MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION NATIONALE, DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE

BULLETIN
DE L'INSTITUT FRANÇAIS
D'ARCHÉOLOGIE ORIENTALE

en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne

BIFAO 125 (2025), p. 523-578

Rhiannon Williams

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Intra-Ecclesial Interments and the Notion of 'Privilege' in Early Christianity

Oasis Magna as a Case-Study

RHIANNON WILLIAMS*

ABSTRACT

Intra-ecclesial interments were a common feature of the physical religious landscape of late antiquity. Likely having started already by the third century, such burials are archaeologically traceable predominantly from the fifth century, after having grown in popularity during the course of the fourth. These interments existed in several forms—pit-graves in church floors, in sarcophagi or loculi in crypts or hypogea which were often, but not exclusively, in the area of the altar, as well as in annexed funerary chapels. Although there are numerous archaeological attestations throughout Egypt, details of the phenomenon, such as to who these burial contexts were available, remain ambiguous. The practice is often explained simply as a privilege, understood as having been awarded to important religious figures, correlating with the cult of saints. There are indeed instances of such burials having belonged to holy figures of more or less renown, including saints and bishops, but numerous examples of the interment of women and juveniles attest to a more nuanced realm of privilege. Rather than wealth or apparent holiness—though these too were important—there appear to have been a larger range of factors which contributed to an individual's eligibility for such a burial. The earliest securely dated examples of church crypts and intra-ecclesial interments in Egypt come from the Kharga and Dakhla oases, with the relevant examples also including juvenile and female interments. As such, the oasean sites will form the core corpus of this broad study, which will be expanded upon with comparanda from throughout Egypt and the wider Mediterranean. The intention of the paper is to examine the notion of privilege amongst late antique Christians in Egypt and see how this manifested in funerary practices, all the while introducing a comprehensive assemblage of archaeological data upon which other scholars can develop.

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BIFAO 125 (2025), p. 523-578 Rhiannon Williams
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Keywords: Christianity, funerary archaeology, privilege, cult of saints, Kharga Oasis, Dakhla Oasis.

RÉSUMÉ

Les inhumations intra-ecclésiales étaient une caractéristique commune du paysage religieux physique de l'Antiquité tardive. Ayant probablement débuté dès le IIIe siècle, ces sépultures sont archéologiquement traçables principalement à partir du Ve siècle, après avoir gagné en popularité au cours du IVe siècle. Ces inhumations existaient sous plusieurs formes : tombes à fosse dans les sols des églises, dans des sarcophages ou loculi dans des cryptes ou des hypogées souvent, mais non exclusivement, dans la zone de l'autel, ainsi que dans les chapelles funéraires annexes. Bien qu'il existe de nombreuses attestations archéologiques dans toute l'Égypte, les détails du phénomène, comme l'identité de ces contextes funéraires disponibles, restent ambigus. Cette pratique est souvent expliquée simplement comme un privilège, compris comme ayant été accordé à des personnalités religieuses importantes, en corrélation avec le culte des saints. Il existe effectivement des exemples de telles sépultures ayant appartenu à des figures saintes plus ou moins renommées, notamment des saints et des évêques, mais de nombreux exemples d'inhumation de femmes et de mineurs témoignent d'un domaine de privilèges plus nuancé. Plutôt que la richesse ou la sainteté apparente, même si ces éléments étaient également importants, il semble qu'il y ait eu un large éventail de facteurs contribuant à l'éligibilité d'un individu à un tel enterrement. Les premiers exemples bien datés de cryptes d'église et d'inhumations intra-ecclésiales en Égypte proviennent des oasis de Kharga et de Dakhla, les exemples pertinents incluant également des inhumations de mineurs et de femmes. En tant que tels, les sites oasiens constitueront le corpus central de cette vaste étude, qui sera élargie par des comparaisons provenant de toute l'Égypte et de la Méditerranée au sens large. L'intention de cet article est d'examiner la notion de privilège parmi les chrétiens de l'Antiquité tardive en Égypte et de voir comment cela se manifestait dans les pratiques funéraires, tout en introduisant un assemblage complet de données archéologiques qui pourront être utiles à d'autres chercheurs.

Mots-clés : christianisme, archéologie funéraire, privilège, culte des saints, oasis de Kharga, oasis de Dakhla.

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INTRODUCTION[1]

Intra-ecclesial interments are a well-known phenomenon from late antiquity[2] and have been identified at sites throughout the entirety of Egypt (Fig. 1). Precise details of the practice, however—who could be awarded the privilege and in what context it was appropriate—, remain vague. Such details are further obscured by the diverse array of materialisations. Relevant burials occur in both extra- and intra-mural settings—the latter seemingly contradicting the traditional prohibition of intramural burials as codified in the *Twelve Tables*[3]—and can comprise either crypt or floor interments, single and multiple inhumations—including certain cases of ossuaries—, instances of grave re-use, and have occurred either during or after the operational period of a church. Such diversity rarely receives the deserved scrutiny,[4] with little scholarly reflection offered with regards to who could be awarded such a burial and why. Instead, the phenomenon is regularly explained away as simply as a 'privilege' reserved for well-regarded religious figures, predominantly saints and martyrs—who form a category in their own right—but also renowned bishops[5] and ascetics,[6] while certain members of the *civitas* could have been buried in proximity to the former (i.e., *ad sanctos*), though they notably appear also in churches devoid of saintly relics.[7] The idea that recipients of intra-ecclesial burial were privileged is certainly true. It is particularly apparent with regards to crypt interments which necessitated architectural forethought and a team of workers. The same can be said for an annexed funerary chapel, which would have at least required the latter. But the explanation is applied also to intra-ecclesial interments in the floor, showing a lack of systematised differentiation between different types of intra-ecclesial interment and,

1 The present work has been developed out of a chapter included in the author's master's thesis submitted in May 2021, entitled "Fourth-Century Christian Burials in the Dakhla and Kharga Oases. A Critical Examination of Religious Affiliation in the Archaeological Record of Late Antique Egypt," supervised by Associate Professor Christian Bull at MF vitenskapelig høyskole. The chapter in question, which pertained to privilege, was inspired by the work conducted on the funerary church at Amḥayda (Trimithis) in Dakhla Oasis, namely Aravecchia et al. 2015.

2 For key works examining the practice, see: Duval, Picard 1986; Duval 1988; Lamberigts, Van Deun 1995; Goldfus 1997; Grossmann 2002, pp. 127–136; Achim 2014, with a relevant bibliography on p. 288.

3 *Twelve Tables* 10.1. Later reaffirmed under Hadrian (*Dig.* 47.12.3.5), followed by Diocletian and Maximian (*Cod. Just.* 3.44.12), and then again under the Christian emperors Gratian, Valentinian and Theodosius (*C. Th.* 9.17.6). For discussions of intra-mural burial, see: Lambert 1997; Cantino Wataghin 1999; Costambeys 2001; Costambeys 2002; Achim 2014, p. 290; Kötting 1988, pp. 93–95, 112.

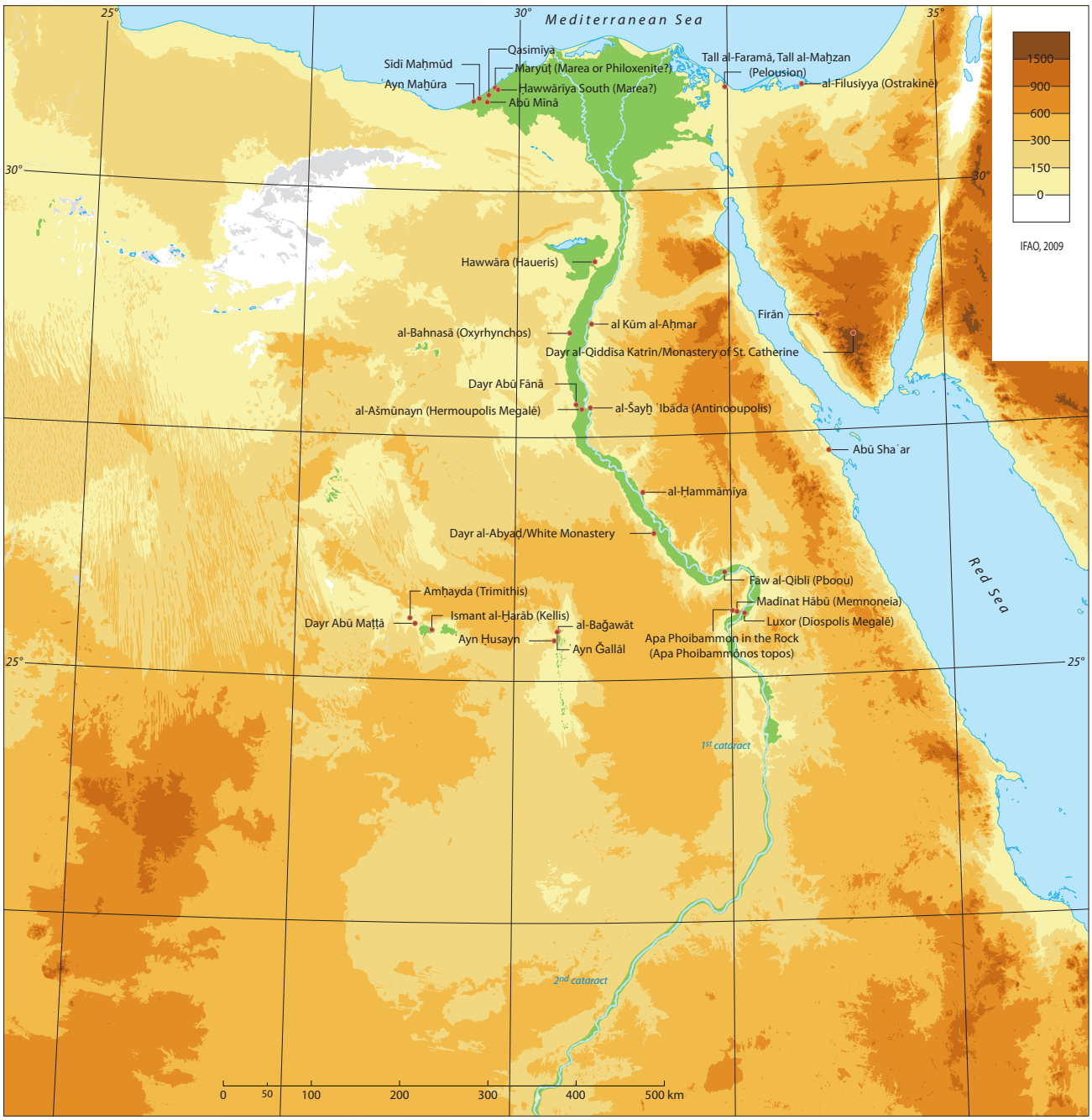
4 Despite invitations to do so: "Il va sans dire qu'il faudrait essayer de connaître aussi les personnes qui ont pu acquérir un tombeau près de martyrs ou d'évêques, et de connaître leur origine, leur condition sociale, leurs fonctions, leurs croyances et leur mentalité." Reekman 1986, p. 247.

5 Such as those considered to have been the founders of new churches, as Peter Grossmann posited with regards to the intra-ecclesial interments at Hawwāra, the Episcopal and City churches of Firān, and the transept basilica at al-Ašmūnayn (Hermoupolis Megalē). See: Grossmann 2002, pp. 129, 427–428, 483–486, 441–446; Grossmann 2014b, p. 108, and the Appendix.

6 Or "nouveaux martyrs" as denoted by Duval 1988. P. Grossmann posited that the burial at Sīdī Maḥmūd belonged to a local ascetic. See the Appendix.

7 Kötting 1965, p. 31; Deichmann 1970, p. 153; Grossmann 2002, p. 128; Grossmann 2014b, pp. 94, 107; Bollók 2016, p. 119.

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Fig. 1. Localisation of late antique intra-ecclesial mortuary contexts. Ancient name in brackets.

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thus, potentially different types of privilege.[8] It is therefore useful to examine the diverse array of conditions that underpin the concept of privilege in order to understand the diversity of intra-ecclesial burial types.

In addition to the spatio-temporal context of the interment—in a crypt or the floor, near the altar or in the aisles, an initial or later deposition, etc.—, the sex and age of the individual further complicate any attempt at interpretation, particularly with regards to women and juveniles.[9] Such instances have been recorded in the crypt-church at Amḥayda (Trimithis) in the Dakhla Oasis, along with several other sites in *Oasis Magna*—the combined administrative unit of the Dakhla and Kharga Oases in antiquity—, as well as Egypt more broadly. Close examination of these cases can offer unique insight into the social hierarchisation of early Christian communities, including the role of one's family, sex, and age, and possibly assist in expanding current scholarly understanding of Christian views of death in late antique Egypt.

The present study is divided into three parts. The intention of the first part is to contextualise the phenomenon, exploring its development, the expectations of the persons who practiced it, and the ways the practice manifested, introducing some of the most distinguished examples from Egypt. In the second part, the material from the oases—which is the earliest known in Egypt— will be presented as a case study, while the third part will discuss possible explanations for the phenomenon. The intention is not to provide definitive answers for all instances of intra-ecclesial interment, but to demonstrate the diversity of the phenomenon as well as the variety of conditions which may have led to privileged burials.

1. CONTEXT

1.1. The cult of saints

The practice of intra-ecclesial interment is closely related to the cult of saints, which first appeared in the third century but flourished particularly from the fourth–fifth century onwards.[10] Choosing to suffer rather than denounce their Christian adherence was considered

8 Two variant categories of privilege were distinguished by P. Grossmann with regards to such burials in accordance with burial location: 1. burials in the area of the altar, which were often crypts, reserved for 'deserving members of the higher clergy', and 2. simple graves for the 'worldly people', which were situated in the side aisles, or exterior to the church building. This distinction lacks nuance, however. These 'worldly people' are considered to include donors and high achievers, the former being those who financially supported the construction of the church, while the context of the latter is not expanded upon. Furthermore, Grossmann distinguished between the two inconsistently, considering the individuals originally interred in the crypt of the Chapel of the *gerokomion* at Ḥawwārīya South to have been the founders of the church while, according to the above distinction, such persons should rather have been interred in the floor. See: Grossmann 2002, pp. 128–130. Also see the Appendix below.

9 The latter referring generally to all ages before adulthood, which here will be classified as 18 years of age, i.e., adolescent, child, infant, neonate, etc. When included in archaeological reports, the chosen terminology is often limited simply to 'child' or 'infant'.

10 The cult of saints was largely born out of the Donatist and Meletian movements in North Africa where altars were erected for the worship of the martyrs. The transferal of the bodies of martyrs is recorded already from the fourth century onwards, however only sparingly. See: Eusebius, *Martyrs of Palestine* 11.29; Papaconstantinou 2001, pp. 274–275; Brandenburg 1995, p. 74. The practice was largely denounced by the 'Catholic' Church (i.e., Athanasius' 41st Festal Letter). See: Camplani 2003, pp. 526–537.

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indicative of the sanctity and power held by these individuals, who then came to be perceived as capable of miracles, particularly related to healing. This, in turn, led to the establishment of improvised shrines at their places of burial where people could participate in healing practices such as incubation. Depending on the popularity of the individual, these small shrines were sometimes transformed into churches, where the tombs were incorporated as crypts.[11]

As well as inspiring the faith-healing practices of the living, these martyrial interments inspired the phenomenon of burial *ad sanctos*—burial in close proximity to the holy individuals. What exactly adherents expected from such burials is not immediately apparent, but it is generally understood that the deceased were anticipating protection,[12] both from the torments of hell and the desecration of their graves.[13] Certain texts also mention the assistance expected to be provided by the saint/martyr on the day of resurrection to those interred nearby.[14]

One of the earliest literary references to the phenomenon of burial *ad sanctos* is Augustine's *De cura pro mortuis gerenda.* The work was written in response to a query authored by Paulinus of Nola who asked about the advantages of such burials. In short, Augustine considered the phenomenon to be of no use to the deceased, with material remains being irrelevant for resurrection, and beneficial only insofar as it offered consolation for the living.[15] Given the archaeological record and the numerous recorded instances of prohibition,[16] this assertion seems to have held little sway on actual practices.

The most explicit examples of these sanctified burials are those where not only churches were constructed, but where entire pilgrimage complexes developed, such as can be seen at Abū Mīnā and Tall al-Maḫzan.[17] The Abū Mīnā pilgrimage complex developed out of a purportedly fourth century *hypogeum* in which the saint was understood to have been interred, with a

11 Relevant examples in Egypt which fit this developmental model include the basilica church at al-Kūm al-Aḥmar (Huber 2006, p. 58; Huber 2017, p. 5), and the transept basilica and south church at al-Ašmūnayn (Hermoupolis Megalē), the latter which is hypothesised to have housed the remains of Abū Makār. See: Wace et al. 1959, p. 25; Bailey 1991, p. 46; Grossman 2014b, pp. 108–109. These original burials were situated in 'traditional' cemeteries, with the erection of shrines and/or churches, as well as *ad sanctos* burials, eventuating in what seem to have become Christian-specific burial areas. See: Grossman 2014b, p. 94 and the Appendix.

12 There are instances of *ad sanctos* burials in Africa with accompanying epitaphs dedicated to saint/martyr/s, but without their name, understood to have been an attempt to guarantee protection from all possible figures, thus strengthening the protection of the deceased. See: Duval 1988, pp. 134–135.

13 Maximus of Turin, *Sermon* 12; John Chrysostom, *On Saint Drosis*; Duval 1988, pp. 142, 146, 173–201.

14 Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Forty Martyrs* II. For an English translation and additional information, see: *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity*, E01299. These intercessionary benefits inspired the location of Constantine's tomb in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. See: Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 4.60; Brandenburg 1995, p. 73; Sodini 1986, p. 234; Grossmann 2014b, p. 94. Several *ad sanctos* funerary epitaphs are presented as prayers from the deceased to the nearby figure, with Duval hypothesising that such burials can thus be understood as offerings made to saints and martyrs i.e., Diehl 1925, p. 423 (no. 2161). See: Duval 1988, pp. 182, 185–186, 208.

