

**PUBLISHING A VARIETY OF INSCRIBED STONE BLOCKS
FROM THE DISCOVERIES OF HELIOPOLIS IN THE ARAB
AL-HĪṢN ANTIQUITIES STORE IN AL-MATARIA**

BY

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ABSTRACT

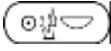
[AR] نشر مجموعة متنوعة من الكتل الحجرية المنقوشة من اكتشافات عين شمس بمخزن آثار عرب الحصن بالمطرية يتناول هذا البحث دراسة ونشر مجموعة متنوعة من الكتل الحجرية مستطيلة الشكل والمكتشفة أثناء أعمال الحفائر بمنطقة آثار المطرية وعين شمس، وهي محفوظة حالياً بمخزن آثار عرب الحصن بالمطرية، وهذه الكتل عبارة عن بقايا عناصر معمارية هامة تعود لفترات زمنية مختلفة. وترجع أهمية هذه التحف الحجرية أنها أجزاء من مباني أثرية تم هدمها في العصور القديمة، ودراسة هذه الكتل التي ظلت منسية لسنوات عديدة بعد اكتشافها، ستعطي لنا صورة أوضح عما كانت عليه هليوبوليس قديماً، ومن الممكن أن يتم ربطها بتحف أثرية أخرى مكمله لها. وجميع الكتل الحجرية محل الدراسة من الحجر الجيري وعلما نقوش وكتابات هيروغليفية أغلبها في حالة سيئة، الكتلة الحجرية الأولى رقم ١٤٧ عليها خرطوش باسم الملك أمنحتب الثالث من الأسرة الثامنة عشر. وتحتوي على اسم الإله آمون-رع وألقابه، والكتلة الحجرية الثانية رقم ١٦٧ تحتوي على اسم الإله بتاح وألقابه، والكتلة الحجرية الثالثة رقم ١٧٧ صنفت على أنها بقايا عتب مدخل باب وعلما بقايا نص لألقاب حور البحتي، والقطعة الرابعة رقم ٤٥٦ وهي عبارة عن جزأين تحتوي على اسم الإله أوزير وألقابه.

[EN] This research seeks to study and publish various rectangular stone blocks discovered during excavations in al-Mataria and Ain-Shams areas, currently preserved in the Arab al-Hīṣn Antiquities Store in El-Mataria. These blocks from demolished buildings in ancient times hold remains of important architectural elements dating back to different periods. Studying these forgotten blocks after many years of their discovery will give a clearer picture of what Heliopolis was in the past, and its possible link to other complementing artifacts. All the studied stone blocks are made of limestone with Hieroglyphic inscriptions and writings, most of which are in poor condition: block N^o.147 contains a cartouche of «Amenhotep» III from the eighteenth dynasty and the name of the god «Amun-Ra» with his titles; block No.167 contains the name and titles of the god «Ptah»; block N^o.177 is considered the remains of a lintel situated at the door's entrance. It contains traces of text that depict the titles of «Horus Behdetite». The block N^o.456 is comprised of two parts and bears the name of the deity «Osiris» and his titles.

KEYWORDS: *Amenhotep III, Amun-Ra, El-Mataria, Horus Behdetite, Heliopolis, limestone, Osiris, Ptah, stone blocks.*

I. INTRODUCTION

This study examines various stone blocks that have not been studied before and were discovered during excavations in al-Mataria and 'Ain-Shams in the early 1990s. They are now preserved in the Arab al-Hiṣn Antiquities Store in El-Mataria. Remnants of architectural limestone blocks were found during excavations in the West area of the complex of temples dedicated to «Ra» in Heliopolis. These blocks contain hieroglyphic texts, but are in poor condition. These blocks date back to different periods, as indicated by the texts inscribed on them.

The first block N^o.147, was found two meters deep behind the complex of the «Ra» temples in Heliopolis. It is almost rectangular, and is broken from the top and bottom. It is likely the remains of a shoulder wall or part of a door jamb; it has a vertical line starting with a cartouche of King «Amenhotep» III  Nb-m³t-R^c, the ninth King of the eighteenth dynasty. The block also features the name of the god «Amun-Ra»  Imn-R^c and his titles.

The second block N^o.167, was found three meters underground during sewage and sanitation works in the Prison Farm area in El-Mataria. Its irregular rectangular shape has an incomplete line of vertically hieroglyphic writing, including the name of the god «Ptah»  Pth and his titles.

During sewage excavations in the Prison Farm area of El-Mataria, block N^o.177 was discovered at a depth of approximately two and a half meters. The archaeological site is rectangular in shape, and four of its sections are absent. This block may have been used as a lintel for a religious establishment because there are text remains of the titles of «Horus El-Behdetite»  ntr-^c3 s3b-šwti. During the sewage project for Greater Cairo, archaeological probes discovered the fourth block, identified as N^o.456, located at a depth of approximately three meters. This block was found in the western area of the Heliopolis «Ra» temple complex, situated west of the Awqaf Farm. It has a rectangular limestone shape with a longitudinal decorative line on its right side. It consists of two parts 456/1 and 456/2, which fit together to form a complete object. (2nd half complements the 1st half), A vertical line of hieroglyphic writing includes the name and titles of the god «Osiris»  Wsir/3sir. There are also the remains of another hieroglyphic text, but it is incomplete and unclear.

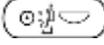
B. Hieroglyphic Text



... (Nswt-bity) nb-m³t-R^c (mry) 'Imn-R^c nb nswt-t³wy ntr-^c3 ...

