

Remarks on royal statues in the form of the god Osiris from Deir el-Bahari



Abstract: This article recapitulates information available, and mostly not published yet, on the statues in the form of the god Osiris from the Upper (Coronation) and Lower Porticoes of the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari. This includes the North and South Colossi, both of which were recently restored in a pilot reconstruction project undertaken by the Polish team, revising a missed restoration attempt by earlier excavators. Other examples include a sandstone painted statue of Amenhotep I, from Asasif, in the form of the mummiform figure of the god Osiris, which was also reconstructed, a fragmentary sandstone statue of Amenhotep III in the form of Osiris, as well as two fragments of statues of Osiris from the Third Intermediate Period burial ground discovered in the area of the temple of Hatshepsut.

Keywords: Deir el-Bahari, Osirides, statues of Amenhotep I, Hatshepsut and Amenhotep III in the form of Osiris, statues of Osiris from Third Intermediate Period burial ground, statues of Senusret III

Deir el-Bahari has its exceptional place in the history of Egyptian civilization. It is an important Theban religious site comprising temples and tombs dating from the early Middle Kingdom to the Ptolemaic period (Iwaszczuk 2017: 37–135). New artistic ideas appeared here for the first time. The temple of Mentuhotep II Nebhepetre was regarded as a monument of the united kingdom after a time of discordance, the First Intermediate Period. The temple was a manifestation of new power. In the temple, a new Theban god was enthroned: Amun's rise to pre-eminence was a direct result of the ascendancy of Mentuhotep II. Amenhotep I was the first pharaoh to build a separate mortuary temple here after the Second Intermediate

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Period. Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III built their temples six hundred years after Mentuhotep II. The religious significance of Deir el-Bahari at the time of the existence of the mortuary temples was connected with the god Osiris. It remained a holy place for a long time after that.

Osiride statues of kings found in the area of the Bahari temples and the statues of Osiris connected with the Third Intermediate Period necropolis located here are important sources for establishing the religious function of this temple group.

OSIRIDES

A standing statue of a king in the form of a mummiform figure of the god Osiris, its back leaning against a square pillar or wall, is commonly referred to in research as an Osiride statue, an Osiride pillar or simply an Osiride (pl. Osirides). Dieter Arnold prefers to use the term “statue pillar of the king”, considering ‘Osiride’ to be incorrect (Arnold 2003: 228). Hatshepsut had a row of such Osiride statues, 26 in number, lined up in the facade of the Upper Coronation Portico and over the course of the past 20 years conservator Wojciech Myjak from the Polish project has restored nine of these statues as part of a pilot reconstruction project implemented by the team.¹ Osiride XVI is the most recently restored sculpture in the south wing of the Upper Portico [Fig. 1].

The statues have all been restored to the same height, that is, about 5.20 m, corresponding to roughly 10 royal cubits according to the modular grid of 1.5 royal cubits square identified by Waldemar Poloczaniński; the Upper Portico along with the Osiride pillars was set out on this grid (Poloczaniński 1985: 63, 73, Fig. 1). With his intimate knowledge of several of these

statues, which he has restored over the years, Myjak is of the opinion that they were carved by at least two different sculptors; for example, the range of the executed face details differs in size from 6 to 10% (W. Myjak, personal communication). This individualization was naturally unintended. However, the Osirides from the two wings of the Portico were different iconographically, reflecting an Old Kingdom idea of geographical distinction into Upper and Lower Egypt. They reflect Christian Leblanc’s typology: the statues in the southern wing wear the White Crown – Leblanc’s type A.7, those in the northern wing the Double Crown – Leblanc’s type A.10 (Leblanc 1980: 72–75). This distinction is present in the royal iconography of scenes almost everywhere in the temple (Szafrński 2014: 130, Fig. 7.5).

