



# Ministry of Antiquities

Newsletter of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities \* Issue 15 \* August 2017

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES



- A MoA mission working in al-Kamin al-Sahrawy (south-west of Samalut in Minya) discovered three catacombs with burial recesses, containing a number of coffins of different shapes and sizes. They are dated to the twenty-seventh dynasty and Greco-Roman Period.

- A MoA mission working next to the Christian cemetery in El-Bahnasa in Minya revealed rock tombs and ruins of a Coptic residential area. These tombs are dated to the fifth century AD, and contain several burial chambers. As for the residential area, it contains remains of residential houses, mud brick cells for monks, and a well.



- A MoA mission working in Bir al-Shaghalah in Dakhla Oasis uncovered five Roman mudbrick tombs. Several funerary objects were found in the tombs, including parts of a plaster funerary mask painted in yellow, a variety of pottery vessels, ostraca bearing hieroglyphic and hieratic texts, an oil lamp and remains of a small sandstone sphinx.

# Inaugurations

The Minister of Antiquities and the Matrouh Governor inaugurated the Rommel Cave Museum, after the completion of its restoration and refurbishment in collaboration with Matrouh Governorate. The museum displays a collection of weapons and equipment used during the World War II and a map of the military sites. The German commander Rommel used the cave as a headquarter during the war.



The official visiting hours of the museum are scheduled to be extended to the evening in order to provide visitors with a night-time option. In ۲۰۱۰, the museum was closed for restoration and development, until early this year when MoA resumed the restoration works at the cave as part of the Ministry's policy to open the largest number of museums and archaeological sites in order to promote tourism. The development process included applying a new museum display scenario, new lighting and security systems and reinforcing the mountain walls with iron rods.

## Field work

Several archaeological missions began their work in August 2017, including: joint Sohag University-University of Berlin mission working on the First Intermediate Period tombs at Western Asyut Mountain; joint ARCE-University of Pennsylvania mission in Abydos, Sohag; joint ARCE- University of Groningen, Netherlands- University of Auckland, New Zealand mission working in the east and northeast of Lake Qarun, El-Fayoum; and the EES mission working in Qesna in El-Monufiyyah and Merimda Beni Salama in Giza.

## Repatriated Antiquities

- In collaboration with the Hurgada Maritime Port Police Department, the MoA's Archaeological Ports Unit intercepted a collection of eighteenth century objects before being smuggled abroad. They include a stone stick with a carved head depicting a bearded man wearing a kippah (brimless cap worn by Jews), in addition to five stelae and a 29-page book written in Hebrew.
- In cooperation with the MoA, the Tourism and Antiquities Police succeeded in seizing a black granite statue of 37cm in height, in the possession of a criminal in Asyut. The statue, which depicts a priest worshipping, is probably from the Late Period and bears hieroglyphic inscriptions.
- The MoA has handed over paper currency and bonds to the Iraqi and Chinese embassies in Cairo, during a special ceremony held at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. This is after the



Archaeological units of the Central Administration of Ports and the Archaeological units in Egyptian Ports had seized 44 paper currency and coins which date to the royal period of Iraq, specifically to the reigns of Kings Faisal I & II and Ghazy I, and also after the Egyptian Postal Service in Ramses Station (Central Station) had intercepted 13 Chinese paper bonds that are in fact registered as antiquities in China.

# Projects

## Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM)

- The GEM has received three limestone columns of King Djed-Ka-Ra-Isesi from the fifth dynasty, and thirty fragments of stone blocks from the lower part of the western wall of the Valley Temple of King Snefru, which were stored in the Ahmed Fakhri storehouse in Giza. The blocks depict women carrying offerings representing the different nomes of Egypt, which reached 42 nomes in the reign of King Snefru.
- A decree was issued by the Prime Minister to form the Board of Directors of the GEM under the presidency of the Minister of Antiquities and the membership of the Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Head of Museums Sector, Director of NMEC, a group of experts and representatives of concerned ministries and professors of archeology (26 August, 2017).
- The first session of the committee formed to organize and finish the works required for the partial opening of the GEM, and started its works under the head of the Minister of Antiquities, the Membership of the Representatives of Giza Governorate, the Engineering Committee of GEM Project, the Urban Planning Authority, the Military Museums Department, the coordinator of the Giza plateau development project, and the General Supervisor of the GEM project.
- A committee was formed and has met to prepare the necessary studies and find scientific solutions to transfer large and heavy objects from EMC to GEM.
- A scientific committee was formed to write labels for 45,000 objects in both Arabic and English, which will be displayed in the next phase of the GEM partial opening.

