

NUBIA CHRISTIANA

II



EDITED BY MAGDALENA ŁAPTAŚ AND STEFAN JAKOBIELSKI

NUBIA CHRISTIANA II

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WARSZAWA 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The idea of publishing these studies arose during the “13th Conference of the International Society for Nubian Studies” which was held in Neuchâtel in 2014. During the section devoted to Christian art in Nubia, papers were delivered by several researchers from Poland, who had previously met at the Nubiological Conference in Sobieszewo organized annually by the Archaeological Museum in Gdańsk. We had the feeling that the same group of speakers had once again met up, this time in an international context. This clearly showed us that there was a need to get more scholars, working in the other fields of research, to be introduced to studies on Nubian Christianity.

The research material covering the period from the introduction of Christianity in Nubia to the late Middle Ages is extremely interesting and extensively enriches general knowledge about the development of Medieval art. The dynamics of archaeological research conducted in the Sudan and southern Egypt significantly contribute to new knowledge about Nubia. However, as long as studied by a narrow group of specialists, it is difficult to verify the theories already accepted. The presentation of research at large international congresses allows for brief lectures and communication only and there is hardly time for longer discussions during which individual issues can be discussed in depth.

Therefore, an idea was put forward to organize a conference, on Nubian art allowing the presentation of papers not only to Nubiologists, but also to Byzantologists, Ethiopists and Coptologists. A conference that would allow us to determine the scale of research on Christian art in Nubia and the main trends in current research. In 2015, Magdalena Łaptaś and Waldemar Deluga sent a request to the international research community to take part in a conference entitled “Nubian Art in a Byzantine, Ethiopian and Coptic Context”. Scholars representing various research centres, both Polish and international, applied for participation in the conference *[Fig. 1]*.

The venue for the conference, which took place on 25–26 November 2016, was the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw (successor to the Academy of Catholic Theology) and the National Museum in Warsaw. The Academy was created in 1954 when the Polish communist government



Fig. 1. Magdalena Łaptaś guiding the participants of the conference in Faras Gallery of the National Museum in Warsaw (Phot. Roman Szlązak).

decided to remove theological faculties from the Warsaw University and the Jagiellonian University in Kraków [Fig. 2]. In 1999 the Academy was transformed into a University and named after Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the well-known Polish primate who was persecuted and imprisoned by the communists during the 1950s.

This University, from its establishment, focused on the study of Christian history, philosophy, art history and of course, theology. The Christian character of its research distinguishes it from other state universities in Poland, just as its predecessor did. In the 1970s, students of the section of Christian Archaeology of the Academy of Catholic Theology were educated by scholars such as a biblist Ludwik Walenty Stefaniak CM; Coptologist Rev. Wincenty Myszor; archaeologist Barbara Ruszczyk; ancient historian Tytus Górski; art historians: Tadeusz Dobrzeniecki and Janusz Stanisław Pasierb; as also an Egyptologist, 'Nubiologist' Stefan Jakobielski. Their work was continued later by archaeologists: Barbara Filarska, Elżbieta Jastrzębowska, Tadeusz Gołgowski, Jan Partyka, and the author. In 1974 in the frame of studies



Fig. 2. The Academy of the Catholic Theology buildings in 1970s (Phot. Archive of the UCSW in Warsaw).

of Christian archaeology a two-year course of the archaeology of Nubia was introduced by Jakobielski. This course was regarded as an obligatory element of the student's syllabus and apparently was the world's first experiment of this kind, if not counting those at the University of Khartoum. The idea of organizing Nubiological studies in the Catholic Academy of Theology originally came from Professor Kazimierz Michałowski. This eminent scholar, called "the father of Polish Mediterranean archaeology", conducted excavations on many sites in the Crimea, Syria, Cyprus, Egypt and the Sudan. In Egyptian Nubia he chaired a group of archaeological experts who were in charge of the relocation of the temples at Abu Simbel. Michałowski's excavations in Faras

brought not only extraordinary archaeological results, but also led to Poland obtaining a valuable collection of Nubian paintings found there, architectural elements, ceramics and inscriptions. This material made possible the establishment of the Faras Gallery in the National Museum in Warsaw. As a result of the division of finds, Poland received half of the paintings' assemblage discovered during the excavations. After the success in Faras, Kazimierz Michałowski also in 1964 began excavations in Old Dongola, the capital city of Makuria. It was the largest excavation concession of the Centre of the Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw. During subsequent excavations in Old Dongola (conducted under the direction of Stefan Jakobielski until 2006), Polish archaeologists unearthed city fortifications, several churches, private houses, cemeteries, and a pottery workshop. Many of the buildings were adorned with splendid wall paintings. In annexes of the Monastery at Kom H, a valuable set of paintings was found, as well as the famous crypt of Bishop Georgios (died in 1113) with walls covered by religious and magic texts. Later work carried out by Włodzimierz Godlewski brought to light a palace, the Royal Church on the Citadel (B.V.) and further discoveries on Kom H and in the Throne Hall. The excavations in Old Dongola are currently being conducted by Artur Obłuski, who works on uncovering the urban area of Dongola enclosed by Citadel walls.

Work carried out under the direction of Bogdan Żurawski in Banganarti within the fortified enclosure, led to the unearthing of two superimposed churches dedicated to the Archangel Raphael. It has been proved that the Upper Church was an important pilgrimage site, especially in the late period of its functioning. This is evidenced by a great amount of pilgrim graffiti. The wall paintings from Banganarti are extremely interesting and of great value. They were associated with the cult of the Archangel Raphael and the commemoration of Nubian kings. Given the richness of the archaeological material acquired by Polish researchers in the Sudan, it is not surprising that Polish teams have a certain responsibility to promote research into Christian art and culture in Nubia. In turn, referring to the profile of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, it is understandable that studies on the art of Christian Nubia have a prominent place there.

In 1982, a collection of articles entitled "Nubia Christiana" (originally started as a journal), was published at the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw. It was edited at that time by Stefan Jakobielski and Bożena Rostkowska. Texts for that volume were written by foreign scholars (J. Martin Plumley and Giovanni Vantini), as well as the Polish ones. There were also articles by graduates of the Academy, Marek Steinborn and Zbigniew Ratyński included.

Thirty-seven years have passed since the time of publication of that volume, but the idea of collecting the Nubiologists around the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw has survived, hence the intention of publishing *Nubia Christiana II*. Using the opportunity, I would like to express my gratitude to the International Center for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue for their help and support of projects related to the Christian Nubia.

The following collection of four articles deals with Nubian and related art. The article by Catherine Jolivet-Lévy presents the programme of Nubian sanctuaries in a broad Mediterranean context. The text by Tasha Vorderstrasse takes up a little explored thread of Nubian manuscripts' decoration, while the other two: by Aleksandra Sulikowska-Bełczowska and Małgorzata Martens-Czarnecka refer to the Nubian iconography of the Archangel Michael and the Virgin *Galaktotrophousa*.

One can hope that this volume will encourage more scholars to study Christian art in Nubia, not only in a narrow but also a wider Byzantine context, and that the words written by Kazimierz Michałowski in the introduction to *Nubia Christiana I* will be partially fulfilled: *Actuellement sous les auspices de ce centre universitaire, Nubia Christiana pourra prétendre dans l'avenir à devenir un organe international de la Society for Nubian Studies*.

At the time, Kazimierz Michałowski did not expect so many other professional journals to appear and editorial series to be devoted to Nubian studies. Let us hope that *Nubia Christiana* will become one of them.

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NUBIA IN A BROADER PERSPECTIVE:
THE ICONOGRAPHIC PROGRAMME OF THE SANCTUARIES
IN BYZANTIUM AND BEYOND

ABSTRACT

Taking mainly representative material preserved in Cappadocia into consideration, this paper discusses the iconographic programme of the apse and of the north-eastern *pastophorion*. In order to place the Nubian double-zone composition within the Byzantine *koine*, it points out its reach over the Eastern Christian world. It then highlights the great flexibility in typology, function, and decoration of the so-called *prothesis* in Byzantine churches. The most specific image in Nubia – Christ shown in half-figure – is also attested in the Cappadocian *prothesis* niche.

KEYWORDS

Eastern Christian and Byzantine painting, Nubian painting, Cappadocia, iconography of the apse, iconography of the north-eastern *pastophorion*, *prothesis*

In order to place the iconographic programmes of Nubian sanctuaries in a broader framework, I will address two subjects: the apsidal double-zone composition with the *Majestas Domini* in the conch, and the so-called *prothesis*. The apses in the Nile Valley, right up as far as Nubia, often depict a *Majestas Domini*, forming part of a double composition: the enthroned Christ in the conch, the Mother of God surrounded by the apostles in the

lower register (Van Moorsel 1966: 308; Van Moorsel, Jacquet, and Schneider 1975: 78–79; Van Moorsel 1981; Godlewski 1992: 289–291; Zielińska 2009; Zielińska 2012: 593–594; Dijkstra, van Loon 2013: 149). It has been assumed that this iconographic programme, extremely popular in Nubia from the 7th century onwards, was modelled on Coptic murals, such as those known from Bawit and Saqqara. However, it was widespread with many variations not only in Egypt and Nubia, but all over the Christian world, from an early period onwards.

Scholars have discussed at length the iconography of Christ in Majesty (Skubiszewski 2005, with extensive bibliography), a composition that lends itself to several levels of reading. It is characterized by a fusing of figures and motives surrounding Christ in glory (cherubim, seraphim, wheels, flames, the four living creatures, etc.), mainly derived from the prophetic visions of the Old Testament, particularly the visions of Ezekiel and Isaiah, and from the Book of Revelation. The Christian notion of *Majestas Domini*, of biblical origin, occupies a central place in the Eucharistic liturgy, as evidenced by the texts of all the rites of Mediterranean and Eastern Christendom. The liturgy seems to have been the medium of the synthesis designed to show and make present the majesty of God worshiped by the heavenly court. It is the main prayer of praise and thanksgiving recited during the Anaphora, which develops the image of heaven, with the Almighty in his glory, surrounded by myriads of angels, cherubim and seraphim “singing, crying, shouting, and saying the triumphal hymn: Holy, holy, holy Lord Sabaoth, the heavens and the earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest” (Brightman 1896: 322–333¹). The threefold ‘holy’ hymn of the seraphim echoed then by the living creatures of John’s Revelation 4 has thus been incorporated in the Eucharistic liturgy (with variations from one rite to another), and the *epinikios* hymn, or *Sanctus*, of the heavenly beings is repeated by the faithful gathered in the church. A materialization of the presence of God and angels – especially at the time of the Eucharistic sacrifice – the *Majestas Domini* engaged men in the glorification and adoration that angels offer to God in heaven. In a Cappadocian church, Köy ensesi Kilise (“the church behind the village”), at Gökçe / Mamasun (10th century), an inscription below the conch mentions explicitly the union of men in the praise of the angels, as well as the feeling of

¹ Byzantine liturgy of the 9th century; see also Brightman 1896: 18 (Apostolic Constitutions), 50–51 (liturgy of St James), 131–132 (liturgy of St Mark), 175–176 (liturgy of the Coptic Jacobites), 231–232 (liturgy of the Abyssinian Jacobites), 284 (liturgy of the Nestorians), 436 (liturgy of the Armenians), 465 (liturgy of Palestine in the 4th century).

sacred fear related to the sanctuary where the Eucharistic sacrifice is accomplished (Jolivet-Lévy 1992: 289–291; *ead.* 2019: 399–400).

The *Majestas* composition facilitated the raising of men to a vision and union with the divine during mass, but at any time it could be the support of the continuous contemplation of God, especially in monastic contexts. The representation of Christ in glory played a role in the practice of contemplation, a tool to effect transformation and to access the divine (Bolman 1998; Iacobini 2000: 216–220; Bolman 2007: 423–424). Owing to its location in the church (or cell), it focalized the viewer's attention and encouraged a *face à face* vision. Thus the image, closely related to the Eucharistic liturgy, was also linked to spiritual practice and personal piety; it guided the worshipper into the understanding and experience of the divine.

Below this timeless theophany (stressing the oneness of God and the divine quality of Christ) the Mother of God (in different iconographic types) appears on the lower register attesting to the full humanity of Christ in the flesh, along with the apostles, witnessing the mystery of the Incarnation, re-enacted in the Eucharistic liturgy, when bread and wine are transformed into Christ's flesh and blood. Both registers of this double-zone composition are complementary, and form a unit offering the viewer a vision of the intelligible in the space of the sanctuary (Ihm 1960: 95–108; Van Moorsel 1985; *id.* 1986; Innemée 2013). The resonance between the image and the text of the liturgy explains the popularity of this apse decoration throughout the Christian world, with a wide range of local variants and different levels of complexity. With the liturgy aiding its dissemination and persistence, it has gained a firm foothold not only in Egypt and Nubia, but also in Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia), and in Asia Minor, at Mount Latmos and in Cappadocia, where it became very common during the 9th and 10th centuries.

In early Christian Egypt, nine examples have been identified in the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit (Rochard 2017: 1, 111–173). One of the best preserved decors had been found in so-called Chapel 6 (more probably a public room) and is now in the Coptic Museum in Cairo, Inv. no. 7118. It shows Christ in the upper zone seated on a throne, enclosed within a mandorla, surrounded by the four living creatures, with wings covered with eyes, under which there are wheels and flames, and flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel, and roundels of the sun and moon [*Fig. 1*]. On Christ's codex appear the words ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος, "holy, holy, holy", recorded in Nubia in the *Majestas* of Abdalla-n Irqi, where they are associated with the living creatures (Van Moorsel 1966: 302–303). In the lower zone the enthroned Mother of God, with the Christ child, is surrounded by the twelve apostles and by



Fig. 1. Double-zone composition in Room 6 at Bawit, Egypt, 7th or 8th century, The Coptic Museum in Cairo, inv. 7118 (Phot. E. Drioton).

two local saints. In Chapel 42, the *Theotokos* is shown seated and breastfeeding the infant Jesus, according to the iconographic type of the Galaktotrophousa, an iconography revisited by Elisabeth S. Bolman (Bolman 2004), who proposed to interpret the image as a metaphor for the Eucharist: as the Logos, the milk in Mary's breasts is the food of salvation and immortality. In Chapel 17, where the personification of the Church, above the niche, holds the chalice, Mary is rendered in an orans posture, flanked by the apostles, as in the central church of Abdalla-n Irqi, for instance. It has been assumed that these paintings of oratories or cells reproduced at a reduced scale the monumental art of the time, as for instance the programme of the church of the Red Monastery near Sohag (Bolman 2016: 129–149).

A variety of theophanic images in the conch, with or without the Virgin at the centre of the apostles pictured below, is also known in early medieval Armenia and Georgia, from the 7th century onwards. In Armenia, this iconographic programme is found at the large church of T'alın, at Lmbat, and at

Koš (Dournovo 1979: 137–144, 290–292; Donabédian 2008: 220–221).² An apostolic group (and maybe the Virgin) appear below the *Majestas Domini* at T'alín, and Lmbat, while at Koš, Lydia A. Dournovo saw an original synthesis of the Eucharist and *traditio legis*. In Georgia too, the composition of Christ in Majesty flanked by angels, and enriched with elements of prophetic visions, was deeply rooted in apse decorations (Skhirtladze 2007: 306–307; Iamanidzé 2016: 229–234). At T'elovani, in the Church of the Holy Cross (late 8th century), where there is a double-register programme, the enthroned Saviour, in the conch of the apse, surrounded by two praying angels, has no mandorla nor elements of prophetic visions; in the lower zone, the twelve apostles are featured on either side of a medallion containing the face of Christ, labelled “the Holy Face of God”. In the Sabereebi cave monastery (9th and 10th century), in the Gareja desert, four churches (nos 5–8) offer diverse versions of the double-zone composition. In Churches nos 5 and 7, as in the Church of the Šeiḥ in Tamit, and in the Faras Cathedral, the open book held in the left hand of Christ is inscribed with the opening words of the prologue of St John's Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” [Jn 1.1]. The One on the throne is thus identified with the Word, the Logos, which has become flesh. In the Church of St Dodo, in David-Gareja monastery (9th century), two cherubim, their feet on flaming wheels, two archangels, and the sun and moon flank the Christ. The words “Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth” are written twice (in the Georgian language) on either side of the throne, close to the cherubim. At Nesguni (early 10th century), Jesus Christ (now very damaged) appears enthroned between archangels, above the *Theotokos* and Child in a medallion, and standing apostles, while at Čyabiani (10th–11th century), we see cherubim, archangels and flying angels, the sun and moon, and the dove of the Holy Spirit; the words of the thrice-holy hymn are also written on the background of the picture. The apostles are featured in the lower register. Other contemporary or later Georgian churches preserve similar iconographic programmes, but the *Majestas Domini* is often combined with the Deesis, a theme that finally became dominant.

On the west coast of Asia Minor, in Caria, the double-zone composition preserved in the Cave of the Pantokrator at Latmos has often been dated to the second half of the 7th or early 8th centuries (Ruggieri and Záh 2016: 69–70), but on stylistic and epigraphic grounds it must have been painted at the earliest in

² The apsidal compositions showing Christ standing at Mren (Maranci 2013), Aruč, and St Sergios at Artik, do not deserve the appellation *Majestas Domini*, but Christ is also part of a double composition.



Fig. 2. Double-zone composition in the Cave of the Pantocrator at Latmos, Turkey, 9th or 10th century. (Phot. Nicole Lugol).



Fig. 3. The Virgin labelled *Theotokos* on the lower register of the apse in a church at Maziköy, Cappadocia, 7th century? (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).

the second half of the 9th and more probably in the 10th century. The Christ is seated on a precious throne, his right hand lifted in a blessing gesture, the mandorla is carried by two flying angels, and surrounded by the symbols of the four evangelists, their wings decorated with eyes [Fig. 2]. The medallions of the sun and moon are depicted under the angels, while the bust of Ouranos (the sky) is displayed in the centre, below the glory. The inscription that surrounds the mandorla bears a quote from Isaiah 6.3: Ἄγιος, ἄγιος, ἄγιος κ(ύριος) Σαβαώθ, πλήρης ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ τῆς δόξης σου. The beginning of the prologue of St John's Gospel: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος... is once more found on the open book of Christ. The *Theotokos* is on a throne breastfeeding the infant Jesus in the lower register and pictured in the middle of eight standing saints seriously damaged: there are some apostles, but also John the Baptist, St Theodore, St Thekla, and St Kyrillos.

The double-register composition (*Majestas Domini* above the apostles, with or without the Mother of God, and John the Baptist) is the main theme observed in the apses of Byzantine Cappadocia up to the 11th century. One of the oldest examples (possibly 7th century) of this iconographic programme was already very damaged when I discovered it in 1986 in the village of Mazi, and in 1988 it was completely destroyed (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 177–178; *ead* 2015: 224). Only Christ's feet were preserved in the conch of the apse, above the Mother of God [Fig. 3], labelled ἡ ἅγια Θεοτόκος, standing in orans position, in the middle of the wall, between St Paul and St John the Baptist, followed by Peter, Andrew and John the Evangelist. The murals in the St John the Baptist Church at Çavuşin (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 23–26; *ead.* 2015: 127–129), and at St George in Zindanönü (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 58–60; *ead.* 2015: 155) have been assigned by Nicole Thierry to the early Byzantine period (7th century?).³ In the central part of the composition, at St George [Fig. 4], we can restore an enthroned Christ within a mandorla; he was surrounded by the four symbols of the evangelists, seraphim (and probably cherubim), and, to either side, two archangels, below roundels with the sun and the moon. Besides these traditional elements, surmounting Christ in majesty, the cross was depicted; it is the “sign of the Son of man”, whose appearance in the sky, according to Matthew 24.30, will precede the Second Coming of the Lord. In St John the Baptist Church at Çavuşin, a row of saints, apparently apostles, was displayed in the lower register; at St George in Zindanönü, some holy martyrs join the apostles. In Kavaklıdere, the Badem Kilisesi (7th or 8th century according Nicole Thierry, or 9th century)

³ This dating is controversial: Xenaki 2011 proposed to date them to the second half of the 9th century.



Fig. 4. Double-zone composition at St George in Zindanönü, Cappadocia, 7th or 9th century. (Drawing N. Thierry).

(Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 63–64; *ead.* 2015: 156) has in the conch of the apse the figure of Christ seated on a rainbow, blessing and holding a closed codex; the four symbols of the evangelists, each nimbed and carrying a gospel, emerge from behind the mandorla [Fig. 5]. They are accompanied by the words introducing the thrice-holy hymn during the Anaphora: ᾄδοντα / singing (the eagle), βοῶντα / shouting (the bull), κεικραγότα / crying (the lion), καὶ λέγοντα / and saying (the man). Their acclamation ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος (holy, holy, holy) is written in large letters on each side of the conch. The Hand of God is represented at the top of the vault. The Mother of God orans and the twelve apostles are displayed on the wall.



Fig. 5. *Majestas Domini* above *Theotokos* orans and apostles in the apse of the Badem Kilisesi in Kavaklıdere, Cappadocia, 9th century. (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).

It is from the end of the 9th century onwards in the so-called “archaic” churches that this double-register apsidal programme becomes the rule in Cappadocia: there are more than twenty examples, with a number of variations. The connection of the composition with the Eucharistic liturgy is made obvious by the inscriptions derived from the triumphal hymn of the Anaphora. The apse of Tavşanlı Kilise (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 182–184; *ead.* 2015: 190–192), dated by an inscription in 913/20 (or 945), offers the standard *Majestas Domini* for “archaic” Cappadocia [Fig. 6]: Christ seated on a throne, behind which emerge (within the mandorla) the four symbols of the evangelists, accompanied by the participles introducing the *epinikios* hymn; two pairs of wheels (representing the angelic category of thrones) on a flaming background, two seraphim with six wings, two four-headed cherubim, with wings covered with eyes. The words *hexapterygon* and *polyommaton* used to name the seraphim and the cherubim are drawn from liturgical texts. On either side the archangels Michael and Gabriel standing frontally are represented as guards, holding a standard with the triple acclamation ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος. Above the glory appear



Fig. 6. *Majestas Domini* in the apse at Tavşanlı Kilise, Cappadocia, early 10th century. (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).



Fig. 7. *Majestas Domini* above John the Baptist, the *Theotokos* orans, apostles and two martyrs in the apse at Haçlı Kilise, in Kızıl Çukur, Cappadocia, first half of the 10th century. On the left, a *prothesis* niche, that has been cut later into the east wall of the nave (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).

the personifications of the sun and moon in medallions. The paintings of the lower register are almost entirely destroyed, but we can restore a row of standing saints, probably the Mother of God and the apostles. The best preserved double-register composition is at Haçlı Kilise in Kızıl Çukur, early 10th century (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 50–53; *ead.* 2015: 153) [Fig. 7]. The liturgical inscriptions are used for the four symbols, the seraphim (*hexapterygon*) and the cherubim (*polyommaton*), while the triple *hagios* is written on the *labarum* of the archangels. Beneath Christ, the axial niche contains a cross, to either side of which are the *Theotokos* orans, and John Prodromos who holds a scroll with the text of John 1.29: “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”; they are flanked by the apostles, and two holy martyrs, Niketas and Kerykos. Other variants of the double-zone composition appear in Cappadocia. At Yılanlı Kilise (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 307–310), in the Ihlara Valley, for instance, the upper register shows Christ seated on a rainbow in a glory carried by four flying angels – a composition clearly derived from the iconography of the Ascension – but, below, the Mother of God and Child is depicted seated, in the middle of a row of standing apostles. Whatever the version, the theophanic subject was not intended to call to mind a single event, such as the Ascension or the Second Coming of Christ, but has the same synoptic character that the Eucharistic celebration does. Not simply a memorial of biblical events of the past, and an anticipation of the Second Coming, it materializes the actual presence of Christ, made alive and effectual, especially (but not only) during the celebration of the Eucharist.

Throughout the middle Byzantine period, the theme continued to play a central role, and it is well attested in Constantinopolitan art: after the end of iconoclasm in 843, the representations of theophanies appear both in monumental settings, and in manuscripts. In an *ekphrasis* of the basilica of the Stoudios monastery in Constantinople, the 10th-century poet John Geometres describes Christ enthroned in the apse, upon “the chariot of the blazing cherubim” accompanied by the ten-thousand-eyed seraphim, and by the Virgin Mary, a mosaic probably dated to the decades after the end of iconoclasm in 843 (Woodfin 2003–2004). In Hagia Sophia, a drawing by Cornelius Loos records a vault mosaic (assigned to the late 9th or early 10th century) in the south gallery, showing Christ Pantocrator (in bust form) surrounded by cherubim, seraphim and wheels amid flames (Mango 1962: 29–35). Visions of God, which nearly always include the representation of the prophet who saw the vision, are found in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus (Paris, BnF, codex graecus 510), produced in Constantinople for the Emperor Basil I between 879 and 882, and in other 9th-century Constantinopolitan miniatures

(Brubaker 1999: 281–284)⁴. As André Grabar and Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne have observed, the iconographic theme of the vision of divinity was favoured after the end of iconoclasm (843), because it demonstrated that humans could see the divine, and thus legitimized religious art (Grabar 1957: 247–248; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1968).

So, we must conclude that the *Majestas Domini*, far from being an outdated iconographic programme maintained in provincial or monastic contexts, as formerly viewed, was considered an appropriate apsidal decoration, in resonance with the Eucharistic liturgy. In medieval churches, the apse iconographic programme probably does not mirror the influence of old Syrian or Coptic paintings in regions isolated from Constantinople, but it might have been broadly disseminated throughout the Christian world from the capital of the Byzantine empire. This would support the hypothesis that the Nubian apse compositions are part of this common pictorial tradition, which attests to the links between Nubia and Byzantium, even if the iconographic relations have not been direct and if the studies on Nubian iconography have rightly highlighted the limits of Byzantine influences (Frend 1968; Galavaris 1979; *id.* 1986; Innemée 1995: 283; Łajtar 2015).

