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*Ancient Restorers
in the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari
in the Light of Newly Found Graffiti*

It is well known that most of the decoration of the temple of Hatshepsut, as preserved today, is the result of work of ancient restorers dating to the early Ramesside period. In some places at least we can still admire excellent reliefs dating to the reign of Hatshepsut. A good example of this is the figure of Atum in the middle portico, left untouched by the Amarna iconoclasts.¹ The method of work of early Ramesside restorers has been amply commented in the available literature.² One can observe careful linear sketches made in red paint accompanying some of the restored motifs of the temple decoration. These are drawings and inscriptions found on the walls of the Birth Portico on the middle terrace of the temple which illustrate in a most vivid way the technique adopted by those ancient restorers. A moot question, however, is chronology of these undertakings, especially because dated inscriptional evidence of the early Ramesside period from Deir el-Bahari is extremely rare.

Though dozens of hieroglyphic restoration inscriptions of the period of Ramesses II have been left in the temple, none of these texts have provide any dating.³ Only two hieratic graffiti from the Hatshepsut temple can be dated explicitly to the reign of Ramesses II. In both cases, however, there is no certainty about their possible relation to the restoration work conducted in the temple area. The graffito left by the god's father Wennefer and his relatives dates to year 20 (IV *peret* 28), and looks rather like a commemorative inscription written as a token of their pious pilgrimage.⁴

A new graffito recently found on the external face of the northern wall of the lower courtyard is dated explicitly to the sixth year of the reign of Ramesses II (**Fig. 1**):

(1) *rnpt-sp 6 3bd 4 3h.t sw 1 hm n nsw-bitj Wsr-m³c.t-R^c stp-n-R^c ^cnh(.w) wd3(.w) snb(.w) s3-R^c [R^c]-msj-[sw] mrj-Imn ^cnh(.w) wd3(.w) snb(.w)* (2) *3bw-Km.t*

(1) *Year 6, the fourth month of akhet, day 1, (under) the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Usermaatse-Setepenre, l.p.h., Son of Ra [Ra]mes[ses]-meriamun, l.p.h.;^a*
(2) *Abukeme.*

