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Temple of Tuthmosis III in Deir El-Bahari in 2008 and 2009 : Work in the Stores and Field

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TEMPLE OF TUTHMOSIS III IN DEIR EL-BAHARI IN 2008 AND 2009: WORK IN THE STORES AND FIELD

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Abstract: Continued studies of fragmentary reliefs from the Tuthmosis III temple in Deir el-Bahari, now in storage on the site, were the focus of two seasons of work in 2008 and 2009. This led to theoretical reconstructions of a number of scenes, the documentation of several blocks was revised and supplemented with previously unobserved detail, and a study of the decoration of the east wall of the Hypostyle Hall and the walls and jambs around and above the various inner doorways in the temple was carried out. Extensive re-photographing of the blocks was continued, as was the digitizing of extant documentation and its verification. Storeroom improvements, including new lighting, will ensure better work conditions in the future, as well as proper storage conditions for the reliefs.

Keywords: Deir el-Bahari, Temple of Tuthmosis III, relief decoration, theoretical reconstruction

In the course of the two seasons the team concentrated on preserving the substance of the fragmentary reliefs from the temple of Tuthmosis III and on recording and revising material for the forthcoming publication.

The work included in particular:

1. New drawing reconstructions of scenes on the grounds of provisional sketches, making use of black&white photographic and scanned images. The following scenes from Room D were completed in this manner:

- double scene above the niche (Amon offering a sign of life to a falcon from the royal *serekh*),
- scenes with the king and a goddess on the West Wall by the corners; figure

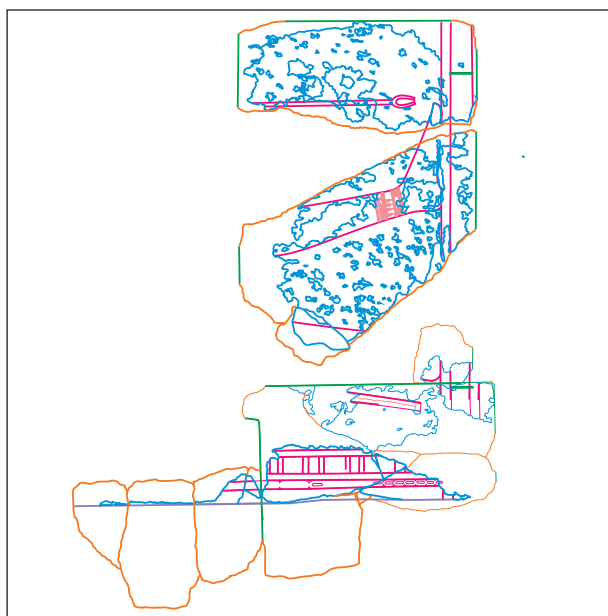
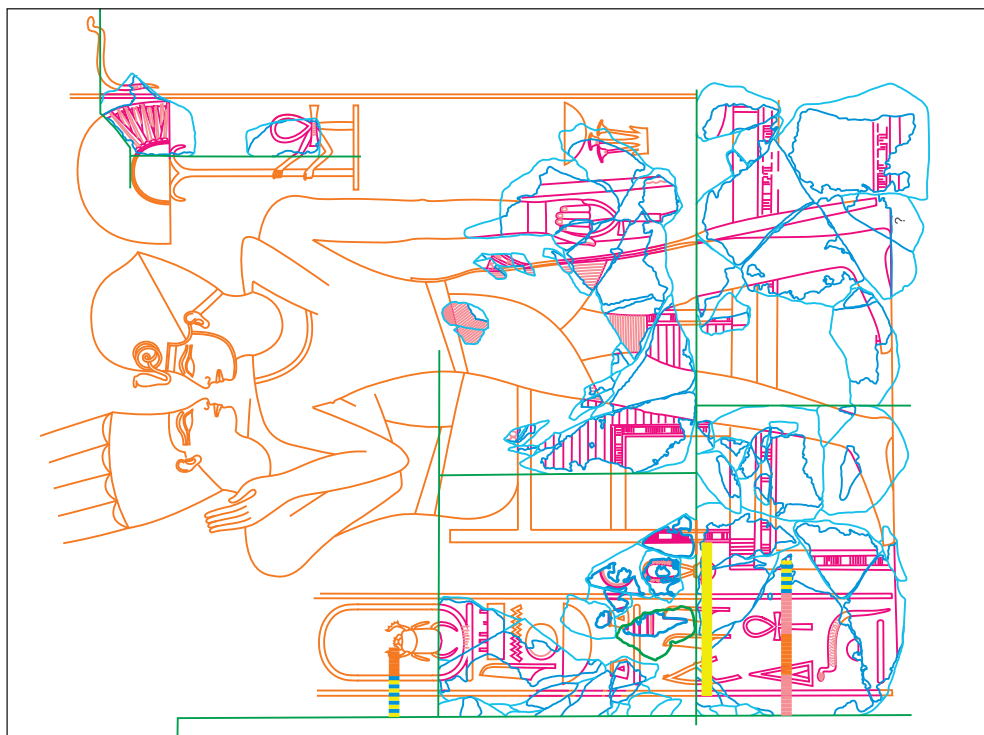
of Amon from the last scene on the North Wall [*Fig. 1*];

– scene of offering milk, cows and bulls to Kamutef on the East Wall to the south of the entrance.

