Quarrying for Claudius, protected by Min:
A small quarry at Gebel el-Silsila East

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Gebel el-Silsila was ancient Egypt’s greatest source of sandstone, a fine to medium-grained beige-grey stone in high demand at all periods from Dynasty 18 on, when the site was first exploited on a massive scale. Stone extracted from the quarries was conveyed to locations throughout Upper Egypt and employed for building blocks in most of the major temples between Aswan and Abydos. The quarries lie in the massif of Gebel el-Silsila or ‘mountain of the chain’, between Edfu and Kom Ombo. Today the nearest larger cities are Luxor, 130 km to the north, and Aswan, 65 km to the south. Located on either side of the Nile where the valley reaches its narrowest point, possibly once a cataract, the quarries stretch along the river for approximately 2.5 km.

Known as Khenu or Kheny as early as the Old Kingdom, the site acquired its true importance during Dynasties 18–20, when extraction work was carried out for such famous New Kingdom rulers as Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten, Sety I, Ramesses II and III. In addition to the physical stone extraction, the pharaonic presence at Silsila is attested by the remains of monumental architecture: cenotaphs, stelae and a rock-cut temple dedicated by King Horemheb to the Nile gods (Caminos 1955, 51–55; Caminos and James 1963; Bommas 2003; Thiem 2000). Local religious festivals were celebrated biannually, the high priest of Memphis performed rituals here and high officials wished for their souls to return to the site in the afterlife (Gomaà 1973; Habachi 1971). Even after the end of the New Kingdom, Gebel el-Silsila retained its religious profile and continued to see quarrying activity. There is, however, a distinct difference between the two banks of Silsila: archaeological records attest continued activity on the west bank as late as Emperor Domitian (Sayce 1907, 102 with fig. 2), while the east bank quarries were abandoned in the early Roman period. Thus far textual graffiti attested the exploitation of the east bank until the reign of Tiberius (Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915), but in 2012 the Gebel el Silisila Survey Project revealed a series of demotic and Greek inscriptions in one of the smaller quarries that push the final quarrying activity two generations later, in the four-year period between the sixth and tenth imperial years of Claudius (AD 45/46–49/50). The small quarry of Claudius has now been labeled Q35 (Quarry 35).

Q35 is located in the central part of Gebel el-Silsila East, directly south of the largest and best-known quarry (Q34). It can be reached either via the plateau past a series of workmen’s huts, or through a small wadi that shoots off from the main pathway along the Nile. Oriented east–west, this wadi provides a natural road for transporting blocks out of Q35 to a Nile quay located some 225m to the west. The quarry consists of eight quarry faces (A–H), including a short corridor-like entry, and its maximum length and width measure 35 x 25m. The tool marks on the quarry faces follow a diagonal, parallel pattern generally recognised as representing the Ptolemaic and Roman extraction technique (Klemm and Klemm 2008, 194–201, esp. figs 305–306). Archaeologically the quarry is more or less empty with the exception of some pottery.

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/online_journals/bmsaes/issue_22/nilsson_almasy.aspx
sherds and an inscribed stone fragment (Figs 10a–b) that was displaced from its original position on the eastern quarry face. All eight quarry faces bear ancient graffiti, predominately quarry marks.

In addition to 133 pictographic quarry marks, the quarry contains eight demotic and ten Greek inscriptions. They are concentrated on face C (west; Fig. 1) and face E (east; Fig. 2). Many of these have been marked or even retraced with chalk, probably by G. Legrain during the series of visits he made in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries; only a few were published years later by W. Spiegelberg and F. Preisigke (Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915). The seven texts (two demotic, five Greek) discussed below all date from the reign of Emperor Claudius. They were written by three men who visited the quarry on four occasions between AD 45/46 and AD 49/50. None of them refer to any actual stone extraction.

Demotic inscriptions

The demotic inscriptions are located on the western quarry face (Q35.C; Fig. 1) and the eastern face (Q35.E; see Fig. 2). They were written by the same hand and probably both date to the same occasion, Claudius’ tenth regnal year.

