

Middle Kingdom Studies 11

The Treasure of the Egyptian Queen Ahhotep

and International
Relations at the Turn
of the Middle Bronze
Age (1600–1500 BCE)



Gianluca Miniaci, Peter Lacovara (eds)



GHP

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Middle Kingdom Studies 11

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Middle Kingdom Studies

Series

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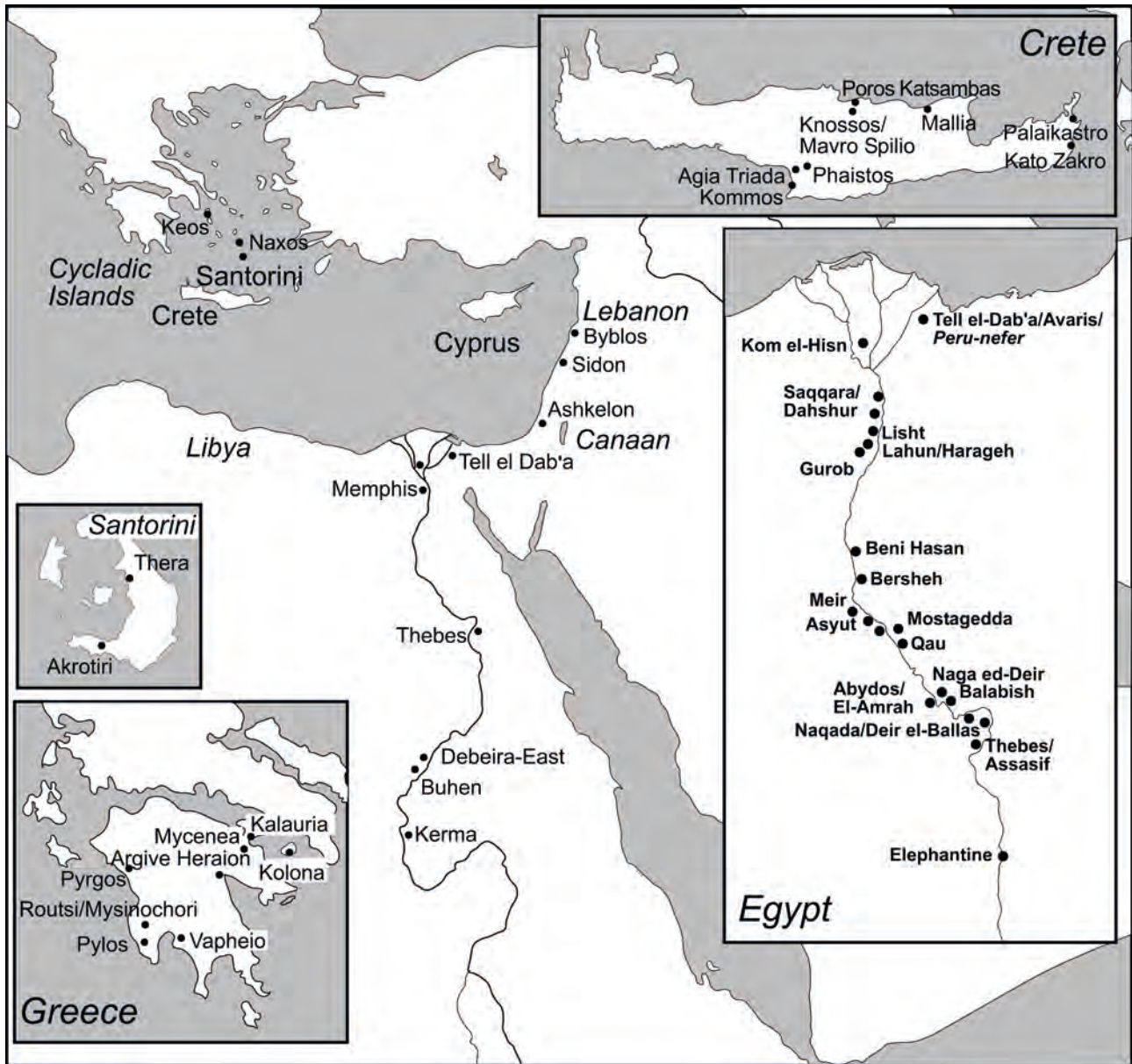
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List of Abbreviations

Ä&L	Ägypten und Levante/ Egypt and the Levant	BSAE	British School of Archaeology in Egypt
AA	Archäologischer Anzeiger	BSF	Beiträge zur Sudanforschung
AAA	Athens Annals of Archaeology	CAENL	Contributions to the Archaeology of Egypt, Nubia and the Levant
AAAL	Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology	CAJ	Cambridge Archaeological Journal
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament	CCdE	Les Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie
ABSA	Annual of the British School at Athens	CCE	Cahier de la céramique égyptienne
ACE	Studies Australian Centre for Egyptology Studies	CChEM	Contributions to the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean
ADAIK	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo Ägyptologische Reihe.	CdE	Chronique d'Égypte; Bulletin périodique de la Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, Bruxelles
Aegaeum	Aegaeum. Annales d'archéologie égéenne de l'Université de Liège	CG	Catalogue général (des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire)
ÄF	Ägyptologische Forschungen	CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology	CHE	Cahiers d'Histoire égyptienne
AJSL	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures (Chicago) [after 1941: JNES]	ClevStHistArt	Cleveland Studies in the History of Art
ArchEph	Archaiologikē Ephēmeris	CNIANES	Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies Publications
ASAE	Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte (SAE)	CRAIBL	Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres
ASR	Annuaire, École Pratique des Hautes Études: Ve section - sciences religieuses	DAE	Département des Antiquités égyptien- nes, Musée du Louvre, Paris
BABesch	Bulletin Antieke Beschaving	DB	Museum database (either online or written register)
BAEDE	Boletín de la Asociación Española de Egiptología	DE	Discussions in Egyptology
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research	DGÖAW	Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften
BCH	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique	EA	Egyptian Archaeology
BE	Bibliothèque Égyptologique	EES	Egypt Exploration Society, Excavation Memoirs
BICS	Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London	ENiM	Égypte nilotique et méditerranéenne
BIE	Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypt	EPHE	École Pratique des Hautes Études
BIF	Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France	EPHE Golénischeff	École Pratique des Hautes Études, Centre Wladimir Golénischeff, Fonds Lacau,
BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (IFAO)	ERA	Egyptian Research Account
BiOr	Bibliotheca Orientalis (Leiden)	ErghÖJh	Ergänzungshefte zu den Jahresheften des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes in Wien
BM EA	British Museum, Egyptian antiquities	EVO	Egitto e Vicino Oriente, Università di Pisa
BMMA	Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA)	FIFAO	Fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale (IFAO) du Caire.
BMSAES	British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan	GEM	Grand Egyptian Museum
BMTRB	British Museum Technical Research Bulletin	GM	Göttinger Miscellen
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France	HAS	Harvard African Studies
BSA	Studies British School at Athens Studies	IB	Inventaire de Boulaq
BSA	The Annual of the British School at Athens	IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal

IJNA	International journal of nautical archaeology	PIOL	Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Leuven
J. Raman Spectrosc	Journal of Raman Spectroscopy	PM	B. Porter and R. Moss, <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings</i> , 7 vols, 1927-1951
JAA	Journal of Anthropological Archaeology	PPS	Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society
JACF	Journal of the Ancient Chronology Forum	PSBA	Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology
JAEl	Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections	PZ	Prähistorische Zeitschrift
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society	RANT	Res Antiquae
JARCE	Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt	RAr	Revue archéologique
JAS	Journal of Archaeological Science	RdE	Revue d'Égyptologie
JCH	Journal of Cultural Heritage	RevL	Revue du Louvre: la revue des musées de France
JE	Journal d'entrée (Cairo Museum)	RGA	Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics
JEa	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology	RT	Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes
JEgH	Journal of Egyptian History	Serapis	Serapis
JEOL	Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-egyptisch Genootschap Ex Oriente Lux	S&N	Sudan & Nubia
JGS	Journal of Glass Studies	SAA	Studies in African Archaeology
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies	SAGA	Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens
JMA	Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology	SAK	Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies	SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilisation
JÖAI	Jahreshefte des österreichischen archäologischen Instituts in Wien	SDAIK	Sonderschrift des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo
JRGZM	Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz	SIE	Studies in Egyptology
JSSEA	Journal of the Society of the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (SSEA)	SIMA	Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology
JRGZM	Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz	SIP	Second Intermediate Period
LÄ	W. Helck, E. Otto, W. Westendorf, <i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> , 7 vols., Wiesbaden 1975-	SJE	The Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia Publications
LdR	Le livre des rois d'Égypte	SMEA	Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici
MÄS	Münchener Ägyptologische Studien	SR	Special Register (Cairo Museum)
MDAIK	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo	StaReSO	Station de recherches sous-marines et océanographiques
MK	Middle Kingdom	TC	Turin Canon Papyrus
MKS	Middle Kingdom Studies	TR	Temporary Registrar (Cairo Museum)
MMA	Metropolitan Museum of Art	TTS	Theban Tombs Series (London)
MoDIA	Monographs of the Danish Institutes at Athens	Urk.	Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums', 8 vols. ed. K. Sethe, H.W. Helck, H. Schäfer, H. Grapow, O. Firchow, 1903-1957
NEA	Near Eastern Archaeology	UZK	Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis	WdO	Die Welt des Orient: Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Kunde des Morgenlandes
OJA	Oxford Journal of Archaeology	ZÄS	Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta		
PAe	Probleme der Ägyptologie		
PBF	Prähistorische Bronzefunde		
Philippika	Philippika: Marburger altertumskundliche Abhandlungen		

Maps



Maps of Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean (including the Levant, Greece and Sanorini)
© drawn by Wolfram Grajetzki

The Discovery of Queen Ahhotep's Burial at Dra Abu el-Naga (Thebes) in the Nineteenth Century AD: Between Tale and Archaeological Evidence

Gianluca Miniaci

Abstract

In 1859 some Egyptian workmen digging in the northern sector of the Theban necropolis on behalf of Auguste Mariette brought to light the coffin of a queen called Ahhotep (Second Intermediate Period), which contained rare and unparalleled items, forming the largest “treasure” of the goldsmith’s art then known from Egypt. The discovery of the burial equipment quickly received international attention, triggering the need for more definite and appropriate contours of its story. Nonetheless, the accounts produced have wrongly been interpreted as archaeological reports, generating an inaccurate understanding of the events and assumptions handed down in the Western Egyptological tradition. The article aims at deconstructing and then reconstructing the history of this discovery through archival research, in order to: a) retrace the most important events in the timeline; b) determine the roles played by the people involved; c) provide the approximate spatial coordinates for location of the burial; d) shed light on the type of burial in which the coffin was found; e) determine the total number and type of recorded objects; f) analyse the consistency of the assemblage. The final objective is to define more realistic contours for the discovery, moving away from the narrative which Egyptological tradition contributed to build.

Introduction

During October 1857, the French scholar Auguste Mariette¹ was sent to Egypt for an archaeological mission of eight months. The aim of this campaign was to collect Egyptian antiquities in order to prepare for the cultural journey of Prince Napoleon to Egypt. Works were set up throughout Egypt, from Alexandria into Aswan, especially concentrating in the Memphite necropolis, at Abydos, Thebes and Elephantine.² On June 1st 1858, Mariette was appointed at the head (as *mamour*) of a new institution for the conservation and excavation of Egyptian antiquities called *Maslahat al-Athar* (Antiquities Service) by the Viceroy Saïd Pasha³ (see Table 2).

On the west bank of Thebes, Mariette set up his excavations in different spots in the hills of Dra Abu

el-Naga.⁴ In 1859, Egyptian workmen digging in the northern sector of Dra Abu el-Naga, most probably on behalf of Mariette, brought to light the burial of a queen named Ahhotep,⁵ which contained the largest “treasure” of the goldsmith’s art ever found in Egypt until then. The discovery had an international resonance at that time, due to the exceptional number of precious, luxury items as well as rare and unparalleled types. The burial assemblage of Ahhotep is still considered one of the most important discoveries in Egyptian archaeology.⁶

Premise

The only publication of the funerary assemblage of Ahhotep was produced by Friedrich von Bissing in 1900. This publication aimed to be preliminary in view of a

¹ DAWSON, UPHILL, BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who*, 355-7; see also DAVID, *Mariette Pacha*.

² DESTI, *Des dieux, des tombeaux, un savant*, 20.

³ See DE ROUGÉ, *CRAIBL* 2, 115-21.

⁴ MINIACI, in BETRÒ, DEL VESCO, MINIACI (eds), *Seven Seasons*, 41-3.

⁵ For the identity of Queen Ahhotep, see BETRÒ, “The Identity of Ahhotep and the Textual Sources”, in this volume.

⁶ Cf. REEVES, *Ancient Egypt*, 50-1; ORSENIGO, in PIACENTINI (ed.), *Egypt and the pharaohs*.

more complete one, to be part of the *Catalogue Général* of Cairo, which never appeared.⁷ No further attempts have been produced to re-assess the whole group, but objects have been randomly individually selected for study. A project for restudying the whole Ahhotep group was undertaken in 2020 by Gianluca Miniaci “*Queen Ahhotep Treasure and its Context: The long Road to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, c. 1550 BC-1863 AD*”.

The archive documents which contain some relevant information about the Ahhotep discovery belong to the *Fonds Maspero* in the *Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France* in Paris: the letter of Maunier (Q.1), the two lists of February 25th 1859 (Q.7),⁸ and some other administrative documents which could be related to the event (Q.9, Q.14). These documents originally belonged to Mariette and entered in possession of Maspero only at his death.⁹ Other useful information are preserved in a notebook of Déveria in the Louvre Museum (see Q. 11, Q. 17 and *Appendix A* at the end of the article) and in the *Fonds Lacau* of the *Centre Wladimir Golénischeff* at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études* in Paris (Q.4-6).

The *Journal d'Entrée* numbering system has been adopted here for referring to the objects associated with the Ahhotep assemblage because it is the only system that uniformly records all the objects found in association with the queen's burial.¹⁰

The unsolved Questions

The accounts about the discovery of Ahhotep's coffin too often have wrongly been interpreted as archaeological reports, although the person/s who discovered the coffin is/are still unknown. Egyptological literature attributes to Auguste Mariette the credit of the find, although he was miles away from Luxor at that moment; even his Egyptian foremen were not exclusively working only on his behalf at Thebes. The exact location of the queen's burial and the type of structure in which it was found were forgotten since its discovery, and they are now lost.

The objects associated with the queen have predominantly been considered in terms of their aesthetic value

rather than being investigated as a group.¹¹ Their coexistence in a single context raised questions about whether the group was assembled in modern times, mixed lavish finds from other burials of the area, and/or really belonged to the queen. Remarkably, the burial equipment consisted almost exclusively of precious objects, made of the highest value metals and semi-precious stones of the time, i.e. gold, silver, electrum, turquoise, lapis-lazuli, carnelian, and feldspar. Even more surprisingly, all these objects were found – according to the accounts of the time – packed inside the coffin, used as a sort of all-inclusive storage space or “treasure trove”. Finally, none of the objects are inscribed for the queen herself and those bearing inscriptions only refer to the Kings Kamose and Ahmose (in at least seven cases, there is evidence that this is Ahmose Nebpehtyre).¹² To further cloud things, the body inside the coffin – if it was ever present – was destroyed soon after its discovery in the search for precious objects. Therefore, the “identity” of the person contained inside the coffin has been lost forever and the assumption that those objects belonged to Queen Ahhotep is mainly grounded in the fact they were found inside a coffin inscribed with her name.

Therefore, the discovery of Ahhotep's assemblage and its archaeological context are still shrouded in mystery and inconsistency. Such a level of ambiguity has raised among scholars questions of what the diggers actually found in Dra Abu el-Naga in the mid-nineteenth century: the expected royal original funerary structure of the queen (unseen, since not reported in the accounts), a simpler burial (shaft tomb without a burial chamber/surface burial), or a cache; an intact or a secondary deposition (disturbed or rehashed burial); a standard funerary assemblage or an ancient/modern assemblage of disparate items.

The aim of this paper is to reassess the question, providing all the available pieces of information currently known, noting down the secure and indisputable evidence, highlighting the inconsistencies, and questioning the unsecure elements, which generated assumptions then fostered and handed down in Egyptological literature.

⁷ See below § **The Timeline of the Discovery and successive related Events**, 1900, p. 34-5. See also VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund*.

⁸ MINIACI, “The original Inventory List of the Queen Ahhotep ‘Treasure’ from Mariette's Papers (*BIF* Paris, *Fonds Maspero*, Ms. 4052)”, in this volume.

⁹ See below § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, *Gaston Maspero*, p. 41-2.

¹⁰ For cross-references to *CG*, *TR*, *SR*, other inventory numbers or lost locations, see MINIACI, “Notes on the *Journal d'Entrée* Entries for Queen Ahhotep's Assemblage”, in this volume, Tables 2-3.

¹¹ The only full publication of the group – which appeared 40 years after the discovery – is credited to von Bissing, who was not even born at the time of the discovery (DAWSON, UPHILL, BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who*, 60-1), VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund*. Von Bissing visited Egypt for the first time in 1897, ABOU-GHAZI, *ASAE* 67, 29.

¹² See below § **The Burial Assemblage**, *Absence of the queen's name on the objects*, p. 62-3. See also discussions in BETRÒ, “The Identity of Ahhotep and the Textual Sources”, in this volume; and BISTON-MOULIN, *ENiM* 5, 66. See also below Table 4.

Written Reports produced in Conjunction with the Discovery

Before tackling any of these questions, all the available accounts of Ahhotep's discovery must be carefully considered, since none of them can be taken as reliable archaeological reports. The discovery of the coffin attributed to Auguste Mariette first-hand must be reconsidered since he was directing things from Cairo and was moving up and down the Nile in his steamboat, the *Samanoud*.¹³ A letter from Victor Maunier (Q.1) and other later accounts (cf. Q.10, Q.12-13) clearly document that Mariette was in Cairo at the moment of the discovery of Ahhotep's coffin, which was actually a matter in the hands of Egyptian workmen and foremen. However, so far no sketch or written notes from any of them is preserved or known today. Many of them may have been illiterate, but also Arabic archival documentation has only rarely been considered by Egyptologists.¹⁴ The only known written documentation close to the time of the discovery is provided by oral accounts noted down (and filtered?) by European Egyptologists and explorers circulating in Luxor or revolving around the figure of Mariette.

The most detailed information – and apparently the closest in time – about the unearthing of the coffin is to be found in a letter written by Maunier¹⁵ to Mariette, supposedly drafted the day after the discovery (“*hier*”). Unfortunately, the letter does not bear any date, probably once placed in the worn upper part of the sheet. The letter, published by Maspero, is now in the *Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France* in the *Fonds Maspero* together with other documents of Mariette's excavations at Dra Abu el-Naga¹⁶ from 1858-63 (Fig. 1a-b).

Q.1 – “*Mon cher Monsieur Mariette,*

J'ai le plaisir de vous donner avis que vos reys de Gourneh ont trouvé à Dra-Abou-Naggi [read Dra Abu el-Naga], une magnifique boîte de momie, et une caisse renfermant quatre vases en albâtre, variés de formes, sans couvercles ni inscriptions, trouvés à côté de la boîte de la momie. La boîte de la momie a le couvercle entièrement doré, une inscription longitudinale, que j'ai copiée ci-derrière ; les yeux sont en émail enchâssés dans un cercle en or ; sur la tête est un serpent Uréus en relief, malheureusement la tête du serpent manque, elle devait être en or à juger à la richesse de la boîte. Quelques petits conflits ont eu lieu ces jours-passés entre vos reys de Gourneh et Bédouï-Efendi. Ce dernier,

il paraît en l'absence du reys Aouad, s'est permis d'ouvrir une boîte de momie, qui était dans votre magasin à Gourneh et d'en démailloter le cadavre [not referring to Ahhotep]. Aouad est arrivé à la fin de l'opération ; de là, grande discussion. Hier quand vos reys eurent trouvé la belle boîte ils m'en ont prévenu immédiatement, mon intervention vous l'a conservée intacte. Par précaution je l'ai fait transporter dans votre magasin de Karnac, après y avoir apposé à la cire d'Espagne le grand cachet V.G.M. Cette opération a fait faire la grimace à plus d'un qui aurait bien voulu voir ce qu'il y avait dans le Sendouk bita' el-Sultana [...]. Nous comptons que vous allez nous revenir dans une quinzaine au plus tard ; nous sommes depuis votre départ dans une solitude thébaine [...].

V. G. Maunier” – Maunier¹⁷

In his letter, Maunier notified Mariette about the fact that the coffin of the queen had been discovered at Dra Abu el-Naga and it was left untouched. To this letter, Maunier added a very faithful hand-copy of the hieroglyphic inscription visible on the coffin¹⁸ (see Fig. 1b). The central part of the letter is not connected with Ahhotep but it rather focuses on an event which frequently happened at that time: a local official of the governor of Qena province, Bedawy Effendi,¹⁹ visited Mariette's storerooms in Qurna and opened some sealed coffins, ravaging the mummies.²⁰

Unfortunately, Maunier did not add any information about the people involved with and the place of the discovery of Ahhotep's coffin, nor did he add any type of data on the structure in which it was found. The relationship with Mariette's excavations is rather clouded; the discovery is not attributed to a specific *rais* (the very active *rais* Sheikh Awad is mentioned in connection with another event) but vaguely to some *ruasa*²¹ who are tied to Mariette.²² The *ruasa* were not necessarily expected to constantly be on the excavation spot, so it is possible that none of them were present at the moment of discovery. Also, the presence of Mariette's workmen could be questioned, since in that time at Thebes, temporary – and partially independent – diggers were circulating and they were selling their discovered antiquities to the various

¹⁷ BIF Ms 4030, f. 393. Reposted also in MASPERO, RT 12, 214. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁸ See also BETRÒ, “The Identity of Ahhotep and the Textual Sources”, in this volume, fig. 1.

¹⁹ See below, § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, Bedawy Effendi, p. 38.

²⁰ Cf. below, § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, Fadil Pasha, p. 36-8-3.

²¹ The term *ruasa* is here preferred to *raises*, as the plural of *rais*.

²² See also below § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, Egyptian workmen and foremen.

¹³ THOMPSON, *Wonderful Things*, vol. I, 230.

¹⁴ Cf. discussions in QUIRKE, *Hidden hands*, 33, 36, 306-7.

¹⁵ See below § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, Victor Maunier, p. 36.

¹⁶ See above, p. 28, n. 8, and below, p. 41.

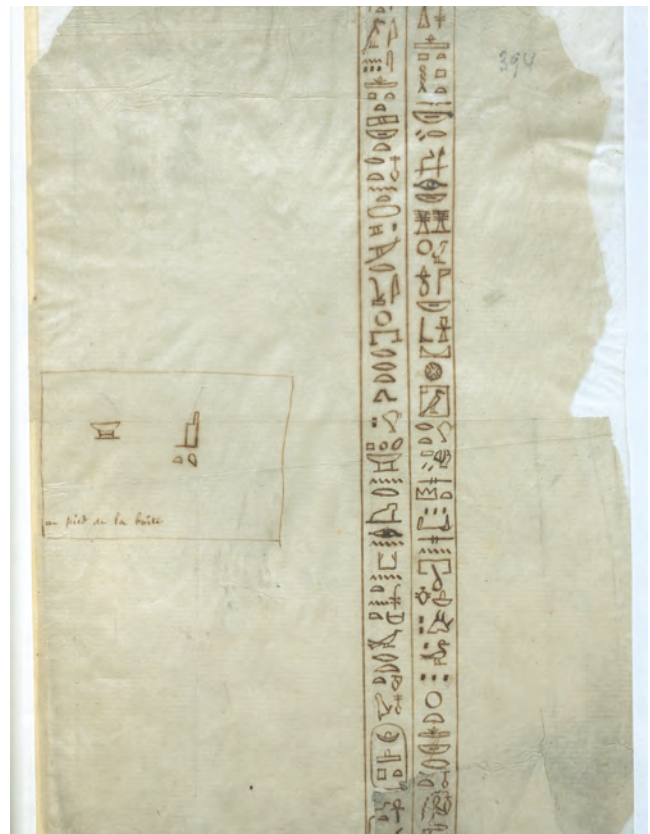
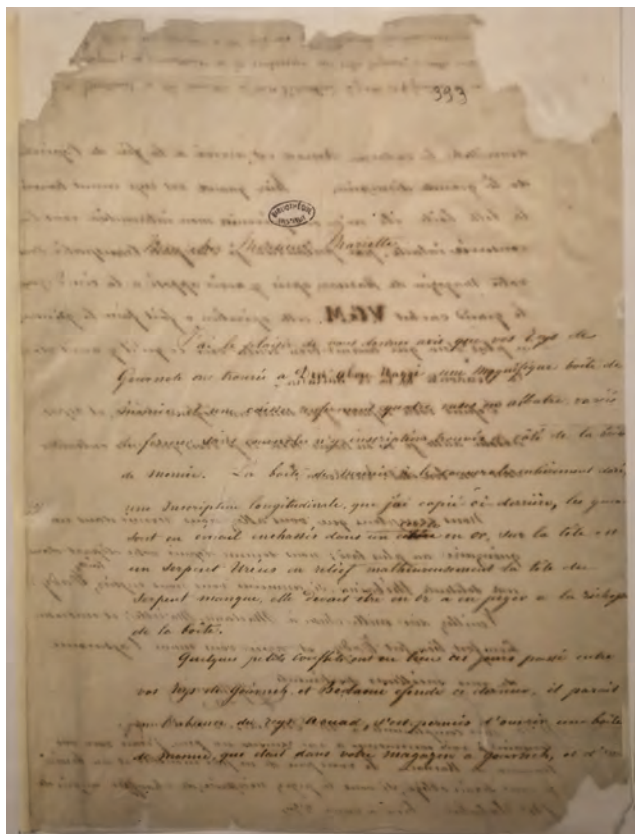


Fig. 1a-b – Letter written by Victor Maunier to Auguste Mariette about the discovery of Ahhotep’s coffin – supposedly – in February 1859. *1a*) First page of the letter (undated/date lost); *Fonds Maspero*, Ms 4030, f. 393 *1b*) Fac-simile of the inscription on the coffin of the Queen Ahhotep; handwriting of Maunier; *Fonds Maspero*, Ms 4030, f. 394

© courtesy of the *Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France*

ruasa of Thebes (cf. **Q.34**). In addition, Maunier, acting also as antiquities dealer in Luxor, placed over the coffin his own sealing, probably with a view to a possible profit. The general impression from this account is that the Ahhotep discovery was “claimed” from multiple sources: private diggers (**Q.34**; see also **Q.12**), some of the *ruasa* of Mariette, Maunier, and the governor of Qena.

