



Ministry of Antiquities

Newsletter of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities * Issue 7 * December 2016

Happy New Year 2017 !

To celebrate the New Year, MoA is offering foreigners a 30% discount on the Annual Antiquities Pass, and 20% on Luxor Pass, during January 2017.

REPATRIATED ANTIQUITIES

December has been a very busy and fruitful month for the Department of Repatriated Antiquities, which has succeeded in intercepting several objects that have been stolen and smuggled out of Egypt. The Egyptian Embassy

in Washington received four objects dating to the Late Period, the Egyptian Embassy in Switzerland received a limestone stela originally from Luxor, while the Egyptian Embassy in London received a limestone block from the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir al-Bahri. This is in addition to objects that have already been returned to Egypt, including two Islamic lamps repatriated from the United Arab Emirates, and 340 objects from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Recognising the importance of bilateral agreements governing the protection of cultural heritage, Egypt and the U.S., represented by their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs, have signed an MoU between both countries regarding the protection of antiquities (1 December, 2016).

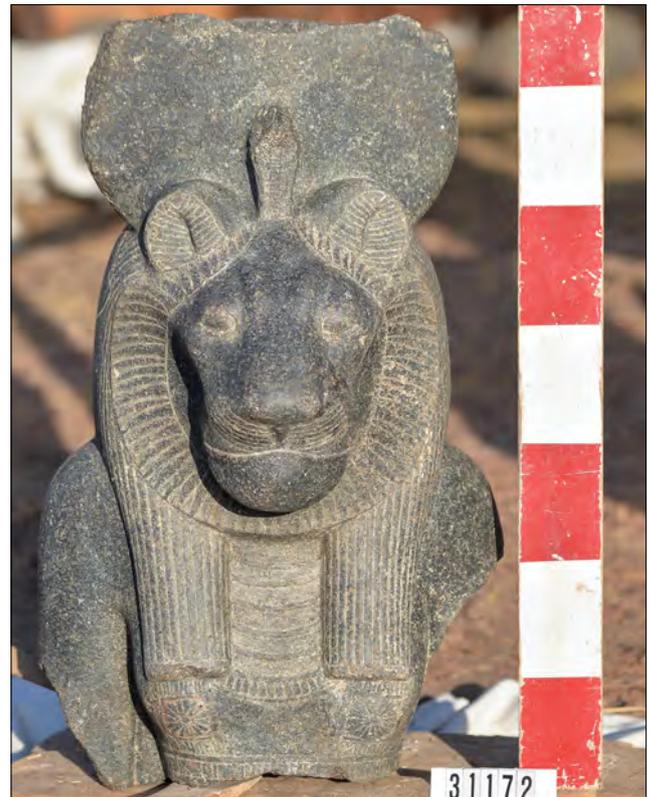


Field Work

Several archaeological missions have started their work in December 2016: Fayoum University at Kiman Faris in Fayoum; joint MoA-Saint-Domingue University (Dominican Republic) at Taposiris Magna in Alexandria; joint University of Leuven (Belgium) - University of Cologne (Germany) mission at Wady Sudamin in the Red Sea; University of Alabama (USA) at al-Lisht in Giza; Waseda University (Japan) at al-Khokha in Luxor; German Archaeological Institute at Watfa in Fayoum; Leiden University (Netherlands) at Deir al-Suryan in Wady al-Natrun; University of Naples (Italy) at Wadi Gasus in the Red Sea; American Research Center at Tall al-Samara in Daqahliyyah; Comasco Center (Italy) at the Temple of Amenhotep II in Luxor.

Archaeological Discoveries

- The Amenhotep III Temple Conservation Project working at the temple of Amenhotep III on the West Bank of Luxor has made several new discoveries. In the hypostyle hall of the temple, four statue fragments of the goddess Sekhmet were found. They will be matched to other Sekhmet statues previously found at the site. Additionally, limestone fragments of colossal sphinxes and a small torso of a deity in black granite were found in the area of the third pylon.



