

## **| A “Mummy of a Woman” – the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Beginnings of the National Museum in Warsaw’s Egyptological Collection**

The majority of the Egyptian artefacts in the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw are buried deep in the museum’s deposit records and inventories from 1918 and 1919, and because of this not many know about them. Of course, an exception here are the mummies and coffins. The exotic nature of artefacts of this kind has always appealed to the imagination, and each instance of such an item appearing in Poland is vociferously reported by the general press. Besides the information to be found in Warsaw periodicals, the main archival sources on the collection’s contents are: the inventory records of the Museum of Fine Arts from 1863 to 1877, the list of objects transferred in 1869 from the Museum of Fine Arts to the Museum of Antiquities at the Main Library (the catalogue of the museum’s holdings, sadly only partially surviving to the present, was drafted by Hipolit Skimborowicz),<sup>1</sup> the list of objects transferred as deposits from the University of Warsaw to the National Museum of the Capital City of Warsaw in 1918–19, and the museum’s inventory and artefact inventory cards from before the Second World War. Also surviving are legal records concerning the functioning of the Museum of Fine Arts, which indicate that the institution was envisioned to hold not only works of painting, drawing and sculpture, but also archaeological collections and other ancient curiosities, including Egyptian ones.

In June 1864, in a session of the committee mandated to design and organise the functioning of the Museum of Fine Arts, chaired by Justynian Karnicki, it was decided that the simplest, and thus most cost effective, course of action was to adapt the building at the time used by the School of Fine Arts. According to the school’s director and professors who sat on the committee, the building “is utterly ill-suited for the existing purpose and cannot be conveniently adapted for the School, but comprehensive study shows that it could easily be converted for use by the Museum and would suit all of the needs thereof.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hipolit Skimborowicz – deputy head librarian at the Main Library, columnist, archaeologist, enthusiast and collector, who in 1869 founded the Museum of Antiquities. That museum was later (in 1871) transformed into the Cabinet of Archaeology at the Imperial University of Warsaw. See Witold Benedyktowicz, “Hipolit Skimborowicz – dziennikarz – bibliograf – bibliotekarz,” *Roczniki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*, 5, issue 1 (1964), pp. 35–62.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes of the session of the committee called with the aim of designing and organising the operations of the Museum of Fine Arts in Warsaw on the date of 6–18 June 1864, Archive of the National Museum in Warsaw (henceforth: NMW Archive), ref. no. 15.

The building of the School of Fine Arts is today known as the Auditorium Building<sup>3</sup> (used for a long time by the Warsaw University of Medicine, and after its renovation in 2017, by the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies of the University of Warsaw). Up to that point, the museum had occupied two rooms: the gallery of plaster casts was located on the ground floor of the Fine Arts Building (hitherto known as the Zoological Building, currently housing the Institute of History), while the gallery of paintings found a temporary home in the School of Fine Arts,<sup>4</sup> in a small workshop of one of its painting professors.

Entrusted with preparing a design for the building's conversion, one that would allow it to accommodate rooms for exhibiting paintings as well as a space for a Museum of Archaeology, was Professor Bolesław Podczaszyński, who proposed a layout as follows: "A separate entrance will lead from the courtyard to a heated, stone-floored vestibule, which in turn will lead to the space allotted for the Museum of Archaeology. That space, if used prudently, will for some time suffice to house the current objects and any that may be added. Having five significantly enlarged windows, that room will be adequately lit, though the windows ought to be secured with wrought-iron grates. Via the stairs from the vestibule, which will remain as they have been with only the old iron handrails replaced with new oak ones, passing the landing on the mezzanine, also heated and containing a cloak room where outer garments, canes, etc. can be left, one arrives on the first floor, where a spacious landing leads to the main doors of the Museum Rooms, and to the door of Director's Office."<sup>5</sup> This is followed by descriptions of the rooms allotted for the display of prints and paintings from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts and of the space to house the conservation workshop. The total cost of the conversion was estimated at 14,000 roubles, of which 4,500 was to be raised by selling off materials from the dismantling of superfluous elements like old partition walls, flooring, etc., reducing the actual sum of funds to be raised to 9,500 roubles. From the cost estimate breakdown attached to the committee meeting report, we also learn that the cost of a new door for the Museum of Archaeology was estimated to be 75 roubles, and of the larger windows to be installed there – 60 roubles each. The layout of the rooms in the Auditorium Building appears in the "Pavilion Plans" prepared by Jan Tańkowski in 1827 (**fig. 1**); the Museum of Archaeology was to occupy a room situated on the ground floor (visible in the upper left corner of the design drawing).

