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BIFAO 86 (1987), p. 353-359

Charles Cornell Van Siclen III

Amenhotep II's Bark Chapel for Amun at North Karnak [avec 19 planches].

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AMENHOTEP II'S BARK CHAPEL FOR AMUN AT NORTH KARNAK

Charles C. VAN SICLEN III

The clearance by Alexandre Varille of the foundations of the Temple of Montu at North Karnak in the early 1940s on behalf of the French Institute in Cairo brought to light a large number of reused blocks of Amenhotep II, only a few of which were published in a first volume soon after excavation (*Karnak I,* p. 16). While it had been Varille's intention to publish all these blocks of Amenhotep II and other blocks he had discovered as well in a companion volume, he was unable to accomplish his objective prior to his early death. In point of fact, any complete and proper publication of all the reused blocks which Varille exposed must await the dismantling of the foundations of the Temple of Montu, a structure which is a part of the concession of the French Institute at North Karnak. At the present time, enough can be observed of the blocks of Amenhotep II — as they now remain in the foundations or exist elsewhere in the area or in fiches prepared by Varille — to garner an idea of what those monuments whose blocks were reused looked like. A total of at least four buildings of Amenhotep II can be reconstructed from the blocks : two chapels, one for the bark of Amun and another for that of Montu, a storehouse for incense, and a palace. There may be remains of a temple to the goddess Maat as well. Of these buildings, the most significant and best able to be reconstructed on paper is the chapel built by Amenhotep II for the bark of Amun.

The blocks from this particular chapel of Amenhotep II are presently located in (or derive from) the foundations of the Temple of Montu, in the northern half of the first building stage of Amenhotep III. (For these stages, see *Karnak-Nord III,* pl. 41). The blocks from the palace generally come from this building stage as well, while the blocks of some of the other buildings were reused in the second building stage of Amenhotep III. The reused blocks of Amenhotep II generally lie in the second and third courses of stone below floor level, although the architraves of the structure were reused around the circumference of the building at the first course above floor level in the first stage of Amenhotep III's new temple. Approximately 150 large blocks (as well as many small fragments) may be identified from this structure of Amenhotep II; however, not all of the reused blocks are fully accessible as they presently lie within the foundations. Additional

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blocks which presumably could be fitted into the reconstruction are so placed as to be unassignable.

The recording of the blocks in situ was done over a one month period in the winter of 1984 while I pursuing other research in Luxor. Each block was sketched at a scale of 1 : 10 on slips of paper, with the decoration of the opposing sides of each block sketched on the opposite side of each such slip. A following month was spent in joining the drawings of blocks into scenes. In the drawings, those parts of blocks in the foundations or otherwise which were not accessible to view are marked by stipling. The drawings are as accurate as possible given the difficulty in seeing many of the blocks and the hasty nature of the block drawings.

As reconstructed, the chapel erected by Amenhotep II takes the form of a peripteral temple (Fig. 1), about 15.3 by 18.5 meters in overall size, with a core structure similar in plan to the Temple of Nekhbet built by Amenhotep III in the desert to the east of El Kab. The core structure is a single room, about 7.5 by 10.6 meters in interior dimensions, divided into three aisles by two rows of two 16-sided polygonal columns supporting architraves. Towards the front, these architraves engage pilasters while at the rear, they directly join the wall. (This plan is also generally preserved in the room of the Temple of Montu under which these blocks were reused). The edifice erected by Amenhotep II seems to have been built as an addition to an earlier, now lost structure — probably a smaller, simple bark chapel with peripteral colonnade. This is evidenced by the continuance of the torus and cavetto on the exterior side rear corners, the opening outward of the inner door, and the dressed but undecorated surface of the exterior rear wall and that wall's lack of a torus and cavetto. The remains of balustrades and numerous pillar fragments — including corner pillars with engaged vertical toruses — show the existence of the surrounding colonnade, although its exact spacing is uncertain.

The various pillars, columns, pilasters, architraves, doorways, and wall surfaces of this building of Amenhotep II were decorated with scenes or texts in either polychrome raised relief or yellow monochrome sunken relief. In all there are remains in raised relief of 20 major wall scenes as well as 6 minor scenes (some from door jambs or pilasters), (Fig. 2). In addition, there are numerous fragments of pillar scenes showing the king and god embracing and parts of texts from the columns and architraves in either raised or sunken relief, according to their placement. These scenes and texts all find parallels in the standard decorative repertory of the mid-eighteenth dynasty — that is, the corpus of scenes and texts from other buildings of Amenhotep II and those buildings from preceding reigns still visible when Amenhotep II decorated his structure. The scenes include the king standing alone, the king being embraced by Amun, the king presenting various

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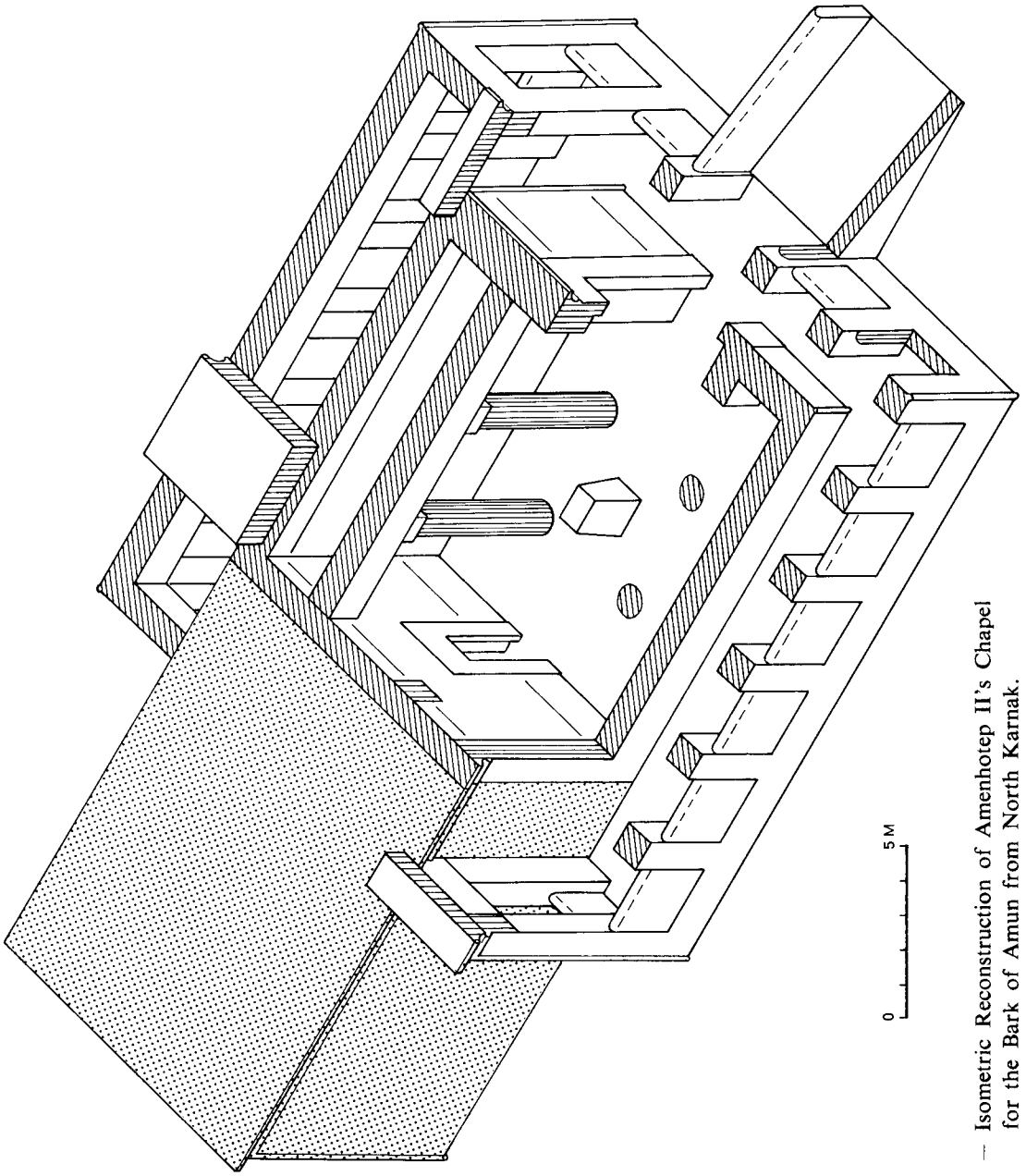


Fig. 1. — Isometric Reconstruction of Amenhotep II's Chapel for the Bark of Amun from North Karnak.

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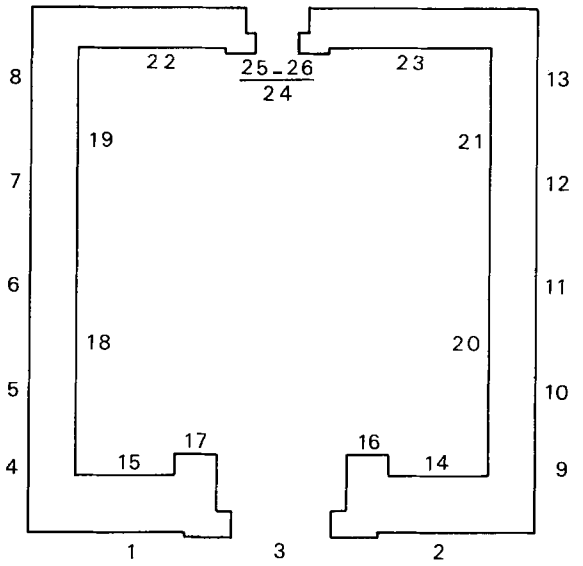


Fig. 2. — Key-plan.

offerings to Amun, the induction of the king into the temple, the « coronation » of the king, and the king receiving various items : life from Amun, the menat from Hathor, annals from Sheshat, and years from Thoth.

The most significant scenes of this structure built by Amenhotep II — scenes which define its purpose — are the two interior scenes from the side walls, each a rough mirror image of the other. Each scene shows Amenhotep II offering a hecatomb to the bark of Amun resting upon its socle. In both cases, the bark is shown in its typical pre-Amarna form, with a rank of ram-headed standards of Amun to the rear and offerings to the front. The two scenes indicate the function of the structure as a chapel for the bark of Amun. In particular, the fragmentary text over the left-hand scene (Fig. 3) explains the specific purpose of the building. It shows the bark of Amun-Re, resting in this chapel (or the like) *m ḥbw·f ⟨n⟩ prt ⟨r-⟩ḫ³ ⟨ḫft⟩ wḏ³·f ⟨m⟩ ḥwt-nṯr·f r pr ḥḏ n tp-rsy* . . . . :

> « . . . in his festivals ⟨of⟩ procession (lit. « going out ») ⟨when⟩ he proceeds ⟨from⟩ his temple to the Treasury of the Head of the South . . . »

This text is partly paralleled by a passage on the stela of Tuthmosis III from the Temple of Ptah (*Urk IV*, 765, 10-11) which mentions as its date such a procession by the bark of Amun passing via the Temple of Ptah from the Temple of Amun at Karnak to the Treasury of the Head of the South. This stela is dated :

> « The day of divine intromission for all his (Amun's) annual festivals when he proceeds to the Treasury of the Head of the South ».

