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*St Andrew the Apostle
in the Murals of the Upper Church
in Banganarti*

In 2002–2004 the Polish Archaeological Mission to the Middle of the Nile Valley uncovered the Upper Church in Banganarti (Sinada). The site is located 9 km from Old Dongola.¹

The Upper Church is a central building, measuring approximately 23.5 m x 23 m (**Fig. 1**).² The central part of the church was covered with a dome supported by four massive pillars engaged with two columns each. Around the central part there is a wreath of small rectangular rooms, which are opened with one of their shorter sides to the center.

In the eastern part of the church there are seven such chapels closed with apses. These chapels are numbered from I through VII on the church plan (**Fig. 2**). There are two passages in Chapels II and VI leading to *pastophoria*. The apses and the lateral walls of all the chapels were primarily covered with murals dated to the eleventh–thirteenth century.³ A part of this painted decoration has not survived, however, it is possible to identify the subject of the preserved compositions. In each chapel there is a Nubian ruler under protection of an archangel and the twelve apostles (**Fig. 3**).

The rulers are rendered frontally holding their regalia, while the archangels stand behind them. They are flanked by the apostles. In this paper I would like to draw some attention to the iconography of the apostles standing nearest the rulers.

Unfortunately in the case of the murals from Banganarti we have almost no inscriptions describing images,⁴ therefore the apostles could be recognized on the basis of the physical types. Some of the murals, however, are so worn off that the faces of the apostles are not preserved. The recognition of the apostles could be carried out on the basis of the attributes, but the problem is that apart from Peter, who always holds keys, others have no such characteristic attributes. They usually hold codices or scrolls, so the only way to recognize them is their position in the apostolic college. It seems that in Nubian painting all the apostles had a fixed place in the apse compositions. The mural from Room XIII of the NW-Annexe of the Monastery in Old Dongola can be used as an exemplification (**Fig. 4**).

On the eastern wall of this room one can see a monumental composition of the Investiture of Archangel Michael by the Holy Trinity. On the lateral walls Christ and the twelve apostles are painted. The mural is dated to the mid-eleventh century.⁵ Luckily some legends

¹ B. ŻURAWSKI, Banganarti (Tangasi and Buros Islands), in: *Id. et al.*, Nubia II. Southern Dongola Reach Survey 1. Survey and Excavations between Old Dongola and Ez-Zuma, Warsaw 2003, pp. 140–163; *Id.*, Dongola Reach. The Southern Dongola Reach Survey 2001, Fortified Enclosure at Banganarti, *PAM* XIII, 2002, pp. 217–226; *Id.*, Excavations and Restoration Works in Banganarti, *PAM* XIV, 2003, pp. 241–249.

² The name Upper Church was given to this building to differentiate it from the so-called Lower Church upon which the former was founded. In fact there were three ‘Lower Churches’ as B. Żurawski has lately stated. Cf. *Id.*, The Anastasis Scene from the Lower Church III at Baganarti (Upper Nubia), *EtTrav* XXI, 2007 [= *EtTrav* XXI], pp. 162f. For the Church dimensions cf. n. 1, *supra*.

³ Or even later, cf. M. ŁAPTAŚ, Banganati 2003. The Wall Paintings, *PAM* XV, 2004, p. 252.

⁴ A. ŁAJTAR, Wall Inscriptions in Banganarti Churches. A General Note after Three Seasons of Work, *JJP* XXXIII, 2003, pp. 137–159; *Id.*, Inscriptions from Banganarti. Season 2003, *PAM* XV, 2004, pp. 253–260.

⁵ M. MARTENS-CZARNECKA, Wall Paintings Discovered in Old Dongola [= Wall Paintings], in: S. JAKOBIELSKI, P.O. SCHOLZ (eds.), *Dongola—Studien. 35 Jahre polnischer Forschungen im Zentrum des makuritischen Reiches, Bibliotheca nubica et aethiopica* 7, Warsaw 2001, p. 268, Pls. XLIV–XLV.



