



Ministry of Antiquities

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INAUGURATIONS

The Minister of Antiquities inaugurated several historical buildings on al-Mu'izz Street after their restoration was completed: Qubbet al-Saleh Negm al-Din Ayoub, Mohy al-Din Abu al-Tayeb Hall, and the Sabil of Kheserou. The event was attended by several Egyptian Ministers of Endowment, Culture, Local Development, the Governor of Cairo, ambassadors of foreign countries, directors of foreign archaeological institutes in Egypt and a number of public figures (9 July, 2017).



CAIRO PASS

A new visitor's pass is now being issued! "Cairo Pass" is a permit that allows foreign visitors to enter all museums and archaeological sites in Cairo and Giza for five consecutive days during official visiting hours, with an unlimited number of entries during the validity period. Passes cost \$80, while students pay a reduced price of \$40.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

- Monks in St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai uncovered a parchment palimpsest manuscript during restoration and documentation of the monastery's library. The earlier layer contains a medical Greek text signed by the Greek physician Hippocrates, and dates to the fifth/sixth centuries. The layer was erased and replaced with a twelfth century text from Bible written in Arabic.



- An MoA mission succeeded in revealing a mosaic brick floor in the area of Muharram Bek in Alexandria,



which was once part of a Roman bathhouse. The flooring is an exciting discovery as it is one of the very rare examples of such flooring in Egypt. This type is referred to as «Opus Spicatum» in Latin, which describes its herringbone pattern. The surviving floor measures about 4.5x5m. Excavations and documentation will continue, in preparation for dismantling the floor and transporting it for better conservation.

- A collection of Arabic inscriptions related to the Holy Pilgrimage were discovered in a mountain cave behind the tomb of Sheikh Abd al-'Aal on the Quft-Quseir road. The discovery came during an archaeological survey conducted by MoA. The cave was a site where pilgrims and travellers sought shelter on their way to Mecca.



- Conservators from the Anba Bishoi monastery in Wady al-Natron working with MoA conservators have revealed several wall paintings. They were recovered while removing modern plaster layers from different parts of the monastery's church, and date to the ninth and thirteenth centuries.



Field work

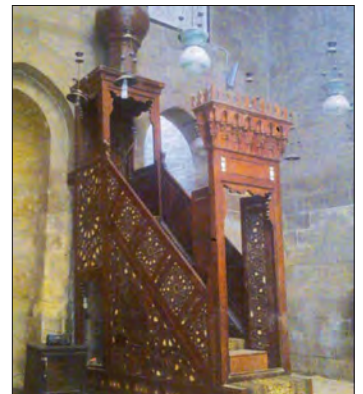
The University of Berkley archaeological mission began its work in al-Heiba in Beni Suef. Centre d'études alexandrines also resumed its work at Tabyet al-Nahhaseen in Alexandria.

Training

The training program for July 2017 included 16 courses in archaeology, archaeological sciences, and conservation, in addition to training organised by the Survey Authority of the Armed Forces, and a training program by CE-Alex on fundraising for museums.

Repatriated Antiquities

- Tourism and Antiquities Police, in cooperation with the MoA, succeeded in retrieving two wood and ivory inlays looted from the minbar of Gany al-Ashrafy Mosque in al-Megharbleen Street at al-Darb al-Ahmar. They will be returned to their original place after restoration.
- Two-hundred coins from different time periods and a collection of maps from 1922 were intercepted at the Safaga Port.



Meeting and Visits

- The Minister of Antiquities hosted the Japanese Minister of Culture, Education, Sports and Information Technology, the Ambassador of Japan in Cairo and the accompanying JICA delegation; Anba Demianos Archbishop of St. Catherine's Monastery; Mexican Ambassador in Cairo; French Ambassador in Cairo; and the Chinese cultural attaché in Egypt.
- The Minister of Antiquities, accompanied by MoA officials, visited several archaeological sites, museums and projects in several governorates: al-Monufiyyah (Masjid al-Abbasi, Sidi Shebl Mosque and a few archaeological sites); Damietta (Mosque of Amr Ibn al-'As and al-Ma'ieny Mosque); Port Said (Masjid al-Abbasi, Port Said Museum grounds and St. Eugene Church); Alexandria (Tabyet al-Nahasin site, Kom al-Nadura); Luxor (al-Qurna, Valley of the Kings and the Great Processional Way between Karnak and Luxor Temples).



