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Photography and Antiquity in the Archive, or How Howard Carter Moved the Road to the Valley of the Kings

Christina Riggs

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1 – Museum and archive handbooks with relevant guidance include *Museum Archives: An Introduction*, ed. Deborah Wythe, 2nd edn, Chicago: Society of American Archivists 2004, 123–40; and *Photographs: Archival Care and Management*, ed. Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler and Diane Vogt-O'Connor, Chicago: Society of American Archivists 2006. For theoretical issues concerning photography and the archive, see Tim Schlak, 'Framing Photographs, Denying Archives: The Difficulty of Focusing on Archival Photographs', *Archival Science*, 8 (2008), 85–101; and Karen Cross and Julia Peck, 'Editorial: Special Issue on Photography, Archive and Memory', *Photographies*, 3:2 (2010), 127–38, both with further references.
2 – Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1998, 83–95.

A single glass plate negative formerly in the collection of Howard Carter (most famously the excavator of Tutankhamun's tomb) and now in the archives of the Griffith Institute, Oxford University raises a number of questions about photography, archaeological practice, and the creation and use of excavation archives. By following this negative, known as Negative VIII, on five of its trajectories through time, media, and space, I argue that the reproducibility of the photographic image creates a distinct set of issues within archaeology, which has preferred to emphasise photography as a unique record of the destructive excavation process. Tracing the genealogy of a photographic image (rather than the biography of a singular photograph) allows us to consider the circulation of photographs as physical objects and through public dissemination, as well as the relationship between an image's content and its use. The parallel existences of Negative VIII highlight the pitfalls and potentials of archival research, where – unless adequately recognised – the apparent banality of certain photographs, and their replication in multiple forms, may stubbornly confound attempts to deconstruct and decolonise the knowledge formations on which nineteenth-century Egyptology was built.

Keywords: *Howard Carter (1874–1939), Harry Burton (1879–1940), Tutankhamun, Valley of the Kings, archives, archaeological photography, photographic reproduction, albums, lantern slides*

The naming of negatives is a difficult matter. Negatives, their positives (prints in an array of media, lantern slides), and their doppelgängers (copy negatives made by photographing prints, digital scans) all present the archivist with a practical problem: how to register materially and temporally distinct permutations of essentially the same image, while at the same time differentiating the original or earliest form of the photograph, deemed closest to the moment of exposure and the photographer's will.¹ The reproducibility of photographic technology – itself a working tool of the archive – works against the categorisations, unique numbers, labels, and storage modes on which archival functioning depends; these anchors are inevitably inadequate to hold in place the discursively-produced significance of objects and images. Both the archive and the photograph, each meant to preserve memory, instead slip beyond it into the *hypomnesia* that Derrida argued is the archival condition of modernity.² The practical problem of naming negatives, positives, and duplicates

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Figure 1. Howard Carter (attr.) after Harry Burton, *Negative VIII*, 3¼ inch × 4¼ inch glass plate, 1922 or 1923. Griffith Institute, Oxford University, TAA i.5.viii (Burton kv08 neg).

hence belies a conceptual and methodological issue as well, which this article explores through a single image associated with the 1922 discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt's Valley of the Kings.

A quarter-plate glass negative in the Howard Carter archives of the Griffith Institute, Oxford University bears the Roman numeral VIII on its modern sleeve. Other negatives in the same series have their own Roman numerals scratched into the edge of the plate, but Negative VIII seems to have avoided this standard attention. Instead, its place in the sequence has been fixed not to the object but to the various ways in which the negative has been stored over the years, most recently in an acid-free envelope ordered with identically sleeved negatives in the metal drawers of a filing cabinet. But Negative VIII (seen here in [figure 1](#)) has other names as well – at least three different names, in fact. In its digital life it is known as PKV08, and exists with 1,846 other digitised images in a group entitled 'Photographs by Harry Burton'.³ The 'P' stands for photograph, the 'KV' for King's Valley (a standard Egyptological designation for the Valley of the Kings: the tomb of Tutankhamun is KV62, for example), and the '08' turns the Roman number into a more user-friendly Arabic one. Formally, the Griffith Institute's catalogue of the Carter archive identifies this negative as TAA i.5.viii, a rarely used designation in a classificatory scheme that emphasises its presumed status (the initial 'i') as a primary record of the Tutankhamun (hence, TAA) excavation, which Howard Carter directed from 1922 to 1932. More informally, staff and researchers in the archive refer to VIII and its series as the Valley of the Kings photographs, the Carter

3 – See <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/gallery/gal-090.html#> (accessed 15 June 2015).

4 – Further discussion in J. A. Baird, 'Photographing Dura-Europos, 1928–1937: An Archaeology of the Archive', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 115:3 (2011), 427–46; Frederick N. Bohrer, 'Photography and Archaeology: The Image as Object', in *Envisioning the Past: Archaeology and the Image*, ed. Sam Smiles and Stephanie Moser, Malden, MA: Blackwell 2005, 180–91; and Michael Shanks, 'Photography and Archaeology', in *The Cultural Life of Images: Visual Representation in Archaeology*, ed. Brian Leigh Molyneux, London: Routledge 1997, 73–107.
5 – Examples include Susan J. Allen, *Tutankhamun's Tomb: The Thrill of Discovery*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2006; Paul Collins and Liam McNamara, *Discovering Tutankhamun*, Oxford: Ashmolean Museum 2014; George B. Johnson, 'Painting with Light: The Work of Archaeology Photographer Harry Burton', *KMT*, 8:2 (Summer 1997), 58–77; and Ronald T. Ridley, 'The Dean of Archaeological Photographers: Harry Burton', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 99 (2013), 117–30.

6 – J. A. Baird and Leslie McFadyen, 'Towards an Archaeology of Archaeological Archives', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, 29:2 (2014), 15–33; and *Archives, Ancestors, Practices: Archaeology in the Light of Its History*, ed. Nathan Schlanger and Jarl Nordbladh, New York: Berghahn 2008.

7 – Elizabeth Edwards and Christopher Morton, 'Between Art and Information: Towards a Collecting History of Photographs', in *Photographs, Museums, Collections: Between Art and Information*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards and Christopher Morton, London: Bloomsbury 2015, 8–10. In the nineteenth century, there are also parallels and overlaps between photography and other replication technologies, such as plaster casts. See Stefanie Klammer, 'Neue Originale. Medienpluralität in der Klassischen Archäologie des 19. Jahrhunderts', in *Das Originale der Kopie. Kopien als Produkte und Medien der Transformation von Antike*, ed. Tatjana Bartsch, Marcus Becker, Horst Bredekamp, and Charlotte Schreiter, Berlin: De Gruyter 2010, 47–67.

negatives, or simply, as if among old friends, the ones with the Roman numbers. In his first published book about the tomb of Tutankhamun, Carter himself captioned the image, 'View of the Royal Cemetery with its Guardian Peak Above'.

