

# SUDAN & NUBIA

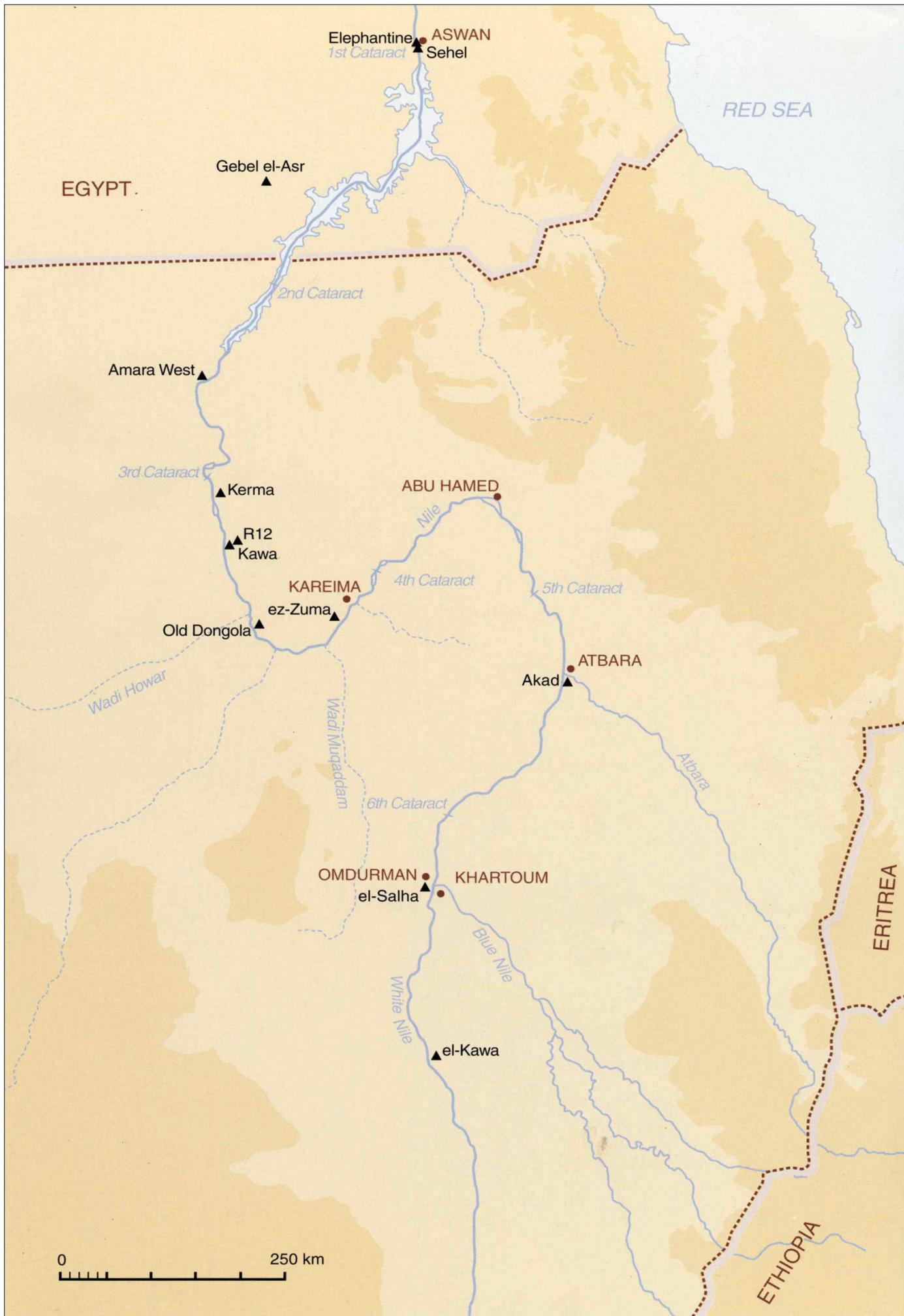
The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



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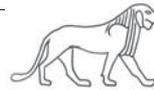
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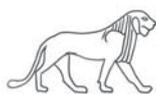
*Front Cover:* An apostle from the mural in the chapel at Baganarti containing the king's portrait.

