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KARNAK, THE TEMPLE OF AMUN-RA-WHO-HEARS-PRAYERS

الكرنك: معبد آمون - رع الذي يسمع الصلوات

Laetitia Gallet

Karnak, der Tempel des hörenden Ohres
Karnak, le temple-d'Amon-qui-écoute-les-prières

*The eastern temple of Karnak known as “Temple of Amun-Ra-Who-Hears-Prayers” was partly built and entirely redecorated between year 40 and year 46 of the reign of Ramesses II; it was located in an area devoted to the personal piety from Thutmose III until the reign of Ptolemy VIII. The masonry has revealed that the temple hides previous structures. This former edifice could be the work of Horemheb. The columns of the hypostyle hall, which have probably been in place since the Thutmosid Period and were transformed by the Ramesside intervention, suggest also that a Thutmosid structure was still there. *Sdm nht* is the principal epithet—but not the only one—which indicates that the king as the god listens to the prayers in this sector of the Karnak Temple complex. Some tenuous indications suggest that divine justice, as corollary of the listening of the prayers, could have been applied in the temple by means of a processional bark before the Ptolemaic Period; during the reign of Ptolemy VII, there are indications that justice was administered in the temple.*

لقد شيد المعبد الشرقي بالكرنك والمعروف بمعبد «آمون الذي يسمع الصلوات» جزئياً ، وتم إعادة زخرفته كلياً ما بين العامين 40 و 46 من حكم رمسيس الثاني. وكان يقع داخل منطقة مكرسة للتعبد الفردي من عصر الملك تحتمس الثالث حتى عصر بطليموس الثامن. طريقة البناء تكشف أن المعبد يخفي منشآت سابقة. هذا الصرح السابق قد يكون من اعمال حور محب. وتشير أعمدة قاعة الأعمدة والتي في الغالب كانت موجودة في موقعها خلال عصر التحامسة، والتي تم نقلها خلال تدخل الرعامسة، تشير أيضا إلى وجود منشأة من عصر التحامسة. «*Sdm nht*» هو اللقب الأساسي - ولكنه ليس الوحيد - الذي يشير أن الملك بصفته إله يستمع إلى الصلوات في هذا الجزء من معبد الكرنك. بعض المؤشرات الخافتة تشير إلى أن العدالة الإلهية كنتيجة طبيعية للإنصات إلى الصلوات قد تكون كانت مطبقة في المعبد عن طريق مركب الموكب المقدس قبل العصر البطلمي، ويجود مؤشرات خلال عصر بطليموس السابع أن العدالة كانت تقدم بالمعبد.



The Temple of Amun-Ra-Who-Hears-Prayers or the Eastern Temple is located at the back of

the architectural complex of Karnak, within the mud-brick enclosure wall of the 30th Dynasty, approximately 400 m from the First Pylon. Its actual entrance, which faces east,

lies at a distance of less than 50 m from the Eastern Gate to the Karnak complex, while the center of the monument, the [Unique Obelisk](#) (also the Lateran Obelisk), is approximately 20 m from the contra-temple of Thutmose III (see [Karnak, contra-temple](#)). The entrance is fronted by a colonnade dating to the reign of Taharqo (Leclant 1954: 114 - 172). North of the north wall lies an unexcavated area of approximately 45 x 45 m, which comprises several mud-brick structures. This area with earth-filled ruins is higher than the temple, and the mound leans against the temple wall at its northwestern corner. Surprisingly, this heaped mound of soil has never been excavated and preserves some of the original landscape from the time of the first discovery of the site.

Discovery

A turning point in the rediscovery of the site of Karnak may have been the veritable harvest of statues, found in 1818 by Rifaud (1830: 348; see also Baum et al. 1998: 69 - 70; Cherpion 1983: 247 - 252). Unfortunately, the general plan of Karnak, on which he traced the plans of the excavated buildings and the location of the major finds, has not been found until this day (Fiechter 1994: 103).

