



**THE CROWN OF THE DIVINE CHILD IN THE MEROITIC  
KINGDOM.  
A TYPOLOGICAL STUDY<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT:** The crown of the divine child was one of the headdresses that transferred from Egypt to the Meroitic Kingdom. It was integrated in the Egyptian decoration program in the early Ptolemaic time. The first king of Meroe to use this crown in the decoration of the Lion Temple in Musawwarat es-Sufra was Arnekhamani (235–218 BCE). It also appeared later in the sanctuaries of his successors Arkamani II (218–200 BCE) and Adikhalamani (ca. 200–190 BCE) in Dakka and Debod. The Egyptians presented it as the headdress of child gods or the king. In the Kingdom of Meroe the crown was more like a tool to depict the fully legitimised king before he faced the main deity of the sanctuary.

To show this the Meroitic artists changed its iconography in such a way that the primarily Egyptian focus on the aspects of youth and rebirth withdrew into the background so that the elements of cosmic, royal and divine legitimacy became the centre of attention. Even if the usage and parts of the iconography were different, the overall meaning remained the same. It was a headdress that combined all elements of the cosmos as well as of royal and divine power.

**KEY WORDS:** Crowns – divine child – Meroitic culture – Dakka – Debod – Musawwarat es-Sufra

## **Introduction**

The beginning of the third century BCE witnessed a marked change in political relations between Egypt and its southern neighbour – Nubia (for a more specified overview of this topic see: Török 1997: 424-432; Welsby 1996: 66-67). After the retreat of the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty from Egypt in 664 BCE and the military confrontation in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE the two countries existed side by side without any significant influence

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on each other. This situation changed after the Ptolemaic Dynasty took over the Egyptian throne. During the period around the turn of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE many changes in the social, political and cultural spheres took place in both countries. In Nubia, this transition may be best documented by the transfer of the royal necropolis from the region of Jebel Barkal to the one of the southern capital of Meroe.

The new political environment contributed to an intensification of trade exchange between Egypt and the Kingdom of Meroe. Along the same lines, cultural and intellectual exchange was realized.

Adoption and adaptation of contemporary Egyptian iconography and religious concepts into the Meroitic sacral landscape were an important part of this new interconnection, for which the Lion Temple of Musawwarat es-Sufra may serve as an example. There the Meroitic builders integrated many iconographic features taken from Ptolemaic patterns in the depictions on the walls and columns of the sanctuary. Similarly many of the texts accompanying the depictions of either Egyptian or Meroitic gods were modelled on texts from (Upper) Egyptian temples (Hintze *et al.* 1977: 79ff).

1. The first example may be found on the third column, namely in the scene no. 3/2/3 of this temple (Fig.1), where King Arnekhmani (235–218 BCE) (the dating of the

