



Ministry of Antiquities

Newsletter of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities * Issue 10 * March 2017

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

• The Egyptian-German Joint Mission working at Souq al-Khamis in al-Matareyyah discovered two parts of a quartzite colossus carrying one of the five names of King Psamtik I (ca. 664-610 BC). It was discovered in front of King Ramesses II's temple, which was built in the vicinity of the sun temples in the ancient city of Heliopolis. The Mission's discoveries also include an upper part of a life size limestone statue of King Sety II, and a fragment of



a painted cornice with King Sety I's cartouche, later reused by a Ramesside king. The objects were transferred to the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

• The European Archaeological working at the temple of King Amenhotep III on the West Bank in Luxor unveiled an alabaster sculpture thought to be Queen Tiye, wife of Amenhotep III. The sculpture is carved into the side of a colossal statue of King Amenhotep III. Remains of colours are still visible on this spectacular find. The project has also uncovered a wealth of Sekhmet statues, amounting to 109 during their spring 2017 season.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

The Spanish University of Jaén working at Qubbet al-Hawa (West Aswan) discovered a complete burial chamber belonging to the brother of an important ruler of Elephantine during the twelfth dynasty. The tomb contains funerary furniture including pots, an inner and an outer coffin made of cedar, and wooden funerary boat models. In addition, its walls were carved with scenes of daily life. The mission also found a mummy covered with colourful cartonnage, and a mask and necklace.



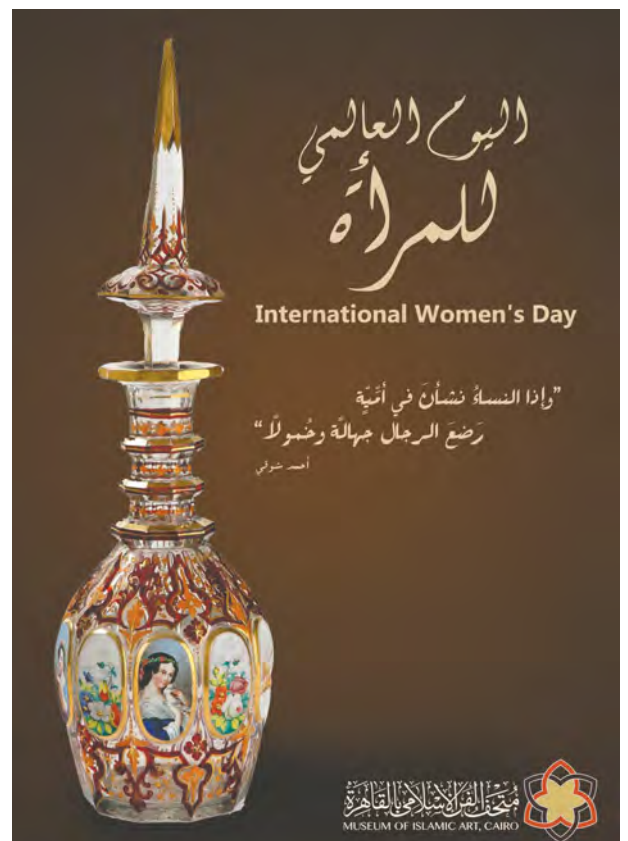
Field Work

Several field projects have started their work in March 2017, including: Joint MoA-Swiss at Nag' al-Deir in Aswan; joint MoA-IFAO mission at 'Ain Sukhna, Suez; University of Würzburg, Germany, at Tall Basta in al-Sharqiyyah and Edfu in Aswan; the National Archaeological Museum of Madrid, Spain, at Ihnasya al-Madina in Beni Suef; University of Leuven, Belgium at Deir al Barsha at Minya; Centre for Hellenic Studies at Kom Bahig, Alexandria; Louvre Museum at Serapium, Saqqara; University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, at the tomb of Nefer-Hetep (TT49), al-'Assasif, West Bank of Luxor; University of Leiden, Holland, at the New Kingdom Cemetery at Saqqara; Royal Museum of Art and History, Belgium, at al-Kab in Aswan; AERA at Giza; British Museum at Shatb, Asyut.

