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*Some Remarks on Iconography of Rulers
and Archangels in Nubian Painting*

Excavations that have been carried out for many years by Polish scholars in the territory of Nubia, namely in the monastery in Old Dongola and the church in nearby place called Banganarti,¹ exceedingly enriched our knowledge of the subject of rulers and archangels in the Nubian wall painting. So far all the conclusions concerning that subject have been drawn mainly on the ground of an analysis of wall paintings discovered in the twentieth century by British,² Italian,³ and Dutch⁴ missions in churches in Faras, Abd el-Qadir, Tamit, Sonqi Tino, and Abdalla-n Irqi, and later by Polish mission directed by Professor Kazimierz Michałowski in the cathedral in Faras.⁵

A set of paintings representing effigies of Nubian rulers under protection of archangels in chapels of Banganarti church⁶ and the painting in the Dongola monastery,⁷ showing the scene of coronation of a Nubian king, considerably contribute to the learning of culture of the Christian Nubia. Representations of Nubian rulers, investigated in different aspects can largely enhance our knowledge of the structure of the royal court, hierarchy, propaganda, and ideology of rule and religion, while discoveries of grave crypts give an idea of kinds of burials of Christian Nubia rulers. Analysis of attire can in turn bring new information on attributes of power (sceptre, crown), while richness of fabrics and decorative elements shows what sorts of objects were available to and used by an elite of the Nubian society.

Paintings preserved in chapels of the church in Banganarti and the monastery in Dongola confirm certain pattern of iconographic arrangement which, as it seems, appeared in Nubia in the middle of the tenth century and made an original element in the Nubian art. According to that pattern a figure of a ruler is always protected by an archangel or a holy person.⁸ The protecting person is pictured in large dimensions behind the protégé making

¹ B. ŻURAWSKI, Dongola Reach. The Southern Dongola Reach Survey 2001. Fortified Enclosure at Banganarti, *PAM XIII*, 2002, pp. 221–226; Id., Excavations and Restoration Works in Banganarti, *PAM XIV*, 2003 [= Works in Banganarti], pp. 241–249.

² F.L.L. GRIFFITH, Oxford Excavations in Nubia, *LAAA XIII*, 1926 [= Oxford Excavations I], pp. 57–59, 66–93; Id., Oxford Excavations in Nubia, *LAAA XV* (3–4), 1928 [= Oxford Excavations II], pp. 63–82.

³ Tamit 1964. *Missione Archaeologica in Egitto dell'Università di Roma*, Roma 1967, pp. 35, 39–60.

⁴ P. v. MOORSEL, P.J. JAQUET, H. SCHNEIDER, *The Central Church in Abdallah Nirqi*, Leiden 1975.

⁵ K. MICHAŁOWSKI, Faras. Die Kathedrale aus dem Wüstensand, Einsiedeln – Zürich – Köln 1967 [= Die Kathedrale]; Id., Faras. Wall Paintings in the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw, Warsaw 1974 [= Wall Paintings].

⁶ ŻURAWSKI, Works in Banganarti, pp. 245–249, Figs. 8, 10, 11; B. ŻURAWSKI (ed.), Nubia II. Southern Dongola Reach Survey 1. Survey and Excavations between Old Dongola and Ez-Zuma, Varsovie 2003, p. 93, Fig. 24; B. ŻURAWSKI, Banganarti. SDRS Season 2003, *PAM XV*, 2004, p. 240, Fig. 8; M. ŁAPTAŚ, Banganarti 2003: The Wall Paintings, *PAM XV*, 2004, pp. 244–252, Figs. 1, 4, 5.

⁷ M. MARTENS-CZARNECKA, A Nubian King – Painting from the Monastery from Old Dongola [= Nubian King], in: S. JAKOBIELSKI, P.O. SCHOLZ (eds.), *Dongola-Studien. 35 Jahre polnischer Forschungen im Zentrum des makuritischen Reiches*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 285–300.

⁸ N. JANSMA, M. DE GROOTH, Zwei Beiträge zur Ikonographie der nubischen Kunst, *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jarboek* 22, 1971, pp. 1–19; M. MARTENS-CZARNECKA, Late Christian Panting in Nubia, in: CH. BONNET (ed.), *Études nubiennes. Conférence de Genève. Actes du VII^e Congrès international d'études nubiennes, 3-8 septembre 1990*, Genève 1992, p. 308; cf. also: S. JAKOBIELSKI, Nubian Scenes of Protection from Faras as an Aid to Dating, in this volume, *supra*.

a background against which the smaller figure of a ruler is represented. The protecting person's hands rest on the ruler's shoulders. In that way all the figures of rulers preserved in the chapels of Banganarti are protected. The protecting persons are always either archangel Rafael or Michael, represented in full splendour.

