

Two relief fragments from the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari in the Egypt Centre, Swansea



Abstract: During a student handling session at the Egypt Centre, Swansea University, two relief fragments from the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari were identified. Both fragments had been cut from the walls of the temple, most likely in the late 19th century, before arriving in Swansea via the Wellcome collection in 1971. One fragment contains two columns of text (W351b) while the second depicts the head of a figure (W1376). This paper examines these two fragments, identifying the head of the figure as Hatshepsut's daughter, the God's Wife of Amun Neferure.

Keywords: Deir el-Bahari, Egypt Centre, God's Wife of Amun, Hatshepsut, Neferure, Swansea

In March 2018, two relief fragments from the memorial Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari were identified in the collection of the Egypt Centre during a handling session for students of an art and architecture module at Swansea University.¹ W351b, which contains two columns of hieroglyphs in raised relief, had been on display in the House of Life gallery with other objects associated with writing. W1376 contains the head of a figure, also in raised relief, and had been in storage since at least 1998, when the Egypt Centre opened to the public. Both objects arrived in Swansea in 1971 during the dispersal of the Egyptian collection belonging to the pharmaceuti-

¹ The discovery of W1376, which was initially thought to depict Hatshepsut was announced at the end of March and generated widespread media attention. See, for example, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-43503731>.

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cal engineer Sir Henry Wellcome (Bierbrier 2012: 571–572) by the Trustees of the Wellcome Institute, London (Gill 2005; Graves-Brown 2004). Both objects had been cut from the walls of the temple, most likely in the late 19th century when

it was common for travellers and collectors to acquire objects from the site. This paper presents a detailed examination of these two fragments and identifies W1376 as the head of Hatshepsut's daughter, the God's Wife of Amun Neferure.

W351B

W351b is a limestone fragment containing partial remains of two columns of hieroglyphs, separated by a dividing column line and executed in raised relief [Fig. 1]. The irregularly shaped fragment measures 39.5 cm in height, 19.5 cm at its widest point, and is 3.8 cm thick. The fragment had clearly been cut from a larger block or wall, as is evident from the saw marks on the back. Given the limited hieroglyphs preserved, it is difficult to present a reconstruction of the text, although the signs present indicate that it should be read from left to right. The first column consists of three *hh* signs (𐎃𐎃), most

likely as part of the writing *hwt-ntr ʿ3t nt hhw m rnpwt*, “the great mansion of millions of years”, one of the designations for the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari (Ullmann 2002: 26–52). Only the *di* sign (𐎃) in the second column is completely preserved, with a possible reading of *di.sn*, “they give”. The height of the *hh* signs (11 cm) differs from that of the *di* sign (8 cm), perhaps suggesting that they come from two separate scenes. Further research on the provenance of this piece is needed in order to determine the exact composition of the text.

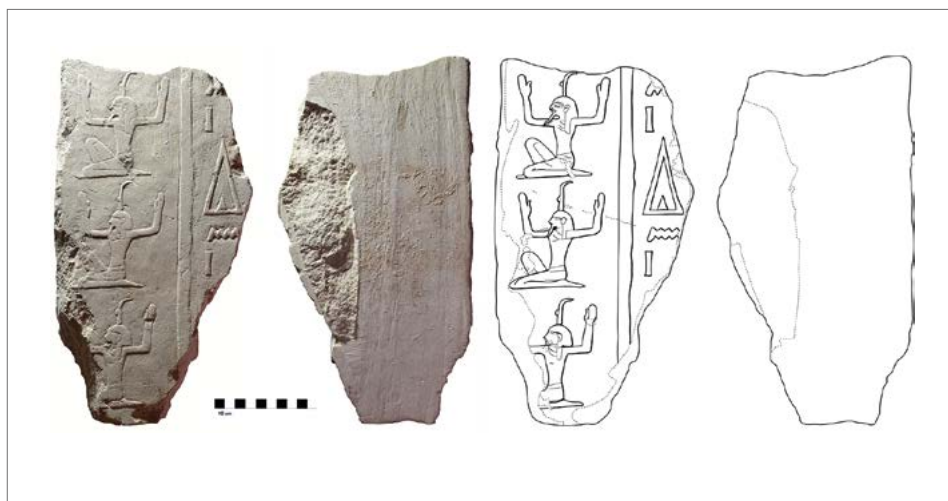


Fig. 1. W351a (The Egypt Centre/photo K. Griffin, drawing F. Weber)