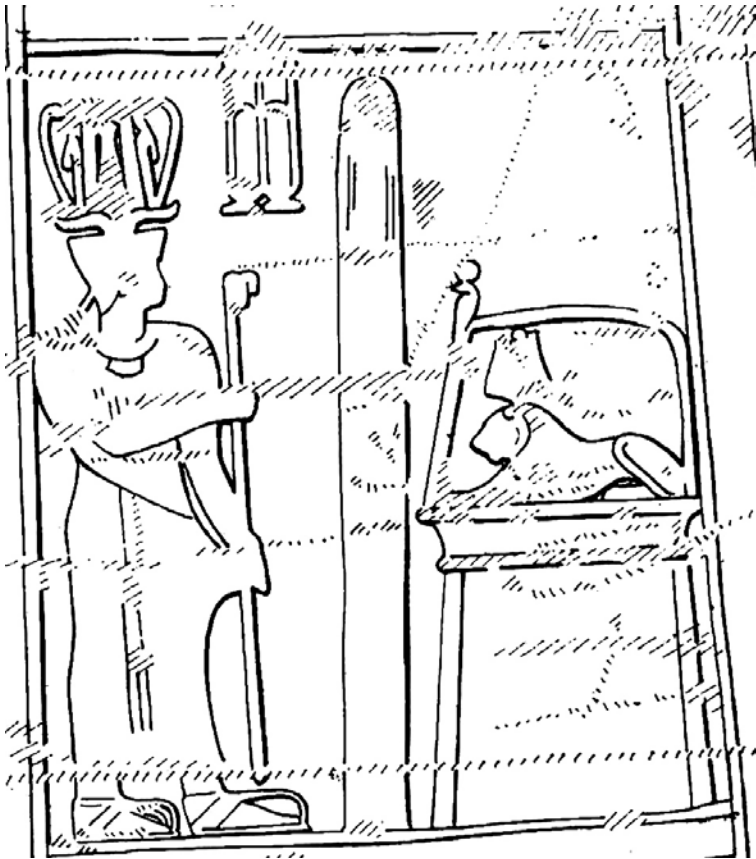


Fig.1 King Arnekhmani standing in front of the shrine of Apedemak;  
Lion Temple of Musawwarat es-Sufra, column scene 3/2/3 (from Hintze 1971: plate 85).

Kushite kings in this article follows Welsby 1996: 207-209), the builder of this sanctuary, is shown wearing a special type of crown. This significant headdress has often been mistaken for the “*Kapitellkrone*”. This headdress was named like this because it had a shape similar to the crowns on top of the heads of the Hathor capitals. Wenig thought that the depiction on the column from Musawwarat es-Sufra showed this crown (Hintze *et al.* 1993: 172). This is not convincing, because this specific headdress was only worn by female persons, not the king. Also the size of the bundle or white crown in the middle of this headdress is too big for the depiction of the “*Kapitellkrone*”. (Vassilika 1989: 323, FMV 17, FMV 18). It also has been confused with the *hemhem*-crown (Gamer-Wallert 1983: 113. The reference to Blackman is actually the crown of the divine child and not the *hemhem*-crown. Blackman 1911: pl. CX). Despite its unusual appearance and slightly changed iconography (see below) a more detailed analysis would lead us to the conclusion that it is an example of the “crown of the divine child” (Beinlich – Hallof 2007: 92). The king wears it in front of the temple shrine in which the creator-god Apedemak rests, in the form of a reclining lion. The depiction from Musawwarat es-Sufra is the oldest example of this crown known to us so far among the Meroitic iconographical material.

2. Another example of this headdress may be found in the “chapel” (Roeder called these structures chapels probably because he saw them only as parts of the whole building, although they were originally complete sanctuaries in themselves. Roeder 1930, Roeder 1911) of Arkamani II (218–200 BCE), a contemporary of Ptolemy IV Philopator (222–205 BCE) and Ptolemy V Epiphanes (205–180 BCE), at Dakka namely in the third register from the bottom of the inner southern wall on the left of the door to the roman inner sanctuary. There the king wears the crown while presenting Maat to Thoth of Pnubs and Tefnut (Fig. 2).
3. The last depiction that we know of to date comes from the chapel of Adikhalamani (ca. 200–190 BCE) in Debod (Fig. 3). It is located in the third register from the bottom of the inner western wall on the right side of the door to the main sanctuary. There the king wears it while presenting Maat to Amun of Debod.

Even though only three depictions of this crown survive from the Meroitic period, it is possible to determine its contextual function and the purpose of its integration into the cultic repertoire of the Meroitic temples because of its specific iconography and positioning within the decorative program.

### **Iconography, meaning and usage of the crown of the divine child in Egypt**

Before we can approach to the analysis and interpretation of the crown of the divine child in the Meroitic context it is necessary to mention the contemporaneous comparative evidence from Egypt. The crown first appeared during the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246–222 BCE) in Karnak. Three scenes are located at the gate of Euergetes (Clère 1961: pl. 7; pl. 8, pl. 42). Another one can be found at the Pylon gate of the Amun-Re-Montu complex at Karnak (Aufrère 2000: 144f). The oldest ones that are preserved in the temple of Edfu are from the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (222–205 BCE) (for example: Edfou II: pl. 15; pl. 16; pl. 18). From these locations its depictions in relief expanded south to Philae and the Dodekaschoinos. The oldest depictions in the temple of Philae are from



Fig. 2 King Arkamani II performing the offering of Maat in front of Thot of Pnubs and Tefnut;  
Temple of Dakke, "Chapel" of Arkamani II, inner southern wall, 3rd register, left scene  
(from Roeder 1930: plate 102).

