"...half a loaf is better than no bread" *

On the Fragmentary Nature of Early Archaeological Publications and Their Utilisation in the 21st Century

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W.M.F. Petrie is without doubt one of the most influential figures in late 19th/early 20th century Egyptology. This impact, lasting until today, is based not just on his advancement of methodology and excavation techniques, but also on the great number of publications he produced during his long career. Due to the destructive nature of archaeological research, these publications remain an important and irreplaceable source for modern Egyptologists. Based on a reassessment of the New Kingdom remains of the cemeteries of Sedment in Middle Egypt, unearthed during the 1920/21 excavations, this article analyses the 1924 publication of the site. The main focus is laid upon the questions of how much of the archaeological finds and features are included in the publication, and whether certain criteria can be identified that determined the inclusion or exclusion of information in the publications. As can be shown, only a minor part of the findings was published, and while some groups of finds, such as Myceanean pottery, were presented virtually complete, plain domestic pottery or finds from the Ramesside period in general are underrepresented in the publication. As not all on-site documentation has been preserved, the possibilities of any reassessment of a given site are limited. Nonetheless, the value of the publications still remains, as long as a sound source criticism is carried out.

1 Introduction

William Matthew Flinders Petrie is without doubt one of the most influential figures in late 19th/early 20th century Egyptology. His aim was to prepare a monograph on any excavation, ideally within one year. This led to a great number of monographic publications[1], most of which are relatively brief. This approach also holds true for other early scholars, some of which were disciples of Petrie.

As publications of early excavations (i.e. late 19th and early 20th century) remain an important

* From the preface of Petrie's 1886 publication of Naukratis (Petrie 1886: 1).

I want to express my thanks to Thomas Gertzen, to whom I owe several suggestions, hints to literature, and remarks out of his great knowledge of Petrie and the disciplinary history of Egyptology, and to Garry Shaw for correcting my English. All mistakes remain, of course, my own.

1 For a bibliography of W.M.F. Petrie, not including articles and other shorter papers, see Drower 1995: 466–469. A complete bibliography can be found in Uphill 1972.

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– and due to the destructive nature of archaeology irreplaceable – source, this paper will take a closer look at the nature of these publications and the consequences for new research into sites that were excavated a long time ago. The approach chosen for this article is a rather pragmatic one, taking the author's own perspective as a present-day Egyptologist and archaeologist who needs to make use of Petrie's excavation reports.[2]

Today, Petrie's publications are viewed controversially. Jason Thompson bluntly states that "*Subsequent research into his papers has shown that he never published more than portions of his findings, and not always the best portions*"[3]. A judgement based on research regarding a specific site is made by Karin Sowada. Referring to Petrie's publication of Diospolis Parva, she states: "*While some of Petrie's records of the excavation are still extant, the publication itself presents relatively little information.*"[4] Other authors commenting more generally on Petrie stress the fact that he published almost all of his excavations without lengthy delays. Thomas Gertzen, for example, concludes that "*Er* [Petrie, H.F.] *publizierte die Ergebnisse seiner Grabungen zeitnah, was weder für die damalige noch die heutige archäologische Forschung eine Selbstverständlichkeit ist*".[5] This verdict replicates the contemporary view of Adolf Erman, expressed in 1929: "*… etwa so wie in England. Da wird alljährlich die Arbeit des vorigen Jahres veröffentlicht, in einfacher Form und gewiß nicht so erschöpfend, wie unsere Forscher es verlangen würden, aber das Nötigste wird doch veröffentlicht und kommt der Wissenschaft zugute*".[6]

While it surely holds true that Petrie did not publish everything, it has to be stated that "a complete publication" – whatever that might be – was never Petrie's aim; more than once, he explicitly expressed that he was aware of them being "*defective*".[7] And, in contrast to many other Egyptologists up to today, he indeed promptly published, according to his valuation, the major results of most of his excavations. Thus, the most important question to be dealt with must be whether the advantages of a quick publication of some results compensate for the major shortcomings. In order to address this question, this article will provide tangible evidence for what Petrie published and what he did not publish. Moreover, a focus of this paper will be the reality of how he published, and how he dealt with the archaeological evidence in connection with his manner of excavation and documentation. The two-volume record of the excavations at the

2 The author is an archaeologist who has a long experience of using Petrie's publications (Franzmeier 2017), but is neither a historian specialized in 19th and 20th century history, nor the disciplinary history of Egyptology in particular.

3 Thompson 2015: 21. This remark is unfortunately not substantiated by any reference to existing literature or own research. For the shortcomings of Thompson's "Wonderful Things – A History of Egyptology", see Gertzen 2016.

4 Sowada 1996, referring to Petrie 1901.

5 Gertzen 2017: 61.

6 Erman 1929: 241. This statement follows a section on the problem of Robert Koldewey's never appearing or long delayed publications. Even though he refers to "England" in general, it can be assumed that he had Petrie and his disciples, such as Brunton, on his mind. Moreover, it needs to be stressed that Erman was a philologist, interested in new texts and not an archaeologist. Thus, he might not have realized the problems deriving from Petrie's work regarding archaeological contexts, which had already been observed by other contemporaries, such as George Andrew Reisner. See below paragraph 5.

7 Petrie 1886: 1. See below in paragraph 2 for the full quotation.

site of Sedment in the winter of 1920/21[8], which were reassessed by the author, will be used to analyse the realities of Petrie's publication strategy in detail, and to supply data to the discussion about his publication practice. Practical problems for any modern scholar undertaking a reassessment of an old excavation will be highlighted; these are connected to the fragmentary nature of the publication, the already biased documentation, and the often heavily disturbed archaeological contexts. Solutions and the potentials connected to a re-examination of archaeological material excavated in the earlier days of Egyptology will be demonstrated. This article and its results do not, of course, cover all of Petrie's incredibly rich work, and its results cannot be generalised; rather, it will add to the study of a specific publication from one of his last excavations in Egypt, after almost 40 years of work in the country. It might encourage other archaeologists, dealing with material from Petrie's excavations, to provide further evidence for the realities of the actual work of Petrie, his documentation, and publication.[9]

2 Petrie as a Prolific Writer: His Approach

Without doubt, W.M.F. Petrie can be considered one of the most prolific authors that Egyptology has ever seen. He published 108 (or 102[10]) monographs between 1874 and 1953. Even though 31 were co-authored and three appeared after his death, the number remains impressive.[11] Amongst them were no less than 47 excavation reports. Moreover, he also penned a huge amount of smaller publications, resulting in a bibliography containing 1024 items.[12] One of the reasons for this large number of publications is a very high work efficiency, while the underlying motivation to publish so many works is expressed in Petrie's credo: "*It is a golden principle to let each year see the publication of the year's work, in any research; but a writer places himself thus at the disadvantage of showing how his information may have been defective, or his views requiring change, as year after year goes on. Such a course, however, is the most honest and most useful, as half a loaf is better than no bread.*"[13] He can surely be said to have followed this motto throughout his life, even though sometimes a publication might have taken a little longer.[14] He summarized the aim of his publications as follows: "*So far as my own credit is concerned I look mostly to the production of a series of volumes, each of which shall be incapable of being altogether superseded, and which will remain for decades to come–perhaps centuries–as the sources of facts and the references on their subject*".[15] This shows that Petrie was well aware that, because of the destructive nature of archaeology, for many sites there could be no better publication in the future. However, he seems not to have had in his mind that future

8 Petrie/Brunton 1924.

9 Of course, this article is not the first to deal with Petrie, his excavations, and publications. But the author has gained a very deep insight by reassessing all documented New Kingdom contexts and finds from the 1920/21 excavations at the site of Sedment. See Franzmeier 2017.

10 Uphill 1972: 356 gives 102 books, while the bibliography of Drower 1995: 466–469 contains 108 works, some of which are co-authored and some further are posthumous.

11 The data of Drower 1995: 466–469 was used.

12 Uphill 1972: 356.

13 Petrie 1886: 1.

14 The 1920/21 work at Sedment (work finished the April 25th, 1921) was published in 1924 (Petrie/Brunton 1924).

15 Petrie 1932: 112.

Egyptologists would also make use of his documentation. Even though this remains somewhat speculative, it might point towards an understanding of the documentation as being just for his own use in the preparation of publications and perhaps not for future colleagues.

In his 1904 work "Methods and Aims in Archaeology", Petrie devotes a whole chapter to the question of publishing.[16] It revolves less around the question of what shall be published but how it should be done. He gives absolute priority to the preparation of plates: "*The arrangement of the plates must precede the writing of the details of the book*"[17]. And indeed, the importance of plates is highlighted by the fact that many of his later excavation reports contain more plates than text.[18] Afterwards, he talks about the necessity of presenting the material on the plates in a comprehensive order, establishing criteria such as the type of object (e.g. inscriptions, pottery etc.) and the need for a chronological order.[19] Moreover, he points out that every object needs to be identifiable. The remainder of the chapter mainly concerns different types of printing qualities and procedures for plates, with the background of explaining how to achieve the best possible publication at a reasonable price both for the producer and the potential reader. This part actually represents about five of the chapter's eight pages, most likely reflecting not just Petrie's frugal nature, but the economic necessities of his situation in contrast to better funded institutions.[20]

In the end, Petrie did not always have a scientific audience in mind; his list of publications also includes books aimed at a more general audience, or as Petrie himself put it, "*… readers who feed in the intermediate regions between the arid highlands and mountain ascents of scientific memoirs and the lush – not to say rank – marsh-meadows of the novel and literature of amusement.*"[21] Though more irregular, it shows his awareness of the need to communicate his results to the public. It can be guessed that these pub-

16 Petrie 1904: 114–121.

17 Petrie 1904: 114.

18 In qualification, it should be stated that the plates often also contain tomb registers and other types of tables, which in other publications might have been part of the text and not the plates. Regarding the increase of the number of plates over time, it might be guessed that printing plates had become cheaper in the years after 1910 compared to the 1880s.

