

CHAPTER 28

THE TEMPLES OF MILLIONS OF YEARS AT WESTERN THEBES

MARTINA ULLMANN

INTRODUCTION

WHERE was the cult dedicated to the kings buried in the Valley of the Kings performed? Usually we can observe a close spatial connection between the place of interment and installations for a funerary cult within the Egyptian culture, regardless of the royal or nonroyal nature of the dead. This was the case in the Old and Middle Kingdoms with the pyramid complexes, which combined the burial within the pyramid with the pyramid temple where the cult for the king took place.

With the choice of a rock-cut tomb in the Valley of the Kings for the royal burial in the early Eighteenth Dynasty the situation changed. The location of the Kings' Valley in the West-Theban hills was too remote to allow a proper daily cult and regular visits during festival processions. No buildings where a royal funerary cult could have been performed have been identified in the valley, and no priestly titles related to the valley as a whole or to a specific royal tomb there are known.

This leads to the question posed above: Where did the royal funerary cult take place during most of the New Kingdom? Usually the answer points to the row of royal temples in Western Thebes, which were built on the flat desert strip between the lower irrigated land to the east and the desert hills to the west, from Qurna in the north to Medinet Habu in the south. These temples are commonly interpreted as "funerary" or "memorial" temples, with their cult focused on the deceased kings (e.g., Stadelmann 1986; Gundlach 2001). One of the main reasons for this interpretation is the location of the temples in Western Thebes, that is, within the necropolis area and thus in the vicinity of the royal tombs in the Kings' Valley. The Egyptian designation for these temples as *ḥw.t n.t ḥḥ.w m rnp.wt* "house of millions of years" has therefore often been regarded as denoting an installation that was dedicated specifically to the royal funerary cult.

But the simple equation of “house of millions of years” with “funerary” or “memorial” temple and the setting up of an opposition to so-called divine temples does not work (for this and the following, see Ullmann 2002). First of all, temples of millions of years do not represent a feature that is in any way exclusive to the Theban necropolis area, as they are also documented in Eastern Thebes (within the Karnak precinct and at Luxor temple) and throughout Egypt and Nubia. Apart from the Theban area, concentrations of temples of millions of years existed at Heliopolis, Memphis, and Abydos. All of them are cult places that were especially relevant for kingship ideology. But the evidence for million year houses at places like Pi-Ramesse, Thinis, Serabit el-Khadim, and at several locations in Nubia shows that the theological concept that underlies these temples could at least in principle be transferred to any place. And it is important to note that in many cases more than one temple with this designation was erected by the same king.

Chronologically the temples of millions of years are not tied exclusively to the kings who were buried in the Valley of the Kings. The evidence runs from the reign of Amenemhat III in the late Twelfth Dynasty to the Third Intermediate Period (Scheschonq I and Osorkon II), with a late resumption of the designation at the beginning of Greek rule in Egypt under Alexander the Great at Luxor temple.

That means that topographically and chronologically there is no specific relationship between the temples referred to by the Egyptians as “houses of millions of years” on the whole and the royal tombs in the Valley of the King. But the question arises whether all or some of the temples of millions of years, which were located at Western Thebes, formed a specific group with distinct features that set it apart from other royal temples, and if so, if this might be due to a royal funerary cult.

The following discussion considers this question from various points of view: temple designation, layout, architecture, iconographic program, temple theology, priesthood, and cult.

THE NAMES OF THE WEST-THEBAN ROYAL TEMPLES

The royal temples in Western Thebes are designated as “*hw.t* of king N” (“house of king N”), that can be varied to “*hw.t-ntr* of king N” (“god’s house of king N”) (for this and the following, see Ullmann 2002, 639–660). The term for “temple” may be expanded by the genitive connection *n.t hḥ.w m rnp.wt* (“of millions of years”). In most cases the so-called prenomen of the king—his *nswt-bjt* or “throne” name—was used for denoting his West-Theban temple, whereas the *s3 R^c* name was usually employed for royal temples in Eastern Thebes and elsewhere in Egypt. But there are some exceptions to this rule, and it is only from Ramesses II through the end of the Ramesside period that this topographical pattern of use of the royal names is observed strictly.

This brings up the question whether the *nswt-bjt* name had a specific significance that made its use for the West-Theban royal temples especially fitting. The title *nswt-bjt*

characterizes the king as keeper of the royal office upon earth; it empowers him to act as a ruler politically and within the cult. The premen itself sets up a relationship between the king and the sun god by its constant use of the element "R". We may therefore assume that especially these aspects of the royal ideology were of importance for the theological setting in which the West-Theban royal temples were functioning.

The so-called proper or religious name of a West-Theban royal temple, like *Dsr Dsrw Jmn*, "Sacred is the Sacredness of Amun," for the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri, usually follows the king's name in elaborate temple designations, but it is often used as a kind of shorthand for the temple in question, for example, within priestly titles (Helck 1960, 79–81). It implies a short theological message, which may refer either to the cult topographical setting of the temple or to the cultic function of the building, or it takes the form of a religious statement that is related to either the king or a god (see Table 28.1).

