

## A Brief Description of the Decoration of Room II of the Temple of Soleb

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**A** GAIN, as in my previous article published in KUSH VII (1959), pp. 166-9, the numbering of the scenes has no significance other than to indicate their position on the walls; see plan in KUSH VI (1958), PLATE IV. For a full bibliography, see Porter-Moss, VII, pp. 170-1.

### *Entrance to the Pylon*

In the entrance passage, on the right-hand side at the point where the door folded back, can be seen the remains of an extensive scene. Beneath the hieroglyphic sign for the sky, the king was depicted facing the sanctuary. The vulture of the goddess Nekhbet, the 'White One' of el-Kāb, is the only part of the relief, apart from the inscriptions, which remains intact. Lepsius, the only scholar previously to have mentioned this scene, affirmed that the cartouche contained the name Nebmaatre, but supposed that this name was not the original one. It is, however, impossible to confirm his statement. The text in the right-hand section contains the royal epithet 'he who drives away the (nine) bows'; the second column begins with 'Amonrasother residing at (Soleb)'. The left-hand text reads: '. . . O(?) our lord(?), (there is no exaggeration in this, who fights and brings back plunder from every land, full of energy, the only one who is strong'. Below these texts one can still just see the legs of a figure facing the king, but nothing remains of the pharaoh; there is an offering-table between them. The deity would not appear to be Amon since the text above his head leaves no room for the double plume.

The state of the opposite wall indicates that it, too, was certainly decorated. To the extreme west can be seen two legs turned to the east. In view of the fact that these legs have been restored, it seems likely that this was the god Amon. Facing him are the remains of another figure.

### *Right Door-jamb of the Entrance (FIG. 1)*

This door-jamb was originally decorated with at least four registers one above the other. The lowest (no. 16) is almost destroyed. The other three depict the king, Amenophis III, on the right, standing before a deity, who is also standing, and facing him.

The existing lower register (no. 17) shows the pharaoh wearing the *nemes*-head-dress in adoration before the god Amon of Karnak residing at Soleb; the

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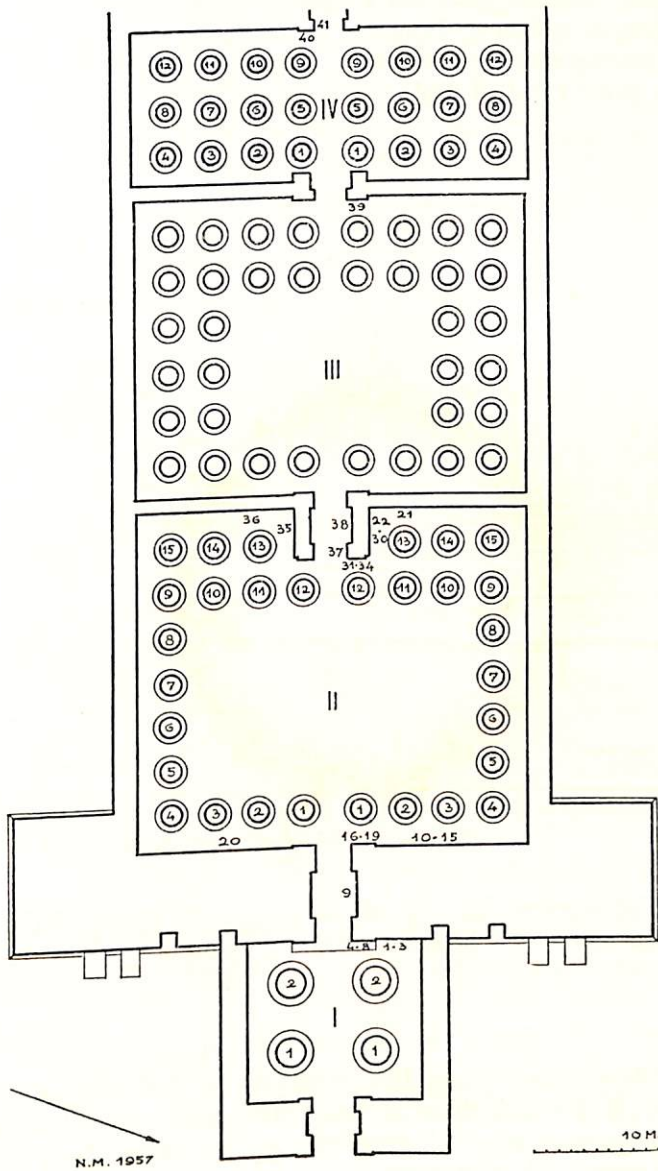


