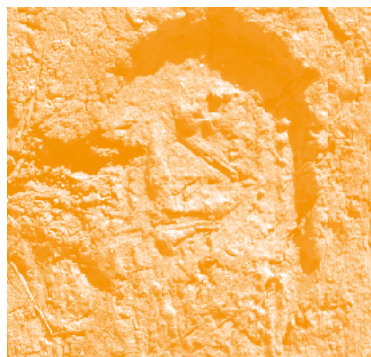


Stamped bricks of Amenhotep I from Deir el-Bahari

Abstract: Stamped bricks with the names of the king Amenhotep I and his mother, queen Ahmes Nefertari, were found throughout Deir el-Bahari, including the Temple of Hatshepsut investigated by a mission from the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw. All of the bricks came from the edifice raised by Amenhotep I at Deir el-Bahari that was demolished before the construction of the mortuary temple Djoser-djeseru and then reused in a structure that emerged at the same time or later.

Keywords: seal, stamped mud brick, Amenhotep I, Ahmes Nefertari, Temple of Hatshepsut, Deir el-Bahari



Stamped mud bricks are common to the era of the New Kingdom. They did not occur earlier, the first precisely dated stamped bricks coming from the early Eighteenth Dynasty. They were still popular in the Nineteenth Dynasty, then lost significance with the latest examples dating from the Twenty-sixth Dynasty (see Spencer 1979: 144, 146; Booche 1982: 21). The main purpose of stamping a mud brick, as indicated by the information contained in the impressions, was to give the name of the founder of the building or the name of the edifice, for the construction of which they were intended. Unfortunately, it is not clear why only a limited number of bricks were marked in this way. A magical or religious cause cannot be excluded (Booche 1982: 3), because the stamp was immured and hence not visible.¹ This led to the conclusion that the stamps were dedications to the deities. They may have also been a sign of the king's workshop

¹ Except for a group of private stamped bricks where the seal is on the (narrower) side, which resulted in the impression being exposed in the wall face, see Borchardt 1934: 32–34; Spencer 1979: 140–146.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mirosław Barwik for his invaluable help and knowledgeable support during my work on the presented material.

I am also grateful to Alicja Łais and Mateusz Zaranek for their help and very useful suggestions and to Zbigniew E. Szafrński, Director of the Polish–Egyptian Archaeological and Conservation Mission at the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari, for permission to publish this material.

responsible for the building material for a specific construction project.²

The sacral edifice that Amenhotep I raised beside the temple of Mentuhotep II in the valley of Deir el-Bahari pre-existed Hatshepsut's temple of a million years in the same place. Herbert Winlock suggested that it was a small temple or a chapel (Winlock 1924: 14–16, 20; 1932: 23–24; Porter and Moss 1972: 343). This building has also been referred to as the “Brick Temple” with the annotation that its original name was the “House of Ameno-phis of the Garden” (Porter and Moss

1972: 343, Note 1), which was mentioned in the Abbot Papyrus (papAbbot, page 2, lines 3–4, see Peet 1930: Pl. I). However, it is doubtful that the building was indeed a temple, as indicated by the fact that it was built not of stone, but of mud brick. Probably it was an edifice associated with one of festivals, maybe a bark shrine, as Dieter Arnold suggested (1974: 68).

The queen's builders had to clear the area and dismantle the building of Amenhotep I before starting on the construction of Hatshepsut's time. Its remains are now located under the floor level of

