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The Angel Showing John the River of Living Water
1951 Purchase Fund

Jean Duvet (ca. 1485–ca. 1561)

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

SUBSCRIPTION ONE DOLLAR

PTOLEMAIC RELIEFS

I

A Granite Block of Philip Arrhidaeus

SOME twenty years ago a wise old curator of Egyptian art told an incredulous young student: "Some of the best excavations have been made in museum basements." That this may hold true for small objects which can be put away easily and then are soon forgotten seems to be evident, but it is harder to believe when a large granite block, weighing approximately two and one half tons, is involved. And yet this was the case with the relief of red Assuan granite which is published herewith for the first time.

Of course, the physical presence of the stone was known to everybody who worked in the overcrowded storeroom of this Department as the block had been deposited in an awkward spot when the Museum moved to its present location in 1909, and because of its size and weight it had been very much of a nuisance for a long time.¹ It always had been partly covered with burlap which obscured the sculptured faces, and it was thought vaguely to belong to a group of granite reliefs from the temple of Bubastis of which this Museum has several large blocks in the same cramped quarters.

Finally in the winter of 1950-51 it became feasible to ease somewhat the congestion of the Egyptian storage and to sort out the large stones which had accumulated there in the course of the past forty years. Heavy timber shelving was erected to get the lighter pieces off the floor, and as a result of this re-arrangement the block under discussion had to be moved a few feet. When after this move its new location was recorded in the Department's files it became apparent that neither the date nor the provenance of the stone had ever been established properly. It also showed that the block had entered the Museum long before the excavations at Bubastis were begun. As the vague outline of a royal cartouche had been observed on one face of the monument this called for an investigation, and so we went back to the basement and, eventually, with the help of raking light and paper squeezes it became possible to establish the king's name within the cartouches. To everyone's surprise it turned out to be that of Philip Arrhidaeus, the weak-minded epileptic half-brother of Alexander the Great, who fell heir to the Macedonian empire in 323 B.C. He never set foot on Egyptian soil and was murdered in 317 B.C. His name does not often occur on Egyptian monuments, and therefore it was not too difficult to find out where granite blocks with the king's name had been located in the Nile Valley.² There were only two sites which de-

¹The block, with the three fragments of Face B in place, was on exhibition in the Egyptian Room of the Museum on Copley Square as shown in an old photograph. It is also faintly visible in *Bulletin M.F.A.*, vol. VII, No. 38, April 1909, p. 15, in the illustration of the Egyptian Room (below the colossal head in the background).

²By means of the invaluable *Topographical Bibliography*, vols. I-VII, by B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss.

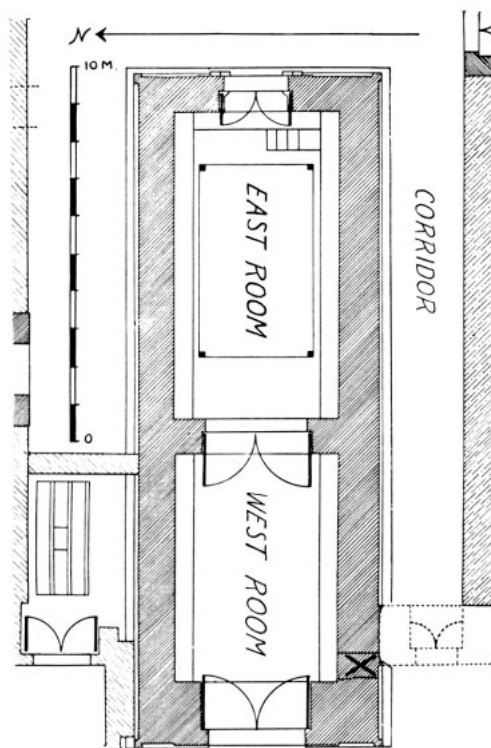


Fig. 1. Plan of the Granite Sanctuary of Philip Arrhidaeus at Karnak. X indicates original position of the Museum's block

manded consideration, Samannûd in the Delta and Karnak at Thebes. Both places had contained granite buildings inscribed for Philip Arrhidaeus, but Samannûd¹ had to be eliminated because, first of all, its remnants showed a different style of workmanship and, furthermore, because the representations on the Boston stone bore a striking resemblance to those of the famous Granite Sanctuary at Karnak.² Fortunately, there exists a detailed ground plan of this sanctuary drawn to scale (Fig. 1),³ and it proved that the thickness of the walls corresponded exactly to that of our stone (Fig. 5), measured from one sculptured face to the other. Thus there seemed to be little doubt that the Museum had indeed some part of the sacred shrine of Karnak among its treasures.

The next task, obviously, was to spot the place on the walls where the Boston block had once stood, but here some difficulties were encountered. The Karnak sanctuary, in spite of its central location, imposing size, and religious importance, has never been adequately published, and a complete photographic record of the monument was not available. Though it appeared, judging from the few published views, that the relief of face A (Fig. 3) had belonged to an outside wall and the

¹*id. ib.*, vol. IV, p. 43.