15 Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda* 6–7. This is an interesting example of the malleable nature of teachings of the early Church given that, one century prior, Lactantius taught that a wounded or incomplete body would be unfit for resurrection. See: Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* IV, 26.31-33.

16 Canon XVIII from the first Synod of Braga (c. 561) states that the dead should not be buried within the church under any circumstances. In a collection of canons attributed to Theododore of Tarsus (c. 670), it is stated that the dead shall not be buried in consecrated churches, and that if burials are already present in a church which has not yet been sanctified, it cannot be (McNeil, Gamer 1990, p. 216 no. 8). In the *Basilika*, authored by Emperor Leo VI the Wise (ninth century), it is stated that nobody should bury the dead in a holy church (*Basilika* 5.1.2), while in his (presumably) later *Novels*, all official bans on intra-ecclesial interment were lifted (*Novel* 53). Regarding denunciations of burials *ad sanctos* specifically, see: *Cod. Just.* 1.2.2.

17 For thorough overviews of both sites, see: *4CARE*, DEChriM ID 49, 46.

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thriving pilgrim-tourist industry leading to the development of several churches,[18] rest-houses, and baths, all intended to accommodate visitors. Here, the original shrine, and implicitly the complex, were constructed atop a pre-Christian cemetery. Likewise, Tall al-Maḫzan, belonging to ancient Pelousion, developed out of a traditional mortuary area, with both the 'South Church' and 'Basilica Church' evolving out of *martyria* situated in the south-east of the structures. The complex includes a total of three churches, alongside hydraulic installations and food production areas intended to accommodate visiting pilgrims.[19] A smaller and lesser-known example is the church of Sīdī Maḥmūd in the modern city of Burǧ al-ʿArab in the Mareotid. Though not operating as a pilgrim centre *per se*, it appears to have been a place intended for visiting, with two sets of stairs providing access to the crypt situated under the contra-apse which permitted the circulation of traffic.[20] An additional example of an apparently saintly church crypt where pilgrims flocked is that found in the Church of St. Colluthos at al-Šayḫ ʿIbāda (Antinoopolis). Originally constructed as a private tomb chapel, the structure was transformed into a public place of worship devoted to Saint Colluthos as indicated by 72 ticket oracles dedicated to the saint, undeniably linking the structure with the associated cult, though whether remains of the saint were ever actually present here is contested.[21]

The burials which inspired these complexes are prime, unequivocal examples of holy interments, and they allow one to comprehend why intra-ecclesial interments are so often taken for the burials of saints. Not all such burials can belong to renowned holy figures, however. What of those situated around these holy nuclei, or those in churches devoid of saintly relics?[22]

1.2. Holy spaces and intra-ecclesial hierarchisation

Intra-ecclesial burials which are not those of renowned holy individuals can be understood rather in relation to the inherent sanctity of church buildings, a notion which certainly made them a more desirable location for burial. Not only would one constantly be in close proximity to the celebration of the Eucharist—and thus remain a passive participant in community practice—interment within a church guaranteed the maintenance of the memory of the deceased,

18 The earliest of these, the 'Small Basilica', was constructed above the *hypogeum,* with the later 'Great Basilica' also containing interments. See: Grossmann 2002, pp. 401–409; Grossmann 2014b, p. 100 and the Appendix.

19 One of these structures is understood to have, at one point, housed the relics of St. Epimachus. See: Carrez-Maratray 1999, p. 156; Grossmann 2002, p. 472; Bonnet et al. 2004, p. 47; Bonnet et al. 2005, p. 281, and the Appendix.

20 As aptly stated by Grossmann, such a degree of accessibility clearly demonstrates the holiness of the interred: "Leicht zugängliche, oft mit getrennten Ab- und Aufgängen versehene Krypten, die also für einen größeren Besucherandrang bestimmt waren, haben daher immer als Grabstätten von Heiligen zu gelten, auch wenn in den meisten Fällen nicht mehr bekannt ist, welcher Heilige in diesen Krypten einst bestattet war und verehrt wurde." Grossmann 2002, p. 132, also Sodini 1981, p. 443. Regarding the distinction between churches accommodating pilgrims and an 'église à visites', see: Grossmann 1998a, p. 286; Grossmann 2002, p. 397; Wipszycka 2011, p. 180 n. 36.

21 See: Grossmann 2014a, pp. 268, 279, 281; Papini 1983; Papini 1998, pp. 393, 396; Thompson 1993, pp. 51, 57; Till 1935, p. 169 (text), 176 (transl.).

22 There are certainly instances where relics were removed and are thus no longer present, but their former presence is often perceivable via architectural indicators such as niches in crypts, or crypts seemingly too small to have housed complete bodies, i.e., the church of the "Eastern Gate" at al-Šayḫ ʿIbāda (Antinoopolis); though there are also places that never held the tomb or relics of a martyr but were considered sanctified by the life or death of a martyr. Nonetheless, this cannot account for all intra-ecclesial burials. See: Grossmann 2014b, pp. 107–108; Duval 1988, p. 56.

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as attendees would often be reminded of their presence upon entering the church and likely feel inclined to pray for them during services. The sanctity of these places of worship appears to have been hierarchically organised, with certain areas within the confines of the church considered more or less holy than others, or more or less permissible as places of burial, resulting in the development of a sort of sacred micro-topography.

The most overt attestation of this micro-topography is the prevalence of burials within the apse. As the place where the altar was often located—and thus the place where the Eucharist was performed—this was the most sacred space within a church building and thus the most sought-after location for intra-ecclesial burials. Even in instances where there are no burials in the apse itself, perhaps due to community-imposed restrictions, it seems that the general aim was to be situated as close to the apse as possible. This can be seen through several examples of clerical burials restricted to the aisles, but at the eastern end.[23] A relevant example of the segmentation of intra-ecclesial space can be seen in the basilical church of Biʾr Futūḥa, in Carthage, which includes several "focal tombs in the apse and the choir around which the basilica was built,"[24] as well as numerous later interments which were restricted to several annex buildings, the majority being located in the West Building (the so-called *ennagon*), clustered to the east—"as close as possible to the church proper and its 'special tombs'."[25] Specific details concerning the interred are wanting, but the focal tombs are hypothesised to be those of saints whose presence inspired pilgrimage to the site,[26] while the latter interments are considered simply to have been "privileged individuals" incrementally interred from the construction of the basilica in the late 540s until it ceased to operate at the end of the seventh century.[27] Circumstantial evidence suggests that two of the interred could have been clergymen,[28] while several other graves were notably presumed to be child-burials.[29] Despite the limited information concerning the interred, the regulated location of burials exemplifies the intentional demarcation of intra-ecclesial spaces and the varied sacredness attributed to them.

These sites are indeed illustrative of a constructed sacred topology which mimics the significance of church space in worship practices and demonstrates the diverse ways in which spatiality and grave placement can be interpreted. The variations, and the topology itself, stem from the religious community's sacralisation and prioritisation of certain spaces, thus relating to both

23 See: Achim 2014, pp. 314–315.

24 Stevens 2000, p. 273.

25 Totaling to either 16 or possibly 32 tombs. Another example of clustering to the east can be seen at the basilica of Melleus. See: Stevens et al. 2005, pp. 539, 575; Duval 1981.

26 Stevens et al. 2005, pp. 571–573.

27 Especially with regards to the burials in the West building which are considered to have enhanced "the buildings function as an entrance vestibule to the (basilical) complex," a space that can be found "preceding many cemetery churches and churches in which burial was reserved for the elite or excluded altogether". See: Picard 1989, pp. 505–511, 532–536; Stevens et al. 2005, pp. 574–575.

28 Delattre 1895, p. 339 no. 24; Stevens et al. 2005, pp. 325, 573.

29 Two such burials, accompanied by dedicatory mosaics, are situated in the peristyles—that of Adeodatus and Redibibus(/a). There are only three burials in this area, a comparatively limited number when we consider the other burial areas, especially the clustering of graves in the West building. Despite catechetical and homiletic literature emphasising that only a pure (i.e., baptised) soul can find rest in a church (i.e., Augustine's *De Sepultura catechumenorum* below), the excavators have proposed that the area was "particularly privileged" and perhaps restricted for the interment of children or those who died prior to baptism. There were also "two suggestively tomb-shaped pits… found in the ambulatory of the baptistery" which were too small to have belonged to adults (if they were burial pits). See: Stevens et al. 2005, pp. 20, 103–105, 325, 575–576, fig. 6.16.

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Henri Lefebvre's conceptualisation of the transformation of 'place' into 'space', and Kim Knott's notion of 'perceived space'.[30] In both theoretical models, the way these spaces were used and maintained by the community reflected, and cemented, their importance, leading to the development of a perceived holiness that differed between certain intra-ecclesial areas. Thus, the desirability and appropriateness (or inappropriateness) as a place for burial was constructed, and perpetuated, by the local community. This perhaps accounts for the diversity of intra-ecclesial interments seen throughout the Empire.[31] It has been suggested that this differentiation between interior church spaces could also explain the practice of intra-ecclesial burial despite prohibitive legislation, with it possible that such prohibitions were considered to refer to the liturgical center (i.e., the *bema* and the central bay of the *naos*), rather than the entire church building, differentiating between "a church's main liturgical space and zones of secondary importance."[32]

This sacred micro-topography was further generated by the fact that not everyone could be awarded the same proximity to the sacred nucleus, whether it was the altar or relics of a saint. Consequently, there was necessity for a depositional hierarchy, with interments closest to the nucleus belonging presumably to those 'worthy' of the privilege, while those further away, such as in other areas of the church or the surrounding cemetery area if there was one, could be considered of lesser social importance.[33] Remains the question of who would be relegated to which area. The examples above relate predominantly to members of the clergy, but little extrapolation is offered regarding the other individuals who were awarded this privilege.

1.3. Who was privileged?

Though there exist several canonical ordinances explicitly prohibiting intra-ecclesial interment,[34] the material record demonstrates that it did not cease. Not only, but one can assume that the ecclesiastical hierarchy were very aware of the fact that it could not be stopped. Attempts were thus made to impose certain limitations, rather than prohibit it outright, in order to assert some degree of control.[35]

The earliest of these appears to be that of Augustine in his *De sepultura catechumenorum* where it is noted that the unbaptised cannot be buried in churches.[36] Later, in Canon 21 of the Synod

30 Lefebvre 1991, pp. 68–168; Knott 2008, pp. 1110–1111. For discussion of 'spatial practice' in relation to the conceptualisation of monastic space, see: Brooks Hedstrom 2017, p. 199.

31 Achim 2014, p. 329, also Delahaye 1998, pp. 716–717.

32 Marinis 2009, p. 152. This notion is tentatively supported by several ordinances which specify that burial is allowed in certain areas of the church but not in others. E.g., Regino of Prüm specifies that burials are only allowed in the forecourt or portico of a church but never within a church, especially near the altar. See: Regino of Prüm, *De ecclesiasticis disciplinis* 125–129; Kötting 1988, pp. 116–118.

33 The developmental progression of saintly burials or a sanctified space attracting the burials of others who desired to be in immediate proximity to the former (developing from the nuclei outwards) differs from what appears to be the case in the area of *Scythia Minor* and *Moesia Secunda* (south-eastern Romania and northeastern Bulgaria), where, as noted by Irina Achim, burials seem to have begun outside of church buildings and "moved progressively inside and towards the sanctuary of the church." See: Achim 2014, esp. pp. 287 and 329.

34 See n. 16 above.

35 Each of the following examples post-date the material under examination by several centuries. See: Kötting 1988, pp. 115–117 for an overview.

36 Augustine, *De sepultura catechumenorum* 2.

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at Dovin, dated to the sixth century, it is stated that the church may not be a burial place for 'all', but it does not offer further details.[37] In Theodore of Tarsus' *Paenitentiale Theodori*, it is noted that an altar may not be sanctified in a church where 'unbelievers' are buried, though it is permissible if the bodies are removed. It is later stated that if the altar had previously been consecrated, masses may be celebrated if the buried are 'religious men'.[38] In the first capitulary of the bishop Theodulf of Orléans, from the end of the eighth century, it is stipulated that only priests and righteous men may be awarded such burials,[39] while Canon 52 of the Synod of Mainz, from the beginning of the ninth century, lists bishops, abbots, good priests, and lay faithful as appropriate candidates.[40] The general message conveyed in these texts is that it was a privilege largely reserved for men in the religious hierarchy, but that it was also accessible to others, such as the lay faithful—at least according to the Synod of Mainz. Surely, the whole congregation constitutes as lay faithful, however, in which case this privilege can be understood as having been theoretically accessible to everyone. This is further supported by the fact that chapter 17 of the eighth century *Aregis principis* states that fines will be given to those who bury individuals within churches without permission from the bishops or *custodes ecclesiastici*, likely indicating that such things occurred. Unfortunately, no information is available regarding on what basis permission could be granted.[41]

Several hagiographic texts assert that conforming to the ways of life of the saints, apostles, and martyrs justified burial near such figures. For example, in the *Life and Miracles of St. Thecla*, the saint denounces the masses of bodies deposited around saintly graves, agreeing only to keep in her sanctuary those 'worthy' to cohabit with a martyr.[42] This notion is further exemplified by epitaphs of *ad sanctos* burials which, when present, emphasise the merits of the deceased.[43] What is more, the necessity for a life of virtue is referenced in the writings of Gregory the Great, who stressed that burial *ad sanctos* would be of no help to sinners, and would in fact be of severe detriment, warranting more extreme penalties at the time of Judgement.[44]

The excess of bodies at some sites not only demonstrates the popularity, but the apparent permissibility of the practice, certainly having been more tolerated than one may first be inclined to think based on the denunciations mentioned above. Perhaps, then, we should understand the practice as having been largely dependent on local church bodies, with decisions made by the head of the local religious hierarchy based perhaps on the personal merit, social standing, or financial compensation offered by the candidate or their family, thus accounting for variations in the custom across the Empire.

Several instances seem to indeed show specificities arguing in favour of locally regulated practice. A prime example in Egypt is the site of al-Kūm al-Aḥmar in Middle Egypt, where the intra-ecclesial interments are restricted almost exclusively to men. Here, there are 179 male burials cut into the floor, with women and children associated only with one of the two subterranean

37 Hefele, Leclercq 1908, p. 1079 (n. 21).
38 *Penit. Theod.* II.I.4–5.
39 *Capitlua ad presbyteros parochiae* IX.
40 Hefele, Leclercq 1910, p. 1142. See also: Kötting 1988, p. 116; Hartmann 1989, pp. 130–144 esp. 138.
41 *Aregis principis* 17.
42 *Life and Miracles of St. Thecla*, Miracle 30.
43 Duval 1988, pp. 155–157.
44 Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV 52.3–4 and 55.4; Duval 1988, pp. 164–166.

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tombs situated two meters south of the main, vaulted, tomb.[45] Such a predominance of males was certainly a choice, rather than a chance occurrence, demonstrating that there was a system of control in place. Even though the male interments are not explicitly clerical, it is possible to entertain the idea that they could have been members of the clergy,[46] thus accounting for the overrepresentations of males, the privilege extending only to the women and children of the most prominent families.[47] An additional example is the basilical church of Bi'r Futūḥa in Carthage which differs significantly from other churches in North Africa, especially the other suburban churches of Carthage, due to the limited number of intra-ecclesial interments. It has been suggested that such an absence resulted from the desires of the patron, rather than the local religious authorities, who forbade additional intra-ecclesial interments.[48]

In addition to local religious authorities and church patrons, certain burials seem to have resulted rather from the desires of lay members of the community. The church of the so-called "Eastern Gate" at al-Šayḫ ʿIbāda (Antinoopolis), for example, contains burials almost exclusively of women.[49] Differing from the two previous examples, it appears that the individuals here were interred after the cessation of formal worship in the church, as the burials had been filled with stones from the walls of the building.[50] Nonetheless, Peter Grossmann suggested that the liturgy was still practiced here on special occasions, inferred from the fact that the structural integrity of the sanctuary was respected, though this may have been out of general respect for the sanctity of the space.[51] It may have still been necessary to receive permission for such burials, but it is also possible that Church authorities did not oversee the use of abandoned churches, with these interments rather established at the whim of the local community.

45 In Huber's 2004 publication it is noted that the easternmost of the two tombs contained two adults with no more able to be determined due to the state of the remains, while the westernmost was considered a familial tomb, containing two adults, at least one of which was male, and two children 1–1.5 years of age; no mention is made of women. In a 2018 publication, it is stated that "Only a few tombs of more important families which contained women and children had the same advantage" (re: proximity to the 'saint'), leaving the location of the female individual/s unclear. See: Huber 2018, pp. 217, 221; Huber 2004, pp. 1082–1091, figs. 2–3 and the Appendix.

46 This is obviously only hypothetical and seems rather unlikely given the sheer number of bodies. If the deceased were successive clergy, the structure would have either been in use for a markedly long period of time or had a rather quick turnover of clerical personnel. The only way to be absolutely certain an intra-ecclesial burial is clerical is for it to be accompanied by an epitaph, which, while common elsewhere, particularly in North Africa, is rare in Egypt. The only examples known to me are the two found in the 'Byzantine fortress' church at al-Bahnasā (Oxyrhynchos), one complete and one fragmentary tombstone from the Middle Church of Ǧabal Ṭāḥūna (Firān), and objects from the Lower Church at Dayr Abū Fānā which are described as both votive tablets and tombstones. One of those from Oxyrhynchos contains reference to a religious title, while three from Dayr Abū Fānā refer to Apa Kafka, Apa Herakleides, and Apa Shons. See the Appendix.

