

FOUR SEASONS OF DOCUMENTATION IN THE MAIN SANCTUARY OF AMUN-RE IN THE TEMPLE OF HATSHEPSUT AT DEIR EL-BAHARI

Franciszek Pawlicki

Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw

Abstract: Four seasons of documentation have supplied pertinent data to indicate that the Main Sanctuary of Amun-Re in the Temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari was perceived from a theological perspective as a cult place for the local form of *Foremost of Dsr-dsrw* and for the royal worship of Hatshepsut connected with it. The latter aspect was of sufficient significance to warrant twice a far-going modification of the decoration of the tympanum of the east wall of the Bark Hall, influencing the way the Inner Sanctuary was illuminated.

Keywords: sanctuary, Amun-Re, Horus Behdeti, skylight, graffiti, cryptogram

Four seasons of documentation between 2011 and 2015 in the Main Sanctuary of Amun-Re in the Temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari were dedicated to preparing a complete set of documentation of the wall decoration, which is essential to begin preparing a full publication of the complex.¹ The documentation could not be prepared before the Polish–Egyptian Mission to the Temple of Hatshepsut had finished conservation of the architecture and wall decoration, removing a thick

coat of soot and dirt from the reliefs in order to make them legible, bringing back a wealth of painted details, alterations and later graffiti. Identification of these changes and inscriptions, and their documentation were often of key importance, allowing the sequence of changes to be established, first by the queen herself and then by successive rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty: Tuthmosis III, Akhenaten, Tutankhamon and Horemheb. This in turn supports a reconstruction of the building history,

¹ Tracings are done one-to-one with permanent markers on transparent film. They are digitized and vectorized, then verified by comparing the printouts with the original reliefs in the sanctuary. The process is repeated until satisfaction. The adopted standard is to present changes in the decoration with color, whereas losses, joins between blocks, ancient hammering and chiseling of the surface are marked with varying line thickness. See Karkowski 2003..

the architectural transformation of the sanctuary and its functioning. To date, it was clear foremost that the shrine had undergone extensive modification during the Ptolemaic period, specifically in the rule of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (Laskowska-Kusztal 1984; Łajtar 2006: 31–36).

There is usually no trace of these alterations in the published drawings of select scenes (or fragments of scenes) from the granite portal, vestibule and Bark Hall of the main sanctuary (Champollion 1833: 292–302, Pls CXCII.3, CXCII.5, CXCI, CXLV; Rosellini 1844: 344–348; Lepsius 1849–1859/III: Pl. 20; Naville 1906: Pls CXXXVII–CXLVIII). However, their documentary value is sometimes priceless despite the inaccuracy of dimensions and a specific drawing convention on occasion. Edouard Naville first observed the missing block with the head of princess Neferure

from the south wall of the Bark Hall,² a drawing of which was published by Champollion; today, when we compare the surviving decoration with the drawing in his publication (Naville 1906: Pl. CXLVII) we note another missing fragment, namely, the piece with the figure of Queen Ahmose from the niche in the north wall of the Bark Hall. These two examples demonstrate the importance of the drawing documentation, which takes into account all the evidence (for another example from the south wall of the Bark Hall, see Dodson 1988: Pl. XXVIII,1).

The same can be said of the tracing of the tympanum of the east wall of the Bark Hall with the opening of the first of two skylights illuminating the interior of the sanctuary. Naville (1906: 9, Pl. CXXXVIII) does not comment on the skylight, the presence of which is indicated by the traces, marked in

