

# Akhet Neheh

Studies in Honour of Willem Hovestreydt  
on Occasion of His 75th Birthday

edited by

Anke Weber, Martina Grünhagen,  
Lea Rees, and Jan Moje



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cover image: kneeling fecundity figures bearing offerings, Medinet Habu temple, 2016 © Anke Weber.

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## PREFACE

The present volume is a contribution to our colleague and friend Willem Hovestreydt on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday at the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2020. For so many years he spent an enormous amount of time to support the field of Egyptology as one of the editors of the renowned *Annual Egyptological Bibliography* (AEB)/ *Online Egyptological Bibliography* (OEB) and as a well-respected member of our discipline. Therefore, we would like to honour Willem's extraordinary work which resulted in numerous contributions to one of the most frequently used bibliographies in Egyptology and his unconditional commitment to *The Ramesses III (KV 11) Publication and Conservation Project*. Not only was he responsible for the compilation and editing of the AEB as well as organising its transition from a written book to the digital OEB database, but also he found time to carry out research into different Egyptological matters. His main interests concern much varied topics like iconography, treasuries, the god Shepsi, research history, and the tomb of Ramesses III in the Valley of the Kings. In particular, his work in the framework of *The KV 11-Project* led to a number of articles and in-depth studies: His scientific research into the decoration program of the tomb and its history of exploration, paired with his practical work in photogrammetry and digital drawings, are just some of his contributions to this project and make him an invaluable member of our team. Willem is not only an excellent teacher for his students and a knowledgeable and helpful colleague to Egyptologists but also a dear friend to us. We would like to thank him for his friendship, his expertise, and his important contributions to the field of Egyptology. We are looking forward to continuing our archaeological fieldwork, scientific papers, and numerous evening discussions with him.

We are indebted to all participants of this *Festschrift* for their contributions to honour Willem, and to Nelleke Hovestreydt for providing photos of the jubilarian in private and academic life. We are also grateful for the support of the reviewers who were working with the contributors on their papers. Special thanks go to the *Netherlands Institute for the Near East* for their outreach grant, allowing us to present the *Festschrift* to Willem. Finally, we would like to thank Wolfram Grajetzki for publishing this volume in his publishing house, and for the work he put into editing and laying out it.

### *The Editors*

Anke Weber  
(Berlin / Luxor)

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(Leipzig)

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Jan Moje  
(Berlin)

*With thanks for their support:*



The Ramesses III (KV 11)  
Publication and Conservation Project



The Netherlands Institute  
for the Near East

THE SARCOPHAGUS ENSEMBLE OF RAMESSES III FROM KV 11:  
NEW INSIGHTS FROM OLD DOCUMENTS AND RECENT FINDS

LEA REES AND HELEN STRUDWICK

*Contributing an article to this Festschrift for Willem Hovestreydt is an honour as well as a pleasure for me. After spending many hours of studying the manuscripts of 19<sup>th</sup> century travellers in the archives of the British Library, the Bodleian Library and the Griffith Institute together for our work in The Ramesses III (KV 11) Publication and Conservation Project, I hope he will enjoy this contribution concerning the research history of the sarcophagus ensemble from KV 11. I would like to thank Willem for our long, interesting conversations and discussions during our research trip to the British archives, our workshops in Berlin, and our fieldwork in Luxor.*

Lea Rees

*It was in the 1990s that I first met Willem, when he was active in the field of computers and Egyptology. For a while, our paths crossed only occasionally, usually in connection with the 'Informatique et Égyptologie' working group, and it was a great pleasure to reconnect with him on The Ramesses III (KV 11) Publication and Conservation Project, and to share conversations, amongst other things, about the use of photogrammetry within fieldwork. I am delighted to have the opportunity of joining Lea in this contribution to his Festschrift.*

Helen Strudwick

## I. Introduction

The Valley of the Kings in Western Thebes is one of the most famous and intensively explored archaeological sites of Egypt, where archaeological investigations and excavations have been carried out since nearly three centuries. Nevertheless, it is astonishing how little information is published on some tombs and their burial equipment – and how contradictory accounts of their research history are. Concerning its early history of exploration, the tomb of Ramesses III is no exception.<sup>1</sup> Today, the sarcophagus lid belonging to Ramesses III is housed in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (Inv. No. E.1.1823) (fig. 1), while the coffer is displayed in the Musée du Louvre in Paris (Inv. No. D1) (fig. 2). How the objects actually got there seems to be a matter of confusion. This paper therefore explores the history of the matter, and adds some new important information from recent fieldwork carried out in KV 11, the tomb of Ramesses III.<sup>2</sup>

## II. History of Exploration

Egyptological literature long offered a variety of contrasting versions of who removed the sarcophagus and its lid from the tomb, who broke the lid and when, or if it was even retrieved from the tomb of Ramesses III (KV 11).<sup>3</sup> The solution of this problem requires a close reading of the works of the early travellers, the

<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the tomb's history of exploration, see WEBER, *JEA* 104.1 (2019), 60-2 as well as *PM* I.2., 518-27.

<sup>2</sup> This article is based on research carried out in the framework of *The Ramesses III (KV 11) Publication and Conservation Project*. We would like to thank the whole team for their discussion of this topic during our workshops and in long e-mail conversations. Special thanks go to Anke Weber, the director of this project, and to Willem Hovestreydt for their support. For more information about our work visit <https://www.ramesSES-iii-project.com/> <accessed 04.07.2020>. We would also like to express our thanks to the reviewer of this paper and his or her many helpful suggestions.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, CLAYTON, in STARKEY, STARKEY (eds.), *Travellers in Egypt*, 43; HUME, *Belzoni*, 73-5; MANLEY, *RÉE*,



Fig.1. Sarcophagus lid of Ramesses III in the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge, Inv. No. E.1.1823 (© The Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge, University of Cambridge).



Fig.2. Sarcophagus box of Ramesses III in the Musée du Louvre in Paris, Inv. No. D1 (© Helen Strudwick).

interpretation of which is hampered by the fact that hieroglyphs had not yet been deciphered at the time, making it often difficult to relate a description to a certain object without doubt. Moreover, personal accounts cannot be taken for granted as they often tend to emphasise the writer's own achievements while minimising those of others – and are often influenced by sympathy or antipathy towards the people involved. Nevertheless, these old documents offer important insights on the turbulent history of exploration concerning the renowned sarcophagus of Ramesses III and its lid.

