For many years, Jack Josephson has been one of the most devoted supporters of the Brooklyn Museum excavations in the Precinct of the Goddess Mut, South Karnak, and a loyal friend to Richard A. Fazzini, director of the project, as well as his colleagues in the excavations. When Richard began his investigations of the precinct in 1976, it was with the obvious intention of recording what was preserved, as well as searching for new information. The mapping of the principal temple in the precinct was a high priority. I offer this modest discussion of the results of that early endeavor to Jack with sincere regards.¹

The greater temple complex of Karnak is undoubtedly one of the most thoroughly documented physical areas preserved from the antiquity of Egypt.² It has been studied and analyzed, excavated and restored, the subject of theory and hypothesis, to the point that it would seem that there is little more to learn. In actual fact, one area of the complex, the Precinct of the Goddess Mut in South Karnak, had been somewhat neglected and only partly known until the excavations instituted by the Brooklyn Museum in 1976 opened a new chapter in its exploration.³ The precinct had been excavated and mapped and areas of it studied in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but a more complete plan of the Temple of Mut proper was to await the work of the Brooklyn Museum excavations. As with many ancient sites in Egypt, it was somehow assumed that the basic work had been done and a reexamination might only improve previous results.

In 2001, the Brooklyn group was joined by a separate mission from Johns Hopkins University under the direction of Dr. Betsy Bryan. The work of the two groups proceeded cooperatively but independently, each pursuing separate goals in different areas of the precinct. The mapping project summarized here was carried out primarily in the 1980s and 90s and illustrates the state of the Temple of Mut before further work was done in its interior by the Hopkins staff.

Over the years, with the occasional support of the Detroit Institute of Arts, various areas of the temple were examined, and a number of important features were clarified or discovered. Many of these can be illustrated on the new, tentative, plan (fig. 1). This plan is a compilation and reduction made from carefully detailed sectional drawings. It is important to repeat that the following descriptions include what was visible before the work of the Johns Hopkins University team in the body of the temple and explain what was planned and mapped before any attempt was made to further investigate foundations and the reuse of material in them, and in no sense is it a historical explanation of the growth of the temple.

The first map of the precinct using the modern standards of cartography of the time was essayed by the savants of the French expedition ⁴ at the end of the eighteenth century, as a part of the documentation of the ancient sites in the country (fig. 2). With the use of what was then the most modern technology, the engineers and architects of the expedition produced a map of the Karnak Temple complex of unquestioned value. It can be observed that the trapezoidal shape of the precinct of the goddess Mut is slightly off true when compared with more recent maps, and the horseshoe-shaped sacred lake seems to have been almost dried up at the time of the French visit. On this map, the three major temples in the precinct show little detail of the configuration of walls and rooms, indicating

¹ Richard Fazzini has made a number of important suggestions and provided some references that have greatly improved this paper, and I thank him not only for that assistance, but for his many years of loyal friendship.

² In PM II, 336 pages were devoted to publications about the Karnak complex, and this was only to the date of publication.

³ PM II has 13 pages of references on the Mut Precinct (to 1972); a good deal has been written about the site since then.

⁴ Published in Description de l’Égypte, ou, Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l’expédition de l’armée française (Paris, 1809–1822), Antiquités, vol. III, pl. 16.
Fig. 1. Plan of the Temple of the Goddess Mut by the Brooklyn Museum Expedition.

Fig. 2. Mut Precinct as recorded by the eighteenth century French expedition. From Description de l’Égypte, vol. III, pl. 16.