Table 28.1 List of Royal Temples at Western Thebes

King	Royal temple/s in Western Thebes	Location	Proper Name of the Temple
Ahmosé	not proven		
Amenhotep I/ Ahmes-Nefertari	yes	east of Dra Abu el-Naga?	most probably <i>Mn js.t/Mn js.wt</i> "Enduring is the place/ are the places"
Thutmose I	yes	north of <i>Hnk.t ʿnh?</i>	<i>Hnm.t ʿnh</i> "The one which is united with life"
Thutmose II	yes	north of Medinet Habu	<i>Šsp.t ʿnh</i> "The one which receives life"
Hatshepsut	yes	Deir el-Bahri	<i>Dsr Dsrw Jmn</i> "Sacred is the Sacredness of Amun"
	yes (classification as royal temple not entirely certain)	unknown	<i>Hʿj 3h.t Jmn</i> "The horizon of Amun appears"
Thutmose III	yes	Deir el-Bahri	<i>Dsr 3h.t Jmn</i> "Sacred is the horizon of Amun"
	yes	north of Ramesseum	<i>Hnk.t ʿnh</i> "The one which bestows life"
Amenhotep II	yes	north of Ramesseum	<i>Šsp.t ʿnh</i> or alternatively <i>Jʿb 3h.t</i> "The one which receives life" or "The one which unites with the horizon"

(continued)

Table 28.1 *Continued*

King	Royal temple/s in Western Thebes	Location	Proper Name of the Temple
Thutmose IV	yes	south of Ramesseum	unknown
Amenhotep III	yes	Kom el-Heitan	<i>Šsp.t Jmn w.t.s.t nfrw=f</i> "The one which receives Amun and which raises his beauty"
Amenhotep IV/ Akhenaten	not proven		
Semenchkare	probably yes, but not entirely certain	unknown	unknown
Tutankhamun	probably yes, but not entirely certain	north of Medinet Habu?	unknown
Aye	yes	north of Medinet Habu	<i>Mn mnw</i> "Enduring are the monuments"
Horemheb	yes	north of Medinet Habu	unknown
Ramesses I	uncertain	unknown	unknown
Seti I	yes	Qurna	<i>3ḥ (Stḥj mrj.n-Pth)</i> "Beneficial is Seti, loved by Ptah"
Ramesses II	yes	Ramesseum	<i>Ḥnm.t W3s.t</i> "The one which is united with Thebes"
Merenptah	yes	northwest of Kom el-Heitan	unknown
Seti II	yes	unknown	unknown
Siptah	yes	north of Ramesseum	unknown
Tausret	yes	south of Ramesseum	[...] <i>ḥn mj Stḥ nḥt</i> [...]"... beautiful like Seth the strong one..."
Sethnacht	not proven		
Ramesses III	yes	Medinet Habu	<i>Ḥnm.t nḥḥ</i> "The one which is united with eternity"
Ramesses IV	yes	north of Medinet Habu?	unknown
	yes (classification as royal temple not entirely certain)	Asasif	unknown
Ramesses V	yes	unknown	unknown
Ramesses VI	yes	unknown	unknown
Ramesses VII	not proven		

(continued)

Table 28.1 *Continued*

King	Royal temple/s in Western Thebes	Location	Proper Name of the Temple
Ramesses VIII	not proven		
Ramesses IX	yes	unknown	unknown
Ramesses X	not proven		
Ramesses XI	not proven		

Source: Based mainly on Helck (1960, 82–115); Haring (1997, 419–425); Ullmann (2002); and Leblanc (2010).

Compared with the religious names of royal temples in Eastern Thebes or elsewhere in Egypt, no specific grammatical or semantic pattern can be detected for the West-Theban temples, apart from the fact that if a god is mentioned, it is usually Amun, but this relates to the fact that the royal temples in Western and Eastern Thebes alike are in theology and cult closely connected to the god Amun, as the main local deity.

During Ramesside times a tendency arose to create the names of several royal temples by following a uniform pattern. In the reign of Seti I the religious names for his temples of millions of years in Karnak and in Qurna almost paralleled each other: Karnak, *3h (Stḥi mri.n-Jmn)* “Beneficial is Seti, loved by Amun”; and Qurna, *3h (Stḥi mri.n-Pth)* “Beneficial is Seti, loved by Ptah”. During the reign of Ramesses II the names of his temples in Abydos and at Western Thebes made the same kind of cult topographical statement: Abydos, *Hnm.t T3-wr* “The one which is united with *T3-wr*”; and Western Thebes, *Hnm.t W3s.t* “The one which is united with Thebes”. And the name of his newly built part of the Luxor temple, which can be extended to the entire temple, varied the theme to *Hnm.t nhḥ*, “The one which is united with eternity”. Exactly the same name was later chosen by Ramesses III for his West-Theban royal temple. This is a clear warning against too obvious modern interpretations, like *nhḥ* = eternity = some kind of funerary meaning. The Egyptian concept of eternity was different from the modern use of the term, and *nhḥ* might best be described as eternal cyclic rejuvenation (Assmann 1975).

The evidence provided by the proper names of the royal temples shows clearly that the temples in Western Thebes were not treated in any way differently from royal temples elsewhere. The religious statements made within these names were not specific to Western Thebes, and no special reference to a funerary or memorial cult can be detected. The uniform name pattern of the Nineteenth Dynasty might point to a building program for the royal temples of a king conceptualized early in his reign.

Another important part of the designation of a royal temple in Western Thebes is the phrase “*m pr Jmn*” (“in the house of Amun”). In the Ramesside period “*m pr Jmn*” is frequently added after the proper name or, if this is omitted, directly after the king’s name. In the Eighteenth Dynasty the use of this phrase is attested much less, but we do have evidence for it (dated to the reign of Amenhotep III), for example, for the West-Theban temple of Thutmose III called

Hnk.t nḥj. The small number of attestations before the Nineteenth Dynasty may be due in part to the poorer documentation for the Eighteenth Dynasty and also to a growing tendency in the early Ramesside period toward a greater standardization of temple names.

