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Egypt through a Belgian Lens: Jean Capart and the Collection of Photographic Glass Plate Negatives of the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels*

by

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KEYWORDS. — Jean Capart; History of Belgian Egyptology; Photographic Archives; Egypt.

SUMMARY. — Under the impetus of a growing interest within the international Egyptological community in the history of its own discipline, many institutions have recently made considerable investments to disclose historical photographic archival collections by digitization efforts. The famous Egyptological library of the Royal Museums of Art and History (RMAH) in Brussels also keeps an important photographic archive of which the large subcollection of almost fourteen thousand historical glass plate photographic negatives were studied in the framework of the SURA project. These photos date from the first half of the 20th century and document the pioneering years of Egyptology in Belgium from the perspective of Jean Capart, founding father of Belgian Egyptology and the first curator of the Egyptian department of the RMAH, and his collaborators.

TREFWOORDEN. — Jean Capart; Geschiedenis Belgische egyptologie; Fotografische archieven; Egypte.

SAMENVATTING. — *Egypte door een Belgische lens: Jean Capart en de collectie fotografische glasnegatieven van de Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst en Geschiedenis in Brussel.* — Onder de impuls van een groeiende interesse van de internationale Egyptologische gemeenschap in de geschiedenis van haar eigen discipline hebben verschillende instellingen recent aanzienlijke inspanningen geleverd om historische fotografische archiefcollecties digitaal te ontsluiten. De beroemde Egyptologische bibliotheek van de Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst en Geschiedenis (KMG) in Brussel bewaart ook een belangrijk fotografisch archief waarvan de grote deelcollectie van circa veertienduizend historische fotografische glasnegatieven werden bestudeerd in het kader van het SURA project. Deze foto's dateren uit de eerste helft van de 20^{ste} eeuw en documenteren de pioniersjaren van de Belgische Egyptologie vanuit het perspectief van Jean Capart, de grondlegger van de Belgische Egyptologie en eerste conservator van de Egyptische collectie van de KMG, en zijn medewerkers.

MOTS-CLÉS. — Jean Capart; Histoire de l'égyptologie belge; Archives photographiques; Égypte.

RÉSUMÉ. — *L'Égypte dans l'objectif belge: Jean Capart et la collection de photographies sur plaque de verre des Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire à Bruxelles.* — Dans un contexte international marqué par l'intérêt croissant de la recherche égyptologique pour l'histoire de sa propre discipline, de nombreuses institutions scientifiques ont récemment consenti à des investissements importants afin de numériser leurs collections d'archives photographiques et en permettre le libre accès. La célèbre bibliothèque

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égyptologique des Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (MRAH) de Bruxelles possède également de riches archives photographiques, dont la sous-collection importante de près de quatorze mille négatifs sur plaques de verre a fait l'objet d'une étude dans le cadre du projet SURA. Ces photos datent de la première moitié du XX^e siècle et documentent les années pionnières de l'égyptologie belge, alors dominée par les activités de Jean Capart, fondateur de l'égyptologie en Belgique et premier conservateur de la collection égyptienne aux MRAH, et de ses collaborateurs.

Photographing Egypt

Egypt has long appealed to the imagination of a large and worldwide audience. From the Middle Ages onwards, pilgrims, explorers and adventurers visited Egypt, often in harsh conditions, but it was only after the French expedition to Egypt led by Napoleon Bonaparte (1798-1801) and the publication of the resulting *Description de l'Égypte* (1809-1829) that the ancient Egyptian civilization became known to a large public. Ever since, multitudes of travellers, writers and artists have journeyed up and down the Nile Valley and explored the Egyptian deserts. They have left an enormous amount of documentation in the form of travel accounts, drawings, paintings, and sketches. The invention of photography in the mid-1820s offered new possibilities for depicting the world and thus added a whole new dimension to these already existing forms of documentation. Egypt played a pivotal role in the early history of photography (for excellent overviews on this subject, see Howe, 1994; Hüttner, 2016; Perez, 1988; Stapp, 2008; Zevi & Bostico, 1984; see also Yelles, 2020 for a more global perspective on the history and development of photography in the context of the archaeological exploration of the Mediterranean basin). In August 1839, the French physicist and politician François Arago held a speech to the French National Assembly in which he presented the importance of the invention of the daguerreotype process by Louis Daguerre and Joseph Nicéphore Niépce. He made several references to Egypt and particularly stressed the use that photography could have had for the scientific members of the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt who copied Egypt's monuments and which resulted in the publication of the *Description de l'Égypte*:

Pour copier les millions et millions d'hiéroglyphes qui couvrent [...] les grands monuments de Thèbes, de Memphis, de Karnak, etc., il faudrait des vingtaines d'années et des légions de dessinateurs. Avec le Daguerreotype, un seul homme pourrait mener à bonne fin cet immense travail. Munissez l'Institut d'Égypte de deux ou trois appareils de M. Daguerre, et sur plusieurs des grandes planches de l'ouvrage célèbre [the *Description de l'Égypte*], fruit de notre immortelle expédition, de vastes étendues d'hiéroglyphes réels iront remplacer des hiéroglyphes fictifs ou de pure convention [...] (Arago, 1839, pp. 28-31).

In the following decades, photography continued to develop with Egypt serving as an extensive practising field for this new medium. The photographic œuvre of several major photographers from these pioneering years like Maxime Du Camp, Francis Firth, Félix Bonfils or Antonio Beato is well known. Photography paved the way for new possibilities of visual communication and documentation, and became an indispensable tool for Egyptologists involved in fieldwork in Egypt. For instance, influential Egyptologists such as William Matthew Flinders or George Andrew Reisner, who can both be considered pioneers in the development of modern scientific archaeology, strongly advocated the use of photography to document the archaeological record [1]* (Petrie, 1904, pp. 73-84; for Reisner's unpublished manual on archaeological

* Numbers in brackets [] refer to the notes, p. 38.

photography, see Der Manuelian, 1992). Although many of the published reports of these early excavations and surveys were illustrated with photos, the original and unpublished field documentation often still contains vast amounts of photographs that are hardly known to the scholarly community. Fortunately, many of these archives are preserved in public research institutes. Under the impetus of a growing interest within the international Egyptological community in the history of its own discipline (Gertzen, 2017), together with a greater awareness of the importance and wealth of information these unpublished research archives may contain, many institutions have recently made considerable investments to digitally disclose these collections [2]. A number of publications dealing with the subject of photographing Egypt, both academic and for the general public, have also appeared in recent years (Azim & Réveillac, 2004; Piacentini, 2010; Driaux & Arnette, 2016; Berman, 2018; Juret, 2019; Larson, 2006; Riggs, 2019).

Jean Capart and his Photographic Collection

The Royal Museums of Art and History (RMAH) in Brussels keep an important collection of ancient Egyptian artefacts, but are also home to one of the world's finest and most complete Egyptological libraries. Besides a large collection of books and journals, this library houses a substantial photographic archive. The real development of both the collection and the library took place during the first decades of the 20th century under the initiative of Jean Capart (1877-1947) (Bierbrier, 2019, pp. 88-89; Brasseur Capart & Brasseur Capart, 1974; Bruffaerts, 2022). Capart was the first curator of the RMAH's Egyptian department and is the founding father of Belgian Egyptology (fig. 1). He studied with some of the great Egyptologists of his time, initiated the first Belgian excavations in Egypt and occupied the first Belgian chair in Egyptology at the University of Liège. He set up an extensive network with Egyptologists abroad and succeeded in putting Brussels firmly on the map as a globally known centre of Egyptology (Bruffaerts, 2013, 2021, pp. 168-171). Capart was not only an ambitious man but also a visionary. He was the first in Belgium to combine education with scientific research as key principles for museology and curatorship (Mairesse, 1995). In this respect, Capart recognized the importance of a strong and well-developed library. In 1901, he donated his personal collection of over seven thousand books and journals to the RMAH, laying the foundation for the international reputation of the RMAH's Egyptological library. This donation also included over a thousand photographs. In fact, the availability of photographic documentation was for Capart equally important to carry out his tasks as a museum curator and researcher. During his career, he constantly invested in the development of this collection by adding the photos he took during his trips, excavations, and other scientific missions to Egypt and elsewhere. The creation of the *Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth* (FÉRE) in 1923 provided Capart with additional means to further develop this photographic collection. As Capart explained in 1928, the organization and management of the collection was entrusted to some of his collaborators:

[...] Dès leur arrivée à Bruxelles, toutes ces photographies sont numérotées, inscrites dans un registre, classées et indexées sur fiches. Mlle Werbrouck a trouvé, pour ce long travail, une aide aussi intelligente que dévouée en Mlle E. De Mot (Capart, 1928a, p. 10).

Two years after the creation of the FÉRE, Capart decided to make the scientific classification of the photographic collection one of the top priorities. To fill the gaps in the collection, several study trips to Egypt were organized to photograph sites and monuments. Photos were also

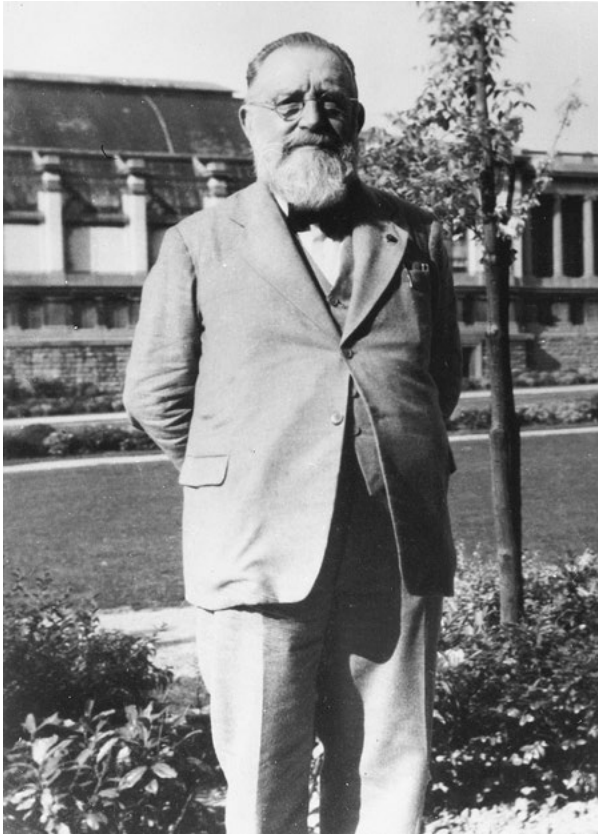


Fig. 1. — Jean Capart in front of the Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels. Photo by Baudouin van de Walle, 3 June 1947 (© RMAH, inv. EGI-2 12414).

bought from other institutions such as the *musée du Louvre*, the Ashmolean Museum, the NY Carlsberg Glyptotek or the Egyptian Museum in Berlin to name but a few, while colleagues like Georges Legrain or John Garstang provided Capart with photos of their fieldwork. ‘Commercial’ photos were also acquired in order to have additional and new documentation. In the inventory records, the names of well-known photographers appear, such as the Italian-British photographer Antonio Beato [3] or the Egyptian photographers Abdullah Attiya Gaddis and Georges Seif (Capart, 1928a, p. 9) [4].