Varia

MoA in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and Cairo Governorate removed nine buildings at Arab al-Yassar trespassing on the buffer zone around the Salah al-Din Citadel (4 July, 2017).

Temporary Exhibitions

In Egypt

Celebrating thirty years of Egyptian excavations in Sinai, the MoA and Bibliotheca Alexandrina held a photographic exhibition entitled “Thirty Years-Excavations at the Eastern Entrance of Egypt 1987-2017” (13-30 July, 2017).



International Exhibitions

- “Golden Pharaohs and Pyramids” exhibition continues In Fukuoka, Japan until the end of July, 2017.
- “Sultan Baybars and His Reign” exhibition continues in Astana, Kazakhstan until 10 August, 2017.
- “Sunken Cities: Egypt’s Lost Worlds” exhibition continues at the Rietberg Museum in Zurich, Switzerland until 13 August, 2017.

Conferences

The MoA and Bibliotheca Alexandrina held a conference entitled “Thirty Years-Excavations at the Eastern Entrance of Egypt 1987-2017” at the lectures hall of Bibliotheca Alexandrina, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of Egyptian excavations in Sinai. The Minister of Antiquities, Director of Bibliotheca Alexandrina, and several former Ministers of Antiquities and MoA officials attended the inauguration ceremony. Several former mission members and those who supported the Egyptian excavations in Sinai were honoured in appreciation of their work (13-30 July, 2017).



Cultural Events and Community Outreach

Educational departments at Egyptian museums across the country have opened their doors to visitors to start off their summer activities in July. This includes a number of workshops and a series of lectures and guided tours. Unemployed women, as well as youth, are being trained in traditional crafts such as leather, wood, jewellery making and printing.

International Participation

A number of MoA employees have travelled abroad, including: to Poland: Dr Yasmin El Shazly (Supervisor of the Department of the International Organizations and International Cooperation); to London: Dr Hesham al-Leithy (Director of the Centre of Documentation of Ancient Egypt), Ebtessam Khalil Gharib (Director of the Alexandria National Museum); Heba Sami Mohamed (Director of the Technical Office of the Head of the Museums Sector); to Japan: Ahmed Sa’ied Abdo (the Department of the International Organizations and International Cooperation), Mahmoud al-Shafei (inspector at Saqqara); to Kazakhstan: Fahmy Ahmed Abdul Aziz (General Director of Islamic Antiquities Missions at South Sinai); to Switzerland: Dr Ahmed Gabr Salama (Director of al-Qalyubiyah Archaeological Area); to Japan: Mohammed Badr al-Din Hussein (Director of Storerooms Administration at GEM).

Projects

National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC)

NMEC received 453 objects from the collections excavated at Ezbet al-Walda in Helwan, which were stored at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. The objects mostly date to the first and second dynasties, and include pottery and stone vessels, funerary stele and pottery coffins (17 July, 2017).

Historic Cairo Project

- The Historic Cairo Project purchased five electric cars to serve visitors, tourists and people of al-Mu'izz Street, bringing the number of cars to 13 (5 July, 2017).
- MoA in cooperation with the Engineering Authority of the Armed Forces commenced development and restoration of the Baron Empain Palace in Heliopolis, in the light of a protocol signed between the MoA and the Authority to restore a group of historic buildings. The restoration works are expected to take a year and a half.

Conservation Projects

- MoA conservators have dismantled and reconstructed a tomb in al-Husseiniyyah at al-Sharqiyyah Governorate. The tomb contained a sarcophagus, and remains of hieroglyphs are carved on its walls.
- MoA has completed dismantling of the previously discovered archaeological painting next to the bases of the minaret of Abu Shusha Mosque in Dairout at al-Beheira. The painting was placed temporarily in the storerooms of Rashid in preparation for the necessary studies.