Temporary Exhibitions

Local Exhibitions

- The Museum of Islamic Art celebrated International Women's Day, setting up a one-day temporary exhibition on the role of women in the fields of art and jewellery manufacturing. The exhibition displayed 12 pieces presented for the first time (8 March, 2017).
- On the occasion of the new discoveries in Souq al-Khamis in al-Matareyyah, the Egyptian Museum, Cairo hosted finds discovered by the Egyptian-German Joint Mission working there. The objects include fragments of a colossus carrying one of the five names of King Psamtik I, a cornice with the cartouche of King Sety I and a torso of a limestone statue of King Sety II, in addition to two stone blocks depicting King Ramesses II making offers to the goddess Mut (16 March, 2017).



Projects

Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM)

- Fifty-six percent of the construction works have been completed, including 30% of the internal finishing's and 45% of the outer areas and landscaping.
- The Egyptian-Japanese Project has been studying and x-raying King Tutankhamun's ritual beds at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo to ascertain the safest methods to transfer them to GEM.
- The restoration team of the Grand Egyptian Museum has completed conserving objects from King Tutankhamun's collections which have never been on display before. King Tutankhamun's complete collection is slated to go on display at GEM.

Conservation Projects

- A temporary restoration laboratory has been opened at the Giza Plateau, where the Egyptian-Japanese mission is working. The laboratory is equipped with a variety of microscopes and facilities to study and conserve King Khufu's Boats.
- King Djoser's Stepped Pyramids: some stones have been in the burial well has been stabilised.

Muhammad Aly Mosque, Citadel: restoration works began with cleaning the wall cladding, removing rust layers from copper windows in the mosque's courtyard.

- Al-Wardiani Tombs in Alexandria: three stone coffins which were in the Greco-Roman Museum, have been restored and added to a custom-built concrete base to rebuild them. The upper parts of the coffins were conserved, as well.
- North Sinai: restoration works of the City of Pelusium are underway, in addition to reconstructing the northwester tower using ancient bricks from the site, and using mortar is composed of lime and sand.

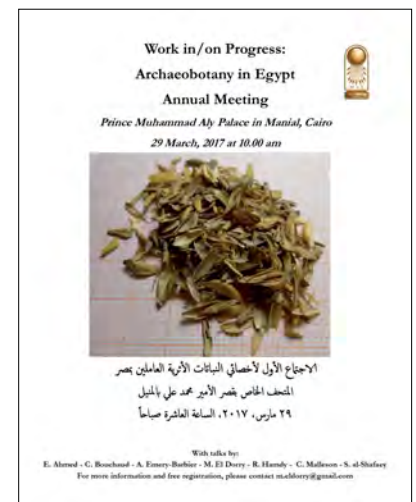
Meetings and Visits

- The Minister of Antiquities inaugurated an international conference titled "Sekhmet Omnipresent" at the Mummification Museum in Luxor (23 March 2017).
- The Minister of Antiquities received several high official guests including the U.S., Polish, and French Ambassadors; the Khazak Minister of Culture and Sports; ARCE Executive Director; Director of the International Institute of Papyrus; Director of the Paul Getty Museum.
- The Minister of Antiquities was accompanied by MoA officials on visits to: Cairo (Museum of Islamic Art, al-Matareyyah); Giza (Giza Plateau Development Project, GEM); Luxor (Mummification Museum, West Bank, Luxor Temple); and Suez (National Museum of Suez, Muhammad Aly Palace); Ismailiyyah (Ismailiyyah Museum, Suez Canal Authority Building, and de Lesseps' House).



Conferences

- The first annual “Archaeobotany in Egypt” meeting was held at the Prince Muhammad Aly Palace Museum in Manial. The meeting included a series of lectures on current research projects in archaeobotany (29 March, 2017).



