



ALEXEY K. VINOGRADOV

THE INSTALLATION OF KING IRIKEAMANNOTE: THE WARRIORS' WISH VS. AMUN'S DIVINE WILL¹

The enthronement accounts in the surviving royal annals of Kush differ so considerably that it would seem rather doubtful that any general pattern of the enthronement procedure ever existed in Ancient Sudan. It would appear more likely that the course of actions was each time determined by the concrete political situation in the kingdom.

The most detailed record of the enthronement procedure survives on the so-called "Election stela", presumably of king Aspetla (c. 592-568 B.C.E.), in the text of which a number of stages are discernible:

- a) upon the decease of a certain Kushite king (apparently Anlamani, c. 623-593) a plenary meeting of the "Host of His Majesty" took place (line 2);
- b) this *military assembly*, in which twenty-five highest officials, both military and civil, took part, urged that a new ruler should be "raised" to office (lines 2-5);
- c) due to the indecision of the gathering, the matter, by common consent, was eventually presented to the judgement of Amun of Napata, the main god of the kingdom (lines 5-14);
- d) the new king was elected from among a number of contenders (called "King's Brethren") by means of Amun's oracle, somehow consulted, in the presence of the highest dignitaries as witnesses, in the main sanctuary of Kush (lines 14-23);
- e) the elect's legal (genealogical) rights to the royal office were proclaimed (allegedly by the god Amun himself) in public (lines 19-21);
- f) the elect conversed with (some representation of ?) Amun, in private, in a secluded part of the temple and took some of the royal regalia (crowns and ceremonial staff of his predecessor) placed there (lines 22-24);
- g) the elect offered up a prayer to Amun-Re^c (lines 25-27);
- h) the elect "came out <...> into the midst of the Host of His Majesty", as if to get a ceremonious legitimation of his accession (lines 28-29);
- i) the newly-elected king established festivals to celebrate his assumption of rule (lines 29-30).

An important feature of the procedure recorded in the "Election stela" (*Var. 1*) is the fact that the future king, and the other potential claimants to the throne evidently too, seem from the very beginning to have been *among the participants of the ceremony*. Yet, as reported by some other sources at our disposal, the course of actions could be totally different when *an absent person was elected* as the new king. The events could develop in either of the two following ways:

Var. 2-a: One of the potential candidates, elected (or at least "nominated") *in absentia*, is *summoned to (the temple of?) Amun of Napata, to assume royal investiture*. Such a situation is presented in the stela of Nastasen (c. 325-310) and apparently in the stela of Harsiotef (c. 404-368).

Var. 2-b: The future king was elected *in absentia* and *was informed about it by a great mass of people arriving at his place*. An example of this kind, as suggested in a recent study,² appears to be described in the "Dream stela" of king Tanutamun (c. 664-656).

Another version of the latter kind seems to be recorded in the "Great Inscription" (= Kawa IX) of king Irikeamannot (c. 431-405) in Temple T in Gematen, discovered by F.Ll. Griffith's expedition in 1931 and published by M.F.L. Macadam in 1949.³ The important feature of this case is the fact that, just like in Aspetla's times, one of the main participants of the enthronement procedure was the "Host of His Majesty".

The record of Irikeamannot's accession is in fact much more complicated than it might seem at first sight, so a number of comments are obviously needed to help one get a better understanding of this interesting piece of evidence.

¹ I am very much indebted to Dr Jaromír Málek, Keeper of the Archive in the Griffith Institute, Oxford, for the permission to make use of all relevant material from the archive of the *Oxford Excavations in Nubia* project.

² A.K. Vinogradov, 'The Puzzles of the Dream Stele', *Beiträge zur Sudanforschung*, Bd. 9 (Wien, 2006), SS. 119-15.

³ M.F.L. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, Vol. I: *The Inscriptions*; Plates (London, 1949), pls. 17-21 (photographs), 22-26 (hand-copy).