Let us turn now to our second point: the decoration of the so-called *prothesis*, an issue recently addressed by several studies for the northern *pastophorion* of Nubian churches (Martens-Czarnecka 1998; Innemée 2013; Łajtar and Zielińska 2016)⁵. Although the decoration of this space in Nubia is varied, its most specific image seems to be Christ in half-figure, a recurring depiction from the 9th/10th century onwards, that is also found in Byzantine churches. Three iconographic variants have been observed in Nubia: Christ blessing (Wadi el-Sebu‘a), Christ holding the Eucharistic vessels (Abd el-Qadir, Church of Angels at Tamit), and Christ blessing the chalice, the most widespread type: Petros Cathedral at Faras, Church B.V on the citadel of Dongola, Sonqi Tino, rooms nos 7 and 27 of the Northwest Annexe to the Monastery on Kom H in Old Dongola, and possibly Raphael’s Church at Tamit and the Central Church at Serra (Zielińska 2010: 645–646; Łajtar 2015: 113–115; Zielińska 2015: 104; Łajtar, Zielińska 2016). Based on the inscriptions of prayers evidenced on the walls of the northern *pastophorion*, these images of Christ have been considered as mirroring the liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts which could have been performed in this room. However, the northern *pastophorion* was certainly

⁴ There are also images of visions of God in the *Sacra Parallela* (Paris. Gr. 923) and Christian Topography (Vat. Gr. 699): Brubaker 1999: 288–289.

⁵ For Egypt, see Bolman 2009.

not used only for the celebration of this liturgy: it was also the place where the liturgical utensils were kept (and probably cleaned) (Žurawski 2012: 200–203) and where the bread and wine was prepared during the initial part of the Eucharistic liturgy (Innemée 2013: 192–193). The depiction of Christ blessing a chalice has been regarded as an original Nubian creation: actually, it is apparently unknown outside Nubia, but variants of this image are attested in the Byzantine world. The other representations that are found in close relation to the northern *pastophorion* in Nubia are Christ or Maria, Melchisedech or Aaron, the Nativity, and portraits of priests. As for the so-called *diakonikon*, the repeated occurrence of St John the Baptist and St Stephen as a deacon, displayed side by side, has been understood as referring to the double function of the space: as *diakonikon* and as baptistery, an opinion supported by the presence of baptismal fonts (Godlewski 1979; Zielińska 2010: 645; Žurawski 2012: 205–206).

What is the situation in Byzantine churches, especially in Cappadocia? I must stress from the start that as in Nubia the role of the north and south spaces framing the apse in Byzantine churches is far from clear. The question has repeatedly been debated, and one has shown that they could assume varying and fluctuating functions. These spaces were, to some extent, interchangeable, as was for a long period the use in the sources of the terms *skevophylakion*, *diakonikon* and *prothesis* for the place where the offerings were prepared (Walter 1982: 234; Descœudres 1983). Focusing on the issue of the *prothesis*, let us first briefly outline the Byzantine rite and its evolution (Walter 1982: 232–238; Schulz 1986: 64–67, 98–99, 180–184). Already in the early Byzantine period, there was a place for the preparation of Eucharistic bread and wine, but the introduction of a *prothesis* liturgy is placed (at the latest) in the 8th century and its more or less final form in the 12th century; its evolution has not been direct, straight and identical throughout the Byzantine empire, and, needless to say, for Cappadocia textual information is completely lacking. From the simple preparation and transfer of gifts prior to the beginning of the Eucharist, the *prothesis* rite developed into a series of ritualized actions, the recitation of biblical quotations, commemorations and prayers. At the beginning, it was probably limited to the prayer of offering said by the priest when he puts the bread onto the paten (*diskos*): “O God, our God, you who have sent the heavenly bread, food for the entire world, Our Lord Jesus Christ (...) bless this *prothesis* and receive it to your heavenly altar, etc.” A 9th-century interpolation in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, the mystagogical commentary attributed to Germanos I, patriarch of Constantinople (d. 733), gives insight into the ceremonial at this time: the priest takes the *prosphora* (the bread offered) from the deacon,

and with the liturgical lance he incises a cross in the oblation, while he recites “As a sheep led to the slaughter and as a lamb before its shearer is silent” (cf. Is 53.7). He places the oblation on the paten, then he takes the chalice, and while the deacon pours into it wine and water, he says “From his side poured blood and water, and he who saw it has borne witness to it and his witness is true” [Jn 19.34–35]. Then the priest places the chalice on the table, points at the bread representing the sacrificed Lamb, and the wine representing the blood shed. Finally, he incenses the offerings and recites the prayer of the *prothesis* (Meyendorff ed. 1984: 72–73, § 24; Bornert 1966: 148–150). The *Historia ecclesiastica* interprets the ritual in the context of the mystery of Incarnation – it symbolizes Christ’s first coming to earth: “The bread of offering (...) signifies the superabundant riches of goodness of our God, because the Son of God became man and gave Himself as an offering and oblation in ransom and atonement for the life and salvation of the world. He assumed the entirety of human nature, except for sin” (Meyendorff 1984: 70–71, §20). For Nicholas of Andida, in the *Protheoria* (mid-11th century), “the body of the Lord now remains on the table of preparation, as at Bethlehem, where Christ was born... but also, and at the same time, as at Nazareth” (PG 140: col. 429 CD),⁶ and for Michael Psellos, the *prothesis* is the image of the crib (Joannou 1958: 5, v. 78; Bornert 1966: 207–210). In the 11th century, only one modification in the ritual deserves to be mentioned: the deacon (or the priest) is said to cut out from the *prosphora* the central portion, the *Amnos* (or Lamb), signifying Christ’s body. At the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries, the service develops into a much more elaborate rite: the prayers have been duplicated, several particles were cut out of the *prosphora* to be offered in commemoration of the Mother of God, of all the angelic orders, of John the Baptist, the apostles, the prophets, holy bishops, and all the saints. Further particles might be offered as memorials for the living and the departed. Finally, 13th-century service books prescribe offerings to be made in honour of individually named saints.

In the early Christian period diverse locations were used for the preparation of the Eucharistic bread and wine, and even later the shape, size and location of the space, as well as its iconography, were varied. The range of variables noted may be attributed to regional architectural and workshop practices, but it is also related to the function of the church: a monastic and a ‘parish’ church,

⁶ For Nicholas Cabasilas, all that is said and is done in the *prothesis* symbolizes the first period of the *oikonomia* of Christ: Salaville 1967): 60 (1, 6), 62 (1, 8). Symeon of Thessaloniki (PG 155: col. 264C, 348AB) equates the *prothesis* with Bethlehem, the cave of the Nativity and the crib.

a private domestic and funeral chapel had different needs. A *pastophorion* or side room was not indispensable, but a niche was probably always necessary.

Where did the preparation of bread and wine take place in Cappadocian churches? Rarely in a special room,⁷ but, most often in small rural churches, in a simple niche usually set in the eastern part of the north wall of the nave, no matter what the architectural type of the church: single-nave with one or three apses, double- or triple-aisled, transverse nave, cruciform and cross-in-square churches.⁸ This location provided easy access for the clergy during the liturgy – the area between the niche and the sanctuary might have been reserved for the clergy – and it allowed the faithful to observe the liturgical performance. Sometimes the niche was fitted within the eastern wall near the apse, on the north side, and it could also be inside the apse (to the north), as evidenced especially in 13th-century churches. The *prothesis* rite could also be accommodated not in a simple niche, but in a subsidiary apse. When the arrangement of the *bema* is asymmetrical with two apses and that they are interconnected, it is tempting to consider the northern apse as the *prothesis*. In Yusuf Koç Kilisesi, Göreme Village (Jolivet-Lévy 2015: 110), its size, smaller than the other one, its decoration – the *Theotokos* and Child – suggest that this space was intended to be used for the preparation of bread and wine; a deacon saint is represented at the entrance, to the left. However, there is also a niche set to the north, within the eastern wall of the nave, a location that corresponds to the place of the *prothesis* niche in several churches; on its back wall Misael is pictured, one of the Three Young Hebrews, a figure of sacrifice (Stefănescu 1936: 53). Other examples invite us not to interpret the northern lateral apsidiole in two-sanctuary churches systematically as a *prothesis*. A cross-in-square church in the Göreme Valley, close to Church no. 2b, has only two apses, the northern one smaller, but they are not interconnected, and there is also a niche at the eastern end of the north wall of the *naos* (Jolivet-Lévy 2015: 52). A small funerary chamber in the north-west bay suggests that the north apse was not (or not only) a *prothesis*, but a secondary sanctuary for commemorative and funeral services. In another chapel in the Soğanlı Valley (no. 27), the northern apsidiole was added later, probably because of

⁷ However, see Ala Kilise at Belisırma (Kalas 2009), and Church no. 27 in the Soğanlı Valley (Jolivet-Lévy 2015: 281-282).

⁸ Teteriatnikov (1996: 80–82) considers the location of the *prothesis* niche in the eastern part of the nave as a distinctive feature of Cappadocian churches, but it is also found in many other churches throughout the Byzantine empire.

evolution in the ritual; at the beginning, there was only a small semicircular niche, set in the eastern cross arm (Jolivet-Lévy 2015: 281–282).

The tripartite arrangement of the *bema*, that became standard in Constantinople, and in the middle Byzantine churches in general, belongs to a long-standing architectural and liturgical tradition, introduced as early as the 6th century, so before the introduction of the *prothesis* liturgy. In the middle and late Byzantine period, when the three spaces are symmetrically arranged, and often interconnected, the rooms to the north and to the south are commonly referred to as *prothesis* and *diakonikon* (Varalis 2006; Marinis 2014: 30–41; Karagiannis, Mamaloukos 2009). These denominations, however, are conventional and the north apse is not a response to the introduction of the *prothesis* liturgy: it dates from the early Byzantine period, and the three-part arrangement seems to make more sense in terms of architecture than it does in terms of liturgy. Other plausible functions can be, and have been proposed for the lateral apses: needed in particular because of the prohibition of liturgical celebration twice on the same altar within the single day, they could have been used as additional sanctuaries, or chapels, for votive services by villages, families or private individuals for various occasions (Babić 1969; Mathews 1982). As Thomas F. Mathews has evidenced based on the New Tokalı Church at Göreme (10th century), each apse was often a *bema*, equipped with an altar, a presbyter's seat, and a *prothesis* niche. However, the function might also change over time: in the basilica of Pliska, Bulgaria, whose dating is still debated, the side sacristies seem to serve as *prothesis* and *diakonikon* only at a later phase; originally the north room served as a chapel and the south as a baptistery – to compare to the function of the southern *pastophorion* in Nubia (Varalis 2006: 285–286). There is also the possibility that the multiplication of additional sanctuaries would have allowed additional dedications. In the church of the *Theotokos* of Skripou (873/74), at Orchomenos, Greece, for instance, the *bema* and the two eastern lateral rooms have a small semicircular niche in their northern wall, certainly intended to serve as a *prothesis*: these rooms, dedicated to St Paul and to St Peter, were two independent chapels (Čurčić 1977: 100–101). The same uncertainty remains about the function of lateral apses in Cappadocia. They rarely connect directly to the central apse, and each unit is normally equipped with its own altar, seat, and chancel, as in the New Tokalı Kilise, where each apse has a separate *prothesis* niche. One can deduce that the northern apse in Byzantine churches did not have a unique and exclusive purpose; it could be used as a *prothesis*, and also for additional services, commemorative or funeral, for the cult of saints, or any other use.

Although it is difficult to ascertain a precise connection between iconography and function, the painted decoration can help, at least to some extent, and determine the use of this space (Bolman 2009). The cross motif, of course not specific to the *prothesis* niche, represents one of the earliest images found in the niche used to accommodate bread and wine, in accordance with the pronounced sacrificial meaning of the ritual – the preparation of the Holy Gifts which evokes the memory of Christ’s death.⁹ The cross appears both in early and in middle Byzantine *prothesis* niches of Cappadocia. Sculpted in Church no. 6 in Zelve (Thierry 1994: 360–361), assigned to the 6th century, it is painted at Kokar Kilise (Ihlara Valley, 9th/10th century), where an archangel surmounts the niche (Thierry, Thierry 1963: 133) [Fig. 8]. In Chapel no. 15a at Göreme (early 10th century), where the image of the cross has been intentionally erased, it is John the Baptist, an unscrolled roll in the left hand who is depicted above the niche (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 118–120). There was a cross (now destroyed) in the *prothesis* niche set in the east wall of the nave of Tavşanlı Kilise, and three holy bishops are represented above (Jolivet-Lévy 2015: 190–192).¹⁰ A cross motif is also found in the *prothesis* of middle and late Byzantine churches beyond Cappadocia (Altripp 1998: 99–101), like St Mercury in Corfu (11th century) (Vocotopoulos 1971: 163–164), St Charalampos at Marôneia (9th/10th century), or the funerary *parekklesion* of the Old Metropolis (Sts Theodoroi) at Serres (after 1364, Papatheophanous-Tsouri 2016: 310–313, 143).

Another subject sometimes painted close to the *prothesis*, because it is an appropriate illustration of the sacrificial character of the rite, is the Presentation of Christ in the temple. In Church no. 1 in Güllüdere (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 27–29; *ead.* 2015: 147), the scene is displayed above the *prothesis* niche, on the barrel vault [Fig. 9], while at Sümbüllü Kilise (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 305–307), it fills the north apse (the Mother of God between archangels is in the main apse, the Koimesis in the south niche). In El Nazar (Göreme no. 1), the Presentation of Christ in the temple is displayed above the small south apse, which could have served as a *prothesis* – Christ flanked by two angels is represented inside – while the north *pastophorion* might have been in relation to the cult of the Saint Eustathios

⁹ Hence the image of Christ *Akra Tapeinôsis* (Man of Sorrows) that became the theme *par excellence* of the *prothesis* niche in late Byzantine period: Altripp 1998: 89–91.

¹⁰ There is no mention of the cross in Jolivet-Lévy 2015: 190–192. At a later time, another *prothesis* niche had been cut inside the apse, on the north side. It possibly reflects the evolution of the rite: from the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries, the *prothesis* was taken from the deacon and began to be performed by the priest, who conducts the office of oblation behind the *templon* – often in a separate chamber to the north of the altar, but here inside the apse, to the left of the altar table.



Fig. 8. The Cross in the *prothesis* niche at Kokar Kilise in the Ihlara Valley, Cappadocia, 9th/10th century. (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).



Fig. 9. Güllüdere Church no. 1. The Presentation of Christ in the temple is depicted in the north-eastern corner above the *prothesis* niche, first half of the 10th century. (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).

and his sons, whose portraits are displayed above the entrance to the small chamber (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 83–84; *ead.* 2015: 45–47). Another scene typologically related to Eucharist is the sacrifice by Abraham. It appears in the *prothesis* niche of Church no. 2 at Yüksekli (13th century) (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 237–239; *ead.* 2015: 158), but it is rarely found in this context in the middle Byzantine period (Weyl Carr 2009: 144–145). However, it graces the *prothesis* of the Saviour's Church at Megara (around 1200), along with the Philoxenia and Moses with the burning bush. In late Byzantine programmes it becomes a much more frequent theme in the area of the *prothesis*, especially in Crete and in Cyprus (Altripp 1998: 88–89; Weyl Carr 2009: 145–146; Weyl Carr 2012: 219–221).

The symbolic link of the *prothesis* to Bethlehem and to the Incarnation has been expressed by different images. In Nubian churches, such as Faras, Abd el-Qadir, Abdalla-n Irqi, or in the Northwest Annexe of the Monastery on Kom H in Old Dongola, the Nativity is painted in the north-eastern corner (Innemée 1989: 8; *id.* 1995: 280; *id.* 2013: 194; Martens-Czarnecka 2005: 273–276; Zielińska 2010: 644–647), but it can also be located elsewhere in the church. In Cappadocia this theme is not especially associated with the *prothesis*, but there is evidence in other regions, as attested by the instances of St Nicholas in Melnik (Bulgaria, 13th century) (Stransky 1940: 423), the Church of the Virgin at Sušica (early 14th century) (Todić 1999: 304), the church of the Cozia monastery (Romania, late 14th century) (Stefănescu 1936: 51), or Hagios Georgios at Perlenigiana (Kythera, late 15th century) (Chatzidakis, Bitha 2003: 86).

If the Nativity is not found in the context of the *prothesis* in Cappadocia, other themes refer to the Incarnation of God, re-enacted in the Eucharistic mystery. The most widespread (in Cappadocia and in Byzantine churches in general) is the *Theotokos* and Child, also attested, often with donors, in Nubia (Łajtar 2015: 111). It is known in a variety of iconographic types (Altripp 1998: 75–80, 115–117). Amongst many other examples, let us mention the Virgin of tenderness at the New Tokalı Kilise, Göreme (10th century) (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 103; *ead.* 2015: 73) and Karabaş Kilise in the Soğanlı Valley (1060 or 1061) (Jolivet-Lévy 2015: 272) [Fig. 10], the *Theotokos* and Child in half-figure in the north lateral apse of the so-called 'column-churches' at Göreme (11th century): Karanlık Kilise, Çarıklı Kilise (below the Hospitality of Abraham, a theme with obvious offertory and Eucharistic overtones) [Fig. 11] and Elmalı Kilise (below the Entombment of Christ) (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 124, 130, 134; *ead.* 2015: 81–82, 86, 89). In Cambazlı Kilise at Ortahisar, the enthroned *Theotokos* with the Child flanked by her parents Anne and Joachim are found in the north apse, and three holy bishops are portrayed in the south one (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 197–198; *ead.* 2015: 180). The north niche of the Chapel of the *Theotokos* (Göreme no. 9)



Fig. 10. The *prothesis* niche at Karabaş Kilise (Soğanlı Valley, Cappadocia): the Virgin of tenderness; beneath, the Saints Sergius and Bacchus, 1060 or 1061. (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).



Fig. 11. Above the *Theotokos* and Child, in the conch of the north apse, the Hospitality of Abraham at Çarıklı Kilise (Göreme no. 22), 11th century. (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).



Fig. 12. View looking east of the Church of Nikephoros Phokas (or Pigeon House Church) at Çavuşin, Cappadocia. The Phokas family is pictured within the north apse, the *Theotokos* and Child in the south, c. 964/965. (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).

has the Mother of God standing between two saints, presumably Basil and George, while the south one shows Christ between John the Baptist and John's father Zechariah; but there is also a niche in the eastern part of the nave, to the north, where a holy bishop had been depicted (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 110; *ead.* 2015: 23). In Kılıçlar Kilise (10th century), where there is also a small niche fitted in the north wall of the *naos*, the standing *Theotokos* flanked by four figures (among them Zechariah and St Theodote), above the Communion of the apostles, filled the north apse (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 139–140; *ead.* 2015: 57–58). However, the image of the Mother of God also appears in the south niche or apse of the *bema*: in Church Göreme no. 15a, both the two shallow niches that flank the apse contained a representation of the *Theotokos* (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 120; *ead.* 2015: 38), while in the Church of Nikephoros Phokas (or Pigeon House Church) at Çavuşin, which may be dated c. 964/65, the image of the imperial Phokas family fills the north lateral apse, and the enthroned *Theotokos* with the Child fills the south one (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 20–21; *ead.* 2015: 130) [Fig. 12]. The same situation, of course, exists outside Cappadocia, as at

St Nicholas *sto Kastro* at Serres (14th century): the *Theotokos* in half-figure is found in the *diakonikon* conch while the *prothesis* is graced with the image of Christ Amnos in the paten (Papatheophanous-Tsouri 2016: 150–151).

Certain scenes have also been selected to be displayed inside or above the place of oblation in order to denote, as did the image of the *Theotokos*, the Incarnation. At St Eustathios (Göreme no. 11), the Annunciation occupies the *prothesis* niche (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 115; *ead.* 2015: 39–41); according to the *Prothectoria*, the deacon who cuts out the *Amnos* from the *prosphora* represents the archangel who said to Mary: Χαῖρε (PG 140: col. 429C). Michael Altripp mentions a few examples of the representation of the Annunciation in close relation to the *prothesis*, but he also found the theme in the *diakonikon* (Altripp 1998: 117–118). In Asinou, Cyprus (early 12th century), it is the Nativity of the Virgin, which is displayed on the north wall of the *prothesis*, while on the south wall of the *diakonikon* the Presentation of the Virgin in the temple is depicted, with Mary being fed by an angel (Stylianou 1985: 119). This latter episode appears in Chapel no. 9 at Göreme above the *prothesis* niche, on the barrel vault of the nave, to the north-east (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 110; *ead.* 2015: 23).

Pictures of saints have been associated with the *prothesis* niche. Among them, holy deacons are directly connected with the ritual. While the prayer of the *prothesis* was always recited by the priest, the preparation of Eucharistic bread and wine has been the task of deacons since apostolic times: the depiction, in the niche, of a deacon, most often the protomartyr Stephen, attests to the lasting importance of the deacon in the *prothesis* rite. Its image appears in Cappadocia in the Karabulut Church (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 80–82; *ead.* 2015, 116) [Fig. 13], Church no. 28 in the Soğanlı Valley (Jolivet-Lévy 2015, 283), the Church of the Forty Martyrs at Şahinefendi/Süveş (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 207), and there are many other occurrences in Byzantine monuments (Altripp 1998: 82–86; Prolović 1997: 104; Todić 1999: 298, 304, 327, 331, 344; Papatheophanous-Tsouri 2016: 143, 281). In Kurbinovo (Macedonia), at the end of the 12th century, in the absence of a *prothesis* chamber, two niches flank the apse, which would have played a role in the preparation of the offerings; inside two deacons, St Stephen and St Euplos (Hadermann-Misguich 1975: 90–92), are represented. Actually, deacon saints were also considered an appropriate choice for the south subsidiary apse or niche (Alltrip 1998: 82–86); for instance, St Stephen is pictured in the *diakonikon* of St Prochor of Pčinja at Vranje (c. 1315) (Todić 1999: 319).

Beside the deacons, prominence is given to bishops, but holy physicians, martyrs, and locally venerated saints are also found, which could reflect the personal desires of the patron. In Church no. 13 at Göreme John Chrysostom is pictured



Fig. 13. Saint Stephen featured as a deacon in the *prothesis* niche at Karabulut Kilisesi, Cappadocia, first quarter of the 11th century. (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).

(Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 117–118); at Kubbeli Kilise no. 1 (Soğanlı Valley), St Basil, and above the niche the anargyroi Cosmas and Damian (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 264), while in Church St Barbara in Soğanlı (1006 or 1021), we have St Sabas between Cosmas and Damian (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 259), and in Ali Reis Church at Ortahisar, the holy martyrs Julitta and Kerykos (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 198–199).

John the Baptist has sometimes been represented in relation to the *prothesis*, as in the already mentioned Chapel Göreme no. 15a, where he is found above the niche set at the eastern end of the north wall of the nave (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 118–120). He is often observed in the *parabemata* (Stefănescu 1936: 51–52; Altripp 1998: 75–80, 111–114), as for instance in the conch of the north apse of the *katholikon* of Daphni where Aaron and Zechariah are also depicted, while the image of St Nicholas fills the conch of the *diakonikon*, Gregory Thaumaturgos and Gregory of Agrigent being on the lateral walls (Millet 1899: 77). In Chrysaphitissa Church at Chrysapha (Lakonia, 1290), the table of the *prothesis* with two angels dressed as deacons holding *rhipidia* is displayed beneath an image of John the Baptist (Albani 2000: 32).¹¹ This location of the image of John Prodromos can be explained by the fact that the presbyter is likened to him. We read in the *Protheoria*: “The priest who accomplishes the opening part of the liturgy is an image of John the Baptist, who began the proclamation by saying ‘Do penance, the kingdom of heaven is at hand’ and by baptizing all who came to him.” (PG 140: col. 432B; Schulz 986: 92). However, much more often, John Prodromos is pictured in the south space, as in Nubian churches. In the church of Eski Gümüş (near Niğde), for instance, John the Baptist is in the south niche, in response to the Virgin who fills the north one (Jolivet-Lévy 1991: 280–281), an arrangement widespread throughout the Byzantine empire, as at St Panteleimon at Nerezi (1164) (Sinkević 2000: 44–46). At Hagios Nikolaos at Elaiôn, Greek Macedonia (13th century, Papatheophanous-Tsouri 2016: 152, 155), John Prodromos is pictured in the niche to the south of the main apse and holds the text of John 1.29 (“Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”). These words could refer to the preparatory rites, when the priest separates out the *Ammos* from the *prosphora*, saying: “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, is offered in sacrifice.”¹² However, the image of John Prodromos could also have had another justification, that the destruction of the other paintings in the church does not allow us to elucidate. In Mikre

¹¹ There are scenes displaying the life of John Prodromos in the vault of the *prothesis*, whereas Christ is pictured in the apse of the *diakonikon*.

¹² A mention that does not appear in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, but is attested later (in the liturgical commentary of Nicholas Cabasilas).

Episkope Church in Crete (first half of the 14th century), below the image of John the Baptist that fills the conch of the *diakonikon*, the Baptism of Christ is displayed (Altripp 1998: 79), a theme that perhaps indicates that the rite of the Blessing of the Waters could have taken place in this space. In fact, contrary to what is observed in some Nubian churches, the south-eastern room does not seem to have been used as a baptistery in middle Byzantine churches; we know that early Christian baptisteries were often distinct constructions, and that, then, as a result of changing baptismal customs, the font was moved into the church, but usually in the narthex or in a room aside.

