

OLD DONGOLA

DOCUMENTATION WORK IN THE MONASTERY, 1999

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While no excavations were planned in the Monastery on Kom H in 1999, a study season was organized, to continue documentation work in the Northwestern Annex, from January 9 to January 20, 1999.¹⁾

Advantage was taken of this opportunity to check on the effectiveness of measures taken during the previous season to protect the surviving paintings, this in view of the disastrous rainfall and flooding that had occurred in Dongola in the summer of 1998.

¹⁾ The team comprised Dr. Stefan Jakobielski, director; Dr. Małgorzata Martens-Czarnecka, archaeologist, responsible for documenting the murals; and Mr. Tomasz Jakobielski, photographer. Sd. Mustafa Ahmed El-Sherif, staff member of the National Museum Conservation Laboratories, represented the NCAM of Sudan. The work was financed by the Research Center for Mediterranean Archaeology of the Polish Academy of Sciences with a contribution from the Bank Rozwoju Eksportu SA (BRE), Warsaw.

SDRS expedition members Ms. Paulina Terendy and Ms Małgorzata Sładkowska assisted in making facsimiles of the graffiti.

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The outer walls of the building were found to be considerably damp in effect of the rains, but the murals had not been affected due to the well protected painted layer. The roof showed no evidence of leaking. Substantial loss of mortar from the joints between bricks in parts of the wall raised by the mission in the previous campaign were observed, but this hardly endangered the stability of the structure. The situation was redressed and a conservation note made for the future to use impregnating substances for the outer wall mortar.

Six paintings from the Annex were copied as part of the documentation work program (*Fig. 1*) and facsimiles were made of the graffiti, as yet unrecorded, from the entrance vestibule on the south (Room 35) and a dozen other inscriptions from rooms 29, 22 and 23. An important part of the work included a professional photographic documentation of all the murals uncovered so far in the part of the Northwestern Annex that is now under roof.

The excavations will be continued in early 2000.



*Fig. 1. Monastery on Kom H. Unidentified warrior saint, second half of the 11th century
(Photo T. Jakobielski)*