

## **4. Central Sector Area 248**

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## Introduction to Area 248 – The Amun Temple of Heliopolis

Aiman Ashmawy and Dietrich Raue

The second major temple unit, located east of the temple of Area 200–203 was dedicated to Amun and Mut (Fig. 1). Rescue excavations were carried out during the spring and autumn of 2016 in preparation for modern municipal construction projects.

The sanctuary was thoroughly destroyed by quarrying and reuse of its limestone blocks in more recent periods and no original context features were observed. The debris covered an area of about 90 × 40 metres, containing a small number of brown quartzite and granite chips, and almost no other materials such as basalt or granodiorite.

Nevertheless, the northern sondages yielded at least two fragments of quartzite colossal statuary and another fragment from a smaller representation of a divinity made of the same material (see below). Therefore, it may be reasoned that this temple faced the main processional axis of the precinct with a façade that was embellished with Ramesside colossi, followed by an open space holding statuary representations of deities.

Four well preserved limestone reliefs were discovered in the southern sondages. At least one block undoubtedly belongs to the room with the statue of the goddess Mut, as indicated by the daily ritual that is preserved with a scene of Ramesses II anointing the goddess. It is only in this sanctuary that Ramesses II's birth name is

substituted with Paramessu (ASHMAWY/RAUE 2017a, 18–19). This substitution might be a reminder of the king's grandfather Paramessu and might point to additional aspects of the Ramesside ancestor cults. The divinisation of prominent members of the Ramesside dynasties (ASHMAWY/RAUE 2017 b, 37–38 with note 20; RAUE 2016–2017, 103) requires further study because this temple currently holds the only known occurrence of this name.

Sufficient epigraphic evidence has survived in the limestone debris layers to ascertain the dedication to the goddess Mut with the epithet: *hnt.yt 'b.wj ntr.w* “president of the horns of the gods”, a well-attested name for Mut in Lower Egyptian contexts of the New Kingdom (LUISELLI 2015). This rare birthname of Ramesses II along with the reference Amun-of-Ramesses was also observed on a block that had been part of the Fatimid/Ayyubid fortification of Cairo,<sup>1</sup> which most likely originated from our Heliopolitan temple. Whether a third identity, for example the divine Ramesses II, received a cult in a separate room unit, remains an open question.

Evidence for a small sun-sanctuary of Ramesses VI was found in the southern-most sondages. This unit was probably added directly to the southern rear wall of the temple. A small quartzite obelisk and a seated depiction of the king, dedicated to

<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to Khaled Mohammed Abu al-Ela and Mahmud Tharwat Abu el-Fadl for this information. This and other blocks from consolidation work at the northern section of the fortification of Cairo were transported to the Obelisk Museum at Matariya in 2018.

Osiris were also found (ASHMAWY/RAUE 2017a, 18–20). This structure was probably of limited size since no evidence for stone architecture was found further south.<sup>2</sup>