The varied nomenclature of Negative VIII – as I will refer to it here – raises a number of questions about photography, archaeological practice, and the creation and use of excavation archives. Photographs created in conjunction with archaeology seem to exert a particularly lasting hold as innocent records of objective facts and nostalgic views of adventurous discovery.⁴ This is as much to do with photography's well-established imbrication in discourses of colonialism, evidence, and time as it is to do with archaeology's recidivist tendencies where critical engagement with its own histories is concerned. A famous find like the tomb of Tutankhamun exemplifies the problem: mythologised almost from the moment of its unearthing as a unique capsule of Egyptian antiquity, the tomb can still readily be presented in exhibitions, publications, and the media as the preordained outcome of archaeological perseverance, filtered through the heroic efforts of a talented excavator (Carter) and the credited photographer, Harry Burton.⁵ Yet the excavation archives hint at a different story. Unlike the softly lit photographs Burton took of the tomb's artefacts, for instance, or his crystal-clear exposures of the apparently untouched chambers, Negative VIII appears almost banal, a view instantly recognisable to any Egyptologist – or tourist – as the road leading into the Valley of the Kings. It is a thousand holiday snapshots, drained of colour. What is it doing in the Carter archive at all, other than multiplying its names?

This article takes the apparent banality of Negative VIII, its multiple names, and – as we will see – its multiple material forms as fundamental to understanding the entanglement of photography and the study of antiquity in the long nineteenth century, and beyond. First, I argue that the reproducibility of the photographic image creates a distinct set of issues within the archaeological archive, which is otherwise premised on the singularity of its dataset (tomb cards, object records, diaries, and so forth) and the unrepeatability of whatever excavation it documents. This tension between excavation-as-destruction and photograph-as-replication has implications for the practical care and use of photographic archives in the study of antiquity, as well as for the theoretical underpinning of the archaeological archive, whose formation, instabilities, and future potential have only begun to be considered within the field.⁶ To explore these implications further, I then follow Negative VIII on five trajectories through time, media, and space, teasing apart some of the assumptions that have often been brought to bear on archaeological photography – for instance, that photographs offer a unique record of a unique archaeological moment, or that the more able the photographer, the more 'true' and accurate the archaeologist's reconstruction of the past. The shifting names and forms of Negative VIII also force us to give due weight to the public face of archaeology (and here particularly Egyptology) and to the personal relationships through which archaeology in colonial-era Egypt operated, often crossing the presumed boundaries of nationality and social class.

What I offer here is not an object or social biography, a model that has proved influential and even powerful in parsing the changing states and status of artefacts over time. Photographs, as Edwards and Morton have recently argued, generate multiple histories, spatialities, and temporalities precisely because reproduction is inherent in the technology; photograph collections thus resist straightforward application of the biography model, operating as they do between the photographic object on the one hand, and its image content on the other. Instead, like branches of a family tree, photographs yield genealogies, with all the attendant gaps, collateral lines, and changes of identity.⁷ If Negative VIII, which represents a road, has travelled one to reach the archives of the Griffith Institute, it has not been – and cannot be – a linear route. To grasp what photography meant for archaeology and the study of antiquity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, let us begin with the archive and be prepared for diverging paths.

Archivings: Negative VIII (TAA i.5.viii)

As seen in [figure 1](#), Negative VIII is a landscape image, in both senses of the term. Shadows over the rocky surface in the foreground were cast by the afternoon sun as it slipped towards the Theban hills, since this photograph was taken with the camera facing approximately west-southwest towards the mountain peak known as al-Qurn. The peak has been a sacred setting for millennia, dignified successively with ancient Egyptian, Christian, and Islamic sites of worship. It dominates the skyline from several vantage points on the west bank of the Nile at Luxor, making it a notable landmark frequently included in postcards, tourist photographs, and the orientation shots of archaeological projects in the vicinity. From the left of the photograph, a well-defined road bordered by neatly placed rocks stretches towards the mountain until it disappears around a bend at the point where a simple wooden structure stands, its upright poles echoing the vertical fissures in the low cliffs beyond. This is the road developed in the latter nineteenth century over long-established tracks, to take tourists to visit the decorated rock-cut tombs in the Valley of the Kings. The Valley lies some five miles from the river, and in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, riding on a donkey was the preferred means of tourist transport, even if the indignity of the animal's gait became the stuff of travellers' lore. What the photograph shows us is a landscape well known to Egyptologists and other visitors to Egypt, and consequently a landscape shaped and controlled in the colonial era by the Service des Antiquités and its superintending body, the Ministry of Public Works.

As a physical object dating to 1922 or 1923, the glass plate numbered as Negative VIII measures 3¼ inch × 4¼ inch (8.5 cm × 10 cm), dimensions suggesting its use in a British-manufactured camera.⁸ It is filed with other quarter-plate and half-plate negatives in the Griffith Institute, Oxford University, which was established in 1939, the same year as Howard Carter's death. Carter's heir was his niece, Phyllis Walker, who donated all the records he held from the Tutankhamun excavation to the newly established institute, on the advice of other Egyptologists. This archive included his card catalogue of the objects found in the tomb; notebooks, diaries, and journals; drawings, typescripts, handwritten notes, and correspondence; and several hundred glass plate negatives identified as the work of Harry Burton. Unlike many photograph collections, the history of the photographs included in this archive is thus comparatively well documented. During the war, the negatives were warehoused in the East End of London, from whence they emerged unscathed to find a home in the Griffith Institute's purpose-built extension to the Ashmolean Museum. When this was demolished in 2000, the entire Carter archive moved with the rest of the Griffith Institute to the Sackler Library built on the cleared site.

Among the archived photographic material associated with the Tutankhamun excavation, large-format (18 cm × 24 cm) glass negatives are immediately recognisable as the work of Burton, who preferred the fine detail and direct printing this size allowed. Although Burton used a more portable half-plate camera as well, a number of the smaller format glass negatives appear to be the work of other photographers – including Howard Carter himself. Like many archaeologists of his day, Carter was quite a competent photographer. Earlier in his career, he had used photography Sherlock Holmes style, to record the footprints of tomb robbers in the Valley of the Kings as well as more standard archaeological subject matter, such as site views and object finds *in situ*.⁹ When it came to photographing the Tutankhamun find, however, Carter admitted his shortcomings: disappointed after developing a set of photographs taken of the tomb's sealed entrance in November 1922, Carter arranged the loan of Burton's services from the Metropolitan Museum

8 – *The Oxford Companion to the Photograph*, ed. Robin Lenman, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005, 228–29 ('formats, plate and film').

9 – C. N. Reeves and John H. Taylor, *Howard Carter before Tutankhamun*, London: British Museum Press 1992, 49 and 62.

of Art, whose Egyptian Expedition worked the neighbouring archaeological concession and enjoyed collegial relations with Carter. Some of Carter's 'failed' photographs can be identified in the archive as 3¼ inch × 4¼ inch quarter-plates, their poor contrast in the underground conditions making it clear why he found them unsatisfactory.

