The Etymology of the Toponym "Pourgoundi" (Notes on Medieval Nubian Toponymy 5)

Vincent van Gerven Oei
vincent@vangervenoei.com

Alexandros Tsakos
atsakos@gmail.com

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The toponym ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲅⲟⲩⲛⲁⲓ was first recorded in a Greek–Old Nubian graffito on a wall of the Church of the Archangel Raphael in Tamit, originally published by Sergio Donadoni (ᴅʙᴍɴᴛ 451).[1]

1   [+ⲉⲅ]ⲱ ⲫⲓⲗⲟ ⲁⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛⲟⲩ ⲩ̅ⲥ̅
       [ⲙ]ⲁⲣⲓⲁⲛⲧⲁ ⲉⲭⲱⲛ ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲅⲟⲩⲛⲁⲓ
       [ⲉ]ⲡⲁⲅⲱⲙⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲉⲟⲣⲑⲏⲛ ⲣⲁⲫⲁⲏⲗ
       [ⲉ]ⲅⲣⲁⲯⲉⲛ

1 ⲫⲓⲗⲟ] Łajtar & Van der Vliet ⲫⲓⲗⲟ(ⲑⲉⲟⲥ). 2 [ⲙ]ⲁⲣⲓⲁⲛⲧⲁ] Donadoni, Łajtar & Van der Vliet [ ]ⲁⲣⲓⲁⲛⲧⲁ. 4 [ⲉ]ⲅⲣⲁⲯⲉⲛ Donadoni [ⲉ]ⲅⲣⲁⲯⲁ; Łajtar & Van der Vliet ⲉⲅⲣⲁⲯⲁ.

"I, Philo(n), the deacon, son (of) Marianta, having (the church at) Pourgoundi, written (this on the) feast (of) Raphael (during the) epagomenal (month)."

The name of the dedicator and scribe has been interpreted by Łajtar and Van der Vliet as *Philo(theos)*.[2] This seems an over-interpretation of what stands in the text, since an abbreviated form of this name would be expected to have the letter ⲑ in superscription. An alternative interpretation could be to read the two words (ⲫⲓⲗⲟ and ⲁⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛⲟⲩ) as a single personal name, meaning "Friend of the Deacon." The authors opt for a third alternative though, which would

see the name ⲫⲓⲗⲟ as a variant of the Greek name ⲫⲓⲗⲱⲛ, since both the shift between ⲟ and ⲱ, and the deletion of the final ⲛ are well-attested phenomena.

For other attestations of the female name Marianta, see I.QI 35 and 57.[3] As regards the participle [ⲉ]ⲡⲁⲅⲱⲙⲉⲛⲟⲥ , there are six attestations of the verb in the DBMNT, five of which are participles: two feminine, one neuter, one without suffix, and the present one, which is masculine. Łajtar and Van der Vliet's general interpretation as the participle referring to the calendar traditions of the epagomenal days is accepted, but with changes in the translation, since the use of the masculine participle in the present inscription accompanied by a reference to a feast, which refers to a precise day, shows that the scribe had in mind a sort of an "epagomenal month."[4]

Finally, it should be stressed that it is difficult to estimate whether the owner of the church at Pourgoundi was Philon or Marianta, due to the degradation of the language.[5]

Donadoni identifies ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲅⲟⲩⲛⲇⲓ as the modern village Furgundi on the eastern bank of the Nile, about 5 kilometers north of Abu Simbel, across from Tamit.[6] Łajtar and Van der Vliet suggest that on the basis of the presence of the verb ⲉⲭⲱⲛ "having," it can be conjectured that ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲅⲟⲩⲛⲇⲓ had a church. The name of the village was "for some reason so distinctive," that its church was not called by its official name, "but by the name of the village."[7]

Two inventories of churches with payment from Qasr Ibrim published by Giovanni Ruffini confirm that indeed we are dealing with a church: DBMNT 1729.17 ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲅⲟⲩⲛⲇⲓⲁ̄ "Pourgoundi-PRED"; DBMNT 1730.23 [ⲡⲟⲩ]ⲣⲅⲟⲩⲛⲇⲓⲁ̄ "Pourgoundi-PRED." Both inventories mention three churches: Peter, John, and Mary,[8] although it remains unclear which of these three is the church of Pourgoundi referred to in Tamit graffito.

ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲅⲟⲩⲛⲇⲓ follows a morphological pattern that is found frequently Nubian toponyms: X–genitive -ⲛ–Y "The Y of X."[9] Well-

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3 Łajtar & Van der Vliet, *The Greek and Coptic Inscriptions Published on Behalf of the Egypt Exploration Society.*

4 For a more accurate identification of the time of that feast, see Ochała, *Chronological Systems of Christian Nubia*, p. 322, n. 4. It should be noted that the verb can also mean other things, such as "brought forward," or even "contributed," but the interpretation as "the epagomenal month" is preferable.