FIG. I. PLAN OF THE TEMPLE



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figure of the god has been hammered out and restored. The vulture of the goddess, here called Wadjet, is flying over the figure of the king and sheltering him with her wings.

The middle register (no. 18) retains only the remains of the pharaoh, depicted making an offering of incense to the moon god; the latter is wearing ram's horns surmounted by lunar discs. The god bears the premen of the king and is called 'Lord of Nubia'.

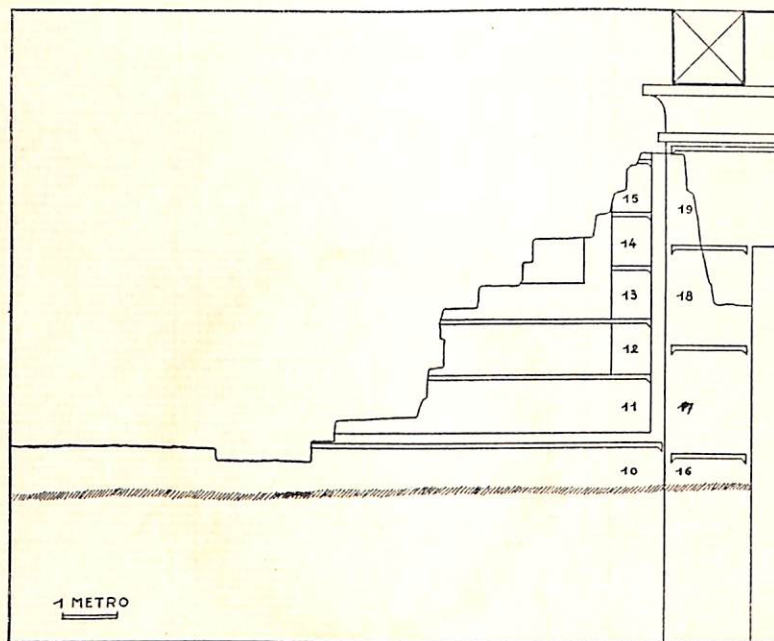


FIG. 2. PYLON : NORTH PIER, WEST FACE

In the third register (no. 19), the top one, the figure of the king is lost. On the left the moon god is again to be seen but it is difficult to define his gesture.

### *The Great Wall to the right of the Entrance (FIG. 2)*

The registers ornamenting this wall are divided into several scenes of different sizes, all of which show aspects of the celebration of the royal jubilee.

The lower part of this wall (register 10) was originally divided into two. The southern side is taken up with scenes related to the 'illumination' of the two thrones. To the left of these scenes, in the northern section, the representations are grouped into two registers one above the other. An inscription reads 'going to the great throne room'. But it would be interesting to know



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whether this happened before or after the 'illumination' of the thrones. Since the texts which accompanied the second tableau are in the main destroyed, it seems impossible to determine the chronological order of these scenes. Furthermore, at the extreme right of this tableau a palace is shown, from which the king and his attendants have just emerged and are moving away from the 'illumination' of the thrones.

It should be noted that on the North Wall of the West Doorway where the royal palace is represented several times, it is always shown at the end of a series of scenes. However, it is possible that the palace was placed in the middle of register 10 to indicate that the scenes developed in both directions beginning after the king and his suite had left the royal residence.

