

# Marija Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's contribution to Egyptology

(in commemoration of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the scholar's birth)

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the contribution of Lithuania's first professional Egyptologist, Marija Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė (16 July 1885–4 May 1941), to the science of Egyptology. The discussion is centred around the formation of Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's interest in Oriental studies, her academic activities at the University of Lithuania, her scholarly and popular publications, her scientific and organisational activities, her participation in international congresses of Orientalists, her collection of Egyptian antiquities, the most relevant trends in her scholarly research, and a general overview of her activities within the sphere of Egyptology.

Interest in the history and culture of Ancient Egypt is deep-rooted in the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL). Egypt used to be a meeting place for travellers, a working arena for researchers, and an antiquarium for ardent collectors. Among numerous travellers, Duke Mikalojus Kristupas Radvila Našlaitėlis, patron of culture in the GDL, reserved a place of his own (1549–1616) as he disseminated knowledge about Ancient Egypt in Lithuania and the rest of Europe. Travel impressions were also published by alumni of Vilnius University, notably by Orientalist Osip-Julian Senkovskij (Senkowski) (1800–1858), Antoni Muchliński (1808–1877), physician Ignotas Žiogelis (Ignacy Żagiell/Żagiella, 1826–1891), and Count Mykolas Tiškevičius (Michał Tyszkiewicz, 1828–1897), who conducted archaeological excavations. Within the scholarly domain, mention should be made of astronomer and Vilnius University Professor Marcin Poczobutt-Odlanicki (Martynas Počobutas-Odlanickis) (1728–1810) and the alumnus of Vilnius University and artist Vincentas Smakauskas (1797–1876), alongside other researchers of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The diplomat, writer, artist, architect, and collector, Count Stanisław Szczęśny Korwin-Kossakowski (1795–1872), was both keenly interested in the culture of Ancient Egypt and a passionate supporter of the methodology to decipher hieroglyphs developed by Jean François Champollion (1790–1832). Overall, Egypt's antiquities were collected by the nobility of the GDL as well as kings of the republic and Lithuanian travellers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The emergence of qualitatively new, professional Lithuanian Egyptology in the 1930s–1940s was a manifestation of cultural development in independent Lithuania. When Orientalists commemorated the anniversary of deciphering Ancient Egyptian writing in 1922 and the tomb of Tutankhamen was discovered intact, the first Lithuanian Egyptologist Marija Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė started to teach the history of Ancient Egypt and Egyptian hieroglyphics at the University of Lithuania (from 1930 known as Vytautas Magnus University) in the temporary capital of Lithuania, the city of Kaunas. Her activities left a deep mark on the history of Lithuanian culture and science.

### Complicated journey of life



Karlas Baulas (1893–1964) (*Soldiers' Economic Company Photo Studio*). Marija Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė, c. 1930, Kaunas. Private collection

Marija Rudzinskaitė was born into a large family of a petty nobleman in the village of Šaravai in the region of Kėdainiai. In 1900 she finished a girls' gymnasium in Kaunas. She naturally studied in Russian, which enabled her to carry on with her studies in Moscow where her brother lived at the time, the famous plant breeder Dionizas Rudzinskas (1866–1954). In 1904 Rudzinskaitė completed teacher training courses and in 1908 graduated from Higher Women's Courses (Faculty of History and Philology). Upon receiving a diploma of higher education, Rudzinskaitė pursued her career at Moscow Imperial University (the beginning date of her studies is unknown).<sup>1</sup>

During her studies, in 1912, the art museum of Moscow University was opened (the Tsar Alexander III Museum of Fine Arts, currently the Alexander S. Pushkin State Museum of Visual Arts) and the collection of Ancient Egyptian artefacts exhibited in it aroused her interest. A number of young people wanting to explore the mysteries of hieroglyphics gathered around Boris Turayev (1869–1920), professor at St Petersburg University, organiser and curator of the exhibition, owner and researcher of the collection of Egyptian antiquities, and famous Russian Egyptologist. In 1912 in the Lecturers' Hall of the Museum, Professor Turayev began delivering a course in Egyptology, which Rudzinskaitė joined in 1913, to students of Moscow Higher Women's Courses. Nearly every lecture

<sup>1</sup> VUB RS, F 96–149, fol. 1.

practical workshops took place in the Ancient Egypt section of Moscow University's art museum. As Rudzinskaitė put it, here the Egyptologist, 'living the mesmerising life of olden Egypt, cast a spell on us, his students, too'. According to numerous responses from listeners, the lectures were 'very interesting ... Delivering a lecture, he spoke as if to gods' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1921, 118–9). A born educator, he taught his students not only to read hieroglyphs and to get acquainted with the development of this writing, but also to use comparative materials.<sup>2</sup> Rudzinskaitė studied the culture of Ancient Egypt, occasionally taking teaching jobs,<sup>3</sup> and was concurrently getting ready for state examinations at Moscow Imperial University (Faculty of History and Philology). On 26 November 1916, after passing her exams, she was awarded a *summa cum laude* master's diploma in world history.<sup>4</sup>

It is not known where and when Rudzinskaitė got married; most likely it happened around 1915. She became a widow early as, shortly after the wedding, her husband went to war and never came back.<sup>5</sup> This fact, alongside her graduation and political changes in her home country in 1918, encouraged Rudzinskaitė to return and to start her pedagogical career in the schools and gymnasiums of Kaunas. Over the course of time, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's activities came to be associated with Kaunas and Vilnius universities. She taught at the University of Lithuania in 1922–39, with an interval due to her illness (1925–28). For a few years early in her career, after receiving the university's permission, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė delivered her lectures in Russian. Starting from 1924 and after a thorough study of Lithuanian, she started teaching her subjects in her native language.<sup>6</sup> At the university, the young Egyptologist worked as a *docent* or *privatdocent* in the Faculty of Humanities.<sup>7</sup> In the autumn of 1940, the Ministry of Education granted her permission to work throughout the 1940–41 academic year as senior research associate in the Department of World History of the Faculty of Humanities at Vilnius University.<sup>8</sup> Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė died in Vilnius in 1941.<sup>9</sup>

Little is known about Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's life in Kaunas since her archive has not withstood the ravages of time. It is however known that the profession of scholar was entwined with her lifestyle, while her home environment reflected her inner world. Her contemporaries unanimously maintained that she was a devoted scholar, delving into her field and ready to speak about Egypt for hours on end.

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<sup>2</sup> VUB RS, F 96–149, fol. 1.

<sup>3</sup> LCVA, F 631, inv. 3, f. 25, pp. 2–3.

<sup>4</sup> VUB RS, F 96–149, fol. 1.

<sup>5</sup> VUB RS, F 110–306, fol. 14.

<sup>6</sup> LCVA, F 631, inv. 3, f. 25, fol. 7.

<sup>7</sup> VUB RS, F 96–149, fol. 3; VUB RS, F 96–VDU 17, fol. 125.

<sup>8</sup> VUB RS, F 96–149, fol. 2, 8.

<sup>9</sup> LCVA, R 856, inv. 25, f. 28, fol. 12.

### Journeys to the land of pyramids

Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė went to Egypt thrice. Her first journey dates back to 1910 (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924a, no 135) when she left for Palestine and Egypt via Constantinople as member of the Moscow Archaeological Commission.<sup>10</sup> She shared her impressions about the city in a brochure written in the genre of popular literature under the title *Constantinople* (Rudzinskaya 1915), which was published as part of the 1915 series of *War and Culture* (Moscow, no 44) issued by the Historical Commission of the Society for the Dissemination of Technical Knowledge. In this edition the author presented the perspective of the connoisseur of the past on the present. She provided a description of the city—including its size, peoples, and religions—she discussed the significance of the Bosphorus and landscapes, and she shared her personal impressions resulting from her observations of the citizens of the country and of the repercussions of the major events of the time. Unfortunately, the authorship of the second brochure, *Egypt*, of the *War and Culture* series (Moscow, no 43) raises doubts: Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's authorship is testified in her *curriculum vitae*,<sup>11</sup> but information from the brochure itself suggests that the author is Semion Narkiryer (Narkiryer 1915).

