

Two Semi-Erased Kushite Cartouches in the Precinct of Mut at South Karnak

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William Murnane is perhaps best known for his work in New Kingdom Egypt, but his interests were more far ranging than that. For example, in the 1990s he became involved with the question of the name of Taharqa in the entrance way of the Second Pylon of the Temple of Amun at Karnak.¹

Much earlier, soon after I began work in the Precinct of Mut at South Karnak in 1976, I benefited from conversations with Bill concerning Ptolemaic inscriptions at the site. At the time, Bill was also engaged in attempting to establish the date of a much damaged stela in the first court of the Amun Temple before the south wing of the Second Pylon (Fig. 1).² This stela had been attributed first to Dynasty XXV and Taharqa³ and then to a much later time.⁴ Bill had come to believe that it could be dated to Dynasty XXV on the basis of its style and asked me, as an art historian, what I thought of his attribution. I told him that I thought that he was correct, and advised him not to worry that he was not trained in art history: paleography, after all, is a variant of art history. Not long thereafter Bill got confirmation of his theory: Claude Traunecker and Françoise Le Saout of the Centre Franco-Égyptien d'Étude des Temples de Karnak arranged for a latex cast to be made of the cartouche on the stela, and both they and Bill agreed that the traces must belong to Nefertumkhure, the prenomen of Taharqa.⁵ The same prenomen exists in a crypt in the Mut Temple (Fig. 2).

Margaret Benson and Janet Gourlay reported that they uncovered crypts in "Room f," which is the Mut Temple's central bark shrine (Fig. 3) and another chamber which they did not

¹ W. J. Murnane, "Egyptian Monuments & Historical Memory: New Light on the Ancients' 'Uses of the Past' from the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak," *KMT* 5.3 (Fall 1994), pp. 14-24 and 88. See also the later comments of E. Russmann and Bill Murnane as cited by her in "Two Bracelets with Anachronistic Cartouches, with Remarks on Kushite Royal Jewelry and on the Commemoration of Kushite Kings in Egypt," *BES* 13 (1997), pp. 47-58.

² This is described in *PM II*², p. 24 as "Stela, unfinished, two figures of Amun, back to back, and text with erased cartouche, granite, in front of south wing of the Second Pylon."

³ H. Chevrier, "Rapport sur les travaux de Karnak (1930-1931)," *ASAE* 31 (1931), p. 85, where he said that "Dans tout le déblai, nous n'avons trouvé qu'une stèle en granit noir... La stèle, où ne subsistent plus que les figures d'Amon et du roi [*sic*: the figures of Amun and the king are actually back to back figures of Amun], est entièrement martelé. Elle date, je pense, de l'époque éthiopienne: le cartouche, dont l'intérieur seul est martelé, est très petit, permet de l'attribuer à Taharqa." For good images of the stela's figures, see B. de Gryse, *Karnak, 3000 Jahr ägyptischer Glanz*, trans. N. Hiltl and H. Weber (Liège: Éditions du Perron, 1985), unnumbered pages 66-67, where it is also attributed to Dynasty XXV.

⁴ J. Lecant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXV^e dynastie dite éthiopienne*, BdE 36 (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1965), p. 15, E, where he says "Si le martelage des cartouches pouvait faire envisager de la considérer comme éthiopienne, le style de sa gravure, exagérément maniérée, exigé, nous semble-t-il, qu'on la rejette à l'époque ptolémaïque ou peu auparavant."

⁵ Letter in the files of the Brooklyn Museum from William Murnane to Bernard V. Bothmer, who had agreed with Leclant's dating.

specify. They described these as “small stone-lined vaults, too low to stand upright in, and had probably been used for safe-guarding treasure.”⁶

The bark shrine does not seem to have such a chamber, but one of these “crypts” could possibly be the room just northwest of Benson and Gourlay’s “Room e” (Fig. 3), whose south wall seems to have had a sliding panel and where the space between the edge of the Tuthmoside platform of the temple and the foundations of a later expansion of the temple could have been seen as a crypt.⁷

Another structure in the Mut Temple identified as a crypt is that called the Crypt of Taharqa or Montuemhat (Fig. 3). As the author has stated elsewhere, this is not necessarily a crypt or chamber to hold ritual images or equipment but could be a sort of serdab⁸ or *Hwt-k3*.⁹ However, it does contain an image of Taharqa labeled with both his prenomen and nomen.

