

# SUDAN & NUBIA

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Front cover. Block 1000.0049 from Naga (photograph courtesy Karla Kroper).

Above. Pottery jar with decoration of sorghum heads from BMC 60, Berber (photograph courtesy Mahmoud Suliman Bashir).

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# The Isis Temple at Wad Ben Naga (WBN 300)

Pavel Onderka

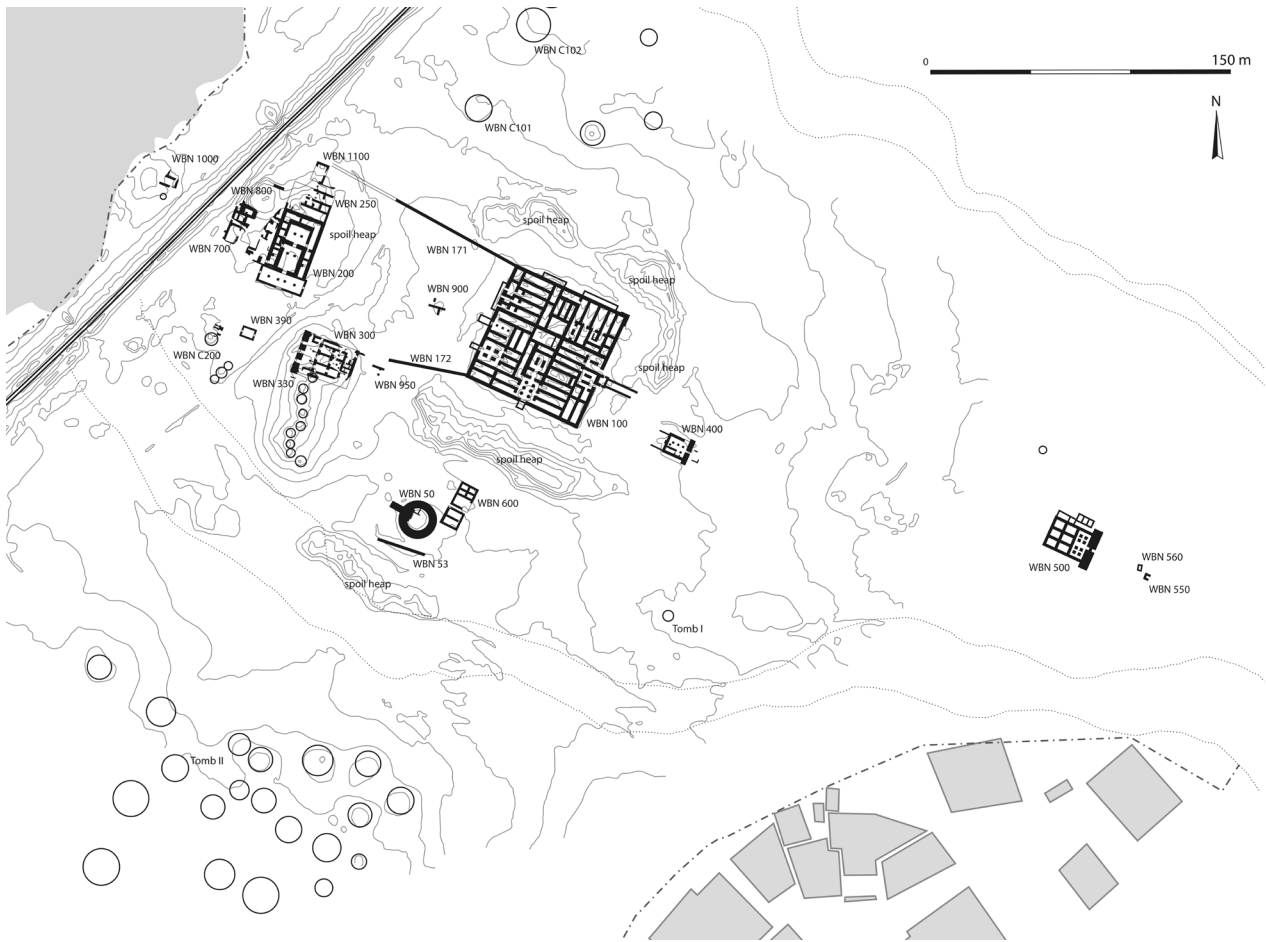


Figure 1. Map of Central Wad Ben Naga (drawing by Vlastimil Vrtal).

## Introduction

In 2018, the Archaeological Expedition to Wad Ben Naga concluded the exploration of the so-called Typhonium (WBN 200), an actual temple of Mut in her capacity as the Distant Goddess (see Onderka and Vrtal 2016), and shifted its attention to the exploration of the nearby Isis Temple (WBN 300), a long-lost temple known as the structure in which a barque stand with bilingual names of King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore (the so-called ‘Altar A’ from Wad Ben Naga, now in the collection of the Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection in Berlin; Inv. No. 7216) was discovered by the Royal Prussian Expedition in 1844 (Figure 2).<sup>1</sup> The Isis Temple, like the Typhonium, formed part of an extensive building programme by the above-mentioned royal duo, who ruled over the kingdom of Kush in the mid-first century AD.

<sup>1</sup> The present work was financially supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic (DKRVO 2019–2023/18.II.e). The Archaeological Expedition to Wad Ben Naga wishes to express its sincerest thanks and gratitude to the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums, namely to Dr Hassan Hussein Idris, Dr Abdel-Rahman Ali Mohamed, Dr Ghalia Garelnabi Abdelrahman Babiker, Dr Hatem el-Nour, Professor Ibrahim Mousa, Juweriya Osman Mohamed Zain Babiker, Dr Abdelhai Abdelsawy, Iglal Al Malik, and Dr Ikhlass Abdellatif, as well as to Dr Nasreldin Shulgami, the Honorary Consul-General of the Slovak Republic in the Republic of the Sudan, for their enduring support and help. The works at Wad Ben Naga could never have happened without local members of our team.

