

Five Unpublished Blocks of Ancient Egypt from Old Cairo¹

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Abstract: Five inscribed stone blocks from ancient Egypt were discovered inside some buildings in Old Cairo. These blocks are inscribed with the cartouches and titles of King Sobekhotep IV, Thutmose III, Ramses IX, and Ptolemy V. Some blocks are kept in the Open Panorama near Al-Nasr Gate, such as two blocks of King Thutmose III and Ptolemy V, while other blocks are still reused in the old buildings such as the three blocks of King Sobekhotep IV and Ramses IX. The paper studies the five blocks in the context of reusing the ruins of ancient Egyptian constructions during the Medieval Era. The studied blocks have been destroyed over the centuries. To save effort, money and time, builders of the Mediaeval Era reused the remains of some ancient monuments to reconstruct their new buildings. There is no indication of a re-inscription of these blocks in ancient times, suggesting they were brought directly to Old Cairo from their original site. Heliopolis had extensive ruins, which could be easily transported because there were no natural obstructions between Heliopolis and Old Cairo, especially those smaller objects such as these blocks. For many years, the proposed source of these blocks was the ruins of the great temple of the deity Re-Horakhty in Heliopolis. The inscriptions provide essential information about those kings' architectural activities and their attention to Heliopolis throughout the ancient Egyptian periods.

Keywords: Stone blocks, Ayyubaid Cairo, Sobekhotep IV, Thutmose III, Ramses IX, Ptolemy V, Heliopolis.

¹ Thanks to Mrs. Laila Atia, manager of the Bab el-Nasr Gate of Old Cairo District - Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and Mr. Abd El-Aziz Hazaa Security responsible for their help.

خمس كتل غير منشورة لمصر القديمة من القاهرة القديمة

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المُلخَص: تم اكتشاف العديد من الكتل الحجرية المنقوشة من مصر القديمة داخل بعض المباني في القاهرة القديمة. هذه الكتل منقوشة بخرطيش وألقاب الملك سوبك حوتب الرابع، وتحتمس الثالث، ورمسيس التاسع، وبطليموس الخامس. بعض هذه الكتل تم حفظها في البانوراما المفتوحة بالقرب من بوابة النصر مثل كتلتين من عهد الملك تحتمس الثالث وبطليموس الخامس، بينما كتل أخرى مازالت مستخدمة في المباني القديمة مثل ثلاث كتل من عهد الملك سوبك حوتب الرابع ورمسيس التاسع. تتناول الورقة البحثية دراسة الكتل الخمسة في سياق إعادة استخدام أنقاض المباني المصرية القديمة خلال العصور الوسطى. تم تدمير تلك الكتل المنقوشة من منشآت على مر القرون في موقع هليوبوليس. ولتوفير الجهد والمال والوقت، أعاد بناء العصور الوسطى استخدام بقايا بعض الآثار القديمة. ولا يوجد ما يشير إلى إعادة نقش هذه الكتل في العصور القديمة، مما يدل على أنها تم إحضارها مباشرة إلى القاهرة القديمة من موقعها الأصلي. هليوبوليس بها أطلال ممتدة يمكن نقلها بسهولة، لأنه لم تكن هناك عوائق طبيعية بين هليوبوليس والقاهرة القديمة خاصة تلك القطع الصغيرة مثل هذه الكتل. لسنوات عديدة، كان المحجر المختار لتزويد تلك المباني آنذاك هو أنقاض المعبد الكبير للإله رع حوراختي في هليوبوليس. من ناحية أخرى توفر النقوش معلومات أساسية عن الأنشطة المعمارية لهؤلاء الملوك واهتمامهم بهليوبوليس خلال العصور المصرية القديمة.

الكلمات الدالة: كتل حجرية، القاهرة الفاطمية، سوبك حوتب الرابع، تحتمس الثالث، رمسيس التاسع، بطليموس

الخامس، هليوبوليس.

1. Introduction

In the Mediaeval Era, the Egyptians reused ancient Egyptian buildings like temples to reconstruct their stone blocks in new buildings to save effort and time. The Ayyubian kings built new fortification walls to defend Old Cairo against any attack by the Crusaders. Several inscribed stone blocks, which had previously belonged to the ruins of ancient Egyptian buildings, were discovered separately inside the Northern Wall of Old Cairo in 2001 during routine restoration work¹. Some blocks are kept in the Open Panorama near Al-Nasr Gate², while other blocks are still used, such as the two blocks of King Sobekhotep IV and Ramses IX. The paper publishes these blocks in the context of reusing the ruins of ancient Egyptian constructions during the Medieval Era. The five blocks' inscriptions provide essential information about the kings' architectural activities throughout ancient Egyptian history.

2. The studied blocks

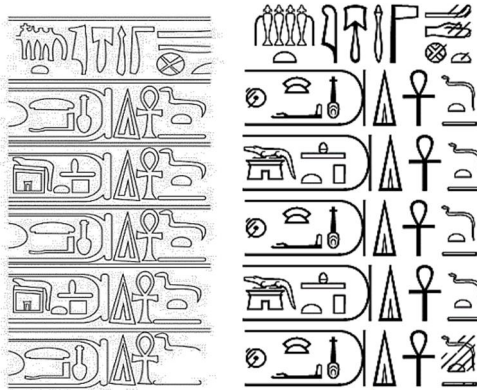
Although many of the discovered blocks in Old Cairo were over twenty-four, only twelve were published before³. This paper will study five inscribed blocks as follows:

2.1. A block of King Sobekhotep IV

2.1.1. Description:

A limestone block is reused in the backside of the northern Ayyubid wall close to the Mettawly Gate of Old Cairo. It measures 120 cm L and 61 cm H. Six horizontal lines of hieroglyphic are inscribed in raised relief (Fig. 1).

