

# **The Brooklyn Museum's 2019 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of Mut at South Karnak**

by Richard Fazzini and Mary McKercher

## *Abstract*

The 2019 season concentrated on Temple A's First Court. The south side of the court was cleared, revealing what are probably the remains of sphinx bases. The front two rooms of the Nitocris Chapel in the court's southeast corner were fully cleared. Five of the eight columns on the north side of the court were re-erected on new bases. The rear half of a sphinx on the west side of the court was restored and it and the upper half of a statue of Ramesses II were placed on mastabas and the badly-deteriorated lower halves of two granite royal statues were protected from windblown soil. Study of the site's Sakhmet statues and the Montuemhat Crypt in the Mut Temple continued.

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The archaeological expedition to the Precinct of Mut at South Karnak is a project of the Brooklyn Museum conducted under the auspices of the American Research Center in Egypt and with the permission of the Ministry of Antiquities.<sup>1</sup> The 2019 season took place February 4-23.

All excavation and preservation work took place in the First Court of Temple A in the northeast corner of the site.

## **Excavation**

### *South side of the court*

This season we re-exposed the Nitocris Chapel on the east end of the court (discovered in 1980)<sup>2</sup> and the structure at the west end (uncovered in 1999) that contained a pair of limestone

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The staff for this season were Richard A. Fazzini, Egyptologist and Director; Mary E. McKercher, Assistant Director, archaeologist and photographer. Funding for the 2019 season was provided by R. Fazzini and M. McKercher.

<sup>2</sup> The chapel is attributed to Nitocris I based on a lintel found beside the chapel that bears her name. See R. Fazzini, "A Monument in the Precinct of Mut with the Name of the God's Wife Nitocris I", H. De Meulenaere *et al.*, *Artibus Aegypti. Studia in Honorem Bernardi V. Bothmer a Collegis, Amicis, Discipulis Conscripta* (Brussels, 1983), pp. 51-62

rectangles bounded by sandstone walls on three sides and the east face of the Second Pylon on the fourth.<sup>3</sup> We then excavated the area between the chapel and the western structure to try to establish how they relate to each other. Fig. 1 shows the area at the the end of the 1999 season and the beginning of the 2019 season. Fig. 2 is photograph of the south side of the court at the end of 2019 and a plan of the features in the area.

Maurice Pillet excavated Temple A in 1923-25. In the First Court he noted colonnades along the north, east and south sides<sup>4</sup> and said that “à l’est et au sud, les entre-colonnements de cette cour furent fermés par un petit mur en calcaire blanc.”<sup>5</sup> He was wrong on two counts. First, there is no colonnade along the east side of the court, just the limestone bases of the two columns flanking the approach to the Third Pylon. They are different in size and style from the colonnades on the north and south sides of the court. The column that he drew in front of the second column from the east in the north colonnade on his 1938 plan of the temple<sup>6</sup> has either disappeared entirely or was reconstructed by Pillet from stray column drums, of which there was a jumble in this area (see below). We found no trace of a column base this season. In an unpublished photograph of the court<sup>7</sup>, the column his plan shows on the west wall of the Nitocris chapel appears to be a column drum resting on the chapel wall, not a column on a base; it is no longer present.

Secondly, the limestone “entre-colonnements” are not intercolumnar walls. The one along the court’s east side can only be the walls of the Nitocris Chapel whose outline he shows on his plan but doesn’t recognize as a chapel. The southern colonnade rests on a tall footing (mainly limestone) that does not “close” the colonnade but rather supports it. From Pillet’s photographs (published and unpublished) it seems that he did not excavate this area below the modern surface.

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<sup>3</sup> R. Fazzini, “Preliminary Report on the 1996-2001 Seasons of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak,” *ASAE*, 79 (2006), pp. 85-94; also available online at [www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut)

<sup>4</sup> M. Pillet, “Rapport sur les travaux de Karnak” (1922-1923), *ASAE* 23, fasc. 2, pp. 136-137; M. Pillet, “Rapport sur les travaux de Karnak (1924-1925): X. Enceinte de Mout. Le Temple et le stèle du mariage de Ramsès II,” *ASAE* 25 (1925), pp. 14-19.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18

<sup>6</sup> M. Pillet, “Le Temple de Khonsu dans l’enceinte de Mout à Karnak,” *ASAE* 38, pl. LXXXVII.

<sup>7</sup> *Les archives photographiques de Maurice Pillet sur l’Égypte*, Image B137-16, “Karnak – Temple Ramsés II – Mout – vu de l’Ouest 29 avril 1925” (Service Image de la Maison de l’Orient et de la Méditerranée, <https://www.mom.fr/pillet/index.php/objet/vignettes/action/view/frmObjetID/1901/> cited April 2019)

### *Nitocris Chapel*

After clearing the windblown earth that had partially buried the three-room chapel since 1980 we removed the jumble of small, decayed limestone blocks that filled the first room. Beneath it we discovered a paving of sandstone and limestone on which the walls of the first room were built (fig. 3). The shallow hole in one of the sandstone blocks contained only earth and limestone chips.

The wall between the first and second rooms sits on this same stone foundation/paving, but the east and west walls of the second room are built on earth that is the same level as the paving, which extends a short distance outside the west wall of the first room (see plan, fig. 2) although there is no evidence of paving beyond the chapel's east wall. Very decayed traces of paving were also found north of the chapel's entrance. The door socket of the west leaf of the chapel's two-leaf door was *in situ*, with the granite door pivot still in place. Nearby we found the corresponding block for the east side of the entrance, along with its granite pivot, which we put back in approximately their original position (fig. 4). The door pivots are several centimeters above the level of the newly-revealed paving/flooring in the first room. This suggests either that there was a gap between the bottom of the door and the paving (unlikely?) or that the paving uncovered this year is the foundation course on which the walls and the actual floor of the room (represented by the broken limestone blocks in the room?) was built.

Neither the wall between the first two rooms nor the limestone blocks along the west side of room one are bonded to the chapel's outer walls. It is entirely possible that the wall/doorway between the first two rooms was built on the limestone flooring that once covered both rooms, of which only the section forming the base of the wall/doorway is preserved *in situ*. It rests on the same sandstone and limestone supports the first room. A sandstone block of that foundation projects several centimeters into the northeast corner of room two and several smaller pieces of limestone are visible under the center of the south side of the wall (fig. 5).

Unlike room one, the east and west walls of the second room were built on earth. The footing of the south colonnade divides the second and third rooms, with two columns of the colonnade flanking the entrance to the rear room, which is unexcavated. The floor of the second room was completely robbed out and was filled with broken stone. Among the sandstone blocks are two large fragments of a palmette column capital, and fragments of column drums. What we hoped were remains of the floor's paving turned out to be displaced limestone blocks. From this debris came the left haunch of a sandstone sphinx (fig. 6)<sup>8</sup> that is almost the same size as the rear half of a sphinx sitting on a base

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<sup>8</sup> Expedition no. 30M.2. H: 39.7 cm; W: 17 cm; D: 48 cm

in front of the north wing of the Third Pylon (fig. 25). That and the similarity in the treatment of the lion's claws on both sculptures suggests the haunch discovered this year may once have stood in front of the pylon's south wing as a pendant to the northern sphinx. Pillet notes the existence of two sphinxes at the west face of the Third Pylon.<sup>9</sup> The rear half of the northern one still sits on a base (whether original or placed by Pillet is unknown), but except for the fragment found this year, the southern sphinx and its base have both disappeared.