47 Huber 2004, p. 1089.

48 Duval 1986; Stevens et al. 2005, p. 576. Examples of such prohibition can be seen via the dedicatory inscription of a Basilica of the Saints and Angels in Perugia which stated: *sanctorum angelorum in qua sepeliri non licet.* See: De Rossi 1871, p. 147; Saxer 1995, p. 53.

49 Though there were also two men and one 'very small' child. This church has a crypt located below the sanctuary which is understood to have housed relics that were visited, as indicated by the presence of two symmetrically disposed staircases on either side of the central chamber intended to facilitate the movement of visitors. A feature seen also at the church of Sīdī Maḥmūd and the second phase of the small basilica at Abū Mīnā. See: Uggeri 1974; Grossmann 1998a, p. 286; Grossmann 2002, p. 430; Grossmann 2010, p. 167; Grossmann 2011, pp. 114–117. The interred, however, were clustered in the western part of the central nave, rather than in close proximity to the crypt, thus constituting an example of intra-ecclesial interment resulting from the inherent holiness of the church building, rather than desires for burial *ad sanctos*. See: Grossmann 2010, p. 169, fig. 2, pl. IVa.

50 The church, which had two construction phases, is presumed to date prior to the last quarter of the fifth century. See: Uggeri 1974, pp. 65–66.

51 Grossmann 2010, p. 170.

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Evidently, there was no governing body dictating all instances of intra-ecclesial interment. Rather, it seems to have operated as a local affair, predominantly monitored by local religious authorities, but also sometimes occurring in accordance with the desires of church patrons, and, at other times, those of community members perhaps in spite of the desires of the former. When permission was granted for such a burial, we can assume it was based on the wealth, social standing, or personal merit of the individual, though what exactly the latter fact entailed remains unclear. And when it was conducted without permission, little more can be asserted regarding the individual apart from the fact that their family found such a burial appropriate, meaning there are a diverse array of contexts which could have resulted in an intra-ecclesial burial, rather than a single, all-encompassing explanation.

2. THE OASES OF DAKHLA AND KHARGA

The examples of sites with intra-ecclesial interments discussed so far date almost exclusively from the fifth century onwards.[52] The oasean material, however, dates exclusively from the century prior—at least the church buildings do—, with it possible that some interments may post-date their operational period.[53] The three oasean crypts—at Amḥayda (Trimithis), ʿAyn Ǧallāl South, and ʿAyn Ḥusayn—are, to my knowledge, the earliest church crypts archaeologically attested in Egypt, and *Oasis Magna* thus contains the earliest proofs of intra-ecclesial interment in the country. The collection of material from the region thus offers unique insight into the earliest forms of the practice, while also attesting to its diversity.

52 Though there are some earlier structures. The South Church at Tall al-Maḫzan, for example, is considered to have been founded in the fourth century, while the hypogeum out of which the Small Basilica at Abū Mīnā developed is understood to also date from the fourth century. For the South Church, see: Bonnet, Abd el-Sami 2000, pp. 80–81; Grossmann 2002, p. 476; Bonnet et al. 2004, p. 49. For the Small Basilica at Abū Mīnā, see: Grossmann 2002, p. 401, fig. 16; Grossmann 1998a, pp. 282–283; Grossmann et al. 1982, p. 137, fig. 4. Also see the Appendix.

53 For the fourth century date of the church at Amḥayda (Trimithis), see: Aravecchia et al. 2015, p. 22. The fourth century date of the church at Dayr Abū Maṭṭā—based on radiocarbon dating—was communicated by Gillian Bowen in a lecture given on July 18, 2014, at the Australian Egyptology Conference, organised by Macquarie University, Sydney, permitting the revision of the initially proposed fifth century foundation date which was based on ceramic and coins. This radiocarbon date was restated at the most recent conference of the Dakhleh Oasis Project (DOP) held at the British Museum on September 7th–8th, 2023, and so will presumably appear in the conference proceedings. For the datation of the West Church Complex at Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis), see: Bowen 2024, pp. 291-306. The church at ʿAyn Ǧallāl South was originally situated in the fourth century based on architectural parallels, with radiocarbon datation of organic material from the bricks recently confirming the fact, for which see: Ghica forthcoming. The structure at ʿAyn Ḥusayn is the least securely dated of the oasean corpus. The bricks do not contain sufficient organic material to permit radiocarbon analysis, and none of the ceramic recovered during excavations was analysed. Preliminary analysis of surface ceramic from the settlement area, however, indicates that occupation was concentrated almost exclusively in the fourth century (see p. 538 below). Such datation fits well within the general settlement patterns of *Oasis Magna*, which was largely depopulated around the end of the fourth/beginning of the fifth century, further strengthening the datation of the other relevant structures. A study dedicated to the depopulation of the region is being prepared by the author.

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2.1. Amḥayda (Trimithis)

The crypt-church at Amḥayda, ancient Trimithis in Dakhla Oasis, is unique not only due to its fourth century date, but also because it is intra-mural.[54] While only the lowest courses of the walls remain, numerous architectural elements confirm that the structure had functioned as a church.[55] The building has three interconnected crypts, situated beneath the apse and the north and south apse side rooms,[56] understood to have been planned as structurally integral part of the building, rather than later additions.[57] Access to the collection of subterranean rooms was via the southern apse side room, where an opening in the floor led to the crypt below (R4).[58] This crypt was devoid of burials, while R3, the crypt below the apse, contained seven in-tact interments (T10–16),[59] and R2, below the northern apse side room, contained four (T6–9).[60] In addition to these were five interments in the floor of the nave (T1–4 and T17),[61] as well as one in the room adjoining the church to the south (T5).[62] Only four of the 17 bodies can be considered to belong to adult males, and only one of these was situated in one of the subterranean rooms.[63] The remaining individuals were adult women as well as children and infants of undetermined sex. It is also worth noting that two floor levels were identifiable in the crypts, attesting to at least two distinct phases of burial.

A poignant question is whether one should view the nave burials in association with the crypt-interments, i.e., *ad sanctos*, or consider them solely in association with the sacral space of the church itself. Peter Grossmann had stated that exceptions to sanctions against intra-mural

54 Aravecchia et al. 2015, pp. 21–22, figs. 2, 5. A more updated plan of the church can be found in the 2023 preliminary field report, for which see: Ratzan 2023, fig. 1. For a 3D model of the structure, see: https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/amhayda-712c3abd14064cc7be0dfc0ad72c1c34.

55 As of yet, this church is the only definitive architectural indicator attesting to Christianity at Amḥayda (Trimithis). Considering the size of the site, however, and its economic and administrative role in the oasis, a *polis* in the fourth century, it is likely that there were several other churches throughout the urban landscape, with at least one other tentatively identified, situated at the northwest side of the cemetery. These architectural indicators are accompanied by a few modest textual attestations. See: Aravecchia et al. 2015, p. 26; Aravecchia 2015, p. 130; Aravecchia 2018, pp. 18–19; Bagnall, Cribiore 2015.

56 These side rooms are typically referred to as *pastophoria*, but it has been suggested that scholars refrain from using this term with regards to late antique examples in Egypt given the absence of contemporaneous attestations of the term in the country.

57 The following information concerning the interred is based on the preliminary 2023 field report (Ratzan 2023, pp. 2–6) and information shared by Dr. Aravecchia during his paper at the Urbes clariores aliis conference held in Rome (and online) May 11th, 2023, titled "Churches, Burials, and the Built Environment of Late Antique Egypt: Archaeological Data from Fourth-Century Dakhla Oasis." More information is certainly available in Aravecchia 2024, but I was not able to access this work prior to publication of the present article.

58 In Aravecchia et al. 2015, the interments are referred to as B*n* or Burial*n*, while in the 2023 preliminary field report they are T*n*. The latter has been adopted here.

59 T10 contained a woman of 50–65 years, T11 a child of c. 6 years (± 24 months), T12 a child approximately 8 years old (± 24 months), T13 a six-month-old (± 3 months) infant, T14 a child of 5 years (± 16 months), T15 a child of approximately 18 months (± 6 months), and T16, a 40–50-year-old female.

60 T6 contained a male individual of approximately 40–50 years, T7 contained a 12–15-year-old juvenile of undetermined sex, T8 a female of approximately 35–45 years, and T9 a child of 5 years (± 16 months), also of undetermined sex.

61 T1 contained a male of 45–50 years, T2 a female of 15–17 years, T3 another female of 35–40 years, T4 a male between 25 and 40 years, and T17 a male of 50–65 years. For T1–4, see: Aravecchia et al. 2015, pp. 27–37.

62 This space is denoted R8. The burial T5 contained a female of approximately 25 years.

63 The crypt burial is the 40–50 years-old individual in T6 in R2. The three other males are: T1 in the north-western corner of the nave R1 (45–50 years), T4 in the east of the nave, immediately north of the stairs leading to the sanctuary (25–40 years), and T17, also in the eastern part of the nave between the step up to the sanctuary and the foundational wall supporting the inner colonnade (50–65 years).

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interment "were granted only in rare cases and for very important persons. As elsewhere in the late antique Mediterranean, crypts in intramural churches in Egypt did not contain ordinary burials."[64] Though Grossmann was referring specifically to crypt interments, the statement can be considered to refer also to floor interments in intra-mural churches, meaning the nave burials (T1–4 and T17) must also have been those of extra-ordinary people. How, then, shall these burials be explained? Were the deceased members of the local elite, or perhaps financial benefactors of the church? If the remains had been exclusively male, one may be inclined to suggest that they were members of the clergy. If not clergy, an all-male funerary assemblage could lead one to suppose that it was a privilege restricted by sex, as seen with regards to al-Kūm al-Aḥmar. But the presence of women shows that this was not the case. Not only, but the large number of juveniles indicates that this was not a privilege restricted by age, as might be assumed given the age-based hierarchisation of late antique society. Why, then, was the privilege of intra-ecclesial burial bestowed upon these individuals?[65] Before delving deeper into potential explanations, there are several additional examples of church crypts and intra-ecclesial interments in the oases which should be mentioned.

2.2. Crypts and funerary shafts: ʿAyn Ǧallāl South, ʿAyn Ḥusayn, and al-Bağawāt Necropolis (Kharga Oasis)

The first example is located in the southern sector of ʿAyn Ǧallāl in Kharga Oasis, a structure understood to have been a monastic complex.[66] The site was excavated in the 1990s by the local inspectorate but nothing was ever published, with the only extant documentation relating to this work being of a limited number of film photographs of regrettably poor quality, none of which show the crypt (Fig. 2).[67] Based on material indicators—architectural features and analysis of ceramic—as well as similarities to the Western Church at Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis), the site had been dated to the late fourth/early fifth centuries,[68] with radiocarbon dates recently retrieved confirming a fourth century date.[69] If the crypt was contemporaneous with the construction of the church, which it appears to have been (below), it would be, alongside that at Amḥayda (Trimithis), one of the earliest examples in Egypt.

According to A.A. Abd al-Aziz, the inspector who led excavations, a clay coffin decorated with a cross or a *crux ansata* containing human remains was found within the crypt.[70] This, and the other information shared by the inspector, was confirmed in December 2022 when

64 Grossmann 2014b, p. 109.

65 Of note also is the fact that the church appears to have remained functional after the deposition of the burials near the sanctuary, with the mud-brick coverings being sealed by the floor. See: Aravecchia 2015, p. 129.

66 Ghica 2012, p. 206. For a 3D model of the structure, which is markedly sanded, see: https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/d5e202a9c79448a39e6d4ddea4a3bd5f.

67 The campaign, which also saw the excavation of the northern sector of the site, was directed by A. A. Abd al-Aziz, with seasons between 1994–1996 and again in 2001. See: *4CARE*, DEChriM ID 6.

68 Ghica 2012, p. 210.

69 Straw inclusions from mudbrick of both sectors of the site were sampled 23/2/2021. The straw from the southern sector was taken from the eastern wall of the narthex and provided a date ranging from the last quarter of the third through to the very beginning of the fifth century. See: Ghica forthcoming.

70 Pers. comm. 6/11/2020.

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Fig. 2. View of ʿAyn Ǧallāl South from the north-west, showing the sanctuary with the position of the crypt indicated. Taken during excavations in the 1990s.



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Fig 3. Showing the head-end of the sarcophagus in the crypt of ʿAyn Ǧallāl South. A crux ansata is visible in the centre flanked by a theta to the left and an omicron to the right.

the chance to clean the space arose.[71] This work indeed revealed a crypt situated immediately below the southern apse side room, which was accessed via an opening in the floor in the south-eastern corner of the room.[72]

Within the crypt, there was indeed the complete bottom of a ceramic coffin, the head-end of which was adorned with a *crux ansata* bordered by a *theta* to the left and what seems to be an *omicron* to the right (Fig. 3). Apart from sand, the coffin was empty, but a small pile

71 Clearance of the crypt occurred between December 18th and 20th and was part of a larger program of work conducted by the joint Norwegian-Egyptian mission (as part of DEChriM) between December 5th and 21st. As well as the clearance of the crypt at ʿAyn Ǧallāl South, this mission saw the continuation of excavations at Šams al-Dīn and Dayr Muṣṭafā Kāšif, as well as the completion of topographic work at Ayn al-Ṭurba, all of which had been begun in 2021. For the 2021 seasons at Šams al-Dīn and Dayr Muṣṭafā Kāšif, see: Ghica et al. 2023; Ghica et al. 2024.

72 For a model of the crypt, see: https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/ayn-gallal-s-crypt-71eef14951ab41b187a1455cd1d3cac8. There was a total of three holes in the floor, but the other two were clearly breakages. Several previously unrecorded features were identified in the apse side room, including a niche in the western wall, immediately beside the doorway, and *mastaba* running along the length of the northern wall.

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of disarticulated and fragmented bones was situated near the south-west corner of the room. It can be assumed that the placement of these bones was the result of the previous Egyptian mission, with at least some of them initially located in the coffin, though this is nothing more than an assumption.[73] Unfortunately, the bones were too few and fragmentary to allow for any assessment of age or sex. The opening in the floor was certainly too small, and the angle too awkward, for the coffin to have been placed within the crypt after its construction, seemingly indicating that the roof of the crypt was constructed once the coffin had already been placed there, which, in turn, indicates the contemporaneity of the crypt with the church.[74]

A second church crypt in Kharga, though typologically distinct from those so-far mentioned, was uncovered at ʿAyn Ḥusayn during excavations conducted by the local inspectorate in 2011, prior to the construction of a new road.[75] The site was already recorded as part of the survey work conducted by IFAO directed by the late Michel Wuttmann,[76] but the church was not evident at this time. Documentation of the excavation is not available but contact with inspectors permitted the acquisition of various details concerning the work. The site comprises a large settlement area some 250 meters east of the modern road, a funerary area (part of which is now covered by the modern road),[77] and a particularly small funerary church (Fig. 4).[78]

The structure has a square opening in the floor of what is presumed to have been the sanctuary, said to have been originally covered with a stone slab. The hole opens to a shaft several metres deep, with two chambers at the bottom, one to the east and one to the west. Apparently, these chambers were full of sand and water, and housed only disarticulated remains with no skulls.[79] These remains were not analysed and so no demographic information is available. The opening is actually one of four such features in the area, the other three being situated varying distances to the east of the church (Fig. 5).[80] It is possible that these were all funerary pits related to a pre-existent burial area.[81]

73 The previous excavation work of the Egyptian team was further demonstrated by a 20 piastre coin minted in 1992, found in the backfill of the crypt.

74 It is interesting to note the hypothesis already posited by Victor Ghica regarding the interior fittings of the northern sector of ʿAyn Ǧallāl which indicate that it could have functioned as a *xenodocheion,* a charitable institution run by the church, sometimes equated to a hospital, but also associable with a rest house or hostel for foreigners, particularly pilgrims**.** This hypothesis correlates with the general fact that, in many instances, so-called 'privileged burials', such as crypt interments, are located near social welfare institutions, or rather social welfare institutions tend to develop out of privileged burials, as was the case at Abū Mīnā, Sīdī Maḥmūd, and the church of St. Colluthos at Al-Šayḫ ʿIbāda (Antinoopolis). Although the crypt burial at ʿAyn Ǧallāl is in the southern sector, this northern sector also supposedly contained several burials immediately to the east of the church, hence its tentative inclusion in the Appendix, but again, no documentation is available. See: Ghica 2012, p. 206, fig. 6.

75 For a 3D model of the church: https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/ayn-husayn-abae6361110a6432fbaf02f9073caf873.

76 Now denoted the South Kharga Oasis Survey (SKOS) which was recently published online as a GIS gazetteer on the DEChriM website. A paper format book is also being prepared for publication. For the SKOS results pertaining to ʿAyn Ḥusayn, see: *SKOS*, KS509.

77 These graves are all simple pits dug in the sand, oriented on an east-west axis with heads to the west, with no associated goods.