Despite the budget being calculated in such a cost-conscious manner, the museum never came to be. Because no other location could be found, the School of Fine Arts could not be relocated and there proved to be insufficient funds for any major reconfigurations to the building. As a result, the Museum of Fine Arts took over only three rooms on the building's

<sup>3</sup> From 1846, the school occupied part of the building known as the Physics or Auditorium Building on account of the fact that it originally housed auditoriums, the university's event room and the Cabinet of Physics, see Feliks Paweł Jarocki, *Kronika Pałacu Kazimierzowskiego z 34 ostatnich lat*, 1846, manuscript, Archiwum Państwowe m.st. Warszawy, Teki Korotyńskich, folio IV/41; Feliks Maksymilian Sobieszczański, *Rys historyczno-statystyczny wzrostu i stanu miasta Warszawy* (Warsaw, 1848), p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> Here, it is worthwhile to mention that the similarity in the facilities' name has caused a fair amount of confusion (which, for years, resulted in their misidentification). What we are dealing with here are the Fine Arts Building, formerly also known as the Zoological Building or Former Museum Building (currently the Institute of History) and the Auditorium Building, also called the Physics Building, which housed the School of Fine Arts. Therefore, the School of Fine Arts and the Fine Arts Building are two different and unrelated sites.

<sup>5</sup> NMW Archive, ref. no. 15.

first floor, which became a painting gallery, while the archaeological collection continued to be kept in various nooks in the buildings belonging to the university.

But what kind of archaeological collection was it? Pursuant to the legal act on public education in Congress Poland which officially established the Museum of Fine Arts, in addition to paintings, prints and plaster casts, the institution was to house an archaeological department to take over supervision of the collection hitherto possessed by the university's Cabinet of Ancient Curiosities. The Cabinet, focussed mainly on collecting artefacts connected with the history of Polish lands, experienced lacklustre growth despite an appeal from the Government Commission on Religious Faiths and Public Education calling for domestic antiquities to be handed over to the university, and was eventually incorporated into the Cabinet of Numismatics. Its history is covered in depth in articles on the history of archaeology at the University of Warsaw.<sup>6</sup> After the collapse of the November Uprising, the numismatics collection and a collection of small bronze figures were shipped out to Russia while the majority of the archaeological artefacts remained in Warsaw. In 1848, the collection, numbering 123 artefacts, was put on display in three cupboards next to the Zoological Cabinet on the first floor of the Fine Arts Building (called the Former Museum Building), the current site of the Institute of History. According to Feliks Maksymilian Sobieszczański, that collection "is composed of two sections: one for curiosities comprising mainly clothing, armour and tools of various nations; and one for miscellaneous antiquities, including: 21 Slavic urns found buried in the earth, an Egyptian mummy and Chinese tools."<sup>7</sup> Part of the archaeological exhibition was located in the building of the Government Library in Kazimierz Palace. As is indicated in Bieliński's monograph,<sup>8</sup> there was one other mummy (not mentioned by Sobieszczański) in the Zoological Cabinet collection.

