

A comparative study of two Ramesses II scenes in the Sety I Temple of Millions of Years at Gurna (West Thebes)

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[This paper analyzes two textual and iconographically related scenes of Ramesses II located in the temple of Gurna (West Thebes), built by his father Sety I. Both were carved during the coregency between Sety I and Ramesses II. In them we can observe how Sety I attends, as living King, his son's coronation as co-regent.]

Keywords: Thebes, Gurna, King's coronation, coregency, scenes of the King receiving the Sed-Festivals.

1. *Introduction. Chronology of Ramesses II's building activity and decorative programs at ancient Thebes*

It is usually said that Ramesses II carried out a great building activity throughout Egypt during his long reign. However, the dates of the buildings that were constructed and decorated over the years Ramesses II, Sety's I son and successor, ruled over Egypt are barely touched upon. Sure, this is not an easy task, because first we should establish how long the coregency with Sety I was. K.C. Seele¹, in his monograph on the coregency of Ramesses II with Sety I, argued that it was long coregency, about 10 years long. Seele also advocated that dates alluded to in Ramesses II monuments refer to the period Ramesses II reigned alone and do not include the years of coregency. Seele's opinion has been followed by other authors². W. J. Murnane, otherwise, summarized in 1975³ and 1977⁴ the evidence we possess from the period Ramesses II acted as crown prince and co-regent and concluded that the coregency with Sety I should not be so long as Seele posited. In Murnane's opinion Ramesses coregency with Sety I spanned over 2 years, from the start of Ramesses II reign until the adoption of the final form of his *prenomen* "Usermaatre-Setepenre".

Prenomens are crucial to elucidate the dates of the monuments Ramesses II built and decorated at the start of his reign. To ascertain this, though, two epigraphical points ought to be considered.

1. Seele 1940.

2. Faulkner³ 1975, 225; Gardiner 1961, 257.

3. Murnane 1975, 153-190 y 153-190.

4. Murnane 1977, 57-87.


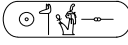
a) First, at the onset of his reign, Ramesses used a short *prenomen*: *Wsr-m3^ct-R^c* (Usermaatre), accompanied sometimes by different epithets:

Wsr-m3^ct-R^c tit-R^c, “Usermaatre, the image of Re”⁵;

Wsr-m3^ct-R^c hk3 W3st, “Usermaatre, ruler of Thebes”⁶;

Wsr-m3^ct-R^c iw^c-R^c, “Usermaatre, heir of Re”⁷, and

Wsr-m3^ct-R^c mry-R^c, “Usermaatre, beloved of Re”⁸.

The final form of the *prenomen*, the one Ramesses II used throughout his long reign, was achieved adding the epithet *Stp.n-R^c*, “chosen of Re”, to the first form. Murnane states that Ramesses II adopted the final form of the *prenomen*, “Usermaatre-Setepenre” , after the death of his father, Sety I. So, any building activity accompanied by the short form of the *prenomen*  should be attributed to the coregency period⁹. The first evidence we possess of the short form is the Gebel el-Silsileh inscription which reads “Year 1, third month of summer, day 10”. The stele of Gebel el-Silsileh, that presents the four variants of the short form, indicates that in the last third of the Ramesses II first year, the king still used the short form of his *prenomen*; in other words, the final form “Usermaatre-Setepenre” was not yet in use. This is a good argument to demonstrate, as many authors agree, that it was in his second regnal year that Ramesses adopted -and maintained for over 66 years- the final form of his *prenomen*, “Usermaatre-Setepenre”¹⁰.

b) Secondly, *prenomens* can be correlated with three stages in the decorative program of temple architecture at the start of his reign:

- First stage (= 1eR2): Ramesses II uses bas-relief decoration, as his father does, and the first form of the *prenomen*.

- Second stage (= 2eR2): Ramesses still employs the first form of the *prenomen*, but bas-relief is replaced by sunk relief.

- Third stage (= 3eR2): Sunk relief is currently used and the last form of the *prenomen* is introduced. Besides that, Ramesses II introduced many changes in previous architectonical works:

In the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, the bas-relief of the first stage is replaced by sunk relief and the first and short form of the *prenomen*, “Usermaatre”, turned into the final form “Usermaatre-Setepenre” (= 1eR2→3eR2).

Likewise, Ramesses II usurped, on a small scale, reliefs completed by Ramesses I and Sety I, using the final form of his *praenomen*.

The initial building activity of Ramesses II, which relates to the first two stages of the decorative program, is thus characterized by the use of the first form of the *prenomen*, “Usermaatre”, and the transition from the bas-relief to the sunk relief. These both stages belong, as stated above, to the coregency¹¹. However, the difficulty arises while trying to ascertain the exact duration of this coregency.