This treasury is without doubt the structure built at North Karnak by Tuthmosis I and added to by Hatshepsut and Thutmosis III. The remains of this building were excavated over the last decade or so by Jean and Helen Jacquet on behalf of the French Institute, and its publication is currently under way (see *Karnak-Nord V*, p. 4-5). By its text, the chapel of Amenhotep II is thus designed as a way-station on a particular processional route between the treasury of North Karnak and the Temple of Amun.

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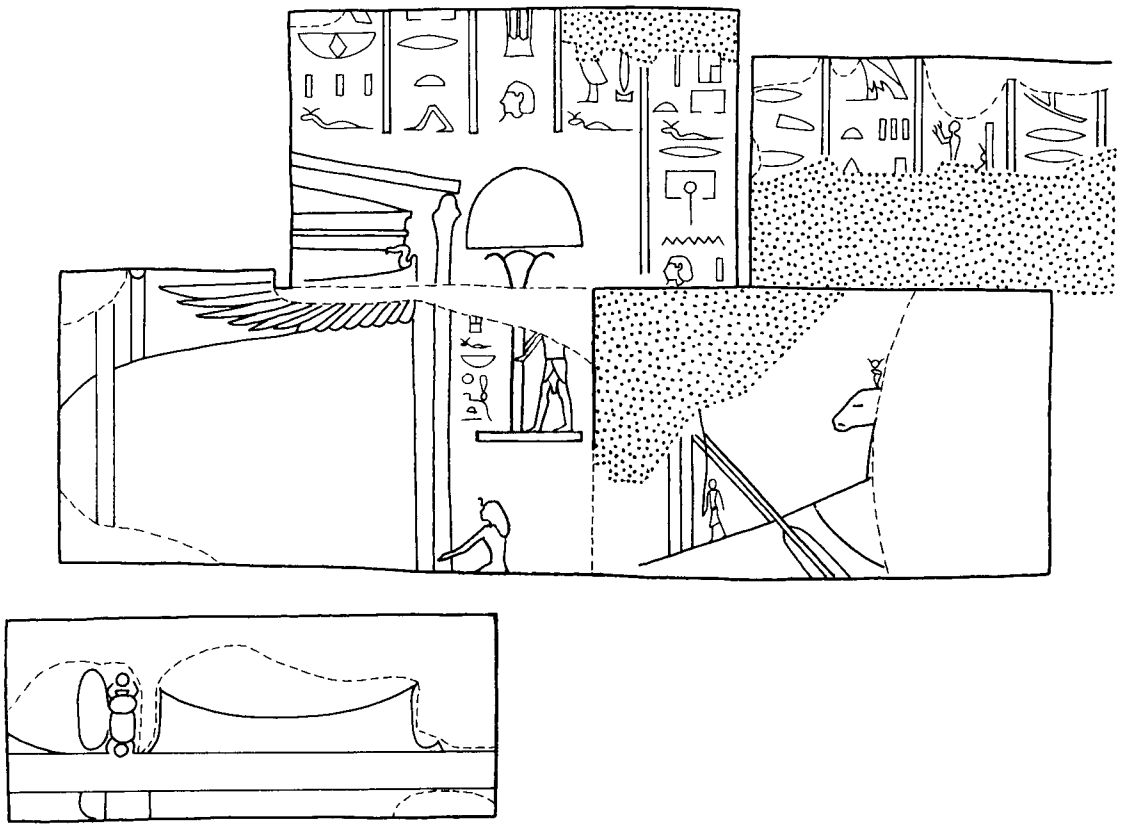


Fig. 3. — Detail of Scene 18 with the text mentioning the Treasury of the Head of the South.

There is no way of knowing precisely where the chapel of Amenhotep II once stood, but given its relationship with the Treasury of the Head of the South, it probably was reused near — if not on — its original site. The method in which certain of the stones were reused : the placement of architraves in the new building and the position of the reused blocks in general below a four-columned bark room suggest in fact that the new building of Amenhotep III — as it was originally conceived, at least — was a replacement for the bark chapel of Amenhotep II. (It should be noted that it is in no way evident that the first stage building of Amenhotep III at North Karnak was originally intended as a temple to Montu).

The chapel built by Amenhotep II and its reliefs do not give any indication as to when in the reign the structure was erected, although it should postdate the co-regency period between Amenhotep II and his father. Certainly there is no mention of Tuthmosis III anywhere in the chapel remains. A eulogizing passage in one scene (no. 20) does mention

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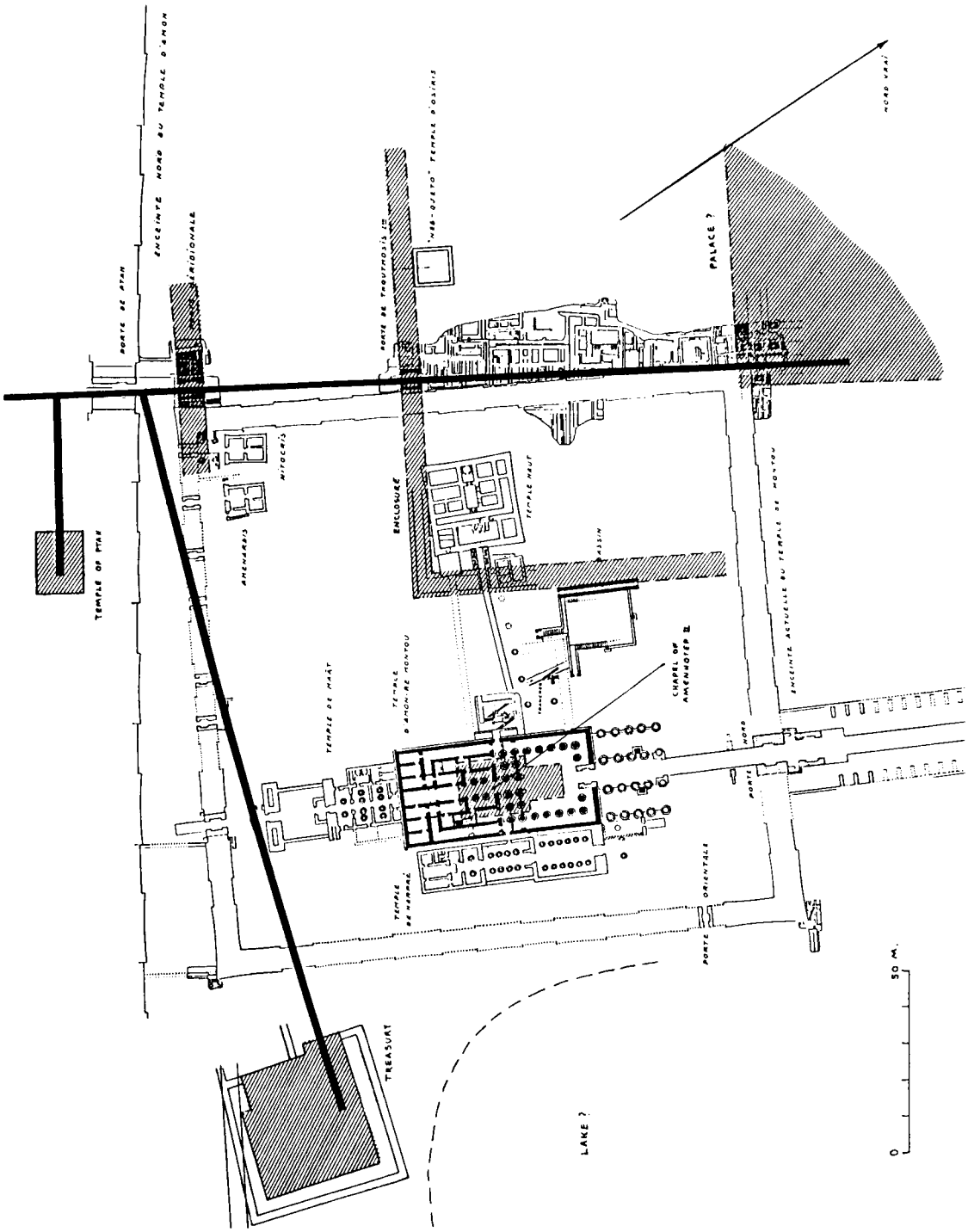


Fig. 4. — Principal monuments of North Karnak in the reign of Amenhotep II. (Adapted from *Karnak-Nord III*, pl. 50).

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Mitanni, but whether this reference indicates a period after the general cessation of hostilities in Southwest Asia in year 10 is moot.

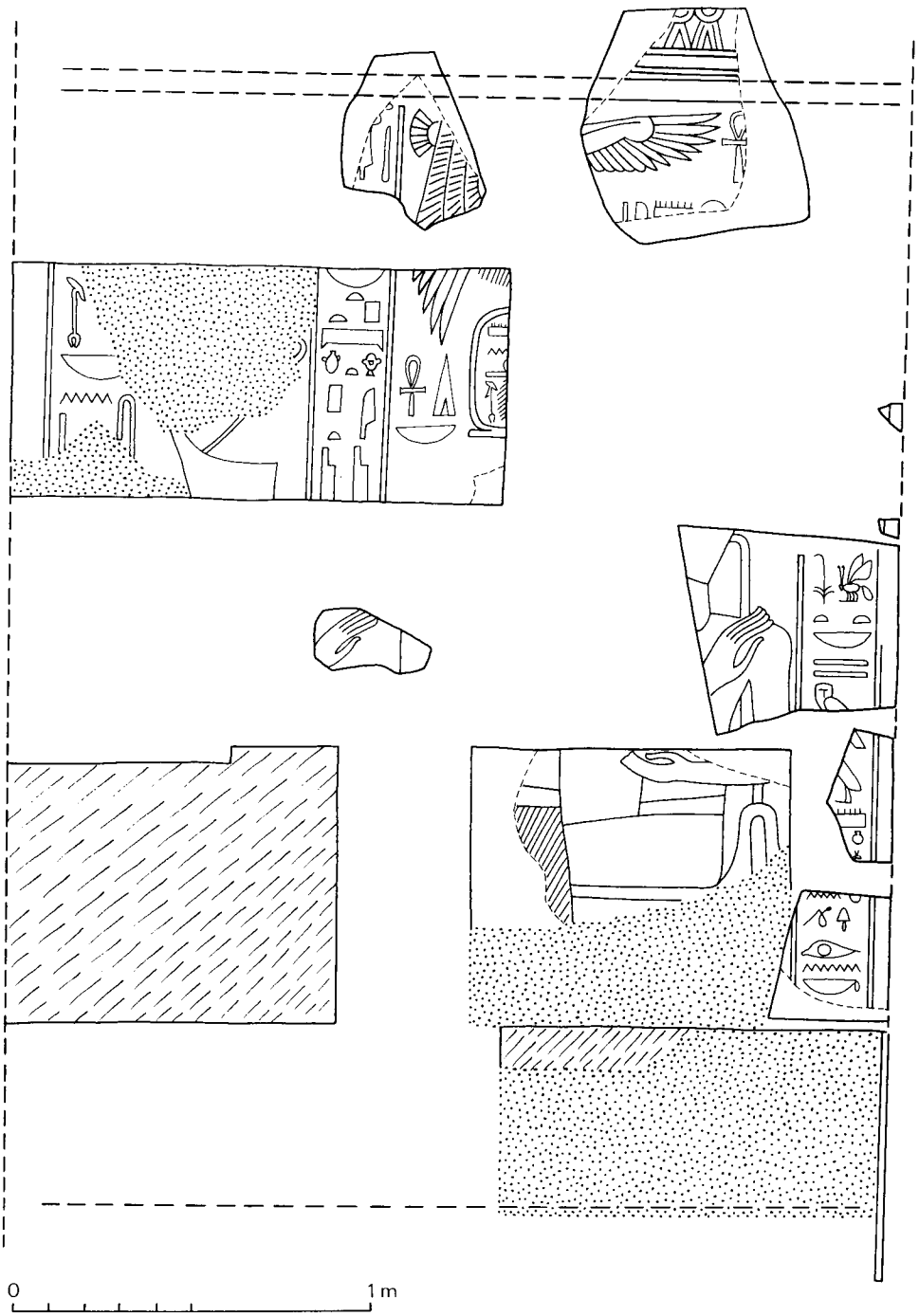
The chapel which Amenhotep II built for the bark of Amun was part of a larger building scheme of that king in the area of North Karnak, a building scheme which continued to mark this part of Thebes as the center of the city proper in the mid-eighteenth dynasty. As mentioned above, other structures of Amenhotep II in this region include a chapel for the bark of Montu, an incense storehouse, perhaps a temple to the goddess Maat, and a palace (possibly the palace of Herihermerui), the gateway of which was once attributed to Tuthmosis I but which clearly was built by Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III and partly usurped by Amenhotep II. (A brief note on this gateway appears in *GM* 80, 83). The probable remains of the platform of this palace — although not identified as such — were actually excavated by Robichon for the French Institute in the early 1950s (*Karnak-Nord III*, p. 94, pl. 16, 21, no. 18, and 50).