Since Negative VIII is the same size, it is likely to have been taken with Carter's camera as well. But it was not Carter who aimed his camera at the Theban hills one afternoon. Negative VIII is a copy negative, as the edges of the wooden copy-stand (visible in figure 1), with the print held in place by drawing and dressmaking pins, reveal. Rephotography was a crucial practice throughout the twentieth century, made redundant only by the relatively recent rise of scanning technology. As a form of direct copying used to assist with published reproductions, duplicate (and thus preserve) prints from lost or damaged negatives, or, in later usage, create 35 mm slides, rephotography was the bottom rung of a ladder of value which privileged art photography or singular photographic objects, like Daguerrotypes.¹⁰ In a context other than the Carter archives, which preserve what appears to be his own numbering system, copy negatives would have been devalued, separated from 'original' negatives in the same series or even destroyed. Their association with the discoverer of Tutankhamun is what ensured the survival of the Roman-numeral negatives as a complete series – an effective demonstration of two salient points: first, the contingencies on which archival orderings are based; and second, the importance of engaging with all the forms the photographic archive takes, regardless of whether they are 'mere' reproductions.

If we consider the negatives in the Roman numeral series as a group, numbered I to XCVI (with some numerals skipped and others supplemented by the suffix 'a'), their physical variety is striking: thirty-nine are large-format (18 cm × 24 cm) glass plates, Burton's trademark; twenty-one are glass quarter-plates, which I have suggested are Carter's work (and around one-third of which are copy negatives); eighteen are glass half-plates (12 cm × 16 cm and 10.5 cm × 16 cm, perhaps British and American sizes, respectively), some of which are also copy negatives; and nine are large-format film negatives, of which six are labelled as duplicates of the other three. The series also includes eleven film negatives in two different sizes (one cut from roll film, one in sheets), of the kind used in Kodak and similar handheld cameras in the early twentieth century. What is consistent in the group is that each image represents an aspect of archaeology in the Valley of the Kings, but not work inside the tomb of Tutankhamun or artefacts removed from it, which were instead catalogued using Arabic numbers. The Roman-numeral sequence mixes views of the Theban hills and the road to the Valley with interior shots of other royal tombs (these as large-format negatives, known to be Burton's) and numerous smaller-format images of the Egyptian workforce, from dusty basket-boys to the men who lifted and re-laid the metal tracks of a light railway in searing May heat, when the tomb's crated objects were transported to the river for shipment to Cairo.¹¹

From the perspective of a researcher or an archivist, this multiplicity of forms, subject matter, and replicative character could readily be construed as problematic, especially in a collection like Carter's where no other data, such as a photographer's name or a date, are explicitly recorded. Recognising that replication is inherent to the photographic archive, however, and that copies, originals, and reproductions exist in familial relationships with each other (to deploy Edwards and Morton's genealogical analogy), opens the possibility for photograph collections to speak to changing practices and priorities in archaeological research, as the next manifestation of Negative VIII demonstrates. Mediated through archival and human relationships, the circulation of photographs embedded them in new narratives and brought them to different audiences, even if the image itself stayed stubbornly the same.

10 – Edwards and Morton, 'Between Art and Information', 9–10; Angela Matyssek, 'Memory and the Archive: Photography, Conservation and Restoration', in *Photo Archives and the Photographic Memory of Art History*, ed. Costanza Caraffa, Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag 2011, 355–57.

11 – In the 1920s, American archaeologist George Reisner, director of the Harvard University–Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition at Giza in Egypt, advised the use of a 'snap-shot' film camera 'exclusively for taking pictures of the men at work' and other 'local inhabitants': Peter Der Manuelian and George Andrew Reisner, 'George Andrew Reisner on Archaeological Photography', *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 29 (1992), 17.

Blurrings: 'View of the Royal Cemetery with its Guardian Peak Above'

Having assembled a team of specialists – including Burton – to assist with complex clearance operations in the tomb, Carter worked furiously through the winter of 1922–23, mindful of the need to prepare and pack the objects by spring for safe-keeping in the Cairo museum, but also anxious to break through into the sealed burial chamber. The work proceeded with constant interruptions from journalists, distinguished visitors, and tourist crowds. Carter contracted to publish a book-length account mere months after the discovery, a project on which he collaborated with team member Arthur Mace, a steady hand and more experienced (not to mention better-educated) author. A bestseller when it appeared in 1923, *The Tomb of Tut.ankh.Amen* was the first of three eventual volumes, the last of which appeared in 1933.¹² Carter and Mace devoted the first five (of eleven) chapters of their book to a history of the Valley of the Kings in antiquity and ‘modern times’ (that is, since the Napoleonic expedition) and to a discovery narrative whereby Carter’s search for the tomb is retrospectively recounted as a quest based on reasoned deduction and archaeological foresight. The next three chapters recount the clearance of the Antechamber, describing finds which had already been presented in the press: the three laden funerary couches; the enigmatic guardian statues; and the chariots, storage boxes, sandals, furniture, and walking-sticks that facilitated interpretations of the boy-king as an ‘everyday’ ancient Egyptian filtered through familiar twentieth-century modes of consumption. Finally, the book’s last three chapters respectively discuss famous visitors to the tomb; detail the work of repairing, recording, photographing, and packing the objects; and end with a trailer for what would come next season, the burial chamber having been breached in February 1923.

The title page of *The Tomb of Tut.ankh.Amen* highlights the inclusion of ‘104 photographs by Mr Harry Burton of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’. Since no other photographer is mentioned, this credit suggests that Burton took each of the photographs used, while their inclusion in this first, dedicated publication implies that they are contemporaneous with the work on the Tutankhamun tomb over the course of the 1922–23 season. For a photographer to be credited at all in an excavation report was unusual in Egyptian archaeology at the time; it testifies to the esteem in which Burton’s work was held, as well as Carter’s need to acknowledge the contribution of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Many of the photographs (Plates XLVI–LXXIX) appear in an Appendix called a ‘Description of the Objects’, but the rest are inserted as halftones on glossy paper between pages of the text, which often refers the reader to them – except for a handful of plates positioned in the early chapters devoted to exposition of the landscape and monuments of the Valley of the Kings.

One of the plates not anchored to a specific passage in the text reproduces the same image captured in Negative VIII. Inserted opposite page 58, and seen here in [figure 2](#), Plate IV bears the caption quoted earlier, ‘View of the Royal Cemetery with its Guardian Peak Above’. It forms a short sequence with the plates inserted a few pages before and ahead of it: Plate III, ‘Road to the Tombs of the Kings’, showing a rock-lined path with al-Gurn in the far distance; and Plate V, ‘Entrance to the Tomb of Ramses VI’, showing the above-ground doorway of the tomb next to Tutankhamun’s, here with a metal security barrier across it, the gate open, and an Egyptian man in white turban and dark garment standing in front, facing the camera. In the Carter archive, Plate III is Negative III, with its caption written directly on the edge of the negative; like Negative VIII, it is a quarter-plate copy negative, and in the book it is the first plate not reproducing star objects from the first season’s work. Unlike Negatives III and VIII, Plate VI corresponds to a glass plate numbered Negative XXVII, its large format marking it as the work of Harry Burton. If we consider the relationship between the text and these images (none of which the authors refer to), what emerges is a visual scene-setting that reinforces

12 – Howard Carter and A. C. Mace, *The Tomb of Tut.ankh.Amen*, London: Cassell 1923; Howard Carter, *The Tomb of Tut. ankh.Amen*, vol. 2, London: Cassell 1927; and Howard Carter, *The Tomb of Tut.ankh. Amen*, vol. 3, London: Cassell 1933.

