

Original article

THE LOST OBELISK AND CULT OF HERIHOR WITH EVIDENCE OF A NEW CULT OF AMENHOTEP I AT KARNAK

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Article history: Received: 21-3-2023 Accepted: 13-4-2024 Doi: 10.21608/ejars.2024.361171	Abstract: This paper presents a detailed study of a sunk-relief scene from the Temple of Khonsu at Karnak. This scene has not yet been presented in a detailed publication although references have been made to it in several publications. This study revealed the ambiguity of two main elements of the scene actioned in Karnak temples in the reign of Herihor; the first is the lost dedicated obelisk of Herihor and the second is evidence of a new cult of king Amenhotep I and its dating according to his figuration in the scene as “ <i>Imn-ḥtp n bnrt</i> ”.
Keywords: Amenhotep I Amenhotep n bnrt Obelisk Herihor Eastern temple Supplication	

1. Introduction

The temple of Khonsu in Karnak is considered the only monument certifying the fall of the last Ramesside king and the succession of the High Priest of Amun, Herihor [1]. By the death of Ramesses XI [mentioned by Breasted as Ramesses XIII] [1-2] [who figured in the hypostyle hall making offerings with Herihor but disappeared from the inscriptions of the hall of Herihor] [2], Nesubenebbed became king of Lower Egypt and founded the 21st dynasty according to Manetho. In Thebes, the High Priest Herihor, a man with a strong military background, proclaimed himself the king of Upper Egypt. [1,3-6]. The inscriptions of the Temple of Khonsu (*House of Khonsu in Thebes of the Beautiful Rest*) are the main source of Herihor’s rise as the High Priest of Amun and his usurpation of the kingship in Upper Egypt [1], which could therefore be extended to Dendera [7]. The scene in question inscribed in the hall of the temple of Khonsu was erected by Herihor in white sandstone and called the “*Wearer of Diadems*” [1]. Many scenes figured the royalty aspects of Herihor, such as uraeus, double crown, and the full titular of a Pharaoh with a Horus name and cartouches [2,8-9]. Herihor’s inscriptions in the Temple of Khonsu depict him as a great king. In the scene in question, he is represented burning incense and pouring a libation on an offering table, and with a very detailed

inscribed obelisk dedicated in the scene in front of the shrine of Amun-Re and Amunt. Additionally, “*Imn-ḥtp n bnrt*” in the form of a small naked figure behind the throne of Amun-Re indicates a new cultic role during the time of Herihor. This study presents evidence of the history and originality of this cult according to the aspects of deification and veneration at this time, in addition to a new variation of the birth name of king Amenhotep I (whose cult started in Deir el-Medina in the 18th dyn., and lasted as late as 25th Dyn., specifically to Taharqa [10]) derived from the date of his cult.

2. Description

A detailed scene, fig. (1), on the western wall of the hall, middle register, fifth scene from the south, shows the priest Herihor burning incense and pouring a libation on an offering table with lotus flowers, facing an inscribed stone obelisk in front of Amun-Re, who is depicted sitting on a [wooden] chair in his wooden shrine decorated with *uraei* and sun disc and holding a “*w3s*” scepter (S40¹). In front of Amun-Re is a bouquet of lotus flowers and papyri and behind him is the goddess Mut, who is wearing the red crown and a long tight-fitting robe and is holding an “*nh*”

5. Discussion

5.1. The lost obelisk of Herihor

5.1.1. Calligraphical Notes

a) The Horus name (*Hr k3 nht s3 Imn*) [14] on the text depicted on the obelisk is written not framed in a *srh* although it was inscribed inside a *srh* in the inscription of the Opet feast on the western wall, lower register in the same court of the scene in question [15]. Furthermore, the falcon is shown without the double crown on the head (this depiction without the double crown is common when the title *s3* is written using the duck sign - G39) [8]. **b)** In the word “*mnw*”, the sign “N35” is written at the end, but the common spelling is with the three bowl signs [16]. **c)** Probably, the dedication of this obelisk is proof that Herihor is acting [8] as a real king and has the prerogative of dedicating in Karnak like the kings who were his New Kingdom predecessors (we know that he was the High Priest of Amun at the end of the reign of Ramesses XI).

