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## The Ceiling Paintings of the Harem Rooms at the Palace of Malqata \*

The four suites of harem rooms are arranged on each side of the great columned hall at the main palace of Malqata (Fig. 1) <sup>1</sup>, which was founded by Amenhotep III. Although these apartments were already excavated by Robb de Tytus in 1901-2 <sup>2</sup> and the Metropolitan Museum of Art during 1910-12 <sup>3</sup>, Waseda University resumed architectural investigations there in 1987-8 <sup>4</sup> to research the decorative paintings liberally applied to the secular architecture of the New Kingdom, and also in order to compare the depicted motifs found there with those unearthed from "the architecture of Kom al-Samak" <sup>5</sup> (the desert altar at Deir al-shalwit).

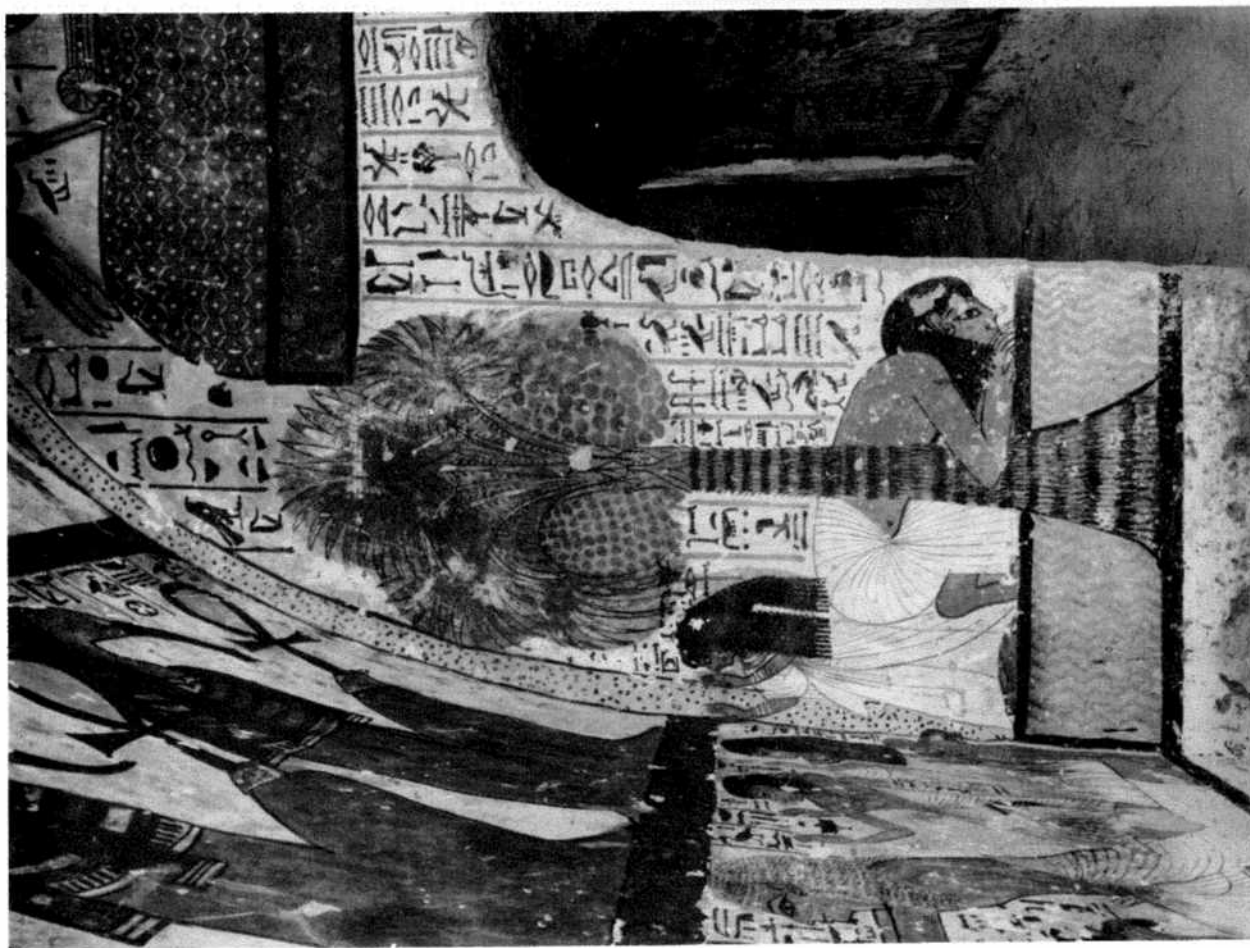
The ceiling paintings discussed here were those from Room N5, Room K5, Room L5 and Room B5 <sup>6</sup>, which form the north-eastern apartment as shown in Fig. 2. The re-excavation of these rooms yielded a large number of mud fragments <sup>7</sup> bearing the various motifs. Few geometrical patterns, however, could be ascertained as part of the ceiling paintings by observing the characteristic impressions on their reverse side <sup>8</sup>.

