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BROOKLYN MUSEUM ANNOUNCES FORMATION OF THEBAN EXPEDITION
TO SAVE AND PRESERVE MONUMENTS IN VALLEY OF KINGS AND COMPLETE
EXCAVATION OF THE PRECINCT OF MUT

BROOKLYN, New York, November 15 -- The Brooklyn Museum today announced the formation of The Theban Expedition, a long-range scientific project at the site of ancient Thebes. The Expedition will combine the conservation and recording of the monuments in the Valley of the Kings on the west bank of the Nile with continuing excavations in the east bank Precinct of Mut.

The initial two-year phase is being made possible by a grant from The Coca-Cola Company, Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. The project has received wide encouragement and support from the governments of Egypt and the United States. Present at the press conference announcing the Expedition were Aymon El-Emir, Press Consul, The Egyptian Embassy and John Q. Blodgett, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State. Representing The Coca-Cola Company was Sam Ayoub, President of the Company's Middle East Group.

The Theban Expedition's work on the west bank will be devoted to a geological and archaeological study to provide the basis for preserving the ancient sepulchres and their treasures.

The Directors of the project, James B. Manning and Richard Fazzini,

characterized the planned west bank operations as a race against the ravages of time. Hundreds of monuments in the Theban Necropolis, built during the five centuries of the "New Kingdom" - about 1550 B.C. - 1000 B.C. - are presently endangered by flash floods and massive movements of rock. Furthermore, salt efflorescence continues to damage the paintings and reliefs which adorn their walls.

Manning and Fazzini also led a similar team in the east bank excavations in the Precinct of the Goddess Mut for the past two years and will supervise the continuing work there as well. It was Manning's concern for the deteriorated state of the monuments in the Valley of the Kings which led to the international concern that generated the additional formation of The Theban Expedition.

In addition to the geological and archaeological studies in the Royal Necropolis, the monuments in the Valley of the Kings will be mapped, measured and recorded. Until now, far less than 20% of the tombs have been adequately recorded or photographed. The best known tomb in the Valley of the Kings is that of Tutankhamen, a comparatively small one.

After the completion of the initial surveys and publication of the results, The Theban Expedition will become multinational, with scholars, historians, archaeologists and others from the world's leading museums and institutions invited to participate.

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FACT SHEET

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THE THEBAN EXPEDITION: THEBAN ROYAL TOMB PROJECT

1. The Valley of the Kings

During the third great phase of ancient Egyptian history, the five-century period of empire now called New Kingdom, 25 Pharaohs were buried in rock cut tombs in a forty acre site known today as the Valley of the Kings. Some of the finest reliefs and paintings ever made by the ancient Egyptian artists were placed upon the walls of the passages and chambers of these tombs. They form the single most important source of our knowledge of the religion of that period. The surviving records produced by the craftsmen who made the tombs provide an economic and sociological record without parallel in the ancient world.

The Valley of the Kings lies behind the cliffs that face the town of Luxor, about four hundred miles south of Cairo. This was the site of the huge city of Thebes, the religious and political center for most of the New Kingdom period. The age of archaeological discovery in the Valley of the Kings was between 1799, the date of the Napoleonic expedition's work in the area, and 1922, when Howard Carter opened the tomb of the Pharaoh Tutankhamen, one of the smallest of the royal tombs in the Valley. More than 75 tombs of kings, queens and courtiers were discovered and numbered during that period, but plans for less than 20% of the Necropolis tombs have been recorded in a scientific manner.

2. Deterioration of the Royal Tombs

Royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings have suffered significant physical deterioration since tomb construction first began almost 3500 years ago. Today virtually one third of the tombs have been lost under the rubble which covers a large part of the floor of the Valley, and many more tombs still require excavation to free them of their filling of rock and gravel, untouched since ancient times. Almost half of these tombs urgently require major conservation work and support to prevent them from collapsing or shedding their plaster decorations and texts.

The tombs of the Valley are cut in limestone and an underlying bed of shale. This shale expands upon contact with water and contracts with desiccation. The Valley is highly vulnerable to flash floods, and some of the finest tombs have been ruined by the effects of water, causing movement of the shale layer and the collapse of tomb chambers. Further damage is being caused by movement in the limestone itself. Salt efflorescence is damaging decorations. Vandalism, theft, casual visitor damage, careless tomb clearing and massive rock movements are some of the factors which have been other deteriorative factors.

