



ELEONORA KORMYSHEVA

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ICONOGRAPHICAL PROGRAM OF THE SACRED STANDS FROM THE TEMPLES OF ABU ERTEILA AND WAD BEN NAGA

During the excavation of the season 2015 and 2017¹, three stands were found on the territory of the Natakamani temple at Abu Erteila (fig. 1, 2, colour fig. 6). All of them were decorated and inscribed with the pictures and texts of the ritual *tw3 pt*. This is a second example among the temples of Natakamani (after the temple of Wad Ben Naga), displayed this ritual. Images and text on these stands have distinctive features, which allows to undertake a comparative analysis. This analysis in turn will reveal the stylistic and iconographic features of the ritual *tw3 pt* during the Natakamani reign. The obtained data allows to re-examine the Natakamani's successors.

The first (AE15/II-R26/st.1) decorated and inscribed stand was found in the upper layer of the room 26 (fig. 3). Room 26 has been identified as a sanctuary of the temple due to the existence of the altar with the names of Natakamani and Amanitore. The floor of the sanctuary was paved with dark sandstone slabs. The stand was found in the inclined position between level 391,91m and 391,32m, at the north-western part of the room after tearing down by the looters of the temple.

The height of the object is 137 cm, but the dimension of the sides are not identical:

- width of the side with the name of Natakamani and Amanitore: 34 cm
- width of the side with the *prenomen* Kheperkare and name of Sorkaror: 32 cm
- width of the upper side of all broken sides: 29 cm.

The remains of a torus with the bas-relief of the solar disk surrounded by uraei are preserved over the side

with a dedication to Natakamani. On the other parts of the top traces of a typical decor for *cavetto* are seen.

At Abu Erteila female figures in profile are pictured supporting the sky with uplifted hands on each side. This action is marked here with two lines imitating the hieroglyph *pt* (as, for example, on the stand from Wad Ben Naga). The typical frieze from stars over the heads of women stresses the idea of moving on the sky.

The four women on this stand have no head-dresses. The diadem in the hair is depicted on the head of one of them represented on the side with *prenomen* of Natakamani, others are in a long wig without distinctive signs. All of them are dressed in the long clothes falling to their ankles. There are two columns of hieroglyphs on each side disposed under the uplifted hands of the female figures.

Another two stands were discovered in room 36 which adjoins the sanctuary (26) from the south. Room size is: length 430 cm; width 330 cm; remaining height of the walls: 93 cm. The width of the passage is 65 cm. It most likely was the southern side room of the temple, which could be intended for the disposition of the basements for the barks or naos. The room was paved with dark sandstone, two basements for the barks or naos with the image and inscriptions of the ritual *tw3 pt* were found there.

The room (36) was oriented along the east-west axe. The southern wall of the room is preserved up to 6 rows of bricks. The room has a common wall with the rooms 35 and 34, and has a clearly defined and lined passage to room 35. This passage is framed by two portals made of bricks. The northern portal is better preserved and has the following dimensions: length 60 cm; width 60 cm; height 93 cm. The southern portal accordingly has dimensions: 60 x 50 cm, height 60 cm. The room level is 391.22 m. The difference between the level of the room 26, which was determined as the sanctuary of the temple, and the room 36 is 20 cm. The reasons of such a difference in the level cannot be established yet.

¹ Excavations in Abu Erteila have been carried out since 2008 in the form of the joint Italian-Russian archaeological mission on the basis of the agreement between the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Mediterranean Archeology of the University of Sapienza (Rome). Co-directors of the mission are Eugenio Fantusati and Eleonora Kormysheva. Excavations are carried out consistently by two groups (Italian and Russian) in the framework of the same concession on the territory of Abu Erteila.

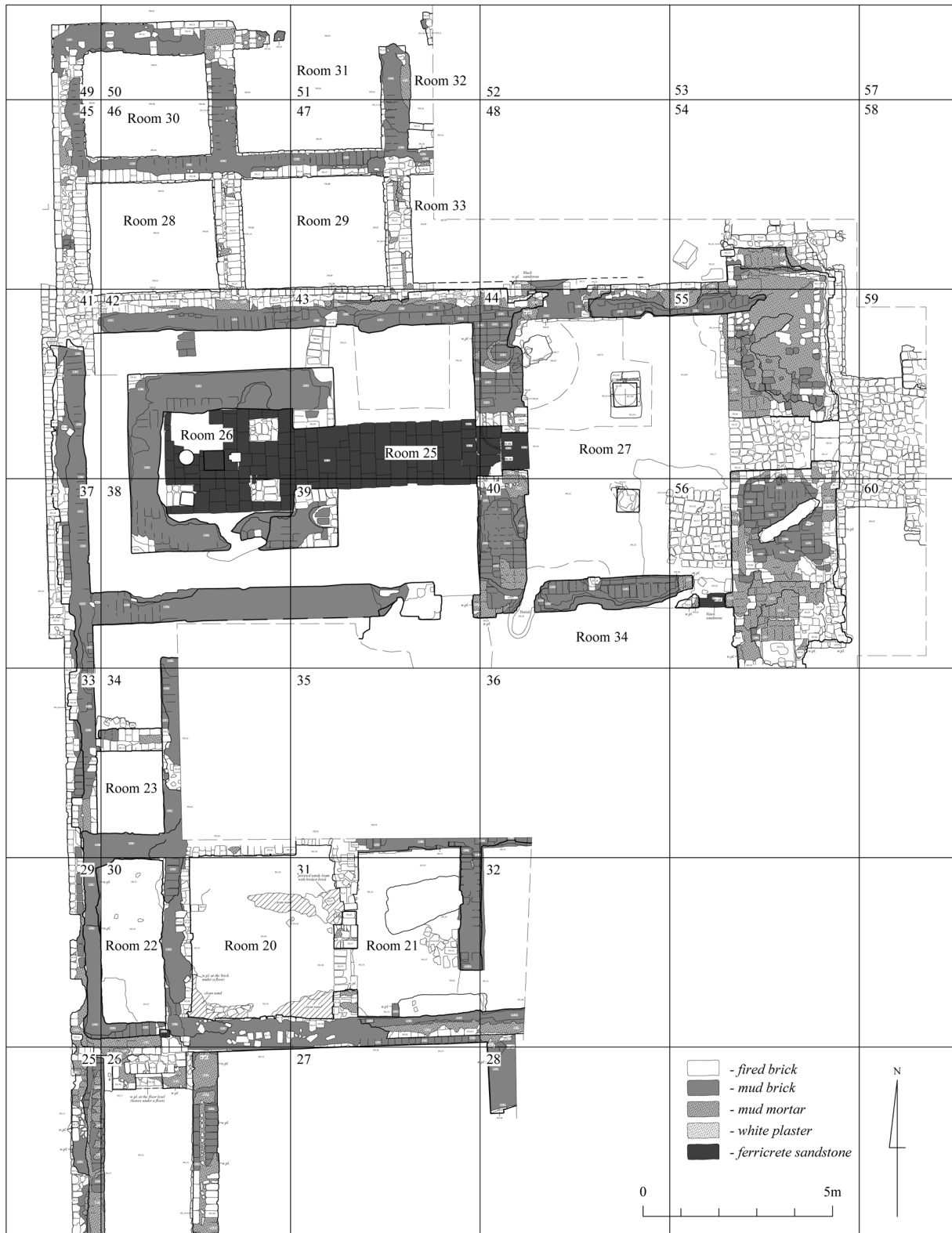


Fig. 1: Plan of the temple. Made by S. Vetokhov.



Fig. 2: 3D plan of the temple. Made by M. Lebedev.

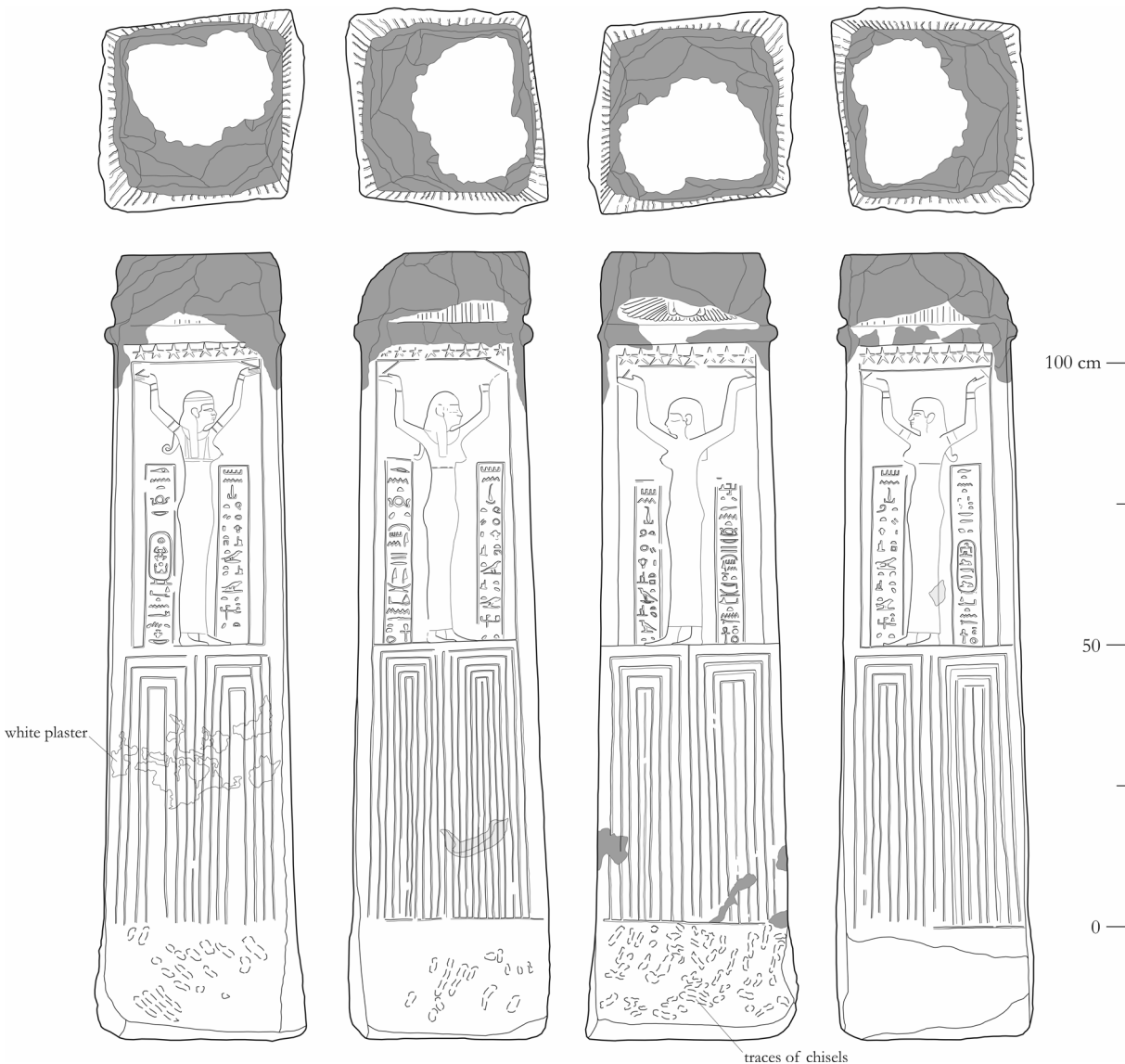


Fig. 3: Stand AE15/II-R26/st.1 Photo and drawing M. Lebedev.



Fig. 4: AE17/II-R36/st.1. Photo E.Fantusati, prepared for publication E. Krevchenko.



Fig. 5: Room 36 after removing stands. Photo M. Lebedev.

