

Tutankhamun in Portugal

Reports in the Portuguese Press (1922–1939)

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Introduction

It is certainly no exaggeration to say that the pharaoh Tutankhamun is among the best-known pharaohs to non-experts in Egyptology. It may even be said that he is the best known of them all. However, this is not because of his exceptional or far-reaching governmental acts in the history of Egypt of his time. In fact, having ascended to the throne as a child (perhaps at eight years old) and having died before he reached the age of twenty, the young child who ruled Egypt in the fourteenth century BC for about ten years (1333–1323 BC)¹ is best known for the exceptional discovery of his tomb (KV 62) in the Valley of the Kings, with the seals intact, about 3000 years after his death, by Howard Carter (1874–1939) and his financier George Edward, the fifth Count of Carnarvon, commonly known as Lord Carnarvon (1866–1923).

The amazing discovery that occurred on the morning of that Saturday, the fourth of November of 1922 (a stone staircase with fifteenth steps), the official opening of the tomb in the presence of Lord Carnarvon and his daughter Lady Evelyn Herbert on the 29th the November, and the ten years of excavation that followed, which brought into light thousands of artefacts (more than 5000), were unveiled in the international press in an unusual and unprecedented way. As a result of this massive publication of news and reports about the discovery and the excavation of the tomb of Tutankhamun, the name of the virtually incognito twelfth pharaoh of the New Kingdom, and of the main players in this “wonder-

¹ Nicholas Reeves, *The Complete Tutankhamun: The King, The Tomb, The Royal Treasure* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1990), 8.

ful discovery in the Valley”² became well known for millions of readers around the world.

The coverage of the discovery was, of course, dominated by the English newspapers, headed by *The Times* with which, on the 9th of January of 1923, Lord Carnarvon signed an exclusivity agreement. French newspapers were also very attentive to the topic. The journal *Le Petit Parisien* stands out due to its own exclusivity agreement with *The Times*,³ but also *Le Matin*, *Le Excelsior*, *Le Figaro* and the magazine *L'Illustration*.

When, in 2016, we started the research project entitled *Tutankhamon em Portugal. Relatos na imprensa portuguesa (1922–1939)*,⁴ our intention was, in the context of the reception of ancient Egypt, to study how the Portuguese press (newspapers and magazines), reported the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, in the Valley of the Kings, in Western Luxor.

Portugal was, in the early twentieth century, a country with no direct connection with any archaeological work in Egypt. In addition, the national press was dominated by the political reality of the time,⁵ being that the newspapers themselves were openly doctrinaire. Still, the republican regime was very conducive to the development of the press,⁶ to the point that it was affirmed that Portugal was then a country of newspapers.⁷

² Expression used by Carter to reveal to Lord Carnarvon his discovery. Nicholas Reeves, *Ancient Egypt. The great discoveries. A year-by-year chronicle* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 160; Zahi Hawass, *The golden king. The world of Tutankhamun* (Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2006), 107.

³ See: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6052744/f1.item>.

⁴ In English: *Tutankhamun in Portugal. Reports in the Portuguese press (1922–1939)*.

⁵ The *First Republic* was a period of permanent political crisis which gave rise to one of the longest periods of political instability in contemporary Portugal. Fernando Rosas, *A Primeira República 1910–1926. Como venceu e porque se perdeu* (Lisboa: Bertrand Editora, 2018), 22–3.

⁶ Maria de Fátima Nunes, “Indústria. Imprensa/ Jornais e revistas”, in *Dicionário de História da I República e do Republicanismo*, ed. Maria Fernanda Rollo, vol. II: F–M (Lisboa: Assembleia da República, 2014), 441.

⁷ António Henrique de Oliveira Marques, *A Primeira República Portuguesa* (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1980), 90.

Thus, it was our goal to understand whether, even in this particular reality, Carter's great archaeological discovery had an impact on the Portuguese press, and in what form and with what intensity the news was made public. It is a case study focused exclusively on the Portuguese case, and not a comparative study regarding other European realities. Despite the existence in Europe of some works concerning the impact and repercussions of Carter's discovery, and how the press⁸ dealt with the matter, it is not our goal to produce a comparative study between some realities. Rather it is to develop an investigation that aims to contribute solid and precise data and conclusions about the Portuguese case (something unheard of, we might add), keeping in mind, though, that in the future, such a comparative study should be carried out.

The chronological beacons of this research are the years of 1922 (year of discovery), and 1939 (year that marks simultaneously the death of Howard Carter and the discovery of other intact Egyptian royal tombs in Tanis, Eastern Delta, by the French archaeologist Pierre Montet).

Historical and cultural background: Portugal in the 20s of the 20th Century

When, in November of 1922, Howard Carter discovered the entrance to the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun and began ten years of discovery and excavation work, Portugal was living the twelfth year of the period commonly known as the First Republic, namely the period between the end of the Monarchy, on the 5th of October of 1910, to the beginning of the Military Dictatorship, on the 28th of May of 1926.

On the 5th of October of 1910, Portugal became the third European country, after France and Switzerland, to replace the Monarchy with a Republic. However, this pioneering spirit did not necessarily mean an improvement in the country's political, economic, financial and social conditions. In fact, the sixteen years of the First Republic were, above all, characterized by great parliamentary,

⁸ We have, as an example, Jon S. Arakaki, *The glint of gold: Press coverage of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb* (Las Vegas: University of Nevada, 1999) and Myriam Seco Álvarez, *Tutankhamón en España. Howard Carter, el duque de Alba y las conferencias de Madrid* (Sevilla: Fundación José Manuel Lara, 2017).

presidential and governmental instability. In summary, we can say that this period witnessed eight presidential elections; forty-five governments that lasted, on average, four months; some phases of military dictatorship; and three civil wars caused by the monarchist sectors.⁹

Political parties and elected governments were constantly embroiled in dissent and internal power struggles. There was no unanimity of opinion: some defended a more radical and revolutionary action, while others had a more moderate view. It added to this scenario the lack of popular support and the partisans' constant movements for the return of the Monarchy.¹⁰

The Portuguese participation in World War I aggravated an already difficult situation. Portugal experienced, during and after the War, great internal problems, such as the shortage of commodities—which led to famine—; inflation; intense popular discontent; and an exponential worsening of political instability.¹¹

After having experienced a particularly troubled period in 1920—seven governments followed—and again in 1921, having faced another radical revolution in Lisbon, the country entered, from January of 1922 onwards, into a period of relative stability with a government that lasted twenty-one months.¹² However, this was the last breath of the First Portuguese Republic. From this moment forward, the instability, the uprisings and the succession of governments returned. On the 28th of May of 1926, a riot led to a period of military dictatorship (1926–1930). In 1930/31, the *Estado Novo*,¹³ first led by Oliveira Salazar (until his death in September of 1968), and later by Marcello Caetano, who was ousted during the so-called *Revolução dos Cravos*¹⁴ on the 25th of April of 1974, which put an end to the forty-eight years of dictatorship in Portugal.

Despite its chronic instability, the First Republic brought about several advances and developments for the country, from social assistance, industrial develop-

⁹ Oliveira Marques, *A Primeira República*, 591.

¹⁰ Oliveira Marques, *A Primeira República*, 562–4.

¹¹ Oliveira Marques, *A Primeira República*, 568 and 573.

¹² Oliveira Marques, *A Primeira República*, 576.

¹³ “New State”, unless otherwise noted, the translations are by the authors.

¹⁴ “Carnation Revolution”.

ment, to culture and basic and higher education. But the truth is, for one reason or another, the population was tired, worried and unsatisfied, which contributed to the establishment and consolidation of a dictatorial regime.¹⁵

In this context, it is not surprising that the press was first and foremost devoted to the political cause. Several factors contributed to the progress of the press and aided mass production during this period: the development of the population's cultural level, the increasing politicization of public opinion, the improvement of distribution routes and services, and the advent of the telegraph and other technologies.¹⁶ According to Matos:

During the First Republic, the press enjoyed great vitality, despite censorship, frequent assaults to newspapers' pressrooms, and the extinction of some of the most important Royalist newspapers. In 1900, there were in Portugal 416 publications of all sorts (1 per 14,736 inhabitants); in 1910, the number had risen to 534 (1 per 11,238); in 1923 the number increased to 631 (1 per 10,817 inhabitants);¹⁷

Most of the several newspapers of the First Republic were directly linked to the political struggle:¹⁸

The press became the most important instrument of action and the main vehicle for political parties' recognition. Newspapers set the political agenda and pressed or defended governments. They were the great shapers of public opinion.¹⁹

Political, cultural and religious debates were part of the daily routine of the press. A good journalist should use his newspaper as a mean to spark the debate of

¹⁵ Oliveira Marques, *A Primeira República*, 578–9.

¹⁶ Álvaro Costa de Matos, “The Press in the First Portuguese Republic: Constants and Guiding Principles (1910–1926)”, in *A History of the Press in the Portuguese – Speaking Countries*, eds. Jorge Pedro Sousa, Helena Lima, António Hohlfeldt, Marialva Barbosa (Porto: Media XXI, 2014), 185–7.

¹⁷ Matos, *The Press*, 185. We should keep in mind that Lisbon and Porto were the cities with the most published periodicals. In the beginning of the century, these two cities held 42% of the total of the published newspapers. José Miguel Sardica, “Imprensa. Títulos”, in *Dicionário de História da I República e do Republicanismo*, ed. Maria Fernanda Rollo, vol. II: F–M (Lisboa: Assembleia da República, 2014), 346.

¹⁸ Sardica, “Imprensa. Títulos”, 347. José Tengarrinha, *História da Imprensa Periódica Portuguesa* (Lisboa: Caminho, 1989), 220.

¹⁹ Matos, *The Press*, 186.

ideas and the defence of the seemingly valid ideals.²⁰ The press shaped, informed, clarified, mobilized and shook up citizens.²¹

In each publication, there was a clear ideological identification with any of the sides of national politics, and this filled the majority of the newspapers' pages (usually, they had four pages, or, in periods of greater instability, two pages). However, some of the space was dedicated to noteworthy international politics and events, from art and national and international culture (regular promotion of new publications, theatres and performances, and publication of books and short stories in a column of the respective newspaper), to sports, women's domestic life and the publicity that ensured the financial health of each periodical. For this reason, it is understandable that the great archaeological finding of 1922 easily earned its space in the Portuguese newspapers and magazines.

However the contact that the Portuguese had with Egypt, with its history and its impressive archaeological findings, was not initiated with the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun. In 1869/1870, prompted by the inauguration of the Suez Canal (17th of November of 1869), José Maria de Eça de Queirós (1845–1900), one of the most acclaimed Portuguese writers, at the age of twenty-four travelled to Egypt. Besides the testimony in the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* (on January of 1870), he wrote, about this journey, in two of his novels, in *A Relíquia* (1887) and in *O Egípto – Notas de viagem*, published posthumously in 1926.²²

In 1903, Queen Amélie of Orléans (1865–1951), the wife of King Carlos I of Portugal (1863–1908) and mother of King Manuel II of Portugal (1898–1932), the last king of Portugal, went on a voyage with her children through the Mediterranean on the royal yacht “Amélia”, having been in Egypt between

²⁰ Matos, *The Press*, 191.