It must have been her first journey to Egypt that encouraged Rudzinskaitė to pursue the career of Egyptologist, and after her dreams had come true, she sought to deepen as far as possible her expertise in the history and culture of Ancient Egypt. While a member of the Moscow Archaeological Commission, she intended to go to Egypt in 1921 once again in order to take part in archaeological excavations,<sup>12</sup> but after getting a job in Kaunas, she came to associate her aspirations with the University of Lithuania.

At the beginning of 1924, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė asked the University of Lithuania for support to help cover her travel expenses to Egypt. According to the minutes of the council meeting of the Faculty of Humanities (22 February 1924), for her 'as a teacher of the history of the East, it is important to research in the East the information for her lectures delivered at the university. In recent years, scholars have been particularly interested in the East, since excursions, scientific expeditions, exhibitions, etc. are organised regularly. In order to save on expenses, she would like to join a Jewish excursion and go to Egypt. She asks the faculty to give her around 1,500 litas to cover half of her travel expenses. ... Decided: ... to provide aid in the amount

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<sup>10</sup> VUB RS, F 1–E 70. The scholar elsewhere stated that she had travelled with a group of Moscow teachers on an excursion; see Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924a, no 135.

<sup>11</sup> VUB RS, F 96–149, fol. 1.

<sup>12</sup> VUB RS, F 1–E 70.

of 1,000 to cover travel expenses'.<sup>13</sup> The Egyptologist barely managed to gather the necessary sum of money (3,000 litas) and went to Egypt with an excursion organised by the Jewish Society, the main objective of which was Jerusalem. Whereas getting to Jerusalem was not difficult, moving from there to Egypt proved complicated.

During her journey Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė kept a diary, and her impressions, problems encountered, and surprises were thoroughly and vividly described in a series of articles (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924a) published in 1924–25 in the daily *Lietuva* and in Chapter 2 of her book *Tut-Anch-Amono kapas ir Tebų paminklai* (The Tomb of Tutankhamun and Monuments of Thebes) published in Kaunas in 1933 (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1933, 29–62).

The descriptions of the journey made in 1924 reveal that, while in Jerusalem, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė underwent numerous obstacles before she finally succeeded in getting a visa to Egypt.<sup>14</sup> On the morning of 1 May, she woke up in Cairo's *Central Hotel*<sup>15</sup> and hurried to the Egyptian Museum, but it was closed. On this occasion the scholar wrote: 'I was contemplating the beauty and splendour of the building. This enormous temple ... contains everything that is most precious from the sanctuaries and tombs of Ancient Egypt. There are numerous huge statues of kings, sarcophagi, and sphinxes in front of it. ... The immense sphinx is particularly impressive. Dazzling beauty lights up its face with a smile of Egyptian gods and kings. The sphinx's eyes are directed to the east so as to greet the rising sun while it is carried away in sweet dreams viewing a world that is unknown to us. When lit by the sun, its face looks particularly vibrant and jubilant'. During her next visit to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė realised that it would take her several years to see the exhibits thoroughly since the museum is 'a real labyrinth which first seems to be magnificent chaos that is never to be understood. This chaos is however perceived as such only by one who wants to grasp everything in a single glance, one who seeks to see the entire collection in but a few days. To the habitual visitor who ... spends there days and weeks on end, the museum starts to reveal its underlying meaning and its mysteries, and it unravels them particularly gladly to those coming with at least some preparation beforehand' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924a, no 147). During her stay, the scholar worked in the museum intensely.

Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė spent another day of her stay in Egypt seeing the Giza pyramids and, assisted by two Arabs, climbed to the top of the Great Pyramid.

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<sup>13</sup> VUB RS, F 96–VDU 16, fol. 3.

<sup>14</sup> At the time, Egypt required that foreign tourists travel 1st class and have at their disposal at least 100 pounds (Šalčius 1935, 12]. Seeking to save money, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė travelled 3<sup>rd</sup> class and had as little as 100 dollars (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924a, nos 135, 142).

<sup>15</sup> MAB RS, F–163–526.

She was amazed at the fact that the top was flat, capable of fitting about fifty persons. While in Egypt, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė felt clearly how ‘vibrant life is here and you, dweller of the northern lands, start smiling at the sun immediately and feel the ancient Egyptians’ thirst for life, who loathed death and did everything in their consciousness to find a way to immortality and not to give in to death. This opposition to death created Egyptian mummies, pyramids, and the underground temple of the Pharaoh in the mountains in Libya’ (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1933, 41, 59).

On 7 May, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė left Cairo for Luxor by train. Despite the tension (since she turned out to be the only European among the Arabs and, besides that, a woman), the scholar rejoiced in her journey while observing the changing views. She remembered the words of James Henry Breasted (1865–1935) that ‘Egypt is special to such an extent that nowhere else on the globe is there such a land’. Early in the morning of the following day, accompanied by an Arab, she went by ship to the other side of the Nile and continued her journey on a donkey. After a trip of half an hour, she could already see the remains of the Mortuary Temple of King Seti I. While in the Valley of the Kings, she felt that ‘it kept an eerie and mysterious silence, as if it had been listening to something immeasurably distant’ (ibid., 37). Unfortunately, she was not able to see the tomb of Tutankhamen since the entrance was temporarily buried after the numerous newly-discovered treasures had been taken to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. After viewing the tombs of Ramesses VI and Seti I, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė returned to Luxor. The following day she got up early again and, having gone to the other side of the Nile, inspected the renowned Colossi of Memnon, as well as the temples of Medinet Habu, Ramesses II, and Deir el Bahri.

The scholar spent one day on the east bank of the Nile viewing the remains of the temples of Luxor and Karnak: ‘Only here, between their living debris, does one start to understand those statues. There, in the museum, they are rooted away from their native setting and put in an absolutely alien order; all of them have lost their vitality and sense’ (ibid., 49).

On her way from Luxor to Karnak, the scholar saw from afar and was amazed at the temple that could not be embraced at a glance: ‘One walks for at least a few hours, and it seems that there will be no end to this magnificent labyrinth; one just cannot conceive what its plan is in an area of 4 kilometres’ (ibid., 51). However, little by little one starts to figure out the chaotic layout and ‘everything looks as if it were a fairytale ... and above all that is blue sky that melts in the golden sunrays and transcends peculiar shades of colour of the joy of life and of special gratifying experiences. A hawk silently flies above, the sacred bird of Egypt—Horus, the god of light’ (ibid., 53). Having spent a few days in Luxor, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė remarked ‘how important it is for any Egyptologist to live in Egypt for a while’ (ibid.,

61). On a postcard sent from Luxor to her brother D. Rudzinskiy in Ariogala, she wrote: 'I am finally in Egypt. It is good here, but very hot. I live here as if in a fairytale. I had never thought I could live with such joy'.<sup>16</sup> Upon returning to Cairo on 16 May, the scholar was so short of money that she was about to leave, but suddenly a casual acquaintance helped her extend her stay in Egypt.

Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė had received her German and Italian visas, which were necessary to return home, in Jerusalem, but she had to get a Czech visa, too. In the consulate of this country, the scholar met the consul, Russian Egyptologist Professor Grigoriy Loukianoff (1885–1945), who had been residing in Egypt since 1920 (Bothmer 2003, 154). Her devotion to Egyptology greatly impressed him: 'After he heard why and to what lengths I went to in order to come to Egypt, he advised that I stay here for a longer period of time and work under the supervision of Golenishchev, a scholar who is renowned across Europe and who is now working at the Cairo Museum<sup>17</sup> ... The same day I spoke to him and received a hearty welcome as a student of his friend Professor Turayev. Golenishchev gave me the address of Professor Vikent'ev, whom I personally knew while in Moscow. ... And I stayed. I now spend every day in the museum researching the tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amun. Meanwhile there is so much work and so much material that it can hardly be described. And I stayed at my own risk—without money, without sustenance' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924a, no 153). Wanting to do research at the Egyptian Museum, she stayed in Cairo for a while; in addition, pursuing didactic objectives, she was eager to compile a collection for Lithuania and hoped that she would get some help when needed (ibid.).

Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė paid close attention to Egyptologist Vladimir Golenishchev's (1856–1947) words: 'A single journey to the desert is an eye-opener into the past of Egypt to a much greater extent than reading bulky volumes' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1933, 60). She realized that 'only here, among these living monuments, where traces of pharaohs can still be perceived, only here, upon getting kinship with these stones, does one start to conceive their true meaning. By examining closely the faces of these statues, by breathing the air imbued with the warmth of the rays of the sun and intoxicating with sweet peacefulness and oblivion, one begins to feel and understand the meaning of life. ... Here one can easily understand the words of Egyptian papyri: "The sweet smell of life"' (Bothmer 2003, 59).

The precise date of Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's return to Lithuania is unknown, but it is clear that it was in the second half of May, since on 2 June 1924 she was paid £35 to cover her expenses to return home from the funds allocated for business

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<sup>16</sup> MAB RS, F 303–33, fol. 2–3.

<sup>17</sup> The Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

trips of the staff of the Faculty of Humanities.<sup>18</sup> The description of Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's journey made in 1924 is one of the most remarkable travel texts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By relying on the Egyptologist's scrutinising look, Lithuanian readers had for the first time the opportunity to get to know Egypt through reading her articles and the book, written not in a barren style, but in a sensitive, sincere and romantic way.

The scholar made her third and final visit to Egypt in 1934. At a meeting of the council of the Faculty of the Humanities on 26 May 1933, it was decided to send Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė to Egypt during the holidays at her own expense while taking care of her business passport and visas.<sup>19</sup> Due to unknown reasons, the journey did not take place. On 8 April 1934, she addressed the council of the faculty once again, receiving permission to leave and the assurance of assistance in getting a foreign passport and visas.<sup>20</sup> In July 1934,<sup>21</sup> Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė went to Egypt, but Lithuanian periodicals of 1935 mention few facts about this journey. It is known that she went to see the excavations near the Giza Pyramids carried out by the University of Cairo under the supervision of Egyptologist Selim Hassan (1886–1961). During the excavations in the Giza Necropolis near the small queens' pyramids and next to the Pyramid of Cheops, huge mastabas were discovered that belonged to the elite, alongside smaller and poorer tombs, viz., the tomb of a twelve-year-old boy from Prince Kai's family, the tomb of an official named Seshetu(?), the tomb of an unknown woman, and others. Some of them had been robbed, while others, by happy accident, remained intact. While inspecting the excavated mastabas, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė marvelled at the perfectly preserved reliefs, sensitive colours, and the skills of the artists of the olden times at matching colours with exceptional harmony: 'One can hardly take his eyes away from the walls ornamented with gracious, slender, sensual and mysterious Egyptian figures of the distant past. The multicoloured hieroglyphs vividly speak about those who were preparing for eternal life, believing in the wonders of magic spells and hoping they would be able to give whatever man's heart might wish, whatever his wildest dreams might desire. ... And imperceptibly, one is overwhelmed with fear for having encroached upon their holy of holies' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1935a, no 7, 155).

Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė entered a heated discussion on the dating and identity of the smaller pyramids with Vladimir Vikent'ev (1822–1960)—professor at the University of Cairo and former fellow-student of Professor Turayev—and with

<sup>18</sup> VUB RS, F 96–VDU 16, fol. 39.

<sup>19</sup> VUB RS, F 96–VDU 18, fol. 15.

<sup>20</sup> VUB RS, F 96–VDU 18, fol. 39.

<sup>21</sup> LNB RS, F 7 LG 17.



American Egyptologist Andrew Reisner (1867–1942). Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė closely followed Egyptian periodicals and met Herman Junker (1877–1962), a University of Vienna professor who was conducting excavations nearby Hassan. This issue is analysed in the publication 'Les traditions relatives à la reine Chent-Kaus' which appeared in the *Journal du Caire* (5 April 1932) (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1935a, no 7, 155).

During her journey to Egypt in 1934, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė also attended excavations conducted under the supervision of the renowned Egyptologist Professor Reisner (expedition of Harvard University and Boston Museum of Art). When he found out that the visitor was a student of the Russian Egyptologist Turaeyv, Reisner was very favourably disposed. Accompanied by the professor's assistant, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė inspected the tombs in the chronological order of their discovery (in 1932 the excavations of the Cheops families, as well as those of high officials and priests, were completed). Many a time the scholar came back to the more significant mastabas, and while inspecting the burial chambers she was amazed that 'they have absolutely nothing in common with our burial places. Here one will never find heartrending black and white colours, heavy crosses, or sad pictures. Everything here breathes life and joyfulness' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1935a, no 9: 216). Many valuable objects were found during the excavation of these tombs: statues, faience amulets, numerous pieces of gold jewellery, the richly ornamented wooden bed canopy of Queen Hetepheres (Cheops' mother), etc. All of them were taken to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė spoke with bitterness about the fact that these objects could be neither photographed nor drawn (ibid.). According to her, all of them were significant from the archaeological perspective for they allowed one to reconstruct the entire history of the necropolis and the pyramids and enabled better understanding of the everyday life, rituals, and burial customs of the time. Both scientists and ordinary people across the world were keenly interested in the excavations. Introducing the latest Egyptian discoveries to Lithuanian society, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė relied on official releases by Hassan published in the Cairo daily *La Bourse Égyptienne* (29 January 1932 and 22 February 1934) (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1935a).

In her account of the journey made in 1924, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė maintained that, 'from the times of the Greeks to the present day, the Ancient East has been but a beautiful fairytale for Europe. Mysterious hieroglyphs, magnificent pyramids, enigmatic tombs, ever-smiling Egyptian statues, endless rows of sphinxes with their looks directed into the unknown, enormous figures of kings made of red and white stone, at times half-ruined, like the Colossi of Memnon, at times laying down and burdened with thousands of years, like the colossal statue of Ramesses

II—all this tells the story of the remarkable past of those countries and arouses the attention of scholars, the imagination of poets, and profound respect for glorious antiquity’ (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924, 16). Nevertheless, studying the culture of this country, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė did not limit herself to the accumulation of knowledge and its dissemination in Lithuania. She hoped to compile a collection and do active research in the sphere of Egyptology, but her death put an end to her plans.

### **The formation of a collection of antiquities and problems of exhibiting**

One of Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė’s greatest aspirations was to compile a collection devoted to the ‘Egyptian cult of the deceased’, but due to the lack of resources this was difficult to realise (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1933, 62). Unlike other Lithuanian collectors, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė was gathering her collection exclusively for didactic purposes.