The “*m pr Jmn*” phrase connects the royal temples in Western Thebes with the main temple of the local patron deity, that is, the temple of Amun at Karnak. The royal temples in other religious centers were associated with the respective main local cult in the same way: the ones in Memphis were “in the house of Ptah,” the ones in Heliopolis were “in the house of Ra,” and the ones in Abydos were “in the house of Osiris.” Furthermore the “*m pr Jmn*” phrase is not specific to West-Theban temples. The million year houses known from Eastern Thebes were connected to the Amun cult alike, for example, the Achmenu of Thutmose III at Karnak, or the so-called triple shrine of Seti II in the forecourt of the Karnak temple, or the Luxor temple during the reign of Ramesses II.

Primarily the “*m pr god N*” phrase reflects a religious dependency; that is, the royal temple was attached to the theological system and the cult regulations of the temple of the local patron deity. Usually this was made visible by means of festival processions between the temples. Administrative and economical bonds could come along with this, too.

Sometimes a location is added to the designation of a West-Theban royal temple. It describes the topographical position of the temple, most often as being simply *ḥr jmnt.t W3s.t*, “to the west of Thebes” or as indicating its relation with the Amun temple at Karnak: *m ḥft-ḥr n Jp.t-s.wt*, “opposite of *Jp.t-s.wt*”.

The most elaborate form of denoting a West-Theban royal temple thus consists of five parts and runs, for example, for the temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, like this: *ḥw.t n.t ḥḥ.w m rnp.wt n nswt-bjt nb t3.wj (Wsr-M3^c.t-R^c mrj Jmn) Hnm.t nḥḥ m pr Jmn ḥr jmnt.t W3s.t*, “house of millions of years of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, the lord of the Two Lands Ramesses III ‘Which is united with eternity’ in the temple of Amun to the west of Thebes.” A wide range of combinations of the five different elements is attested. Most common were the abbreviations “*ḥw.t* of king N” and/or the proper name of the temple. There was a growing tendency toward complexity over the time.

WEST-THEBAN ROYAL TEMPLES ATTESTED DURING THE NEW KINGDOM

The tombs of the first kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Ahmose and Amenhotep I, are most likely to be found in Dra Abu el-Naga, the traditional burial ground of the Seventeenth Dynasty (for the tomb of the latter, see Polz 2007, 172–197). A temple of Ahmose in Western Thebes is not proven (Ullmann 2002, 17–25), and it is not certain whether some personnel of *Nb-pḥtj-R^c* refers to a West-Theban temple of this king (Helck 1960, 82; Haring 1997, 426). Several temples connected with Amenhotep I and Ahmes-Nefertari are attested in Western Thebes, but most of them were only set up in the Ramesside period within the context of the special veneration for these individuals in the Theban necropolis, and in most cases the exact location is disputed. The best

candidate for a royal temple erected during the lifetime of Amenhotep I is the *hw.t Dsr k3 R^c*, for which priests and other officials are documented from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Dynasties (Helck 1960, 83; Haring 1997, 426–427). The location and proper name of this temple are not known with certainty, but it has been convincingly equated with the temple named *Mn js.t/Mn js.wt* and identified archaeologically with a building that was situated below the hills of Dra Abu el-Naga (Polz 2007, 104–111, 187–190).

A temple of Thutmose I called *hw.t 3-hpr-k3-R^c* at Western Thebes with the proper name *Hnm.t 3nh* is amply attested until the late Twentieth Dynasty, but the exact location is much debated (Helck 1960, 88–91; Haring 1997, 419, 428–431). Recently an identification with a structure unearthed by Abu el-Ayun Barakat in 1970/71 about 200 m north of the Thutmose III temple called *Hnk.t 3nh* was proposed (Iwaszczuk 2009).

The construction of temples of millions of years in Western Thebes is proven for the majority of the kings (see Table 28.1) through the end of the Twentieth Dynasty, with the notable exception of Akhenaten (for possible reasons, see Ullmann 2002, 628).

In the reign of Thutmose III two different royal temples were erected at Western Thebes, called *Hnk.t 3nh* and *Dsr 3h.t Jmn*. A block from the Asasif area with a partly destroyed inscription mentioning a house of millions of years of Hatsheput—with her name replaced by the cartouche of Thutmose II—seems to attest a second royal temple already for Hatshepsut, but the proposed identification with the textually proven temple *H^cj 3h.t Jmn* (Ullmann 2002, 53–59) as well as the location and exact nature of the latter remains uncertain. If the block is indeed part of the material unearthed by Abu el-Ayun Barakat in 1970/71, then the temple referred to might instead be the royal temple of Thutmose I called *Hnm.t 3nh* (see above). A considerable part of its decoration seems to have been executed only during the reign of Hatshepsut (Iwaszczuk 2009, 273, 275).

During the reign of Ramesses IV three or even four temples were planned on the west bank (Ullmann 2002, 524–542; Budka 2009). The textually well proven “house of millions of years” of this king may have been located north of Medinet Habu, close to the temple of Aye/Horemheb (Ullmann 2002, 534–535; Budka 2009, 42–43). But the very large temple in the Asasif, where work started under Ramesses IV (for the latest dating, see Budka 2009: 40–41) and was continued by Ramesses V and VI, might as well have been considered a royal temple due to its presumed function within the Beautiful Festival of the Valley (Ullmann 2002, 535–536; Budka 2009, 42–44). It remains uncertain where the royal temples of the late Ramesside rulers, especially the textually proven ones of Ramesses V, VI, and IX, were located (Ullmann 2002, 548–563; Budka 2009, 43; Polz 1998, 279–281).

