

# NEWSLETTER

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## DEIR EL-BAHARI, THE TEMPLE OF QUEEN HATSHEPSUT, PRESERVATION MISSION

The Polish-Egyptian Preservation Mission headed by Dr. Franciszek Pawlicki worked from December 1996 to mid-April 1997. The Supreme Council of Antiquities was represented by Mr. Said Gebriil and Mr. Mohammed Shawky Bakri.

The reconstruction of the western wall of the Upper Courtyard ("wall with niches") was completed with more than 70 fragments or whole blocks featuring the original decoration being remounted in position. Some of the elements have proved of importance for recreating the wall decoration, e.g. the reliefs depicting Tuthmosis I in libation scenes, scenes of offerings and blessing of vases, as well as many blocks completing the pantheon of deities represented in the niches, including Neit, Geb and Ptah. It is noteworthy that work on reconstructing the wall with niches was commenced exactly one hundred years ago by a British mission.

The granite portal of the temple's main sanctuary was treated; the cracked lintel was consolidated and the peeling facade was protected. As for the limestone entrance to the Hall of the Bark, the jambs, carelessly restored in the past by the British mission, were dismantled; the blocks were then protected and mounted back in position with the addition of several original elements from the expedition stores. The original dimensions of the entrance were restored; it is now a few dozen centimeters wider than before.

The conservation of the south wall of the Hall of the Bark was completed with the cleaning of a thick deposit of soot from the wall decoration. An additional four fragments depicting a kneeling Tuthmosis II, the god Amon-Ra and offerings before the bark were remounted at this time. Cleaning commenced of the wall decoration in the sanctuary's hall of the statue.

A reconstruction of the eastern wall of the vestibule of Re-Horakhty was carried out, with the mission mounting more than 70 blocks in the course of the work. The decoration of the wall composed of two long hieroglyphic texts: hymns to the Rising and Setting Sun, was completed.

Over 40 blocks, mainly with depictions of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, were mounted in the north wall of the courtyard. At the same time, studies continued on

the conceptual design of the reconstruction of the southern wing of the Upper Courtyard's east wall.

The Osiride statue in the Upper Portico was restored, as well as the balustrades of the temple's two ramps. The disintegrated fragments that have been preserved were consolidated and additional original elements were mounted in place. The original ending of the balustrade in the form of the falcon of Horus was also reconstructed in its original form.

The plaster and polychromy on the north wall of the Portico of the Birth and in the Lower Shrine of Anubis underwent conservation.

All in all, over 200 original elements were remounted in their position in the walls, balustrades and statues.

## DEIR EL-BAHARI, THE TEMPLE OF QUEEN HATSHEPSUT, EPIGRAPHIC MISSION

The Epigraphic Mission to the Hatshepsut temple, headed by Dr. Janusz Karkowski, worked from late February to mid-April 1997.

The main objective of the mission was to study and prepare the documentation of the Hathor Shrine, particularly the restoration projects of some of the walls of the double colonnade. This task required special care in view of the irregular wall structure at this point of the building and many errors made in the original restoration of the 20s and 30s. A final drawing of the scenes of the presentation of the menit-necklace to Hatshepsut by Hathor (originally assigned to the northern wing of the outer colonnade's east wall) and the presentation of offerings to the statue of the Hathor cow (south wall) was begun following minute analysis of several trial restorations on paper.

It was also found that the decoration on the symmetrical north wall of the outer colonnade (similar to the scene on the south wall) was originally in sunk relief; work upon it had started prior to the erection of the outer colonnade and was reworked in low relief by Hatshepsut's artists once the actual construction had begun. Additional fragments from the stores were identified as belonging to the shrine's colonnade.

The recording of the decoration in the inner, completely preserved rooms of the Hathor Shrine was continued, as was the work on inking the final plates for publication and the photographic documentation.

A routine end-of-season check of the condition of the Hathor Shrine's walls and roofs led to the discovery of cracks in the northernmost architrave and in one of the roofing slabs of the Vestibule. Appropriate steps were undertaken to protect the endangered spots.