The first general description of the interior of the Temple of Amun-Ra-Who-Hears-Prayers was provided by Champollion, who called it the “Petit Rhamesseion” (Champollion 1974: 254 - 260). He was mostly interested in the Ptolemaic decorations and the columns. He did not describe or draw the section closest to the sanctuary, because it was not yet accessible at that point in time. It was not until 1950 that P. Barguet and H. Chevrier identified the base of the Unique Obelisk as part of the sanctuary (Leclant 1950: 365, 1), and not until 1952 that the entrance of the temple was completely cleared.

Layout

In its present state the temple, with a length of slightly over 30 m, consists of three distinct parts (fig. 1).

1.) A long entry portal that has the form of a corridor, which pierces the remains of a massive mud-brick wall (situated along the same line as the temple’s eastern enclosure wall during the 18th Dynasty), constructed upon curved foundations. Its appearance evokes that of a pylon, also because the door jambs made of layered sandstone are sloped (fig. 2).

2.) A peristyle court with eight *wadj*-columns and two Osirian pillars, distributed between the southern and northern half of the court. Two gates open towards the exterior of the lateral walls.

3.) A hypostyle hall, which is entered from the peristyle court through an axial door and two open lateral doors in the interior wall. The room has four *wadj*-columns and protects the foundation stones of the Unique Obelisk at the axis and at the very end of the monument. Two small lateral chambers line the original emplacement of the obelisk.

Date

From an architectural point of view the temple can be dated primarily to three periods: Thutmoseid, Ramesside, and Ptolemaic. The most recent structures are the massive mud-brick foundations of the entrance (built in a construction technique, which has not been attested before the 30th Dynasty), the lateral walls, and the small unfinished lateral chambers of the hypostyle hall.

The oldest element is the Unique Obelisk, presently in Rome, a famous monolithic monument that was planned by Thutmose III and erected 35 years later by Thutmose IV on a foundation, which is still visible in the hypostyle hall (Barguet 1950: 269 - 280, 1951: 1 - 4; Yoyotte 1957: 81 - 91). The monolith carries inscriptions with the names of both pharaohs and also two scenes referring to Ramesses II on the side that originally was oriented towards the east. The enormous hill north of the temple seems to enclose the remains of the scaffolding used to take down the obelisk in the fourth century CE (Azim

