

## Ramesside Inscriptions and Preparatory Sketches in the Western Wall of Portico of Obelisks of Hatshepsut's Temple at Deir el-Bahari

EWA JÓZEFOWICZ

**Abstract:** The representations of all the gods on the western wall of the Portico of Obelisks in Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahari were destroyed during the Amarna period and restored under the reign of Ramesses II. In this paper, the inscriptions related to those restorations are commented on, along with a set of *dipinti* drawn on undecorated blocks below the *dado* lines. Those *dipinti*, of varying quality, represent the god Amun. Because of their location and form they were probably 'restoration guidelines' for the sculptors re-creating the destroyed images of the god. The paper's aim is to reconfirm the dating of the restorations in this part of the temple and discuss the possible reasons for the *dipinti* creation.

**Keywords:** New Kingdom Egypt, Portico of Obelisks, Temple of Hatshepsut, *dipinti*, Deir el-Bahari, Ramesside restorations

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The decoration of the Southern Lower Portico in Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahari, also known as the Portico of Obelisks, was subject to destruction more than once,<sup>1</sup> and some of its parts were restored still during the New Kingdom. The destruction of the gods' images on the portico's western wall done during the Amarna period, their restoration under Ramesses II, and the possible role of *dipinti* in the latter process is a subject that needs to be analysed to acquire a more detailed knowledge about the temple's history after the reign of Hatshepsut.

The western wall of the Southern Lower Portico, apart from the scene of obelisks transport occupying roughly one fourth of its decorated surface, contained also more standard scenes which involved the king interacting with the gods. All representations of these gods were destroyed during the reign of Akhenaten, with no exceptions. This concerns

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<sup>1</sup> Martinez 2007: 157–158.

first of all the large figures from the main scenes of the decoration – in order, from south to north: Amun (Karnak scene),<sup>2</sup> ithyphallic Amun and goddess Meret (in front of the running Thutmose III),<sup>3</sup> Seshat (Stretching the Cord scene),<sup>4</sup> Amun (last scene of the Temple Foundation ritual),<sup>5</sup> ithyphallic Min-Amun-Kamutef (offering scene).<sup>6</sup> The deities shown in a smaller scale as a procession above the obelisks transport scene<sup>7</sup> were also removed and later restored. Not all of these are identifiable, as the procession scene has most of its blocks missing, including the parts containing the deities' names. However, the blocks documented by Edouard Naville (both those placed in the reconstructed wall and those left out), as well as the ones found in the temple's blockyards and documented for the current project,<sup>8</sup> all show the same pattern of restoration.

It is certain that the gods' representations were fixed under the reign of Ramesses II because of his short restoration texts carved in sunk relief accompanying several of them. The restoring activities of Ramesses II seem to be concentrated principally on the Lower and Middle Terraces,<sup>9</sup> although isolated examples are also present in the Upper Terrace.<sup>10</sup> Kenneth A. Kitchen noted that the known post-Amarna restoration inscriptions of that king are in fact limited to Deir el-Bahari. According to this scholar, this was due to the fact that the majority of the post-Amarna restoration works were already done by the predecessors of Ramesses II, while this king was more involved in other, new, building projects.<sup>11</sup> Philippe Martinez clarified that it is just the restoration inscriptions that are rare for Ramesses II, while the restoration works were also made in other places, but can only be distinguished by their stylistic features.<sup>12</sup> The form of the name of this pharaoh in the restoration texts from the Portico of Obelisks dates more precisely the restoring interventions to the earlier part of his reign.<sup>13</sup> A *graffito* from the year 6 of Ramesses II, written on an external wall and in no way directly connected to the discussed below *dipinti*, can be used as a rough indicator of the times when the functionaries of the king had an interest in the area, and thus possibly date the restorations.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Naville 1908: Pl. CLVI.

<sup>3</sup> Naville 1908: Pl. CLVII.

<sup>4</sup> Naville 1908: Pl. CLVIII; Karkowski 1976: Fig. 3; 2016: Fig. 1a-b.

<sup>5</sup> Karkowski 2016: Fig. 3a-b.

<sup>6</sup> Karkowski 2016: Fig. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Naville 1908: Pl. CLIV.

<sup>8</sup> To be published by the author.

<sup>9</sup> Apart from the Lower Porticos, restoration inscriptions are also present in the Portico of Birth: Naville 1896: Pls XLVI–L, LII, LV; Polaczek 1985: 81. I would like to thank Dr Jadwiga Iwaszczuk for helping me to find traces of the activities of Ramesses II throughout the temple.