5. Barguet 1952, 51.

6. Barguet 1952, 56.

7. Barguet 1952, 57.

8. Barguet 1952, 57.

9. Murnane 1977, 80.

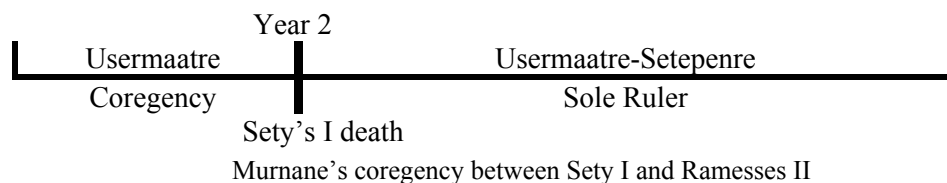
10. Kitchen 1987, 133.

11. Seele 1940; Murnane 1977, 63.

According to Seele, Sety I and Ramesses II ruled together for 10 years, because in his opinion the building program executed during these three stages is too much widespread to be accomplished in a short span of time. Seele reckoned the coregency from the moment Ramesses II was crowned as co-regent until his ascension to the throne of Egypt as sole ruler. Moreover, Seele considered that Ramesses II was still using the decoration styles of the first two stages at the time of his father's death. Ramesses would have adopted the final form of his *prenomen* at the end of his first regnal year as sole ruler, because the Gebel el-Silsileh stele informs us that the first form was still in use the 10th day of the third month of the summer of the first year. Seele's reasoning that Ramesses II needed 10 years to complete his initial building activity¹² has been rejected by Murnane who considers it an exaggeration¹³.

During the coregency period Ramesses II constructed two temples, the rock-hewn temple at Beit el-Wali and the little temple at Abydos. Only the first one was completed at the time of his father's death. Besides that, Ramesses II was associated with his father Sety I in the decoration of the temples constructed by him at Abydos and Gurna and the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak. Murnane states, even if it cannot be demonstrated, that the workforce employed should have been very huge and Ramesses II would have been able to carry out his entire building program related to the first form of his *prenomen* in those two years that predate the adoption of the last form of the *prenomen*.

Murnane goes on to say that the distinction between "coronation" (as co-regent) and "ascension" (as sole ruler) should be rejected and that the coregency lasted only for two years, from the first regnal year of Ramesses II to the adoption of the final form of his *prenomen*¹⁴. These two years would correspond to the last two regnal years of Sety I. Thereby there is no need to count extra years. Ramesses' regnal years begin at the time he is crowned as co-regent.



2. Ramesses II association to Sety I in the temple of Millions of Years at Gurna

The temple of Gurna, in Theban west bank, was initially constructed by Sety I, but it was due to his son, Ramesses II, to complete it. Decoration in the west part of the temple bears only Sety's I cartouches, while in the east part, Sety's names are accompanied by Ramesses'. Ramesses II association to his father Sety is visible in the Porch, the Hypostyle Hall, Hall XXVIII of the chapel of Ramesses I and Room XXXIV. This part of the temple was decorated in three stages.

1) First stage (1eS1R2):

- Ramesses II is already associated to Sety I.
- Bas-relief is used.
- Ramesses II employs the first form of his *prenomen*, "Usermaatre".
- This stage correlates with the first stage of the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak (1eR2).

12. Seele 1940, 29.

13. Murnane 1977, 81-82.

14. Murnane 1977, 86.

2) Second stage (2eS1R2):

- Ramesses II is associated to Sety I.
- Sunk relief is used.
- Ramesses II still employs the first form of his *prenomen*, “Usermaatre”.
- This stage correlates with the second stage of the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak (2eR2).

3) Third stage (3eS1R2):

- Ramesses II is still associated to Sety I.
- Sunk relief is used.
- Ramesses II employs the final form of his *prenomen*, “Usermaatre-Setepenre”.
- This stage correlates with the third stage of the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak (3eR2).

Two scenes executed during the first stage (1eS1R2) merit a more detailed analysis, for they are stylistically and epigraphically related (*fig. 1*). The first one is located in the south half of the east wall of the Hypostyle Hall (Kurnah 148), while the second one is displayed on the bottom register of the north wall of Hall XXVIII in the chapel of Ramesses I (Kurnah 301).