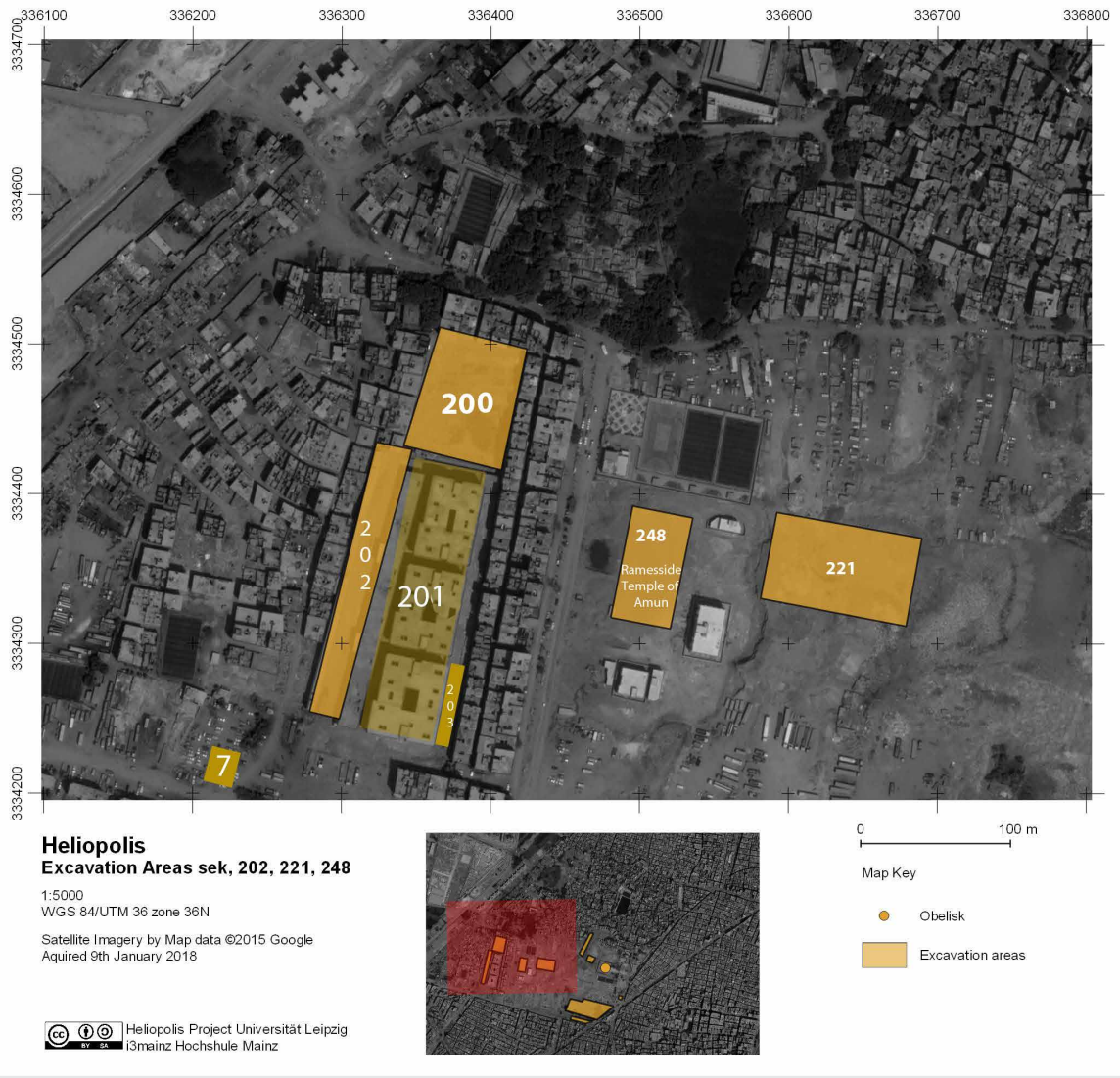
There is no evidence for later alterations to inscriptions or additions to the main temple building in the Third Intermediate Period or during the Late Period. Likewise, no evidence for earlier buildings or reuse of building materials from the Amarna Period was found.

The temple belonged to the sector of the temple-complex that was annually inundated after the late Roman/early Islamic Periods, and final quarrying activity took place during the

11th/12th centuries. It does not appear in any descriptions by the travellers during the 18th / 19th centuries (e.g. GABOLDE/LAISNEY 2017, 110, fig. 5), or the archaeological maps of the 20th century (PETRIE 1915, 2–3, pl. I; ABD EL-GELIL/SHAKER/RAUE 1996, 136–137). While the Heliopolitan cult of Amun, and even of Khonsu, is well attested in the New Kingdom (RAUE 1999, 113, 293, 312),<sup>3</sup> the presence of Mut can be traced back to the Middle Kingdom (POSTEL/RÉGEN 2005, 248; LUISELLI 2015, 115).

<sup>2</sup> Area 251 follows about 50 m further south, without any indications for stone-built architecture, see ASHMAWY/CONNOR/RAUE 2021, 12–17.

<sup>3</sup> See also the contribution of Klara Dietze in this volume, p. 418–419.