5 For the general degradation of the Greek language in Nubia, as witnessed also by this inscription, see Łajtar, "The Greek of Late Christian Inscriptions from Nubia – The Evidence from Banganarti and Other Sites."

6 Donadoni, "Tamit (1964). Missione archeologica in Egitto dell'Università di Roma," p. 67.

7 Łajtar & Van der Vliet, "Rich Ladies of Meinarti and Their Churches: With an Appended List of Sources from Christian Nubia Containing the Expression 'Having the Church So-And-So'," p. 46.

8 Ruffini, *The Bishop, The Eparch, and the King: Old Nubian Texts from Qasr Ibrim (P. QI IV),* pp. 144, 150.

9 Bell, *Place Names in The Belly of Stones*, p. 6.

known are, for example, the islands (ⲁⲣⲧ[10]) Kulubnarti, Meinarti "island of Michael,"[11] and Banganarti "island of the locust."[12] There are two other attested toponyms in -ⲛ-ⲇⲓ: dbmnt 1397.6 ⲙⲟⲅⲟⲛⲇⲛ̄ "Mohondi-GEN," where Gerald Browne suggests there was a church[13] and dbmnt 1044.8–9 ⲧⲟⲩⲛⲇⲛ̄ "Toundi-GEN," where there was a Michael Church,[14] cf. DBMNT 1729.6–7 ⲧⲟⲩⲛⲇⲛ̄ ⲙⲓⲭⲁⲏⲗ "Michael (Church) of Toundi." There are several spelling variants of this name: DBMNT 1044.8 ⲧⲟⲛⲇⲉⲁ̄ "Tonde-PRED"; and perhaps DBMNT 1730.7 ⲧⲟⲛⲇⲁ[ⲛ] "Tonda-GEN."

Old Nubian ⲇⲓ/ⲇⲉ appears to be related to a noun featuring the same ⲉ/ⲓ alternation that appears as ⲇⲓ/ⲇⲉ in a land sale from Qaṣr Ibrīm (DBMNT 584), which Browne suggests could be "some kind of crop."[15] Considering the semantic field in which it appears this seems however unlikely. The first occurrence is DBMNT 584.i.16–17 ‹ⲙⲁⲑ›ⲧⲟⲛ ⲇⲓⲉⲓⲁ̄ ⲡⲁⲣⲣⲉ ⲅ̄ⲗⲟ· "three plots for the di of the east," which follows the pattern of dbmnt 584.18 ⲟ̄ⲣⲱⲛ ⲁⲅⲅⲟⲩⲣⲉⲗⲁ ⲡⲁⲣⲣⲉ ⲟⲥⲕⲁⲗⲉ ⲁ̄ⲗⲟ "one waterwheel plot for the irrigation of the south." The second is DBMNT 584.i.28–29 ⲡⲁⲣⲣⲉ ⲕⲟⲣ̄ ⲧⲁϣϣⲓ ⲇⲉⲉⲓⲁ̄ ⲡⲁⲣⲣⲉ ⲃ̄ⲗⲟ· "two plots for the de (of) the *tašši* tree plot."

The only extant cognate of Old Nubian -ⲇⲓ is Midob -tí/-dí, a "morpheme to express tribal subsection,"[16] e.g., *èlkèdí* "Elke-section"; *Kàagèdí* "Kaagedi (Shalkota)-section." This gives us for the two phrases from the land sale above the respective translations of "three plots for the tribal section of the east," and "two plots for the *tašši* tree plot tribal section."

The meaning of ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲅⲟⲩ was recently clarified through the translation of a legend on a painting in Room 5 of the South-Western Annex of the Monastery on Kom H in Old Dongola. The painting, discovered during excavations in Dongola in 2004,[17] shows a group of dancing and singing Nubians, performing a ritual that appears to be related to birth of a new male heir to the royal throne.[18] One of the lines sung by the dancers is dbmnt 1364.d.2–4 [ⲉⲓ]ⲗⲗⲟ ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲣⲁ ⲅⲟⲛⲛⲁⲥⲁ· "You are the Queen Sister for the *Pour*."

10 BROWNE, *Old Nubian Dictionary*, p. 20.
11 SEIGNOBOS, "La liste des conquêtes nubiennes de Baybars selon Ibn Šaddād (1217–1285)," p. 567, n. 22.
12 ŽURAWSKI, *St Raphael Church I at Banganarti, Mid-Sixth to Mid-Eleventh Century: An Introduction to the Site and the Epoch*, p. 41, n.1.
13 BROWNE, "Griffith's Old Nubian Graffito 4," p. 20.
14 BROWNE, *Old Nubian Texts from Qaṣr Ibrīm, vol. III*, p. 74.
15 BROWNE, *Old Nubian Dictionary*, p. 45.
16 WERNER, *Tìdn-Àal: A Study of Midoob (Darfur Nubian)*, p. 131. For sound correspondences see RILLY, *Le méroïtique et sa famille linguistique*, pp. 221–22, 242–44.
17 MARTENS-CZARNECKA, "Wall Paintings Discovered in Dongola in the 2004 Season," pp. 273–84.
18 VAN GERVEN OEI, "A Dance for a Princess: The Legends on a Painting in Room 5 of the SW Annex of the Monastery on Kom H in Old Dongola (DBMNT 1364)."

