

DEIR EL-BAHARI, TUTHMOSIS III TEMPLE

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The Polish-Egyptian mission working on the restoration of the remains of the funerary temple of Tuthmosis III at Deir el-Bahari, in accordance with a special protocol between the EAO and the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, started conservation work again after a four-year interval.¹

According to the program adopted by the Permanent Committee of the EAO, the work concentrated on three fields of activity:

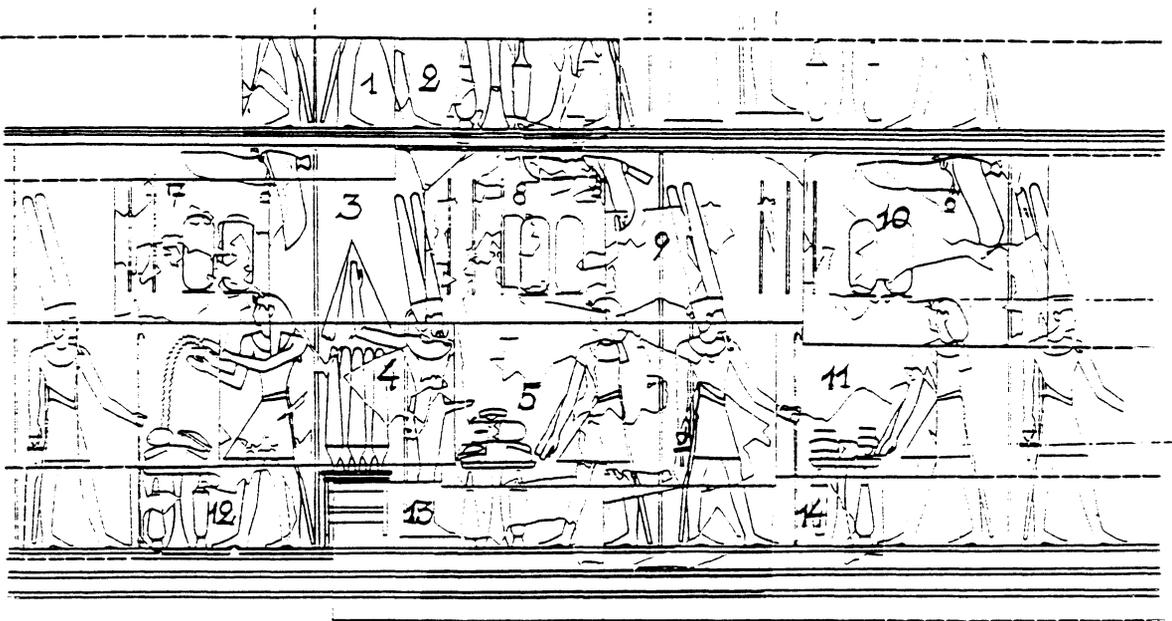
- restoration of wall reliefs,
- studies on fragmentary wall reliefs,
- conservation of temple remains in situ.

Resumed restoration work concerned the decorated wall blocks originating from the eastern wall of the temple sanctuary

¹ The mission comprised: Prof. Jadwiga Lipińska, head of the mission; Dr. Rafał Czerner, architect; Mr. Leonard Bartnik, chief restorer; Miss Magdalena Gawłowska, Mr. Stefan Miszczak, restorers; Mrs. Monika Dolińska, Miss Janina Wiercińska, Miss Joanna Aksamit, egyptologists; Miss Kamila Baturo, artist; and Mr. George B. Johnson, photographer. The EAO was represented by Mr. Salah Bawomy Baswony, who was working with us as inspector.

Special thanks are due the Chairman of the EAO, Prof. Muhammad Bakr. for his kindness and cooperation, as well as to the Director of the EAO in Luxor, Dr. Muhammad el-Saghir, and the Director of the Gurna office, Dr. Said Hegazy, for their constant help and interest taken in the mission's work.

For financial support in the purchase of conservation materials the Mission is grateful to Mr. George B. Johnson of Logan, Ohio, and to Mr. Edmund Warzyszyński of BIPROMASZ BIPRON TRADING Co. Ltd., Warsaw.



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Fig. 1. Tuthmosis III temple at Deir el-Bahari. The eastern wall of the sanctuary. Blocks 1a, 2a, 3a, 5a and 6 were restored in 1987-89, block no. 15 in 1993, block no. 8a is prepared for restoration in 1994.