The cartouche with Taharqa’s prenomen in Fig. 2 is in what is both the one definite crypt that Benson and Gourlay identified and a structure that has normally been ignored in discussions of crypts.¹⁰ It is located under the central shrine of the Mut Temple (Fig. 3). Benson and Gourlay described it and its discovery as follows:¹¹

...the man who was clearing out the earth in front of it perceived that under its pavement was a hole large enough for a little boy to crawl into. We began to work out the hole, and found that it extended inwards from the top of a narrow door, through which, when the earth was removed we descended into a tiny underground chamber, measuring 4 feet 4 inches in breadth by 5 feet 6 inches in length, and too low to allow one to stand upright... The door or hole at which one got in was broad enough to admit the shoulders of the average person but not more than two feet high, and its top being on the same level as the top of the chamber there was thus a drop of about three feet inside. From the top of the doorway outwards masonry extended for a short way, the blocks of stone being

⁶ M. Benson, J. Gourlay and P. Newberry, *The Temple of Mut in Asher. An account of the excavation of the temple and of the religious representations and objects found therein, as illustrating the history of Egypt and the main religious ideas of the Egyptians* (London: Murray, 1899), p. 75, with plan of Mut Temple opposite p. 36.

⁷ R. Fazzini, “Some Aspects of the Precinct of the Goddess Mut in the New Kingdom,” in *Leaving No Stones Unturned. Essays on the Ancient Near East and Egypt in Honor of Donald P. Hansen*, ed. E. Ehrenberg (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2002), pp. 72-73, and p. 64, fig. 1, 11.

⁸ R. Fazzini, *Egypt, Dynasty XXII-XXV, Iconography of Religions, Section XVI, Egypt 10* (Leiden: Institute of Religious Iconography, State University of Groningen / E. J. Brill, 1988), pp. 16-17 and 33, and pl. XXX. For this “crypt” see also *PM II*², p. 258; R. Fazzini and W. Peck, “The Precinct of Mut During Dynasty XXV and early Dynasty XXVI: A Growing Picture,” *JSSEA* 11 (1981), pp. 115-116; R. Fazzini, “Report on the 1983 Season of Excavation at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut,” *ASAE* 70 (1985), p. 294, and pl. IV, a.

⁹ For a *Hwt-k3* of Nesptah, son of Montuemhat, that was built into one of the Mut Temple’s XXVth Dynasty porches, see R. Fazzini, “The Precinct of the Goddess Mut at South Karnak 1996-2001,” *ASAE* 79 (2006), pp. 85-94. This monument will be dealt with in greater depth in R. Fazzini, *Aspects of the Art, Iconography and Architecture of Late Dynasty XX-early Dynasty XXVI (with Special Emphasis on the Temple Precinct of the Goddess Mut at Karnak)*, forthcoming.

¹⁰ For some recent publications of crypts, their decoration and contents, see S. Cauville, “Les statues cultuelles de Dendera d’après les inscriptions parietales,” *BIFAO* 87 (1987), pp. 73-117; C. Traunecker, “Cryptes décorées, cryptes anépigrahes,” in *Hommages à François Daumas* (Montpellier: Université de Montpellier, 1986), pp. 571-577; C. Traunecker, “Cryptes connues et inconnues des temples tardifs,” *BSFE* 129 (1994), pp. 21-46; W. Waitkus, “Zum funktionalen Zusammenhang von Krypta, Wabet und Goldhaus,” in *3. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung, Hamburg, 1-5 Juni 1994. Systeme und Programme der ägyptischen Tempeldekoration*, *ÄAT* 33, ed. D. Kurth (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995), pp. 283-303.

¹¹ M. Benson, J. Gourlay and P. Newberry, *The Temple of Mut in Asher*, pp. 50-52.

ingeniously placed in such wise that two more stones dropped between them would have filled up the space and completely hidden the little door... when on having cleared out the earth and rubbish with which the chamber was choked we found that in the paved floor there was a hole extending from the north-east corner to halfway below the door. There is probably but one paving-stone missing, and the hole seemed to have been deliberately made, for it was filled not with earth but with rubbish... We worked at the hole in the floor through rubbish, finding nothing but some scraps of pottery, half a Hathor head in earthenware, a broken bit of blue glaze, until we came to the sand. Even then we did not despair of finding a deposit in the sand, and worked through it until we came to layers of earth that were wet with infiltration from the lake...