To proceed from the editor's rendering, which has for half a century determined the interpretation of Kawa IX,⁴ the following three statements are of key importance for the understanding of the whole account in general.

a) The declaration of the warriors: "Our desire is to present to him the throne [of this land]" (col. 10). Unprecedented in its directness, it seems to establish beyond any doubt that the "Host of His Majesty" played the decisive role in the enthronement of Irikeamannoté.

b) The continuation of the foregoing phrase, also uttered by the "army": "His father [Amun] appointed him [while in the] womb [of] his [mother] <...>" (col. 10). The statement thus understood, it could be assumed that Irikeamannoté had some special (genealogical?) right to the throne.

c) And finally, Irikeamannoté's own, very intriguing, allusion to the "goodly wonder which my father [Amun] performed for me [in] the ... month of winter, day 19, (the day) of my appearance as King" (col. 21). The interpretation of these words is extremely problematic, because the very beginning of the phrase seems to have been mistakenly omitted by the scribe (or carver?).⁵ Searching for a better understanding Macadam recalled that accession to the throne is similarly regarded as a "wonder" in a text of Taharqa, a much earlier king of Kush,⁶ and not unreasonably assumed: "When Aman-Nete-yerike refers to a wonder done for him by Amun, it is not difficult to guess that his accession is likewise being referred to".⁷

On closer consideration it is not difficult to notice that these three statements – if taken as Macadam proposes – strangely enough, do not quite agree with each other. Moreover, the last two are difficult to understand in the overall context of the narrative presented in Kawa IX.

1) Some ambiguity is brought about, for instance, by the "army's" statement that Irikeamannoté had been "appointed while in the womb of his mother". Logically, such a reference could sound convincing only if that fact had been *well known prior* to his enthronement. But is not it strange then that after the decease of the previous king – and the more so, in the

time of the invasion of the "rebellious" neighbours – the country appeared as if having no ruler at all? Why did not the heir proceed to the throne automatically and *immediately*? Should we consider this statement as merely *topical*?

2) If Irikeamannoté had been "appointed" to be king, and if it was a well known fact (cf. above), it is difficult to understand why he – or may be rather the writer of the account? – later referred to his own enthronement as a "goodly *WONDER*" made for him by the god Amun? Why did not he consider it to be merely implementing what had long been ordered by the chief Kushite god?

3) But the main problem lies of course in the fact that the date of the day when the mentioned "goodly wonder" happened does not agree with that one which stands at the very beginning of the inscription and seems to refer to the day on which all of the described events took place (or at least started). In accordance with Macadam's reconstruction, the wonder had been performed long (at least 66 days)⁸ *before* the moment when Irikeamannoté was nominated by the "Host of His Majesty".

This contradiction is fairly obvious and of course Macadam could not be blind to it. Trying to explain the paradox, he put forward a hypothesis that Irikeamannoté had actually come to power already in the reign of his predecessor Talakhamani and, consequently, for a certain period of time was the latter's coregent.⁹

The hypothesis about Irikeamannoté's joint rule with the previous king has already been touched upon by the present writer in a comparatively recent discussion.¹⁰ As it was pointed out, the generally

4 The only other translation (though also depending on Macadam's) to appear since is that by R.H. Pierce in: *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum*, Vol. II (Bergen, 1996), pp. 400-420, with comments by L. Török, pp. 420-428.

5 See M.F.L. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, Vol. I: *The Inscriptions*; Text (London, 1949), p. 55, n. 37.

6 Kawa VI, col. 23 (Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, pls. 11-12).

7 Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, p. 55, n. 38.

8 A *five months'* period of possible coregency between Irikeamannoté and Talakhamani is supposed in some studies (I. Hofmann, *Studien zum meroitischem Königtum* (Bruxelles, 1971), 12, 30; L. Török, *Der meroitische Staat*. 1 (*Meroitica* 9; Berlin, 1986), SS. 35 (§ 21), 199 (f), which implies the *maximal* span of time between both events, reconstructable on the basis of Macadam's (very arguable) hypothesis. A curious view that the "wonder" may have been performed "c. circa 2 to 6 (so! - A. V.) months before Talakhamani's death", brought forward by Török in his commentary on the recent translation of Kawa IX by Pierce (*Fontes*, Vol. II, p. 423), is still less acceptable.

9 Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, p. 55, n. 38: "This passage may therefore be made to yield the historical information that a few months before he died Talakhamani associated his brother (?) Aman-Nete-yerike with him"; cf., 57, n. 59.

10 A. K. Vinogradov, *Politicheskaya organizatsiya obshchestva Kusha v VIII-III vekakh do n. e.* (Cand. Hist. Sc. Dissertation; Institute of Oriental Studies; Moscow, 1983), pp. 56-63; id., 'O predpolagayemom sopravlenii Amanneteyerike i Talakhamani', *Meroe* 4 (Moscow, 1989), pp. 64-72; id., 'On the supposed coregency of Irikeaman-



accepted interpretation of the former king's allusion to the "goodly wonder" is not only connected with some logical and factual difficulties but looks rather suspicious from a philological prospective as well.