This photographic archive was primarily used for research purposes but also for public conferences and publications. It was furthermore intended to illustrate a monumental encyclopaedia on ancient Egypt which Capart prepared but unfortunately never completed. Its multivolume manuscript is kept at the RMAH’s Egyptological library. Capart realized that his photographic collection could also make a valuable contribution to scientific research and

he wanted to share it with the Egyptological community. For that purpose, he started the publication of a series of books focusing on the history of Egyptian art, illustrated with numerous photographs of objects and monuments he had taken in Egypt and in European and American museums. The series was entitled *Documents pour servir à l’étude de l’art égyptien* and intended to comprise a total of five volumes. Unfortunately, the first two ones, published in 1927 and 1931, were not particularly well received and therefore the series was discontinued. There was nevertheless an obvious international enthusiasm for Capart’s photographic project. After his intervention at the *Congrès des Orientalistes* in Oxford (Capart, 1928b), where he presented the Brussels photo collection [5], a number of international colleagues at the conference urged others to not only donate copies of their Egyptological publications to the RMAH’s library but also to send photographs of Egyptian objects from excavations and Europe’s numerous museum collections in order to enrich the photographic collection.

The Collection of Glass Plate Negatives

When Capart was appointed curator at the RMAH in 1901, the photographic collection of the Egyptian department included about five hundred pictures. By 1930, it had grown to over thirteen thousand items, almost doubling to twenty-two thousand photos by 1940 (fig. 2). Today, this photographic archive holds over fifty-three thousand individual non-digital items. However, the

core of the collection consists of almost fourteen thousand glass plate negatives that were made during the first half of the 20th century. From a technical point of view, these glass plates can be subdivided into three types. First, there are the photos made by Capart and his collaborators such as Arpag Mekhitarian (1911-2004) (Bierbrier, 2019, p. 312) or Marcelle Werbrouck (1889-1959) (Bierbrier, 2019, p. 486; Bruffaerts, 2018). From 1901 onwards, they travelled in Egypt from the Mediterranean coast to its southern borders on many occasions. Besides notebooks and personal diaries, these field trips and research stays resulted in thousands of glass plate negatives, which make up the bulk of the collection. A large proportion of these negatives consist of stereoscopic photographs or stereograms. In addition, the collection contains a limited number of photographic copies of photos. Of the many photographs Capart bought or obtained from colleagues, a selection was re-photographed on glass plates so that they could be used in lectures or public conferences (fig. 3). Finally, the collection also contains a considerable number of reproductions of illustrations from Egyptological publications photographed with the aim, again, of using them to illustrate publications, public conferences and lectures.



Fig. 2. — Wooden cabinet containing the glass plates in the Egyptological library of the RMAH. Photographer unknown, ca. 1930 (© RMAH, inv. EGI-2 21543).

These glass plates are unquestionably of great historic value and can be divided into different categories. A first category concerns photos that document the pioneering years of Egyptological research at the RMAH. They cover not only the development of the Brussels museum collection but also the deployment of its scientific activities in Egypt, including archaeological expeditions organized by both the RMAH and FÉRÉ at Heliopolis (1907; fig. 4), Sheikh Fadl (1924), Tell Hiw (1927; fig. 5) and especially Elkab (1937-1946). Many of these photographs were never published and had been forgotten. In particular, the three excavation seasons at Elkab were extensively photographed (fig. 6). In addition to documenting the progress of the excavations and the original find context of some three hundred objects in the RMAH's Egyptian collection that come from these excavations and surveys, there are a remarkable number of photographs in which the Egyptian workmen (fig. 7), the local house staff and life in the various villages in the immediate vicinity of Elkab are the focus of attention (De Meyer, Claes, Mahran, Van der Perre & Gräzer Ohara, 2023). With the help of various archival documents kept at the RMAH, such as the original field diaries or the registers in which the salaries of the different workmen and other expenses were recorded, it is possible to identify many of them and thus highlight and recognize their fundamental role in the successful excavation campaigns at Elkab. As such, these photos are of key importance to the RMAH as they illustrate and tell the story of the formative period of the Egyptian department of the museum in terms of the development of its collection and its scientific activities in Egypt (compare with Stevenson, 2019 for British Egyptology).

