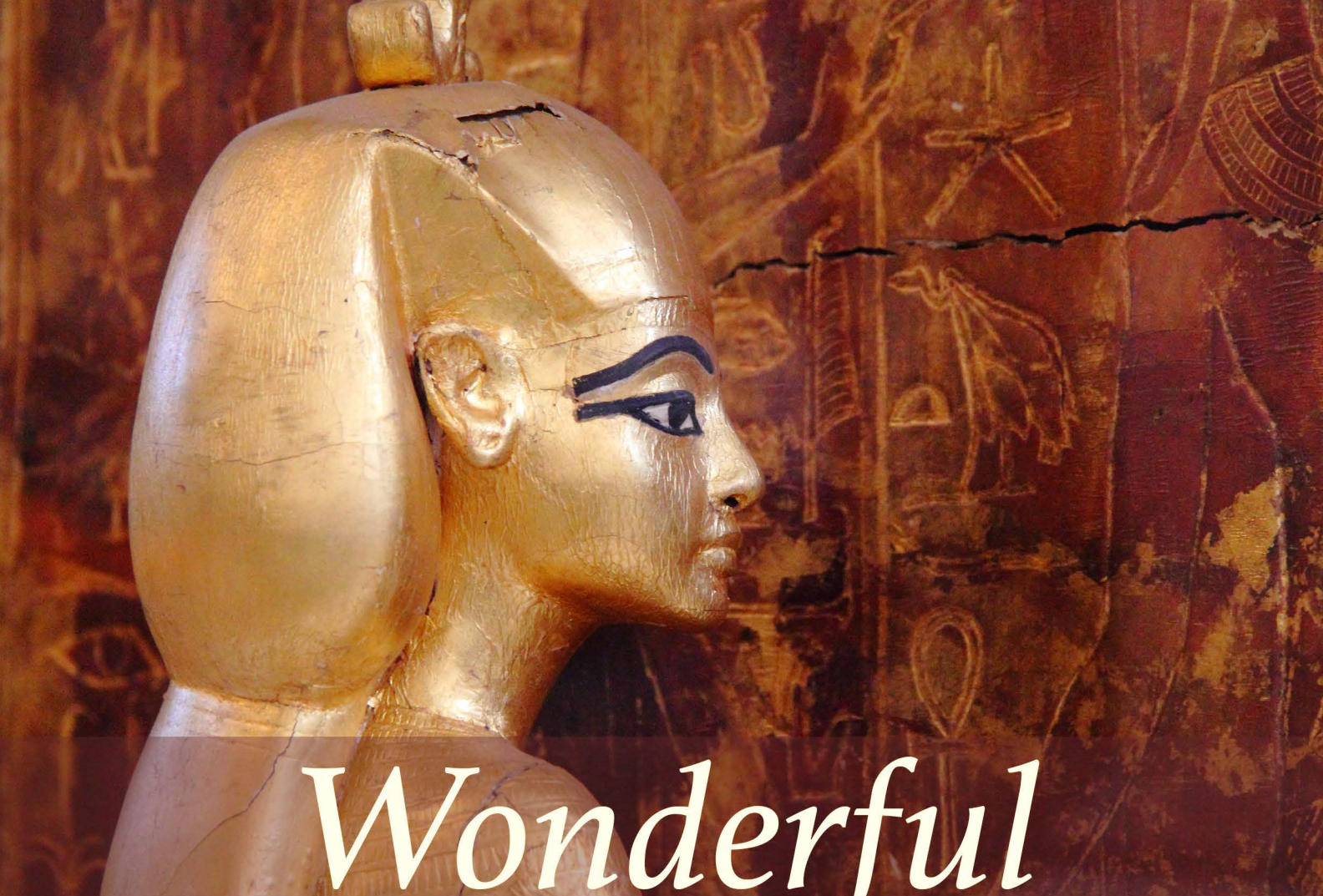




# *Wonderful Things*

Essays in Honor of Nicholas Reeves

*Peter Lacovara (ed.)*



# WONDERFUL THINGS

# Material and Visual Culture of Ancient Egypt

*Series Editor*

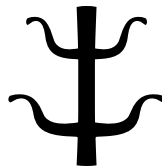
Christina Geisen

Number Ten

WONDERFUL THINGS:  
ESSAYS IN HONOR OF NICHOLAS REEVES

WONDERFUL THINGS  
ESSAYS IN HONOR OF NICHOLAS REEVES

*Edited by*  
Peter Lacovara



LOCKWOOD PRESS  
Columbus, Georgia  
2023

# WONDERFUL THINGS: ESSAYS IN HONOR OF NICHOLAS REEVES

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Nicholas Reeves in the Valley of the Kings in 1999.  
Courtesy of Kenneth Garrett Photography.



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Peter Lacovara

January 2023



## Foreword

This volume of studies is dedicated to Nicholas Reeves, a brilliant scholar and curator and a peerless authority on the history and material culture of Egypt during the late Eighteenth Dynasty.

Carl Nicholas Reeves was born in Rochdale, England on 28 September 1956, the son of photographer Arthur Raymond Reeves and Bet Wardle. Beginning as a student of Anglo-Saxon archaeology, Nick went on to obtain a first in ancient history (Egyptology) at University College London in 1979. It was at UCL that he met his future wife, Claire Morel. During a decade balancing work and play the couple produced three wonderful girls—Kate, Elizabeth, and Harriet. Finding himself hopelessly outnumbered, he sensibly departed the chaos, though seeing his daughters frequently and ready always to share with them his love and advice with a dry humor. The past decade has seen Nick turn from Pa to Grandpa, and a charming one at that. His children love him very much, and are so very proud of him.

Nick Reeves received his PhD in Egyptology from Durham University in 1984, completing a thesis entitled *Studies in the Archaeology of the Valley of the Kings, with Particular Reference to Tomb Robbery and the Caching of the Royal Mummies*. This masterful compendium served as the basis for his *Valley of the Kings: The Decline of a Royal Necropolis* (London: Kegan Paul, 1990), the first of several books and articles he would dedicate to the site. This deep-seated interest in the Valley eventually led him to launch the Amarna Royal Tombs Project (ARTP) in 1998, dedicated to investigating and documenting the site's late Eighteenth Dynasty aspects in a controlled and systematic manner.

In 1984 Nick was appointed as a curator in the Department of Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum. There, his encyclopedic knowledge of Egyptian antiquities served him well in the conception and execution of a comprehensive survey of Egyptian collections in the United Kingdom. This now forms a part of the online Libraries and Archives Council Cornucopia database. With John Taylor he prepared the catalog for the exhibition *Howard Carter before Tutankhamun* held at the BM between 1992 and 1993, a natural follow-on from his appointment as part-time curator to the seventh Earl of Carnarvon at Highclere Castle in 1988. At Highclere he created an exhibition based around those objects retained from the fifth Earl's early work at Thebes and elsewhere, and in 1990, with Claire, organized the famous Highclere Conference on the Valley of the Kings with its first-ever showing of Egyptian antiquities from the collections of Queen Elizabeth II.

The jobs have been many and characteristically varied. For a time, Reeves served as archaeology correspondent on the London *Daily Telegraph* and as area editor on ancient Egypt for the *Macmillan* (now *Grove*) *Dictionary of Art*. He would go on to found Libri Publications and later initiate and edit the Egyptology series established by Duckworth (now Bloomsbury Academic).

For some years, Nick served as curatorial consultant to the Freud Museum in London, cataloging and publishing from the famous psychoanalyst's collection of antiquities. He would later work for a decade as honorary curator and later director of collections for the Denys Eyre Bower Trust at Chiddingstone Castle, eventually resigning from the post in protest at the Trustees' endless sales of Castle artworks.

From 2000–2010, Reeves was G. A. D. Tait Curator of Egyptian and Classical Art at the Myers Museum of Egyptian and Classical Art at Eton College in Windsor, organizing a number of important research and exhibition projects and working diligently toward what he had hoped might be a permanent installation of this exceptional collection at Eton itself.

