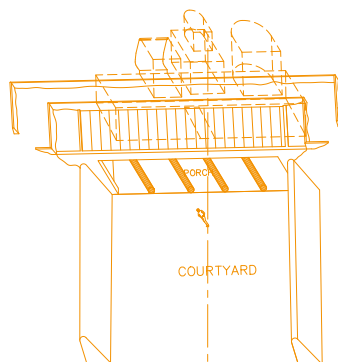


Architecture of a non-royal “Temple of Millions of Years”: the case of TT 39



Abstract: The aim of this article is to examine the funerary monument of Puimra, Second Priest of Amun, from an architectural perspective. However, the monument known as TT 39 in Egyptological literature is not a tomb; it is a complex that includes a temple and several tombs. The structure, excavated in the rock, is inscribed with a specific name in hieroglyphic characters: Temple of Millions (of Years). As such, it should be treated accordingly. While it is true that the rock-cut complex called TT 39 contains the tomb of Puimra, there are also several other funerary shafts leading to additional tombs. This study of TT 39, from an archaeo-architectural standpoint, describes some of the insights gained during the intervention of the Mexican Egyptological Mission in the hemi-speos of Puimra.

Keywords: TT 39, Puimra, Temple of Millions of Years, Deir el-Bahari, *Djeser-djeseru*, Hatshepsut

INTRODUCTION

In May 2008, during the celebration of the Tenth International Congress of Egyptologists, Gabriela Arrache, director of the Puimra TT 39 Project, gave a presentation entitled “Theban Tomb 39, Puimra, Tomb or Funerary Temple?”, raising the possibility that the monument called the tomb of Puimra was actually a funerary tem-

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ple. Her approach was that “... architecture mirrored and reinforced the desired social order, the relationships Egyptians felt were normative within kinship, communities, and the state. And architecture expressed ideas about the cosmos or the universe, and the individual’s and society’s roles within it” (O’Connor 1997: 155). This more recent conception of an ancient funerary monument should be evaluated. In the years following this presentation, and after numerous work campaigns at TT 39, we have been able to verify that the aforementioned monument does indeed include a temple — but not just any temple, one of the so-called “Temple of Millions of Years”, a term previously applied primarily to various temples linked to royalty. However, this designation had not been widely associated with private monuments until now.

Our findings show that the monument referred to in Egyptological lit-

erature as TT 39 is not simply a tomb. A tomb is defined as “the place where a corpse is buried”; therefore, applying the term “tomb” to TT 39 is overly restrictive and sometimes misleading, as it does not accurately define the structure in question. The rock-cut construction bears a specific name inscribed inside in hieroglyphic characters: Temple of Millions (of Years), and it should be recognized as such. Although it is true that beneath the complex known as TT 39 lies Puimra’s funerary chamber, and that both the courtyard and the chapels excavated in the rock contain shafts leading to several tombs, the Temple of Millions of Years is not always a supra-structure or structure positioned directly above the tomb. In many cases, tombs may be located far from the temples and not beneath them, as evidenced by several examples from royal burials of the New Kingdom.



Fig. 1. Isometric view of TT 39, showing the courtyard, the vestiges of the portico, and the excavated spaces: the corridor and the three internal chapels (3D scanner image J. Delgado, A. Mora, and M. Gonzalez 2024 (SYSTOP-INAH))

PUIMRA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MONUMENTS FOR HATSHEPSUT AND ITS CONSEQUENT INFLUENCE ON TT 39

The architecture of TT 39 [Fig. 1] closely parallels that of *Djeser-djeseru*, not only because the two constructions are contemporary but also due to Puimra's education at the royal court. His position and functions within the high ranks of Amun's clergy further enabled him to be aware of the architectural trends of his time.

Puimra was an educated noble at the royal court. His mother was the royal nurse Neferiah. This may explain why Puimra is inscribed as *sdty nswt* "(adopted) son of the king" in both the transverse corridor (Davies 1922: 36, n. 4, Pl. IX) and on the façade (Davies 1923: 44, Pl. LXIX) of TT 39. His father, Puia, was also a notable (*s3b*). Both Neferiah and Puia are depicted on the north wall of the transverse corridor of TT 39.

Throughout the monument, the title most frequently associated with the name of Puimra is that of Second Priest

of Amun. Both his name and title were preserved despite the various erasure interventions the monument suffered — during the *damnatio memoriae* of Hatshepsut, the persecution of Amun during the Amarna period, and even the reuse of TT 39 in later times. This indicates that he was a highly respected figure both during his lifetime and after his death.

Furthermore, Puimra was married to Senseneb, the daughter of the First Priest of Amun, Hapuseneb, who is identified as a Divine Adoratrice of Amun in TT 39.

Puimra's involvement in the construction of Hatshepsut's monuments is indisputable, as confirmed by archaeological findings. Hieratic inscriptions bearing the name of this high-ranking official were found on inscribed blocks discovered by Howard Carter during his excavation of the Valley Temple

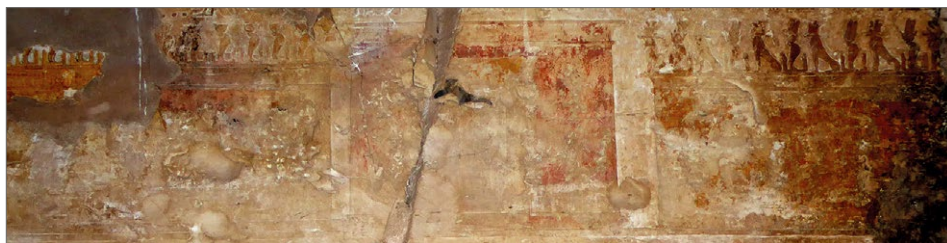


Fig. 2. Hatshepsut's chapels depicted on the western wall of the transverse corridor of TT 39 (Photo J. Trello 70382/2014)

- 1 One of these blocks was located by Jadwiga Iwaszczuk in storeroom 1 at the Metropolitan House (Iwaszczuk 2017: 56–57, Figs 36–38). Another block is stored at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, 12.181.305 (<http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/576276>, accessed: 22.11.2016).

of *Djeser-djeseru*, and published in his report of the work (Carter 1912: 39, Fig. 10).¹ An ostracon discovered in the area of the processional alley by the Austrian mission (Bietak 1972: Pl. IX [b] and Iwaszczuk 2017: 56) also corroborates Puimra's participation in the construction of Hatshepsut's temple. However, Puimra was not alone in this effort; several key figures from Hatshepsut's reign also contributed to the construction. Other inscribed stones found in the Valley Temple area feature a line of hieratic text in ink that includes the names of Senenmut, Hapuseneb, and Djehuty (Roehrig, Dreyfus, and Keller 2005: 146). It seems likely that Senenmut was in charge of the works at the Valley Temple (Iwaszczuk 2017: 56) but fell out of favor before its final completion. Djehuty probably did not outlive Hatshepsut (Galán 2014: 248) and possibly also fell out of favor, suffering *damnatio memoriae* — his name and face were erased in his chapel tomb. However, Puimra retained the trust of both Hatshepsut and Thutmose III until his death.

Puimra was also the supervisor of the work at the Temple of Amun (*jmy r k3t nw hwt ntr nt jmn*). It is important to note that on the eastern wall of the corridor in TT 39, three chapels are depicted [Fig. 2], with Hatshepsut's name inscribed on the cornice of two of them, the construction of which he may have been involved in.

The chapels are shown within the context of a larger scene. The individuals in the upper register are labeled as “Overseers of the craftsmen of the Temple of Amun, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands”, and they present the luxurious equipment for the temple rituals [Fig. 3]. In the lower register, “Supervisors of the works of the Temple of Amun” (*jmjw-r k3t nw hwt-ntr nt jmn-r*) are depicted, presenting the completed works, including the three chapels of Hatshepsut and the two obelisks bearing the name of Thutmose III. It is worth highlighting the distinction Puimra makes in the spelling of the texts for his chapels, writing *hwt* when referring to his temple [see below, Figs 10 and 12] and *hwt-ntr* when referring to the Temple of Amun [Fig. 4].

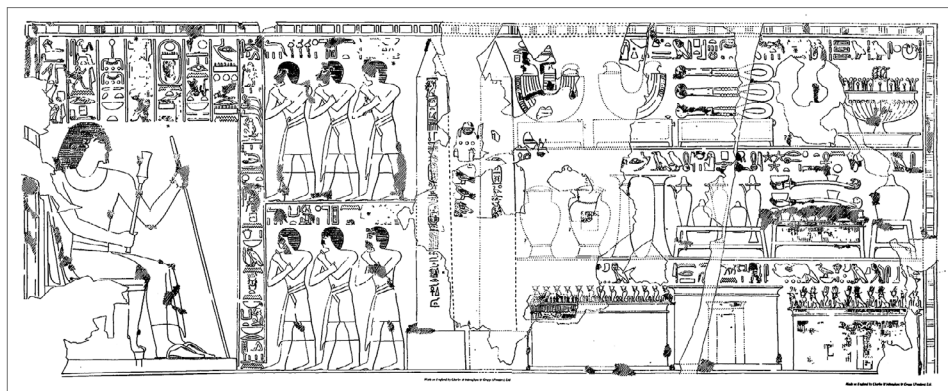


Fig. 3. Puimra receiving reports from those responsible for the preparation of the movable and immovable elements made for the Karnak temple (Davies 1922: Pls XXXVII and XXXVIII combined)

Puimra's active participation in the construction of Hatshepsut's temple in Western Thebes undoubtedly influenced the design and execution of his own "Temple of Millions of Years". Furthermore, the exceptional creativity attributed to Hatshepsut's reign, particularly in the architecture of *Djeser-djeseru*, seems to have been influenced by the "east Mediterranean international style of the mid-second millennium BC, which came from the Minoan sphere

through the Levant to Egypt" (Szafrński 2014: 126). Thus, it is likely that TT 39 also received this influence.

Additionally, Puimra played an important role in the construction of the Temple of Mut in Karnak during Hatshepsut's reign. The texts inscribed on the base of his offering statue (Cairo Museum CG 910) document his involvement in the construction of various elements for this temple (Bryan 2014: 96).

ARCHITECTURE OF HATSHEPSUT'S TEMPLE OF MILLIONS OF YEARS

When we refer to the temples of "Millions of Years", we generally mean the temples of the pharaohs in Western Thebes. As Wilkinson points out, these temples represent "... an allusion perhaps to the desired continued cult of the deceased King" (Wilkinson 2005: 25). The existence of such temples has been confirmed since at least the Middle Kingdom, although it was from the New Kingdom onward that the name "Temple of Millions of Years" became widespread. According to Olga Bialostocka (2016: 1), "Djeser-djeseru is the oldest preserved example of the term *ḥwt nt ḥḥw m rnpwt* attested in written sources".²

However, this designation is not exclusive to the temples of Western Thebes.