Different places of the bark's location were attested in the Nubian temples. For comparison, in speos and semi-speos, like Deir el Bahri and the Nubian temples of Ramses II, the bark on the basement was located in the last room of the sanctuary. The closest parallel to Abu Erteila is in Abu Simbel temple, where the bark was located in the southern chapel. The action took place also in the second hypostyle hall and sanctuary. In the temple of Derr the action

with the bark was also associated with the second hypostyle hall and sanctuary, in Wadi es Sebua, and in Gerf Hussein with a vestibule and sanctuary, and in Amara with a sanctuary², which can also be compared to the stand AE15/II-R26/st.1.

² Karlshausen Ch., *L'iconographie de la bark processionnelle divine en Égypte au Nouvel Empire*. Leuven, Paris, Walpole 2009, p. 329–330, p. 244, note 3.

In room 36, two stands were found (fig. 6, 7). At the time of its detection one of them (larger AE17/II-R36/st.1) was disposed on the sand, which remained under its bottom, where there was no slab on the pavement (fig. 3). The stand has the following dimensions: height: 89, 2 cm; width of base: 47, 2 x 48, 3 cm; - the top protrudes beyond the sides of the stand and has a size of 50, 9 x 51, 1 cm.

The stand has been preserved completely, only minor damages are on the cavetto area. The upper part of the side, related to Natakamani, has a decor in the form of a winged solar disk, surrounded by uraei, the other sides are decorated with the lines typical for the cavetto.

On each side of the sacred stand the ritual of supporting the sky, performed by the goddesses, is depicted. The goddesses are shown with arms raised upward, supporting the sky. The sky is marked by two oblique lines on the sides (as well as on a stand from room 26), above them is a characteristic frieze of five-pointed Meroitic stars (fig. 5).

The female figures have a stylistic resemblance to the figures on the stand from the room 26, the style is comparable to the style of the same goddesses from Edfu³. Each goddess in Abu Erteila has one broad bracelet on one hand.

The ritual was performed in favour of the royal family of Natakamani; Natakamani, Amanitore and Sorkaror are mentioned in the inscription. The ritual symbolized the unity of the earthly and heavenly powers and was associated with the journey of the bark with the cult statue, which made its way in the temple, imitating a similar action in the heaven. These finds indicate the influence and interaction of Meroitic and Egyptian theology of the turn of our era.

Under the basement of the AE17/II-R36/st.1 stand, one of the paving slabs has been removed, however, on the stand itself, there were no traces of the untreated surface in the lowest part, as it has been attested on the AE17/II-R36/st.2 stand, and on the stand AE15/II-R26/st.1. Accordingly, there is no reason to assume that the stand was dug into the ground. Its fixation could be carried out only by fastening the tiles around. In Wad Ben Naga, the altar A, which has remained in its place⁴, stood on a smooth screed, which can also be assumed with respect to the stand AE17/II-R36/st.1 at Abu Erteila.

3 Kurth D., *Wo Götter, Menschen und Tote lebten. Eine Studie zum Weltbild der Alten Ägypter*. Hützel 2016, p. 80, fig. 38.

4 Priese K.-H., *Wad Ben Naga 1844. Forschungen und Berichte*. Bd. 24. Berlin 1984, p. 13.

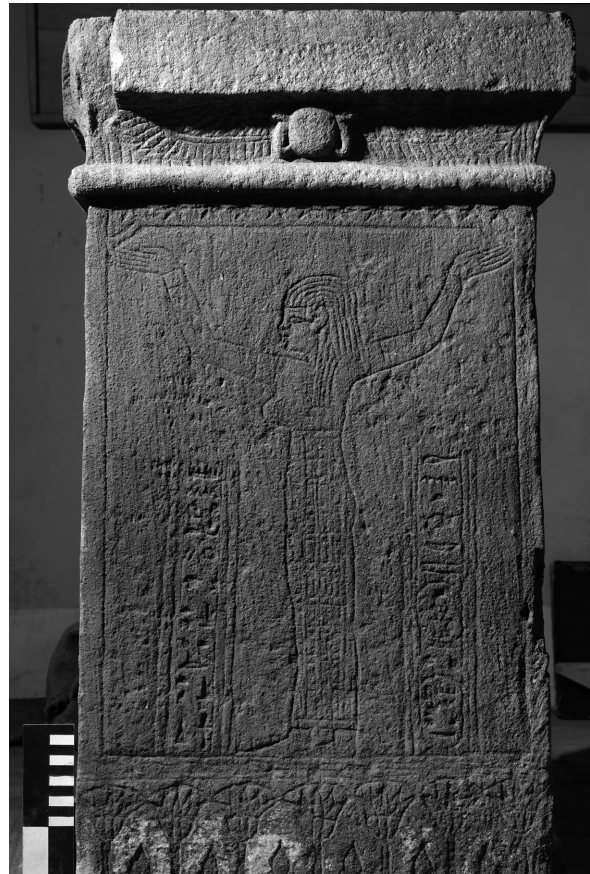


Fig. 6: Stand AE17/II-R36/st.1. Photo M. Lebedev.

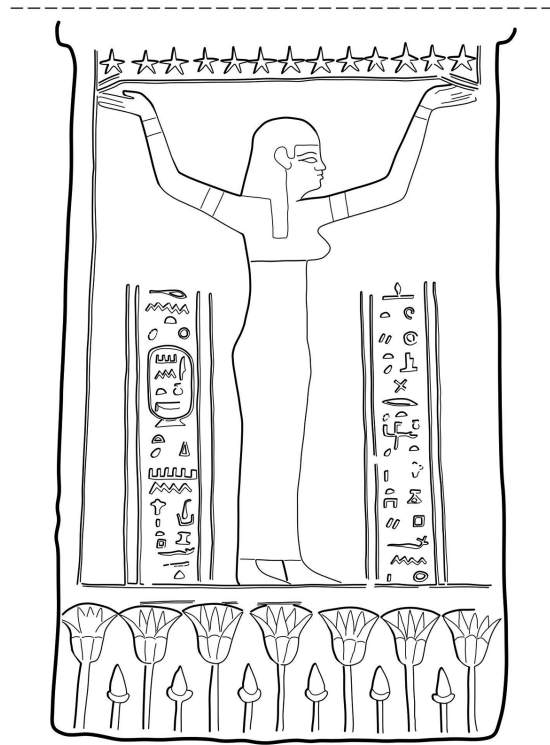
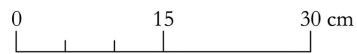
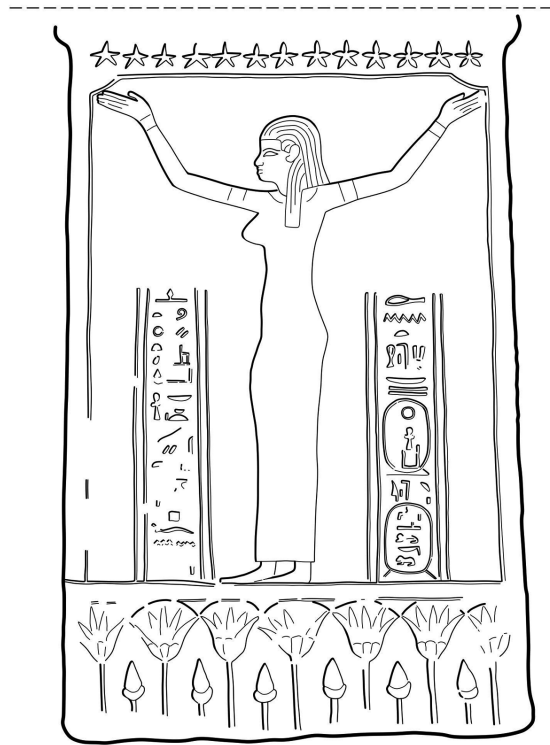
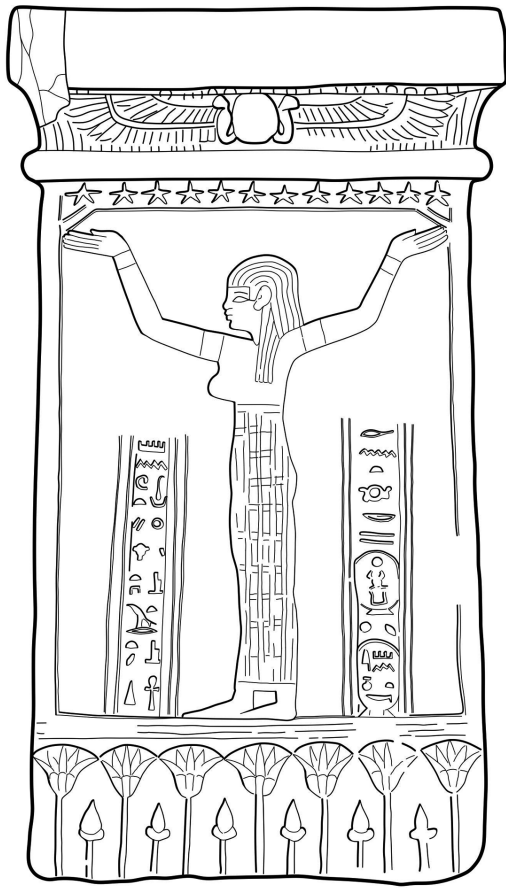


Fig. 6: Stand AE17/II-R36/st.1. drawing M. Lebedev.

Traces of a similar screed for three objects were found in room 26 around the altar (fig. 8) with the clear contours of three rectangular bases. Plates surrounding the proposed space for the construction were cut to a smaller size of possible anchorages, and the inner surface was stoned, apparently in ancient times after the functioning of the temple was ceased. The probability of the presence of columns or supports here is confirmed by the discovery of a fragment of sandstone with traces of the cartouche Amanitore (AE17/II-R25/st.3) on the level 391, 30 m. It was found inside the southern mud brick wall of possibly later origin.

The contours of the cartouche are decorated with dashed patterns, hieroglyphs and partially the surface of the fragment contains traces of a white plaster, possibly from a previously existed color (fig. 9). This arrangement of signs at the end of the Amanitore cartouche was attested by Griffith⁵ in the inscription from the pyramid, although in the latter there is one more reed flower (*yodh*) after these signs. Two other fragments of sandstone found here do not have a decor.

These findings suggest that the fragments could initially belong to one of the columns from the Natakamani temple – possibly to the sanctuary (26). The surviving hieroglyphs at the end of the cartouche suggest the presence of the names of the royal family on the columns, as it is in case in Amara and Naga.

On the stand AE17/II-R36/st.1, the entire lower part of the base has a decor in the form of a combination of lotus flower and buds, standing vertically. Their stem is rather short. Such décor is attested on many reliefs from different buildings in Philae.⁶

The upper part under the cavetto is framed by stars on all sides. The decor of the lotus is separated from the figures of women and the hieroglyphic text by three parallel lines carved into the relief (fig. 3, 4). The lotus on the base is a symbol of earthly existence, which in the Egyptian world-wide picture was considered the body of Geb (Heliopolis version), the

5 Crowfoot J.W. & Griffith F.Ll., *The Island of Meroë and Meroitic inscriptions*. London 1911, p. 79.

6 Beinlich H., *Die Photos der Preussischen Expedition 1908 – 1910 nach Nubien. Teil. 1: Photos 1-199*. Dettelbach 2010 on the Pylon – 0054, – 0055; Beinlich, H., *Die Photos der Preussischen Expedition 1908 – 1910 nach Nubien. Teil. 3: Photos 400-599*. Dettelbach 2011, internal wall of the vestibule of the Mammisi – 0461, – 0462; northern part of the 1. Pylon – 0506, – 0507; Beinlich, H., *Die Photos der Preussischen Expedition 1908 – 1910 nach Nubien. Teil. 4: Photos 600-799*. Dettelbach 2012, Kiosk – 0639, – 0640; Beinlich, H., *Die Photos der Preussischen Expedition 1908 – 1910 nach Nubien. Teil. 5: Photos 800-999*. Dettelbach 2012; Mammisi, Room III B 0950, B 0952.