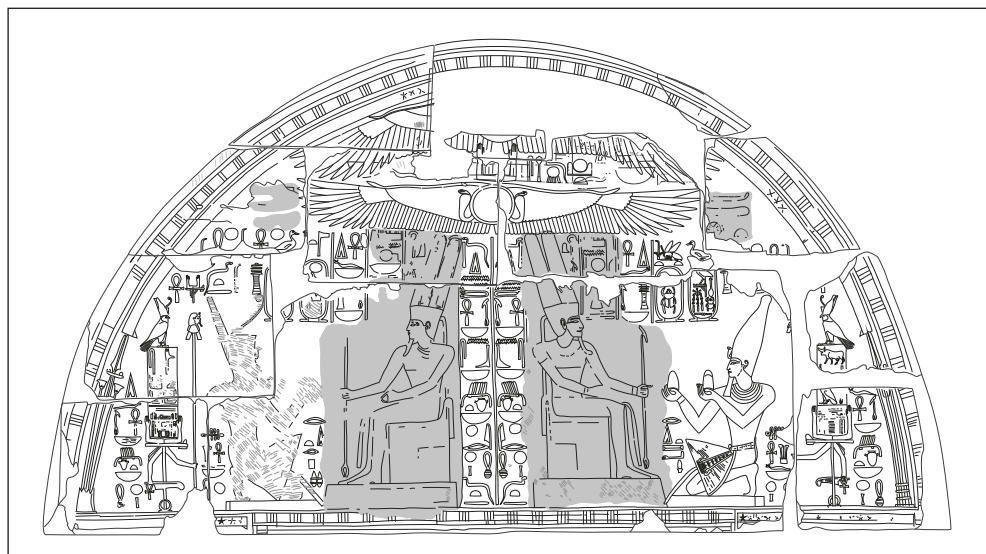


Fig. 1. Tympanum of the east wall of the Bark Hall
(Drawing F. Pawlicki, A. Golijewska)

² Now in the Museum in Dundee. See Kitchen 1963.

the drawing, of the geometric frieze around it (noted by Di. Arnold [1975: 1021]). The newest documentation of this part of the wall distinguishes between at least three phases of the decoration [Fig. 1]. Importantly, all three took place in the reign of Hatshepsut and all were connected undoubtedly with the illumination of the Inner Sanctuary. The existence and form of this chamber was confirmed finally by the discovery of original blocks from the entrance (Pawlicki 1999: 124–127, Fig. 5; Barwik 2010). Although the next changes of decoration of the tympanum on the east wall, introduced by Tuthmosis III, Akhenaten and Horemheb, had no direct relation to the functioning of the skylight, their identification is important in establishing the sequence of events. There is no doubt that Naville's drawing evidences the first phase of the skylight. An exact inventory drawing demonstrated that the rectangular opening of the skylight, 52.6 cm by 40.5 cm, was set right under the vault of the Bark Hall, precisely aligned with the chapel axis, the azimuth being $115^{\circ} 57' 10'' \pm 30''$.³ It was framed with a geometrical frieze that was 12.5 cm wide, the same as that framing the wall decoration [Figs 2, 3]. The skylight was planned and made together with the vault of the Bark Hall; this is indicated by the interlocked blocks of the walls and the

vault (the upper part of the southern side of the tympanum has not been preserved). A representation of Horus Behdeti in the form of a winged sun disk with feathers painted green appears below the embrasure of the skylight.⁴ The disk was placed between spread wings, aligned with the long axis of the shrine, and protected by uraei without crowns on the two sides.⁵ An identical hieroglyphic legend with the titles of Horus: *Bḥdtj nb p.t ntr ʿ3 nb [Msn] dj.f ʿnh* was arranged above the wings of the falcon and on either side of the skylight opening. The inscription, which reads: “Behdeti, Lord of the Heavens, Great God, Lord [of Mesen],⁶ He gives life”, was



Fig. 2. Skylight in the east wall of the Bark Hall (Photo M. Sękowski)

³ For the calculation of the azimuth, see Sękowski 2015. The same azimuth for the Temple of Hatshepsut (Sun Altar) was given by Shaltout and Belmonte (2005: 277).

⁴ Exactly the same form is presented by Horus Behdeti depicted below the opening of the second skylight on the opposite west wall of the Bark Hall. See Winlock 1942: 216, Fig. 13.

