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Deir El-Bahari: The Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, 1997

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DEIR EL-BAHARI

THE TEMPLE OF QUEEN HATSHEPSUT, 1997/1998

Franciszek Pawlicki

The tragic events which had place in the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari in November 1997 delayed by a few weeks the start of the sixth consecutive season of conservation and restoration works by a joint Polish-Egyptian expedition.¹ Changes on the staff² precluded the previously planned engineering work on the protection of the Northern Chapel of Amun and the Upper Chapel of Anubis. Instead, taking advantage of the dramatic decline in tourist visits to the site, a full conservation of the southern wall of the Portico of Punt was carried out. All the other planned works in the program approved by the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities were executed in full.

¹ The work of the expedition was financed as usual by the Polish Center of Archaeology of Warsaw University and the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt. The season lasted from December 1, 1997, to April 3, 1998. Words of special thanks are due to SCA Secretary General, Prof. Dr. Gaballa Ali Gaballa; SCA Pharaonic Sector Director General, Dr. Mohammed Soghayer; SCA Antiquities Department in Luxor Director, Dr. Mohammed Nasr; SCA Antiquities Inspector in Gurna, Dr. Sabri Abdel Aziz; and Restoration Department director, Eng. Mohamed Ali Salam. Without their help the execution of the expedition's extended program would have been practically impossible.

² The expedition staff included: Dr. Franciszek Pawlicki, expedition director; Messrs Andrzej Kwaśnica and Piotr Dąbrowski, architects-engineers; Prof. Dr. Jan Krzysztof Winnicki, egyptologist; Messrs Rajmund Gazda, Wojciech Myjak, Andrzej Sośnierz, Ms Agata Wiaderny, Dr. Maria Lulkiewicz-Podkowińska, conservators; Messrs Pawel Dąbrowski, Maciej Jawornicki, draftsmen-documentalists; Mr. Waldemar Jerke, photographer. Throughout the season the expedition cooperated with SCA Antiquities Inspector, Mr. Yasser Youssif Ahmed, and with Mohammed Shawki Bakri, engineer, supplier of all the reconstruction materials needed by the team. Special recognition is also due Mr. Ragab Ahmed Yassin who managed the work of the team of Egyptian monument restorers.

UPPER PORTICO FACADE

The fifth statue of Queen Hatshepsut was set up in line with the previous four, in front of the last but one pillar of the northern wing of the Upper Portico. The monumental stone statue, over 5 m high, depicted the temple founder in standing position, encased in the white shroud of Osiris. The facade along with the statues decorating it had been destroyed in an earthquake back in antiquity. In previous seasons, more than 30 pieces had been selected³ from the surviving statuary elements to be remounted in the statue. Practically the whole head along with a part of the painted surface is original; so is a large fragment of the double crown, shoulders and hands with

the insignia of power restored mostly from original blocks and pieces of blocks. The missing parts of the statue were modeled in float-ing-coat technique. Mortar used for the reconstruction was composed of the following mineral components: powdered limestone, sand and some white cement. Big pieces were mounted on stainless steel rods. The coloring and texture of the new elements were made to look like the original stone. In accordance with approved principles of reconstruction, the surface of the new parts of plaster were recessed with respect to the original. Prior to mounting, all the elements were protected with hydrophobic preparations in

