

# Authoritative and Protective Insignia, Regalia and Symbols in Nubian Afro-Byzantine Rulers' Iconography

**Raita Steyn**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7506-8179>

University of Pretoria

raita.steyn@up.ac.za

## Abstract

This article discusses the “authority and protection” insignia, regalia and symbols which are used in the Nubian Afro-Byzantine iconography of kings, *eparchoi* and other royals. They are discussed and analysed—through the study of the most important frescos in Nubian medieval churches—in terms of their position, function and meaning within the Byzantine and Afro-Byzantine context. The article reaches a number of conclusions referring to the religious, artistic, symbolic, political and institutional use and value of these representations of authority, protection and their connotations.

**Keywords:** Byzantine iconography; Afro-Byzantine art; Nubian murals; Nubian *eparchoi* and royals; divine and saintly protection; Nubian regalia and symbols

## 1. Introduction

Nubia, one of the early civilizations of north-east Africa, was located in the region of what is known today as southern Egypt and northern Sudan. The name “Nubia” derived from the nomad Noba people who settled in that region in the 4th century at the collapse of the Meroitic kingdom. During the Christian period (ca. 550–1500 AD), Nubia was divided into three kingdoms: Noubadia, situated in the north, Makouria positioned in the middle, and, further south, Alodia (Alwa, Arwa).<sup>1</sup> In 640–641, Muslim Arabs

---

1 For the history of the three main Christian kingdoms, see mainly Giovanni Vantini, *Christianity in the Sudan* (Bologna: EMI Publishers, 1975); David N. Edwards, *The Nubian Past. An Archaeology of the Sudan* (London: Routledge, 2004); Derek A. Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia* (London: British Museum Press, 2002); William Y. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* (London: Princeton University Press, 1977) and William Y. Adams, *Qasr Ibrim: The Late Mediaeval Period* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1996).

conquered Egypt, from where in 641 or 642 and again in 652 they invaded Nubia, which led to a stalemate, resulting in the so-called *baqt*, a bilateral agreement of non-aggression and mutual exchange of goods between Christian Nubia and Muslim Egypt.<sup>2</sup> Noubadia and Makouria eventually united into one Monophysite kingdom, under the spiritual authority of the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria between 650 and 710.<sup>3</sup> It is now generally accepted that this unification was the work of King Merkourios, who ascended to the throne in ca. 697. Dongola in Makouria was the capital of this united kingdom, while Noubadia was administered by an *eparchos* in Faras.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the two regions were administered separately.<sup>5</sup>

Byzantine influence is strongly evident in Nubian and Ethiopian Monophysite Orthodoxy, art and architecture, as well as in political ideas.<sup>6</sup> There was an extraordinary fusion of cultures, based on the common ground of Christian faith, present in Nubian and Ethiopian artistic concepts. The purpose of this article is to discuss artistic concepts and

---

2 Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, 68–71.

3 A record is found in the chronicle of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria Eutychius, that in 719 the church of Nubia moved its loyalty from the Greek Orthodox to the Coptic Church.

4 The *eparchos* was a type of viceroy appointed by the king of Nubia, also referred to by the Arabs as *sahib el jebel*, (= Lord of the Mountains): Benjamin Hendrickx, “The Lord of the Mountain: A Study of the Nubian Eparchos of Noubadia,” *Le Muséon* 124 (3–4) (2011): 303–355. The Nubian function of *eparchos* is only partly inspired by the *eparchos* of Constantinople (*praefectus Urbis*), who is the mayor of this city. In fact, the Byzantines had different *eparchoi*, one of which was the *eparchos Aigyptou* who succeeded the Roman *praefectus Aegypti*, the governor of Egypt. See Rodolphe Guilland, “Etudes sur l’histoire administrative de l’Empire byzantin—L’Eparque,” *Byzantinoslavica* 41 (1980): 17–32.

5 William Y. Adams, “Medieval Nubia: Another Golden Age,” *Expedition* 35, no. 2 (1993): 32; Stefan Jakobielski, *Faras III. History of the Bishopric of Pachoras* (Warsaw: PWN, 1972), 37.

6 Byzantine influence in these fields has in the past sometimes been minimised (e.g. by Jadwiga Kubinska, *Faras IV: Inscriptions grecques chrétiennes* (Warsaw: PWN, 1974), 86), but there is now general consensus that—even in the later Nubian period—this influence remained important. Cf. Tomas Hägg, “Titles and Honorific Epithets in Nubian Greek Texts,” *Symbolae Osloenses* 65 (1990): 147–177, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00397679008590840>; Benjamin Hendrickx, “Byzantine Profane Titles, Epithets and Symbols in Use in the Medieval Nubian and Blemmyan Kingdoms,” *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 87 (N.S. 16) (2005): 325–342; Benjamin Hendrickx, “The *Urkunden* of the *Eparchos* of Nubadia and Their *Compositio*,” *Journal of Early Christian History* 22, no. 1 (2011), 40–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2222582X.2011.11877230>. Even elements coming from Asian heterodoxy or Monophysitism greatly remained within the Byzantine orbit. Weitzmann has proven that some Nubian painters took Byzantine icons as mode (e.g. for the Virgin and Child, especially the *Hodegitria*, *Galaktotrophousa* and *Eleousa* types), sometimes with slight changes: Kurt Weitzmann, “Some Remarks on the Sources of the Fresco Paintings of the Cathedral of Faras,” in *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in Christlicher Zeit*, ed. Erich Dinkler (Recklinghausen: Bongers, 1970), 336. It is of interest that Victor Lazarev writes that the type of *Virgo lactans* developed toward a similarity to representations of Isis and Horus, with which it corresponds both in subject and in style: Victor Lazarev, *Studies in Byzantine Painting* (London: Pindar Press, 1995), 199.

symbols of authority and protective regalia and insignia, evident in the Nubian murals.<sup>7</sup> These not only remarkably resemble concepts found in the Byzantine iconographical models but also confirm the need for divine and holy protection received or given by the African Nubian rulers. Not only symbols and insignia are of particular interest, but the vestments and robes of *eparchoi* and royals in themselves are of prime importance.<sup>8</sup>

In this article, I will begin with the few known kings of Noubadia before the unification. Then I will discuss the controversial iconography of the *eparchoi* of Noubadia, who continued to rule the North as viceroys or deputy kings of the unified kingdom. A new theory, however, believes that the paintings of *eparchoi* were in fact paintings of the kings of Makouria, but no final agreement has been reached among scholars.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, due to the great quantity of written documents by or regarding these *eparchoi* and their position, the controversy, which may greatly influence the study of the institutions and ideology of Nubia, does not affect the study of saintly or divine protection of rulers, since the function of the *eparchoi* in Noubadia as such is not

---

7 All figures in this article were drawn by me. The article results partly from my PhD studies (Raita Steyn, “Christian Divine, Holy and Saintly Protection of African Rulers in the Byzantine ‘Coptic’ Iconographic Tradition,” [PhD thesis, University of Johannesburg, 2014]) and is part of my research project at the University of Pretoria. While this article focuses on Nubia, in another article I have focused on Ethiopia with emphasis on the saints who gave protections to the Ethiopian Afro-Byzantine rulers: Raita Steyn, “‘Saintly’ Protection of African Rulers in the Afro-Byzantine Orthodox Iconographic Tradition,” in *Graeco-Africana et Afro-Byzantina. Proceedings of the International Conference on Graeco-African and Afro-Byzantine Studies at the University of Johannesburg (27 October–1 November 2014)*, ed. Thekla Sansaridou-Hendrickx and Benjamin Hendrickx (Johannesburg: Institute for Afro-Hellenic Studies, 2016), 208–219.