2.1.2. Texts:



1) {from right to left} *Bḥdt* (y) *nṯr* ʿ3 *s3b* *šwt* *ḥnty* [*ḥbt*]⁴

¹ Neil.D. MacKenzie, *Ayyubid Cairo: A Topographical Study* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1992), 19-21.

² Mohamed El-Mezain, and Mohamed Mahmoud Kacem, "Two Unpublished Sphinxes of Amenemhat V and Ramses II" *JARCE* 55 (2019): 85.

³ D. Heiden, "Pharaonische Baumaterialien in der mittelalterlichen Stadtbefestigung von Kairo," *MDAIK* 57 (2001): 59; D. Heiden, "Pharaonische Baumaterialien in der mittelalterlichen Stadtbefestigung von Kairo," *MDAIK* 58 (2002): 257; M. El-Mezain, and M.M. Kacem, "Two Unpublished Sphinxes of Amenemhat V and Ramses II," *JARCE* 55 (2019): 85-96; Id., "Unpublished Blocks of Ancient Egypt from Old Cairo," in (Eds.) B. Kasparian and O. el-Aguizy, *Proceedings of the Twelfth International Congress of Egyptologists, Cairo – Egypt, November 3rd - 8th, 2019*, (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, In print).

⁴ A parallel scene shows Thutmose III running before Amun in the company of Seth and Horus. The scene is closed out by Horus whose speech reads: ... *bḥdt*(y) *nṯr* ʿ3 *s3b* *šwt* *nb* *pt* *ḥnty* *ḥbt* *ḥnty* ʿ*nw* *ḥnty* *itr*(t) *mḥw* "The Behdite, the Great God, Variegated of Plumage, Lord of Heaven, Foremost of Hebet, Foremost of AINU, Foremost of the shrines of Lower Egypt." See A.J. Shanley, *God of Confusion? An Examination of the Egyptian God Seth in New Kingdom. Expressions of Royal Ideology* (Atlanta: Ph.D. Emory University, 2015), 72.

2) {from left to right} ... H^c-nfr-R^c di ʿnh dt

3) ... Sbk-htp di ʿnh dt

4) ... H^c-nfr-R^c di ʿnh dt

5) ... Sbk-htp di ʿnh dt

6) ... H^c-nfr-R^c di ʿnh d[t]

“1) *The Behdite, the Great God, Variegated of Plumage*¹, *Foremost [of Hebet]*.

2) ... *Khaaneferre*², *given life forever*.

3) ... *Sobekhotep (IV)*, *given life forever*.

4) ... *Khaaneferre*, *given life forever*.

5) ... *Sobekhotep (IV)*, *given life forever*.

6) ... *Khaaneferre*, *given life forever*.”

2.2.3. Comment:

The block is attributed to the 13th Dynasty king Sobekhotep IV³. Two of his royal names clearly inscribed on the block. The repeat of the royal names in the same text could indicate that the block is related to a memorial text as a table of glorification for the king. There is a similar text is recorded on the chamber II walls beside the inner courtyard of Great temple in Philae Island⁴. King Sobekhotep IV was a warrior king as a Nubian expedition, to suppress rebellious Medjay in Lower Nubia, was dated to the latter part of the 13th Dynasty during his reign. Thus, he achieved a safe and welfare life for the Egyptians during his reign. We can define it through his erecting works as the block of Old Cairo belonged to its ruins.

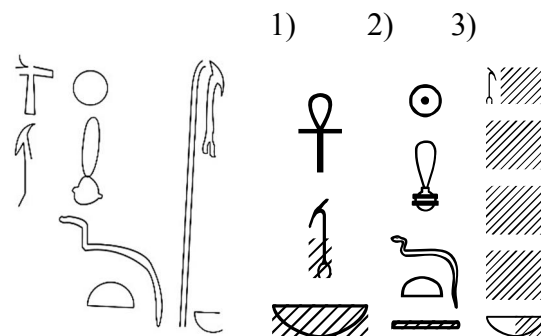
2.2. A block of Unknown King

2.2.1. Description:

A block is situated near the previous block in the Ayyubid Wall of Old Cairo (fig. 1). It measures 59 cm L, and 45 cm H.

2.2.2. Text:

The block bears three short vertical lines of hieroglyphic inscriptions in raised relief:



¹ Literary: ‘many-coloured of plumage’ of solar Horus. See A.J. Shanley, *God of Confusion?:* 65; R.O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, modernized by B. Jegerović (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2017), 260, 319.

² H. Gauthier, *Livre des rois d’Égypte*, II (Le Caire: l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale 1912), 33 (no. IX).

³ A Nubian expedition to suppress rebellious Medjay in Lower Nubia, dated to the later part of the 13th Dynasty.

⁴ G. Bénédite, *Description et Histoire de l’ Ile de Philae*, II: *Textes hieroglyphiques* (Paris: L’ecole du Louvre, 1893), 11, pl. iv.

1) (di) ^cnh w3s [nb]¹

2) mi R^c dt

3) ... w3s ... [ht] nb

1) (given) [all] life and domain

2) like Re forever.

3) all [life and] domain [...] and every[thing].”

2.2.3. Comment:

These remains of the text related to a protective formula that traditionally inscribed behind the king figure. Thus, it could be inscribed between two figures of the God Amun / Atum (?) and King. Although the block is placed near the previous block of King Sobekhotep IV, it is not attributed to the same king. The style and signs size of inscriptions relief of the two blocks is different.