### II.1. James Bruce

KV 11 has often been called 'Bruce's tomb' since travel writer James Bruce (1730-1794) visited the tomb in 1769 (fig. 3).<sup>4</sup> He did not, however, discover the tomb, which had already been lying open for a long time (maybe even since Graeco-Roman times), and had probably been entered previously by locals.<sup>5</sup> Yet Bruce described the tomb in detail and was fascinated by the beauty of its reliefs and paintings, especially the scene of the two harpists in chamber Cd.<sup>6</sup> He may also possibly be considered the first to mention the sarcophagus of Ramesses III in his *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*.

Henry Salt, 89-99, 137-8, 150-3, 198-203; MAYES, *The Great Belzoni*, 119, 132-5, 306, n. 2; MOJSOV, in CLINE, O'CONNOR (eds.), *Ramesses III*, 277; REEVES, WILKINSON, *The Complete Valley of the Kings*, 53, 56; ROMER, *Valley of the Kings*, 52-3; STRUDWICK, in STRUDWICK, DAWSON (eds.), *Death on the Nile*, 13-4; THOMAS, *The Royal Necropolis of Thebes*, 127; WILSON, in STARKEY, EL-KHOLY (eds.), *Egypt Through the Eyes of Travellers*, 49-50.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. REEVES, WILKINSON, *The Complete Valley of the Kings*, 53, 56.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 53, 159. Greek graffiti from KV 11, as well as from the Islamic Middle Ages, suggest that the tomb must have been accessible multiple times in history, or continuously.

<sup>6</sup> The frequently copied scene of the two harpists also led to the tomb's denotation as 'Harper's tomb'. Denominations of the rooms in KV 11 in this article follow the numbering system developed by Jan Moje for the KV 11-Project, based on the data of the Theban Mapping Project.

Describing the first tomb he entered in the Valley of the Kings, Bruce mentions ‘the prodigious sarcophagus [...]. It is sixteen feet high, ten long, and six broad, of one piece of red granite; and, as such, is, I suppose, the finest vase in the world. Its cover is still upon it, (broken on one side,) and it has a figure in relief on the outside.’<sup>7</sup> Since this passage is directly followed by the description of what is certainly the tomb of Rameses III, this would at first sight seem to be a description of the sarcophagus in that tomb.

However, the sarcophagus of Rameses III is by no means as high as Bruce (even if exaggeratingly or rounding-up) states. Therefore, Aidan Dodson suggests that Bruce’s description relates to the sarcophagus of a different pharaoh: that of Rameses IV (KV 2), which not only has a sarcophagus with a total height for the coffer and lid of *c.* 3.00 m (*c.* 10 ft); that of Rameses III would have been only around 2.20 m [*c.* 7.2 ft] high), but also one with a lid that has remained in place since antiquity, with the side of the coffer, and not the lid, being severely damaged.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the dimensions given by Bruce are still very much overestimated (16 ft ~ 4.88 m), despite the fact that the sarcophagus of Rameses IV is the most massive of all the cartouche-shaped royal sarcophagi from the Ramesside period.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Bruce describes just two sentences later in the text that the ‘inclined passage’ (probably referring to corridor B) of KV 11 measures 20 ft (*c.* 6.00 m) in width, whereas in reality it measures only 2.70 m. His estimate fits to neither width or length of any of the tomb’s corridors. Based only on Bruce’s measurements, it seems to be impossible to judge whose sarcophagus he is referring to in this passage, since he even states himself: ‘I speak only by guess, for I did not measure.’<sup>10</sup>

More importantly, it is unclear whether Bruce reached the sarcophagus chamber of KV 11, since his account ends after describing the ten small chambers. Whereas Richard Pococke in 1737/1738 only found the front part of the tomb to be accessible, Napoleon’s scholars in 1799 managed to enter the rear chambers of KV 11.<sup>11</sup> When exactly the access to the sarcophagus hall was cleared, is undocumented.

As Willem Hovestreydt pointed out, KV 11 was most probably the last of the seven tombs Bruce claims to have entered, since he recounts how he had to find his way back through the wadi in the middle of the night and fight some ‘bandits’ on the way, after his guides left him when he was still copying some scenes.<sup>12</sup> The first tomb he entered, therefore, may quite likely have been KV 2, which he almost certainly visited, although he does not describe it any further.<sup>13</sup> It seems most likely that Bruce later confused the many tombs he visited and conflated them in retrospect when writing up his recollections *c.* 20 years after his visit.<sup>14</sup>



Fig.3. James Bruce. Detail of an engraving by S. Freeman from a painting by D. Martin, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Maryland (PD, <https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/catalog/nlm:nlmuid-101411117-img> <accessed 21.07.2020>).

<sup>7</sup> BRUCE, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, 126.

<sup>8</sup> DODSON, *Rameses III*, 127-8. For the sarcophagus of Rameses IV, see HORNING, *Zwei Ramessidische Königsgräber*, 120-7, pl. 88-93.

<sup>9</sup> This sarcophagus type is first attested for Merenptah, followed by Seti II, and was developed further by adding the two goddesses Isis and Nephthys as well as protective figures for king Siptah, Tawosret/Sethnakhte, Rameses III and Rameses IV. A comparative typological and iconographical study of this type is in preparation by the Rameses III (KV 11) Publication and Conservation Project.

<sup>10</sup> BRUCE, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, 126.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. WEBER, *JEA* 104.1 (2019), 60.

