Rogério Sousa, Alessia Amenta and Kathlyn M. Cooney

This book gathers a collection of essays by leading scholars on the Tomb of the Priests of Amun (Bab el-Gasus), where the burial of 153 individuals who lived under the 21st Dynasty have been unearthed, creating the largest undisturbed tomb ever found in Egypt. This is the first publication to present a coherent vision of this find, with papers addressing the excavation and subsequent treatment in museums around the world and in Egypt; carpentry and decoration of coffins; Ramesside coffin economics; the conservation of the 'yellow coffins' of the Third Intermediate Period; as well as the funerary goods associated with them; the history of the collections that had been given away to foreign countries in 1893, including their reception and subsequent treatment in museums around the world and in Egypt; and the inventory and integrated study and publication of the objects found in the Tomb of the Priests of Amun (Bab el-Gasus), Turin, for the study of the Gate of the Priests Project, for the study of the Gate of the Priests Project, for the study of the Gate of the Priests Project. This book gathers a collection of essays by leading scholars on the Tomb of the Priests of Amun (Bab el-Gasus), where the burial of 153 individuals who lived under the 21st Dynasty have been unearthed, creating the largest undisturbed tomb ever found in Egypt. This is the first publication to present a coherent vision of this find, with papers addressing the excavation and subsequent treatment in museums around the world and in Egypt; carpentry and decoration of coffins; Ramesside coffin economics; the conservation of the 'yellow coffins' of the Third Intermediate Period; as well as the funerary goods associated with them; the history of the collections that had been given away to foreign countries in 1893, including their reception and subsequent treatment in museums around the world and in Egypt; and the inventory and integrated study and publication of the objects found in the Tomb of the Priests of Amun (Bab el-Gasus), Turin, for the study of the Gate of the Priests Project, for the study of the Gate of the Priests Project, for the study of the Gate of the Priests Project.

Elizabeth Anne Bottari - 2017

BAB EL-GASUS IN CONTEXT
REDISCOVERING THE TOMB OF THE PRIESTS OF AMUN
Edited by
Rogério Sousa, Alessia Amenta and Kathlyn M. Cooney

In press.

In the context of the excavations carried out in the 19th century, the tomb of the Priests of Amun has remained largely inaccessible. This publication offers a coherent vision of this find, with papers addressing the excavation and subsequent treatment in museums around the world and in Egypt; carpentry and decoration of coffins; Ramesside coffin economics; the conservation of the 'yellow coffins' of the Third Intermediate Period; as well as the funerary goods associated with them; the history of the collections that had been given away to foreign countries in 1893, including their reception and subsequent treatment in museums around the world and in Egypt; and the inventory and integrated study and publication of the objects found in the Tomb of the Priests of Amun (Bab el-Gasus), Turin, for the study of the Gate of the Priests Project, for the study of the Gate of the Priests Project, for the study of the Gate of the Priests Project.

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EGITTO ANTICO
Photo taken during the clearance of the tomb on the 5th February 1891 (from the archives of the Collège de France. Éugène Grébaut, Mohamed Abd el-Rassoul and Georges Daressy stand in the center).
BAB EL-GASUS IN CONTEXT
REDISCOVERING THE TOMB OF THE PRIESTS OF AMUN

Edited by
ROGÉRIO SOUSA, ALESSIA AMENTA AND KATHLYN M. COONEY

2021
«L’ERMA» di BRETSCHNEIDER
Roma - Bristol
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Contributors
This volume gathers the contributions of scholars who convened in Lisbon on the 19-20th September, 2016, on the premises of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. This meeting was held under the auspices of the Centre of Classical and Humanistic Studies from the University of Coimbra, and the Centre of History from the University of Lisbon, on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the discovery of the Tomb of the Priests of Amun.

We are deeply indebted to the institutions that supported this conference and to all the colleagues and scholars who joined us in Lisbon, sharing the results of their work and contributing to enhance the significance of the Tomb of the Priests as a field of research. To the core of study areas formed by the papers presented at the conference, others have since joined, widening the areas under scrutiny. This material is now being investigated from a variety of different angles – philologically, archaeologically, art historically, iconographically, socially, economically, and materially, even to the point of reconstructing methods of craft specialization and finding better methods of object conservation.

