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ABSTRACT

This contribution catalogues the 19 New Kingdom Hieratic inscriptions in the collections of National Museums Scotland (NMS). The collection is made up of 14 wooden labels, 1 pottery sherd, 1 travertine fragment, 1 fragment of papyrus letter, and 2 limestone ostraca. It provides an overview of the history of NMS and its formation from The Royal Scottish Museum, The University of Edinburgh's Natural History Museum, and the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, detailing each collection's origin and development. The provenance and find spots of the hieratic material is also discussed focussing on the key donors: the pioneering Scottish archaeologist and antiquarian Alexander Henry Rhind (1833–1863), the Scottish surgeon Dr John Ivor Murray (1824–1903) and the British School of Archaeology in Egypt; describing the full histories of several objects for the first time. A full publication history for the texts follows, with their contents described. The inscriptions include a unique tomb warning from a Theban tomb and one of two attestations of the poem/hymn of the 'King upon his chariot'. A case study of 14 late 18th Dynasty wooden labels naming princesses is also presented. The labels were collected in Sheikh Abd el-Qurna during Rhind's excavations. The case study examines their archaeological context and compares them with examples of wooden name labels from other 18th Dynasty royal tombs, as well as several in historic private collections as a means of assessing their dating, usage, and previous identification as relics of post-robbery re-burials.

1. HISTORY OF NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND

The ancient Egyptian collections of the National Museums Scotland have their origins in three, historically intertwined institutions: the University of Edinburgh, the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, and the Royal Scottish Museum.

The Industrial Museum of Scotland was founded by an 1854 Act of Parliament, making it

the first UK national museum outside London.¹ It was renamed the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art in 1864 and opened in 1866 before the building's completion in 1875.² To reflect its national status, it was renamed the Royal Scottish Museum (RSM) in 1904.³ During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Museum supported excavations conducted by the Egypt Exploration Fund/Society, Egyptian Research Account, the

1 Lidchi (2016: ix).

2 Lidchi (2016: xiii).

3 Lidchi (2016: xiv); History see <https://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/our-organisation/history/> (accessed 15.10.2021).

British School of Archaeology in Egypt and the University of Liverpool.⁴ Objects were also purchased from excavators and from antiquities market vendors. The collection was heavily shaped by Cyril Aldred (1914–1991), who worked for the Museum 1937–1974, opening a new, permanent ancient Egyptian gallery in 1972.⁵ He acquired many objects by purchase, donation, and transfer from other museums, these acquisitions generally reflected his art historical focus and did not include any New Kingdom hieratic material.⁶

The University of Edinburgh's Natural History Museum formed several distinct collections over its history, originating in natural history and medical specimens collected in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, many of which were later lost. The 19th century led to a re-development under the Regius Professor of Natural History, Robert Jameson (1774–1854), who collected vast numbers of specimens from individuals travelling the world as part of colonial governance.⁷ Despite his successes, an 1852 request for treasury funds

to expand the galleries was rejected. Instead, it was agreed that a national collection would be founded with the circa 75,000 objects in the collection, being transferred to the Industrial Museum of Scotland in 1854.⁸ An initially close connection between the Museum and University, typified by the West College Street bridge which connects the buildings, quickly soured. The University severed ties with the Museum in 1873 following disagreements over the administration of the collections.⁹ Objects from the University collection in NMS are identified by their accession number prefix: A.UC.

Following its 1780 formation, fellows of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland began donating objects for display.¹⁰ Initially displayed in rented accommodation across Edinburgh, moving frequently,¹¹ the collections focused on Scottish material, with select comparative and ethnographic material.¹² Following years of financial difficulties and problems securing permanent accommodation, the Society agreed to make the collections 'National Property' in 1851,¹³

4 See [Potter] (2020: 76–100).

5 Bothmer et al. (1997: 3–5).

6 Stable et al. (2021).

7 Natural History Collections: The Royal Museum of the University (<http://www.nhc.ed.ac.uk/index.php?page=4.7>, accessed 15.10.2021).

8 Manley & Dodson (2010: 2–3); Natural History Collections: The Royal Museum of the University (<http://www.nhc.ed.ac.uk/index.php?page=4.7>, accessed 15.10.2021).

9 Swinney (1999); Natural History Collections: The Museum of Science and Art (<http://www.nhc.ed.ac.uk/index.php?page=4.8>, accessed 15.10.2021); Natural History Collections: The Third Natural History Collection (<http://www.nhc.ed.ac.uk/index.php?page=4.9>, accessed 15.10.2021).

10 Stevenson (1981a) and (1981b); Our History (<https://www.socantscot.org/about-us/our-history/>, accessed 15.10.2021).

11 The accommodation was as follows: a no longer standing Old Town house near St Giles' Cathedral; Chessel's Buildings; Gosford's Close/Lawn-market; Castle Hill; 42 George Street; The Royal Institution; 24 George Street; and The Royal Institution for a second stay following the completion of the National Gallery of Scotland for the Royal Scottish Academy. Stevenson (1981a).