The Brooklyn Museum's investigation of the crypt (Fig. 4) indicated that it was a rectangle 157 cm. deep and 135 cm. wide (slightly different from Benson and Gourlay's measurements) and 155 cm. tall. The short shaft leading to it was almost centrally located, being 39.5 cm. from the crypt's east wall and 42.5 cm. from the west wall. The preserved portion of the shaft is 94 cm. tall, 52 cm. wide, 50 cm. deep, its floor sitting 61 cm. above the crypt's floor. A line of text that ran around the interior of the crypt except for the space left by the opening has been almost completely erased. However in one area, Jacobus van Dijk and the present writer were able to make out remains of an inscription that could be read as *ntr nfr nb t3wy nb h^{cw}*, followed by the traces of the cartouche with the name Nefertumkhure illustrated in Fig. 2.¹²

A fragmentary and not easily datable offering table¹³ (Fig. 5) was found at the bottom of the shaft. However, as Benson and Gourlay did not mention it, one cannot be sure that it was there when they conducted their excavation of this entrance. Moreover, the length and width of the preserved portion of the table suggest that it was too large to fit in the bottom of the shaft. If the offering table was originally associated with this part of the temple it could have been placed inside the crypt or have fallen down from the paving of the sanctuary. Be this as it may, the crypt's entrance seems only to have been accessible by pulling up paving stones of the floor above.

In an interesting article, C. Traunecker discussed a number of types of cult images. Among his tentative classifications of these images were: (1) images used in the "culte manifesté," i.e. images of the god(s) of the temple and of temple equipment with specialized functions, such as sacred barks; and (2) "images de culte latent," defined as: "les effigies divines conservées en des lieux discrets tel les cryptes, les cénotaphes ou les salles cachées d'un temple où par leur seule présence elles remplissent leurs fonctions."¹⁴ If images were contained in the crypt under the main shrine of the Temple of Mut, they would certainly only be accessible with considerable effort and of Traunecker's "latent cult" type.

Temple A in the northeast sector of what became the Precinct of Mut also contains some badly damaged cartouches, probably or definitely of Dynasty XXV.

¹² The few readable elements of decoration of this crypt will be published in R. Fazzini, *Aspects of the Art, Iconography and Architecture of Late Dynasty XX-early Dynasty XXVI*. Suffice it to say here that one group of signs could be restored to read "Beloved of the Mistress of the Gods."

¹³ Expedition Number 6M.14. Length 41.5 cm.; width 45.5 cm.; height 13 cm.

¹⁴ C. Traunecker, "Observations sur le décor des temples égyptiens," in *L'Image et la production du sacré. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (20-21 Janvier 1988) organisé par le Centre d'Histoire des Religions de l'Université de Strasbourg II. Groupe «Théorie et pratique de l'image culturelle»*, eds. F. Dunand, J. M. Speiser and J. Wirth (Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck, 1991), pp. 85-86.

The most important and only readable one of these is on a stray block found in the north side of the Inner Hall by the door to the North Sanctuary.¹⁵ Badly damaged, this front part of a horizontal cartouche was read first by Jacobus van Dijk and then confirmed by this writer as Šb3 ... (Fig. 6).¹⁶ From the Third Pylon (called Second Pylon in the plan cited in n. 15) to the rear of the building, Temple A was built as a whole. The style of those of its reliefs that were not recarved in later times is that of Dynasty XXV¹⁷ and much more likely of the reign of Shabaqo than Shebitku. The reasons for this attribution are simple. We do not have any large-scale construction of Shebitku and the few well-preserved faces in relief in this part of the temple (Fig. 7) resemble more closely known faces in relief of Shabaqo¹⁸ than of Shebitku.¹⁹ Nevertheless, these faces are examples of a main style of the art of the Third Intermediate Period, one with roots in Dynasty XXI and which continued into early Dynasty XXVI.²⁰

Unfortunately, the birth and circumcision scenes on the north wall of Temple A's First Court (called simply "Court" in *PM II*²) cannot be dated by inscription because their cartouches are entirely erased.²¹ Nevertheless, the faces in these scenes²² have significant similarities to reliefs of the reign of Taharqa, who was responsible for other significant work in south Karnak,²³ and this writer believes the attribution of these reliefs to Taharqa is relatively safe.