The preserved face and naked parts of Hatshepsut’s body in the form of the god Osiris were painted red regardless of the kind of crown.² There are several examples of reliefs of Hatshepsut wearing the White Crown showing a red-painted face, e.g., those on the granite gate of the Main Sanctuary of Amun-Re (Pawlicki

1 A copy of an Osiride head wearing the Double Crown, restored by Wojciech Myjak, is now exhibited at the University of Warsaw Library.

2 Red-painted fragments of an Osiride head in a White Crown have now been reintegrated into the restored Osiride VIII statue.

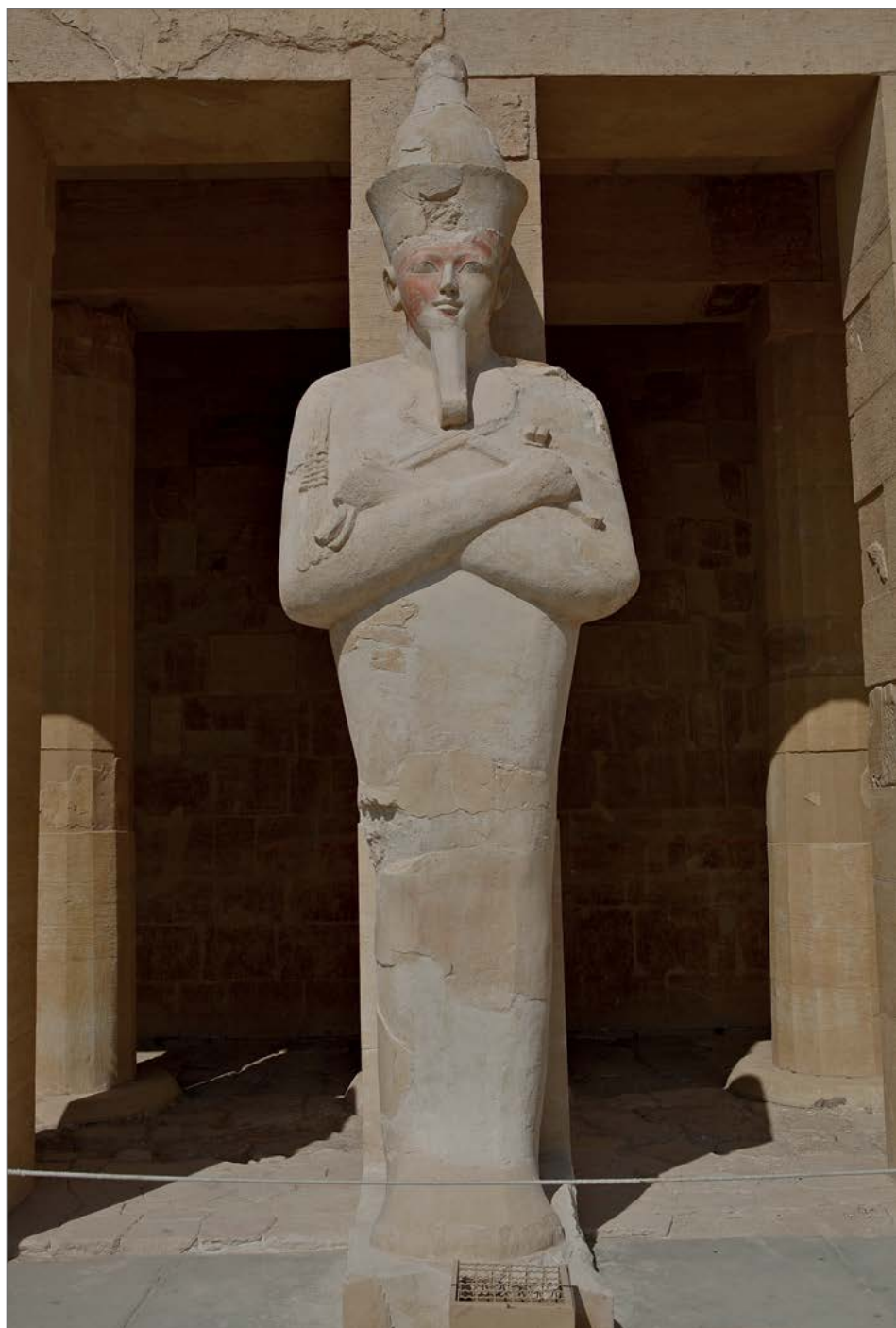


Fig. 1. Osiride XVI after reconstruction. Upper Portico, south wing (PCMA UW Temple of Hatshepsut project/photo M. Jawornicki)