Various sources indicate at least 61 temples bearing the term Temple of Millions of Years, of which 36 were possibly located outside Western Thebes³ — some as far as Amada or Soleb, and even in more remote regions beyond the Nile Valley, such as the Sinai Peninsula.⁴

It is worth remembering that a Temple of Millions of Years could serve different functions. This is also the case with *Djeser-djeseru*, as explained by Mohamed El-Bialy (2015: 66): "*Longtemps considéré comme un temple "funéraire", il s'agissait en fait d'un édifice de culte royal associant, de son vivant déjà, Hatshepsout à son géniteur divin, "roi des dieux", Amon-Ré, maître de Karnak*".

2 In Bialostocka 2016: 1, n. 4, it is indicated: "Upper Courtyard, west wall: PM II, 364; Urk. IV, 294, stela of Djehuti (tomb TT 11, Dra Abu el-Naga): Urk. IV, 422:9; PM II, 22 (5). See also Ullmann, 2002: 26–52".

3 It remains possible that there are more temples of this type that have yet to be discovered or identified as Temples of Millions of Years (Leblanc 2010). As to the interpretation of Temples of Millions of Years, see also Schröder 2010.

4 There was a Temple of Millions of Years of Ramses IV: *m3ṯi m pr ḥwt-ḥr nbt mfk3t* (Leblanc 2010: 44). For Serabit el-Khadim, see Valbelle and Bonnet 1996: 61–70 and Trello 1999.

To explore the parallels between Hatshepsut's Temple of Millions of Years and TT 39 (the chapel and tomb complex of Puimra), we must first analyze the characteristics of the queen's temple at Deir el-Bahari, its technical heritage, and the influences it generated. In this regard, the architectural model for the temples of Millions of Years during the Eighteenth Dynasty was the Temple of Hatshepsut, *Djeser-djeseru*. This temple, in turn, was influenced by earlier models from the First Intermediate Period — particularly the architectural concept established by Nebhepetra Mentuhotep II five centuries earlier in the Eleventh Dynasty (Shaw 2002: 241; Polz 2008), also at Deir el-Bahari.

Mentuhotep II decided to construct his temple in the so-called natural amphitheater of the Theban Mountain. This

design implied a symbolic positioning, as the temple was entirely located within the western funerary realm. At the same time, it was framed by the mountainous profile, which served both as a rock shelter, a backdrop, and an axial crown, with the natural point of el-Qurn. As established by Naville and Winlock in their comprehensive plans of the Temple of Mentuhotep II (Winlock 1942: 2), the natural bay in the Theban Mountain was used for the construction. In Winlock's plan, the trajectory of the retaining wall can be seen, opening obliquely toward the north side. This wall followed the natural bay's contours and served as both support and protection for the architectural complex.

The pharaoh's funeral chamber of *Djeser-djeseru* would be placed within the base of the cliff, like a hemi-speos,

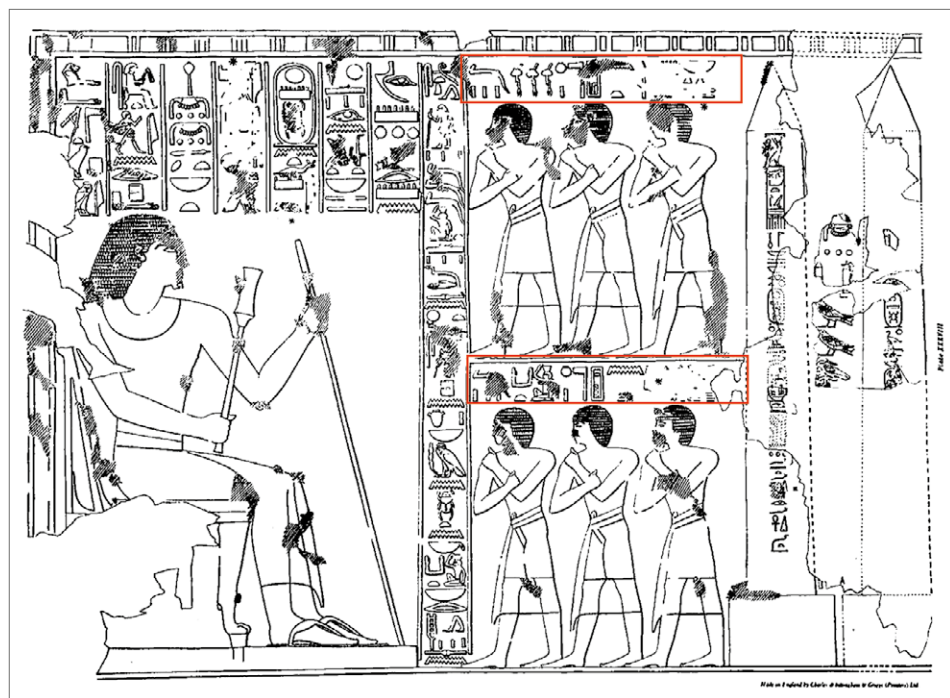


Fig. 4. Puimra receiving a report from the supervisors (Davies 1922: Pl. XXXVII)

while the rest of the temple would be constructed outside the cliff. The result was undoubtedly spectacular in terms of architectural integration [Fig. 5], and it laid the foundation for a series of architectural principles that would be widely used during the Eighteenth Dynasty.

The greater the development of the plan for the upper terrace, the larger the dimensions of the perimeter containment structure would be. Likewise, the creation of stepped terraces was complemented by ramps perpendicular to the central axis of the complex, creating an almost scenographic impact between the temple and the natural landscape [Fig. 6]: "As the interface between the divine and human spheres, the Egyptian temple served as a theatre in which symbolic ritual dramas

were enacted" (Wilkinson 2005: 8).

Hatshepsut undoubtedly took advantage of the knowledge gained by the builders of Mentuhotep II in the conception of her Temple of Millions of Years: she located her temple immediately to the north of the Eleventh Dynasty temple, adjacent and parallel to it, and also attached to the mountain cliff.

This location, linked to the great temple of the god in Thebes, compelled the builders to make significant modification to the natural landscape. It was decided to expand the bay of the sacred mountain to the north by cutting into the natural rock at the base of the cliff and leveling the land through three stepped platforms, aligned with the processional access axis of the queen's temple. This modification



Fig. 5. Hatshepsut's temple in Deir el-Bahari (Photo J. Trello 0617/2014)

of the terrain involved expanding an area equivalent to 50% of the second platform and adding 100% of the area to the third platform [Fig. 7], which must have required extensive rock cutting, crushing, and removal of the excess debris. Additionally, it was necessary to modify the diagonal retaining wall of the Mentuhotep II enclosure to accommodate the earthworks and the successive leveling of the platforms. These platforms were partially filled with material excavated or cut during the construction of the expanded bay. There is insufficient archaeological evidence regarding the formation of the platforms. However, Iwaszczuk provides some clues that support our assertions, stating: “All the walls of the Upper Courtyard were erected on a platform carved in

bedrock, however, the rock under the Upper Courtyard and the rooms located to the south of it sloped down considerably. Thus it was necessary to form a type of artificial platform in the southern part to create a uniformly flat surface of the Upper Terrace” (Iwaszczuk 2017: 15). Nonetheless, a deeper analysis is required. Understanding the construction processes carried out by the builders highlights the degree of refinement and organization involved in these works.

Hatshepsut’s temple became, as Ian Shaw (2002: 241) points out, “the most complete statement in material form about her kingdom”. Hatshepsut’s Temple of Millions of Years is a complex consisting of three large stepped terraces, connected by ramps aligned along the



Fig. 6. Scenographic interplay between the temple and the natural landscape (Photo J. Trello 0954/2014)

processional axis and culminating in a sanctuary excavated directly into the mountain. Each terrace is marked by the presence of a covered porch, which, as in the case of the neighboring Temple of Mentuhotep II, served as a supportive mechanism for the upper structure. As Iwaszczuk explains, these containment elements combine walls with an inclined face toward the area to be contained, thereby increasing the base relative to the crown. These walls are further reinforced by a roofed porch, with stone cover slabs supported by two rows of columns, thereby strengthening the retaining structure (Iwaszczuk 2017: 16–18). This architectural mechanism — combining inclined walls in a collabo-

orative effort with attached supports as braced reinforcement— has been widely used across various periods, such as in European Gothic architecture, and even more recently in the works of the modernist architect Antoni Gaudí. In the plan created by Iwaszczuk (2017: 18, Fig. 9), which locates the inclined walls in the Temple of Hatshepsut, it is evident that this structural mechanism may have been one of the most important technological innovations applied by the builders of *Djeser-djeseru* to contain the terraces. This approach, while inspired by the funerary temple of Mentuhotep II and earlier dynastic construction principles, was implemented with greater breadth and boldness [Fig. 8].

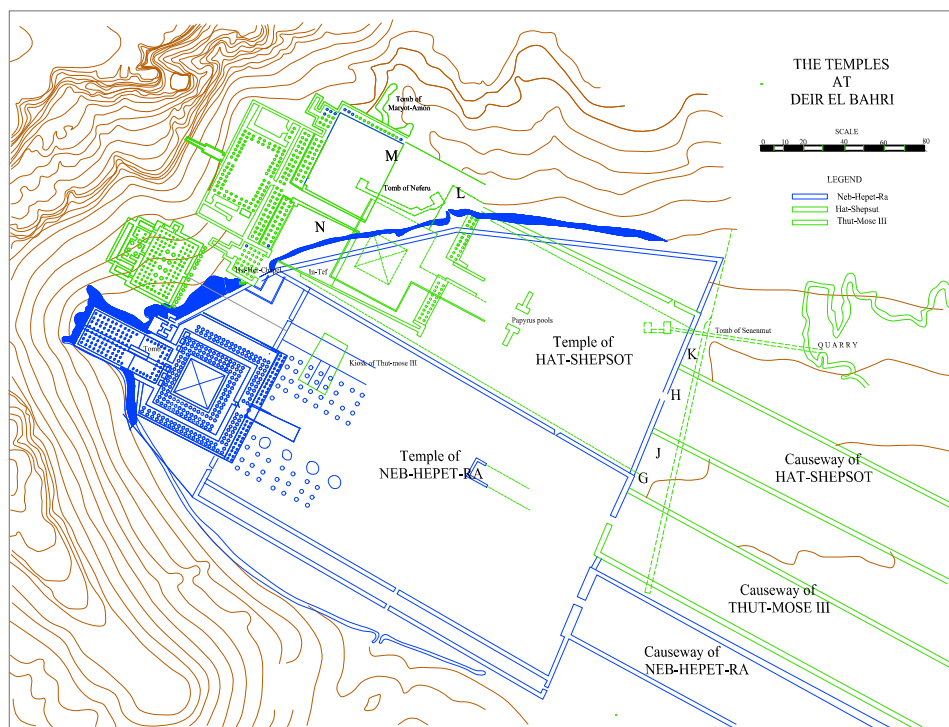


Fig. 7. Deir el-Bahari plan according to Winlock 1942: 2. The overlapping areas of the temple of Mentuhotep II with that of Hatshepsut can be observed (Drawing M. Villarruel and C. Gamba 2024)

Now, in general terms, we can describe the architectural layout of Hatshepsut's Temple of Millions of Years as follows: it is a temple developed on three stepped platforms.