Only four official reports were produced around the time of the discovery (see Table 1, uppermost row):

R.1) a report signed on behalf of Mariette and presented at the *Séance du 5 juin 1859* and published in the *Bulletin de l’Institut Egyptien*, in which there are no details about the discovery;²³

R.2) another short report signed on behalf of Mariette presented at the *Séance du 26 août 1859* and published in *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres* of 1862;²⁴

R.3) a letter of March 14th 1860 addressed by Mariette to the *Vicomte de Rougé* published in the *Revue archéologique* of the same year;²⁵

R.4) a more extensive report, with coloured plates of most of the objects, produced by Ernest Desjardins for the *Revue générale de l’architecture et des travaux publics* of 1860; this report aimed to be only a temporary description of Mariette’s results in Dra Abu el-Naga but it actually remained the only comprehensive account of the time.²⁶

The main person responsible for passing on the account of the discovery of the coffin is Ernest Desjardins,²⁷ who drew up the preliminary information about the excavations of Mariette for his work in Egypt 1850-54 and 1858-60. Desjardins, with the help of Mariette’s notes, reconstructed a version of the discovery of the coffin (**R.4**). However, the account is *per se* already tendentious, almost turning that event into a novel: Mariette is described by Desjardins as a nineteenth century “hero”, carrying out excavations in first person (while he was in reality somewhere in Cairo) and encountering the body of the dead queen (while there is no report about the body

²³ MARIETTE, *BIE* 1, 32-6.

²⁴ MARIETTE, *CRAIBL* 3, 161-3.

²⁵ MARIETTE, *RAr* 2, 29; the date of the letter should be wrong-

ly typed, “Bédérchyn, le 14 mars 1850 [sic]”. See also **Q.28**.

²⁶ DESJARDINS, *RGA* 18, 98-112. See **Q.2**, **Q.18-19**, **Q.27**, **Q.37**.

²⁷ See below, § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, Ernest Desjardins, p. 39.

inside the coffin); the assemblage had been reduced to a treasure, focussing only on the gold and silver items.

Q.2 – “*M. Mariette trouva le corps de la reine Aah-Hotep littéralement couvert et enveloppé d’objets d’or et d’argent*” – Desjardins²⁸

This story has been passed down in the Egyptological tradition and since then almost mechanically repeated.

Q.3 – “*The circumstances of their discovery are as follows: – In 1859, M. Mariette had remarked, at the entrance of the valley of the Biban-el-Melook, or Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, in the Gournah quarter of Thebes, a strip of earth, formed of fragments of stone and broken pottery, revealing the situation of an ancient sepulchre. On the 5th February, 1859, a magnificent gilded wooden coffin was found there in a pit of between 15 and 18 feet deep*” – Birch²⁹

The Timeline of the Discovery and successive related Events (see Tables 1-2)

November 1858 = At the beginning of November 1858, Mariette’s excavations started in the area of Qurna,³⁰ as explicitly mentioned in a number of letters written by the French scholar in which he reminded the governor of Qena that his *ruasa* of Qurna (especially *rais* Awad) should have been paid for the work done (“*Les travaux de S. A. ont commencé depuis deux mois et 24 jours* [letter dated to January 24th 1859], *et par conséquent on devra, de 84 jours aux réis* [damage]”).³¹

January 1859 = The *Inventaire de Boulaq*,³² recorded by Mariette himself³³ for the entries of Ahhotep, reported the month of January 1859 as the date of discovery (“*Gournah / Drahou l’Neggah / Janv. 1859*”), which is repeated in the *Journal d’Entrée* and in the various entries

of the *Catalogue Général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire*. The letter of Maunier to Mariette (**Q.1**) – which is the closest written testimony of the discovery – is unfortunately left undated or the date is lost, given the bad state of preservation of the document (see Fig. 1).

24th January 1859 = A letter written in Luxor by Mariette to his *rais* Awad and dated January 24th 1859 indicates that until then no significant discovery had been made in Qurna area.

Q.4 – “*A Aouad, réis des travaux de Gournah. Demain vous prendrez 75 hommes avec vous et vous les mettrez à Gournah pour chercher des boîtes de momies de l’espèce de ceux que vous nommez richi. Vous enverrez Aly avec les 25 autres hommes à Deir-el-Bahari et vous lui direz de nettoyer la complètement la chambre que j’ai fait ensabler. Dans quelques jours je désire enlever des pierres de cette chambre.* Louqsor, 24 Janvier 1858₉” – Mariette³⁴

Other documents of Mariette dated to January 24th 1859 reveal his clear disappointment at the lack of any notable discoveries.

Q.5 – “*Jusqu’à présent on vous doit 84 jours. Mais comme, en mon absence, vous n’avez pas trouvé beaucoup de choses, je vous retransche 24 jours de paie*” – Mariette³⁵

Q.6 – “*Mais comme, en mon absence, vous avez été négligent et que vous n’avez rien trouvé, je vous retransche en punition 24 jours de paie*” – Mariette³⁶

Therefore, presumably the treasure of Queen Ahhotep was not found before January 24th. In addition, these documents substantiate that Mariette was in Luxor at least till January 24th: the discovery of the treasure must have occurred at a later date.

5th February 1859 = The accounts of Mariette and Desjardins (see above, **R.2**, **R.4**) provide a more precise date for the discovery of the coffin, which is stated to have occurred precisely on February 5th 1859 (**Q.27**), later followed also by Birch (**Q.3**), Maspero (**Q.29**),³⁷ and Winlock (**Q.30**). This date conflicts with the month

²⁸ DESJARDINS, *RGA* 18, 99.

²⁹ BIRCH, *Facsimiles*, 1.

³⁰ The toponym “Gurnah”/“Gournah”/“Qurneh”/“Qurna”, was used by explorers and archaeologists of the nineteenth century to indicate either the west bank of Luxor or, more specifically, the northern part of Dra Abu el-Naga, MINIACI, in BETRÒ, DEL VESCO, MINIACI, *Seven Seasons*, 15. In **Q.4** there is a clear indication that at least by January 24th 1859 the excavations should have moved to an area of Dra Abu el-Naga in search for Second Intermediate Period burials.

³¹ Letter of Mariette to the governor of Qena, Luxor 24th January 1859, *EPHE Golénischeff*, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 43. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

³² See MINIACI, “Notes on the Journal d’Entrée Entries for Queen Ahhotep’s Assemblage”, in this volume, p. 85.

³³ The handwriting for the entries of Ahhotep belongs to Mariette; information by Elisabeth David.

³⁴ Letter of Mariette to Awad, Luxor 24th January 1859, *EPHE Golénischeff*, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 44. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

³⁵ Letter of Mariette to Awad, Luxor 24th January 1859, *EPHE Golénischeff*, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 46. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

³⁶ Letter of Mariette to his *ruasa*, Luxor 24th January 1859, *EPHE Golénischeff*, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 47. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

³⁷ MASPERO, in MARIETTE (ed.), *Oeuvres diverses*, cii.

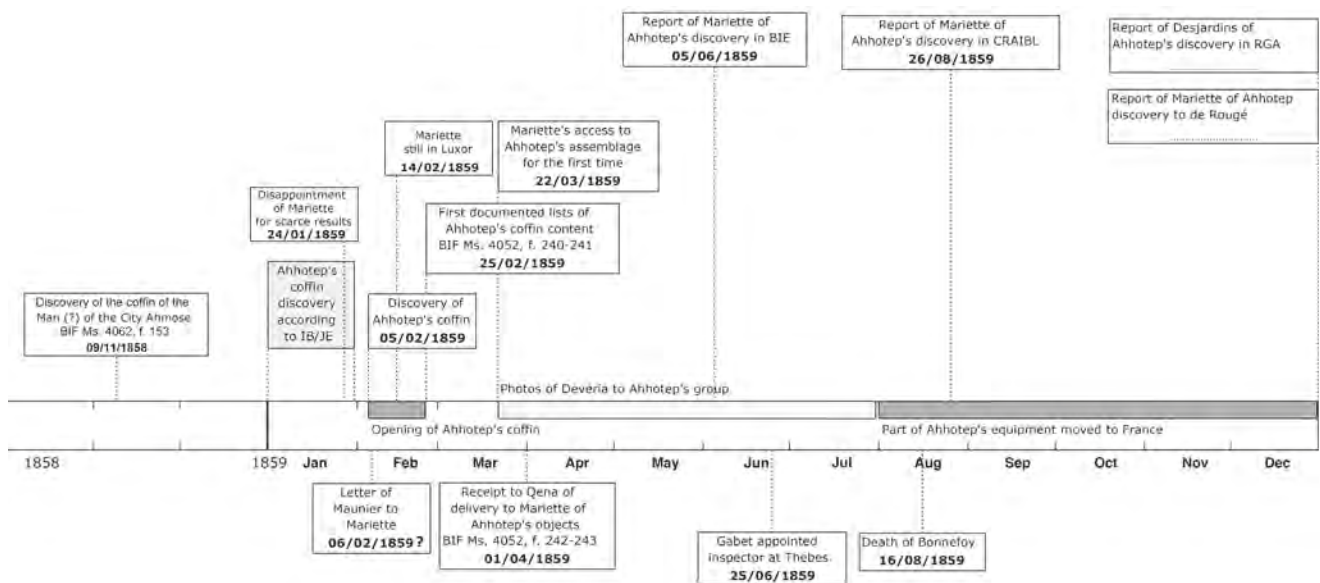


Table 1 – Chronological table for the year 1859, highlighting the main events in relation to the Ahhotep discovery and the publication of its “notice”; graphic by Gianluca Miniaci

recorded in the *IB/JE* (January) and with a letter written by Mariette in Luxor on February 14th (see below).

14th February 1859 = In the archives of the Centre Wladimir Golénischeff at the *EPHE* is a letter written by Mariette to the governor of Qena while being in Luxor [sic] dated to February 14th.³⁸ The date and place of the letter should be reliable enough, since on February 21st Mariette was in Asyut (probably sailing back to Cairo).³⁹ There is no mention in the letter of the discovery of the queen's coffin. Therefore, there are only two possible options: either Mariette had not been informed about the discovery of the queen's coffin (although the news should have had a certain resonance in Luxor) or this must have happened after Mariette's departure from Luxor, sometime after February 14th.

25th February 1859 = Two copies of the coffin's contents, drawn up in Arabic and in French, contain the first known inventory list of the objects associated with Queen Ahhotep.⁴⁰ The two lists are both dated to February 25th 1859 (23 Ragab 1275 of the Hijri calendar)⁴¹ and were found among the papers in possession of Mariette, later passed to Maspero.

Q.7 – “*Copie d'une liste adressée par le Moudir de Kineh à la Maïeh Sanieh en date du 23 Ragab 1275 N 16 [25th February 1859] contenant les antiquités trouvées à Gurné*” – anonymous (French version)

“*Copy of a list in which there is description of ancient objects found in the tomb of el-Qurna, in the directorate of Qena, returned to Ma'iyeh, on the date of the 23rd of Ragab, year 1275 (Hijry) [25th February 1859], 16*” – anonymous (Arabic version)⁴²

Both lists seem to have been drafted from another original document which was composed on February 25th and certainly before the objects from the Ahhotep burial had been shipped by the governor of Qena to Cairo. The February 25th date might also correspond with the date of the official opening of the coffin,⁴³ since the majority of testimonies suggest that the coffin was only opened at a later date by the governor of Qena (cf. **Q.10**, **Q.12-13**; *contra* see **Q.34**). However, between its discovery (presumably February 5th) and February 25th, at the latest, the coffin was opened (see Table 1). The manner in which these two documents came into the possession of Mariette is unknown; one could have been copied in Upper Egypt and accompanied the boat during the transport of boxes containing the “treasure” (cf. **Q.14**), while the other could have been copied in Cairo and officially passed onto Mariette by the central

³⁸ Letter of Mariette to the governor of Qena, Luxor 14th February 1859, *EPHE Golénischeff*, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 48. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

³⁹ Letter of Mariette to the *nazir* of Girga, Asyut 21st February 1859, *EPHE Golénischeff*, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 49. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

⁴⁰ MINIACI, “The original Inventory List of the Queen Ahhotep ‘Treasure’”, in this volume.

⁴¹ For the correspondence with the Gregorian calendar, see <https://calendarhijri.com/en>.

⁴² BIF Ms. 4052, f. 240-241. The emphasis is mine. See also MINIACI, “The original Inventory List of the Queen Ahhotep ‘Treasure’ from Mariette's Papers (BIF Paris, *Fonds Maspero*, Ms. 4052)”, in this volume.

⁴³ See below, § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, *Fadil Pasha*, p. 36-8.

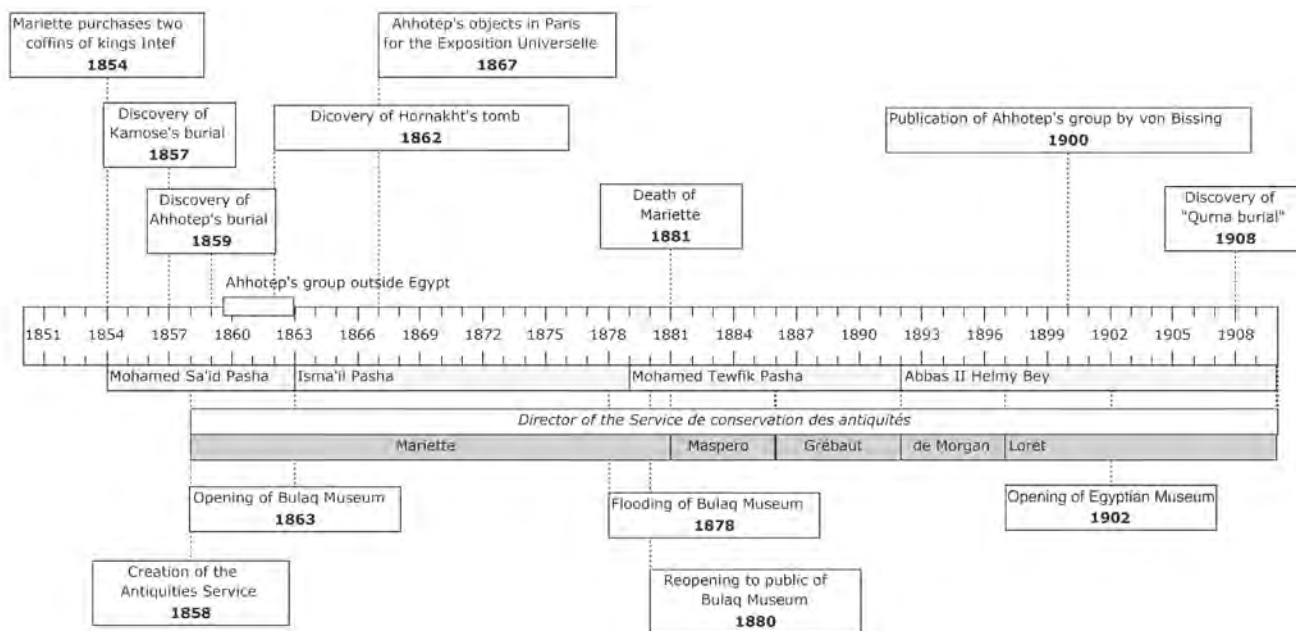


Table 2 – Chronological table for the time span 1850-1900, highlighting the main events in relation to the Ahhotep assemblage and Mariette excavations at Dra Abu el-Naga North; graphic by Gianluca Miniaci

administration or by his employees. They seem to correspond to the same documents mentioned by Théodule Devéria⁴⁴ in his account about the recovery of the treasure by Mariette on the boat:

Q.8 – “*M. Mariette en reçut l’inventaire d’un de ses employés arabes. Le gouverneur en avait de son côté expédié la liste au vice-roi, en le prévenant de l’envoi direct de ces objets à la Cour khédiviale [...]. Les deux listes comparées étaient assez bien d’accord, mais elles nous parurent singulièrement exagérées, quant au nombre des choses décrites et quant à leur poids d’or. Munis d’un ordre ministériel, conférant le droit d’arrêter tous les bateaux chargés de curiosités et de les transborder sur notre vapeur*” – Devéria⁴⁵

22nd March 1859 = After its opening, the coffin together with its funerary equipment was shipped from Upper Egypt to Cairo by the governor of Qena. On 21st March Mariette, impatient and afraid about the destiny of the queen’s equipment once it would have arrived in the docks of Cairo, decided not to wait and intercept the boat transporting the treasure downstream along the Nile under the surveillance of Bedawy Effendi⁴⁶ (**Q.9**). On

March 22nd, after one day boat journey, Mariette came into possession of the Ahhotep treasure.⁴⁷ Devéria, who was accompanying Mariette on the boat in that journey, provided a brief and vivid account about the event.⁴⁸ From this account, the “treasure” of Ahhotep seems to have been inaccessible to Mariette for inspection, most probably still locked inside some packing cases or resealed inside the coffin itself. It is very likely that the funerary assemblage had been unpacked by Mariette only after the arrival at Bulaq, where Devéria took some photos of the coffin and its content.⁴⁹ According to Maspero, once back in Cairo, the objects had been offered by Mariette to Saïd Pasha, who took for himself only a necklace and the scarab, which would have eventually returned into the group not too long after.⁵⁰

1st April 1859 = Among the papers of Mariette preserved in the *BIF* in Paris, there is a copy (both in French and Arabic) of a receipt-letter dated to April 1st 1859 (27 Shaban 1275 of the Hijri calendar)⁵¹ sent by the Maïeh in Cairo to the governor of Qena. The letter attests the re-

⁴⁴ See below, § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, Théodule Devéria, p. 38-9.

⁴⁵ MASPERO, in MARIETTE (ed.), *Oeuvres diverses*, cii. The emphasis is mine.

⁴⁶ See below, § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, Bedawy Effendi, p. 38.

⁴⁷ MASPERO, in MARIETTE (ed.), *Oeuvres diverses*, ciii; see also DAVID, *Mariette Pacha*, 114.

⁴⁸ The content of the account is reported in MASPERO, in MARIETTE (ed.), *Oeuvres diverses*, cii-ciii; translated into English by WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 252-3.

⁴⁹ See below, § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, Théodule Devéria, p. 38-9.

⁵⁰ MASPERO, in MARIETTE (ed.), *Oeuvres diverses*, civ; DAVID, *Mariette Pacha*, 115.

⁵¹ For the correspondence with the Gregorian calendar, see <https://calendarhijri.com/en>.

ceipt of the “antiquities in gold” sent to Cairo and their transmission to Mariette for custody:

Q.9 – “*Copie de la traduction d’une lettre adressée par la Maïeh au Moudir de Kéneh en date 27 Shaban 1275 N 15* [1st April 1859]. *La Maïeh accuse réception de votre lettre et en réponse, Elle vous averti que les antiquités en or adressées à la Maïeh sous la surveillance de Bedaoui effendi ont été remises entre les mains de M. Mariette*” – Maïeh in Cairo⁵²

Given the close date and the specific mention of objects in gold, this letter seems to refer to Ahhotep’s treasure and was presumably sent in response to the communication of the governor of Qena who informed the Khedival court that he had shipped the coffin and its precious assemblage to Cairo. In this case the antiquities were accompanied on the boat by Bedawy Effendi, a person not particularly dear to Mariette (cf. **Q.14**).

August 1859-1862 = Most of the objects from the assemblage were brought to Paris for an exhibition in August 1859 at the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* and in the autumn of the same year were cleaned and restored in France. Not all the objects were brought to Paris, since at least the coffin remained in Cairo. Afterwards, Mariette had them exhibited in Boulogne-sur-Mer.⁵³ There is no information – easy to be retrieved – about the destiny of the objects after 1859, but in 1862 they were displayed in London at the *International Exhibition*.⁵⁴

16th October 1863 = On October 16th 1863, Mariette inaugurated the first national museum to open to the public in Egypt, the Bulaq Museum:⁵⁵ it housed the assemblage of the Queen Ahhotep which represented one of the main attractions for the museum.⁵⁶ In this year, at the latest, the whole burial assemblage received a number in the *Inventaire de Bulaq*, later repeated in the *Journal d’Entrée* of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.⁵⁷

April-November 1867 = The objects from Ahhotep’s coffin were brought to France in order to be part of the

Exposition Universelle which took place in Paris in 1867, from April to November.⁵⁸ The exhibition was a great success, and the “treasure” played an essential role for the impact of Egyptian archaeology among the international community. During this time, the whole assemblage ran the risk of being torn apart, since the Empress Eugénie strongly expressed her desire to possess some of Ahhotep’s jewellery.⁵⁹ However, all the pieces safely returned to Egypt thanks to the opposition of Mariette.⁶⁰

October 1878 = In the month of October 1878, the Bulaq Museum and the house of Mariette suffered from a violent flooding. This event had little impact on the objects of Ahhotep, but it damaged the written documentation produced by Mariette. Indeed, in a letter of von Bissing to Maspero, an “*inventaire de Mariette*” concerning the assemblage of Queen Ahhotep is mentioned in order to facilitate the reconstruction of the *wesekh* collar.⁶¹ This document seems to prove that the documentation produced by or in the hands of Mariette in relation to the assemblage of Ahhotep was larger than that preserved today.

1881 = On January 18th 1881, Mariette died and was succeeded by Gaston Maspero in the direction of the museum and antiquities service (*Maslahat al-Athar*). Mariette’s books, papers, notes, and manuscripts were bought by the French government in 1882 on the advice of Maspero and brought to Paris for the archives of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*.⁶² At present, no relevant documents concerning Ahhotep’s group are known in Mariette’s archives in the *BnF*, but there is a group of documents preserved in the archives of the *Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France* in Paris.⁶³

1900 = In 1900, Friedrich Wilhelm von Bissing published Ahhotep’s objects, which aimed to be a full publication of the group, providing descriptions for most of the objects, photographs (a few) and drawings (mainly) (see also Pls III-VI).⁶⁴ Nonetheless, he did not provide the *Journal d’Entrée* inventory numbers for them, but he instead followed the arrangement of elements in his

⁵² BIF Ms. 4052, f. 242 (Arabic version f. 243).

⁵³ PODVIN, *Auguste Mariette*, 118, 121.

⁵⁴ BIRCH, *Facsimiles*.

⁵⁵ The museum of Bulaq constituted the nucleus of the collection of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, and it was formed by those objects collected during Mariette’s previous excavations. See ABOU-GHAZI, *ASAE* 67, 15; LEBÉE, *Le musée d’antiquités*, 137-43; PIACENTINI, in PIACENTINI (ed.), *Egypt and the pharaohs*, 5-45; PIACENTINI, RONDOT, in ELDAMATY, TRAD (eds), *Egyptian Museum Collections*, 949-56; PIACENTINI, in RAFFAELE, NUZZOLO, INCORDINO (eds), *Recent discoveries*, 221-36.

⁵⁶ See also EL-SHAZLY, “The Display History of the Ahhotep Treasure”, in this volume.

⁵⁷ See below, § **The Burial Assemblage**, *Total number of recorded objects*, p. 57.

⁵⁸ NOUR, *MDCCC 1800* 6, 35-49.

⁵⁹ ABOU-GHAZI, *ASAE* 67, 19-20.

⁶⁰ DAVID, *Mariette Pacha*, 181-2; THOMPSON, *Wonderful Things*, vol. I, 235.

⁶¹ BIF Ms. 4005, f. 473 is dated to the “17 février 1907”, and is, therefore, later than von Bissing’s publication in 1900, which was intended not to be the ultimate report.

⁶² DAVID, *Gaston Maspero*, 81.

⁶³ See above, § **Introduction, Premises**, p. 27-8. See also below, § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, *Gaston Maspero*, p. 41. MINIACI, “The original Inventory List of the Queen Ahhotep ‘Treasure’ from Mariette’s Papers (BIF Paris, *Fonds Maspero*, Ms. 4052)”, in this volume.