**No. 1: \textit{di ³nh} dedication to Min (Figs 3a–b)**

\textit{Inv. no.:} Q35.C.In.2  
\textit{Date:} AD 49, 27 August (year 10 of Claudius)  
\textit{Measurements:} total h. 130cm, w. 207cm; text h. 41cm, w. 125cm; scene h. 130cm, w. 94cm  
\textit{Condition:} marked during previous documentation as no. 301 and traced with chalk  
\textit{Bibliography:} unpublished

The inscription is located in the southern corner of the western quarry face, 1.5m above the ground (Fig. 1). It is elaborate and carefully carved in direct connection with a pictorial scene that depicts the Egyptian god Min. The style, technique, depth and width of the engravings indicate that the text and pictorial scene were both made by the same hand.

\textit{Text in transliteration:}

1. \textit{Mnw p³ nTr s³ Š prosperity n P³ tw}  
2. \textit{Df ³NH n P³-šr-³-pht s³ P³-šr-Hnm ³ d.t}  
3. \textit{sh (n) ḫsb.t 10.t n Glwtyḥys ibd 1 ḫ.t sw 1 ḫ.t n rnp.t}

\textit{Translation}

1. Min, the great god, the Shay of the Mountain  
2. gives life to Psenapathes, son of Psenchnumis forever.  
3. Written in year 10 of Claudius, Thoth 1, beginning of the year.

\textit{Comments}

Line 1: The \textit{di ³nh} formula is written in hieroglyphs.
Line 3: The expression $h.t \ n rnp.t$ is unusual in graffiti (cf. Johnson (ed.) 2001, H2, 9; Erichsen 1954, 250).

The style of writing and the proper names recur in inscription no. 2, located on the opposite quarry face. For $Pr-\sr-\sph$, see Lüddeckens 1984, fasc. 4, 230. The name $Pr-\sr-\Hnn$ (Lüddeckens 1984, fasc. 4, 257) appears moreover, without affiliation, in a text elsewhere in Gebel el-Silsila East (Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915, no. 143).

The God Min, described with the epithet Shay (‘Fate’) (cf. Quaegebeur 1975, 94), was considered the protector of the quarry; see the discussion further below.

Three inscriptions in Q35 refer to the month of Thoth. Further study of texts and archaeological material in situ is required before theorising about a possible connection with the New Year’s festival or a culmination of transportation work and loading during this season of high flood.

The quarry mark depicted below the inscription is found again next to inscription no. 2

**Pictorial scene**

Integral with inscription no. 1 is a carved pictorial scene that depicts the Egyptian god Min (cf. Klemm and Klemm 2008, 190, fig 287). He is conventionally depicted ithyphallic and cloaked, with one arm raised sideways behind the body, holding up a flagellum. He wears a beard and his double-plumed crown with a solar disk. The characteristic ribbon falls down behind the head in a straight vertical line to the figure’s heel. His chest is adorned with a collar and pectoral. The god faces right (north), towards the centre of the quarry (e.g. Winckler 1939, pl. 12). Behind Min stands the $\shn$-shrine with, tied to its doorway, a column surrounded by bull’s horns: the $\shnt$-pole. This emblem associates the graffito with Min’s role as Amun-Min-Kamutef (the bull aspect of Min), his union with Wadjet, and the ceremony of raising and climbing the Min-pole (Wainwright 1935).

Four clover-like motifs surround the figure of Min and possibly symbolise lotuses, but it is more likely that they represent lettuces. This plant was sacred to Min and is often present in depictions of the deity. As a last element, a carved quarry mark appears just below the demotic inscription. The same mark appears to the left of inscription no. 2. It consists of a semi-circle with a horizontal line piercing the centre. The mark resembles a bow and arrow but could also have phallic significance (Wainwright 1934).