13 – Plate IX in the book is a photographic print catalogued in the Griffith Institute as Carter MSS I.J. 322, dated 23 December 1917, available at <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/cc/page/photo/322.html> (accessed 15 June 2015).

the verbal narrative but also operates on its own, leading the reader/viewer along the desert road and past (as well as into) the royal tombs. Several pages on, the reader/viewer joins the archaeological quest, using photographs probably taken by Carter to link his work in the area in 1917 to the recent success of autumn 1922.¹³ Cross-references begin to link text to image more closely, but the images themselves derive from multiple dates, photographers, and technologies, including further copy negatives.

Parsing the photographic genealogies of *The Tomb of Tut.ankh.Amen* plates lets us see that, however sharp the images, any original function they were taken to serve, and in many cases even their 'origin' itself, had become blurred. They are photographs of antiquity in that they depict sites and activities that met established expectations of archaeological tropes, not to mention Orientalist ones like the 'native' figure of the tomb guard, inserted as if for scale or local colour. Their inclusion in Carter and Mace's popular volume places the tomb of Tutankhamun within this pre-established lineage, while also linking these specific images and their archival presence to the famous find. The road to the Valley of the Kings runs through time as well as space, leading to the moment of revelation. But what is not revealed in this permutation of Negative VIII is that the photograph comes from a different moment of discovery altogether.

Fixatives: 'Inside the Gate Shewing the Donkey Stand' and Negative T3125 (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Carter had the right road, but in the wrong place: he had lifted it from one moment captured by a camera lens and dropped it into another, splicing images of a route he knew well to create an approximated journey for the *Tomb of Tut.ankh.Amen* readership. If the conjecture is correct – that Negative VIII was produced with Carter's quarter-plate camera – then he both is and yet is not the photographer: he may have made the copy negative, but he did not take the 'original' image. Instead, the print stuck through with pins is a photograph taken around 1910 in conjunction with an archaeological expedition in which Carter had no direct involvement – the discovery and clearance of the tomb of Horemheb (KV57), a military officer who became king in the aftermath of Tutankhamun's short reign. At the time, the Service des Antiquités concession to excavate in the Valley of the Kings was held by a wealthy American lawyer and businessman, Theodore M. Davis.¹⁴ Only when Davis relinquished the concession, just before World War I, did the Service grant it instead to the Earl of Carnarvon, who had already been employing Carter to dig on his behalf. Although many archaeologists frowned on the patronage of men like Davis and Carnarvon, the antiquities service could never have afforded to carry out such work with its limited government funds.

Like Carnarvon, Davis hired experienced archaeologists to excavate and record his discoveries, which he published in folios that were lavishly produced, if thin on detail, by the standards of the day. It is in the publication of the Horemheb tomb that Negative VIII's 'parent' photograph appears, designated as Plate III and captioned 'Inside the Gate Shewing the Donkey Stand'; it is illustrated here as figure 3.¹⁵ Unlike the caption Carter and Mace later associated with this image, the caption used in Davis's *The Tombs of Harmhabi and Touatânkhamanou* draws attention not to the towering peak, but to the simple wooden structure of the donkey stand where tourists' mounts sheltered. The 'gate' refers to the narrow entrance to the Valley itself; the usage may also reflect an English adaptation of the Valley's Arabic name, *Biban el-Malek*, 'gates of the kings'. Tutankhamun is a spectral presence here, his name in the book's title arising from Davis's misapprehension that he had found the king's tomb in what was in fact a cache of embalming materials. Carter haunts the photograph as well, for it was Carter, in his capacity as government antiquities inspector from 1900 to 1905, who had had the animal shelter built in the first place.

14 – John M. Adams, *The Millionaire and the Mummies: Theodore Davis's Gilded Age in the Valley of the Kings*, New York: St Martin's Press 2013, esp. 209, 274 and 284–87.

15 – Theodore M. Davis, *The Tombs of Harmhabi and Touatânkhamanou*, London: Constable 1912.

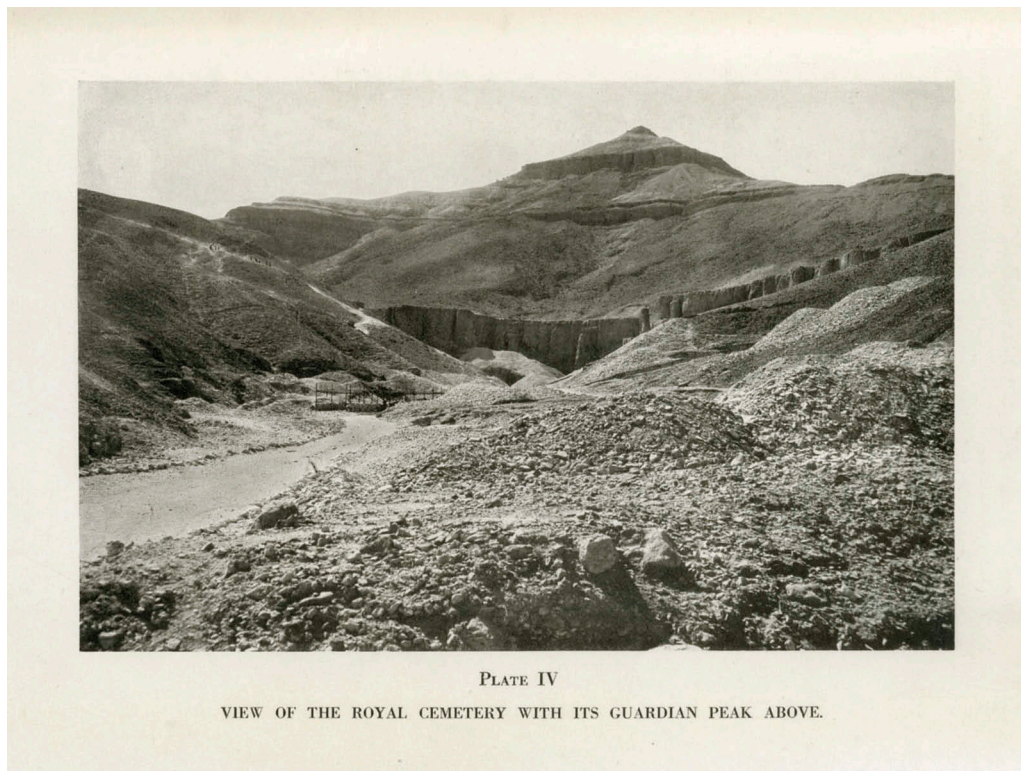


Figure 2. Harry Burton, *View of the Royal Cemetery with its Guardian Peak Above*, ca. 1910. From Howard Carter and A. C. Mace, *The Tomb of Tut.ankh. Amen*, London: Cassell 1923, pl. V. Reproduced with permission of the Griffith Institute, University of Oxford.