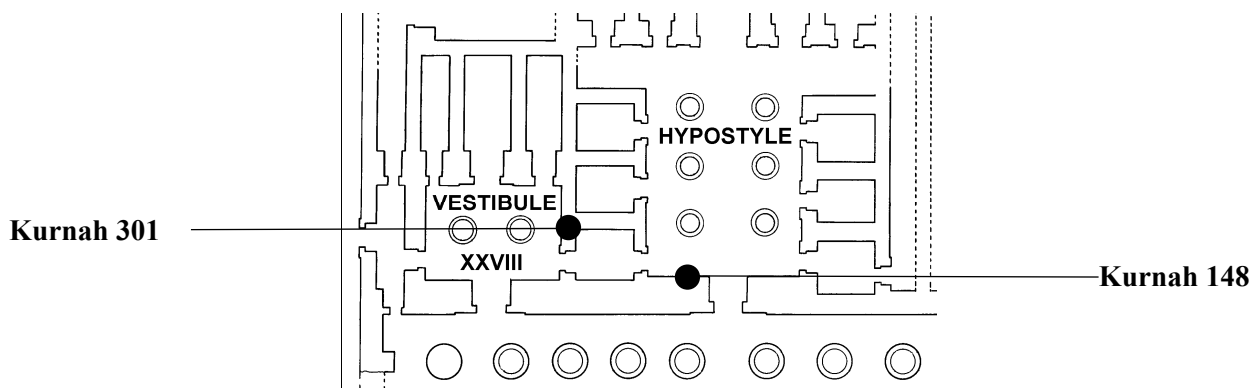


Figure 1. Scenes' location in the Sety I temple at Gurna.

3. Comparative analysis of scenes Kurnah 148 and Kurnah 301

Scene Kurnah 148

Location: Hypostyle Hall, east wall, south half, second register (Kurnah 148).

Bibliographical references: Porter & Moss ²1972, 410: 17, II; Rosellini 1832, LXIII [1]; Costa 2004, I/2, 67-69.

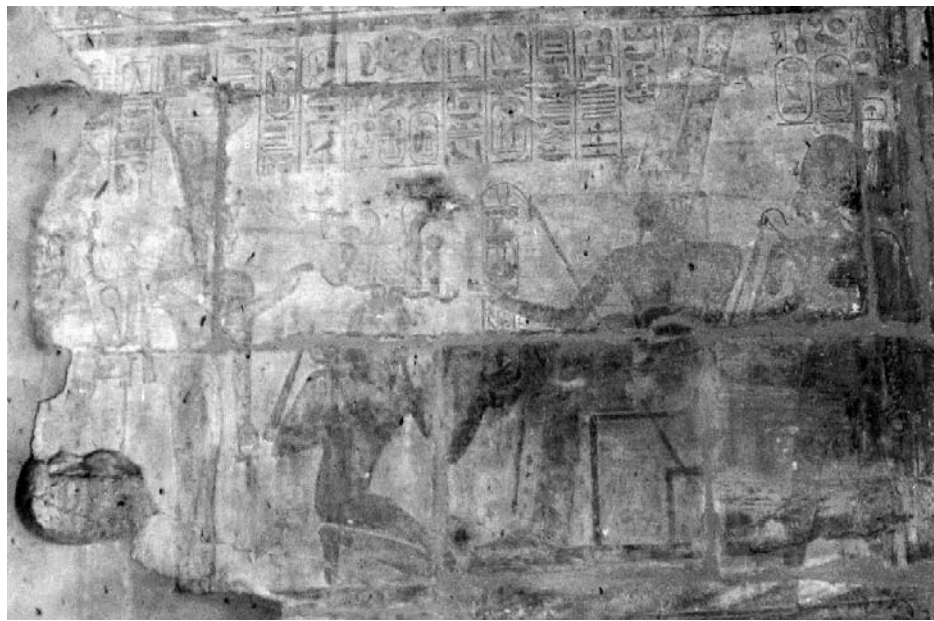
Description of the scene: Ramesses II, kneeling upon the *heb*-sign, is crowned, before Sety I, by Amun and Mut, receiving the jubilees from Amun-Re in presence of Khonsu (see *fig. 2*).

Scene Kurnah 301

Location: Hall XXVIII, north wall, bottom register (Kurnah 301).

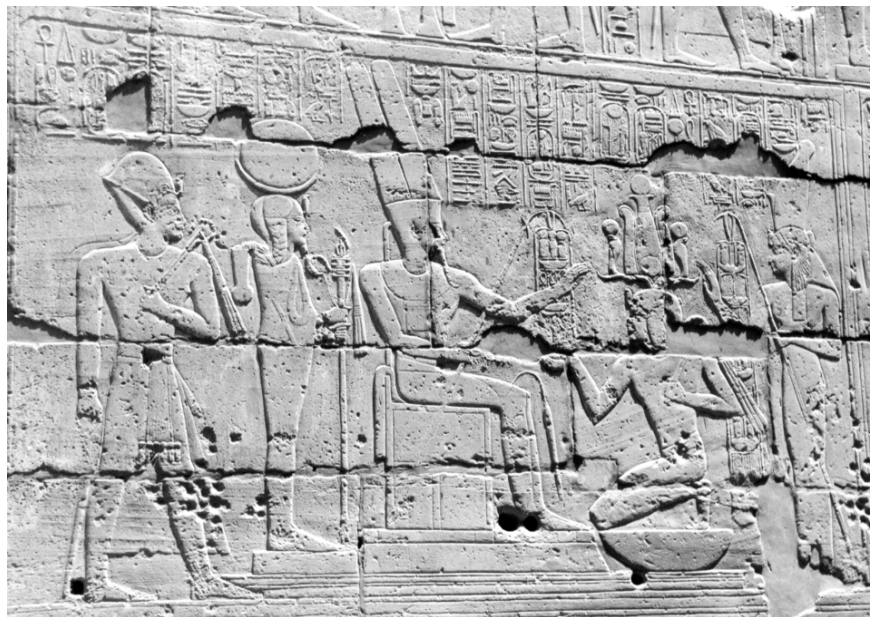
Bibliographical references: Porter & Moss ²1972, 417: 101-102, II, 2; Kitchen 1969-1979, 641-642 (244, B, 2); Lepsius 1849-1859, III, 150 [c]; Costa 2004, I/2, 234-243; Murnane 1977, 62; Putnam 1990, 46; Seele 1940, 27 (n. 14), 38-39, *fig. 9*.