Once the second room was cleared and photographed, we laid down plastic sheeting to inhibit the growth of grass. On top of it we placed a layer of sand topped with gravel. We also laid sand and gravel in the first room and the area north of the chapel.

The two raised blocks against the rear wall of the chapel (i.e., the south wall of the court) were tilted. We straightened and leveled them, supporting them with baked brick. We also straightened a large block that was part of the west wall of the rear room and moved a stray block that lay on the column in the chapel's west wall onto the newly-straightened block.

### *The Western Structure*

Like the Nitocris Chapel, the feature at the west side of the court had also become buried in blown earth since 1999,<sup>10</sup> and the two limestone rectangles had deteriorated considerably (see fig. 1), but we were at least able to define their edges. Between the first and second (counting from the west) we uncovered a hardpack surface that is 18 cm below the bottom of the row of blocks forming the north wall of the later structure. Abutting the southwest corner of the second base are the remains of a paving (first seen in 1999) that must be contemporary with the bases. This paving sits about 23 cm below the bottom of the south wall of the later structure.

A small trench along the west face of the second base's northernmost block showed that this is, indeed, the foundation course of the feature, with a narrow foundation trench (c. 15 cm wide) filled with a mix of sand and dirt. The block itself is preserved to a height of c. 70 cm.

The structure's west wall contains one limestone block at the north end and three square sandstone blocks of which the south block runs under the feature's south wall. When we excavated the area in 1999, we found the remains of a second course of limestone (visible in fig. 7), but by 2019 this

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<sup>9</sup> Pillet, *ASAE* 25, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> R. Fazzini, "Preliminary Report on the 1996-2001 Seasons of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak," *ASAE*, 79 (2006), pp. 85-94

had completely disappeared. The wall is laid at a slight angle to the Second Pylon and appears to have been cut by the pylon's construction in Dynasty 25 (figs. 2, 8).

The western structure's south wall is composed of a row of sandstone blocks built against the footing of the raised colonnade and resting on a layer of earth that covered the paving behind the second rectangle (see above). They thus postdate both the bases and the colonnade. The westernmost block rides over the footing of the Second Pylon, indicating that this feature postdates construction of the pylon as well.

The structure's north wall contains a variety of blocks (see figs. 1, 2). There are two large sandstone blocks laid east-west but they are flanked by smaller blocks laid north-south.<sup>11</sup> The westernmost block has a round hole and the remains of a channel. It may have been a door socket, but since there is evidence of a second course riding over this one (see below), it is possible that it is simply a re-used block built into the foundations rather than a functional part of the structure. It abuts the limestone block at the north end of the feature's west wall.

East of the large blocks is a row of rectangular sandstone blocks carefully aligned with the north edge of the rectangles. Each has a longitudinal channel interrupted by at least one circular hole (figs. 2, 9). One block has a separate square hole while another has a square hole connected to a channel. Our best guess is that these blocks once served as the foundation for a structure made of a lightweight and/or perishable material such as wood, perhaps a screen around a shrine or even a shrine itself, with the circular holes holding posts and the channels supporting the bottoms of panels. Patricia Spencer has identified a type of temple furniture called a *sbht*, a wood screen, often gilded or covered in metal, but her examples all had feet and could be rearranged at need.<sup>12</sup>

The east wall (the boundary between the west and central areas of the court) abuts the base of the footing on which the columns stand and adjoins the easternmost block of the feature's south wall. The sandstone block at the north end of the wall rides over the blocks that form the foundation of the north wall of the feature, confirming that the whole is a single unit.

When we excavated in 1999, we found that the holes in the odd northern blocks were filled with sand, and the westernmost block of that wall sat on a mix of sand and limestone chips; there was also evidence of sand north of the feature's north wall. This suggests that when the western structure (whatever it is) was built, a sand foundation was laid for the north wall and perhaps for a paving to its

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<sup>11</sup> In 1999 there were a few smaller blocks laid along their south edge as well, to create an even line for the south side of the wall, but these small blocks are no longer present.

<sup>12</sup> P. Spencer, "*Sbht* as a term for a wooden screen," *JEA* 66 (1980), pp. 161-164

north (see below), while the east wall was built directly on the third rectangle and the west wall directly on the row of sandstone and limestone blocks close to the pylon. The interior of the space was then leveled up with earth, probably at least to the top of the limestone rectangles. The south wall was built on this landfill. Whether the new structure formed a platform or was the foundation for one or more chapels we will never know as not enough remains. We also cannot determine whether the limestone rectangles remained exposed and served as partial flooring for the new structure. However, it seems clear that it was intended to be raised above the rest of the paving of the court. The Nitocris Chapel, the small buildings in the central area (see below), the north colonnade, and the two limestone column bases all sit on roughly the same level.

In 1999 two thin sandstone blocks ran east from the northeast corner of the western feature, with another block oriented north-south forming a corner (fig. 7). They rested on the sand layer but are no longer present. Excavation of the central area in 2019 showed that the sand continued to the east along the north baulk, but no architectural elements were found. From the scant evidence found in 1999, we speculate that the sand was perhaps the foundation for a new paving in the courtyard contemporary with the construction of the western structure.

### *The Central Area*

When we removed the surface dirt from the central area we were able to confirm that the east wall of the western structure, which divides the west and central areas, was built on the earlier sandstone and limestone feature that extends on both sides of the wall. We discovered two more limestone or limestone and sandstone features to its east (figs. 2, 10), bringing the total of rectangular (or formerly rectangular) features to five, including the two limestone rectangles in the western structure. All are a maximum of 3 m long by 1.6-1.8 m wide. Although the spacing appears uneven (given the degree of damage to the blocks) the similar sizes, along with the absence of any indication of walls, suggests that what we have are the remains of the bases of sphinxes or rams rather than the foundations of a number of chapels.

A small sandstone building (a chapel?) oriented east-west was built against the east wall of the western structure, which had been cut back slightly to accommodate the chapel's(?) north wall. The chapel(?) is thus either contemporary with or slightly later than the wall against which it was built. Its north and south walls are sit directly on the remains of the third and fourth bases (counting from the west). The sandstone is in very poor condition, so it is difficult to determine if we have the actual entrance to the chapel(?) at the east end, where the sandstone blocks project just beyond the edge of the

fourth base. It is possible that the space between the chapel(?) and the colonnade formed another room/chapel, but if so nothing remains. Traces of sandstone walls (visible in fig. 10) were found on the easternmost base, but too little remains to determine their function or even their orientation. Only the lowest course of both structures remains.

### *Dating*

Given what little remains, it is impossible to date any of these structures precisely, but we can at least determine the sequence of construction.

The limestone and mixed limestone/sandstone bases are the earliest constructions in the area. When the western bases were first uncovered in 1999, the little pottery associated with them was primarily New Kingdom, with a number of characteristic blue-painted sherds. The foundation of the western structure's west wall may be contemporary with the limestone/sandstone bases and appears to have been cut by the construction of the Second Pylon in Dynasty 25 (fig. 8). The western structure itself was built sometime during or after Dynasty 25 as its south wall runs over the pylon's footing. The small chapel(?) against the structure's east wall must also post-date Dynasty 25. The chapel at the east end of the court, dedicated by Nitocris I of Dynasty 26 is the only potentially datable feature on this side of the court. But what date are the five limestone/sandstone rectangles?