## Historic Cairo Project

- The MoA started the third phase of Historic Cairo Development Project, which aims to develop it as architectural district and not only as archaeological site.
- In the framework of cooperation between MoA and the Department of Construction Engineering at the Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, a joint team has started the archaeological documentation of Prince Omar Tosson, built in 1303 AH / 1886 AD in Road El-Farag area. The documentation work includes using a 3D Scanning Laser to analyze the palace structural elements and architectural condition, which helps to obtain accurate information about the place before restoration. Prince Omar Tosson is the grandson of Khedive Mohammed Aly.
- The MoA has submitted five historical buildings in El-Gamaliyyah, El-Azhar and El-Ghoureya to the "Centre for Conservation of Archaeological Objects, Archaeological and Historical Buildings and Museum Collections", at the Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo University, to start their refurbishment and restoration works, as part of a national campaign launched by MoA in 2005 to save 100 archaeological buildings in Historic Cairo. These five buildings are: El-Set Wasela House, El-Mabiada Gate, Wekalet Qusun gate, Mahmoud Muharram Mosque, and Bayt al-Sehemy. All renovation and restoration works will be carried out under the supervision of the Historic Cairo Development Project.



## Conservation Projects

- The MoA in cooperation with the Ministry of Endowment, started mitigation works of Engy Hanem Mosque at Moharram Bek, Alexandria, in preparation for its restoration project. The mosque is a registered monument within Egypt's Islamic and Coptic Heritage List since 2008, and dates back to the end of the 19th century.
- The MoA in cooperation with the Engineering Authority of the Armed Forces, started the restoration work of the Jewish Synagogue in Alexandria, the Baron Palace in Heliopolis, Tea-Kiosk in Khedive Mohammed Aly Shubra Palace, the Sphinx Avenue in Luxor, as well as the completion of the Giza Plateau development project.
- The MoA began the development and restoration work of El-Mahaly Mosque in Rashid (Rosetta), as part of the Ministry's plan to develop the city and turn it into an open air museum of Islamic art.

## Meeting and Visits

- The Minister of Antiquities was accompanied by MoA officials on several visits, including: Red Sea Governorate (Hurghada National House, Hurghada Museum Land, Wady Hammamat, Mons Claudianus and the Citadel in El-Quseir); Marsa Matrouh (for the Rommel Cave Museum opening and visiting Umm al-Rakham).
- The Minister of Antiquities met the Regional Director of UNESCO in Cairo to discuss ways of cooperation with the organization.

## Protocols

The MoA has signed a protocol with Matrouh Governorate to establish an archaeological museum in the governorate's Egypt Public Library.

The protocol stipulates that Matrouh Governorate will finance the project and prepare the building along with its exhibition halls, lighting and security systems. The museum is a two-storey building exhibiting about 1,000 artifacts derived from archaeological sites in Matrouh in an attempt to highlight the history of the governorate. Part of the museum will also be dedicated to cultural activities and educational programs.



## International Participation

A number of MoA employees have travelled abroad, including: Dr Mohammed Abd el-Latif (Minister of Antiquities' Assistant for Archaeological Sites) to Austria; Mahmoud Mohy El-Din (Specialist Restorer at the Museums Sector in South Sinai) to Switzerland; Akmal Aly Tawfiq (Supervisor of the Restoration Department at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization) to Kazakhstan; Wessam Mohammed Abd el-Alim (Member of the Technical Office of the Minister of Antiquities' Assistant for Archaeological Sites) to Finland.

## Temporary Exhibitions

### In Egypt

- The Egyptian Museum, Cairo held a temporary (modern) art exhibition titled "Egyptian Faces of Kings and Queens of Egypt". (27 August - 26 September, 2017).
- Prince Muhammad Aly Palace Museum in Manial organized a temporary photo exhibition about Ottoman costumes titled "A Feather on His Head" (28 August - 27 September, 2017).



