

The Festival on which Amun went out to the Treasury

Helen Jacquet-Gordon

Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale

Karnak temple and its environs were among Bill's special interests. I am happy to make a small contribution towards the understanding of its history in this volume devoted to his memory.

Festivals during which the bark of Amun was carried out of his temple of Karnak in order to visit neighboring sanctuaries played a considerable role in the annual religious calendar at Thebes from the beginning of the New Kingdom onward. The best known of these outings are those which conducted the god southwards from Karnak towards the temple of Luxor on the festival of Opet, and that which took him to the west, across the river to Deir el-Bahari, during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley. If the latter of these festivals may already have been celebrated as far back as the Eleventh Dynasty,¹ the former appears not to have existed before the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty.² It is about a third festival of this nature during which the bark of Amun traveled northwards from Karnak in the direction of the temple of Ptah, at that period situated outside the enclosure wall of the Amun precinct, that we are here concerned. This festival, like the festival of Opet, appears to have been instituted at the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

In 1902, when Legrain cleared the Temple of Ptah at Karnak, a stela of Tuthmosis III was discovered *in situ* in the forecourt of the temple,³ the text of which had been partly erased during the Amarna period and summarily restored by Seti I.⁴ It relates how his majesty ordered the Temple of Ptah to be (re)built to serve as a way-station for his father Amun "during the festival on which he went out to the Treasury of the Head of the South."⁵ A list of offerings to be presented to Ptah on the occasion of this festival, among them "white bread from the bakeries of the Treasury," is followed towards the end of the text by a statement of the precise date on which this particular festival of Amun was celebrated, namely: the 26th day of the first month of the inundation season.⁶ No mention of this festival date has been noted elsewhere, but a certain number of circumstances connected with the building and functioning of the small temple and bark shrine included in the temenos of the Treasury of Tuthmosis I at Karnak North suggest that a close association existed between this temple and the above mentioned festival.

¹ H. Altermüller, *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, II (Wiesbaden : O. Harrassowitz, 1977), col. 181.

² D. Arnold, *Der Tempel des Königs Montuhotep von Deir el-Bahari*. Band I. *Architektur und Deutung*. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Kairo, Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 8 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1974), pp. 78-80.

³ G. Legrain, *Annales du Service Antiquités de l'Égypte*, III, pp. 107-111. CGC No. 34013. P. Lacau, *Stèles du Nouvel Empire*, I (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1909), pp. 27-30, pl. IX.

⁴ The renewal formula of Seti I is placed in the center of the vignette at the top of the stela.

⁵ K. Sethe and W. Helck, *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums IV. Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), 765/7-11.

⁶ Sethe, *Urk.* IV, 770/3.

The temple built by Tuthmosis I at Karnak North was dedicated to Amun, as is indicated from what remains of the decoration of its walls.⁷ It was originally a free-standing building preceded by a bark shrine and surrounded by a peripteral colonnade,⁸ an architectural ensemble of which this appears to be the earliest example known to us.⁹ That the temple was endowed with a regular clergy is indicated by the discovery in the fill over the bakeries attached to the Treasury of a small stela dedicated to the sacred geese of Amun by a priest whose name has been erased but whose title remains intact. He was “*hem-netjer* of Amun in the Treasury.”¹⁰

Pursuing his program of construction, Tuthmosis I included the already existing temple together with its bark shrine within the perimeter of the stone enclosure wall built to protect his newly completed *per hedj*.¹¹ This complex of buildings, whose remains are still visible directly north-east of the Temple of Ptah, can with certainty be identified with the Treasury named by Thutmosis III on his stela “The Treasury of the Head of the South.” It was the destination towards which the bark of Amun was carried on the feast that brought him north from Karnak to stop on the first lap of his journey before the Temple of Ptah and to come to rest finally in the bark shrine prepared for him in front of the sanctuary of Tuthmosis I within the Treasury complex itself. The bakeries situated along the southern side of the treasury enclosure¹² were those where the bread for the offerings to Ptah was baked.

The reference on the stela of Tuthmosis III to the occasion when the bark of Amun, after halting at the Ptah Temple, proceeded out to the Treasury of the Head of the South, indicates clearly that such a festival was regularly celebrated during the reign of that King. But it is evident that the bark shrine situated in front of the sanctuary of Tuthmosis I was destined from its inception to receive the sacred bark of the god to whom it was dedicated on the occasion of such a festival. It may therefore very well have been Tuthmosis I himself who inaugurated this festival although we cannot exclude the possibility that it existed even earlier. Fragments of wall decoration bearing the name of Ahmose, found during the excavation of the Treasury of Tuthmosis I in a context which suggests that they had been intentionally preserved there, may have belonged to an older bark sanctuary located in the same general area.¹³ Evidence that this festival continued to be celebrated at least until the time of Amenhotep II is provided by the inscription on a block from the latter’s bark shrine for Amun reused in the foundations of the temple of Amenhotep III at Karnak North. It clearly mentions the festival “when (Amun) proceeds (from) his temple to the Treasury of the Head of the South,” using the same expressions as on the Tuthmosis III stela. The shrine of Amenhotep II appears to have been erected approximately where the Amenhotep III temple now stands.¹⁴ It would have constituted a second way-station for the bark on its way to the treasury.

⁷ H. Jacquet-Gordon, *Karnak-Nord VI. Le Trésor de Thoutmosis Ier. La Décoration*. Fouilles de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale 32 (Cairo: IFAO, 1988).

⁸ J. Jacquet, *Karnak-Nord V. Le Trésor de Thoutmosis Ier. Etude Architecturale* (Cairo: IFAO, 1983), pp. 29-45.

