

Report on the Brooklyn Museum's 2008 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak

by Richard Fazzini, Brooklyn Museum

Abstract

The Brooklyn Museum expedition's recent fieldwork was in late December 2007 to early March 2008. This work included: (1) continued excavations in the front parts of Temple A and of the Ptolemaic and Roman Period mudbrick structures before the East Tower of the Mut Temple's First Pylon; (2) excavation and restoration of the site's Ptolemaic Chapel D; (3) excavation of the site's Taharqa Gateway in preparation for its restoration; (4) the further investigation of Ptolemaic and Roman Period structures just west of the Taharqa Gate.

The expedition also cut the vegetation in the front part of the site; arranged for it to be cut again prior to the expedition's return to the field; and began improving the visibility of monuments stored on the mastabas in the front part of the precinct.

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 Supreme Council of Antiquities.¹

The Brooklyn Museum has been working in the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak since 1976/7 and since 2001 work at the site has been divided between the Brooklyn Museum Expedition and an expedition from The Johns Hopkins University. Those expeditions are independent entities but cooperate on certain matters. In fact, we are now in the third season of a five-year plan to make it possible both to open the site to visitors and to make its monuments more meaningful to them. The Brooklyn Museum's 2008 season took place between late December 2007 and March 2008 and is described below. Fig. 1 is an aerial view of the site indicating the major monuments.

Temple A in the Northeast Corner of the Mut Precinct.

In 2007, in the space between the stone north wall of Temple A's forecourt and the brick precinct enclosure wall, the expedition uncovered a gilded and painted lintel depicting seven birth-related deities². The lintel sat on a plaster surface toward the west end of the area. In 2008

¹ The Expedition acknowledges with gratitude the cooperation and assistance of officials of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, in particular Dr. Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of the SCA; Dr. Sabry Abdel-Aziz, Undersecretary; Dr. Magdy El-Ghandour, General Director for Foreign and Egyptian Missions; Dr. Mansour Boreik, General Director for Upper Egypt; Dr. Mohammed Assem, Director for Luxor and Karnak; and Dr. Ibrahim Suleiman, Director for Karnak. The SCA inspector for this season was Mr. Osama Maogoud Abdulla. The SCA conservator working with us was Khaled Mohammed Wassel. We thank them all for all their help with the season's work.

The staff for this season were Richard A. Fazzini, Egyptologist, Director and Co-Field Director; William H. Peck, Co-Field Director and Architect; Mary E. McKercher, Assistant Director, archaeologist, and photographer; Elsie H. Peck, archaeologist and artist; Jacobus van Dijk, Egyptologist and epigrapher; and John Steele, conservator. Funding for the 2008 season was provided by the Brooklyn Museum's Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund and by William and Elsie Peck, Richard Fazzini and Mary McKercher.

² This lintel was published by R. Fazzini and J. Van Dijk, "Recent Work in the Mut Precinct at South Karnak," *Egyptian Archaeology* 31 (Autumn, 2007), 10-13 with four images of the lintel on p. 12.

we discovered that this surface ran the length of the space between the two walls, sloping down to the east. Among the small amount of pottery associated with it were a few pieces of Memphis black ware; a Ptolemaic coin was also found, suggesting that this phase of the passage dates to the Ptolemaic Period. Although the surface was robbed out from about the center of the passage to the east end, traces of the plaster and of the layer of limestone chips on which it was laid could be seen at the face of the enclosure wall. The east end of the passage was blocked by a mass of laid mud brick that extends to the temple's 2nd pylon.

To determine the extent of this blockage, we excavated the area between the north side of the 2nd pylon and the enclosure wall along the full width of the pylon. We found traces of a mud brick wall running south from the enclosure wall toward the pylon (fig. 2), but it was completely robbed out a short distance from the enclosure wall; only brick debris remains in the rest of the area. It does appear, however, that the blockage at the east end of the corridor and this wall are the same construction. As a result of this work the north side of Temple A's Second Pylon is now cleared down to its footing, where it was discovered that the stone north wall of the forecourt extends east past the northeast corner of the 2nd pylon.

In the southeast corner of the forecourt we conducted a small sounding to examine the foundations of the 2nd pylon and the forecourt's limestone south walls. All are built on a layer of sand that does not appear to be enclosed by a mud brick revetment. The east end of the southernmost limestone wall extends over the pylon's foundation blocks, suggesting that the pylon predates, if only slightly, the construction of the forecourt's south wall. This parallels the situation with the forecourt's north wall.

In a lower course of the southern limestone wall was a re-used block with the name of Merenptah. This, with the presence of numerous re-used Ramesside blocks, suggests that the wall was built no earlier than the reign of Merenptah. The only other occurrence of Merenptah's name so far in the precinct is a sandstone block with his cartouche, reused in the construction of the small gate at the east end of the Mut Temple's first pylon. If the 2nd pylon in its present state is part of the Dynasty 25 renovations to the temple, then the forecourt's northern and southern walls – and possibly the small gate just mentioned -- are most likely part of the same project. Wedged between two of blocks of the southern wall we found a small limestone double ancestor bust with traces of pigment (fig. 3).³

The Area before the East wing of the Pylon of the Mut Temple

For the past several seasons we have been excavating the complex of mud brick structures built between the east wing of the Mut Temple's 1st pylon and the south side of Temple A's columned porch whose latest phases date to the 1st-2nd centuries AD.⁴ Fig. 4a is a plan of the four rooms built against the pylon as defined during 2007, while fig. 4b is a plan of

³ Expedition no. 22ME.1. H. 12.3 cm. For discussions of these figures and their dating, see J. Keith, "Anthropoid Busts II: Not from Deir el Medineh Alone", *BES* 3 (1981), 43-72 and, most recently, R.A. Hema, *Group Statues of Private Individuals of the New Kingdom*, vols. 1-2, BAR International Series 1413 (Oxford, 2005).