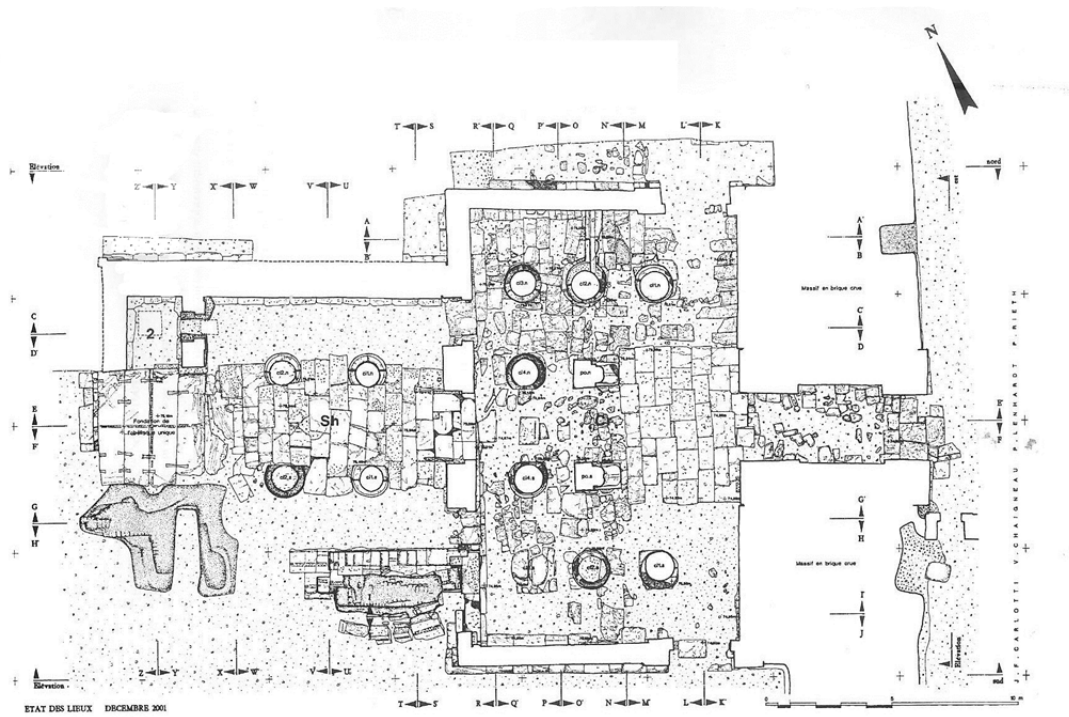


Figure 1. Plan of the temple of Amun-Ra-Who-Hears-Prayers (the Eastern Temple) at Karnak.



Figure 2. Entrance of the temple of Amun-Ra-Who-Hears-Prayers (the Eastern Temple) at Karnak.

1980: 120 - 124). We cannot reconstruct what the architectural context of the obelisk was at the time of its erection, because the visible structures around its foundation are all of a late date and earlier architectural elements have disappeared.

If we use the decorative program as a dating device, then the sunk relief scenes can be dated to Ramesses II; however, the axial door in the wall between the peristyle court and hypostyle hall is decorated with relief and texts of Ptolemy VIII.

Walls

The temple displays a number of strange architectural features: the limited width of the lateral walls (less than a meter for walls that would have been 7 m high); the use of thin “plates” of stone only 10 to 15 cm deep; sections of bulging stone, protruding 35 to 40 cm from the surface of the sandstone in several places of the lower part of the walls of the court (inside and outside); and finally the door jambs of the lateral gates, which have a thickness twice that of the usual ratio during the New Kingdom. All these remarkable features can be accounted for by one explanation: the walls of Ramesses II were originally thicker. They consisted of two headers and two stretchers, which would have formed the interior of the wall. They were revealed when the surface of the wall was cut back to remove the sunk relief of earlier date. The “plates” are thus scraped down blocks, and in some places they have fallen out: either the back of the neighboring block has become visible in the masonry (fig. 3) or the empty space was filled with mortar. The unusual thickness of the lower part of the walls inside the court (fig. 4), i.e., the stone extrusions, can also be observed on the external faces of the walls of the peristyle court, giving the impression that the temple was erected on a podium. This phenomenon is difficult to explain, unless we suppose that the wall was originally thicker. The present size of the door jambs also reflect the scraping of the original wall surface, but to a lesser extent: the door



Figure 3. Peristyle court, north wall: detail of the masonry and of a “stone plate” that has fallen out.



Figure 4. North door of the temple, west jamb, stone extrusion of the masonry.

jambes were decorated in raised relief, which required much less leveling to prepare the stone face for the Ramesside decoration.

The eastern jamb of the north gate shows a stud, in the shape of a dovetail, strangely put vertically in the facade of the masonry: it seems to indicate that the workers of Ramesses II were obliged to reinforce the surface of the wall when they cut it back.

The wall separating the peristyle court and the hypostyle hall was also scraped down, but to a less uniform size. For example, traces of earlier decoration can still be seen under the actual scenes, on both faces of the wall between the axial gate and the northern gate.

Although unrefined masonry, reuse, and pockmarked walls are a very usual phenomenon during the Ramesside Period, the present case appears to be somewhat different. Ramesses II probably used an existing structure and maintained the layout, but scraped down the more massive walls for his own decoration (Carlotti and Gallet 2007: 271 - 282). This scenario seems corroborated by the dedicatory text on the monument (on the external face of the north wall), which specifies that “the temple of the upper (eastern) gate was remade anew.” Furthermore, tracks of an ancient wall predating the Ptolemaic one have been noticed north of the hypostyle hall. Therefore, it seems possible to suppose that a previous temple existed with a plan somewhat similar to what is extant today, at least for the peristyle court and perhaps the hypostyle hall.