the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–164 BCE and 163–145 BCE) (Vassilika 1989: 270). The oldest preserved examples in the Dodekaschoinos on the other hand are the ones from the reign of Arkamani II in Dakka and from the reign of Adikhalamani in Debod. One of the oldest Ptolemaic examples is located in the Temple of Dakka from the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170–163 BCE) (Roeder 1930: 103, pl. 43). Since the



Fig. 3 Kind Adikhalamani performing the offering of Maat in front of Amun of Debod; Temple of Debod, “Chapel” of Adikhalamani, inner western wall, 3rd register, right scene (from Roeder 1911: plate 25).

oldest examples of the crown of the divine child in Philae are from the reign of Ptolemy VI, the kings of Meroe might have taken their inspiration from Karnak or the temple of Edfu in the case of this headdress (for more on this see below).

The crown of the divine child consists of numerous elements, the number of which is shared with other composite crowns. The core of the crown of the divine child is formed by a bundle similar to that of the *atef* crown (Fig. 4). The bundle is flanked by two falcon feathers, while two *uraei* with lion’s heads emerge from a papyrus plant and two coils similar to those that protrude from the “chair-shaped” arrangement of the red crown. Numerous sun discs decorate the crown. They may be found in front and on top of the bundle (sometimes also in front of the two falcon feathers) and on top of the *uraei* incorporated into the crown. The body of the crown stands on top of two long wavy



Fig. 4 The child god Ihy wearing the crown of the divine child in Dendera, 1st western room (K), eastern wall (southern corner), 3rd register (from Dendara III: plate CCVI).

ram's horns (*Ovis longipes palaeoegyptiaca*) which rise from a trapeziform arrangement resembling the lower part of the red crown. In addition the crown is often decorated with a winged sun disc or a winged scarab placed in the centre of the bundle, as well as two cow horns wrapped around the sun disc in front of the bundle. Another element that regularly appeared is a staff or a disc (Beinlich – Hallof 2007: 91) between the ram's horns and the trapeziform lower part of the crown. This element did not appear in Philae and the Dodekaschoinos before the late Ptolemaic period. In the majority of the scenes the wearer also had the side lock over his ear. Variations on and additions to this "basic type" are also to be found in various Egyptian temple scenes. In Philae, for example, there are variations that are particularly concise on the Upper Egyptian part of the crown (see below). Instead of the bundle they have a white crown as the core

element. These types also do not have the wires from the Lower Egyptian red crown in them (Vassilika 1989: 309, TUC 1-4). Because there is no evidence that they made their way into the Meroitic iconography, these types will not be further described here.

In Egypt the crown of the divine child was, with some exceptions (Beinlich; Hallof 2007: 91-92), worn by either child gods or the king. As already mentioned, the king often had the side lock over his ear in combination with this composite crown. This leads us to the conclusion that he represented the divine successor in these scenes. By wearing this headdress he was taking the position of the future ruler of the cosmos who was not completely enthroned at this time. However, they had already presented him with all the necessary elements allowing him to claim the throne from his divine predecessor. These features were presented through the parts of the crown of the divine child. With the exception of the ostrich feathers, all the main parts of the most important crown types were combined in this headdress. The twines and the trapeziform lower part were taken from the red crown, which was the headdress of Lower Egypt. The white crown of Upper Egypt is an inherent part of the bundle. This is because the outline of the white crown is quite similar to the one of the bundle from the *atef* crown - the bundle overlaps the white crown. The white crown was only placed in front of the bundle if a specific depiction had a special focus on the Upper Egyptian part (the white feather crown is an example of this, Vassilika 1989: 300-301). The sphere of heaven was represented by the falcon feathers, and the underworld, as well as the earth, by the bundle. The eastern and western horizons were represented by the *uraei* with lions' heads, and in combination with the sun discs on their heads they also represented the rising and setting sun. The other sun discs were representations of the sun god himself.

There are several other ways in which we may interpret the single elements of this crown in addition the cosmological interpretation, but it would be too much for this article to examine them all in detail.

## **The crown of the divine child in the decorative program of the temples in Egypt**

We have already seen that either child gods or somebody who was depicted in the position of a child god wore the crown of the divine child. The king was pictured with it around eight times more often than the child gods in Egyptian temples (the statistical analysis can be found in: Beinlich – Hallof 2007: 92). In Meroitic presentations, without exception, only the king appeared with the crown of the divine child on his head. We will thus examine only the scenes where the king wears this headdress.

