

ARCHIVE · FINDING AID

The Ravensworth Expedition Archive

A Finding Aid

Anglo-Egyptian Survey season of 1908–1909, Ras el-Qaus,
Western Desert above the Bend of Qena, Upper Egypt

Seven items catalogued · compiled for research use

Prepared as a descriptive index to the printed Report, its companion photographic portfolio, and related papers. This finding aid is a cataloguing instrument prepared for readers of the archive; it is not itself a document of the 1908–1909 expedition.

1 Provenance Note

The papers described below relate to the 1908–1909 season of the Anglo-Egyptian Survey at Ras el-Qaus, conducted under the direction of Edmund A. Ravensworth on behalf of the Expedition Committee. The materials entered the record in stages. The *Annual Report*, together with Appendix I and the twelve-plate photographic portfolio issued as its companion volume, were printed for the Committee and circulated to subscribers in 1909; these constitute the public record of the season and were deposited together. A fourth item — a small, undated gathering of private papers withheld by the Director from the printed Report — did not form part of that deposit. It surfaced later among Ravensworth's own papers and has been added to this archive as a fourth catalogue entry, distinct in status from the three items published in 1909. It is catalogued here for completeness; its provenance and the date of its discovery among the Director's effects remain to be established with precision, and researchers should treat it accordingly.

Three further items have since been added to the archive and are catalogued here as Items /5–/7. Item /5, the Committee's internal correspondence on the printing of the refraction section, and Item /6, Cordelia Ravensworth's field notebook excerpt from the Veiled Oasis, both belong to the same 1908–1909 season as Items /1–/4 and are catalogued alongside them without qualification. Item /7, the Papers of the Interval, stands apart: it is a later, retrospective compilation covering 1910–1954, and its own unsigned covering memorandum describes the set as "a separate, uncatalogued item, distinct in origin and in date from the four items the Finding Aid describes." This finding aid preserves that distinction rather than absorbing Item /7 silently into the same tier as Items /1–/4; see the cataloguer's note at Item /7, below.

2 Item-by-Item Catalogue

Seven items are catalogued below, in the order in which they were issued or, in the case of Items /4, /5, /6, and /7, compiled or added to the archive. Each entry gives the catalogue number, full title, physical description, date, a brief content summary, and the item's relation to the other items described here.

R.1908–09 / 1	<i>Annual Report of the Ravensworth Expedition — The Season of 1908–9</i>
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	18 pp.; cream stock (warm ivory tone); A4 trim; printed letterpress, sewn gathering, printed wrappers. Printed for the Committee by Chalmers & Wray, 17 Great Russell Street, London.
DATE	1909 (MCMIX); printed and circulated to subscribers the same year.
SUMMARY	The primary published account of the season: the Director's introductory letter, the survey and excavation of the Necropolis Ridge at Ras el-Qaus, the clearance of Tomb R.14 and recovery of stela No. 41 ("the Stela of the Bow"), the meteorological and instrumental observations of Dr. Ambrose, and a description of the twelve plates at § 43.
RELATION TO OTHERS	The founding item of the archive. Appendix I (Item /2) continues its pagination directly, pp. 19–20. The photographic portfolio (Item /3) reproduces, as a separately issued companion, the same twelve plates described at § 43 of this Report. Item /4 was withheld from this Report by the Director and is not referenced within it.
R.1908–09 / 2	<i>Appendix I — A Note by the Rev. Canon H. B. Starling, "On the Association of the Bent Bow with the Sky in Comparative Literature"</i>
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	2 pp. (paginated 19–20, continuing the Report); same cream stock and A4 trim as the Report. Bound with and following the main Report as its first appendix.
DATE	1909; issued with the Report as part of the same printing.
SUMMARY	A comparative-literature note surveying analogues to the bow-and-sky motif of the stela's middle register across Hebrew, Babylonian, Vedic, and Greek sources. The author explicitly declines to draw conclusions about the stela itself, and flags that the stela's bow is bent and strung — a notable divergence from the "unstrung" bow of the Genesis account.