In Memoriam: Ahmed al-Zayyat and Tohfa Handosa

- MoA held a memorial service for Professor Ahmed al-Zayyat, Professor of Islamic Archaeology at the Faculty of Arts, Tanta University, and the Islamic Antiquities Advisor of the Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, at Ahmed Pasha Kamal Hall at the Ministry's office in Zamalek (16 July, 2017).



- A memorial service was held at the MoA in memory of Professor Tohfa Handoussa, Professor of Egyptology and the Former Head of the Egyptology Department at the Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo University, who was one of the most prominent figures in archaeology in Egypt (25 July, 2017).



Appointments

- Dr Ayman Ashmawy has been appointed Head of the Egyptian Antiquities Sector, and Mohammed Alaa al-Shahat has been appointed as his Deputy.
- General Hisham Samir Ibrahim has been appointed Assistant Minister of Antiquities for Engineering.
- Adel Okasha has been appointed Head of the Central Administration of Cairo and Giza Antiquities.
- Abd al-Fattah Eid has been appointed Head of the Central Administration of Antiquities of the South.
- Dr Nagwa Metwally has been appointed as General Director of the Scientific Publishing Department, while Dr Mohammed Ismail has been appointed as its Scientific Supervisor.
- Abeer Abd al-Sattar has been appointed to work in the accounting unit of the Minister's Office.
- Mounir Mohammed Sa'ied, Walid al-Sayed Abdel-Rahim, Malak Nushey Malak have been appointed to work in the Office of the Minister's Assistant for Archaeological Sites.
- Dalia Mohammed Abd al-Rahman and Karim Ashraf Mohammed have been appointed to work in the Financial Resources Development Unit at the Minister's Office.
- Du'aa Ahmed al-Amin has been appointed to work in the Follow Up department at the Minister's Office.
- Engineer Marwa Mohammed Talaat has been appointed to supervise the GIS department.
- Tariq Ahmad Mokhtar Mohammed has been appointed to Deputy to the Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities.
- Wagdi Abbas Abu Ahmed has been appointed Deputy Head of the Islamic and Coptic Antiquities Sector.
- Mona Shaaban Hafez has been appointed Deputy to Head of the Museums Sector.
- Al-Sa'eed al-Sayed Shehata has been appointed General Supervisor for Legal Affairs of the Secretary General's Office.
- Al-Sayed Mohammed Abd el-Fattah has been appointed General Director of Ismailia Museum.
- Dr Daa Mohammed Zahran has been appointed General Director of the Archaeological Documentation Department in the Islamic and Coptic Antiquities Sector.
- Mostafa Osman has been appointed General Director of the Central Delta Antiquities and Supervisor of the Accounting Unit there.
- Ashraf Kamal has been appointed General Supervisor of the castle workshops, gardens and beauty works.
- Dr Hassan Mohammed Sulaiman has been appointed Assistant to the Secretary General for Archaeological Affairs and the Follow Up.
- Dr Adel Mohammed Ziada has been appointed Assistant to the Secretary General for scientific and administrative affairs and researches.
- Mustafa Abd el-Halim has been appointed Assistant to the Board of Directors affairs and Permanent Committees.
- Dr Hoda Khalifa has been appointed Supervisor of the Scientific Administration in the Minister's Technical Office.

Decrees

- The Centre of Documentation of Ancient Egypt in Zamalek undertook the task of supervising the General Administration of Archaeological Documentation at the Egyptian Antiquities Sector and all documentation departments of the sector. The Islamic Antiquities Registration Centre at the Citadel in Cairo will supervise the General Administration of Archaeological Documentation in the Islamic and Coptic Antiquities Sector and all documentation departments at the sector.
- The Central Administration for Information has been assigned to supervise all information centers of the MoA.
- The Permanent Committee has approved the implementation of the use of the Glypho-Nasr herbicide reinforced with 2.4 bacterial proto-enzymes on all pharaonic and Greco-Roman archaeological sites in Egypt. This comes after preliminary testing in the southern part of the Ptah temple in Memphis proved a success. The results of the trial were approved by the French Academy of sciences and the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency.



