

Block SC/south/2003/6 (El-Awady 2009: pl. 6)

This scene is also horizontally divided into two main registers, in turn divided into several subsidiary registers; unlike in the previous one, in this scene, the king is oriented towards the east.

In the upper main register, he is sitting on a throne supported by lions and is touching the branches of an *ḥntyw* tree presenting it to his mother and his spouse. They are sitting in front of him together with several officials, all of them placed on five subsidiary registers. Behind Sahura, a banquet scene occupies four subsidiary registers.

The lower main register show artists playing harps and flutes and clapping their hands. In the lowermost western edge, some officials are represented while entering the scene. In this scene too, the titles and names of the royal figures and of all the officials are carefully recorded.

Block SC/south/2002/05–05A1 (El-Awady 2009: pl. 7–8)

On two smaller blocks, a fragmentary scene of rewards depicts some officials being rewarded with gold necklaces. Even in this case, the names and titles of the persons involved are registered.

– Distribution of the newly discovered scenes within the figurative program of the complex

As in the previous paragraph on the position of the Punt reliefs within the general plan of the temple of Deir el-Bahari, I think it useful to have a look at the provenance and supposed original position of the newly discovered scenes in the framework of Sahura's funerary complex. In doing so, I simply follow the reconstruction presented by Tarek El-Awady in his publication. Beside the identification of each scene, I will also provide the following information:

- a) The position of each scene inside the temple, including scenes previously discovered by Borchardt, with their conjectured position;
- b) A note indicating when the scene is represented for the first time;
- c) *Italic fonts* are used when the scene is present also in the temple of Hatshepsut. Brackets are used to indicate where the scene is placed in the temple of the queen (DeB: and collocation).

Valley temple: *Sahura as a sphinx slaying enemies* (1st time) (DeB: Lower colonnade, North Half)

King suckled by a goddess (1st time) (DeB: Hathor Shrine)

Assembly of deities (1st time) (DeB: various cases)

Causeway (South side):

Visiting sanctuaries

(DeB: Middle Colonnade, North Wing)

Causeway (North side):

Fowling in the marshes

(DeB: Lower colonnade, North Wing)

Expedition to Punt (three blocks)
(DeB: the whole Middle Colonnade,
South Wing)

Fishing with clap nets
(DeB: Lower colonnade, North Wing)

Transporting architectural elements
(DeB: Lower Colonnade, South Wing)

*Military exercises and training of Sahura
nautical crews* (DeB: Hathor Shrine?)

Funerary temple: *Driving 4 calves* (DeB: Lower Colonnade, North Half); *Smiting enemies* (DeB: Lower Colonnade, North Half)

Unknown places: *Jubilee*: reused block with *hb sd*, from Apa Geremia Monastery (DeB, several scenes); receiving *ʿnh* from gods (1st time) (DeB: several scenes).

Others: *king offering to gods* (1st time) (DeB: several scenes)

Discussion

As we have just seen, in Sahura's complex, the number of themes - recorded for the first time in a royal repertoire - is noteworthy for a single monument, but this may also depend on the incomplete state of the documentation that has come down to us, and we cannot be sure that future investigations will not change this datum, due to the discovery of earlier examples of the same scenes. What is very significant is the number of subjects (14 out of the 15 known from Sahura's pyramid complex and listed above) that the artists of Hatshepsut borrowed from the Old Kingdom antecedent, although their distribution within the architectural space of the two temples is not necessarily the same (north or south of the main axis of the temple, for instance). They represent more than the 90% of the decorative program known to us from the Old Kingdom complex. The datum is not significant *per se*, as we do not know how much of the lost repertoire was comparable to that of the New Kingdom temple of Hatshepsut, however, it clearly demonstrates the queen's strong interest in following a model whose characteristics were particularly suited to her self-representation. We will come back to this topic later, as I would now emphasize that, notwithstanding the noteworthy analogies between the decorative programs of the two temples, the two sets of bas-reliefs narrating the Punt expedition are not exactly comparable. Considering that different groups of scenes were depicted along the causeway of Sahura's pyramid, the total space devoted to the Punt expedition should not be much larger than the blocks still extant, while in Hatshepsut's temple three walls are completely reserved for the representation of this enterprise. This is depicted with a large number of details, illustrating the various phases of the expedition and the contexts involved: the village, the Puntites, the Egyptian boats with all the related activities, the products and the long royal and divine texts commenting the scenes. How should we interpret the formal analogies and the deep differences between these two sets?