### **I. The offerings**

The rituals most frequently performed by the king while wearing the crown of the divine child were the offering of Maat (for example: Edfou VII: 194, pl. 172; Dendara II: pl. XCIV; Aufrère 2000: 145, pl. 19 and 20) the offering of headgear (for example: Edfou IX: pl. CVI; Edfou IX: pl. CVII), the offering of kingship (for example: Dendara III: pl. CCIV), the offering of myrrh (for example: Edfou II: pl. XV; Dendara XI: pl. 98), the offering of food (for example: Edfou X: pl. CXIX; Dendara VII: pl. DCV) and the playing of the sistrum (for example: Dendara III: pl. CCXIX). There seems to be no direct relation to a special group of offerings that made it necessary to wear this specific headdress. The fact that the king was performing in the position of a child god, however, could

have had an influence on the type of offering that he was presenting. An example of a headdress which could have such an influence would be the *atef*-crown on top of the red crown (Beinlich – Hallof 2007: 92). The playing of the sistrum, for example, was a performance normally carried out by divine children. It is thus no surprise that the king would perform this action while wearing the crown of the divine child, but it was also possible that he did wear other headdresses, such as the *Hemhem*-crown, in this context.

## II. The deities

In the majority of the scenes where the king wore the crown of the divine child he was presenting offerings to the main deities of the temple. This was especially the case in the temples of Dendera and Edfu. Here in over 80% of the scenes (in Edfu 94 scenes and in Dendera 108 scenes are preserved) in which the king wears the crown of the divine child he is presenting offerings in front of Hathor of Dendera and/or Horus of Edfu. In Philae the king is performing offerings in front of Isis and/or Osiris in 6 of the 17 preserved scenes. The huge difference in the number of the scenes with the crown of the divine child between these temples might explain this situation. In these depictions the king is portrayed as the divine successor of the main deities from the particular temples who is presenting offerings in front of his divine predecessors.

The king could also wear the crown of the divine child in front of child gods (for example: Philae II: 176; Dendara XI: pl. 98). In these scenes the depicted deity had a direct influence on the crown of the king. Because the sovereign approached in front of divine children he wore a crown that had a direct relation to the particular deities.

There were several other gods in front of which the king could wear the crown of the divine child. Because these scenes form only a small part of the complete corpus they will not be described here.

## III. The position in the cultic context

The king wears the crown of the divine child in various parts of the temples, with the exception of the main sanctuaries. There is no clear evidence of a special position of this crown in the decoration program of the temples in Ptolemaic or Roman Egypt. It could be used beside other crowns to depict the king as a divine child, but it was not necessary to use this special crown in a specific context. Another crown which often appeared as a headdress for divine children was the *Hemhem*-crown. This headdress was often displayed with the crown of the divine child in the counterpart scene on the opposite wall of a room unit (for example: Edfou II: pl. XXXV; Dendara VII: pl. DCVI; pl. DCV; Dendara VII: pl. DCXLV). Both crowns seemed to be exchangeable in the cultic course. This means that the crown of the divine child would have been more important for the specific characterisation of the person who wore it. Because this headdress combined the elements of cosmic, divine and royal power, the iconography of the crown of the divine child pictured its wearer as the all-powerful ruler of the cosmos.

## The iconography of the Meroitic depictions

For the most part the iconography of the crown of the divine child is fairly similar to the one of Ptolemaic Egypt. In particular, the depictions from Dakka and Debod, where Egyptians worked under Meroitic authority, are almost like the ones from Egypt. Beside the many similarities, however, there is one important difference between the Egyptian and Meroitic depictions.



Instead of the side lock over his ear, the scenes from Dakka and Debod picture the king with the Amun horn. This seems strange because the main focus of the crown of the divine child in Egypt was to present the wearer as the divine successor. With the integration of the Amun horn instead of the side lock in the scenes the main focus of the crown seems to have changed from an attribute of the divine successor to a representation of the legitimate king who was chosen by Amun (more on this below).

The bad state of preservation of the scene from the Lion Temple of Musawwarat es-Sufra makes it impossible to decide if the king had a side lock, the Amun horn or nothing at all over his ear. Despite this, the depiction is different in another way in comparison to the Egyptian iconography. In this scene the *uraei* with lion's heads and the papyrus plants were replaced by two *was*-signs. With the integration of this divine attribute (Gardiner 1950: 12) the focus of the crown shifted even more from a headdress that represents its wearer as a divine child to one that represents divine power. It seems that the meaning of the crown changed from a crown of the divine child to a crown of the cosmic ruler who is already the legitimated and enthroned sovereign of the world.