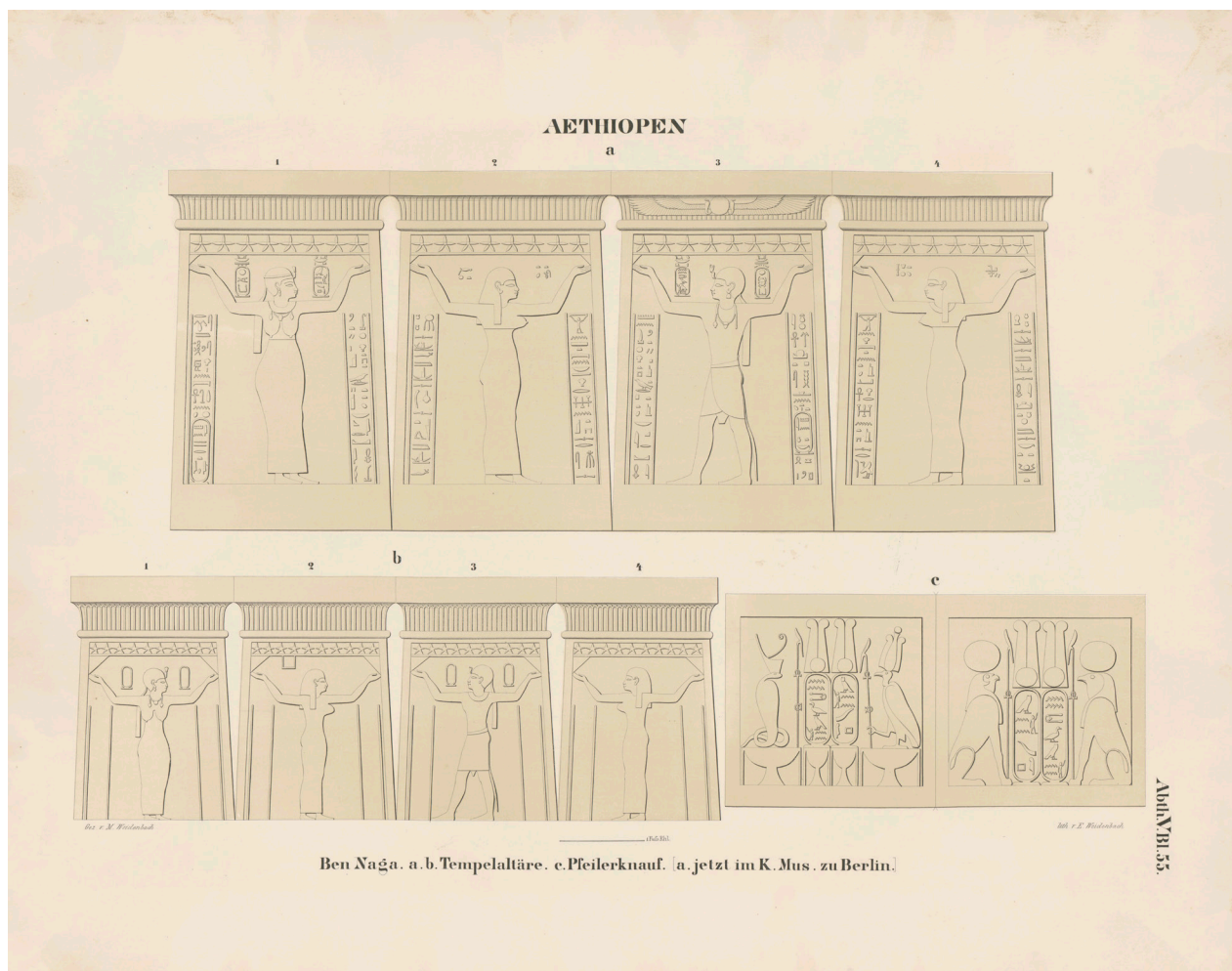


Figure 2. Plate from *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopen* showing Atlas A, Altar B and an abacus from the Isis Temple at Wad Ben Naga (courtesy of the Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection in Berlin; LD V, 55).

The two temples belonged to a single sacred precinct established following large-scale construction, including demolition of earlier structures, in the western part of Central Wad Ben Naga (i.e., the part of the archaeological site with monumental sacral and profane structures dating to the Meroitic period (300BC–AD350), nowadays delimited by a pair of parallel east-west running khors) (Figure 2). Besides the two temples, the precinct included other buildings, e.g., Kiosk WBN 390, which preceded the Isis Temple (Figure 3). Both temples were built using the usual techniques and materials for the period and the site.

Before the armed conflict in the Republic of the Sudan broke out on 15 April 2023, excavation of the Isis Temple was almost complete apart from a section of the temple's hypostyle hall (WBN 301). This paper aims to summarise the state of exploration of the temple and present some of the extraordinary finds and findings in the building.

### History of Exploration

Remains of the Isis Temple were first recorded by Frédéric Cailliaud (1787–1869) in the plan of Central Wad Ben Naga published in his *Voyage à Méroé*. Cailliaud marked 'remains of a temple' in the middle of a kom labelled with the capital letter 'C' (Cailliaud 1826, pl. X/2; Onderka 2016, pl. 11). The remains could be identified as those of the Isis Temple based on their relative position to the well-established location of the Typhonium. The ruins were later recorded on the plan produced by George Alexander Hoskins (1802–1863) in 1833, in which stone architectural features are marked on the northern end of an elongated kom, located to the southwest of the Typhonium, which dominates the plan (Figure 4) (Hoskins 1835, 114;