As we and others have also argued elsewhere, during the Third Intermediate Period and later Temple A functioned as a mammisi,²⁴ and the attribution of this building to Shabaqo and Taharqa leads to another point worth mentioning.

¹⁵ *PM II*², pl. XXVI.

¹⁶ The Mut Expedition's reading of this cartouche was already reported by K. Cooney, "The Edifice of Taharqa: Ritual Function and the Role of the King," *JARCE* 37 (2000), p. 39 with n. 163.

¹⁷ P. Barguet, *Le temple d'Amon-Rê à Karnak. Essai d'exégèse*. Recherches d'Archéologie, de Philosophie et d'Histoire 21 (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1962), pp. 9-10; R. Fazzini and W. Peck, "The Precinct of Mut During Dynasty XXV and early Dynasty XXVI," pp. 115-126; R. Fazzini, "A Monument in the Precinct of Mut with the Name of the God's Wife Nitocris I," in *Artibus Aegypti. Studia in Honorem Bernardi V. Bothmer a Collegis, Amicis, Discipulis Conscripta*, eds. H. De Meulenaere and L. Limme (Brussels: Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, 1983), pp. 51-62.

¹⁸ E.g., K. Myśliwiec, *Royal Portraiture of the Dynasties XXI-XXX* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1988), pls. XXVII, a-d; XXXI, b-d; XXXIII, b and d; J. Leclant, in R. Parker, J. Leclant and J.-C. Goyon, *The Edifice of Taharqa by the Sacred Lake of Karnak*, Brown Egyptological Studies 8 (Providence: Brown University Press, 1979), pls. 2, E and 3, A-B.

¹⁹ K. Myśliwiec, *Royal Portraiture of the Dynasties XXI-XXX*, pls. XXXIV and XXXV, b.

²⁰ R. Fazzini, "Sculpture, Third Intermediate Period," in *The Dictionary of Art* 9, ed. J. Turner (London and New York: Grove, 1996), pp. 886-888; and R. Fazzini, "The Chapel of Osiris Ruler-of-Eternity and the Art of the Third Intermediate Period," in *The Twenty-Third Dynasty Chapel of Osiris Ruler of Eternity at Karnak*, eds. G. Kadish and D. Redford (Mississauga, Ontario: Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities Publications, forthcoming), with references to E. Russmann, *The Representation of the King in the XXVth Dynasty*, Monographies Reine Élisabeth 3 (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth; Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1974); S. Wenig, *Africa in Antiquity. The Arts of Ancient Nubia and the Sudan II: The Catalogue* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1978); C. Aldred et al., *L'Égypte du crépuscule. De Tanis à Meroé, 1070 av. J.-C. - IV^e siècle apr. J.-C.*, Le monde égyptien. Les pharaons 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1980).

²¹ A decent published photograph of the best preserved cartouche is W. J. de Jong, "De tempel van Chonsoe-het-kind (vervolg)," *de Ibis* 8, no. 4 (1983), Afb. 37 on p. 115.

²² See, e.g., W. J. de Jong, "De tempel van Chonsoe-het-kind (vervolg)," p. 105, afb. 30; p. 107, afb. 32.

²³ See, e.g., K. Myśliwiec, *Royal Portraiture of the Dynasties XXI-XXX*, pl. XL; R. Fazzini and W. Peck, "The Precinct of Mut During Dynasty XXV and early Dynasty XXVI," pp. 115-126; R. Fazzini and W. Peck, "Excavating the Temple of Mut," *Archaeology* 36 (1983), pp. 16-23.

²⁴ H. De Meulenaere, "Isis et Mout du mammisi," *OLA* 13 (1982), pp. 25-29; R. Fazzini and W. Peck, "The Precinct of Mut During Dynasty XXV and early Dynasty XXVI," pp. 122-126; R. Morkot, *The Black Pharaohs: Egypt's Nubian Rulers* (London: Rubicon Press, 2002), p. 244. For publications of the decoration of Temple A see *PM II*²,