2.3. A block of King Thutmose III

2.3.1. Description:

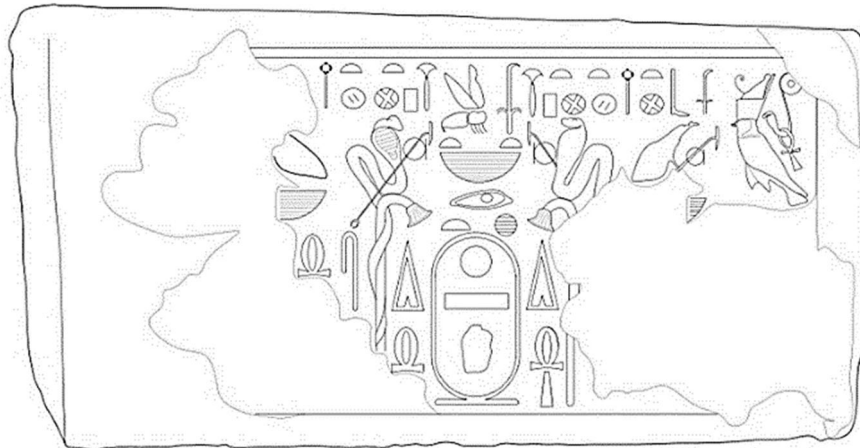
A granite block measures 147 cm L, 79 cm H, and 33 cm D. It was divided into three vertical registers (Fig. 2). Each register contains one of King Tuthmosis III's royal names inscribed in sunken relief.

The main register is engraved in the middle of the block and records the Throne name alongside some traditional epithets. Wadjet-Lady as Copra wraps around a papyrus stem and faces the Throne-name to present traditional symbols such as the *was*-sceptre and *shen*-ring to the royal name. The last details are repeated on the other side of the throne name.

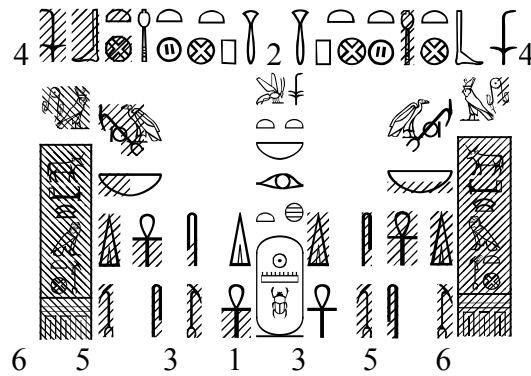
The second register is engraved on the left side of the block. It bears the *Horus*- and *Nebty*-names. First: Horus as a falcon introduced the Horus-name and is crowned with a double crown. A copra with a decorative *ankh*-sign coiled around a sun disc to protect Horus. *Serekh* of the Horus-name is damaged. Second: Nekhbet-Lady as a vulture faces the Horus falcon to present the same traditional symbols of Wadjet-Lady to the royal name.

The third register on the right side of the block has similar content to the previous register, but it is almost damaged.

2.3.2. Texts:



¹ <https://www.memphis.edu/hypostyle/pdfs/glossary.pdf>, p. 12 (Accessed in 3/3/2022).



The text of main register is inscribed in the middle of the block and records the Throne name of King Thutmose III. It runs vertically from right to left:

1) *nsw-bt nb ir ht Mn-hpr-R^c*

“1) *King of Upper and Lower Egypt, lord who performs thing(s), Menkhepre*”

Above the Wadjet depiction as copra, there is a short text that records its name. It runs horizontally from left to right:

2) *W3dyt (nbt) Dp*

“2) *Wadjet-(Lady of) Buto*¹.”


Furthermore, some traditional royal epithets are inscribed around the papyrus stem in a decorative style. The text runs vertically from left to right:

3) *[di.s] ^cnh [w3s]*

“3) *[May she (Wadjet) give] life [and domain] (to the king)*”

The second register depicts the Nekhbet figure in the vulture form that stands on the



hieroglyphic sign *nb*: . She presents a *was*-sceptre of authority with a *shen*-ring of eternity to the Horus-name of King Thutmose III. Above her figure, there is a text that records the name and title of Nekhbet-Lady. It runs horizontally from right to left:

(4) *Nḥbt ḥdt Nḥn* “4) *Nekhbet, the White One of Nekhen*².”

Another vertical text, which follows the Nekhbet figure, is damaged, but there is a similar relief of King Thutmose III from Amada temple that could help to read this damaged inscription of the block³:

5) *Nḥbt [di(.s) ^cnh w3s snb]*

“5) *Nekhbet-Lady, [may she (Nekhbet) give life, domain and prosperous (to the king)].*”

Nekhbet faces the Horus name of King Thutmose III, whose content is totally not preserved. Its suggested text runs vertically from left to right:

6) *Hr KA-nḥt ḥ^c-m-WA.st*

“6) *Horus, Kanekhet-khaemwaset (the strong-bull-arising-in-Thebes)*”.

The third register is inscribed on the opposite side of the block and symmetrically records all the details of the previous register.

¹ Tell El-Fara’in – Desouk. See U. Hartung, “Buto (Modern name: Tell El-Fara’in),” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 7/4 (2015): 61.

² Nekhen (Hierakonpolis) was situated in the 3rd Nome of Upper Egypt, modern el-Kab. Cf. *Wb.* II, 309 (7-8); H. Gauthier, *Dictionnaire des noms géographique*, III, (Le Caire: l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1926), 99.