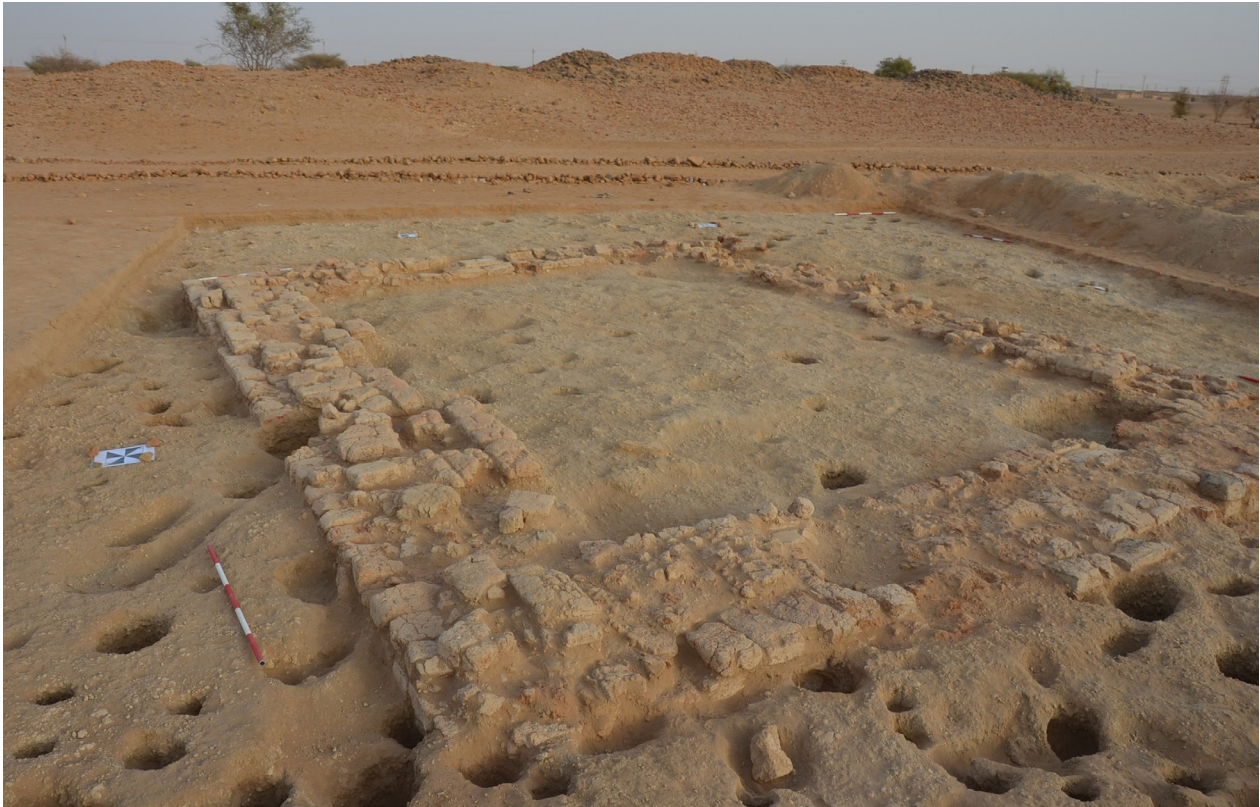


Figure 3. Foundations of Kiosk WBN 390 (Pavel Onderka).

Onderka 2016, pls 12–13). In comparison to Cailliaud's plan, Hoskins' plan more accurately assessed the Isis Temple's position at the northern end of Kom C.

The remains of the Isis Temple were first recorded by Louis Maurice Adolphe Linant de Bellefonds (1799–1883), who visited Wad Ben Naga at about the same time as Cailliaud (Rondot *et al.* (eds) 2021, 291, ill. 181; Onderka 2016, pls. 2–3). In the drawing, the ruins have the form of a kom covered with fragments of (fired) bricks. The next drawing was provided over two decades later by the draughtsman of the Royal Prussian Expedition, Max[imilian] Weidenbach (LD I, Pl. 139). It shows a pair of Bes-pillars in the centre of the ruins of the Typhonium in front, and a hilly terrain in the background, which is probably identical with Kom C. It is uncertain if the stone blocks seen behind the western Bes-pillar, i.e., right, once formed the monumental entrance to the Typhonium, or if they belonged to the Isis Temple's pylon (Figure 5).

The earliest visitors to the site – including Cailliaud, Linant de Bellefonds and Hoskins – paid very little attention to the Isis Temple, and generally omitted any reference to its ruins. In 1834, Giuseppe Ferlini (1797–1870) carried out excavations at several locations in Central Wad Ben Naga, including the northern extremity of Kom C (Vrtal forthcoming). During the excavations he disturbed one of the burial mounds on top of the kom (the whole cemetery is currently numbered as WBN C300) (Figure 6) and continued beneath, eventually cleaning the entirety of the southern sanctuary (WBN 311) probably all the way to the ground. In the centre of the room, he discovered a barque stand, that he extracted from the room, likely dragging it out through the southern body of the inner part of the temple towards the front part of the temple. As Ferlini was not able to take the barque stand with him away from Wad Ben Naga, he deposited it with a local sheikh in the original village of Wad Ben Naga (the present-day neighbourhood of Qubbit Saleh, where it is possibly still hidden today). Only a small fragment of Altar D was discovered in the course of the current excavations (Figure 7). Traces of Ferlini's works on Kom C were reported a year later, when the site was visited by John Lowell (Onderka 2016, 113–114).