- The University of Birmingham in cooperation with EES has uncovered an archaeological wall in the northern part of the Qubbet al-Hawa Cemetery in Aswan, indicating the presence of as yet undiscovered tombs.

International Participation

Several colleagues were granted approval for international travel, including: Ahmed al-Laithy (Director of Mallawi Museum), Dr Mennat-Allah El Dorry (Scientific Office), Ahmed Kamal (Islamic and Coptic Sector), Ali Mahfouz (Daqahliyyah Inspectorate), Eman Haggag (Luxor Inspectorate), Noha Salah and Sarah Hamdi (GEM), Sally Mustafa (Egyptian Textile Museum), Muhammad Rushdi (Minya inspectorate), Waleed al-Sayed (Sohag inspectorate), Iman Abd al-Hamid (Museums Sector), Samah Asham (Coptic Museum), Asmaa Aley al-Din (EMC), Safwat Muhammad and Hadeel Khalil (GEM Conservators) Mamdouh Boshra and Mohamed Salah (Mallawi Conservators) have travelled to Germany; Ref at al-Anany (Head of the Conservation in Daqahliyyah) to Switzerland; Somaya Benyamin (Head of the Central Administration for Finance and Administration and Supervisor on the Finance Sector) to the U.K.; Mohamed Ahmed Zaky (Imbaba Inspectorate) and Khaled Omar Abd al-Naby (Chemist at the Centre of Antiquities Restoration and Research) to Japan; and Ahmed Mohamed Naguib (EMC) to Tunisia.

Projects

Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM)

- Construction is continuing at GEM, where the ceiling works are 96% completed.
- An international press conference was held at GEM to announce that the Multinational Atelier Bruckner Company won the bid proposal requested by the MoA to start implementing GEM's displays. Their proposal was one of ten and was found to be technically and financially the best offer. The event was attended by the Minister of Antiquities and the governor of Cairo (7 December, 2016).

National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC)

- NMEC's temporary exhibition on handicrafts, scheduled to be opened early 2017, is being finalised. Most archaeological objects have been transferred to NMEC and their display is underway.
- The Higher Committee for NMEC has convened to discuss the progress of the museum (4 December, 2016).
- The committee for NMEC's temporary exhibition has convened (20 December, 2016).
- Dr Ahmed al-Shoky, General Supervisor of the Museum of Islamic Art, was appointed as supervisor of the temporary exhibition of NMEC.

Giza Plateau Development Project Working

- Construction continues on the interior and exterior finishing as well as the central air conditioning of the VIP building. Interior details and furnishings of the administrative building are also being finished.
- Work is proceeding on insulation of the student buildings, as well as the walls.
- The Minister of Antiquities was accompanied by Eng. Ibrahim Mehleb, Assistant to President for National and Strategic Projects on a visit to the Giza Plateau Development Project (26 December, 2016).

Historic Cairo Project

- Preservation measures have begun on the Baron Empain Palace in Heliopolis, including supporting the basement and some parts of the palace.
- Five electric cars are being purchased to serve visitors and residents of al- Mu'izz Street. The electronic gates that close off access to the street are being repaired.

Giza Plateau Development Project Working

- The electricity grid in the police building of the EMC has been upgraded. Work is continuing on upgrading the electrical grids of the offices at the back of the museum and also in the papyrus laboratory in the museum. Cables necessary for installing air conditioning inside the museum have been installed.
- A limestone fragment with a woman eating a duck drawn in black ink was chosen as object of the month in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.



Conservation Projects

Restoration works of the Nubian temples have started, including Wady al-Sebu , al-Maharraqa and Amada. The conservation includes mechanical and chemical cleaning using organic solvents, as well as strengthening the stone blocks.