²¹ Sardica, “Imprensa. Títulos”, 345.

²² José das Candeias Sales, “O lusitano Teodorico e o alemão Topsisius no Oriente ou em torno da camaradagem luso-alemã n’*A Relíquia* de Eça de Queirós”, in *Outros Horizontes. Encontros luso-alemães em contextos coloniais*, ed. Fernando Clara (Lisboa, Edições Colibri, 2009), 131–71; José das Candeias Sales, *Política(s) e Cultura(s) no antigo Egípto* (Lisboa, Chiado Editora, 2015), 365–409; Luís Manuel de Araújo, *Eça de Queirós e o Egípto faraónico* (Lisboa: Editorial Comunicação, 1988; Luís Manuel de Araújo, *Imagens do Egípto queiroso. Recordações da jornada oriental de Eça de Queirós e o Conde de Resende em 1869* (Vila Nova de Gaia: Solar Condes de Resende, 2002).

March and April of that year. The tour was announced and documented by the press and the Queen, a photography enthusiast, left a vast record of it.²³ Furthermore, she brought around 200 objects that are currently in the National Archaeology Museum in Lisbon.²⁴ This museum, founded in 1893 by José Leite de Vasconcelos (1858–1941),²⁵ has also around seventy pieces brought by him from Egypt when, in 1909, he went there for an Archaeology Conference.²⁶

There are also accounts of ancient Egyptian presence in the Portuguese academic field. We know that, for example, in 1868, António de Orta Enes defended a thesis within the *Curso Superior de Letras* (University of Lisbon), entitled *A Philosophia Religiosa do Egypto*²⁷ of which the *Boletim da Academia de Ciências de Lisboa* reports:

[...] in a curious collection of knowledge gathered in some of the finest works of its time—such as the ones of Bunsen²⁸ and Rawlinson²⁹—a brief but interesting image of the Religion in Egypt is drawn.³⁰

We have no supporting data that allows us to evaluate which investigation and teaching context led to the writing of this thesis. Nonetheless, we know that the study of this civilization was, in some way, a part of the university curriculum in Portugal. This might have not been an in-depth study, being that the author was mostly driven by some personal interest and was self-taught, but the truth is that, as we will see, in the 1920s in Portugal there was a production of scientific essays in the area of Egyptology and as such there was enough knowledge to recognize

²³ To see the photographic register of this voyage: <http://purl.pt/28017> (accessed July 29, 2020).

²⁴ *Antiguidades Egípcias* I (Lisboa: Museu Nacional de Arqueologia/IPM, 1993), 15–6.

²⁵ Renowned physician, ethnographer, archaeologist, philologist, museologist and professor. Carlos Fabião, “José Leite Vasconcelos (1858–1941): um arqueólogo português” *O Arqueólogo Português*, Série IV, nº 26 (2008), 97–126.

²⁶ *Antiguidades Egípcias*, 16.

²⁷ Luís Manuel Araújo, “Egiptologia em Portugal” *Cadmo. Revista de História Antiga* 10, *Actas do Colóquio Internacional Sociedade, Religião e Literatura no Próximo Oriente* (2010), 57–8.

²⁸ Christian Karl Josias, baron von Bunsen (1791–1860).

²⁹ George Rowlinson (1812–1902).

³⁰ *Academia das Ciências de Lisboa. Boletim da Segunda Classe. Actas e Pareceres, Estudos, Documentos e Notícias*. Volume XVI. 1921–1922 (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1926), 213.

an Egyptian piece. The article written by Vergílio Correia,³¹ published in 1925 in the magazine *Terra Portuguesa. Revista Ilustrada De Arqueologia, Artística e Etnografia*, entitled “An Egyptian amulet in the necropolis of Alcácer do Sal”,³² shows exactly that. In this article, the Portuguese archaeologist describes that when excavating a group of pre-Roman graves, he found, inside one of them, what he calls an “scarab-amulet” with hieroglyphs on it.³³ To validate his discovery, he contacted H. R. Hall of the British Museum,³⁴ who confirmed that what he had found was, in fact, a contemporary Egyptian piece from the reign of Psamtik I (664–610 BC).

In short, many reports, from the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, demonstrate and clarify the interest that certain branches of the Portuguese society had for ancient Egypt, which contributed to the relevance that the press gave to the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in the 1920s.

Likewise, three authors from different areas, which will be mentioned later—Gomes Monteiro, a writer/journalist, Pinto de Lima, an academic, and Carvalho Henriques, a novelist who majored in engineering—show that they had access to enough information and Egyptological knowledge to, respectively, write a long essay about ancient Egypt, do the first translation to Portuguese of the *Hymn to Aten*, and write the first Portuguese historical novel inspired by Tutankhamun.

³¹ Vergílio Correia Pinto da Fonseca (1888–1944), was a Portuguese professor, art historian, archaeologist and journalist.

³² Vergílio Correia, “Um amuleto egípcio da necrópole de Alcácer do Sal”, *Terra Portuguesa. Revista Ilustrada De Arqueologia, Artística e Etnografia* V, 41 (Lisboa, 1925), 90–3. Available at: http://hemerotecadigital.cm-lisboa.pt/Periodicos/TerraPortuguesa/1925/N41/N41_master/TerraPortuguesaN41_Jul1925.PDF (accessed July 29, 2020).

³³ Correia, “Amuleto egípcio”, 90.

³⁴ Henry Reginald Holland Hall (1873–1930) became in 1924 keeper of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum, a post he held until his death in 1930.

Theoretical framework: archaeology and the media, *Tutmania* and Reception of Antiquity

The discovery and the excavation of the tomb of Tutankhamun by Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon, and the corresponding media coverage is certainly one of the first and significative examples of the problematic relation between archaeology and the media.

It is not the purpose of this essay to thoroughly analyse the nature of the relationship between Carnarvon/Carter and the press at the time, not only because of its extent —worthy of a more detailed analysis—, but mainly due to the fact that here we are focused specifically on the Portuguese case, and that Portugal did not have journalists in Egypt. However, regarding the sources of our investigation – newspapers and magazines’ news sections – it seems relevant to note overall how the journalistic coverage of this discovery was made and what its most visible consequence was, which, as we will see, impacted what was published in Portugal.

Clarck and Brittain state: “The most valued archaeologists appear as those that hold the key to mysteries unsolved, unravelling the truth behind the oldest, grandest, or most splendid wonders.”³⁵ The discovery of the tomb of pharaoh Tutankhamun clearly fit the description. The world’s press went to the site trying to gather as much information and images as possible, so that they could share with their readers the wonders of the tomb. This interest even surprised Howard Carter, who said quite expressively of this situation:

Archaeology under the limelight is a new and rather bewildering experience for most of us. [...] and now all of a sudden, we find the world takes an interest in us, an interest so intense and avid for details that special correspondents at large salaries have to be sent to interview us, report our every movement, and hide round corners to surprise a secret out of us. [...] Whatever the reason, or combination of reasons, it is quite certain that, once the initial Times dispatch

³⁵ Timothy Clack and Marcus Brittain, eds., *Archaeology and the Media* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2007), 15–6.

had been published, no power on earth could shelter us from the light of publicity that beat down upon us.³⁶

In fact, for the first time, archaeology become a media sensation and, at the same time, profitable.³⁷ Lord Carnarvon, shortly after the discovery, signed an exclusivity agreement with the newspaper *The Times*, in exchange for financial compensations.³⁸ This attitude triggered many negative reactions³⁹ from the other periodicals in Egypt, and even from within the Egyptian Government, which did not accept easily the idea that the Egyptians had to read *The Times* to know what was happening in the tomb.⁴⁰ Hankey identifies some issues that were raised:

The tomb itself belonged to the Egyptian Government. Was Carnarvon in any position, therefore, to sell information about it? And was such a monument a proper subject for royalty deals struck between newspapers and private individuals?⁴¹

Nevertheless, the most visible discontent occurred with Arthur Weigall (1880–1934), who was sent to Egypt as a special correspondent of the *Daily Mail*. Weigall began his interest in Egyptology by working with Flinders Petrie (1853–1942), in London and, later, in Egypt, and then worked with Friedrich Wilhelm von Bissing (1873–1956). Between 1905 and 1911, he stepped in for Howard Carter as Chief Inspector of Antiquities for Upper Egypt. At that time, he went back to London and followed other career paths, eventually becoming a journalist, which brought him back to Egypt. After arriving to cover the excavation of

³⁶ Howard Carter and A.C. Mace, *The Discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen* (New York: Dover Publication, 1977 [1923]), xxix.

³⁷ Julie Hankey, *A Passion for Egypt. Arthur Weigall, Tutankhamun and the 'Curse of the Pharaohs'* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001), 4.

³⁸ Hankey, *A Passion for Egypt*, 4, 260.

³⁹ Elliot Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities. Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian modernity* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2007), 191.

⁴⁰ Hankey, *A Passion for Egypt*, 264. This situation happens in the climate of already complex political relations between Egypt and the United Kingdom. That is, Carnarvon's agreement with *The Times* completely counters the need of a broad critical analysis of the situation (including the local political context) that Clack and Brittain say to be essential in the relationship between archaeology and the media. Clack, Brittain, *Archaeology and the Media*, 13.

⁴¹ Hankey, *A Passion for Egypt*, 4.

the tomb on behalf of his newspaper, he faced the restrictions imposed by the deal between Carnarvon and *The Times*. As such Weigall was directly associated with the dispute. Hankey says:

Weigall's prominence in the hostilities between the press and Carnarvon's expedition is one of the few things that is remembered about him now. At the same time, very little is known with any exactness, and much colourful speculation has filled the gap.⁴²

James, in his Howard Carter biography, actually says:

Weigall could casually talk of one-day-old news being no news at all, but he should have known better, and it was he who especially attracted the displeasure of Carter and his team. He too may have been largely responsible for the deterioration in relations between Carter and the World Press, and perhaps even with Lord Carnarvon, who had made the arrangement with *The Times* without seriously consulting Carter, and certainly without proper consideration of what the effects might be on the work.⁴³

Weigall's exponent displeasure is generally associated with the creation/dissemination of the so-called "curse of Tutankhamun", the speculated cause of death of Lord Carnarvon (and many others after him). However according to Hankey, Weigall did not actually believe in the existence of such a curse, and he did not contribute to its circulation. Rather Weigall opted, in his texts, to express some doubt about the matter, leaving it as an open question⁴⁴ and allowing the readers to decide for themselves. About the curse, he said, "But see how the public will lap it up!"⁴⁵ He was thus aware that the curse would be well received by the public.⁴⁶ And, in fact, the press itself used this theme as an effective way to circumvent the exclusivity of *The Times* and to deal with the slow

⁴² Hankey, *A Passion for Egypt*, 261.

