

GURNA

NEW FIND OF DECORATED BLOCKS IN GURNA

Janusz Karkowski, Mohammed el-Bialy

The six decorated blocks here presented were found in front of the house of Sheikh el-Tayeb, opposite the southern edge of Drah abu'l-Nag'a. They were discovered in a hole that had opened on the night of November 21, 1998, in the asphalt road that leads to Deir el-Bahari.¹⁾ The present authors recorded the blocks and described them in 1999. The comments at the end of this communication are based on the files of the Polish Epigraphic Mission collected at Deir el-Bahari and elsewhere.

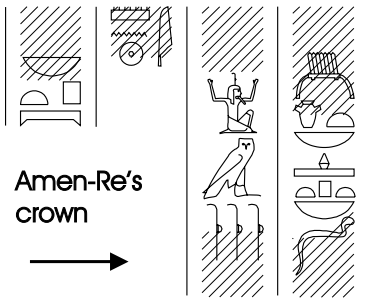
1) The discovery was made by Mr. Mohammed el-Bialy, SCA Director of Antiquities of Gurna, who intervened immediately to repair the damage to the road that gives access to the temple site in Deir el-Bahari.

LIMESTONE BLOCKS

1. PART OF A SCENE:
AMEN-RE AND HIS SPEECH (*Fig. 1*)

DIMENSIONS: 49 x 76.5 x 30 cm.

PRESERVATION: Right, upper and lower sides are original, the left side is broken. Along the upper edge two regular depressions for reparation slabs.



COLOR: The feathers are white with the yellow details outlined in red. Red is on the body of *hh*, blue on the division lines of the text, on *t* and on the wig of *hh* and on the *pt* in Amun's epithet. Black is seen on the three *rnp*, green with yellow cross-bands on the lower part of *hṭp* and on *p*, green on the two *nb* in the rightmost column, yellow on the wing and part of the tail of *m*.

DESCRIPTION: Part of a scene in low relief with the figure of Amen-Re facing right and part of his speech in vertical columns. Of the god the tops of the feathers on his head-dress are preserved. They show that the figure of the god had been reworked.

TEXT:

[*dd-mdw di.n=i n=t (or k) ...*]

1) [...] *3w.t-ib nb hṭp.t nb(.t) d[f3w nb]*

2) [*ir.t hh(w) m rnp.wt ...*]

3) *Imn-R^c*

4) [...] *nb pt.*

[*Recitation: I give you...*] *all joy, all offerings and [all provisio] ns...[and making] millions of years.*

Amen-Re [...] Lord of Heaven.

COMMENT: The remains of the name and the epithet of Amen-Re in the last two columns show that his speech began with the formula given in the restoration of column 1. The phrase *hh(w) m rnpwt* usually begins with *ir* – cf. e.g., Urk. IV, 230, 16–17 (*irt hh(w) m rnpwt hr st Hr n nhw nbw dt*); 234,4 and 9 (*irt hh(w) m rnpwt hr st Tr mi R^c dt*). The part of the divine name shows traces of reworking.