The second terrace, also an open court, was connected by another ramp leading to the third platform, which is bordered to the west by a retaining wall and portico on both sides of the ramp. The south wing is decorated with reliefs representing the expedition to Punt, while the north wing features scenes depicting the queen's conception and divine birth. Notably, at the northern limit of the second terrace, a covered portico was built, housing a series of chapels. This structure must have had a structural justification related to its location.

The third and final terrace, the most important area of the complex,

is framed by a new bay of porticos with Osiride sculptures of the queen integrated into the front columns. Here, the open space in front is reduced to a minimum, resembling a continuous balcony, to create an inner court that opens into the building. To access this courtyard, one must cross an elevated colonnade, which could be considered the equivalent of the hypostyle hall in a temple of the god. Upon entering the court, the tripartite composition governing the temple's design becomes evident. At the northern end of the central courtyard lies the solar cult complex, while to the south is the chamber (featuring a window in the south) dedicated to the queen and her father, Thutmose I. Completing the temple's central axis is the sanctuary of Amun, carved into the natural rock of the Theban Mountain.

From this, we can define the relevant characteristics in the conception and design of the Hatshepsut complex, summarized as follows:

- a) Symbolic orientation toward a significant point (Wilkinson 2005: 36). The evident ritual connection between the site of *Djeser-djeseru* and the main enclosure of the god Amun in Karnak demonstrates the intention of creating a functional ceremonial corridor, connected by canals and the ascending dromos of Deir el-Bahari.
- b) Proportion grid. The layout of the *Djeser-djeseru* Temple was designed with a modular system. According to Iwaszczuk (based on the research of Waldemar Polocznanin and Jean-

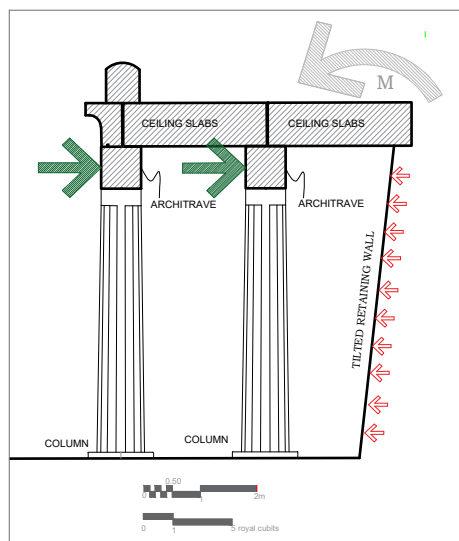


Fig. 8. Image of the porch/tilted wall of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahari. Drawing by M. Villarruel, 2024. Based on Iwaszczuk 2017: 25, Fig. 16)

François Carloti), this system was based on a grid of squares measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$ Royal Cubits each, equivalent to approximately 78.6 cm (Iwaszczuk 2017: 12).⁵

- c) Generation of a tripartite model through a scheme with a central axis and balanced elements on both sides. This design principle is evident in the temple's façade, where the ramp serves as the dominant element, flanked symmetrically by inclined porticos and walls.
- d) Tripartite platform model. This scheme appears to replicate the tripartite composition mentioned above, but now in plan, possibly with additional symbolic meaning: the cre-

ation of three stages or ritual zones that materialize the cosmic order through the architecture of the building. As David O'Connor points out: "As a result, the owner of a temple or tomb chapel was identified with the creator, sun god, and cosmic ruler, and the architectural form and the program —laid out in an essentially similar fashion in both temple and tomb chapel— represented the sequential unfolding of the developments typical of the processes... At the same time, the social hierarchy of the cosmos, as visualized by Egyptians, was evoked and its validity reaffirmed" (O'Connor 1997: 158). In this way, the temple of Deir el-Bahari replicates the symbolic arrangement formula of the temples of the gods in the east of



Fig. 9. Location of the images on the north and south walls of the central chapel of TT 39 (Photo J. Trello 1208/2018)

⁵ According to Petrie (2013: 50–51), 1 Royal Cubit is equal to 52.4 cm.

the Nile, such as Karnak or Luxor for example, with gradual transitions between open spaces to more intimate and closed spaces, but adapting it to the scenographic scheme planned by Hatshepsut for her Temple of Millions of Years, through a synchrony of stepped stages, which become uncoupled and evident, as one advances and ascends through the ramps.

- e) The last terrace as the most sacred area of the complex. This terrace synthesizes the functions of the hypostyle hall and the sanctuary found in temples of the gods. Here, a spatial

trinomial is once again incorporated: the solar cult area, the cult area of Hatshepsut and her father Thutmose I, and the sanctuary of Amun.

According to Wilkinson (2005: 79), “The Egyptian temple functioned in both spatial and temporal dimensions. Spatially, the temple stood at a crucial point—the focal point or fulcrum between different worlds of spheres— between heaven and earth, human and divine, chaos and order”. This concept is fully realized at *Djeser-djeseru* and, as argued in this paper, represents a special vision adopted by Puimra for TT 39.

THE APPELLATION “TEMPLE OF MILLIONS OF YEARS” IN TT 39

The monument which we usually refer to as the tomb of Puimra is designated in Egyptological literature as TT 39, or Theban “tomb” number 39. However, the texts inscribed in the south chapel refer to it as a Temple of Millions of Years. This

discrepancy in nomenclature may have contributed to the misunderstanding that what Davies himself called a tomb is, in reality, a temple. The conceptual identification between temple and tomb exists and it is very common even today.

The designation Temple of Millions of Years appears inscribed in the texts on both the north and south side walls



Fig. 10. Part of the north wall of the central chapel of TT 39 (Photo J. Trello 04247/2024)

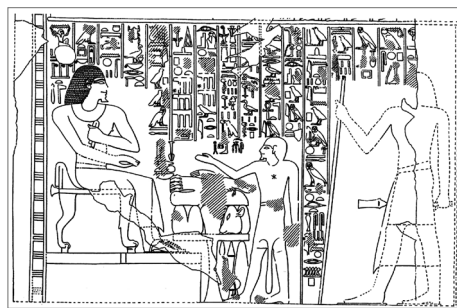


Fig. 11. Lower left quadrant of Plate LIII (Davies 1923)

of the central chapel. In both instances, it is located in the lower register, closest to the western wall [Fig. 9].

On the north wall [Figs 10 and 11], the scene depicts Puimra seated alone (without his wife), receiving offerings presented by a priest. The accompanying text is a prayer for Puimra to remain in his Temple of Millions of Years. The full inscription reads: "/// Puimra, justified, your *ba* appearing in Nut's womb. May you remain, may you remain in your Temple of Millions (of Years) reaching the Great God!" (///*pwj-m-r^c m3^c-hrw hpr b3.k r ht nwt wn.tj m hwt.k n hh (m rnpwt) s3h.t-(j) ntr^c3*).⁶

On the south wall [Figs 12 and 13], the scene depicts Puimra and Senseneb seated, receiving offerings presented by a priest. The accompanying text is a prayer for Puimra to remain in his Temple of Millions (of Years) with his *ba* and his heart: "Welcome, welcome in your Temple of Millions (of Years), your *ba* being with you for the first time and

your heart between those who are at the front. You will receive the acclamations in the Boat of Millions (of Years) being as a god, without your enemies." (*wn.tj wn.tj m hwt.k n hh (m rnpwt) b3.k hr.k n sp tp ///h3t(y).k n jmy-h3t ///šsp.k hknw m dpt hh (m rnpwt) wn.tj m ntr nn hftw.k*). In the image, Puimra is presented with the titles Bearer of the Seal of the King of Lower Egypt and Second Priest of Amun.

It is evident that the name of the structure and the phrases inscribed in these two scenes express a desire for the temple to endure, given its function associated with eternity — or, more precisely, with the longevity of the building itself. Therefore, in this study, we propose that the structure excavated in the rock at ground level is not a tomb but rather a temple, explicitly named in the inscriptions as the Temple of Millions (of Years), and should be regarded as such. However, it is true that the courtyard of this Temple of Millions of Years contains funerary shafts leading to several tombs. This simple shift in terminology allows for a more accurate analysis of the monument from a different perspective.



Fig. 12. Part of the south wall of the central chapel of TT 39 (Photo J. Trello 04258/2024)

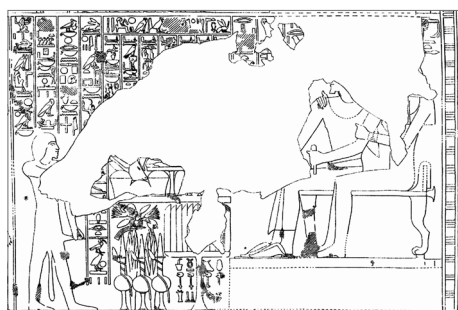


Fig. 13. Lower right quadrant of Plate LIV (Davies 1923)

6 For the meaning of the word *hwt*, see Faulkner 1988: 165 and Erman and Grapow 1935: IIc.

It is not our intention to alter the current nomenclature of TT (Theban Tomb), but rather to acknowledge that what is

traditionally referred to as the tomb of Puimra is, in reality, a complex that contains a “temple” and a tomb.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE “TEMPLE OF MILLIONS OF YEARS” IN TT 39

THE ARCHAEO-LANDSCAPE OF WESTERN THEBES NEAR TT 39

During the Eighteenth Dynasty and until the end of the New Kingdom, royal tombs were built at a certain distance from the Temples of Millions of Years. However, this was not the case for non-royal individuals, who built their tombs in close proximity to their chapels. Puimra must have planned his final resting place with careful consideration of its surrounding context. Regardless of the political and ideological aspects of his time, he likely envisioned TT 39 in relation to both the existing structures and the natural landscape. One of the key insights that emerges from analyzing the technical feat of the queen's temple at Deir el-Bahari is that, by that time, the necessary technical, tectonic, and logistical expertise was already in place to develop architecture that maintained a close connection with the natural landscape.

TT 39 is located beneath the hill of el-Khokha, in the Asasif area, adjacent to Deir el-Bahari. It faces the processional roads that connected the temples of Mentuhotep II, Hatshepsut, and Thutmose III with the temple of the god Amun in Karnak (on the east bank of the Nile). The strategic location, as well as the topographic characteristics and construction features of TT 39, as we will describe later, gives it a predominant role

in the symbolic and urban distribution of this vast funerary archaeo-landscape of the New Kingdom.

We fully agree with Josep Cervelló, who states: “A funerary monument (tomb or ritual enclosure) is above all a “ritual artefact”, that is, an anthropic creation with specific mythical and ritual motivations and purposes. Its ultimate significance cannot be inferred from its pure physical or material dimension or from its economic implications, but only from the funerary symbolism and ritual underlying it, which explain its location and structure and on which all its other formal and social aspects depend” (Cervelló 2017: 213). Therefore, we understand that the hemi-speos Puimra commissioned must be interpreted through its funerary symbolism, as part of the essential ritual apparatus designed to achieve the deceased's intended goal of eternity.

