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# BUILDING *DIPINTI* IN THE TEMPLE OF HATSHEPSUT DOCUMENTATION WORK, SEASON 2007/2008

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**Abstract:** The overall character of the corpus of building *dipinti* from the Hatshepsut Temple has changed significantly in the light of new finds. Two new types of inscriptions have been identified. So-called 'brief notes' have shed new light on the process of controlling building progress at the temple site.

**Keywords:** Deir el-Bahari, Temple of Hatshepsut, building *dipinti*

The recording of building *dipinti* in the Temple of Hatshepsut was continued, proceeding eastward along the South Wall of the Temple and covering the outer face

of the south wall of the so-called Room with Window (L.1/08) and the south face of the retaining wall of the temple terrace (MT-RW-S) [Fig. 1], at a point at

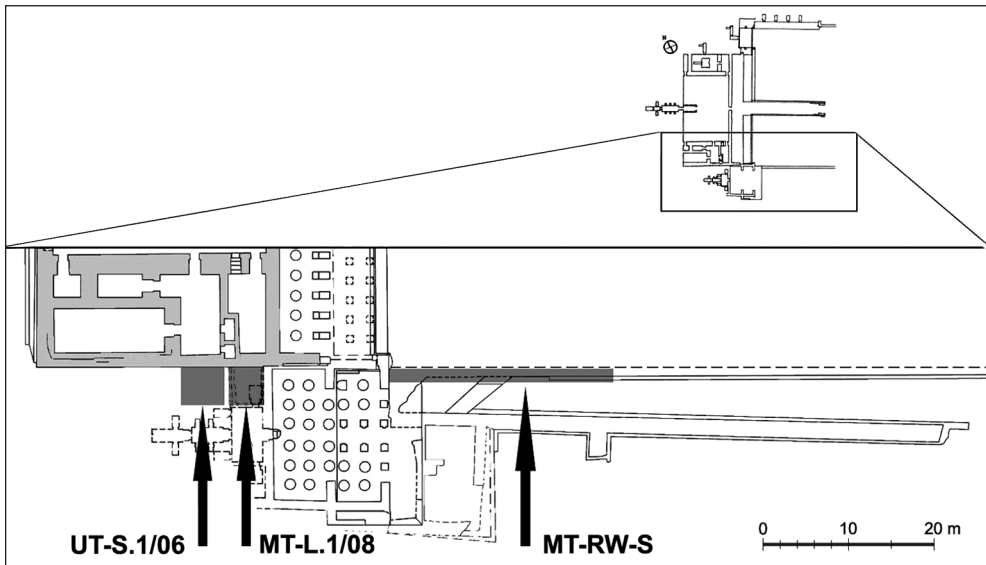


Fig. 1. Extent of documentation work carried out in the 2007/2008 season  
(Drawing D.F. Wiczorek after T. Kaczor)

the western end where the impression of a ramp once leading to the Chapel of Hathor has been preserved. The loose blocks with

building *dipinti*, recovered from Test Pit S.1/06 in the 2005/2006 season, continued to be documented concurrently.

## L.1/08

The outer face of the south wall of the so-called Room with Window is a continuation eastward of the outer face of the south wall of the Vestibule of the Chapel of Hatshepsut (CH-V-OFSW), which was studied in the 2005/2006 season (Wiczorek 2008). It is one of four walls belonging to a curious architectural feature created by the development of the southwestern edge of the Middle Temple Terrace and the addition of the Chapel of Hathor in this place. This structure has all

the appearances of a rectangular well shaft measuring approximately 4.00 x 4.50 m, sunk about 3.40 m below the pavement of the vestibule of the Chapel of Hatshepsut (CH-V), to the recorded level of the top of the fill in the northern part of this feature measured from the pavement level in the vestibule of the Royal Mortuary Cult Complex [Fig. 2].