⁴ For the expedition's work in this area in previous seasons see the following by R. Fazzini: "Some Objects Found before the First Pylon of the Mut Temple," in Z. Hawass and J. Richards (eds.), *The Archaeology and Art of Ancient Egypt. Essays in Honor of David B. O'Connor I*, *CASAE* 36 (Cairo, 2007), 277-289; "Report on the Brooklyn Museum's 2006 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak," *ASAE* 81(2007), pp. 101-115; "Report on the Brooklyn Museum's 2007 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak," *ASAE* 82 (2008), pp. 67-87.

the whole area showing the major features uncovered this season. Fig. 5 is a general view taken in mid-season when most of the features described below were visible.⁵

Again, the largest room (room 4) and the area immediately to its north proved the most interesting. In the east, south and west of the room we found large fragments of very hard plaster, plaster-coated mud brick, and pieces of baked brick lying on mud brick floor that was clearly visible the full length of the east and west sides of the room but less distinct in the center. Associated with this floor is what appears to be a threshold of baked brick and stone lying south of and slightly below the north wall of the room as revealed in earlier seasons. More of the plaster and plastered brick mixture was found immediately north of the room.

A few meters to the north of room 4 were the remains of a kiln or furnace, of which only some of the rectangular compartments of the firing chamber are preserved (fig. 6a); no trace of the superstructure was discovered. An arc of a single row of baked brick lies immediately west of these chambers, and debris from this structure was spread to the east and south. The southern debris was made up of mixed charcoal, baked brick, fragments of heavily fired clay to which pieces of copper alloy had adhered, and the occasional piece of glass slag. Together with the discovery of five baked clay moulds in the immediate vicinity, this suggests the installation may have been used for smelting copper or making glass rather than for firing pottery, although a few pieces of pottery were found in the ashes.

This smear of burnt material lay immediately under the plaster and plastered brick fragments mentioned above. When the north wall of room 4 was removed, this debris layer was found to extend below it as well, running almost to the newly uncovered baked brick threshold.

It now appears that the baked brick threshold of room 4, the brick flooring, and the stone footing along the east side of the room (which stops short of the later north wall) represent an earlier phase of the structure, whose walls were heavily plastered and which may be contemporary with the kiln/furnace.

In room 3, removal of the east wall revealed an earlier and narrower wall lying about 30 cm to the east, making the earlier phase of the room somewhat larger than its later incarnation.

Immediately north of room 3 we uncovered another room (room 3a). Two walls crossing at right angles in the center of the room are evidence of yet earlier construction of which little other evidence remains. The north-south wall represents an earlier phase of the room, which opened from room 3, as a door pivot found in the southeast corner of room 3a demonstrated (Fig. 6b). This doorway was later blocked and the room enlarged to fill the space between the east wall of room 4 and the wall that runs north from room 3's NE corner. A bin in the east half of room 3a cuts through the earlier phase and was itself partially covered by the later wall running north from room 3. This later wall, with a baked brick threshold and door pivot at its northern end, belongs to the later phases of building in this area. To its east and at a lower level we uncovered a mud brick floor or platform (see fig. 4b) that appears to predate the wall and is definitely earlier than the oval baked brick and stone feature (cistern?) that cuts its southeast corner.⁶ Traces of this same floor/platform were found east of the oval feature and seem to be

⁵ We are hesitant to assign phase designations to the various levels uncovered to date as we are as yet uncertain about the exact relations among the various stages of construction. As we have not yet finished work in the area, we will defer designating phase numbers until the final publication.

⁶ This feature was dismantled to its lowest course of bricks during 2008, and the stone blocks forming its east end were removed. See R. Fazzini, "The Brooklyn Museum's 2007 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of Mut, South Karnak", *ASAE* 82 (2008), pp. 70-73 for a description of this feature.

associated with a stone door pivot and wall running to the south and turning to the east, but at a different angle to the rest of the structures (upper left corner of fig 4b).

As we noted in the 2007 article for the *ASAE*, at the end of the season we had come to the end of the walls of rooms 1 and 2, the most eastern of the rooms built against the pylon face. As can be seen in fig. 4a, an earlier north-south wall ran through the western part of room 1 and extended north of its north wall. In 2008 we uncovered the remains of a north wall for this earlier room, with a doorway at the west end (not shown on the plan but visible in fig. 5). This room seems to be contemporary with the earlier phase of room 3 just described. It is labeled “room 2” on this season’s plan (fig.4b) for consistency, although in reality it encompasses part of the later room 1.

Since there is no sign of destruction by fire of these earlier phases nor of the kiln/furnace itself, it seems likely that they were intentionally razed and the area leveled to permit construction of the later, expanded versions of rooms 1-4 and the “walled court” to their north, uncovered in 2006.⁷ This seems confirmed by the presence of kiln debris under the later wall of room 4 and the plaster and plastered brick debris from the early phase of room 4 lying directly on the kiln debris.

A total of 28 coins was found in the area this year, most too badly corroded to be identified.⁸ Among them was one coin possibly of Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE), found in room 4 on the brick floor (possibly intrusive); and a coin of Vespasian (69-79 CE) found to the west of the kiln/furnace on a somewhat higher level.

