



Ministry of Antiquities



Tomb of Queen Nefertari

Newsletter of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities * Issue 5 * October 2016

Luxor Pass Launch and Opening the Tombs of King Sety I and Queen Nefertari

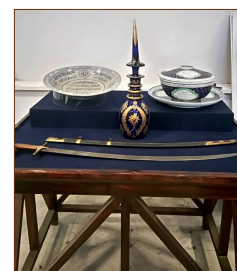
The MoA is launching a new pass for foreigners to visit open archaeological sites and museums in Luxor, starting 1 November, 2016. The "Luxor Pass" will be valid over five consecutive days at the price of \$100 (\$50 for students) (for passes without the tombs of King Sety I and Queen Nefertari). A pass that is inclusive of the tombs of King Sety I and Queen Nefertari is also available for \$200 (\$100 for students). Luxor Pass can be bought either from the Department of Foreign Cultural Relations at the MoA in Zamalek; or from the Public Relations Office in the Luxor Inspectorate (behind Luxor Museum).

In addition the tombs of King Sety I and Nefertari will be open to the public starting November, 2016. Tickets are EGP1000 for each tomb, and can be bought from the West Bank ticket office, with a maximum of 150 visitors per day.



Temporary Exhibition: Seized Antiquities at Egyptian Ports 1986-2016

H.E. the Minister of Antiquities inaugurated a temporary exhibition titled «Seized Antiquities at Egyptian Ports: 1986-2016» at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo in the presence of several ambassadors and officials (24 October, 2016). The exhibition includes 425 objects that were intercepted in Egyptian ports and airports in collaboration with authorities. Objects range from Pharaonic to Muhammad Ali's Dynasty. This is in addition to items of cultural value that belong to other countries, also intercepted at Egyptian ports and airports. The exhibition lasts until the middle of December, 2016 and is accompanied by different events and activities.



Projects

Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM)

- The Grand Egyptian Museum Conservation Center received 362 objects from the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. The objects include items from the treasures of Kings Tutankhamun and Ramesses II.
- Construction continues on the internal metal ceiling of the entrance vestibule, the grand staircase, open air spaces in front of the museum, in addition to internal details. Work has started on the external casing of the Menkaure Wall that separates the museum level and the promenade located on the elevation to the west of the museum. The casing has a stepped texture inspired by King Djoser's funerary complex.
- Furthermore, the Egyptian committee formed to document the condition of King Tutankhamun's shrines and prepare a preliminary report, is working at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC)

- The High Committee for NMEC convened to approve the list of objects to be included in the temporary exhibition hall, which will include 352 objects related to crafts in Egypt (17 October, 2016).
- The French project assigned to prepare a feasibility study and present a proposal for using NMEC's reception building has met to discuss possible uses of the reception building (23 October, 2016).
- Work is proceeding on the temporary exhibition hall. Wooden floors and vitrines were installed. Lighting was installed in the theatre and the central laboratory has been hooked up to the electric grid. Work on the VIP reception area, elevators and landscaping is proceeding.

Historic Cairo Project

- The MoA has hired a security company, funded by the Ministry of Tourism, to provide staff and security systems to secure al-Moe'ezz Street in al-Gamaliyyah.
- Research to restore and repurpose Wikalit al-Bazar'ah in Historical Cairo has been completed.
- A committee formed by the Ministerial Decree No. 464 of the year 2016 has completed its work to prepare the specifications needed for the conservation of Prince Taz's palace in al-Khalifa.

Conservation Projects

- Restoration of the Barque shrine of King Thutmose III in the Open Museum at Karnak is now finished. The work included reassembling the shrine, and cleaning and restoring the architrave of the ceiling.
- Documentation of deterioration of the Mosque of Amir Altinbugha al-Maridani in Bab al-Wazir in Historic Cairo is under way to reduce the risks threatening its decorative motifs. The loose motifs are being strengthened and reattached, while those already detached are being classified and their original locations being identified.
- Restoration of tombs at al-Anfouchi necropolis in Alexandria has started. Walls and paintings of the tombs were seriously affected due to the fluctuation of the subsurface water level.
- Ten fragments from the Michigan Papyri collection, papyrus fragments from Bab al-Gasus collection and two coffins, two coffin lids and One-hundred and twenty numismatics have been restored and conserved at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.