19 See paragraph 4.7 for an assessment of the implementation of these criteria in the case of Sedment.

20 Except for criticizing "Greenwell's British Barrows" (Petrie 1904: 114, referring to Greenwell 1877), he does not explicitly mention any other work, Egyptologist, or institution. Nonetheless he refers to "*wild freaks of recent books in Egyptology*", calling them "*monumental*" (Petrie 1904: 117). This might indeed be understood as criticism of publications of much better funded institutions, where good funding might have met the lack of common sense so that "*Every absurdity which want of design, forethought, and common sense could perpetrate, seems to be found in these monumental works*" (Petrie 1904: 117). Moreover, publications "monumental" in appearance might have been deemed abhorrent by Petrie who expressed his non-approval of luxury in his 1907 work *Janus in Modern Life* (Petrie 1907). He states, discussing taxation as a means of "moral education": "*If instead of taxing income (which is often requisite for reasonable living, or else usefully on improvements of the world), we had the luxuries taxed, the only people to complain (if the change were gradual) would be those who wasted instead of using their income*" (Petrie 1907: 52–53). In the following text, he explicitly mentions commodities, such as "*spacious rooms*", "*costly food*", "*motorcars (not professionally needed)*", or "*entrance money for amusements*" as such luxuries.

21 Petrie 1892: 1.

lications also served the purpose of publicising his work in the light of the constant need for funding to pay for his excavations.[22]

3 Petrie's excavation reports: The effects of the on-site documentation upon the publication

As any excavation report is normally based on information recorded on site, Petrie's recording strategy deserves attention; understanding the recording strategy is also crucial for any reassessment of an excavation, and its results, that go beyond the publications. Even though his documentation has already been subject to research, some key issues will be addressed in the following discussion.[23] In his 1904 work "Methods and Aims in Archaeology", Petrie writes "*To state every fact about everything found would be useless, as no one could wade through the mass of statements.* […] *It is absolutely necessary to know how much is already known before setting about recording more. In some periods, such as the XVIIIth Dynasty, so much is ascertained that it is seldom that new facts can be brought to light; and only fine or unusual discoveries are worth full publication. On the other hand, in such an age as the early dynasties our only resource lies in complete records of the levels or collocations of hundreds of pots, whole or broken; and most important historical conclusions may hang on a single potsherd.*"[24] Of course, not everything can be recorded, and modern (and future) technological developments allow, and will allow, for the recording of data that Petrie could never have recorded. Similarly, an early 21st century archaeologist will not be able to record what a 22nd century archaeologist will.[25] Moreover, modern excavations experience limitations based on manpower, time etc. for recording, making it necessary to define an adequate accuracy.[26] Nevertheless, the shortcomings of the work of the late 19th and early 20th centuries related to the general conditions of the time have to be taken into account, even though they should not be criticized *per se*. More problematic is Petrie's definition of what I call adequate accuracy. He refers to "*how much is already known*" as a key factor. While this is easily understandable, it would require the excavators to be fully aware of all that is "*already known*". Under these circumstances, the quality and the knowledge of the excavators responsible for documentation is decisive. An extremely good understanding of the material culture is beyond doubt for Petrie himself, as well as for some of his collaborators, such as Guy Brunton, who had a lot of experience in Egyptian archaeology. But Petrie always also had team-members who were not Egyptologists or archaeologists by profession – interested laymen with useful

22 Sparks 2013. See especially page 3 for Petrie's use of the Biblical connections to attract funding.

23 E.g. Serpico 2008a.

24 Petrie 1904: 49. While he refers in the rather infamous statement regarding the 18th Dynasty to the publication, the chapter's topic is recording, and it can be supposed that what was considered not being worth full publication might have already influenced the documentation.

25 As an example for modern techniques, 3D recording using photogrammetry might be mentioned.

26 The general difference between the accuracy of excavations of paleolithic sites and the work in an Egyptian settlement site such as Qantir, where cubic meters of pottery sherds have to be processed, might serve as an example. For reflections and definitions of "adequate accuracy" – "adäquate Genauigkeit", see Pusch Unpubliziertes Manuskript: 195.

skills.[27] These might not have realized the rare nature of any given find or feature and dismissed very rare finds as usual.[28] Moreover, even already known types of features and finds might be very relevant when interpreting archaeological features and particular finds.[29] Besides potential problems during the excavation itself, some mistakes, especially regarding inscriptions, persisted into the publications.[30] A very striking example from Sedment shows a combination of two orthographic variants of the same name on a set of shabtis, forming a completely new name; the misinterpretation of a sign also led to a change in the person's gender.[31] Further mistakes relate to the wrong attribution of pottery as "foreign".[32] Thus, these individuals' capability to act in the way Petrie sketched out in 1904 can be doubted. The Egyptian workforce surely can be identified as another factor, even though they were not involved in the documentation.[33] Any assessment of the qualities of particular workmen, whose names can sometimes be linked to the excavation of particular tomb groups through notes on tomb cards or in the notebooks, would be very difficult and is beyond the scope of this paper.[34]

Last but not least, it should be mentioned that the reality of work and documentation of Petrie's excavations sometimes differs greatly from his own aspirations and methods. Numerous anecdotes prove his sometimes very unorthodox way of working, including the direction of workmen and team-members using a telescope.[35]

4 Case Study: The excavations at Sedment

The paragraphs above discuss some of Petrie`s own thoughts and the conditions under which he worked. But how did these translate into the reality of a publication? As has been outlined already, it was never Petrie's aim to publish everything. Therefore, a confirmation of the first part of Thompson's criticism, mentioned in the introduction to this article, would not at all come as a surprise. Whether indeed "*the best portions*" were published or not remains a very subjective issue, which might also be influenced by different research questions and the approaches of various

27 For the team-members working with Petrie at Sedment in 1920/21, see Franzmeier 2017, 33–37. Useful skills were, for example, related to first aid, camping, and dealing with the simple conditions found at excavations in Egypt in general and Petrie in particular. The Egyptian workforce surely can be identified as another aspect.

28 See paragraph 4.2 for some examples of rather unusual objects neither documented beyond their mention on a tomb card or in a notebook or published.

29 Even though the number of shabtis in Sedment was extremely high and the monetary value very low, the prosopographical information gained by a complete documentation of all inscriptions would have been valuable. See below, paragraph 4.4 and Franzmeier 2016b.

30 Petrie himself was hardly able to read hieroglyphs, and he normally drew upon the expertise of philologists, such as Wilhelm Spiegelberg. See Drower 1995: 204.

31 Franzmeier 2017: 59 with Abb. 3.7.

32 See below, paragraph 4.1.1.

33 Petrie describes the functions of the workforce in a chapter "*The Labourers*" in Petrie 1904: 20–40. On page 22 he states that "*The freshman from England is their* [the workmen H.F.] *inferior in everything except in recording.*"

34 For a modern discussion of the Egyptian workforce, see Quirke 2010 with a list of tombs and the Egyptian workmen that excavated them (Quirke 2010: 169–197).

35 Drower 1995: 411.

periods and trends in Egyptological research. In order to supply the discussion with a point of departure, the following paragraphs present and discuss data which the author gathered during his work on the New Kingdom finds from the 1920/21 excavations at Sedment in Middle Egypt.[36]

Between December 1920 and April 1921, more than 2,000 archaeological contexts, mainly tombs, were excavated by Petrie and his team, which consisted of eight members plus the Egyptian workforce.[37] Besides Petrie, Brunton, and their wives, Major H.G.C. Hynes, Elmer Montgomery Neilson, Henri Bach, and Edward Eustace Miller worked at Sedment.[38] Based on approximately 110 working days over the period mentioned, every day, at least 18 tombs were cleared, with every team-member having to oversee and document two or three a day.[39] The documentation therefore had to be conducted in quite a hasty way. More problems arose from the topography of the excavated area, because the cemeteries are spread over a distance of about 6 km from north to south. The area was so large that Brunton decided not to join Petrie's camp, but to set up another camp in the south of that region.[40] This might have negatively influenced the communication between the two parts of the team. It is likely that tomb numbers assigned twice or even thrice to contexts in different cemeteries might stem from this situation.[41]

The contexts excavated show a great chronological variety, dating from the Early Dynastic Period to the Roman or even the Coptic Era. While the majority of tombs can be dated to the phases between the late Old Kingdom and the early Middle Kingdom, the focus of this paper will be the New Kingdom.[42] From the New Kingdom, 253 tombs are known. Most of the data derives from previously disturbed contexts, as only 14 or 15 contexts were found intact. Out of these, only about five comprised relevant find-groups, while four contained no objects except for the bodies and mats or undecorated and undocumented coffins. Their dating thus remains uncertain and is based only on the estimation of the date on the tomb cards, which cannot be substantiated by any evidence.[43]

4.1 The 1924 publication

In the case of Sedment, a two-volume publication was prepared.[44] It did not appear in print until about three years after the end of the work on site – delayed, when compared to Petrie's stan-

36 Franzmeier 2017.

37 The exact number is impossible to identify. Tomb cards or notebook entries exist for 874 tombs; the highest tomb number is 2253 and on the published plans 2,542 features are marked, with many of them without a number assigned.

