

Introduction

Neal Spencer

Keeper of Nile Valley and Mediterranean Collections

Even within the British Museum, the array of research, projects, displays and discoveries around Egypt and Sudan can come as a surprise to colleagues. That very much continued in 2018, with rediscovered papyri in the rare (and wonderfully named) 'abnormal hieratic' script, scientific analysis of 'black goo' on coffins to reveal details of ancient funerary rituals, or new approaches to well-known gilded mummy masks that suggest how these fittings were produced.

Recognising and researching the history of the British Museum continues to form an important strand of study. This was evident in the Annual Egyptological Colloquium on *Displaying Egypt*, which explored how acquisitions, design, political and social contexts shape, and are shaped by, how Egypt has been represented to the public in museums and beyond. The Museum's collection continues to grow, whether through donations of objects with rich layered histories (such as the samples used to support an early 20th century history of hair and style), or the acquisition of very new objects, such as the football boots of Egypt and Liverpool star Mohamed Salah.

Very different perspectives on Egypt were presented to British Museum audiences this year. The Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world placed Egypt within a world that stretches from Morocco to Indonesia, while also addressing the contribution of non-Muslim communities in those regions. The Asahi Shimbun displays *The past is present: becoming Egyptian in the 20th century* looked at how Egyptians – not Europeans – deployed and reimagined the pharaonic past for domestic audiences from the 1920s onwards. Finally, the BP exhibition *I am Ashurbanipal: king of the world, king of Assyria* allowed us to think of Egypt as a place at the periphery of the Assyrian world view, and how it provided the setting for clashes between the great Mesopotamian empire and the kingdom of Kush.



Archaeological fieldwork, training and collaboration continue in Egypt and Sudan – from museum interpretation workshops to training on digitising glass plate negatives, or the removal of a rare Kushite wall painting in Dangeil. Our *Circulating Artefacts* project is addressing the current increase in illicit export of antiquities from Egypt and Sudan. Four Sudanese colleagues spent three months at the Museum documenting the art market and learning about research techniques and legal frameworks.

This year sees collaboration on a yet grander scale: the British Museum will join the Museo Egizio (Turin), the Musée du Louvre, the Rijkmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden) and the Egyptian Museum in Berlin to work with the Ministry of Antiquities on *Transforming the Egyptian Museum (Cairo)*, a project generously funded by the EU Delegation in Cairo.

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Exhibitions and galleries
Pharaoh touring in Spain

Marie Vandenbeusch

Project Curator: Egyptian Touring Exhibitions,
Department of Egypt and Sudan

Following the display at the Cleveland Museum of Art in 2016 (see *Newsletter* 4, 2017: 6–7), the exhibition *Pharaoh: King of Egypt* was transformed with new objects and two short films, designed to evoke the Egyptian landscape and the evolution of royal tombs. This latest incarnation of the exhibition is now touring in Spain as part of a collaboration between the British Museum and La Caixa Forum. It will travel across the country, already having visited Barcelona and Madrid where it was seen by nearly 350,000 visitors. A slightly smaller version – prompted by space constraints – will be shown at Caixa Forum venues in Girona and Seville, before finishing in Tarragona in 2020.

The 3D design of the exhibition by Guri Casajuana was notable for the use of innovative lighting, through film atop each exhibition case that provided a high level of background light, yet also strongly raking light to highlight relief and sculptural detail. Reliefs with shallow carving were transformed. For example, a red granite block from Bubastis (EA 1102), originally inscribed with the name of Senwosret III, was recarved some 500 years later during the reign of Ramses II. In the exhibition, details of Senwosret III's cartouche not seen before were suddenly apparent.

Rediscovering objects in the collection is one of the privileges of developing exhibitions. They are not only revealed through beautiful display, but also re-excavated from museum storerooms. For example, a sandstone lintel (EA 153) depicting Thutmose III offering the symbol of Maat to four gods; Amun-Ra, Mut, Khonsu and Hathor, with Amenhotep I presenting vases to a company of four other gods. Not displayed before, to our knowledge, this relief had not even been photographed. The Spanish tour of *Pharaoh* prompted its cleaning, conservation and documentation, with high-resolution imagery now available on the British Museum's collection online (www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search).



This red granite relief from Bubastis shows various layers of carving: the name of Senwosret III was later replaced by the cartouche of Ramses II (EA 1102).



Lintel showing two New Kingdom kings, each offering to a company of four gods (EA 153).

Right: View of the opening section of the exhibition *Pharaoh. King of Egypt* in La Caixa Forum, Barcelona (© Fundación Bancaria "la Caixa").



Exhibitions and galleries
**The Albukhary Foundation Gallery
of the Islamic world**



Venetia Porter
Curator, Department of the Middle East

In October 2018, the *Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world* opened, situated at the heart of the Museum, within two high-ceilinged galleries that had previously housed medieval European collections. Made possible through the extraordinary generosity of the Malaysia-based Albukhary Foundation, the result is a total restoration and refurbishment of these elegant rooms within the 'White Wing' of the Museum, adjacent to *The Sir Paul and Lady Ruddock Gallery of Medieval Europe*, within which are shown the famous Sutton Hoo collections. An ambitious scheme for the new gallery, worked on by a team of six curators for over three years with leading architects Stanton Williams, involved the creation of a new narrative and a holistic way of looking at the cultures of the Islamic world. At its full stretch this can be defined as a series of regions that extend from West Africa to Southeast Asia, from the 7th century AD to the present day.

Within the gallery, unsurprisingly, Egypt plays a central role. As the visitor enters the gallery, they are greeted by objects made during the rule of the Fatimids (969–1171) and a text in Arabic from the Moroccan traveller Ibn Battutah (d.1369) stating '*Misr um al-dunya* (Egypt is the mother of the world)'.
The underlying curatorial vision sought to create a gallery focussing not only on high Islamic art, but that such objects made for sultans would be shown alongside the objects of everyday. Thus an impressive brass basin inlaid with silver made for Nasir al-Din Muhammad ibn Qalawun, a great patron of art and architecture who reigned three times between 1293–1341, can be seen with a display of Fatimid era water filters broken from their clay jugs. These filters were found discarded on the rubbish heaps of Fustat, and feature a variety of delightful designs that include an elephant. Another important element of the Egyptian narrative is a case devoted to carving traditions, and here, we have been able to include the cedar wood

door panels of the Coptic church of Sitt Mariam, known as the *Mu'allaqa* (Hanging) Church. Carved around 1300 and acquired by the British Museum in 1878, these are placed alongside wooden panels from *minbars* (pulpits) of mosques. This juxtaposition allows a focus on the stylistic vocabulary of the Mamluk period (1250–1517) which includes the extensive and elaborate use of the repeating vegetal ornament sometimes known as the 'arabesque'.

In her analysis of the *Mu'allaqa* panels, Lucy-Ann Hunt demonstrated the similarity between the designs on the *minbar* of Sultan Lajin (1296) within the mosque of Ibn Tulun, and the motifs on the panels. In her discussion of the iconography of these important panels, Hunt also notes that the designs can be seen to be responding to 'Oriental Christian, Western, and Byzantine works of art, reinforced with aniconic motifs in common with contemporary Islamic art'. She is thus highlighting an interconnected world in which trade, patronage and pilgrimage finds artistic expression in the objects. Exemplified in the *Mu'allaqa* doors, this globalised theme is one of the main threads running through the displays. It is a gallery full of stories, told through a myriad of objects drawn from across the Museum's collection.

The British Museum would like to thank the Albukhary Foundation for their generous support that made possible the creation of these new permanent galleries.



Entrance to the Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world.

Mamluk basin of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, made in Damascus or Cairo c. AD 1320-1341 (1851,0104.1)

Carved panel from the Coptic church of Sitt Mariam (Mu'allaqa), Cairo, c. AD 1300 (1878,1203.7).



Granite gneiss sphinx of King Taharqa; from Temple T, Kawa, Sudan; about 690–664 BC (EA 1770).

Gypsum alabaster wall panel showing the Assyrian army besieging an Egyptian town; North Palace, Nineveh, Iraq; 645–640 BC (ME 124928).

Quartzite shabti made in the image of the Kushite ruler Taharqa; Pyramid 1, Nuri, Sudan, about 664 BC (EA 55485).

Exhibitions and galleries

The BP exhibition:

I am Ashurbanipal: king of the world, king of Assyria



Gareth Brereton

Curator of Ancient Mesopotamia, Department of the Middle East

The BP exhibition *I am Ashurbanipal: king of the world, king of Assyria* explored the world of ancient Assyria through the life and legacy of its last great ruler, who ruled 669–631 BC. The exhibition presented the individual, his family, the building programmes of palaces and temples, his fascination with knowledge and the library he created. Yet it also explored his empire, and how it was controlled. This empire extended from the banks of the Egyptian Nile to the Zagros Mountains of western Iran, and from the shores of the Persian Gulf to the plains of the central Anatolian steppe. The exhibition thus allowed the pharaonic and Kushite states to be seen from a different – Assyrian – perspective to that usually evoked in the British Museum's Egyptian galleries.

Ashurbanipal's first challenge as king was to deal with Egypt, which had been interfering in Assyria's prosperous western border. By 716 BC Egypt was under the control of the kingdom of Kush, whose heartland lay around the 4th Cataract of the Nile, in modern northern Sudan. During the reign of Ashurbanipal's father, King Esarhaddon (681–669 BC), the pharaoh Taharqa (690–664 BC) sought to further Kushite influence on Assyria's western border in the Levant, an area of strategic importance for maritime links and overland trade routes. Phoenician harbours, for example, had been transformed into major ports for the acquisition of raw materials and the production of luxury goods.

After an initial conquest of Memphis in 671 BC, under Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal would return to fight Taharqa and his allies in the Levant, stopping on the way to gather reinforcements and essential supplies, such as boats, from vassal kingdoms in the Levant and Cyprus. Once in Egypt, Ashurbanipal's army defeated Taharqa's forces in a pitched battle near Kar-Banitu, but Taharqa escaped and fled south to Thebes.

'Taharqa, against the will of the gods, made efforts to take away the country of Egypt... He was defeated on the battlefield and the troops on which he relied were massacred... Panic and fear befell him and he became mad. He left his royal city, Memphis, the place on which he had trusted, boarded a ship to save his life, abandoned his camp, fled alone, and entered Thebes.'

The Assyrians pursued Taharqa but appear to have faced firm resistance – perhaps even defeat – in Thebes, for Taharqa's kingship was still acknowledged in Upper Egypt until his death around 664 BC. When Taharqa's nephew, Tanwetamun, was declared king of Egypt and Kush he marched his army north to liberate the country from Assyria's grasp and managed to recapture Memphis. In response to this new threat, Ashurbanipal gathered his troops for the decisive confrontation, which led to the sacking of Thebes, Egypt's religious centre. The great Egyptian city was captured, captives deported and countless treasures plundered. Booty seized from Ashurbanipal's campaigns in Egypt was paraded through the streets of Nineveh and the metal obelisks that once stood at the temple gates in Thebes were melted down to decorate Assyria's holiest shrines.

'Silver, gold, precious stones, as much property of his palace as there was, garments with multi-coloured trim, linen garments, large horses, people – male and female – two tall obelisks cast with shiny zahalû-metal, whose weight was 2,500 talents and which stood at a temple gate, I ripped them from where they were erected and took them to Assyria. I carried off substantial booty, which was without number, from the city Thebes.'

The BP exhibition I am Ashurbanipal: king of the world, king of Assyria was shown at the British Museum from 8 November 2018 to 24 February 2019.



Exhibitions and galleries

I object – informal discourse in ancient Egypt

Ilona Regulski

Curator of Egyptian Written Culture,
Department of Egypt and Sudan

Ancient Egypt is often presented as an extremely conservative culture. Written out in monumental form, royal inscriptions echo the absolute power of the pharaoh, a triumphant hero who re-established order in a chaotic universe. A solid social hierarchy, unchanged since the time of the gods, was supported by a cultural narrative dictated by the king and his entourage. But Egypt was not only a culture of temples and palaces; personal reflections on life were jotted down in the periphery of royal legends. It is as such that ancient Egypt is represented in the Citi exhibition *I object: Ian Hislop's search for dissent*, co-curated by Ian Hislop.

In an attempt to present an alternative history, the exhibition explores objects that challenged the official version of events and defied the established narrative. The Egyptian evidence is diverse, but the most telling examples come from Deir el-Medina, a village on the west bank of the Nile in Luxor, on the edge of the Valley of the Kings. It was home to many of the artisans and craftsmen who built and decorated the nearby royal tombs of the New Kingdom, between the 16th and 11th centuries BC. Here, beside the ruins of ancient dwellings, were found thousands of painted limestone and pottery fragments, known as ostraca. The subject matter of these pieces is highly varied, providing a valuable snapshot of everyday life among the Egyptian non-elite. Some are documents of a semi-official nature, for example lists recording absenteeism of workers, while others record details such as goods transactions, marriages, and prayers. A small proportion of ostraca contain drawings of a less formal nature, such as an example depicting an erotic scene (EA 50714). The ostrakon shows a man having sexual intercourse with another person, possibly a woman. A hieroglyphic caption reads 'a satisfied foreskin means a happy person'. Although the subject matter is clear, the purpose of such scenes is uncertain: sexual activity was



associated with religious festivity, but the sketchiness suggests a frivolous, throw-away quality. Crude though this sketch is, the painter understood the complex conventions that comprised pictorial representations of the human body. Note, for example, the way in which the eye of the female is drawn as if it were viewed from the front, even though her head is turned back at what seems to be an impossible angle, while her legs and those of her sexual partner are shown in profile.