From a broader perspective, these images also document the state of preservation and conservation, as well as the setting and landscape of a vast array of monuments and sites spread across the entire Nile Valley. As several parts of the Egyptian landscape have profoundly changed since the early 20th century through expanding agriculture, construction works (*e.g.*, the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s) or the growth of modern villages, towns and cities, but



Fig. 3. — The Ramesseum, Luxor. Photo by the Italian-British photographer Antonio Beato, date unknown (© RMAH, inv. EGI 2487).



Fig. 4. — Excavations at Heliopolis, setting up camp. Photo by Jean Capart, 1907 (© RMAH, inv. EGI 1052).

also as a result of archaeological fieldwork or because looting and destruction of archaeological sites and monuments in Egypt obviously had a deep negative impact on these sites and monuments, the historical value of these photos becomes ever more significant. Even today, and especially after the uprisings in Egypt and the Arab Spring of 2011, various sites have been raided and looted, causing irreparable damage. Older photographic documents such as these glass plates may ultimately be the only potential source for studying and assessing certain monuments and sites (fig. 8).



Fig. 5. — Excavations at Tell Hiw, falcon mummy. Photo by Jean Capart, 1927 (© RMAH, inv. EGI 6113).



Fig. 6. — Excavations at Elkab, removal of a ceiling slab of crypt B in the temple of Nekhbet. Photo by Jean Capart, 5 March 1938 (© RMAH, inv. EGI 11477).



Fig. 7. — Excavations at Elkab, Rais Chared, his three sons (Anwar, Seif and Kamal) and the workmen from Quft. Photo by Jean Capart, 1945-1946 (© RMAH, inv. EGI 12234).



Fig. 8. — The ‘Royal Tomb’ of the First Dynasty at Naqada, which is now largely destroyed. This is a rare photo of the tomb after it was excavated at the end of the 19th century. Photo by Jean Capart, 1930 (© RMAH, inv. EGI 7235).



Fig. 9. — Armant, excavation of the Bucheum by Robert Mond & Oliver Myers. Photo by Jean Capart, 1930 (© RMAH, inv. EGI 7248).



Fig. 10. — Karnak, great hypostyle hall of the temple of Amun, restoration works by Georges Legrain. Photo by Jean Capart, 21 April 1909 (© RMAH, inv. EGI 1518).

The international dimension of this collection, which also reflects Capart’s extensive professional network, is illustrated by several hundreds of photographs Capart and/or his collaborators took of ongoing excavations conducted by the *Service des Antiquités de l’Égypte* and other institutions. Among the sites they visited are Abydos (University of Liverpool), Amarna (*Deutsche Orientgesellschaft* and Egypt Exploration Society), Armant (Egypt Exploration Society) (fig. 9), Deir el-Bahari (Egypt Exploration Fund and the Metropolitan Museum of Art), Edfu (*Institut français d’Archéologie orientale*), Giza (Harvard University/Museum of Fine Arts Boston), Karnak (*Service des Antiquités de l’Égypte*, fig. 10), Medamud (*Institut français d’Archéologie orientale*), Tanis (*Mission française*) and Tod (*Musée du Louvre*). In a few instances, these visits were spread over several days as was the case for Abydos and Amarna where Capart was a guest of respectively John Garstang (University of Liverpool, 1909) and John Pendlebury (Egypt Exploration Society, 1934).

At the invitation of the Educational Foundation of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, Capart toured the USA between 1924 and 1925 as visiting professor and lectured at forty-four universities and institutions across the country (Capart, 1928b; De Meyer, 2023; forthcoming). In 1932, he was appointed advisory curator at the Brooklyn Museum where he was also instrumental for the development of the Egyptian collection. He divided his time between Brussels and Brooklyn until the outbreak of World War II but also spent much time in Egypt for excavations and research, and visited various museums across the European continent. During these trips, he photographed hundreds of objects from Egyptian collections around the world. His personal notebooks and diaries, kept at the RMAH, frequently provide additional information on the objects he photographed, thereby adding to the international dimension of this collection of photographs from a museological point of view.