Established in 1976 and first headed by Eng. Shehata Mohammed, the Department prepares cadastral maps for archaeological sites across the country, in order to ease their registration or their subjugation to the Antiquities Protection Law.

The Department, in cooperation with the archaeological areas, proposes the registration or conjoining of lands with public benefits and their subjugation or registration. Once decrees are issued, the department implements the decisions concerning the expropriation of some sites in coordination with the Egyptian General Authority for Land. Monetary compensation may be paid to the owners when necessary, and are paid through the treasury of the General Authority for Land, in order to receive the site and deliver it to the relevant archaeological area.

A recent example of this is the Alexan Palace in Asyut, owned by an influential politician and the head of the Evangelical community in Egypt until his death in 1949. Commissioned in 1910 by Alexan Pasha, his house was built in a classic style by Italian engineers. The palace is a unique historical and architectural structure, and was therefore expropriated from its inhabitants who were compensated, and conjoined to the MoA. It is being developed and restored in preparation for its transformation into a regional museum for Asyut.

The Department participates undertakes a pivotal role in inspections to identify and remove trespassing on archaeological sites, preparing the legal logistics necessary, in addition to supporting the case in front of specialised committees, the Permanent Committee for Islamic antiquities, the Lands Committee and the Licences Committee.

The Department is working to create an electronic database on the lands and estates on all archaeological sites, which include the relevant cadastral maps and coordinates.

The head Office is located at: 8 al-Khudairi Street, next to the Sarghatmash Madrassa in al-Sayeda Zeinab;

phone: 02-23619137

Monument of the Month

Oinochoai

Eman Abdel Hamid
Museums Sector

Oinochoai vessels were used in the Greek civilisation for pouring wine. The name consists of two syllables derived from the Greek language, the first syllable «oinos» means wine, and the second «cheo» expresses the verb “to pour”. They were used for pouring wine, as the name indicates, in funerary rituals, where wine was poured as an offering to the deceased spirit. It was used in festivals and holidays as well. These vessels appeared in Egypt after the death of Queen Arsinoe II, when she was deified and depicted in assimilation with Isis. The Oinochoai were known as Ptolemaic queens’ vessels, and were made by Alexandrians to be used in festivals and processions of Ptolemaic rulers during ceremonies. The production of these vessels became a popular industry, duplicating the original vessels.

Oinochoai pots were made from Egyptian faience mixed with auxiliary oxides. Most vessels took a round shape, with a neck and the handles. The shoulder comes out of the vessel body with a curve of about 30 cm. These vessels are characterized by embossed inscriptions on their bodies, depicting the Greek ritual of wine-pouring, where the queen is shown in the middle of the altar and carrying the horn of prosperity and pointing to the altar while pouring wine. The name of the queen and sometimes that of her husband often appeared in Greek language on the vessel’s body with the benediction of good fortune and happiness. The Queen was depicted in the Greek style, wearing a robe that combines the slim multi-Chiton and the hematione on the waist, and her hair is in a chignon.



Queen Arsinoe II and later Ptolemaic queens were associated with goddess Isis. The king made himself a pharaoh from the Egyptian gods’ offspring, and overshadowed all the types of art in the Ptolemaic Kingdom of the Hellenistic era. If the vessels depicts a ritual of the pouring of wine by the queen, the goddess Isis has performed the role of pouring water over the deceased by the god before, and poured milk and wine on her husband’s altar to give life to him. The people would pour milk, wine and water on the altars of the goddess Isis and the mother goddesses. Thus, the ritual of pouring wine for the Ptolemaic queens is just a continuing custom of the previous Egyptian offering rituals.



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