A turning point in the study was the writer's recent find in the Archive of the Griffith Institute of some "new" copies of Irikeamannot's inscription: the squeezes taken by Griffith's expedition at Kawa in 1931 and the tracing prepared from them afterwards.¹¹ The intriguing reference to the "goodly wonder" in col. 21 of Kawa IX has already been revisited lately, in light of the newly recovered Griffith Institute copies, in a paper of the writer in the *MittSAG* 19.¹² The present study will be focused on the other two statements, both in col. 10, regarding Irikeamannot's accession (Fig. 1: a), since their revision has also provided some important new food for thought.

A re-examination of the lower part of col. 10, containing the warriors' remark that Irikeamannot's becoming king was pre-destined, proved to be rather surprising. The damaged phrase is presented in Macadam's hand-copy as:



restored by him¹³ as:



and translated as:

"His father [Amun] appointed him [while in the womb of] his [mother], the son of Re^c, [Aman-Neteyrike,] (11) may he live for ever".¹⁴

No proofs for this rendering of the text were presented, the editor's concise comment being confined to the reconstruction of the hieroglyphic text itself, as if that reading was to be taken for granted. It can hardly be admitted however, that

everything is quite clear in this statement. Firstly, the very meaning of the declaration remains somewhat obscure.

Judging by the examples at our disposal the idea that a certain king's coming to power was – before his birth – anticipated by the god Amun certainly was an element of the Kushite concept of kingship. It does not seem to have been originally a native postulate, however, for it contradicts the principle of *electivity*, a basic feature of the royal office in Ancient Sudan. One should rather consider it, together with many other religious and political concepts, as a borrowing from Egypt, perhaps even adapted for local circumstances since the Kushite examples reveal an important difference from the Egyptian prototype. We can find in them statements that Amun "(fore)knew" (𓂏𓂐),¹⁵ "(fore)saw" (𓂏𓂐)¹⁶ or – at the most – "had spoken concerning" (𓂏𓂐 <...> 𓂏)¹⁷ a certain king in advance. Unlike Egypt¹⁸ however, no claim to Amun's having *appointed* (which implies a much more vigorous act) any of the rulers "while in the mother's womb" has so far been attested in Kush.¹⁹ And it would be all the more strange to find such a revelation in Kawa IX with its emphasis upon the king's election by the "Host of His Majesty".

note with Talakhamani', *Sesto Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia, Atti*, Vol. 1, ([Turin], 1992), pp. 635-641; id., 'Vozvysheniye tsarya Irikeamannot', *Vestnik Drevney Istorii*, № 4 / 2004 (Moscow), pp. 108-127.

11 For the discussion of the textological problems of the study of Irikeamannot's inscription see: A. K. Vinogradov, 'In Search of Kawa IX' in: D. A. Welsby (ed.) *Recent Research in Kushite History and Archaeology, Proceedings of the 8th International Conference for Meroitic Studies* (British Museum Occasional Paper No. 131; London, 1999), pp. 305-311.

12 A.K. Vinogradov, 'Revising the Enthronement Account of Irikeamannot', *Mitteilungen der Sudanarchäologischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, Heft 19 (Berlin, 2008), SS. 105-109.

13 Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, p. 54, n. 24.

14 Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, p. 51.

15 Granite obelisk of Senkamanisken from the Amun Temple at Gebel Barkal (D. Dunham, *The Barkal Temples* (Boston, 1970), pp. 32-33, no. 19 (16-4-33), fig. 29, left outer column); cf., two monuments of Pi'ankhy of the same provenance: "Sandstone stela", lunette, cols. 1-2 (G. A. Reisner, 'Inscribed Monuments from Gebel Barkal', *ZÄS*, Bd. 66 (1931), pl. V) and "Triumphal stela", lines 1-2 (N.-C. Grimal, *La stèle triomphale de Pi('ankhy) au Musée du Caire JE 48862 et 47086-74089* (Études sur la propagande royale égyptienne, I; le Caire, 1981), pl. V).

16 Stela of Anlamani from Temple T in Gematen (Kawa VIII), line 5 (Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, I, pls. 15-16).