### *Sphinx Bases?*

The tomb of Khabekhenet (TT2), who lived during the reign of Ramesses II, includes a relief of the Mut Precinct and (presumably) the area between it and the 10<sup>th</sup> Pylon (fig. 12). Until now it has only been published as sketch.<sup>13</sup> The late Agnès Cabrol suggested that the two rows of rams shown to the left (=north) of the Mut Temple and perpendicular to its axis were a dromos of at least ten rams leading to Temple A<sup>14</sup> that had been built by Amunhotep III and was still in place in the reign of Ramesses II.<sup>15</sup> She argued that Pinedjem used the rams from this dromos (of which only ten are represented in the relief) and not rams from Amunhotep III's Temple of Millions of Years on the West Bank to create the dromos of 124 rams in front of the Khonsu Temple.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For a sketch, see A. Cabrol, "Une représentation de la tombe de Khâbekhenet et les dromos de Karnak-sud: nouvelles hypothèses," *Centre Karnak X* (Paris, 1995), pl. 5

<sup>14</sup> Cabrol, *Karnak X*, pp. 54, 56.

<sup>15</sup> A. Cabrol, *Les voies processionnelles de Thèbes*, OLA 97 (Leuven, 2001), p. 238

<sup>16</sup> Cabrol, *Karnak X*, p. 55; Cabrol, *Voies processionnelles*, p. 254, 266-268

The existence of five probable sphinx bases uncovered this season in Temple A's First Court might lend credence to this theory, although none bears any inscription. We have also not excavated the north side of the court to determine if there is a corresponding row of bases there. However, there are problems with Cabrol's theory.

First, she was incorrect in describing Temple A as being "à l'intérieur de l'enceinte du temple de Mout."<sup>17</sup> As noted elsewhere, Temple A remained outside the Mut Precinct until the time of Taharqa, in an area called *Ipet* or *Opet*.<sup>18</sup> While traditionally ascribed to Amunhotep III, no part of the present temple can be dated to his reign.<sup>19</sup> We do not know either the temple's name or its function until late in the reign of Ramesses II, by which time it had been enlarged and had become a Temple of Millions of Years.<sup>20</sup> Until Dynasty 25, the Mut Precinct consisted only of the Mut Temple and the *Isheru* and extended no further north than the line of the present First Pylon. Its western limit was the enclosure wall along the west side of the *Isheru* into which a gateway inscribed for Thutmosis III and Thutmosis II (probably replacing Hatshepsut) was set.<sup>21</sup> The area north of the Ramesses III temple and the northwest quadrant of the precinct (west of the Taharqa Gate) are *terra incognita* as far as the New Kingdom is concerned because the whole area is covered with the remains of Ptolemaic and Roman Period structures that have not been excavated.

As for the area between the west wing of the Mut Temple's First Pylon and the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC north enclosure wall, neither Brooklyn's excavations nor the SCA's revealed any suggestion of sphinx bases or, indeed, of any temple structures predating Dynasty 25.<sup>22</sup> It was not until Taharqa's reign that

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<sup>17</sup> Cabrol, *Karnak X*, p. 56.

<sup>18</sup> Most recently, R. Fazzini, in R. Fazzini and J. van Dijk (eds.), *The Gateway in the First Pylon of the Mut Temple, South Karnak: History, Decoration, Inscriptions* (Leuven, 2015), p. 5 and n. 2-5.

<sup>19</sup> The limestone statues of Thutmosis IV, re-carved for Ramesses II and found in the temple's Forecourt (Pillet, *ASAE* 25, p. 16) are not necessarily original to the temple and may have been brought there to be broken up when the site was used as a quarry.

<sup>20</sup> Fazzini, *The Gateway in the First Pylon*, p. 5, n. 2. See also, R. Fazzini, *The Brooklyn Museum's 2017 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of Mut, South Karnak*, pp. 2-4 and figs. 6-7; online at [www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut)

<sup>21</sup> Fazzini, *The Gateway in the First Pylon*, p. 5, n. 1 for references.

<sup>22</sup> The SCA uncovered a Middle Kingdom mud brick building, probably domestic, several centimeters below the modern ground level just inside the west wing of the Propylon. Its orientation was different to that of the Precinct's buildings. Unpublished; personal observation in 2001-2002.

this area was brought into the Mut Precinct, his new western gate creating a new processional way to Temple A.<sup>23</sup>

While the base of a fifth pair of rams is clear in the Khabekhenet relief, the rest of the upper part of the wall is too damaged to tell if the dromos continued to the top of the wall or if it stopped at the entrance to a building. Cabrol has opted to see the dromos as terminating at a building, which she identifies as Temple A.<sup>24</sup>

Whether or not there was a building at the top of the scene, the dromos in the relief is clearly “free-standing”, that is, not within the *parvis* of a temple. Since Temple A’s Third Pylon existed in the time of Ramesses II (it bears his name), this interpretation is possible and the sphinx bases uncovered this year could be the remnants of such a dromos. This would only work, however, if Khabekhenet’s relief was carved early in Ramesses II’s reign and if Ramesses II is credited with building not only the Forecourt described below, but an early version the Second Pylon as well (the existing Second Pylon dates to Dynasty 25). It is more likely that some version of the Second Pylon already existed to the west of which Ramesses II added his forecourt and a mud brick pylon sheathed in limestone in front of which he erected two colossal statues and two stelae. By the end of his reign, therefore, the theoretical dromos was two courts removed from the new front of the temple.

The row of blocks forming the western structure’s west wall in Temple A’s First Court may be the remains of an earlier wall or pylon cut in Dynasty 25 by construction of the Second Pylon. As noted above, this row of limestone and sandstone blocks (fig. 8) is oriented at a slight angle to the existing pylon. It is unlikely that it represents another sphinx base as the limestone block at the north end of the row extends beyond the line of the bases, while the southernmost sandstone block, as stated above, runs under the south wall of the later construction.

In the New Kingdom, the area between Temple A and the approach to the Mut Temple was outside the *parvis* of both temples. Logically, a processional way leading west from Temple A would have intersected the road/processional way that ran north from the Mut Temple, assuming one existed.<sup>25</sup> However, excavations in the Temple A’s Forecourt and in the area north of the east wing of

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<sup>23</sup> *Idem.*, p. 5, n. 5 for citations.

<sup>24</sup> Cabrol, *Karnak X*, p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> If there were a dromos north of the Mut Temple, its remains lie under the pair of porches built in front of the Mut Temple by Montuemhat. The only sphinxes in the area are the two rams of Taharqa that stood at the north ends of the East and West Porches. See R. Fazzini, “A Sculpture of King Taharqa (?) in the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak,” *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar I*, BdÉ XCVII, 1 (Cairo, 1985), pp. 293-306; and *idem.*, “Preliminary Report on the 1996-

the Mut Temple's First Pylon have revealed no evidence of anything that could be a sphinx base.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the space west of the Forecourt where the sphinxes would have stood is occupied by a six-columned porch (two pairs of three columns) that presumably dates to Ramesses II or later.

