

Post-New Kingdom topography and chronology of the Hatshepsut Temple at Deir el-Bahari in light of new archaeological evidence



Abstract: Around 1000 BCE, an earthquake brought down many temples in Western Thebes, thus putting an end to the cult centre at Deir el-Bahari which had been a key site for the celebration of the Beautiful Feast of the Valley all through the New Kingdom. Within a few dozen years the deserted chapels and rooms of the Hatshepsut temple were turned into a burial ground. The necropolis established on the ruins of one of the most famous temples of Egypt was first excavated in the 19th century; however, current work by the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw expedition in the Hathor cult complex of the temple of the female pharaoh has resulted in the discovery of a group of shaft tombs and a great number of burial remains. These new finds have instigated a revisiting of both the topography and the chronology of this reuse of the older monument, as well as a contextualization of the work of the early explorers which has gradually been forgotten partly through lack of proper documentation.

Keywords: Deir el-Bahari, Temple of Hatshepsut, Third Intermediate Period, rock-cut tomb, Roman era, reuse

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INTRODUCTION

When at the end of the 19th century, Édouard Naville, working on behalf of the Egypt Exploration Fund, cleared mounds of rock-rubble from the site of the Temple of Hatshepsut, uncovering what had been hidden for more than a thousand years, some groups of coffins with mummies and grave goods from Deir el-Bahari had already been dispersed among various collections in Egypt and Europe. The precise location of individual burials is extremely difficult to establish because at the time the plan of the temple was not fully recognized (Moret 1912–1913; Gauthier 1913; Sheikholeslami 2003; 2018). Nonetheless, Naville very deliberately avoided previously explored sites, not expecting to find anything of interest there. In later years, the expedition from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, headed by Herbert E. Winlock, followed Naville's example, choosing to work in places untouched earlier by the spade (Winlock 1942).

The archaeological context of the early discoveries was to be verified in the early 1960s, with the coming of an expedition from the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw. Shortly, researchers also uncovered the ruins of a temple of Thutmose III (Dąbrowski 1968: Pls IV–VIII; Lipińska 1968: 142–143, Pls II–III; Dzierżykray-Rogalski 1972: 94–96, Pl. 2). Clearing the walls of chambers on the third terrace 20 years later, Zygmunt Wysocki rediscovered the other shaft tombs from the Third Intermediate Period (Stefanowicz 1982). Archaeological research on the third terrace of the temple of Hatshepsut

intensified in the 1990s and early 2000s with ground checking and stabilizing activities preparing for an extended restoration (Pawlicki 1999: 122; 2000: 165; Szafrński 2001: 196–199, Fig. 8; Karkowski 2003: 31–32, Pl. I: “a”; Barwik 2011). Finds included a great number of fragmented objects from the ancient burials, left behind by the early explorers seeking “art” for European collections. This confirmed the original context of material known for nearly 150 years, but more importantly provided a chronological framework for the necropolis (see, for instance, Barwik 2003; Payraudeau 2018; Sheikholeslami 2018).

Currently, archaeological excavations preceding reconstruction processes have moved to the lower levels of the temple, and consist of small probes wherever reconstruction work is planned and a large-scale project in the southern part of the temple [Fig. 1]. The latter is tasked with a thorough and comprehensive investigation of the archaeological and architectural context of the Hathor cult complex. One of the most important results of this work so far—including the latest excavations during the 2021–2022 season presented in this paper—is the rediscovery of long-forgotten tombs, bringing new data on the post-New Kingdom history of Hatshepsut's temple. And although this work is still in progress, it is already possible to provide a preliminary reconstruction of the chronological sequence and topographical arrangement of the post-New Kingdom necropolis located on the lower terraces of the temple complex.

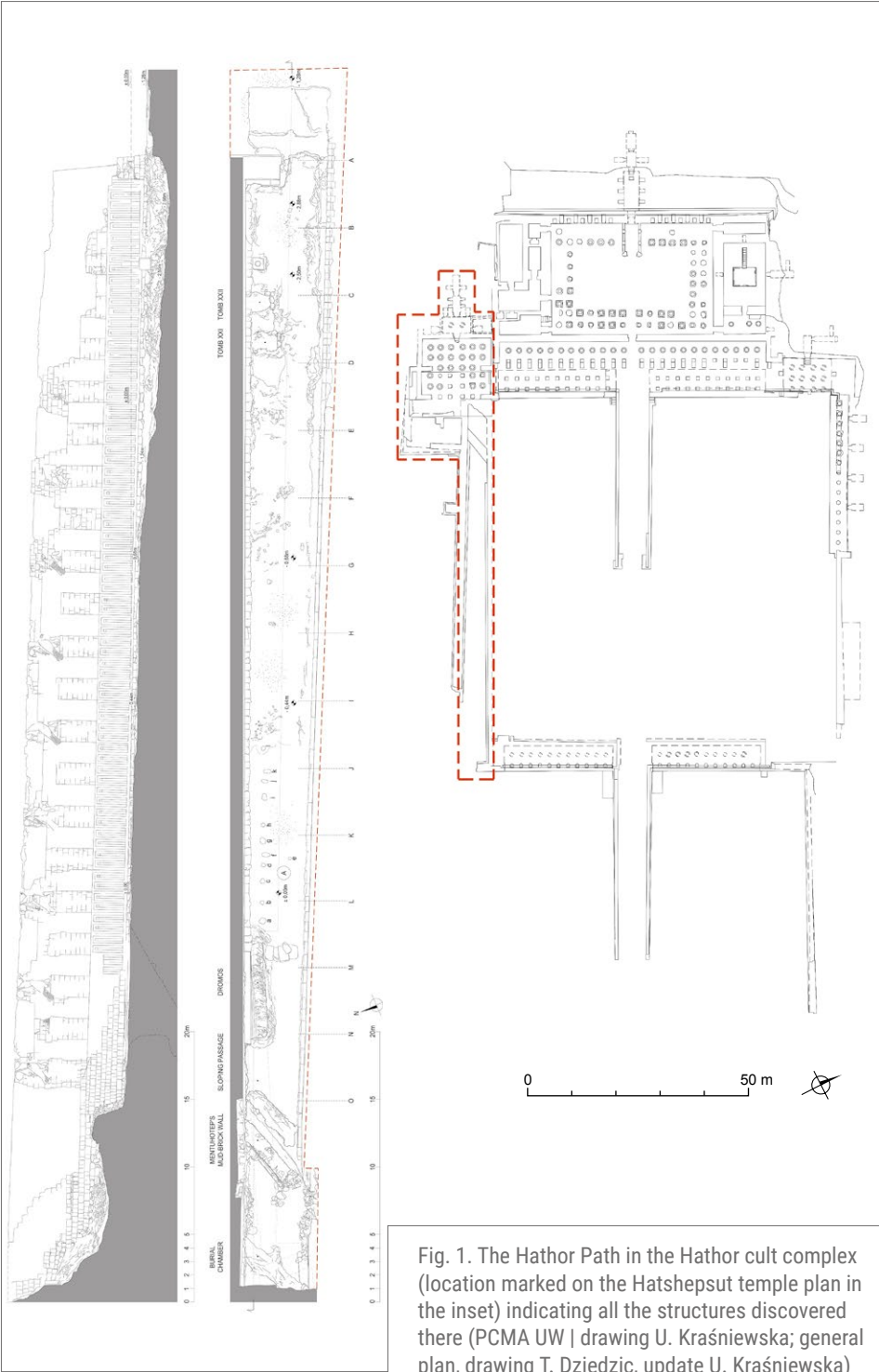


Fig. 1. The Hathor Path in the Hathor cult complex (location marked on the Hatshepsut temple plan in the inset) indicating all the structures discovered there (PCMA UW | drawing U. Kraśniewska; general plan, drawing T. Dziedzic, update U. Kraśniewska)