**Fig. 1:**  
 Location of Area 248:  
 Temple for Amun  
 and Mut.

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## Area 248: Sculpture

### 4.2.1 Fragments of a Colossal Statue (Inv. No. U4313-1 and U4313-2) Simon Connor

Material:	Quartzite
Find spot:	Area 248, section 3

This fragment of a colossal statue was found in 2016 in the area of the Paramessu temple (Area 248: “Youth Club”), together with the torso of a male deity (Inv. No. U4317-5 and several other fragments of statues and reliefs of the Ramesside Period (ASHMAWY/RAUE 2017a and 2017b).

Sculpted in a whitish variety of quartzite, the piece belongs to the upper part of a white crown (Fig. 1–5). Its dimensions (H. 67; W. 45; D. 41 cm) allow us to estimate the total height of the crown of this statue at 150 cm; if standing, the statue may therefore have reached 8 meters high.

A fragment of back pillar (?) in the same stone, showing the leg of a falcon hieroglyph, was found in the same context and might belong to the same statue (Inv. No. U4313-2, Fig. 7).

The bulb of the white crown was once topped by a protruding element carved from the same block of stone. Of this element remain only some traces, too little, however, properly to identify its original shape. The presence of an element surmounting a crown excludes a pre-New King-

dom date. The *nemes* and different wigs are frequently topped by the double crown or the *atef*-crown, from the mid-18th Dynasty until the Greco-Roman Period, but such a feature on the top of the white crown remains exceptional, and renders a reconstruction of the original form difficult. Comparisons with other statues may suggest a disk or a scarab, although the latter would have been barely visible from the ground.

Scarabs indeed cover the top of the *nemes* on a series of Ramesside statues: Ramesses II (Cairo JE 41750 / CG 42145, found in the Cachette of Karnak temple), Ramesses III (Cairo JE 69771, found in Heliopolis), Ramesses VI (Cairo JE 27535, from Coptos; on this piece, the scarab is itself topped by a disk), and a Ramesside unfinished bust (Cairo JE 27856 / CG 38104, from Memphis; see Minas 2002, 811–813, pl. 1–2, with complete bibliography for each piece), as well as a kneeling statue of Sety II now in the Matariya Open-Air Museum (EL-SAWI 1990, 337–340, pl. 55–56; RAUE 1999, 374, no. XIX.6-5.2). On the granodiorite head of a standard-bearing royal statue, perhaps another representation of Sety II, found in Matariya

## 4.2.1

in 2008, a scarab is sculpted on the top of the long wig.<sup>1</sup>

A solar disk is another possibility, perhaps more likely (Fig. 6). It is attested on a large number of examples on the top of the white crown in its *atef*-shape, although the top of the white crown has in these cases the shape of an open flower instead of a bulb as here. A disk is also attested above the nemes on several New Kingdom and Late Period statues, notably on a large number of Ramesside statues (among many examples are the colossal statues of Sety II from Karnak, Turin Cat. 1383 and Paris A 24 + Cairo TR 16.2.21.7).<sup>2</sup> The archaeological context in which this fragment was found makes it likely to belong to that period in particular.

At the moment of its discovery, the surface of the fragment was black in several areas, maybe due to burning. One should be careful before attributing too quickly these traces to a breaking

of the statue or destruction of the temple by fire, but it remains a seductive hypothesis. The rest of the statue, which must have been monumental, has not been found and may therefore have been reused as masonry blocks in a Late Antique or Medieval construction.



Fig. 1:  
Upper part of a  
quartzite white crown  
[Inv. No. U4313-1]  
(Front view; photo:  
S. Connor).



Fig. 2:  
Upper part of a  
quartzite white crown  
[Inv. No. U4313-1]  
(Left side view;  
photo: S. Connor).



Fig. 3:  
Upper part of a  
quartzite white crown  
[Inv. No. U4313-1]  
(From below; photo:  
S. Connor).

<sup>1</sup> The fragment was found in Area 200, square K24; publication in preparation.

<sup>2</sup> SOUROUZIAN 2003, 411; BARBOTIN 2007, 100–102; SOUROUZIAN 2019, 606–607, no. 386.