A number of ostraca show animals engaged in human activities. One depicts a monkey eating from a bowl filled with pomegranates while the back contains four incomplete lines of a legal text (EA 8507). Should we consider paintings such as this to be social satire? There can be no doubt that these images were created for the purpose of amusement, though to what intent they were subversive is difficult to say. We do not know, for example, if the animals illustrated were from popular stories or if they were meant to mock officials by portraying them as animals. What they do reveal is the Egyptians' taste for humour, and a willingness to poke fun at the strict hierarchical nature of their society.

The Citi exhibition I object: Ian Hislop's search for dissent was shown at the British Museum from 6 September 2018 to 20 January 2019.



Limestone ostrakon with erotic scene, from Thebes, c. 1300–1070 BC (EA 50714).

Limestone ostrakon with scene of monkey eating pomegranates, from Thebes, c. 1450–1070 BC (EA 8507).

Exhibitions and galleries

The past is present: becoming Egyptian in the 20th century

Neal Spencer

Keeper of Nile Valley and Mediterranean Collections

The use of pharaonic imagery in the 19th and 20th century is often termed 'Egyptomania'. This was fuelled by the 'rediscovery' of Egypt through travel and publications such as the *Description de l'Égypte* (from 1809), the arrival of statues, coffins and other objects in museum collections, and discoveries such as the tomb of Tutankhamun (1922). From architecture to furniture and jewellery, echoes of pharaonic Egypt can be found from Chicago to St Petersburg. Yet Egyptomania was focused on European interpretations of Egypt's past. How did Egyptians view this past?

The exhibition *The past is present: becoming Egyptian in the 20th century*, curated by Mohamed Elshahed, engaged with this question. Drawing upon the newly acquired collection of objects from 20th and 21st century Egypt, Mohamed explored how pharaonic imagery – especially Cleopatra and the pyramids of Giza – were deployed by government, companies and individuals within the context of emergent nationalism. From food packaging to vinyl record covers, tobacco products to sewing machines, street adverts to magazines, this imagery provided a recognisably Egyptian identity, and one that could engage Muslim, Christian and immigrant communities.

The exhibition design, by All Things, sought to avoid clichés of an Orientalised Egypt. Instead of Arabic design motifs, minarets or evoking a chaotic *souk* (market), the room was furnished with materials to evoke the hard concrete cityscapes typical of modern Egypt. We were keen to also include Egyptian voices in the display. This was achieved in two ways. Firstly, with a quote from Mahmoud Mokhtar, the Egyptian sculptor, on his 1928 sculpture *Nahdat Misr* (Egypt Awakened):

'The sphinx, icon of the glorious pharaonic past ... rises just as Egypt discards the thick veil that has concealed her from the world for thousands of years. Her fingers, resting lightly on the sphinx, symbolise the ... present catching up with the past and this Egyptian nation resurrecting its storied civilisation.'

Secondly, the display was set against the backdrop of a video artwork. *Domestic Tourism II* (2009) by Maha Maamoun. An Egyptian artist based in Cairo, she splices together footage from Egyptian films that show the Pyramids of Giza as a backdrop. It thereby explores how these iconic monuments could be reclaimed from a tourist view towards being part of Egypt's political and social context. The actors' voices – whether in a comedy, crime, sci-fi or romantic film – ensured the display buzzed with the sounds of 20th century Cairo.

The Asahi Shimbun Displays The past is present: becoming Egyptian in the 20th century, guest curated by Mohamed Elshahed, was displayed at the British Museum from 24 May to 22 July 2018.



Milk bottle with Cleopatra logo, 1960s (EA 87544).

View of the display in Room 3.



Project Focus

Circulating Artefacts: a cross-platform alliance against the looting of pharaonic antiquities

Marcel Marée

Curator, Department of Egypt and Sudan

The Museum has taken a major new initiative to tackle the widespread trade in illicit antiquities. April 2018 saw the launch of Circulating Artefacts, a project made possible by a generous grant from the Cultural Protection Fund, which is run by the British Council. The project will generate a database of Egyptian and Sudanese antiquities on the market and in private collections, with a prime focus on objects circulating after the 1970 UNESCO Convention against the illegal trade in cultural artefacts. The database will be a powerful research tool developed, populated and researched by a team of subject specialists, putting the trade under greater scrutiny. Shielded from open access view to ensure it does not undermine criminal investigations and repatriation efforts, we will encourage dealers, collectors, law enforcement agencies, indeed anyone with useful information, to report artefacts to us, so we can record and assess them at the first opportunity. We anticipate that the scheme will prompt buyers and sellers to strive for a higher standard of due diligence and greater transparency on object provenances.

Since the Arab Spring, numerous archaeological sites have seen a sharp increase in illegal digging. Tarnished artefacts now flood the art market as looters and traffickers employ new technologies and platforms to ply their destructive trade. The first results of our project show that the scale of the problem is widely underestimated, even by subject specialists. Since its inception last year, we have identified over 600 artefacts that were demonstrably looted in recent years. One of our aims is to help inform public debate and raise awareness, as current legislations and efforts to enforce them are woefully inadequate. The British Museum has a long history of recognising these problems: we have supported the Ministry of Antiquities (Egypt) and the National Corporation for Antiquities & Museums (Sudan) for many years in their efforts to spot and recover illicit artefacts. Our new project serves to strengthen that support, with a dedicated team working full-time to develop an effective means of monitoring sales, sellers and artefacts. Much input of data and research is contributed by



In-country colleagues and a growing army of volunteers and Egyptology students, some of whom are focusing research their research on specific groups of objects.

As a key component, we are offering workshops to our colleagues in Cairo and Khartoum, both at their home institutions and at the British Museum. This ensures that concurrent efforts in counteracting illegal trade are better aligned and more productive. Skills development focuses on provenance research, aspects of art market legislation, as well as improved communication between relevant parties and organisations. Guest speakers include legal experts, police officers, archaeologists undertaking related work, and representatives of the trade itself. All parties have a vital role to play in fighting the illicit antiquities trade.

The database system being developed is not a traditional database or catalogue. In close coordination with the British Museum's ResearchSpace team and the software supplier Metaphacts, we are developing a semantic database best suited to complex provenance research. This will help us carefully map the histories and journeys of objects and the associated events, actors and places. It will also help identify and visualise suspicious patterns and interconnections, for instance recurrent links between objects from certain sites and certain sellers. We also keep tabs on matches and conflicts between purported collection histories and our independent findings.

How will our database differ from others, such as those managed by national and global police forces, or by companies such as the Art Loss Register and Artive? We work closely with each of these organisations, but our strategy is different. First and foremost, we record all objects of importance seen in the trade and in private collections, not just objects reported stolen. One reason is that many thefts are not, or not widely, reported. More importantly, countless artefacts come straight from illegal excavations and so go totally unreported. We document objects of legal, illegal and unknown status, confident that many unknown provenances will be clarified as a result.

We collect artefact images and data from dealers' websites and catalogues, but a good proportion is readily

brought to our attention by the owners themselves. Objects can be reported to us by email or via an online tool (circulatingartefacts.britishmuseum.org). Auction houses, galleries and dealers' associations are increasingly inclined to alert us to objects, for an appraisal and permanent documentation. We actively research pieces that raise our suspicions, especially if provenance information is sparse or unreliable. An object's archaeological origin can often be deduced from its type, inscriptions or style, and such objects may be linked to recent looting events.

Crucially, the Circulating Artefacts database is run by Egyptologists with specialist knowledge. Scholars often look away from the art market, wanting 'nothing to do with it'. This is a problem, because scholars are better placed than anyone else to spot a suspicious artefact. Museum curators are especially well placed to act as a central point of contact between police, legal experts, private collectors, archaeologists and representatives of the art market. It is essential that academics become more readily available to police and customs authorities around the world, to assist in the identification and recovery of illicit artefacts. We do not only invite dealers, collectors and law enforcement to confidentially report antiquities to us: the same invitation goes out to fellow Egyptologists and archaeologists.

The current grant for the project extends to February 2020. In the interim we aim to document an initial 80,000 circulating artefacts. We see this as just the first step towards a greater goal. Objects will continue to surface in the trade, and we look actively for ways to safeguard the project's long-term duration. One particular objective of the current project is to evaluate how the system could be deployed for other regions affected by the illicit trade in antiquities. The platform we are developing, the research database, the workflows and the training modules are all designed to be fit for application to a much wider geographical scope, so that the system can be tailored to specific countries or regions. The British Museum, with the global breadth of its connections and curatorial expertise, is perfectly placed to take a leading role in combatting the trade in cultural property.

Circulating Artefacts is supported by the Cultural Protection Fund, run by the British Council for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. For more information about the project, or if you wish to support it, contact circulatingartefacts@britishmuseum.org



Relief fragment from a Spanish auction house, reported by a London dealer to the project team, who identified it as stolen from the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahri. It has since been returned to Egypt.

Ayman el-Tayeb and Rihab Khider, both of the National Corporation for Antiquities & Museums (Sudan), documenting circulating artefacts.

The collection
Documenting Amarna ostraca

Micòl Di Teodoro

Independent scholar and former PhD student,
 University College London

The ancient city of Amarna is located in Middle Egypt, in the modern province of al-Minya. Here, in a desert plain alongside the east bank of the Nile, the pharaoh Akhenaten founded his capital (c. 1330 BC). The site comprised residential quarters and temples surrounded by cemeteries, quarries, and two isolated settlements for workers: the Workmen's Village and the Stone Village. Archaeological excavations begun in 1891–92 with William F. Petrie and proceeded in 1896 with Alessandro Barsanti and 1907–14 with Ludwig Borchardt. Subsequently, new excavation seasons were funded by the Egypt Exploration Society and directed by various scholars: Thomas E. Peet, Leonard Woolley, Francis Newton, Henri Frankfort, and J.D.S. Pendlebury from 1921 to 1936, and since 1977 by Barry Kemp.

Many finds from the EES and Petrie's privately funded excavations were sent to the British Museum and have been stored there ever since, among them nearly 800 inscribed fragments of pottery vessels, for the most part hitherto unpublished. In January 2017, I started a photographic documentation of the large corpus of fragments, which will soon be available to scholars and the general public through the online collections database.

The pottery fragments from Amarna, or ostraca, form a homogeneous corpus of texts classified as 'jar-labels'; they are fragments of the body of the jar or sections of the jar's shoulders. The material is red, brown, or grey pottery, the exterior of which can be covered by white or cream coloured slip. Some of them are well preserved, a

few show salt concretions, others are moderately worn. They were discovered in different areas of Amarna; many come from houses and the building Meru-Aten, others were found in magazines and granaries, a few come from the Great Temple area and the Workmen Village.

The texts, usually written from right to left in black ink, are in hieratic script. The most common label is two or three lines long and identifies the original content of the jar. Longer texts are also present. Most of these commodity labels record wine, but a few also mention meat, honey, oil, incense, and linen. A typical label gives the following information: year, content, the provenance/place of production of the commodity, and often the title and name of the supervisor of production. For example, label EA 59337 identifies the content as 'year 6, wine of the Aten estate from the western river' providing also the name of the 'head vintner'. Occasionally, *nefer*-signs in wine jar-labels record the quality of the wine as 'good' (one *nefer*-sign), 'very good' (two *nefer*-signs) or 'excellent' (more than two *nefer*-signs). Such labels are important pieces of evidence for different aspects of pottery and commodity production, as well as valuable sources to reconstruct economic and social relations during the Amarna period.



Ostrakon from Amarna with an ink inscription referring to wine of the Aten estate (EA 59337).

The collection
Predynastic tattoos revealed



Daniel Antoine

Curator of Bioarchaeology, Department of Egypt and Sudan

Renée Friedman

Honorary Senior Research Associate, Griffith Institute, University of Oxford

The reanalysis of long-held mummies has provided unexpected and remarkable new findings. The Museum curates seven rare mummies from Egypt's Predynastic period, the era preceding the country's unification by the first pharaoh at around 3100 BC. Originally buried in shallow graves at the site of Gebelein in Upper Egypt, the bodies were naturally desiccated by the heat, salinity and aridity of the Egyptian desert, preserving their soft tissues. As part of a new programme of conservation and research, their skin was examined for signs of body modification as part of a new programme of conservation and research. Infrared photography revealed that two of the seven had been tattooed. One of them was the well-known mummy known as Gebelein Man. Despite being on display almost continuously since his discovery around 100 years ago, the dark smudges on Gebelein Man's right arm, had remained unexamined. Infrared photography revealed that these smudges, which appear only as faint markings under natural light, are in fact tattoos depicting two slightly overlapping horned animals, probably a Barbary sheep and a wild bull.

A female mummy, known as Gebelein Woman, also has several tattoos. Under infrared examination, a series of four small 'S' shaped motifs appeared over her right shoulder and a curving linear motif, perhaps a staff or musical clapper, is present below them on her upper right arm. The tattoo sets on both individuals would have been highly visible and may have denoted status, bravery, cult or magical knowledge, or protection. Radiocarbon dated to 3351 to 3017 BC, these mummies conclusively demonstrate that tattooing was practised in prehistoric Egypt and overturn the circumstantial evidence of the artistic record that previously suggested only females were tattooed. To date, the oldest physically preserved examples of tattoos are the mainly geometric motifs



visible on the mummy known as Ötzi (3370–3100 BC) whose skin was preserved by the ice of the Tyrolean Alps. The Gebelein tattoos are approximately contemporaneous with Ötzi. This makes them amongst the earliest surviving tattoos in the world and the oldest known tattooed figural motifs. At over 5,000 years of age, they push back the evidence for tattooing in Africa by a millennium and, together with other tattoos being discovered thanks to this new technology, are helping to rewrite the history of body modification in antiquity.