²*id. ib.*, vol. II, pp. 37-38.

³G. Legrain, "Le Logement et transport des barques sacrées et des statues des dieux dans quelques temples égyptiens," in *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, 13 (1917), pp. 1-76, pl. II, with slight changes.



Fig. 2. Relief from Inside Wall of the Granite Sanctuary at Karnak (Face B)
Gift of the Heirs of Francis Cabot Lowell, 1875

representation of Face B (Fig. 2) had formed part of one of the inner walls, it remained uncertain where to look for a gap large enough to have contained the piece. Inquiries were made from Egyptologists at the site, and after many weeks of anxious waiting the reply came that there seemed to be no place where the Boston block would fit.

Meanwhile the work of recording the reliefs of Faces A and B had begun, and it is due entirely to the skill and patience of Miss Suzanne E. Chapman, the Department's artist, that the accompanying drawings can be published (Figs. 6 and 7). The part which puzzled us most was the fragment in the upper left of Face B (Fig. 2) until she recognized on the paper squeeze, rather than on the pock-marked original, the outline of the birds which in turn led to the conclusion that this piece had formed part of a netting scene, a re-



Fig. 3. Relief from Outside Wall of Granite Sanctuary at Karnak (Face A)
Gift of the Heirs of Francis Cabot Lowell, 1875

ligious ceremony, of which there are only three examples known from Ptolemaic temple reliefs.¹ It was then easy to find the illustration given in Fig. 4² which had been copied by C. R. Lepsius' draftsmen in 1844-45 when the Boston stone was no longer on the wall at Karnak.

It now became necessary to find out how the block, which had been given to the Museum in 1875,³ had come from Egypt to this country, and

¹ M. Alliot, "Les Rites de la chasse au filet, aux temples de Karnak, d'Edfou et d'Esneh," in *Revue d'Égyptologie*, 5 (1946), pp. 57-118.

² C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien*, IV, pl. 2 a.

³ Acc. No. 75.11a-d. Red granite; height of Face B with the top fragment in place, 1.66 m.; thickness from Face A to Face B, 95.5 cm. Gift of the heirs of Francis Cabot Lowell; March 18, 1875.



Fig. 4. Netting Scene on Inside of South Wall of the Granite Sanctuary as Rendered by C. R. Lepsius in 1844-45

this search eventually led to the person of Mr. John Lowell, Jr., 1799-1836. He had gone abroad in 1832 after having lost his wife and two daughters, his only children, of scarlet fever in the course of a few months.¹ First he traveled in Europe and late in 1834 arrived in Egypt. At Thebes, in the spring of 1835, he fell ill; it was there that he completed his will with the testamentary provisions for the founding of the Lowell Institute of Boston. In June he set out for Nubia, was in Meroë in September, in Khartum in November, and finally embarked from Massowa for the coast of Arabia on December 22, 1835. But his small party was shipwrecked in the Red Sea, and he did not reach Mocha until January 1, 1836. A few weeks later he left for Bombay where he arrived in the middle of February. On March 4, 1836, he died in Bombay. The following is quoted in the words of Mr. Everett:²

"While detained by sickness at Thebes, he employed his attendants in making a collection of antiquities; and he succeeded in possessing himself of as large an amount and variety of these objects as have, probably, at any time been acquired by an American. They consist of frag-

¹ The following is based mainly on *A Memoir of Mr. John Lowell, Jun., delivered as the introduction to the lectures on his foundation in the Odeon, 31st December, 1839; repeated in the Marlborough Chapel, 2d January, 1840.* By Edward Everett, (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1840).
² *id. ib.*, p. 44.

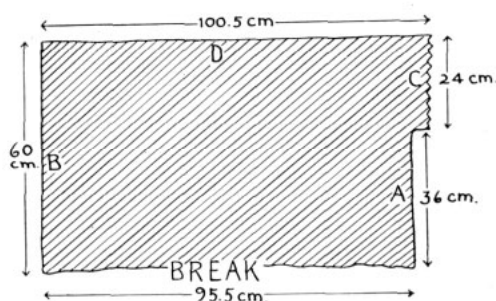


Fig. 5. Horizontal Section of the Granite Block

ments of sculpture in granite, basalt, and alabaster, some of them with hieroglyphical inscriptions; two or three papyrus rolls; bronze figures; mummies; and a multitude of utensils and other articles illustrating the superstitions, arts, and manners of the Egyptians."¹

Further confirmation came from Mr. John Lowell's own journal. Under the date of March 23, 1835, he wrote: "I rode to Karnac to day to see an immense block of granite that the shékḥ & some 50 men are slowly transporting to the boat. It is a fragment of an enormous block of red Syanite granite forming part of what perhaps constituted a sanctuary to a little temple in that immense pile of buildings at Karnac. Several figures painted red were represented marching in procession with the sacred barc, or boat, on the shoulders of some of them. These must have been priests carrying the ark of their God. My stone contains, on one side, 4 of these figures & one end merely of the base; but similar bas reliefs, also painted on the blocks by its side, shew what it must have been originally."²