Figure 3. Harry Burton, *Inside the Gate Shewing the Donkey Stand*, ca. 1910. From Theodore M. Davis, *The Tombs of Harmhabi and Touatânkhamanou*, London: Constable 1912, pl. III. Reproduced with permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. Shelfmark: 331 S 2 D [fol.].

Visible in [figure 1](#), the pins in Negative VIII make it clear that the photograph Carter copied in the early 1920s was an actual print, rather than the printed page of Davis's *Harmhabi* volume. The photographic replication of photographs relied on access to printed versions, and tracing genealogies of photographs thus raises questions about the circulation not only of images more generally, but also specifically of objects such as prints or postcards. The exchangeability of the photographic object speaks to networks of interpersonal and professional associations, which may be formed and re-formed over time and in different places. This turns out to be the case with Negative VIII once its 'original' photographer is identified: Harry Burton, the same man whose services were seconded to Carter throughout the Tutankhamun excavation. Burton first visited Egypt in 1903 at the behest of Theodore Davis, whom he had met in the Anglophone art circles of Florence. Although lacking any prior experience of the country, or of archaeology (in Florence, he had been personal secretary to British art historian Robert Henry Hobart Cust), Burton became an established part of Davis's expedition. Already a keen photographer, he began to take photographs for Davis in 1910; as was common in excavation reports for Egyptian sites at the time, however, his photographic work was never credited in publications, only that of the authors and illustrators.

Both living and working on the West Bank of the Nile opposite Luxor, and both one-time associates of Davis (Carter illustrated finds for Davis in the early 1900s), Burton and Carter had known each other more than fifteen years by the time of the Tutankhamun discovery. Just as Carter had moved on from jobbing for Davis to being employed by Carnarvon, Burton had moved on to work as specialist photographer for the Egyptian Expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. With some of Burton's own working archive kept at the well-equipped Metropolitan Museum dig house, it was straightforward enough for him to supply Carter with a suitable print for illustrating the Valley road in *The Tomb of Tut.ankh.Amen*. Its salient visual features – the road and the mountain, demarcating the accessible 'antiquity' that is the Valley of the Kings – made the content of Negative VIII interchangeable from one captioned context to another, although the specifics of the photographic exchange between Carter and Burton can only be surmised. Perhaps Carter enjoyed the image's reference to his earlier career; perhaps Burton simply had a print to spare. A simple change of caption from one book to the next shifted the focus of the image from the donkey stand to the peak of al-Qurn and the promise of the road as it curved around the bend – towards the tomb of Tutankhamun this time, not Horemheb. Although a caption can make or unmake meaning for any pictorial representation, not just a photograph, its mechanical technology had always lent photography a particular evidentiary weight.¹⁶ It is Carter's scientific, archaeological, and authorial command which permits the kind of re-naming that, in other hands, would question the objective truth of the image but that here can guide the viewer to focus on one detail over another, switching both the 'there' and the 'then' that a photograph (in Barthes's formulation) implied.¹⁷

Burton's early work for Davis has since been construed as a precursor to his more accomplished and prolific output for the Expedition and, of course, for Tutankhamun. The bleached sky of the 'donkey stand' photograph indicates, for instance, that Burton had not yet begun to employ yellow filters to correct for the blue-sensitivity of the orthochromatic plates then in use. Its pale uniformity suggests that he painted over the sky on the negative, correcting for the mottled appearance that overexposure would otherwise produce. The unexpected discovery of the painted-over negative in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, after this article had been written, proves this to be the case. Catalogued as negative T3125 (T for 'Theban Series') in the Museum's Department of Egyptian Art, the extremely large (9 inch × 12 inch) glass plate was one of nineteen negatives and prints donated by Burton in 1926, all representing work he had done for Davis in the 1910s. 'I have been getting rid of all my negatives', Burton explained in a letter written from his Florence home to the head of the Department, Albert Lythgoe.¹⁸ Black pigment carefully follows the horizon line on the non-emulsion side of

16 – John Berger has also drawn attention to the role of the caption in constituting the meaning of photographs: see 'Appearances: The Ambiguity of the Photograph', in John Berger, *Understanding a Photograph*, ed. Geoff Dyer, London: Penguin 2013, 61–73 [first published in Berger's *Another Way of Telling*, London: Writers and Readers 1982].
17 – Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (1981), trans. Richard Howard, London: Vintage Classics 2000; with relevant reflections in Christopher Pinney, *The Coming of Photography in India*, London: British Library 2008, 1–4.

18 – Letter dated 26 July 1926 on personal letterhead, Burton correspondence files, Department of Egyptian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

negative T3125, and a paper label bearing the Arabic numeral '8' corresponds – by chance or by design – to the Roman numeral VIII that Carter later applied to his own copy version.

Recognised by his contemporaries for the artistry and clarity of his photographs (and his easy temperament – no small matter in the confines of archaeological work), Burton has continued to receive laudatory treatment within Egyptology, at the expense of more probing analysis.¹⁹ Much like the hero-discoverer myth in archaeology, the 'great man' approach to photography abrogates its collaborative and contingent nature: the negotiated decisions made about what to photograph, and where, and when; the contributions of Burton's Egyptian assistants; the happenstance by which two old colleagues might swap photographs; and, for Burton and the Museum, the reciprocal relationship that linked employer and employee through the mechanics of donation. Moreover, the apparent ease with which a photograph from one excavation could do double duty for another challenges archaeology's self-conscious claim to the uniqueness and scientific rigour of its field photography. As much as any discipline, archaeology used photography in multiple registers, and photography in turn made certain aspects of archaeology either possible or impossible, to echo Pinney's recent revisiting of this Barthesian quandary.²⁰ What both published versions of Negative VIII underscore is that photography facilitated archaeology's ability to communicate its visions of antiquity to an ever-expanding public – through publications, news media, and the lecture hall.

Projections: Lantern Slide VIII (TAA i.8, Drawer 7)

Not surprisingly given the fame of the discovery, Howard Carter was in high demand as a lecturer, and although he had no prior public-speaking experience, he made quite a success of an extensive lecture tour to North America in 1924, as well as delivering several talks in the UK and on the Continent throughout the decade. His lectures were illustrated by 3¼-inch lantern slides like that shown in figure 4, including a few hand-coloured slides remarked on by the London *Times* when it reported Carter's talk to a packed New Oxford Theatre in September 1923. The slides – and on this instance, moving picture film as well – provoked 'enthusiastic applause' from the audience,

now at a moving picture of the wild scenery of the Valley; now at one of the struggles of Mr. Carter and Mr. [Arthur] Callender [a team member], assisted by Egyptian workmen, to carry some wonderful object up the steep stairway at the entrance to the Tombs; now at the picture in colours of the throne of Tutankhamen glittering with gold and faience and semi-precious stones. [...] The photographs gave, indeed, a complete and fascinating survey of the whole story of the discovery.²¹

Both the lantern slides and the twelve-drawer wooden cabinet in which Carter stored them are preserved in the Griffith Institute, catalogued like the photographic negatives with the 'i' designation for primary material associated with the excavation.²² There are more than six hundred slides in total, including two or three versions of some images, filed in separate drawers as 'duplicate sets'. They include photographs from every season of work up to the autumn of 1928, when the last tomb chamber (the so-called Annexe) was cleared; hence the collection was added to at intervals, as new photographs became available and new slides were required. Almost all correspond to negatives in Carter's possession, although some show photographs not represented among the extant glass plates. Many bear the label of the James Sinclair Company, which was one of the leading manufacturers and suppliers of photographic goods in 1920s London, when they were based in Haymarket near Piccadilly Circus. Firms like Sinclair could produce lantern slides in volume for clients, using a technique that was still recommended in handbooks of archaeological photography up to the 1950s.²³ Lantern slides were made by exposing the negative through an enlarger (to reduce its size where necessary) onto a collodion-coated glass slide, which was then developed, fixed, and washed to produce a positive transparency. A second sheet of glass laid over the slide face protected the developed emulsion, and the two were then bound together with tapes manufactured for the purpose.²⁴

19 – See note 5.