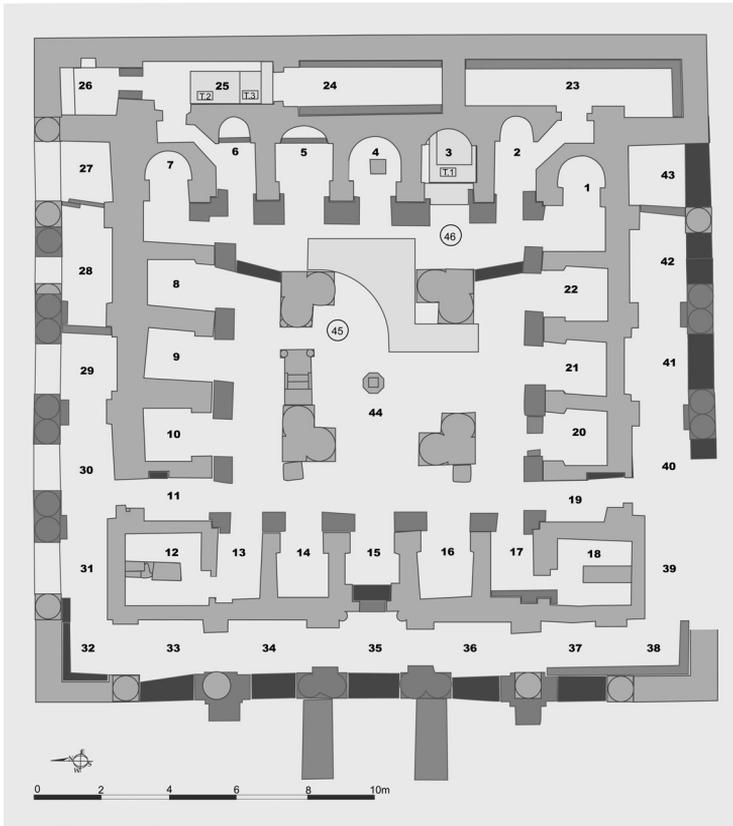
1. Aerial view of the Upper Church in Baganarti (Phot. B. Żurawski).

survived above the heads of the apostles. Thanks to them we can identify the figures. Following the inscriptions M. Martens-Czarnecka lists the apostles on the right-hand side of Christ as: Peter, John, Philip, Thomas, Thaddeus, and on the left-hand side: Andrew, Jacob, Bartholomew, and Simon (**Fig. 5**).⁶ The apostles hold scrolls in their hands and only Peter can be distinguished thanks to the key. It looks like the same sequence is repeated in the chapels of the Baganarti Church. On the right-hand side of Archangel Peter is always shown (**Figs. 3 and 6**).

On the left-hand side of the rulers on the paintings from Baganarti there is always a gray-haired apostle. His hair is disheveled and beard long. He is placed antithetically with Peter and holds almost equal position with him. The best preserved images of this apostle in Baganarti are found in Chapels II, III, and IV.

Let us briefly compare them. On the southern wall of the Chapel II of the Baganarti Church there is an entrance to the *diakonikon*. The composition in the apse is asymmetrical and shows three apostles with a ruler and an archangel. The remaining apostles are painted on the lateral walls of the chapel (**Fig. 7**). The use of such an asymmetrical com-