⁹ The same plan was later adopted by Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III for their sanctuary at Medinet Habu as well as for their bark shrine situated in front of the Mut Temple at Karnak (in its original form), and survived in variously modified versions at least until the time of Amenhotep III in his temple at Kuban.

¹⁰ H. Jacquet-Gordon, *Karnak-Nord VIII, Le Trésor de Thoutmosis Ier. Statues, Stèles et Blocs Réutilisés*. IFAO 39 (Cairo: IFAO, 1999), No. 170, p. 269.

¹¹ J. Jacquet, *Karnak-Nord V*, pp. 45-73.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 82-84.

¹³ H. Jacquet-Gordon, *Karnak-Nord VI*, §6.2.5, pp. 90-92.

¹⁴ Ch. van Siclen, “Amenhotep II’s Bark Chapel for Amun at North Karnak,” *Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale* 86 (1986), p. 356, Pl. LV.

During the Amarna period, all the festivals of Amun were, presumably, in abeyance, and it is apparent from what remains of the decoration of Tuthmosis I's temple and bark shrine that the latter underwent rough handling on the part of Akhenaten's agents of destruction. The festival when Amun went out to the Treasury, therefore, like Amun's other festivals, was probably suspended. But there is reason to suppose that it was reinstated, at least for a short time, during the reign of Seti I or possibly earlier.

Spallinger, who briefly mentions this feast in his study of the Amun festivals,¹⁵ points out that the date mentioned on Tuthmosis III's Ptah Temple stela is situated in that part of the inscription which was restored by Seti I and does not necessarily reproduce the exact text as it originally stood and whose reading is very uncertain. This may very well be so, but for our purposes is not of primary importance. What interests us most here is the fact that the festival was still (or again) celebrated at the beginning of the Nineteenth Dynasty, whether it was on the traditional date or on a new date fixed by Seti I. That it was so celebrated is guaranteed not only by the fact that the festival is mentioned in Seti's restoration of the text of the Tuthmosis III stela, but also by archaeological evidence observed in the bark shrine of Tuthmosis I itself. Nothing much remains *in situ* of this building apart from its foundations and the sill of its southern doorway. However, the pavement of the narrow passageway which led from the bark shrine via this doorway to the chapels of the small temple behind it still remains in place. It was very much worn and had been repaired with a number of *talatat* and with two paving slabs cut from a pillar on the face of which the cartouches of Tutankhamun could be deciphered.¹⁶ The necessity for making such repairs can only be attributed to the renewed celebration of the festival on these premises, which required that the buildings be renovated and put into condition worthy of receiving the sacred bark of the god.

Such renovations could, of course, have been made by any one of the successors of Tutankhamun, but since no trace of activity on the part of Ay, Horemheb or Ramses I have been detected in the Treasury whereas a cartouche of Seti I was found recut over an erased royal name on one of the fragments of wall relief,¹⁷ it seems probable that it is indeed Seti I to whom can be attributed the work of restoration.

The dismantling of the entire Treasury complex of Tuthmosis I by Ramses II¹⁸ necessarily put an end to the celebration of this particular feast leaving a lamentable lacuna in the festival calendar. But it should be remarked that the days following those on which this festival had been celebrated, namely the 28th and 29th of Thoth, the first month of the inundation season, are known to have been the dates of one of the festivals dedicated to the cult of Amenhotep I and Ahmes-Nefertari.¹⁹ This cult, very widely celebrated in the Theban area during the Ramesside period, was particularly important on the west bank. As Černý has pointed out, there existed at Deir el-Medina several forms of this cult corresponding to the statues, each of which had a particular name, housed in the various sanctuaries established there.²⁰ Now the brick sanctuaries built by Ramses II and his successors down to the time of Pinedjem I on the emplacement of the Treasury of Tuthmosis I appear likewise to have been dedicated to the cult of King Amenhotep I

¹⁵ A. Spallinger, *Three Studies on Egyptian Feasts and their Chronological Implications* (Baltimore: Halgo, Inc., 1992), p. 14, n. 50 and p. 20.

¹⁶ J. Jacquet, *Karnak-Nord V*, p. 32, pl. XXVIII/B.

¹⁷ H. Jacquet-Gordon, *Karnak-Nord VI*, pp. 166, 171; pl. XLIII/C, XLV(C26/1).

¹⁸ J. Jacquet, *Karnak-Nord VII. Le Trésor de Thoutmosis Ier. Installations antérieures ou postérieures au monument*. FIFAO 36/1 (Cairo: IFAO, 1994), p. 150.

¹⁹ J. Černý, "Le culte d'Amenophis 1^{er} chez les ouvriers de la nécropole thébaine," *BIFAO* 27 (1927), p. 182.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

and Queen Ahmes-Nefertari.²¹ A small statue found in the fill above the Treasury may even have mentioned the name of the particular form of Amenhotep's statue which was worshipped there.²² Unfortunately the inscription on the dorsal pillar is badly broken and all that one can recognize of the title inscribed there is: "First Prophet of Amenhotep of the" Traces which follow do not correspond to the writing of any of the known names of the king's cult statues. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to attribute it to the form of Amenhotep worshipped in the successive sanctuaries erected on this spot at the end of the New Kingdom. The fact that these sanctuaries were located at Karnak North may possibly be attributed to the association of this area with memories of the Sanctuary first established there by the early Eighteenth Dynasty kings.

²¹ J. Jacquet, *Karnak-Nord VII*, p. 64, §5.9.

²² H. Jacquet-Gordon, *Karnak-Nord VIII*, Statue No. 80 (KN Inv. No. A378), p. 132.