In the mid-eighteenth dynasty, the monuments of North Karnak (Fig. 4) seem to have been arranged about a pair of axes running between the palace on the north and the treasury to the northeast and the Temple of Amun to the south. The extensive reconstruction in this area undertaken by Amenhotep III may indicate a shift in the growth of the city of Thebes — perhaps due to natural causes such as river shift — and a changing function of that city. (A full study of all the monuments of Amenhotep II at North Karnak and the urban development of that area in the mid-eighteenth dynasty is in progress).

As noted above, a truly adequate publication of this and the other monuments of Amenhotep II from North Karnak must await the dismantling of the foundations of the Temple of Montu. As the blocks now sit, they seem to be stable and not subject to any immediate danger. Whether such a monumental task can be undertaken by the French Institute in the ninties or must await future generations, only time will tell.

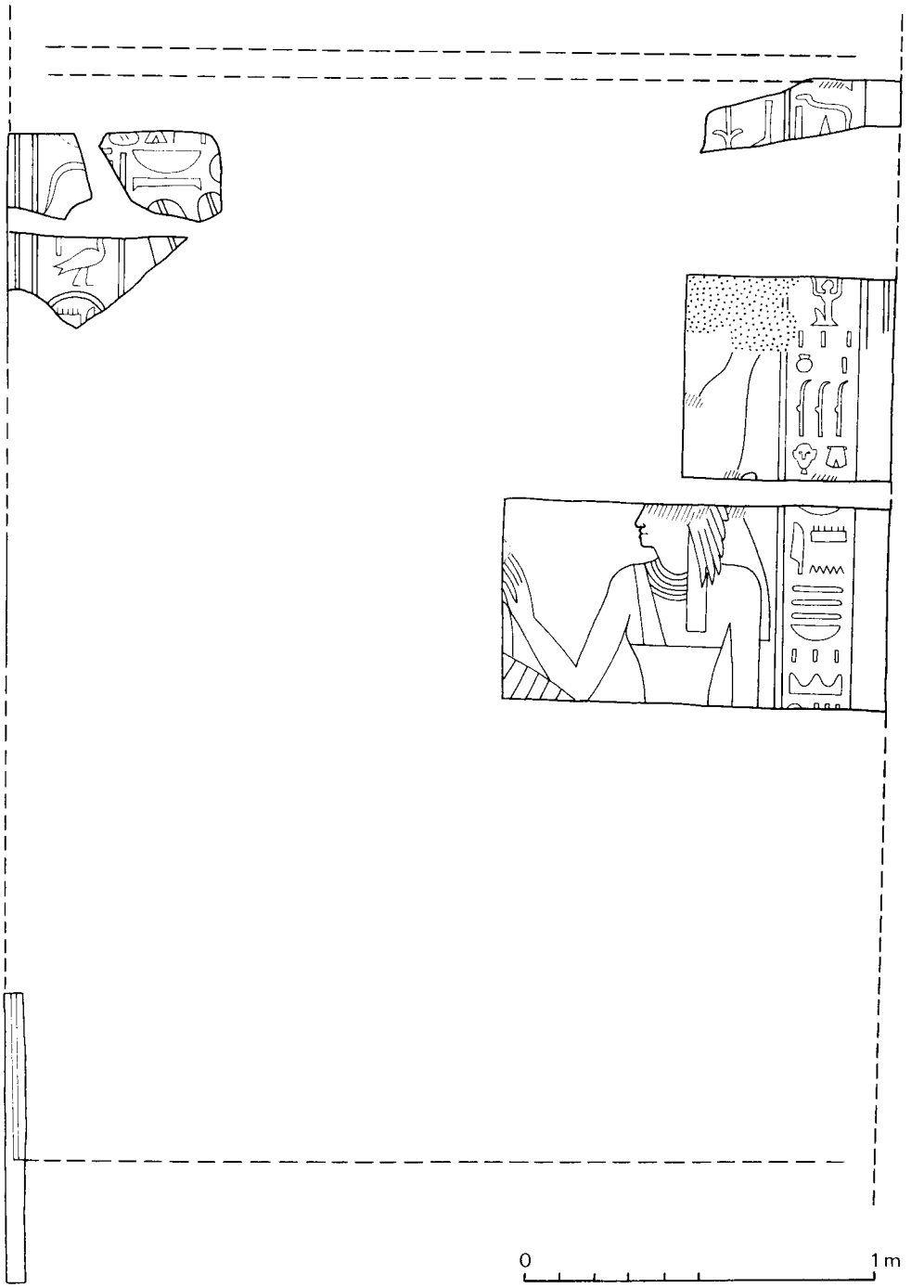
(This study was done with the encouragement of Helen Jacquet-Gordon and Jean Jacquet and the permission of the Director of the French Institute in Cairo, Pr. Paule Posener-Kriéger. Their cooperation is greatly appreciated. The preceding article, which lacks full critical apparatus, was presented as a paper read at the Fourth International Congress of Egyptology in Munich, 1985.)

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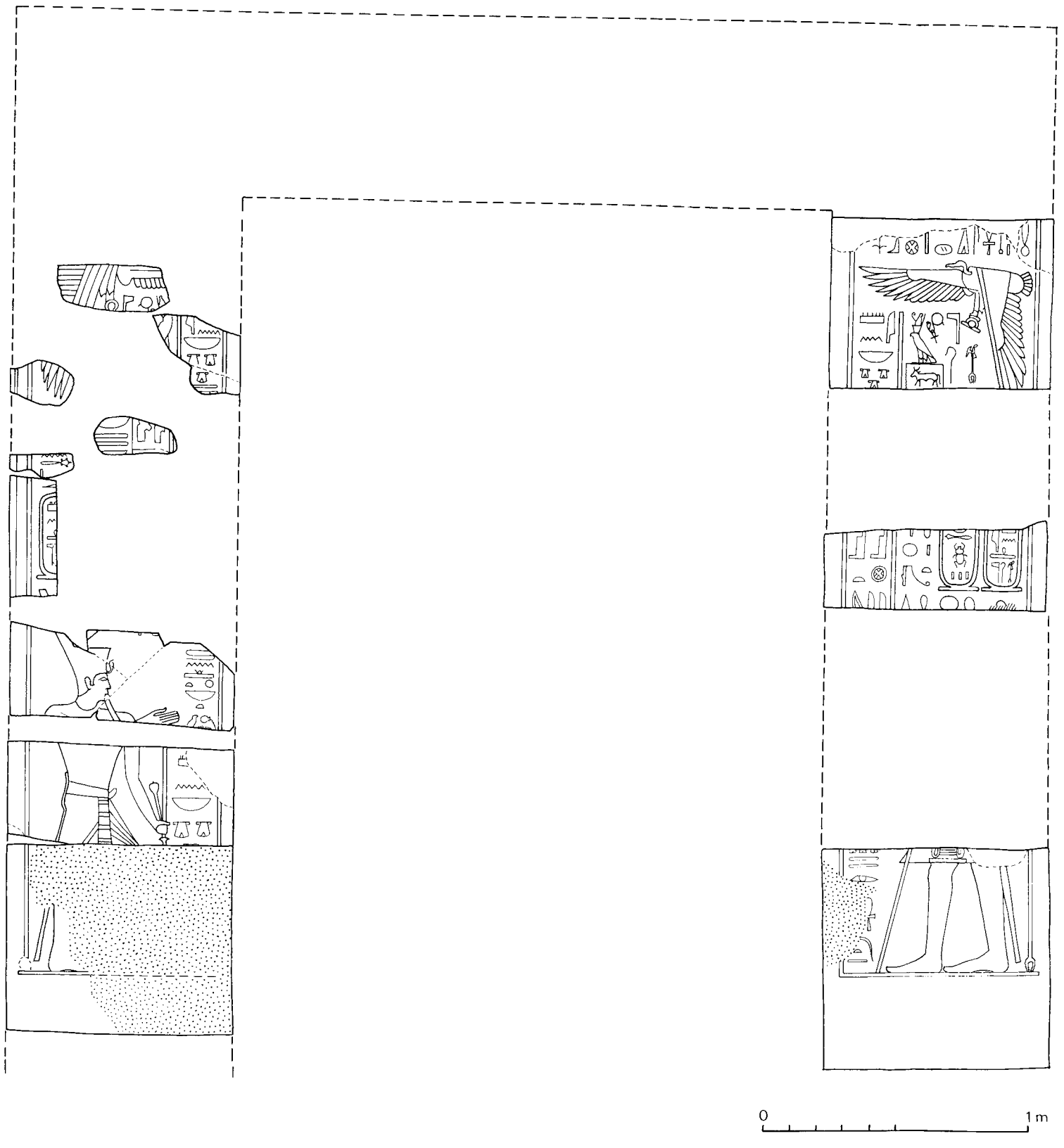
Scene 1 : Amenhotep II embraces Amun-Re in the presence of Wadjit.