<sup>10</sup> Column fragments: Karkowski 1979: 31, 38 (Fig. 1); portico: Karkowski 1979: Fig. 1 (restoration inscription, with the name of the king damaged). Generally, for restoration inscriptions (with literature), see: McClain 2007: 162–165.

<sup>11</sup> *KRITANC* II: 430, 631.

<sup>12</sup> Martinez 2007: 159, n. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Eaton-Krauss 2002: 198. For further literature on this matter, see also: Martinez 2007: 160, n. 10.

<sup>14</sup> Barwik 2013: 96–98.

The restoration texts in the Portico of Obelisks, where visible in their entirety, all follow a standard formula, with two variants where either the throne name or the birth name of the king was used, with their respective epithets:

- *sm3w mnw jr(w) n nswt bjtj nb t3wj Wsr-M3 't-R' stp-n-R' n jt=f Jmn-R'*;
- *sm3w mnw jr(w) n s3 R' nb h'w R' -ms-sw mrj-Jmn n jt=f Jmn-R'*.

These texts were written in spaces that were earlier unoccupied by writing or decoration – in front of the large depictions of the deities, once per scene (thus, there was no separate text for Meret). A shorter version, written in smaller hieroglyphs, was inserted before the gods in the procession above the obelisks bark. Only one full text was preserved for this scene, *sm3w mnw jr(w) n nb t3wj Wsr-M3 't-R' stp-n-R' n jt=f Jmn-R'*. Other remaining fragments are *sm3w mnw jr(w) n nb t3wj [...]* and *[...] nb h'w R' -ms-sw mrj-Jmn n jt=f Jmn-R'*; it seems likely that those restoration texts followed the same pattern of alternating the birth and throne names of Ramesses II, with the title *nswt bjtj* and possibly also *s3 R'* omitted because of the constricted space. Traces of a restoration text on yet another block from this lot strongly suggest that such inscriptions were present before all the deities.

The restoration inscriptions were rather conspicuous because of their different relief style, which was probably an intentional feature,<sup>15</sup> and their location also caught the attention.<sup>16</sup> Ramesses II had also restored the parts of the portico's texts where the gods' name was damaged (principally the name of Amun, but also the plural *ntrw*). These obviously were written in their assigned places at an appropriate scale, but instead of mimicking the style of the surrounding text, they were carved in sunk relief, similarly to the restoration texts (**Fig. 1**).

The way the figures of the gods were re-carved is consistent within the portico: the new relief is almost flat, except for the external borders which are usually very broad. The outlines of the relief were highlighted with red paint. The surfaces bear the remains of the previous chiselling, as the new figures would have to be cut very deep to make these chisel marks less visible and plaster could have been used to fill the cavities.<sup>17</sup> Thus, with their mottled appearance, the restored representations are conspicuously different from the original ones. The proportions and colours of representations being an effect of Ramesse-side restorations were in general different than the Thutmose-side ones,<sup>18</sup> but in the case of the Portico of Obelisks this cannot be fully analysed, as the colours of the restored parts were only occasionally preserved. The figures of Hatshepsut, destroyed in the later reign of Thutmose III, were not included in the restoration process.

Most interestingly, the re-carving of the gods seems to have been carefully planned: small *dipinti* sketches were drawn in red to show which god (and in which form) should be carved again in a specific space. This method has analogies in some areas of the temple,<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Martinez 2007: 163, n. 23.

<sup>16</sup> See: Brand 1999a: 114.

<sup>17</sup> For a discussion on the methods of restoring reliefs in soft stones, including the use of plaster, see: Brand 1999b: 41–43.

<sup>18</sup> Martinez 2007: 162–163.

<sup>19</sup> Ćwiek, Sankiewicz 2008: 293.



1. Examples of the style of restoration and addition of the name of Amun in the times of Ramesses II: a. restoration of Amun-Re's names destroyed in the Amarna period; b. writing of the name of Amun-Re in the restoration texts added during the reign of Ramesses II; not to scale (Phot. M. Jawornicki).

while others are devoid of similar sketches.<sup>20</sup> For instance, in the Portico of Birth's northern wall there is an example of a figure of the god Thot, also drawn in red,<sup>21</sup> as well as a sketch representing two gods in a purification scene, drawn just above the now incomplete relief representation.<sup>22</sup> However, the majority of the *dipinti* on this wall show what inscriptions should be restored or added, and not so much as the gods' figures. Moreover, they are also positioned differently. Similarly, in Medinet Habu sketches of the same period are also more often related to texts than to figures.<sup>23</sup> The pillars of the Portico of Birth have also a large group of *dipinti* which include figures of gods,<sup>24</sup> but the varied character of these images does not allow to identify them in bulk as similar preparatory sketches to those from the Portico of Obelisks, although some of them possibly are.<sup>25</sup> Contrary to the small sample found in the Portico of Obelisks, they include representations of the king, and among these a detailed, large scale image of the king's head in the Blue Crown.<sup>26</sup> Sketches are

<sup>20</sup> Barwik 2018: 101.