12 Stevenson (1981a: 43–44, 69) reports that the first Egyptian objects entered the collection c. 1827–1831. Wilson (1849: 118–123) provides a list of sixty-eight Egyptian objects in Case XX. Ethnographic material was generally treated as an extension of natural history.

13 This transaction was conducted through a Deed of Conveyance signed with the Board of Manufactures on behalf of Parliament. This ensured that the collections would be preserved and displayed in proper accommodation, paid for by the government rather than the Society. Stevenson (1981a: 80–81); Lidchi (2016: xii).

becoming the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (NMAS) when it reopened in 1859.¹⁴ This agreement ensured that, though still under the control of the Society, the museum would be housed and financed by the government. The early Egyptian collections were greatly enhanced by the donations of Alexander Henry Rhind (1833–1863), who was integral in organising their display, typological arrangement and contextual interpretation, which made them a focal point of the galleries.¹⁵ From 1891, the museum was housed with the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in a purpose-built Gothic revival building on Queen Street, until NMAS was amalgamated with the RSM in 1985.¹⁶ Several proposals were made to move part or all the NMAS collections to the Museum of Science and Art/RSM but were all rejected.¹⁷ With a greater focus on Scottish history, a series of permanent loans of ‘art objects’ were made to the RSM which included circa 1000 Egyptian objects in 1939.¹⁸ These objects were formally accessioned in 1956. The NMAS and the RSM merged in following the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985, establishing National Museums of Scotland (from 2006 known as National Museums Scotland).¹⁹

2. THE NEW KINGDOM HIERATIC MATERIAL

2.1. The size of the collection

The NMS collection of New Kingdom hieratic material consists of: 1 papyrus, 2 limestone ostraca, 14 wooden labels, 1 pottery sherd and 1 travertine fragment.

2.2. Provenance

Sixteen objects inscribed with New Kingdom hieratic are associated with Alexander Henry Rhind (1833–1863) and his archaeological work in Luxor.²⁰ Often erroneously described as a lawyer, and even in one case as English,²¹ A.H. Rhind was an antiquarian and archaeologist born in Wick, Caithness, northern Scotland and educated at the University of Edinburgh. Following his studies, influenced by developments in Scandinavian archaeology and its application to Scottish prehistory, he conducted systematic excavations near his home in Wick, resulting in his election to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, aged 19.²² In 1853, he supervised the excavation of an Iron Age brooch at Kettleburn, donating all the finds to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.²³ Advancing pulmonary disease prompted him to seek warmer climates,²⁴ eventually making his way to Egypt. He

¹⁴ The official address was Museum of Antiquities, but the longer name was in persistent use by 1860, Stevenson (1981b: 143). It was also alternatively known as the National Museum of Antiquaries of Scotland, and the National Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

¹⁵ Stevenson (1981b: 147); Irving & Maitland (2015: 94–95).

¹⁶ Our History (<https://www.socantscot.org/about-us/our-history/>, accessed 15.10.2021).

¹⁷ Stevenson (1981b: 156, 182, 188). In 1875 the Royal Society of Edinburgh proposed to move the whole NMAS collection to the Museum of Science and Art; in 1906 the RSM Director, James Johnston Dobbie (1852–1924) proposed to loan or transfer Egyptian and Assyrian objects to the RSM; in 1919 a new proposal was made to transfer all foreign objects to RSM.

¹⁸ Stevenson (1981b: 194); Lidchi (2016: xv).

¹⁹ National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/16/contents>, accessed 15.10.2021).

²⁰ Irving & Maitland (2015); Gilmour (2015); Bierbrier (2019: 391–392).

²¹ Bouvier (2009: 59).

²² Stuart (1864: 2).

²³ Rhind (1851–1854) and Rhind (1853).

²⁴ Gilmour (2015: 430–431).

applied a similar systematic approach to Egyptian excavations, focusing on ‘closed finds’ and their proper recording.²⁵ His stated objective was to find an undisturbed tomb (preferably 18th–19th Dynasty), with ‘deposits...*in situ*’ from which the change in material culture over time could be studied.²⁶ In early 1857,²⁷ he and his team of Qurnawi excavators discovered a tomb in the lower slopes of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, which had been used and reused for over a thousand years before being sealed circa 9 BC. The ‘Rhind Tomb’, which has since been lost, was found following the exploration of a neighbouring T-shaped tomb.²⁸ The T-shaped tomb had been robbed in antiquity; from the debris of the tomb, 14 wooden labels inscribed in black ink naming 18th Dynasty princesses were recovered (fig. 1: A.1956.154–167, not shown to scale).²⁹ The labels are discussed in full in section 3.1.

