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## Temple of Tuthmosis III at Der El-Bahari, Seasons 2010-2011

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# TEMPLE OF TUTHMOSIS III AT DEIR EL-BAHARI, SEASONS 2010–2011

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**Abstract:** Research and documentation work were continued by the Tuthmosis III Temple mission in the 2010 and 2011 seasons, concentrating on scenes located in the Hypostyle Hall, Bark Room, rooms D, G and H and the Room of Ritual Vessels. Architects studied the general layout of the three temples (Tuthmosis III, Hatshepsut and Mentuhotep) and their interconnections, while conservators succeeded in reconstructing from fragments another four decorated blocks for use in the final reconstruction project.

**Keywords:** Tuthmosis III, Deir el-Bahari, temple decoration, temple architecture, photomontage, theoretical reconstruction

The two main goals of the Tuthmosis III Temple mission are: completing the final publication of the temple study project and the protection, cleaning and preservation of the original polychrome relief decoration as much as possible, with an eye to future museum display of the most interesting and decorative fragments. The mission was reactivated in 2008 to continue the work began by Prof. Jadwiga Lipińska and the first Tuthmosis III Mission, which was suspended in 1996 (Dolińska 2012). To date, apart from two volumes published by Jadwiga Lipińska on the architecture (1977) and statuary and votive monument (1984), which are in need of revision and updating, there has been only a series of articles on various aspects of the temple (for a full list until 2010, see Dolińska 2010). The first volume

of the final publication, concentrated on the rooms connected to the royal and Hathor cult (rooms D, G and H), is in the course of completion [*Fig. 1*, top right].

The two seasons reported on here were dedicated to continued studies by individual members of the mission. And so, Janina Wiercińska concentrated on scenes of a river procession [*Fig. 4A–B*] and ritual scenes represented on the north half of the Eastern Wall in the Hypostyle Hall. She was able finally to identify the complete set of scenes belonging to this wall and establish most of the sequence with the exception of the south half of this wall and the South Wall, which is gone entirely. The scenes around the Granite Portal were also studied (see Wiercińska 2010) [*Fig. 1*, left]. The iconographic content

of the Bark Room, also in the hands of Janina Wiercińska, was successfully identified, some uncertainty remaining only with regard to the West Wall and the end of the North Wall. The decoration of the Room of Ritual Vessels, which had been the task of the late Dr. Joanna Aksamit, had to be tackled anew; the scenes were identified and drawn, but there remain many details to be corrected or added. The identification of the decoration of the various entrances was continued, an unrewarding task in view of the fact that doorjambs and lintels were usually separated from scenes on the walls and even the kind of stone could differ, making them extremely difficult to locate [Fig. 1, bottom right].

The mission continued documenting reconstructed scenes: photographing, drawing, digitizing, in view of future publication. There are thousands of frag-

ments which should have new digital photographs, in order to go on with the digital photomontage based on finished drawings. This is a slow and multi-phased process, the preparation of a photomontage regularly necessitating adjustments to the drawings. The effects are definitely worth the labor, considering that there is no other way of seeing the scene as a whole. Over the course of the two seasons in question, two walls of the niche and the entrance wall to Room G were reconstructed in this way [Figs 2, 3].

Photographing the fragments for photomontage processing is a major task, handled very capably by the mission photographer Zbigniew Doliński from the National Museum in Warsaw, but there are many other photo needs as well. It is necessary to shoot fragments added to already drawn scenes, fragments recently joined together, and fragments deserving

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#### Team

*Dates of work:* 11 November–9 December 2010; 1 November–13 December 2011

*Director:* Dr. Monika Dolińska (National Museum in Warsaw)

*SCA representative:* Mohamed Hatem Ali (2010); Abou el Hagag Taya Hassanien (2011)

*Egyptologists:* Janina Wiercińska (National Museum in Warsaw; 2010, 2011); Piotr Czerkwiński (PhD candidate, Center for Research on the Antiquity of Southeastern Europe, University of Warsaw; 2010, 2011); Filip Taterka (student, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań; 2011)