17 Pi'ankhy's "Sandstone stela", lunette, cols. 2-3 (Reisner, 'Inscribed Monuments', pl. V).

18 E. g., R. A. Caminos, *The New-Kingdom Temples of Buhen*, Vol. I (London, 1974), pls. 60-61, lines 3-4; *Urk.* IV, 244, 7-9; 568, 7; *KRI* II, 197, 10 and 11; cf. 327, 13; *Urk.* II, 34, 10-12. Cf., *Pyr.* 779; Merikare^c E 135-136 (W. Golénischeff, *Les papyrus hiératiques N° 1115, 1116 A et 1116 B de l'Ermitage Impérial à St Pétersbourg* (St-Pétersbourg, 1913), p. 14, pl. XIV); Sinuhe B 67-68 (~ R 92-93); Perhaps also F. Ll. Griffith, 'The Abydos Decree of Seti I at Nauri', *JEA*, Vol. 13 (1927), pl. 40, line 4.

19 "Triumphal stela" of Pi'ankhy, lines 68-69 (Grimal, *La stèle triomphale*, pl. VIII); Taharqa's stela from the desert road at Dahshur, lines 16-17 (A. M. Moussa, 'A Stela of Taharqa from the Desert Road at Dahshur', *MDAIK*, Bd. 37 (1981), S. 332, Fig. 1, Taf. 47), the Gematen stela Kawa VI, cols. (20-)22 (Macadam, *Kawa*, I, pls. 11-12), and (supposedly) an inscription in the Temple of Amun in Karnak (P. Vernus, 'Inscriptions de la Troisième Période Intermédiaire', *BIFAO*, T. 75 (1975), pp. 3 with Fig. 1; 29, col. [8]). See also notes 15-17 above.