Fig. 2. W1376 (The Egypt Centre/photo K. Griffin, drawing F. Weber)

W1376

W1376 is an irregularly shaped limestone fragment measuring 49 cm in height and 37 cm in width [Fig. 2]. Like W351b, the fragment has clearly been cut from a wall. Additionally, the fragment was cut into two uneven parts in modern times before being glued together at an unknown date. The reason behind this modification will be explained below.

The obverse of the fragment contains the head of a figure whose face is now missing, with the carving of the eye, particularly the long cosmetic line and low brow, being characteristic features dating to the reign of Hatshepsut (Karkowski 2003: 58; Myśliwiec 1976: Figs 68, 70, 72–73, Pl. 145) [see Figs 2, 3]. The figure wears an *ibs*-wig with echeloned curls that completely cover the ears. The carving of the curls is achieved through horizontal incised lines with vertical incisions. While the

ibs-wig is known from as early as the Old Kingdom, the style is well attested during the reigns of Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III (Myśliwiec 1976: 49, 145–146, Pl. 145). The head is adorned with a *sšd* diadem, knotted at the back in the shape of two lotus flowers with double ribbons. Traces of red paint are present on the headband, circle of the knot, and the two ribbons, while yellow was used for the lotus-shaped parts of the knot. An *uraeus* entwines the diadem on the forehead. Although the diadem was frequently worn by the pharaoh, it is also attested for queens and the God's Wife of Amun. According to Myśliwiec, Hatshepsut is rarely depicted wearing this diadem (Myśliwiec 1976: 49). Two examples of silver diadems have survived, both dating to the Seventeenth Dynasty (Marée 2018: 7). Traces of an erased modius are still present on the head of the figure.

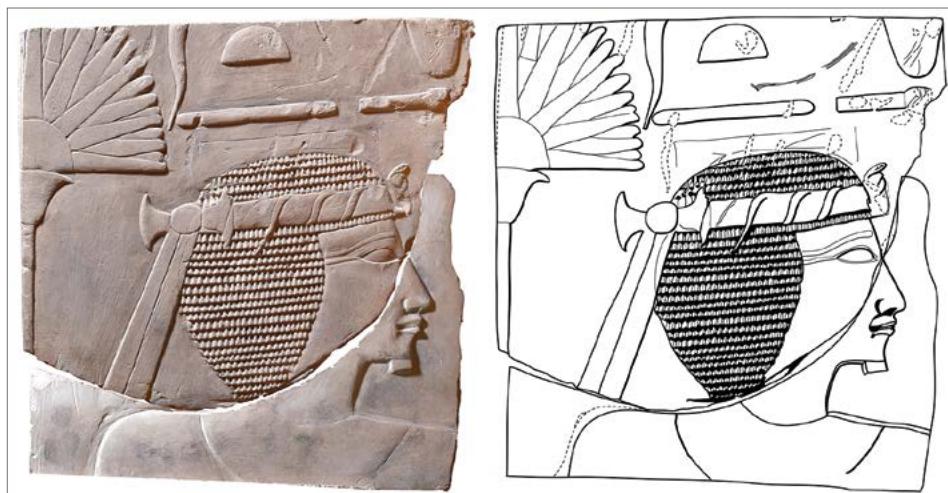






Fig. 3. W1376 with reworked head (The Egypt Centre/photo K. Griffin, drawing F. Weber)

Behind the head are the remains of a fan possibly held by a personified-*ꜥnh*, as is the case with other reliefs from the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari (Naville 1895: Pls 19, 22; 1901: Pls 94, 96). Several hieroglyphs are present in two columns, with no dividing line, directly above the head of the figure. The tips of three feathers that are preserved belong to the wing of a vulture that would have hovered above the inscription. Traces of dark paint are present, originally likely blue to judge by other examples from the temple.

