Representation of Ptolemaic Kings in cloaks on the walls of the Egyptian Temples

By

Heba Magdy Khalil
Associate professor of Graeco-Roma Archeology
Faculty of Tourism & Hotels, Guiding Department
Alexandria University
ملخص

لقد اعتاد المصري القديم على تصوير الملوك الفراعنة مرتدية النقية أو اللاتونيك، ولكن من النادر أن نجد منهم مصورين مرتدين العباءة. ربما يعزو ذلك إلى فكر الفنان المصري القديم في تصوير الملوك بشكل مثالي يظهر فيه شباب الملك. حيث أن الشباب هو رمز القوة والقدرة على الحكم. ولا يمكن أن يظهر ذلك إذا تم تغطية جسم الملك ببعادة لذلك كان دائما ما يصوّر بالنقية. خلال العصر اليوناني-الروماني بدأ تصوير الملوك مرتدين العباءة على حدود المعابد المصرية. لقد رصدت الباحثة 13 منظر من معابد ادفو ودندرة وعبد خونسو بالكرنك يظهر فيها الملك الربطي مرتدية العباءة. المناصر مصور فيها الملوك التالية: بطلموس الثالث، الرابع، الثامن، وربما الثاني عشر. تهدف الباحثة رصد سبب ظهور الملوك في هذه المناظر بالتحديد مرتدين العباءة عوضا عن النقية الملكية التقليدية. هل يمكن أن تكون هذه المناظر تشير إلى طقس محدد؟ ولماذا تم تصوير هؤلاء الملوك بالتحديد في هذا الشكل؟

الكلمات الدالة:

العباءة، الملوك البطالمة، المعابد المصرية، عيد الحب سد

Abstract

The ancient Egyptian kings used to be represented during the Pharaonic period wearing the kilt or the tunic, rarely they were represented in cloaks. This could be related to the concept of the ancient Egyptian artist to represent the king in his ideal shape. The youth of the king which is a symbol of his strength and ability to rule Egypt,
could only be represented through showing him in just a kilt not in a robe or a cloak that hides his body. It was not until the Graeco-Roman period, when the kings started to be more represented on the walls of the temples wearing the cloak. The researcher noticed 13 scenes from Edfu, Dendara, and Khonsu temple at Karnak. All of them show the king Ptolemy III, Ptolemy IV, or Ptolemy VIII. The researcher will try to investigate the reason for these representations. Could they be related to a certain ritual? Why those kings were the one that were represented in this shape?

**Keywords:**

Cloak, Ptolemaic kings, Egyptian temples, Sed festival

**Introduction:**

The ancient Egyptian kings used to be represented during the Pharaonic period wearing the kilt or the tunic. The shendyt, or kilt, was the basic garment of the Egyptian nobleman, or upper class, from the earliest days of the Old Kingdom (c. 2700–c. 2000 B.C.E.) all the way through the New Kingdom (c. 1500–c. 750 B.C.E.). At its most basic, the shendyt was a rectangular piece of cloth, wrapped around the hips and held in place by tucking one end into the tightly wrapped waist or by wearing a tied belt.\(^1\) The classical kilts were represented in Egyptian art in three different lengths: short, long, and high waisted. The short

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and long extend from the waist to the knee, or to the calf or ankle. The high-waisted kilt extends from beneath the breast to the calf or ankles.\textsuperscript{2}

At the beginning of the New Kingdom (c. 1500–c. 750 B.C.E.), Egypt conquered Syria. Syrians were known for the quality of their weaving, and they helped introduce the tunic to Egypt.\textsuperscript{3} It was made of a rectangular piece of cloth that was folded in half and sewn on both sides. An armhole was left at the top of each side, in addition to an opening for the neck at the top. The basic tunic was sleeveless; however, separate sleeves could be attached to it.\textsuperscript{4} Baggy tunics with false sleeves were more common to be seen on the archaeological objects. They were called false sleeves because they were formed by the surplus of fabric from which the tunic was made.\textsuperscript{5}

