



# Ministry of Antiquities



Ibis bird  
Mallawi Museum

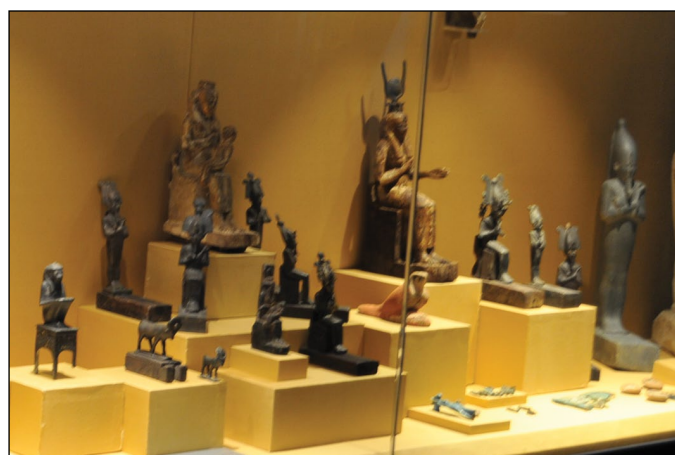
Newsletter of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities \* Issue 4 \* September 2016



## Reopening of Mallawi Museum in Minya

H.E. Minister of Antiquities reopened Mallawi Museum in Minya. The ceremony was attended by the governor of Minya, MoA representatives, ambassadors, cultural attaches and representatives of foreign archaeological institutions, and missions in Egypt (22 September 2016).

The museum was first inaugurated on 23rd July, 1963. It is situated in a region rich in archaeological sites. Two of the most important archaeological sites in the vicinity are Tuna al-Gebel and el-Ashmunein. In August 2013, looters vandalised the museum.



Of 1089 objects originally on display, 1043 were smashed, burnt or looted. Authorities have since managed to recover 656 of the missing items, which have been restored.

Today, the new display houses 944 items, of which 503 are new additions brought in from an antiquities storehouse at al-Ashmunein and al-Bahnasa. All the new additions are from local excavations. An additional five objects were brought in from the Coptic Museum.



## Field Work

Several field projects have started their work in September:

Durham University and Egypt Exploration Society joint mission, U.K., at Sais (Sa el-Hagar); MoA-University of Leipzig (Germany) at Heliopolis/Matariyyah - University of Milan (Italy) and IFAO at Umm-el-Breigat in Fayoum - University of Birmingham (U.K.) at Qubbet al-Hawa – University of Warsaw (Poland) at Deir al-Naqlun – Museum of Soissons (France) at San El-Hagar (Tell Debqo); University of Geneva (Switzerland) at the Cemetery of Pepi I in Saqqara - University of Yale (USA) and University of Bologna (Italy) joint mission in Kom Ombo, Aswan; German Archaeological Institute at Kom El-Gier in Buto; Ancient Egypt Research Associates at Memphis.

## Archaeological Discoveries

Evidence has been discovered to support the hypothesis of the presence of a temple of King Ramses II in the area of Heliopolis/Matariyyah.

The Egyptian-German joint mission between the MoA and the University of Leipzig and the University of Applied Sciences, Mainz, working at Matariyyah recently uncovered a number of blocks from the temple courtyards and fragments of the temple statuary west of the Obelisk of Senusert I. Other blocks farther off depict King Ramses II anointing a divinity.

These finds would have once formed part of the decoration of the innermost rooms of the temple. Other groups of relief fragments attest King Ramses II as the builder of this temple.



## Meetings and Visits

- Egyptian Prime Minister Eng. Sherief Ismaiel convened with the Ministers of Antiquities, Housing, Tourism, and the Governor of Giza to discuss progress of the Giza Plateau Development Project (6 September 2016).
- The Minister of Antiquities was accompanied by MoA officials to visit Luxor to attend the opening session of the “Thebes in the First Millennium” conference, in addition to visiting other sites including Ramses II Temple at the Karnak Temple complex, Luxor Temple, and Assasif (24-25 September 2016).
- The Minister of Antiquities, accompanied by Dr Tarek Tawfik, General Supervisor of the Grand Egyptian Museum, travelled to Japan to inaugurate “Golden Pharaohs and Pyramids” exhibition in Kyoto, Japan. They attended the signing of a protocol of cooperation between GEM and the National Museum of Tokyo, and each delivered a lecture at the museum (28 September - 1 October 2016).