Here, then, was proof that our block had been removed in 1835, which explains why Lepsius il-

¹ Through the generosity of the heirs of Francis Cabot Lowell, Jr. (1803-1874), brother of John Lowell, Jr., most of the monuments of this collection are now in the Museum of Fine Arts. The major pieces are (in addition to the block of Philip Arrhidæus):

- Acc. No. 75.7. Black granite statue of the seated Goddess Sakhmet; from Thebes; Dynasty XVIII.
- Acc. No. 75.8. Upper portion of a similar statue; from Thebes; Dynasty XVIII.
- Acc. No. 75.9. Fragments of a schist sarcophagus lid; Dynasties XXVI-XXX.
- Acc. No. 75.10. Colossal red granite head of a king; probably from Karnak; Dynasty XIX.
- Acc. No. 75.12. Fragment of the broken granite obelisk of Queen Hatshepsut; from Karnak; Dynasty XVIII. William Stevenson Smith, "Two Fragments from Hatshepsut's Karnak Obelisk," in *Bulletin M.F.A.*, Vol. XL, No. 239, June 1942, pp. 45-48, figs. 7-8.
- Acc. No. 75.13. Another fragment of the same obelisk; *id. ib.*, figs. 5-6, 8-9.
- Acc. No. 75.14. Sandstone fragment of a papyrus column capital; Ptolemaic.
- Acc. No. 75.15. Sandstone fragment of a lotus column capital; Ptolemaic.

² From a manuscript copy of the diary, now on loan at the Museum of Fine Arts.