It is our suggestion that Old Nubian ⲡⲟⲩⲣ is related to the Meroitic *pqr* /bakʷara/ or /bakʷora/ "prince," which can be analyzed as /bakʷ/ "power, authority" (cf. Old Nubian ⲡⲁⲅⲟⲩ "power, authority"[19]) + masculine suffix /ara/.[20] Meroitic *q* /kʷ/ was probably already pronounced /w/ in Northern Meroitic,[21] and appears to be a cognate of Nubian /w/, cf. Mer. *qore* "sovereign"[22] ~ Old Nubian ⲟⲩⲣⲟⲩ "king."

Although it is as yet not fully determinable whether ⲡⲟⲩⲣ is also a cognate, like ⲡⲁⲅⲟⲩ, or a loan word, there are several indications that it is the latter. First, Old Nubian does not have an agentive suffx /-ar/; second, court functions and royal titles are regularly prone to borrowing, and as the Nubian kingdoms have, to a certain extent, inherited the matrilineal inheritance of the throne, it would not be surprising if they also borrowed accompanying titles from Meroitic; third, the absence of the first /a/, present in ⲡⲁⲅⲟⲩ, does not appear to follow the currently known sound correspondences between Meroitic and Old Nubian.[23]

ⲡⲟⲩⲣ is probably also attested in an unpublished inscription from Banganarti, 424 + ⲉ<ⲅ>ⲱ ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲏⲣ "I, the Prince,"[24] with determiner -ⲏⲣ /-ir/ < -ⲓⲗ /-il/, and has perhaps also and element of the place name ⲡⲟⲣⲇⲓⲡⲡⲁ, attested in two Coptic texts: ᴅʙᴍɴᴛ 630.13–14 ⲉⲓ̈ⲥⲛⲡⲟⲣⲇⲓⲡⲡⲁ and ᴅʙᴍɴᴛ 631.11 ⲉⲓ̈ⲥⲛⲡⲟⲣⲇⲓⲡⲁ .[25] The first part ⲡⲟⲣ- may very well be related to ⲡⲟⲩⲣ-, while the second element ⲇⲓⲡⲡ- is a common Old Nubian word meaning "town" or "city."[26] ⲇⲓ/ⲇⲉ may have originally formed the first element in a form that in later stages of the language was no longer interpreted analytically. A similar element may in that case also be found in word *deffufa*, referring to the ancient mud-brick constructions found in Nubia.

ᴅʙᴍɴᴛ 1364.d.2–4 [ⲉⲓ]ⲗⲗⲟ ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲣⲁ ⲅⲟⲛⲛⲁⲥⲁ· should therefore be translated as "You are the Queen Sister for the Prince," and the place name ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲅⲟⲩⲛⲇⲓ as "Tribal Section of the Princes," with ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲅⲟⲩ being the plural of ⲡⲟⲩⲣ. That this place name was still experienced by Nubian speakers as analytical, i.e., consisting of two words connected by a genitive, is shown by church inventory ᴅʙᴍɴᴛ 1728.4–5, which, features the place name without -ⲇⲓ and the predicative -ⲁ: ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲅⲟⲩⲛ ⲓ̈ⲱ̅ⲁⲛⲛⲏⲥ ⲇⲟ·ⲃ̅·ⲗⲟ ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ̅ ⲇⲟ·ⲁ̅·ⲗⲟ ⲡⲉⲧⲣⲟⲥ ⲇⲟⲁ̅·ⲗⲟ "John of (the tribal section of) the Princes: 2; Mary: 1; Peter: 1(?)."

19 Bʀᴏᴡɴᴇ, *Old Nubian Dictionary,* p. 144.
20 Rɪʟʟʏ, *Le méroïtique et sa famille linguistique,* p. 115.
21 Rɪʟʟʏ, *La langue du royaume de Méroé: Un panorama de la plus ancienne culture écrite d'Afrique subsaharienne,* pp. 39–42.
22 Rɪʟʟʏ, *Le méroïtique et sa famille linguistique,* p. 136.
23 Claude Rilly, p.c.
24 Adam Łajtar, p.c.
25 Cʀᴜᴍ, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum,* pp. 212–15. Robin Seignobos first suggested this connection.
26 Bʀᴏᴡɴᴇ, *Old Nubian Dictionary,* p. 45.

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