



Authority of State and Church in Nubia, its Expression in Costumes

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NARODOWE CENTRUM NAUKI



UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW • FACULTY OF ARCHAEOLOGY • DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY OF EGYPT & NUBIA



POLONEZ BIS

Dear participants of the workshop,

We gladly welcome you at the workshop 'Authority of State and Church in Nubia, its Expression in Costumes'. This is a part of the research project 'Costumes of Authority. The Image of Royalty and Clergy in Christian Nubia' (NCN, Polonez bis 2021/43/P/HS3/00764).

In virtually all social structures hierarchy, power, and authority play a role and this was also the case in Christian Nubia. Costume plays an important role as a way of displaying authority, and vestments and attributes can often be 'read' as form of non-verbal communication. This visual language in the Nubian kingdom of Makuria has been shaped and influenced by earlier cultures and neighbouring regions and in order to understand the relations of power and authority in Nubia they have to be seen in a wider context. That is the purpose of this workshop. In the coming two days a group of scholars from various disciplines will present short papers, followed by discussion, about power, authority and their expressions in Byzantium and the Nile Valley.

We wish all participants a fruitful and pleasant event.

The organisers
Karel Innemée, Magda Woźniak, Dobrochna Zielińska

Hour	Programme
9:30-9:50	Arrival, Coffee
9:50-10:10	Karel Innemée <i>Welcome, introduction (practical announcements)</i>
10:10-10:30	Karel Innemée <i>Power, authority, and how to communicate them – introduction to the workshop</i>
Nubian costumes, iconography and material aspects chairperson: Karel Innemée	
10:30-10:50	Marta Osypińska <i>The cattle kingdom. Economic and symbolic importance of livestock in Nubia – archaeozoological evidence</i>
10:50-11:10	Robert Morkot <i>Costumes and regalia in Nubia from the A-Group to Napatan period</i>
11:10-11:30	Discussion
11:30-12:00	Coffee Break
Nubian costumes, iconography and material aspects chairperson: Grzegorz Ochała	
12:00-12:20	Angelika Lohwasser <i>Royal women in pre-Christian Nubia</i>
12:20-12:40	Janice Yellin <i>Images of royal males in pre-Christian Nubia</i>
12:40-13:00	Magda Woźniak <i>Royal costumes in the kingdom of Makuria: an overview</i>
13:00-13:20	Karel Innemée <i>Ecclesiastical costumes in the kingdom of Makuria: an overview</i>
13:20-13:40	Discussion
13:40-15:30	Lunch Break
Byzantium and Ethiopia – costume, iconography and material aspects chairperson: Dobrochna Zielińska	
15:30-15:50	Robin Cormack <i>The power of power-dressing in Byzantium</i>
15:50-16:10	Catherine Jolivet-Lévy <i>Byzantine 'costumes of authority': which influence in Nubia?</i>
16:10-16:30	Claire Bosc-Tiessé <i>Crowning the rulers, crowning the text. Between ornament, iconographic pattern, and historical evidence</i>
16:30-16:50	Discussion

Friday, 12 April 2024

Hour	Programme
Immaterial aspects: texts, iconography chairperson: Magdalena Woźniak	
10:00-10:20	Grzegorz Ochała <i>'When King Moses George was King of Dotawo': Nubian rulers in indigenous written sources</i>
10:20-10:40	Adam Łajtar <i>The image of Nubian bishops in written sources</i>
10:40-11:00	Dobrochna Zielińska <i>Veneration or propaganda? Portraits of authorities in the iconographical context of Nubian churches</i>
11:00-11:30	Discussion
Conceptual approach chairperson: Joanna Wegner	
11:30-12:30	Common Discussion
12:30-12:50	Karel Innemée <i>Concluding remarks and ending of the public session</i>

ABSTRACTS

(alphabetically by speaker's name)

Claire Bosc-Tiessé

Crowning the rulers, crowning the text. Between Ornament, Iconographic Pattern, and Historical Evidence

This paper will first provide a brief historiographical overview of the study of rulers' clothing in Ethiopian studies, in relation to the available documentation for the period between the 12th and 15th centuries, mainly painted. It will then focus more specifically on crown motifs as they appear in paintings of the period, and what we should see in them, between ornamental abstraction, iconographic model, or mirror of real objects. On the one hand, we will consider the extent to which these representations can be taken as historical evidence, and on the other hand, what we can understand from their similarity to the border decorations that crown the beginning of certain texts.