⁴³ Thomas G. H. James, *Howard Carter. The Path to Tutankhamun* (London, New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 1992), 281.

⁴⁴ Ronald H. Fritze, "The Rise of Mass Egyptomania: Tutankhamun, Tutmania and the curse of the mummy", in *Egyptomania. A History of fascination, obsession and fantasy* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016), 236.

⁴⁵ Hankey, *A Passion for Egypt*, 5.

⁴⁶ James, *Howard Carter*, 426. Fritze characterizes the contemporary atmosphere that was conducive to this phenomenon. Fritze, "The Rise of Mass Egyptomania", 227–34.

developments and little reported works on the tomb.⁴⁷ Fritze states: “Cut off from the genuine news about the tomb, they resorted to fabrication and sensationalism. The greatest fountainhead of speculation involved the alleged curse of the pharaohs.”⁴⁸

In conclusion, a poor management of the relationship with the world press by Carnarvon and Carter led to not only a bad atmosphere (with the media as well as politically), but also to the appearance and propagation of the idea of a curse, that greatly dominated the published news at the time and that survives until today, almost 100 years later.

Initiated by the discovery and encouraged by the curse, the public’s interest in the tomb of pharaoh Tutankhamun reached such proportions⁴⁹ that we witnessed the emergence of a new field within Egyptomania: so-called Tutmania. Fritze claims:

The discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb created the phenomenon of Tutmania, which soon became an industry in itself that was very good for all sorts of business. Tutmania appeared rapidly and intensely after *The Times* reported the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb. Egyptian-themed music, architecture, interior design, jewellery and fashions appeared.⁵⁰

In other words, this new display of Egyptomania, specially focused on Tutankhamun, was a direct result of the news published by *The Times*, and certainly other periodicals around the world ... including Portugal. That is, the newspapers and their news were the ones that allowed the information to reach the general public and enhanced their interest in ancient Egypt in general, and for Tutankhamun in particular.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Joyce Tyldesley, *The Tutankamen’s curse. The developing history of an Egyptian King* (London: Profile Books, 2012), 226.

⁴⁸ Fritze, “The Rise of Mass Egyptomania”, 227.

⁴⁹ Fryxell says: “The whole world was under the Tut-ankh-amen spell.” Allegra Fryxell, “Tutankhamen, Egyptomania, and Temporal Enchantment in Interwar Britain”, *Twentieth Century British History* 28, 4 (December 2017): 516.

⁵⁰ Fritze, “The Rise of Mass Egyptomania”, 238.

⁵¹ Fritze, “The Rise of Mass Egyptomania”, 238.

We will not go further into the theme of Tutmania; we only intend to identify another issue directly related to the role that the press played in the creation of knowledge and in the dissemination of information about what was happening in distant Egypt. Our theoretical framework is within the Reception of Antiquity studies, specifically the reception of ancient Egypt through the news published in Portuguese periodicals about the discovery Tutankhamun's tomb.

The Reception studies, at their core, were essentially associated with the Classics' literary critic.⁵² Notwithstanding this, the evolution of this domain allowed the entrance of new civilizations/geographies and new expressions beyond literature, which enable us to talk not about Reception, but about Receptions. Regarding the Reception of ancient Egypt, Moser says:

The reception of ancient Egypt, it is argued, is not passive or derivative (from scholarly traditions), but has played a driving role in the creation of knowledge about Egyptian antiquity. We have been too ready perhaps to assume that the development of ideas about ancient Egypt results from the impacts of scholarly work, neglecting the role that representations created outside academic discourse play in influencing perceptions of antiquity.⁵³

Thus the author emphasizes the importance of going beyond the academic sphere to understand the different discourses and perceptions about Antiquity and, more specifically, about ancient Egypt.

⁵² For more on reception studies, in general terms, see, for example: Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an aesthetic of reception* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982); Hans Robert Jauss, "The Theory of Reception: A Retrospective of its Unrecognizes Prehistory" in *Literary Theory Today*, ed. Peter Collier, Helga Geyer-Ryan (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 53–73; Lorna Hardwick, *Reception studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri, Ayelet Haimson Lushkov, Katherine Wasdin, eds. *Reception and the Classics. An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Charles Martindale, "Reception" in *A companion to the classical tradition*, ed. Craig W. Kallendof (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 297–311.

⁵³ Stephanie Moser, "Reconstructing Ancient Worlds: Reception Studies, Archaeological Representation and the Interpretation of Ancient Egypt", *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 22, 4 (December 2015): 1264. About the reception of ancient Egypt, see also: Alan B. Lloyd, ed. *A Companion to Ancient Egypt* (Malden, London: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), "Part VII: The Reception of Egyptian Culture".

Considering the starting point of this investigation (an archaeological finding) and the sources that were used (newspapers and magazines), we can even place our study in the scope of archaeological reception, particularly in archaeological representation as defined by Moser:⁵⁴

Archaeological representation is a recently established research specialism within archaeology that centres on examining how non-academic representations of the past have contributed to the construction of knowledge about ancient societies and cultures. Such representations exist in the form of illustrations, museum displays, media reports, artworks (including the decorative arts), literature, film, staged reenactments, advertising, and computer games. Archaeological representations can be two- or three-dimensional, visual or textual, static or performative. Furthermore, they can either depict past cultures, archaeological sites, or the material remains of ancient societies. As primary vehicles for communicating ideas about the past, archaeological representations are invaluable documents for investigating how we have come to understand human history. They constitute a unique resource for learning about the ways in which knowledge about the past has been constructed and are important for understanding how particular interpretations of the past have come to prevail above others. In seeking to establish how, and the extent to which, archaeological representations have influenced our perceptions of the past, researchers have investigated the distinctive epistemological contribution that these non-scholarly forms make to knowledge construction in archaeology.⁵⁵

It is our goal, with the data that we will present and its analysis, to apprehend the way in which the Portuguese press, through the release of the discovery and excavation of pharaoh Tutankhamun's tomb and all the associated facts, contributed to the creation of knowledge and perspectives about ancient Egypt. The tone of our investigation and the sources used allow different theoretical frameworks, as we briefly showed. However, above all, we want to understand how the press helped the Portuguese of the 1920s get to know Egyptian civilization.

⁵⁴ Moser, "Reconstructing Ancient Worlds", 1274–5.

⁵⁵ Stephanie Moser, "Archaeological representation: The consumption and creation of the past" in *Oxford Handbook of Archaeology*, eds. Barry Cunliffe, Chris Gosden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 739.

The *corpus*: stages of the research

The first stage of the research consisted of the identification of the periodicals published in Portugal during the period of analysis (from 1922 to 1939). Through the specialized bibliography of the Portuguese press,⁵⁶ and via the websites of the National Library of Portugal, the General Library of the University of Coimbra, and the Municipal Newspaper Library of Lisbon, it was possible to identify seventy-nine titles (fifty-eight newspapers and twenty-one magazines), for the defined period.

Once we identified the publications, we began the second stage of the research: the process of consulting them. Regarding the dates of publication of this set of journals, two different situations can be noted: on the one hand we have newspapers and magazines published during the seventeen years under analysis; and on the other we have publications covering only part of the period under study, whether it be the beginning, the middle or the end. This consultation led to the identification of three different situations: twenty-eight publications (35% of the total) in which was identified news related to the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun and the several events associated with it; twenty publications (25% of the total) with no news on the issue; and thirty-one publications (39% of the total) whose dates of publication do not coincide with the dates of events related to the discovery (for example, 1933–1938), or where such events have never been published (for example, 1926 and 1927). See in Table 1 the twenty-eight publications where the news was collected.

Considering the key aspects of the characterization of this type of publication, we can say that the set is comprised of twenty-four newspapers and four magazines. All the newspapers were daily, sixteen published in the morning and eight in the evening. In the case of the magazines, we have three published weekly and one monthly. Regarding the place of publication, we have twenty-two periodicals from Lisbon, five from Oporto and one from Coimbra. The affiliation or political tendency must also be considered when we characterize the publications of that time. Thus, we have a majority of republican newspa-

⁵⁶ Mário Matos e Lemos, *Jornais diários portugueses do século XX: um dicionário* (Coimbra: Ariadne Editora, 2006).

pers, specifically eighteen, although three of these have changed their tendency during the Military Dictatorship/*Estado Novo*. There are four generalist or informational publications, three monarchists, one pro-Dictatorship, one Catholic, and one of a cultural nature.

In sum, about these periodicals, we can state that: with regard to the location of the publications, we have not identified any differences between the news published in Oporto and in Lisbon;⁵⁷ despite the ideological affiliation/political tendency of the publications, we have also not identified any differences in the approach to the published news; in terms of typology, there is not a significant difference between newspapers and magazines, because, although in magazines we can find more developed and illustrated articles, there are also newspapers with similar reports; in terms of periodicity, all newspapers with relevant news are daily, and the magazines are weekly and monthly; also, with regard to the daily publication period (morning/afternoon) there are not obvious differences.

The *corpus*: the published news

The twenty-eight newspapers and magazines that have been characterized above provided us with a total of 234 news reports about the discovery of the tomb of the Pharaoh Tutankhamun and the associated events. Its distribution is presented in Table 1.

Publications	Number of news per year of publication											Total
	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929 - 30	1931	1932 - 38	1939	
<i>A Capital</i>	-	9	8	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
<i>A Epoca</i>	-	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
<i>A Imprensa Nova (Série I)</i>	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
<i>A Pátria</i>	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>A Tarde</i>	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4

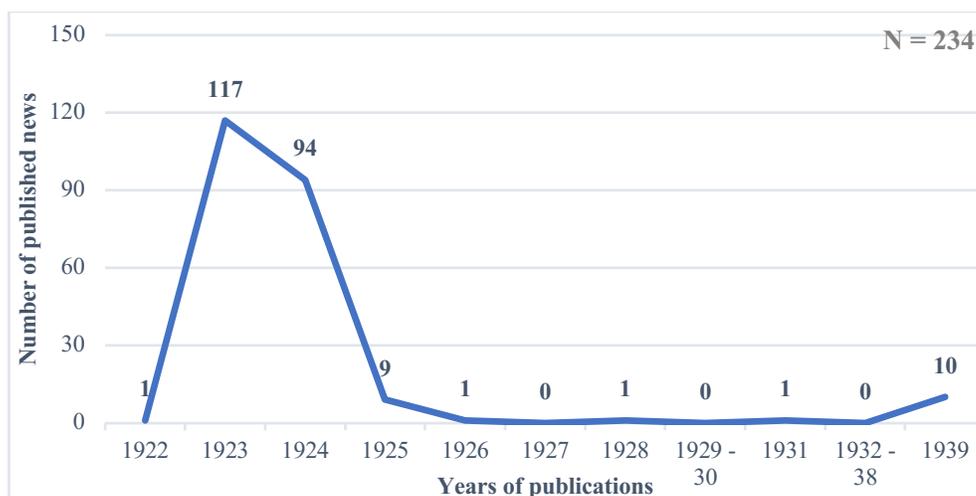
⁵⁷ The possibility that there are differences in the published news relates not to the theme, but to the local context of each city that could lead to different approaches or a different choice of topics to be addressed.