Friedman R, Antoine D, Talamo S, Reimer PJ, Taylor JH, Wills B and Mannino MA (2018) Natural mummies from Predynastic Egypt reveal the world's earliest figural tattoos. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 92, 116–25.

Infrared photography of the naturally mummified man from Gebelein reveals the presence of two tattoos – a wild bull and a Barbary sheep – on his upper right arm.

The collection
**Ritual black liquids applied to
22nd dynasty coffins**

Kate Fulcher
Scientist, Department of Scientific Research

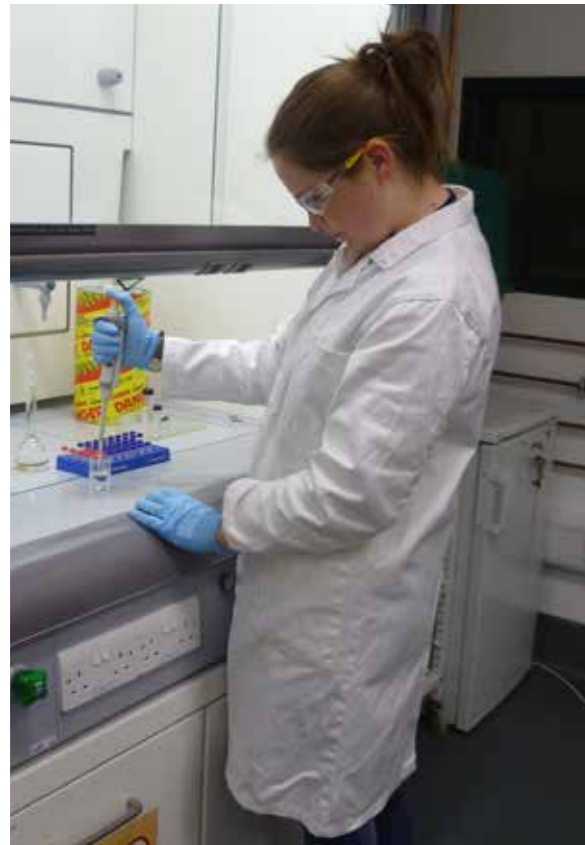
As part of in-depth research into Third Intermediate Period coffins and cartonnage, led by John Taylor, British Museum scientists are undertaking analyses of the materials used to produce and decorate the coffins. After the coffin or cartonnage had been constructed, painted, and occasionally varnished, some had a black liquid poured over them, presumably as a part of a funerary ritual. In some cases the extent of the black liquid is limited, for example Padihorpakhered (EA 29578) has only a splash on the face of the outer coffin. In other cases the coverage is almost total; the cartonnage case of Djedkhonsiufankh (EA 6662) is completely covered in the black liquid, which has pooled in the bottom of his coffin, cementing him inside. Wrapped mummies could also receive this treatment; the wrapped body of Denytenamun (EA 6660) had a very thick black liquid poured over it. A black substance was also used to paint the exterior and interior of many coffins from this period, with scenes and figures drawn over the top in yellow.

Analysis of both painted black liquid and poured black liquid is being conducted using gas chromatography mass spectrometry (GC-MS) in the laboratories at the British Museum, with the aim of identifying the molecular components of the black liquids and thus their constituent materials. Knowledge of the materials allows their properties to be evaluated, aiding interpretation of their method of application, the locations from which they were sourced and their ideological significance. The analyses so far have identified conifer resin, plant oils (or maybe fats), beeswax, and bitumen, which means that this liquid is similar to the black 'resin' used in mummification.

To some extent, the type of plant resin, and more rarely oil, can be identified using biomarkers, which are degradation products of the original organic molecules in the plant resin. Most of these occur across a variety of plants, but a few are specific to a plant family or genus. The biomarkers for coniferous resin (dehydroabietic acid and its oxidation products) are frequently seen in the black liquids we are analysing.

Since bitumen is formed from long dead living organisms, the same principle can be applied. The types of plants, bacteria, and archaea which formed the bitumen vary by climate and therefore by geographical area and time period. The biomarkers they leave can thus be used to identify the source of the bitumen by comparison to other bitumen samples from known places. The bitumen component of mummification balms previously studied has been sourced to the Dead Sea, Gebel Zeit in the south of the Gulf of Suez, and Ras Zaafarana in the central Gulf of Suez. Identifying the source of the bitumen establishes evidence for trade routes and contact with other ancient cultures. This scientific study will provide a material perspective on little-known aspects of the complex funerary rituals practised in ancient Egypt.

Kate is working with John Taylor (Curator of Egyptian Funerary Culture, Department of Egypt and Sudan), Rebecca Stacey (Senior Scientist, Department of Scientific Research) and Margaret Serpico (Independent Researcher).



Kate working in the research laboratories of the World Conservation & Exhibition Centre, British Museum.

22nd dynasty coffin and cartonnage case (containing mummy) of Djedkhonsiufankh (EA 6662) completely covered with black substance.





Gilded and painted cartonnage mask, Ptolemaic Period (EA 29474).

Photograph of the interior of mask EA 29474.

A painted and gilded cartonnage mask from Abydos (1st century BC – 1st century AD; EA 51146) awaiting scanning in the British Museum laboratory.



The collection Mummy masks reconsidered

Marie Vandenbeusch

Project Curator: Egyptian Touring Exhibitions,
Department of Egypt and Sudan

Daniel O' Flynn

Scientist: X-ray Imaging, Department of Scientific
Research

Egyptian funerary masks were used to cover the head of mummified individuals, starting in the Middle Kingdom until the Roman period, with the Ptolemaic period seeing a peak in production. They not only guaranteed the preservation of the deceased's head for eternity, but also provided a welcome connection between the deceased and the divine. Gold evoked, for example, the flesh of the gods. It is however not the complex symbolic function of these masks which is the main focus of this new research project, but their manufacture. Made in cartonnage – combining textile (or reused papyrus), plaster and glue – they were usually mass-produced to fulfil the high demand existing for such funerary goods. And this is one of the pieces of evidence for mass-production that raised our interest: the internal exploration of these masks often reveals a clearly defined face. It is far more detailed than the external surface of the finished product, suggesting the use of an internal mould that helped creating the general features of the face. Studying these masks layer by layer informs us on the production methods of these items, highlighting variations depending on trends, regionalism or – unsurprisingly – cost effectiveness.



This project aims at researching masks dated to the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods in the British Museum collection. A number were selected on the basis of their preservation and of a first visual examination. CT-scanning, typically deployed to research mummified remains, allows a wealth of unsuspected information to emerge. For example, we are now able to see how the thickness and application of textiles can vary. Furthermore, while plaster could be used as a modelling tool to enhance the shape of the face, it is usually thinly applied to the surface of the masks, perhaps more to reinforce and smoothen the surface, creating a base for pigments and gilded decoration.

The second phase of this research requires no technology: a very detailed observation of the external layering of pigments and gilding, as well as the textile visible internally. This provides a more comprehensive sense of patina, wear, use and modern conservation of these masks.

We have generally very little information about the owners of these masks, whose names and physical remains are often not preserved. They must have been wealthy individuals, or at least rich enough to purchase such items and to have access to gilding and to craftsmen familiar with funerary texts that are in some cases decorating the surface. At first glance, all these masks look very similar, but a further look shows that they were made following unique steps of fabrication, allowing us to know more about their manufacturer(s). Research is ongoing, and the methods will also be applicable to material of different time periods.

The collection

From Abydos with love: a remarkable depiction of Isis-Aphrodite and Dionysos-Osiris

Andreas Effland

German Archaeological Institute, Cairo

Abydos is famous for its Early Dynastic royal burials at Umm el-Qaab, for its beautiful New Kingdom temples, and as the centre of the cult of the god Osiris. It is less well known that burial grounds for animals were established in several parts of the wider sacred landscape during the Egyptian Late and Graeco-Roman Periods. The large majority of these animal burials were sacred animals and votive mummies: species include raptors, serpents, cats, shrews, dogs, and birds, especially ibises. The sacred ibis is commonly associated with the god Thoth: this god's role in the mystical solar union of Re and Osiris, during the sun's journey through the netherworld, probably explains the presence of Thoth at Abydos, since rebirth and resurrection are a key feature of the main narrative of this holy place.

A large ibis cemetery, apparently dating to the late Ptolemaic or early Roman Period (late 1st century BC), is located to the east of the processional *wadi* leading from the old temple of Osiris-Khentiamentiu at the Kom es-Sultan towards Umm el-Qaab. In 1912–1913 William Leonard Stevenson Loat was responsible for excavating this area in cemetery E on behalf of the Egypt Exploration Society. The majority of the mummified birds were buried close to the surface, placed in large pottery jars of varying shapes. The jars were placed upright in the surrounding sand, closed and sealed. Each jar contained multiple ibis bundles (from two to 108) often associated with eggs or bundles of feathers. The jars, some of sun-dried

clay, others fired, were numbered (1001–1091) by the excavator. One jar of redware pottery with pierced lug handles, number 1022 (EA 52929), is of special interest and historical importance.

This large jar (61 cm) is adorned with the drawing of two human figures in black outline, representing a woman and a man facing one another over a plant or tree, which is possibly a vine, *convolvulus*, or branch of ivy. The woman is depicted with an old royal Egyptian headdress rather than a Greek *sakkos*; the man wears a fillet round his head. Both are nude and raise one hand. The woman's Egyptian headdress and the date of this part of the cemetery may point to a specific woman of high rank. The fillet of the man indicates a person of high status as well, according to Greek ideals. The positioning of these figures, interacting over the branch of ivy or vine, reflects the Dionysiac relationship between a royal woman and a foreign, Greek, notable. It is very tempting to see in this depiction a scene representing the Roman leader Mark Antony and the Ptolemaic Queen Cleopatra VII.

Such a scene seems unusual; in Abydos, one might rather expect a representation of the deities Isis and Osiris. But in fact the pair Cleopatra and Antony was seen, since their remarkable meeting at Tarsus (41 BCE), as the living manifestation of Dionysos and Aphrodite or the royal couple Osiris and Isis.

We may never know if the drawing was initially intended as a decoration for this ibis-jar, or if it was inscribed on a broken piece of jar.



Jar from the ibis cemetery at Abydos (EA 52929).

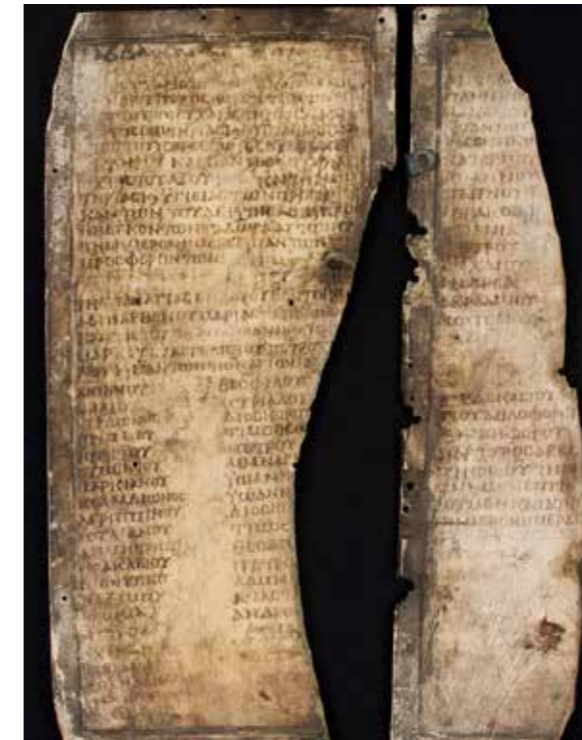
Drawing of Mark Antony and Cleopatra.



The Luxor or Moir-Bryce Diptych (BEP 1920,1214.1) shown in Visible (VIS) and Ultraviolet-induced visible luminescence (UVL).

The collection

What lies beneath: a 7th-century palimpsest ivory diptych



Elisabeth R. O'Connell

Curator, Department of Egypt and Sudan

Joanne Dyer

Scientist, Department of Scientific Research

By the mid-6th century AD, there were four simultaneous claimants to the patriarchate of Alexandria. The Byzantine emperors Justin I (reigned 518–527) and Justinian (r. 527–565) had sought to impose the statutes promulgated at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 across the empire, threatening exile for those who did not comply. Bishops were told to strike from their liturgical diptychs the names of those who rejected the statutes, igniting a new crisis in the church.

Read during the church service where 'the deacon, the diptychs' appears, liturgical diptychs record the genealogies of bishops traced back through the apostles to Christ himself. By prescribing that bishops erase the names of their predecessors, they were asked to remove the basis for their claim to authority in favour of the lineages acceptable to Rome. Non-Chalcedonian bishops refused, as indeed did some Chalcedonian bishops. Removing the names of former bishops not only interrupted claims to apostolic succession, it was humiliating.

Diptychs are well-known from literary sources, but the Luxor Diptych is a rare physical survival. Copied after the successful revival of the Severan anti-Chalcedonian Church at the end of the sixth century, the Luxor diptych lists the names of the Archbishops of Alexandria and the bishops of a local see, probably Hermonthis/Armant. The genealogies smooth over the long exiles of episcopal heroes who were later claimed by the anti-Chalcedonian cause, like Athanasius who was exiled five times under four emperors (r. 328–373, inclusive of exiles, 335–337; 339–346; 356–362; 362–364; 365–366). They also omit gaps between anti-Chalcedonian archbishops, such as the nine-year gap between Theodosius I (r. 535–566,



inclusive of exile to Constantinople, 536–566) and Peter IV (r. 576–577), effectively revising the complicated and contested history of the Alexandrian Church.