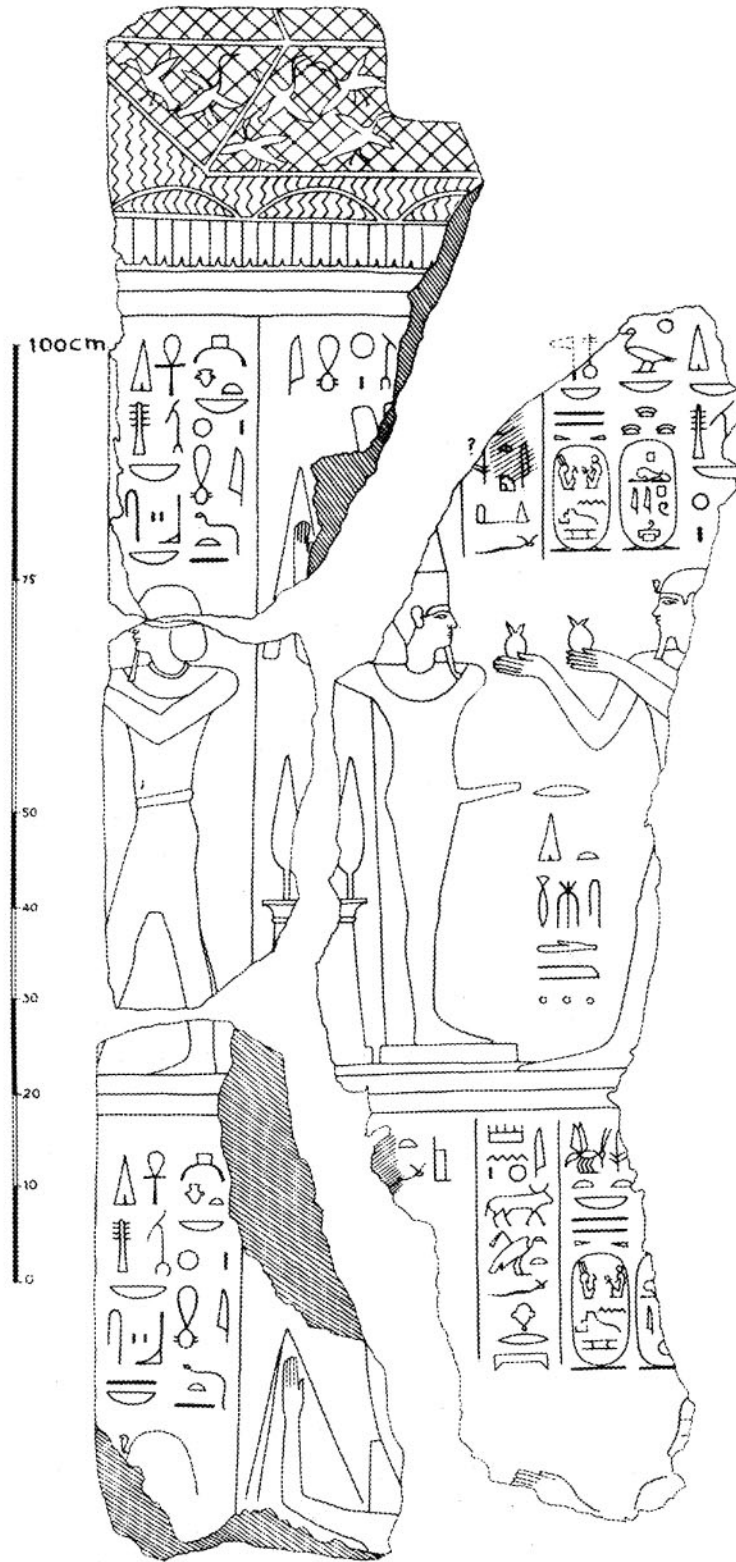


Fig. 6. Granite Block, Face B
Drawing by Miss Suzanne E. Chapman

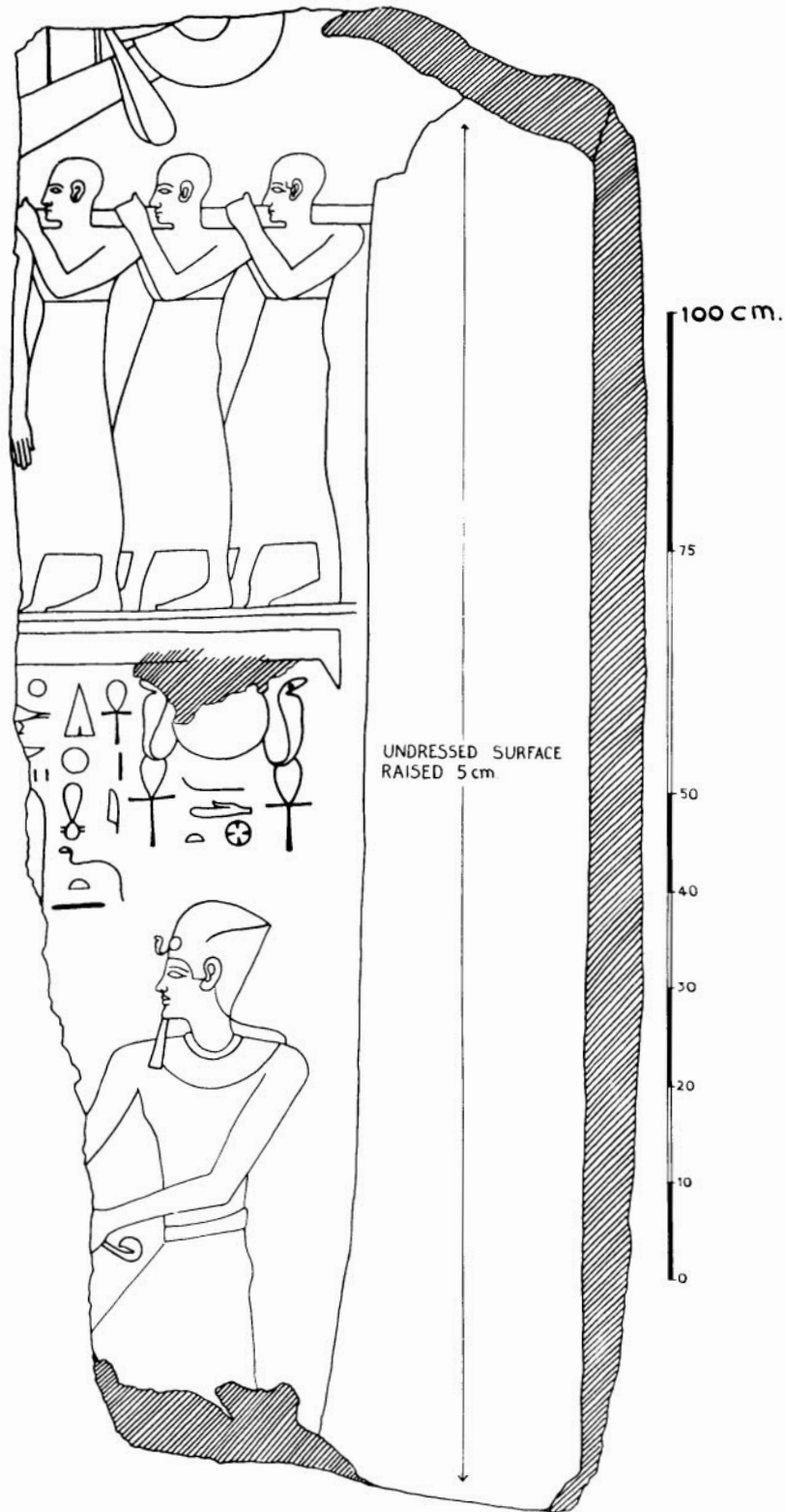


Fig. 7. Granite Block, Face A
Drawing by Miss Suzanne E. Chapman

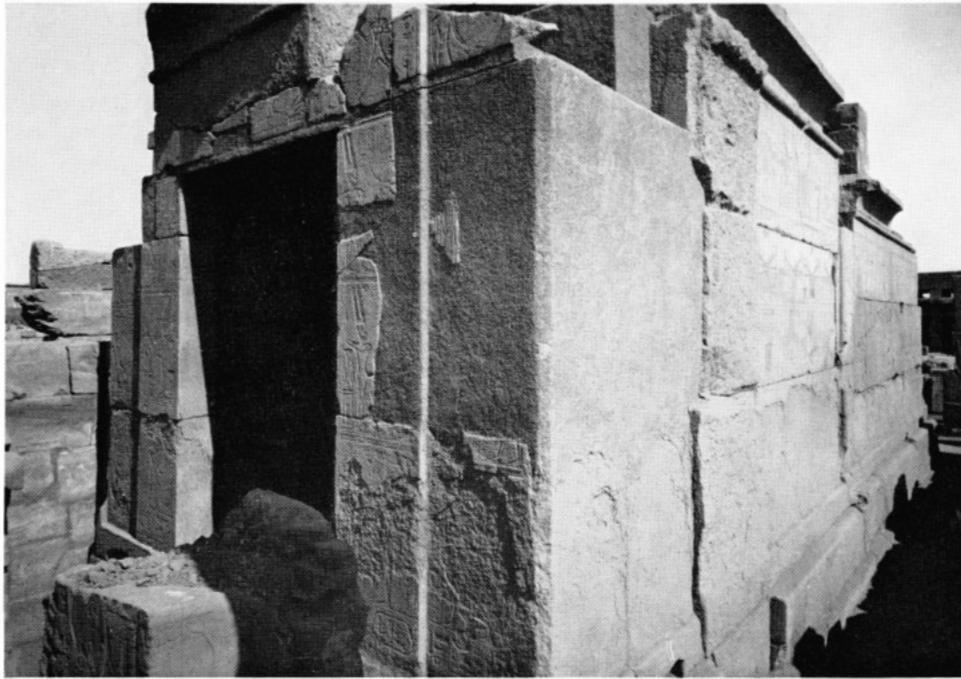


Fig. 8. The Granite Sanctuary at Karnak
Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago

lustration (Fig. 4) of the bird trapping scene is incomplete. But many of the earlier travelers may have set eye upon the Boston relief when it was still at Karnak, and none other than the great Champollion who worked there in 1828 and 1829 mentions it: “. . . La trainasse est en effet remplie d’oies qui se débattent; d’autres parviennent à s’échapper.”¹ Since the remaining part on the wall shows the traces of only one bird (Fig. 12), our stone must have given him the clue to the contents of the trap. But it is unlikely that the block was still in situ at that time. Around A.D. 600 a heavy earthquake caused damage to many parts of the Karnak temple;² then, or later, the front of the Granite Sanctuary and part of its roof