The Lake Edifice of Taharqa by the sacred lake of the Amun Precinct at Karnak had strong links to solar-Osirian ideas of divine and royal renewal.²⁵ Equally important, it may also be a structure originally built by Shabaqo but then rebuilt by Taharqa.²⁶ If so, and admitting that ideas of divine and royal rebirth/justification are also known in the Lake Edifice and other Theban structures in Dynasty XXV, it seems reasonable to see Temple A, apparently just brought into the Mut Precinct at the beginning of Dynasty XXV,²⁷ as a structure devoted to mammisiac royal renewal/justification that served as a counterpoint to the Lake Edifice, site of solar-Osirian royal renewal/justification.²⁸ Be this as it may, it is important to keep in mind that the rise of both the mammisiac and the solar-Osirian ritual of Djeme began no later than late

pp. 270-272, especially the references to M. Pillet, "Les scènes de naissance et de circoncision dans le temple nord-est de Mout à Karnak," *ASAE* 52 (1952), pp. 77-104; and G. Nagel, "Décoration d'un temple de Mout à Karnak," *Archiv Orientalní* 20 (1952), pp. 90-99. See also W. J. de Jong, "De tempels van Karnak, 4: De tempel van Chonsoe-het-kind," *de Ibis* 8, no. 3 (1983), pp. 66-96 and W. J. de Jong, "De tempel van Chonsoe-het-kind (vervolg)," pp. 98-119. Without referring to the articles by De Meulenaere or Fazzini and Peck just cited, de Jong argued (p. 118) that Temple A "...can be tentatively identified as a 'missing link' between the temple halls of Deir el Bahri and Luxor..." He also suggested (p. 119) that the Khonsu Temple shows "the merging of the ancient royal birth reliefs with the, already existing, separate child-god temple," which led to the later mammisis. As we have already indicated, the identification of Temple A as a temple of Khonsu is not necessarily correct and there is reason to believe that it was a mammisi by Dynasty XXV (R. Fazzini and W. Peck, "The Precinct of Mut During Dynasty XXV and early Dynasty XXVI"). This has been accepted by other scholars (e.g., D. Arnold, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egyptian Architecture*, trans. S. Gardiner and H. Strudwick [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003], p. 33).

In "A Monument in the Precinct of Mut with the Name of the God's Wife Nitocris I," p. 58, I stated my belief that the presence of certain female images in Temple A was related to the presence in the temple of scenes of the birth of a king. Here I will add that it probably also reflects the relationships among Mut, queens and God's Wives of Amun. If this is accepted, I wish to briefly note here two errors in that article on topics with which I will deal in more detail elsewhere. First, at the time of writing the article I was not certain that the Nitocris I lintel belonged to the small structure near which it was found; after further study, there seems no reason to doubt that it does. Secondly, I stated that the base of a statue of a queen, inscribed for a queen of Taharqa (p. 57 and fig. 7a-b), was original to Dynasty XXV. This statue was also attributed to a queen of Taharqa by R. Morkot, *The Black Pharaohs*, p. 244, possibly on the basis of my article. However, and as first noticed by Jacobus van Dijk, the sculpture appears to be an earlier work usurped by her, such a usurpation being unusual in Dynasty XXV royal statuary. After studying the object further and examining a parallel piece at the Ramesseum to which Jacobus van Dijk kindly referred me, it appears to me that Queen Tiye is a potential candidate for original ownership of the statue. For another possible fragmentary statue of Tiye in the Precinct, see R. Fazzini, "Some New Kingdom Images," forthcoming in a volume of the *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* in memory of James F. Romano.

²⁵ J.-C. Goyon, in R. Parker, J. Leclant and J.-C. Goyon, *The Edifice of Taharqa by the Sacred Lake of Karnak*, pp. 11-86; K. Cooney, "The Edifice of Taharqa," pp. 27, 34, 39, 41.

²⁶ J. Leclant, in R. Parker, J. Leclant and J.-C. Goyon, *The Edifice of Taharqa by the Sacred Lake of Karnak*, pp. 5-10; K. Cooney, "The Edifice of Taharqa," p. 17.

²⁷ R. Fazzini and W. Peck, "The Precinct of Mut During Dynasty XXV and early Dynasty XXVI," p. 119.

²⁸ R. Parker, J. Leclant, J.-C. Goyon, *The Edifice of Taharqa by the Sacred Lake of Karnak*, pp. 30, 33-35, 82; K. Cooney, "The Edifice of Taharqa," pp. 21, 27, 34, and 39. For the importance of the solar-Osirian cycle in the earlier Third Intermediate Period, see A. Niwiński, "The Solar-Osirian Unity as principle of the Theology of the 'State of Amen' in Thebes in the 21st Dynasty," *Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap Ex Oriente Lux* 30 (1987-1988) (1989), pp. 89-107.