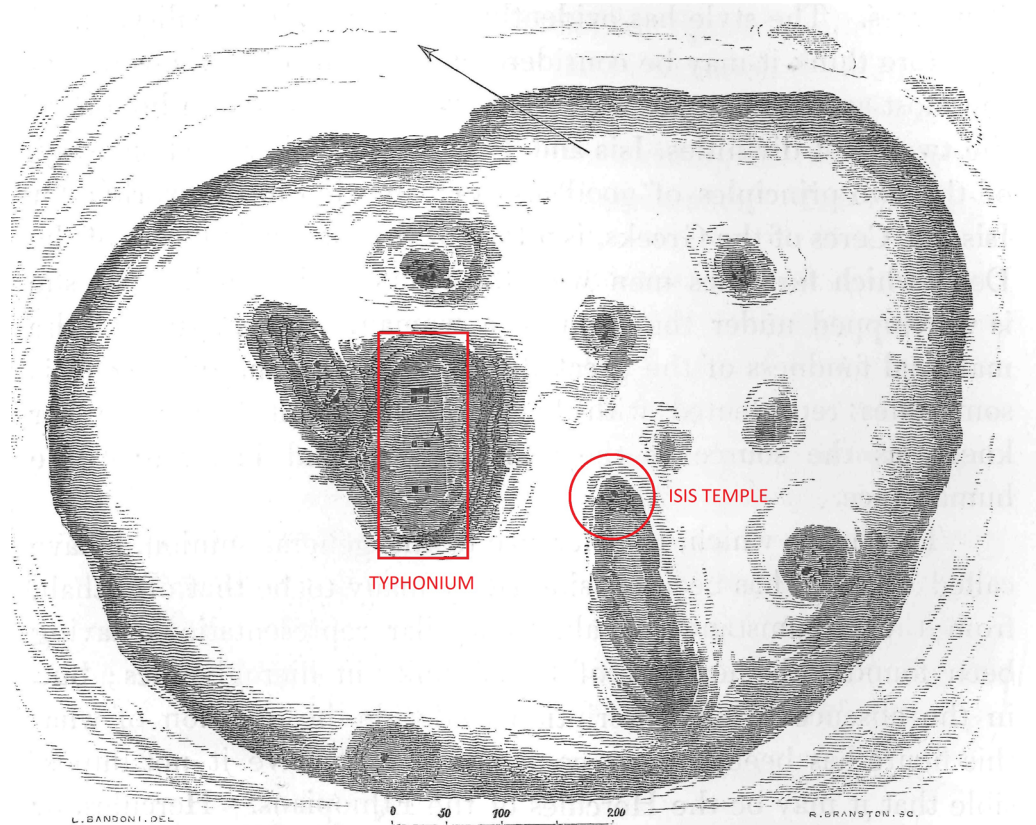


Figure 4. Plan of Central Wad Ben Naga from Hoskins' *Travels in Ethiopia, Above the Second Cataract of the Nile* (Hoskins 1835, 114).



Figure 5. Ernst Weidenbach's drawing of the ruins of the Typhonium (at the front) and the Isis Temple (at the back) (LD I, 139; Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection in Berlin).



Figure 6. Satellite image of Cemetery WBN C300 located on top of Kom C (Alexander Gatzsche).

### The Royal Prussian Expedition at Wad Ben Naga

In January 1844, the Royal Prussian Expedition arrived at Wad Ben Naga. They paid equal attention to the Typhonium and the Isis Temple; however, they decided to only excavate the latter. They excavated three rooms in the northern part of the temple - the northern vestibule (WBN 304) in which they found the so-called Altar B (an actual barque stand inscribed with invocations for Hathor, Lady of Iqer; remains of this are currently in the collections of the Sudan National Museum, Inv. No. 36350), the northern chapel (WBN 305) where they found the so-called Altar A (again a barque stand inscribed with invocations for Isis, Lady of Iqer), and the northern porch (WBN 308; with the so-called Altar C, which was decorated similarly to the previous two, but uninscribed) (Figure 8).



Figure 7. Fragment of Altar D, extracted from the southern sanctuary (WBN 311) during Giuseppe Ferlini's excavations, discovered during present excavations (Pavel Onderka).

The expedition intended to transport the two inscribed barque stands to Prussia; however, the material they were made of proved to be too difficult to simply cut with saws. The expedition decided to use explosives to take the barque stands apart. Firstly, they attempted to dismantle Altar B, but the use of explosives proved to be disastrous. Altar B was blown into pieces, some landing up to 60m away from its original location. The larger fragments, which remained in the closer vicinity, were assembled and dumped into the pit created while extracting the barque stand. They abandoned this crude method for the bigger Altar A and finished the work with saws for transport across the Bayuda Desert to Jebel Barkal, where it was loaded on a ship taking it along with other antiquities down the Nile (Figure 9).

The fate of the uninscribed Altar C has remained obscure.

During the current excavations, only a podium on which it was placed was found (Figure 10).

Besides the barque stands, the expedition discovered other antiquities, including two libation basins with an *ankh*-design, two fragments of New Kingdom royal statues (likely originating from the Egyptian fortresses on the Second Cataract), one inscribed with the name of Amenhotep II. Four objects, including Altar A, two fragments of the New Kingdom royal statues and one libation basin (the other was damaged and left at the site) were transported to Berlin (see Priese 1984b, 11). All the transported finds probably originated from a pit excavated around Altar A during its extraction, as the current excavation has shown.

A major part of the documentation produced by the Royal Prussian Expedition at Wad Ben Naga was included in the multi-volume publication, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien*, published between 1849–1859 (illustrations) and between 1897–1913 (texts) by various editors. The remaining materials were only published in 1984, in two articles by Priese (Priese 1984a; 1984b).

Following the departure of the Royal Prussian Expedition, the ruins of the temple received only limited scholarly attention. A Sudanese expedition under the direction of Thabit Hassan Thabit, the first Sudanese Director of the Sudanese Antiquities Service, carried out excavations at Wad Ben Naga between 1958 and 1960 (see Vercoutter 1962). When their excavations,