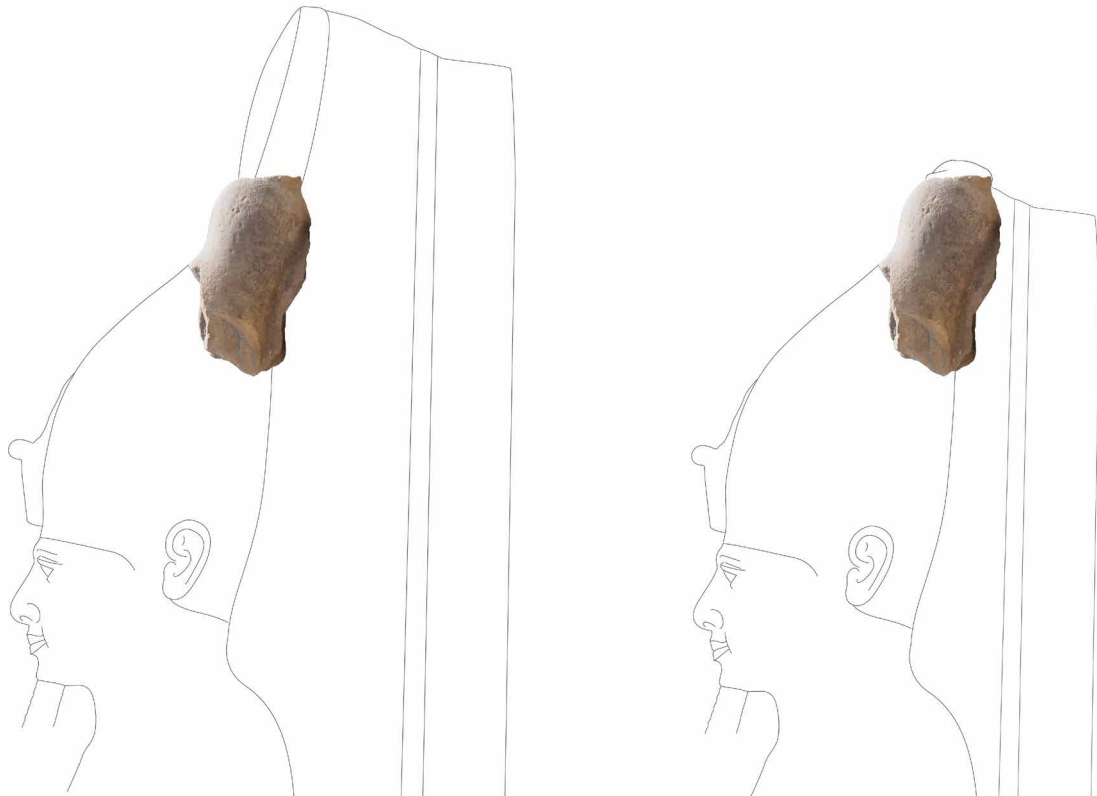
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**Fig. 4:**  
Upper part of a  
quartzite white crown  
[Inv. No. U4313-1]  
(Top view; photo:  
S. Connor).



**Fig. 5:**  
Detail of the protruding  
element on top of  
the white crown  
[Inv. No. U4313-1]  
(Photo: S. Connor).



**Fig. 6:**  
Possible original  
appearance of the  
statue, either with  
a sun disc or with a  
scarab on top of the  
white crown  
(Reconstructions:  
S. Connor).



**Fig. 7:**  
Fragment of a  
quartzite relief  
[Inv. No. U4313-2],  
perhaps from the  
same statue as the  
white crown.  
(Photo: S. Connor).



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## Torso of a Male Deity

(Inv. No. U4317-5)

Simon Connor

Dating:	19th Dynasty
Material:	Quartzite
Dimensions:	H. 24.5 W. 24.3; D. 13.5 cm
Find spot:	Area 248, section 4

This fragment consists of the upper part of a small statue of very high quality, representing a deity, in a yellowish vein of quartzite. The slight inclination of the upper arms suggests that it was originally seated, and the preserved part of a back pillar rises up to the shoulder blades. The figure wears a tripartite wig (which is attested for male and female deities) and a broad collar composed of six rows; the chin was adorned with a false beard, which has been carefully erased.<sup>1</sup> Despite the apparent prominence of the breast, typical of the style of the Ramesside Period, the represented entity is a male.