The main visible Greek text was written after the diptych had been repaired (hand two). Written in the reign of Benjamin (r. 626–665), it was updated after his death, when his name was added to the list of dead archbishops of Alexandria (line 35), and his successor's name, Agnaton (665–680) written over his in line one (hand three). The contents of hand one have long been deemed illegible, but with advances in imaging techniques, the burning question of whether or not the under-text (hand one) might contain earlier lists of archbishops and bishops could finally be answered definitely. The answer unfortunately is no.

Multispectral imaging undertaken by British Museum Scientist Joanne Dyer has revealed the text of all three hands more clearly using Infrared-reflected false colour (IRRFC) and Ultraviolet-induced visible luminescence (UVL) (Fig 2 UVL). In particular, hand one is not 'clumsy, and slightly ligatured', as originally described, but a swift and confident semi-cursive script, probably an administrative text, which future research may decipher.

The Abraham appearing in line 56 is probably Abraham, Bishop of Hermonthis/Ermont (r. c. 590–620), who established the Monastery of the holy martyr Phoibammon on the ruins of the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri. Both the foundation document in which the 'deserted' (*eremos*) land is granted (PKRU 105) and Abraham's own last will and testament in which the same property is transmitted to his heir, the abbot and priest Victor (P.Lond. 77), survive on papyrus documents now in the Coptic Museum (Cairo) and British Library (London), respectively. As a result of Egypt Exploration Society excavations at the turn of the 20th century, the British Museum holds hundreds of ostraca from the site, some of which are to, from, or reference the Bishop Abraham.

The collection
Conserving a late antique wall-painting

Elisabeth R. O'Connell

Curator, Department of Egypt and Sudan

Tracey Sweek

Conservator: Stone, Wall Paintings and Mosaics,
 Department of Collections Care

Stephanie Vasiliou

Conservator: Stone, Wall Paintings and Mosaics,
 Department of Collections Care

When this famous 6th-century AD wall-painting was taken off display due to conservation needs in 2017, we knew quite a lot about it thanks to research undertaken as part of a British Museum research project, *Wadi Sarga at the British Museum*. Discovered in the last days of the excavation in 1914, it was found at a 'villa' located 2.5km to the north of the site itself, as R. Campbell Thompson sought Coptic textiles for the Museum. Campbell Thompson traced the painting in situ at a 1:1 scale, before attempting to remove them. Conserved and published immediately after arriving at the Museum, it went on display in the Early Christian and Byzantine galleries.

In the British Museum conservation studio, the painting was fully assessed using a combination of visual examination and historical records. It quickly became apparent that all of the outer edges and a considerable portion of the iconographic details were 20th century restorations. Furthermore, it was also evident that a protective coating had been applied in 1955. This was confirmed with the use of technical imaging (ultraviolet-induced visible luminescence), which showed an orange fluorescence, suggestive of a shellac coating, further confirmed through Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR). This degraded coating and overpaint were responsible for the dark orange/brown colour observed, giving the object surface a glossy appearance.

After testing various methods for reducing the coating and overpaint, the erbium laser (Er:YAG) was found to be the most effective and efficient method. To determine the modern and original materials sensitivity to the laser radiation, Dr Lucia Pereira-Pardo analysed samples to identify their damage thresholds, allowing us to establish safe working parameters. As a result of this information, the treatment allowed selective removal or reduction of the modern materials, without causing damage to the original wall painting surface

We started by removing the coating and overpaint, which involved a pass with the laser, followed by swabbing with a conservation grade solvent. It was decided that the restorations should only be retained where they had been executed to a high quality, such as the faces of Saints Cosmas and Damian. By adjusting the lasers' working parameters, we were able to gradually reduce the overpaint in these areas, removing the darkened top layers. In contrast, the decision was made to completely remove the overpaint depicting the palm fronds around the edges of the painting and the feet of St Cosmas, as they had lost definition after multiple phases of retouching. Removal of the coating and overpaint also identified how much of the original surface was hidden beneath the restorations. For instance, a fragment by the left hand of St Damian was not visible until the modern material was removed. In exposing this piece, we uncovered the original

outline of his hand, discovering that the fragment had been misaligned, when the object was reconstructed.

Once the surface of the object had been treated, we then removed the heavy wooden backing. With help from the UV imaging, we were able to identify and utilise the original join lines, dismantling the painting in four parts. These panels were then secured to a new lightweight backing, with steel fixings and conservation grade resin, using pre-existing screw holes in the modern plaster. During this stage, voids beneath the panel depicting the 'Three Hebrews in the Fiery Furnace', were consolidated to stabilise the surface and the fills covering the painting were removed. This uncovered the original bevelled edge of this section, giving us an idea of how much higher this panel should be placed, in comparison to the rest of the painting, which was observed from the in situ photograph from the excavation.

The final stage of treatment to be completed is the retouching. This will again involve close consultation with the curator and archival material, to ensure a final result that is representative of the objects original purpose and current condition.

The provision of erbium laser equipment to undertake this work has been made possible through the generosity of Ed and Ann Teppo. For more information, visit www.britishmuseum.org/research/research_projects/all_current_projects/wadi_sarga.aspx



Painting (EA 73139) before conservation in 2016 (above) and after conservation in 2019.

Excavating the 'villa' in 1914.

Conservator, Stephanie Vasiliou, at work with the erbium laser.

The collection

Researching the Hogarth collection of artefacts from Asyut

Hannah Pethen

Former Project Curator, Department of Egypt and Sudan

During 1906–1907 David George Hogarth excavated the northwestern part of the necropolis of Asyut on behalf of the British Museum; nearly 600 artefacts and his excavation archive are now held in the Museum. Almost all of the tombs excavated by Hogarth were uninscribed and displayed a limited assemblage of grave goods, albeit ones typical for tombs of the First Intermediate Period and early Middle Kingdom. They therefore have the potential to illuminate the funerary habits of various strata of ancient Egyptian society, and reveal how artefacts were selected and grouped into practical funerary assemblages during this period.

Research into the Hogarth collection forms part of a larger project *Urban Development and Regional Identities in Middle Egypt* and is revealing new insights into early 20th century excavation methods and tomb assemblages of the First Intermediate Period and early Middle Kingdom. Recent research has focused on a small group of 19 pottery offering trays (sometimes called 'soul-houses') and their archaeological context, as indicated by Hogarth's records and the other artefacts found with them. The pottery offering trays were chosen because previous studies have assumed they were a cheap alternative to stone offering tables, associated with the lower strata of Egyptian society, but they have rarely been studied with due consideration for their archaeological context. The Hogarth collection provides a valuable opportunity to contextualise these artefacts and their associated tomb assemblages, because it was archaeologically excavated and both the artefacts and associated documentation are preserved and accessible.



Ceramic offering tray from Hogarth's excavations at Asyut (EA 46608).

Although the precise findspots of the artefacts were not recorded in most cases, Hogarth's relatively detailed records (at least for the early 20th century) made it possible to identify the tombs which produced offering trays and the other artefacts found with them. Inevitably a research project that began with offering trays rapidly evolved to encompass several other types of artefact found in the tomb assemblages; a probable early shabti, wooden models, statues, coffins and a large pottery corpus. A considerable amount of archival research was also undertaken, including the transcription of Hogarth's notebooks and letters and an analysis of his field pottery corpus. The research is ongoing but the evidence to date reveals that the use of pottery offering trays was more complex than previously thought. While some appear to have been supplied as alternatives to stone offering tables, others were in tombs with relatively high status artefacts. More complex examples may be precursors to the pottery 'soul-houses' from nearby Deir Rifeh.

The work is part of the Asyut Region Project led by Ilona Regulski, which is partly funded through an Institutional Links grant from the Newton-Mosharafa Fund, delivered by the British Council.

The collection

A study of hair and baldness in antiquity

Patricia Usick

Visiting Academic, Department of Egypt and Sudan

In October 2017 the British Museum was donated a glass-fronted wooden box with four compartments containing human hair samples from ancient mummies (EA 66890). The hand-written labels affixed to the box read:

*'Woman's hair IV Dynasty Meydum BC 2800'
'Hair of the Queen of Mentuhotep II Pharaoh of Egypt 2050 BC'
'Woman's hair from Badari Predynastic Egypt BC 3300'
'Negro Hair Abbasid Period Egypt AD 1000'*

The accompanying correspondence from several distinguished anatomists and ancient historians on the subject of hair and baldness in antiquity, dated to 1932 and 1933, is addressed to Mr W.J. Preston, of Stroud, Gloucestershire; perhaps a hairdresser or wigmaker. The material was later collected by Margaret Grew (1928–2016), a hairdresser married to a salesman of hair products, who gave the material to her cousin, our donor.

Eight of the letters are detailed replies from Sir John Linton Myres (1869–1954), a British archaeologist and Professor of Ancient History at the University of Oxford, to Preston's numerous and diverse queries. The nature of baldness and its depictions, whether arising from natural progression, inheritance, or as a result of disease, baldness in women and whether more common in certain races, are discussed in depth.

On Myres' suggestion, Preston contacted Douglas Derry (1874–1961), a British anatomist and anthropologist, Professor of Anatomy at the School of Medicine, Cairo, who had carried out the first examination of the mummy of Tutankhamun in 1923. On 2 May 1933 Derry wrote:

'I am sending you some specimens of hair from Egyptians of different periods. That of the queen 2050 B.C. was in numerous small plaits exactly similar to the method now practised in Nubia. This queen was almost certainly Nubian both from her skull and from the fact that she is represented on her sarcophagus as brown not yellow as an Egyptian woman is painted.'

John Taylor immediately identified this queen from burials at the Temple of Mentuhotep II in Deir el Bahri as Aashait (Ashayet); as can be seen in her image on her coffin.

Both Derry and Myres' remarks reflect the prevalent racial stereotyping ideas of the day. Derry added that:

'It happens that all the samples are from women, chiefly because women did not shave their heads, but occasionally we get immense shocks of hair on men. This was notably the case in sixty soldiers of the same date and from the same place as the queen 2050 BC. In fact they were believed by the excavators to be women owing to the quantity and length of their hair until I examined them and found every one to be a man. They had all been killed either by arrows or blows on the head.'

Two other letters are from Henri Gauthier, Director-General of the Service des Antiquités, Cairo, regarding the hair of two statues in their collection, one showing a shaven head, one with natural hair, and from Wallis Budge, Keeper of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities at the British Museum, stating that 'Egyptians of all periods shaved the head for coolness, and wore wigs made of hair fastened on to some light groundwork' and discussing the use of wigs and false beards.



Correspondence (AES Ar.2085).
The box of hair samples, EA 66890.

The collection
Korean print of the Rosetta Stone

Eleanor Soo-ah Hyun
 Curator: Korean Collections

Nam June Paik (1932–2006) was a pioneering Korean experimental artist who is recognised as the father of video art. Drawing inspiration from the Rosetta Stone, he created this print in 1995 entitled *Key to the Highway*. Paik likely saw the Rosetta Stone at the British Museum in 1988, if not before, when he was in London for his exhibition at the Hayward Gallery.

Born in Seoul, Paik and his family immigrated to Japan in 1950 to escape the Korean War and obtained a degree in aesthetics and musicology in Tokyo. In 1956 Paik went to West Germany to study experimental music where he met and collaborated with various Fluxus artists, before moving to New York City in 1964. Acknowledging the importance of new media, Paik was not only an early adapter, but also a prognosticator of the digital revolution and the internet, which is made evident in this print. Paik ingeniously updates the Rosetta Stone to reflect the roles that images, language, and mass media played in transforming contemporary society. The top section of Paik's Rosetta Stone is comprised of symbols such as hearts, diamonds, clocks, and planets; in their repetition and bright colours they resemble the emojis that are used today. The multilingual text in the centre consists of phrases from the five languages that Paik spoke: Korean, Japanese, German, French, and English. The television monitors contain images of his video works. Revealing his sharp wit, Paik entitled this print *Key to the Highway* as a nod to the term 'electronic superhighway', which he is credited with coining in 1974 for telecommunications. Understanding the significance of the Rosetta Stone in deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphs and unlocking our understanding of the ancient world, Paik recognised that the telecommunication revolution would forge new methods of interconnection and communication, which would open up the world in an unprecedented manner. As he famously declared: 'the future is now.'

'Key to the Highway' will be on display in the Korea Foundation Gallery (Room 67) from 24 July 2019 to 26 January 2020.



Key to the Highway (1995) by Nam June Paik (1932–2006), intaglio and silkscreen print (Asia 2017,3066.1).

The Rosetta Stone, 196 BC (EA 24).



The collection

An Egyptian icon of the early 21st century in the collection



Neal Spencer

Keeper of Nile Valley and Mediterranean Collections

As the Champions League final between Real Madrid and Liverpool approached in May 2018, the British Museum was offered the Adidas football boots of Egyptian superstar Mohamed Salah. Why would the Museum consider such an acquisition?

As a Museum we do not only collect ancient cultures but objects that tell the story of human experience across the last two million years. This extends to objects made during the 21st century, including from England, Australia, Japan, or Egypt. In the last three years we have completed a project, led by Mohamed Elshahed, to create a collection that reflects the materiality of day to day life in 20th and 21st century Egypt. From magazines to sewing machines, radio sets to street signs, product packaging to photographs, these objects allow us to portray modern Egypt as something other than orientalist, exotic and traditional (see p.9).