... (King of Upper and Lower Egypt) «Neb-Maat-Ra»¹, (Beloved) «Amun-Ra», Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, the Great God.

C. Analytical Study

Upon examining block N^o.137 and its engraved text, which contains the coronation name of King «Amenhotep» III  nb-m³t-R^c, it is suggested that this block is a component of a religious architectural structure constructed by the aforementioned King in Heliopolis.

- King «Amenhotep» III :

King «Amenhotep» III  'Imn-ḥtp ḥk³ w³st, is the ninth King of the eighteenth dynasty who was reknown throughout the ancient world. King «Amenhotep» III married Queen Tiye, despite her lack of royal origins. However, her parents held high positions.² He became the father of «Amenhotep» IV  'Imn-ḥtp ntr ḥk³ w³st³, later dubbed «Akhenaten»  3ḥ-n-itn, meaning «one sincere to Aten»⁴.

- King «Amenhotep» III's Activity in Heliopolis

Suppose we follow the architectural activity of King «Amenhotep» III. In that case, we find that he was a prolific builder, responsible for numerous significant architectural monuments all over Upper Egypt and the Delta. As proven by many texts most kings constructed architectural structures in Heliopolis, as it played an important cultural and religious role in ancient Egyptian history. Unfortunately, most of these testimonials that existed during this region have disappeared because of destruction, displacement, or reuse in buildings in Old Cairo⁵.

Artifacts signify King «Amenhotep» III's architectural activity in Heliopolis, including a basalt column in shape of an eight-stem lotus bud in Al-Gamaleya district. It was usurped by King «Merneptah» and includes the name of «Amenhotep» III in the center:

¹ BECKERATH 1999: 140-141, 9:T1.

² CLAYTON 2001: 115.

³ MIEROOP 2021: 188-189.

⁴ BECKERATH 1999: 142-143 (10: E4).

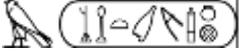
⁵ MOURSI & BALBOUSCH 1975: 85.



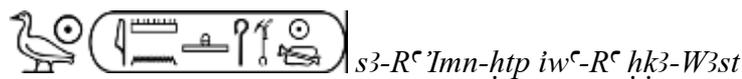
nswt-bity nb-m3^ct-r^c s3-R^cImn-htp hk3-W3st di ʿnh dt

King of Upper and Lower Egypt, The Possessor of the «Maat» of «Ra», Son of «Ra», «Amenhotep», ruler of Thebes/Waset, given life forever (a long life).

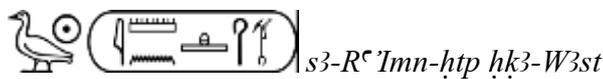
Concerning the titles of the god «Horus» surrounding King «Amenhotep» III's name, this column may be from the remains of a temple dedicated to «Horus» in Heliopolis. It is also possible that this temple belonged to the Middle Kingdom due to the commonality of the column type,⁶ Between 1964 and 1967, the Egyptian Antiquities Authority excavated the ancient Heliopolis site. Within the obelisk area, many stone blocks from the New Kingdom, a number of stone blocks with «Amenhotep» III's name, along with numerous funerary steles for the priests of the Sun Temple⁷ were discovered. There is also a scarab-like seal bearing the name of «Amenhotep» III⁸.

«Amenhotep» III lived his early years near Memphis and Heliopolis⁹. He built many religious chapels for the gods of Heliopolis and several memorial stelas for the god «Amun-Ra» and the goddess «Hathor» in Heliopolis¹⁰. This clearly indicates the continuous royal presence in the Heliopolis region. It is clear that King «Amenhotep» III was associated with Heliopolis because he took the «Horus» title, which reads:  *hr wts hdt mry Twnw* «Horus», who wears the white crown, beloved of Iunu (Heliopolis), which appeared on many of King «Amenhotep» III's monuments¹¹. In regard to «Amenhotep» III's names and titles:

C. Birth Name



Son of «Ra», «Amenhotep», Heir of «Ra», Ruler of Thebes.



Son of «Ra», «Amenhotep», Ruler of Thebes.

⁶ BAKRY 1967: 56-58, FIG.2, Taf. XIII/a.

⁷ LECLANT 1971: 229 (11); MOURSİ & BALBOUSCH 1975: 86-88, Abb.1-3, Taf. 29/b-c.

⁸ NEWBERRY 1907: 57, CG 36226, PL.XXII.

⁹ KOZLOFF 2012: 11.

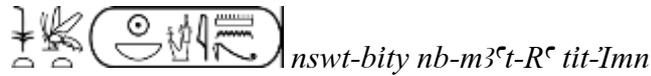
¹⁰ JOHNSON 1998: 64-66.

¹¹ BECKERATH 1999: 140-141, 9: H4.

D. Throne Name



King of Upper and Lower Egypt, The Possessor of the «Maat» of «Ra».



King of Upper and Lower Egypt, The possessor of the Maat (justice) of «Ra», the (exact) image of «Amun».

E. Other Titles

King «Amenhotep» III was given numerous important titles, including:

- Association with the name of «Ra»; *ir-n-Rc* Made by «Ra», *stp-n-Rc* The choice of «Ra», *mry-(n)-Rc* Loved by «Ra», *iw-Rc* Heir of «Ra», *tit-Rc* Image of «Ra», *s3-Rc* Son of «Ra».
- Association with the name of «Amun»; *tit-Imn* Image of «Amun».
- Association with the name of «Atum»; *šsp-n-Itm* Image of «Atum».
- Declaration of the King's Title; *hk3-W3st* Ruler of Thebes, *hk3-ntr-W3st* Divine ruler of Thebes¹².

