Two Unpublished Blocks from The Greco-Roman Period

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Abstract: This article focuses on two unpublished sandstone blocks preserved in the Abu-Elgood Museum store, Luxor. The first block (No. 225) is a sandstone block that is semi-square and unpublished, dating back to the reign of Emperor Augustus. It was not unearthed during any former excavations or archaeological surveys. but it was found in an archaeological seizure at the Luxor Antiquities and Tourism Police Department. It is currently housed in the storeroom of the Abu-Elgood Museum, Luxor. identified by inventory No. 225, Register No. 1. Its provenance and date are undocumented.

The sandstone block had a sunken relief depicting Emperor Augustus offering the White Crown and the Red Crown before the god Horus and the goddess Nephthys, as well as some hieroglyphic writings.

The second block (No. 230) is a fragment of a broken sandstone block. It was also found in an archaeological seizure at the Luxor Antiquities and Tourism Police Department. currently preserved in the Abu-Elgood Museum store, Luxor, identified by inventory No. 230, Register No. 1. Its provenance and date are undocumented. The sandstone block had a sunken relief contained hieroglyphic signs and the remains of three crowns.

In this study, the hieroglyphic texts are meant to be published, copied, translated, commented on, interpreted, and analyzed.

Keywords: Block of sandstone – Crown–Emperor Augustus–Greco-Roman Period–Horus.

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كتلتان غير منشورتين من العصر اليوناني الروماني

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الملخص: تركز هذه الدراسة علي كتلتان من الحجر الرملي محفوظتان بمخزن أبي الجود بالأقصر؛ الكتلة الأولى رقم ٢٢٥، وهي من الحجر الرملي ذات شكل شبه مربع وغير منشورة، ترجع إلى عصر الإمبراطور أغسطس، لم يتم اكتشافها من خلال حفائر علمية أو مسح أثري، ولكن وُجدت في ضبطية أثرية بقسم شرطة السياحة والآثار بالأقصر، وهي حاليا محفوظة تحت رقم ٢٢٥ بسجل رقم ١ مضبوطات، ولا توجد أي معلومات عن مصدرها أو تاريخها. تحتوي الكتلة الحجرية على نقش غائر يصور الإمبراطور أغسطس وهو يقدم التاج الأبيض والتاج الأحمر أمام المعبود حورس والمعبودة نفتيس وبعض الكتابات الهيروغليفية. الكتلة الثانية رقم ٢٣٠، وهي عبارة عن جزء من كتلة مكسورة من الحجر الرملي، وهي أيضا تم العثور عليها في ضبطية أثرية بقسم شرطة السياحة والآثار بالأقصر، وهي حاليا محفوظة تحت رقم ٢٣٠ بسجل رقم ١ مضبوطات، ولا توجد أي معلومات عن مصدرها أو تاريخها؛ تحتوي الكتلة الحجرية على نقش غائر يمثل بعض العلامات الهيروغليفية وبقايا ثلاثة تيجان.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى نشر النصوص الهيروغليفية ونسخها وترجمتها والتعليق عليها وتفسير وتحليل المناظر.

الكلمات الدالة: كتلة من الحجر الرملي– تاج – الإمبراطور أغسطس– العصر اليوناني الروماني – حورس.

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Block No. 225 (Fig. 1-2)

Introduction:

The main reason behind selecting these two blocks in this article was that they were from the same register (Register No. 1) in the Abu-Elgood Museum store in Luxor. Additionally, they date to the same period (the Greco-Roman period), as well as because of the same artistic and linguistic elements.

The sandstone block No. 225 was found in an archaeological seizure at the Luxor Antiquities and Tourism Police Department. Further, it was scored in proceedings No. 78 on November 10, 1991, at Luxor, and then handed over to the storeroom of the Abu-Elgood Museum, Luxor, by proceedings No. 8 on September 15, 2020. Then, it was stored at the Abu Elgood museum storage, Luxor, until its discharge by declaration No. 2616 on August 6, 2020. Currently housed in the storeroom of the Abu- Elgood Museum, Luxor, identified by inventory No. 225, there are no records detailing the circumstances of its discovery, as it was not unearthed during any formal excavations or archaeological surveys. Consequently, the absence of a well-defined archaeological context presents significant challenges in understanding its provenance and historical background, but it comes probably from Arment.