*Photographer:* Zbigniew Doliński (National Museum in Warsaw)

*Documentalist:* Marek Puszkarski (Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw; 2010)

*Architects:* Mariusz Caban (PhD candidate, Wrocław University of Technology; 2011); Szymon Caban (freelance; 2011)

*Conservators:* Joanna Lis, Andrzej Karolczak (both National Museum in Warsaw; 2011)

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#### Acknowledgments

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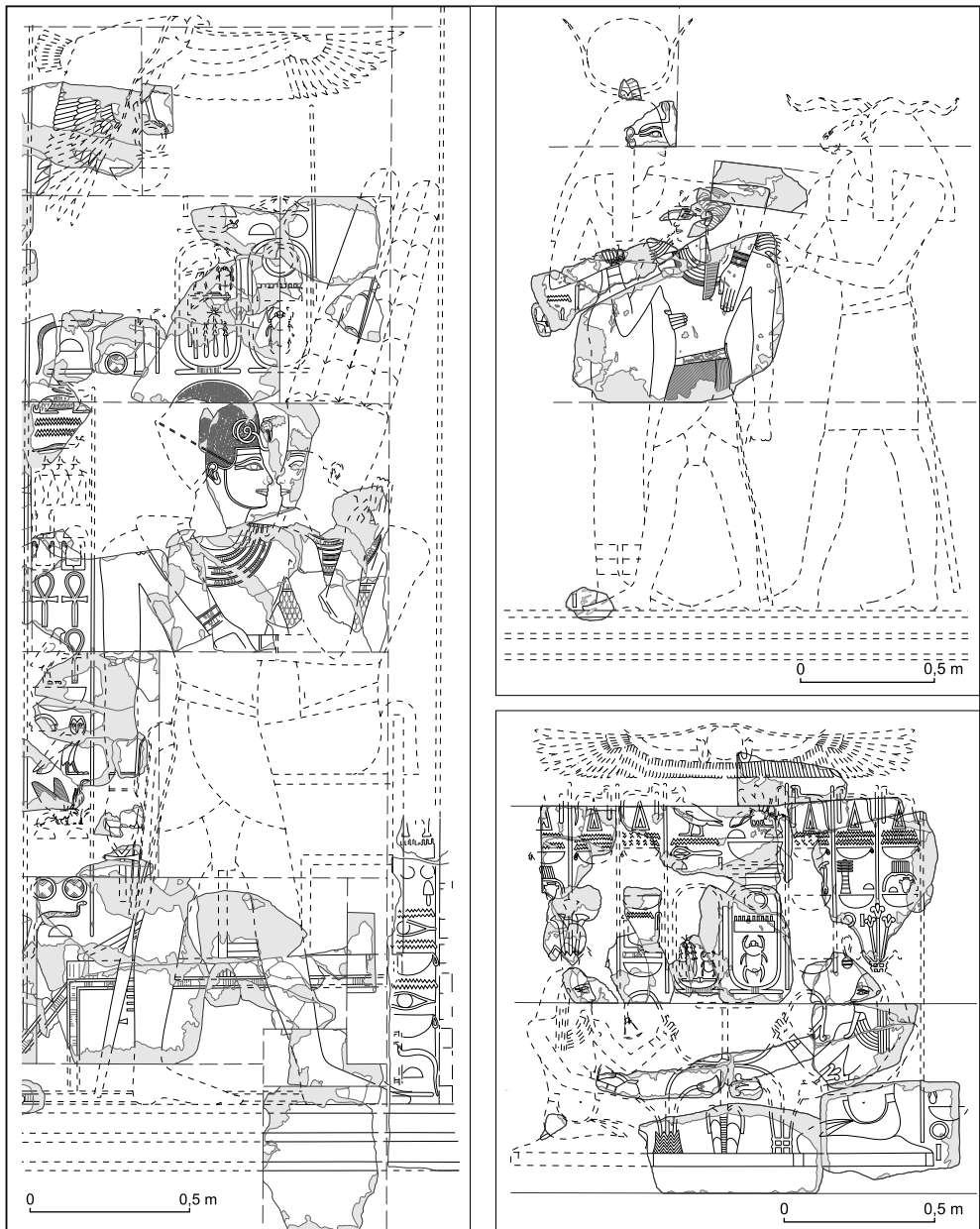