A.H. Rhind also probably collected ostraca A.1956.319 (fig. 2) and A.1956.316 (fig. 3, r^o on left, v^o on right). The precise provenance of ostracon A.1956.319,³⁰ which preserves a section of the

hymn/poem ‘King upon his chariot’, is not known. As O. Turin S.9588 was found at Deir el-Medina during the excavations of E. Schiaparelli (1909–1912), it is likely, given their shared composition, that A.1956.319 also originated there.³¹ A.H. Rhind (1862: 41, 165–166) records his activity around Deir el-Medina and Medinet Habu.³² His work in this area is evidenced by a statue of an official presenting the statue of a young king which may have been found in the Khenu Chapel,³³ a ceramic ostrakon inscribed with work gang identity marks in red ink found ‘behind the temple’ in the village,³⁴ and several other objects.³⁵

The find-spot of A.1956.316³⁶, which features a warning to tomb visitors, is also unknown. Luxor seems probable as all the ostraca in the 1863 catalogue are listed as coming from Thebes.³⁷ It is probable that it was found in A.H. Rhind’s excavations, though he does not describe it, so it is also possible that it was a purchase. Given the size and shape of the 9.1 kg stone, it seems likely that it was originally part of a structure, possibly a low wall enabling the inscription to be read easily.³⁸

25 Irving & Maitland (2015: 87–88).

26 National Museums Scotland Library, SAS.MS.UC60/28 quoted in Irving & Maitland (2015: 92).

27 National Museums Scotland Library, SAS.MS.500: 104–106 places this c. 3rd March 1857.

28 Maitland (2017: 38).

29 Rhind (1862: 84).

30 H. 219 × w. 106 × d. 30 mm.

31 Inferred by Manley (2008).

32 Rhind (1862: 41, 165–166).

33 A.1956.139: Maitland (2022: 171) Rhind noted that the statue was ‘Found in the course of excavations near Der el Medinet’, National Museums Scotland Library Special Collections, SAS.MS. UC60/17/3.

34 A.1956.242: [Society of Antiquaries of Scotland] (1863: 4), where it is described as ‘38. A Fragment of Pottery bearing a few rude hieroglyphics, like a learner’s work. From an excavation behind the Temple of Der-el-Medineh—Thebes.’

35 [Society of Antiquaries of Scotland] (1863: 3) includes ‘Vases found in a small Pit–tomb in the Valley of Der-el-Medineh.’ It is also possible that A.1956.98, a copper alloy chisel, was found in the area due to the inclusion of an incised *hq*’ sign on the wooden handle, common to 18th Dynasty Deir el-Medina. Pers Comm. M. Maitland, D. Potter and D. Soliman.

36 H. 245 × w. 173 × d. 150 mm.

37 [Society of Antiquaries of Scotland] (1863: 4).

38 Černý (1967: 50).

This structure was probably at the entrance to a tomb, as indicated in Face A, 1–2, through the use of *p³y r-st* ‘this tomb passage.’³⁹ S.I. Groll (1991: 145–146) has shown that a semantically strong *p³-A* construction such as *p³y r-st* can be understood as referring to the location the inscription was placed, thus implicating ‘here’.

Papyrus A.212.113.1⁴⁰ (fig. 4) was donated to the NMAS in January 1858 by the Scottish surgeon Dr John Ivor Murray (1824–1903)⁴¹ with 4 other papyri and 17 other ancient Egyptian objects.⁴² Known for his illustrious medical career in China, Japan, Hong Kong and as a military surgeon during the Crimean War, J.I. Murray was in Egypt and Sinai between 20 March and 10 June 1854, the details of which are preserved in his journal.⁴³ Murray was introduced by the unofficial French consul, Victor Gustave Maunier (1819–1847),⁴⁴ to a ‘Copt curiosity merchant’ operating from a shop which had to be entered by crawling inside on all fours, where he made several purchases including ‘some much damaged papyri.’⁴⁵ It is probable that the papyri purchased were A.212.113.1–5, though this is uncertain. The dealer was likely Todros Bolos (fl. 1856–1898), a Consular Agent for Prussia and prominent dealer, whose hidden stores were also described by A.H. Rhind (1862:

248, 253).⁴⁶ A.212.113.1–5 were unrolled at a meeting of the Society of Biblical Archaeology on 4 November 1884 by Samuel Birch (1813–1885) and John Rylands (1801–1888), before being framed, glazed, and traced.⁴⁷ It was necessary to re-number the Murray papyri circa 1966 due to repeated confusion over their attribution; the smallest fragment of papyrus—the letter fragment—became A.212.113.1 even though it had previously been accessioned as A.212.113.3.⁴⁸

The jar label preserved as ceramic sherd A.1921.1499 (fig. 5) and the travertine fragment from the body of a vessel A.1921.1480 were excavated in the large, multi-chambered tomb 474 at Gurob, along with jewellery, amulets, an ivory Bes inlay, and a scaraboid inscribed for Thutmose III, amongst other items, by the British School of Archaeology in Egypt.⁴⁹ It was distributed to the RSM as part of a group of 211 objects from the excavations at Gurob, Lahun and Sedment (A.1921.1460–1671). The sherd preserves the black ink label [*irp*] *nf[r n] hrw 6 m pr n mn-hprw-r^c* ‘[Wine of] good [quality of] day 6 of the estate of Thutmose IV.’⁵⁰ The travertine fragment is inscribed *t³ m^ht* ‘the tomb’ in now blurred black ink.⁵¹

39 Černý (1967: 48–49).