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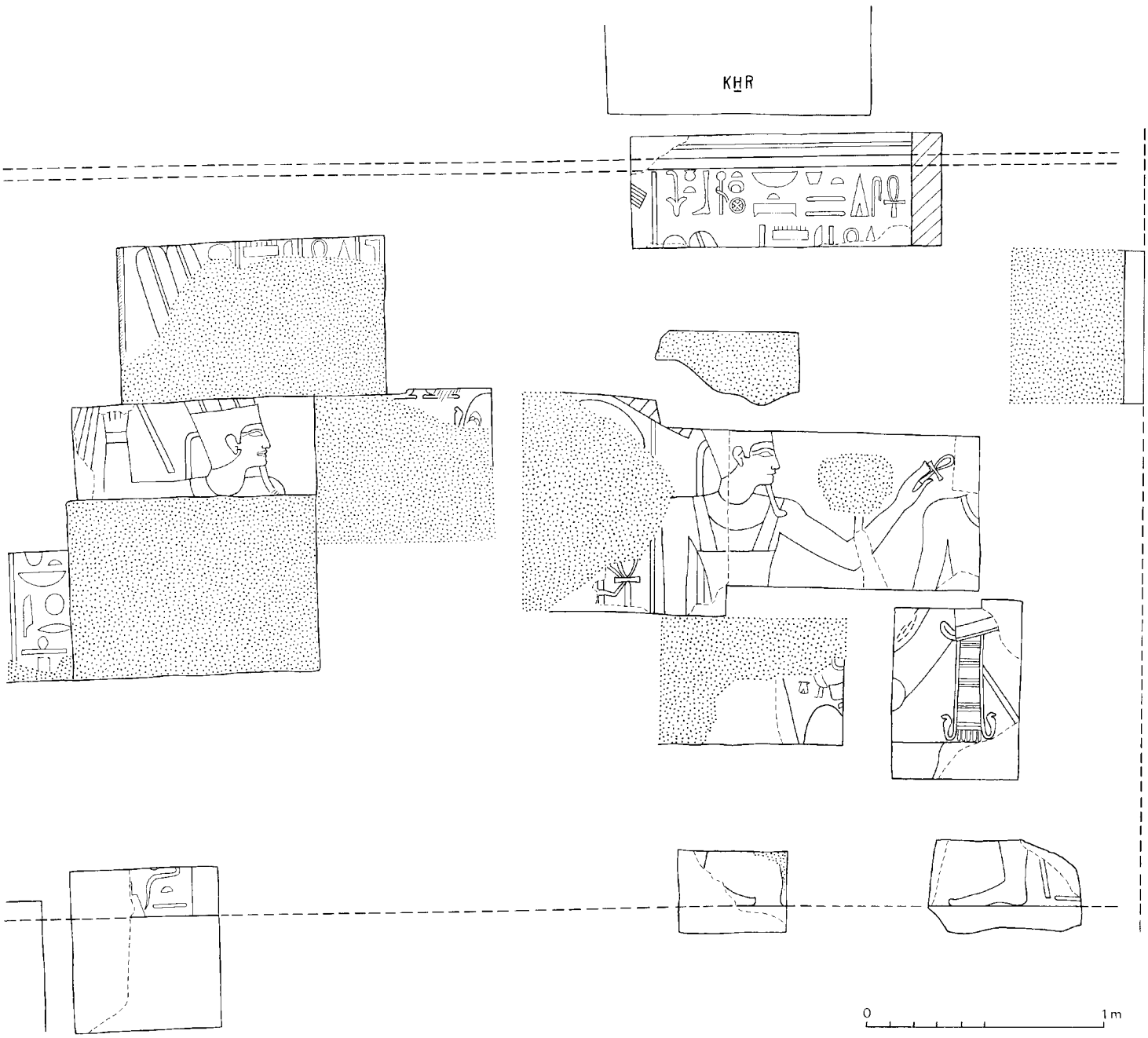
Scene 2 : Amenhotep II embraces Amun-Re in the presence of Nekhbet.

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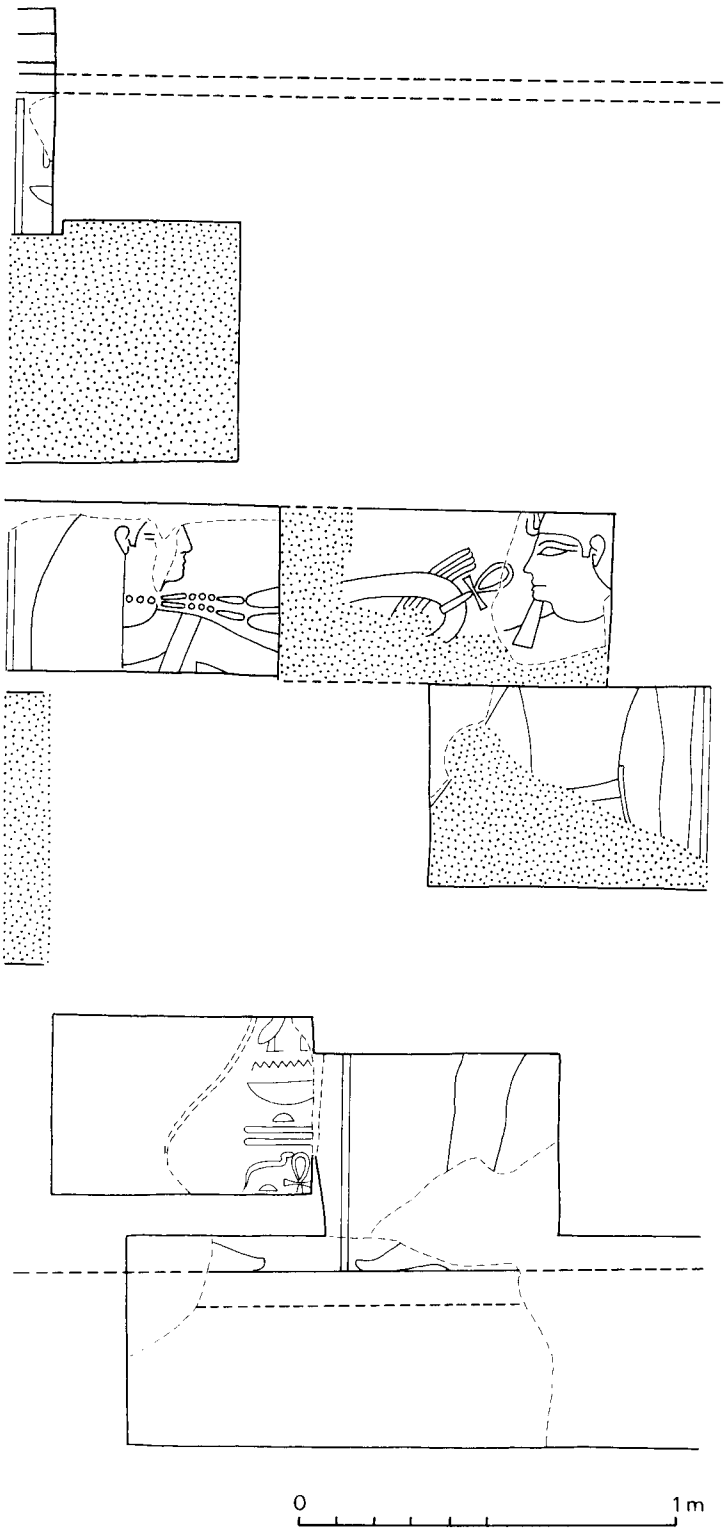
Scene 3 : Entrance with figures of Amenhotep II on the jambs.

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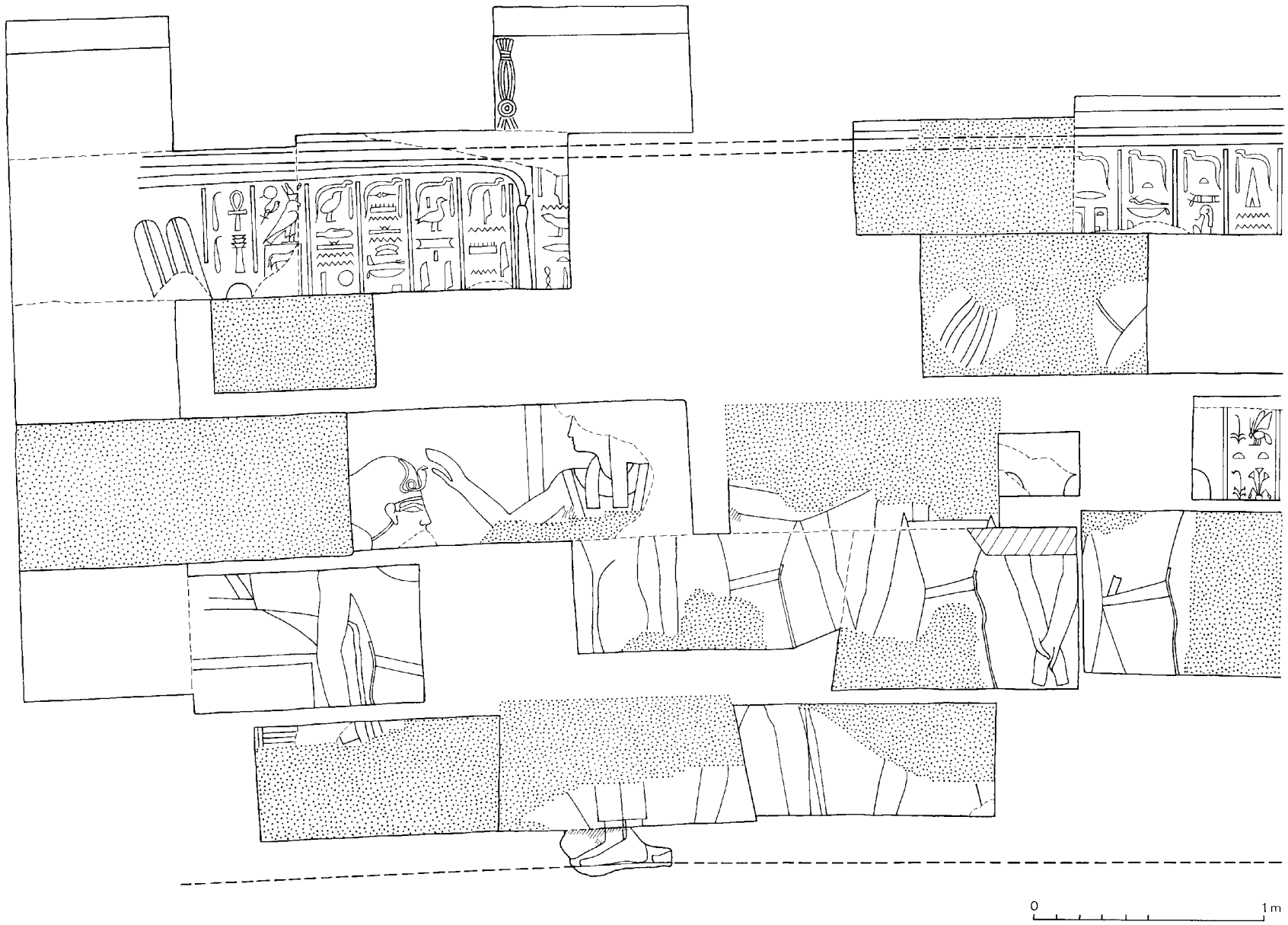
Scene 4 (right) : The king makes offering to Amun and receives life.
Scene 5 (left) : The king before Amun-Re.