# Projects

## Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM)

Work is underway on the ceilings in GEM's galleries, as well as the grand staircase. The flooring of an arena on the northern side of the building meant to house shops and restaurants is also being prepared. The Grand Egyptian Museum Conservation Center received 668 objects from the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. The objects include items from King Tutankhamun's treasures, and a statue of Horus as a hawk topped with a sun-disc and made of metal and gold from Dendera. GEM's scenario has also been completed, and all of the objects have been entered into the museum's database.

The board of GEM convened in the presence of Eng. Ibrahim Mahlab, Assistant to the President for National and Strategic Projects, to follow up on the progress of work and to ensure that work continues to flow smoothly (19 September 2016).

The Japanese-Egyptian Higher Committee for the Grand Egyptian Museum convened (26 September 2016).

Additionally, a new committee has been formed of Egyptian and international specialists to document King Tutankhamun's shrines, undertake preliminary conservation and prepare for their transfer to GEM (26 September 2016).



## National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC)

Final applications and finishings are underway for NMEC's laboratories. Work is continuing on the temporary exhibition hall and the VIP lounge. A committee was formed to develop the museum's landscape and outdoor areas. The High Committee for NMEC convened on September 26, 2016.

## Conservation Projects

- The reinforcement and stabilization of the southern cemetery and Step Pyramid in Saqqara are underway. Structural restoration procedures, filling mortars and shoring of the fourth mastaba in the west have been completed. Work at space no. 8 of the first level of the pyramid is also completed. The construction of masonry offsets are being used to reinforce the southern cemetery.
- The restoration of Al-Emary Mosque at Edfu is finished and the mosque is about to be reopened.
- Restoration and protective isolation procedures at a church at Wadi Al-Natrun's Anba Bishoy monastery are now finished. Restoration of the ancient windmill is also completed. A new project for the Great Church has started.
- The ancient doors and windows at Abd al-Aziz Radwan Mosque in Zagazig were cleaned and the ceiling of the mosque was isolated.
- Restoration work at al-Manesterly Palace in Cairo has been resumed by treating the deteriorated places in the ceiling and the conservation of the ornaments.
- The restoration project of the lion statues at Qasr al-Nil bridge is now finished. The deformations on metal surfaces of the lions and granite towers were mechanically and chemically cleaned. A laser ion-beam cleaning was implemented on some parts of the granite bases and an inhibitor was used to decrease future corrosion on the metal surfaces.
- Work on the Gayer-Anderson Museum's manuscript collection is underway. The collection includes the Arab Antiquities Preservation Committee maps.
- Restoration work on the temple of King Ramses II at the Karnak Temple complex has been completed. The restoration included structural and minute conservation. Previous restoration work on the upper part of an Osiriad statue was removed. An offering-table at the western entrance of the temple was reassembled.

## Repatriated Antiquities

An ushabti, illegally smuggled out of Egypt, has been repatriated from Mexico. It was found in a newly bought apartment, and was delivered to the authorities in Mexico. A committee was formed to assess its authenticity and undertake the necessary legal steps to repatriate it. The wooden ushabti dates to the Nineteenth Dynasty or perhaps a later era. A hieroglyphic text, written on the front, gives the name and titles of the deceased.



## Training

- The MoA has launched its first annual training program. The schedule runs September 2016-September 2017, and offers workshops, courses and field schools in cooperation with a myriad of archaeological and specialized institutions. September featured training courses on documenting inscriptions, conservation, and database design and field schools. These are in collaboration with the University of Chicago, University of Durham, EES, ARCE, and DAI.
- The Museums Sector has organised a few workshops including the use of science in documentation, documenting using cartography, documenting prehistoric archaeological sites, and understanding stones.
- Based on the request of the International Organisation and International Cooperation Department at the MoA, UNESCO offered a training programme for the Department's staff on international heritage and preparing proposals to request the inclusion of archaeological sites of particular value onto international heritage lists.
- In September, selected NMEC employees were trained in CT scanning, security, emergency evacuation, combating fires, and documentation.