The landscape of the necropolis was undoubtedly governed by the presence of the Theban Mountain, which dominated the western valley, where small hills, such as el-Khokha, stood out among depressions like the Asasif, formed by the natural slope of the terrain. It was also defined by the ritual complex of the *Djeser-djeseru* Temple, which, as we know, comprised not only the Temple of Millions of Years but also a series of complementary architectural and urban elements.

At that time, the active cult landscape was further enriched by the presence of pre-existing temples from the Eighteenth Dynasty, such as the Temple of Amenhotep I and Ahmose Nefertari, *mn-swt*, and the earlier Temple of Mentuhotep II, *3h-swt*, among others. There may have been up to 15 such temples, as recorded in the incense distribution scene in TT 39 (Trello 2021: 164), which could have been operational, under construction, or undergoing modifications during the reigns of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (Iwaszczuk 2017: 40–41, 44–45, 212–213). Additionally, there must have been entrances to the courts of nobles' tombs in the valley leading to Deir el-Bahari, including those belonging to figures closely associated with Puimra, such as TT 67 (Hapuseneb), TT 71 (Senenmut), TT 81 (Ineni), TT 82 (Amenemhat), TT 85 (Amenemheb), and TT 131 (Useramun). Furthermore, a network of utilitarian roads would have facilitated the movement of workers and the transportation of goods using pack animals, shaping the sacred landscape through the interplay of social, economic, and ritual activities associated with funerary temples and tombs.

In this cultural landscape, rich with construction, cultic, and productive activities, the construction of TT 39 had to be planned as an architectural complex that both interacted with and took advantage of the existing infrastructure. The placement of TT 39 was determined by three deliberate decisions, each closely linked to the cultural landscape of the Theban Necropolis. First, it was located adjacent to and at the same level [Fig. 14] as the processional dromos of Mentuhotep II. As noted by Iwaszczuk (2017: 212), this route was still in use, making it logical for Puimra to build near it. Beyond its symbolic significance, this proximity also offered practical advantages, facilitating the transportation of construction materials. Second, the natural hill of el-Khokha was utilized as a foundational element for the priest's hemi-speos. The rocky promontory was integrated into the composition, similar to how the Theban Massif supports and frames the *Djeser-djeseru* Temple.⁷ Finally, the orientation of the Puimra complex was carefully aligned with a specific point on Hatshepsut's dromos, a few meters

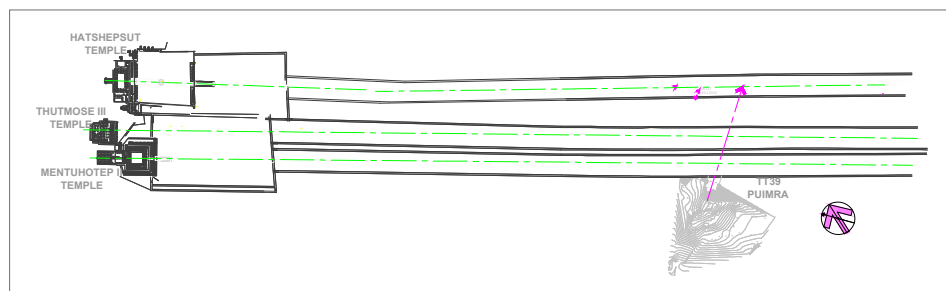


Fig. 14. General urban plan of the Deir el-Bahari temples and the location of TT 39, oriented toward the processional dromos (Mexican Mission survey | Drawing M. Villarruel 2008–2024)

7 Could we venture to say that the pyramidal shape of el-Khokha was also a feature that inspired or influenced the builders of TT 39? Note of the authors.

before the processional bark station (Iwaszczuk 2017: 21). The map generated by the Mexican Mission of Puimra [Fig. 15], drawn and measured in the field, reveals that in the broader context of the Theban Necropolis, this guiding axis would align just a few meters east of the position of the ritual station of the god's bark — possibly indicating a significant stage in the processional route.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

After addressing the characteristics of its location, it is essential to describe the spatial distribution and organization of TT 39. As previously mentioned, TT 39 is a hemi-speos composed of three clearly defined sectors: the open courtyard, the access porch façade, and the area exca-

vated beneath the hill. The first architectural space of the Puimra temple is the courtyard. This area, as noted by Norman de Garis Davies in his publication on TT 39, was generally given little attention by Egyptologists excavating the Theban necropolis.⁸

It is important to note that since Davies' publication, an "assumed north" orientation has been used to facilitate the spatial interpretation of TT 39, and this convention is followed here for clarity.

The hypothetical plan of TT 39 [Fig. 16] illustrates the general layout, including the possible eastern boundary of the courtyard, which may have featured an entrance causeway or ramp, as well as the location of the funerary chamber beneath and behind the inner chapels.

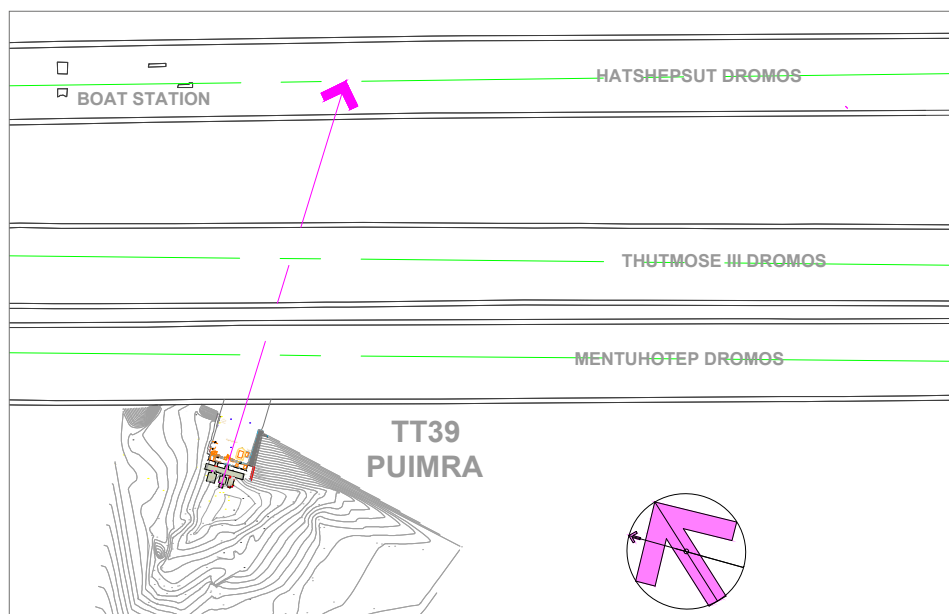


Fig. 15. The location and direction of the main axis of TT 39 were established in front of Mentuhotep II's causeway and aligned to a specific spot on Hatshepsut's temple causeway, near the bark station (Mexican Mission survey | Drawing M. Villarruel 2009–2024)

Based on a reticular modulation with separations of $1\frac{1}{2}$ Royal Cubits, following the model of the *Djeser-djeseru* Temple, a plan was designed as follows [Fig. 17]: the central axis forms a tripartite distribution, with balanced elements on both sides. Access was through a slightly inclined courtyard, a ritual esplanade with an almost square plan measuring 20×20 modules, open to the east, where the trajectory of Mentuhotep II's dromos crossed. To the north and south, it was bordered by ascending retaining walls made of limestone ashlar, which protected the open space from debris sliding down the hill. Remnants of a strip of original floor suggest the presence of a ramp along the central axis. Additionally, there are traces of a possible enclosure wall for the courtyard, but since the western end has not been excavated, the existence of such a wall cannot be confirmed with certainty [Fig. 18]. The

courtyard of TT 39 has been analyzed and compared with contemporary examples by José Manuel Galán (2009: 250–260), highlighting the importance of open spaces in the funerary process.

On the western side of the courtyard, access led to the tetrastyle portico built of sandstone, measuring 20×3 modules. Each of its columns consisted of 16-sided drums and a capital (each column had a diameter of 1 Royal Cubit, as can be measured at their bases). These columns supported a lintel roof, possibly covered with stone slabs. Through this porch, visitors entered the tomb. The inclined wall containing the entrance was carved directly into the bedrock. From here, a central doorway led to an interior distribution hall running parallel to the porch, also excavated into the el-Khokha hill. This lobby, measuring 20×3 modules with an interior height of 4 modules, featured an iconographic program. A later modifi-

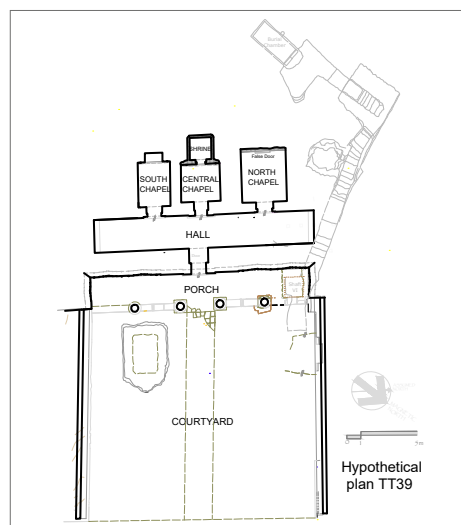


Fig. 16. Hypothetical plan of TT 39, according to the Mexican Mission survey and restoration process (Drawing M. Villarruel 2024)

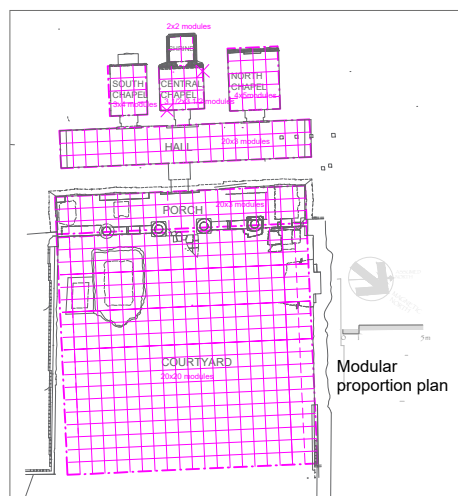


Fig. 17. Proportional grid ($1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ Royal Cubit squares) used as proportioning rule, similar to that of *Djeser-Djeseru*, according to Iwaszczuk (2017: 12) (Drawing M. Villarruel 2024)

cation introduced an additional window, which visibly disrupts the mural of fishing and hunting in the marshes, cutting through the scene.

As in the tripartite model of the *Djeser-djeseru* Temple, the corridor provides access to three chapels, all carved directly into the rock of the el-Khokha hill. The central chapel ($3\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ modules) houses the sanctuary, where the image of Osiris would be located at the back. The south chapel (3×4 modules) contains a niche with the seated image of Puimra and his wife, Senseneb. The north chapel (4×5 modules) features a false door stela, which was placed over a previous depiction of the return journey from Abydos, thereby obscuring it.