<sup>12</sup> W. Hovestreydt, personal communication. Bruce says to have visited seven tombs on one day ‘with a great deal of fatigue’: BRUCE, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, 125. His adventures at night he describes on pp. 134-6.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. REEVES, WILKINSON, *The Complete Valley of the Kings*, 53, although not explicitly mentioned in HORNING, *Zwei Ramessidische Königsgräber*, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Similarly, his drawings of the harpists in KV 11 can hardly be regarded as actual copies but rather as creative interpretations of the scenes. Later traveller William George Browne, who visited KV 11 in 1792, therefore suggests that

This detail in the history of exploration of the tomb, however, has a big impact on the question about whether the sarcophagus lid of Ramesses III was still placed on its coffer during the times of Bruce's visit, or not. The lid was certainly no longer in place at the end of the century (see below, ch. II.2.), and in 1819 Giovanni Belzoni described the lid as now buried in debris (see below, ch. II.3.). Following Aidan Dodson's theory and factoring in that the sarcophagus chamber may still have been inaccessible, it has to be assumed that the lid was covered in debris for centuries until Belzoni rediscovered it.<sup>15</sup> If we believe that Bruce may have managed to reach the sarcophagus of Ramesses III, it has to be concluded that the lid was levered off the sarcophagus box after Bruce's departure in 1769 and before the French expedition arrived at the turn of the century.<sup>16</sup>

## II.2. The *Savants* of Napoleon's Expedition to Egypt

The scientists who accompanied the French army during Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt during 1798-1801 visited KV 11 in 1799. Louis Costaz (1767-1842) describes the sarcophagus of Ramesses III in the *Description de l'Égypte* as a rather massive piece in a gloomy, eerie atmosphere: 'imaginez une grande cuve oblongue de granit rose de Syène, ornée en dehors et en dedans d'hieroglyphes et de peintures: ses dimensions sont telles, qu'un homme debout dans l'intérieur est à peine aperçu de ceux qui sont au dehors; un coup de marteau le fait résonner à la manière des cloches, et en tire des sons que les parois de la grotte et ses longues voûtes répètent sur un ton lugubre.'<sup>17</sup> Here it is noted that the lid of the sarcophagus is missing: 'Ce sarcophage a dû être fermé autrefois par un couvercle qui a disparu, et dont il ne reste pas un seul fragment.'<sup>18</sup> Relating to its cartouche-shaped coffer, Costaz is able to draw a parallel to the sarcophagus lid of Ramesses IV in KV 2: 'Nous pouvons juger de sa forme d'après un couvercle qui existe dans la seconde catacombe de l'ouest; il est de la même matière de la cuve, creusé en dedans, et taillé de manière que ses bords peuvent s'ajuster exactement sur ceux de la cuve: sa partie supérieure est ornée d'une figure couchée, semblable à une momie, sculptée avec un relief si fort qu'on la croirait détachée. Ce couvercle formait une masse considérable et difficile à déplacer; ce qui donnait une assurance de plus que le mort ne serait pas troublé dans son dernier asile.'<sup>19</sup> In this way, he provides us with the first description of the type of cartouche-shaped sarcophagi with Ra-Osiris (respectively Deba-Demedj) as a central figure which were used by the Ramesside kings exclusively.<sup>20</sup>

## II.3. Giovanni Battista Belzoni

The person most frequently connected with the sarcophagus attributed to Ramesses III is Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778-1823), the Italian circus strongman, traveller and adventurer who used his physical strength and his engineering skills to gather colossal pieces of Egyptian antiquities (fig. 4). Belzoni's *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries in Egypt and Nubia* is certainly influenced by his later dispute with Henry Salt, his primary sponsor.<sup>21</sup> Salt (1780-1827) was the British Consul-General in Cairo, who commissioned Belzoni to collect Egyptian antiquities including the transport of the colossal head of Ramesses II from Karnak temple to England.<sup>22</sup> Their collaboration, however, ceased due to disagreements regarding the character of Belzoni's employment, his salary and the ownership of certain objects collected by him. In his *Narrative*,

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Bruce may have produced them later 'from memory': BROWNE, *Travels in Africa, Egypt, and Syria*, 137.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. DODSON, *Rameses III*, 128.

<sup>16</sup> This possibility is also discussed but dismissed in DODSON, *Rameses III*, 127-8. Hume's theory, that the savants and soldiers of Napoleon's expedition might have dumped the lid on the floor, also has to be refused. Cf. HUME, *Belzoni*, 75.

<sup>17</sup> COSTAZ, in COMMISSION DES SCIENCES ET DES ARTS (eds.), *Description de l'Égypte*, vol. III, 196.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* Mojsov's suggestion that Belzoni removed the lid before the French commission entered the tomb is chronologically impossible. Cf. MOJSOV, in CLINE, O'CONNOR (eds.), *Rameses III*, 277.

<sup>19</sup> COSTAZ, in COMMISSION DES SCIENCES ET DES ARTS (eds.), *Description de l'Égypte*, vol. III, 196.

<sup>20</sup> The identification of the central figure as Deba-Demedj, a temporarily unified manifestation of Ra and Osiris, is based on research by Anke Weber.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. BELZONI, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries*. Concerning the dispute between Salt and Belzoni, see the biographies by MANLEY, RÉE, *Henry Salt*, 89-99, 137-8, 150-3, 198-203 and MAYES, *The Great Belzoni*, 116-8, 162-3, 190-2, 207-8.

<sup>22</sup> The famous colossal head now forms a centrepiece of the British Museum's Egyptian collection (Inv. No. EA 19).

Belzoni jumps from one anecdote to another and thus caused much confusion concerning the tombs and the sarcophagi he mentions.<sup>23</sup>

In particular, a sarcophagus lid Belzoni describes as part of his first journey has often been confused with the one of Ramesses III.<sup>24</sup> This sarcophagus lid is mentioned in an encounter with Bernardino Drovetti (1776-1852), Salt's rival in the colonial competition of accumulating Egyptian antiquities. Belzoni writes, 'He then made me a present of a granite cover of a sarcophagus, which the Arabs had discovered in one of the tombs. He said that he had employed several of them for many days to take it out for himself, but they could not succeed; so that, if I could take it out, I was welcome to it. I thanked him for his present, and proceeded on my voyage.'<sup>25</sup> After his arrival in Luxor, Belzoni states: 'according to my wish, some Arabs came to conduct me to the cave, where the sarcophagus was which Mr. Drouetti had attempted to take out [...]. I was conducted into one of those holes, that are scattered about the mountains of Gournou, so celebrated for the quantities of mummies they contain.'<sup>26</sup> Belzoni enters, accompanied by two locals and an interpreter, 'through a cavity in the rock, which extended a considerable length in the mountain, sometimes pretty high, sometimes very narrow, and without any regularity.