## Lectures

Dr Leo Schmidt delivered a talk at the MoA on "Tasks and Challenges for the Management of Archaeological Sites: Management, Conservation, and Site Design". The lecture comes as part of the MoA's plan to develop site management (25 September 2016).

## Conferences

The Mummification Museum in Luxor hosted the second international "Thebes in the First Millennium" conference organised by MoA, South Assasif Conservation Project and EES. The conference comes on the occasion of the South Assasif Conservation Project celebrating ten years since it has been launched (25-29 September 2016).

## Temporary Exhibitions

### In Egypt

- The Egyptian Museum, Cairo, has started receiving objects seized by the Central Administration of Archaeological Units, in preparation for an exhibition on seized objects that will soon be hosted by the Museum.
- The Textile Museum on al-Moe'ezz Street has opened an exhibition on the transport of the Kiswa (cover) of the Holy Kaaba from Egypt to Saudi Arabia (5 September – 5 October 2016).

### International Exhibitions

- "Golden Pharaohs and Pyramids" has been inaugurated in Kyoto, its fourth stop in Japan (30 September 2016). The exhibition is on from October 1, 2016 to December 25, 2016. Its next move will be to Toyama, Japan, in January 2017.
- "Sunken Cities: Egypt's Lost Worlds" exhibition is currently at the British Museum in London until November 22, 2016. Its next stop is the Rietberg Museum in Zurich from January 12 to May 12, 2017.

# International Participation

- The MoA took part in the second Ministerial Conference at the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan titled “Heritage under Threat”. The conference aimed to work towards preserving cultural heritage in the participating countries. Several topics were discussed, including the challenges that face the field of cultural heritage in the region. Also discussed were the possible avenues for future collaboration. Conference participants also talked about different visions that can be implemented to combat illicit trafficking in items of cultural value (8 September 2016).
- The MoA participated in the regional meeting of the Arab Organization for Heritage. The meeting’s theme was “Developing National Policies and Laws to Combat Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property” (27-29 September 2016).

## Cultural Events and Community Outreach

- A relief depicting the myth of Hades (god of the underworld) and Persephone (goddess of spring) was chosen as the object of the month at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, as it received the highest number of votes on the MoA’s Facebook page. The limestone



relief depicts the Greek myth of Hades kidnapping Persephone on his carriage. Following in the footsteps of the Egyptian Museum, Farouk’s Corner Museum in Helwan has also opened up a chance for the public to vote for their favourite object on the museum’s Facebook page. The winning object for September was a vividly coloured chandelier in the shape of a bird’s cage.

- On the occasion of al-Adha Feast and the pilgrimage to Mecca, several museums organised activities to celebrate the festivities and the pilgrimage. These include the museums of Prince Muhammad Aly Pacha in Manial, Farouk’s Corner Museum in Helwan, and the Royal Carriages Museum in Boulaq.
- The Gayer-Anderson Museum in

Cairo organised several activities and events for children during the summer holiday, including “Old Egypt in Colour” which included guiding children in several of the nearby mosques as well (8 September 2016).

- The Museums Sector collaborated with the Ministry of Interior and local NGOs to organise a bicycle tour that started at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo and ended at the Textile Museum on al-Moe’zz street (23 September 2016).
- The Gayer-Anderson Museum organised a workshop titled “Make Heritage Fun” to encourage children to engage with sites of cultural and historical value (24 September 2016).
- On the occasion of World Tourism Day, Egyptians, Arabs, and foreigners residing in Egypt were granted free entry to all open archaeological sites and museums (27 September 2016).





# Varia

- The Department for Private Archaeological Collections is working on inventorying and documenting collections housed in a nineteenth century church of St Maqqar in Atris, a village in Giza. The collections include nineteenth century icons, amongst other liturgical tools.
- Indexing and inventorying Gayer-Anderson's library is underway. The library, housed in the Gayer-Anderson Museum, contains many valuable books that Gayer-Anderson collected.
- The library of Prince Muhammad Aly Pascha's Palace in Manial is being indexed and inventoried.
- A new scenario for display has been prepared for the Hunting Museum that is housed inside the Prince Muhammad Aly Pascha's Palace complex. A committee has been formed to start working on preparing for the museum opening.
- The labels of the National Museum of Alexandria are being updated. A database has been developed for the museum's numismatic collections recovered from underwater excavations. A new guidebook is also being prepared for the museum.



