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TWO INSCRIBED AKHENATEN
BLOCKS FROM EL-ASHMUNEIN

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by ROSTISLAV HOLTHOER

In April, 1971, I had together with my colleagues in the Finnish Egyptological Society, an opportunity to pay a two hours' visit to the site of the ancient town of Hermopolis. Hereby we took the advantage to photograph two inscribed blocks (1 and 2), dating from the reign of Akhenaten — re-used as filling of the northern pylon of the 19th dyn. temple of Thoth (cf. *Porter-Moss IV*, pp. 167 f.).

Because they seem not to have been previously published elsewhere and because their present position does not provide security for their future preservation, I see it being my duty to render the present report about the results of our somewhat accidental documentation.

Block Nr. 1.

This sandstone block has the approximate measures of 40 × 30 centimetres. It is found, turned upside down and facing inwards (fig. 4), in the filling of the northern pylon behind the north thickness of the entrance (cf. fig. 1.).

It bears an inscription consisting of 6 fragmentary lines of hieroglyphs, carved «en creux». A block, PC 190, published by *Roeder* (Amarna Reliefs aus Hermopolis. Hildesheim, 1969. Taf. 201.) is very similar to the present one and provides good analogy for the restoration of some of its lost portions. It contains in a similar manner two different texts separated by a double line, but does not mention the name of Akhenaten's probable grand-daughter, as our text does (fig. 2.):

- A 1. [s',t nsw] n [h]t.f mrt.f Mrt-Ītn ms [n]
2. hmt nsw wr Nfr-nfrw-Ītn-nfrt-ĭtj 'nh dt nhh
- B 1. . . . [t]', šrj ms n s',t nsw n h]t.f mr[t].f . . .
2. . . . [ms n hmt nsw wrt?] Nfr-nfrw-Ītn-nfrt-ĭtj 'nh]tj [dt nhh?]
3. . . . t Ītn mr[f?] . . .
4. . . . mrt

Translation:

A 1. »(Royal daughter), of his (body), beloved by him, Meritaten, born (from) 2. the great royal wife Neferneferuaten-Nefertiti, who lives for ever and ever.»

B 1. »... *tasherī*, born from the royal daughter, of his body, beloved by him, (NN.), 2. (born from the great royal wife?)¹ Neferneferuaten-Nefertiti, who lives (for ever and ever?)¹ 3. ... *aten*, beloved (by him?) ... 4. ...».

The preserved traces and the analogous text, mentioned above, give reasons to believe that text »A» is complete. As for the text »B», it is difficult to estimate the length of the lacunae at the beginning and at the end of each line. It is, however, clear that line 4 contains the end of the text. Whether Ankhesenpaaten-tasherī (*Brunner*: ZÄS 74 /1939/, pp. 104—108) or Meritaten-tasherī (*Roeder*: Op. Cit. §V N 2, p. 176, Taf. 221.) was originally mentioned on line 1, is not possible to establish. Line 2 shows an interesting variant for the orthography of the queen's name, with a large *nfr*-sign, being a ligature for the beginning of her both names: Neferneferuaten and Nefertiti. At the end of the preserved part of line 3, traces which could be a part of the III p.m.s. suffix, are visible. They can, however, also be mere cracks in the stone.

Block Nr. 2.

This block is of limestone. It is found lying on the ground, embedded in the soil outside the north-western corner of the northern pylon (cf. fig. 1.). No dimensions of the block were obtained because of the layer of silt, adhering to its surfaces. The text, consisting of two preserved lines, is eroded (fig. 5.) because of the damage caused partly by the abovementioned coating of silt, partly by the visitors ascending the pylon, who use the block as a threshold instead of using the original staircase in the northern end of the pylon.

Of the first line only ... *n ht.f*, »... of his body ...» is preserved (fig. 3.). The second line consists of two superimposed cartouches of which the uppermost is destroyed. On the basis of the preserved one, it can be easily restored (fig. 3.): [*nḥ Rḥ ḥk' ḥwtj ḥ'j m ḥt] m rn.f m Rḥ it ij m Ḥtn ...*] (May *Re* live, the ruler of the two horizons, who rejoices at the horizon), in his name of: *Re*, the father who has come from *Aten*».

This orthography of the name of Akhenaten is not verified in the early years of his reign, according to the Russian egyptologist, *J. Perepelkin* (Perevorot Amen-hotpa IV. Part I. Moscow, 1967, p. 71.) not before the end of the 11th regnal year.

¹The restauration of the epithets is uncertain.