As for the Cloaks, they were also known in ancient Egypt as an outer garment to be worn by men and women alike. A cloak can be defined as a large oblong, square or rectangular piece of cloth which was generally worn over other garments. The wrapping of a cloak over one shoulder can be seen more commonly in Middle and New Kingdom tombs.\textsuperscript{6} Shawls also appeared in the Pharaonic period. It is

\textsuperscript{2} Hallman A., Article spotlight: unwrapping ancient Egyptian fashion, News & Notes, oriental institute of the university of Chicago, issue 239, 2018, 12.
\textsuperscript{3} Vogelsang-Eastwood G., 29.
\textsuperscript{4} Hallman A., 10.
\textsuperscript{5} Hallman A., 11
\textsuperscript{6} Vogelsang-Eastwood G, 161.
a square or rectangle outer garment used to cover the upper part of the body. There are few examples of short shawls worn by Egyptians, which may indicate that this garment was not a typical, everyday Egyptian garment. It seems that the high officials and the priests were represented wrapped in cloaks and shawls (Pl. 1). As for the kings they wore these cloaks rarely in certain ceremonies.

The reason for representing the kings in kilts and not in cloaks could be related to the concept of the ancient Egyptian artist to represent the king in his ideal shape. The youth of the king which is a symbol of his strength and ability to rule Egypt, could only be represented through showing him in just a kilt not in a robe or a cloak that hides his body.

**Scenes of Ptolemaic kings in cloaks**

It was not until the Graeco-Roman period, when the kings started to be more represented on the walls of the temples wearing the cloak. The researcher observed the following scenes:

**In the temple of Dendara**, the Ptolemaic king is represented on the eastern wall of the eastern staircase that leads to the roof of the temple, surmounted with the double crown and wears a tunic covered with striped cloak that wrapped over both of his shoulders and covered the arms.

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7 Vogelsang-Eastwood G, 155.
up to the elbows (Pl. 2). 8 The same scene is represented on
the western wall of the same staircase that shows the king
descending from the roof of the temple. 9 He is represented
surmounted with the double crown, wears a tunic fastened
from the front. One striped sleeve is attached to the tunic in
order to cover the right arm (Pl. 3).

The same two processions, the ascending and the
descending ones, were repeated on the walls of the western
staircase. the ascending procession here is similar to the
previous one (Pl. 4). 10 While in the descending scene
represented on the southern wall, he is represented wearing
a tunic fastened from the front with also one attached sleeve
covers the left arm. There is also a shawl covers the upper
part of the body (Pl. 5). 11

At Edfu temple, a scene on the eastern wall of the
library in the first hypostyle hall. The lector priest ḫrỉ ḫbt is
represented skewering nine figurines on a spear in front of
Ptolemy VIII. 12 The king is represented wearing a cloak.
(Pl. 6). The title of the ritual reads:

‘Overthrowing the enemies of the king daily as nṯṣyw (and)
as the nine bows’

8 Chassinat E., le temple de Dendara, tome. VII, IFAO, (Caire, 1972),
Pl. DCLXVI.
9 Chassinat, Dendara VII, Pl. DCLXXXI.
10 Chassinat E., le temple de Dendara, tome. VIII, IFAO, (Caire, 1978),
Pl. DCCXLI
11 Chassinat, Dendara VIII, DCCLXXIII
12 Chassinat E., le temple d’Edfou, Tome IX, IFAO, (Caire, 1929), Pl.
LXXXII
The lector priest is depicted wearing an animal skin and holding a papyrus roll and the inscription above him reads:

‘The chief lector of Horus of Behdet, great god, lord of the sky’ (ḥr-ḥḥt ḫrty n ḫḤḏt nṯr ḫ3 nḥ pr).\(^{13}\)

A relief in the second hypostyle hall, on the western wall shows Haroeris presenting to Ptolemy IV the sword of victory (Pl. 7).\(^{14}\) The sword of victory is called ḫptṣ and used to be associated with the war gods. In the Pharaonic period, precisely starting from the New Kingdom, the king used to receive it from the god.\(^{15}\)