Fig. 2. The North Colossus as reconstructed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art Expedition (PCMA UW Temple of Hatshepsut project/photo M. Jawornicki)

2017: 2) and others in the South Chamber of Amun. However, there are some sculptures from the temple now on display in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where the face of the head of Hatshepsut wearing the White Crown is painted an “orange yellow” (Hayes 1990: 91).

One of the colossal figures of Hatshepsut in the form of the god Osiris, the so-called North Colossus, located at the end of the North Portico of the Lower Terrace, was restored almost a century ago by the Metropolitan Museum of Art expedition (Winlock 1929: 13, Fig. 16)

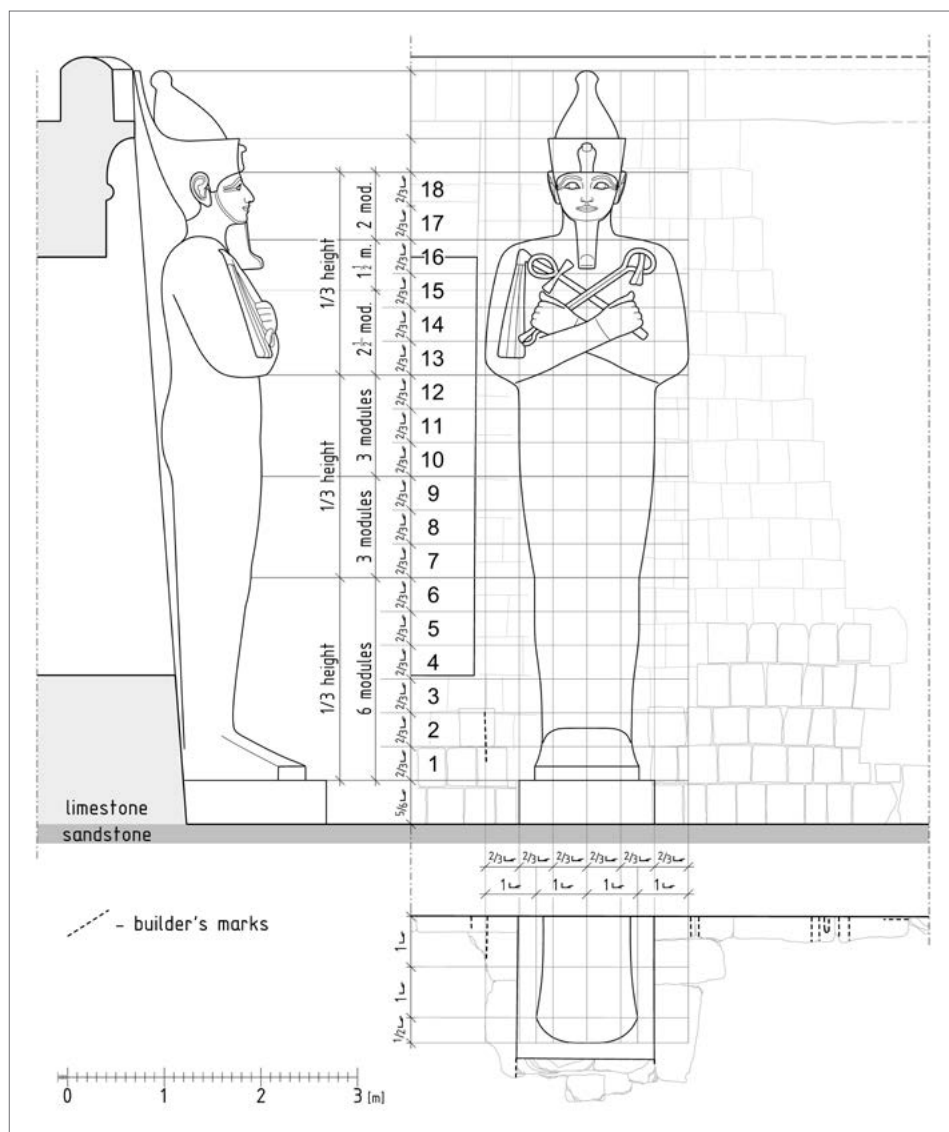


Fig. 3. The proportions of the North Colossus in the new reconstruction (PCMA UW Temple of Hatshepsut Project/after Dziedicz and Caban 2019: Fig. 6)

[Fig. 2]. The expedition had a number of original fragments to use at the time, certainly fewer than today. Following the recent discovery of new original fragments belonging to this Colossus (two fragments of the right arm, Fig. 4 bottom left), it was established that the height of the statue restored by the Metropolitan team was grossly overestimated. After analyzing the proportions and measurements it was found that the height of the Colossus was 735 cm, or 14 royal cubits, the royal cubit for the Lower Portico equaled 52.5 cm (Dziedzic and Caban 2019: 277–278). The whole height of the statue, with its plinth (43 cm), was approximately 7.80 m

[Fig. 3]. The statue has been dismantled and a new restoration is underway, using a head of the North Colossus that had already been restored earlier by Andrzej Sośnierz [Fig. 4 top left].