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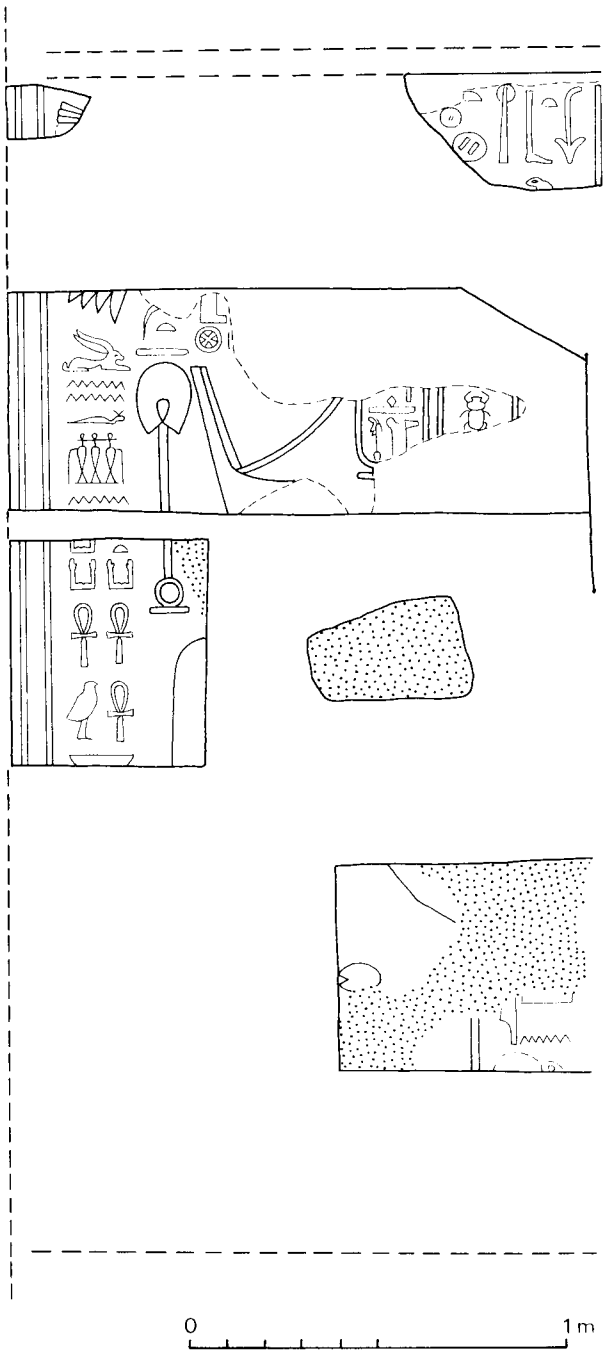
Scene 6 : The king receives the *menat* and life from a goddess.

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Scene 7 (right) : Montu and Atum lead the king into the temple.
Scene 8 (left) : Amun crowns the king in the presence of Weret-Hekau.

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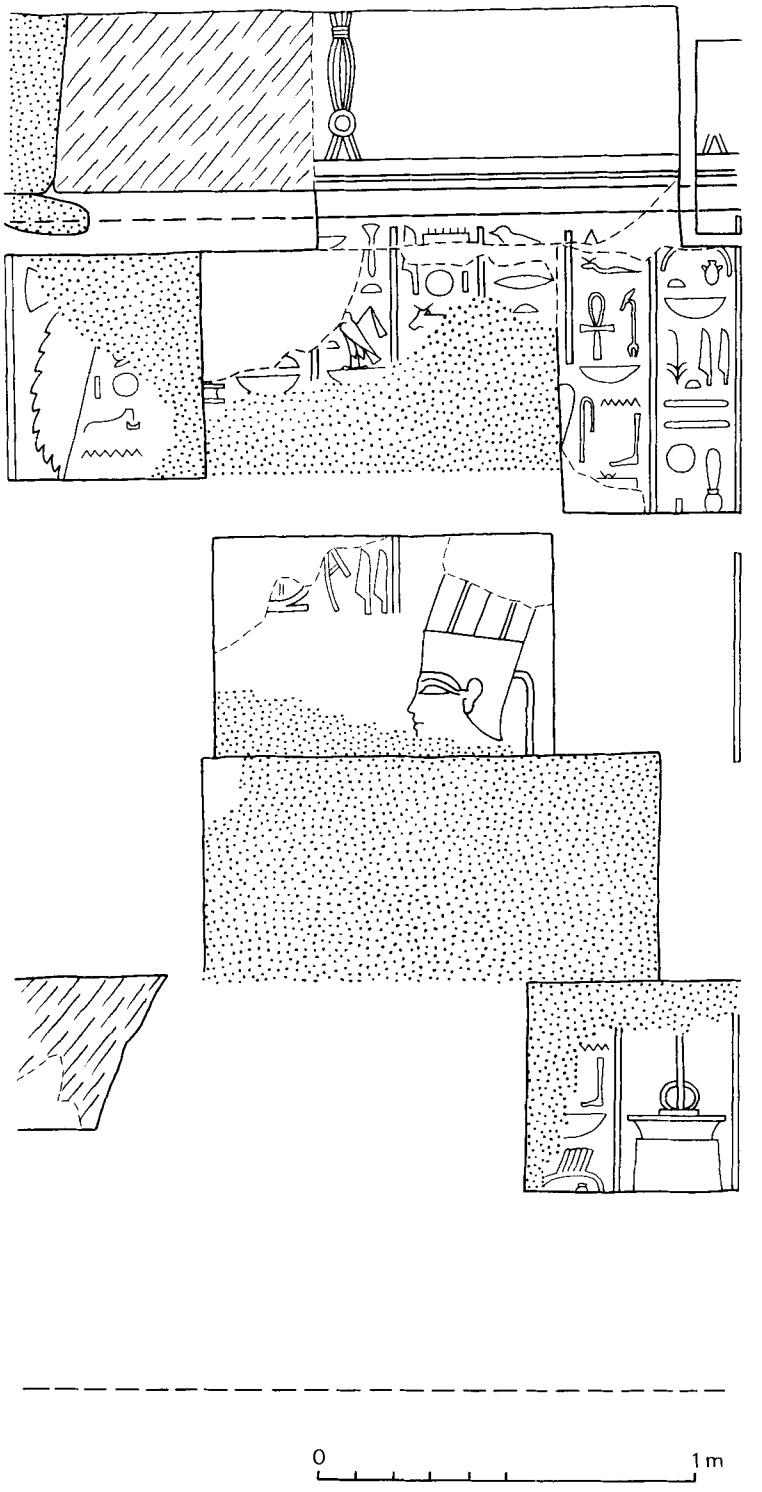
Scene 9 : Amenhotep II stands with staff and mace.

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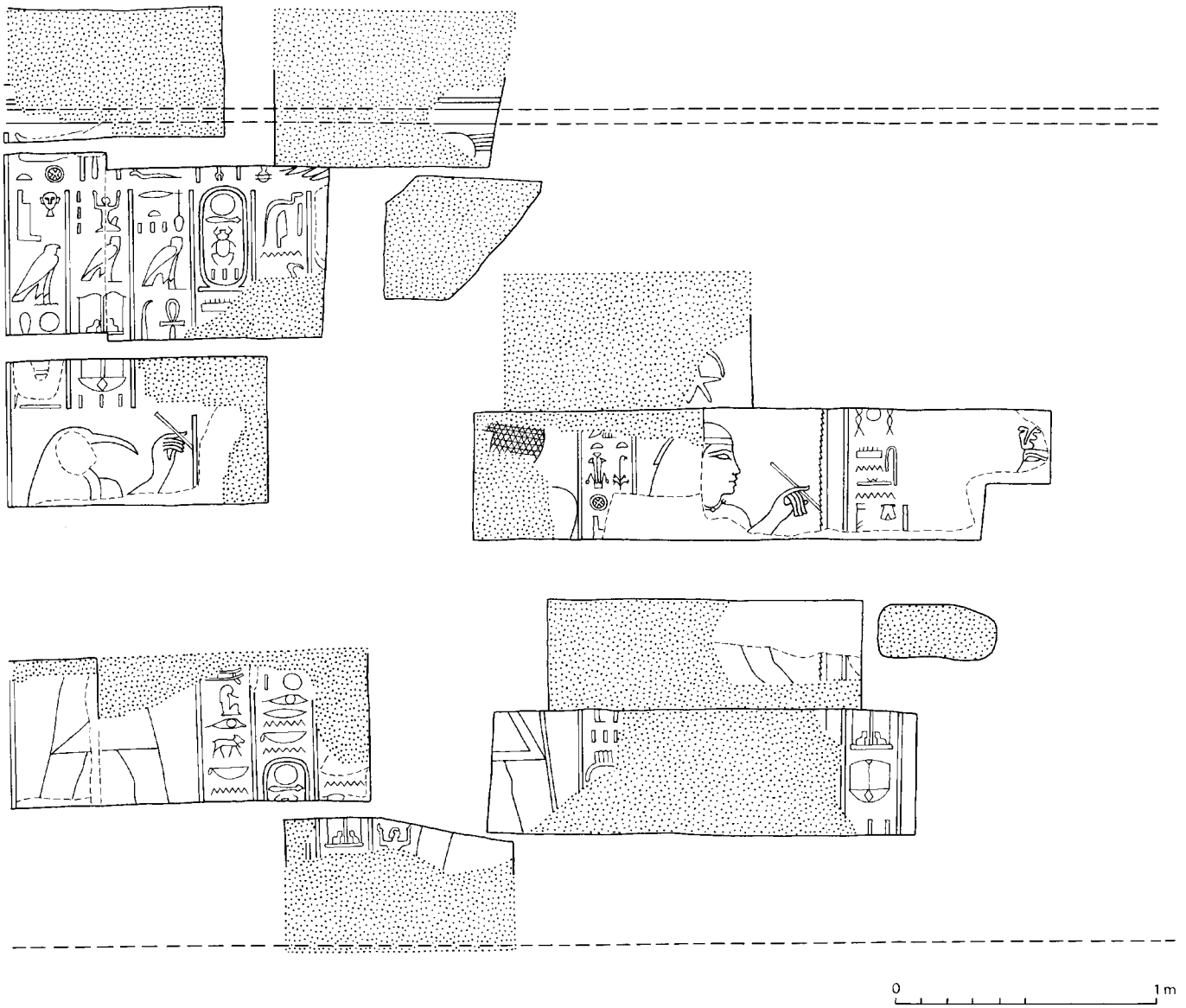
Scene 10 : Montu and Atum lead the king before a goddess.