Because the lower part of the stone block was lost, the word *mry*, which complements the text, was inferred contextually. It is noted that the word «Amun» *Imn*, the sign *mn* was erased and it is possible that the erasure occurred by the new religious followers of the god «Aten» in the era of King «Akhenaten». Upon inspection of many of King «Amenhotep» III's monuments, it was discovered that the name of the god Amun had been defaced or removed from most of them. For example, the name «Amun» was destroyed on the back column and the right side of the base of the granodiorite statue of King «Amenhotep» III preserved in the British Museum EA5¹³, which indicates that the erasure of «Amun's» name was intentional after the religious revolution of «Akhenaten». Many monuments had the name «Amun» removed and erased by his supporters¹⁴.

¹² BECKERATH 1999: 140-143; LEPROHON 2013: 102-104.

¹³ EDWARDS 1939: Part.VIII, 10, PL.11; PORTER & MOSS 1974: PM II: 452 (Statues of Amenophis III/c N^o.5).

¹⁴ ABD EL-HAI & ELSHARNOUBY & ABD ELFTA 2022: 192-193, 204.

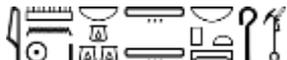
The God «Amun-Ra»  *Imn-R^c*:

The god «Amun»  *Imn* is considered one of the most important ancient Egyptian deities. He originally gained prominence during the Middle Kingdom and eventually became the primary god in the New Kingdom. He merged with another god, «Ra» to become «Imn-Ra». «Amun» was also a member of Ogdoad (of El-ashmunen)  *hmnyw*¹⁵.

The worship of «Amun»  *Imn* originated in Thebes and developed when he merged with the god «Ra»  *R^c* and became «Amun-Ra»  *Imn-R^c*¹⁶. «Ra» was considered the main deity of Heliopolis, which was called Iwnw  *Iwnw* in ancient Egyptian, meaning a city of The Sun (Currently Ain-Shams)¹⁷. «Amun's» wife was initially called «Amunet»  *Imnt* the feminine of «Amun»¹⁸. The previous main wife was replaced by «Mut» or «Mwt»  *Mwt*. Mut was depicted as a female figure wearing a double crown (pschent), which includes the White Hedjet Crown of Upper Egypt and the Red Deshret Crown of Lower Egypt. She also bore him their son «Khonsu»  *hnsu*, known as the moon god, to form the triad of Thebes¹⁹. Hence, as a result of his prominence in ancient Egyptian religion, «Amun» acquired many names and titles. The name «Amun» signifies being hidden, unmanifest and inner. When he merged with the god «Ra» to become «Amun-Ra», he gained the attributes of the sun and royal sovereignty. He also merged with the god «Min» to become «Amun-Min», obtaining the power of fertility and cosmic sovereignty, which qualified him for the sovereignty over the universe. In the late period he was known as «Amun-Kematef»  *Imn-R^c k3 mwt.f* meaning «Amun-Re the bull of his mother». Therefore, «Amun's» is recognized by various names and titles that have many formulas associated with his name²⁰:

 *Imn-R^c nsw ntrw nb pt hk3 w3st*

«Amun-Ra» King of Gods, Lord of the Sky, Ruler of Thebes.

 *Imn-R^c nb nswt t3wy nb pt hk3 W3st*

«Amun-Ra» Lord of the Thrones of the two lands, Lord of the Sky, Ruler of Thebes²¹.

¹⁵ WILKINSON 2003: 92-94.

¹⁶ TOBIN 2001: 82-85.

¹⁷ DOBROWOLSKI 2006: 15-16.

¹⁸ REMLER 2010: 14.

¹⁹ HART 2005: 97-98.

²⁰ PINCH 2002: 100-101; JORDAN 2004: 17-18; HART 2005: 13-21; REMLER 2010: 13-15.

²¹ GAYET 1894: 43-44, PL.IX, FIG.58 – PL.X, FIG.59; PORTER & MOSS 1974: *PM* II, 318 scene N^o.102.