⁶⁴ VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund*.

own plate section.⁶⁵ The absence of consistent inventory numbering creates some difficulties in providing a solid reference system for the entire group. Von Bissing had planned a special issue for the *Catalogue Général* series specifically devoted to the assemblage of the queen with dedicated new inventory numbers,⁶⁶ but this project never saw light. In addition, von Bissing decided that the objects coming from Kamose's coffin (the mirror,⁶⁷ the bracelet,⁶⁸ and the dagger⁶⁹ – in addition to a scarab and a few amulets which unfortunately were lost) should have belonged to Queen Ahhotep too, so he mingled all the objects together, creating a layer of misinterpretation, occasionally still repeated in Egyptological literature nowadays.⁷⁰

People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission

Egyptian workmen and foremen = Apparently, the Egyptian workmen and foremen were the only direct witnesses to the discovery. Among those “invisible” people, there were probably the *ruasa*⁷¹ on the “payroll” of Mariette at Thebes (cf. Q.1). However, no direct information from any of them is currently known, although a certain amount of written documentation on the excavations would have been produced. For instance, from a letter of Mariette it is known that he expected some of the Egyptian people supervising the excavations on his behalf to produce written reports concerning the state of the works and discoveries, as well as indicating which antiquities were being shipped to the governorate store-rooms.⁷²

At Dra Abu el-Naga, *rais* Sheik Awad was the man responsible for reporting to Mariette (referred to in his

letters as “*réis des traveaux de Gourneh*”; see Q.4), although there were at least two other *ruasa* who could have partnered him. A document of Mariette addressed to the governor of Qena explicitly states that the *ruasa* Sheik Awad and Aly (Rabbah Ali?) had been appointed to supervise excavations in Qurna (“*j’ai eu l’honneur de vous remettre relativement aux réis des travaux d’antiquités, je vous prie d’inscrire comme réis : [...] Pour Gournah, les nommés Aouad et Aly*”).⁷³ In another document of January 24th 1859, Mariette mentions a certain Moustapha-agma, “*cawass des traveaux de Gournah*”.⁷⁴ A note of Vassalli in his *Album di disegni* (f. 111v) mentions some other *ruasa* who were probably supervising excavations on Mariette's behalf at Thebes a few years later (1863): “*Reis Rabbah Ali. Gournah / Ali Kalifeh Gournah. El Baharat / Ali Mohamed Gournah / Demmerai – Luxor / Cavass Hussein ay. (?)*”.⁷⁵ However, no other indications are provided and they could have been assigned to different areas of Thebes (cf. for instance, Mohammed Damaraoui was assigned to Karnak in 1859).⁷⁶ The exact number of workmen employed by Mariette at Dra Abu el-Naga should be 75, known from a letter of Mariette to the *rais* Awad (Q.4).⁷⁷ Since in nineteenth century Egypt a workforce of twenty to thirty-five workers was usually supervised by a single *rais*,⁷⁸ the presence of more than one *rais* for Mariette's larger number of workers is not inconceivable at Dra Abu el-Naga at that time.

Carter gave a different account of the discovery, unrelated to Mariette and instead connected to the private (illicit?) “enterprise” of a man called Ahmed Saïd el-Hagg⁷⁹ (Q.34; cf. Q.12). However, also in this case there are no direct sources.

⁶⁵ MINIACI, “Notes on the Journal d’Entrée Entries for Queen Ahhotep’s Assemblage”, in this volume, Table 5.

⁶⁶ See MINIACI, “Notes on the Journal d’Entrée Entries for Queen Ahhotep’s Assemblage”, in this volume.

⁶⁷ Louvre E 3458; DESTI, *Des dieux, des tombeaux, un savant*, 221.

⁶⁸ Louvre E 7168; DESTI, *Des dieux, des tombeaux, un savant*, 220.

⁶⁹ Bruxelles, Royal Library of Belgium, Coin Cabinet; BEN AMAR, *In Monte Artium* 5, 45-67.

⁷⁰ VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund*, 24; cf. BOVOT, in HEIN (ed.), *Pharaonen und Fremde*, 263, nr. 364 and fig.

⁷¹ DOYON, in CARRUTHERS (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology*, 145, 147.

⁷² See for instance the letter of Mariette addressed to the *nazir des traveaux d’antiquités* of Girga: “*Vous m’adresserez des rapports sur le résultats des traveaux en mettant votre lettre à la poste à mon adresse au Caire [...]. A ce rapport vous aurez toujours soin de joindre un état des antiquités que vous aurez expédiées à Girgeh*”, Asyut 21st February 1859, EPHE Golénischeff, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 49. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

⁷³ Letter of Mariette to the governor of Qena, 24th January 1859, EPHE Golénischeff, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 43. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

⁷⁴ Letter of Mariette to Moustapha-aga, Luxor 24th January 1859, EPHE Golénischeff, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 45. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

⁷⁵ See TIRADRITTI, in ANONYMOUS (ed.), *L’egittologo Luigi Vassalli*, 88.

⁷⁶ Letter of Mariette to the *ruasa*, Luxor 24th January 1859, EPHE Golénischeff, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 47. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

⁷⁷ The same number is also reported in DAVID, *Mariette Pacha*, 112.

⁷⁸ See VYSE, *Operations*; cf. MARIETTE, CRAIBL 3, 161, “*une vingtaine d’hommes suffirent pour mettre au jour des cercueils de la XI^e dynastie [read Seventeenth Dynasty]*” (also followed by WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 252).

⁷⁹ See BETRÒ, “A Note to Carter Manuscripts and the Discovery of Ahhotep’s Coffin (Cairo CG 28501)”, in this volume. See also below § **The presumed Architectural Structure**, *Placed in a hole dug out inside a mud-brick structure*, p. 50-1.

Unfortunately, Egyptological history has largely omitted Egyptian written sources (archives of the khedival court and local governors), which creates a big gap in our historical and archaeological reconstruction. Engagement between Egyptian Egyptologists and Egyptian historians of nineteenth century AD Egypt would be necessary to explore this area more effectively and possibly fill the gap.

Victor Maunier = Victor Gustave Maunier,⁸⁰ a French antiquities dealer in Luxor often wrongly mistaken for a consular agent in the same nineteenth century sources, was among the first Europeans to be informed about the discovery of the treasure (together with Gabet),⁸¹ and he produced the first written record about it (Q.1). He was particularly enthusiastic about the find, noticing that the coffin was gilded and of magnificent manufacture, and that it bore an inscription of certain interest (given the presence of the cartouche; see Fig. 1b):⁸² probably his enthusiasm, his own sealing affixed over the coffin, and his immediate letter to Mariette could be seen as attempts to obtain some “profit” from this discovery.⁸³ From Maunier’s description, the coffin seems to have still been closed at that time (or it was carefully reclosed by the workmen who had discovered it).

Charles Gabet = Charles Edmond Gabet⁸⁴ was appointed as inspector of the Theban district under Mariette’s supervision on June 25th 1859,⁸⁵ although he was already in Luxor at the time of Ahhotep’s discovery. He also became assistant curator in the Bulaq Museum at the time of its opening. Although he is likely to have played an important role in the timeline of Ahhotep’s discovery and public display, there is no information from his side. From later accounts (Q.13), Gabet, together with Maunier, was the first European to be informed about the discovery of Ahhotep’s coffin.⁸⁶

Joseph Bonnefoy = In 1858, Mariette entrusted to his assistant Marius François Joseph Bonnefoy⁸⁷ the di-

rection of excavations in Qurna. However, by the end of November he was sent by Mariette to Lower Egypt (“*je vous invite à prendre soin des travaux qui se font ou vont se faire dans la Basse-Egypte, à partir de Béni-Souef*”).⁸⁸ He was called back to Luxor by Mariette only in March 1859⁸⁹ where he died (16th August 1859)⁹⁰ not long after the discovery of the queen’s assemblage. Therefore, he is scarcely mentioned in connection with this event, although he played an important role in Theban excavations.

Fadil Pasha = Fadil Pasha, the governor of Qena province, was connected with the coffin of Ahhotep and its assemblage to a very profound degree after it had been found and brought to the storerooms of Karnak. He played the “role of the villain” since he seems to have acted in an illegitimate way, confiscating the coffin, opening it, ravaging the mummy, and shipping it to Cairo against Mariette’s will. However, the events of Ahhotep’s coffin in connection with the governor of Qena have been narrated exclusively from a European perspective. To what extent the accounts of Devéria (Q.10-11) are based on trustworthy eyewitnesses or Mariette himself is unknown. However, his version is the one faithfully reproduced by Maspero two decades later in 1883 (Q.12), and – with slight embellishments – in 1902 (Q.13).

Q.10 – “*M. Maunier prévenu de cette découverte, envoya à Mariette une copie de l’inscription, assez lisible pour que j’aie pu reconnaître qu’il s’agissait de la momie d’une reine nommée Aah-Hotep. Mariette écrivit alors de l’envoyer tout de suite à Boulaq par un vapeur spécial ; malheureusement, avant réception de cette lettre, le gouverneur de la province avait fait ouvrir le cercueil, par curiosité ou par zèle malentendu, on ne sait trop [...]. On avait jeté, comme de coutume, la toile et les ossements, pour ne conserver que les objets ensevelis avec la momie*” – Devéria⁹¹

Q.11 – “*Le gouverneur de la province la [Ahhotep’s coffin] fit apporter chez lui et eut l’audace de l’ouvrir lui-même, en dépit des protestations du surveillant des travaux. [unreadable] cachet d’un européen (Français) qui réside à Luqсор. Les bandelettes furent déchirées et enlevées dans le harem de ce pacha, le corps brisé puis jeté dehors ; on ne conserva que les objets précieux*

⁸⁰ DAWSON, UPHILL, BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who*, 363; WEENS, in COOKE (ed.), *Journeys erased by time*, 101-13.

⁸¹ See below, § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, Charles Gabet, p. 36.

⁸² See also BETRÒ, “The Identity of Ahhotep and the Textual Sources”, in this volume, fig. 1.

⁸³ Maunier was involved in the trade of antiquities, “*Such objects of curiosity, works of art, domestic utensils, etc I find in these excavations, I send immediately to Cairo, where the Pasha is forming a museum*”, in WEENS, in COOKE (ed.), *Journeys erased by time*, 104.

⁸⁴ DAWSON, UPHILL, BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who*, 203.

⁸⁵ Information from BIF Ms. 4052, f. 226.

⁸⁶ See BETRÒ, “A Note to Carter Manuscripts and the Discovery of Ahhotep’s Coffin (Cairo CG 28501)”, in this volume.

⁸⁷ DAWSON, UPHILL, BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who*, 67. Bonnefoy entered in service on 1st June 1858 and was dismissed from his duties 10th March 1859, see BIF Ms. 4052, f. 226.

⁸⁸ Letter of Mariette to Bonnefoy, Bulaq 20th November 1858, EPHE Golénischeff, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 37. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

⁸⁹ Letter of Mariette to Erfan Bey (?), 10th March 1859, EPHE Golénischeff, Ms. boîte 44, pièce 44. Transcription courtesy of Thomas Lebée.

⁹⁰ Information from BIF Ms. 4052, f. 226.

⁹¹ MASPERO, in MARIETTE (ed.), *Oeuvres diverses*, cii. The emphasis is mine.

qui y étaient enfermés, encore en fit-on sans doute disparaître quelques uns et ce n'est qu'à grand peine que Mr Mariette parvient à rentrer en possession du plus des pièces principales pour les placer dans la collection du vice-roi" – Devéria⁹²

Q.12 – "La momie de la reine Ahhotpou fut découverte par les fouilleurs arabes, en 1860, et **confisquée par le moudir de Qénéh**, qui la fit ouvrir et s'empara de ce qu'elle contenait. Le bruit de la trouvaille s'étant répandu, M. Mariette mit la main sur le cercueil et sur les bijoux qui sont exposés dans la vitrine H, mais pas assez à temps pour empêcher que **beaucoup d'objets précieux eussent été volés**" – Maspero (version 1883)⁹³

Q.13 – "Le bruit de la trouvaille s'étant répandu promptement, le moudir de Kénéh saisit le cercueil et prévint le vice-roi Saïd Pacha. Mariette, averti à son tour par M. Gabet, Inspecteur des fouilles, et par M. Maunier, agent consulaire de France à Louxor, fit expédier aussitôt l'ordre de conserver le cercueil tel qu'il était, mais l'ordre ne fut pas exécuté : **la momie fut déshabillée dans le harem du moudir** et une partie des **objets qu'elle portait disparut dans l'opération**. Mariette eut grande peine à obtenir la restitution des autres, et avant qu'ils lui fussent remis, plusieurs d'entre eux furent retenus par le prince" – Maspero (version 1902)⁹⁴

Nonetheless these accounts mainly mirror European scholars' point of view and show a touch of "orientalism", building up a tradition which took hold in Egyptological literature: the coffin was supposedly opened by the governor in his harem (probably to be intended as a sector of the private apartments of the "Mudirieh" of the governor); the mummy was ravaged in search for precious objects; much of the original burial equipment was stolen.

No primary written records about the event, including Arabic/Turkish sources such as the governmental archives, have been used for its reconstruction, and the only records provided show a tendentious reinterpretation. Actually, the facts would have been more nuanced than those handed down in the Egyptological tradition.

A part of the wages of the workforce devoted to the archaeological tasks on the west bank of Thebes was in the charge of the governor of Qena.⁹⁵ Therefore, the

claim of Mariette that the coffin was discovered by his workmen could have been more disputed than the Egyptological tradition shows: the legal and financial regulations of archaeological finds at that time did not have yet clear borders, and situations were evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For instance, in April 1859, the *rais* Muhammad Husein, working on behalf of Lord Dufferin at Deir el-Bahri, had troubles with some of Mariette's men and Fadil Pasha had to intervene and stop the excavations of both missions, awaiting a clarifying *firman* from Saïd Pasha.⁹⁶ Indeed, not by chance, in the following decades, the government authorities underwent a redefinition of the legal rights of intervention, in order to solve more and more frequent disputes raised over the ownership of antiquities.⁹⁷

If it really took place, the presumed destruction of the mummy attributed to the governor and portrayed as an inappropriate act would have been in line with the customs of the time of unwrapping mummies and searching for objects amongst the bandages.⁹⁸ The mummy of Kamose, discovered a few months before by Mariette's workmen, underwent a similar fate (and according to Desjardins, it was Mariette himself who had "ravaged" the mummy searching for antiquities: "*M. Mariette, après avoir levé les dernières bandelettes, fouilla dans le corps de ce roi [Kamose] enseveli depuis de quatre mille ans, et il en retira un scarabée, des amulettes et deux petits lions d'or couchés*").⁹⁹

Also the action of sending the coffin with its contents to Qena and then to Cairo was in line with the normal procedure of the time. Indeed, a decree of 1835 had placed on local governors the legal obligation for bringing antiquities to the Antikhana,¹⁰⁰ and the governor of Qena acted accordingly, shipping all the objects to Cairo instead of waiting for the boat sent by Mariette to gather Ahhotep's antiquities (**Q.10**). Indeed, only later Mariette obtained, directly from the viceroy, a special ministerial order for stopping the boat and confiscating the coffin.¹⁰¹

of sections", an elaboration of *al-mashayikh sheykhs* of a village, as documented in a register of 1613-15. These are heads of the (mainly) agricultural workforce which needed to pay the levy, see MICHEL, *L'Égypte des villages*, 290-1. The terms "*corvée*" used in some instance by Mariette in relation of his excavation workforce (cf. DAVID, *Mariette Pacha*, 109; LEBÉE, *CAHIERS* 5, 59) may mirror a system in use from the central administration applied also for the organisation of the "archaeological" work of Mariette.

⁹⁶ The episode is quoted in EDWARDS, *JEA* 51, 17.

⁹⁷ Cf. HUNTER, *Egypt under the Khedives*. The redefinition of authority in Egypt in the nineteenth century AD is investigated by FAHMY, *In Quest of Justice*.

⁹⁸ Cf. RIGGS, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt*, 56-8.

⁹⁹ DESJARDINS, *RGA* 18, 53.

¹⁰⁰ DAVID, *Mariette Pacha*, 115-6; KHATER, *Le Régime juridique*, 37-71.

¹⁰¹ MASPERO, in MARIETTE (ed.), *Oeuvres diverses*, cii-ciii.

⁹² *Cahier de notes Devéria, 1858-59*, Musée du Louvre, *Département des Antiquités égyptiennes*. The emphasis is mine. See also *Appendix A* at the end of the article.

⁹³ MASPERO, *Guide Musée de Boulaq* [1883], 77. The emphasis is mine.

⁹⁴ MASPERO, *Guide Musée du Caire* [1902], 413-14. The emphasis is mine.

⁹⁵ The word for *rais/ruasa* can come from *ruus al-hisas*, "heads

Furthermore, the presence of the two lists drafted on 25th February may indicate the opposite of a thoughtless action, and the governor of Qena could have been instead following a legal and formal procedure for the opening of the coffin: listing all the contents from the coffin in front of a sort of official “notary”.¹⁰²

Three documents (A.-C., respectively Q.14-16) show the procedure in action at Thebes at that time: the antiquities found on behalf of Mariette were assigned to Fadil Pasha, who shipped them to a recipient in Cairo (Maïeh), accompanied by a list of contents drafted by or on behalf of Fadil Pasha, and later both objects and lists were redirected to Mariette. In other cases, Mariette visited the storerooms of the “Mudirieh” at Qena and selected the objects that were destined for Cairo or his storerooms in Luxor.

A. The first document is a letter, left undated and written by Mariette: it mentions some objects coming from his own excavations at Qurna shipped to Cairo (?) (and from Cairo to him?) by Fadil Pasha together with a list of content personally drafted by the governor himself.¹⁰³

Q.14 – “*Erfan-bey Excellence, En réponse à la lettre de Votre Excellence de j’ai l’honneur de vous informer que j’ai reçu la caisse envoyée par Fadil Pacha et contenant des antiquités trouvées par moi à Gournah. La liste de ces antiquités est conforme à la liste ci-jointe dressée par Fadil-Pacha lui-même. Quant à Bedaoui-effendi, j’ai de grands sujets de plainte contre lui et depuis long-temps. Il a brisé des monuments de ses mains et à Gournah, il a battu fait battre des rêis pour les forcer à me désobéir, et lui-même il a fait tout le contraire des instructions que je lui avais laissées, étant cependant un serviteur mis par Votre Excellence à ma disposition. Je ne demande cependant pas sa destitution, quoique je l’eusse obtenue facilement de Son Altesse quand j’ai eu l’honneur de la voir. Mais je demande qu’il soit envoyé, conformément à vos premiers ordres, à Harabat-el-Madfounet [Abydos], en l’informant qu’il doit m’obéir en tout ce que je lui commanderai pour le bien du service dont je suis chargé. Quelques mots sévères adressés par Votre Excellence à cet employé le forceront à comprendre ses devoirs un peu mieux qu’il ne l’a fait jusqu’à présent*” – Mariette¹⁰⁴

B. Another more formal document mentions some antiquities shipped by Fadil Pasha to Cairo and later ending up in the hands of Mariette, together with the list of the objects produced in connection with the dispatch.

Q. 15 – “*Copie d’une liste envoyée à la Maïeh par le Moudir de Kineh en date de 12 Chawal 1274 [25th May 1858] contenant les antiquités trouvées à Gournah*”.¹⁰⁵

C. A page of Montaut’s diary records a visit paid by Mariette to the governor of Qena in October 1858 in order to see the antiquities deposited in the “Mudirieh”.

Q. 16 – “[Mariette] choisit quelques objets et donne l’ordre qu’on les porte à son bateau à vapeur. Les autres devront venir à Thebes dans un magasin génPral qu’il y fera préparer” – Montaut¹⁰⁶

Bedawy Effendi = Bedawy Effendi was a local official, probably based in Luxor, working under the direction of the governor of Qena. Unfortunately, there is no complete information in the Egyptological sources about this person, although his relations with Mariette would not have been very friendly, as documented in one of the letters of Mariette, who complains about the behavior of Bedawy Effendi, not following his instructions (Q.14). The expressed request of sending Bedawy Effendi to Abydos in Q.14 may be a direct effect of the Ahhotep episode, although the letter was left undated. Effendi seems to have been on the boat sent to Cairo accompanying the treasure (Q.9).

Théodule Devéria = Théodule Charles Devéria,¹⁰⁷ who often accompanied Mariette as copyist and photographer, arrived in Cairo at the end of December 1858,¹⁰⁸ and was with Mariette when he received the news about Ahhotep’s discovery. He was also with Mariette on the boat when the assemblage was retrieved by the French scholar (Q.8). In this case, he produced a vivid (and embroidered?) account of the event (“*M. Mariette propose à l’un de le jeter à l’eau, à un autre de lui brûler la cervelle, à un troisième de l’envoyer aux galères, et à un quatrième de le faire pendre*”).¹⁰⁹

Devéria is also responsible for a kind of preliminary list of the contents of the treasure written in one of

¹⁰² See MINIACI, “The original Inventory List of the Queen Ahhotep ‘Treasure’”, in this volume.

¹⁰³ The fact that this letter was found in the same folder containing the letter of Maunier, the mention of Bedawy Effendi and the detonative hostility shown by Mariette towards him might suggest a connection with the Ahhotep story (i.e. could this letter have been written soon after the confiscation of Ahhotep assemblage by Mariette?).

¹⁰⁴ BIF Ms. 4030, f. 392. The emphasis is mine. The transcription is given by Elisabeth David.

¹⁰⁵ BIF Ms. 4025, f. 235.

¹⁰⁶ *Journal de Montaut*, f. 35v, October 1858; Musée du Louvre, *Département des Antiquités égyptiennes*. Transcription courtesy of Elisabeth David.

¹⁰⁷ DAWSON, UPHILL, BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who*, 153; MASPERO, in DEVÉRIA, *Mémoires et fragments*; LE GUERN, *L’Antiquité à la BnF*.

¹⁰⁸ DAVID, *Mariette Pacha*, 110.

¹⁰⁹ Reported in MASPERO, in MARIETTE (ed.), *Oeuvres diverses*, cii ff; translated in WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 252-3.

his diaries – still unpublished – kept in the Musée du Louvre, unfortunately without any date.

Q.17 – “Voici maintenant la liste des principaux objets trouvés dans la momie : (voir p. 63 l'extrait de la lettre de Mr Maunier)

(vases, chevet, coffre, étui à collyre)

1° Une hache d'arme en or incrustée de pierres dures et portant la légende complète du roi Aahmès ; 2° plusieurs haches de bronze sans légendes apparentes ; 3° un poignard sans gaine dont le manche est en or masqué et la lame en bronze ; sans ornements ni légendes ; 4° un poignard muni d'une gaine d'or et dont le manche de bois sculpté est orné de quatre têtes humaines, recouvert de lames d'or et incrusté de pierres dures, sans légende apparente ; 5° trois ou quatre petits poignards plus ou moins ornés ; 6° un flagellum ou éventail de bois recouvert de lames d'or et pourtant sur chaque face les cartouches prénom du roi Kamès ; 7° plusieurs chaînes d'or de différentes formes ; et [unreadable] la plus grande, longue de près de deux mètres et fort pesante porte sur les fermoirs les deux cartouches du roi Aah-mès ; un scarabée d'or incrusté de lapis lazuli et admirablement travaillé, y est suspendu. 8° plusieurs bracelets et anneaux de jambes en or et de différentes formes mais sans légendes, 9° trois bracelets composés de grains de pierres dures et d'or en passés dans des fils du même métal en forme de mosaïque, avec les noms d'Aahmès sur les fermoirs ; 10° un bracelet d'or avec personnages ciselés et incrustations de lapis lazuli ; on y lit les cartouches d'Aahmès. 11° un bracelet d'or incrusté de pierres dures ayant la forme d'un épervier les ailes éployées 12° un autre bracelet d'or incrusté de pierres dures et formé d'une grosse torsade qui supporte le cartouche d'Aah-mès entre deux sphinx ; la partie inférieure de ce joyau est munie d'un appendice toujours incrusté de pierres dures et destiné à l'empêcher de tourner sur le bras. 13° Un pectoral d'or découpé à jour et incrusté de pierres dures taillées en très léger relief et représentant le roi Aahmès entre deux divinités, avec accessoires et légendes hiéroglyphiques, cette dernière pièce est certainement le plus beau de tous les bijoux antiques connus jusqu'à ce jour ; 14° un miroir métallique avec un manche de bois orné d'or. 15° un petit modèle de barque avec ses rameurs, 16° un autre modèle de barque en or avec ses rameurs en argent et les chefs de l'équipage également en or ; celui-ci porte le nom de Kamès ; 17° un modèle de char à quatre roues en bronze et bois pour supporter l'une de deux barques ; 18° diverses parties de colliers et autres objets” – Devéria¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Cahier de notes Devéria, 1858-59, Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités égyptiennes. See also **Appendix A**

In addition, he took the first (?) photographs of the coffin and part of its burial equipment¹¹¹ (see Figs 2-3, 17, 21-22, Pls I-II). Devéria's negatives and photos are now in the archives of the Musée d'Orsay, gathered from the archives of the Louvre (DAE) in the years 1980-90.¹¹² On the back of most of these photos is indicated the date “1859”, a sign that the pictures were taken in the same year as the discovery, probably soon after Mariette had retrieved the coffin and its funerary equipment. Indeed, the background of some of these photos may provide further information about the place where they were taken. In the photo PHO 1986 131 221 (see Fig. 2) are present some vertical bars, while in the photo PHO 1986 131 220 in the upper right corner is visible a thick rope rolled up around a kind of thick metal cleat (see Fig. 3). These elements are those of the storerooms of Bulaq (just behind Mariette's house), as visible in another photo of Devéria himself, provided with an explicative label: “Magasins de remorquage à Bulaq” (PHO 1986 131 185; see Fig. 4). Therefore, most probably the photographs of Devéria were taken right at the arrival of the objects in the storerooms of Mariette at Bulaq in March 1859.

