

Geographic Location in Hammamat Inscription

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This paper discusses the geographical location mentioned in Hammamat Inscription No. 1, according to Couyat and Montet. This inscription was created by Sankh in commemoration of his expedition to the Eastern Desert and the Red Sea Coast during the reign of Mentuhotep IV. The toponym is problematic due to its complete absence from all ancient Egyptian texts. This led scientists to disagree about its geographical location; some located it in Quseir, while others placed it on the River Nile, or in the Eastern Desert. This matter has been a mystery, and the toponym remained unknown without a specific identity, which made some scientists leave it without certain specifications, and this, in turn, added more mystery to the inscription, and led a number of scientists to minimize its value. Therefore, the researcher has decided to confront this problem, especially after the recent archaeological discoveries on the Red Sea Coast in general, and the port of Mersa Gawasis in particular. According to the writer, these recent discoveries may define Mersa Gawasis (this conforms with the nature of Sankh's expedition in light of other inscriptions and according to the linguistic comparisons between these two toponyms). The inscription, thus, becomes very important as it proves—for the first time in the ancient Egyptian sources—that there were some activities attributed to Mentuhotep IV on the Red Sea Coast and Mersa Gawasis, which provides a new historical and cultural dimension to the policy of this king, and increases the value of the inscription.