Robin Cormack

The Power of Power-Dressing in Byzantium

Constantinople seems to be the centre where strategies for the presentation of human and divine power were conceived and developed, and they were at their most sophisticated in mosaic. Emperors and Patriarchs were seen dressed as at their most formal moments – for example the emperor at his coronation. St Sophia, Constantinople and also San Vitale at Ravenna offer key cases of the strategies. But Nubia was far away, and its public medium was wall painting. Apart from pilgrimages from Nubia or itinerant artists there, the method of transmission of Byzantine ideas was perhaps through icons, like the Appa Mena icon in the Louvre or even manuscripts. The Madrid Skylitzes manuscript will be brought into the discussion.

Karel Innemée

Power, Authority, and how to communicate them

In order to discuss the expressions of power and authority in costumes it is essential to define the concepts of power and authority. In every community, be it an extended family or nation-state, there are hierarchies that find their expressions in verbal and visual form. Costumes, especially uniforms, are visual expressions that have their own 'grammar' and 'vocabulary' that can be considered a non-verbal way of communication. This introduction presents a number of thoughts on the differences between power and authority and how a community is confronted with their expressions.

Karel Innemée

Ecclesiastical costumes in the kingdom of Makuria: an overview

Ecclesiastical dress can be considered a uniform that shows the rank of the wearer within a hierarchy. It also shows the denomination of a cleric and can thus be considered a non-verbal way of communicating the position of the wearer within an organisation. The Church of Makuria after the merger with Nobadia was under the authority of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and one would expect for this reason that the Nubian clergy

would be following the dress code of the Coptic Church. In reality, however, Makurian bishops were depicted in a costume that follows the model of Byzantine episcopal costumes and each development that can be witnessed in Byzantine iconography is also to be found in Nubian iconography. What does this say about the position of the Makurian Church and the 'triangle' of authority of Makuria, Alexandria and Constantinople?

Catherine Jolivet-Lévy

Byzantine 'costumes of authority': which influence in Nubia?

It is generally accepted that there was a strong Byzantine influence in the Nubian royal and ecclesiastical costumes, but what was truly the extent of this influence? To contribute to the debate on this issue, I'll recall the characteristics and meanings of the various ceremonial costumes in Byzantium. As far as the Nubian royal attire is concerned, it appears that the Byzantine influence is limited to 10th-century royal portraits, with the adoption of the *chlamys* worn over a belted tunic, and the red shoes. If, according to the textual sources, the *chlamys* seems to be the most important ceremonial dress down to the late 12th century, the *loros* overwhelmingly dominates representations of the emperor in the Middle Byzantine period. Does it mean that the models imitated in Nubia dated back to the period of the Christianization of Nubia? Byzantium probably served as a model for the concept of divine kingship, as for some of the 'costumes of authority'. *Sacerdotium* and *regnum* seem, however, to have been more closely tied in Nubia than in Byzantium, where the emperor actually had no sacerdotal status and was not at the head of Church and State, a position apparently claimed by the rulers of Makuria.

Angelika Lohwasser

Royal women in pre-Christian Nubia

A number of depictions of royal mothers, wives and daughters are known from the Napatan period (8th–4th centuries BC). Unlike the king, who wears a costume borrowed from Pharaonic Egypt, the Napatan royal women are shown in indigenous dress. Only the crowns correspond to Egyptian models, albeit in a different style. In the Meroitic phase, however, both kings and queens are depicted in Meroitic garments. Some elements can be identified that clearly indicate authority – above all the Meroitic state robe or the falcon dress. It should be stressed that at least in the Temple of the Lion at Naqa the robes of the king and the queen correspond exactly, i.e. there is no difference between male and female costumes. At the temple of Amun, however, only the crowns of the king and queen are identical - here only the Kandake wears an indigenous garment. A clear sign of female power, however, is the corpulence of the queens. This, together with the sometimes over-long fingernails, may indicate a courtly life without physical labour and thus express authority over the subjects.

Adam Łajtar

The image of Nubian bishops in written sources

Bishops of the local Church are the best known group of Christian Nubian society. Information about them is found in both external sources, which are mostly of narrative character, and the internal ones, which are mostly documentary. When combined, they allow sequencing bishops of individual sees, and throw light on their ethnic and social origin, their careers, their activities, and their position in the Nubian society.