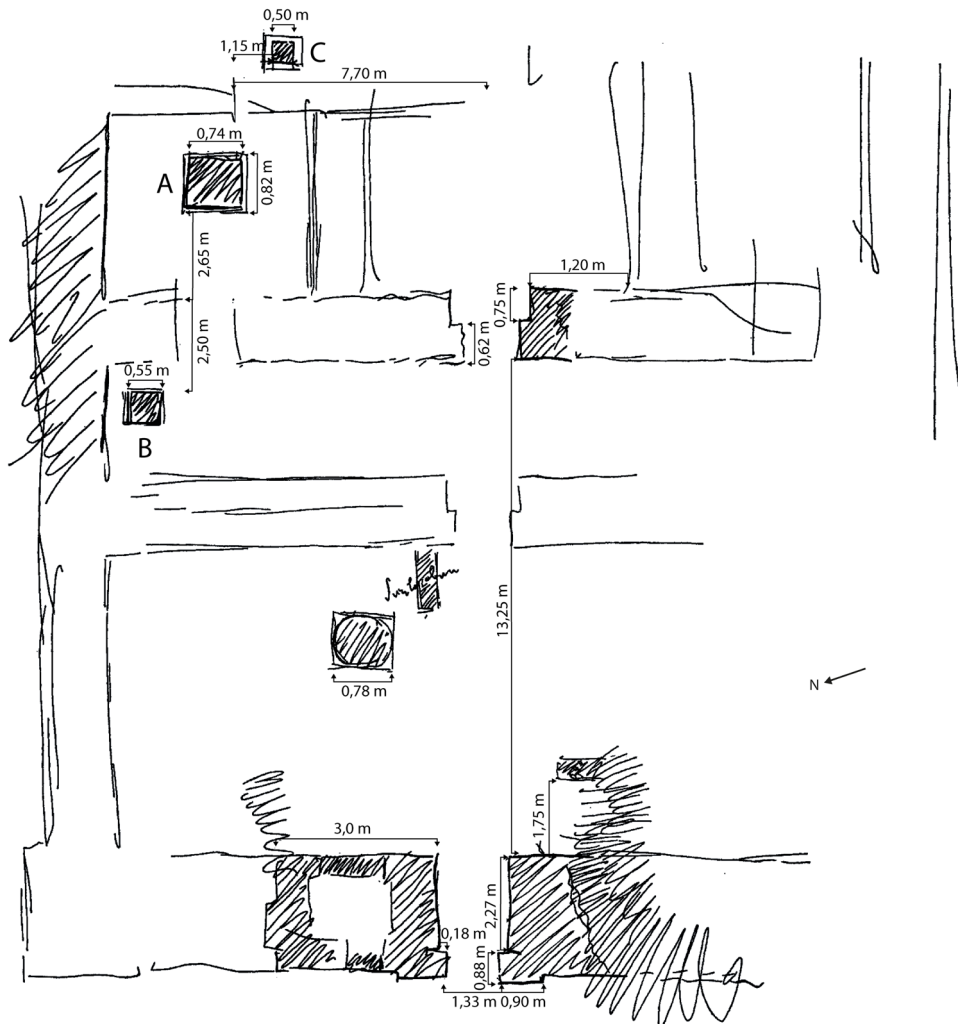


Figure 8. Sketch of the ground plan of the Isis Temple by Georg Erbkam (after Priese 1984b, Abb. 3; Vlastimil Vrtal). Based upon Weidenbach's drawing of the ruins of the Typhonium (in the front) and the Isis Temple (in the back) (LD I, 139; Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection in Berlin).



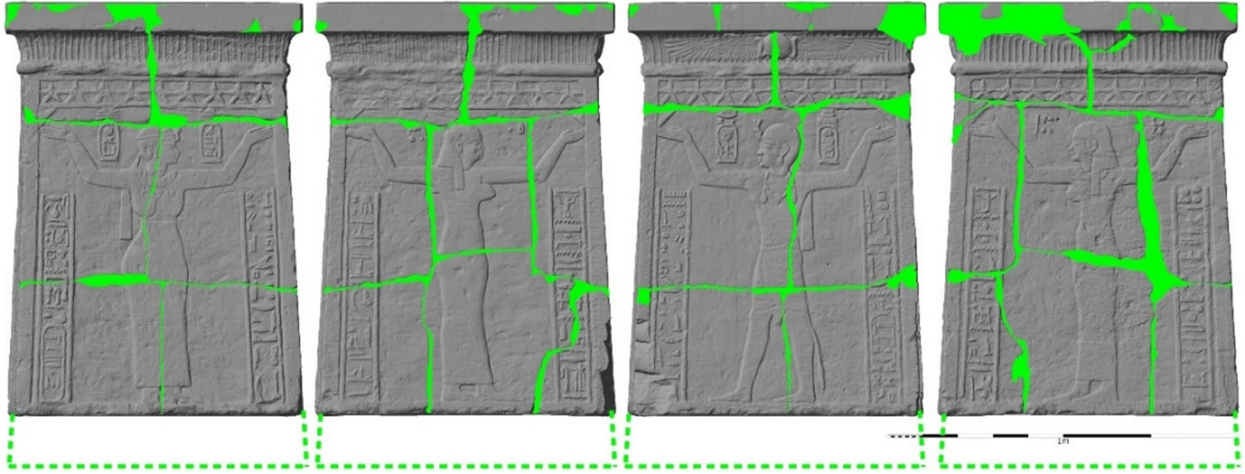


Figure 9. 3D scan of Altar A with indications of cuts (Alexander Gatzsche).



Figure 10. Podium under Altar C in the northern porch (WBN 308) (Pavel Onderka).

proceeding from east to west (see Vrtal 2017), reached the rear part of the Isis Temple, Thabit Hassan Thabit was then tasked to coordinate the UNESCO Campaign in Nubia on the Sudanese side of the Sudano-Egyptian border and left Wad Ben Naga, unfortunately never to return.

### **Architecture and cultic equipment of the temple**

The Isis Temple (Figure 11) was a multi-roomed temple with an unparalleled inner structure. Its architecture was highly influenced by that of the Great Temple of Isis on the Island of Philae (see Onderka and Vrtal 2022a).

The Isis Temple was built in the construction manner usual for the building programme of King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore. The main building material was brick, while mudbricks were used for the interior walls and cores of exterior walls, and fired bricks were used for the outer casing. Sandstone, quarried in the hinterland of Wad Ben Naga (c. 2km southeast from Central Wad Ben Naga), was used for thresholds, door jambs, architraves, paving of selected rooms and cultic equipment.

The inner structure of the temple was axially symmetrical and centred around a triple sanctuary. The most sacred place of the temple was the main sanctuary (WBN 303), which served the worship of a Deified Meroitic Queen. The northern sanctuary (WBN 305) was dedicated to the worship of Isis, while the southern sanctuary (WBN 311) was dedicated to the worship of a male deity, either Horus or Osiris, the former being the more likely option, as indicated by other finds from this side of the temple.