## Introduction

*Vivian Davies*

At the time of writing (mid-September 2002), the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference for Nubian Studies has just finished, generously hosted by colleagues in the Università di Roma "La Sapienza". The large number of papers delivered shows how rapidly the subject of Middle Nile studies is growing, with significant advances in knowledge achieved since the last conference held in Boston four years ago, an encouraging state of affairs, to which the content of this present volume bears further witness. There was, however, one hugely important issue which overshadowed the event: the looming crisis of the new dam at the Fourth Cataract.

As reported by the Sudanese delegation, preparatory work for the dam has now begun and actual building will start in two years. It is expected to take a further seven years to complete. In an unwelcome echo of the Aswan High Dam scheme, the reservoir created will flood over 170km of the Nile Valley between the Fourth Cataract and Abu Hamed, enveloping, as we now know from preliminary surveys, thousands of archaeological sites - artefact scatters, settlements, cemeteries and rock-drawings dating from the Palaeolithic to the Islamic Periods. Very little is known about these sites; for the most part only that they exist. Our Sudanese colleagues are urgently appealing for assistance, so that as much as possible of the record may be investigated and documented before the area is lost to knowledge for ever. In response, SARS is this winter launching a campaign of rescue excavation in a region which we recently surveyed (see *Sudan & Nubia* 4 [2000], 51-7), but an extensive international effort will be required if any serious impact is to be made. Our next international colloquium, to be held at the British Museum on 8 May 2003, will focus on the dam emergency. All colleagues with an interest in helping are invited to attend.



## Does Aten Live On in Kawa (Kówwa)?

*Herman Bell and Muhammad Jalal Hashim*

This investigation will (1) describe the local pronunciation and reported etymology of the modern Nubian place-name which is usually spelled as **Kawa**. It will then (2) evaluate a suggestion by Karl-Heinz Priese (1976, 323) that **Kawa** is derived from *Gm- Ttn*, the ancient Egyptian name for the site. *Gm- Ttn* may be translated as ‘Finding Aten’. It may also be called ‘Finding Yaata’. Gerhard Fecht (1960) demonstrated that the divine name ‘Aten’ was probably pronounced ‘Yaati’ and ‘Yaata’ in the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

**Kawa** is located on the east bank of the Nile almost opposite Dungula al-Urdi. Although the site of **Kawa** with its ruined temples of Tutankhamun and Taharqo (Plate 1) is now uninhabited, there are neighbouring villages with residents who are bilingual in Arabic and the Dungulawi Nubian language (Andáandi). The villagers reported that local women perform rites in the ancient ruins. This will require investigation by an appropriately trained woman, preferably someone who speaks the Dungulawi Nubian language.

In January 2002 Muhammad Jalal Hashim and Herman Bell visited the three villages closest to the ancient site in order to examine the name **Kawa**. These were the villages of Kasúura (Arabic: ‘break’ [in irrigation canal]) to the north of the site and Timenáar (Dungulawi Nubian: ‘watermelon riverbank’) and Wadi Halfa (Arabic: ‘valley of esparto grass’) to the south.

The first task was to check the local reaction to the following two entries by C. H. Armbruster (1965, 120) in his *Lexicon* of Dungulawi Nubian:

**káwwa** n. *Kawa* (on map)

**káwwa** adj. *broad, wide*

Armbruster spelled the place-name with /**ww**/ rather than /**w**/, i.e. **Káwwa**, not **Kawa**. In the 2002 field investigation, the doubling of the consonant as /**ww**/ was confirmed. Hashim and Bell (2000, 74) had postulated that the acute accent on /**á**/ should represent high tone (musical pitch) rather than Armbruster’s stress (loudness). In the field investigation the high tone on this syllable was also confirmed.