Dynasty XX,²⁹ which is the time by which Temple A appears to have changed from a “Temple of Millions of Years” of Ramesses II to a mammisi.³⁰

²⁹On the mammisiac see, e.g., R. Fazzini, “Four Unpublished Ancient Egyptian Objects in Faience in the Brooklyn Museum of Art,” *JSSEA* 28 (2001) = *Papers Presented in Memory of Alan R. Schulman*, pp. 55-66. On the ritual of Djeme see R. Fazzini, *Egypt, Dynasty XXII-XXV*, pp. 22-24, with its numerous references, and K. Cooney, “The Edifice of Taharqa,” pp. 26-37.

³⁰R. Fazzini and W. Peck, “The Precinct of Mut During Dynasty XXV and early Dynasty XXVI,” pp. 122-124. This subject will be discussed in more detail in R. Fazzini, *Aspects of the Art, Iconography and Architecture of Late Dynasty XX-Early Dynasty XXVI*.

Figures



Fig. 1. Detail of a Dynasty XXV stela found in front of the south wing of the Second Pylon of the Amun Temple at Karnak. Photograph by B. V. Bothmer.

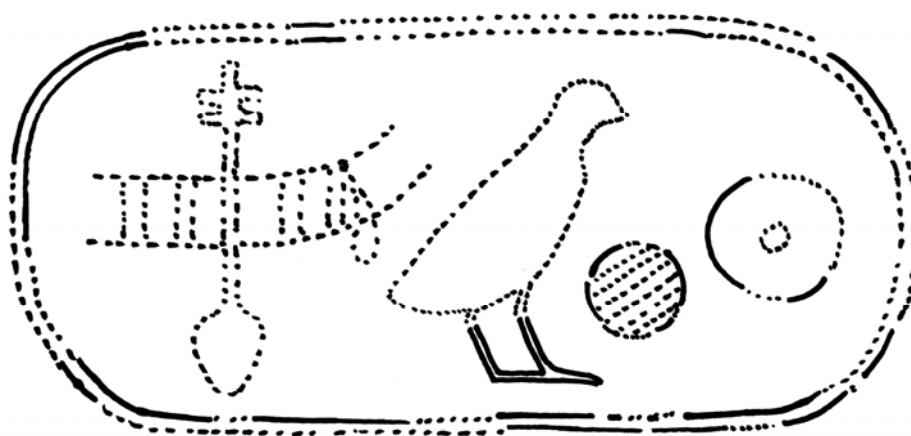


Fig. 2. The prenomen of Taharqa in the crypt under the main sanctuary of the Temple of Mut. Drawing by J. van Dijk and R. Fazzini.