The pottery suggests a Ptolemaic date for these earlier phases of the structures. Included were several pieces of fine silt ware jars with a deep red/brown slip on the lower portion and an orange slip on the shoulder and neck.⁹ A few examples of the “lotus flower and cross-lined band” style were found, along with a number of fragments of large Nile silt storage jars whose shoulders were decorated with floral patterns on a white slip, usually very degraded.¹⁰ We also found several examples of a fine Nile silt fabric with a white slip on the outside and a burnished red slip that covers the interior and extends over the rim to the upper portions of the exterior. Pottery of this type ranged from small bowls to storage jars. Red-slipped bowls with two or more purple bands around the widest part of the body, and shallow, carinated red-slipped bowls with concentric circles in purple on the floor continued to be common.¹¹ We also found a number of pieces of large storage jars with remains of purple plant decoration on a white ground (usually very worn) on the shoulders, a characteristic Ptolemaic motif.

The northern part of the area, between the kiln/furnace and the south side of Temple A’s columned porch, proved very different to the area closer to the pylon. In 2006 we recorded a walled court in the western part of the area, but found no other traces of building. Indeed, the area had been severely disturbed by quarrying activities, pitting, and an extensive network of animal burrows. Below the level of fairly clean earth at which we started in 2008 we came upon

⁷ For a description of this work, see R. Fazzini, “Report on the Brooklyn Museum’s 2006 Season of Fieldwork at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak”, *ASAE* 81 (2007), pp. 102-106.

⁸ Once again, the expedition thanks Dr. Penelope Weadock Slough, former Associate Curator of Ancient Art at the Detroit Institute of Arts, for undertaking the task of researching the coins.

⁹ Cf. Lauffray, *La chapelle d’Achôris à Karnak: 1. Les fouilles, l’architecture, le mobilier et l’anastylose* (Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1995), 97 and fig. 46, #166.

¹⁰ For a recent discussion of Ptolemaic painted pottery, see G. Schreiber, *Late Period and Ptolemaic Painted Pottery from Thebes (4th – 2nd C. BC)*, DissPan III,6 (Budapest, 2003)

¹¹ J. Lauffray, *La chapelle d’Achôris à Karnak*, 87-109 and figs. 42-55, whose Ptolemaic pottery closely resembles material excavated at Mut in 2008.

a thin layer of fine gray ash that extended across much of the area that may have been laid down when the kiln/furnace was in use. Three large pits were uncovered (fig. 7) that seem to combine both the activity of quarriers and of animals, as the lower reaches of the pits were connected by animal burrows. In one pit we discovered two partial adjoining column drums that resemble a column drum found in the past which shows two periods of carving: Dynasty 25 and Ptolemy IV (222-205 BC). The two new column drums show legs in what could be Dynasty 25 and Ptolemaic style and could have come from the East Porch before the Mut Temple, which is definitely Dynasty 25 and Ptolemaic, or Temple A's columned porch, which could originally date to Dynasty 25.

Below the layer of ash, and lying at a lower level than the kiln and the structures associated with it, we uncovered remains of a large area of mud brick about 2.75 meters wide lying a little over 2 meters south of Temple A's columned porch (see plan, fig. 4b). The whole construction, and in particular the eastern section, was badly damaged by pitting and animal burrows, but we were able to trace it almost the full length of the Temple A porch, from the paving east of the Mut Temple's East Porch to a line of mud brick running south from Temple A's porch. At the west end, portions of three courses of brick are preserved. Three very decayed single rows of limestone, spaced at irregular intervals, run from the porch to the northern edge of the platform. The western row sits on a bed of sand that extends on either side; whether this sand bed continued further east is debatable given the very disturbed nature of the area (fig. 8). The purpose of the expanse of brick and the limestone are as yet unknown. Could the brick be the foundation for a building now totally destroyed?

From two of the pits came two coins of Antoninus Pius, suggesting a mid-2nd century CE date for the quarrying activities at least. The pottery here is similar to that found elsewhere in the area, except for several fragments (possibly from the same vessel) of very fine, highly burnished red ware with rows of shallow rouletting and fine bands of blue and white paint that sometimes runs over the rouletting (fig. 9) for which we know no parallels. The relative uniformity of pottery across the area between the Mut Temple's first pylon and Temple A's porch suggests the thoroughness with which the kiln and associated buildings were razed and leveled.

Sounding at the Face of the First Pylon

In the space defined by the east and west walls of room 3 we made a sounding at the pylon face that brought us to the bottom of the Pylon's mudbrick and revealed the outlines of a foundation trench for the Pylon (fig. 10a-b). Among some stones in this trench was one with a sunk relief image of Khonsu datable by its style to late Dynasty 18/early Dynasty 19 (fig. 10c), indicating that the current façade of this wing of the Pylon is no earlier than Ramesside Period in date. This suits the strong possibility that the Tuthmoside façade of the Mut Temple was not a pylon but a gateway in a wall, connected to the Tuthmoside walls and gateway west of the Mut Temple discovered by the Brooklyn Museum expedition and further excavated by the Johns Hopkins Expedition¹². This gate and its wall defined the western limit of the Mut Precinct at that time, and the wall turns to the east on a line with the Mut Temple's present First Pylon. In the

¹² For a discussion of the Tuthmoside gate and walls, see R. Fazzini, "Some Aspects of the Precinct of the Goddess Mut in the New Kingdom", in E. Ehrenberg (ed.), *Leaving No Stones Unturned: Essays on the Ancient Near East and Egypt in Honor of Donald P. Hansen* (Winona Lake, IL, 2002), 63-76.

New Kingdom, therefore, the area north of the Mut Temple was outside the Mut Precinct, which was referred to as “House of Mut” and “Isheru”.¹³

We now have uncovered a footing for most of the length of the east wing of Mut’s First Pylon that was covered in whitewash or plaster, as was the Pylon itself. Against this footing in room 2 were found a small bowl near which were 5 very decayed coins and flecks of gold foil. The lump of earth in which the foil flecks were found was removed and consolidated by Conservator John Steele. When cleaned, it proved to contain a rectangle of thin gold foil and a number of tiny blue beads. The original use of the gold foil is also unknown, although its rectangular shape and size suggest it may once have decorated a small box.

