ANCIENT EGYPT 2017
PERSPECTIVES OF RESEARCH
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edited by

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Study of Kushite architectural programmes: the Taharqa’s columned porches at Thebes*

Jérémy HOURDIN

Abstract: This paper focuses on the study of the Taharqa’s columned porches built in front of Theban temples, in particular the colonnades of the Karnak eastern temple and Montu temple at North Karnak. The decoration of their intercolumnar screen walls can be decomposed mainly in two successive phases: the royal introductory rites following by the coronation rites. The decorative programme stages the crowning of the Kushite king within an accessible area of sacred precincts by people. It could be possible to see also the porches of Taharqa as a monumentalisation of the ancestral shrines of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Keywords: Taharqa, columned porches, coronation, Kushite kingship, Thebes

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During the Kushite period, and more especially under the reign of Taharqa, many colonnades were built in the Theban area. The most numerous columned monuments are the “colonnades propylées” erected in front of many Theban sanctuaries: the eastern temple of Amun and the temple of Khonsu in the precinct of Karnak, but also at North Karnak in front of the Montu temple, and at South Karnak before the Mut temple.¹ Unlike the Kushite kiosks,² the columned porches were not independent constructions but extensions of the temples directly attached to the entrance. An important part of the decoration of these monuments focuses on the coronation of the Kushite king Taharqa and its staging.³

The columned porches of Taharqa in the Theban area

The colonnades of Karnak eastern temple and North Karnak

Among the “colonnades propylées” of Taharqa in Thebes, only the porch built in front of the Eastern temple at Karnak is still partially well preserved in situ.⁴ The monument was appended to the mud brick

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¹ Leclant 1965: 200–216, Fig. 32; Dallibor 2005: 107–109.
³ This paper presents some conclusions of my PhD study about the Kushite monuments at Thebes (“Des Pharaons kouchites aux Pharaons saïtes: identités, enjeux et pouvoir dans l’Égypte du VIIe av. J.-C.”, defended in January 2016 under the supervision of Prof. D. Devauchelle, University Lille 3, France).
⁴ The colonnade of Karnak eastern temple (KIU 1131) will be published online as part of the Karnak project: CNRS, USR 3172 – CFEETK / UMR 5140 – Équipe ENIM - Programme « Investissement d’Avenir » ANR-11-LABX-0032-01 LabEx Archimede.

References to the monuments of Karnak are given with their KIU numbers (Karnak Identifiant Unique) which allow to access the full entrees (hieroglyphics texts, photographs, bibliographical references, etc.) from the Karnak project at the address: Karnak.