The rate of physical deterioration of some royal tombs has increased in the last decade as confirmed by preliminary scientific data.

Although tombs may have several agents of deterioration in common, no two tombs are identical and each tomb must be studied as an individual case.

The causes of tomb damage are complex and to some extent interdependent. A broadscale study by a team consisting of several scientific and academic disciplines is necessary to define existing conditions and prepare detailed recommendations for appropriate remedies.

3. Initial Two-Year Research Plan of Theban Expedition

An extensive geological survey, including the mapping of the limestone and shale layers, the faults and fractures in the limestone, and the entire flood pattern of the area, will be prepared. Monitoring instruments will be placed in the Valley and its tombs, and a complete record of the physical conditions of the tombs made. This data, coupled with all the historical information available, will enable an accurate assessment of the remedial action necessary.

An archaeological/epigraphic record of the monuments must be undertaken, in conjunction with the physical survey. This multi-disciplinary approach will greatly increase the amount of information that would be gained from normal archeological procedure. It is expected that much fresh historical information will emerge from this work including new information concerning the workers who worked on the tombs. Other monuments in the royal necropolis may be uncovered.

The importance of the geological investigation cannot be overestimated. An accurate mapping of the expansive shale surface will form the basis of recommended flood control and tomb conservation work.

The world famous Colossi of Memnon, the great sandstone temples, non-royal tombs in the Theban Necropolis, and the other ancient monuments of Egypt will greatly benefit from the research to be conducted by the Expedition.

Monuments in other lands will benefit as well, since the results of the two-year study will be made universally available and scholars from other institutions the world over will be invited to participate in later phases of the work of the Theban Expedition.

FACT SHEET
(EAST BANK)

THE THEBAN EXPEDITION: EXCAVATIONS OF THE PRECINCTS OF THE
GODDESS MUT

1. The Precinct of Mut

Since January, 1976 The Brooklyn Museum and The American Research Center in Egypt have been conducting an archaeological expedition to the Temple Precinct of the Goddess Mut at Karnak South. This site is known as Karnak South because it represents the southern portion of that great complex of temples, collectively termed Karnak, which constituted one of the great religious centers of ancient Egypt.

These temples are the major state constructions on the East Bank of the Nile at Thebes, that ancient capital whose cemeteries on the West Bank of the river, in particular the royal necropolis known as the Valley of the Kings, are the concern of the other half of the Theban Expedition. The deteriorating state of the royal tombs has been documented in a report to the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities by the Mut Expedition, which conducted concurrent exploratory work on the west bank.

The precinct, the sacred realm of the goddess, covers an area of about 25 acres. Surrounded by a massive mud brick wall to protect and delimit it from the profane world without, Mut's precinct is linked to the precinct (Central Karnak) of her husband, Amun, King of the Gods, by an avenue of sphinxes. These were most probably erected by King Tutankhamen as part of his restoration of the state cults abandoned by his predecessor Akhenaten during that unusual interlude in the XVIIIth Dynasty now known as the Amarna Period.

2. The Structures

Within the precinct of Mut are the remains of five temples and chapels which are at least partially hidden by the mounds of earth and man-made debris which have built up over the millennia.

The major structures now known within the precinct are as follows:

- a. The Temple of Mut. This, the main temple in the precinct, has a history extending from ca. 1550 B. C. well into Roman times. Partially cleared in the late 1890's, almost the entire periphery of the temple remains to be excavated. Brief past work uncovered fascinating architectural features as well as an impressive number of artistically and historically important sculptures. It is anticipated that future excavations in this area will be at least as productive.

- b. A temple of Khonsu-pa-khered, a lunar deity and the offspring of Amun and Mut, in the northeast corner. Also partially cleared in the past, this monument is constructed to no small extent of decorated blocks from earlier temples. These will eventually have to be retrieved by first dismantling and then rebuilding the temple, an operation which is also necessary for the preservation of the building. The Temple of Khonsu-pa-khered also has an unexcavated forecourt in which are still to be seen half buried monuments including colossal statues.
- c. A temple on an artificial platform of mud brick whose purpose and date are not yet known.
- d. A temple of King Ramesses III of Dynasty XX (1196-1080 B. C.), the approaches to which remain to be excavated.
- e. A chapel of the Ptolemaic Period (323-30 B. C.) which was almost entirely excavated by the expedition in 1977.

