

## THE MUMMY-COVER FROM BAB EL-GASUS AT THE *BOHUSLÄNS* MUSEUM IN UDDEVALLA

The mummy-cover kept at the *Bohusläns Museum* in Uddevalla was bought by Carl Christiansson, in 1910, at premises of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo itself. This mummy-cover belonged to an anonymous male burial originally found the Tomb of the Priests of Amun (Bab el-Gasus), in 1891. This was the largest undisturbed tomb ever found in Egypt, releasing 153 burials. Perhaps for this reason, in 1893, the Egyptian authorities decided to offer a substantial part of the find to other countries, including Sweden. Objects from this find are currently kept in Stockholm, Uppsala and Oslo. This object, however, was sold in Cairo and, thanks to Carl Christiansson, it is one of the few objects whose purchase is well documented.

The object itself is dated from the mid-21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, a period that witness to economic crisis and social turmoil. It shows an elaborate program illustrating the nightly journey of the sun god through the netherworld. The mummy-cover would be positioned inside the coffin, protecting the mummy. Despite a few damages (this was in fact the reason why it was sold), the quality of the object is very good, showing a gleaming varnish coating, intended to provide the deceased with sun light. Unfortunately, the name of the deceased was erased in Antiquity making the identification of the original burial very difficult to achieve. However, it is relatively safe to assume that the corresponding coffin(s) are still kept in Cairo.

It is not uncommon to find anonymous coffins in Bab el-Gasus. This practice is normally associated with the reuse of coffins, which strongly suggests that the actual user of the coffin was not the men for which it was first prepared.

Translation of the main inscriptions.

### *Inscription 1* (proper right side)

Offering that the king gives to Osiris the foremost of the West, Uennefer, the sovereign of the living, the great god, who is in Abydos, the great one, who rises in his *atef*-crown, so that he may give invocations-offerings in bread and bear, meat and fowl, and all things good and neat to the deceased, the servant of the god (...)

### *Inscription 2* (proper left side)

Offering that the king gives to Re-Horakhty-Atum, the foremost of the Great Temple, who's *ba* is in heaven, over the horizon, he illuminates the Two Lands, in the opening of his disk, so that he allows his *ba* to go forth to see the Aten, to the deceased, the servant of Amun, the king of the gods (...)