The representation of Jesus Christ, the most specific image for the north-eastern *pastophorion* in Nubian churches, is also known as a theme for the decoration of the *prothesis* niche in Byzantine churches (Altripp 1998: 89–97). Christ appears in bust form, with long hair and short beard, in the small niche cut into the eastern wall of the north arm at Yılanlı Kilise (Ihlara Valley, late 9th century) [Fig. 14]. In 13th-century Cappadocia, he became the favourite motif for the *prothesis* niche, but contrary to Nubian iconography he is shown beardless, as Christ Emmanuel, young or with *puer senex* features, in accordance with the interpretation of the *prothesis* rite given by the commentators of the liturgy (see *supra*). The privileged association of the image of Christ Emmanuel with the *prothesis* is confirmed by its depiction within the opening letter omicron of the words “O God, our God, ...”, the beginning of the *prothesis* prayer, in liturgical roll no. 707 in Patmos, produced in Constantinople in the 12th century (Kominis 1988: fig. 26). We found the depiction of Christ Emmanuel shown in half-figure, blessing and holding a closed roll, in the Church no. 4 in the Mavrucan Valley (Jolivet-Lévy 2015: 255) [Fig. 15], in two churches at Tatlarin, Karaca Kilise and Kale Kilise no. 1 (Jolivet-Lévy 2015: 159–160), in the Archangelos Church near Cemil (Jolivet-Lévy 2015: 212), in the Church of the *Theotokos Kardiovastazousa* at Gökçetoprak (Jolivet-Lévy 2015: 158–159; Uyar 2016: 642), and in the Bezirana Kilisesi in the Ihlara Valley (Jolivet-Lévy 2017: 120) [Fig. 16]. In this last church, an imitation of a hung cloth is painted underneath the *prothesis* niche¹³ – according to the Byzantine custom, deacons spread a linen cloth over the altar before the offertory rite – and immediately to the left of the niche St Stephen is portrayed as a deacon, holding a pyxis, and a censer. In the Byzantine iconography of the *prothesis*, Christ is not pictured blessing the chalice, but at Karşı Kilise (St John) near Gülşehir, painted in 1212, the recess within the apse on the north side contains the image

¹³ A *podea* is also observed below the *prothesis* niche in other churches, as at St Mercury in Corfu (Vocotopoulos 1971: 163–164).



Fig. 14. View looking east of Yılanlı Kilise in the Ihlara Valley, Cappadocia, late 9th century. (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).



Fig. 15. Christ Emmanuel in the *prothesis* niche of the Church no. 4 in the Mavruca Valley, 13th century. (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).



Fig. 16. Saint Stephen and Christ Emmanuel (within the niche) on the north side of the apse of Bezirana Kilisesi in the Ihlara Valley, late 13th century. (Phot. C. Jolivet-Lévy).

of a chalice covered by the *aer*, and other cloths, referring to the liturgical function of this niche (Jolivet-Lévy 2001: 169). Michael Altripp also mentions some representations of the Emmanuel in the *diakonikon* (Altripp 1998: 95–96), a location observed in Nubia at the cathedral of Petros at Faras (Zielińska 2010: 645).

Finally, we must acknowledge that the evidence of iconography remains of rather limited usefulness to determine the function of the spaces adjacent to the apse which could fulfil several purposes, and even been utilized interchangeably. The so-called *prothesis* could be used for preparing the sacred species for the liturgy and serve as well a votive function, while the *diakonikon* shows even

more flexibility in typology, function, and decoration. There was no strict regulation either for their use or for their paintings, which seem to have been not only diversified but also, to a certain extent, interchangeable. Only the image of Christ (particularly as Emmanuel) seems to be specific, however, of course, not exclusive, for the *prothesis* niche. Far from being submitted to a binding system, painters or those who decided the choice and the location of the subjects enjoyed a certain freedom.

This paper did not have any pretensions of answering questions related to the iconographic programme of the sanctuary of Nubian churches and to the function of their *pastophoria*. Bringing them into a geographically widened context, it was only meant to contribute to frequent points of discussion, and to demonstrate that it could be beneficial to research Nubian wall paintings in a broad perspective, even if Nubia developed its distinctive regional artistic activity. It has been already evidenced by secular and religious costumes, and symbols of power and ornaments that Nubian culture received a part of its inspiration from Constantinople (Frend 1968; Innemée 1995: 283–287), but this probably should be investigated more thoroughly for religious iconography (Woźniak 2011). For this purpose, murals preserved in large numbers in Cappadocia that reflect metropolitan traditions to a certain extent can help fill the gaps in our knowledge of Constantinopolitan decorations, and be used as comparisons.

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**“I GAVE MILK TO HIM
WHILE HE WAS FEEDING ALL THE WORLD”
REPRESENTATIONS OF THE *GALAKTOTROPHOUSA*
IN FARAS CATHEDRAL**

ABSTRACT

The article is an attempt to present an interpretation of the images of the Mother of God *Galaktotrophousa* from the cathedral in Faras. Three paintings preserved on the walls of the north aisle of the church (at present in collections of the National Museum in Warsaw and the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum) depict the Virgin breastfeeding Christ as a Child. In the article a meaning of the representation is considered in the context of theological texts, especially Christological problems discussed since the time of Chalcedonian Council. In the cathedral of Faras, however, these paintings had played mainly a votive role.

KEYWORDS

Eastern Christian and Byzantine painting, Nubian painting; iconography of the Virgin, *Virgo Lactans*, Faras cathedral

When in the years 1961–1964, Faras Cathedral in the Sudan become the place of discovery of over 150 mural paintings rooted in the Eastern Church tradition, one of the most important figures that could be seen on the church's walls was that of Mary, Mother of Jesus. Among the effigies from Faras,

now located in the National Museum in Warsaw and in the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum, there are representations of the Mother of God supporting her Son on her left arm and raising her right hand in a greeting gesture, pictures of Mary holding the Christ Child who embraces her. There are also compositions in which she is shown as a protector of the clergy and laypeople, as in the paintings where she is seen next to Bishop Marianos or Queen Martha, and finally in some narrative scenes, as in two examples of the Nativity. The prominent role of the *Theotokos* in the iconographic programme of the cathedral and her central position in the apse can be associated with noticeable Marian devotion among the Nubians and even more with the fact that by the 10th century (or even earlier) Mary was the patroness of the church (Jakobielski 2016: 39).

The present article discusses one of the most characteristic themes in Marian iconography examples of which are found in Faras Cathedral: effigies of the Nursing Virgin, in Greek *Galaktotrophousa* – “she who feeds milk” (Van Moorsel 1991: 531–532). On the cathedral walls three such images were preserved, all situated in the northern part of the building. They were first mentioned by the head of the expedition Kazimierz Michałowski in 1964 (*Kush* XII: 203, pl. XLIVa and described in his study entitled *Faras. Die Kathedrale aus dem Wüstensand* (Michałowski 1967: 151–154, figs 73, 76). In the year 1970 such images from Faras were considered by P.P. van Moorsel in his article *Die Stillende Gottesmutter und die Monophysiten* (Van Moorsel 1970: 281–282), while Tadeusz Gołgowski examined them in a little more detail in his work *Paintings from the Faras Cathedral – Representations of Mary with Christ of the Eleousa and Galaktotrophousa type*, however, in the then state of knowledge about the ideological implications connected with the Nursing Virgin’s images (Gołgowski 1970: 399–406). Later, they were also reproduced in numerous publications regarding Faras Cathedral. In the present article, which focuses mainly on the meaning of the iconography of the *Theotokos*, I shall concentrate on the question of the coexistence of images following the same iconographic type within one church or even part thereof: in an aisle that not only had its function in the cyclically performed liturgy, but was also a place where the faithful would come for individual devotion.

Thus, the text will consider another question which is vital for the study of Faras Cathedral, namely the ideological foundations for particular elements and the entirety of the iconographic programme of the paintings in this church. In the works on this subject there have been two conflicting views. One adheres to Kurt Weitzmann’s statement in a 1970 article where it was argued that the paintings on the Cathedral’s walls were a sort of “mural icons” (Weitzmann 1970: 325–339), often unrelated to one another. The other – rep-



Fig. 1. Faras Gallery, The National Museum in Warsaw (Phot. Nicolas Grosppierre).

resented in the following years by Piotr Scholz (Szolc 1975: 296–299), Karel C. Innemée (1995: 279–287), Włodzimierz Godlewski (2000: 168–181), and Dobrochna Zielińska (2010: 643–651; 2012: 593–597) presumed that in Faras, like in other Nubian ecclesiastical interiors, there is a distinct theological, liturgical and political iconographic programme. While analysing the effigies of the *Galaktotrophousa*, one should consider the question whether any of these contradictory views may be confirmed.

As previously stated, the archaeological mission led by Kazimierz Michałowski in Faras in the early 1960s managed to uncover and transfer from the walls three paintings depicting the *Galaktotrophousa*. Nowadays one of these is kept in the National Museum in Warsaw, and the remaining two in the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum. All three were painted using tempera on dry plaster. The first painting [Figs 1, 2], (Godlewski 2006: fig. 101; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 74–75, Cat. 80, fig. 7.3) comes from the western part of the north aisle; it was placed on its northern wall at 1.60m above the floor.¹

¹ For the previous publications see: Gołgowski 1970: 400, fig. 8; Michałowski 1974: 228–229, Cat. 52, fig. 52; Mierzejewska *et alii* 2002: 87–89, Cat. 21; Mierzejewska 2014: 162–163; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: Cat. 80.



Fig. 2. Mother of God *Galaktotrophousa*, tempera on dry plaster, 11th century, The National Museum in Warsaw (Phot. Zbigniew Doliński & Piotr Ligier).

The upper part of the painting underwent considerable damage. In consequence the whole head and the upper part of the Mother of God's body are hardly visible and only their contours can be guessed. They can be identified on the basis of their resemblance to other representations of the *Galaktotrophousa*. The painting shows Mary on the throne, sitting on a cushion and resting her feet on a footstool. On her lap sits Christ as a Child, supported by her left arm. Mary looks toward him and breastfeeds him. She wears a crimson maphorion adorned with jewels, and a slate-grey dress with two orange stripes. Her feet are adorned with crimson shoes. Jesus sits on his mother's lap facing to the left. His left hand grabs the hand of Mary that supports her breast, while his right hand remains invisible. He wears an ochre chiton and himation, and a contour of sandals can be seen on his feet. The throne and the footstool are golden and studded with gems. Below the throne a cross is visible, and on both its sides there are votive inscriptions on the left side: + *Lord Jesus Christ (and) Mary, guard, bless, protect, strengthen (and) help Thy servant Joseph, son of Marko, deacon (from the church of) Mary (at) Pachoras. So be it. Amen* (Jakobielski 1972: 180; 1974: 298–299, no. 33; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 275) and on the right side: + *Lord Jesus Christ (and) Mary, guard, bless, protect, strengthen (and) help Thy servant Mariame, daughter of Mariata. So be it. Amen* (Jakobielski 1974: 299, no. 33; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 275). A distinctive sooty stain is present under the inscription indicating that an oil lamp was used in front of the painting (Gołgowski 1970: 402).

The Sudan National Museum in Khartoum houses two other effigies of the *Galaktotrophousa*. The first [*Figs 3, 4 and 5*] comes from the western part of the cathedral's north aisle; it was originally located near the painting that is now in the National Museum in Warsaw, and is placed at a similar height.² It was obviously painted on a subsequent layer of plaster, as images were discovered beneath: that of the Apostles Peter and John (now in the National Museum in Warsaw) and of a Nubian woman with Saint Aaron as a patron (now in the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum). The representation of the *Virgo Lactans* is only partially preserved, a large part of its middle section is totally missing which makes it difficult to retrace the details of its iconography. Yet, by analogy with other representations, we can almost undoubtedly identify it as a representation of the *Theotokos*. Mary is depicted

² Published so far in: Michałowski 1964: 203, pl. XLIVa; Michalowski 1967: 151–152, fig. 73; Gołgowski 1970: 402, fig. 8; cf. Michałowski 1974: 229; Scholz 2000: 196, fig. 16; Godlewski 2006: fig. 84, 101; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 280–282, Cat. 83; cf. Werner 1972a: 7, fig. 8.



Fig. 3. Mother of God *Galaktotrophousa*, tempera on dry plaster, the early 11th century, at present in the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum (Phot. Tomasz Jakobielski).



Fig. 4. Mother of God *Galaktotrophousa*, a painting in the north aisle of Faras Cathedral, at present in the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum. Fragments of murals on the earlier layer of plaster visible in the middle. (Courtesy of the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences).

on the throne, sitting on a red cushion, three quarters facing the right. She wears a navy-blue, slightly purplish, *maphorion* and a red headscarf is seen from below. On her laps is Jesus, shown from the side, facing the left, his legs crossed, and wearing an ochre robe. It is a typical manner of portraying Mary: with a very fair complexion, linear features of the face and particularly highlighted almond-shaped eyes with upper and lower eyelids made up with green and red lines. The throne is very ornate, its frame is jewelled with multicolour gems that also adorn the seat and legs with the slat between them on which Mary rests her feet, while the backrest seems to be an imitation of a brick wall (Gołgowski 1970: 402). The representation bears an inscription: *With God, + Holy Mary, Mother of Christ, Godbearer* (Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 281; cf. Gołgowski 1970: 402).



Fig. 5. Faras Cathedral. The North Aisle looking West. (Courtesy of the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Culture, Polish Academy of Sciences, phot. Andrzej Dziewanowski).

Another representation of the *Galaktotrophousa* [Fig. 6] was found in the northern wing of the transept, on its eastern wall, on the intrados of the passage from the northern vestibule to the north aisle.³ It depicts the *Theotokos* on the throne with her feet on a footstool. She wears a blue robe with two orange vertical stripes and on the scarf on her head there is a golden crown with two wing-shaped elements and a cross in the middle, decorated with gems and small pearls. A red veil falls to her shoulders from beneath the crown, its almond-like shape resembles a mandorla. We can also notice – in spite of this part of the painting being significantly damaged – the figure of an adolescent Christ holds his mother's breast with his right hand. Mary hands her white breast to Jesus with outspread fingers. Her face is poorly preserved, but that of Jesus is clearly visible. Both of them have very fair complexions and are drawn linearly. The viewer's attention is drawn to the almond-like shape of Christ's eyes and the lines that encircle them. His head is surrounded by a cross halo. The throne, where the Mother of God sits, has a high, arched backrest decorated with an ornament imitating a brick wall. The framing and legs of the seat contain also forms reminiscent of precious gems. The upper part of the throne is surmounted with a cross, the arms of which widen at the ends. The painting bears an inscription above the throne: *With God, + Holy Mary, Mother [of Christ]* (Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 261; cf. Gołgowski 1970: 400; cf. Kubińska 1974: 123, Cat. 64, fig. 58) and dedication below it: *+ Lord Jesus Christ (and) Mary, guard, bless, protect, strengthen, (and) help Thy servant* (Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 261).

Despite the damages in some of the described images which make it partially impossible to interpret their iconographic programme and to analyse their form, it may be said that all of them follow the same pattern of a hieratic and ceremonial character in which Mary on the throne offers her breast to Jesus sitting on her lap supported by her left hand (Higgins 2015: 104).

All of the effigies of the *Virgo Lactans* preserved on walls of Faras Cathedrals are executed in a similar way. Their decorative character is particularly visible in the manner of executing such elements as the crown or the throne. In the two paintings from the National Museum in Sudan we notice striking similarities in handling the technique, especially in the execution of the faces whose complexion contrasts with the multicoloured setting. In the painting from the National Museum in Warsaw the faces are virtually missing, yet the remaining parts (beside the persons) are very akin to the other two. Based on

³ Published in: Michałowski 1967: 153–154, fig. 76; Gołgowski 1970: 400, fig. 10; Michałowski 1974: 229; Scholz 2000, 196, fig. 15; 2001: 228 fig. VI.g; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 260–263, Cat. 74.



Fig. 6. Mother of God *Galaktotrophousa*, tempera on dry plaster, early 11th century, from Faras Cathedral at present in the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum (Phot. Tomasz Jakobielski).



Fig. 7. Fragment of the painting of St. Anne Nursing in the North Aisle of Faras Cathedral, tempera on dry plaster, early 11th century (Courtesy of the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences).

the style of all these representations it may be assumed that they ought to come from the same period. It is also probable that they were made by the same studio or different studios that kept in some sort of touch. Their comparison with other objects from Faras – the typical manner of painting the face, apparel and details together with their colours (such as the image of Bishop Marianos and his patrons, Mary and the Child, and Jesus Christ alone) also indicate the beginning of the 11th century as a possible time of their origin (cf. Michałowski 1974: 210–222, Cat. 45; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 308–313, Cat. 95).

Due to their formal and iconographic proximity (as far as we can infer from the fragments preserved), the above-mentioned paintings can be associated with the representation that was found in the north aisle, near the entrance to the chapel of the *prothesis* (now in the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum, [Fig. 7] accompanied by the following inscription: *With God, + Saint Anne, mother of Mary, mother of Christ* (Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 259, Cat. 73; cf. Kubińska 1974: 120–121, Cat. 61, fig. 55). On this partially preserved painting we see the upper part of a throne similar to the backrest of Mary's on the representations of the *Galaktotrophousa*. By dint of both these data – it seems highly probable that the painting originally showed Saint Anne Nursing.

All of the representations discussed herein should be considered not only with reference to the Nubian tradition of the 11th century, but also in the context of Byzantine art of that century in more general terms with its very well-developed Marian iconography (Cutler 1987: 335–350; Scholz 2001: 225–228). The presence of the picture of Saint Anne, which is most likely close to the representations of the *Galaktotrophousa*, may indicate some particular aspects of the interpretation of these effigies. The veneration of the *Theotokos* after the suppression of iconoclasm in Byzantium and in the areas directly connected with it was of prime importance, while beginning from the 10th and 11th centuries started a true efflorescence of Marian iconography whose instances abounded both in official cult (Weyl Carr 2000: 325–335), and in private devotion (Maguire 2000: 279–288).

While analysing the meaning of the iconography of the *Galaktotrophousa* (Kondakov 1914: 255–258; Smoraż-Różycka 2017: 5–26) it is worth considering the question of the frequent stereotypes connected with the picture of the *Virgo Lactans* and related to their Egyptian roots. According to these stereotypes the image of the Nursing Virgin shows the maternal bond between mother and son, and it repeats the iconographic model of the Nursing Isis (Davis 2008: 189–191), implying a direct link between the latter and the *Galaktotrophousa* (cf. Werner 1972a: 7).

It is in the context of Isis's effigies and regarding the essence of the *Virgo Lactans* that Elizabeth Bolman asked the question about what motherhood and childhood meant in the 4th–6th centuries actually were. The period indicated by this scholar is of vital significance as this was a time when the iconography of the *Galaktotrophousa* was being shaped. Bolman points out that, at the time, it was a standard practice to separate the mother from her infant-child, a dramatically different view on the value of childhood than nowadays. Hence Bolman indicates that breastfeeding (as viewed in our times) was by no means a symbol of motherhood and did not necessarily have to be associated with it (Bolman 2005: 16). At the same time, she stresses the significance of the representations of the *Virgo Lactans* with reference to the role of the *Theotokos* in the salvation of mankind and the place of Christ in this narrative and the relationship between the Mother and the Son.

This may be confirmed by various texts, especially from the early Christian period, that discuss the idea of Mary's divine motherhood. Many of these texts state that owing to the *Theotokos's* virginity (preserved by Mary even after Jesus was born), there could have been no milk in her breasts. Virginity affects Mary's motherhood in a critical way, making it far different from the ordinary one (Patterson Corrington 1989: 396). Therefore, the authors tend to treat the

Virgin Mary's milk as something most unusual. In the 4th century Ephrem the Syrian wrote in his *Song of Virgin* that a woman cannot have milk and virginity alike; where there is milk, there is no virginity (523–526; cf. Kania 1981: 37). In Ephrem's *Song of Mary to the Child Divine* he added that he was aghast that Mary could give her milk to He who feeds the peoples and became a child, and dwelt in the Virgin; He whose glory fills the whole world (CSCO 186, 199; cf. Kania 1981: 44).

This motif is constantly present in the religious literature of the early Christian period especially the image of Mary bearing the *Logos* in herself, which is described as "burning fire". Mary was not consumed by it even though she carried the Lord of the Universe in her bosom. Thus, according to Ephrem, it is thanks to her that "the flame became flesh and she was allowed to caress it in her hands" (CSCO 186, 199; cf. Kania 1981: 44). Following that thought, Saint Germanus (already in the 8th century) wrote about Mary that "she fed Him who gives life and food to the whole nature" (PG 98, 375-376; cf. Kania 1981: 202) in his *Homily for the Consecration of the Church of the Mother of God*. All these statements draw theologians to the conclusion that the provider of the milk that flowed from Mary's breasts, were it present in them, must have been God himself, while Christ in the Virgin's arms represents not only the child, who is the recipient of the milk, but also the very giver of this food. *Solomon's Ode* no. 19 states that the Son is the goblet, the Father is He who gives milk, and the Holy Spirit is the one who takes from Him. His [*i.e.* Father's] breasts were full and the Holy Spirit opened his bosom (Starowieyski 2003: 155). The same source also says that Mary was born like a man, by her own will (Starowieyski 2003: 155).

Referring the image of the *Galaktotrophousa* to the quoted texts we may define it as an image of strictly theological significance: it shows Mary, a Virgin whose breasts should not secrete any milk, and yet, they do; and Jesus Christ, the second hypostasis of the Trinity, who – as Eternal God, Incarnated *Logos* – needs no nourishment like milk. Nonetheless, the Virgin *does* give it to the Eternal God and this is what makes the ideological message of this representation so powerful. Since it may be presumed that Mary's milk does not originally come from the Mother but the Father, the meaning of the Nursing Virgin's iconography hardly refers to a human relationship between the woman and her child (Bolman 2004: 1177). It can be stated, then, that the picture of the *Galaktotrophousa* is not a symbolical representation of motherhood, but rather one that highlights the essence of the incarnation of the *Logos*. *Ipsa facto* the iconographic type of the *Virgo Lactans* may be included in a larger group of Marian pictures that do not denote a relationship between mother and son but

represent the Son as Eternal God who will be sacrificed for the salvation of the world. Some of the images preserved this concept in a remarkable way. We can also take as an example one of the paintings in Dongola depicting the Mother of God nursing and spinning at the same time, which allows an interpretation in the context of the idea of incarnation.⁴ Again, on a miniature of a Coptic hagiography manuscript, dated to the early 10th century, the figure of the *Galaktotrophousa* is shown on the lower arm of a triumphal cross with open arms and with a medallion in the middle containing the bust of Christ giving a blessing.⁵ Thus the concept of the incarnation of the *Logos* became visually bound with the image of the Saviour's sacrifice for mankind.

Nevertheless, the above statements should not exclude other interpretations of the *Galaktotrophousa's* effigies, as they can also be associated with a different theological content that stem from this tradition. The picture of milk flowing from Mary's breasts may then be referred to its meaning as nourishment in various contexts. Clement of Alexandria (2nd–3rd century), whose writings seem particularly important for the shaping of the Nursing Virgin's representations, focuses greatly on Christ's features as a child in *The Paedagogus* (I: 6) perceiving them in the context of being fed. This author many a time mentions the Son of God – the *Logos* – as the one who enlightens man and nourishes them, and refers to the *Logos* as the *milk from Father's breasts* (*Paed.* I, 6:46; Patterson Corrington 1989: 412; Słomka 2004: 13). According to Clement, the *Logos is all to the child, both father and mother, and tutor and nurse. 'Eat ye my flesh, He says, and drink my blood* (cf. John 6:53). *Such is the suitable food which the Lord ministers, and He offers His flesh and pours forth His blood, and nothing is wanting for the children's growth. O amazing mystery! We are enjoined to cast off the old and carnal corruption, as also the old nutriment, receiving in exchange another new regimen, that of Christ* (*Paed.* I, 6:42, Wilson 1885; cf. Słomka 2000: 65; Słomka 2004: 134). In the *Vision of Theophilus*, a fourth-century apocryphon describing the Holy Family's flight to Egypt, these theological reflections were summarised in a single sentence uttered by Mary herself: *I gave milk to Him while He was feeding all the world* (*Vision of Theophilus*; Mingana 1931: 18; Davis 2008: 193).

Milk and blood have a complex symbolical significance and are also understood as divine nourishment for the faithful (Davis 2008: 191-192). This

⁴ Martens-Czarnecka 1999: 562, fig. 15; Scholz 2001: 227, fig. VI.f; Martens-Czarnecka 2011: 172–174, figs 84–85.

⁵ The manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS 600, fol. 1v; cf. Werner 1972b: 130–131, no. 2, fig. 32.

meaning may be deduced from the *First Epistle to the Corinthians: I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh* (1 Cor 3:2-3, Oxford Annotated Bible: 2004). This is why drinking milk is understood and associated with something that belongs spiritually to the childhood and immaturity of the spirit (Patterson Corrington 1989: 407). In the latter passage drawn from the *Gospel of John*, Eucharistic speech is contained (the so-called *Speech of the Bread of Life*) and delivered by Jesus who declares that in their future and eternal life people will eat *the bread that comes down from Heaven* (John 6:50) (cf. Słomka 2000: 35–36). The scholars who analyze this fragment of the Gospel emphasize the fact that when speaking of the Eucharistic bread Christ means his own body (*sarx*) and the consumption thereof (*trogo* – ‘chew’, ‘eat’) has a purely material meaning, and not a figurative one, which highlights the true, and not symbolical, corporeality of the Saviour (Słomka 2000: 37).

Here we can assume that in Biblical images and their exegeses milk symbolises (or announces) wine, as wine symbolises (or announces) blood (Bolman 2005: 17). Clement of Alexandria speaks thus of Jesus: *Wherefore also I have given you milk to drink, ‘he says; meaning, I have instilled into you the knowledge which, from instruction, nourishes up to life eternal. But the expression, ‘I have given you to drink’ is the symbol of perfect appropriation. For those who are full-grown are said to drink, babes to suck. ‘For my blood,’ says the Lord, ‘is true drink.’ In saying, therefore, ‘I have given you milk to drink,’ has he not indicated the knowledge of the truth, the perfect gladness in the Word [i.e. Logos], who is the milk? And what follows next, ‘not meat, for ye were not able,’ may indicate the clear revelation in the future world*”. Milk, however, seems not to be merely a beverage for babies. Clement elaborates: *Thus in many ways the Word is figuratively described, as meat, and flesh, and food, and bread, and blood, and milk. The Lord is all these... (Paed. I, 6:47, Wilson 1885 ; Słomka 2000: 63; Słomka 2004: 133)*, and continues by writing: *If, then, some would oppose, saying that by milk is meant the first lessons – as it were, the first food – and that by meat is meant those spiritual cognitions to which they attain by raising themselves to knowledge, let them understand that, in saying that meat is solid food, and the flesh and blood of Jesus, they are brought by their own vainglorious wisdom to the true simplicity (Paed. I, 6:47, Wilson 1885; cf. Słomka 2000: 63; cf. Słomka 2004: 133)*. The cited passages may be understood as an echo of the dispute with the view that divides the faithful into “natural Christians” and “Gnostics”, who are supposed to eat the same food (Słomka 2000: 64).