In 1990, he visited Japan for the first time as a British Museum staff member, and in 1994 was invited for a term as visiting lecturer in Egyptian art and archaeology in the Egyptian Culture Center, Waseda University, Tokyo. During the next years he spent more and more time in Japan, developing a deep appreciation of Japanese art, archaeology, and history. In 1996, in collaboration with the Freud Museum in London, he organized the exhibition *Freud as Collector* at the Mikazuki Gallery in Tokyo, and in 2008 he arranged a tour to six major venues across Japan of Egyptian masterworks from the Eton Myers collection and Durham University's Oriental Museum. These exhibitions built upon six earlier Eton shows he had organized, with accompanying catalogs, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum in Hildesheim, the Centro Cultural Conde Duque in Madrid and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Bordeaux.

In 2010, Reeves was invited to spend a year in the Department of Egyptian Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, as Sylvan C. Coleman and Pamela Coleman Memorial Fellow; to his pleasure and surprise, in 2011 he would be appointed Lila Acheson Wallace Associate Curator of Egyptian Art at that same institution. A highlight of Nick's time at the Met would be his identification of the mummy masks of Amenhotep, overseer of builders of Amun, and his wife Mutresti, an inspiring piece of archaeological detective work. He left New York to spend a year as scholar in residence at the storied School of Anthropology of the University of Arizona, Tucson, afterward maintaining these links as a senior Egyptologist on the University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition. Now back in England, his work is focused once again on the late Amarna era and the detailed analysis of Tutankhamun's treasures.

Reeves was elected a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1994.

Kate Cattermole-Mitchell  
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Peter Lacovara

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# Abbreviations

## GENERAL

|          |                                                                 |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abb.     | Abbildung (figure)                                              |
| ÄMUL     | Ägyptisches Museum – Georg Steindorff – der Universität Leipzig |
| BCE      | Before Common Era                                               |
| BM       | British Museum, London                                          |
| BM EA    | British Museum, Egyptian Antiquities section                    |
| ca.      | circa, approximately                                            |
| Cat.     | catalog                                                         |
| CE       | Common Era                                                      |
| cf.      | confer, compare                                                 |
| CG       | Catalogue General of Egyptian Antiquities in the Cairo Museum   |
| ch.      | chapter                                                         |
| CIPEG    | International Committee for Egyptology                          |
| cm       | centimeter(s)                                                   |
| CNI      | Carsten Niebuhr Institute                                       |
| col(s).  | column(s)                                                       |
| CT       | Coffin Text                                                     |
| DeM      | Deir el Medina                                                  |
| diss.    | dissertation                                                    |
| e.g.     | exempli gratia                                                  |
| ed.      | edition; edited by                                              |
| EEF      | Egypt Exploration Fund, London                                  |
| EES      | Egypt Exploration Society, London                               |
| EMC      | Egyptian Museum Cairo                                           |
| esp.     | especially                                                      |
| et al.   | et alii                                                         |
| etc.     | et cetera, and so forth                                         |
| ex.      | example                                                         |
| fasc.    | fascicle                                                        |
| fig(s).  | figure(s)                                                       |
| frag(s). | fragment(s)                                                     |
| GEM      | Grand Egyptian Museum                                           |
| i.e.     | id est                                                          |
| inv.     | inventory                                                       |
| JE       | Journal d'Entrée (Cairo Museum)                                 |
| m        | meter                                                           |
| MMA      | Metropolitan Museum of Art                                      |
| MRAH     | Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire Bruxelles                     |
| n(n).    | note(s)                                                         |

|             |                                    |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| n.d.        | no date                            |
| no(s).      | number(s)                          |
| O.          | ostrakon                           |
| OIM         | Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago |
| p(p).       | page(s)                            |
| pers. comm. | personal communication             |
| PhD         | Doctor of Philosophy               |
| PJEL        | Peggy Joy Egyptology Library       |
| pl(s).      | plate(s)                           |
| q.v.        | quod vide, which see               |
| rev.        | revised                            |
| rt.         | recto                              |
| S.          | Stela                              |
| Taf.        | Tafel(n) (plate[s])                |
| trans.      | translated by                      |
| UCL         | University College London          |
| viz.        | <i>videlicet</i> , namely          |
| vol.        | volume                             |
| vs.         | versus                             |

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC

|              |                                                                                  |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ÄA           | Ägyptologische Abhandlungen                                                      |
| ÄAT          | Ägypten und Altes Testament                                                      |
| <i>AcOr</i>  | <i>Acta Orientalia</i>                                                           |
| ADAIK        | Abhandlungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts Kairo. Ägyptologische Reihe |
| AegHel       | Ægyptiaca Helvetica                                                              |
| <i>AfO</i>   | <i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>                                                |
| ÄgAbh        | Ägyptologische Abhandlungen                                                      |
| ARCER        | American Research Center in Egypt Reports                                        |
| <i>ArOr</i>  | <i>Archiv Orientální</i>                                                         |
| ARG          | <i>Archiv für Religionsgeschichte</i>                                            |
| ASAE         | <i>Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte</i>                             |
| ÄuL          | Ägypten und Levante                                                              |
| BACE         | <i>Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology</i>                          |
| BARCE        | <i>Bulletin of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>                         |
| BAR-IS       | British Archaeological Reports. International Series                             |
| BASOR        | <i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>                     |
| BdE          | Bibliothèque d'étude                                                             |
| BES          | Brown Egyptological Studies                                                      |
| <i>BIFAO</i> | <i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>                   |
| <i>BiOr</i>  | <i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>                                                    |
| BMMA         | <i>Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i>                                |
| BMOP         | British Museum Occasional Papers                                                 |

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BMSAES         | British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| BSAE           | British School of Archaeology in Egypt                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| BSEG           | <i>Bulletin de la Société d'Égyptologie, Genève</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| BSFE           | <i>Bulletin de la Société française d'égyptologie</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| CAENL          | Contributions to the Archaeology of Egypt, Nubia and the Levant                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| CANE           | Sasson, Jack, ed. <i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East</i> . New York: Scribner's Sons, 1995.                                                                                                                                                   |
| CdE            | <i>Chronique d'Égypte. Bulletin périodique de la Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth</i>                                                                                                                                                         |
| CG             | Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| CoA I          | Peet, T. Eric, and C. Leonard Wooley. <i>The City of Akhenaten</i> . Part I: <i>Excavations of 1921 and 1922 at el-Amarnah</i> . MEES 38. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1923.                                                                   |
| CoA II         | Frankfort, Henri, and J. D. S. Pendlebury. <i>The City of Akhenaten</i> . Part II: <i>The North Suburb and the Desert Altars; The Excavations at Tell el-Amarna during the Seasons 1926–1932</i> . MEES 40. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1933. |
| CoA III        | Pendlebury, J. D. S. <i>The City of Akhenaten: The Central City and the Official Quarters</i> . MEES 44. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1951.                                                                                                    |
| CRIPEL         | <i>Cahiers de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille</i>                                                                                                                                                                  |
| EDAL           | <i>Egyptian and Egyptological Documents Archives Libraries</i>                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| EES EM         | Egypt Exploration Society Excavation Memoirs                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| EES OP         | Egypt Exploration Society Occasional Publications                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| EgyArch        | <i>Egyptian Archaeology</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| EPRO           | Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain, Leiden                                                                                                                                                                           |
| EU             | Egyptologische Uitgaven                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| EVO            | <i>Egitto e Vicino Oriente</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| FIFAO          | Fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Gardiner, EG   | Gardiner, Alan H. <i>Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950.                                                                                                                |
| GHP Egyptology | Golden House Publications Egyptology                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| GM             | <i>Göttinger Miszellen: Beiträge zur ägyptologischen Diskussion</i>                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| HÄB            | Hildesheimer ägyptologische Beiträge                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| HdO            | Handbuch der Orientalistik                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| HES            | Harvard Egyptological Studies                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| JAEI           | <i>Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| JARCE          | <i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| JJEA           | <i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| JEH            | <i>Journal of Egyptian History</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| JEOL           | <i>Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| JKDAI          | Jahrbuch des kaiserlich deutschen archäologischen Instituts                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| JAOS           | <i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| JSSEA          | <i>Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities</i>                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| LAAA           | <i>Liverpool Annals of Art and Archaeology</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| LD             | Lepsius, Richard. <i>Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien</i> . 12 vols. Berlin: Nicolai, 1849–1856.                                                                                                                                                  |
| LGG            | Leitz, Christian, et al., eds. <i>Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen</i> . 8 vols. OLA 110–116 and 129. Leuven: Peeters, 2002–2003.                                                                                              |