This sandstone block is a part of the monuments built by Emperor Augustus during the Roman period, and it represents the emperor's offering of the White Crown and the Red Crown. By offering the two crowns, the king guarantees the union of the two halves of the country[1]. This block holds great significance as it is a valuable addition to the monuments that Emperor Augustus constructed and for the offering of the white and red crowns in Egyptian temples during the Roman period.

Description:

This fragment is a semi-squared sandstone block measuring 51 cm in height and 48 cm in width with irregular borders and some smashing, the upper corners of the relief being lost completely. The relief scene and the hieroglyphic inscriptions are incised in sunken relief with a medium state of preservation; some hieroglyphic signs can be read with difficulty, and the offering was also determined with difficulty by adding some effects to the picture; no traces of color can be recognized.

The upper part of the block consists of four vertical columns of hieroglyphic signs oriented from right to left; a thin line separates each column, and the text starts with two cartouches containing the so-called throne name together with the *s3 R*ᶜ title[2] of Emperor Augustus.

The lower part of the block is the main part of the relief. It is a scene that shows Emperor Augustus standing barefooted with his far leg advanced, offering the White Crown and the Red Crown[3] before the god Horus and the goddess Nephthys; he holds

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[1] Sylvie Cauville, *Offerings to the Gods in the Egyptian Temples*, translated by Bram Calcoen, (Paris: Walpole, 2012), 131-132.

[2] James P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian (an introduction to the language and culture of hieroglyphs),* (Cambridge: University Press, 2010), 64-66.

[3] Cauville, *Offerings to The Gods in Egyptian Temples*, 131-132.

the red crown on the left hand and the white crown[1] on the right hand; his head is adorned with the crown of Horus with four feathers[2], he puts the *wsḫ*-collar on his chest; he wears an unadorned knee-length kilt with a trapezoidal apron panel; at the back of the kilt there is an animal tail attached. This tail formed a part of a royal dress from the early period of Egyptian history; it remained reserved for gods and kings only[3] as evidence of the power of the king.

The god Horus stands barefooted with his far leg advanced facing the emperor, he is adorned with a double crown, and he wears an unadorned knee-length kilt. At the back of the kilt there is an animal tail attached, and his left hand holds the *wȝs* scepter, but the right hand holds something unclear, but it may be *ʿnḫ* sign. Behind him stands the goddess Nephthys[4], she wears a long tripartite wig, she is adorned with Nephthys crown[5], she puts the *wsḫ*-collar on her chest, she wears a traditional close-fitting long garment, and she extends her left hand forward towards the emperor, but the right hand is lost.

Now, we can only provide a very brief examination of the scene on block No. 225 from the perspective of its iconographic shape, Emperor Augustus offering the White and Red crown to the god Horus, son of Isis, and the goddess Nephthys.

The scene is accompanied by a brief hieroglyphic text written in vertical columns. The inscription is carved in sunken relief.

By studying and comparing this stone block with other Roman-period blocks, there are similarities in the artistic and linguistic characteristics of this stone block and other Roman-period blocks[6].

Text:

sȝ Rʿ "*kysrs*" *nsw-bity* "*ȝwtḳrtr*"

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[1] For Red crown and White Crown See, Christine Strauss, "Kronen", *LÄ III*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz 1980): 812.

[2] When he wears the crown with four feathers, Horus, *the guardian of the throne and chief of the great sanctuary*, is the first of the gods. He is the successor of Osiris, who is called *the great victorious one*, see Cauville, Offerings to The Gods in Egyptian Temples, 133

[3] Mansour El-Noubi, "A Fragment of a Block of Rameses II", *GM* 165 (1998): 47.

[4] For the Goddess Nephthys See, Erhart Graefe, "Nephthys", *LÄ IV*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz 1984): 457-460; *LGG VI*, (Paris, 2002): 95-104; Hartwig Altenmüller, "Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys" *SAK* 27 (1999): 1-25; Jessica Léval, Aspects of Nephthys, Especially During The Graeco-Roman Period in Egypt, (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation Submitted to Department of Egyptology&West Asian Studies, Brown University, Rhode Island, May 2007).

