

RECONSTRUCTION WORK IN THE VESTIBULE OF THE CHAPEL OF HATSHEPSUT

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The decorative program of the Vestibule of Hatshepsut's Chapel in the Royal Cult Complex on the Upper Terrace of the Temple of Hatshepsut has been studied thoroughly enough, but ongoing research continues to bring new information (compare e.g. PM II², 359 and Pl. XXXVI [3] (89–93) to Karkowski 2001: 105 and 108). On all three walls: the southern one being the wall bordering on the temple of Tuthmosis III, the eastern one including two niches, and the western one being the facade of the chapel of Hatshepsut, the procession of gods is the main motif, dominating over the other, poorly preserved decoration of the western end of the south wall. Notwithstanding, this part of the south wall showing the king's image in three scenes was of the greatest importance because it was immediately visible to those entering the complex.

The reconstruction of the Vestibule presents a number of problems. The original decoration has been obscured first by intentional damages on two separate occasions: on the order of Tuthmosis III and then again by Echnaton's followers and the post-Amarna restoration. Still younger hammerings of the gods' figures, the incomplete state of preservation and the same scheme of decoration with

a procession of the gods on the walls constitute additional obstacles. Further investigation of the architecture and decoration is necessary to resolve the issue of the architrave arrangement (cf. Karkowski 1983: 150, Fig. 8 on 151). Finally, earlier reconstructions of some parts of the wall have proved to be incorrect in places.

Documentation of the architecture of the Royal Cult Complex started in 1991 (Karkowski 1993: 70). Over seventy blocks with decoration from the vestibule were identified in 1993 (Pawlicki 1994: 90, and Fig. 1), among them also those belonging to the upper register of the south wall shown in F. Pawlicki's reconstruction drawing: seven almost complete blocks¹ presenting two royal figures in a shrine. In the 1993/1994 season more blocks from the upper register scene with "the Great Ennead striding toward Tuthmosis I and Hatshepsut (Tuthmosis II) seated inside a palace" were recognized, along with a niche in the lower register of the south wall (Pawlicki 1995: 59). The facade of the Chapel of Hatshepsut and part of the opposite, east wall were documented. Finally, a reconstruction proposal was presented for the western part of the south wall (Pawlicki 1995: 58, Fig. 2).

1 Current inventory numbers B.470, B.471, B.472, B.473, B.474, B.475. A block with the upper part of the body of the king is now restored in the lower register scene, compare the main text above.

In 2005, the author embarked on a study of the south wall of the Vestibule of Hatshepsut's Chapel. Pawlicki's earlier propositions of the reconstruction of the south wall (Pawlicki 1994: Fig. 1 on 88, and 1995: Fig. 2 on 58; unpublished reconstruction drawings in PCMA archives) were sustained, adding new material and revising the position of some of the blocks. All the blocks were renumbered in a new coherent system (starting with the letter 'B'). Work on documenting the other walls of the vestibule, beginning with the east one, was continued by the author early in the 2007/2008 season.

The author's research started in the 200/2006 season with a verification of the documentation made in the 2001/2002 season concerning blocks from the lower register of the south wall found *in situ*. Only two blocks with a representation of the upper part of the body of a male king from the lower register had been restored to their original position in the wall. Subsequent to the verification, some of the earlier block attributions were changed or determined as no more than probable (compare Pawlicki 1995: Fig. 2). A small fragment of a male face (B.467) may be that of the king from a scene with a goddess, but its size is the only indication for that. A complete block with vulture's wing and the beginning of two columns of text (B.841) is part of a scene with the king in front of the procession of gods and not that of the king with the goddess. Three other fragments have been attributed to the latter scene instead. They make up one block (B.464) bearing decoration in the form of a falcon's wing and text naming the goddess in the scene with the king as Hathor. In the course of the author's research, the following fragments

were recognized as belonging to the lower register of decoration on the south wall:

- upper frame of niche (B.463) and an additional fragment of a block with the upper frame of a niche and sky sign from the adjoining scene (B.461); other small fragments of the frame of the niche (B.876, B.1540),

- part of the leg of the king (B.460),

- two fragments of a cartouche with the name of Tuthmosis III from the scene of the speech of the gods (B.458 and B.459).

As for the upper register of the south wall, a few blocks additional to those documented in 2001/2002 have been identified by the author. The scene presents Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut (of the latter only a part of the destroyed crown has been preserved) sitting in a shrine and the gods striding towards them (cf. Pawlicki 1994: Fig. 1). The decoration of the western part with two kings does not raise any doubt, unlike the gods whose names and figures were destroyed during the Amarna period. There were four figures of divinities in front of the kings, probably two male and two female (B.468, B.478, B.480, B.481, B.482, B.483, B.484, B.840).² The texts accompanying each of them (B.476, B.477, B.479, B.482, B.835, B.836, B.838, B.839, B.840, B.867) are very similar and do not solve the problem of identification, but Seth and Hathor are obvious. The actual sequence of the gods, however, requires further study. Blocks from the western part of the upper register of the south wall bear the following numbers:

- upper part of scene: B.466 (plus B.465, B.466a, B.831, B.832), B.470, B.471, B.472, B.473, B.474, B.475, B.830, B.833, B.875, B.1525, B.1526, B.1549;

- lower part of scene: B.828, B.829, B.834;

2 An earlier reconstruction drawing proposes three gods and one goddess, see unpublished drawing in the PCMA archives.

— blocks with frieze of knotted grass ends assumed to be from this section of the wall: B.1520, B.1521.