The theoretical north-south dromos from the Mut Temple and a short dromos in front of Temple A might have connected with the southern end of the dromos from the 10<sup>th</sup> Pylon,<sup>27</sup> whose southernmost criosphinxes are partially hidden by the Ptolemaic Propylon and so reached almost to the Mut Temple proper in late Dynasty 18. Since there seems to have been a close connection between the cult of Mut and that of Amun-Re-Kamutef,<sup>28</sup> it is possible that such a pair of dromoi (i.e., east-west dromos from the Temple A to the Mut Temple approach and south-north dromos from the Mut Temple) would have related to cultic activities involving the barque station on the west side of dromos from the 10<sup>th</sup> Pylon and the Amun-Re-Kamutef temple on the east side, both of which existed from the time of Hatshepsut.<sup>29</sup>

The lack of foundations of sphinx bases north of the Mut Temple and west of Temple A --- in fact, anywhere but in Temple A's First Court -- is not definitive proof against the existence of sphinxes in the area, but if they did exist, they were rigorously and completely removed at some point.

Another argument against Cabrol's theory is space. She maintains that all 124 of the Amunhotep III rams that Pinedjem I used for the Khonsu Temple's dromos -- along with two rams west of the Propylon (her B6-7) and the eight rams now in front of the west wing of the Mut Temple's First Pylon (her B14-21) -- are from the same source and that that source was the Mut Precinct.<sup>30</sup> If we are right and the area west of the Mut Temple's axis was not part of cultic activities in Dynasty 18,<sup>31</sup>

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2001 Seasons of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak," *ASAE*, 79 (2006), pp. 85-94 (also available online at [www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut) ).

<sup>26</sup> We found no traces of sphinx/ram bases in Temple A's Forecourt nor in the area between Temple A's First Pylon and the approach to the Mut Temple. The row of rams and sphinxes along the enclosure wall east of the precinct entrance are not in their original location. The re-use of blocks of Montuemhat and Horwedga in some of the bases suggests that they were lined up here sometime in the Late Period.

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of the history of this dromos, see Cabrol, *Voies processionnelles*, pp. 220-236.

<sup>28</sup> Cabrol, *Voies processionnelles*, p. 265-26

<sup>29</sup> Cabrol, *Voies processionnelles*, p. 265.

<sup>30</sup> *Idem.*, pp. 239-241, 261

<sup>31</sup> As shown on Cabrol's plan: *Voies processionnelles*, p. 704.

there is simply no room for such a large number of rams in or around the New Kingdom Mut Temple and Temple A.

Cabrol also argued that the Henuttawy inscriptions on two Sakhmet statues (one still in the Mut Temple's First Court) should be interpreted as saying that it was *after* Pinedjem moved the rams "qui se trouvaient à l'origine aux abords du temple de Mout" that Henuttawy was able to bring Sakhmet statues into the now-vacant space and re-arrange the sphinxes/rams remaining at the site. This may be true for the Sakhmet statues found among the rams in front of the west wing of the Mut Temple's First Pylon, two of which bear Pinedjem's name, but is unlikely for the statues in the temple's First Court (which would have been the *parvis* of the temple in Dynasty 21), which neatly line the sides of the court. Given how often these statues have been re-arranged, however, we cannot be certain where they stood in Henuttawy's time. Again, though, no evidence of sphinx bases was found in the First Court.

And finally, there is the matter of the size of the Amunhotep III rams and of the bases in Temple A's First Court. Along with the rams of the Khonsu Temple dromos, Cabrol's numbers B6-B7 (west of the Propylon) and B14-21 (placed in front of the west wing of the Mut Temple's First Pylon by Pinedjem I and Henuttawy)<sup>32</sup> are all 3.5 m long by 1.4 m wide, while the bases in Temple A's First Court are only 3 m long by 1.6-1.8 m wide.<sup>33</sup> Based on size alone, therefore, it is unlikely that those rams once stood on the bases in Temple A.

#### *What do the Khabekhenet rams represent?*

It is not necessary to see the five pairs of rams in the Khabekhenet relief as representing a dromos perpendicular to the Mut Temple. While the rams are perpendicular to the *Isheru*, they are on the same orientation as the Mut Temple and its colossi. Cabrol said that space on the wall limited what could be shown to "les facteurs prioritaires dans le contexte de la fête figurée et indispensables à sa localisation,"<sup>34</sup> and explained that the lack of trees along the north row of rams may be because the large figure of Amun-Re-Kamutef took up the space where the trees would have been shown (although she does admit that there may have been no trees on this row).<sup>35</sup> Is it not possible, then, that the ten

<sup>32</sup> Cabrol, *Voies processionnelles*, pp. 241-254 for the Khonsu dromos; pp. 260-261.

<sup>33</sup> Depending on the state of preservation. The best preserved is the second base from the west. Its north edge meets the foundations of the western structure's north wall, and its southwest corner abuts the small area of paving, so we have its full length, which is 3 m.

<sup>34</sup> Cabrol, *Voies processionnelles*, p. 265.

<sup>35</sup> Cabrol, *Voies processionnelles*, p. 443. We found no evidence of tree pits behind the sphinx bases in Temple A.

rams represent a now-vanished dromos that led north to meet the processional way from the 10<sup>th</sup> Pylon and/or the barque station and Amun-Re-Kamutef temple (both apparently important to the ritual taking place within the Mut Temple<sup>36</sup>)? They were shown apparently perpendicular to the *Isheru* and the Mut barque simply because there was no room to display the dromos in its proper orientation.

If one insists on the Khabekhenet dromos being perpendicular to the Mut Temple, then it is also possible (although again unprovable) that it ran west from the southernmost pair of criosphinxes of the 10<sup>th</sup> Pylon dromos either to a quay at which the sacred barque(s) would be placed on boats to continue the procession on the Nile or to the road/processional way leading to the Luxor Temple. The latter dromos was eventually replaced by the Nectanebo dromos. Even this suggestion, however, requires no connection with Temple A.

#### *An alternate suggestion for the Temple A Sphinxes*

There is another possible group of sculptures still in the precinct that could have stood in Temple A's *parvis* in the New Kingdom. Cabrol noted that the three sphinxes along the enclosure wall east of the Propylon (her A1-3) and two sphinxes in Turin that Rifaud removed from the Mut Precinct in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century are virtually identical.<sup>37</sup> She suggested that two other sphinxes, just east of Chapel D (her A12-13), are similar enough to be part of the same group.<sup>38</sup> None is in its original position. Of the sculptures east of the Propylon, one sphinx (A2, second from the east end of the row) and the ram at the west end of the row (her B5) rest on bases that include blocks from monuments of Dynasties 25 and 26.<sup>39</sup> The bases of the sculptures west of the Propylon are either too fragmentary to be datable or

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<sup>36</sup> Cabrol, *voies processionnelles*, p.265

<sup>37</sup> Turin, Museo Egizio, A1408, A1409

<sup>38</sup> Cabrol, *Voies processionnelles*, pp. 270-278.