The Tomb of the Priests of Amun, also known as Bab el-Gasus, is the largest undisturbed tomb ever found in Egypt. This collective tomb held the burials of 153 priests and priestesses of Amun who lived under the 21st Dynasty (ca. 1069-945 BC). Equipped with sophisticated defensive systems, the tomb successfully escaped millennia of harm from potential robbers and intruders. In the year 1891, within its galleries, Eugène Grébaut and Georges Daressy unearthed a vast hoard of funerary equipment consisting of 254 coffins, a large collection of papyri, 110 boxes containing ushebtis, 80 statuettes, various inscribed stelae, among many other artefacts. When the mummies were unwrapped by Georges Daressy and Daniel Fouquet, and later on by Grafton Elliot-Smith, additional material was uncovered from within the mummy wrappings (e.g., amulets, papyri) thus extending considerably the collection of objects found in the tomb. This immense documental corpus provides a significant source of information, shedding light onto one of the most obscure periods of the Egyptian history marked by social crisis. With objects dating from different moments of the 21st Dynasty, the tomb offers a vivid portrait of the funerary material culture of this period.
In spite of the richness of this find, its reception by and subsequent dispersion to 17 different countries created a massive loss of context, and, in terms of archaeological information, almost complete oblivion. Only the rise of a global scientific community has made it possible to put the pieces of the puzzle back together and regain a holistic understanding of this heavily scattered find, eventually coalescing into a unique field of site and object research, offering relevant material for museological work, the reconstruction of the original composition of the burials, and endless resources for the study of iconographic symbolism, religious texts, workshop practices, and socioeconomic studies.

The Gate of the Priests Project was set up in 2013 aiming at gathering scholars carrying out research on materials from this find. The Project includes the University of Leiden, the University of California - Los Angeles, the Royal museums of Art and History in Brussels, the Vatican Museums, the Museo Egizio in Turin, the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, and the Louvre Museum in Paris. In this volume we use the terminology adopted in the publications of Gate of the Priests Project, except when the authors explicitly requested the use of a different methodology. Over the years, as new publications had come to light, this terminology integrated, and it will continue to integrate, many useful suggestions proposed by other projects and scholars.

This volume thus represents the culmination of years of work by dozens of different researchers of the Tomb of the Priests as a major archaeological find. Despite that, it is clear that we are only at the beginning of the systematic study of this find, which offers inexhaustible material for museological research, as well as endless resources for iconographic studies, workshop practices, and socioeconomic studies.

Regarding the preparation of this volume, we would like to express our gratitude to Ambers Wells-Myers and Agnes Purzycka who supported us with the revision of the texts and in the elaboration of the Index. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the priceless support and encouragement provided by “L’Erma” di Bretschneider to the publication of this work.

The Editors
Rogério Sousa, Alessia Amenta, Kathlyn M. Cooney
There is no doubt that the discovery of the Tomb of the Priests of Amun stands out as one of the most important events in Egyptian archaeology. The significance of this find is due both to its dimension – 153 burials – and to the extraordinary fact that it was found undisturbed, with these finds perfectly preserved. These combined aspects would seem to dictate a fortunate fate for the site and its objects, but a combination of historical and political events have conspired to keep the Tomb of the Priests hidden in an oblivion, lasting more than a century.

THE STORY OF A FIND

At the time when the tomb was found, Eugene Grébaut was the Director of the Service des Antiquités d’Égypte. He had succeeded Gaston Maspero to this position in 1883 but unlike his predecessor, he did not have much support from the political and diplomatic quarters, nor from scholars,1 both of whom revealed themselves to be critical for the French Direction of the Service, now under pressure during the British occupation of Egypt,2 so much so that he was forced to resign his leadership in 1892, just one year after the major archaeological discovery occurred in Deir el-Bahari.

Indeed, it is possible that the logistic challenges raised by this find played a major role in this professional turnover. The fact is that Eugène Grébaut left his discovery unpublished,3 a travesty which was only mitigated thanks to the diligent involvement of Georges Daressy. At the moment of the discovery, on the 4th of February 1891, Daressy was working at the Luxor temple across the river from Deir el Bahari. Quite unlike

1 Orsenigo 2010, 132.
2 Orsenigo 2010, 132.
most of his predecessors, Daressy was a diligent and detail oriented recorder of archaeological information. As a comparison, we can even point out that just ten years before the Tomb of the Priests discovery, when the Royal Cache was taken over by the Service des Antiquités under the direction of Gaston Maspero, no record of the find was made.