In the following article the ceiling paintings are approximately reconstructed, with a brief description of the painting technique.

### 1. Ceiling painting in Room N5

A total of 214 pieces of painted mud fragments were found from Room N5, and 180 of them could be identified by their motifs (Table 1). The fragments with a yellow quadruple spiral pattern and blue rosettes on a red background and red rosettes on a blue background (Fig. 3) were unearthed in the greatest quantities (139 pieces), making up some 65 per cent of the total. Most of these bear the impressions of bundles of grass on their reverse side (Fig. 4). Tytus states that in the main palace of Malqata the bundles of grass were used for supporting and strengthening a layer of mud spread over the surface of ceiling <sup>9</sup>. Since the fragments except for that of quadruple spiral pattern did not have the same traces, it was thus suggested that the design of the quadruple spiral must have been rendered over the ceiling of this room <sup>10</sup>.

A fragment showing a yellow coil accompanied by a straight black line and white border was also found in the same room, which indicates that the spiral pattern may have been surrounded by a border.



Pl. 3

The checked pattern (20 pieces) composed of black, red, white and the frieze pattern <sup>11</sup> (15 pieces) were presumably consecutive, executed at the top of the wall.

The colours of all the fragments were directly painted on the flat surface of untreated mud plaster as seen in the case of Amama <sup>12</sup>, not on a coat of gypsum plaster. As the brushwork is rather free and colours frequently overlap, the artists may have painted swiftly <sup>13</sup>.

## 2. Ceiling Painting in Room K5

The largest quantity of fragments bear a pattern consisting of alternate bands of continuous yellow scroll and blue rosettes in succession (Fig. 5, B) (69 pieces), and the second largest is of the quadruple spiral pattern (Fig. 5, A) (17 pieces) which resembles that in Room N5. The total number of these decorative motifs with impressions of bundles of grass on the rear and the pieces indicating a border (14 pieces; painted in white and blue, and having the same impressions on the reverse side) makes up over 40 per cent of the total (230 pieces) (Table 2). Since such impressions could not be found on other fragments, the painted ceiling decoration of this room seems to have been from the above mentioned three patterns.

Judging from the number of excavated fragments with the pattern A and B in Fig. 5, it is assumed that the geometrical pattern A may have been used on the ceiling of the nave and pattern B would have been employed on the ceiling of the aisles <sup>14</sup>.

The colours used on the ceiling were painted directly on the mud surface. In some cases the preliminary grid lines marked out in white paint are clearly visible beneath the geometrical pattern with white splashes along the lines as the string contacted the mud surface (Fig. 6).

## 3. Ceiling Painting in Room L5

301 painted mud fragments were found from Room L5 (Table 3). Over half of them (181 pieces) show a geometrical pattern with an interlocking rosette of red and blue (Fig. 7), most of which bear the grass impressions on the reverse. It is evident that the pattern with a combination of rosettes has been framed by a white and blue border.

The entire surface of the ceiling was once painted in white; subsequently, the red and blue rosettes were painted on a white background. The preliminary grid lines can be recognized by the splashes along these lines but are marked out in red paint in this particular room.

The number of recovered fragments bearing a checked pattern of black, red, white was comparatively large (49 pieces), however impressions on the back could not be found at all. This pattern is likely to be from a wall in this room as in the case of Room N5.

## 4. Ceiling Painting in Room B5

This room is considered as the bedroom of the north-eastern apartment in view of the architectural plan. The total number of unearthed fragments from the room was 535 (Table 4), and almost half of them (267 pieces) had the same pattern shown in Fig. 8 <sup>15</sup>. Every fragment of a certain thickness with this geometrical pattern contained the impressions of grass bundles on the reverse. It is supposed that the checked pattern must have been a part of a mural painting as it lacks such impressions on the reverse. The frieze pattern is also clearly distinguishable as the decorative motif applied to the top of the wall.

The ceiling decoration indicated in Fig. 8 is painted directly on the untreated surface of a flat mud layer, and the preliminary grid lines marked out in white paint are visible where the colours have faded or flaked off.

A feature of interest is that no fragments with the well-known ceiling designs showing fluttering pigeons or ducks <sup>16</sup> were discovered in the north-eastern apartment. Owing to this fact, it thus comes to light that the ceiling designs of the north-western apartment must have greatly differentiated from those of the north-eastern apartment, in spite of having been arranged symmetrically with respect to the longitudinal axis of Room H.