collapsed. It was in ruins as recently as 1910; Arthur E. P. Weigall’s *Guide to the Antiquities of Upper Egypt From Abydos To the Sudan Frontier*, published in that year, says (page 99): “. . . the granite sanctuary is in so ruinous a state that it cannot now be entered without great difficulty.” This is the reason why, up to then, only some scenes from the upper part of the inner wall had been published. The rest was still buried in debris. In 1914, finally, the sanctuary was cleared³ and in the following years reconstructed, the gaps being filled with concrete.

Since the exact location of the scene rendered

by Lepsius (Fig. 4) could be ascertained,¹ it seemed clear that the block had formed part of the upper west end of the south wall of the sanc-

¹ Porter and Moss, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 38, (88).

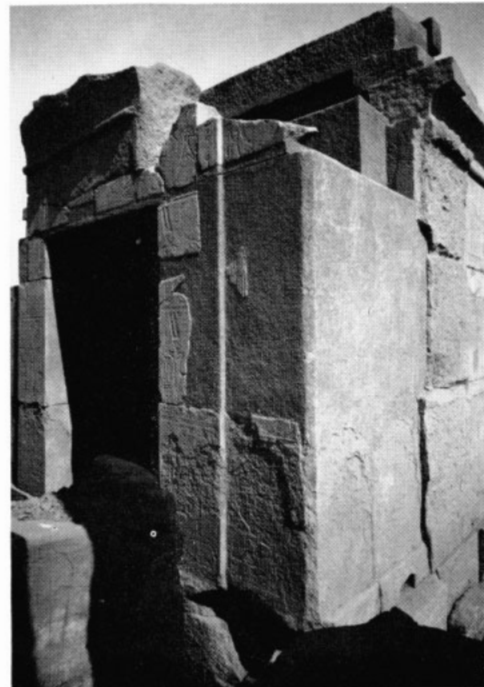


Fig. 9. Granite Sanctuary, Southwest Corner
Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago

¹ J. F. Champollion, *Monuments de l’Egypte et de la Nubie, Notices descriptives*, vol. II, p. 148.

