

THE SCENE OF “GOING ROUND THE WALL” ON THE NORTH WALL OF THE PORTICO OF THE BIRTH

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In the season which started in the fall of 2006, the epigraphic research conducted by the authors in the Portico of the Birth focused on the scene in the upper register of the north wall, which has been identified as representing the 'Going Round the Wall' rite. It belongs to a cycle of investment and coronation ceremonies depicted in the upper register of the portico walls. Hatshepsut is there, represented strutting rightward (Neville 1898: Pl. LXIV) [*Fig. 1*] and the scene is labelled: *sm3 ꜥꜣwj, ꜥꜣr ꜥꜣ inb, ꜥꜣ ꜥꜣr ꜥꜣr gs ꜥꜣbt* 'Unification of the Two Lands, Going Round the Wall, Flying (?) and Running at the Eastern Side' (Sethe 1906-1909, 264).¹ The scene may thus be identified as a depiction of the ceremony of 'Going Round the Wall'.² together with the 'Unification of the Two Lands' constituted the core of the accession rites in the Early Dynastic Period and the Old Kingdom (cf. Wilkinson 2000: 149-150, 209-212). It seems that the 'Unification of the Two Lands', although mentioned, was not represented here.

The figure of Hatshepsut is almost completely destroyed. She was wearing the White Crown with the uraeus and royal beard. Existing traces and comparable scenes permit the assumption that Hatshepsut was wearing a blue necklace on a bare chest and a *šndyt* apron. Both arms lowered along the body held the *ꜥꜣd* mace and the *mks* sceptre. Hatshepsut was walking barefoot.

Preceding the king are five standards bearing (in order from right to left) an ibis (Thoth), falcon (Horus), throne cushion (*nꜥꜣn-n-nswt*), canine figure (Wepwawet), and fetish of Anubis (*ꜥꜣmj-wt*).³ They are held by personified signs *ankb, djed, was, ankb, was* respectively. Between these standards and Hatshepsut's front knee is depicted the hieroglyphic sign of a fortress (Gardiner's sign O 36), oriented horizontally [*Fig. 2*]. Although this enlarged hieroglyph seems to be clearly visible, it was omitted from Neville's publication (1898: Pl. LXIV).

The whole scene is topped by the goddess Wadjet in the shape of a cobra-

- 1 Neville originally misunderstood the phrase *ꜥꜣ inb* as 'Northern Hall' (Neville 1898: 8), but later (in Davies 1906: 12-13) he assumed that Hatshepsut was going round an enclosure ("a walled court open to the sky").
- 2 Karkowski (2001a: 97) described this scene as "procession as the King of Upper Egypt"; elsewhere he identified it as "processions that symbolize assuming power over the Two Lands" (Karkowski 2001b: 118). The rite of 'Going Round the Wall' (termed sometimes the 'Circuit of the Wall' or 'Circumambulating the Wall'; for this and other 'races' see Wilkinson 1985: 46-51).
- 3 Neville (1898: 8) mentioned only "four divine standards of Thoth, Horus, Khonsu and Anubis". Sethe obviously did not recognize the last standard (cf. Sethe 1906-1909: 264).



Fig. 1. 'Going Round the Wall' scene on the north wall of the Portico of the Birth (Photo M. Jawornicki)