Notably, the ceilings of the three chapels have distinct shapes, each corresponding to a specific architectural or symbolic function. The south chapel's ceiling was carved in the form of a sanctuary roof, physically materializing the ideogram or determinative *k3(r)j* ("chapel", "sanctuary") (O18, Gardiner 1988: 494). The central chapel has a straight, horizontal roof, matching the determinative in *sh-ntr* (*zH-nTr*) ("the divine booth") (O21, Gardiner 1988: 495). Meanwhile, the north chapel features a semicircular vaulted ceiling, corresponding to the determinative for *jtrt* ("series of sanctuaries") and *hm* ("sanctuary") (O20, Gardiner 1988: 494–495).



Fig. 18. Side walls of the TT 39 courtyard in the process of excavation (Photo J. Trello 1309/2024)

The façade also follows a symmetrical composition, balancing the axis and its two components on both sides. The porch consists of five large openings with four columns supporting a flat lintel roof. According to Davies (1922: 4–7; 1923: 51–56), the interior façade of the porch, which includes the entrance door, was flanked by two stelae inscribed with biographical texts about Puimra. Additionally, four false doors in relief were carved on either side of the entrance. The plinth of the interior façade of the portico also features a series of repeated false doors. In the northern section of the portico, an en-

trance to a vertical shaft leads to a series of underground corridors connecting to Puimra's funerary chamber. This chamber is situated below and behind the north chapel.

It is important to note that the hypothetical reconstruction of the façade, as presented in Davies (1923: Pl. LXXV), suggests the possible presence of four parapets or half-height walls between the columns, separating the portico from the courtyard. Although there is some evidence for these elements, we believe that, due to their position, differing construction characteristics, and resemblance to

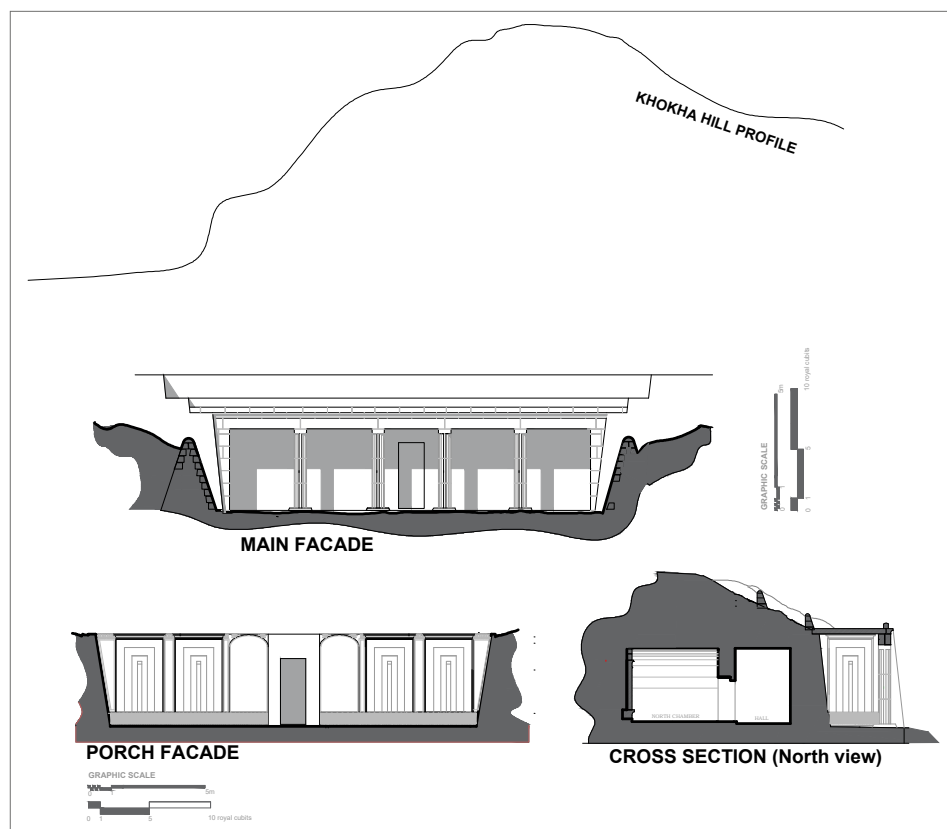


Fig. 19. Hypothetical reconstruction of the main façade of TT 39 and the inner façade of the porch, based on the Mexican Mission of Puimra survey (Drawing M. Villarruel 2019–2024)

Ptolemaic portico walls, they were likely later additions rather than part of Puimra's original tomb design. However, the slabs placed as a curbstone along the edge of the porch appear to overlap the circular bases of the columns, which may serve as archaeological evidence indicating that they were installed at a later stage. In this sense, the final *apparentia* of Puimra's portico may have resembled the design of the portico galleries of the Chapel of Anubis or the north and south wings of the second terrace of Hatshepsut's temple, for example [see below, Fig. 28]. [Fig. 19] illustrates the relationship and scale between the building and the el-Khokha hill.

The practice of adopting ancient royal texts is prominent in *Djeser-djeseru*, and this tradition was transferred to the deco-

ration of TT 39. For example, Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts were copied in TT 39 from Hatshepsut's cult chapel at Deir el-Bahari (PT spells 204–205, 207, 209–212; and CT spell 607; Diego Espinel 2014: 320).

The influence of ancient models is evident in the architectural themes of both royal and private structures. Just as the architecture of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahari emulated that of the neighboring Middle Kingdom temple, so did the courtiers adopt similar stylistic elements. The layout of Puimra's excavated temple may also have been inspired by Middle Kingdom private tomb models from Asyut (Kahl 1999: 321; Diego Espinel 2014: 320), such as tomb 1 of Asyut, which can be compared to TT 39 [see Figs 20 and 21].

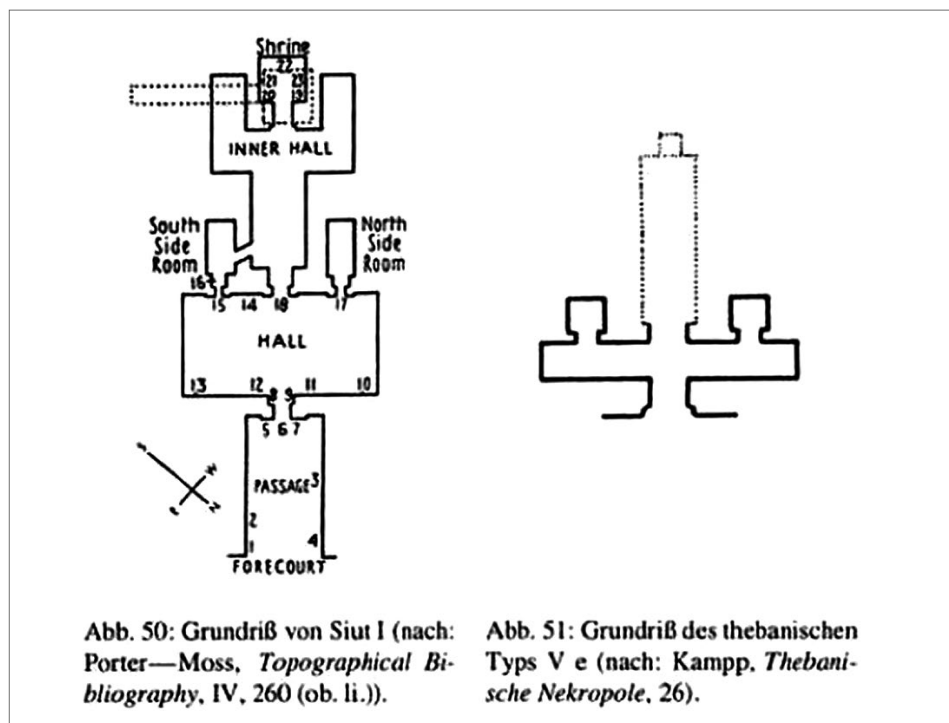


Fig. 20. Comparative plans of tomb 1 at Asyut and a type V Theban tomb (Kahl 1999: 271)

tion can be observed between this guiding line and a specific point on the processional dromos leading to Deir el-Bahari, aligning with the crest of the el-Khokha hill [Fig. 23]. It is likely that this focal point corresponded to a station for the bark of the god Amun during the Beautiful Feast of the Valley. Consequently, the builder would have adjusted the tomb's axis with this direction.

The next logical stage of construction involved delineating the courtyard. The quadrangular space to be used was outlined on the inclined slope of the hill, positioned orthogonally to the guiding axis. With this reference in place, excavation work began in the natural rock to create a horizontal platform for the courtyard.

Table 1. Quantification of rock volumes originally excavated for TT 39 according to M. Villarruel's own calculations

Excavated space	m ³
Courtyard and porch	738.63
Façade	11.49
Corridor	116.0
South chapel	20.72
Central chapel and sanctuary	31.98
North chapel	29.67
Total	948.49

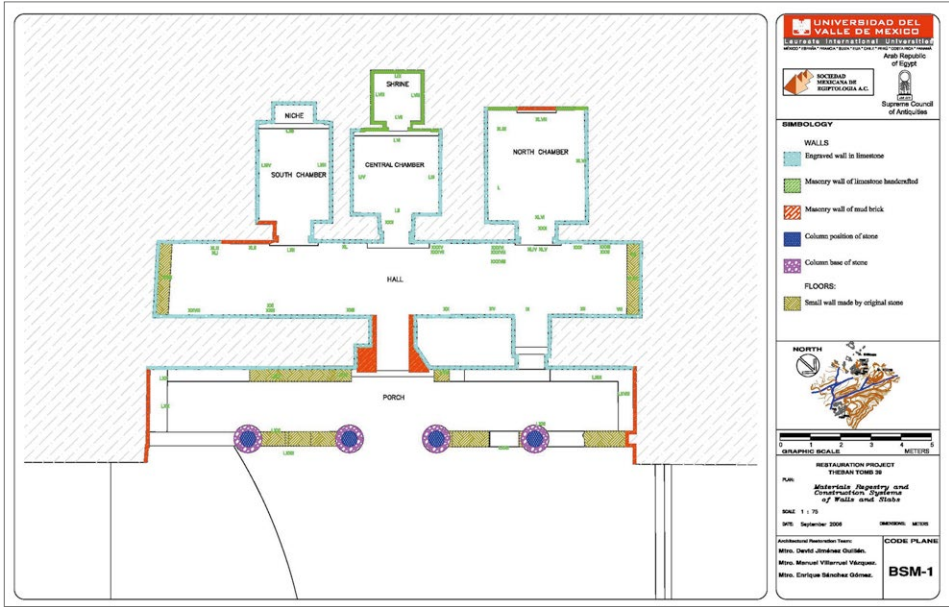


Fig. 22. Hemi-speos plan with registration of compositional materials (Trello and Villarruel 2020: 170)

Excavation

An adequate planning process had to be developed to calculate the excavation volumes, which totaled 948.49 m³, taking into account the dimensions of the architectural spaces as well as the hardness and consistency of the bedrock [Table 1]. According to the "Geological appraisal of the Theban cliff overhanging the Hatshepsut temple at Deir el-Bahari", the geological territory is divided into three major strata: Tarawan Chalk of Palaeocene age, Esna Shale of late Palaeocene–early Eocene age, and the overhanging Theban Limestone of early Eocene age (Chudzik et al. 2021: 281). Specifically, the area of el-Khokha hill, where TT 39 is located, lies in an intermediate geomorphological zone between the Tarawan limestone formation and the zone of rotated blocks⁹ and "tilted blocks", according to Bardaji's geological schematic map of the Theban Mountains (Bardaji et al.