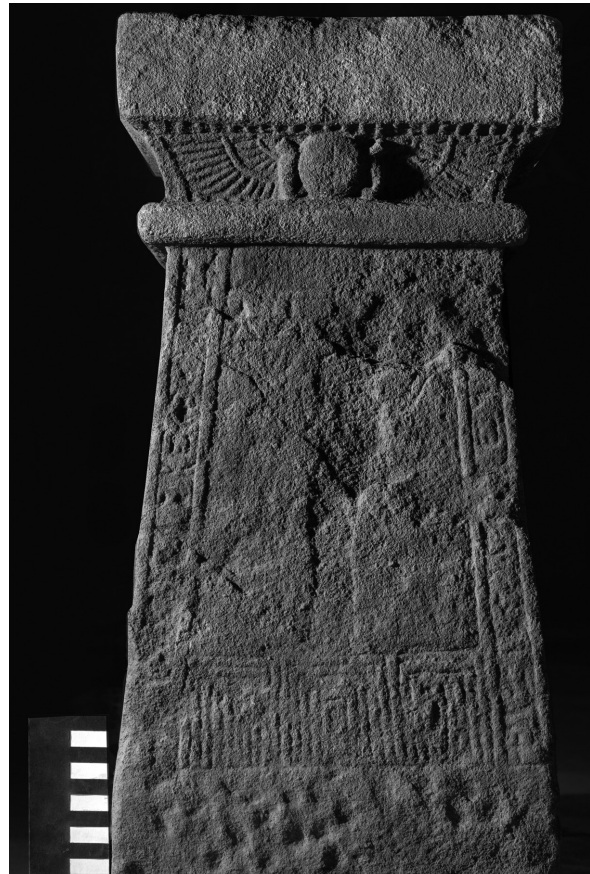


Fig. 7: Stand AE17/II-R36/st.2. Photo M. Lebedev.

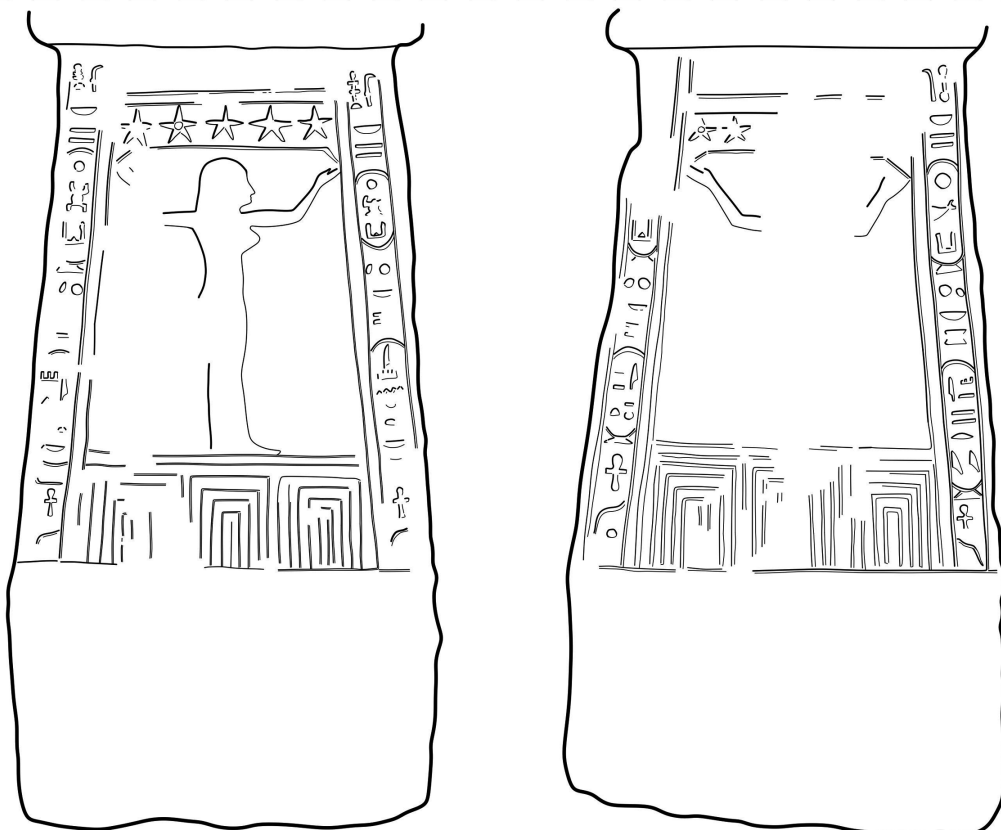
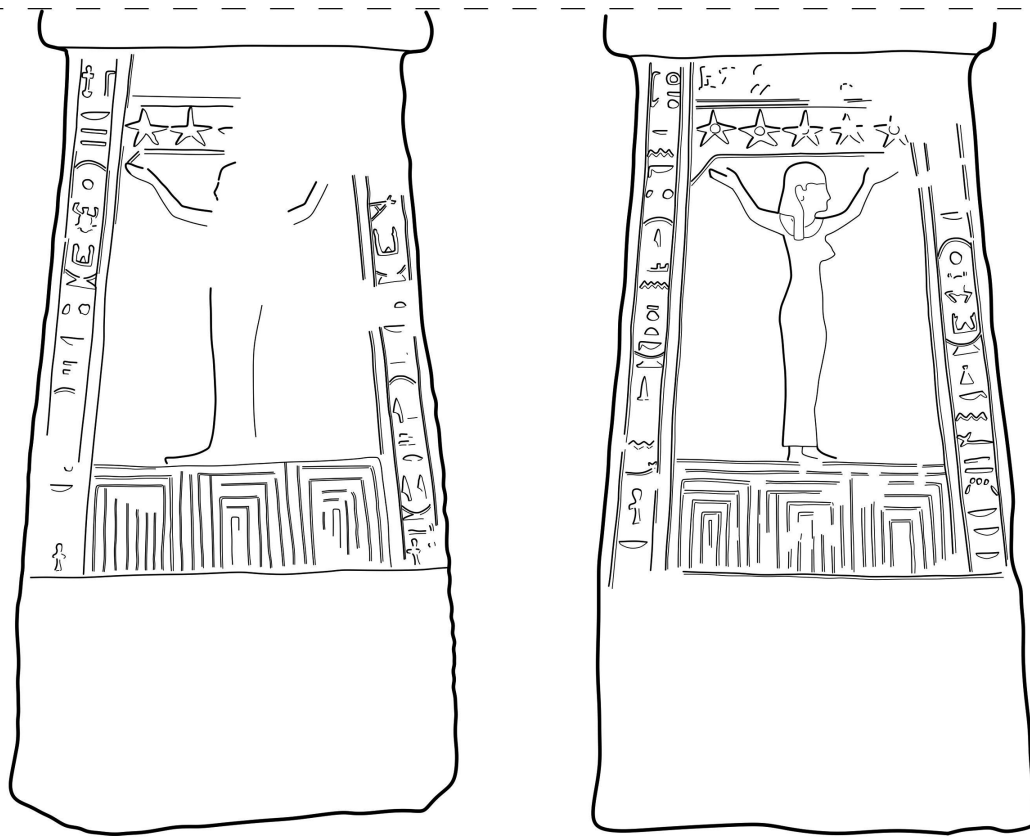


Fig. 7: Stand AE17/II-R36/st.2. drawing M. Lebedev.

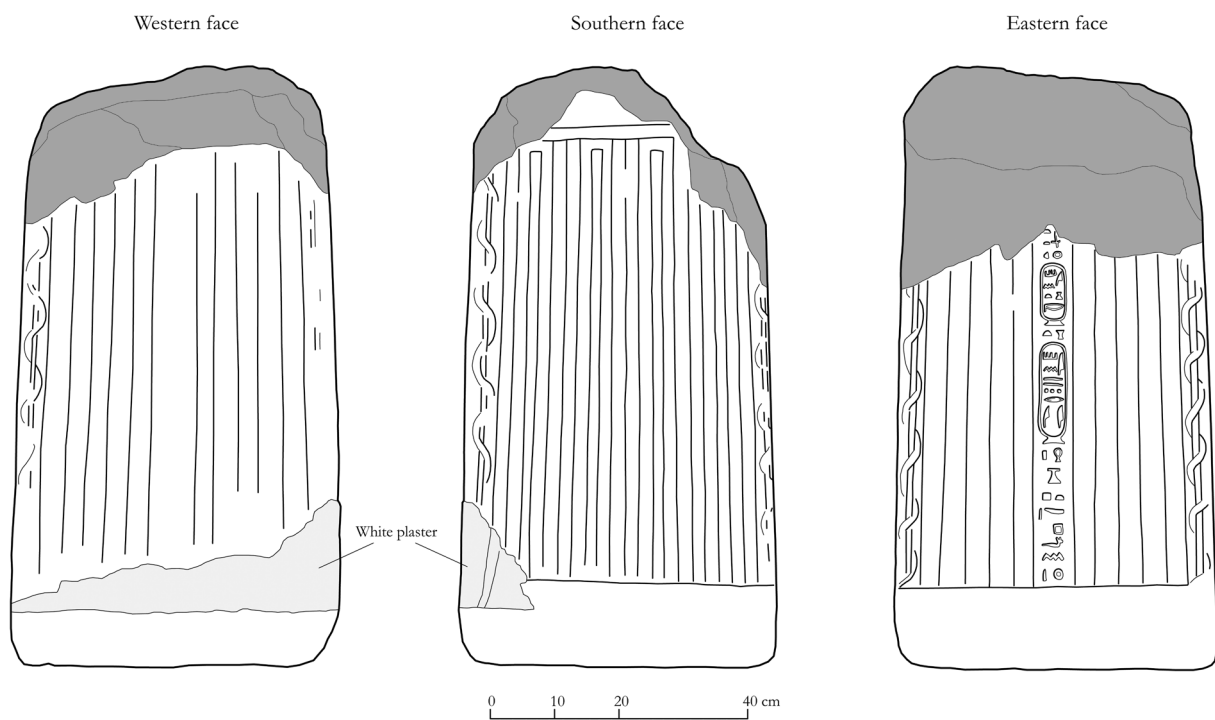


Fig. 8: Altar from the room 26. Photo E.Kormysheva, Drawing M. Lebedev



space between earth and heaven was considered as a space between two constants⁷. Semantically, the prototype of the stand with the bark was a divine bark in the sky, which moved along the ellipse of the sun.

Hieroglyphic inscriptions disposed in two columns on the stand from Abu Erteila are similar on each side and belong to the royal family of the king Natakamani, *kandake*⁸ Amanitore and the crown prince Sorkaror. The inscriptions on the four sides of the stand AE17/II-R36/st.2 (fig. 6) are not the same as on AE17/II-R36/st.1, there is much more damages in the inscriptions. The very inscriptions refer only to Natakamani and Amanitore.

STAND AE15/II-R26/ST.1⁹

Side of Natakamani



*mn.tj sp 2 hr st-wrt 3st wrt
mwt ntr jrj.n nswt bit nb t3wj <Imn-Nw-t-k> di.t n.f^cnh*

Be firm, be firm (1) on the Great Throne (2), o Great Isis (3), god's mother (4). (It) is done for the king (5), the Lord of Two Lands Natakamani, whom life is given.

Side of Natakamani (Kheper-ka-Re)



*mn.tj sp 2 hr st-wrt 3st wrt mwt ntr
jrj.nt nswt bit nb t3wj <Hpr-k3-R^c> di.t n.f 3wt-ib nb*

Be firm, be firm (1) on the Great Throne (2), o Great Isis (3), god's mother (4).

(It) is done (5) for the king, the Lord of Two Lands <Kheperkare > (6) whom joy is given.