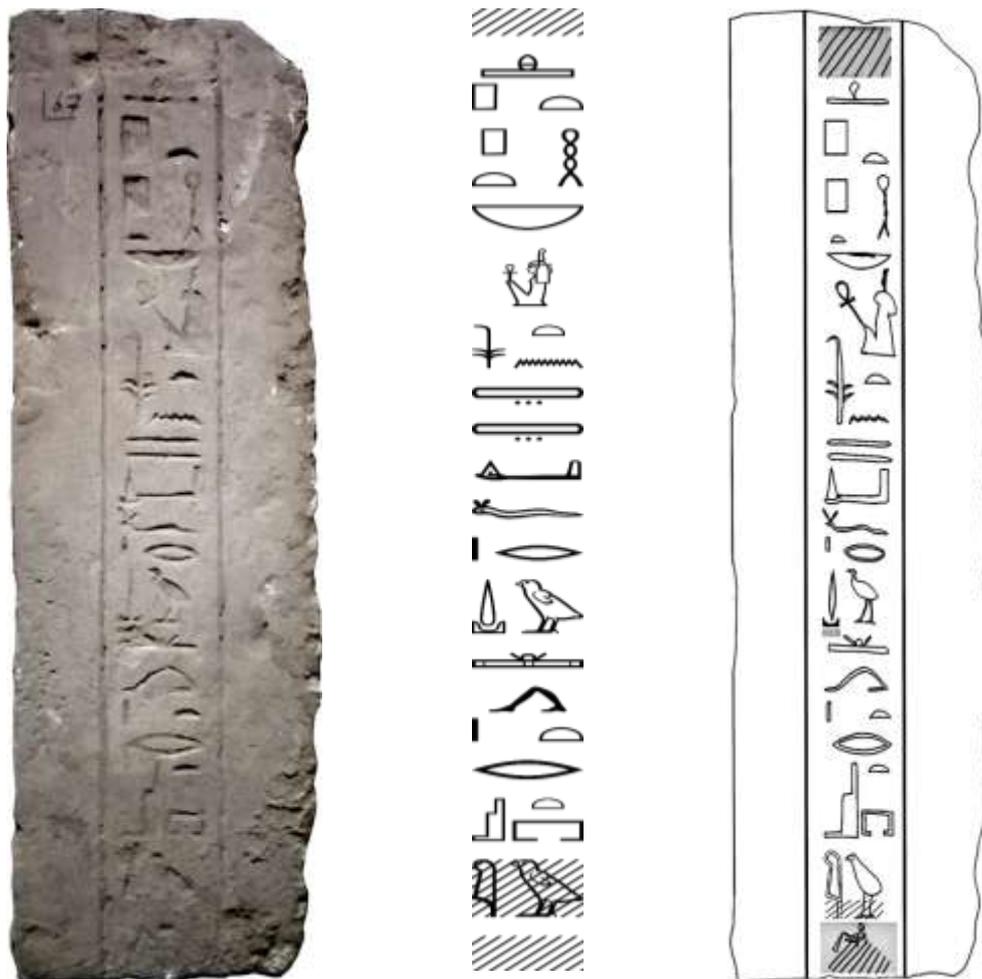
2. Second Stone Block N^o.167 [TABLE 2]

Type	A rectangular architectural element that includes a stone block.
Material	Limestone.
Publishing	Unpublished.
Era/ Dynasty	Unknown; possibly New and Late Period due to the nature of writing.
Dimensions	Max. Length 68.5 cm, max. Width 22 cm, max. thickness 7.5 cm.
Discovery Site	Prison Farm in El-Mataria.
Save Location	Al-Mataria and 'Ain-Shams Antiquities Inspection Store, N ^o .167.

[TABLE 2]: A stone block that represents part of an architectural element of limestone in al-Mataria Antiquities Store N^o.167© Done by the researcher.

A. Description [FIGURE 2]

The Block N^o.167 has an irregular rectangular limestone shape, which is broken from the top and bottom. It was found three meters deep in the ground during sewage and sanitation works in the Prison Farm area in El-Mataria, and was later transferred to the examination antiquities repository located in al-Mataria and Ain-Shams. The item bears an unfinished vertical hieroglyphic inscription that reads from left to right.



[FIGURE 2]: A rectangular limestone block in al-Mataria antiquities store N^o.167 © Photo and facsimile done by researcher

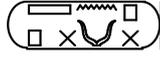
B. Hieroglyphic Text



... (*hṭp*) *pth nb m3ʿt nswt-t3wy di.f r wd3.t r st šw...*

... «An offering» to «*Ptah*», the Lord of Justice and King of the two lands, gives a spell (talk) to cross to the place of light (meaning here's sunlight).

C. Analytical Study

The word   *hṭp*, is expected to be spelled in this manner   based on its pronunciation, as the text is written from left to right. The letter  *p* was replaced with the letter  *t*; It is thought that the occurrence may be a mistake made by the writer or a new addition to the typical characteristics found in writings from the New kingdom and Late periods. It's probable that this writing is from the Late Period, as that period is characterized by the inversion of the letters *p* and *t* in similar texts from the Late period.   *p*,  *t*, the stone block of «*Shepenwepet*» II  *Šp-n-Wpt* JE. 39396. By omitting the word  *di* and considering the context of the text, the following translation can be inferred:



To make an offering which the King gives to «*Osiris*»²².

Due to the upper part of the stone block being missing, the text is unclear. Therefore, the word   *hṭp* has been rendered as an offering (gift/blessing)   *hṭpt* in the context of the funerary formula, which the King gives    *hṭp-di-nsw* or offers    *hṭpw*²³. Multiple translations of this term exist due to its various written forms and contextual nuances. Among these translations are «rest» as   *hṭp* or «be pleased» or «be happy» or «be kind» among others²⁴.

- The God «*Ptah*» *Pth*²⁵:

The name «*Ptah*»   *pth* holds great significance in ancient Egyptian civilization; thus, it is possible that a chapel was erected in Heliopolis to «*Ptah*». The Memphite theology states that «*Ptah*» was the creator of the universe. *Ptah*'s appearance came before that of the Heliopolis Ennead as he played a crucial role in the creation process through the

²² WINKELN 2009: 78 (JE. 39396); KOCH 2012: 126.

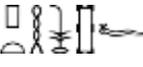
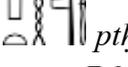
²³ LESKO 2002: 337-338.

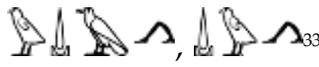
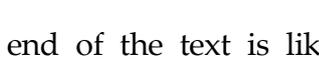
²⁴ DICKSON 2006: 184-186; FAULKNER 2017: 221.

²⁵ HART 2005: 128-131.

power of thought and word, which paved the way for the eventual emergence of the Heliopolitan Ennead. Although the main center of worship for «Ptah» was centered in Memphis, he was worshiped in all major temples in Egypt and Nubia²⁶.