2017: 237). The rock in this area is a whitish, soft, and chalky limestone (Chudzik et al. 2021: 281), which facilitates cutting.

The rock extraction processes must have been similar to those used in cutting and leveling the platforms at Deir el-Bahari. During the work of the Mexican Mission in 2012, two wooden mallets with signs of wear were discovered, likely used during the chiseling and grinding of the stone. The quadrangular-shaped courtyard, as noted, must have been the initial point of excavation (Villarruel 2023). It would have one open face facing the dromos, two faces parallel to the governing axis with an increasing slope according to the hill's incline, and a fourth smooth rectangular face perpendicular to the governing axis. This latter face would be the façade receiving the entrance opening to TT 39's interior spaces. This façade, along with the two short sections of the south and north façades of the portico,

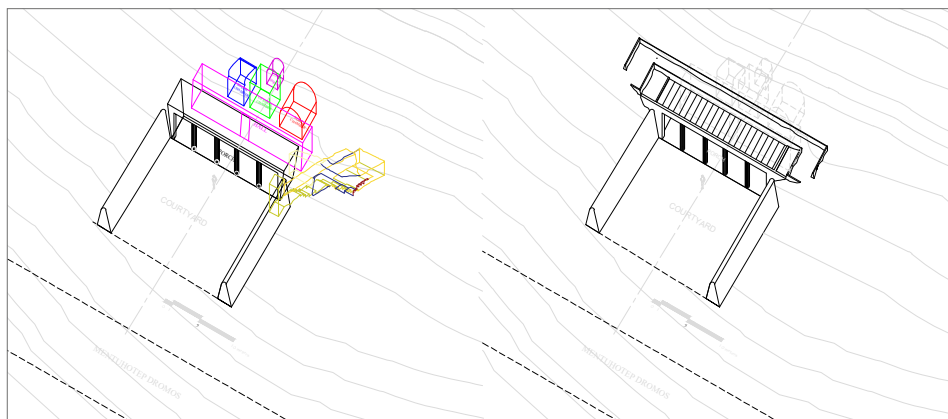


Fig. 23. Comprehensive axonometric view of TT 39. Left: different spaces constituting the complex; right: exterior view of TT 39 and its connection to the dromos (Graphic file of the Puimra TT 39 Project | drawing M. Villarruel; Trello and Villarruel 2020: 152)

- 9 It refers to "...a mass of rock that has broken away from the Theban Plateau along a detachment plane and now rests at some distance from it" (Dupuis et al. 2011). These faults occur in the upper strata, so excavations carried out at these depths may encounter natural faults.

were excavated, resulting in an inclined wall with a wider base than the crown, likely for structural stability. The design created a “U” box to contain the forces of the terrain [Fig. 24].

Defining the characteristics and dimensions of the entrance was crucial, as it not only involved creating a hole in the façade wall with the required proportions

but also played a key role in determining the proportions of the entire façade. This opening would define the floor level of the complex, the height of the door lintel, and, from these references, the height of the first room. This allowed for a precise calculation of the thickness of the rocky roof at that point, based on the exterior slope of the hill. In the case of the TT 39 corridor cover, the thickness at the most unfavorable point exceeds two Royal Cubits, approximately 104 cm.

To understand the hypothesis of the excavation work with control trenches [Fig. 25], we refer to the text presented by Trello and Villarruel (2020: 153–155), based on the research of Martínez Hermoso (in Jiménez Serrano et al. 2018: 119–121). The fitting out of the interior spaces of TT 39 was carried out as a meticulous sculptural excavation process, where voids were created by extracting material. This process was guided by trenches, starting with a trench along the axis of the access door, which reached the required depth. Perpendicular trenches were then developed to control the material extraction, ensuring the desired lengths or widths of the inner spaces.

They allowed for the evaluation of the quality of the natural rock in advance to avoid the risks of collapse or the use of materials that were difficult to work with, while also determining the amount of time, workers, and tools necessary for the total extraction of the rock volume.

The clearing of each space for the excavated architecture, or subtractive architecture (Trello and Villarruel 2020: 142), followed empirical rules. The Egyptians, highly skilled in recognizing the

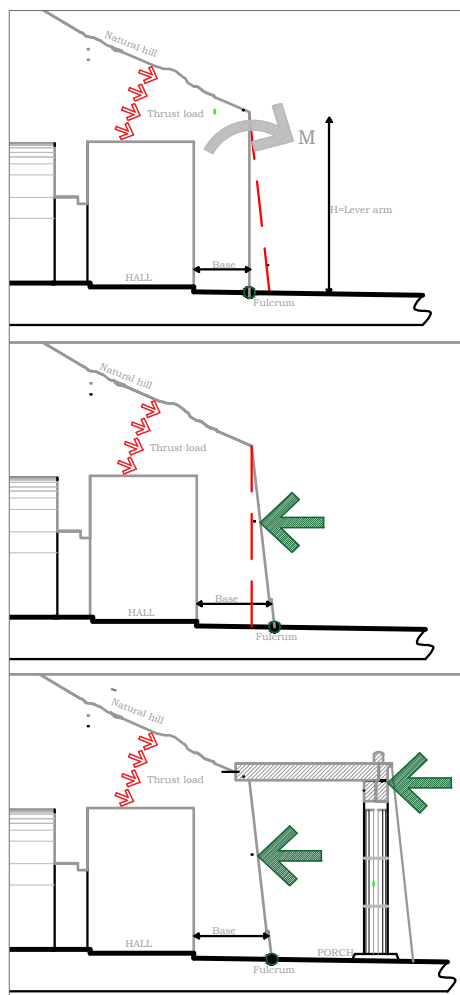


Fig. 24. Analysis of the combined containment mechanism of the inclined wall with the supportive porch (Drawing M. Villarruel 2024)

different types of rock in the area and understanding their advantages and limitations, were able to create clearings that did not compromise the stability of the chambers. The spans of the rooms range from 3 modules (2.39 m) to 4 modules (3.25 m). It is reasonable to assume that, with their knowledge of excavating

underground spaces and the combined working method of the façade wall/lintel portico, the corridor space would have been structurally solid. However, it is possible that, at some point in the history of TT 39, when the porch collapsed—among other factors—the ceiling of the corridor also gave way.

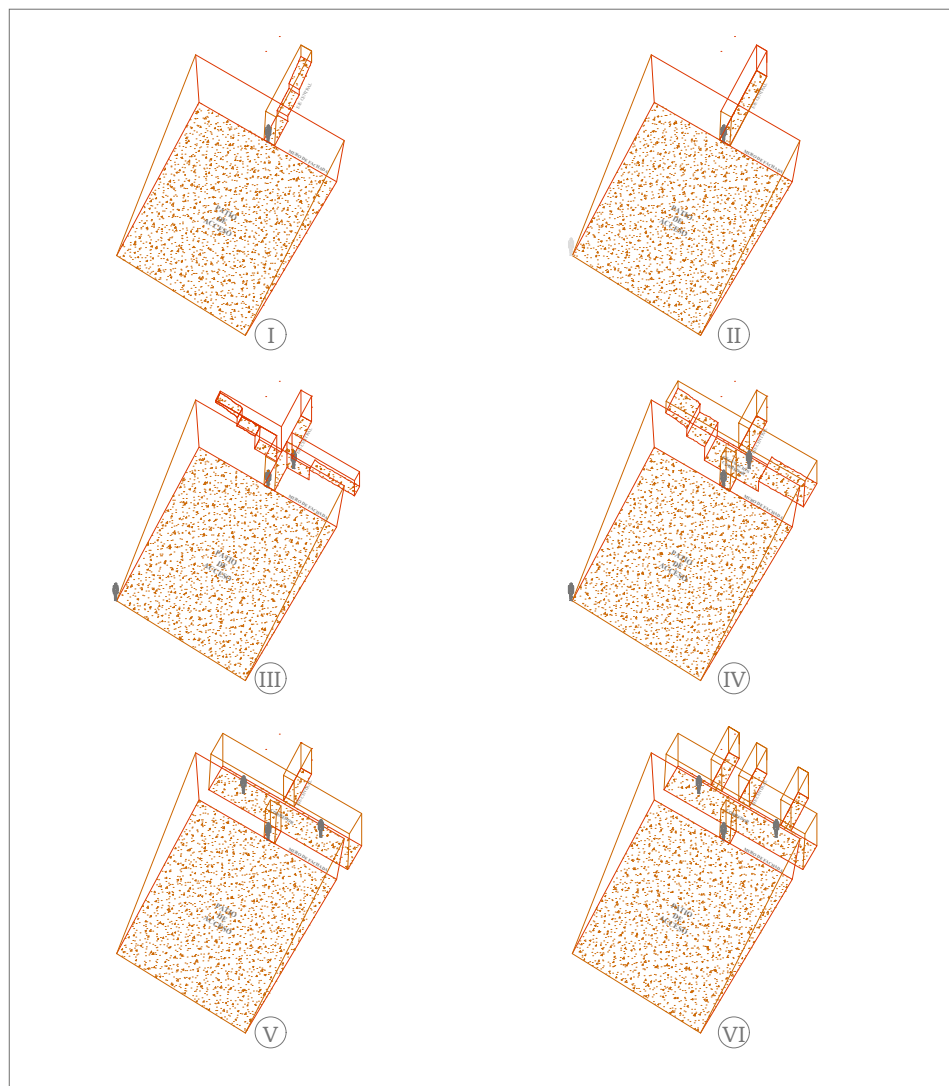


Fig. 25. Hypothetical excavation process diagram with control trenches (Trello and Villarruel 2020: 155; drawing M. Villarruel 2020)

Building process

Although most of the architectural elements of TT 39, such as roofs and walls, were excavated directly into the natural rock, the construction of stonework elements was necessary for different areas of the tomb, as well as for the decoration of surfaces. Carved stone elements were designed, manufactured, and installed in specific locations within TT 39 [Fig. 26]: the sandstone lintel portico [Fig. 27], the façade and four walls of the inner sanctuary made of limestone blocks, the limestone lintels of the doors in the south, central, and north chapels, the limestone ashlar of the west wall in the north chapel, and the false door of Puimra, which was made of red granite.