THE HATHOR PATH

The exploration of the so-called Hathor Path, a long open avenue running between the southern retaining wall and the limestone wall of Mentuhotep II's temenos, began in early 2021 (Chudzik 2021: 53–54, 58–73). The area was partly surveyed by previous explorers (Naville 1894–1895; 1908: 17–31, Pls CLXIX–XLXXIV; Winlock 1942: 52–53, 89; Wysocki 1985), but the latest PCMA UW fieldwork has uncovered numerous structures and artifacts shedding new light on the temple's history.

Continued research in 2022 concentrated on the eastern part of the Hathor Path [see *Fig. 1*]. A significant difference in bedrock level was noted right from the start: the surface dropped markedly toward the east. The earliest phase of construction work in the time of Mentuhotep II, when a rough stone wall was built, leveled the whole area with a layer of rock debris (see Arnold 1979: 40–41). The rock rubble deposited on bedrock in the western part of the avenue, investigated in early 2021, did not exceed 0.40 m in thickness, while in the eastern sectors it reached more than 2.50 m or even 2.80 m, like in sector A. The foundation deposit of Hatshepsut that Winlock (1942: 88–89) found in 1922, which was said to have been dug in rock rubble (and labelled as “B”), is likely to have been located in this depressed area rather than in the western part of the avenue where the foundation deposit “A” was carved entirely in the bedrock (Naville 1908: 9; Chudzik 2021: 62, *Fig. 10*). The circular pit found by Winlock was lined with mud bricks. Wysocki cleared the

deposit again in the early 1980s and located it on his plan (for the location of deposit “B”, see Wysocki 1985: *Fig. 1*). It should be in the southwestern corner of Sector C or slightly to the west of it, in the southeastern corner of Sector D, but although the site yielded mud bricks, a great number of ceramic sherds, and the remains of a bullock, no trace of the deposit pit could be observed. The material, presumed to have been part of this deposit, was found within a few metres of where the pit was supposed to be.

On the plan northeast of foundation deposit “B”, right next to the temple retaining wall, Wysocki marked a rectangular structure lined with stones, which he recognised as the mouth of a burial shaft, but did not take steps to clean out (Wysocki 1985: 298–299, *Fig. 1*). Under a mat of palm leaves he revealed human bones and remains of a funerary assemblage. The pit was filled with debris and sand. Wysocki stopped at a depth of 1.70 m because his focus was on reconstructing the southern retaining wall and investigating the building history of the ramp, which was supposed to be in the western part of the path, leading to the higher level of the temple, directly to the Hathor Shrine. Current investigations in late 2021 uncovered the tomb again. It was labelled Tomb XXI, continuing the tomb numbering system used by the PCMA expedition in the temple of Hatshepsut (see Szafrński 2015).

The underground structure was fully cleared this time. The tomb turned out to have a simple form: a shaft nearly 4.50 m deep and a roughly-carved burial cham-

ber hewn at its bottom on the northern side. Two large staircases are carved into the bottom of the shaft, descending to the

north, toward the entrance of the crypt which then opens to the east. A wall of limestone rocks and block fragments,

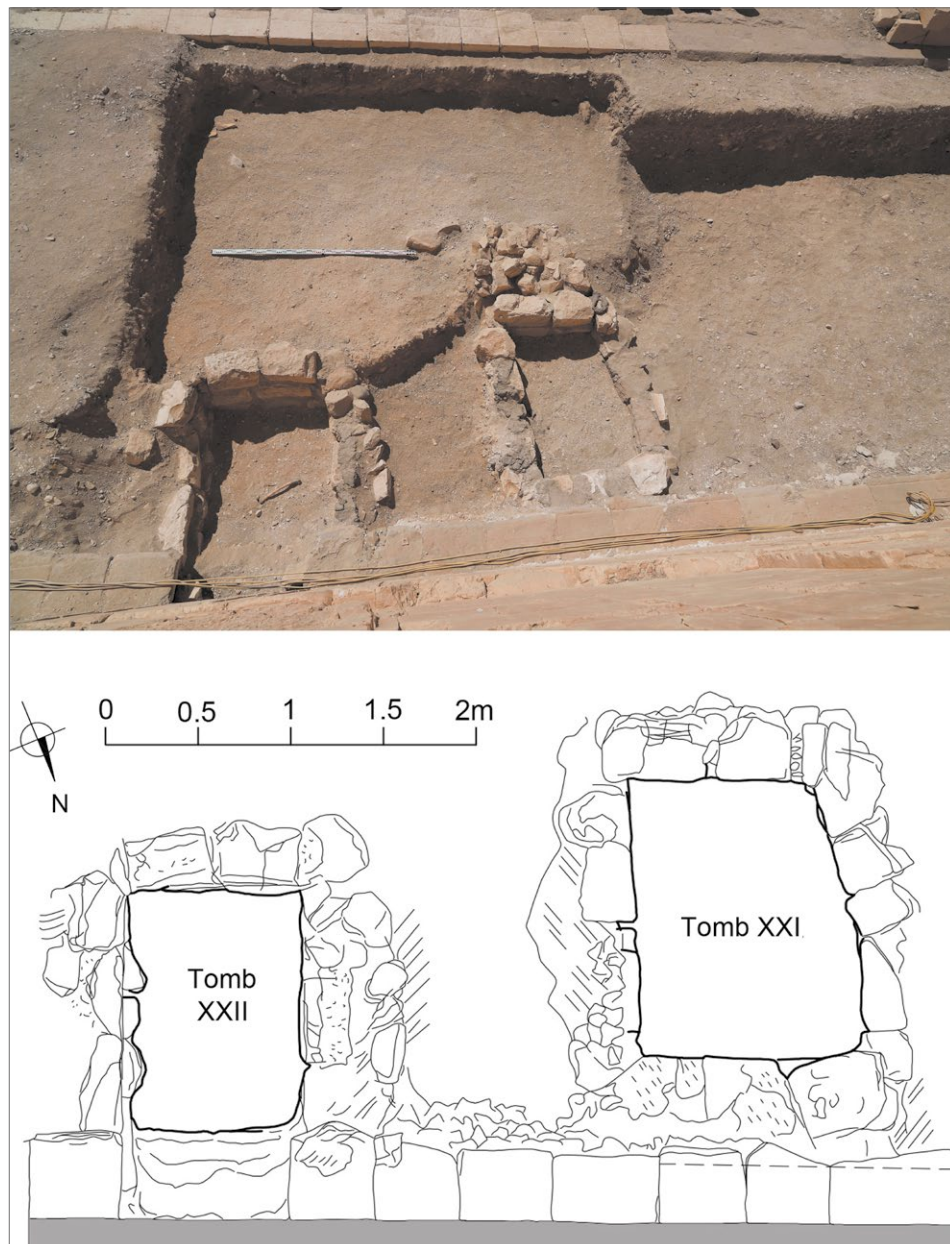


Fig. 2. Two shaft tombs in the eastern part of the Hathor Path: top, view looking south; bottom, plan of the tomb shafts at ground level (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki, drawing U. Kraśniewska)

some of them decorated, lines the uppermost part of the shaft. The blocks came from the Temple of Hatshepsut, like the cornice fragment mentioned by Wysocki (1985: 298). Later excavation around the mouth of the shaft demonstrated that the stone lining was intended to keep rock debris from falling into the tomb; it became clear that the uppermost part of the pit was constructed, like the foundation deposit “B”, in a layer of rock rubble deposited in the time of Mentuhotep II. Most of the subterranean features were carved into bedrock.