After the end of the Twentieth Dynasty no newly founded royal temples are attested in Western Thebes. A temple of Sheshonq I, called *hw.t Hd-hpr-R^c stp.n-R^c m W3s.t*, is most likely to be equated with the building activity of this king at Karnak (Ullmann 2002, 573).

Taking all the written and archaeological evidence together, we may assert that each monarch who was buried in the Valley of the Kings had at least one royal temple—sometimes even several—erected in Western Thebes. The frequency with which temples of millions of years are attested in Western Thebes is thus definitely higher than at any other place in Egypt. This may in part be due to the much better evidence within the Theban area, but it also points to the desire or even need to have a place for the royal cult established especially at Western Thebes.

TOPOGRAPHY, LAYOUT, AND FUNCTION

The royal temples on the west bank are an integrant part of the Theban ritual landscape, which encompasses the temples at Karnak and Luxor as well as the sanctuaries at Western Thebes and the tombs there. Numerous cult buildings on both banks of the Nile were linked together theologically in manifold ways. Festival processions (Cabrol 2001) revived the underlying religious and ideological concepts at various occasions throughout the year and presented them to a broader public, thus enabling the participation of at least parts of the population for their own benefits.

The location, layout, and function of the temples of millions of years at Western Thebes can only be understood by putting them within this wider framework of a sacred area. Of primary importance is the Beautiful Festival of the Valley, which came into being in the Eleventh Dynasty, during the later reign of Mentuhotep II, when an annual bark procession between the Amun temple at Karnak and the royal temple in the valley of Deir el-Bahri was introduced. The joining of the royal cult and that of Amun in the latest building period of the Mentuhotep temple at Deir el-Bahri led to the development of the temples of millions of years in general and to the West Theban ones in particular (Arnold 1974a, 73, 78–80, 88; 1974b, 30–33; 1997, 74–76; Ullmann 2002, 674–675; 2007).

When Queen Hatshepsut in the early Eighteenth Dynasty chose a place near the Mentuhotep temple at Deir el-Bahri for her own royal temple, which clearly depends in its location and general layout (valley temple and processional way leading up to a terrace temple) on the Eleventh Dynasty sanctuary (Arnold 1978), the Valley Festival was revived. Throughout the New Kingdom this feast played a major role within the theological concept of the royal temples at Western Thebes. Apart from iconographic and inscriptional evidence, this is indicated by the east-west alignment of all royal temples at the west bank since the time of Hatshepsut, which clearly relates these sanctuaries with the main temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak.

The situation is different for the royal temples of the very early Eighteenth Dynasty. The temple below the hills of Dra Abu el-Naga, which might have served for the cult of Amenhotep I and Ahmes-Nefertari, is oriented north-south with its axis pointing toward the courts of two tombs up the hill (K93.11 and K93.12), which have been proposed as the burial places of Amenhotep I and Ahmes-Nefertari (Polz 2007, 172–192). The general layout of the temple—especially in its rear part—resembles other sanctuaries of the early Eighteenth Dynasty, but the scarcity of information available does not allow a detailed functional interpretation (Polz 2007, 104–111). The temple of Thutmose I has not been thoroughly investigated till now (Iwaszczuk 2009). The one for Thutmose II is very badly preserved, though it was quite small, differs in its plan from later royal temples, and was altered by Thutmose III (Stadelmann 1979, 309).

The reign of Hatshepsut was pivotal for the evolution of the West Theban royal temples and the emerging Theban ritual landscape. Numerous features that can be observed with a constant development in these temples are attested for the first time at her site at Deir el-Bahri (Arnold 1978; Stadelmann 1979). The theology and cult of Amun-Ra,

together with the closely related royal ideology and the cult directed toward the divine ruler and the royal ancestors, were expressed in the layout and the iconographic program of her temple in an all-encompassing effort unseen prior to that time.

Essential features of the layout of most of the West-Theban royal temples since Hatshepsut are (Stadelmann 1979, 1986; Hölscher 1941, 22–32, pl. 2) the already mentioned east-west alignment; huge open courtyards, arranged in ascending terraces, which provide the monumental festival architecture along the processional route into the inner part of the temple; one or several columned halls for the admission of the bark processions with lateral chambers; and the westernmost part of the temple, which displays a tripartite structure. This tripartite arrangement consists of chambers for Amun-Ra (and, probably from the time of Thutmose III, chapels for Mut and Chonsu) in the center, with rooms for the royal cult and the king's ancestors in the south, and an open court (sometimes with adjoining rooms) in the north, which served as a cult place for the sun god. The rooms for the royal cult in the south display a combination of certain architectural and iconographic elements that can be traced back to the innermost part of the pyramid temples of the Old Kingdom: a vaulted ceiling, the king sitting in front of the offering table, and in the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri and the one of Thutmose III called *Hnk.t ʿnh* a false door at the rear wall (Arnold 1978). It is important to note that elements of the royal ideology and the royal cult were not restricted to these rooms in the south dedicated primarily to the king's cult, but were an essential feature of all parts of the temple.