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|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LNP     | Lisht North Pyramid                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| MÄS     | Münchner Ägyptologische Studien                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| MDAIK   | Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| MEES    | Memoirs of the Egypt Exploration Society                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| MIFAO   | Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| MMJ     | <i>Metropolitan Museum Journal</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| MonAeg  | Monumenta Aegyptiaca                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| OBO     | Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| OIMP    | Oriental Institute Museum Publications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| OIP     | Oriental Institute Publications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| OLA     | Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| OLZ     | <i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| OMRO    | <i>Oudheidkundige mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden</i>                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Or      | <i>Orientalia</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| PdÄ     | Probleme der Ägyptologie                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| PM I.1  | Porter, Bertha, and Rosalind L. B. Moss. <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings</i> . Vol. 1: <i>The Theban Necropolis. Part 1: Private Tombs</i> . 2nd ed. Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1960.                      |
| PM I.2  | Porter, Bertha, and Rosalind L. B. Moss. <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings</i> . Vol. 1: <i>The Theban Necropolis. Part 2: Royal Tombs and Smaller Cemeteries</i> . 2nd ed. Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1964. |
| PM VIII | Porter, Bertha, and Rosalind L. B. Moss. <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Statues, Reliefs and Paintings</i> . Vol. 8, Parts 1 and 2: <i>Objects of Provenance Not Known: Statues</i> . 2nd ed. Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2008.   |
| PMMAEE  | Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| RdE     | <i>Revue d'égyptologie</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| RPN     | Ranke, Hermann. <i>Die ägyptischen Personennamen</i> . 2 volumes. Glückstadt: Augustin, 1935 and 1952.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| SAK     | <i>Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| SAOC    | Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| SDAIK   | Sonderschrift des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| SEP     | <i>Studi di Egittologia e Papirologia</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| StDem   | Studia Demotica                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| UCLAEE  | <i>UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology</i> . Los Angeles, 2010–. <a href="https://escholarship.org/uc/nelc_uee">https://escholarship.org/uc/nelc_uee</a>                                                                                                                     |
| Urk. IV | Sethe, Kurt. <i>Urkunden der 18. Dynastie</i> . Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums 4, fasc. 1–16. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1906–1909. 2nd rev. ed., 1927–1930. Continued by Wolfgang Helck, fasc. 17–22. Berlin, 1955–1958.                                                    |
| Wb.     | Erman, Adolf, and Hermann Grapow, eds. <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i> . 7 vols, plus 5 vols. Belegstellen. Berlin: AkademieVerlag, 1926–1963.                                                                                                                 |
| WVDOG   | Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| WVPM    | Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung (Pelizaeus-Museum)                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| ZÄS     | <i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| ZBA     | Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| ZDPV    | <i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

# Douglas Derry: Tutankhamun's Worst Nightmare

BOB BRIER

Because Tutankhamun's mummy was the only pharaoh's body found undisturbed in its tomb in the Valley of the Kings, Howard Carter had great hopes that that it would be the best preserved of all the royal mummies.<sup>1</sup> Those of Seti I and Ramses II were in remarkable condition,<sup>2</sup> and they had been plundered and moved from their original tombs. So, Tutankhamun's mummy engendered high expectations, but they were not to be met.

Soon after the nested shrines in the burial chamber were dismantled and the sarcophagus and coffin lids raised, it was discovered that the mummy of Tutankhamun was in poor condition.<sup>3</sup> Several gallons of sacred oils had been poured on the mummy at the time of burial and the mummy was stuck to the bottom of the innermost, gold coffin. The question was what to do. Carter had considerable experience excavating artifacts of all kinds, but mummies were a different thing altogether. Mummies are dead bodies, once living people, who died thousands of years ago, and often, people are not sure how to react. This is the case now, and it was the case in Carter's time. Today, however, we have a fairly well-developed discipline called "mummy studies."<sup>4</sup> There are experts. Today, almost always, if a mummy is found on an excavation, a specialist is called in to work with the mummy. In Carter's day, this was not yet standard practice.

Douglas E. Derry, professor of anatomy at Cairo University, was given the responsibility of working with the body.<sup>5</sup> Assisted by Dr. Saleh Bey Hamdi, Director of Sanitary Services in Alexandria, Derry began examining the mummy of Tutankhamun on November 11, 1925. Also attending was Pierre Lacau, the Director-General of the Antiquities Service, and several other officials. Photographer Harry Burton was, of course present and recorded the event.

Examining Tutankhamun's mummy was slow-going and took nearly a week. The unguents poured on the mummy had caused a chemical reaction with the bandages, darkening them by a slow spontaneous combustion. Because the fragile bandages could not be unrolled in such a state, Alfred Lucas, the chemist who worked with Carter on conservation,<sup>6</sup> brushed heated wax over the outer layer so that when the wax cooled, it could be cut away in a large piece. Derry made a longitudinal incision and peeled back the first layer to reveal amulets and jewelry incorporated within the wrappings. Over the next few days, as the layers of bandages were removed, Burton would photograph the position of amulets and jewelry, and Carter would remove them.<sup>7</sup> Then another layer of bandages could be removed and the process repeated.

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1. Howard Carter, *The Tomb of Tut.Ankh.Amen*, 2 volumes (New York: Cooper Square, 1966), 2:xxi.

2. G. Elliot Smith, *The Royal Mummies* (London: Duckworth, 2000), 9, 60.

3. Carter, *Tomb of Tut.Ankh.Amen*, 2:105.

4. Most scientists who study mummies are members of the Paleopathology Association. For a popular account of the kinds of studies done, see Heather Pringle, *The Mummy Congress* (New York: Hyperion, 2001).

5. Morris L. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1995), 123.

6. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who*, 263–64.

7. Carter, *Tomb of Tut.Ankh.Amen*, 2:pls. XXII and XXV.

They began by peeling away layers of bandages on the lower part of the mummy, eventually revealing Tutankhamun's gold sandals. Then the arms were bared and on the following day rings removed from the pharaoh's hands and bracelets from his arms. At the same time, the mummy of Tutankhamun was being removed from the coffin in pieces. The biggest problem was the torso, which was firmly glued to the bottom of the gold coffin.

First, Derry tried to chisel the mummy free, then he switched to heated knives, both operations causing considerable damage to the already fragile body. Finally, in desperation, he cut the mummy in half at the third lumbar vertebra so it could be removed in sections.<sup>8</sup> Derry's disregard for and rough treatment of the mummy destroyed physical evidence that might have revealed the cause of Tutankhamun's death. Carter had little idea of how much information could be gained by a careful examination, so he abandoned the mummy to Derry's rough handling. If Tutankhamun's throne had been stuck in the unguents, I doubt Carter would have permitted it to be sawed in half. The unguents would have been chemically analyzed and a solvent devised to free the throne without damage. Not so for poor Tutankhamun. The mummy was in poor shape when Derry started to work on it, but it was in far worse condition when he finished.

### The King Is a Boy

There were some benefits to the rough treatment that Tutankhamun's mummy received. His arms and legs had become disarticulated from their joints and thus Derry could clearly see the tops and bottoms of the long bones. This enabled him to estimate the approximate age at death for Tutankhamun. In young people, the ends of the long bones, the epiphyses, are loosely connected to the shafts by cartilage that becomes bone as the person ages.<sup>9</sup> This is one of the reasons why young people are more flexible than older people. Cartilage flexes, bones break. We know the average age at which the epiphyses join to the long bones, and the degree of this union is a reliable criterion of age. In the case of Tutankhamun, the kneecap could easily be lifted to examine the lower end of the femur, the longest bone in the body. The union of the tip of the lower end of the femur with the main shaft takes place at about the age of twenty. Here Derry could see cartilage; the union was not yet complete, therefore Tutankhamun was under twenty years of age. At the top of the femur is the great trochanter the part that fits into your hip and is what is replaced when one needs a hip replacement. This part unites with the femur's shaft at around eighteen or nineteen years of age. Here the head of the femur was solidly fixed to the neck of the bone, but Derry could still just see the line of the union. Derry concluded that Tutankhamun was less than twenty but over eighteen at the time of death. His estimate was accurate and still holds today.