³ C. Spieser, *Les noms du Pharaon: Comme êtres autonomes au Nouvel Empire*, (Göttingen: Editions Universitaires. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht/Fribourg/Suisse, 2000), 239, 332 (no. 170).

2.3.3. Comment:

The block of King Thutmose III has a style of memorial plaques or lintels that ornamented the gates or doors of sacred buildings. It records the glories and praises of the king's name. One or two deities appeared on such plaques to crown or purify the royal body. Many examples of such memorial plaques or lintels are known, such as the previous memorial block of King Thutmose III in Amada Temple¹.

2.4. The block of King Ramses IX

2.4.1. Description:

A vertical granite block measures L. 229 cm, H. 17 cm, and D. 46 cm (figs. 3-4). It is reused as a crossed threshold in the gate of Khanqat of Baybars Al-Jashankair at Al-Moaz Street, No.32 (Dated 1309-1306 A.D.). The three registers contain three figures with inscriptions as follows:

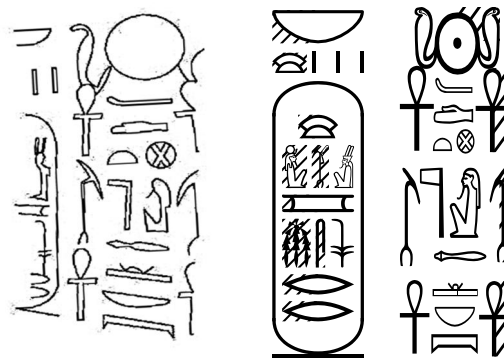


The First Register:

The register scene depicts King Ramses IX wearing a tall and narrow dress, a necklace, and a *khepresh*-crown ornamented with a uraeus. The king is kneeling on a bolster and raising his arms in a gesture of prayer. The head and crown have an oval shape. The eyebrows and cosmetic lines unusually extended the same distance towards the ear. Moreover, a nasal-labial flap reaches below the mouth (fig. 5). All these artistic characteristics belonged to the iconographic type of Ramses IX².

2.4.2.1. Text:

There are some remains of two vertical lines of inscriptions that runs from left to right as follows:



1) *nb ḥꜣw Rꜥ-ms-sw ḥꜣi-(m)-W3st mrr-Imn* 2) *Bḥdt(y) nṯr ʿ3 nb pt*

“1) Lord of appearance Ramses-Khaemwaset-merrwamen (who appears (in) Thebes, beloved of Amun)³ 2) the Behdety, the great god and Lord of heaven”⁴.

¹ There are other examples of these memorial plaques or lintels such the blocks of King Thutmose I and Amenhotep II that kept now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Cf. Spieser, *Les noms du Pharaon*, 239-240, 332 (nos. 171-172).

² S.C.B. Robin, *Late Ramesside Three-dimensional Royal Statuary, from Ramesses IV through Ramesses XI*, (Baltimore: PhD. Johns Hopkins University, 2001), 210.

³ R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien*, III (Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, 1849), 235; J. von Beckerath, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen* (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1999), 172-173, (8: E2).

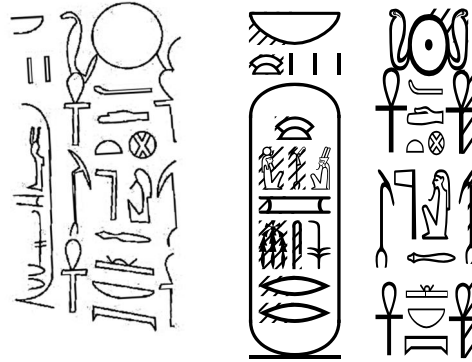
⁴ Z. Abdel-Magiud, “Two Hymns of Doring Re,” *Shedet* 3 (2016): 35.

The second register:

The scene of the second register depicts Ramses IX crowned with the *khat*-headdress that is ornamented with the uraeus. The king is kneeling on a bolster and raising his arms in a gesture of prayer (fig. 6).

2.4.2.2. Text:

Remains of two vertical lines of inscriptions, which runs from left to right, are similar to the previous text as follows:



1) *nb ḥꜣw Rꜥ-ms-sw ḥꜣi-(m)-W3st mrr-Imn* 2) *Bḥdt(y) nṯr ꜥ3 nb pt*

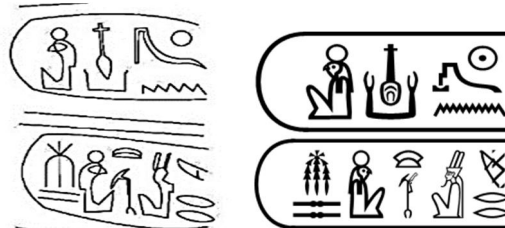
“1) lord of appearance Ramses who appears (in) Thebes, beloved of Amun 2) the Behdety, the great god and Lord of sky”.

The third register:

The scene of the register depicts King Ramses IX crowned with the *nemes*-headdress that is ornamented with the uraeus. The king is kneeling on a bolster and raising his arms in a gesture of prayer (fig. 7).