⁵ Cobras without crowns probably symbolized the goddess Maat, as among others in the scene on the west wall of the vestibule of the Chapel of Hathor. See Naville 1901: Pl. CIII; Beaux et al. 2012: Pl. 29, Fig. 32. In turn, the winged disk of Horus Behdeti and the cartouche of the queen below the opening of the skylight in the Statue Room are protected by uraei in the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt, symbolizing the goddesses Nekhbet and Wadjet.

⁶ A title belonging to Horus from the times of the Old Kingdom, see Habachi 1957: 14–17. It appears also in the Chapel of Hathor, see Naville 1901: Pl. XCIV. In the temple (on the granite lintel of the sanctuary portal and on the north wall of the Bark Hall, among others) Behdeti was usually given the epithet *s3b šw.t.*, variegated by the plumage, referring to the colors of the feathers. See also Gardiner 1944; Shonkwiler 2014: 63–144.

cut away,⁷ together with the frame of the skylight opening, the surface of the blocks being smoothed with care in preparation for the second phase of the decoration.

It is a matter without precedence in the sanctuary for divine titles to be removed before the Amarna period and the reason for this lies in the change that was introduced in the way the Inner Sanctuary was illuminated. Upon analysis of the decoration, it becomes clear that the skylight was blocked and a new representation of Horus Behdeti in the shape of a winged sun disk was carved just under the vault, covering all of the upper part of the tympanum. The wings of the falcon were no longer in a horizontal

arrangement, but lowered to fit the shape of the tympanum.⁸ There is no difference between this representation and the first one in terms of coloring and inner detail. A large-sized *k3* symbol was positioned centrally, under the disk, the intention being presumably to make it look as if it was supporting the sun disk [Fig. 3]. As a matter of fact, a part of this sign and the brief inscription next to it was recorded already on Naville's tracing.

The text is written from left to right: *shd 3ht*, illuminating the horizon. Naville could not see the signs in full as their upper parts were on a block that has only recently been restored to its position in the embrasure of the new skylight opening.



Fig. 3. The sign *k3* below the skylight embrasure; the frieze of the skylight from the original phase of the decoration marked in red (Photo M. Jawornicki)

⁷ Only the name of the god at the sides of the wings remained without change. They were removed during the time of Akhenaten and left unrestored.

⁸ An identical representation of Horus Behdeti is to be seen at the very top of the tympanum of the west wall of the Bark Hall, see Winlock 1942.

The inscription runs from the axis of the wall to the outside, hence cannot be associated with the image of Horus Behdeti, even though its solar aspect is attested already in the Eighteenth Dynasty. It should be noted that the proportions of the *k3* sign correspond to the size of the sun disk beneath which it is carved. Assuming the presence of uraei symbolizing the goddess Maat on either side (for which we have the grounds for⁹), then the *k3* sign could have been part of a cryptographic version of the name of Maatkare and the text could be read as: Maat-ka-Re illuminating the horizon [Fig. 4].¹⁰ This would be important evidence for the development of the ideology of Hatshepsut's cult, especially the royal *k3* cult inside the Main Sanctuary of Amun-Re. It has important implications also for the iconographic program and carved decoration of the chambers inside the sanctuary.¹¹ One cannot be certain due to the extent of the damage to the wall

surface on the left (northern) side of the *k3* sign, but it seems possible that the same text *shd 3ht* was present there as well. It is highly probable that the changes evidenced on the tympanum of the east wall of the Bark Hall were part of a larger program of alterations introduced by Hatshepsut in the Upper Courtyard. This is evidenced also among others by the changes to texts on the colonnade architraves along the facade and in the entrance to the sanctuary. The question that arises is how, if at all, was the last chamber of the sanctuary and especially the cult statue illuminated after the skylight had been blocked.¹² The only alternative apparently is opening the door of the sanctuary and the results of preliminary astronomical observations do not exclude such a possibility.

