

MATERIAUX ET BIBLIOGRAPHIE

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REPRESENTATIONS OF THE TRIUMPHANT RULER IN
THE TEMPLE OF QUEEN HATSHEPSUT
AT DEIR EL-BAHARI

In the thematically rich repertory of relief scenes found at the famous temple of Queen Hatshepsut (XVIIIth Dynasty, 1520—1484 B.C.) at Deir el-Bahari, a symbolic representation of the victorious queen triumphant over her enemies is included. On the north side of the lower colonnade (the so-called Portico of Hunting) a scene was placed for this purpose showing the ruler as a sphinx trampling the enemies of Egypt. Despite the fact that this scene was defaced one is able to discern the contours of the queen as a sphinx and the outlines of her defeated enemies¹. On the other hand on the southern side of this same lower colonnade a different composition of the triumphal scene over Egypt's enemies was employed. Only the lower part of the walls have been preserved, on which from the left we see the remains of a scene representing defeated prisoners (cartouches with the names of southern tribes and heads of their defeated representatives) being led by ropes

¹ E. Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari*, Part VI, London 1908, pl. CLX, p. 7; M. Werbrouck, *Le temple d'Hatshepsout a Deir el Bahari*, Bruxelles 1949, pp. 34—35, fig. 3; cf. PM II, Theban Temples, p. 115 (6). On the origin and historical development of scenes representing the ruler as a sphinx triumphing over his defeated enemies see J. Śliwa, *Some remarks concerning victorious ruler representations in Egyptian art* (in:) *Forschungen und Berichte*, Bd. 16, Berlin 1975, pp. 105—107 (group 2).

held by Dedwen, the god of Nubia². The right side of the composition represents a defaced scene of the queen in the classical triumphal pose holding in one hand a mace ready to strike and with the other hand holding the hair of the prisoners. Although this scene has been deliberately defaced a reconstruction of its contents according to the structures of the compositional canons should not provoke much controversy because of the clearly distinguishable elements, such as for example the preserved contour of a leg drawn to the rear, with the foot possessing a characteristically raised heel.

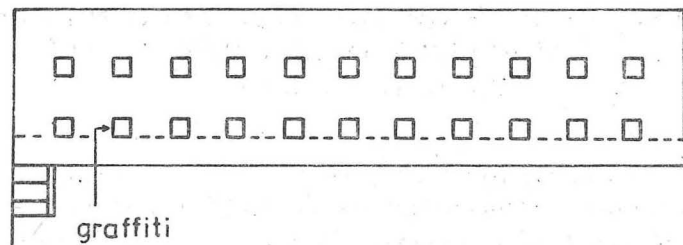


Fig. 1. Deir el-Bahari. The temple of Queen Hatshepsut. Plan of the north side, middle colonnade (Portico of Birth) showing the localization of graffiti representing a triumphant ruler. According to E. Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari*, Part VI, London 1908, pl. CLXXIV.

One other example of this compositional scheme employed in scenes depicting the ruler triumphing over his enemies may be found on the north side of the middle colonnade (the so-called Portico of Birth). It does not belong to the temple decorations proper and was executed in a red colour (ochre) at a significantly later date in the lower undecorated part of the second pillar from the left in the exterior row, on its southern side (Fig. 1). This representations is 0.34 m high, while its lower edge is found at a height of 0.51 m from the level of the floor³. In this case we

² E. Naville, *op. cit.*, Part VI, pl. CLII, p. 2; M. Werbrouck, *op. cit.*, p. 39 sq; cf. PM II, Theban Temples, p. 113 (1). This concept relates to the known scene from the funerary temple of Sahure (Vth dynasty) in which the gods are depicted leading forth captured representatives of various nationalities. See J. Śliwa, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

³ This graffiti was copied by the author during his stay at Deir el-Bahari in March of 1974.

are dealing with a very popular compositional scheme used in Egyptian art, representing the ruler with a smiting raised hand, while the other holds the defeated enemy by the hair (Fig. 2). Scenes of this kind were already in use during the First dynasty and entered the repertory on a permanent basis in the New Kingdom, becoming an important element in monumental relief compositions⁴. The graffiti was done in a manner which allows us to recognize the skilled hand of the artist, who has given us a correct study of a figure in accord with the canons of Egyptian art. The figure has one hand raised and ready to strike, while the other