The representation of the 'illumination' of the thrones has as its focal point a large double shrine, supported by eight papyriform columns and decorated with bands of uraei facing in both directions. Though it is largely obliterated, this scene still retains traces of a throne in the centre of the right-hand section. The vertical strip behind the throne displays several royal symbols: the bull, the falcon of Horus, and the animal symbolic of Seth. The double shrine or baldachin is flanked by two chests containing 'the mysterious oil' for 'illuminating the throne'. The seven receptacles in which it had been contained are under the protection of six deities, shown above them, each in a naos. The name of the first cannot be distinguished, but the others are the bull *šmz*, the monkey *ʿnn*, the ibis *thn*, the god Anubis, and the goddess Pakht. The part played by the chest in the ceremony is not clear and the inscription above it does not clarify the point. It states that the king is bringing his eye to Horus and imploring him to make it well. On the other hand, the text between the shrine and the chests tells us that the object of the ceremony was to 'light up the throne', 'beginning at the 4th month of the *peret* season, the 26th day, until the 1st month of the *shemu* season'.\* Are we then to understand that this ceremony was repeated on five successive days? In any case, the text states that the ceremony began 'at dawn on the day of the *sed*-festival' when the pharaoh received the fire of the torch which illuminated the shrine.

To the left and right of the shrine and the two chests, Amenophis III is shown holding a long torch in his hands and he is followed by the queen, Teye. In front of the figure of the king, to the right, are to be seen two figures one of whom is offering the torch and the other reciting the ritual. Behind the queen there is a long text of 23 lines; lines 10-16, which Lepsius was able to read, were already missing in the photographs taken by Breasted 50 years

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\*A copy of this text is given by Fr. W. von Bissing, unter Mitarbeit von H. Kees, in *Untersuchungen zu den Reliefs aus dem Re-Heiligtum des Rathures*, I. Teil, München, 1922, 21\* (Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse, xxxii, Band, 1. Abhandlung); see also, *ibidem*, pp. 13-14.



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ago since part of the block had disappeared. The text is far from clear, but we can understand that it describes how light was given to several high officials of the royal court.

To the left of this long tableau there is a palace, probably a double one, from which a great procession is emerging and wending its way to the north. At the head of the procession are to be seen the escort of the Great Chamberlain of the court. The majority of the participants, of whom many are arrayed in the robes of *sem*-priests, are depicted with raised hands. Finally, close to the palace, the pharaoh, wearing sandals, is preceded by two officials and some figures are prostrated in front of them. On a stone fragment found in the southern part of this court figures are to be seen similarly prostrated.

Registers 11-15, above the tableau of the 'illumination' of the thrones, are surrounded by a band representing a crenellated wall. There follows the ceremony of pharaoh knocking at the doors which is shown both horizontally and vertically. This rite is intercalated with representations of the pharaoh preceded by officials; besides the two viziers several standard-bearers are to be seen; amongst the standards at the extreme right of the scene is a great post surmounted by Wepwaut. A woman is twice portrayed in front of him; this seems to be the same person that we find on the opposite wall of this room. The king is shown standing, facing the entrance, and wearing the blue crown; he is knocking on a door with his club; in his left hand he carries a staff. This act is shown four times in the horizontal band and at least three times in the vertical. The vulture goddess is hovering above the king. Two officials face him from the other side of the door; one of them, the royal scribe Amenothis, is also touching the door with his club. The king is supposed to be going from one door to another, since the text, in archaic language, gives the number of each repetition. The most southerly door bears the number 12.

The section bordered to the south by registers 11-15 is divided into two parts of unequal height. The lower one which prolongs register 12, shows, on the right, the king holding a staff in his left hand while with his other hand opening the door of one of the nine chapels which are shown in front of him. The first chapel contains a *heset*-vase, the others are occupied by deities, among them the goddess Werethekau; two chapels seem to be dedicated to the god Montu. The following scene shows a very large naos; in the centre of which the sacred barque of Amon of Karnak is represented on a pedestal, and with the winged disc above it; to the left of this are five *heset*-vases, and to the right five standards. The prow of the barque is ornamented with a ram's head and there is another near the helm. There is a naos in the centre of the boat. The king is approaching the barque and seems to be offering a bouquet. To the left of the large naos are small sanctuaries arranged in three rows one above the other; each row seems to consist of two groups of four chapels facing each other. The following scene of which we only have part, depicts two rows of stylized palm trees; the space between the palm trees being filled with chapels.