The rock rubble, mixed with sand filling the tomb interior, covered the ancient burials. Mummified human remains were accompanied by fragments of wooden coffins and cartonnages, which are dated by the style of the decoration to the Twenty-second or early Twenty-third Dynasty, shabti figurines, bead nets, linen, and limestone block fragments. The traces of decoration on the surface of some of these blocks suggest that they come from the southern retaining wall of the Temple of Hatshepsut. Some modern finds were recorded, including a newspaper in Arabic from 1979, a witness to Wysocki’s earlier excavations. The presence of this material in the fill to a depth of 1.70 m is not surprising in light of the Polish report from this work, stating that Wysocki stopped digging at this depth. Cigarette butts and matchbox fragments found in deeper layers clearly indicate exploration at an even earlier time.

Working south of the middle terrace, Wysocki decided not to continue the excavation further east, although he opened a small test trench to check the depth of the rock a few metres in that

direction (Wysocki 1985: “p” in Fig. 1). He missed another shaft tomb in the space between Tomb XXI and the probe, just over a metre east of it [Fig. 2]. The mouth of the pit was hidden under a thin layer of rock rubble covering the entire pathway area. This indicates that the current surface level at the site corresponds to that of 3000 years ago. The shaft mouth of Tomb XXII, as it was designated recently, was oriented similarly to the other tomb to the northeast, perpendicular to the southern retaining wall and coinciding in part with the sandstone slabs of the foundation course of the southern retaining wall. The shaft is thus shifted 0.50 m north compared to the shaft of Tomb XXI. The absence of slabs from the foundation course in this part was evident from the start. The uppermost part of the shaft was also lined with a wall of decorated limestone blocks and stones bonded in a Nile-silt mortar. The decorated blocks came from the temple of Hatshepsut, including a fragment of a solar disk representation from the upper part of the southern retaining wall decoration [Fig. 3]. It would suggest that at least the



Fig. 3. Decorated block from the southern retaining wall of the Hatshepsut temple, reused in the facing wall of Tomb XXII (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

uppermost part of the southern retaining wall had already been destroyed, most likely in the aftermath of an earthquake around 1000 BCE. Further excavation of the shaft revealed brick walls on four sides, supporting the lining walls of stone in the upper part. Two massive steps are hewn in the rock at the bottom of the shaft, descending into the burial chamber located to the north [Fig. 4]. The chamber behind the entrance reveals clear stages of successive reuse. Initially, it had opened to the east, but was subsequently enlarged several times, presumably to accommodate further burials. This is also confirmed by the great number of mummified human remains and remnants of burial equipment discovered in the fill of the tomb. The repertoire of artifacts resembles that found in tomb XXI, namely fragments of decorated wooden coffins and cartonnage cases, objects made of faience, pottery, linen—everything shattered and discovered outside of the

original context. Based on the results of preliminary stylistic observations, the material is of Twenty-second Dynasty date at the earliest.

The exploration of the tomb also yielded material shedding some light on the history of modern research. While Wysocki did not come across this tomb while excavating the area, a newspaper fragment discovered in the fill of the shaft, at a depth of 0.50 m, pointed to exploration at a much earlier date. The fragment was from *The Athenaeum*, a British literary magazine published in London between 1828 and 1921, and the date of issue of the page discovered, that is, 1894, clearly coincides with Naville's work at the site (Naville 1894–1895). The neighbouring tomb XXI must have also been discovered for the first time during the excavations of the Egypt Exploration Fund and partly reexcavated more than 80 years later by Wysocki.

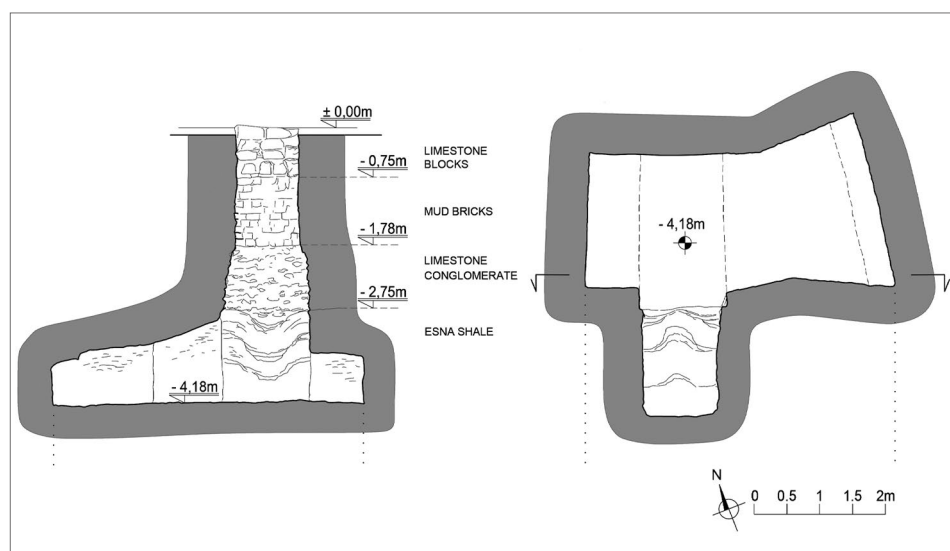


Fig. 4. Tomb XXII: section and plan (PCMA UW | drawing A. Kwaśnica, digitizing U. Kraśniewska)

THE HATHOR SHRINE

In the winter season of 1894–1895, before digging in the area between the southern retaining wall and the limestone temenos wall of Mentuhotep II, Naville first completed clearing the mounds still covering the westernmost part of the Middle Terrace of Hatshepsut's temple (Naville 1894–1895: 33–34). He turned his attention to, among others, the rock rubble in front of the Punt Portico and the Hathor Shrine, the interior of which had already been cleaned in the 1857–1858 season by Auguste Mariette (Naville 1898: 10; see also Mariette 1877: 6). Mariette had also explored the hypostyle halls of the cow-goddess cult complex, but only to the point of allowing tourists easy access to the interior of the chapel, therefore Naville decided to continue digging in this place, discovering shortly thereafter the intact family tomb of the Montu priest Djed-Djehuty-*iwef-ankh* (Naville 1894–1895: 34–35, see plan for the location of the tomb). Previous excavations by Mariette inside the Hathor Shrine, which were in fact conducted on his behalf by V. Galli Maunier (Sheikhholeslami 2003: 133–134), led to the discovery of a number of coffins, which Naville says were then transported to the Bulaq Museum (Naville 1898: 10). However, the exact place of discovery of the coffins remained unknown. Even noninvasive research carried out inside the shrine in the late 1990s did not clarify the issue (Sheikhholeslami 2003: 134 and footnotes 49 and 50). Two decades later, another effort was made to locate this spot, combined with an examination and potential reinforcement of the foundations of the chambers.