40 H. 61 × w. 55 mm.

41 [British Medical Journal] (1903: 339–340); Waterson and Macmillan Shearer (2006: 682).

42 Papyri: Roman period abbreviated Books of Breathing of Pamonthes–aa A.212.113.4 and an un-named woman A.212.113.5: Coenen (2004: 105–112). *Book of the Dead* of the God’s Father Paiistjenef, A.212.113.2 and A.212.113.3: Reymond (1972: 125–132).

43 Journal of John Ivor Murray, army surgeon (1824–1903): National Library of Scotland, NLS MS.9843.

44 Weems (2019).

45 NLS MS.9843, 59.

46 Hagen & Ryholt (2016: 25, 248–250, 268).

47 Birch (1884–1885: 79–89).

48 Reymond (1972: 125–132).

49 Brunton & Engelbach (1927: 15–16, pl. xx, xxviii, l).

50 H. 85 × w. 59 mm.

51 H. 93 × w. 89 × d. 24 mm.



Fig. 1. A.1956.154-167



Fig. 2. A.1956.319

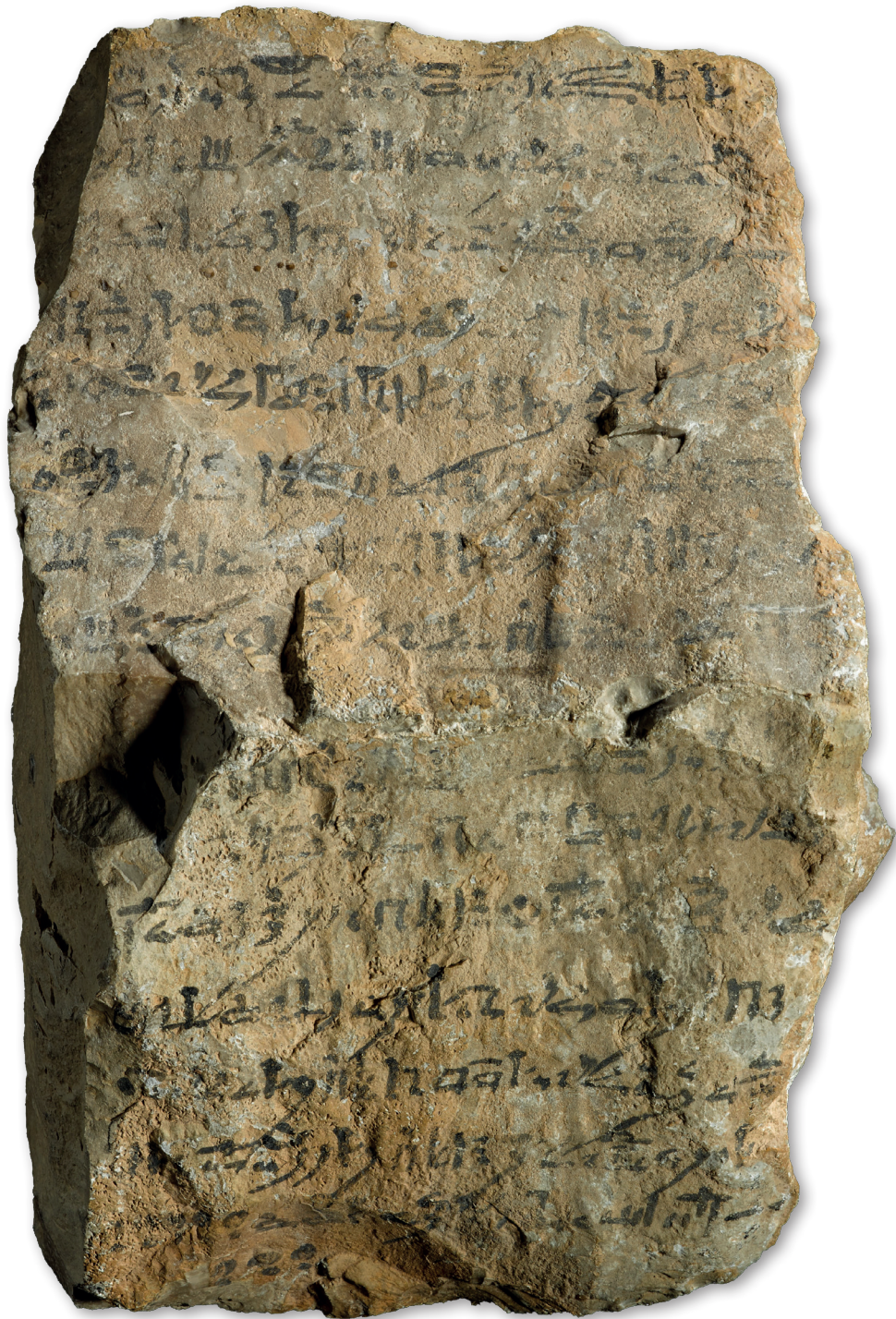


Fig. 3. A.1956.316

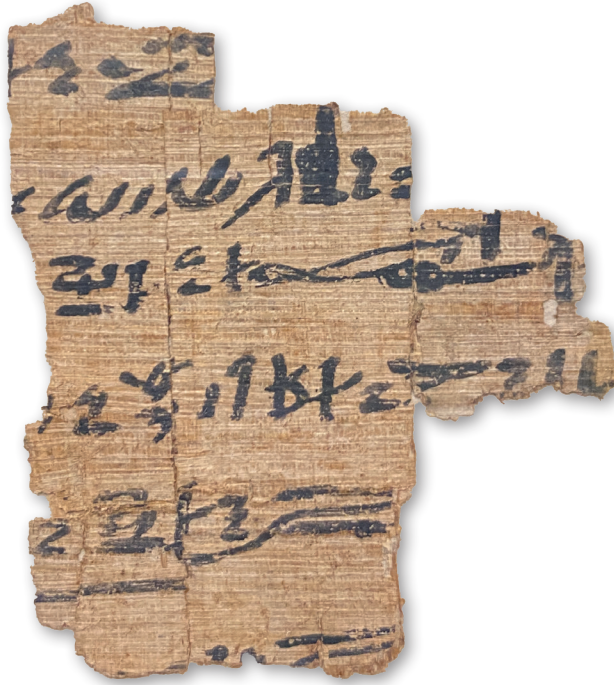


Fig. 4. A.212.113.1



Fig. 5. A.1921.1499

2.3. Genres represented within the collection

Labels: A.1956.154, A.1956.155, A.1956.156, A.1956.157, A.1956.158, A.1956.159, A.1956.160, A.1956.161, A.1956.162, A.1956.163, A.1956.164, A.1956.165, A.1956.166, A.1956.167, A.1921.1499, A.1921.1480

Literary/Historical Fiction: A.1956.319⁵²

Miscellaneous: A.1956.316

Letter: A.212.113.1

2.4. Publication of material

A.212.113.1, letter fragment: Unpublished and not included in other publications of the J.I. Murray papyri.⁵³

A.1956.316, a warning to tomb visitors: Full edition by J. Černý (1967). Transcriptions made by A.H. Gardiner and T.E. Peet.⁵⁴ A.H. Gardiner and J. Černý (1967) state that this ostrakon had previously held the museum number 912, however, M. Murray (1899: 514) describes ‘912’ as a ‘Limestone ostrakon, inscribed with fifteen lines of Coptic.’ It seems more likely that ostrakon A.1956.316 is to be identified with 917 ‘Ostrakon, inscribed with sixteen lines of hieratic.’⁵⁵ Highlighted by recent NMS exhibitions.⁵⁶