<sup>39</sup> Cabrol's suggestion that the socles of B4-B5 may date to Dynasty 21 (*Voies processionnelles*, p. 260) is incorrect as the base of the westernmost ram (B5) included at least one re-used block naming Montuemnat. This base was not visible when Cabrol visited the site as the ram had not yet been righted and placed on a new base. For the restoration of some of these sculptures, see R. Fazzini, *Report on the Brooklyn Museum's 2005 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak* (online at [www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut)), p. 8 and fig. 3; "Report on the Brooklyn Museum's 2006 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak" *ASAE* 81 (2007), pp. 107 and fig. 10; and *The Brooklyn Museum's 2010 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak* (online at [www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut)), p. 13 and figs. 42-43 (Horwedja chapel whose lintel was re-used in the base of sphinx A2).

are missing altogether, the statues resting directly on soil.<sup>40</sup> According to her, all seven sphinxes can be dated to Ramesses III and, along with a now-missing eighth sphinx, may have formed a dromos in front of his temple southwest of the Mut Temple. This is entirely possible. It is also possible (although unproven by excavation) that this short dromos connected with the road that presumably ran west from the Thutmoside gateway in the New Kingdom enclosure wall, which was still the precinct's western limit in the Ramesside Period. There is no need to posit a dromos running any further north. As stated above, there was probably no processional way in this area leading to Temple A as Cabrol shows in her schema<sup>41</sup> until the time of Taharqa, by which time Ramesses III's temple was out of use.<sup>42</sup>

Betsy Bryan and Arielle Kozloff have argued that the two Turin sphinxes date originally to Amunhotep III and were re-carved in the Ramesside Period.<sup>43</sup> This is entirely plausible given the extent of Ramesside re-use of the monuments of earlier reigns.

As to the number of sphinxes, at the time that Cabrol was working, only the third sphinx east of the Propylon (her A3) still had its head. Since then, however, we have found two more heads, one of which we were able to restore to Cabrol's A1, the easternmost sphinx (fig. 13).<sup>44</sup> The other head did not fit on A2 nor on any of the sphinxes west of the Propylon, but is the same size and style as the rest. Theoretically, then, we now have evidence of a group of at least eight androsphinxes that might date to

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<sup>40</sup> On p. 255, Cabrol says the sphinxes along the Mut Temple's First Pylon and those against the north enclosure wall are aligned with the axis of Temple A. It seems to us, rather, that they are oriented to the walls against which they are lined up, which happens to coincide with the axis of Temple A. Their grouping is too random to suggest an actual dromos.

<sup>41</sup> Cabrol, *Voies processionnelles*, p. 704

<sup>42</sup> R. Fazzini and W. Peck, "The Precinct of Mut During Dynasty XXV and Early Dynasty XXVI: A Growing Picture," *JSSEA* XI, 3 (1981), p. 120

<sup>43</sup> B. Bryan in B. Bryan, A. Kozloff, L. Berman (eds.), *Egypt's Dazzling Sun: Amenhotep III and His World* (exh. Cat., Cleveland, 1992), p. 223-24, n. 5; A Kozloff (cited by Cabrol as B. Bryan on p. 277), "Statues of Amenhotep III Usurped by Ramesses II – A Study of Tool Marks and Surfaces," *Sixth International Congress of Egyptology: Abstracts of Papers* (Turin, 1991), pp. 258-59

<sup>44</sup> See R. Fazzini, "Report on the Brooklyn Museum's 2005 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak" (online, 2005), available online at [www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut). Both heads have traces of red on their necks and face, and the head of A1 has a trace of yellow on the forehead band of the nemes.

Amunhotep III's reign.<sup>45</sup> Cabrol's A1-3 and A12-13 and the two Turin sphinxes are all 3 m long x 0.9 m wide, so they would fit on the bases uncovered in Temple A's First Court.

We suggest, therefore, there was, indeed, a dromos in the *parvis* of Temple A in the New Kingdom, but that it was made up of five pairs of sphinxes (of which two sphinxes are now missing) rather than 62 pairs of rams. These sphinxes, re-carved in the Ramesside Period, may have been moved to form the dromos for Ramesses III's temple, which was outside the Mut Precinct until the construction of the final enclosure walls in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. They were brought back into the precinct sometime after Dynasty 26 (probably during the Ptolemaic Period) and placed on new bases along the north enclosure wall, where they now stand.

Cabrol said that the sphinxes and the rams along the enclosure wall and the west wing of the Mut Temple's First Pylon are "réparties suivant un axe est-ouest qui correspond à celui du temple A".<sup>46</sup> While technically true, in our opinion the assumption of their purpose is incorrect. The orientation of the sculptures is to the north enclosure wall and the Mut Temple's First Pylon, which happen to be perpendicular to Temple A. The intentional arrangement of the sculptures on either side of the Propylon (rams closest to the precinct entrance then sphinxes) would seem to confirm this for the sculptures along the enclosure wall. The rams along the First Pylon are not necessarily the south half of a dromos of pairs of statues.

East of the Propylon the two rams and three sphinxes sit on bases that are evenly spaced, with chapels between some of the sculptures (fig. 13). West of the Propylon, however, the sculptures are much less organized (figs. 14a, 15), the three rams (B6-8) being squashed together on very short bases (restored by the SCA), with the remains of the fourth ram (B9)<sup>47</sup> resting on a heap of dirt. After a gap comes the large sphinx of Ramesses II (A10) that has been turned parallel to the enclosure wall. It and the next sphinx (A11) flank a square sandstone platform of unknown use (fig. 15). The dislocation of the Ramesses II sphinx may have happened when the vaulted stone and baked brick drain was cut

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<sup>45</sup> The paws and fragments of an eighth sphinx and perhaps the remains of its base were also uncovered east of the two sphinxes beside Chapel D (Cabrol's A12-13; see fig. 14b), strengthening the argument that there were at least eight such sphinxes.

<sup>46</sup> Cabrol, *Voies processionnelles*, p. 255.

<sup>47</sup> Some confusion arises here with Cabrol's numbering of the rams (plan, p. 255 and p. 259). She groups B9 with B4-5, but the sculpture in B9's position is only a horizontal slice of a ram body (see fig. 14a) with no head. We suggest that references to "B9" should be amended to "B8", which does have a disproportionately small head (p. 260). The location of "B9" is also incorrect: with B6-8 it stands along the enclosure wall not in front of the Mut Temple.

through the enclosure wall, presumably in the Roman Period. The final two sphinxes (A12-13) are also closer together than they should be, with the remains of another sphinx and base just to their east (fig. 14b).

A similar rearrangement took place at the west end of the Mut Temple's First Pylon. The first five rams (B14-18) are evenly spaced if decayed, but the last three (B19-21) were moved off their bases and crammed together on a new support against the fifth ram (fig. 16a). The spaces between the original bases were filled with mud brick and a new structure of mud brick faced with stone was built in the space the rams once occupied (fig. 16b). We have suggested elsewhere<sup>48</sup> the possibility that this structure (which includes re-used blocks of Ramesses II and Nectanebo II) and the construction on top of the Taharqa Gate wall were built during the Ptolemaic Period to create direct access from Chapel D to the *Isheru* by cutting through the still-existing Thutmoside enclosure wall.

## **Preservation and Restoration**

### *South side of the court*

Aside from the work in the Nitocris Chapel, the expedition straightened the columns in the south colonnade, supporting them with baked bricks. In hopes of preventing the area excavated this year from becoming buried in earth again, we built a brick wall along the north edge of the excavation (fig. 11).