In the 2021–2022 season, having completed the work on the Hathor Path, the Polish expedition turned to the shrine of the cow goddess [see *Fig. 1*]. Attention was focused only on sections of the floor with missing floor slabs. It became immediately apparent that there were tombs carved into the bedrock under the floor. In the vestibule of the Hathor Shrine, a test trench (S3/21) was opened in the southeast corner of the transverse room with two columns. An oblong area along the south side of the east wall of the vestibule concealed an extensive, roughly carved cavity [*Figs 5, 7*], penetrating also under the wall and exposing the remains of limestone blocks from the shrine foundations. On the south side of the irregular cavity, an opening was found just below the entrance to the southern niche of the vestibule. As it later became clear, this opening led to one of the chambers of a tomb, currently labeled XXIII, the original entrance to which was located in the floor of the southern niche. This tomb consisted of a small shaft and two crypts, one of which was undoubtedly added later, like the roughly carved floor recess that was discovered at the beginning of the work.

The complex architectural layout of the tomb appears to correspond with the material uncovered during its cleaning. Numerous artifacts, preserved in fragmentary condition, were mixed with the rock debris without any stratigraphic import. Fragments of coffins and cartonnage cases predominated. Wooden fragments included both anthropoid and *qrsw* coffin remnants [*Fig. 6*]. Small traces of



Fig. 5. Test trench S3/21 and Tomb XXIII in the southeast corner of the Hathor Shrine vestibule, looking toward the entrance to the southern niche (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

figures and texts, in particular the *hṯp di nsw* formula and fragments from the Books of the Underworld, are preserved on some of them. On some fragments the texts were written in large hieroglyphs, painted with blue ink on a yellow or natural wooden background. On others, the texts were in black on a white background. They can be attributed to the Twenty-second/Twenty-third and Twenty-fifth/Twenty-sixth Dynasties, respectively.

Fragments of other wooden objects have also been preserved. Of particular interest is a fragment of a son of Horus figurine, of a type typical exclusively of the period between about 950 and 750 BCE (Aston 2009: 389). The fill also yielded fragments of a jackal figurine from the vaulted lid of a Twenty-fifth



Fig. 6. One of the four corner posts from a *qrsw* coffin from Tomb XXIII (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

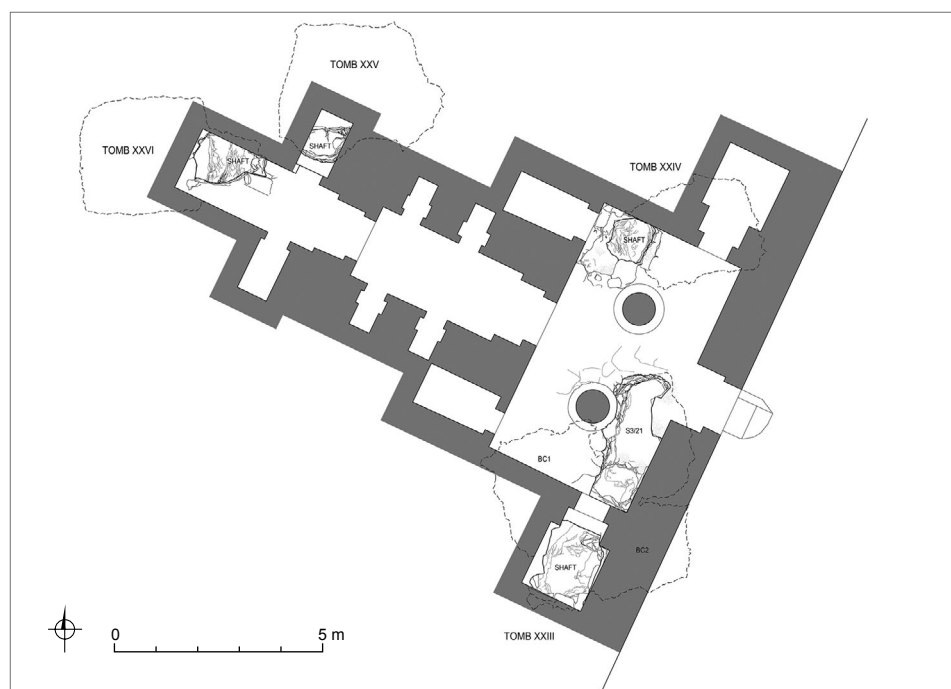


Fig. 7. Location of shaft tombs within the Hathor Shrine (PCMA UW | drawing U. Kraśniewska)



Fig. 8. Head of a wooden jackal figurine from the lid of a *qrsu* coffin (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

or Twenty-sixth Dynasty *qrsu* coffin [Fig. 8]. Large quantities of decorated cartonnage cases were also brought to light. The majority of them were brilliantly polychrome, often painted dark



Fig. 9. Faience scarab amulet with traces of a resin coating (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

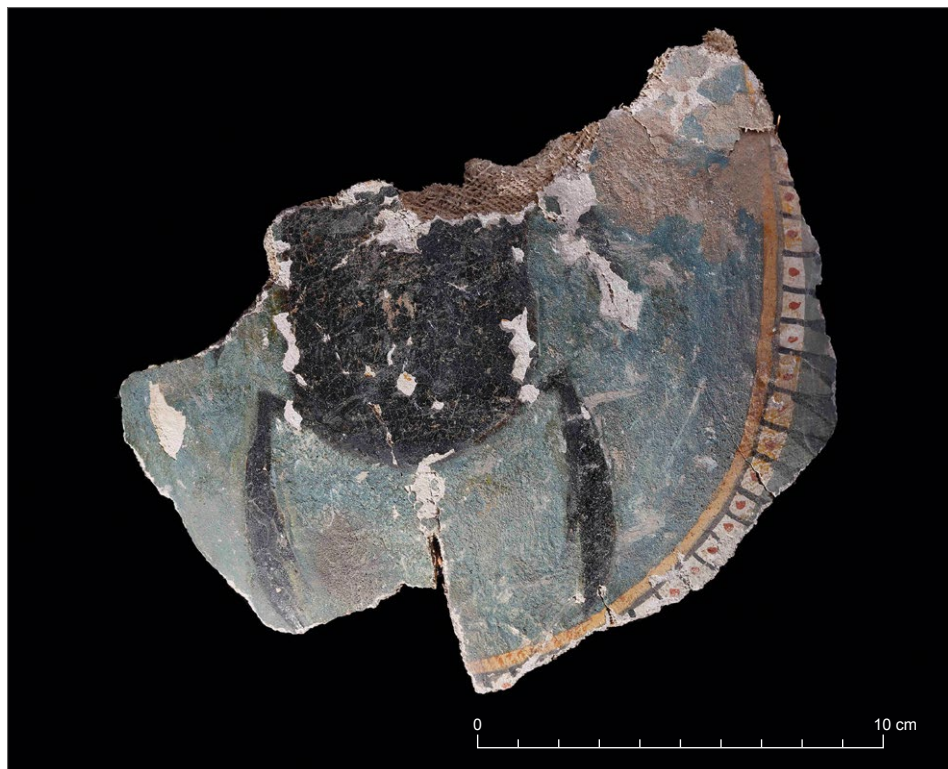


Fig. 10. Scarab beetle from the top of one of cartonnage cases found in Tomb XXIII (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