<sup>21</sup> Martínez 2007: 165, Fig. 1 (no. 11).

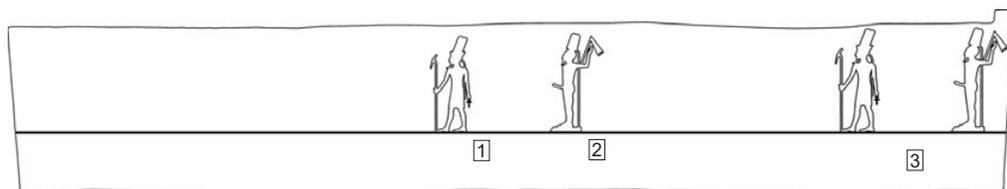
<sup>22</sup> Ćwiek 2015: 85.

<sup>23</sup> *Epigraphic Survey 2009*: 64–67, Pls 96–98. I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out this analogy.

<sup>24</sup> Niwiński 1985: 213–227.

<sup>25</sup> Barwik 2018: 102.

<sup>26</sup> Niwiński 1985: Fig. 11.



2. Sketch of relative positions of the *dipinti* (nos 1–3), *dado* lines and images of Amun restored in the Ramesside times on the western wall of the Portico of Obelisks (Drawing: E. Józefowicz).

also found in the Lower Anubis shrine and in the Hathor shrine.<sup>27</sup> Also the figural *dipinti* from the Solar Complex represent another type than the discussed set, as two of them were created probably during the times of Hatshepsut and do not represent gods,<sup>28</sup> and others are dated to the Late period and posterior times.

In the case of the Portico of Obelisks, only the deities were deemed necessary to be referenced for the restorers. Also, the restoration *dipinti* were found only in relation to the larger figures of the gods (and not all of them). This may be the effect of the poor preservation of the scene of the procession of gods and of the western wall in general, so any assumptions regarding the selection of the gods to be sketched need to be careful. Where visible, the *dipinti* were usually located on the undecorated blocks below the *dado*, to the right in relation to the place where the large figure was to be re-carved (Fig. 2). However, the distance between each pair of *dipinto* and its figure, as well as the sketches' size and height above the ground, were not uniform. The quality of the drawings also varied, from little more than stick figures to elaborate miniature sketches. The drawings were found for the four figures of Amun in his several forms, but not for Seshat and Meret. It cannot be presently ascertained whether the omission was intentional or if the *dipinti* of those goddesses were simply not preserved. The latter is particularly plausible in the case of Seshat, as the surface of the undecorated blocks that are the best candidates to contain her sketch (according to the general observations of the existing ones) is damaged, and also covered in unrelated *dipinti*. Another possibility is that the image of the goddess was more recognisable for the restorers, either because of lesser damage or because of the context of the scene, and so no sketch was needed. As Amun could be represented in various ways, it may have been more important to show his form to the restorers.

All the commented *dipinti* were drawn on a surface that was originally without decoration, but not completely smooth. Thus, the red paint bled into the grooves of preparation cuts and into lines that were scratched earlier, blurring the lines of the sketches. There are also a number of other drawings in red, mostly very crude and so difficult to interpret, of which some cross the lines with the restoration *dipinti* and thus make their outlines less clear. For this reason, the following sketches' photos here are also shown as images manipulated with DStretch software, making their details more evident.

<sup>27</sup> Barwik 2018: 101 (with further references).

<sup>28</sup> Karkowski 2003: 255, Pl. 53A.

The discussed *dipinti* are not the only ones in the Portico of Obelisks, but they are distinctive because of their direct relationship with the western wall scenes and for the clarity of the figures they represent. The remaining *dipinti*, made in various times and not limited to the undecorated part of the wall, need to be researched separately. They range from straight lines, through crudely drawn boats, to a Greek inscription, and reflect a prolonged access to the portico.