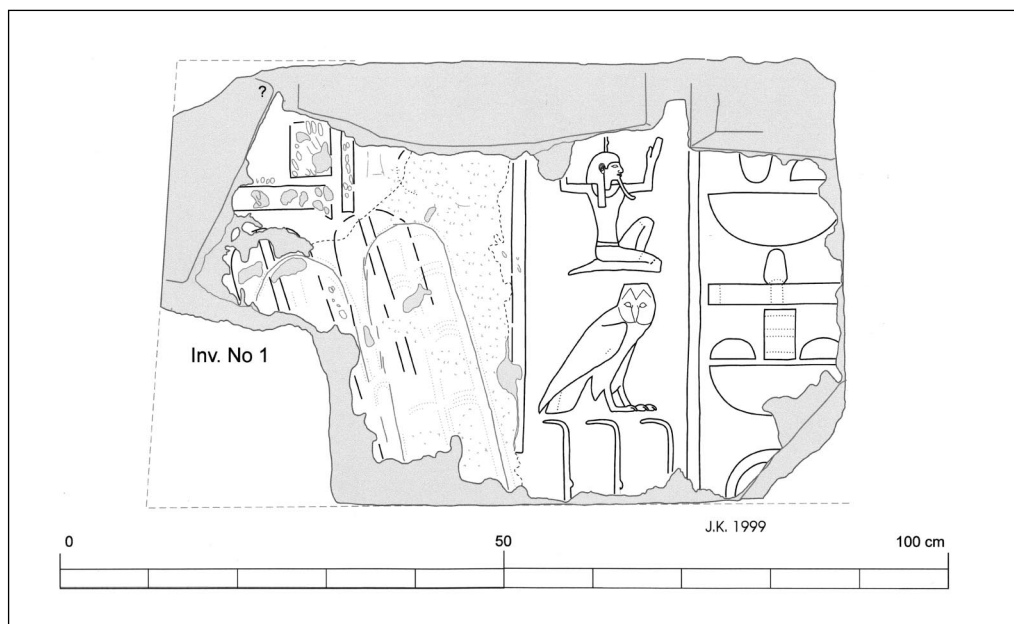


Fig. 1. Part of scene: Amen-Re and his speech
(Drawing & photo J. Karkowski)

2. PART OF A WALL SCENE (*Fig. 2*)

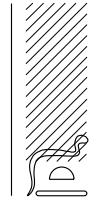
DIMENSIONS: 38 x 79 x 40 cm.

PRESERVATION: The block edges can be restored with the exception of the right side, which is broken. The left foot of the bird was partly repaired in plaster, probably due to the poor quality of stone. On the upper surface, 9 cm from the left edge of the block, an incised line shows the joint of blocks of the upper course.

DESCRIPTION: Part of wall decoration in low relief with the lower painted border composed of two wider bands, red above yellow, framed with three narrow black bands. Above the border there are fragments of decoration that belonged to two scenes separated by a vertical line. To the left of the border line, the feet of a king facing right and the lower end of the ceremonial tail. To the right, the end of

a vertical text, probably part of a divine speech.

COLOR: Red, yellow and black on lower border. Red on feet, yellow on ceremonial tail, blue on *t* and on N17 in *dt*.



TEXT:

[...] *dt*.

[...] *forever*.

COMMENT: The foot apparently belonged to a king, since it was left untouched by Akhenaten's agents. The decoration could belong to a suit of scenes, each with a king facing left and performing some acts before a divinity.

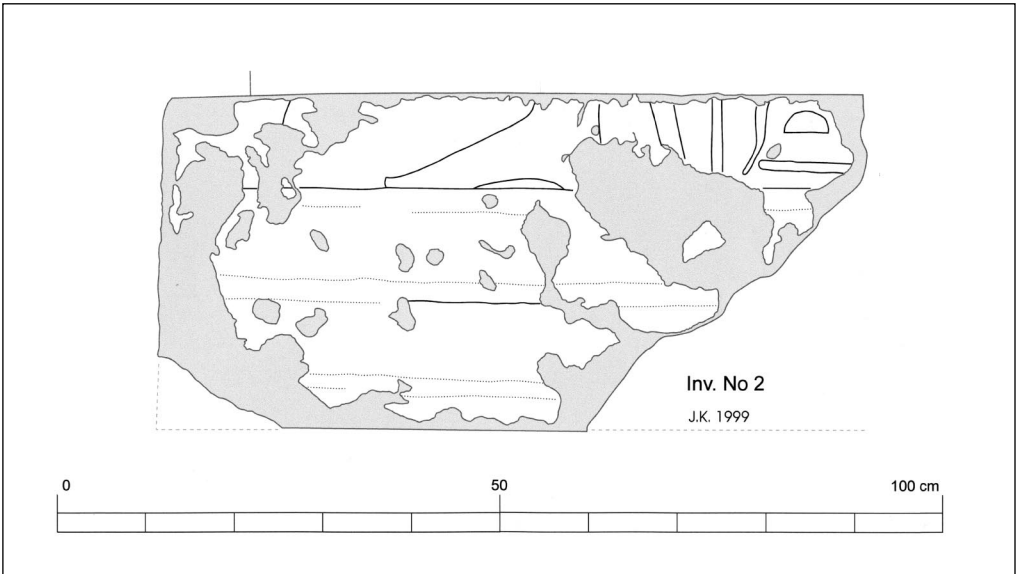


Fig. 2. Part of wall scene
(Drawing J. Karkowski)

3. PART OF A SCENE: TEXTS (*Fig. 3*)

DIMENSIONS: 33 x 22 x ? cm.