**No. 2: signature (Figs 4a–b)**

*Inv. no.:* Q35.E.In.3

*Date:* plausibly AD 49 (year 10 of Claudius)

*Measurements (excl. quarry marks):* h. 17cm, w. 100cm

*Condition:* traced with chalk

*Bibliography:* unpublished

The inscription is located c. 6m above the ground, towards the southern corner of the eastern quarry face (Fig. 2). A quarry mark appears to the immediate left, and a series of further
quarry marks appear further down.¹

_Text in transliteration_
_P3-šr-£-ḥ ṭ sī P3-šr-Ḥnum_

_Translation_
Psenapathes son of Psenchnumis

_Comments_
The ductus and general form of writing match those of inscription no. 1, and it mentions the same men (but there the noun šr in the father’s name is written differently). The inscription has been inserted between two quarry marks; that on the left recurs below inscription no. 1, while the other depicts a tree.

_Greek inscriptions_
The Greek inscriptions are located on the western (Q35.C; Fig. 1) and eastern (Q35.E; Fig. 2) quarry faces. Three of them (nos 3, 6–7) are adorations; one can be dated to the eighth year of Claudius (no. 3); two (nos 4–5) are abbreviated name formulas including the patronym (with one exception), written by the same person (Harbeschinis) in the sixth year of the same ruler. The name of Claudius is consistently written with a tau instead of a delta, and without any further imperial titles. The lunar sigma is used in all Greek inscriptions.

_No. 3: adoration (Figs 5a–b)_

_Inv. no.:_ Q35.E.In.10
_Date:_ AD 47, 28 August – AD 48, 26 August (year 8 of Claudius)
_Measurements:_ h. 36cm, w. 100cm
_Condition:_ traced with chalk, now all but lost
_Bibliography:_ Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915, no. 304; Bernand 1989, no. 162; Bilabel 1926, no. 6918; www.trismegistos.org/text/54378 [April 2015]

This inscription is located c. 2m above the ground towards the southern corner of the eastern quarry face (Fig. 2).

_Text_
1. ΤΟΠΡΟΣΚΥΝΜΑ
2. ΑΡΒΕΣΧΙΝΙ
3. ΠΕΤΕΦΙΒΙ
4. |H

¹ These quarry marks will be discussed in more detail in a forthcoming comprehensive report on Q35.
Normalised transliteration
1. то προσκύνημα
2. Ἀρβεσχαϊβν(ος)
3. Πετεφίβι(ος)
4. (€τους) η

Translation
1. adoration of
2. Harbeschinis
3. son of Petephibis
4. year 8

Comments
Line 1: The earlier publications erroneously added an epsilon.
Line 2: Preisigke’s transliteration of the name misreads a kappa instead of a chi. The chi and preceding sigma are linked together.
Line 3: Preisigke read an alpha where, on closer inspection, it is a clumsily written beta. For the nominative form, see Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915, no. 304; Bernand 1989, nos 158, 161.
Line 4: Preisigke overlooked the date in the last line.

Preisigke’s transliteration of the name as Πετεφίβις creates a unique name without a demotic equivalent (Preisigke 1922, 317), while our reading Πετεφίβις is well documented as a Greek form of the Egyptian name Pi-ti-pi-hb (Lüddeckens 1985, fasc. 5, 306: ‘Der, den der Ibis gegeben hat’; www.trismegistos.org/name/7927 [April 2015]).

The Greek name Harbeschinis appears repeatedly in Q35: there are three examples on the western quarry face (one with the same affiliation), and three on the eastern quarry face (two with the same affiliation). However, the name is attested by just a few other sources (Preisigke 1922, 46; www.trismegistos.org/name/8273 [April 2015]). It is most likely a Greek form of the Egyptian name Ἡρ-νb-ςhm (Lüddeckens 1992, fasc. 11, 823: ‘Horus, Herr von Letopolis’). This demotic form occurs in another quarry at Gebel el-Silsila (Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915, no. 289). Another plausibly associated Greek form, Ἐρβεσχαϊβνις, is attested in yet another quarry on the east bank (Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915, no. 28). Inscriptions nos 4–5, in the same quarry and written by the same hand, contain the name of Claudius, and thus confirm the proposed date.