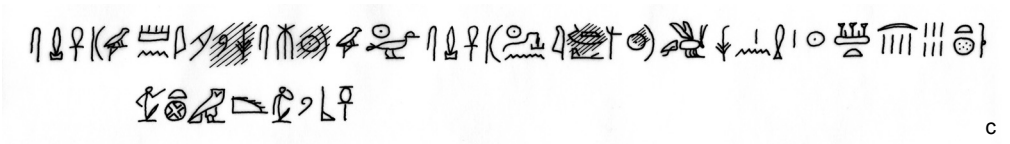
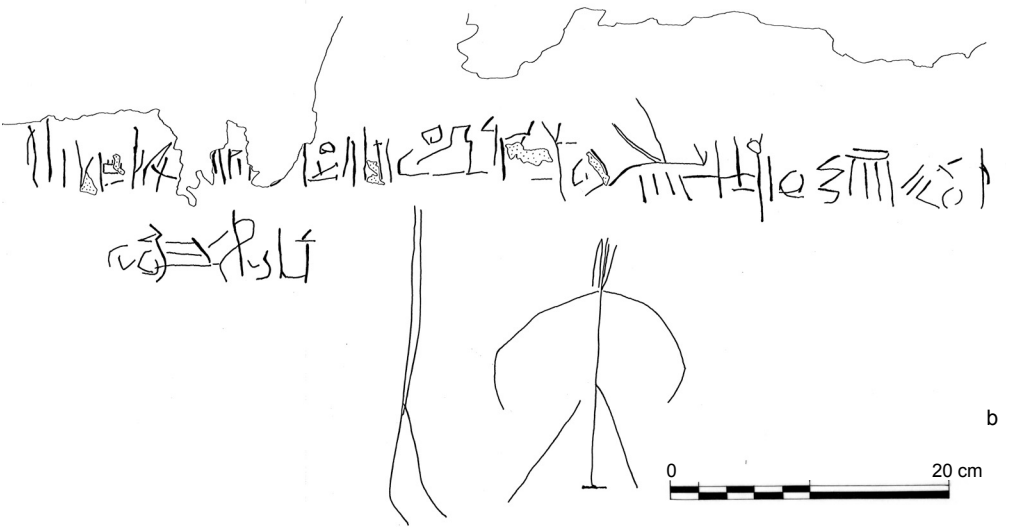
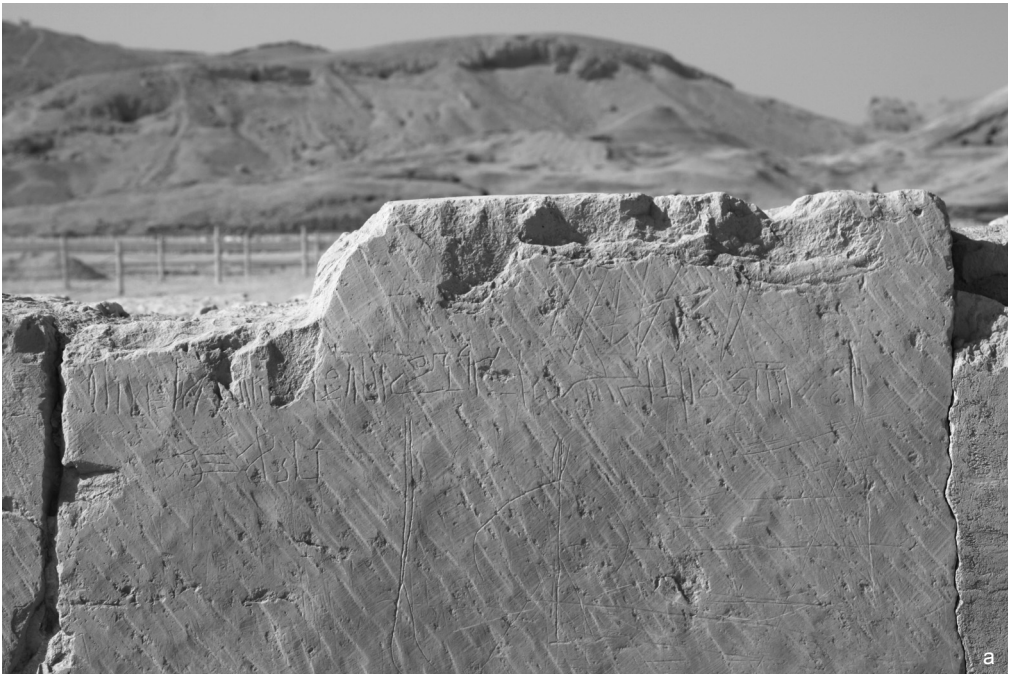
* I would like to express my gratitude to Paul Barford for improving my English.

¹ The scene has been admirably interpreted by Professor Karol Myśliwiec in his article: Amon, Atum and Aton: The Evolution of Heliopolitan Influences in Thebes, [*in:*] *L'Égyptologie* en 1979. Axes prioritaires de recherches II, Paris 1982, pp. 285–289.

² Cf. P. MARTINEZ, Restorations post-amarniennes commanditées par Ramsès II: un cas d'école à Deir el-Bahari, *Memnonia* XVIII, 2007, pp. 157–176, Pls XXXVI–XLV; A. ĆWIEK, M. SANKIEWICZ, The Scene of “Going round the Wall” on the North Wall of the Portico of the Birth, *PAM* XVIII (Reports 2006), 2008, pp. 290–294. For the history of the post-Amarna restorations in general, see M. EATON-KRAUSS, Restorations and Erasures in the Post-Amarna Period, [*in:*] Z. Hawass (Ed.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century II*, Cairo 2002, pp. 194–202; P. BRAND, Methods Used in Restoring Reliefs Vandalized During the Amarna Period, *GM* 170, 1999, pp. 37–44; ID., Secondary Restorations in the Post-Amarna Period, *JARCE* 36, 1999, pp. 113–134.