The god «Ptah» is widely regarded as the creator and patron of craftsmen and architects, and is a prominent member and leader of the Memphis triad. He is the spouse of the goddess «Sekhmet» and father of the god «Nefertum» and is considered the father of the sage Imhotep²⁷. «Ptah» has many titles that accurately describe his roles in the ancient Egyptian religion²⁸. He merges with other gods to become «Ptah-Hapi», «Ptah-Osiris», «Ptah-Sokar», «Ptah-Sokar-Osiris», «Ptah-Sokar-Tem», «Ptah-Tatenen»²⁹, holding the renowned titles of:

- «Ptah», Master of Justice  *pth nb m3t*³⁰.
- «Ptah», King of the Two Lands  *pth nswt-t3wy*.
- «Ptah», who is south his wall  *pth rsy inb.f* refers to the boundary wall surrounding the temple area of «Ptah» at Memphis.
- «Ptah», The Great God  *pth ntr*³¹.
- «Ptah», Lord of Ankh Tawy  *pth nb nh-t3wy* «Life of the two lands» refers to the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt.
- «Ptah», The Beautiful Face  *pth hr-nfr*, his flesh was gold³¹.

Regarding the rest of the text, the offerings are given through spoken words, either in the form of an incantation or a recitation., where he gives  *dif* an incantation  *r* in order to depart or leave  *wd3.t*³², which took various written forms , ,  ³³. Due to the stone's significant fragmentation, the word  at the end of the text is likely to be read  *sw*, meaning sunlight³⁴, which means the movement of the deceased from darkness to light (daylight).

²⁶ PINCH 2002: 181-182; JORDAN 2004: 255; REMLER 2010: 170-172.

²⁷ ALLEN 1988: 38-41.

²⁸ KURILO 2022: 259.

²⁹ REMLER 2010: 171-172.

³⁰ DAUD 1993: 261.

³¹ HOLMBERG 1946: 16, 75, 83, 110, 115; WILKINSON 2003: 123-126.

³² ERMAN & GRAPOW 1958: *Wb.I*, 403.

³³ DICKSON 2006: 92; FAULKNER 2017: 92.

³⁴ ERMAN & GRAPOW 1971: *Wb.IV*, 430; FAULKNER 2017: 322.

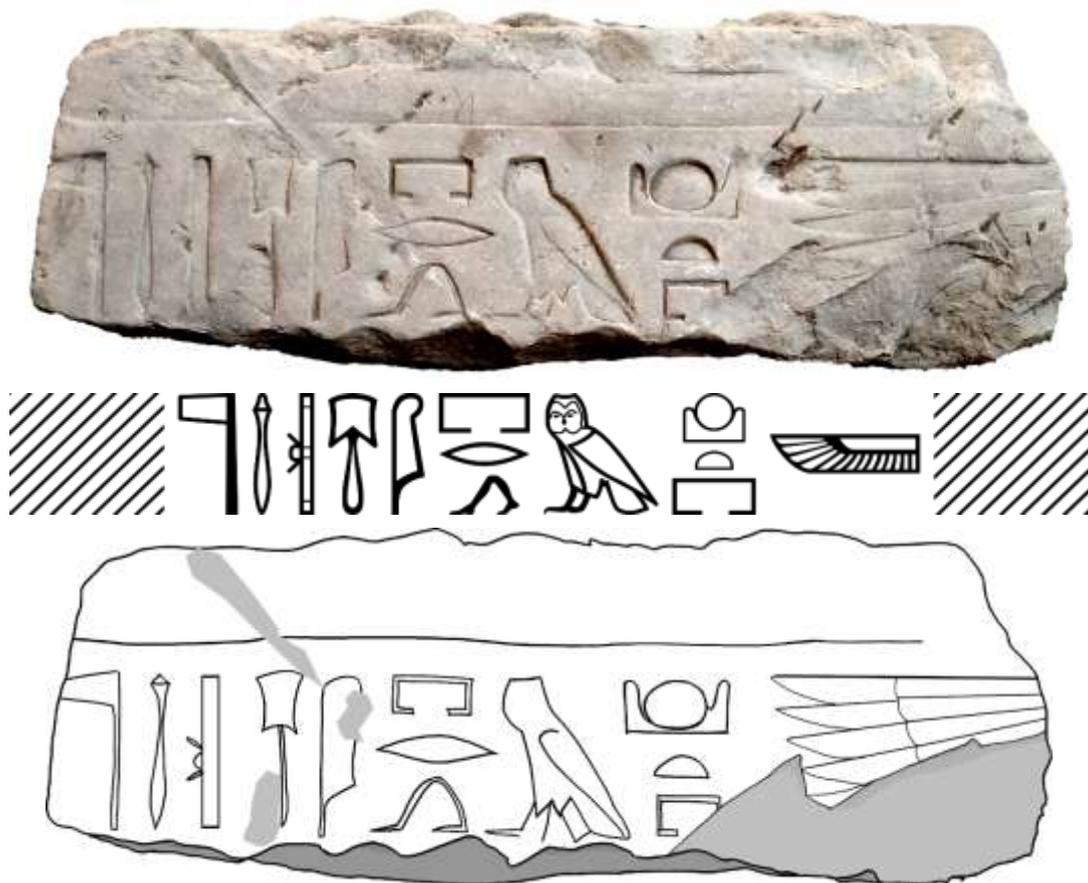
3. Third Stone Block N^o.177 [TABLE 3]

Type	Upper part of an irregular rectangle architectural element.
Material	Limestone.
publishing	Unpublished.
Era / Dynasty	Unknown? Conceivably the New Kingdom.
Dimensions	Max. length 118cm, max. width 37cm, max. thickness 39cm.
Discovery site	Prison Farm in El-Mataria.
Save Location	Al-Mataria and Ain-Shams Antiquities Inspection Store, No. 177.