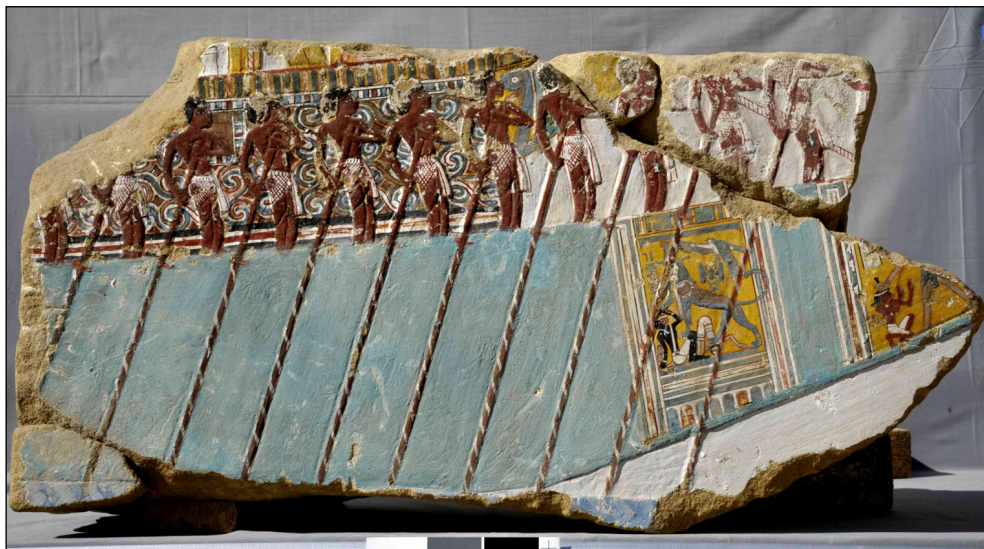
Fig. 1. Scenes from the relief decoration of the Tuthmosis III temple: top right, suckling scene with Hathor and a god; bottom right, Nile gods decorating the entrance to Room D; left, scene with the king and Amun on the south side of the granite portal (Drawing M. Puskarski [top and bottom right] and H. Lewak, G. Zborowska [left])



*Fig. 2. Entrance wall in Room G  
(Photomontage Z. Doliński; photos Z. Doliński; drawings K. Baturo, M. Puzkarski)*

*Fig. 3. Rear and right wall of the niche in Room D  
(Photomontage Z. Doliński; photos Z. Doliński)*



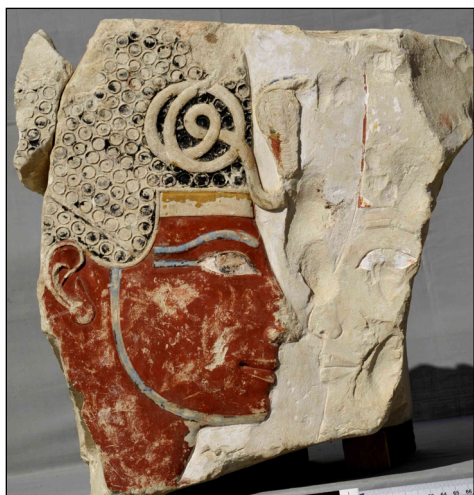


*Fig. 4A. Painted relief scene of a boat with oarsmen from the East Wall of the Hypostyle Hall, on a sandstone block (Photo Z. Doliński)*



*Fig. 4B. Painted relief scene of a boat with oarsmen from the East Wall of the Hypostyle Hall, on a limestone block (Photo Z. Doliński)*

special attention, although not yet placed in their original context. A very special task this year was the photographing of several blocks returning from a several-years exhibition tour of the United States. The blocks [e.g., *Fig. 5*], which first reached the Carter store (a fact reported already in Dolińska 2012: 267), came back at last to our storeroom [*Fig. 6*].