A special set of glass plates consists of several dozen images depicting the local Egyptian fauna, and particularly flora. These photos were taken by German Egyptologist Ludwig Keimer (1892-1957) who was in close contact with Jean Capart. After the death

of Keimer's mentor Georg Schweinfurth in 1925, Capart encouraged him to make his first trip to Egypt. Keimer already had a strong interest in Egypt's rich botanical heritage, but this interest was further stimulated by Capart, and their collaboration was formalized in a signed agreement. In exchange for an annual allowance, Keimer would provide the RMAH with duplicates of his photographic documents related to his research on Egypt's fauna and flora (van de Walle, 1958, pp. 67-68). This gave Keimer additional means to pursue his research, and Capart was able to further develop and enrich the photographic archive of the RMAH's Egyptian department with a new subject matter that previously did not receive much attention from the Egyptological community.

Finally, these images also illustrate the daily life of the local Egyptian population and the way Westerners experienced travelling through Egypt in the early 20th century, commonly referred to as the 'Golden Age of Travel' (Humphreys, 2014, 2015). Over two hundred photos illustrate, for instance, the two royal voyages Capart made in the company of Queen Elisabeth of Belgium. In 1923 they attended the official opening of the burial chamber of the tomb of Tutankhamun (Bruffaerts, 1998), while seven years later, in March-April 1930, Capart accompanied the Belgian Queen and King on a cruise along the Nile following an official state visit (Bruffaerts, 2006) (fig. 11). The photos from this archive provide an exceptional glimpse behind the scenes of both trips and complement the already known archival sources of these journeys which are kept in the Belgian Royal Palace's archives. Prior to this second trip with Queen Elisabeth of Belgium, Capart had already travelled through Egypt for two months in the company of several members of the Goldman family, known from the American investment bank Goldman Sachs. Invited by his good friend Ashton Sanborn, secretary of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, close collaborator of the well-known American Egyptologist George Reisner, and son-in-law of Julius Goldman, Capart acted as a guide for a boat trip that took them from Cairo to beyond the Second Cataract at Semna (fig. 12). Several hundreds of photographs of this journey are preserved in the RMAH's archives along with various other archival documents that will allow us to reconstruct this voyage in full detail.

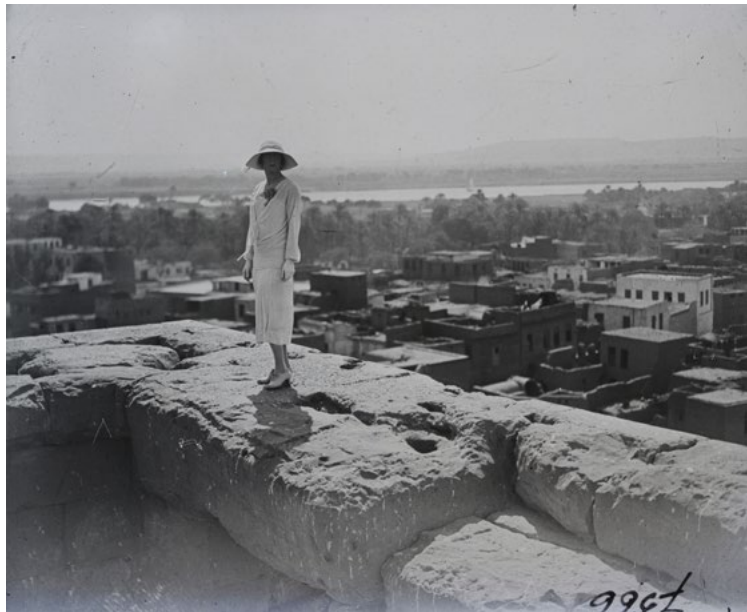


Fig. 11. — Queen Elisabeth of Belgium on top of the pylon of the temple of Edfu. Photo by M. Polinet, 1930 (© RMAH, inv. EGI 7566).