It is unknown whether Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė was able to obtain any antiquities during her journey to Egypt in 1910. During her journey in 1924, she became convinced that ‘currently a collection can still be compiled easily, for today the Egyptian government still allows that; but to do so one needs to live in Egypt for a while, as collectors of all countries have done so far, collecting treasures and sending them to museums in their home cities. ... As of now, the Archaeological Commission of the Museum of Cairo permits removing mummies and other antiquities from Egypt, naturally, those that are amply represented in the museum’ (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1933, 61–2). She intended to buy antiquities for the University of Lithuania, but having received no financial support, she did not manage to buy them herself, although she did succeed in obtaining a few valuable articles for her own private collection. The Archaeological Commission of the Museum of Cairo gave its permission to purchase and remove the sarcophagus (without the lid) and mummy of Amun’s singer, discovered nearby Luxor. The scholar bought a few smaller articles, a mummy’s arm among them, from the bothersome Arab tradesmen (*ibid.*, 35–6). As Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė puts it, ‘very frequently, despite the strict prohibition of the Archaeological Commission, those mummies are burnt instead of wood, which is in short supply in Egypt. On the outskirts of the desert, Arabs wait for tourists and surreptitiously sell them mummies’ heads, legs, and arms for pennies on the dollar’. According to the scholar, this fact should reassure those readers who put into question the authenticity of the acquired mummy. Indeed, they ‘have no grounds whatsoever to spout an opinion across Lithuania that the mummies brought to various museums from Egypt are forged. First, not a single mummy may be removed from

Egypt without the stamp of the Museum of Cairo, which testifies to its authenticity, and second, any endeavour to create a forgery would cost far more than the original' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1935a, no 7).

In 1924 in Cairo Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė bought a demotic papyrus with a marriage contract alongside several fragments of a hieratic papyrus of *The Book of the Dead* from Russian Professor Grigoriy Loukianoff (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1936, 34, n. 31). After returning to Lithuania, she corresponded with Loukianoff since she intended to acquire more antiquities. This is testified by Professor Loukianoff's letter dated 24 November 1930 to Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė, in which he informed her that

currently in Cairo, before the tourists have arrived and antique shops have been resumed, one can still buy good articles for relatively small sums of money. Within 2 or 3 weeks, the season will start, prices will grow remarkably, and it will be hard to buy anything. Therefore, if you have made up your mind and have the necessary sum of money, it is high time you sent an advance payment—a third or half of the total amount, and since I am free at this time, I will start collecting articles that are relevant for you.

From what I have, you may be interested in acquiring priest statuettes and a model of a pharaoh's face; attached are their photos with their description and price given on the reverse. You have to add 10% for the shipping and payment of the museum tax. I also include a photo of a hieratic papyrus of *The Book of the Dead* I have in my possession. ... The papyrus is 400 cm long, of which 320 cm are scenes from the judgment of Osiris (the upper part till the bust has been preserved) and then scenes from the afterworld (80 figures total). Under the scenes, are 6–7 lines of the hieratic text of *The Book of the Dead* ... The papyrus dates back to the 20th–15th dynasty. ... I sell it very inexpensively—for £50. ... Should you choose the papyrus, please send £25 (museum tax + £5 for shipping), the remainder to be sent after you have received it in Kaunas. The papyrus belongs to me.

Now, if you want to have an excellent ushabti, statuettes of gods, and articles of the afterlife ritual, please send an advance payment of £15–20. The money is to be sent via the telegraph payable to my name at the address—9 Rue Fayoum, Heliopolis, Egypt, or to my current account—National Bank, Cairo, Elisabeth Loukianoff (the account is in my wife's name).<sup>22</sup>

This letter proves that antiquities could indeed be acquired on favourable terms. Even though she was short of money, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė still managed to enrich her collection by a few valuable purchases from Grigoriy Loukianoff.

It is not known whether Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's collection grew after her 1934 journey to Egypt. However, only in late 1936–early 1937 (Prieš 3 000 metų 1937, 8; Neseniai į Kauną atvežtas 1937, 15) does one find any information that the Egyptologist's private collection was enriched by new exhibits in an unknown way. Among the articles is the lid of Udjarenes' sarcophagus, discovered in Deir el Bahri(?)

<sup>22</sup> Grigoriy Loukianoff's letter from Heliopolis to Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė in Kaunas, 24 November 1930 (A. Snitkuvienė's personal collection).



Pl. 2. The lid of Udjarenes' sarcophagus: outside view (*left*), inside view (*right*). Deir-al-Bachri (Thebes region.), 22<sup>nd</sup>–26<sup>th</sup> dyn. ČDM TDS, acc. no Tt 2796. *Courtesy: M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art*

in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Pl. 2). It used to belong to a family of priests who played an important role in Thebes for 200 years, then presumably to the collection of physician and collector Antoine Barthélemy Clot (1793–1868) (S. J. 1936), and afterwards to Professor Loukianoff. It is believed that around the same time Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė could have received the mummy masks of two children, which had been discovered in Luxor and sent to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.<sup>23</sup> (Pl. 3)

Having compiled a valuable collection of antiquities, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė faced another problem: that of exhibiting. Besides, the sarcophagus with the mummy of Amon's singer (Mašiotienė 1931), shipped from Egypt in 1924, turned out to be a dilemma as it was kept in a rented room and imbued the owners with panic and terror. Only on 7 September 1926 did Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė deposit the mummy (without the sarcophagus) in Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis Gallery, while the sarcophagus remained in her room. Alongside the mummy, she submitted twenty-eight other exhibits.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, on 1 April 1931, the Egyptologist was requested to collect her antiquities (Mašiotienė 1931). Disappointed by the fact that

<sup>23</sup> ČDM TDS, 1938–1945, p. 60, index number 4–5.

<sup>24</sup> ČDM TDS, ČG and VM Performance records for the year 1926, p. 7, III. ČG and VM asset inflow. c) Deposits.



P. 3. Children's mummys masks, 4<sup>th</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> century BC. ČDM TDS, acc. no Tt 2799–2800. *Courtesy: M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art*

the articles were to be exhibited in the lobby, on 20 April 1931 she removed all her exhibits.<sup>25</sup>

Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė hoped to get a separate room in which Egyptian antiquities could be accessible to pupils and students for educational purposes. She however complained about not being able to find a place in a museum. Using the opportunity, Professor Heinrich Schäfer (1868–1957), director of the Berlin City Museum offered to take over the mummy.<sup>26</sup> Naturally, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė turned down this offer and kept looking for an alternative. Luckily, Vincas Ruzgas (1890–1972), director of the Kaunas Pedagogical Museum, agreed to take the exhibits. The mummy of Amon's singer, the children's masks, and other antiquities were exhibited at the museum alongside children's paintings.<sup>27</sup> The Egyptian antiquities were never given exhibition facilities of their own. For this reason, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė had to keep the sarcophagus of Amon's singer, and later on, the lid of Udjarenes' sarcophagus, in the small room she rented or in the attic (Mašiotienė 1931;

<sup>25</sup> ČDM VDS, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's note dated on 20 April 1931.

<sup>26</sup> Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė kept in touch with Prof Heinrich Schäfer, director of the Berlin City Museum. He wrote a letter of recommendation for Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė addressed to English Professor Theodore Monroe Davis (1837–1915), who was carrying out archaeological excavations in Luxor (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924a, no 142).

<sup>27</sup> RPM, F IV–C, inv. 1, f. 60, p. 38; Mokytojas 1938.

S. J. 1936). Finally, in 1937, the Pedagogical Museum exhibited the sarcophagus of Amon's singer, too (Pedagoginiam muziejui 15 m. 1937; Pedagoginiam muziejui 15 m. 1937a; Mokytojas 1938).