[5] For Nephthys crown See Noha M. Nael, Symbolic Denotations and Artistic Values of Gods Crowns in Ancient Egyptian Carving, Master's Thesis, (Helwan University 2003), 164.

[6] For Examples See, Christophe Thiers, "Apotropaia Repousser Apophis à Ermant", *BIFAO* 120 (2020): 393-410; Fredrik Hagen, "Echoes of "Ptahhotep" in Greco-Roman Period", *ZÄS* 136 (2009): 130-139; Horst Beinlich, and Jochen Hallof, "Found and Lost-ein Block aus Deir el-Hagar Unterm Hammer", *GM* 195 (2003): 7-10; Adel Farid, "New Roman Blocks From a Hypostyle-Hall Found at Asfun El Mata'na", *SAK* 13 (1986): 35-53; Jean C. Grenier, "La stèle funéraire du dernier taureau Bouchis (Caire JE 31901 = Stèle Bucheum 20). Ermant - 4 novembre 340 [avec 1 planche]", *BIFAO* 83 (1983): 197-208.

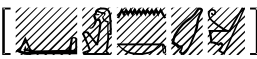The son of Ra "Caesar" The king of upper and lower Egypt "Autokrator"

ḏd mdw in ḥr s3 3st s3 wsir ḥry-ib iwn rsw

Words recited by Horus, son of Isis, son of Osiris which is in Arment.

ḏd mdw in nbt-ḥwt snt nṯr ..

Words recited by Nephthys, sister of the god ..

Text in front ofAugustus: [𝄃🅰️🅱️🅲️🅳️]

[ḏi .i n.k šmˁ mḥw.]

[May I give you white crown and red crown.]

Text in front of Horus:

ḏi .n.k ḏdw m ḥtp

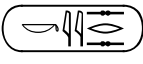May I give you speech peacefully.
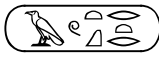
Text in front of Nephthys:

di =i n=k pr-ḥḏ ḏt nḥḥ

May I give you silver forever.

Comment:

The title son of Re" *s3 Rˁ* " ☉ and the throne name "*nsw-bity*☐ began to be written with this form during the 20th Dynasty, and this was the most common method during the Greco-Roman period[1].

The name Emperor Augustus has been attested in "Beckerath"[2]by various signs according to the forms in which it was written. When studying the forms and titles of

Emperor Augustus, it was observed that the title "Caesar" has been attested with the same hieroglyphic signs at Schenhur temple, which was built by

Emperor Augustus in Qus, Qena[3], and the title "Autokrator" has been attested with the same hieroglyphic signs at Philae temple[4].

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[1] *Wb* III, 410.

[2] Jürgen von Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, (Mainz: Münchner Universitätsschriften, 1999), 248-249; For titles of the emperor Augustus see, Jean C. Grenier, *Les Titulatures des Empereues Romains*, (Bruxelles: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1989), 9-16.

[3] Carl R. *Lepsius, Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien IV*, (Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, 1859), 70g

[4] *Lepsius, Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien IV*, 71 a-b.

The determinative (S3) is used instead of the letter N (N35) from the 19th Dynasty, and it was common during the Greco-Roman period[1].

The city "*iwnrsw* " is translated to mean "the southern *iwn*", it refers to the area south of Thebes, which is now the city of Arment[2].

The goddess Nephthys was written by the determinative (H8) with the letter T (X1) is almost common to the name of the goddess Nephthys in the Greco-Roman period in various forms[3].

The title *snt nṯr* is translated to mean "sister of the god", this title was often used by the goddesses from the New Kingdom and Greco-Roman period; it used 18 mentions referring to the goddess Nephthys, 19 referred to Isis, and 20 referred to Hathor[4], the goddess Nephthys has been attested with the same name and title "*nbt-ḥwt snt nṯr* " at Schenhur temple[5].

The text in front of Augustus was completely lost but we can recreate it by other parallel texts, because this offering was frequently mentioned in temples in the Greco-Roman period, for example in Philae temple[6].