No. 4: signature (Figs 6a–b)

Inv. no.: Q35.C.In.1
Date: AD 45, 27 August – AD 46, 26 August (year 6 of Claudius)
Measurements: w. 105cm
Condition: traced with chalk, now all but lost
Bibliography: unpublished

The inscription is located c. 7.5m above the ground, towards the southern corner of the western quarry face (Fig. 1).
Text

XI ΦΙ
1. ARBE ΠΕΤΕ
2. [ς ΚΛΑΟΥΤΙΟΥ

Normalised transliteration
1. Ἀρβε(σ)χ(νις) Πετεφί(βιος)
2. (ἐτους) Σ Κλαουτίου

Translation
1. Harbeschinis son of Petephibis
2. year 6 of Claudius

Comments
Line 1: One or two vertical strokes in the first name and maybe also the second, indicate the abbreviation (cf. Avi-Yonah 1940, 36).

The handwriting is identical with that of no. 5. The second line is written in smaller letters. The horizontal stroke in the large alpha consists of two strokes. The Greek name Harbeschinis appears in two other inscriptions on this quarry face (E; once with the same affiliation) and three times on the opposite quarry face (C; twice with the same affiliation).

No. 5: signature (Figs 7a–b)
Inv. no.: Q35.E.In.5
Date: AD 45, 27 August – AD 46, 26 August (year 6 of Claudius)
Measurements (excl. quarry marks): w. 105cm
Condition: traced with chalk, now all but lost

The inscription is located c. 7m above the ground towards the southern corner of the eastern quarry face (Fig. 2).

Two quarry marks, depicting a tree and a lotus-crowned uraeus, are situated immediately to the right of the inscription.

Text

XI ΦΙ
1. ARBE ΠΕΤΕ
2. [ς ΚΛΑΟΥΤΙΟΥ

Normalised transliteration
1. Ἀρβε(σ)χ(νις) Πετεφί(βιος)
2. (ἐτους) Σ Κλαουτίου

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/online_journals/bmsaes/issue_22/nilsson_almasy.aspx
Translation
1. Harbeschinis son of Petephis
2. year 6 of Claudius

Comments
Line 1: As in no. 4, the names are written in abbreviated form. For an alternative reading of the first name in its nominative form (Harbeschinos), see Bernand 1989, nos 158, 161. The alpha has a cross bar that rises towards to the left; in line 2, the alpha in ‘Claudius’ is horizontal.
Line 2: The digamma indicating the date of the inscription is crudely carved, but the parallel in inscription no. 4 confirms the reading of the sign.
   Although Preisigke divided this inscription into two texts (Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915, nos 299 and 302), but inscription no. 4 confirms that it should be read as one and that his transliteration of the second line is incorrect.

No. 6: adoration (Figs 8a–b)

Inv. no.: Q35.E.In.12
Date: AD 47, Sept. 15 (year 8 of Claudius)
Measurements (excl. quarry mark): h. 97cm, w. 43cm
Condition: marked during previous documentation as no. 320 and traced with chalk
Bibliography: unpublished

The inscription is located in the southern corner of the eastern quarry face, within reach from the ground level (Fig. 2). A quarry mark depicting a tree appears directly to the right.

Text
1. ΤΟΠΡΟΣΚΥΝΗΜΑ
2. ΠΑΚΟΙΒΙΟΣ ΠΑΟΥΗΡΙΟΣ
3. ΠΑΡΤΥΘΕΟΥΜΕΧΙΘΟΥΕΝΤΗΣ
4. ΑΛΤΩΜΙΑΚΘΕΟΙΚΙΣΙ
5. ΗΓΛΑΥΤΙΟΣ(Ο)ΘΙΘ

Normalised transliteration
1. to proskynhmata
2. Pakoibios Pauhrios
3. Partuymexithoenths
4. Altomiactheoicis
5. Hlauytioc(ow)theta

Translation
1. adoration
2. of Pakoibis son of Paweris
3. for the greatest god among the gods of
4. the quarry, Isis(?)
5. year 8 of Claudius, Thoth 19

