



ALEXEY K. VINOGRADOV

REVISING THE ENTHRONEMENT ACCOUNT OF KING IRIKEAMANNOTE¹

The mechanism of royal succession in Kush is an important aspect of Ancient Sudanese polity that still requires much more clarity.

The written sources at our disposal seem to witness a peculiar co-existence of the hereditary and elective principles in the transfer of royal power. It has also been conjectured in the literature that joint rule was occasionally practiced in Kush. In a society where the rise to power, in keeping with the official dogma, was to be regarded (or at least to be *presented*) as an ‘unpremeditated wonder’,² coregency, as some scholars maintain, may have been a means to ensure a ‘directional’ hand down of the crown.

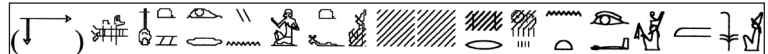
Several cases of joint rule (mainly during the period of Kushite domination in Egypt)³ have been pointed out in the literature, yet no unambiguous proofs of co-regency seem to have been found so far. On the contrary, in those rare cases where the predecessor is referred to in a text of a Kushite king (the stele Kawa V of Taharqa,⁴ the ‘Election Stele’ of Aspelta⁵) we get to know that the latter succeeded to the throne *after the death* of the former. Moreover, some data might make one doubt that co-regency could ever be possible in Ancient Sudan. A number of indications in the native kings’ chronicles in Egyptian, up to the last readable one (the Nastasen stele), as well as classical tradition (evidently reflecting the situation during the much later period), make one think that *electivity* was an important

feature of kingship in Ancient Sudan. An illustration of this might be seen, for instance, in the enthronement procedure as represented in the ‘Election Stele’, our main source for Kushite polity.

In such circumstances, the evidence of king Irikeamannoté’s Great Inscription in Temple T in Gematen (Kawa) takes on special significance. The enthronement account in this text seems to have something in common with the ‘Election Stele’,⁶ whereas at the same time it has been considered as a proof (and the only one undisputed in the research literature until recently) that coregency did take place in Kush. It seems obvious that this precedent, when correctly understood, could substantially contribute to our understanding of Ancient Sudanese political organization.

The hypothesis about Irikeamannoté’s joint rule with his predecessor Talakhmani was put forward in 1949 by M.F.L. Macadam in his comments on the Great Inscription (= Kawa IX) which he published together with the other written monuments from Kawa discovered by F.L. Griffith’s expedition in 1930/31.

Macadam’s assumption must have been founded on two indications of the enthronement account in the opening part of the text. The starting point was an obscure phrase in col. 21 which the editor of *The Temples of Kawa* read as



1 The writer is very thankful to Dr. Jaromír Málek, Keeper of the Archive in the Griffith Institute, for the permission to use some unpublished material from the archive of F.L. Griffith’s ‘Oxford Excavations in Nubia’ project.

2 Kawa VI, col. 23 (M.F.L. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, Vol. I: *The Inscriptions* (London, 1949) 36, pls. 11-12).

3 Shabaka with Pi^{ankhy}, Shabataka with Shabaka, Taharqa with Shabataka, Tanutamani with Taharqa (K. A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 BC)*³ (Warminster, 1996), §§ 132-139, 348, 354, 462-473, 527-528; W. J. Murnane, *Ancient Egyptian Coregencies* (Chicago, 1977), 188-196, 235-236; A.K. Vinogradov, ‘On the supposed coregency of Irikeamannoté with Talakhmani’, *Sesto Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia*,

Atti 1, ([Turin], 1992), 635, n. 1-2; cf. id., *Politicheskaya organizatsiya obschestva Kusha v 8-4 vv. do n.e.* [The Political Organization of the Society of Kush in 8th - 4th centuries B.C.E.] (Ph D diss., Inst. Or. St. of the USSR Ac. Sc.; Moscow, 1984), 56-63; id., ‘O predpolagayemom sopravlenii Amanneteyerike i Talakhmani’, *Meroe 4* (Moscow, 1989), 64-72.