#### AMUN IN THE KARNAK OBELISKS SCENE

The drawing of Amun from the Karnak scene (*dipinto* no. 1) is the most schematic in the commented set, being also the smallest sketch (**Fig. 3**). The figure is drawn with broad lines without any details. The head part is not well preserved. Still, it is visible that the person represented is standing and wearing a kilt, with one arm along the body and the other extended – exactly as in the re-carved Amun relief. The sketch was made one layer of blocks below the ones with the *dado*.

#### ITHYPHALLIC AMUN IN A CEREMONIAL RUN SCENE

This drawing (*dipinto* no. 2) is the most elaborate, as the god's figure is complete and large, the details of the face were shown, and the proportions are regular (**Fig. 4**). It is also the most conspicuous among the discussed sketches. Amun was drawn with a double-feathered crown, a flail and a collar necklace, standing with mummy-wrapped legs on a line that represented the usual pedestal. The only detail that was not included was the phallus. The outlines were partially carved into the stone in shallow lines, but without consistency and mostly without creating one smooth line. It is possible that they were not created at the same time as the drawing proper. After this part of the wall was cleaned by the conservator,<sup>29</sup> a small table resembling a chapel starts to be visible behind Amun, but without the offerings that ultimately were included in the restored relief. The feathers of the crown were drawn just below the *dado* lines, and the figure's head is at the top of the next layers of blocks.

#### AMUN IN THE TEMPLE FOUNDATION RITUAL SCENES

The discussed sketch (*dipinto* no. 3) is partially faded and some lines are barely visible with the naked eye. This part of the wall has not yet been cleaned, what makes it even harder to interpret. The *dipinto* shows better the god's torso, the extended arm, partially the other arm and the kilt, whereas the rest of the figure is very faint (**Fig. 5**). The drawing could have been made with similar care as the sketch of ithyphallic Amun from the ceremonial run scene (*dipinto* no. 2) discussed above, but on a slightly smaller scale. Most of the image is on a block situated two layers below the *dado*, but the feathers of the crown reach one layer up.

<sup>29</sup> The cleaning and initial conservation of the portico's western wall were done in the 2018 and 2019 seasons by Dr Maria Lulkiewicz-Podkowińska. Presently, two thirds of the wall are cleaned.

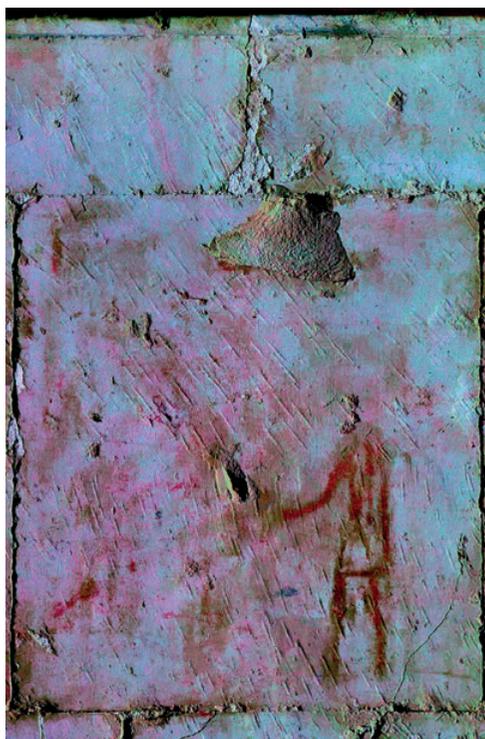


a

3. *Dipinto* no. 1 (20cm high); Amun in the Karnak obelisks scene: a. drawing; b. photo; c. image manipulated with DStretch (LWE) (Phot. M. Jawornicki; drawing: E. Józefowicz).