Side of Amanitore



*mn.tj sp 2 hr st-wrt mwt ntr
irj.nt nswt bit <Imn-t3wj-r-y> di n.f^cnh*

Be firm, be firm (1) on the Great Throne (2), o Great Isis (3), god's mother (4).

(It) is done (5) for the queen, Amanitore, whom life is given.

7 Kurth D., *Den Himmel stützen. Die "tw3 pt"- Szenen in den ägyptischen Tempeln der griechisch-römischen Epoche.* Bruxelles 1975, p. 71–73.

8 According to the reading of the demotic graffiti Dak 17, proposed by C. Rilly with the reference to the specialists on demotic writing the royal names have to be read as Natakamani and *kandake* Amanitore. Date of ruling is 50 – 80 B.C. (see Rilly C. in: Calon O. et al., *Histoire et civilisations du Soudan de la préhistoire à nos jours.* Paris 2017, p. 271, 273).

9 My heartfelt thanks to Prof. D. Kurth for the assistance in work on this inscriptions.



Fig. 9: Sandstone fragment AE 17/ II-R25/st.3 with the traces of the cartouche Amanitore. Photo E.Kormysheva.

(It) is done for []⁽⁸⁾, the Lord of Rituals ⁽⁹⁾, Sorkaror ⁽⁷⁾ whom life is given.

STAND AEI7/II-R36/ST. 1

Text is written on all sides. Two columns of the text are in front of and behind the figures of the holders of the sky. The inscriptions are quite similar, the images of goddesses attest to the ritual *tw3 pt*, which is performed for the royal family of Natakamani, Amanitore and Sorkaror.

Side of Sorkaror



*mn.tj sp 2 hr st-wrt 3st wrt mwt ntr
jrj.t nt.f [...] nb jrj iht <Srkr> di.t n.f^cnh*

Be firm, be firm ⁽¹⁾ on the Great Throne ⁽²⁾, o Great Isis ⁽³⁾, god's mother ⁽⁴⁾.

Side of Natakamani



*mn.tj sp 2 hr st-wrt 3st di^c nh
jrj nt nswt bjt nb t3wj <Hpr-k3-R^c>
s3 R^c <Imn - Nw-t-k>*

Be firm, be firm ⁽¹⁾ on the Great Throne ⁽²⁾, o Isis, giving life.

(It) is done ⁽⁵⁾ for the king, Lord of the Two Lands <Kheperkare>, Son of Re <Natakamani>.



Fig. 10: Cartouche of Sorkaror. Photo E. Kormysheva.

Side of Amanitore



*htp.tw sp 2 3st wrt nst pfj⁽¹²⁾ n R^c
jrj nt hnwt nb t3wj <Mrj-k3-R^c>
hnwt(?) <Imn-t3wj-r-i>*



Be in peace, be in peace ⁽¹⁰⁾, o Great Isis ⁽³⁾ (on) this throne ⁽¹²⁾ of Re.

(It) is done ⁽⁵⁾ for the mistress, Lady of Two Lands <Merikare> ⁽¹¹⁾, mistress (?) <Amanitore>.

Another side with the name Natakamani



*h̄tp.tw sp 2 3st wrt mwt ntr hr nst pfj⁽¹²⁾ n R^c
jrj nt s3 R^c (?) <Imn Nw-t-k >di 'nh (??)
mn.tj hr nst pf n R^c*

Be in peace, be in peace ⁽¹⁰⁾, o Great Isis ⁽³⁾, the God's mother ⁽⁴⁾, on this throne ⁽¹²⁾ of Re. It is done for the king ⁽⁵⁾ <Natakamani>, given (?) (in order) he was firm on his throne of Re.

Side of Sorkaror



*h̄tp.tw sp 2 3st di 'nh nb i3.t [...] nst [...] pf n [R^c]
jrj nt [hm ntr??] nb t3wj <'nh-k3-R^c> [...] <Srkr>*

Be in peace, be in peace ⁽¹⁰⁾, o Isis giving life ⁽¹³⁾, Lady of the Sacred Hill (?)⁽¹⁴⁾ [...] on this throne ⁽¹²⁾ of Re.

(It) is done for [...] (?) <Ankhkare> ⁽¹⁵⁾ [...] <Sorkaror>⁽⁷⁾.

STAND AE17/II-R36/ST. 2

Stand AE17/II-R36/st.2 was found in the same room, to the east of the first one. It was found standing on a pavement of dark sandstone, respectively, it was not in the original position. Presumably its original location was in the northwest corner of this room (fig. 8), where a burial was found. The anthropoid pit for the burial violated the pavement and it was, in all likelihood, the reason for the displacement of the AE17/II-R36/st.2, which was previously installed here.

This stand is much smaller in size, its lateral surfaces are tapering upward. The size of the stand: height 62, 5 cm; width of the base 28, 5 x 27, 8 cm. It has also a protruding top, its size is 27, 3 x 27, 7 cm. The basic decor is identical to the decor of the large stand. However, the lower part under the figures of women and the inscriptions on all four surfaces was decorated with palace facade, identical to what was found on the stand from the room 26.

Side with the throne names of Natakamani and Amanitore



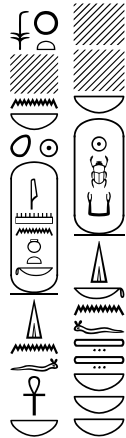
*ntr nfr nb t3wj <Hpr-k3-R^c> s3 R^c
nb t3wj [<Imn Nw-t-k>]nb [...]di 'nh
[...] <Mrj-k3-R^c> [hnw]t (???) nb [...]
<Imn-t3wj-r-j>di 'nh*

Perfect god, Lord of Two Lands <Kheperkare> ⁽⁶⁾, Son of Re, Lord of Two Lands [<Natakamani>], lord, given life.

[...] Merikare ⁽¹¹⁾ [...], [mistre]ss, lady [...] <Amanitore>, given life.



Side of Natakamani

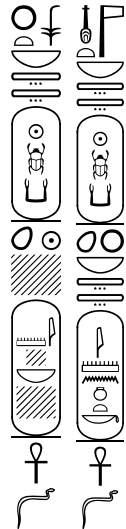


*nswt (?) [...] n nb s3 R^c <Imn- Nw-t-k> di n.f ^cnh nb
[...] nb <Hpr- k3- R^c> di.k n.f t3wj nbw*

The king (?), lord, Son of Re, <Natakamani>, all life is given to him.

[...] lord, <Kheperkare> ⁽⁶⁾, all lands you give him ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Side of Natakamani



*nswt nb t3wj <Hpr-k3- R^c> s3 R^c [...] <Im[n]- [Nw-t]-k> ^cnh dt
ntr nfrt nb t3wj <Hpr-k3- R^c> s3 R^c
nb t^cwj <Imn- Nw-t-k> ^cnh dt*

The king, Lord of Two Lands, Kheperkare, Son of Re [...], Na[ta]kama[ni], living forever.

The good god, Lord of Two Lands Kheperkare Son Re, Lord of Two Lands, Natakamani, living forever.

Side of Natakamani and Amanitore



*[...] <[...] k3> s3 R^c nb t3wj <Imn - Nw-t-[k]> ^cnh dt
ntr nfr nb t3wj <Mrj- k3- R^c> s3 R^c nb t3wj
<Imn - t3wj- r-y> ^cnh dt*

[...] <[Kheper]ka[Re] ⁽⁶⁾, Son of Re, Lord of Two Lands Nata[ka]mani, living forever.

Perfect god, Lord of Two Lands <Merikare> ⁽¹¹⁾, Son of Re, Lord of Two Lands <Amanitore>, living forever.

The specificity of this monument, unlike other supports, is in the disposition of the entire text, which is located on the sides of the stand, respectively, two columns on each side. Sorkaror's name is not mentioned anywhere. The content is also different from other stands, there is no name of Isis, the title "Son Re" is often repeated.

Comments:

⁽¹⁾ The phrase *mn.tw*, with which the text begins on four sides of the sacred stand, was in use starting from the Old Kingdom in different meanings. In this case, the most acceptable value is "dauern sein" – standing constantly (firmly).¹⁰ In the New Kingdom values do not change.¹¹ According to the assumption of Priese, the grammatical form *mn.tw* is an imperative in the similar phrase from Wad Ben Naga, after which a subject pronoun is used ('stay you').¹² Kurth has noted that in this case the phrase from Wad Ben Naga should be understood as

10 Wb. II, 60, 6-9; Hannig R., *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch I. Altes Reich und Erste Zwischenzeit*. Mainz am Rhein, 2003, p. 527 (4).

11 Lesko L.H., *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian*. Providence 2002, Vol. 1, p. 183–184.

12 Priese, Wad Ben Naga...p. 25 (a).



mn.tj - second person pseudo-participle with phrases containing a wish. He refers to the spelling (𓄿𓏏) that occurs in Dendera, and is also attested in the Erman's grammar already for the end of the New Kingdom.¹³ It corresponds to the rendering of this word-combination in the phrase from Abu Erteila. Given the context, namely, the reference to Isis, it is certainly more logical to treat this phrase as a request-wish form, taking into account, in particular, the graphic transfer a pseudo-participle's end, having parallels in other inscriptions. The interpretation of Prieše may agree with Kurth's opinion about the elliptical character of the pseudo-participle form as a wish, since the imperative with the same reason can be considered as an ellipse, which stems from its morphological features.¹⁴

The etymological meaning of the word *mn* "to be strong, to possess"¹⁵ indicates the meaning of the action described in the text, namely, ascension to the sky, which in turn was able to confirm the omnipotence of Isis, the possessor of the Great Throne, on which she is in the naos of the bark and her benediction of the royal family of Natakamani.

(²) The word 'place', 'throne' 𓄿𓏏 is written in all cases as 𓄿𓏏. The phrase "Great Throne" ("Great Place") with the semantically identical name of Isis dates back to the Pyramid Texts.¹⁶ Originally the term referred to a place, where a king or a god could be, but then it began to designate the pedestal on which the divine bark was located. A number of examples testify to the use of this phrase for the designation of the sanctuary or even the whole temple.¹⁷ In Greco-Roman temples "entering to the Great place" pictured a king in the position "der Haltung", "Gott schauen".¹⁸ The word combination "Great Throne" with different paleographical variants of the determinative is attested in Egypt very early.¹⁹ The

transliteration *wrr/wrrt*, proposed by Kuhlmann, did not correspond to the common transliteration given in the dictionaries. I suppose that it is not necessary to make a reduplication *r* in the transliteration, which is here a phonetic complement to the bilateral sign.

Regarding the paleography 𓄿𓏏 it must be noted that Prieše suggested that the rectangle sign in this variant denotes a piece of stone and a support for the object.²⁰ Another example may confirm this supposition, namely the phrase "Lord of Two Lands, child", which is attested in the inscription from Kom Ombo. Here, after the article *p3* the hieroglyph of the sphinx is cut, which is inscribed after it with two rectangular briquettes and the hieroglyph of the child with a finger in his mouth.²¹ Rectangles in this case emphasize the material from which the sphinx was made and the pedestal on which it is located. An additional sign in the form of a rectangle in the word "throne" is on a stand from Wad Ben Naga,²² according to Kurth it is a determinative of *st wrt* and presents a parallel to the sign *pr*.²³ The same paleography is attested on the altar from room 26 of Abu Erteila.²⁴ The word composition "Great Throne" in this case is a wordplay regarding the Isis name,²⁵ it refers to the naos with the statue disposed on the bark. The word composition "Great Throne" was used for the designation of other gods, which was reflected in the temple inscriptions. The example is

the epithet of Ptah: 𓄿𓏏 𓄿𓏏 in the temple of Abu

Simbel (Ramses II),²⁶ or 𓄿𓏏 𓄿𓏏 𓄿𓏏 ²⁷, also the epithet of Amun-Re-Kamutef in the temple Derr.²⁸

Herrschaftszeichens. Glückstadt 1977, p. 16–19.