20 – Pinney, *Coming of Photography*, 1–7.

21 – 'Tutankhamen', *The Times* (Saturday, 22 September 1923), 8.

22 – Collins and McNamara, *Discovering Tutankhamun*, 65, bottom photograph, where the relevant drawer is opened in the middle row.

23 – M. B. Cookson, *Photography for Archaeologists*, London: Max Parrish 1954, 104.

24 – Summarised in Gordon Baldwin, *Looking at Photographs: A Guide to Technical Terms*, Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum; London: British Museum Press 1991, 58; and see detailed presentation in R. Child Bayley, *The Complete Photographer*, 9th edn, London: Methuen & Co 1926, 245–53 (which opens, 'It has been said that the greatest test of technical excellence in a negative is making a lantern slide from it, and the observation is very true'.)

Figure 4. Harry Burton, *Lantern slide VIII*, 3¼ inch × 3¼ inch, ca. 1920s. Griffith Institute, Oxford University, TAA i.8, Drawer 7 (Burton kv08 LS).



25 – Frederick N. Bohrer, 'Photographic Perspectives: Photography and the Institutional Formation of Art History', in *Art History and Its Institutions: Foundations of a Discipline*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield, London: Routledge 2002, 246–59; and Howard B. Leighton, 'The Lantern Slide and Art History,' *History of Photography*, 8:2 (April–June 1984), 107–18.

26 – Correspondence concerning the lantern slide donation in the Griffith Institute archives as follows: File 'Carter 1945–6', letters dated 27 December 1946 (D. B. Harden to S. R. K. Glanville), 15 December 1946 (P. Walker to D. B. Harden), 11 December 1946 (D. B. Harden to P. Walker), and 2 December 1946 (D. B. Harden to P. Walker); and File 'Carter 1947–77', letters dated 25 April 1947 (S. R. K. Glanville to J. Waley, on *Cambridge Ancient History* compliments slip), and 3 March 1947 (J. Černý to J. Waley, on University College London-headed notepaper).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, lantern slides were pivotal to the public dissemination of photography and to the professionalised operation of specialist areas of study – not least archaeology and art history. Arguably, lantern slide projection made possible the academic training and exchange of ideas on which such image-focused disciplines depended.²⁵ The history of further duplicates and triplicates among the Carter lantern slides makes a salient example: in 1946, after consulting Carter's niece (who replied that 'for several reasons, I am not too anxious for the British Museum to have the first offer'), the Griffith Institute offered 222 slides to Prof. Stephen Glanville at the University of Cambridge and 102 slides to Dr Jaroslav Černý at University College London – with Oxford, the other university centres for Egyptology in the UK. Archive correspondence indicates the great care that went into this exchange of slides from each side, with descriptive lists, shipment notes, and thank-you letters from the recipients. Nor would it seem that such care over lantern slide ownership was in any way remarkable; in fact, Černý returned a slide numbered 483 to the Institute when he realised he already had an identical one in his collection.²⁶

Experiencing a slide-illustrated lecture involved quite a different engagement with photographic images than, for instance, viewing them in the pages of a book. Sequenced with other slides, matched in pairs where dual projection was used, and accompanied by the spoken lecture or commentary, the lantern slide expanded far beyond its modest physical dimensions. The consumption of photographs as part of an audience in a darkened room, usually in a public or semi-public space, brought photograph and audience alike into the realm of spectacle.

If, as Edwards has observed, the lantern slide ‘is a much underestimated layer in the formation of historical consciousness and imagination’, what consciousness and what imaginings did a slide like Negative VIII engender in viewers when Carter projected it onto the theatre screen?²⁷ There is no way to know for certain whether Carter used the slide version of Negative VIII, seen in figure 4 (its emulsion now clouded, its taped edges tattered), in any of his lectures – but the possibility certainly existed, since he went to the effort to have most of the Roman-numeral sequence of negatives made up in lantern format; the image would already be familiar to audience members who had read his book, as well. The slides are numbered in a system that corresponds almost exactly to the numbering of his negatives, maintaining the separate sequences of Arabic numbers for tomb interiors and objects, photographed by Burton, and Roman numbers for views of the Valley and the site clearance, which as we have seen mix Burton’s stand-camera work for different expeditions with Carter’s (and perhaps others’) handheld photography. On the September 1923 occasion reported by the *Times*, Carter’s first foray into public speaking used moving camera footage to transport the audience to ‘the wild scenery of the Valley’, but later lectures perhaps relied on the Roman-number slides to create a similar effect. Any ‘wildness’ that spectators like the *Times* reporter drew from these images must refer to the rough rocks and steep cliffs of the desert geography, and perhaps to the Orientalising donkeys or lone, robe-wearing Egyptians who appear in some shots – in other words, ignoring the testimony of the carefully tended road that this was a landscape which had been brought to heel.

By the mid-twentieth century, M. B. Cookson’s manual *Photography for Archaeologists* (1954) would specify the need to take photographs of a site before excavation began, some of which ‘should be purely pictorial’.²⁸ Cookson never specifies why such ‘pictorial’ views were desirable, but his advice codified a photographic practice that was already well established in Carter’s day. Images like Negative VIII familiarised the ‘wildness’ or exoticness of sites associated with Middle Eastern antiquity in a way not dissimilar to much earlier photography – for instance by Maxime du Camp, Francis Frith, or the commercial studios of Bonfils, Pascal Sébah, and Abdullah Frères. Photographs associated with the archaeological project can be better understood by looking beyond that specific, disciplinary context to see how they resonate with other image worlds and how they anticipate, or at least potentiate, their subsequent uses, whether for the public arena of lectures and news media, the academic sphere of publications and professional communiqués, or, in the fifth and nearly final glimpse of Negative VIII to be considered here, the personal collections (and recollections) of the archaeologist.