38 For the team, see Franzmeier 2017: 33–37.

39 As a matter of fact, not all team-members were in Sedment for the whole period, and the documentation would also include photography and the drawing of objects. The time on site, overseeing and documenting the actual excavation was therefore even less. See Franzmeier 2017: 40.

40 See Franzmeier 2017: 39–41. The reason for the choice can be assumed to be the distance, even though this cannot be proven.

41 See below paragraph 4.6.

42 For a modern, but brief general coverage of the cemeteries of Sedment, see Grajetzki 2005, and Bagh 2011: 151–174. For the First Intermediate Period and the early Middle Kingdom in particular, see Seidlmayer 1990. An overview of the secondary literature can be found in Franzmeier 2017: 78–79.

43 Franzmeier 2017: 357–362.

44 Petrie/Brunton 1924.

dards and to his other works. Petrie co-authored it with Guy Brunton, who was responsible for three of the book's nine chapters, covering about 17 of the books 33 paginated pages. In total, the publication consists of 91 plates juxtaposed with 41+VIII pages of written text.[45]

In the case of Sedment, the transfer of the documentation into the publications is another factor that might have influenced the contents of the book. Letters show that part of the preparation was done by the team members after the excavation, and that notebooks often remained with the team members for a long time and not with Petrie himself. While not much is known about the concrete circumstances of the preparation of the Sedment volumes, one detail sheds some light on the writing process, which seems to have taken place towards the end of 1922: "*I send you herewith all the plans drawings etc also my note books. I had intended to bring them up to you in the Xmas Holidays by which time I had hoped to have finished the whole lot.* […] *I am wondering why you wish my note books. I thought I had made my tomb cards very clear have I failed to do so?*"[46] While this sheds some light on the publication process, it might also mean that team members continued to work on their documentation; the question emerges of how much of the preserved documentation was actually prepared on site, and what might have been added from memory.

Moreover, there is evidence that drawings and photographs of some finds were only prepared in England after the excavation.[47] Thus, the inclusion of objects in the publication would be related to the process of choosing which objects would be brought out of the country and which were not. As most objects that had been brought to England were already sent to the museums in the autumn of 1921, they were no longer available for drawing or for the checking of drawings during the preparation of the publication, further influencing what could be published and to what degree.[48]

4.2 What was published?

A total of 577 objects from the New Kingdom are depicted on the plates. This is about 16 % of the 3,683 objects – the minimum deducible from the documentation and the objects identified in museums.[49] Most of these objects were published in drawing, and a few in photographs. Only a

45 The pagination only reaches page 33. The remainder concerns the distribution list and the index. Eight plates in contrast contain tomb registers. While the highest plate number is XC, there is a plate XXIVA in addition to XXIV.

46 Letter by Major H.G.C. Hynes to Petrie, dated to the 10th December 1922; quoted from Serpico 2008a: 6.

47 Petrie/Brunton 1924: 9: "*The many models of boats and other objects were photographed by Prof. Petrie in London. To Mrs. Myrtle Broome we are indebted for the copy of the inscriptions and decoration of the two coffins of Nekht-kaui*". The coffins of Nekht-kaui were obviously also copied in London because there is no evidence Myrtle Broome was present in Sedment. As they were ultimately sent to the Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek in Copenhagen, they definitely left Egypt. For the coffins, see Petrie/Brunton 1924: 12–13, and pl. XXIV–XXV, and Jørgensen 2002: 62–67.

48 In most museums the inventory books prove an arrival of the objects in 1921. See Franzmeier 2017: 49–50.

49 The actual number of objects that once existed is most likely significantly higher, because the information on tomb cards is often vague. If an unquantified plural such as "vessels" or "shabtis" is used, two objects are being counted while "fragments" are always counted as just one object, because they might pertain to just one find.

very small number were shown in both photos and drawings.[50]

The second parameter is the number of archaeological features mentioned in the book. 157 tombs from all periods are mentioned in the text[51] and 457 can be found in the tomb registers. Moreover, objects from 546 tombs can be found on the plates. As not all tombs from which objects are shown are in the tomb registers or the text, or vice versa, in total 673 tombs are represented in the publication. Compared with the total of at least 2,000 tombs, this means that only about 8 % are mentioned in the text, 27 % have objects depicted[52], 23 % are contained in the tomb registers, and about 34 % are mentioned at all. It must be added that tombs from which single objects are depicted on the plates are particularly problematic; these finds are left in a kind of void, with no information available regarding their context. As not all tomb cards are preserved, these objects themselves are the only information regarding certain tombs.[53]

4.2.1 Over-representation of specific groups of objects: foreign vs. Egyptian ceramics

Another aspect of the publications (and already the documentation) is the focus on the extra-ordinary as perceived by Petrie and his collaborators. While it is of course legitimate to focus on objects relating to important research questions, this can lead to wrong impressions. One example is the emphasis on foreign objects in general, and imported pottery in particular. Most of the Egyptian pottery, especially if undecorated, is only mentioned on the typological plates or in the tomb registers. If depicted, sometimes more than one tomb number is given for a certain type. Other pottery is just mentioned in the register of graves with a type number. Broken vessels are hardly mentioned at all; even in the documentation, they just appear as "fragments" without any further specification. Foreign pottery, in contrast, is treated differently and appears to a much larger percentage, giving, at first sight, the impression of being quite common. Out of the 132 New Kingdom tombs, 26 are published as having foreign pottery with at least 51 vessels. But this rate of about 20 % does not reflect the reality. In total, the reassessment revealed 78 imported

50 This "double publication" pertains mainly to architectural fragments and the tomb group 254. See Petrie/Brunton 1924: Pls. LV, 1–14 and LVII, 32–40 (tomb 254) and Pls. LXXI, 4, 6 and LXXII, 6/LXXIII (architectural fragments from tomb 201). The choice of objects seems quite random. In general, photographs were most often taken of high-quality objects that were also difficult to draw, such as figure vases.

51 At least sixteen tombs are only mentioned in the text without being mentioned in the tomb registers or with objects figured. Most of them seem to relate to tombs excavated by M. Neilson or Major Hynes (Petrie/Brunton 1924: 14–15 and 32–34).

52 The list of "*graves with objects figured*" contains 220 numbers, but in most cases not the tombs where only pottery is included on the plates (Petrie/Brunton 1924: Pl. LXXIX). It also contains at least one error, as the dish on plate XLII, 1 does not pertain to tomb 1319 but to 1314, according to the number on the plate and in the tomb register. Moreover, the number 1319 is followed by 1315. It also misses tombs with objects figured, such as 2017 of which a cosmetic vessel is figured on plate LXVI, 9.

53 As my reassessment focused on the New Kingdom, the documentation pertaining to tombs of other periods was not subject to detailed research. One such case of the New Kingdom relates to tomb 601 where an openwork mummy-board and a ceramic stand were published (see Franzmeier 2017: 1306–1307). As the two objects belong to the Late Old Kingdom/First Intermediate Period and the New Kingdom, due to the lack of documentation, it cannot be excluded that the number was assigned to two tombs.

vessels, with the majority coming from Cyprus and some Myceanean and Levantine vessels.[54] This means that more than half of the vessels were published. After the reassessment, 37 tombs can be shown to have yielded imported pottery, a rate of about 15 %. Moreover, the number published is subject to the problems relating to the terminology and the identification of imported pottery in the documentation. Several examples show that pottery identified as "foreign" is actually Egyptian, making it impossible to give a secure number without examination of the vessels themselves, even more-so if it concerns unpublished vessels. A paradigmatic example is a vessel from tomb 245. On the tomb card, "*fragments foreign 6 or 7 pots*" are mentioned, while the notebook mentions "*fragments usual foreign pottery* [illegible] *18th Dyn*". As no other pottery from the tomb is mentioned, it seems likely that three fragments from a pilgrim flask, today housed in the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow (inv.-no.: D.1921.107), can be identified with parts of these "foreign fragments".[55] In fact, these fragments, neither figured nor described in the publication[56], belong to a pilgrim flask of Egyptian production, as evidenced by the fabric II.A.02[57], while the floral decoration is far from "usual". This treatment of the unknown or unusual as "foreign" makes any further evaluation of the real rate of foreign pottery mere speculation.

4.3 What was not published?

The most important bias in the publication, especially in the plates, relates to the ratio of the images (both drawings and photographs) of finds outside their context *vs.* the archaeological contexts. Only four *in situ* pictures were published[58]. One more picture, showing an unfortunately unknown tomb, has survived in the archive of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology in London.[59] Moreover, only 25 plans – mere sketches – of tombs were published.[60] Out of these, only seven give details, such as the find spots of objects and the position of bodies. All the others just reveal the architecture; and, with the exception of five Early Dynastic tombs, only floor plans are given and no sections. Moreover, amongst the tombs of which Petrie published plans, there are three of which nothing else was published: no

54 Every mention of a "foreign" vessel on a tomb card or in the notebook is taken as one vessel, unless proven wrong by the analysis of a preserved object. Furthermore, the number of vessels is a problem as often just "fragments" are mentioned, which could relate to one but also many more vessels. As this problem often cannot be solved with certainty, each mention of "fragments" is counted as one vessel while a mention of "vessels" or "jars" will be counted as two vessels. Thus, the number of vessels of both categories can be assumed to have been higher.