Investigations relating to the other ceiling paintings of the harem rooms will be undertaken in the future.

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### Key to Figures 3, 5, 7, 8

The colour labels are: r=red, b=blue, y=yellow, g=green, w=white.

### Notes

\* I wish to thank Mr. Mike Jacobs for his kindness in correcting my English text, and to Mr. Hiroyuki Kashiwagi for his help in arranging the records and photographs.

1. The plan was based on the survey carried out by Waseda University in 1985-6, and partly with reference to material from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, as a consequence of the demolition at the site that is still in progress. Dr. Dorothea Arnold, Lila Acheson Wallace Curator in Charge, and Marsha Hill, Assistant Curator, both of the Department of Egyptian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, to whom I would like to express my sincere appreciation, kindly granted permission to study the unpublished records and provided several photographs of the main palace taken in 1910-12. Professor Cathleen Keller of the University of California, Berkeley, has added to the records in the Metropolitan Museum. She will publish the ink labels on storage jars from the site.

2. Tytus, Robb de Peyster: *A Preliminary Report on the Re-excavation of the Palace of Amenhotep III* (New York, 1903).

3. *BMMMA* 7 (October 1912), 184-89. It is unlikely that these harem rooms have been excavated by J. Daressy, for which cf. *ASAE* 4 (1903), 165-70.

4. The first expedition to the site of Malqata was carried out in 1985-6, and was mainly concentrated on the re-excavation of Room H (labelled by Tytus, op. cit., 11, plan of the excavated portion of the palace; see also *Porter & Moss*, Vol. I, Part 2, Plan XVIII). In the second season of 1986-7, continued clearing of Room H and a part of the south palace, the enclosure wall to the south and west of the main palace were re-excavated as well as the minor rooms located to the north of Room H. The staff of the third expedition, which ran from 4 December 1987 to 15 January 1988, consisted of Yasutada Watanabe (the project director and architectural historian); Takeshi Nakagawa (co-director and architect); Sakuji Yoshimura (assistant field director and Egyptologist); Kishiro Iida (architectural historian); Eizo Inagaki (architectural historian); Hisashi Gotoh (architect and surveyor); Kazuaki Seki (architect and surveyor); Jiro Kondo (Egyptologist); Takashi Yasumatsu (photographer and surveyor); and the present writer (analyst of painted mud fragments). These investigations were supported financially by grants from the Japanese Government, the Ministry of Culture and Education and funds from Waseda University. We are deeply indebted to the late Dr. Ahmed Kadry, the former Chairman of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, for facilitating our project, without which our expeditions would have been impossible. We also wish to thank Dr. Mohammed al-Saghir, the General Director for Luxor, Dr. Mohammed Nasr, the Director of al-Qurna, Dr. Sayed Hegazy, the Director of the Temples of Karnak and Luxor, and Mr. Mohammed Abd

Allah, formerly our Inspector, now the Chief Inspector of al-Qurna for their assistance. Finally I wish to extend my thanks in particular to Dr. Yasutada Watanabe, who permitted me to write this article.

5. Watanabe, Y. and K. Seki: *The Architecture of "Kom el-Samak" at Malkata South, A study of architectural restoration*, Studies in Egyptian Culture 5 (Tokyo, 1986); see also *Dossiers* 136 (Mars 1989), 70-71.

6. The letterings of the rooms were made by the author, followed by Tytus, op. cit., 11, plan; *Porter & Moss*, Vol. I, Part 2, Plan XVIII. Any fragment that suggests a motif of the ceiling design was not found in Room M<sup>5</sup> or Room P<sup>5</sup> (see Fig. 2).

7. These painted mud fragments were buried along the walls. This condition, which is apparently in order to preserve the painted mud fragments and other finds, seems to be attributed to the treatment by previous investigators, i. e., those of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

8. The impression on the reverse side of the fragments bears a strong resemblance to that of Amarna; cf. Bomann, A.: *Report on the 1984 Excavations, Chapel 561/450 (The Main Chapel)*, in *Amarna Reports II* ed. by Barry J. Kemp (London, 1985), 8-12; Figs. 1.9 and 1.10; regarding the bundles of grass, see Wendrich, W.: *Preliminary Report on the Amarna Baskery and Cordage in Amarna Reports V* ed. by B. J. Kemp (London, 1989), 185-192, and Fig. 9.18, Type 2.

9. Tytus, op. cit., 13. On the comparative consideration between Malqata and Amarna, see Smith, W. Stevenson: *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, rev. by Simpson, W. K. (Harmondsworth, 1981), 295; Fig. 290.