8 Kazimierz Michalowski, “Open Problems of Nubian Art and Culture in the Light of the Discoveries at Faras,” in *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in Christlicher Zeit*, ed. Erich Dinkler (Recklinghausen: Bongers, 1970), 17–18, has remarked that although the study of robes, crowns, bishops’ chasubles and diverse insignia continuously progresses, our knowledge of “which royals and other dignitaries were wearing which vestments and *insignia*, and which function corresponded to which title,” remains limited.

9 Włodzimierz Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings, the Official Program of the Pachoras (Faras) Cathedral,” in *Between the Cataracts. Proceedings of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies*, Warsaw University (27 August–2 September 2006), Part I. *Main Papers*, ed. Włodzimierz Godlewski and Adam Lajtar. Warsaw: PAM Supplement Series 2.1. (Warsaw: Warsaw University Press, 2008), 271–274, has proposed that the *eparchoi*-paintings in Faras were in fact paintings of the kings of Makouria (Dongola), and that the horned crowns are in fact royal crowns of Alodia. This Arwan crown—says Godlewski—replaced the older Byzantine-type royal crown in the first half of the 11th century, because there was probably a personal union then between the ruling families of Makouria and Alodia, which would have led to a “Nubianizing” of Makouria. Godlewski’s theory is not based on any written source and already Jakobielski (“Horned Crown—an Epigraphic Evidence,” *Etudes et Travaux* 26 [2013]: 326–37) strongly reacted to Godlewski’s hypothesis, which does not cover all cases of *eparchoi*-paintings.

affected by this.<sup>10</sup> Yet I will still present the traditionally accepted paintings of *eparchoi* separately from those of known kings.

Iconographic murals found at the Cathedral in Faras are referred to by Godlewski as expressing “official programs”<sup>11</sup> and include portraits of bishops, kings and other royals. Godlewski has established several architectural phases of construction and reconstruction of the Faras Cathedral according to the name of the bishop connected (directly or chronologically) to these phases. The first one refers to the Aetios Cathedral (from ca. 620), followed by the Paulos Cathedral (from ca. 707), the Petros Cathedral (from second half of 10th century) and the Late Cathedral (between 1300 and the 1360s).<sup>12</sup> Godlewski also refers to “liturgical programs” comprising iconographic scenes of the Nativity, Christ in Glory and Christ Emmanuel, the Virgin Mary, the Ascension and the archangels,<sup>13</sup> while Michalowski distinguishes between four periods in the stylistic development of Nubian paintings. These periods are marked by different colours: a) the violet style (8th to mid-9th century), b) the white style (mid-9th to the beginning of the 10th century), c) the red-yellow style (10th century) and d) the multi-coloured style (11th–12th century). After 1175, the latest frescos seem to return to dark colours.<sup>14</sup> Since the Monophysite and Orthodox Churches segregated the sexes, as a reflection of this rule the Nubians put paintings of males (*eparchoi*, kings, bishops, etc.) in the south aisle, and pictures of females (queens, princesses, women) in the north aisle.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Silko and the Noubadian Kings

After the disintegration of the Late Meroitic Kingdom, newcomers of Nubian stock, belonging to the X-group or Ballana group inherited the Meroitic kingship and power. Only a few royal names have survived in the written sources, namely these of King Kharammadoye (ca. 410–420)<sup>16</sup>, King Silko (ca. 450)<sup>17</sup>, King Abourni (post 450)<sup>18</sup>, King Eirpanome (ca. 559 or 574)<sup>19</sup> and King Tokiltoeton (post 559)<sup>20</sup>, the last two already

---

10 Cf. Gerald M. Browne, *Old Nubian Texts in Qasr Ibrim. II* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1989); Gerald M. Browne, *Old Nubian Texts in Qasr Ibrim. III* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1991); Adams, *Qasr Ibrim*; Hendrickx, “Lord,” 303–355 and Jakobielski, “Horned Crown,” 327–336; Hendrickx, “*Urkunden*,” 40–56.

11 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 263–274.

12 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 263–265; Godlewski, *Cathedrals*, 71–72.

13 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 263–265.

14 Kazimierz Michalowski, *Faras: Centre Artistique de la Nubie Chretienne* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1966) 11–24; Michalowski, “Open Problems,” 14–15.

15 Jakobielski, *Faras III*, 60.

16 Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, 17, 20; Török, in Tormod Eide, Tomas Hägg, Richard Holton Pierce and László Török, eds, *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum*, vol. 3, *From the First to the Sixth Century AD* (Bergen: Bergen University, 1998), 1103–7, no 300. When we refer below to a discussion by only one of the only, we give the name of the author, followed by *Fontes*.

17 Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, 17–20.

18 Welsby, 17.

19 Welsby, 37–38.

20 Welsby, 38.

being Christians, and the second one probably still a heathen, but living in a Christian environment. It is this King, Silko, who is best known as a result of his triumphal Greek inscription at Philae (ca. 450)<sup>21</sup> and the letter of his foe, the Blemmyan King Phonen, to King Abourni of the Noubades, Silko's successor.<sup>22</sup>

It is very tempting to see in some lines of the inscription of Silko, celebrating his victory over the Blemmyes, an African belief associated—according to Duerden—with the king's power to bring rain and provide shade from the sun for the earth. The sky spirits that belonged to the king's cult were linked to the tallest trees in the forest, while dark clouds were said “to be seen hovering over the trees at the shrine of the sky spirit.”<sup>23</sup> King Silko writes in his inscription:

As for the rulers of the other peoples who contend with me, I do not allow them to sit in the shade, but in the sun outside, and they did not drink water [or I did not give them water] inside their houses (οἱ δεσπότη[αι] τῶν ἄλλων ἔθνῶν, οἱ φιλονεικοῦσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ, οὐκ ἀφῶ αὐτοὺς καθεσθῆναι εἰς τὴν σκιάν, εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ ἡλίου ἕξω, καὶ οὐκ ἔπωκαν νηρὸν ἕσω εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτῶν).<sup>24</sup>

The inscription is accompanied by a graffito that is generally believed to be a picture of Silko, although it may represent another contemporary Ballana ruler. Silko sits on a horse, spearing an enemy (almost in St George-style or generally in the later Christian Nubian and Ethiopian cavalier style, where saints on horseback kill their adversaries with a spear). The king wears a jewelled royal necklace, a bracelet, armlets, a Roman tunic and is crowned by a winged Victory (*Nike*). Silver crowns, like the one worn by Silko are similar to these worn in Meroe.<sup>25</sup> Below Silko's inscription, there is another picture, which may refer to him, dressed in a Roman tunica, a double crown, a *uraeus*, armlets and a sceptre in his right hand and an ankh in the left.<sup>26</sup> The style of the inscription's language and some regalia in the pictures (the Roman tunica, the *Nike* figure, the warrior on horseback) strongly suggest that Silko was an ally of the Romans (Byzantines), although one cannot deny the Meroitic legacy (silver crown, double crown<sup>27</sup>, *uraeus*<sup>28</sup> and armlets).

---

21 Török and Hägg, in *Fontes*, 1147–1153, no. 317.

22 Pierce and Török, in *Fontes* 1158–1165, no. 319.

23 Dennis Duerden, *African Art: An Introduction* (London: Hamlyn, 1974), 75.

24 Greek text and translation in Eide, Hägg, Pierce and Török, *Fontes III*, 1149–1151; Benjamin Hendrickx, *Official Documents Written in Greek Illustrating the Ancient History of Nubia and Ethiopia* (Johannesburg: Institute for Afro-Hellenic Studies, 1984), 75–80, no. 16.