55 Franzmeier 2017: 61–62 and 908–912.

56 Tomb 245 is mentioned in Petrie/Brunton 1924: 26 and finds are shown ibid. pl. LXIII, 245.

57 For the fabric terminology used, see Aston/Mommsen/Mountjoy/Pusch/Rehren 2005. In general, no modern fabric terminology could have been used by Petrie and his collaborators, because the Vienna System, on which the system used here is based, was only invented in the 1970s.

58 A very small image of the finds in tomb 560 (pl. I, 1), the *in situ* situation of the famous statues of Mery-reha-ishtef of Dynasty 6 in tomb 274 (Pl. XI, 3), and two images of the New Kingdom chapel 276 (Pl. XLIX, 1, 2).

59 Serpico 2008b: 130 (PMAN 3522). In general, the use of photography for documentation at Sedment can be called antiquated for the 1920s. For the methodology of photography used by Petrie see Serpico 2008a: 7–10 and below 4.7.

60 Petrie/Brunton 1924: Pls. LXXXI–LXXXIV.

finds, no description, and not even a mention in the tomb registers.[61]

For all the other tombs, only the descriptions in the text or the documentation can serve as a base for any reconstruction of the archaeological contexts.

The majority of the text, and especially the plates, is occupied by finds; the quantitative data of published finds to objects found on site was already mentioned above. From a qualitative perspective, the following observations can be made:

1. Even though the impression is given on several plates that tomb groups were published, they are almost never complete. Even for the most important features, such as tomb 201 of the vizier (Pa-)Rahotep, almost all small-finds are missing, including the shabtis, which held relevant prosopographic material.[62] This also holds true for the important group of serpentine vessels from tomb 132, which represents one of the largest corpora from any single tomb of New Kingdom Egypt.[63]
2. The later New Kingdom, i.e. the 19th and the 20th Dynasties, is under-represented, especially if the large group of finds from the tomb of (Pa-)Rahotep (201) – even though it was published incomplete – is taken out. This holds especially true for the large corpus of shabtis, typical for tombs of this period.[64]
3. While monumental inscriptions were published, the vast majority of smaller inscriptions, mostly related to shabtis, were not; these shabtis were simply neither documented nor brought to museums.
4. Except for six objects, no finds dated to any period later than the New Kingdom were published.[65] The presence of a much larger amount of post-New Kingdom material is evidenced not only from tomb cards and notebook entries – which might be false – but also by objects that were sent to museums. Even though I did not search for them in the course of my research, a couple of such objects appeared. They belong to reused contexts, but also to genuinely later features.[66] Moreover, objects of a New Kingdom date, which were thought to be later by the excavators, are missing. One example is pottery coffins. None of them were published, while all recorded examples were dated to the "*22nd Dynasty*" on tomb cards and in notebooks. The reassessment of some of them – recovered in a "cache", created by Petrie and his team in an empty tomb – by an Egyptian team in the 1980s and 1990s, proved their New Kingdom date.[67]
5. Very simple burials were not published at all. While today it would have been desirable information, no wrappings or mats – often the only containers for the bodies – were described or even depicted. This leads to an almost complete absence of this supposed lower stratum of society in the publication, and distorts the view towards the higher social status.

61 This applies to tomb 266 (18th Dynasty), and tombs 568 and 569 (both 2nd Dynasty).

62 For the tomb of the much-discussed vizier (Pa-)Rahotep, see Franzmeier 2015, and Franzmeier 2017: 776–813.

63 Franzmeier 2017: 709–712.

64 This under-representation is repeated in the finds preserved in museums. See Franzmeier 2016b.

65 Petrie/Brunton 1924: Pl. LXI, 77, and LXII, 117–120.

66 Tomb 326 is the burial of a bovine, according to the tomb card. A large wedjat-eye from this feature is now in the collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum and dates to the late Ptolemaic or early Roman Period (Inv.-No. 081.1921).

67 Galal Abdel Fattah/Aston 2003 and Franzmeier 2017: 46.

6. No data related to skeletal material was published, except for the presumed sex and sometimes the age at death of human remains found in tombs.[68] The criteria on which the sex determination was based are nowhere stated, and it cannot be excluded that grave goods might also have had an influence. Moreover, the data seems to have been taken from the tomb cards and notebooks; this makes the sex determination process even less transparent, because it is most likely that the same person was not always responsible for the examination of human remains.[69] The same holds true for the age determination, even though, except for the tomb register on plate XLVII, only "child" or "adult" are discerned, and it can be assumed that body size was the decisive parameter. Thus, within this publication, Petrie's interest in anthropometry and eugenics seems to have played no role.[70]

Moreover, several inconsistencies can be observed, with highly unusual and even potentially valuable objects left unpublished. Amongst them are objects from some tomb groups mentioned above under 1). For instance, it is not clear to me why not more of the huge group of serpentine vessels from tomb 132 were published. As already expressed, the corpus is exceptional in coming from one context, both for its size and its quality. In addition, there are types amongst the unpublished fragments that should have been unknown to Petrie. For one type, I only know of three parallels, one of which Petrie himself later excavated in 1930 at Tell el-Ajjul, and which therefore should have been unknown as a type to him.[71] Another example is a faience situla, which is amongst the most magnificent examples of this type of vessel from the later New Kingdom.[72] It might be guessed that within the huge number of contexts and finds, combined with inexperienced team members and the lack of capacity for documentation, many pieces might have simply escaped the attention of Petrie and Brunton, especially if the objects were not complete or broken, as in the case of both objects mentioned above. Also, the process of writing up might have played a role regarding the objects missing in the publication. The above-mentioned circulation of notebooks and the transfer of information onto the tomb cards is surely a factor, and might have caused mistakes or simply led to the loss of data.

As a last point, it should be added that an evaluation of the excavated material is almost nonexistent. This goes hand-in-hand with the very few references to other works in the text, most of which refer to parallels in previous publications by Petrie himself.

68 Petrie himself took measurements of skulls, mainly of the First Intermediate Period, as is evidenced by the preserved notebook 95c. Moreover, at least 67 skeletons of the First Intermediate Period are preserved at the Duckworth Laboratory of the University of Cambridge (pers. comm. Emily Barlow 2012). None of this data was published though.

69 See Franzmeier 2017: 374–376. Another problem is the (non-)mention of the state of preservation of human remains. The very good preservation conditions for organic materials at many tombs at Sedment makes it likely that corpses might have been preserved as mummies with visible sexual organs. But the preservation of mummies can only be proven for tomb 276a (Franzmeier 2017: 1092–1102). Thus, the only way to determine the sex of tomb owners in Sedment are inscriptions which are rare in comparison to the total number of tombs.

70 See Perry/Challis 2013 for this topic.

71 0132/GSt/005, Oxford Ashmolean Museum AN 1921.1404. See Franzmeier 2017: 721–722, 1758 for the object and further references. The two other parallels were found decades later in Hazor and Saqqara.

72 0413/GFa/001, Sydney Australian Museum E026806. See Franzmeier 2017: 1213, 1832.

4.4 Under- and over-representation of periods

For the New Kingdom, 132 tombs are known either from objects on plates, the tomb registers, or the text. During the reassessment, from the existing documentation and the objects in museums, it was possible to deduce most likely 253 tombs from the New Kingdom.[73] Thus, the New Kingdom in general is over-represented, with about 52 % of the tombs known from the publication, when compared to the overall rate of only 34 %. Also, the tombs most likely pertaining to the later Second Intermediate Period seem to be over-represented.[74] In contrast, all periods after the New Kingdom are not only underrepresented, but virtually missing; there is only one object shown on a plate dated to the 22nd Dynasty, and some more mentioned in the text or in the tomb register.[75] Moreover, finds pertaining to the Ramesside period, except those from the 19th Dynasty elite tombs, such as the tomb of (Pa-)Rahotep, are under-represented. About 80 % of the Ramesside finds can only be deduced from the documentation, while about 50 % of the 18th Dynasty finds are known either from the publication or from museums.[76] Amongst the features presented, the distribution is more even, both within the text and within the plans of tombs.

Nonetheless, the 18th Dynasty is thus over-represented both in the publication as well as in the surviving finds. This calls for an explanation, as already in 1904, Petrie had explicitly stated that regarding the 18th Dynasty "*seldom new facts could be brought to light*".[77] This is most likely related to the excavation's funding, which was based upon providing donors with finds. High-quality artefacts from daily life, such as cosmetic equipment, seem to have sparked a higher interest than rather mediocre Ramesside shabtis. A quite bizarre case relating to First Intermediate Period boats and scenes of daily life probably best highlights the mechanisms at work. It shows that museums could and would connect their funding for Petrie to the order of specific types of objects, threatening Petrie with the withdrawal of the already made contributions afterwards in the case of non-delivery. From the correspondence between Petrie, his wife, and the Ipswich museum, it is clear that the "*collection sent*" was not acceptable. As the majority of the objects received by the museum were Ramesside, including a group of shabtis from tomb 131, this episode can be taken as evidence for the low appraisal of such objects.[78] In addition, some known prices underline the process that led Petrie and his team to place Ramesside shabtis in lower esteem, in contrast to 18th Dynasty objects, such as beautiful cosmetic spoons.[79]

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73 Due to the limited number of finds, the dating of a small number of these tombs is uncertain. Moreover, these objects are often not preserved in a museum or documented beyond a mention on a tomb card or in the notebook. In total about 10–15 tombs are affected by this situation.

