



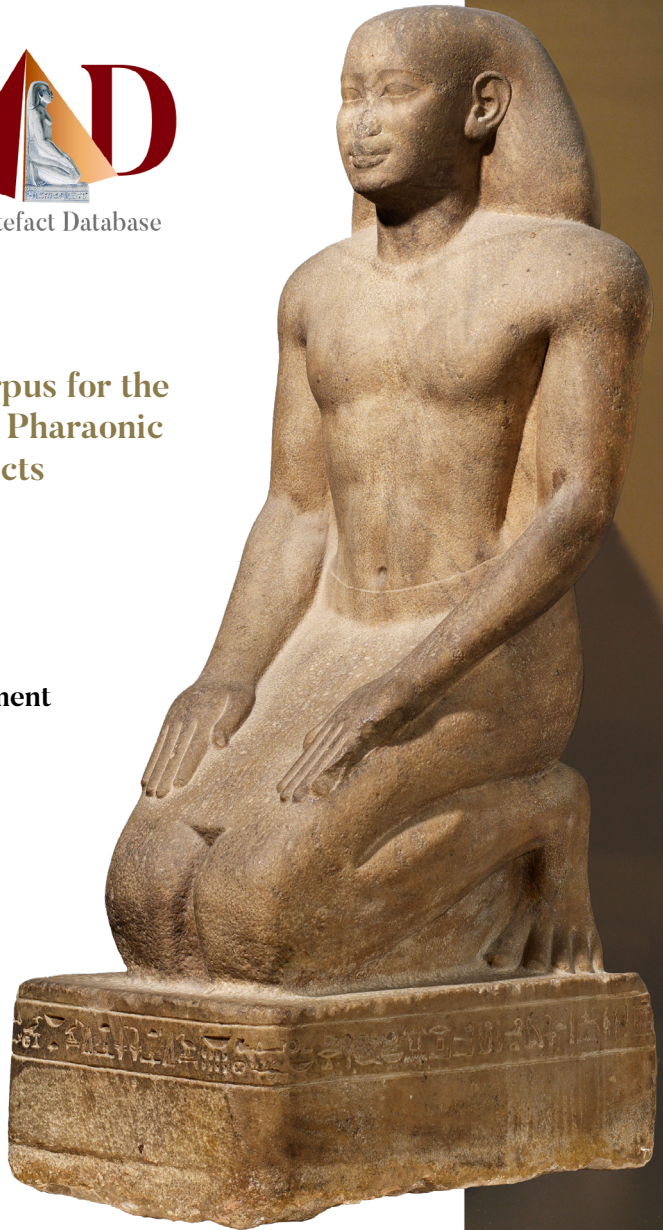
Late Egyptian Artefact Database

**A digital corpus for the
Late Period Pharaonic
objects**

Project management

Laurent Coulon

Olivier Perdu



ate Egyptian Artefact Database

Presentation of the project



<https://lead.ifao.egnet.net/>

A fundamental priority for Egyptology



Today modern technologies, and in particular computer technology, facilitate large-scale documentation processing and distribution, making it clear to all that it is both necessary and urgent to take advantage of such tools so as to share, with the widest audience possible, the countless historical testimonies from the Pharaonic Period, and thus giving birth to new prospects liable to greatly enhance research methods which could reach unprecedented levels.

The documentation relating to the statues discovered in the Karnak

Cachette Publication published on the Institut français d'archéologie orientale (IFAO) website has already proved the utility of this kind of initiative in the field of Egyptology and, beyond that, the necessity to proceed in this direction seeking to come across the widest possible range of monuments. Such is the aim of the *Late Egyptian Artefact Database* (LEAD), launched in 2016, which plans to primarily focus on all Late Period statuary, starting with private statuary that already represents a very large corpus. From a few hundred monuments listed in

the “Cachette database” we reach over three thousand when taking into consideration the resources including both public and private collections. The importance of this first step lies not only in the access to a vast and unpublished documentary corpus but also to the very nature of such documentation representing one of the main sources for Egyptian Antiquity studies covering the fifteen centuries between the beginning of the Third Intermediate Period (1069 BCE) and the end of the Roman domination (395 CE).