Fortunately, the Tomb of the Priests was found during a turning point of Egyptian archaeology, when a new scientific awareness was rising among scholars regarding the importance of adopting new methods for recording the position and the composition of the finds. These scientific interests notwithstanding, it was really the dedication showed by Daressy that saved so much information about the find – not only during the clearance of the tomb, but also during the examination of the mummies which would take place in the years to come.

This lapse in time between discovery and publication also witnessed important technological changes, particularly the innovation of photography, which now played a larger role in the documentation of archaeological finds.

Seen in countless labels and notes on illustrations and photographs, the records are consistent in showing that it was Daressy who took careful notes, which he later published in the *Annales du Service des Antiquités d’Égypte* (Figs. 1/4) and which provide the most valuable sources for the reconstruction of the original composition of the tomb.

On the 5th of February 1891 the archaeological team started the clearance of the tomb. Inside the galleries Daressy numbered the coffin sets in labels glued to the headboard (these numbers form the A-list) according to the position they occupied in the tomb, beginning with those closest to the entrance (Fig. 3).

Outside, a gang of workers lifted the finds out of the shaft under the supervision of Eugène Grébaut and Urbain Bouriant. While preparing the objects for their transportation to the steamer, Bouriant assigned a different serial number to each object (these numbers form the B-list). Twice a day, a procession of bearers carried the finds across the flood plain, to be loaded onto the Giza Museum’s steamer anchored along the Nile bank.

A photo recently released by the Collège de France shows the only known photographic record of this operation. Standing amongst a crowd of workers at the background, three men face the camera (from left to right): Eugène Grébaut, Mohamed Abd el-Rassul and Georges Daressy (Frontispiece). They stand on the west side of the shaft, in the midst of nearly a dozen coffin sets pulled from the tomb, among which the

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4 Daressy 1907, 3.
5 Daressy 1907, 3.
only recognizable set is the one belonging to Paennesittaui (A.11), suggesting that the photo was taken on the first day of the tomb’s clearance, i.e., on February 5th.

The records published by Daressy acknowledge the role played by Mohamed Abd el-Rassul in the discovery of the tomb, pointing out that it was Mohamed who had revealed the location of the tomb to Grébaut. This valuable tip proved to be correct, and indeed it was given before any real damage was done to the find, particularly as compared to the Royal Cache, which had already been resourcefully ‘explored’ and exploited by the Rassul clan before Antiquities agents claimed it. The Tomb of the Priests by contrast, was undisturbed; it was the confusion of events after its discovery that caused such a loss of information.

In any case, the photo pays a deserved homage to Mohamed Abd el-Rassul, including him among the team of French excavators of the tomb.

The clearance of the tomb was completed in just 8 days, with excavators completing their task on the 13th of February. During this time Daressy himself took personal care of the security of the find and slept in a tent near the shaft’s entrance. The final list of objects cleared from the tomb and brought on board included:

- 153 coffin sets, of which 101 include two coffins and 52 a single coffin
- 110 *ushebti*-boxes
- 77 wooden statuettes of Osiris, most of them hollowed and holding a papyrus scroll
- 8 wooden stelae
- 2 large wooden statuettes of Isis and Nephthys
- 16 canopic vases
- 1 mat
- 10 baskets of reeds
- 5 round baskets
- 2 fans
- 5 pairs of sandals
- 11 baskets with food (with meat, fruits, etc.)
- 6 baskets with floral garlands
- 5 large vases
- 5 pots
- 1 box with wooden hands and divine beards ripped from coffins.

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6 Perdu 2017, 34. This coffin set is kept at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (JE 29698).
7 Daressy 1907.
8 Daressy 1900, 144-145.
With its precious cargo finally secure on board, the vessel set off downriver to Cairo, which was finally reached some months later at the beginning of May. This material was then registered in the *Journal d’Entrée* originating a third serial list.