Field Work

Several field projects have started their work in October: joint MoA-Cambridge mission in the Western Wadis in Luxor; joint Centre for Documentation of Egyptian Antiquities-French National Research Centre in the Ramesseum and Theban Necropolis; University of Seville, Spain, in the funerary temple of Thutmose III temples in Luxor; Centre for Hellenic Studies in al-Shellallat gardens in Alexandria; DAI in Dra' Abul Naga in Luxor and on Elephantine Island in Aswan; University of Roanoke, USA, in Kom al-Hisn in al-Beheira; University of Chicago in Tall Edfu in Aswan and Medinet Habu in Luxor; IFAO on the walls of Salah al-Deen in Cairo, Quft in Qena, Sannor in Beni Suef, Tabat al-Geish in Saqqara, Armant in Luxor, Dendera Temple in Qena; University of Basel, Switzerland, in the Valley of the Kings; Royal Art Museum in Belgium in al-Kab; University of Tübingen, Germany, in Saqqara; University of Salento, Italy in Demiet al-Seba' in Fayum; University of Turin, Italy, on the Nelson Island in Alexandria.

Repatriated Antiquities



A golden mask was returned to Egypt from an Egyptian-French citizen, who received it as a gift for his son. The mask is now at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, awaiting assessment to ensure its authenticity and later conservation.

Archaeological Discoveries



Two Late Period rock cut tombs were excavated by an MoA field school in the so-called Aga Khan Necropolis, West of Aswan behind the Agha Khan Mausoleum. The tombs are badly preserved, and contain remains of coffins and mummies. Each tomb has a few steps that lead into a small square shaped burial chamber.

Temporary Exhibitions

In Egypt

- The Egyptian Museum, Cairo held an exhibition on the occasion of the White Cane Safety Day which recognises the transition of those with limited visibility from dependency to full participation in their societies. The exhibition, titled "You Can See with your Hands" aims to show the sighted what the blind experience by closing their eyes and touching some object replicas.
- The Suez National Museum organised two exhibitions to celebrate the National Suez Day: "Islamic Treasures" included twenty-seven Islamic ceramics; and «Suez through its Children's Eyes» presented paintings depicting the Sixth of October War (20 October-21 November, 2016).

International Exhibitions

- "Golden Pharaohs and Pyramids" exhibition in Japan has moved to Kyoto, where it will be on display until 25 December, 2016. Its next move will be to Toyama, Japan on 13 January, 2017, where it will be on display until 26 March, 2017.
- "Sunken Cities: Egypt's Lost Worlds" exhibition is currently at the British Museum in London until 22 November, 2016. Its next stop is the Rietberg Museum in Zurich from 12 January to 12 May, 2017.

International Participation

- The MoA participated in a forum in Beijing, China titled “Ancient Civilisations and Challenges they Face” (18-20 October 2016); Egyptian Festival organised by the Egyptian general consulate in Houston, USA (27-30 October, 2016); Meeting of the Bureau of the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, UNESCO in Paris, France (30 October-2 November, 2016).
- Several colleagues were granted approval for international travel to attend conferences, or to accompany exhibitions, or other official business, including: Ibrahim A. Ibrahim (GEM Conservator) to Morocco; Mahmoud A. Hamam (GEM Conservator) to UAE; Mamdouh M. Oda (General Director of General Administration for Risk Management) to UAE; Abdel-Khalek A. Helmy (Director of Karnak Visitors Center), Hany A. al-Tayeb (Inspector in Saqqara), and Mohamed S. Mahmoud (NMEC Conservator) to UK; Dr Mohamed Ismail (General Supervisor of the Permanent Committees and Foreign Missions), and Amr El Teeby (Administrative Director at the Archaeological Replicas Unit) to Poland; Dr Mostafa F. Abdellah (General Director of Luxor), Salah El-Masekh (Chief Inspector in Karnak), and Khaled M. al-Sayed (Inspector in North Qalyubiyah) to USA; Dr Mohamed Abdel-Aziz (General Director of Upper Egypt), Shehab H. Abdel-Nasser (General Director of Conservation in Middle Egypt), Fahmy M. Mohamed (General Director Administration of Archaeological Units in Egyptian Ports in Aswan), and Sabry A. Abdel-Kareem (General Director of Conservation in Greater Cairo) to Japan; Shaimaa S. Mohamed (Conservator in Museum Stores in Kom Aushim), and Ayman Damarany (Inspector in Abydos) to Italy; Dr Safaa Abdel-Moneim (General Director of the General Administration of Papyrus Studies and Research of the Center of Documentation and Studies on Ancient Egypt), Eng. Tarek M. Mohamed and Eng. al-Sayed A. Mostafa (Electronic Security at NMEC) to Germany; Heba Samy (General Director of Technical Office of Museum Sector's Head) to Austria; Naglaa G. Abdel-Rahman (Antiquities Inspector, Nubia Museum, Aswan) to U.K. and Switzerland; Dr Adel Ziyada (General Director of Technical Follow Up of the Coptic and Islamic Sector) to Turkey.