A scene on the west wall of the chamber at the western staircase (second register), shows Ptolemy IV wearing a cloak, sitting on the throne accompanied by his wife Arsinoe, in front of god Khonsu and goddess Sefkhet who write on the palm rib (Pl. 8).\(^{16}\)

A scene on the eastern wall of the eastern staircase represents Ptolemy VIII in ascending procession of priests with standards.\(^{17}\) The king wears a plain clock and sandals. (pl. 9).

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14 Chassinat E., Edfou IX, Pl. XL
15 El-Mahdy I., "Some Weapons of the Gods in Ancient Egypt until the End of the New Kingdom", Journal of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels-University of Sadat City Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 64.
16 Chassinat E., le temple d'Edfou, Tome XII, IFAO, (Caire, 1934), Pl. CCCLXV
17 Chassinat E., Edfou IX, Pl. XXXVIII
A scene on the eastern external wall of the sanctuary, second register, the sixth scene, represents Ptolemy VIII sitting on a throne wearing the cloak and the sandals, surmounted with the double crown, followed by his wife Cleopatra III and their son Ptolemy IX. The king is receiving three palm ribs with the 'Heb-Sed' sign (the symbol of the Royal Jubilee) from Thoth (Pl. 10).  

Two scenes on the western wall of the sanctuary representing Ptolemy IV wears the cloak. The first one shows the king sitting on the throne followed by Arsinoe III before Horus who offers him the palm rib, while the second shows the king stands followed by Arsinoe III before Thoth who writes on three palm ribs (Pl. 11). In the second scene, we can read above Thoth:

\[\text{ḥr ḫp ṣn ṣw.t} \] "the helper of Ra, counting the years"

\[\text{ḥpt ṣn ṟḥ ṣw.t} \] "recording the royal titulary of the king of the two lands"

Above the king we can see the sign \[\text{ḥbw}-\text{ḥs} \] "give many ḥb-sd festivals"

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18 Chassinat E., Le temple d’Edfou, Tome XIII, IFAO, (Cairo, 1934), Pl. CCCXVI.
19 Chassinat E., Edfou IX, Pl. XI
Another scene in the interior southern wall of the sanctuary of the mammisi, the first register, the fourth scene, represents Ptolemy VIII standing wearing the cloak followed by Cleopatra II, Cleopatra III, and the son Ptolemy IX. Thoth writes on four palm ribs the years of the king's reign (Pl. 12). In front of the king, under the Serekh, we can read ḫb-sd saSA "many Heb Sed".

At Karnak, Ptolemy III added a huge stone gate in the enclosure wall south to the Temple of Khonsu, known today by its Arabic name, Bab el-Amara (Pl. 13). The huge portal was covered with inscribed relief scenes and texts of that king. In one of the scenes represented on the right inner side of the gate, the second register, Ptolemy III and Berenice II appear before Khonsu who writes on the palm rib the years of the king's reign. The king is surmounted with the double crown and wears a cloak that covers both of his shoulders while leaving his arms bare. In front of the king we can see the sign ḫb-sd "give many ḫb-sd festivals". It's worth mentioning that this is the only scene in the whole gate where the king is represented wearing this cloak, as in the other scenes he wears the traditional Pharaonic kilt.