Yet, how did Egyptian mummies wind up at the university?<sup>9</sup> Information on their provenance can be found in press archives from the time. The first mummy was donated to the curiosities collection by "Count JW. Aloizy Potocki, Heir to Tykocin" in 1821, for which the Royal University of Warsaw extended to the count "the sincerest gratitude."<sup>10</sup> In all likelihood, this was a late 18<sup>th</sup>-century counterfeit, the likes of which appeared in many museums around the world (**fig. 2**).<sup>11</sup> Already in 1869, it was described as a "reproduction" in the list of objects

<sup>6</sup> Józef Bieliński, *Królewski Uniwersytet Warszawski (1816–1831)*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1907), p. 649; Jerzy Kolendo, "Zbiory zabytków archeologicznych oraz kolekcje numizmatyczne na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim w latach 1816–1915" in Stefan Karol Kozłowski, Jerzy Kolendo, eds, *Dzieje archeologii na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim* (Warsaw, 1993), p. 30; Tomasz Mikocki, "Historia zbiorów starożytnych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego" in *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>7</sup> Feliks Maksymilian Sobieszczański, *Rys historyczno-statystyczny wzrostu i stanu miasta Warszawy* (Warsaw, 1848), pp. 458–59. Sobieszczański also indicates that the cabinet was twice weekly opened to the public.

<sup>8</sup> Bieliński, *Królewski Uniwersytet Warszawski...*, op. cit., p. 538: "Mummy – 2, value undetermined."

<sup>9</sup> A precise history of the University's collection of Egyptian coffins appears in a publication covering the art collections of the University of Warsaw, see Monika Dolińska, "Egipskie mumie i sarkofagi z kolekcji Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w Muzeum Narodowym w Warszawie" in *Kultura artystyczna Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Ars et educatio*, conceived and edited by Jerzy Miziołek (Warsaw, 2003), pp. 445–62.

<sup>10</sup> *Kurier Warszawski* ("Nowości Warszawskie") no. 256 (26 October 1822), p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> The National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 200334 MNW, Monika Dolińska, "Falsyfikaty nie całkiem fałszywe, mumie nie całkiem prawdziwe," *Światowit*, no. 2(43), Series A (2000), pp. 32–34; ead., "On the Bizarre Career of Mummies in Modern Times" in Jerzy Miziołek, ed., *Falsifications in Polish Collections and Abroad* (Warsaw, 2001), pp. 44–46. *Światowit* Supplement Series A: Antiquity, vol. 8.

transferred by Justynian Karnicki, the honorary director of the Museum of Fine Arts, to the nascent Museum of Antiquities at the Main Library.<sup>12</sup>

It appears today, however, that the matter of the mummy's authenticity (and that of others of its kind) demands further, and comprehensive, study as, in addition to undeniably counterfeit elements (a paper imitation of a face and random bones inside), the artefact contains original ancient components as well – amulets embedded inside the bandages, discovered during radiological testing conducted as part of the Warsaw Mummy Project.<sup>13</sup>

The other mummy was brought from Egypt in 1826 by Jan Wężyk-Rudzki, a painter, sculptor and architect at one time affiliated with the Potocki family (as secretary to minister of education Stanisław Kostka-Potocki). It cannot be ruled out that its journey to Poland was made possible thanks to funds allotted earlier for the purpose by Kostka-Potocki himself.<sup>14</sup> The arrival of a new mummy in Poland made a tremendous stir in the press: "Monitor Warszawski" noted the event on 14 December 1826 (Thursday), "Kurier Litewski" on 15 December (Friday), and "Gazeta Warszawska" and "Gazeta Korespondenta Warszawskiego i Zagranicznego" on 16 December (Saturday). The reports differ only in the minor details: "Mr Józef [sic, actual name Jan – MD] Rudzki, former adjunct in the Government Education Commission, has returned to Europe from his travels to Egypt. His most recent letter bears a very fresh date (9 November) and was written at sea near the island of Elba on board the Swedish ship Anna. Among the many curiosities he has in his possession is a mummy found in the royal tombs in Thebes, one so well preserved that, as he declares, no other mummy in the museums of Vienna, Tuscany, Rome or Naples could rival its beauty. The mummy itself has not been opened, only the three cases in which it lies: one of the cases is made of sycamore. Mr Rudzki has not reported whether the mummy has a papyrus with the deceased's biography placed, as is customary, at the underarm or in the hand. The mummy is destined for a room at the Royal Warsaw University."