Milk may also be perceived as a metaphorical image of the Son of God himself (Patterson Corrington 1989: 408–409). According to another early-

Christian author (here as important as Clement), namely Cyril of Alexandria (5th century), the breastfeeding of Christ by Mary meant transferring human flesh and blood to him (Bolman 2004: 1178). Cyril writes that Jesus receives milk from his Mother's breast and it tastes *sweeter than manna*. The description of the moment when the Saviour is breastfed may be treated even as an equivalent of the representations of the *Galaktotrophousa* which, besides, appears as an illustration to a tenth-century manuscript (Bolman 2004: 1178): *He stretched out His hand. He took thy breast, and He drew into His mouth the milk which was sweeter than manna. The savour of thy sacrifice was sweeter unto Him than the babes of the sacrifice of Noah. Having drunk from thy spotless breasts, He called thee 'My mother'* (Budge 1915: 717–718). In the *Discourse on the Virgin Mary* Cyril stresses that *Mary's womb grew large without [the help of] a man, and [her] breasts became full of milk* (Budge 1915: 719). As the one who feeds baby Jesus she also deserves to consume his flesh and blood: *Since thou didst nourish Him with the milk which was in the virgin breasts, then assuredly His Body of God and His precious Blood shall be placed in thy mouth* (Budge 1915: 721).

While considering different ways of interpreting the milk either as a beverage or as nourishment, as well as its purpose, particular attention should be paid to the fact that milk might be understood as a potion that gives life, longevity, salvation, and divinity (Patterson Corrington 1989: 398). In many Biblical sources a river of milk and honey appears as the symbol of paradise and a metaphor for opulence and happiness, a sign of the Promised Land (Lv 20:24; Dt 31:20; Jr 11:5) (Ferguson 2009: 768). In the *5 Ezra* (2 Esdras 1-2), sources of milk and honey are mentioned (Starowieyski 2001: 178; Bolman 2005: 18). In the *Apocalypse of Paul*, written a century later, Paul mentions the Land of Promise: *I saw a river flowing with milk and honey* (Elliott 2005: 629; Starowieyski 2001: 258). The *Apostolic Tradition* by Hippolytus from the early 3rd century describes an exceptionally ceremonial Eucharist whose participants first ate bread, and then drank from three goblets containing: water, milk and honey and wine with water (Pietrusiak 2011–2013: 54). It needs stressing that in early Christian services the newly born baptised were given milk and honey to drink (Ferguson 2009: 345; Pietrusiak 2011–2013: 56). In the Biblical context they were treated as a symbol of the Promised Land (Pietrusiak 2011–2013: 55) – a sign of the journey from hell to heaven, from the fall of the first people to their promised *theosis* (Jensen 2000: 178); and it was presumed that milk is a healing food or beverage (Bolman 2005: 18). Customs related to the consumption of milk and honey differed greatly: in Carthage, in the early 3rd century, newly baptised individuals stepping out of the font were served

a goblet filled with milk and honey symbolising that they had accepted the gifts of the Promised Land (Tertullian, 1885, PL 2, 78C; Pietrusiak 2011–2013: 57). In his *Against Marcion* (1.14.3) Tertullian comments on the custom of drinking milk and honey by the Marcionists (Ferguson 2009: 277); in fourth-century Egypt newly baptised individuals were served milk and honey as a symbol both of their puerility and as a sign of their future happy eternal life (Ferguson 2009: 467). The Eucharistic tradition of using substances other than bread and wine, including milk and honey, must have existed until the beginning of the 5th century although, as can be seen from the examples above, not always did it follow the prescriptions of orthodoxy (Pietrusiak 2011–2013: 54).

Another issue related to the image of the *Virgo Lactans* and important in the context of its significance is the question of its genesis. Many scholars refer it to the representations of the Nursing Isis, which depict the goddess usually on the throne. On her lap sits Horus, to whom Isis gives one of her bare breasts. As concerns the iconography of those images one can find a lot of similarities to the *Galaktotrophousa*. Yet, attention should be paid to the fact that this resemblance, albeit salient, is rather superficial and devoid of well-documented historical links with the two images (Tran Tam Tinh, Labrecque 1973: 40–49). It is worth recalling the standpoint of Sabrina Higgins (2015: 104–109), who contrasts the two views which focus either on the similarity or the dissimilarity of the images of the *Virgo Lactans* and the Nursing Isis (Higgins 2015: 105–106). She stresses the fact that the iconography of the *Galaktotrophousa* should be seen as an extremely complex problem and indicates the temporal distance between the two representations (Higgins 2015: 106). Higgins also claims that the prevalent tendency to link these two images of breastfeeding women, Mary and Isis, to each other results merely from their apparent likeness, which shows no direct connection that might occur between the representations in question (Higgins 2015: 106–107). She emphasizes the Christian symbol of the *Galaktotrophousa*: it shows Mary as a virgin and Christ is fed with the nourishment that comes straight from God the Father himself (Higgins 2015: 78). Therefore, she treats this image as a manifestation of Christian beliefs which has nothing to do with the echoes of pagan religions. The multi-threaded possibilities of interpreting the depictions of the *Virgo Lactans* with reference to Christian doctrine and the literature related to it appear to confirm such a thesis.

The question of the genesis of these representations must be linked to their meaning, but it may also be considered in the context of the purpose of creating the paintings found in the north aisle of Faras Cathedral, often seen as the section of the church that was destined for women (cf. Sulikowska-Bełczowska

2016: 118–129). It seems that the cult of Isis can be perceived as a particularly feminine one (Cf. Heyob 1975: 53–110), and it must have influenced Christian women's devotion (Chuvin 1990: 210–211). The works by Bolman and Higgins, which concentrate mainly on representations from the 6th and 7th centuries, point out that the effigies of the *Galaktotrophousa* often come from male monasteries (Bolman 2005: 14) and ought to be associated with the followers of the Council of Chalcedon. It appears that one may see in them an image related to the dogma of Incarnation, a metaphor of the Eucharist and the idea of God's healing power (Bolman 2004: 1177). That being said, it is hard to treat these representations as belonging to an iconographic programme dedicated to female believers or connected with the feminine aspects of life. Elizabeth Bolman expands on it with reference to the cult of the *Theotokos* in male monastic communities (Bolman 2005: 16).

It needs to be stressed also that these three images of the *Virgo Lactans* are almost the same. Although the iconography of individual paintings differs in the details, of which some are meaningful (e.g. a crown on Mary's head), the general ideological message of these three is common. It is significant that all of these images were painted at a considerable height, almost 2 metres above the floor. We may, then, not be sure to what extent, if at all, the faithful were able to behold and contemplate these effigies, which is also connected with the question whether an *eikon* needs to be perceived by a worshipper's senses or what actually counts is its very presence in the church. The practical arguments seem to support the theory that it was the presence itself, not the visibility and comprehensibility, that was of utmost importance for the beholders/worshippers for whom these painting were intended.

The presence of these images in the north aisle of Faras Cathedral tempts us to see a relationship between the gender of the faithful and the subject of the paintings. The representation of the *Galaktotrophousa* are seen as one of the arguments to support the thesis that this part of the church was meant for women (Sulikowska-Belczowska 2016: 118-129). Their significance, however, as far as it may be reconstructed based on theological writings, warns us to be very careful when formulating such statements, for there are many examples of such paintings being found in areas where women were not allowed to enter. Furthermore, the inscriptions that may accompany the paintings (as in one of the effigies discussed above) indicate that they were object of interest, worship or veneration of both women and men. Given all these facts, we may virtually reject a solely "feminine" interpretation of such images.

The hieratic nature of the *Galaktotrophousa* iconography, together with the fact that Mary is almost completely dressed, and the nudity of her bare

breast, are deeply symbolic and point to a universal and rather theological sense of this representation. It is visible in many examples, such as Chapel 42 in Bawit where the effigy of the *Virgo Lactans* appears in the niche beneath Christ Pantocrator in a mandorla and surrounded with the Four Living Beings, while to both sides of Mary breastfeeding Christ as a Child stand apostles holding books. All the elements of this composition, and even more so its location, prove that the image of the *Galaktotrophousa* should be analysed as an expression of doctrinal content (Kondakov 1914: 257, fig. 160; Van Moorsel 1979: 282, fig. 285; Scholz 2001: 223; Higgins 2015: 95–96, fig. 14). Such a theological meaning also seems to appear in the painting dating back to the 6th/7th century and depicting the *Galaktotrophousa* among the saints in the Red Monastery Church (Higgins 2015: 108–109, fig. 29). Similar interpretations of the *Virgo Lactans* in the Faras Cathedral were proposed by Kurt Weizmann (1970: 336).

However, what about the apparent resemblance of the images of the breastfeeding Virgin Mary to those of the Nursing Saint Anne? It seems that this association is due mainly to iconographical similarity, the manner of depicting the figures and the inscriptions provided. Is this correspondence also of an ideological nature? Could the interpretation of both types be similar? In the literature on the subject a view expressed also by Sharol Gerstel prevails that Saint Anne was venerated by women in Byzantium who wished to have children (Gerstel 1998: 96–98). Gerstel indicates that the effigies of Saint Anne with the child Mary in her arms or depictions of the Nursing Saint Anne always appear in the proximity of votive images (Gerstel 1998: 96–97) and most of them will also have a parallel function. It also suggests a similar understanding of the role of the depiction of Saint Anne and Mary which was situated near the entrance to the chapel of the *prothesis* in Faras (Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: Cat. 73; cf Martens-Czarnecka 1982: 77–78, fig. 122; Kubińska 1974 120–121, no. 61, fig. 55). If we want to ascribe theological significance to the effigies of the Nursing Virgin, then – in spite of their meaningful location – the paintings of Saint Anne should be interpreted in a more human perspective. From the theological point of view, the representations of the *Virgo Lactans* seem closer to Nativity scenes than to depictions of Saint Anne. These paintings in Faras Cathedral, irrespective of the understanding their meaning by the local congregation of the faithful, were no doubt of a votive nature. This is proved by their location next to one another in the same aisle and the partially preserved donor dedications on them.

Is it therefore possible to link these images to the manifestations of religious identity? This question is also related to the symbolic meaning of the depictions of the Nursing Virgin found in Faras in the context of the Coun-

cil of Chalcedon and the non-Chalcedonianism. This issue appeared in the studies on the iconography of the *Galaktotrophousa* in Egypt and in Nubia, especially in Faras initiated by Kurt Wessel (1964: 234ff), and was used as an argument in a hypothesis of the putative change in religious direction to the Melkite Chalcedonian persuasion in Faras at the beginning of the 11th century (Cf. Michałowski 1967: 91–92; 1974: 39, 229; Gołgowski 1970: 406; Jakobielski 1972: 145). As a similar composition appears in Egypt among the followers of both Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians (monophysite) directions, the hypothesis was strongly opposed (e.g. Van Moorsel 1970: 281–288; Krause 1987: 295, 300) and also as it found no confirmation in new evidence from Nubia itself, it was eventually rejected. On the other hand, owing to a certain previously-mentioned ideological ambiguousness of the depictions of *Galaktotrophousa*, it is difficult to attribute to them a role in the context or considered as an argument between the stance of the Melkites and that of the anti-Chalcedonians.

Clement of Alexandria provides another possible hint to the interpretation of the Nursing Virgin's representation in the community that knew religious controversies or at least their echoes. Clement writes: *one is the only virgin mother. I love to call her the Church* (Clement of Alexandria 1885: I, 6, 42). It is the Church that appears as a mother feeding its children the nourishment given by God (Patterson Corrington 1989: 413; Słomka 2000: 200), and in that sense the image of the *Galaktotrophousa* may be seen as a metaphor for the Church.

The representations of the *Galaktotrophousa* in Faras Cathedral are concentrated in the north aisle, in which a large number of these paintings are somehow related to women. They have features of votive images, “mural icons”, situated on the walls and intended principally for individual devotion, as may be inferred from the soot coming from the fire that used to be lit in front of these effigies. The inscriptions on two is proof of the individual, votive nature of the paintings, but also – given that their donors were people of both sexes – it seems to contradict the “feminine” meaning. In the present work, theological interpretation has been shown that can be attributed to the depictions of the Nursing Virgin, in light of the texts that underpin this iconography. Can we, however, be sure that the faithful who came to the Cathedral were aware of these meanings? The context of the *Galaktotrophousa*'s depictions in Faras does not allow for broader theological interpretations as the above-mentioned inscription preserved on the images shows (cf. Jakobielski 1972: 180, fig. 62; 1974: 298–299, no. 33). Thus, it is doubtful that the images of the Mother of God in Faras were any sort of theological statements, which, moreover, was

extremely rare in the case of effigies: icons and mural paintings in the Early Christian culture. The inscription says: “Holy Mary, Mother of Christ” (Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 115, 241, 261, 309, 430), and rarely ‘*Theotokos*’ (Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 123, 249, 281; cf. Gołgowski 1970: 400, 402), and references to the name of Mary (instead of *Theotokos*) are also found in the votive invocations. This is evidence for their archaic character that refers to the early-Byzantine traditions in which the depictions of the Virgin were accompanied with such an attribute, later replaced with “*Theotokos*” (Kalavrezou 1990: 167-168). Although the paintings from the north aisle of Faras Cathedral seem to have a coherent programme, the presence of different images on the same iconographic theme next to one another and dated alike indicates that on the Cathedral’s walls – beside the representations that formed a clear programme – there were “mural icons” with separate functions and displaying no continuous narrative. This shows a connection of eleventh-century Nubian art with the early Christian tradition of the early-Byzantine period, and indicates its particular archaic features, and proves its specificity and noticeable independence of the Byzantium of the time.

translated by Szymon Żuchowski

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ARCHANGEL MICHAEL AND HIS PEACOCK FEATHERS IN NUBIAN PAINTING

ABSTRACT

Among the mural paintings discovered in Nubia, one of the most popular theme is the Archangel Michael. The present article aims at describing his role among the celestial hierarchy as well as the iconographical characteristics of his Nubian effigies. Particular attention is paid to the decoration of his wings and their symbolic meaning. The analysis of the chronology of the representations of Archangel Michael in Nubia seems to prove that from the mid-10th century an iconographic rule has been adhered to that only his wings, unlike other archangels, are depicted as covered with peacock feathers and eyes.

KEYWORDS

Christian iconography, Nubian painting, Byzantine painting, Angels, Archangel Michael, Old Dongola

At the very dawn of Christianity, Philo of Alexandria laid the foundations of angelology (Decharneux 1994: 96–104). He perceived the angels as incorporeal, winged beings who served as divine messengers, fulfilling God's will in relation to humans, protecting them and appearing to them often in human form.

By the end of the 6th century, a combination of the Neoplatonic theory of emanation and critical studies of biblical sources led to the conception of

an angelical hierarchy devised by the Greek theologian Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.¹ Countless hosts of angels were included in a system which claimed that there were nine choirs organised into three triads which differed in rank according to their proximity to God: *the first group is forever around God and is said to be permanently united with him ahead of any of the others and with no intermediary. Here, then, are the most holy “thrones” and the orders said to possess many eyes and many wings, called in Hebrew the “cherubim” and “seraphim” (...) The second group, he says, is made up of “authorities”, “dominions” and “powers”. And the third, at the end of the heavenly hierarchies is the group of “angels”, “archangels” and “principalities”* (*De Coel. Hier.* 6:2, Luibheid 160–161). The latter are the most active in the human realm. (cf. Peers 1999: 299)

In governing earthly matters, God makes use of the infinite hosts of angelic servants.² In the New Testament, angels are viewed as spiritual creatures and fulfil a variety of roles (Lk. 1, 11–20; 26–38; 2, 9–14; Mt. 13, 49–50; Ps. 91, 11–12; Ps. 103, 20). The angels serve before the throne of the Lord, they appear to prophets in visions, passing on divine prophecies, they care for and protect mankind. Through the medium of the angels, God reveals himself and speaks to humans. Angels are also called upon to carry out various divine commands on Earth. They have wings: an attribute which signifies their speed and readiness to fulfil these commands. Early exegetists such as Tertullian (*Apol.* 22: 8) perceive wings as a symbol of the transcendental nature of angels. (Bindley 1890: 46; Peers 1999: 300). This attribute stems from two different origins: from the civilisation of the Ancient East, including a sphinx and a griffin (de Vaux 2002: 25–32) and from the culture of antiquity, such as Nike or Victoria (Ostrowski 2002: 473–494). Wings can also be seen as affording protection, shelter and a feeling of safety. (Delumeau 1989). Apocryphal writings, particularly the Books of Enoch, the Book of Tobias and various Apocalypses, contain a great amount of detailed information on the

¹ The author of the mystical works known as the *Corpus Areopagiticum* lived in Syria at the turn of the 5th century. In his writings he introduced himself as Dionysius, a disciple of St Paul. This false attribution gained great recognition in the Eastern Church. A part of his *Areopagiticum* viz. *The Celestial Hierarchy* is of particular interest. For the text see: PG 3, 120-369; translation: C. Luibheid, 1987 (*Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*).

² On various sources of information about Angels and aspects of their functions see: Oleschko 2002: 365–393; Pietras 2002: 131–150; Longosz 2002: 151–204; Stępień 2002: 111–120; all gathered in H. Oleschko, *Księga o aniołach* [A Book on Angels], Kraków 2002.

subject of angels. There we can learn of their names, the role they fulfil and on the various parts of heaven with which they are associated.

In 869–870 the resolution of the Council of Constantinople stated that angels could be depicted in paintings, as the Bible refers to them as beings which appear, and hence are visible to humans (Grabar 1957: 244–245).

In Byzantine art angels are represented as winged individuals either shown in flight in the divine sphere, in long white robes and mantles, shod with sandals, or acting in the human realm, often in narrative scenes, but also standing as attendants turned towards the central figure dressed mostly in white (Brown 2007: 4). The latter also applies to the iconography of all archangels who were often depicted in virtually identical fashion. In these instances, it was only possible to identify them through the use of captions giving their names, which usually accompanied their representations. In some cases, however, the effigies of archangels were provided with attributes in order to identify them. By the 9th century archangels were depicted mostly in imperial dress modelled on earthly rulers (Lamy-Lassalle 1968: 189–198; Woodfin 2010: 315), with whom they shared the same rank in their respective hierarchies (earthly and celestial). They stand before the throne of Christ and the Virgin³ in the style of imperial dignitaries. The apocryphal Third (Hebrew) Book of Enoch (17,8) tells us that... *all of them are crowned with kingly crowns and clothed in regal dress and decked with royal jewels ...* (3 *En.* 17:8, Alexander 1983: 270).

In Nubia we see archangels in *loroi* derived from a robe known as *trabea triumphalis* (cf. Lamy-Lassalle 1968: 190; Piltz 1994: 71; 2013: 42, 45–46) [Fig. 1] or in *chlamydes*, component of imperial ceremonial dress (Eastmond 1968: 26) [Fig. 2]. Underneath they wear dalmatics (*delmatikon* or *divitision*) and chitons [cf. Figs 1, 2, and 3]. Their heads are topped with crowns represented on the background of a yellow halo [cf. Figs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5]. A noteworthy feature are broad bands (either green or red) around the archangel's neck: *maniakia* (torques) [cf. Figs 1, 2, 3, and 5], imitating a similar type of insignia worn by emperors, kings and dignitaries of the imperial court (Piltz 1994: 66; Żurawski 2014: 131, 134–135). Another symbol of power is the archangel's belt – *zonarion* (Efros 1999: 339) with which his dalmatic is always tied [cf. Figs 1, 2, and 5]. This belt is lavishly encrusted with jewels. In their right hands the archangels usually hold a staff: *rabdos* (crossier), a symbol of power [cf. Figs 1, 2, 3, and 5] alluding to the ceremonial staff *dikanikion* (Effros, *loc. cit.*) held by officials standing in attendance at the throne of a ruler (Müller 1959: 79. This staff is always

³ Representations of Christ and the Virgin are images of Theophany. Archangels are witness to the Theophany of the embodied *Logos*, cf. Grabar 1972: 226.



Fig. 1. Archangel Michael, wall painting from the monastery in Old Dongola. (Martens-Czarnecka 2011: Cat. no. 74, phot. by the author).

surmounted by a cross. In their left hands the archangels hold a round object identified by various scholars as a sphere, globe, or *diskos* [cf. Figs 1–6] (Łaptaś 1997: *passim*). All the above-mentioned iconographic features occur as well on numerous representations of archangels in Nubian art.⁴

⁴ Apart from those illustrated in the article, some other paintings can be quoted as examples. From the Faras Cathedral [in round brackets Cat. numbers are added derived from the complete catalogue of paintings from Faras: Jakobielski *et alii* 2017]: Michałowski 1967: pls 34 (Cat. 39), 36 (Cat. 37), 51 (Cat. 105–106), 62 (Cat. 118), 65 (Cat. 70); Michałowski 1974, nos/pls 6–8 (Cat. 31–32), 9 (Cat. 29), 17 Cat. 36), 32 Cat. 55), 41 (Cat. 121), 49 (Cat. 63) see also Martens-Czarnecka 1993: *passim*; from Abdalla-n Irqi – Van Moorsel *et alii* 1975: pls: 66, 68, 70, 99; from Dongola (Monastery on Kom H) – [in brackets Cat. numbers are given derived from a complete catalogue: Martens-Czarnecka 2011] Jakobielski, Scholz, 2001: pls: XXIX,2 (Cat. 47) XXXI (Cat. 39), XXXIII (Cat. 44), XXXIV–XXXV (Cat. 24), XXXVIII,1 and XXXIX,1 (Cat. 41), XLI,1 (Cat. 61), LVII (Cat. 80) and many other paintings in several Nubian sites in Dongola itself and Banganarti (Żurawski 2014).



Fig. 2. Archangel Michael, wall painting from the Faras Cathedral at present in the collection of the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum (after Michałowski 1962: pl. XXXI).



Fig. 3. Archangel Michael with Holy Trinity and a donor, wall painting from the monastery in Old Don-gola (Martens-Czarnecka 2011: Cat, no. 65, phot. by the author).

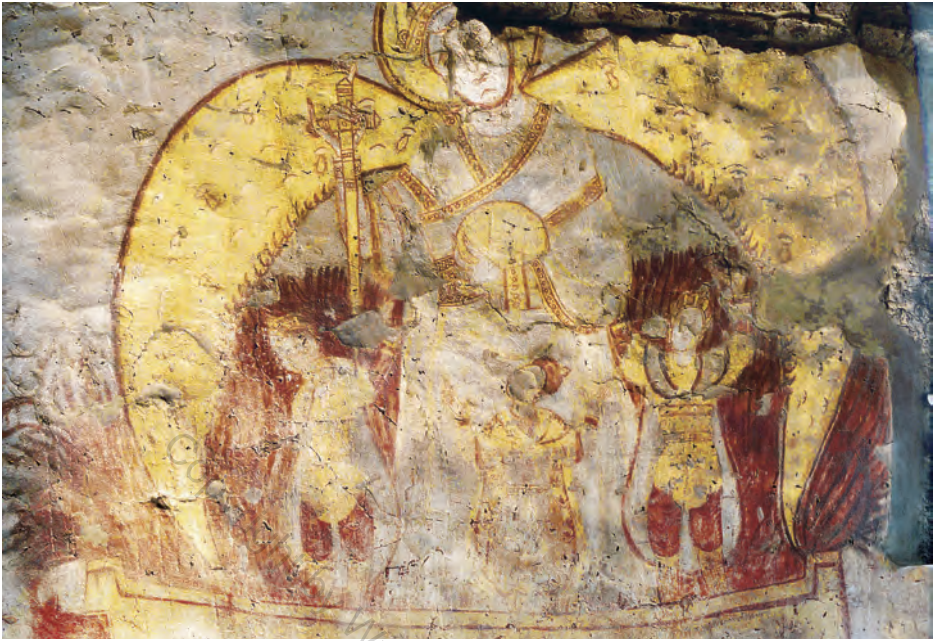


Fig. 4. Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace, wall painting from the monastery at Old Dongola (Martens-Czarnecka 2011: Cat. no. 24; after Jakobielski, Scholz 2001, pl. XXXV,2).



Fig. 5. Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace, wall painting from the Faras Cathedral in the collection of the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum, phot. by the author).

Archangel Michael is considered the most important archangel (Copt. Enc. V, 1616–1617), and is frequently mentioned in the Apocrypha. His virtues and roles are expounded in most detail in the Testament of Abraham and the Book of Enoch. The name of Archangel Michael is always the first featured in lists of archangels.⁵ His name in Hebrew means *who is as God* (Müller 1959: 108). He is King Michael or King of Angels, and has been called *the LORD's greatest archangel* being the executor of his will (2 *En.* A 22,6 – Andersen 1983: 139) and his *intercessor and archstrategist* (2 *En.* A 33:10 – Andersen 1983: 157) leading celestial hosts (DACL I,2 1907, col. 2083),⁶ he maintains peace and harmony, and stands guard at the gates of Heaven (Müller 1959: 185). In the New Testament he protects humans from evil forces; the one who defeated the dragon (*Rev* 12,7–9); he is the mouthpiece of good, and acts against barbarism and paganism, Michael is in command of the best part of mankind. He occupies an important position in eschatology, as he will lead the dead to the Last Judgement (Müller 1959: 139) and weigh their souls on the scales of justice as the *psychopompos* he carries the souls of the dead to Paradise (*T. Abr.* 14:4; 20:10-15 Charlesworth 1983: 891, 895; cf. Rubinkiewicz 1999: 99).