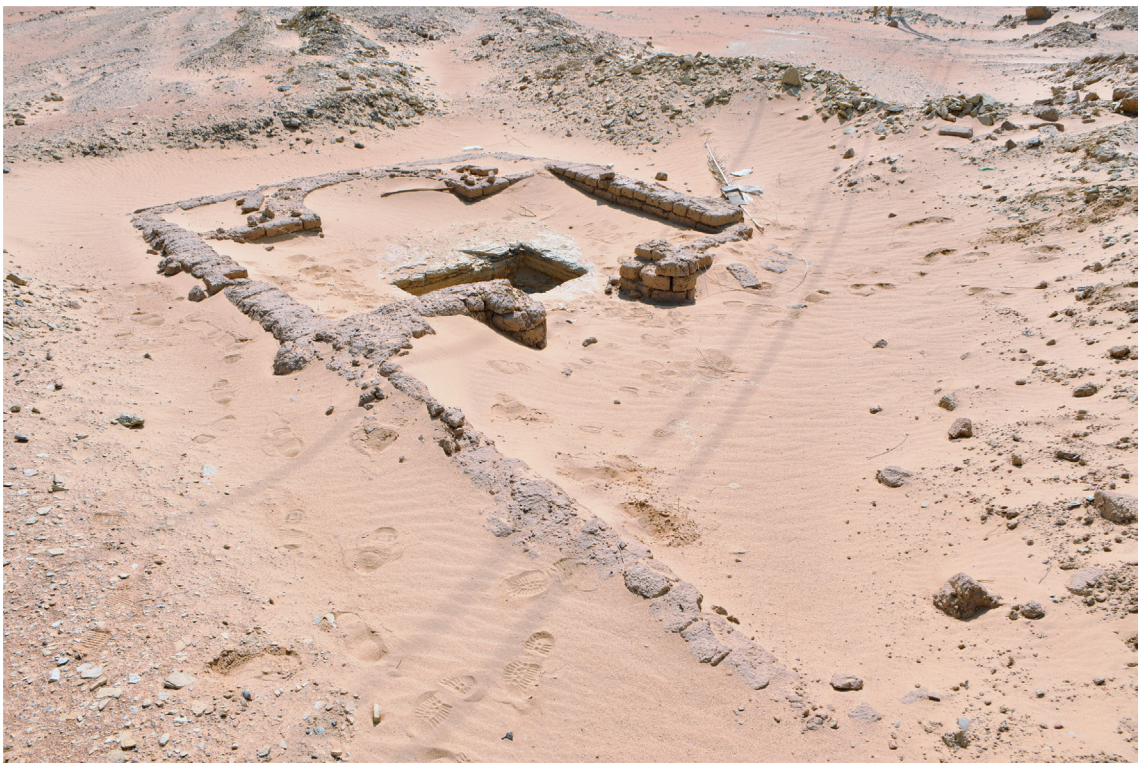
78 For a more in-depth examination of the site, with images and a photogrammetric model of the church, see: *4CARE*, DEChriM ID 42.

79 Pers. comm. (23/2/2021) M. Ibrahim, director of the Pharaonic Inspectorate of Egyptian Antiquities in Kharga and director of the excavation.

80 Two are in close proximity to one another, c. 20m north-east of the church, and a third is c. 63m east of the church. These additional pits had not been noticed prior to December 16th, 2022.

81 Interestingly, one of the pits closest to the church was surrounded by a small pile of clean sand, indicative of recent digging. The only place the sand could have come from was the pit, but it was not nearly enough to have filled the hole, which was indeed at least 5m deep. One possible explanation for this, perhaps the only explanation, is that there had been a

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Fig. 4. The church of ʿAyn Ḥusayn, looking south-east.

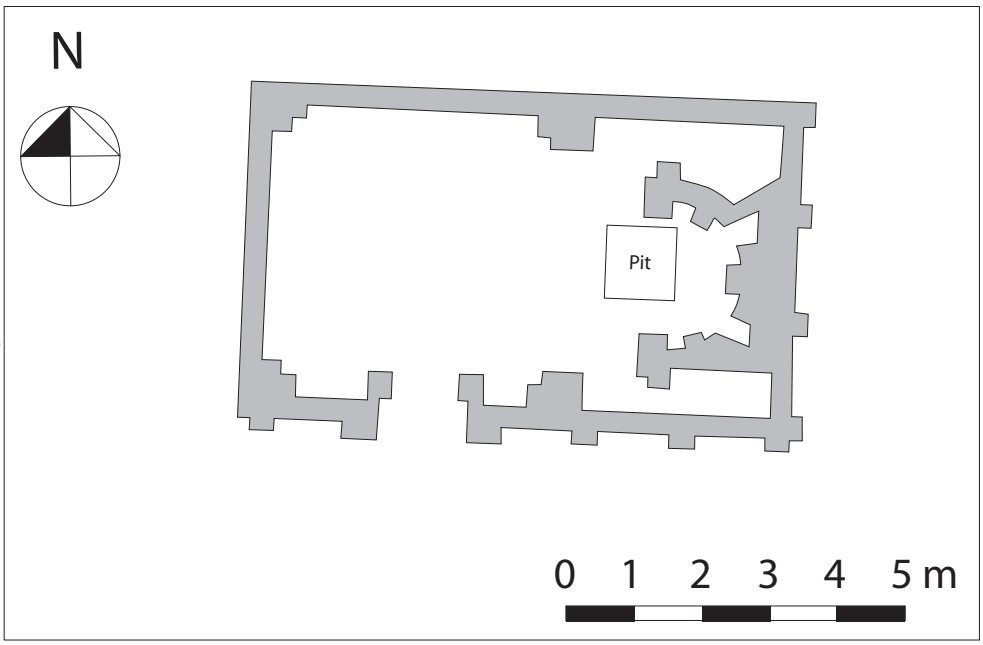


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Fig. 5. The apse of ʿAyn Ḥusayn, the corner of the funerary pit visible in the foreground, showing the position of the three other pits cut in the bedrock.

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Rather than a crypt, this example could arguably be classified simply as a funerary shaft. The presence of such a feature in a church nonetheless remains equally, if not more, important. Oasean parallels are to be found in al-Bağawāt necropolis, specifically chapels nos. 66 and 90 (Figs. 6–10). These chapels display similar architectural features to churches, comprising two rooms, a 'nave' to the west and a 'sanctuary' to the east—more clearly delimited in chapel no. 90 than 66—, and both feature monumental apses bordered on either side by small side chambers.[82] Additionally, both are quite large and so able to have housed a considerable number of people at a single time, with no. 90 also including internal seating.[83] These combined architectural features have led some to posit the possibility of the performance of liturgical services, such as the Eucharist, in the mausolea.[84] The burial pits, which are situated to the west of the apses, did not allow access to the remains, originally being covered by slabs, but did enable rituals to be celebrated in immediate proximity to the deceased, as in a church burial.[85]



© R. Williams 2023 (after Fakhry 1951, fig. 103)

Fig. 6. Chapel no. 66.

cover over the hole, as was reported to have been the case for the pit within the church. Such a covering could have sat some centimeters below the level of the surface, allowing for the accumulation of a small amount of windblown sand, though there is no clear indication of its existence within the pit (such as a ledge), nor are there traces of such an object on the surface.

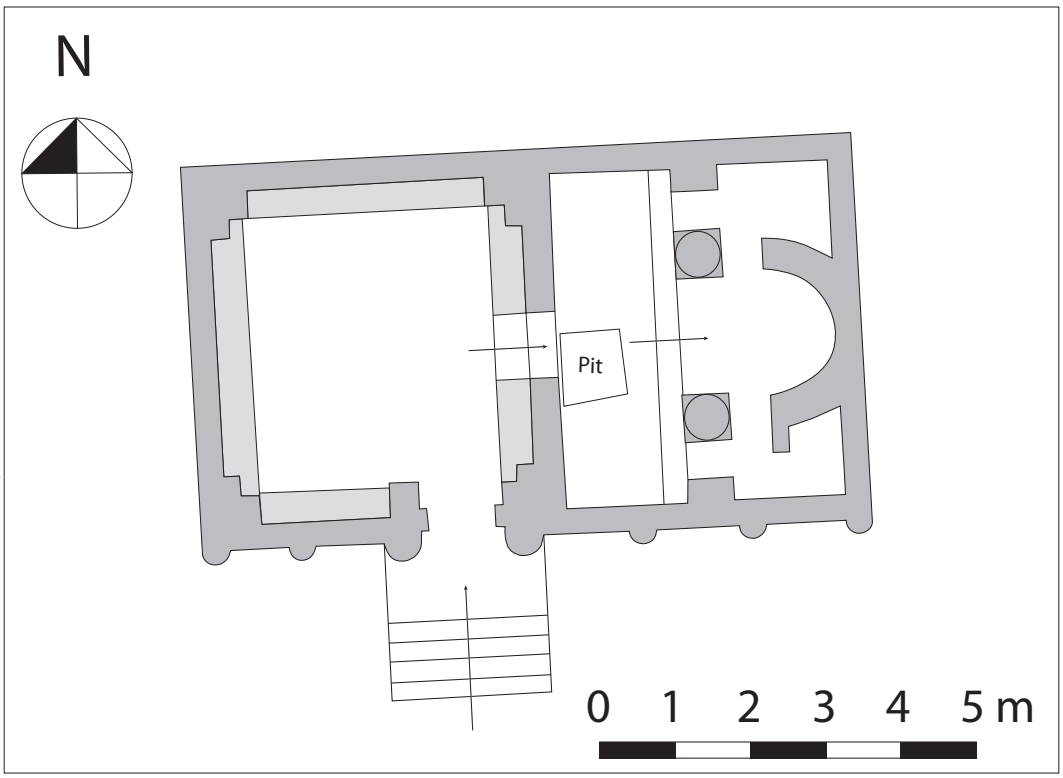
82 Several other mausolea are remarkably church-like in their design—chapel nos. 78, 117, 192, as well as the front hall of no. 24—but they do not have funerary pits. Instead, the interment(/s) would have been deposited in pit graves situated within the confines of the chapels, still identifiable in no. 117, though it is also possible that there was a funerary pit here that is not currently visible. No plan is available for no. 78, but for plans of the remaining chapels, see: Fakhry 1951, pp. 118, 142, 163. For general examinations of the architecture and decoration of the Bagawat mausolea, see: Fakhry 1951; Cipriano 2008; Zibawi 2005.

83 Such internal seating is present only in 11 mausolea. See: Cipriano 2008, p. 66, fig. 37.

84 A possibility which could be considered alluded to in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, but which was not an institutionally sanctioned practice. See: *Apost. Const.* 6.30; Grossmann 2002, pp. 332–333; Kötting 1998, pp. 95–96.

85 See: Grossmann 2014b, pp. 93, 97; Cipriano 2008, p. 71. Another interesting example is chapel no. 159, a simple one-roomed chapel, the façade of which shows traces of painted *cruces ansatae*, with a funerary pit, in front of which is a *triclinium*. See: Cipriano 2008, p. 67.

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© R. Williams 2023 (after Fakhry 1951, fig. 105)

Fig. 7. Chapel no. 90.



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Fig. 8. Chapel no. 90 looking south-east, showing the columned apse in the 'sanctuary' divided from the 'nave' by a transverse wall to the right of the image.

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Fig. 9. Chapel no. 90 looking east. The funerary pit is visible between the opening into the 'sanctuary', as are the mastabas.



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Fig. 10. View eastwards of the interior of chapel no. 66, showing the 'sanctuary' and funerary pit.

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These three sites, ʿAyn Ḥusayn, al-Bağawāt, and ʿAyn Ǧallāl South, could each be interpreted as documenting different stages in the architectural development of church crypts, representative also of different stages in the conceptualisation of the place of the dead in Christian worship. The burial shaft within the confines of ʿAyn Ḥusayn may have been pre-existent, in which case it was presumably the impetus for the building's construction, which consequently acted both as a memorial for the deceased and a location of worship, though details of the latter fact remain unclear. Was it exclusively a place of private funerary rites related to the interred, thus functioning as a funerary mausoleum, or was it a public church building? Indeed, several of the mausolea from al-Bağawāt appear to be more church-like than the structure at ʿAyn Ḥusayn, with a more clearly demarcated 'sanctuary' in chapel no. 90 as well as internal seating, features which perhaps argue in favour of more than just the celebration of private funerary rites at the latter. Either way, in both cases the structures were erected for the sake of maintaining the memory of the deceased who, through proximity, could subsequently be incorporated into the worship practices of the living. The crypt at ʿAyn Ǧallāl South could be considered a finalised form of this, having been planned as an integral part of the church building from its beginning. What is more, the building in which the crypt of ʿAyn Ǧallāl South is located was undoubtedly a church, not a funerary mausoleum, and, as such, there is no doubt as to whether proper liturgical services were performed.[86]

2.3. Intra-ecclesial interments: Dayr Abū Maṭṭā and Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Dakhla Oasis)

Moving westwards, we come back to the Dakhla Oasis, which contains two additional sites of relevance, Dayr Abū Maṭṭā and Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis). These structures do not contain crypts, but pit burials. The former comprises a three-aisled, triple-apse basilica as well as several adjoining buildings, in and around which were found several interments, though a precise number is not offered in the relevant publications.[87] Majority of these were located in a complex adjoining the church to the north, the function of which is not immediately clear, though architectural features indicate that it pre-dates the purportedly fourth century erection of the church.[88] Although not located within the perimeter of the church itself, the proximity of these burials to the church necessitates their inclusion in this study. The discernible burials were all either cut into the fill of the floor and into, or against, earlier walls, indicating that they post-date the intended use of the northern structures. Similarly, two were cut into the lower courses of the north wall of the church and, so, post-date the construction—but not necessarily the use—of

86 Grossmann 2014b, p. 111. A select number of funerary chapels at al-Bahnasā (Oxyrhynchos), referred to as 'apse tombs' by Petrie and now destroyed, also offer parallels; one of which, no. 42, is considered to have operated solely as a church. See: Petrie 1925, p. 16, pls. 41, 45 n. 2; Grossmann 2002, pp. 337–339.

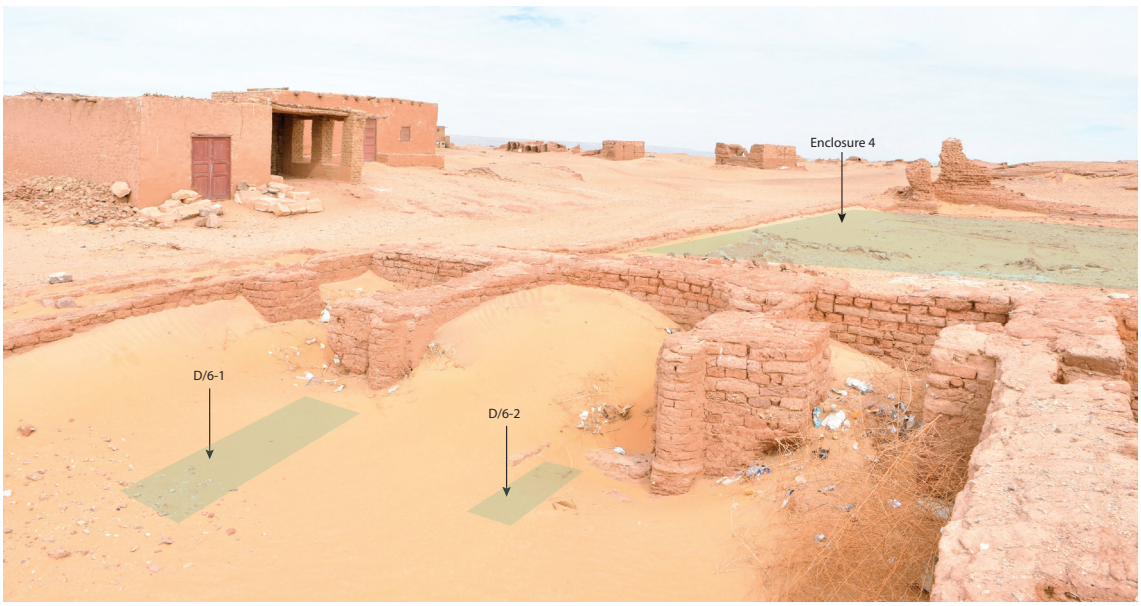
87 It is noted in Aravecchia et al. 2015, p. 37 that the total number of burials was 13, referencing "Bowen and Dupras forthcoming," for which see n. 163. For a plan of the structure, which shows the position of only a small number of burials which are not particularly well marked, see: Bowen 2012a, fig. 1.

88 The southern section of the north-south walls of this northern building had evidently been cut back to build the north wall of the church. See: Bowen 2008, p. 8; Ghica 2019, p. 136. For the fourth century date, see n. 53 above.

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the church.[89] Of the several graves in the eastern section of Trench 9, situated to the north of the eastern section of the church, four are 1.3m or less in length and are considered to be child burials.[90] There are several pit graves inside the confines of the church itself, predominantly in the west, all of which have been cut through the mud floor into the sand on which the church is built.[91] The one undisturbed interment in this area was of an infant buried in a hooded linen garment.[92] As in the northern structures, it is difficult to determine the chronology of these burials due to the damage to the floor, but it seems unlikely that the church was built above a pre-existing cemetery given that the burials for which the stratigraphy is clear seem to have been interred in relation to the church, rather than prior to its construction. Additionally, at least two burials were identified in the eastern extension of the 'tower' west of the church.

The final example is the West Church Complex at Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis).[93] Located at the western extremity of the site, the complex is one of three churches uncovered. In 2000, two burials were found within the confines of the church, one located in front of the sanctuary, north of the *bema* (D/6-1), the other south of the *bema* (D/6-2) (Figs. 11–12). These graves contained the remains of a man in his late 20s and a c. six-month-old infant, with it understood that both were interred in relation to the apse, consequently post-dating the construction of the church which is dated to the second half of the fourth century.[94]



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Fig. 11. View of the apse of the West Church at Ismant al-Ḫarāb looking east, with the associated burial area Enclosure 4 in the background. The general positioning of the church interments is marked.

89 All the identifiable interments were oriented east-west, and all but two were disturbed. The individuals in the two undisturbed graves were both laid on their backs with their heads to the west, showing signs of having been wrapped in linen textiles. See: Bowen 2012a, p. 439.

90 Bowen 2009, p. 10; Bowen et al. 2010, p. 14.

91 Bowen 2012a, p. 438.

92 Further textiles were associated with the burials of two adults, interred parallel to the south wall of the church, who appear to have been wrapped in red cloth, much of which lay in the vicinity of the bodies. See: Bowen 2012a, p. 439.

93 For a 3D model of the church, see: https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/2f859180c8584970896193f5b1ed3359.