25 Lawrence Kirwan, “The X-Group Problem,” *Meroitica* 6 (1982): 200.

26 For these descriptions and further commentary, see Eide, Hägg, Pierce and Török, *Fontes*, 1151–1153; László Török, *Late Antique Nubia. History and Archeology of the Southern Neighbour of Egypt in the 4th–6th c. A.D.* (Budapest: Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1988), 59 and pl. I.

27 This type of crown was also found in a tomb of a ruler as well as in Meroe. Cf. Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, 22.

28 Silko had only one protective *uraeus*, while the Egyptian and the Black Nubian pharaohs wore two of them, as long as they were ruling over Upper and Lower Egypt.



**Figure 1:** Silko on horseback.

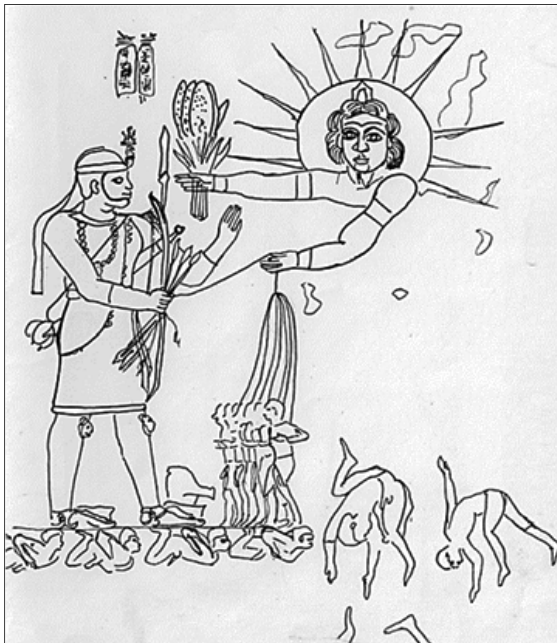
Source: Raita Steyn, based on <http://www.twcenter.net/forums/showthread.php?108379-FACTION-The-Kingdom-of-Makuria/page14&styleid=41>



**Figure 2:** Silko

Source: Raita Steyn, based on Török and Hägg, in *Fontes*, title page.

In fact, even Silko’s victory picture under divine protection is not the first or oldest one in Nubia, since similar elements in a relief of King Sherkarer of Kush, who, however, does not belong to the Noubadian Kingdom *sensu stricto*, are found.<sup>29</sup> King Sherkarer (20–30 AD) was already depicted in a famous relief carved on a rock at Jebel Qeili, under the protection of the sun god, who gave him victory by smiting his enemies. Note that in this picture (Figure 3) the king has received a bow, a spear and arrows from the sun god. The sun god is giving his blessing, holding out three heads of sorghum in his right hand; with his left hand, he hands over enslaved enemies to the King.



**Figure 3:** King Sherkarer  
 Source: Raita Steyn, based on Hendrickx, *Official Documents*, 44.

Of Kings Eirpanome and Tokiltoeton, church founding dedications have been found respectively in Dendur and Ikhmindi. In these inscriptions, both kings are called (like the Byzantine rulers) “Christ-loving” (φιλόχριστος). There are no engravings or paintings available of those two kings.<sup>30</sup>

29 Cf. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor*, 313; Hendrickx, *Official Documents*, 44; Fritz Hintze, “Preliminary Report of the Butana Expedition 1958 Made by the Institute for Egyptology of the Humboldt University, Berlin,” *Kush* 7 (1959): 190.

30 Eide, Hägg, Pierce and Török, in *Fontes* III: 1194–6, no. 330. Sergio Donadoni, “Un’epigrafe Greco-nubiana da Ikhmindi,” *Parola del Passato* 4, no. 69 (1959): 458–465.

### 3. *Eparchoi Noubadias*

Paintings of rulers, traditionally considered to be *eparchoi*, are found in different places in different churches. Most of the *eparchoi* and dignitaries, who may or may not be *eparchoi* cannot be identified and it is often difficult to date the pictures. I here discuss the most important and representative frescos.

#### 3.1 The *eparchos* Fresco in Faras

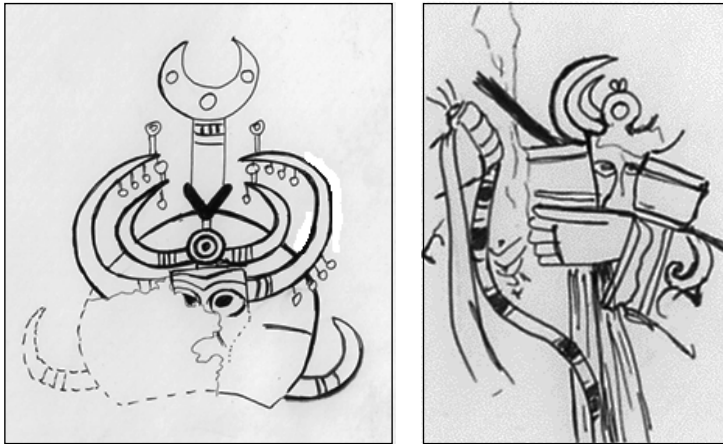
Michalowski<sup>31</sup> has described two protective scenes, in the first of which an unnamed *eparchos* is protected by Christ, found in 12th-century fresco fragments in the Faras Cathedral (now in the National Museum of Khartoum) and representing Nubian iconographic art at its highest level. In contradiction to the Byzantine iconographic rule, where rulers were depicted wearing a halo, the *eparchos* is portrayed without a halo but with a headdress.<sup>32</sup> The headdress is decorated as follows: it has a double pair of horns fixed on its sides; the front pair of horns is adorned with three small bells and the other two have five bells each. The decoration of the horns ends with small rounded balls on their tips. In the middle, on top of the headdress, raised by a small bar, rests a half-moon, adorned with three semi-precious stones. The composition is very fragmentary: only Christ's head and the *eparchos*' crown are preserved. The second scene consists of a similar *Eparchenkrone*: an unnamed *eparchos* found on a western pillar in the same church (now in the National Museum of Warsaw). The *eparchos* is portrayed wearing a long red spiral-patterned tunic, adorned with red and green emblems and black lines. The tunic is painted against a light mauve background. The *eparchos* holds a bow in his right hand and a double-horned diadem in his left hand, to his chest. Whatever the value of Godlewski's thesis on the *eparchoi* and kings' crowns, these two crowns belong without doubt to *eparchoi*, since an inscription states: 'OYTOC ECTIN EΠΑΡΧΟC..'

---

31 Hendrickx, "Lord," 321–124; Michalowski, *Centre*, 23 and pl. XIX, 2; Kazimierz Michalowski, *Faras. Die Kathedrale aus dem Wüstensand* (Zurich: Benziger, 1973), 165–166 and figures. 12/13, 91, 92, 93; Jakobielski, "Horned Crown," 327, 330–332.

32 Bogdan Zurawski, "Medieval Nubian Regalia: Innovation versus Tradition," in *Recent Research in Kushite History and Archaeology: Proceedings of the 8th International Conference for Meroitic Studies*, ed. Derek A. Welsby (London: British Museum Press, 1999), 224.