There were other age indicators that Derry used, most of them still standard today. One was the eruption of the molars, which follow a fairly predictable schedule.<sup>10</sup> So, it is not surprising that Derry would want to confirm his other observations with the state of Tutankhamun's molars. In the appendix to Carter's second volume on the excavation, Derry observes, "The right upper and lower wisdom teeth had just erupted the gum and reached to about half the height of the second molar. Those on the left side were not so easily seen but appeared to be in the same stage of eruption."<sup>11</sup> This all makes sense and would again place the boy-king's age between eighteen and nineteen at the time of his death. But how did Derry exam-

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8. F. Filce Leek, *The Human Remains from the Tomb of Tut'ankhamun* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1972), 17 and pl. XXII.

9. Craig Cunningham, Louise Scheuer, and Sue Black, *Developmental Juvenile Osteology* (London: Academic Press, 2016) 8–13.

10. Cunningham, Scheuer, and Black, *Developmental Juvenile Osteology*, 14–15.

11. Carter, *Tomb of Tut.Ankh.Amen*, 2:155.

ine the molars? Tutankhamun's mouth was closed, so you can't see the molars. X-rays would have done it, but Tutankhamun was not x-rayed until much later. Again, how did Derry examine the molars? The answer is that he cut the skin that is around the mandible, pulling down the semicircular flap so he could look inside from the bottom. Then, using some of the readily available black sticky resin from the coffins, he glued the flap back up, and never told anyone.<sup>12</sup> There were other things Derry did to the mummy that he never mentioned, like the damage done to the head in removing it from the gold mask.

Derry established that Tutankhamen was about five feet six inches in height, slight of build, with no obvious cause of death ascertainable. Interestingly, the two guardian statues from the antechamber are almost exactly six feet, six inches tall, an accurate estimation. As an anatomist, he was quite good and his observations about Tutankhamun still hold up over the years. My complaint about Derry is about how he manhandled the body and didn't keep track of body parts sent to him.

I believe part of the reason for the rough treatment of Tutankhamun's mummy is Derry's background as an anatomist. Anatomists dissect bodies, they don't preserve them. In an era before mummy studies, even Derry didn't realize how much information is contained in a mummy. Still, he knew he had manhandled the body, and covered it up.

After Derry was done with his examination, the Antiquities Service decided that because Tutankhamun was the only pharaoh ever found undisturbed in his tomb, he should remain there. So, Derry reassembled the body on a wooden litter filled with sand in such a way as to conceal the damage done. The arms are crossed so the the cut across the lumbar region is hidden. But if you look closely, you can see that the bones are disarticulated; this is clearest at the shoulders. The tray was put inside the outer coffin and then lowered into the sarcophagus where it remained undisturbed for more than half a century.

In a sense, Derry was following in the tradition of Thomas Pettigrew's unrolling of mummies in the early nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> There was little concern for the preservation of the mummy and much of the focus was on the antiquities found within the wrappings. No scientific tests were done in Pettigrew's day, everything was based on visual observation and to a great extent, this was Derry's technique also.

As we have seen before, Carter had no great interest in mummies and when he selected Derry as his mummy expert he may not have made the best choice. Pettigrew, one hundred years earlier, was at least interested in the history of mummification, had studied it, and had written a book about it. He even took the time to learn the basics of hieroglyphs. Not so for Derry. Further, he was not a scholar and was not used to publishing research and never published a full report about his unwrapping of Tutankhamun. All we have is the appendix to the second volume in Carter's three-volume publication.<sup>14</sup> A better choice to examine Tutankhamun might have been Sir Grafton Elliot Smith, another anatomist, but one who had extensive experience with mummies and had already published the definitive work on the Royal Mummies.<sup>15</sup> Derry just didn't have enough experience and didn't seem to be aware of possibilities other than visual inspection. For example, x-raying Tutankhamun's head would have helped reveal how he had been mummified, but this would not happen for another sixty years.<sup>16</sup> Further, there were techniques available for studying soft tissue that might have revealed the presence of disease, but Derry didn't seem interested. True, it is difficult to work with the soft tissue of mummies, but it could have been done.

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12. Leek, *Human Remains*, 17–18.

13. Thomas Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies* (Los Angeles: North American Archives, 2015).

14. Douglas E. Derry "Report upon the Examination of Tutankhamen's Mummy," in Carter, *Tomb of Tut.Ankh.Amen*, 2:143–61.

15. G. Elliot Smith, *The Royal Mummies* (Cairo: Institut francais d'archaeologie orientale, 1912).

16. R. G. Harrison and A. B. Abdalla, "The Remains of Tutankhamun," *Antiquity* 46 (1972): 8–14.

When a body is mummified it is dehydrated and over the centuries becomes brittle, and with rough handling can break. It was a problem waiting to be solved. Sir Armand Ruffer,<sup>17</sup> a physician intrigued by mummies, came up with the solution. Ruffer, the son of a French baron, had studied at Oxford and later with the great Louis Pasteur, so he was a real scientist. While researching a serum for diphtheria, he contracted the disease, and like so many wealthy Europeans of his day, he went to Egypt to recuperate. He fell in love with the country and stayed, eventually becoming president of the Sanitary Council of Egypt.

When Ruffer first attempted to slice mummy tissue thinly enough to put under a microscope it was so brittle it crumbled. So, he developed a method to soften the tissues by soaking them in a solution of alcohol and five percent carbonate of soda. This softened the tissue enough for sectioning and microscopic investigation. The solution, still known today as “Ruffer’s solution” opened a new field of study, paleopathology, the study of diseases in the ancient world.<sup>18</sup>

This technique for studying soft tissue was available to Derry but as far as we know, he didn’t try it. In a recently found letter to Carter he says:

I have received the boxes containing the two fetuses & viscera, but have not had time to open them yet. When I do & have made another very careful examination I will write to you. Both Prof. Englehart (?) and Dr. Aziz Girgis have made several attempts to get something definite from the viscera they have been examining, but all cellular tissue has gone with the exception of some muscular fibres in what is almost certainly stomach or intestines. Apparently the organs had undergone extensive decomposition before mummification. Even eight hours in hot weather is enough to spoil tissues for microscopic work and it would seem therefore that in the 21st Dyn. they had much more perfect methods, as we got plenty of good stuff from mummies of that date.<sup>19</sup>

It is not absolutely clear which viscera the two doctors were working on. Derry said he didn’t have time to open the boxes Carter sent, so it probably wasn’t Tutankhamun’s. It would be nice to know what was tried, what worked, and what didn’t. Did they try Ruffer’s solution? As far as I know, no one ever published anything on Tutankhamun’s viscera. As is well known, the fetuses went missing for decades because Derry never returned them and the same is true of Tutankhamun’s viscera. I searched for the viscera in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, but with no luck. Now this recently discovered letter suggests they might be in storage at Derry’s hospital. It would be important to know which organs were placed in the four miniature coffins. If the stomach is there, its contents might tell us if Tutankhamun suffered a long, lingering death. The liver could tell us about possible diseases. Are the kidneys there? It doesn’t seem as if everything could fit in those small coffins. There is a great deal to be learned from a careful, scientific investigation of the organs.

How could the fetuses and viscera of the most famous pharaoh in history disappear for decades, unrecorded? The answer is simple. No one cared. Carter never asked Derry to return the fetuses or viscera. Did Carter, who was supposed to be so careful about cataloguing objects, ever give the viscera separate entry numbers? Rex Engelbach, director of the Egyptian Museum at the time, never asked where they were. These were human remains so no one wanted to deal with them. It was a similar story with Tutankhamun’s mummy; it didn’t disappear, but no one wanted to deal with it. After he was reassembled on the sand tray and placed in his sarcophagus, he was forgotten for decades. Few visitors to the tomb realized he was still inside his sarcophagus. No one knew what ravages the mummy of the boy-king had suffered at the hands of Douglas Derry.