74 No detailed reassessment – which would be necessary – has been conducted by the author; the impression is based on the quite large number of tombs from this period known from the publication (87), in contrast to the tombs known from the documentation (approximately 100).

75 Petrie/Brunton 1924: Pl. LXI, 77. Mentions include "*poor burials of the XXVIth to the Ptolemaic times, and a considerable amount of the poorest Roman*" (Petrie/Brunton 1924: 14).

76 Franzmeier 2016b: 112 (Tab. 2).

77 Petrie 1904: 49. For the complete quotation, see paragraph 3 above.

78 For the correspondence, see Serpico 2008b: 109–110 and Franzmeier 2017: 43–46.

79 Franzmeier 2016b: 110–111.

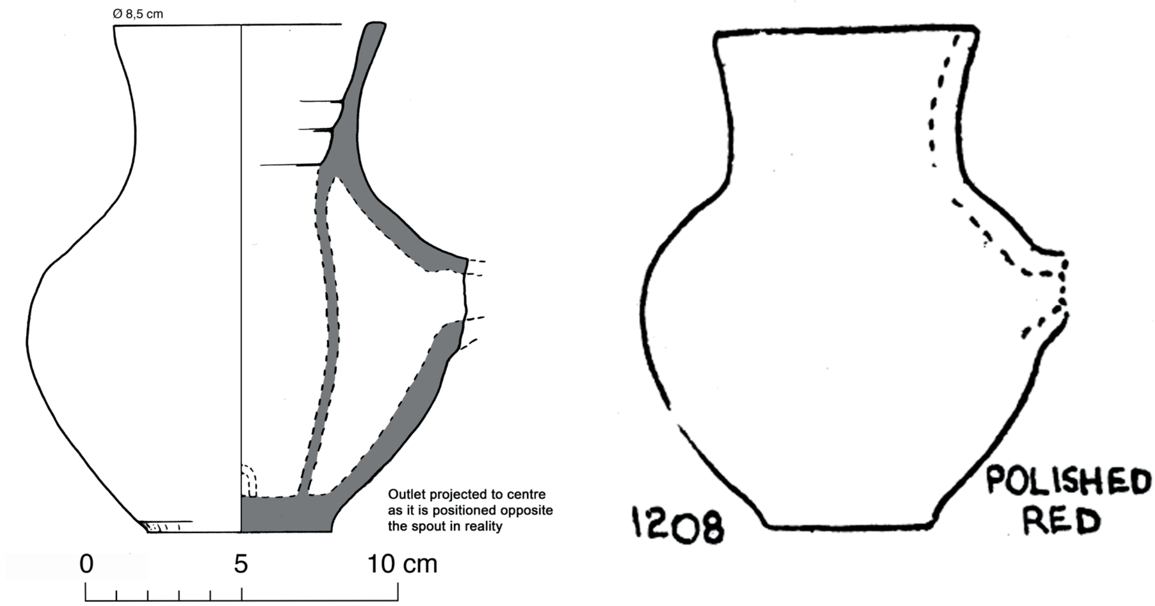

Fig. 1: The unusual jug from tomb 1208 (1208/GKe/001; London UC 18962). On the left the authors's drawing. To the right the drawing by Winifred Brunton (after Petrie/Brunton *1924: pl. LXV, 89N).*

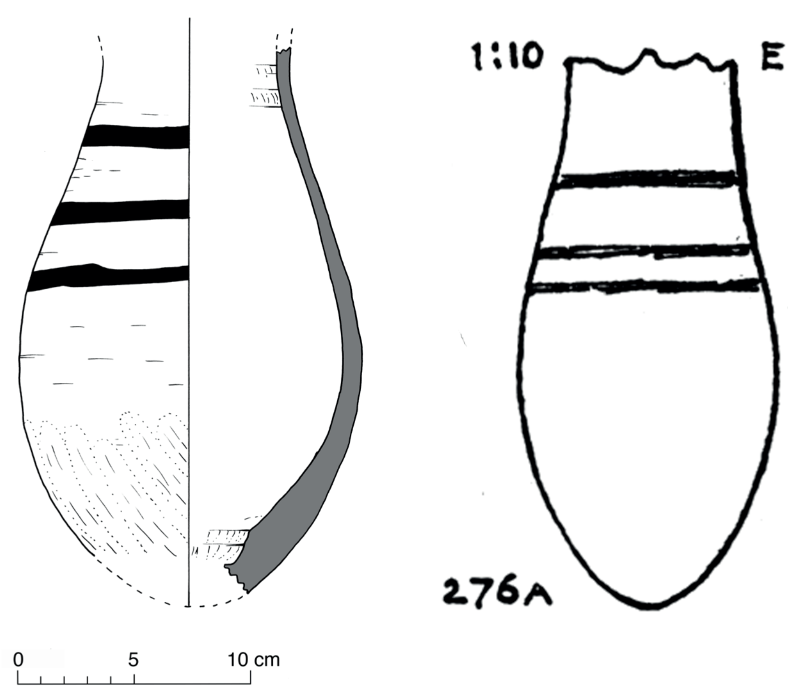

Fig. 2: The ovoid vessel from tomb 276A (0276A/GKe/005; London UC 18968). On the left the authors's drawing with visible traces of scraping. To the right the drawing after the sketch of Major Hynes (after Petrie/Brunton *1924: pl. LXIII, 276A, E).*

4.5 The accuracy of the drawings

The majority of the plates bear drawings by Winifred Brunton, Hilda Petrie, and Flinders Petrie himself.[80] Those of Winifred Brunton, who also published a book with fictitious portraits of Egyptian pharaohs, are of a very good quality. Examples include copies of the decoration of some First Intermediate Period coffins, which were too fragile to be moved and therefore had to be copied *in situ* – clearly a very demanding task.[81]

A specific issue appears on plate LXIII. The drawings are said to have been done by Petrie himself and "H.G.C.H." These initials belong to Major Hynes, who had already been named as one of the team members. Most of the extremely small drawings – scales reach from 1:2 for a piece of jewellery, up to 1:30 for larger pottery vessels, and 1:80 for a coffin – on this plate derive from sketches in Major Hynes' notebook.[82] For any use of these drawings, this has to be borne in mind. Even though the sketches have proven to be quite accurate, the small scale of the drawings renders many details invisible, and given the thickness of the lines, beyond what is possible. This is especially unfortunate because there are several important objects that are not preserved today, such as the potentially only B.R.II-vessel from the excavations from tomb 267, or the only BLWm-ware vessel from tomb 273.[83]

4.5.1 Pottery and stone vessels

The published pottery and stone vessels were mainly drawn by Flinders Petrie and Winifred Brunton. Most drawings proved to be quite accurate in terms of shape and size when the actual objects could be checked against the drawings, something already observed for the earlier work of Petrie.[84] Nonetheless, the drawings have some major shortcomings that need to be addressed. In general, these are related to absent details that are standard today. The drawings mostly just give the shape of the outside of the vessel. Variations on the inside are not given (Fig. 1). Also, grooves from turning the pots or other details that reveal information now known to be of chronological or technological importance are missing. One example is the change of finishing methods, especially of the bases of ovoid jars; until the Second Intermediate Period, and sometimes in the early 18th Dynasty, they were finished by being scraped freehand with a knife, while later they were returned to the wheel and trimmed while rotating[85] (Fig. 2). Sometimes the colours of the decoration and/or the general surface colour are not given, the importance of

80 On most plates, the draughtsperson is mentioned in the right-hand corner on the bottom of the page. F.P. stands for Flinders Petrie, H.P. for Hilda Petrie, and W.M.B. for Winifred Brunton.

81 Petrie/Brunton 1924: 5 and pls. XVIII–XIXA. Other examples of very detailed and high-quality object drawings can be found on plate XLII.

82 This is explicitly stated in Petrie/Brunton 1924: 26. Petrie ibid. also mentions that he was "*laid up*" for a week or two during the excavation, which made it obviously impossible for him to do the drawings himself.

83 0267/GKeA/002 (Franzmeier 2017: 1042) and 0273/GKeA/002 (Franzmeier 2017: 1070).

84 Personal communication, Valentina Gasperini 20.01.2020. Her observations are based on her reassessment of the "burnt groups" from Gurob (Gasperini 2018), which were published by Petrie in 1891 (Petrie 1891). The biggest problems in the Sedment volumes in this regard relate to the use of sketches from notebooks and the small scales up to 1:30 used for publication, as mentioned above.