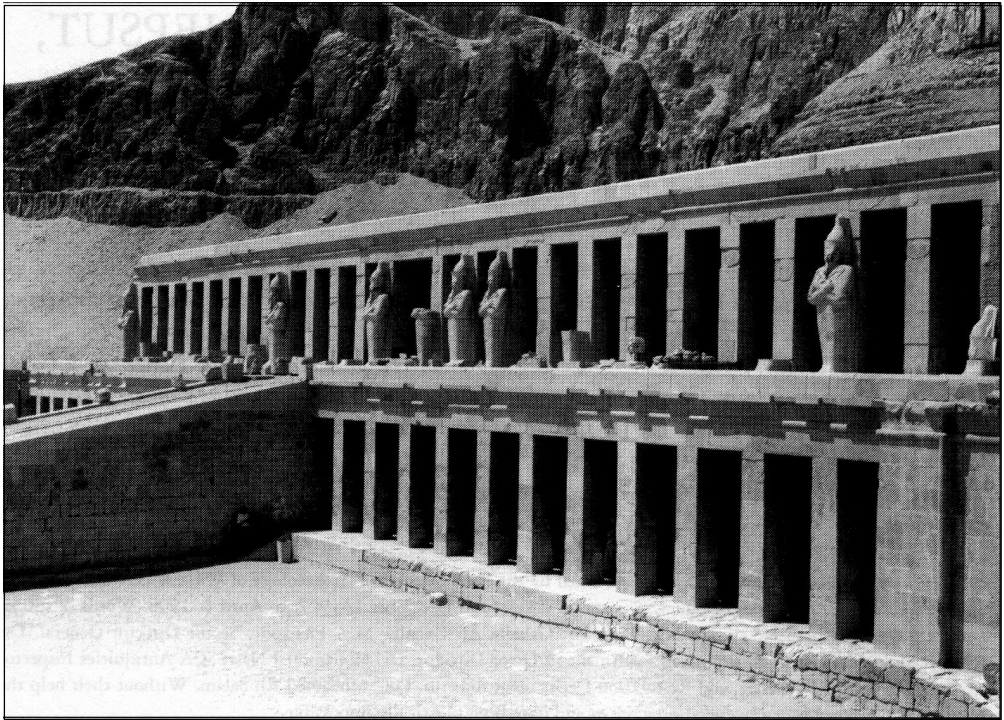


Fig. 1. Upper Portico facade after reconstruction of Osiriac statues of Hatshepsut (Photo W. Jerke)

³ F. Pawlicki, *PAM VI, Reports 1994 (1995)*, pp. 56-57; *PAM VII, Reports 1995 (1996)*, pp. 73-74; *PAM VIII, Reports 1996 (1997)*, pp. 65-66; *PAM IX, Reports 1997 (1998)*, pp. 53-54.

order to prevent humidity from penetrating. The peeling polychromy was reattached and the lost fragments of the queen's portrait were modeled in the plaster. Aesthetic considerations dictated the localization of the reconstructed statue at the northern end of the portico, in order for the entire length of the structure to be uniformly accentuated and a strong emphasis laid on the central axis of the entrance to the Upper Court [Fig. 1].

The reconstructed statue constitutes the last of the monumental pieces of statuary to

be set up in the facade of the Upper Portico. The artistic modeling of details of the already mounted statues, planned for the coming season, will complete the reconstruction of the Upper Portico. Work on the classification of statuary fragments in the expedition stores has led to the identification of some 20 big fragments belonging to the smaller statues of the queen once standing in the niches of the western wall of the Upper Court and in the Hall of the Bark of the Main Sanctuary. A provisional project for the reconstruction of two such statues has been prepared.

MAIN SANCTUARY OF AMUN

HALL OF THE BARK

The conservation work was concentrated in the rooms of the main sanctuary of the temple lying at the end of the principal building axis.⁴ Earlier egyptological research permitted further original elements (more than 40 blocks and pieces of blocks) to be identified as coming from the northern and western walls and from the six niches in the hall of the bark. The niches, which had once held the statues of members of the royal family, were blocked during the Ptolemaic repairs and rebuilding of the sanctuary.⁵ At the time, the bottom registers of the walls were also renovated with decorated blocks brought from, for instance, the room of the cult statue, as well as huge floor slabs and blocks from other parts of the temple which were fitted into the wall. Among the more than 20 decorated elements installed in the niches, there were fragments with a representation of priest

Iunmutef, a list of offerings and a table of offerings with the royal titles carved above it. The deformed walls of the niche, which have caused mechanical pressure, crumbling of the edges and cracking of blocks, were dismantled. The displaced blocks were removed, treated and replaced in position. The thick layer of dirt and soot, which had gathered on the painted surface in Coptic times, was removed by mechanical and chemical means. The cleaning required repeated use of tampons saturated in a solution of ammonia water and Condrat-2000 preparation to soften the soot which only then could be gradually removed using glass fiber sticks, scalpels and sponges. The peeling painted surface was reattached to the stone and all the air pockets and blistering were eliminated. The joints and losses were filled with mineral putties.

The conservation of the lowermost course of blocks and the preparation of

⁴ *PM* II, p. 342ff.

⁵ The only niche not to be blocked was the one by the entrance to the room of the bark in the southern wall. It is also why the walls of this niche were covered with a thick layer of soot, cf. Z. Wysocki [in:] *Melanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar* II (Le Caire 1985), p. 361ff.; J. Karkowski, J.K. Winnicki, E. Brecciani, *MDAIK* 39 (1983), pp. 93ff.

