

**Rosemarie Klemm and Dietrich D. Klemm, *Stones & Quarries in Ancient Egypt*,
British Museum Press, London, 2008.**

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This recent study by Rosemarie Klemm and Dietrich D. Klemm was originally published in German in 1993 under the title *Steine and Steinbrüche im Alten Ägypten*. The publication of this English edition is a direct result of a donation made by the authors to the British Museum of a collection of rock samples, which consists of samples from quarry sites throughout Egypt as well as from Egyptian monuments.

The translation into English is not the only difference to be found in the new edition. The text has been updated to include new research as well as a new chapter on the building stones of the Western Oases.

This book will appeal to a range of specialists and non-specialists in the field of Egyptology. It is detailed enough to be of use to those seeking comprehensive geological descriptions, and at the same time provides clear explanations for those with limited experience in the field of geology. The general accessibility of the work is perhaps a reflection of the different academic backgrounds of the authors; Egyptologist and geologist respectively at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich.

The first two chapters act as an introduction to readers who are unfamiliar with the topic. Chapter One provides a brief introduction to the geological study of Egypt, including a history of geological expeditions, a review of past and present literature on the topic, and a general description of Egypt's geological structure. Chapter Two introduces the reader to rock classification and gives a summary of the current methods for examination and identification.

The remaining chapters provide a survey of the quarries of Ancient Egypt, and are divided according to stone type, with chapters on limestone, alabaster, sandstone,

quartzite, granite, and basalt and two additional chapters on the Eastern and Western Desert. Each chapter begins with an introduction to the identification of that particular rock type, and follows with a survey of quarry sites, presented in order from north to south. In each case, the name of the quarry is given along with the geographical position and the specific type of stone found there. This enables the reader to quickly and easily identify the most important information relating to the site. Following this more detailed information is provided. A general description of the quarry is given along with both a macro- and microscopic description of the rock found there. Where possible, there is a discussion of the date of the quarry and the monuments for which the stone appears to have been used. Additional information can be found at the end of each chapter relating to geochemical analyses of the stone types as well as further literature on the topic.

The chapters on the Eastern and Western Deserts are similarly divided according to quarry site. These have been presented as separate chapters due to the difference between the types of rock found in these regions and those found in the Nile Valley and the Delta. Finally, a short chapter relating to the weathering and conservation of Egyptian monuments is included at the end of the book. This is not extensive, but it summarises the main literature on the topic and identifies a number of key issues to be addressed in the future.

The publication is beautifully presented and incorporates over 600 illustrations, including maps and photographs of the quarry sites, microscopic images of stone types, and drawings and photographs of objects and inscriptions. In addition, a series of colour plates are included, which illustrate key rock types and provide the reader with a useful visual reference for identifying rock specimens.

This study will be useful as a reference for archaeologists and Egyptologists attempting to identify and describe monuments and objects in the field, as well as for identifying material in museum collections. The publication of this study in English means that it will reach a much wider audience and it is anticipated that it will become an important addition to the shelves of Egyptologists and non-specialists alike.