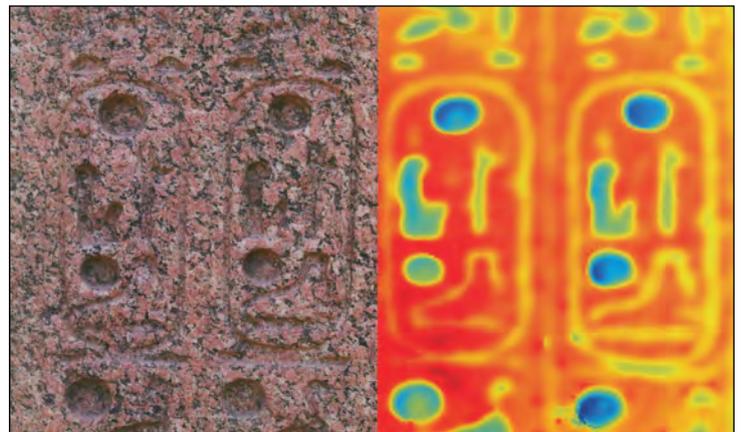
Meetings and Visits

- The Minister of Antiquities participated in three parliamentary committees to discuss the updates of the Giza Plateau Development Project (13 December, 2016), to look into supporting the project to produce replicas of antiquities in the MoA (19 December, 2016), and to present the proposal for establishing a syndicate of archaeologists (20 December, 2016).
- The Minister of Antiquities delivered a speech during a memoriam of Prof. Abd al-Halim Nour al-Din, which was held at the Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo University (24 December, 2016).
- The Minister of Antiquities participated in the Christmas eve mass at the All Saints Cathedral in Zamalek as the official representative of the Egyptian government (24 December, 2016).
- The Minister of Antiquities was accompanied by MoA's officials on visits to the Baron Empain Palace in Heliopolis, al-Khalifa neighbourhood, NMEC, the Giza Plateau Development Project, and the Egyptian Museums, Cairo.
- The Minister of Antiquities accompanied Dr Muhammad Gom a, Minister of Endowment on a visit to the Muhammad Aly Palace in Manial to look into establishing a new museum within the Palace's premises to display manuscripts and documents belonging to the Ministry of Endowment (26 December, 2016).
- The Minister of Antiquities received several high profile guests including the Ambassador of Armenia; Ambassador of Japan; Prince Abbas Hilmi; Head of the National Research Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics; Director of the Egyptian Museum in Turin journalists from Agence France-Presse (AFP) and journalists from the Chinese Press.
- Dr Mostafa Amin, Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, has visited two areas during December 2016: the National Museum and the Amphitheatre in Alexandria; and the Monastery of St Paul in the Red Sea.
- Dr Ahmed al-Shoky, General Supervisor of the Museum of Islamic Art, received the Head of the Islamic Section at the Louvre Museum to discuss avenues of cooperation.



Conferences

- The MoA has organised an introductory session for the syndicate for archaeologists. The session was attended by the Minister of Antiquities, Prof. Fayza Haikal (representative of the syndicate founders), Mr Salah al-Hadi (General Coordinator), Dr Mohammed Abdel-Maqsoud (former Head of the Egyptian Antiquities Sector), Mr Ghareeb Sonbol (Head of the Central Department for Restoration), and members of the founding organising committee and MoA officials (5 December, 2016).
- The MoA in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Center in Cairo, the Restoration Institute and the Scientific Research Centre in Rome organised the first Italian-Egyptian Workshop on Sciences and Technologies applied to Cultural Heritage (11-13 December, 2016).
- The MoA organised a conference at the MoA's headquarters in Zamalek on Coptic Art. The conference included a discount on MoA publications on Coptology and replicas of Coptic art produced by the MoA (20 December, 2016).



Training

- The quarterly assessment of the MoA's first annual training program is in. Several groups of trainees have undertaken their own projects after receiving training, including:
 - Inspectors of Islamic antiquities who received training on photography using 3D and IR technologies presented a virtual reality proposal for the Historic Cairo project in collaboration with Wolverhampton University. Several buildings were used in the pilot study, and more will be worked on as well.
 - Museum curators who have been trained on database writing by Prof. Dr Stephan Seidlmayer, Head of the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, have started designing their own database following the MySQL database used at the Egyptian Museum in Berlin.
 - Curators from the Royal Jewellery Museum in Alexandria have presented new templates from label writing and suggestions for digital the museum's register after training they received from Dr Myriam J. Morelle (Louvre Museum) at the Centre d'Études Alexandrines.
 - Engineer Nesreen Aly al-Hennawy from the Engineering Department of the MoA in Alexandria participated with Dr Yanics Zelicianne (Professor of Architecture at the Sorbonne) in assessing the threats to supporting tomb walls in Tabyet al-Nahasseen in Alexandria.
- Overall, 306 MoA employees from 16 governorates have been trained since September 2016.
- The Minister of Antiquities has met with some MoA employees who have participated in the annual training program since September 2016, and MoA employees who have received international travelling grants during October and November (26 December, 2016).
- The Minister of Antiquities has delivered a lecture on research methodologies during a workshop on basics of scientific research (27 December, 2016).