3. Other Findings of the Mut Expedition

Mut and her temple have long been overshadowed by the dominance of Amun, and little is known about her. She seems often to have been identified with another goddess, the lion-headed Sakhmet. In fact, the two deities may be called the opposite sides of the same divine coin, Mut being the beneficent aspect of the goddess and Sakhmet the destructive aspect. Further work in the precinct should provide important information not only for the study of Mut and Sakhmet, but Egyptian religion in general.

Excavation in 1977 brought to light a decorated stone gateway of King Taharqa, one of the Sudanese kings who ruled Egypt as the XXVth Dynasty (ca. 750-656 B. C.). The discovery of this gate, together with other findings in the precinct, indicates that ambitious building programs were undertaken in the Mut Precinct during that dynasty.

The 1977 excavation also brought to light a series of habitations of Ptolemaic and Roman date. Their continued excavation during the coming seasons should contribute to world knowledge of the "urban" archaeology of Upper Egypt.

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4. The Sacred Lake

The Mut Temple is encircled on three sides by a sacred lake named Isherew. This lake, according to Theban religious texts, was the site of the creation, with the waters of the lake being equated with the waters of chaos within which the universe first came into being. The Isherew is also described in ancient texts as a watery refuge, excavated by the sun-god Re, behind which Mut, (or Mut identified with the leonine goddess Sakhmet), gives birth to her divine son. The history and plan of the sacred lake, which almost certainly contains the remains of sculptures, also remains to be discovered.

The importance of the lake to the precinct is emphasized by the existence of a peculiar structure, normally called the Contra-Temple, abutting the rear of the Mut Temple and opening onto the lake. This structure too remains to be completely excavated.

5. The Ongoing Work on the East Bank

The efforts of the Mut Expedition will focus on excavations at the Temple of Mut, the Temple of Khonsu-pa-khered, the Temple of King Ramesses III, the Ptolemaic and Roman Period habitations and the area of Lake Isherew.

New excavations are also programmed. From plans of the site made during the 19th century A.D. we know that the precinct, the residence of the Queen of the Gods and the Lady of Heaven, contains not only more houses but other important religious structures. Their excavation and study, together with the preservation of monuments already known and those yet to be discovered, is the purpose of this phase of the Theban Expedition.

ANTICIPATED RESULTS OF THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF
"THE THEBAN EXPEDITION"

I. East Bank

- A. Two more seasons of excavation in the precinct of the Goddess Mut at Karnak may result in the unearthing of religious and domestic structures in stone and other materials. It will also entail conservation and reconstruction work on structures already visible as well as those to be unearthed.
- B. The construction of a living/research compound to be utilized for the work on both banks of the Nile.
- C. Research on factors causing the destruction of monuments on the East bank.

II. West Bank

- A. A geological survey of the Theban Necropolis. This will include a tracing of basic rock formations and an investigation of how the nature of those formations is threatening the preservation of the Tombs in the Necropolis.
- B. A recording of changes in temperature and humidity in the Tombs and an investigation of the implications of the data thus derived for their continued preservation.
- C. An investigation of how to deal with the problem of salts in the stone which are now destroying the decoration in the Tombs and Temples on both sides of the River.
- D. A condition report on the Tombs in the Valley of the Kings and in selected Tombs elsewhere in the Theban Necropolis. This material to provide a basis for a future program of conservation work.
- E. An archeological survey of the Valley of the Kings and its environs. This will include a mapping of habitations and roads both in the Valley and in the cliffs forming the rest of the Theban Necropolis. The information thus derived will be of paramount importance for the study of the urban archeology of Upper Egypt. It will also include a basic recording of the Tombs in the Valley of the Kings. All this information will be necessary for the formulation of plans for the ultimate preservation of the monuments at Thebes.

- III. Initial publication of the results of the work on both banks in addition to publication of the two previous seasons' work at Thebes.