**Figure 4:** Nubian *Eparchoi* Crowns

Source: Raita Steyn, based on Jakobielski, "Horned Crown," 327 and Michalowski, *Faras*, 93.

### 3.2 The *eparchos* Painting in Abd el-Qadir

A painting (dated to the 1270s), found in the Abd el-Qadir church shows an *eparchos* wearing golden earrings and dressed in a tunic, holding a sceptre in his right hand.<sup>33</sup> Griffith points out that an inscription next to the painting identifies the figure as an *eparchos* of Nubia.<sup>34</sup> Godlewski first identified his name as Marikouda yet later rejected his own identification, believing that the figure was a king, which in turn was rejected by Jakobielski.<sup>35</sup> The tunic is decorated with repeated patterns of Byzantine-inspired double-headed eagles within interwoven circles. The two-headed eagle was the emblem of the Byzantine emperors and was used as the emblem for the rank of supreme commander. The headgear of the *eparchos* is very similar to the previous crowns described above; on either side are horns that have bells hanging from them. In front of the headgear is a pentagram or hexagram—both interpretations are possible because the fresco has

33 Francis Ll. Griffith, "Oxford Excavations in Nubia," *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 15 (1928): 70, pl. XXXII, painting 12; Jakobielski, "Horned Crown": 332–335; Bożena Rostkowska, "Patronage of the Arts in Nobadia on the Basis of Archaeological and Written Sources," in *Nubian Studies: Proceedings of the Symposium for Nubian Studies, Selwyn College, Cambridge, 1978*, ed. John M. Plumley (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1982), 211 and 214; Hendrickx, "Lord," 322–324. My analysis of the *eparchos* in 3.2 is a more correct version of the corresponding discussion in my thesis (Steyn, "Christian Divine, Holy and Saintly Protection of African Rulers," Chapter 6, 156–157).

34 Griffith, "Oxford Excavations in Nubia," pl. XV, 70 and pl. XXIX.

35 Włodzimierz Godlewski, "Late Period in Nubian Art—from the Middle of 13th to the End of 14th Centuries," in *Der Sudan in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart (Sudan Past and Present)*, ed. R. Gundlach, M. Kropp, and A. Leibundgut (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1995), 38; Godlewski, "Bishops and Kings," 274; Jakobielski, "Horned Crown," 332–334.

been damaged. While the pentagram represents King Solomon's seal, the six-pointed star is linked to the Star of David. Both types of star are found in Nubian paintings and referred to in Nubian documents.<sup>36</sup> The six-pointed star is linked to power and authority and is similar to the emblem of the Byzantine emperor's autocracy, which is reflected in decisions concerning military and administrative matters.<sup>37</sup> Zurawski thinks that the *eparchos*' horned helmet signified a subordinate rank in Lower Nubia.<sup>38</sup> This, in the light of the fact that the *eparchoi* were the successors to the original Noubadian kings and continued to rule in the South, should be nuanced, the king nevertheless being their overlord.<sup>39</sup>

The *eparchos* also holds a miniature model of a church in his left hand, indicating that he is the founder of the church. Over his right shoulder, he is wearing a sash ending in the royal purse, a symbol of authority, which, according to Zurawski, is unknown in Byzantine royal depictions. In other African kingdoms, the royal purse, worn over the king's right arm, was used for collecting levies. Zurawski refers to an 18th century Portuguese missionary who witnessed the ceremonial enthronement of the king of the Congo, during which the king was given a levy sack. This levy sack was a traditional attribute that symbolised his earthly power to rule over his people. The Congolese royal sack was identical in shape to that worn by the Nubian Christian kings.<sup>40</sup> However, Zurawski's assertion that the royal purse is unknown in Byzantium is incorrect since Grabar refers to two mosaics found in the Hagia Sophia, portraying emperors holding a purse or sack with money—the "sack" may be different in shape, but the concept is the same. One mosaic depicts Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos and Empress Zoë offering a purse and a scroll to Christ enthroned. The other mosaic portrays the Virgin and Child between Emperor John II Komnenos and Empress Irene, presenting a purse of silver and a roll of parchment as donations. Grabar says that this type of offering was a customary part of the ceremonial offerings, obligatory for the royals.<sup>41</sup> Christ is pictured behind the *eparchos*' right shoulder. His right arm is holding the *eparchos*' right arm and at the same time touching the royal purse's sash with the tips of his fingers. In addition, the fact that Christ touches the royal purse displays submission of the funds to Christ and the requirement of holy and divine protection over it. Behind the *eparchos*' left side is another smaller holy figure holding a shield and wearing a halo. It seems as if this holy figure is also holding a handkerchief in its right hand, another symbol of the

---

36 Vantini, *Christianity*, 156.

37 Alexis Savvides and Benjamin Hendrickx, *Introducing Byzantine History* (Paris: Herodotos, 2001), 63.

38 Zurawski, "Regalia," 228.

39 See also the important article by Jakobielski, "Horned Crown," 325–337 to which I will return in section 3.3 of this article.

40 Zurawski, "Regalia," 226. Zurawski does not exclude the possibility that the sack was, however, a water-skin sack.

41 André Grabar, *Byzantine Painting, Historical and Critical Study* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 98–100.

supreme power of a ruler. Griffith considers this figure as a warrior saint, his smaller body enhancing the greatness of Christ, while Hendrickx relates the miniature figure to the *Archistrategos*, i.e. Archangel Michael, due to his position as heavenly leader of the army and protector of the earthly leader, the *basileus*, who is the commander of the earthly army.<sup>42</sup>



**Figure 5:** *Eparchos* protected by Christ.  
Source: Raita Steyn, based on Griffith, “Oxford Excavations in Nubia,” pl XXXII, painting 12.

The illustration of the *eparchos* holding a church and offering it to Christ resembles the same concept found in a mosaic at the southern entrance of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. The mosaic portrays Emperor Justinian I offering the “Great Church”

---

42 Hendrickx, “Lord,” 323–324: he also refers to Archangel Michael as protector of the imperial Byzantine House of the Angeloi as depicted on Byzantine coins. Archangel Michael is depicted as protector of his namesake emperors. Thus Isaak II Komnenos minted a coin in which Archangel Michael is depicted together with the emperor holding a sword between them. See Michael F. Hendy, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire, 1081–1261* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1969), 143. Later, Michael VIII Palaiologos issued hyperpyra on the reverse of which Archangel Michael presents the emperor to Christ, who holds a scroll. Michael Palaiologos also placed a bronze statue of Archangel Michael in front of the Holy Apostles’ Church in Constantinople. See Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. 5, part 1 (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1999), 107.

to the Mother of God, with Emperor Constantine I, offering the city to the Virgin and Child. The Virgin and Child are positioned between the two emperors.<sup>43</sup>

The *eparchos* receives double protection: from Christ and from the Archangel Michael (or a saintly warrior). The power to rule as a royal figure is given to the *eparchos* by Christ in a symbolic way as he stands behind the “right” arm of the *eparchos* who holds in his “right” hand a sceptre. The “right” and not the “left” symbolically relates to God’s divine and glorious power,<sup>44</sup> while the divine power to rule with military strength is given to him by the archangel. This echoes a personal delegation of authority for administrative matters, showing that the *eparchos* owed his investiture with wisdom to his heavenly ruler, Christ. The fact that the archangel is depicted holding an attribute such as a shield relates, firstly, to the divine and spiritual protection that he bestows upon the *eparchos* and the church and, secondly, to the physical protection that he receives. Comparing the role of the archangel to the role of the emperor in Byzantium, both are military rulers, the one of God’s heavenly army, the other of the earthly army. The emperor, moreover, has the duty to act as a deputy of Christ by protecting his churches. Finally, the Nubian rulers were also the protectors of the patriarch of Alexandria.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.3 *Eparchoi* or Kings: Jacobielski versus Godlewski