2. Digitizing of scanned drawings using Corel software.

Drawings scanned as .tiff images were vectorized in order to allow revisions and additions. Two scenes on either side of the niche in the West Wall of Room D were digitized in this manner [*Fig. 2*], as well as scenes above the doorways to Rooms D, G and H, and the two first scenes on the North wall of Room D.

3. Revision of existing drawings and adding details included a check of the exactitude of drawings made previously of the East,



▲ Fig. 1. Last scene on the North Wall of Room D: fragment of a figure of Amon (All drawings J. Rembievska and M. Puszczarski)

▲ Fig. 2. Scene next to a niche in the West Wall of Room D: the king embraced by Amon

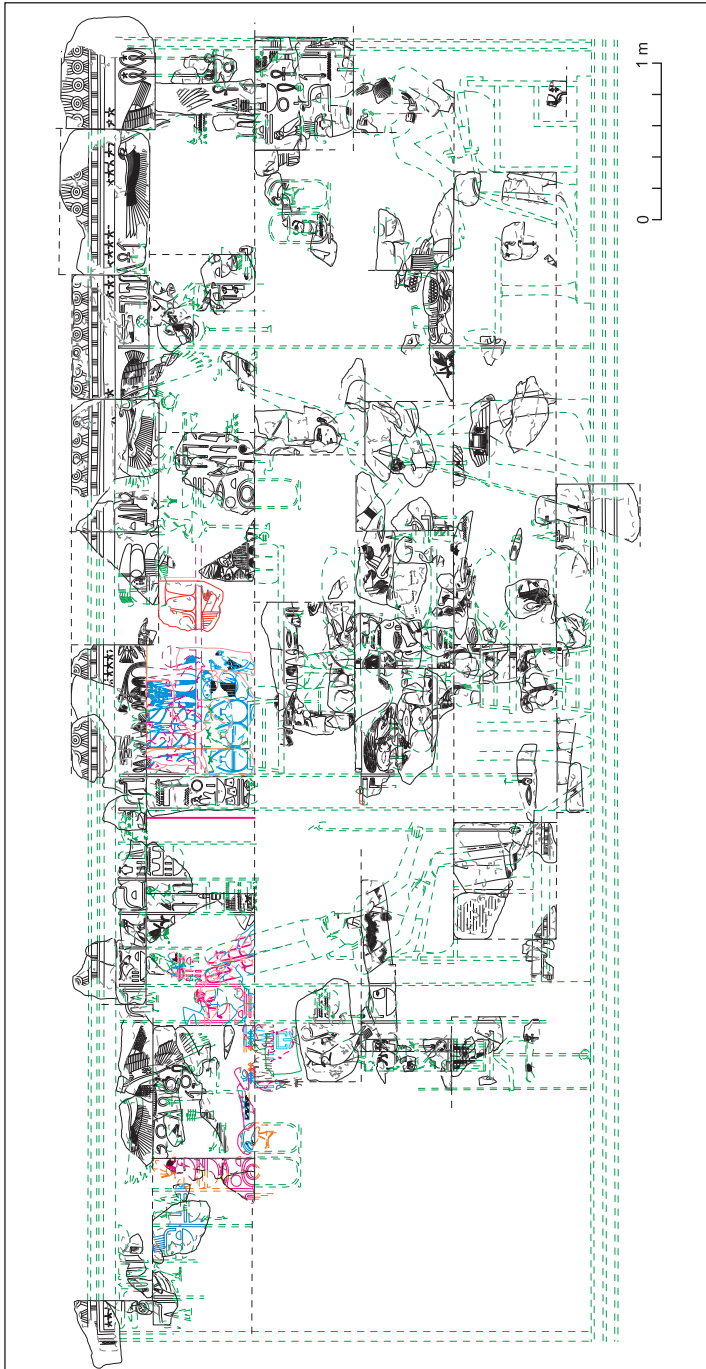


Fig. 3. North Wall of Room G with newly revised fragments

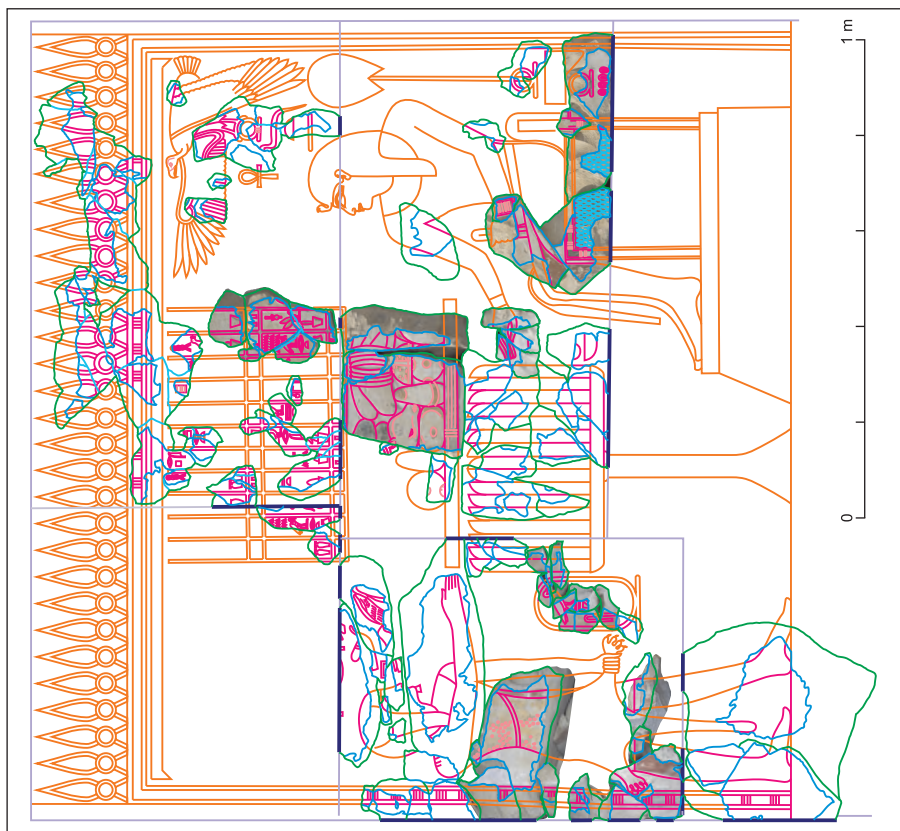


Fig. 5. Left wall of a niche with inserted available photographic images
(All photos Z. Doliński)



Fig. 4. Provisional photographic reconstruction of the figure of a king in atef crown from the north wall of Room H