Publications	Number of news per year of publication											Total
	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929 - 30	1931	1932 - 38	1939	
<i>A Tribuna</i>	-	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
<i>A Vanguarda</i>	-	6	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
<i>ABC: Revista Portuguesa</i> ⁵⁸	-	7	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
<i>Correio da Manhã</i>	-	9	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
<i>Diário da Manhã</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
<i>Diário de Lisboa</i>	-	6	7	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	15
<i>Diário de Notícias</i>	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	10
<i>Dionysos</i>	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	4
<i>Ilustração Portuguesa</i>	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
<i>Jornal de Notícias</i>	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6
<i>Novidades</i>	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
<i>O Comércio do Porto</i>	-	9	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	18
<i>O Comércio do Porto Edição da Tarde</i>	-	17	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27
<i>O Dia</i>	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
<i>O Domingo Ilustrado</i>	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>O Mundo</i>	-	7	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
<i>O Primeiro de Janeiro</i>	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
<i>O Radical</i>	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
<i>O Rebate</i>	1	7	9	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
<i>O Século</i>	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
<i>O Século - Edição da Noite</i>	-	2	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9
<i>República (Série I)</i>	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
<i>República (Série II)</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	1	117	94	9	1	0	1	0	1	0	10	234

Table 1: The twenty-eight publications (in alphabetical order) in which the news was collected, and the number of news published per year in each publication.

⁵⁸ *ABC: Revista Portuguesa*, *Dionysos*, *Ilustração Portuguesa* and *O Domingo Ilustrado* were magazines; the other titles were newspapers.

This data can also be presented graphically with reference to the year of publication, that is, distributing the 234 news by the years in which they were published (See graphic 1).



Graphic 1: Number of news per year.

From this systematization of the available data, we noticed that the year with the highest number of news is 1923 (117 news reports), followed by 1924 (ninety-four news reports). In these two years, we found 211 of the 234 news items collected, that is 90% of the total. This overwhelming preponderance is fully justified by the fact that these two years are the ones with the highest number of facts surrounding the discovery: 1923 is the year of the official opening of the tomb, and the death of Lord Carnarvon; in 1924, the work in the tomb continues, and the problems that occurred between Howard Carter and the Egyptian government surrounding the continuation/operation of the excavation work stand out. The year 1939, which closes our chronology, appears in third place, albeit with only ten news reports, all dedicated to the death of Howard Carter, or the new discoveries that occurred in Tanis under the supervision of Pierre Montet.

As important as the presences are the absences. We should mention two absences: the first, in 1922, the year of the discovery of the tomb, of which we have only one text (*O Século*, 03.12.1922). The fact that the discovery and the first archaeological work took place in the late part of 1922 (from the 4th of November of 1922 onwards), may explain this absence, not so much because of

the lack of interest of the Portuguese press, but perhaps simply because of a lack of substantive information on the ongoing archaeological intervention; the second absence happens in 1925, the year in which the most iconic piece of Tutankhamun’s tomb was found: the funerary mask of the Pharaoh (JE 60672). In this year, only nine news reports were identified, none of which is related to the most important archaeological discovery that occurred in that year, which means that no news has been published in the Portuguese press that alludes to this discovery or that presents an image of the famous funeral mask of Tutankhamun.

The graphic curves are, in fact, very explicit: in general, although our chronology covers a period of seventeen years, it was only in 1923 and 1924 that the discovery caught the attention of the Portuguese periodicals. From 1925 onwards, it seems that the subject is no longer attractive and worthy of occupying space in the pages of the newspapers and magazines in Portugal.

Let us now look at the characteristics of the collected news. It is easy to conceive that the 234 news items published in the Portuguese press between 1922 and 1939 on the discovery and excavations of Tutankhamun’s tomb did not all have the same characteristics, nor did they deserve exactly the same journalistic approach. Compiling and observing closely the characteristics of all this data, we established, with our own labels, eight great typologies of news (see table 2).

Typology of the news	Number of news
News from “news agencies”	143
Unsigned original (?) text	38
Text or image copied / adapted from foreign publications	23
News copied from other Portuguese newspapers	12
“Scientific” article	8
Opinion article	4
Signed original (?) text or image	4
Curiosity article	2

Table 2: Typology of the identified news.

The different typologies of news that make up our *corpus* allow us to perceive that we are dealing with a set of texts (and images) of different natures, and with different origins. However, this also highlights the fact that most of the news is not original, or at least written entirely in its original form by journalists or reporters of national publications. That is, much attention was paid by the Portuguese magazines and newspapers to the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, however, what was published is essentially the result of news sent from abroad via news agencies or copies/adaptations of texts/images from foreign newspapers, more specifically, French newspapers. This resource “to what came from outside” cannot be attributed to a disinterest in the subject. Such a hypothesis is contradicted by the space that the publications gave to it. It seems to make more sense to think that those who wrote in the Portuguese newspapers and magazines of the time, the type of publications centred mostly on political themes and focused mainly on national politics, might not feel prepared, in terms of information and knowledge, to themselves address and deepen the theme in question.

Nevertheless, some original texts were also published, some of them signed, which allow us to understand that there was already some knowledge about the history of ancient Egypt among the Portuguese authors. Note, for example, the article written by Joaquim Gomes Monteiro, published in *Diário de Lisboa* (08.02.1923) entitled “The dawn of time. The recent discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, King of Egypt, 1,000 years before Christ”;⁵⁹ and the article written by Julião Quintinha (1886–1968), a journalist and writer, entitled “The Mysterious Sarcophagi of Egypt” (*Republica Série II* – 24.03.1939).

⁵⁹ “A madrugada dos tempos. A recente descoberta do tumulo de Tut-Ankh-Amen, Rei do Egipto, 1.000 anos antes de Cristo.” The texts originally in Portuguese were freely translated into English and presented in this way throughout the text. For example, the name of the pharaoh Tutankhamun was always adapted for this formulation, although in the Portuguese news it appears written in the most diverse forms. The original version of the titles and texts, in Portuguese, will be presented in footnotes.

The *corpus*: the themes and issues addressed

To each one of the 234 news items, regardless of their intrinsic characteristics, we assigned a theme, a sub-theme, and, when necessary, a topic, so that in a simple and direct way the essential ideas may be perceived. In this way, we obtained a total of twelve themes, and thirty-three sub-themes, as can be seen in Tables 3 and 4.

Theme	Number of news
Opening / closing of the tomb	54
Problems between Howard Carter and the Egyptian government	49
Death / translating of Lord Carnarvon' dead body	43
Other related issues	27
Works at the tomb	24
Curse	9
Howard Carter disease	7
“Small essays”	6
Lord Carnarvon's disease	5
Discovery of the tomb	4
Tomb reproduction exhibition (Wembley)	3
Death of Howard Carter	3

Table 3: The themes of the news.

Sub-themes	Number of news
With curse	33
Official opening of the tomb	24
Without curse	23
Suspension of the work in the tomb / Cancellation of Carters' license	23
Riches / Treasures	20
Other discoveries	19
Opening the sarcophagus	15

Sub-themes	Number of news
Suspension of entrances and works at the tomb / Case against Howard Carter	11
Opening of the tomb to the tourists	7
New agreement / Continuation of excavations with Carter	7
(Without sub-theme)	7
Case in court	5
Closing of the tomb	4
Transport and exhibition	4
(Possible) contributions to the study of the past	3
Pharaoh's threat	3
History of the tomb; Theory on the occupation of the tomb - Usurpation	3
The curse of Pharaoh's daughter	3
Protests against the English	3
Victims	3
Duel	2
Scrooge / Irony	2
The construction of pyramids	1
The fashion in ancient Egypt	1
The Queen Nefertiti	1
Authors	1
Statue of Senuseret III	1
Interest of journalists	1
Furniture	1
Failed negotiations	1
The worship of animals	1
Reopening of the tomb	1
Sarcophagus	1

Table 4: Sub-themes (regardless of theme).

Regarding the themes, sub-themes and topics, it is possible to have different approaches and analysis. For example, we can analyse our data by totals, by year and/or by publication, however, here we will only consider the issues that most caught the attention of the Portuguese publications in order to perceive which aspects of the discovery, in the eyes of the newspapers and magazines, seemed more interesting to the public.

The theme with the highest number of occurrences (fifty-four) is “opening/closing the tomb”. On this theme, there are twenty-eight news items published in 1923, twenty-four in 1924 and two published in 1925, it is present in twenty-one of the twenty-eight publications, and it is the most discussed in six of them.

This theme comprises six sub-themes: official opening of the tomb (twenty-four news), opening of the sarcophagus (fifteen), opening of the tomb to the tourists (seven), closing of the tomb (four), protests against the English (three), and reopening of the tomb (one).

If we look at the topics in this theme (regardless of the sub-themes), what stands out is the attention given to the riches and the treasures found in the tomb (seventeen cases) and, although less frequently, the issue of the tomb violation/desecration (five), and the interest in the study of the mummy (four). Here are some examples of news headlines on this theme:

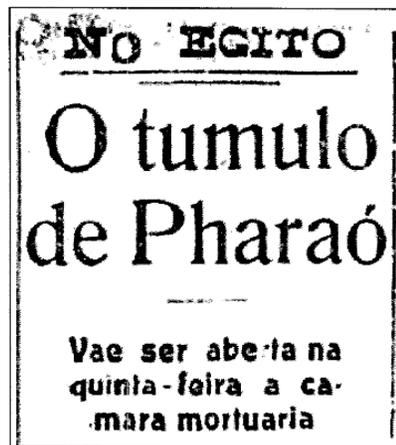


Figure 1: Headline from A Capital (29.01.1923), 3. Translation: “Egypt. The tomb of the Pharaoh. The mortuary chamber will be opened”.



Figure 2: Headline from A Capital (21.02.1923), 3. Translation: “Egypt. The latest excavations. The mummy of Tut-Ankh-Amen appeared after three thousand years”.