the floor for reconstruction required the clearing of a compact layer of earth and rock debris overlying the floor. The sub-structure of the floor was found to be made up of haphazardly laid stone elements introduced in Ptolemaic times. Single blocks from the original floor have survived only in the northwestern corner of the room, but they have provided sufficient data to reconstruct the floor level and its inclination. The dimensions and position of the foundations of the bases of the Osiriac statues of Hatshepsut in the four corners of the room were also recorded.⁶ Most of the blocks laid in Ptolemaic times, now completely disintegrated because of the humidity and salt efflorescence, were cut from the architrave of the upper courtyard colonnade. A big piece with the royal titles of Tuthmosis III was identified among these blocks. The bedrock, upon which the sanctuary was erected, was about 55 cm below the bottom edge of the blocks in the wall. In the south-eastern corner, an irregular shaft leading to the tombs of the priests of Montu was uncovered in the bedrock. The loose rock debris yielded a series of blue-glazed ushebti figurines, fragments of painted cartonnages and inscribed coffin planks.⁷ Small pieces of limestone blocks from the walls of the hall of the bark or the neighboring sanctuary were also discovered here. One of these blocks with a preserved fragment of the Horus name of Hatshepsut was immediately replaced in the south jamb of the hall of the cult statue. Three steps of the stairs leading from the hall of the bark into the sanctuary turned out to be reused blocks, provisionally installed during earlier rein-

tegration works. Below them, in the loose debris, six Roman coins were discovered. The coins were issued in the reign of Constantine the Great and his sons, Constans, Constantius II and Constantine II, in the mints of Alexandria, Nikomedia, Constantinople and Antioch [Fig. 2].⁶

There is no way to be sure whether the coins had been left here by the Roman legionaries from the garrison at Luxor or the inhabitants of the monastery of St. Phoibamon occupying this space in Christian times.⁹

The biggest technical problem was caused by the need to replace blocks in the central part of the northern wall of the room of the bark. Originally, the section



Fig. 2. Coin of Constantine the Great issued by the Alexandrian mint after the death of the emperor but before AD 340 (Photo W. Jerke)

⁶ Pawlicki, *PAM IX*, op. cit., p. 59; H. Winlock, *Excavations at Deir el-Bahari 1911-1931* (New York 1942), p. 215.

⁷ PM I, part II, p. 628 ff.

⁸ I am indebted to Dr. A. Krzyżanowska for kindly identifying and dating the coins.

⁹ W. Godlewski, *Deir el-Bahari V. Le monastère de St. Phoibammon* (Varsovie 1978).

between the western and central niche had been filled with blocks decorated with a representation of the *sm3-ḫwy* ceremony of the symbolic union of Upper and Lower Egypt. The localization of the scene immediately below the entablature of the holy bark of Amun seems to indicate that it was Amun to whom the role of guarantor of Egypt's unity was ascribed.¹⁰ An analogous composition was to be found on the opposite, south wall. This part of the wall, damaged in an earthquake and threatening to collapse, was dismantled in the Ptolemaic period; in place of the original blocks, other blocks taken from different parts of the temple were installed, the principal criteria of choice being the required size of a given block and its nearness to where it was supposed to be moved. Hence, one of the

blocks here was with all certainty brought from the inner chamber of the sanctuary, which had been taken apart at the time. The surviving decoration (the relief on the remaining sides had been cut off) shows a fragment of a procession of priests bearing offerings [Fig. 3].

This block was installed in the second course from the bottom regardless of the different decoration that was still visible on the surrounding original stones. Its identification is of capital importance for a theoretical restoration of the as yet unknown iconography of the sanctuary.

For reasons of safety the assembly work was carried out in stages. It was preceded by the conservation and reconstruction of a block made up of more than 20 pieces. Its decoration is consti-