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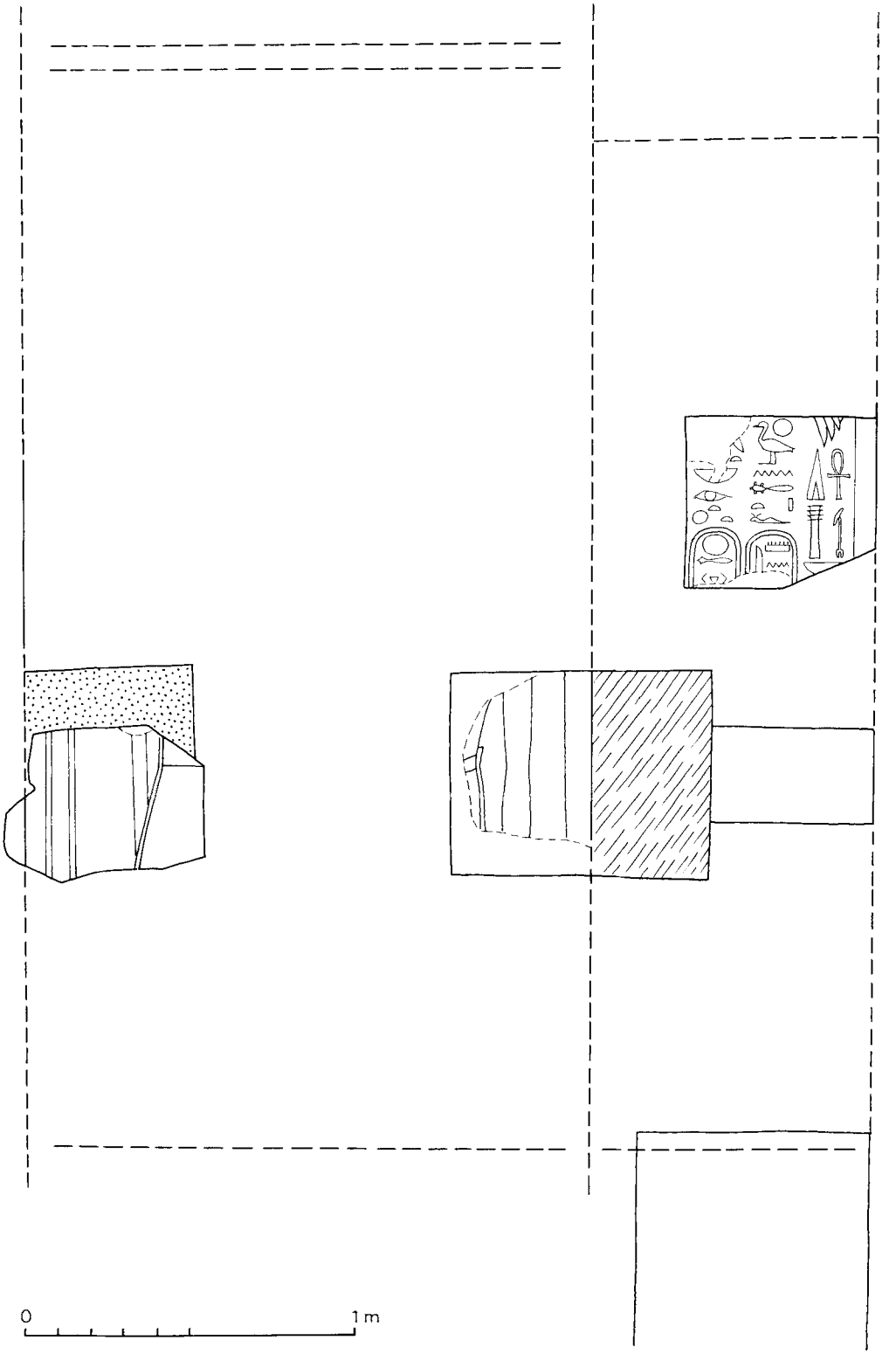
Scene 11 : The king before Amun-Re-Kamutef.

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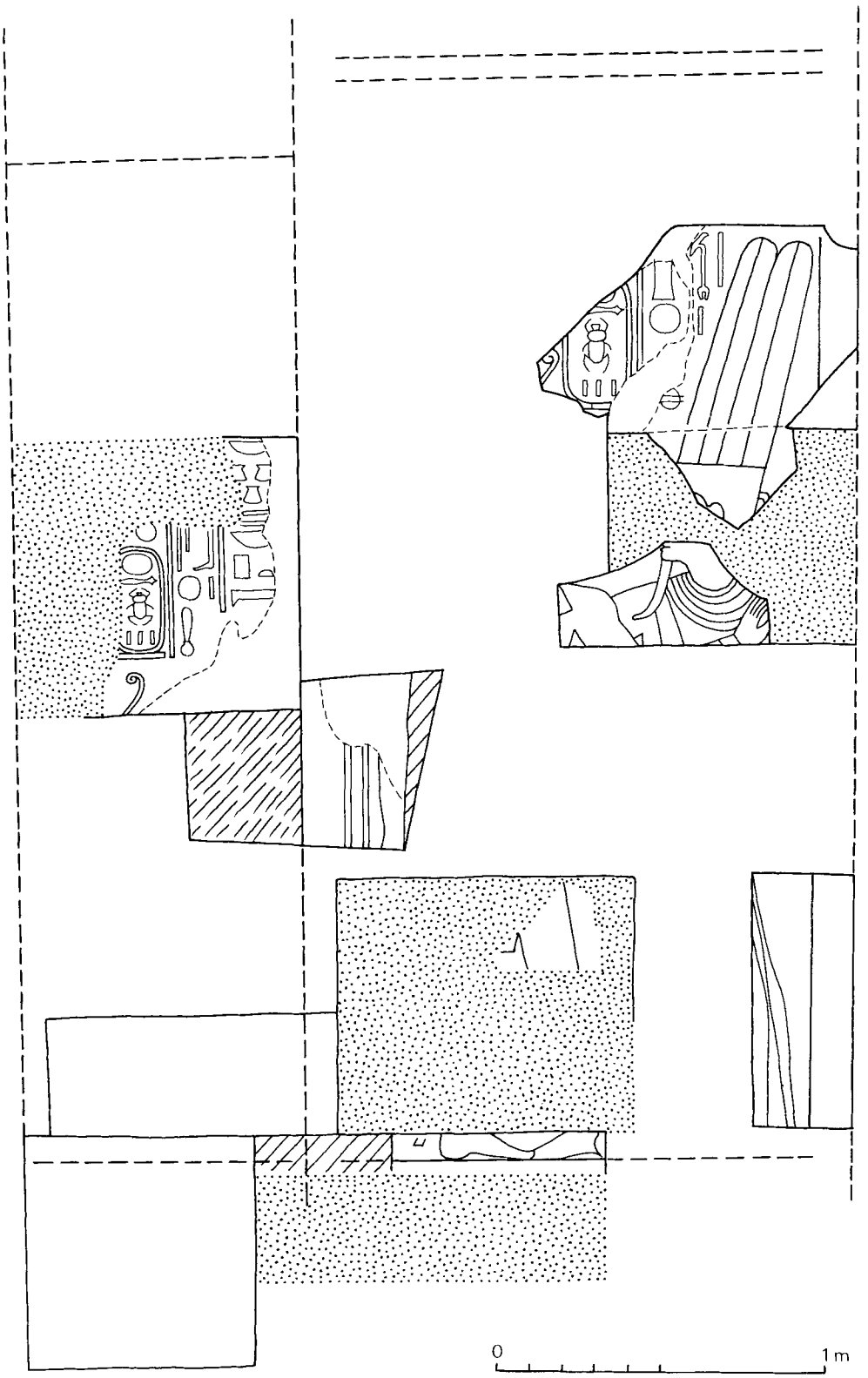
Scene 12 (left) : Thoth inscribes years for Amenhotep II.
Scene 13 (right) : Sheshat inscribes annals for the king.

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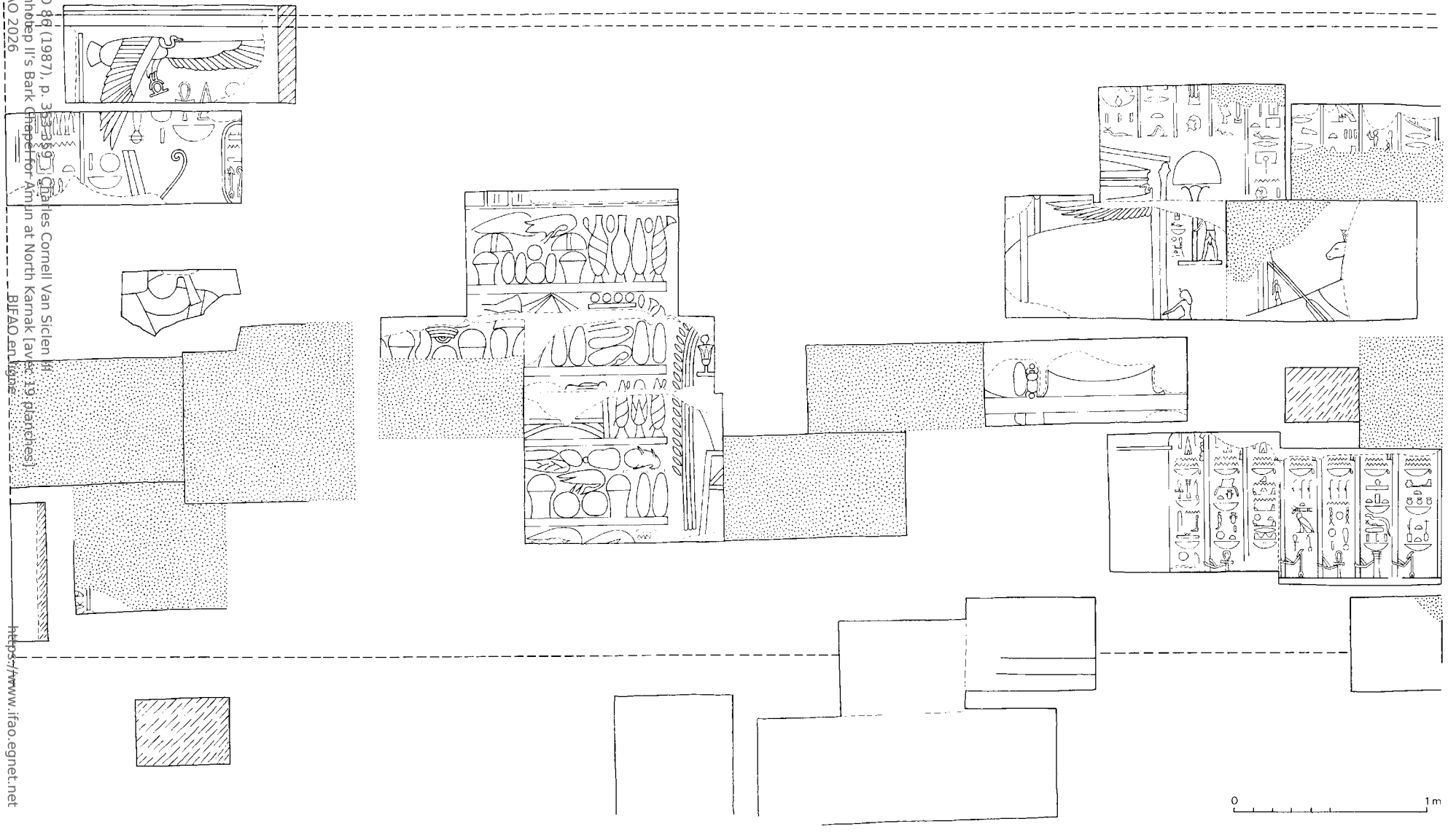
Scene 14 (left) : The king and a god embrace.
Scene 16 (pilaster, right) : Amenhotep II faces left.