³ Cf. E. NAVILLE, The Temple of Deir el-Bahari, Part II, London 1897, Pls 46–50, 52; Part VI, London 1908, Pls 152, 157–159, 161; *KRI* II, pp. 643, 927.

⁴ See now M. BARWIK, A Priestly Family from Abydos at Deir el-Bahari, *MDAIK* 66, 2010, pp. 13–18. As regards the family of Wennefer, see D. RAUE, Ein Wesir Ramses' II., [*in:*] H. Guksh, D. Polz (Eds), *Stationen. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Ägyptens R.Stadelmann gewidmet*, Mainz a/Rhein 1998, pp. 341–351.



1. Graffito on the northern wall (exterior) of the lower court of Hatshepsut temple (Phot. and drawing M. Barwik).

^{a)} As regards the writing of nomen and prenomen, cf. J. VON BECKERATH, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen*, *MÄS* 49, Mainz 1999, pp. 155, 157. The writing of group *m3^c.t* (G. MÖLLER, *Hieratische Paläographie. Die aegyptische Buchschrift in ihrer Entwicklung von der Fünften Dynastie bis zur römischen Kaiserzeit II*, Osnabrück 1965, 469B) in the prenomen is doubtful in fact; it seems the width of the lacuna at the end of the nomen does not fit the ‘early’ form of nomen with double *s* (*R^c-msj-s(w)*) as evidenced by Kitchen.⁵

It is hard to determine the reason behind the writing of such a terse text comprising only the date and the names of the reigning king plus the strange-looking name of the apparent author of the inscription. Its location on the external wall of the temple (just between the two northern entrances to the lower courtyard) rather precludes it from relating directly to any activity in the temple itself. There is no certainty whatsoever that the two large scale signs accompanying the text were scratched at the same time nor may they be explained in a plausible way (some rather vague resemblance to the signs *hr* and *b* may be noticed).⁶ Even the supposed name (‘Pleasure/Jubilation (of) Egypt’) of the author of the graffito, not attested elsewhere, raises some doubts, as it cannot be excluded that this is perhaps only a kind of epithet applied here to the name of the victorious pharaoh. The graffito postdates by several months the anniversary of the coronation of Ramesses II (III *shemu* 27), and the date of the battle of Kadesh (the beginning of III *shemu*). Only four months earlier, the pharaoh had returned in triumph (sic!) to his capital of Pi-Ramesses, and no doubt already planned to commemorate his victory (sic!) in a set of elaborate scenes and inscriptions decorating the greatest temples of Egypt.⁷ It was thirteen months earlier (i.e. Year 5, III *akhet* 10) that a certain Ramose had been promoted to the office of the Scribe of the Royal Necropolis as evidenced by oCG 25671.⁸ Approximately at that time, a huge building programme in the necropolis area was started under supervision of vizier Paser, including the memorial temple of the sovereign, and the chapel of Hathor with the *hnw* of Ramesses II at Deir el-Medina.⁹ This, as may be concisely sketched on the basis of the inscriptional evidence, was the historical background of the graffito from the Hatshepsut temple. The restoration work in the temple may provisionally be placed in those times, although no precise date can be provided on the basis of the available data. According to

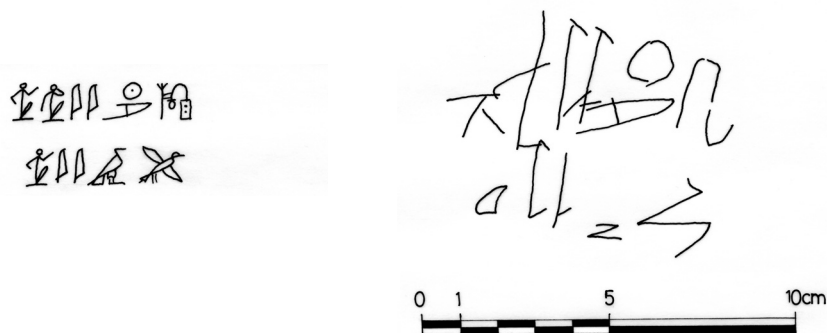
⁵ See K.A. KITCHEN, *Aspects of Ramesside Egypt*, [in:] W.F. Reineke (Ed.), *First International Congress of Egyptology. Acts*, Berlin 1979, p. 384; compare also A.J. SPALINGER, *Historical Observations on the Military Reliefs of Abu Simbel and Other Ramesside Temples in Nubia*, *JEA* 66, 1980, pp. 95ff.