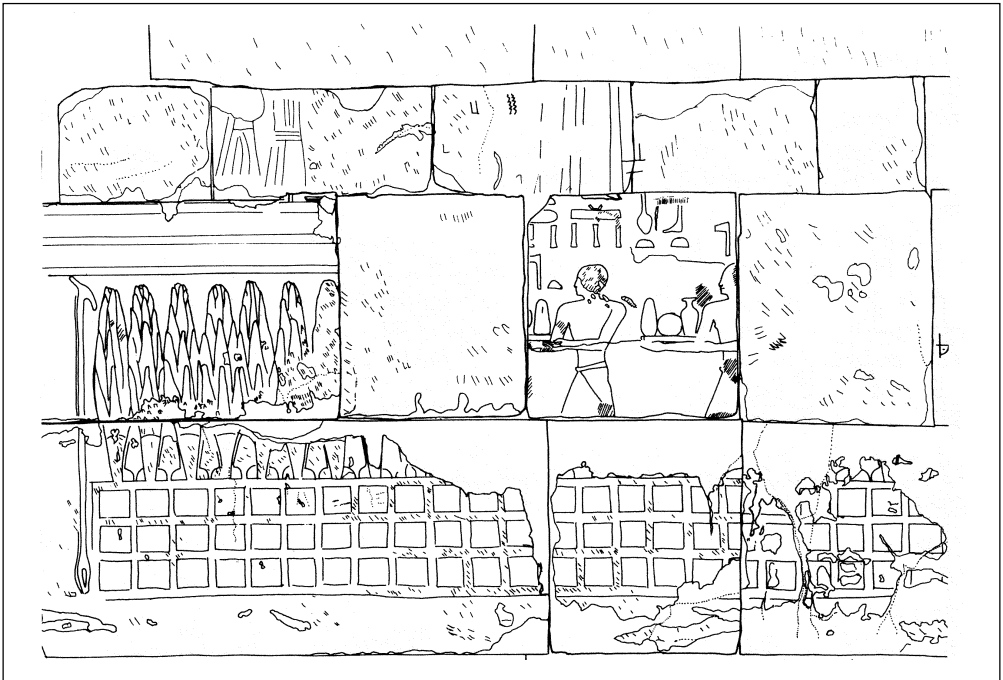


Fig. 3. Block with representation of priests bearing offerings, inserted in Ptolemaic times into the original decoration of the northern wall of the room of the bark (Drawing R. Gazda)

¹⁰ J. Karkowski, *PAM VIII, Reports 1996 (1997)*, p. 51.

tuted by a frieze of *rekhyet*-figures, drawn as small lapwing birds facing the entrance to the chamber. The localization of this block with a centrally positioned *sm3* sign permitted a precise reconstruction of the remaining elements of this symmetrical composition. It was decided to trace the silhouettes of the missing figures of the fertility deities in the new parts of the plaster in order for the character of the scene to be made more evident [Fig. 4].

Single blocks with images of the offerings brought before the holy bark were mounted in two other scenes. Soot was removed from all the royal images in the bottom register of the decoration, including the figure of Tuthmosis II and his *k3* in the west end of the northern wall of the room and a representation of Amun embracing Hatshepsut from the eastern section of the southern wall. After the changes introduced in the decoration at the end of the reign of Tuthmosis III, the figure of Hatshepsut was removed and the now isolated Amun was given a *w3s* scepter to hold.

The final restoration of the western wall of the hall of the bark was carried out to the end. The wall was simultaneously the facade of the entrance to the room of the cult statue. In the previous two seasons this wall was largely restored; now five new fragments with a dedicatory inscription and the royal titles seen on the jambs of the entrance were added to the several already installed original blocks in the tympanum above the lintel [cf. Fig. 3].

It was decided to remove from the bottom courses of the northern jamb a block, the surviving decoration of which indicated that it had been reused here in Ptolemaic times. Upon dismantling, it was found that

the block had come from the upper course forming the entrance leading to the last room of the sanctuary, the hall of the offerings. The arched *tkr* frame leaves no doubt as to this.¹¹

A stone pavement was laid in the whole room. Many original blocks were used while the missing sections were reconstructed of new limestone quarried in the vicinity of the temple site. Also, the steps leading to the hall of the table of offerings were restored.

HALL OF THE CULT STATUE

A full conservation of the walls of this room was carried out in the course of the season. The entire eastern section of the northern wall was taken apart and the loose rock debris gathered behind it was removed in order to release the pressure that had caused the wall to bulge and be displaced. The completely preserved block found behind the wall must have been thrown into the space when the room was being rebuilt, still in the reign of Hatshepsut. Its dimensions, scale and the subject of the decoration with a *hkr* frieze and the royal titlature visible at the top indicate that the block must have belonged to the back end wall of the side (northern) chapel of the divinities of Lower Egypt. It is also to be presumed that it originated from the first stage of the building of the sanctuary before year 11, when the two side chapels were among the parts of the temple that were renovated. Its place in the wall was taken by a newly prepared block which had been sized to fit the new chapel vault.

Of equal importance was the discovery in the western corner of the northern wall of the room of the cult statue of an-

¹¹ The block had been recorded earlier and erroneously localized in the back wall of the last room of the sanctuary, cf. Karkowski *et al.*, *MDAIK* 39, op. cit., fig. 1, p. 96.