10. Concerning Room H, Tytus described in his preliminary report (...) as the palace at this part collapsed towards the east, much of the wall material of this room must lie the as yet unexcavated chambers along its eastern side' (Tytus, op. cit., 20-21). As for the ceiling pieces, however, a careful re-excavation of this room failed to show any traces that might suggest that the many fragments had fallen down from the ceiling of Room H to the floor of Room N<sup>5</sup>. Badawy restored the ceiling painting of Room H in his publication in which the aisles were covered over with a quadruple spiral pattern (Badawy, A.: *A History of Egyptian Architecture, The Empire (The New Kingdom)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968), Colour Plate III); nevertheless, only 5 pieces bearing a quadruple design were found from Room H, while numerous ceiling fragments depicting the alternate bands of continuous scroll and rosettes were discovered. It is thus supposed that the decorative motif of alternating bands of scroll and rosettes must have been applied on the ceiling of aisles in Room H, and the quadruple spiral pattern must have been used on the ceiling of Room N<sup>5</sup>. The above-mentioned 5 pieces seem to be originally those of Room N<sup>5</sup>, and would have been mingled with the fragments of Room H when it collapsed.

11. Cf. Tytus, op. cit., Pl. IV, Fig. 3.

12. Cf. Weatherhead, F.: *Report on the 1986 Excavations*, in *Amarna Reports IV* ed. by B. J. Kemp (London, 1987), 17-20, especially see reference 2.

13. *Tytus*, op. cit., 20-21.

14. This scheme might have also been executed on the ceiling of Room I (titled 'Room 5' in the records of the Metropolitan Museum of Art). Cf. the photographs of PA 40 and 41 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, captioned 'Room 5, fragments of fallen ceiling in central aisle (?)', 'Room 5, fragments of fallen ceiling in side aisle (?)', respectively. See also Winlock's notes for January 14, 1911 kept in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

15. It can be also assumed that the ceiling painting of this room may have been separated into two parts; the recessed ceiling above the raised platform, and that excluding the recessed portion. Another motif of the ceiling design, however, could not be recognized among the mud fragments found from Room B5.

16. These decorative motifs were recovered from the north-western apartment. Cf. restored fragments of painted ceiling in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, accession No. 12.180.257-8; one of the same designs is also exhibited in the Cairo Museum (Room 44, No. unknown); *Tytus*, op. cit., 22, Pls. II and III; *BMMA* 7 (October 1912), 186 and Fig. 2; *Smith*, op. cit., 289 and Fig. 285.

**Table 1: Classification of painted mud fragments found in Room N5**

Decorative motif	Number	Comment
quadruple spiral pattern	139	Including 1 example with border.
border	3	Painted in white and blue.
checked pattern	20	Painted in red, black, white.
band of rosettes with border	2	Common design applied on the wall.
frieze pattern	15	Motif applied at the top of the wall.
blue border	1	Architectural fragments.
unclassified	34	Small fragments, simply painted in red, blue, etc.
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	

**Table 2: Classification of painted mud fragments found in Room K5**

Decorative motif	Number	Comment
continuous scroll pattern	69	Including 32 examples with blue rosette.
quadruple spiral pattern	17	Including 5 examples with rosette.
rosette	10	Fragments of blue rosettes.
border	14	Painted in white.
band of rosettes	1	Painted in white and blue.
checked pattern	9	Common design applied on the wall.
frieze pattern	3	Painted in red, black, white.
corner	3	Motif applied on the wall.
blue torus	14	Architectural fragments.
unclassified	90	Small fragments, simply painted in red, blue, etc.
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	

**Table 3: Classification of painted mud fragments found in Room L5**

Decorative motif	Number	Comment
red and blue rosettes	181	Including 30 examples with border.
border	37	Painted in white and blue.
checked pattern	49	Design applied on the wall.
frieze pattern	7	Motif applied on the wall.
corner	6	5 examples are with checked pattern.
unclassified	21	Small fragments, simply painted in red, blue, etc.
<b>Total</b>	<b>301</b>	

**Table 4: Classification of painted mud fragments found in Room B5**

Decorative motif	Number	Comment
pattern shown in Fig. 7	267	Including 6 examples with border.
red and blue rosettes	24	Presumably mingled from Room H.
border	28	Painted in white and blue.
frieze pattern	84	Decorative motif applied on the wall.
checked pattern	56	Design applied on the wall.
yellow corner	4	Architectural fragments.
unclassified	72	Small fragments, simply painted in red, blue, etc.
<b>Total</b>	<b>535</b>	