- An international conference was held at the Mummification Museum in Luxor about the goddess Sekhmet (23-25 March, 2017).

Varia

- During March, Egypt has welcomed number of high profile guests, including Angela Merkel the German Chancellor, Footballers Lionel Messi and Hollywood star Will Smith, who visited archaeological sites during their visits.
- A joint Archaeology-Tourism Committee collaborating with the Ministries of Tourism and Interior have finished the first phase of a project documenting the Journey of the Holy Family through Egypt, and promoting it to international tourism. The first stage included preparing the Church of Abu Serga and its surroundings in Old Cairo to receive visitors, as well as the monasteries of Wady al-Natrun, the Tree of Virgin Mary in al-Matareyyah, the monastery of Jabal al-Tayr in Minya, and archaeological sites in Asyut.



Training

- Dr Regine Schulz delivered a three-day training to MoA employees on the methodologies of studying ancient Egyptian art (5-7 March, 2017).
- A new seminar room was inaugurated at the German Archaeological Institute excavation house on Elephantine, Aswan. On the occasion of the inauguration, a study day was held. Speakers presented basics of archaeological science, understanding matting and textiles, and Nubian ceramics (25 March, 2017).

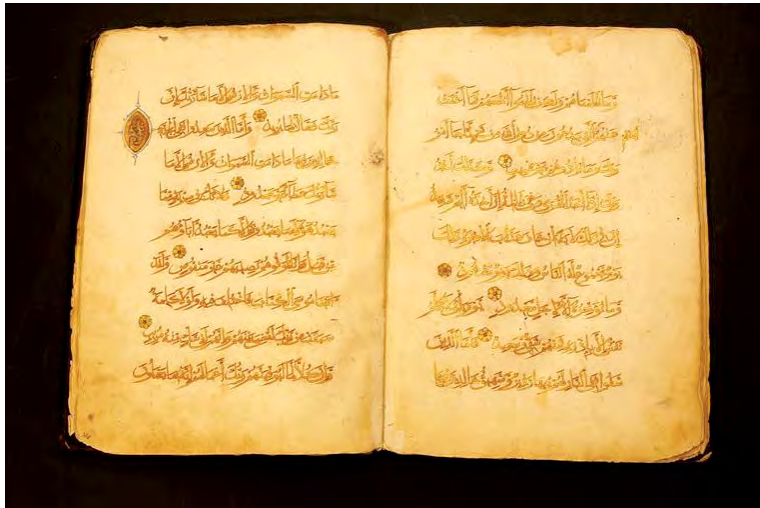


Lectures

- The Minister of Antiquities delivered a lecture titled “Scientific Research Methodology” at the Ahmed Pasha Kamal Hall in Zamalek (2 March, 2017).
- Mr Vincent Rondot (Head of the Egyptian Antiquities Department at the Louvre Museum) delivered a public lecture at the MoA titled “From Saqqara Plateau to Louvre Palace: the Story of Akhethetep’s Chapel over More than One Hundred Years” (22 March, 2017).

Cultural Events and Community Outreach

- The Museum of Ismailiyah celebrated its 83rd anniversary. The event was attended by the Minister of Antiquities, the Governor of Ismailiyah and MoA officials (4 March, 2017).



- The Museum of Islamic Art held an exhibition to display the products made by participants in handcraft workshops, including pottery crafts, tent-making, ceramics, inlay work needlepoint work, and glass.
- The Museum of Islamic Art celebrated Mother's Day at the Children's Cancer Hospital 57357, and organised an exhibition presenting replicas of Islamic lamps and ceramics (21 March, 2017).
- On the occasion of the Egyptian-German mission's finds and work in Souq al-Khamis in al-Matareyyah, the Egyptian Museum, Cairo hosted an international press conference to present the finds. The event was attended by the Prince of Denmark, the Egyptian Minister of Tourism, and many ambassadors including Denmark, Spain, France, Austria, and Serbia, in addition members of the parliament, the German Cultural Attaché and heads and members of foreign archaeological institutions in Egypt.