Archangel Michael also played a huge role in Nubian Christianity and is probably the most revered of the archangels there. This is evidenced not only by many images of him which survive in churches⁷ and residential buildings, but also by countless examples of *graffiti* scratched or *dipinti* left on their walls.⁸ Very often there are multiple images of him in a single room or chapel [*cf. Fig. 3*], thus increasing the potency of these votive paintings. The layout of images on particular walls also appears to be of significance. Archangel Michael can be painted in the Northwest Annexe of the monastery in Old Dongola, next to a figure of Christ (Room 24, east wall), alongside the Virgin and the Holy Trinity (Chapel 13, south wall), or next to Saint Menas in Room 24, on

⁵ As exemplified in 1 *En.* – *Book of Watchers* 9,1, Isaac 1983: 16. Cf. also Rubinkiewicz (ed.) 1999: 146; On the functions and virtues of Archangel Michael in general, see Łaptaś 2010.

⁶ In legends from the 10th/11th century accompanying effigies of the Archangel Michel in the Faras Cathedral he is always referred to as φιλάν(θρωπ)ος, and ἀρχιστράτιγος (*sic!*) cf. Kubińska 1974: 167, 169; for the complete texts of legends see Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 334, 369 and 379.

⁷ For example, the Faras Cathedral where 18 of his representations were recorded (for a full list see Martens-Czarnecka 1993: 172).

⁸ Schneider 1975: 33–36; Kubińska 1974: 156–169; On the graffiti from Faras see also Jakobielski 1974: 279–283. An enormous number of these inscriptions was discovered in Banganarti, see Łajtar 2008: 321–331; 2014: 261–283.

the north wall (see Martens-Czarnecka 2011: figs 7.7 and 7.9). A monumental image of Archangel Michael with the Holy Trinity adorns the whole east wall of Chapel 13 [cf. Fig. 3], possibly indicating that the chapel was dedicated to him. Location of the painting seems to additionally emphasise its Eucharistic and liturgical aspects. This image has also been seen as the scene of Investiture of Archangel Michael as archstrategist of the celestial hosts followed by his victory over the evil forces commemorated by the Coptic Church in his main feast on November 8 (Zanetti 1994: 347; Łaptaś 2008: 79-86). The inscription placed under the wings of the archangel refers to him as a Divine intermediary and bishop of the Celestial Jerusalem.⁹

In several instances Archangel Michael appears in the role of 'entrance guardian'. In the narthex of the Faras Cathedral as many as four of his painted representations were found, two of these, on superimposed layers of plaster dated to the 9th and the beginning of the 11th centuries, were located to the right of the main southern entrance on the east wall.¹⁰ Another figure of Michael [Fig. 6] (dated to the 8th century) together with that of Gabriel, standing on both sides of the western entrance with their wings raised over the arched top of it, were also considered guardians of the doorway to the church's interior.¹¹ In another edifice, Michael's protective action is confined not only to the doorway itself,¹² but also to the vault of the arch as a structural element (Velmans *et alii* 1999: 45). Nowadays too, the picture of Archangel Michael is used to be placed over the entrance as can be seen in the monastery at Wadi el-Natroun in Egypt [Fig. 7]. In a few instances Archangel Michael appears in the role of protector of

⁹ Adam Łajtar, personal communication.

¹⁰ Martens-Czarnecka 1993: 188–189, figs 5 and 10; Jakobiński *et alii*, 2017: Cat. nos 37 and 118.

¹¹ Cf. Michałowski 1974: 96, Cat. nos 7 and 8; Martens-Czarnecka 1983: 180–184; Łaptaś 2003: 137–138. Of another opinion is Bożena Mierzejewska (2001: 155–159) who proves that the care shared by archangels in this particular spot did not concern so much the entrance as the effigy of the Virgin and Child painted in the niche which was created in place of the entrance after it was walled up. This hypothesis has been strongly backed recently by Stefan Jakobiński (2016: 50–52).

¹² There was a figure of Archangel Michael on a pilaster of the arcade dividing Room 22 from Room 24 in the Northwest Annexe of the Dongolan Monastery, another smaller one on the arch itself and another effigy of him over the entrance in the north wall of this room leading to Chapel 13 (Martens-Czarnecka 2011: Cat. nos 59, 40 and 62). A representation of Archangel Michael can be seen in the so-called Mosque in Old Dongola (former Royal Building) on the south wall of the first landing on the staircase which led to the Kings' Audience Hall (Martens-Czarnecka 2001: 281, fig. 23). On Michael's role as a guardian see also Bougrat 1982: 147–174, 153–154).



Fig. 6. Archangel Michael, wall painting from the Faras Cathedral; after Michalowski 1974: Cat. no. 8.



Fig. 7. A doorway in the Monastery at Wadi el-Natroun in Egypt; phot. by the author.

a church or state dignitaries, e.g. in the Dongolan Monastery (Jakobielski, Scholz 2001: pl. XXX,1), in Songi Tino (Vantini 1985: pl. XLI) or in the Faras Cathedral (Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: Cat. no. 99). In the most evident example, Archangel Michael appears in the role of guardian of the Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace (e.g. in the Dongolan Monastery – Martens-Czarnecka 2011: Cat. nos 24 and 90). The three youths, standing in a blazing furnace, are afforded protection underneath Archangel Michael's outspread wings [*cf. Fig. 4*]. It is interesting that in the Book of Daniel (3:49), from which this scene derives, the "Angel of the Lord" is only mentioned as the one who saved the three youths from a fiery death, and in early Christian representations, the name of this angel is not given. In later iconography the angel – saviour of the youths – is identified as Archangel Michael (Rassart-Debergh 1978: 141–151; Łaptaś, Jakobielski 2001: 75–86; Łaptaś 2003: 137). An example of an indisputable image of Archangel Michael of this scene comes from a late 10th/early 11th century mural of the Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace found in the Faras Cathedral [*cf. Fig. 5*]. (Michałowski 1967: 138–140, figs 60–61; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: Cat. no. 120). The legend in the frame below the archangel's feet identifies him as: *Archangel Michael, leader of the host and loving mankind and good.* (Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: 369; *cf.* also Łaptaś, Jakobielski 2001: 78). This inscription and the distinctive attributes of the represented archangel allow us to identify as Michael each archangel represented in other scenes of the Three Youths, numerous in Nubian art, but deprived of legends. In the *Hermeneia* (172: 130, Hetherington 1974: 25) Archangel Michael is also associated with the angel who shields the Three Youths.

In Nubian painting as seen for example in the Dongolan Monastery the depictions of Archangel Michael survive in various states. In some instances, only the lower half of the figure, from the waist down, is extant; in other cases only the top portions remain (Martens-Czarnecka 2011: Cat. nos 61 and 74), whilst others still are represented by no more than fragments of wings (*ibidem*, Cat. no. 119). The fragmentary condition of many murals meant that the legends accompanying the effigies of angels or archangels survive only in a few instances. They could be identified only hypothetically.

The analysis of representations of archangels proves that a certain iconographic canon was developed and applied in Nubian painting as early as in the 8th century. That canon was in principle uniform for all the archangels. The depiction is always frontal, the archangels stand in hieratic pose, their attire reflects the highest court splendor.

It seems that probably since that period certain specific features were introduced particularly concerning the decoration of archangel wings within

the frame of that canon. The surface of the wings is either decorated with an eye motif [*cf. Fig. 6*] or filled with plumage rendered with horizontal lines separated by rows of dots (or small vertical strokes).¹³ In the 9th century two other types appeared: plumage on wings reminiscent of fish-scales with a peacock *ocello* at the centre of each 'scale';¹⁴ and a combination of schematically drawn peacock feathers and eyes [*Fig. 8*]. The latter pattern seems to be reserved only for Archangel Michael and certainly from the second half of the 10th century it became obligatory in his iconography in Nubian art, while from that point in time the surface of the wings of all other archangels had to be left plain without any decoration. Up to that time there is no evidence which of the decoration types was assigned to Michael or to any other archangels. It rather seems that in the early period of Christian Nubian art, similarly adorned wings could have been applied to Michael, Gabriel or Raphael according to the painter's choice.

As time goes by the wing decoration type accepted for Michael in the mid-10th century took on different forms but the essence (feathers and eyes pattern) remained the same until the end of Christianity in Nubia.¹⁵ Through this whole period (as is seen on examples from Dongola and Faras [*cf. Figs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5*]) the wings of Archangel Michael were always painted in yellow-orange symbolising gold, with thick, bold (mostly red) contours, with their surface adorned with a peacock feather motif and with eyes with defined pupils. The peacock feather motif assumes several forms, stylised to various degrees depending on the period and the characteristic style of the artist or his technique. The feathers are usually painted red or brown depending on the painter; the centers are red or green. Eyes have distinctly marked whites and black upper eyelids.

The peacock – *a creature of a hundred eyes*, (Fromaget 2003: 44; DACL XIII,1, 1937: 1075–1097) was known in various cultures from the earliest times. In the Roman Empire culture from which a majority of Christian depictions derive, the peacock played an important role, for instance in scenes

¹³ Michałowski 1974: Cat. no. 6; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: Cat. nos 4 and 19. This decorative pattern was used in Faras at the beginning of the 10th century, see Michałowski 1974: Cat. no. 32; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: Cat. nos 53 and 55.

¹⁴ Michałowski 1967: 114–115, fig. 36, 116, fig. 36; 1974: Cat. no. 17; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: Cat. nos 36 and 37.

¹⁵ Such decoration occurs on the wings of two archangels on a 14th-century partition wall in the presbytery of the Faras Cathedral, see Michałowski 1974: Cat. nos 65 and 66; Jakobielski *et alii* 2017: Cat. nos 149 and 150; as also in Banganarti in Upper Church, chapel 5, on two paintings dated to the 13th century or later, see Żurawski 2014: 158–159.



Fig. 8. Fragment of wing of the 9th-century painting of Archangel Michael from the Faras Cathedral, at present in the National Museum in Warsaw; after Jakobielski 2016: fig. 31.

of the imperial apotheosis in which the peacock carried the deified individual to heaven. Therefore, it is obvious that the connection of the archangel with the holy bird is of immense importance in Christian symbolism. The centres of peacock feathers which are similar to eyes as well as eye motifs scattered on the entire surface of the wings make one think of the Four Living Creatures with the wings 'covered with eyes' described in the apocalyptic vision of Saint John (*Rev* 4: 6–7).

It is worth noting that a fan made of peacock feathers (*flabellum*) was used during mass. It symbolised angels who participate in the liturgy around the altar (Wissa Wasef 1971: 105–106; Woodfin 2010: 310–311). The Byzantine liturgy places particular emphasis on the belief that angels take part in the liturgy; this relates not only to the *trisagion* – the worship of the Thrice Holy but also to the inclusion of angelic iconography in the procession and decoration of the church (Caseau 1999: 29). Deacons, who waved the fans, were compared to the cherubim and seraphim, whose wings were covered with eyes (Woodfin 2010: 311).

In the apocrypha the cherubim and seraphim assimilated with the Four Living Creatures from the vision of the prophets Isaiah (6, 1–4) and Ezekiel (1: 4–6, 10–13, 22, 26–28), who are filled with love of God, proclaim His glory, and possess Divine knowledge, eternal and cosmic.¹⁶ No doubt that in Christian Nubian iconography, peacock feathers similarly to eyes, a sign of omniscience and 'seeing all' were the accepted attributes of Michael, the archangel who was most worshiped in Nubia.

¹⁶ Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, PG 3, 120–369; Luibheid 1987: 161.

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THE ART OF MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION IN MEDIEVAL NUBIA

ABSTRACT

Although they have not been studied in detail, Nubian illuminated manuscripts are an important aspect of Nubian art. This article provides the first detailed overview of these illuminations. There has been a question about where some of these manuscripts were produced, but the evidence seems to indicate that they were made in Nubia rather than Egypt. The illuminated manuscripts can be divided into two main types: manuscripts that have a close relationship with Coptic language manuscripts from Egypt and manuscripts that show more influence of local Nubian art and are closely related to Nubian wall paintings.

KEYWORDS

Manuscript illumination, Old Nubian manuscripts, wall paintings, Coptic and Nubian art, art, Coptic art, decorative elements, Coptic and Nubian literature, manuscript collections

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to examine illuminated manuscripts that seem to have been made for the population of medieval Nubia.¹ The study of

¹ For a brief overview, see Vorderstrasse 2019.

illuminated manuscripts found in Nubia or those whose colophons indicate that they were ordered for patrons in Nubia, remains an understudied field. Many of the studies of Nubian art history have focused on the rich corpus of wall paintings from the region rather than its illuminated manuscripts. Further, there are not very many surviving manuscripts that can be associated with Nubia and other aspects of Nubian manuscripts, such as book bindings, have also received limited attention although this is starting to change. In addition, manuscripts continue to be found in excavations (Näser, Tsakos 2014: 978, 980, figs 1–2, 8), and it is likely that more material will be found that will add to our understanding of illuminated manuscripts from Nubia. This article will begin by setting out how one can identify these manuscripts as being distinctively “Nubian” before looking at the wider context of medieval Nubian manuscript illumination and the different schools of painting that I have identified. I will argue that it seems highly likely all of the manuscripts that were found in Nubia or can be associated with Nubia were actually illuminated there and this evidence adds to our rich understanding of Nubian culture in the medieval period. The texts can essentially be divided into two groups: those which resemble Coptic manuscripts produced in Egypt and those that look far more local in their iconography. All of this information adds to our understanding of the artistic production of medieval Nubian art, supplementing the better known and more numerous wall paintings. As we will see, there are a number of iconographic and stylistic similarities between the two art forms.

Identifying Medieval Nubia in Illuminated Manuscripts

When one is examining manuscripts that have been found in Nubia or can be identified with medieval Nubia, there are a variety of factors that could indicate that the manuscript was made for the Nubian community and likely made in Nubia itself. Or, as Ochała states in his book on Nubian texts, “why a source is considered Nubian or not” (Ochała 2011: 23; see also Ochała 2014, 3–4). As he notes, one has to use various criteria to determine whether or not texts without a provenance can be considered Nubian or not. Ochała lists two different factors, “formal” and “palaeographical” and ends the list of how manuscripts are said to be Nubian when they have no provenance with an “etc.” He does not explain in detail what he means by “formal” or what the other factors are (Ochała 2011: 23, see also, p. 46). It is important to note however that Ochała is not trying to determine whether or not a particular manuscript was produced by Nubians or, for example, Egyptians, but rather if the text can be said to be from Nubia, although he does discuss the few Nubian-related texts found outside of

Nubia itself. This includes a bilingual Coptic-Old Nubian ostrakon acquired in Qena by Schmidt, for example (Erman 1897, 108 and see more on Schmidt below).

In the case of the illuminated manuscripts, one can look at other art historical studies to suggest criteria for determining whether manuscripts should be considered “Nubian” rather than manuscripts made in Egypt for a Nubian audience or simply Egyptian manuscripts. In his examination of Syrian Orthodox art, Snelders identified three markers that differentiated the Syrian Orthodox community from other communities in the medieval Middle East which he terms as “identity markers:” iconography, style, and language (Snelders 2010: 11, 22, 30–35). It is important to keep in mind however that even when one can identify a distinctive style in art, that style can cut across distinctive communities and regions meaning that in the medieval period we can identify the same style used by the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities (Vorderstrasse 2005; Vorderstrasse 2007; Immerzeel 2009: 170; Snelders 2010: 27, 213; Vorderstrasse and Treptow 2015). Further, it can often be difficult to determine where an object was produced based on style alone (Fleck 2010: 261). Some of the icons from the Sinai, for example, were difficult to provenance until evidence from Lebanon in the form of an icon and wall paintings indicated that these icons had a connection to the County of Tripoli (Hélou and Immerzeel 2005; Hélou 2009; Immerzeel 2009: 127–128, 135, 139; Vorderstrasse 2011: 146–148 and bibliography; Hélou and Immerzeel 2013). The implication for Nubia is that we can see manuscripts that appear to be stylistically Egyptian and inspired by art produced by the Coptic community there, but these manuscripts are likely produced for and by the Nubian community (see below). This is in addition to manuscripts that appear to be stylistically similar to wall paintings and painted pottery from Nubia that do not resemble styles produced outside of the region.

The issue of language is another factor that needs to be taken into account when assessing the manuscripts and whether they are Nubian. As has recently been documented in detail by Ochała (2014), Nubia was a multilingual environment where Coptic, Greek, and Old Nubian were used, sometimes in the same text. Coptic appeared in Nubia as both a literary and documentary language but is often linked to the Egyptians in Nubia even though it is used extensively (Ochała 2014: 4, 30, 34–35, 37). Both van der Vliet and Hagen have argued convincingly using the Coptic language evidence from Qasr Ibrim that it is unlikely that Coptic was a language solely used by Egyptian immigrants (Hagen 2010: 724; van der Vliet 2010: 765–767). Therefore, one can argue that the use of Coptic in Nubia does not indicate that it was used by Egyptians only and is not only the result of material being written in Egypt and imported into Nubia. The other language that appears in the manuscripts, Old Nubian, on

the other hand, is widespread throughout Nubia and appears in very low numbers in Egypt (Ochała 2014: 22, Table 4).

Another aspect in identifying a manuscript as particularly Nubian is one of iconography. The study of Nubian wall paintings has revealed aspects of Nubian art that were clearly inspired and adapted from Byzantine art creating a new Nubian style. As Łaptas has described it, “Nubian painters availed themselves of models from Byzantine iconography, but they also drew heavily on local Nubian traditions” (Łaptas 2010: 680. This view is also echoed by Mierzejewska 2010: 653). There are cases in Nubia where the art is similar to Byzantine art with only a few local influences such as the depiction of St Mercurius which looks similar to Byzantine iconography (Lucchesi-Palli 1982: 163. For this in general see Martens-Czarnecka 2010a; Martens-Czarnecka 2012). In addition, however, some paintings are uniquely Nubian in nature (Martens-Czarnecka 2010b). Therefore, a careful examination of the iconography in manuscripts should help reveal any unique aspects in the iconography. In addition to the three “identity markers” defined by Snelders we can also add the manuscript colophons in some of the Nubian manuscripts. These colophons are unfortunately not always clear because they do not indicate where the manuscripts were actually produced, but they do make it evident that the medieval Nubian community was commissioning and consuming manuscripts. This of course does not prove that these manuscripts were produced in Nubia itself. Not only can artists move between regions, but patrons can order manuscripts from regions beyond where they live.

The production of pottery that is similar to manuscript illumination also has implications for the possibility that the individuals illuminated manuscripts in Nubia rather than Egypt. Adams, in his study of medieval Nubian pottery, noted that Nubian pottery has decoration inspired from Coptic Christian manuscripts. This similarity has led him to believe that the potters must have been familiar with illuminated manuscripts. As he felt that only monks would have this type of understanding, he argued that the medieval Nubian potters were monks and must also have been Egyptian (Adams 1981: 10; Adams 1986: 42, 490). While there is evidence for pottery being produced at monasteries in Egypt, a few texts indicate that the monasteries were leasing their kilns to private individuals rather than making the pottery themselves (Schrunk 2009). Further, there is very limited evidence from Nubia for monks involved with pottery production and it has been argued it was likely only for their own needs rather than to sell to the general population (Żurawski 1996; Romaniuk 2010: 636). Adams’ contention that the potters must have been Egyptian because the pottery was produced in an Egyptian style seems unlikely. It is evident that

styles could and did travel. What seems more likely is that his suggestion that there is a crossover in workshops who were busy with pottery decoration, manuscript illumination, and fresco painting (Adams 1986: 53, 245). This overlap between different art forms has been observed previously for other types of medieval pottery, manuscripts, and frescoes from Egypt (Vorderstrasse 2007) and Iran (Hillenbrand 1994; Flood 2006; McClary 2016). Therefore, the implication of Adams' observation about the similarities between pottery and manuscripts can be interpreted in another way. Instead of assuming that Egyptians produced both the pottery and the manuscripts, this paper argues that pottery decorated in a Coptic Egyptian style was likely produced by local Nubian potters. This and the evidence below also suggest that Nubian manuscript illuminators would have been familiar with Coptic Egyptian styles.

Illuminated Nubian Manuscript Evidence: Libraries and Excavations

The evidence for illuminated manuscripts from Nubia is unfortunately scanty but it represents a valuable and unique group of objects. Nubian illuminated manuscripts are different from other illuminated manuscripts found in the Middle East because of the nature of the finds. In Egypt and other parts of the Middle East, most of the manuscripts were preserved for centuries in libraries, sometimes sent from one place to another (Brock, van Rompay 2014; Martyros 2016a). This is not the case in Nubia however, where many manuscripts were found in excavations rather than in libraries. Only a small number of manuscripts that are illustrated have been identified, although there may be more that have not been published. The emphasis in Nubian manuscript studies has long been on the content of the texts and not the illustrations.

The manuscripts that are associated with Nubia can essentially be divided into two categories: those in libraries in western Europe and those that were found in the course of scientific excavations. Both sets of manuscripts were probably found buried in the ground, however, rather than in libraries. The European manuscripts consist of the Coptic and Old Nubian manuscripts sold to the British Library by Rustafjaell and others, as well as the two Old Nubian manuscripts that are now in Berlin (van der Vliet 2015). The manuscripts in the British Library are: 1) BL Ms. Or. 6804, *Book of Bartholomew*, which lacks a date but was donated to the Church of Our Savior, Jesus Christ, which was located in Illarte in Nubia (Budge 1913: xvi; Layton 1987: 84–85, Cat. No. 80; Westerhoff 1999: 16, who suggests that the colophon was not original to the manuscript but was copied from an original; Suciu 2017: 46), 2) BL Ms. Or. 6799 illustrated in 1053 or 1056 by Merkure son of Pameos for a son of Mashenka

of Faras to be deposited at the Church of the Cross at Serra (Budge 1915: 808; Layton 1987: 89–90, Cat. No. 83, and 3) Old Nubian Or. Ms. 6805 which does not have a colophon but contains an account of the miracle of St Menas and pseudo-epigraphic rules about the canons of Nicaea (Budge 1909; Griffith 1913: 6; Browne 1983a; Browne 1994: 1). In addition, there is a fourth manuscript, BL Ms. Or. 6784, which was copied for unnamed donors in order to be deposited in churches in the region of Oxyrhynchus (Layton 1987: 128–129, Cat. No. 117). Layton does not mention that there is a second colophon, but van der Vliet read it and notes that the manuscript was subsequently purchased by Mariakouda Ioannou son of Esioupapo, which are Nubian names (van der Vliet 2015: 271). According to van der Vliet, this connects all four manuscripts: three written in Coptic and one that was written in Old Nubian (van der Vliet 2015: 272–273). In addition to the manuscripts from the British Library, there were two Berlin manuscripts in the Staatsbibliothek: Ms. or. quart. 1020, which was the “Stauros” text that had been dedicated by Doukas Choiak-ikshi, Songoj and Neshsh of Atwa and his wife Jauē at the Jesus Church in Serra (Griffith 1913: 41; Browne 1983b; Browne 1984: 139; Łajtar 1992: 123–125 discusses the title Choiak-eikshil; Hubai 2009: 147–148; Ruffini 2012: 46–47, 50–56; Buzi 2014: 72, Cat. No. 20, 224–225) and a lectionary, Ms. or. quart. 1019 (Schäfer, Schmidt 1906; Schäfer, Schmidt 1907; Griffith 1913: 24–25; Browne 1982; Buzi 2014, Cat. No. 19, 222–223). Several scholars state that Berlin ms. quart. 1020 was found at Serra (Hubai 2009: 53; Dilley 2016: 186; Suciu 2017: 44 No 70), but there is no evidence for this (see below).

Some of the British Library manuscripts were acquired from Robert de Rustafaell, whose original name was apparently Robert Smed (or Smith), a Norwegian, though apparently born in St Petersburg. His next name, Robert Fawcus-Smith is first attested in Stockholm, Sweden in 1889 when he filed railway patents on behalf of his father Nicolaus Smith. He then changed his name in 1894 in the UK to Robert de Rustafaell, having moved there at some time in the 1890s. In 1895, he became a naturalized British citizen, where he claimed to be a Swedish and Norwegian citizen, as well as the son of a Nicolaus Classen Smed Smith of Norway and Maria Tamara de Rustafaell of Russia. In this document, he stated that he was thirty-five years old, suggesting he had been born around 1860. He claimed to be a widower with no dependents, but a Robert Clarence Hjalmar de Rustafaell (who later studied mining engineering) is attested as being born in 1892. Rustafaell may have committed bigamy (and possibly polygamy as a Mary Davis de Rustafaell appears to be another wife), as his mother is Irma de Rustafaell (Bierbrier suggests the mother was Carolina Amalia Arfwidson and Irma may be a nickname), who

was born in Sweden and lived in Cornwall in the UK. Irma was still alive in the 1911 census and in 1914, when Robert Clarence Hjalmar died and left his income to her. In 1895, after becoming a British citizen, Rustafjaell married Harriet Wilkinson, who refused to give her age, a wealthy widow with connections to Philadelphia and whom he later sued in court over the control of income. Rustafjaell worked in Egypt as an engineer and while there, acquired a collection of Egyptian antiquities for himself, in addition to selling others as the owner of Luxor Trading Co. After emigrating to the United States at the end of WWI, he claimed to be a Georgian prince, Roman Orbeliani (Bierbrier 2012: 479–480). Rustafjaell seems to have been a natural self-promoter, publishing a book on prehistoric Egyptian stone vessels entitled *Palaeolithic Vessels of Egypt or The Earliest Handiwork of Man* (Rustafjaell 1907) and in the 1915 auction catalogue of part of his collection, his various accomplishments were listed and he was described as being a leading scholar of Egypt and having spent 10 years living in Egypt where he was engaged almost entirely in research on Predynastic Egypt and formed one of the best collections of this type of material (Auction Catalogue 1915). It is perhaps not coincidental that this material was sold in this auction in addition to the “oldest painting on cloth in world” apparently discovered at Deir el-Bahari (Auction catalogue 1915). It is clear that Rustafjaell made claims about the items he was trying to sell in order to increase their appeal, which was not uncommon. When he died in 1943, his obituary claimed that he had been born in Birmingham, UK and was a Georgian nobleman who had attended Oxford and Cambridge and had fought for the British in Gallipoli where he was captured by the Ottomans and then escaped via the Crimea (Bierbrier 2012: 479–480). It is clear that there were many stories told by Rustafjaell and this also puts his account of the discovery of the manuscripts in doubt.