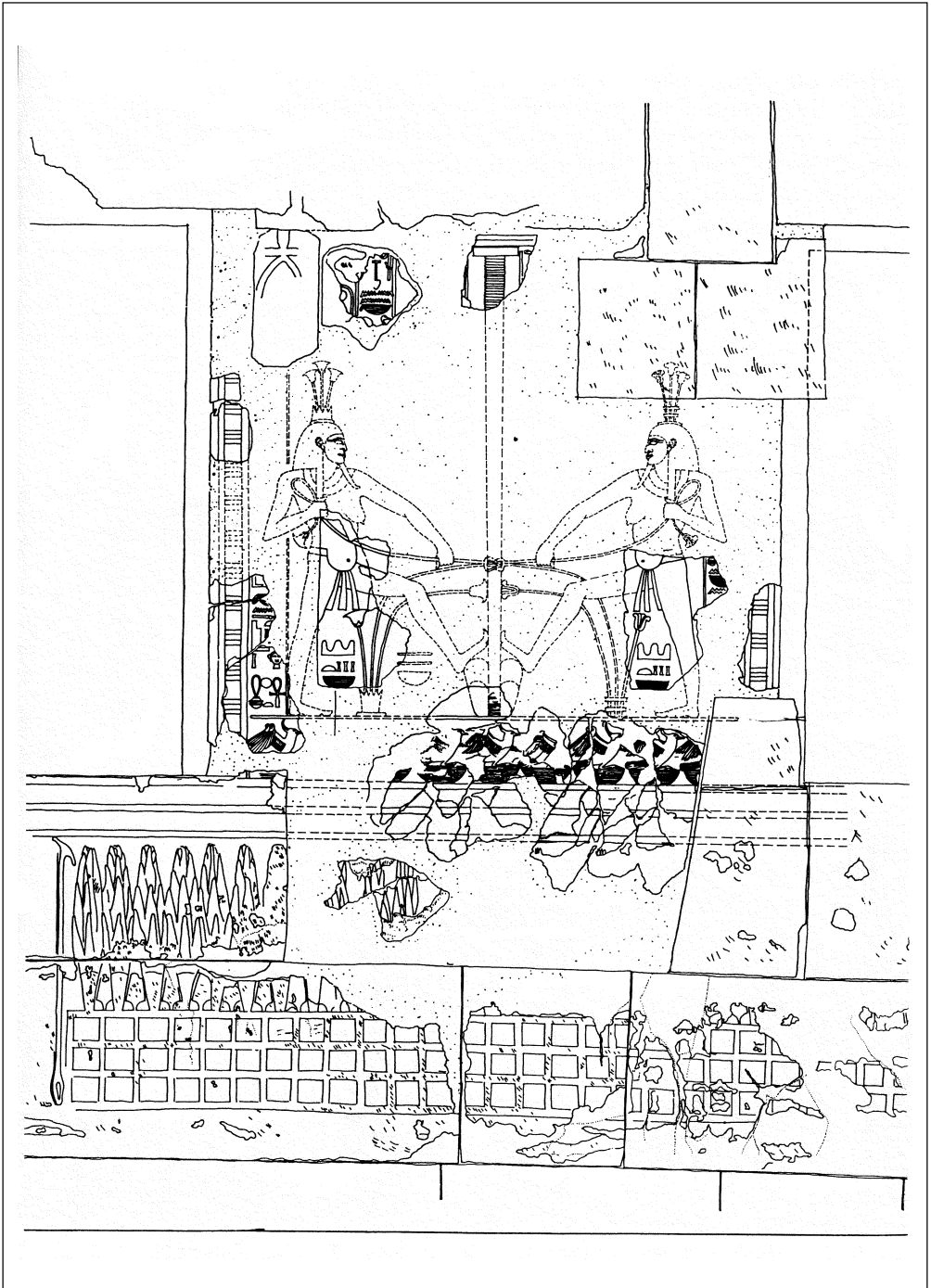


Fig. 4. Northern wall of the room of the bark after reconstruction of *sm3-t3wy* scene
(Drawing P. Dąbrowski)

other decorated block, concealed almost completely by the sandstone jamb of Ptolemaic make. The cleaning of the wall revealed a fragment of a relief which had not been visible so far; once the front of the block was cleaned of mortar and dirt, a big fragment of a depiction of Hatshepsut became visible. Despite the unfortunate damage to the face of the queen, which occurred when the block was being reinstalled in the north wall, the type of the representation with the queen shown with hands raised in the

characteristic gesture of greeting that is common in portal decoration, leaves no doubt that the block should be referred to the now lost original entrance to the room of the offerings. The decoration of the facade of the entrance to the last room of the complex repeated a motif known from the granite portal of the sanctuary. Thanks to the identification and fitting together of five other blocks from different expedition stores, it became possible to reconstruct the entire south jamb, as well as the decoration above