5.1.2. The reason for the proposed location of Herihor's lost obelisk

a) This court is the only one free of structures from the time of Thutmosis III onwards [17]. **b)** The temple of the Hearing Ear of Thutmosis III has the divine shrine of the gods and inscriptions of Amun-Re figures on the exterior walls. **c)** The scene in question clearly depicts Amun-Re, Amunt, and Amenhotep I inside a shrine with Herihor's obelisk in front. **d)** The text on Herihor's obelisk is proof that it is a real obelisk and that it is different from Thutmosis III's, which had been planned by Thutmosis III and erected 35 years later by Thutmosis IV and which now stands in Rome [13]. **e)** There was a long distance between Thutmosis III's obelisk and the façade of the sixth Osiride pillars. **f)** Many additions, particularly inscriptions, were added later, into the Ptolemaic period, as shown in fig. (2). **g)** The eastern temple of the Hearing Ear of Ramesses II was not a divine shrine although many inscriptions were added later.

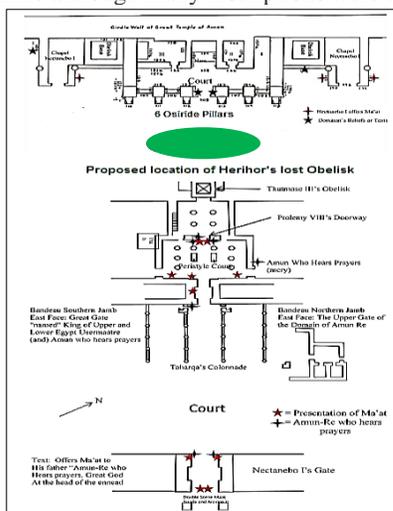
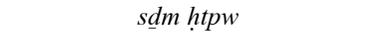


Figure (2) plan of the Contra temple with two eastern temples of the Hearing ear of Thutmosis III and Ramesses II and the proposed location of the lost obelisk [in green color] (Modified after: Ausec 2010).

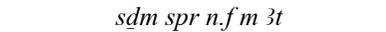
5.2. Amun-Re and the temple of the Hearing Ear

1) The unification of Amun [*the first known appearance of Amun is in the Old and Middle Kingdom*] [18-23] and Re could be motivated by the will to add cosmic epithets to the god Amun as a cosmic deity, a combination of the power of the sun [Re] and the air [Amun] and to appropriate the human figuration of the god Re to be the global and cosmic god [22-24]. Amun-Re [*the oldest appearance of the name of the god Amun-Re is inscribed on a headless faïence statue of king Pepi I discovered at Thebes and now in the British Museum (EA 58366)*] [25] is described as King of the Gods [*this title probably came after the unification between Re and Amun to dominate the complete cosmic sphere and all the gods*] [26-28] in the “[*pr Imn*] house of Amun” [29]. All of Herihor's dedication texts inside the hypostyle hall of Karnak describe Karnak as [*pr Imn*] the house of Amun [30]. 2) The temple of the Hearing Ear [*there are two eastern Temples of the Hearing Ear: one of Thumosis III and the second of Ramesses II*] [31] was described and theorized by Ch. Nims as “beautiful of hearing”. It was built by Thutmosis III built for Amun-Re [31] and redecorated between years 40 and 46 of the reign of Ramesses II. The whole area was used for personal piety from Thutmosis III until Ptolemy VIII [13]. 3) Below is a list of the epithets and titles of the god Amun-Re, which provide strong evidence of the reasonable causes of his existence inside the Shrine of the Hearing Ear and point to a cultic role of Amenhotep I in the eastern temple and the reason why he is accompanying Amun-Re in the scene in question [32]:

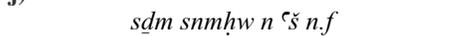
- a)** *sdm n 's n.f*
(he who hears those who call to him), New Kingdom.
- b)** *sdm 's.tw n.f m pr ms*
(he who listens when you see him in the birthplace),
Greek-Roman period.
- c)** *sdm w3*
(he who hears, although he is distant/he who (also) hears him who is far away), New Kingdom.
- d)** *sdm.tw mdw.f nn m33.tw.f*
(he whose words are heard without him being seen),
Greek-Roman.
- e)** *sdm nht*
(he who hears the request), New Kingdom, Late Period,
and Greek-Roman.
- f)** *sdm nhwt*
(he who hears the requests), New Kingdom.
- g)** *sdm nhwt nt ntrw rmt*
(he who hears the requests of the gods and the people),
New Kingdom.

h)  / 
sdm htpw

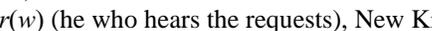
(he who hears the offerings), New Kingdom [32].

i)  / 
sdm spr n.f m 3t

(he who instantly answers the one who asks him).

j)  / 
sdm snmhw n 's n.f

(he who hears the requests of those who call to him), New Kingdom.

k)  / 

sdm spr(w) (he who hears the requests), New Kingdom.