20 Prieše, Wad Ben Naga... p. 25.

21 LÄGG III, 2002, p. 11 – *p3 hr*

22 Prieše K.-H., *Das Ägyptische Museum Berlin. (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrusammlung)*. Mainz 1991, p. 255, 263; Répertoire d'épigraphie méroïtique. Corpus des inscriptions publiée. Sous la direction de J. Leclant. Paris 2000, tome 1, (further REM), REM 0041; Kurth, *Wo Götter...* p. 205–210, Quelle 208.

23 Kurth, *Wo Götter...* p. 206, n. 1833.

24 Kormysheva E., Remnants of the Temple Complex at Abu Erteila (II), in: *Proceedings of the 13 Conference for Meroitic Studies*. Prague (in press).

25 Variants of the Isis name, exactly repeated this word combination see: LÄGG I, p. 69.

26 Černý J., Donadoni S., Abou-Simbel. Porte d'entrée et Grande Salle F. Textes hieroglyphiques. Le Caire s.d. 19.

27 Ibid., F 15 (c); F 49; Fouad Abdel Hamid avec la collab. de S. Donadoni et de Ch. Leblanc. *Grand Temple d'Abou Simbel*. Vol. III. *Les salles du Trésor sud*. [fasc.II]. Le Caire 1975, pl. VIII.

28 Blackman A.M., *The temple of Derr*. Le Caire 1913, p. 44, pl. XXXII, XXXIII.

13 Kurth D., *Einführung ins Ptolemäische. Eine Grammatik mit Zeichenliste und Übungsstücken*. Teil 2. Hützel 2008, p. 724, § 140b, Anm. 7; S. 1014–1015, § 277A.

14 Kurth, *Einführung...* p. 1014, n.6.

15 Takács G., *Etymological Dictionary of Egyptian*. Leiden, Boston 2008, vol. III, p. 221.

16 Bergman J., *Ich bin Isis. Studien zum memphitischen Hintergrund der griechischen Isisaretologien*. Uppsala 1968, p. 127–130.

17 Wilson, P., *A Ptolemaic Lexikon. A Lexicographical Study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu*. Leuven 1997, p. 948–949.

18 Beinlich H., *Handbuch der Szenentitel in den Tempeln der griechisch-römischen Zeit Ägyptens. Die Titel der Ritualszenen, ihre korrespondierenden Szenen und ihre Darstellungen. Teil. I. Studien zu den Ritualszenen altägyptischer Tempel*. Band 3, Dettelbach 2008, p. 52.

19 Kuhlmann K., *Der Thron im alten Ägypten. Untersuchungen zu Semantik, Ikonographie und Symbolik eines*



(³) The paleographic features of the inscriptions from Wad Ben Naga, which are visible on the photographs, as well as in the copy of the inscriptions reproduced by Lepsius, present the option of writing *wr* as a swallow with a phonetic complement *r*. The signs are not separated, the swallow is sitting on the *r* sign.²⁹ The same position is observed at Abu Erteila on stands from room 36. It is also worth noting the inversion of the Q1 sign both in the name of Isis and in the phrase “Great throne”.

(⁴) Graphic rendering of the Isis epithet the “Mother of God” is typical for inscriptions in Greco-Roman times.³⁰

(⁵) This part of the phrase should be considered as a variant of the formula for establishing *jrj n.f* (*Stiftungsformel*), the first evidence of which refers to the IV dynasty, and which existed in the Egyptian epigraphy until the Late Period. The actions, introduced by this phrase, were fulfilled with the aim of endowing the subject with life³¹ that corresponds to the studied inscriptions. These formulas were written on the elements of sacral architecture, which include stands for the sacred bark, where they appear on the sidewalls, and are in particular related to the *tw3 pt*. On our object the phrase was used as a consecrate formula (*Weibeformeln*).³² The inscription may be commented as *irj n.f*, where *n.f* renders dative, and is a direct object of the action.³³ A variation of this phrase *irj.t n.f* (which is often met starting from the Old Kingdom), may serve as example from Ramesside period,³⁴ which variations might serve as a model for Egyptian epigraphy in Nubia.

The graphics attested on the object from Abu Erteila in this formula have two varieties: *irj nt.f* and *irj.t nt.f*, which is a variant of *irj n.f di ʿnh* with the meaning – ‘it is done for the one who has given life’, which omits the suffix. The ability of the formula to be used without an expressed subject suggests that the suffix after *n* is the direct object rather than the subject of the verb *irj*.³⁵ The presence of *t* is probably

explained by the fact that the ritual action was performed by goddesses supporting the sky, although due to the absence of a grammatical ending as an indicator of gender at that time, this case cannot be considered as a rule. The samples with an active verb, which in its agreement with feminine donor have a final *t* from Dynasty XVIII and later are exposed by Teeter with the reference to Fischer.³⁶

The establishment formula *jrj.(j) n.f* denoted giving life to the subject in the context of the inscriptions from Abu Erteila seems to assume the meaning – *jrj.(j) n ...*, as “I (= goddess-holder the sky) do for ...”.³⁷

(⁶) Throne name of Natakamani *hpr-k3-Rc* was borrowed from that of Senwosret I,³⁸ later this name belonged to Nectanebo, Arnekamani, Malowiebamani.³⁹

(⁷) The identification of the sign Aa 18 (fig. 10, 11) with the phonetic value *s*, *s3*,⁴⁰ *s*, *sj3*,⁴¹ on my view is without any doubt due to its paleographical peculiarities, fixed in the cartouches. This shape has many analogues in the Egyptian texts.⁴² An alternative reading *s3 - pr - ʿ3 (š) -r-k-r*, proposed by Fantusati,⁴³ in my opinion, is impossible due to the general direction and the configuration of the signs, the lack of space for three signs in the inner space of this cartouche, taking into account the need for a proportional distance between them, a violation of the direction of the hieroglyph when the sign interpreted by Fantusati as *s3* turns in the opposite direction of the other hieroglyphs. A similar inversion for this sign is not attested in other inscriptions. The sign, which Fantusati took for ʿ3, is located at a very small distance from the sign, which he interprets as *pr*. This is the horizontal line, which is the lower line of the Aa 18 sign. In the reading proposed by Fantusati, the strong consonant *s* disappears from the

29 Priese, Wad Ban Naga..., p. 14 B 3, B 7, B11, A3, A 8; Kurth, Wo Götter... p. 205, fig. 73; p. 207, fig. 74.

30 Kurth D., Einführung ins Ptolemäische. Eine Grammatik mit Zeichenliste und Übungsstücken. Hützel, Teil 1, 2007, p. 174 (65)

31 Phrases are studied in Grallert S., Bauen – Stiften – Weißen. Ägyptische Bau- und Restaurierunginschriften von den Anfängen bis zur 30. Dynastie, Berlin 2001, p. 93.

32 Grallert, Bauen... p. 47.

33 Teeter E., The presentation of Maat. Ritual and Legitimacy in Ancient Egypt. Chicago, 1997, p. 65–66 with the transliteration the verb as *ir*. The conclusion is based in particular on the analysis of the subsequent inscription from Beit el Wali temple (Ibid., p. 67–68).

34 Cit. by the list studied in Grallert, Bauen... p. 100–108.

35 Teeter, The presentation... p. 66.

36 Ibid., p. 65, note 142 (formula *di ʿnh* and p. 66, note 150, formula *irj n di ʿnh*)

37 Grallert, Bauen... p. 93; Cf. Kurth, Wo Götter... p. 206, n. 1835.

38 Méroé un empire sur le Nil. Sous la direction de M. Baud. Paris 2010, p. 74.

39 Beckerath J. von, Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen. Mainz 1999, p. 83 T, 227 T, 273, T1, 277 T 1.

40 Dumas F., Valeurs phonétiques des signes hiéroglyphiques d’époque Gréco-romaine. Montpellier 1995, vol. IV, p. 835 N 33 (2683) et N 35 (2155).

41 Kurth D., Einführung ins Ptolemäische. Eine Grammatik mit Zeichenliste und Übungsstücken. Teil. 1. Hützel 2007, p. 446 (3. Phonogramme) – *s3*, *s*, *sj3*.

42 Examples *s*. in Kormysheva E., Remnants of the Temple Complex at Abu Erteila (II). Proceedings of the 13 Conference for Meroitic Studies. Prague 2016. Prague (in press).

43 Fantusati E., Abu Erteila’s stand: A short note. BzS, Bd.12, 2017, p. 85.

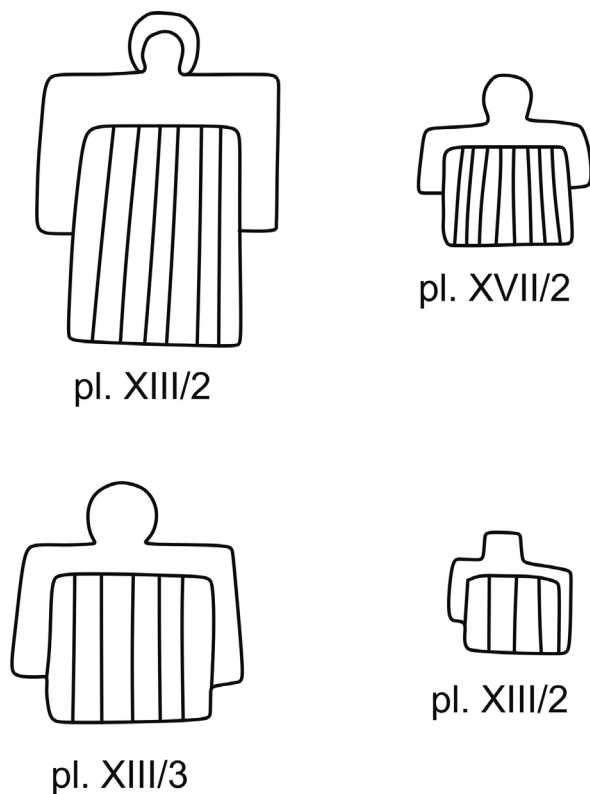


Fig. 11: Paleography of the sign Aa18, after Meeks, D. *Les architraves du Temple d'Esna. Paléographie. Le Caire 2004*, p. 235, 350, § 634 (c).

name of Sorkaror, it has no place, and in the proposed transliteration of the name of Sorkaror it is added in parentheses.

The analogue of the rendering the name of Sorkaror at Jebel Geili with the Meroitic hieroglyphs has vowels and is transliterated as Sorkhror. The cartouche is preceded by the royal title *nswt bjt* and *nb t3wj*, which was characteristic for Meroitic inscriptions. Another cartouche with the partly damaged hieroglyphs and the same title is read as [...] *qnhlme*.⁴⁴ The presence of two cartouches with different names may be an evidence of the fact that one of them contains a proper name, the other his throne name, which he accepted already after succession to the throne. In this case, his throne name was intentionally changed to distinguish him from other applicants.

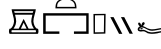
44 REM 0002. I support this transliteration, although Hintze supposed reading *Mnšlhe* (Hintze F., Preliminary Report of the Butana Expedition 1958 made by the Institute for Egyptology of the Humboldt University, Berlin. *Kush*. Vol. VII, 1959, p. 190). According to Török the throne name of Sorkaror composed of the name of Amun and the epithet *lh* – “great” (Fontes Historie Nubiorum III, Bergen 1998, p. 911), that also does not corresponds to the transliteration proposed in REM.

(8) Signs “Two Lands” in the inscription are missing, although there is a place for them on the surface of the stone. The surface is smooth, being prepared for cutting, but any traces of a cutter are not preserved. Most likely, the carver simply forgot to cut them.