The boots of Mohamed Salah allowed a very different perspective on this same Egypt. An Egyptian who had become world-famous due to his televised exploits while playing for Liverpool, he scored 17 goals for the team during the 2018/2019 English Premier League; he was also held dear in Egypt itself. His image remains ubiquitous in TV adverts or on billboards lining the busy roads into Cairo. On the street, murals were painted next to downtown Cairo cafes, and he was designated by nicknames that referenced the pharaonic past, such as 'pharaoh' or 'the 4th pyramid'. The boots, of course,

also embody multinational sports business, sponsorship, globalisation, fame and how this could be interpreted and refashioned on the streets of a city like Cairo. And as with so many of the objects in the collection, they were very much used. Scuff marks below the hand-stitched 'Salah' and Egyptian flag reflect that they were worn by Salah, as he scored a goal against Manchester City, in Liverpool's 4–3 victory at Anfield on 18 January 2018.

A brief display of the boots in May and June – during the UEFA Champions League final and throughout the World Cup – brought new audiences to the Museum – some in full Liverpool kit! Posts on social media received some of the highest levels of interaction ever witnessed by the Museum, reflecting fascination with Salah, football and why the Museum would acquire such an object. In the Egyptian media, debate raged as to whether this was an insult to Egypt's ancient cultures, or a refreshing representation of Egypt in the UK: something different from mummies, pharaonic statues and news about modern politics.

The boots are now part of the registered collection, which could not occur until a conservation assessment had confirmed the polyurethane, cellulose acetate and metallic paint are not likely to degrade over time. As with all objects that enter the collection, the Museum is committed to ensure their preservation and accessibility for future generations.

The Museum is grateful to Adidas for their donation of the football boots.

Football boots worn by Mohamed Salah on 18 January 2018 (EA 95151).

The collection

Rediscovery of a group of 'abnormal hieratic' papyri

Adrienn Almásy-Martin

Former Curator of written culture (2018),
Department of Egypt and Sudan

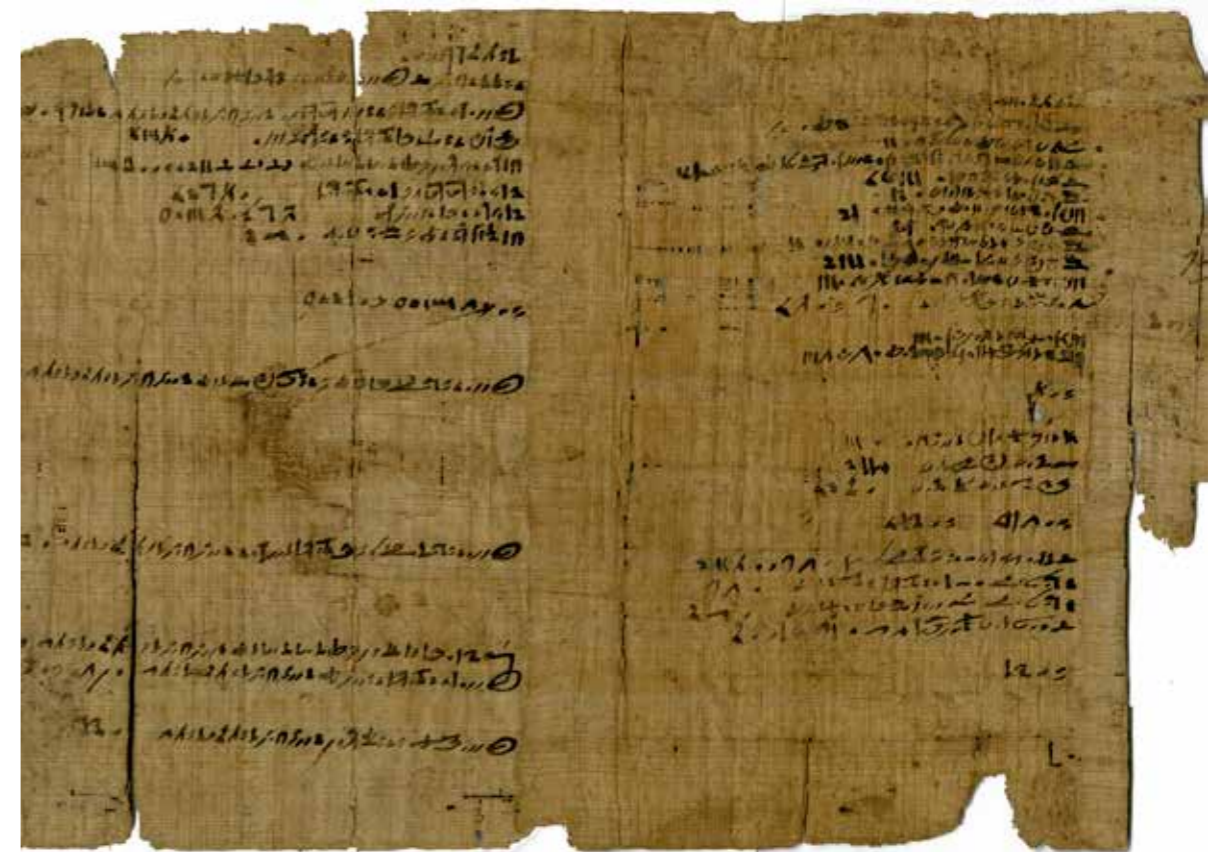
Petra Hogenboom

University of Leiden

The British Museum's papyrus collection consists of approximately 3,300 papyri with texts written mainly in different types of Egyptian scripts: hieroglyphic, hieratic, demotic and Coptic. Late cursive hieratic, also known as abnormal hieratic, represents the latest phase in the development of hieratic writing and originated in the south of Egypt. It was only in use for a relatively short period, between around 725 and 535 BC. Texts in this script are comparatively rare and there were only seven examples housed in the British Museum, but nine other frames have just been identified during my improvement of records on the Museum's catalogue MI+. Originally catalogued (EA 10798) and mounted together in 1962, they had remained unstudied and their significance had not been recognised. It remains unknown when and by whom these papyri were originally brought to the British Museum.

The fragments are well preserved and three were definitely part of the same papyrus roll; the whole group may originally have come from the same place or from a larger archive. Based on the features of the script, as well as various preserved regnal years, it is likely that they date to the reign of Psamtek I (664–610 BC). One important feature of the find is that a number of the fragments have 'abnormal hieratic' script on one side, but 'regular' hieratic on the other, showing the parallel use of the two scripts: cursive 'abnormal' hieratic for documentary texts and more 'classical' hieratic for religious compositions. The 'abnormal hieratic' fragments are mostly accounts, simply giving titles and names, followed by numbers indicating some kind of division.

Due to the complexity and the length of the material the study and publication require a collaboration of specialists working on hieratic and 'abnormal hieratic' scripts. An international group of Egyptologists including Petra Hogenboom (University of Leiden) and Joachim Quack (Heidelberg University) has recently started work on this unusual group of papyri, which will give important insights in understanding the development of 'abnormal hieratic'.



'Abnormal hieratic' script on papyrus originally catalogued in 1962 (EA 10798)

In Egypt
Exploring context and collaboration



Neal Spencer
Keeper of Nile Valley and Mediterranean Collections

Hartwig Fischer, Director of the British Museum, visited Egypt in early April 2018. The first aim of the journey was to see the monumental and landscape contexts related to the British Museum Egyptian collection, to inform how the Museum might redisplay its pharaonic collections in the coming years. From the Ramesseum to the tomb of Seti I in the Valley of the Kings, to the streets of New Kingdom tombs at Saqqara or the Ramesside temples at Abydos, we were welcomed by colleagues – Egyptian and international – who could provide perspectives from the latest archaeological research.

A second purpose of the visit was to see first-hand the collaborations taking place between the Museum and colleagues in Egypt, principally with the Ministry of Antiquities. In addition to formally opening the Egyptian Museum exhibition *Egypt on Glass*, with the Minister of Antiquities Dr. Khaled el-Enany, Hartwig co-hosted a gathering of International Training Programme fellows at the British Embassy, with Deputy Ambassador Helen Winterton. Several International Training Programme fellows work at the Grand Egyptian Museum, where we were welcomed by Director General Tarek Tawfik, to see the expansive galleries which will soon house the Tutankhamun collection.

In Upper Egypt, we were shown around Shubt by Ilona Regulski, to learn about archaeological findings on the complex history of this ancient city. Heba Shama (representing Takween Integrated Community Development) then led us on a walking tour of the modern town, which sits above the ancient remains. Here we saw the work to document vernacular architecture, and the community engagement projects now underway (pages 30–31).

Many thanks are due to the Ministry of Antiquities for facilitating the visit.

Hartwig Fischer in the Egyptian Museum Archive, discussing trainees' work on digitising historic glass plate photographs.

In Egypt
Capturing Egypt on Glass

Sara Kayser
Formerly Project Curator: Egypt Documentation Project, Department of Egypt and Sudan

In 2017, at the request of the Ministry of Antiquities, the Egypt Documentation Project, generously funded by Arcadia – a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, began a major digitisation and preservation initiative. Its aim was to preserve the information stored in two archives, which between them contain more than 50,000 glass negatives spanning nearly 100 years of photography and archaeology in Egypt.

In addition to the important task of digitising the glass negatives, the project also provided a rare opportunity for the staff of the two archives to highlight the importance of their work and the material they care for through the exhibition *Capturing Egypt on Glass: Photographic Treasures from the Ministry of Antiquities Archives* in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The exhibition was inaugurated by the Minister of Antiquities, Dr. Khaled Al-Enany, and the British Museum director Hartwig Fischer on 1 April 2018.

The displays covered five main themes – archaeology, conservation, daily life and photographic processes – which were illustrated by items carefully selected by the project team.

At the centre of the exhibition was a wooden camera made in Germany in the 1920s. This may have been used by the University of Cairo archaeological team working in Maadi from 1930–1953 to capture the excavation on glass negatives. Surrounding this display were cases with glass plates gently lit from below. While they represented only a fraction of what is available in the archives, visitors were given a rare glimpse of the range and quality of the collections.

Among the highlights were a view of the Karnak temple captured by the well-known Italian-British photographer Antonio Beato (active in Egypt 1862–1906) and a portrait of Alfred Lucas, a British conservator who worked with Howard Carter in the tomb of Tutankhamun. The fascinating scenes of daily life in Egypt, taken by Gabriel Lekegian, an Armenian photographer established in Istanbul and Cairo at the turn



of the last century, were probably staged for the camera. This was a necessity as exposure times were long and any movement would disturb the clarity of a scene. Nonetheless, they provide a unique glimpse into the life in Egypt at the time.

In contrast to Lekegian's arranged scenes some of the more vivid images are seen in photographs capturing life on excavations at the turn of the last century. Scenes of workers lifting heavy sarcophagi out of tombs in Giza and of fun and games after a hard day's work in Amarna are unique moments of excavations rarely seen in scientific publications.

On display from the archive in the Egyptian Museum were views of the galleries and displays as they were at different stages of the building's history, as well as snapshots of curators, artists and other staff working in the museum. The oldest negative exhibited is of the Boulaq Museum, taken by Émile Béchard Bechard in the 1860s for the *Boulaq Album*, a catalogue of souvenir photographs. Interestingly, the subject of the negative, a view of one of the galleries, seems at first to be the negative of a photographic print found in the *Album*, but at closer comparison some subtle differences show that this version of the view was in fact never published. To illustrate this discovery, the negative was displayed with an original copy of the *Boulaq Album* from the Egyptian Museum library.

The Egypt Documentation Project was generously supported by Arcadia – a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin. Thanks are due to the Ministry of Antiquities, and staff at the Egyptian Museum (Cairo) for installing the exhibition, which was on display from 1 April to 31 July 2018.



View of exhibition in the Egyptian Museum (Cairo).

Camera on display with various photographic equipment from c. 1920s. Photographs: Ibrahim Abdelfattah (2018).

In Egypt A history of Asyut through objects



Heba Abd el-Gawad

Former Project Curator, Department of Egypt and Sudan

Heba Shama

Chevening fellow, London School of Economics and Political Science

Ilona Regulski

Curator of Egyptian Written Culture, Department of Egypt and Sudan

The British Museum project in the Asyut region aims to appeal to local interests and supports that through deploying methodologies drawn from archaeology and heritage preservation. In an attempt to reconnect communities in the Asyut region with their heritage and establish a link with the British Museum, the 'make stone speak' card game was developed using objects from Asyut housed in the British Museum, the Manchester Museum and the Museo Egizio in Turin. Reflecting the full span of history, the game's purpose is to let objects speak and reanimate the many captivating stories of ancient and modern Asyut. Produced in Egyptian colloquial Arabic, the game is intended to entertain and educate. By bringing objects exhibited internationally to local communities, young generations are encouraged to make their own links with the past and explore how this past can feature in their present.

Following a scoping exercise of Egyptian national curricula and local social and cultural interests, the game was designed to address four themes: daily life, professions, afterlife, and rituals. Each theme is represented by four cards and introduced by questions related to the bigger social and cultural traditions the game attempts



to address. The front of the card shows an ancient Egyptian object. On the back, a graphic impression and an engaging tagline taken from more recent popular culture, make objects memorable and create links with people's lives today. A detailed object description and a set of reflective questions follow. The description attempts to trace developments of social and cultural phenomena until present-day while the questions act as talking points encouraging discussions about the object's meaning and their response to ancient and modern needs and aspirations. Directions of how to play the game and a timeline are provided for ease of use. Finally, a 'how to search for Asyut objects in online collections databases' guide ensures the game has a sustained impact.