The head that had been part of the Metropolitan restoration turned out to belong to the South Colossus placed at the edge of the Southern Portico of the Lower Terrace. It has undergone conservation and a preliminary restoration (Dorota Rudzińska and Wojciech Myjak were responsible respectively for the job) [Fig. 4 right] and will be replaced on the restored upper part of the South Colossus.



Fig. 4. Two of the colossi: left, the North Colossus with a preliminary reconstruction of its head at the top and newly found fragments of the right arm at bottom; right, preliminary reconstruction of the head and shoulders of the South Colossus removed from the Metropolitan restoration (PCMA UW Temple of Hatshepsut project/photos M. Jawornicki)



Fig. 5. Statue of Amenhotep I after reconstruction, now in the North Chamber of Amun (PCMA UW Temple of Hatshepsut project/photo W. Wojciechowski)

STATUES OF AMENHOTEP I

An Osiride statue of Amenhotep I was found in Asasif. The fragmented statue of painted sandstone appears to have been buried in a sort of tomb by the north side of the causeway leading to the temple of Mentuhotep II Nebhepetre (Szafrński 1985). The restored statue, once again made by Wojciech Myjak, stands 2.51 m high and is now displayed in the North Chamber of Amun in the Temple of Hatshepsut (Szafrński 2014: 131–132, Fig. 7.7) [Fig. 5]. This sandstone Osiride of Amenhotep I has a mummiform lower body and legs and wears a double crown, Leblanc's type A (Leblanc 1980), with the back pillar which is a vehicle for the inscription. There are holes, 16 mm in diameter, in each fist of the restored statue, meaning that the Osiride was holding at least two implements: either two ankhs, Leblanc's type A.9, or a *nahaha* flail and a *heqa* crook. This new type of Amenhotep I Osiride is much earlier than the examples enumerated by Leblanc (1980: 72–75, Fig. 1).