The fantastic diversity in terms of style, attitudes, and accessories, of the Late Period private statues makes them all the more precious testimonies in the field of art as they represent the major part of the production of the workshops after the New Kingdom. As media for diverse and original texts, they also represent a wealth of documentation supplying knowledge on various subjects such as history, religion, society, institutions, economy or literature. Their importance can no longer be overlooked as already



Late Egypt at the
Brooklyn Museum
(© O. Perdu)



View of a CLES
photography file
(© L. Coulon)

proved by the interest they aroused at exhibitions and in numerous publications. It is therefore obvious that a project to render them available in their entirety meets widely shared expectations. Its utility, which multiplies the possibilities of comparison and cross-referencing, is notably liable to appeal to museums as the LEAD constitutes a tool capable of assisting in the making of catalogues, although it does not intend to become a competitor and thus will retain no exclusive rights of analysis, commentary and interpretation.

Such an initiative, with the numerous operations it entails, can only be conceived in a long term framework, while hoping that its means of existence will enable it to develop, and even spread to other areas. Nevertheless, the wish to benefit from its advantages as soon as possible led to the decision to gradually post documentation online, proceeding collection by collection. The first collections selected are those from the Louvre and the other museums in Paris, therefore all their Late Period private statues should shortly be available.

The first steps of the project

2016

Launching of the project by Laurent COULON and Olivier PERDU.

28 September-19 October 2017

First CLES digitalization mission at the Brooklyn Museum with Laurent COULON, accompanied by Patrick IMBERT and Nicolas SOUCHON.

2017-2018

Processing of the first part of the CLES raw documentation and indexing of the associated metadata by Sépideh QAHÉRI.

27 April-13 May 2018

Second CLES digitalization mission at the Brooklyn Museum with Olivier PERDU, accompanied by Patrick IMBERT and Raphaële MEFFRE.

2018-2019

Processing of the second part of the CLES raw documentation and indexing of the associated metadata by Sépideh QAHÉRI.

28 June 2019

Round-table discussion at the EPHE concerning the standards for encoding and posting the Egyptological data online.

23-25 September 2019

Patrick CARDON's visit to the Brooklyn Museum to survey the CLES.

2-4 December 2019

Digitalization mission of the Herman DE MEULENAERE archives in Brussels with Olivier PERDU, accompanied by Patrick IMBERT and Raphaële MEFFRE.

2018-2020

Photographic processing of the complete CLES documentation by IFAO's photography and archives departments.

Analysis and recording of all the CLES bibliographic references and their integration into the Zotero database by Vincent CHOLLIER and Emmanuel JAMBON.

Scientific collaboration with the DEA at the Louvre, headed by Florence GOMBERT.

2020-2022

Creation of a project-specific thesaurus and preparation of the first group of monuments (Late Period private statues from the Louvre) for the online publication by Olivier PERDU, Sépideh QAHÉRI, Elsa RICKAL and Nicolas SOUCHON.

First stage in the conception of the online database by Vincent RAZANAJAO and Nicolas SOUCHON.

2022-2023

Development of the online data presentation interface by Vincent RAZANAJAO.

Labelling of the CLES photographs for permanent archiving by Sépideh QAHÉRI and Elsa RICKAL, in collaboration with Christian GAUBERT.

From the CLES to the LEAD



A few figures relating to the CLES: eleven drawers, each containing around fifty hanging folders; dozens more drawers full of boxes preserving rolls of negatives; ninety binders gathering files on each monument stored on shelves.