For example; the theme 'Professions' features a wooden male figure with a mattock dated to the Middle Kingdom (2100 BC). The object allowed us to address the high percentage of community members working in agriculture and the social stigma of the profession. On the back, a modern axe visualises the profession again while Mohammed Abd el Wahab's (1902–1991) classical but widely-popular song is used as a tagline: 'What a wonderful life farmers lead!'. The text focuses on the development and persistence of ancient Egyptian farming tools and crops. Questions seek to emphasise the importance of farming and the need to enhance appreciation of the profession.

The cards were printed with the support of an Institutional Links grant of the Newton-Mosharafa Fund delivered by the British Council, and can be downloaded at britishmuseum.org/research/research_projects/all_current_projects/asyut_urban_development



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أما، المتحف البريطاني



محلانا عيشة الفلاح

تمثال خشبي مطلي لرجل يحمل فأس
المتحف البريطاني
قطعة رقم - EA45195
ارتفاع التمثال : 33 سم

تفتكر إيه مهنته؟ إيه الأداة اللي بيستخدمها؟

هل المهنة دي لسه موجودة؟ هل أدواتها اختلفت عن زمان؟

هل المهنة دي مهمة حالياً؟ ليه؟

تفتكر صاحبها متقدر في المجتمع؟ لو هتكرم صاحب المهنة دي في شطب، هتختار مين؟ هتكرمه إزاي؟

النيل ومواسم فيضانه وفرت للمصري القديم التربة الخصبة والمواعيد الثابتة لتطوير نظام زراعة موسمية. النظام الزراعي في مصر القديمة وفر محاصيل غذائية أساسية مثل القمح والشعير ومحاصيل صناعية مثل القطن والبردي. طريقة وأدوات زراعة مصر القديمة مماثلة بشكل كبير للطرق الحالية. التمثال هنا مثلاً بيوضح أول مرحلة في الزراعة وهي عزق الأرض بالفأس قبل حرثها بمحاريت تجرها الثيران، تمام زي الفلاح المصري الأصلي حالياً.

In Egypt
Museum interpretation in Aswan



Claire Messenger
International Training Programme Manager

In May 2016 a two-day conference, *Archaeology in Egypt and Sudan: Opportunities for Future Collaboration*, was held in Cairo, Egypt. Over the two days ideas were shared about how Egyptian and Sudanese archaeological institutions might work together in the future. The International Training Programme (ITP) supported two fellows from Sudan and one British Museum member of staff to attend. To follow up on some of the outcomes of the conference an ITP+ Course was held at the Nubia Museum, Aswan, in October 2018. The course focused on *Museum interpretation*: the tools such as labels, panels and digital information that help visitors understand the displays. It provided an opportunity for Egyptian and Sudanese museum professionals and colleagues from around the world to share skills and knowledge through panel discussions, presentations and project work.

The British Museum selected 12 ITP fellows from four countries (India, Uganda, Egypt and Sudan) to attend and help facilitate the course. We were also delighted to welcome to the workshop 13 further participants from six museums selected by the Ministry of Antiquities (Egypt), which ensured that the learnings from the workshop and the ITP were cascaded to a wider range of colleagues in Egypt.

The course comprised a series of seminars, creative workshops, practical working groups and a panel discussion with support from colleagues from the British Museum, Manchester Museum and the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology. Following presentations and a series of interpretation-based case studies from UK facilitators and our Indian and Ugandan fellows, participants were tasked with project work using the

Nubia Museum as a case study. This included label- and panel-writing, creating an 'Object in focus' display, and conceiving a gallery tour. A panel discussion led by UK facilitators closed the workshop, exploring audience surveys and evaluation methods.

As expressed by Norhan Hassen Salem, a Registrar in the Egyptian Museum (Cairo, ITP Fellow 2017), 'the best thing about the course is how it embraced academic sessions and practical work.'

This project was made possible through the generous support of the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust and the Ministry of Antiquities (Egypt). We are grateful to the Nubia Museum for hosting the workshop from 23 to 26 October 2018.



Workshop participants outside the Nubia Museum, Aswan.

Huzoor Choudhry (India, ITP Fellow 2018) and Amani Mohamed (Sudan, ITP Fellow 2013) working on interpretation tasks during the workshop.

In Egypt
British Museum excavations at Naukratis



Ross Thomas
Curator, Department of Greece and Rome
Aurélia Masson-Berghoff
Project Curator: Naukratis, Department of Greece and Rome

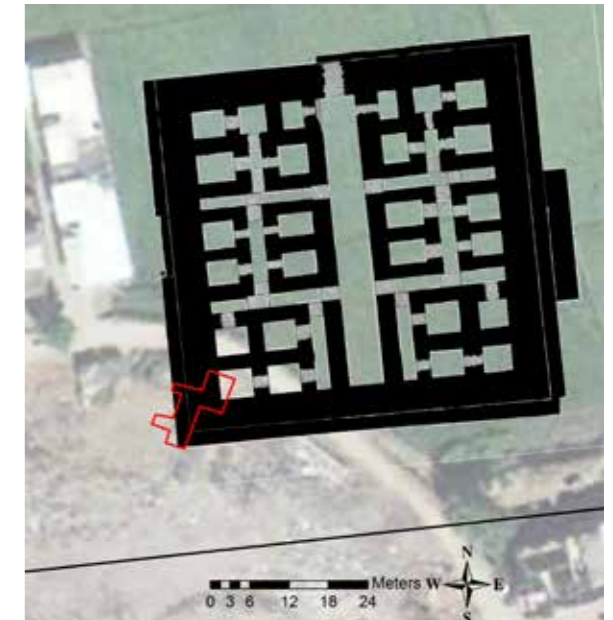
The port of Naukratis, founded during the 26th Dynasty in the late 7th century BC, was the earliest, and for a period the only, Greek port in Egypt. Excavations in October 2018, the sixth season, concentrated in three areas:

- 1) The eastern area of the 'Hellenion', in the Greek sanctuary precinct to the north of the settlement.
- 2) The river front to the west of the site.
- 3) The 'South Mound' in the south-western corner of sanctuary of Amun Ra ('Great Temenos').

The fieldwork was carried out with the assistance of local Ministry of Antiquities inspectors who were trained in the use of the survey equipment, excavation supervising, recording and finds processing.

In the northern part of the dried-up lake, excavations complemented those undertaken in 2014–2016 which revealed parts of the western side (wall and gateway) of the Hellenion and adjacent Dioskouroi (Greek) sanctuaries. Three new trenches located for the first time the 10.9m-wide eastern mudbrick boundary wall of the Hellenion sanctuary, which was built directly on top of sterile soil, 2m below the surface. The wall was abutted by a sequence of surfaces from its founding at the end of the 7th century BC, followed by 4th century BC and early 1st century BC surfaces. To the east of this sanctuary lie the remains of a housing area.

In the (north-)western part of the site, a single trench was opened to discover the earliest phases of the Canopic branch of the Nile river bank of Naukratis and thus to complement the work of previous seasons (2015–2016) in this area which had uncovered stretches of the late 6th through to 3rd century BC river bank, yielding abundant finds. A stratigraphic sequence from 500 BC back to the late 7th century BC was revealed, when human activity is first apparent on the virgin soil. The steeply sloping mud



Trench S8 at southwestern room of casemate building. Photograph: Jeffrey Spencer.

Trench S8 marked in red with Flinders Petrie's original plan overlaid on a Google Earth image of the area.

bank consolidated with plaster, pottery sherds and rubble lies immediately to the west of the Greek sanctuary of Hera. This sequence provides a unique insight into trade between Egypt, Greece, East Greece and the previously underestimated trade contacts with Cyprus. Trade amphorae (from Cyprus, Chios, Klazomenae, Miletos, Lesbos and Corinth), fine lamps and table wares, some carrying graffiti, attest to this trade.

Excavations in the 'South Mound' were able to reveal further internal and external edges of the 17m-wide southern temenos wall of the great Amun-Ra sanctuary of Naukratis, complementing work started in 2013 and 2016. Magnetometry undertaken in 2016 had re-located a casemate store structure first discovered by Flinders Petrie in 1884, but thought to have been lost to agriculture already by the time a subsequent excavation directed by David Hogarth began working at the site in 1899. The 7m-wide external walls and a part of the southwestern room of the building was excavated revealing a construction technique using large alternating mud- and sand-bricks with a row of wooden beams added through the wall as a supporting feature, consistent with other Saite buildings in the Delta, particularly those of Psamtik I, under whom Naukratis is thought to have been founded. The room was filled with pottery that can be dated to the end of the 7th or early 6th century BC. The now securely ascertained location of the temenos enclosure makes it clear that this area was once part of the sanctuary of Amun-Ra, containing, besides the main temple, a complex of magazines and priests' houses.

The 2018 season has produced significant new data on the layout of ancient Naukratis, its local environment, as well as important stratigraphic, dating and topographic evidence for its earliest phases. The wealth of data gathered now requires careful processing before results can be published.

British Museum fieldwork at Naukratis is generously supported by the Honor Frost Foundation. For more, visit britishmuseum.org/research/research_projects/all_current_projects/naukratis_the_greeks_in_egypt



Julie Anderson
Curator, Department of Egypt and Sudan
Francesca Guiducci
Freelance Archaeological Conservator

Archaeology requires forward planning and the cultivation of patience. This certainly has been the situation at Dangeil where an Amun temple dated to the 1st century AD is being explored. While excavating the temple's monumental fired brick gate in 2015, part of a wall painting was discovered. It was painted on lime plaster and situated on the northern pylon inside the peristyle court. As the excavation was coming to a close, it was not fully exposed and was covered for protection to await future work. Excavations on the gate continued in following seasons and in 2017, plans were made to conserve the painting.

The scene depicted is a repeating frieze of lotus flowers consisting of an open blossom, followed at a lower level by a bud in the process of emerging, then by a flower in the process of opening. The flowers and register lines were painted in yellow, red and blue pigments on white lime plaster. The red and yellow were ochres, while the blue was the man-made pigment, Egyptian blue. The image formed part of the lowest register on the wall. Red painted lines to guide the artist underlie the picture and at some point, part of the right side of the painting was burnt. Measuring approximately 90cm by 120cm, this is one of the largest Kushite wall painting fragments discovered in situ in a non-funerary context, and it sheds light on the decorative programme the Kushites employed within their temples.

Conservation of the painting, culminating in its removal from the pylon wall, commenced in autumn 2018. Because of its unstable condition, the wall painting required immediate attention after having been fully exposed. Its survival in

situ was threatened by the detachment of plaster layers in several areas (both between the second and first plaster layers, and between the first layer and the wall) and by the volatility of the pigments. More crucial in the decision to detach the painting was the state of the wall face itself. It was structurally unstable, completely detached from its core, and partially collapsed.

Technical operations carried out on site comprised cleaning and pre-consolidation of the paint layer, followed by the placement of a protective facing on the painted surface, and then finally its detachment from the wall; the latter undertaken by hitting the plaster at its base with long metal bars inserted between the wall and the painting. The reverse side of the painting was then consolidated and covered in a layer of hydraulic lime mortar, which was left to carbonate for 20 days. Three layers of carbon fibre textile of different weights were applied with bi-component epoxy resin, and bars of Aerolam (aluminium honeycomb panel) were inserted as further support in critical areas, as well as to prevent flexion. Finally, after a series of operations that lasted over a month, the painting was successfully un-faced and lacunae filled with lime mortar.

Detachment is always a risky and destructive operation; however it is justified by the impossibility of ensuring a painting's preservation in situ, for reasons ranging from instability of the structural support and extreme weather conditions, to anthropogenic factors such as vandalism and theft. In this case, the challenge was increased by working conditions on site and by the limited availability of conservation supplies. While some materials were imported from Europe, mainly items for the structural support (hydraulic lime, carbon fibre and Aerolam), the remaining supplies, such as epoxy resin as well as all tools, were sourced locally. The results were both effective and



appropriate. Thanks to our Sudanese colleagues, the detachment was also an occasion to further explore the local availability of materials, knowledge of which will be extremely useful for increasing the sustainability of future conservation operations at Dangeil.

Since 2013, fieldwork at Dangeil, a project of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (Sudan) in cooperation with the British Museum, has been funded through the Qatar-Sudan Archaeological Project, the Institute for Bioarchaeology and the generous support of Dr D. Bird and Mr A. Giambone.