In some passages we were obliged to creep on the ground, like crocodiles.'<sup>27</sup> This description does not fit at all with the tomb of Ramesses III, even if it was very much filled with rubble. Belzoni portrays a labyrinth of ascending and descending passages and a large space into which many cavities opened, all of them being burial places, since they continually walk over skulls and bones.<sup>28</sup> Pointing to a small aperture, one of the local guides says that this is the place where the sarcophagus lies, but the passage is too tight for Belzoni to enter. The following events are rather dramatic: Belzoni and one of the guides stay behind, while another local and the interpreter proceed through the aperture, where the local falls into a deep hole, extinguishing both their lights. Luckily, the interpreter finds his way out and gets help to save the other man, who is badly injured for the rest of his life.<sup>29</sup> In the meantime, Belzoni and the other guide desperately try to find their way out, getting lost a number of times, in constant fear that their torches would extinguish. Finally, they find a different exit (or entrance), which is larger and closer to the sarcophagus they saw underground. Belzoni concludes that the locals tricked him by showing him a more complicated entrance and expected money for finding the new, more convenient way in.

Given this detail, it seems remarkable that so many later authors persisted in identifying 'the Drovetti lid' with that of Ramesses III, as the arrangements can in no way be equated with accessing the burial chamber of KV 11, with suggestions ranging from the party entering through the tomb of Amenmesse, KV 10, with which

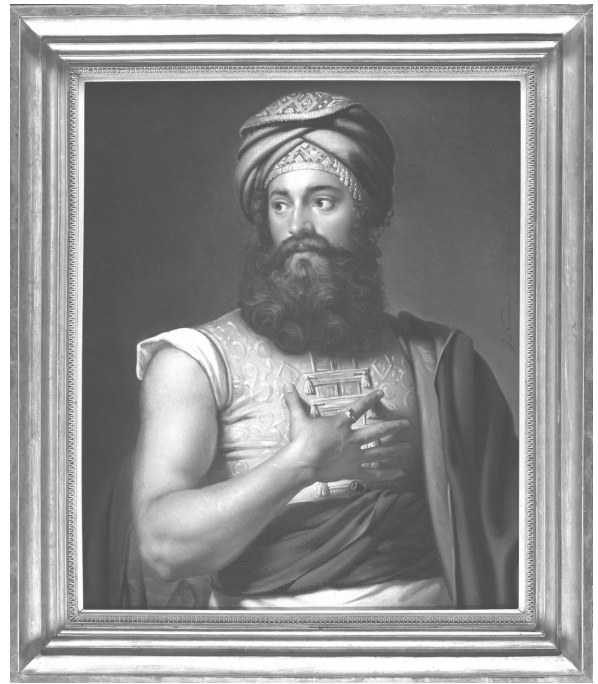


Fig. 4. Giovanni Battista Belzoni. Portrait by Jan Adam Kruseman from 1824, The Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge (© The Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge, University of Cambridge).

<sup>23</sup> This problem has already been discussed by BICKERSTAFFE, *Ancient Egypt* 6.6/36 (2006), 22-30, whom we would like to thank for sharing some of his published and even unpublished work with us, and whose work has been fundamental in unravelling the confusion in Belzoni's accounts of the discovery of the lid.

<sup>24</sup> As found in Mayes, *The Great Belzoni*, 119, 132-5, 306, n. 2; WILSON, in STARKEY, EL-KHOLY (eds.), *Egypt Through the Eyes of Travellers*, 49-50; CLAYTON, in STARKEY, STARKEY (eds.), *Travellers in Egypt*, 43. The only publications indicating that there must have been a confusion are THOMAS, *The Royal Necropolis of Thebes*, 127; BICKERSTAFFE, *Ancient Egypt* 6.6/36 (2006), 22-30; HUME, *Belzoni*, 73-5.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. BELZONI, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries*, 30.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 51-2.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 52-4.

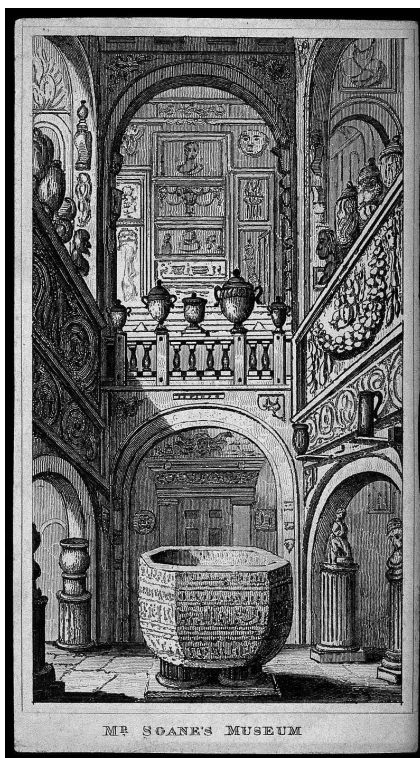


Fig. 5. Engraving showing the sarcophagus of Seti I in Sir John Soane's Museum (CC BY Wellcome Collection: <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/z576fdnv> <accessed 09.07.2020>).

KV 11 collides in chamber D1a (but the description of an entrance as a cave or cavity and of the following chambers as a labyrinth do not correspond to the interiors of KV 10 or KV 11) or that the Ramesses III lid had somehow been removed from KV 11 between 1798 and 1818 to a cache, somewhere in the Theban hills.<sup>30</sup> All of what is described above happened during Belzoni's first journey (June 1815-January 1817) and it is not until his second journey (February 1817-December 1817) that he comes back to retrieve the same lid.<sup>31</sup> Here, he talks about transporting 'the cover of the sarcophagus of which so much was said on my first visit'<sup>32</sup> together with other monuments on a boat up the Nile. 'It cost much trouble, as may be supposed, to remove a heavy piece of granite from those abysses, through a place scarcely high enough to allow a man to sit on the ground, up an uneven and craggy ascend'<sup>33</sup>, he recalls. Again, this does not reflect the situation of KV 11.