A.1956.319, Poem/Hymn of the ‘King upon his chariot’: Though the two inscriptions do not overlap in content, A.1956.316 and O. Turin

S. 9588 (Formerly CGT 57365) represent two parts of a longer composition, meaning that their publication history is necessarily entwined. The NMS ostrakon, which can be identified as ‘916’ in M. Murray (1899: 514) was first published by A. Erman (1880), and the Turin ostrakon by J. Černý (1927). The two inscriptions were published and discussed together for the first time by W.R. Dawson and T.E. Peet (1933). The composition is formed around punning word–plays utilising chariot terminology, to describe the King and his actions against his foreign enemies. A.R. Schulman (1986a); (1986b), U. Hofmann (1989: 210–211) and R. Pietri (2017) discuss the technical terminology and loan words related to chariotry. Further translations of the NMS inscription have been published by A. Erman (1923: 348–349) and B. Manley (2008), who also discussed the author’s possible inspiration and intentions. B. Manley (2014) discussed the NMS ostrakon and the compositional method of the author, their linguistic knowledge, skill, and ability. C. Manassa (2013) discussed the composition as an element of historical fiction, exploring the mechanics of the puns, the representation of royal power, intertextualities with ‘The Capture of Joppa’, and possible settings for ancient performance. A bibliographic summary and translation of the NMS ostrakon was published by L. Popko (2012) for the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*. Transcriptions by A.H. Gardiner and T.E. Peet are held in the Griffith Institute.⁵⁷

⁵² Poem/hymn known variously as ‘Poem on the King’s Chariot’, ‘The King of Egypt upon his Chariot’, ‘The Hymn to the King in His Chariot’, and ‘King upon his chariot’, Dawson & Peet (1933); Manley (2008); Manassa (2013).

