The Egypt Exploration Society

The Lucy Gura Archive:

The hierarchical structure of the EES Archive

Throughout 2014 the Society implemented a new archival reference system to allow staff and researchers to easily locate items for consultation and to accurately catalogue and digitize material in our care. This alphanumerical ordering system, developed by Maria Rodriguez Rubin and Carl Graves, makes use of a number of abbreviations and hierarchical structures to assist with cataloguing in a clear and relational way. Details of the abbreviations and their meanings can be found in the *Sub-archive levels and abbreviations* document. This guide gives more background to the overall hierarchical structure and how the referencing system reflects this system of arrangement.

The online library and archive catalogue can be accessed via:
http://ees.soutron.net/Library/Catalogues/Search.aspx

The Society's archive preserves a lasting record of the over a century of contributions to the field of Egyptology. Today it contains an estimated one-million individual items and remains one of the most unique and research rich archives in the discipline worldwide. The task of unlocking the potential of the archive and to encourage further research and engagement is something that the Society tackled head-on throughout 2014.

The most essential task through this process was to implement a unique archival referencing system across all of the Society's collections. This was achieved by creating a hierarchical alphanumeric system that reflected the complexity and interconnectedness of the materials. The template for this new system was based on international standards of archival arrangement and can be summarised as follows:

Level	Notes
Fond	The whole of the records, regardless of form or medium, organically created and/or accumulated and used by a particular person, family, or corporate body in the course of that creator's activities and functions.
Sub-fond	A subdivision of a fond containing a body of related records corresponding to administrative subdivisions in the originating agency or organization or, when that is not possible, to geographical, chronological, functional, or similar groupings of the material itself. When the creating body has a complex hierarchical structure, each sub-fond has as many subordinate sub-fond as are necessary to reflect the levels of the hierarchical structure of the primary subordinate administrative unit.
Series	Documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit because they result from the same accumulation or filing process, or the same activity; have a particular form; or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use. A series is also known as a records series.
File	An organized unit of documents grouped together either for current use by the

	creator or in the process of archival arrangement, because they relate to the same subject, activity, or transaction. A file is usually the basic unit within a record series.
Item	The smallest intellectually indivisible archival unit, e.g., a letter, memorandum, report, photograph, sound recording.
Definitions taken from the International Council on Archives *General International Standard Archival Description, ISAD(G),* 2000.	

Rather than using the terms defined above the Society's archives uses the following terminology, although the definition of what each level contains remains the same as the international standards outlined above:

ISAD (G) Level	EES Lucy Gura Archive Level
Fond	Archive
Sub-fond	Sub-archive
Series	Collection
File	File
Item	Item

The following constitutes the archive trail of item TA.OC.31-32.581 within the archive:

Level	Example	Notes
Archive	EES	The institution
Sub-archive	TA	Site/expedition
Collection	OC	Document type (object card)
File	31-32	Season (1931-32)
Item	581	Number of object
i.e. 581st object discovered during the 1931-32 season at Tell el-Amarna		

Because everything in the EES Lucy Gura Archive falls under the heading 'EES', it is dropped from the archival reference. The length of the reference code should therefore be indicative of the position of that item within the archive. However, some items may have fewer sections in their reference if they are not arranged into as many file or collection levels – or occasionally may be longer.

Each reference is worked out for individual archives and each code usually relate to numerical systems established by excavators, secretaries and staff in the past. This ensures that cross-referencing among records will still be relevant in the new system and will allow for steady cataloguing down to item level of the entire archive.

The archive is estimated to contain as many as
- 45 sub-archives
- 350 collections
- > 1000 files
- And up to 1 million items!