94 Molto et al. 2003, pp. 347, 349; Bowen 2002, p. 78; Bowen 2004 p. 21; Hope 2003, p. 252.

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3. POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

Instances of intra-ecclesial interment can differ markedly from one example to the next, the material from *Oasis Magna* alone is a clear attestation of the fact. And in much the same way as materialisations varied, so too did the factors determining who could be granted such a burial. As already stated, it is unlikely that there is a single all-encompassing and unambiguous explanation which would befit each occurrence. There are numerous instances of crypt-interments of saints or other holy persons, for whom churches and religious complexes were built, some of which include architectural features to accommodate visitors, and other churches which contain the marked burials of bishops and clergy, but there are also more ambivalent instances of unmarked interments in churches with and without crypts and post-operational interments, as well as interments of women and juveniles. To posit plausible interpretations of the phenomenon, we must first examine the diverse factors which shaped status in antiquity, with particular focus on sex, age, and, of course, familial connection, which directly influenced wealth and social status. In doing so, it should be possible to glean supplementary information which can help to develop upon current understandings of women and children in early Christian milieus and explain in which contexts one could be awarded a privileged burial.

3.1. Children in Early Christianity

The interment of children and infants within churches in antiquity is known from Egypt as well as other areas of the Roman Empire.[95] Reasons for their presence, however, are unclear. The perceptions of children presented in early Christian writings are varied, both with regards to their place in society and their capacity for salvation. Origen emphasised their innocence, and saw the simplicity, freshness, and purity of childhood as symbolic of the beginning of a new religious life.[96] This perceived innocence then led to discussions, including in the writings of Tertullian, surrounding the justification for infant baptism, something which was likely practiced in North Africa since at least the third century.[97] Additional sources demonstrate the extent to which children were involved in worship practices.[98] Evidently, children and infants were not excluded from the religious realm, neither with regards to practice nor thought,

95 As a random example one can look to Cyprus where work conducted in the 1990s revealed numerous instances of single and multiple intra-ecclesial burials of children. See: Manning et al. 2002; Rautman et al. 2003.

96 Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 13.16. For general discussion regarding the innocence of childhood in Christian writings, see: Bakke 2005, pp. 56–109.

97 Tertullian argued for the postponement of baptism until a later stage in life when an individual is fully aware of and thus capable of upholding the responsibilities of a religious life, discussed not only with regards to infants but also young, unmarried individuals. One of the arguments put forward in relation to infants was that baptism was conducted for the forgiveness of sins, which he considered infants to be devoid of, making baptism unnecessary. See: Tertullian, *De Baptismo* 18. Origen, on the other hand, argued that infant baptism is necessary not with regards to sin, but inherent 'stain'. See: Origen, *Homilies on Luke* 14.3. Also, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* 5.9.11; Cyprian, *Letters* 64. For discussions on infant baptism, see: Wright 1987, pp. 45–63; Bakke 2005, pp. 223–243.

98 Casual references are made in various texts to children participating in worship services, e.g., *Apost. Const.* 8.11. For general discussions, see: Bottermann 1982, pp. 47–51; Bakke 2005, p. 223.

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and so perhaps their burials in these holy spaces should not surprise us.[99] However, certain theological discussions regarding infant mortality could be considered argumentation against infant and child interment in such locations. Augustine, for example, considered children to be accountable for their own ailments, and implicitly their premature deaths.[100] Similarly, Gregory of Nyssa considered the premature deaths of infants and children to be a positive action in some instances, resulting from God's desire to pre-emptively avert the potential for adult sin.[101]

Perceptions clearly varied amongst early Christian writers, and there does not seem to have been any explicit theological justification for particular care taken for their interment.[102] Despite this, special consideration seems to have indeed been shown in certain instances of child burial among Christian communities in late antique Egypt based on the fact that 'Christian' objects retrieved from graves have been found predominantly in the graves of children,[103] in addition

99 High infant mortality rates in antiquity have led many to suppose that parents were deliberately distant, both physically and emotionally, from their young children until they were of an age when their survival was more certain. The limited number of children and infants (and related epitaphs) in mortuary contexts of the Roman Empire are considered indicative of this detachment, and of the idea that children were removed from funerary traditions. It has come to be recognised by scholars, however, that there were an array of factors contributing to this absence, and that physical absence is not indicative of communal disregard. The use of alternative burial areas for young individuals, the fragility of their remains, and issues inherent in palaeodemographic techniques all contribute to the skewed demographic view the material record often presents. For mortuary practices pertaining to children and pre-Christian Egypt, see: Nenna 2012.

100 Augustine, *Confessions* 1.7.11.

101 Gregory of Nyssa, *De infantibus praemature abreptis*.

102 It has, however, been suggested that there was a Christian-specific concern for the interment of juveniles based on the high percentage of children identified in funerary areas deemed Christian in the oases, i.e., the disproportionate presence of the remains of children and infants in the 'Christian' cemeteries of K2 at Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis) and Dayr Umm al-Ġanā'im (also known al-Dayr) in Dakhla and Kharga. Of the 683 individuals which had been studied at the former as of 2010, 65% were children, of which 40% were foetal or neonate burials (Bowen 2012b, p. 355, table 1). At the latter, the ratio of children as of 2019 was 45%, versus 18-25% in the Southern ('non-Christian') Cemetery (Dunand 2019, p. 388; Dunand, Letellier-Willemin 2019, p. 246). In addition to this, 10/24 of the intrusive east-west oriented burials in North Tomb 1 at Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis) were of children. At al-Bağawāt also, we see a high number of children and infants recovered from the pit-graves in between the mausolea. As well as children, these three 'Christian' cemeteries included burials of women who died in childbirth. See: Coudert 2014, p. 252; Bowen 2012b; Tocheri et al. 2005, p. 329. The assertion that these burial areas are Christian-specific is methodologically dubious, as are numerous other purported 'Christian indicators' in the mortuary record, but this will be addressed elsewhere. Possible explanations for such an over-representation of young persons in these contexts could possibly relate to the shift from collective to individual interments, with single interment pit-graves being the predominant means of interment in K2, the 'Christian' cemetery at Dayr Umm al-Ġanā'im, as well as al-Bağawāt. Interments prior to the period in question were principally in collective tombs, likely based on familial association, meaning that tombs were often re-opened, with the remains of the newly deceased placed among those of their forebears. With semi-frequent re-use, as well as the work of looters, both in antiquity and in modern times, these funerary environments were often disturbed, thus compromising the integrity of the interred remains, meaning that the fragile remains of young individuals were less likely to survive intact. Though looting was still ongoing, pit-grave interments perhaps created a better environment for preservation. An additional explanation relates to excavation methodologies, with the misidentification or disregard of the skeletal remains of younger individuals, especially fetuses, a very plausible explanation for known cemetery demographics which seem to demonstrate a marked absence of children. See: Bowen 2003, p. 85; Bowen 2010, p. 18; Tocheri et al. 2005, pp. 326, 338.

103 There is insufficient space here to go into any depth with regards to the methodological issues of associating Christian adherence with material objects. Suffice to say that assuming a one for one equivalence is methodologically dubious. Nonetheless, the material of relevance comprises: the 'Mudil Psalter', a Coptic codex containing the book of Psalms uncovered in the grave of a young girl at al-Mudil near the Fayuum (Gabra et al. 1995, p. 24), cross and *crux ansata* pendants from al-Zuhūr found under the head of a child (Ibrahim 2012, p. 7), an equilateral cross pendant which formed the necklace of a child from al-Ḥammāmiyya (Paribeni 1940, p. 279), and, from al-Bahnasā (Oxyrhynchos), two cross pendants made of bone

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to the phenomenon under examination of intra-ecclesial child-interments. Perhaps such instances need to be considered not only with regards to the fact that the deceased were children, but with regards to the wider social and familial network these children were a part of.

3.2. Affluence

The young ages of these individuals make it unlikely that personal merit was a determining, or even contributing factor for their interment, as could perhaps be the case with women. Familial association, and thus social affluence, could, however, offer what is likely the most applicable explanation for both social categories. Among the examples of likely familial intra-ecclesial burial areas in Egypt one can mention one of the crypts identified in the basilica of al-Kūm al-Aḥmar, that of the small chapel south of the 'Great Basilica' at Abū Mīnā, the *hypogeum* of the church at Ḥawwārīya South, and the Tetraconch Church at Tall al-Faramā (Pelousion).[104] These are considered familial due to the limited number of individuals interred together, the presence of adults and juveniles alongside one another, and the small size of the associated structures with regards to the examples from Abū Mīnā and Tall al-Faramā.

Based on the same conditions (minus the question of size), familial connections can likewise be hypothesised with regards to several osean examples, specifically the crypt interments at Amḥayda (Trimithis) and the nave burials in the West Church Complex at Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis). The supposition with regards to the former is based purely on the composition of the mortuary environment, comprising a limited number of children interred alongside adults who *may* have been parents (of different generations).[105] This is, of course, highly speculative, and cannot be proven without genetic analysis, but it seems to be a plausible explanation. The situation at Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis) is more indicative, though still hypothetical. Here, genetic analysis indicates a familial connection between the adult male from this church (D/6-1) and two of the females in the adjacent Enclosure 4 (D/7-3 and -5), all of whom suffered from precondylar tubercle, a rare and highly genetic trait, meaning the condition was present in three of the eleven individuals interred in the neighbouring mortuary areas (Fig. 12).[106] These results strongly support some sort of familial association between the

found with a sub-adult in the crypt of Room 2 (Sector 36) (Padró et al. 2019, p. 8, figs. 28–29). 'Christian' grave inclusions are extremely rare during the period in question—the example from Oxyrhynchos is not given a more precise date than Christian/Byzantine, but the others are dated to the fourth century—and so the fact that there are numerous instances of them found with children is of interest. Given the history of unsystematic excavation in Egypt, it is difficult to say with certainty whether there is a genuine statistical difference between children and adults in this regard, however. Examples of non-Christian-specific goods (mostly jewelry) on likely-Christian children and infants include the 'Coptic' cemetery at Qarāra, where 40% of the children were provided with goods, versus 10% of the adults (Huber 2018, p. 212), the cemetery surrounding the basilical church at al-Kūm al-Aḥmar (Huber 2018, p. 221), and at al-Bahnasā (Oxyrhynchos) in Crypt 1 of Sector 29 (a 6–12 month old infant and a 3–4 year old child) (Padró et al. 2019, p. 25, figs. 104–105).

104 See the Appendix.

105 T3 in R3 was 50–65 years of age and was doubtfully the mother of any of the five children (T11–15) interred therein, though she could theoretically have been the mother of the 40–50-year-old T16, who could have herself been the mother of these children. In R2, the male (T6) and female (T9) adults may have been the parents of the two children (T7 and T9). It should be noted that different floor levels were identified in these crypts, attesting to two distinct phases of interment.

106 Molto et al. 2003, pp. 345–347.

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interred, a hypothesis which is further reinforced by the occurrence of spina bifida occulta in D/7-8, D/7-9 and D/6-1.[107] Though the infant does not show traces of these two disorders, the high incidence of these genetic similarities amongst the remaining individuals makes it likely that this was a familial burial area, and thus leads one to consider whether this was a familial church, or perhaps a public church funded by a family, in which case we have a reasonable explanation for the presence of the infant. But, if family members at Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis) were interred in both the church and the cemetery, the question remains as to what dictated who would be buried where? Perhaps we would benefit here from a closer look at intra-familial hierarchisation. If the male interred in the church (D/6-1) was the *pater familias*, and the infant (D/6-2) his only child, or perhaps only male child and thus sole heir, the distinction between the two areas could be explained—the church being the most important location reserved for the head of the family and his heir, while remaining family members were interred in the adjacent cemetery.[108] Even this hypothesis is not without complications however, with Enclosure 4 containing a disproportionate number of elderly women and young children rather than a family-like composition of varying ages and sexes.[109]

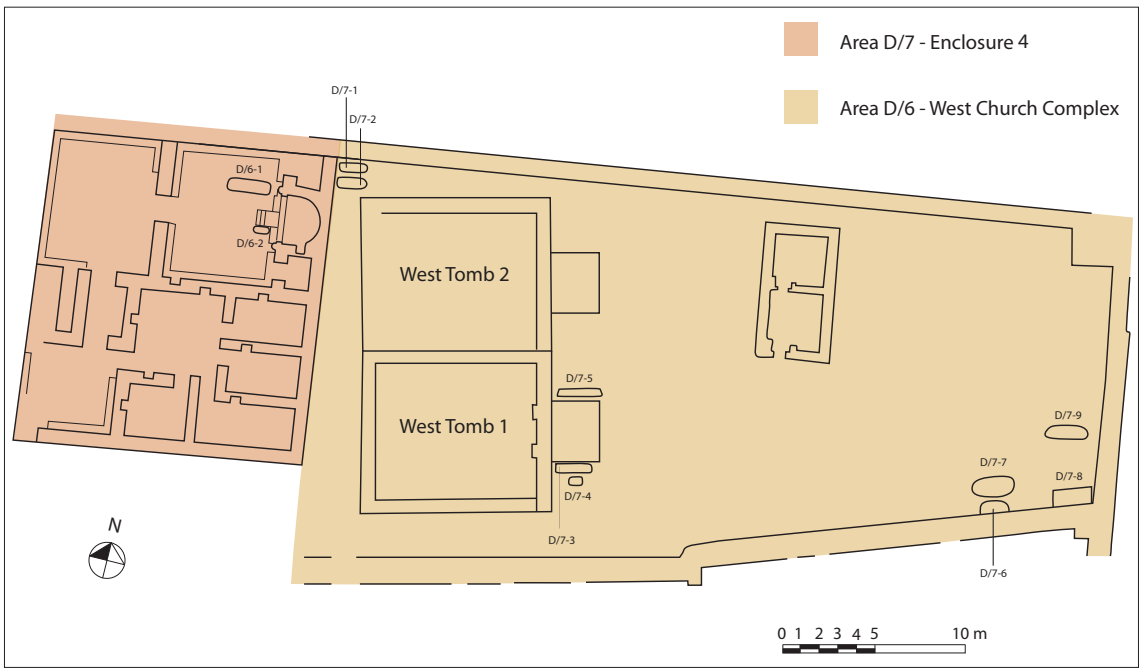


Fig. 12. Plan of the West Church Complex from Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis) and the associated Enclosure 4.

107 Molto et al. 2003, pp. 346, 360, 362, pls. 2, 9. An addition pathology, an anomalous neurovascular canal of the left scapula, was shared by D/7-3 in Enclosure 4 and NT1/12 in North Tomb 1, an additional burial area of the site. This complicates the matter of familial connection and spatial proximity given that the two could very plausibly be related and yet were buried in distant locations. See: Molto et al. 2003, p. 362, pl. 3.

108 A similar explanation can be posited with regards to tombs 5/1 and 5/2 in the crypt of the Basilica Church at Tall al-Maḫzan. See: Bonnet, Abd el-Sami 2000, pp. 76, 84–85, fig. 4 and the Appendix.

109 The individuals interred in D/7: D/7-1: female, c. 55 years, D/7-2: female, c. 20 years, D/7-3: female, c. 60 years, D/7-4: late fetus/perinate, D/7-5: female, c. 48 years, D/7-6: infant, c. 18 months, D/7-7: female, c. 40 years, D/7-8: male, c. 45 years, D/7-9: male, c. 28 years. See: Molto et al. 2003, pp. 345–347.

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The possibility of familial connection is difficult to scientifically prove, even with genetic analysis, as shown with regards to Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis), and there are of course other possible reasons for the presence of juvenile burials. An interesting example are the interments from the church of Maroni Petrera in Cyprus. From the two graves here came a minimum of six individuals, a young adult of undetermined sex from Burial 1 and five infants from Burial 2/3.[110] Here again, we see juveniles alongside an adult, but there is insufficient data regarding the adult to assert a more precise age, in which case they should not necessarily be considered a parent. Even if they were a parent, they presumably could not have been a parent to every one of the infants in Burial 2/3. The composition of Burial 2/3 seems to indicate a juvenile-specific practice and could perhaps be explained in relation to the conditions of death.[111] Given the seemingly contemporaneous interment of such a high number of individuals, one could hypothesise that these deaths were the result of an epidemic, thus making them not only premature, but dramatic. No pathologies were recorded, however, making this a difficult hypothesis to substantiate, though it remains a possibility. Indeed, the profound grief experienced at the deaths of juveniles, especially infants, certainly offers a substantial explanation for the presence of such burials within church buildings.[112]

The idea of intra-ecclesial interment being, in some cases, a juvenile-specific practice, or at least having a juvenile-specific dimension, remains a valid hypothesis. Of relevance for such a phenomenon are the child and adolescent burials, including clerics in training, found around the martyrial altar of the east chancel at Basilica I at Ḥaydra in Tunisia. This clustering could be seen to imply that these martyrs were considered by the community to play an important role with regards to younger members of the congregation, perhaps the catechumenate, and so interment close by was reserved for them, rather than adults.[113] This example relates also to the aforementioned micro-topography of intra-ecclesial spaces, with community-determined segmentation demonstrably having been enacted.

An additional context in which children were interred in churches, and perhaps the most easily explained instances, relate to monastic communities. In the crypt of the church of the fifth century monastery of Ḫān al-Aḥmar in the Judean desert, for example, the remains of 117 adults and 21 children were recovered. Given the monastic nature of the complex, and the fact that the remains were exclusively of males, it has been inferred that the children buried here were monastic pupils.[114] Similar instances have been found in Egyptian monastic contexts, though not necessarily within churches, with those interred in the necropolis associated with the monastery of Dayr al-Baḫīt hypothesised as possibly having been pupils of the monastic

110 The youngest being a c. 8–month–old fetus accompanied by four infants ranging from six to eighteen months of age. See: Manning et al. 2002, pp. 38–40; Fox et al. 2012, p. 71.