85 See Bourriau/Schenck 2015: 182 for the description of the example from Sedment, tomb 276a with general comments. For the tomb, see also Franzmeier 2017: 1092–1102.

which can be gathered from the highly unusual vessel 0132/GKe/021 shown in Fig. 3.[86] Last but not least, in several cases, only drawings of a particular type remain. The type might have been found in several tombs, but potential individual variation cannot be captured any more, unless a particular vessel is preserved and identifiable in a museum.[87]

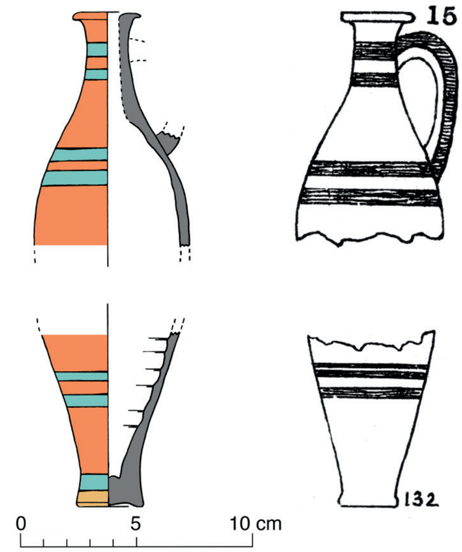

Fig. 3: The blue painted imitation of a Cypriote spindle bottle from tomb 132 (0132/GKe/021; Oxford Ashmolean Museum AN 1921.1440A). On the left the authors's drawing. To the right the drawing by Flinders Petrie (after Petrie/Brunton *1924: pl. LIX, 15).*

4.5.2 Inscriptions

Most epigraphic material from Sedment was published in a relatively high quality; the drawings of architectural pieces and stelae have proven to be mostly flawless. Nonetheless, some smaller problems remain, related once more to information supplied by the non-Egyptologists, such as Major Hynes. Examples include the already mentioned inscription on a shabti, which was assembled by Major Hynes out of two different variants of the same name, and an upside-down copy of a hieratic inscription on a Canaanite jar.[88]

4.5.3 Small finds

After pottery, the majority of the published finds can be assigned to the group of small finds. The drawings can be divided into two groups: line drawings and more complex shaded drawings. The vast majority of objects were published as simple line drawings. Of the New Kingdom finds, only three are known from shaded drawings of Winifred Brunton.[89] The choice seems quite random: while the cosmetic vessel from tomb 2010 is an exceptional object, the kohl-tube with a monkey, and especially the shabti from tomb 1374, can be called remarkable, but not outstanding for their quality. The quality of other objects, even some left completely unpublished, would have justified a more complex drawing. Nonetheless, where present, the drawings are of high value today, because objects, such as the shabti from tomb 1374, have deteriorated over time (Fig. 4).

86 The designation 0132/GKe/021 refers to the object number in Franzmeier 2017 (tomb 132/pottery vessel – "Gefäß Keramik"/running number within object group and tomb group). Petrie/Brunton 1924: pl. LIX, 15. The highly unusual vessel has a blue decoration on a red slip. Moreover, a yellow band near the base is completely missing, which is especially regrettable because yellow is a rarely used colour on vessels. In the text (Petrie/Brunton 1924: 25), the vessels are called "*foreign*".

87 These variations might have been significant, as is suggested by the comparison of sketches on tomb cards and notebooks of vessels said to be of the same type. See Franzmeier 2017: 66 with Fig. 3.9.

88 Petrie/Brunton 1924: pl. LXVI, 16. For the correct inscription see Franzmeier 2017: 77.

89 Petrie/Brunton 1924: pl. XLII, 4, 5, and 10.

4.6 Plans and tomb numbers

Petrie differentiated 16 separate cemeteries on the ridge between the Fayum and the Nile valley south of the modern village of Sedment. Plans were published of each of them.[90]

Plans of a couple of concentrations of tombs, where only general locations are known from the descriptions and/or the general map on plate LXXXV, are missing. These are "group 2100"[91], the tombs east of cemetery K[92], the area between cemeteries B, C, and E[93], and some rather isolated tombs, such as 2200 and 2253, which are most likely located east of group 2100[94]. All published plans were printed either in a scale of 1:800 or 1:900. This does not leave a lot of room for details, and all tombs are normally only represented by black rectangles, indicating the tomb shaft. In the case of cemetery W, the chambers and staircases of the mostly Early Dynastic Tombs are also indicated.[95] No further archaeological features, for instance the remains of superstructures, are indicated, most likely because they were badly preserved and neither excavated nor recorded.[96]

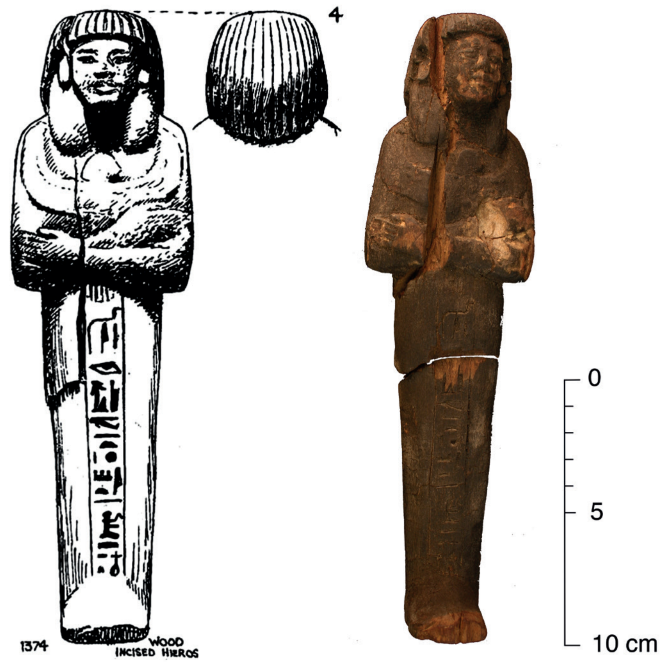

Fig. 4: The shabti 1374/U/001 (Sunderland, Tyne & Wear Museums 2006.214) from tomb 1374. On the left, the drawing by Winifred Brunton (after Petrie/Brunton 1924: pl. XLII, 4). To the right a photography of the object in its deteriorated condition (author's photo; courtesy of the Tyne & Wear Museums).

The published maps contain more than 2,500 features in total, while the highest tomb number is 2253. Numbers were assigned in sequences, and often the numbering in a certain cemetery starts with xx01. Cemetery C, for instance, starts with 101, while D starts with 401. For other cemeteries, more than one sequence was used. Tombs in cemetery B, for instance, bear a number either between 56 and 60 or 201+. For the largest, cemetery G, several sequences were used – amongst them 280-312 and 1501-1891.

Though this should have prevented the double assignment of the same numbers to different tombs, there are several cases of numbers used twice or even thrice, both in one cemetery and in more than one. For instance, there is a tomb 280 in both cemetery A and G, while a grave numbered

90 Petrie/Brunton 1924: pls. LXXXV–XC, and XXXIVA (cemetery N).

91 Located north of cemetery E and northwest of cemetery B on the plan, Petrie/Brunton 1924: pl. LXXXV. Brunton in Petrie/Brunton 1924: 9–14. Also, see Franzmeier 2017: 291–293.

92 Franzmeier 2017: 293–295.

93 Franzmeier 2017: 295–297.

94 Franzmeier 2017: 1677–1688.

95 Petrie/Brunton 1924: pl. XC.

96 Franzmeier 2017: 307–309.

398 is to be found three times in cemetery G. In cases where the tomb card or notebook entry does not reveal any useful notes or at least the cemetery, this can lead to an uncertainty regarding the tomb's position. It must be noted that the problem also relates to the mention of tomb numbers on plates, as it cannot be ruled out that objects with the same tomb number have in fact their origin in different tombs. Moreover, it needs to be mentioned that no case is known where more than one tomb card or notebook entry exists for the same tomb number. Therefore, some problems relating to double numbering cannot be solved anymore.

Another issue regarding the plans is that the majority of the marked features does not have a number; and furthermore, by far, not all tombs known from the notebooks and tomb cards have numbers either. A couple of tombs thus cannot be assigned to an exact position, and others cannot even be related to any cemetery. In some cases, a guess can at least be made if the tomb number belongs to a sequence known to have been used in a particular cemetery, but even this is not always the case. Last but not least, there is the extreme example of museum objects that can be assigned to tombs via the distribution lists or object marks and for which neither any notes nor a mark on a plan survives. In some of these cases, the existence of the tombs can even be doubted, because in 1921 finds from the earlier season at Gurob were also distributed to museums, and it has to at least be checked whether a find might originate there.[97]

4.7 The plates and their order

Petrie explicitly stressed the importance of the plates over the text. He identified several criteria by which the plates should be organised, the most important being chronology. Indeed, the Sedment volumes plates roughly follow a chronological order, with pre-New Kingdom objects being restricted to plates I–XLVII in volume I.[98] But amongst these, there are a couple of New Kingdom finds scattered over several plates. These finds were not misplaced due to incorrect dating, but are correctly identified as pertaining to the New Kingdom. Examples include tomb group 310 on plate V, tomb groups 1204, 1215, 1216, 1358, and 1373 on plate VI, hardly allocable pieces of jewellery on plate XIII, or headrests on plate XV. Though the headrests form part of a chronological presentation of headrests as a particular object group, most other objects do not relate to neighbouring objects at all. For example, amongst the headrests on plate XV, fragments of openwork mummy boards and two stone vessels from tomb 33 are also shown. As a headrest from tomb 33 is not even shown, the explanation that they were putting together tomb groups is not possible. Also, the presentation of the inventory of neighbouring tombs is not intended here, because the finds can be identified as coming from different cemeteries. However, in the case of plates XLII–XLVII this seems to have been the underlying principle: finds spanning Dynasties 17–19 from the cemeteries around the modern village of Mayana are shown, complemented by a tomb register of the respective tombs.[99]

97 Typically, in distribution lists and on the objects, finds from Gurob bear the prefix "Gh" before the number, while finds from Sedment were marked "21/xxx". For the excavations at Gurob, see Brunton/Engelbach 1927.