Description of the scene: Ramesses II, kneeling upon the *heb* sign, is crowned by Amun and Mut, receiving the jubilees from the hands of Amun-Re, in presence of Khonsu (see *fig. 3*).



Khonsu → Mut → Ramesses II → Amun-Re ← Sety I ←

Figure 2. Scene Kurnah 148.



Sety I → Khonsu → Amun-Re → Ramesses II ← Mut ←

Figure 3. Scene Kurnah 301.

Sety I

- Orientation:

Kurnah 148: ← (Sety I attends the coronation of Ramesses II accompanying the god Amun-Re).

Kurnah 301: → (Sety I attends the coronation of Ramesses II accompanying to Amun-Re and Khonsu).

- Posture:

Kurnah 148:

Standing.

Kurnah 301:

- Physical appearance:

Kurnah 148:

Barefoot or Discalced.

Kurnah 301:

- Headdress:

Kurnah 148:

Blue crown.

Kurnah 301:

- Dress:

Kurnah 148:

Short cloth *šndyt*, and ceremonial bull's tail.

Kurnah 301:

Set consisting of a transparent long skirt and a short cloth with frontal ornament. Ceremonial bull's tail.

- Attitude:

Kurnah 148:

Right hand: *heqa*-sceptre and *nekhakha*-flagellum.

Left hand: *ankh*-sign.

Kurnah 301:

Left hand: *heqa*-sceptre and *nekhakha*-flagellum.

Right hand: *ankh*-sign.

Ramesses II

- Orientation:

Kurnah 148: → (accompanied by Mut and Khonsu).

Kurnah 301: ← (accompanied by Mut).

- Posture:

Kurnah 148:

Kneeling on the *heb* sign.

Kurnah 301:

- Physical appearance:

Kurnah 148:

Ritual beard. Barefoot.

Kurnah 301:

- Headdress:

Kurnah 148:

Atef crown surmounting short wig with fillet.

Kurnah 301:

- Dress:

Kurnah 148:

Short cloth *šndyt*, and ceremonial bull's tail.

Kurnah 301:

- Attitude:
 - Kurnah 148: The king holds in the right hand the *heqa*-sceptre and the *nekhakha*-flagellum.
With his left hand he receives the hieroglyphic signs given to him by the god Amun-Re.
 - Kurnah 301: The king holds in the left hand the *heqa*-sceptre and the *nekhakha*-flagellum.
In his right hand he receives the hieroglyphic signs given to him by the god Amun-Re.
- Hieroglyphic signs received by Ramesses II from the god Amun-Re
 - Kurnah 148: Hanging from the year-staff:
 - (fig. 4) - Two cartouches, crowned with solar disk, flanked by two *uraei* crowned with a solar disk; this whole group is placed upon a *neb*-sign.
 - A *heb-sed* sign.
 - The god Amun-Re, with the right hand, covers a series of signs. Only two solar disks (one complete and the other partial) are visible.
 - An *ankh*-sign with spleens holds in each hand an *uas* sign; all this group was placed on a *neb*-sign.
 - A god Heh, personifying eternity, is kneeling upon a *heb*-sign. In each hand holds a year-staff ("hundreds of thousands of years") and an *ankh*-sign. Another *ankh*-sign hangs on his right arm.



Figure 4. Scene Kurnah 148.

Kurnah 301:
(fig. 5)

Hanging from the year-staff:

- Two cartouches, crowned with solar disk, flank a *uraeus* crowned with a solar disk; this whole group is placed on a *neb*-sign.
- Three *ankh*-signs and two *was*-scepter, placed $\text{ankh} \text{ was } \text{ankh} \text{ was } \text{ankh}$ (partially covered by the left arm of the god Amun-Re), resting on a *neb*-sign.
- A god Heh, personifying eternity, is kneeling upon a *heb*-sign or a *neb*-sign (destroyed area). In each hand holds a year-staff (“hundreds of thousands of years”) and an *ankh*-sign. From each arm hangs another *ankh*-sign.