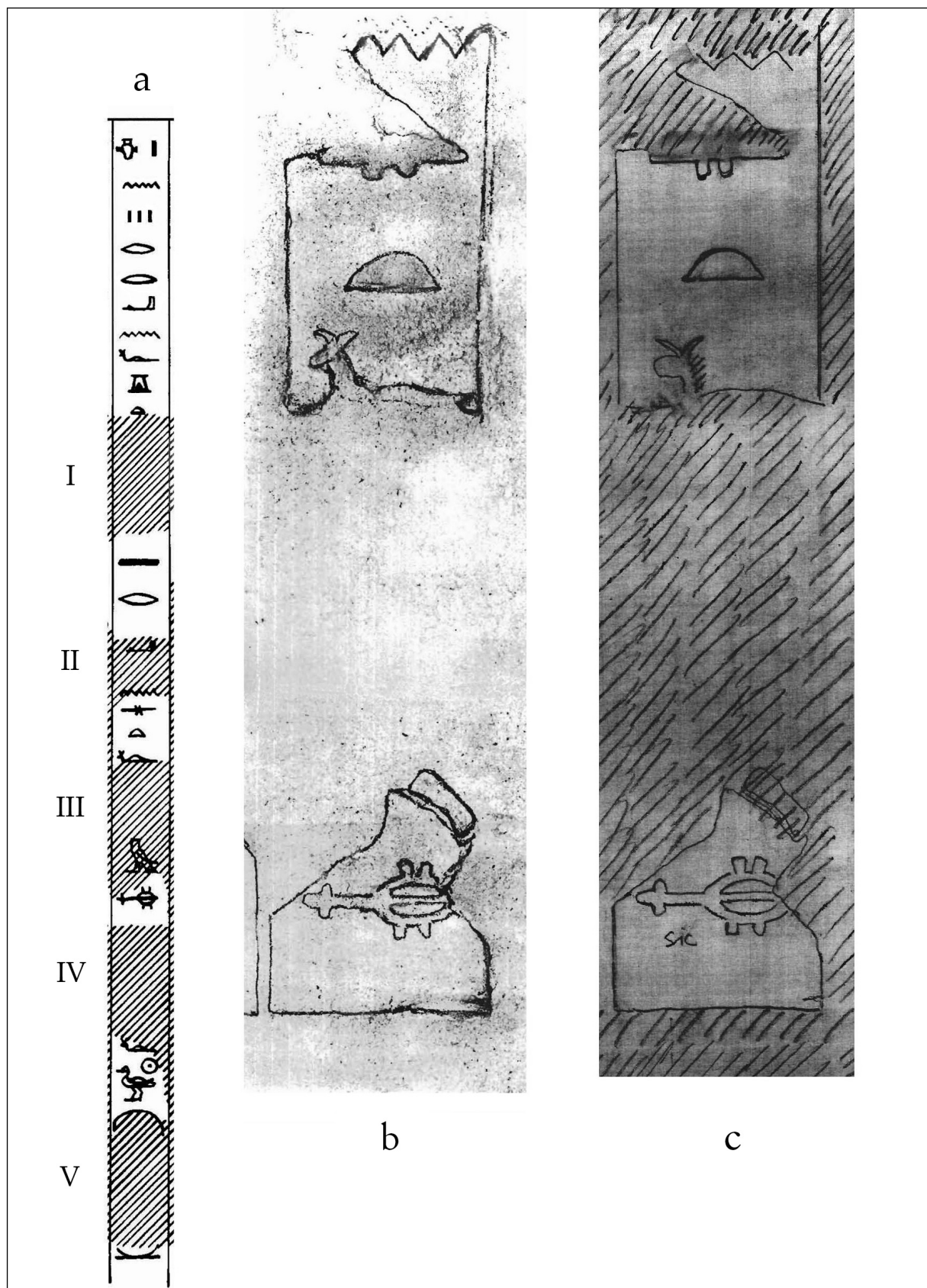


Fig. 1: Col. 10 of the "Great Inscription" of king Irikeamannote.

a. Version of Macadam's hand-copy (The Temples of Kawa, pl. 22);

b. Fragments III and IV, after the Kawa Squeeze I.6 (courtesy of the Griffith Institute);

c. Fragments III and IV, after the tracing (courtesy of the Griffith Institute).



Secondly, just as with the statement from col. 21 discussed above, the very construction of the phrase, as read by the editor, looks somewhat strange. Rendering the verb rdj “give”, “place” as “appoint”,²⁰ Macadam evidently takes the word Amun “father” (or here rather “<his> father”) together with the name “Amun”, reasonably enough reconstructed after it,²¹ as the subject, and sw (standing, as he thinks, for the pronoun sw)²² as the object “him” implying Irikeamannot. Theoretically, this interpretation is possible because the aforementioned metaphorical usage of rdj is certainly very well known.²³ A difficulty – which Macadam, strangely, passes over in silence – is that the general meaning of the statement becomes then uncertain. The verb rdj as “appoint” naturally demands a further object, specifying the task or function assigned (e.g., $\text{r h}k3$ “to reign”),²⁴ or position (e.g., m nsw “as king”, $\text{m h}k3$ “as ruler”, etc.)²⁵ of the appointee. The above interpretation leaves no place for this important indication and the phrase looks logically and syntactically incomplete.

This last problem might be partially solved if we take into consideration that the entire phrase is a continuation of the foregoing one, where rdj is also used, and not in the metaphorical sense but in its most direct meaning “give”: “(our will (is)) rdj - to give him the throne <...>”. Would not it be logical to suppose that rdj is used with the same meaning in the second instance as well? The statement then would read: “Our will (is) to give him the throne (of) [this] land (for?) (his) father [Amun] gave it [while in the] womb [of] his [mother] <...>”.

This interpretation, if accepted, solves one problem, but at the same time, however, it gives rise to further questions.

a) If the statement “<his> father [Amun] gave it <...>” does allude to the “throne”, mentioned in the foregoing phrase, it might seem strange that the word

Amun , which is feminine, is used with this meaning in the former case whereas sw , which, according to Macadam, stands here for the pronoun sw , which is masculine, replaces it in the latter.

b) Reading the phrase as “<his> father [Amun] gave it [while in the] womb [of] his [mother] <...>” we do not find any indication as to the one to *whom* the throne was claimed to have been given by Amun. Strangely, there is neither indication sw “to him” after “gave it”, nor even *nota dativi* sw before the combination of the proper name with the title Re “the Son of Re” and epithet Re “(may he) live forever”, which closes the sentence and might be considered as object.

An explanation of the former of the above peculiarities might be that here we deal with the [conjunction] of identical consonants, a well known phenomenon in Egyptian,²⁶ and consequently the combination Amun may have actually implied Amun <...> <...> <...> <...>.

It is much more difficult to find a good explanation for the latter abnormality, unless we assume a mistake in the text, which, of course, is not completely excluded but – as an argument – can only be a last resort. Does it mean that the alternative view is no better than the adopted one, and if so, is it possible to suggest anything else?