Although it is not impossible that some traces of emplacements for sculpture may yet come to light under the remaining shallow layers of earth and mudbrick walls before the east tower of the Mut Temple’s first pylon that seems unlikely given the present evidence. Moreover, as traces of sphinxes are absent in the forecourt of Temple A and the limestone in the south side of Temple A’s First Court could be the remains of chapels rather than sphinx bases, as we once thought¹⁴, we have no archaeological evidence to support the theory of the now unfortunately deceased Agnès Cabrol that there was a sphinx/ram avenue running east to west across the front area of the Precinct from Temple A.¹⁵

The Northwest Sector of the Mut Precinct

When the Brooklyn Museum began work in 1977 we decided first to excavate in one of the highest parts of the terrain from which projected a small part of Chapel D. We felt that that structure, datable by its inscriptions, would give us a chronologically fixed monument with which to link the clearly later structures built around it. Some of these were of mud brick and proved to be the remains of late Ptolemaic and Roman Period houses. But stone walls just to the southwest of Chapel D that we thought would be another broader court for the chapel turned out to be a sandstone gateway inscribed for King Taharqa.¹⁶ We did not complete the excavation of either of these structures then because there was more urgent work necessary elsewhere in the Precinct, including in the Mut Temple. Since the latter structure and several other areas of the site have become the responsibility of The Johns Hopkins University Expedition, the Brooklyn Expedition is now working to complete its work begun in 1977.

¹³ The name of the area that lay outside the original Mut Precinct and was incorporated into it in Dynasty 25 is provided by a stela that originally stood before Temple A’s First Pylon and was discovered in 1979 by the Brooklyn Expedition. This stela’s text and another Ramesses II block re-used in Temple A’s Second Pylon demonstrate that Temple A was a “Temple of Millions of Years” associated with Amun, renewed by Ramesses II, that stood in a place termed Ipet (or Opet). As noted by others, there were a number of places called Ipet/Opet associated with Amun-Re. For Ipet/Opet as a generic term and Amon-Re sometimes called *hnty ipwt.f* “qui préside à ses ipet”, see J. Quaegebeur, “Aménophis, nom royal et nom divin; questions méthodologiques,” *RdÉ* 37 (1986), 97-106, and especially pp. 104 and 105.

¹⁴ R. Fazzini, “The Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak 1996-2001,” *ASAE* 79 (2005), 87 and fig. 6 on p. 93.

¹⁵ A. Cabrol: “Les criosphinx de Karnak: un nouveau dromos d’Amenhotep: III,” *Centre Franco-Égyptien d’Étude des Temples de Karnak. Cahiers de Karnak X. 1995* (Paris, 1995), 1-32; and “Une représentation de la tombe de Khâbekhenet et les dromos de Karnak-sud: nouvelles hypothèses,” *Centre Franco-Égyptien d’Étude des Temples de Karnak. Cahiers de Karnak X. 1995* (Paris, 1995), 33-64.

¹⁶ See R. Fazzini and W. Peck, “The Precinct of Mut During Dynasty XXV and Early Dynasty XXVI: A Growing Picture”, *SSEAJ* XI,3 (May, 1981), 115-126, and especially p. 119.

The Taharqa Gateway

I believe Taharqa of Dynasty 25 expanded the Mut Precinct (Per-Mut/Isheru) to include some of what was Ipet/Opet because in the Third Intermediate Period Temple A was transformed from a Temple of Millions of Years (related to a king's cult) into a *per-mes* ("House of Birth") or *mammisi* dedicated to the birth of Khonsu-the-Child, the divine child of Amun and Mut, and of a king identified with that deity and birth.¹⁷ However, I must note that a Kushite block in Temple A with an inscription reading "foremost of Ipet" still maintains an association of the site with the concept of Ipet/Opet.

In 2008 the Expedition completed the excavation of the Taharqa Gateway (fig. 11). We have learned quite a bit as a result of this work.

The gateway opens from west to east and was closed by a double-leaved door, as demonstrated by the discovery of two door pivots and a corresponding pair of bolt holes in the center of the paving. It has a maximum width of 6.2 meters at the western jambs and almost 7 meters at the interior side walls behind those jambs. The dimensions given on the plans of Lauffray's article cited in footnote 17 (5 meters for the opening of the northern side door and 6 meters for the opening of its main gate) appear to indicate that comparable elements of its decoration were smaller than those of South Karnak's Taharqa Gateway. Given our excavations in the past there is no evidence for Mut's Taharqa Gateway having led eastward into a colonnade.

The west and east faces of the gate and the jambs at the gate's entrance are decorated in raised relief. The main scene preserved on the west face of each wing has a scene of two fecundity figures binding the plants of Upper and Lower Egypt supporting the preserved lower portions of the king facing inwards towards a deity.¹⁸ Reflecting the fact that the Mut Precinct is south of the Precinct of Amun, the deity on the north jamb is Amun and that on the south jamb is Mut. The discovery of a badly decayed block showing of a fecundity figure below the figure of the striding king on the east face of the north jamb in 1977 (fig. 12, left) and of a block from the east face of the south jamb with the lower part of a kneeling fecundity figure this season (fig. 12, right) suggests that the decorative scheme of the east face of the gate mirrored that of the west.