# Cultural Events and Community Outreach

- In solidarity with Hepatitis C patients, the Giza Pyramids were illuminated in green for an hour. The event was organized in collaboration between MoA, Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization and the World Bank. (3 August, 2017).
- The Department of Cultural Development and Archaeological Awareness at the MoA in coordination with the Islamic and Coptic Monuments Sector, has organized a guided tour of El- Sakakini Palace in Cairo for students of the Faculties of Archaeology. This was done as part of the initiative launched by the MoA in cooperation with a charity organization named, «Preserve its Beauty». The tour ended with participants cleaning the palace (11 August, 2017).
- El-Sakakini Palace in Cairo in coordination with the Department of Archaeological Awareness in El-Gamaliya, has hosted the "Palaces' Artists" initiative, which included 25 artists visiting the palace who drew paintings inspired by the place and was then followed by an art exhibition displaying the paintings of these artists (12 August, 2017).
- The Minister of Antiquities has participated in the 150th anniversary celebration of the establishment of Khedival Cairo (16 August, 2017).
- The EMC organized a group of free guided tours on the occasion of the celebration of Eid Wafaa al-Nile. These tours included an explanation of the most important objects that reflect the importance of the Nile River in ancient Egypt. Also, an ostraca depicting the god of the Nile Hapi, was chosen to be the object of the month of August at the museum (24 - 18 August, 2017).
- Prince Muhammad Aly Palace Museum in El-Manial held a workshop for school students ranging in age from 7-10 years old, titled "Renew Your Objects". The workshop aimed to recycle and renew student's school supplies from the previous year, for the start of the new school year (21 August - 14 September, 2017).
- The MoA in cooperation with "Egypt's Will" Association, organized a guided tour at the religions complex in Old Cairo, targeting young students of Egyptian Universities, as part of the "Aslak Atharak" initiative (24 August, 2017).
- The Department of Cultural Development and Archaeological Awareness at the MoA organized an art exhibition at Prince Taz Palace entitled "Egypt in the Eyes of its Artists" (28 August, 2017).



## Varia

- The President of the Arab Republic of Egypt has issued a decree stating that the minister of antiquities is the competent minister for the application of the provisions of the law of the public sector companies for the catching company to invest in the fields of archaeology and the promoting of the culture of archaeological.
- The President of the Arab Republic of Egypt has issued a decree to cancel the collection of 10% of the proceeds of the Fund for antiquities, museums and Sound and Light Projects, by the Cultural Development Fund at the Ministry of Culture.
- The Prime Minister has issued a decree appointing General A.H./ Adel Ahmed Nageeb as the Prime Minister's Advisor for the Giza Plateau development project for one year.
- The Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with the MoA, has demolished all encroachment neighbouring the ancient Mill in Al-Montaza area in Alexandria as well as located at Tabyet El-Nahaseen in Alexandria.
- A collection of bronze busts, photos, documentaries and replicas were loaned to the Egyptian Embassy in Paris to participate in the 200th anniversary celebration of the discovery of Abu Simbel Temple, to be held in Paris on 12 September, 2017.

# Appointments

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- Nayera Ahmed Jalal El-Din (Inspector at El-Haram, Giza) has been appointed to work in the Minister's Technical Office.
- Khaled Farag Mohammed (Accountant at NMEC) has been appointed to work in the Department of Human Resources and Training.
- Mohammed Saad (Inspector at the Scientific Publishing Department) has been appointed managing editor of the MoA's newsletter.
- Mostafa Sobhy has been appointed as General Director of the Technical Follow-up Department headed by the Islamic and Coptic Monuments Sector.
- Ibtisam Khalil Gharib has been appointed as General Director of the National Museum of Alexandria.
- Gamal Gad al-Rab has been appointed as General Director of Giza - Islamic Monuments.
- Mahmoud Shaaban has been appointed as General Director of Giza - Islamic Monuments Affairs.