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The scene to the left of registers 13 and 14 seems to be the centre of the group surrounded by a precinct. The king, who has just left a sanctuary which is reached by a stairway, is in the middle. In front of the pharaoh is another sanctuary, also with a stairway. The first sanctuary is perhaps consecrated to Amon of Karnak since he is referred to in the text. Before the king are three rows of people—*sem*-priests and standard-bearers—with a sacrificial scene above them. A figure is offering the front leg of a cow to the king; on a level with his shoulder two women are depicted bearing the hieroglyph *h3* on their heads. This central panel is surrounded by chapels containing deities. Below are two rows of chapels opposite each other. The inscriptions refer amongst other deities to Thoth, Sopdu, Horhekau, Banebdjedet and Sendet. To the right, a great number of naos are ranged in at least six rows. Among the deities represented may be mentioned Amon, Anubis, Khonsu, Horus (several times), and the monkeys Benty and Bentet.

### *The Great Wall to the Left of the Entrance*

Only a few traces remain of the decorations on the western face of the south wall. It is clear, however, that this also was decorated with reliefs. Enough remains to show that the sacred barque of Amon was again depicted here. Although it is several metres lower than in the analogous scene on the North Wall, the prows point to the same direction. On another block farther to the south one can just make out a few traces of reliefs.

### *North Wall*

It has been possible to reassemble several blocks which certainly come from the ornamentation of the eastern end of the North Wall of the temple. Among them are to be found fragments of the door-jambs. There is also the king presenting a clepsydra to a goddess, a motif which does not appear on the walls now standing and which is repeated here at least six times. Other blocks show fragments of processions comparable to those depicted on the two walls which are still intact in this sector. A fragment of relief contains the remains of a great Hapy facing west; it would be most interesting to know the exact position of this relief, but it must certainly have been somewhere near the side door. It should be borne in mind that the decoration of the façade of the pylon also contains a Hapy on a level with the cornice.

### *South Wall*

It is impossible with certainty to attribute a single decorated stone to this wall. We found amongst the rubble in this sector a considerable number of small pieces of stone showing amongst other things fragments of a procession. Perhaps they were part of this wall.



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### *North Jamb of the West Door*

Above an inscription mentioning 'the great door of Nebmaatre' are three registers of reliefs; in each register the king is shown on the right facing a deity and both of them are standing. In the lower register (no. 32), Amenophis III, wearing the red crown, is standing before Amonrasonther, residing at Soleb. The god calls him 'my beloved son Nebmaatre'. It should be noted that the figure of Amon has been hammered out and restored.

The following register (no. 33) shows Amenophis wearing two plumes and the ram's horns on the *nemes*. The two cartouches in front of him have been hammered out and only the second one has been rewritten, but instead of the name Amenophis *heka-waset*, the prenomen of the king has been inscribed there. He is making the offering of incense to the divine Amenophis shown in the form of the moon god residing at Soleb. He is wearing the moon on his head which is ornamented with ram's horns.

The third register (no. 34) represents, to the right of the lintel, the same moon god embracing the king 'his living image on earth'; the king is wearing the blue crown. To the left the pharaoh is shown running with an oar in his hand.

### *Southern Jamb of the West Door*

Nothing remains of the façade. On the southern side of this jamb three horizontal blocks remain, decorated with badly worn reliefs. Three figures are standing in front of an inscription which tells how Amenophis III built the hall or the door(?) and 'no one has ever done anything like it'. There follows a man who is pouring liquid into a great vase which is standing on the ground, and another man is facing him. In the lower register the remains of at least four figures are visible; they seem to be bearers of offerings. The following block shows plants in rows one above the other; in the middle a man can be seen bowing. Below, two birds can be distinguished and, above, a man sitting on a stone or a stool. The third block is also ornamented with plants. Other representations of plants are to be found on the adjacent western wall. On this side a bird and a fish are to be found among the plants.