¹⁷ Among our more important discoveries about the site is that the area north of the Mut Temple's First Pylon was originally not in the Mut Precinct (*Per Mwt* or *Isheru*) but was called *Ipet* or *Opet*. It was not until Dynasty XXV that this terrain was brought into an expanded *Isheru* presumably because the temple had come to function as a *mammisi*. Cf. most recently, R. Fazzini and J. van Dijk, "Recent Work in the Mut Precinct at South Karnak," *Egyptian Archaeology* 31 (Autumn, 2007), 10.

¹⁸ An excellent parallel for the "Nile gods" (fecundity figures) binding the plants exists on the northern side gateway of the Taharqa kiosk in the First Court of Karnak's Amun Temple: J. Lauffray, "La colonnade-propylée occidentale de Karnak dite «Kiosque de Taharqa» et ses abords," *Kêmi* XX (1970), 111-164; fig. 28 (drawing), and pl. XVIII, fig. 35 (photograph). The best preserved scene on South Karnak's Taharqa Gateway has been published several times, first by R. Fazzini and J. Manning, "Archaeological Work at Thebes by The Brooklyn Museum under the auspices of the American Research Center in Egypt, 1975 – 1977," *NARCE* 101/102 (Summer/Fall, 1977), 23, fig. 5. This was the basis for a drawing by John Baines, *Fecundity Figures. Egyptian Personifications and the Iconology of a Genre* (Warminster, 1985), 237, fig. 138. The Taharqa Gateway's several images are examples of Baines' "Attitude 3": "a small but crucial group of cases where the *zm3-t3wj* motif is combined with that of bringing or presenting offerings" (p. 236ff).

Baines also noted (p. 242) that, with one possible exception of Dynasty 19, the image of Attitude 3 is attested in the Middle Kingdom and Dynasty 25. Moreover, with the exception of the example he knew from Mut's Taharqa Gateway and its counterparts in the Kiosk of Taharqa, its appearance was limited to Middle Kingdom examples from the north and a Dynasty 25 relief on CG 656, a statue base of Shebitku for Memphis. Under the circumstances, and because this was a time when he feels that artistic influence was largely Memphite, Baines feels that the Theban examples under consideration may also have been Memphite-influenced.

Re-used in the construction of the north jamb of the gateway is a block preserving the lower portion of a cartouche in sunk relief ending in two reed leaves (y) the style of which appears to be post-New Kingdom in date. If so, the possible candidates for this cartouche re-used by Taharqa would be Piye of earlier Dynasty 25 or Pamiy of the slightly earlier Libyan Period. Either would be a rare occurrence of a king's name at South Karnak.

The gateway did not long remain in use at its full width. A new stone threshold, made up of rectangular blocks and a re-used column drum, was laid directly on the original paving, and the space between the new threshold and the original jambs was blocked with mud brick. A mud brick wall ran west from this threshold; the interior corner of a wall running north from this wall was found; both extend into the west baulk of the excavation (fig. 13). There is no trace of a similar wall on the south side of the threshold.

Occupying the space between the south side of the new threshold and the south wing of the gate was a room whose mud brick walls were also laid directly on the original paving (fig. 14), which was quite well-preserved in this area although sadly deteriorated elsewhere in the gate. The entrance was in the east wall, which extended beyond the east face of the south wing. It continued in use, with modifications, through the rest of the gate's history.

A mud brick wall also ran east from the north side of the new threshold, presumably forming a similar room in the northern third of the gateway, but no trace of this area's east wall was found.

The stone threshold was later covered with mud brick, with additional brick added for a distance of c. 1.75 meters eastward. Was there a step down from this brick walkway to a lower, unpaved surface? A channel was discovered running between the south side of this platform and the southern room, visible in fig. 14.

Judging from the pottery, these phases of work in the gateway took place during the Ptolemaic Period. Several examples of Memphis black ware and a number of fragments of floral-painted storage jars were found in and among the brick.

Over the ensuing years, the ground level outside (west of) the gate gradually rose, necessitating raising the floor level in the gateway, which was done by adding new courses of mud brick to the existing walkway. A new threshold made of two courses of baked brick and stone was added just west of the gate's mud brick paving. On its north side it abuts the wall running west from the gate; on the south this wall has been robbed out.

The south room was also renovated, perhaps at the same time as the new threshold was created. Four courses of baked brick were added to the north wall, while the west wall was strengthened by three courses of baked and a sandstone block set against the jamb of the gate (fig. 15). Baked brick was also added to the southeast corner of the room where it abuts the inner face of the gate's south wing.

The next phase of the gate's development involved major renovations to the whole area. North of the entrance, a wall of sandstone blocks three courses deep was added to the east face of the existing wall. It cut through the wall that ran along the north side of the first phase of the gate's narrowing, its south end encroaching on the existing entrance, which was now filled with dark grey brick with lime mortar. A wood beam was laid on this brick, extending from the stone wall on the north to the baked brick and mud brick wall on the south (fig 16). A similar beam was laid across the west side of the new threshold, which was covered with a thin layer of plaster. As visible in fig. 16, the northern portion of the gateway suffered considerable subsidence, as did the original paving in the same area.

To complete this phase of the work, stone door jambs were installed on the west side of the new entrance; of these only the lowest courses remain. On the north, the preserved jamb consists of two square sandstone blocks, one atop the other. Of the southern jamb, only the lowest, re-used limestone block remains (visible to the left in fig. 16), although traces of a second limestone block were found. This block has a cutout on its north side to accommodate the door. More interesting, however, are the inscriptions on the east and south faces, which indicate that it came originally from the jamb of a structure built by Montuemhat. The east face shows the top of a column of text mentioning “great Mut, Mistress of Isheru”, while the south face mentions “the prince and governor of Upper Egypt, Montuemhat,” whose offers wine and cool water to the goddess.