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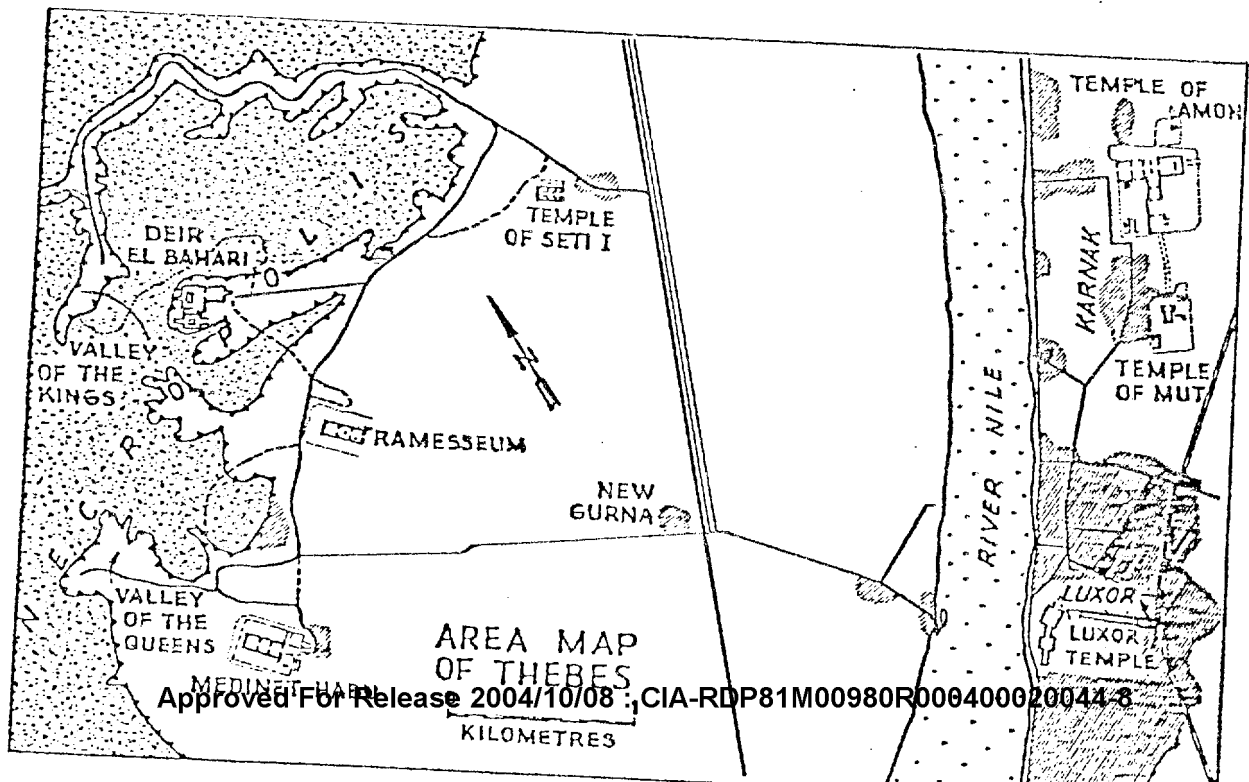
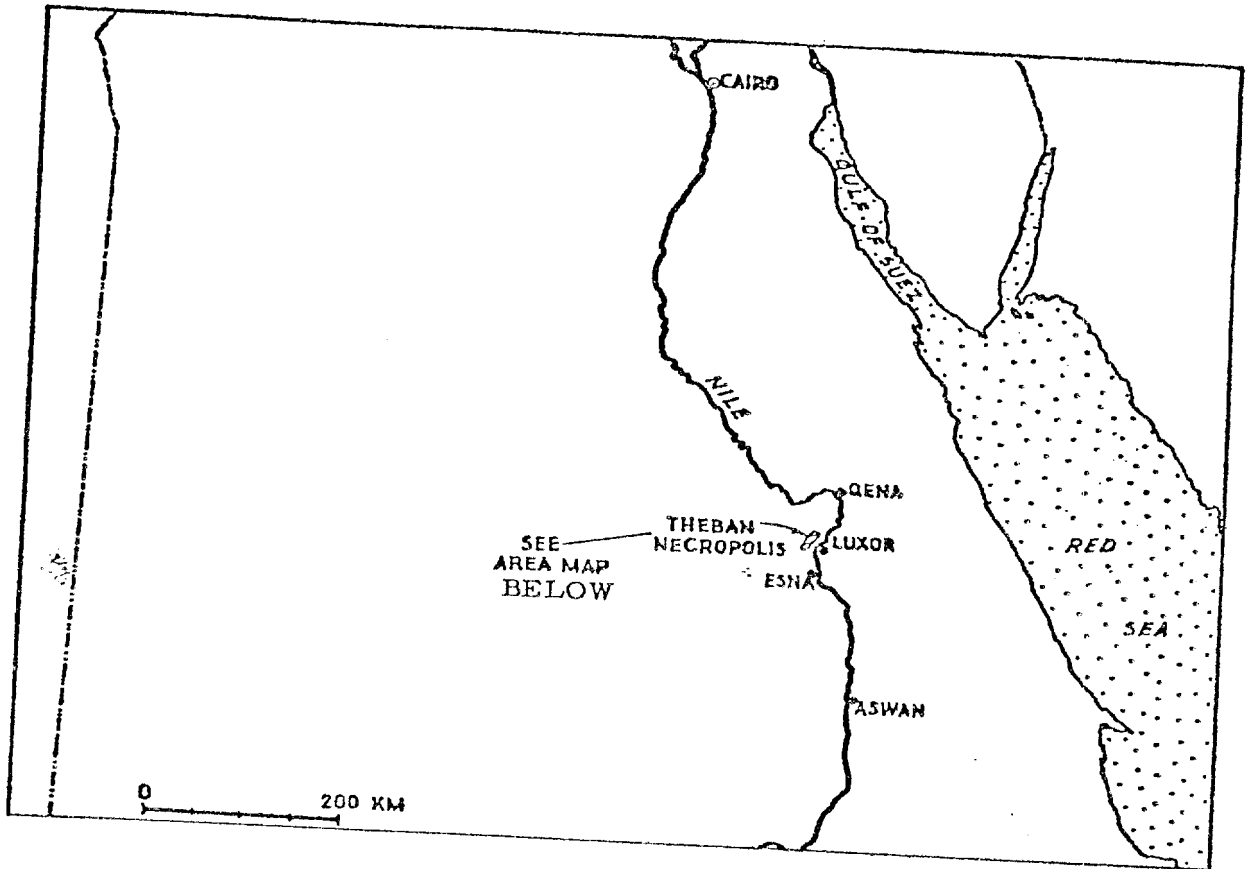
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The Theban Expedition is made possible by a grant from
The Coca-Cola Company, Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT SHOWING THEBAN NECROPOLIS