Although I have already examined the crowns of the rulers discussed in the examples mentioned above, Jakobielski’s recent article on horned crowns obliges me to pay special attention on this subject. Jakobielski, who wrote this article as a reaction against Godlewski’s theory that the pictures of the *eparchoi* were in fact pictures of kings, made copies of the existing horned crowns (or helmet-crowns) in Nubia as found in the murals. He distinguishes between six different types, of which two can be divided into two subtypes each.<sup>46</sup> The differentiation resides in the complex design of each crown: some have only two, others four or even six horns; some have a crescent on top of the crown, other not, some are composite, comprising a diadem, mounted with a *bucranium*, or a diadem mounted on a horned helmet. He concludes that Godlewski’s theory could certainly not cover all cases, and that his theory is not based on evidence.<sup>47</sup> The serious problems Jakobielski has highlighted deserve, without doubt, further research and specialised studies. So also does the study of the different Byzantine-type crowns of

---

43 The mosaic of Emperor Constantine the Great in the Hagia Sophia church in Constantinople portrays Constantine’s dedication of the city he had founded to the Virgin—Grabar, *Byzantine Painting*, 95. See also Grabar, *Byzantine Painting*, 97–102.

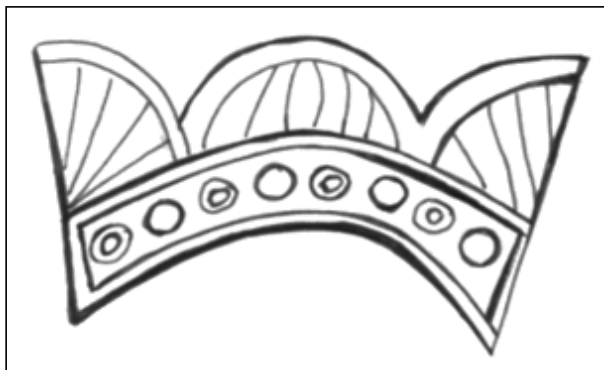
44 Exod 15:6 and 12; Ps 110: 1, 5; Matt 26:64; Mark 14:64; 16:19; Luke 20:42 and 22:69; Acts 2:33–34; 5:31; 7:55–56; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20.

45 Peter L. Shinnie, “Medieval Nubia” [= out-of-print 1954 pamphlet of the Sudan Antiquities Service, Khartoum], accessed April 15, 2017, <http://rumkatkilise.org/nubia.htm>; Zurawski, “Regalia,” 223–224.

46 Jakobielski, “Horned Crown,” 327–331.

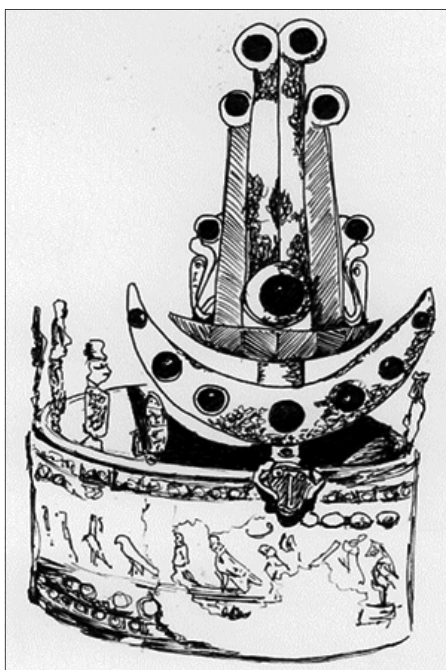
47 Compare also note 9 above.

kings and other royals. One should add here the importance of the Ballana royal crowns too, found in the Ballana tombs.



**Figure 6:** Byzantine type Nubian crown

Source: Raita Steyn, based on Michalowski, *Kathedrale*, pl. 70.



**Figure 7:** Ballana crown

Source: Raita Steyn, based on <http://www.unesco.org/culture/museum-for-dialogue/item/en/98/silver-diadem>.

## 4. Kings, Mothers of Kings, Princes and Princesses: portraits, crowns, birds, rings and different programs

The following examples are representative of the royal pictures:

### 4.1 The Kings

\* A portrait of King Georgios I (ca. 856–892) under the protection of the Virgin, which is not well preserved, is found in the apse of Faras Cathedral and dated to the second half of the 9th century<sup>48</sup> (now in the National museum of Warsaw). Yet other sovereigns are painted either in the same Cathedral, namely Stefanos (?) and Solomon (?), or in Sonqi Tino (Stefanos (?) or Rafael (?) or his son (?)).<sup>49</sup> In the Paulos Cathedral, there is also a portrait of King Zacharias III.<sup>50</sup> These monarchs wear Byzantine-type crowns.

\* King Georgios III, crowned ca. 970, is illustrated in a mural, standing in front of a much larger figure of the Virgin.<sup>51</sup> The Virgin offers her protection by embracing King Georgios III with her right arm whilst holding a sceptre in the same hand, ready to be given to the king, and with the left hand, she holds the infant Christ. Christ at the same time touches the royal crown with his right hand—thus also giving the king his protection and blessing. The body of Christ is the church and is referred to in Scripture: “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn ...”<sup>52</sup> Godlewski refers to the Virgin as the patroness of the Cathedral of Petros.<sup>53</sup> The king wears a Byzantine-type crown, as do almost all other kings of the same period and later.

\* The crown of the Byzantine Emperor Leo VI, embellished with a bird standing on its edge, is reminiscent of the crown of the Nubian King Georgios III in Sonqi Tino Church. The king’s crown has two small birds, one on the left and the other on the right edge of the lower part of the crown.<sup>54</sup> While both crowns are essentially different in design, their message is the same— they are both symbols of authority, power and protection. Birds also play a positive, sometimes protective role as advisers or guides. They are found in the decorations in old churches, at sites and in handicrafts (such

48 Michalowski, *Kathedrale*, 121; Michalowski, “Open Problems,” 13, 21 and pl. 2.

49 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 271, 276; Sergio Donadoni, “Les fouilles à l’église de Sonqi Tino,” 214–215.

50 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 271.

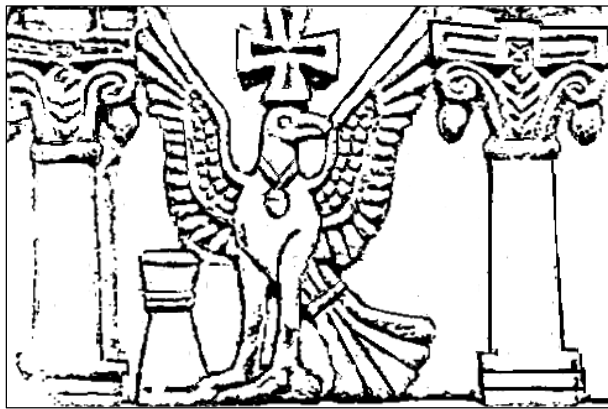
51 Kazimierz Michalowski, *Faras: Wall Paintings in the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Artystyczno-Graficzne, 1974), 176; W. Godlewski, “The Golden Age of Makuria,” *Africana Bulletin* 50 (2002): 88–91; Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 265.