To accommodate the new gateway, which was deeper although not wider than the older one, the walls on either side of the jambs were thickened using the same dark grey brick and white mortar as used under the wood beams. A facing of this same brick was also added to the inner faces of the south room’s west and north walls, covering the baked brick, (fig. 16) and perhaps to the east wall as well, although the situation there is somewhat unclear. A bench(?) made of two slabs of sandstone resting on three stone supports with concave fronts was built against the north wall of the room, and a storage jar was set into the northwest corner. It is from this level that the season’s most interesting finds came, including a large piece of white coral,¹⁹ a small bronze recumbent lion, and a thoroughly Hellenistic stone figure of Isis and Horus (fig. 17).²⁰

North of the new entrance, the walls running west and north from the north jamb were also thickened, enclosing all but the south side of the stone north jamb, but the area between the north jamb of the gate and the south room seems to have been left open as no walls or even traces of fallen brick were found.

As visible in photographs taken at the end of the 1977 season, habitations had by now grown up outside the Taharqa Gate, in an area protected by the northwest corner of the site’s enclosure wall. The structures were built on an intentional landfill created to level the ground. The wall running west from the north wing of the narrowed gate extended along the south side of the phase of the village excavated that year, perhaps forming one boundary of a street that terminated at the northern end of the gate’s north wing. Eventually, as can be seen in fig. 18a, the Taharqa Gate was completely blocked by a wider north-south wall.

A wall of baked and mud brick runs south from the gate’s south wing in this late phase. West of it lies a parallel wall that turns to the west at a point opposite the northwest corner of the south wing, and may form the southern side of the area in front of the gate (fig. 18b).

A group of ostraca was found in a late phase of these habitations and published by Richard Jasnow, who dated them to the early first century AD.²¹ The final phases of the blocking of the Taharqa Gate may also date to this time.

During the 1977 excavation and the brief clean-up of the area in late 2007, a number of blocks from the gate were found in the area between the jambs. Additional blocks were found in 2008. These blocks were in a jumble, the southern blocks atop the collapsed brick walls of the

¹⁹ For a discussion of coral and its meaning in Egypt, see D. Meeks, “Le corail dans l’Egypte ancienne”, in J.-P. Morel, *et al.* (eds.), *Corallo di ieri, corallo di oggi. Atti del Convegno, Ravello, Villa Rufolo, 13-15 dicembre 1996* (= *Scienze e Materiali del Patrimonio Culturale*, 5) (2000), 99-119.

²⁰ Coral (expedition no. 22MW.10): h. c. 12 cm; max. w. c. 9 cm; bronze lion (Expedition no. 22MW26): l: 4.4 cm; figure of Isis and Horus (expedition no. 22MW.29): max h. 8.5 cm, w. 5.0 cm d. 6.0 cm.

²¹ R. Fazzini and R. Jasnow, “Demotic Ostraca from the Mut Precinct in Karnak”, *Enchoria* 16 (1988), 23-48. Jasnow publishes 23 ostraca of the early Roman Period, many of which contain receipts for a variety of taxes.

south room, and the lowest on a surface below the level of the lime-plastered threshold described above and associated with an area of burning in the northern half of the area. Below the burning was what had been the north wall of the first narrowing of the gate, cut by the later rebuilding. It appears that when the doorway with the wood beams was built, the area north of the south room remained open for some reason.

The south room itself went through one last phase of construction before being buried under fallen blocks. It appears that its east wall was destroyed and rebuilt. Since we found blocks from the east end of the gate's south jamb fallen immediately to the south and on about the same level, the collapse of this part of the gate (whose stone is very fragile) may have caused the wall's collapse. Using baked brick and small stones, the southern part of the east end of the room was crudely rebuilt on a layer of rubble consisting of fragments of dark grey brick and white mortar. An L-shaped area was created on the south side, with a vestibule(?) at the north end built over the original threshold to the room (fig. 19).

In future seasons, we hope to be able to restore the Taharqa Gateway to the extent possible, inserting new blocks as necessary to allow fallen blocks to be placed back in their appropriate positions.

Our excavations this year revealed that the stone paving in the Taharqa Gateway extends west into the mound to the west. This emphasizes the fact that we need to discover what religious structures are buried under the partial remains of late Ptolemaic and Roman Period houses mentioned above to understand the functioning of the Precinct as a whole. And in 2008 we made a start at what we need to do in the next two seasons by beginning excavation of a building of which traces had long been visible.

North of the Sacred Lake

The expedition began to investigate a baked brick building south and west of the Taharqa Gate. It seems to be built over the remains of what was the north wall of the Tuthmoside Mut Precinct and against a wall running south from the Taharqa Gate. The structure is built of baked brick and a thick cement made with many pebbles and contains two small plastered rooms (or cisterns?) at right angles to each other with a circular room to their south and a brick-lined well to the east of the eastern plastered space (fig. 20). The building's purpose is unknown as yet, but it has been suggested that this may have been a fulling/dyeing facility²².

To judge from its position in relationship to other structures, this building probably dates to the Roman Period, and that appears to be confirmed by an initial study of the pottery associated with it.

At the end of the season we covered this structure with plastic sheeting, sand and earth to protect it until our next season of work.

Conservation

Chapel D and its restoration

This chapel was built in two phases: the rear two rooms adorned in raised relief, were the work of Ptolemy VI, Philometor (180-164 and 163-145 BC) and larger first room, adorned in sunk relief, was that of Ptolemy VIII, Euergetes II (170-163 and 145-116 BC). Both parts were dedicated to Mut and another goddess represented with a leonine head, but also to the royal cult of deified Ptolemies.

²² Personal communication by Luc Gabolde, with reference to work by Sylvie Cauville at Edfu.

