

THE TEMPLE OF TUTHMOSIS III

SEASON 2000

Joanna Aksamit, Rafał Czermer

The work at the temple of Tuthmosis III, interrupted after the 1996 season, was resumed this year for a short term, from February 5 until March 26, 2000. Associated

with the Temple of Hatshepsut reconstruction mission, the team focused on the restoration of architectural elements in the area of the Hypostyle Hall (*Fig. 1*).¹⁾

THE GRANITE DOORWAY

The most important task of the season was completing the restoration of the northern jamb of the granite doorway leading once from the Hypostyle Hall to the Bark Shrine (*Fig. 2*).²⁾ The reconstruction (comprising all loose pieces coming from the excavations in the 1960s) and re-erection of the jamb were carried out in 1996.³⁾ The jamb is 3.9 m high, 0.80 m wide and 0.95 m deep. Originally, it leaned 0°13'26" southwards and 2°6' westwards. The westward inclination has increased slightly since antiquity and now is 2°58'48"; it was decided nevertheless to leave the jamb in the present position, as the inclination does not affect its stability. Due to a shortage of time in 1996, the jamb had to be left unfinished and its bare

reinforced-concrete core remained visible where no original granite surface had been preserved. In 2000 the gaps between the original surface and the core were filled in with limestone chips bound together with white cement mortar. The filler was then covered with plaster tinted with crushed sandstone. The color thus obtained resembles that of the ancient plaster restoration visible in the lower part of the jamb's northeastern edge.⁴⁾ The reconstructed jamb illustrates very well the original dimensions of the whole doorway. The upper part of the southern jamb (unfortunately, almost devoid of decoration, which was hacked away already in antiquity, during the demolition of the temple), preserved as a two-ton block of

1) The team consisted of: Dr. Joanna Aksamit (Warsaw National Museum), Egyptologist responsible for the work at the Tuthmosis III temple; Dr. Rafał Czermer, architect; and Mr. Stefan Miszczak, conservator. The mission was visited by Mrs. Teodozja Rzeuska, pottery specialist (February 21-23), and Mrs. Monika Dolińska (March 18-26), Egyptologist.

2) See J. Lipińska, "The Granite Doorway in the Temple of Tuthmosis III at Deir el-Bahari. Studies on reconstruction", *ET* 2 (1968), 79-97; ead., *The Temple of Tuthmosis III, Architecture, Deir el-Bahari II* (Varsovie 1977), 17-21. New measurements were made after the publication of the above studies and they are referred to in the present report. Several more decorated fragments have also been added since to both jambs of the doorway and some pieces coming from the lintel have been identified.

3) See J. Lipińska, *PAM VIII, Reports 1996* (Warsaw 1997), 68-72.

4) See R. Czermer, Egyptian "building excellence" – Tuthmosis III's builders, *Essays in honour of Prof. Dr. Jadwiga Lipińska* (Warsaw 1997), 33.