### *North Wall of the West Door*

This wall is divided into nine registers (nos. 22-30), the upper limits of which are indicated by the elongated sign for the sky. The majority of these registers are subdivided but often in an irregular manner. The following description of each register begins at the right-hand side, continuing towards the left, following the order of the scenes and going from top to bottom. In order to simplify the description 'the king' always means Amenophis III and 'the queen' his wife Teye.



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The first remaining block of register 30 shows, at the bottom, a group of 18 men carrying a great standard of Wepwaut set in a wooden support with a cornice. There are two more persons below the standard. The inscription reads: 'setting out under the god for the great hall'. Two fan-bearers precede them but they belong to the procession accompanying the royal couple. Above, are to be seen a dignitary followed by a lady; she heads the procession probably in the capacity of 'mother of the god of Assiut', the town of Wepwaut, and precedes three *sem*-priests. After the great standard of the lower register nothing now remains of the royal suite but two priests and a figure leaning on a stick. In the following scene, the royal couple are shown, the pharaoh dressed in archaic costume. At the extreme left of the register, in front of the palace, can be seen the king standing and the queen followed by a group of princesses.

The upper section of the following register (no. 29) begins with a scene going from left to right, unlike the rest of the tableau, and there seems to be a naos in the centre of it. A person with a staff opens the procession, followed by women; behind the naos can be seen two people, the first of whom holds a vase in his two hands. The second tableau shows the pharaoh dressed for the *sed*-festival and followed by the queen. The officials preceding the king seem to be part of the next tableau where the king is in a chapel, making the offering of incense before a naos which contains the sacred ram of the god Khnum. There are several officials behind the king in the chapel; those above are kneeling in the attitude of jubilation. After making the offering, Amenophis and Teye, preceded by bearers of standards and symbols of royalty, proceed towards the palace and are shown yet once more before going back inside.

The lower part of this register (no. 29) is taken up with a long procession moving towards the left. The first group from the left is made up of a great number of people, apparently in groups of three, who are carrying a great standard of the god Wepwaut. Six princesses follow them under the watchful eye of the steward of the royal harem. Then come numerous standard-bearers, generally denoted as *hem-netjer*.

The first blocks at the right-hand side of the third register (no. 28), at the bottom, show the royal couple making an offering to the ithyphallic god of Koptos, Min, who is to be seen in a naos. The queen is carrying a sistrum in her right hand. The upper part of the scene is badly weathered. However, standard-bearers can still be distinguished approaching a building. In the following tableau the royal family are shown both above and below. Above, they are preceded by many people carrying staffs or perhaps standards. Below, they are preceded by several persons carrying the figure of the god Min before which are to be seen the king preceded this time by two figures who seem to be holding two large crossed oars. The god Min is also represented in the following tableau in both the upper and lower sections. Above, he is shown standing facing another royal image in front of his sanctuary,



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which is recognized by its characteristic shape, and decorated with two lettuces. The part between the king and the god is badly worn ; the text accompanying Min says, amongst other things, that he has given the king the throne of Geb and the office of Atum. A scene which appears to be almost identical is depicted just beneath in the lower part of the register. After having paid homage to the god Min, the royal couple turn to the left preceded by some standard-bearers. Then the king and queen enter the palace followed by courtiers. The lower part of the left-hand section of the register is occupied by a group of at least seven persons. The first four are priests among whom the *smty*-priest is closely associated with the god Min as also are the bearded dancers who follow with arms raised.

The scene with which register 27 begins shows first the pharaoh faced by 24 standard-bearers arranged in three rows of eight. Behind the king there is a row of small standing figures and another figure precedes the king. A vertical inscription in four lines above this servant is entirely worn away. The lower row of standard-bearers are followed by a princess. Above her the pharaoh is again depicted in the *heb-sed* costume confronted by eight deities in two rows—one above the other. Next the king approaches a naos in which is the standing figure of an anthropomorphic god which Lepsius took to be a ram-headed god, but the figure might perhaps represent Horus. The tableau to the left shows the royal couple preceded by several groups of standard-bearers ; a large Wepwaut occupies the central position. Then the royal couple go back to the palace. All the lower part of the register is taken up by a procession of dignitaries.

