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Medieval Christian crypt found in Sudan

A 900-year-old medieval crypt, containing seven naturally mummified bodies and walls covered with Greek and Sahidic Coptic inscriptions, has been excavated in a monastery at Old Dongola, the capital of the lost medieval kingdom Makuria. One of the mummies in the crypt (scientists aren't certain which one) is believed to be that of Archbishop Georgios, a powerful religious leader for whom the crypt was built.

The inscriptions were "intended to safeguard not only the tomb, but primarily those who were buried inside of it during the dangerous liminal period between the moment of dying and their appearance before the throne of God," writes Adam Łajtar, of the University of Warsaw, and Jacques van der Vliet, of Leiden University, in the most recent edition of the journal *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*.



The crypt contained the bodies of seven older males, no younger than 40, said anthropologist Robert Mahler, a researcher with the University of Warsaw who examined the remains. At least some of the individuals wore crosses somewhere on their body.

At the time the crypt was created, Makuria was at its height. Its kings, ruling from Old Dongola, controlled territory throughout much of modern-day Sudan and parts of southern Egypt. Makuria's ability to maintain good relations with the Fatimid Caliphate, which controlled northern Egypt, was important to the kingdom's success. The two had an extensive trade relationship, and many people from Makuria served in the Fatimid army.

Read more at: http://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.com/2013/12/medieval-christian-crypt-found-in-sudan.html#.U8_fg7Hw_cs