## Appointments

- Ms Sabah Abdel Razek has been appointed as Acting Director for the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.
- Mr Muhammad Aly Fahmy has been appointed as Deputy Director for Technical Affairs for the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.
- Ms Hala Hassan has been appointed as Deputy Director for Curator Affairs for the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.
- Dr Lotfy Abdel Hamid has been appointed as Deputy Director for Archaeological Affairs for the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.
- Dr Gamal al-Belem has been appointed as Head of the Library at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.
- Ms Doaa Farouk has been appointed as Supervisor over Libraries in the major museums of the MoA.
- Dr Hoda Ibrahim Khalifa has been appointed to work in the Minister's Technical Office.
- Dr Ayman al-Ashmawy has been appointed as Head of the Central Administration for Inspectorates and Excavations of Egyptian and Greco-Roman Antiquities in Northern Egypt, Sinai and the Northern Coast.
- Seven potential candidates were selected for the Assistant to the Minister positions. Four of the seven will be chosen to fill the four positions.

## Decrees

The decrees issued by the Board of the Supreme Council of Antiquities and the Permanent Committees in September include:

- Approving the restoration of the Ahmed al-Zahed Mosque in Bab al-She'reyyah in Cairo (7 September 2016).
- Approving the restoration of the domes in the Mar Guirguis Church in Gerga, Sohag (7 September 2016).
- Approving the continuation of the development, restoration and repurposing of the Revolutionary Command Council in Zamalek (third stage) (7 September 2016).
- Approving the partial reopening of the Zaghloul Mosque in Rosetta, al-Beheira, for prayer (7 September 2016).
- Approving the registration of the Abbas Helmi II mosque on Muhammad Aly Street in Cairo as an Islamic monument (19 September 2016).
- Approving the registration of Muhammad Aly Pacha Palace in Suez as an Islamic monument (19 September 2016).
- The Board of the Supreme Council of Antiquities has decided to award the top ten students of each educational stage (primary, preparatory and secondary) a free year-long visitor pass to visit all open archaeological sites and museums (25 September 2016).

## Department of the Month

## Centre for the Revival of Ancient Egyptian Art



The Centre of Ancient Egyptian Art Renovation was built in accordance with the decree issued by Dr Ahmad Kadry, no. 309, on 7 April, 1982. It was established as a move towards reviving the spirit of ancient Egyptian art, and to faithfully replicate objects of particular value from Egyptian history.

Several technical departments make up the Centre. The primary one being the Department of Quality, which ensures that replicas are faithful and exact copies of antiquities down to the smallest detail.

Other sections within the Centre include: Department of Colouring Archaeological Models, specializing in producing statues and models from different periods; Department of Coloured Replicas, specializing in producing coloured copies from different objects from different time periods, such as murals, boxes, papyri, or textiles; Department of Coptic Replicas, specializing in producing replicas of Coptic icons, manuscripts, textiles, and ivories from churches and museums; Department of Models, specializing in producing models; Department of Ceramics, which produces vessels, scabbards and clay figurines; Department of Sculpture, which produces statuary and stelae, as well as creating moulds for them; Department of packing; Department of Archaeological Information, which prepares the labels that are appended to the replicas.

Work begins by deciding on the objects to replicated, based on historical, archaeological and aesthetic criteria. After the produced objects are priced by a specialized committee, they are packed and disseminated amongst the MoA's gift shops in museums, including the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Islamic Museum, and the Solar Boat Museum, and the Gayer-Anderson Museum. The Centre has also participated in an exhibition with Archaeological Replicas Unit held at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo between 14 July and 15 August 2016, organised to mark the establishment of a permanent gift house in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

Another exhibition was also held at al-Sinnari House this September. The Centre is also preparing for an exhibition in Sharm al-Sheikh organized by Kuwait in October.