Each of the tree chapels was preceded by a vestibule that connected them with the hypostyle hall (WBN 301). The northern vestibule (WBN 304) was devoted to the worship of Hathor, as indicated directly by the inscriptions on Altar B and also by a decorative band formed by Hathor's heads at the top of the room's walls (Figure 12).

The vestibules connected the chapels with the hypostyle hall, which was fronted by two towers of the pylon. The northern and the southern vestibules (WBN 304 and WBN 310, respectively) also provided access to mirroring lateral complexes of rooms consisting of elongated corridors (WBN 306 and WBN 312; running from the pylon to the rear wall of the triple sanctuary), open courtyards (WBN 307 and WBN 313; situated in the rear corners of the temple), porches (WBN 308 and WBN 314) and eventually small chapels (WBN 309 and WBN 315; adjacent to the temple axis at the very end of the lateral complexes). A pair of staircases leading to the roof of the temple were built at the west ends of the corridors.

Under the northern porch, the podium with the uninscribed Altar C was located. A counterpart of Altar C was discovered in the southern porch. It had a shape similar to those of the barque stand with sloping sides, even though slightly slimmer. The upper part of the altar was formed by a cavetto cornice. On the front side the cornice was adorned with a sun disc encircled by two cobras. The altar was topped with a pair of reclining lions (Figure 13). Such a type of altar has been otherwise attested only in the reliefs on the fifth column of the Lion Temple at Musawwarat es-Sufra (Figure 14) (Hintze 1971, Taf. 93, 5/2/1), where an altar topped with two sitting lions is depicted between Amun of Napata and Isis, wearing the Hathoric crown. Lohwasser who has recently revisited the decorative programme of the Musawwarat temple connects the scene with the worship of royal ancestors, which corresponds to the context in which it appears in the Isis Temple at Wad Ben Naga, which served the worship of the Deified Meroitic Queen (pers. comm. 2021).

The temple was accessed through five entrances; all led from the perimeter of the temple to the hypostyle hall. The main entrance was positioned on the main axis; a pair of side entrances were inserted into the pylon's towers. Two side doors were placed at the western ends of the lateral exterior walls just behind the towers of the pylon.

The pylon was mainly built of fired bricks. All three frontal gates were framed with sandstone jambs



Figure 11. Ground plan of the Isis Temple (drawing by Pavel Onderka, Vlastimil Vrtal).

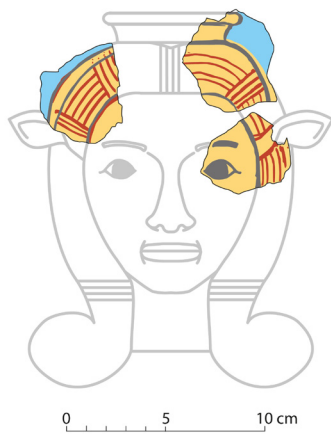


Figure 12. Hathoric heads from the decoration of the inner walls of the northern vestibule (WBN 304) (Pavel Onderka, Vlastimil Vrtal).



Figure 13. The lion altar/Altar E discovered under the southern porch (WBN 314) (Pavel Onderka).

and architraves with a torus cavetto cornice bearing a relief decoration painted with the basic Meroitic repertoire of colours. Stone architectural features, namely the blocks forming torus moulding and cavetto cornice, were used for the constructions of the tops of the pylon towers.

The side gates were flanked with flagpole niches on their outer sides. At the bottom of the niches were large plinths made of ferricrete sandstone. The front surfaces of the blocks was covered with a layer of exterior-type plaster into which five columns of hieroglyphic texts were incised. The text on the northern plinth was relatively better preserved than that on the southern plinth and reads: 'Isis [raised (?)] her voice up to the sky. They invoke [someone/some ritual to grant] the kingship of his father Ra [in the] heaven. The gods are ordering to grant the office to (his) son!' (Figure 15).

Of the sandstone casing of the side doors, only the lowermost courses of blocks were preserved. They bore parts of the lowermost registers filled with striding fecundity figures representing the gifts of the Nile. Large fragments of blocks, forming the upper part of the jambs and architrave of the main entrance, were discovered in front of the pylon. They bore both figural and textual decoration. One of the topics represented was the act of 'supporting the sky as [the god] Shu [does it]', as indicated by one of the inscriptions discovered in the debris. Other fragments indicate scenes depicting interactions between royal and divine figures. This was probably also the case of the unpreserved frames of the side entrances.

The towers of the pylon were extensively decorated. The relief decoration modelled in the exterior plaster with polychrome painting in the basic Meroitic colour scheme. The scenes on the façades of the pylon towers depicted Natakamani and Amanitore smiting enemies. It is probable that Amanitore was depicted on the northern tower, as the northern area of the inner part of the temple was associated with the goddesses Isis and Hathor, while Natakamani was depicted on the southern one, as the southern chapel was dedicated to a male deity. Under the feet of the sovereigns was a register depicting six to seven representations of conquered regions or peoples in the form of a shield inscribed with a toponym or ethnonym, topped with a torso of a prisoner of war. As a matter of fact, only one fragment of the first representation (from the centre) on the southern tower is preserved. The back sides of the towers were also decorated. A torso of a depiction of a seated figure of Horus was discovered in the fill of the hypostyle hall.

Two pairs of columns supported the roof of the hypostyle hall. They were made of sandstone and



Figure 14. Depiction of the lion altar from the fifth column of the Lion Temple at Musawwarat es-Sufra (after Hintze *et al.* 1971, Taf. 93).



Figure 15. Northern plinth with the Egyptian inscription (Pavel Onderka).

consisted of a rectangular base, a round shaft sloping slightly inwards, and a rectangular abacus. One of the abaci (see Figure 5) was recorded by the Royal Prussian Expedition in 1844. It was recently rediscovered split into two parts. A smaller part lay close to the surface above the central vestibule, while a larger part was found in the entrance connecting the hypostyle hall and central vestibule.