[TABLE 3]: Limestone door lintel in al-Mataria Antiquities Store N^o.177 © Done by the researcher

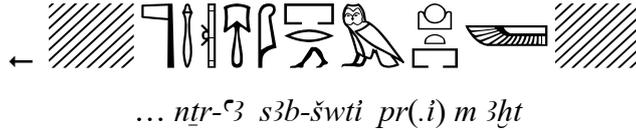
A. Description [FIGURE 3]

The block N^o.177 is a large, rectangular limestone block that is missing four parts. It was discovered at a depth of about two and a half meters during sewage excavations in the Farm Prison area of al-Mataria antiquities area, and it may have originally been used as a lintel for a religious building. The front of the object is polished but has cracks and scratches. Hieroglyphic script is inscribed on it. On the far right, we notice the remains of the wing of the sun disk , while the far left shows the beginning of an incomplete hieroglyphic text.



[FIGURE 3]: Limestone door lintel in al-Mataria Antiquities Store N^o.177
© Photo and facsimile done by Researcher

B. Hieroglyphic Text

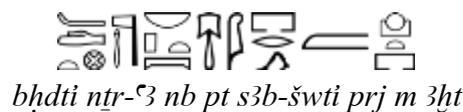


The Great God, with Dappled/Speckled Feathers (many colored of plumage of Solar «Horus»), emerging from the horizon.

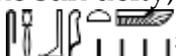
C. Analytical Study

The component on the right of block 177 has been misplaced, leaving only a diminutive portion on the left side of the sun disk wing intact . The left part was misplaced, leaving an incomplete hieroglyphic text. Thus, it is possible that the text begins with the word  *bḥdty*, i.e., that belongs to the winged sun-disk because the title  Behdet is one of the titles associated with the god *Horus* known as «*Hor al-Bahdati*» (al'idfawi, Edfu in Upper Egypt)  *ḥr-bḥdty*³⁵. The winged sun disk stands out as one of the most distinguished Egyptian symbols denoting the deity «*Ra*», who is one of the most renowned ancient Egyptian gods³⁶. As a religious symbol of unified Egypt, the disc symbolizes the sun, while the wings represent the wings of a falcon - the primary deity of the Egyptian ruling dynasties. The whales surrounding the sun disk embody the two deities «*Nekhbet*» and «*Wadjet*» who are the two goddesses of the two divisions of Egypt. Therefore, on some occasions they are adorned with crowns of the north and south³⁷. The winged sun disc was heavily employed in ancient Egyptian monuments, including the tops of stelae and sarcophagi, entrances to temple doors, and inner chambers such as:

- Naos of King «*Nectanebo*» II inside the Edfu Temple:



Behdetite, the great god, lord of the sky, he of multicolored plumage who appears from the horizon³⁸.

The title  *ntr-ꜥ*, is regarded as one of the designations bestowed upon the monarch after death, whereas the word  *s3b-šwt*, denotes speckled or dotted, which refers to a multi-colored wing designated for Horus, the sun deity, who is adorned with colorful plumage and is inscribed in its complete form ³⁹.

³⁵ GARDINER 1944: 23; HART 2005: 74-75; REMLER 2010: 86-87.

³⁶ JORDAN 2004: 264-265.

³⁷ MACKENZIE 2003: 61, 63.

³⁸ ABDELHAMID & SALEM 2022: 115.

³⁹ ERMAN & GRAPOW 1971: *Wb.*IV, 17, 13-15; FAULKNER 2017: 260.

4. Fourth Stone Block N^o.456/1,2 [TABLE 4]

Type	Rectangular stone block broken in two halves.
Material	Limestone.
Publishing	Unpublished.
Era/ Dynasty	Unknown?
Dimensions	Max. Length 62cm, max. Width 19cm.
Discovery Site	Prison Farm in El-Mataria.
Save Location	Al-Mataria and 'Ain-Shams Antiquities Inspection Store, N ^o .456/1,2.

[TABLE 4]: A rectangular stone block, broken in two halves, is part of an architectural element made of limestone, currently in al-Mataria Antiquities Store N^o. 456/1-2 © Done by the researcher

A. DESCRIPTION [FIGURE 4]

The block N^o.456/1-2 is part of a rectangular architectural limestone element broken into two halves (the second half complements the first) and was found at a depth of about three meters during archaeological probes in the course of the sewage project for Greater Cairo, specifically in the area west of the complex of the «Ra» temples in Heliopolis, west of the Awqaf Farm. It has a vertical line of hieroglyphs and the remains of another incomplete and unclear line with a longitudinal ornamental marking situated on the right side of the stone.



[FIGURE 4]: A rectangular stone block broken in two halves in al-Mataria antiquities store N^o.456/1,2 © Photo and facsimile done by Researcher

B. Hieroglyphic Text

• First Line

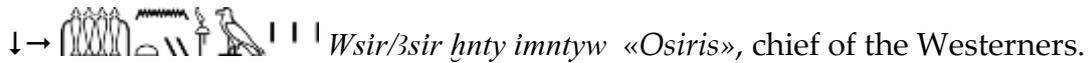


... ntr-ꜣ hkꜣ 3bdw in Wsir/3sir ꜣ 3 n t??y m3ꜣ-hrw

... The Great God Ruler of Abydos, by «Osiris» the Great, for «T... y??» true of voice (justify).