Comments
Line 1: The carver has used an omega instead of an omicron (cf. Gignac 1976, 277)
Line 3: The use of the genitive with the preposition παρά is uncommon (e.g. Geraci 1971, 57, 69; Bernand 1977, 18). The gamma in μεγίσθος was replaced by a chi. The aspirate consonant theta is often used as a substitute for its equivalent non-aspirate tau.
Line 4: The reversal of the vocals in the syllable λα (rendered as αλ) may be an orthographical error; for other examples where the liquid consonant and an adjacent vowel are interchanged, see Mayser 1906, 189–90, §42). In the same word, as in line 1, omega has been written instead of an omicron: one expects ΛΑΤΟΜΙΑΣ (cf. Bernand 1984, no. 115, 278–79). Although the text is written for an unnamed male deity, the last three letters of the line may refer to Isis. Was the author’s intention to address the adoration to two deities, both a male god and Isis? If so, why omit the former’s name?
Line 5: The employed variant of the name Claudius is uncommon. The use of gamma instead of kappa (Gignac 1976, 77) and of tau instead of delta (Gignac 1976, 88) corresponds to the demotic forms of the name (cf. inscription no. 1). The ruler’s name is in nominative form, as in inscription no. 7b.

The text is written by the same person as no. 7 (see below). Pakoibis was a common name during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods (Preisigke 1922, 258; Foraboschi 1971, 225–26; www.trismegistos.org/name/700 [April 2015]), particularly in Upper Egypt. The Greek form is equivalent to the Egyptian name Pa-Gh (Lüddeckens 1986, fasc. 6, 418: ‘Der zu Geb Gehörige’). The name recurs in another demotic inscription within the quarry (Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915, no. 303; www.trismegistos.org/text/54376 [April 2015]).

Other than the two examples in Q35, the Greek form Paweris is unusual (Preisigke 1922, 272; Foraboschi 1971, 233). It corresponds to the Egyptian name Pa-wr (Lüddeckens 1985, fasc. 5, 359–60: ‘Der des Großen’; www.trismegistos.org/name/740 [April 2015]), found in demotic sources within the quarry and more commonly elsewhere.

The text was written in the 19th day of the first month of the year; cf. the comments with inscription no. 1, carved in the same month of a different year.

No. 7: adoration (Figs 9–11)

Inv. nos: Q35.E.In.9 and 13
Date: AD 47, 28 August – AD 48, 26 August (year 8 of Claudius)
Measurements: part in situ (no. 7a), w. 60cm; detached fragment (no. 7b), h. 45cm, w. 90cm
Condition: traced with chalk

Bibliography: no.7a in Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915, no. 301; Bernand 1989, no. 160; Bilabel 1926, no. 6916; www.trismegistos.org/text/54374 [April 2015]; no. 7b unpublished

The inscription is today in two parts, due to breakage. The main portion (no. 7a) is in situ, c.

6m above the ground towards the southern corner of the eastern quarry face (Fig. 2). The second fragment (7b) appears on a detached fragment and preserves most of line 4.

A quarry mark representing a tree is present to the immediate right of the inscription; this, too, is mostly preserved on fragment no. 7b. Another Greek inscription, inv. no. Q35.E.In.8, and two quarry marks are located above inscription no. 7, but will be separately dealt with elsewhere.

**Text of both portions combined**

1. ΤΟΦΡΟΣΚΥΝΗΜΑ
2. ΠΑΚΟΙΒΙΟΣ
3. ΠΑΟΥΗΡΟΣ
4. [(ΗΓΑΛΑ]ΥΤΙΣΦΑΩΦΙ [...] 

**Normalised transliteration**

1. to proskûnhma
2. Pakoibios
3. Paweris
4. (êtouc) [η Γλαυτι(ο)ς φαωφι [...] 

**Translation**

1. adoration of
2. Pakoibis
3. son of Paweris
4. year [8 of Cl]audius, Phaophi [...] 

**Comments**

Line 1: Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915, no. 301, wrongly read a pi in the inscription.

Line 2: Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1915, no. 301, incorrectly read rho instead of beta. They also misinterpreted the final traces in this line as ν[εο(τζεου)]; the recovered fragment no. 7b shows that we are dealing with the top of a tree – a quarry mark.