It was not the last change made to the decoration of the upper parts of the tympanum of the east wall of the Bark Hall. Another important change, introduced

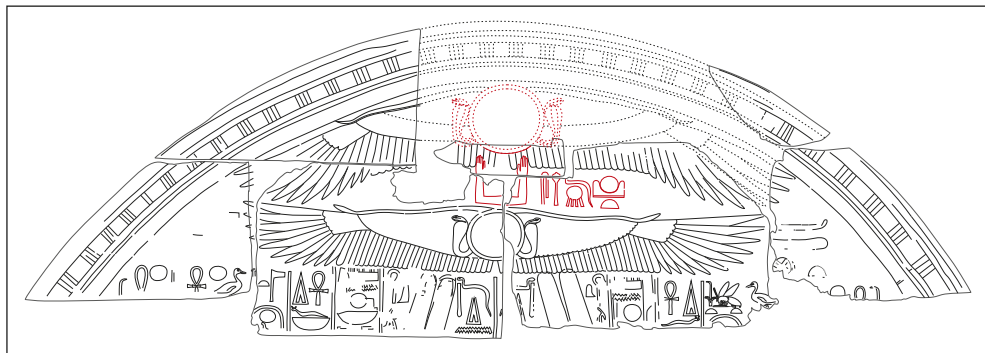


Fig. 4. Cryptogram of the Maatkare name of Queen Hatshepsut with an inscription, east wall of the Bark Hall (Drawing F. Pawlicki, A. Golijewska)

⁹ One should keep in mind that the sun disk from the first decoration phase, furnished with two cobras symbolizing the goddess Maat on either side, remained visible directly under the *k3*.

¹⁰ However, it should be noted that the reversed order of *m3't* and *k3* is against the usual orthography. In all existing cryptograms of Hatshepsut's praenomen, the element representing *m3't* precedes *k3*, as in traditional writing.

¹¹ It makes the presence of the royal *k3* among the deities of the Great Theban Ennead in the Southern Side Chapel understandable. On the worship of the royal *k3*, see Bell 1985.

¹² The god's statue was the most important manifestation of his presence in the sanctuary, see Murnane 1985: 135–138.

still in the reign of Hatshepsut, was the reinstallation of skylights illuminating the statue in the last chamber. Part of the block covering the skylight was removed at this time, forming a new opening of changed geometry and clearly smaller in size (28.50 cm wide, 33.50 cm high). This is the opening that has been preserved until modern times. The inclination angle of the embrasure was also bigger. The wall decoration around it remained unmodified despite the fact that the wings of Horus Behdeti were separated by the skylight opening and that the central part with sun disk was removed. In the new arrangement only the lower part of the disk remained together with the *k3* sign and *shd 3ht* inscription. In this way, when the rays of the sun fell through the skylight into the interior of the sanctuary, it was still Maatka-Re illuminating the horizon.¹³

The inscription, which was so important for the idea of the royal cult of Hatshepsut, surprisingly remained undamaged in the times of Tuthmosis III despite the evident effort put into obliterating all traces of the person of the founder in the Bark Hall.



Fig. 5. Stone vessels with erased names of Hatshepsut on the north wall of the Bark Hall (Photo A. Golijewska)