Over a three-year period, between 1907–1910, Rustafjaell and other dealers such as Maurice Nahman with Abd el-Nūr Gabriel of Qena (see below), Ali (of Farag and Ali, two Egyptian antiquities dealers who were based in Giza and frequently sold to foreigners) and Chauncey Murch sold manuscripts to the British Museum and the Freer Gallery that have traditionally been assigned to the monastery of St Mercurios at Edfu, but which were made in Esna at the end of the 10th/beginning of the 11th century, i.e. between 960–1060 (Layton 1987: xxviii; Westerhoff 1999: 9–10; Davies, O’Connell 2013: 5–7; van der Vliet 2015: 264–265; Williams forthcoming). Rustafjaell described in some detail how the manuscripts were found in a Coptic monastery near Edfu by a local who was on the land and that they were bought from a “Coptic dealer.” Rustafjaell claims that he spoke to the individual who supposedly found the manuscripts later,

who showed him the place where they were found. This was apparently a monastery where the manuscripts were hidden in a wall. Even Rustafjaell doubted if the story he was told was correct, noting that there was no sign that any digging had been done at the alleged find spot. He thought it was possible that the finder had not told the truth but that the colophons proved that they were probably found somewhere in the area (Rustafjaell 1909: 3–6).

While Rustafjaell argues for a Coptic dealer in Edfu, the two Berlin manuscripts had a different story. The initial publication described how Schmidt had bought the pages of one manuscript during the summer of 1906 in Cairo from a dealer who had bought them a long time ago in Upper Egypt. The dealer said that they were Coptic, but it was clear that was not the case and Bernhard Moritz helped identify them as Old Nubian. As a result, the pages were bought on that basis. Schmidt and Bernhard Moritz then went on a trip to Upper Egypt and found two further manuscript pages that belonged to a single manuscript (Schäfer, Schmidt 1906: 774–775; Griffith 1913: 4; Buzi 2014: 72). It seems unlikely that Moritz and Schmidt just happened to find another Old Nubian manuscript, so perhaps they went to the same source from whom the dealer in Cairo had acquired the manuscript in Upper Egypt. It is possible that this individual was Abd el-Nūr Gabriel of Qena, who was thought to be the person from whom de Rustafjaell had acquired his manuscripts (See Layton 1987: XXVII, XXIX, No. 22; Dijkstra 2004: 205, No. 101). If so, Nahman might have been the dealer from whom Schmidt acquired the Old Nubian manuscript in Cairo and his partner in Qena may have been the source of the Upper Egyptian Old Nubian manuscript. Griffith incorrectly states that both manuscripts were purchased in Upper Egypt but notes that there are similarities in the Berlin texts and those of the British Library (Griffith 1909: 545–546).

Rustafjaell had already connected the manuscript made in 1053 for Mashenka (BL Ms. Or. 6799) with the Old Nubian St Menas (BL Ms. Or. 6805), but he did not recognize Illarte as a Nubian toponym, so he missed the connection with this manuscript (BL Ms. Or. 6804). Further, he dated the Illarte manuscript much later to the 12th century (Rustafjaell 1909: 104–105, 110, 136, 141). Later scholars relied on Rustafjaell's story about finding the manuscripts together based on the fact that most of the manuscripts come from the same period and same area (van der Vliet 2015: 267). Budge first stated that the Old Nubian Ms. Or. 6805 along with parts of several other manuscripts “of the same type” and “several” Coptic manuscripts were found by “nomad Arabs” in a stone box (Budge 1909: 13), but then he wrote that BL Ms. Or. 6804 and the Old Nubian manuscript had not been discovered with

the other manuscripts (Budge 1913: xvi). Subsequently, Budge claimed they were all found together although he does refer to them as a “find” in quotes and mentions that they came from various dealers, perhaps suggesting he did not entirely believe it (Budge 1920: 371–372). In 1915, Budge suggested that the manuscripts were part of different libraries (Budge 1915: xxiv). The initial suggestion of Budge in 1909 was echoed by Griffith and Browne (citing Griffith), who stated that Old Nubian Ms. 6805 had been found with two Coptic manuscripts, BL. Ms. Or. 6801 and 6799 (Griffith 1913: 4; Browne 1994: 1, 5). These were the three manuscripts that were originally sold by Rustafjaell to the British Museum. Griffith believed that Rustafjaell offered two groups of manuscripts at different times to the British Museum (Griffith 1913: 4), and thus divided them into two groups, whereas Layton states that all the manuscripts were acquired by Rustafjaell at the same time on November 12, 1907 (Layton 1987: XXVII–XXVIII). Layton suggests that Budge in 1920 thought they did not come from a single find, even though that does not seem to be what he said at that time. Layton thought that it was unlikely that the manuscripts were all found together, given the fact that they were written in different places (Layton 1987: XXVII). Griffith, on the other hand, following Crum, argues that the manuscripts constitute two groups: the Edfu-Esna manuscripts which date from 10th – early 11th century and the Serra manuscript which dates to 1053. He thinks that manuscripts were taken to Nubia from Egypt during, destruction of the churches in 1007–1012 by the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim (Griffith 1913: 4). Although Griffith does not explicitly say so, this implies that he thought that the manuscripts were actually found in Serra not Edfu-Esna.

Van der Vliet argued that British Library Ms. Or. 6784 should also be connected with the other Nubian manuscripts. He studied a second colophon in the manuscript, which had not been noted by Layton (see above). The second colophon indicated that it had been purchased by an individual with a Nubian name: Mariakouda Ioannou son of Esioupapo (van der Vliet 2015: 271). The fact that a Nubian might purchase this manuscript was not surprising to him given the fact that other Nubian related items have been found in Egypt, such as a marble tray with a Greek and Old Nubian inscription of the Nubian king Georgios (1130–1158) found at the Monastery of Deir el-Surian (Evelyn White 1933: 215–217; van Gerven Oei 2011–212: 225; Martyros 2016b: 215). Van der Vliet believes that all the British Library manuscripts were copied for Nubians living in Edfu and BL. Ms. Or. 6784 was purchased by a Nubian in Edfu (van der Vliet 2015: 276), which is of course possible, but he does not explain how the manuscripts were then

dedicated to churches in Nubia. He also noted that a passage from the same text as BL. Ms. Or. 6784 was found in Dongola itself on the wall of a tomb (van der Vliet 2015: 276). Van der Vliet also connected these manuscripts to Ms. BL Or. 7029, which is a copy of the *Life of Aaron*, which he felt was connected to Nubia (van der Vliet 2015: 274) and that all the manuscripts were found together (Dijkstra, van der Vliet 2015: 369–370).

Other authors have been more cautious than van der Vliet in suggesting that all the manuscripts belonged together. O’Connell suggested that the majority of the manuscripts from Edfu are from one find given that they appeared on the market at the same time and the fact that they have similar dates. She notes that most of them were copied in Esna and Edfu (O’Connell 2016: 246) but does not state definitively whether she thinks the non-Edfu-Esna part of the group was actually found with them, though she points out that if it was, it could show that the different monastic libraries may have borrowed or copied manuscripts from each other (Davies, O’Connell 2013: 6–7). Williams’ forthcoming study of the Rustafjaell manuscripts, on the other hand, suggests that the Nubian manuscripts cannot be connected with the Esna-Edfu manuscripts. As Griffith had already noted that Crum stated, the Esna-Edfu manuscripts dated from the 10th–early 11th century whereas the Serra manuscript dates to 1053 or 1056 and is therefore later (Williams forthcoming). This has been followed by Tsakos in his forthcoming study of manuscripts from Serra (Tsakos forthcoming). It is very possible that the Nubian manuscripts were not found together with the Esna-Edfu manuscripts but rather a smaller find such as the three Coptic manuscripts that were found in the rubbish dump of the hermitage of Sheikh abd el-Gurna (Górecki 2007: 266–272; Thommée 2012: 199). Still, it is possible that Rustafjaell bought a library and that this library contained these manuscripts along with the Edfu-Esna ones, since manuscripts could travel over long distances, but there is no reason why these manuscripts should not have been produced in Nubia rather than Upper Egypt.

The other codices came from excavated finds, which included a Coptic codex from Qasr el-Wizz (Aswan, Nubian Museum, Special Number 168), which was discovered by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago in 1965. The codex contains two apocryphal texts: *The Discourse of the Savior* and *The Dance of the Savior* (Hubai 2009; Tsakos *et alii* 2013; Dilley 2016: 184; Suciú 2017: 42–43), which can be related to other Nubian texts. A codex found at Serra is a text with the Old Nubian version of Pseudo-John Chrysostom’s *In venerabilem crucem* (Hubai 2009: 19; Dilley 2016: 186; Suciú 2017: 44). The Serra codex was found in the 1963–1964 season and would be placed in Church of

Jesus in Serra East by the donor and his wife Ettine (Browne 1984, 9, 17; Dilley 2016: 186). There is also a Greek codex page found at Serra excavation which is from the *Liber Institutionis Michaelis* (Tsakos 2014; Tsakos forthcoming). Several manuscript pages were found at Qasr Ibrim in the excavations. Further evidence of connections between the archaeologically found codices and the Rustafaell manuscripts comes in the fact that the palaeography of the Qasr el-Wizz codex is the most similar to BL Ms. Or. 6804 according to some scholars (Hubai 2009: 37, No. 64; Suciu 2017: 46).

Codices with Coptic Egyptian Influences: Qasr el-Wizz and British Library Coptic Codices, Old Nubian Serra Codex

The Coptic language Qasr el-Wizz codex [*Figs 1–11*] has been studied in detail by Hubai. He has a fairly lengthy discussion about the art of the codex, since it is lavishly illustrated and is similar to Coptic manuscripts from Egypt in terms of marginal ornamentation.

There are two crosses [*Figs 1–2*]: one at the beginning of the codex and another at the last preserved folio, as well as illustrations on other pages, including a guilloche pattern on page 3 that he suggests is similar to the Stauros text from Berlin and the Serra East codex (Hubai 2009, 40, no. 72). While the design is similar, the shape of the decoration is much different. The text is completely framed on three sides, whereas the other texts do not frame their texts in a similar manner. A similar framing device is found in BL Ms. Or. 6783 illuminated in Esna in 1003, although the framing devices there were turned ninety degrees on the side and have somewhat similar guilloche decoration. That type of guilloche pattern is similar to the 9th/10th century codex from Sheikh abd el-Gurna, specifically leaf 48. Furthermore, some pages of the Sheikh abd el-Gurna codex were painted in a red and green guilloche pattern which had a very similar colour scheme to the Qasr el-Wizz manuscript (Górecki 2007: 272, fig. 9; Thomée 2012: 200, 206–207). Guilloche patterns also appear in crosses on two manuscripts from Hamouli Monastery in the Fayyum in the Pierpont Morgan Library: Ms. 605 (903/904 AD) and Ms. 566 (822/823–913/914), and Ms. 576 (822/823–913/914). In Nubia, guilloche patterns are found in wall paintings from 8th/9th century Dongola (Martens-Czarnecka 2001a: 256–257, fig. 5) and Faras (Martens-Czarnecka 1982: pls 58, 60, 172; Martens-Czarnecka 2012: fig. 10). There was also a guilloche pattern on an ostrakon from Thebes, which Górecki suggests was a guilloche pattern for wall painting on plaster (Górecki 2008: 62; Górecki 2010: 37) and is frequent in Coptic language manuscript illuminations (see Bibliothèque

nationale ms. copte 129 (20), British Library Ms. Or. 6801 fol. 22r) and described by Suciú as being “in the usual Coptic style” (Suciú 2017: 46). Hubai compared the crosses in the manuscript to Coptic Egyptian art, including the church of Abu Fana (Buschhausen 1995: fig. 63; Hubai 2009: 42–43, nos 74–75), but it does not appear to be particularly similar. Such guilloche decoration was also popular in the decoration of terracotta icons in Nubia, which Ryl-Priebisz attributes to the influence of Islamic art (Ryl-Priebisz 2001: 382, pl. LXII, fig. 14). Martens-Czarnecka, on the other hand, suggests that it was similar to Coptic and Byzantine art (Martens-Czarnecka 2001: 256–257). It also appears on painted Nubian pottery as one of its most popular patterns



Fig. 1. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.36863/P.56794. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

(Bagińska 2003: 18, 22, 25, 27, figs 5.7, 10.1, 13.4, fig. 20:1). Adams suggested that the guilloche decoration on Nubian pottery is the result of individuals looking at illuminated manuscripts (Adams 1981: 6; Adams 1986: 245, 256; Adams 2016: 324) but does not discuss those in detail. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Late Antique Egyptian pottery, however, with paintings on Egyptian pottery appearing similar to Egyptian wall paintings and manuscripts (Xanthopoulou 2010: 19, 34, 37–41, 50, no. 86).

The two crosses in the Qasr el-Wizz manuscript are also unusual in that they are asymmetrical and appear to be an even-armed cross sitting on a single step. One can find similar looking crosses in Coptic language Egyptian



Fig. 2. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.36879/P.56810. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

manuscripts, but they all have a top horizontal bar as well, making the cross symmetrical. The Qasr el-Wizz crosses most resemble Damascus, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate Ms. 12/221 fol. 202b that is dated to 1041, probably from the Tur Abdin in southern Turkey. This includes the lack of an upper bar and the fact that it is decorated with a guilloche pattern. It is unfortunately poorly preserved but it and a few other crosses from 10th and 11th century Syriac manuscripts have similar guilloche patterns (Leroy 1964: pl. 8.3; Raby, Brock 2014–2016: 45, 49, pl. 19). The entire text of the first written page is marked by guilloche patterns on all three sides, framing the manuscript. There are similar ways of marking texts in Coptic language manuscripts from Egypt, but the guilloche patterns are drawn on different sides (see for instance Pierpont Morgan Library ms. 579, Leroy 1974: 11.2, British Library Or. Ms. 6783, British Library Ms. 6801 fol. 2r). Such framing devices are more similar to some Syriac manuscripts, although the design does not go down the entire page (Leroy 1964: fig. 16). Therefore, the guilloche patterns in the manuscripts with a Nubian provenance are similar to those found not only in Coptic language manuscripts, but also Syriac (Raby, Brock 2014–2016: 2, 28, 36–44). This suggests that guilloche patterns cannot be taken as anything more than part of a common motif found in art of the eastern Mediterranean.

The birds in the Qasr el-Wizz manuscript [*Figs 3–4*] also have parallels in Coptic Egyptian manuscripts. The bird on page 16 of the Qasr el-Wizz manuscript in particular is similar to a Hamouli Monastery manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library (Ms. 576, 822/823–913/914 AD). Nubian art of various types was apparently inspired by Coptic Egyptian manuscripts (see above) and one can see birds that are clearly inspired by Coptic illuminated manuscripts in medieval Nubian pottery of 850–1100 (Style NIV) and in Style A.IIIA of the 9th/10th centuries from the Elephantine region (Adams 1981: 7; Adams 1986, 490, fig. 168, 55, figs 319.3.1-1 and 319.3.1-2. See also Bagińska 2003: 27, fig. 20.2, who notes the popularity of birds on pottery at Faras). Hubai also suggests that the birds on pages 6 and 16 were similar to Vat. copt. 69 and the vase with a plant [*Fig. 3a*] was similar to a manuscript in London (Hubai 2009: 43), but the birds in the Vatican manuscript do not seem that similar and while the vase is drawn in a similar manner (see https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.copt.69), the rest of the decoration that accompanies the vase is not the same (see Victoria and Albert Museum E. 1079–1933). The marginal scroll work on pages 18 and 20 [*Figs 5–6*] is similar to some Coptic manuscript leaves in the Victoria and Albert Museum apparently dated to the 8th–11th centuries and found in Akhmim (434B–1888, 434E–1888) and a Hamouli Monastery manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms.

590 (before 893 AD). The head in the manuscript [*Fig. 7*] looks like a Hamouli manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 574 (822/823–913/914).

Other aspects of the ornamentation of the Qasr el-Wizz manuscript are not typical of Coptic art, however. This includes the marginal illustration of the crocodile [*Fig. 8*] which has thin, narrow legs similar to the birds drawn in the manuscript. Crocodiles are known in art from Egypt, but also in Nubia as the relief of Horus spearing the crocodile from Faras indicates (for more on the context of this object see Naerebout 2014: 42–43; for this figure, dated to the 4th century, see Exhibition Catalogue 1996: 84, dated to the 1st–3rd century in Fluck *et alii* 2015: 60, Cat. no. 54). The crocodile with such thin bird-like legs, however, is not known elsewhere. Suciu in his unpublished PhD thesis suggests that the crocodile shows the “unmistakable mark of the encounter between Christianity and African culture” (Suciu 2013a: 32) but does not explain further and this comment does not appear in the published edition. The peculiarities of the art of the manuscript, combined with its palaeographic parallels to Nubian manuscripts noted by some scholars (see above) argues that the manuscript was made in Nubia although it shows considerable Coptic Egyptian influences.

This is also the case with BL Ms. Or. 6804, the parchment codex of Bartholomew the Apostle on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the manuscript paleographically most similar to the Qasr el-Wizz Coptic codex and arranged to be donated at Illarte (see above). While there is no date on the manuscript and the dates assigned to it have been various, fol. 24 notes that it was a donation to the Venerable Church of Our Savior Jesus Christ in Illarte. Budge published a facsimile of the manuscript, which is unfortunately extremely damaged along the edges, where most of the decoration is located. The manuscript was decorated with a headpiece at each hymn title, along with bird heads, guilloche decoration, and many decorated uncial letters (Budge 1913: xvi; Layton 1987: 84–85, Cat. no. 80). In one case, there appears to be the remains of a head in the margin, similar to what can be seen in the Qasr el-Wizz Coptic manuscript (see above). There seems to be the remains of a halo, which suggests it is a saint’s head as seen in Coptic language manuscripts (see for example Bibliothèque nationale ms. copte 29 (19), fol. 35v, line drawing in Jansma 1973: 150, l.2, fols. 37v, 40v; Bibliothèque nationale ms. copt. 129 (11) Fol. 40r and other examples above. See also Leroy 1974: 85). It is difficult to reconstruct the marginal ornamentation, although there are the remains of a bird present in one instance, as well as two bird heads. Once again, there is guilloche decoration. The decoration does appear to be coming out of Coptic art, but it is again somewhat different than the published examples [*Figs 9–11*].

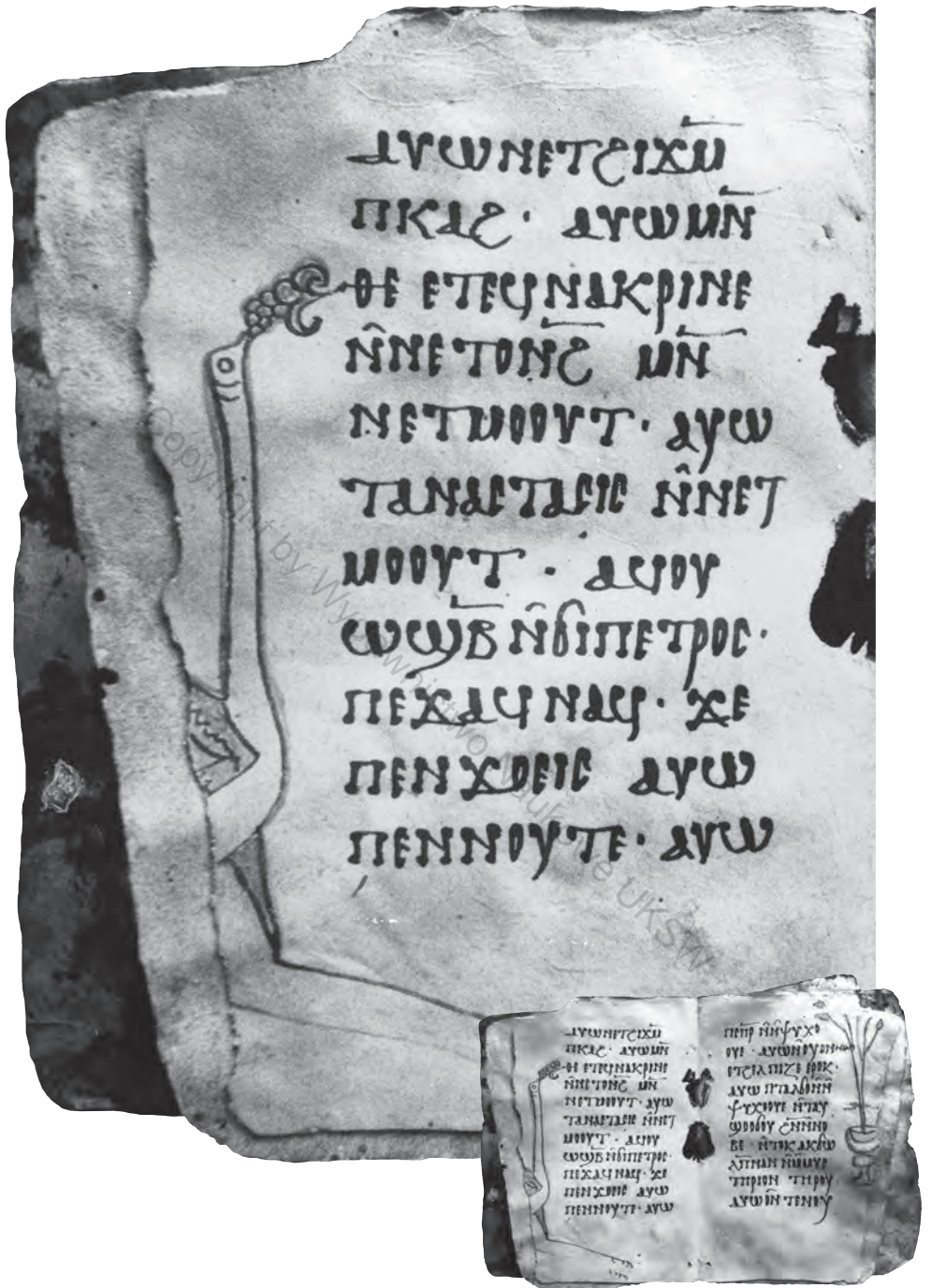


Fig. 3. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.36865/P56796. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

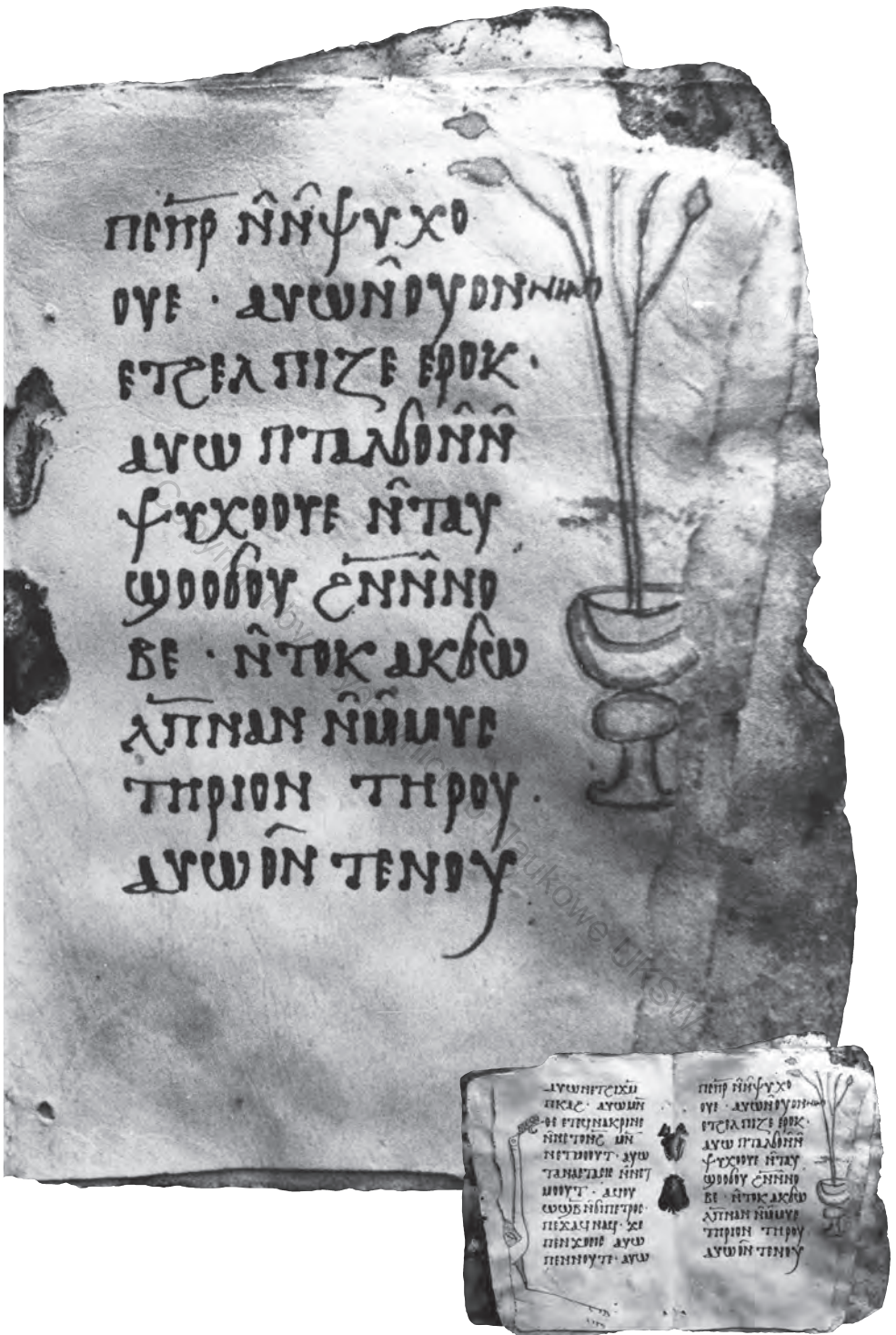


Fig. 3a. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.36865/P56796. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