(9) The signs before the cartouche of Sorkaror are not clear, except the title *nb ir jht* (Wb I, 124, 12) – “lord of rituals” (verbatim: “making things”) is clear. This title, for example, is attested on the Senkamanisken statue from Dangeil.⁴⁵

(10) The phrase “be in peace” points to the position of Isis in her sacred bark and to the ritual procession, in which the sacred bark had a station on the special place in order to be venerated by priest and royal family and to receive offerings.

(11) The name of Amanitore – *Mrj-k3-Rc* goes back to the Middle Kingdom, it was the throne name of Aspelta,⁴⁶ from whom Amanitore probably borrowed this name.

(12) The phrase  has analogues on the other sides of the sacred stand, the same phrase is on the altar, found in the sanctuary (26).⁴⁷ This phrase has the demonstrative pronoun *pf*, which has the form *pfj* in the inscriptions from Edfu and Dendera.⁴⁸ In case of Abu Erteila this pronoun accentuated the importance of the action – given the throne of Re as the result of the ritual action.

(13) This epithet of Isis differs from other her designations on the stands.

(14) The variant *3st 3st*, which is written on the side of Sorkaror, relates Isis to the sacred hill. This sign is part of a number of geographical names of the temples where Isis was worshiped during the Greco-Roman period, including Abaton.⁴⁹ Probably it is a reflection of the close contacts between Egyptian (Philae) and Meroitic theology.

(15) On the sacred stand AE17/II-R36/st. 1 the throne name of Sorkaror *nh-k3-Rc* is attested for the first time. This throne name of Sorkaror *nh-k3-Rc* belonged to different kings – Psammetich III, Anlamani, two other sons of Natakamani and Amanitore – Arakakhataror⁵⁰ and Arikankharor, and also

45 Anderson, J., Salah El Din Mohamed Ahmed, Excavations in the Temple Precinct of Dangeil. Sudan. Bookleter 2010, p. 27.

46 Beckerath, Handbuch... S. 75, T3*, 269 T.

47 More detailed see Kormysheva, Remnants... (in press)

48 On this matter see: Kurth D., Einführung ins Ptolemäische. Eine Grammatik mit Zeichenliste und Übungsstücken. Teil 2. Hützel 2008, p. 626-627.

49 LGG I, 2002, p. 92-94.

50 This reading was established by Francigny who analysed the inscription on the abaci of the column in the Amun temple at Naga and the finds on Sai. As Francigny has



to the last kings of Meroe – Tekrideamani and Arite-nyesbohe.⁵¹ It can be assumed that the same names were originally given to all three potential heirs of the throne. This assumption is based on another name in the cartouche in Jebel Geili (see also note 7), where the stylistics of the image with the participation of Sorkaror leaves no doubt that he is a king.

(¹⁶)The initial part of the inscription has been lost. The proposed translation is conditional.

The text of the inscriptions on the stand AE17 / RII-36 / st.1 is similar to the inscriptions on the stand from room 26, all of them give evidence of the ritual *tw3 pt* in the temple of Abu Erteila.

The phrase “stay, stay (or: ‘be strong, be strong’) on the Grand Place, oh Great Isis, the Mother of God,” is pronounced by the goddess, who symbolized the pillars of heaven. In the inscriptions from Wad Ben Naga similar text is pronounced by Natakamani and Amanitore. Accordingly, the aim of the text from Abu Erteila was to fulfill the ritual *tw3 pt*, which was performed by goddesses addressed to Isis, pronouncing the text referred to Natakamani, Amanitore and Sorkaror. In exchange of this action the king was endowed with life according to the principle *do ut des*, which was implemented from the construction of the monument itself and the appearance of the goddess supporting the sky on it.

On the object from Abu Erteila, as well as on a number of other similar Kushite monuments the sky image points to the object that floats on the sky with the image of god. In general, supports were used for statues, naos or the sacred barks. They had the cubic form and have been topped by eaves with *cavetto*.

The ritual *tw3 pt* connected with the earth and heaven space has very ancient origin. Kurt studied more than 20 examples from the Pyramid Texts, Sarcophagus Texts, the Book of the Dead, Magical papyri, which reflects the idea and ways of transition of the deceased into the sky.⁵² These data testify to the existence of a prototype of the ritual *tw3 pt*, where both gods and the king are associated with the supporting sky. The picturing of the scenes with the *tw3 pt* ritual appeared in the temples under Seti I and Ramses II, in the temple of Karnak and were

represented in the Egyptian temples up to the time of Trajan (the temple of Esna).⁵³

A comparative analysis of the phrases from Abu Erteila with the texts of the sky-holders in Wad Ben Naga, Dendera, Edfu shows the identity of purpose and action, but in the texts, unlike Abu Erteila, the action itself is called as the supporting the sky for Isis or for the lord of heaven.⁵⁴ These ideas of Egyptian origin have disseminated in the ancient Sudan, images and texts are known there from the XXV dynasty and to the reign of Natakamani.⁵⁵

In the iconographic program of the stands from Abu Erteila and Wad Ben Naga, the images of the divine holders were either embodied by the king himself, or by goddesses. The accompanying text gives a pattern of divergence, it does not mention “supporting the sky”, this action is transmitted only in an image unlike a similar text from Wad Ban Naga, where the action of the sky raising is conveyed by the ideogram *ḥj pt*. In Abu Erteila, the text does not have this or a similar word combination, but gives the meaning and purpose of the scene – the image of the goddess Isis, raised to heavenly space for the blessing of the reign of the royal family. The sky-holders perform the ritual of raising Isis in favor of the royal family, which is confirmed by the phrase “made for”. Analysis of the *tw3 pt* scenes, undertaken by Kurth, has demonstrated that as a result of the ritual, the king obtained the kingdom of Atum, dominance over the world, the forces of divine sky holders, the breath of life, the strength, the forces to kill enemies, power on the earth, the throne of Re.⁵⁶ Accordingly, the purpose, semantics and the aim of the ritual are connected with the main constant of the king’s power and its divine nature. In other words it is a part of repeatedly cycle of legitimization of the ruler and confirmation of his ability to be a ruler. Such rituals were known in Egypt and very probable were accepted in the ancient Sudan.

Obviously, there is a certain regularity in the fact that one of the supports, namely, the altar A in Wad Ben Naga, and AE17/II-R36/st. 1 at Abu Erteila, is larger and better preserved, it stands so that the image of the king with the corresponding inscriptions is

supposed Arakakhatror was a prince of Sai. After his death the temple at Amara was constructed (Francigny V., Le prince Arakakhatror. La Pioche et la plume. *Autour de Soudan, du Liban et de la Jordanie. Hommages archéologiques à Patrice Lenoble*. Paris 2011, p. 404–406).

51 Beckerath, 1999, p. 219, T2, 269 T, 273 T1, 275, 48 b, 48 c, 281 (57, 62). The similar throne name – *K3 - ḥj - R* had Nastasen (Ibid., p. 269).

52 Kurth, *Wo Götter...*, p. 3–23.

53 Ibid., p. 22–25, Quelle 59; 26–27, Quelle 60, p. 162, Quelle 184; Earlier, the scene of supporting the sky by the king is shown on the stand of Seti I, but with a different pose of the king – with two hands of the king facing each other (Ibid., p. 36–37).

54 Ibid., p. 208–209.

55 See: Aldenhoven K., Kushite bark stands. *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond. Proceedings of the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies*. Leuven, Paris, Walpole 2014, p. 601–609.

56 Kurth, *Wo Götter...*, p. 255–256.



located on the (eastern) western side, which is most likely caused by an association with the axis of the visible daytime movement of the sun.

The eastern side of the stand from Abu Erteila, where there is a cartouche with the personal name of Natakamani, is decorated from above under a cavetto by the winged sun disc. Other sides have a linear pattern on the cavetto. In a similar way the decoration was made in Wad Ben Naga, where the sun disc surrounded by uraei is pictured only above Natakamani.⁵⁷

Unlike Abu Erteila, where the text on all sides is related to Isis, the second altar (V) in Wad Ben Naga is dedicated to Hathor. At Abu Erteila, there are images of only goddesses supporting the sky, while at Wad Ben Naga, the king, queen and goddesses supporting the sky with their names are pictured. At Wad Ben Naga, as at Abu Erteila, the text is inscribed in Egyptian hieroglyphs, however, the proper names of the king and the queen in Wad Ben Naga are written with Meroitic hieroglyphs, while in Abu Erteila all the royal names are written with Egyptian hieroglyphs.

The text component of the iconographic program of the stand reflects the ritual associated with the lifting up Isis sitting on the throne, from the basement on the earth to the celestial sphere, over other gods, which is evident when compared with similar texts on a stand from Dendera and on the column of the inner hypostyle of Edfu.⁵⁸

For the first time, the sky-holders, as a group composed of four women, are attested in Edfu (the time of Ptolemy VIII of Everget II), which served as a model for Dendera. The names of these four goddesses – *h'jt*, *tw3jt*, *hjt*, *f3jt*, is the offspring of the theology of the Ptolemaic time. They appear as functional symbols, their names are verbal participles. The material from Dendera demonstrates that the names of these four goddesses are related to the movement of the sun, in particular *hj* to rise, *h'c* to stand, corresponds to the highest standing – the sun in the south *f3j* / *tw3* to wear, maintain.⁵⁹

If one tries to correlate the location of the stands with the alignment of the world, then the eastern side of the stands AE17/II-R36/st. 1, and AE17/II-R36/st. 2 at Abu Erteila belonged to Natakamani. This was probably due to the axial orientation of the entire temple – east-west. In Wad Ben Naga on the stand C, the king was on the north side.⁶⁰

The second column of inscriptions indicates to the purpose of the action – it is done for the king, the

kandake and Sorkaror. The general context and content of the inscriptions make it possible to estimate the ritual of supporting the sky with the ascension of goddess Isis as an act performed for the royal family, whose names are in the text after the phrase *jrj n*, which denotes the purpose of the action.

The aim of the ritual *tw3 pt* was the reproducing the act of creation, in this case it is connected with the royal house of Meroe, in favor of which Isis ascends to heaven. One can assume that the execution of this ritual was due to the legitimization of the ruler and the confirmation of the power of the ruling family of the kingdom of Meroe. The presence of one of their sons, Sorkaror, is especially significant. Together with his parents, he participates in the ritual and accordingly becomes his beneficiary.

It seems that the execution of the ritual *tw3 pt* in Abu Erteila was due to the special position of Sorkaror – probably his own investment. The distinguished feature of the *tw3 pt* scenes from Abu Erteila is the recognition of Sorkaror, who is an active and equal participant on this ritual in contrast with other heirs. Participation in the ritual elevated and distinguished Sorkaror, in turn gave him obvious advantages over other applicants.

This assumption is indirectly confirmed by the presence of two cartouches with different names written by Meroitic hieroglyphs, in the scene from Jebel Geili, where the entire composition gives evidences of the royal status of Sorkaror. It can be assumed that his ascension to the throne was confirmed in Abu Erteila, where during the reign of Natakamani, the ritual *tw3 pt* was executed in order to maintain and confirm the legitimacy of the royal family.