52 Col 1:18; Col 1:24 and Eph 1:22–23.

53 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 265. As such one may also conclude that the Virgin is the protector of the infant Christ who represents the church according to the interpretation of the given verses and indirectly also becomes the protector of the church.

54 Images in Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 272.

as crowns). Birds on pillars and blocks of friezes, from the early 7th-century block from an apse frieze in red sandstone are seen on the pillar of the arch at the entrance to the square of the Aetios Cathedral (now in Warsaw National Museum). These birds represent in fact 24 eagles with spread wings and a cross above each of them. While the cross of course refers to Christianity, the eagles, especially the double-headed ones, refer to Byzantium,<sup>55</sup> although I wish to add that they were also found in the Meroitic Empire, e.g. on cups.<sup>56</sup> Plumley, on the other hand, has considered the birds in the Faras Cathedral and elsewhere in Faras as doves, thereby noting that the doves with outspread wings and a cross upon their head “may have been the badge or symbol of the kingdom of Maris [i.e. Noubadia] or of the see of Lower Nubia.”<sup>57</sup>



**Figure 8:** Bird on apse frieze

Source: Raita Steyn, based on Michalowski, *Faras*, pl. 1.

\* The famous fresco of the Nativity at Faras (second half of the 12th century),<sup>58</sup> is a magnificent composite tableau combining the Virgin with Christ with the magi, the shepherds and King Moise, Joseph, two archangels and the traditional animals. It is

55 Bożena Iwaszkiewicz, “La frise de l’abside de la première Cathédrale de Faras,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 60, no. 2 (1974): 380–81; Włodzimierz Godlewski, “La frise de l’abside de première cathédrale de Pachoras (Faras),” in *Orbis Aethiopicus*, ed. P. Scholtz (Albstadt: K. Schuler, 1992), 339–40; Godlewski, *Cathedrals*, 37–39 fig. 19; 165 fig. 16; 46 fig. 25.

56 Patrice Lenoble, “The Division of the Meroitic Empire and the End of Pyramid Building in the 4th Century AD: An Introduction to Further Excavations of Imperial Mounds in the Sudan,” in *Recent Research in Kushite History and Archaeology: Proceedings of the 8th International Conference for Meroitic Studies*, ed. Derek A. Welsby (London: British Museum, 1999): 191, fig. 5.

57 John M. Plumley, “Some Examples of Christian Nubian Art from the Excavations at Qasr Ibrim,” in *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in Christlicher Zeit*, ed. Erich Dinkler (Recklinghausen: Bongers, 1970), 132.

58 Michalowski, “Open Problems,” 13 and 21, pl. 1.

my considered opinion that it represents both the official and liturgic programmes. The symbolism, also composite, is unique in that it covers protection, authority, the New Testament and perhaps Jewish tradition.<sup>59</sup> One of the magi, who are depicted as cavalier saints, is dressed as a Nubian king according to Michalowski,<sup>60</sup> while the bit worn by one of the horses is the same as the iron horse-bits found in the Ballana tombs, thus establishing a link between both cultures, Ballana and Christian Nubian.<sup>61</sup> In the same Nativity mural complex, we remark under the Nativity scene itself a person, wearing a crown and now identified as King Moise.<sup>62</sup> The Virgin represented in the Nativity, of the *Galaktotrophousa* type, is portrayed wearing a royal crown similar to that of the “Mother of the King”-type. Godlewski refers to another such example found at the Church of Raphael in Tamit.<sup>63</sup> He concludes that Bishop Petros’s “official program” was actually a reflection of the belief in the Makourian kings’ divine power as well as a reflection of the unique position the “Mother of the King” held by referring to the Virgin’s role as the Mother of God. When one accepts this view, it becomes indeed understandable that, for the Nubians, it is the Virgin who protects the King—a symbolic expression rightly chosen because of her role as the Mother of God. Christ, who is also a King (King of the Jews)<sup>64</sup>, thus becomes symbolically associated with the Mother of the King of Nubia.

I suggest that the sceptre, attribute of power and protection and a royal symbol of sovereignty, depicted in the Afro-Byzantine iconography, has also the blessing of the Virgin. Then, the Virgin is not only the patroness of the Cathedral but in my opinion also the protector of the Christian people; the Christians as such are associated with the church as the church is indirectly referred to as the bride of Christ.<sup>65</sup> Not only is the Virgin the protector of the Christians but she becomes the protector of especially the females, as her images are found in the northern part of the *naos*—the part of the church reserved specially for females. Also, to answer the question of which specific types of iconography protected only the female and not the male rulers in protective iconographic scenes, we can accept, based on Godlewski’s findings, that the ideological image of the Virgin as protector is expressed in two specific types of images: the *Theotokos* and the *Galaktotrophousa*. However, we must conclude that the Virgin does not only protect the

---

59 Zurawski, “Regalia,” 228–229 connects the figure of King Moise also with the biblical Moses, both being legislators.

60 Michalowski, 1967a: 147 and pl. 66.

61 Kirwan, X-group, 200.

62 See Godlewski (*Cathedrals*, 117) for the correct date. Godlewski (“Bishops and Kings,” 271) believes that the identification of King Moise is wrong, and that the figure is rather the mother of King Solomon.

63 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 265. Godlewski does not know the biblical interpretation by Zurawski (see note 59 above).

64 Matt 2:2; 25:31–46; John 18:37; 19:19.

65 “The bride of Christ” is directly associated with the New Jerusalem of the Holy City (Rev 21:2, 9; 22:17), Paul used the marriage relationship to illustrate the relationship of Christ to his Church. See also 1 Cor 11:3; 12:12–28; Eph 4:12–16; 5:25–33.



female rulers but also the male rulers whether king or bishop, as portrayed in the Petros Cathedral.

\* A Dongolese monarch, wearing three rings, is painted on the wall of the *xenon* of Dongola. The Trinity, pictured as three identic Christ busts, protects him. The monarch is—according to Zurawski—crowned in the same way as the Byzantine Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes.<sup>66</sup> The fresco projects the divine origin of the monarch’s power.

In medieval northeast Africa, rings were a symbol of supremacy and authority, as well as a symbol of power and royalty.<sup>67</sup> The importance of rings is evident in detailed pictures, which highlighted their significance in Nubian ceremonial life. Nubian rulers wore three rings and in an unusual way; one ring was placed on the left little finger and the others on each thumb. The Makourian King pictured in the *xenon* of Dongola is an excellent example.<sup>68</sup> These thumb-rings, foreign to the Byzantine imperial iconography, had a special biblical meaning in Ethiopian paintings,<sup>69</sup> which probably inspired the Nubians. Zurawski believes that the original Nubian rings must have been made of gold, as these were depicted in yellow.