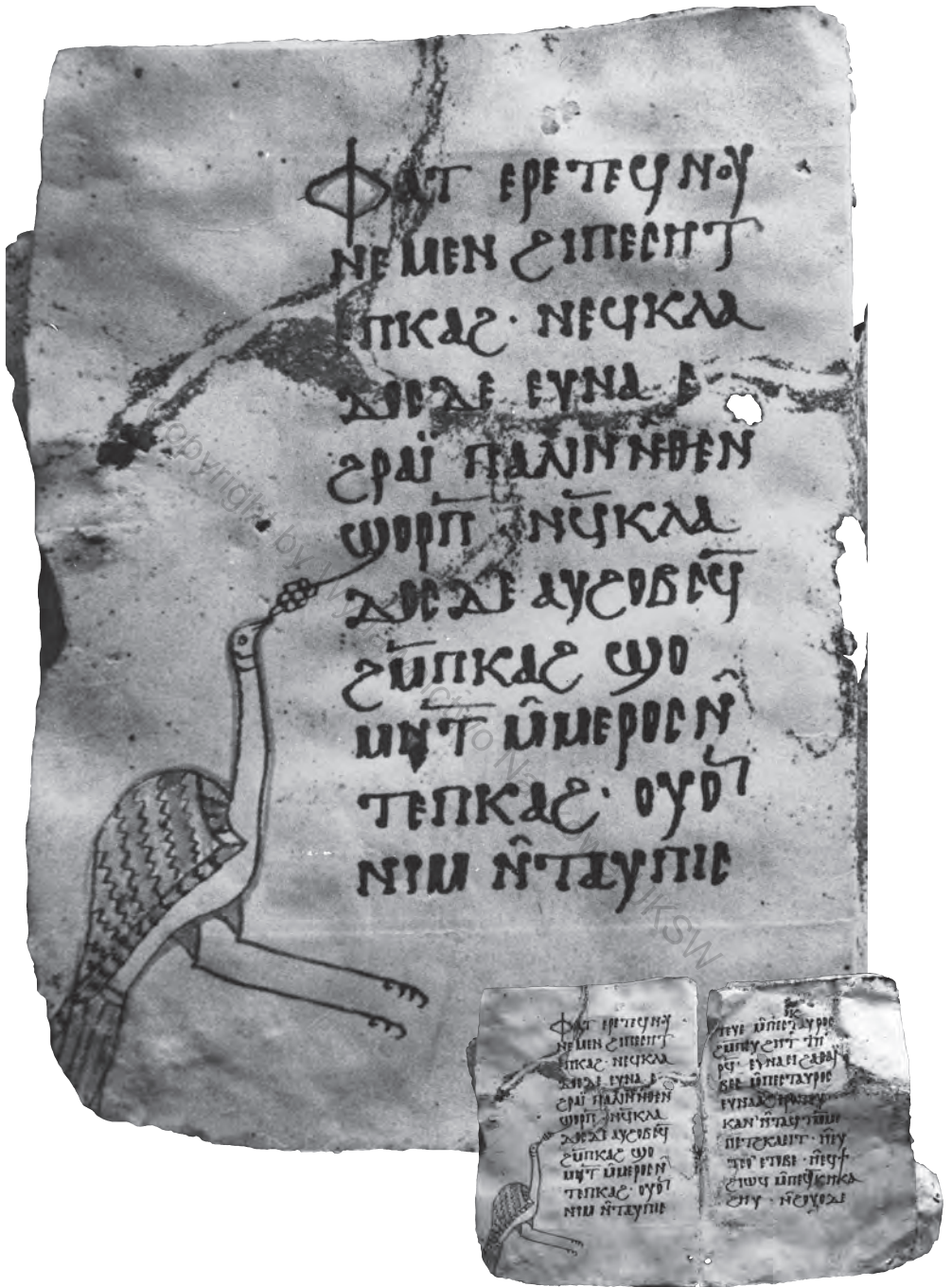


Fig. 4. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.36870/P.56801. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

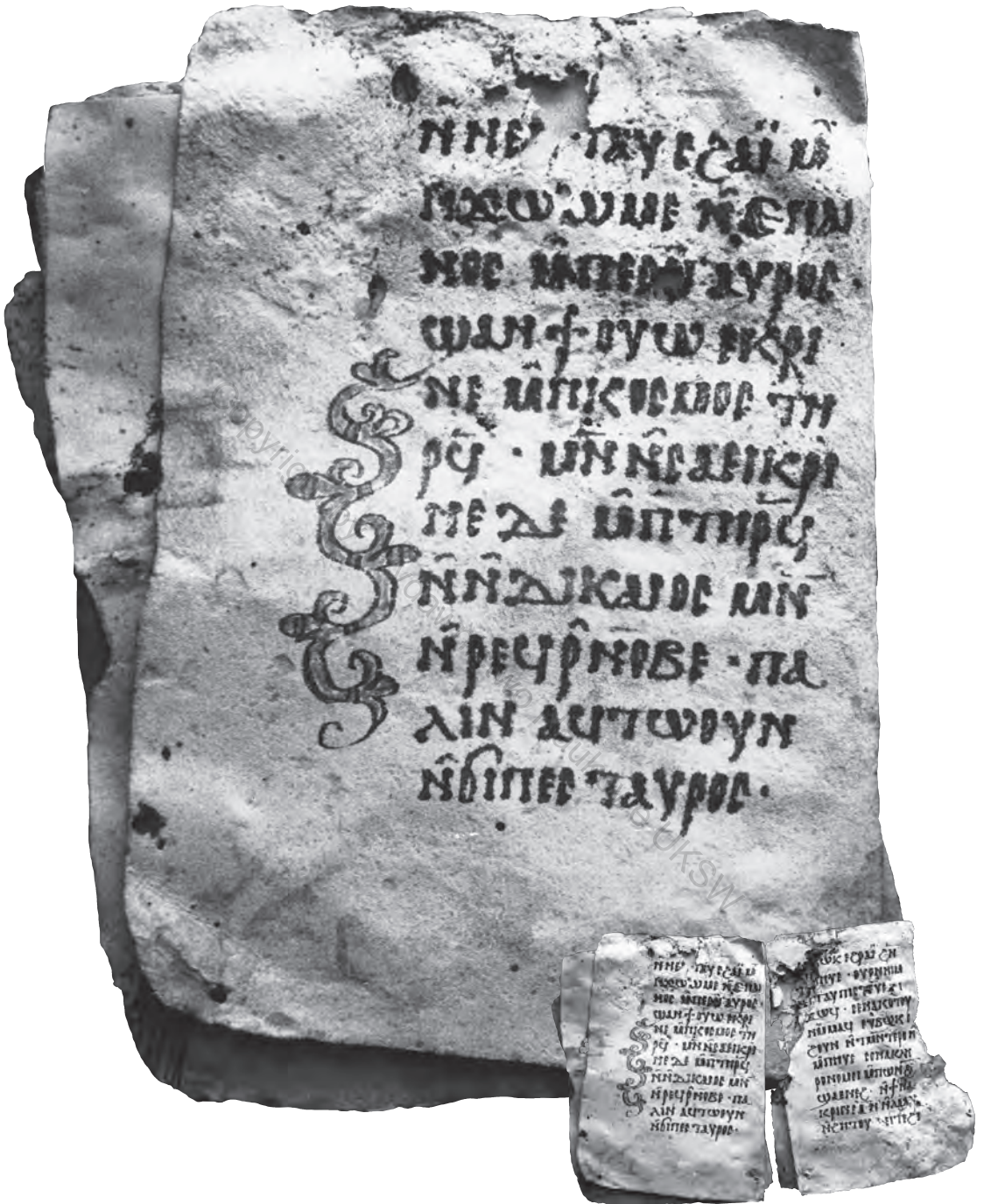


Fig. 5. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.36871/P.56802. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.



Fig. 6. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.36872/P.56803. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

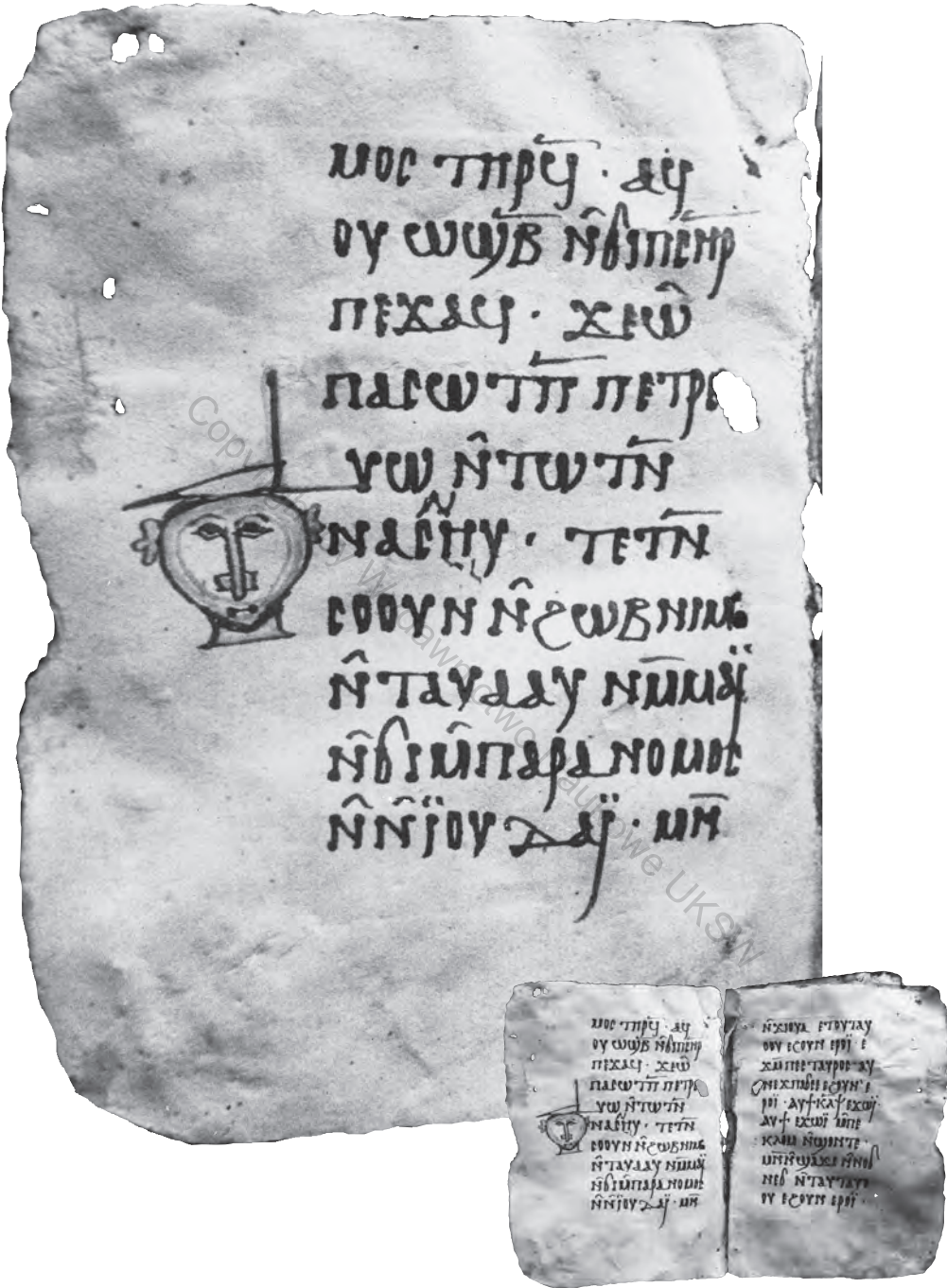


Fig. 7. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.36868/P.56799. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

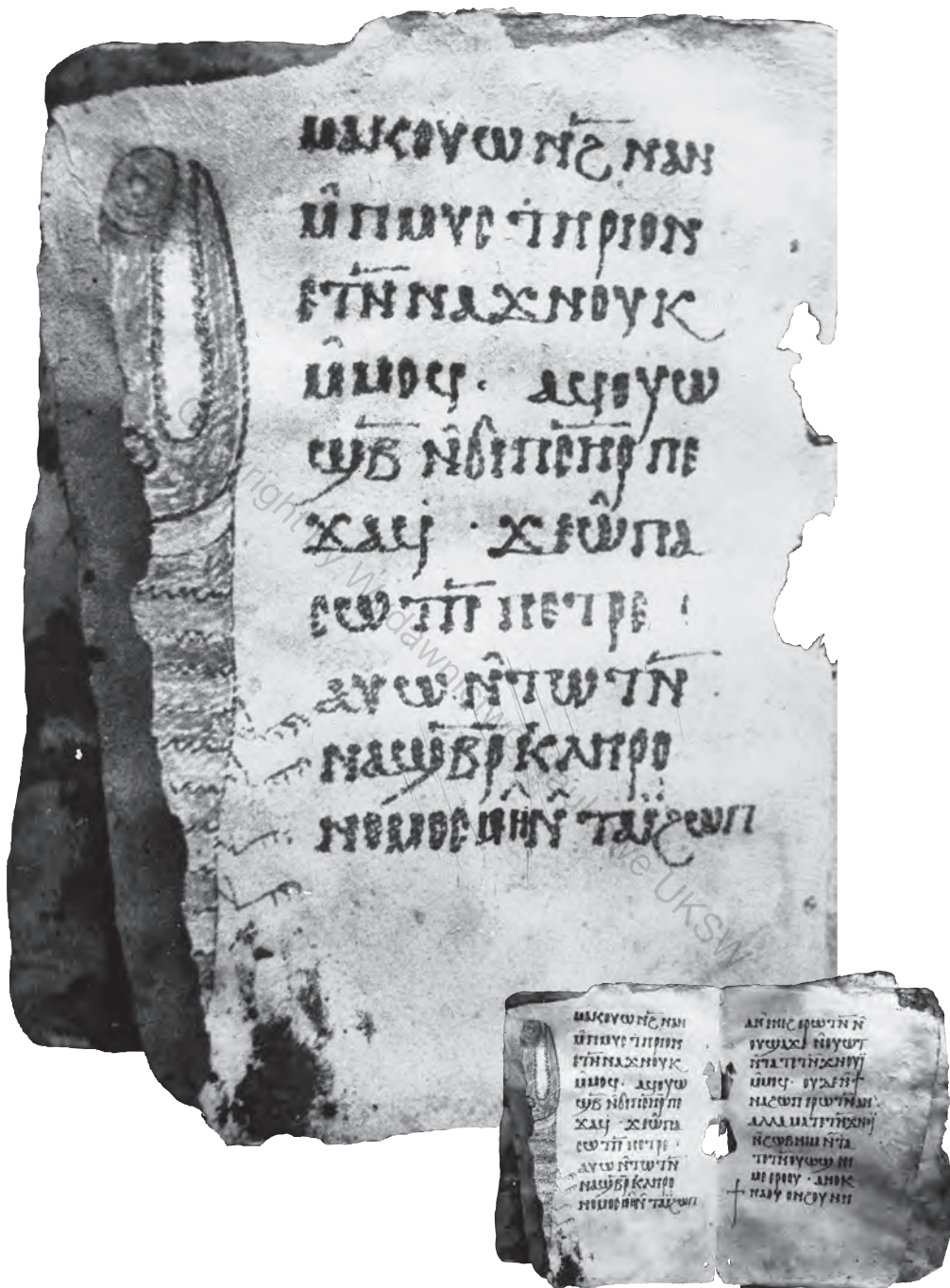


Fig. 8. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.36866/P.56797. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

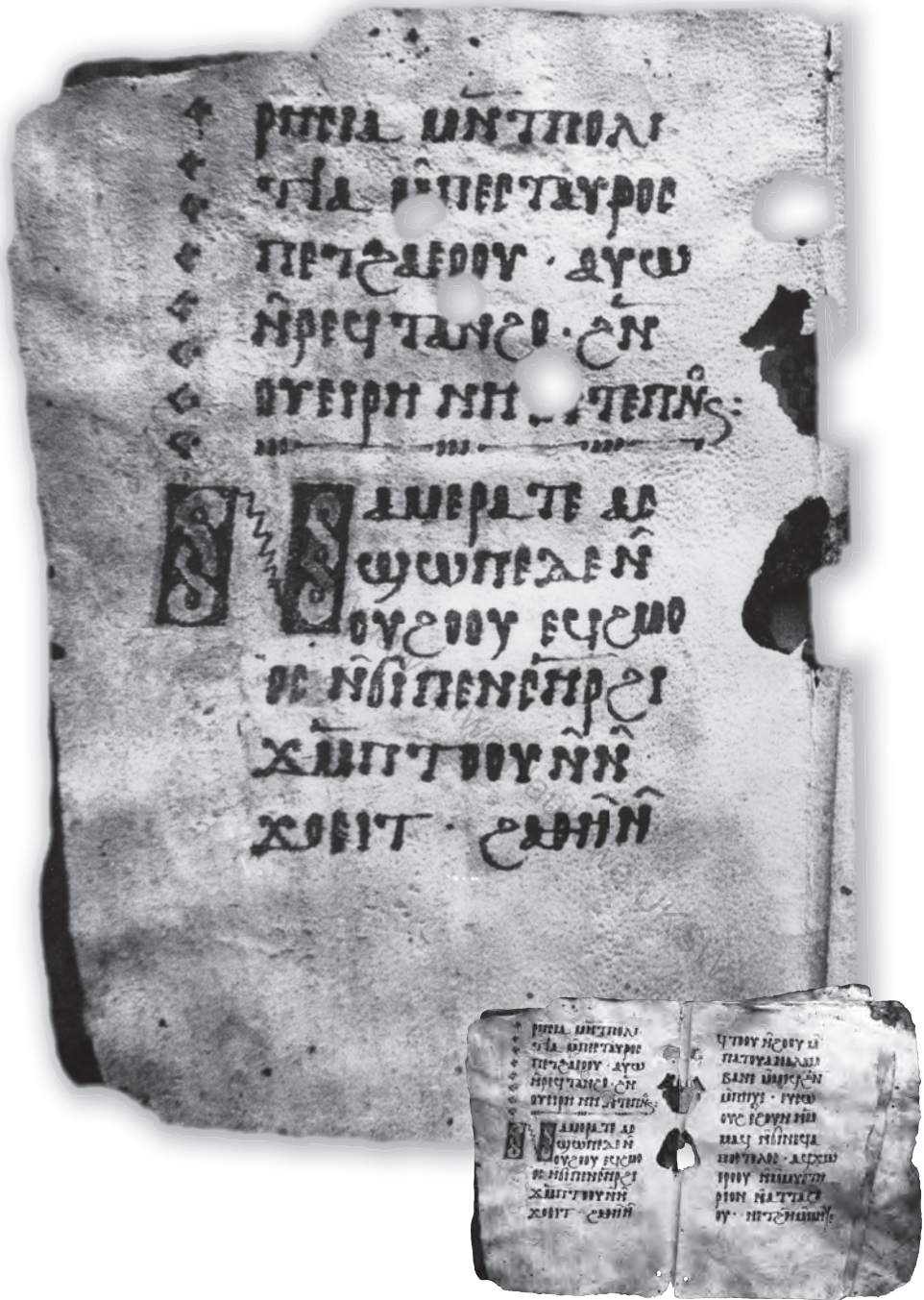


Fig. 9. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.35864/P.56795. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

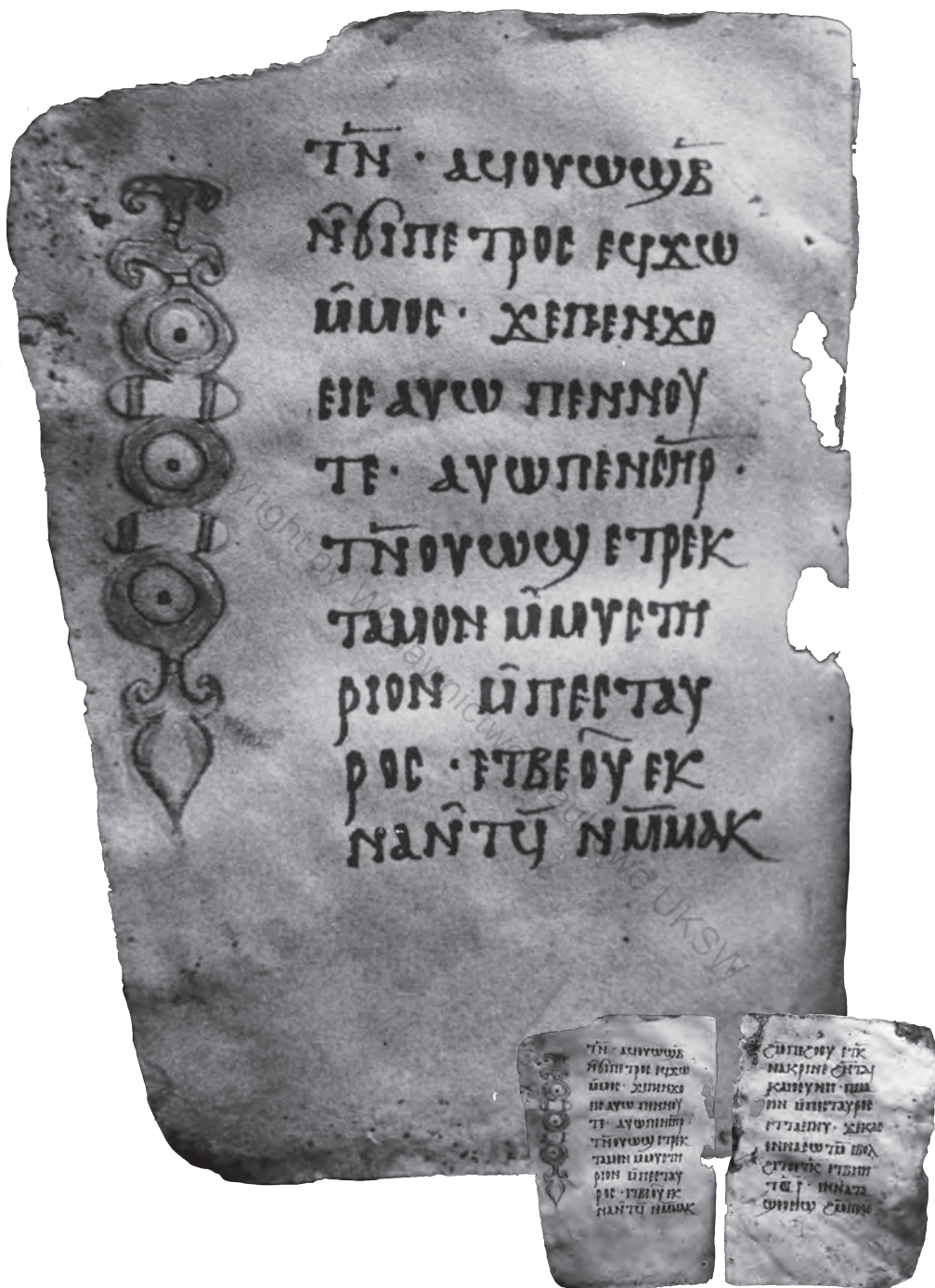


Fig. 10. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.36868/P.56799. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

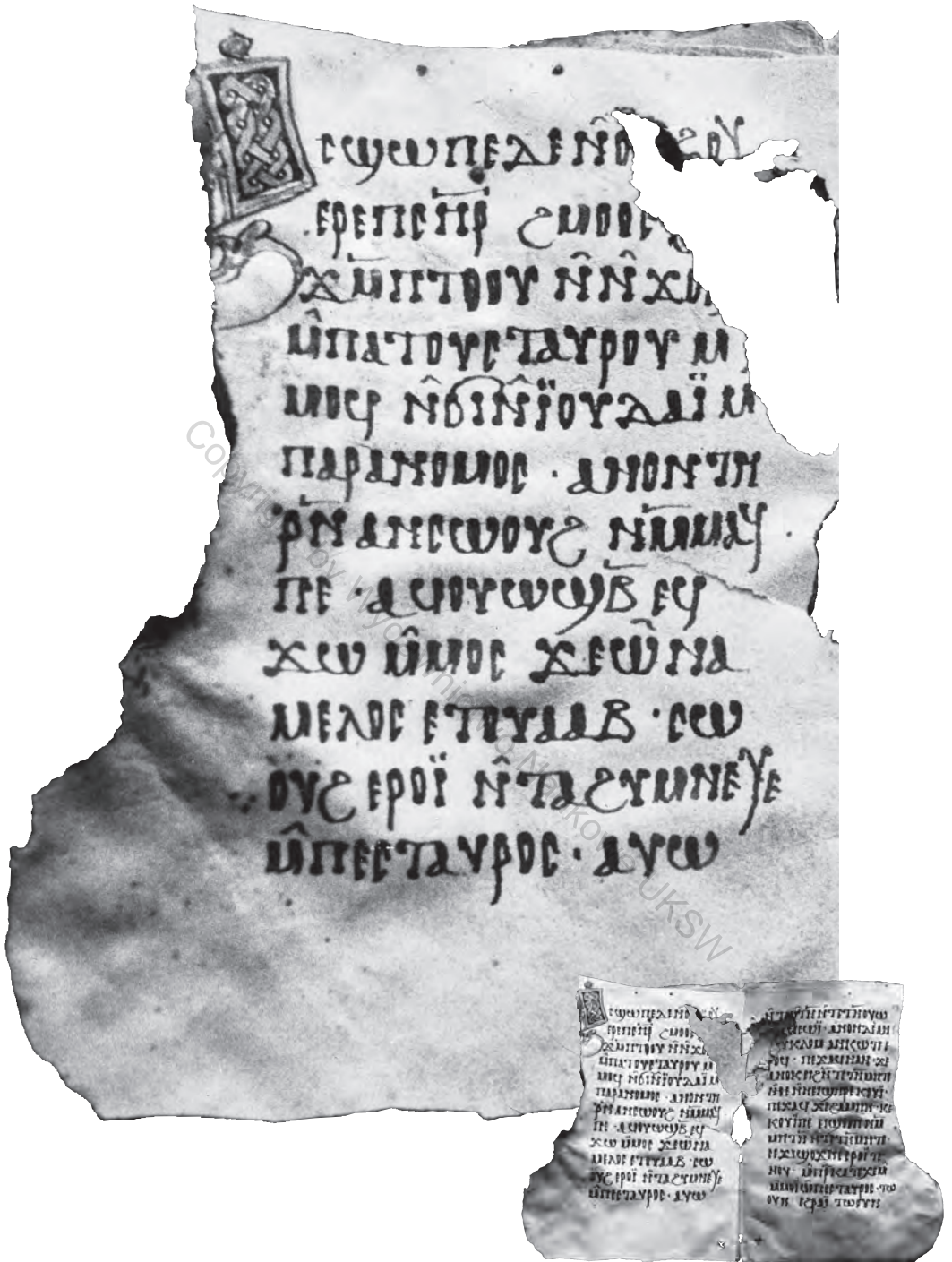


Fig. 11. Coptic Qasr el-Wizz Codex. N.36784/P.56805. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.