Traces of the erased modius indicate that it originally represented a female figure, as confirmed by the hieroglyphs above, in which the feminine pronoun (—) is used. While the inscription is only partly preserved, its formulaic nature means it can tentatively be reconstructed based on numerous parallels, including others at Deir el-Bahari (Naville 1895: Pl. 18; 1896: Pl. 34; 1898: Pls 61, 77; 1906: Pl. 137) [Fig. 4]:

[*di ꜥnh dd w3s nb*] 3w<t>-*ib.s* [*mi Rꜥ*] *dt*,
 “[Given all life, stability, and dominion], her heart being rejoiced [like Re] forever”

Traces of red paint can be seen on several signs (   ).

While the obvious choice for the identity of the figure is the pharaoh Hatshepsut, the iconography does not fit with her images from Deir

el-Bahari.² Instead, her daughter, the God’s Wife of Amun Neferure, is a more suitable candidate. Depictions of Neferure on temple walls are exceedingly rare (Pawlicki 2007: note 10), but she is depicted no less than eight times on the walls of the Upper Courtyard and in the Main Sanctuary of Amun-Re at Deir el-Bahari (Pawlicki 2007: 110, 117). She is also represented with her parents, Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis II, four times on the *ntry-mnw* at Karnak (Gabolde 2005: Pls 3, 7, 11, 13). Neferure is commonly shown wearing the *ibs*-wig with a *sšd* diadem and a modius in the exact same manner as on the Swansea fragment. These regalia, along with the *hṯs*-sceptre that she often wields, are associated with the office of the God’s Wife of Amun (Pawlicki 2007: 113). Six of these scenes at Deir el-Bahari were carefully modified to represent instead Hatshepsut’s parents Iahmes or Tuthmosis I (Pawlicki 2007: 111). In particular, the modius was erased, the *ibs*-wig modified into a vulture cap when representing

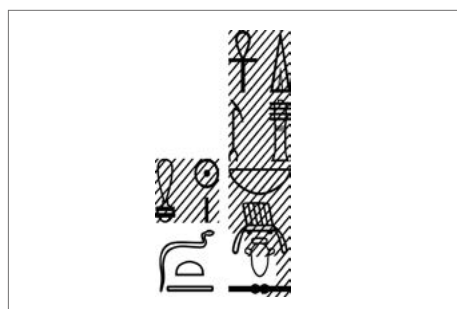


Fig. 4. Reconstructed hieroglyphs on W1376 (JSesh K. Griffin)

2 It was Philippe Martinez who suggested to me (personal communication) that the head could in fact depict Ahmose-Nefertari, who is attested on a number of limestone monuments from Karnak dating to the reign of Amenhotep I.

Iahmes, and the *hts*-sceptre replaced. The change of headgear forced the ancient restorer to model—although not always as carefully as other elements—the ear that had not been visible before (Pawlicki 2007: 122). The best example of this is the two images on either side of the jambs of a granite portal leading to the main temple sanctuary (PM II²: 365 [129–130]; Ćwiek 2007: 25; Pawlicki 2007: 121, Figs 6–8; Szafrński 2008: 283, Figs 11–12). In fact, only the two images of Neferure located within the sanctuary were left untouched (PM II²: 365 [132], 366 [133]; Ćwiek 2007: Fig. 6; Karkowski 2001: 135; Naville 1906: Pls 141, 143; Pawlicki 2007: 111, Fig. 2). One of these scenes even depicts the young princess with the side-lock of youth, a feature more common on her statues than in relief sculpture (PM II²: 365 [132]; Kitchen 1963: Pl. 7; Pawlicki 2007: 113).