All four walls were studied from the epigraphic point of view: 10 courses of blocks in the north wall, five courses in



Fig. 2. Unit L.1/08  
(Photo D.F. Wiczorek)

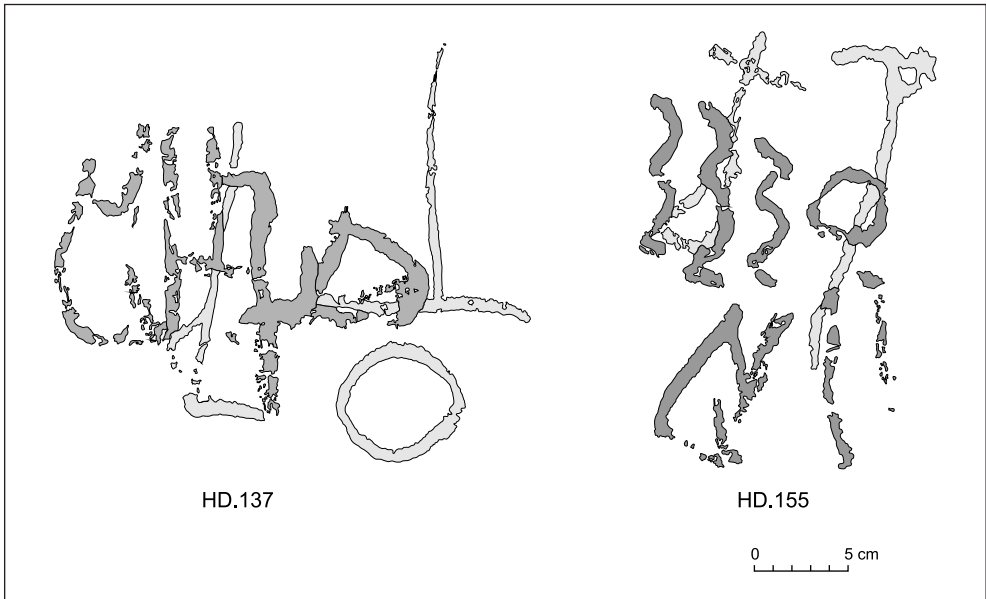


Fig. 3. Day dates + j+A24 group superimposed on rnp.t-hr and rnp.t-nfr groups  
(Drawing D.F. Wiczorek)

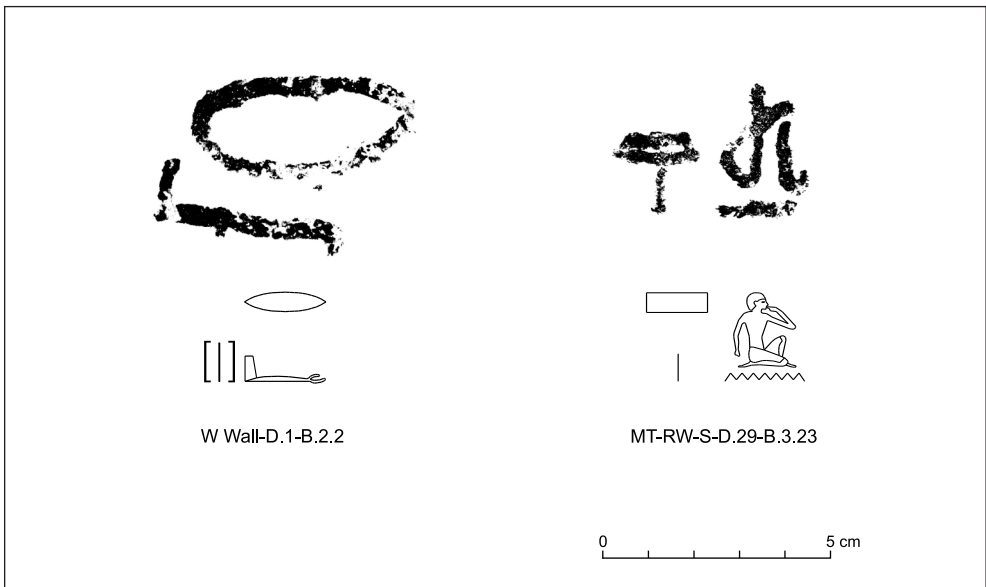


Fig. 4. Two examples of brief building notes (Type IX), see also Fig. 6

the south wall, five courses in the east wall and four in the west wall, all the blocks preserving roughly dressed facing sides. The current bottom of L.1/08 is formed of the roofing slabs of the Northern Niche in the Vestibule of the Chapel of Hathor and the top of the fill in the northern part of the unit, still concealing a considerable part of the north wall and some of the east wall. Texts were traced on all of the walls, recording a total of 86 building *dipinti*.