Position of a ruler in the Christian kingdom of Nubia, from the very beginning of its existence, can be learned from numerous references in written sources like inscriptions and reports by medieval historians and travellers.⁹ Kings are mentioned as *Great King* or *Greek King*,¹⁰ they bear by-names like *Philochristos*,¹¹ *Augustus*¹² or *Theosteptos*. King Mercurios is named *New Constantin*¹³ and the crown of Cyriakos originates from Heaven.¹⁴ It is all aimed at stressing particular role and position of a ruler¹⁵ at the very top of social hierarchy and at the same time his connections with God.¹⁶ King's power is conferred on him by Christ and he performs it on earth in Christ's name. King's high standing recognised by the Church largely contributed to maintaining integrity of the Nubian kingdom and strengthening Christian faith. The most appropriate places for such formal effigy of a ruler were city squares and public buildings. However, a ruler was represented in church interiors in perhaps slightly different aspect, more personal and intimate in his relation with God, his representation in full royal attire with insignia of power equally popularise his person among believers. Rulers represented on portraits placed in church interiors were in a way 'sanctified' and adjacent representations of holy persons as well as representations of rulers under direct protection of Holy Virgin, Christ, Holy Trinity, saints, and archangels testify the divine origin of rulers' power.

The paintings represent not only the Nubian kings, whose residence was in the capital city of the kingdom – Dongola, but also governors of provinces – eparchs,¹⁷ named by Arabs *Masters of the Mountain* – *Sahib el-Giabal*, residing in Faras or Qasr Ibrim. Those paintings were found in churches discovered in Sonqi Tino,¹⁸ Abd el-Qadir,¹⁹ and the

⁹ Cf. *Oriental Sources Concerning Nubia*, collected and translated by Fr. G. VANTINI SFCJ, Heidelberg – Warsaw 1975 [= *Oriental Sources*].

¹⁰ G. VANTINI, *Christianity in the Sudan*, Bologna 1981 [= *Christianity*], pp. 76–77.

¹¹ Cf. G. VANTINI, *Il Cristianesimo nella Nubia antica*, Verona 1985 [= *Cristianesimo*], pp. 102–103.

¹² T. DZIERZYKRAY-ROGALSKI, S. JAKOBIELSKI, *La tombe de l'Évêque Yoannès dans l'Église à Colonnes en Granit de Dongola (Soudan)*, in: K. MICHAŁOWSKI (ed.), *Nubia – Récentes Recherches. Actes du Colloque Nubiologique International au Musée National de Varsovie, 19-22 juin 1972*, Varsovie 1975, pp. 44–45.

¹³ VANTINI, *Christianity*, p. 74; ID., *Oriental Sources*, p. 40.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁵ D. WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, London 2002 [= *Medieval Kingdoms*], pp. 88–92.

¹⁶ On this subject cf. B. MIERZEJEWSKA, *Murals in the Bishop's Chapel, Faras: The Visual Expression of the Ruler's Ideology in Nubia* [= *Murals in the Bishop's Chapel*], in: *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit. Akten des 6. Internationalen Koptologenkongresses, Münster, 20.-26. Juli 1996*, Bd. 1, Wiesbaden 1999, pp. 285–296; EAD., *Nubian Imagines Potestatis* in the Collections of the National Museum in Warsaw, *BMusVars* XLI, 2000 [= *Imagines Potestatis*], pp. 11–24.

¹⁷ WELSBY, *Medieval Kingdoms*, pp. 93–95.

¹⁸ S. DONADONI, *Les fouilles à l'église de Sonqi Tino* [= *Sonqi Tino*], in: E. DINKLER (ed.), *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in christlicher Zeit*, Recklinghausen 1970, pp. 209–216.

¹⁹ GRIFFITH, *Oxford Excavations II*, pp. 63–68.