2.4.2.3. Text:

There are some remains of two horizontal cartouches of King Ramses IX that runs from left to right as follows:



1) *Nfr-k3-Rꜥ stp-n-Rꜥ* 2) *Rꜥ-ms-sw ḥꜣ-(m)-W3st mrr(w)-Imn*

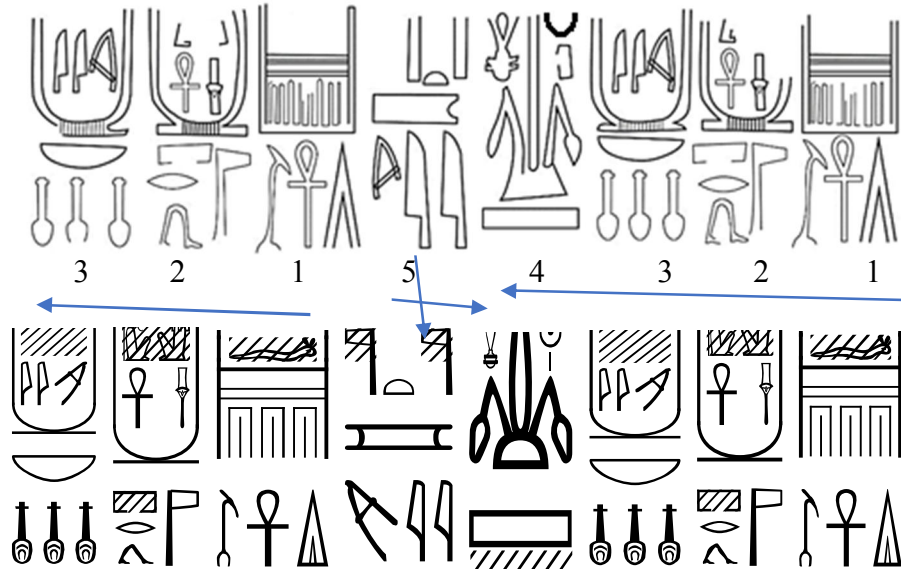
“1) Neferkare-setepenre 2) Ramses (IX)-Khaemwaset-merrwamen, (He-who-appears-in-Thebes, beloved of Amun).”

2.5. The block of King Ptolemaic V

2.5.1. Description:

A rectangular block is made of limestone and measures L., 115 cm, H. 46 cm, and D. 42 cm. Its inscriptions are divided into two similar registers. They contain the Horus, Throne, and the Birth names of King Ptolemy V Epiphanes (fig. 8) in addition to some of his traditional royal titles.

2.5.2. Texts:



1) [Hr: Hwnw-ḥꜥy-m-nsw-ḥr-st-ít]f dī nḥ w3s 2) [nsw-bit: Íwꜥn-ntrwy-mr(wy)-ít stp-(n)-Pth wsr-k3-R] šm-ꜥnḥ[-(n)-Ímn]) ntr prí 3) [s3-R: Ptwlmís nḥ-dt] mry[-Pth] nb nfrw 4) ... mi Rꜥ 5) mry ntrwy

“1) [Horus: Hwnw-khaensw-hersetetef (The-youth-who-has-appeared-as-king-on-his-father's throne)¹.] Given life and domain. 2) [King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Iwaennetrwy-merwyet-setepenptah-oserkare-sekhemanehenamen (The heir-of-the-two-gods^(a)-who-love-(their)-father^(b), Chosen of Ptah, the strong one of the ka of Re²], the living-image-[of-Amun³]. God who appears^(c). 3) [Son of Re: Ptolemaios (V), Living forever], Beloved [of Ptah]⁴. Master of kindness^(d), 4) ... like Re 5) Beloved of the two gods⁵.”

2.5.3. Comment:

a) The title of “two gods” refers to King Ptolemy IV and Queen Arsinoe III.

¹ R.J. Leprohon, *The Great Name: Ancient Egyptian Royal Titulary* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 181. There is another version of his Horus name: “Youth who has appeared (in Glory) on the throne of his father”. See S. Cauville, *Dendara, III: Traduction, OLA 95* (Paris - Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2000), 46.



² J. das C. Sales, “Le Roi Ptolémafoue et les divinités Égyptiennes selon la titulature royale,” *Aegyptus et Pannonia* 3 (2006): 200.


³ Leprohon, *The Great Name*, 181, 190. There is another version of his Throne name “Heir of the gods who love their father, chosen of Ptah, the power of the ka of Re, the living image of Amun.” See M. Chauveau, *Egypt in the Age of Cleopatra: History and Society under the Ptolemies*, translated by D. Lorton (London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 46.

⁴ H. Gauthier, *Le livre des rois d'Égypte*, III (Le Caire: l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1913), 275–288; von Beckerath, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 236–239; Sales, “Le Roi Ptolémafoue”: 201; Leprohon, *The Great Name*, 181. The complete version of this title is “Ptolemy, living eternally, beloved of Ptah, the god who appears (= Epiphanes), master of kindness (= Eukharistos)”. Cf. Chauveau, *Egypt in the Age of Cleopatra*, 46.

⁵ R.A. Hazzard, “Theos Epiphanes: Crisis and Response,” *Harvard Theological Review* 88/4 (1995): 427.

b) This title is written in Egyptian as a translation of the Greek title “the two Philopators (= Ptolemy IV and Arsinoe III)”. It also appeared on some contemporary monuments¹.

c) The surname  *ntr-pri* in Egyptian was just a translation of the Greek title *Ἐπιφανής* Epiphanes “*God Manifest*”², or “*the Glorious/Illustrious*”³. Sometimes it appears in a dual form as  *ntrwy-pri*, and it refers to the dead parents, King Ptolemy IV and Queen Arisnoi III⁴.

d) The epithet  *nb nfrw* could be also translated as “*lord of the crowns / perfection / kindness*”⁵.”