Hashim and Bell (2000, 74) had posed the question of whether the place-name **Káwwa** might be identical with the Dungulawi Nubian word **káwwa** meaning ‘broad, wide’. Certainly the site of **Káwwa** with its lone and level sands could have been described that way. However, when local residents were asked about this, they denied that the geographical name had any relationship to the word for ‘broad, wide’. They pointed out that it even sounded different. The place-name was generally pronounced **Kówwa** rather than **Káwwa**. Although **káwwa** meant ‘broad, wide’, **Kówwa** was said to have no meaning either in Nubian or in Arabic.



*Plate 1. Muhammad Jalal Hashim in the Taharqo Temple in Kówwa, looking east. He is standing at the northeast corner of the original site of the Taharqo shrine, now in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.*

This information agreed with an observation made in the early 1990s to Herman Bell by Ibrahim Hamid ‘Abd al-Karim, a linguist and a native speaker of Dungulawi Nubian (Andáandi), cf. ‘Abd al-Karim and Bell (1990). He said that the correct form of the place-name was not **Kawa**, but **Kówwa**.

The vowel /**o**/ in the first syllable of this name has rarely appeared in print. However, it did appear on the map of G. A. Hoskins (1835). This fact was noted by F. Ll. Griffith, even though he opted for **Kawa**, see Macadam (1955, 2, Text, 1, note 1). Hoskins had written the name as ‘Cowah’ (Plate 2).

During the 2002 field investigation, a significant comment about /**o**/ was made by al-Hajj ‘Abd al-Qadir Muhammad Salih Shammatt, 66 years old, of the hamlet called Wadi Halfa in Sharq Labab to the south of **Kówwa**. He volunteered that the first vowel in **Kówwa** was pronounced with a ‘*damma*’ /**u**/ rather than a ‘*fatah*’ /**a**/.

Thus, al-Hajj ‘Abd al-Qadir significantly rejected the /**á**/ in **Káwwa**. As a Nubian with an education in Arabic, he made use of the Arabic grammatical terms available to him to describe his pronunciation, **Kówwa**. However, there was no Arabic character to represent /**o**/ precisely and unambiguously. The /**o**/ was an intermediate sound on the phonetic continuum between /**u**/ and /**a**/.

In the dilemma of having to choose between the ‘*damma*’ /**u**/ and the ‘*fatah*’ /**a**/ as the closest Arabic character to represent /**o**/, al-Hajj ‘Abd al-Qadir opted for /**u**/.

While there is no /**o**/ in written Arabic, there is a long /**o**/ in the spoken colloquial Arabic of the Sudan. It corresponds to the diphthong /**aw**/ in written Arabic. The word for ‘bananas’ is pronounced **mo:z** by speakers of the colloquial, but **mawz** by formal Arabic scholars. Formal pronunciation is often preferred by Nubians with an extensive education in Arabic and Islam, such as al-Hajj Ya-Sin Isma’il, 88 years old, in the village of Kasúura north of **Kówwa**. Al-Hajj Ya-Sin recognized a difference in pronunciation between



Plate 2. Cowah on Hoskins' Map (1835). From the Library of The Queen's College, Oxford. Acknowledged with thanks.

**káwwa** and **Kówwa**, in order to demonstrate the contrasting quality of the vowel of the first syllable in **káwwa** 'broad, wide', he would lengthen it as follows: **káawwa**. However, he chose to Arabise the /o/ in **Kówwa** in the guise of a formal /aw/. Such an Arabisation of the /o/ was not detected in the speech of his colleague Muhammad Latif Muhammad Ahmad, 75 years old, who simply said **Kówwa**.

