



# Ministry of Antiquities

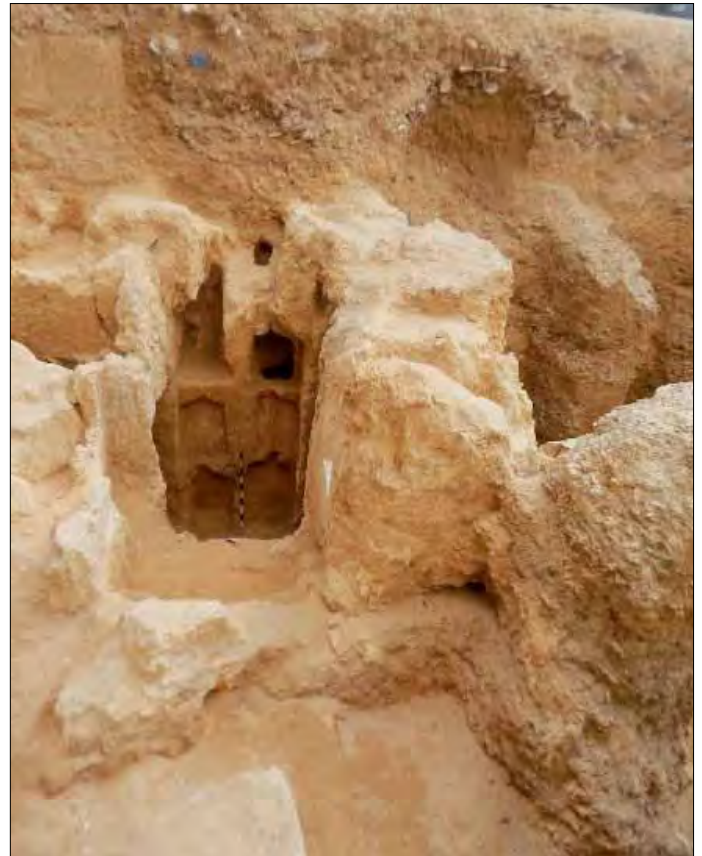
Newsletter of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities \* Issue 13 \* June 2017

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

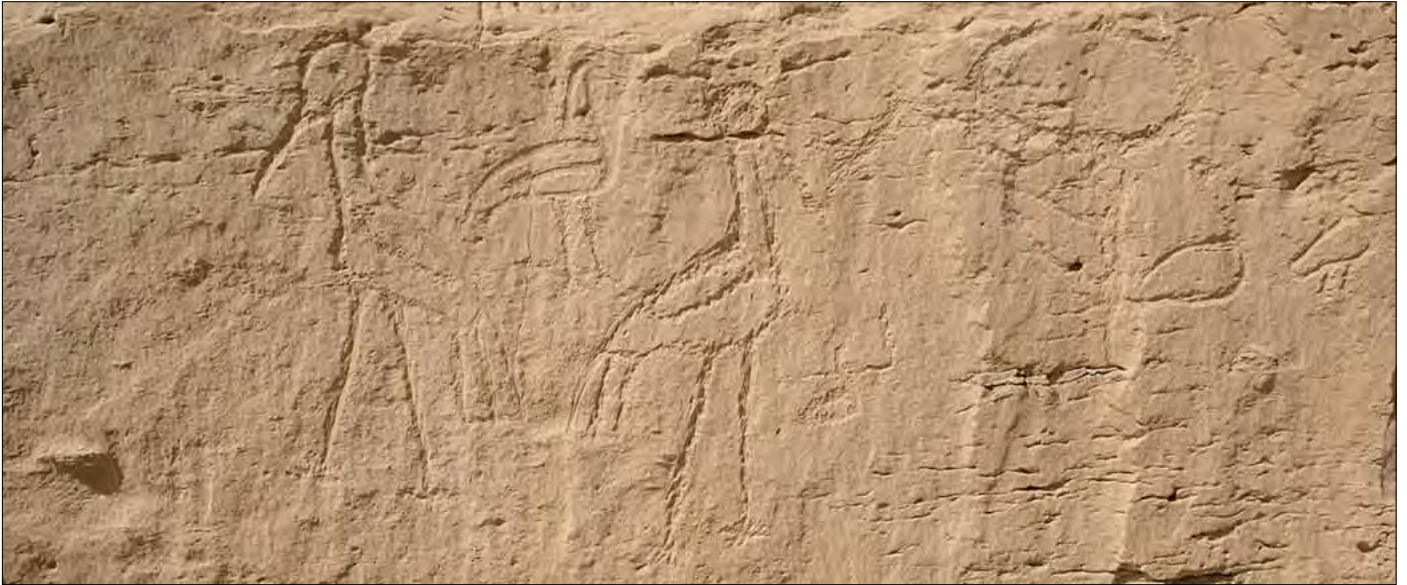
- An MoA project working near Agha Khan Mausoleum West of Aswan uncovered ten Late Period tombs. The area is an extension of the West Aswan necropolis cemetery, where the elite of Aswan, during the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms, were buried. The tombs are similar to one another in architectural design, each contains staircases carved into rock leading to the entrance of the cemetery, then to simple rooms where a number of coffins and mummies were found.