After the Vytautas the Great Museum of Culture in Kaunas (now ČDM) was constructed, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė sought to establish an Egypt section in it. On 19 April 1936, she went to the minister of education with a request to arrange for her collection a separate room where popular lectures on the history of the ancient Orient could be delivered and students could write reports on the exhibits they studied. She intended to expand her collection as she kept in touch with Egyptologists residing in Egypt.<sup>28</sup> At a meeting on 23 December 1936, the possibility of establishing an 'Ancient Egypt Corner' at the Vytautas the Great Museum of Culture was discussed. The idea was enthusiastically supported by Aleksandras Račkus, head of the Department of History.<sup>29</sup> On 20 February 1937, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė decided to leave at the museum the mummy, its sarcophagus, a cloth from a different sarcophagus, two children's masks, a showcase with papyrus fragments from *The Book of the Dead*, another showcase with various papyri, and one more showcase with smaller articles.<sup>30</sup> For unknown reasons, there was no exhibition arranged for them.

On 12 October 1939, after acquainting herself with the exhibits stored at Vilnius University (five mummies and an ample collection of scarabs, which previously were the property of the Museum of Archaeology of Stefan Batory University),<sup>31</sup> Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė did whatever possible to get better exhibiting facilities since she intended to move her entire collection from Kaunas to Vilnius in order to expand and enrich the exhibition of the culture and art of Ancient Egypt. In the hope of going to Vilnius 'with her mummy, sarcophagi, masks, papyri, and so on',<sup>32</sup> the scholar submitted a request to the rector of Vilnius University to transfer the Vilnius collection of Egyptian antiquities from the small, cold, walk-through university room into better facilities and offered to expand the exhibition by adding articles from her own collection.<sup>33</sup> She unfortunately failed to secure better facilities. After long and unsuccessful attempts to found an Egyptian section in a museum, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė collected her Egyptian antiquities from the Pedagogical Museum on 30 November 1940, and exhibited twenty-four articles at the Kaunas State Museum

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<sup>28</sup> ČDM TDS, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's request to the minister of education, 19 April 1936.

<sup>29</sup> ČDM TDS, VDKM Council meeting minutes no 4, 23 December 1936.

<sup>30</sup> ČDM TDS, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's explanatory note to VDKM director, 20 February 1937.

<sup>31</sup> VUB RS, F 96-149, fol. 6; Hołubowicz 1933.

<sup>32</sup> VUB RS, F 96-149, fol. 5.

<sup>33</sup> VUB RS, F 96-149, fol. 9.

of Culture (now ČDM).<sup>34</sup> After her death on 4 May 1941, the exhibits remained at the museum. It should be pointed out that they played a significant part in the formation of the museum collection. The exact number of articles acquired by Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė is not known since she never provided a detailed account of her collection or such an account has not survived to the present day; but it is known that the scholar kept part of the exhibits at home and constantly exhibited the other part in one of the museums in Kaunas.

In 1984 several statuettes that Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė had brought from Egypt got into the Čiurlionis Art Museum. In 1985 the museum acquired a valuable fragment of the papyrus of *The Book of the Dead* (Įvairenybės 1986). Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's collection kept at the museum also regained a few exhibits that the scholar had given as a present to her colleagues: the ushabti and the scarab which Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė had given to painter Antanas Žmuidzinaičius (1876–1966), as well as the faience scarab she had given to literary scholar Zigmąs Kuzmickis (1898–1976). The metal scarab and a piece of fabric that Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė had presented to the lawyer and zealous collector of the interwar period, Zigmąs Toliušius (1889–1971), were not found nor is their further history known.<sup>35</sup>

Because Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė had hoped to devote her exhibits to 'the future "Egyptian Corner" of the Vytautas the Great Museum' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1933, 62), one may assume that her wish came true. In 1949 the antiquities of her collection, alongside Aleksandras M. Račkus's articles, were presented at an exhibition entitled 'The Culture and Art of Ancient Egypt' (total 128 articles) and organised by the M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art in Kaunas. Today the exhibits of Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's collection constitute the basis of the 'Ancient World' exhibition established at the Mykolas Žilinskas Art Gallery.

During World War II and unlike the Vilnius collection, the collection of Egyptian antiquities in Kaunas escaped unharmed. There is only one loss related to Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's complicated life: as there were no inheritors, the number of antiquities the Egyptologist kept at home and those lost is not known. As the collection of Egyptian antiquities at the Čiurlionis Art Museum was expanded in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the museum staff members who pursued the enrichment of the museum collection started to play an important role. It is thanks to both the staff members of the museum and collectors that the museum currently boasts of having the largest collection of Egyptian antiquities in Lithuania.

<sup>34</sup> ČDM TDS, 1938–1945, fols 59–63, serial number 113 (a mummy, a sarcophagus without a lid, the lid of another sarcophagus, two children's mummy masks, a mummy's arm, four scarabs, five statuettes of gods, three ushabti, a necklace, an amulet, a piece of an acacia pod, and three fragments of a papyrus plant); ČDM TDS, 30 November 1940.

<sup>35</sup> LNB RS, F 66–41, fols 8–11.

### The formation of professional Egyptology

A comparison of the contributions of 19<sup>th</sup>-century travellers to Lithuanian Egyptology with those of 20<sup>th</sup>-century travellers reveals totally different perspectives. During the period of Lithuania's interwar independence, professional Egyptology found new vistas for development. By the efforts of the intellectual elite, the University of Lithuania was established in Kaunas and offered courses in Arabic and Sanskrit. In addition, a department of Hebrew studies was established and several members of the university were keenly interested in Oriental cultures. The founder of professional Egyptology, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė, also worked at the university.

The scholar had immense respect for her teacher, Professor Boris Turayev, who she referred to as the founder of the Russian school of studies of the ancient East. She also wrote: 'as a connoisseur of the Orient, Professor Turayev is known not only in Russia but also abroad and notably due to his talented translation of the monumental inscriptions of Egypt ... Thanks to him, global science now has numerous translations of Egyptian hieroglyphs and papyri, which he pioneered' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1921, 116–7). Having read many of his works, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė held them in high esteem and referred to them when writing her own books (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1936, 199–202). According to Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė, Turayev's books 'differ from other books of the kind by having an outstanding feature: they evoke interest in an absolutely indifferent reader. These truly scholarly works ... are not merely a naked outline of the facts which are only accessible to a specialist of his kind; they are perfectly clear to any educated reader. Abounding in original translations from papyri and hieroglyphs, decorated with rare drawings, and published in an incredibly appealing way, they, like it or not, make even an outsider feel the breath and beauty of ancient Egypt' (*ibid.*, 117). However, it was not only Turayev's scholarly activities that greatly influenced the formation of Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's scientific views, but also the overall level of the science and culture of Russia of the time.

While studying in Moscow, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė participated in the activities of the History Commission at Moscow University and the Polish Scientific Society. She also published her travel impressions in Russian and Polish periodicals and was involved in pedagogical activities. In 1909 she delivered lectures on history at the University for All (*Uniwersytet dla Wszystkich*) in Warsaw.<sup>36</sup> After graduating and returning to Kaunas (from 1918 to 1929 with a few intervals), Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė carried on with her pedagogical activities at the Kaunas School of

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<sup>36</sup> VUB RS, F 96–149, fol. 1. The University for All operated from December 1905 to October 1908. In 1909 educators and numerous listeners moved to the 'Society of Polish Culture' (*Towarzystwo Kultury Polskiej*).