Both mummies were transferred to the newly established Museum of Fine Arts in 1866 and given the inventory numbers 767 and 768: "inv. no. 767: a mummy of a woman brought directly from Egypt with original wooden coffin and canvas wrappings applied inside the coffin, valued at 810 roubles," and "inv. no. 768: a mummy of a child, valued at 30 roubles." In addition to the mummies, among the items from Egypt in the museum inventory are "wood shavings found on the chest of the mummy described above in entry no. 1" and "a wooden tablet also found on the mummy's chest" (sadly, both objects have since been lost). Appearing in the inventory from the following year is also a mummy of an ibis.

The term "mummy of a woman" may have been misleading and could have resulted in an erroneous identification of the object in question, as had happened in earlier publications.<sup>15</sup> A breakthrough came with the publication of a book titled *Kultura artystyczna Uniwersytetu*

<sup>12</sup> *Spisok arkheologicheskikh i drugikh predmetam peredanyim iz Varshavskogo Muzeya Izyashchnykh Iskusstv v Varshavskuyu Glavnuyu Biblioteku. Predmety pereshedshiye v Muzei Izyashchnykh Iskusstv iz Zoologicheskogo i b. Gipsogo Kabineta*, pos. 61. NMW Inventory Department.

<sup>13</sup> Warsaw Mummy Project – a team of scientists at the University of Warsaw comprising: Kamila Braulińska (Egyptologist, zoologist), Marzena Ożarek-Szilke (Egyptologist, anthropologist) and Wojciech Ejsmond (Egyptologist), which since 2015 has been studying human and animal mummies at the National Museum in Warsaw.

<sup>14</sup> Piotr Jaworski, "Wiadomość o Janie Wężyku-Rudzkim (1792–1874), miłośniku egipskich starożytności. Z dziejów zbiorów starożytności Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego," *Światowit*, no. 3(43), Series A (2001), pp. 50–51.

<sup>15</sup> See n. 7.

*Warszawskiego. Ars et educatio* [The artistic culture of the University of Warsaw. *Ars et educatio*], for the purpose of which a string of inquiries in the available archival resources was carried out.<sup>16</sup> An engraving published in the periodical “Przyjaciel Dzieci” in 1862 finally made it possible to determine which of the mummies the term referred to (fig. 3), though there was still a great deal of disagreement as to the deceased’s gender.

Shown at the upper edge of the illustration appearing in the aforementioned magazine is the pseudo-mummy of a child and beneath it a mummy which according to the caption is of a woman, below which is a cartonnage (at left) and a coffin (at right) with a characteristic angular head with prominent ears. In the inventory cited above, the cartonnage is described as “canvas wrappings applied inside the coffin,” and the coffin as an “original wooden coffin.” Egyptological study of the mummy revealed that the cartonnage and coffin belonged not to a woman but a man – a priest of Horus and Thoth named Hor-Djehuti.<sup>17</sup> The man lived in the town of Djeme in the first century BC (modern-day Medinet Habu, on the west bank of the Nile opposite Luxor).<sup>18</sup> As was customary in his day, the priest was laid to rest in a beautifully decorated and gilded cartonnage (whose delicately modelled face could have been partly responsible for the false identification of the mummy’s gender), while the coffin is quite crude and somewhat comical in its striking contrast with the subtly decorated cartonnage (fig. 4). Meanwhile, as revealed by recent research conducted during the Warsaw Mummy Project, the mummy is in fact of a woman and was most likely placed in the cartonnage and coffin in Early Modern times by a crafty antiques dealer to increase the set’s value. What’s more, computerised tomography testing determined that the woman was pregnant.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the mummies in the inventory of the Museum of Fine Arts, the list of items in the Department of Archaeological Curiosities contains 142 archaeological artefacts (116 in 1866, 25 in 1867, and 1 in 1868), all of which were transferred in 1869 to Hipolit Skimborowicz’s Museum of Antiquities. Contained therein were some truly odd items, like “a hammock; booties of the daughter of King Jan III; a Sámi shirt; a Chinese parasol; a Tatar ritual utensil; a mythical basilisk that kills with its eyes, made from a raja fish; a quiver made of giant bamboo, resembling a long cylindrical canister made from one shoot of the plant containing 10 poison-tipped arrows, with a cap made later in Europe; a walking stick of the wild Americans composed of flint embedded in a split branch end; etc.”<sup>20</sup>