blue, on a white or yellow background – a style most common during the Twenty-second Dynasty (Taylor 2003: 104–107). A blue wig with painted floral collar and a scarab beetle on its top [Fig. 10] confirms these chronological observations. These objects were found together with a great number of mummified human remains, including children's mummies, crude clay and faience shabti figurines, remnants of faience bead nets and amulets [Fig. 9], textiles, pottery sherds and organic materials, namely baskets and floral garlands. This material represents typical elements of Third Intermediate Period burials.

Burial remains from the 1st millennium BCE were not the only material discovered in this tomb. The fill also contained numerous fragments of painted shrouds and at least three mummies wrapped in decorated textiles with a central column of demotic texts, further secured by horizontally crossing bandages, indicating a much later chronological context of these burials [Fig. 11]. The stylistic features of these materials, in particular the motif of a pair of seated jackals flanking the feet of the deceased, similar to the Soter type as well as to burials previously found in Deir el-Bahari, suggest a 2nd or 3rd century CE date



Fig. 11. Lower parts of Roman mummies found in Tomb XXIII: linen bandages of the one on the right decorated with a polychrome painted arm representation of the deceased of goddess Nut; two sitting jackals at the feet end observed on the one on the left (PCMA UW | photos P. Chudzik)

(Riggs and Depauw 2002: 79, 85; for the Soter Group see Schreiber 2017).

Gilding was a typical element of Roman period mummification practices; it was applied to the skin in different parts of the body (Ikram and Dodson 1998: 130). This was observed on another, but unwrapped, human mummy revealed during the past field season.

Another artifact to be related to these mummies and textiles is a fragmentary mummy mask of a woman (for parallels see Riggs 2000; 2003: 198–199) [Fig. 12]. The mask is a composite of linen and

plaster. It depicts the deceased in a white tunic, with hair painted black and adorned with a molded red wreath, and wearing a painted necklace. Although the lower part of the mask is not preserved, it can be assumed that it was one with a molded representation of a hand, found separately, decorated with bracelets.

Exploration of the tomb also revealed a small human-headed bird of carton-nage [Fig. 13], similar to that of Cleopatra's mummy in the British Museum (EA 6707, Dawson and Grey 1968: 33, Pl. XVIIa; Riggs 2005: Cat. 78, Fig. 96; Strudwick



Fig. 12. Fragment of a Roman mummy mask of a woman (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

2006: 308–310), but the context of its discovery suggests a much later date. Attribute to this mortuary context is the front of a rectangular coffin base, decorated with two facing jackals sitting on a chapel

façade [Fig. 14]. The jackals have four-pronged keys suspended from red collars around their necks and hold red-painted *djed* pillars in their forepaws. The stylistic features of this fragment correspond to



Fig. 13. Cartonnage amulet of a bird with a human head topped with a solar disk (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)



Fig. 14. Two seated jackals represented on the front of the base of a wooden coffin of Roman date (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

the decoration of several other coffins previously discovered by Winlock at Deir el-Bahari and dated to the 3rd century CE (see Riggs and Depauw 2002: 78–89).

The fill of Tomb XXIII also contained material related to the everyday life of Coptic monks residing in the monastery established within the ruins of the temple of Hatshepsut. However, it seems more likely that the potsherds and broken mudstoppers in question found their way into the shaft when the tomb was backfilled at a much later date, which

is attested by the presence of modern newspaper fragments, cigarettes and matchboxes. The fragmentary decorated blocks discovered in all parts of the subterranean structures may have been thrown into the tomb at this time, along with the rock rubble, but it cannot be excluded that at least some of them were used either during the original burials or when the tomb was reused. Most of them—fragments of walls, columns and pillars—come from the hypostyle halls of the Hathor Shrine [Fig. 15]. Some of

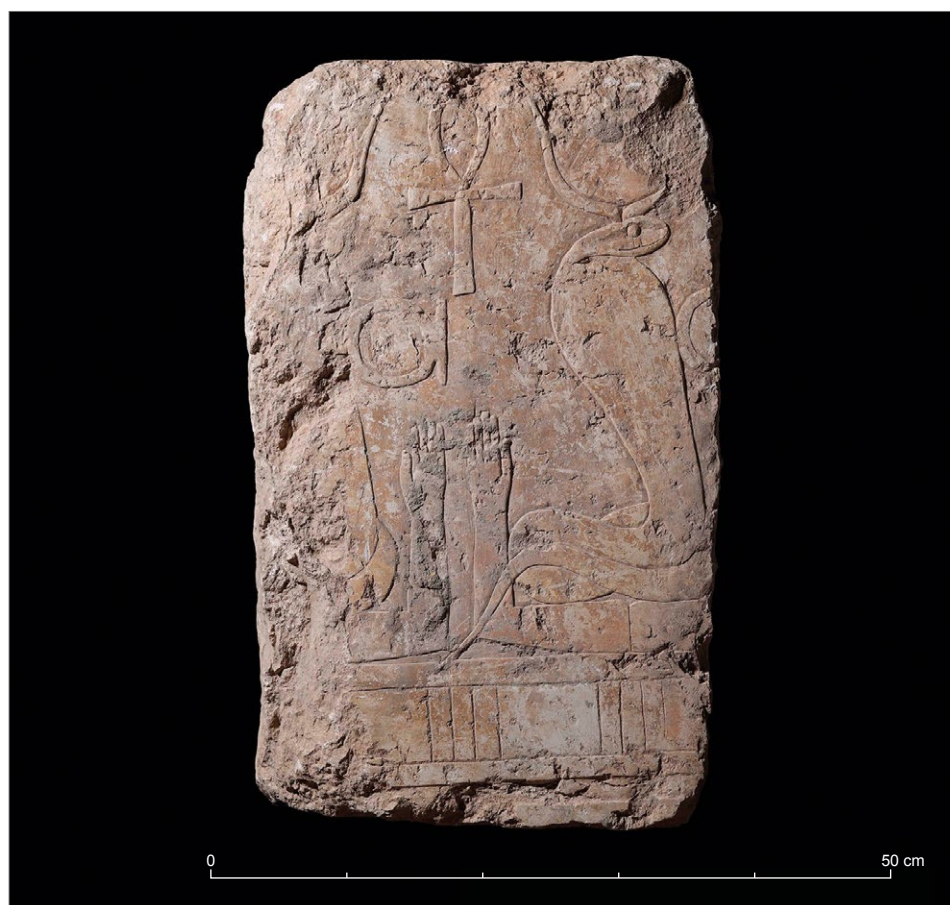


Fig. 15. Limestone block decorated with a cryptogram uraeus frieze, attributed to a wall in the hypostyle hall of the Hathor Shrine (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

them still present a richly polychrome relief decoration. More intriguing, however, is the presence of fragments of decorated sandstone blocks that cannot be attributed to the temple of Hatshepsut. Significantly, the secondary fill of the tomb yielded also much older artifacts, predating the construction of the tomb: fragments of faience bowls deposited in the shrine during the New Kingdom as votive offerings for the goddess Hathor. These bowls must have been overlooked by priests regularly cleaning the shrine of such offerings and dumping the rub-

bish in various parts of Deir el-Bahari (Pinch 1993: 23–24). Buried in the rubble accumulated over the floor of the shrine, they ended up in the fill of the reburied tomb together with tomb furnishings, fragments of decorated blocks, objects of everyday use from the Coptic period and modern rubbish.