Rivergate Church in Faras.²⁰ The most numerous paintings of that kind decorated the interior of the Faras cathedral.²¹ Because of almost uninterrupted functioning of the Faras cathedral over nearly eight centuries during which its painted decoration evolved, being enriched with new effigies, we are able to trace changes in the way of representation of a figure of ruler. Such elements as foreign influence and local components in painting art of particular period, adopted rules of representation as well as painting techniques of different ateliers²² were of particular importance in formation of the relevant iconography. Because of the same artistic trends prevailing in the entire kingdom of Nubia in different periods, portraits of rulers as well as other effigies discovered outside Faras feature significant iconographic similarities. According to the rules, all portraits should be supplemented with, appropriate to the period, identifying legends. Unfortunately in many cases legends are not preserved. In such cases definition of a person of a ruler is very difficult. Sometimes it is entirely impossible and than analysis of style can help to place particular painting in general chronological classification.

It seems that the one of the earliest portraits of a ruler well preserved in Nubia is an effigy of a king dating from the beginning of the tenth century, placed in the middle of the apse of the Faras cathedral (Fig. 1). Discussion on the king's identity is currently under way; is it Georgios I,²³ Zaharias III²⁴ or, maybe, one of his predecessors?²⁵

The king²⁶ is represented under protection of the Virgin Mary, who stands behind him and whose hands rest on king's shoulders. The king is clad in *chiton* with long sleeves with adorned cuffs. The red belt decorated with pearls and with golden buckle is bound round the king's waist. Around the neck there is a wide red 'collar' which makes a specific component of the attire of Nubian dignitaries (red is attributed to kings and bishops).²⁷ On his shoulders, the king wears *chlamys* braced on the right shoulder and decorated with *tablion* – the sign of dignity. The bottom corners of the mantle are decorated with golden pendants. The king wears red shoes, covering the insteps. The king's head is not preserved, and therefore we do not know what the crown was like. The king holds a short silver cross in his right hand. On the ground of other, later representations, we can assume that together with a crown, the cross belonged to attributes of a ruler.²⁸

As far as the way of representation is concerned, from among all Nubian paintings of that type, the figure from the apse of the Faras cathedral mostly resembles effigies of

²⁰ GRIFFITH, Oxford Excavations I, pp. 25–93.

²¹ MICHAŁOWSKI, Die Kathedrale, Cat. Nos. 40–41, 49, 60–61, 62, 70, 71, 77–79, 95 a–b; ID., Wall Paintings, Cat. Nos. 6–9, 16–17, 19, 32, 34, 41, 49, 56, 58, 61, 66; B. ROSTKOWSKA, Remarques sur l'iconographie des éparques en Nubie, *EtTrav* V, 1971 [= Remarques], pp. 201–208; EAD., Iconographie des personnages historiques sur les peintures de Faras, *EtTrav* VI, 1972, pp. 195–205.

²² M. MARTENS-CZARNECKA, Faras VII. Les éléments décoratifs sur les peintures de Faras, Varsovie 1982 [= Faras VII].

²³ MICHAŁOWSKI, Wall Paintings, pp. 128–129.

²⁴ Cf. MIERZEJEWSKA, Murals in the Bishop's Chapel, pp. 285–296.

²⁵ S. JAKOBIELSKI, Tentative d'identification de certaines peintures de Faras, *EtTrav* XIX, pp. 65–66.

²⁶ MICHAŁOWSKI, Wall Paintings, Cat. No. 19, pp. 128–129, 140.

²⁷ MARTENS-CZARNECKA, Faras VII, p. 56.

²⁸ Cf. MICHAŁOWSKI, Wall Paintings, pp. 43–44.



1. Representation of a Nubian king from the Faras cathedral (The National Museum in Warsaw). (Phot. M. Niepokólczycki).



2. Representation of the Nubian king Georgios II from the Faras cathedral (The National Museum in Warsaw). (Phot. M. Niepokólczycki).



3. Representation of king Georgios II from the church in Sonqi Tino (The Sudan National Museum in Khartoum). (Phot. M. Martens-Czarnecka).

Byzantine dignitaries, for example emperor Justinian from the church San Vitale in Ravenna. Later paintings are more and more different from that pattern.

The effigy of one of the later and most famous Nubian rulers – king Georgios II can be found not only in the Faras cathedral, in so-called Bishops' Room,²⁹ but also in the church in Sonqi Tino. In the Faras cathedral the king is protected by the Virgin Mary (Fig. 2) while in Sonqi Tino³⁰ by Christ (Fig. 3). Both effigies are supplemented with

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Cat. No. 34.

³⁰ G. VANTINI, S. DONADONI, Gli scavi nel diff di Sonqi Tino, *RendPontAc* 3 (1967–1968), p. 257, Fig. 5; DONADONI, Sonqi Tino, p. 215, Fig. 91.