Figure 5. Scene Kurnah 301.

As observed, in scene Kurnah 301, located in Hall XXVIII, no *heb-sed* sign is visible among the hieroglyphs Ramesses II receives from the god Amun-Re, in clear contrast to what is depicted in the scene Kurnah 148 in the Hypostyle Hall. The absence of the *heb-sed* sign in the scene of Hall XXVIII constitutes the most significant non-appearance among the group of hieroglyphic signs the King receives from the god.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the hieroglyphical texts that accompanied both scenes, it would be worth considering the physical appearance and attire of the members of the Theban Triad, Amun-Re, Mut and Khonsu.

Amun-Re

- Orientation:

Kurnah 148: ← (accompanied by Sety I).

Kurnah 301: → (accompanied by Khonsu and Sety I).

- Posture:

Kurnah 148:

Kurnah 301:

Sitting on a throne placed on a base.

- Physical appearance:

Kurnah 148:
Kurnah 301: Ceremonial beard of the gods.

- Headdress:

Kurnah 148:
Kurnah 301: Top crown with two high vertical feathers.

- Dress:

Kurnah 148:
Kurnah 301: Short cloth; bull's tail that falls in front of the legs.

- Attitude:

Kurnah 148: His right arm is stretched forward, his palm open and placed towards the king's crown. In his left hand he holds an *ankh*-sign, a *uas*-scepter and a year-staff, leaning towards the sovereign, from which hang the hieroglyphic signs that he gives to the King.

Kurnah 301: His left arm is stretched forward, his palm open and placed toward the king's crown. In his right hand he holds an *ankh*-sign (disappeared today), a *uas*-scepter and a year-staff, leaning towards the sovereign, from which hang the hieroglyphic signs that he gives to the King.

Mut

- Orientation:

Kurnah 148: → (between Ramesses II and Khonsu).
Kurnah 301: ← (accompanied by Ramesses II).

- Posture:

Kurnah 148:
Kurnah 301: Standing.

- Headdress:

Kurnah 148: Tripartite wig surmounted with the body of a vulture. On the headdress rests the Double Crown (the white crown predominates on the red one).
Kurnah 301:

- Dress:

Kurnah 148:
Kurnah 301: Tight long dress.

- Attitude:

Kurnah 148: Right arm raised and palm open and placed towards the king's crown. In her left hand holds an *ankh*-sign.

Kurnah 301: Right arm raised and palm open and placed towards the king's crown. The goddess Mut grasps a year-staff in her left hand; hieroglyphic signs hang from the year-staff.

Khonsu

- Orientation:

Kurnah 148: → (accompanied by Ramesses II and Mut).

Kurnah 301: → (between Amun-Re and Sety I).

- Posture:

Kurnah 148:

Kurnah 301:

Standing, static, on *maʿat* socket.

- Physical appearance:

Kurnah 148:

Kurnah 301:

Ceremonial beard of the gods.

- Headdress:

Kurnah 148:

Kurnah 301:

On his head is the crescent of the new moon in which the circle of the full moon rests.

- Dress:

Kurnah 148:

Kurnah 301:

Body wrapped in bandages, except head and hands.

- Attitude:

Kurnah 148:

Kurnah 301:

Both hands holding the *djed-ankh-uas* composite scepter, the *heqa*-scepter and the *nekhakha*-flagellum.

4. Hieroglyphic texts of the scenes Kurnah 148 and Kurnah 301

Sety I

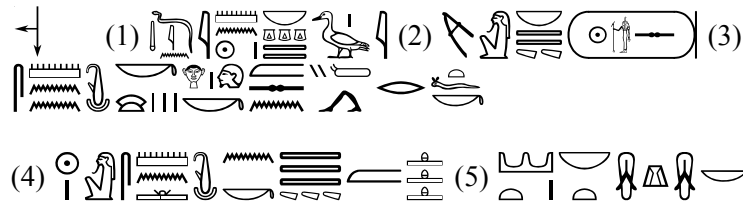
Kurnah 148



«The Perfect god, Menmaatre, the Son of Re, Sety I, given life like Re forever».

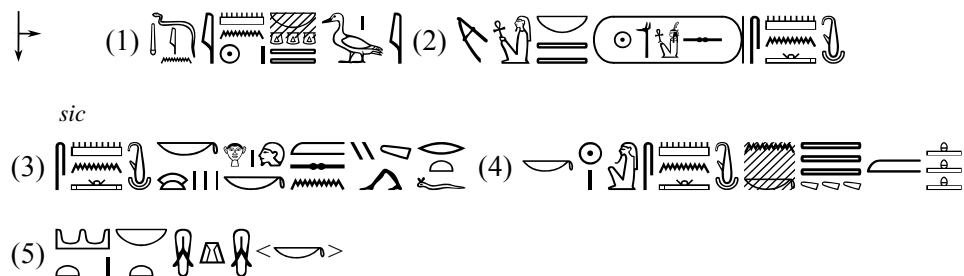
Amun-Re

Kurnah 148



«Words spoken by Amun-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, (to) my beloved son, Lord of the Two Lands, Usermaatre: “I establish for you the crowns on your head, according to your father Re. I make endure for you the flat lands in peace and all the foreign countries under your sandals”».