The White crown and Red crown offering:

The white crown represents Upper Egypt, while the red crown represents Lower Egypt[7]. By offering the two crowns, the king guarantees the union of the halves of the country[8]. The beneficiary is Montu, and the divine heirs Horus, Harsomtus, and Ihy, who are expected to reciprocate the offering to him, the goddesses in their role of queen also receive these ornaments. The first appearance of the offering of the white crown and the red crown was in the Temple of Philae by King Nektanebis I, he was wearing the double crown and offering the white and red crown to the goddess Nekhbet and the goddess Wajit[9]. The offering of the white crown and the red crown was quite common during the Greco-Roman period; it was mentioned in the Temple of Edfu 9 times, in the Temple of Dendera 13 times, and in the rest of the temples 24 times.

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[1] *Wb* II, 193, 4.

[2] Henri Gauthier, *Dictionnaire des Noms Géographiques Contenus Dans Les Textes Hiéroglyphiques I*, (Caire: IFAO, 1925), 56.

[3] *LGG VI*, 95; *Wb* II, 233.

[4] *Wb* IV, 151.

[5] Carl R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien, Text, Vol II*, (Leipzig: Hinrichs Sche Buchhandlung, 1904), 259.

[6] Georges Benedite, *Description et Histoire de L'Ile de Philae*, (Paris: Librarie de La Société Asiatique, 1893), 85-86.

[7] Sandra A. Coller, "The Crowns of Pharaoh Their Development and Significance in Ancient Egyptian Kingship" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996), 16-36.

[8] Cauville, *Offerings to the Gods in the Egyptian Temples*, 131-132.

[9] Eleni Vassilika, "Ptolemaic Philae", *OLA* 34, (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1989): 232.

Date and Provenance of the sandstone block No. 225:

The text mentions the names of Emperor Augustus, Horus, and Nephthys, as well as their titles, which helped to identify their personalities without a doubt, so that this sandstone block is a part of the monuments built by Emperor Augustus during the Roman period.

The inscription refers to the city of *iwn rsw* which is now the city of Arment, which would allow a closer identification of the provenance of the sandstone block under discussion, so that the block No. 255 was probably one part of the temple of Montu in Arment[1] because of the great similarity in the reliefs of the temple of Montu in Arment[2], but it found its way out of the temple, and then it was reserved in an archaeological seizure at the Luxor Antiquities and Tourism Police Department, where it now resides within the museum's holdings.

Block No. 230 (Fig. 3-24)

Introduction:

The sandstone block was found in an archaeological seizure at the Luxor Antiquities and Tourism Police Department. Further, it was scored in proceedings No. 3/31, 1988, at Luxor. Then, it was stored at the Abu Elgood museum storage, Luxor until its discharge by declaration No. 2616 on August 6, 2020. Currently housed in the storeroom of the Abu-Elgood Museum, Luxor, identified by inventory No. 230, there are no records detailing the circumstances of its discovery, as it was not unearthed during any formal excavations or archaeological surveys. Consequently, the absence of a well-defined archaeological context presents significant challenges in understanding its provenance and historical background.

Description:

This fragment is a broken part of a sandstone block with an irregular shape measuring 28 cm in height and 34 cm in width 12 cm in thickness, with some smashing. Decorated in sunken relief with a medium state of preservation, it shows on top the remains of a solar bark. Below there is a text of a few hieroglyphic signs mentioning the goddess Isis and her title (*mwtnṯr*), then there are remains of three crowns, the first one from left to right the *3tf* crown[3] which was common with the god Osiris from the early dynastic[4], the second one being the seat of Isis, and the last one being a remain of cow's horn, maybe the crown of Hathor or the crown of Nephthys; the relief probably presents a scene of the god Osiris, the goddess Isis and Nephthys. Unfortunately, the block is broken and the inscription is incomplete, so we can only identify the goddess Isis without a doubt depending on the text; no traces of color can be recognized.

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[1] For temple of Montu in Arment See, Pierre Zignani, "L'architecture du temple de Montou à Ermant. Essai d'approche typologique et proportion du plan", *BIFAO* 114 (2015): 589-606; https://www.asm.cnrs.fr/les-fouilles/ermant/330-ermant, 18/11/2023, 10:51 Am.

[2] For example, See, Christophe Thiers, "Apotropaia Repousser Apophis à Ermant", *BIFAO* 120 (2020): 393-410.

[3] Collier, *The Crowns of Pharaoh*, 37; Abd el Monem J. Abubakr, *Untersuchungen über die Altägyptische Kronen,* (New York: J. J. Augustin, Glückstadt, 1937), 18-19.