⁶ As regards the rare hieratic form of the former sign, see M. SHERIF ALI, *Hieratische Ritzinschriften aus Theben*, *GOF* IV, 34, Wiesbaden 2002, Pl. 45.

⁷ Cf. K.A. KITCHEN, *Pharaoh Triumphant. The Life and Times of Ramesses II*, Cairo 1990, pp. 62ff.

⁸ Cf. J. ČERNÝ, *Ostraca hiératiques (N^{os} 25501–25832) I*, *CGC*, Le Caire 1935, p. 75*, Pl. LXX = *KRI* III, p. 636 (52); W. HELCK, *Die datierten und datierbaren Ostraka, Papyri und Graffiti von Deir el-Medineh*, *ÄA* 63, Wiesbaden 2002 [= *Die datierten und datierbaren Ostraka, Papyri und Graffiti*], p. 52; for the comment, see also B.G. DAVIES, *Who’s Who at Deir el-Medina. A Prosopographic Study of the Royal Workmen’s Community*, *EgUit* XIII, Leiden 1999 [= *Who’s Who at Deir el-Medina*], p. 79.

⁹ D. VALBELLE, « Les Ouvriers de la Tombe ». *Deir el-Médineh à l’Époque Ramesside*, *BdE* 96, Le Caire 1985 [= *Les Ouvriers*], pp. 168ff.



2. Graffito of the scribe Meryre and Pay from the Punt Portico (Drawing M. Barwik).

the epigraphic data relating to the writing of the king's nomen in restoration inscriptions in the temple¹⁰ the work can be placed perhaps within the first two decades of the reign of Ramesses II.¹¹

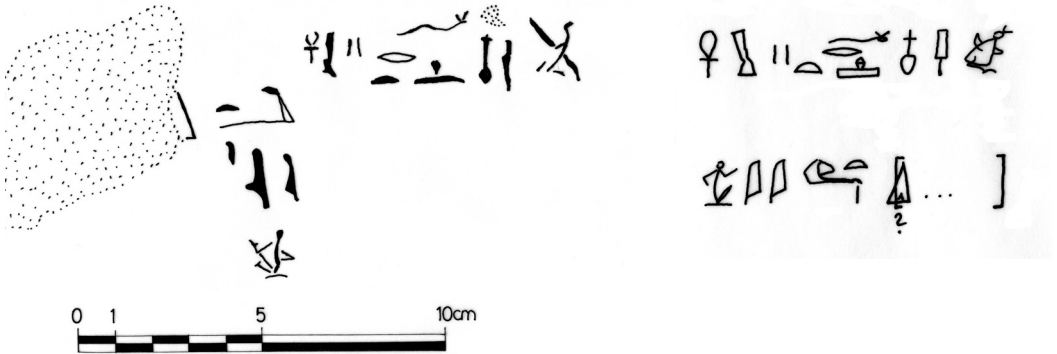
Significantly, some of the workmen engaged in the project of restoration of the temple decoration left their personal signatures. Undoubtedly a dipinti painted in red by the 'draughtsman Nebamon' on the right wall of the niche in the colonnade of the Lower Chapel of Anubis has such a character. A large hieratic dipinti written in red on the south wall of the Birth Portico (1.41m above floor level) can be possibly connected with one of the restorers as well – this was a certain Nakht-Min. Unfortunately, nothing certain can be said about Nebamon and Nakht-Min.¹² Similarly the 'Scribe Meryre' and Pay (**Fig. 2**) of the graffito scratched on the west wall of the Punt Portico, directly under the scene of offering myrrh and other products of Punt to Amun, cannot be identified either, unless Meryre is the same person as the scribe of the *semdet*-staff of the royal necropolis who was active in the fourth decade of the reign of Ramesses II.¹³

¹⁰ Cf. *supra*, n. 5.