Robert Morkot

Costumes and Regalia in Nubia from the A-group to Napatan Period

The paper examines the evidence for Nubia during the Pharaonic and 'Napatan' periods. The evidence for the iconography of indigenous rulers from the A-Group, Kerma and post-New Kingdom phases is extremely limited. The influence of Egypt on 'royal' iconography is significant and the paper attempts to raise issues around representations and what appears to be a lack of Kushite tradition of royal images. Nevertheless, during the 'early Napatan' (post-New Kingdom and 25th Dynasty) phases, there are some distinctive elements of regalia, and some costumes that might be considered as indigenous, rather than Egyptian, in origin. A key issue is the problem of the influence of Egypt, which had a very elaborate visual tradition, especially in relation to the iconography of rulers and elites, and the far more limited evidence that survives from the broader 'Nubian' region.

Grzegorz Ochała

“When King Moses George was King of Dotawo”: Nubian rulers in indigenous written sources

Christian Nubian kings are best known from their painted representations preserved on the walls of churches. It seems that for the majority of the population these images were the only way to see their monarchs. However, Nubian kings also occurred, albeit rarely, in local written sources, both epigraphic and papyrological, sometimes personally, as authors, but mostly simply mentioned in different contexts. My paper will explore all these contexts and the roles in which the kings appear in order to see what they can tell us about the social perception of the sovereign in Christian Nubia.

Marta Osypińska

The cattle kingdom. Economic and symbolic importance of livestock in Nubia – archaeozoological evidence

Since the beginning of the Holocene, 10,000 years ago, cattle ranching has been a central part of the economy and culture for Middle Nile communities. This is confirmed by archaeozoological, archaeological data, and the rock art of the Sahara and Sahel zones. Anthropological and ethnographic studies also unequivocally identify cattle ranching as a central element of social life, distinguishing "cattle-centred behaviour" communities. This clean and consistent picture begins to blur with the conquests of Egypt and the Egyptianisation of the Nubian elite. The economic pattern remains mostly the same, but is no longer adequately reflected in symbols of power, royal iconography, onomastics, etc. Archaeozoological data, however, clearly indicate the central role of cattle and beef consumption as a marker of social status. With a brief interruption, in the so-called post-Meroitic period, the Egyptian-Mediterranean model persists on the Middle Nile until the end of the 10th century AD, when a process of nationalization transforms Nubian civilization in its letter and spirit. Archaeozoological and isotopic studies from Dongola and Banganarti clearly indicate a marked increase in the economic role of cattle during 10th–12th centuries AD. This is associated with the importation of herds from outside the Nile Valley. This is also the time of the spread in iconography of the specific headgear of Nubian rulers – the horned crown.

Magda Woźniak

Royal costumes in the kingdom of Makuria: an overview

The presentation will offer a chronological overview of the costumes of the kings, demonstrating how the rulers of Makuria carefully constructed the visual expression of their authority by introducing their portraits within the walls of churches. The choice of textiles and garments represented in their portraits attests various influences in terms of fashion originating from Byzantine and Abbasid cultures, while at a later stage, lavishly decorated silks are combined with indigenous regalia such as bows and bucrania to create a proper Nubian royal attire. Interestingly, the closer observation of the representations of both Royal and Divine Mothers shows a similar trajectory departing from the classical costume made of a dress and a *maphorion* towards a new style of costume, enriched with additional cloth layers and numerous colourful sashes and characteristic patterns, typical of the Nubian textile production.

Janice Yellin

Costumes of Royal and Elite Males in the Meroitic Period

This presentation will explore depictions of kings, princes, and elites in Pre-Christian Nubia in official, religious, and funerary contexts with particular attention to the ways in which they communicated their wearers' power and authority. The development of indigenous features in Meroitic kings' and princes' royal costumes from the mid-3rd century BCE – mid-4th century CE that express power and authority will be presented in contrast to the very Egyptian-based appearance of royal costumes during the Napatan period. Particular attention will be paid to Nubian elements such as the royal mantle, tasseled cord, crowns, and distinctive garments that both denote and communicate the sources of royal power and authority. Elements of elite male costumes (governors, local princes, priests) in Lower Nubia that express their status and power will also be considered. Given these elites' high status, later dating, and geographical proximity to some of the earliest Christian kingdoms, it is worthwhile exploring if their self-representations may have been another source of inspiration for the expression of power and authority in royal and religious costumes of Christian Nubia.

Dobrochna Zielińska

Veneration or propaganda? Official portraits of Nubian authorities in the iconographic programme of Nubian churches

Among the most recognisable artefacts of Nubian Christian culture are the monumental wall paintings. From the ninth century, portraits of rulers, their mothers and bishops began to be placed among the depictions of saints that decorate the walls of churches. The images of these figures were placed on an equal basis with the most important religious figures, and soon figures of kings began to take a central place in the apse, the theologically most important place in the church. What was the nature of these representations? What was intended to be manifested by depicting the main 'pillars' of state and Church in this way?