The decision to build a superimposed porch with sandstone is architecturally evident. However, the choice to carve the sanctuary, door lintels, and ashlar of the north chapel raises some questions. During the excavation work carried out by the Mexican Mission since 2005, we verified that the backing of the wall where the false door and the ashlar wall were placed consisted of conglomerate limestone material with gravel inclusions. This composition likely made carving difficult, leading to the decision to construct the wall using ashlar. It is plausible that Puimra chose to prefabricate the architectural elements in areas where the natural rock of el-Khokha was of lower quality or where additional structural reinforcement, such as a lintel, was necessary.

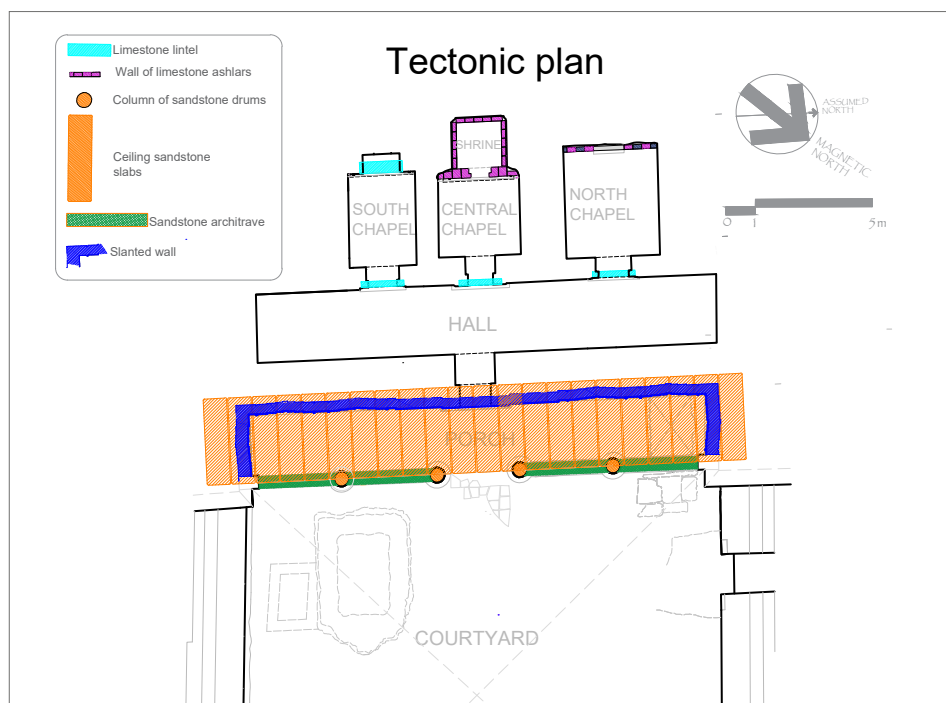


Fig. 26. Tectonic plan showing the different pre-carved stone structural elements, used inside the inner spaces of TT 39 (Drawing M. Villarruel 2024)

As stated, the columned porch was a sandstone lintel structure similar to the porticos of *Djeser-djeseru* [Figs 27 and 28]. We know that the base of the columns was circular, while the column shafts had a 16-sided form, with a diameter measuring 1 Royal Cubit (from outer edge to outer edge). The column capitals were square, and the upper sandstone drum of one of the columns, which has an approximate height of 1.04 m (2 Royal Cubits), was tongue-and-groove jointed to interlock with other drums. Given this modular system, if each column consisted of three such drums, its total height would be similar to that of the upper cornice of

the false doors on the interior façade of the portico, allowing us to estimate the overall height of the portico.

The limestone lintels of the doorways to the south and north chapels were found in fragments by the Mexican Mission. Assembly tests were carried out to reconstruct the south lintel, but the reconstruction did not ensure structural stability. As a result, a hidden metal reinforcement was used to secure its reinsertion as part of the door enclosure.

For the innermost sanctuary, the limestone pieces were designed by Puimra's team to form an integrated "box". The ashlar blocks structured both the façade

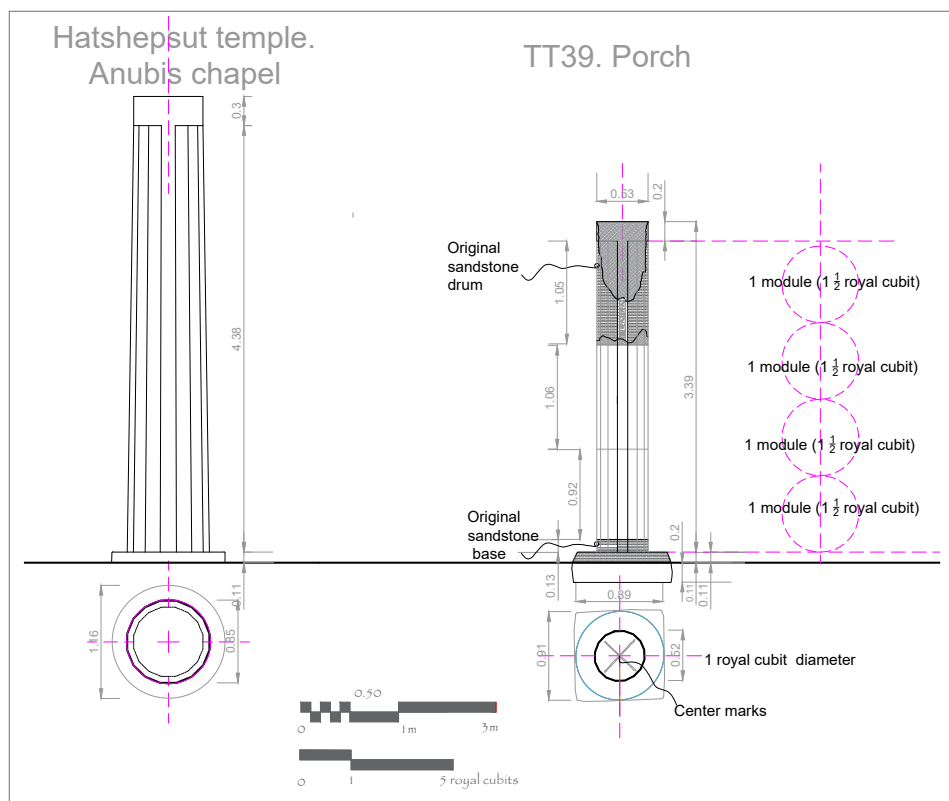


Fig. 27. Graphical comparison of the TT 39 porch column with the Anubis chapel column at Deir el-Bahari (Drawing M. Villarruel 2023)

of the sanctuary and its four interior faces. The sanctuary's cover was a semi-circular vault made with carved, non-voussoired pieces; unfortunately, only a few fragments of it remain.

The west wall of the north chamber, or the back wall, was undoubtedly the area that received the most attention from the construction team. This wall was built with limestone blocks; some pieces were found *in situ* by Davies, while others were found scattered inside TT 39 by the Mexican Mission. A grammatical reconstruction of the ashlar was possible, but the lost pieces had to be replaced with similar limestone blocks to ensure interlocking and stability.

Thanks to small lines found on the back of the wall indicating the height of each row of ashlar, the Mexican Mission was able to manufacture the missing ashlar to those exact dimensions.

Decoration

The columned porch on the outside of TT 39, as well as all the inner surfaces, were decorated with high-quality bas-reliefs and high-reliefs that exhibited great finesse and detail. The surfaces took advantage of the natural limestone's fine texture, which allowed for the precise display of graphic representations and hieroglyphic inscriptions. In some areas, the smooth surface

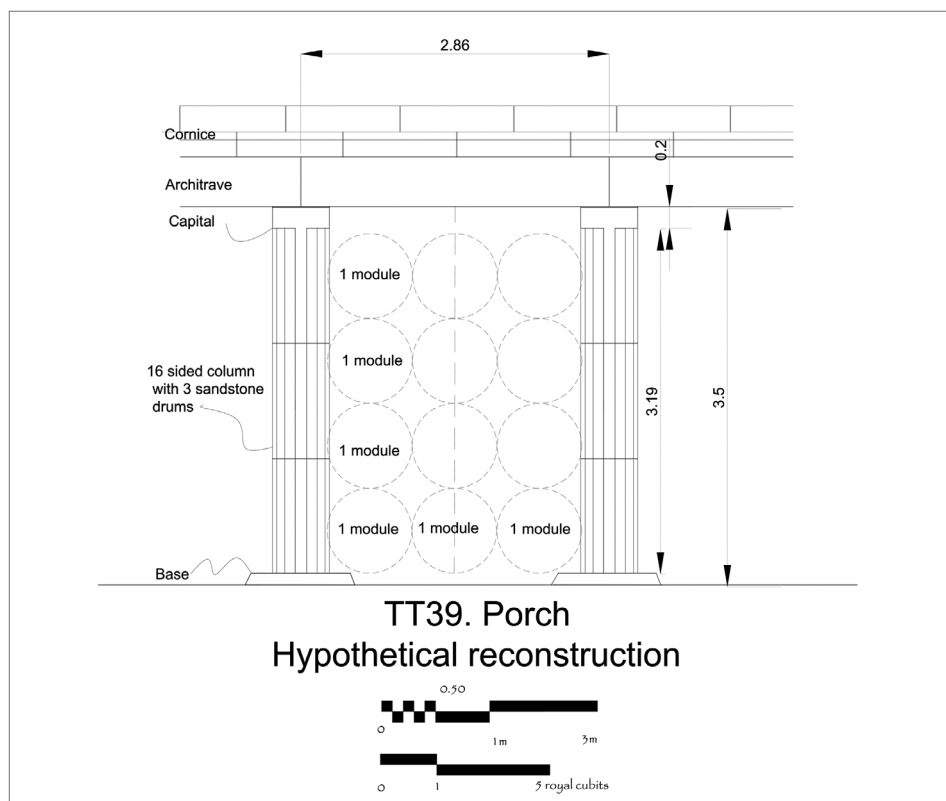


Fig. 28. Possible porch design of TT 39. Based on the Mexican Mission of Puimra survey, evidence of the porch's structural dimensions was found (Drawing M. Villarruel 2024)

was affected by natural geological fractures in el-Khokha hill. These cracks were carefully sealed with lime and gypsum mortar to ensure the continuity of the relief representations. Although the overall design appears continuous and integrated, small imperfections are visible in certain areas, which were likely repaired with mortar to correct them.