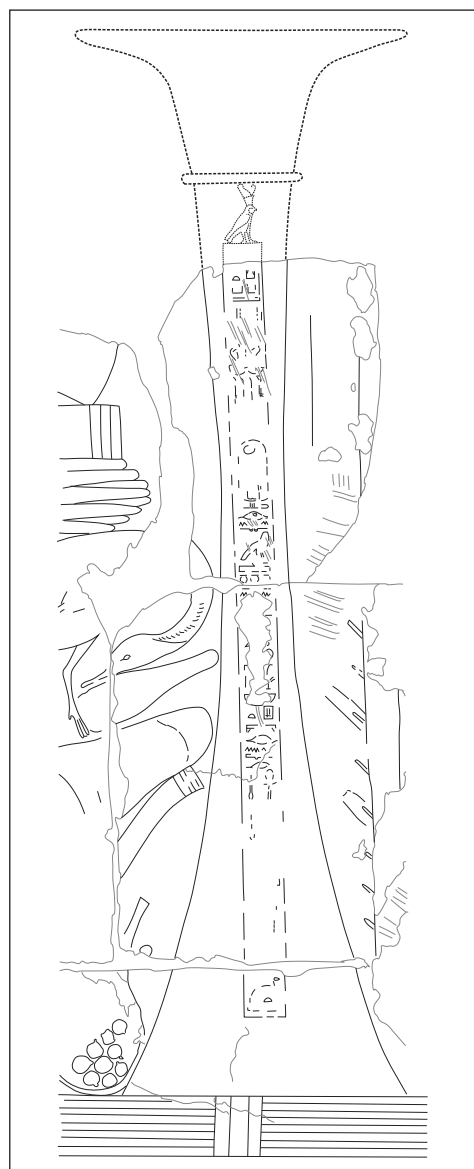


Fig. 6. High stand with traces of a dedicatory inscription on the south wall of the Bark Hall (Drawing F. Pawlicki, A. Golijewska)

¹³ Astronomical calculations for the reign of Hatshepsut place this event between February 12 and 22 and between November 15 and 25. See Sękowski 2015.

Her large representations were removed from the walls, including the east wall tympanum, but also her names, titles and even small graffiti from the niches of the first chamber. It included among others Hatshepsut's dedication inscriptions in red ink on the high stand in front of the prow of the bark of Amun-Re on both the north and the south walls. The latter is completely illegible, as is the cartouche of the queen's Maat-ka-Re once decorating the vessels among the offerings in front of the sacred bark [Fig. 6].¹⁴ Documentation of the decoration revealed part of a long inscription on the south wall taking up more than two-thirds of the height of the stand [Fig. 5]. The text was destroyed twice. The first time was in the rule of Tuthmosis III, when an effort was made not to damage in the process the yellow-painted surface of the base. The second time was in the Amarna period, when the name of Amun-Re was hammered out, leaving deep cuts that were not repaired in post-Amarna times.¹⁵ The top of the stand with a representation of the Horus-Falcon on a *serekh* sign was the only part that was not preserved. The end of the graffiti was completely illegible before conservation.

*Wsr.t k3w nbty w3dt rnp.wt nsw bity
M3^ct-k3-R^c jr.n.s m mnw.s n jt.s Jmn-R^c
nswt ntr.w nb pt jr [] 'nh.tj [dd.tj w3s.
tj] [] dt.*

It contains the titlature of the queen (the first four names) and a dedicatory formula addressed to Amun-Re as "King of the Gods", Lord of the Heaven. Interestingly, the epithet *nswt ntr.w* appears also in front of the naos of the bark and undoubtedly refers to the processional statue of the god which came from Karnak.¹⁶ One can assume that inscriptions of this type with the titlature of the offering queen for her father Amun were present also on other offering representations. A suggestion to this end is offered by the graffiti on the offering table on the south wall of the Hypostyle Hall of the Chapel of Hathor.¹⁷ Despite the assiduous removal of all inscriptions related to the Queen from the Bark Hall, some of the texts in the upper parts of the walls survived. In the offering list, many of the determinatives representing vessels have preserved heavily obliterated but still legible red-painted cartouches with the name of Maat-ka-Re.

Another image that is difficult to read was preserved on the stern of the holy bark of Amun-Re on the south wall; it has a small sitting figure which is the determinative of the name of *Jmn-R^c*, to whom a kneeling king offers a statue of the goddess Maat.¹⁸ The presentation of Maat was not only a symbol of the highest offering, but also confirmation that the ruler was acting with the god's will. The dating of the graffiti to the post-Amarna period, regardless of the

¹⁴ *Gnw*-stands of this kind are typical items in offering scenes, see Naville 1895: Pls XV, XVI; 1896: Pls XXXVI, XXXVII; 1901: Pls CIV, CV. Compare also Hannig 1995: 901.