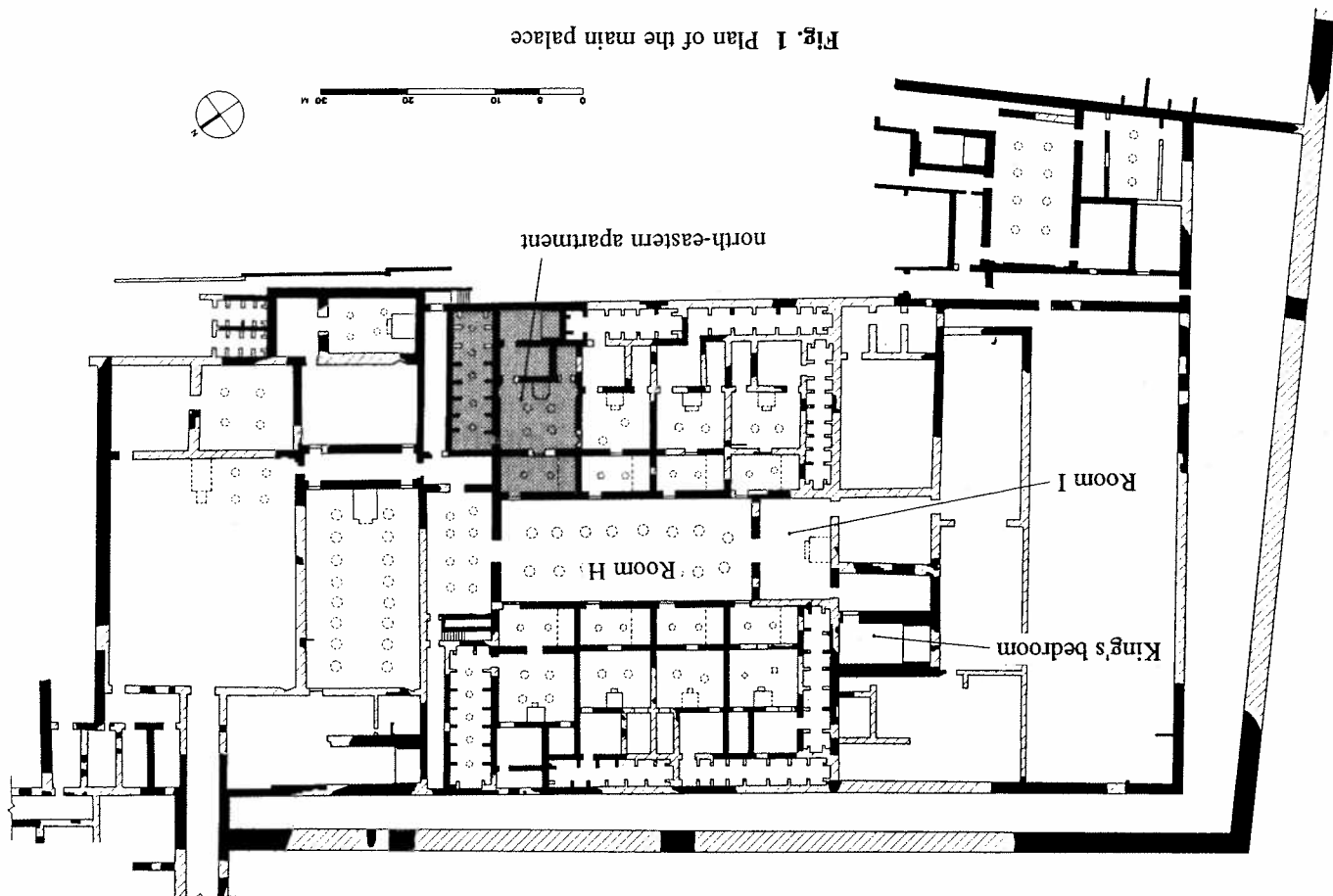


Fig. 1 Plan of the main palace

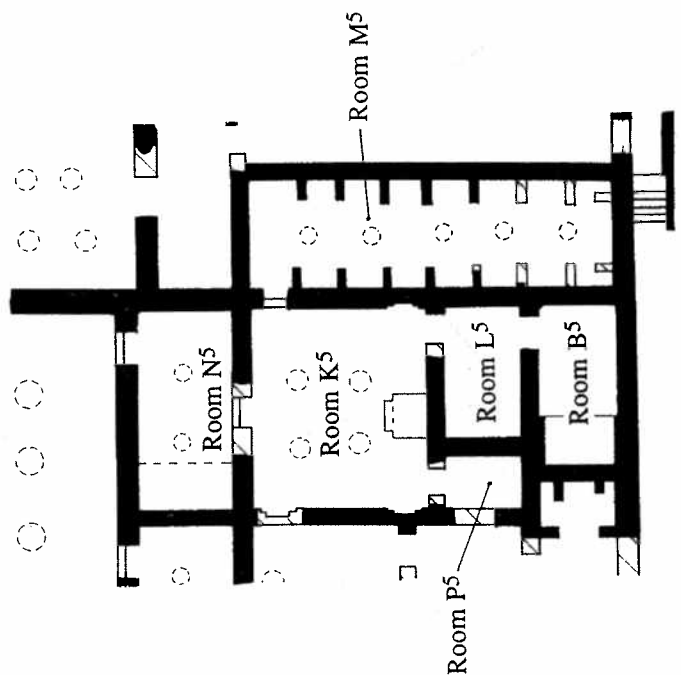


Fig. 2 Plan of the north-eastern apartment

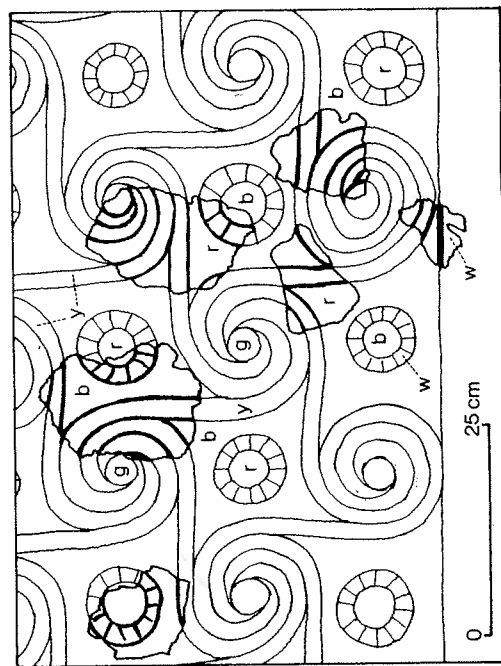