⁵³ Birch (1884–1885: 79–89); Coenen (2004: 105–112).

⁵⁴ Gardiner 52.6–8; MSS.31.78.3–6. Checklist of transcribed hieratic documents in the archive of the Griffith Institute (<http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4higaros.html>, accessed 15.10.2021). Peet 1.159. Checklist of transcribed hieratic documents in the archive of the Griffith Institute (<http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4hipee.html>, accessed 15.10.2021).

⁵⁵ Murray (1899: 514, 517–528). The same confusion between 912 and 917 is apparent in other NMS documents. From the description, it is probable that 912 should be identified as A.1956.321.

⁵⁶ Maitland (2017: 15); Potter (2017).

⁵⁷ Gardiner 52.1–5; MSS.31.79.3–8. Checklist of transcribed hieratic documents in the archive of the Griffith Institute (<http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4higaros.html>, accessed 15.10.2021). Peet 1.156–8. Checklist of transcribed hieratic documents in the archive of the Griffith Institute, (<http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4hipee.html>, accessed 15.10.2021).

A.1956.154–167, wooden labels: Circumstances of their discovery and the content of the inscriptions were first described by A.H. Rhind (1862: 83–87; 1863: 19–29) and published in facsimile by S. Birch (1863: 18, Pl.12). Included in several catalogues of the NMAS⁵⁸ including by M. Murray (1899: 450–463, 493, 519). Translated and discussed as comparators for other wooden labels and inscriptions by A. Wiedemann (1883: 123; 1895: 7–8), A. Erman (1893), W. Spiegelberg (1894: 66) and P. E. Newberry (1903: 359–360). W.M.F. Petrie (1894: 143–145) also discussed the labels in relation to 18th Dynasty chronology and royal personalities, publishing line drawings of A.1956.154 and A.1956.163. A. Dodson and J.J. Janssen (1989) republished the Rhind, Wiedemann and Amherst labels, providing a synthesis of these sources and a hypothesis for dating the group, expanded on by A. Dodson (1991). They have been further discussed by G. Bouvier (2009), P. Litherland (2018: 224, 402) and in a comprehensive study by F. Adrom (2021). Transcriptions of the labels made by J. Černý are now in the Griffith Institute.⁵⁹ Highlighted in recent NMS displays and exhibitions.⁶⁰ A discussion of the labels and their context is presented in section 3.1.

A.1921.1499, label on sherd and A.1921.1480, travertine fragment: Published in the excavation report by G. Brunton and R. Engelbach (1927: 15–16, pl. xxviii).

3. CASE STUDY: THE RHIND LABELS

The fourteen labels are not uniform, each showing the markers of quick manufacture such as unfinished, uneven drill holes and saw marks. They are stela-shaped, with two having more angled shoulders (A.1956.160, A.1956.167). The un-treated wood was written on directly with black ink. The inscriptions vary, with some simply providing the name of the individual, while others also include a brief list of associated staff.⁶¹ The ten/eleven deceased princesses were either daughters or granddaughters of the king.⁶²

Name	Accession Number	Dimensions (H×W×D mm)
<i>nbtī</i> ³	A.1965.154	59×40×5
<i>ḥnwt-īwnw</i>	A.1955.155	78×49×7
<i>ḥnwt-īwnw</i>	A.1956.156	77×50×8
<i>pypwy t³ šryt sp iwy</i> ⁶³	A.1956.157	73×53×9
<i>pth-mryt</i>	A.1956.158	76×54×9
<i>py-ihī</i> ³	A.1956.159	68×48×8
<i>sīt-ḥri</i>	A.1956.160	71×52×8
<i>pypwy t³ šryt</i>	A.1956.161	73×50×7
<i>pypwy t³ šryt sp iwy</i>	A.1956.162	85×50×9
<i>tī-³</i>	A.1956.163	70×53×8
<i>py-ihī</i> ³	A.1956.164	70×54×9
<i>wi³y</i>	A.1956.165	90×57×7
<i>tīt³w</i>	A.1956.166	75×28×9
<i>nfrw-īmn</i>	A.1956.167	65×50×8

⁵⁸ [Society of Antiquaries of Scotland] (1860: 4); (1863: 4).

⁵⁹ Černý NB 17.57, 5–7 (<https://archive.griffith.ox.ac.uk/index.php/notebook-cerny-mss-17-57>, accessed 15.10.2021).

⁶⁰ ‘The Tomb: Ancient Egyptian Burial’ 2017: Maitland (2017: 38–39), and NMS Touring Exhibition ‘Discovering Ancient Egypt’ 2019–2021.

⁶¹ For a comparison of the formulae used in the Rhind, KV 40, KV 64 and WB1 labels see Adrom (2021: 54).

⁶² Newberry (1903: 360); Spiegelberg (1894: 66). Regarding the epithets *m³-ḥrw* and *šsr* see Adrom (2021: 53).