A possible way to solve the problems connected with the interpretation of the evidence of col. 10 presented itself quite recently, when an opportunity to consult the Griffith Institute squeezes and tracing of Kawa IX was afforded to the writer. A close examination of these copies has revealed a slight but extremely important difference between their version(s) and the transcript in Macadam’s edition. Neither the squeeze nor the tracing made from it, and later collated by Macadam himself with the original *in situ* (see Fig. 1: b, c), show any real traces of the sign m , interpreted by him as the preposition “in” before the word body , which in its turn is the key word for the understanding of the whole phrase in question. As is obvious now, the editor, preparing the hand-copy, *reconstructed* that sign (just like some others elsewhere)²⁷ trying to make the damaged text meaningful, but doing that he seems to have been misled by an oblique furrow visible in this place on the squeeze. An analysis of the paper impression shows that this trace was most likely accidental, being a result of that sheet – due to the shortage of paper, evidently – having been used

20 Wb. II, 476, 26, 28, 35-38.

21 In Kawa IX, the word “father” is accompanied by the theonym “Amun” / “Amun-Re” in 18 out of the 21 surviving cases.

22 Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, p. 54, n. 24.

23 Cf., Wb. II, 467, 25, 26, 28; R. O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford, 1991 (=1972)), p. 155.

24 Urk. VII, 40, 6; cf. Urk. IV, 567, 16; W. Wolf, *Das schöne Fest von Opet* (Leipzig, 1931), 8, (c). Some other parallels are Urk. VII, 26, 11/13; 27, 2; 28, 1, 8/9; 29, 7; 31, 5/6, 9. See also Wb. II, 467, 37-38.

25 LD V, 15 (right outer column); Urk. I, 100, 7; Urk. VII, 46, 15, 19, 20. Cf., Sinuhe B 86; also B 78; B 107-108. See also Wb. II, 467, 35-36.

26 A.H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (3rd ed.; London, 1957), § 62.

27 Vinogradov, ‘In search of Kawa IX’, p. 308.



his predecessor's death but only after a certain period of time. This is obvious from the fact that these two events were separated in time by the invasion of the "rebellious" desert-dwellers *Rrhs* "seizing all the herds, flocks and people they (could) find" (cols. 5-6), which seems to have precipitated the whole procedure of installation of the king.

b) In accordance with the rules of the regnal year numbering, the period of time after the death of the king-predecessor until the end of the civil year would already have been dated, retrospectively, to the first year of the king-successor,³⁴ even if by that moment he had not yet been officially inducted, or at least elected/nominated to reign.³⁵

c) Everything will, thus, find its right place if we assume that the omen, or consultation of the oracle, which, according to the aforementioned theory, led Irikeamannot to power, took place on the ninth day after the death of king Talakhamani.

There is, consequently, no contradiction between the two mentioned testimonies of Kawa IX. The king, alluding to the "goodly wonder" performed for him by the god Amun, evidently means the oracle/omen itself³⁶ and, quite understandably, is not going

into details as to how and by whom it was received.³⁷

As for the warriors, it is only natural that, referring to Amun's will as their guideline, they first of all speak about their own will, for, according to the text, it is on their initiative that the enthronement procedure was started and – if the above interpretation is right – the oracle was turned to. Moreover, judging from some details of the account (for instance from the fact that the "royal Brethren" – who evidently were, along with Irikeamannot, potential claimants to the throne – are cursorily mentioned but do not seem to participate in the events anyhow) it is not unlikely that consulting the oracle actually was only a confirmative measure, taken in order to sanction the "army's" (half-?) ready decision as to the heir of the crowns.

In any case the two wills thus prove to be, or are presented as, two factors of the single decision, just as was the case in the history of many other societies where the ruler was elected through oracle etc. At this stage of social development both factors seem to have been equally important conditions for the candidate to the throne to become king.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Da die in den königlichen Annalen überlieferten Berichte über die Inthronisation der Könige von Kusch so unterschiedlich sind, ist es zweifelhaft, dass es ein generelles Muster des Ablaufes der Inthronisation im antiken Sudan gegeben hat. Es ist eher anzunehmen, dass der Verlauf jedes Mal durch die kon-

34 See e.g., Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, p. 204 (Excursus C).

35 The expression "day 9 of/since my appearing as king" shows that the statement itself *was not* made on that day, for otherwise the indication *m hrw pn / pf3* "on this day", in the meaning of "today", would have been used. This quite well agrees with the "anachronistic", at this stage of the narrative, usage of the title "His Majesty" in application to Irikeamannot (since it is only later that the inauguration ceremony is being described) and only proves that the account is given retrospectively. This could also be the explanation of the paradoxical reference to his having been elected – by means of an oracle – on the 9th day of his "appearing as king", which date, naturally, could only be established retrospectively. An interesting parallel may well be the allusion, in a similar context, to "that day 24, (when) thou (*scil.* Amun - A. V.) gave me power" in line 19 of king Nastasen's annals (*Urk.* III, 147, <10-11>).