Ernest Desjardins = Antoine Émile Ernest Desjardins¹¹³ was a close friend and admirer of Mariette,¹¹⁴ and officially in charge of reading his excavation accounts in front of the members of the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* in Paris when Mariette was away. He was the first scholar to produce a more detailed account about the discovery and content of the assemblage in 1860, although this aimed only to be preliminary (see above **R.4**). From November 1862 to January 1863, Desjardins visited Upper Egypt, accompanied by Mariette, and had the chance to meet also Vassalli and Gabet, who were excavating at Thebes on behalf of Mariette.¹¹⁵

and MINIACI, “The original Inventory List of the Queen Ahhotep ‘Treasure’”, in this volume.

¹¹¹ Musée d'Orsay, photos inv. nos: PHO 1986 144 93/MS 163 89 and PHO 1986 131 220 (coffin lying horizontally, with the four calcite jars, wooden box, kohl jar and headrest); PHO 1986 144 104/MS 164 4, PHO 1986 144 94/MS 163 90 and PHO 1986 131 221 (standing coffin with the four calcite jars, wooden box, kohl jar and headrest); PHO 1986 144 95/MS 163 91, PHO 1986 144 96/MS 163 92 and PHO 1986 131 219 (detail of the coffin, profile); PHO 1986 144 97/MS 163 93 and PHO 1986 131 216 (foot end of the coffin). See also comments in LE GUERN, *L'Antiquité à la BnF*.

¹¹² Information kindly provided by Elisabeth David; see also STARING, *JEA* 102, 146.

¹¹³ *Maître de conférences* at the *École Normale Supérieure* in 1874; afterwards professor at the *Collège de France*. Responsible for the course of *Géographie* at the *École Normale* in 1861: DE FRANQUEVILLE, *Le Premier Siècle*, vol. I, no. 827.

¹¹⁴ DAVID, *Mariette Pacha*, 74.

¹¹⁵ DAVID, *Mariette Pacha*, 148.



Fig. 2 – Photo of the coffin of the Queen Ahhotep in standing position with a few objects of its assemblage, photo by Devéria; PHO 1986 131 221 © Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Alexis Brandt



Fig. 3 – Coffin of the Queen Ahhotep laying on its base; photo by Devéria; PHO 1986 131 220 © Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Alexis Brandt



Fig. 4 – Storerooms of Mariette at Bulaq; photo by Devéria; PHO 1986 131 185 © Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Alexis Brandt

There are other persons, who were not directly involved with the 1859 events, but who played an important role in the transmission of the “account of the discovery” because they were closely connected to Mariette: Vassalli, Brugsch, and Maspero.

Luigi Vassalli = In 1859, Mariette decided to engage Luigi Vassalli¹¹⁶ to supervise some of his archaeological activities, but in that year he was primarily in the necropolis of Giza. Shortly after he returned from Italy, where he had joined Garibaldi in 1860, Vassalli was under Mariette service again from the 29th October 1861,¹¹⁷ and he was sent to Thebes only in December 1862 in order to continue excavation in the same area of Dra Abu el-Naga where the coffin of Ahhotep had been discovered before.¹¹⁸ Inevitably, the news about Ahhotep's discovery reached Vassalli's ears either via Mariette or any of the workmen/foremen working under his supervision.

Heinrich Brugsch = Although behind the scenes, also Heinrich Ferdinand Karl Brugsch¹¹⁹ would have played an important role, since he was a close friend of Mariette. Information reached Brugsch via Mariette rather quickly, as for instance the first account about the discovery of Kamose's coffin is contained in a letter sent by Brugsch to von Humboldt on the 31st of December 1857 “*In Theben ist ein Sarkophag aus den Zeiten der*

12ten Dynastie [sic; read instead Seventeenth Dynasty] (*älter als 2000 Jahre vor unserer Ära*) *aus der Erde gezogen, welcher außer der In Staub zerfallenen Mumie, einen Dolch mit goldenem Griff, zwei Löwen in Gold und einen noch unbekannten Königsnamen enthält*”.¹²⁰ He also helped Mariette in drafting the first register of the Museum of Bulaq. Nonetheless, at the moment, there is no information about the Ahhotep discovery from his side.

Gaston Maspero = Gaston Camille Charles Maspero¹²¹ met Mariette only in 1867, therefore a few years after the discovery of Ahhotep's coffin, and when he was at a young age (twenty-one); nonetheless on February 8th 1881, he succeeded Mariette as director of the Museum of Bulaq and head of the Antiquities Service, taking charge of his legacy too, being executor of Mariette's will. In the archives of the *Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France* in Paris, there is a thin folder titled “*Fouilles de Gournah*”,¹²² introduced by a paper explaining the reason why this group of papers was in the hands of Maspero: “*Fouilles de Gournah de Mariette. Mariette est mort le 18 janvier 1881. Gaston Maspero a été prié par les enfants Mariette de regarder les papiers laissés par lui / l'annotation à publier en grande partie [...]*”.¹²³ Unfortunately, these are only a few scattered papers, from different times, but several of these refer to the excava-

¹¹⁶ DAWSON, UPHILL, BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who*, 552-4. See also TIRADRITTI, in MARÉE (ed.), *Second Intermediate Period*, 329-42. See also LA GUARDIA, in ANONYMOUS (ed.), *L'egittologo Luigi Vassalli*, 11-44.

¹¹⁷ Information from BIF Ms. 4052, f. 226.

¹¹⁸ See below, § **The presumed Location of the Burial, Khaw el-Alamat, near TT 155**, p. 45-7.

¹¹⁹ DAWSON, UPHILL, BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who*, 84-5.

¹²⁰ BEN AMAR, *In Monte Artium* 5, 48.

¹²¹ DAWSON, UPHILL, BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who*, 359-61; DAVID, *Gaston Maspero*.

¹²² BIF Ms. 4062, ff. 148-165.

¹²³ BIF Ms. 4062, f. 148. The inventory lists of February 25th are in another folder, see MINIACI, “The original Inventory List of the Queen Ahhotep ‘Treasure’ from Mariette's Papers (BIF Paris, *Fonds Maspero*, Ms. 4052)”, in this volume.

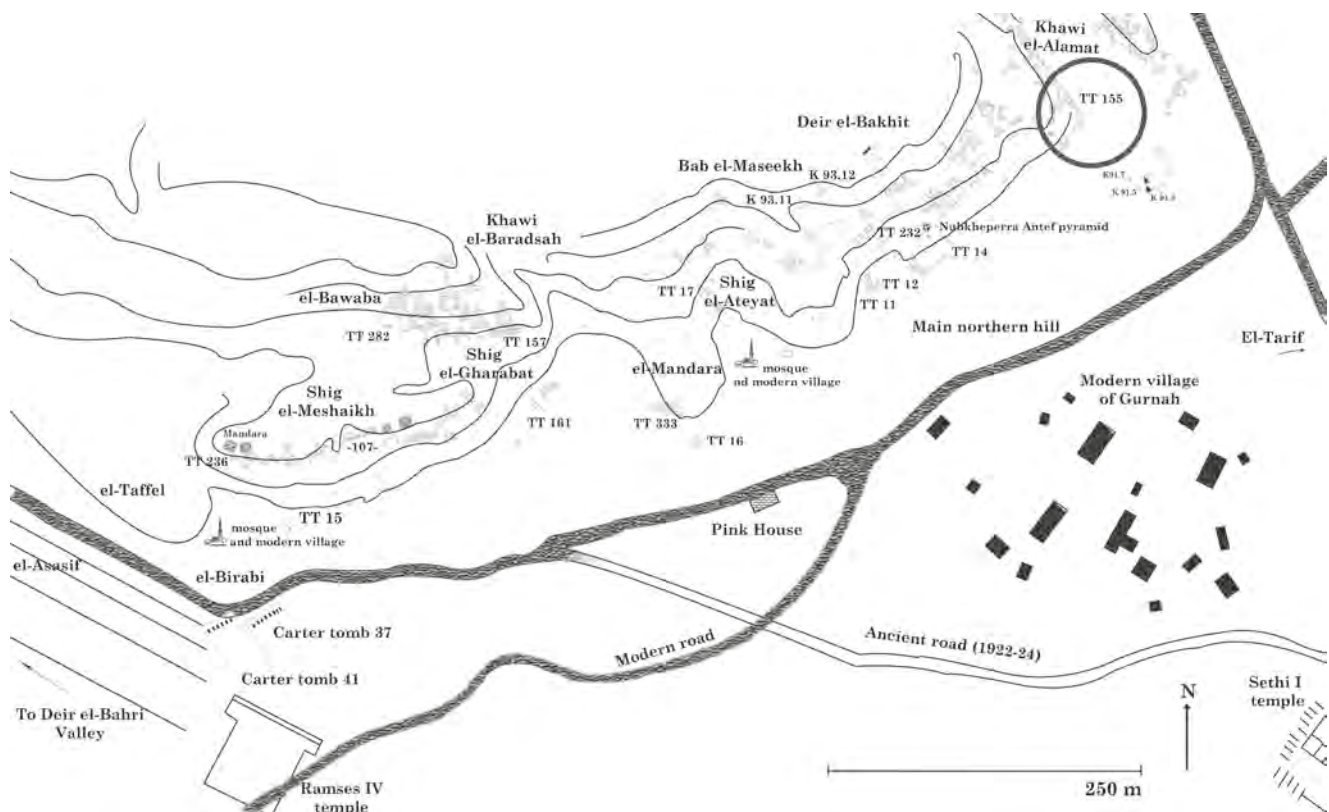


Fig. 5 – Plan of the necropolis of Dra Abu el-Naga © drawing by Gianluca Miniaci

tions at Dra Abu el-Naga.¹²⁴ In 1883, he published his first edition of the guide to the Bulaq Museum, after the six editions issued by Mariette from 1864 till his death. In his edition, he detailed the information already provided by Mariette in his various editions, adding new details, whose source is often unknown.¹²⁵

The presumed Location of the Burial

Since his arrival at Thebes, Mariette decided to devote one part of his research to the northern section of Dra Abu el-Naga. The selection of the area could be due to the incredible intuition of the French Egyptologist, but probably it was also the result of his personal acquaintances and the accumulated knowledge and experience from the local workmen. Excavations of Mariette were significantly rapid in Dra Abu el-Naga: in December 1857, Mariette had already discovered the coffin of Ka-

mose.¹²⁶ In addition, just over one year later, on January/February 1859 he would have discovered the burial of Queen Ahhotep. It is worth emphasizing that Mariette in 1853 had purchased for the Louvre two other royal coffins of the Seventeenth Dynasty, previously part of the collection of Triantaphillos,¹²⁷ coming from Dra Abu el-Naga North as well¹²⁸ (see Table 2). Probably the connections between the discovery of the two royal coffins by Triantaphillos, the purchase of them by Mariette and the area selected in Dra Abu el-Naga were deeper than the sources seem to suggest.

Dra Abu el-Naga North = In spite of the lack of precise information, the area where the coffin of Ahhotep had been found can be approximately located within the northernmost part of Dra Abu el-Naga North (see Figs 5-6; see also Q.4).¹²⁹

¹²⁴ BIF Ms. 4062, f. 150 reproduces the box coffin belonging to Sobeknakht, coming from the same tomb of Hornakht found by Vassalli in Dra Abu el-Naga in 1863, cf. Ms. Vassalli AV f. 110v in the *Civica Biblioteca d'Arte di Milano – Fondo Luigi Vassalli*, Album H 2 and MINIACI, QUIRKE, *EVO* 31, fig. 2. For a *rishi* coffin of a private individual named Ahmose, see BIF Ms. 4062, f. 153, and see below.

¹²⁵ ABOU-GHAZI, *ASAE* 67, 22.

¹²⁶ Egyptian Museum, Cairo TR 14.12.27.12, DARESSY, *ASAE* 9, 61-3, pl. 9; MINIACI, *Rishi Coffins*, 226-7 (rT03C).

¹²⁷ DEWACHTER, *RdE* 36, 43-66; DEWACHTER, in LECLANT (ed.), *Entre Égypte et Grèce*, 119-29.

¹²⁸ MINIACI, in BETRÒ, DEL VESCO, MINIACI (eds), *Seven Seasons*, 37.

¹²⁹ Other short accounts on Mariette excavations at Dra Abu el-Naga can be found in MINIACI, in BETRÒ, DEL VESCO, MINIACI (eds), *Seven Seasons*, 41-3.



Fig. 6 – Dra Abu el-Naga north. View from the east. On the right the narrow rocky slope called Bab abu Negga. Between the two hills the mouth of the wadi Khawi el-Alamat. Photo by Gianluca Miniaci

Q.18 – “L’endroit où M. Mariette fit faire la fouille avait fourni déjà des cercueils de rois de la XI^e dynastie [read Seventeenth Dynasty], dont les souverains ne possédaient, selon toute apparence, que la Thèbaïde” – Desjardins¹³⁰

Q.19 – “Malgré les nombreux explorateurs qui avaient précédé M. Mariette dans la partie de Gournah qui porte le nom de Drah-Aboul-Neggah, il remarqua, presque à l’entrée de la longue vallée qui mène à Biban-el-Moluk, une bande de terrain dont le sol, formé d’éclats de pierres et de poteries brisées, trahissait un de ces lieux de sépulture antique qui semblaient à l’éminent archéologue avoir été affectés aux rois de la XI dynastie. Ce terrain n’avait jamais été fouillé. [...]” – Desjardins¹³¹

Mariette concentrated his work mainly in Dra Abu el-Naga North, probably excluding the hills of Dra Abu el-Naga South. He certainly explored the main hill in Dra Abu el-Naga North, where he (re)-discovered the tomb of Nubkheperre Intef.¹³² As stated by Desjardins, he worked also

in the plain and onto the hill of Dra Abu el-Naga North next to the entrance of the Valley of the Kings (**Q.19**).

From this area come the coffin of the King Kamose and other burials of the same period. The royal coffin of Kamose was discovered in December 1857 by the workmen excavating on behalf of Mariette at Dra Abu el-Naga North (see **Q.20-21**). On 9th November 1858, Mariette recorded a *rishi* coffin bearing the name of the “Man/Official (?) of the City” (*s n niwt* or *shzwt wr n niwt*) Ahmose, not known from other sources. A drawing of this coffin is preserved in the folder of Qurna excavations among a few scattered papers of Mariette taken into the possession of Maspero in 1881¹³³ (see Fig. 7). Unfortunately the provenance of the coffin is not precisely indicated beyond a generic “Gournah”,¹³⁴ but the style and type of the coffin can be compared with that one of Kamose and other coffins later found by Vassalli in the northernmost part of Dra Abu el-Naga.¹³⁵ In addition, a photo of Devéria taken in the storeroom area of Bulaq shows another *rishi* coffin bearing the handwritten notes “Qournah” in the front and “1859” on the verso¹³⁶ (see Fig. 8). The *rishi* style of the coffins is very diagnostic of the Second Intermediate Period–early Eighteenth Dynasty.¹³⁷ Therefore the exploration of a Second Intermediate Period cemetery along the hills of Dra Abu el-Naga

¹³⁰ DESJARDINS, *RGA* 18, 53. The emphasis is mine.

¹³¹ DESJARDINS, *RGA* 18, 99. The emphasis is mine.

¹³² MARIETTE, *Monuments divers*, pl. 50 (copy of the inscription of one of the obelisks of Nubkheperre Intef). Actually, in his notes, Mariette records “celles des rois Ra-noub-Kheper-Entef et Sevek-em-Saf”, MARIETTE, *RAr* 2, 28. Puzzlingly, Mariette does not give sufficient evidence for the tomb of Sobekemsaf. As suggested by Weill, probably when Mariette discovered Intef Nubkheperre’s tomb, he recalled the story that a golden scarab inscribed with the name of a King Sobekemsaf was associated through an account of Athanasi with the discovery of the King Intef coffin in 1827. In his notes, Mariette would have associated by mistake the name of Sobekemsaf with that of Nubkheperre, see WEILL, *La fin du Moyen Empire*, 363. However, there could be some faint evidence that Mariette actually discovered a tomb of a king

called Sobekemsaf, see MINIACI, *EVO* 29, 75-87. See discussions in POLZ, *Der Beginn*, 123-30.

¹³³ BIF Ms. 4062, f. 153. See above, § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, Gaston Maspero, p. 41.

¹³⁴ The “Gournah” reference poses some problems as it can be interpreted both as the excavation provenance but also as the storeroom for Mariette’s excavations on the west bank of Thebes (cf. **Q.1**).

¹³⁵ MINIACI, *Rishi Coffins*, 56-63. See below, § **The presumed Location of the Burial**, Khawi el-Alamat, near TT 155, p. 45-7.

¹³⁶ Musée d’Orsay, PHO 1986 131 261.

¹³⁷ Cf. MINIACI, *Rishi Coffins*.



Fig. 7 – Drawing of a *rishi* coffin bearing the name of the “Overseer of the City” Ahmose – *Fonds Maspero* Ms 4062, f. 153 © courtesy of the *Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France*

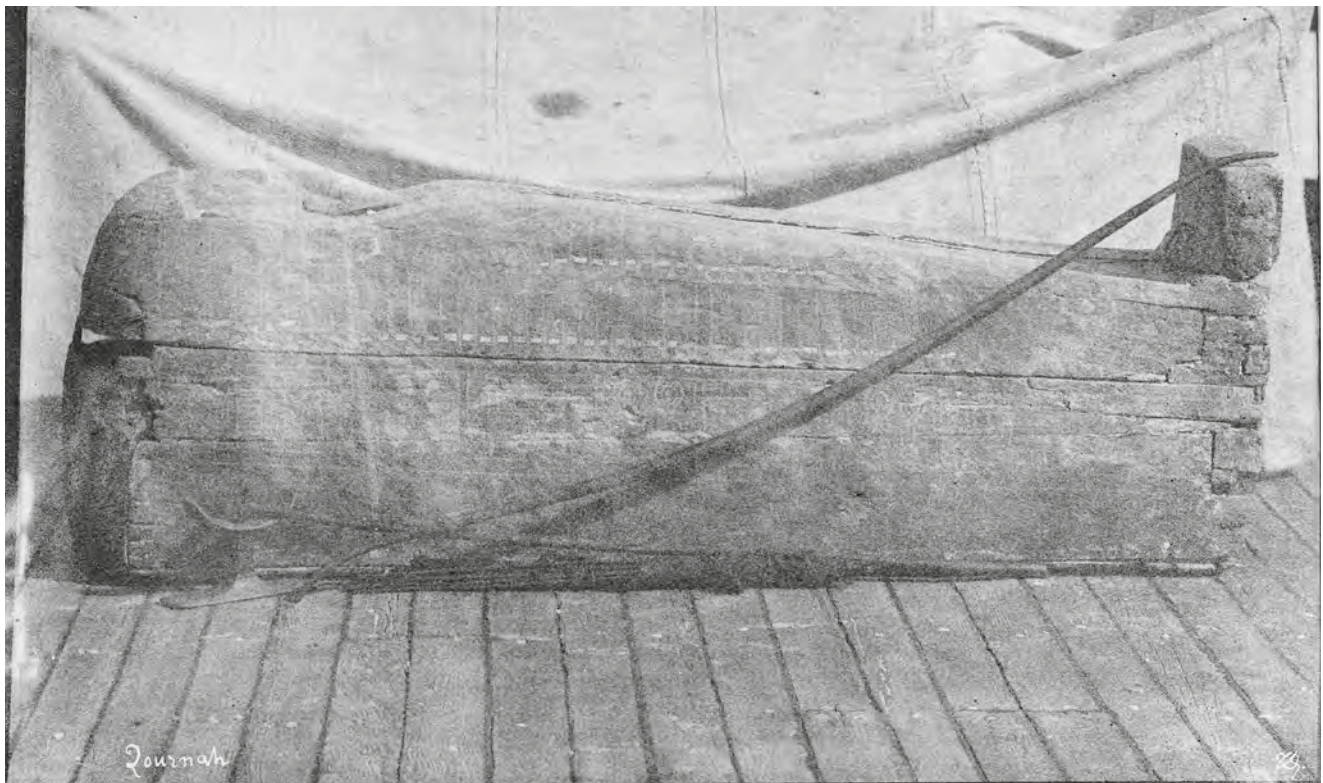


Fig. 8 – *Rishi* coffin in the storeroom area of Bulaq; photo by Devéria; PHO 1986 131 261
© Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Alexis Brandt

on behalf of Mariette seems to have been uninterrupted from 1857 to 1859. Certainly, the excavation activity of Mariette in that area for a prolonged time (1857-59) would have also attracted “side”-excavations and illicit digs in the area.

Close to Kamose = Other accounts provide the information – and they are all consistent in this – that the find-spots of Ahhotep’s and Kamose’s coffin were close each other.

Q.20 – “M. Mariette a trouvé, en 1859, au même endroit [the find-spot **Kamose’s coffin**], un autre cercueil [Ahhotep’s] *semblable à celui-là*” – Desjardins¹³⁸

Q.21 – “Le tombe di Gurnah sono scavate parte nella collina e parte nella pianura. Alcune delle ultime hanno il pozzo verticale che conduce alla camera sepolcrale, ma la maggior parte ne sono prive. Fu in una di queste che il signor Mariette anni sono scoprì un sarcofago inviolato [**Kamose**] [...]. È pure all’incirca in questo posto un po’ verso l’alto della collina che fu scoperto dal signor Mariette il magnifico sarcofago dorato della regina Ahhotep” – Vassalli¹³⁹

Khawi el-Alamat, near TT 155 = The general information about Dra Abu el-Naga North can be further narrowed down, thanks to the information provided by Vassalli and Carter (also re-posted by Winlock), who could have been somehow aware of its original location.

Q.22 – “Je ne veux pas commencer la nouvelle année sans vous écrire deux mots [...]. J’ai abandonné le projet d’aller dans la vallée de l’ouest, où j’ai vu la presque impossibilité de ne rien trouver; tandis que les fouilles de Drah abu Neggah me promettent mieux; j’ai mis moitié des hommes dans l’emplacement que nous avons visité ensemble et le reste sur la lisière de la montagne de la reine Ahhotep et sur les environs du sarcophage de S.A. le prince Napoléon [read Kamose]” – Vassalli¹⁴⁰

Q.23 – “Non molto distante [the find-spot of Ahhotep’s coffin] e precisamente ai piedi della collina io ritrovai pure un bel sarcofago, che conteneva la mummia di un principe per nome Tuau [coffin inscribed for Hornakht; throw-stick bearing the name of the king’s son Tjuiu]” – Vassalli¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ DESJARDINS, *RGA* 18, 53. The emphasis is mine.

¹³⁹ VASSALLI, *I monumenti istorici egizi*, 128. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁴⁰ BnF Ms. 20179, f. 278. Letter of Vassalli to Mariette, Gurnah 1st January 1863. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁴¹ VASSALLI, *I monumenti istorici egizi*, 131. The emphasis is mine. The reference is to the tomb of Hornakht in which the throw-stick of prince Tuau (read Tjuiu) was found.

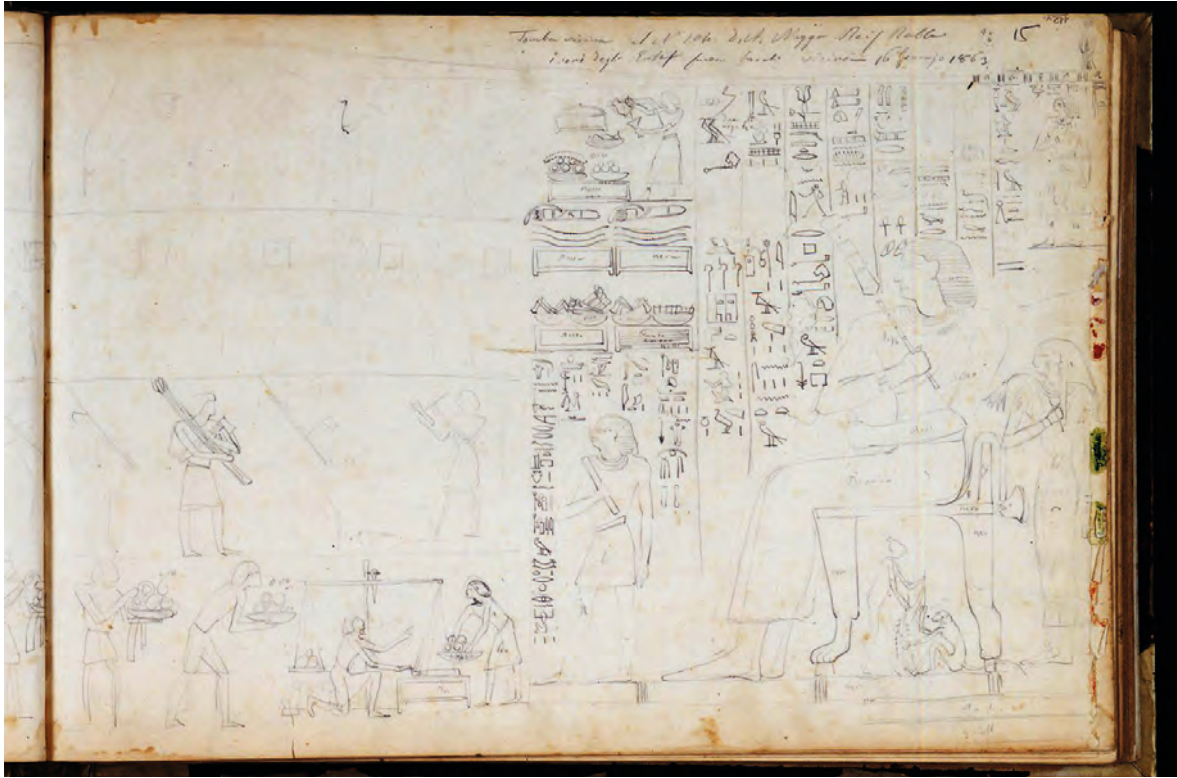


Fig. 9 – Vassalli’s drawing of some scenes from the tomb of the “great royal herald” Intef (TT 155); see the annotation “Tomba vicina al N. 104 D. A. Negga Reis Rabba” in the upper right-hand corner; *Album di disegni Vassalli*, Ms. AV, f. 112v
© courtesy of the Civica Biblioteca d’Arte di Milano – Fondo Luigi Vassalli, Album H 2



Fig. 10 – Dra Abu el-Naga North, area around TT 155 © photo by Gianluca Miniaci

According to Vassalli the burial of Queen Ahhotep was not too distant from the tomb of Hornakht (Q.23), although unfortunately there is no information about the exact position of the last. Nonetheless, some hypotheses can be advanced, since during Vassalli's work at Dra Abu el-Naga in 1862-63, he set up his work in the area where the coffins of Kamose and Ahhotep had been found a few years before and here discovered some burials of the same time span (Q.22).