4 Kawa V, line 15 (Macadam, *Kawa*, I, pls. 9-10).

5 Election stele, lines 2-3 (N.-C. Grimal, *Quatre stèles napatéennes au Musée du Caire, JE 48863-4886, Textes et Indices* (Études sur la propagande royale égyptienne, II; Paris, 1981), pl. vi; cf. Urk. III, 86, [4-9]).

6 Macadam, *Kawa*, I, 54, notes 17 and 20.

(fig. 1) and rendered as ‘goodly wonder which my father [Amun] made for me [in] the month of Winter, day 19, (the day) of my appearance as King’. Due to a parallel in stele Kawa VI (col. 23) of king Taharqa,⁷ Macadam deduced: ‘when Aman-nete-yerike (*i.e.* Irikeamannote. - A. V.) refers to a wonder

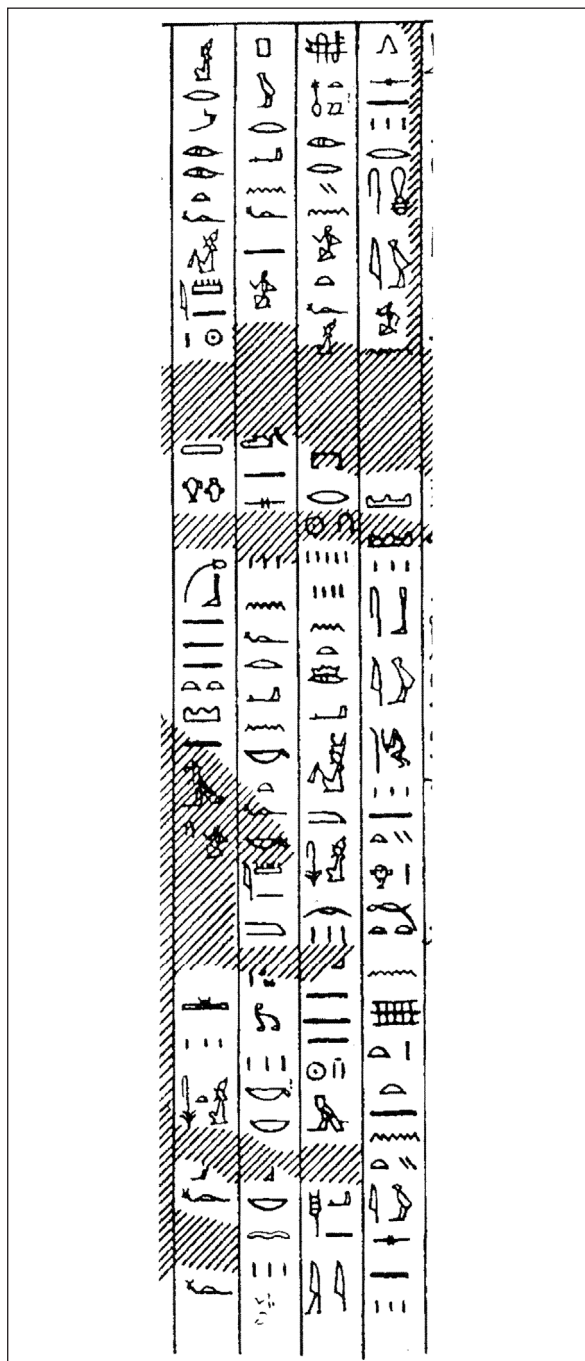


Fig. 1: Cols. 19-22 of the Great Inscription of Irikeamannote as presented in Macadam's hand-copy (*Kawa*, I, pl. 22).

done for him by Amun, it is not difficult to guess that his accession is likewise being referred to’.⁸