Fragments of at least two other sandstone figures, most likely also of Amenhotep I, now displayed in the Deir el-Bahari Open-air Museum, were found before in Asasif (Szafrński 1985: 258, Fig. 2, Pl. 39.c–d). Others are known from the Deir el-Bahari area (Szafrński 1985: 258–260) and a well preserved statue on display in the British Museum, EA 683 (James and Davies 1984: 32–33; Bothmer 1988:

88–89, Pls 16 a–b, 17 c) as well as head fragments in the New York and Boston collections (Bothmer 1987; 1988; Hayes 1990: 48, Fig. 23) may also have originated from Asasif. These Osirides would have lined the processional way to the temple of Mentuhotep II Nebhepetre, standing most probably on its northern side as well as by the northern side of the temple causeway. Statues of Mentuhotep II would have faced them on the opposite side in a most likely arrangement that is depicted on stele EA 690 from the British Museum (Quirke 1992: 84; Iwaszczuk 2017: 47 note 29) where statues of Amenhotep I are shown opposite those of Mentuhotep II. It seems that Amenhotep I placed his statues by the causeway due to the importance of the temple of Mentuhotep II, and/or the Mentuhotep's causeway was connected with his brick temple built in the area of the Middle Terrace of the temple of Hatshepsut.

Amenhotep I was the first pharaoh to build a separate mortuary temple, a “mansion of millions of years”, at Deir el-Bahari. The grandeur of this temple, however, was soon surpassed by that of the temple of Hatshepsut. His burial place has not yet been identified; he may have been buried alongside his Seventeenth Dynasty ancestors some distance away from his temple, at Dra Abu el-Naga, or in the Valley of the Kings (Reeves and Wilkinson 1996: 88–90).

STATUES IN TEMPLES

King Senusret III of the Twelfth Dynasty placed his granite statues in the temple of his predecessor Mentuhotep II in Deir el-Bahari, emphasizing in this way the importance of this temple; they are not statues in the form of Osiris. He himself was regarded as an archetypically Egyptian ruler. His standing statues are in the British Museum, London, described as made of “black granite” (Shaw and Nicholson 2008: 291), and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Wildung 1984: 202–203, Figs 176, 177). The two that are made of dark green granite, still found in Deir el-Bahari [Fig. 6],

were destroyed and were not restored in the Ramesside period, possibly because they did not fit the Ramesside idea of a ruler (Wildung 1984: 204). Their height is: $x + 0.95 + x$ m and $x + 1.12 + x$ m, respectively. The cult of Mentuhotep II (El-Enany 2003: 169–173; Iwaszczuk 2017: 48) is attested by statues of Senusret III from his funerary temple, and possibly by the figures of Amenhotep I standing on the nearby causeway of his temple.

A fragment of a white-painted sandstone statue of Amenhotep III, a king of the Eighteenth Dynasty, in the form of Osiris, Inv. No. ST.96, can also be traced



Fig. 6. Fragments of two statues of Senusret III from the Temple of Mentuhotep II (PCMA UW Temple of Hatshepsut project/photos M. Jawornicki)

to one of the temples in Deir el-Bahari, even though its actual provenance cannot be determined conclusively. The statue was found stored in the stone lapidary

by the Lower Terrace of the temple of Hatshepsut. The surviving body part is 0.35 m high [Fig. 7].

STATUES IN THE NECROPOLIS

After the destruction of the Upper Terrace of the temple of Hatshepsut in the aftermath of an earthquake before 900 BC, during the Twenty-second Dynasty (Karakhanyan and Avagyan 2010), the ruins were used as a burial ground (Szafrński 2015). The necropolis functioned throughout the Third Intermediate Period (understood as the entire period from the Twenty-first through the Twenty-fifth Dynasties, until 664 BC (see Aston 2009: 37) and the beginning of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty (Barwik 2003: 122).



Fig. 7. Fragment of a statue of Amenhotep III in the form of Osiris ST.96 (PCMA UW Temple of Hatshepsut project/photo M. Jawornicki)