The work carried out within the framework of the LEAD naturally benefits from the abundant harvest of monuments carried out by Bernard V. BOTHMER between 1956 and 1982 for the CLES (*Corpus of Late Egyptian Sculpture*). This extensive documentation, the analysis of which benefited from the expertise of Herman DE MEULENAERE, is preserved at the Brooklyn Museum, where it includes not only photographic files of thousands of monuments

classified according to their nature, type and period, but also hundreds of negatives and, sorted in binders, the descriptive sheets of the various documents. With the kind assistance of Edward BLEIBERG, then in charge of the Brooklyn Museum's Egyptian collections, this collection was digitized in the fall of 2017 and spring 2018, during two missions that permitted to take almost 55,500 photographs, which then took more than two years to process. The

operations carried out in Brooklyn were extended to December 2019 with the digitization of 138 files that belonged to Herman DE MEULENAERE, now under the responsibility of Luc LIMME, at the Association Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, who kindly made them available for the present project. Although their content is essentially limited to duplicates of the CLES photos relating largely to listed monuments, they are of particular interest when sorted according to their provenance (proven or presumed) and by annexing extracts from correspondence between Bernard V. BOTHMER and Herman DE MEULENAERE relating

thereto, which is of great value as such correspondence constitutes the only currently available record of their exchanges during the years of their collaborative work on the CLES.

Nonetheless, however fundamental the work carried out by Bernard V. BOTHMER and Herman DE MEULENAERE, the aim of the LEAD is not to restore it as it stands simply by putting it online. This would make no sense at all given its current form, as its present state remains that following the departure of Bernard V. BOTHMER from the Brooklyn Museum. Although the CLES was originally conceived as a working tool available to all, it was never organized as

373 : Lisbon, Gulbenkian 427
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Blz. 59 : p. 62.- Cette pièce m'intéresse à cause du nom de son propriétaire. J'ai quatre exemples de ce nom sur statues de Basse Époque : Caïre 1233, Goldscherrif 4) (Catalogue, p. 22-24), Marseille 14 (BIFAO, L, p. 198, h) et (373). Pour ma part cette dernière statue représente le même personnage que Caïre 1233 ; les deux autres sont probablement différents. Je dirais d'après l'inscription que (373) doit provenir quelque part du Delta ; il en est de même de 1233. Date bien établie à cause des cartouches.

Blz. 136 : Did you notice that this statue equals McGregor 1628 ? As for the identification of this Basa with the one of (354), I am doubtful. It needs more proof than I have been able to give till now.

Blz. 225 : See 1960/44.

BvB 62 : asymmetrically squatting statuette dated to Ps. I : famous piece, well known, but these are the first good photographs, two of which I enclose. Is the man known from other monuments ?

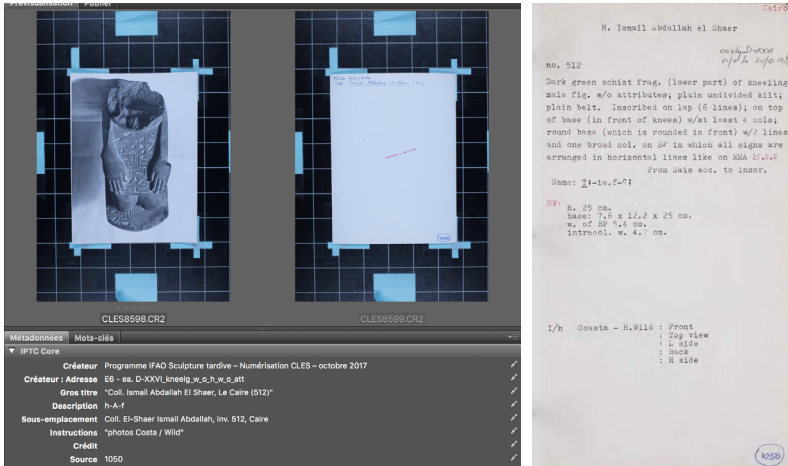
BvB 164 : H:136. Yes, I knew all along that it was ex-MacGregor since it was well illustrated in the catalogue of the sale.