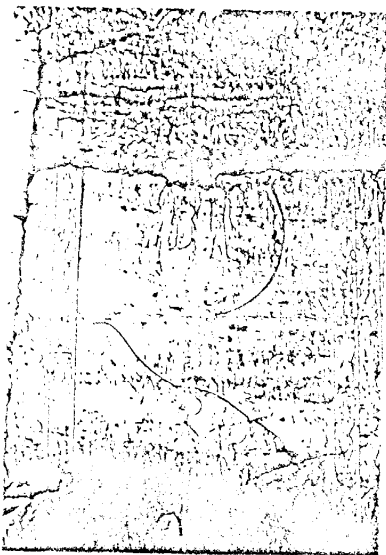




The head of the Valley of the Kings.



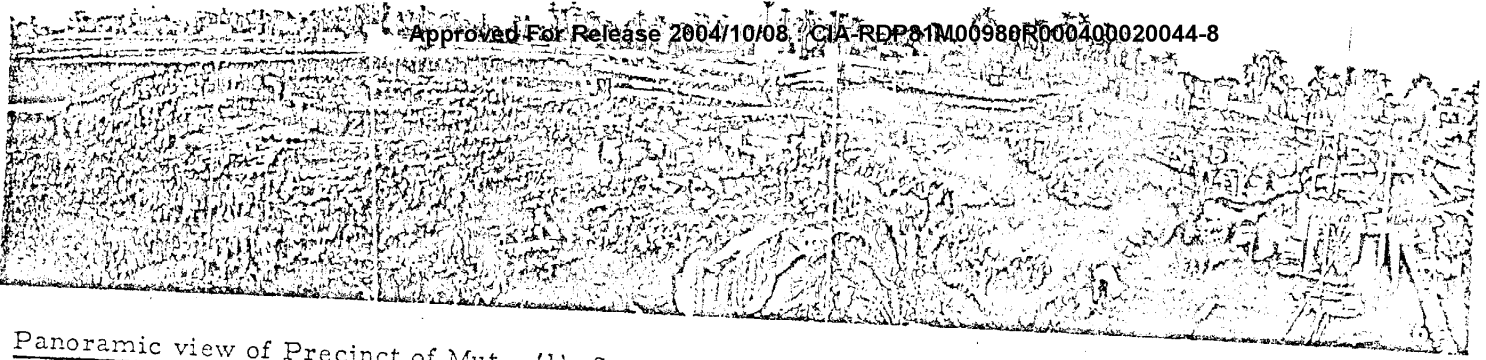
Entrance corridors of the tomb. The beams stand upon the remains of flood debris and were placed in position by some early excavator fearful of rock falls. Today, due to desiccation and shrinkage of the sediment on which they stand, they barely touch the roof that they were intended to support.



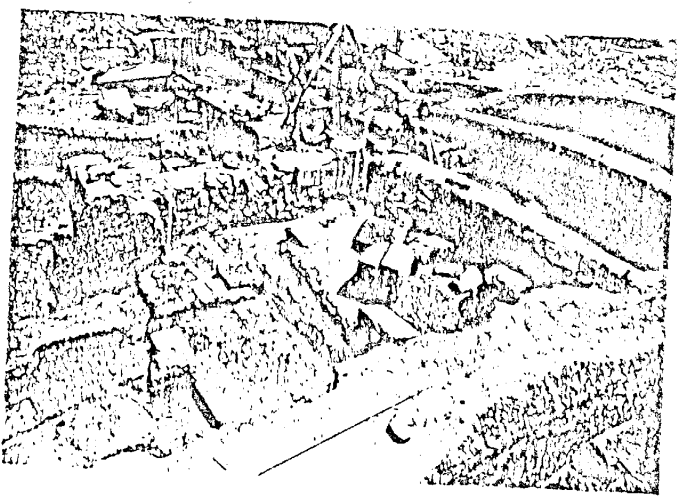
Limestone relief in tomb of King Ramesses II. The spirit of the dead king is chasing away the spirits of the underworld. Separations are filled with flood debris, water damage has set in on the bottom and the relief is being which will cause its eventual disintegration.



Burial chamber of the tomb of Ramesses II -- the most destroyed room of the tomb. The desiccation of the shale was greatly accelerated by the diggings of early archaeologists in search of the king's sarcophagus, and the chamber is reaching the final stages of collapse. This detail of the end wall shows a vertical split with subsequent rotation. This unusual fracture may be due to subsidence caused by the desiccation of shale in a yet undiscovered chamber lying under or beyond.



Panoramic view of Precinct of Mut. (1) Sacred Lake; (2) Temple of Mut; (3) Fallen colossal statue; (4) Temple of Ramesses III; (5) Excavation in progress; (6) Northern enclosure wall of Precinct



North wing of the newly discovered gateway of King Taharqa (middle); excavation of Ptolemaic Chapel (background); walls of houses built into gateway when it went out of use (lower left). The decorated blocks in the middle have fallen from the gateway.



James B. Manning (left) and Richard Fazzini (right), co-directors of the Theban Expedition shown in January, 1977, beginning the excavation of the houses in the Precinct of Mut.

Luxor's Other Temple

Digging into the mysteries of Mut, Tut and Sekhmet

"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"

—Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Ozymandias*

Ozymandias, as the Greeks called Ramses II, was a compulsive builder of temples, palaces and statues. But Ramses, who reigned in the 13th century B.C., was not the only Egyptian ruler with an edifice complex; every pharaoh, from 3,000 B.C. on, helped assure his immortality by leaving behind monuments of many kinds and shapes to his greatness. For many years the temple complex at Karnak has stood out as one of the most remarkable of these works.