Two dense papers have recently discussed, in different ways, the significant and numerous “debts” of Hatshepsut’s figurative, architectural and textual programs towards those of the past sovereigns (Ćwiek 2014: 62–93; Breyer 2014: 47–91). Ćwiek’s paper in particular is a very wide and exhaustive review of all the old patterns employed by Hatshepsut in her temples, and more specifically in *Djeser Djeserw*. Through a detailed survey of the architectural and decorative program of the temple, Ćwiek identifies, among the major models followed by Hatshepsut’s architects and artisans, monuments and documents from the early dynastic times, the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom. Although his text is illustrated with only a few pictures, comparisons are easy and allow to immediately confirm what he states. I add that it is extremely interesting that, while, in some cases, we are simply confronted with a general resemblance in the choice of subjects and themes, in others we can observe a strict formal correspondence of Hatshepsut’s version of a subject, with particular reference to the Fifth dynasty antecedent, so that in those cases individual elements, or even a whole scene, appear as a precise copy from the earlier model.¹⁶ For all these reasons, Ćwiek is rather cautious in accepting the historicity of Hatshepsut’s expedition to Punt, as he states: “This is not to say that there was no expedition to Punt in the Year 9, but the choice of the subject for depiction might have been influenced by an already ancient tradition, and one has to be perhaps a bit more cautious about the historicity of depicted events, recorded names and details.” (Ćwiek 2014: 5). In his *Conclusions*, however, the author gives only general motivations to the “Vast and deep references to the past” by the queen (and also by her posterity), even invoking “a need to additionally legitimize the rule that might be contested” (Ćwiek 2014: 93).

Breyer’s article is different in that it is specifically devoted to identify the Old Kingdom “Vorlagen zur ‘Punthalle’ von Dair al-Baḥrī” (Breyer 2014). It starts from a philological analysis of the inscriptions commenting Hatshepsut’s expedition to Punt. After a thorough philological and palaeographic study of the whole complex of texts, the author also tackles important iconographic questions relating to both the racial features and ethnic characteristics of the peoples depicted,¹⁷ and the representation of the foreign landscape and of the different phases of the expedition. In his opinion, language, orthography and specific iconographic elements clearly suggest that more than one Old Kingdom model was used in Deir el-Bahari (Breyer 2014: 87), but he also firmly believes “dass es unter Hatshepsut tatsächlich eine Expedition nach Punt gegeben hat, scheint aufgrund des hohen Grades an Individualisierung kaum zweifelhaft zu sein” (Breyer 2014: 85).

In this regard, I completely agree with Breyer’s opinion, also in consideration of the points illustrated in the previous pages. Actually, in the final remarks of my presentations both at the 2015 Neapolitan seminar and at the 2017 Prague conference, I concluded: “However, apart from single images, the intrinsic nature of the two sets is heavily individualized; if we observe specifically the Punt reliefs, the scenes depicted in Deir el-Bahari are much richer and more circumstantial and I confirm my previous statement that “the figuration

16 See for instance the scene of “driving the four calves” and that of the “sovereign sphinx slaying enemies”.

17 These subjects are extensively debated in a recent monograph of the same Breyer 2016.

is not the issue of an imaginary creation". In other words, I maintained that Hatshepsut *did* really send an expedition to Punt, although the report of her enterprise was edited *also* by using earlier images and texts,¹⁸ as she did also for other parts of the decorative program of her temples, as Ćwiek rigorously reconstructs in his paper.¹⁹

Why did Hatshepsut decide to "copy" so many topics from her predecessors of the Old and Middle Kingdom?