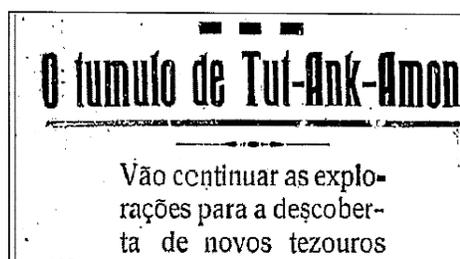


Figure 3: Headline from A Capital (16.01.1925), 2. Translation: “The tomb of Tut-Ank-Amon. Explorations will continue for the discovery of new treasures”.



Figure 4: Headline from Diário de Lisboa (19.02.1923), 7. Translation: “In the tomb of Tut-Ank-Amen. The English archaeologists, when they open the last chamber, discover new wonderful treasures, considered the most important of all”.

The second most frequent theme is “problems between Howard Carter and the Egyptian government” with forty-nine news items, forty-eight published in 1924 and one published in 1925, in sixteen of the twenty-eight publications.

This theme comprises six sub-themes: suspension of the work in the tomb/cancellation of Carters’ license (twenty-three), suspension of entrances and works in the tomb/case against Howard Carter (eleven), new agreement/continuation of excavations with Carter (seven), case in court (five), duel (two), and failed negotiations (one).

This news allows us to follow in some detail the problems, and the misunderstandings between Howard Carter and the Egyptian government in 1924, at the beginning of the second year of work after the discovery. The archaeologist and the institutions disagreed over the continuation of the works after the death of Lord Carnarvon, and Carter was even replaced by Pierre Lacau. Notwithstanding this situation, the problem was overcome, and it was Carter, the discoverer, who led the work to the end. Next, we have included some headlines on the subject.

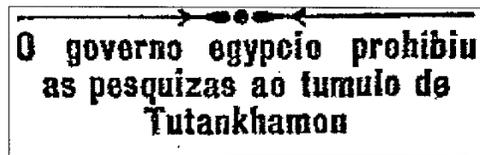


Figure 5: Headline from *O Comercio do Porto – Ed. da Tarde* (22.02.1924), 3. Translation: “The Egyptian government has banned the research on the tomb of Tutankhamun”.

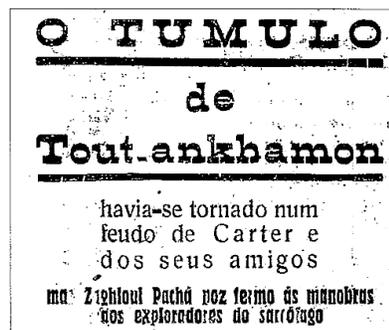


Figure 6: Headline from *A Capital* (19.02.1924), 3. Translation: “The tomb of Tout-ankhamon had become a fiefdom of Carter and his friends but Zighloul Pasha put an end to the maneuvers of the sarcophagus’ explorers”.

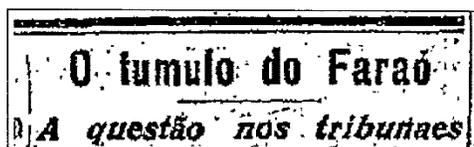


Figure 7: Headline from *A Imprensa Nova* (02.03.1924), 3. Translation: “The tomb of the Pharaoh. The issue in the courts”.

The third theme most frequently addressed by the published news was “death/translating of Lord Carnarvon’s dead body” with forty-three news items, forty-one published in 1923 and two in 1924, present in twenty of the twenty-eight publications.

This theme comprises only two sub-themes: with curse (twenty-six news) and without curse (seventeen news). In this case, we chose to identify the situations in which the news informs the death of Lord Carnarvon and subsequent situations referring to the curse that was supposedly the cause of his death, and the cases in which the news ignores this perspective.

Concerning the topics identified, the sub-theme “with curse” covers sixteen situations that point to the cholera/vengeance of the pharaoh, nine that evoke black magic, six that blame the poisonous gases, three that fear mysterious powers and one that only refers to a beetle. In the sub-theme “without curse” there are only two cases with topics as such; one that speaks of infection and another that refers to an insect. Consider the following images with some headlines on the subject.



Figure 8: Headline from *Diário de Lisboa* (09.04.1924), 7. Translation: “The international news. Carnarvon, the discoverer of the tomb of Tut-Ank-Hamon, and the mystery of his death. An interesting struggle between superstition and science”.



Figure 9: Headline from *Diário de Notícias* (07.04.1923), 1. Translation: “The Pharaoh's revenge. The mysteries of the black magic of ancient Egypt and the death of Lord Carnarvon, who violated the tomb of Tutankhamun. ‘Do not dare to discover the secret of my death!’”



Figure 10: Headline from *O Comercio do Porto – Ed. da Tarde* (13.04.1923), 1 and *A Capital* (10.04.1923), 2. Translation: “The death of Lord Carnarvon. Could the Pharaoh have avenged himself? - Certainly, say the occultists/ - How can we know that? Theosophists declare/ - Impossible, the Spiritists protest/ - Infantile, say the Egyptologists”.

The reception of the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in the Portuguese press, and the shared gaze on ancient Egypt

Despite living in one of the most troubled political and social periods in its history, and although its numerous newspapers and magazines were fundamentally devoted to political intervention, Portugal did not escape the interest that the discovery and excavation of the tomb of Tutankhamun stimulated all over the world.

Portuguese periodicals, regardless of their political or editorial tendency, realized that Carnarvon's and Carter's great archaeological discovery was a lode of news. Either through short agency news, or through longer, and even illustrated texts (originals or copied/adapted), a vast and diversified set of information about what was happening, at the time, in the distant Valley of the Kings was made available to their readers or listeners.⁶⁰

Hereinafter, we seek to demonstrate, resorting to the content of the published news, how the periodicals shaped the Portuguese's gaze on the civilization of ancient Egypt after the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun.

One of the aspects that the Portuguese publications highlighted was the relevance of the discovery and even the impact of its disclosure. The newspaper *A Tribuna* (05.04.1923) published an article which says:

Lately, the curiosity and attention of the entire world was triggered by the discoveries made by Lord Carnarvon in the Tomb of Tutankhamun, avidly reading all that referred to them, even the most insignificant details.⁶¹

This paragraph is at the same time a testimony of the importance of the discovery and of its echo around the world, and proof of the journalistic conscience that existed about its exploration.

⁶⁰ Being a country with a large number of illiterates, there was the habit of reading the newspapers aloud in public. Marques, *A Primeira República Portuguesa*, 90.

⁶¹ “Nestes ultimos tempos a curiosidade e a atenção de todo o mundo foram despertadas pelas descobertas realizadas por Lord Carnarvon no tumulo do faraó Tout-Ankh-Amon, lendo-se com avidéz tudo que a elas se referia, ainda os mais insignificantes pormenores.”

The newspaper *A Vanguarda* (17.02.1923) began an article with the following remark, in which features, once again, the dimension of the impact of the discovery:

The Pharaoh Tutankhamun, who died more than three thousand years ago, is the sovereign who is making more noise around the world.⁶²

Embarking on this world-wide movement, the Portuguese periodicals reported the most varied questions about what was happening in Egypt, as demonstrated earlier. However, what was more intensively published and explored focused on three essential aspects, namely:

- a) the historical knowledge and learnings that stem from the discovery.
- b) the patrimonial and artistic value of the findings.
- c) the question of the ‘curse of the mummy’ or ‘the revenge of the pharaoh’ that would be the cause of the premature death of Lord Carnarvon.

Let us look at these issues in more detail.

On the 30th of January of 1923, even before the official opening of the tomb that would take place in the middle of the following month, the newspaper *A Capital* published a text (full copy of an original from the French newspaper *Excelsior* on the 28th of January) whose content seemed so relevant that it was also published by two other newspapers (*O Comércio do Porto – Edição da Tarde* – 02.02.1923; *Correio da Manhã* – 05.02.1923). This text was entitled “The Excavations of Luxor. The whole history of Egypt will be revealed. The holy books in the face of reality”⁶³ and had as its main purpose to demonstrate that the rolls of papyri discovered in the tomb, still to be deciphered, would help to fill the gaps in the history of ancient Egypt. Curiously, it becomes clear throughout the text that rather than only discovering the history of ancient Egypt, there was a great interest in its relation to the history of the Hebrew people, and there was even

⁶² “O pharaó Tut-anh-Amen, morto há mais de trez mil anos, é bem o soberano que faz actualmente mais ruido em todo o mundo.”

⁶³ “As escavações de Langson. Toda a história do Egipto vae ser revelada. Os livros santos perante a realidade”. “Langson” is a poor understanding/transcription of Luxor, where the archaeological excavations took place.

the possibility that the discovery helped to clarify the date of the *Exodus* and to validate the *Pentateuch* narratives. In the text, we can read:

[...] But thanks to previous investigations, certain gaps in the history of ancient Egypt may be filled; notoriously, it is believed that the date of the exodus of the people of Israel may be settled; they [the papyri] will, therefore, corroborate in a striking way the narratives of the Pentateuch. Everything leads one to believe that Tutankhamun was that Pharaoh of which the Scripture says that he "did not know Jose" and that he oppressed the Israelites. [...] The tomb inscriptions already tell us that Tutankhamun – whose mummy undoubtedly rests in the still-closed enclosure and whose dissected features, reproduced by the photograph, in a few days will be known all over the world – ordered many thousands of foreign slaves to perform construction work. The sealed papyri that will be deciphered will reveal to us if these slaves were the children of Israel and if the pharaoh is the one whose death is reported in the first chapter of the Exodus.⁶⁴

These texts present the “amazing discoveries” from the tomb as priceless contributions for the elucidation of legendary and enigmatic events from ancient history, and the relation of the Egyptian history to Hebraic or Biblical history values, by the greater proximity of the latter, enhances the impact of the discovery.

In an editorial line that differs from the other Portuguese periodicals considered in this investigation, which we can see as generalists, the *Diónyssos. Revista Bimestral de Filosofia, Sciencia e Arte*⁶⁵ had a nature closer to what we now call “scientific”, and it is in this publication that the appreciation of the historical significance of

⁶⁴ “[...] Mas já, graças as investigações feitas, se poderão preencher certas lacunas da historia do antigo Egipto; vão permitir, notoriamente, julga-se que se fixe a data do exodo do povo de israel, veem portanto corroborar duma maneira frisante, as narrativas do Pentateuco. Tudo leva a crêr que Tut-auh-Amon fosse aquele pharaó de que a Escritura diz que ‘não conheceu José’ e que oprimiu os israelitas. [...] As inscrições tumulares já nos dizem que Tut-auh-Amen – cuja mumia repousa sem duvida no recinto ainda fechado e cujos traços dissecados, reproduzidos pela fotografia, em breves dias serão conhecidos do mundo inteiro – fez executar imensos trabalhos de construção por milhares de escravos estrangeiros. Os papyrus selados que vão ser decifrados revelar-nos-hão talvez se esses escravos foram os filhos de Israel e o pharaó aquele cuja morte é relata no primeiro capítulo do Exodo.”