A magnificent temple of the god Amon was begun near modern Luxor in Upper Egypt around 2000 B.C. and was continuously added to by generations of succeeding rulers. Now, however, this temple in all its splendor may have a rival. A team from New York's Brooklyn Museum has begun excavating the grounds of the temple of Mut (pronounced Moot), Amon's consort, a few hundred meters south of the temple of Amon, and has hit archaeological pay dirt. The new site, which was used continuously from around 1400 B.C. until as late as Roman times, not only links many of Egypt's most illustrious pharaohs, but casts new light on the little-known goddess they honored. "This site is a gold mine," says James Manning of the Brooklyn Museum. "It could give us an entirely new view of a large portion of ancient Egypt and its religion."

Located at what was the ancient city of Thebes, the temple of Mut had been investigated sketchily by earlier archaeological expeditions. But the Brooklyn Museum, which was granted an exclusive concession to excavate the area in 1975, is the first institution to launch a systematic study of the temple grounds. The 25-acre site is surrounded by an ancient mud brick wall nearly four meters (twelve feet) high in places, and is connected to the larger temple of Amon by a sphinx-lined avenue believed to have been constructed by Amenhotep III.

The centerpiece of the site is the ruined temple of Mut, surrounded on three sides by a horseshoe-shaped lake called Isheru. The lake is symbolic of the watery abyss in which—according to Theban legend—all life that is to be found on earth originated.

The handiwork of a number of

religious practices. Their hope, of course, is that even more dramatic artifacts lie waiting to be unearthed. A small rise overlooking the temple is dotted with large stone heads of sphinxes, and team members believe that monumental statues lie just beneath them, waiting to be revealed by further excavation next year. "We know from 19th century maps of the site that there are large walls with stone gateways buried beneath the mound," says Richard Fazzini, curator of Egyptian art at the Brooklyn Museum and field director of the dig.

No statues of Mut—she is sometimes unflatteringly if elegantly depicted as a vulture—have yet been found in the temple that is dedicated to her or on the surrounding grounds. But the site abounds with statues of Sekhmet, the lion-headed goddess whose association with fire, war and pestilence made her one of the most powerful in the Egyptian pantheon.

To the Brooklyn archaeologists, this suggests that Sekhmet, who was consort to Ptah, the major god of Egypt during an earlier period, became associated and later identified with Mut, mate of the new king of the gods, Amon. The identification got a boost during the reign of Tutankhamen, who revived the once-suppressed Theban religious cult. Manning speculates that Tut's linking of the temples of Mut and Amon may have been a move to bring harmony and prosperity to a weakened and disordered land. Says Manning: "He had to restore order to Egypt if he was going to rule effectively, and we know he moved the capital from Akhetaton [which is now called Tel el Amarna] back to Thebes. What we've found here so far suggests that he would have had a major role in promoting the cult of Mut, which would be a logical move if he were trying to unite Egypt."

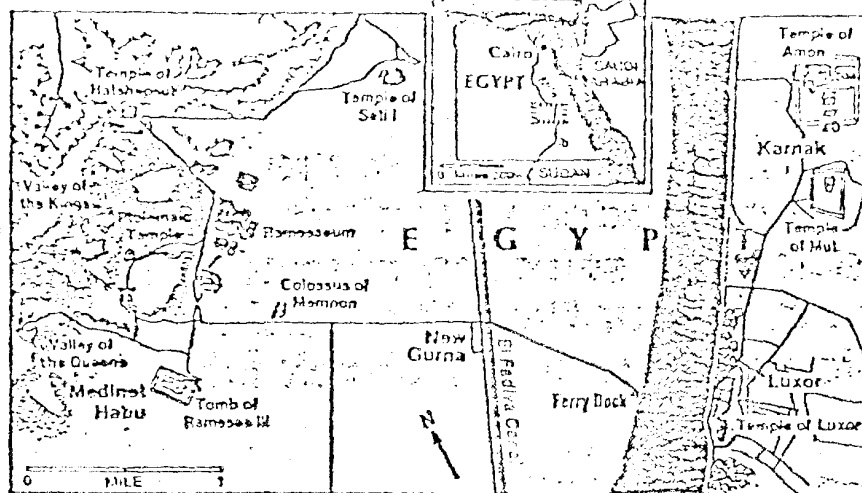
Manning hopes to find out more about the temples and Mut herself from the contents of 500 plastic shopping bags full of potsherds and other fragments that the team has already collected. The archaeologists are likely to need a lot more shopping bags before they are finished. Only a fraction of Mut's temple grounds have been explored thus far. Manning estimates that it will take another 25 years to dig up the



Statue of lion-headed Sekhmet in Temple of Mut

A new view of a long-overlooked goddess.