36 Dr (now Professor) Mark Smith (Oxford University) drew my attention to the fact that a nine days' period is also separating the day on which, according to the date in col. 1, the events started (2nd <month of> *šmw*, 24th day) from the day on which the "rebels" *Rrhs* were defeated (3rd <month of> *šmw*, [2]nd day). Considered from this prospective, Irikeamannot's statement would have read "goodly wonder (which) my father (will) perform[on] the 9th day of/since my appearing as king", thus predicting the victory over the foreigners to be granted (lit. "performed") by Amun on the ninth day after the election.

This interesting observation should, of course, be kept in mind as a hypothesis even though it is not without problems: a) the latter date could actually be "10th" and not "2nd" (cf. Macadam's remark in *The Temples of Kawa*, p. 56, n. 39); b) the form *irj* "make", "perform", etc., tends to have perfective meaning elsewhere in Kawa IX (cols.

37, 45, 47); c) the analogy with Taharqa's stela Kawa VI, col. 21, cf. 23) seems to speak in favour of Macadam's (and usual ever since) rendering of the word "wonder" here as a hint to the enthronement.

In any case such a rendering, if accepted, does not seem to affect the above general interpretation of the account of Kawa IX in principle. The main point to be reconsidered would be that the allusion to the "ninth day" (the presence of the figure which could be merely rhetorical, as in Egyptian expressions like the "Nine Bows", "Nine Gods", "Nine Friends", etc., might seem not accidental in this case) would have referred to the day of the predicted victory over the *Rrhs*. The starting point of the record (indicated by the date in col. 1) then would have been the day on which Irikeamannot was elected by the "Host of His Majesty" and not the one on which Talakhamani died.

37 It should be remembered, on the other hand, that the beginning of Irikeamannot's statement most likely was, by mistake, omitted by the carver (cf. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, p. 55, n. 37). Some relevant indications could have been contained in that lost passage of the inscription, or otherwise, in the text at the bottom of col. 20 which is now almost illegible.

krete politische Situation im Königtum bestimmt wurde.

Die Machtergreifung von Irikeamannote, die in seiner großen Inschrift (Kawa IX) am Tempel T von Gematon aufgezeichnet ist, ist besonders interessant, da dort einige für die Rekonstruktion der kuschitischen Gemeinschaft bedeutende Details genannt sind. Da der Text aber komplizierter ist, als er im ersten Moment zu sein scheint, sind einige zusätzliche Kommentare angebracht.

Ausgehend von der Wiedergabe in M.F.L. Macadams editio princeps von 1949, die für ein halbes Jahrhundert die Interpretation von Kawa IX beherrscht hat, sind die folgenden drei Aussagen von besonderer Wichtigkeit:

- a) Die Feststellung der Krieger: „es ist unser Wunsch, ihm den Thron [dieses Landes] zu geben.“ (Z. 10)
- b) Die folgende Feststellung der Krieger: „Sein Vater [Amun] hat ihn bestimmt, [als er noch im] Leib seiner [Mutter] <...>.“ (Z. 10)
- c) Die Anspielung von Irikeamannote auf ein „gutes Wunder, das mein Vater [Amun] gemacht hat für mich [im] ... Monat des Winters, Tag 19, (dem Tag) meiner Erscheinung als König.“ (Z. 21)