• Second Line

Completely smashed, and based on the surviving inscriptions, the line probably reads:



C. Analytical Study

Block No. 456-1/2 has been split into two parts, with the second half completing the first half. This occurred because the upper part of the block was lost. Some remnants of the text may still exist, especially at the beginning, which is likely,  *sntr*, as indicated by the remaining clues⁴⁰; this is followed by the title «Great God»  *ntr-ꜣ*, a divine title of the gods usually given to deceased Kings⁴¹, followed by the title «Ruler of Abydos»  *hkꜣ 3bdw*, indicating that the ruler is either a god or a King. A symbol denoting rule and power was represented by a crook  that dates back in its origins to the shepherd's stick. The word  *hkꜣ* was written in multiple forms ⁴².

Abydos  *3bdw*, was the center for the veneration of the deity «Osiris», where his name became synonymous with «Osiris», the Master of the Westerners, and was revered as a pilgrimage destination in ancient Egypt; it housed both the «Ka» and «Ba» of the god «Osiris»⁴³. Abydos, known as (al-ʿArāba El-Madfūna) is located in El-Balyana Directorate, south of Sohag Governorate, and is known in ancient Egyptian texts as «Abjo» and «Abdo», which later became «Abydos» in Greek; the name has remained the same and is known as it is today⁴⁴.

The word Abydos was written in various forms, including: , , ,  *3bdw*⁴⁵, as for the god «Osiris» , he is worshiped in

⁴⁰ ERMAN & GRAPOW 1971: *Wb*.IV, 180; DICKSON 2006: 187.

⁴¹ ERMAN & GRAPOW 1958: *Wb*.I, 161; ERMAN & GRAPOW 1971: *Wb*.II, 358; FAULKNER 2017: 177.

⁴² ERMAN & GRAPOW 1971: *Wb*.III, 170; DICKSON 2006: 226; FAULKNER 2017: 219.

⁴³ WEGNER 2006: 7-8; O'CONNOR 2009.

⁴⁴ DAVID 1981: 1-3; BESTOCK 2009: 1-4; VARTAVAN 2016: 57, 220.

⁴⁵ ERMAN & GRAPOW 1958: *Wb*.I, 9; DICKSON 2006: 132; GARDINER 2007: 66, 68, 140, 239, 413, 464, 489, 502, 550, 605; FAULKNER 2017: 3.

several sacred places throughout Egypt, such as in the Delta in Letopolis (Ausim)  *hm*, Heliopolis (Iunu/Iwnw)  *Twnw*, Memphis  *mn-nfr*, Heracleopolis Magna (Ihnasiyyah)  *hwt nn nswt*, and Hermopolis (El-Ashmunein)  *hmnw*. But the largest and most important centers of his worship was Abydos  *3bdw*⁴⁶.

- The God «Osiris»  *wsir/3sir*⁴⁷

«Osiris» was one of the most important gods in ancient Egypt, and is respected as a god of resurrection and reckoning head of the Court of the Dead⁴⁸. He is the eldest son of the earth god «Geb»  *Gb*, and his mother, «Nut»  *Nwt* was the goddess of the sky. His wife and sister was the goddess «Isis»  *3st*, the goddess of motherhood, magic and fertility, and his son was the god «Horus»  *Hr*. Osiris was also a significant member of the Heliopolitan Ennead  *psdt*, depicted in the form of a man without specifying his body parts, wearing the Atef Crown  *3tf* on his head, holding the shepherd's stick crook (scepter)  *hk3* with his right hand and the fagellum/flail  *nh3h3* with his left⁴⁹.

Despite the veneration of «Osiris» in numerous locations and sacred metropolises throughout Egypt, the preeminent locales of his adoration within the Upper Egyptian region were situated in Abydos  *3bdw*, and Abusir (Busiris)  *ddw* in Lower Egypt, which was written in various forms  ,  ,  , and Therefore, Abydos and Busiris were the two regions that were most associated with «Osiris» and leading centers of his worship in Upper and Lower Egypt, respectively⁵⁰.

The written form of «Osiris» name  *wsir/3sir* changed with the different periods of ancient Egyptian history  ,  ,  ,  , however he held many titles that highlight his prominent roles in ancient Egyptian faith and religion, including:

- «Osiris», Lord of Eternity  *Wsir/3sir nb dt*.
- «Osiris», Ruler of Abydos  *Wsir/3sir hk3 3bdw*,  *nb 3bdw*.
- «Osiris», Lord of Djedu (Abu-Sir/Busiris)  *Wsir/3sir nb ddw*.

⁴⁶ REMLER 2010: 145; DICKSON 2006: 164, 286, 289.

⁴⁷ OSING 1974: 91-113; KUHLMANN 1975: 135-38; GRIFFITHS 1982: 623-633; WILKINSON 2003: 118-123.

⁴⁸ MOJSOV 2005: 83-93.

⁴⁹ HART 2005: 115-124; DICKSON 2006: 68, 70, 83, 94, 107, 130, 179, 277.

⁵⁰ JORDAN 2004: 235; BAYOUMY 2021: 30-36.

- «Osiris», Ruler of Gods *Wsir/3sir ḥk3-ntrw*⁵¹.
- «Osiris», Wennefer *Wsir/3sir wnn-nfrw*⁵².