² *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l’Egypte*, I (1900), p. 126.

³ Legrain, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

tuary's west room and the representation shown in Figs. 3 and 7, being on the opposite side of the block, must have adorned the outside of the same wall. In order to confirm this assumption, drawings, photographs, and references were sent to the late Alexandre Varille of the Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, whose headquarters was at Luxor, and finally came his reply, dated May 10, 1951, in which he wrote: ". . . au reçu de votre lettre, nous nous sommes précipités, vos documents en mains, — Simpson¹ et moi —, au sanctuaire de Karnak, pour localiser le fragment de granit rose de Boston. Et nous avons trouvé très facilement sa place! Le fragment s'adapte exactement à l'extrémité du bas-relief intérieur, et vient combler une lacune, qui avait été bouchée au ciment . . ." And a few weeks later he added: "A l'extérieur, au-delà de la porte, aujourd'hui détruite, il ne reste rien de la scène des porteurs de barque, mais il y a — jusqu'à l'angle — très exactement sa place."

This removed the last doubt about the location of the Boston stone on the wall of the sanctuary. Due to the kindness of Dr. Charles F. Nims of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, who took the photographs reproduced in Figs. 8–12 especially for the Museum, it is possible to envisage exactly the emplacement of the block.² Face A (Figs. 3 and 7), the height of which is 1.54 m., has an undressed portion whose surface is some 24 centimeters wide and protrudes about 5 centimeters. This rough part (marked C in Fig. 5) neatly complements the undecorated section of the adjoining block (Fig. 10), thus increasing the undressed area on the right so that it corresponds in width to that of the courses above and below. This is the place where a short wall with a doorway abutted on the sanctuary (Fig. 1). The doorway led to a corridor, today roofless, which runs along the entire length of the exterior south wall of the sanctuary (Fig. 8). It must have been a much traveled passage since it provided the only direct west-east connection through this part of the temple.

On the inside of the sanctuary (Figs. 11–12) the Boston stone completes the second course from the top, up to the entrance wall which meets it at a right angle. This side of the block (Face B, Figs. 2 and 6), with the three fragments in place, is 1.66 m. high. When these fragments were broken off has not been established. Mr. Lowell's diary mentions only one block, but the breaks appear to be as old as the main break (Fig. 5), and so it has to be assumed that he recognized the fragments as belonging to Face B of the relief and ordered them to be removed at the same time.

The sanctuary of Philip Arrhidaeus is built of

huge granite slabs which, for the most part, came from a chapel of Tuthmosis III (ca. 1504–1450 B.C.). This chapel must have stood in the same place,¹ and some of the blocks of the new sanctuary still bear the name of the earlier king. When Ptolemy, the later King Ptolemy I Soter, governed Egypt on behalf of her absent sovereign, he must have found the Tuthmoside granite chapel in ruins and had it rebuilt and redecorated as an act of reverence of the new king to Amen-Ra, the chief deity of Thebes. It thus stands amidst the Halls of Annals of Dynasty XVIII which, some eleven hundred years before the days of the Macedonian king, had been adorned with the glorious record of a period when the ancient world was ruled from Thebes. The fact that blocks from an earlier temple building were re-used was quite in accordance with good pharaonic tradition. Not the lack of proper construction materials, but the wish to imbue the new structure with the spirit inherent in an older building was the cause of this practice.²

The granite structure of Philip Arrhidaeus at Karnak has been called a sanctuary for so long that it seems reasonable to retain this term. Yet, it has to be understood that it is not a sanctuary in the strict sense of the word, the *Cella*, the *Holy of Holies* of the temple. That sanctuary, which must have stood further to the east,³ has not survived. The so-called Granite Sanctuary of Philip Arrhidaeus was actually a chapel, a repository for the sacred bark of the god Amen-Ra where it stood between processions, and the pedestal, which supported the bark and the sledge-shaped base on which the bark rested, is still in its place today in the east chamber (Fig. 1). The bark bore the sacred shrine which contained the image of the great god of Karnak, Amen-Ra, and therefore the main theme of the wall decorations is concerned with rites and ceremonies performed in his honor.

To begin with the relief on the outside of the wall, the Boston stone, now devoid of all the color mentioned by Mr. Lowell, contains the beginning of two registers (Face A, Figs. 3 and 7). The upper scene shows three priests in long garments supporting the ends of poles, by means of which the bark and its base were carried in procession.⁴ Above them the stern of the bark is visible. It is hung with the semicircular broad collar of the ram's head which adorned each end of the boat. The two rudders and the sternpost are outlined, and so are the staff of a ceremonial sunshade and, in line with the break, the pole of the baldachin surmounting the shrine. The adjoining block on the same wall (Fig. 10) shows a similar scene in

¹L. Borchardt, *Ägyptische Tempel mit Umgang* (Cairo, 1938), pp. 85–90, pl. 18.