Cultural Events and Community Outreach

- A head of Queen Hatshepsut was voted as object of the month at Alexandria National Museum. At the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, a wooden model of Nubian archers was voted as the object of the month. The eleventh dynasty model was found in the tomb of Prince Mesehti in Asyut.
- Visually impaired history enthusiasts were treated to a series of special events to mark the White Cane Safety Day. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo held a two week exhibition accompanied by guided museum tours for the visually impaired and events for both those with impaired vision and sighted individuals (4-16 October, 2016).
- In commemoration of the forty-third anniversary of the October War, Egyptians, Arabs, and foreigners residing in Egypt were granted free entry to all open archaeological sites and museums on 6 October, 2016. Other activities marked the celebrations, including events held in cooperation with the Morale Affairs Department of Armed Forces in Salah al-Din Citadel in Cairo. Celebrations included a seminar about the history of Egypt's army. (6-7 October, 2016).
- To mark the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of establishing the Egyptian parliament, free entry was granted to all Egyptian, and resident Arabs and foreigners (22 October, 2016).



Varia

The MoA has submitted a preliminary report to the World Heritage Committee to register Pharaoh's Island near Taba on UNESCO's World Heritage List. The final draft will be submitted in 2017, while the results will be announced in 2018. The last Egyptian cultural heritage site to be registered on the list was Saint Catherine's Monastery in Sinai, in 2003

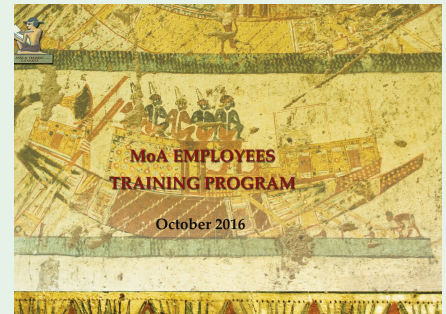
Field Visits

The Minister of Antiquities was accompanied by MoA officials on visits to several governorates: Minya; Beni Suef, accompanied by the Beni Suef Governor to visit several sites and the National Museum of Beni Suef; Cairo, Matariyyah/Heliopolis, with the German Ambassador, to visit the German-Egyptian Mission there, Mameluke Cemetery in Manshiet Nasser; Aswan to attend the sun entering the inner sanctuary of Ramesses II face at Abu Simbel temple, and the Agha Khan Necropolis, where an MoA field school has been taking place, and presented the participants in this field school with certificates.



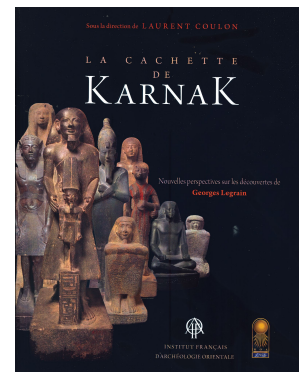
Training

The MoA organized several courses and field schools in October, in cooperation with different archaeological and specialized institutions. Courses included scientific detection of forgery, use of X-ray in archaeology, methodologies of ground penetrating radar, conservation of murals, risk preparedness in museums and cultural heritage sites, publishing in archaeology, database construction and management, marketing for museums and archaeological sites amongst others. NMEC employees have been trained in different subjects, including preserving human remains (for conservators), complete security system civil Defense, and emergency evacuation (for securities officers).



Publications

The MoA has published “La cachette de Karnak: nouvelles perspectives sur les découvertes de Georges Legrain”, edited by Laurent Coulon. The book, co-published with IFAO, includes articles in English and in French.



Conferences and Lectures

- Dr Piers Litherland delivered a talk at the MoA on “The Unique Family Tombs of the Wives and Court Women of Amenhotep III: Recent Discoveries in Wadi Baraia, West Bank, Luxor” (10 October, 2016).
- H.E. Minister of Antiquities delivered the opening speech of the Center of Francophone Activities’ conference celebrating two centuries of Egyptian-French relations (18 October, 2016).
- The MoA organised a conference in collaboration with the French-Swiss mission in Saqqara on Pyramid Texts. The first day was held at the MoA’s headquarters in Zamalek, while subsequent days were held at IFAO in Cairo (23-25 October, 2016).
- The Alexandria International Conference for Maritime and Underwater Archaeology was held in Alexandria on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary for the establishment of the Central Administration of Underwater Archaeology (21 October – 2 November, 2016).