BvB 296 : Lisbon, Gulbenkian; statue of Bes. H:59,136,613. Six-L-pla.

BvB (613): Coll. Gulbenkian no. 10. Squatting statue of the "count and prince, companion of his majesty, Bes" (for subsidiary titles, see Edwards and Wild, BIFAO 80, p. 50). For contents of the inscription, see Edwards' comments. The provenance is obscure. From the mention of Chemmis in l. 1 of the BP inscription we may perhaps conclude that the statue comes from that place in the neighbourhood of Buto. The sph. "horus field" (l.2), however, is unknown as a toponym in connection with Chemmis. This Bes does not seem to be identical with the owner of the Palermo/Cairo statue nor with those of (953) and (1268).



Overview of Herman DE MEULENAERE's files
 (© O. Perdu)



such. Access thereto remained very limited and over time its very importance became an obstacle for the conception of a means to enhance its circulation. As it stands today, due to the absence of any updating since 1982, the CLES also suffers from the fact that its inventory does not include the continual flow of monuments that surfaced thereafter, the number of which has not diminished as research continued both in the field and in the collections. Moreover, the opinions expressed reflect the knowledge people had of the Late Period artistic production at the time rather than the progress made since in this field, for which the research impetus can be thanked for.

The CLES also faces a chronological framework problem, which can be considered too restrictive due to the exclusion of the 21st dynasty and the Libyan domination (1069-722 BCE) from the late periods.

In fact the ambition of the LEAD is to follow on from the CLES by continuing its work, which undoubtedly represents the best tribute that could be paid to its value. While extending its scope to the totality of the late periods, the CLES thus intends to compose the core of a regularly updated documentation system, presented in a coherent manner, along with research progress.

Model description data sheet

LEAD-PS 0001

Place de preservation: Paris, Louvre A 94 (N 95)

Type: kneeling statue

State of preservation: no noteworthy parts missing, both the nose and the left hand show breaks

Owner: Nakhthorheb also known as Hormenekhibnakht (palace administration, worship, royal sphere)

Father: -

Mother: Ta(y)esnakt

Dating: 26th Saite Dynasty, reign of Neferibre Psammetichus II

Origin: probably Hermopolis Baqliya

Selective bibliography

JWIS IV, 2014, p. 332-333, 55.99.

O. Perdu, *Les statues privées de la fin de l'égypte pharaonique (1069 av. J.-C. - 395 apr. J.-C.) I. Hommes*, Paris, 2012, p. 278-281, no 23. (OEB 169003)

O. Perdu (dir.), *Le Crépuscule des pharaons. Chefs d'oeuvres des dernières dynasties indigènes. Ouvrage publié à l'occasion de l'exposition au Musée Jacquemart-André du 23 mars au 23 juillet 2012*, Bruxelles, 2012, p. 48-49, n° 7. (OEB 168972)

A.-P. Zivie, *Hermopolis et le nome de l'ibis. Recherches sur la province du dieu Thot en Basse Égypte I. Introduction et inventaire chronologique des sources. Bibliothèque d'étude 66 (1)*, Le Caire, 1975, p. 98-104, n° 25. (OEB 19095)

Material: silicified sandstone

Dimensions: H. 148,5 cm; W. 54 cm; D. 70,3 cm

Monument attributes

Head: bag wig

Clothing: simple loincloth

Inscriptions

Back support: owner's details

Right side of the base: offering formula and owner's details

Left side of the base: offering formula and owner's details

Kneeling statue of Nakhthorheb also known as Hormenekhibnakt



Photographs: © CLES, Brooklyn Museum / Collège de France, P. Imbert (black and white). © 2008, musée du Louvre, Chr. Décamps (colour)



The LEAD:

Principles and choices

As in the case of the “Cachette database”, the *Late Egyptian Artefact Database* aims to provide a descriptive data sheet for each monument including all the useful information expected, accompanied by sufficiently rich photographic coverage, to supply as perfect a view its details as possible, whether these concern its style, iconographic features or any inscriptions figuring thereon.