RELATION TO OTHERS	Continues the Annual Report's own pagination without break; not a separately issued item. Its subject — the bow device of stela No. 41 — is the same device photographed at Plate X of Item /3 and discussed further, in draft, within Item /4.
R.1908–09 / 3	Photographic Plates I–XII: The Ravensworth Expedition, 1908–9 ("Portfolio II")
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	14 pp.; grey-buff wrapper stock, distinct from the Report's cream; A4 trim; issued unbound as a separate portfolio of collotype plates, with prefatory note. Negatives by C. E. Latham; collotype by Chalmers & Wray, London.
DATE	<i>1909; issued to subscribers of the second class and upwards as a separately published companion volume; not for sale separately.</i>
SUMMARY	Twelve collotype plates covering the excavation site, camp, the clearance of Tomb R.14, the burial in situ, and the stela (No. 41) in general and detail views, including Plate X, an enlarged view of the bow device of the middle register, and Plate XI, the lower register bearing the three lines of text.
RELATION TO OTHERS	Captions repeat, word for word, those printed at § 43 of the Annual Report (Item /1); the prefatory note recommends binding the plates following p. 14 of the Report for subscribers who prefer a single volume. Plate X is the working image referenced again, in an unretouched contact-print state, within Item /4.
R.1908–09 / 4	"Material Omitted from the Report" — Ravensworth Expedition, private dossier
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	8 pp.; manila/kraft stock, warm ochre tone, visually distinct from all three published items; A4 trim; unbound gathering of six enclosures (covering note, memorandum, personal letter, contact print, and a two-stage tracing enclosure — a tracing overlay together with its aligned-reveal composite, counted as a single enclosure in two states — and a shipping-label facsimile), kept together as a private folder. Privately held; not deposited with the Committee papers.
DATE	<i>Undated; internal items range in date from May to July 1909; found among the Director's private papers, marked in his hand "Kept among my own papers. — E.A.R." Date of compilation and date of discovery among his effects are both unestablished.</i>
SUMMARY	A private gathering explicitly withheld by the Director from publication: a covering note in the Director's hand identifying Cordelia Ravensworth as "my cousin"; Prof. Bramhall's hedged, unfinished translation memorandum on the stela's lower-register text; a personal letter from Cordelia Ravensworth noting an unsettling coincidence of dates between the Report and her own excavation at the Veiled Oasis; and photographic working materials — a contact print, a tracing overlay, and a composited alignment of the two — concerning the bow device of stela No. 41.
RELATION TO OTHERS	Fulfills, in draft and unpublished form, the promise at § 37 of the Annual Report that Prof. Bramhall's reading "will be printed in the next report" — a promise the printed record does not appear to have kept. Its contact print and tracing concern the same Plate X device reproduced in Item /3. Not referenced in, and not deposited with, the public Committee papers; its relationship to the published record is inferred by this cataloguer, not stated by any of the items themselves.
R.1908–09 / 5	Committee Correspondence on the Printing of the Refraction Section
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	7 pp.; four items (two letters from the Director, one enclosed physician's memorandum, one Committee member's proposal, and the Chairman's letter of decision), copied into the Committee's Minute Book; marked "NOT PRINTED — FOR THE USE OF THE COMMITTEE ONLY."
DATE	<i>February–June 1909 (dated items range from 12 March to 20 April 1909).</i>

SUMMARY	Internal Committee correspondence concerning how to print Dr. Ambrose's instrumental record of the optical phenomenon observed at Tomb R.14. Establishes the editorial decision — endorsed by Mr. Aldous Treherne, F.R.A.S. and ratified by the Chairman, Sir Aubrey Lister-Hume — to print the readings factually within the Report proper and to relegate all comparative/interpretive material (i.e., Canon Starling's note) to a separate numbered appendix.
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RELATION TO OTHERS	Directly explains the editorial structure realised in Items /1 (Annual Report §§ 45–55) and /2 (Appendix I). Should be read alongside both.
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R.1908–09 / 6	Field Notebook Excerpt — Site VO-7, the Veiled Oasis (C. Ravensworth)
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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	5 pp.; transcription of four consecutive leaves from a pocket notebook, original pagination preserved, irregular hand and abbreviations retained. Marked "private papers, not for the Committee's public series."
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DATE	1–14 February 1909.
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SUMMARY	Cordelia Ravensworth's first-hand field notes recording the opening of the sealed Chamber 3 at Site VO-7 on 3 February 1909 under Lt.-Col. Aubrey Fenwicke-Stade, the discovery and initial description of the bow/case assembly (field numbers 137/137a/137b), and its subsequent measurement, photography, and crating by 14 February 1909.
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RELATION TO OTHERS	Corroborates and supplies first-hand detail behind the Veiled Oasis material referenced obliquely in Item /4's personal letter (enclosure 3). Establishes the precise date (3 February 1909) that coincides with the first sighting of the optical phenomenon recorded in Item /1.
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R.1908–09 / 7	Papers of the Interval — Aethelgard Roads, 1910–1954
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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	5 pp.; four loose papers, clipped as found, not bound or otherwise regularised: a warehouse ledger extract (1910–1954), a private trade memorandum (1936), an average adjusters' casualty schedule (1954), and an unsigned covering memorandum (undated, after 1954).
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DATE	<i>Compiled retrospectively; underlying papers dated 1910–1954 (see Physical Description).</i>
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SUMMARY	Documents the decades-long bonded storage of the crate consigned under bill of lading AR-1188 (containing field objects 137/137a/137b) at Aethelgard Roads, its inundation on the night of 14–15 January 1954, and the unresolved status of its recovery as of the last dated paper in the set. Explicitly does not extend to, or anticipate, the object's later accession record.
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RELATION TO OTHERS	Bridges the 1910 consignment referenced implicitly by Item /6 and the external modern museum record (the Verrick Museum's Gallery Guide), without itself belonging to either the Committee's public series or the modern institutional record.
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Cataloguer's note. Item /7 is privately held and its own unsigned covering memorandum explicitly describes the set as "a separate, uncatalogued item, distinct in origin and in date from the four items the Finding Aid describes." That self-description is preserved here rather than silently set aside: Item /7 is entered in this catalogue for completeness and cross-reference, but it should be understood as standing apart from Items /1–/4 in origin, and from Items /1–/6 generally in date, exactly as its own covering memorandum states.