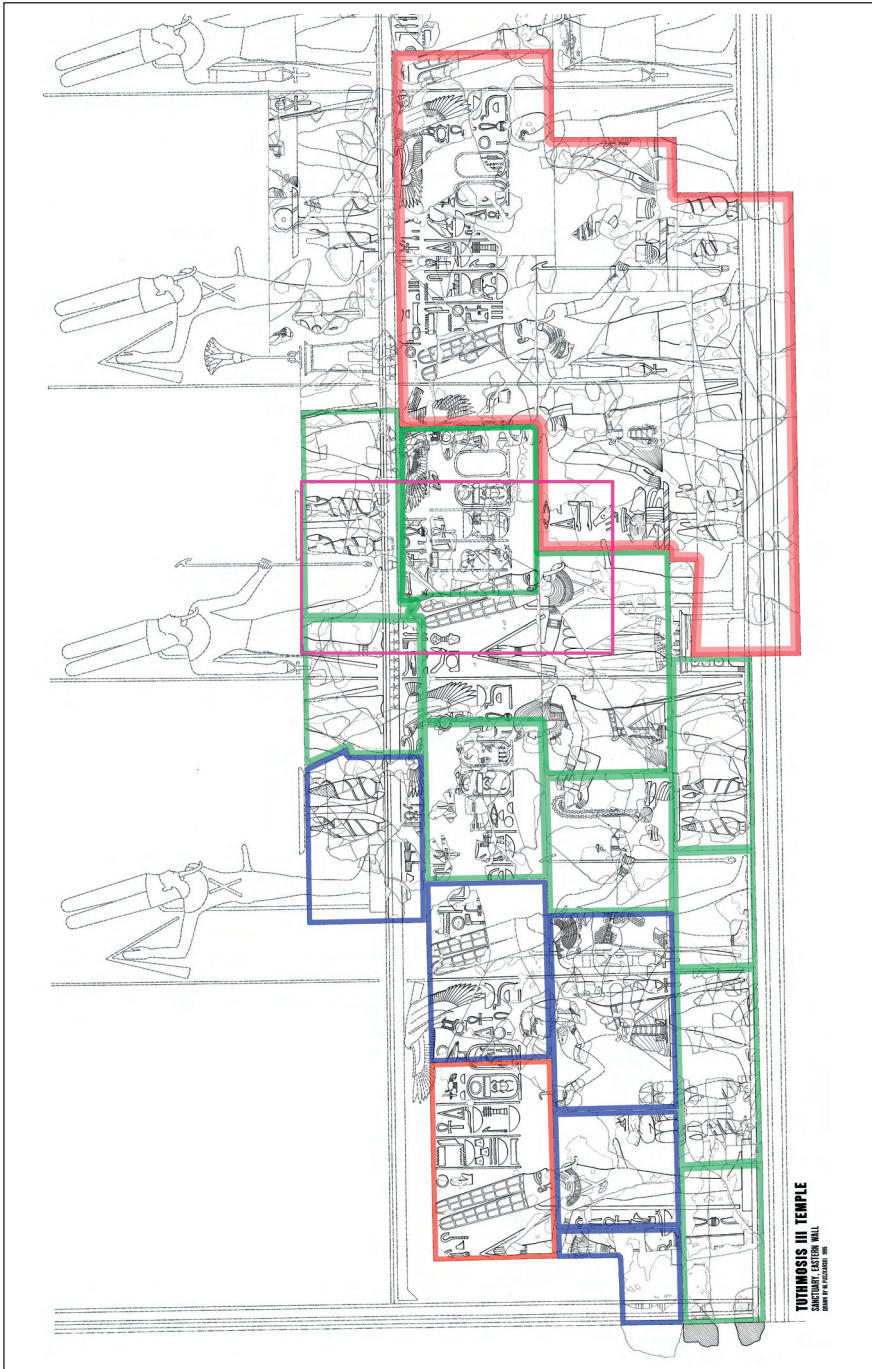


Fig. 6. Scheme of the east wall of the sanctuary; outlines in: pink – reconstructed blocks, provisionally installed in the storeroom; green – blocks prepared for installing; blue – hardened fragments prepared for reusing; purple – outline of niche in the other side of the sanctuary wall; red – block from the Carter Store which has returned from a traveling exhibition in the United States

North and South Walls of Room H, a drawing of the North Wall of Room G [Fig. 3], drawings of walls of the niche and scenes next to the niche in Room D.

4. Photographing blocks and fragments of blocks with decoration considered as particularly important, interesting and visually appealing. An added value of this work is the preparation of a set of professional images for use in publication and promotion activities.

Fragments making up selected scenes were all photographed separately in order to prepare photographic reconstructions of whole scenes for publication [Figs 4, 5].

5. Checking drawings of all scenes from the Hypostyle Hall, locating elements of the scenes from this hall scattered in the storeroom, macro-photography of fragments for use in further studies of decoration details.

6. Study of the decoration scheme of the East Wall of the Hypostyle Hall.

7. Study of the decoration around and above the various inner doorways in the temple, including photographic documentation of fragments of door jambs.

8. Transport to the storeroom of fragments of two architraves with fairly well preserved colors of painted reliefs.

Recent heavy winter rainfall has had a detrimental effect on the stone fragments