⁶ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

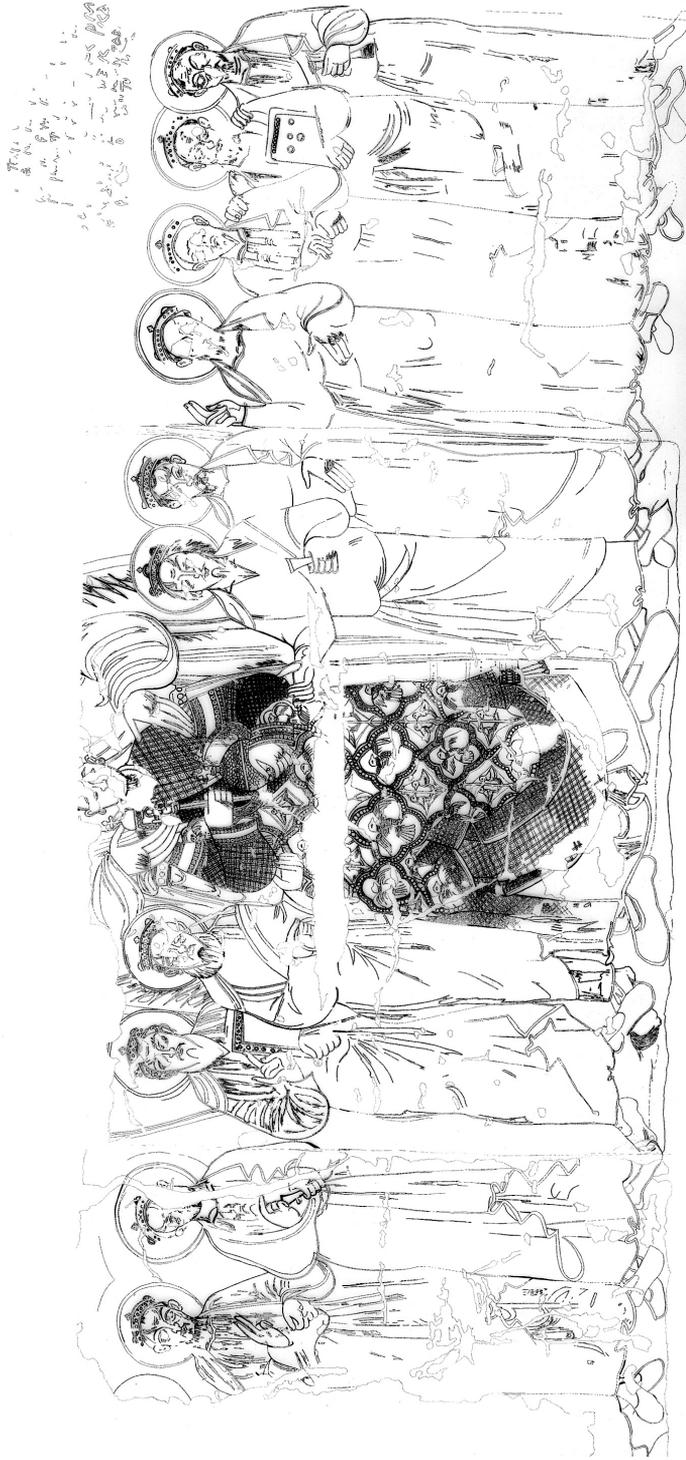


2. Plan of the Upper Church in Baganarti (Drawing: B. Żurawski).

position resulted from the lack of space on the southern wall due to the presence of the entrance to Room XXIII. Thus, under wings of the archangel there are only two apostles and the third one is represented outside the archangel's left wing. The position of the apostles standing nearest the ruler is stressed by the fact that only two of them are sheltered under the wings of the archangel. They touch the arms of the ruler with their hands, what symbolizes their protection and also shows their special role as the leaders of the apostolic college.

In the apse of Chapel III there is a ruler under protection of an archangel and four apostles (**Figs. 3 and 8**). The archangel stands behind the ruler. He holds a small cubiform object topped with a cupola with his right hand and touches the ruler's arm with his left hand. The object is probably a model of the Baganarti Church, which was dedicated to archangel Raphael.⁷ The ruler holds regalia in his hands: a scepter in the left and a crown in the right hand. Four apostles are sheltered under the wings of the archangel. The

⁷ Cf. ŻURAWSKI, *EtTrav XXI*, p. 162.



3. Nubian ruler under protection of archangel and twelve apostles. Apse composition. Chapel III. Upper Church in Banganarti (Drawing: W. Chmiel).



4. The Investiture of Archangel Michael. Chapel XIII, looking east. NW-Annexe of the Monastery in Old Dongola (Phot. T. Jakobielski).

apostles who are closest to the ruler support his elbows. In this scene the physical features of the apostle standing on the left-hand side of the ruler are strongly stressed. He has an oval face, disheveled hair, and ragged beard.