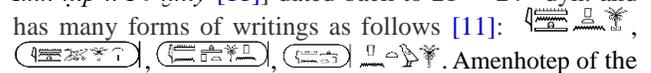
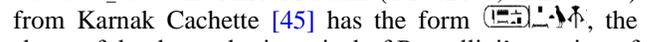
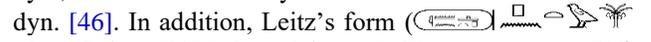
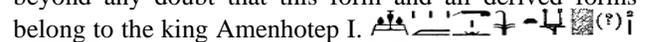
All these forms reflect the need of people to ask the King of the Gods to protect them and supply their needs in life and the afterlife in the same equivalence as a deified god [10]. The ancient Egyptians connected some deities with hearing to be in contact with the gods [33].

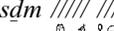
5.3. Amunt and the cult of Herihor

The Thebes triad is Amun, Mut and Khonsu. The goddess Mut was a female goddess and wife of Amun, depicted wearing the double crown and a fitted long dress and taking the title of “*nbt t3wy*”, the Mistress of the Two Lands [34-36]. The human figure of Amun-Re is connected with the goddess Mut, while the ithyphallic figure is connected with the goddesses Isis and Hathor [36,37]. The scene in question shows the goddess Amunt wearing the crown of Lower Egypt (the red crown) because she is one of Lower Egypt’s deities and for this reason, could not be the main wife of Amun in the Thebes triad [38]. She also took Mut’s title of “*nbt t3wy*”, which reflects the political and religious aspects of Herihor’s domination, reputation, and a clear cult in the Temple of the Hearing Ear towards all the people of Upper and Lower Egypt. Particularly, Herihor is shown wearing the same crown and uraeus as “*Imn-htp-n-bnrt*” [Amenhotep I] in the same scene, like the cultic role of the New Kingdom kings as the cult of Amenhotep I below. So, he could act the same cultic role as the intermediary between Amun-Re and the people’s supplications (see, 5.4).

5.4. Amenhotep I and the new evidence of his cult and epithets

At least, four very well-known cult statues of Amenhotep I, namely “Amenhotep of the garden” [this title is written once in the Abbott papyrus, BM10221] [39], “Amenhotep of the court”, “Amenhotep the navigator on the water” and “Amenhotep the favored of Hathor” are mentioned in Bologna papyrus no. 1094, dated to the end of 19th dyn. [10]. J. Cerny assumed that these statues were found in Karnak temples and their cult transformed on the West Bank as “Amenhotep of the garden [the garden of Karnak temples]”, “Amenhotep of the court [court of Karnak temples]” [40]. Other two images are “Amenhotep of the Village/Domain (Deir el-Medina)” and “The Favorite of Amun/(Amenhotep with the beautiful name of *PA ib-ib*)”, in addition to a title

also is “*P3 hnty*” (probably a place in Thebes), mentioned just once on a lintel in the British Museum (no. 369.153) [10]. Comments on the form in question “*Imn-htp n bnrt*” can be summarized as follows: **1)** According to Ch. Leitz, “*Imn htp n bnrt qr Imn htp p3 n (t3) bnrt*” “Amenhotep of the Date Palm” [one of the names of the god Amun is *Dsr k3 R^c Imn htp n P3 hnty* [11]] dated back to 21st - 24th dyn. and has many forms of writings as follows [11]: . Amenhotep of the Date Palm usually figured in various shapes as follows [11]: **a)** Standing man with a large cobra on his forehead, probably naked and his hand on his mouth and a lapwing in the other. **b)** Enthroned mummy with a short wig and holding a crook and flail. **c)** Enthroned god with a short wig, holding a ribbon and a staff. **d)** Standing mummy with a short wig. These figures are new performances of Amenhotep I according to his new title as “Amenhotep of the Date Palm”. Leitz indicates that the title (*Imn-htp n bnrt*) inscribed in Rossellini [41-42] who gave inscription without its source and following the provenance, belongs to the tomb of Amenemopet (A. 18), (buried and unknown location) [43]. **2)** Following the originality and first appearance of “Amenhotep *n bnrt*”, it comes in the tomb of Amenemopet which has two copies of its inscriptions by Rossellini and Champollion [41, 42-44]. Comparing the two copies of the inscriptions, fig. (3) particularly the cartouches, fig. (4), it arises that: **a)** The cartouche (*Imn-htp n bnrt*) is copied by Rossellini with the date palm determinative (M55 ) , but by Champollion [44] with the (M13 ) determinative. In this case, if (M55 ) is right, there is strong evidence that this title of Amenhotep I dates back to the Ramesside period based on the dating of the tomb [43]. Conversely, if the cartouche with (M13 ) is right, it is also a new name of Amenhotep I which probably indicates a cult of the king during the Ramesside period, and in the latter case, the indication of Leitz to Rossellini about this title was incorrect. **b)** A statuette of “*‘sd sw hnsu*” in Cairo Museum (CG 42131, JdE 37375) from Karnak Cachette [45] has the form , the shape of the date palm is typical of Rossellini’s version of the tomb (A. 18), which means that Champollion’s copy could be wrong. So, the form dated to the Ramesside period agrees with the date of the tomb. The dating of the Cairo Museum statuette is uncertain: Legrain dated it to the 18th dyn., Schulz to the 19 dyn. and Vandier to the 21st -22nd dyn. [46]. In addition, Leitz’s form  [11] [*p3 n.i t3 bnr.t*] [46] is dated to the 21st -24th dyn. but it could be that same date palm figuration as the Cairo Museum and tomb A. 18 providing logical evidence that the form dates back at least to the Ramesside period and so does the statue. **c)** The form [45] of the Cairo Museum (on the base) is clear evidence that the date palm form refers to the “Ka” of Amenhotep I and to him as a glorified king, given the text describing a table of offerings in front of the royal “Ka” of Imnhotep, which reveals beyond any doubt that this form and all derived forms belong to the king Amenhotep I.  **d)** Another form

