Christian Nubia is a term designating a region extending between the First Nile Cataract and territories to the south of present-day Khartoum, where from the middle of the sixth century until the end of the fifteenth Christian kingdoms of Makuria, Nobadia, and Alwa existed, kingdoms that are very little known in scholarly milieu and almost unknown outside it.

It should be reminded here that studies on the history and culture of Christian Nubia are a Polish specialisation, initiated by Professor Kazimierz Michałowski and his discovery of wall paintings in the cathedral of Faras. While this priceless finding opened the eyes of the whole world to the existence of Christian kingdoms in the Middle Nile Valley, present studies aim at disseminating the knowledge about them among both scholars representing related fields of research and a wider public. Wall paintings, not only those from Faras, are perhaps the most representative for Christian Nubia, showing the value of its culture. However, very few people know that beside those paintings (sometimes literally, on the same wall) a huge wealth of written sources exists created by Nubians themselves in four different languages (Greek, Coptic, Arabic, and the native Old Nubian language) and including various types of texts (from important monumental inscriptions, through epitaphs, private letters, literary works of religious nature, inscriptions left on walls of churches by pilgrims, to texts scratched on ceramic vessels).

Although studies on the history and culture of Christian Nubia have a long tradition going back to the nineteenth century, their state is still far from satisfactory. One may say that in terms of scholarly tools and methodology 'Nubiology' is currently in the state that disciplines dealing with classical antiquity achieved already 200 years ago. Sophisticated historical, political, and sociocultural theories are constructed in Nubian studies, but the research still suffers form the lack of basic scientific tools such as corpora of texts, databases, or even up-to-date handbooks, which long ago proved extremely helpful in studying Greek and Latin written sources coming from the area of the Mediterranean.

In my work on texts originating from the Middle Nile Valley I endeavour to fill in this methodological gap through a systematic and comprehensive analysis of particular subjects enabling the verification of 'big' theories. My principal area of research is literacy in Christian Nubia, broadly understood, and main objectives are to understand the phenomenon of using as many as four languages in this territory and to study all aspects of the production of written sources, such as popularity of particular types of texts, identity of their authors and readers, various linguistic phenomena occurring in them, scribal techniques and types of scripts, etc.

The research project entitled *'What's in a name?' A study on the onomastics of Christian Nubia* constitutes another piece in this puzzle. It has several objectives. First of all, it will result in creating a lexicon of personal names used in Nubia furnished with philological, historical, and prosopographical (i.e. referring to functions and offices fulfilled by a given person) commentaries. Second, an analysis will be carried out of the topographical and chronological distribution of individual names, which will allow for both preparing an onomastic map of Christian Nubia and distinguishing patterns of use of names in particular regions and periods. Third, an attempt will be made to establish on the basis of prosopographical data whether any restrictions in the use of particular names in certain ethnic, social, and professional groups. Fourth, a search will be carried out for cultural patterns and sources of inspiration (ethnic, religious, social) that governed naming practices in Christian Nubia. Thanks to this research we will gain an insight into medieval Nubian society, about which our knowledge is still very limited, and we will be able to better understand sociocultural and historical processes that shaped it.