Fig. 3 Restored ceiling painting of Room N5



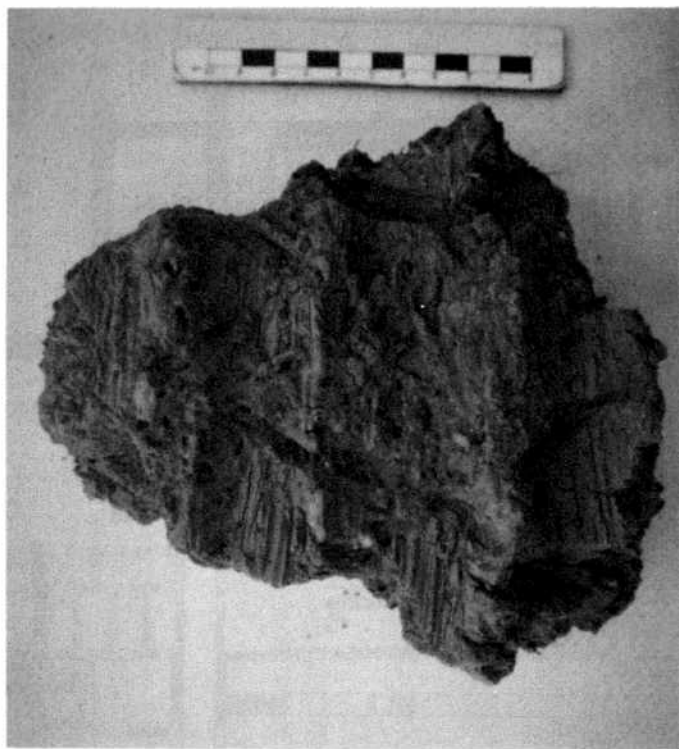


Fig. 4 A fragment of the painted ceiling found in Room N5 (left) and its reverse side (right)