He could not fail to notice that the Great Inscription opens with the date ‘Year 1, 2nd month of Inundation (*šmw*), day 24’ referring to the events which followed the death of king Talakhamani and the result of which was Irikeamannote's installation as king. Thus the ‘goodly wonder’ (*bj3.t nfr*) must have taken place at least 66 days before the day on which he was made king by the warriors. Trying to reconcile both statements Macadam surmised that ‘a few months before he died Talakhamani associated his brother (?) Aman-Nete-yerike with him’.⁹

At first sight this interpretation looks logical and it is no wonder that it became generally accepted in the literature ever since Macadam's publication. However, some contradictions in the text so understood reveal themselves at closer study. For instance, considering Irikeamannote as a coregent it is difficult to understand why:

a) he did not take over the throne (or more strictly, did not *remain* on it) immediately after the death of his senior counterpart, when the country found itself ‘like herd without a herdsman’ and fell pray to the ‘rebellious’ desert-dwellers;

b) he later needed a *new coronation* and legitimation in the main sanctuaries of Kush, whereas normally a coregent was receiving all royal regalia at his initial accession;

c) after the death of king Talakhamani the ‘Host of His Majesty’ declared ‘(It is) our will to give him (*scil.* Irikeamannote. - A. V.) the throne [of this land (?)]’ (col. 10), from which we can conclude that prior to that day *the throne did not belong* to the latter.

Trying to clarify the text the present writer some time ago pointed out a grammatical irregularity of the reference to the ‘beautiful wonder’ in Macadam's reconstruction, who rendered the key phrase in the sentence as a combination of two elements:

a) calendar date (𓅓𓅓𓅓𓅓𓅓𓅓, --- month of Winter, day 19’);

b) subordinate clause (𓄏𓅓𓄏𓅓𓄏𓅓𓄏𓅓 (the day) of my appearance as King’), with the word ‘day’ as antecedent.

It should be recalled however that the meaning ‘day’ (which, depending on the context, could be expressed in Egyptian by various words) was conveyed in calendar dates by the term (𓄏𓅓𓄏𓅓𓄏𓅓𓄏𓅓) ‘šw-day’.¹⁰ It was restricted in usage and normally could

7 Macadam, *Kawa*, I, pls. 11-12.

8 Macadam, *Kawa*, I, 55, n. 38.

9 Macadam, *Kawa*, I, 55, n. 38.

10 Wb. IV, 58, 4; A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*³ (Oxford, 1957), 203. Cf., A. Erman, *Ägyptische Grammatik* (Berlin, 1911), § 247; G. Roeder, *Ägyptisch* (Munich, 1913), § 48.



not be immediately combined with a subordinate clause. To introduce additional information it was necessary to *repeat* the word ‘day’ (exactly what Macadam did in translation, having thus *corrected* the text). The term ‘hrw-day’, somewhat different in nuance, would be used in this second case, taking the role of the governing word of the subordinate clause. The phrase under discussion, if we stick to Macadam’s reconstruction, has no room for this second term as a result of which the sentence looks syntactically incomplete, or in other words, grammatically *incorrect*.

Inscription taken by Griffith’s expedition in 1931 and now kept in the Archive of the Griffith Institute at Oxford. These include Griffith’s provisional hand-copy, a set of squeezes of the whole text and a tracing made after the squeezes but never turned into facsimile and left unpublished.¹²

A revision of the recovered copies of the text (compared with the hand-copy and the series of five photos in Macadam’s publication) has, unfortunately, failed to bring in a straightforward answer as to whether the group in question was beginning with the word *pr(.t)*, as Macadam believed, or alternatively with ‘hrw-day’, which was the writer’s suggestion:

GRIFFITH’S HAND COPY	SQUEEZES ¹³			TRACING	MACADAM’S HAND COPY
‘Red Book’ ¹⁴ , p. 12	KS I. 8 (reverse)	KS I. 14 (reverse)	KS I. 17 (reverse)	Sheet 2	<i>The Temples of Kawa, I,</i> pl. 22

An alternative rendering proposed by the writer some years ago was that the damaged group in the middle of the key phrase in col. 21 should be read as ‘hrw-day’ rather than *pr(.t)* ‘Winter’, the text referring to the ‘goodly wonder which my father [Amun] made for me [on] the 9-th [day] of/after my appearance as king’.¹¹ This conjecture would leave no place for a calendar date and, making one dispense with the assumption of any co-regency, would resolve most of the otherwise inevitable problems arising from the interpretation suggested by Macadam.