In his *Album di disegni*, Vassalli had noted in a drawing of some scenes from the tomb of the "Great Royal Herald" Intef (TT 155) the following text (see Fig. 9):

Q.24 – "Tomba vicina al N. 104 D. A. Negga Reis Rabba / i conigli Entef furono trovati vicini – 16 Gennaio 1863" – Vassalli¹⁴²

Therefore, Vassalli's tomb 104 was located near TT 155. The position of Vassalli's tomb 104 is nowadays lost but TT 155 is well known, located in the northernmost part of Dra Abu el-Naga North, at the mouth of the wadi called Khawi el-Alamat¹⁴³ (see Fig. 10; cf. Fig. 6). Vassalli was working in tomb 104 on 23rd December 1862,¹⁴⁴ and in the same time, on 21st December 1862, Vassalli had discovered also the burial of the "Royal Acquaintance" Hornakht (Q.23),¹⁴⁵ misinterpreted as "un principe per nome Tuau" since it was equipped with the throw-stick inscribed for the "King's Son"¹⁴⁶ Tjuiu, bearing the cartouche of King Seqenenre Tao (see Fig. 11).¹⁴⁷ The tomb is unfortunately not numbered (the only coffin received number 67), however, in the same days, other tombs belonging to the Second Intermediate Period–early Eighteenth Dynasty and featuring *rishi* coffins were numbered from the "100" system and were

recorded in Vassalli's *Album di disegni*.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, given the coincidence of the date of discovery and overlap of the types of the burial equipment, it is possible to suppose that in the season December 1862-January 1863, Vassalli had found a cluster of tombs all belonging to the same period (Second Intermediate Period), one next to another. The tomb of Hornakht should have been included in this cluster, not too distant from the tomb no. 104, and – in consequence – in the neighbourhood of the tomb of the "Great Royal Herald" Intef¹⁴⁹ (TT 155; see Fig. 10). As stated by Vassalli, the tomb of Hornakht was not so distant from the find spot of Ahhotep (just the latter should have been located more up to the hill; cf. Q.23): in consequence, Ahhotep's burial should have also been in the proximity of TT 155 (see Fig. 5).

The hypothesis pieced together from Vassalli's scattered notes seems to be confirmed by a piece of later information handed down by Carter,¹⁵⁰ that the queen's burial was found in close proximity to TT 155.¹⁵¹ The same information is reported in a footnote also by Winlock who heard this from Carter himself.

Q.25 – "[the tomb was] at the extreme northern boundary of the hill-slope [of Dra Abu el-Naga], deep below a tomb (of a certain Antef, the 'Great Herald of the King', dating from the reign of Tuthmosis III) where there are some hidden brick vaults [...]" – Carter¹⁵²

Q.26 – "Carter has heard a tradition in Kurnah that the site [the find-spot of Ahhotep's coffin] was near Tomb 155" – Winlock¹⁵³

¹⁴² In Vassalli AV f. 112 v. The emphasis is mine. Read in TIRADRITTI, in ANONYMOUS (ed.), *L'egittologo Luigi Vassalli*, 89. See also MINIACI, in BETRÒ, DEL VESCO, MINIACI (eds), *Seven Seasons*, 43, fig. 20.

¹⁴³ MINIACI, in BETRÒ, DEL VESCO, MINIACI (eds), *Seven Seasons*, 15-16, fig. 3.

¹⁴⁴ TIRADRITTI, in ANONYMOUS (ed.), *L'egittologo Luigi Vassalli*, 70.

¹⁴⁵ TIRADRITTI, in ANONYMOUS (ed.), *L'egittologo Luigi Vassalli*, 69.

¹⁴⁶ On this title, see SCHMITZ, *Untersuchungen zum Titel s3-njswt*. On the possibility he was not belonging to the royal sphere, see MINIACI, in PERNIGOTTI, ZECCHI (eds), *IV Colloquio di Egittologia*, 99-131.

¹⁴⁷ In Vassalli AV f. 36r. See also MARIETTE, *Monuments divers*, 16, pl. 51. The reading Seqenenre Tao has been questioned by Parlebas who argues for Seqenenre Djehutj-aa, see PARLEBAS, *GM* 15, 39-43.

¹⁴⁸ MINIACI, *Rishi Coffins*, 58-63; TIRADRITTI, in ANONYMOUS (ed.), *L'egittologo Luigi Vassalli*, 55.

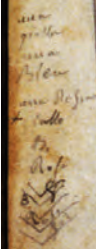
¹⁴⁹ See also POLZ, *Der Beginn*, 171.

¹⁵⁰ See BETRÒ, "A Note to Carter Manuscripts and the Discovery of Ahhotep's Coffin (Cairo CG 28501)", in this volume. See also below, § **The presumed Architectural Structure**, *Placed in a hole dug out inside a mud-brick structure*, p. 50-1.

¹⁵¹ The mention of the brick vault structures in the notes of Carter led Eaton-Krauss to believe that the find spot of Ahhotep could have been more shifted towards the plain, where Polz has cleared a number of free-standing chapels in the plain, EATON-KRAUSS, in BLÖBAUM, KAHL, SCHWEITZER (eds), *Ägypten-Münster*, 82. However, this observation would go against the information provided by Vassalli, that the coffin of Hornakht had been found at the foot of the hill.

¹⁵² LILYQUIST, *Egyptian Stone Vessels*, 55 reporting a note of Carter preserved in the MMA. The emphasis is mine. See BETRÒ, "A Note to Carter Manuscripts and the Discovery of Ahhotep's Coffin (Cairo CG 28501)", in this volume.

¹⁵³ WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 252, n. 2. The emphasis is mine.



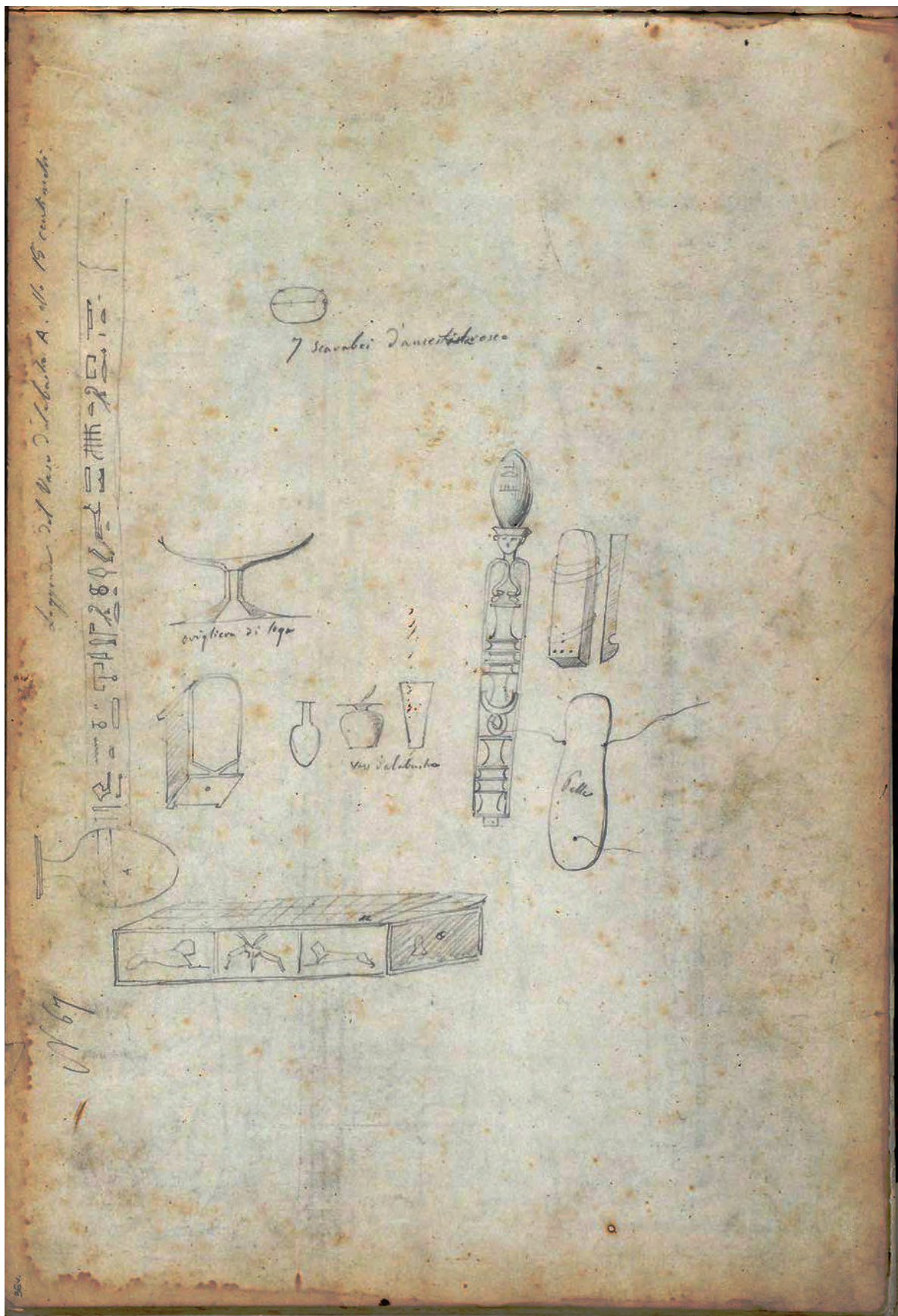


Fig. 11 (left and right) – Drawing of the coffin of Hornakht and part of its burial equipment, including the throw-stick inscribed with the cartouche of King Seqenenre Tao; *Album di disegni Vassalli*, Ms. AV, f. 36r-v © courtesy of the Civica Biblioteca d'Arte di Milano – Fondo Luigi Vassalli, Album H 2

The presumed Architectural Structure

One of the main questions concerns the type of structure in which the coffin of Ahhotep had been found. The structure is undefined and variously reported in the different accounts of the time, often in conflict with each other.

At the bottom of a deep pit without any chamber = Desjardins is the main person responsible for handing down the most reproduced version. From his report, the coffin seems to have been found at the bottom of a pit, deep five or six metres; since no chamber is mentioned, supposedly the coffin was found at the bottom of the pit.

Q.27 – “On retira, le 5 février 1859, d’une fosse de cinq à six mètres, un magnifique cercueil doré [Ah-hotep], dans l’intérieur duquel étaient enfermés tous les objets d’or dont il s’agit, à côté d’une momie humaine” – Desjardins¹⁵⁴

The same reconstruction is offered by Mariette himself, who specified that the coffin was simply placed at the bottom of the pit; Mariette’s report added another piece of information, that there was no visible structure above the pit:

Q.28 – “Les tombes de la quatrième sorte sont les plus simples : dans le sol pierreux de la plaine, on faisait un trou de quelques mètres de profondeur ; on descendait le cercueil dans ce trou, qui était ensuite rebouché, et tout était dit [...] celle [the tomb] d’un roi Ahmès [read Kamose] qui n’est ni l’Amosis de Manéthon, ni l’Ahmès sipear du papyrus, ainsi que celle de la reine Aah-Hotep, toutes deux arrangées selon la quatrième système, c’est-à-dire que les momies royales enfermées dans leur cercueil avaient été confiées à la terre sans aucun signe extérieur qui en révélât la présence” – Mariette¹⁵⁵

Correspondent versions to those of Mariette and Desjardins were handed down by other scholars:

Q.29 – “Or, le 5 février, les ouvriers, qui remuaient en corvée les sables de Draḥ abu ’l-Neggah, recueillirent au milieu des décombres, dans un trou profond de quatre ou cinq mètres” – Maspero¹⁵⁶

Q.30 – “On February 5, 1859, at a depth of some five or six metres in the surface-rubbish and sand, this gang found the coffin containing the mummy and jewelry of Ahhotep” – Winlock¹⁵⁷

In a shallow hole below the surface = On the other hand, Mariette himself produced another version of the same discovery in 1872, in which the coffin was found in a shallow hole in the ground, just below the surface.

Q.31 – “Contre toutes les habitudes, Aah-hotep avait été ensevelie, non dans un souterrain précédé d’une chambre mortuaire, mais en pleine terre et à un mètre à peine du sol” – Mariette¹⁵⁸

A few numbers of other publications tended to follow this version produced by Mariette:

Q.32 – “Chose singulière et inexplicable, ce cercueil fut trouvé dans une masse de matériaux au milieu desquels il semblait avoir été déposé” – Matthey¹⁵⁹

Q.33 – “Ce cercueil fut découvert en 1860 [sic], par des fouilleurs indigènes, couché à même dans le sable à Draḥ abu ’l Neggah” – Maspero¹⁶⁰

Although this version evidently conflicts with the earlier version, the words used by Desjardins, “fosse” (Q.27), and Mariette, “trou” (Q.28), in both cases underline a sort of unstructured deposit in the open ground rather than the more usual rock-cut structures frequently attested at Thebes. However, the version of a shallow hole appeared only in 1872 and it may have been influenced by the tradition handed down about Kamose’s coffin discovery (Q.36-38), which was stated to be placed in a hole just below the surface.

Placed in a hole dug out inside a mud-brick structure = At the beginning of the twentieth century, Howard Carter gathered another version of the discovery from Ahmed Saïd el-Hagg,¹⁶¹ an Egyptian peasant and occasional digger of antiquities, who claimed to have discovered the coffin himself inside a mud-brick structure:

Q.34 – “[...] deep below a tomb (of a certain Antef, the ‘Great Herald of the King’, dating from the reign of Tuthmosis III) where there are some hidden brick vaults, he [Ahmed Saïd el-Hagg] found hidden in one of the vaults a massive wooden coffin containing a mummy, four alabaster canopic jars, a bundle of gold and silver ornaments hurriedly placed beside the mummy in the coffin. The coffin he said was placed in a hole at

¹⁵⁴ DESJARDINS, *RGA* 18, 99. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁵⁵ MARIETTE, *RAr* 2, 28. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁵⁶ MASPERO, in MARIETTE (ed.), *Oeuvres diverses*, cii. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁵⁷ WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 252. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁵⁸ MARIETTE, *Album du Musée de Boulaq*, pl. 29 with text. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁵⁹ MATTHEY, *Explorations modernes*, 162. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁶⁰ MASPERO, *Guide Musée du Caire* [1902], 413. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁶¹ See BETRÒ, “A Note to Carter Manuscripts and the Discovery of Ahhotep’s Coffin (Cairo CG 28501)”, in this volume.

the side of the vault that seemed to have been gouged out expressly for it, and it was roughly covered up with bricks as if to hide it" – Carter¹⁶²

The tradition of a brick structure has been handed down in Egyptological literature, increasing the dissemination of different versions:

Q.35 – "*The burial of the queen [Ahhote] was found in a brick-lined vaulted chamber*" – Grajetzki¹⁶³

This version introduced a brick vaulted structure completely absent from other accounts. Mariette and Desjardins totally disavowed the presence of any brick structure, as Mariette explicitly remarked the absence of any external sign for a structure ("*sans aucun signe extérieur qui en révélât la présence*", **Q.28**). However, neither Mariette nor Desjardins were present at the time of the discovery.¹⁶⁴ The account provided by Ahmed Saïd (**Q.34**) is reliable in certain details: the location is explicitly indicated close to TT 155 as supported by the documentation independently drawn from Vassalli's notes.¹⁶⁵ Even the mention of a mud-brick structure (in ruin?) seems to provide a more archaeologically adherent explanation for the mass of material mentioned in earlier versions (cf. **Q.29-30**, **Q.32**).

The account handed down by Carter is not accurate in other respects: all the sources are consistent in mentioning that the jars had been found outside the coffin (cf. **Q.1**; see also p. 61) and not inside the coffin as indicated by Ahmed Saïd. However, given the elapsed timeframe from the actual moment of the discovery, the memory of Ahmed Saïd could have been mistaken, mingling his own account and experience with the details known from the news.¹⁶⁶ Alternatively, the account reported by Carter could have been totally invented by Ahmed Saïd building on local accounts and rumours circulating in the village of Qurna.

¹⁶² LILYQUIST, *Egyptian Stone Vessels*, 55 reporting a note of Carter preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The emphasis is mine. See especially BETRÒ, "A Note to Carter Manuscripts and the Discovery of Ahhotep's Coffin (Cairo CG 28501)", in this volume.

¹⁶³ GRAJETZKI, *Tomb Treasures*, 166.

¹⁶⁴ Winlock remarked that Mariette missed the pyramid features above the tomb of Nubkheperre, WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 226. However, one wonders how much Mariette was interested in an empty and very decayed brick structure in his synthetic reports, see archaeological report in POLZ, SEILER, *Die Pyramidenanlage*.

¹⁶⁵ See above, § **The presumed Location of the Burial**, *Khaw el-Alamat, near TT 155*, p. 45-7. See also discussions in BETRÒ, "A Note to Carter Manuscripts and the Discovery of Ahhotep's Coffin (Cairo CG 28501)", in this volume.

¹⁶⁶ BETRÒ, "A Note to Carter Manuscripts and the Discovery of Ahhotep's Coffin (Cairo CG 28501)", in this volume.

Other non-normative contemporary burials

A "non-normative" status seems to emerge from the different accounts over the type of burial granted to Ahhotep. This status is unexpectedly shared with other royal or wealthy burials of the Second Intermediate Period: namely, the coffin of Kamose and an anonymous burial labelled in Egyptological literature as the "Qurna Queen", now in National Museums Scotland in Edinburgh.¹⁶⁷

Q.36 – Kamose: "*Le sarcophage [Kamose's] découvert par M. Mariette était confondu dans une masse de matériaux avec lesquels il semblait qu'il eût été posé pêle-mêle, au lieu d'être déposé dans un caveau comme à l'ordinaire; il était couché sur le côté droit, et néanmoins ce cercueil n'avait pas été violé*" – Mariette¹⁶⁸

Q.37 – Kamose: "*Le sarcophage [Kamose] découvert par M. Mariette fut trouvé dans une masse de matériaux, au milieu desquels il semblait avoir été déposé. Il n'aurait donc pas été renfermé, comme à l'ordinaire, dans un caveau. Le cercueil était couché sur le côté droit, et cependant il n'avait pas été violé [...]*" – Desjardins¹⁶⁹

Q.38 – Kamose: "[Kamose's coffin discovered at] *deux pieds sous terre sans caveau ou autre construction*" – Prisse d'Avennes¹⁷⁰

Q.39 – Qurna burial now in Edinburgh: "*In the ground below this were several natural boulders lying close together. When our men came to clear amongst these they found that they covered a burial, which was placed in an open shallow trench in the rock [...]. Though this burial was only in the open ground yet it is very complete in personal objects. Probably it is the richest and most detailed undisturbed burial that has been completely recorded and published*" – Petrie¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Since the label "Qurna Queen" contains an assumption (there are no explicit indications that this burial belongs to the royal circle apart from the remarkable quantity of precious objects), here it is adopted a more neutral label "Qurna burial". For the archaeological context, see PETRIE, *Qurneh*, 6-10, pls 22-9; MINIACI, *Rishi Coffins*, 65-6. All the funerary equipment of this burial was transferred by Petrie to a single destination, Edinburgh, in order not to split its archaeological unity; see MAITLAND, POTTER, TROALEN, "The Burial of the 'Qurna Queen'", in this volume.

¹⁶⁸ MARIETTE, *CRAIBL* 2, 120. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁶⁹ DESJARDINS, *RGA* 18, 53. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁷⁰ DESTI, *Des dieux, des tombeaux, un savant*, 219 *verbatim* quoting a note taken by Prisse (without any reference). The emphasis is mine.

¹⁷¹ PETRIE, *Qurneh*, 6, 10. The emphasis is mine.

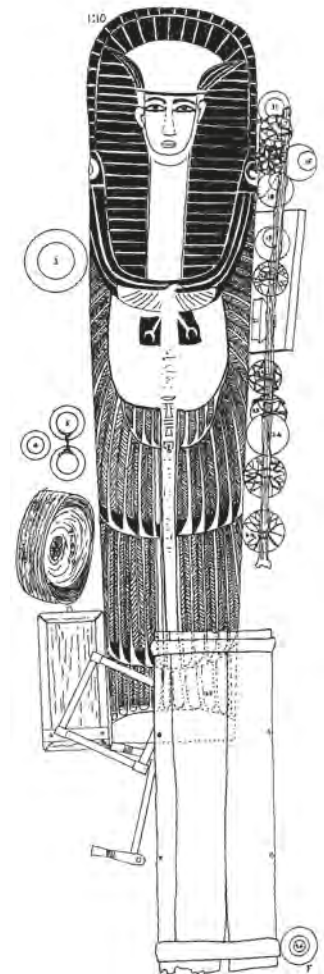


Fig. 12a-b – Photos of the so-called “Qurna Queen” burial as found by Petrie in the northernmost part of the Theban necropolis; *a.* (upper): PMAN2851; *b.* (lower left) PMAN2852; © courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London

Fig. 13 – (lower right) Plan of the so-called “Qurna Queen” burial, from PETRIE, *Qurneh*, pl. 22

Neither of the two burials had been found in a proper structure, rather they were buried just below the surface. While for Kamose there is only another set of oral accounts provided by Mariette and others, who were absent from the find-spot at the moment of the discovery, for the Qurna burial there is photographic documentation of the actual moment of discovery and a plan of the finds as it was discovered (see Figs 12-13). Flinders Petrie in the season 1908-09 in the northernmost part of the Theban necropolis¹⁷² discovered an undisturbed *rishi* coffin buried – together with a rectangular box containing the body of an infant – in an open shallow trench, below the ground, covered up by several boulders (see Fig. 12a-b). The coffin, partially gilded and equipped with a rich set of jewellery and precious items, is believed to have belonged to a member of the royal family or uppermost classes of the Second Intermediate Period.

were not found in tombs, but simply buried in the rubbish”,¹⁷⁴ without quoting any reference for such information. Nonetheless, there is no evidence that the two Kings Intef (Wepmaat and Heruhirmaat) were found in a ditch; rather, according to an annotated sketch of their find-spot provided by Wilkinson, they seem to have been found buried in a rock cut tomb with a shaft and a room (?) opening at the bottom. In addition, in the accompanying written notes, Wilkinson mentioned a brick pit (?) and a cloth over the coffins, which allows one to imagine a primary burial rather than a reburial or a cache (see Fig. 14).

Q.40 – “A pit of brick to depth of 4 men both mummies [Intef’s coffins] covered with cloth & dirty thrown over them” – Wilkinson¹⁷⁵

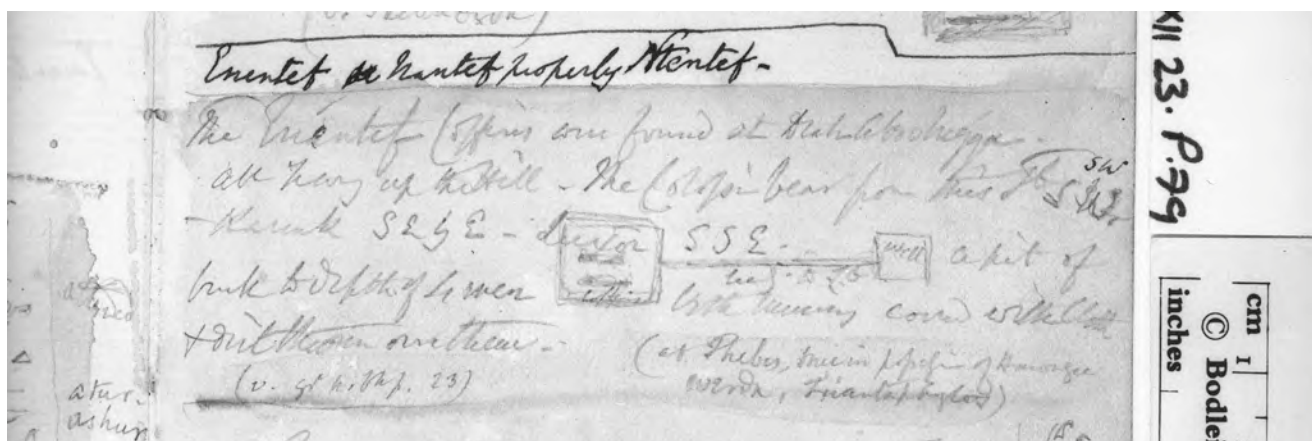


Fig. 14 – Wilkinson’s sketch showing the burial deposition of the Kings Wepmaat Intef and Sekhemre Heruhirmaat Intef coffins; Ms. Wilkinson dep. e. 67, p. 79 [former Wilkinson MSS XII, 79] © courtesy of the Bodleian Library, Oxford

The analogies, chronological, spatial, and “depositional” of the two burials with that one of Ahhotep are particularly striking. From these analogies, one is inclined to pay more attention to the 1872 version of Mariette (**Q.31**), in which Ahhotep is stated to have been found in a shallow hole dug into the ground. The account reported by Carter could also be reconsidered in this light (**Q.34**).