In 1864, there appear new mentions of other mummies being donated to the university (specifically to the Zoological Cabinet), brought to Poland by the counts Branicki. Though they did not end up in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts (never appearing in its inventory records), they went to the Museum of Antiquities. The press reported on the new donation. The periodical “Biblioteka Warszawska” writes about the fruits of the scientific expedition of Aleksander and Konstanty Branicki to Egypt in late 1863/early 1864 (along

<sup>16</sup> See n. 11.

<sup>17</sup> The National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 236805 MNW.

<sup>18</sup> Adam Henzel, “Zbiory egipskie w Muzeum Narodowym w Warszawie,” *Sztuka i Praca*, issue 25 (1929), pp. 19–23; Irena Pomorska, “Kartonaż z Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie nr inw. 17330,” *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, vol. 7 (1963), pp. 53–74; Marek Marciniak, “Cercueil anthropoïde de Horus-Thot au Musée National de Varsovie,” *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale*, vol. 62 (1964), pp. 87–101.

<sup>19</sup> Wojciech Ejsmond et al., “A Pregnant Ancient Egyptian Mummy from the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC” [online], *Journal of Archaeological Science*, vol. 132 (August 2021), <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0305440321000418?via%3Dihub>>, [retrieved: 18 November 2021].

<sup>20</sup> *Spisok arkhеologicheskikh i drugikh predmetam...*, op. cit.



with Professor Antoni Waga), which in addition to zoological specimens included "a beautiful mummy of an adult man, the bones of another mummy which disintegrated en route and will be used to build a skeleton; mummies of an ibis and a crocodile, and the wrappings of small crocodile mummies."<sup>21</sup> This had not been the first instance of the Branickis importing mummies. In 1860, Aleksander Branicki had no less than three coffins shipped from Alexandria via Odessa, one of them to Krakow, one to Vilnius and one presumably to Sucha.<sup>22</sup>

The Branickis' 1864 donation likely comprised two coffin. One was the coffin of a priest of Amenhotep from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (fig. 5),<sup>23</sup> while the other belonged to the priest Djed-khonsu-iu-ef-anekh living in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (fig. 6).<sup>24</sup> Studies and testing in 1988 revealed that the coffin of the priest of Amenhotep contained remnants of a mummy mixed with fragments of a cartonnage, a beaded mummy net, amulets, etc. – it is not known whether the contents' state was the result of 19<sup>th</sup>-century experiments with unwrapping mummies, of wartime damage, or of looting (in antiquity or later).<sup>25</sup> The coffin of Djed-khonsu-iu-ef-anekh was in terrible condition until its restoration in the 1990s – its lid damaged and its bottom consisting of broken planks. The contents did not survive, though perhaps the remains were immediately handed over to the Zoological Cabinet.