The data sheet itself has been designed to accommodate both the need for functionality required by the format of a database and the concern to deliver information that is as precise as it is relevant. In particular, when regarding private statues, whose complexity is commensurate with their interest, the problems they raise have led to the adoption of presentation principles and choices that can be summarised section by section.



Head of the statue
Louvre, A 94
(© 2008, musée du
Louvre, Chr. Décamps)

Presentation of the documents

— *Description of the monuments*

Outside any terminological problems associated with this field, the main difficulty lies in how the statues should be described according to their attitudes. Their astonishing diversity in private statuary complicates the situation further as it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between particularities specific to a category of monuments and those that figure as mere alternatives.

The categories acknowledged to date - those of Käthe BOSSE (1936) and Bernard V. BOTHMER (1960) - bear two major drawbacks. On the one hand, they do not cover all the possibilities, omitting examples where the subject is depicted holding one or more ritual attributes in his or her hands. On the other hand, they may dissociate statues from the group to which they belong, as in the case of “sistrophores”, which simply represent a variant of

“theophores” and not a group in its own right. Therefore, the manner in which private statues are described could not be envisaged without reconsidering their typology, thus reorganising their content while simultaneously completing it.

— *References to the characters*

The name of the owner is stated, as well as those of the other people mentioned preceded by their kinship with the owner; an asterisk identifies the potential dedicator.

When the description of the person includes titles, they are not stated but are substituted by his or her field of work (e.g. temple, palace, army, etc.), which is placed between brackets after their names.

— *Monument dating*

The information supplied in this field is governed by the principle that dating must not be based on a sole argument, but on a convergence of clues, taking into account not only the stylistic or iconographic details, but also the content of the inscriptions and their presentation, as well as the form of the signs.

— *Origin of the monuments*

Clear distinction is made between proven origins, relating to monuments discovered during excavations,



uncertain origins, for which a more or less precise memory has been preserved, and origins deduced from inscriptions, which, due to their hypothetical nature, must bear a question mark.

When the origin of a monument is completely unknown, care must be taken to compensate this geographical reference void by mentioning the owner's geographic location, once determined.

— *Bibliography*

It is intended to be selective to avoid the user getting lost in a maze of vague references to monuments. For ease of consultation, references are organised according to their nature. The “classics” of the genre, such as *Topographical Bibliography*, are listed first.

If the monument has figured in detailed publications, whether they be a museum catalogue or a collection of articles, this is indicated immediately afterwards, in bold, thus rendering it immediately visible.

The other publications follow, including exhibition catalogues, which are selected on the basis of the novelty of their information.

Details relating to their appearance

— *Material*

If this detail cannot be established, the indicated material is that determined to date and is stated between quotes.

In the case of stone monuments, the material is indicated in accordance with current practice in this field, as defined by Thierry DE PUTTER and Christina KARLSHAUSEN in 1992 and updated in 2022.

— *Dimensions*

In the case of a fragmentary monument, supplementary information required to ascertain a possible connection (e.g.: width of an element where it is broken) can be added to the basic information (height, width and depth).

— *Accessories*

In the absence of detailed descriptions of the monuments, this section permits to summarise the various elements (wigs, clothing, accessories such as jewellery, linen, sandals, etc.). They are listed according to their position from top to bottom.

— *Inscriptions*

The first step is to identify the types of text figuring in the spaces reserved for inscriptions (owner's name, offering formula, call/warning to passers-by/priests, appeal to a deity, "Saite formula", dedication formula, etc.), which should make it possible to understand their variety and the way in which they are combined or allotted, while facilitating their identification and, beyond that, their comparison.