111 The Aliki II basilica at Thassos in Greece is another unique example of an apparently intentional overrepresentation of juvenile burials. See: Buchet, Sodini 1984.

112 This is something which is recorded in the letters of Basil, e.g., *Ep.* 5, 6, 206, 300. See also: Horn 2009, pp. 127–129. It is worth mentioning that the ages of these individuals are not given. The letters were addressed to grieving parents, authored in response to their losses, but they could very well have been referring to adult children, as is the case for no. 300. Reference is nonetheless made to the untimeliness of their deaths.

113 Stevens 2019, pp. 649–650, 660.

114 Hershkovitz et al. 1993, p. 374. See also Fox et al. 2012, pp. 66–68 regarding the interment of a young child in the basilical crypt at Kalavasos-*Kopetra* in Cyprus, a site considered to have operated as a monastic complex.

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community or donations made by the children's parents.[115] One might assume a similar explanation for the child and infant burials at Dayr Abū Maṭṭā which has been hypothesised to have functioned as a monastery, but the difficulties in establishing a chronology of the site make such a hypothesis difficult to substantiate, with many of the burials understood to post-date the period of use of the church, and thus the operational period of the monastery—if it was indeed a monastery.[116] Such an explanation nonetheless remains valid for certain instances of intra-ecclesial child interments.

3.3. Women in Early Christianity

Much like the lived realities of children in antiquity, those of women remain rather obscure. Sex is known to have been a defining factor with regards to numerous aspects of life, in both Christian and non-Christian milieus and so explanations for the inclusion of women in these sacred spaces are not immediately apparent. There is no uniform perception of women in early Christian communities in Egypt, no more than that in the wider Roman Empire, and while they were apparently prominent participants in the early Church,[117] they were simultaneously considered the ones "who deceived and broke God's law."[118] The most obvious and perhaps expected explanation is that these women were the wives or daughters of wealthy and influential men, the privilege being bestowed upon them thanks to this conjugal or otherwise familial connection. The absence of a female individual accompanying the hypothetical father-son duo in the West Church Complex at Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis) could be seen to indicate that partnership did not guarantee inclusion in such a space, however. Furthermore, the near total absence of males in the crypts at Amḥayda (Trimithis) seems to be indicative of an importance bestowed upon these women which was not otherwise bestowed on their husbands or family members. How else, then, should the presence of women in church burials be explained?

The most common explanation for intra-ecclesial interments, as previously discussed, relates to religiously important individuals, sometimes a martyr-turned-saint, but more often simply members of the clergy—only unquestionably demonstrated to be such in rare instances where there are accompanying epitaphs.[119] In cases where there are no such epitaphs, clerical association is often assumed given that it seems a fitting explanation. This assumption is only made in relation to male interments, however, and I have never read it posited with regards to female interments. This seems logical when we consider that there is only limited evidence

115 Such donations are textually associated with Dayr al-Baḥarī, for which see: Papaconstantinou 2002. A relevant bibliography is also offered in Wipszycka 2011, pp. 221–222 n. 128. One of the textual documents from Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis) alludes to the donation of a child to the Church, though the future role of this child—pupil or servant—is difficult to determine (*P. Kellis Copt.* 73). This letter derives from the Manichaean cache and should perhaps be seen exclusively with regards to Manichaean practices, rather than 'Catholic' ones. See: Lieu 1992, p. 28; Gardner 1995, p. 202; Gardner et al. 2014, pp. 84–87.

116 The classification of the site as a monastery is not certain and relates partly to the tower-like appearance of the structure immediately west of the church, which later becomes an integral element of monastic architecture (*ǧawsaq*). More substantial than this are ostraca retrieved from the site which reference several *Apas*. See: Bowen 2012a, p. 448.

117 As critiqued by Celsus. See: Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.44.

118 1 Tim. 2:14; Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum* 2.1. See also: Cloke 2000, p. 422.

119 See n. 46.

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attesting to official liturgical roles for women in antiquity. Deaconesses are mentioned in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, considered to date from the end of the fourth century, and the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, from the first half of the third century, but are absent from the c. sixth century *Canons of Athanasius.*[120] Criticisms were penned by various authors with regards to the liturgical roles of women in certain Christian groups in various areas of the Empire, but there is no definitive papyrological evidence of female clergy in Egypt, in which case this is not necessarily the most suitable line of argument, at least not for the Egyptian examples.[121]

It is also possible that certain instances relate to female martyr saints. While such individuals certainly existed, archaeologically attested burials relating to them are rare. Perhaps the only such example is that of Perpetua, who, with her companions, was martyred and whose relics are presumed to have been interred in the Basilica Majorum in Carthage where a commemorative plaque was dedicated to their memory.[122] Though a unique instance, the case of Perpetua demonstrates the prospect of intra-ecclesial interments belonging to female martyr-saints, certainly a less frequent occurrence than with regards to male saints.[123] It is highly unlikely, however, that the women interred in the crypt-church at Amḥayda (Trimithis) were forgotten martyrs. Remains the possibility that these individuals were proprietors or individuals of religious renown.

It is believed that wealthy women sometimes took on proprietorial responsibilities of churches,[124] and it is possible that their financial aid was rewarded with an intra-ecclesial burial. Indeed, male church founders are considered the main recipient of such burials after saintly figures.[125] Demonstrating this association without textual attestation is obviously impossible, but it should be kept in mind that the explanation is offered with regards to male interments, particularly those in crypts, despite a similar absence of written evidence. At least one woman from fourth century Kharga is recorded as having been a property owner, attesting to the fact that some women indeed had the financial means to be church benefactors,[126] though there is no direct attestation of the fact. Nonetheless, it seems just as appropriate an explanation for female crypt interments, for example, those in the crypt church at Amḥayda (Trimithis), as it is for male interments.

Perhaps a more likely, or more frequent, context for the intra-ecclesial interment of women would be in relation to their personal piety, with the most likely candidates being those individuals particularly involved in the activities of the church, namely female monastics, virgins, and widows. These were some of the only roles in which early Christian women are acknowledged as having been actively involved and the main forms in which female asceticism

120 *Apost. Const*. 2.26.3; Didascalia Apostolorum 16.

121 Tertullian directed criticisms at Marcionite women who dared to teach, engage in debates, exorcise, as well as baptise, while Epiphanius of Salamis condemned the idea of women being appointed as priests, as well as of their performing baptisms and blessings. See: Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 41.5; Epiphanius of Salamis, *The Panarion* 49.2.3–4 and 79.7.2–4. For Egypt, see: Zanetti 1991.

122 See: Tabbernee 2009, p. 128; Tabbernee 1997, pp. 111–113, 115–116; Patout Burns Jr., Jensen 2014, pp. 113–114, figs. 20–21. The details of Perpetua's life and death are detailed in the *Passio santarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*.

123 An additional North African example is the tentative association of Saint Crispina and her companions with the Christian district of Tebessa in Algeria. See: Christern 1976, pp. 18, 125–128; Brenk 1995, pp. 117–121; Stevens et al. 2005, p. 573.

124 Cloke 2000, pp. 426–427.

125 See n. 5

126 *O.Douch* 658.

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manifested.[127] A handful of the former are known from fourth century Kharga, recorded in association with documentation from Dūš (Kysis),[128] but there are no textual attestations of virgins or widows, though that does not disprove their possible presence. The first two categories are particularly relevant as a means of explaining the crypt interments at Amḥayda (Trimithis) where the women are not accompanied by men who could be understood as their husbands. Age is, however, a matter of relevance, with dedicated virgins and widows being positions reserved predominantly for older women.[129] For example, canonical widows—individuals who declared to remain widows and devote their lives to charity and prayer—had to be above the age of sixty, though this was eventually lowered to fifty.[130] Eligibility for the position of deaconess was likewise limited to those above the age of sixty years.[131] Some of the women from Amḥayda (Trimithis) fit within this age bracket while others, such as T2—who was in her late teens—do not. Of note, however, is the fact that a woman could apparently devote herself as a virgin to the church once she was older than sixteen or seventeen.[132]

3.4. Collective Christian identity and the sanctity of church space

If one considers a main impetus for intra-ecclesial burial to have been the fact that the interred would be in close proximity to the celebration of the Eucharist, then the phenomenon of intra-ecclesial burials which post-date the period of operation raises questions. It is in these instances that the perceived sanctity of church buildings and the importance of collective religious identity become apparent.

Churches that include burials can be considered collective funerary monuments, which, just like all monuments of this type, accentuate specific identity categories. In the same way as collective tomb interments from earlier periods prioritised an individual's role within a household unit, intra-ecclesial burials can be seen as reflecting membership within the religious community.[133] Consequently, intra-ecclesial interments offered a way of asserting and maintaining religious identity through burial location, with this perhaps being the most appropriate explanation for the late burials from Dayr Abū Maṭṭā and the church at the so-called "Eastern Gate" at al-Šayḫ ʿIbāda (Antinoopolis). Why only certain individuals were buried in church buildings after they ceased to function, however, remains a relevant question.

127 The so-called *Canons of Athanasius* (c. fifth century) explicitly stipulate the necessity that every Christian household has a virgin "for the salvation of the house" (*Canons of Athanasius* 98.62). The *Lausiac History* provides two references to virgins living ascetic lives at home (chapters 31 and 60), but the phenomenon is most widely regarded with relation to wealthy and cultured Alexandrian households. These pious women could live either alone, with a group of other women, or as part of an ordinary domestic household. See: Wipszycka 2009, pp. 591–596. Useful information can certainly also be found in Albarrán Martínez 2011 (*non-vide*).

128 *O.Douch* 190, 611, 836.

129 This relates to the perceived correlation between age with wisdom and authority. With reference to the age-determined hierarchy referenced in *On Virginity* (ch. 14), a work also attributed to Athanasius. See: Wipszycka 2009, p. 595.

130 This age-based restriction was imposed with the idea that younger women would be more inclined to break their vow by re-marrying. See: 1 Timothy 5:9, 11–16; *Didascalia Apostolorum* 14; Wipszycka 2015, pp. 177, 359; Elm 1996, pp. 229–230.

131 See: *C. Th.* 16.2.27; also Wipszycka 2015, p. 115.

132 Basil, *Ep.* 199 (no. 18).

133 Yasin 2005, p. 436.

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Perhaps the phenomenon can be explained as having been reserved for those considered by the community to be in greater need of divine assistance, for example, the unbaptised. Consequently, such a burial location signified the membership of the departed in the wider community all the while offering more guarantee of salvation than what was considered possible in an ordinary cemetery. The fact that the buildings were no longer in use likely meant that an intra-ecclesial burial was also more accessible, in which case relational, financial, and social privilege did not necessarily play a role, or at least played less of a role, than in instances where a church was operational. It is also possible that the deceased had had more substantial connections to the now defunct structures. For example, an individual may have held a clerical role in the structure in question during their life, a faith and profession-based connection which they wanted emphasised via their burial location. This would have been predominantly relevant for adults but could perhaps likewise explain the presence of juveniles who had planned to fulfill a clerical function in the church in question in adulthood.

4. CONCLUSION

The diversity of intra-ecclesial burials is markedly apparent, even when looking only at the geographically delimited material from *Oasis Magna*. In addition to housing some of the earliest extant church-crypts in the country, the demographic actualities of the known intra-ecclesial interments from Dakhla in particular demonstrate the fact that the catch-all explanation of privilege is, in reality, an over-simplification of a far more complex phenomenon.

After saints and martyrs for whom churches were frequently built, the primary interpretations offered with regards to intra-ecclesial interments is that the individuals in question were members of the clergy—namely bishops—, or church benefactors. Such explanations are sometimes demonstrable thanks to accompanying epigraphic evidence, with numerous clerical burials recorded in North Africa for example, but this is rarely the case in Egypt. That does not discount the possibility of intra-ecclesial burials in the country belonging to such people, it is simply a hypothesis that can rarely be proven. What is more, despite the popularity of the explanation, it is not necessarily the most appropriate. Indeed, the diversity seen in the archaeological record underlines that fact that the list of plausible reasons for which individuals could be awarded intra-ecclesial interments is much longer than scholars may first be inclined to think, differing largely in accordance with the age and sex of the deceased, as well as geographic region, with explanations for one example not necessarily applicable for another.

Familial association, and thus related wealth and influence, seems to be the next most applicable explanation, one which is relevant for all sexes and ages. The most explicit examples of such familial contexts are instances of annexed chapels containing a limited number of persons of varying ages and sexes, as seen in the funerary basilica of al-Kūm al-Aḥmar and the small chapel south of the 'Great Basilica' at Abū Mīnā. Other, less extravagant familial examples include those of a restricted number of pit interments in church floors, such as can be seen in the West Church Complex at Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis) and the Tetraconch Church at Tall al-Faramā (Pelousion). If individuals are interred together or in close proximity to one

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another, a familial relationship can be inferred, but demonstrating such a fact requires genetic or paleopathological analysis which even then, can be inconclusive.

Specifically with regards to children, the most easily explainable instances of intra-ecclesial interment, in addition to familial association, seem to be those in monastic contexts wherein they were likely either pupils or 'donations'. Such cases are rare, however, and have no interpretive value outside the monastic realm. Another plausible explanation, particularly apt for young individuals, could be supreme grief felt by parents or caregivers, perhaps relating not only to their young age but their manner of death. This is not only relevant for instances where children are buried without adults but could likewise be an applicable explanation for most intra-ecclesial child interments. Instances where high numbers of young individuals were interred either contemporaneously or in quick succession can be indicative of a catastrophic event which inspired this grief. But more common than this, such grief could simply be understood with regards to the added emotional weight attributed to the death of young individuals, though this is highly speculative and indemonstrable.

With regards to women, personal piety seems to be the next most plausible explanation after familial association, though it can hardly apply to juveniles. Perhaps these women were either wealthy donors or had themselves fulfiled a religious function, as consecrated widows, virgins, or monastics. These women could have been considered particularly pious, holding social and/or religious significance due to their role within the community, mirroring that of men in the religious hierarchy and monastic communities, who are better recorded as having been awarded such burials.

A final explanation, relevant for men, women, and juveniles alike, relates to the construction and maintenance of religious identity, and is perhaps of most relevance for intra-ecclesial interments established after the cessation of official worship in a church building. Such burials created a spatial link between the deceased, the religious community to which they belonged, and an associated place of worship which, though no longer in use, or not in use in the same way, maintained its religious significance.

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APPENDIX
LATE ANTIQUE CHURCHES IN EGYPT WITH INTRA-ECCLESIAL INTERMENTS (4TH-6TH CENTURY)

This is, to my knowledge, a complete list of relevant churches. Nevertheless, this is a preliminary work, and it is likely that there are still unpublished or as yet unexcavated structures of relevance that could be added in the future.

- The interment types are the following: in a crypt (C), floor burials (B), in a funerary annex (A), and reliquaries (R).
- The interred are classified as women (W), juveniles (J), men (M), no remains (N), and undocumented/undetermined (U).
- The proposed date presented relates to the structure, not to the burials. Dates with an asterisk (*) are based on 14C analysis.

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Site	Structure	Proposed date (CE)	Interment type	Interred
Abū Mīnā	Small Basilica	First half of fifth century	C, R	U
		Description		
		This church developed out of a memorial chapel erected likely in the beginning of the fifth century, which itself developed out of a late fourth century cenotaph. These were both associated with a triple-armed familial hypogeum,[134] tentatively dated to the fourth century, in which the remains of St. Menas are considered to have been interred; the space of the hypogeum being transformed into the so-called Menas-cubiculum. The memorial chapel was transformed into a three-aisled church in the first half of the fifth century, with a staircase permitting access to the hypogeum which was incorporated as a crypt, though the staircase was outside the confines of the church. The church building underwent several principal construction phases,[135] the latest of which was a five-aisled basilica in which a pit covered by a slab was identified, considered to have housed a reliquary.[136]		
	Great Basilica	Early sixth century	C	U
		Description		
		This structure is intrinsically connected with the above-mentioned Small Basilica, having developed out of the final, five-aisled phase at the end of the fifth/beginning of the sixth century.[137] Two vaulted crypt chambers are noted as being situated beneath the apse of the church, with a third extending westwards into the basilica, each of which were noted by C.M. Kauffmann as having been filled with bones. These remains were not the subject of study, but they are posited as having belonged to "outstanding personalities" and "deserving clerics."[138]		
	'Family chapel' East of the 'Great Basilica'	Second half of the sixth century	C	U/J
		Description		
		This single-nave church—which appears to have been part of a domestic complex—contains a vaulted funerary chamber, accessed via a steep set of stairs in an opening in the north-eastern corner of the small sanctuary. The chamber contained six burials, "at least two of which were children," leading to the assumption that it was a family grave, with the church itself classified as a privately owned chapel. No additional details were offered with regards to the remains. The church and the surrounding area is considered to date from the sixth century, with a seventh century abandonment date.[139]		
	Western Chapel Complex	Sixth century	C	U
		Description		
		Situated in the western area of the site, near the "Western Gate," the complex of the Western Chapel contains a single-nave church in the south, comprising four rooms. From east to west, these are: a baptistery, naos, narthex, and a westerly room with benches. In the floor of the narthex is situated the entrance to a double-chamber hypogeum, both of which contained "several burials." These chambers were constructed at two separate phases, with that to the south being the original. Consequently, the associated burials belong to at least two separate phases.[140]		

134 Each of these 'arms' had seven attached burial chambers, making a total of 21 chambers. P. Grossmann noted that they were certainly large enough to contain more than one interment, but it is unclear whether or not this was the case. It was used for at least one generation but likely more. See: Grossmann 1989a, pp. 191, 196.

135 The Small Basilica ("Gruftkirche I") > Justinian Conch-Church ("Gruftkirche II") > Late Five-Aisled Basilica ("Gruftkirche III") –, with various extensions and modifications occurring in association with each of these phases. See: Grossmann 2002, pp. 401–405, figs. 16–20.