Within this distinctive tripartite structure of most of the West-Theban million year houses the cult was oriented along two different ritual axes (Karkowski 2003): in the center, a large east-west oriented temple designed for processions with the barks of Amun-Ra (and sometimes accompanying deities) and the divine king; in the south an area dedicated to the cult of the king and his royal ancestors and in the north an open court as a cult place for the sun god Ra-Horakhty-Atum. The latter two are connected by a north-south axis for the ritual manifestation of the annual circuit of the sun, as well as for the inclusion of the king, more specifically his divine reign, within the cyclic renewal of the sun god. This tripartite structure can be proven archaeologically with a constant development starting from Hatshepsut until the late Twentieth Dynasty (Stadelmann 1979, 1986; Hölscher 1941, 22–25, pl. 2).

A recurring element of the royal temples at Western Thebes is the integration of a temple palace for ritual purposes (Stadelmann 1973; Waitkus 2008, 286).

Another important feature of the Hatshepsut temple at Deir el-Bahri is the cult of Hathor, which might go back at this site to the time of Mentuhotep II (Arnold 1974a, 83–84). A small temple directly to the south was dedicated to her. The cult of Hathor was integrated in the Valley Festival, but beyond that Hathor played an important role within the concept of royal renewal (Beaux 2012). The temple *Hnk.t ʿnh* of Thutmose III had its own Hathor chapel in the southern forecourt, but in the later royal temples this element is not regularly found.

Thutmose III had another temple of millions of years, called *Dsr ʒh.t Jmn*, built at Deir el-Bahri. Its layout does not display the distinctive tripartite structure described above. The iconographic program seems to center around two closely connected main topics: the

cult for Amun-Ra, especially in connection with the Valley Festival, and the royal cult, primarily directed toward a *Ka* statue of Thutmose III, but also including statues of his predecessors, Thutmose I and II (Ullmann 2002, 88–95; Dolinska 2010 with bibliography).

Most probably only one temple was dedicated permanently—that is, lasting beyond the death of the king—to the cult of each individual king at Western Thebes as a rule. This at least is indicated by the distribution of titles referring to the cult of an individual king (Helck 1960, 79–117). Beginning with the reign of Hatshepsut, these temples displayed the tripartite structure described above.

Due to the lack of archaeological evidence, we do not know whether the royal temples at Heliopolis and Memphis had the same or a similar structure as the one described above as distinctive for most of the West-Theban temples. The royal temples at Abydos do not exhibit exactly this kind of structure, but in the sanctuaries of Seti I and Ramesses II the rooms for the cult of the ancestors and the king are situated at least partially to the south of the main east-west-oriented ritual axis (Ullmann 2002, 246, 323; David 1981). The plan of the Akhmenu of Thutmose III at Karnak, which functioned as a house of millions of years too, differs greatly from the royal temples in Western Thebes, but structural similarities can be observed by placing rooms for chthonic rituals and the ancestors in the southern part and by installing a place for the worship of the sun god on the roof in the northern part (Ullmann 2002, 82–83; Barguet 1962, 283–340). The great speos of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel seems to have been modeled after the contemporary West-Theban royal temples (Ullmann 2013): It displays the same tripartite structure and great similarities within the decoration program. But for the other royal temples of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties in Nubia, individual architectural and decorative programs were preferred.

ICONOGRAPHIC PROGRAM, TEMPLE THEOLOGY, AND CULT

The decoration program of the royal temples at Western Thebes, especially along the east-west main axis, clearly attests a form of the local patron deity Amun (-Ra) as the main deity (Ullmann 2002, 663). A specific form of Amun seems to have been resident in each of the West-Theban royal temples, called “Amun (-Ra) of/in temple N” (Nelson 1942; Stadelmann 1979, 320–321; Ullmann 2002, 666–667; Waitkus 2008, 180–181). He received a daily cult within these temples, as well as a festival one, when the portable statue of Amun-Ra from Karnak visited the royal temples at the west bank at least once per year during the Beautiful Festival of the Valley. The itinerary most probably included the million year house of the reigning king, the construction of which usually started very early in a reign (Ullmann 2002, 668–669), and all the other royal temples still in use, as well as the Hathor sanctuaries at Deir el-Bahri (Waitkus 2008, 182, with further references). The main purpose of these visits seems to have been the temporary merging

of Amun of Karnak with his manifestation resident in each of the royal temples in order to provoke a regular regeneration for the local form of Amun (Waitkus 2008, 181–182).

In addition to Amun, the king in his divine aspects received a cult service in his temple (Ullmann 2002, 661–663). This is amply proven by the priests assigned to the cult of king N within his West-Theban royal temple (Helck 1960, 79–119; Haring 1997, 426–459). The documentation of priests and other officials also makes it very clear that as a rule the royal temples already were in use during the lifetime of a king. Within the temple decoration the royal cult is displayed regularly by the scene in which the Inunmutf priest assigns an offering to the king, or rather his divine *Ka*, sitting in front of an offering table (Rummel 2010a, 96–125; 2010b). Royal statues received daily cult in the royal temples and also as participants in festival processions, as in the case of the West-Theban temples in particular during the Valley Festival. The earliest known depiction of a processional bark for a statue of the reigning king dates to the time of Tutankhamun (Karlshausen 2009, 62–64), but a statue of the reigning king doubtless took part in the ceremonies performed during the Valley Festival since its revival in the early Eighteenth Dynasty.