In Chapel V the same apostle is painted on the southern wall. The apse of this chapel was closed in the late period of the functioning of the church with a dividing wall (probably to strengthen the construction of the building, which was founded on an uneven surface). On the western side of this wall there is a composition repeated from the apse, presenting a ruler under protection of an archangel. The images of the apostles are painted on the northern and southern walls of the chapel. It seems that these images of the apostles were not repainted as they are on the first layer of plaster. The apostle standing on the left-hand side of the ruler is rendered, as in other chapels, with disheveled hair and grey beard. He glances aside, towards the ruler (**Fig. 9**).

After the analysis of the preserved images from the Upper Church in Banganarti, one can conclude that an apostle with disheveled hair and grey beard is always paint-

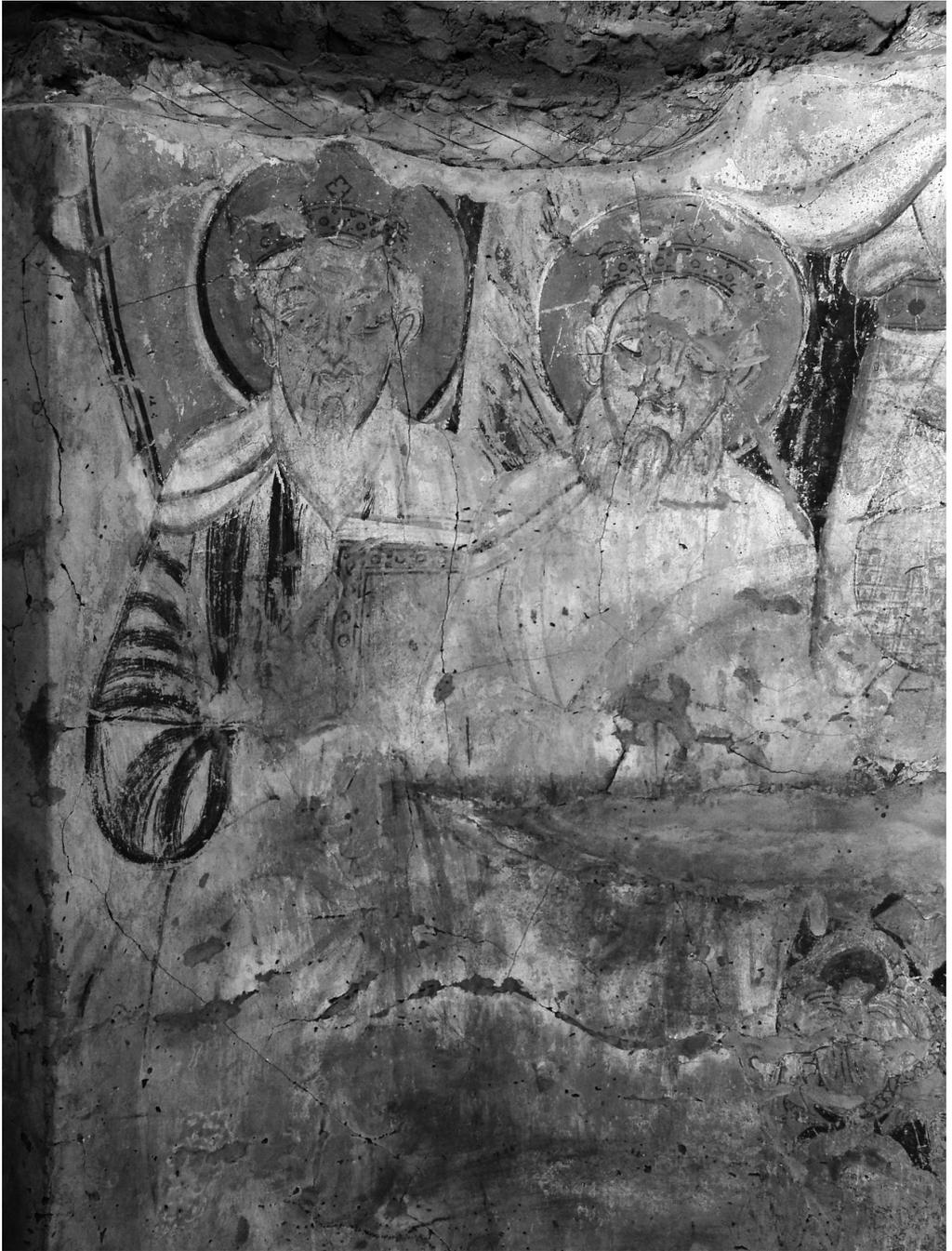


5. Apostles Andrew, Jacob and Bartholomew. Chapel XIII, southern wall. NW-Annexe of the Monastery in Old Dongola (Phot. T. Jakobielski).

ed on the left-hand side of the ruler. His physical type relates him to Andrew⁸ – a brother of Peter. The main reason for such a placement of Andrew among the Twelve was probably a reference to the Gospel (*Mt* 10:2–4, *Mk* 3:16–19, *Lk* 6:14–16). The Nubian sequence is closest to the list in the Gospel of St Matthew: *first Simon, who is called Peter; and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.* However in Nubia John precedes James and of course instead of Judas Iscariot there is Matthias, who replaced Judas after his treachery.⁹ Using this scheme the Nubian painters placed the apostles alternately against the axis of the composition, i.e. in the most important

⁸ R. PILLINGER, *Der Apostel Andreas. Ein Heiliger von Ost und West*, Wien 1994 [= *Apostel*], p. 11; K. WESSEL, *Andreas*, *RBK* I, cols. 154–156; J. IRMSCHER, A. KAZHDAN, A. W. CARR, *Andrew*, *ODByz.* I [= *Andrew*], p. 92.

⁹ *Acts* 1:12–26.