136 Grossmann et al. 1982, pp. 131–132, 137–129, figs. 3–5; Grossmann et al. 1984, p. 130; Grossmann 1989a, pp. 13–14, 189–204, fig. 53, plans 1, 3, 12; Grossmann 1998a, pp. 282–283; Grossmann 2002, pp. 401–403, fig. 16; Grossmann 2014b, pp. 104–105, fig. 13.

137 Grossmann's Gruftkirche III. There are two main construction phases associated with this structure: "Große Basilika I" and "Große Basilika II".

138 Kaufmann 1910, p. 87; Grossmann et al. 1984, p. 134; Grossmann 1998a, p. 283; Grossmann 2002, pp. 405–409, fig. 17; Grossmann 2014b, p. 109.

139 Grossmann et al. 1991, pp. 479–483, figs. 20–25.

140 Abdel-Aziz Negm 1993, pp. 130–132, fig. 1.

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Abū Sha'ar	*Principia*-Church	Post-fifth century	B	M
		Description		
		This church is situated within a Roman fort on the Red Sea coast, having been erected once the latter was abandoned sometime after the fourth-fifth century. After abandonment, there was an undetermined period of inactivity before being reoccupied by a small community of Christians. The interred individual—found abutting the eastern side of a structure to the west of the apse—is considered by the excavators to have been "a martyr or saint".[141]		
Amḥayda (Trimithis)		Fourth century	C, B	M, W, J
		Description		
		Seventeen burials have been recorded, and archaeologically investigated, in association with this church. Six of these are situated at floor level: T1–4 and T17 in the floor of the nave, and T5 in the room adjoining the church to the south (R8). The remaining eleven burials are located in two of the three crypts situated below the apse and the northern apse side room. These are: T10–16 in R3, the crypt below the apse, and T6–9 in R2, the crypt below the northern side room. The surface-level burials comprise the following: in the nave, T1 contained a male of 45–50 years, T2 a female of 15–17 years, T3 a female of 35–40 years, T4 a male between 25–40 years, and T17 a male of 50–65 years,[142] while T5 in R8 contained a female of approximately 25 years. In R3, T10 contained a woman of 50–65 years, T11 a child of c. 6 years (± 24 months), T12 a child approximately 8 years old (± 24 months), T13 a six-month-old (± 3 months) infant, T14 a child of 5 years (± 16 months), T15 a child of approximately 18 months (± 6 months), and T16, a 40–50-year-old female. In R2, T6 contained a male individual of approximately 40–50 years, T7 contained a 12–15-year-old juvenile of undetermined sex, T8 a female of approximately 35–45 years, and T9 a child of 5 years (± 16 months), also of undetermined sex. As such, only four of the 17 burials belong to adult males—T1, 4, 6, and 17—, and only one of these, T6, was situated in a crypt, attesting to the fact that the practice of intra-ecclesial interment at Amḥayda was disproportionately reserved for women and juveniles.		
Apa Phoibammon in the Rock (Apa Phoibammōnos topos)		Fourth-sixth century	B	U
		Description		
		The church—if indeed it is a church—was in a very poor state at the time of excavations and is certainly in a worse condition now. It was classified as such based largely on the presence of paving stones, with the architectural layout largely indistinguishable. To the east of this apparent church, in a room which facilitated access to the former, was a tomb attributed to the monastic superior. The plan of the structure depicts a bench along the southern wall of the room in question, perhaps indicating veneration of the interred. No reference is made to human remains. The relevant publication is very brief, with the inclusion of this example only tentative.[143]		

141 Sidebotham 1994a, pp. 136–141. For datation, see: Sidebotham 1994a, p. 156; Sidebotham 1994b, pp. 274–275; Sidebotham 2008, pp. 59–60.

142 For T1–4, see: Aravecchia et al. 2015, pp. 27–37.

143 Khater, KHS-Burmester 1981, p. 6, pl. XV B; Brooks Hedstrom 2017, p. 254.

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al-Ašmūnayn (Hermoupolis Megalē)	Transept Basilica	Mid-fifth century	C	N
		Description		
		Rather than a single crypt, this structure housed a burial complex comprising several interconnected rooms below the apse. It was originally believed to have housed the body of a saint, possibly Abū Makār given that his body is recorded as having been preserved at al-Ašmūnayn. It has since been noted by P. Grossmann that the apparent absence of signs of veneration could rather be indicative of the space having been intended for the bishops who had served the church. No remains were recovered during the course of excavations.[144]		
	South Church	First half of fifth century	C	N
		Description		
		This crypt is situated to the south of the church, directly accessible from the southern aisle of the nave. It includes a small prayer hall, with an "alcove-like recess large enough to house a sarcophagus containing the body of a saint,"[145] with it posited that it could also have housed the body of a local bishop, as was suggested with regards to the Transept Basilica. No remains were recovered during the course of excavations.[146]		
ʿAyn Ǧallāl	Southern Sector	*Third-fifth century	C	U
		Description		
		The crypt is located below the southern pastophorion and was accessible via a hole in the floor in the south-east corner (fig. 2). The bottom of an empty ceramic coffin was present along the northern wall, the head of which was adorned with a *crux ansata* bordered by a *theta* to the left and what is understood as an *omicron*, or simply a circle, to the right (fig. 3). Fragments of ceramic scattered throughout the room likely belonged to the lid of the of the coffin. A small pile of disarticulated bones was present along the western wall but were too few in number, and in too poor a state of preservation, to allow for the interpretation of age or sex of the individual/s.[147]		
	Northern Sector	*Fourth-fifth century	B	U
		Description		
		Here, there are five east-west oriented structures located against the exterior face of the eastern wall of the church which have been hypothesised as having once housed interments. Despite not actually being intra-ecclesial, it seems relevant enough to include the example here give that the burials are in immediate proximity to the church and should certainly be seen in association with it. No information is available concerning the remains of deceased individuals, including whether or not remains were actually present.[148]		
ʿAyn Ḥusayn		Fourth-fifth century	C	U
		Description		
		This is a small funerary church with a perpendicular shaft in the area of the sanctuary (Fig. 4). At the bottom of the shaft are two chambers to the east and west, within which were said to be found disarticulated human remains devoid of skulls. These remains were not studied and so no information is available with regards to the biological profiles of the interred. Interestingly, this shaft is one of four in the area (Fig. 5), with it possible that the shaft pre-dated the church, possibly having inspired its construction.		
ʿAyn Maḥūra	Central Church[149]	Sixth century	C (?)[150]	U
		Description		
		Immediately in front of the opening which permitted access from the nave into the sanctuary is a burial chamber, noted by P. Grossmann as having been intended for the remains of "deserving clerics".[151] Four burials were uncovered but it is considered that the area was originally only intended for a single burial *ad martyrem*, and that the remainder were later depositions.[152] No information regarding the interred is available.[153]		

144 Wace et al. 1959, pp. 23, 25; Bailey 1991, p. 51; Grossmann 2002, pp. 129, 441–443, figs. 59–60; Grossmann 2014b, p. 109.

145 Grossmann 2014b, p. 108.

146 Bailey 1991, pp. 46, 50, pl. 96; Grossmann, Bailey 1994, pp. 49–71, fig. 5; Grossmann 2002, pp. 135, 437–441, fig. 58; Grossmann 2014b, p. 108.

147 Information regarding the crypt derives from on-site prospection. For the sector in general, see: Ghica 2012, p. 206 n. 81, fig. 6; Ghica 2019, pp. 134–135. For the dates see: Ghica forthcoming.

148 Ghica 2019, fig. 12. For the dates see: Ghica forthcoming.

149 Denoted 'die Ostkirche' in Grossmann 1979b, and 'die Zentralkirche' in Grossmann 2002, pp. 129, 387–388. Its location is not specified in Grossmann 1989b where it is referred to simply as the oldest of the two churches at the site, the other, newer church being in the west, allowing one to distinguish between the two.

150 Noted as being a burial chamber ("Grabkammer"), but it is unclear whether it was a crypt or a large pit.

151 Grossmann 2002, p. 388.

152 Grossmann 2002, p. 129.

153 Grossmann 1979b, pp. 187–191, fig. 2; Grossmann 1989b, p. 1847; Grossmann 2002, pp. 129, 387–389, fig. 6.

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al-Bahnasā (Oxyrhynchos)	Church of the 'Byzantine Fortress' (Sector 16)	Fifth-seventh century	C, B	U
		Description		
		Several "privileged burials" were found within this church. On fig. 1 provided in Subías 2020, six pit graves seem to be shown, but apparently the easternmost rectangle near the apse is not a pit grave given that later in the text it is noted that only five graves were identified in the pavement of the church "in the ambulatory surrounding the central space".[154] Four of these are situated in the southern aisle with a fifth in the north-western area of the central nave. None of these interments were excavated. In addition to these, a collective burial area was identified within the northern chapel, hypothesised as having been a martyrium chapel which was "later used as a burial ground for certain members of the monastic community".[155] The presence of a monastic community was attested to via reference made in one of two Greek tombstones to a certain 'Menas', the *proestós* of Saint Cyriacus. These tombstones were found in association with two graves, though which two is not noted. Both are considered datable to the sixth-seventh centuries, with one containing an absolute date of 685 CE, while the church building itself, based on ceramic, is considered to date between the fifth and seventh centuries.[156]		
	Basilica in the Upper Necropolis (Sector 24)	Sixth century	C	N
		Description		
		This is a porticoed structure understood to have been a Hellenistic temple, perhaps dedicated to Serapis, which was later transformed into a five-aisled Christian Basilica. The 'crypt' is an earlier construction, presumed to be Ptolemaic, and so is unique as a church crypt, being accessible via a 7m long ramp, and comprising some four rooms. It is adorned with several layers of decoration, including several graffiti, one of which has the absolute date of 520CE. It is unclear if any interments were found here and whether or not it should actually be considered a church crypt.[157]		
	Funerary church (Sector 29)	Fourth century	C x7	M, W, J
		Description		
		Associated with this church, which is located in a cemetery area, are seven crypts. They are noted as being north of the church proper,[158] rather than below it. They are presumably the collection of rectangular rooms shown on Mascort, Padró 2020, fig. 16, six of which are oriented east-west, and one of which is oriented north-south. Excavations in the area are on-going, and no comprehensive summary of the final results are yet available (the most extensive information is available in Padró et al. 2016, pp. 5–9). It is noted, however, in Padró et al. 2019, that crypt no. 1 contained 88 individuals, with the graph of p. 26 showing 60 adults and 28 subadults with an over-representation of females.[159]		

154 Subías 2020, p. 81.

155 Subías 2020, p. 81. Footnote no. 16 therein notes that information concerning this collective grave is available in the unpublished doctoral thesis of Dolors Codina completed at University of Rovira i Virgili in 2019 and titled "El món funerari bizantí a egipte. El cas d'oxirrinc." In an earlier publication, only three graves are noted here. See: Subías 2016, pp. 1387–1388.

156 Subías 2012, pp. 1163–1178; Subías 2020, pp. 77–92, fig. 1; Mascort, Padró 2020, pp. 52–53. For editions of the text, see: Piedrafita 2015, pp. 455–465 (nos. 1–2), with corrections by Delattre et al. 2020, p. 400 (nos. 6–7).

157 Padró et al. 2015, pp. 3–5, figs. 1–3; Mascort, Padró 2020, pp. 43–44, figs. 10, 12–14. For the graffiti, see: Delattre et al. 2020, pp. 400–402 (nos. 8–10).

158 Padró et al. 2016, p. 3.

159 Padró et al. 2015, pp. 9–14, figs. 18–21; Padró et al. 2016, pp. 3, 5–9; Padró et al. 2018, pp. 5–9, fig. 9; Padró et al. 2019, pp. 18–19, 25–26; Mascort, Padró 2020, p. 46, fig. 16.

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Dayr Abū Fānā	Lower Church[160]	Fourth-fifth century	B	M, F
		Description		
		This church included the marked burials of a certain Apa Herakleides (2/90) and Apa Kafka (1/90), with it hypothesised also to contain the remains of Apa Bane (3/92) (Saint Fana), as well as other 'monastic' and 'pagan' interments classified predominantly with regards to orientation. The 'monastic' burials (4/92, 5/92, 8/92, 9/92, 10/92 and above) were oriented east-west, while the 'pagan' ones (1/92, 2/92, 6/92, 11/92) were oriented north-south. 8/92 and 9/92 were only tentatively identified by the excavators as burials given their small size, without positing the idea that they could have been juvenile interments. The association of 2/90 and 1/90 with Apa Herakleides and Apa Kafka respectively was due to the presence of 'votive slabs' covering the relevant burials in the church floor, with a third slab dedicated to Apa Shons which was not associated with a burial. The association of 3/92 with Apa Bane was based on an examination of the pathologies of the human remains in light of information included in various hagiographical texts, the conclusion being that the body did indeed belong to him. Though there are several noteworthy aspects that could be seen to support such a classification, the excavators went so far as to base the dating of the church on the interment of this tentative Apa Bane. Given that no consideration was made for the grave in the construction of the later church (phase II)—no reburial or marking of the pavement to indicate its presence—the idea that it was the grave of Apa Bane, and thus that the church dates to the fourth century, is rather speculative.[161]		
Dayr Abū Maṭṭā		*Fourth century	B	J
		Description		
		Burials are present both within the confines of the church as well as in a structure to the immediate north—the original function of which is not known—and to the west. No depositional chronology is offered for the burials given how unclear the stratigraphy is, though it is hypothesised that some burials could have been deposited after the operational period of the church. Little information is offered with regards to the interred, though it is at least known that some were child and infant burials.[162] Additional information presumably awaits publication.[163]		
Fāw al-Qiblī (Pbou)		Fourth-fifth century	B	U
		Description		
		This church belongs to a monastic complex which is understood to have been that founded by Pachomius. The latest phase was a five-aisled basilica, prior to which there were either two or three earlier church structures. It was noted by P. Grossmann that the structure was used "extensively for burials," both during the and after the period of operation, presumably referring specifically to the latest construction phase. No information is given regarding the interred.[164]		

160 "Untere Kirche (sogenannte Grabeskirche)" comprises two phases: an earlier single nave church (phase I) considered to date to the 370s, on top of which was built a three-nave church (phase II) at the beginning of the fifth century. Both structures have graves in the floor.

161 See: Buschhausen et al. 1989, pp. 214–257, pls. 10–12 for the 'votive slabs'; Buschhausen et al. 1994, pp. 95–127 (pp. 107–109 for details of the interred and pp. 108–114 for a discussion), pls. 9–15; Buschhausen et al. 1996, pp. 13–73 (pp. 34–39 for all the intra-ecclesial graves, the positioning of which is shown in fig. 6, and pp. 39–48 for a comparative examination of the pathologies of the individual interred in 3/92, shown in pls. 16–24, and hagiographical details recorded about Apa Bane); Grossmann 2002, pp. 516–518, figs. 134–135.

162 Bowen 2009, pp. 10, 13–14, fig. 4, pl. 5; Bowen 2012a, pp. 438–439; Bowen et al. 2010, pp. 12–14, 18–19, fig. 1b.

163 Various references have been made to forthcoming articles authored by G.E. Bowen and T.L. Dupras regarding the burials at Dayr Abū Maṭṭā which would certainly shed much light upon the situation but seem to have unfortunately remained unpublished, and an attempt to contact the former author proved unfruitful. The references are the following: in Aravecchia et al. 2015 one finds "A Christian Community at Dayr Abu Matta, Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt," noted as being forthcoming in *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*; in Bowen 2019 "The Christian Burials at Dayr Abu Matta, Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt" is listed as being forthcoming in *Bioarchaeology of the Near East*.

164 Grossmann 1979a, p. 234; Grossmann 2000; Grossmann, Lease 1990. No mention is made of the burials in the latter two publications.

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al-Filusiyya (Ostrakinē)	South Basilica / Large South Church / A151	Fifth-sixth century	B	U
		Description		
		An unspecified number of burials were identified in the pavement of the church's nave during the excavations of J. Clédat, all of which had been compromised by water. These are noted by E. Oren as likely belonging to clergymen.[165]		
	Church of the Island / A-152/A	Fifth century	R, B	U
		Description		
		A reliquary with bone remnants was identified in the room flanking the apse to the south, while decorated limestone slabs in the floor of the nave, specifically in the area of the chancel, were considered to be representative of the presence of graves, perhaps marking "the entrance to a crypt or saint's tomb."[166] These were never investigated due to the level of the groundwater.[167]		
Firān	Middle Church of Ǧabal Ṭāḥūna	Sixth century	B	U
		Description		
		Two interments are located here in the western end of the nave. No information is available regarding the interred, it is simply stated that one grave was disturbed and that the other seemed to be in-tact. A tombstone was found south of the bema which refers to a certain Ιωάννου, but its location likely indicates that it ought not to be associated with the burials. Fragments from an incomplete inscription found close to the western entrance of the church, that is, close to the burials, are considered to relate to one of the two. This inscription is fragmentary, however, and offers little insight with regards to the interred.[168]		
	Episcopal Church	Mid-sixth century	B	U
		Description		
		This church is comprised of two phases. The burial in question—which was situated west of the bema—was associated with the first phase. No information is given regarding human remains and it is not even clear whether or not they were physically present. P. Grossmann attributed the grave to the 'episcopal donor'.[169]		
	Town Church of St. Cosmas and Damian	Second half of the sixth century	B	U
		Description		
		This three-aisled basilica is dedicated to the saints Cosmas and Damian according to an inscribed door lintel retrieved during excavations. It is understood to have been a place of healing, accounting for the wide mastaba along the interior of the southern wall and an area dedicated to food preparation under the stairs leading to the roof in the south-western corner of the structure. In the western end of the building a simple grave was located, considered by P. Grossmann to have belonged to the founder of the church. No details are published concerning the interred.[170]		
al-Ḥammāmīya		Fourth-fifth century	B	W, J, M
		Description		
		Remains were supposedly found under the pavement of a building believed to have been a church. This structure was situated in the "immediate neighbourhood" of the find-spot of a Coptic codex containing the Gospel of John, palaeographically dated to the late fourth century. Nearby was a rubbish dump from where a bronze censor was recovered, tentatively supporting the hypothesis that the structure was indeed a church.[171]		

165 Clédat 1916, pp. 25–26; Oren 1993, p. 307; Grossmann 2002, pp. 479–480, fig. 92; Verreth 2006, p. 391.
166 Oren 1993, p. 310.
167 Oren 1982, p. 42; Oren 1993, pp. 310–311; Grossmann 2002, pp. 480–481, fig. 93; Verreth 2006, p. 391.
168 Grossmann et al. 1996, pp. 14, 29–31, figs. 2, 7; Grossmann 1998b, p. 95, pl. 2 (*non-vide*); Grossmann 2002, p. 483, fig. 96.
169 Grossmann 1998b, pp. 53, 59, pl. 4 (*non-vide*); Grossmann 2002, pp. 129, 483–484, figs. 97–98.
170 Grossmann et al. 1992, pp. 7–8; Grossmann et al. 1998, pp. 345–347, 350–355 (ceramic), 355–358; Grossmann 1998b, p. 66, pl. 5 (*non-vide*); Grossmann 2002, pp. 130, 485–486, fig. 99. The interred is referenced only in the latter source.
171 Petrie 1924, p. IX; Brunton 1930, p. 31, pl. X, 3.