of the Cairo Museum on the right shoulder is as follows: [45]. This is a good indication that this form is related to Karnak temples, but nobody can confirm where exactly in Karnak. It could be related to the Graffiti on the VI pylon at Karnak [there is a plan of Amenhotep I shrine in this area] [47] depicting Amenhotep I as a living king with a wig, a straight beard, and the Anedjti crown and sun disc with two Uraei and a very interesting and clear depiction of the date palm, but the exact date of this graffiti still ambiguous. Another stela from the British Museum (EA 989) depicts Amenhotep I and the date palm generically dated by the British Museum to the New Kingdom [46]. **e**) The depiction of Amenhotep I naked with a hand in his mouth and holding a bird could be a representation of Khonsu the son of the Triad and Amunt replacing Mut. **f**) The cartouche in both versions (Rossellini's and Champollion's) has the same order of the term (*htp*) signs, (Q3□) preceded (X1△) as same order of all variants of the same form of the title (*Imn-htp n bnrt*) [as mentioned before] as cartouche of the king as a living king [48] [for normal order of (X1△) and (Q3□) see; [49]]. **g**) The cartouche in all versions has the term (*t3* ♂), which could be the 1fs demonstrative pronoun like the title (*Imn htp p3 n (t3) bnrt*) [11], which reconfirms that the (M13 ♀) determinative was copied mistakenly by Champollion instead of the feminine determinative (M55 ♀). **h**) A new form of Amenhotep "*Imn htp n bnrt*" or "*Imn htp p3 n (t3) bnrt*", which could be considered and added to the birth name variations of the king Amenhotep I, appeared in the Ramesside period, because the cartouche preceded by (*s3 R*) title in the tomb (A.18) [41,42], same as the variation of the cult image of "the Son of Re Amenhotep *ib-ib* in the house of Amun" [49]. **3**) Alexandra von Lieven assumed that the Amenhotep of the date palm dated to the 21st dyn. [46] but according to previous comments and the tomb (A. 18) it could be dated at least to the Ramesside period. **4**) One of the unique epithets of Amenhotep I is the "Son of Amun, who came forth from his limbs" [10], while, on the other hand, Amun-Re became the most important god in the Egyptian Pantheon in the time of Amenhotep I [48]. Amenhotep I was a judge in the West Bank and later in Karnak [49]. Still, Herihor's scene is the only well-known reference to the existence of Amenhotep I in the Temple of the Hearing Ear. Therefore, "Amenhotep *n bnrt*/Amenhotep I) could play a new cultic role in hearing supplications of the people (*rekhyt*) as a "priest-king" [50] or High Priest as expressed by the form (*sdm nht*) [see the list of Amun-Re epithets of hearing supplications above]. Particularly, in the scene in question, Amenhotep figures naked one hand in his mouth and the second catching a bird that strongly resembles the *rekhyt*-bird of Amenhotep III's depiction and his Ka in front of Khnum in Luxor temple [51]. This is the same cult which accompanied Imhotep in the Greek-roman times and appeared very clearly in Qasr el-Aguz, south of Medinet Habu, according to supplication forms such as: [52]  *sdm*  *nht* (he who hears the prayers of the sufferers),  *sdm nht*