### *North wall of the court and the east face of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pylon*

We discovered that the lowest course of the west end of the court's north wall had deteriorated badly, to the point that we feared the wall would collapse. A nearby (but smaller) area of the east face of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pylon was in a similar condition (fig. 17). Given the importance of the Taharqa birth reliefs on the north wall, we made repairing these walls our first priority. The conservators cleared the decayed stone and replaced it with new sandstone blocks. (fig. 18).

### *Sphinx and statues*

At the west end of the north side of the court, two lower halves and one upper half of statues of Ramesses II stand at the face of the Second Pylon. In front of them the rear portion of a sphinx lay

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<sup>48</sup> R. Fazzini, *The Brooklyn Museum's 2010 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak* ([www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/features/mut)), p. 12 and figs. 36-39

tilted in the earth (fig. 19). The statues, at least, were discovered by Pillet,<sup>49</sup> but he makes no mention of the sphinx.

We moved the sphinx onto a mastaba east of the statues where it could be restored. We planned to do the same for the Ramesses II statues, but except for the upper portion this proved impossible. Pillet had repaired the statue on the left but did not move either one from the paving in front of the Second Pylon where they had been found (fig. 20). However, the present level of the court is c. 45-50 cm above the ancient paving. Since Pillet doesn't seem to have excavated the court down to its paving, it is possible that he merely cleared around the bases and repaired the one on the left *in situ*. In the intervening years, dirt had again encumbered the lower parts of the statue bases.

The lower halves proved to be too fragile to move. All we could do was clear an area around them and build a low baked brick wall to try to protect them. The upper half of the statue was placed on a new base that both supports its uneven lower surface and protects it from groundwater. A protective barrier isolates the bottom of the statue from the surface of the base. Fig. 21 shows all three statues and the sphinx after restoration.

### *The Colonnades*

The north and south colonnades each consist of a single row of eight cylindrical columns with palmiform capitals, fragments of which Pillet discovered during his excavations.<sup>50</sup> According to Pillet, palmiform capitals disappeared from use after the Middle Kingdom, reappearing only in the Ptolemaic Period.<sup>51</sup> However, Dieter Arnold notes that palmiform columns remained popular in the Late Period.<sup>52</sup> The capitals found by Pillet are simpler than later versions, having no details beyond the fronds' central vein. The bases of the columns in both colonnades are c. 145 cm in diameter and support columns that are c. 85 cm in diameter.

The colonnade on the south side of the court was built on the raised footing that runs the length of the court and is composed primarily of limestone blocks that appear to be contemporary with the sphinx/ram bases. However, as we discovered when we began to restore the northern columns this colonnade rests directly on the court's original paving, now c. 45-50 cm below modern ground level.

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<sup>49</sup> Pillet, *ASAE* 25, p. 17.

<sup>50</sup> Pillet, *ASAE* 25, p. 18 and *idem.*, *ASAE* 38, p. 476 and fig. 67 on p. 477.

<sup>51</sup> Pillet, *ASAE* 38, p. 476-77.

<sup>52</sup> D. Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs* (New York, Oxford, 1999), p. 296.

Two larger limestone column bases flank the approach to the Third Pylon. The southern column also rests directly on the paving of the court (we have not excavated the northern column). The remains of two displaced, lower column drums from this pair indicate that they were of the bulbous type with the usual triangular plant motif around the base. It is probable that the two large fragments of a campaniform, palmette column capital found in the ruins of the Nitocris Chapel's second room belong to one of these columns, having either been dumped there when the area was being quarried for its stone or fallen there when the column collapsed. According to Arnold,<sup>53</sup> the palmette capital developed during Dynasty 26 and remained popular through the Roman Period. Thus these two columns could have been erected at about the time of the Nitocris Chapel or during the Ptolemaic work in the temple, when the Third Pylon was given a new gate.

Of the eight columns of the north colonnade, only seven were still visible. The two at the west end are still vertical, but the columns in the center consist of a single column drum or two lying at odd angles (fig 22a) and the sixth column from the west had disappeared completely. In Pillet's time, the two eastern columns still stood to a height of four column drums, but they had collapsed since then. There was also a disorganized cluster of column drums to the south of the eastern columns (figs. 1, 22b). We initially determined to re-erect the two eastern columns and at least straighten up the ones to their west.

In clearing the dirt around the easternmost (eighth) column to build a new base, we discovered the original column base, of which no trace was visible on the modern surface. We cleared the base entirely and found it to be made of two pieces sandstone, both of which were extremely decayed (fig. 23). The base stands on the court's original paving, made of limestone and sandstone and also very deteriorated. The base of the second column (cleared only enough to define its size and location) was in similarly poor condition.

Because we had neither the time nor the resources to conserve these bases, we covered them with plastic and a layer of clean sand to protect them and built new bases above the old. The remaining columns were then put back in place on the new bases.

The base of the third column from the east lay under the the pathway to the Taharqa circumcision scene built by ARCE (there had been no trace of the column base on the surface). At the request of Ahmed el-Leithy, we uncovered this column base and treated it as we had the ones to the east. We used the more stable of the column drums from the disorganized cluster to rebuild this column as well. The drums that were too broken or fragile to be re-assembled were placed on baked

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<sup>53</sup> Arnold (*op. cit.*, p. 296) illustrates three examples (fig. 256).

bricks in front of the north wing of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pylon. All the columns in the north colonnade are shown in fig. 24.

### *Miscellaneous*

The two large pieces of the palmiform column capital at the west face of the Third Pylon's north wing (to the right in fig. 23b) were placed on a base, arranged so that the full circumference of the capital could be seen (see fig. 24).

A ceiling block from the gate in the Third Pylon was placed on bricks against the south face of the pylon's north wing. Finally, the sandstone base on which sits the rear half of a sphinx in front of the north wing of the Third Pylon was straightened and placed on baked brick. Both are visible in fig. 25.

## **Study and Documentation**

### *Documentation of Sakhmet statues*

We continued our documentation of the site's Sakhmet statues, confirming measurements taken in 2017 and 2018 and re-photographing texts and features as needed. Our intent is to publish an inventory and history of all the Precinct's Sakhmet statues within the next year or so.

### *Montuemhat Crypt*

We continued the study and documentation of the Montuemhat Crypt (or Taharqa Crypt) set into the east wall of the Mut Temple's 2<sup>nd</sup> Court. While the crypt's texts have been published,<sup>54</sup> based on squeezes, no photographs of the actual texts have ever appeared. It is our hope to correct that lack in the coming year.

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<sup>54</sup> J. Leclant, *Montuemhat. Quatrième Prophète d'Amon, Prince de la Ville*, BdE XXXV (Cairo 1961), "C. Inscriptions de la chapelle du temple de Mout à Karnak. Doc. 44," pp. 193-238, pls. LXVI-LXXI; R. Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy. Inscriptions from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period* (Atlanta, 2009), "166. Mut Temple Inscription of Montuemhat," pp. 556-554.

