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THE EPITAPH OF BISHOP MARTYROPHOROS

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In the editio princeps,¹ the last two lines read:

22. ἀπὸ μαρτ(ύρων) ωσε' ΛΘ, Μεχ^εἰρ α', IC² γ' λο. ἀνά-

23. παυσο(ν) ἡμέρα TPBMOAPICΔ³

A. Łajtar has significantly improved the reading of the first segment:⁴ ἀπὸ μαρτ(ύρων) ωσε' ΛΘ, ΜΕΧΕΙΡΔ ΚΓ λΟ “im Jahre 875 der Martyrerära, am dreiundzwanzigsten (Tage des Monats Mecheir' (18. Februar 1159)”. He notes that ΜΕΧΕΙΡΔ is Old Nubian and stands for ΜΕΧΕΙΡ-λΔ. In the next line he

¹ T. Hägg, “Two Christian Epitaphs in Greek of the ‘Euchologion Mega’ Type”, *The Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia VI, Late Nubian Cemeteries* (Solna 1982) 59-62.

² $\overline{\Sigma}$ in the transcription; lunate sigma on the plate.

³ $\overline{\Sigma}\Delta$ in the transcription; lunate sigma on the plate.

⁴ “Varia Nubica (I-II)”, *ZPE* 104 (1994) 203-204.

reads ἡμέρα $\overline{\text{TPB}}\lambda\lambda\text{O}\delta\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{C}}\overline{\text{A}}$, tentatively resolves $\overline{\text{TP}}$ as $\tau\rho(\acute{\iota}\tau\eta)$ [i.e. ἡμέρα $\tau\rho(\acute{\iota}\tau\eta)$ — “(er starb) am dritten Tag (der Woche)”, d.h. am Mittwoch”], and convincingly suggests that $\delta\overline{\text{P}}$ could just as easily be $\delta\overline{\text{P}}$, an Old Nubian stem meaning “to live”. On the basis of parallels, he writes: “Vielleicht sollen wir ... dieses Fragment der Inschrift in dem Sinne ‘Die Jahre seines Lebens waren + ein Numerale’ lesen, aber das mögliche Numerale $\overline{\text{K}}\overline{\text{A}}$ ganz am Ende gibt einen so geringen Wert an, daß es sich nicht um die Lebenszeit des Bischofs handeln kann”.

Building upon Łajtar’s interpretation, I propose: ἡμέρα $\overline{\text{TP}}(\text{ονισμοῦ})^5 \text{B}\lambda\lambda\text{O} \delta\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{C}} \langle \overline{\text{N}} \overline{\text{N}} \rangle \overline{\text{A}}$ “the years of his enthronement are 2, those in which he lived 54”.

ἡμέρα: “lifetime, years” – see Hägg (above, n. 1) 59.⁶

$\tau\rho(\text{ονισμοῦ})$: cf. J. Kubińska, *Inscriptions grecques chrétiennes*, Faras 4 (Warsaw 1974) No. 7B.7-10 ἔτη θρονησιμῶς (l. θρονισμοῦ) αὐτοῦ ἔτη ἦ, and note also No. 8.21-23 ἔτη $\langle \acute{\epsilon} \rangle \kappa\acute{\alpha}\theta(\iota\sigma\epsilon)$ ἐπὶ θρόνοι: λγ, ἔτη ἡμέρα τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ: ξθ. For τ instead of θ , note Old Nubian TIMIDTP^- “censer” (= θυμιατήριον)⁷ and see M.G. Tibiletti Bruno, “Di alcune caratteristiche epigrafi funerarie cristiane della Nubia”, *Istituto Lombardo (Rend. Lett.)* 97 (1963) 521, 525, 527; cf. also B.H. Stricker, “A Study in Medieval Nubian”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies (University of London)* 10 (1940) 442: “θρόνος [is] turned into *tir-’o-nos* [in Old Nubian]”.

$\text{B}\lambda\lambda\text{O}$: i.e. $(\text{OY}\text{O})^- \lambda^- \lambda\text{O}$ “... are two”; cf. Browne (above n. 7) §§ 2.9, 3.10 (s.v. $-\lambda\text{O}$), 4.1.1.

$\delta\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{C}} \langle \overline{\text{N}} \overline{\text{N}} \rangle \overline{\text{A}}$: cf. H. Kortenbeutel, “Ein griechischer Grabstein aus Nubien”, *ZNTW* 37 (1938) 61-64, where he publishes an inscription whose final clause reads: $\delta\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{C}}\overline{\text{N}} \text{OYKIPIG}\overline{\text{OY}}\lambda\lambda\text{ON} \overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{F}} \lambda\text{O}$ “and the years in which he lived are 73”,⁸ and J.W.B. Barns in P.L. Shinnie and H.N. Chittik, *Ghazali, A Monastery in the Northern Sudan*, Sudan Antiquities Service: Occasional Papers 5 (Khartoum 1961) 94 No. 79 $\text{TANNA} \delta\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{C}}\overline{\text{N}} \text{SEMNF}\overline{\text{OY}}\lambda\text{O}(\text{N}) \overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{A}}$ “and the years in which he lived are 81”.⁹ These two texts suggest that the engraver’s $\delta\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{C}}$ is an error for the expected preterite II subjunctive: $\delta\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{C}} \langle \overline{\text{N}} \rangle$, which we are to understand as “(the years) in which he lived”.¹⁰ The engraver appears inadvertently to have set over the C the stroke intended for the second N and to have omitted the intervening $\overline{\text{N}}$.

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⁵ I.e. θρονισμοῦ (see below).

⁶ Note also the fuller expression ἔτη ἡμέρα in the second of the two inscriptions cited in the next paragraph.

⁷ For the disappearance of $-\iota\text{ov}$, see G.M. Browne, *Introduction to Old Nubian*, Meroitica 11 (Berlin 1989) § 3.3.5.

⁸ Cf. Łajtar, “Collection Froehner 81, A Christian Epitaph from Nubia: Notes on the Reading”, *JJP* 23 (1993) 10 n. 10. Literally, $\text{OYKIPIG}\overline{\text{OY}}\lambda-$ is here “the days”, i.e. ἡμέρα (see above).

⁹ The Form $\delta\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{C}}\overline{\text{N}}$ is an alternative spelling of $\delta\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{C}}\overline{\text{N}}$: Browne (above n. 7) § 3.9.6.

¹⁰ See Browne (above, n. 7) § 4.6d, especially SC 21.3-4 (there cited) $\text{KAP}\overline{\text{E}}\text{COY}\overline{\text{N}} \text{OYK}\overline{\text{OY}}\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{W}}$ “on the day on which you have eaten”; $\text{OYK}(\text{I})\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{I}}\overline{\text{G}}\overline{\text{OY}}\lambda$ (see the text quoted at the beginning of the present paragraph) can easily be supplied from the preceding ἡμέρα (cf. above, n. 8).