



## The opening of the Main Sanctuary of Amun-Re in the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari (near Luxor, Upper Egypt)



*The interior of the Sanctuary of Amun-Re after the completion of work. Photo M. Jawornicki*

Another part of the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari will be available to the public. The opening ceremony of the Main Sanctuary of Amun-Re and the Ptolemaic Portico preceding it will take place on 9 December 2017 at 2 p.m.

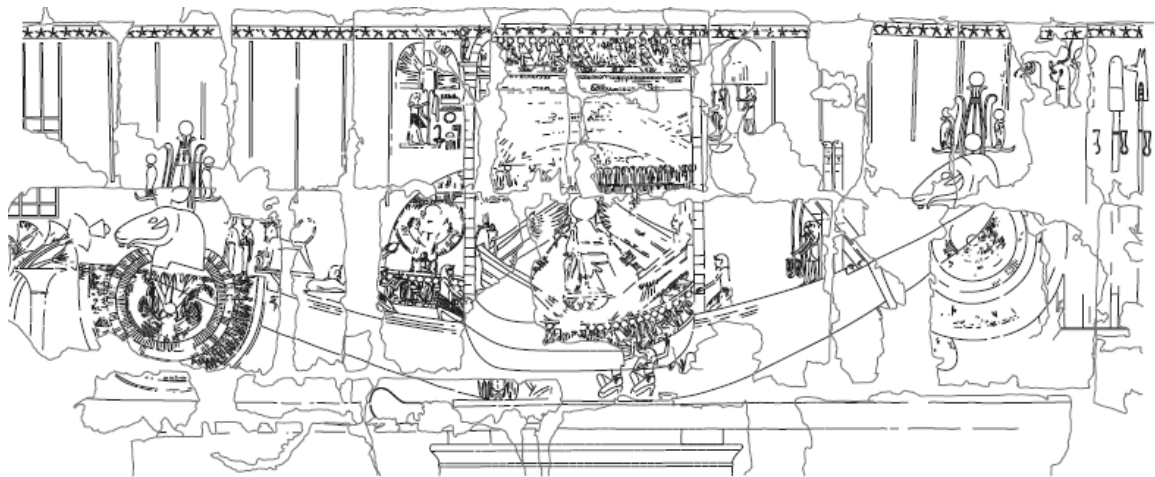
The ceremony will be hosted by the Egyptian Ministry of State for Antiquities, represented by the Minister of Antiquities Prof. Khaled el-Enani, and the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw, represented by its Director, Prof. Tomasz Waliszewski, with the participation of the Polish Ambassador, H.E. Michał Murkociński, and the Governor of Luxor, Mohamed Badr.

The PCMA will be also represented by Dr. Artur Obluski, Director of the Research Centre in Cairo, and Dr. Zbigniew E. Szafranski, director of the Polish-Egyptian Archaeological and Conservation Mission at the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari.

The Sanctuary of Amun-Re is located in the middle of the west wall of the Upper Courtyard of the Temple of Hatshepsut. It can be entered through through the Ptolemaic Portico and the granite portal, situated exactly on the prolongation of the line of the ramps leading to the Lower and Middle Terrace. The Main Sanctuary consists of the Bark Hall and the Statue Room with three chapels. The first room housed the sacred



bark of Amun during the ritual and it is the most magnificent part of the complex. The walls of the Bark Hall are decorated with representations of Hatshepsut, Tuthmosis III and Neferure, Hatshepsut's daughter, making offerings before the bark of Amun, as well as with depictions of the deceased members of the queen's family – Tuthmosis I and Ahmes (Hatshepsut's parents), Tuthmosis II and Neferubiti (Hatshepsut's sister) – welcoming the sacred bark. Members of the royal family are also represented in the six niches in the north and south walls. In the next room, the Statue Room, where the figure of Amun-Re was situated, the most important rituals related to the cult of this deity were performed. The statue was illuminated by sunlight thanks to a system of skylights situated above the lintels of the entrances to the Bark Hall and the Statue Room. In the middle of the north and south walls, entrances to two narrow chapels devoted to the Ennead, a group of nine deities worshipped at Heliopolis, were located, which was a symbolic way of including other areas besides Thebes in the ritual. The last chapel, and the farthest room, was the so-called Ptolemaic Sanctuary. Its present shape dates to the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II.