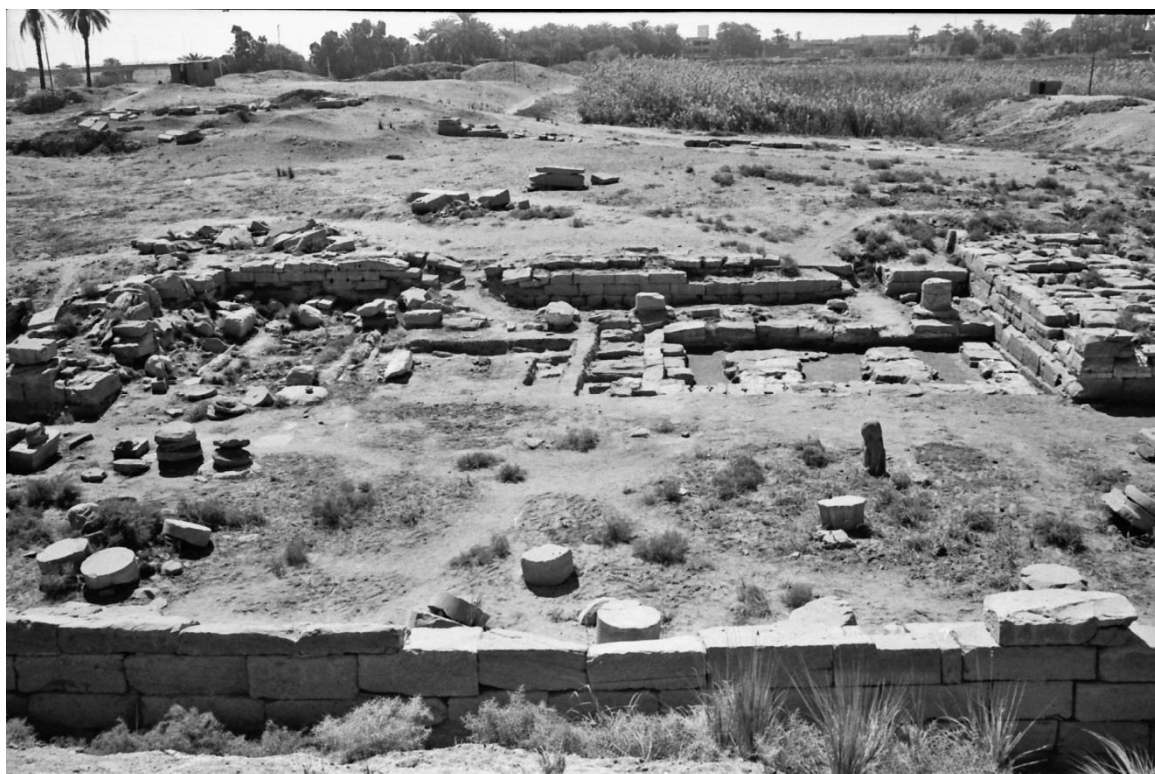


Fig. 1 General view south of Temple A's First Court at the end of the 1999 season (top) and the start of the 2019 season. The Nitocris Chapel and the limestone features have become almost completely covered in windblown earth.

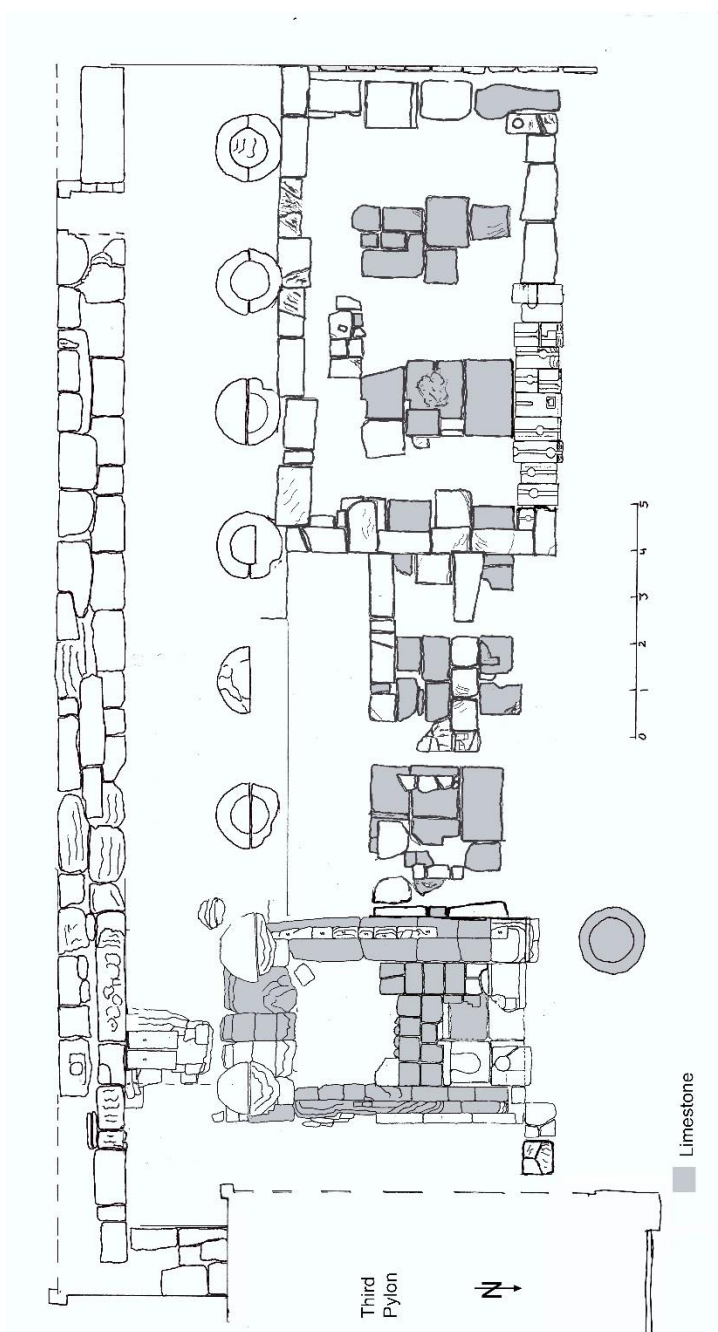
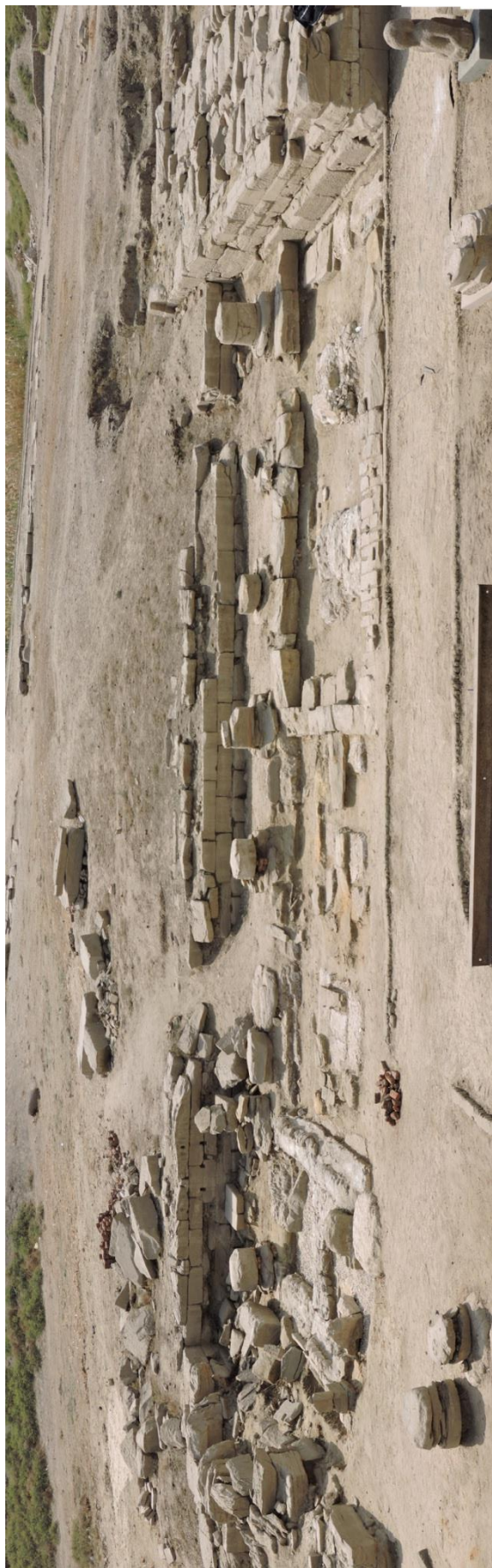