Commerce, the Polish Gymnasium, the Second and Third gymnasiums, and Justinas Tumėnas' General Certificate Courses, where she taught world history.<sup>37</sup>

During her work at the University of Lithuania, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė pursued quality teaching of world history at schools and gymnasiums. In 1922–23 she published a series of articles (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1922a; Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1923) in the journal *Mokykla ir gyvenimas* (School and Life), where she provided a critique of the history curriculum of the time and proposed expanding the syllabus since 'while studying history, we find out what our nation is, what differentiates it from other nations, what it has achieved throughout its life, and what aspirations it holds. ... History educates our aesthetic feelings as well. When studying ancient art and literary monuments, scholars learn to understand, sympathise with, and respect the relics of the past' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1923, 5). According to Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė, 'ancient history reveals to us the source of human culture and if the bond between Lithuanian history and ancient history has not been found, it does not mean that there was not such a bond' (ibid., p. 8).

Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė critically assessed the translation of textbooks from Russian into Lithuanian executed by world history specialist Robert Vipper (1859–1954), an adherent and disseminator (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1925) of the theory of Panbabylonism. According to Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė, their author is but a disseminator rather than an educator since 'he lacks the knowledge and understanding of primary sources of cognition and comprehension of the great culture in which—as the true connoisseur of the Orient Turayev puts it, even in his popular works—all separate facts fuse harmoniously, thus constructing a comprehensive image of the magnificent past' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1925, 490).

Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė suggested that Lithuanian translations be made 'not of these surrogates ... but of those without which one cannot get introduced to the Ancient East' (ibid., 491–2), e.g., of the book by American Egyptologist and New York University Professor James Henry Breasted, *A History of Egypt* (1st ed. in 1905). On 25 November 1922, the Scientific Council of the Faculty of the Humanities decided to delegate Professor Krėvė-Mickevičius (1882–1954) to discuss publishing opportunities of this book with Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė. On 16 December 1922, the decision to translate the book was made, and at a meeting held on 29 February 1923, it was decided to assign the proofreading of the translation to Professor Jonas Jablonskis (1860–1930). The translation was not made from the original language, but from a Russian translation made by Professor Vladimir Vikent'ev in 1915, and after Professor Jablonskis had found numerous inaccuracies, errors, and other flaws

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<sup>37</sup> LCVA, F 631, inv. 3, f. 25, fols 5, 7, 8.

from the viewpoint of Lithuanian grammar, he did not approve the translation for publication.<sup>38</sup>

While teaching at the University of Lithuania and other schools, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė did independent research. In 1921 she published two translations from Russian in the journal *Švietimo darbas* (The Task of Education): one was intended to commemorate Professor Turayev (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1921a; Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1921), and the other dealt with the psychology of Egypt's religions. Early in her writing career, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė experienced a lot of difficulties due to her poor knowledge of Lithuanian. The scholar was proficient in Russian, while Polish was spoken in her parents' family. In a 1921 letter to writer Juozas Tumas Vaižgantas (1869–1933), a docent at the University of Lithuania, she regretted bitterly that 'unfortunately, I do not know my native language, although I'm studying it and making a little progress; I do hope that sometime I'll know it well enough to speak and write in fluent Lithuanian about Egypt, which is utterly unknown to the young Lithuania'.<sup>39</sup> She also complained about not knowing what was to be done with her translation from Egyptian into Polish of the ancient Egyptian literary monument, the tale of *Sinuhe*, alongside her other Egypt-related works.<sup>40</sup> Her correspondence with Krėvė-Mickevičius was also concerned with publishing activities.<sup>41</sup> Most likely she received both advice and encouragement, because in 1922 her article 'Sinuhet', translated from Polish into Lithuanian by Petras Vaičiūnas, was published in the journal *Švietimo darbas* (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1922, 379–92) (the papyrus with the original *Sinuhe* kept at the Moscow Art Museum used to belong to Egyptologist Vladimir Golenishchev's collection (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1922, 378). In the introductory part Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė explained that in the translation of the tale of *Sinuhe* she sought to preserve the characteristic features of the Egyptian language. As she puts it, the work is

interesting and valuable since it sheds light on Egypt's policy with respect to the pharaoh and his subjects and on what the pharaoh's capital used to be; we also find a vivid account of the Egyptian belief about the afterlife and profound representation of the feelings of an Egyptian exile, who is forced to live abroad and is longing for his homeland, prays vehemently to his gods that they take him back to his beloved country "where his heart lives". ... Egypt's culture, which now awaits a glorious future, is not known to the young Lithuania; hence my translation of *Sinuhe* from hieroglyphs and papyri: let it pave the way for the field of Egyptology in Lithuania. (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1922, 371–2)

<sup>38</sup> VUB RS, F 96–VDU 15, fols 38, 45, 66, 72–3.

<sup>39</sup> VUB RS, F 1–F 70.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> MAB RS, F 96–273, fol. 26.

Having provided a discussion on the literary features and genres of Ancient Egypt, the author included an excerpt from a harper's song that reflects 'disillusionment and the loss of hope in gods and the afterlife. (Ibid., 374)

Hardly had the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deciphering of hieroglyphics by the French philologist Jean François Champollion been commemorated when Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė wrote: 'the wonderful news has been telegraphed that a completely intact pharaoh's tomb was found in the Valley of the Kings nearby Luxor in October 1922' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924). Coincidentally, the same year Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė, who at the time was a docent in the Department of World History of the Faculty of Humanities, supplemented her course on the history of the ancient East with a series of lectures on Egyptology and started teaching elements of hieroglyphics to her students. When in 1930 she came up with the idea of publishing a popular science series entitled 'The Ancient East', the scholar asked the Council of the Faculty of the Humanities at Vytautas Magnus University to allocate money (about 2,000 litas) for the publication of the first issue of the series, which would be devoted to a Lithuanian dictionary of Egyptian hieroglyphs. Due to a lack of money, the faculty was not able to fund this endeavour;<sup>42</sup> nevertheless, the *Egyptian Hieroglyph–Lithuanian Dictionary* (Egipto ieroglifai) was published in Kaunas in 1932. With the consent of author Günther Röder (1881–1966), the dictionary was based on his textbook entitled *Praktische Einführung in die Hieroglyphen und die ägyptische Sprache* (München, 1913). The technical part of the project was carried out by Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's student Pranas Karalius (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1932a, ii, n. \*). As Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė puts it, 'the reasons that led to the appearance of the first small hieroglyph–Lithuanian dictionary are exclusively practical. Now that the history of Egypt is taught alongside hieroglyphic texts in the universities of nearly all countries, why could Lithuania, whose past is likewise submerged under the dusk of ages, not take interest in ancient Egyptian literature and language, too?' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1932a, i). The publication of the dictionary was supplemented with excerpts from authentic texts: the goddess Hathor's address to King Tuthmosis III, a hymn to Osiris, the tale of *Sinuhe*, an account of the battle of Ramesses II with Hittites, a hymn of Amenhotep IV to Aton, and others (ibid., 28). The scholar rejoiced at the possibility to involve her students in practical work and, in order to read hieroglyphs, she acquired a sarcophagus and a few papyrus fragments (ibid., iii).

In 1932 the second issue of the Ancient East series entitled *The State of Women in Ancient Egypt* was published (Moters būklė senovės Egipte) (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1932b). It comprised two parts. Part I provided an overview of the

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<sup>42</sup> VUB RS, F 96–VDU 17, fol. 125.

state of women in different periods of Ancient Egypt on the basis of research by Egyptologists Adolf Erman (1854–1937), Henri Édouard Naville (1844–1926), and James Henry Breasted, as well as texts from the Turin, Leiden, and Cairo papyri. An analysis of literary works revealed that those did not contain portrayals of working women; women appeared less than men and were usually portrayed behind them (in the background), thus manifesting their position in society. Considerations were also provided on the role of women in the family and the significance of the harem. Part Two was devoted to Queen Hatshepsut, who broke with tradition, and the wall reliefs of Deir el-Bahri.