Most of these titles or epithets regularly followed the royal names of King Ptolemy V. His Greek titles remained unchanged⁶; They were translated into the Egyptian language⁷. The Greek version accurately renders all these epithets, replacing Amun with Zeus, Ptah with Hephaistos, and Re with Helios⁸. The surname nTr-pri and the epithet nb nfrw provide a specific date of around 199 BC. or 189 BC.⁹

Although Ptolemy V had ruled Egypt for a long time and left the kingdom in a state of vulnerability¹⁰, he achieved relative peace for over 15 years before the armed rebellion resumed its activities among natives and foreigners¹¹. The religious policy of the Ptolemies towards the Egyptian clergy was visible in the plentiful offerings in

¹ Such as a funerary stela of Horemakhet that was discovered in Saqqara; And it preserved in the British Museum no. 1000. Moreover, a sarcophagus of the great prophet of Ptah, Ahmose, was discovered in Memphis and preserved in Berlin Museum no.18. See H. Gauthier, *Le livre des rois d'Égypte*, IV (Le Caire: l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1916), 272.

² von Beckerath, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 239 (B.3); Hazzard, “Theos Epiphanes: Crisis and Response”: 430. There is another formula: “*who manifests himself*”, cf. Leprohon, *The Great Name*, 181.

³ Cf. P. Barry, “Antiochus IV, Epiphanes”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 29/2 (1910): 126 (fn.1); Hazzard, “Theos Epiphanes: Crisis and Response”: 419; K. Schoville, “The Rosetta Stone in Historical Perspective,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 12/1 (2001): 16. There were parallel epithets attested to King Ptolemy V such as nty ir mdt nfrt “*who does the better*” and pA nb Sp “*agreeable / (adv.) happily*”. Cf. F.D. Cenival, “Un acte de renonciation consécutif à un partage de revenus liturgiques memphites (P. Louvre E 3266)”, *BIFAO* 71 (1971): 52.

⁴ *Wb* I, 521 (17); C. Lenormant, *Essai sur le texte grec de l'inscription de Rosette* (Paris: Hachette Livre-BNF, 1840), 32; von Beckerath, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 238-239 (B. 3); É. Bernand, “Laarque,” *Revue Des Études Grecques* 84/401- 403 (1971), 343; G. Zaki and M. Boraik, “L’avant-porte de «Thot qui réside à Thèbes» dans le quartier nord de Karnak,” *BIFAO* 109 (2009): 511.

⁵ Cauville, *Dendara III*, 487; Leitz, C., *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen*, VIII (Paris: Peeters Publishers, 2003), 507.

⁶ C.G. Johnson, *Ptolemaic Royal Titulature in Royal and Civil Documents (304-116 B.C.)* (Toronto: PhD. University of Toronto, 1994), 235-236.

⁷ Johnson, *Ptolemaic Royal Titulature in Royal and Civil Documents*, 221.

⁸ Chauveau, *Egypt in the Age of Cleopatra*, 46.

⁹ *Urk.* II, 172 (8), 173 (5); Cenival, “Un acte de renonciation consécutif à un partage”: 52.

¹⁰ Tyler, M.C., *Alexander's empire and Roman empire*, III (New York: Union Book Company, 1897), 796; N. Rosenstein, *Rome and the Mediterranean, 290 to 146 BC. The Imperial Republic* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 182. Ptolemy V was only five years old when he succeeded his father, Ptolemy IV; Thus, he had the legitimacy to rule Egypt. Then, he married the Syrian queen, Cleopatra I, when he was 16 years old. See G. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, translated by T. Saavedra (London – New York: Routledge, 1994), 140.

¹¹ Cf. M. Alliot, “La fin de la résistance égyptienne dans le Sud sous Épiphane,” *Revue des études anciennes* 54 (1954): 18-26.

addition to building activities of the Egyptian temples¹. Actually, Ptolemy V erected many Egyptian temples to proclaim himself a Pharaoh before the Greeks and Egyptians². On the other hand, he defined many revenues for these temples; thus, he won the Greek nickname Eucharist "Gracious"³. In return, this political propaganda showed him as Egyptian to win the sympathy of the native Egyptians. Ptolemy V connected his violence against the natives' revolt with the native deities of Egypt⁴. He presented the Egyptian deities as his protectors against the protesters. After his victory, Ptolemy V was honoured as a hero, conqueror, and god according to the decree of Memphis⁵ (Rosetta Stone lines 6, 2, and 14 during his coronation on March 27, 196 BC.)⁶.

After centuries, these Ptolemy V temples were abandoned and destroyed; People brought some blocks from the ruins of Heliopolis and reused them in their buildings in Old Cairo during the Medieval Period. Some shards of evidence could support this suggestion:

A bronze seal of unknown provenance was kept in a private collection. It has an inscription of the titulary of Ptolemy V followed by the epithets related to Hathor. It may be a foundation seal beneath King Ptolemy V's temple and was discovered after reusing the ruins of this temple⁷.

- 1) A limestone block discovered in the foundations of the pre-Islamic church of Abu Sarga (Sergius) in Babylon (East Cairo, near Heliopolis) with two Ptolemaic cartouches was initially brought from a Ptolemaic temple for reuse in the construction of that church⁸.
- 2) King Ptolemy V and Queen Cleopatra I permitted the Judean Syrian Onias to remove the destroyed temple of Leontopolis in the Nome of Heliopolis to rebuild a new temple at Yahwa. A view suggests that this temple was probably located much closer to ancient Heliopolis, probably at Tell-el-Yahoudieh, the main settlement of the Jews in Egypt at that time⁹.
- 3) The block of Old Cairo, which was dated to the reign of King Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–181/182 BC.), was discovered near other blocks that originated from Heliopolis¹⁰.