Decrees

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

- Two new departments were created in the Minister's Office: one for Ceremonies and Public Relations, and another for Political Communications.
- Approval for restoration of minarets on the mosques of al-Oraby and al-Nour in Rostetta.
- Approval for the creation of a buffer zone for Sabil and Kuttab Khusraw Pasha, al-Mo'ezz Street in al-Gamaliyyah; additions to buffer zones for the domes of Imir Zeyad and Muhammad al-Ansary and Muhammad al-Khars, Hassan Bin Saleh, and al-Sayyeda Roqayyah, Khawla bint al-Azwar, Muhammad bin Oqbah, Ebadah ibn al-Samet, Aly al-Gammam, Sidy Sawdah, and Jaafar bin Abi Taleb and sons.
- Approval for the creation of a buffer zone for the city of al-Bab south of the first cataract across from Philae in Aswan.

Appointments

- Mr Saied Shebl has been appointed as Head of the Central Administration for Museum Stores.
- Ms Mona Abdel-Hay Ali Santawy has been appointed as General Director of the Administration for Archaeological Documentation, Egyptian Antiquities Sector.
- Mr Nuby Mahmoud Ahmed has been appointed as General Director of the Administration of Excavations, Egyptian Antiquities Sector.
- Mr Mahmoud Ragab Abdel Refaey has been appointed as General Director of the Archaeological Area of Suez.
- Mr Samy Mohamed Ahmed has been appointed as Director of the Administration of Excavations, Egyptian Antiquities Sector.
- Ms Marwa Mohamed Tal'at has been appointed as Deputy of General Director for Technical Affairs at the Administration of Geographical Information System.

One-hundred and Fifty Years of Egypt's Parliament

Egypt celebrated this month the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Egyptian Parliament. Its first headquarters was in the Citadel. In 1923, the current Parliament building was constructed and the parliament was moved there. The building was registered as an antiquity in 1986, and a small museum recounting the history of the parliament was inaugurated. The museum includes a royal carriage used by Khedive Ismail.



Protocols

- The MoA signed a protocol of cooperation between the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) and the National Museum of Tokyo. The protocol, signed by Dr Tarek Tawfik, General Supervisor of GEM, aims to exchange expertise in training for museums, exhibitions and managing temporary exhibitions. The protocol was signed in the presence of the Egyptian delegation that attended the inauguration of the "Golden Pharaohs and Pyramids" fourth stop in Japan (1 October, 2016).
- The MoA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, aiming to serve the archaeological work fields, and preserve the archaeological buildings. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Dr Mostafa Amin, Secretary General of Supreme Council of Antiquities (3 October, 2016).
- The MoA signed a Loan Agreement with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in order to aid the completion of construction works at the Grand Egyptian Museum (24 October, 2016).

Department of the Month

Centre of Documentation and Studies on Ancient Egypt

Documentation of stationary Egyptian monuments began after the High Dam was built in Aswan. The formation of Lake Nasser behind the Dam threatened architecturally and historically unique temples, whether due to the increasing rate of humidity, the rising underground water levels in Upper Egypt or entire monuments being flooded by Lake Nasser.

In order to document this endangered heritage, it was necessary to set up a department to document the temples before their transferal to their new locations. Therefore, to preserve this national heritage, in 1956 the Centre of Documentation and Studies on Ancient Egypt (CEDAE) was established. The Centre's aim was to document and study Egyptian monuments, preserve documents produced and exchange them with scientific and technical organizations for publication.

The Centre was initially located behind the Egyptian Museum, Cairo in Tahrir Square. It was later demolished due to the construction of the Sixth of October Bridge, and a new six-floor building was built in Zamalek. Employees were relocated there on the 1st July, 1977. This building is now the headquarters of the Ministry of Antiquities.