A Future for the Collection: Digitization and the SURA Project

Despite its great historical value, this collection has been much neglected over the past decades and its existence and content are hardly known to the larger Egyptological community. The



Fig. 12. — Aswan, visit of Jean Capart and the Goldman family to the unfinished obelisk. Photo by Jean Capart, 17 February 1930 (© RMAH, inv. EGI 7323).

most important reason for this is undoubtedly the absence of an online searchable database and the lack of descriptive metadata.

The SURA project, a collaboration between the RMAH and Egyptologists of KU Leuven, was launched in 2020 with the aim of studying and digitally disclosing this important photographic collection (Gräzer Ohara, Van der Perre, De Meyer & Claes, 2023). As a first step, the entire collection was digitized in high resolution at the Royal Observatory of Belgium (ROB), using state-of-the-art technology initially developed for the digitization of astrophotographic plates [6]. Current digital imaging technologies enable to visualize these digitized

photos in full detail and the stereo pairs in enhanced 3D viewing. The available metadata of this photographic collection consist of two paper index card catalogues that only contain very limited information. Sometimes the photos are dated and the photographer's name is known, but more detailed information about the specific parts of the monuments, orientation, or names of the persons that appear in the photos is lacking. This evidently complicates retrieval and severely limits the research potential. The SURA project addresses this stalemate through an interdisciplinary approach that ties together Egyptology, digital imaging, archival studies, and digital humanities. Its main purpose is to make this historical collection available online to the international scholarly community as well as to the general public, and to valorize its importance. To do so, several clearly defined research objectives are envisaged.

DETAILED AND HIGH-QUALITY METADATA

This objective calls for a critical revision of the available data of each individual image while at the same time augmenting them with as much additional detailed information as possible, both regarding the content of the photo and its photographic framework (photographer, date). Special attention is also paid to information that places these photos in a broader context. For this purpose, bibliographical references to key publications regarding the depicted subject matter are recorded as well as references to relevant sources from the RMAH's archives such as Capart's personal notebooks, diaries, letters, etc. These references will be made available as cross-links with the RMAH's online library and archival catalogue, including access to electronic versions of publications and archival material when possible. Cross-links to objects in the RMAH's online museum catalogue will also be integrated as well as to online catalogues of other museums when applicable. This type of information significantly enriches the metadata and enhances the scientific potential of this collection for Egyptological, archaeological, or historical research. Finally, technical information (dimensions, type of photo, state of preservation) is also added.

ONLINE DATABASE

Together with their respective metadata, the digitized images will be catalogued in the RMAH's central collection management system (MuseumPlus-RIA/Carmentis) [7]. An Egyptological and historical approach is followed in order to describe the contents of each individual image as detailed as possible. Information is catalogued following the predefined metadata scheme of the MuseumPlus-RIA system, which is compliant with international standards and guidelines for metadata descriptions and data exchange (Spectrum, LIDO, CDWA, Dublin Core, ...). It also uses well-developed controlled vocabulary lists and thesauri which will facilitate data exchange with other research platforms. MuseumPlus-RIA also has integrated solutions for the creation of relevant crosswalks with other entries, images, or digital media.

PRESERVATION AND COLLECTION CARE

In order to preserve this collection for future generations, the physical housing of the glass plates is addressed as well. Due to neglect in previous decades and its current housing conditions, some glass plates already show signs of incipient chemical and biological degradation. To avoid the incurring risk of irreversible damage, a long-term preservation plan will be developed and specific measures in terms of conservation are taken, including repacking in acid-free cases and individual envelopes, to optimize the protective environment in which these glass plates are currently stored.