Pivotal for the cult and the underlying theology of the West-Theban royal temples is the fact that the processional images of the kings were identified with the special form of Amun resident within the particular royal temple (Nelson 1942; Ullmann 2002, 666–667; Waitkus 2008, 189–197). This is proven for the Twentieth Dynasty, but was most probably already established in the early Eighteenth Dynasty. A title like “wab of Amun of *Mn-hpr-R^c* in *Hnk.t^cnh^h*” (Helck 1960, 96) surely refers to this special relationship between the king and the Amun of his temple. By identifying the king in his capacity as a divine ruler—embodied in his *Ka* statue—with the Amun resident in his temple, he took part in whose annual regeneration during the Valley Festival when Amun of Karnak visited the royal temples at Western Thebes. It might even be asked if not the regeneration of the divine ruler—as the main purpose of the royal temples (see below)—by a temporary ritual merging between his statue and that of Amun of Karnak only provoked the existence of a special form of Amun within such a temple, who as a consequence then was closely related to the king.

The existence of special manifestations of Amun within royal temples is not restricted to Western Thebes, but can also be seen in other temples of millions of years, like the Akhmenu of Thutmose III at Karnak or the Luxor temple (Ullmann 2002, 667; Waitkus 2008, 204–209, 215–222). There is also evidence outside of Thebes for the temporary identification of the divine ruler with the local patron deity within his temples of millions of years during certain festivals (Ullmann 2002, 667; Waitkus 2008, 194–197, 282–285).

In addition to Amun and the king, a cult in favor of the Ennead as the ensemble of the local ancestor gods can be observed in the royal temples, be it at Western Thebes or elsewhere (Ullmann 2002, 663–664). But in the West-Theban temples the cult of the royal ancestors was of special importance. This can clearly be seen by the above-described specific tripartite structure of most of the royal temples at Western Thebes, where rooms dedicated to the cult of the royal ancestors—in most cases exemplified by either the direct predecessor or a specially important one (like Thutmose I in the Hatshepsut temple at Deir el-Bahri)—were located to the south of the east-west axis.

Other deities who were venerated regularly in the West-Theban temples were Ra-Horakhty-Atum, whose cult place is in the northern part of the temple (see above), and Osiris, often combined with Ptah and Sokar.

The iconographic program of the temples of millions of years, be it at Western Thebes or elsewhere, generally displays the living king, and the cult is directed toward the reigning divine king (Ullmann 2002, passim and esp. 661–670; Gulyás 2003; Rummel 2010a, 108–114; 2010b, 204–208). The ruler who was responsible for building the temple is usually not characterized as deceased within the decoration (e.g., by using the *m3^c-hrw* formulae), and no specific funerary rituals are depicted (not even in the rooms dedicated primarily to the royal cult), but rather renewal rituals. These are primarily the coronation of the king, allusions to the Hebsed, and the Opening of the Mouth, which is often closely connected to the king sitting in front of the offering table with the *Iunmutef* performing the ritual. In the temple of Seti I at Qurna the Opening of the Mouth is performed within the context of the annual visit of Amun of Karnak in the temple during the Valley Festival and is thereby closely related to the identification of the king with Amun (Waitkus 2008, 175–203; Rummel 2010a, 128–132; 2010b, 200–202). It is important to stress that the ritual of the Opening of the Mouth is not exclusively related to a funerary context at a tomb, but is equally meaningful for the regular revival of cult statues within the daily and the festival temple cult (Rummel 2010a, 142–144).

The denotation of the ruling king as “Osiris N”, which is sometimes, albeit quite rarely, found in the West-Theban royal temples scenes, has to be seen within the context of royal renewal: Ritual death as the precondition for achieving a new, regenerated divine status involved a temporary association between the king and Osiris (Ullmann 2002, 669–670; Rummel 2010a, 108–114, 129–132, 143–144; 2010b, 202–208). The so-called Osiride pillar statues, which are regularly found in royal temples, are connected with the sed festival and the royal renewal as well (Leblanc 1980, 1982; Gulyás 2007).

The primary goal of the cult in the royal temples, be it at Western Thebes or elsewhere, was the regeneration of the divine king, or rather the royal power bestowed upon him by the gods (Haeny 1997; Ullmann 2002, 664–668; Rummel 2010a, 108–114; 2010b). This renewal of the divine rule of the king was fulfilled in analogy to the regeneration of the gods. The perception of Egyptian kingship as a sacred institution, with the reigning king as the earthly representative of the Great God, formed the ideological background. In the “houses of millions of years” first the rule of the living Horus king and later the one of the Osiris king should be perpetuated into eternity by endless cyclical renewal, in analogy to the daily, as well as the annual, circuit of the sun.

Several constantly recurring iconographic elements refer to this main aspect within the function of the royal temples: the king sitting in front of the offering table with the *Iunmutef* performing the ritual, the so-called Osiride pillar statues of the king, scenes displaying the divine parentage of the king, the writing of the king’s name on the sacred persea tree, coronation scenes often combined with the presentation of palm panicles and sed festivals, *sm3-t3.wi* scenes, bestowing of the lifetime of Ra and the years of Atum in combination with the celebration of the sed festival, and so forth.