In time of Natakamani the evidences of this ritual were preserved in Wad Ben Naga as well as in Abu Erteila. The third stand, which was the smallest one, is like that from Abu Erteila.⁶¹ Chronologically, it is hardly possible to establish the sequence of construction and functioning of the temples, however, the fact that only Natakamani and Amanitore are mentioned in Wad Ben Naga and there is no names of their sons can be an evidence of its earlier construction. Unlike Abu Erteila, where the text on all sides is associated with Isis, in Wad Ban Naga the second altar (B) is dedicated to Hathor. In Abu Erteila there are only images of the goddesses supporting the sky, in Wad Ben Naga the king, the *kandake* and the goddess-holders with their names – Ahait and Tuait are pictured.⁶²

57 Crowfoot, Griffith, 1911, pl. XXIV, XXV.

58 Kurth, Den Himmel... p. 31–32; 51–53, n. 4.

59 Ibid., p. 94–96.

60 Priese, Wad Ben Naga..., p. 20.

61 Priese, Wad Ben Naga..., p. 20

62 Priese, Das ägyptische... p. 255, 263; Kurth, Wo Götter...



Thus, the existence of several supports in Wad Ben Naga could be associated with two different cults of goddesses, in Abu Erteila all the stands are associated only with Isis. Priese correlated the orientation of the temple in Wad Ben Naga (east-west) with the find of three altars and the location of the temple perpendicular to Typhonium.⁶³ A different situation is in Abu Erteila. The east-west location of the temple at Abu Erteila is connected with its current of Wadi Hawad, perpendicular to which it was built and, accordingly, the solar orientation.

The plan of the temple and the location of the stands provide quite an interesting picture. The fully preserved stand AE17/II-R36/st.1, which due to its size could be designed for the processional bark that travelled in the temple, was located in the lateral southern room of the temple in almost the same orientation line with the sanctuary.

This position corresponds to the existing tradition of the location of the bark in the side room of the temple. This disposition is noted, for example, in Kawa in room J, which is a side room in relation to the pronaos.⁶⁴ Usually the place for the bark stand was installed in the main building or was located in front of the temple. As a rule, the stand on which there is a sacred bark with the chapel of a god and the statue of the main god had its place – the room for the bark. It could be located between the hypostyle hall and rooms that were into the depths of the temple. However, for example, in Naga and Wad Ben Naga there were separate lateral rooms with sacred stands that were used only for statues of the gods, considered “guest” in the temple.⁶⁵

Excavations in the room 36 have revealed a burial 37 and a row of two bricks at a level of 391, 17 m. Here, the foundation of the room 36 was found, covered with clay and white plaster. This foundation of the structure was disposed under the slabs that made up the pavement. A similar foundation, covered with white plaster, was identified on the outer part of the southern pylon, which indicates the construction technique of the ancient Sudanese architects.

Given the holes in the north-west corner of rooms 26 and 36, located relatively symmetrically around the altar, it would be possible to assume that the stand AE17/II-R36/st.1 was located in the room 36 in the center. Probably the original place for the stand

AE17/II-R36/st.2 was there at the north western corner of the room, where the burial 37 was found.

The small size of the stand AE15/II-R26/st.1 gives a reason to assume that it was not used for a processional bark (which was hardly possible due to the gravity and size of the latter), but for a small naos with a statue fixed either permanently or being portable. Accordingly, the stand found in the debris of the room 26, could also serve as a stand for the naos with a cult statue.

Room 35 was located to the east from the room 36. After excavations it became evident that both rooms were connected by a passage. Room dimensions: south wall 390 cm; western wall 335 cm; north wall 390 cm; eastern wall 323 cm. The western wall is longer than the eastern one because of the composition of the passage to the room, which is equal to 335 cm in the northern part, on the southern side, the passage is significantly destroyed.

Near the eastern wall of room 35, an object was found (fig. 12 a, b), which can be identified as an altar destined for offerings. In front of the altar the offering table partially destroyed was found on the floor. The altar was covered with a large layer of white plaster with traces of red colour, possibly from crumbled bricks. The altar stands on the plinth, the height of its base is 15 cm; its dimensions are 114 x 115 cm. Size of the altar excluding the base: length 105 cm; width 93 cm; height 50 cm. On each side of the wall there are small protruding columns (about 10 cm in diameter). A parallel has been found in the Lion temple of Musawwarat es Sufra, where a similar object was discovered. According to F. Hintze, it was located in the Lion Temple not far from the naos.⁶⁶ Near it was an elevation (three steps), which was located next to the altar⁶⁷ (there was no other place for it due to the fact that the temple was one-roomed).

In Abu Erteila the object is adjacent to the eastern wall of the room 35. The north-eastern part of the wall consists of steps leading to the top of the altar. A staircase leads to the surface of the room wall (fig. 12). One of the steps of the stairs is covered with plaster from the butt end, which indicates that the steps were originally intended for this building. Although the object itself and the so-called staircase were damaged, it can be assumed that their height is

p. 205–210.

63 Priese, *Wad Ben Naga...*, p. 16

64 Macadam M.L.F, *The Temples of Kawa II. History and Archaeology of the Site*. Oxford 1955, tome II, pl. 12, p. 95.

65 Priese, *Wad Ben Naga...*, p. 19.

66 Hintze F, *Musawwarat es Sufra*. Band I,2, *Der Löwentempel*. Tafelband. Berlin 1971, Taf. 12 a; see also Taf. 85, 3/2/3, Taf. 87 c., Taf. 93, 5/2/2; Hintze et al., *Musawwarat es Sufra*. Bd. I,2. *Der Löwentempel*. Textband. Berlin 1993, p. 64.

67 Hintze et al., *Musawwarat es Sufra...*1993, p. 274, F. Cat. 10, Abb. 202.



Fig. 12a: Altar for offerings to the bark, room 35. Photo E. Kormysheva.

slightly more than today's size, as the southern part of the wall, adjacent to the altar, on which the steps are kept horizontally has been preserved at the same height.

The altar in Abu Erteila could be designed for the ritual before the bark. Such rituals were attested in Egypt starting from the Dynasty XVIII, they included offerings to the bark, which consisted of food, fresh water, as it was in the temple of Hatshepsut, from wine, libations, including 4 vases *nemset*. The ritual was accompanied by the pronouncing the list of offerings.⁶⁸

In the north wall of the room there is a clearly traceable passage leading to the hypostyle hall of the temple, which suggests the itinerary of the processions that were performed in temples. It is known that in the Nubian temples of the New Kingdom at Abu Simbel and Wadi es Seboua there were processions with the barks of Amun slightly different from the Egyptian ritual.⁶⁹ Something similar could have been done in Abu Erteila.



Fig. 12b: Altar for offerings to the bark, room 35. Photo E. Kormysheva.

Attempting to imagine the movement of the bark at Abu Erteila it may be presented in the following tentative reconstruction. After performing the ritual of offerings to the bark in the room 35, the boat was supposed to "float" in the procession towards the hypostyle hall (27), where its appearance set in motion the now non-preserved images on the columns, and also contributed to making the appearance of the god to people who came to the temple. Its movement and the appearance in the hypostyle hall could be accompanied by collective prayer, giv-

68 Karlshausen, *L'iconographie...* p. 253–255.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 82–83.

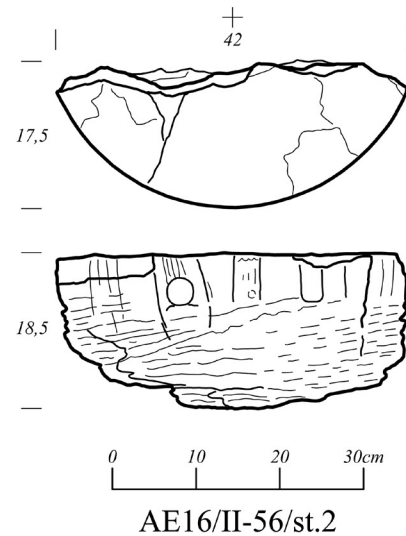


Fig. 13: Fragment of the column with Amun's head. Photo and drawing M. Lebedev.



Fig. 14: Another fragment of the column with Amun head. Photo M. Lebedev.

ing flowers, ritual actions of the king and *kandake*, as well as the priests, rituals of purification, incense and praise of god four times.⁷⁰ This hypothetical reconstruction cannot be confirmed by the unpreserved reliefs, but theoretically in comparison with the ancient Egyptian ritual of the procession with the bark, such a route could take place in the found rooms.

Summarizing it has to stress that the excavations resulted in presence of side rooms belonging to the temple complex, in which rituals were performed. The side rooms found adjacent to the sanctuary from the north (see plan, fig. 1) most likely were the ancillary rooms, for the time being cannot be said more, since nothing was found there, and no possible

passages to the sanctuary were identified. The question of the lord (*nb*) of the temple cannot be finally resolved. The temple with similar stands from Wad Ben Naga Griffith considered dedicated to Isis.⁷¹ However, other scholars denied it. Priese considered it possible to identify the temple of Wad Ben Naga as dedicated to Amun, he believed that the location of the three altars speaks not in favor of Isis as the ruler of the temple, although he noted that the altar A in Wad Ben Naga was destined for the goddess Isis,

and altar B was for the goddess Hathor.⁷² Onderka believes that the so-called Isis temple was actually the main shrine for the god Amun at Wad Ben Naga, and the goddess Isis was only one of the beneficiaries of the cults in the temple.⁷³

In Abu Erteila, besides Isis, there are two more written evidences of worshipping god. This is a small fragment of the column, where the image of the crown of Amun and his name in front of the image is preserved (fig. 13). The head with the characteristic crown of Amun was also found on another fragment of the column, where his typical two feathers crown with a sun disc in the middle was also preserved (fig. 14). The hieroglyphs are badly damaged, but the

70 The ritual of coming back the sacred bark was executed in such a way in the New Kingdom temples in Egypt. On this matter see Karlshausen, *L'iconographie...* p. 259–260.

71 Crowfoot, Griffith, 1911, p. 68. The same idea was expressed by Török (Török, 2002, p. 226).

72 Priese, *Wad Ban Naga...*, p. 18–19.

73 Onderka P., Vrtal V. et al., *Nubia. A Land of the Crossroads of Cultures. Wad Ben Naga 2014. Praha 2014*, p. 145

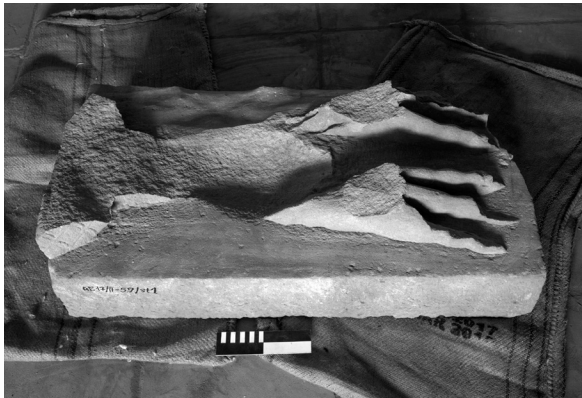


Fig. 15: Plinth of the statue with the bird's paw. Photo E. Kormysheva.



Fig. 16: Decorated tail of the sacred bird. Photo E. Kormysheva.

name of Amun-Re is clearly readable, the title following them is unclear, but at the end of the column the sign of a foreign country is clearly visible and in all probability – the sign of *niwt*. In accordance with the structure of epithets following the name of Amun in the ancient Sudanese temples, it can be assumed that here is “Amun-Re, the lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, resides in” the foreign country, namely very probable in Abu Erteila, that name unfortunately cannot be read. The location of the crown with an inclination regarding another figure – *kandake* Amanitore, as it is confirmed by the surviving cartouches with her personal and throne names, can be an additional indication to the position of Amun as the divine father of the ruling king. These fragments are indisputable proves of the veneration of Amun, which is fully justified for this temple, however this inscription is not enough to make a conclusion about the lord (*nb*) of the temple.

The stand AE15 / II-R26 / st.1, found in the debris of room 26, most likely was originally located there. Thus, both sacred premises with pavement and stands (R26 and R36) were rooms for barks or naos with the statue of Isis. Accordingly, there is no doubt about the great significance of her cult at Abu Erteila.