The expedition has now completed the excavation of this chapel and undertaken the restoration of its *in situ* remains. The east façade and 2 columns in the first room were restored in the 2006 and 2007 seasons. In 2008, the west wall of the middle room and the west and south walls of the front room were completely dismantled and restored.²³ Fig. 21 shows the chapel at the start of the season and after restoration. In 2009 we plan to restore the floor of the chapel. The Egyptological work in this chapel has been carried out mainly by Jacobus van Dijk.

The restoration to date has not only included the blocks that could be put back in place but also some of the blocks that have no physical connection to the existing structure. Some of these blocks may represent a rebuilding of parts of the structure at some time under the Ptolemies. A planned publication of Chapel D will include these blocks and their reconstruction as parts of the chapel.

Mastabas

In 2007 the local SCA asked us to build mastabas to hold decorated blocks of stone in the SCA magazine at Mut taken out of service and not selected by the SCA for transfer to the Museum/Magazine at Abu el Gud. Since the SCA had excavated the areas east of the Taharqa Gateway in 2001-02 and discovered no significant remains, this part of the site was chosen for the construction of 6 mastabas; a 7th was built in 2008 to be used for the results of future work.

At the request of the local SCA we moved the smallest of the blocks from these mastabas and from the main mastaba north of the east wing of the Mut Temple's first pylon to a storeroom where they would be better protected. This made it possible to begin to improve the visibility of larger and more important sculptures and decorated blocks. Among the most important of these are a colossal head from an unfinished statue of Amunhotep III, a bust from a statue attributable to Amunhotep III's Queen Tiye, a relief from an otherwise unknown structure of a Dynasty 21 High Priest of Amun, and some reliefs probably from the Dynasty 25 version of the porches before the Mut Temple.

These efforts, which will eventually include signage for the objects, are being made for the time about two years from now that we hope that the Precinct can be opened to visitors. And during our next season of work similar efforts will be made for the blocks on our other mastabas, such as blocks from Chapel D that can be seen from Chapel D; a relief of King Aye and his queen usurped by Horemheb; a relief of back-to-back images of Mut dating to two phases of Dynasty 18; and reliefs of Hathor heads from Mut's Contra-Temple which cannot be situated precisely in that structure.

²³ This work was supervised by Khaled Mohamed Wassel, the SCA conservator assigned to the Mut Expedition, and was carried out by the very talented stone masons Mohammed Gharib Abdullah and Sayed Ahmed Mohammed Sebbak and their team of workers. They did a superb job.



Fig. 1 Aerial view of the Mut Precinct (photo: James Van Rensselaer IV for the Johns Hopkins University Mut Expedition)



Fig. 2 View west along the corridor on the north side of Temple A's forecourt with the remains of the brick wall running from the enclosure wall to the temple's 2nd pylon in the foreground. Beyond it is the mass of mud brick blocking the east end of the corridor and the remains of the plaster surface (top of picture).



Fig. 3. Double "ancestor bust" found among the limestone blocks of the south wall of Temple A's forecourt.

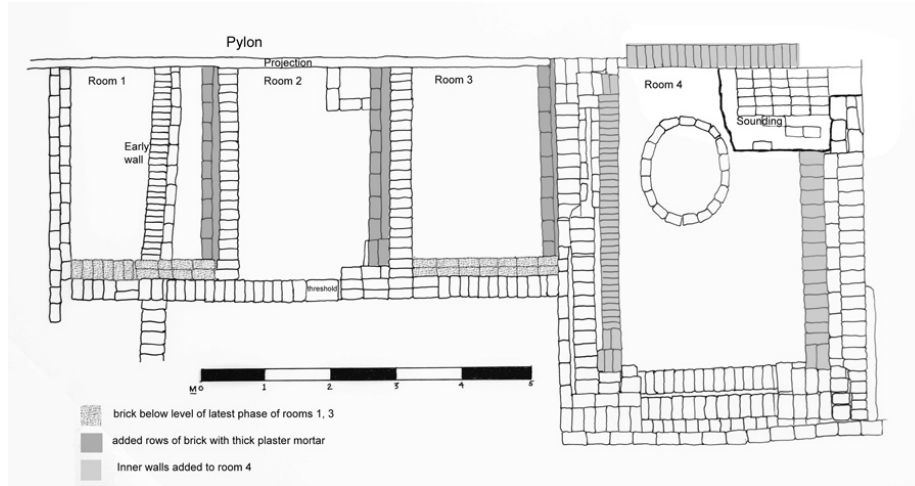


Fig. 4a. Rooms 1-4 in 2007 showing the earlier wall running through room 1.