The revival of ancient traditions is a common and recurring trait in Egyptian history, and Ćwiek summarizes its reasons as follows: "It could be a natural consequence of development of the ideology of kingship and its display, using well known forms. Best schemes, most proper forms could be sought in the works of the past" (Ćwiek 2014: 93).²⁰ After all, we know very well that the manifestation of Egyptian thought through different types of textual compositions, architecture, bas-reliefs and more generally what we call "figurative art" has always been the result of a dynamism that led to continuous transformations, the results of which remained, however, strongly tied to respect for tradition and to that mythical creative moment that had given rise to the Pharaonic state. Likewise, Breyer, following Spalinger, speaks of a "kreativere *emulatio*", rather than a proper *imitatio* (Breyer 2014: 85), motivating it with the need felt by Hatshepsut to reconnect her kingdom to powerful models that, according to him, "waren nun einmal im Alten Reich zu finden" (Breyer 2014: 85).²¹

I think however that we might go a bit further, if we dwell, for a moment, on the models privileged in Hatshepsut's temples. According to Ćwiek's thorough analysis, we can identify them in Menes, Djoser, Sahura, Mentuhotep Nebhepetra and some kings of the Twelfth dynasty, mainly Senusret I and Senusret III. They could be easily divided into two distinct groups: the kings who had created or recreated the unitary state (Menes and Mentuhotep Nebhepetra) and the sovereigns whose kingship bears witness to a strong link with the solar cult and related rituals (Sahura, Senusret I and Senusret III). It is therefore not a question of a generic reference to powerful and revered sovereigns of the past, nor of a further legitimization of Hatshepsut's sovereignty,²² but a conscious revival

18 On this subject, see also Espinel 2011: 341.

19 In this regard, I cannot share Breyer's opinion that the mistakes of the feminine endings - observed by him in the *Punthalle* - depend on the model employed by the scribes, who – according to him – copied a text originally written for a male pharaoh (Breyer 2014: 78). Actually the same error occurs also in other texts, all along the walls of the temple; in some cases, we also see the opposite error, that is, the presence of the female termination following the name of Thutmosis III. See for instance on the pillars of the First Hypostyle Hall of the Hathor Chapel (Pirelli 1999: 223, 233–238, note 9 and 23). I think that these errors were caused by the particular situation in which the scribes had come to find: actually, they had to transcribe texts dedicated to a female pharaoh who was often accompanied by a male co-ruler.

20 As suggested by the graffiti left by her people at important Old Kingdom sites, e.g. at Saqqara (Ćwiek 2014: 65).

21 However the results of Ćwiek's study clearly show that, among Hatshepsut's privileged models, many were also from the Middle Kingdom.

22 I do not think this is a valid motivation, because the construction of a monument such as the temple of Deir el-Bahari already presupposes sufficient consensus, legitimacy and power.

of themes and features peculiar of the royalty of some specific ancestors. Those ancestors on whose ideology and religious policy the queen reflected and whom she wanted to constitute the essence of her own sovereignty. In this sense, I think that a major role should be attributed to the queen's strong wish to renew the role of the solar cult and increase its connection with the regality. This religious policy is clearly mirrored in her whole building activity, above all in Karnak and Deir el-Bahari, the two sanctuaries put on an ideal axis that united the east and west bank of the Nile, virtually following the voyage of Amun-Ra. On the eastern gate of the temple of Karnak, Hatshepsut planned the erection of the two obelisks whose transportation is narrated on the lower northern colonnade of Deir el-Bahari; while in this latter, she built and enlarged a great alabaster altar put in an open (SOLAR) court, north of the third terrace. It is on this solar altar that the queen would unite herself to the sun-god and become, as she mentions in the *Punthalle*, a female Sun (Naville 1898: tav. LXXVI).

It is with this in mind that we can refer to a creative *emulatio*, which, only in some cases, gave rise to copies conforming to the original. More frequently, the Egyptian artists included in the decorative program of a temple a series of "cultured quotations" from the past, which they re-elaborated and integrated with refined wisdom into a model combining tradition and innovation to create an individualized representation of their own sovereign.

One last question remains to be addressed to complete the comparison between the two sets of repertoires: given that the tradition of the past lived on in a form that is partially comparable, what are the features that differentiate the composition of the decorative programs and the self-representations of the Egyptian rulers between the Old and New Kingdoms?

If we return for a moment to the schematic description of the two sets of bas-reliefs (see above), we can see that the role and the attitude of the two sovereigns within the entire compositions is quite different: Sahura is represented twice, once on the first block facing west, towards the same direction as the boats, i.e. coming back from the expedition towards the temple; once on the second block, facing east, while, sitting on a throne, he receives the products of the *ḥntyw* tree. Hatshepsut, instead, is present, once, symbolized by her cartouches while receiving homage by the southern peoples, bowing down in front of her; then she is represented twice in front of Amun, while presenting him with the tribute and reporting the successful enterprise, and a fourth time while announcing the successful results to the court. In other words, Sahura is seen both as the direct leader of the expedition to Punt and as the true recipient of the precious and divine products coming from that land, whereas Hatshepsut is shown as an indirect leader of the expedition (the actual leader being represented in Punt) and as an intermediary recipient of the produce, whose final addressee is the god Amun, whom she presents the issues of her enterprise. Hatshepsut in other words, is depicted as a human sovereign, as is also demonstrated by her role of guarantee of the state in front of its officials.