¹¹ For this, see MARTINEZ, *Memnonia* XVIII, 2007, p. 160; compare also the notice by J. LIPÍŇSKA, Amenemone, Builder of the Ramesseum, *EtudTrav* III, 1969, p. 49, that restorations in Deir el-Bahari were simultaneous to the foundation of the Ramesseum – an opinion based on the so-called 'rhetorical' stela from Deir el-Bahari (Cairo Museum, JE 66570; cf. *KRI* II, pp. 310f.); see also A. LANSING, The Museum's Excavations at Thebes, *BMMA* 30/II, Nov. 1935, p. 14.

¹² As regards the workman Nebamon who started his career late in the reign of Ramesses II, see G. BURKARD, "Die Götter gebaren in diesem Monat." Ostrakon Qurna 633, *GM* 169, 1999, p. 10 n. 32. The sources relating to the royal necropolis do not mention any draughtsman of that name.

¹³ Cf. J. ČERNÝ, A Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period, *BdE* 50, Cairo 1973¹, 2004³ [= Community], pp. 210f. (No. 37); DAVIES, Who's Who at Deir el-Medina, pp. 78, 125, 283: Meryre (III); cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 7f., chart 1: Meryre (I). One may wonder whether Pay is not the same person as the draughtsman Pay (I) of the early years of Ramesses II or else his grandson Pay (II) who was active during later years of the reign of Ramesses II; as regards these men, see *ibid.*, p. 150, chart 10. One of them participated in the work on the decoration of TT 32 in Khokha, as indicated by the graffiti found in the tomb; see Z.I. FÁBIAN, Graffiti in TT 32, [*in:*] Intellectual Heritage of Egypt. Studies Presented to László Kákosy by Friends and Colleagues on the Occasion of His 60th Birthday, *StudAeg* 14, Budapest 1992, pp. 137ff. (esp. p. 142 n. 11: Pay the younger).



3. Graffiti of the sculptor Neferhotep and Haty scratched on the west wall of the north wing of the Lower Portico (Drawing M. Barwik).

Two other graffiti on the west wall of the Lower Portico (northern wing) can be possibly dated approximately to the same period. These are hieroglyphic graffiti carelessly scratched below the dado on the plain surface of the wall. One can only guess the reason for their presence here, in a portico with badly damaged original decoration. The title borne by two of the men commemorated in these graffiti enables one to connect them with the work of restoration.

The first of these graffiti comprises two names at least (**Fig. 3**):

- (1) [...] *H3ty* (2) *ḥy-md3.t Nfr-ḥtp(.w) wḥm-ḥnh*
 (1) [...] ^{a)} *Haty*^{b)}; (2) *sculptor*^{c)} *Neferhotep may (he) live again*^{d)}.

^{a)} Traces of a *di*-sign (?) preserved after the lacuna at the beginning of the text.

^{b)} See *PN I*, 233 (3). The name may be taken as a short form of the name *Hatiay*,¹⁴ as indicated by the presence of both forms in the tomb of *Hatiay*, cf. G. DARESSY, *Rapport sur la trouvaille de Hataai*, *ASAE II*, 1901, pp. 1ff. (for the short form, see pp. 3, 8).

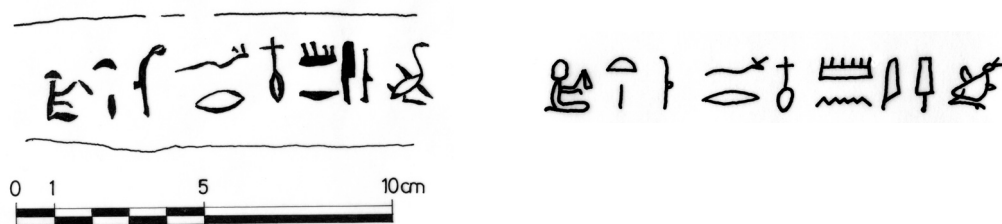
^{c)} As regards the variety of forms of the ideogram for *md3.t* 'chisel', see Y. BOGOSLOVSKY, *Ostrakon Hermitage 18067*, [*in:*] *Ancient Egypt and Kush*, Moscow 1993, pp. 91–93.