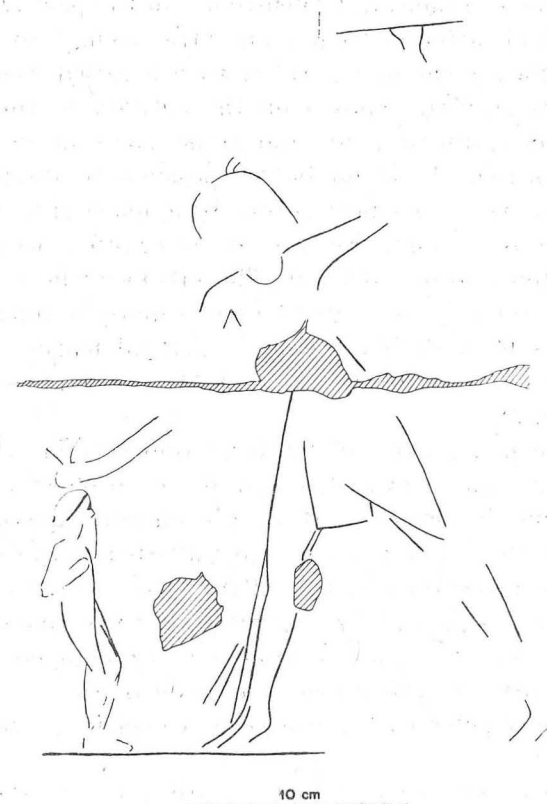


Fig. 2. Deir el-Bahari. The temple of Queen Hatshepsut. Graffiti representing the ruler triumphant over his enemies.

⁴ Cf. J. Śliwa, *op. cit.*, pp. 98—104 (group 1).

is holding the hair of the defeated enemy. The figure of the ruler, turned to the right is slender, sketched with sure, decided lines. An exception is the leg moved forward, whose contours were adjusted several times in order to obtain the most proper form (Fig. 2). It is worthy to note that the foot of this leg is not planted squarely on the surface, as is normal in representations of this type (only in cases where a leg is retracted the heel is raised in order to obtain the impression of active movement⁵; this relates strictly to the gesture of the raised hand) but also has a raised heel, which gives the impression of the ruler running on the tips of his toes. This is either an inconsistency on the part of the artist, or evidence of his attempt to give an extra strength and elasticity to the rapid movement of the ruler, with a raised weapon ready to strike. This graffiti, exposed on the activity of the sun rays, is relatively difficult to read, and some parts of it have been wholly disappeared. It is no longer possible to distinguish the raised weapon, yet it is most probably a mace (Fig. 2). On the right side we see scanty remains of inscription which is now illegible, written also in red paint. The prisoner who is being held by the hair by the ruler is treated here in a more summary manner. His figure has been sketched only in general features, and it is possible that we are dealing here with the representation of a Syrian (Fig. 2).

In the so-called Portico of Birth we find several other graffiti made with red paint, of which some appear to be also within the group of carefully executed sketches or even drawing studies. They are located in the lower parts of the walls below the relief decorations and on the surface of the pillars, also on their lower parts. In this way the evened and perfectly prepared surface was taken advantage of. An analogous technique was employed in another interesting graffiti on the upper colonnade of the temple, representing a running ruler with an offering vessel in his hands, pub-

⁵ In an analogous scene from the Narmer palette the ruler still has both feet implanted squarely on the surface. However with the Abydos plaque of king Udimu the figure of smiting ruler acquires the features of living movement because of supporting his retracted foot only on his toes (with an upraised heel), the weight of the body moved forward. Cf. J. Śliwa, *op. cit.*, pp. 98—100, figs. 1 and 3.

lished by A. Bataille who wanted in this way to preserve it from disappearance⁶. It seems that the described graffiti representing the triumphant ruler should be included into the same group as the figure of running ruler with offering jar, mentioned above. Evidence to support this would be similar stylistic features, a close, quite analogous manner in drawing lines, significant skill shown by the artist and similar proportions of the represented figures.

The existence of this careful graffiti sketched in red paint on the walls of the temple (so-called pre-Coptic graffiti) was noted already by E. Naville⁷. Some general observations were made by A. Bataille, who formed also wider conclusions concerning their dating⁸. It seems right to agree with his supposition that the above described graffiti arose in the period after the temple was out of use during the XXIIIrd or XXIVth dynasty. That is, the most probable date would be the Saite period (XXVIth dynasty), at least to the representation reproduced here (Fig. 2) as well as the mentioned graffiti from the upper colonnade.

⁶ A. Bataille, *Les inscriptions grecques du temple de Hatshepsout à Deir el-Bahari* (Publications de la Société Fouad I de Papyrologie. Textes et documents X), Le Caire 1951, pp. 138—139, No 191 (Appendice premier).

⁷ E. Naville, *op. cit.*, Par I. London (1895), p. 4: „These pre-Coptic red graffiti, found in so many parts of the temple, are sometimes obviously the work of practised hands, and may have been the idle efforts of artists who were engaged on the wall-decorations, just before work was abandoned in the temple”.

⁸ A. Bataille, *op. cit.*, pp. 138—139: „Peut-être le temple a-t-il abrité, aux temps saïtes ou gréco-romains un quartier d'artistes décorateurs qui auraient profité de l'admirable grain du calcaire, dont piliers et murs étaient construits, pour leurs ébouches ou la formation de leurs élèves”.