Fig. 12. Old Nubian Pseudo-John Chrysostom's *In venerabilem crucem sermo*. The Sudan National Museum, Khartoum. Photographs courtesy Bruce Williams.

Another manuscript that shows art that seems to come out of Coptic language Egyptian manuscripts is the Old Nubian Pseudo-John Chrysostom's *In venerabilem crucem sermo*, which was found in the Serra excavations [Fig. 12]. The manuscript was published by Gerald Browne, who argued it was made in Serra (Browne 1984). The reason for this is the badly preserved colophon, which mentions that it was deposited on the cross resting in the Jesus Church of Serra East by an individual whose name he cannot read and his wife Ettine (see above). Browne dates the manuscript to the 11th or 12th century and says it is “somewhat similar” in its style to the Berlin “Stauros” text from Serra. Based on a study of the palaeography of both manuscripts, Browne suggests that the two were made more or less at the same time at Serra (Browne 1984: 25–26, 74). The illustration of the codex is far more minimal than the other examples, but the illustrated heading with guilloche decoration once again provides a connection to Egyptian art even though the piece is evidently from Nubia, and again illustrates the popularity of guilloche decoration in Nubia (see above).

The final manuscript in this group is the only one of these manuscripts that is dated, British Library Manuscript Oriental 6799. This is a parchment codex of Cyril of Jerusalem on the Sacred Cross. It was illustrated either

in 1053 or 1056 on the 9th of June. The copyist was Merkure son of Pameos and it was made for an individual whose name is illegible, but he was the son of Mashenka of Faras and it was to be deposited at the Church of the Cross at Serra. There were also 2 parchment fragments that were bound with it. The main illumination in this manuscript is a cross. The manuscript also includes paragraph ornaments and monograms. The design of the cross and the ornamentation looks similar to Coptic Egyptian art, such as crosses from the Pierpont Morgan manuscripts illuminated in Hamouli including ms. 567 (892/893) (Leroy 1974: pl. 15.2), ms. 576 (822/823–913/914), ms. 570 (897/898), and ms. 580 (889/890). The illuminated chapter heading and initial in the manuscript is also quite similar to Pierpont Morgan Ms. 567 (892/893) and British Library Ms. Or. 6782 from 989–990 in Akhmim (Leroy 1974: pl. 13.1), as well as an 8th century Coptic language manuscript in Trinity College Dublin (Cramer 1964: fig. 8). This manuscript is the closest of the Nubian manuscripts in terms of similarities to Coptic Egyptian art and similarities between the crosses in Nubia and Egypt have been observed previously (Rassart-Debergh 1986), but there is no reason to assume that it was not produced in Nubia. While most crosses from Nubia are quite elaborate, simpler crosses from Nubia were found in Tamit (Scholz 2001: 214, fig. e), and Faras (Martens-Czarnecka 1982: pl. 58) that are similar to Ms. Or. 6799.

Manuscripts showing Nubian Influences: Berlin and British Library Old Nubian Codices, Qasr Ibrim Coptic and Serra East Greek Illustrated Pages

There were also manuscripts that showed Nubian influence and were produced outside the sphere of Coptic Egyptian art even if some limited influences can be observed. Woźniak has looked at Berlin ms. or. quart. 1020 in the most detail (Woźniak 2018). When Griffith first published the manuscript, he suggested that the figure at the beginning of the manuscript was Christ (Griffith 1913: 42), but Rostkowska suggested that the figure was actually Doukas the donor of the manuscript (Rostkowska 1982: 210, fig. 1, see also Woźniak 2018: 625). This interpretation seems to be more likely and there are clear similarities between Doukas and the depiction of other Nubian elites on wall painting in Nubia not only in the design of the clothing, but also the tiraz decoration on the upper sleeves, the way that the figure holds the sash and the position of his hand (Woźniak 2018: 627–628), including Abd el-Qadir (Griffith 1928), Faras (Martens-Czarnecka 1992: 367, 369, fig. 3), Dongola (Scholz 2001: 203, figs b–c, e), Banganarti (Łaptaś 2003: 246, 252, figs 1, 5; Żurawski

2014: 126–127, 120–131, 152–155, 159, 162–166, 247, figs 1, 6–7, 11–14). The way that the individual was depicted clearly identified their social status (Mierzejewska 2010: 653, 659).

Łaptaś argues that the colours in the wall paintings were meant to “create a contrast” (Łaptaś 2003: 246), which also seems to have been the case in the manuscript. In addition to this illustration, there is an illuminated heading decorated with a knot guilloche pattern on Fol. 4r that looks similar to Christian Egyptian art as well as the Qasr el-Wizz and other manuscripts (see above). There are also marginal decorations on the manuscripts including what appears to be a black and red outline of a chalice (fol. 6r, 9r), that does not have similarities to Egyptian art.²

Another manuscript is British Library Ms. Or. 6805, also an Old Nubian manuscript that is illustrated in a style that appears to be Nubian (Browne 1994; Exhibition Catalogue 1996: 246, 248, fig. 264). The chapter heading on Fol. 1b and three crosses are influenced by Coptic Egyptian art. The chapter heading consists of a guilloche heading (Browne 1994: Cover (colour picture), 91, 108) which is similar to the braided decoration on the Sheikh abd el-Gurna Coptic parchment codex. Above the chapter heading are three crosses which are similar to Coptic manuscripts in style but appear to be Nubian in execution. These seem to represent the cult of the cross and are perhaps connected to the Holy Trinity, which is a popular motif in Nubian wall paintings dating from the 10th–14th centuries already at Faras and Kom H at Dongola (Makowski 2015: 293–294, 298, 301, figs 22.2, 22.11). Buzi suggests that it is similar to Ms. or. quart. 1020, which had a generally similar chapter heading. There are traces of crosses above this, as well, which Buzi also feels are “comparable” to Ms. Or. 6805 (Buzi 2014: 225), but they do not appear to be that similar although it is difficult to tell due to the preservation of the “Stauros” manuscript (Berlin ms. or quart. 1020).

In addition, there was an illustration at the end of the story of St Menas on fol. 10a. These are the only two decorative elements in the manuscript because the Nicene canons section of the manuscript does not have any illustrations (Budge 1909; Rustafjaell 1909: pl. LI). The illustration shows a horseman with an inscription that identifies him as St Menas (Budge 1909: 14; Griffith 1913: 14–15). An examination of the palaeography of the manuscript and that of the caption on the St Menas inscription (Budge 1909; Browne 1994), indicates that

² This manuscript has been completely digitized and is available in colour here: http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN724274057&PHYSID=-PHYS_0001&DMDID=

the writer is probably the same person. This suggests that the illustration was made at the same time that the manuscript was written. Although St Menas is a popular figure in Eastern Christian art, the depiction here is very different from the usual iconography of warrior saints, including in Nubia. Warrior saints are frequently depicted in medieval Nubian churches, where they are shown riding horses or standing (Tsakos 2012: 214, no. 23), which is similar to the rest of the eastern Mediterranean. In this depiction, Saint Menas is pictured on horseback with his head in profile, while warrior saints normally have their heads facing the viewer or turned slightly so that three-quarters of their face is visible. Griffith had already noted that his face was unusual (Griffith 1913: 14–15) and this observation was repeated by Suciu and led him to believe that the individual being depicted was Nubian (Suciu 2013b). The illustration is closely linked in its style to the excavated page from Qasr Ibrim (see below) and this argues that the two were likely produced by the same school of manuscript illuminators.

Saint Menas had a shield, flowing cloak, and spear as is normal for mounted warrior saints, although there were differences between this and usual depictions of warrior saints. St Menas holds the spear vertically, whereas usually the saint holds the spear at an angle impaling a foe or monster. In this case, it seems to be an accurate representation of the story, where Menas appears before the boatman holding a hunting spear (Browne 1994: 15; Suciu 2013b). In a few cases in Nubia one can see the warrior saints on horseback holding the spear similarly to Saint Menas, namely at Abd el-Qadir (Griffith 1928: pl. XXXV; Steinborn 1982: 330) as well as the relief of Horus on horseback spearing a crocodile from Faras. Horus holds a spear in a manner extremely similar to St Menas, even though he is spearing an animal. The same pose also appears in 13th century paintings of warrior saints of St George in the church of St Anthony on the Red Sea in Egypt (Bolman 2002: figs 4.5, 7.22), but it is very rare. The three crowns over the head of St Menas may be a manifestation of Menas' tripartite nature: virginity, endurance, and martyrdom (Budge 1909: 14, 28, 40, 47; Griffith 1913: 15; Suciu 2013b). The drawing of the crowns is similar in style to those from Dongola (Jakobielski 2001: 273, fig. 7; Martens-Czarnecka 2005b: 169, 170–171, figs 17, 19).

Another unusual aspect of the drawing is the way that St Menas is depicted, with a very sharp hooked nose and curly hair which Suciu suggests appears Nubian (Suciu 2013b). It is this depiction that closely links this illuminated page to the excavated page from Qasr Ibrim (see below) and argues that the two were likely produced by the same school of manuscript illuminators. The warrior saint on the top right corner of the page is extremely similar in the way

he is drawn with his head in profile, sharp hooked nose, and the spear. St Menas is barefoot and riding the horse bareback, although he does use reins. Warrior saints are generally not depicted barefoot (see Suciu 2013b, who makes this observation but only as Saint Menas appears in Egyptian art). The armoured Horus on horseback from Faras (see above) is barefoot, although he is riding a horse with a saddle. Usually, individuals riding horses in Nubia use saddles, although this is not the case in the graffito from Kalabsha of King Silko, though it is fairly schematic (Steinborn 1982: 314, fig. 8). St Menas' bridle is similar to St Phoebammon at Abdalla-n Irqi and the horse has the same pointed ears (Steinborn 1982: 326–327, fig. 16), while at Abd el-Qadir one figure holds a spear straight up and down and he is also barefoot. The horse depicted there has a sash around its neck in addition to the bridle which is similar to this depiction of St Menas (Steinborn 1982: 330, 339).

While warrior saints are not usually barefoot, other individuals in Nubian paintings do ride barefoot, however. In Dongola, a wall painting from Kom H dated to the late 11th/early 12th century shows a Magi riding a horse and barefoot (Gazda 2005: 89, fig. 5; Martens-Czarnecka 2014: pl. 13), as does a painting of the second half of the 12th century from the NW annexe of Kom H that shows the Prophet Balaam on a donkey and barefoot (Martens-Czarnecka 2005b: 169, fig. 17), as do other depictions from Dongola (Martens-Czarnecka 2014: pl. 14) and Faras (Martens-Czarnecka 1982: fig. 111). In contrast to other countries, warrior saints in Ethiopia are frequently depicted barefoot such as at the Church of Däbrä Səyon dating to the 14th/15th centuries (Tribe 2009: pls 8–9). Most of the depictions in Ethiopia are considerably later than the depictions in Nubia, given that little medieval art from Ethiopia has survived.

The leather strap around the neck of the horse being ridden by St Menas is similar to depictions of leather straps on horses ridden by other warrior saints in Nubia such as the Rivergate church at Faras (Griffith 1926: pl. LVIII) and the church of St Mercurios of Abd el-Qadir (Griffith 1928: pls XXXV–XXXVI, XLIII), which is said to be a local type at Faras that dates to the second half of the 12th/13th century (Martens-Czarnecka 1992: 379, fig. 9). While the bridles and leather straps may be similar, the hooves of other horses are not usually drawn in this way. There are close parallels with a graffito of a horse from the site of Ghazali (Williams: forthcoming), a painted horse on a pottery sherd from Serra (Vorderstrasse 2019: 17, Oriental Institute Museum E19350) and more general similarities with horses' hooves being ridden by the Magi in the Nativity scene at Faras (Scholz 2001: 216, fig. a, early 11th century, in Dongola cf. pl. XXXIX,1; Gazda 2005: 90, fig. 6; Martens-Czarnecka 2014: 920, pl. 12), as well as at Banganarti (Żurawski 2014: 199, figs 5–6), and Faras

(Martens-Czarnecka 1982: fig. 111), and Abdalla-n Irqi (Van Moorsel *et alii* 1975: pls 63, 67, 83). These hooves are also similar to those on the horse on an icon from Mt. Sinai that depicts St George (Michigan Inventory no. 409, see “Saint George on Horseback,” *The Sinai Icon Collection*, accessed March 10, 2018, <http://vrc.princeton.edu/sinai/items/show/6659>). In addition, there are similarities in Ethiopian wall paintings. Similar hooves can be observed at the Gännätä Maryam church depicting a warrior saint that dates to the end of the 13th century (Chojnacki 1975: fig. 1. See Mäzɡäbä Səəlat database MG-1993.027:22), and on a horse ridden by the donor Kwelsewon (Mäzɡäbä Səəlat database MG-1993.028:019) and horses ridden by warrior saints at the 12th century AD Yemrehanna Krestos Church (Mäzɡäbä Səəlat database MG-2007.044:009-010, MG-2007.233:002, 012, MG-2007.237:001-2, 7).

There is a figure at the bottom of the page who appears to be naked and kneeling in front of St Menas holding the hoof of his horse. Griffith identified the individual in front of St Menas with the boatman from the story of his life, following Budge (Griffith 1913: 14–15) and this was followed by Suciu (Suciu 2013b). Żurawski noted similarities between this depiction and the depiction of a warrior saint from Banganarti where the warrior saint is spearing one individual but there is another man there as well of whom only half his body can be seen, perhaps because he is coming out of a jar, although it looks like the ground. The man is naked and possibly holds a towel and he is pointing towards the saint. Żurawski claims the man is similar to the depiction of the boatman in Ms. Or. 6805 (Żurawski 2014: 206), but it seems more similar to the depiction of St Theodore from Tebtunis and the two children (Walters 1989: 194, pl. XVIII). It is most similar to a mounted warrior saint with a man in a jar from Abdalla-n Irqi which Van Moorsel could not identify (Van Moorsel *et alii* 1975: 115–117, pls 83, 87). Warrior saints are seen with supplicants in other types of art from Egypt including the 9th/10th century manuscript from Hamouli in the Fayyum (Pierpont Morgan Ms. 581), that shows Ptolemy of Dendera with the supplicant Apa Papnoute, a 9th/10th century book with St Theodore on horseback with a widow in Bibl. Vat. copt. 66 fol. 287v (Leroy 1974: pls 37, 105.2; Bolman 2002: fig. 4.11), wall paintings from circa 10th century Tebtunis (Walters 1989: 194, pls XVIII–XX; Bolman 2002: fig. 4.10), and an icon of St Sergius from Mount Sinai with a female donor that was kissing the foot of St George (Hunt 1991, who did not note the similarities in iconography).

As has already been noted, there was a manuscript page that was excavated in Qasr Ibrim (see above) and was clearly from Nubia and was likely produced there. The page depicts two warrior saints, both in military dress and boots at the top of the page and has an archangel at the bottom right of

the page. All three figures hold shields and the warrior saint on the top left has a missing face. The picture was published in black and white by Adams although it is a colour illustration and is not discussed in great detail. Adams describes the top right figure as having a blue cloak and a red and yellow shirt. He suggests the top left figure is similar (Adams 2010: 217, pl. 44d) but does not specify any colours, which implies that the colours are the same. He describes the angel as wearing a red garment, blue cloak, and black shoes, with wings, halo, and shield in red (Adams 2010: 217). There is a magical text on the bottom left page that has a list of 37 names related to the apocalypse that is typical of other Nubian magical texts and depicted in wall paintings in Dongola (Adams 2010: 244; Ruffini 2012: 229; Godlewski 2015: 335–336, fig. 8). Adams suggests that the archangel on the bottom of the page was a female angel (Adams 2010: 217), but the figure is clearly labelled as Michael and is therefore the Archangel Michael. The figure appears to be very similar to other depictions of the Archangel Michael in wall paintings from Nubia. It closely resembles the depiction of the Archangel Michael dating to the 11th century from Faras, including the outline of the wings, the crown, the way the angel held the cross and a round shield, as well as an angel that is possibly the Angel Lithargoel known from Faras (Scholz 2001: 208–211, figs a, d, pl. XXXIII). It is also similar to a saint from Dongola (Jakobielski 2000: 208, fig. 1; Jakobielski 2001: 273, fig. 7; Martens-Czarnecka 2001: 263, pl. XXVI; fig. XXVII, 2; Scholz 2001: pls XXVI, XXIX), an angel from the Rivergate church at Faras (Martens-Czarnecka 1992: 380, fig. 10), and a 12th century angel at Qasr Iko (Presedo Velo 1963: 39, pl. V), and one at Faras (Martens-Czarnecka 2010a: fig. 11). This depiction of the Archangel Michael also appears in Coptic Egyptian art with similar colour schemes (Bolman 2002: fig. 4, figs 8.20). The angels from Nubia frequently have a yellow halo, shield, and wings, but the blue cloak is less common. There is an example from Dongola that has similar colours that may be of the Archangel Uriel (Scholz 2001: pl. XXXIII). In addition to commonalities with other angels from Dongola, a shield held by an unknown warrior saint is also similar (Scholz 2001: pl. XLII).

The warrior saint on the top left of the manuscript (which is missing head) is extremely similar to the figure of a warrior saint from a wooden plaque of the 12th century found in Dongola which had a similar pose, wore Roman armour, boots, a cloak, and carried a shield and spear pointed towards the ground, which is unusual (Jakobielski 1999: fig. 8; Anderson 2004: 219), and is similar to the standing warrior saint from Banganarti (Żurawski 2014: 204–205, figs 3–5). The saint in the wooden plaque of St Epimachos from Attiri held a spear in a similar manner (Shinnie 1990: pl. 1; Tsakos 2012). The shield



Fig. 13. Greek *Liber Institutionis Michaelis*. The Sudan National Museum, Khartoum. (Phot. courtesy of Bruce Williams).

held by the figure is similar to the figure of an archangel holding a shield found in Dongola (Scholz 2001: pl. XXIX; Martens-Czarnecka 2004: 282, figs 10–11).

Another illustration that is considered in the Nubian illustrated manuscript corpus comes from the Greek language *Liber Institutionis Michaelis* which was found in the Serra excavations [Fig.13] (Tsakos 2014; Tsakos forthcoming). There is a figure sitting cross-legged, wearing blue and green-striped

trousers, an orange tunic and shoes, with a sash. He is pointing his right hand towards a globe and his index finger appears to be extended. It is possible that this globe is actually a mandorla, which would contain the figure of Christ, but this can no longer be seen on the manuscript although the decoration makes it clear that something was there that is now missing. There is something in the globe that may be a foot of Christ. This might suggest that it was a depiction of the Transfiguration of Christ and then the seated man pointing would be an apostle. The Transfiguration occurred when Jesus went with the apostles James (usually depicted on the right), Peter (usually depicted on the left), and John (usually depicted in the middle) and spoke with Moses and Elijah (Elsner 1988: 474; Andreopoulos 2005: 38, 101, 155, 158; Ćurčić 2012: 311; Strezova 2014: 86–87, 100). The possible presence of the mandorla does not automatically mean that the depiction must be the Transfiguration, since mandorlas appear in other religious depictions, but the seated figure argues for something other than the Ascension of Christ or the Resurrection (Andreopoulos 2005: 83). There is also the hand of another figure in the lower left-hand corner, which presumably belonged to a figure no longer extant who might be one of the prophets or possibly part of a larger narrative that showed not only the Transfiguration, but also the return of Jesus and the apostles to the city. Both of these appear in manuscripts and there is no set format for how the apostles are depicted during the Transfiguration itself. Andreopoulos suggests the main factor is the layout of the space which was available (Andreopoulos 2005: 78–79). Indeed, in the Sinai mosaic, the apostles are not located below Christ with the prophets but rather between them (Elsner 1994; Andreopoulos 2002; Andreopoulos 2005: 128).

While the scene of the Transfiguration is popular in Byzantine art (Ćurčić 2012: 311) and is also attested in Syriac (Leroy 1974: pl. 98.1–2, pl. 101.1, and pl. 136.1) and Armenian manuscripts as well as Ethiopian art (Mäzğäbä Səəlat database MG-1993.028:003), there seem to be no other depictions of the Transfiguration of Christ yet discovered in Nubia and it is rare in Egyptian Christian art as well notwithstanding the importance of the Sinai mosaic. The Transfiguration is found in one wall painting, that of the Church of St Mercurius (*Abu Seifein*) in Cairo that dates to the second half of the 12th century. The painting is not well preserved but shows Christ surrounded by a mandorla. The standing figures on either side of him are Moses and Elijah with whom he is conversing, while below them witnessing the scene are John, Peter and James who was seated and pointing towards Christ (Van Loon 1999: 81, pl. 32; Bolman 2002: figs 5.15, 5.20; Gabra and Eaton Krauss 2006: 247, fig. 154).



Fig. 14. Old Nubian Manuscript page from Qasr Ibrim. British Museum EA82963. (Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum).

The style of the Greek Serra manuscript resembles a second manuscript page that was found at Qasr Ibrim although the Qasr Ibrim manuscript seems more accomplished and less sketchy in execution [Fig. 14]. This manuscript, which is written in Old Nubian, features a man holding a book in the margin of the manuscript. His pointed hood resembles saints in Coptic art from the 13th century (Bolman 2002), but the way he is sitting and the colour of his robe is similar to the seated Virgin Mary from Dongola (Jakobielski 2004: 264, fig. 6; Scholz 2001: pl. XLVI.2). He is holding a book, which led Frend to suggest that he was a bishop (Frend 1969: 536), while Browne’s unpublished edition of the text mentions an archbishop and what the “archbishop said” (Browne 1991: 289, 291, fig. 1; Ruffini 2012: 221–222, fig. 8.1). The connections between the two manuscripts, combined with the find spots, strongly argue that this man-

uscript and the related Serra manuscript were produced in Nubia. It is similar to the St Menas manuscript in that the text and the illustration are clearly interacting with one another.

The last example of illustrated manuscript art in Nubia is what one might consider the least accomplished. Unlike the other examples, it survives on paper. It features a figure, who may be Christ, drawn with a wide brush in a very rough style. The other side of the paper features a variety of letters which primarily appear to be Greek script (Adams 2010: 239, pl. 47e–f). This may be a practice sketch, but one cannot help but think that Adams' assessment of the piece as being very poorly done to be somewhat unfair. Further, this does not prove, as he states, that the piece did not come from a manuscript (Adams 2010: 239). In Coptic Egyptian manuscripts similarly roughly done figures exist, such as in Hamouli manuscripts Pierpont Morgan Ms. 596 and Pierpont Morgan Ms. 611, but these seem to be less accomplished than the Ibrim example.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that there are many iconographic and stylistic connections between Coptic Egyptian art and manuscripts connected to Nubia, as well as important differences. It is perhaps surprising that there has not been as much attention focused on the illustrations in these manuscripts, but the emphasis has largely been on exploring them from a linguistic rather than artistic point of view. It was surprising to see how many manuscripts there were and how they were different from manuscripts from other parts of the Middle East even though some of them fit into wider trends in the art of the eastern Mediterranean. The manuscripts can be divided into two main types: those with a close connection to Christian Egyptian art but with a distinctive style, and those that are distinctively Nubian and can be connected to artistic trends in wall paintings. This suggests that the same artists may have been involved in the production of both manuscripts and wall paintings in Nubia or at least worked in the same artistic milieu. Serra East emerges as an important centre of manuscript consumption and possibly production. All of this demonstrates that Nubian art is more than just the spectacular wall paintings, pottery, and other objects that have been indicated, and new discoveries will doubtless add more evidence to this material.

ABBREVIATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCES

Apol. = *Apologeticus*

CSEL = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*

De Coel. Hierar. = *De Coelesti Hierarchia*

1En. = 1 (Ethiopic) *Book of Enoch*

2En. = 2 (Slavonic) *Book of Enoch*

3En. = 3 (Hebrew) *Book of Enoch*

Paed. = *The Paedagogus*

T. Abr. = Testament of Abraham

SECONDARY SOURCES

BAH = *Bibliothèque archéologique et historique*, Paris

BASP = *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, Ann Arbor

BMNV = *Bulletin du Musée Nationale de Varsovie*, Warsaw

CA = *Cahiers archéologiques: fin de l'Antiquité et Moyen Âge. Fondés par André Grabar et Jean Hubert*, Paris

Copt. Enc. = Aziz S. Atiya (ed.), 1991, *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. I–VII, New York: Macmillan

CRIPPEL = *Cahiers de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille*, Lille

CSEL = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*

CSCO = *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, Leipzig, Leuven

DACL = F. Cabrol, H. Leclercq (eds), *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, vols I–XV, Paris 1907–1953: Letouzey et Ané

DOP = *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Washington, New York

ECA = *Eastern Christian Art*, Online Paper

ÉtudTrav = *Études et Travaux*, Warsaw

GAMAR = *Gdańsk Archaeological Museum African Reports*, Gdańsk

JEA = *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, London

JJP = *Journal of Juristic Papyrology*, Warsaw

JTS = *Journal of Theological Studies*, Oxford

KuGN = E. Dinkler (ed.), 1970, *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in christlicher Zeit. Ergebnisse und Probleme auf Grund der jüngsten Ausgrabungen*, Recklinghausen: Aurel Bogers Verlag

LAAA = *University of Liverpool. Annals of the Archaeology and Anthropology*, Liverpool

PAM = *Polish Archeology in the Mediterranean*, Warsaw

PG = J. P. Migne (ed.), 1857–1866, *Patrologiae cursus completus: series graeca*. Paris

PIHANS = Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandaise de Stamboul

OLA = *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, Leuven

ZÄS = *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterumskunde*, Leipzig, Berlin

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