An opportunity to have a try at verifying the reconstructions in question presented itself in more recent time when the writer got a chance to acquaint himself with the long-forgotten copies of the Great

The problem might seem unresolvable, bearing in mind that the original of the text, inscribed on one of the inner walls in Temple T, has become inaccessible since the 1935/36 excavations at Kawa, if only exists.¹⁵ In these unfavourable conditions some indirect evidence provided by Irikeamannoté’s inscription is worth consideration. An answer is prompted by some palaeographical features of the text. A careful study of the squeezes, the clearest of which is reproduced in fig. 2, made it quite certain that the group under consists of a round character accompanied by a stroke¹⁶ and followed by the figure ‘nine’ and not ‘nineteen’ as Macadam read it. This small alteration is very important for the rendering of the whole statement.

11 Vinogradov, ‘On the supposed coregency’, 638.

12 For the details 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* (BM Occasional Papers, 131; London, 1999), 305-311.

13 The outlines of signs on the obverse of the Great Inscription squeezes being often misleading due to inaccurate pencilling in the 1930-ies, the data presented below is

based on the analysis of the unpencilled reverse of the squeezes as giving a more objective view of the text.

14 Griffith’s field notebook which includes his provisional hand-copies of all ‘narrative’ written monuments found at Kawa during the excavation season of 1930/31.

15 Vinogradov, ‘In Search of Kawa IX’, 308.

16 Clearly reproduced by the tracing but for unknown reason ignored in Macadam’s publication.

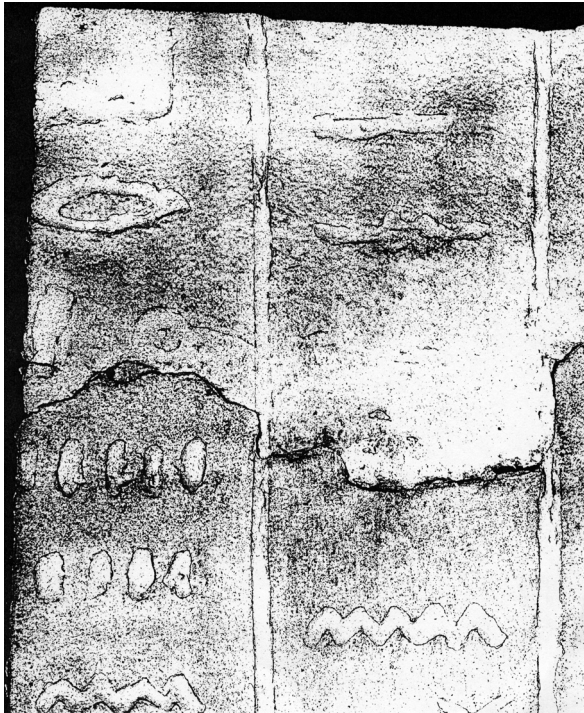





Fig. 2: The 'date' in col. 21 as seen on the squeeze KS I. 8, reverse (courtesy of the Griffith Institute).

It is obvious that the round sign and the stroke do not write a phonematically conveyed word but are used as determinatives which might be interpreted in

two ways. According to Macadam, these two signs are to be rendered as the ideographically conveyed term 'šw-day' which was used in dates after the designation of month and immediately before the number of the day. It is significant, however, that in the Great Inscription all examples with calendar dates (fifteen altogether)¹⁷ show the word 'šw-day' written out with the disc ideogram  only, without the stroke. On the contrary, *both* determinatives   are present in all of the six attestations¹⁸ of the word 'hrw-day' in this monument (fig. 3). The remarkable stability of these two words' spelling throughout the text seems to be a helpful means to verify the aforementioned reconstructions and tends to support the latter, alternative, one proposed by the writer.