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17. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who*, 367.

18. Armand Ruffer, *Studies in the Paleopathology of Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921).

19. Letter in the possession of Anthony Marks.

# Reconstructing Merenptah's Missing Coffin: Some Thoughts on a Royal Coffin and Coffin Craft Industry in the Valley of the Kings

NICHOLAS R. BROWN

It is with my upmost pleasure that I present the following research to Nicholas Reeves, a scholar whose interest in studying the Valley of the Kings has inspired many others' work, but who has also helped build the foundation of my own research within the field. My hope is that these brief thoughts and ideas into Merenptah's missing coffin and coffin craft industry within the Valley of the Kings will prove interesting and insightful to him. In gratitude for Nick's time, mentorship, and above all his dedicated research over the years to the Valley.

## Introduction

Some of the most significant finds from Egyptology include the discovery of the two royal caches in Western Thebes. Today these caches are known as Deir el-Bahri 320 (or Theban Tomb 320), discovered in 1881 by the Antiquities Service, and KV35, the tomb of Amenhotep II discovered in 1898 by Victor Loret.<sup>1</sup> These two hidden locations were the result of the state-sanctioned systematic looting and clearance of older royal tombs at Thebes, during the transition from the New Kingdom into the Third Intermediate period.<sup>2</sup> Both caches offer insight into the turbulent political and social climate at the time of their creation, as well as providing Egyptologists with an extensive source of data for royal mummification techniques and the recommodification and reuse of royal coffins.

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This study will appear in my doctoral dissertation, provisionally titled *Preparing for Eternity*, to be completed under the supervision of Drs. Kathlyn M. Cooney and Willeke Wendrich at UCLA (*insh'Allah!*). I would like to thank the following colleagues and mentors for their research assistance and notes on this article: C. Arbuckle MacLeod, K. Cooney, P. Lacovara, L. Pinch-Brock, and J. Winnerman.

1. Erhart Graefe and Galina Belova, *The Royal Cache TT320: A Re-Examination* (Cairo: Supreme Council of Antiquities 2010); Victor Loret, "Le tombeau de Aménophis II et la cachette royale de Biban el-Molouk," *Bulletin de l'institut Égyptien*, Troisième Série No. 6 (1899), 98–112; Georges Daressy, *Cercueils des Cachettes Royales* CG nos. 61001-61044 (Cairo: l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1909).

2. For arguments on the systematic plundering of these older tombs, see Nicholas Reeves, *The Valley of the Kings: Decline of a Royal Necropolis* (London: Kegan Paul 1990), 276–78; John H. Taylor, "Aspects of the History of the Valley of the Kings in the Third Intermediate Period," in *After Tut'ankhamun: Research and Excavation in the Royal Necropolis at Thebes*, ed. C. Nicholas Reeves (London: Kegan Paul 1992), 188; Karl Jansen-Winkel, "Die Plünderung der Königsgräber des Neuen Reiches," *ZÄS* 122 (1995): 66.

The work of the UCLA Coffins Project at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo<sup>3</sup> successfully demonstrated that many of the coffins found within these two royal caches were carefully stripped of valuable materials, were reprocessed, and were then reused for burial.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, in its analysis the project also studied the collection of coffins in an attempt to identify which coffins were the original burial containers for the royal mummy they held.<sup>5</sup> In some instances, kings were reburied in reused, updated, private coffins. Otherwise, many of the royal coffins found within both caches were shuffled around and traded between rulers of different dynasties, thus resulting in one king's coffin being recycled and reused for the burial of another king.<sup>6</sup> Such was the case for the reburial of Merenptah.

While the mummy of Merenptah (CG61079)<sup>7</sup> was discovered by Victor Loret in 1898 in the second royal cache (KV35), the king's body was reburied in the cartonnage coffin-trough of Sethnakht (CG61039).<sup>8</sup> No original coffin for Merenptah is known to exist from either of the royal caches;<sup>9</sup> the only known "burial containers" for the king are the three stone sarcophagi from his tomb (KV8), some partially reconstructed,<sup>10</sup> and a fourth sarcophagus that was found reused at Tanis.<sup>11</sup> However, there is textual and iconographic evidence from the Valley of the Kings that sheds light on the form of Merenptah's missing coffin in antiquity. By comparing a figural ostrakon discovered within Merenptah's tomb<sup>12</sup> with a textual record of the funerary preparations for Merenptah,<sup>13</sup> I believe we can better understand what the king's original coffin set possibly looked like and how it was prepared for his funeral. Additionally, these two ostraca provide Egyptologists with information about the use of the Valley of the Kings as an industrial site for the preparation of royal funerary equipment.

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3. Directed by Dr. Kathlyn Cooney, in collaboration with Egyptian colleagues from the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, including Mme. Sabbah Abdelrazik (museum director), Sara Hassan (section curator), and Marwa Badr el-Din (head of the registrars' department).

4. Kathlyn M. Cooney, *Recycling for Death* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, in press).

5. Examples include the coffin of Seqenenre-Tao (CG 61001), a potential coffin set belonging to Ahmose (CG 61002 and CG 61008), which was separated and reused for two burials in antiquity, and the coffin of Thutmose III (CG 61014). For more on these coffins, see Daressy, *Cercueils*; Cooney, *Recycling for Death*; or Nicholas R. Brown, "Raise Me Up and Repel My Weariness! A Study of the Coffin of Thutmose III (CG 61014)," *MDAIK* 76 (2020): 11–35..

6. For a possible explanation as to why this occurred, see Nicholas Reeves, "The Coffin of Ramesses II," in *Proceedings of the First Vatican Coffin Conference 19–22 June 2013*, ed. Alessia Amenta and Hélène Guichard, 2 volumes (Città del Vaticano: Edizioni Musei Vaticani 2017), 2:435–36.

7. Grafton Elliot Smith, *The Royal Mummies* (Cairo: l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1912), 65–70.

8. Daressy, *Cercueils*, 219; Reeves, *Valley of the Kings*, 196 and 204; Patrizia Piacentini and Christian Orsenigo, *La Valle Dei Re Riscoperta: I giornali di scavo di Victor Loret (1898–1899) e altri inediti* (Milan: Università degli Studi di Milano, 2004), p. L.

9. See Daressy, *Cercueils*, 242–43; see also Cooney, *Recycling for Death*.

10. Edwin C. Brock, "The Tomb of Merenptah and Its Sarcophagi," in Reeves, *After Tut'ankhamun*, 122–40.

11. Pierre Montet, *Les Constructions et le Tombeau de Psousennès Ier à Tanis*, La Nécropole royale de Tanis 2 (Paris: Centre national de la Recherche scientifique, 1951), 111–26.

12. Howard Carter, "Report of Work Done in Upper Egypt (1903–1904)," *ASAE* 6 (1906): pl. III.

13. Jaroslav Černý, *Ostraca Hiératiques*, CG (Nos 25501–25538) (Cairo: l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1930), 2, 2\*–3\*, and pl. 2; Andrea G. McDowell, *Village Life in Ancient Egypt: Laundry Lists and Love Songs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999), 223–25; Wolfgang Helck, *Die datierten und datierbaren Ostraka, Papyri und Graffiti von Deir el-Medineh*, ÄgAbh 63 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 87–88.