*Fig. 5. Block with the heads of the king and Amun (Photo Z. Doliński)*

All of them have a place in larger compositions and had already been “inserted” in their respective positions digitally before their trip to America.

The study of the temple has been in progress for many years and yet many important architectural and landscaping issues remain unsolved. For one, the connection between the three temples, of Mentuhotep, Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III, in the valley. For another, the appearance of the lower and middle terrace of the Tuthmosis III temple. And going further still, the function of walls adjoining the ramp. Architect Mariusz Caban scrutinized the remains of the lower ramp [*Fig. 7*], the blocks adjoining the ramp and those situated in the vicinity of the Mentuhotep lower portico, as well as the complicated arrangement of walls and pavements near the Hathor chapel of Tuthmosis. This led him to suggest important changes to the conception of the temple facade, the form of the porticoes and of the access to the Hathor chapel, all of which are crucial to the planned 3D reconstruction. It appears that the existing upper layer of



*Fig. 6. Blocks from the Tuthmosis III temple returning to the mission storeroom at Deir el-Bahari: left, transport of blocks from the Carter store; right, supervising the return of a sanctuary block (Photos Z. Doliński)*



blocks on the ramp was not the original upper surface, as was previously presumed, and that the ramp could have been considerably longer than reconstructed so far. Adjoining blocks probably belonged to the lower portico, advanced more to the east than in the previous reconstruction. Connections between all three valley temples were also analyzed.

Between 1996 and 2008, when the mission was suspended, most of sculptures and reliefs from the excavation were removed from the Tutmosis III storeroom to the Carter store and elsewhere. The remains — still an interesting assembly of objects, selectively published by Jadwiga Lipińska — include fragments of coffins, sculptures and reliefs, sets of small ushebti, beads, faience

fragments etc. Piotr Czerkwiński has started to examine these objects and has undertaken to prepare a proper inventory.

In 2011, conservators Joanna Lis and Andrzej Karolczak [Fig. 8] were able to continue a project of long duration for the reconstruction of the east wall of the sanctuary with a niche cutting into it from room D, located to the east. The wall was chosen for reconstruction after studies of the decoration of these two rooms revealed that whole sections of the reliefs are in fairly good condition. Over 20 blocks (sometimes decorated on two sides) were reconstructed already and in 2011 it was possible to add another four; the project now is just two blocks away from completion. Blocks are reconstructed using a stainless steel frame to stabilize



Fig. 7. Remains of the lower ramp  
(Photo M. Dolińska)

the fragments and filling the core with artificial stone.

Apart from this project, the conservators routinely cleaned and reinforced fragile relief fragments, concentrating especially on pieces threatened by loss of color.

By courtesy of Piotr Zambrzycki and Roman Stasiuk, conservator and photographer respectively from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, some trial photography in infrared and ultraviolet was done, in hope of revealing more graffiti and *dipinti* under the external coat of whitewash on the walls. The results, however, were not satisfactory.

Supplementary works accomplished during the season included a complete electricity system overhaul in the storeroom, assembly of two sets of shelves for storing fragments of scenes, devising a new protective covering for columns with hieratic graffiti (previous methods have proven unsatisfactory), transporting fragments of inscribed columns from the temple platform to custom-built benches in the open-air lapidaries near the lower court of the Hatshepsut temple and transfer of some other fragments (architraves, pillars, fragments of geometric ornaments) to other benches.



Fig. 8. Conservators at work on the reconstruction of blocks from the East Wall (Photo M. Dolińska)

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