In cooperation with the IFAO in Cairo, a radar examination of the floor of the Hathor Shrine was performed by a team of French geophysicists. The objective was to identify possible tomb shafts and verify a hypothesis as to the existence of an older shrine of Hathor, belonging to Mentuhotep, under the platform of Hatshepsut's shrine. Unfortunately, the rock upon which Hatshepsut's temple is built proved highly resistant to radar, while the complicated construction of the temple's platforms prevented any clear evidence of empty spaces from showing up.

The same team carried out, on the request of Dr. Mohammed el-Sughayer, Director of the Upper Egypt Antiquities of the SCA, a radar examination of a section of the corridor that precedes the burial chamber in the tomb of Seti I in the Valley of the Kings. By contrast, the examination here revealed a clear anomaly which may reflect an excavation in the limestone bedrock sealed with a different material; its exact nature and depth can be established only by drilling or excavations.

## ALEXANDRIA, KOM EL-DIKKA, PRESERVATION AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSIONS

The Polish-Egyptian Preservation and Archaeological Mission, directed by Dr. Eng. Wojciech Kotłaj, worked from October 1996 to June 1997. The excavations and archaeological research in the reported period were headed by Dr. Grzegorz Majcherek. The Supreme Council of Antiquities was represented by Mr. Ahmed Mousa.

Conservation activities focused on current preservation projects at the cisterns and bath complexes. The entire southern section of the western facade of the wall separating the cisterns from the R4 street was restored. The wall of the southern end of the eastern corridor of the cistern was also largely restored; about 10 sq. m. of its face was rebuilt and the top was insulated. Final landscaping of the surrounding area was completed, including tourist walkways along the southern perimeter of the site.

The preservation work on the northern facade of the cisterns proved somewhat difficult in view of the extensive cavities that were revealed in the course of its clearing (ca. 50 sq. m.). The cavities were found to underlie practically the entire structure. The most endangered fragments had to be cleared and protected on a step-by-step basis, introducing supporting pillars and walls.

In the bath, work concentrated on the restoration of the subterranean vaulted structure. A heavily damaged vault leading to one of the hypocaustum furnaces was reconstructed. Yet another vault in the southern part of the service area, almost entirely dismantled in the Mamluk period, was also restored, permitting entry into this part of the service cellars in the future. A total of 12 sq. m. of vaulting was completed over the course of the season. The western end of the baths' outer wall was cleared, the overhanging structure protected with steel ropes, and the lower foundation courses of the buttress rebuilt.

Conservation work proceeded also in the ruins of a nearby Roman villa excavated during previous campaigns. One of the brick-made domes was consolidated, the cracks filled in with lime-cement and casein putty in order to protect against the penetration of rainfall. Similar methods and materials were employed to protect other fragments of the villa's walls.

As in the previous few campaigns, archaeological investigations concentrated on a complex of Early Roman villas discovered in the area between the baths and the cisterns. The next row of rooms uncovered in the eastern wing of House FA was found to have been heavily damaged and comprehensively rebuilt in the 3rd cent. AD; of the first-century building only the lower parts of some walls and sections of the old floors have remained. In one of the rooms, the clearing of an opus sectile floor was completed. The central panel is designed as a circle inscribed in a large frame filled with alternating triangles, the contrasting white marble and red porphyry creating a colorful geometric composition. Remains of painted decoration: a black socle and, above it, rectangular, alternately red, yellow and black panels separated by thin green bands, were uncovered on the lower parts of walls.

Explorations in the abutting House FC (to the east) revealed fragments of a street facade and two adjacent rooms. An analogous entrance plan was identified with a door in the southern wall and remains of a staircase leading to the upper floor or terrace. Some slabs from the pavement of the street were also discovered. The house extended all the way to the R4 street; its complete clearing, planned for the next season, should provide data for determining the extent of urban lots and reconstructing in theory the principles governing the inner divisions of metropolitan insulae.