⁶⁵ *Bimonthly Magazine of Philosophy, Science and Art*, edited in Coimbra, between March of 1912 and April of 1928.

Carter/Carnarvon's discovery reaches its greatest expression. In three texts of this magazine (July 1925, October 1925, and May 1926) we move from the simple enunciation of hypotheses about what was discovered to a historical analysis and contextualization.

Humberto Pinto de Lima (1902–1984), at the time Assistant Professor of Historical Sciences at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Oporto, wrote these three texts generically entitled “Modern discoveries in Egypt. Who was Tutankhamun. Egypt and Amenhotep IV”. The tripartite reflection of Pinto de Lima was motivated by the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, and the death of Lord Carnarvon two years earlier, as is explicitly stated in the first text of 1925:

The sensational discoveries of Lord Carnarvon and Carter in the Valley of the Kings and the tragic events that followed, aroused in the European crowds an enthusiasm for the Egyptian civilization, very similar to what was originated, decades ago, by the works [...] of Champollion and of Mariette [...].⁶⁶

The author, also motivated by this enthusiasm, and resorting to the Egyptological knowledge available at the time, and to which he could have access in Portugal,⁶⁷ carried out in his three essays a characterization and analysis of the reigns of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten and of the owner of the newly discovered tomb. However, he demonstrated a clear preference for the first, whose reign was, according to him:

⁶⁶ “As descobertas sensacionais de lord Carnarvon e de Carter no Vale dos Reis e os trágicos acontecimentos que se lhe seguiram, despertaram nas multidões europeias um entusiasmo pela civilização egípcia, muito semelhante ao que dezenas de anos atrás tinham originado os trabalhos [...] de Champollion e de Mariette [...]”

⁶⁷ There are many references in his texts, such as *L’Égypte sous les Pharaons, ou recherches sur la géographie, la religion, la langue, les écritures et l’histoire de l’Égypte avant l’invasion de Cambyse* de Champollion (1814), *A Lettre à M. Dacier relative à l’alphabet des hiéroglyphes phonétiques employés par les Égyptiens pour inscrire sur leurs monuments les titres, les noms et les surnoms de souverains grecs et romains* (1822), from Auguste Mariette he refers to *Notice des principaux monuments exposés dans les galeries provisoires du Musée d’Antiquités Égyptiennes de S.A. le vice-roi A. Boulaq* (1869), *Les Listes Géographiques des Pylones de Karnak Comprenant La Palestine, L’Éthiopie, Le Pays des Somâl* (1875), and *Lettres et Souvenirs personnels (avec un portrait de Mariette Pacha)* (1904), from Moret and Davy, *Des Clans aux Empires: l’organisation sociale chez les primitifs et dans l’Orient ancien* (1923), among others.

[...] Artistic and literarily the most brilliant of the long series of Egyptian dynasties, being this great development of the spirit of that time explained by the freedom and life revealed by the cult introduced by him.⁶⁸

These three texts prize, apply and discuss the historical knowledge enhanced by the discovery. However, in the context of Portuguese Egyptology, we must highlight the second text, published in October 1925, in which Pinto de Lima includes the first Portuguese translation of the *Great Hymn to Aton*.⁶⁹

The patrimonial and artistic value of the findings uncovered in Tutankhamun's tomb were highly valued, not only focusing on the material wealth and associated luxury, but mainly emphasizing the beauty and quality of the pieces of art that were becoming known. As a testimony to this interest, we point out three examples (of many possible ones), since they are the most illustrative of two different approaches to the question.

The news published by *Diário de Lisboa* (08.02.1923) stands out for the richness of the text produced and for the way the discoveries were described. In a different register, the two news articles in *Ilustração Portuguesa* (10.03.1923 and 19.01.1924), by virtue of the profusion of images published, allowed the Portuguese readers to see, and not only to imagine, the riches of the tomb of Tutankhamun.

As mentioned earlier, the newspaper *Diário de Lisboa* published, on this theme, an original text written by Joaquim Gomes Monteiro, a journalist, writer, and essayist whom, in a very eloquent way, praises and values Egypt in general, and the tomb of Tutankhamun in particular. Let us look at some excerpts from his text:

Egypt – the blessed land where Art rehearsed the first dance steps of its adolescence; [...]. still is a sphincter sarcophagus of mysteries that, day after day, are being unveiled, thanks to the persistent excavations. Our English allies, who

⁶⁸ “[...] artística e literariamente o mais brilhante da longa série de dinastias egípcias, explicando-se esse grande desenvolvimento do espírito de então pela liberdade e vida que revela o culto por ele introduzido.”

⁶⁹ José Sales, Susana Mota, “Tutankhamon em Portugal: relatos na imprensa portuguesa (1922–1939). A revista *Diónyssos*, Humberto Pinto de Lima e Tutankhamon”, *Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura* 18 (2018): 227–49.

are always persevering in their enterprises, continue to tear the bowels of the Egyptian land, in the sole interest of probing the still unknown beauty of Ancient Art, thus giving a great benefit to the constitution of the history of that country whose origin is lost in the night of the times. [...]

It was found there wealthy furniture, chairs covered with precious stones whose value was estimated at 3 million pounds, cars, a kind of ‘chaise-longue’ plated with fine gold and formed by two majestic lions, having as support their eight claws, a jewellery box with 12 inches of height, 12 of width and 14 of length, that represents an artistic work of incalculable value, containing great amount of adornments such as bracelets, necklaces, earrings, etc. Alabaster vases, and various ceramics of a totally unknown design, canes that the king used, a gold rod and, scattered on the floor, shoes, dresses, baskets, and also some circular boxes, plated and painted white, containing meat, flours and other food already cooked placed there more than 3.200 years ago, when the sovereign died! The Egyptians believed that death was a long journey and that every person who took it should take food with them on the way. What most impressed those who attended the excavations was a wealthy throne in whose backrest were the portraits of the king and queen formed by thousands of small precious stones, with such perfection that they even gave the natural colours of the flesh and dresses of the portrayed ones. [...]

What else is still there? What new surprises will be reserved for the lucky researchers? What new proofs of the age-old spirit of art, always young and always beautiful, will still emerge, documenting the already existing and now almost unknown perfection of human work?⁷⁰

⁷⁰ “O Egipto – a terra abençoada onde a Arte ensaiou os primeiros bailados da sua adolecência; [...]. é, ainda hoje, um sarcófago esfingado de mistérios que, dia a dia, vão sendo desvendados, graças às escavações persistentes, ali realizadas. Os nossos aliados ingleses, sempre perseverantes nas suas empresas, continuam rasgando as entranhas da terra egípcia, no único interesse de sondar as belezas ainda desconhecidas da Arte Antiga, prestando assim um alto benefício á constituição da historia desse país, cuja origem se perde na noite dos tempos. [...] Encontrava-se ali riquíssimas mobílias, cadeiras cobertas de pedras preciosas, cujo valor foi calculado em 3 milhões de libras esterlinas, carros, uma especie de ‘chaise-longue’ chapeada de oiro fino, formada por dois leões magestosos, tendo como suporte as oito garras dos reis das selvas, um guarda-joias com 12 polegadas de altura, 12 de largura e 14 de comprimento, que só por si

Gomes Monteiro produces an informative and appreciative text about the great discovery of November 1922, capable of fascinating its readers by the beauties produced by the ancient Egyptians that the archaeology brought into public knowledge. The Egyptian artistic riches are more valued for their civilizational dimension than for their material significance.

The two news of the magazine *Ilustração Portuguesa* consists essentially of images: thirteen in the news from 1923 and seven in the news from 1924 (see some examples in Figures 11 and 12).

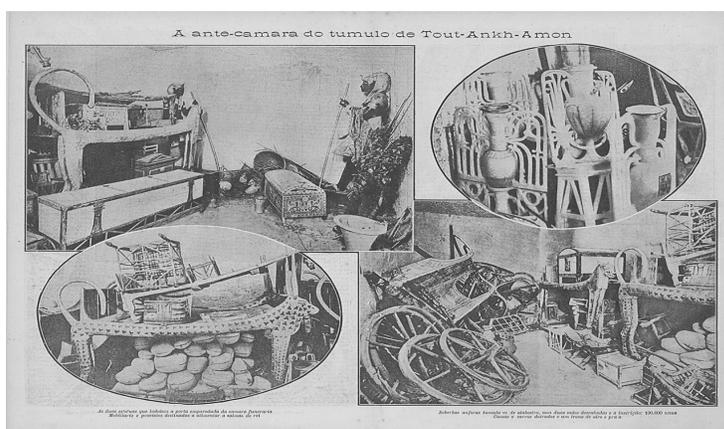


Figure 11: *Ilustração Portuguesa* (10.03.1923), images presented on the page 304 of the magazine, second page of the article.

representa um trabalho artístico de incalculável valor, contendo grande quantidade de adornos como braceletes, colares, brincos, etc., vasos de alabastro e ceramicas varias dum desenho inteiramente desconhecido, bengalas que o rei usou, um bastão de ouro e, espalhados no chão, sapatos, vestidos, cabazes e ainda umas caixas circulares, chapeadas e pintadas de branco, contendo carne, farinhas e outros viveres já cosinhados e ali postos, há mais de 3:200 anos, por ocasião do falecimento do soberano! É que os egipcios tinham a crença de que a morte era uma longa viagem devendo, cada pessoa que a empreendesse, levar consigo o farnel para o caminho. O que mais impressionou os que assistiram às escavações foi um trono riquíssimo em cujo recôsto se encontravam os retratos do rei e da rainha formados por milhares de pequenas pedras preciosas, com tal perfeição que davam as cores naturais da carne e vestidos dos retratados. [...] O que haverá ainda? Que novas surpresas estarão reservadas aos felizes investigadores? Que novas provas do antiquíssimo espirito da Arte, sempre moça e sempre bela, surgirão ainda, documentando a já existente e agora quasi desconhecida perfeição da obra humana?”



Figure 12: *Ilustração Portuguesa* (19.01.1924), images presented on the page 80 of the magazine, second page of the article.