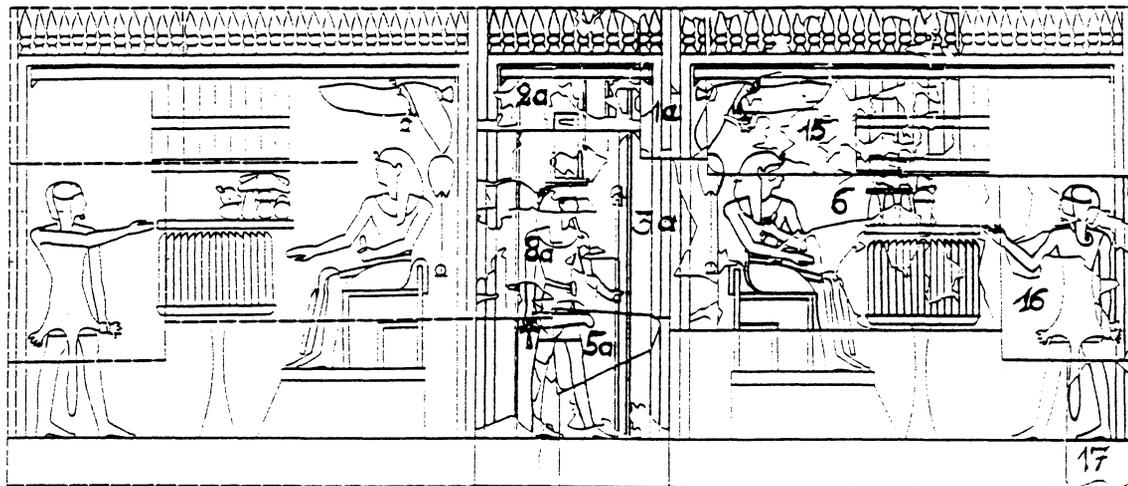
(Fig. 1) and from the niche opening on the other side of this wall (Fig. 2). In 1987-89 five blocks from the middle part of the wall were restored, and five from the niche. In 1993 another block from the wall was fully restored as well as one block from the niche. The former, 78 cm long and 62 cm high, was reconstructed of 66 fragments; the latter, 96.5 cm long and 70 cm high, consists now of 160 fragments. Its restoration was extremely difficult as some of the pieces were paper-thin and fixing them together was a complicated technical task.

Fragments of both blocks, being of very fragile limestone with salt efflorescence and peeling polychromy, were first reinforced with a stone hardener Keim-Silex OH. Fragments of polychrome reliefs, originating from four further blocks were also hardened and prepared to be joined together in the 1994 season (blocks 8, 8a, 9, 10 and 11 on figs 1 and 2).

Studies of the theoretical reconstruction of the original temple decoration were continued. The main task this season, however, was to fill the gaps in already assembled wall blocks, before handing them over to the restorers. Newly found fragments enrich the content of the original material in restored reliefs, and often help to determine the position of individual, unconnected parts of representations and inscriptions.

The final examination of the original material from the Hypostyle Hall was carried out. All the drawings from its walls were checked and necessary corrections made.

The studies of the decoration of the western shrines of the temple resulted in putting together a considerable number of inscriptions from the Bark Hall and adjoining chambers. The drawings were corrected, and updated versions of the eastern



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Fig. 2. Tuthmosis III temple at Deir el-Bahari. The niche in the western wall of the sanctuary. Blocks 1-5 were restored in 1987-89, block no. 7 in 1993, blocks 8-10 are prepared for reconstruction in 1994.

wall of the sanctuary, the eastern wall of shrine I, and the northern wall of shrine E were made. A first drawing of the western wall of the Bark Hall was also prepared. The preserved parts of a great red granite doorway leading from the Hypostyle to the Bark Hall were fully recorded.

The photographic recording of newly assembled reliefs and inscriptions was continued. Also the colour recording of all important polychrome reliefs was made by George B. Johnson on large-format Kodachrome film.

As far as the conservation of elements of temple architecture is concerned, three main tasks were accomplished this season: protection and consolidation of the granite doorway foundation and its immediate vicinity; protection, conservation and partial reconstruction of the column bases in the Hypostyle Hall; rendering the layout of the temple and its architecture more comprehensive.

The foundations of the granite doorway and the pavement slabs adjacent to it were raised, reinforced and put together. Later they were replaced in their proper positions. A reinforced concrete beam was inserted below the western sill and other beams were installed below the pavement blocks. The destroyed foundation of the northern jamb of the doorway, which had been provisionally protected, was now permanently replaced with sandstone blocks and reinforced concrete. The stairway, originally leading from the Hypostyle Hall to the granite doorway, preserved in very poor state, was reinforced and prepared to be restored. For the treatment of the original sandstone elements of the temple a Polish stone-hardener, Ahydrosil, was employed.

The bases of six columns in the Hypostyle Hall were protected with reinforced concrete foundations, strengthened and put

together. In some cases the missing parts were replaced with newly cut sandstone.

In order to restore the original difference of levels between the Hypostyle Hall and the shrines to the west of it (c. 0.50 m), the uneven bedrock was levelled with gravel and sandstone slabs, distinctly smaller than the original pavement slabs.