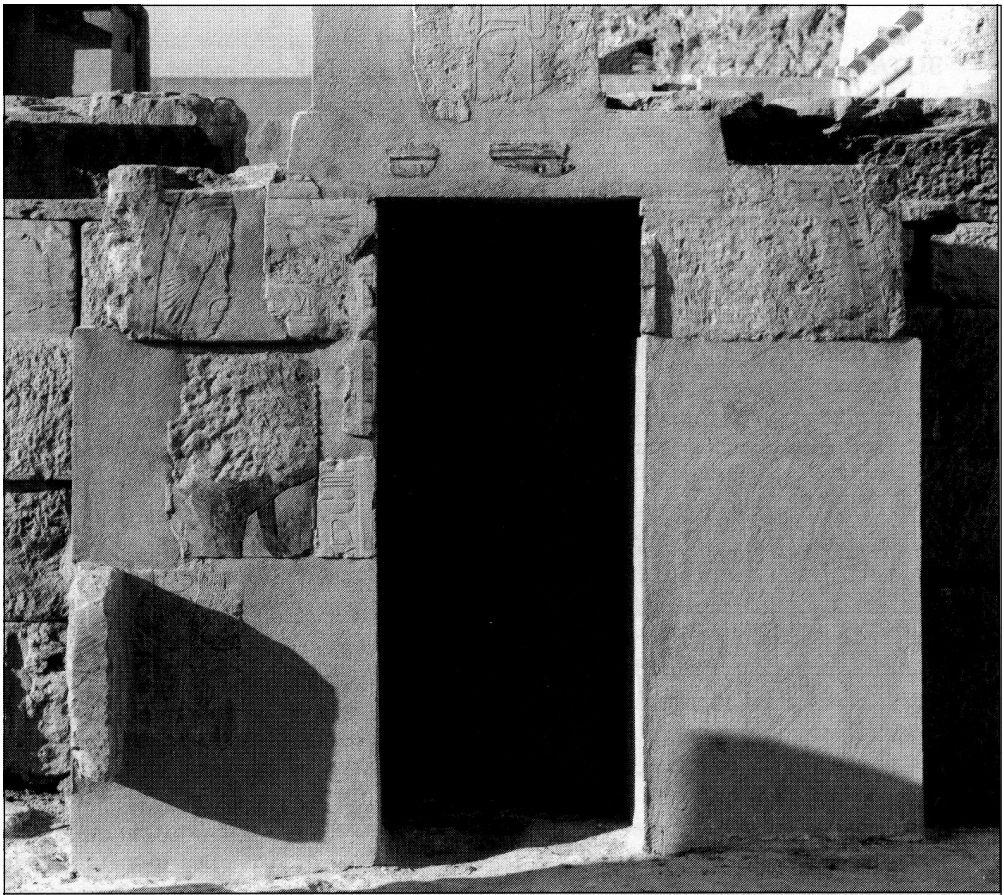


Fig. 5. Reconstruction of the entrance to the last room of the sanctuary of Amun-Re: a - block removed from the northern wall of the room of the offerings table; b - block removed from the western wall of the room of the bark; c - blocks recovered from the expedition stores (Photo W. Jerke)

the lintel, at the same time providing firm grounds for a theoretical reconstruction of the course of blocks in the walls of the room of the offerings. In view of the fact that the original spot is taken up by the Ptolemaic portal, the block which was removed from the northern wall and combined with the remaining elements of the original entrance is now on display in the upper court next to the sanctuary. The Ptolemaic jamb was reassembled and consolidated with silico-organic agents.

The conservation and cleaning of the walls lasted through the season. Around the places, where in Coptic times oil lamps had been lighted, the layer of soot was so thick that the treatment consisting of softening the soot with saturated tampons and removing it mechanically had to be repeated several times so that the original painted surface would not be damaged in any way. The greasy soot deposits have caused a permanent discoloration of the stone in the bottom courses and in the entrance to the room decorated with the characteristic band ornament. On the northern door frame, a poorly preserved representation of a kneeling Senenmut was traced, including an illegible hieroglyphic inscription which had been hammered out. All the scenes representing the purification of the statue of Amun (water libation, offering of incense and pellets of natron by Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III) were cleaned. An analysis of the decoration clarified by the cleaning treatment has shown that originally the purification of the statue of Amun was carried out by the royal pair, Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III, in unison. As in many other parts of the temple, so here the figure of the queen occupied the southern side, while the figure of the king dominated in the northern part of the room. The representation of the queen seen next to the en-

trance on the south wall is especially noteworthy. The yellow pigment on the face of the queen testifies to the artist's intent to emphasize the female gender of the represented figure. The obviously modeled female breast corresponds with this intent. These attributes, as well as the portrait features of the queen and the localization itself of the relief in the room from the first stage in the construction of the temple at Deir el-Bahari, constitute evidence that the representation we are dealing with here is that of Hatshepsut still as a woman although dressed already in male royal dress. The traces of red paint on the shoulders, body and legs are the effect of repainting executed either still in the reign of Hatshepsut or under Tuthmosis III.

The soot-covered vault of the room was left untreated as it was found that under the influence of the temperature the molecules of the blue background had reacted chemically with the soot to such a degree that the deposits could not be lifted without considerable damage to the painted layer. The treatment was limited to reattaching peeling fragments and to filling the void joints between displaced blocks. Work started on the new floor and on the last aesthetic touches.