The next coffin appeared in Warsaw in 1883 as a gift of the 8<sup>th</sup> Ordynat of Zamość. As *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* weekly reported: "An Egyptian mummy in Warsaw. The Zoological Cabinet of the city's university has received a mummy imported from Egypt as a gift from Count Karol Zamojski of Paris. Taking place today was the opening of the wooden coffin and the unwrapping of the shrouded Egyptian. The coffin itself exhibits nothing curious, marked with typical colourful decoration and hieroglyphic inscriptions. More intriguing proved the discovery made upon the mummy's unwrapping from its extensive coverings. The body was evidently not embalmed, as was usually done by the Egyptians in an effort to preserve the body of the deceased. Inside the rib cage, along the entire spinal column are thick layers of balsam resin, which seem to indicate that the embalming in this particular case was done carelessly by pouring a large amount of varnish on the bones to halt their decay. The skull, preserved in quite good condition, is the typical kind of elongated Egyptian head. The coffin, along with the remains of the canvas wrappings, has been handed over to the local antiquities cabinet."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Biblioteka Warszawska*, vol. 3, issue 9 (September 1864), pp. 493–97.

<sup>22</sup> Cecylia Zofia Gałczyńska, "Pierwsze sarkofagi egipskie w Polsce. Z historii zbiorów zabytków antycznych," *Materiały archeologiczne*, vol. 39 (2013), pp. 241–63. Gałczyńska conjectures that a fragment of the lid of the coffin from the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty currently residing at the Museum in Bielsko-Biała may be from the collection in Sucha.

<sup>23</sup> The National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 236804 MNW. See Henzel, "Zbiory egipskie...", op. cit., pp. 24, 25; Elżbieta Dąbrowska-Smektała, "A Coffin of Amenhotep from National Museum in Warsaw (inv. no. 17329)," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, vol. 41, issue 2 (1980), pp. 15–18.

<sup>24</sup> The National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 236806 MNW. See Henzel, "Zbiory egipskie...", op. cit., p. 24; Andrzej Niwiński, *21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty Coffins from Thebes* (Mainz, 1988), p. 178, cat. no. 418; Monika Dolińska, "Sarkofag Dżed-Chonsu-juf-anch" in Dorota Ignatowicz, Zofia Wąsowska, Maciej Ciunowicz, eds, *O konserwacji sztuki słów kilka...*, (Warsaw, 1996), cat. no. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Andrzej Niwiński, "Excavations in a Late Period Priest's Mummy at the National Museum Warsaw. Preliminary Report" in Silvio Curto et al., eds, *Atti del VI Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia*, vol. 2 (Torino, 1993), pp. 353–61; id., "Some Unusual Amulets Found on the Late Period Mummies in Warsaw and Cracow" in *Egyptian Religion. The Last Thousand Years*, vol. 1 (Leuven, 1998), pp. 179–90.

<sup>26</sup> *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, no. 49 (8 December 1883), p. 377.

Up until as late as 2003,<sup>27</sup> it was assumed that this information concerned the last coffin to have joined the museum's collection as a deposit of the University of Warsaw – the coffin of Amon Tay-akhuth from the turn of the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>28</sup> By and large, the well-preserved coffin, with its multicoloured decorations, was as described in the press (fig. 7). The situation changed, however, with a 2019 analysis carried out by the Ukrainian Egyptologist Mykola Tarasenko, who turned his attention to the coffins of priests of Amon from the 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty found in 1891 in a tomb in Deir el-Bahari, called Bab el-Gusus. It was a discovery that made news across the globe due to its scale: found were 153 sets of coffins (101 double coffins – inner and outer, and 52 single coffins), 110 chests for shabti, 77 figures of Osiris, wooden stelae and myriad other objects contained in the tombs. Khedive Abbas II of Egypt came up with an idea to gift the findings of the excavations to 17 countries on good terms with Egypt. One of these countries was Russia, which received six coffins among other things.<sup>29</sup> Thanks to Tarasenko's research, we now know that one of the coffins from this group was shipped from Odessa to Warsaw in 1895, bearing the number six on the disbursal list.<sup>30</sup> Joining the coffin in Warsaw was an shabti chest and 9 shabtis (which today are sadly nowhere to be found in the NMW collection), while the other items were distributed between nine university museums in Russia.<sup>31</sup> Tarasenko's findings were confirmed by a note remaining in the coffin with an inscription reading *V Impieratorskij Varszavskij Univiersitet, No. 6 Sarkofag*, which up to that point was only considered to be a statement on the coffin being part of the University of Warsaw collection (which in the years 1869 – 1915 was known as the Imperial University of Warsaw).<sup>32</sup>