Columns and Pillars

The four columns of the hypostyle hall are *wadj*-columns, reusing the drums of *jwn*-columns. The old polygonal column shafts were installed on earlier bases, which already had traces of placement or guidelines for other, no longer extant, pillars. The new polygonal shafts associated with these ancient bases (and masking the prior guideline) were never decorated. The columns were uninscribed for a sufficiently long period to have been covered with cupules (small hollow

scrapes, to collect stone powder for magical purposes) almost everywhere on their surface. Ramesses II then abraded the circular collar of the lower drums and the ridges of each polygonal column, replastering them to obtain the curve of a *wadj*-column, filling the cupules, and inscribing his texts (fig. 5). After performing this change, the former guideline on the column bases reappeared. The temple elements were thus reused in situ under Ramesses II, who simply recut and decorated the unfinished columns. We should, however, not disregard the hypothesis that Ramesses II could have reused the bases separately from the proto-Doric column shafts, which may have been brought in from another geographical location, having been put in their present place before being recut and decorated. This complex scenario would suppose that under Ramesses II the undecorated polygonal column shafts were erected in their new position while care was taken to fit them meticulously in the same place so that the cupules, which often bridge two column drums, fit exactly, as they were in their hypothetical previous location. Although this scenario seems less probable, examples of such refitting have been attested elsewhere (Traunecker et al. 1981: 61).



Figure 5. Column of the hypostyle hall transformed into *wadj*-columns during the Ramesside Period. Detail of the inscriptions of Ramses II made in the coating.

The imposing *wadj*-columns of the peristyle court, a completely Ramesside concept, are made of half cylinders and roughly hewn blocks smoothed over with mortar (in some areas over 10 cm thick). Polygonal drums, with 16 cut planes, identical to those of the hypostyle hall, are exclusively and intelligently used in the narrow parts of the column shafts: under the capital and the lowest drum, which corresponds to the part where the shaft is constricted. It would have been necessary to plaster them to a larger thickness if they had been indiscriminately employed at a wider part of the column. Moreover, the ribs were not leveled and the cupules not filled up: it was not a necessity because the entire column was supposed to be covered in a generous layer of plaster, and the ribs and cupules would actually have facilitated the adhesion of the plaster (fig. 6).



Figure 6. Peristyle court: columns with reused polygonal drums and thick layers of coating.

These facts can only be concluded through a sondage at the base of the columns in the hypostyle hall, but it is logical to presume that a colonnade had been built in the Thutmosid

Period consisting of at least eight columns, while the total number and exact location remain unknown. These were reused by the director of works Bakenkhonsu of Ramesses II, after a partial demolition. Was this a building of Thutmose III? Thutmose IV? The first did not inscribe the obelisk; but would he have erected the colonnade without having raised the obelisk? It is possible to attribute an original building to Thutmose IV. The absence of decoration on the columns before they were reused and/or recut in the Ramesside Period is not inexplicable. In any case, we do not know how the colonnade coexisted with hitherto little known changes wrought in this area during the reign of Amenhotep IV.

The extremely heterogeneous masonry of the Osirian pillars in the peristyle court—without any equivalent—indicates that the method was the same as that used for the walls: carving, similar to what was done to the “plates,” caused the face of the southern Osirian figure to be like a mask, which was about to fall before the restoration. Very thick plaster was found in many parts as medium of sculpture. The hands of the colossus were, for instance, entirely made of plaster. Furthermore, small blocks were used, and the north face of the base of the north Osirian pillar has stone bulges. Here are some of the features showing that, in this particular case, it seems impossible to consider a scenario in which Ramesses II would have created pillars with reused blocks coming from another place. Considering that the workers had to cope with material that was already in place, as in situ masonry, and had to carve the new shape from a thicker structure, allows us to explain why they did not reuse stones in a more adequate way. This preexisting structure that remains to be specified (maybe a facade with a portico) is suggested by an indentation in the stony bulges at the foot of both side-walls inside the court. This indentation in the bottom of the walls is exactly align with the bases of both pillars.