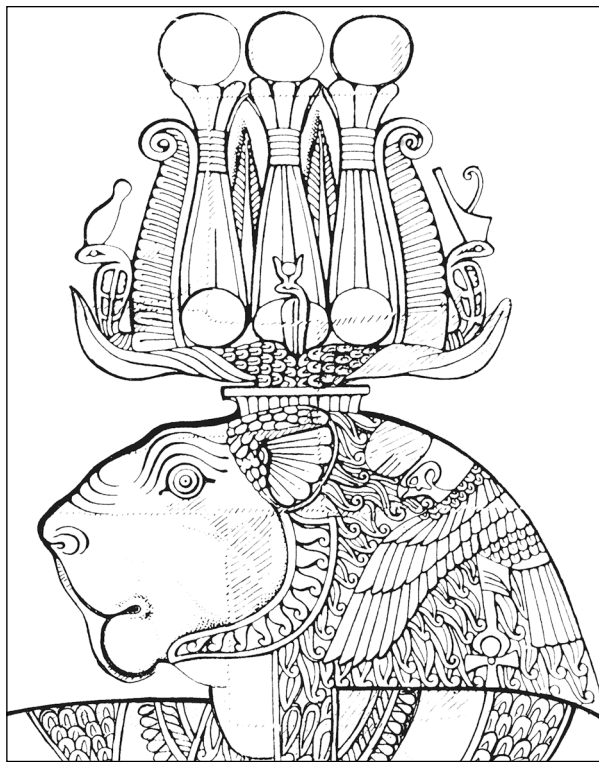
Bei genauerer Betrachtung erkennt man, dass diese drei Feststellungen – wenn man Macadams Interpretation folgt – nicht untereinander und mit dem Kontext der Inschrift übereinstimmen. Die Erwähnung von Irikeamannotes Vorherbestimmung „noch im Leib der Mutter“ ist nur überzeugend, wenn dieses Faktum bereits vor der Thronbesteigung bekannt war. Es ist dann aber schwierig zu verstehen, warum nach dem Tod des Vorgängers, besonders in einer Zeit der Einfälle von „rebellischen“ Nachbarn, das Land keinen Herrscher gehabt haben sollte? Warum ist der Nachfolger nicht sofort auf den Thron gefolgt?

Ebenso ist es schwer zu verstehen, warum Irikeamannote über seine eigene Thronbesteigung als „gutes Wunder“, das Amun für ihn gemacht hat, spricht. Warum hat er sie nicht als Umsetzung dessen, was schon lange durch den Hauptgott der Kuschiten angeordnet war, aufgefasst?

Noch erstaunlicher ist der Umstand, dass das „gute Wunder“ lange (mindestens 66 Tage) vor dem Moment, an dem Irikeamannote durch die Krieger nominiert wurde, stattgefunden haben muss. Dies führte Macadam zu der Hypothese, dass Irikeamannote einige Zeit Koregent seines Vorgängers gewesen ist, aber diese Erklärung macht den Text in sich widersprüchlich.

Wenn man sich dieses Problems annimmt, muss man bedenken, dass der Text gerade an essentiellen Stellen einige Zerstörungen aufweist, die durch Macadam ergänzt wurden. Da ich 1994 unpublizierte Kopien des Textes im Griffith Institute in Oxford identifizieren konnte, ist es nun möglich, diese Stellen neu zu überprüfen. So konnte Macadams Rekonstruktion der Vorherbestimmung von Irikeamannote „[als er noch im] Leib seiner [Mutter] war“ nicht erhärtet werden. Viel wahrscheinlicher ist, dass sich der Text darauf bezieht, dass Amun den Thron dem „geliebten Sohn von seinem Leibe“ (= seinem leiblichen geliebten Sohn) gegeben hat – eine gut bekannte rhetorische Figur, die die Kuschiten von den Ägyptern übernommen haben. Irikeamannote wurde auf Druck der Krieger (so ist es im Text ausdrücklich beschrieben) eingesetzt, vielleicht nach einem bestimmten Vorkommnis, das als Omen des Amun interpretiert und später „gutes Wunder“ bezeichnet wurde. Daraus geht hervor, dass die Wahlmöglichkeit des Militärs durch den göttlichen Willen festgelegt war.

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Angesichts der Tatsache, daß die globalen wirtschaftlichen, ökonomischen und politischen Probleme auch zu einer Gefährdung der kulturellen Hinterlassenschaften in aller Welt führen, ist es dringend geboten, gemeinsame Anstrengungen zu unternehmen, das der gesamten Menschheit gehörende Kulturerbe für künftige Generationen zu bewahren. Eine wesentliche Rolle bei dieser Aufgabe kommt der Archäologie zu. Ihre vornehmste Verpflichtung muß sie in der heutigen Zeit darin sehen, bedrohte Kulturdenkmäler zu pflegen und für ihre Erhaltung zu wirken.

Die Sudanarchäologische Gesellschaft zu Berlin e.V. setzt sich besonders für den Erhalt des Ensembles von Sakralbauten aus meroitischer Zeit in Musawwarat es Sufra/Sudan ein, indem sie konservatorische Arbeiten unterstützt, archäologische Ausgrabungen fördert sowie Dokumentation und Publikation der Altertümer von Musawwarat ermöglicht. Wenn die Arbeit der Sudanarchäologischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin Ihr Interesse geweckt hat und Sie bei uns mitarbeiten möchten, werden Sie Mitglied! Wir sind aber auch für jede andere Unterstützung dankbar. Wir freuen uns über Ihr Interesse!

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