SCIENTIFIC EXPLOITATION AND COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

Finally, the scientific potential of this collection is mined, not only for the RMAH but also for other national and international research institutes. Specifically for the RMAH, the focus is first and foremost on images that relate to the objects of the RMAH's collection which originate from the different sites investigated by Capart and his collaborators. The original find contexts of these objects as described in the registration cards and the original field documentation are confronted with the available photos. This has already resulted, for instance, in new information with regard to the original location of the mastaba of Neferiretenef, acquired by Jean Capart in 1905 and still one of the centrepieces of the RMAH's Egyptian collection, and several other mastaba tombs that were declined by Capart (Gräzer Ohara, Delvaux, Van der Perre, De Meyer & Claes, 2024).

The SURA project is also actively looking for new collaborative research opportunities, not only with other similar online research platforms and databases to mutually expand their scientific potential, but also with individual researchers, research consortia or institutions that could have a potential interest in the content of these glass plate negatives. Since the start of the project, several institutions and researchers have already expressed a keen interest in these photos. The project also has an inherent overlap with the interdisciplinary EOS project 'Pyramids and Progress: Belgian expansionism and the making of Egyptology, 1830-1952', a Belgian consortium comprising KU Leuven, the Université libre de Bruxelles, Ghent University, the RMAH and the Royal Museum of Mariemont, which is conducting research on the emergence of Belgian Egyptology against the background of Belgian expansionist policies (De Meyer *et al.*, 2019). After the completion of the SURA project, this photographic collection

will be firmly embedded in and fully available to the international Egyptological community and the public at large.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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NOTES

- [1] For more than two decades, Reisner employed Mohammedani Ibrahim, an Egyptian photographer who was in charge of the photographic documentation of his excavations in different parts of the Egyptian and Nubian Nile Valley. Ibrahim was a very talented and skilled photographer and the quality of his photos still receives much acclaim today (Berman, 2018; Wray, 2021).
- [2] *E.g.*, Griffith Institute Archives, Oxford [www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/archive/], Digital Giza Project, Harvard University [giza.fas.harvard.edu/], Egypt Exploration Society, London [www.ees.ac.uk/collections/archive.html], Institut für Ägyptologie, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität & Staatlichen Museen Ägyptische Kunst, München – Mudira Database (mudira.gwi.uni-muenchen.de), Oriental Institute, University of Chicago [isac-idb.uchicago.edu/], Netherlands Institute for the Near East, Leiden [www.nino-leiden.nl/collections/nino-collection-glass-slides], Frobenius Institute, Frankfurt am Main [bildarchiv.frobenius-katalog.de]. Worth mentioning in this respect is also the Egypt Documentation Project, supported by the British Museum, in which about fifty thousand glass plate negatives from the collections of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and the Scientific Archives of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities are currently being digitized.
- [3] Capart most probably bought these photos at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. After Beato's death in 1905, the remaining photographs and negatives were bought from Beato's widow by Gaston Maspero for the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Bierbrier, 2019, p. 41; see also Busi & Piacentini, 2008, particularly pp. 22-23).
- [4] An important collection of glass negatives taken by Gaddis and Seif is currently kept at the research archives of Chicago House, Luxor.
- [5] «[...] L'ensemble de la collection présente une image toujours plus complète des monuments importants de l'archéologie égyptienne. Je voudrais qu'à l'avenir les égyptologues fassent plus souvent appel à notre collaboration pour illustrer leur enseignement. Ils pourront toujours se procurer à Bruxelles les clichés de projection qui leur seront nécessaires» (Capart, 1928b, p. 20).
- [6] For more information on the ROB digitization facility, see: <https://espace.oma.be/science/rob-facilities.html>. Technical information can also be found in De Cuyper, 2012 and De Cuyper, de Decker, Winter & Zacharias, 2011.
- [7] <https://carmentis.be/eMP/eMuseumPlus>.

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