The text in this news item was used just as a background to the photos they accompanied. Nevertheless, they deserve to be mentioned due to the way they emphasize their value and beauty. Quoting the words of Pierre Montet from an article originally published in *L'Illustration*, on the 10th of March of 1923, the Portuguese magazine wrote:

This discovery eclipses all those previously made [...] It is not [...] objects manufactured with second-order materials to be placed in the tomb. It is the personal furniture of the King Tutankhamun that is restored to us and there are not enough praises for the richness and delicate taste of its ornamentation. [...] For Archaeology, they represent an inexhaustible mine. We only know the Egyptian customs through the statues and bas-reliefs, very precious documents

indeed, but what is about to come out of the vault, so beautifully ornamented, are the king's own suits, his sandals, his cushions, his flares.⁷¹

In the news published in 1924 it is said:

[...] It goes beyond the wildest imagination the spectacle offered, to the English archaeologists, while penetrating in the diverse divisions of hypogeous, reaching [...] proportions of a true wonder, the treasures found within the tomb chamber.⁷²

On the one hand, an attentive reading of the set of news articles that emphasized the historical value and the heritage and artistic wealth of the discovery allowed the Portuguese readers to know not only the historical richness of ancient Egyptian civilization, but also the beauty and richness of their art. On the other hand, the set of news articles that follows, pulls away the readers from this historical, artistic, and even scientific perspective, to an Egypt surrounded in mystery and black magic that enables curses that crossed millennia.

The most explored issue, and the one that was given more attention to in the news, especially from the 5th of April of 1923 onwards, the date of the death of Lord Carnarvon, was “the curse of the mummy” or “the revenge of Tutankhamun”.

The fifth Earl of Carnarvon, George Edward Stanhope Molyneux Herbert, patron of the archaeological exploration that led to the discovery of the tomb of

⁷¹ “Esta descoberta eclipsa todas as anteriormente realizadas [...] Não se trata [...] de objectos fabricados com materiaes de segunda ordem, para serem colocados no tumulo. É o mobiliario pessoal do rei Tout-Ankh-Amon que nos é restituído e não ha louvores que cheguem para a riqueza e gosto delicado da sua ornamentação. Os vasos de alabastro e os cofres oferecem-se mais belos que no dia em que foram removidos do atelier, pois é a sua conservação e receberam essa patine maravilhosa com a qual só o tempo valorisa as obras de arte. E estas remontam a trinta e cinco seculos. Para a arqueologia, representam uma mina inexgotavel. Apenas conhecemos os costumes egipcios pelas estatuas e os baixos-relevos, documentos muito preciosos, sem duvida, mas o que está prestes a sair dos cofres, tão maravilhosamente ornamentados, são os proprios fatos do rei, as suas sandalias, os seus coxins, as suas bengalas.”

⁷² “[...] Excede tudo quanto possa fantasiar-se de mais extraordinário o espetaculo que se foi oferecendo, aos arqueologos ingleses, ao par e passo que iam penetrando nas diversas divisões do hipogeu, atingindo [...] proporções de verdadeira maravilha as preciosidades encontradas na camara tumular propriamente dita.”

Tutankhamun, was born on the 26th of June of 1866 and died at the age of fifty-six, about six weeks after the official opening of the burial chamber of the tomb (16th–17th February 1923). His death was the result of an infection caused by a mosquito bite, which triggered a septicaemia. The unfortunate fate of George Edward was not uncommon in Egypt,⁷³ but the international press, eager to match the interest of the general public, soon launched the story of the “curse of the pharaoh” that punished those who dared to disturb his eternal rest.

This topic, of guaranteed success to the general public, was also used on a large scale by the Portuguese press. Examples of this include the following news headlines that are revealing of the will to draw public attention to a magical and superstitious dimension, allegedly associated with ancient Egyptian religion.

- “Lord Carnarvon died. The pharaoh’s threat 3.500 years later. The secret of death. The revenge of the mummy”⁷⁴ (*A Capital*, 05.04.1923);
- “Tutankhamun. The Pharaohs take revenge and Lord Carnarvon is a victim of them and of his fellow Egyptologists”⁷⁵ (*A Tribuna*, 05.04.1923);
- “The pharaoh’s revenge. The mysteries of the black magic of ancient Egypt and the death of Lord Carnarvon, who violate the tomb of Tutankhamun. ‘Do not dare to discover the secret of my death!’”⁷⁶ (*Diário de Notícias*, 07.04.1923 – Figure 9);
- “The international news. Carnarvon, the discoverer of the tomb of Tutankhamun, and the mystery of his death. An interesting struggle between

⁷³ For example, Francesco Ballerini (1877–1910), the first assistant to the Italian Archaeologist and Egyptologist Ernesto Schiaparelli (1856–1928) who was responsible, among others, for the discovery of the tomb of Queen Nefertari (QV 66), in the Valley of Queens, and by the excavation of the also intact tomb of the royal architect Kha (TT8), in Deir el Medina, in 1906, who died in the same way on the 5th of May of 1910.

⁷⁴ “Morreu Lord Carnarvon. A ameaça do faraó 3500 anos depois. O segredo da morte. A vingança da múmia.”

⁷⁵ “Tout-Ankh-Amon. Os faraós vingam-se e Lord Carnarvon é vítima deles e dos egiptólogos seus colegas.”

⁷⁶ “A vingança do faraó. Os mistérios da magia negra do antigo Egipto e a morte de ‘lord’ Carnarvon, violador do tumulo de Tutankamon. ‘Não ouse descobrir o segredo da minha morte!’”

- superstition and science”⁷⁷ (*Diário de Lisboa*, 09.04.1923, and *O Comércio do Porto – Ed. da tarde*, 16.04.1923 – Figure 8);
- “The death of Lord Carnarvon. Could the Pharaoh have avenged himself? - Certainly, say the occultists; - How can we know that? Theosophists declare; - Impossible, the Spiritists protest; - Infantile, say the Egyptologists”⁷⁸ (*A Capital*, 10.04.1923 – Figure 10);
 - “The revenge of Tutankhamun against the desecrators of his grave. The gods will not rest”⁷⁹ (*A Capital*, 11.02.1924);
 - “The mysteries of Egypt. Tutankhamun and his posthumous revenge. Who killed Lord Carnarvon and the natives employed in the excavations of the Pharaonic tomb?”⁸⁰ (*A Tarde*, 16.02.1924);
 - “The profanation of the Valley of the Kings and the justice of Tutankhamun”⁸¹ (*O Comércio do Porto*, 19.02.1924);
 - “Foreigner’s Bulletin. The Pharaoh’s vengeance continues to relentlessly exert itself upon all who approached the discovered tomb”⁸² (*A Tribuna*, 04.03.1924);

As can be seen in the examples above, the published news spread, on a large scale,⁸³ of Lord Carnarvon’s death as having occurred from the fact that he had dared to desecrate the tomb of Tutankhamun, and as such, Carnarvon became the victim of his vengeance perpetrated through a millennial curse. These

⁷⁷ “A actualidade Internacional. Carnarvon o descobridor do tumulo de Tut-Ank-Amon e o mistério da sua morte. Uma luta interessante entre a superstição e a sciencia.”

⁷⁸ “A morte de Lord Carnarvon. O Pharaó ter-se-hia vingado? - Certamente, dizem os ocultistas/ - Como sabe-lo? Declaram os téosofos/ - Impossível, protestam os espiritas/ - Infantilidade, afirmam os egiptólogos.”

⁷⁹ “A vingança de Toutankhamon contra os violadores do seu tumulo. Os Deuses não descansarão.”

⁸⁰ “Os misterios do Egipto. Tut-Ank-Amen e sua póstuma vingança. Quem matou Lord Carnarvon e os indígenas empregados nas escavações do tumulo faraónico?”

⁸¹ “A profanação do Valle dos Reis e a justiça de Tut-ank-Amen.”

⁸² “Boletim do Estrangeiro. A vingança do Faraó continua implacavelmente a exercer-se sobre todos os que se acercam do túmulo descoberto.”

⁸³ It should be noted that, as it can be seen in Table 4, there were also news items that ignored this issue. However, their impact was considerably lower.

obviously sensationalist headlines systematically resort to expressions like “threat”, “revenge”, “mystery”, “black magic”, “superstition”, “profanation”, and “desecrators”, that under the guise of an innocuous and informative appearance transmit judgments of value that helped to shape the readers’ perspective on the civilization of ancient Egypt.

The historical and artistically wealthy Egypt was also displayed as the context of a primitive religiosity impregnated with mysteries and black magic so powerful that it was able to overtake the limits of time to punish those who disturbed the dead, the eternal rest of a sovereign. No matter who the victim was, the Pharaoh’s revenge was implacable and infallible.

The newspaper *A Capital* (05.04.1923), informing readers of the death of Lord Carnarvon, on that same dawn, refers to the existence of inscriptions on the walls of the tomb that said: “Do not dare to violate the secret of my death! The god Amon is with me and he will punish your sacrilege!”⁸⁴

The newspaper *A Tribuna*, on the same day, also has no doubt that Carnarvon’s death was a “[...] mysterious revenge of Tutankhamun, that profane hands went to wake from the sleep in which he laid for centuries.”⁸⁵ However, this newspaper does not speak of parietal inscriptions but rather of inscriptions on a papyrus: “In a very old papyrus there is a magic formula to punish the mummy diggers: once this formula is ritually pronounced, the tomb rapist is fatally bitten by a venomous viper.”⁸⁶

Nevertheless, the specific origin of the threat did not matter. What mattered was that it existed, and it was infallible. The newspaper *Diário de Notícias* (07.04.1923) sums up the situation:

To disturb the rest of this king who lived between heaven and earth, representing one of the greatest civilizations of the world, and who slept peacefully and

⁸⁴ “Não ouse violar o segredo da minha morte! Deus Amon está comigo e Ele castigará o teu sacrilégio!”

⁸⁵ “[...] vingança misteriosa de Tout-Ankh-Amon, que mãos profanas foram despertar do sono em que jazia há tantos séculos.”

⁸⁶ “Num papiro antiquíssimo existe uma fórmula mágica para castigar os desenterradores de múmias: ritualmente pronunciada esta fórmula, o violador de túmulos é fatalmente mordido por uma víbora venenosa.”

ignored in the midst of his treasures for three thousand years [...] was to draw up a death sentence. [...] The revenge [...] would be terrible! [...] It was the fatality pursuing the sacrilege of the Valley of the Kings! [...]. The prophecy had been materialized. ‘Do not dare to violate the secret of my death!’ The threat will fall inexorably upon the indefatigable explorer. The Black Magic of ancient Egypt [...] had its effects. The Pharaoh’s revenge! The punishment of Amon! [...].⁸⁷

The interest in the “curse of the mummy” was such that even though the central character had been the patron Lord Carnarvon’s, the Portuguese periodicals, following their international counterparts, also shared the stories of other victims of Tutankhamun’s revenge.

One news from *A Capital* (11.02.1924), reproduces a text of the French newspaper *Le Matin* (04.02.1924), quoting one such “Dr. J. C. Mardeus”,⁸⁸ the content of which is basically the same: the series of dramatic events that have occurred since the opening of Tutankhamun’s tomb. The text states:

[...] What happened? On that day and hour, a litter came out of the hypogeum.
And the Lord was dead. First act!

And the writer lists the victims who followed him, Woolf Joel, George Jay-Gould, Sir Archibald Douglas, who recently succumbed, when X-rayed the Pharaoh’s mummy⁸⁹ as the second, third, and fourth acts.