In addition to the Ahhotep, Kamose and Qurna burials, two other coffins of the same dynasty, Sekhemre Wepmaat Intef and Sekhemre Heruhirmaat Intef, were also reportedly discovered in an unusual context.¹⁷³ Herbert Winlock, in his article about the kings of the Seventeenth Dynasty, noted that “Mariette and Brugsch both seem to have known that the Louvre Intef coffins

Other, more modest burials of the Second Intermediate Period—early Eighteenth Dynasty show a similar non-normative attitude in their deposition: the coffin of Harmose and another anonymous individual were interred in surface burials (coffins *F* and *D*), found under some tumuli of limestone chips and blocks below the courtyard of the tomb of Senenmut (TT 71) at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna¹⁷⁶ (see Figs 15-16).

¹⁷⁴ WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 236-7, fn. 5. Cf. BRUGSCH, *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, 51, “hidden under heaps of loose stones and sand” in relation to King Intef Nubkheperre.

¹⁷⁵ Bodleian Library Oxford, Ms. Wilkinson, dep. e. 67, p. 79. See also MINIACI, in BETRÒ, DEL VESCO, MINIACI (eds), *Seven Seasons*, 37 and POLZ, *Der Beginn*, 31, Abb. 8.

¹⁷⁶ Harmose “was given burial at the bottom of the pile of limestone chip which was gradually filling up the gully [of Senenmut’s courtyard]”, see LANSING, HAYES, *BMAA* 32, 6-8, figs 11, 13. To be noted that “a household box near the foot of Har-mose’s coffin had been converted, by setting boards crosswise, into a Canopic chest”, recalling a closer parallel

¹⁷² MINIACI, in BETRÒ, DEL VESCO, MINIACI, *Seven Seasons*, 45-7.

¹⁷³ Louvre E 3019 and E 3020; see MINIACI, *Rishi Coffins*, 268-71 (rT01P-rT02P).

In sum, the question of the (re-)/burial of Ahhotep and other sovereigns of the Seventeenth Dynasty is certainly still an open question. Several scholars have envisaged in the hasty and non-normative characters of these burials an intention to cache or rebury these coffins and some of their funerary equipment,¹⁷⁷ in analogy to a well-known practice of ancient and modern Egypt.¹⁷⁸ However, if at first sight the accounts provided for the burials of Ahhotep and Kamose point directly to “caches/reburials”, this is less evident for the Qurna burial, which rather points to a primary deposition with a complete group of funerary equipment. The presence of several items of furniture, pottery vessels, food offerings, net bags and a wooden stick for vessel transport,¹⁷⁹ seem to suggest a primary surface burial left untouched since its original deposition.

This encourages to advance a working, very speculative hypothesis: a need for extreme secrecy and/or hasty burial could have led most members of the royal family of the Seventeenth Dynasty–early Eighteenth Dynasty to select unusual, hidden burial spots, conceived of as primary burials, purposely distant, without a conventional architectural structure and separated from their cult places. Unpredictably, surface burials could actually be more hidden than other rock-cut tombs, since a cut in the rock and any architecture already reveals where to search to ancient as well as modern robbers.

The practice of hiding a burial/coffin could be envisaged as being at the origin of the separation of the tomb from the cult funerary structure for the kings at the dawn of the New Kingdom.¹⁸⁰ It cannot be just chance that most of the coffins of the kings of the Seventeenth Dynasty and their funerary equipment were preserved intact till the nineteenth century.¹⁸¹

with the wooden box found next to the coffin of Ahhotep, cf. LANSING, HAYES, *BMMA* 32, 8. For further comments, see GALÁN, *JEA* 103, 182, esp. n. 28.

¹⁷⁷ See for instance, WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 274; THOMAS, *Royal Necropoleis*, 39-40; EATON-KRAUSS, *CdE* 65, 205; JANSEN-WINKELN, *ZÄS* 122, 62-78; TAYLOR, in WILKINSON, WEEKS (eds), *The Oxford Handbook*, 362. A few scholars believed that these coffins had been reburied in a modern reburial, see for instance, POLZ, *Der Beginn*, 169-72, esp. 170.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. GRAEFE, in COULON (ed.), *La Cachette de Karnak*, 71-86.

¹⁷⁹ See § **The Burial Assemblage**, *Burial equipment type*, p. 63-5.

¹⁸⁰ ULLMANN, in WILKINSON, WEEKS (eds), *The Oxford Handbook*, 417-8.

¹⁸¹ Some pharaohs and members of the royal family of the Sev-

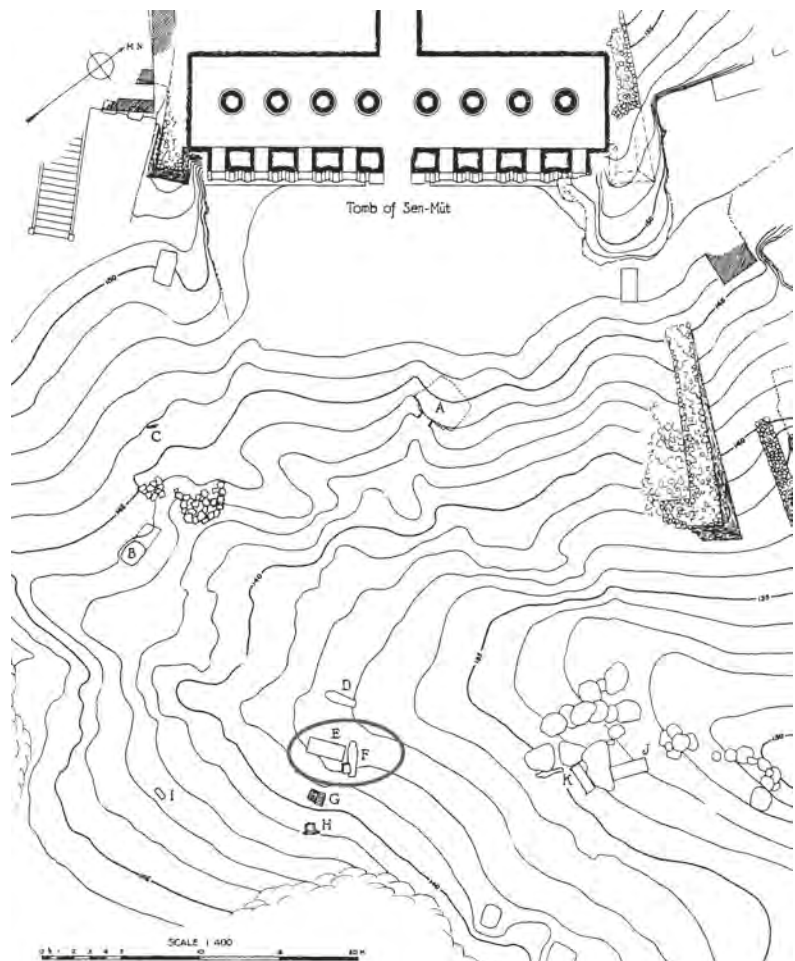


Fig. 15 – Map of the area in front of the tomb of Senenmut, from LANSING, HAYES, *BMMA* 32, fig. 8



Fig. 16 – Photo of the burial of Harmose as found during excavation in the courtyard of Senenmut, from LANSING, HAYES, *BMMA* 32, fig. 11

enteenth Dynasty are still “missing from the list” (*i.e.* King Senakhtenre Ahmose, Queen Nubkhaes, etc.), and they could remain buried hidden in secrecy under the ground of Dra Abu el-Naga.

The Burial Assemblage

The coffin is repeatedly stated to have been found “intact”, following a recurrent myth in the histories of archaeology: the magical awakening of a forgotten past by the archaeologist, as did the prince with the “sleeping beauty” in fairy tales.¹⁸² The word “intact” has created some imprecisions and misconstructions, since it indicates several possible conditions that may lead to further assumptions. In the case of Ahhotep, “intact” should be intended to mean that the coffin was found “closed”, *i.e.* not opened or visibly violated at the time of its discovery in the nineteenth century, if the accounts are to be believed. This does not mean that the coffin had been not opened, altered, or tampered in the time before its modern discovery. Therefore, it is useful to distinguish the condition of being “closed” before and “opened” after 1859.

Closed before 1859 = According to the collected accounts, the coffin was reportedly found closed (Q.1). Most probably, the coffin was not actually opened at the time of the discovery, since the presence of precious objects was not mentioned in Maunier’s letter to Mariette and he explicitly stated that the coffin had been kept closed, shipped to the storerooms in Karnak, and properly sealed with his own sealing “V.G.M.” (*contra* see Q.34). The absence of the uraeus from the head of the coffin, already noted in the first account of the discovery produced by Maunier (Q.1), may be interpreted as signs that the only stealable part – due to time availability and conditions – was actually stolen (this could be modern, at the time of the discovery, but also ancient, at the time of the primary or secondary depositions). However, it is worth remembering that the coffin was discovered in total absence of scientific control; therefore, although the possibility that it was found closed and kept as such till it arrived at the storerooms in Karnak may be reliable, this should not be considered incontrovertible evidence.¹⁸³

If the find status (“closed”) of the coffin is to be believed, the archaeological evidence implies that the last action to be performed on the coffin was closing it with all that was inside. Therefore, the main concern is to understand when the last closing took place. Given the type of objects, it is difficult to imagine that such an action could have been performed by any individuals after the beginning of the nineteenth century AD, when Egyptian antiquities had already become “valuable” items to be sold on market. Probably also in the previous centuries, or millennia, few people would have left un plundered such wealthy contents.¹⁸⁴ Unless one assumes a number of *lec-*

tiones difficiliores,¹⁸⁵ the only time when the coffin could have been closed with all the valuable objects inside is in the pharaonic period, when the sensorial links between the objects and their social significance were active.¹⁸⁶ The date of sealing may coincide either with: 1) the primary (and original) deposition of the individual buried inside the coffin (therefore defining it as a purely intact context – but potentially conflicting with the unconventional architectural features);¹⁸⁷ or 2) a secondary deposition, following one or more moments of movement and opening, which could give rise to several conjectures (including the option that the person buried inside the coffin was not the queen herself).¹⁸⁸ Unfortunately, nothing was recorded in the account about the fastening and closing system (ropes, tenons, etc) of the coffin (see Fig. 17). In addition, today only the lid is preserved and on display in Cairo Museum, while the lower case is unavailable for inspection.¹⁸⁹

Opened after 1859 = The second-hand account provided by Carter about the discovery of Ahhotep (Q.34) suggests that a first opening of the coffin could have happened on the spot. Faithful or not, the objects officially recorded as coming from the coffin of Ahhotep¹⁹⁰ may not correspond to the content of the assemblage as originally deposited in the ground, since the opening of the coffin happened without any scientific control. Maspero, more than once, repeated that the treasure was only partial, and that several objects may have been lost at the time of the opening¹⁹¹ (Q.12-13). However, certainly by February 25th the coffin had been opened, since its contents was reported in an official list drafted on behalf of

early Eighteenth Dynasty prince called Amenemhat, reburied in a late Ramesside coffin in the ground beneath a large rock high in the cliffs of the Theban massif, not far from the Royal Cache (DB 320), deprived of any burial equipment, *cf.* LANSING, *BMMA* 15, 8-10, figs 4-6.

¹⁸⁵ See some hypotheses in WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 254.

¹⁸⁶ MINIACI, *CAJ* 29/2, 287-307.

¹⁸⁷ See above, § **The presumed Architectural Structure**, *Other non-normative contemporary burials*, p. 51-4.

¹⁸⁸ The reason for reopening could probably exclude the intent of ancient robbery, unless it was interrupted, since – at least on a theoretical level – the primary logic of plundering is not to leave precious objects behind. Nonetheless, any reasons behind possible re-openings and re-closings are only assumptions and hypotheses at the present state of current knowledge; therefore, they will not be explored further here.

¹⁸⁹ For the lid see MINIACI, *Rishi Coffins*, 225, rT02C. For the lower case, see comments in MINIACI, “Notes on the Journal d’Entrée Entries for Queen Ahhotep’s Assemblage”, in this volume.

¹⁹⁰ See below, § **The Burial Assemblage**, *Objects found inside/outside the coffin*, p. 60-1.

¹⁹¹ MASPERO, *Guide Musée de Boulaq* [1883], 77; followed by VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund*, 24; PETRIE, *History*, vol. II, 13.

¹⁸² *Cf.* SOMMER, in LINK, SCHIMMELPFENNIG (eds), *Taphonomie*, 15-34.

¹⁸³ VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund*, 24.

¹⁸⁴ See ROTH, in TEETER, LARSON (eds), *Gold of Praise*, 369. See also comments in GALÁN, *JEA* 103, 182-3 quoting an



Fig. 17 – Coffin of the Queen Ahhotep in profile; photo by Devéria; PHO 1986 144 95/MS 163 91 © Musée d’Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Alexis Brandt

the governor of Qena.¹⁹² The intention of the governor of Qena may not have been to gain personal profit from this discovery, but to follow the law and possibly obtain the favor of the Khedive in Cairo. However, the list produced on February 25th shows that formal and legal procedures were carried out in respect to the coffin assemblage. Moreover, the surprising correspondence between the objects listed in Upper Egypt and those later inventoried by Mariette in the *Inventaire de Boulaq*¹⁹³ represents good grounds to believe that the preserved assemblage corresponds with what was actually inside the coffin at the time of discovery.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² See MINIACI, “The original Inventory List of the Queen Ahhotep ‘Treasure’ from Mariette’s Papers (*BIF* Paris, *Fonds Maspero*, Ms. 4052)”, in this volume.

¹⁹³ See MINIACI, “Notes on the Journal d’Entrée Entries for Queen Ahhotep’s Assemblage”, in this volume.

¹⁹⁴ WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 254. See now MINIACI, “The original Inventory List of the Queen Ahhotep ‘Treasure’ from Mariette’s Papers (*BIF* Paris, *Fonds Maspero*, Ms. 4052)”, in this volume, to be noticed some minor discrepancies among the first inventory lists and the objects recorded in the *IB/JE*.

Total number of recorded objects = The *Journal d’Entrée* is the most reliable source for the reconstruction of the burial assemblage of the queen.¹⁹⁵ The first volume of the *Journal d’Entrée* was drafted in 1881, hence more than twenty years after Ahhotep’s discovery,¹⁹⁶ by a museum assistant, Ernest Cousin. Nonetheless, it was meant to be a faithful copy of the *Inventaire of Boulaq*, drawn up in the first years of the 1860s by Mariette himself, Vassalli and Heinrich Brugsch.¹⁹⁷ The front page of the *Inventaire de Boulaq* claims that the finds were entered in the inventory book in the order that they were found (“*au fur et à mesure de leur découverte*”),¹⁹⁸ therefore its contents can be treated as a sort of abridged “archaeological diary” for the time.¹⁹⁹ Presumably, the entries for Ahhotep in the *Inventaire* were compiled closer to their find-date, and in any case not beyond 1863. The handwriting for Ahhotep’s entries in the *IB* is that of Mariette.²⁰⁰

The *Journal d’Entrée* reports 70 items forming the total of Ahhotep’s assemblage (including the coffin), although at the beginning of the Ahhotep list, the *IB/JE* counts a total of 68 objects.²⁰¹ The same number (70) is provided also by the two lists drafted on the 25th of February, although using a different ratio for counting the objects.²⁰² Although Mariette and Maspero repeatedly lamented that the assemblage suffered from illicit subtraction or robbery of objects (**Q.11-13**), Winlock noticed that in the accounts provided at the time of the discovery, including Déveria’s account, there was no “*suggestion that any of the jewellery was lost, or that any of it was introduced from other sources*”.²⁰³

¹⁹⁵ See MINIACI, “Notes on the Journal d’Entrée Entries for Queen Ahhotep’s Assemblage”, in this volume.

¹⁹⁶ DEWACHTER, *BIFAO* 85, 110.

¹⁹⁷ About the relation between Heinrich Brugsch, Vassalli, Mariette and Ahhotep, see above § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, p. 41.

¹⁹⁸ DEWACHTER *BIFAO* 85, pl. 20. Were the entries recorded in a sort of chronological order according to their discovery?

¹⁹⁹ DEWACHTER *BIFAO* 85, 110. The *Inventaire de Boulaq* is nowadays preserved in the *Cabinet des manuscrits* of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in Paris (*BnF* 20181-20183), made of four registers of 1340 pages.

²⁰⁰ Information kindly provided by Elisabeth David.

²⁰¹ See Table 3. Mariette in his first report mentioned only about forty objects “*au nombre d’une quarantaine*”, MARIETTE, *BIE* 1, 32. See also MINIACI, “Notes on the Journal d’Entrée Entries for Queen Ahhotep’s Assemblage”, in this volume § *Comment to the JE entries*, Table 2.

²⁰² See MINIACI, “The original Inventory List of the Queen Ahhotep ‘Treasure’ from Mariette’s Papers (*BIF* Paris, *Fonds Maspero*, Ms. 4052)”, in this volume.

²⁰³ WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 253.

The types of objects = [see Figs 18-20; Pls III-XX; see also Table 3] Beside the coffin (JE 4663), the assemblage as it is known from the preserved written records was formed by a mirror (JE 4664), four daggers (JE 4665-68: JE 4666 shows an unusual human heads shaped handle; for JE 4667 only the blade was preserved), two boat miniatures (JE 4681 in gold and JE 4682 in silver, which could have been positioned over a wagon with four wheels, JE 4669), a plaquette (JE 4670), a short wooden stick (JE 4671), a fan stick whose feathers or any other organic material were missing (JE 4672), six axes (JE 4673-78: for JE 4677-78 only the blades were preserved), two armlets (JE 4679 showing a vulture and JE 4680 bearing a three-dimensional cartouche inscribed with the

name Ahmose), a pectoral (JE 4683), four bracelets bearing the name and prenomen of King Ahmose (JE 4684-87), several necklaces, including some fragmented pieces (JE 4688-95: JE 4694 presents three miniaturised and stylised golden flies; JE 4695 is holding a scarab), a bracelet in thick gold (JE 4696), sixteen different types of bracelets (JE 4697-4712), two lion head gaming pieces (JE 4713-14), nine miniature axes (JE 4715-23), one ring (JE 4724), a large *wesekh* collar (JE 4725; hypothetically reconstructed) and several elements, pendants, and beads listed under it, an antimony kohl jar (JE 4726), four toilet jars (JE 4727-30), a wooden box (JE 4731), and a wooden headrest (JE 4732).

pNo.	Type	JE							
1	Coffin	JE 4663	31	Necklace ending with papyrus buttons, in 3 pieces	JE 4693	63.1	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Falcon head pendants	JE 4725-1	
2	Mirror	JE 4664	32	Necklace ending with flies	JE 4694	63.2	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Lion head pendants	JE 4725-2	
3	Dagger with straight grip	JE 4665	33	Necklace with scarab	JE 4695	63.3	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Fly pendants	JE 4725-3	
4	Dagger with human heads shaped handle	JE 4666	34	Bracelet in massif gold	JE 4696	63.4	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Bell pendants	JE 4725-4	
5	Dagger (only blade)	JE 4667	35	Bracelet (*)	JE 4697	63.5	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Spiral-shaped pendants	JE 4725-5	
6	Dagger with discoid butt	JE 4668	36	Bracelet (*)	JE 4698	63.6	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Rosette disks	JE 4725-6	
7	Waggon miniature	JE 4669	37	Bracelet (*)	JE 4699	63.7	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Four pointed star pendants	JE 4725-7	
8	Plaquette	JE 4670	38	Bracelet (*)	JE 4700	63.8	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Drop shaped pendants	JE 4725-8	
9	Stick	JE 4671	39	Bracelet (#)	JE 4701	63.9	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Almond shaped pendants	JE 4725-9	
10	Fan	JE 4672	40	Bracelet (#)	JE 4702	63.10	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Rectangular plaques	JE 4725-10	
11	Axe with Ahmose name/prenomen	JE 4673	41	Bracelet (#)	JE 4703	63.11	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Buttons	JE 4725-11	
12	Axe in bronze	JE 4674	42	Bracelet (#)	JE 4704	63.12	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Bird pendants	JE 4725-12	
13	Axe in silver	JE 4675	43	Bracelet	JE 4705	63.13	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Hawk pendants	JE 4725-13	
14	Axe in bronze (golden foil handle)	JE 4676	44	Bracelet	JE 4706	63.14	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Vulture pendants	JE 4725-14	
15	Axe (only blade)	JE 4677	45	Bracelet (°)	JE 4707	63.15	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Winged cobra pendants	JE 4725-15	
16	Axe (only blade)	JE 4678	46	Bracelet (°)	JE 4708	63.16	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Antelope pendants	JE 4725-16	
17	Armlet with vulture	JE 4679	47	Bracelet (°)	JE 4709	63.17	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Lion pendants	JE 4725-17	
18	Armlet with Ahmose cartouche	JE 4680	48	Bracelet (°)	JE 4710	63.18	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Running dog pendants	JE 4725-18	
19	Boat miniature in gold	JE 4681	49	Bracelet (°)	JE 4711	63.19	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Seated dog pendants	JE 4725-19	
20	Boat miniature in silver	JE 4682	50	Bracelet (°)	JE 4712	63.20	<i>Wesekh</i> collar – Box with beads	JE 4725-20	
21	Pectoral with Ahmose name/prenomen	JE 4683	51	Lion head pawn in gold	JE 4713	64	Kohl jar	JE 4726	
22	Bracelet with Ahmose name/prenomen	JE 4684	52	Lion head pawn in copper	JE 4714	65	Toilet jar	JE 4727	
23	Bracelet with Ahmose prenomen (*)	JE 4685	53	Axe miniature in gold (§)	JE 4715	66	Toilet jar	JE 4728	
24	Bracelet with Ahmose name (*)	JE 4686	54	Axe miniature in gold (§)	JE 4716	67	Toilet jar	JE 4729	
25	Bracelet with Ahmose prenomen	JE 4687	55	Axe miniature in gold (§)	JE 4717	68	Toilet jar	JE 4730	
26	Necklace ending with hemispherical beads	JE 4688	56	Axe miniature in silver (§)	JE 4718	69	Wooden box	JE 4731	
27	Necklace ending with hemisph. beads	JE 4689	57	Axe miniature in silver (§)	JE 4719	70	Headrest	JE 4732	
28	Necklace	JE 4690	58	Axe miniature in silver (§)	JE 4720				
29	Necklace	JE 4691	59	Axe miniature in silver (§)	JE 4721				
30	Necklace ending with papyrus buttons, in 5 pieces	JE 4692	60	Axe miniature in silver (§)	JE 4722				
			61	Axe miniature in silver (§)	JE 4723				
			62	Ring	JE 4724				
			63	<i>Wesekh</i> collar	JE 4725 (1-20)				

Table 3 – List of all the objects recorded in the *JE* for the burial equipment of Ahhotep



Fig. 18 – Part of the burial assemblage from the coffin of the Queen Ahhotep, from MARIETTE, *Album*, 137, pl. 31
 © courtesy of the Musée du Louvre. Note: not all the objects in the photo belong to the burial assemblage of Ahhotep;
 those unrelated (when clearly identified) have been crossed with a white stroke

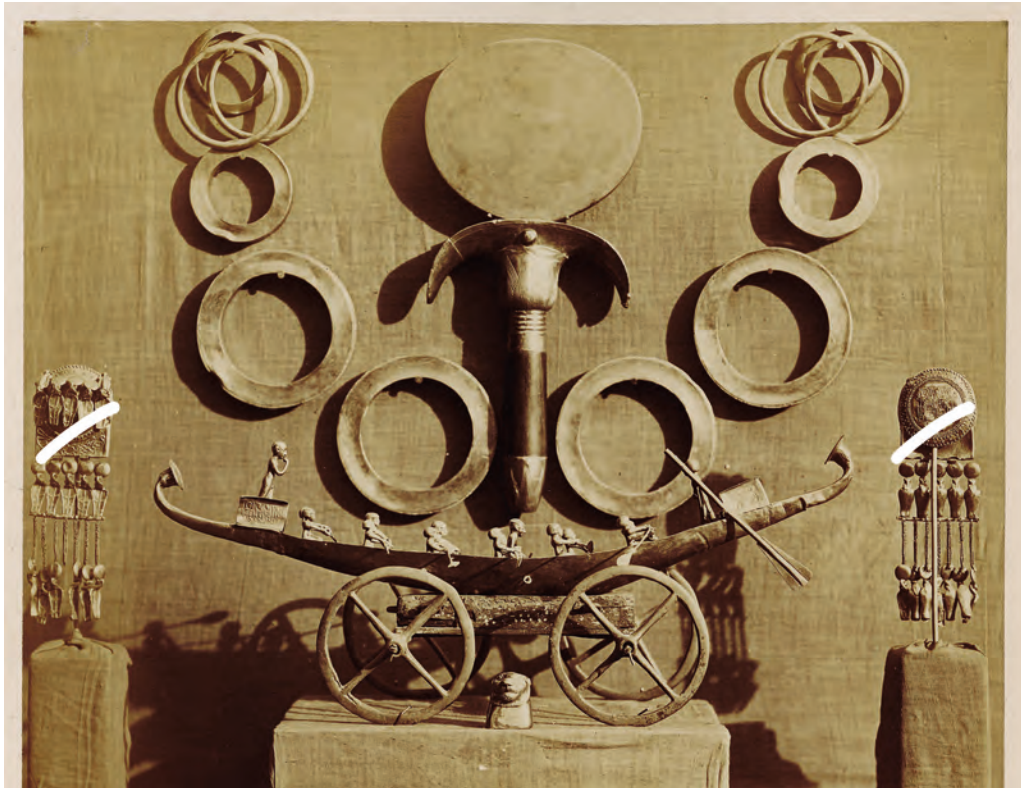


Fig. 19 – Part of the burial assemblage from the coffin of the Queen Ahhotep, from MARIETTE, *Album*, 133, pl. 30
 © courtesy of the Musée du Louvre. Note: not all the objects in the photo belong to the burial assemblage of Ahhotep;
 those unrelated (when clearly identified) have been crossed with a white stroke



Fig. 20 – Part of the burial assemblage from the coffin of the Queen Ahhotep, from MARIETTE, *Album*, 129, pl. 29
 © courtesy of the Musée du Louvre. Note: not all the objects in the photo belong to the burial assemblage of Ahhotep;
 those unrelated (when clearly identified) have been crossed with a white stroke

Objects found inside/outside the coffin = In the *Journal d'Entrée* there is a number of dissonant pieces of information. In a note appended to the end of the group list, the items numbered from JE 4663 [sic]²⁰⁴ to JE 4725 are supposed to have been found inside the coffin, seemingly excluding the remaining seven: an antimony kohl jar (JE 4726), four calcite jars (JE 4727-30), a wooden box (JE 4731), and headrest (JE 4732). The note appended in the *JE* is directly copied from the *Inventaire de Boulaq*. A part of this information agrees with the first account (Q.1) which states that calcite jars were found in a box outside the coffin. The *JE* comment is followed by a short note “+ no. 4726 à 4732” (not present in the *Inventaire de Boulaq*), implying that also these objects should have been found inside the coffin. Given that the handwriting is different to Cousin's, it must be supposed that this was a later addition. Another comment, made in pencil, and in English, noted down some uncertainties about the last addition, adding two question marks and the indication that at least the wooden box should not have been found inside the coffin.