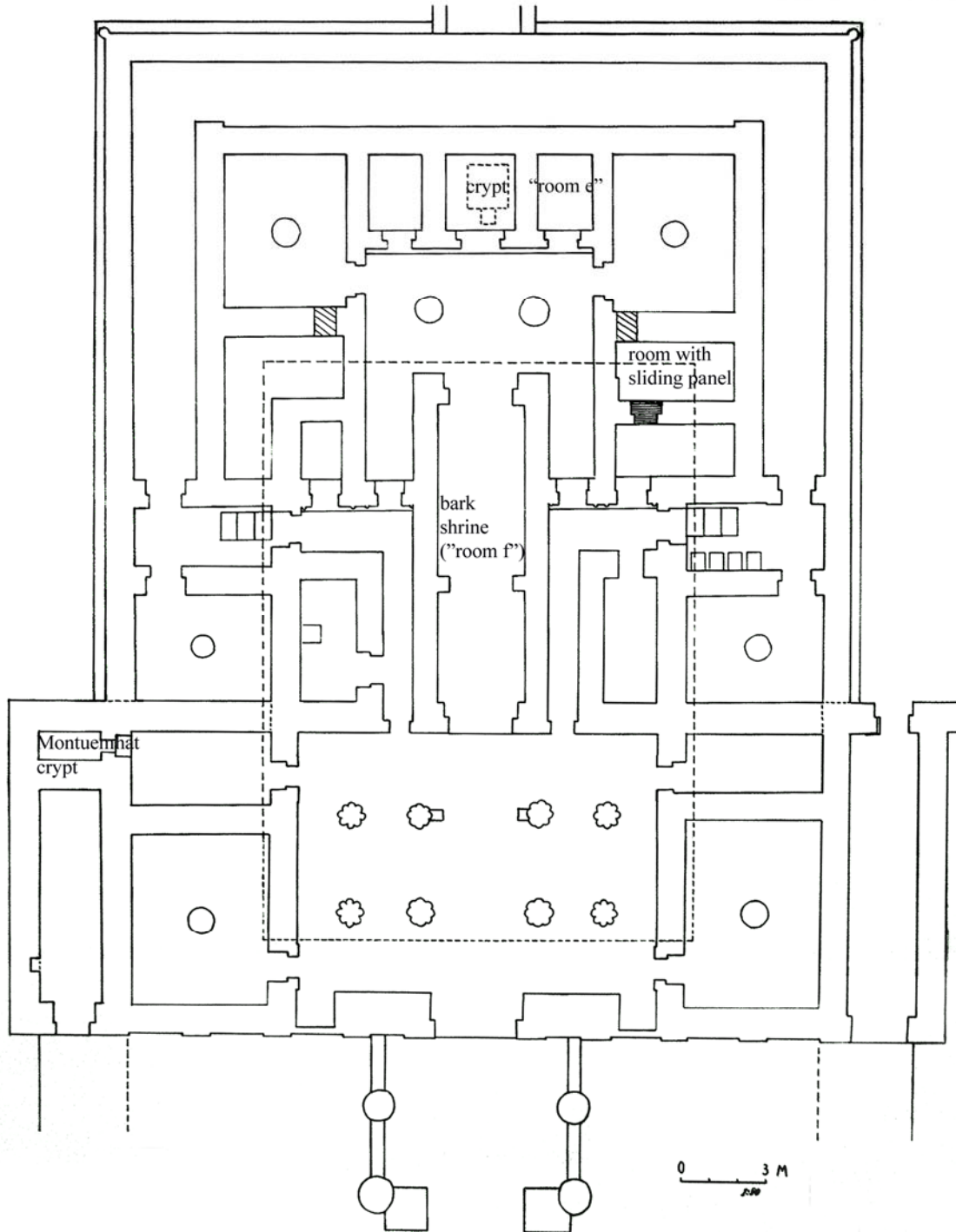


Fig. 3. Schematic plan by C. Van Siclen of the rear half of the Temple of Mut. The dotted line indicates the Tutmoside platform.



Fig. 4. The crypt under the main sanctuary of the Temple of Mut and the shaft before it. Photograph by M. McKercher.



Fig. 5. Fragmentary offering table found at the bottom of the shaft before the crypt under the main sanctuary of the Temple of Mut. Photograph by M. McKercher.

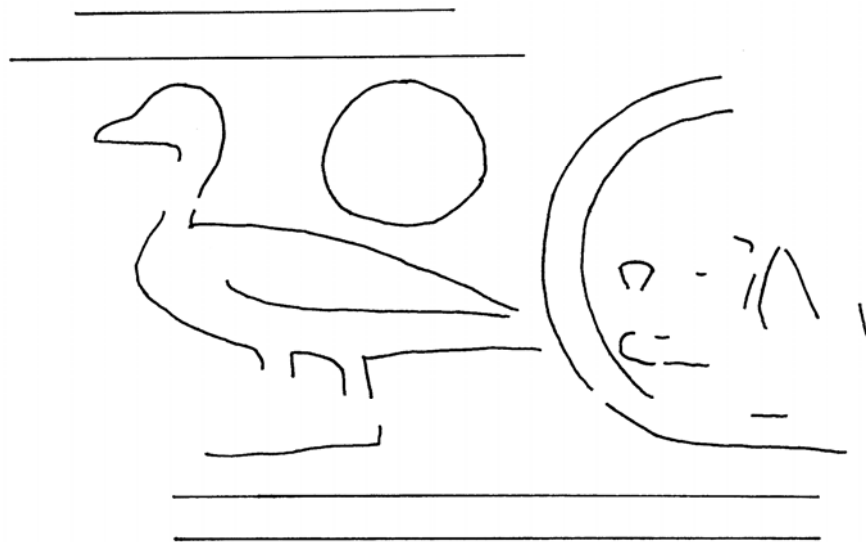


Fig. 6a-b. Photograph and drawing of the front part of a cartouche of Šb3... found in the rear of Temple A. Drawing by R. Fazzini. Photograph by M. McKercher.



Fig. 7. Two well-preserved faces in relief in the rear of Temple A. Photograph by M. McKercher.