b

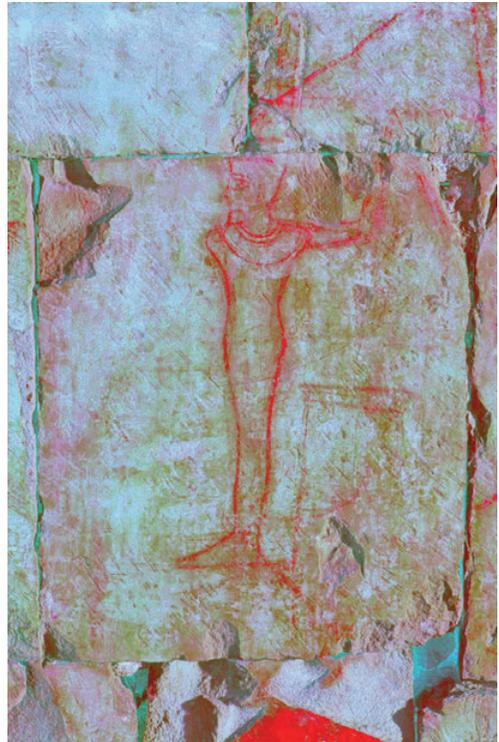
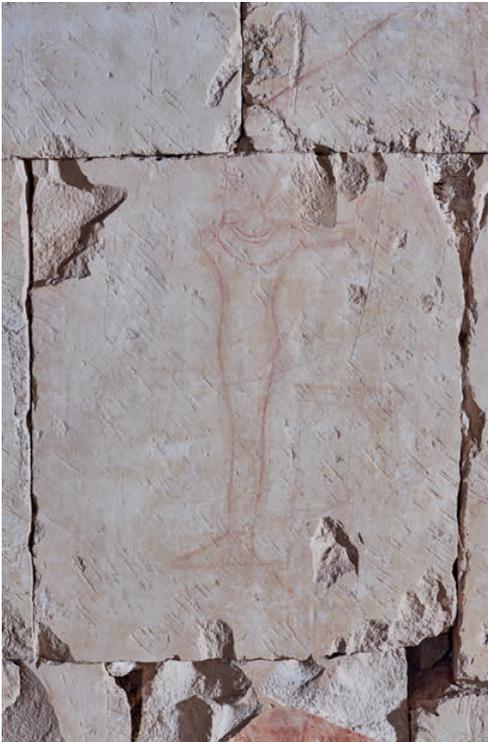


c

### ITHYPHALLIC AMUN IN THE OFFERING SCENE

This drawing (*dipinto* no. 4) is the most interesting for its location. The relief of ithyphallic Amun (**Fig. 6**) is very close to the northern end of the western wall of the portico, and so an attempt to draw its sketch in its direct vicinity would require placing it either underneath the figure, or to its left. Instead, the restoring team opted to draw the image on the northern wall of the Portico of Obelisks, at a quite considerable distance from the restored god's image. The *dipinto* is located on the right side of the wall, below the *dado* as in the case of the other sketches. The image is very crude – details such as the eye and

4. *Dipinto* no. 2 (48cm high); ithyphallic Amun in a ceremonial run scene: a. drawing; b. photo; c. image manipulated with DStretch (YWE) (Phot. M. Jawornicki; drawing: E. Józefowicz).



5. *Dipinto* no. 3 (37cm high); Amun in the Temple  
Foundation ritual scenes: a. drawing; b. photo; c. image  
manipulated with DStretch (YWE) (Phot. and drawing:  
E. Józefowicz).



a

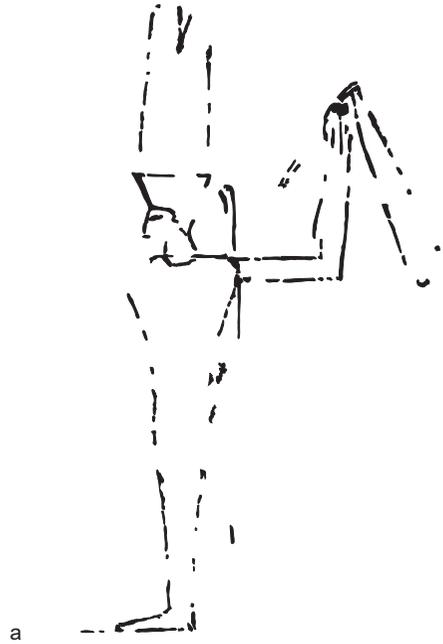


b



c

6. *Dipinto* no. 4 (58cm high); ithyphallic Amun in the offering scene: a. drawing; b. photo; c. image manipulated with DStretch (Phot. and drawing: E. Józefowicz).



a



b



c

hand are sketched, but the figure holds no proper proportions and appears geometricised. The head is small in comparison to the crown, and the torso with the exaggerated raised hand is larger than the lower part of the figure. It is clear that this drawing could not be used as a direct model, but rather as a reference to the type of representation needed to be restored, as the actual figure in the scene was carved with correct proportions and the usual Ramesside style. It can also be excluded that the *dipinto* was associated with any of the figures in the northern wall. These scenes, although very badly preserved, include Hatshepsut as a sphinx trampling her enemies, and standing gods, which in a parallel scene in the Lower Northern Portico's northern wall are never the ithyphallic Amun.