Q.41 – JE 4727-4730 “Tous les objets catalogués du no. 4663 au no. 4725 ont été trouvés dans le cercueil de la reine Aah hotep” “+ no. 4726 à 4732 [different handwriting]” “?? Surely JE 4731 was not in coffin” [pencil annotation; different handwriting] – *Journal d'Entrée*²⁰⁵

On this premise, it is to be noted that the coffin of the queen was photographed by Devéria in front of the Boulaq magazines with exactly those items reported in the *Inventaire de Boulaq* to have been found outside the coffin (the headrest, kohl jar, calcite jars and wooden box; see Fig. 21; see also Figs 2-3, and Pls I-II). Devéria also kept separated these items in his own object list (Q.17).



Fig. 21 – The objects shown next to the coffin in Devéria's 1859 photos; cuts from PHO 1986 144 94/MS 163 90 © Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Alexis Brandt

²⁰⁴ JE 4663 is the coffin itself, probably to be intended 4664.

²⁰⁵ See MINIACI, “Notes on the Journal d'Entrée Entries for Queen Ahhotep's Assemblage”, in this volume.

None of the objects presumably found inside the coffin was present in those photos, although the composition would have been more effective with the coffin next to some of the precious and eye-catching items. Instead, some of the artefacts found inside the coffin were separately photographed by Devéria (see Fig. 22), very probably in the same moment and with the same background settings.²⁰⁶ Hence, the compositions of the coffin and other *external* elements in the photos of Devéria could represent a sort of aide-mémoire, almost as if intended to reproduce an “archaeological context”, indicating the spatial separation of elements according to their place of discovery (those found outside the coffin separated from those contained inside it). It must be born in mind that the photos of Devéria were most probably taken as soon as the assemblage arrived in Boulaq.²⁰⁷

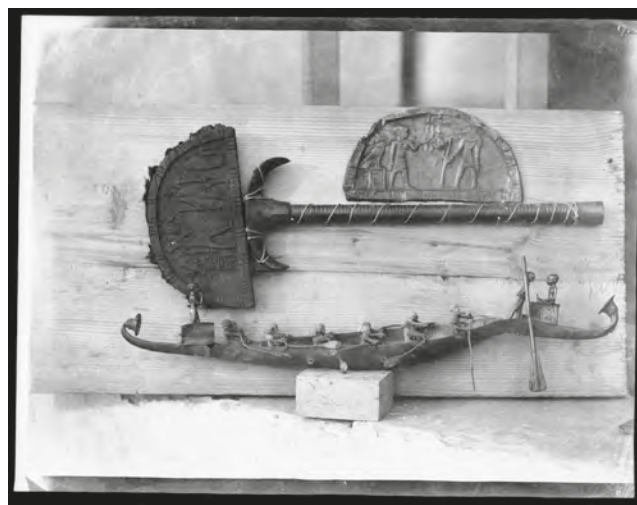


Fig. 22 – Photo of Ahhotep's assemblage by Devéria in 1859, “Momie de la reine Aahhotep. Bijoux de Kemès” in the Bibliothèque nationale de France © Source gallica.bnf.fr / BnF

To further complicate things, in the individual descriptions of the objects in the *IB/JE*, the wooden headrest was instead explicitly stated to have been found inside the coffin, as more expected.²⁰⁸

Q.42 – JE 4732 “Chevet trouvé dans le cercueil de la reine Aah hotep” – *Journal d'Entrée*

From the two lists dated to February 25th, the headrest and the antimony kohl jar were listed among all the other objects associated with Ahhotep, presumably indicating

²⁰⁶ Pectoral (PHO 1986 144 128, MS 164 8); bracelets and pectoral (PHO 1986 144 127, MS 164 7 and PHO 1986 144 126, MS 164 6); boat and fan (PHO 1986 144 98, MS 163 94).

²⁰⁷ See above, § **People involved with the Discovery and its Transmission**, *Théodule Devéria*, p. 38-9.

²⁰⁸ See below n. 206.

that they were found inside the coffin. Archaeological evidence of the Second Intermediate Period suggests that these two items were usually included inside the coffin.²⁰⁹ In opposition, the wooden box and the four calcite jars were excluded from those two lists.

The *IB/JE* descriptions for the calcite jars and wooden box are more ambiguous since they are stated to have been found “together” (“avec”) with the mummy of Ahhotep – though not necessarily to be understood as inside the coffin.²¹⁰

Q.43 – JE 4731 “Boite à dos bombé qui contenait les quatres vases precedents [JE 4727-30] trouvé avec la momie de la reine Aah hotep” – Journal d’Entrée²¹¹

A pencil note in the *JE*, written in English, remarks that the wooden box (JE 4731) was certainly not included inside coffin²¹² (**Q.41**). Von Bissing is responsible for handing down the information that the calcite jars were found directly inside the coffin of the queen (“Bei der Mumie wurden vier Alabastergefäße gefunden [...]. Sie [...] sollen nach dem Journal d’entrée 4727-30 in dem Sarg der Aahhotep gefunden sein”),²¹³ but there is no evidence for such a statement in the *JE* unless some personal notes (currently unknown) were in the hands of von Bissing.²¹⁴ However, the first account (**Q.1**) explicitly noted that the jars and the wooden box were found outside the coffin (*contra* see **Q.34**). Also, the box and the jars were not included in the two lists of objects drafted on February 25th 1859, which, being closest to the discovery, might represent the documentation of the actual moment of the opening of the coffin.²¹⁵

In conclusion, there is a good evidence to believe that all the objects attributed to Ahhotep in the *JE*, apart from the wooden box and the four calcite jars, were actually stored inside the coffin.

The position of the objects in the coffin = The information provided about the position of the objects inside the coffin is very approximate and may not be unconditionally reliable, since none of the people who handed

down the account of the discovery was present at the moment of the opening of the coffin. In addition, Mariette himself gave some contradictory and vague information in his publications.

Q.44 – “Les morts sont plutôt entourés de linges en forme de linceuls que serrés dans des bandelettes; **entre ces linges sont placés des objets** de toute sorte en rapport avec les usages de la vie privée; d’autres objets de même nature **adhérents à la peau**, ou bien encore **déposés dans les vides du cercueil**” – Mariette²¹⁶

Q.45 – “Deux barques d’or et d’argent, des haches de bronze, de bracelets gros de jambes ont été trouvés à côté d’elle [mummy], sur le bois du cercueil. **Entre les linges mal noués étaient déposés, comme au hasard, des poignards, une hache d’or, une chaîne garnie de trois mouches d’or, un pectoral. Enfin le cadavre lui-même était revêtu d’une autre chaîne d’or ornée d’un scarabée, de bracelets, d’un diadème, etc.**” – Mariette²¹⁷

Q.46 – “Des bijoux destinés à la momie royale, les uns étaient déposés **au fond du cercueil**, les autres **adhéraient extérieurement aux bandelettes**, les autres enfin **couvraient directement le cadavre**” – Mariette²¹⁸

According to the information provided by Mariette, the objects seemed to be placed inside the coffin in three main locations:

- a. directly over the mummified body, under the linen wrappings. This group should have included the golden necklace with scarab (JE 4695), some bracelets (JE 4684-87), and probably the armlet with vulture (JE 4679) (*cf.* **Q.45**);
- b. entangled within the linen bundles, possibly indicating that they were either poked in the external surfaces of the bandages or wrapped in a linen bundle (as suggested in **Q.34**).²¹⁹ This group seems to be more definite, as it should have included – according to Mariette – some of the daggers, the axe with the golden handle (JE 4673), the chain with flies (JE 4694), and the pectoral (JE 4683) (*cf.* **Q.45**);
- c. loosely placed inside the coffin, since – according to one account of Mariette – they were found at the back/bottom of the coffin: the two boat models (JE 4681-82), some of the metal axes (JE 4674, 4676-78?) and larger bracelets (JE 4697-4700?) (*cf.* **Q.45**).

²⁰⁹ See below § **The Burial Assemblage**, *The position of the objects in the coffin*, p. 61-2, esp. n. 222.

²¹⁰ The four calcite jars have been preserved in association with the coffin, and they are currently on display in the Egyptian Museum in the same showcase.

²¹¹ See MINIACI, “Notes on the Journal d’Entrée Entries for Queen Ahhotep’s Assemblage”, in this volume.

²¹² See comments in MINIACI, “Notes on the Journal d’Entrée Entries for Queen Ahhotep’s Assemblage”, in this volume.

²¹³ VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund*, 23.

²¹⁴ VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund*, 24; VON BISSING, *Steingefäße*, 18478-80.

²¹⁵ See above, § **The Timeline of the Discovery and successive related Events**, 25th February 1859, p. 32-3.

²¹⁶ MARIETTE, *Notice* [1864], 219. The emphasis is mine.

²¹⁷ MARIETTE, *Notice* [1864], 219-20. The emphasis is mine.

²¹⁸ MARIETTE, *Album*, text of pl. 29. The emphasis is mine.

²¹⁹ See BETRÒ, “A Note to Carter Manuscripts and the Discovery of Ahhotep’s Coffin (Cairo CG 28501)”, in this volume.

The sources for such information are unknown, whether Mariette had been directly informed by the people who were present during the opening of the coffin or if he drew some evidence from the condition of the artefacts themselves (pieces of bandages or resinous matter from embalming still attached to them), or if he figured out a plausible and reliable reconstruction to be presented to the public. Unfortunately, after the restoration of the objects which occurred in the autumn of 1859,²²⁰ there is little hope of finding traces of any organic material or bandages still adhering to the surface of the objects.

A number of the object types were indeed made to be placed either on the body or among the bandages: collars, amulets, bracelets, necklaces, armlets, chains, plaquettes, pectorals, pendants or small amulets/miniatures (such as the two lion's heads²²¹ and the nine reduced-scale axes). In other burials of the period, mirrors, headrests and (single) kohl jars²²² are usually found inside the coffin, as it may have been for Ahhotep. The objects adhering to the body and wrapped within the mummy – if the account can be considered reliable – allow little room for differences of opinions: they would have been placed during the mummification process and belonged to the buried person. Other objects find a natural position inside the coffin, such as staves, axes and daggers, which were commonly placed inside coffins for the burials of the time.²²³

The position of a few object types inside the coffin is more difficult to explain: the two boat models and the fan. Nonetheless, models have occasionally also been placed inside coffins during the late Middle Kingdom,²²⁴ and the position of the fan can be paralleled with two fans found in the burial of Tutankhamun (although of

a different date), placed in the space between the third and fourth shrine and on the southern side of the innermost shrine, therefore almost inside the coffin.²²⁵ Other burials of the time show all the objects of their funerary equipment stored inside the coffin (see for instance Hornakht).²²⁶ However, if any of the objects were deposited inside the coffin or gathered in a separate bundle, as stated by Mariette, they could have been added to, tampered with, or reshuffled at any moment.

Absence of the queen's name on the objects = None of the inscribed objects deposited inside the coffin bore the name Ahhotep (apart from the coffin itself; see Table 4). All the inscribed objects bear the names of the Kings Kamose and Ahmose Nebpehtyre.²²⁷ Some issues should be noted: the mention of the surname Wadjkeperre on JE 4676 is given by von Bissing in his 1900 publication, while in the *JE* it is specifically stated that there were no inscriptions on the bronze axe (*"pas de legends"*). The armlet JE 4680 bears only the name Ahmose but, due to the presence of another king called Ahmose (Senakhtenre)²²⁸ and the lack of the prenomen on the object, its attribution to Ahmose Nebpehtyre could be questioned.²²⁹ Bracelets JE 4686 and JE 4687 were intended as a pair, one bearing the king's name, Ahmose, and another the King's prenomen, Nebpehtyre.

The absence of the queen's name raised a number of doubts about whether the burial assemblage could have been untouched since its primary deposition and about its authenticity as a group. Based on this evidence, some scholars supposed that the Egyptian diggers who discovered the coffin had encountered – or artificially “composed” – a burial assemblage made up of precious objects from other burials of the period.²³⁰

²²⁰ See above, § **The Timeline of the Discovery and successive related Events**, *August 1859-62*, p. 34.

²²¹ See COLELLA, “Queen Ahhotep's Lion Heads and the Inclusion of Gaming Pieces in the Funerary Costumes of Second Intermediate Period-early Eighteenth Dynasty”, in this volume.

²²² See for instance, the tomb of Vassalli no. 100, “*sotto la testa* [of a woman] *un vasetto d'alabastro per il kohl*”, in *Album di Disegni Vassalli*, f. 44r, TIRADRITTI, in ANONYMOUS (ed.), *L'egittologo Luigi Vassalli*, 71. See also MAITLAND, POTTER, TROALEN, “The Burial of the ‘Qurna Queen’”, in this volume, p. 209.

²²³ SMITH, *MDAIK* 48, 205-6, 209. For similar types of objects found inside coffins in Second Intermediate Period burials at Asasif, see LILYQUIST *et. al.*, *Excavations at Thebes*, kohl jars: cat. nos 70, 139, 164, 173, 195, 218, 324, 425, 617, 696, 700, 702, 729, 753, 771, 800 (?), 824, 835, 842, 850, 874, 879, 885, 941, 951, 1070, 1071, 1098, 1330, 1338, 1433, 1474, 1475, 1484, 1491, 1492, 1541, 1560; mirrors: cat. nos 69, 642, 764, 802, 841, 886, 1337, 1526, 1534 (?); headrests: cat. nos 249, 339, 727, 736; staves: cat. nos 323, 327, 383; axes: cat. nos 728, 804 (?), 836.

²²⁴ MINIACI, *Miniatures Forms*.

²²⁵ Cf. REEVES, *The Complete Tutankhamun*, 179 (all the other fans were placed in a wooden box and in the Annexe).

²²⁶ VASSALLI, *I monumenti storici*, 131. See also *Album di Disegni Vassalli*, f. 36r, TIRADRITTI, in ANONYMOUS (ed.), *L'egittologo Luigi Vassalli*, 69-70.

²²⁷ See BETRÒ, “The Identity of Ahhotep and the Textual Sources”, in this volume for remarks about the paleography of the name Ahmose. The evidence leads to the assumption that the king named only Ahmose is Ahmose Nebpehtyre (the two bracelets could have been pair; see VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund*, 8). See also MINIACI, “Notes on the Journal d'Entrée Entries for Queen Ahhotep's Assemblage”, in this volume.

²²⁸ Cf. CAHAIL, “The Internal Chronology of the Second Intermediate Period: A Summary of Old Theories and New Discoveries”, in this volume.

²²⁹ See BETRÒ, “The Identity of Ahhotep and the Textual Sources”, in this volume.

²³⁰ WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 254. Especially, Daressy believed that the workmen found the coffins of Ahhotep and Kamose together and placed a part of the items of Kamose inside the

Object Type	JE inv. no.	Inscribed Objects
Coffin	JE 4663	Ahhotep
Axe in silver	JE 4675	Kamose Wadjkheperre
Axe (only blade)	JE 4677	Kamose Wadjkheperre
Boat miniature in gold	JE 4681	Kamose Wadjkheperre
Axe in bronze (golden foil handle)	JE 4676	Kamose Wadjkheperre (?)
Fan	JE 4672	Wadjkheperre
Armlet with Ahmose cartouche	JE 4680	Ahmose
Dagger with human heads shaped grip	JE 4666	Ahmose Nebpehtyre
Axe with Ahmose name/prenomen	JE 4673	Ahmose Nebpehtyre
Pectoral with Ahmose name/prenomen	JE 4683	Ahmose Nebpehtyre
Bracelet with Ahmose name/prenomen	JE 4684	Ahmose Nebpehtyre
Necklace with scarab	JE 4695	Ahmose Nebpehtyre
Bracelet with Ahmose prenom (•)	JE 4685	Nebpehtyre
Bracelet with Ahmose name (•)	JE 4686	Ahmose
Bracelet with Ahmose prenom	JE 4687	Nebpehtyre

Table 4 – List of the inscribed objects from the Queen Ahhotep assemblage

The absence of any object bearing the name of Ahhotep, although surprising, is not to be completely unexpected. Also, the few objects found inside the coffin of Kamose did not bear his name, and the golden bracelet bore a cartouche with the name of King Ahmose Nebpehtyre.²³¹ Not by chance, this burial had been for a long time believed to belong to King Ahmose, until Daressy provided the hieroglyphic inscription on the foot end of the coffin in 1907, naming King Kamose.²³²

Although from a different social level but almost contemporary with Ahhotep and found not so far from her find-spot (Q.23), none of the objects found inside the undisturbed (?) coffin of the “Royal Acquaintance” Hornakht,²³³ bore his name apart from his coffin. The objects were inscribed for the “King’s Son” Tjuiu, “Mayor” Minemhat, “Mayor of Hierakonpolis” Sobeknakht, and an official named Idi.²³⁴ Also from the intact tombs of the Second Intermediate Period found at the Asasif by Carter and Carnarvon there is a lack correspondence between the names of the owners of the coffins and the names inscribed on the

coffin of Ahhotep, see DARESSY, *ASAE* 9, 63. The fact that the satisfaction of the prince Napoleon during his visit to Egypt would have determined Mariette’s presence in Egypt and his possibility to continue carrying out excavations has not to be underestimated as “playing factor” in “creating” an extraordinary event, the discovery of a treasure, see DAVID, *Mariette Pacha*, 102; PODVIN, *Auguste Mariette*, 102-9.

²³¹ BEN AMAR, *In Monte Artium* 5, 48, see also n. 12.

²³² DARESSY, *ASAE* 9, 61-3.

²³³ See above, p. 47, n. 145, Fig. 11.

²³⁴ MINIACI, *Rishi Coffins*, 58.

objects found inside the coffins.²³⁵ For instance, inside the *rishi* coffin inscribed for the “Lady of the House” Reri, a bronze razor naming the “Estate Overseer” (?) Sobeknakht was found;²³⁶ if the coffin had been anonymous, the name of the razor could have been leading to a wrong assumption, that the burial belonged to Sobeknakht. In this light, also the nineteenth century story – barely believed by Egyptologists – that the mummy of King Nubkheperre Intef was found with a heart scarab inscribed for King Sobekemsaf²³⁷ can be reconsidered (“*the scarabaeus, which was purchased by the British Museum, from Mr. Salt’s collection, was placed on the breast [of the mummy of Nubkheperre Intef], without having, as is usual, any ornament attached to it*”).²³⁸

The discrepancy between the coffin owner (when attested) and the wide array of names inscribed on the objects stored inside the coffins of Second Intermediate Period burials could then raise the question of what these objects could represent: misappropriation (reuse from other burials), heirlooms, donations or gifts received for their key role, the continuous reuse of objects. The heirloom/gift practice is to be found with more evidence in the following period (early New Kingdom).²³⁹

Burial equipment type = This paragraph does not aim to discuss each type of item but solely to assess its consistency as group. The objects found inside the coffin show material, manufacture and chronological consistency, spanning a broad dating from the late Seventeenth to early Eighteenth Dynasties, although most of them remain rare and unparalleled. Further studies can help in narrowing down a more precise date, targeting different chronological moments inside the assemblage itself, and investigating the place(s) and techniques of manufacture.

The calcite cosmetic jars, larger than usual, were originally interpreted as part of a canopic set, since they seem to contain some materials from the embalming process, associated by Mariette with animal remains.

Q.47 – “*Quatre vases sans couvercles trouvés dans le même coffre que la momie de la reine Ahhotepou. Ils contenaient des matières animales embaumées, et faisaient office de canopes. Pas d’inscription*” – Maspero²⁴⁰

This has generated the false belief that the Ahhotep assemblage also included canopic equipment.²⁴¹ The wood-

²³⁵ See LILYQUIST *et. al.*, *Excavations at Thebes*.

²³⁶ MINIACI, *Rishi Coffins*, 93-4. The *rishi* coffin is rT04NY.

²³⁷ MINIACI, *EVO* 29.

²³⁸ See D’ATHANASI, *A Brief Account*, 237-8.

²³⁹ Cf. RUSSO, *Kha* (TT 8); REEVES, *The Complete Tutankhamun*, 168-9 (roughly thirty objects inscribed with the names of other persons).

²⁴⁰ MASPERO, *Guide Musée du Caire* [1902], 183-4.

²⁴¹ PETRIE, *A history*, vol. II, 12.

Material	Quantity	JE inv. no.
Gold	49	JE 4663; JE 4664; JE 4665; JE 4666; JE 4667; JE 4668; JE 4671; JE 4672; JE 4676; JE 4679; JE 4680; JE 4681; JE 4683; JE 4684; JE 4685; JE 4686; JE 4687; JE 4688; JE 4689; JE 4690; JE 4691; JE 4692; JE 4693; JE 4694; JE 4695; JE 4696; JE 4697; JE 4698; JE 4699; JE 4700; JE 4701; JE 4702; JE 4703; JE 4704; JE 4705; JE 4706; JE 4707; JE 4708; JE 4709; JE 4710; JE 4711; JE 4712; JE 4713; JE 4714; JE 4715; JE 4716; JE 4717; JE 4724; JE 4725 (1–20)
Silver	12	JE 4668; JE 4670; JE 4675; JE 4681; JE 4682; JE 4718; JE 4719; JE 4720; JE 4721; JE 4722; JE 4723; JE 4725 (1–20)
Copper alloy	11	JE 4665; JE 4666; JE 4667; JE 4668; JE 4669; JE 4674; JE 4675; JE 4676; JE 4677; JE 4678; JE 4724
Semi-precious stones	9	JE 4673; JE 4679; JE 4680; JE 4683; JE 4684; JE 4685; JE 4686; JE 4687; JE 4725 (1–20)
Wood	10	JE 4663; JE 4664; JE 4666; JE 4669; JE 4671; JE 4672; JE 4673; JE 4674; JE 4676; JE 4731; JE 4732
Calcite	5	JE 4726; JE 4727; JE 4728; JE 4729; JE 4730

Table 5 – List of the main materials (as reported in the *JE*) employed for the Ahhotep's equipment objects

en box, whose location is currently lost although registered in the *Journal d'Entrée* of Cairo Museum, is shown in the photos of Devéria (see Figs 2, 21; Pl. I): its narrow and vaulted shape with a knob on one short side indicates that it represented a toilet box rather than a canopic chest.²⁴² Also the shape of the jars classifies them as a toilet set rather than a canopic one (although they may have been readapted to serve for embalming rites). Von Bissing first realised that the jars did not represent canopic equipment,²⁴³ but were ointment jars of larger dimensions. The shape of the jars is not consistent with similar objects manufactured in the Second Intermediate Period, but they find closer parallels with Old Kingdom ones (although their reuse in the Second Intermediate Period is attested in a number of occasions).²⁴⁴ In the absence of archaeological reports, the connection of the wooden box and the jars with the whole assemblage of Ahhotep can be reasonably questioned.