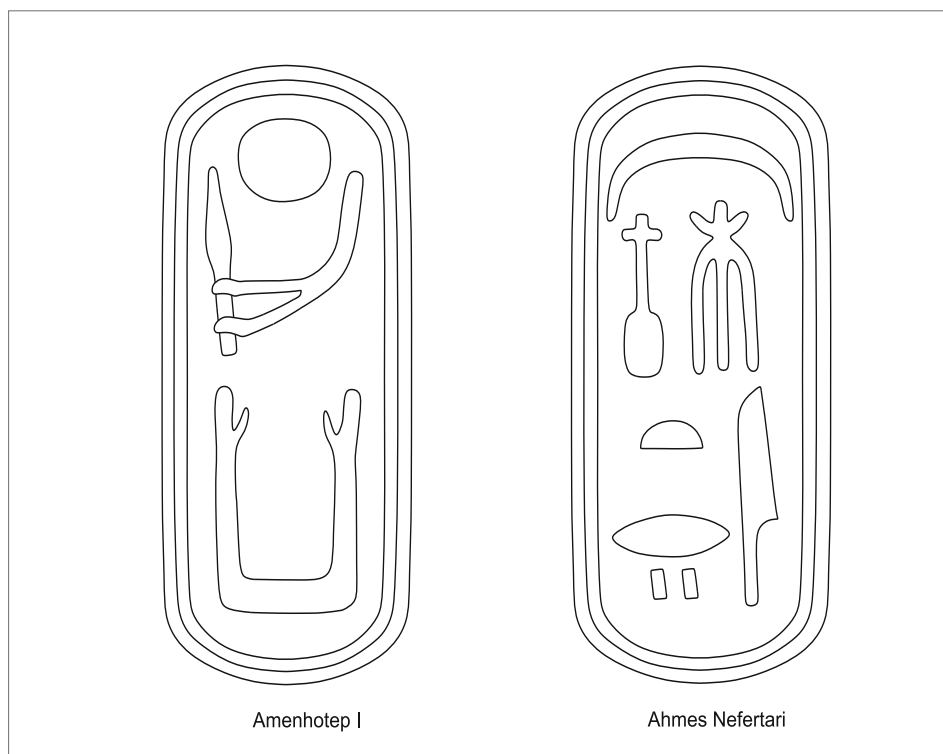


Fig. 1. Types of seal impression on mud bricks from Deir el-Bahari (PCMA Temple of Hatshepsut Project/all photos and drawing A. Madej)

- 2 Fourteen different types of seals were recognised in the mortuary temple of Tuthmosis III. They give the name of the king or the name of the temple and differ only in the spelling, see Ricke 1939: 34–36; Seco Álvarez and Radwan 2012: 70, Fig. 2.

the Middle Courtyard of the Hatshepsut temple (Wysocki 1984: 332, 334). Although the building was razed, the building material, originally used in the Amenhotep I foundation, was reused later in different structures at Deir el-Bahari. This is attested by mud bricks stamped with the name of the king found in various places in the valley, in the area of the temple and its immediate vicinity.

Some stamped mud bricks were found during the work of the University of Warsaw PCMA Polish–Egyptian Archaeological and Conservation Mission at the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari. They were not associated with Queen Hatshepsut's activity.³ It seems that these mud bricks were relocated and reused probably in an auxiliary or outside structure which may have been connected with the construction or functioning of the temple of Hatshepsut or later activity on this spot.⁴ All the finds of mud bricks with seal impressions are non-contextual. Some were found on the surface in the Chapel of Hatshepsut or without precise provenance in the temple area. Only one was actually excavated in context in the Complex of the Royal Mortuary Cult. Therefore, this material is mixed with objects from various contexts and sometimes different historical periods.

Two types of matrices for the impressions were identified based on the sample of stamped mud bricks from the temple area. Both were oval in shape and repre-

sented large seals typical of the sealings on bricks, made mostly on jar stoppers and doorways. All the seal impressions discovered by the Polish mission are approximately 10.5 cm long, and about 4.5 cm wide. Both types had the inscription oriented vertically and a double frame around the text. In all cases the signs on the impressions showed that the face of the matrix was carved in sunk relief.

The division into stamp types thus depends on the inscription [*Fig. 1*]. The first type, more frequent, appears in four examples of mud bricks found in the temple and contains the praenomen of Amenhotep I, Djeserkare. The second one, attested on a single brick, mentions the name of this king's mother, queen Ahmes Nefertari. It is characteristic that the inscription on the seal of Amenhotep I is read from left to right, but the seal of Ahmes Nefertari has a reverse orientation of the text. It is certain that both types originally came from the same construction built by king Amenhotep I. There is no reason to suppose that another edifice was founded a little earlier or at the same time by the Great Royal Wife of Ahmose at Deir el-Bahari. Interestingly, both types of seals were also found outside the temple and, moreover, they almost always occurred together (see below). The proportions of the occurrence of bricks with the name of the king in relation to the ones with the name of his mother varies, but it seems that those with the name of

3 A drawing of one of mud bricks was published, see Szafrński 2007: 250, Fig. 3. Incorrect identification of the sign in the middle brought about a misinterpretation of the name on the seal.

