

## DISCOVERING A CHAPEL THAT ISN'T THERE

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During the last decade of the nineteenth century the Temple of Khonsu (located within the temple complex of Karnak on the northern edge of the modern town of Luxor, Egypt) was cleared of its centuries' accumulation of debris. One of the results of that clearance was to uncover hundreds of fragments of red granite which came from blocks that once served to line the interior of the bark chapel (housing the boat-shaped portable shrine containing the cult image of a god) of that temple. When the temple fell into disuse, these blocks served as a ready supply of stone suitable for the production of grinding stones, thus accounting for their current ruinous state. No attempt seems to have been made by the modern restorers of the temple to reassemble the fragments except for the joining of three of them. Most of the smaller fragments were removed to a room in the rear of the temple, while the larger decorated pieces were left in the area of the bark chapel. This granite lining had been installed in the temple under the reign of Ramesses IV (1166-1160), but rather than quarrying new stone, he had simply expropriated blocks from a monument of one of his predecessors (a not uncommon practice in ancient Egypt). In the case of the granite blocks, they once belonged to a structure of Amenhotep II (1450-1425). When the blocks were installed in the temple, the exterior faces were recarved for Ramesses IV, but those faces hidden within the walls retained their original decoration. With the destruction of the room this original decoration has become evident.

During the season of 1971-2 and 1972-3 I was a member of the Epigraphic Survey in Luxor. Concurrently I was starting work on a study of the reign of Amenhotep II. I therefore began an examination of that king's monuments in my spare time. With the permission of the Field Director, Dr. C. F. Nims, I started to study the blocks of Amenhotep in the Temple of Khonsu.

What concerned me most during 1971-2 was the examination of one segment of an offering list made by Amenhotep II for the god Amon-Re. Part of this had already been published, and I hoped to use the opportunity to check the accuracy of the original publication. I was in fact able to correct some readings and to reorganize the sequence in which the lines were read. It then occurred to me that additional pieces of the offering list might exist in the as yet unexamined piles of fragments. Spending isolated hours over the course of several weeks, I was able to locate 12 additional fragments of the text, including one fragment which completed a broken line of the part originally published. Once the pieces were located I began the laborious task of producing an accurate copy of the text. By the end of the season the original three columns of text had been expanded to eight, although some of these contained only one or two hieroglyphs.

During the summer of 1972 I began to realize that the full significance of the offering list could be assessed only if the exact extent and nature of the original monument to which it belonged were known. Thus when I reached Luxor in the fall of 1972, I set to work on a far more ambitious project: the locating and copying of all the granite fragments of Amenhotep II in the Temple of Khonsu. Although the broken fragments contained reliefs of both that king and Ramesses IV, the scale of the relief and the style and workmanship were so dissimilar that pieces could be assigned to the correct king. The first problem was isolating the relevant fragments. This involved examining the hundreds of pieces of red granite in the vicinity of the temple. In all 56 of them ranging in size from a few square centimeters up to pieces  $1\frac{1}{2} \times 2 \times 1$  meters were found. The next stage required the copying of the fragments. Since many of them could be neither moved nor photographed in place I was forced to use a less precise means of copying. Each fragment was drawn to scale on squared paper, and the resulting drawings were cut to the shape of the blocks and fitted together. These paper "joins" were then tested wherever possible by moving together the more portable bits of granite. Once the joins were made, a composite drawing was completed for each assembled text or scene.

It was possible to reconstruct four scenes and the jambs of two doorways from the fragments assigned to Amenhotep II. At present it has not been possible to reconstruct the plan of the building in its entirety. The fragments seem to come from a chapel with an interior volume some 3.7 meters high, 3.5 meters wide, and perhaps 5 meters deep, with a large door at one end. The fragments of the second doorway found probably came from a secondary structure.

Unfortunately, nowhere was there preserved the name of this hitherto unknown chapel, and I can only speculate as to its original location. In the tomb of Sennefer, Mayor of Thebes under Amenhotep II, is a picture showing a garden which I associate with a pair of granite doorjambs found at Karnak which describe the *Set-Kebekh* or "pleasure-garden" of Amenhotep II. In this garden is depicted a granite chapel with three adjacent chambers, and it is quite possible that the granite fragments from the Temple of Khonsu could indeed come from the right-hand room of this structure, with the extra doorjamb coming from one of the other structures in the garden. If this is the case, the physical remains of one of the larger monuments of Amenhotep II may have at last come to light, although there remain other possible explanations for the monument.

At present work on this project is still incomplete. The preliminary drawings are ready, but reconstructions are still to be made and the drawings need to be completed in ink. Additional research on the nature of the building is required. Once all this is done a preliminary publication can be made. Final publication of the temple must wait until the physical rejoining of all the fragments is undertaken and the scenes of Ramesses IV are also analysed.