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Hawwāra (Haueris)	'Coemeterialkirche'	Fifth century	C	N
		Description		
		Though not referenced by F. Petrie—who was the first to publish information about this church—nor included in his plan, this church building houses a crypt situated below the apse, considered to have belonged to the surrounding burial area and thus pre-dating the construction of the church. I. Uytterhoeven noted that the "western part of the basilica is constructed upon a tomb with a well-built limestone vault,"[172] but P. Grossmann states that it was under the eastern part of the apse, with the same positioning offered in Uytterhoeven's later reference to the structure.[173] It is considered by P. Grossmann to have been the burial place of the founder/s of the church.[174]		
Ḥawwāriya South (identified with Marea)	Chapel of the *gerokomion*	Sixth century	C	U
		Description		
		The relevant space is a hypogeum situated below the church, comprising a central communicating room which facilitated access to three independent burial areas. The easternmost chamber was recorded as being the oldest. Despite apparent contemporaneity, the lack of direct access to the hypogeum from the church led P. Grossmann to discount a direct relationship between the two, stating that it was unlikely for the hypogeum to contain relics of a saint. Rather, it is thought to belong to the founders of the church who was interred alongside his family. No remains were recorded in association with the structure.[175]		
Ismant al-Ḫarāb (Kellis)	West Church Complex	Second half of fourth century	B	M, J
		Description		
		Two burials are present in this church, one located north of the *bema*, that of a male aged 27 ±3 years (D/6-1), the other, an infant with an estimated age of 6 ±3 month, south of the *bema* (D/6-2) (figs. 11–12). It was posited by the excavators that both individuals were deposited in relation to the apse, thus post-dating the construction of the church, which is dated to the second half of the fourth century. Both graves had been paved over indicating that the church remained in use after the interments were deposited.[176]		
al-Kūm al-Aḥmar	Funerary Basilica	Last quarter of fourth/beginning of fifth century	C, B, A	M, W, J
		Description		
		This church appears to have developed out of a barrel-vaulted mud-brick structure which, though empty, is believed to have housed the remains of a saint. This structure was subsequently incorporated into the church as a crypt. Some two meters south of this were two additional stone-lined, presumably familial burials. The westernmost of the two contained the remains of two adults, one of which was male, as well as two infants between 1–1.5 years of age, while the easternmost contained two adults, but the state of preservation of the bones meant obtaining further information was impossible. It was hypothesised by B. Huber (2004) that the latter grave possibly contained the remains of a saint due to the presence of an opening in the covering slab. In a later article (2018) it is stated that the bones of a 40–60-year-old male found in the church crypt could have been those of a saint, but it is unclear which burial is being referenced given that the remains in said grave were apparently in too poor a state for age and sex to be determined. The presence of women is also referenced (2018) with regards to the two stone burials, but it is unclear as to where exactly they were found. Some 80 simple pit-burials of men, women, and children were interred around these three graves, but they pre-date the church, and are thus not to be classified as intra-ecclesial interments though could theoretically be *ad sanctos*. The floor of the church proper, however, contained some 179 additional interments, all of which were of males, while a vast cemetery area extended 200m around the church, with some 1000 burials so-far identified, comprising men, women, and children.[177]		

172 Uytterhoeven 2001, p. 64.
173 Uytterhoeven 2009, p. 458.
174 Grossmann 2002, pp. 427–428, fig. 49; also, Grossmann 1989b, p. 1862, pl. 7, which makes no reference to the crypt; Petrie 1890, p. 21, pl. 6; Uytterhoeven 2001, pp. 63–64; Uytterhoeven 2009, pp. 458–459.
175 Abdal-Fatah, Grossmann 2000, pp. 30–34, figs. 1, 4–5; Grossmann 2002, pp. 395–396, figs. 11–12; Grossmann 2014b, p. 97.
176 Molto et al. 2003, pp. 347, 349; Bowen 2002, p. 78; Bowen 2004 p. 21; Hope 2003, p. 252.
177 Huber 2004, pp. 1082–1091; Huber 2017, p. 5; Huber 2018, pp. 217, 221, 223; Grossmann 2002, pp. 131, 428–429, fig. 50; Grossmann 2014b, p. 102.

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Luxor (Diospolis Magalē)	Church in front of the pylon (Luxor Temple)	End of the sixth century	B	M
		Description		
		Only a single burial was present in this church, situated at the eastern end of the southern aisle. The remains were revealed to be those of a male between 40–50 years who was considered to be of a "high social standing." It is stated in Grossman, Whitcomb 1992 that the complete analysis of the individual would be included in the final report of the excavation, but it is unclear as to whether or not this was ever published. As is common, the figure was interpreted as having been "one of the archpriests or even the founder of the church."[178]		
Madinat Hābū (Memnoneia)	Small church in the temple precinct of Eye and Harmhab	Post-fourth century	B	U
		Description		
		This church developed out of a pre-existent building considered to have been erected prior to 300 based on the apparent fourth-fifth century date of the surrounding graves; several graves were recorded as being inside the structure, though no precise number is offered. The only details given regarding the interred is that some were Christian, while others were not, classified according to the presence or absence of crosses on coffins or grave walls.[179]		
Maryūt (identified with Marea and Philoxenite)	Transept Basilica	Fifth-sixth century	C	M, W, J
		Description		
		In the apse of the structure, which was constructed atop the earlier 'Old Church',[180] two crypts were revealed which are recorded having contained c. 120 burials. Included among the individuals were male and female adults, as well as "fetuses, newborns, infants, and children."[181] Additionally, a third barrel-vaulted crypt was uncovered in the southern apse side room. Despite having been looted, the remains of children as well as male and female adults were identified.[182]		
	Funerary Chapel	Sixth century	C	M, W, J
		Description		
		This is an apsed structure with three east-west oriented crypts situated side by side, extending the width of the building. Each crypt contained multiple burials, with a total of 23 individuals identified, though the number from each crypt is not specified. Among the interred were twelve sub-adult individuals between 1–18 years of age, four males of various ages between 30–50 years, one female between 30–40 years, as well as an 18–23-year-old individual of an undetermined sex. Sexes of the sub-adults are not provided. The excavators state that the burials are clearly familial but offer no explanation as to why. This is of course possible, and perhaps likely given the shared spaces, but the spaces could also have been re-used at a later time by non-relatives.[183]		
Dayr al-Qiddīsa Katrīn/Monastery of ST. Catherine		Sixth century	C, R	U
		Description		
		The room of relevance is the 'Dornbuschkapelle', a later-added chapel dedicated to the burning bush. In the publication from 1990, P. Grossmann referred to this simply as a chapel, but in his 2002 monograph it was described as a crypt. Little additional information, other than the means of access, is offered, but we can assume no remains were present. Additionally, a shrine situated to the right of the altar purportedly contains the remains of St Catherine.[184]		

178 Grossmann, Whitcomb 1993, pp. 29–30, 32–33 (n. 12), pls. 2–3; Grossmann 1973, pp. 167–181; Grossmann 1989b, p. 1889; Grossmann 2002, pp. 130, 448–450, fig. 68, pl. XIIIa.

179 Hölscher 1954, pp. 39–40, 56–57, fig. 60.

180 This 'Old Church' is considered datable either to the fourth or fifth century; but the crypts belong to the later structure. See: Babraj et al. 2020, pp. 14–16, fig. 13.

181 Szymańska, Babraj 2004, pp. 56–62, figs. 4, 7, which provisionally situates the construction of this later basilica in the fifth–sixth century; Szymańska, Babraj 2005, p. 43; Babraj et al. 2020, pp. 12–14.

182 Babraj et al. 2013, pp. 57–58, figs. 2, 9 (no. 38).

183 Szymańska, Babraj 2004, pp. 53–56, figs. 1–2; Szymańska, Babraj 2005, p. 43 (noted as totaling to 30 individuals); Babraj, Szymańska 2008, pp. 177–185.

184 Grossmann 1990, pp. 34–37, pls. 2–3; Grossmann 2002, pp. 136, 568, fig. 183.

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al-Šayḫ Ṭbāda (Antinoopolis)	Church of the so-called "Eastern Gate"	Last quarter of the fifth century	C, B	W, M, J
		Description		
		No interment was present in the crypt, with it understood that it was intended to house a reliquary rather than a complete body given the size. The burials in the floor of the nave included seven young women, as well as two men and one "very small" child.[185]		
	Church of St. Colluthos	Fourth-sixth century	C	N
		Description		
		The structure (D3) was originally a private burial chapel erected in the fourth century which was then transformed into a public church, with the area becoming a Christian healing center dedicated to Saint Colluthos, as attested to by the plethora of ticket oracles retrieved from the site. No interment was present, and its contested as to whether or not the remains of the saint were ever present here.[186]		
	Church in the North Necropolis (Kom 1 East)	Fifth-seventh century	B	U
		Description		
		This small burial chapel has an apse to the east and three east-west oriented rows of pits in the floor, said by the excavators to have housed five in-tact depositions. The photograph offered by P. Grossmann appears to show seven spaces, while the plan by Manfredi et al. seems to show eight of varying lengths, with it not entirely clear where the individuals were interred. Nonetheless, no information is available concerning the interred, with very little ever having been published relating to the excavation of the structure. An *in-situ* tombstone bearing the name 'Nymphe' in Greek was noted in the brief publication of M. Manfredi (1966), with it, and the textiles recovered, considered datable to the fifth century.[187]		
Sidi Maḥmūd		Sixth century	C, R	N
		Description		
		One of the only contra-apsed churches in Egypt, this structure is interpreted as having functioned as a place of healing, though apparently never having reached the same level of popularity as Abū Mīnā or Tall al-Maḫzan. In the floor of the altar in the eastern end was a recess likely intended to hold a reliquary, while a crypt was situated at the western end of the church, behind the contra-apse and thus exterior to the surface limits of the church building; this feature belongs to a third phase of construction. Rather than the crypt housing a burial, however, it seems that the burial was *below* the contra-apse, with this not having been excavated. The crypt was accessed by two sets of stairs which allowed for the circulation of traffic, with it likely that a small shrine occupied a niche in the eastern wall of the crypt which could have housed relics, perhaps related to the interred. Seating areas were present in the contra-apse, supposedly used for incubation, while a pedestal decorated with a cross is considered to have held a vessel for consecrated water or a receptacle for holy oil. The northern apse side room (of the eastern apse) is hypothesised to have functioned as a martyrium.[188] It was suggested that the body—which was considered to have been "an ascetic monk who lived in the neighbourhood"—had been removed, presumably already in antiquity.[189]		

185 Uggeri 1974, pp. 37–67, fig. 14, pls. 18–21 (for the date, see p. 66); Grossmann 2002, pp. 430, fig. 52; Grossmann 2010, pp. 169–170, fig. 2, pl. IVa; Grossmann 2011, pp. 114–117; Grossmann 2014b, pp. 107–108.

186 Manfredi 1998, pp. 25–26; Grossmann 2002, pp. 432–433, fig. 54; Grossmann 2014a, p. 102, fig. 12, pl. 4.

187 Manfredi 1966, p. 191; Manfredi 1969, p. 40; Manfredi et al. 2007, p. 627 n. 1, pl. 26a; Grossmann 2002, pp. 433–434; Grossmann 2014b, p. 102, fig. 12, pl. 4.

188 Grossmann, Korshid 1994, pp. 79–90, figs. 1–2; Grossmann, Korshid 1998, pp. 57–66, figs. 1–2; Grossmann 2002, pp. 397–398, fig. 13.

189 Grossmann, Korshid 1998, p. 60.

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Tall al-Faramā (Pelousion)	Rotunda church	Sixth century	C, R	N
		Description		
		A crypt is present at the western end of the church which likely once held a centrally positioned coffin. This space was accessed via two symmetrical stairways which would have permitted unhindered circulation of traffic, indicative of frequent visitation, and thus the importance of the interred. A small underground chamber was identified at the southern outer side of the crypt which is understood to have housed a later added tomb. No remains were retrieved during excavations, and no additional burials were identified.[190]		
	Tetraconch Church / North-West Church	Early fifth century	B	U
		Description		
		This church appears to have developed out of a private villa, with a room from this villa having been transformed into an oratory which then formed the nucleus of the church. There were at least four locations intended for coffins, which then came to be accompanied by a number of east-west oriented graves in the floor. This has led to the interpretation that the structure was intended to have a funerary function, likely having been a familial mausoleum related to the family who owned the villa.[191]		
Tall al-Maḥzan (Pelousion)	South Church	Fourth century	C, B, A	Misc.
		Description		
		This church contains basically every form of intra-ecclesial mortuary context and is a pertinent example of the diversity of the phenomenon. A chapel in the south-east of the structure contains a crypt which formed the nucleus of the building and likely functioned as a martyrium, while a staircase in the aisle of the church led to another crypt. Burials are littered throughout the entirety of the church in the floor, while a funerary annex is attached to the north of the structure. An exact number of graves is not given by the excavators. Two tombs were examined in the 1998 and 1999 campaigns for which anthropological data are available, but these are described as being *in front* of the church, rather than within it. This is the oldest of the three churches at the site and is thus considered to form the nucleus of the pilgrimage complex.[192]		
	Basilica Church	Fifth century	C, B,	M, W, J
		Description		
		Situated to the north of the South Church, this is the largest church at the site. Understood to have developed out of a three-apsed martyrium to which a crypt was eventually added with the construction of the church. Here too, the floor is full of burials, with a burial chamber considered to have belonged to the founder of the church and their family. Several mortuary contexts were examined during the 1998 and 1999 campaigns, revealing the following: in the martyrion were three coffins found to include a young woman 18–20 years who had been interred alongside an adult male (sarcophagus 10), a probable adult male (sarcophagus 11), and an adult of undetermined sex (unnumbered sarcophagus), each of which were later depositions. Additionally, four graves were examined in the crypt: a child, perhaps male, 6 ± 3 months interred alongside (as a later addition) a male 43 ± 3 years (tombs 5/1 and 5/2), a male 49 ± 2.5 years (tomb 6), presumably an adult male (tomb 7).[193]		

190 El-Taher, Grossmann 1997; Grossmann, Hafiz 1998, pp. 177–179, fig. 1; Grossmann, Hafiz 2001, pp. 109–111; Grossmann 2002, pp. 470–471, fig. 88; Grossmann 2014b, p. 109.

191 Bonnet et al. 2006, pp. 373–374, fig. 1; Bonnet et al. 2008, pp. 126–129; Bonnet et al. 2009, p. 142.

192 Bonnet, Abd el-Sami 2000, pp. 77–81, 83–84, figs. 1, 6; Bonnet, Abd el-Sami 2003, pp. 78–80, fig. 2; Grossmann 2002, pp. 475–476, fig. 90.

193 Bonnet, Abd el-Sami 2000, pp. 67–77, 84–87, figs. 1–5; Grossmann 2002, pp. 471–475, fig. 89; Bonnet et al. 2004, pp. 58–59.

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Dayr al-Abyaḍ/White Monastery	Large Church	Fifth century	C (?)	U
		Description		
		In the floor of the northern side room which communicates directly with the apse is situated a stone slab which, when moved to the side, reveals a shaft leading to a vaulted subterranean chamber. This is considered to have been a secret hiding place rather than a place of burial, but its location does indeed lead one to consider the possibility of a burial location. A corresponding chamber is considered to be present in the south.[194]		
	Tri-Conch Sanctuary	Fifth century	C	N
		Description		
		Below the nave of the chapel are situated two subterranean rooms interpreted as burial chambers due, in part, to the artistic programs decorating the walls. This has been interpreted as the burial place of Shenoute, but the classification is not wholly accepted. No human remains were recovered.[195]		
Qasimīya		Uncertain	C	U
		Description		
		Here, there is a small church containing a baptistry and an underground tomb. Unfortunately, I could not access the relevant publication and so am unable to offer additional details with regards to the tomb itself or the interred.[196]		

194 Grossmann 2002, pp. 530–531, figs. 150–151; Grossmann 2004, pp. 89–90.

195 Bolman et al. 2010, pp. 453–462; Grossmann 2014b, p. 97, figs. 6–7. Regarding the burial place of Shenoute, see: Grossmann 2004, pp. 85–105.

196 Grossmann et al. 2009.

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