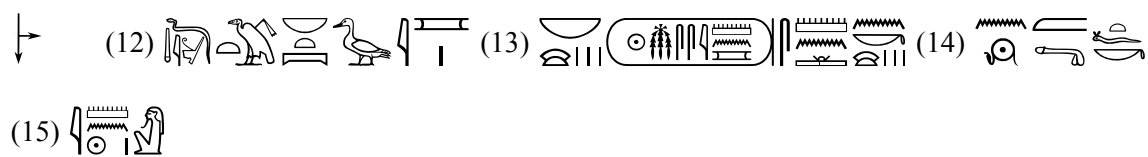
Kurnah 301¹⁷



«Words spoken by Amun-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, (to) my beloved son, Lord of the Two Lands, Usermaatre: “I establish for you the crowns on your head, according to your father Re. I make endure for you the flat lands in peace and all the foreign countries under <your> sandals”».

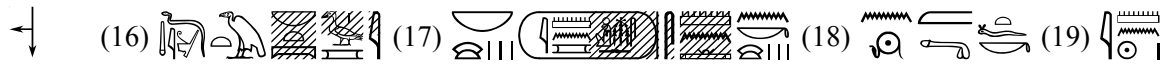
Mut

Kurnah 148



«Words spoken by Mut, Lady of Heaven, (to) my beloved son, Lord of Diadems, Rameses II: “I establish for you the crowns of Re in the presence of your father Amun-Re”».

17. Kitchen 1969-1979, 641:15-16.

Kurnah 301¹⁸

«Words spoken by Mut, [Lady of Heaven], (to) my beloved [son], Lord of Diadems, Ramesses II: “I establish for you the crowns of Re in the presence of your father Amun-Re”».

Khonsu

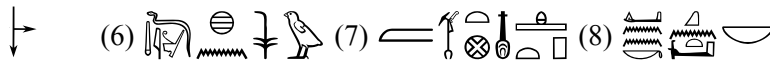
Kurnah 148



«[Words spoken by Khonsu-in-Thebes Neferhotep]».



«Words spoken: “I have given you the life-span of Re”».

Kurnah 301¹⁹

«Words spoken by Khonsu-in-Thebes Neferhotep: “I have given you all valor”».

5. Political and religious context of scenes Kurnah 148 y Kurnah 301

In the scenes Kurnah 148 and Kurnah 301 depicted in the Temple of Millions of Years of Sety I, five figures are present: two rulers, Sety I and Ramesses II; and three gods, Amun-Re, Mut and Khonsu, the three members of the Theban Triad. As we stated above, these scenes, carved in bas-relief, were executed during the first stage of the decorative program (1eS1R2), in which Ramesses II is associated to his father Sety I, and belong to the coregency period. Ramesses' II *prenomen*, “Usermaatre” corresponds to his first form.

These scenes represent a most significant act of the Egyptian kingship, as conveyed by the royal ideology: the crowning of the heir prince by the deities. In both scenes, Amun-Re and Mut crown prince Ramesses as co-regent, in presence of Khonsu, son of both deities. The ceremony is attended by Sety I, the Perfect God. In the two coming years both kings, Sety and Ramesses, will rule the Two Lands.

18. Kitchen 1969-1979, 641:14.

19. Kitchen 1969-1979, 642:1.

Likewise, the iconography of scenes Kurnah 148 and Kurnah 30 manifests the rational and practical aspects of religiosity which are expressed through the wish to celebrate Sed Festivals and to obtain millions of regnal years. These wishes should be as well understood as framed in what Georges Posener called “the sentiment of filial devotion”²⁰. The Egyptian King, in recognizing his filiation, accepted that his authority emanates from his fathers and mothers -the gods and goddesses-, to whom he ought constantly to present offers if he wants, in reward, to keep on receiving their needed support.

In these scenes, the figure of Sety I is not represented as fully transfigured, an Osiris King, but as a ruler still alive. Nothing indicates that the process has been completed and that Sety I has been conducted to the gods’ tribunal to be judged and to be granted the status *m3^c-hrw* (“true-of-voice”), which enables the King to enter the Underworld.