¹ Cf. E. Lanciers, "Die Ägyptischen Tempelbauten zur Zeit des Ptolemaios V. Epiphanes (204-180 v.Chr.)," *MDAIK* 42 (1986): 81-98. The small number of preserved monuments of Ptolemy V in Lower and Middle Egypt is due to the recycling of building materials by the population, the uncertain political situation in Upper Egypt, and the economic decline in his reign. Cf. E. Lanciers, "Die Ägyptischen Tempelbauten zur Zeit des Ptolemaios V. Epiphanes (204-180 v. Chr.)," *MDAIK* 43 (1987): 173-180.

² Johnson, *Ptolemaic Royal Titulature in Royal and Civil Documents*, 225.

³ Schoville, "The Rosetta Stone in Historical Perspective": 17.

⁴ Johnson, *Ptolemaic Royal Titulature in Royal and Civil Documents*, 235.

⁵ Schoville, "The Rosetta Stone in Historical Perspective": 2-16. The actual date is March 27, 197 BC. See E. Hincks, "On the True Date of the Rosetta Stone," *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* 19 (1843): 72-77.

⁶ He took over the power in 204 BC. when he was only five years old. See M.O. Aneni, "Politics of the Ptolemaic Dynasty," *New Journal of African Studies* 12 (2016): 155.

⁷ E. Doetsch-Amberger, "Ein Siegel Ptolemaios' V," *GM* 142 (1994): 67.

⁸ G. Gabra, "Ein Block Ptolemaios' V. Epiphanes aus Babylon," in (eds.) B. Schmitz and A. Eggebrecht, *Festschrift Jürgen von Beckerath: zum 70. Geburtstag am 19. Februar 1990* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1990), 49-51.

⁹ Cf. G. Bohak, *Joseph, Aseneth and the Jewish Temple in Heliopolis*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 267.

¹⁰ M.C. Taylor, *Antiochus the Great* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 2013), 161; J.P. Mahaffy, *The Empire of the Ptolemies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 289.

3. General discussion

The first point discusses the provenance of the five studied blocks. Although the intended destruction of the buildings was almost for economic reasons, some buildings fell due to natural aspects. The generations over the years reused the ruins of such buildings to supply other new buildings. According to Al-Maqrizi, the Ayyubid Rulers prefer to take these blocks from ancient sites instead cutting stones from Moqattam to save effort and time¹.

The sites of Memphis and Heliopolis give an ideal example of the reuse phenomenon. Memphis is located far (about 35 km) from Old Cairo, where the blocks were already discovered, and the Nile River separates the two sites. Memphis, therefore, was not the original suggested site for these blocks of Old Cairo. Alternatively, there are many notes refer to Heliopolis as the original site, as follows:

- 1) Heliopolis is nearer to the modern site of these blocks, only about 12 km away.
- 2) Ramses IX left several monuments at Heliopolis².
- 3) An inscription records a royal offering that was presented by King Pami of the 22nd Dynasty³, as follows: "*The son of Re [Pamy] is endowed with life forever. He did this as an endowment for the Baou of Heliopolis, the lords of the Great Temple which dominates Heliopolis, the establishment of their daily offering and [for] every feast of the Great Temple forever [...] with them like Re [eternally]*"⁴. This text is inscribed on a reused block that was discovered within the same walls of Old Cairo. It is related to the Great Temple of Heliopolis.
- 4) The perfect evidence for the proposed origin of these blocks is the discovery of a sphinx of King Ramses II. It was reused as a threshold for the side-gate of the Ayyubian walls of Old Cairo. Heliopolis was the original site of this sphinx⁵.

According to the previous observations, there were ruins of a building at Heliopolis from which the people of Old Cairo transported these blocks to reuse them in their buildings.

The second point of discussion is about the type of building from which these inscribed blocks were brought, so we must concentrate on the following points of observation:

- 1) The big size of these blocks indicates to their use in a sizable building as temple.
- 2) The decoration of these blocks is traditional on the temples' walls.
- 3) There are other discovered blocks related to the god Re-Horakhty and King Ramses II, and they are also reused in other buildings of Old Cairo⁶. They all belonged to the same source.

Accordingly, these blocks of Old Cairo were brought from the ruins of the great temple of the sun god Re-Horakhty at Heliopolis to reuse them in other buildings like the northern wall of the Ayyubid dynasty. This phenomenon has been practised since

¹ Al-Maqrizi, *Preaching and Consideration of Plans and Effects* (in Arabic), I, (Beirut: Dar-elKotep elmia, 1966), 136, 379.

² K. Kitchen, "Ramses V-XI," *LÄ*, V: 124-128.

³ H.M.M. Ahmed, "The Chronology of the Cat King (Pami)," *JGUAA* 5/2, (2020): 29.

⁴ S. Bickel and Others, "Des annales héliopolitaines de la Troisième Période Intermédiaire," *BIFAO* 98 (1998): 37, 39, 43-44 (j).

⁵ El-Mezain and Kacem, "Two Unpublished Sphinxes of Amenemhat V and Ramses II": 85-96.

⁶ D. Lorand, "A block of Ramesses II reused as a threshold in the Wakala of Qawsun (Cairo)," *JEA* 99 (2013): 272.

early times. For example, a block from the mortuary temple of King Amenhotep III was reused in the mortuary temple of Merenptah¹.

The last point is why the hieroglyphic inscriptions on these blocks were not erased, despite they were used in an Islamic cult place? Along the periods, the Egyptians respect their ancient monuments especially those of the religious building as temples in the so-called 'Heritage Zones.' They consider these ruins as 'Architectural Heritage'². Thus, they protect these ruins through reusing without re-inscription.