21 Chassinat E., le mammisi d'Edfou, IFAO, (Cairo, 1939), 14, Pl. 13.
22 Clere P., La porte d'Evergete a Karnak, IFAO, (Caire, 1961), Pl. 43.
Analysis:

Looking back to the scenes of the Pharaonic kings, the researcher found that the kings used to wear a special cloak during the \( hb \ sd \) festival, rather than the kilt with the attached tail. It used to be short covering the arms and upper body down to the thighs but leaving free hands. Sometimes it was long covered the whole body, such as the representation of Amenhotep III on the walls of the temple of Soleb (Pl. 14).\(^{23}\)

The researcher noticed 13 scenes in which the Ptolemaic kings appeared wearing the cloak rather than the traditional kilt (table 1). Could all of these Ptolemaic scenes be related to the \( hb \ sd \) festival? The \( hb \ sd \) festival is one of the oldest festivals in ancient Egypt, where the king celebrated the rule of 30 years. Papyrus 47.218.50 of the Brooklyn Museum, provides the ceremonial sequence of a Ptolemaic New Year festival for the king. It seems that there is a similarity between the New Year festival and The \( hb \ sd \).\(^{24}\) Thus, all the scenes found on the staircases of the temples of Edfu and Dendara referring to ascending and descending from the roof after the festival of the New year (Pl. 2,3,4,5,9), could relate to the \( hb \ sd \) festival.


\(^{24}\) Degreer J., " The Heb Sed festival sequence and pBrooklyn 47.218.50.", Gottinger Miszellen 223, (2009), 27-34.
It seems also that the New Year festival is divided into two parts: the first part concerned the ritual of the *ḥb sd* in which the king appeared wearing the cloak. The second part concerned the uniting of the statue of the god with the rays of the new sun. That's way the king is represented on the walls of the staircases of Dendara and Edfu twice either in the ascending or the descending scenes. The first representation shows him proceeded a procession accompanied with priest, while wearing the cloak (related to the ritual of the *ḥb sd*). The second representation shows him wearing the traditional kilt while burning the incense in front of the shrine of the goddess accompanied by the queen (related to the ritual of the unifying with the new sun).

Comparing the first part of the staircase scenes, in which the king appeared wearing the cloak accompanied with priests holding standards, with the scenes found in the Osirian chapels at the roof of the temple of Dendara (Pl. 15),\(^25\) it is obvious that the same priests with their clothes and standards appeared on the walls of these chapels. It's well known that the Sed Festival was a ceremony for renewing the pharaoh’s power. The king had a ritual death and afterwards he came back to life in perfect physical conditions for going on with his kingship. In the Ramesseum Dramatic Papyrus, that tells the ascension of Senwsert I to the Throne of Egypt, we read that the erection

of pillar *djed* (an Osirian rite) was a very important moment in the Sed Festival. Scenes appeared also in Amenhotep III's festival in the tomb of Kheruef at Thebes shows the king erecting the Djed pillar in the Sed festival (Pl. 16). This could confirm the relation between the Sed festival and the Osirian cult.

Therefore, all the ascending and the descending scenes appeared on the staircases of the temples of Dendara and Edfu referring to a ritual related to the Sed festival, where the king used to practice it on the roof of the temple in connection with the Osirian rituals. As long as the Osirian Chapels were built by Ptolemy XII, the king represented on the first part of the ascending and descending staircase could be Ptolemy XII.

This could also explain the scene appeared on the gateway to the temple of Khonsu at Karnak. The temple of Khonsu which lies in the east became the place of the living Osiris. On the contrary, the temple of Opet which lies to the west became the realm of the deceased Osiris (Pl. 17). A connection between the two temples were discovered by the founding of a staircase connecting the crypt of the Opet temple with the court of the temple of Khonsu. In addition, more than six-hundred graffiti were discovered on the roof of the temple of Khonsu. Part of these graffiti represents figures relevant to the lunar cult of Osiris confirming that

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certain lunar Osirian rituals were performed on the roof of the temple.  

This could indicate that the scene found on the gateway to the temple of Khonsu at Karanak, is related to the Sed festival. Moreover, in the same scene god Khonsu appeared writing on the palm rib. There are also six scenes showing the palm ribs either being represented by the god to the king (Pl. 10) or was written on it by the god in front of the king (Pl. 8,11,12,13). There are many scenes in the Pharaonic period associating the palm rib with the *hb sd* festival. Example is the scene of Montuhotep-Nebhepetre receiving palm ribs from the gods Horus and Seth (Pl. 18). In the ancient Egyptian mythology, the palm also was a symbol of time. The date palm rib was mainly a gift of god Thot as (lord of time) to the kings for a guarantee for a long life and millions of years for the king.  