6. Apostles Peter and John. Chapel III. Upper Church in Banganarti (Phot. B. Żurawski).



7. Nubian ruler under protection of archangel and apostles Peter, Andrew and Jacob. Chapel II. The Upper Church in Banganarti (Phot. B. Żurawski).

place, on the right-hand side of the ruler, Peter was depicted; on the second position (on the left-hand side of the ruler) – Andrew, and so on. This scheme seems even more justified as it is repeated in the inscriptions from Nubia.¹⁰

On the other hand, according to the iconographic tradition which reached even Christian Egypt, it was Paul who was represented in the apse paintings in the second place after Peter. Why was Paul included into the group of the Twelve? In the texts mentioned above he was not even listed. The reason was probably the cult of St Paul which developed in Rome.¹¹

¹⁰ Cf. T. HÄGG, Magic Bowls Inscribed with an Apostles-and-Disciples Catalogue from the Christian Settlement of Hambukol (Upper Nubia), *Orientalia* 62/4, 1993, pp. 376–399, 381. I would like to thank A. Łajtar for sharing the information about the sequence of the apostles in Nubian texts (some of them not published yet) during a seminar at the University of Warsaw. Also M. Martens-Czarnecka mentions a list of the apostles written on the southern wall of Room 29 of the NW-Annexe of the Monastery in Old Dongola, on the right-hand side of the painted group of the apostles, cf. M. MARTENS-CZARNECKA, Wall Paintings, p. 268, n. 37.

¹¹ J. MYSLIVEC, Apostel 2, Zahl und Namen, LCI I, pp. 151f; V. SAXER, Il culto degli Apostoli Pietro e Paolo dalle origini all' epoca carolingia, in: A. DONATI (ed.), Pietro e Paolo. La storia, il culto, la memoria nei primi secolo. Catalogo della mostra (Roma, Palazzo Cancelleria, 30 giugno–10 dicembre 2000), Milano 2000, pp. 73–85;



8. Apostles Andrew and Jacob. Chapel III. Upper Church in Banganarti (Phot. M. Łaptaś).



9. Apostle Andrew. Chapel V. Upper Church in Banganarti (Phot. M. Łaptaś).

Paul did not belong to the group of the twelve disciples chosen by Christ. However, according to the later tradition, he was named an apostle, i.e. *envoi* – ἀπόστολος.