ROOM OF THE OFFERINGS (Ptolemaic sanctuary)

The reconstruction of the entrance, identification of the arrangement of the wall courses and of a few decorated blocks from the side walls permitted the first provisional theoretical restoration of the iconographic program of the room of the offerings. This was possible thanks to the discovery of several as yet unknown blocks which the Ptolemies had installed with the decorated side facing inward. It has turned out that the two side walls

were filled with a procession of priests carrying offerings. The general character of the scene recalls the decoration on the walls of the offerings room of Hatshepsut in the south complex of the Royal Cult Chapels and taking into consideration the stages in the building of the temple, it should be thought of as the prototype. It is a unique decoration, not found in other temple structures.

Concurrently, preparations started on replacing the original fragments of the Ptolemaic portal and on the reconstruction of the floor of the room. The consolidated sandstone lintel of the entrance to the sanctuary of Amenhotep son of Hapu and Imhotep will be displayed in the Ptolemaic portico before the entrance to the room of the bark as there is now no place for it in the original wall.

UPPER COURTYARD

A reconstruction of the upper band of the decoration was carried out in the southern section of the eastern wall, restoring the series of scenes representing the procession of the holy bark of Amun from the temple in Karnak to the temple at Luxor during the Feast of Opet. The brick wall was replaced with more than 40 original blocks with surviving decoration. The stone material underwent conservation, removing from the wall concrete and gypsum mortars used in the earlier reconstruction. The missing parts were concealed under a layer of plaster in which some of the missing figures were modeled.

The scene beginning the ceremony was completed. The royal pair (Hatshepsut and Totmes III) is shown offering natron pellets before the bark which stands in the chapel of the Karnak temple [Fig. 6]. The figure of the queen, which was followed by that of Tuthmosis, was removed and replaced with a depiction of the offerings. In the same way, the composition of the other scenes in the eastern wall was changed. Sometimes, as in the last scene of the bottom register of the decoration, the figure of the queen was replaced with a hiero-

glyphic inscription. Other blocks replaced in the wall permit a reconstruction of consecutive episodes in the celebration of the feast, including dancers accompanying the procession, the retinue of priests with standards, the procession of royal statues including the surviving figure of queen Jahmes, princess Neferubity and Mutneferet, mother of Tuthmosis II. What is noteworthy is the rich repertory of royal headdresses: composite crowns, crowns of Lower and Upper Egypt, the *atef* crown and the *hprš* helmet. The upper register of the decoration ends with a representation of the holy bark standing in the chapel of the temple at Luxor.

A few additional fragments were also restored to the bottom register of a representation depicting the procession's return by boat to Karnak, reconstructed earlier by the Polish-Egyptian expedition.¹² The newly fitted elements include two blocks of special interests, showing the *Up-uaut* jackal "opening the way" depicted on one of the standards set up on the bow of the royal ship. Small decorated fragments (bow, rudders, chapels) were also fitted into the representations of the bark of Amun and the boats transporting it.

¹² Blocks from this part of the wall are to be found in a number of museums including Hanover and Berlin. Cf. J. Karkowski, [in:] *Geheimnisvolle Königin Hatshepsut* (Warschau 1997), pp. 111, 113.