Putting the question in these terms, we should deduce that it is the god Amun who, in the Temple of Millions of Years, assumes the function that the pharaoh of the Old Kingdom performed in his funerary temple. This shift certainly mirrors the remarkable

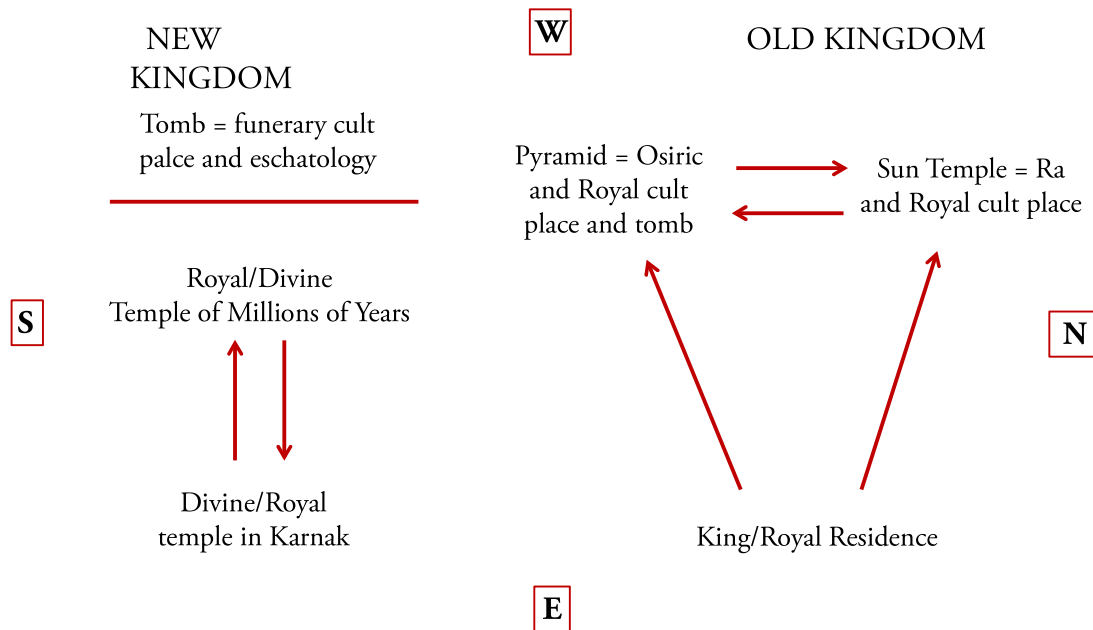


Fig. 5. Diagram of the role of the Old Kingdom vs New Kingdom royal temples.
(Drawing: R. Pirelli)

difference in the conceptions of the royal-divine cult in the two periods (fig. 5). What we consider the royal necropolis of the Fifth Dynasty is probably to be seen also as the cult place of Osiris and the Sun-god (both considered immanent in the nature of the sovereign), respectively in the pyramid and the sun temples.²³ On the other side, the Temples of Millions of Years on the west bank of Thebes are to be considered cult places of the living pharaoh (and the God) and complementary to the temples on the east bank devoted to the God (and the king), who were eventually united by means of the rituals that regularly took place in them. Starting from these assumptions, the royal tomb of the New Kingdom – located further west in the Kings' Valley – plays a completely different role from that of the Old Kingdom: there is nothing connecting it with the divine cult; it is really a place reserved to the funerary cult of the sovereign – who will reach his divine fathers in the netherworld – and the related eschatology, and marks once more the changes that occurred in the conception of the royal nature, whose dichotomy between the divine and human essence was evidently strongly felt in this period.

²³ In this sense, it is worth noting that the abandonment of solar temple construction almost coincides with the appearance, in the royal burial chambers, of the Pyramid Texts summarizing the solar and the Osirian aspects of the divine transfiguration of the king.

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