Byzantine type of inscription – *polychronion* wishing the ruler long life, which indicates that the portraits were painted in the ruler's lifetime, that is in the second half of the tenth century.³¹ The date of birth and death of Georgios II is unknown;³² we know however, that he reigned in the year 969, in which Egypt was conquered by Fatimids (report of Arab emissary Selim el-Aswani). He must have died before 1002 because in that year his successor, king Raphael,³³ was already in power. Both paintings from Faras and Sonqi Tino are executed in the same artistic manner, specific for Nubian painting in the period of the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century.³⁴ On both pictures the king is represented in similar attire and with the same attributes. He has the red 'collar' and the red belt with golden buckle is bound round his waist. *Chlamys* with golden pendants covers his shoulders, he wears the red shoes and holds a short golden cross in his right hand. The king's crown is of *kamelaukion* type and is topped with the star of David and a cross. On both sides of the crown little chains with crosses at the ends hang from the pieces resembling horns. In Byzantium such crown – one of the insignia of imperial power – was considered to be God's gift for the first emperor, brought to him from heaven by an angel.³⁵ Apart from the cross, Georgios from Sonqi Tino holds a sceptre topped with a spherical piece decorated with precious stones (Fig. 3). On the representation from Faras the same attribute is held in place with right hand of the Virgin Mary resting on the king's shoulder.

Another portrait of a dignitary from the period of the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century have been discovered in the Faras cathedral on the oldest coat of three times repainted painting. It represents a king³⁶ wearing a veil on his head (a crown not preserved) and clad in a mantle decorated with medallions filled with coloured circles. Rich belt on the hips and *enchirion* held in right hand can be seen. If it is a portrait of a king, it could be of one of the successors of Georgios II, that is Raphael (1002–1006) or Stephanos? (around 1027).³⁷

Another representation of a figure wearing crown and veil (Fig. 4) discovered in the church in Sonqi Tino is undoubtedly painted by the same painter as the portrait of Georgios. The figure is protected by archangel Michael adored by Four Living Creatures.³⁸ The crown is poorly preserved, nevertheless it can be concluded that its shape is different from that of the crown of Georgios. It is tripartite, higher in the middle. The figure holds a bow and a sceptre in his right hand. It is known from historic sources that Nubian army was renowned

³¹ S. JAKOBIELSKI, *Faras III. A History of the Bishopric of Pachoras on the Basis of Coptic Inscriptions*, Warsaw 1972, pp. 127–130.

³² VANTINI, *Christianity*, pp. 119–123.

³³ Cf. VANTINI, *Cristianesimo*, pp. 168–169; *Id.*, *Christianity*, pp. 113, 116–117.

³⁴ MARTENS-CZARNECKA, *Faras VII*, pp. 68–69, 72, 75, 80–88.

³⁵ E. PILTZ, *Kamelaukion et mitra. Insignes byzantins imperiaux et ecclesiastiques*, *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis Figura* 15, 1977, p. 28.

³⁶ MICHALOWSKI, *Wall Paintings*, Cat. No. 56.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

³⁸ DONADONI, *Sonqi Tino*, p. 214, Fig. 191.



4. Representation of a Nubian eparch from the church in Sonqi Tino (The Sudan National Museum in Khartoum). (Phot. M. Martens-Czarnecka).

for its archers.³⁹ Archers were under command of an eparch – viceroy, whose attribute of power was a bow,⁴⁰ so the painting from Sonqi Tino could represent that Nubian dignitary. It would be then the earliest portrait of an eparch preserved in Nubia. Other representations of eparchs originated from the late period, i.e. twelfth-thirteenth century.

According to, adopted in Nubia, manner of representation of archangels in imperial pose and splendour⁴¹ and at the same time in conformity with artistic trends specific for

³⁹ VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 80, 95.

⁴⁰ Cf. representations of eparchs from the church in Abd el-Qadir and from the Faras cathedral.

⁴¹ Cf. M. MARTENS-CZARNECKA, *L'archange Michel sur les peintures de Faras*, *EtTrav XII*, 1983, pp. 172–193; EAD., *Wall Paintings Discovered in Dongola*, in: JAKOBIELSKI, SCHOLZ (eds.), *Dongola-Studien*, pp. 254–284.



