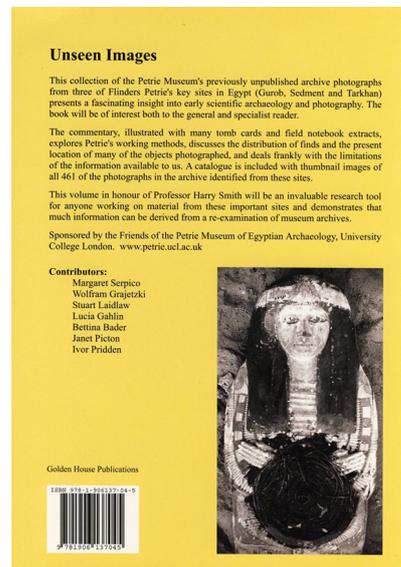
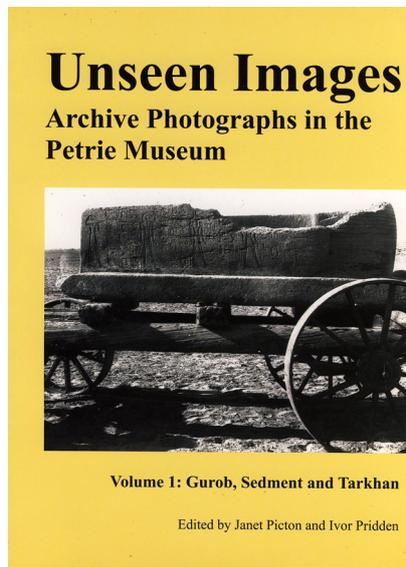




BOOK REVIEWS

Picton, J. & I. Pridden. 2008. Unseen Images. Archive Photographs in the Petrie Museum. Volume 1: Gurob, Sedment and Tarkhan. – London, Golden House Publications

André J. Veldmeijer



Sometimes, a book does not need a long review to explain its importance. 'Unseen Images. Archive Photographs in the Petrie Museum. Volume 1: Gurob, Sedment and Tarkhan' is one of these. The volume is edited by Janet Picton and Ivor Pridden and dedicated to UCL's Professor Harry Smith. Several scholars (Margaret Serpico, Wolfram Grajetzki, Stuart Laidlaw, Lucia Gahlin, Bettina Bader and the editors themselves) contributed to the volume, each of which is very familiar with the topic at hand.

Making hidden archives available to the world is one of the tasks the scientific world should take more seriously than they currently do. In the age of the digital highway, the internet is of course the praised medium to do so. Perhaps the best example of this is the Griffith

Institute's website about the excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb (<http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4tut.html>). Frustratingly, institutes are still reluctant to do so for whatever reason, seriously limiting the progress of scholarly and scientific research. The more surprising it is to see a real book with part of Petrie's photo archive.

As can be read on the cover of the book "This collection [the unseen images] of the Petrie Museum's previously unpublished archive photographs from three of Petrie's key sites in Egypt (Gurob, Sedment and Tarkhan) presents a fascinating insight into early scientific archaeology and photography." This is absolutely true, not the least because of the chapter by Stuart Laidlaw about the technicalities of Petrie's photography. But the book is much more than photographs

only: "The commentary, illustrated with many tomb cards and field notebook extracts, explores Petrie's working methods, discusses the distribution of finds and the present location of many of the objects photographed, and deals frankly with the limitations of the information available to us." After an introduction by Margaret Serpico, the three sites are dealt with individually in chapters, followed by the list of the negatives (by Ivor Pridden) and the thumbnail images of all 461 of the photographs in the archive identified from these sites. An extended bibliography and index is included.

This excellent volume is, as can be read on the cover, "an invaluable research tool for anyone working on material from these important sites and demonstrates that much information can be derived from a re-examination of museum archives." I fully support this statement and I can only hope that it will instigate more comparable projects. The book should be available in every library that takes archaeology, and thus not only Egyptology, serious as good example of how important it is to deal with hidden archives. Congratulations!

Picton, J. & I. Pridden. 2008. *Unseen Images. Archive Photographs in the Petrie Museum. Volume 1: Gurob, Sedment and Tarkhan.* – London, Golden House Publications. 300 pp. ISBN 978-1-906137-04-5. Price £25 - \$55 (paperback).

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