Line 4: The first fragmentary word may be reconstructed as the name Claudius in nominative form, as in text no. 6. The far left end of the detached fragment preserves part of a vertical line; based on a comparison with inscription nos 3 and 6, this may be reasonably reconstructed as part of an eta, referring to the eighth regnal year of Claudius.

**The chronology of the inscriptions**

The eastern quarry face (Q35.E) has inscriptions dated in years 6, 8 and 10 of Claudius (AD 45/46, 47/48 and 49/50) and so represents four years of continued work. The two dates recorded on the western quarry face (Q35.C) are years 6 and 10, so we may assume that stone from both sides of the quarry was extracted simultaneously. The earliest inscriptions, two Greek signatures (nos 4 and 5), were left by the same person, Harbeschinis. They are situated

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/online_journals/bmsaes/issue_22/nilsson_almasy.aspx
higher on the quarry faces than the later inscriptions. Apparently quarrying started from the top down (Harrell 2013, 24, with examples of undercutting). The inscriptions located high were carved at a stage when the quarrymen may still have used scaffolding or when the quarry face was being worked into a terraced profile (Clarke and Engelbach 1930). The locations of the earliest inscriptions (nos 4–5) and those belonging to year 8 (nos 3, 6, 7) confirm this development. On the other hand, inscription no. 2, if contemporary with no. 1 (based on the engraver's identity), dates to year 10 (AD 49) but is situated some 2.5m above no. 6 from year 8 (AD 47). Thus, the later inscription (no. 2) was made when the extraction of this quarry face had already come to an end. Its high location – 6m above the ground – would have required a climbing aid to reach that spot. As no. 2 is located in the southern part of quarry face E, some 1.5m from the corner, it may be suggested that the owner carved it while working on the adjoining southern quarry face (F) and standing on a scaffolding that extended to the already quarried area of the east face (E). These observations provide an important insight in the chronology of stone extraction in the quarry as a whole: the western and eastern quarry faces may have been fully exploited before extraction began at the southern end of the quarry.

Egyptian quarrying under Claudius

As Claudius never visited Egypt, he is hardly detected in the country’s archaeological record, other than in some Egyptian-style reliefs, cartouches (occasionally added on earlier monuments) and some legal documents. However, his reign saw a peak in the quarrying and export of imperial porphyry, so Claudius’ name became synonymous with imperial quarrying in Egypt’s Eastern Desert (Mons Claudianus), and there was also activity in alabaster quarries (Sidebotham et al. 2001, 138–39). Claudius has never before been attested in a sandstone quarry. Five inscriptions name him in a dating formula (nos 1, 4–7), and another two have been identified as written by the same persons (nos. 2–3). Based on the size of the quarry a considerable amount of stone would have been extracted and transported to an Upper Egyptian destination. This presents us with a conundrum: no large buildings in Egypt are known to have been constructed by Claudius.

Claudius was involved with a temple for Harendotes on Philae and is usually also credited for the pronaos in the Khnum temple at Esna, but it is likely that he only decorated pre-existing buildings (Arnold 1999, 251). Claudius may have constructed gates in Medinet Habu, Fayum and in Koptos, but again it is possible that he only decorated them in his name. In a recent study D. Klotz suggests that Claudius was the builder of a small Isis temple at Deir Shalwit, based on a series of ostraca (Klotz 2009). Included among a group of Theban λογήθα receipts are five that are dated to regnal years 8, 9, 11 and 14 of Claudius. If the temple of Deir Shalwit was indeed constructed under Claudius, the ostraca would reveal a plausible destination for the sandstone extracted from Q35. However, the geological strata in the sandstone blocks at Deir Shalwit include reddish veins that are characteristic for sandstone in Gebel

3 Q35.C.In.3 is not included here because it does not contain a date.
4 This is a topic which will be explored in more detail in a forthcoming comprehensive report on Q35.
el-Silsila West and Nag el Hammam, but not compatible with the beige-grey stone extracted from Q35 (Silisila East). Furthermore, the blocks at Deir Shalwit bear tool marks that for the most part point to extraction during the New Kingdom, with only a few showing the long, diagonal marks that are typical for the Ptolemaic and Roman quarrying technique (Klemm and Klemm 2008, 194–201). This supports the general assumption that the stone blocks at Deir Shalwit were reused rather than made from newly quarried stone. In conclusion, without a sandstone temple or other structure of which the construction can be decisively dated to the reign of Claudius, the destination of the blocks that were quarried from Q35 remains obscure.