5. Representation of archangel Michael from the Faras cathedral. (Phot. M. Niepokólczycki).

the period of the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century,⁴² archangel Michael protecting the eparchy is clad in *loros* with richly decorated stripes, has not red but green ‘collar’ around his neck and on his head probably a diadem shaped crown, which unfortunately is not preserved. Archangel’s yellow wings are decorated with simplified peacock feathers with green centres, specific for representations of archangel Michael in Nubia, and are finished at the edges with wide red border (Fig. 5).

It is worthwhile to consider the effigy of queen Martha – a royal mother, represented under protection of the Virgin Mary (Fig. 6).⁴³ However the painting undoubtedly originated in the period of Georgios II, the figure is shown wearing slightly different garments and also different type of crown. Also the Holy Virgin stands beside and not behind the queen. Those differences may result from application of another iconographic pattern, which in the period in questions appears on other representations.⁴⁴

An interesting painting (unfortunately only fragmentarily preserved) representing a figure in rich robes under protection of an archangel (not Michael) was discovered in recent years in the Holy Trinity monastery in Old Dongola (Fig. 7). The painting is lo-

⁴² MARTENS-CZARNECKA, *Faras VII*, pp. 59–62.

⁴³ MICHAŁOWSKI, *Die Katedrale*, pp. 154–157, Figs. 77–79; *Id.*, *Wall Paintings*, p. 48.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Cat. No. 45.



6. Representation of the Virgin Mary with Queen Mother Martha from the Faras cathedral (The Sudan National Museum in Khartoum). (Phot. M. Martens-Czarnecka).

cated on the eastern, thus the most important from liturgical point of view,⁴⁵ wall of a chapel. Under the painting remains of an altar can be found. The painting represents a complex composition. The central part is composed of the mentioned figure and above it a bust of Christ and dedicatory inscription of Georgios, later bishop of Dongola and

⁴⁵ M. MARTENS-CZARNECKA, An Attempt to Define the Function of Selected Rooms at the Monastery in Old Dongola, *GAMAR* I, 1998, pp. 81–86.



7. Painting in the Chapel 29 from the Monastery on Kom H in Old Dongola.
(Phot. M. Martens-Czarnecka).

prior of the monastery. On both sides, like in the apse of Nubian churches, there are rows of apostles framed with the wings of the archangel.

The archangel in hieratic pose is clad in wide *loros* and *dalmatic*. He holds a sceptre and probably a sword in his right hand. The diadem shaped crown on his head is set with precious stones. The wings are plain yellow with no decoration. Very poorly preserved protected figure (Fig. 8) is dressed in ample mantle decorated with rows of crosses. A red belt on the hips draws one's attention. A veil is visible on the head. A dark hand supports



8. Lower part of the painting in the Chapel 29 from the Monastery on Kom H in Old Dongola. (Phot. M. Martens-Czarnecka).

a wallet. The painting originated in the second half of the eleventh century.⁴⁶ Assuming that the figure represents a ruler, it would be for the first time that a wallet appears as an attribute of power of a king or eparch, which is the case on many paintings from the late period of the Nubian art (twelfth–thirteenth century).⁴⁷ The wallet in the form of a sack hangs loose from the right shoulder, across the chest to the left hip. Such wallet can be most clearly seen on the representation of king Moise, son of Georgios IV, who reigned in the twelfth century and whose portrait was painted in the Faras cathedral under the

⁴⁶ Cf. M. MARTENS-CZARNECKA, Suggestions on Dating of Some Murals from Monastery in Old Dongola, *EtTrav* XIX, 2001, pp. 217–236.

⁴⁷ ROSTKOWSKA, *Remarques*, pp. 201–208.



9. King Moise from the Faras cathedral (The Sudan National Museum in Khartoum). (Phot. M. Martens-Czarnecka).

composition of Nativity (Fig. 9).⁴⁸ On that painting, the king is depicted in ample caftan and skirt with pattern similar to caisson decoration, typical for that period of Nubian painting. A cross can be seen on the king's chest, a veil and tripartite crown on his head. The king supports a wallet and holds a bow, an attribute of an eparch, with his right hand. Can it be that, in the period of the twelfth–thirteenth century, attributes of Nubian king and eparch, that is a veil, a bow or a wallet were used interchangeably while painting portraits of those figures? Could it be also in case of yet another portrait of a dignitary in the apse

⁴⁸ MICHAŁOWSKI, *Die Kathedrale*, pp. 147–148, Fig. 70.