## DISCUSSION

The *dipinti* of Amun, although differing in details, seem to form a unified group created for the same purpose. Located below the *dado* lines, they do not hinder the original scenes. They are not situated directly underneath the god's images, but at varying distances to the right. A possible explanation for this may be that they would remain visible whatever construction was used to access the wall to make the restoration, as the scenes including the figures of Amun had only their lowest parts reachable from the floor level.

It must be noted here that although the interpretation of the *dipinti* as restoration guidelines is the simplest explanation for their creation, and their similarity to the re-created Amun's figures is the strongest argument for such interpretation, the possibility that they were created for other reasons remains. Andrzej Niwiński posited the hypothesis that the *dipinti* on the pillars of the Portico of Birth would be made as exercises by trainee artists learning their skills.<sup>30</sup> This is less probable for the Portico of Obelisks *dipinti* set, as they are not that numerous and show only specifically the figure of Amun, not any additional themes. There are no repetitions or partial representations, each image of Amun was painted only once. These *dipinti* bear more resemblance to the ones from the Portico of Birth northern wall, which in the opinion of Martinez were created to guide sculptors that were illiterate.<sup>31</sup>

The possibility that the *dipinti* were not purely utilitarian creations needs also to be considered. Numerous *graffiti* and *dipinti* made by visitors to temples reflect individual cult practices and the significance of the sacred spaces over time. They took form, among others, of drawing copying a part of nearby scene, including images of gods.<sup>32</sup> While the individual *dipinti* of Amun in the Portico of Obelisks could be interpreted in a similar manner, so as votive, it seems unlikely that random visitors would all draw only Amun, especially in such regular locations.

As the discussed *dipinti* lack more minute details that would help with their dating, it also cannot be completely excluded that they are not contemporary to the restorations of Ramesses II, although certainly these *dipinti* were neither made in the same moment as

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<sup>30</sup> Niwiński 1985: 213.

<sup>31</sup> Martinez 2007: 163–164.

<sup>32</sup> Cruz-Urbe 2008: 2.

the original reliefs nor in the Amarna period. In such case, the regularity of their placement would require a different explanation.

If the ‘restoration guidelines’ hypothesis is accepted, it seems reasonable to assume that the *dipinti* were drawn in the times of Ramesses II who took care of the Portico of Obelisks’ restoration, as manifested by his inscriptions. The striking differences in the quality of the sketches could demonstrate that the tracers and sculptors of the restored reliefs were to a certain level conscious of the requirements imposed by the composition of the scenes. Therefore, some of these *dipinti* would be just a general ‘reminder’ of the figure to be re-carved, but in other cases more detailed ‘instructions’.

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## *Table des matières*

Editorial (par Ewa Laskowska-Kusztal) .....	7
MIROSLAW BARWIK	
Two Portraits of Senenmut in the Hatshepsut Temple at Deir el-Bahari .....	15
MIROSLAW BARWIK	
New Prayers and Invocations to Hathor among Unpublished <i>Dipinti</i> from the Thutmose III Temple at Deir el-Bahari .....	23
LINDA CHAPON	
The Decoration of the Columns and Pillars from the <i>Henket-ankh</i> of Thutmose III (Western Thebes) .....	33
ABRAHAM I. FERNÁNDEZ PICHEL	
Quelques blocs ptolémaïques inédits de la cour du IX <sup>e</sup> pylône du domaine d'Amon à Karnak .....	73
AMGAD JOSEPH	
The Stela of Haremwia, Chief of the Provisioning Sector of the Temple Workshop (CG 34079 / JE 22011) .....	89
EWA JÓZEFOWICZ	
Ramesseid Inscriptions and Preparatory Sketches in the Western Wall of Portico of Obelisks of Hatshepsut's Temple at Deir el-Bahari .....	107
MIRAL LASHIEN	
Donkeys in the Old and Middle Kingdoms According to the Representations and Livestock Counts from Private Tombs .....	121
ALEKSANDRA PAWLIKOWSKA-GWIAZDA	
Christian Secondary Epigraphy in the Temple of Hatshepsut. Some New Remarks .....	139
KRZYSZTOF RADTKE	
Square Grids in the Tomb of Akhethotep – Questions and Doubts .....	163
MYRIAM SECO ÁLVAREZ, JAVIER MARTÍNEZ BABÓN	
The Temple of Millions of Years of the Pharaoh Thutmose III (Luxor). An Update on the Research .....	179
ABRÉVIATIONS .....	221