¹⁵ The surface may have been evened out with plaster which has not survived.

¹⁶ In earlier inscriptions from the Middle Kingdom, a mobile statue of Amun was called simply *nb ntrw*. The connotation of the two epithets is undoubtedly the same, whereas replacing the term "Lord" with "King" underscored Amun's prominent position in the Eighteenth Dynasty. See Kruchten 1991; Kruchten and Zimmer 1989: 245ff.

¹⁷ Beaux and Karkowski 1993: Figs 10, 14. Hieroglyphic dedicatory inscriptions of Hatshepsut of a similar nature could be seen on the proto-Doric columns in the Hypostyle Hall of the Chapel of Hathor and the Upper Portico. See Niwiński 1976.

¹⁸ Decoration identified by Janusz Karkowski in the course of his epigraphic studies at Deir el-Bahari.

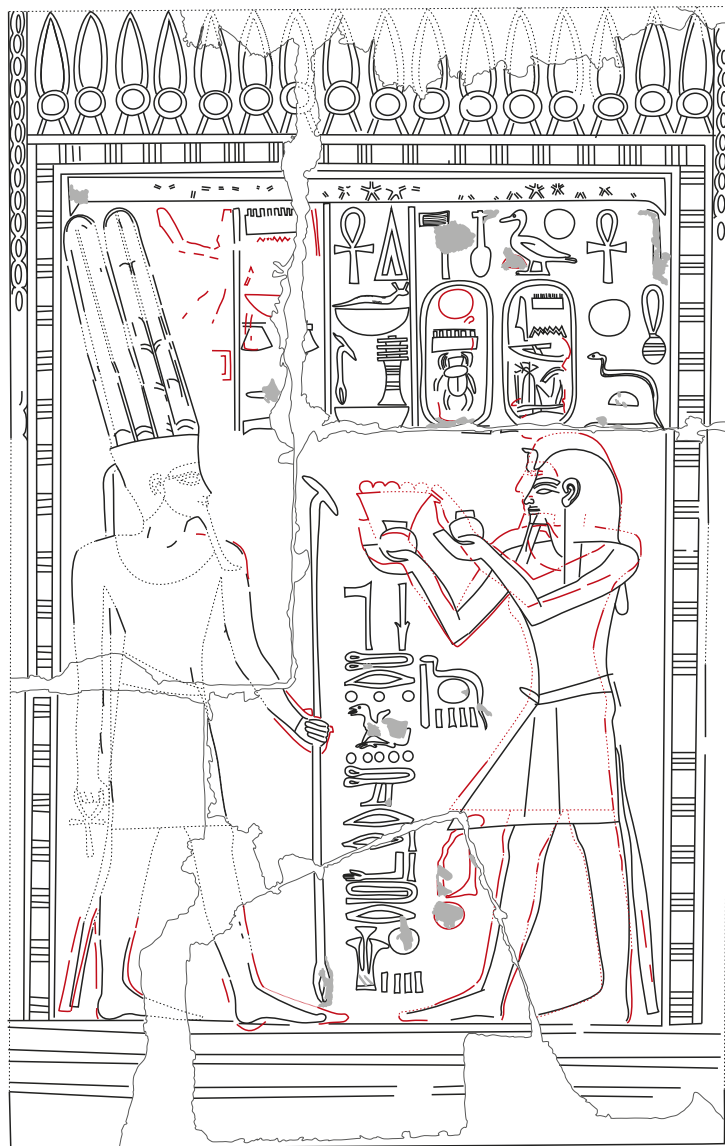


Fig. 7. Representation of Hatshepsut changed to Tuthmosis III in the eastern niche on the north wall of the Bark Hall (Drawing A. Golijewska)

neighboring representations made in the same technique and bearing the name of Horemheb, is certain, especially as scenes with presentations of Maat do not appear as a rule in the temple decoration from the times of Hatshepsut, whereas Horemheb willingly emphasized his unity with the goddess of Truth (his edict among others expresses it clearly) (Teeter 1997: 10).