Another tomb was discovered at the opposite end of the vestibule, in its northwestern corner, in front of the northern niche in the west wall [see *Fig. 6*]. The tomb (XXIV) consists of a shaft, over 3.50 m deep, and a roughly-

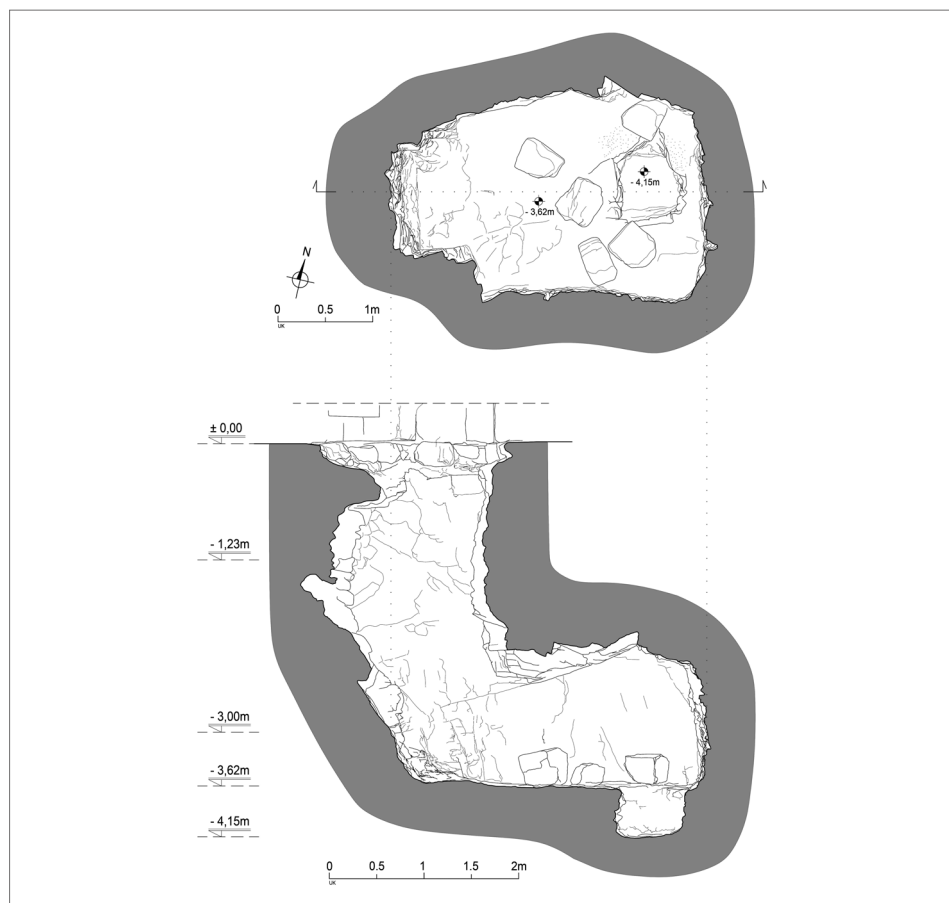


Fig. 16. Tomb XXIV: plan and section (PCMA UW | drawing U. Kraśniewska)

hewn burial crypt off its east side [Fig. 16]. A regular, 0.50 m deep, depression was carved into the floor in the eastern part of the chamber. A niche carved in the upper part of the shaft, on its western side, leading towards the entrance to the bark hall, made work in this tomb extremely dangerous due to the fragility of the thin layer of Esna shale constituting its ceiling. The danger posed by the poor quality of local bedrock was recognised by previous explorers, who introduced a wall of rocks and limestone blocks to support the ceil-

ing of the niche. To build this wall, they used, among others, fragments of ceiling slabs painted with yellow stars on a blue background.

The mixed bag of severely damaged artifacts from this tomb was not as numerous as in the case of Tomb XXIII. The repertoire is dominated by fragments of coffins and cartonnage cases from the Twenty-second or Twenty-third Dynasties [Fig. 17], and shabti figurines. In addition, the fill contained mummified human remains, wreaths, textiles, and a small



Fig. 17. Examples of fragmentary cartonnage cases found in the fill of Tomb XXIV (PCMA UW | photos M. Jawornicki)

number of Coptic artifacts, but these are particularly important in light of the overall interpretation of the context. Several fragments of clay vessels from this tomb match sherds discovered in Tomb XXIII, indicating that the assemblages from these two tombs had been mixed together at least in part. One should also mention a great number of decorated block fragments, again mostly from the hypostyle halls of the Hathor Shrine, but there was also a fragment from the vaulted ceiling of the Chapel of Hatshepsut situated on a higher level of the temple (for the decoration see Barwik 1998).

Two tombs were discovered in the sanctuary of the Hathor Shrine: XXV in the northern niche and XXVI in the northwestern corner of the room [Fig. 18; see Fig. 6]. The pit of Tomb XXV opened in a very narrow niche and led to a vertical shaft which sloped down gently toward the north, opening into a burial chamber cut in the north wall. After the funeral, the entrance to the crypt was walled-up with mud bricks, a few of which remain on the threshold at the bottom of the shaft. The irregular shape of the burial chamber suggests that it was either never completed or that enlargement, to place more burials, was initiated in later times. The other tomb, XXVI, has a similar architectural design. A vertical shaft leads to the burial chamber, in this case, however, located on the western side of the shaft. The crypt is regular in shape, and its large size, approximately 3 m by 3 m, indicates that it may have been intended for more than one burial. The location and dimensions of this tomb seem to match Naville's description, but it is uncertain at the moment whether this

is the place mentioned by Naville (1898: 10), where Mariette found a great number of coffins that were later transported to the Bulaq Museum. An in-depth study of the artifacts found in this tomb may yet throw more light on this subject.

Human remains evidently dominated the material discovered in Tomb XXV. Wrapped and unwrapped mummies and their fragments were found in both the shaft and the burial chamber. Among them are heavily burned mummies in a very poor state of preservation. The mummies could not have been burned already in the tomb because there are absolutely no traces of a fire in its interior. Instead, traces of fire were noted in both burial crypts in Tomb XXIII.