Bakenkhonsu's Innovation

The actual entrance to the temple is called “Upper Gate” (a name attested since Thutmose IV) and is the only element that was entirely reconstructed under Ramesses II. Contrary to the rest of the temple, which we have just seen, Bakenkhonsu did not reuse a previous structure in situ by merely cutting back the walls. The famous image of Amun-Kamutef with two penises should be attributed to the Ramesside artist’s correction and not to a Ramesside intervention on an older relief.

This innovation is corroborated by a knife-sharp cut, which isolated the gate from the masonry of the court, by iconographic indications (Carloti and Gallet 2007: 277), and especially by extensive reuse; in particular the decorated door jambs (perhaps the remains of the ancient “Upper Gate”), in two parts made in the style of the late 18th - early 19th Dynasty, a block with the cartouche of Horemheb (fig. 7), and foundation stones the size ratio of which are similar to talatat blocks. Quite ambiguously, the inscription that Ramesses’ director of works Bakenkhonsu left on one of his statues (Munich, Louis de Bavière no. 30, Plantikow-Münster 1969: 117 - 131) confirms the observations on the ground. No remains of previous buildings (such as the peristyle court and the columns) are mentioned, and the director of works can legitimately claim to be the father of the architectural elements, which are specified. Thus the first sentence in his description “I have made for him the Temple of Ramesses who loves Amun-who-hears-prayers” (*m pꜣ sbꜣ ḥry n pr Ḳmn*, fig. 8) should be read in this vein. The construction claimed by Bakenkhonsu starts at the location of the “Upper Gate” (and is followed by elements, which are no longer visible in situ), not below. If we believe the evidence from the statues of Bakenkhonsu and that of Papyrus Berlin 3047 (Théodoridès 1980: 11 - 46), we can date the enormous building site and the restructuring to years 40 - 46 of Ramesses, and attribute this activity to one of his last Sed Festivals (a recurring theme in the monument). Judging

from the level of erasures of the relief decoration in the peristyle court and considering the signs of reuse found on the gate, the first edifice could have been erected and inscribed under Horemheb, but this remains to be confirmed.



Figure 7. Cartouche of Horemheb in the south masonry of the door.



Figure 8. Entrance of the temple: south jamb of the door with mention of the “Upper Gate.”

A Temple of Hearing

The dedication of the temple of hearing is indicated by the epithet *sdm nht*, “who listen(s) to the prayers,” in the Ramesside and Ptolemaic inscriptions. Such terminology is usually more typical of private monuments, such as the stelae of Horbeit of Memphis (Sadek 1987) or the stelae of Deir el-Medina (Morgan 2004), than of official monuments. *sdm nht* at Karnak forms a geographical marker and is exclusively connected to the sector of this one temple. But who is listening? The biography of Bakenkhonsu designates the edifice clearly as dedicated to Ramesses Mery-Amun who hears the prayers. But on every vertical jamb of the gate of Nectanebo (which is without a doubt based on the decoration of a Ramesside gate to the temple that the Nectanebo gate replaced), Amun-Ra is the dedicant. An inscription on the “Upper Gate,” barely legible today, seems to specify both Ramesses II and the god *sdm nht* (Barguet 1962: 226). Five other attestations of the expression “who listen(s) to the prayers” exist in the temple: four referring to Amun-Ra (one from the Ramesside Period, three on Ptolemaic monuments), and one specifically mentioning Ptolemy VIII. More than a change in function, deviating from the original, this epithet given to both king and god seems to indicate an assimilation, a process whose existence we knew about, but which is echoed particularly in this part of the Karnak complex: the visiting believers are greeted by two Osirian pillars with the face of Ramesses II, whose flesh is painted blue, as in most reliefs representing Amun.

In the eastern sector of Karnak, *sdm nht* may have indicated the popular veneration of a colossal statue of Thutmose IV (Chadefaud 1982: 4). Based on a text of Thutmose III (Nims 1969: 69 - 74, 1971), we know that the sanctuary behind the statue was named, right from its construction onwards, “exact place of hearing” or “exact place of the hearing ear” (Nims 1971: 109, note 20). It is, then, this last designation, which brings a scene from the temple of Khons to mind, where Herihor is depicted before the Unique Obelisk and a

building called *Msdr-sdm*, “the hearing ear” (Nims 1969: 73).