Egypt's rulers is evident on the grounds: a gate dating from the reign of Taharqa, one of the Nubian kings who ruled Egypt in the 25th dynasty, and the remains of a chapel from the Ptolemaic period. The archaeologists have also discovered priests' quarters, which could provide new



The New York Times/Nov. 14, 1977

Museum Expedition Will Assess Damage to Tombs of Pharaohs

By BOYCE RENSBERGER

Egypt's Valley of the Kings, in whose rock walls the tombs of 25 pharaohs rested securely for more than 3,000 years, is cracking and crumbling so severely that many tombs are believed to be near collapse.

In the hope of assessing the problem and taking corrective measures in time to save the tombs, most of which have not been systematically studied, the Brooklyn Museum announced yesterday that it was mounting a long-range expedition to the valley.

The co-directors of the project, calling it "a race against the ravages of time," said the museum had obtained the support of the Egyptian and United States Governments and a grant of at least \$360,000 from the Coca-Cola Company to cover the first two years of what is being called the Theban Expedition.

The Valley of the Kings, part of the Necropolis of Thebes, which also includes tombs of queens and courtiers, is near present-day Luxor, the site of ancient Thebes, once the most important political and religious city of Egypt. In and around Thebes are concentrated the greatest known and suspected repositories of artifacts of ancient Egypt, particularly of the New Kingdom period, which lasted from about 1550 B.C. to 1000 B.C.

It was in the Valley of the Kings in 1922 that archeologists found the tomb of Tutankhamen, one of the smaller ones. Carved inscriptions and paintings on the walls of the tombs are considered to be among the most important sources of knowledge about the religion of the New Kingdom.

It is estimated that fewer than a fifth of the tombs in the area have been properly photographed and systematically described. Most have been subjected to the Brooklyn Museum project called "archeological plundering."

salt crystals in the outermost layers of the tomb walls, causing bits to flake off, along with vandalism, theft, damage by tourists and careless work in clearing rubble that has already fallen into some tombs.

Mr. Romer said the project would include a detailed geological survey of the region and mapping of the various rock members and the area's flooding pattern. Monitoring instruments will be set up to detect changes in various physical conditions.

At the same time, he said, other workers will carry out a detailed archeological survey, documenting what remains before any more is lost. Mr. Romer said it was possible this work could bring to light tombs and monuments.

To Ward Off Humidity

Among 100 possible corrective steps Mr. Romer said his work might recommend are sealing the tomb entrances so that humidity inside could be maintained at a level that would prevent further drying out, and installing drainage pipes in the valley to prevent any new floods.

The Theban Expedition, which is under the overall direction of James E. Manning and Richard Fazzini, both of the Brooklyn Museum, will also include additional excavations in the Precinct of Mut. This 25-acre walled area across the Nile from the Valley of the Kings was the sacred realm of the goddess Mut, consort of Amun, who was king of the gods.

Preliminary work in this place earlier this year suggests that it is extraordinarily rich with new evidence of Egyptian civilization. There is also a sacred lake that, according to Theban religious texts, was the site of the creation. The waters of chaos from which the universe arose.

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John Romer, a British Egyptologist who has worked in the area for many years in various capacities, has been appointed field director of the royal tomb project. He said there appeared to be many causes for the deterioration of the tombs, but he cited the long-term effects of flooding as a major one.

Until the last century the tombs were sealed. But when archeologists opened them, they became vulnerable to the rare but sometimes severe flooding that can follow a sudden rain in the valley. Runoff from the barren soil is substantial and many tombs have been inundated at one time or another. The last significant flooding occurred in 1916.

Because the limestone tombs overlay shale, which expands on contact with water, many were lifted slightly after the flooding. In the decades since the flooding, the shale has been slowly drying out and settling. The uneven settling, which has occurred unevenly throughout the area, have caused severe cracking and crumbling of the tomb walls.

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