The dimensions allow us to estimate the total original measurements of the statue as follows: 65–70 cm (without the crown that may have topped the wig).

The elongated torso, smooth treatment of the body and prominent pectoral muscles, with clear indication of the nipples, as well as the presence

of a broad collar ending in a row of pendants are characteristic features of the style of the early Ramesside Period. Close parallels are the statues of the gods Imy-khent-wer (Vienna ÄS 5770; ROGGE 1990, 76–83), Nehebkau (Matariya Museum),<sup>2</sup> Horus of Hebenu (Cairo JE 89623)<sup>3</sup> and Thoth (Cairo TR 7.3.45.1, now in the garden of the Cairo Museum), which can all be dated to the reign of Ramesses II thanks to their inscriptions.

The remaining part of the neck and the traces of the curved beard allow us to assume that the god was human-headed, while the naked torso suggests that he was probably represented wearing a short kilt. Such iconography is attested for representations of several different deities in the New Kingdom. We may be dealing with a representation of the sun god Atum (in which case the tripartite wig may have been covered with a double crown, similar to the slightly older statue found in the Cachette of the Luxor

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the removal of the beard, clearly intentional, see, in this volume, comments regarding the quartzite royal head of the Late Old Kingdom or Early Middle Kingdom (p. 558–563), the two Ramesside granite heads (U4936-1 and 5070-6, p. 220–227), and the limestone bust of Sety II (p. 132–142).

<sup>2</sup> RAMADAN 1989, 51–61, pl. 1–2; MOUSSA 1994, 479–483; ABD EL-GELIL/SHAKER/RAUE 1996, 138, cat. 17; RAUE 1999, 357; MASSIERA 2015, 25–33.

<sup>3</sup> PM VIII, no. 802-106-060; RADWAN 1976; CURTO/ROCCATI 1984, cat. 36.

temple that represents Horemhab offering the *nw*-vases to this deity [EL-SAGHIR 1991, 35–40, figs. 75–89])<sup>4</sup> or of Khepri (with a scarab covering the wig, similar to that of the Middle Kingdom statue Cairo JE 30168 / CG 38103; MINAS 2002, 812, pl. 1, cat. 1). The unfinished dyad of Ramesses II and a solar (?) deity recently found in Giza indicates that a disc could have originally covered the wig (HAWASS 2011, 124–127). We cannot exclude the possibility of a representation of Ptah-Tatenen, particularly revered in the time of Ramesses II, in which case two feathers, perhaps accompanied by horizontal ram horns and a solar disc, would have been sculpted above the tripartite wig.<sup>5</sup> Nehebkau is also a candidate for the identification of this statue; although mostly attested as a snake-headed deity, a statue of the god found in Matariya thirty years ago, now on display in the Open-Air Museum, represents him with a human face.<sup>6</sup> Another parallel from the same period is the statue of the little known god Imy-khent-wer (VIENNA ÄS 5770, see above). The sculptural repertoire produced during the reign of Ramesses II does not lack human-headed male deities represented with a tripartite wig and a beard, and it would be difficult to enlarge on the identification of this statue. The find spot in Heliopolis and the stone chosen for this delicate statuette, quartzite, suggest that it represented a deity linked to the solar cult.

Its mutilation – perhaps committed on two different occasions, first the careful removal of the beard, and later a more brutal destruction of the piece – could have occurred at various moments in Egyptian history, which the archaeological context cannot help to date yet. Seeing the small dimensions of the piece, it is unlikely that it was broken in order to reuse the stone as construction material. Perhaps some act of anti-pagan iconoclasm during the 4th–5th centuries AD is to blame? Unless the removal of the beard, a still unexplained but largely attested practice, corresponds to some ritual performed before burying or destroying the piece in the Pharaonic Period.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Other Ramesside statues show the god Atum without a crown above the wig, see, e.g., the dyad representing Ramesses II and Atum, found at Tell el-Rataba (PETRIE 1906, pl. 32; SOUROUZIAN 1989, 76).