Formal Arabic forms written 'by the local *katibs*' were produced by F. L. Griffith to support the spelling '**Kawa**', see his chapter in Macadam (1955, 2, Text, 1, note 1). Like Hoskins before him, Griffith ignored the double /ww/. He may have been misled by the Arabic forms provided by the *katibs* since they omitted the Arabic character *shadda* which would have indicated that the /w/ was doubled. However, there is another factor that may have affected Griffith and Hoskins. English speakers tend not to regard doubling as important. The doubling of consonants is significant both for Nubian and Arabic, but is only marginally distinctive in spoken English. In English a consonant may be pronounced

doubled at junctures between words (e.g. as double /dd/ in **bad dog**), but not normally in the midst of individual words (e.g. **giddy** is pronounced as [gid*d*i]).

The local inhabitants provided no meaning for **Kówwa**. Names with no reported meaning form a baffling category of potential importance. They may be old Nubian names whose original meaning was by-passed and lost as the language changed through the centuries. They may incorporate personal names which flourished in the pre-Islamic period, but which now are no longer in use. On the other hand, they may be derived from non-Nubian languages. Reporting on his excavations in Nubia, Jean Leclant (1970, 247) noted the survival of an ancient Egyptian place-name from the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C as follows: '<Adeye>', the archaeological site locally called 'aussi bien Adeye que Sedeinga'. According to Leclant, this name <Adeye> perpetuates the designation given by the ancient Egyptians of the New Kingdom: *ḥwt-Tīy*, <the temple of Queen Tiy>.

Could **Kówwa**, like <Adeye>, have been derived from an ancient Egyptian place-name? Karl-Heinz Priebe (1976, 323) proposed that it was, as follows:

'In diesem Zusammenhang wird vorgeschlagen, den Ortsnamen der meroitischen Inschrift Kawa 102 [sic for 104] als **Qwt /qawata/** zu lesen. Dies wäre dann als Vorläufer des modernen Kawa zu erklären als

(Pr)-Gm-'tn > /kam-ata/ > /kawata/.

**Gm-'tn** alone is the town name spelled with the Egyptian hieroglyphic determinative for 'town'. (Pr) represents the word 'House' or 'Temple'. **Pr-Gm-'tn** refers to the 'Temple of **Gm-'tn**'.

Between the ancient Egyptian examples of **Gm-'tn** and the modern '**Kawa**', Priebe pointed to an important Meroitic link which he interpreted as /qawata/. His account of the development of the town name from ancient to modern times seems to have been as follows:

**Gm-'tn** > /kam-ata/ > /kawata/ (Meroitic: /qawata/) > **Kawa**.

Later, Priebe seems to have lost confidence in this suggestion. In an article of 1984, whenever he considered an etymology to be convincing, he wrote the derived modern name in bold letters. However, when he mentioned Kawa, it was not in bold letters, (1984, 494). His original suggestion of 1976 will now be examined in detail to see how convincing it may still be and whether any additional points can be made pro or con.

One obstacle to the transmission of the modern name **Kówwa** from ancient times is the apparent lack of a settled population at certain periods of history. This was noted during the SARS Northern Dongola Reach Survey around Kawa. Derek Welsby (2001, 2, 597) reported that for the Post-Meroitic period (c. A.D. 350-550) 'not one piece of post-Meroitic pottery has been recognised nor are there any tumuli which can be assigned to that period'. This is a serious con-



**ww/**. It is the lengthening of a **/w/** to fill a vacuum. The symbol **/Ø/** below indicates the position vacated by the lost consonant **/y/**. The position may possibly be filled by a transitional sound in Meroitic (such as a non-distinctive glottal stop before the vowel represented by the seated man [ʔ]).

**Rule 3: Compensatory lengthening.**

(**/w + y/** > **/w + Ø/** > **/w + w/**)

**Gw-Yaata** > **Gw-Øaata** > **Gw-Waata**

The **/w/** is lengthened as **/ww/** to compensate for the loss of a following consonant **/y/**. This **/ww/** would be consistent with the doubling of the medial consonant in **Kówwa**. It would strengthen the argument that Meroitic **/qaw-ata/** may be linked to the modern **Kówwa**.