Excavations in the vicinity of the northeastern corner of the cisterns uncovered the edge of a structure located in the next insula lining the southern side of the side street. The fill contained considerable amounts of painted plaster, as well as stucco and limestone architectural elements, giving some idea of the original interior decoration. A section of the outer facade, which was plastered and painted with two horizontal red bands, was cleared in the trench, as well as remains of an entrance porch. The remains of an opus isodomum

wall built of exceptionally big blocks were found directly underneath; the wall, which takes the same course as the later wall, is of Ptolemaic date. A series of thresholds corresponding to successive street surfaces are proof of an occupational continuation in this part of the habitation district, starting in Ptolemaic times and extending into the 3rd cent. AD.

## MARINA EL-ALAMEIN, ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION

During the March campaign the Polish Archaeological Mission to Marina el-Alamein, directed by Prof. Wiktor A. Daszewski (and assisted by the Supreme Council of Antiquities representative Mr. Mohammed Ali Abd el-Razzek) concentrated fieldwork in the Western Necropolis. While completing a full and detailed documentation of the excavated tombs, the mission took care to leave the structures protected as much as possible and ready for conservation in the future. Wherever possible, a partial anastylosis of the walls was carried out.

Hypogeum tomb 16, already identified in the previous season, was now excavated. Its total length turned out to be 32.20 m. The aboveground structure consisted of a rectangular chamber with two banquet beds and a door in the rear wall giving on a corridor and staircase roofed with limestone slabs. At the bottom of the steps there was a rectangular open court (5.45 x 4.80 m, ca. 7 m high) cut in the rock, giving access to a huge rock-cut funerary chamber with one large transversal loculus in the center of the south wall preceded by an offering table. Two other loculi were discovered as well, one of sarcophagus form in the west wall and the other concealed in the floor in front of the offering table. Several burials of both sexes, adults and children, were found, some revealing distinct evidence of mummification. The tomb appears to have been built in the 1st century AD and was used for several generations.

Archaeological and anthropological examinations of the burials in hypogeum tombs 13 and 14 were also carried out, the resinated or bituminized bandages again confirming the presence of mummies. Mouldmade figurines of lime mortar(l), depicting naked and robed females, were discovered in the context of male burials. An urn with ashes presented the first evidence of cremation burials occurring in Marina concurrently with inhumations.

Further excavations in the area of the pillar tombs led to the uncovering of yet another tomb of the type (no. 17), as well as a number of simple graves next to pillar tombs T1K and T1D. A new hypogeum tomb (no. 18) was identified and partly excavated (entrance and vaulted staircase) in the area west of temenos tomb 4.

Small finds in general consisted of pottery and oil lamps, bronze coffin nails, and remains of wooden planks.

## MARINA EL-ALAMEIN, PRESERVATION MISSION

In April and May, the Polish-Egyptian Preservation Mission to Marina el-Alamein, directed by Prof. Stanisław Medeksza, worked to complete the conservation of House no. 9 and 9a. The Supreme Council of Antiquities was represented by Mr. Mohammed Ali Abd el-Razzek.

Applying procedures and methods tested in past seasons, the mission continued work on the conservation of house no. 9, which had been greatly advanced over the past two seasons. Two columns of the peristyle court were reassembled, as well as the pillar in the entrance to the main hall of the house, which was topped by a partly restored capital. Work continued on reconstructing the door jambs in new stone and protecting and consolidating wall faces and tops. Existing floors were preserved and new ones arranged.

Difficulties in organization of the mission's activities made it necessary to concentrate on other tasks, such as preparing the conservation documentation prerequisite for the conservation of houses 7 and 7a in future seasons. The excavated area was cleared and some additional limited excavations were carried out to verify the structures' plan and stratigraphy.

As a side activity, members of the mission surveyed and mapped tombs recently excavated by Egyptian archaeologists in the western part of the site. The mission was also involved in the landscaping of the surrounding area in preparation for the opening of the site to tourists.

## LECTURES

1. Prof. Adam Łukaszewicz: *Alexandria in April 216. The climax of a drama* (April 1, 1997)
2. Prof. Wiktor A. Daszewski: *Excavating Nea Paphos - the Ptolemaic and Roman capital of Cyprus* (April 8, 1997)
3. Dr. Zuzana Skálová: *Regeneration versus conservation: the old and new approaches to the restoration of icons* (May 20, 1997).

language consultant: Iwona Zych