collected in the field. Stockpiling of decorated fragments on the ground outside the storeroom, even under cover, created excessively humid conditions after the rains. It took a long time for the damp to be eliminated. Brick benches will be used from now on to store fragments with surviving polychromy in order to avoid long standing in rain-related mud and with no direct sun exposure.

9. Furnishing and supplying a field conservation lab for the purpose of completing the reconstruction of previously prepared blocks from the east wall of the sanctuary. A group of fragments was cleaned and preserved, especially those which had suffered the most from heavy rainfall in the past. One block, which had been solidified earlier, was now recomposed and prepared for installing in the sanctuary wall, which has been reconstructed provisionally inside the storeroom [Fig. 6].

10. Canvas protection in successive seasons of columns with hieratic graffiti, standing in the temple area. This procedure had to be repeated as the columns were uncovered in the team's absence between fieldwork seasons, presumably in order to use the columns as an added tourist attraction.

11. Storeroom improvements including a new lighting system, designed and

Team

Dates of work: 8 November–15 December 2009

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Egyptologist: Janina Wiercińska (National Museum in Warsaw)

Photographer: Zbigniew Doliński (National Museum in Warsaw)

Documentalist: Marek Puzkarski (PCMA)

Conservators: Zbigniew Godziejewski, Joanna Lis (both National Museum in Warsaw)

installed in replacement of the old and malfunctioning electric cables; new shelves in the storeroom.

12. Return of three blocks from the Carter Store recently on exhibition in the United

States (“The Quest for Immortality” shown in several American cities and towns). The blocks will be incorporated into their respective scenes, including the reconstructed sanctuary wall.

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