## Merenptah's Missing Coffin

During their 1905–1906 excavation season, Theodore Davis and Edward Ayrton discovered an ostrakon (O. Cairo CG 25504)<sup>14</sup> in the Valley of the Kings near the tomb of Bay (KV 13).<sup>15</sup> The text describes the funerary preparations that took place for Merenptah, from regnal year seven to regnal year eight, long before the king's death, since the highest attested year for Merenptah's reign is regnal year ten.<sup>16</sup> The text describes the work of the Deir el-Medina crew and the king's officials at the tomb (*p3 hr*) of the king within the Valley of the Kings (*t3 jn.t* and *sh.t*<sup>17</sup>), with discussions of bringing to the tomb “the gods” (ostensibly the small gilded statuettes found in royal tombs<sup>18</sup>), and an item made of alabaster.<sup>19</sup> Other noteworthy passages mention bringing the king's coffins (*wt.w*), one which was made from cedar wood (*wt n mrw*),<sup>20</sup> which strongly implies that the king had multiple coffins that comprised a nested set.

One particularly interesting passage deals with a scribe of the “House of Gold” (*sš n hwt-nbw*),<sup>21</sup> Huy, who spent two days in the Valley working (*hr-b3k.w*) on the king's coffin (*wt*). After Huy's two days of work at the necropolis, an Overseer of Craftsmen (*p3 jmy-r hmww*) visited the site to check Huy's work on the coffin. In addition to this textual record of Merenptah's coffins, along with the indication that some kind of “work” was performed on them within the Valley of the Kings, there is also iconographic evidence that provides Egyptologists with an idea of the size and look of Merenptah's coffin.

In 1903–1904, Howard Carter worked in the tomb of Merenptah (KV 8), clearing flood debris and making the tomb accessible for tourists.<sup>22</sup> While excavating the burial chamber, Carter discovered a figural ostrakon (fig. 1). The ostrakon shows what seems to be a coffin in two views, one frontal and the other in profile, and ostensibly these two views come from either side of the same limestone flake or pottery sherd. The frontal view clearly depicts a royal figure, who wears the *nemes* headdress and royal beard, and is holding a crook and flail in either hand. In profile, the figure again wears the same *nemes* headdress, though fronted by a *ureaus* (in the background) and a vulture (in the foreground),<sup>23</sup> with the headcloth's

14. Černý, *Ostraca Hiératiques*, 2, 2\*–3\*, and pl. 2; McDowell, *Village Life*, 223–25; Helck, *Datierten und datierbaren*, 87–88. For my full translation and analysis of this ostrakon, please see my forthcoming dissertation, provisionally titled *Preparing for Eternity*, to be completed at UCLA.

15. Reeves, *Valley of the Kings*, 298; see also Černý, *Ostraca Hiératiques*, 2.

16. Alexander J. Peden, *The Graffiti of Pharaonic Egypt: Scope and Roles of Informal Writing (c. 3100–332 BC)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 150 n. 94.

17. Černý notes that this term can refer to the Valley of the Kings, as opposed to a “field,” as it is an abbreviation of “*sh.t 3.t*” or “the Great Field.” This latter term is one of the attested toponyms of the royal necropolis. Though he stresses that the entire context of the text should be considered when determining whether “field” or the royal necropolis is being referred to by the scribe (Jaroslav Černý, *A Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period* [repr. Cairo: l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2004], 90–91).

18. Campbell Price, “Other Tomb Goods,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Valley of the Kings*, ed. Richard H. Wilkinson and Kent R. Weeks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 276–78.

19. Quite possibly the king's alabaster sarcophagus, as the item is said to be “for the coffin” (*r p3 wt*) (Brock, “The Tomb of Merenptah,” 125 and 130; Černý, *Ostraca Hiératiques*, 2\* and pl. 2).

20. Translation by author, based on Černý, *Ostraca Hiératiques*, 2\* and pl. 2; see also McDowell, *Village Life*, 223–25.

21. The “House of Gold” was an institution closely connected to the temple estate, responsible for producing and crafting high-quality statues of gods and kings, ritual implements, and other cult tools. The craftsmen associated with this institution were an initiated group, with some even selected personally by the king to work there based on their skills, craft knowledge, and access to high cost materials. For more, see Alexandra von Lieven, “Im Schatten des Goldhauses: Berufsgeheimnis und Handwerkerinitiation im Alten Ägypten,” *SAK* 36 (2007): 147–55.

22. Howard Carter, “Report of Work Done in Upper Egypt (1903–1904),” *ASAE* 6 (1906): 7; Reeves, *Valley of the Kings*, 291.

23. For further remarks on this dual cobra-vulture motif from this ostrakon, see Edna R. Russmann, “Vulture and Cobra

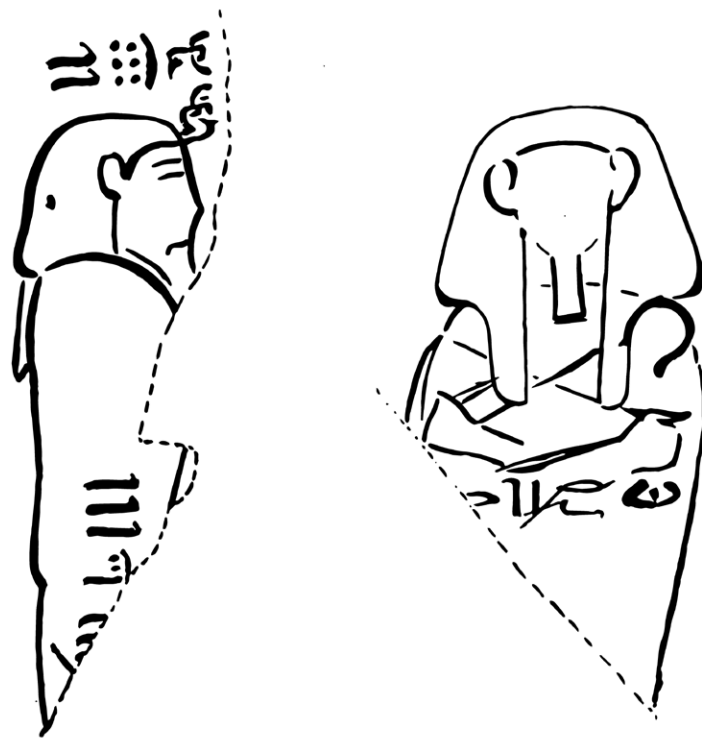


Figure 1. A figural ostracon discovered by Howard Carter from the tomb of Merenptah (KV8). The drawing depicts a royal coffin in two views and is captioned with the dimensions of the object in hieratic.

Drawing by Nicholas Brown after Carter 1906, pl. III.

pigtail running down the back of the head. In hieratic on the ostracon are notations of the object's height/depth, length, and width:<sup>24</sup>

*hy šsp-6 db<sup>c</sup>-2*

"Height: six palms and two digits"

*[3w mh-3] šsp-5 db<sup>c</sup>-3*

"[Length: three cubits] five palms and three digits"

*wsh mh-1 db<sup>c</sup>-1½*

"Width: one cubit and one and a half digits"

An ancient Egyptian cubit could be broken down into smaller units of measurement and was equal to seven palms or 28 digits (with one palm equaling four digits).<sup>25</sup> In the modern metric system, one ancient Egyptian cubit equals approximately 0.5231 meters,<sup>26</sup> and therefore one palm is 0.0747 meters, while one

at the King's Brow," in *Chief of Seers: Egyptian Studies in Memory of Cyril Aldred*, ed. Elizabeth Goring, Nicholas Reeves, and John Ruffle (repr. New York: Routledge, 2009), 269.

24. The author would like to thank J. Winnerman for notes on this translation.

25. Gardiner, *EG* 199 § 266.2.

26. Howard Carter and Alan Gardiner, "The Tomb of Ramesses IV and the Turin Plan of a Royal Tomb," *JEA* 4.2/3 (1917):

digit is 0.0187 meters. When compared to the captions on the figural ostrakon, the final metric measurements of the object can be approximated: its height/depth was 0.4856 meters, its length 1.9989 meters, and its width 0.5512 meters.