To make this process of clearance and multiple registration somehow more problematic, it was in that same year that the collection exhibited in the Boulaq Museum was transferred to a former khedival palace in Giza. During this time, only a sample of selected objects from the Tomb of the Priests was accommodated on the first floor of the Giza Museum (rooms 57-61, 76-83, and 85-86).
However, the sheer number of objects created a serious logistic problem for museum staff, and decision was made to gift a large portion of the find to representatives of diplomatic missions represented in Cairo on the occasion of the coronation of the Khedive Abbas II Hilmy.9

As a result, only a selection of the Tomb of the Priests coffins was retained for the Giza Museum while the rest of the objects was divided into deaccessioned groups, each containing 4 to 5 coffins, nearly 90 *ushebtis* and one or two *ushebti*-boxes.10 On the 10th of June, 1891, a selection of lots took place in the Giza Museum.11 Finally, in 1893 these lots of antiquities were sent to the 17 countries involved in this diplomatic operation.12

From the collection of funerary objects that remained in Egypt, one group was sent to the Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, while the rest of the material was transferred to the newly created Egyptian Museum situated on Tahrir Square in 1902. These internal Egyptian transfers only added to the confusion, creating increasing uncertainty about the correct identification of the objects. Indeed, it is quite possible that during this period of time, a good number of the currently unallocated artefacts were sold by the antiquities authorities to unknown buyers. The mummy and coffin case kept in the Albany Institute of History and Art in New York, for instance, figures among one such situation, having arrived from Egypt in 1909.13

Yet more internal transfers of antiquities are now underway; most recently, the Tomb of the Priests collection remaining in Egypt has been dispersed further still to several newly created museums in Egypt, including the Textile Museum in Cairo, the Mummification Museum in Luxor, the National Museum in Alexandria, the Suez Museum and many provincial museums up and down the Nile. This process of dispersal has been further exacerbated by the creation of the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Fostat and the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza, to which most of the remaining collection is planned to be moved.

Museum transfers notwithstanding, it is the different inventory numbers assigned to the objects at three different times (1) when they were documented in the tomb by Daressy, 2) when they were removed from the site and loaded onto the steamer; and 3) when they arrived to the Giza Museum) that makes the correct identification of the objects so very difficult. All of this unintended confusion accumulated only after the discovery of the Tomb of the Priests, creating an enormous jigsaw puzzle with many lost pieces, requiring dozens of researchers and hundreds of years to solve.

11 MANN, GRECO, and WEISS 2018, 37-38.
12 At first only six nations were chosen to receive these gifts: the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, England, the Prussian Empire, Russia, France and the Vatican. See MANN, GRECO, WEISS 2018, 37-38.
13 Case of Ankhefenmut (Albany Institute of History & Art, Gift of Samuel W. Brown, 1909.18.1b).
As for the tomb itself, given that no decoration was ever found on its walls, it remained neglected even though it remains one of the largest such spaces ever found in the Theban necropolis (Fig. 2). In fact, shortly after the clearance of the tomb, the shaft was again filled up with the debris Grébaut himself had removed, and it remained inaccessible until reopened in 1924 by Herbert Winlock of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Winlock subsequently used the empty corridors of the tomb as a magazine for the storage of artefacts found during the excavations he directed at Deir el-Bahari. When Winlock abandoned the site, the shaft would be refilled with debris, and it was not until 1969 that the Polish Mission at Deir el-Bahari opened and cleared the tomb once more. Ten years later, in 1979, the Egyptian Antiquities Organization granted the Polish Mission permission to use the empty tomb for storing finds made in the ruined Thutmose III funerary temple at Deir el-Bahari. At that time a plan was made by architect Rafal Czedner, which is the most updated plan of the tomb thus far. Recently the mouth of the shaft has been fitted and protected with a removable cover, keeping the tomb safe from looting or desecration, but problematic for further

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research. Indeed, no access has been granted to researchers willing to pursue further studies on the structures of the tomb.

The tomb itself never received a serial number. Georges Daressy accurately designated it as the ‘Tomb of the Priests of Amun’. However, in his reports, Daressy also added the expression “Deuxième Trouvaille de Deir el-Bahari”, thus forever associating this 1891 find with the 1881 discovery of the Royal Cache in Theban Tomb 320, one being the “first” find and the other, the “second.” Unfortunately this designation ended up being more widely used in Egyptological literature than the simple and straightforward designation proposed by Daressy, contributing to a rather nebulous perception of the now scattered find. Eventually, the word ‘cache’ or even ‘cachette’ became associated with the Tomb of the Priests of Amun, and thus some Egyptologists call it the “Second Deir el Bahari Cache” or similar.

