

THE HATSHEPSUT TEMPLE AT DEIR EL-BAHARI, SEASON 1991

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During the autumn of 1991 an epigraphic mission continued the recording of Hatshepsut's temple decoration and architecture.¹ The demotic inscriptions of pilgrims of the Graeco-Roman times were also studied. As in the previous seasons, decoration was copied directly from the walls onto plastic film. Then the tracings were photographically reduced.

Emphasis was laid on recording the upper terrace. The central and largest of the three parts into which the terrace can be divided is occupied by the Amun complex. To the north of it, there is the solar complex and the complex of royal chapels joins it on the south.

The decoration of the solar complex had already been recorded previously with the exception of a series of figural graffiti scratched on the southern wall of the altar court, which were traced this season. Apparently they are pagan. Since they contain no allusions to the cult of Amenhotep, son of Hapu and Imhotep, they must have been executed before the Ptolemaic period.

¹ The mission included Dr. Janusz Karkowski, Director of the Mission, Dr. Nathalie Beaux, egyptologists, Messrs Mirosław Czarnocki and Bolesław Kobielski, architects, Prof. Jan Krzysztof Winnicki, philologist, and Mr. Rajmund Gazda, draughtsman. Accompanying the mission was Mr. Nubi Taya, Inspector of the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities. The season lasted from 13 October to 31 December 1991.

The mission would like to express its gratitude to the directors of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization's offices in Luxor and Gurna, Dr. Mohammed el-Sughair and Dr. Mohammed Nasr, for their support and help.

Also the architectural investigation of the solar complex was completed, revealing several building stages. Contrary to earlier opinions,² it was established that the upper Anubis shrine was the latest addition to the complex, and that the altar court was first built with four niches in the middle of each wall.

The largest preserved Pharaonic altar was also examined and it was established that it had been built in three stages. At first a smaller altar was built with the usual torus mould and cornice. A section of this cornice is visible in the side of the later stairs (Fig. 1). In the second stage, the smaller altar was provided with stairs, which reached the top of the cornice. Finally the cornice of the smaller altar was removed and the altar enlarged together with the stairs. The cornice blocks of the older altar were re-used in the larger one. During the season some dust and loose rubbish were removed and the south-eastern corner of the original smaller altar was uncovered with its torus (Fig. 2). It was also established that the stairs of the smaller altar were completed and are still preserved inside the final stairs.

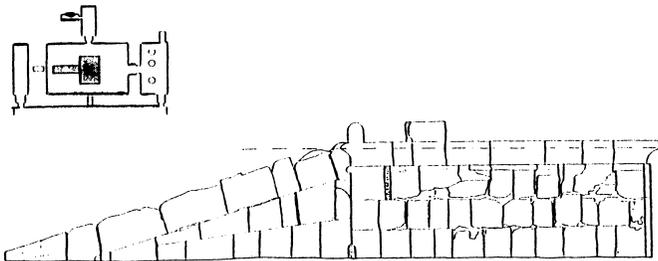


Fig. 1. The altar seen from the south. The section of the earlier cavetto cornice is visible in the wall of the stairs.

² Z. Wysocki, *MDAIK* 43, 1986, 267ff.

The documentation of the largest complex of the upper terrace, that of Amun, was this year the main objective of the mission. Epigraphic work here is highly complicated by many re-workings of the decoration in ancient times. The northern chapel of the Ennead in the main sanctuary was completely recorded, and the mission proceeded with recording of the bark room where the western wall was traced. Also recorded was the last untraced scene on the facade of the wall with the niches, which showed Hatshepsut, now erased, accompanied by Tuthmosis III and embraced by Amun with the queen's mother, Ahmes, present.

It is expected that the recording of the remaining scenes of the Amun complex will be completed in two more seasons. The planned publication of the Amun complex will be divided into five volumes.

