
PREFACE

The magnificent great bay of the cliffs at Deir el-Bahari was the site chosen by the pharaohs Nebhepetre Mentuhotep II, Amenhotep I, Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III for their mortuary temples. Until 1893 it had been dominated by the remains of a Coptic monastery that had risen on top of the temple ruins, a tall brick tower being the salient feature of this complex. It was called the Monastery of the North, in Arabic “Deir el-Bahari”.

From the time of the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt at the end of the 18th century the site had been visited, examined, dug over, and superficially investigated by travellers as well as by serious scholars. John Gardner Wilkinson gave a name to the site, Richard Lepsius probed more carefully and identified Hatshepsut as the founder of the temple, Auguste Mariette turned his gangs of temple-clearers onto the site. In 1893, Edouard Naville embarked on a comprehensive clearance of the surviving structures of the Temple of Hatshepsut on behalf of the Egypt Exploration Fund (Howard Carter had been employed as a ‘tracer’ for the Fund). Herbert E. Winlock, who came to Deir el-Bahari at the head of the expedition of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, worked in and around the temples of Mentuhotep and Hatshepsut.

Then in 1961, Kazimierz Michałowski acquired the concession for the reconstruction of the third terrace of the temple of Hatshepsut. He ordered the clearance of a huge heap of rocky debris that obscured the ground outside the southwestern part of the temple. Thus the hitherto unknown temple of Tuthmosis III was discovered.

With our present knowledge there can be no doubt as to the great sanctity of the Deir el-Bahari area, which includes the Asasif Valley and Khokha Mountain, from at least the end of the Old Kingdom onwards. The prestigious Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom temples were built in a place already sanctified by Old Kingdom graffiti above the temple and the tomb of the Eleventh Dynasty Queen Neferu. Third Intermediate Period and late antique burials associated with the Coptic monastery followed in the ruins of the temple precinct.

The sacred landscape of Deir el-Bahari area is more than just the Temple of Hatshepsut which has been the focus of egyptologists and restorers from the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw for more than half a century now. Thus, the scope of research carried out within and beyond the Queen’s Temple far exceeds issues connected with the New Kingdom complex. With this first issue of the *Deir el-Bahari Studies*, published as a Special Studies fascicle of the PCMA

journal *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, we present articles covering manifold aspects of human cognitive behavior in the Deir el-Bahari and Asasif area. They range widely in space and time, being aimed at studies of particular periods or problems, rather than general theoretical statements. In future special issues of *Deir el-Bahari Studies* contributions from specialists in complementary fields, such as architecture, conservation or linguistics will also be encouraged. This broad scope of the presentation will hopefully be appreciated by all those concerned with the archaeology and restoration of West Theban monuments.

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