If the contra-temple of Thutmose III and the Temple of Amun-Ra/Ramesses-Who-Hears-Prayers are two distinct architectural units, then all buildings, which were constructed east of the contra-temple (with exception of those added by Amenhotep IV), may be considered to a certain degree extensions of the “Place of the Hearing Ear,” as already suggested by Nims (1971: 58). The concomitant use of the epithets *msdrwy sdm*, “the hearing ears” (Wagner and Quaegebeur 1973: 58), and *sdm nht*, “who listens to the prayers,” in the inscriptions of Ptolemy VIII in the Eastern Temple seems to confirm this (fig. 9).



Figure 9. Door decorated under Ptolemy VIII: mention of *sdm nht* in the inscriptions of the south jamb.

While having functioned as an independent cult place for a thousand years, it seems that the Eastern Temple also served as a type of antechamber between the believers and the heart of “He-Who-Hears-Prayers,” which was, as the name specifies, “the exact place.” Before the Ptolemaic era, the side gate of the peristyle court opened towards the exterior and may have been meant to regulate the circulation of persons, guiding them towards the contra-temple at the back of the Unique Obelisk. During the reign of Ptolemy VIII, when the small gates appear no longer to have functioned, the temple still had the function of antechamber for the listener, but more as a space of negotiation, where one would halt,

than a route or corridor. This seems to be devised by the pavement and the barriers at the entrance of the peristyle court, related to the location of the inscriptions of Ptolemy VIII opposite these.

The divine justice is the corollary of the listener, and it seems that by intervening in the axial gate leading to the hypostyle hall, Ptolemy VIII sought to create a *rw̄t dj M̄ꜣꜥt*, “gate where justice is done” (for details see Gallet *fc.*). Although none of the extant inscriptions mention the term, the identification of the structure as a *rw̄t dj M̄ꜣꜥt*, a name that furthermore covers a function (Traunecker 1992 : 373 - 379), is strongly suggested by the texts in the lower courses of the gate, which are similar to the texts on the Gate of Evergetes, or the *Mht* of Edfu. Both texts contain the double theme of the benevolence of the god and his power to sanction, mentioning among other epithets a god “with open ears,” “rewarding the true speech and punishing the lie.” The system of barriers at the entrance of the peristyle court could have contained the believers or the accused at a respectable distance of the gate and the divinity. They could also have played a role in the taking of oaths and pledges. The presence of *Nehemet-any* (“The one who protects the despoiled”) and *Rattany* (whose role in taking an oath is well known for the Late Period) in the iconography could be an indication of this. It is possible that oracular activity took place here, although none of the strictly oracular expressions has been found in any of the extant inscriptions (Quaegebeur 1997 : 15 - 34). Ptolemy appears in the inscriptions as negotiator of Amun, who transmits the words and listens to the prayers, and who in addition also practices juridical actions.

The performance of justice has already been attested in the eastern sector of the Karnak complex since the times of Ramesses II. Papyrus Berlin 3047 contains an echo of a lawsuit presided by Bakenkhonsu near a gate, which was called “Maat is satisfied” (Théodoridès 1980). This gate must have been situated east of the “Upper Gate” and

contained all the architectural elements constructed by Bakenkhonsu, as listed in his description of the Eastern Temple. Today they are no longer visible and could only be identified through excavation.