To a certain extent, the latter is indirectly confirmed by the finding of a stand with paws and a bird's ornamented tail, which indicates its sacred meaning (fig. 15, 16). The pedestal containing the statue was found in a somewhat biased position with respect to the remains of other pedestals located in front of the entrance to the temple. The orientation of the statue on the pedestal should have been along the north-south line with a specific position in relation to the entrance to the temple. Such alleys oriented in front of the entrance to the temple with figures of sacred animals are attested in Wadi es Seboua and Naga. There they were located on high pedestals. In Abu Erteila, judging by the remains and the pavement, in front of the temple the number of figures did not exceed four. The height of the preserved pedestal is no more than 1-2 rows of bricks, respectively, the restoration of the original structure (or adoption found for the original structure) in this case is impossible.

In addition, a large number of fragments resembling bird plumage (fig. 17) were found in front of the temple, some fragments indicate that the bird had decorations, possibly on its neck (fig. 18). Behind the western wall of room 26 an eye of glass with a red iris



Fig. 17: Fragments of bird's feathers. e statue with the bird's pawl. Photo E. Kormysheva.

(fig. 19) was found, which also probably belonged to a statue of a sacred bird.

As it is known, the statues on the alley in front of the several temples were the embodiment of the god to whom the temple was dedicated, for example rams in front of the Naga temple and lions in front of the Apedemak temple at Musawwarat es Sufra. And although we still have neither a statue nor an inscription clearly pointing to a specific god, the lord of the temple, we can assume that the statue of a bird in front of the temple of Natakamani could belong to a falcon and, accordingly, embody Horus,



Fig. 18: Décor belonged to the bird statue. Photo E. Kormysheva.



Fig. 19: Eye, probably from the bird statue. Photo E. Kormysheva.

Re-Harakhte or even the syncretic image of Amun-Re-Harakhte. The latter is also possible, since it is not known whether this figure had a head of a bird or a ram.

The layout of the multi-roomed temple testifies in favor of the deity of Egyptian origin or its local hypostasis in Meroe. At the same time, it is quite obvious that the main ritual action in this temple was associated with the legitimation of the royal family, i.e. including recognition of his incarnation of Horus, whose mother was Isis. Perhaps this explains the accented role of Isis in the inscriptions on the stands. As it is known, the main element of the sacred bark was the statue located in it. All the inscriptions on the stand for the bark, glorifying Isis, testify to the action produced for the royal family. Phrases to stand firmly and rest in a bark are also connected with the goddess who is lifted to heaven, i.e. in the case of Abu Erteila with the goddess Isis. However, the absence of a cult statue and a dedicatory inscription leaves the question of belonging to the temple of Isis not fully resolved.



The obtained material rises again the question of the succession of the family of Natakamani and Amanitore, who had three potential male heirs. Among them, Sorkaror is depicted together with the royal family in Amara in scenes of offering to the gods. His name, enclosed in a cartouche and written with Meroitic hieroglyphs, was repeated four times in the third row of images, under the images and inscriptions of Amanitore and Natakamani.⁷⁴

According to Griffith, the phrases after the name of the royal family denote the “beloved by God” with the name of Amun (Natakamani), Ariten (Amanitore) and Sokaror, respectively, followed by Meroitic word combination *Mak lakh*.⁷⁵ Sorkaror is also named on the bark stands three times at Abu Erteila. Arakakhtaror is depicted in the scenes of ritual run in Naga together with the royal couple, Arikankaror is seen in relief from Meroe along with his parents. They make offerings to the gods, respectively, receive their blessing, as well as their reigning parents,⁷⁶ but their smaller figures and clothes emphasize the status of non-ruling persons. Török noted, that the concept of Osiris-Isis-Horus was a model followed by the royal family of Ptolemies – Serapis, Isis, Harpocrate.⁷⁷ However, according to Lohwasser in spite of manifold relations between Meroe and the Hellenistic world, which are also recognizable in the world of the gods – see e.g. the representations of Serapis or Dionysus – the concept of the “child gods”, dominant in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, has not been adopted into the Meroitic pantheon.⁷⁸ She also stressed, that triads in Kush occur only in the form of the “Theban Triad” of Amun, Mut and Chons and – for a limited time – in the representation of the Meroitic royal family of Natakamani, Amanitore and a “Crown Prince”.⁷⁹

Since we have no data on the participation of a king, a *kandake* and a heir in such rituals, either before or after the reign of Natakamani, we also do not have accurate data on the relationship sys-

tem within this family, in particular, potential heirs, we may assume different solutions – namely in the sphere of religious ideology, contacts with Egypt and the Greco-Roman world, or even purely pragmatic reasons – the need to distinguish and approve one of them as a nominated legitimate heir with the ritual of the *tw3 pt*.

The fact that all three heirs appeared in different temples with their parents would seem to equalize their status, but the find at Abu Erteila emphasizes Sorkaror, who participated in the most important royal ritual of unity of the earth and space and, accordingly, recognition of the maximum proximity of the earthly royal house to the gods. The entire royal family of Natakamani and his heir, Sorkaror, in the course of performing the ritual become the beneficiaries of the heaven support ritual, giving the divine character of royal power. Perhaps it was performed due to the supposed reign of Sorkaror, who participated in the heaven support ritual, and acquired divine blessings and divine traits. This ritual of Egyptian origin could be adapted to the existing tradition of investiture and the legitimization of the king of ancient Sudan and an appointment of his successor.

If we assume that the throne name of Sorkaror in Jebel Geili was intended to be changed, then perhaps the investiture of Sorkaror took place initially in Amara, and was intended to declare the patrilineal heir, who could later occupy the throne.⁸⁰ In Amara, the name Sorkaror is rendered by the Meroitic hieroglyphs in the phrase – Sorkaror, beloved by the Great God.⁸¹ The latter represents the possibility of comparison with an inscription from Abu Erteila. Unlike the Egyptian version, here the name includes the vowels, respectively, the name reads Sorkror. In Abu Erteila, there is only the cartouche of Sorkaror, which may indicate his sole proclamation as heir.

At the same time, we do not have reliable data on the order of the succession after Natakamani’s death. The suggested assumptions about the premature death of Arikankharor and Arakakhtaror and the order of ascension to the throne have neither reliable grounds, nor reliable chronological criteria for making this statement. We have no exact data on the time of the temples during Natakamani’s reign, whether they were built sequentially or simultaneously, there is no data on the age of his sons, the time of their death or other circumstances that accompany or prevent the ascent to the throne.

74 Griffith F.L., *Meroitic Inscriptions. Part II. Napata to Philae and Miscellaneous*. London 1912, pl. VI, N 84; REM 0084, t. 1, p. 184–185.

75 Griffith, *Meroitic Inscriptions...* p. 12.

76 Török L., *Meroe City. An Ancient African Capital John Garstang’s Excavations in the Sudan pt. 1,2*. London, 1997, p. 118, 120.

77 Török L., *The image of the Ordered World in Ancient Nubian Art. The Construction of the Kushite Mind (800 BC – 300 AD)*. Leiden, Boston, Köln, 2002, p. 262.

78 Lohwasser A., *Triaden und Dyaden in Kush. Across the Mediterranean – Along the Nile. Studies in Egyptology, Nubiology and Late Antiquity Dedicated to László Török on the Occasion of His 75th Birthday*. Budapest 2018, p. 434.

79 Ibid.

80 Török, *The image...* p. 239, n. 926 with the reference to F. Hintze believed that Sorkaror was the first successor of Natakamani and Amanitore.

81 Griffith, *Meroitic Inscriptions...* p. 12, pl. VI.



Summarizing the comparative analysis of the stands for the bark in Abu Erteila, the following points should be highlighted:

A comparative analysis of the iconographic program of the supports for the sacred barks testifies to the *tw3 pt* ritual, which was performed for Natakamani, Amanitore and Sorkaror in order to confirm royal legitimization and recognition of Sorkaror's right to the throne. The throne name of Sorkaror, transmitted by the Egyptian hieroglyphs witnessed for the first time in the inscriptions on two stands. Sorkaror's titles are not clearly readable. However, in addition to the title "Lord of Rituals", which is attested on the stand AE15 / II-R26 / st.1, and "Lord of Both Lands" on the stand AE17 / II-R36 / st.1, one may assume the transfer him the function of the king.

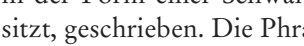
The epigraphic material from the temple of Natakamani at Abu Erteila undoubtedly demonstrates the dominant role of Isis in this temple. The twice mentioning the name of Amun and the remnants of his title, probably related to his local hypostasis at Abu Erteila, however the final decision for the identification of the ruler of the temple requires additional data.

A comparative analysis of the epigraphy relating to the *tw3 pt* ritual at Abu Erteila and Wad Ben Naga demonstrates similar features – images of sky holders, an appeal to the statue of God to stand firmly on the throne, or have a rest in a bark located on a stand, common features of the *wr* sign with paleography not characteristic to other monuments. The similarity of the performance and stylistics of the images gives basis to continue the study of the characteristic style of Natakamani and the existing canon, which is especially evident in the composition of phrases, the presence of an additional rectangle sign, possibly designating material, in the specifics of the style and use of the demonstrative pronoun.

Each of the temples of Natakamani had its own peculiarities of the language of sacred inscriptions. For example, only in Wad Ben Naga and Abu Erteila the ancient Egyptian language was fully used. However, when transmitting the same ritual, the text component in the two temples had a different structure and content. The text from Wad Ben Naga refers to the night (moon) bark of Isis, whose journey takes place in another world. The text from Abu Erteila on all four sides is intended to confirm the legitimacy of the royal family through the action of supporting heaven, pictured, but not named in the text. The textual component of the iconographic program of Abu Erteila contains names the beneficiaries of the ritual, while in Wad Ben Naga the beneficiaries, the king and queen, are performers of the ritual themselves.

Analysis of the iconographic program of the sacred stands from Abu Erteila, in contrast to Wad Ben Naga, makes it possible to trace clearly the divergence of the text and image. So, the text fixes the purpose of the action – confirmation of the coronation and legitimacy of the rulers, and the image of the goddesses supporting the sky pictures the action of supporting the sky.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Bei den Ausgrabungen in Abu Erteila wurden drei Sockel für Barken oder Naoi mit Darstellungen und Inschriften, die das Durchführen des Rituals *tw3 pt* bezeugen, gefunden. Der hieroglyphische Text beinhaltet die Namen von Natakamani, Amanitore und Sorkaror und ist dem Text auf dem Barkensockel aus Wad Ben Naga ähnlich. Dieser Fund ist der zweite (nach dem aus Wad Ben Naga), der den Einfluss und die Interaktion zwischen ägyptischer und meroitischer Theologie belegt. Der Untersatz aus Abu Erteila hebt Sorkaror hervor, der im wichtigsten königlichen Ritual, dem Stützen des Himmels, beteiligt ist. Die Inschriften zeigen, dass die königliche Familie des Natakamani – er, seine Frau Amanitore und sein Sohn, Sorkaror, die Begünstigten des *tw3 pt* sind. Es gibt Ähnlichkeiten in der Paläographie – in allen Fällen ist das Wort *wr* in der Form einer Schwalbe, die direkt auf dem *r* sitzt, geschrieben. Die Phrase  hat Analogien in den Inschriften auf den anderen Seiten des Untersatzes, ebenso auf dem Altar, der in dem Tempel gefunden wurde. Die Paläographie des Zeichens Aa 18, mit dem der Name des Sorkaror in der Kartusche beginnt, hat eine große Zahl von Analogien in ägyptischen Texten. Ein Vergleich der Fundstücke von Abu Erteila und Wad Ben Naga bezeugt die Besonderheiten in Stil und Paläographie von Sakraltexten, die in ägyptischen Hieroglyphen in Tempeln von Natakamani erhalten sind. Die Analyse des ikonographischen Programmes auf dem Untersatz von Abu Erteila – im Gegensatz zu Wad Ben Naga – macht es möglich, die Divergenz von Text und Bild zu unterscheiden: Der Text belegt den Zweck der Handlung – Versicherung der Krönung und Legitimation der königlichen Familie –, und die Darstellungen zeigen die Handlung selbst.