Each side of the abacus was decorated with a pair of cartouches containing the Meroitic versions of the names of King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore. On one of the opposite pairs of sides, Horus and Thoth having the forms of a falcon-headed and ibis-headed lion, respectively flanked the cartouches. On the other pair, the royal names were surrounded by the Two Ladies, a serpent, representing the goddess Wadjet, and a vulture representing the goddess Nekhbet (Figures 16 and 17). The decoration of the columns' shafts was divided into three to four registers (the present state of exploration and reconstruction of the columns does not allow for more precision). The first register from the top was filled with *djed*-pillars, *ankh*-signs and scarabs pushing the sun disk. The pattern for the register's decoration was inspired by the columns of the Birth House and the Great Hypostyle Hall of the Philae temple (Figure 18).

The central part of the columns' shaft probably contained two separate registers with depictions of gods – most notably Isis, Osiris and Horus – in interaction with King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore. The division into two registers is suggested by two differing sizes of figures included in the scenes. The figures were certainly accompanied by texts inscribed in columns, representing captions for the scenes, as well as direct speech by the scenes' protagonists.

The probable lowermost register appears to have been filled with Egyptian texts organised vertically into columns and separated by dividers (the texts are impossible to interpret entirely, as parts of column fragments are still in the unexcavated part of the hypostyle hall). However, one may present first observations. Besides the royal names, the texts include a notably high number of ethnonyms and toponyms (Figure 19).

The bases of the columns were intended as perfect cubes; however, the eventual result slightly deviated from this plan. Their sides were decorated with overlapping leaf decoration. The gate leading to the central vestibule was – unlike the side gates, which were constructed of fired bricks – built of sandstone blocks. The façade of the door was decorated with a pair of concentric scenes, out of which only the lowermost register was preserved. The mirroring depictions showed King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore, accompanied by partly preserved captions in Egyptian hieroglyphs inscribed into single columns surrounding the scenes from both sides (Figures 20 and 21).

The inner sides of the jambs were inscribed with five columns of Egyptian texts, which included cartouches with the Egyptian names of King Natakamani, preceded by elements of royal titulary taken over from the later Ptolemaic kings of Egypt, including the title of the 'the chosen one of Ptah' (Figure 22). The back sides of the jambs remained uninscribed. In the middle of the central vestibule a statue stand similar in shape to the barque stands, but smaller. A depression was hollowed out in its top so that a statue base could be embedded.

The gate leading to the main sanctuary was also constructed of sandstone. The preserved lower part of the jambs was entirely inscribed with columns of Egyptian text which contained the cartouches with Egyptian names of Queen Amanitore (Figure 23).

A short distance behind the threshold that separated the central vestibule from the main sanctuary (Figure 24), on the temple axis, a pottery libation basin with an *ankh*-design found inserted into the floor. In the middle of the room was a square podium made of sandstone and decorated in relief and with yellow and red paint. On the top of the podium was the depiction of the Nine Bows bound together by a rope, while the sides were decorated with alternating protective symbols (*ankh*, *djed* and *was*). The triads of symbols were placed on top of alternating *neb* and *heb* signs (Sudan National Museum, Inv. No. 41030) (Figure 25).

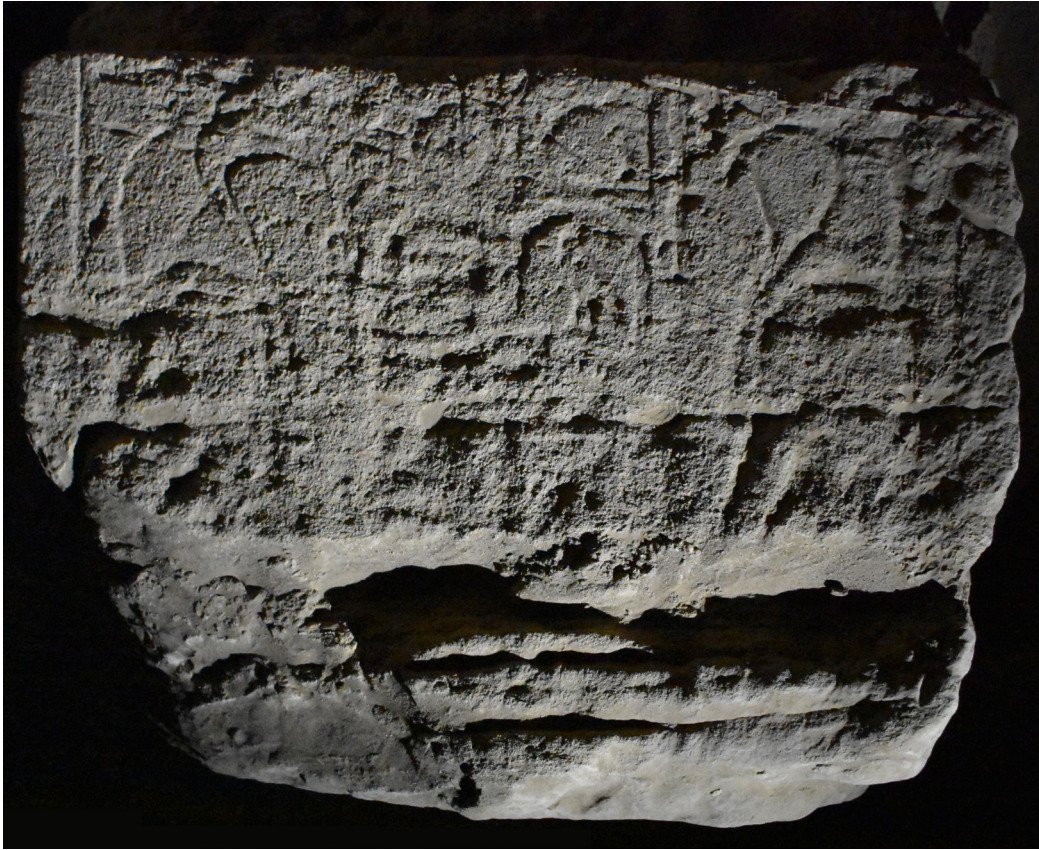


Figure 16. One side of the abacus, originally recorded by the Royal Prussian Expedition and recently rediscovered in the gate leading to the central vestibule (WBN 302) (Pavel Onderka).