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., the seated dyad of Amenhotep III (reused by Ramesses III) found in Memphis, Cairo JE 30167 / CG 554, BORCHARDT 1925, 101–102; standing statue of Tatenen found in Karnak (Cairo CG 38068, DARESSY 1905–1906, 25, pl. 6).

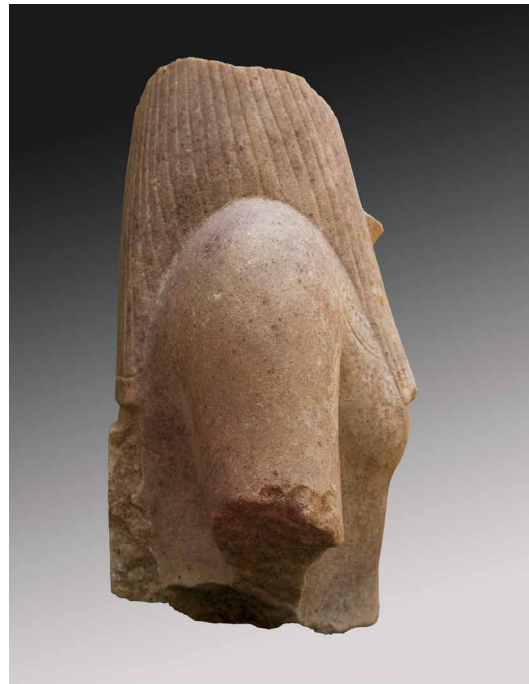
<sup>6</sup> Despite the discussions concerning the identification of the individual, either Ramesses II or Nehebkau (see bibl. above), there is very little doubt that the statue might have represented the king. The tripartite wig is not attested for statues of the living pharaoh in the Ramesside Period, while several male deities are represented with such a headdress.

<sup>7</sup> There are many examples among the statues buried in the Karnak Cachette. Concerning traces of mutilations in the sculptural material found in the Cachette, see JAMBON 2016.

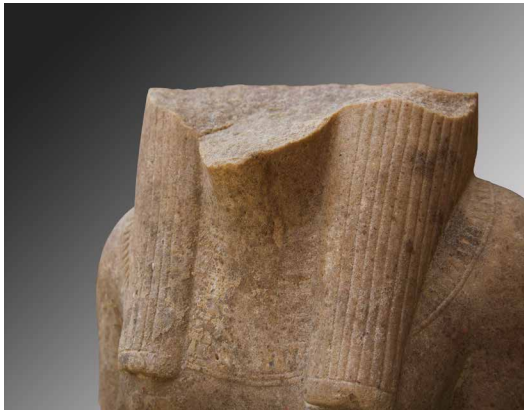
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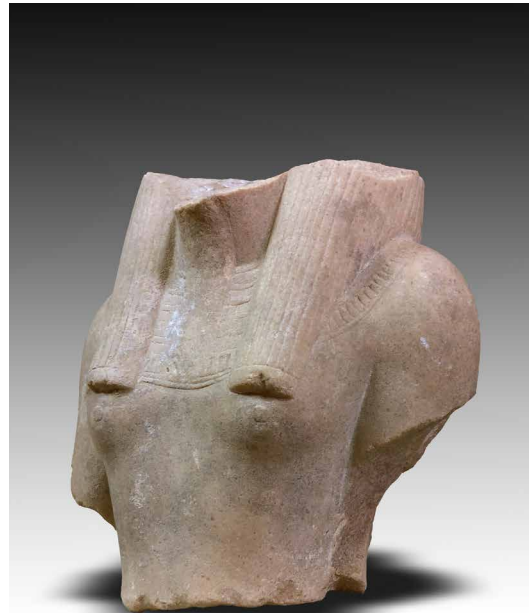
**Fig. 1:**  
Upper part of a  
quartzite statue  
showing a male deity  
[Inv. No. U4317-5]  
(Front view, photo:  
S. Connor).