4 Like the preparation of a burial shaft in the Chapel of Hatshepsut, see Szafrński 2007: 245–251. It is possible, however, that the stamped brick was deposited in this shaft much later, in modern times, see Barwik 2011: 391, Note 1.

Djeserkare are more frequent.⁵ Although two different matrices were used to make the seal impressions, and interpreted as an early variant of the seal bearing two cartouches, the first one is the one with the throne name of the king and the other one with the name of the queen, usually with her title of Great Wife. This kind of decoration with the queen's name as an addition to the name of the reigning king is known in the case of large seals only from mud bricks made at the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Objects stamped with cartouches of Amenhotep III and Tiye,⁶ as well as those of Akhenaten and Neferneferuaten Nefertiti⁷ are known from the archaeological record. The addition of the name of the Great Wife to the name of the pharaoh denotes a significant position of this woman within the royal court and her major impact on the activities of the ruler. It should be pointed out that the seal mentioning the name of Ahmes Nefertari is the only example of the name of a female connected to the royal family occurring separately on a stamped mud brick.

Several examples of very similar, if not identical seal impressions on mud bricks, are noted in reports of the archaeological missions working in the temple at the beginning of the 20th century. There are bricks stamped with the name Djeserkare as well as his mother Ahmes Nefertari. In most cases, both types occurred together.

Howard Carter was the first to cite mud bricks with seal impressions bearing the mentioned names. He discovered them in the vicinity of the Hatshepsut temple (Carnarvon and Carter 1912: 11, 30, Pl. XXIII, No. 3). He found walls (of some edifice, as he supposed, and the so-called "serpentine wall") which he incorrectly dated to the reign of Amenhotep I, assuming this king had raised both buildings. The results of the Metropolitan Museum of Art excavation by Herbert A. Winlock disproved Carter's conclusions, uncovering the remains of a small building under the Middle Courtyard of the temple (the same sort of stamped mud bricks were found there). Winlock noted that the building material, reused in different places, "had been known as coming from this locality for years" (Winlock 1924: 14). It may even be possible that some of the stamped mud bricks found and documented by the Polish Mission were originally excavated by Winlock and his team, owing to the fact that their contexts are uncertain. It cannot be ruled out that the bricks from the Chapel of Hatshepsut, for example, were known to American archaeologists who left them there.

As a matter of fact, it is impossible to ascertain whether the seal impressions with the same inscriptions were made using one stamp or almost identical yet different matrices were exploited by people in charge of producing and signing new batches of building material. First,

5 Bricks stamped with the name of Ahmes Nefertari may not have been preserved down to our times, hence a disproportion in the quantity of these two types of seals on bricks.

6 Probably all types are from Malkata, see Hayes 1951: 162–164, Fig. 30, Nos 3–4; Lepsius 1970: 185; Teeter and Wilfong 2003: 166–167.

7 From Akhetaten: Pendlebury 1951: 150, Pl. LXXXIII, No. IV.

none of the seals is untouched. Parts of the inscription or frame enclosing the signs are in each case illegible. Thus one cannot compare the precise arrangement of signs or their sizes and proportions. However, the material used to make the bricks was very plastic and vulnerable to deformation before drying and hardening. Thus, the disparity of pressure for impressing a stamp is probably the reason why there is a small variation in the appearance and size of the decoration, notwithstanding that all the seals bearing the name of Djoserkare—preserved in readable parts or complete as seal impressions—are almost identical.

Bricks with cartouches of Amenhotep I and his mother were also found in the quarry in the vicinity of the Senenmut tomb (TT 353) at Deir el-Bahari.⁸ The building of this tomb may have been timed to coincide with the construction works in the temple area and Senenmut used materials from the razed foundation of the former king in his own investment. A mud brick from Deir el-Bahari with the name of Djoserkare on its surface was also mentioned by Karl Richard Lepsius (1900: Pl. 4b; 1970: 117), but the author did not specify the precise location where the object was found.

Some of the finds cited above ultimately became part of the Ancient Egyptian collections of American, Egyptian, and German museums. Two

bricks stamped with the throne name of Amenhotep I and another two of Ahmes Nefertari currently belong to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.⁹ An identical set of objects was given to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Cat. Nos 49079–49082, cited after Porter and Moss 1972: 343). Two bricks with an impressed cartouche of Djoserkare went to the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung in Berlin, most likely in effect of Lepsius's activity at Deir el-Bahari (Nos 1512, 1520, cited after Lepsius 1970: 117).