# Committees

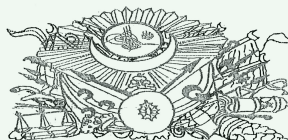
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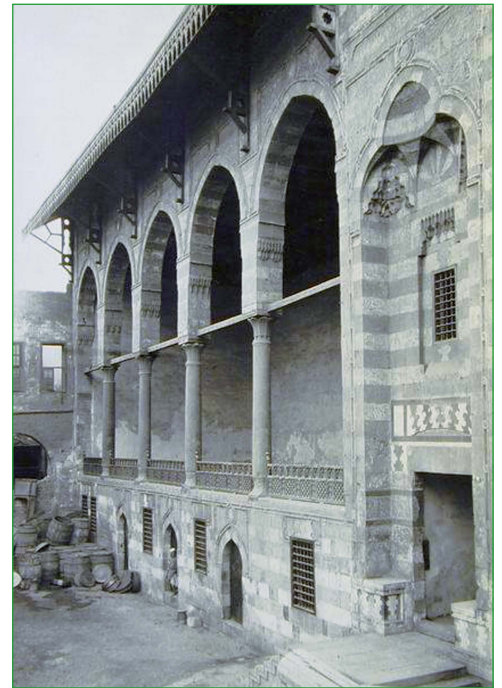
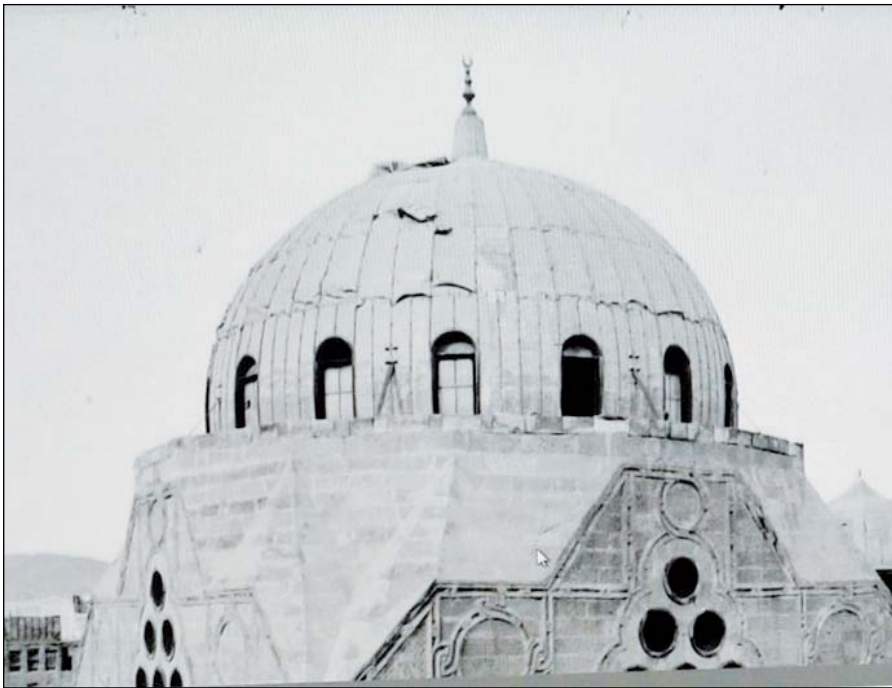
- A specialized higher committee was formed to oversee the implementation of the development project of Rashid Monuments.
- The meeting of the Board of Directors of the Supreme Council of Antiquities was held in its new formation (22 August, 2017).

# Decrees

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- Dr Samia El-Marghany, former General Director of the Research and Conservation Centre, joined the Permanent Committee for Egyptian Antiquities.
- The Department of Antiquities (archaeological objects) and the General Directorate of Acquisition were integrated into one department under the name «General Department of Acquisition and Antiquities».
- The statue of De Lesseps in Port Said, the Hammamat Grand Hotel in Helwan, the Dome of Cairo University, the Clock Tower, the Museum Building of Cairo University, and the caves under Points No. 3-4-6-9 in the monastery of St. Makarios El-Sakandary in Wadi El-Raiyan at El-Fayoum, were approved to be registered among the Islamic and Coptic Monuments.
- An exhibition for the model of king Sety I tomb was approved to be held in the Museum of Archeology in Basel, Switzerland.
- Nine objects of king Amenhotep II from the EMC's collection, were approved to participate in an exhibition titled «Egypt: the Extraordinary Discovery of the Pharaoh Amenhotep II» in the new Cultural Museum in Milan, Italy.
- The opening of the Suez Museum every Thursday from 6pm to 10pm during the months of September and October was approved. Tickets prices of museums open for evening visits are 50% higher than prices of the morning visit tickets.
- An archaeological committee formed based on a decree by the Permanent Committee of Islamic Antiquities, has approved criteria for establishing clear controls to inspect archaeological seizures dating to the Mohammed Aly dynasty.





The Archaeological Studies Center at Salah El-Din El-Ayubi's Citadel was established in 1985 by Dr Ahmed Qadry, former Head of the Egyptian Antiquities Authority, with the aim of preparing scientific and archaeological studies on restoration projects for Islamic, Coptic and Jewish monuments. The first director of the centre was Dr Assem Mohamed Rezk.

The Centre has specialized in reviewing excavation reports and preparing them for scientific publication, as well as being closely involved in committees to determine buffer zones around antiquities, in addition to documenting antiquities outside Cairo and preparing files for them.

The Centre includes archaeologists, photographers and illustrators. It is divided into several departments for Archaeological Affairs, Photography and Architectural Drawing. Each of these departments prepares scientific materials related to their specialization for each object, and prepares object files that include everything related to the object to date, including a detailed description and the current condition.

