Mut that sits approximately 100 meters south of the Amun Precinct of Karnak. Although the book is short, it is packed with photos and plans that are very helpful in elucidating the many layers of this site.

The book consists of nine chapters (with a chronology of the dynasties, glossary, further reading section, acknowledgements, photography credits, and index). The first chapter of the guide provides a brief synopsis of what is known about the goddess Mut, including a discussion on the Eye of Re goddesses and how they overlap and interact, the mythological stories involving Sekhmet, and the larger context of the Sekhmet statues, for which this temple is so well-known. The second chapter is a review of the archaeological history of the site: beginning with the first western records of the site from the Description de l’Egypte and the publications of Lepsius and Mariette in the early-mid 1800s. The earliest scientific excavations were begun in the late 1800s by British scholars Margaret Benson and Jane Gourlay. In the 1920s Maurice Pillet, then Director of Works for the Egyptian Antiquities Service at Karnak, carried out further work at the site, followed in the 1970s by a team from the Brooklyn Museum (with assistance from the Detroit Institute of Art). The Johns Hopkins University team began a separate but collaborative set of projects at the temple precinct in 2001. As the excavation history of this temple is not as well-known as that of many of the other temples in Luxor, this section is illuminating, and the added contextualization of some of the earliest work (along with the selection of historical photos) clearly contributes to the understanding of the site.

The remaining seven chapters (chapters 3–9) are each based on the different areas of the Precinct. Thus, the first of these chapters covers the entrance; the second covers the many elements of the Mut Temple proper (including the porches, Hut-ka chapel of Nesphah, Taharqa rams, pylons, courts, Sekhmet statues, rear of the temple, contra-temple, open air museum, and the temple in Dynasty 25); the third covers Temple A (including the courts, pylons, rear of the temple, and central sanctuary); the fourth covers Chapel B; the fifth covers the Northwest Quadrant (including the Taharqa gate and the Ptolemaic chapel); the sixth covers the temple of Ramesses III; and finally the seventh covers the Sacred Lake and the south half of the precinct. Each chapter outlines the most pertinent archaeological information for the area, with notes on the chronology and any objects uncovered during excavation. In addition, each chapter


The Precinct of Mut at South Karnak: An Archaeological Guide by Richard Fazzini and Betsy Bryan is a very useful summary of the archaeological remains of the remarkable Precinct of
contains a floor plan for the structure under discussion and numerous color photos, often with internal labels to indicate any noteworthy features. These labels are tremendously helpful, as the remains of many of the structures can be difficult to distinguish (see, for example, on pp. 23–24—in the section on the Horwedja Chapel—where the photos have labels indicating the in situ location of some reused blocks). The information provided here is invaluable for anyone interested in visiting the site, or in using the complex for comparative work.

This admirable volume could have been improved by the inclusion of captions for each figure. Although the images are referenced in the surrounding text, their content is sometimes difficult to understand without explanatory captions. That being said, the book is well organized, and the number and variety of photographs and plans are notable assets. Additionally, the “Further Reading” section is comprehensive and will be useful for anyone interested in the Mut complex.

Overall, this book is an excellent resource, as beneficial for a layperson looking to visit the site, as for an Egyptologist looking to better understand the larger historical context of the temple compound and the complex interplay of layers and chronology.

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