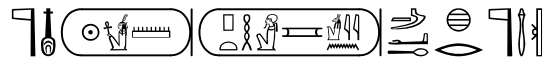
Instead, two scenes from Hall XXVIII and Room XXXIV executed during the third decorative stage at the temple of Gurna (3eS1R2) reveal a different treatment of Sety’s figure, for Sety is accompanied by the epitheth *m3^c-hrw*, “true-of-voice”, implying that he is already dead and his son is the sole ruler of Egypt. In this third stage Ramesses II, still associated to his father, uses the final form of his *prenomen*, “Usermaatre-Setepenre” and decoration is carved in sunk relief.

The first scene is located in the bottom register of the south half of the East wall in Hall XXVIII (Kurnah 313)²¹. There Ramesses II, wearing the White Crown of Upper Egypt, performs the ritual race holding a *hes* vase on each hand. Ramesses stands before the god Osiris, Lord of Abydos, and his father, Sety I. Both figures are located inside the chapel Shetayet.

Ramesses II: “The King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands, Usermaatre-Setepenre, Son of Re, Lord of Diadems, Ramesses II”.



Sety I: “The Perfect god, Menmaatre, Sety I, true-of-voice in the presence of the great god”.



The second scene it’s found above the lintel of the door that leads from Hall XXVIII to Room XXX (Kurnah 305)²². There, Ramesses II, wearing also the White Crown of Upper Egypt, fastens an incensory on his left hand, while with his right hand performs the ritual invocation to the gods. Ramesses stands before Amun-Re, Mut and Sety I.

Ramesses II: “The Lord of the Two Lands, Usermaatre-Setepenre, Lord of Diadems, Ramesses II”.



Sety I: “The Lord of the Two Lands, Menmaatre, true-of-voice in the presence of the great god”.



20. Posener 1960, 35.

21. Porter & Moss ²1972, 417: 99-100, II, 1.

22. Porter & Moss ²1972, 418: 109, a-b; Champollion 1835-1845, CL [1].

There are more examples of this change of status of Sety I in scenes dating to the period of coregency with his son Ramesses II. For instance, we can observe this change in the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak. From the first stage of decoration of the Hall (1eR2) four scenes are preserved, two in the west half of the south wall and two in the door of the south wall. These four scenes were initially carved in bas-relief and Ramesses' *prenomen* appears in his first form. Afterwards, during the third stage of decoration of the Hall, scenes from the first stage were reworked [3eR2 (1eR2→3eR2)], in order to match the different styles employed in the Hall. Bas-relief was replaced by sunk relief and the first form of the *prenomen*, "Usermaatre", turned into the final form, "Usermaatre-Setepenre". Besides that, in three of the scenes, it was added the epithet *m3'-hrw* to Sety's figure, implying that he was already dead by the third stage of decoration. Let's have a look to these scenes:

- Scenes from the west half of the south wall

The scene KB 86²³ is located at the upper register, west end (*fig. 6*). There Ramesses II offers incense and libation to his father, Sety I, who is accompanied by his *Ka*.

Ramesses II²⁴: "The Lord of the Two Lands, Usermaatre-Setepenre, Lord of Diadems, Ramesses II".



Sety I²⁵: "The Perfect god, Menmaatre, Lord of Diadems, Sety I, true-of-voice in the presence of the great god".

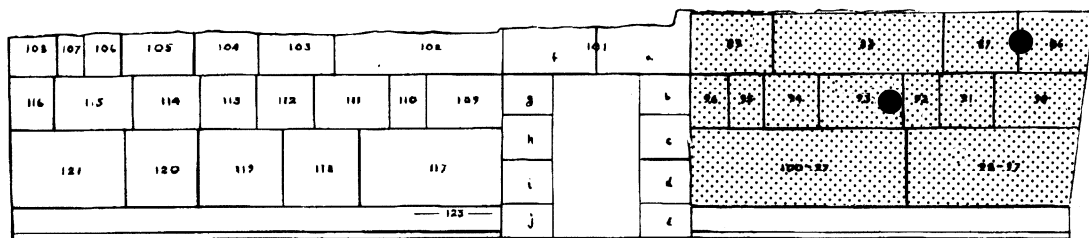


Figure 6. First stage (1eR2) in the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, south wall, west half.

The scene KB 92²⁶ belongs to the middle register (*fig. 6*). There, Ramesses II pours water from four jars *nemset* over a statue of Sety I.

In the text that accompanies the figure of Ramesses II it is verified that the purification is realized to a statue of "Osiris King Menmaatre"²⁷.



23. Porter & Moss ²1972, 47: 158, I, 4; Kitchen 1969-1979, 578:9-16; Seele 1940, 16 y 62, fig. 18; Barguet 1962, 66; Murnane 1975, 178, fig. 17; Nelson 1981, pl. 42.

24. Nelson 1981, pl. 42:5-6.

25. Nelson 1981, pl. 42:9-10.

26. Porter & Moss ²1972, 47: 158, II, 3; Barguet 1962, 66; Murnane 1975, 177, fig. 17; Nelson 1981, pl. 48.

27. Nelson 1981, pl. 48:3.

Ramesses II²⁸: “The King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Usermaatre-Setepenre, Son of Re, Ramesses II”.