Neither in Philae nor in the rest of the Dodekaschoinos are any surviving depictions of the crown of the divine child known before or at the same time as the Meroitic ones from Dakka, Debod and Musawwarat es-Sufra. It was during the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–164 BCE and 163–145 BCE) that this crown was used for the first time at Philae (Vassilika 1989: 270). Older depictions can only be located in Edfu (Edfou II: pl. 15; pl. 16; pl. 18) and Karnak (Clère 1961: pl. 7; pl. 8, pl. 42; Aufrère 2000: 144f). The iconography of the crown of the divine child was slightly different in these areas; the majority of the depictions had the already-mentioned disc or staff between the lower part and the ram's horns. This element did not appear in any of the Meroitic scenes (the oldest example of this iconographic element in Philae is from the time of Ptolemy XII (80–51 BCE); Philae I: pl. 3). The crown of the divine child might have already been part of the decorative canon in Philae, but just not used in the decoration of the temple before the time of Ptolemy VI Philometor, but there is no evidence to prove this. We must therefore suggest that the crown was taken over from Edfu or Karnak. It was probably just a coincidence that because of the transfer the staff or disc was not depicted in the Meroitic scenes.

## The cultic context of the scenes

The scenes with the depictions of the crown of the divine child from Dakka and Debod were integrated into the typical Egyptian cultic course. This is not surprising, given that these temples were built and decorated by Egyptians under Meroitic authority (Török suggested that the crown of the divine child in Dakka was only used by Arkamani II because he merely took over the decoration of Ptolemy IV. Török 1987: 16). In both scenes the king presents Maat to the main deity of the sanctuary which is Thoth of Pnubs in Dakka (Fig. 2) and Amun of Debod in Debod (Fig. 3). He is dressed in a typical Egyptian skirt in Debod and in a double skirt in Dakka (for a more detailed descriptions of the scenes see Roeder 1911: 69-70, §193-195; Roeder 1930: 253-255, §563-566). The texts are also quite similar (Roeder 1911: 69; Roeder 1930: 253-255).

The only major difference between these scenes is that Thoth of Pnubs is accompanied by Tefnut, while Amun of Debod does not have any companion. This might be because of the smaller door frame in Debod, which left no space for another deity behind Amun.

The cultic course in the scenes of both temples is also fairly similar. The front of the temple of Debod is today mostly destroyed, but the remaining scenes are not much different from the ones in Dakka (Roeder 1911: 48, §125-128, pl. 6, pl. 10b). Before he entered the temple the king presented several offerings to the main deities of the sanctuary and the most important gods and goddesses from the area of the first cataract and Upper Nubia (Roeder 1930: 173, fig. 22). The cultic course continued with the coronation of the king in Dakka (Roeder 1911: pl. 95a) and a purification scene in Debod (Roeder 1930: 203, fig. 25; a similar purification scene can be found in Kawa Temple B; Macadam 1955: pl. VI). In the next two scenes the king faced Hathor and Isis in both temples (Roeder 1911: pl. 16; Roeder 1930: 216, fig. 27). All these scenes at the outer and inner side of the entrance can be summarised as performances which allowed the king to enter the temple building. He needed to restore order outside the temple first before he could confront the main deities of the temple and the area to obtain their allowance so that he could enter the building.

In the next scene the king handed over the temple to the main deity of the sanctuary (Roeder 1911: pl. 16; Roeder 1930: 216, fig. 27). The cultic course continued with a sequence of scenes where the king performed several rituals and presented different offerings to the gods so that he could obtain their legitimation to become ruler of the cosmos. With this power he could keep the world in balance (Roeder 1911: pl. 96/98; Roeder 1930: 216, fig. 27; 256, fig. 28).