According to the legend preserved in Eusebios' *Historia Ecclesiastica* (2.25.5–6)¹² his martyrdom took place on the same day as Peter's did. Therefore their cults were connected with one another¹³ and Peter's images were accompanied by the ones of Paul.¹⁴ In

B. IWASZKIEWICZ-WRONIKOWSKA, Najstarsze świadectwa kultu męczenników w Rzymie, in: B. IWASZKIEWICZ-WRONIKOWSKA, D. PRÓCHNIAK (eds.), *Sympozja Kazimierskie poświęcone kulturze świata późnego antyku i wczesnego chrześcijaństwa* [= *Sympozja Kazimierskie*] IV. *Męczennicy w świecie późnego antyku*, Lublin 2004, pp. 149–174; E. JASTRZĘBOWSKA, Miejsca święte Piotra i Pawła w Rzymie w III i IV wieku, in: EADD. (eds.), *Sympozja Kazimierskie V. Miejsca święte w epoce późnego antyku*, Lublin 2005, pp. 217–232.

¹² Cf. EUSEBIOS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in: E. SCHWARTZ (ed.), *Eusebius Werke* 2.1–3. *Die Kirchengeschichte*, Leipzig 1903–1909.

¹³ M. STAROWIEYSKI, Wstęp, in: Id. (ed.), *Dwunastu, Pseudo Abbiasza*, Kraków 1995, p. 72; J. MIAZEK, Apostołowie w liturgii Kościoła, 4a. Kult Apostołów Piotra i Pawła, in: M. STAROWIEYSKI (ed.), *Apokryfy Nowego Testamentu II*, 1, *Dzieje Apostolskie*, Kraków 2007 [= *Apokryfy*], pp. 47–49.

¹⁴ Cf. P. TESTINI, Gli apostoli Pietro e Paolo nella più antica iconografia cristiana, in: *Studi Petriani*, Roma 1968, p. 113; L. DE BRUYNE, L'iconographie des apôtres Pierre et Paul dans une lumière nouvelle, in: *Saecularia Petri et Pauli*, Città del Vaticano 1969, p. 52; F. GERKE, Petrus und Paulus, zwei bedeutende Köpfe im Museum von S. Sebastiano, *RivAC* 1, pp. 307–329; R. KNAPIŃSKI, Kolegium Apostolskie w sztuce pierwszego

the apse painting Peter and Paul were in the first place of the apostolic college. They were the special protectors of the Roman community¹⁵ and Rome itself received a noble epithet of the ‘apostolic city’. While the apostolic traditions flourished in Rome, the relics of St Andrew the apostle were transferred from Patras to Constantinople.¹⁶ Andrew was Peter’s brother and according to the Gospel of St John he had become a disciple of Christ even earlier than Peter did: *As He (Christ) walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them: ‘Follow me and I will make you fishers of men’*.¹⁷

Because in this Gospel Andrew was called the first disciple, the name *protokletos* was given to him. A comparison between the position of Peter, who was a *koryphaios* of the apostles, and Andrew – *protokletos* – started to appear progressively in Byzantine texts.¹⁸ By the end of the seventh century the idea that Andrew ordained Stachys, the first (legendary) bishop of Constantinople,¹⁹ appeared.

