Among the iconographic scenes depicted on the walls of the Ramesside temples in Ancient Egypt, two sets of representations could be considered to complement each other. In the following pages, we analyse the iconographical elements of these scenes as we find them represented at the Ramesses III's temple of Medinet Habu and argue that their complementarity arises from their common ideological background, which concerns the role of the king as guarantor of the cosmic order, personified in the figure of the goddess Maat.

1. For the role of Ramesses III as guarantor of the cosmic order, see Costa and Magadán 2017.

Keywords: Thebes, cosmic order, Maat, jubilees, flood.

Palabras clave: Tebas, orden cósmico, Maat, jubileos, inundación.

Ramesses III as Guarantor of Maat: the Iconographic Evidence at Medinet Habu

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Among the scenes depicted on the walls of the Temple of Millions of Years of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu there are two sets of representations which portray the king performing two rituals whose purpose was to assure the cosmic order established from the beginning of times. Both rituals complement each other, as we can notice analyzing the depictions both on the stelae erected by Ramesses III in his 12th regnal year at the entrance of the main pylon, and on the walls of Room 32 inside the temple. Specifically, the rituals performed by Ramesses III inside Room 32 intended to assure the annual advent of the Nile flood, which granted the renewal and prosperity of the earth thanks to the life-giving force of its waters filled of sediments.

Ramesses III como garante de maat: la evidencia iconográfica en Medinet Habu

Entre las escenas que decoran el templo de Millones de Años de Rameses III en Medinet Habu, hay dos grupos de representaciones donde el rey aparece realizando dos rituales que garantizan el orden cósmico establecido desde el principio de los tiempos. Ambos rituales se complementan, como podemos observar en las dos estelas fechadas en el año 12 y en la decoración de la sala 32 del mismo templo. En esta última estancia, con los dos rituales, Rameses III pretendía asegurar la llegada de la inundación, que procuraba la renovación y la prosperidad de la tierra gracias a la fuerza vitificadora de las aguas portadoras de sedimentos.

Keywords: Thebes, cosmic order, Maat, jubilees, flood.

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Among the iconographic scenes depicted on the walls of the Ramesside temples in Ancient Egypt, two sets of representations could be considered to complement each other. In the following pages, we analyse the iconographical elements of these scenes as we find them represented at the Ramesses III’s temple of Medinet Habu and argue that their complementarity arises from their common ideological background, which concerns the role of the king as guarantor of the cosmic order, personified in the figure of the goddess Maat. The first set of scenes portrays, in fact, the king as guarantor of the cosmic order established since the beginning of times. The Pharaoh presents the figure of the goddess Maat to a divinity, who acts as recipient of the offering. In the second group, in stead, the king is the recipient of the action. Here a divinity gives the king the regnal years and the signs of the Sed Festival. The double role of the king, as donor and recipient, enables us to see in these scenes the depiction of the balance of the universe as the Egyptians conceived it, although in a very schematic way. By presenting the figure of Maat to the gods, the Pharaoh reassures them that he has fulfilled his role as guarantor of the order, and so, he deserves to be granted an infinity of regnal years.

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