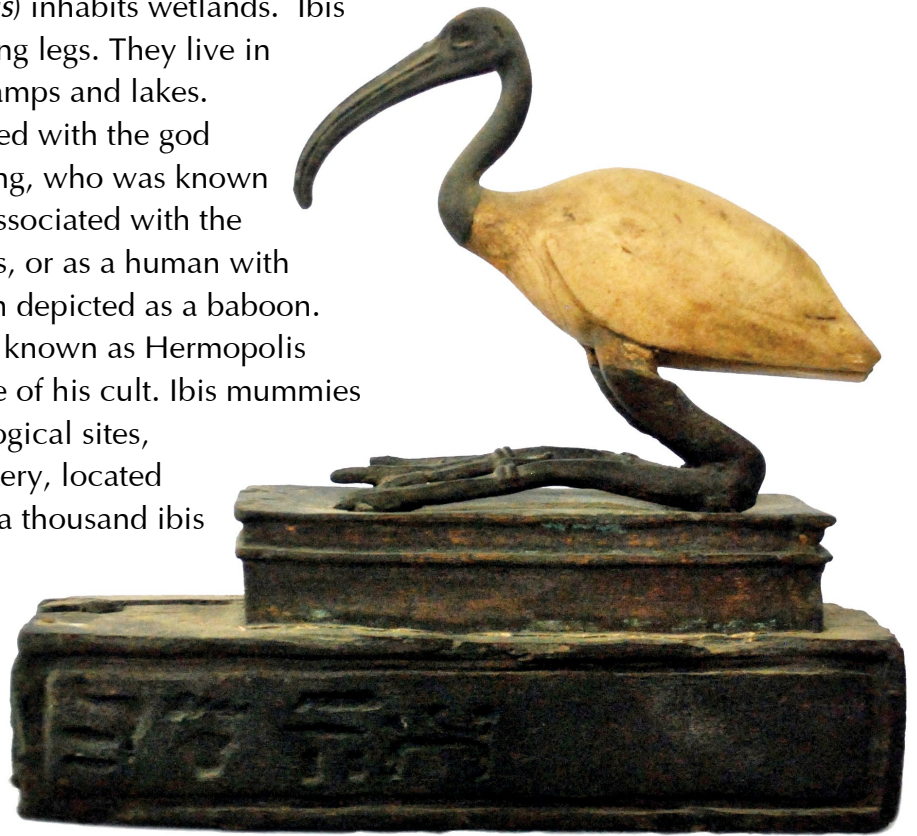




# Object of the Month

## Ibis Birds at Mallawi Museum in Minya

The ibis bird (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*) inhabits wetlands. Ibis have a thin long curved beak, and long legs. They live in warm regions and feed off fish in swamps and lakes. In ancient Egypt, the ibis was identified with the god Thoth, the deity of wisdom and writing, who was known as the chief of scribes. He was also associated with the moon. Thoth was portrayed as an Ibis, or as a human with the head of an ibis. He was also often depicted as a baboon. Al-Ashmunein, a city in Upper Egypt known as Hermopolis Magna in Greek, was the main centre of his cult. Ibis mummies were recovered from many archaeological sites, most notably at Tuna al-Gabal cemetery, located west of Al-Ashmunein, and contains a thousand ibis mummies placed as votive offerings to Thoth.



The cemetery at Saqqara also had many ibis mummies from later periods. In the fourth century BC, the high priest of Thoth, Petosiris, revived the ibis cult in Al-Ashmunein after the Persian invasion of Egypt. His tomb is decorated with many scenes of Thoth represented as an ibis or a baboon.

The Mallawi Museum includes a vast collection of ibis birds in different forms. Some are wrapped in linen and date to the Greco-Roman Period. Statuettes are made of various materials such as wood, bronze, ivory, faience, and alabaster. The body of the bird may be in gold or white colours; while its head, tail, and legs are usually painted in dark colours. They can be depicted standing, sitting, or walking, and other deities can be represented in front of them.

Editor: Mennat-Allah El Dorry  
Staff: Maather Ibrahim Aboueich  
Mohamed Saad  
Hoda Ibrahim Khalifa  
Rhio Barnhart  
Lamiaa Shehata  
Designer: Marwa El Shimy

Ministry of Antiquities  
3 El-Adel Abu Bakr Street, Zamalek  
Cairo, Egypt  
[antiquitiesnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:antiquitiesnewsletter@gmail.com)

Telephone numbers:  
(+2-02) 237356010 - 27358761  
27365645 - 27371724  
Fax: (+2-02) 27357239  
f Ministry of Antiquities  
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