As recognised by Dylan Bickerstaffe,<sup>34</sup> the 'Drovetti' lid was actually a piece that came to the British Museum as part of the sale of Salt's first collection.<sup>35</sup> Bickerstaffe plausibly identifies it with the anthropoid sarcophagus lid of Setau, a 19th Dynasty viceroy of Kush (Inv. No. EA78), whose tomb is in Dra 'Abu el-Naga (TT 288-289).<sup>36</sup> Both the location and the complex form of the substructure of the tomb match Belzoni's description better,<sup>37</sup> although the latter seems to have been somewhat exaggerated for effect.<sup>38</sup>

Another passage in Belzoni's *Narrative* that has been misconstrued as relating to the sarcophagus of Ramesses III is the following:<sup>39</sup> 'I took out the celebrated sarcophagus, which gave me something to do (in consequence of its being so very slender and thin), lest it might break at the smallest touch of any thing: however, it was safely got

out of the tomb and put in a strong case. The valley it had to pass to reach the Nile is rather uneven for more than two miles, and one mile of good soft sand and small pebbles. I had it conveyed on rollers all the way, and safely put on board.'<sup>40</sup> It is clear, however, that Belzoni describes the fragile alabaster sarcophagus of Seti I here, especially since the lid of Ramesses III is made of granite and could scarcely be described as slender and thin. Belzoni discovered the tomb of Seti I (KV 17) in October 1817 during his first journey. It was not until his third journey (April 1818-February 1819) that he recovered Seti's sarcophagus from the tomb and shipped it to Alexandria. Belzoni organised an exhibition of his finds in the Egyptian Hall in London in 1821, which made the alabaster sarcophagus famous before it even arrived there.<sup>41</sup> It was later bought by Sir John Soane and is now exhibited in his private house that has been turned into a museum (Inv. No. M470) (fig. 5).<sup>42</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Cf. WILSON, in STARKEY, EL-KHOLY (eds.), *Egypt Through the Eyes of Travellers*, 45-56 and MAYES, *The Great Belzoni*, 132-5, 306, n. 2. Mayes realises that this theory is unlikely but cannot find another explanation, following almost all other writers in assuming that Belzoni is talking here about the sarcophagus lid of Ramesses III.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. BELZONI, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries*, 54.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 184-5.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. BICKERSTAFFE, *Ancient Egypt* 6.6/36 (2006), 29; followed by HUME, *Belzoni*, 74-5.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. MANLEY, RÉE, *Henry Salt*, 329-32, Appendix A. Salt's second collection was bought by the King of France and went into the Musée du Louvre in Paris.

<sup>36</sup> This object is listed as 'Found by Drovetti and given to Salt' in MANLEY, RÉE, *Henry Salt*, 332, Appendix A.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *PM I.1*, 369-72.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. BICKERSTAFFE, *Ancient Egypt* 6.6/36 (2006), 29.

<sup>39</sup> A passage probably referred to by ROMER, *Valley of the Kings*, 53.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. BELZONI, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries*, 372.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. BICKERSTAFFE, *Ancient Egypt* 6.6/36 (2006), 28-9.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. MORKOT, *ASTENE Bulletin* 69 (Autumn 2016), 22-3. More information on Sir John Soane's Museum and the sarcophagus of Seti I can be found online: <https://www.soane.org/> <accessed 09.07.2020>.

Along with the shipment of the sarcophagus of Seti I, Belzoni mentions ‘the cover of another sarcophagus’, whose description finally fits that of Ramesses III: ‘It had been thrown from its sarcophagus when it was forced open, and being reversed it remained buried by the stones, and unnoticed by any visitor. I cleared off all the stones, and on examination of the under part, found that it was a fine figure, larger than life, in alto relievo, and, except the foot, all the rest was quite perfect. On turning the stone, I found that, besides the said figure, which is in the centre of the cover, there are two others at each side in basso relievo, and also, excepting the feet, are quite perfect: its preservation is owing to its being reversed.’<sup>43</sup> The French *Commission* apparently did not notice the massive fragment of the lid which, according to Belzoni’s description, lay reversed next to the coffer, probably obscured by rubble.<sup>44</sup> The cover was then brought to London via Alexandria. One of the Cambridge newspapers of the time reported that ‘It was brought to England with the rest of the Egyptian monuments, which Mr. Salt, his Majesty’s Consul at Cairo, was enabled to collect, principally through the zeal and ingenuity of Mr. Belzoni’.<sup>45</sup>

After its arrival in the UK, Ramesses III’s sarcophagus lid was stored, together with Salt’s first collection, in the entrance court of the British Museum until the end of March 1823, when it was removed to Cambridge. This operation was carried out ‘by the Rev. G. A. Browne, last week, by virtue of an order from Mr. Belzoni.’<sup>46</sup> Belzoni’s connection with Browne most probably came about through a shared enthusiasm for Freemasonry.<sup>47</sup> It is unclear when Belzoni himself became a Mason,<sup>48</sup> but he became a member of the Royal Arch in the School of Plato Chapter in Cambridge (which Browne had been instrumental in forming in 1807) in 1820,<sup>49</sup> and a Knight Templar in the Provincial Priory of East Anglia at Norwich around 20 August 1821.<sup>50</sup> Four years older than Belzoni, George Adam Browne was an ‘ardent freemason’,<sup>51</sup> as well as the Bursar of Trinity College, Cambridge at that time and a person of great influence in Cambridge. He was also Chaplain to the Duke of Sussex, who was another influential freemason at that time and to whom Browne introduced Belzoni. Belzoni clearly trusted Browne sufficiently to give him power of attorney over his affairs before he left England on his final expedition,<sup>52</sup> and it may have been Browne’s influence on him that led him to begin fostering a relationship between himself and the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh by presenting them with silver medals that had been struck in Padua in his honour.<sup>53</sup>

It is almost certain that the newspaper report of the presentation of this medal to the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge came from Browne,<sup>54</sup> who seems to have regularly provided information to the *Cambridge Chronicle* about Belzoni until his death in 1823, including the publication of letters from Belzoni to him while on his ill-fated expedition to Timbuktu.<sup>55</sup> Browne also used the *Chronicle* as a means of raising money to support Belzoni and, later, his wife Sarah.<sup>56</sup> News of his death reached Cambridge in May 1824<sup>57</sup> and the *Chronicle* reported at length on the contents of his Will on 10 December 1824. Given that newspaper’s interest in Belzoni and his exploits, it is remarkable that there are no reports of any visits

<sup>43</sup> Cf. BELZONI, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries*, 373-4. It has to be noted, however, that the two other figures, namely Isis and Nephthys, are not actually worked in low relief, but a very shallow raised relief.