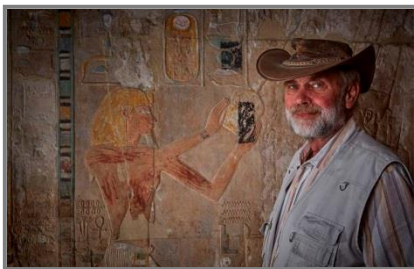


*The depiction of the sacred bark of Amun on the wall of the Sanctuary. Drawing A. Golijewska, F. Pawlicki*

The Polish-Egyptian Conservation Mission at the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari was founded in 1961 by Prof. Kazimierz Michałowski. Since then, archaeologists, restorers and architects associated with the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw have been documenting and reconstructing the temple. The original ceiling of the Bark Hall and the wall of the facade were protected, and a protective platform was built over the Upper Terrace. Thanks to these measures, the pressure of rocks and stones and the destructive influence of rainwater on the structure of the Sanctuary were eliminated. The walls of the complex were stabilized and their decoration reconstructed, including two of the four Osiride statues of Hatshepsut and the reliefs in the Bark Hall. Moreover, the preserved reliefs were cleaned and protected by



restorers which brought out the bright colours of the original paint layer. 3D scanning was also carried out as part of comprehensive documentation work. Since work in the Sanctuary has been completed, it can now be opened to the public. Research on the Egyptological aspects of the Sanctuary is conducted by Dr. F. Pawlicki (author of, among others, a guide booklet accompanying the opening) to be published as a monograph. Research on the Ptolemaic part has already been published by Assoc. Prof. Ewa Laskowska-Kusztal, Polish Academy of Sciences (*Le Sanctuaire Ptolémaïque de Deir el-Bahari*, Deir el-Bahari III, Varsovie 1984).



*Jawornicki*)

Dr. Zbigniew E. Szafranski – director of the Polish-Egyptian Archaeological and Conservation Mission at the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari since 1999 and PCMA associate for almost 40 years. For 10 years (2005–2015) he has served as director of the Research Centre in Cairo. Author of numerous scientific publications on Egyptian archaeology. (*Photo M.*

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**Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw** – Numerous Polish excavation and conservation projects in the Mediterranean, Africa and the Middle East have been carried out under its auspices for more than 50 years. At present, the Centre conducts about 30 excavation and conservation projects on sites dated from the prehistoric times through all the historic periods to Late Antiquity and Islamic period in Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan, Cyprus, Iraqi Kurdistan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Georgia and Armenia. It also manages the Research Centre in Cairo.

**Read more:** [www.pcma.uw.edu.pl](http://www.pcma.uw.edu.pl) ; [www.facebook.com/pcma.uw/](https://www.facebook.com/pcma.uw/)





*List of appended figures:*

- I. *Deir el-Bahari. The terraced Temple of Hatshepsut. Photo W. Jerke*
- II. *The Ptolemaic Portico at the entrance to the Sanctuary. Photo M. Jawornicki*
- III. *Granite portal and the interior of the Sanctuary after conservation. Photo M. Jawornicki*
- IV. *The interior of the Sanctuary after the completion of work. Photo M. Jawornicki*
- V. *Queen Hatshepsut, the founder of the Temple, in a ritual scene before Amun-Re. Photo M. Jawornicki*
- VI. *Plan of the Sanctuary of Amun-Re in the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari:*
  1. *Bark Hall*
  2. *Statue Room*
  - 3–4. *Chapels*
  5. *Ptolemaic Sanctuary*
  6. *Ptolemaic Portico*
- VII. *Dr. Zbigniew E. Szafrński in the Sanctuary. Photo M. Jawornicki*