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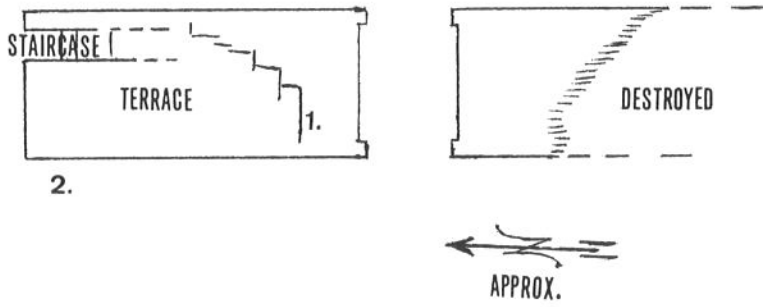


Fig. 1. Sketch showing the location of the two inscribed blocks in the ruins of the XIX dyn. temple of Toth.

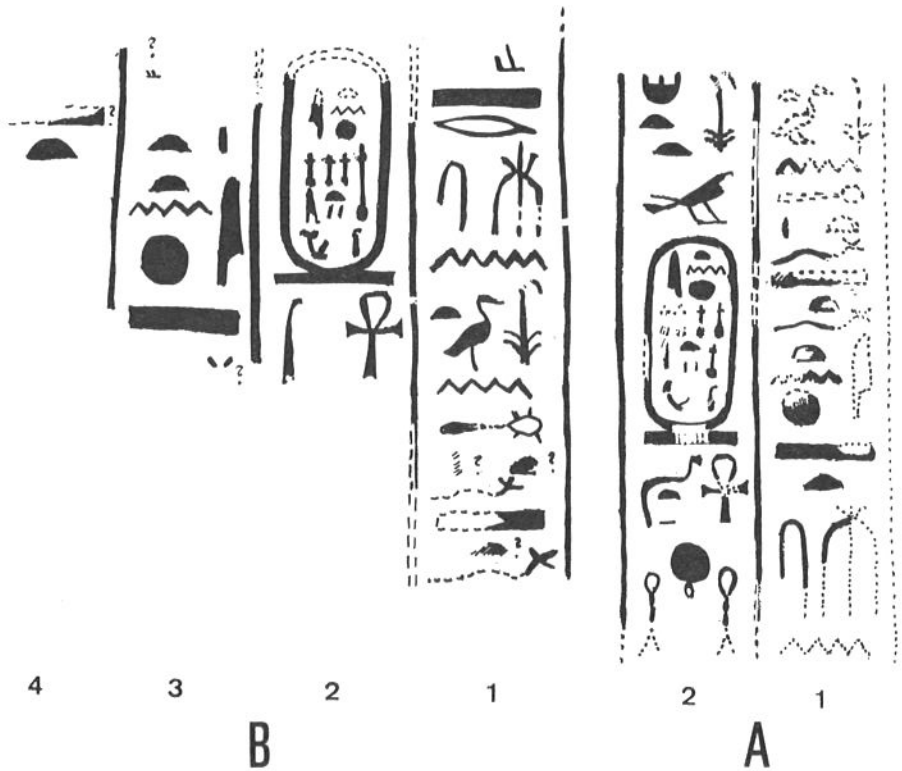


Fig. 2. The text of the block Nr. 1. (hand copy).

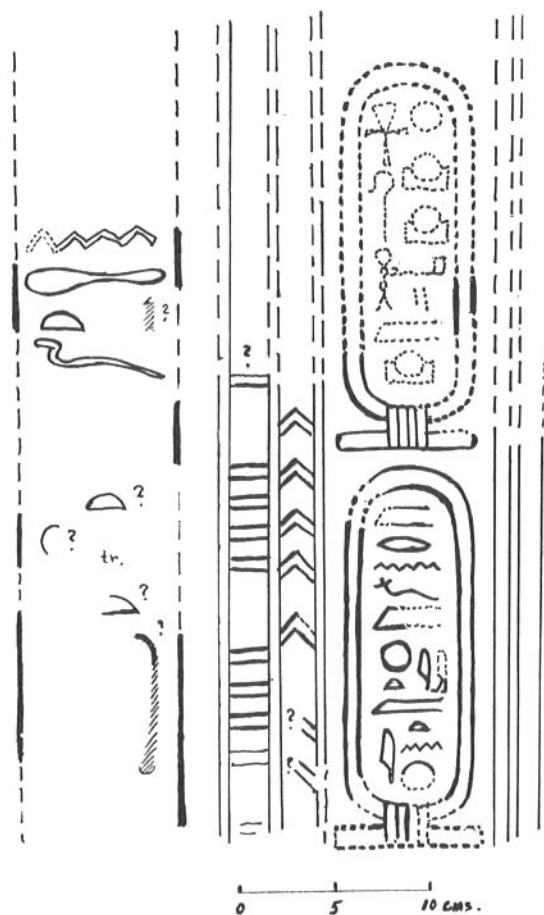


Fig. 3. The text of the block Nr. 2. (hand copy).



Fig. 4. The block Nr. 1, in situ (1971).



Fig. 5. The block Nr. 2.