hr Imntt W3st (he who answers the request in the west of Thebes), in addition to a distinctive scene in the tomb of Ipyu (TT217) from the time of Ramesses II, showing king Amenhotep I with the *Atef* crown. He is depicted wearing the cap crown in the scene in question – probably derived from the same blue crown/wig as Herihor. It is a tightfitting leather cap with round metal plates stitched to it or a tightfitting cap of fine linen, artfully embroidered with gold and faience beads in the form of snakes and a large golden forehead plate [53] perching on *sm3-t3wy* symbol between Horus and Seth who are placing the *Atef* crown on his head and holding ropes by other hands. Below are four *rekhyt* figures, which reflect the relationship between Amenhotep I and the people as a whole, not just the workmen in the time of Ramesses II [54]. The texts of the eastern temple describe Ramesses II and Ptolemy VIII as hearing prayers and hearing the god [31]. The *rekhyt* appeared in the reliefs of the Ptolemaic period on the walls of the eastern temple of Ramesses II [31]. The palm is reproduced twice as a real tree, which suggests that this palm existed and the cult image of the king in some way connected to it [46]. Van Walsem now assumes that a cult statue of the king in a palm grove in the temple of Amun at Karnak would have been. This palm grove is the latest felled during the construction of the *3h-mnw* but the statue would have continued to receive cult as "Amenhotep *n.i p3 wb3*" and the priests continued would have spoken of "Amenhotep of the Date Palm" [46].

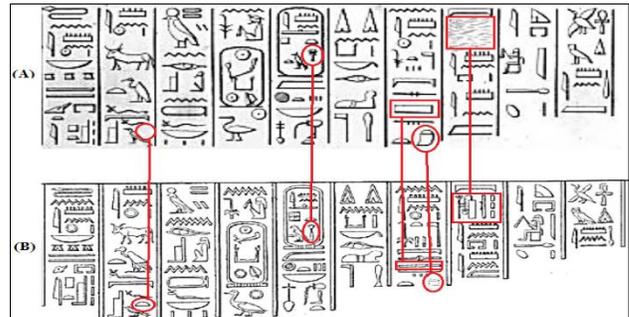


Figure 3 differences between Rossellini's and Champollion's copies of the main texts accompanying Amenhotep I and Ahmes-Nefertari, Tomb A. 18 in Draa Abu el-Naga at Thebes; **a**, Rossellini's copy, **b**, Champollion's copy (After, Rossellini- Vol. 3, 1838 & Champollion, 1845)

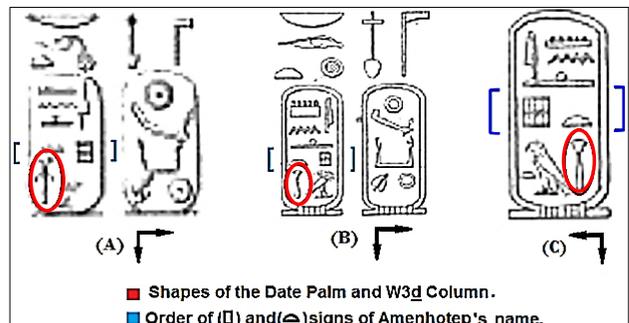


Figure 4 differences between Rossellini's and Champollion's copies of Amenhotep I's cartouches over the heads (except c) of Amenhotep I and Ahmes-Nefertari, Tomb A. 18 in Draa Abu el-Naga at Thebes; **a**, Rossellini's copy, **b**, Champollion's copy, **c**, Champollion's copy of the main text (After, Rossellini Vol. 1, 1832 & Champollion 1845)

6. Conclusion

In the scene in question, Herihor proclaimed himself as a real king, both religiously and politically, with a uraeus on his forehead, libating, burning incense, dedicating an obelisk –now lost– and playing a cultic role in the presence of Amun-Re, Mut, and Amenhotep I in the temple of the Hearing Ear. All the divine epithets of Amenhotep I were known and listed by Černý, but the scene described in this paper refers to a new cultic role of Amenhotep I in the temple of the Hearing Ear related to the supplications of the rekhyt. The form “*Imn-ḥtp t3 bnrt*” is dated to Tomb A.18 [if the date palm determinative is the *w3d* column it is also a new name of the king] from the Ramesside period and this form also expresses the birth name of king Amenhotep I at the time of the tomb. This study also contributes to determining the date of the Cairo Egyptian Museum 42131 to the Ramesside period.

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