PRESERVATION: All sides are original with the exception of the upper, broken surface.

DESCRIPTION: Part of a scene in low relief, close to the right edge of a wall. Preserved are parts of two texts: a horizontal one reading from the right and a vertical text reading from the left. To the right of the texts part of a painted side border is preserved. The signs of the upper text are partly chiselled. They were restored in a wide black painted line.

COLOR: Traces of green on the side border and on the upper *pt*.



TEXTS:

Text 1:

Bḥdty [*ntr* ʕ].

Behdety [*the Great God*].

Text 2:

dd-mdw di. [*n=i n...*].

Recitation [*I give you...*].

COMMENT: The scene was the rightmost one on a wall. It depicted a pharaoh, facing right, before a divinity facing left. Above the king the falcon of Behdety may be expected or else one of the other forms of this god: the disc with one or two wings. The texts above the royal figure and above the divinity started below the wing of Behdety and below the text concerning this god.

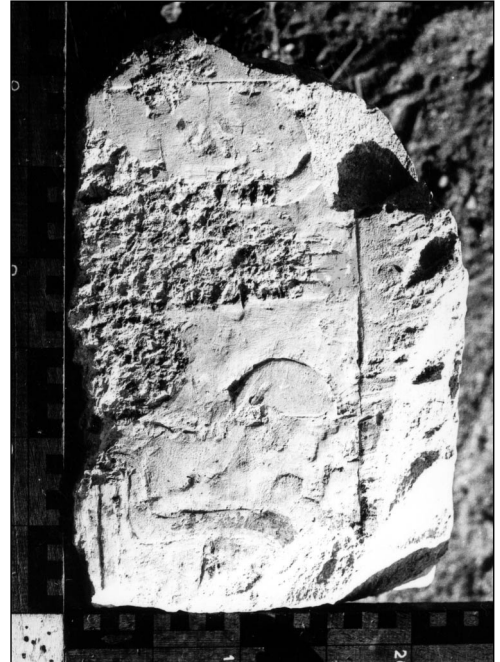
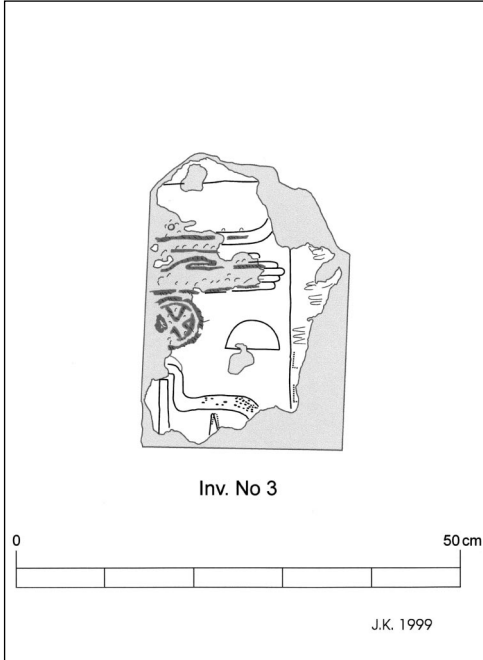


Fig. 3. Part of scene: texts
(*Drawing & photo J. Karkowski*)

4. PART OF A SCENE: FALCON OF BEHDETY (Fig. 4)

DIMENSIONS: 57 x 45 x ? cm.

PRESERVATION: The lower surface is original. The left and upper surfaces are broken; the right surface is only roughly smoothed, possibly during reuse. In the upper right corner there is a depression cut with a different tool than the lower surface. It may come from the reuse of the block.