Follow Julie on Twitter: @Amesemi

In Sudan Archaeological conservation at Amara West

Luciana Carvalho

Adrian Condie Fellow, Freelance Archaeological Conservator

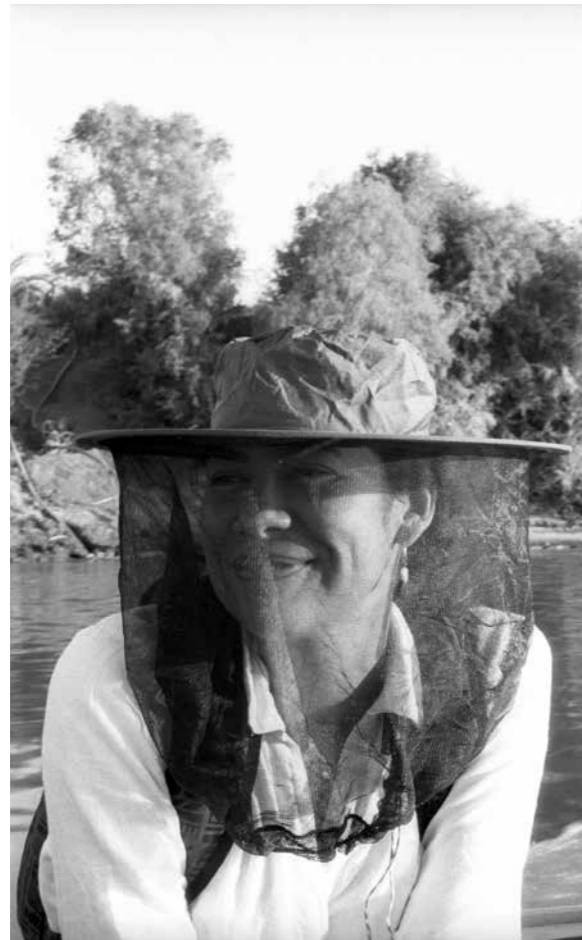
I joined the 2018 study season at Amara West in mid-January. Having worked in the UK, Egypt and Jordan I was thrilled about the opportunity to work for a British Museum mission and to travel to Sudan for the first time. At the end of the 2017 study season, hieroglyphs and other decorations were found on fragments of a wooden coffin using a luminescence imaging technique that captured the glow of Egyptian Blue pigment under LED light. My job was to try to uncover more hieroglyphs that could help identify the coffin's owner.

The coffin fragments were covered with a layer of sand that had stuck to the adhesive used for their consolidation during excavation. The aim of the conservation treatment was to reveal more traces of blue pigment that may be preserved underneath the sand layer. As the pigment was practically invisible to the naked eye and the plaster substrate very fragile each grain of sand had to be carefully removed, with the help of a solvent. Progress was evaluated in the evenings when the best conditions (low light) could be achieved for photographing the fragments. It was a slow and challenging process requiring input from the finds specialist Manuela Lehmann, in the acquisition and processing of images to enable the identification of areas for further investigation the following day. Although more pigmented areas were revealed not enough hieroglyphic signs forming the title or name of the deceased had survived.

I also worked on a range of objects that required cleaning, reconstruction and repackaging. The overall aim of these interventions was to stabilise the objects to facilitate their study and analysis. A particularly rewarding treatment was the recovery of painted plaster amidst previously consolidated fragments of a mummy mask. Similar to a micro-excavation, the treatment comprised of the careful removal of sand crusts with a solvent to reveal decorated fragments that could then be put together, like a puzzle. An important aspect of my work was the transfer of conservation skills as I supported the finds specialist in the study of a mummified remain, which involved the consolidation of human bones.

During my time in Sudan I interacted with a range of specialists, exchanging experiences, learning about their field of expertise and promoting awareness of conservation and archaeological science. As the topic of my PhD is the recovery of organic residues from metal surfaces I have a particular interest in excavation and find processing archival practices that could interfere with the scientific potential of objects. On Fridays we visited other sites, some unexcavated, others developed for tourism. Experiences like these are fundamental to my continuous professional development as an archaeological conservator and scientist.

The Adrian Condie Fellowship generously supports the participation of a PhD student in British Museum fieldwork in Egypt or Sudan. The fieldwork at Amara West is made possible through funding from the Qatar-Sudan Archaeological Project.



Luciana on the boat from Amara West to the dig house. Photograph: Elisabeth Sawerthal.

In the UK The International Training Programme



Claire Messenger

International Training Programme Manager

The 2018 summer programme took place from 2 July to 10 August when the British Museum and its eleven partner museums across the UK welcomed 23 fellows from 17 countries. Through sharing knowledge, skills and experiences, the ITP is working to create and promote a sustainable global network of museum and heritage professionals. For six weeks over the summer, the 2018 cohort were provided with a detailed overview of all aspects of the Museum's work, both front of house and behind the scenes.

This summer the Department of Egypt and Sudan hosted four participants on the Programme: Rana Ramadan Mahmoud from Alexandria National Museum and Bassem Mohammed Ezzat from the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo were joined by Huyam Khalid Mohammed Madani and Sarah Abdolattif Elsheekh Mohammed Elbasheer, both from the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums, Sudan.

Departmental time was spent connecting the ITP fellows with curators and collections and included a tour of Blythe House where the textile collection of the British Museum is housed; general introductions to the library and study

room and comprehensive tours through the different store rooms, galleries and the archive collection. Time was also spent sharing information on the various projects and programmes being worked on in the department and colleagues gave insight into their work, including *Circulating Artefacts*, the Modern Egypt Project and the Amara West Project. The participants were also able to attend the Annual Egyptological Colloquium at the British Museum which this year focused on Displaying Egypt, whilst discussing many aspects of museum work throughout the UK and Egypt.

Having taken part in the ITP Summer Programme, fellows become part of an active network in which they can participate and collaborate in the future. The programme continues to provide further training, research and developmental opportunities and this year has supported 11 ITP fellows from Egypt and Sudan to take part in further courses, workshops, conferences and collaborations.

The programme would not be possible without the generous support of many institutions and individuals. A full list of those who have sponsored the ITP since its inception in 2006 is available at britishmuseum.org and in each year's report. For further information on sponsors or how to support the ITP, email development@britishmuseum.org

Sarah Elbasheer in discussion with Ali Al Kathiri, Director of The Museum of the Frankincense Land, Oman, during one of the ITP sessions.

In the UK
Displaying Egypt



Neal Spencer
Keeper of Nile Valley and Mediterranean Collections

Egypt has been fundamental in shaping the form of the British Museum today, not least with the arrival of monumental sculptures in the early 19th century, prompting the need for a grandiose new building, planned by Robert Smirke in 1823 and built throughout the ensuing decades. The Egyptian Sculpture Gallery, opened in 1834, remains an iconic space, while the upper galleries of smaller antiquities (first opened in 1838) remain enduringly popular, not least for the displays of mummies.

But how have museum displays of Egypt – at the British Museum and beyond – shaped how various audiences have perceived Egypt? This was the focus of this year's Annual Egyptological Colloquium, bringing together scholars, curators and historians from Egypt, Europe and North America. The following pages highlight two impacts of the British Museum displays. Firstly, how Victorian artists deployed 'everyday objects' displayed in the galleries within their paintings (Stephanie Moser, the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Distinguished Lecture in Egyptology). Secondly, how the iconic *Tutankhamun* exhibition of 1972 should be read within a geopolitical context, with a distinctively British hue to its presentation compared to the blockbuster show at other European or North American venues (Christina Riggs).

Other speakers explored the presence or absence of archaeological context in the great European Museums

such as Leiden (Lara Weiss) and Turin (Paolo del Vesco), trends in how the past is represented in regional museums, social media and other contemporary media in Egypt (Shreen Amin, Fatma Keshk, Heba Abdel Gawad). A session focused on 'circulating knowledge', with papers on orphaned collections and the post-World War II phenomenon of decluttering displays (Alice Stevenson), the Egypt Exploration Fund exhibitions in late 19th and early 20th century London (Alice Williams) and the negotiations on where Cleopatra's Needle should end up in London.

Human remains, and the ethics of their display, was explored through the lense of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris (Angela Stienne), the disconnect with recent scientific research (Sonia Zakrzewski) and through digital interfaces to better represent mummified persons as individuals with distinct biographies (Daniel Antoine and Marie Vandenbeusch). Shifting approaches to representing Egypt – from 19th-century displays to not-yet opened galleries – across the UK were interrogated by Margaret Maitland and Dan Potter (Edinburgh), Stephanie Boonstra (Leicester) and Ashley Cooke (Liverpool). The representation of later periods of Egyptian history, shaped by institutional frameworks, was the focus of papers on the Mamluk collections at the V&A (Moya Carey and Mercedes Volait) and modern Egypt as shown in Expos and museums (Mohamed Elshahed). The colloquium closed with a presentation by Tarek Tawfik on the Grand Egyptian Museum, Cairo, due to open in 2020.

Part of the Asahi Shimbun Displays *The past is present: Becoming Egyptian in the 20th century* (2018, see page 9).

Young visitors gaze into the Second Egyptian Room (perhaps 1980s), British Museum Archive.



In the UK

The engagement of Victorian artists with the Egyptian collection in the British Museum



Stephanie Moser

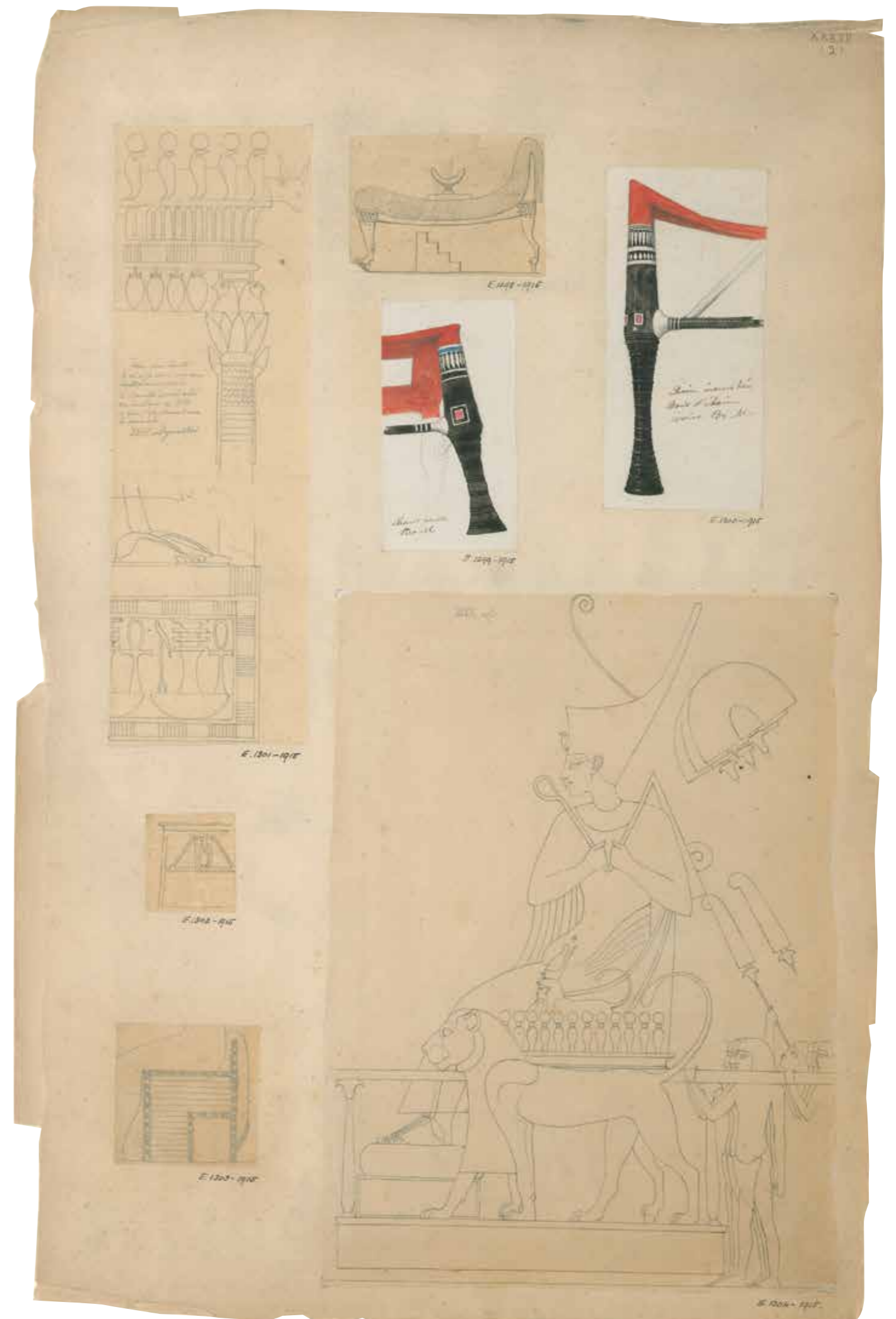
Professor of Archaeology, University of Southampton

Since opening in 1759 the British Museum has been a source of great inspiration to artists. Amongst these were the historicist painters working in Britain in the second half of the 19th century, known for their vivid evocations of the ancient world. Drawn to the collection of 'everyday' antiquities from ancient Egypt, Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836–1912), Edward Poynter (1836–1919) and Edwin Long (1829–1891) featured numerous British Museum objects in their pictures. Displayed in the new Egyptian Room opened in 1838 and the additional gallery opened soon after, the furniture, utensils and other domestic objects had a profound impact on the visual imagination of these artists. The Egyptian-themed paintings they exhibited at important venues such as the Royal Academy in London and which are displayed in art galleries around the world, represent an important response to Egyptian antiquities. Such images reveal that these artists did not simply use the Egyptian collection to add picturesque interest to their compositions or to bolster the historical veracity of their reconstructions but, rather, to try and understand ancient ancestors in new ways.

If not aware of the British Museum collection from their training, artists would have been alerted to the Egyptian material in the Museum from media reports, many of which were accompanied by engravings of the galleries. Drawings in Alma-Tadema's portfolios indicate that he copied Museum objects in detail, including the Egyptian inlaid stool which is prominently featured in his landmark painting *Pastimes in Ancient Egypt*. When Alma-Tadema moved to London in 1870 he drew even more closely upon the Museum's collection, meticulously reproducing Egyptian

objects in paintings such as *Egyptian Widow* (1872), *Death of the Firstborn* (1872), *Joseph, Overseer of Pharaoh's Granaries* (1874) and *The Meeting of Antony and Cleopatra* (1883). Poynter also regularly sketched in the Museum and when producing his series of Egyptian images in the 1860s he lived in very close proximity to it. His famous painting *Israel in Egypt* (1867) referenced objects in the Museum's Egyptian collection, as did his *Offering to Isis* (1866) and *Adoration to Ra* (1867). Long also lived in London and visited the Museum galleries as part of his preparation for his Egyptian works. His *Egyptian Feast* (1877), *God's and their Makers* (1878) and *Love's Labour Lost* (1885) feature numerous domestic items from the Egyptian galleries.

