

## Object Biography

Shroud including  
Fragment buried in  
tomb at Deir el-  
Medina, Thebes

ca. 100-225

1948

Shroud first excavated  
by French archaeologist  
Bernard Bruyère with  
sections already  
missing upon discovery<sup>1</sup>

Shroud first published  
in Bruyère's report of  
his 1948-51  
excavations<sup>1</sup>

1953

Section went missing  
in between excavation  
and appearance in  
Sotheby's catalog

Shroud purchased for  
£1500 at Sotheby's  
auction in London<sup>2</sup>

1970/1

c. 1970

Restorations done  
(by whom?) to fill  
in the Shroud's  
missing sections<sup>3</sup>

Shroud purchased by  
The Brooklyn  
Museum (Charles  
Edwin Wilbour Fund)<sup>4</sup>

1975

Christie's acquires  
Fragment from "a private  
European collection"<sup>5</sup>

prior to  
1980

Textile collector Lloyd  
Cotsen purchases  
Fragment from  
Christie's lot 34<sup>6</sup>

Dec 6, 2007

Oct 2018

Lloyd Cotsen's personal  
textile collection (including  
the Fragment) donated to  
George Washington  
University Museum & The  
Textile Museum as Cotsen  
Textile Traces Study  
Collection<sup>7</sup>

Shroud and Fragment  
first linked together in  
print<sup>8</sup>

2020

Connection between  
Shroud and Fragment  
confirmed through in-  
person analyses

2024

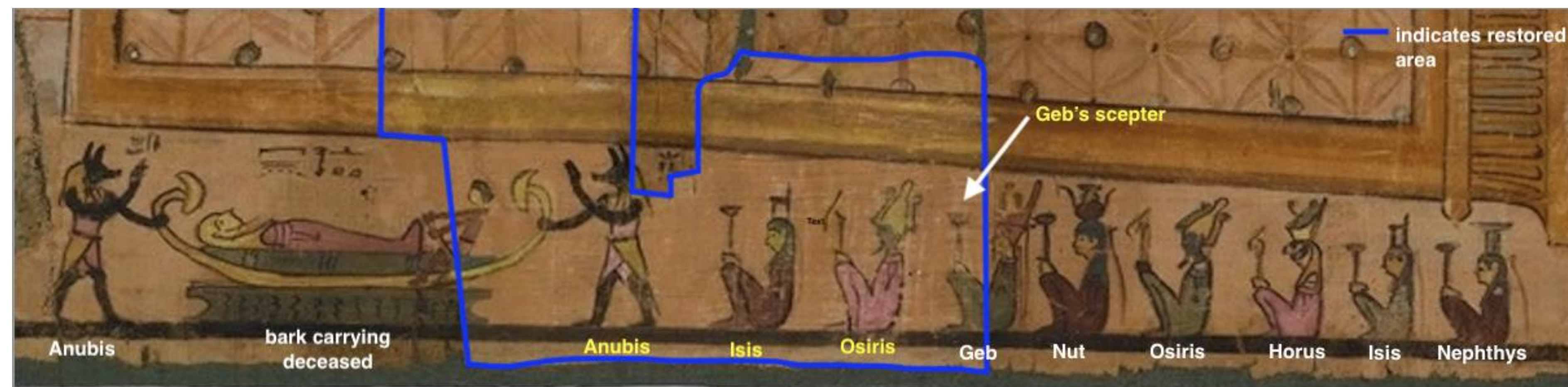
## Broader Implications

- Fragment regains ancient context:
  - From Roman-period Egypt
  - Belongs to Theban burial shroud
- Importance of provenance research for...
  - Reversing looting's ill effects
  - Upholding commitments to preserve cultural heritage
- Tracing object biographies can yield unexpected and valuable connections
- Role of university museums in provenance research<sup>9</sup>
  - Cotsen's Collection (largely from art market) gifted to GW to support nuanced research & undergraduate education

## Cotsen Fragment: Forged or Genuine?

- Purchased from Christie's
- Listed as unprovenanced, Ptolemaic, Demotic script
- Academics refused to study due to market connections
- Undergraduate research opportunity to...
  - Study museum object
  - Reconstruct object biography
  - Explore consequences of forged/looted antiquities

Textile fragment depicting traditional Egyptian iconography, c. 100-225 C.E. Pigment on linen, 15.2 x 13.3 cm. The Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection T-2920. Photograph courtesy of The George Washington University Museum. Photo: Bruce M. White Photography.



