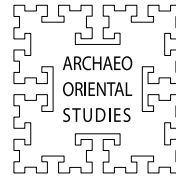




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***Textiles for the king – an investigation of costume and identity
in medieval Nubia***

Abstract

The discovery of the mural paintings in the Faras cathedral during the Nubian Campaign set the basis for studies of history and art of Christian Nubia. In his introduction to the catalogue of the Faras paintings in the collections of the National Museum, Warsaw (1974), Kazimierz Michałowski pointed out the iconographic features of the various categories of historical figures represented on the cathedral's walls: crowns appear as specific for kingship, horned crowns for eparchs and books for bishops. Yet, another particularly important visual marker of authority deserves to be added – the richly ornamented textiles in which the garments of monarchs and dignitaries were tailored. In this seminar, I will address the role of patterned textiles in the visual communication of royal authority in medieval Nubia. After a brief introduction to the sources and the methodological approach, I will present the typology of the royal costume and its evolution, and discuss how anomalies detected in that scheme bring to light new research perspectives for our understanding of the medieval Nubian society.