The portrayals of rings are not limited to male rulers. Godlewski writes that the representations of Nubian women (Mothers of the Kings) are mainly distinguished through their jewellery (rings, dangling earrings, necklaces) and their long hair. The women’s rings were worn either on the thumb or on the little finger of the left hand. Rings were observed on at least two female (royal) images—one from Pachoras and another from Dongola.<sup>70</sup>

## 4.2 The Mothers of the Kings

An 11th-century fresco with the *Theotokos* and the Child protecting Martha, Mother of the King (+ Μάρθα μή(τη)ρ β(ασι)λέως πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη) is situated in the north *naos* of the Faras Cathedral, now in the museum of Khartoum.<sup>71</sup> The picture of the white Virgin Mother is larger than the adjacent picture of the black king’s mother. This in itself

66 Zurawski, “Regalia,” 224–225; fig. 1 and pl. 1–5.

67 Zurawski, “Regalia,” 225, note 14.

68 Zurawski, “Regalia,” 227.

69 The Ethiopian *Kebrā Nagast* tells of King Solomon giving the Queen of Sheba a ring as a token of their covenant when she told him that she was pregnant and going back to Ethiopia. The ring Solomon gave her was a ring he removed from his little finger—similar to the placement of the ring of the Nubian rulers. The ring was also a sign of authority and protection as it was the seal of the kingdom of Solomon. Cf. Wallis E. A. Budge, *The Queen of Sheba and Her Only Son Menyelek (I)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), xxviii, xl, xli, xlii, 32. In an Ethiopian magic scroll, Archangel Michael gives his ring to King Solomon as a symbol of protection. The archangel used his ring to conquer Satnaél (Satan) on the fourth day of Creation. The ring was powerful because it was a seal engraved with the secret name of God. See Jacques Mercier, *Ethiopian Magic Scrolls*, (New York: George Braziller, 1979), 8, 14, 20.

70 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 278–280.

71 Michalowski, *Kathedrale*, pl. 73; Jakobielski, *Faras III*, 60, 178–179; Kubinska, *Faras IV*, 125–126.

implies the importance of the Mother of God compared to the much smaller body of the king's mother. Martha is not standing in front of—but under, next to, the Virgin, whose right hand rests on Martha's right shoulder. According to Godlewski,<sup>72</sup> in carrying out the “official program,” Bishop Petros implemented the same ideological divinity of royal authority as portrayed in the “liturgical program.” This ideological character is expressed in images of the *Theotokos* and the *Galaktotrophousa* found in the northern part of the *naos*. Godlewski writes that the *Theotokos*, whether standing by herself or next to the Mother of the King, wears a crown similar to that of King Georgios III.<sup>73</sup>

\* Other Mothers of the King have been preserved in the Cathedral of Faras and one even in Dongola. They should be dated to the later period of the Cathedral and were probably added to paintings already done in an earlier period.<sup>74</sup> Some of them have tentatively been identified, e.g. as the mother of Zacharias III (a white woman protected by Archangel Michael)<sup>75</sup>, Queen Mariam, protected by St Aaron,<sup>76</sup> the mother of King Stephanos and perhaps—at least as proposed by Godlewski—the mother of King Solomon and several others.<sup>77</sup> The mothers wear Byzantine-type crowns.



**Figure 9:** Unidentified princess (?) under the protection of the Virgin

Source: Raita Steyn, based on Michalowski, *Kathedrale*, pl. 95a.

72 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 265.

73 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 265.

74 Godlewski, *Cathedrals*, 168.

75 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 269.

76 Jakobielski, “Tentative d’identification de certaines peintures de Faras,” *Etudes et Travaux* 19 (2001): 66–69, fig. 7; Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 268.

77 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 268–273, 278–280.

### 4.3 Princesses and Princes

In the museum of Khartoum, there is also a fresco of a Nubian Princess protected by the Virgin Mary and the Child.<sup>78</sup> It dates from the 12th century.<sup>79</sup> The fresco is quite different from the ones depicting Mothers of a King. The large white *Theotokos* with the white Child embraces a much smaller young black princess, crowned in the Byzantine way. One Greek text in the inscription identifies Mary as “Virgin, Mother of Christ,” and another one identifies the Child as “I(esou)s the Ch(rist).” The princess is not identified. The white colour of the Virgin and Christ, also found in other depictions, reflects the “reality,” and indicates beyond doubt that the Nubians were black. The white colour is the result of the Byzantine prototypes. No racist connotations should be read into it. While several paintings are preserved, perhaps picturing a prince or a princess, they may—however—represent an *eparchos* or another male or female dignitary. Weitzmann has remarked that the scenes of Christ, protecting a prince are paralleled by the scenes where the Virgin protects a princess,<sup>80</sup> but this is not always the case.

## 5. Conclusions

From the examples discussed, the conclusion can be drawn that the protection theme is not limited to Christian pictures, but already existed in the Meroitic and Ballana period. The examples of Silko and Sherkarer prove that the pre-Christian and Christian-Orthodox symbols mainly express the same message. The protecting figures of the Christian pictures can be divided into three groups: (a) godly protection, where Christ, the Trinity or the Virgin with the Child protect royals or *eparchoi*, (b) angelic protection, where an archangel is the protector, and (c) saintly protection, where a saint is the protector. In some cases, a combination of these groups occurs.

The presentations of the protecting figures are almost always larger—with only a few exceptions, in which cases the protectors are pictured above the protected. The protected royal figures are always depicted with regalia, while their ornaments have a symbolic function and a message for the people. The colours used in the paintings normally also have a symbolic meaning, but can also be the result of the Cathedral programmes and/or the specific colours, defining a certain period. The contexts of figures very often refer to Christian political-ideological context (e.g. the earthly “royals” vis-à-vis Christ, the heavenly King) or religious-ideological representations (e.g. scenes from the Bible).

It is beyond doubt that the Nubian iconography was deeply influenced by Byzantine prototypes, but that it also included African (traditional) and Asia-Minor (Monophysite) aspects, giving it its own Afro-Byzantine character. The chronology of the hagiographic

78 Godlewski, “Bishops and Kings,” 279, Figure bottom right, considers her as an unidentified King’s Mother.

79 Jakobielski, *Faras III*, 60; Kubinska, *Faras IV*, 125, 126, 127.

80 Weitzmann, “Some Remarks,” 332 and 336. Cf. Michalowski, *Kathedrale*, 167; pl. 94–95a, 95b–96.

pictures cannot yet be considered as final, since new findings and interpretations constantly bring new elements to the fore. Moreover, recent interpretations and hypotheses have been confused and confusing, although the controversies give rise to continued and more intense research.

The findings and studies of the murals in Nubia and especially of those of rulers have helped historians in their reconstruction of Nubian medieval history and institutions. Nevertheless, written texts, such as Greco-Nubian and Coptic epigraphs, the archives of Qasr Ibrim, and Arab chronicles, have not always, and certainly not often enough, been brought together with archaeological and artistic findings in order to complete our knowledge of Nubian medieval institutions, ideology and international relations.

## Acknowledgement

This article is dedicated to Professor Hansie Wolmarans. The article is partly based on my doctoral research and results of my University of Pretoria (UP) project on Afro-Byzantine art.

## References

- Adams, William Y. "Medieval Nubia. Another Golden Age." *Expedition* 35, no. 2 (1993): 28–39.
- Adams, William Y. *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*. London: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Adams, William Y. *Qasr Ibrim. The Late Mediaeval Period*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1996.
- Browne, Gerald M. *Old Nubian Texts in Qasr Ibrim. II*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1989.
- Browne, Gerald M. *Old Nubian Texts in Qasr Ibrim. III*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1991.
- Budge, Wallis E. A. *The Queen of Sheba and Her Only Son Menyelek (I)*. London: Oxford University Press, 1932.
- Donadoni, Sergio. "Les fouilles à l'église de Sonqi Tino." In *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in Christlicher Zeit*, edited by Erich Dinkler, 209–44. Recklinghausen: Bongers, 1970.
- Donadoni, Sergio. "Un' epigrafe Greco-nubiana da Ikhmindi." *La Parola del Passato* 4, no 69 (1959): 458–465.
- Duerden, Dennis. *African Art: An Introduction*. London: Hamlyn, 1974.
- Edwards, David N. *The Nubian Past. An Archaeology of the Sudan*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Eide, Tormod, Tomas Hägg, Pierce Richard Holton, and László Török, eds. *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum*. Vol. 3. *From the First to the Sixth Century AD*. Bergen: Bergen University, 1998.