3 Suggested Reading Order

Three approaches will serve most researchers equally well.

(a) Publication order. Read the Annual Report (Item /1) through to its close, continuing directly into Appendix I (Item /2), then turn to the photographic portfolio (Item /3), consulting its plates against § 43 of the Report as needed. This reproduces the experience of the original 1909 subscriber. The fourth item was not available to that original readership and was not deposited with the public papers; readers who wish to consult it should treat it as a later, separate addition, and should note that its date of compilation and the circumstances of its survival are not fully established (see § 4, below).

(b) Plates alongside the text. Some researchers have found it useful to read the Report's descriptive sections on Tomb R.14 and the stela (§§ 30–41) with the portfolio's plates open beside § 43, rather than deferring the plates to a separate sitting; the plate captions are drawn verbatim from that section and the cross-reference is direct.

(c) The later additions. Items /5, /6, and /7 were added to the archive after Items /1–/4 and are best read once the reading order above is complete. Item /5, the Committee's internal correspondence, illuminates the editorial decisions behind Items /1 and /2 and may usefully be read immediately after them. Item /6, Cordelia Ravensworth's field notebook excerpt, supplies first-hand detail behind the private letter in Item /4 and is best read alongside it. Item /7, the Papers of the Interval, should be read last of all and on its own terms: it is a later, retrospective compilation, and its own covering memorandum describes it as a separate, uncatalogued item distinct in origin and date from Items /1–/4 (see the cataloguer's note at Item /7, above).

In either case, Item /4 is best consulted last among the original four, and with the understanding that it is a private, unpublished gathering rather than a fourth instalment of the printed series; its bearing on the other items is a matter for the reader's own judgment.

4 Open Cataloguing Questions

The following points remain unresolved on the evidence of the items themselves and are flagged here for the record, rather than settled by this finding aid.

- The relationship between Miss Agnes M. Treherne, Hon. Secretary to the Committee, and Mr. Aldous Treherne, F.R.A.S., who appears in Item /5 as a Committee member endorsing the editorial decision on the refraction section, is not stated in any item catalogued here; the two share a surname, and Item /5 alone among the Committee's papers gives Mr. Treherne a voice, but no document specifies whether or how the two are connected.
- The identity of the anonymous subscriber referenced elsewhere in the Committee's papers in connexion with the stela's eventual consignment has not been established from the materials in this archive; Item /4 records only that consignment was made through an intermediary firm of solicitors, without a named principal.
- The present whereabouts of Prof. Bramhall's original squeeze of the stela's lower register — the working object underlying both his memorandum in Item /4 and Plate XI of Item /3 — are not recorded in any item in this archive and have not been traced.
- The date at which Item /4 was compiled, and the date at which it was recovered from the Director's private papers and added to this archive, are both unknown; the item is undated internally save for the dates of its individual enclosures.
- Whether any further material was withheld from the printed Report beyond the six enclosures described in Item /4 (see Item /4, above, on the counting of its two-stage tracing enclosure) cannot be determined from the archive as presently constituted.

Finding aid compiled for research use from the seven items described above. Enquiries regarding access to Item /4 should note its status as privately held material outside the public Committee papers; the same applies to Items /6 and /7, which are likewise privately held and outside the public Committee papers.