Recently, Claude Rilly (1999) considered an argument by G. Böhm and demonstrated that the Meroitic letter **Q** was phonetically a labiovelar sound **/kʷ/**. Thus, **/qaw-ata/** would be represented as **/kʷaw-ata/**. He also demonstrated that it coloured the following vowel. Thus, the Meroitic **Qes** found in lines 3 and 4 of the stela of Akinidad (REM 1003 in Leclant *et al.* 2000, 1380) would be read not as **Ke:sh**, but as **Ku:sh** or **Ko:sh**, the name of the country. Similarly, the impact of **/kʷ/** upon a following **/a/** would probably colour it as an **/o/**, e.g. **/kʷaw-ata/** > **/kʷow-ata/**. Influenced by the Meroitic **Q**, this vowel is consistent with the **/o/** in the first syllable of **Kówwa**. Rilly's demonstration can, therefore, be used to strengthen the argument that the Meroitic **/qaw-ata/** may be linked to the modern **Kówwa**.

With the application of Rule 3 above, **/kʷow-ata/** would become **/kʷow-wata/**. Since the Nile Nubian languages do not have labiovelar consonants, this name would be reduced to **/kow-wata/** in Nubian. The Nubians would probably by that time have lost the awareness of an original word division (-) between the ancient elements of the name 'Finding' and 'Aten'. Therefore, **/kow-wata/** should be represented as **/kownwata/**.

Priese suggested that **/ta/**, the final syllable of the name, was lost. The loss of a **/ta/** might arguably have been reinforced among Arabic-Nubian bilinguals by a similar reduction of the word-final *ta mārbūṭa* in formal Arabic (**/t/** > **/h/** when not supported by following elements such as case suffixes). Whether or not Arabic had this impact on Nubian, the loss of a final syllable is a familiar process of sound change. Change or loss of a final **/t/** in names written in Egyptian hieroglyphs can also be mentioned, cf. the proposed derivation of the modern Nubian place-name 'Sai' (Priese 1984, 492).

Priese's suggested sequence of sound changes was as follows:

**Gm-ʔtn** > **/kam-ata/** > **/kawata/** (Meroitic: **/qawata/**) > **Kawa**.

This sequence can now be expanded. A brief summary of the detailed arguments above on the process of sound changes from **GM-YAATA(N)** to **KÓWWA**, is as follows:

1. **GM-YAATA(N)** - Ancient Egyptian (**N** written, but not pronounced)
2. **GW-YAATA**
3. **QAW-ATA** (not QAWATA as in Priese) - Meroitic
- 3a. **KʷAW-ATA** (Rilly's interpretation of 3)
4. **KʷOW-ATA**
5. **KʷOW-WATA**
6. **KOWWATA** – Absorbed into Nile Nubian via Meroitic (or directly from ancient Egyptian?)
7. **KOWWA(TA)**
- 7a. **KÓWWA** - High tone observed on vowel of initial syllable (recent observation)

These seven steps offer a strengthened version of Priese's proposed link between the ancient Egyptian name and the modern **Kówwa**. The focus has been on names which may be derived directly from *Gm-ʔtn*, but not on names which may be derived from the related *Pr-Gm-ʔtn* 'The Temple of *Gm-ʔtn*'. Classical derivatives of *Pr-Gm-ʔtn* were dealt with by Priese and do not affect the argument presented in the seven steps above.

Incidentally, the ancient 'Temple of *Gm-ʔtn*' has a modern counterpart. The name **Kowwán-Díb** may be freely translated as 'the Temple of **Kówwa**'. Respondents in all the villages near the archaeological site mentioned the name **Kowwán-Díb** as well as the name **Kówwa**. Both in modern times and in ancient times there were two names, one referring to the temple buildings and the other to the site.