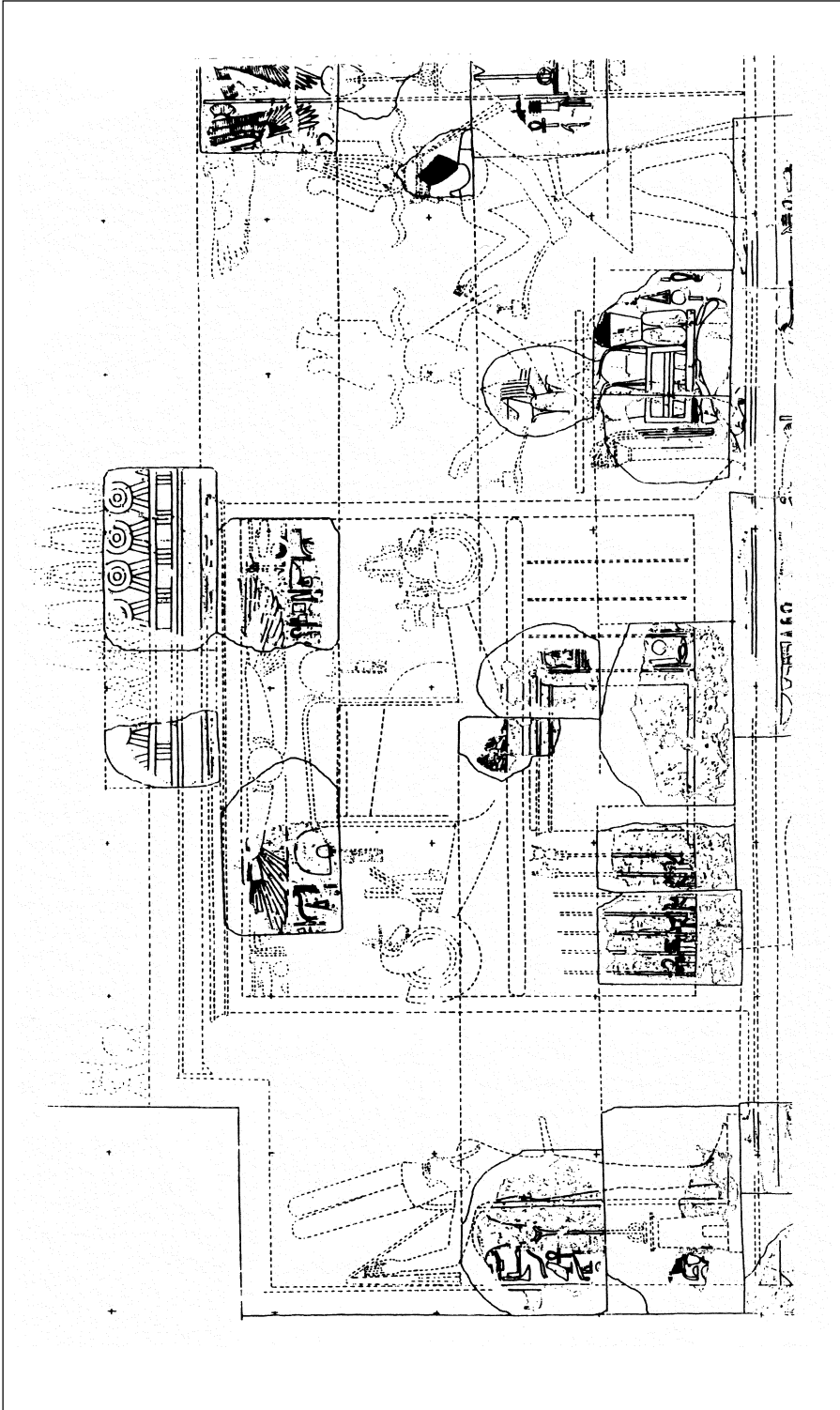


Fig. 6. Upper register of the east wall of the Upper Courtyard after reconstruction. Opening scene of the procession of the bark of Amun during the Opet feast (Drawing A. Kwaśnica)

A penetrating analysis of the representation of a group of priests accompanying the procession in the bottom register of the decoration has revealed that the royal statue standing between them had replaced an earlier image. The surviving traces of the contour of the original decoration in this spot reveal the figure of a standing woman. The context and composition of the scene permit the assumption that originally it was a representation of princess Neferure, later removed by Hatshepsut upon the girl's premature demise. Her images on the western wall of the upper court were eliminated in similar fashion.

One of the important findings of the reconstruction of the southern section of the eastern wall was the identification of the sockets of the architrave of the colonnade of the upper court. This permitted a definite understanding of the arrangement of the pieces of the architrave in the south-eastern corner of the space and in the vi-

cinity of the entrance to the Royal Cult Chapel complex.¹³

Over the course of the season conservators intervened with treatment on the north wall and the northern section of the east wall of the upper court where a peeling tendency of the stone surface had been observed. The separated fragments were consolidated and reattached using Primal AC 330, a silico-organic preparation protecting stone surfaces. With the installment of blocks from the topmost layer crowning the representation of the scene of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley the upper register of the decoration of the northern wall was completed.

The pieces of the architrave were transported from the Middle Terrace courtyard to the Upper Court where they will be displayed after the planned conservation. Smaller fragments not intended for reconstruction were removed to the stores on the Lower Terrace.

THE PORTICO OF PUNT

The southern wall of the portico with the best known representations: landscape scenes from an African village, the arrival of Hatshepsut's emissaries and their welcome by the Queen of Punt, transport of the trees etc., received full conservation treatment. The wall, which had been reconstructed by E. Baraize after A. Mariette's excavations in the early years of this century, had been damaged by frequent rainfall penetration of the core through the unprotected southern edge of the vault of the upper portico and the northern wall of the hypostyle hall of the Hathor Chapel. Salt efflorescence and rusty stains had appeared on the blocks of the upper courses,

the surface of the stones had started to powder and discolor, peeling from both the original elements and the 20th-century plaster.

The limestone blocks were consolidated and protected with silico-organic preparations. Aesthetic touches were added, removing the peeling modern paint and powdering gypsum putties and replacing them with mineral ones of a color and texture approaching that of the original blocks. It was determined that the reconstruction of the upper registers of the decoration requires many revisions and additions, which will be made possible once a full documentation is carried out and a separate project prepared.

¹³ A. Kwaśnica, F. Pawlicki, The Temple of Djeser-Djeseru at Deir el-Bahari, *JEA* (in print).