The project of publishing the Lithuanian Encyclopedia (*Lietuviškoji enciklopedija*) was launched in Kaunas in 1933. Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė submitted an elaborate article entitled 'Assyria' (pp. 1248–52) to be published in the first volume. The same year the third booklet of the Ancient East series came out under the title *The Tomb of Tutankhamun and Monuments of Thebes* (Tut-Anch-Amono kapas ir Tebų paminklai). The first chapter of the book provides an account of the archaeological excavations in the Valley of the Kings, starting from the activities in 1870 by French Egyptologist Gaston Camille Charles Maspero (1846–1916), director of the Museum of Cairo, to the explorations by Professor Howard Carter (1874–1939). Of particular significance was the discovery of an intact tomb of the little-known King Tutankhamun (18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) in 1922. The booklet contains descriptions of the findings that shed light on both the personality of Tutankhamun and the period of his rule. Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė gave an account of the discovery of the tomb, the mysterious death of Lord George Edward Herbert Carnarvon (1866–1923), who had financed the archaeological excavations, and Professor Carter's conflict with the government of the country. The description of the opening of the sarcophagus is accompanied by Carter's emotional quotations. This publication was a valuable source of information for the Lithuanian reader since it revealed one of the greatest discoveries in the history of archaeology.

The year 1934 witnessed the publication of the fourth booklet of The Ancient East series entitled *The Meaning of the Name in Ancient Egypt* (Vardo reikšmė senovės Egipte), which Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė dedicated to Professor Turayev. This is part of her unfinished manuscript 'The Magic of Ancient Egypt and the Beliefs of Ancient Lithuanians'. Although she had not managed to collect substantial material on the religion of ancient Lithuanians, the author deemed the book to be an original endeavour since not a single work had been published on this issue before (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1934, 5). Under the cryptonym V. K-tas, a reviewer pointed out that 'if the author ever completes and publishes her research entitled 'The Magic of Ancient Egypt and the Beliefs of Ancient Lithuanians', it is likely to be of

interest not only to us, Lithuanians, but to the broader scientific community as well' (K-tas 1934, 122). Though small and unpretentious, the booklet was interesting and valuable since it was grounded on historical and literary facts, thereby elevating and promoting the beliefs of ancient Egyptians by the magic of the word and name.

Although sketchy, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's booklet *The Land of Gods and Perfume* (Dievų ir kvėpalų žemė) devoted to Ethiopia, the culture of which used to be significantly influenced by Ancient Egypt, was a relevant publication at the time, partly due to Italy's policy toward Ethiopia, which the author experienced clearly at the International Congress of Orientalists in Rome in 1935.

In 1936 the broadest study by Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė, *A History of the Ancient East*, vol. 1: Egypt (Senovės Rytų istorija, t. 1: Aigiptas) was published in Kaunas. It was published within the series *Raštai* (Works, vol. 20)<sup>43</sup> of the Faculty of Humanities. In her most important and most elaborate work, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė based her research on works by Egyptologists H. Breasted, Adolf Erman, Norman de Garis Davies (1865–1941), Eduard Meyer (1855–1930), Turayev, and others. The introduction provides an overview of the influence the East had on European culture, alongside a discussion of the sources and history of research, as well as the ancient Egyptian script. The author provides a detailed account of the beginnings of the ancient Egyptian state and of the Old, the Middle and the New kingdoms. The book includes a map of Egypt and a chronological table of the rulers (after J.H. Breasted), while the exhaustive bibliography comprises works of both general and special domains: studies on art, archaeology, literature, and language.

In her articles, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė informed her Lithuanian readers about the latest archaeological excavations nearby the Giza pyramids carried out by Professor Hassan from the University of Cairo and provided an account of the expeditions of Harvard and Boston universities (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1925a). Most likely, the materials for the book came from foreign periodicals (*La Bourse Égyptienne*, 29 January 1932, 22 February 1932; *Journal du Caire*, 5 April 1932) sent to her by Professor Loukianoff (ibid., no 80).

In the journal *Mokslo dienos* (Days of Science) in 1937, the scholar published an elaborate article entitled 'The Cult of the Sun', supplemented with an excerpt from 'The Great Hymn to Aten' by Amenhotep IV (translated from German by L. Kuolis) and myths about the sun god Re (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1937). The author explained that 'the sun—the god Re, the god Aten (the face of the sun), and the god Amon-re (the hidden force)—came to be the greatest deity in ancient Egypt. The Egyptian belief in the sun and the cult of the sun in general is the religion of the entire

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<sup>43</sup> The book was reviewed by Lev Karsavin.

world; this is the infallible feeling of a force brimming over with life' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1921a).

The Egypt of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is also given attention in Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's 1937 article 'The revival of Ancient Egypt. Some considerations on the present-day population of Egypt' (Senovės Egiptas vėl atgyja. Šiek tiek apie šių dienų Egipto gyventojus). Here Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė provided an account of the political regime in the country, local citizens, and traditional apparel. She also touched upon the phenomenon of the harem. She pointed out that, 'thanks to Egyptian patriots, the impudent robbery of the treasures of Egypt's renowned past has now been stopped, and no Egyptian antiquities can be removed from the country' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1937a).

Upon reading the book *Pour transformer un viellard en un jeune homme* (How to turn an old person into a young one, 1937) by Belgian Egyptologist Jean Capart (1877–1947), Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė wrote an article entitled 'How can an old man be made young?' (Kaip atjauninti senį?), which was devoted to recipes and other medical miscellanea collected from papyri texts by Georg Moritz Ebers (1837–1898) and Edwin Smith (1822–1906) and introduced discoveries by Professor Victor Loret (1859–1946), a botanist (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1939).

Unfortunately, a number of booklets and articles for the The Ancient East series never came out: 'Egyptian Gods', 'Akhenaten's Reform', and 'A Grammar of Egyptian Hieroglyphs' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1934, 32). Other items that were never released include longer essays ('The Times of Pyramids in Egypt' [100 pp.], 'Ancient Egyptian Scripts' [50 pp.], 'The religion and art of the times of Amenhotep IV and Tut-Ankh-Amun' [50 pp.], 'The Belief in the Power of the Name in Egypt' [100 pp.], 'Pharaoh Hatshepsut' [15 pp.], and 'The Laws of Hamurabi' [80 pp.]<sup>44</sup> and translations from the Egyptian language ('An Egyptian Story about Two Brothers' and 'The Book of the Dead').<sup>45</sup> The scholar also hoped to write 'Hieroglyphs in the Light of the Latest Research in Egyptology'<sup>46</sup> and 'Prus' "'The Pharaoh" in the Light of Egyptology'.<sup>47</sup> She also intended to deliver a course to Vilnius University students.

### **Involvement in the activities of the international congresses of Orientalists**

On several occasions Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė represented Lithuania at international congresses of Orientalists. During her trip to Berlin with a group of

<sup>44</sup> VUB RS, F 96–E 149, 2.

<sup>45</sup> LCVA, R 856, inv. 2, f. 28, fol.16.

<sup>46</sup> VUB RS, F 96–E 149, fol. 1.