Laboury dates the reliefs of Neferure to years 5–7 of the co-regency between Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut (Laboury 2014: 85). Her prominent position, which was unusual in Egyptian art of this time, was no doubt the result of her appointment as the God's Wife of Amun. Yet Szafrński believes her inclusion in the temple reliefs was indicative of Hatshepsut paving the way for a line of female pharaohs (Szafrński 2007: 149; compare Galán, Bryan, and Dorman 2014: x). In particular, he highlights the prominent position of the two images of Neferure flanking the Main Sanctuary of Amun-Re, which were later amended to those of Iahmes (Szafrński 2007: 150). Pawlicki argues that the images of Neferure at Deir el-Bahari were replaced by those of Iahmes and Tuthmosis I already

in the reign of Hatshepsut (Pawlicki 2007: 125) and though it is difficult to know exactly when, he suggests that it occurred around year 16 (Pawlicki 2007: 127). The modification of the figures of Neferure to those of Iahmes and Tuthmosis I fit with Hatshepsut's promotion of the ancestor cult within the temple, particularly in the Upper Terrace, in order to emphasise her royal decent and the legitimacy of her right to the royal throne (Laboury 2014: 85; Pawlicki 2017: 18).

The reverse of the upper fragment of W1376 depicts the face of a nobleman with a short beard carved in raised relief [see Figs 2, 3]. While the lower fragment is 4.5 cm deep, the upper fragment is only 3 cm, confirming that the face was only carved after W1376 had been cut from the block. In fact, it seems that W1376 had been specifically cut into two pieces so that the reverse of the upper fragment could be used to carve a new face for the original figure, an action that also explains the unusually rounded shape of the upper fragment. When this adjustment took place and who was responsible is unknown, but it was likely done by a dealer, auctioneer, or previous owner in order to increase both the monetary and aesthetic value of the object.

An examination of the edges of W1376 [Fig. 5] reveals that the tip of the upper fragment is the original top surface of the block, with some ancient chisel marks still visible (red). The edge of the upper right side of the lower fragment and the left side of the upper fragment are rough, indicating that they are natural breaks. The damage to the surface on the left side of the upper fragment also seems to be natural (blue). The remainder of the

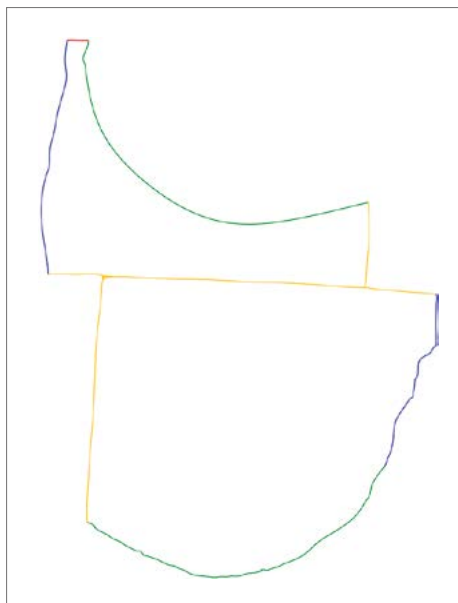


Fig. 5. Schematic drawing of the different edges of W1376: red – original top surface of the block; blue – natural surface damage; green – filed down to a smooth surface; yellow – modern saw marks (Drawing F. Weber)

right side and bottom edge of the fragment was filed down to produce a fairly smooth surface (green). This was obviously with the intention of adding the new face, although there are no traces of glue or mortar at this point to fix the fragments together. The left side of the lower fragment and right side of the upper fragment display the same modern saw marks present along the separation of the two pieces (yellow). Finally, the curvature of the upper fragment seems to have been created by a series of vertical cuts, indicated by at least eleven grooves spaced every few centimetres. The rounded end was then filed to give it a nice smooth edge (green), in a similar manner to the bottom of the lower fragment. Traces of a white powder, which was used as mortar, are present on both the original and broken surfaces (red and blue).

ACQUISITION HISTORY

As previously noted, W351b and W1376 both arrived in Swansea as part of the dispersal of the Wellcome collection in 1971. Records show that W351b was originally part of the Robert de Rustafjaell (Bierbrier 2012: 479–480) collection, before being sold at auction in 1906 in a lot of six items (Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge 1906: 6). Lot 58 was purchased on behalf of Sir Henry Wellcome by “Llewellyn” for 52 shillings, with the catalogue entry reading as: “other fragments in sand- and limestone. Kneeling figure of woman, etc., men with offerings, etc.; Thebes and Deir-el-Bahari”. Despite the somewhat random dispersal

of the objects in the Wellcome collection, the Egypt Centre acquired at least two further objects from this lot: EC304 and W1371.