4. Conclusion

In sum, the inscribed blocks of Old Cairo have been destroyed over the centuries at the site of Heliopolis, which seems to be reasonably rapid pace. For economic reasons through saving money and effort, builders of the Mediaeval Era reused the remains of some ancient monuments to reconstruct their new buildings. There is no indication of a re-inscription of these blocks in ancient times, suggesting they were brought directly to Old Cairo from their provenance site. Heliopolis had extensive ruins that could be easily transported by the ships through the River Nile branches. There were no natural obstructions between Heliopolis and Old Cairo. For many years, Heliopolis was the chosen source for the building's supplies. The proposed source of these blocks was the ruins of the great temple of the god Re-Horakhty in Heliopolis. According to the texts, the blocks of Old Cairo added a new achievement to the well-known monuments of King Sobekhotep IV, Thutmose III, Ramses IX, and Ptolemy V.

¹ Cf. S. Bickel, "Blocs d'Amenhotep III réemployés dans le temple de Merenptah à Gourna. Une porte monumentale," *BIFAO* 92 (1992): 3, fig. 1.

² A.A. Al-Tuhamy, "Lights on some Egyptian Monuments that reused in the Islamic Monuments (In Arabic)," *JGUAA* 5 (2014): 183.

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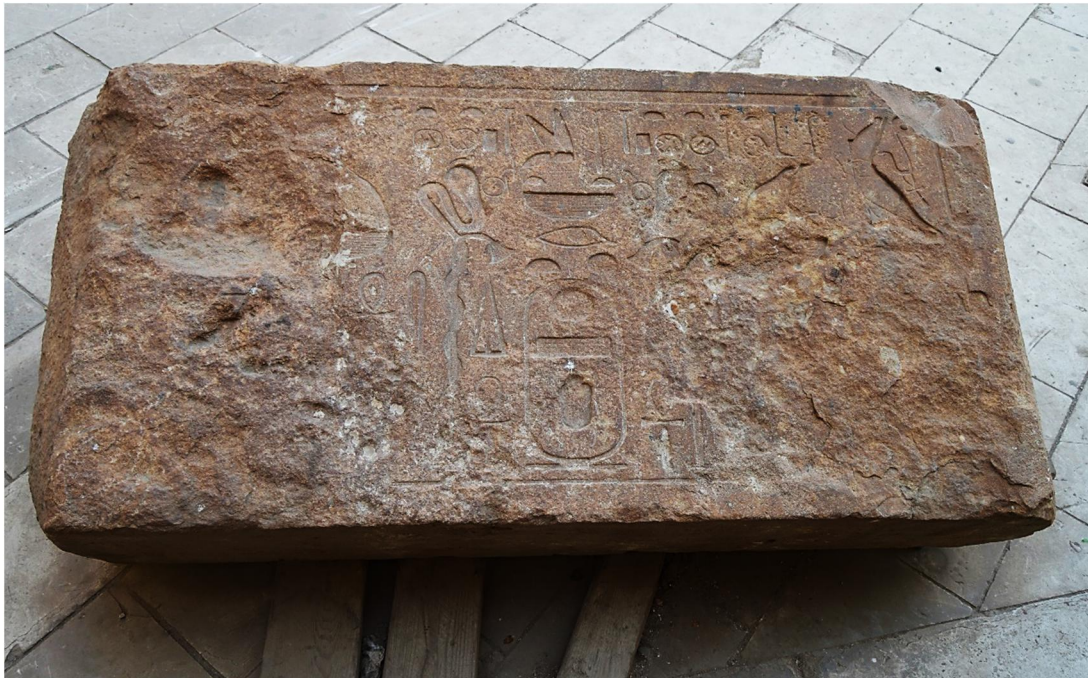
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(Fig. 1)
The upper block of King Sobekhotep IV and the lower blocks of Unknown King
©authors



(Fig. 2)
A block of King Thutmose III. Photograph © Authors



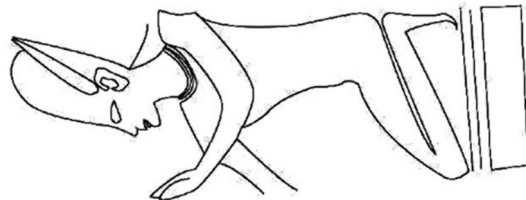
(Fig. 3)

The block of King Ramses IX. Photograph © Authors



(Fig. 4)

The block of King Ramses IX was used as a threshold at the entering door of the Khanqat of Baybars Al-Jashankair. Photograph © Authors



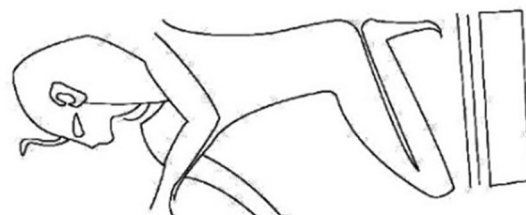
(Fig. 5)

Details of King Ramses VI' figure with the khepresh-crown. Photograph © Authors



(Fig. 6)

Details of King Ramses VI with the *khat*-headdress. Photograph © Authors



(Fig. 7)

Ramses IX was crowned with the *nemes*-headdress. Photograph © Authors



(Fig. 8)

The middle inscriptions of the block of King Ramses IX. Photograph © Authors



(Fig. 9)

The lower inscriptions of the block of King Ramses IX. Photograph © Authors



(Fig. 10)

A block of King Ptolemaic V. Photograph © Authors