How important it was for Constantinople to possess the relics of the apostle is proved by the text written in the ninth century by Agnellus, the church historian of Ravenna. He writes that in the sixth century Maximian, bishop of Ravenna, asked Justinian to transfer the relics of Andrew to this city.²⁰ The emperor, however, refused to do that as he stated that *Roma* and *Constantinopolis* are sisters and sisters should possess relics of the brothers.²¹ During the Iconoclasm increasingly often Constantinople was called the ‘apostolic city’. It was connected with the idea of ordaining Stachys and establishing the Byzantine Church by Andrew. Between Rome and Constantinople there was a sort of a rivalry. The see of Rome took its roots from the *koryphaios* – Peter, the leader of the apostles, and the see of Constantinople from *protokletos* – the apostle who was the first disciple called by Christ. After the Fourth Crusade the relics of Andrew were transferred to Amalfi.²²

Taking into consideration that Constantinople aspired to be the apostolic city, no wonder that Nubia, remaining under a Byzantine influence, inherited a strong position of Andrew. Paul never gained such a role in Nubia as he did in Rome. In the Nubian texts

tysiąclecia, in: ID. (ed.), *Symbol Apostolski w nauczaniu i sztuce Kościoła do Soboru Trydenckiego*, Lublin 1997, pp. 115–151.

¹⁵ C. IHM, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 1960 [= *Programme*], pp. 22–23.

¹⁶ Some scholars assumed that the transfer of the relics of Andrew took place during the reign of Constantine. However, it seems more probable that it happened during the reign of Constantius, cf. F. DVORNIK, *The idea of apostolicity in Byzantium and the legend of the Apostle Andrew*, Cambridge, Mass. 1958 [= *Idea*], p. 139; B. ZIMMERMAN, André, *DACL* I.2, 2031–2034, esp. 2033.

¹⁷ *Jn* 1: 35–40.

¹⁸ DVORNIK, *Idea*, p. 148.

¹⁹ IRMSCHER, KAZHDAN, CARR, *Andrew*, p. 92.

²⁰ L. DUCHNESE (ed.), *Le Liber Pontificalis I*, Paris 1886, p. 360.

²¹ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

²² Cardinal Peter of Capua placed them in the Amalfi Cathedral. Cf. J. FRAIKIN, Amalfi, in: *DHGE* II, 926–930, esp. 929. In 1462 Pope Pius II ordered to transfer the relics of the apostle’s head to St Peter Basilica in Rome. In 1964 Pope Paul VI turned back the relics to the Patras Cathedral. Cf. T. CHODZIDŁO, W. SZUBZDA, *Andrzej Apostoł, EK* I, col. 533.

containing the lists of the Twelve his name is not even mentioned. And in Nubian apse painting the scheme is repeated, so Andrew takes the second place after Peter.

Yet, it is interesting that in the apse paintings from Egypt the sequence of the apostles is not always the same. Let us now compare some murals coming from the chapels of the monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit, dated to the sixth and seventh centuries.²³ In the apse of Chapel XLII the composition consists of two horizontal zones. In the upper one *Maestas Domini* is painted and in the lower – the *Virgo Lactans* on the throne flanked by the apostles.²⁴ The names of the apostles are written above their heads, so we can be sure that Peter and Paul are represented on the sides of the Virgin.²⁵ Andrew is painted next to Peter on the right-hand side of the Virgin. In Chapel VI of the same monastery Peter and John are closest to the enthroned Virgin. Andrew takes again his ‘third’ place after Peter. Also here the inscriptions do not leave any place for doubts.²⁶ On the contrary, it seems that Andrew is painted on the left-hand side of the Virgin in Chapel XVII.²⁷ To sum up, taking these three examples into consideration we can state that Andrew had no fixed position in the Egyptian chapel painting. The images of this apostle, however, were popular in Egypt. The Alexandrian mural from the so-called Wescher Catacombs, dated to the fifth–sixth century,²⁸ contains the contracted scene of the Feeding of the Multitude (*Mt* 15:32–39; *Mk* 8:1–10):²⁹ Peter and Andrew approach the enthroned Christ: Peter offers Him some bread, while Andrew – a plate with fish; several baskets of bread stand at the foot of the throne.