In the aftermath of the October 1992 earthquake, the Centre created an archive for damaged Islamic monuments in Cairo, which later became the basis for the restoration of these antiquities.

In cooperation with the Information Centre of Ministerial Cabinet, the Centre also prepared a Guide to Islamic Antiquities in Cairo, published in Arabic in 2000, and then prepared a series of publications about Egyptian heritage, beginning with mosques of Cairo, in addition to preparing architectural studies on some cities including Rashid and Fuwah in Kafr El-Sheikh.

The archive housed in the centre includes almost 11,000 glass negatives that document architectural details of Islamic, Coptic and Jewish monuments. The slides were made by the Committee for the Preservation of Arab Antiquities between the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. They are a vital resource that guides restorers, as they documented the conditions of many historical buildings since the nineteenth century. These slides are now being conserved and rehoused through a joint French-German-Egyptian mission.

The centre can be contacted through their official Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/markzdrasat/>.

# Monument of the Month

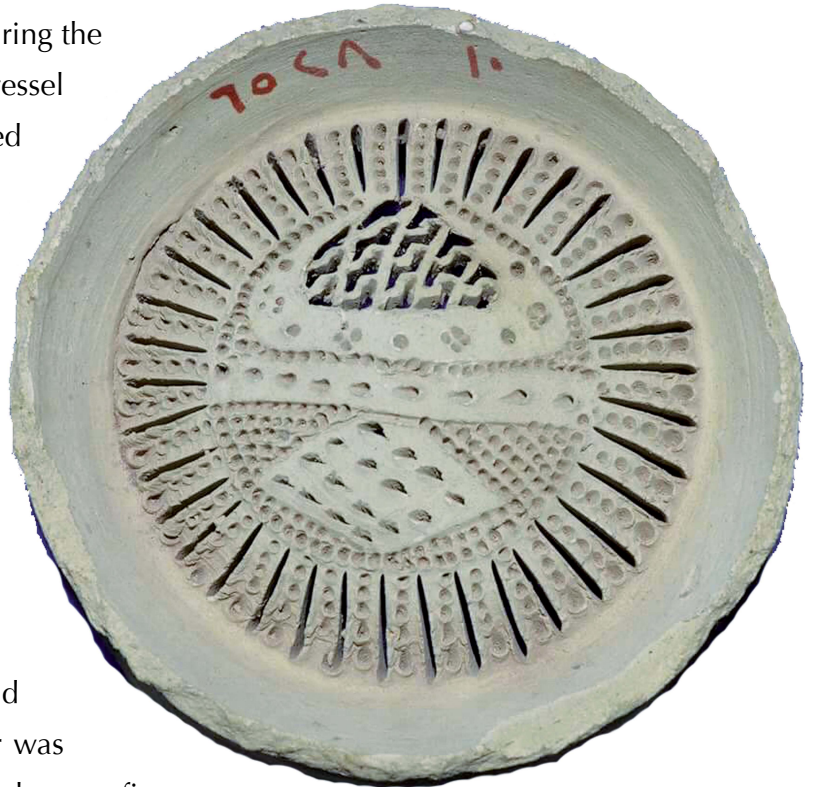
## Pot Strainers

Mameluke Period (648-923 AH /1250-1517 AD)

Egypt was renowned for its pottery vessels during the Islamic Period. One of those is the drinking vessel (qulla in Arabic, 'ulla in colloquial) featured decorative strainers at its mouth.

The strainers highlight the creativity of Egyptian artisans of the Islamic period, especially their skill at turning small surfaces into beautiful artistic works. They not only served an aesthetic purpose, but were also functional: they acted as a filter to prevent impurities from polluting the water, and to make dispensing water easier.

Qullas were made of special Nile clay from Qena in the South of Egypt, and the pot and the strainer were made separately. The strainer was decorated with a variety of designs, including human figures, animals, floral motifs, geometrical patterns and inscriptions.



Strainers also allow dating the pots and reveals a glimpse of their political contexts. Some of them bore blazons (or crests) of sultans and princes, which denoted the owners of these pots. The National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in El-Fustat houses a special strainer decorated with a blazon that shows a horse shoe and a bag. This blazon indicates the position its owner had. In this case, he was in charge of the royal stables, as well as being in charge of clothing at the palace.

Despite the small size of pot strainers, they are witnesses to the creativity of Egyptian artisans. Their historical value allows us to explore the economic, political and social life of that time.





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