Howard Carter wrote that the image depicted a recumbent figure of the king lying on the royal sarcophagus, but it seems more appropriate to say that it is actually a depiction of a royal coffin, ostensibly one of those belonging to Merenptah. This is not the only example of a figural ostrakon of a coffin, as there are other ostraca that depict coffins from Western Thebes. One is now at the Museo Egizio in Turin and was discovered by Ernesto Schiaparelli in 1905 during his excavation at Deir el-Medina (Museo Egizio S.6306).<sup>27</sup> Additionally, in 1920 Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon discovered an ostrakon of a private Ramesside coffin on the slope just above Merenptah's tomb (MMA 23.7.1).<sup>28</sup> When the measurements from the KV 8 figural ostrakon are compared to other known examples of royal coffins (table 1), the reconstruction of the object's dimensions fits well within the range of coffin sizes for known Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Dynasty royal coffins.

Table 1. A comparison of New Kingdom royal coffins of kings and their dimensions. Note how the reconstructed dimensions of Merenptah's coffin fits within the range of known coffin sizes for the period. Note: \* = height taken from the foot end.

| Coffin Owner              | Museum No. | Length (m)    | Width (m)     | Height (m)    | Citation              |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Sequenre Tao              | CG 61001   | 2.12          | 0.70          | 0.56          | Daressy 1909, 1       |
| Thutmose I<br>/Panedjem I | CG 61025   | 2.32          | 0.72          | 0.70          | Daressy 1909, 50      |
| Thutmose III              | CG 61014   | 2.07          | 0.67          | 0.63          | Daressy 1909, 19      |
| KV55 Coffin Lid           | JE 39627   | 1.75          | 0.56          | --            | Davis et al. 1910, 16 |
| Tutankhamun               | GEM 7590   | 2.235         | 0.838         | 1.085*        | Carter card 253-1     |
| Tutankhamun               | JE 60670   | 2.04          | 0.68          | 0.785*        | Carter card 254-1     |
| Tutankhamun               | JE 60671   | 1.875         | 0.513         | 0.51*         | Carter card 255-1     |
| Ramses II                 | CG 61020   | 2.05          | 0.42          | 0.77          | Daressy 1909, 32      |
| <b>Merenptah</b>          | --         | <b>1.9989</b> | <b>0.5512</b> | <b>0.4856</b> | Carter 1906, pl. III  |

When compared to the other examples of coffins from the two royal caches, it seems likely that the coffin drawn on the KV 8 figural ostrakon depicts either the outer coffin of Merenptah or possibly his middle coffin.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, based on the drawing of the coffin, the decoration and iconography of Merenptah's coffin closely resembled other known royal coffins of the New Kingdom. This includes the use of the dual

136; see also: Franck Monnier, Jean-Pierre Petit, and Christophe Tardy, "The Use of the Ceremonial Cubit Rod as a Measuring Tool: An Explanation," *The Journal of Ancient Egyptian Architecture* 1 (2016): 1–9.

27. [https://collezioni.museoegizio.it/en-GB/material/S\\_6306](https://collezioni.museoegizio.it/en-GB/material/S_6306). The author is grateful to C. Arbuckle MacLeod for drawing this object to his attention.

28. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/555557>.

29. If he had a nested set of three coffins, such as those found within Tutankhamun's tomb (GEM 7590; JE 60670; JE 60671). However, a one-to-one comparison to the latter tomb assemblage should be exercised with some caution, as it is our only semi-intact tomb dated to the New Kingdom from the Valley of the Kings, and may therefore not be representative of typical royal funerary assemblages.

vulture-cobra motif at the forehead, the king wearing a *nemes* headdress, and the presence of the crook and flail insignia. Comparable examples of these decorative motifs include the three coffins of Tutankhamun (GEM 7590, JE 60670, and JE 60671),<sup>30</sup> or the outer coffin of Thutmose III (CG 61014).<sup>31</sup>

Although it is tempting to suggest then that this figural ostrakon from Merenptah's tomb was related to the scribe Huy's work, or the examination of the king's coffin by the Overseer of Craftsmen who later came to inspect Huy's work, it may never be possible to know if there is a direct connection between these two ostraca. Even though a relationship between the two ostraca is difficult to establish, what is clear is that both ostraca give insight into craft production and industry that happened within the Valley of the Kings during the New Kingdom.

### Coffin Craft Industry in the Valley of the Kings

It is interesting that "work" on Merenptah's coffin is mentioned taking place in the Valley of the Kings. But what kind of work? The exact location of the state-sponsored workshops that produced the funerary equipment of the king is unknown, though artistic and textual evidence suggests that workshops (in general) could be attached to temple estates or to the palace itself.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, there is always the possibility that more independent, officially state-sanctioned workshops existed on a craftsman's estate. The sculptor's workshop of Thutmose at Amarna serves as an example of such a workshop.<sup>33</sup> The near-finished products could have then been sent to the palace, temple, or Valley for completion.<sup>34</sup> It should also be taken into consideration that according to the textual record, there was a thriving "informal workshop" for funerary arts that was abundant during the Ramesside period in Western Thebes, but this seems to have been for private objects.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the exact location(s) where these items were crafted is uncertain, though some texts imply that it was regular practice for an artist or craftsman "to travel for craft commissions."<sup>36</sup>

Some archaeologists, however, suggest that it is not only at urban centers where production sites and craft industry can be found. More specifically, between 2017 and 2018, in the Western Valley of the Kings, a set of glass inlays typical of a New Kingdom royal coffin was discovered during excavations by the expedition working there.<sup>37</sup> The team proposed that the discovery of these inlays and a series of workmen's huts (or storehouses) nearby indicated that craft industry, such as the making of royal coffin inlays, was carried out within the Valley of the Kings itself, since the sides of the inlays were rough and

30. Howard Carter, *The Tomb of Tutankhamun*, Vol. 2: *The Burial Chamber*, repr. ed. (New York, NY: Cooper Square, 1963), pls. LXVI–LXXI.

31. Brown, *Raise Me Up!*

32. Caroline Joan Arbuckle, "A Social History of Coffins and Carpenters in Ancient Egypt" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2018), 132–35. For general comments on craft industry, as represented at Amarna, see Barry Kemp, *The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti: Amarna and Its People* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 281–99.

33. For more on this workshop, see Barry Kemp and Anna Stevens, *Busy Lives at Amarna: Excavations in the Main City (Grid 12 and the House of Ranefer, N49.18)*, 2 vols., EES Excavation Memoir 90 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2010), 493–94.

34. Arbuckle, "A Social History", 135.

35. Kathlyn M. Cooney, *The Cost of Death: The Social and Economic Value of Ancient Egyptian Funerary Art in the Ramesside Period* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten 2007), 162–72.

36. Cooney, *Cost of Death*, 166.

37. Zahi Hawass, "The Discoveries of the Egyptian Expedition at the Valley of the Monkeys, Western Valley: December 15, 2017–April 10, 2018 Season," in *From the Field of Offerings: Studies in Memory of Lanny D. Bell*, ed. Sue D'Auria and Peter Lacovara (Columbus, GA: Lockwood Press, 2023), 62–64, figs. 13–16.

unfinished.<sup>38</sup> Yet, the press releases at the announcement of their discoveries did not show any evidence of inlay production from the site, such as the tools to cut these inlays, debitage, or glass blanks to create the chevron inlays.<sup>39</sup> However, the events as described in O. Cairo CG 25504 support the idea that some work was carried out on coffin production within the royal necropolis itself, and thus supports the archaeologists' suggestion that some type of craft industry happened within the Valley. Furthermore, the figural ostrakon from Merenptah's tomb demonstrates that measurements and checks on the near-finished products were carried out at the necropolis itself. Though the exact nature of the "work" that Huy performed on Merenptah's coffin is not entirely clear, it is possible that Huy's work at the necropolis was to provide finishing touches to the coffin's decoration, or quite possibly to double-check its size for a nesting coffin ensemble. Other pieces of archaeological evidence from the Valley support this later suggestion in particular.