The most common group among *dipinti* documented this year consists of hieratic day dates + *j+A24* group (Type III) (Wiczorek 2008: 288; for the typology, see also below, *Fig. 6*), followed closely in number by the *rnp.t-hr* group (Type VII) [*Fig. 6*]. Moreover, *dipinti* of the two types frequently appeared to be superimposed, the day dates evidently introduced later covering previously written *rnp.t-hr* groups HD.137 and HD.155, usually oriented irregularly upside-down [*Fig. 3*]. The almost complete absence of day date + *rnp.t-nfr* group (Type II) — only one example HD.114 on the north wall — as well as the independent *rnp.t-nfr* group (Type VI) — four examples HD.122, HD.125, HD.147

and HD.155 on the north wall — merits attention, considering that they constituted the absolute majority of the corpus of texts recorded on the CH-V-OFSW wall in the 2005/2006 season (Wiczorek 2008: 288).

The repertoire of *dipinti* recorded on the west wall of L.1/08 also proved to be entirely different in character and indeed appeared to represent yet another type of building *dipinti* previously not noted on the walls of the Temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari. These texts are brief building notes, mostly very fragmentary and consequently virtually unintelligible. In one case, HD.234 [*Fig. 4*], a highly likely reading is *r-c* “limit” (*Wb* II: 394:1; Faulkner 1962: 146; Lesko 2002–2004: 260), most probably an abbreviation of a building term: *r-c n mh* “position of filling” (Petrie 1897: 22, Pl. IX:24), referring, for example, to the level of sand fill in the foundations. The interpretation is supported by the position of this *dipinto* on the west wall, precisely below a line indicating the level of finishing of the outer face of the wall and the level of the original fill inside L.1/08.

## HATHOR CHAPEL “RAMP IMPRESSION” MT-RW-S

Epigraphic documentation covered also the south retaining wall of the Middle Temple Terrace (MT-RW-S) in its western end, at a point preserving the impression of a ramp once leading to the Chapel of Hathor [*Fig. 5*]. This part of the wall that had once been obscured by the now lost ramp is roughly dressed, approximately 24.40 m long and 8.40 m high at the highest point. The original slope of the ramp is evident; it represents the first of four stages in the

development of this ramp (Wysocki 1985: 293–307; see also Wysocki 1979/1980).

The building *dipinti* on the surfaces of these blocks amounted to 93, but only the eastern part of the ramp in a section 10.50 m long from east to west could be documented now.

The nature of textual matter recorded on the MT-RW-S wall does not differ significantly from that recorded earlier. Dates continued to predominate, although

independent day dates (Type I) occurred here to the exclusion of dates of types II and III. One case of day date clearly superimposed on top of an earlier *rnp.t-hr* group was noted (MT-RW-S-HD.268), similarly as on the north wall of L.1/08. This group was much damaged when the block was chiseled down. Large groups of signs, like *rnp.t-nfr* and *rnp.t-hr*, occurred alternately next to one another almost continuously.

The most surprising finding on one of the blocks MT-RW-S-HD.273 was a brief note [see *Fig. 4*] paralleling those recognized on the west wall of L.1/08.

It seems to be a brief note made by the scribe on the surface of a block in the ramp area while inspecting progress in the construction of the South Retaining Wall. The Hieratic text can be read as *snh n jnr* “muster of stone (blocks)”<sup>1</sup>.



*Fig. 5. Wall with impression of ramp leading to the Chapel of Hathor MT-RW-S  
(Photo D.F. Wiczorek)*

<sup>1</sup> Regarding the first sign, the noun written here ideographically could be transliterated in at least two ways: *snh* (Wb IV: 167) *muster*, (see Hayes 1960: 32, Pl. IXA 4v:4; 39, Pl. XIA 12v:1; 44, Pl. XIII A 17v:1) or *sh3* (Wb IV: 234:18) *note/report* (see Megally 1971: 34, Pl. XLV Bv 1:0; 1977: 54, 61).