The human remains were accompanied by a great number of textile fragments, including painted shrouds of Roman age. Fragments of four mummy masks of the same date were also uncovered in different parts of the underground structures. Three of them belonged to women and one shows the gilded face of a man. One of the female masks, like the mummies mentioned above, is heavily burnt. Apart from these materials, the finds included remains of coffins and cartonnages associated with the original burial, indicating a Twenty-second or Twenty-third Dynasty date for the tomb. Of note is the absence of shabti figurines suggesting a reshuffling of material between the tombs. Thus, determining the original position of individual burials is practically impossible. The disturbed nature of the context is further confirmed by the tail of a wooden jackal figure, which originally lay on the lid of a Twenty-fifth or Twenty-sixth Dynasty



Fig. 18. Floor of the sanctuary in the Hathor Shrine: smaller floor slabs at right back mark the location of the entrance to Tomb XXVI (state prior to excavation) (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

coffin, fragments of which were uncovered in Tomb XXIII. Decorated limestone fragments from the walls, ceiling, columns and pillars of the Hathor Shrine hypostyle halls were also found in this tomb [Fig. 19].

The masses of rock rubble filling the shaft and crypt of Tomb XXVI also yielded a large number of objects. The chronological profile of these artifacts, supposing that at least some of them were originally deposited in this burial, presents a sequence similar to that of Tomb XXIII, although without material evidence for the tomb's reuse at the end of the Third Intermediate Period. The sepulcher was cut most likely for a Twenty-second-Dynasty burial, clearly attested by fragments of decorated coffin(s) and

cartonnage case(s), as well as shabti figurines. Of particular significance, however, are fragments of a solid corn mummy made of mud and straw and enveloped in resin-soaked mummy wrappings [Fig. 21]. The uppermost part of the figurine is unfortunately lost, and the biggest of the preserved fragments is 18.4 cm in height. And although corn-mummies are recorded in archaeological contexts from prehistory to Roman times, the technological features of this particular object suggest a date in the Third Intermediate Period (Raven 1982: 16–17; Aston 2009: 377). Fragments of another two wooden figurines of the sons of Horus were also found in the tomb [Fig. 20], coming probably from the same set as the figurine uncovered in Tomb XXIII. Of Roman



Fig. 19. Fragment of the capital of a Hathor-headed pillar (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)



Fig. 20. Fragment of a corn mummy from Tomb XXVI (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

date was a fragmentary terracotta figure head, apparently burned, and fragments of painted shrouds. Moreover, the fill of the tomb contained human remains, both mummified and skeletal, a large number of broken clay vessels and mud-stoppers, papyrus fragments, remnants of a basket, linen, decorated block fragments and two fragments of a sandstone offering table. There were also fragments of two terracotta cones of a New Kingdom date, which should rather be linked to the activity of Coptic monks using Pharaonic funerary cones as stoppers for narrow-mouthed vessels (for more on this practice see Górecki 2014: 142–144, Fig. 12).

Remains of modern materials were also found, including a photo of King Farouk I as a young man, Farouk succeeded his father, Fuad I, on the throne of Egypt and the Sudan in 1936. The photo came from the upper part of the shaft fill, several centimetres below the level of the floor in the sanctuary, proving that this tomb had been cleaned in the 1930s.



Fig. 21. Falcon face fragment from a wooden figurine of one of the sons of Horus (PCMA UW | photo M. Jawornicki)

DISCUSSION

THE POST-NEW KINGDOM HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE OF HATSHEPSUT

It is commonly accepted that the ruins of the Hatshepsut temple, destroyed in an earthquake around 1000 BCE, were turned into a prestigious burial ground functioning throughout the 1st millennium BC and in the Roman era. This view, formulated on the grounds of a Third Intermediate Period cemetery discovered on the third terrace of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahari, has now been confirmed by current archaeological research carried out by the PCMA expedition outside of the third terrace, mainly on the southern side of the middle and lower terraces. The known boundaries of this cemetery, the centre of which was most likely on the highest level of Hatshepsut's temple, have now been extended to all of the terraces of this sanctuary. Recent work has also provided data on the Roman-age necropolis. Burials from this time have been discovered so far in the northern part of the middle terrace of the temple, north of the precinct wall on the level of the middle and lower terraces, in the rock debris covering the temple of Thutmose III, as well as in front of the northern portico of the temple of Mentuhotep II (Riggs 2000: Fig. 2).

Although the Hatshepsut temple was first reused already at the turn of the Twenty-first Dynasty (Chudzik 2021: 72–73),¹ the rise of an extensive necropolis in the area is dated to the Twenty-second and Twenty-third Dynasties. The largest clustering of tombs was discovered on the third terrace of the temple (Barwik 2003; 2011; Sheikholeslami 2003). The tombs were hewn into the floors of almost all of the chambers in this part of the monument. The architectural layout is always the same: a vertical shaft, none of which exceeds 5 m in depth, leading to a roughly-hewn burial chamber, or sometimes two, carved in the side of the shaft at its bottom (Szafranski 2015). Interestingly, no remains of mortuary cult chapels, which should have been associated with these tombs, have been found so far. Since cult objects have been recorded in the area, it could suggest that the dead were worshipped directly in the rooms where the tombs were located (Barwik 2011: 388–389).

Several important conclusions can be drawn from the tombs cleared in the southern part of the temple's middle and lower terraces, in the eastern part of the

1 A late Twenty or early Twenty-first Dynasty burial was discovered in tomb MMA 28 located on the Hathor Path, but it is more important to mention burials from this period uncovered at Deir el-Bahari but outside the temenos of the Hatshepsut temple: north of the precinct wall, in the tomb of priests currently known to researchers as Bab el-Gasus (Daressy 1900; Niwiński 1999; Sousa, Amenta, and Cooney 2021). Other Twenty-first-Dynasty burials were found in early Middle Kingdom tombs in the North Triangular Court of the Mentuhotep II complex (Naville 1907: 45–46).

Hathor Path. First, the location of shaft mouths just below today's ground level suggests that the ancient level was much the same at the time of construction of the temple during the Eighteenth Dynasty and its reuse as a burial ground in the Third Intermediate Period. Supporting this idea is a foundation deposit from the time of Hatshepsut found nearby, in a levelling layer of rubble from the reign of Mentuhotep II. Second, the presence of decorated blocks from the upper parts of the southern retaining wall of the Hatshepsut temple indicates that this part of the temple was already in ruins when Tombs XXI and XXII were cut. Last but not least, the presence of tombs at this site means that the Hathor Path was already out of use as a cult place, assuming that it had functioned as such at all, something apparently contradicted by deposits of votive gifts to the cow goddess, dated to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties, dumped in tomb MMA 28 (see Chudzik 2021: 71–72; Weźranowska and Wodzińska 2021: 82–83).

In addition to the intensive reuse of the third terrace and the single tombs on the lowest level of the temple, the Hathor Shrine and presumably the cow-goddess herself were of particular importance during the Third Intermediate Period. This is confirmed by the four tombs full of burial finds in the two chambers excavated over the past season and the at least five new places without the original pavement where more underground mortuary structures are to be expected. One of the selected places is located in the front part of the Bark Hall, where nearly 30 years ago Janusz Karkowski recognized the mouth of a funerary shaft in

a small probe (Karkowski 1994: 84). Third Intermediate Period tombs in the Hathor Shrine prove that this part of the temple was already out of use by this time, just like the third terrace. The architectural arrangement of these tombs resembles that known from the third terrace survey. The Hathor Shrine was probably the place of worship for the dead buried in tombs under the floor of the chapel, an idea explaining the absence of any traces of cult structures and confirmed by fragments of sandstone offering tables among the finds.

