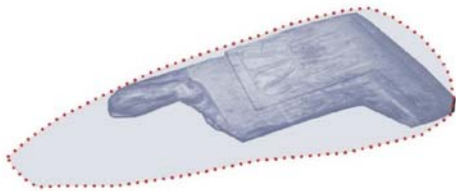
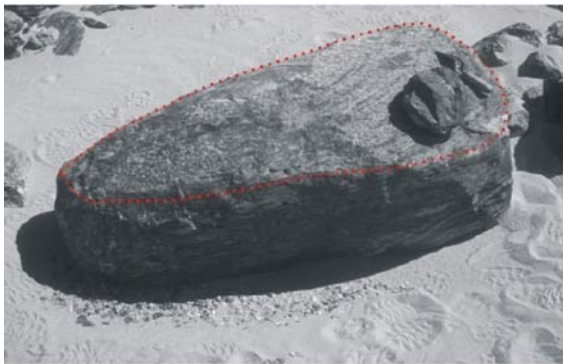


Fact sheet 8

Blanks, roughouts and finished products in quarries

In most cases, the “products” being made in a quarry are not ready to use. They are “blanks”, “roughouts” or “dressed blocks” which were brought to a workshop or a building site where the completion of them took place. An ashlar may have been finished to the point of its dimensions and rough shape in the quarry, but the final working for fitting it with others and making a smooth surface was mostly carried out at the construction site. The degree and process of finishing (or lack of it) in the quarries clearly tells us a lot about the organization of stone production. If the products actually were finished to completion in the quarries, it tells us that all the organisational layers of people involved in stone working were present at the site.

The question of finishing or not in the quarries thus depends on several factors that usually fall into the realm of economic and functional explanations: on the one hand it is important to avoid costly transport of excess stone and stone with failures that may break at a later stage of finishing. So, at least production in the quarries must be brought to a level of good knowledge of the quality of the blanks. On the other hand, complete finishing in the quarries requires more skilled people and longer production time. The way this is balanced depends on the cultural context to which the quarries belong and to distance from infrastructure and permanent settlements.



Dressed block of stone shaped as a “statue blank” fit for making life sized statues of King Khafra, Old Kingdom, Egypt.



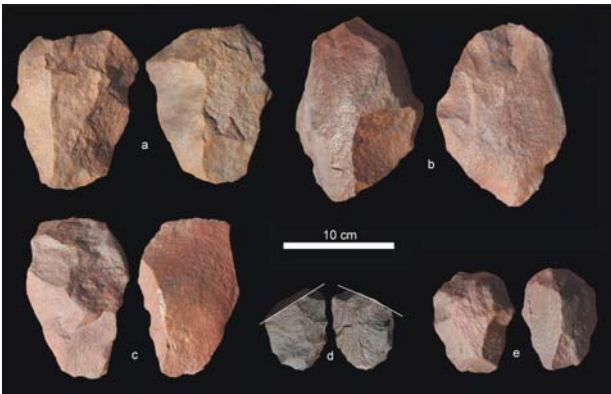
Oval grinding stone blank as found in the quarries made from silicified sandstone, Aswan, Egypt



Stockpile of roughly shaped vessel blanks in Chephren's Quarry, Egypt.



Close to finished, Roman column at the Mons Claudianus granite quarry, Egypt



Roughout of Palaeolithic tools (axes and scrapers) as found in the quarry sites, Aswan, Egypt



Obelisk tip, finished to inscriptions, at Aswan West Bank, Egypt



Semi-finished statues, Aswan, Egypt



Trimmed blank of statuette, Aswan, Egypt