[4] Heinrich Shäfer, "Die Doppelkrone der Pharonen, ihr Bild und ihr Sinn", *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 35 (1932): 704.

Text:

[hieroglyphs]

ȝst mwtnṯr irt sȝw [sn=s m] imntt

Isis is the mother of God she makes protection of [her brother in] in the west.

Comment

   The title (*mwtnṯrt*) [hieroglyphs] is translated to mean "the mother of God"[1], this title appeared in the 18th Dynasty. The title (*mwtnṯr*) the mother of God refers to many goddesses, especially Isis, as she is a mother of Horus[2]. It was common with the goddess Isis at the temples during the Greco-Roman period (Deir Chelouit -Dandara- Esna- Edfu- kom Ombo- Phila).

   The goddess Isis was mentioned at the temple of Edfu "Isis, protector behind her brother, who nurses her child to be his son as protector his majesty from rebels"[3]; the goddess Isis was mentioned at the temple of Philae as "Isis protects her brother [Osiris]"[4]; the goddess Isis was also the mother of the god Horus, and she had protected Horus[5]. Despite this, because the relief belongs to the god Osiris, it is possible to recreate the missing part of the text.

   The scribe reverses the direction of the sign (*imnt*) [hieroglyph] in the word *imntt* [hieroglyphs] .

Date and Provenance of the sandstone block No. 230

   The text mentions the name of the goddess Isis. Isis is linked to different cult centers all over Egypt, extending from the north to the south, but she was the main goddess at the temple of Deir Chelouit[6], Luxor. The temple is located quite near the place where this block was found, so it is possible that this block was a part of this temple. But this block is a broken part of a sandstone block and the relief is uncompleted, it is challenging to determine the block's original provenance.

By studying and comparing this stone block with other Greco-Roman period blocks, there are similarities in inscriptions[7], decorations, and paleographical details[8], as well

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[1] *LGG III*, 261-262; *WB II*, 54.

[2] *WB II*, 54.

[3] Amr Gaber, *The Central Hall in The Egyptian Temples of the Ptolemaic Period*, (England: Durham E-Theses, 2009), 475.

[4] Benedite, *Description et Histoire de L'Ile de Philae*, 126.

[5] *Wb III,* 414.

[6] For the temple of Deir Chelouit See, Christiane M. Zivie, *Le temple du Deir Chelouit*, (Cairo: IFAO, 1992).

[7] For example, s [hieroglyphs] , see: Benedite, *Description et Histoire de L'Ile de Philae,* 4.

[8] For examples, See, Farid, "New Roman Blocks from a Hypostyle-Hall Found at Asfun El Mata'na": 35-53; Hagen, "Echoes of "Ptahhotep" in Greco-Roman Period": 130-139; Chantal, S. Nivet, Et Jean F. Carlotti, "Trois autres portes des premiers Ptolémées à Médamoud", *BIFAO* 115 (2016): 373-454.

as the artistic and linguistic characteristics of this stone block and other Greco-Roman period blocks, so that the block No. 230 may date to the Greco-Roman period.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Block No. 225 is a sandstone block. It was one of the monuments built by Emperor Augustus during the Roman period. It consists of a relief representing the emperor offering the White Crown and the Red Crown to the god Horus and the goddess Nephthys. Also, the hieroglyphic text mentions the name of the emperor Augustus, the name of Horus, and the name of Nephthys and their titles. This block probably came from Arment, Block No. 225 offers valuable insights into the religious and cultural landscape of the Greco-Roman period. This block provides a fascinating glimpse into religious rituals and offerings beliefs during the Greco-Roman period.