Shaft tombs, 17 in number, were hewn in the rock floor of the terrace, by the preserved walls of the temple, apparently without superstructures more solid than some rudimentary mud-brick walls around the mouth of the shaft (Szafrński 2013: 140–142, Figs 4–5; for the architectural form of mortuary chapels of the Third Intermediate Period in West Thebes, see Anthes 1943; Eigner 1984; Nelson 2003; Schreiber and Vasáros 2005, with bibliography in note 14; Schreiber 2008: 64–67; Aston 2009: 157–268, with additional bibliography; Aston 2011). They were located directly below texts and scenes still present on the walls: figures of gods, offering inscriptions, tables of offerings and representation of offerings, fragments of the Book of the Dead, texts of the Day and Night Hours on the ceiling in the Chapel of Hatshepsut, etc. Tomb X was cut right under Hatshepsut's false door in her Chapel. In the ideological sense, these religious scenes and inscriptions above the tombs formed a religious superstructure for the tombs. They formed the mortuary chapels of the necropolis, and were connected with the mortuary cult of noblemen, priests and members of their families buried there (Barwik 2011: 388–389; Szafrński 2011: 145–146; 2015: 189–191).

No other installations connected with the mortuary cult have been identified in the temple, but the presence of family

members visiting the tombs is attested in the form of a late figural graffiti in one of the niches of the Altar Courtyard in the Complex of Sun Cult. It represents human figures entering the niche, and on the opposite wall, a similar pair leaving the niche. They seem to be paying homage to the figure of the solar god from the original decoration depicted on a rear wall. The dating of the graffiti to the Third Intermediate Period “cannot be excluded” (Barwik 2011: 389, Fig. 1). A number of uninscribed crude offering tables found in the temple area could also be connected perhaps with the mortuary cult in the

necropolis. They are not dated precisely however (Barwik 2011: 389–391, Fig. 2).

Two incomplete and uninscribed statues in the form of a mummiform figure of the god of Osiris come from the Deir el-Bahari area. A statue backing a pillar, Inv. No. ST.99 [Fig. 8 left] was made of the so-called typical Hatshepsut limestone, namely, a reused temple block. The statue measures: H. $x + 80 + x$ cm, W. $43 + x$ cm, Th. 39 cm (at the hands). The execution of the *heqa* and *nahaha* attributes points to the Third Intermediate Period. The statue was painted white (no traces of other colors have been preserved). Trac-



Fig. 8. Fragments of two statues of Osiris: above, ST.98; left, ST.99 (PCMA Temple of Hatshepsut project/photos M. Jawornicki, Z.E. Szafranski)

es of mortar on its back indicate that it had once stood against a wall. The other statue is of sandstone, Inv. No. ST.98 [Fig. 8 above]; it was found in the Upper Terrace area. It measures: H. $x + 34 + x$ cm, W. 38 cm (at the elbows), Th. 24 cm (at the hands); there are holes in its fists, 1 cm in diameter, for inserting the *heqa* and *neheha* attributes. The statue was painted white (no traces of other colours have been preserved). It seems to have been a freestanding statue.

The necropolis was in use for about 150 years. The Osiride statues belonged to it, playing a significant role in the mortuary rites celebrated there. Ever since the Thirteenth Dynasty the deceased were all entitled to divine status in the form of the god Osiris. The statues may have stood in different parts of the necropolis until they were replaced by new burial customs introduced with the Kushites around 720–675 BC. At this time newly styled Ptah-Sokar Osiris figures appeared in the Theban funerary assemblages (Aston 2011: 23–25).

The impulse of the Upper Egyptian building tradition of the temples of Mentuhotep II Nebhepetre and those of Amenhotep I and Hatshepsut led to opening up the temple front with processional ways. Osiride statues of the new Amenhotep I type were positioned by the north side of the causeway leading to the temple of Mentuhotep and, perhaps, to the brick temple of Amenhotep I. The statues of Senusret III and Amenhotep III found in the Deir el-Bahari area testify the importance of the temples. The exceptional group of Osiride statues from the temple of Hatshepsut is an important source contributing evidence for studies on the idea of the temple and on the sculpture of the early New Kingdom.

However, statues of Osiris connected with the Third Intermediate Period necropolis form a different group of sculptures. They indicate the social position of the tomb owners and contribute to the character of the necropolis functioning at that time of Egyptian history in West Thebes.

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