DESCRIPTION: The low-relief decoration shows the upper right corner of a scene. Preserved are: part of a representation of a falcon hovering over the lost figure of a pharaoh and small sections of the upper *pt*-border and of the right-side border. Below the falcon there are the remains of one sign destroyed with a chisel.

COLOR: Traces of green on the wings; the pattern of bent lines on the feathers of the wings and of the tail is painted in blue. The ends of the shorter feathers of the outer row of the wing are painted red. On the legs of the falcon there are traces of yellow. Traces of blue on the upper *pt*.



TEXT:

[...] *mi* R^c [*dt*].

[...] *like* Re, [*forever*].

COMMENT: The fact that the *mi*-sign shows clear traces of destruction with a chisel indicates that the scene showed queen Hatshepsut.

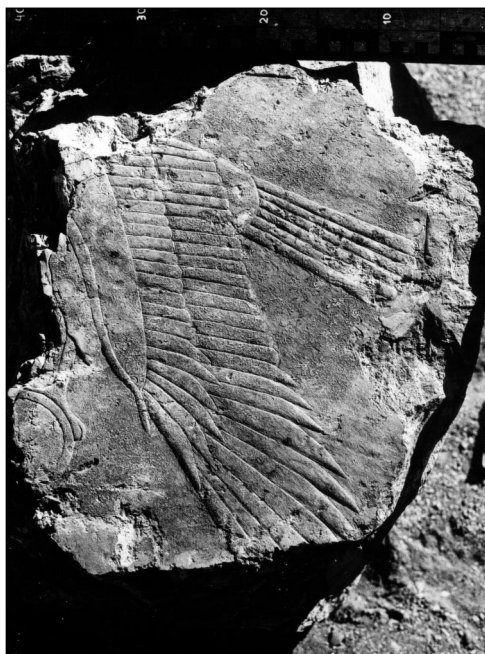
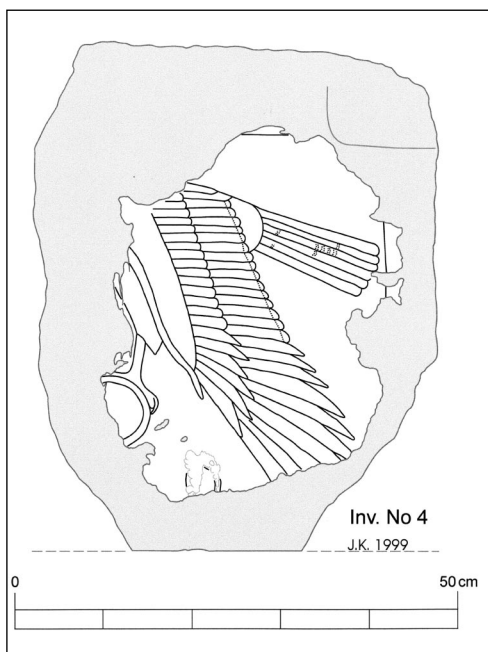


Fig. 4. Part of scene: falcon of Behdety
(Drawing & photo J. Karkowski)

5. PART OF A WALL SCENE: KING'S TORSO (*Fig. 5*)

DIMENSIONS: 61.3 x 51.5 x 39 cm.

COLOR: Red on the king's body.

PRESERVATION: All sides original with the exception of the right side which is broken.

DESCRIPTION: Part of a scene in low relief showing a king facing left. Preserved are parts of the torso, of the right arm and of the ceremonial beard.

COMMENT: The arm of the king lowered along the body suggests the ceremony of *dw3-ntr sp 4* before a divinity. The fact that the king's body shows no traces of chiselling points to some Tuthmoside male pharaoh as the person represented. The feet of a pharaoh on block no. 2 show the same orientation and may belong to the same figure.