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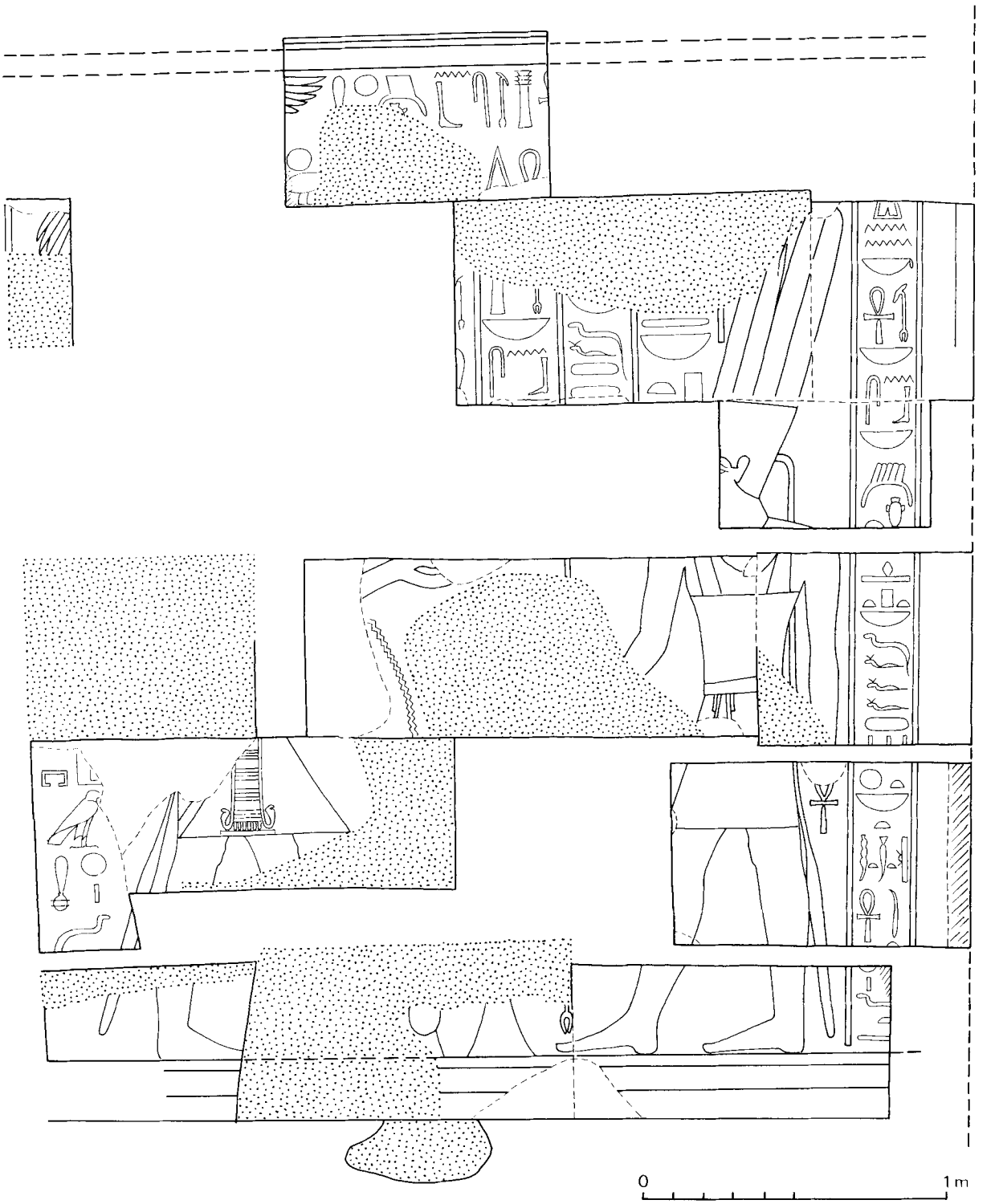
Scene 15 (right) : Amenhotep II and Amun embrace.
Scene 17 (pilaster, left) : Amenhotep II faces right.

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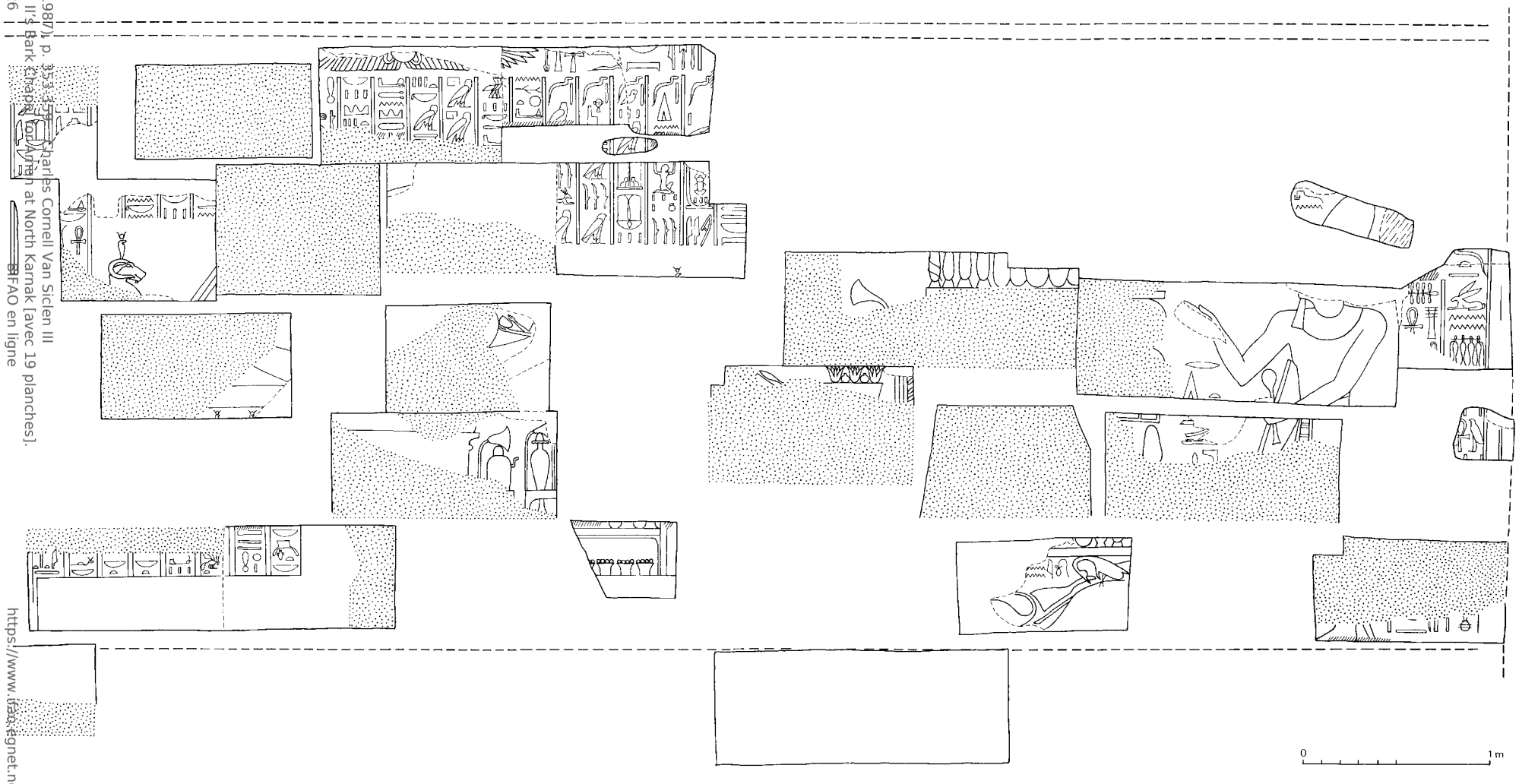
Scene 18 : Amenhotep II offers a hecatomb to the bark of Amun.

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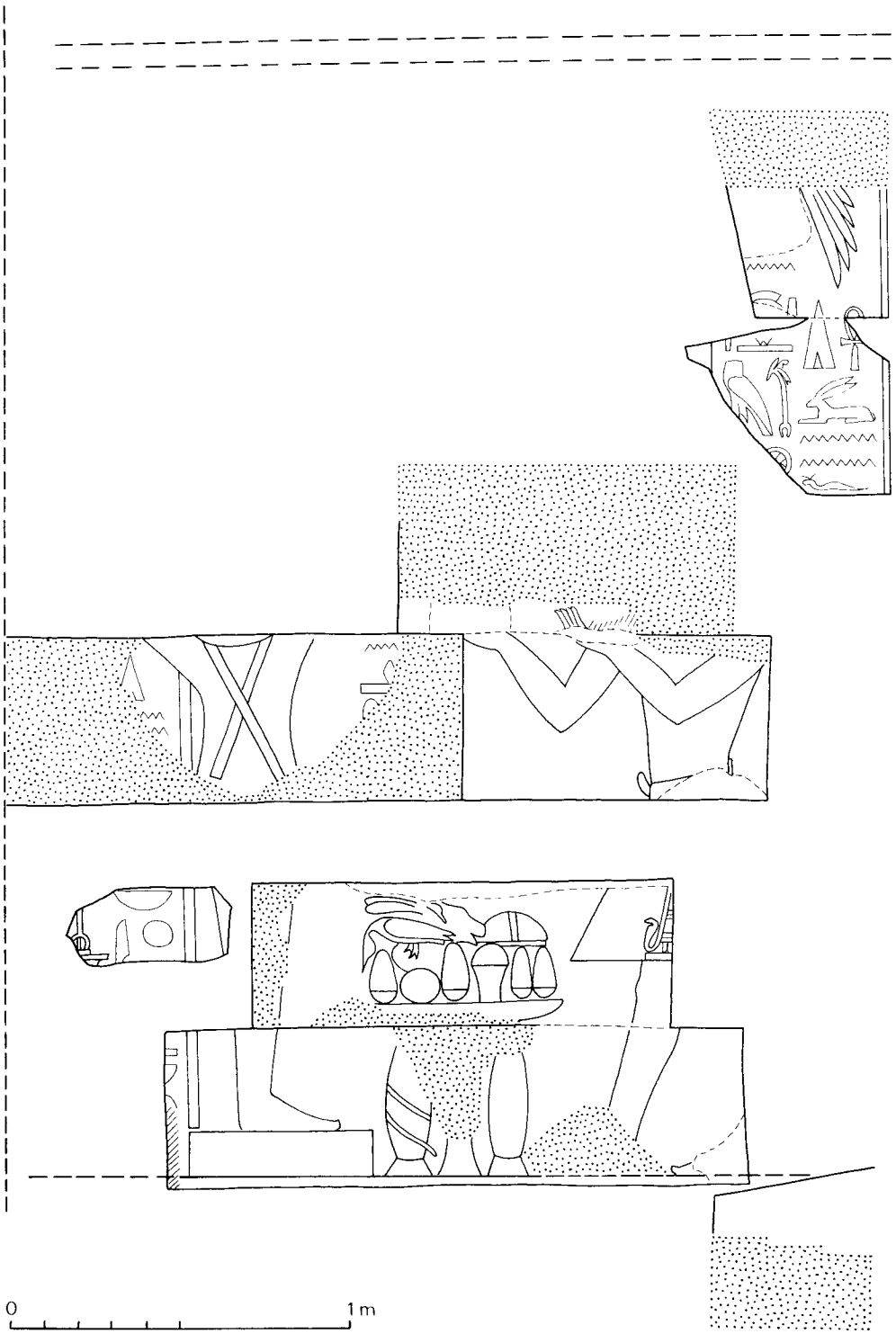
Scene 19 : The king offers incense and cool water to Amun.