Type I

Day date: *sw* + *x*



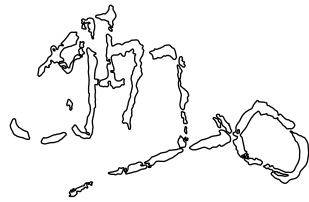
Type II

Day date + (group of signs) *rnp.t-nfr*



Type III

Day date + (group of signs) *j* + A24



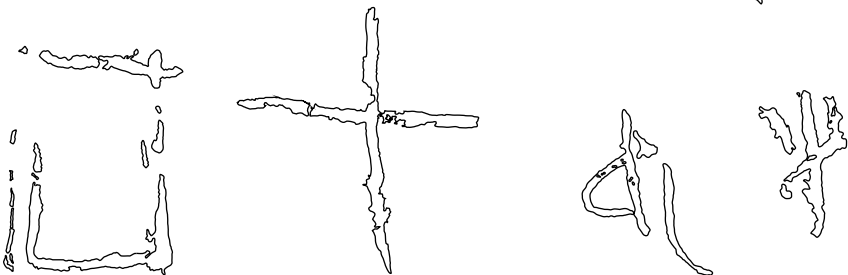
Type IV

Dependent date: month + season of the year + day



Type V

Single signs and group of signs

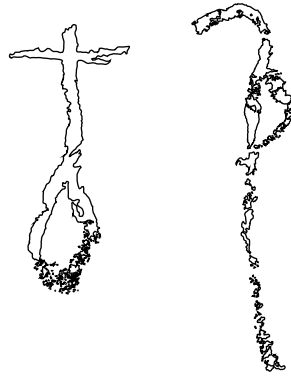


0 5 cm

Fig. 6. Typology of building *dipinti*, on this and facing page

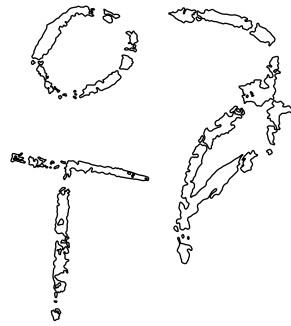
Type VI

Group of signs: *rnp.t-nfr*



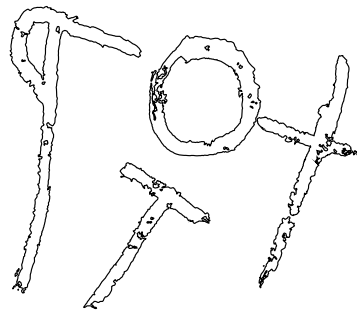
Type VII

Group of signs: *rnp.t-hr*



Type VIII

Group of signs: *rnp.t-hr + jmj (?)*



Type IX

Brief building notes



0 5 cm



## LOOSE BLOCKS

More than a hundred loose limestone blocks were recovered from Test Pit S.1/06 in the 2005/2006 season. Many of these blocks bore building *dipinti* on the surface. Documentation of these inscriptions was continued this season, adding 51 blocks to the 20 that were documented in the last season. Similarly as before, most of the collection was made up of *dipinti* assigned to one of two groups: *rnp.t-nfr* (Type VI) and *rnp.t-hr* (Type VII) [Fig. 6]. These groups were evidenced foremost on the right and left faces of the blocks, not to be seen once inside the wall structure. The

present season indicated that the *rnp.t-nfr* group could occur on two faces of the same block (B.1181-HD.91a/b) (see Lipińska 1977: 23). While most building *dipinti* are attested on blocks without any decoration, this year's findings have contributed examples of *rnp.t-nfr* and *rnp.t-hr* groups occurring also on the back surface of blocks with relief decoration (e.g. B.772-HD.78, B.1315-HD.90).

Previously unattested building *dipinti* were also recorded: signs *nfr*, *hw.t* (?), *jmj* (?) (Type V) and the group *rnp.t-hr* + *jmj* (?) (Type VIII) [see Fig. 6].

## CONCLUSIONS

The collection of building *dipinti* recorded this season, 154 in all, has changed significantly the overall character of the corpus documented in the previous season (Wiczorek 2008). Day dates accompanied by the *j*+A24 (Type III) and *rnp.t-hr* (Type VIII) groups were represented chiefly in L.1/08, while the wall MT-RW-S bore only a day date (Type I) and *rnp.t-hr* and *rnp.t-nfr* groups (Type VI). The day-date + *rnp.t-nfr* (Type II) was poorly represented this season, while the independent

*rnp.t-nfr* group was most frequent on loose blocks from Test Pit S.1/06. Moreover, two new types of inscriptions, VIII and IX, were recorded this season, multiplying also the variety of signs used, most probably "team marks" included in Type V, that is, *nfr*, *hw.t* (?) and *jmj* (?). The so-called brief notes (Type IX) discovered on the west wall of L.1/08 and the face of MT-RW-S have directed new light onto the process of controlling building progress on the site of the temple.

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