The other interesting mural dated to the tenth–eleventh century has been uncovered on the southern wall of the *khurus* of the Holy Virgin Church in Deir el-Suriani in Wadi el-Natrun.³⁰ It represents Andrew preaching to the animal-headed men. This scene is based on the apocrypha acts of Andrew who, during his missionary activity, reached the land of *anthropophagi* and met there a man whom he converted into Christianity.³¹

²³ Such dating is quoted after L. TÖRÖK, *Transfigurations of Hellenizm. Aspects of Late Antique Art in Egypt AD 250–700*, Leiden – Boston 2005 [= *Transfigurations*], p. 279.

²⁴ J. CLÉDAT, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouit*. Notes mises en oeuvre et éditées par D. Bénazeth et M.H. Rutschowscaya avec contributions de A. Bourd’hors, R.G. Coquin et É. Gaillard, *MIFAO* 111, Le Caire 1999 [= *Notes*] p. 47, Pls. 51–52; IHM, *Programme*, p. 203, Pl. XXV, 2.

²⁵ CLÉDAT, *Notes*, p. 47.

²⁶ J. MASPÉRO, E. DRIOTON, *Fouilles exécutées à Baouit*, *MIFAO* LIX, Le Caire 1931, Pls. XXI–XXIII; IHM, *Programme*, p. 200, Pl. XXV, 1; M. KRAUSE, K. WESSEL, *Bawit*, *RBK* I, cols. 568–584; TÖRÖK, *Transfigurations*, p. 345.

²⁷ IHM, *Programme* p. 201, Pl. XXIII, 1.

²⁸ TÖRÖK, *Transfigurations*, pp. 278–279.

²⁹ G.B. DE ROSSI, *Un ipogeo cristiano antichissimo di Alessandria in Egitto*, *BullArchCrist* 3, 1865, pp. 57–64; J.P. RICHTER, *Die Wescher-Katakombe im Jahre 1876*, in: T. SCHREIBER (ed.), *Die Nekropole von Kôm-ersch-Schukâfa*, Leipzig 1908, pp. 30–39; J. WILPERT, *Eucharistische Malereien der Katakombe Karmûz in Alexandrien*, in: *Ehrengabe deutscher Wissenschaft, dargeboten zum 50 Geburtstag von katolischen Gelehrten*, Freiburg 1920, pp. 273–282; M. KRAUSE, *Alexandria*, *RBK* I, cols. 105–107; PILLINGER, *Apostel*, p. 5.

³⁰ Cf. K.C. INNEMÉE, *Recent Discoveries of Wall Paintings in Deir Al-Surian*. Paintings of the Upper Walls of the Khurus, <http://syrc.com.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol11No2/HV1N2Inneme.html>, 1998.

³¹ K. Innemée refers to *Acta Andre et Mathiae apud anthropofagos*, *ibid.* An episode of conversion of the animal-headed is described in an Ethiopian version of the *Contentings of the apostles*, cf. also: E.A. WALLIS

The two discussed representations from Egypt are unique in Christian iconography and not known or not discovered yet in Nubia. It is interesting, however, that Andrew did not achieve in Egyptian apse painting such a position as he did in Nubia.

To conclude, taking into consideration the preserved images of the apostle Andrew from the Upper Church in Banganarti, it can be stated that he takes a fixed place in the apostolic college. He is represented closest to the archangel and the ruler, on their left-hand side. In Chapel II Andrew and Peter touch the arms of the ruler in the protection gesture. In Chapel III the two apostles support the ruler by his elbows. Placing Andrew together with Peter at the beginning of the apostolic college was probably caused by the accordance of the images with the Nubian texts. On the other hand, however, a model of the apse painting with Paul as a partner of Peter was not adopted in Nubia. The Nubian painting stayed within the orbit of Byzantium and Andrew was a patron of Constantinople, which may explain his superior position among the apostles and his closeness to the Nubian rulers.

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BUDGE (ed.), *The Contendings of the Apostles*, Oxford – London 1935, pp. 171–173. This version was translated into Ethiopian from Arabic which in turn is a translation of the Coptic text – see: W. WITAKOWSKI, Etiopskie apokryficzne *Dzieje Apostolów*, in: STAROWIEYSKI, *Apokryfy*, pp. 167–171, esp. 169.