In the Eighteenth Dynasty burials of both Maiherpri and Tutankhamun, archaeological evidence indicates that finishing touches and final checks on dimensions of coffins was not completed in antiquity. In the tomb of Maiherpri (KV36), Victor Loret discovered an unfinished and unused coffin in the burial chamber, with the trough flipped upside down at the center of the room.<sup>40</sup> Aidan Dodson convincingly argued that final preparations for this particular coffin were meant to be carried out in the tomb or within the Valley, but the error in coffin sizing was only noticed during the final preparations for the burial, and thus it seems the coffin was abandoned in the tomb.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, from the tomb of Tutankhamun (KV62), Howard Carter discovered that the outermost coffin of the king (GEM 7590) did not fit properly into the stone sarcophagus, and prevented the sarcophagus's lid from closing properly. He noted that the top of the foot end was thus chipped away with an adze, and he later found these gilded chips at the bottom of the stone sarcophagus. This last-minute alteration of the coffin in the tomb was then covered over with a black resinous material to hide the workmen's alterations to the outermost coffin.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps, either having learned from their predecessors, or sizing just being common practice in funerary assemblage creation under normal circumstances, it is possible then that the scribe Huy and his peers would have worked on the coffin of Merenptah within KV 8 in order to avoid such errors on the day of the funeral itself. The textual record of Huy spending two days working on the coffin of Merenptah, the Overseer of Craftsmen's inspection of this work and the figural ostrakon with the dimensions of the royal coffin all help to support the idea that craft industry of some kind happened to coffins within the royal necropolis.

Even though there is textual and archaeological evidence to show that a craftsman worked on royal funerary equipment within the Valley of the Kings, the type of work performed on the coffin itself is uncertain. Was Huy there to actually construct Merenptah's coffin? Or was his job to put finishing touches to the decoration of an already completed coffin? Did Huy spend two days checking the royal coffin's final measurements? Or was he helping to fit together a complicated nesting set of coffins? Even with the available evidence as listed above, it would seem doubtful that Huy was at the necropolis to do major, extensive

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38. Hawass, "Discoveries of the Egyptian Expedition."

39. For example, Nevine el-Aref, "Zahi Hawass Announces Two Archaeological Discoveries by His Team in Luxor," *Ahram Online* (October 2019), <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/9/40/352581/Heritage/Ancient-Egypt/Zahi-Hawass-announces-two-archaeological-discoveries.aspx>; Zahi Hawass, "One of Our Very First Discoveries...", *Facebook* (October 2019), <https://www.facebook.com/112384738789408/photos/pb.100044332304573.-2207520000../2895745283786659/?type=3>.

40. Reeves, *Valley of the Kings*, 141–42; Piacentini and Orsenigo, *La Valle Dei Re Riscoperta*, 276–78.

41. Aidan Dodson, "On the Burial of Maihirpri and Certain Coffins of the Eighteenth Dynasty," in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists*, ed. Christopher J. Eyre, OLA 82 (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 335.

42. Carter, *Tomb of Tutankhamun*, 89–90.

construction work on the coffin. To date there is still no substantial proof to suggest that the crafting of any royal coffins was carried out within the Valley of the Kings.

### Conclusions about Merenptah's Coffin

*"You either find grand things, or nothing at all."*

– Lord Carnarvon<sup>43</sup>

Lord Carnarvon was right to say that you can find "grand things" while working in the Valley of the Kings. Although sometimes what one discovers is not golden treasure or beautiful objects, but rather it is more information and knowledge than you knew before. When one conducts a study like this, the information can lead to more questions asked than answers found.

What is clear to Egyptologists from the textual and iconographic evidence is that Merenptah had multiple coffins (*wt.w*) employed for his burial, one of which was made from cedar wood (*mrw*). One of these coffins was sketched onto an ostrakon and captioned with its measurements, which helps shed light on the coffins size and decoration. Based on the reconstructed size of the coffin, the figural ostrakon that Howard Carter discovered within KV 8 likely depicts the outermost or middle coffin of Merenptah, at nearly two meters. According to the drawing of the king's coffin, the object's decorative motifs were quite similar to other known royal coffins from the New Kingdom, including the dual vulture-cobra motif on the forehead, the presence of a *nemes* headdress, and fisted arms carrying both a crook and flail. Furthermore, the measurements from the figural ostrakon strongly suggest that the craftsmen commissioned to work on this piece carried out final measurements of the coffin, in order to ensure that it would properly fit within the nested set of coffins and/or within the stone sarcophagi within Merenptah's tomb.

It is possible that the work carried out on royal coffins in the Valley of the Kings was meant for the final application of decoration or to check the final measurements of royal funerary equipment during the New Kingdom. But make no mistake, our understanding of royal funerary assemblage production and industry is still limited: it is uncertain where exactly these items were initially constructed in antiquity. While there is growing evidence to propose that items were worked on and eventually stored within the Valley of the Kings itself, this does not necessarily mean that they were entirely produced there. Other localities should be considered, such as the industrial areas associated with the royal palace or the workshops attached to temple estates. That being said, given the loss and repeated habitation of ancient settlement sites like Memphis and Heliopolis, such craft industry location may be impossible to reconstruct.

There is sometimes a misconception or misunderstanding of the Valley of the Kings as a static, sacred necropolis. But it is important to view this site through an alternate lens, one that shows the true nature of this dynamic and complex landscape as a place of activity and human interaction throughout the New Kingdom.

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43. As quoted in Nicholas Reeves and Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Valley of the Kings: Tombs and Treasures of Egypt's Greatest Pharaohs* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), 48.

# What Counts in Cattle Branding? Two Amarna-Era Brands from the Eton College Myers Collection

BETSY M. BRYAN

PHYSICAL ANALYSIS BY SANCHITA BALACHANDRAN

Among the Egyptian objects that Col. Joseph Myers bequeathed to his beloved Eton College upon his sad death in the Boer War in 1899, are two cattle brands of particularly fine quality, ECM 1771 and 1770 (figs. 1 and 2). The brands are part of a loan from Eton to Johns Hopkins University from 2010 to 2030, during which time the Archaeological Museum is cataloguing and studying the numerous works entrusted. Since Nick Reeves was earlier the curator and careful recorder of the Myers Collection, it is only appropriate that I choose to honor him with a brief study of these brands. There is no one more omnivorous in his interest in and love of Egyptian objects. Cattle brands can hardly be an exception. The discussion below centers on what we know about the use of brands in the New Kingdom (and later) in order to better understand these two specific examples. The entry on brands in the *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* contains a general overview of the types and uses of brands and remains a useful source.<sup>1</sup>

Branding utensils are depicted in a tomb painting in the chapel of Kenamun, TT 93. Figure 3 depicts a portion of the yearly taxed commodities from the northern regions of Egypt. Several brands are shown atop a box (the same brands also appearing in the register above this), and the right-most one bears the glyphs for *pr nfr*, the central one a single eye, *ir*, and the left the prenomen of Amenhotep II, *ʿ3-ḥprw-rʿ*.<sup>2</sup> Peru-Nefer is a well-attested port from the New Kingdom, and Kenamun was none other than the royal steward for the estate of Peru-Nefer.<sup>3</sup> In the tomb representation it may have been an actual brand identifying cattle associated with the tax revenues for that estate, as Davies suggested, or it may have been an imaginary brand mark to associate Kenamun's roles as royal steward of Peru-Nefer and Overseer of the Cattle of Amun, etc., with the scene of yearly taxation produce.<sup>4</sup>

Norman de Garis Davies surmised that the three brands depicted in Kenamun's tomb painting represented the king's cattle, the god Amun's herd referring to the god as *irw*, and an institutional landholder, Peru-Nefer.<sup>5</sup> Given that *irw* also is the designation for the overall taxation process, it is perhaps preferable to understand the *irw* brand in TT 93 in connection with the tax census. The same brand emblem appears

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1. Arne Eggebrecht, "Brandstempel," *LÄ* 1:850–52.

2. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Ken-Amūn* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930), 33; pl. XXVIII with pls. XXV–XXX.

3. Davies, *Tomb of Ken-Amūn*, 12–14, 17; Manfred Bietak, "The Impact of Minoan Art on Egypt and the Levant: A Glimpse of Palatial Art from the Naval Base of Peru-nefer at Avaris," in *Cultures in Contact from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Sarah B. Graff, and Yelena Rakic (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), 188–99.

4. Davies, *Tomb of Ken-Amūn*, 12–17, 33.

5. Davies, 33.