Repatriated Antiquities

- MoA in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Egyptian Embassy in Paris succeeded in recovering a New Kingdom wooden mask, after noticing it going on sale at a French auction house at the end of 2016. Other repatriated items include a wooden ushabti received by the Egyptian Embassy in London and a statue of ivory that has been on sale in an auction house in Germany.
- Tourism and Antiquities Police Forces have succeeded in recovering all items looted from al-Sultan al-Kamel al-Ayouby inside al-Imam al-Shafe'y Mosque. The looters were apprehended and the items returned within two weeks of the theft.



Appointments

- Amr Ibrahim Mansour (Borg al-Arab Inspectorate), Hanaa Shawky Sayeden (Conservator, al-Wady al-Gadid), Manal Ali Mohamed (EMC Registrar), Mohamed Ibrahim Amin (NMEC Geologist), Islam Abd al-Rahim Abd al-Qader (Alexandria Inspectorate), al-Sayed Mohamed al-Qady (Middle Delta Inspectorate), Mohamed Abd al-Qader Badwy (Citadel Conservator), Fawzy Ahmed Fawzy (Security Supervisor in Alexandria) were appointed to the Minister's Office.
- Mostafa Mohamed Ahmed (Kom Ombo Inspectorate), Mohamed Hassan Mohamed and Mohamed Ali Abd al-Bar (Mallawi Museum Curators), Olfat Mohamed Mostafa (Information Centre), Hany Farouk Abd al-Aziz (al-Beheira Inspectorate), Ahmed Mohamed Salah (Tanta Inspectorate) Ahmed Roshdy (Qalyubiyah Conservator), Fatma Abdallah (Projects Sector Conservator), Soha Kamel Zaky (Pyramids Inspectorate), Lamiaa Mohamed Abd al-Ghany (Manial Museum Conservator), Vivian Samer (Registration Administration Inspectorate) were appointed to work in Human Resources and Training Unit of the Minister's Office.
- Dr Hisham Hussein was appointed Coordinator of the Egyptian rock inscriptions registration project.

Committees

Committees formed during March include:

- Supreme Committee for Archaeological Science and Conservation.
- Scientific Committee for the study of Karnak Temples at Luxor.
- Committee to inspect the archaeological discovery of the Egyptian-German mission at Souq al-Khamis in al-Matareyyah.

International Participation

Several colleagues travelled abroad on official trips, including: Dr Tarek Tawfik (General Supervisor of GEM), Iman Mohamed Abu-Hassan (Curator, GEM), Marwa Sayed Shehata and Fatma Abd Allah Abd Allah (Curators, EMC), Ruayda Ibrahim Mohamed (Inspector, Archaeological Replicas Unit) to Germany; Abd al-Hamid Abd al-Salam Abd al-Rahman (Director of the Administration of Scientific Publications at Museum of Islamic Art) to Italy; Ahmad Ebeid (Supervisor of the Minister's Office), Issa Zidan (Director of Conservation Administration, GEM), Sameh Ahmad Mahmoud (Conservator, GEM), Mohamed al-Sayed al-Saeed (Central Administration for Underwater Archaeology) to Switzerland; Dr al-Hussein Abd al-Baseer (Supervisor of Scientific Publish Administration), Abu al-Kher Hassan Shalby (Conservator in Conservation Administration of South Sinai).

Department of the Month

Replica Production Unit

The MoA's Replica Production Unit produces highly quality replicas of ancient Egyptian, Greco-Roman, Coptic and Islamic antiquities. Since its inception in 2010, the Unit has been working on improving the Supreme Council of Antiquities' income and to protect the ownership of intellectual property according to the law of antiquities protection. Its staff include many talented craftsmen and women who are trained in woodworking, pottery manufacture, sculpting, inlaying and colouring. They carefully study and documents archaeological objects in order to reproduce them in the same size and quality.