Figure 17. Another side of the abacus, originally recorded by the Royal Prussian Expedition and recently rediscovered in the gate leading to the central vestibule (WBN 302) (Pavel Onderka).



Figure 18. One of the columns of the Birth House at Philae, which served as a pattern for the decoration of the columns in the hypostyle hall of the Isis Temple at Wad Ben Naga (Pavel Onderka).



Figure 19. Fragment of a column from the hypostyle (WBN 301) hall with toponyms (Pavel Onderka).

A sandstone statue base (Sudan National Museum, Inv. No. 41029) stood on top of the podium. Again, it copied the shape of barque stands, with sloping sides and a cavetto cornice on top. Originally, its surface was covered with a yellow colour, and at a later stage it was covered with lime plaster.

Eventually, on top of the statue base a statue of a Deified Queen (c. 0.5m high; Sudan National Museum, Inv. No. 41028) (Figures 26 and 27), made of high-quality sandstone, was fixed (the final stage in the history of the temple used hook nails). The statue depicts a queen, either Amanishakheto or Amanitore – the former being the more likely candidate. The statue is incomplete; the torso of her body and arms is missing. The queen was depicted in a typical Meroitic fashion with rounded contours of her body and short curly hair. She wore a diadem on her head. The forehead decoration of the diadem is lost. The queen is protected by two winged goddesses carved at the back of her head. She carried a bow over her shoulder (and possibly held other weapons in her hands). The queen was dressed in a long robe. She wore sandals and stepped on three naked prisoners of war, bound under her feet.

Behind the statue on the podium, two sandstone statue bases were set into the floor. A pair of holes hollowed in each of them were intended to fix life-size or slightly over-life-size striding statues either of metal, wood, or a combination of both. Fragments of such statues were discovered buried in a cache discovered in the northern chapel of the temple.

The cache in this chapel, which contained used and broken pieces of cultic equipment, ranks among a number of changes to the original arrangement of spaces and equipment of the temple's interior (Onderka and Vrtal 2022b, 88). A secondary cultic place was discovered behind the right jamb of the gate to the central vestibule. It consisted of an assemblage of several objects, including a fragment of a ritual harpoon-like weapon

made of hard stone, a wonder stone and an ostrakon which bore a sketch of some kind (Onderka and Honzl 2023, 48). A number of doors within the inner structure of the room were blocked, some of them twice.

The most visible alteration was the division of the hypostyle hall into three sections by means of (screen) walls. The walls were built of burnt bricks covered on both sides with waterproof plaster and polychrome figured decoration accompanied with Egyptian texts. At the





Figure 20. Pair of lower registers with depictions of King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore on the bottom of the jambs of the gate leading to the central vestibule (WBN 302) (Pavel Onderka).



Figure 21. Scene with King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore on the bottom of the northern jamb of the gate leading to the central vestibule (WBN 302) (Pavel Onderka).



Figure 22. Titulary of King Natakamani from the southern jamb of the gate leading to the central vestibule (Pavel Onderka).

moment, it is not possible to guess the time between the construction of the temple and the addition of the dividing walls; however, the discovery implies that knowledge of the Egyptian language and script among the personnel of the temple was maintained for a certain period of time and that it did not restrict the decoration of the temple. The reason behind the division of the temple remains unanswered.

The rest of the exterior of the temple was, like the pylon, covered by limestone water-proof plaster. The plaster bore coloured relief decoration. Not much of the decoration has been preserved. The figures were over life size and the walls were topped by a cavetto cornice with royal cartouches, presumably of both Natakamani and Amanitore.

The decoration of the interior was very badly preserved, except for the sandstone door frames. In most rooms, only the lowermost registers of the decorative programme were preserved. As a rule, they depict processions of striding fecundity figures bringing gifts of the Nile. Larger portions of scenes remained on the well-preserved walls of the southern lateral corridor. On the south wall, left of the staircase, five life-size figures were preserved. The first three appear to have been male, the fourth one seems to have represented a winged goddess, and the fifth seems to have been a seated male. On the north wall, a representation of a queen with a frontal representation of her breast, most likely Queen Amanitore, was preserved.

An interesting aspect of the temple's interior is the paving, or its absence in individual rooms of the temple. Among the paved rooms were the northern chapel, the northern vestibule and the southern chapel, all of which were connected with originally Egyptian cults.

### Conclusions

The Isis Temple at Wad Ben Naga (WBN 300) represents another piece in the mosaic of the extensive building programme of King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore in Kush. Like the Typhonium at Wad Ben Naga (WBN 200), the architecture of the temple sought inspiration in a structure built in the distant past, namely the Great Temple of Isis. This inspiration gave the temple a ground plan unparalleled in Kushite architecture. Philae inspired the Wad Ben Naga temple not only by means of its architecture, but also by means of its decoration and texts. All was, however, set into a distinctively Meroitic context.

The texts preserved in the temple are mainly Egyptian. Only in certain places, cartouches with the Meroitic versions of the names of King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore were used. As of now, the temple has provided an extensive compendium of Egyptian texts comparable only to the set inscribed on the outer walls of the Lion Temple at Musawwarat es-Sufra.

The temple was equipped with at least four barque stands (Altars A–D), a lion altar (Altar E), as well as several statue stands, the most opulent example being the assemblage in the main sanctuary. The main cultic image was discovered almost exactly in its original location.



Figure 23. Remains of the gate leading to the main sanctuary (WBN 303) (Pavel Onderka).



Figure 24. Section of the main sanctuary (WBN 303) during the excavations with the podium and statue bases in their respective positions (Pavel Onderka).



Figure 25. Decorated podium from the main sanctuary (WBN 303) (Pavel Onderka, Vlastimil Vrtal).



Figure 26. Statue of the Deified Queen discovered in the main sanctuary (WBN 303) (Pavel Onderka, Vlastimil Vrtal).



Figure 27. Detail of the statue of the Deified Queen (Pavel Onderka).

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