⁶³ Bouvier (2009: 63); Adrom (2021: 55, fn. 281) and Bickel (2021: 33) suggest that there may be two individuals named *Pypwy*, one nicknamed *t³ šryt* and another who was ‘*Die sehr kleine (Tochter) der Iwy*’, indicated by *šryt sp*. This is reflected within the table.

Two other objects were recovered from the tomb: A.1956.168, a clay seal matrix on strips of linen naming *nb-m^st-r^c mry dh^ty inpw* comparable to Malkata seals,⁶⁴ and a stone bearing an inscription in the same style as the labels, now lost.⁶⁵

From A.H. Rhind's publications and notebooks, we can reconstruct the currently unlocated Rhind Princesses' Tomb (RPT) where these objects were found.⁶⁶ It is a T-shaped tomb with an undecorated six pillared hall (circa 40×50 feet) and a sloped passage leading to the burial chamber in one corner. The courtyard of the RPT was apparently extended later to add the so-called 'Rhind Tomb.'⁶⁷ The RPT was sealed in two locations: the main entrance was sealed with a plastered mud-brick wall impressed with rows of seals of 'Amunoph III', a hole breaking through it around 2 feet from the floor.⁶⁸ A second wall with stamps of the necropolis seal, showing of a jackal over nine captives, sealed the burial chamber.⁶⁹ No images of these seals were published, meaning the Amenhotep III identification has been characterised as a mistaken identification.⁷⁰ However, A.H. Rhind's notebook includes a sketched cartouche with *nb-m^st-r^c* followed by an animal attacking a downed enemy and with further signs.⁷¹ When collated with the Malkata-type seals, the A.1956.168, *nb-m^st-r^c mry dh^ty inpw*, makes the connection to Amenhotep III more apparent.⁷²

The breach of both walls left an unsurprising scene: 'The floors were strewn with bones, torn bandages, fragments but these not numerous—of mummy boxes, and (in the lower chamber) with mummies themselves, their wrappings ripped up along the throat and breast.' 'A careful search' that A.H. Rhind 'caused to be made' by his team resulted in the fourteen wooden labels, seal and stone. The nature of the tomb and its contents led A.H. Rhind to conclude that the royal names in the inscriptions did not indicate the presence of any royalty, but instead the burials of 'slaves or attendants of the palace.'⁷³ However, considering the similar excavations of KV 40, one can readily imagine a tomb utilised for members of the royal family which had been the target of thieves.⁷⁴

A.H. Rhind did not identify the find-spots of any of the RPT objects, noting only the position where the bodies were 'chiefly deposited.'⁷⁵ This was characteristic of his approach in Egypt, where his focus on intact tombs meant that he did not plan those which had been robbed. The RPT was a 'comparative failure' and a 'disappointment',⁷⁶ as it did not assist with his research aims in his eyes. P. Litherland (2018: 402) has suggested that the burials of RPT were reburials, due to the lack of canopic jars, but if the search of the spaces was superficial and the spaces were as disordered as KV 40, canopic jars may have been heavily

64 Dodson & Janssen (1989: 126).

65 Published by Birch (1863: pl.12); Dodson & Janssen (1989: 132). Present in [Society of Antiquaries of Scotland] (1863: 4) as '24. A Flint, similarly inscribed. From the same Tomb—Thebes,' although no longer included in Murray (1899).

66 Rhind (1862: 83–87); Rhind (1863: 21); National Museums Scotland Library, SAS.MS.500: 104–106; Maitland (2017: 38).

67 In NMS, SAS.MS.500: 106, Rhind numbers RPT as '1' and the now eponymous tomb as '2'. Plan: Maitland (2017: 38).

68 Rhind (1892: 83); NMS, SAS.MS.500: 104.

69 Rhind (1862: 83–84). Goedicke (1993) states that the earliest known necropolis seal dates from the reign of Thutmose IV.

70 For example: Dodson & Janssen (1989: 135).

71 Rhind (1862: 83); National Museums Scotland Library, SAS.MS.500: 104. A.1956.168 has been confused in PM I/2, 671 as the door seal, and is addressed by Dodson & Janssen (1989: 126).

72 Dodson & Janssen (1989: 126, pl. XI).

73 Rhind (1862: 87).

74 Bickel (2021: 25–28).

75 Rhind (1862: 84); National Museums Scotland Library, SAS.MS.500: 104.

76 Rhind (1862: 87).

fragmented or hard to locate.⁷⁷ The search was not exhaustive, indeed, it is likely that a fine gilded and inlaid wooden box inscribed for Amenhotep II A.1956.113 was found within the tomb, but went unmentioned.⁷⁸ A. Dodson and J.J. Janssen (1989: 127, fn. 22) also suggest that following the 1857 work, the tomb was re-entered, leading to the Wiedemann and Amherst labels entering the market. Such a re-entry or other exploration might also account for several canopic fragments sharing filiation and names,⁷⁹ and additional fragments of the box A.1956.113 acquired by NMS in 2016.⁸⁰