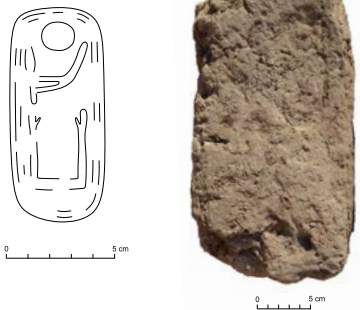
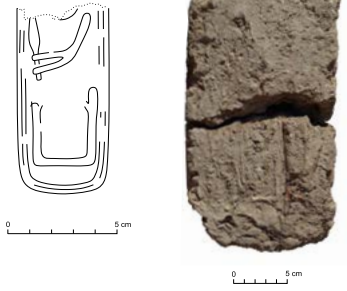
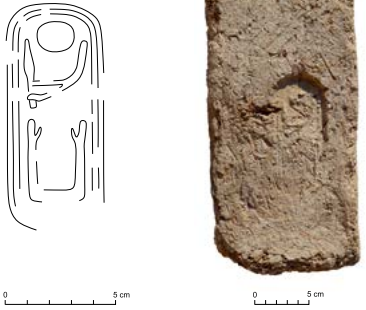
The said objects present the same types of seals as the stamped bricks found by the Polish team. Their identical shape, approximate size, orientation of inscriptions, the same way of writing the names, and first and foremost, the composition of hieroglyphic signs and their sequence, as well as the absence of similar finds on other sites, leave no doubt that all of them originally belonged to one set of bricks made specifically for Amenhotep I's building at Deir el-Bahari. As the secondary context of these finds is unknown, the fact that they were found in the area of the temple suggests that they may have been acquired as building material from the demolition of an earlier structure located in the same place at a time when this part of the valley was transformed into a building site for the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut.


8 Results of work in this area carried out by the Metropolitan Museum of Art are presented in the *Notebooks of Herbert Winlock*, see Dorman 1991: 83–87, Pl. 41c–d; PM: 343.

9 With cartouches of Amenhotep I: 25.3.142–3, www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/554496, www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/559640 [accessed: 11.04.2016]; with the name of Ahmes Nefertari: 25.3.144–5, www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/559641, www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/559642 [accessed: 11.04.2016]; see Hayes 1990: 45, 48.


CATALOG

STAMPED MUD BRICKS WITH THE NAME OF AMENHOTEP I

Cat. No. 1	Inv. No. 715	
Findspot	Chapel of Hatshepsut, S.7A/82 (Szafrński 2007: 247, Fig. 5) = Tomb VIII (Szafrński 2015: 184, Fig. 1; 194)	
Measurement	Brick 28.5 x 15 x 10 cm	
	Seal 10 x 4.5 cm	
Inscription	<i>Dsr-k3-R^c</i>	
Cat. No. 2	Inv. No. 716	
Findspot	Deposited in the Chapel of Hatshepsut	
Measurement	Brick 29 x 13.5 x 12 cm	
	Seal ? x 4.2 cm	
Inscription	<i>Dsr-k3-R^c</i>	
Cat. No. 3	Inv. No. 718	
Findspot	Chapel of Hatshepsut	
Measurement	Brick 28 x 13 x 19 cm	
	Seal 10 x 4.5 cm	
Inscription	<i>Dsr-k3-R^c</i>	

Cat. No. 4	Inv. No. 2348	
Findspot	Deposited in temple area	
Measurement	Brick 30 x 15 x 11 cm	
	Seal 10 x 4.2 cm	
Inscription	<i>Dsr-k3-R^c</i>	

STAMPED MUD BRICK WITH THE NAME OF AHMES NEFERTARI

Cat. No. 5	Cat. No. 717	
Findspot	Deposited in the Chapel of Hatshepsut	
Measurement	Brick 30 x 14 x 12 cm	
	Seal 10.5 x 4.2 cm	
Inscription	<i>Tḥms-Nfrtjry</i>	

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How to cite this article:

Madej, A. (2018). Stamped bricks of Amenhotep I from Deir el-Bahari. In Z.E. Szafrński (Ed.), *Deir el-Bahari Studies 2. Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean 27/2* (pp. 291 -300). Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press.
<https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0013.3306>

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