Memories: Carter Album 10, Page 6 (TAA i.6.10.6)

Carter’s niece and heir, Phyllis Walker, followed her initial 1939 donation of the Tutankhamun excavation archives with a second donation in 1959, comprising ten albums of mounted photographs.²⁹ The albums are large (typically 43 cm long, 28 cm wide, and 6 cm deep), with similar bindings but two different styles of endpapers: one a plain grey like the pages of each album, the other a more refined-looking marbled pattern. In a letter from the Griffith Institute acknowledging receipt, the unnamed author – identifiable as the Institute’s assistant secretary, Barbara M. Sewell – thanks Walker for the albums, which had been brought to Oxford from London on the train by a mutual acquaintance. Some of the albums had suffered from damp, Sewell notes, and are laid out ‘with a three-day draught blowing through them’, with plans to rebind the two worst affected.³⁰ This does not appear to have happened, given that two of the ten albums still display warped pages and water-stained prints, and that the style of the albums is consistent not only

27 – Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination, 1885–1918*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2012, 237.

28 – Cookson, *Photography for Archaeologists*, 48.

29 – See http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/burton_album10.html (accessed 15 April 2015).

30 – Griffith Institute archives, File ‘Carter 1947–1977’, carbon copy of a letter dated 1 July 1959 (B. Sewell to P. Walker, on Griffith Institute letterhead).

31 – For the Griffith Institute set, see http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/burton_albums.html (accessed 15 June 2015); and for the digitised set in Heidelberg, see <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/burton1922ga> (accessed 15 June 2015). The Heidelberg albums were purchased from a London dealer in the 1980s; no further information about their provenance is available, but at the time they were created the albums would have had limited production and usefulness beyond the excavation team.

among these ten that belonged to Carter, but also with five similar albums now in the Universitätsbibliothek, Heidelberg, which may once have been in the possession of another team member.³¹

The Carter albums were assigned numbers 1–10 (or I–X, as pencilled in the inside front covers) after they entered the Institute archives, since the numbering does not correspond to the alphabetical sequence in which several of them – and the five Heidelberg albums – belong: Antechamber to Botanical Specimens (Carter 6, Heidelberg 2); Boxes to Incense (Carter 1, Heidelberg 3); Jewellery to Sticks (Carter 5, Heidelberg 4); and Stools to Weapons (Carter 4, Heidelberg 5), with the fifth comprising prints of Roman-numeral negatives I–LVII, and labelled as such on the spine of the album in Oxford (Carter 10, Heidelberg 1). The five Carter albums that are distinct from the Heidelberg set are those with the marbled, rather than grey, endpapers. They comprise two albums of photographs from the first two seasons in the tomb, leading up to the opening of the burial chamber (Carter 2 and 3); one album devoted to the unwrapping of the royal mummy in 1926 (Carter 7, with warped pages); one album mainly dedicated to the jewellery and other paraphernalia found with the mummy (Carter 8, with some water damage); and one album with further photographs from the Roman-numeral series, negatives LVIII–LXXXV (Carter 9).



Figure 5. Harry Burton, *Negative VIII*, silver gelatin print from glass negative, photograph ca. 1910, print and mounting ca. 1920s. Carter album 10, page 6; Griffith Institute, Oxford University, TAA i.6.10.6.

Figure 5 shows the sixth page of Carter album 10 (hence the digits 10.6 at the end of the archival reference in the sub-heading above), in which Negative VIII appears in sequence.³² In both albums, the print is an enlargement of Carter's quarter-plate copy negative, centred on the grey paper leaf and cropped to remove any trace of the pins and copy-stand visible in figure 1. The print appears to be made on single or lightweight silver gelatin developing-out paper, in keeping with prints in this and most of the other albums Carter owned.³³ Apart from a few words or phrases in those albums with organised headings, most of the album pages are as spare as Negative VIII's, with only the negative number inked above the photograph. The handwriting is Burton's, and the prints and mounting are more than likely his work as well. Like the lantern slides, Carter album 10 bears a label from the Sinclair company inside its back cover, indicating that the album was purchased there, but the printing and compiling may well have taken place in Luxor, where Burton did most of his printing and put together albums (in an entirely different format) for the Metropolitan Museum's own on-site archive.

Each of the Carter albums appears to have functioned – at least on one level – as a consultation set to help identify photographs and their negatives by theme. Other archaeologists of the time used albums for reference purposes in a similar way: in the 1880s, W. M. F. Petrie circulated albums of prints among his friends and colleagues, offering to make copies of any photograph that interested them; while in the 1930s, the University of Michigan expedition to Karanis kept what they termed division albums, in which photographs of excavated finds, laid out in groups with numbers next to each object, were often ticked with a cross on the print to indicate objects that remained in Egypt after the division of finds with the antiquities service.³⁴ The albums, which accompanied the excavators back to Michigan, hence served as a record of the 'complete' finds and as a stand-in for the objects not ceded to the university. Using an album for photographic storage was a particularly apt choice, given the format's association with recording (or, creating) memory through collecting, arranging, and revisiting the images within its pages. The photograph album operated as *aide-mémoire* and memorial alike, reflecting photography's own role as a form of externalised memory.³⁵

What is distinctive about the album as a photographic object is the way in which it imposes a narrative order as the book-like leaves are turned, and introduces an element of suspense since each page conceals the next.³⁶ The different structurings of the Carter albums – numerical order by negative, alphabetical order by object type or tomb chamber, and both time-specific and thematic for the mummy and its unwrapping – indicate the different kinds of narratives that could be created from archaeological photographs. Functional as the albums are, as a finding aid to the negatives, they also hint at a slippage between the private and public, or the personal and professional, uses of photography, reminding us how misleading these distinctions are in the colonial context of the Middle East.³⁷ Both leisure travellers and Egyptologists visiting the country for work combined the consumption of personal photographs and commercial images, exemplifying what Micklewright has characterised as the 'personal, fragmented, and distinctive' experience of visitors to the Middle East, regardless of the supposed coherence of colonial regimes.³⁸ Certainly colonialism shadows the Carter albums, which exclude commercial images but include photographs from different sources and images that had enjoyed a parallel, public life in news media, books, and lectures. Albums 9 and 10, devoted to the Roman-numeral series, belie their tidy sequence and grand numbering when the negatives themselves are taken into account. They become as personal and as fragmented as any scrapbook, here a copy made from a gifted print, there a large-format plate courtesy of Burton's archive, and there again a series of smaller-format photographs, perhaps by Carter, which show the Egyptian workmen – their bodies deemed impervious to the heat – lifting

32 – In Heidelberg album 1, the print appears on page 7 and is mislabelled as Negative VII, having been switched inadvertently with the correct negative of that number, mounted on the following page as Negative VIII.

33 – See Dusan C. Stulik and Art Kaplan, 'Silver Gelatin', *The Atlas of Analytical Signatures of Photographic Processes*, Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute 2013, 24–32, available at http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/pdf/atlas_silver_gelatin.pdf (accessed 15 June 2015). The identification here is deduced from visual inspection of mounted and loose prints; no chemical or microscopic analysis has been undertaken. Prints in other Carter albums – notably Album 7, the mummy unwrapping – are on much heavier paper, the prints having at one time been hole-punched for use in a ring binder.