The fate of the coffin described in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* – the one brought to Warsaw by Count Karol Zamojski and given to the university's Cabinet of Antiquities – remains a mystery. Clearly, it was never transferred to Warsaw's National Museum along with the others.

All of the mummies and coffins – the child's pseudo-mummy, the coffin with the mummy of Hor-Djehuti in a cartonnage, the coffins of Amenhotep, Djed-khonsu-ia-ef-ankh and Tay-akhuth – as well as numerous other objects of which no information survives to this day, made their way to the National Museum in Warsaw after World War I. On request of the academic Senate on 31 October 1917, approved by the Department of Religious Faiths and Public Education, part of the collection of the Museum of Archaeology (i.e., the former Cabinet of Archaeology, enlarged in the following years with the addition of donations and purchases from Skimborowicz's Museum of Antiquities)<sup>33</sup> was put on deposit at the

<sup>27</sup> The National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 236807 MNW. See Dolińska, "Egipskie mumie i sarkofagi...." op. cit., pp. 453–54.

<sup>28</sup> Henzel, "Zbiory egipskie....," op. cit., pp. 20, 23–24; Elżbieta Dąbrowska-Smektała, "Coffin of Tay-akhuth, Chantress of Amun-Re," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, vol. 30, issue 2 (1966), pp. 7–17; Niwiński, *21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty Coffins from Thebes....*, op. cit., p. 178, cat. no. 421.

<sup>29</sup> Jadwiga Lipińska, "Bab el-Gusus. Cache-Tomb of the Priests & Priestesses of Amen," *KMT. A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt*, no. 4 (1993–1994), pp. 48–60; Rogério Sousa, Alessia Amenta, Kathlyn M. Cooney, "Introduction. Remembering the Tomb of the Priests of Amun" in Rogério Sousa, Alessia Amenta, Kathlyn M. Cooney, eds, *Bab el-Gusus in Context. Rediscovering the Tomb of the Priests of Amun* (Rome–Bristol, 2021), pp. 11–30.

<sup>30</sup> Mykola Tarasenko, *U poshukakh starozhitnostey z daru chediva. Davnoegipetski pamyatniki XXI dinastii w muzejach Ukrayini* (Kyiv, 2019) (*In Search of Antiquities from the Gift of Khedive. Ancient Egyptian Objects of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty in the Museums of Ukraine*, English summary, pp. 309–14).

<sup>31</sup> Tarasenko, *U poshukakh starozhitnostey z daru chediva....*, op. cit., pp. 43–45; id., "The Lot VI of Bab el-Gusus in the Light of the New Archive Documents" in *Bab el-Gusus in Context....*, op. cit., pp. 263–77.

<sup>32</sup> Dąbrowska-Smektała, "Coffin of Tay-akhuth....," op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> See n. 1.