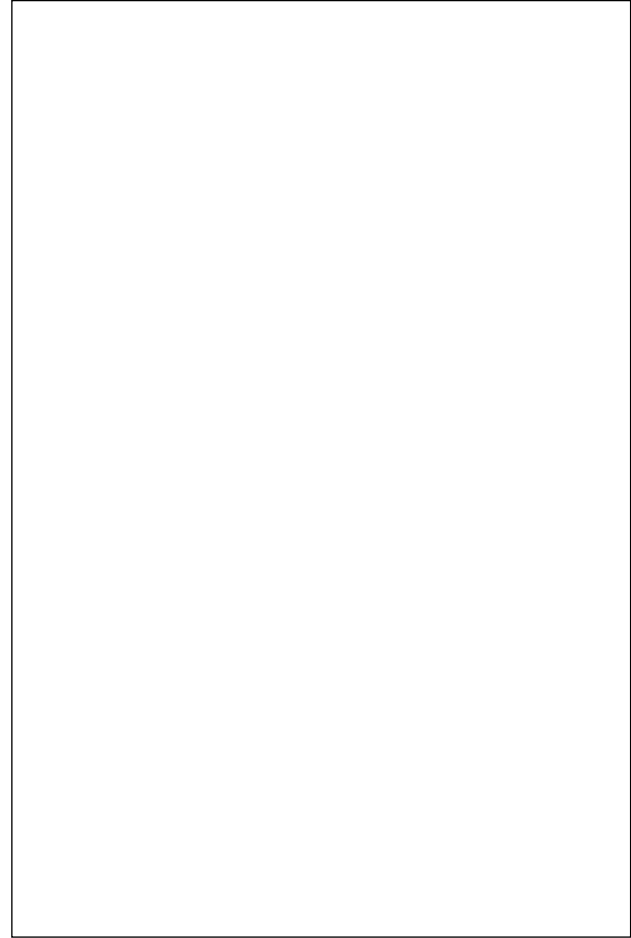


Fig. 2. Detail of the scene of 'Going Round the Wall' – the sign of a fortress (Photo M. Jawornicki)

made roughly and with much use of plaster. The pinkish-beige paint was applied to the background of the restored areas. This phase can be dated plausibly to Ramesses II, whose restoration text is preserved just below the scene in question. The artisans doing the restoration left *dipinti* guiding their work (see below).

The fate of the sign of a fortress is particularly interesting. It had originally been placed in front of the king's figure as a label of some kind, identifying the place of the rite. However, contrary, for example, to the so-called "Götterfestungen" of the Early Dynastic Period, it did not include any name. At some point it was destroyed. Of the two possibilities, the reign of Thutmosis III and the Amarna Period, the latter is more probable, given that the sign was subsequently restored by the Ramesside workers, who almost never

restored elements of the original design referring to Hatshepsut and destroyed during her *damnatio memoriae* by Thutmosis III. The reasons for the primitive placement, destruction, and restoration of the sign are by no means clear. One may speculate, however, that its meaning was obvious and its existence important.

Various identifications of the place where the rite was conducted (and thus the possible identification of the *jnb*), have been made by scholars, leading to different reconstructions of the meaning of this ceremony.⁵ The scene in Hatshepsut's temple, unique in itself (and a rare reference to accession rites after the Old Kingdom), may give a clue to these speculations. Moreover, the research on the scene of 'Going Round the Wall' is a step towards an overall interpretation of the ideological program of the Portico of the Birth.

ADDENDUM. POST-AMARNA RESTORATION SKETCHES

The Ramesside artisans restoring reliefs devastated in the Amarna Period in the temple of Hatshepsut left sketches in red on the walls, marking the planned texts or figures. These *dipinti* are especially numerous in the Portico of the Birth, including the analyzed scene of 'Going Round the Wall', where there are sketches of standards and the signs holding them [Fig. 3], the goddess Wadjyt seated on the *w3d* sign and the sign of a fortress. Also the sketches for neighboring scenes can be observed: between the fan and the White Crown there is a drawing of figures

and labels for Seth and Horus from a former scene of coronation in the chapel of Upper Egypt (without the figure of the king, which was never restored also in parallel scenes in the temple, leaving the two gods alone), and the text belonging to the scene in the lower register was written near Hatshepsut's foreleg. None of the sketches was recorded by Howard Carter who drew the scenes in the Portico of the Birth for Naville's publication. Now all the *dipinti* on the north wall have been documented and the research will be continued.

5 For example, the palace or the capital walls (the 'White Wall') of Memphis (Lauer 1931: 354-355), the tomb of the deceased predecessor of the king (Goedicke 1985: 307-324). These problems will be analyzed by the present authors in a forthcoming article.

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