34 – For an online presentation of one such album, see *Petrie's Photographs of Egypt*, with introductory essay by Stephen Quirke, available at http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/ppoe_opening_page.html (accessed 15 June 2015). For the Karanis albums, see T. G. Wilfong and Andrew W. S. Ferrara, *Karanis Revealed: Discovering the Past and Present of a Michigan Excavation in Egypt*, Ann Arbor, MI: Kelsey Museum of Archaeology 2014, 18–20.

35 – Edwards, *Camera as Historian*, 14–15.

36 – Christopher Morton, 'The Initiation of Kamanga: Visuality and Textuality in Evans-Pritchard's Zande Ethnography', in *Photography, Anthropology and History: Expanding the Frame*, ed. Christopher Morton and Elizabeth Edwards, Farnham: Ashgate 2009, 137.

37 – Luke Gartlan, 'Dandies on the Pyramids: Photography and German-Speaking Artists in Cairo', in *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation*, ed. Ali Behdad and Luke Gartlan, Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute 2013, 131–32.

38 – Nancy Micklewright, *A Victorian Traveler in the Middle East: The Photography and Travel Writing of Annie Lady Brassey*, Aldershot: Ashgate 2003, 182–83. For another example of a personal album based on travel in Egypt, see Alison Nordström, 'Making a Journey: The Tupper Scrapbooks and the Travel They Describe', in *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, London: Routledge 2004, 81–95. Egyptologists and Egyptological institutions also acquired and albumed commercial images: *Fotografi in Terra d'Egitto: Immagini dall'archivio storico della Soprintendenza al Museo delle Antichità Egizie di Torino*, ed. Piero Racanici, Turin: Pas Informazione 1991.

39 – Carter and Mace, *Tomb of Tut.ankh. Amen*, 177, described how fifty men worked for fifteen hours to transport the crates, ‘a fine testimonial to the zeal of our workmen. I may add that the work was carried out under a scorching sun, with a shade temperature of considerably over a hundred, the metal rails under these conditions being almost too hot to touch’. Compare Dias’s discussion of the colonised body perceived as a tool or machine: Nélia Dias, ‘Exploring the Senses and Exploiting the Land: Railroads, Bodies and Measurement in Nineteenth-Century French Colonies’, in *Material Powers: Cultural Studies, History, and the Material Turn*, ed. Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce, London: Routledge 2010, 179–80.

40 – Claire L. Lyons, ‘The Art and Science of Antiquity in Nineteenth-Century Photography’, in *Antiquity and Photography: Early Views of Ancient Mediterranean Sites*, ed. Claire L. Lyons, John K. Papadopoulos, Lindsey S. Stewart, and Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum 2005, 25.

and re-laying the metal tracks of the light railway.³⁹ These last photographs do not appear with the other Roman-numeral negatives on the Griffith Institute website today, and only one or two were published in newspapers at the time; in the albums, however, the full set appears, as if this visual evidence of indigenous contribution to the discovery could be safely contained therein.

It does not seem too fanciful to imagine the albums becoming a performance of memory in Carter’s possession, either on his own or in company with others. Their photographs depict people, objects, and landscapes he knew well – one reason, perhaps, why there are no identifying captions. Unlike the other excavation records she inherited, the more private associations of the album format may have led Walker to keep them in her possession for so long. For the archaeologist, as for the tourist (and what line can be drawn between the two?), taking photographs, collecting photographs, and arranging photographs in albums upon the return home ultimately constituted a claim for having been there and done that.⁴⁰ Although he returned to his house in the Valley each year, Carter spent more time in London throughout the 1930s, plagued by health problems but meant to be working on a final, scholarly publication of the tomb, which never appeared. In his elegant flat, the bound albums offered the most immediate point of contact with an archaeological find that had changed Egyptian archaeology – and his own life. To open the marbled covers of what is now called Album 10 was to revisit places, times, and personal relationships: first, the Valley landscape of the initial dozen negatives; next, the light rail transport to the river; then other royal tombs photographed by Burton, followed by the dusty faces of Egyptian men and boys engaged in clearance and backfilling work; and finally, the culmination of the album with Negative LVII, the pristine entrance to Tutankhamun’s tomb. Carter’s road had reached its end.

Conclusions

These five glimpses of a single photographic image highlight the pitfalls and potentials of archival research concerned with photography and the study of antiquity. That the archive is the entity in which, and from which, photographic meanings are made is a statement that bears repeating, but that also requires further interrogation to understand better both the methodological and theoretical implications of what Baird has termed an ‘archaeology of the archive’.⁴¹ We can take ‘archive’ in its literal sense – here, the archive of Howard Carter’s work on the tomb of Tutankhamun – but should be mindful also of its wider sense, as the material and immaterial forms of discursively-produced knowledge accrued around documents, objects, images, and texts that have been considered to hold some historical significance – even where that significance now seems inconsequential, obscure, or banal, like the landscape of the Valley of the Kings. Since the archive is beyond or beneath memory (*hypomnesic*, in Derrida’s terminology), obscurity is to some extent an inherent archival condition, as it is to some extent an inherent photographic condition as well; hence the need for captions or spoken text to supply specific meanings to the image.⁴² This makes both the archive and photography useful tools for thinking about how camerawork, image reproduction, and photograph circulation permeated the study of Egyptian antiquity by the end of the long nineteenth century, establishing archival trajectories whose traces can still be seen in the use of photographic archives today.

The frameworks of knowledge that archival processes have created remain too often unacknowledged, not to mention unchallenged. Although there was scope within archaeology for images of different origins, like Negative VIII, to be deployed in a range of contexts, it is significant that in Carter’s personal archive and in the Griffith Institute archives today, their classification as ‘excavation’ photographs has superseded other classificatory concerns, such as the format of the negative, the date when it was taken, or the identity of the photographer. A

41 – Baird, ‘Photographing Dura-Europos’.

42 – Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 83–95.

final glimpse of Negative VIII confirms how easily the archive (in that wider sense) forgets what it purports to preserve: since 2002, it has also been known as Image 12575 on the website of the Theban Mapping Project, where it features in ‘The Valley of the Kings: Then and Now’, paired with photographs taken from the same vantage point, the dirt road long paved over.⁴³ There, the photograph is wrongly credited to Lancelot Crane, the artist who illustrated finds in the *Harmhabi* publication and was thus named on the book’s title page – unlike Harry Burton, whose photography did not then merit any mention.

The several permutations of Negative VIII demonstrate the lingering influence of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century archaeological photography, the centrality of photographic replication in archaeological practice, and the possibility of linking the public-facing use of photographs with their circulation among personal and professional networks. Traced from one expedition to another, this negative’s genealogy brings into question the ubiquitous assertion – often made by archaeologists themselves – that photography is a unique and objective record of the ancient, uncovered past. Not only does such a statement ignore the exigencies of photographic practice, but it also points to the ongoing need for archaeology to interrogate the archival and visualisation practices that underpin its discursive strategies, rather than treating photographic images as documentary sources alone. Otherwise, archaeological archives, so many of which were formed in a colonial context, will stubbornly confound attempts to deconstruct and decolonise the knowledge formations on which nineteenth-century Egyptology was built. The naming of negatives is a difficult matter indeed.

43 – See http://www.thebanmappingproject.com/articles/article_3.1.html (accessed 15 June 2015).