<sup>44</sup> A report on causes for destruction of the tomb and the accumulation of rubble and flood sediments in hall J can be found in WEBER, *JEA* 104.1 (2019), 62-5.

<sup>45</sup> *Cambridge Chronicle* for 4 April 1823. It is noteworthy that Belzoni’s relationship with Salt is not here described as employment. This is likely to be a result of the influence on the reporting of this matter by Belzoni’s friend, the Reverend G.A. Browne.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Cf. WILSON, in STARKEY, EL-KHOLY (eds.), *Egypt Through the Eyes of Travellers*, 50-1 and MORKOT, *ASTENE Bulletin* 69 (Autumn 2016), 23.

<sup>48</sup> J. Yarker states that ‘the Grand Lodge ... has it placed on record that this Brother [i.e. Belzoni] was made a Mason in the “Lodge of the Pyramids” at Cairo’: YARKER, *Arcane School*, Chapter XIII. If correct, this would indicate that Belzoni became a Mason before returning to England at the end of his Third Voyage in 1819.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. HAMILL, MOELLIER, in HUMBERT, PRICE (eds.), *Imhotep Today*, 212.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. MATCHETT, *The Norfolk and Norwich remembrancer*, 204.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. VENN, VENN, *Alumni Cantabrigiensis*, vol. I, 414.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. MAYES, *The Great Belzoni*, 281.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. MAYES, *The Great Belzoni*, 268.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *Cambridge Chronicle* for 15 June 1821.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. *Cambridge Chronicle* for 11 July, 5 September and 15 December 1823.

<sup>56</sup> For example, *Cambridge Chronicle* for 15 December 1823, 23 January 1824 and 21 October 1825.

<sup>57</sup> Belzoni died of dysentery in Gwato, Benin, on his journey to Timbuktu, Mali, in December 1823. Cf. CLAYTON, in STARKEY, STARKEY (eds.), *Travellers in Egypt*, 49.

by him to Cambridge. He must have come to the city in 1820 for his initiation into the Royal Arch Chapter. Since Browne held the living of Chesterton (at that time a short distance outside the city itself) and resided in the vicarage there rather than in Trinity College, perhaps Belzoni stayed with him there. Certainly there is no record of Belzoni having stayed in Trinity College.<sup>58</sup>

During the course of their friendship, Belzoni gave a number of gifts to Browne, including a Masonic jewel,<sup>59</sup> and it seems that he may also have actually given the sarcophagus lid of Ramesses III to Browne. In Lecture VI of a series of talks delivered at the Royal Institution, London, in 1828, the Marquis Spineto<sup>60</sup> reveals that 'As a mark of gratitude for the many favours he had received, Mr. Belzoni presented [the sarcophagus lid] to the Rev. G. A. Browne, Fellow of Trinity College; and this gentleman, very generously, wishing still to allow Mr. Belzoni to reap the full benefit of his labours presented it, in Belzoni's name, to the University of Cambridge'.<sup>61</sup> It is regrettable that Browne left instructions for his papers to be destroyed after his own death and so more information about Belzoni's gifts is lacking and Spineto's assertion cannot be verified.<sup>62</sup> A few years after the sarcophagus lid had reached Cambridge, Browne was to receive a letter from Jean-François Champollion discussing the translation of the cartouches on the sarcophagus lid.<sup>63</sup>

#### II.4. Giovanni d'Athnasi

Alongside the confusions surrounding its lid, it is a common misconception that Belzoni also removed the sarcophagus coffer of Ramesses III (fig. 5).<sup>64</sup> However, he left the base in the tomb, and it was Giovanni d'Athnasi who finally had it lifted from the tomb.<sup>65</sup> D'Athnasi (1798-1854) was serving as Salt's interpreter and later agent, and accompanied Belzoni on his second journey in Egypt. Again, d'Athnasi's writings have to be read critically, since his frank antipathy towards Belzoni clearly distorts his narration of events. Regarding the sarcophagus, he writes: 'I caused all the colossal pieces which Belzoni had not taken away to be sent to Alexandria; above all, the famous granite sarcophagus of the tomb called Bruce's, of which this celebrated traveller speaks so much. This sarcophagus is now at the museum in Paris; its lid which Belzoni had the misfortune to break into two pieces when endeavouring to remove it from the tomb, should be in the British Museum.'<sup>66</sup> D'Athnasi still assumes at this point that the lid will be acquired by the British Museum, like the majority of Henry Salt's collection. Belzoni, however, claimed the discovery of the cover as his own achievement and therefore his own property; after long negotiations, Salt had to give in.<sup>67</sup> The rest of Salt's second collection, including the sarcophagus box, was acquired by the King of France for 10,000 £; it came to the Musée du Louvre in 1826.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Email correspondence in March 2015 with Jonathan Smith, Archivist and Modern Manuscript Cataloguer at Trinity College, Cambridge.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. MAYES, *The Great Belzoni*, 318, n. 9.

<sup>60</sup> Spineto, whose original name was Niccolo Maria Doria, was himself an interesting character. He lectured on European literature at the University of Cambridge, and in 1828 gave a series of lectures on the topic of hieroglyphs and Egyptian antiquities (cf. BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 158).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. SPINETO, *Lectures*, 195-6.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. WILSON, in STARKEY, EL-KHOLY (eds.), *Travellers in Egypt*, 51

<sup>63</sup> The correspondence of Champollion and Browne is published in YORKE, LEAKE, *Les monuments principaux*, 18-25.

<sup>64</sup> As found in REEVES, WILKINSON, *The Complete Valley of the Kings*, 56; REEVES, *Ancient Egypt*, 20-1; ROMER, *Valley of the Kings*, 52-3; MAYES, *The Great Belzoni*, 132-5, 306, n. 2.; IKRAM, DODSON, *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt*, 73; BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who*, 52.

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, James Burton's short remark that 'Yanni took it' in Add. MS. 25642, p. 9, note P, held by the British Library London.

<sup>66</sup> D'ATHANASI, *Brief Account of the Researches and Discoveries in Upper Egypt*, 52.