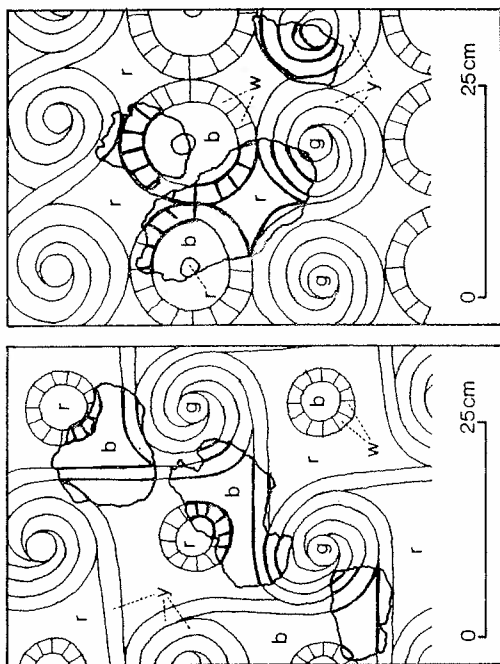
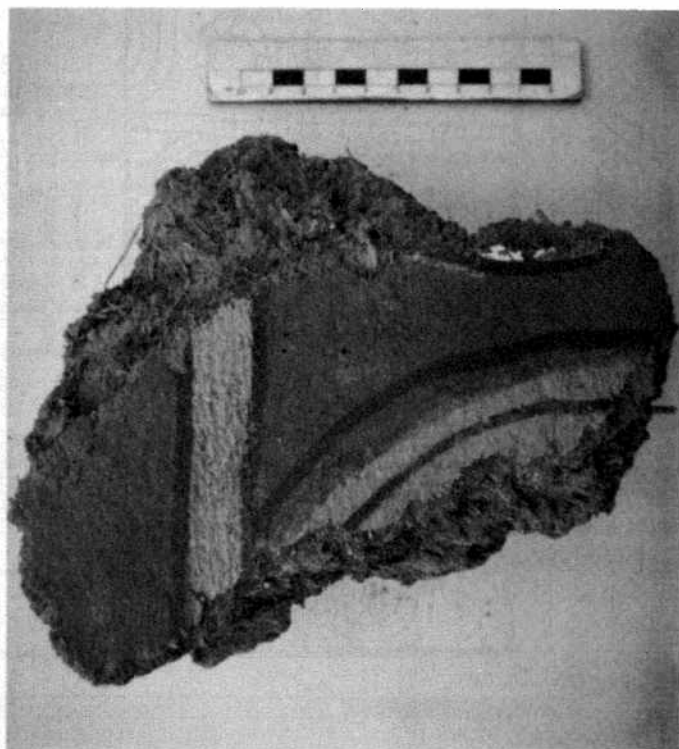


Fig. 5 Restored ceiling painting of Room K5  
A: nave, B: aisles

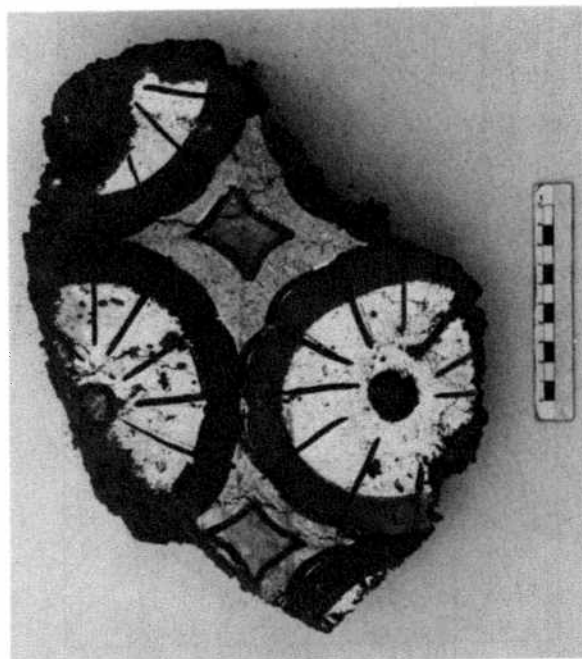


Fig. 6 A fragment of the painted ceiling found in Room L5

BAUSTELLE CHEOPS PYRAMIDE  
(Auszug BAU- und NUTZ HOLZ - WASSER-TRANSPORTE)  
Ing. Herbert Fitlik

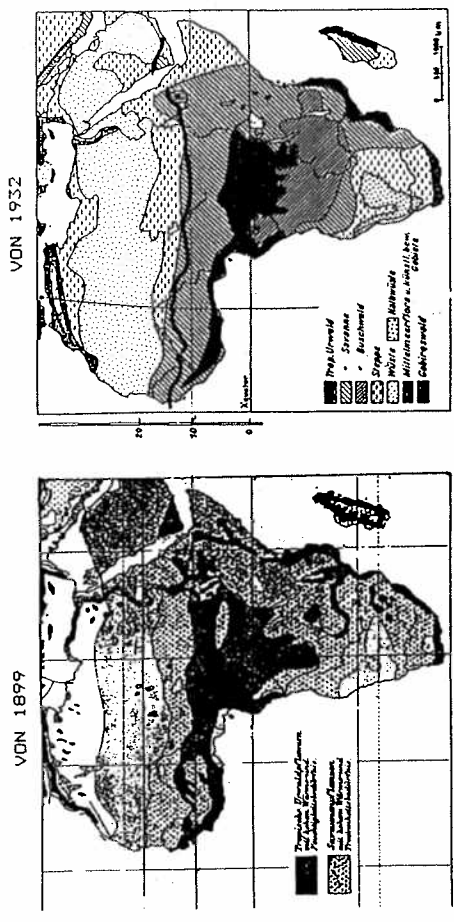
Holz kam nach allgemeiner Ansicht aus dem Libanon. - Das mag für Holz zu besonderen Zwecken zutreffen, bestimmt aber nicht um den Bedarf an Bau- und Nutzholz, - (allein für Rollwege, Gerüstung, Schlitten und dgl. wurde in der Abhandlung für die Cheops-Pyramide eine Mindestmenge an Bau- und Nutzholz von rd. 30.000 m<sup>3</sup> ermittelt), - oder den Bedarf von Holz als Energieträger zu decken.