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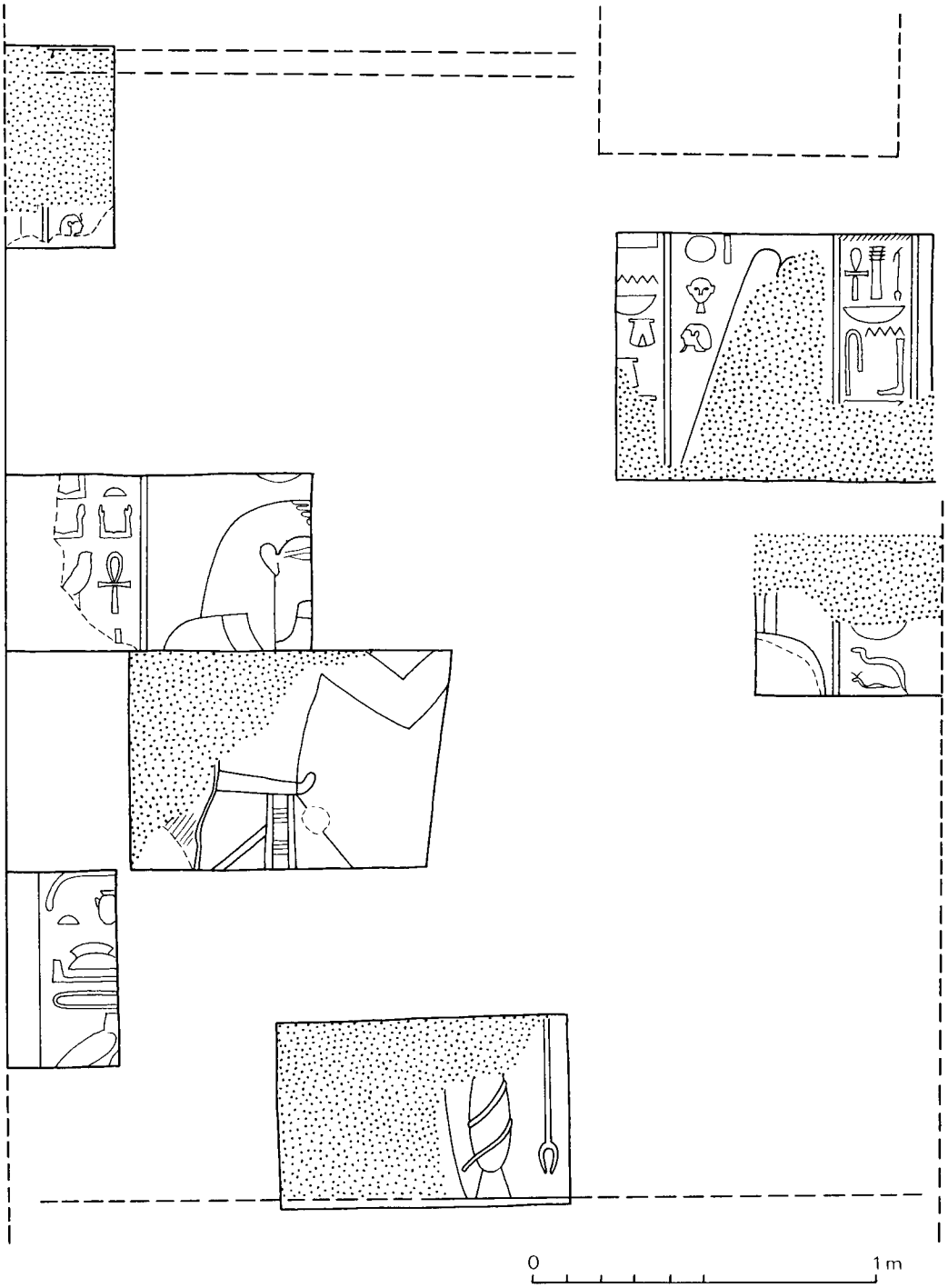
Scene 20 : The king offers a hecatomb to the bark of Amun.

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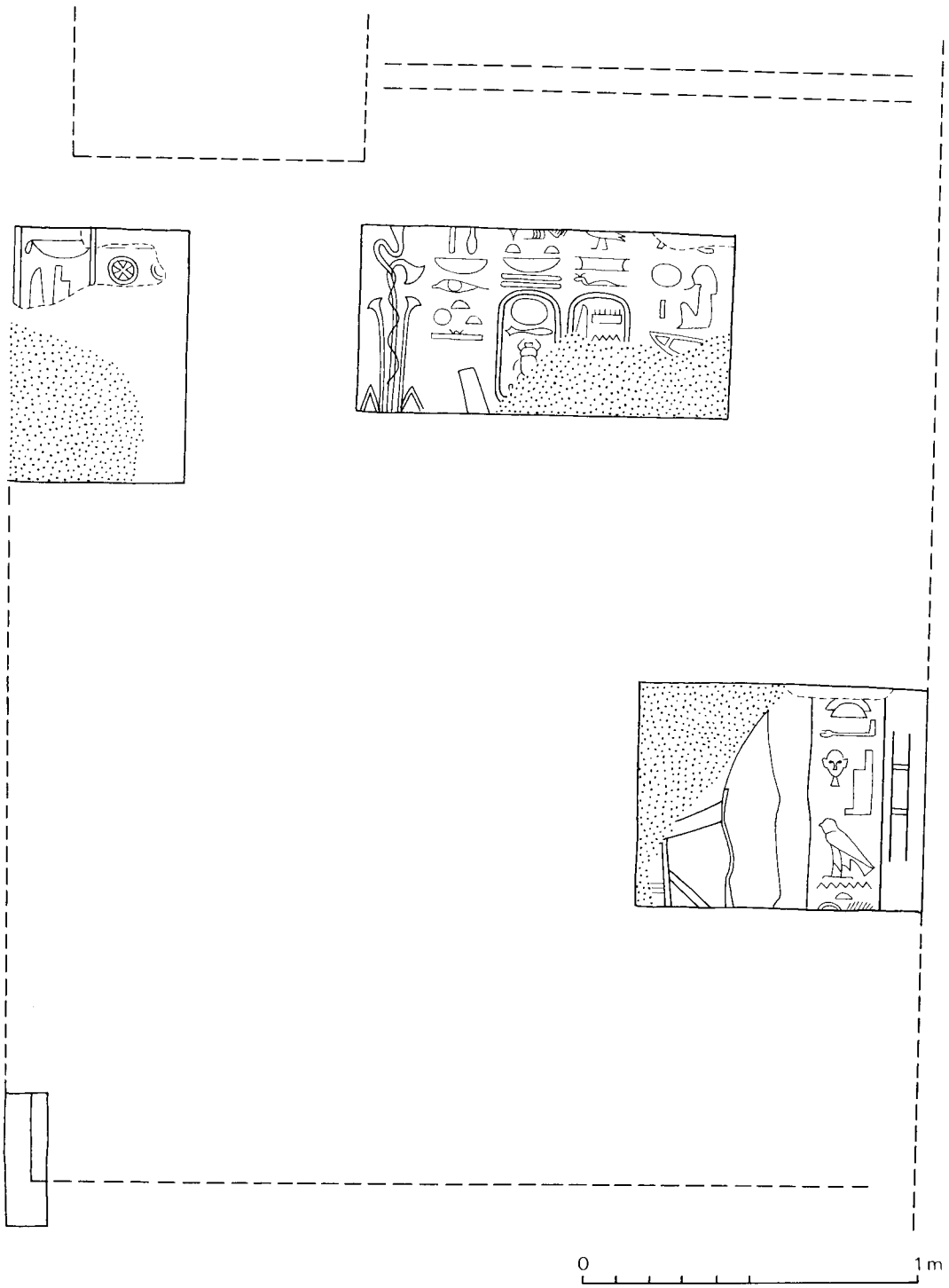
Scene 21 : Amenhotep II offers to Amun.

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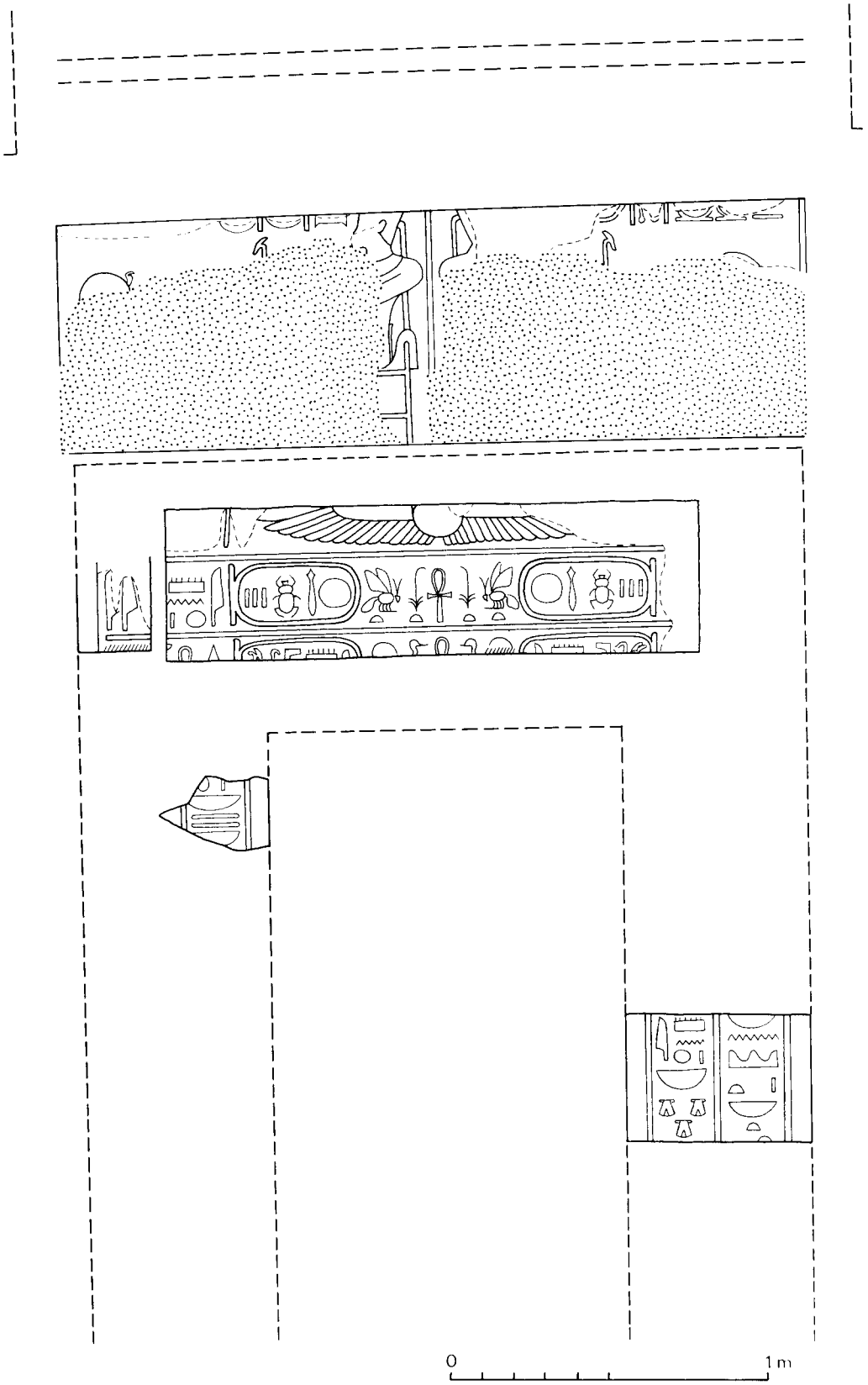
Scene 22 : The king makes offerings to Amun-Re.

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Scene 23 : Amenhotep II makes offerings to Amun.

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Scene 24 (lower) : Rear exit with the names of Amenhotep II.
Scene 25 (upper left) : The king before Amun.
Scene 26 (upper right) : The king before Amun.

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