Shroud with incorrect restoration

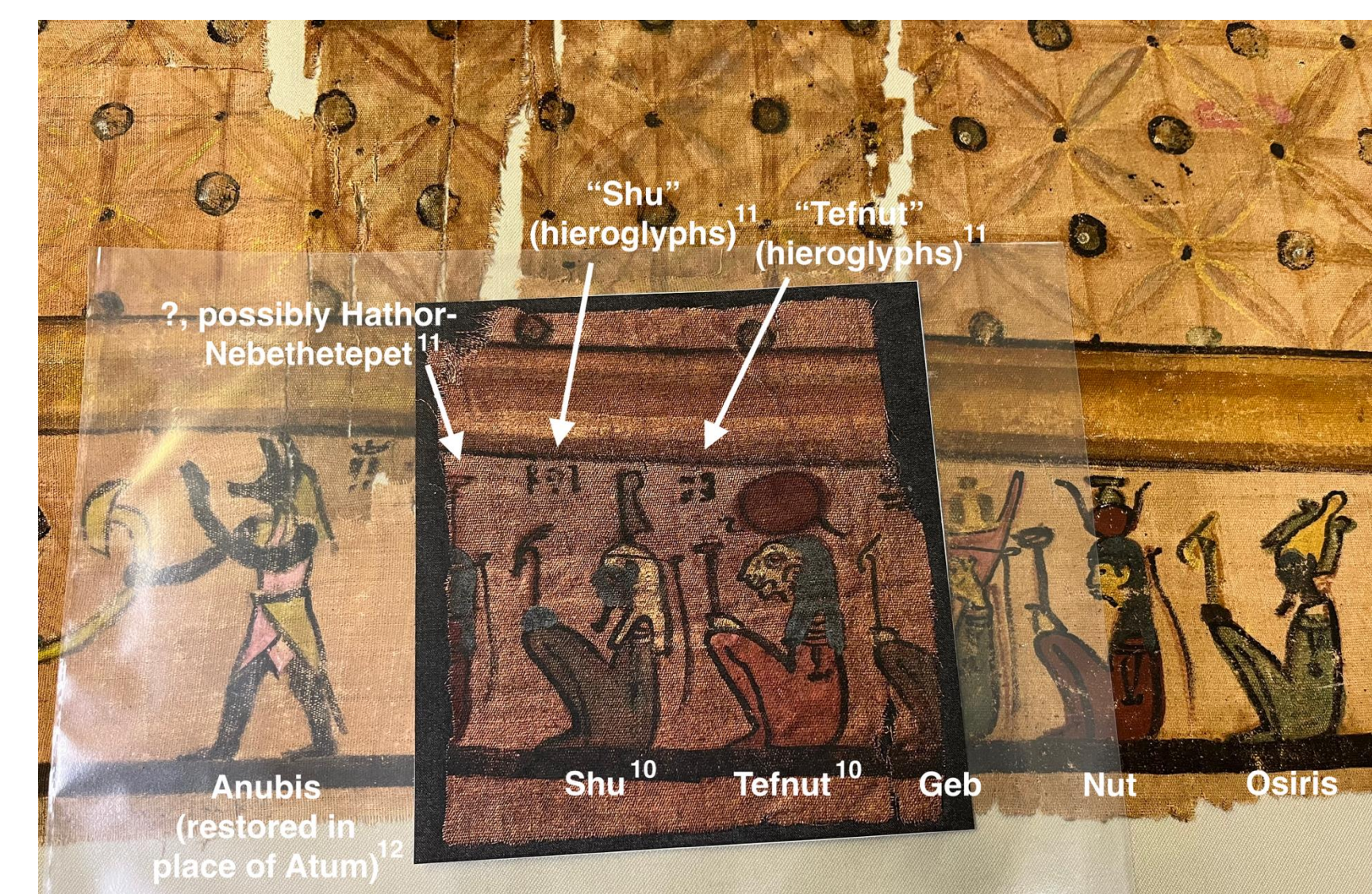
## An Orphaned Object Reunited

### Research Revealed...A Possible Connection

- Sole publication connected Fragment to Roman-period shroud<sup>8</sup>
- Egyptian hieroglyphic script

### Confirming the Connection

- Join:** Fragment's decorations match Shroud's...
  - Circles of black pigment (top of Fragment)
  - Decorative border
  - Black groundline
- Iconography:** Geb's missing half on Fragment
- Weave:** Both single-ply linen, s-twist
  - Warp:** Both 14 ends/cm
  - Weft:** 28 picks/cm (Fragment), 26-30 picks/cm (Shroud)
- Color:** Not prerequisite for match
  - Differences likely due to environmental conditions



Shroud with 1:1 Image of Fragment overlaid



### Ramifications of the Unification

- Prior restoration revealed as erroneous**
  - Isis & Osiris should be Shu & Tefnut
  - Papyrus scepter should be was-scepter
  - Row of deities initially stopped immediately right of bark, i.e., no second Anubis
- Identified row of deities: Heliopolitan Ennead**
  - Atum, Shu, Tefnut, Geb, Nut, Osiris, Horus (replaces Seth), Isis, Nephthys<sup>1, 8, 12</sup>
  - Extra female deity between Atum & Shu: perhaps personification of Atum's hand<sup>11</sup>

Left to right: Sumru Krody, Hannah Faberman, and Karthika Audinet at the Brooklyn Museum. Photograph courtesy of Karthika Audinet.

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