⁸⁷ “Perturbar o repouso desse rei que viveu entre o céu e a terra, representando uma das maiores civilizações do mundo, e que ha três mil anos dormia tranquilo e ignorado no meio dos seus tesouros [...], era lavrar uma sentença de morte. [...] A vingança [...] seria terrível! [...]. Era a fatalidade a perseguir o sacrilégio do Vale dos Reis! [...]. Consumara-se a profecia. ‘Não ouse violar o segredo da minha morte!’ A ameaça cairá inexorável sobre o infatigável explorador. A Magia Negra do antigo Egipto [...] surtiu os seus efeitos. A vingança do faraó! O castigo de Amon! [...].”

⁸⁸ Joseph Charles Mardrus (1868–1949), was a French doctor and translator. He is best known for his translation of the *Thousand and One Nights* from Arabic into French, which was published from 1898 to 1904.

⁸⁹ Woolf Joel was an English industrialist who visited the tomb and returned to England by boat, having died on the 13th of November of 1923, with fever attacks; George Jay Gould was a visitor to the tomb of Tutankhamun who died on the French Riviera on the 16th of May of 1923, after developing a fever following his visit; Sir Archibald Douglas-Reid, the radiologist who X-rayed Tutankhamun’s mummy, died on the 15th of January of 1924 of a mysterious disease.

As for the fifth act, and we hope it is the last one, he adds, of the Pharaonic drama, it is the violent epidemic plague, which soon after the opening of the tomb fell upon the inhabitants of eternal Egypt.⁹⁰

If the individualities referred to by Mardrus were certainly unknown to the Portuguese public, even more so were “the victims of the curse”, whose incidents, subsequent to the visit of the tomb, the newspaper *A Tribuna* (04.03.1924) describes with some sense of humour:

[...] Many people, especially journalists and intellectuals, have come to see the tomb of the Pharaoh Tutankhamun. And the tourism companies, with the Cork Agency ahead, already explore the lode of driving excursions there.

Some excursions have already been organized. And the Pharaoh’s revenge without delay has come.

Thus, the vengeance is exercised not only on the direct desecrators of the sacred tomb but also on those who profane it, by penetrating it only by the curiosity of observing it. [...]

Another ex-officer of the Great War, who visited the tomb, went blind in one eye and the other one was only saved because [...] it was made of glass. [...]

Another one: an ultra-millionaire American after leaving the visit of the tomb received a telegram from America informing him that he was completely poor, poor as Job.

And yet another: [...] It is certain that sometimes between evils some good thing happens: a rich French industrialist went to visit Tutankhamun’ tomb. When he returned to the hotel, he had the news that his factory had completely burned, and that his mother-in-law had died after being informed that his daughter would be poor.

Finally, an old and pretentious lady, as soon as she entered the Pharaoh’s holy place, strange powers raised her wig and her corresponding hat, which, however

⁹⁰ “[...] Que se passou? Que n’aquele dia e hora, sahiu com efeito uma padiola do hipogeu. E o lord tombava morto. Primeiro acto! E cita o articulista as vitimas que lhe seguiram, Woalf Joel, George Jay-Gould, sir Archibald Douglas, que sucumbiu ha pouco, quando applicava o raio X à mumia do Pharaó, classifica de segundo, terceiro e quarto acto. Quanto ao quinto e esperamos que seja o ultimo – acrescenta – do drama pharaonico, é a violencia epidemia de peste, que logo depois da abertura do tumulo, cahiu sobre os habitantes do Egito eterno.”

many attempts were made, they were still stuck on the roof of the tomb of the notorious Tutankhamun.⁹¹

The newspaper *Diário de Lisboa* (09.04.1923) and *Comércio do Porto – Ed. da Tarde* (16.04.1923) sought to add to this perspective of superstition a more rational view by publishing a text that presented Lord Carnarvon's death as "an interesting struggle between superstition and science" (Figure 8), in which they try to devalue the weight of the curse on the death of Carnarvon:

[...] For us men of a time when superstitions have expired, serving only to denounce the smallness of spirit of the ones who rely on them, Lord Carnarvon died of disease. Like any other mortal whose hour had come.

But the opposite hypothesis is still accepted by many worthy people.⁹²

However, even if these newspapers claim not to believe in the curse, they did not stop reporting it to their audience and they even did so by using two texts of *Le Matin*, published on the same day (06.04.1923), which reported the opinion

⁹¹ “[...] Muita gente, sobretudo jornalistas e intelectuais têm ocorrido a ver o tumulo de Faraó Tutankamon. E as empresas de turismo, com a Agência Cork á frente, exploram já o filão de conduzir para lá excursões. Algumas excursões já se têm organizado. E a vingança do faraó sem demora tem sobrevivendo. Assim a vingança exerce-se não só sobre os directos profanadores do sagrado tumulo como sobre os que o profanem, nele penetrando pela curiosidade de o observar. [...] Outro ex-oficial da grande guerra, que visitou o tumulo cegou dum dos olhos e não perdeu a segunda vista porque o outro olho... era de vidro. [...] Outra: Um ultra-milionário americano após sair de visitar o tumulo recebeu um telegrama da América dando-lhe conta de se encontrar completamente pobre, pobre como Job. E ainda outra: [...] É certo que ás vezes entre os males algum bem sucede: um rico industrial francês vai de visita a Tutankamon. Saiu e logo no hotel tem a comunicação de lhe ter ardido completamente a fábrica que não estava no seguro e falecido a sogra devido á impressão recebida quanto a vêr pobre a filha. Por ultimo contemos que uma senhora velha e pretensiosa, mal entrou no lugar sagrado do Faraó, poderes estranhos levantaram-lhe a cabeleira postiça e o correspondente chapéu, os quais por mais tentativas feitas não as descolou do tecto do túmulo do famigerado Tutankamon.”

⁹² “[...] Para nós homens de um tempo em que as superstições caducaram, só servindo a denunciar a pequenez de espirito de um ou outro que nelas confia, lord Carvarvon morreu de doença. Como qualquer outro mortal a quem a sua hora chegasse. Mas nem por isso a hipotese contraria deixa de ser admitida por muita gente que se presa. [...]”

of two famous people, both defenders of the curse: Marie Corelli (1855–1924)⁹³ and Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930).⁹⁴

Marie Corelli possessed a very rare manuscript entitled *Egyptian History of the Pyramids*, and she believed, and assured everyone, that the supernatural forces that existed within the funerary chambers of the Egyptian kings always fell terribly on those who broke the seals of the sarcophagi. Conan Doyle, a passionate advocate and promoter of Spiritualism, was summoned to “testify” that the son of an English Sir, by the name of William Lugram, one day discovered a mummy which contained an inscription – “Whoever robs me will be killed and deprived of his burial”. “A few days after his discovery”, Lugram died on a hunt without knowing why, and was dragged along the stream of a river, thus not being buried. What further proof would it take to realize that Lord Carnarvon had not died of natural causes?

The news that began with an intriguing question, ended with an unmistakable “truth”: “[...] And the truth is that there has not yet been any way of knowing for certain what sort of disease killed the desecrator of Tutankhamun’s tomb [...]”⁹⁵

The promise of “an interesting struggle between superstition and science” announced in the headline is utterly unsuccessful, since in the vortex of the idea of the punishment of the gods of ancient Egypt, and under the testimony of modern authors, the superstition is victorious. Egypt was surely a land of “spiritual things” and powerful superstitions.

Therefore, the Portuguese newspapers of the time echoed the extraordinary facts and contributed in a sensational way to launch into the public the idea of the curse that had reached, in 1923, Lord Carnarvon, the financier of the archaeological expedition and many other intellectuals, journalists, and simple

⁹³ Marie Corelli, pseudonym of Mary Mackay, was an English writer and a mystique. Marie was one of the most successful writers of her generation, having sold more books than some of her contemporaries, such as Arthur Conan Doyle.

⁹⁴ Famous doctor and British writer, world-famous for the stories about the detective Sherlock Holmes.

⁹⁵ “[...] E a verdade é que ainda não houve maneira de se saber ao certo de que especie de doença morreu o profanador do tumulo de Tutankhamon [...]”

tourists. Curiously, Howard Carter, the actual discoverer of the tomb, the one who dared to upset and challenge Tutankhamun, lived for another 17 years—10 of them working in the tomb—having died only in 1939 at the age of 65.

The theory of the “curse of the Pharaoh” that the Portuguese newspapers spread about ended up having, in Portugal, consequences on literary production. Written in the summer of 1923, shortly after the official opening of the tomb, and published in early 1924, the book entitled *A Profecia ou o mistério da morte de Tut-Ank-Amon*,⁹⁶ authored by Fernando Val do Rio de Carvalho Henriques (1897–1966), an unknown Portuguese writer, and edited in Lisbon in Editora Libânio, was one of the first books published worldwide inspired by the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun.⁹⁷

Final remarks

The research project *Tutankhamon em Portugal. Relatos na imprensa portuguesa (1922–1939)* aims to understand how the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb on the 4th of November of 1923 was reported by the Portuguese periodicals at a time when its international counterparts, especially the British and the French, published almost daily news about it.

We quickly realized that, although Portugal was not at the time a country with Egyptological experience and tradition, and that it crossed one of the most troubled political and social periods in its history, the Portuguese newspapers and magazines not only did not ignore the subject, on the contrary, they gave it a place of prominence in its pages, mainly during the years of 1923 and 1924.

⁹⁶ *The Prophecy or The Mystery of the Death of Tutankhamun.*

⁹⁷ Prior to *The Prophecy* were published two books in 1923 (*King Tut-Ankh-Amen. His Romantic Story* by Archie Bell and *The Kiss of Pharaoh. The Love Story of Tutankhamen* by Richard Goynes), and a short story (4 pages) by Agatha Christie, starring Hercule Poirot, entitled *The Gray Cells of M. Poirot: No. I. The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb*, published in the London magazine *The Sketch*. [Available on: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1923-09-26?NewspaperTitle=The%2BSketch&IssueId=BL%2F0001860%2F19230926%2F&County=London%2C%20England>].

Thus, we propose to demonstrate how sources not commonly used in studies of the Reception of Antiquity—namely newspapers and magazines—can also effectively contribute to how the civilization of ancient Egypt was received, in the 1920s of 20th century Portugal.

The great archaeological discovery of Carnarvon and Carter was a powerful motif that allowed the periodicals of the time to bring the Egyptian civilization closer to its readers. Although there were signs of Portuguese interest in ancient Egypt, it was mainly through the press reports that it was most effectively revealed and extended to large masses of the Portuguese population.

In Portugal, the richness of its history, the artistic wealth, and the mysterious and superstitious religion associated with this civilization, were widely reported and thus actively contributed to readers' views of the ancient Egyptian people, their history and culture.