Min as a protector of quarrymen

As one of the more important deities in the Egyptian pantheon, with a cult already documented in Predynastic times, Min was worshipped as a god of fertility and procreation. He was also the patron of the Eastern Desert and protector of the caravan routes leading from Koptos and Akhmim to the Red Sea down to Greco-Roman times, when he was identified with the Greek god Pan (Wilkinson 2003, 115; Goyon 1957, pl. 51; Gundlach 1982, 137–38).

The scene in Q35 (inscription no. 1) is similar in style and iconography to contemporary representations of Min in the Eastern Desert (temp. Augustus and Tiberius), e.g. the stelae from ‘Bradford Village’ in Mons Porphyrites and in the Wadi Umm Wikala quarry (Maxfield and Peacock 2001, 60–61; Tregenza 1951, 40, 42; Sidebotham et al. 2001, 138–39). However, the figure of Min at Gebel el-Silsila does not stand on the traditional $mAa$-shaped base but directly on the ground. The depiction of the shrine and horned post behind him distinguishes our scene from parallels in the Eastern Desert, which illustrate the censer stand or nothing at all. The Gebel el-Silsila scene with its $di\ 5n\ h$ (‘gives life’) formula preserves an Egyptian style, unlike contemporaneous depictions of Min in the Eastern Desert that commemorate the establishment of a Paneion and refer to Min as the Hellenised Pan.

Conclusion

This article has presented seven rock inscriptions, one with a large depiction of Min, from Quarry 35 at Gebel el-Silsila East. Five of them are expressly dated to the reign of Claudius, between his sixth and tenth regnal years (AD 45/46–49/50). Evidently, extraction activity must have begun in, or shortly before, his year 6. Inscriptions from year 8 present a terminus ante quem for the finished exploitation of the eastern quarry face (E), and an inscription from year 10 does the same for the western face (C). A sixth and seventh inscription can be dated to the same ruler on the basis of style, content and close association with the dated inscriptions. The inscriptions extend the history of quarry work at Gebel el-Silsila East by two generations.

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1 See, e.g., Tregenza 1951, 40 with picture 1; Maxfield and Peacock 2001, 61, figs 3.5–3.6. Earlier examples in the Eastern Desert, however, do show examples of these motifs.

There is no evidence to suggest that work was ever resumed here afterwards. The image of Min beside inscription no. 1 is moreover confirms the continued worship of Min, well into Roman times, as a patron of quarrymen.

Acknowledgements

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Fig. 1: Gebel el-Silsila East, Quarry 35, face C (west), with inscription nos 1 and 4.

Fig. 2: Gebel el-Silsila East, Quarry 35, face E (east) with inscription nos 2–3, 5–7.
Figs 3a–b: Gebel el-Silsila East, Quarry 35, inscription no. 1.
Figs 4a–b: Gebel el-Silsila East, Quarry 35, inscription no. 2.
Figs 5a–b: Gebel el-Silsila East, Quarry 35, inscription no. 3.
Figs 6a–b: Gebel el-Silsila East, Quarry 35, inscription no. 4.
Figs 7a–b: Gebel el-Silsila East, Quarry 35, inscription no. 5.
Figs 8a–b: Gebel el-Silsila East, Quarry 35, inscription no. 6.
Figs 9a–b: Gebel el-Silsila East, Quarry 35, inscription no. 7a.
Figs 10a–b: Gebel el-Silsila East, Quarry 35, inscription no. 7b.
Fig. 11: Gebel el-Silsila East, Quarry 35, inscription nos. 7a and b restored together.