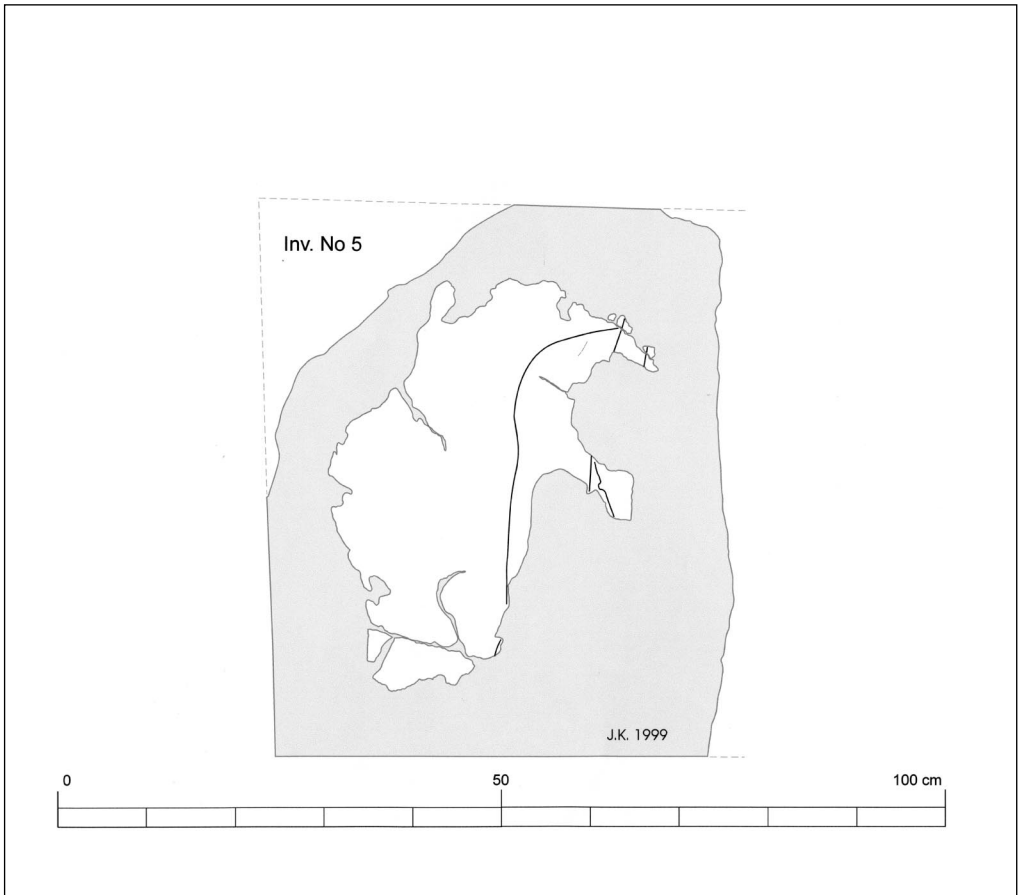


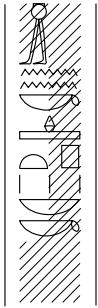
Fig. 5. Part of wall scene: king's torso
(Drawing J. Karkowski)

SANDSTONE BLOCK

INSCRIPTION (*Fig. 6*)

DIMENSIONS: 42.5 x 16.2 x 22 cm.

PRESERVATION: Upper and lower surfaces are original, the sides are broken.



TEXT:

[...] *in.n(=i) n=k ḥtp.w nb k*[...].
I bring you all the offerings [...].

DESCRIPTION: Part of a single text column in sunk relief reading from the left and delimited on the left by a vertical line.

COMMENT: To the right of the restored *ini* there is room for an additional sign or some other detail.

The style of carving seems to be of Ramesside date. The text seems to belong to a royal monument – the speech of a fecundity divinity? It could form part of a wall scene decorating a sandstone monument.