The passage under discussion seems to contain no calendar date referring to the day on which Irikeamannoté, as Macadam believed, became coregent of his predecessor but an allusion to a certain event which took place soon after his ascend to the throne. It is not improbable that the reference is made to something (extraordinary ?) that happened on the ninth day of Irikeamannoté's reign and was considered as a sign of Amun's approval of the new king election (from among the body of the 'Royal Brethren' mentioned in col. 3 of the Great Inscription). This then could be a parallel to the reference in

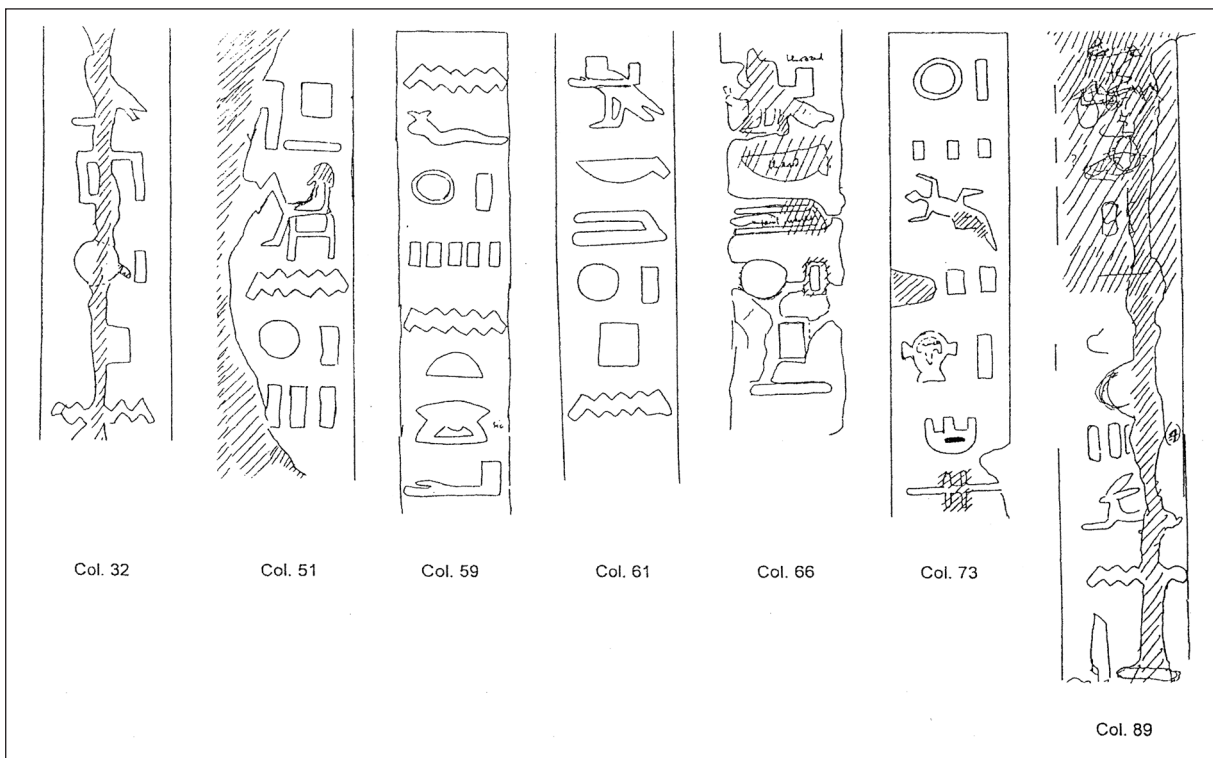


Fig. 3: The word 'hrw-day' in the Great Inscription of Irikeamannoté (after the tracing in the Archive of the Griffith Institute).