The regeneration of the king's power was closely linked to his royal-divine ancestors, who legitimized his rule. This is why the presence of the Ennead as the divine ancestors in the royal temples was of importance. For the same reason, quite regularly the cult of one of the predecessors of the reigning king was integrated within the temple, especially at Western Thebes.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the temples of millions of years was the regular regeneration of the divine rule of the king in analogy to the renewal of the gods, in order to maintain the cosmic order. In the temples at Western Thebes this was accomplished by linking the royal ideology with the theology of Amun (-Ra) and by establishing the Beautiful Festival of the Valley. Based on this theological background and the cultic needs resulting out of it, a regular pattern for the architecture and the layout of these royal temples was developed in the early Eighteenth Dynasty, starting with Hatsheput. But the basic idea behind these temples could be realized at any place in Egypt or Nubia by connecting the royal cult with that of the local patron deity and by adapting theology and rituals to the specific features of the site. The architecture, layout, and iconographic program of these royal temples displayed many similarities to the West-Theban temples, and even the tripartite structure, which was so distinctive for these sanctuaries, could be transferred to another site, as the example of the temple of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel seems to indicate.

Priests performing the royal cult are documented especially well for most of the West-Theban royal temples ("priest of king N in temple N"), but again this is not unique for Western Thebes, as is shown, for example, by several priests of Tutankhamun connected with his temple at Faras in Nubia (Helck 1960, 152). The abundance of prosopographical material found at Thebes might easily provoke a one-sided picture in this case.

The question "Where did the royal funerary cult take place in the New Kingdom?" implies that there was indeed a special cult performed exclusively for the dead kings, but the rituals executed in the West-Theban royal temples or anywhere else are not specifically funerary in their character, and the iconography of these temples shows no special adherence to the dead king. Rather, we should assume that the cult for the dead king at that time was basically a continuation of the cult for the divine ruler, which was an intrinsic part of Egyptian religion. The continuous regeneration of the divine kingship did take place for each individual king, and it was to be carried on after his death. But there is no evidence that the actual rituals in the temples changed.

One specific feature of the royal temples in Western Thebes is that in several cases the cult for individual kings lasted longer there than anywhere else. This was most probably due to the specific importance of the theology of Amun for the royal cult during the New Kingdom, which led to better economic resources for the West-Theban royal

temples. The proximity of the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings might have stimulated further the duration of the cult, especially at Western Thebes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arnold, D. 1974a. *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep von Deir el-Bahari, Band I: Architektur und Deutung*. Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 8. Mainz.
- Arnold, D. 1974b. *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep von Deir el-Bahari, Band II: Die Wandreliefs des Sanktuars*. Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 11. Mainz.
- Arnold, D. 1978. "Vom Pyramidenbezirk zum 'Haus für Millionen Jahre.'" *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 34: 1–8, Mainz.
- Arnold, D. 1997. "Royal Cult Complexes of the Old and Middle Kingdoms." In *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, edited by B. Shafer, 31–85. Ithaca, NY.
- Assmann, J. 1975. *Zeit und Ewigkeit im Alten Ägypten: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Ewigkeit*. Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Heidelberg.
- Barguet, P. 1962. *Le temple d'Amon-Rê à Karnak*. Recherches d'archéologie, de philologie et d'histoire 21. Cairo.
- Beaux, N. 2012. *La chapelle d'Hathor—Temple d'Hatchepsout à Deir el-Bahari: I. Vestibule et sanctuaires*. Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire 129. Cairo.
- Bickel, S., and A. Loprieno, eds. 2003. *Basel Egyptology Prize 1: Junior Research in Egyptian History, Archaeology, and Philology*. Basel.
- Budka, J. 2009. "The Ramesside Temple in the Asasif: Observations on Its Construction and Function, Based on the Results of the Austrian Excavations." In *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Structuring Religion*, edited by R. Preys, 7:17–45. Wiesbaden.
- Cabrol, A. 2001. *Les voies processionnelles de Thèbes*. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 97. Leuven.
- David, R. 1981. *A Guide to Religious Ritual at Abydos*. Warminster.
- Dolińska, M. 2010. "Temple of Thutmosis III at Deir el-Bahari after 30 Years of Research." In *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Interconnections between Temples*, edited by M. Dolińska and H. Beinlich, 8:57–66. Wiesbaden.
- Dolińska, M., and H. Beinlich, eds. 2010. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Interconnections between Temples*, Vol. 8. Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen 3. 3. Wiesbaden.
- Dorman, P., and B. Bryan, eds. 2007. *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*. Occasional Proceedings of the Theban Workshop. Studies of Ancient Oriental Civilizations 61. Chicago.
- Flossmann-Schütze, M. C., et al., eds. 2013. *Kleine Götter—grosse Götter: Festschrift für Dieter Kessler zum 65. Geburtstag*. Tuna el-Gebel 4. Vaterstetten.
- Gulyás, A. 2003. "Die Erneuerungstheologie der HH m rnpwt-Tempel." In *Basel Egyptology Prize 1: Junior Research in Egyptian History, Archaeology, and Philology*, edited by S. Bickel and A. Loprieno, 163–172. Basel.
- Gulyás, A. 2007. "The Osirid Pillars and the Renewal of Ramesses III at Karnak." *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 36: 31–48, Hamburg.
- Gundlach, R. 2001. "Temples." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, edited by D. Redford, 3:363–379. Oxford.