10. Representation of a Nubian eparch from the Faras cathedral. (Phot. courtesy of the National Museum in Warsaw).

of the Faras cathedral, placed to the left of the figure of Zaharias III? The figure on that portrait, under protection of the Virgin Mary and Christ, has an attire similar to that of king Moise but instead of a typical crown there is a helmet with a pair of horns and topped with a crescent. In that period eparchs who, as king Moise, had wallets (eparch from the church in Abd el-Qadir⁴⁹ and Rivergate Church in Faras⁵⁰ or a king from the Faras cathedral⁵¹) were represented in such crowns.

⁴⁹ GRIFFITH, Oxford Excavations II, painting No. 12, Pl. XXXI/2.

⁵⁰ GRIFFITH, Oxford Excavations I, painting No. 34, Pl. XXXIII/1.

⁵¹ MICHAŁOWSKI, Wall Paintings, Cat. No. 66.

Another painting of that late period, from the Faras cathedral, representing an eparch belongs to the extremely interesting ones (Fig. 10).⁵² Bright colours, agglomeration of decorative elements, and distinct linearity attract attention. The eparch is clad in typical garments – caftan and ample skirt decorated with medallions. In his right hand he holds a bow and in the left hand a diadem with *bucranion* richly decorated with sashes. The diadem that can be put on the crown shaped as a helmet with horns makes a separate component of the headgear. Such conclusion can be drawn on the ground of another representation of the eparch's crown composed of a helmet and a diadem. It can be that diadem as such makes certain mark of some additional high rank. White and thus 'sacred' hands on the eparch shoulders indicate protection of God, under which the eparch was represented. It can not be excluded that the scene symbolically represents the eparch's investiture, authorised by a holy person – Christ, Virgin Mary or archangel. Similar ideological meaning has the painting from the Holy Trinity monastery in Dongola⁵³ (Fig. 11). This is however the scene of coronation of a Nubian king by Christ – Person of the Holy Trinity. The painting is executed in the same artistic manner as above mentioned representation of an eparch from Faras. The painting represents a figure of a king dressed in a cloak in a form of *paenula* decorated with linked together medallions with effigies of eagles. The king wears a veil under a *kamelaukion* type crown topped with a cross. The hand of Christ, central Person of the Holy Trinity, protruding from clouds above the king's head, rests on the crown. Right hands of the remaining two Persons of the Holy Trinity rest on the ruler's shoulders. A sceptre topped with a cross, held in king's right hand is supported by the Person of the Holy Trinity. Like above mentioned eparch, the king holds another crown in his left hand. The crown on the king's head is a 'heavenly' crown, given to the king as a gift from Christ, while the king's 'earthly' crown is held in his hand.

Chronologically ordered, preserved effigies of Nubian rulers show changes in course of time in the form and details of their attire. What remained unchanged, as in all effigies of rulers in the Christian world, is the representation of those figures in hieratic, full of dignity poses, standing en face with all insignia of power. The Holy Person, that is Christ, Virgin Mary, and archangels, who protect the rulers, always keep their hands on the rulers' shoulders and in majority of cases stand behind them, less frequently they can stand beside or protrude from clouds above the rulers' heads. Iconographic pattern, in which protecting person stands behind protected one seems to constitute specific local feature of the Nubian art. Introduced in the beginning of the tenth century it was used throughout all the periods of Nubian painting.

Obviously not all the representations of Nubian rulers have been preserved up to our time and can thus be subjected to research. State of preservation of those paintings is sometimes very poor and in many cases it is even difficult to identify a rank of the person (king or eparch). Nevertheless it is possible to follow the changes to which the rulers' attire

⁵² *Ibid.*, Cat. No. 61.

⁵³ MARTENS-CZARNECKA, Nubian King, pp. 285–300.



11. A Nubian king from the Monastery on kom H in Old Dongola. (Phot. M. Martens-Czarnecka).

and attributes as crowns, sceptres, and crosses as well as fabrics⁵⁴ and decorative patterns were subjected over entire period of existence of the Nubian kingdom. Those changes probably reflected trends in fashion but also resulted from current wealth of the country. It may be significant that the major part of preserved representations originated in the late period of Nubian painting (twelfth–thirteenth century) in which decline of power and prosperity of the Nubian kingdom took place.

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⁵⁴ Cf. M. MARTENS-CZARNECKA, Les tissus sur les peintures murales de Faras. Essai d'interprétation technique, *EtTrav* XIII, 1984, pp. 257–275.