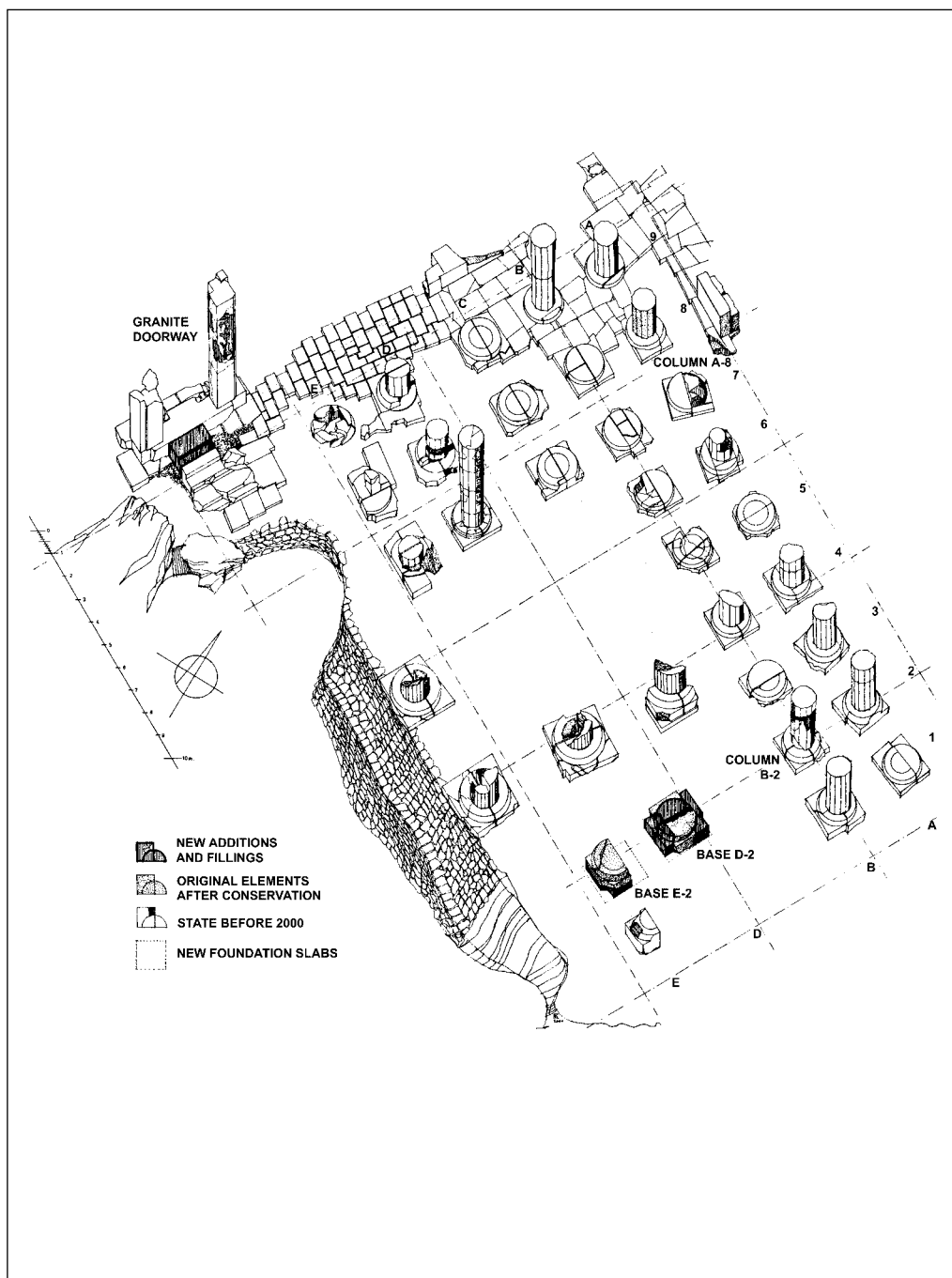


Fig. 1. General view of the Tutmosis III temple area. Hatching indicates work carried out in the present season (Drawing R. Czerner)



*Fig. 2. The Granite Doorway. State in April 2000
(Photo J. Aksamit)*

granite (1.96 m high, 1.0 m wide and 0.82 m deep), awaits re-erection; the complete documentation necessary to carry out this project has already been prepared.

Reconstructing the flight of stairs leading to the Granite Doorway from the Hypostyle Hall was another field of activity for the team. Only the two lowermost steps had been preserved *in situ* and their conservation and consolidation with ethyl silicate were made in previous

seasons. Two more steps (extending on the southern side of the stairs to 2/3 of their original width) were reconstructed out of a new sandstone block in 1995. The reconstruction was completed this season by cutting the last two steps out of another block of new sandstone, of the same dimensions as the one used previously (H. 0.41 m, W. 1.55 m, D. 1.05 m). A foundation of small limestone chips was prepared to set the new block in place.

CONSERVATION OF BASES D-2 AND E-2

Two large pieces (each of them measuring c. 0.55 x 0.9 x 1.25 m) and several smaller fragments of sandstone remained of base D-2. Base E-2 originally consisted of two sandstone blocks, but only one of them –

the southern, bigger one (0.4 x 1.2 x 1.5 m) – had remained in place. After a detailed survey of the state of preservation of the bases the broken or leaning pieces were cleaned and the ones that were the most



*Fig. 3. Fragment of base D-2, before conservation
(Photo J. Aksamit)*

damaged were temporarily dismantled and consolidated with ethyl silicate (*Fig. 3*). Underneath both bases new foundations were made in the form of c. 10-cm thick reinforced-concrete slabs. Each slab was placed on a layer of gravel. In the next step the loose elements of the bases were put back in their original position. Where necessary they were glued together with epoxy resin (Araldite) or simply built up with mortar based on white cement. The gaps were then filled with small pieces of stone bound together with mortar of lime

and white cement, and the surface of the fillings was covered with colored mortar. The missing parts of base D-2 were reconstructed out of new sandstone blocks (0.55 x 0.35 x 0.7 m and 0.55 x 0.6 x 0.55 m). A place was left on the new foundation slab of base E-2 for the future reconstruction of its missing part. The inscribed sandstone drum of a column, which was put on top of column B-2 and temporarily supported with wooden pegs in 1993, was now fixed in place with stone and mortar.

MINOR CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Hieratic graffiti inscribed on column A-8 were treated with a Paraloid B-72 acrylic resin solution in toluene to protect them from exfoliation. Initial experiments with a silicon resin, Remmers Sonderton KSE 500 E, were not successful, resulting in a deep darkening of the surface, probably due to previous conservation made with acrylic resin. The lacunae in the original sandstone

elements of the temple's architecture, which had been left uncovered at the end of the 1996 season, were now filled with colored plaster. Fragments of sandstone architectural elements still stored in the western part of the temple platform were to some extent covered and rearranged to protect them as much as possible from the sun and wind.

STOREROOM ACTIVITIES

The storeroom with reliefs from the Tuthmosis III temple was opened on February 5 and sealed again on April 15, 2000, but activities there were very limited. The restoration of the polychrome reliefs in preparation for the display of the decorated blocks continued to be held up. The absence of a documentalist prevented the recording of the theoretically reconstructed parts of the decoration from being continued. It was possible only to add some fragments to the

already reconstructed scenes. However, the fact that these additions could have been made at all proves that continuation of the work on the theoretical reconstruction of the temple's decorative scheme can still bring new results. New Kingdom pottery found in the area of the temple of Tuthmosis III was studied in preparation for publication.⁵⁾ The already existing documentation⁶⁾ was checked and some new drawings were made.

5) To be published by T. Rzeuska in *ET XIX* (in print).

6) Prepared in the 1980s by Prof. K. Myśliwiec and Mr. T. Górecki.