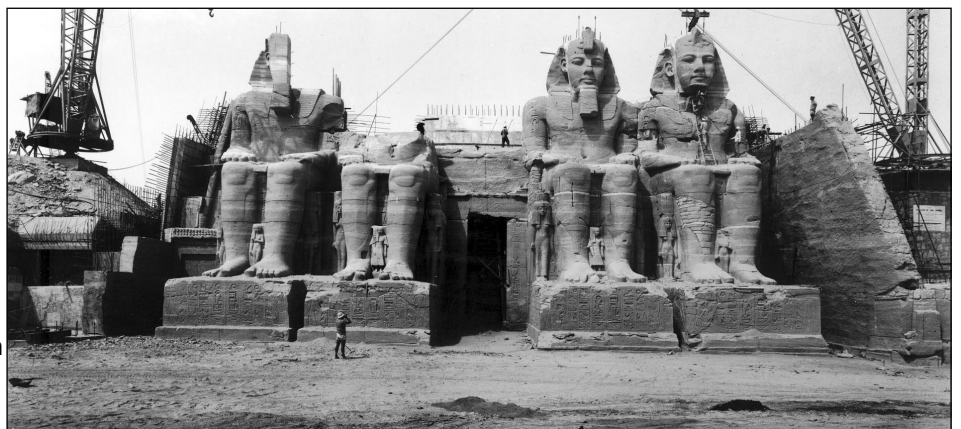
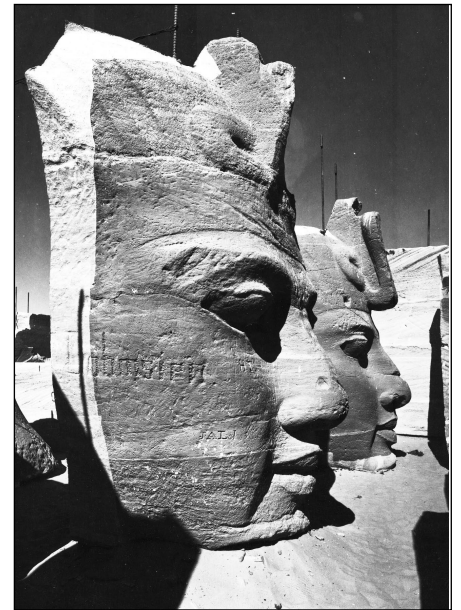
Among the most prominent monuments documented by the Centre are the Nubian temples, including the Abu Simbel Temples, Kalabshah, Garf Hussein, al-Sebua, al-Maharraqa, al-Dakka, Beit al-Wali, Amada, Dabod, al-Derr, al-Lessiya, Tafa, Qertassi. The Centre has since turned its attention to Luxor and Saqqara, where it has documented several tombs and temples. They have also documented monuments in Alexandria, Giza, al-Minya, and Asyut.

Several departments make up the Centre, including the scientific department which includes scientific preservation; research hall; a library with more than three thousand Egyptological titles; a centre of archaeological information; a scientific archive department which includes thirteen archives of photos, gelatine, glass negatives, film negatives; papyri studies and a research department which was newly established to build a database of Egyptian papyri. Also included are departments for epigraphy, engineering, photography, and finance and administration.

Since its inception, the Centre has been directed by pioneering Egyptian archaeologists, including Dr Fayza Haikal, Dr Abdel-Aziz Sadek, Dr. Lotfi El-Tanboly, Dr Zainab al-Kordy, and Ms. Zainab al-Dawakhly.

Archaeological researchers may access the Centre's archive to refer to photographs and can obtain an electronic copy for research or publication after gaining the necessary permissions.

In its next phase, the Centre aims to begin documenting objects stored in magazines.





The Senet board game is one of the oldest board games ever known. The Senet, or the thirty squares, initially began as a form of recreation, but playing it evolved into a ritual of Egyptian Religion. Its first appearance, as far as we know, was in the Predynastic Period and the first hieroglyphic reference to dates to ca. 3100 BC.

Senet literally means the “Passing Game” and was a pursuit game played by two players. Its exact rules are not known to us. For years, Egyptologists have grappled with trying to discover its rules. Recent research has been able to reconstruct some rules, but imagine playing a board game without the rule book!

The board consists of thirty squares depicting deities of ancient Egypt. The players represent the souls of the deceased and the game depicts a journey through the afterlife, passing various obstacles whilst traveling through the netherworld. Passing the final square represented the deceased’s passage out of the netherworld and union with Ra, the sun god, to finally enjoy eternity.

Ancient Egyptians believed that Senet is older than kingship, and that it was even played by the gods themselves. This was documented in one of the creation myths. The story begins with the goddess Nut being impregnated by the earth god Geb. The sun god Re, feeling threatened by the birth of more deities, cursed Nut, preventing her from giving birth on any day of the year. The god of wisdom, Thoth, decided to help Nut, and challenged the moon god Khonsu, to a Senet game, where his prize would be the addition of five extra days to every year. Thoth won, and this allowed Nut to give birth.



One of the most recognisable depictions of the Senet game comes from the tomb of Queen Nefertari on the West Bank of Thebes. If you have never visited the tomb before, we have good news for you: the tomb will be open to visitors from 1 November, 2016!