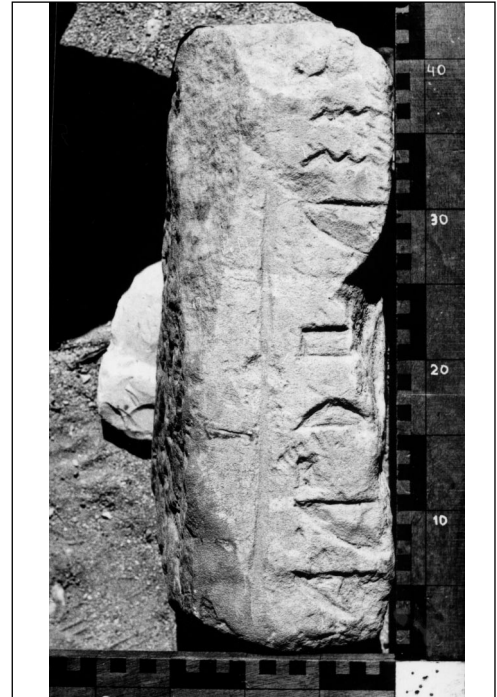
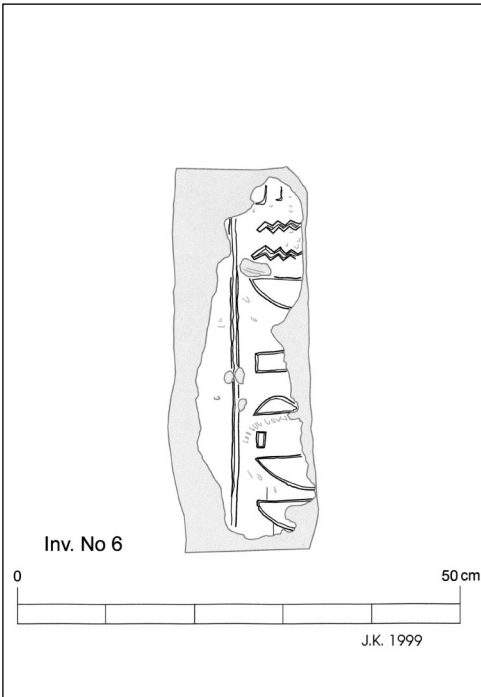


Fig. 6. Inscription
(Drawing & photo J. Karkowski)

GENERAL REMARKS

The limestone of the first group is of local origin; the same material was used to build the Hatshepsut temple at Deir el-Bahari, and was used along with sandstone in another temple of the queen found by the fields between Henket-ankh of Tuthmosis III and the Valley Temple of Deir el-Bahari.²⁾ The same kind of limestone is attested for the majority of limestone decorated blocks of the Tuthmoside Period that were reused to the south of the Ramesseum,³⁾ in the small Ramesside Temple opposite Dra abu'l-Nag'a⁴⁾ and in the large unfinished Ramesside Temple in the east part of Assassif.⁵⁾ A different kind of limestone was used in the temples of Mentuhotep and Tuthmosis III at Deir el-Bahari.

The style of the preserved decoration finds the best parallels in the best reliefs of the Hatshepsut temple at Deir el-Bahari, the temples of Djoser-djeseru and Henket-ankh of Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III. Thus, it seems to be of the Tuthmoside Period. The scale of the preserved figural representations corresponds to scenes occupying the entire height of the wall, e. g. at Deir el-Bahari.

The only reworking of the decoration concerns Amen-Re's figure on block no. 1 and the name of Behdety on no. 3, and are connected no doubt with Akhenaten's persecution of images and names of old divinities and the subsequent restorations after the collapse of the Amarna religious

experiment. The foot on no. 2 and torso on no. 5, both of which can be attributed to pharaohs, bear no traces of reworking; thus, they apparently depicted one of the Tuthmosis kings. The evidence of these five pieces does not exclude Hatshepsut's rule as the period of construction of the temple from which the blocks derive. The purposely destroyed *mi*-sign on no. 4 points to such a dating. Unfortunately, the speech of Amen-Re on no. 1 contains no suffixes and could be addressed to Hatshepsut, as well as to one of the Tuthmosides.

Some clues to establishing the temple of origin for the blocks can be provided by the measurements of some details of the figural representations. The following table (*Table I*) gives all the measurements that can be taken off the new blocks.

For comparison, Table II gives the size of text columns attested on all the Tuthmoside blocks reused in the small Ramesside temple opposite Dra abu'l-

Table I

Inv. No.	Sign height	Sign width	Column width
Block 1	14.5–15.5	16	19.3
Block 2	—	c. 13.5	—
Block 3	11	13	—
Block 4	—	—	—
Block 5	—	—	—
Block 6	—	c. 12	—

2) A. Barakat, "The Temple of Kha-Akhet in Western Thebes" *MDAIK* 37 (1981), 29-33, pls. 4-5.