**Díb** is not derived from *Pr* 'Temple'. It is a Dungulawi Nubian word. Armbruster (1965, 50) glossed it as 'castle, fortress (now ruined)'. The word is cognate with the Nobúin Nubian word **díffi**, 'fortified house'. Examples of **díffi** are particularly frequent in the Mahas region, although usually with Islamic period associations (Edwards 2000, 66f.).

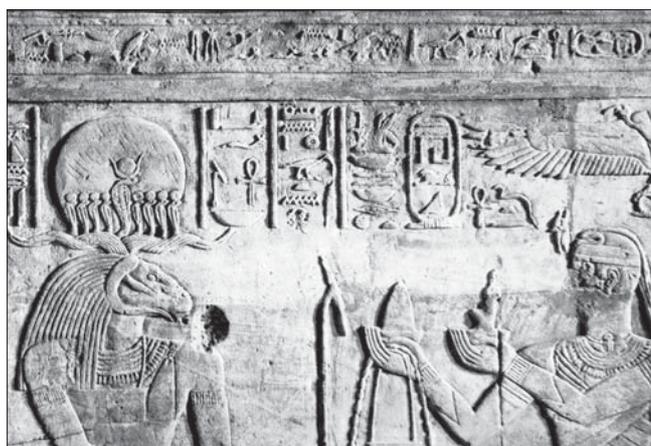
Variants of the expression *Gm-ʔtn* were often used during the Amarna period to refer to an area within the Aten temples. However, *Gm-ʔtn* near Dungula al-Urdi had the distinction of being a geographical name.

It was spelled with the Egyptian hieroglyphic determinative for 'town'. The significance of *Gm-ʔtn* as a town name was noted by James Henry Breasted (1902/3, 107) even before he knew its exact geographical location.

Breasted mentioned the 'remarkable incongruity, ... Amon residing in the Aton-city!!', (1902/3, 107). The common phrase 'Amun of Gm-Aten' must be one of the most paradoxical collocations of ancient times. It associated the god Amun with the sun disk Aten, his arch rival during the religious revolution and counter-revolution of the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The association of the god Amun with the Aten place-name appeared already in the temple of Tutankhamun in **Kówwa** (Macadam 1955, 29, 32 and 33). At that time the mutual hostility must have been intense. The phrase 'Amun of Gm-Aten' was still prominently displayed in the **Kówwa** temple of Taharqo almost 700 years after the religious



turmoil of the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C. ‘Amun of Gm-Aten’ may be observed today on the west wall of the shrine of



Taharqo from **Kówwa** in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (Plate 3).

Plate 3. Relief showing the name Gm-Aten on the west wall of the Taharqo shrine from Kówwa, now in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Acknowledged with thanks to the Ashmolean Museum and to Dr. Helen Whitehouse.

In spite of massive rejection and the methodical destruction of Aten temples in the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C., Aten appears as a divinity in Nubia at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (see the banishment stela of Aspelta, Eide *et al.* 1994-2000, 1, 254).

The geographical name *Gm-Itn* may have survived against all odds down to the present time. Prieše's suggestion to this effect was examined above and found to be stronger than perhaps even he himself had suspected. The name **Kówwa** can be plausibly derived from *Gm-Itn*. There is no rival etymology. Enshrined in the geographical name, Aten may now be traced across more than 33 centuries. In the process, his name seems to have been reduced from an ancient **Yaata** to a modern (w)a. If this is so, then the divine name of Aten lives on in the last syllable of **Kówwa**.

## Acknowledgement

Special thanks are offered to the staff of the Griffith Institute at Oxford University for having made their collection of photographs and papers on **Kówwa** available. The collection includes relevant correspondence of Sir Laurence Kirwan, late Honorary President of the Sudan Archaeological Research Society, who was responsible for bringing the shrine of Taharqo safely from **Kówwa** to Oxford in 1936.

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