Welche andere Quellen standen aber noch zu Verfügung? - Um diese Frage zu klären sollte man die Gegebenheiten VOR dem Bau des 1. Assuan-Staudammes, also vor (nur) rd. 100 Jahren, näher betrachten.

Ein Vergleich der Vegetationskarten aus den Jahren 1899 und 1932 ergibt folgende Erkenntnis: Die nördliche Grenze des tropischen Urwaldes zur Savanne im Bereich des blauen und weissen Nil lag 1899 etwa in Höhe des 10. - 12. Breitengrades. Also ca. 300 km südlich von Chartum. - Die Grenze Savanne zur Steppe verlief ca. 200 km nördlich von Chartum. - Interessant, daß auch das Gebiet des Jemen noch zur Zone des Tropischen Waldes gehörte.

Nur rd. 3 Jahrzehnte später - nicht zuletzt unter dem Einfluß der Kolonialmächte - war die Grenze des tropischen Urwaldes bereits auf die Höhe des 5. Breitengrades zurückgegangen, - (siehe eingezeichnet die Linie von 1899) - aus dem verlorenen Wald-Gebiet wurde Savanne - aus dem Landstrich der früheren Savanne wurde Steppe. - Gleiches auch im Jemen. - Die große Wahrscheinlichkeit, daß 4.000 Jahre vorher die nördliche Grenze des tropischen Waldes nördlich von Chartum lag, soll hier nicht berücksichtigt werden.

Vegetationskarte von Afrika



Klaus Wietlas

Meyers Lexikon

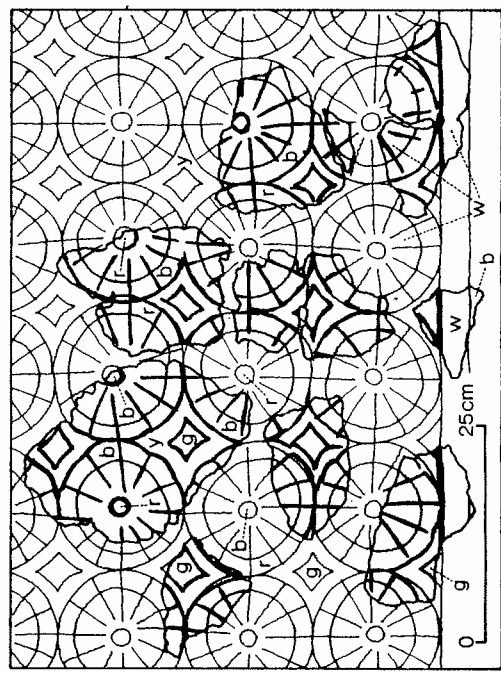


Fig. 7 Restored ceiling painting of Room L5

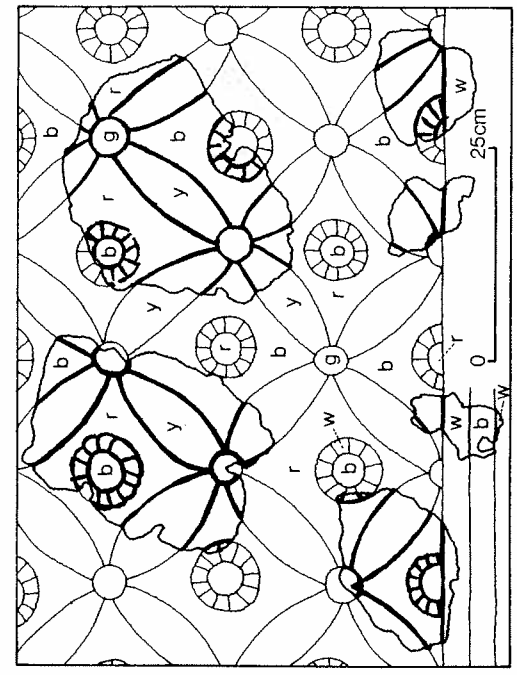


Fig. 8 Restored ceiling painting of Room B5