<sup>67</sup> Belzoni and Salt both signed an agreement which states that Salt 'shall concede to the said Signor Belzoni the cover of a Sarcophagus found by him in one of the end-tombs of the Kings at Thebes with such other objects as he may be able to spare'. Quoted in MANLEY, RÉE, *Henry Salt*, 151.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. BOREUX, *Musée du Louvre*, 109-10, pl. X. The first and third of Salt's collections were bought mostly by the British Museum, while his whole second collection was purchased by the King of France and went to the Louvre.



Fig. 6. Sarcophagus lid from KV 11. Drawing by G. Scharf (published in YORKE LEAKE, *Les monuments principaux*, pl. XIV, fig. 39).



Fig. 7. Sarcophagus lid of Ramesses III during 1968 restoration work in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. (© The Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge, University of Cambridge).

D'Athanasī's accusation of Belzoni damaging the lid during the transport is continuously held up by various later researchers.<sup>69</sup> Belzoni certainly is not known to have followed a very cautious methodology in his hunt for treasures, especially compared to contemporary standards in archaeology and conservation. The lid is depicted in a drawing by G. Scharf, published in C. Yorke's and M. Leake's *Les monuments principaux du Musée Britannique*, before its extensive restoration, with the section below Ramesses' and Nephthys' knees in three separate pieces (fig. 6).<sup>70</sup> Its fragmentary state is also visible on photographs in the Fitzwilliam Museum's archives, taken during restoration work in 1968, when the lid was prepared to be displayed in a vertical orientation (fig. 7). Given that Belzoni found the lid inverted on the floor, it seems most likely that all this damage was caused when the ancient robbers tipped it off the coffer in antiquity.<sup>71</sup>

### III. New Archaeological Evidence

#### III.1. Recent Discovery of Sarcophagus Fragments in KV 11

In 2016, Anke Weber discovered a fragment of a sarcophagus lid in a disturbed context of a hole in the floor of the sarcophagus chamber, hall J (fig. 8).<sup>72</sup> The fragment has a sculpted part on the upper surface as well as a

<sup>69</sup> Cf. ROMER, *Valley of the Kings*, 53 and TYLDESLEY, in WILKINSON, WEEKS (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Valley of the Kings*, 484.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. YORKE, LEAKE, *Les monuments principaux*, pl. XIV, fig. 39. The drawing is not true to scale but gives a good general impression.

<sup>71</sup> Budge and Wilson suggest the same for this piece. Cf. BUDGE, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum*, 2 and WILSON, in STARKEY, EL-KHOLY (eds.), *Egypt Through the Eyes of Travellers*, 46, n. 3. Also in support of this theory is that a large portion of the lid remains unknown, and may thus have been taken out of the tomb long ago. This is in accordance with the state of many of the of the sarcophagi in the Valley of the Kings.

<sup>72</sup> Her research was carried out in the framework of her PhD thesis 'ÜBERlebensmittel' at Freie Universität Berlin. In



Fig. 8. Stills from a 3D-model of a newly discovered fragment of a sarcophagus lid from KV 11 (© The Ramesses III (KV 11) Publication and Conservation Project, model by W. Hovestreydt).

carefully polished curvature on the reverse which was originally the inside of the lid. On the vertical side, the curved lines of an ouroboros' body and a band of inscription are preserved. The remaining inscription on the fragment quotes the (half-)sentence  $n(n) \text{ hft.j } n=k$  which can be translated as 'you do not (or: will not) have any enemies'.<sup>73</sup> The same passage can be found on the proper right side (the viewer's left) of the sarcophagus lid from KV 11 in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (Inv. No. E.1.1823) (cl. pl. II). But when comparing the two pieces, it soon became clear that the newly discovered fragment does not belong to this particular lid. Although the stone material looks very similar on a macroscopic level and the same iconographic components are used (sculpted serpent on the upper surface, ouroboros and inscriptions on the vertical side), the dimensions of the fragment are much smaller and the organisation of the hieroglyphs differs strongly.

In the winter season 2019/2020 of the Ramesses III (KV 11) Publication and Conservation Project, two more fragments of red granite were discovered: one of them shows another sculpted serpent on top, the other one is a corner piece of a sarcophagus lid and bears inscriptions on two sides. Its inner rim, which was lowered into the coffer, forms an angle of nearly 90°, whereas the lid in the Fitzwilliam Museum has a much more rounded rim because of its cartouche shape. Therefore, the second fragment clearly does not fit to the Fitzwilliam lid, and it also seems unlikely that the two recently found fragments may belong to the same object as the fragment found in 2016, due to their different thickness and design.

### III.2. Previously Found Fragments

Evidence of sarcophagus fragments previously found in the tomb of Ramesses III has actually been known in academia but has never been explicitly published.<sup>74</sup> In the 1980's, Edwin C. Brock carried out excavations in several royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings in order to develop a typology of royal sarcophagi.<sup>75</sup> In shaft E of KV 11, he discovered broken pieces of burial equipment, consisting of different hard stones. Lyla Pinch-Brock, who shared some information about Ted's work with us at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Workshop of the KV 11 Project in Berlin, pointed out that there are more small and fragmented pieces of red granite, many of them showing the sculpted curved line of the serpent's bodies, others bearing further hieroglyphs.<sup>76</sup>

2019, we were able to fully document the fragment with photogrammetry and drawings.

<sup>73</sup> We would like to thank our team members Daniel Werning, Lutz Popko, Martina Grünhagen and Jan Moje for their philological advice.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. VASSILIKA, *Egyptian Art*, 86 and DODSON, in WILKINSON, WEEKS (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Valley of the Kings*, 253. That more material is likely to be found in KV 11 was already suggested by THOMAS, *Theban Necropolis*, 127 as well as MOJSOV, in CLINE, O'CONNOR (eds.), *Ramesses III*, 277, 303, n. 37.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. LECLANT, CLÈRC, *Orientalia* 57 (1988), 353, n. 266, who refer to the circular of the German Archaeological Institute from 1987 (DAI Rundbrief), 22.

<sup>76</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop of *The Ramesses III (KV 11) Publication and Conservation Project* took place from the 23.-24.02.2018 at Humboldt University of Berlin. We would like to thank all participants for their interesting contributions and discussions. The find of 'several of the lost fragments from this lid' is already mentioned by VASSILIKA, *Egyptian Art*, 86.

