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Description for the general public

The present project aims to prepare the study of the decorative program of the chapel of Osiris Ptah Neb-ankh, situated in the south part of Karnak temple complex (Luxor, Egypt). The chapel was built during the Kushite period (7 c. BC) for the last ruler of this dynasty in Egypt, Tanwetamani. It was built during a particularly turbulent time in Egyptian history, when Tanwetamani fought for power in Egypt with the invading Assyrians and their vassals, Saite princes. Kushites in Egypt were foreigners themselves and had to struggle to maintain their identity against the background of a dominant Egyptian culture. This effort, which led to negotiating their identity, is reflected in the chapel decoration where the Kushite king is represented in Egyptian and Kushite style.

The chapel is the only surviving *in situ* building from the reign of Tanwetamani in Egypt preserved until the present day in incredibly good and complete condition including the polychromy. Thus, it is very important source not only for the reign of this king but it is also the unprecedented material to study the cult of Osiris during the 25th Dynasty. Moreover, the surviving polychromy gives the rare opportunity to study not only the iconographic program of the chapel but also the techniques used by Egyptian artists in the process of chapel's decoration. Using advanced photographic imaging techniques: IR reflectography, UV florescence, Infrared False Color (FCIR), allows the reconstruction of the consecutive stages of chapel's decoration and highlights areas of deterioration caused by intentional or natural degradation. The image analysis builds up a picture not only of materials but also the techniques used in chapel's decoration, as well as picking up on spots of remaining decoration too small to be immediately visible to the human eye – it helps to build a fuller picture of the polychromatic scheme.

The present study is a part of a larger research project led by French Institute of Oriental Archaeology (IFAO) which aims to publish this and other Osirian chapels from Karnak, built during the 1st Millennium BC. The results of the current project, namely the study of the ideology of chapel decoration, as well as the analysis of its style and artistic techniques, will be published by IFAO in the monograph co-authored by the principal investigator the international partner of the project preparing an epigraphical study.