The complex of royal chapels had undergone substantial restoration works in the period between the world wars. The works were directed by E. Baraize. This year the chapel of Tuthmosis I was recorded together with its vestibule and a small niche with representations of mummiform divinities in the vestibule of Hatshepsut's chapel. The architectural documentation of all the rooms to the south of the upper court was begun.

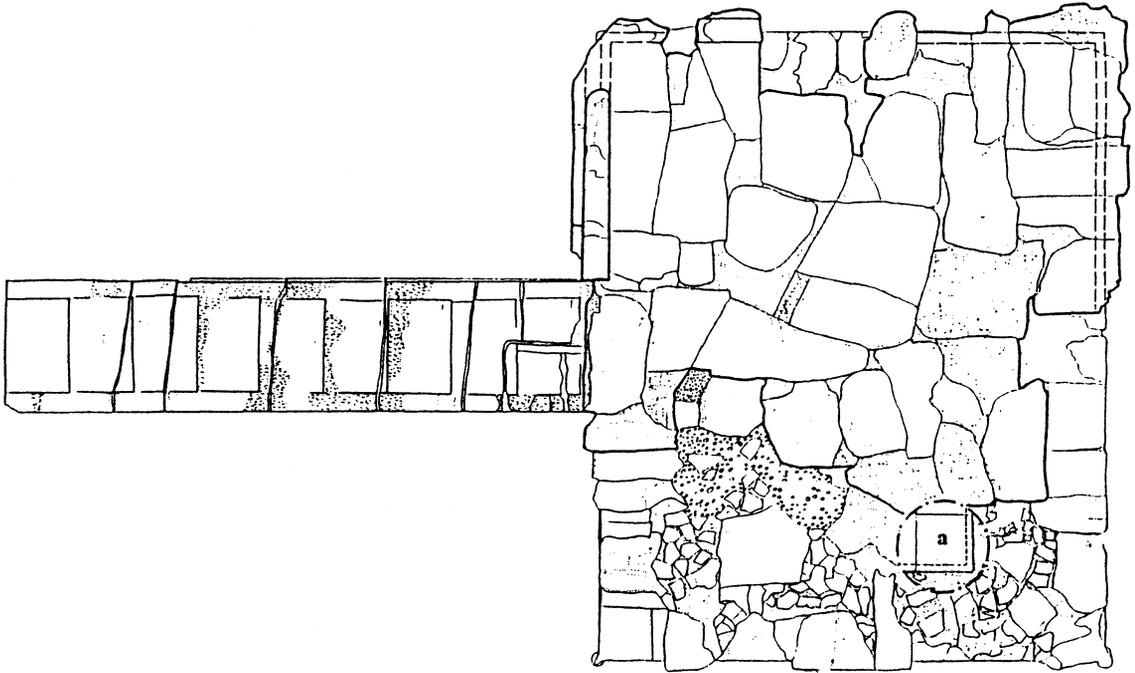


Fig. 2. Plan of the altar. The position of the older altar marked by (a).

Near the end of the season yet another project was started in the Hathor shrine.³ The facade of the shrine, which had also been restored by E. Baraize, was fully recorded and studied. This led to discovery of some significant errors in the restoration of the southern pylon. A number of important observations was made concerning the architecture of the colonnade of the shrine. Any further study requires accurate architectural documentation, but it has already become obvious that the building history of the shrine is even more complex than in Tefnin's hypothesis of 1975.⁴

This season's program also included the study and recording of some 200 unpublished Graeco-Roman Demotic texts from the sanctuary of Amenhotep, son of Hapu and Imhotep⁵ (the Greek graffiti had already been documented during the previous seasons by A. Łajtar). The texts yield new information on the cult which flourished at Deir el-Bahari for half a millennium, i.e., longer than the original cults of Amun and Hathor of the New Kingdom.

³ By N. Beaux and J. Karkowski in cooperation.

⁴ *CdÉL* (1975), 136ff.

⁵ By J. Winnicki.