The end of the cultic course in both temples was marked by two scenes on the left and the right side of the door to the later attached sanctuaries in the third register from the bottom. The first scene is slightly different in Dakka and Debod. In Dakka the king presents two pieces of clothing to Osiris, who is accompanied by Isis. The king is wearing the *hemhem*-crown in this scene (Roeder 1930: pl. 95). In Debod he plays the sistrum in front of Isis. In this scene he was depicted with a combination of the falcon feather crown and the ostrich feather crown on top of his head (Roeder 1911: pl. 27). The similarity between both scenes is that the king was performing an offering for, or at least in the presence of, the most important deity of the area, Isis.

The cultic course finally ends with a scene where the king wears the crown of the divine child. The fact that the scene in Dakka is on the left side of the wall and the one in Debod on the right side might be a mistake by the artists. Because Dakka is a double sanctuary for Thoth of Pnubs and Isis, both deities were assigned to one side of the temple. Thoth of Pnubs was assigned to the left side of the temple and Isis to the right side, which is why the scenes in the end were turned around. Normally the offering scene with Thoth and Tefnut should be on the right side and the one with Isis and Osiris on the left side, as in Debod (Roeder 1930: 236–238, §525–§528). Nevertheless the crown of the divine child was part of the last scene before the cult reached the main sanctuary area in both temples.

The depiction which includes the crown of the divine child in the Lion Temple of Musawwarat es-Sufra (Fig. 1) is also the last one in front of the main sanctuary area. Because this temple has only one room, this area is the altar itself. The structure of the scene, as well as the cultic course of the temple, is on the other hand different from Dakka and Debod. In the Lion temple of Musawwarat es-Sufra the king wears the Meroitic state robe (Hintze *et al.* 1993: 118) while he holds the snake staff with both hands in front of his body. He is standing in front of the altar of the temple, on which a lion with a *hemhem*-crown on his head lies. This lion was most likely an image of

Apedemak, the main deity of this temple. Between the king and the altar stands some kind of structure with a rounded upper part. This probably portrays a closed shrine.

The cultic course (for a reconstruction of the possible cultic course: Hintze *et al.* 1993: 149-154) started at the outer side of the pylon, where Arensnuphis on the right side of the door and Sebiemeker on the left side of the door were depicted. The pylon was destroyed by water in ancient times and only a few decorated blocks have been discovered, but the excavators have been able to reconstruct the scene at least in part (Hintze *et al.* 1993: plan 11a, 11b). Both deities were accompanied by a goddess. As guardians of the temple (for a detailed view of this topic: Wenig 1974) they were protecting the building from the chaos which tried to enter the sanctuary. Arensnuphis stood on top of a tied up crocodile and Sebiemeker on top of a tied up lion. This symbolised the victory of these deities over the elements that tried to put the world out of balance. The cultic course inside the temple continued with several scenes where the king greeted various important Meroitic deities, namely Apedemak, the main god of the temple, different forms of Amun, the most important deity of the county, Sebiemeker, the main god of Musawwarat es-Sufra, as well as other important gods and goddesses. At the end the king confronts his royal predecessor (Hintze 1971: pl. 89, scene 4/2/3; Hintze *et al.* 1993: 120-121) before becoming the fully legitimate king in the final scene. The crown of the divine child, in combination with the other royal insignia, indicated that he had finally reached and earned this status. This headdress was the final combination of the complete legitimization process.

### **The meaning of the crown of the divine child in the Kingdom of Meroe**

As has already been pointed out in the previous chapters, the crown of the divine child was used differently in the Kingdom of Meroe from in Egypt. It did not present its wearer as a divine child who had already united the complete cosmic and the royal and divine power in himself. It was used to show the fully legitimated king in front of the main deity of the temple in the final scene of the cultic course. The complete power that he had gained was combined in this crown. He was the one who had the legitimacy to confront the image of the deity in the main sanctuary. Instead of being presented as a divine child, he was shown as the completely legitimated and enthroned ruler of the cosmos. The side lock which defined the crown of the divine child as the crown of a child god was replaced by the Amun horn to specify that he was the chosen one of Amun, the most important deity in the Kingdom of Meroe. In Musawwarat es-Sufra even the *uraei* with lion's heads were swapped for two *was*-signs in order to add a more specific element of divine power to this crown, which the king gained through the legitimization progress from the gods.

In the Kingdom of Meroe the crown of the divine child had a definite position in the final scene of the cultic course of the temples. It was used to depict the king at the end of the legitimization process. It indicated that the king combined the cosmic, royal and divine power in himself and it was used to show that he was now allowed to enter the main sanctuary of the temple to perform offerings in front of the main deity.