National Museum of the Capital City of Warsaw.<sup>34</sup> The physical handing over took place in several batches in 1918 and 1919. The museum thus added 326 artefacts to its inventory (324 inventory numbers, two of them representing pairs of artefacts). Of these, 45 items (44 inventory numbers, one of them a pair) represent 82 Egyptian objects:<sup>35</sup> 8 mummies and coffins, 46 amulets, 20 figurines, 3 strings of beads and 5 five other objects (a pyramid stone, two corner bricks, papyrus scraps and a wooden tablet). The fact that the mummies and coffins number 8 pieces derives from the fact that two animal mummies are included and that Hor-Djehuti's mummy and cartonnage are counted separately.<sup>36</sup> Besides the coffins from the University of Warsaw, reaching the new post-World War I National Museum was yet another object of this kind: a cartonnage from the collection of Count Michał Tyszkiewicz, an avid traveller and collector<sup>37</sup> (fig. 8). This cartonnage, along with about 120 Egyptian items from the collection in Lahoyok, was relayed to the National Museum in 1919 via the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts, which had received the objects as a gift from Krystyna Brandt-Tyszkiewiczowa, the widow of the last lord of Lahoyok. Tyszkiewicz had travelled in Egypt in 1861–1862, hunting, sightseeing and buying artefacts from various sources as well as leading his own digs (some legal, some not). While in Luxor, he came into possession of a mummy “beautifully decorated on its case of glued canvas”<sup>38</sup> and furnished with an abundance of gems. That mummy and a number of other items (the gems unfortunately not among them) were sent to Lahoyok, the Tyszkiewicz family estate, and from there ultimately made their way to the National Museum in Warsaw, where the mummy was listed in the inventory as a “portrait-bearing case of an Egyptian mummy [of] the wife of a scribe from the temple of Horus and Isis named Baste Iret.” Severely damaged during the Second World War and accidentally re-entered into the inventory, the cartonnage was partly returned to its original splendour via conservation work done in 2001,<sup>39</sup> in which experts were also able to determine which collection it had come from and whose remains it held – those of Nehemes-Bastet, the wife of the scribe Harsies (Hor-sa-Iset), living in Thebes at the turn of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>40</sup>

Mummies, coffins and cartonnages like those that filled 18<sup>th</sup>-century *cabinets de curiosités* also wound up in Polish collections in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The difference is that, by then, cropping up around the world were many excellent and diverse collections which were built up conscientiously and whose treasures were studied on an ongoing basis. In Poland, however, it was only after the First World War that Egyptian artefacts went from being *curiosités* to objects of art and scholarly interest, eventually becoming one of the greatest assets in the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw. By way of conclusion, it is worthwhile to recall the words

<sup>34</sup> Transcript at NMW Inventory Department.

<sup>35</sup> Tomasz Mikocki, Zbigniew E. Szafranski, “Uniwersyteckie zbiory starożytności” in Jerzy Kolendo, ed., *Antyk na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim* (Warsaw, 1993), pp. 147–70. The catalogue contains minor discrepancies resulting from the lack of access to complete, still undiscovered then, documentation.

<sup>36</sup> The correct identification of the objects in this group, separated and mixed up by a succession of military upheavals, was reconstructed only in 2003, see n. 7.

<sup>37</sup> Monika Dolińska, “Looking for Baste Iret. The Cartonnage from the Collection of Michał Tyszkiewicz,” *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie*, vol. 42, nos. 1–4 (2001(2006)), pp. 26–41.

<sup>38</sup> *Egipt zapomniany, czyli Michała hr. Tyszkiewicza Dziennik podróży do Egiptu i Nubii (1861–1862)*, Andrzej Niwiński, ed. (Warsaw, 1994), pp. 245–47.

<sup>39</sup> The National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 238435 MNW.

<sup>40</sup> Dolińska, “Looking for Baste Iret...,” op. cit., p. 28.



of the famous Egyptologist Georges Legrain, who in his 1894 foreword to an overview of the collection of Henri Hoffmann wrote: “Antiquity enthusiasts all take the same road. Initially, they limit their search to no more than masterpieces of Roman and Greek art, deeply convinced that next to such wondrous works nothing else can enthrall them. As the years go by, however, their tastes become more refined and they unwittingly turn to the art of Egypt.”<sup>41</sup>

Translated by Szymon Włoch

<sup>41</sup> Georges Legrain, *Collections H. Hoffmann. Catalogue des antiquités égyptiennes* (Paris, 1894), p. V. [Translated for the purpose of this article by Szymon Włoch].