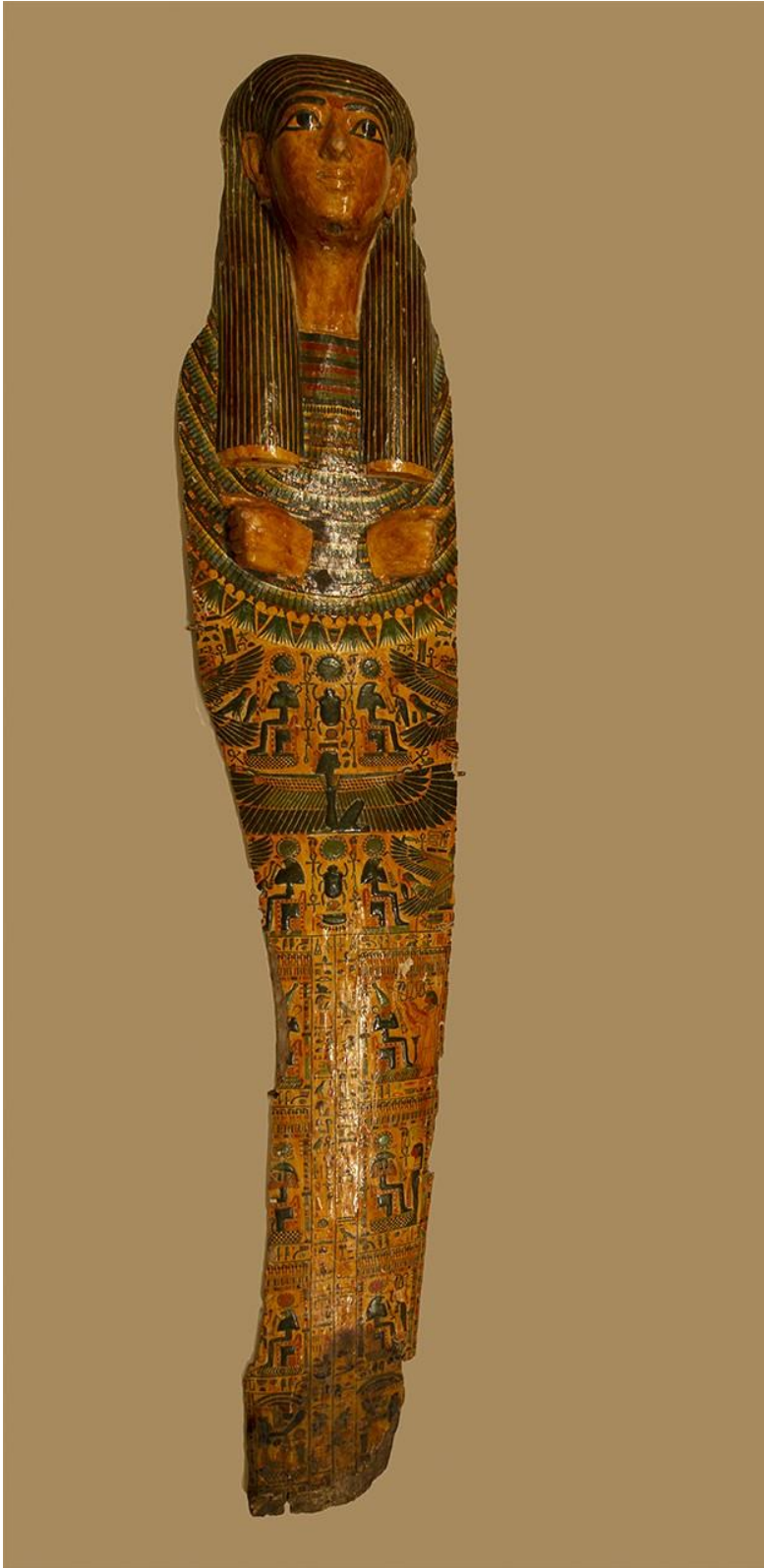


Fig. 1: Mummy-cover



Fig. 2: Mummy-cover  
Headboard and upper section





Fig. 3: Mummy-cover  
Central panel



Fig. 4: Mummy-cover  
Lower section



Fig. 5: Mummy-cover  
Footend





Fig. 6: Mummy-cover  
Inscriptions

U. M., 575  
EVEN PALACE HOTEL  
Cairo. den 19 Feb. 1910.  
Herr Lousé  
Alban Thorburn  
Huddovalla.  
EMOTI 28 FEB. 1910  
RESEVI 7/31910  
EXPEDI

Jag hoppas Huddovalla Museum  
vill emottaga en liten gåfva  
som jag afsänder härifrån  
och som jag hoppas framkomma  
i godt skick.  
Lådan är ej tung men  
den är omkring 2 meters lång.  
Det är ett lock af en

Sarkofag målad i olje färg  
omkring 1200 år för Kristus.  
Som den var något sönderslagen  
så föndet gjordes kunde jag af  
National museet här köpa  
densamma för den femfirdeliga  
lådan summan af 400 Piasters.  
Hade den varit hel så  
hade Museet behållit den.  
Den är af en Prins af  
Amor, fannet i Dair el Bahari  
(Thebes) och jag innesluter  
härmed en öfersättning

af hieroglyfer (som stå i  
Mittan af locket). Öfersättningen  
är på Franska men om  
den kunde också sättas på  
Svenska så blifve det kanske  
mera af intresse för läsokande.  
Dessa Sarkofager äro på  
Museet här uppställda vertikalt  
inom glasskäp.  
Jag har betäckt paketet od.  
och hoppas att det ej blir  
någon tull för sådana varor  
i Sverige. National Museet  
här sätter rätt högt utse på  
lådan och det här ej brytas

får än vid fränkomsten till  
Huddovalla. Jag innesluter  
ochta en vy af Dair el Bahari  
där Sarkofager äro funna  
och ett fotografi af öfre delen  
af 3 sarkofager af samma  
fynd (Museum, Cairo) som också  
äro af försänter från d. 21 dynasti.  
Kanske fotografierna kunde  
också vara af intresse?  
Med vänliga hälsningar  
Ch. Christiansson

Fig. : Letter by Carl Christiansson.





Ligne de droite :

Que l'offrande soit donnée par Ptâ-Harmakhtis, Koum  
dans la grande demeure (Héliopolis), âme du ciel au  
milieu de l'horizon, illuminant les deux terres de ses  
rayons; qu'il donne que sorte mon âme pour voir  
disque solaire, au défunt divin père d'Amon, ciseleur...

Ligne de gauche

Que l'offrande soit donnée par Osiris dans l'Occident, par  
Nounefer roi des vivants, dieu grand dans Abydos,  
le grand qui apparaît avec ses couronne; qu'il donne  
que parviennent à la voie les aliments, pains, liquides,  
boeuf, oies, toutes les choses bonnes et pures, pour le  
defunt, divin père d'Amon, ciseleur du temple d'Amon...

Le nom a disparu

Courecle d'un cerneil de la XXI<sup>e</sup> dynastie, provenant  
de la cachette des prêtres d'Amon à Deir el Bahari.



ofresattung of hieroglyphome

Fig. : Translation of the inscriptions provided by the Museum.

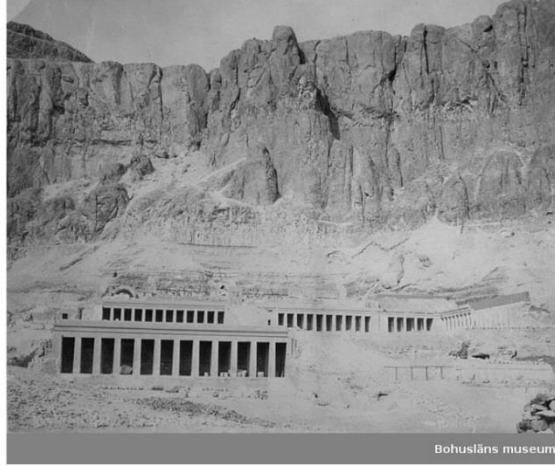


Fig. : Photos sent by Carl Christiansson showing mummy-covers from Bab el-Gasus displayed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (left) and the archaeological site (right)



Fig. : Photos of Carl Christiansson in his early years (left) and about the age when he bought the object to the Museum (right)

## **Bibliography**

Rogério Sousa (2017) – *Burial assemblages from Bab el-Gasus in the Geographical Society of Lisbon*. Turnhout: Brepols

Sousa, Rogério (2019) – *Gilded Flesh: Coffins and afterlife in Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.