There is also a scene of the king receiving the sword of victory on the walls of the temple of Edfu. It seems that this ritual is also associated with the *hb sd*, as a similar scene could be seen at the temple of Kom Ombo, precisely on the north-west wall of the Inner Hypostyle where the falcon-headed god Haroeris Khenty-Jrty is represented holding three palm ribs with the 'Heb-Sed’ sign and giving

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28 Anany A., "A lintel of Amenemhat I at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo", Jaaouth (2014), 66-77, Fig. 15.  
29 Omran W., Religious symbolism of the Palm Branch in the Greco-Roman Tombs of Egypt, Jaaouth (2015), 1-23.
the sword of victory to Ptolemy VIII (Pl. 19). The king wears here the traditional kilt with a shawl draped on his shoulder. In this scene there is an obvious connection between the sword of victory and the ḫb sd.

The scene from the wall of the library in the temple of Edfu shows the lector priest does the execration ritual before the king in which he speared the enemies. This scene could also be part of the Sed festival. It seems that the Sed festival contains rites refers to overcoming the enemies. According to the ritual sequence reconstructed from pBrooklyn, there are some ceremonies that were done on the throne podium include the slaughter of enemies.

The ḫb sd scenes continued to be represented on the walls of the Egyptian temples during the Roman period, examples could be seen on the temple of Philae where both Augustus and Tiberius were represented in front of gods writing on the Heb Sed rib. In the Temple of Nero at Akoris, there is a scene where Nero carries a pair of Heb Sed ribs before Sobek. However, the emperors were represented with the traditional kilt in all scenes. It seems that only the Ptolemaic kings that were represented with the cloak.

33 Holbl, Der Romische Pharao und Seine Temple, (Mainz, 2000), 49
From the previous chart, the kings that are represented in the scenes are: Ptolemy III (in one scene from Karnak), Ptolemy IV (in three scenes from Edfu), Ptolemy VIII (in five scenes from Edfu), however, the king in the scenes from Dendara is still unidentified (could be Ptolemy XII). Looking up in the history of these kings, we will notice that they were in need to show their connection to the Pharaonic kings precisely the Sed festival. During the reign of Ptolemy III, the country faced a rebellion because of the famine occurred in his reign, the matter that forced the king to end his campaign during the 3rd Syrian war and return to Egypt. During the reign of Ptolemy IV Egypt was about to be conquered by the Syrian king in the 4th Syrian war, if it was not for the recruiting of the Egyptians in the army that turned the situation to the victory of Egypt. Later a great rebellion occurred in Upper Egypt that will led
shortly to the secession of Upper Egypt. The reign of Ptolemy VIII witnessed some cruel activities starting with the conflict occurred between him and his brother Ptolemy VI, the killing of his nephew Ptolemy VII, marrying Cleopatra II alongside with her daughter Cleopatra III the matter that made the Alexandrians expelling him outside Egypt, killing his own son from Cleopatra II "Ptolemy Memphitis", and finally expelling Cleopatra II outside Egypt. It was not until the reconciliation that occurred between him and Cleopatra II, that led the rest of his reign to pass in piece. Even the assumed King at Dendara (Ptolemy XII), had a problem with the Egyptians as he was expelled from Alexandria and returned after an agreement issued with the Roman senate, and the interference of the Syrian army. Thus, it seems that each of these kings needed the Sed festival to emphasize his legitimate rule to Egypt.

It is noticeable also that in most of the scenes, the queen accompanied the king in these *hb sd* scenes (Pl. 7,8,10,11,12,13), the matter that was not common in the Pharaonic period. This emphasizes their importance and power.