Daressy’s moniker ‘Tomb of the Priests’ likely finds its origins in the local traditions of Sheikh abd el Gurnah. Indeed, this phrase could be translated directly from the dialectal form of Arabic in use by Gurnawi workmen, resulting in the local designation of the tomb as ‘Bab el-Gasawsa’, which literally means ‘Gate of the Priests’, as Egyptians traditionally see pharaonic tombs as ‘gates’ into the netherworld. This Arabic phrase was probably wrongly interpreted by Herbert Winlock, who recorded it as ‘Bab el-Gasus’, which in fact means ‘Gate of the Spies’. It is perhaps for this reason that the expression was corrected to ‘Bab el-Kusus’, certainly by scholars familiar with the Cairene form of Arabic, and eventually adapting it to the typical Gurnawi pronunciation and spelling with a -g, instead of -k, resulting in the name ‘Bab el-Gusus’. No surprise that the villagers of Gurnah do not use this expression to describe the tomb.

No matter what it was called, the Tomb of the Priests discovery made a splash; news quickly reached Europe, published in a number of popular magazines and journals. In France the news was received with enthusiasm by the press. On the 4th of April 1891 the journal Illustration published a long article on the discovery with two illustrations by Émile Bayard. On the 31st of October 1891 the journal La Science Illustrée published a notice concerning the study of the mummies of the priests of Amun, accompanied by an illustration drawn after a photo taken in Giza during the unwrapping of a mummy by Daniel Fouquet.

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17 We would like to thank our colleague Dr. Eltayeb Abbas for the enlightening discussions that we had on this question and for his valuable remarks and observations on the use of these expressions among the villagers of Sheikh Abd el-Gurnah.
18 Winlock 1922.
20 Perdu 2017, 38.
Despite all the logistic problems raised by the huge number of objects, it is clear that the find drew the attention of scholars, particularly to the possibilities offered for the study of the mummies. From the moment they arrived at the Giza Museum, researchers began to unwrap the mummies, their various amuletic and papyri contents removed from linen bandages and summarily inventoried (Fig. 5). The unwrapping of the mummies, carried out by Daniel Fouquet, was attended by illustrious visitors, and it was eventually memorialized in a magnificent painting by Paul Dominique Philippoteaux.\textsuperscript{21}

The first report published in 1907 by Daressy supplies the results of the examination of 93 coffin sets, without providing any explanation why he did not report any findings about the other 60 burial assemblages. It seems that some of these unrecorded burials were later integrated in the Foreign Lots (29), while others had been sent to Cairo Egyptian Museum at Tahrir (19). However, the location of twelve such burials is still unknown.

\textsuperscript{21} Perdu 2017, 38.
A report dating from 1902 clarifies that the examination of the mummies was still carried out in the Giza Museum,\textsuperscript{22} detailing that, after the first examination, the mummies were then sent to the Medical School in Cairo to complete the research.\textsuperscript{23} The examination of the body cavities revealed that at least 18 mummies were equipped with wax figurines depicting the Four Sons of Horus. Researchers sometimes even found \textit{ushebtis} inside the bodies (A.32).\textsuperscript{24} These procedures were carried out by Daniel Fouquet, a physicien and an art collector based in Cairo.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{mummy_unwrapping.jpg}
\caption{Unwrapping of a mummy from the Tomb of the Priests by Fouquet. Grébaut stands on his left, while Daressy takes notes at the far left (photo by Abdullah Brothers. On the floor is the outer lid of A.111 inscribed with the name Mashasekebt).}
\end{figure}

However, from 1903 onwards, these research operations took place in the Egyptian Museum at Tahrir and were carried out by the famous anatomist Grafton Elliot-Smith,\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{22} The mummy under examination belonged to the coffin set A.91 but at that time the coffins had already been expedited to Berlin, see \textit{Daressy} 1902, 151.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Daressy} 1902, 153. This procedure might explain the current difficulty in finding out the location of most of the mummies.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Elliot-Smith} 1906.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Fouquet} 1896.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Elliot-Smith} 1903, 156-160.