**Fig. 2:**  
Inv. No. U4317-5  
(Right side view,  
photo: S. Connor).



**Fig. 3:**  
Detail of erased beard  
[Inv. No. U4317-5]  
(Photo: S. Connor).



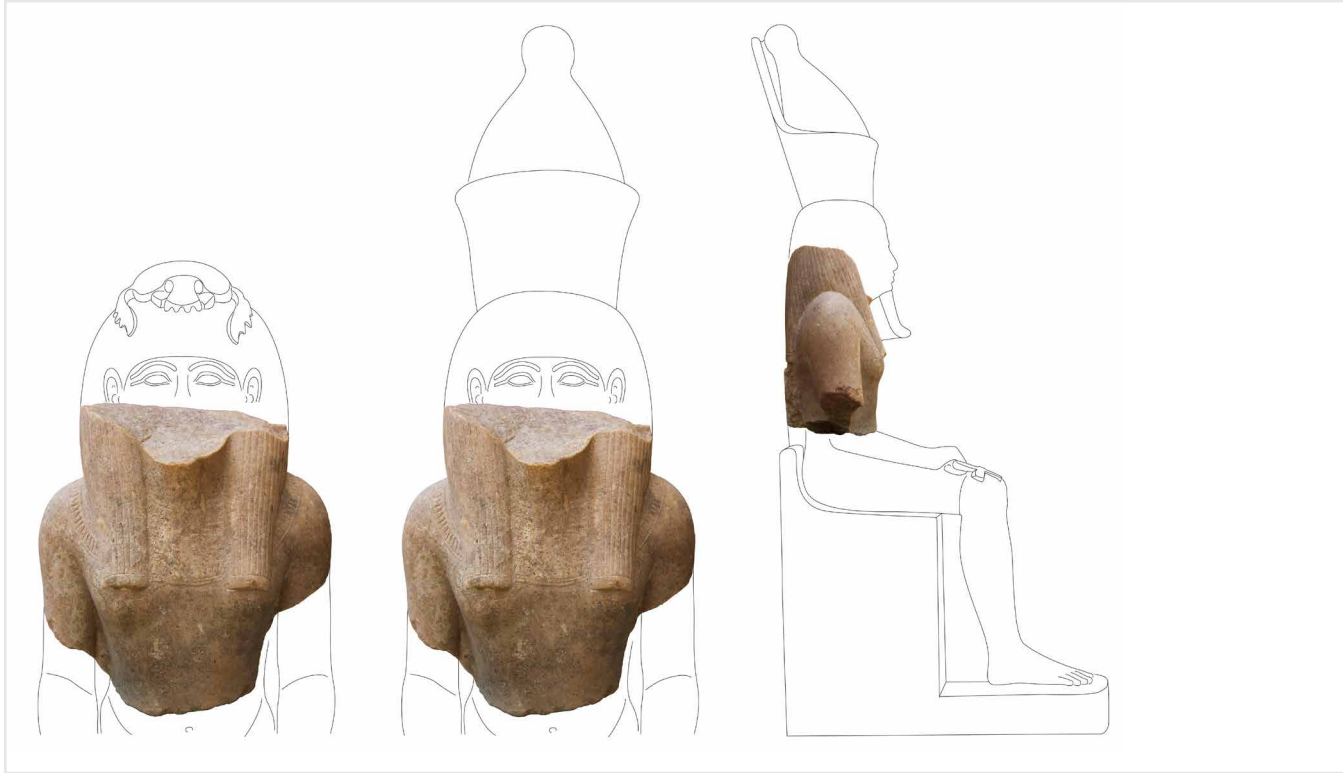
**Fig. 4:**  
Inv. No. U4317-5  
(3/4 view, photo:  
S. Connor).



**Fig. 5:**  
Inv. No. U4317-5  
(Rear view, photo:  
S. Connor).



**Fig. 6:**  
Inv. No. U4317-5  
(Top view, photo:  
S. Connor).



**Fig. 7:**  
Possible original appearance of the  
statue, maybe as Atum or Khepri  
(Reconstructions: S. Connor).

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