The fate of the representations of Hatshepsut in the Bark Hall was much the same as in other parts of the temple. Some were removed and left unrestored, like the representations in the tympanums of the short walls. The one from the south wall disappeared almost completely once Amun's figure was moved and the arrangement of his right hand changed. However, an assiduous examination of the traces visible on the wall permits the composition of the scene of Amun greeting Hatshepsut to be reconstructed, as well as recording any iconographic details like the queen's head covering (blue *hprš* crown). Analysis of the full set of the evidence leads to the conclusion that the figures of Hatshepsut were replaced with other images only in the eastern part of the Bark Hall. This occurred in the case of representations of the queen celebrating in front of the bark and on the back wall of the niche in the north wall nearest to the entrance to the first chamber of the sanctuary. The image of Hatshepsut celebrating the Daily Ritual before the statue of Amun was replaced with a figure of Tuthmosis III [Fig. 7]. The outline of Hatshepsut is clear despite the damages. In her right hand extended toward the god the queen holds a vessel with five pellets of natron, making with her left

hand a typical gesture of consecration of the offering. The secondary and schematic figure of Tuthmosis III largely preserves the original arrangement of the figure. The vessel with natron is replaced with two globular *nw* vessels for water or wine; it is impossible to determine which of these as the text describing this episode of the ritual remained unchanged and still refers to Hatshepsut offering pellets of incense:

*sntr t3 (5) it [w] r r3 phr h3 sp 4 dd mdw
sp 4 w' b sp*

Five pellets of incense, taken to the mouth, taken to the hand, while going around him four times. Words to be recited four times: (he is) twice pure.

The total removal of all representations and texts of Hatshepsut from the Bark Hall when compared with the undamaged state of some of the queen's figures and her titlature in the inner part of the sanctuary leads to the assumption that after her death rituals were celebrated mainly in the first chamber of the sanctuary.

Documentation work inside the sanctuary has revealed or verified many destroyed original epithets of Amun, often different from the titles restored in the post-Amarna period. This concerns especially the inscriptions accompanying the deity on the back walls of the niches in the Bark Hall, where he was given at least four times the title of *hry-ib* or *hnty Dsr-dsrw*. The second title was given also originally in a hymn addressed to the god in an exposed place in the vestibule of the entrance to the Bark Hall.¹⁹ The title referring directly to Amun in the

¹⁹ After restoration the epithet was changed to *nb nswt t3wy*, "Lord of Thrones of Both Lands".

sanctuary at Deir el-Bahari appears also on the walls of the Cult Statue Room, both in the original and the restored version. After the restoration the figures of the god were from an iconographical point of view indistinguishable from the original representations, but they were restored in plaster that is largely lost today. Evident changes in restored images

of gods were recorded in the course of the documentation process in the still unpublished Northern Side Chapel. The same composition of enthroned Atum and Montu, members of the Theban Great Ennead, was reconstructed in post-Amarna times in the lower register of the back wall, but the enlarged and shifted crown of the second of the gods, topped with



Fig. 8. Hatshepsut censuring and offering water to Montu and Atum. Figures of gods restored after the Amarna destruction, back wall of the Northern Side Chapel (Drawing A. Golijewska)

a large sun disk just beneath the inscription *Mntw hry-ib W3st* leaves the impression that his name should be read as Montu-Re [Fig. 8]. This must have been an intentional measure taken by those restoring the relief in order to emphasize the dominant position of the old deity

of the Theban nome through his identification with Re.²⁰ In contrast to the situation in the Bark Hall, Hatshepsut's figure celebrating the ritual was left unchanged, stopping at a perfunctory removal of her names from the cartouche.

Dr. Franciszek Pawlicki

Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw
00-497 Warsaw, Poland, ul. Nowy Świat 4
f.pawlicki@uw.edu.pl

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²⁰ At Medamud in the rule of Amenhotep II, Montu-Re bears the title of King of the Gods, see Bisson de la Roque 1940: 14.

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