Continued use of this part of Hatshepsut's temple as a necropolis is attested by the finds collected from among the tombs: remains of a *qrs*w coffin, fragments of a wooden jackal figurine and a great number of shabti figurines from the Twenty-fifth or Twenty-sixth Dynasties. This burial must have been placed either in one of the older tombs existing inside the shrine or in a new tomb cut specifically for it. This question cannot be answered satisfactorily at the current stage of the research, just as it is not possible to identify beyond doubt the function of the individual buried here. By analogy with other burials from this period, including the one buried in the nearby Hypostyle Hall whose tomb was discovered by Naville in 1894, one can speculate that the individual in question had served as a priest of Montu.

Several hundred years later, when the throne of Egypt passed to the Ptolemaic Dynasty, parts of Hatshepsut's temple began to be used again as places of worship. The most important of these is the Main Sanctuary of Amun-Ra on the third terrace, located on the main building

axis, where a sanctuary of Amenhotep son of Hapu and Imhotep was installed (Laskowska-Kusztal 1984). In the following centuries, the worship of these two “saints”, wise men who served in the courts of Netjerihet of the Third Dynasty and Amenhotep III of the Eighteenth Dynasty respectively, brought visitors back to the temple of Hatshepsut (for the numerous graffiti left by these visitors see Lajtar 2006; 2008). Perhaps it was the extraordinary recognition they received in Hellenistic and Roman times that rekindled interest in the temple of Hatshepsut and the surrounding area of Deir el-Bahari as a burial site (for connotations of the worshipped wise men with the cult of deceased see Kákosy 1968).

In the 2nd and/or 3rd centuries CE, the dead began to be buried in the rocky rubble covering the middle terrace of the temple of Hatshepsut. Burials were placed in small groups that were scattered in different parts of the great rocky circus of Deir el-Bahari. As the latest excavation results show, one of them was the Hathor Shrine. The five mummy masks found at the site suggest at least five burials, but as older excavations have shown, in Roman times, the dead were often buried wrapped only in undecorated cloth. Therefore, it is possible that more of the human remains found at the site belonged to individuals buried here in the Roman period. A wooden coffin, fragments of which were recorded, could have also been part of one of the burials, for instance, the one whose head and upper torso were covered with a mask.

The presence of Roman burials in this part of the temple suggests that the Hathor Shrine was still accessible but not

in use as a sanctuary in the early centuries of the common era. However, access to the interior of the shrine must have been restricted at a later date, because Mariette had to first remove some of the rocky rubble covering the hypostyle halls. The interior was also filled with debris, probably in the wake of another earthquake and the shearing of the rocks overhanging the temple. Indeed, Mariette was probably the first modern explorer working in this part of Hatshepsut’s monument and he undoubtedly discovered several complete coffins, but many other similar ones had probably been shattered long before. Recent research has produced no data on when the individual tombs could have been robbed and some of the mummies and grave goods burnt.

The later history of the exploration of the southern part of Hatshepsut’s temple has also been highlighted to some extent by the recent finds. The first large-scale excavations by the EEF in the 1890s brought to light two tombs in the eastern part of the Hathor Path, and the tomb hewn in the floor of the Hypostyle Hall of the Hathor Shrine. Evidence of later penetration in the fill of the tombs can now be attributed to Émile Baraize. His work in the 1932–1933 season, explains the presence of a photograph of a young King Farouk I, whose reign began in the 1930s. Baraize discovered another tomb of Montu priests in front of the Chapel of Hatshepsut and conducted reconstruction work, for instance, of the hypostyle halls in the Hathor Shrine (Baraize 1933; Bruyère 1956; Sheikholeslami 2018). One can only wonder why he seems to have overlooked so many interesting artifacts, which could have ended up in the collec-

tion of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. His intervention in the tombs is now dated by cigarette butts, matchboxes and newspaper fragments. A low wall reinforced with white cement built in a niche at the top of the shaft of Tomb XXIV can also be dated to his time. Presumably it was during this chaotic work that the contexts of the burials and grave offerings were mixed. Baraize probably delegated the work to one of his associates or even the *rais* and it seems that all of the tombs in the Hathor Shrine were explored at the same time. The fill of the tombs was dumped in one large heap outside the shrine. Material from the chapel floor was probably mixed in as well. Once it was evident that there were no more intact burials in the tombs,

which may have been before they were completely cleaned, the burial chambers and shafts were backfilled with rock rubble and broken artifacts. It is difficult to reconstruct when the fragments of decorated blocks, originating mainly from the hypostyle halls of the Hathor Shrine, but also from other parts of the temple, were thrown into the tombs for the first time. They may well have been taken out of the tombs by Baraize's workers.

Further studies of the material discovered in the tombs or subsequent excavations in the shrine may yet shed more light on this question. Meanwhile, the latest stage in the exploration of the temple, that is, Wysocki's excavations of the Hathor Path, has already been described exhaustively above.

RECAPITULATION

The exploration of the Hathor Path, completed over two winter seasons in 2021 and 2022, has provided interesting data on both Mentuhotep II's early work geared to preparing the ground for the construction of his mortuary complex and the arrangement of the site in Hatshepsut's time, together with a building history of the southern part of her monument. Moreover, the tombs uncovered in the eastern part of this long, open avenue have shed new light on the mortuary landscape of the great bay of Deir el-Bahari during the Third Intermediate Period, highlighting the functional changeover that took place after the destructive earthquake.

Excavation in the Hathor Shrine also yielded interesting data on the topographical arrangement and history of the

post-New Kingdom cemetery. Initiated as an examination of foundations preceding restoration efforts, the work soon developed into regular excavations that yielded a valuable assemblage of finds. The study of the tombs, in its preliminary stage for the moment, has already established a tentative chronological sequence for the shrine after it fell out of use. It was clearly of interest as a burial ground in later times and, indeed, no other site in the temple of Hatshepsut was used for so long in this capacity. Tombs from almost all of the periods represented by finds from the recent excavations have been found in other parts of the temple, but nowhere has this complete chronological sequence been observed with such clarity. Unfortunately, the assemblages are disturbed

and mixed. A close examination of this material might yet lead to a determination of the number of burials from each stage of development of this part of the necropolis at Deir el-Bahari.

Last but not least, the modern phase, meaning the activities of the early explorers of the Hathor cult complex, can now be reconstructed with sufficient detail. Despite the spectacular discoveries made as early as the mid-19th century, the man-

ner in which this work was accomplished made a more thorough understanding impossible for 150 years and this also applied to the third terrace of the temple for a long time. Naville's full clearing of Hatshepsut's temple enabled the first full contextualisation of these finds. From now on, the early discoveries can be verified, leading to a better understanding of the history of Hatshepsut's temple and Deir el-Bahari as a whole.

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