The following register (no. 26) begins with the figure of the king, rather damaged ; he is in a naos before an ennead of deities both male and female. The first from the top represents the sun god, with the head of a falcon. The second tableau shows the king before a naos dedicated to the god Horus. Next there is the king preceded by a great number of bearers of standards and symbols of royalty. Then comes the pharaoh in archaic costume in front of a naos which also contains a representation of the king making an offering of incense to the ram of the god Khnum who is himself in another naos. After the king, and higher up, are four officials in attitudes of jubilation. The royal couple are preceded by a large procession of bearers of standards and symbols of royalty. Again the Wepwaut are numerous. The large post in the middle ornamented with a standing jackal belongs to the lower part of the register. The last scene represents the royal couple before entering the palace. Throughout the length of the lower part of the register there is a long procession headed by the two viziers and moving towards the left.

The following register (no. 25) begins with the figure of the pharaoh who is shown in front of a naos. Inside this naos is an anthropomorphic god with the head of a falcon. The king's face has been hammered out. Then comes the king preceded by a group of bearers of standards and symbols of royalty



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in the midst of whom is to be seen the large Wepwaut of the lower register and, once more, Amenophis III. On the following tableau, only the lower part of the pharaoh remains intact; he is standing before an altar in a naos in which he is represented again, doubtless with the ram of Khnum. After the offering the royal couple turn to the left preceded by a procession carrying mainly Wepwaut standards. Then they arrive at the palace. A very long procession of dignitaries takes up the whole of the lower register. Many of them carry staffs, some plain and some decorated at the top; others are raising their arms. The carriers of the huge support for the post crowned by the Wepwaut should be noted; as is the case elsewhere, there is a small upright figure at the point where the post comes out of the support and another kneeling figure faces him. At the end of the procession are the two viziers and other persons of high rank.

The next register (no. 24) begins with the king standing and wearing the red crown, as he does everywhere on this wall, and holding a sceptre and flagellum in his hands. Priests and courtiers are coming towards him in two rows—one above the other. The chief lector-priest is inviting the *sem*-priest to 'make a royal offering of libations and incense to Osiris before the palaces the day . . . of the jubilee'. Below, a row of people are turning towards the king. Above, the register continues with a naos in which can be seen a great statue of the king in the form of Osiris and in front of him, in three rows, are a number of deities; beginning from the top they are Re, Atum, Shu and Tefnut, respectively.

After having completed the rites, the pharaoh continues his progress. There are three officials in front of his legs and at least three others lower down. Then comes a big naos in which is represented the creator god Khnum in the form of a ram to which the king is offering incense. He is followed, below, by a bowing figure and by officials. Above, four chief magicians are making the gesture of jubilation.

After this ceremony the king, followed by the queen, once more continues his progress towards the palace preceded by a great number of standard-bearers; in the middle is the great Wepwaut of the lower register and the royal couple are shown yet again before they enter the palace. Behind the queen the divine mother of Assiut is to be seen once more.

A long procession is depicted in the lower register but only a few of the figures remain; many groups of *sem*-priests bring it to an end.

At the beginning of the eighth register (no. 23) there is a group of persons turning towards the right. Then follows a scene with the pharaoh sitting on his throne, wearing the red crown, and holding the sceptre and flagellum in his hand. Behind the king can be seen traces of the figure of Queen Teye with the two princesses, Isis and Henuttaneb, behind her. In front of the king a retrograde text in six vertical lines, partly defaced, begins with the date: '30th year, 2nd month of the *shemu* season, first day'. This text describes the ceremonies in the temple of Amon connected with 'the first *sed*-festival of



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his son who occupies his throne'. To the left of this text are to be seen persons in three ranks, one above the other, all turning to the left. It is impossible to say, in view of the state of preservation of the bas-relief, whether this group belongs to the foregoing scene where the king is seated, or whether it is part of the following scene. For the rest, it should be noted that it is often difficult to determine the division between the upper and lower parts of this register, as happens also many times with other registers of this wall.