^{d)} The epithet can be explained perhaps as denoting that the person in question was dead at the time the inscription was written, though the contrary view can be upheld as well.¹⁵

The second graffiti (**Fig. 4**), written in the close vicinity of the previous one, may be related to the well known sculptor from the ranks of the crew of the royal necropolis:

¹⁴ Hardly likely as a form of the name *Amenemhat*, as suggested by K. SETHE, *Über einige Kurznamen des neuen Reiches*, *ZÄS 44*, 1907, p. 90.

¹⁵ For the meaning of the epithet in question, see e.g. H.S. SMITH, *The Fortress of Buhen. The Inscriptions*, London 1976, pp. 86f.; U. LUFT, *Eine Stele des späten Mittleren Reiches in Krakau*, *ZÄS 115*, 1988, p. 150 (gg).



4. Graffito of the sculptor Neferrenpet scratched on the west wall of the north wing of the Lower Portico (Drawing: M. Barwik).

t3y-md3.t (n) Imn Nfr-rnp.t
The sculptor (of) Amun Neferrenpet.

There is no certainty as to whether the extension of the title in question with the element *n Imn* must denote necessarily a person outside the staff of the royal necropolis.¹⁶ Actually, some of the quarrymen of the necropolis had been connected one way or another with the work outside the institution of the royal necropolis proper.¹⁷ In addition, some of the draughtsmen of the necropolis are also described as the ‘draughtsmen of Amun’.¹⁸ The name of Neferrenpet appears in the community of Deir el-Medina in the years 39 and 40 of Ramesses II.¹⁹ He must be the same person as the chisel-bearer or sculptor Neferrenpet who was the owner of the house ‘C II’ in the settlement of Deir el-Medina and the tomb (TT 336) in its western cemetery.²⁰ The BD papyrus of Neferrenpet (portions in Brussels and Philadelphia) has been rightly attributed to him on the basis of the title borne by the owner (*t3y-md3.t*) and genealogical criteria.²¹

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¹⁶ The title in question has been attested for the domain of Amun, cf. S.S. EICHLER, Die Verwaltung des „Houses des Amun“ in der 18. Dynastie, *BSAK* 7, Hamburg 2000, pp. 148 n. 652, 246 (No. 054), 263 (No. 161), 304 (No. 415).

¹⁷ Cf. E. BOGOSLOVSKY, Rev. Alain-Pierre Zivie, La tombe de Pached à Deir el-Médineh [No. 2]..., *CdE* LVII, 1982, pp. 276f.; ČERNÝ, Community, pp. 253ff.; A.G. McDOWELL, Contact with the Outside World, [in:] L.H. Lesko (Ed.), *Pharaoh's Workers*, Ithaca-London 1994, p. 44f.

¹⁸ Cf. ČERNÝ, Community, p. 44 (3); E.S. BOGOSLOVSKY, Hundred Egyptian Draughtsmen, *ZĀS* 107, 1980, p. 95 (VI).

¹⁹ VALBELLE, Les Ouvriers, chart II; compare also HELCK, Die datierten und datierbaren Ostraka, Papyri und Graffiti, pp. 66ff. (oBM 5634).

²⁰ For the sources, see *KRI* III, pp. 666–669; DAVIES, Who's Who at Deir el-Medina, p. 183, chart 14: Neferrenpet (II) son of Piay (II).

²¹ Cf. H. MILDE, The Vignettes in the Book of the Dead of Neferrenpet, *EgUit* VII, Leiden 1991, pp. 11ff.; compare also U. LUFT, Das Totenbuch des Neferrenpet (Grab 336), *StudAeg* III, Budapest 1977, pp. 81–87.