3) C. Leblanc, "Les remplois de blocs decorés de la XVIIIeme dynastie, dans le secteur sud du Ramesseum", *Memnonia* VII (1996), 83-109, pls. XXV-XXIX; C. Leblanc, M. de Saintilan, "Autres remplois de blocs décorés de la XVIIIeme dynastie, dans le secteur sud du Ramesseum", *Memnonia* VIII (1997), 47-59, pls. VIII-XIII.

4) J. Karkowski, "Deir el-Bahari. Hatshepsut Temple: The Epigraphic Mission 1996", *PAM VIII, Reports 1996* (1997), 55-58, with fig. 5 on p. 56. The publication of the temple is in progress.

5) PM II.2 (1972), 424-426.

Nag'a, documented by the Polish Mission in 1966.⁶⁾

It seems that the measurements of the texts on the limestone blocks are similar to those on the blocks from the Ramesside Temple. Also the measurements of details of figural representations of the new blocks find parallels on the blocks reused in the Small Ramesside Temple (*Table III*):

Contrary to this, the measurement of the lower block border attested on one of the new blocks differs from that on two attested cases of Tuthmoside blocks from the Ramesside Temple (*Table IV*).

The measurements of texts and other details on the new fragments find no parallels in the scenes from the Upper Temple at Deir el-Bahari. This excludes their provenience from this monument. Thus, the blocks may come from a temple or temples of the Tuthmoside period built in the desert at the edge of the cultivated area.

The new decorated blocks were found in the neighborhood of the large unfinished Ramesside Temple built during the Twentieth Dynasty in eastern Assasif⁷⁾

and not far from another Ramesside building partly excavated by the expedition of the Earl of Carnarvon⁸⁾ and another small Ramesside temple found first

Table II

Inv. No.	Sign height	Sign width	Column width
44	9	x	x
64	10	12	no lines
69	13	13	no lines
40	12, 14, 15	13-14	13.5-15
1	13-14	14	no lines
83	14	13.5	15-15.3
77	c. 12	14	no lines
12	c. 13.5	14-14.5	no lines
48	14-14.5	c. 14	c. 16
51	13	15	17.2-17.3
24	13	14	17.5
59	x	14	17.5
34	13-14	15-15.3	18
61	c. 12	c. 14	c. 18.5
13	c. 15	c. 15	18
20	x	c. 15	no lines

Table III

Figural detail	New blocks	Ramesside Temple
King's arm	8 cm (B 5)	8 cm (Nos. 20, 77)
King's foot	24 (B 2)	24 (Nos. 55, 97) 25 (No. 29)
Amun's feathers (width)	c. 22 cm (B 1)	23 cm (No. 61)

Table IV

Figural detail	New blocks	Ramesside Temple
Lower block border	23.3 cm (B 2)	16 cm (No. 52) 17 cm (No. 97)

6) Cf. note 3.

7) See note 4 above.

8) The Earl of Carnarvon, H. Carter, *Five Years' Explorations at Thebes: A Record of Work Done 1907-1911* (London-New York-Toronto-Melbourne 1912), 48, pls. XXX (middle), XL.

by the expedition of the Marquis of Northampton,⁹⁾ then cleared in 1985 by Mohammed el-Bialy and Mohammed Abdalla, and finally surveyed by the Polish Epigraphic Mission in 1996.¹⁰⁾ All these monuments were built of reused blocks

including many that date to the Tuthmoside Period.

A further study of this material is of great importance for the restoration of the historical topography of the West Bank of ancient Thebes during the New Kingdom.

9) Marquis of Northampton, W. Spiegelberg, P. Newberry, Report on Some Excavations in the Theban Necropolis during the Winter of 1898-9 (1908), 38, Fig. 30; cf. PM II 2 (1972), 424 ("Colonnaded temple of Ramesses IV") – at least three distinct temples of the Ramesside Period were located in Lower Assasif, cf. topographical remark in Karkowski, *PAM VIII*, op. cit., 55-58, quoted in note 3 above.

10) See note 3 above.