Cultural Events and Community Outreach

- The MoA hosted an exhibition titled «Sultan's Fair: between Old and New» at the Sultan Qaitbay Area of the City of the Dead. The exhibition comes as part of larger project financed by the EU and implemented by ARCHiNOS Architecture in collaboration the Historic Cairo Project and the MoA, aiming to make art and culture accessible for the community in this area of Cairo (6 December, 2016).



- The Giza Plateau hosted a march against terrorism and supporting Egypt (14 December, 2016).
- The Egyptian Museum, Cairo has organised an event for school children on the occasion of the New Year 2017, revolving around astronomy in ancient Egypt. The Minister of Antiquities attended the event (22 December, 2016).
- The MoA has gifted the Ministry of Aviation with a four metre statue of the goddess Serket, produced by the MoA's Replica Production Unit. The goddess was chosen because of her open arms welcoming guests to Egypt (29 December, 2016).

In Memoriam: May Trad (1930-2016)

Ms Trad obtained her B.A. in Egyptian Archaeology from the Faculty of Archaeology at Cairo University. She began working at the American Research Centre in Cairo, before volunteering at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo in the early 1980s. During her many years in the Egyptian Museum, which she very much regarded as her home, she rewrote many of the museum's registers in order to save their important contents from loss, inserted photos of the objects, and bound the registers. She was an important Egyptological resource, and a dear friend to many Egyptian and international scholars researching the museum's



collections. Fluent in English and French in addition to her native language Arabic, she translated many of the museum's labels into the three languages.

Ms. Trad's passing is a loss to the Museum, and many Egyptologists and friends who will remember her stories very fondly.

Temporary Exhibitions

- "Golden Pharaohs and Pyramids" exhibition in Japan was moved from Kyoto to Toyama, where it will be shown between 13 January, 2017 and 26 March, 2017.
- "Sunken Cities: Egypt's Lost Worlds" exhibition is moving to Rietberg Museum in Switzerland where it will be shown from 10 February to 15 August, 2017.

Decrees

Decrees issued in November include:

- Honoraria for inspectors accompanying archaeological projects have been raised to 2100EGP per month for the primary inspector and 900EGP for trainees, who have to be under 35 years of age. This is applicable from 1 February, 2017.
- Several new buffer zones for Coptic and Islamic antiquities have been specified, including: al-Fakahany Mosque on al- Mu'izz Street, Lageen al-Seify Mosque in al-Sayeda Zainab, al-Emary mosque in Kafr al-Sheikh, Farouk I Cinema and Theatre in Damanhour.
- Thirty-four instances of trespassing on Coptic and Islamic antiquities sites have been removed in several governorates.

Appointments

- Hala Qadri was appointed as General Director of Central Department for Personnel.
- Mohammed Saif was appointed Deputy of General Director of Central Department for Personnel.
- Mohamed Abd al-Moneim was appointed General Manager of Financial and Administrative Affairs of Egyptian Antiquities Sector.
- Counsellor Fatima Fathi Khalifa has been commissioned as Legal Advisor to GEM for a year.
- Four Assistants to the Minister have been chosen after passing several interviews: Dr Basem Gehad (GEM Conservator), Assistant to the Minister for Human Resources; Eman Zidan (EMC conservator) Assistant to the Minister for Financial Resources; Amina El Baroudi (EMC registrar) Assistant to the Minister for Digital Services; Dr Sherif Abd al-Moneim (Minister's Scientific Office) Assistant to the Minister for Archaeological Sites Development.