Of great appeal to Victorian artists were the decorative qualities and manufacturing skills exhibited in the wide array of Egyptian material on display. While artists were long accustomed to the practice of drawing antiquities in the Museum, frequently making copies of classical sculptures, the emphasis was primarily on the human form. From the middle of the 19th century an interest in sketching portable antiquities developed, where artists observed the form, decoration and details of manufacture in utilitarian objects such as furniture. Such items were embraced as exemplars for design and inspired the creation of new furniture based on Egyptian examples. Beyond their significance as a key reception 'event' in the history of Egyptology, the paintings of Alma-Tadema, Poynter and Long demonstrate that the artistic engagement with Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum was pronounced. A detailed account of this engagement is presented in *Painting Antiquity: ancient Egypt in the art of Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Edward Poynter and Edwin Long* (Oxford University Press, 2019).



Lawrence Alma-Tadema. *Pastimes in Ancient Egypt* (1863) Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston, UK.

Detail of portfolio drawing by Alma-Tadema, with study of stool in the British Museum collection. Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections, University of Birmingham.

In the UK
The 1972 *Treasures of Tutankhamun*
Exhibition: photographs, history, nostalgia



Christina Riggs

Professor of the History of Art and Archaeology, University of East Anglia and Two-Year Fellow, All Souls College, University of Oxford

Since I started researching the photographic archive formed during the 1920s excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb, many people have shared with me their memories of visiting the *Treasures of Tutankhamun* exhibition at the British Museum in 1972. Famously, visitors queued for hours around the forecourt, spilling out into Great Russell Street and beyond. Some 1.6 million people saw *Treasures* during its nine-month run, and it remains the most popular exhibition ever hosted at the Museum.

Anyone living in Britain in 1972 seems to remember the show, whether from personal experience or the extensive media coverage. Three things seem to have made the strongest impression: first, those queues; second, the dazzling gold mummy mask, spotlighted and alone in a dramatically darkened gallery; and third, a series of enlarged photographs from the excavation, which greeted visitors once they had passed the entrance turnstiles.

'The discovery of the tomb' was the theme of this photographic display, designed to channel visitors into the sequence of galleries presenting the fifty 'treasures' – one for each year since the tomb came to light in 1922, during work financed by the Fifth Earl of Carnarvon and led by Howard Carter. The photographs came from two sources: record photographs taken for Carter by Harry Burton, and snapshots probably taken by journalist Arthur Merton, who was on the scene to provide exclusive coverage for the *London Times*.

The Times was closely involved with the *Treasures* show as well, having been contracted by the Museum to manage the project. *The Times* journalist Peter Hopkirk drafted text to accompany the display of photographic enlargements – but in a memo to then-Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities I.E.S. Edwards, Museum designer Margaret Hall cautioned that Edwards might want to 'tone down some of the more sensational passages and substitute alternative adjectives' (AES Ar. 797, p. 477, dated 9 December 1971).

What were these photographs that inspired such 'sensational' text? Installation views show that they were a mix of newspaper snapshots – such as Lord Carnarvon at the official opening of the burial chamber, just weeks before his premature death – combined with Harry Burton's evocative images inside the seemingly untouched tomb. Burton was a Lincolnshire-born, Florence-based photographer employed by the Egyptian Expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Museum lent his services to Carter to get the best shots possible of the unprecedented find. Burton's photographs did much more than simply 'record' the discovery. They were instrumental in presenting it to the public, turning Carter into an archaeological hero and Tutankhamun into a dreamy, rather bland, boy-king.

Carter kept and catalogued Burton's negatives, which were eventually divided between the New York museum and the Griffith Institute at Oxford University. Both archives were important resources for the 1972 show, with its overt aim of commemorating Britain's role in the Tutankhamun discovery. Some history had to be forgotten, however, in order for the exhibition to take place at all. Not only had relations between Britain and Egypt, its one-time protectorate, been strained since the 1956 Suez Crisis and 1967 Arab-Israeli War, but also the Tutankhamun excavation itself had caused diplomatic difficulties. The discovery came just months after Britain sidestepped Egyptian demands for independence by instead declaring a halfway house that gave Egypt control of domestic affairs – including archaeology – but let Britain keep charge of Sudan and the Suez Canal. Carter clashed with Egypt's antiquities service over access to the tomb and the fate of its artefacts. He had underestimated the extent to which Egyptians would embrace Tutankhamun as one of their own and as a symbol of the country's rebirth after centuries of foreign rule.

By telling only the initial, triumphal tale of the 1922 discovery, *Treasures of Tutankhamun* swept Britain's imperial history in Egypt right under the carpet squares that lined the galleries. On the one hand, the photographic enlargements made that history visible, from the British dignitaries who attended the burial chamber opening, to



the Egyptian labourers who transported crated antiquities from the Valley of the Kings to the Nile – not to mention the Egyptian officials who oversaw the crates' shipment to Cairo. But on the other hand, without any historical contextualisation, the photographs encouraged a certain nostalgic view of the 'golden age' of archaeology, with pith helmets in place of Egypt's anti-colonial political struggles.

Christina Riggs is the author of Photographing Tutankhamun: Archaeology, Ancient Egypt, and the Archive (Bloomsbury, 2019) and Tutankhamun: The Original Photographs (Rupert Wace Ancient Art/Gower Press, 2017). For more visit photographing-tutankhamun.com

The ubiquity of photographs – especially famous photographs, as the Tutankhamun images have become – makes it all too easy to overlook the historical circumstances in which they were taken and circulated. Using photographs created under colonial and imperial conditions requires careful research and reflection, however. As the *Treasures of Tutankhamun* exhibition demonstrated, photographs make for a memorable viewing experience. But they also raise important questions about how Egyptology understands its own history, and how best to present that history in museums today.

Her Majesty the Queen at the opening of the *Treasures of Tutankhamun* exhibition, 29 March 1972. Contact print, British Museum archive.

Queuing for the *Tutankhamun* exhibition in the forecourt of the British Museum. British Museum Central Archive.

In the UK
The Barbara Mertz Bioarchaeology Laboratory



Daniel Antoine
 Curator of Bioarchaeology, Department of Egypt and Sudan

The British Museum curates one of the most important collections of ancient human remains from around the world, and their scientific study is revealing rarely accessible information about the people who inhabited the ancient world. Methods developed in physical anthropology, bioarchaeology and forensic science enable us to investigate past genetics, diet, diseases, life expectancy and burial practices, including the process of mummification. A laboratory dedicated to this research was opened in May 2018. It is named in honour of the celebrated American author and Egyptologist Barbara Mertz (1927–2013) who, under the pen name Elizabeth Peters, is best known for her historical mystery novels featuring Amelia Peabody. Barbara also authored two books on ancient Egypt, *Red Land, Black Land: Daily Life in Ancient Egypt* and *Temples, Tombs and Hieroglyphs*.



Researchers analysing skeletons in the new bioarchaeology laboratory.

The mummy supercomputer used to explore CT scans.

The Barbara Mertz Bioarchaeology Laboratory provides a new hub to continue and expand our bioarchaeological research programme. Over the past decade, the analysis of the human remains curated in the Department of Egypt and Sudan has provided new insights into the past inhabitants of the Nile Valley. Many of the department's 2,000 skeletons were recovered during the Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project by the Sudan Archaeological Research Society, and then donated to the British Museum with the approval of Sudan's National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums in 2007. Their study is allowing us to investigate how, over a period of several thousand years, changes in the environment, culture, diet and living conditions affected the inhabitants of the middle Nile valley, providing rare insights into the circumstances that have led to the emergence and spread of specific diseases.

The laboratory also houses a new supercomputer that allows us to visualise CT scans of the mummies – human and animal – curated at the Museum. Using powerful volumetric graphic software to produce detailed 3D visualisations of the body inside the wrappings, we can virtually peel away each tissue or structure to reveal their faces, skin, muscles, skeleton and internal organs, as well as the embalming materials used to preserve their remains. This approach has led to new scientific discoveries, some of which have been showcased in exhibitions and displays.

Alongside Collaborative Doctoral Award students researching specific aspects of the bioarchaeology collections, the Laboratory is open by appointment to external scholars seeking to study the human or animal remains housed at the British Museum.

The Barbara Mertz Bioarchaeology Laboratory was made possible with the support of the Institute for Bioarchaeology and the Wellcome Trust.

In the UK
Leatherworking in the ancient Nile Valley

Lucy Skinner
 Collaborative Doctoral Award student, British Museum and University of Northampton

My research is taking me into the amazing world of leather: ancient leather to be precise, from the Nile Valley. The aim of my project is to figure out the animal species used to produce the leather and pinpoint the methods employed to make this incredibly versatile material. I work with the British Museum collection and can avail of a huge suite of scientific equipment in the Museum's Department of Scientific Research. The latter includes multi-spectral imaging and reflectance transformation imaging in the imaging suite, optical and scanning electron microscopy as well as various instruments for molecular and elemental analysis. The leather tannery at the Institute of Creative Leather Technologies, part of the University of Northampton, offers me an unrivalled opportunity to gain a technological understanding of leather as a material and the practical experience to produce it. The University of Northampton has never collaborated with the British Museum before, so it has been a great chance for me, and my supervisors, to experience different academic perspectives.

To date, I have focused on creating robust methods and attempting to standardise techniques, for ascertaining animal species identification, using both traditional microscopy and ZooMS, a modern 'proteomic' technique. The traditional method for species identification, by examining hair follicle patterns under the microscope, can be quite subjective. For instance, the follicle pattern of deer skin has been described as looking like 'the sand ripples



on a beach' and the follicle pattern of goat skin as 'rows of pawprints'. On modern reference leather, follicle patterns can vary quite widely, even within one sheet of leather. With archaeological leather there is the added complication that the surface of the leather may be abraded or deteriorated, meaning that the follicle pattern isn't visible. My approach involves standardising techniques, for example measuring the diameter of hair follicle holes and counting their number in a known area and ensuring lighting conditions and angle and magnification are consistent for each sample, as well as building up a large collection of images, for comparison.

ZooMS is a method for species ID which was first developed by the BioArCh group at the University of York. It uses an enzyme to digest a microscopic sample of fibres, from a leather object, and break down the collagen (protein) which it contains, into amino acid peptides. A mass spectrometer is then used to detect the presence of peptides of certain masses in the sample, which are diagnostic for particular animal species. I have now analysed over 200 samples using ZooMS and by pairing these results with follicle pattern IDs, can begin to build a picture of which animal species were used to make different kinds of objects.

Ancient leather is an understudied field and it is exciting to see how many fascinating possibilities are being opened up in this area, and to be part of this movement.

Lucy's doctoral research is funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council under the Collaborative Doctoral Award Scheme.



Pair of leather sandals for a child (New Kingdom, Thebes, EA 26780) with micro-photograph of the leather surface revealing a regular hair follicle pattern suggesting they are made from cowhide (x12 magnification).

Further information

Further resources

To search the collection database and download free high-resolution images for non-commercial use, visit britishmuseum.org/research

For information on visiting the Department of Egypt and Sudan's collection, library and archive, or objects held in other Departments, click on Departments under 'About us' at britishmuseum.org

For *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan*, the free online journal presenting the latest research including fieldwork, click on 'Publications' at britishmuseum.org

For membership of the Sudan Archaeological Research Society, and free online access to the *Sudan & Nubia* journal, visit sudarchrs.org.uk or on Twitter: @Sudan_and_Nubia

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New publications

John Taylor and Marie Vandenberg (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Coffins. Craft Traditions and Functionality*. British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan, 4. Peeters. Leuven, 2018.

Corinna Rossi and Salima Ikram. *North Kharga Oasis Survey. Explorations in Egypt's Western Desert*. British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan, 5. Peeters. Leuven, 2018.

Marie Vandenberg. *Faráon. Rey de Egipto*. Obra Social 'la Caixa', 2018.

Ilona Regulska and Maria Golia (eds). *Asyut. Guardian City*. British Museum, 2018 (Arabic and English language editions).

Dates for your diary

Sudan Archaeological Research Society
Recent archaeological fieldwork in Sudan
13 May 2019

The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Distinguished Lecture in Egyptology
The 'House of the Aten' at Amarna: whose needs did it serve and how?
Barry J. Kemp
19 September 2019

The Annual Egyptological Colloquium
Amarna: The Lived City
19–20 September 2019

The Kirwan Memorial Lecture (Sudan Archaeological Research Society)
Literacy in Christian Nubia: perspectives from the Polish Mission in Dongola
Adam Łajtar, University of Warsaw
16 September 2019

For further information visit britishmuseum.org or call +44 (0)20 7323 8000

British Museum exhibitions

Faraó. Rei d'Egipte
CaixaForum Seville:
25 September 2019 – 12 January 2020
CaixaForum Tarragona:
12 February 2020 – 26 July 2020

Egyptian mummies. Exploring ancient lives
The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
14 September 2019 – 2 February 2020

50 THE GOLD MASK



Front cover:
Emblem of
Banque Misr
(c. 1960),
combining
Cleopatra with
a lotus-flower
headdress
(EA 87609).

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The British Museum
Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3DG
britishmuseum.org

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