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34 انجي فكري، تأثير الثورات على المجتمع المصري خلال العصور اليونانية والرومانية، رسالة دكتوراة غير منشورة، جامعة الإسكندرية. 2019.
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Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>ritual</th>
<th>Deity</th>
<th>King</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Dendara, eastern staircase</td>
<td>Ascending the roof</td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>Could be Ptolemy XII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Dendara, eastern staircase</td>
<td>Descending from the roof</td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>Could be Ptolemy XII</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Dendara, western staircase</td>
<td>Ascending the roof</td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>Could be Ptolemy XII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Dendara, western staircase</td>
<td>Descending from the roof</td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>Could be Ptolemy XII</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Edfu, library</td>
<td>Spearing foes</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>Ptolemy VIII</td>
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<td>6 Edfu, Sword of Haroeris</td>
<td>Sword of Haroeris</td>
<td>Ptolemy VIII</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Edfu, western staircase</td>
<td>Writing on the palm rib</td>
<td>Khonsu and Seshat</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Edfu, eastern staircase</td>
<td>Ascending the roof</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Edfu, sanctuary</td>
<td>Receiving palm ribs</td>
<td>Thoth</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Edfu, sanctuary</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Edfu, sanctuary</td>
<td>Writing on the palm rib</td>
<td>Thoth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Edfu, mammisi</td>
<td>Writing on the palm rib</td>
<td>Thoth</td>
</tr>
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<td>Karnak, Bab El-Amara</td>
<td>Writing on the palm rib</td>
<td>Khonsu</td>
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high officials and the priests were represented wrapped in cloaks and shawls
After: Vogelsang-Eastwood G, Fig. 2:9, 2:15
Pl. 3 *Dendara Temple, the western wall of the eastern staircase, descending scene*

After: Chassinat, Dendara VII, Pl. DCLXXXI

PL. 4 DENDARA, WESTERN STAIRCASE, ASCENDING SCENE

After: Chassinat E., Dendara VIII, Pl. DCCXLI
Pl. 5 *Dendara, western staircase, descending scene*

After: Chassinat, Dendara VIII, DCCLXXIII
PL. 7 **EDFU TEMPLE, EASTERN WALL OF THE LIBRARY**

After: Chassinat E., Edfou IX, IFAO, Pl. LXXXII

PL. 6 **EDFU, EASTERN WALL OF THE LIBRARY**

After: Chassinat E., Edfou IX, IFAO, Pl. LXXXII

PL. 8 **EDFOU TEMPLE, CHAMBER AT THE WESTERN STAIRCASE**

After: Chassinat E., Edfou XII, Pl. CCCLXV
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Pl. 9 Edfou, temple, the eastern wall of the eastern staircase, ascending scene

After: Chassinat E., Edfou IX, Pl. XXXVIII
PL. 10 EDFOU TEMPLE, EASTERN EXTERNAL WALL OF THE SANCTUARY

After: Chassinat E., Edfou XIII, IFAO, Pl. CCCCXLVI.
Pl. 11 Edfou temple, western wall of the sanctuary

After: Chassinat E., Edfou IX, Pl. XI.
Pl. 12 Edfou temple, southern wall of the sanctuary of the mammisi

After: Chassinat E., le mammisi d'Edfou, Pl. 13.
Pl. 13 Gate of Ptolemy III, Karnak

After: Clere P., La porte d'Evergete a Karnak, Pl. 43.
Pl. 14 Amenhotep III, Temple of Soleb.

After: Michela Schiff Giorgini. Soleb V, Pl. 114
Pl. 15 Dendara Temple, Eastern Osirian chapel, lower part of the wall

Pl. 16 Amenhotep III's festival in the tomb of Kheruef at Thebes

After: Geisen C., The Ramesseum dramatic papyrus, 220
Pl. 17 Plan of Khonsu temple and the Opet temple, Karnak

Pl. 18 Montuhotep-Nebhepetre receiving palm ribs from the gods Horus and Seth
After: Anany A., "A lintel of Amenemhat I at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo", Fig. 15

Pl. 19 Kom Ombo temple, north-west wall of the Inner Hypostyle