Fighting looting and illegal handling of antiquities and objects of cultural value is a global cause. The Department of Repatriated Antiquities of the MoA was established in 2002 to repatriate Egyptian antiquities smuggled outside of its borders. The Department staff follow up on various leads that are communicated to them, in addition to monitoring auction houses and online vendors that may sell looted antiquities. Once an object of suspicious origin is found, the Department checks it against its own database of missing objects, and does research to confirm its status. If an item is determined to have been looted, the administration takes immediate steps to repatriate these objects in co-operation with Egyptian and international authorities including Interpol, the Office of International Cooperation at the Egyptian Ministry of Justice, and the Administration of Cultural Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Objects are then delivered to the Egyptian Embassy in the country where it is located, before being returned to Egypt. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Egyptian Embassies follow up to finalize securing, packing, and shipping to Egypt.

The Department has signed agreements with many countries, which ensure an easy and swift recovery of objects from these countries, and also makes smuggling objects into these countries much more difficult.

The Department is working on preparing its annual exhibition at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo which will be inaugurated in January, 2017. The exhibition showcases the department's efforts over the last years, culminating with the objects that have been returned to Egypt in 2016.



Monument of the Month

Colossi of Amenhotep III at his Mortuary Temple in Luxor

Two colossal statues, icons of the west bank of Luxor, represent the eighteenth dynasty King Amenhotep III. The statues stand some 20 metres high at the first pylon of Amenhotep III's mortuary temple, known as the Temple of Millions of Years. The statues are made of quartzite from al-Gebel al-Ahmar. At the side of the king's legs, his wife Queen Tiye appears, as well as his mother Mutemuya.

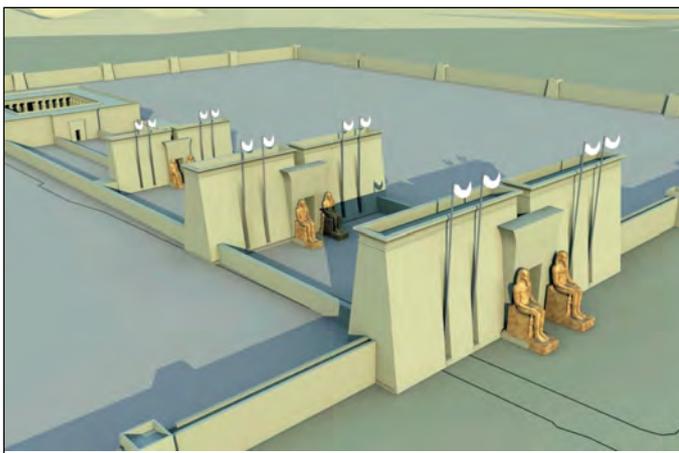
The statues are known today as the colossi of Memnon, in reference to the son of the Greek goddess of the dawn. The story has it that the statues were cracked in antiquity, especially the northern one which tended to make sounds at dawn as a result of air passing through its dew covered cracks. These sounds were interpreted as the wails of Memnon's mother over her son, killed by Achilles at the gates of Troy. The statues, especially the northern one, gained fame due to these sounds, and many visitors to Egypt made sure to inscribe their names on the statues.

The temple itself fell apart as a result of an earthquake in antiquity, and many of its blocks were quarried away to build nearby temples (such as that of Merenptah) and other buildings. The remaining blocks have been gravely affected by the fluctuating and continually rising water table coming in from nearby fields. In 1990, Prof. Dr Rainer Stadelmann began studying the statues, and the Amenhotep III Temple Conservation Project was started in 1998 jointly between the Supreme Council of Antiquities and the



German Archaeological Institute. Since then, the project has undertaken a large-scale underground program to lower the water table, in addition to re-assembling fragmented statues and blocks, and excavations revealing many royal statues and statues of the goddess Sekhmet.

A reconstruction of the temple of Amenhotep III, with the colossal statues standing at the temple's first pylon



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