The most remarkable evidence from the assemblage is an almost total absence of artefacts in more ordinary materials, such as pottery, faience, resin, basketry, linen, papyrus, other organic material (e.g. food offerings), plain wood (without the addition of gold elements), and ordinary stone types. The wooden box and the four calcite jars shall be considered separately,²⁴⁵ since they were

apparently found outside the coffin and, at the moment, there is no cogent evidence that connects them to the Ahhotep coffin if not the fact that they were stated to be found in proximity to each other.²⁴⁶ Only two objects (one stone toilet jar, JE 4726 and a wooden headrest, JE 4732)²⁴⁷ fall within the “more ordinary materials” that are traditionally part of burial equipment.²⁴⁸ The rest of the queen's assemblage seems to be at first sight a selection of purely valuable and precious items rather than the complete or expected burial equipment of the time (see Table 5).

The predominance of precious metals and semi-precious stones could be explained for most of the objects by the fact that they would have adorned the body of the mummy. However, among other richly equipped and intact burials of adjacent times, none exhibits such a mass of material all sealed inside a coffin, apart from Tutankhamun who belongs to a different era and expresses another material culture phase.²⁴⁹

jects found inside/outside the coffin, p. 60-1.

²⁴⁶ The wooden box could be also interpreted as part of another burial equipment, *i.e.* a previous funerary equipment disturbed by the intrusion of queen's coffin or part of the equipment of the people who were (re)burying the coffin of Ahhotep, or a later intrusion inside the funerary space of the queen. See also comments above, § **The Burial Assemblage**, *Objects found inside/outside the coffin*, p. 60-1.

²⁴⁷ For the calcite jars and the wooden box (JE 4726-4731), they were found outside the coffin; their connection with the burial of Ahhotep can be disputed; see below § **The Burial Assemblage**, *Objects found inside/outside the coffin*, p. 60-1.

²⁴⁸ *Cf.* to be noted the pottery, faience, basketry, organic, and wooden objects in the burial equipment Tutankhamun, in REEVES, *The Complete Tutankhamun*, 127-207.

²⁴⁹ The body and wrappings of Tutankhamun were mainly featured by gold and other metal objects and adornments, nonetheless resin, faience, papyrus, and linen materials were

²⁴² A very close parallel although unprovenanced is an ivory inlaid wooden toilet box, inv. no. A635008 of the Science Museum, London, <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/fs5yvx-cm>, <accessed 26.04.2021> (dated in the online archive to the Late Period; however, the dotted circle decoration on the ivory inlays is attested since the late Middle Kingdom).

²⁴³ VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund*, 23.

²⁴⁴ ASTON, *Ancient Egyptian Stone Vessels*, 80, fig. 90. For the reuse of Predynastic and Early Dynastic stone vessels in the Middle Bronze Age, see LILYQUIST *et al.*, *Excavations at Thebes*, Essay 20: *Vessels and Containers*.

²⁴⁵ See also discussion above, § **The Burial Assemblage**, *Ob-*

Luxury Materials	Distinctive Materials	More Ordinary Materials
2 gold necklaces (A+sA); 4 gold ear-rings (A+sA); 4 gold bracelets (A); 1 electrum girdle (A); 1 electrum button (A); 1 copper alloy knife	1 gilded sycamore-fig and tamarisk anthropoid coffin (A); 3 ivory bracelets (sA); 1 acacia, ebony, and ivory headrest (A); 1 horn and ivory container (horn-shaped); 1 blue anhydrite bowl; 1 obsidian kohl jar (A); 2 cedar wood stools; 6 pottery beakers (imported from Nubia); 1 thread of fine linen; 14 linen wrappings; Linen nettings	1 sycamore-fig and cedar rectangular coffin (sA); 1 faience girdle (sA); 2 faience anklets (sA); 1 faience fly-whisk (A); 2 faience bead bags (A); 1 glazed steatite scarab (A); 1 wood stool (unidentified wood type); 1 wood box; 1 sandstone sharpener; 2 flint flakes; 2 calcite toilet jars (A); 1 wood stick for vessel transport; 16 pottery flasks/jars; 4 pottery bowls; c. 6 breads; 1 palm leaf basket; 1 grass fibre basket (A); Fruit

Table 6 – List of the objects in the Qurna burial divided according to more luxury and more ordinary materials (including both those elements associated with the adult [A] buried inside the *rishi* coffin and with the infant [sA] buried in the rectangular box, and those in common), drawn from MAITLAND, POTTER, TROALEN, “The burial of the ‘Qurna Queen’”, in this volume

The coffin of the Qurna burial discovered by Petrie at Thebes, which would have been almost contemporary with Ahhotep and still belonging to a high social status (due to the type and manufacture of the gold jewellery),²⁵⁰ contained beside the objects made in the most precious materials, a number of more ordinary objects²⁵¹ (see Table 6). Also the mummy of King Kamose, very probably almost contemporary with Ahhotep, was not so richly equipped, unless one can suppose that most of his objects had been plundered in ancient time or at the moment of the opening.²⁵²

In conclusion, the composition of the elements within the coffin is not unexpected or unreasonable for the time and, given the royal nature of the burial, an exceptional selection of objects is possible (especially since there are no precise parallels or references which may reinforce or negate their presence in the coffin as part of the burial equipment). The remarkable and stunning aspects of the assemblage remain in the quantity of goldsmith's artworks, rare or unparalleled, and especially in the outnumbered quantity of elements, *cf.* four daggers, six axes,²⁵³ twenty-one bracelets. In this respect it

present too, although in minor quantity, see REEVES, *The Complete Tutankhamun*, 112-13. *Cf.* Kha and Merit, FERRARIS, *La tomba di Kha e Merit*, 40-53.

²⁵⁰ TROALEN, TATE, GUERRA, *JAS* 50, 219-26.

²⁵¹ PETRIE, *Qurneh*, 9-10; see MAITLAND, POTTER, TROALEN, “The Burial of the ‘Qurna Queen’”, in this volume.

²⁵² *Cf.* discussions of VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund*, 24-5 (he attributed some unprovenanced objects to the burial of Ahhotep, but the same can be ascribed rather to Kamose's coffin); however, see comments in WINLOCK, *JEA* 10, 254.

²⁵³ MORRIS, “Daggers and Axes for the Queen: Considering

is worth noting, without questioning the authenticity of the group, that Maunier, the person directly connected with the discovery,²⁵⁴ was a skilled goldsmith,²⁵⁵ and he often created unique and beautiful pieces of jewellery, so much so that Mariette requested some of his works to be included in the *Exposition Universelle* of 1878 in Paris.²⁵⁶

Conclusion: Any possible Reconstruction for Ahhotep's Find Context?

As stated at the beginning, the intention of this article was not to provide an interpretation of the numerous, often contrasting accounts and notes concerning the discovery of Ahhotep but to define their contours, what could be considered appropriate, acceptable and what should be carefully evaluated, or even rejected.

To sum up by paragraph: *§ The Timeline of the Discovery*: the moment of discovery is relatively certain, in early 1859, January or February (5th February has been put forward as “the date”); *§ People involved*: it had happened in the absence of Mariette and any other European supervision; *§ The presumed Location*: the exact find-spot of the coffin is lost but it could be located along the northernmost part of the hills of Dra Abu el-Naga, most certainly in the *wadi* called Khawi el-Alamat and not too distant from the tomb TT 155, the location of which is nowadays well known; *§ The presumed Architectural Structure*: the

Ahhotep's Weapons in their Cultural Context”, in this volume.

²⁵⁴ To be borne in mind that the coffin bore his own sealing, when brought in Karnak.

²⁵⁵ PASCAL, *La Cange*, 283.

²⁵⁶ WEENS, in COOKE (ed.), *Journeys erased by time*, 106.

type of burial encountered by the Egyptian workmen and foremen poses more difficulties. Ahhotep's coffin seems to have been found in the proximity of a densely populated and partially undisturbed Second Intermediate Period-early Eighteenth Dynasty cemetery. This location also included the burial of another royal person from the end of the Seventeenth Dynasty, King Kamose.²⁵⁷ The position of the burial place is also in line with the customary funerary practices of the time: the royal burials were surrounded by contemporary burials of courtesans and officials.²⁵⁸ Nonetheless, most of the accounts were in complete accordance in indicating that the coffin had not been buried in a standard structure, which is explicitly stated as "lacking", whereas it was expected. The inconsistent information about the presence or absence of a shaft (which is not irrelevant) must be combined with the more remarkable information about the absence of any superstructure or funerary chamber. All of the accounts suggest the idea of either a hasty or a non-normative character for her burial, something partially contrasting with the apparently intact character of the coffin and its position in a cemetery of the Second Intermediate Period. Therefore, the find-spot of 1859 as the primary deposition place can be extensively debated and with good reason; § *The Burial Assemblage*: the exceedingly preponderant presence of objects made of luxury materials, the absence of pottery and food offerings, and the mode of storage of the objects (all packed inside the coffin) conflict with the hypothesis of a context being left untouched since its primary deposition.

In conclusion, the original archaeological context in which the coffin was found has been lost in time and in memory. The primary witnesses of the discovery remain faceless and silent. The records of the discovery are entrusted to oral accounts handed down (faithfully?) in writing only by secondary witnesses and from them to the Egyptological literature. What remains to us are a number of confusing and extremely synthetic reports of Mariette and some of his collaborators or colleagues based on their own (re)interpretations of oral accounts from several people involved to different degrees with the discovery and movement of Ahhotep's assemblage. The risk is that of any chain of oral communication: when passing information from one person to another, each one adds, removes or modifies something, and in the end the final output is completely different from the starting one. Through the passage of time, the discovery of the burial of Ahhotep and its treasure has become legend too, and modern literature cannot always see clearly the borders between the tale and reality.

²⁵⁷ Between Ahhotep and Kamose there should be a certain connection, given by the presence of king's name on some of the objects found inside the coffin of Ahhotep.

²⁵⁸ POLZ, *Der Beginn*, 231-45.

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Appendix A – Transcription of the pages from Devéria's diary

“Sur l'autre rive du Nil, près du village moderne de Qournah, de nouveaux tombeaux sont souvent mis à découvert par les travailleurs, et à quelque distance dans de cet emplacement et de celui où a été trouvé autrefois la momie le cercueil du roi Antef de la XI^e dynastie, conservé au Musée britannique, où ont été trouvés depuis par Mr Mariette les deux cercueils royaux de la même dynastie ainsi que ceux qui enrichissent la collection du Louvre, et où a été également découvert par Mr Mariette la momie du roi Ahmès qui régna vers le même temps et dont S.A.S. le prince Napoléon possède le poignard ainsi que les principaux ornements, à Dra-abou-Nagga cet habile explorateur sur ce lieu même Mr Mariette qu'on a pu conserver vient de découvrir encore une momie royale ; de cette époque antérieure à Abraham ; c'est celle d'une reine appelée Aah-hotep. Par malheur, Mr Mariette et moi nous avons quitté Thèbes depuis quelque temps lorsque les ouvriers la trouvèrent ; le gouverneur de la province la fit apporter chez lui et eut l'audace de l'ouvrir lui-même, en dépit des protestations du surveillant des travaux. [word unreadable] cachet d'un européen (Français) qui réside à Luqsor. Les bandelettes furent déchirées et enlevées dans le harem de ce pacha, le corps brisé puis jeté dehors ; on ne conserva que les objets précieux qui y étaient enfermés, encore en fit-on sans doute disparaître quelques uns et ce n'est qu'à grand peine que Mr Mariette parvient à rentrer en possession du plus des pièces principales pour les placer dans la collection du vice-roi. Le cercueil de cette momie, heureusement bien conservé présente une analogie frappante remarquable avec ceux des rois déjà connus des rois Antef de la XI^e dynastie des rois de la XI^e dynastie dont nous venons de parler ; la partie supérieure ou le couvercle est comme dans ces derniers entièrement dorés mais la masque est plus finement sculpté que sur ces dernières : il représente les traits d'une femme et l'ensemble du visage n'est pas dépourvu de grace ; les yeux sont incrustés en pierres dures et les paupières sont en or massif. La coiffure est formée deux grosses tresses qui tombent et s'enroulent sur la poitrine ; les mains ne sont pas apparentes. Au dessous de la gorge sont figurés un aspic ou Uraeus et un vautour. Tout le corps est entouré de deux grandes ailes. Sous les pieds, Isis et Nephthys sont figurées dans des formes masculines. L'inscription hiéroglyphique qui se lit par devant est assez négligemment tracée ; elle nous apprend comme je l'ai dit que cette momie était celle de la reine Aah-hotep. Mais, chose étrange, aucun des objets remis à Mr Mariette comme en provenant ne porte le nom de cette reine ; presque tous portent celui du roi Amosis que Champollion a assimilé à l'Amosis des listes de Manéthon et deux d'entre eux, les cartouches d'un roi inconnu jusqu'ici, appelé Kàmès. Quoi qu'il en soit de ce dernier pharaon, si la Si cette momie, malgré son style archaïque, n'est pas antérieure à la XVIII^e dynastie, c'est-à-dire au 16^e siècle avant notre ère, il faut y reconnaître celle de la femme ou, suivant Mr Mariette, peut-être de la mère d'Amenophis I, 2^e roi de cette dynastie et probablement peut-être fille d'Amosis ou plus probablement, d'après l'opinion de Mr Mariette, la momie de la mère de ce dernier roi. Kamès serait alors un du roi de la 17^e dynastie qui est encore presque entièrement inconnue ; si au contraire elle date de la 11^e dynastie ainsi que sa décoration et son style archaïque sembleraient le faire supposer il y aurait une problème historique très grande difficulté historique ; il faudrait faire remonter à cette époque le pharaon dans les cartouches duquel Champollion on a cru reconnaître jusqu'ici les noms de l'Amosis des listes de Manéthon du premier roi de la 18^e dynastie. Cette La question demande à être examinée sérieusement, mais cette dernière supposition me paraît peu probable.

Voici maintenant la liste des principaux objets trouvés dans la momie : (voir p. 63 l'extrait de la lettre de Mr Maunier)

(vases, chevet, coffre, étui à collyre)

1^o Une hache d'arme en or incrustée de pierres dures et portant la légende complète du roi Aahmès ; 2^o plusieurs haches de bronze sans légendes apparentes ; 3^o un poignard sans gaine dont le manche est en or massif et la lame en bronze ; sans ornements ni légendes ; 4^o un poignard muni d'une gaine d'or et dont le manche de bois sculpté est orné de quatre têtes humaines, recouvert de lames d'or et incrusté de pierres dures, sans légende apparente ; 5^o trois ou quatre petits poignards plus ou moins ornés ; 6^o un flagellum ou éventail de bois recouvert de lames d'or et pourtant sur chaque face les cartouches prénom du roi Kamès ; 7^o plusieurs chaînes d'or de différentes formes ; et [word unreadable] la plus grande, longue de près de deux mètres et fort pesante porte sur les fermoirs les deux cartouches du roi Aah-mès ; un scarabée d'or incrusté de lapis lazuli et admirablement travaillé, y est suspendu. 8^o plusieurs bracelets et anneaux de jambes en or et de différentes formes mais sans légendes, 9^o trois bracelets composés de grains de pierres dures et d'or en passés dans des fils du même métal en forme de mosaïque, avec les noms d'Aahmès sur les fermoirs ; 10^o un bracelet d'or avec personnages ciselés et incrustations de lapis lazuli ; on y lit les cartouches d'Aahmès. 11^o un bracelet d'or incrusté de pierres dures ayant la forme d'un épervier les ailes éployées 12^o un autre bracelet d'or incrusté de pierres dures et formé d'une grosse torsade qui supporte le cartouche d'Aah-mès entre deux sphinx ; la partie inférieure de ce joyau est munie d'un appendice toujours incrusté de pierres dures et destiné à l'empêcher de tourner sur le bras. 13^o Un pectoral d'or découpé à jour et incrusté de pierres dures taillées en très léger relief et représentant le roi Aahmès entre deux divinités, avec accessoires et légendes hiéroglyphiques, cette dernière pièce est certainement le plus beau de tous les bijoux antiques connus jusqu'à ce jour ; 14^o un miroir métallique avec un manche de bois orné d'or. 15^o un petit modèle de barque avec ses rameurs, 16^o un autre modèle de barque en or avec ses rameurs en argent et les chefs de l'équipage également en or ; celui-ci porte le nom de Kamès ; 17^o un modèle de char à quatre roues en bronze et bois pour supporter l'une de deux barques ; 18^o diverses parties de colliers et autres objets”

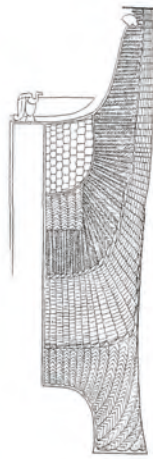
Description of the discovery of the Queen Ahhotep's coffin and list of the main objects preserved in the funerary equipment (Diary of Théodule Devéria, DAE, Musée du Louvre, courtesy of Elisabeth David)



Pl. I – Coffin of the Queen Ahhotep in standing position with a few objects of its assemblage; photo by Devéria; PHO 1986 144 94/MS 163 90 © Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Alexis Brandt



Pl. II – Coffin of the Queen Ahhotep laying on its base; photo by Devéria; PHO 1986 144 93/MS 163 89 © Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Alexis Brandt



decoration of JE 4663

JE 4663



JE 4664



JE 4665



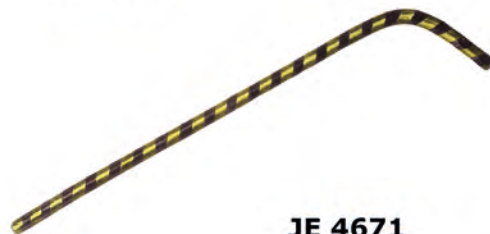
JE 4666



JE 4668



JE 4669



JE 4671



JE 4673

JE 4672



JE 4675

JE 4676



JE 4677



JE 4679



JE 4681

JE 4680



various elements from JE 4681



JE 4682



JE 4683



JE 4684



JE 4685



JE 4687



JE 4694



JE 4696



JE 4697-4700



JE 4701-04



JE 4695



JE 4705



JE 4707-10



JE 4711-12



JE 4713



JE 4714

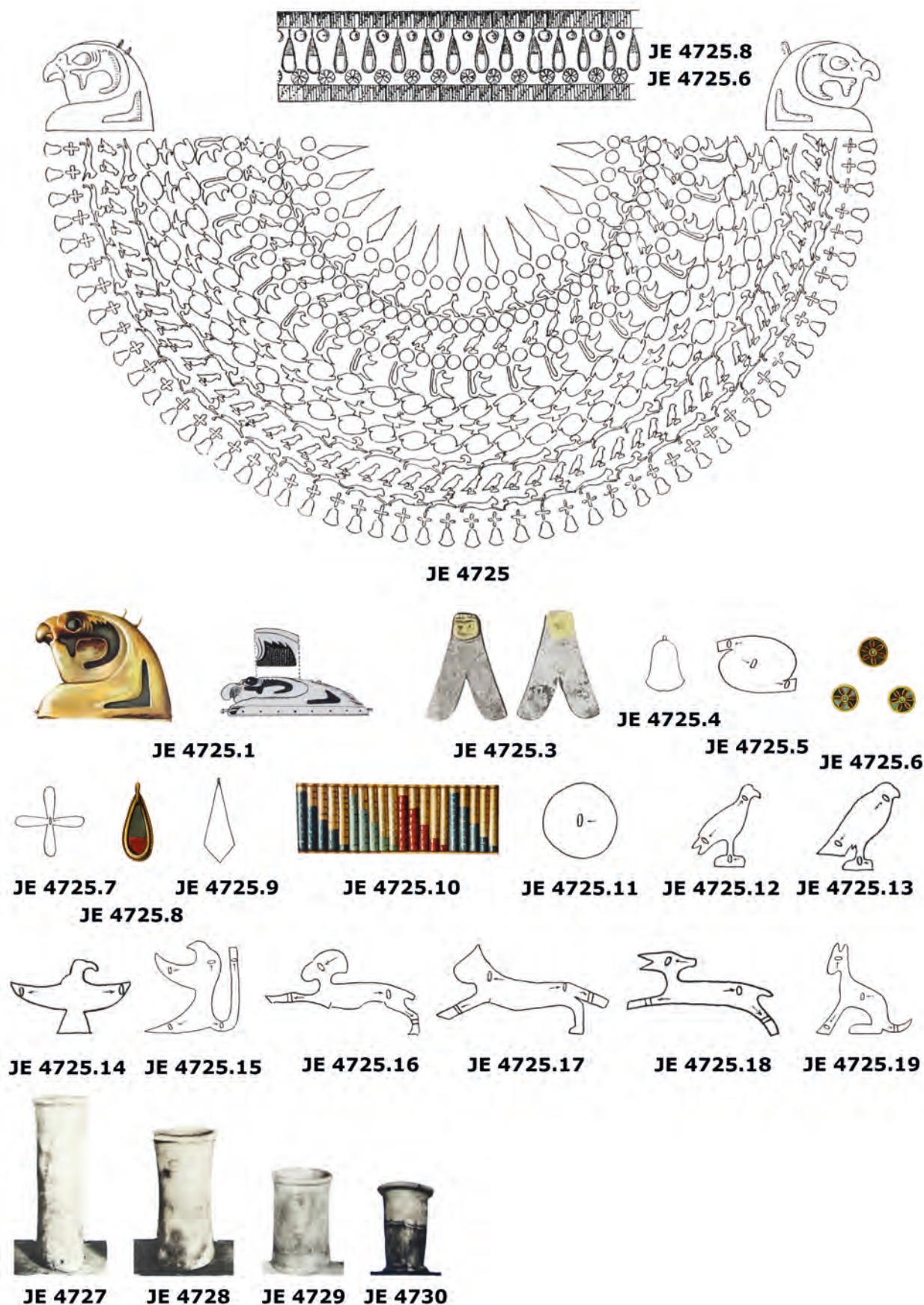


JE 4715-17



JE 4718-23

Pl. V – Equipment from the coffin of the Queen Ahhotep, from von BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund* (drawings by Howard Carter) © assembled by Gianluca Miniaci



Pl. VI – Equipment from the coffin of the Queen Ahhotep, from VON BISSING, *Ein thebanischer Grabfund* (drawings by Howard Carter) © assembled by Gianluca Miniaci



Pl. IX – Lid of Queen Ahhotep coffin © photo by Gianluca Miniaci



Pl. X – Detail of the lid of the Queen Ahhotep coffin © photo courtesy of Kenneth Garrett



Pl. XI – Sword JE 4666 © courtesy of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo



Pl. XII – Bracelet JE 4680 © photo courtesy of Alamy



Pl. XIII – Boat miniature JE 4681 + Waggon JE 4669 © photo by Jürgen Liepe



Pl. XIV – Fly pendants JE 4725.3 © photo courtesy of Alamy



Pl. XV – Bracelet JE 4684 © courtesy of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo



Pl. XVI – Lion's heads JE 4713-14 © photo courtesy of Alamy



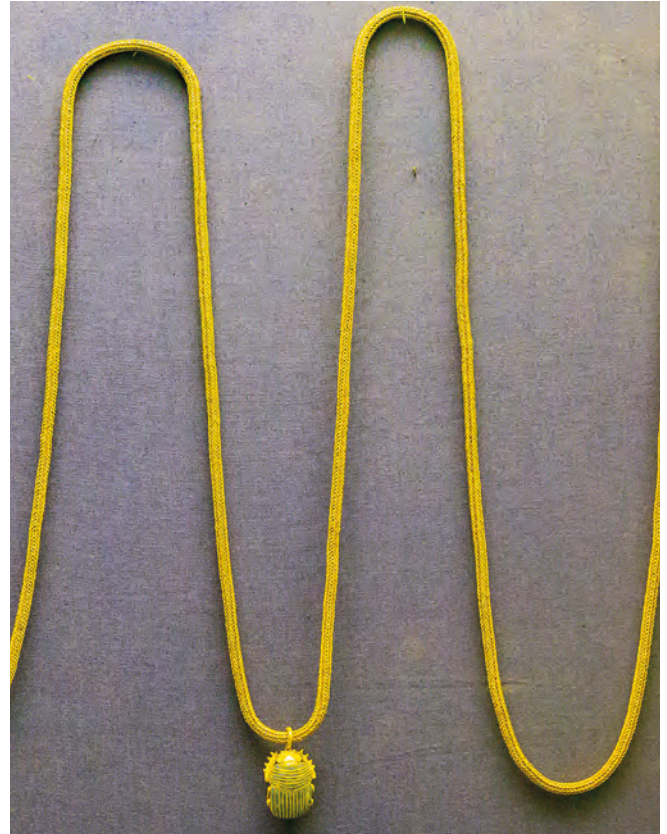
Pl. XVII – Detail of axe JE 4673 © photo by Jürgen Liepe



Pl. XVIII – Axe JE 4673 © photo by Jürgen Liepe



Pl. XIX – Fan JE 4672 © photo courtesy of Alamy



Pl. XX – Scarab JE 4695 © photo courtesy of Alamy



Pl. XXI – Nubians bringing tribute from the tomb of Sobekhotep in the British Museum (EA 922). The central figure wears a fly pendant. Photo by Wolfram Grajetzki
© The Trustees of the British Museum



Pl. XXII – Gold and ivory fly from Buhen (UPM E10347A)
© photo courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Museum