Sety I²⁹: “The Perfect god, Menmaatre, Lord of Diadems, Sety I, true-of-voice in the presence of the great god (*namely*) Osiris, foremost of the westerners”.



- Scenes from the door of the south wall

The scene KB 101d³⁰ is located on the lowest register of western jamb (*fig. 7*). There, Ramesses II offers incense to Amun-Re, followed by Sety I (whose name was later changed to Ramesses II).

Ramesses II³¹: “Usermaatre-Setepenre, Ramesses II”.



Sety I (originally)³²: “The Perfect god, Menmaatre, Son of Re, Sety I”.



Ramesses II (now)³³: “The Perfect god, Usermaatre-Setepenre, Son of Re, Ramesses II”.



In this scene the epithet *m3^c-hrw* doesn't appear after Sety's names. The reason is the lack of space around the plumes of the *henu* crown which Sety wears.

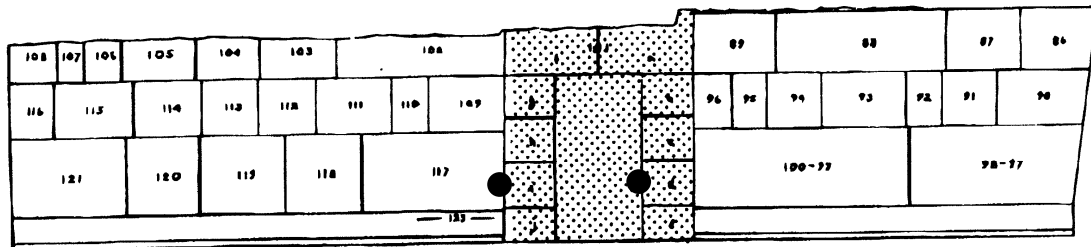


Figure 7. First stage (1eR2) in the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, south wall, doorway.

28. Nelson 1981, pl. 48:5-6.

29. Nelson 1981, pl. 48:8-10.

30. Porter & Moss ²1972, 49-50: 164, a, III; Kitchen 1969-1979, 580:2-8; Legrain 1929, 229, fig. 137; Seele 1940, 64-65, fig. 20; Nelson 1981, pl. 57.

31. Kitchen 1969-1979, 580:3; Nelson 1981, pl. 57:8-9.

32. Kitchen 1969-1979, 580:7.

33. Kitchen 1969-1979, 580:8; Nelson 1981, pl. 57:6-7.

6. Conclusions

Considering all of the above, we can conclude that at the moment scenes Kurnah 148 and Kurnah 301 in the Temple of Millions of Years at Gurna were carved, Sety I was still alive. Even more, two “snapshots” manifest that the pharaoh “attends” his son’s coronation as co-regent. Coronation was performed by his divine fathers, the god Amun-Re and the goddess Mut. From then onwards, in the coming two years until Sety’s death, both kings will rule Egypt.

Both scenes were carved during the first stage of decoration of the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak and of some parts of the Temple of Gurna. This stage is characterized by the use of bas-relief in decoration and the first form of Ramesses II’s *prenomen*.

Moreover, the new king Ramesses II, while receiving “hundreds of millions of years of life and mightiness with an eternity of Sed Festivals”³⁹ from the hands of Amun, conveys his wish to rule hundreds of thousands of years that will enable him to celebrate many jubilees. This wish is expressed 20 years before he could even celebrate his first Sed Festival in his 30th regnal year. Later on, after his father’s death, from his second regnal year onwards, Ramesses II will become the heir of a long tradition, a tradition of more than two millennia.

As a ruler of the Two Lands, the king person acquires a new condition, both humane and divine. Humane because he is mortal, and divine because, as it is stated in his birth name, “it has been engendered by Re” (i.e. Ramesses). During his lifetime his strength will decrease over the years and it would be thus necessary to resort to the rituals of the Sed Festival to renovate them. Exceptionally, in the future, Ramesses will overcome his initial desires expressed at Gurna, for he will celebrate nothing less than fourteen Sed Festivals, more than any other Egyptian king.

When the scenes in the Gurna temple were carved, these wishes were no more than a time prospecting in the future. In Gurna Ramesses expressed, before his father, the gods and men, his wish to rule thousands of years and to celebrate many Sed Festivals. He could do this, because, once crowned, Ramesses assumed the ruler condition that would enable him to be the true guarantor of Ma‘at. In other words, he thus became responsible before the gods for maintaining the cosmic order established from the beginning of times. The king would then dominate the whole world, keeping on a divine strain that, mythologically, was established since primaeval times.

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39. It should be remembered that in the scene of the Vestibule XXVIII (Kurnah 301) there is no *heb-sed* sign shown among the hieroglyphs Ramesses II receives.

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