- Haeny, G. 1997. "New Kingdom 'Mortuary Temples' and 'Mansions of Millions of Years.'" In *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, edited by B. Shafer, 86–126. Ithaca, NY.
- Haring, B. 1997. *Divine Households: Administrative and Economic Aspects of the New Kingdom Royal Memorial Temples in Western Thebes*. Egyptologische Uitgaven 12. Leiden.
- Helck, W. 1960. *Materialien zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Neuen Reiches (Teil I–V)*. Abhandlungen der Mainzer Akademie der Wissenschaften. Wiesbaden.
- Helck, W., and W. Westendorf, eds. 1986. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*. Wiesbaden.
- Hölscher, U. 1941. *The Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III*. Pt. I, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu III*. The University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications 54. Chicago.
- Iwasczuk, J. 2009. "The Temple of Thutmosis I Rediscovered." *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 21, 269–277. Warsaw.
- Jaritz, H. 2010. "The Temple of Millions of Years of Merenptah. The Recovery of an Almost Lost Site." In *Les temples de millions d'années et le pouvoir royal à Thèbes au Nouvel Empire*, edited by C. Leblanc and G. Zaki, 147–158. Cairo.
- Karkowski, J. 2003. *The Temple of Hatshepsut: The Solar Complex*. Deir el-Bahari VI. Warsaw.
- Karlshausen, C. 2009. *L'iconographie de la barque processionnelle divine en Égypte au Nouvel Empire*. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 182. Leuven.
- Leblanc, C. 1980. "Piliers et colosses de type 'osiriaque' dans le contexte des temples de culte royal." *Bulletin de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale* 80: 69–89, Le Caire.
- Leblanc, C. 1982. "Le culte rendu aux colosses 'osiriaques' durant le Nouvel Empire." *Bulletin de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale* 82: 295–311, Le Caire.
- Leblanc, C. 2010. "Les Châteaux de millions d'années: Une redéfinition à la lumière des récentes recherches; De la vocation religieuse à la fonction politique et économique." In *Les temples de millions d'années et le pouvoir royal à Thèbes au Nouvel Empire*, edited by C. Leblanc and G. Zaki, 19–57. Cairo.
- Leblanc, C., and G. Zaki, eds. 2010. *Les temples de millions d'années et le pouvoir royal à Thèbes au Nouvel Empire*. Memnonia Cahier Suppl. 2. Cairo.
- Nelson, H. H. 1942. "The Identity of Amon-Re of United-with-Eternity." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1: 127–155, Chicago.
- Petrie, W. M. F. 1897. *Six Temples at Thebes 1896*. London.
- Polz, D. 1998. "The Ramsesnakht Dynasty and the Fall of the New Kingdom: A New Monument in Thebes." *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 25: 257–293, Hamburg.
- Polz, D. 2007. *Der Beginn des Neuen Reiches: Zur Vorgeschichte einer Zeitenwende*. Sonderschrift des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo 31. Berlin.
- Preys, R., ed. 2009. *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Structuring Religion*, Vol. 7. Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen 3, 2. Wiesbaden.
- Redford, D. 2001. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Vol. 3. Oxford.
- Rummel, U. 2010a. *Iunmutef: Konzeption und Wirkungsbereich eines altägyptischen Gottes*. Sonderschrift des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo 33. Berlin.
- Rummel, U. 2010b. "Generating 'Millions of Years': Iunmutef and the Ritual Aspect of Divine Kingship." In *Les temples de millions d'années et le pouvoir royal à Thèbes au Nouvel Empire*, edited by C. Leblanc and G. Zaki, 193–208. Cairo.
- Schröder, S. 2010. *Millionenjahrhaus: Zur Konzeption des Raumes der Ewigkeit im konstellativen Königtum in Sprache, Architektur und Theologie*. Wiesbaden.
- Sesana, A. 2010. "Le temple d'Amenhotep II à Thèbes-ouest: du passé au présent." In *Les temples de millions d'années et le pouvoir royal à Thèbes au Nouvel Empire*, edited by C. Leblanc and G. Zaki, 73–79. Cairo.

- Shafer, B., ed. 1997. *Temples of Ancient Egypt*. Ithaca, NY.
- Sourouzzian, H. 2010. "The Temple of Millions of Years of Amenhotep III: Past, Present, and Future Perspectives." In *Les temples de millions d'années et le pouvoir royal à Thèbes au Nouvel Empire*, edited by C. Leblanc and G. Zaki, 91–98. Cairo.
- Sourouzzian, H. 2011. "Investigating the Mortuary Temple of Amenhotep III." *Egyptian Archaeology* 39: 29–32, London.
- Stadelmann, R. 1973. "Tempelpalast und Erscheinungsfenster in den thebanischen Totentempeln." *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 29: 221–242, Mainz.
- Stadelmann, R. 1979. "Totentempel und Millionenjahrhaus in Theben." *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 35: 303–321, Mainz.
- Stadelmann, R. 1986. "Totentempel III." In *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, edited by W. Helck and W. Westendorf, 6:706–711. Wiesbaden.
- Ullmann, M. 2002. *König für die Ewigkeit—Die Häuser der Millionen von Jahren: Eine Untersuchung zu Königskult und Tempeltypologie in Ägypten*. Ägypten und Altes Testament 51. Wiesbaden.
- Ullmann, M. 2007. "Origins of Thebes as a Ritual Landscape." In *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*, edited by P. Dorman and B. Bryan, 3–25. Chicago.
- Ullmann, M. 2013. "Von Theben nach Nubien—Überlegungen zum Kultkomplex Ramses' II. in Abu Simbel." In *Kleine Götter—grosse Götter: Festschrift für Dieter Kessler zum 65. Geburtstag*, edited by M. C. Flossmann-Schütze et al., 503–524. Vaterstetten.
- Waitkus, W. 2008. *Untersuchungen zu Kult und Funktion des Luxortempels*. Aegyptiaca Hamburgensia 2. Hamburg.
- Wilkinson, R. H., ed. 2011. *The Temple of Tausret: The University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition Tausret Temple Project, 2004–2011*. Tucson, AZ.