17 Cols. 1, 21 (bottom), 35, 37, 43, 45, 49, 55, 63, 64, 74, 78, 92, 122; cf. 89.

18 Cols. 32, 51, 59, 61, 66, 73; cf. 89.



the enthronement account of king Nastasen to 'that day 24, (when) thou (*scil.* Amun. - A. V.) gave me power'¹⁹ not to mention king Taharqa's allusion to the 'four goodly wonders' that happened as late as the 6th year of his reign²⁰ but still were considered as Amun's sanctioning of his enthronement.²¹

Alternatively, to elucidate the intriguing statement of Irikeamannoté we could recall that he did not take over the throne immediately upon his predecessor's death but only after a certain period of time during which the metropolis was invaded and plundered by the 'rebellious' desert-dwellers *Rrbs* (cols. 5-6). The paradox of the 'goodly wonder' (*i.e.* the installation as king, according to the generally accepted view) having been performed on the *ninth* day of Irikeamannoté's reign may then be a result of the fact that the period of time after the death of the king-predecessor until the end of the civil year would already have been dated to the first year of the king-successor, even if by that moment he had not yet been officially inducted, or at least nominated to reign.²² Thus, a reference in a *retrospective* narration²³ (which is obviously the case with the Great Inscription incised in Temple T not less than a year and a half after the events it describes) to Irikeamannoté's enthronement on the ninth day of the reign looks explicable and logical.

Whichever of these renderings is given preference, we can state at least that the Great Inscription in Temple T at Kawa gives no evidence in support for the hypothesis about a co-regency of Irikeamannoté with his predecessor. The real 'king-maker' here appears to be 'His Majesty's host' declaring '(It is) our will to give him the throne' (col. 10) in the firm belief that such was the choice of Amun.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In der großen Inschrift des Irikeamannoté (Kawa IX) wird in Kol. 21 eine Datumsangabe gemacht, die zur Annahme einer Koregentschaft zwischen diesem König und seinem Vorgänger Talakhamani führte. Durch eine genaue Analyse der Papierabklatsche der fraglichen Stelle kann jedoch das bisher gelesene „... Monat des Winters, Tag 19, (Tag) meines Erscheinens als König“ zu „am 9. Tag meines Erscheinens als König“ korrigiert werden. Das in dem Zusammenhang angesprochene Wunder geschah somit am 9. Tag seiner Regierung und nicht bereits vor der Krönung Irikeamannotés, wie es die von Macadam gelesene Datum im Zusammenhang mit der Datumsangabe in der Eröffnung der Stele ("Jahr 1, 2. Monat der Überschwemmung, Tag 24") nahegelegt hätte.

19 Nastasen stele, line 19 (Urk. III, 147, [10-11]; cf. H. Schäfer, *Die Aethiopische Königsinschrift des Berliner Museums: Regierungsbericht des Königs Nastesen, des Gegners des Kambyzes* (Leipzig, 1901), 14, 54, 107; C. Peust, *Das Napatanische. Ein ägyptische Dialekt aus dem Nubien des späten ersten vorchristlichen Jahrtausends. Texte, Glossar, Grammatik* (Monographien zur Ägyptischen Sprache 3; Göttingen, 1999), 36, 62).

20 Kawa V, lines 10-13 (Macadam, *Kawa*, I, pls. 9-10).

21 Vinogradov, 'On the supposed coregency', 639.

22 Cf. Macadam, *Kawa*, I, 55, n. 38; 57, n. 59.

23 The expression 'day 9 of/since my appearance as king' shows that the statement itself *was not* made on that day, for otherwise the indication *m hrw pn* (or *pfβ*) '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 Irikeamannoté (since it is only later that the inauguration ceremony is being described) and only proves that the account is given retrospectively.