So it may be possible that the carriers depicted beneath the retrograde text belong to the upper scene and that this time they are carrying the king himself. In front of the retrograde text are four men carrying staffs topped with two feathers. They are followed by bearers of standards surmounted by recumbent dogs; according to the text these standards represent 'Wepwaut, master of Assiut'. Below, there is another retinue of carriers. The middle row begins with one person facing several others of whom at least two are carrying standards. The following scene shows the king standing, wearing the red crown, and holding the sceptre and flagellum. He is followed by Queen Teye wearing two long plumes and preceded by figures the lowest of whom is the chief lector-priest and royal scribe Nebmerutef. The scene which follows hardly differs from the foregoing. The king and the queen, followed by four princesses, are returning to the palace to rest 'having completed all that must be done at the *sed-festival*'.

In the lower register, a row of several men holding staffs in their right hands are to be seen below the two scenes at the extreme left; six women, probably the royal princesses, follow them. This procession continues to the right end of the wall but, as has already been mentioned, the state of preservation of the reliefs does not always permit an exact division to be made between the upper and lower sections of this register.

Of the bottom register (no. 22) only traces remain. A boat is depicted on the block at the extreme right. Below this, some plants can be distinguished. At the extreme left of the register can be seen a door opening into a storeroom; in front of it is a man turning to the right. A storeroom is also shown at the same level in register 21 where a series of large jars can be seen. Beneath this is an aquatic scene. First a series of birds can be seen and, on the right, traces of a man crossing the water in a canoe, followed by cattle.

### *The Colonnade*

Despite the fact that the majority of the 24 columns surrounding the court have fallen, the inscriptions on 15 of them still remain in a fairly complete state. Originally the central part of each column facing the court was incised with four vertical bands, the fourth band facing the opposite way to the others; this contains the name of a deity who loves the king. The other three bands always begin with one of the names of royal protocol (Horus, Nebty or Golden Horus) followed by the prenomen and name of the king. It has been stated



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already that a divinity who loves the king appears on each column. On all the odd-numbered columns this divinity is the statue of Nebmaatre facing the royal names; on the alternate columns this space was devoted to different manifestations of Amonre.

The six columns flanking the sides of the door at the end of the court and probably anterior in date to the colonnade surrounding it were ornamented in the same fashion. Only the text of one of these columns has come down to us and there it is not Amonre who loves the pharaoh but Khnum, Lord of the Cataract, residing at Soleb.

One can say in general that the abaci were ornamented on all four faces. In the middle of each side are two vertical cartouches containing the name Nebmaatre, and bearing two plumes and the solar disc. Each of these two names is under the protection of a vulture. The side facing the court is incised, the other faces in relief. Many of the details of this ornamentation are worthy of note, but a full description would be too lengthy here.

Although all the architraves of the interior columns have fallen, it has nevertheless been possible to form a fairly definite idea of how they were decorated. The side facing the court was ornamented with an incised inscription, the inside face with hieroglyphs in relief and the under-side carried a large cartouche of Nebmaatre, preceded by one of the titles *Nesubity*, *Sa-Re* or *netjer-nefer* with the hieroglyph of the sky above it. The inscriptions began at the two doors and proceeded towards the north and south, respectively. Those on the north colonnade began from the west, in the corner of the court, and on the south colonnade they went in the opposite direction. The two lateral faces of the epistyles were inscribed with the protocol names of the king to which epithets were added, sometimes unusual ones such as '(strong bull) in the arena who overthrows all'.

### *West Doorway*

On the north face of the inside of the doorway there is a scene and a text dating from Rameses II engraved 'for the *Ka* of the viceroy (of Kush) the general, the royal scribe, his beloved, Rameses'; in front of this a fragmentary horizontal text extends the whole length of the door. On the north and south sides are engraved cartouches of Rameses III. To the west a kneeling figure is adoring these cartouches. In the upper part of the passage a very worn text refers to a fan-bearer on the right hand of the pharaoh, whose name is lost. This text is accompanied by a scene at the extreme left of which a person can be seen sitting on a seat facing east and coming towards him can be distinguished traces of fan-bearers; probably there were two of them.