The iconographic program is thoroughly described in Davies 1922 and 1923, but we highlight the following key features: the porch with two biographical stelae in bas-relief and four false doors on the natural limestone; the plinth of repetitive false doors on both sides of the main entrance to TT 39 [Fig. 29]; and the portico, made of sandstone, which also likely received decoration and references to the individual. Unfortunately, only one column drum with an inscription remains. The corridor, entirely carved into the natural rock walls, features scenes

depicting the priest's daily and official life. These include a vision of hunting and fishing in the marshes, images of Puimra's parents, scenes of workshops producing fine ceramics, depictions of tax collection, and portrayals of royal works he contributed to, such as the two Karnak obelisks and three sanctuary chapels. There are also representations of the reception of distinguished individuals, identifiable by their attire, who appear to come from other nations. The south chapel is dedicated to Puimra himself, and in the niche, he is doubly represented, seated with his wife to receive offerings, their images preserved in the murals of the space. Inside the south chapel, a looting tunnel was discovered containing fragments from the murals, partially hidden and ready for illegal sale. The best-preserved image of Puimra in the entire tomb was found here, roughly chiseled from the wall for extraction and theft. This piece was restored and returned to its original location. In this area, the Mexican Mission of Puimra also reinstated a decorated but fractured limestone lintel, framing a tender scene of the priest with his wife. The central chapel is entirely dedicated to religious worship, but unlike many tombs, TT 39 is devoted to Osiris and Imentet, rather than Amun. Finally, the north chapel features characteristic funerary ritual themes, including the journey to and from Abydos. These themes were altered and almost entirely erased to accommodate the false door of red granite donated by the pharaoh. This stela, with dimensions similar to that of Thutmose I's in his funerary chapel at Deir el-Bahari, is made from a single piece of red granite and adorned with fine inscriptions.

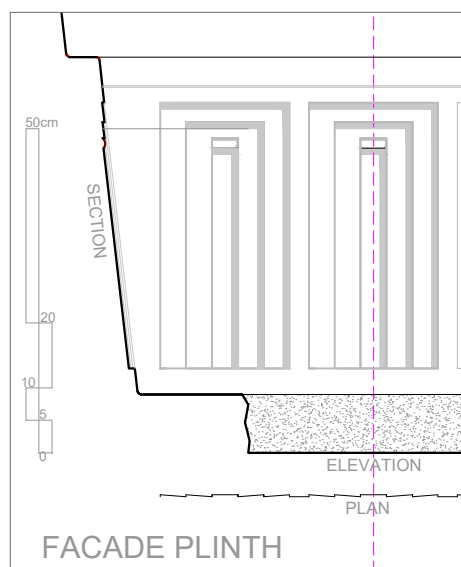


Fig. 29. Façade detail (Drawing M. Villarruel 2024)

A fact worth highlighting in the parietal decoration of TT 39 is that many areas preserve their splendid original coloring, while others —affected by internal water runoff or damage from incineration— retain only the magnificent bare reliefs, which still display their fine craftsmanship.

Since 2005, the Mexican Mission of Puimra has worked to integrate archaeological processes aimed at recovering fragments from the rubble, facilitating the restoration of decorative or epigraphic pieces with an architectural and structural foundation, as in the case of the lintels of the south chapel.

CONTINUOUS MODIFICATIONS IN TT 39

TT 39 underwent multiple modifications, reuses, and alterations that significantly affected its original characteristics, proportions, and values. Many of these changes resulted from later occupations of the space for burials [Fig. 30].

However, modifications to TT 39 may have begun before Puimra completed the tomb. Evidence of this can be seen in the north chapel. Research on the representation of the journey to

Abydos in the north chapel of Puimra suggests that alterations occurred during the construction process. According to Trello and Arrache (2018), the depiction of the return journey from Abydos, located on the east wall of the chapel, may have been altered during the course of the work to accommodate Puimra's false door. The decoration of the ashlar on this wall appears to have been modified to fit the dimensions of



Fig. 30. Three-dimensional model of the courtyard and façade of TT 39 after excavation, showing later shafts and modifications in the courtyard (Trello and Villarruel 2020: 179 | processing J. Delgado, A. Mora, and M. González /SYSTOP-INAH/2018)

a larger stela, possibly a royal gift from Thutmose III, as suggested in the study. This adjustment would have required both artistic modifications to integrate the stela into the temple's iconographic program and technical considerations for its structural incorporation.

The false door, today located in the Cairo Museum, is a granite stela that warrants special attention. This finely carved piece of red granite, probably from Aswan, must have undergone a complex transport process from the quarries. The stela measures 1.18 m × 2.12 m, with a variable thickness of approximately 0.30 cm. Based on the estimated volumetric weight established by Teresa Dziedzic for the stelae of Queen Hatshepsut and Thutmose I in the queen's Temple of Millions of Years (Dziedzic 2018: 130), the Puimra stela likely weighs around 2.0 tons. This estimate closely matches the dimensions and weight that Dziedzic (2018: 132) also assigns to the false door of Thutmose I, which was placed in *Djeser-djeseru*. Unlike the analysis presented by Dziedzic on various hypotheses regarding the transfer of the false door into the Hatshepsut Cult Chapel, TT 39's hemi-speos structure would not have allowed for Puimra's false door to be placed inside before the ceilings were constructed. Despite the great weight involved in handling, Dziedzic estimates that a stela of these dimensions could be moved by approximately 10 or 12 workers. However, in the case of TT 39, the complexity likely lay in maneuvering the stela within the confined dimensions of the corridor and north chapel—requiring it to be rotated, turned, or tilted—before being

erected into its final vertical position. Further study is needed to determine the exact number of workers, mechanisms, and tools used for its assembly in the north chapel [Fig. 31].

The rest of the alterations are visible in the architectural plan of the tomb's current state; however, determining the exact stages or moments when they were made would be speculative. We know from Davies' research that there are 10 additional shafts beyond the one used for Puimra (Davies 1923: Pl. LXXIII), some accessible from the courtyard or porch and others from inside one of the chapels. His findings also reveal the existence of two significant architectural modifications: the construction of a small room in the portico area and the division of the inner corridor with a wall, likely to create two separate tombs—or dwellings. This subdivision may have necessitated the opening of a new access point, possibly a window or door, to reach the second section. The impact would have been considerable, as it likely involved altering the north section of the façade, potentially leading to the removal of the two false doors and the bas-relief stela.

Perhaps the most serious damage in recent times has been due to the looting of TT 39. While plundering has occurred since ancient times, modern looting tunnels are evident in the south chapel. Additionally, some walls, such as those in the corridor, show clear signs of inscriptions or hieroglyphs being removed through chiseling or even electric sawing. Since 2005, the Mexican Mission has worked to close these looting trenches.

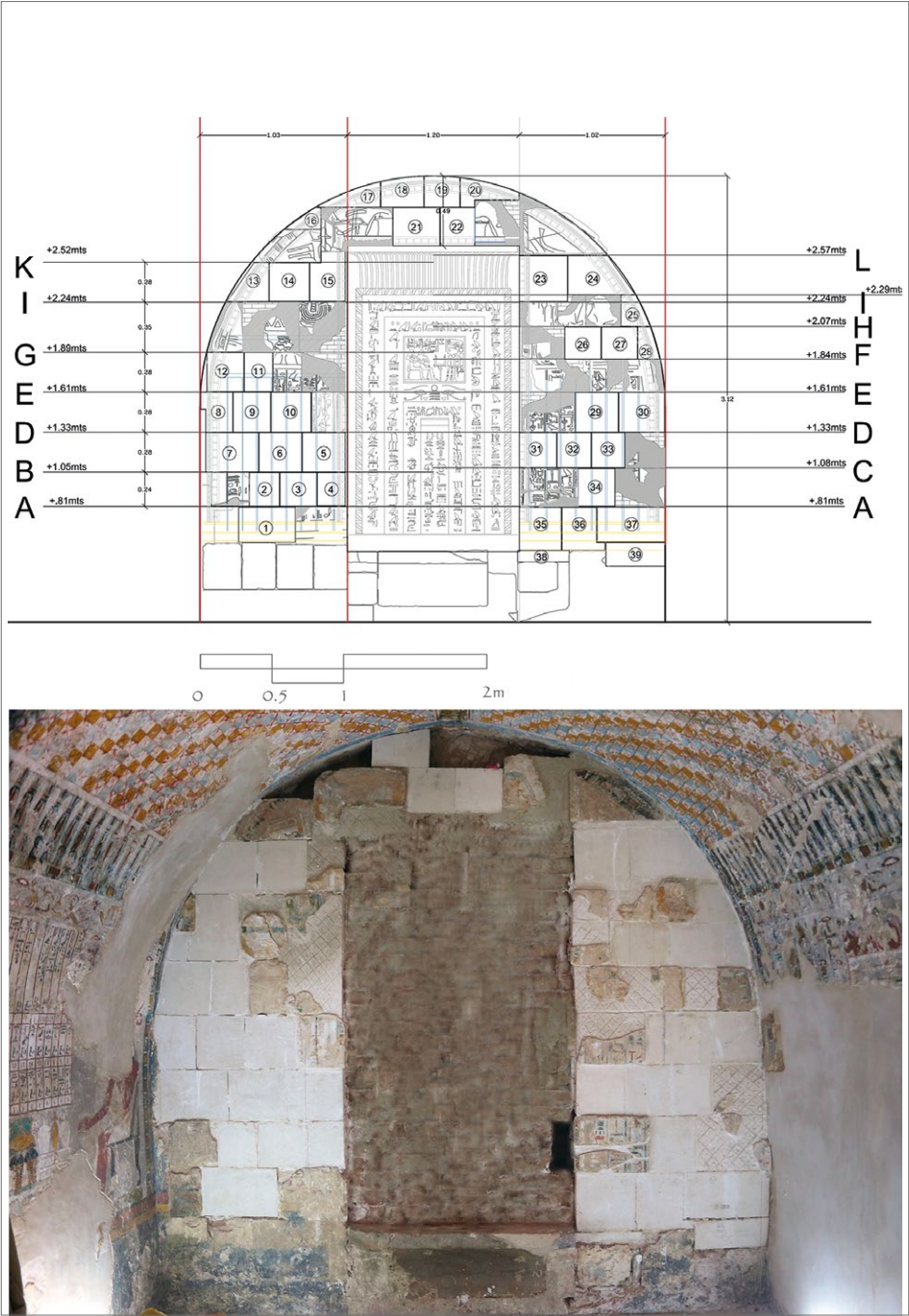


Fig. 31. Restoration process of the north chapel, based on modifications made to incorporate the false door stela (Trello and Villarruel 2020: 178 | reconstruction G. Arrache, M. Villarruel, J. Trello, R. Malagón, L. Andablo, I. Barrera, and Z. Ontiveros 2013–2018)

CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological site designated TT 39 comprises a magnificent “Temple of Millions of Years” and several tombs excavated underground. The inscriptions on its walls indicate that Puimra, the Second Priest of Amun, envisioned it as more than just a tomb — it was conceived as a true place of worship.

Drawing from his experience in royal construction projects, his close ties to the royal court, and the foreign influences of his time, Puimra developed a unique architectural concept for his temple. His design synthesized Hatshepsut’s vision of a space

dedicated to eternal worship, incorporating an architectural program similar to the *Djeser-djeseru* Temple. TT 39 exhibits compositional, sculptural, structural, and ritual elements that emulate, on a smaller scale, the magnificent temple of the queen. Furthermore, Puimra’s “Temple of Millions of Years” aligns with the landscape vision of the Eighteenth Dynasty, integrating its architectural features into the processional routes of the temples at Deir el-Bahari while recognizing the surrounding landscape as a cultural element of great aesthetic and symbolic significance.

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