98 All following plate and page numbers refer to Petrie/Brunton 1924.

99 Plate XLVII also contains an image of a coffin from tomb 276a (cemetery A) and a Bes vessel from tomb 406 (cemetery D) in the northern part of the examined area, some 2–4 km north of the find spots of the other objects presented.

Another somewhat confusing matter is the plans of cemeteries. While most are to be found at the end of volume II on plates LXXXV–XC, the plan of cemetery N can be found on plate XXXIVA.

This quite critical assessment requires a little qualification: the tomb registers on plates XLVI–XLVII, and LXVII, complemented by a "list of graves with objects figured" on plate LXXIX, give the plate numbers of all objects from the respective tombs that are pictured.

Moreover, there is, contrary to Petrie's correct statement regarding the importance of a good numbering of objects on plates, a couple of objects with a missing number. This especially relates to tomb numbers on the plates with the pottery vessel types. On plate XXIX, for instance, at least three types are missing their tomb numbers.[100] If interested in these types, one has to search the tomb registers for contexts with these vessel types. As only one of the three types, type 32b, is mentioned in the tomb register for tomb 1900[101], no contexts can be reconstructed for the other two types from the publication.[102]

In conclusion, the plates leave the impression of a less than perfect planning process for putting them together. While some confusing aspects might be explained by economic constraints (e.g. the strict separation of plates with line drawings and photographs), other plates leave the impression of a rather random compilation of objects, which might have been forgotten at other points. Sometimes, no ordering criteria can be determined.[103]

4.8 Terminology and the effects of non-Egyptologists working on site

As mentioned above, some of the team-members were neither trained in Egyptology nor possessed previous practical experience in (Egyptian) archaeology.[104] This is especially problematical for epigraphy and the mention of inscriptions on objects. One very striking example are the already mentioned, fused inscriptions on shabtis. Moreover, royal names were more than once confused on tomb cards.[105] Further examples relate to the mention of "foreign" pottery in several tombs, a notion that has been proven to be wrong in several instances.[106]

4.9 Conclusions

The very fast work at Sedment in 1920/21 is visible in the publication that appeared about three years later, because several shortcomings from the documentation were transferred into the book. They account for the "*defects*" that Petrie himself was aware of regarding his publication strategy. Moreover, some of Petrie`s ideas, such as the primacy of plates over texts, are clearly visible. But the publication also shows inconsistencies and dif-

100 Petrie/Brunton 1924: Pl. XXIX, 32b, 33h, and 33p.

101 Petrie/Brunton 1924: Pl. XXXIX.

102 The types might be mentioned on tomb cards, even though this is far from certain. As this relates to finds of the First Intermediate Period, the present author has not tried to identify the provenance of the types not identifiable in the publication.

103 For a complete list of concordance of all New Kingdom objects on the plates with tomb numbers and the inventory numbers of museums (if present and known), see Franzmeier 2017: 495–512.

104 Strictly speaking, Petrie himself also had no formal training in Egyptology, but he had a lot of practical experience – almost 40 years when he arrived at Sedment.

105 Franzmeier 2017: 58. Here the names of Amenhotep III and Thutmosis III were exchanged.

106 See the already mentioned case of tomb 245.

ferences to what could be expected from Petrie's considerations. One major issue is the lack of published post-New Kingdom materials. This is even more astonishing because the history of the Heracleopolitan region in the Third Intermediate Period is of high interest, something even mentioned by Petrie himself, who complains about the lack of such finds.[107] Why the supposed finds from the 22nd dynasty were not published remains unclear. Aesthetic perceptions might have played a role; the above-mentioned pottery coffins, for instance, are indeed often very simple. This might go hand-in-hand with Petrie's funding, because most of the objects published were also those taken to England to be sold and shipped to various donors and museums all around the world.[108] Only very few of the objects left on site were published. Another inconsistency regarding the importance of the finds is the publication of plenty of 18th Dynasty material in contrast to 19th Dynasty material, especially in the light of Petrie's above-mentioned 1904 remark concerning the "well known" 18th Dynasty. Finally, there seems to have been some kind of disorganisation and an overwhelming amount of finds, which in combination with the restricted resources, led to an overall defectiveness, which Petrie from the beginning of his career openly admitted, and which seems to have been caused by chance. The above mentioned plate LXIII, where drawings of objects were taken from the notebooks of Major Hynes, might serve as evidence for this. In most cases, all objects left un-sketched by Major Hynes were not published at all, even though there were important finds, such as a faience vessel and a painted pilgrim flask from tomb 245.[109] Moreover, this randomness becomes apparent in the above-mentioned publication of plans of tombs, which are not mentioned at all anywhere else in the text. Besides general maladministration, this haphazardness might also be partially explained by Petrie's frequent periods of illness, which also confined him to bed for one or two weeks in Sedment.[110]

In addition to the factors mentioned above, one anecdote from Petrie's autobiography sheds some light on the circumstances in which he worked on his publications: "*By November 9 I started to Liverpool for the long-sea way, and at Malta visited Hagiar Kim. The writing up of Tanis I was done during the voyage, with Greville Chester as fellow passenger. On December 1, 1884, I went down to the great Greek site and looked round for accommodation.*"[111] This means that the account of his 1883–4 work at Tanis was written up within a few weeks aboard a ship far afield from any library. Of course, he might have done research before and also later, but it remains a pretty brief period to write up a book. This way of working might have also had an influence on the problems observed in the Sedment volumes. Finally, Petrie seems not to have seen his excavation reports as books containing final analyses;

107 Petrie/Brunton 1924: 1: "*But, strange to say, little was found of the XXIInd and XXIIIrd dynasties, although this city and its priesthoods often appear among the titles of the royal family in this period.*"

108 Franzmeier 2016b: 106–107 with further bibliographic references. See also Sowada 1996: 91 for some statements regarding the wishes of the donors.

109 0245/GFa/001 and 0245/GKe/001; see Franzmeier 2017: 910–911. In most cases, Major Hynes' notebook contained only sketches of complete objects. Therefore, any broken or fragmentary find is very unlikely to have been published.

110 Petrie/Brunton 1924: 26. For further accounts of frequent illnesses, see Drower 1995: 75, 199.

111 Petrie 1932: 56. One has to take into account though, that it is Petrie's autobiography, written almost 50 years after the events described. While he might have referred to his diaries (see Del Vesco 2013) for the dates and certain events, the descriptions might have been influenced by time and Petrie's own view of himself.

moreover, as specified in the quotation already given above in paragraph 2, he saw them as "*sources of facts and references on their subject*", lasting for decades or even centuries.[112]

5 The Sedment volumes compared to contemporary works

To interpret and assess the dataset, the excavation first needs to be placed within the broad range of Petrie's work. It was only Petrie's second project after WWI and there is evidence that the site was chosen exactly for the expectation of rich finds.[113] Moreover, Petrie, at age 67, was clearly at a very late stage in his career.[114] His techniques, once considered to be leading within the field, had not changed much, as already noticed by other Egyptologists of the time. In 1907, more than a decade prior to the excavations at Sedment, Petrie had been harshly criticised by Norman de Garis Davies in a letter to Francis Griffith, while in 1928, his field methods were judged as "*long since passé*" by James Henry Breasted.[115] This article cannot be the place to follow this criticism in detail, and compare Petrie's publications with all contemporary works, but a quick survey already reveals that by the time the Sedment volumes were published, they no longer represented good practice.

The publication of the cemeteries of Aniba by Steindorff might serve as an example.[116] While the much longer text (more than 250 pages just in volume I) might be explained by the fact that the preparation of parts of the publication took more than 20 years, the manner of presentation, and the much larger number of *in situ* photos and drawings, already point to a much better documentation on site, including the non-presence of laymen.[117] Moreover, the volumes are much better organised, with clear chapters dividing different cemeteries and particular topics, such as tomb architecture and groups of finds like coffins. As a non-German excavation, showing the international spread of standards within Egyptological archaeology, George Andrew Reisner's work at Naga ed-Dêr might serve as an example.[118] Even though conducted almost two decades before the excavations at Sedment, and published sixteen years earlier, this publication also contains much more detail; this is not just related to a more lavish mode of publication, but also to higher standards of documentation, especially regarding photography and the descriptions of archaeological contexts *in-situ*.[119] The maps also contain many more details regarding the tombs, and include even general sections with the stratigraphy, something entirely missing at Sedment.[120] This mode of documentation and publication is distinctly different from Petrie's work. Reisner states: "*It is necessary to make a complete record by drawings, notes and photographs, of every stage of the work. We have*

112 Petrie 1932: 112. I owe this idea to Thomas Gertzen.

113 Franzmeier 2017: 22.

114 For an assessment of this stage in Petrie's career, see Drower 1995: 348.

115 Thompson 2015: 283.

116 Steindorff 1935 and Steindorff 1937. For a reassessment of the ceramic material, including a chapter on the excavation and the documentation used, see Helmbold-Doyé/Seiler 2019. Even though far from perfect, the standards of the documentation can also be judged as being far superior to the one used by Petrie and his team in Sedment 1920/21. I am grateful to Jana Helmbold-Doyé for providing me with a copy of the chapter on the history of the excavation.