### **The crown of the divine child after the early Meroitic time**

So far there no depictions of the crown of the divine child have been found which were made after the one from the temple of Debod. This might be because the scenes from the upper registers at the entrances to the sanctuaries from later Meroitic multi-

room temples have not been preserved. The same goes for the column scenes of the single room temples in front of the altar. Because of this it is not possible to definitely say that the crown of the divine child was used in the decoration of any temple after the reign of Adikhalamani.

There are nevertheless some clues that the crown was at least still a part of the Meroitic decoration canon in later times, even if it might not have been used in the depictions of the sanctuaries any more. It is possible that two iconographic elements from the crown of the divine child might have been later used in the *hemhem*-crown.

During the early Meroitic time the *hemhem*-crown on the head of the king was depicted either with the *nemes* headdress (for example: Roeder 1930: pl. 72; Roeder 1911: pl. 18) or the Kushite cap (Hintze 1971: pl. 21). With the beginning of the first century BCE the majority of the depictions of the *hemhem*-crown were combined with the trapeziform lower part. Combinations of the Kushite Cap with the *hemhem*-crown also still existed. An example of this can be found on the stele of queen Amanishakheto (10–1 BCE) from the sanctuary of the Amun temple in Naga (Kroeper – Schoske – Wildung 2011: fig. 37). There are no depictions with a combination of the *hemhem*-crown and the *nemes* headdress preserved which are dated later than the ones from the temple of Debod. The *hemhem*-crown on top of the trapeziform lower part was also used in Egypt (for example: Dendara VII: pl. 594) which means that this combination could have been taken over by the Meroitic Kingdom from there. The problem is that the *hemhem*-crown was normally presented with the *nemes*-headdress in the majority of the Egyptian scenes. The combination with the trapeziform lower part was not used very often. In many temples of the Kingdom of Meroe, on the other hand, the depictions with the trapeziform lower part became the standard. This is, for example, the case in the Lion Temple (Fig. 5) and the Amun Temple of Naga. Both temples were built under king Natakamani (1–20 AD). Because of this it might be possible that this combination was taken over from the similar-looking crown of the divine child.

Another part which might have been transferred from the crown of the divine child to the *hemhem*-crown was the winged sun disc. In several depictions from the Lion temple of Naga (Fig. 5) and the Amun temple of the same place the *hemhem*-crown was depicted with a winged sun disc or winged scarab in front of the bundles. Variations of the *hemhem*-crown with a similar-looking vulture in its centre are verified in Egypt, but they were also not used very often (for example: Dendara IX: pl. DCCCC; Dendara IV: pl. CCLXXIV; Edfou IX: pl. LXXXVIII). Not one of these combinations has been verified in Philae or in any other temple of the Dodekaschoinos, the most direct connection point between the Meroitic and Egyptian culture. This means that the trapeziform lower part and the winged sun discs or winged scarabs were probably taken over from the crown of the divine child.

## Conclusion

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE many religious texts, characteristics of deities and iconographic elements were transferred from Ptolemaic Egypt to the Kingdom of Meroe. Some of them were not altered in any way and were just integrated into the existing context. Others were brought into line with the local traditions and the cultic course of the sanctuaries. One of these iconographic elements was the crown of the divine child. During the transition process the overall meaning of the headdress was