²Alexandre Varille, *Quelques Caractéristiques du Temple pharaonique* (Cairo, 1946), pp. 8 ff. *Mercur de France*, tome CCCXII, no. 1055 (July, 1951), pp. 434–435.

³L. Borchardt, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁴For the following see the article by Legrain cited on page 19, note 3.

¹Mr. William K. Simpson, Assistant in the Department of Egyptian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, who happened to be at Thebes then and whose help in this matter is gratefully acknowledged.

²This location corresponds: for Face A to H. H. Nelson, *Key Plans Showing Locations of Theban Temple Decorations*, pl. VI, Section D, to the left of 218 and 222; for Face B to *id. ib.*, pl. XII, Fig. 3, at 292, between 302 and 303, and between 312 and 313.

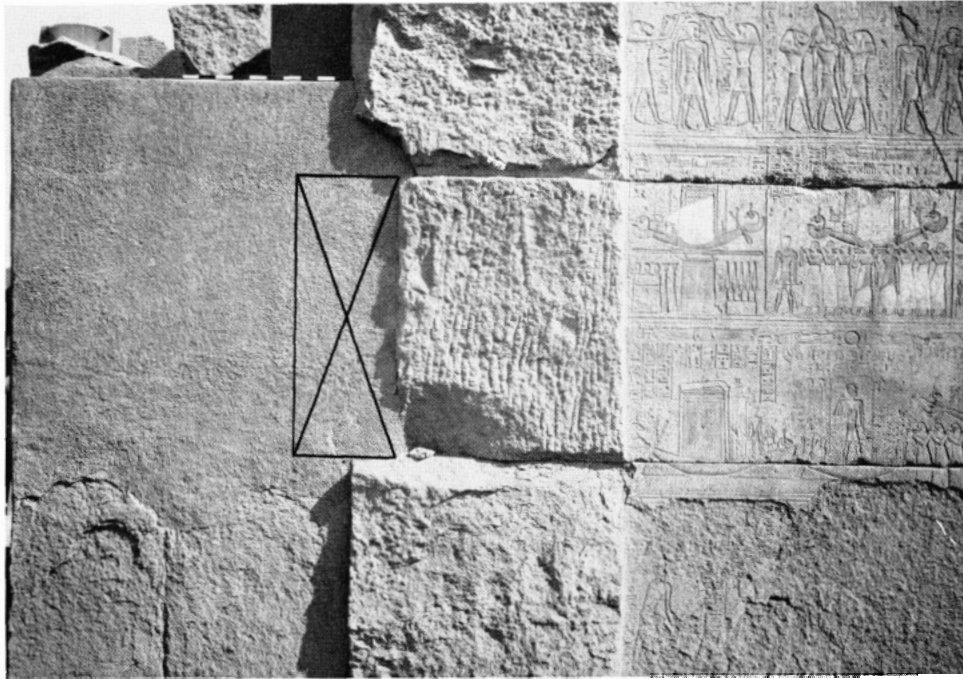


Fig. 10. Granite Sanctuary, Exterior South Wall, West End, Showing Original Position of Block
Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago

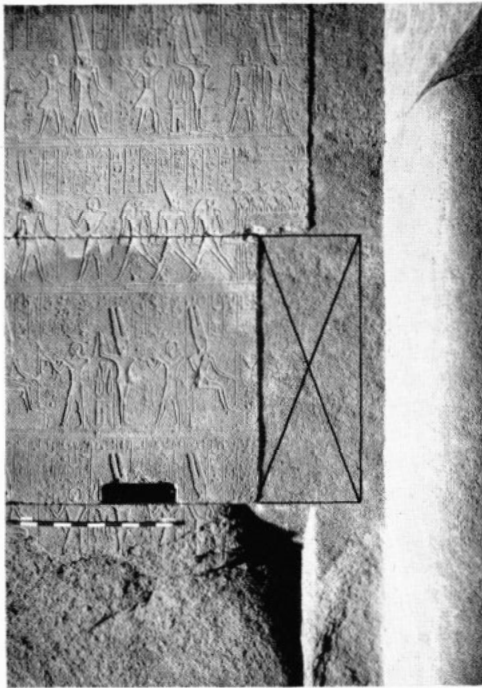


Fig. 11.
Granite Sanctuary, Interior South Wall, West End, Showing Original Position of Block
Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago



Fig. 12.

Granite Sanctuary, Interior South Wall, West End, Showing Original Position of Block
Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago

which the king, who acts as chief priest in all these ceremonies, leads the procession.

The lower register of Face A may have borne a representation of the bark resting on a pedestal in the sanctuary of another temple, or of the transport of the bark from another temple to the river. The latter is more likely since the scene to the right (Fig. 10) illustrates the return of the bark to Karnak, towed by the king himself who precedes it in another boat.¹ On our block only the king remains, and the object in his hand is the end of the censer from which he dispenses incense, probably before the bark on its homeward journey. Such a scene is indeed shown further to the right on the same wall where the king is represented in an identical attitude.² Above him are the remains of an inscription under the sign of *Heaven*. It reads: *The son of Ra* (followed by the king's cartouche); *given life, like Ra, forever*. Then follows the sun disk with two uraei adorned with the sign of *Life*, and between them is written the name of *Behdet*, the town of Horus.