II. CONCLUSION

The researcher has examined four blocks of limestone discovered to the west of the temple complex dedicated to the deity «Ra» in Heliopolis. Findings indicated that these blocks constitute integral parts of religious architectural elements from distinct historical periods. This determination was made by closely analyzing the nature of the writings and texts recorded on these blocks. Moreover, this study has highlighted the profound significance of the ancient city of Heliopolis, especially given that only a limited number of its monuments and temples have survived. It is important to mention that there are ongoing archaeological expeditions in the area, dedicated to uncovering the mysteries of this ancient city of the sun. Indeed, it is with respect to the artifacts under investigation that these significant findings have been made.

A. First Block N^o.147

- The block can be attributed to the New Kingdom period based on the royal cartouche bearing the name of «Amenhotep» III of the 18th dynasty. The close proximity to the complex of «Ra» temples in Heliopolis provides compelling evidence of the New Kingdom Kings' commitment to constructing religious infrastructure for the deities of Old Iunu/Iwnw.
- Due to the significant loss of a major portion of the block, identifying its inherent characteristics was challenging. Its remnants are presumably attributed to either a wall shoulder or a fragment of a door jamb.
- It is conceivable that the elimination of the symbol *mn* from the word «Amun» *Imn* on the block was premeditated and purposeful by the religious supporters of «Aten» during the reign of King «Akhenaten». This is evidenced by the majority of King «Amenhotep» III's monuments, where the name of «Amun» was eradicated from numerous monuments during Akhenaten's revolution.
- al-Gammaliya district houses an intriguing basalt column that originated from Heliopolis; It has the shape of a lotus bud with eight stems with cartouches dating to King «Merneptah». Two of the cartouches also have the name of King «Amenhotep» III, surrounded by epithets of the god «Horus» within a rectangular frame situated at the column's center. Bakry has posited that this column is a fragment of a Heliopolis temple dedicated to the god «Horus», and the column in Middle Kingdom design suggests that it may have originated from that period.

⁵¹ ZECCHI 2006: 132.

⁵² OUDA 2016: 183-184; FAULKNER 2017: 3, 26.

B. Second block N^o.167

- Transcribing the word  *htp* in this particular manner is regarded as a novel and common textual attribute from the new and late periods. This phenomenon is supported by analogous textual instances from the Late Period, which exhibit a transposition of the letters  *p* and  *t* without any discernible impact on the pronunciation of the word above.
- The writing style on this particular block suggests a probable New Kingdom origin, including characteristics referring to the New and Late linguistic period.
- It is suggested that this block appears to be a crucial part of a religious complex dedicated to «Ptah»  *pth* in Heliopolis, who was venerated in various locales, including Memphis and Heliopolis, as his appearance predates that of the Ennead of Heliopolis.
- The presence of «Ptah's» epithets on this block serves as an indication of the deity's paramount significance in the realm of Egyptian religion, faith, and mythology: head of the Memphis triad («Ptah», «Sekhmet», «Nefertum»), the Master of Justice  *nb* *m3't*, and the King of the Two Lands  *nswt-t3wy*, in addition to the other titles he seized as a god that further highlight his prominent and distinguished role among ancient Egyptian deities. This is all evidenced by the inscriptions found in religious and funerary temples.
- Despite Memphis being considered the central location for the worship of the deity, «Ptah» the researcher suggests the existence of a chapel dedicated to «Ptah» in Heliopolis because of numerous stone blocks found there that bear his name. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the Memphite theology, which states that «Ptah» is the creator of the universe even before the Heliopolis Ennead, emphasizing his role in creation through his thoughts and word, which eventually led to the emergence of the Ennead of Heliopolis. However, this chapel may have deteriorated and disappeared over time.

C. Third Block N^o.177

- The block was identified as belonging to the upper lintel of a religious building from the remains of the «Ra» temple complex in Heliopolis.
- The researcher transcribed the block of text even though the beginning was missing. He concluded that it started with the word  *bhdy*, which commonly alludes to the winged sun disk in various inscriptions from the New Kingdom and the Late Period.
- The content of the missing word from the text,  *bhdy*, refers to the winged sun disk , which is one of the most famous religious symbols denoting the deity «Ra». As a religious symbol of unified Egypt, the disc symbolizes the sun, while the wings represent the wings of a falcon - the primary deity of the Egyptian ruling dynasties. The whales surrounding the sun disk embody the two deities «Nekhbet» and «Wadjet»

who are the two goddesses of the two divisions of Egypt. Thus, on some occasions they are adorned with the crowns of the north and south .

D. Fourth Block N°.167

- It is possible that the missing text is a list of offerings made to the god «Osiris»  *wsir/ʒsir*, which reflects the position of «Osiris» in the complex of ancient Egyptian gods.
- As a result of the presence of the name «Osiris»  *wsir/ʒsir*, the God of the Underworld, and the remains of a person's name  followed by the phrase  *mꜣḥrw*, which means «true of voice» (justified: an epithet used after the name of the deceased) at the end of the text, it is likely that this archaeological block belongs to a funerary architectural element in Heliopolis.
- Although «Osiris» held a prominent position as a pivotal member of the Ennead of Heliopolis and was worshipped in many sacred locations and cities throughout Egypt, his most renowned place of worship in Upper Egypt was located in Abydos  *ʒbdw*, while in Lower Egypt, he was worshipped primarily in Abusir (Busiris)  *ḏdw*. Abydos and Busiris were the two sites most closely associated with «Osiris», and served as the central hubs of his veneration in Upper and Lower Egypt.

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