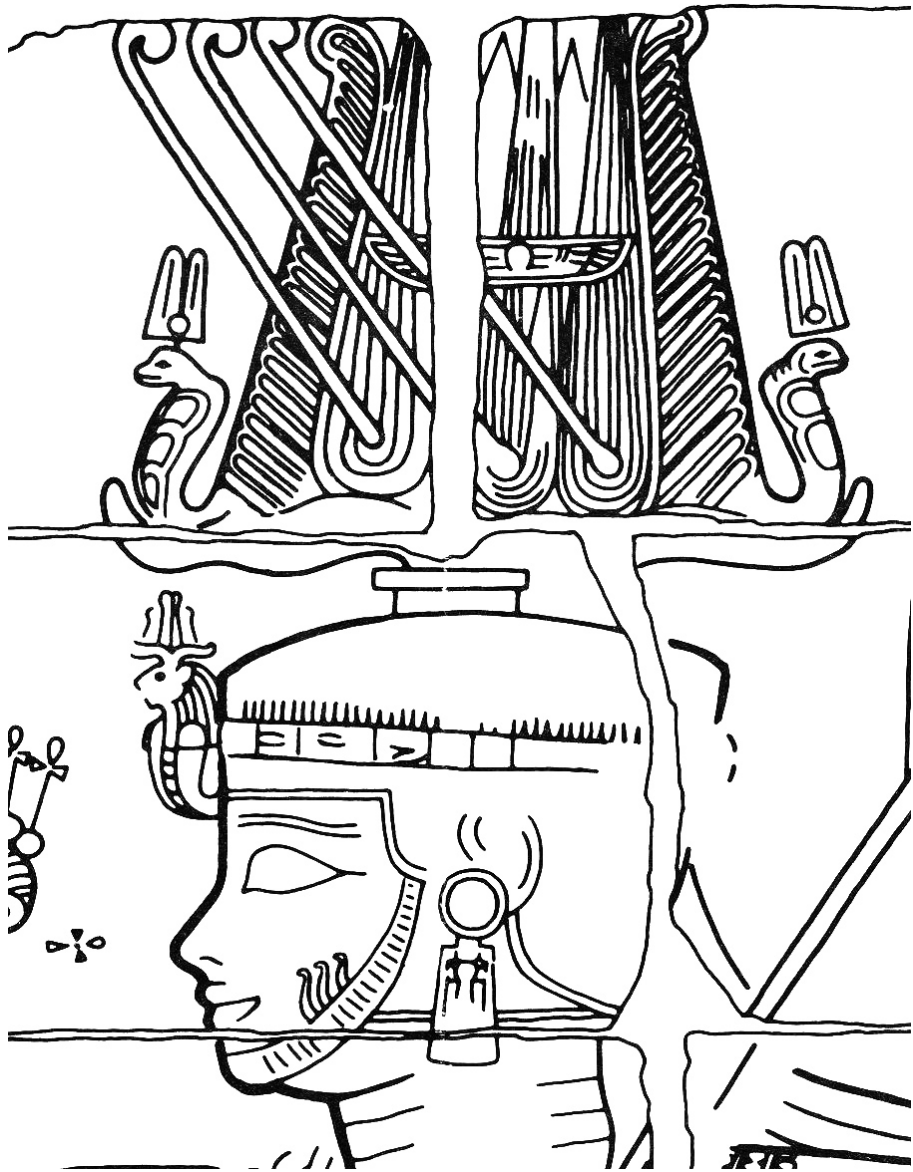


Fig. 5 King Natakamani with the hem-Hem-crown on top of his head; Lion Temple of Naga, outer western wall (from Gamer-Wallert 1983: Bl. 7).

not altered at all. The crown still contained all the cosmic elements and depicted its wearer as the successor of the gods of heaven, earth and the underworld.

Its use in scenes and the cultic course, on the other hand, was different in the Kingdom of Meroe from in Egypt. The person who wore this headdress was the young, not yet enthroned successor of the gods in Egypt. This was the case because normally divine children and especially the king with the side lock over his ear wore this crown in the scenes of the temples.

In the Meroitic depictions the king was presented as the fully legitimated and grown up ruler of the cosmos. He gained this position during the cultic course of the temples. This explains the exchange of the side lock with the Amun horns and the replacing of the *uraei* with lion's heads with the *was*-signs in Musawwarat es-Sufra.

The scenes were placed in a specific position inside the Meroitic decorative program. The majority of the depictions in Egypt had no specific position inside the cultic course of the temples. There also existed the possibility of exchanging it with another similar headdress like the *hemhem*-crown. The crown of the divine child was used to specify the function of the child god or the king in particular scenes. Its placement was not necessary for the composition and the cultic course in general. The scenes in the Meroitic temples, on the other hand, marked the most important point in the cultic course. There it was impossible to replace the crown with another one. This headdress indicated that the king was allowed to enter the main sanctuary area and to confront the main deity of the temple. It is meant to distinguish the king in this scene from his presentations in the earlier parts of the cultic course.

It is not clear if the crown was still used in later times, because the scenes where it would be expected are not preserved in any other Meroitic temple. It seems that at least some elements of it were integrated in the *hemhem*-crown. The winged sun disc or scarab and the trapeziform lower part were most likely transferred to this headdress.

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