— *Representations*

In view of the scenes which often depict ritual scenes (worship or offerings) or which are limited to one or more figurations of deities or characters, these representations should be considered in the same manner as texts. Pinpointing them enables their importance and diversity to be measured

Details of the inscriptions
on the statue Louvre, A 94
(© 2008, musée du Louvre,
Chr. Décamps)



Conception of a digital corpus

The complexity of the information to be combined to form the *Late Egyptian Artefacts Database* bore technological choices enabling the variety of scientific material to be taken into account, while offering a digital environment in which researchers could keep their working habits.

The solution chosen is actually in line with the earlier work of the *Karnak Cachette Database Project*, since it is rooted in the development of its prosopographical and textual component, which, at the time, led to the creation of the Xefee (*XML Editor for Egyptian Epigraphy*) software.

With the increase of Web technologies and the need to embrace *Linked Open Data* principles, this first draft evolved into the *Patrimonium Editor* Virtual Research Environment (VRE), a Web-based application suite, the IT development of which was made possible and implemented within the framework of the *Patrimonium* ERC project directed by Alberto Dalla Rosa, now professor at the Bordeaux-Montaigne University.

An online data input and publication platform

The founding principle of *Patrimonium Editor* is to record all data and metadata relating to the documents, places and people that make up the research corpus in XML. XML encoding has a number of advantages, of which the production of software-independent data that is directly legible by both the human eye and a machine. It is also an ideal format for archiving data, since it is self-documenting: it's set out enables to understand what a data factor corresponds to, even long after it has been added

Here, the *Patrimonium Editor's* concept of the document tallies with that of the artefact, which is rooted at the heart of the LEAD. While the primary aim of the *Patrimonium* project was to build a corpus of essentially epigraphic historical sources, the LEAD does not differ from this approach, recording not only material data, but also textual data (type of text, anthroponyms, toponyms) and representations combining iconography and text (offering scenes, rituals, etc.).

More importantly, regarding XML encoding of documents according to the *Text Encoding Initiative (TEI)* and *EpiDoc* (a subset of TEI for epigraphy),

the current platform is ready to host the transcription of texts with the ultimate aim of building a corpus of texts engraved on movable monuments of late Pharaonic Egypt.

From paper to the Web: data encoding and enhancing

Translation of all the principles and choices that led to the creation of the description data sheet into a database required the creation of several *thesauri* and ergonomic tools, so as to provide a high granular level in the item characterisation, while facilitating data processing.

Thus, a *thesaurus* listing periods and reigns, sometimes poorly documented and often complex to establish, will enable data to be in line with the Thot *thesauri* used by major Egyptological projects such as the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* (TLA, Berlin/Leipzig), the *Ramses Project* or the *Thot-Sign-List* (Liège). Likewise, the platform's geographic location management tool enables the creation of a *gazetteer*, or directory of locations, which allows systematic indication of the proven or presumed origins of monuments, while being in line with the essential *Pleiades gazetteer*, the data model of which it adopts. At the same time, a Zotero integration enables each LEAD

artefact to be associated with the relevant bibliographic references and, in turn, with the central repository of the *Online Egyptological Bibliography*, via the OEB number used as a unique identifier.

Lastly, and more specifically relating to the LEAD, Egyptological thesauri covering all statuary, text and representation types are being developed, and will no doubt be of interest to museums and research teams in the fields covered by the project.

Thus, the LEAD is part of *Linked Open Data* (LOD) and adopts the FAIR principles, which state that all data should be easy to find, accessible, interoperable and reusable. Using this approach, the LEAD database can both draw on data already available on the Web and thus be enriched by the work of other digital humanities projects, in the front line of which figure *Trismegistos* and the OEB, but it can also serve as a reservoir of information for other projects, either present or future



Project actors*

Digitalization of the
CLEES in 2017
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* This list is on-going and will be supplemented according to the progress of the project.



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