The relief of Face B (Figs. 2 and 6) on the other side of the block contains portions of the second, third, and fourth registers of the south wall (Fig. 11). The top fragment shows part of the bird trap filled with wild fowl and belongs to the ritual recorded in Lepsius' drawing (Fig. 4). The king, wearing the crown of Lower Egypt, pulls the rope of the trap net in the company of the gods Khnum and Horus. On the left he appears a second time before Amen-Ra who presides over the ceremony.³ The next register of our block shows two scenes, one of which is fairly complete. Here Philip Arrhidaeus presents two little bags to Amen-Ra-Kamutef, a form of Amun in which he is likened to Min, the god of fertility, and there is some evidence that the procession of the bark, bearing the god in his shrine, took place also at harvest feasts. The inscription between king and god identifies the neatly tied bags as containing *Green Eye Paint* and *Black Eye Paint*, undoubtedly of prime quality, fit for the embellishment of the divine features.

In the scene adjoining to the left, Amen-Ra, serenely enthroned, is offered by Philip a large ornamental necklace consisting of strings of beads (Fig. 12). Throughout the wall these two forms of Amun alternate, and in each scene a different gift is proffered to the god. The ceremony in the bottom register of the Boston block is nearly identical with the one directly above, but its preservation does not permit us to determine what offering was presented here. One empty hand of the king is visible; only a study on the spot might reveal, by process of elimination, which of the customary gifts had been recorded in this scene.

¹ See Legrain, *op. cit.*, p. 25, no. 9, but his interpretation will have to be modified somewhat since he did not know of the relief on the Boston stone.

² G. Jéquier, *L'Architecture et la décoration dans l'ancienne Egypte. Les Temples ptolémaïques et romains* (1924), pl. 111.

³ Alliot, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-73, 98, 115-116.

The lower left corner of our relief barely shows the king's head; it belongs to the next scene still partly preserved on the wall at Karnak (Fig. 12).

These reliefs are not yet typical of that particular Late Egyptian style known as Ptolemaic which, in temple decoration, does not appear before Ptolemy had officially assumed the kingship of Egypt in 305 B.C. The carving of the representations of the Granite Sanctuary follows without modification the royal style prevailing during the fourth century B.C.¹ Actually it is somewhat restrained and archaistic due to the obvious attempt to imitate the granite relief scenes of the New Kingdom. The workmanship of the reliefs on the inside is much less accomplished than that on the outside. This was already noticed by Champollion, the father of Egyptology, who remarked while describing the interior: "Travail fort médiocre et peu soigné."² But he also commented on the color which is still well preserved on the wall at Karnak, and this might lead one to conclude that the sculptors' work was interrupted before the final touch had been applied. Instead, the reliefs were hastily painted which covered up somewhat their semi-finished state. There can be little doubt that this interruption was due to the early death of Philip Arrhidaeus who was now succeeded by the child Alexander, son of Roxane, in 317 B.C. The work on the outside of the wall may have been more advanced by that time since those reliefs excel by their finish as well as by their careful coloring.³ Save for the latter, which is now lost on the Boston block, Face A offers a good example of the traditional royal style still followed in the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period. BERNARD V. BOTHMER

¹ G. Kleiner, "Hellenistisches in ägyptischer Reliefkunst," in *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 1937, cols. 473-476.

² Champollion, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

³ For detailed color notes see Fr. W. v. Bissing, *Denkmäler ägyptischer Sculptur* (1911), text to plates 114-119, cols. 1-2. His analysis of the style of Egyptian temple reliefs of the Graeco-Roman Period (*op. cit.*, cols. 7-20) is even today, after 40 years, the best treatment of the subject.

A Greek Bronze Sphinx

The bronze sphinx illustrated in Figure 1 was acquired by purchase from the collection of Professor Vladimir G. Simkhovitch in 1951.¹ It is a type which was popular in Greece in the late archaic period: a seated sphinx with head turned to one side and front legs slightly drawn back in a way that produces an impression of great alertness.² Other characteristic details are the recurving wings, the stephane which crowns the head, and the long doubly-curved tail. The hair is treated quite simply as a mass falling to the shoul-

NOTE: This article had been drafted and in part written before Dr. Chase's sudden death in February; on the basis of the author's notes it has been prepared for publication with care and competence by his assistant, Dr. Hazel Palmer.

¹ Acc. No. 51.2469. H. 0.083 m. L. 0.077 m.

² Cf. the slightly later bronze sphinx in Baltimore, Dorothy K. Hill, *Catalogue of Classical Bronze Sculpture in the Walters Art Gallery*, p. 122, no. 281, pl. 54.