<sup>47</sup> VUB RS, F 1–E 70.

students from the University of Lithuania on 4–11 April 1923, she went to museums and viewed the exhibits originating from Assyria-Babylon and Ancient Egypt (Žk. 1923; Kai kurie įspūdžiai 1923). She took part in the Congress of German Orientalists (Deutscher Orientalistentag, 9–11 April 1923) devoted primarily to the recently discovered tomb of Tutankhamun (Ž. K. 1923, 1; Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924). In this highly specialised group of twenty-one German Egyptologists, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė was the only woman. Of the eight presentations she listened to, the one by Professor Hermann Ranke (1878–1953) impressed her the most: 'it was as if I was taking part in the excavations of the tomb myself, since the pictures on the screen showed, one after another, the afterlife rooms of the pharaoh in a state as intact as seen by Carnarvon upon his discovery' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924, 19). The congress was concluded by a lecture by Professor Johann Heinrich Schäfer (1868–1957), director of Berlin's Museum of Egypt, about Amarna. Upon meeting German Egyptologists (Professor at Berlin University Adolf Erman, Professor at Heidelberg University Hermann Ranke, Privatdocent at Breslav University Günther Röder, et. al.) (ibid., 20), Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė entertained the hope of going to Egypt once again since she sought to see the Tomb of Tutankhamen and the relevant findings. After returning from the congress, the scholar published an informative article on the sensational discovery (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1924).

With the approval of the council of the Faculty of the Humanities, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė took part in other international congresses of Orientalists. The former was committed to providing her with a passport and other relevant documents, but she covered all her expenses herself.<sup>48</sup>

The 18th International Congress of Orientalists took place on 7–12 September 1931 in Leiden, Holland, which took pride in several institutes of ancient Eastern languages and an excellent Egyptian museum. Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė was the only person from Lithuania to take part in the congress, which hosted about 1,000 participants coming from nearly all European countries, the USA, India and Egypt. There were many representatives from England, but none from Russia and Turkey. Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė worked in the section of Egyptology. There she met Professor Hassan, a pure-blooded Egyptian, whose pioneering activities in the field made him the centre of everybody's attention. As Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė puts it, 'An Egyptian Egyptologist is a remarkable fact on its own since previously it was nearly exclusively Europeans and Americans' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1935a, no 7: 154). 'Reports by Egyptologists demonstrated convincingly that today this science is gaining momentum, and it may well be the case that even recently published books will need to be rewritten because a lot of new information has been

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<sup>48</sup> VUB RS, F 96–VDU 17, fol. 150; F 96–VDU 18, fol. 88.

collected' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1932, 107). The scholar greatly appreciated her week in Holland 'spent in the circle of people, many of whom are renowned scholars sharing similar ideas' (ibid., 108). New contacts opened vistas for further research within a large family of Orientalists.

The 19th International Congress of Orientalists in Rome (22–30 September 1935) hosted no more than 300 scientists. Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė was the only representative from the Baltic region. At the time Italy was preparing for a war with Ethiopia for Abyssinia, and the scholar was rather critical of the congress: 'it is partly due to the present political situation and partly due to the fact that Rome, in general, is not the right place for congresses of Orientalists. Rome outshines the spirit of the East. ... Whereas in the East attention is focused on the issues of the afterlife, Rome has always been overwhelmed by the desire to rule the entire world. Ruins in Rome are different from those in Egypt. The columns of Egyptian temples reach for the sky; in Rome columns are firmly attached to the ground and resemble soldiers drawn in ranks. The spirit of the Roman past is different from that of the East'.<sup>49</sup>

Of all the sections, the Egyptology and the African Studies sections were neglected the most. The hall was half-empty at nearly all times. A few young Italians delivered their reports in Italian and, naturally, were listened to by Italians only. More famous Egyptologists reported to different sections in another hall. 'Although the congress is rather passive and lacks the liveliness of the East and the special sensation of the East, the few days of collaboration connected all scholars into a single family; this family is bound neither by blood, nor by a practical down-to-earth issue, but rather by the abstract idea of "the fairytale of the East"' (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1935, 815).

The last congress that Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė attended, the 20th International Congress of Orientalists, took place on 5–10 September 1938, in Brussels, Belgium. Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė was again the only representative from the Baltic States. The congress took place in the premises of the Musées Royaux, and hosted around 1,000 people. This time the Egyptology section had a fair number of presentations devoted to the latest excavations in Egypt carried out jointly by French and Polish scholars. Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė bitterly regretted that Lithuania had not even made an attempt to join them (Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1938, 818–20).

The congress took place at an unfavourable time: the world was getting ready for the war and some participants even left before the sessions had finished. 'Nevertheless overall, the congress was a success. It was ample and engaging, while Brussels is an ideal place for Orientalists to meet. ... Yet the most important thing about congresses like this one is that they raise an entire range of new issues, give impetus to research and unite scientists from across the world into one family sharing common objectives' (ibid., 819).

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<sup>49</sup> VUB, F 96–VDU 18, fol. 88; Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė 1935, 814.



Taking part at these conferences was of primary significance to Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė herself. As the founder of the scientific approach to Egyptology in Lithuania, she had an excellent opportunity to attend presenters of interest; to obtain information on new discoveries, research, and literature; to make new connections; and to participate in discussions. All this provided an impulse for new research in the field of Egyptology. By representing Lithuania, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė not only developed as a specialist but also transmitted the knowledge she had accumulated to her students and disseminated it in her publications. Meanwhile all her activities were directed towards one goal, i.e., to prepare grounds for the future of Oriental studies in her home country. Enchanted with the majestic culture of Ancient Egypt, she did her best to evoke interest in Lithuanian society. Laying the path for the science of Egyptology at home, she had 'always considered herself the daughter of Egypt' (Alseikaitė 1941).

### Conclusions

The emergence of Lithuanian Egyptology in the 1930s–1940s was a natural manifestation of the development of culture and academic activities in a country which posited as its goal the revival of the traditions aimed at the cognition of the history and culture of Ancient Egypt and the collection of Egyptian antiquities from the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė was the first scholar in Lithuania qualitatively meeting the standards of the science of Egyptology of the time. Throughout Lithuania's interwar period of independence, she was actively involved in various spheres of Egyptology: she taught a course in Egyptology at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, published numerous articles, represented Lithuanian academic science at international congresses of Egyptologists, was successfully compiling a collection of Egyptian antiquities, and so on. Having assessed the outcomes of her versatile research, one may state that Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė was the most prominent Lithuanian scholar of the time; her work aimed at laying the foundations of Egyptology in independent Lithuania is invaluable.

It is regrettable that the Soviet invasion cut short her immense contribution. There was no and could not be a successive development of the science of Egyptology in occupied Lithuania. Nevertheless, Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė's unique personality as well as her versatile academic, educational and research activities; work at the university; and published articles and books, alongside a valuable collection of Egyptian antiquities, have left a deep mark in the history of Lithuanian culture, science and Oriental studies.

*Translated from Lithuanian by Julija Korostenskaja*

## Abbreviations

- ČDM — M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art (Nacionalinis M.K. Čiurlionio dailės muziejus)  
 ČDM TDS — M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art, Department of Applied Art (Nacionalinis M.K. Čiurlionio dailės muziejus, Taikomosios dailės skyrius)  
 ČDM VDS — M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art, Department of Fine Art (Nacionalinis M.K. Čiurlionio dailės muziejus, Vaizduojamosios dailės skyrius)  
 ČG — M.K. Čiurlionis Gallery (M.K. Čiurlionio galerija)  
 LCVA — Lithuanian Central State Archives (Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas)  
 MAB RS — The Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Manuscript Department (Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka, Rankraščių skyrius)  
 LNB RS — Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, Rear Book and Manuscript Department (Nacionalinė M. Mažvydo biblioteka, Retų spaudinių ir rankraščių skyrius)  
 VDKM — Vytautas Magnus Museum of Culture (Vytauto Didžiojo kultūros muziejus)  
 VDU — Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas (Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas)  
 VM — State Museum (Valstybės muziejus)  
 VUB RS — Vilnius University Library, Manuscript Department (Vilniaus universiteto biblioteka, Rankraščių skyrius)

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