When first published, the labels were described as mummy labels or ‘tesserae’ with A.H. Rhind stating that their purpose was to be attached to a body.⁸¹ This interpretation was influenced by the mummy labels he purchased in Luxor, but also possibly by his collaborator, S. Birch.⁸² Their attachment to bodies was certainly an inference rather than evidentially based. Their identification as mummy labels influenced the interpretation of other labels,⁸³ and led J. Quaegebeur (1978: 241) to describe them as ‘distant precursor(s)’ of later mummy labels. Finds of wooden labels in the tombs of Amenhotep III and Tutankhamun support a proposal first put forth by W. Spiegelberg (1894: 66), suggesting that the labels could have been tied to objects instead.⁸⁴ This interpretation is supported not only by the duplication of names, unnecessary for bodies, but also the inscribed

stone,⁸⁵ and by the survival of a length of linen tape associated with A.1956.162, comparable to a 23 cm length of twisted string found in KV 40.⁸⁶ G. Bouvier (2009) has stepped further away from the ‘mummy label’ description, preferring to call the objects ‘name tablets.’

Discussion of their dating initially focused on the reign of Thutmose III due to the inclusion of *mn-hpr-rʿ* in several filiation statements,⁸⁷ until P. E. Newberry (1903: 359–360) proposed that this related the royal children to Thutmose IV, contrary to A. Erman’s (1893) previous 20th Dynasty proposal. As part of their reassessment of the group, A. Dodson and J.J. Janssen (1989) suggested that ‘Year 27, Peret 4, Day 11’ (1) *rnpt-sp 27 ʿbd 4 prt (2) sw 11* of A.1965.154 r^o 1–2 referred to a 21st Dynasty reburial under Psusennes I. This hypothesis linked the *mn-hpr-rʿ* of several labels to the High-Priest of Amun, Menkheperre and suggested palaeographic similarities to TT 320 reburial docket.⁸⁸ A 21st Dynasty dating was reiterated by A. Dodson (1991), excluding Ramesses XI as a candidate for ‘Year 27’ due to the use of the *wḥm-mswt* style by that year. The reburial hypothesis has also been repeated by U. Verhoeven (2001: 10, 110) and P. Litherland (2018: 402).

G. Bouvier (2009) has challenged the reburial hypothesis, drawing on comparative 18th Dynasty labels from the tombs of Tutankhamun (KV 62),

77 For the KV 40 canopic equipment: Münch (2021).

78 Dodson & Janssen (1989: 126).

79 Legrain (1903: 138).

80 V.2016.43: Maitland (2017: 42).

81 Rhind (1862: 83–87; 1863: 21).

82 Rhind (1862: 83–87).

83 For example: Newberry (1903: 360).

84 Kondo (1990: 96–97); Černý (1965: 15, 27).

85 Dodson & Janssen (1989: 133).

86 Kat. 3–11—FN 321 in Adrom (2021: 58, 76–77).

87 Birch (1863: 18); Wiedemann (1883: 123–136).

88 Dodson & Janssen (1989: 134).

Amenhotep III (WV25) and Thutmose IV (KV 43),⁸⁹ which may also be supplemented by the KV 40 wooden labels and those found in Wadi Bairiya.⁹⁰ He suggests that the lack of contents listing in the labels from shared burials (RPT, KV 40 and WB1) is due to the need for the identification of owners, which would not be necessary in the kings' burials.⁹¹ G. Bouvier proposes that 'year 27' of A.1956.154 is that of Amenhotep III, specifically referring to the date of Nebtia's funeral.⁹² The hypothetical reburial team would instead be the household staff involved in the funeral.⁹³

Thanks to a comparative corpus of 18th Dynasty labels, G. Bouvier (2009: 66) and F. Adrom (2021: 54) have also been able to clarify palaeographic matters, preferring a dating in the third decade of the reign of Amenhotep III.⁹⁴

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⁸⁹ Bouvier (2009: 66); Adrom (2021: 48, fn. 241).

⁹⁰ Adrom (2021); Litherland (2018: 223–225).

⁹¹ Bouvier (2009: 66–67).

⁹² Bouvier (2009: 65–66).

⁹³ Also: Adrom (2021: 57).

⁹⁴ A. Dodson has also accepted this dating: Litherland (2018: 403, fn. 10).

This interpretation is further supported by the seals of Amenhotep III discussed above, as well as a clearer understanding of the circumstances of A.H. Rhind's exploration of the tomb and by the finds in WB1 and KV 40. Given the shared names of household staff in several labels, it is apparent that the princesses died in a short period around year 27 of the reign of Amenhotep III, leading G. Bouvier (2009: 69) to propose a possible infectious illness. The tomb was clearly robbed, as other royal family tombs were, and it may be that the space was reused over time in the same manner as KV 40 and the 'Rhind Tomb' were. A future re-identification of the Rhind Princesses' Tomb in the lower reaches of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna may provide further information about this enigmatic burial.

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