Block No. 230 is a broken part of a sandstone block decorated in sunken relief. It shows on top the remains of solar bark. Below that text, a few hieroglyphic signs mention the goddess Isis and her title " mother of the god". Then appear the remains of three crowns which are probable for the god Osiris, Isis, and Nephthys. This block may be a part of the temple of Deir Chelouitat Luxor; it may date back to the Greco-Roman period.
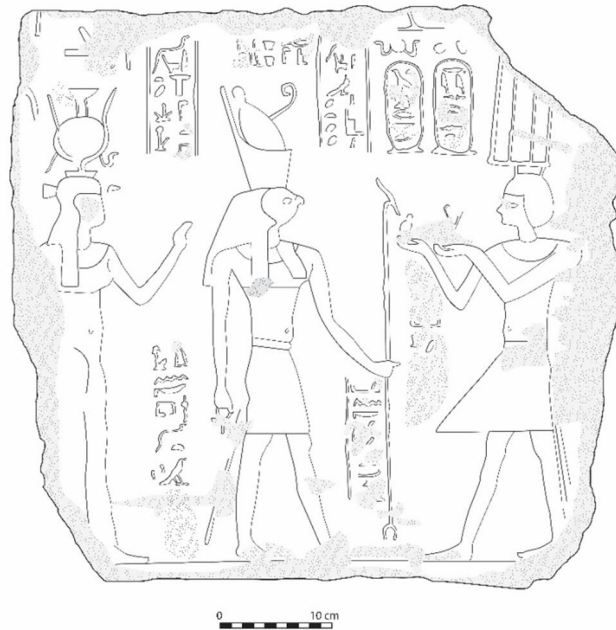
Figures

Fig. 1: Block No. 225(taken by M. Samah)

Fig. 2: Facsimile of Block No. 225 (Line Drawing by A. Abd El Haleem)
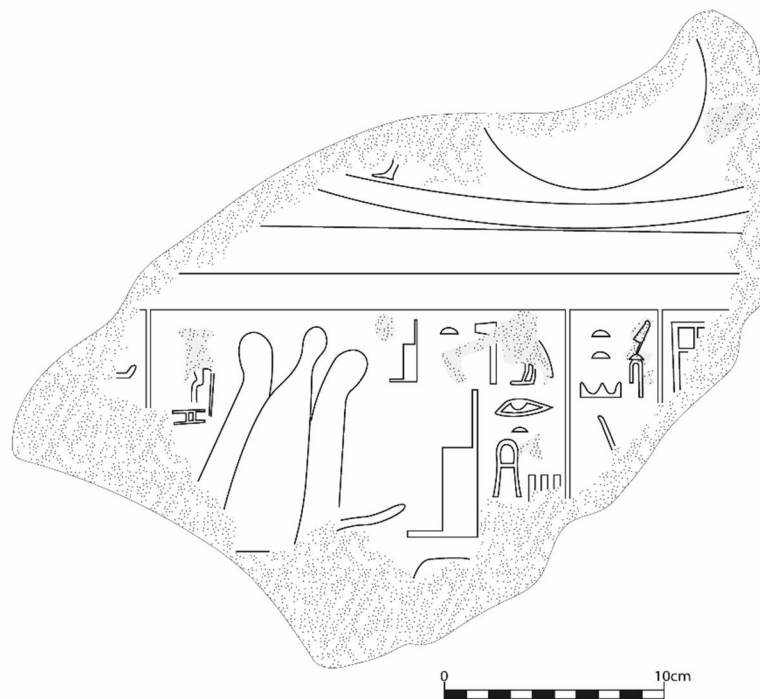
761

Fig. 3: Block No. 230(taken by M. Samah)

Fig. 4: Facsimile of Block No. 230 (Line Drawing by Sh. Mandor)

Abbreviations

- BIFAO = Bulletin de l'institut Francais, d'archéologie orientale, Le Caire.
- GM = Göttinger Miszellen, Göttingen.
- LÄ = Wolfgang Helck, und Eberhard Otto, Lexikon der Ägyptologie, 7 vols, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz 1975.
- LGG = Christian Leitz, Lexikon der Ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen, 7 vols, Paris: Peeters, France, 2002.
- OLA = Orientalia lovaniensia analecta. Dép. d'étud. orient., univ. cathol.(Louvain).
- SAK = Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur (Hambourg).
- WB = Adolf Erman, und Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch Der Äegyptischen Sprache*, vols.1-4, (Leipzig: J. Hinrichs, 1926-1931).
- ZÄS = Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde, Leipzig, Berlin.

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Hartwig Altenmüller, "Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys", *SAK 27* (1999): 1-25.

Heinrich Shäfer, "Die Doppelkrone der Pharonen, ihr Bild und ihr Sinn", *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 35 (1932): 704.

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