Fig. 2 The south side of the court at the end of the season (top) and a plan of the structures uncovered.



Fig. 3 The paving (or foundation course) of the first room of the Nitocris Chapel..



Fig. 4 The Nitocris Chapel at the end of the season, with the east door jamb repositioned.



Fig. 5 View north of room two with sandstone and limestone foundation blocks projecting from the room's north wall.



Fig. 6 The haunch of a sphinx found in the stones in room two.

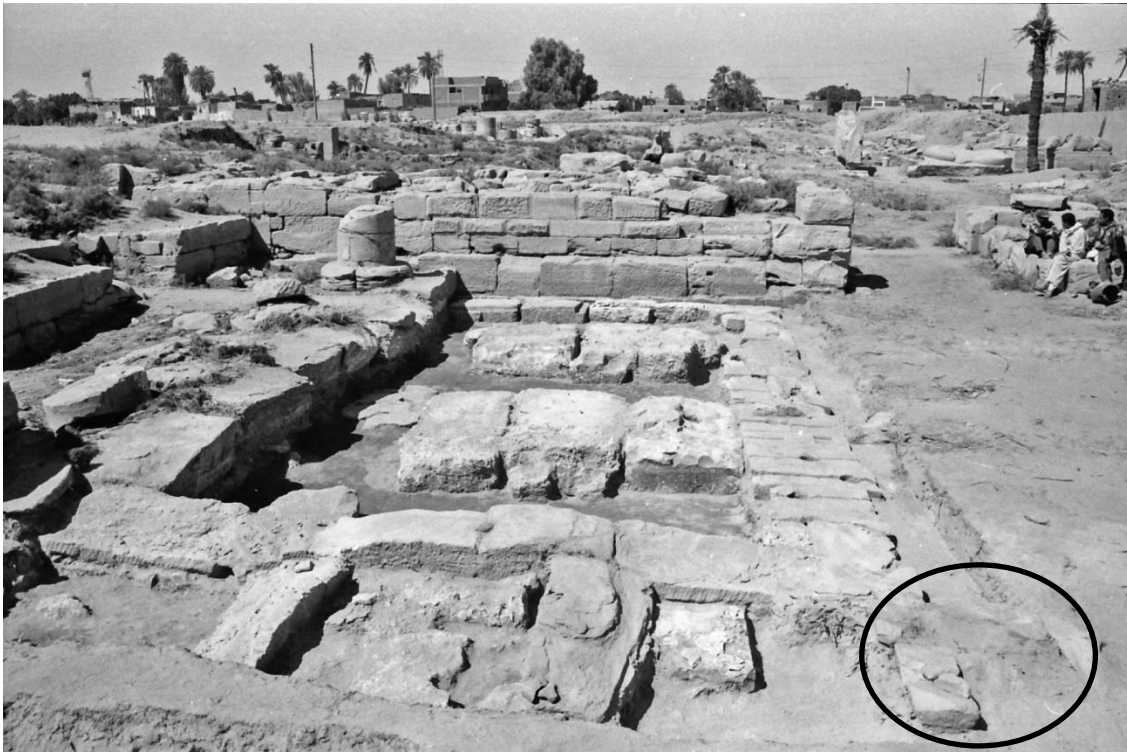


Fig. 7. View west of the western feature at the end of the 1999 season, with the now-gone second course of limestone on the west wall and the possible paving stones at the lower right.



Fig. 8 View north of the western structure's west wall, possibly cut by the construction of the Second Pylon in Dynasty 25.



Fig. 9 The unusual blocks re-used in the western structure's north wall.



Fig. 10 View to the northwest of the third through fifth bases. The small chapel(?) built against the western structure's east wall and running over the third and fourth bases is on the left. Not enough is left of the structure built on the fifth base to determine its shape or purpose.



Fig. 11 The protective wall built along the north edge of the excavation before it was tined to match its surrounds more closely (Photograph: Abdel Aziz Farouk Sharid).



Fig. 12 Relief in the tomb of Khabekhenet (TT2) showing the Mut Precinct in the reign of Ramesses II. Details have been highlighted.  
(Photograph: D. Loggie)



Fig. 13 Looking west along the row of rams and sphinxes east of the Propylon, with the head reattached to the sphinx in the foreground and the re-erected ram at the end of the row



Fig. 14 (a) The row of rams and sphinxes along the west side of the enclosure wall; (b) fragments of an eighth sphinx, including the paws of a sphinx between sphinxes A11 (right) and A12 (Cabrol's numbering)



Fig. 15 Sphinx of Ramesses II (right) and similar sphinx blanking a sandstone platform at the face of the enclosure wall west of the Propylon. The drain cut through the enclosure wall is in the center. Its channel runs along the right side of sphinx A12 in its present position.



Fig. 16a The rams along the west wing of the Mut Temple's First Pylon with the three westernmost rams jammed against the 5<sup>th</sup> ram.



Fig. 16b View west across the space once occupied by rams B19-21 with the remains of the original bases. Beyond is the Taharqa Gate wall with late additions.



Fig. 17 The holes in the foundations of the court's north wall (left) and the east face of the Second Pylon.



Fig. 18 The same area at the end of the season with the foundations repaired.



Fig. 19 The Ramesses II statues and the rear half of a sphinx at the face of the Second Pylon at the start of the season.



Fig. 20 The lower halves, sitting on ancient paving several centimeters below the court's modern surface. Note the stones' fragile condition.



Fig. 21 The sphinx and statues at the end of the season. The torso's base and the wall around the lower halves were tinted to match their surroundings after we left.



Fig. 22 The western (left) and eastern sections of the north colonnade at the start of the season..



Fig. 23 The original bases of the seventh (left) and eighth columns (counting from the west) when uncovered. The court's original paving is visible to the left of the eighth column base .



Fig. 24 The sixth to eighth columns at the end of the season (top), and the column capital fragments on their new base (right). The conservators completed the bases of the remaining columns (left) after we had left (photograph on the left: Abdel Aziz Farouk Sharid)



Fig. 25 The partial sphinx on its newly-leveled base in front of the north wing of the Third Pylon, and the ceiling block that was taken out of the dirt and placed on bricks in the gateway.