- Godlewski, Włodzimierz. "Bishops and Kings, the Official Program of the Pachoras (Faras) Cathedral." In *Between the Cataracts. Proceedings of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies*. Warsaw University (27 August—2 September 2006), Part I. *Main Papers*, edited by Włodzimierz Godlewski and Adam Lajtar, 263–282. Warsaw: PAM Supplement Series 2.1. Warsaw: Warsaw University Press, 2008.
- Godlewski, Włodzimierz. "La frise de l'abside de première cathédrale de Pachoras (Faras)." In *Orbis Aethiopicus*. Vol. 2., edited by P. Scholtz, 327–356. Albstadt: K. Schuler, 1992.
- Godlewski, Włodzimierz. "Late Period in Nubian Art—From the middle of 13th to the end of 14th centuries." In *Der Sudan in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart (Sudan Past and Present)*, edited by R. Gundlach, M. Kropp, and A. Leibundgut. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995.
- Godlewski, Włodzimierz. "The Golden Age of Makuria." *Africana Bulletin* 50 (2002): 75–93.
- Grabar, André. *Byzantine Painting, Historical and Critical Study*. London: Macmillan, 1979.
- Grierson, Philip. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*. Vol. 5, part 1. Dumbarton Oaks: Washington D.C., 1999.
- Griffith, Francis Ll. "Oxford Excavations in Nubia." *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 15 (1928): 63–88, followed by plates XXV–XXIV.
- Guilland, Rodolphe. "Etudes sur l'histoire administrative de l'Empire byzantin—L'Eparque." *Byzantinoslavica* 41 (1980): 17–32.
- Hägg, Tomas. "Titles and Honorific Epithets in Nubian Greek Texts." *Symbolae Osloenses* 65, no. 1 (1990): 147–177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00397679008590840>.
- Hendrickx, Benjamin. "Byzantine Profane titles, epithets and symbols in use in the Medieval Nubian and Blemmyan Kingdoms." *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 87 (N.S. 16) (2005): 325–342.
- Hendrickx, Benjamin. *Official Documents Written in Greek Illustrating the Ancient History of Nubia and Ethiopia*. Johannesburg: Institute for Afro-Hellenic Studies, 1984.
- Hendrickx, Benjamin. "The Lord of the Mountain: A Study of the Nubian Eparchos of Nobadia." *Le Museon* 124, no. 3–4 (2011): 303–355.
- Hendrickx, Benjamin. "The *Urkunden* of the Eparchos of Nobadia and their *Compositio*." *Journal of Early Christian History* 22, no. 1 (2011): 40–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2222582X.2011.11877230>.
- Hendy, Michael F. *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire, 1081–1261*. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1969.
- Hintze, Fritz. "Preliminary Report of the Butana Expedition 1958 Made by the Institute for Egyptology of the Humboldt University, Berlin." *Kush* 7 (1959): 171–196.
- Iwaszkiewicz, Bożena. "La frise de l'abside de la première Cathédrale de Faras." *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 40, no. 2 (1974): 377–406.
- Jakobielski, Stefan. *Faras III, A History of the Bishopric of Pachoras on the Basis of Coptic Inscriptions*. Warsaw: PWN, 1972.

- Jakobielski, Stefan. "Tentative d'identification de certaines peintures de Faras." *Etudes et Travaux* 19 (2001): 59–79.
- Jakobielski, Stefan. "Horned Crown—an Epigraphic Evidence." *Etudes et Travaux* 26 (2013): 325–337.
- Kirwan, Lawrence. "The X-Group Problem." *Meroitica* 6 (1982): 191–204.
- Kubinska, Jadwiga. *Faras IV: Inscriptions grecques chrétiennes*. Warsaw: PWN, 1974.
- Lazarev, Victor. *Studies in Byzantine Painting*. London: Pindar Press, 1995.
- Lenoble, Patrice. "The Division of the Meroitic Empire and the End of Pyramid building in the 4th Century AD: An Introduction to Further Excavations of Imperial Mounds in the Sudan." In *Recent Research in Kushite History and Archaeology: Proceedings of the 8th International Conference for Meroitic Studies*, edited by Derek A. Welsby, 157–197. London: British Museum, 1999.
- Mercier, Jacques. *Ethiopian Magic Scrolls*. New York: George Braziller, 1979.
- Michalowski, Kazimierz. *Faras: Centre Artistique de la Nubie Chrétienne*, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1966.
- Michalowski, Kazimierz. *Faras: Die Kathedrale aus dem Wüstensand*. Zurich: Benziger, 1973.
- Michalowski, Kazimierz. *Faras. Wall Paintings in the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Artystyczno-Graficzne, 1974.
- Michalowski, Kazimierz. "Open Problems of Nubian Art and Culture in the Light of the Discoveries at Faras." In *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in Christlicher Zeit*, edited by Erich Dinkler, 11–28. Recklinghausen: Bongers, 1970.
- Plumley, John M. "Some Examples of Christian Nubian Art from the Excavations at Qasr Ibrim." In *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in Christlicher Zeit*, edited by Erich Dinkler, 129–34. Recklinghausen: Bongers, 1970.
- Rostkowska, Bożena. "Patronage of the Arts in Nobadia on the Basis of Archaeological and Written Sources." In *Nubian Studies: Proceedings of the Symposium for Nubian Studies, Selwyn College, Cambridge, 1978*, edited by John M. Plumley, 208–14. Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1982.
- Savvides, Alexis, and Benjamin Hendrickx. *Introducing Byzantine History*. Paris: Herodotos, 2001.
- Shinnie, Peter L. "Medieval Nubia." [= out-of-print 1954 pamphlet of the Sudan Antiquities Service, Khartoum]. Accessed April 15, 2017. <http://rumkatkilise.org/nubia.htm>.
- Steyn, Raita. "Christian Divine, Holy and Sainly Protection of African Rulers in the Byzantine 'Coptic' Iconographic Tradition." PhD thesis., University of Johannesburg, 2014.
- Steyn, Raita. "'Sainly' Protection of African Rulers in the Afro-Byzantine Orthodox Iconographic Tradition." In *Graeco-Africana et Afro-Byzantina. Proceedings of the International Conference on Graeco-African and Afro-Byzantine Studies at the University of Johannesburg (27 October–1 November 2014)*, edited by Thekla Sansaridou-Hendrickx and Benjamin Hendrickx, 208–219. Johannesburg: Institute for Afro-Hellenic Studies, 2016.

Török, László. *Late Antique Nubia. History and Archeology of the Southern Neighbour of Egypt in the 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.* Budapest: Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1988.

Vantini, Giovanni. *Christianity in the Sudan*, Bologna: EMI Publishers, 1975.

Weitzmann, Kurt. "Some Remarks on the Sources of the Fresco Paintings of the Cathedral of Faras." In *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in Christlicher Zeit*, edited by Erich Dinkler, 325–40. Recklinghausen: Bongers, 1970.

Welsby, Derek A. *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia: Pagans, Christians and Muslims along the Middle Nile*. London: British Museum Press, 2002.

Zurawski, Bogdan. "Medieval Nubian Regalia: Innovation versus Tradition." In *Recent Research in Kushite History and Archaeology: Proceedings of the 8th International Conference for Meroitic Studies*, edited by Derek. A Welsby, 223–234. London: British Museum Press, 1999.