117 For the team, see Steindorff 1935: 20–21.

118 Reisner 1908.

119 Plates 10–30 show *in situ* photographs of tomb contexts.

120 Reisner 1908: Pl. 78.

found it possible to record every tomb in a cemetery, plundered and unplundered, by photography, and, moreover, every important stage in the excavation of each tomb."[121] Regarding the publication, he refers implicitly to Petrie, saying: "*It is necessary to publish these records so far as practicable, tomb by tomb, and at the same time to give a careful systematized consideration of the material they contain. The hasty and incomplete publication, year by year, of the season's work, with the temporary working hypothesis of the hour, satisfies the curiosity of those who have a less direct interest in the work, but tends to deprive the systematic archaeologist of a large mass of useful material.*"

It has to be stated though, that in both cases mentioned, the funding situation was much better. Steindorff and Reisner most likely had a much larger budget, which was not dependent on the sale of antiquities to a large number of donors. Reisner explicitly mentions his antipathy towards the "search for museum specimens" which is so important for Petrie's work due to his funding model: "*The discovery of beautiful objects is, of course, greatly to be desired; but the search for Museum specimens is an offence against historical and archaeological research which is utterly unworthy of any institution which pretends to be devoted to the advancement of knowledge.*"

In both cases, the funding was mainly given by one source, and it can be guessed that it was better than Petrie's. Therefore, one could ask the question of how Petrie would have dealt with much better and secure funding, and whether he would have followed the examples of others. While the lavish way that the Aniba volumes were published might have been considered unnecessary luxury by Petrie, the better documentation and subsequent publication of archaeological contexts would have been something Petrie could hardly have argued against from an archaeologist's standpoint, even if he would have kept his publications rather brief. But all of this, of course, remains speculative.

In the middle, between Reisner's approach of publishing the results of an excavation at length and Petrie's brief reports, classicist John Percival Droop's 1915 book "*Archaeological Excavation*" declares: "*A possible exception comes in the case of a cemetery, for the contents of a tomb are one fact not to be separated either in a museum or in a publication; but as nothing is more dreary than a long catalogue of the contents of mediocre tombs, the excavator should exercise a strict censorship over these facts and be very sure that each is of interest before he lets it see the light.*"[122] Thus, he argues for briefness of publication, but also for keeping the contents of an archaeological context together. Moreover, he states: "*For my labour has been vain if I have not made it clear that to do his work properly the excavator must note down all possible observations whether their interest is apparent at the time or not; many of these, probably the greater number, will in the end prove valueless, and it would be like giving a thirsty man salt water to drink to serve them up to a public hungry for knowledge.*"[123] This is once more a clear plea for sound documentation, which at Sedment was definitely not produced for a huge amount of tombs. The effects for modern research are clearly visible, because certain data, such as the number of persons buried in a particular tomb, is often missing.

Nonetheless, Petrie cannot be totally condemned, as is shown by a contemporary review of the Sedment volumes in the 1925 volume of the *Jorunal of Egyptian Archaeology*.[124]

121 This, and the two following quotes, from Reisner 1908: VIII.

122 Droop 1915: 60.

123 Droop 1915: 58.

124 Hall 1925.

While generally favourable, the criticism takes a surprising turn, stating that "*We do not quite see the use of the elaborate and painstaking plans of cemeteries, Pls. LXXXVII–XC, especially Pl. LXXXIX. Is anything to be learnt from them that can compensate for the time spent in their preparation? One could surely say in print merely that in most of the cemeteries most of the graves were oriented in the same direction, but that in Cemetery G (Pl. LXXXIX) there were considerable variations, many of the graves being placed at haphazard*".[125] From the viewpoint of today, this conclusion must be called a complete misjudgement, maybe related to Henry Reginald Hall's background as a classicist.[126] If these plans were missing, today no maps of the cemeteries of Sedment would survive, as to the author's knowledge the surviving documentation contains no more than sketches of single tombs. Any spatial information beyond the knowledge of the differentiation of certain cemeteries would be missing. No notions of a horizontal stratigraphy, the development of cemeteries, or the orientation of tombs in whole cemeteries would be preserved.

This example might serve as a reminder that even if Petrie's work – especially towards the end of his career – seems to be remote from modern standards, and even from the standards of his contemporaries, it was actually better than what others produced or might have produced. Information, which today is deemed very important, was included in the publication, even though it was not used by Petrie in his discussion of the excavations' results.

125 Hall 1925: 116.

126 Thompson 2018: 382 writes: "*To some extent he remained a classicist at heart all his life*". Moreover, he is classified as a "historian" by Thompson. This might have influenced his judgment even though he had gained fieldwork experience in Egypt. On the other hand, Droop, whose work was cited above, was also a classicist by training, and therefore also individual, personal sentiments and ideas might have played a role.

6 Petrie's Excavation Reports Today: Problems and Perspectives

As described above, Petrie's approach, as well as the translation of it into the reality of publications, was very different from that of most modern excavators. Today, often very specific topics are presented *in extenso* in separate volumes, especially, but not only, in German Egyptology. The aim of such publications was probably best summarized by Edgar B. Pusch: „*Vorzulegen, was wir haben – in Wort und Bild – um dem Leser die Möglichkeit zu geben, jederzeit nachzuprüfen, was wir folgerten und darüber hinaus für ihn die Grundlagen zu schaffen, auf denen er seine eigenen Überlegungen aufbauen kann.* […] *Aus demselben Grund legen wir die hohen Quantitäten auch kleiner und kleinster Stücke vor, zeigte es sich doch, daß selbst solche „Krümel" Merkmale tragen können, die im Gesamtbild einen neuen Blickwinkel ermöglichen.*"[127] This approach is very transparent and helpful for anybody working on a specific subject, such as glass production, as the volume the quotation above comes from is concerned with. It makes sure that every future loss of excavation documentation, and even objects, will not be as regrettable as it is in the case of Petrie's excavations. But it can sometimes go hand-in-hand with missing general publications, providing an overview of a given project's major results as a whole.

127 Pusch/Rehren 2007: 10. For the outline of an ideal publication of excavation results using modern technologies beyond books, even including raw data, see Marchetti/Angelini/Artioli/Benati/Bitelli/Curci/Marfia/Roccetti 2018.

Authors, especially excavators, seem to back off from addressing the "big questions". One of the major reasons is almost certainly the much higher complexity of modern archaeological projects, with so many different specialists involved, and with so many more publications in the field of archaeology and Egyptology.

But what do the results of this brief study mean for the use of Petrie's books in particular and contemporary publications of early excavations in general? As a matter of fact, they will still remain the irreplaceable references for many sites that were extensively excavated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as was anticipated by Petrie himself. But as the author has already argued elsewhere, a thorough criticism of the publication is necessary alongside the use of remaining field documentation and the actual finds to the greatest extent possible. Otherwise, all results will remain flawed by an incomplete dataset or problems, for instance regarding the terminology[128]. Moreover, an explicit reflection on the dataset and the conditions and premises under which the archaeological fieldwork was conducted needs to be included in any reassessment of such old excavations.

One of the major obstacles to this strategy, involving the closest possible (re-)assessment of finds from an excavation, is the distribution of objects.[129] Finds were scattered all over the world, not just from one site, but also from parts of one site, and even finds from the same context.[130]

Moreover, some information has to be regarded as lost forever. For Sedment, this holds true particularly for archaeological contexts of the later New Kingdom, as well as all later periods.[131] The assessment of some multi-phased and/or disturbed burials is very difficult, and any conclusion, especially regarding chronological issues, has to be verbalised with reservations. An example is tomb 246, where a faience ring bezel gives the name of Horemheb. All other finds from the tomb correlate with an earlier 18th Dynasty date, proven by radiocarbon dating.[132] As neither in the publication nor the existing documentation positions for individual finds are given, it cannot be excluded that the ring bezel does not even indicate a second phase of the tomb, but might have been found, for example, in the filling of the shaft of this disturbed tomb.[133] All of this leaves place for speculation and educated guessing without hard evidence. Insuperable problems will most likely limit the informative value of Petrie's, and others', early excavations, even though great potentials lie in the huge number of unpublished finds, which have survived in various museums all around the globe.

128 For a case of the uncritical use of published data from old excavations see Goulding 2013 and the corresponding review Franzmeier 2016a.

129 See Stevenson 2019 for an excellent overview of the various aspects and mechanisms of the distribution of finds from Petrie's and other contemporary Egyptologist's excavations.

130 Objects from tomb 134 at Sedment are today to be found in at least 18 museums in seven countries on four continents. Franzmeier 2016b: 109.

131 Franzmeier 2016b: 112–116.

132 Franzmeier/Höflmayer/Kutschera/Wild 2011: 22–25.

133 Franzmeier 2017: 913–920.

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