New decorated blocks contributing to this set were found during present archaeological testing (pit S1/06; Szafrński 2009: 280) dug in the 2005/2006 season south of the south wall of the vestibule. Blocks identified as coming from the vestibule of the Chapel of Hatshepsut comprised:

— south wall, lower register, inscription under niche: beginning of third column of text (B.378), the king's hand holding a stick and the first two columns of text (B.456, recomposed of five fragments from S1/06 and three from storage) [Fig. 1],

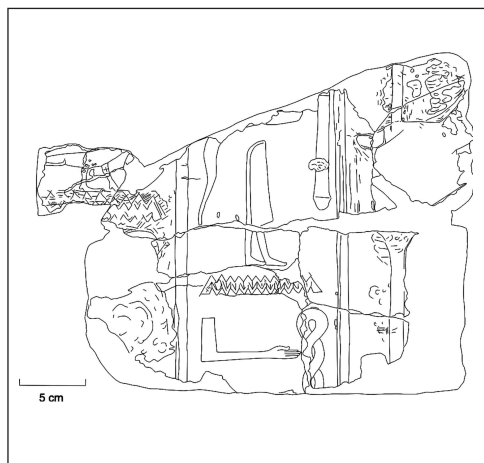


Fig. 1. New block from the south wall, B.456 (Drawing E. Kopp)



Fig. 2. New block (B.370) from trench S1/06 (2005/2006 season) (Photo M. Jawornicki)

- south wall, lower register, speech of the gods: two columns of text and sky sign with part of a cartouche (B.385),
- south wall, lower register, fragment of border decoration (B.654),
- south wall, upper register: small fragment with cobra from the shrine frieze (B.874),
- vestibule in general: block with figure of a goddess, god and the hand of a third divinity, bearing painted decoration from the restoration period (B.370) [*Fig. 2*] and similar painted fragments from the procession of the gods (B.374, B.383, B.390, B.604, B.619),
- blocks presumed to belong to the decoration of the vestibule (B.368, B.630).

Other fragments of blocks with the procession of the gods have been identified and documented by the author in the course of the past three seasons of work on the site (B.462, B.469, B.843, B.844, B.845, B.846, B.847, B.849, B.850, B.851, B.854, B.856, B.857, B.863, B.864, B.865, B.872, B.1527, B.1528, B.1529, B.1530, B.1531, B.1533, B.1534, B.1535, B.1536, B.1539, B.1541). Only two could be attributed specifically to the southern part of the west wall (B.1537, B.1538) based on the walking direction of the figures which is the same on three walls (south, east and southern part of west). Only on the northern part of the west wall is it the opposite (B.848, B.852, B.855, B.868, B.869, B.873, B.1522, B.1523). In this way all of the gods face the entrance to the Chapel of Hatshepsut. The lower register of the south wall should have three levels of decoration with the procession of gods, the east and west walls respectively six.

The decorative program of the niche in the south wall has not been identified. No fragments are certain with the exception of the side of a block with the king's torso in front of the procession of gods. The niche resembles in its architecture other niches for

Osiriatic statues in the west wall of the Upper Courtyard — it was open but surprisingly low (only about 100 cm high). The difficulties in the identification of reliefs from this feature stem from the niche's destruction or alteration.

Post-Amarna restoration, including a change of the decorative program, is attested on the south wall of the Chapel of Hatshepsut. The text under the niche originally had only three columns of text in front. The place now occupied by the three other columns had the *ka* standard with the Horus name of Hatshepsut, accompanying her in front of the gods. In the end, only the first column of text remained as it was. The personal name of Hatshepsut in the second column was altered causing the text following the name to be moved down and presumably requiring the addition of the other three columns. In this case, it seems that the Horus name of Hatshepsut represented on the *ka* standard had avoided total destruction at the hands of Tuthmosis III's executors. That and the careless execution of the new decoration explains why the few elements of the *ka* standard are so relatively well visible.

Such carelessness does not characterize the Amarna-period damages. Traces of the original relief noted at the edges of the decoration (beginning of the wall, zone of the feet) testify to the thoroughness of the restoration. In the new version of the scene the figures of gods and the text with their names above appeared in different position, possibly because of differences in the restored arrangement of texts or the gods of the south and north. Evidently, the original and restored decorative program of the vestibule of the Chapel of Hatshepsut derives from the decoration of royal temples from the Middle Kingdom and the Old Kingdom pyramid temple's square antechamber (Arnold 1997: 67–69, 81–82).

Both layers of decoration require further study, but even so, it is very likely that the details of the original program of decoration may remain forever obscure.

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