The Replica Production Unit produces various replicas, including the collection of King Tutankhamun, which includes his iconic funerary mask, golden coffin, throne, and jewellery. As for Islamic works of art, the Unit has gained repute for its delicately produced vivid replicas of ceramics, including vases, plates and tiles.

The Unit's products are on sale at any of the MoA's gift shops in museums or archaeological sites, the biggest of which is at the Egyptian museum, Cairo. The Unit is also able to take special orders for custom made replicas. Although still very young, the project with its headquarters in the Citadel in Cairo, it has already attracted national and international attention.

The unit is planning to develop and increase its production and supply to meet the ever-increasing demand.



Monument of the Month

Fragments of a Colossal from Matareyyah

During March, Egyptian and international scholars, media and public were captivated by the discovery of two fragments of a colossal statue in front of the temple of King Ramses II in Souq al-Khamis in Matareyyah/Heliopolis in Cairo, discovered by the Egyptian-German Mission, working in the Temple of Heliopolis since 2012.

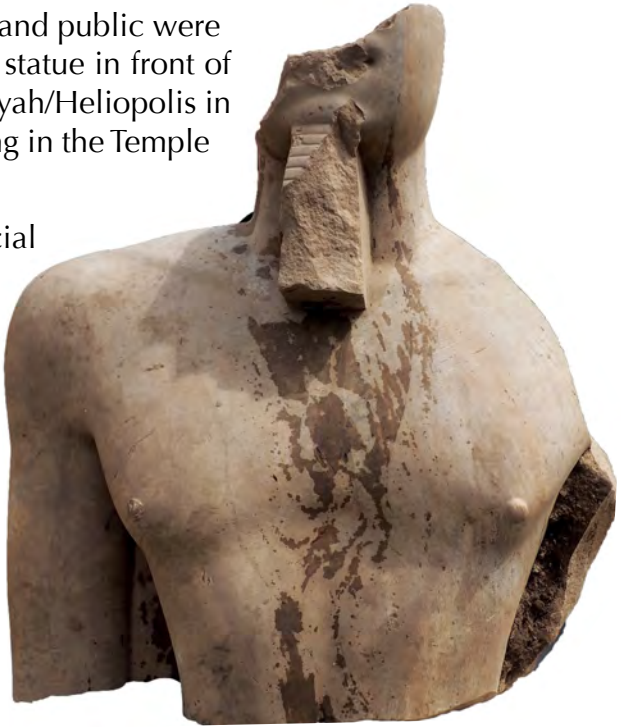
The temple of Matareyyah/Heliopolis was of special importance to the ancient Egyptians, as it was considered to be the place of the world's creation by the sun-god. For some 2400 years, most kings erected their monuments in the temple. Because of its proximity to modern Cairo, the site was heavily destroyed from Late Roman times onward, when blocks of the temple were used to build various monuments in Cairo, such as Bab el-Nasr and other city gates. Nevertheless, the site still holds many monuments that have survived to this day. These last remains of the temple are found under the water table which makes their recovery extremely difficult.

The colossal finds were discovered 2 – 3 metres beneath the water and precariously close to modern houses. The fragments are made of quartzite and represent the torso and a partial head wearing White Crown. The back-pillar revealed an inscription:

one of the five names of the King Psamtik I (ca. 664-610 BC), who ruled during the 26th dynasty known, which was known for merging older artistic features into a style known as «archaising». The style and iconography combine details from the Middle and New Kingdoms, which is characteristic of Late Period art. This colossal fragments represent the largest statue from the Late Period ever discovered in Egypt.

The fragments were moved to the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (EMC) with much pomp and circumstance. The move was successfully realised by a team of restorers from the Grand Egyptian Museum and EMC, Inspectorate of Antiquities in Matareyyah, as well as transport experts from EMC and archaeological technicians from Quft. The Egyptian Army's Transport Administration provided logistical support, vehicles and expertise for the move.

The colossal fragments went on display at EMC's garden during an international press conference.



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