Along with fragments of red granite, pieces of calcite have been found. The most famous (and only nearly-complete) example of anthropoid calcite sarcophagi is the above-mentioned sarcophagus of Seti I, but such fragments are also attested for Ramesses II, Merenptah and Siptah.<sup>77</sup> Ted Brock collected numerous inscribed calcite fragments during his work in KV 11, which may have belonged to a similar sarcophagus to the ones of the aforementioned Ramesside kings.<sup>78</sup> It is also possible, however, that they originally belonged to a canopic chest, an embalming table or large storage jars, since these types of objects made from alabaster have been found in other tombs in the Valley of the Kings.<sup>79</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion: Multiple Sarcophagi for Ramesses III?

This new evidence may suggest that Ramesses III used not only one, but multiple sarcophagi for his burial in KV 11. In Ramesside royal burials, it was a common tradition to nest multiple sarcophagi within each other, a practice best known from the four sarcophagi of Merenptah: the innermost one made of calcite, just like the renowned piece of Seti I; the second one consisting of red granite, reused by king Psusennes I in Tanis, showing a raised central figure protected by Nut; the third one belonging to the type of cartouche shaped sarcophagi of red granite with a raised central figure and the accompanying goddesses Isis and Nephthys, like the one of Ramesses III; and finally, the outermost one, a massive, rectangular box made from red granite.<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, the funerary inventory of Ramesses III may have comprised – in addition to his wooden coffin<sup>81</sup> – a calcite sarcophagus, the sarcophagus which is now exhibited in the Musée du Louvre in Paris and in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, and maybe another sarcophagus of red granite (or even more than one?) to which any of the recently found fragments may belong. It is difficult to establish, however, to which types of sarcophagi those fragments can be attributed, or to estimate their former size. Since the fragments seem to be from objects too large to fit within the Fitzwilliam/Louvre sarcophagus, it may be a possibility that there was once an even bigger sarcophagus, in which the Fitzwilliam/Louvre sarcophagus was nested. This one may have been broken up in antiquity, leaving only the Fitzwilliam/Louvre sarcophagus in place.

Considering the turbulent history of the Valley of the Kings – as shown in the case of Ramesses III's mummy and his wooden coffin<sup>82</sup> – it is just as likely, however, that the newly found fragments belonged to sarcophagi of other persons. One may hypothesise that sarcophagi of other people were reused KV 11, a practice widely attested during Ramesside rule and later times.<sup>83</sup> On typological grounds, Aidan Dodson has suggested that even the sarcophagus employed for Ramesses III was originally produced for Seti II, while Bojana Mojsov has proposed that it may have been intended for Amenmesse.<sup>84</sup> Finally, the fragments may have just accidentally found their way into KV 11. Just how much objects got scattered in the Valley of the Kings is demonstrated by the many pieces of the sarcophagus of Ramesses VI found dispersed in various places in the wadi, or the sarcophagus of queen Takhat found in various rooms of Amenmesse's tomb.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, many objects were displaced in modern times: a lot of material has been relocated due to flash floods and because tombs were used

<sup>77</sup> Cf. DODSON, in WILKINSON, WEEKS (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Valley of the Kings*, 253.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* Here, Dodson already mentions those unpublished calcite fragments for Ramesses III.

<sup>79</sup> The British Museum, for example, holds calcite fragments of a canopic chest from KV 7, probably of Ramesses II (EA 49740), and of an embalming table from KV 57 inscribed for king Horemheb (EA 54374). Large vessels, which may have been used to store funerary oils (EA 55012, EA 55013), and vases inscribed with the names of Thutmose I, Thutmose II, Ahmose and Hatshepsut (EA 43401 – 43404, 54830, 65899) come from Dra Abu' el-Naga and the Valley of the Kings.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. BROCK, in REEVES (ed.), *After Tut'ankhamun*, 124-7.

<sup>81</sup> His wooden coffin was discovered in the Cachette CB320 in Deir el-Bahari (containing the mummy of Amenhotep III) and is now in the Cairo Museum (CG 61040). Cf. DARESSY, *Cercueils des cachettes royales*, 221-2, pl. LXIII. The mummy of Ramesses III was found in the tomb of Amenhotep II (KV 35) in an anthropoid coffin out of cartonnage (CG 61021) inside the sarcophagus of Nefertari. Cf. *ibid.*, 34, pl. XX.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. HAWASS, SALEEM, *Scanning the Pharaohs*, 31-3, 175-91.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. WILKINSON, in WILKINSON, WEEKS (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Valley of the Kings*, 347-59. For an in-depth study of Ramesside re-use of statuary, see MAGEN, *Steinerne Palimpseste*.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. DODSON, *JEA* 72 (1986), 196-8 and DODSON, in WILKINSON, WEEKS (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Valley of the Kings*, 254-6; MOJSOV, in CLINE, O'CONNOR (eds.), *Ramesses III*, 277-278 and MOJSOV, *BES* 11 (1991-1992), 47-55.

<sup>85</sup> For the sarcophagus of Ramesses VI, see BROCK, in DANFORTH (ed.), *Preserving Egypt's Cultural Heritage*, 63. Concerning the sarcophagus of Takhat, see BROCK, in HAWASS (ed.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century*, 97-102.

for storage purposes, holding the material of other excavations.<sup>86</sup>

Ultimately, only future research and fieldwork can shed light on the many questions raised by old documents and recent finds concerning the sarcophagus ensemble of Ramesses III and the original owners of multiple sarcophagi of which fragments were found in KV 11. In order to make it possible in the future to virtually join fitting pieces, our colleague Willem Hovestreydt recorded the fragment found in 2016 photogrammetrically (fig. 8), and we plan to do the same with the other two fragments found last season. Moreover, Gareth Rees produced a 3D-model of the lid in the Fitzwilliam Museum and the sarcophagus box in the Louvre (see his contribution in this Festschrift, cl. pl. II). In this way, it will be possible after 200 years to finally reunite the sarcophagus box and its lid in a virtual way. We also aim to recontextualise the sarcophagus ensemble in its original context, the sarcophagus chamber, hall J.

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<sup>86</sup> Concerning the relocation of material and the use of royal tombs as storage facilities, see TYLDESLEY, in WILKINSON, WEEKS (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Valley of the Kings*, 481-93.

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