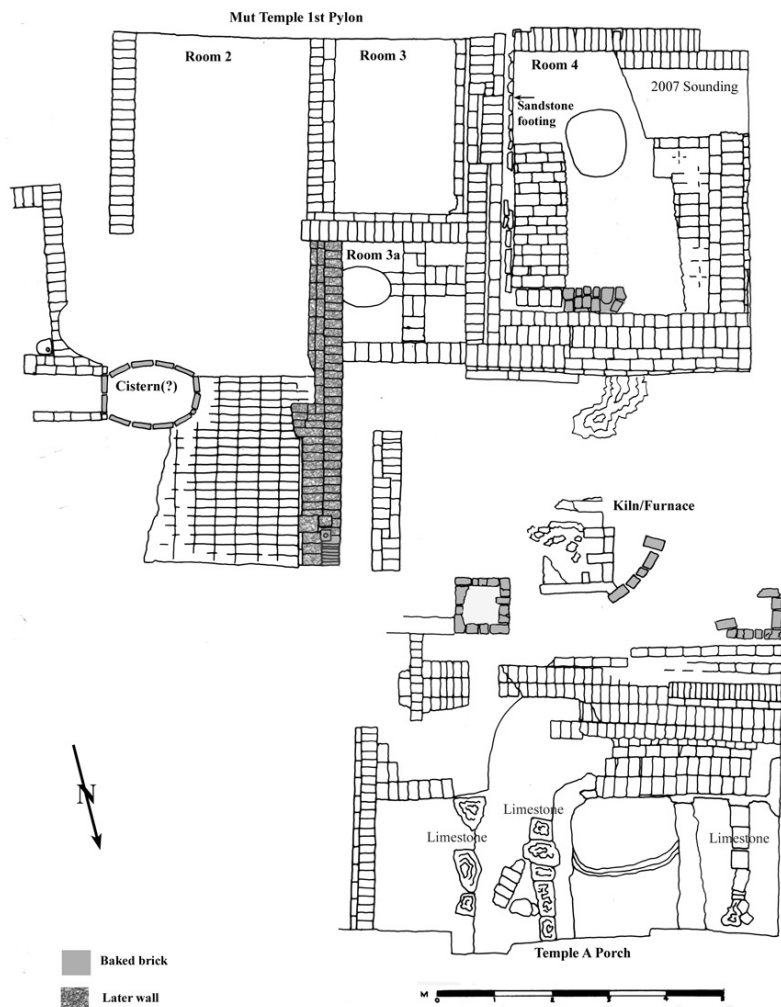


Fig. 4b Plan of the area between Temple A's columned porch and the east wing of the Mut Temple's 1st pylon showing the major features uncovered in 2008. The square baked brick features in the center, from the later phase excavated in 2007, have been left in place to aid mapping.



Fig. 5 General view to the northwest of the area shown in fig. 4b in mid-season, showing most of the features described in the text.



Fig. 6a View to the southeast of the kiln or furnace north of room 4.



Fig. 6b. The door pivot at the southeast corner of an early phase of room 3a.



Fig. 7 Looking north at the area immediately south of Temple A's columned porch, with the three large pits/animal burrows. The kiln/furnace is in the foreground.



Fig. 8. A general view to the east of the same area at the end of the season showing the large mud brick feature and the three small limestone walls that run between Temple A's porch (left) and the mud brick. Note the animal burrow just north of the mud brick.



Fig. 9. Several pieces of a vessel (or perhaps two) of fine pink ware with a highly burnished red slip, rows of shallow rouletting, and black and white painted bands.



Fig. 10a View east along the east wing of the Mut Temple's 1st pylon showing the sounding at the pylon face in room 3.



Fig. 10b. The southeast corner of the sounding showing the sand foundation and the pylon's foundation trench (indicated by arrows).



Fig. 10c The Ramesside Period relief of Khonsu found in the pylon's foundation trench.



Fig. 11 The north (top) and south wings of the Taharqa at the end of the season, showing the original paving level.

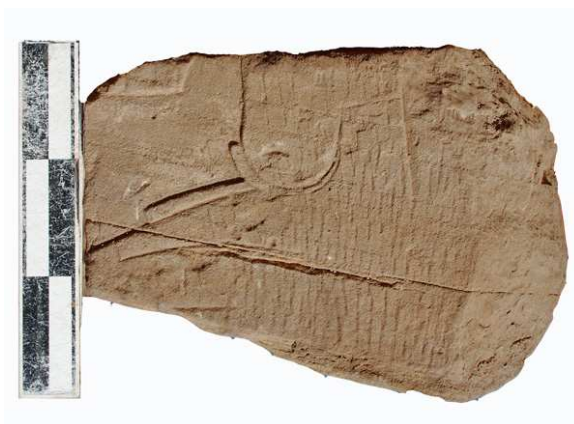


Fig. 12. The decayed fragment of a fecundity figure still *in situ* in the east face of the Taharqa Gate's north wing in 1977 (left) and the block with the lower half of a similar figure discovered in 2008.



Fig.13. The original, now much decayed paving of the Taharqa Gate with the later, narrower stone threshold (the mud brick north and south of the stone continued to the jambs of the gate). The wall running west into the baulk is visible above and to the right of the meter stick.



Fig. 14. The earliest phase of the south room built within the Taharqa Gate, with mud brick paving to its north, separated from the room by a narrow channel.



Fig. 15. The baked brick and stone repairs to the south, west and north walls of the south room.



Fig. 16. A general view to the west of the Taharqa Gate showing the later threshold whose preserved south jamb is a re-used limestone block with inscriptions by Montuemhat. This phase of construction was carried out using distinctive dark grey bricks and a thick lime mortar.



Fig. 17. A bronze lion, a Hellenistic figure of Isis and Horus, and a piece of coral, all found in the south room of the Taharqa Gate in debris under the collapse of the grey mud brick walls.



Fig. 18a 1977 photograph of the north wing of the Taharqa Gate in its latest phase when it was completely blocked by a mud brick wall. The limestone jamb of fig. 16 is just visible against the south baulk to the left.



Fig. 18b. View to the west of the south wing of the Taharqa Gate in 1977, showing the wall running off it to the south. A parallel wall turns westward opposite the south wing's northwest corner.



Fig. 19 The south room of the Taharqa Gate after the eastern wall (foreground) has been crudely rebuilt of baked brick and its shape changed, the southern section now forming an L-shape.



Fig. 20. The baked brick structure south and west of the Taharqa Gate: view to the south showing the plastered spaces and the well (top); view east toward the Mut Temple's 1st pylon. The line of the Tuthmoside enclosure wall is visible in the lower right (center); the round room south of the western plastered room (bottom).



Fig. 21 A general view of the west side of Chapel D at the start of the season (top) and at the end of the season after the restoration was completed (bottom).