Divine justice also seems to have been exercised in this area during the New Kingdom. We can legitimately consider that this monument, with its emphasis on listening, could have been related to the processional bark, especially in a period in which this was the primary instrument for oracular activities. Material traces can strengthen this suggestion: the bases of the columns in the hypostyle hall have clearly been cut back along the main axis, after the column shafts were reshaped. The shape of the column bases in the court, however, seem to have been part of the original spatial concept, with a straight side along the principal axis of the circulatory route (according to our present hypothesis, even if we cannot completely discard the idea that they were recut and restored after Ramesses II). Are those characteristics linked to the presence of a bark? A graffito of a bark has been engraved on the base of the southern Osiriac pillar. If we distinguish the pedestal, with the shield, and bulging sails of the naos, one could not say whether bow or stern are falcon headed (hieracocephale) or ram headed (criocephale). In contrast, the outer wall and the door frames of the temple contain many more figural graffiti representing, without ambiguity, the Ram’s head of the bark of Amun. Although in themselves difficult to date, these graffiti seem, nevertheless, to reflect real facts: the departure of a bark, without doubt since the time of Ramesses. By opening to the exterior of the temple, the gates of the peristyle are sufficiently large to allow a bark to pass. The presence of graffiti on the exterior of the edifice, just like evidence for the one time existence of plates of precious metal with relief decoration (especially on the north facade of Amun *sdm nht*), are in concordance with the function of the temple. Ordinary people would not have had access to the temple precinct, or the passage of the bark, with exception of the

outer areas of the temple. Only particular personnel, such as scribes and priests, were allowed to penetrate in to the antechamber of listening. In contrast to the figural graffiti on the outside, the hieroglyphic graffiti are found inside the monument (for instance, those of the “royal scribe”). The jambs of the “Upper Gate” remind us that everyone beyond these gates was supposed to be cleansed and purified. This enriched imagery (Traunecker 1991: 88) at the entrance of the peristyle court, near the gates, represents small cult devices, modest but well-cared for and probably repaired (fig. 10). Their placement is related to the individual piety of the temple personnel that was authorized to circulate through the lateral entrances to the court.

Surprisingly in the sector where Amun and the pharaoh lent their benevolent ears to prayers, not one ostrakon bearing texts with prayers has been found, nor were any stelae with ears, ad- or ex-voto, discovered in this context. However, the neighboring areas, north of the temple and around Nectanebo’s gate, have never been excavated.



Figure 10. Graffito of Amun at the entrance of the peristyle court: small cult device, support of personal devotion.

Translated from the French by Willeke Wendrich

Bibliographic Notes

This article on the Eastern Temple, or the Temple-of-Amun-Ra-Who-Hears-Prayers, presents only the most characteristic elements of this monument. A detailed publication is forthcoming and will comprise architectural, iconographic, and Egyptological studies of the temple, including the texts and iconography (Gallet *fc.*). For questions about the architecture of the complex, see Carlotti and Gallet (2007: 271 - 282); for a description of the monument, the older publication by Barguet (1962: 219 - 242) can still be consulted. For graffiti of the temple personnel, see Habachi (1972: 67 - 85).

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External Links

Digital Karnak Project

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Contra-temple. University of California, Los Angeles. (Internet resource: <http://dlib.etc.ucla.edu/projects/Karnak/feature/ContraTemple>. Accession date: August 2012.)

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- Figure 1. Plan of the temple of Amun-Ra-Who-Hears-Prayers (the Eastern Temple) at Karnak by J.-Fr. Carlotti. (After Carlotti and Gallet 2007: pl. 1.)
- Figure 2. Entrance of the temple of Amun-Ra-Who-Hears-Prayers (the Eastern Temple) at Karnak. Photograph by the author.
- Figure 3. Peristyle court, north wall: detail of the masonry and of a “stone plate” that has fallen out. Photograph by the author.
- Figure 4. North door of the temple, west jamb, stone extrusion of the masonry. Photograph by the author.
- Figure 5. Column of the hypostyle hall transformed into *wadj*-columns during the Ramesside Period. Detail of the inscriptions of Ramses II made in the coating. Photograph by the author.

Figure 6. Peristyle court: columns with reused polygonal drums and thick layers of coating. Photograph by the author.

Figure 7. Cartouche of Horemheb in the south masonry of the door. Photograph by the author.

Figure 8. Entrance of the temple: south jamb of the door with mention of the “Upper Gate.” Photograph by the author.

Figure 9. Door decorated under Ptolemy VIII: mention of *sdm nht* in the inscriptions of the south jamb. Photograph by the author.

Figure 10. Graffito of Amun at the entrance of the peristyle court: small cult device, support of personal devotion. Photograph by the author.