EC304 is a limestone fragment in raised relief containing the left wing of a bird extending downwards. Directly behind, and with no dividing line in between, is a large *hnt* (𓏏) sign. This limestone differs from the type found in the memorial temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari, suggesting that this is not the provenance, although it is possible that it originates from the neighbouring temple of Nebhepetre Montuhotep II (PM II²: 381–400).

W1371 is a painted fragment of sandstone, roughly square, which was evidently a patch stone. The fragment contains the remains of a large striding figure on the right, with a small kneeling figure of a female offering bearer carrying bread directly in front, with an *ꜥnh*-sign hanging from her arm. Above her head is a rectangle containing the writing *Mn-ḥpr-Rꜥ ḥnkt-ꜥnh*, the name of the memorial temple of Tuthmosis III that is located slightly north of the Ramesseum (PM II²: 426–429; Ricke 1939). It is thus possible that this fragment originates from the named temple, currently being

excavated and restored by the Ministry of Antiquities and the Academy of Fine Arts Santa Isabel of Hungary of Seville, directed by Myriam Seco Álvarez.

Although W1376 has no acquisition details, it is possible that it also comes from the 1906 de Rustafjaell sale. While the remaining three items belonging to lot 58 remain an option, lots 53–54 also seem to have been purchased on behalf of Henry Wellcome. Both lots consist of a total of 10 items and are described as fragments of limestone from Deir el-Bahari. Further research in the archives of the Wellcome collection may reveal more details.³

CONCLUSION

The two fragments presented in this paper are believed to have originated from the memorial temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari, based on a number of factors, including the iconography and carving. Additionally, the limestone used by Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari, which appears to match the two Swansea fragments, is of a particular quality that is quite different from other limestone in Western Thebes.⁴ While their exact placement within the temple is currently unknown, it seems likely that they come from the Upper Courtyard. W351b is certainly from the 1906 de Rustafjaell sale and it is proposed here that W1376 was likewise, particularly as it is well known that the collector sold many fragments from the site of Deir el-Bahari during this auction (PM II²: 365).

The life-cycle of W1376 is particularly interesting, as it seems the fragment originally depicted the God's Wife of Amun Neferure, who Hatshepsut may have been grooming to be her successor. This scene was later transformed with the erasure of the modius. It is also worth noting that two scratches on the diadem, directly behind the tail of the *uraeus*, point to an additional modification. Although it is difficult to know exactly what was originally present, it perhaps represents traces of an erased sidelock, a feature that would confirm the fragment as representing Neferure. The erasures suggest that Neferure was replaced by either Iahmes or Tuthmosis I, Hatshepsut's mother and father, as is the case elsewhere in the temple. The

3 Attempts to locate details of W1376 in the Wellcome archives have been unsuccessful thus far. I am grateful to Trudy Zimmermann, an archivist of the Wellcome collection, and her colleagues for their cooperation.

4 This limestone is referred to by the Polish mission as the "Hatshepsut limestone" (Z.E. Szafráński, personal communication).

fact that the *ibs*-wig was not changed to the vulture cap may indicate that the reworked figure represented Tuthmosis I. If so, those responsible for recarving the scene overlooked the feminine pronoun above. At some point, most likely in the late 19th century, W1376 was removed from a loose block or wall. The fragment was further transformed when it was cut into two pieces, with the reverse of the top fragment carved to form the missing face of the lower fragment. Regrettably, this act resulted in substantial loss to the

original decoration. Eventually the two fragments were glued together in their original layout, although when this occurred is unknown. W1376 arrived in Swansea in 1971 and after several decades in storage is now on display in the House of Life of the Egypt Centre.

It is hoped that it may be possible to determine the original placement of both W351b and W1376 at Deir el-Bahari, with casts of the fragments being produced in order to be inserted into the walls of the temple.

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