- The MoA discovered a tomb in al-Shatby, Alexandria, dating to the Greek Period based on its architectural style and remains of ceramics recovered in it. The tomb consists of four halls, each with a set of burial holes decorated with colourful geometric designs and bearing ancient Greek inscriptions. Some 300 objects were found, ranging from lamps, pottery pots and terracotta statuettes.



- The MoA-Yale University joint mission working at al-Kab discovered a new site with rock inscriptions near al-Khawi village, located about 7 km north of al-Kab, south of Luxor. It is a collection of rock inscriptions and scenes, and the first signs of writing in ancient Egypt, as well as the oldest and largest hieroglyphic signs from the beginnings of Naqqada I (ca. 4000 - 3500 BC).



## Repatriated Antiquities

The MoA has received 5000 objects from the American University in Cairo, dating to different periods. The items were recovered during excavations by American field projects in 1964. The law at that time allowed the missions to retain a number of the archaeological finds (13 June 2017).

## Temporary Exhibitions

### International Exhibitions

An exhibition titled “Sultan Baybars and His Reign” was inaugurated at the National Museum in Astana, Kazakhstan. The exhibition features twenty-two objects from the Museum of Islamic Art, all of which date to the reign of Mamluki Sultan al-Zaher Baybars (13 June -10 August, 2017).





# Projects

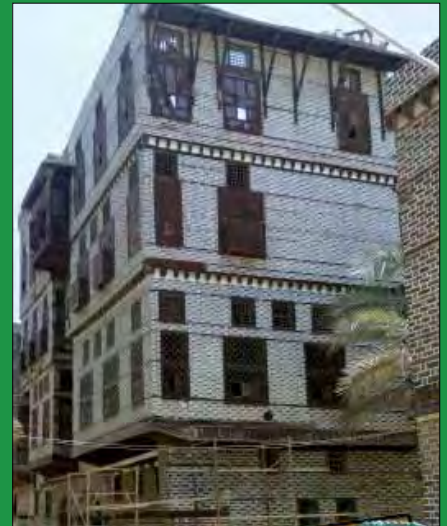
## Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM)

- Three wall reliefs are being transferred to GEM from the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. They date to the fifth dynasty, and are from the tomb of Snefru-int-ished-ef.
- Construction work continues, reaching 62% completion.



## Conservation Projects

- The MoA started a restoration and development project at the domes of al-Ashraf Khalil and Fatma Khatoon in al-Ashraf Street in the neighbourhood of al-Khalifa, in cooperation with al-Athar-lana initiative and the Urban Thought Society. The project aims to turn the land facing these monuments into a public garden and a park area, including an open theatre, a coffee shop, a children's area zone and library as well as an administrative building.
- Maintenance work commenced on the house of al-Haj Ismail Ramadan, which was the seat of the governor of Rasheed during Fraser's campaign on Egypt. The work aims to protect the house from threats resulting from the sudden collapse of the roof in the north-western room on the third floor.



## Training

- In cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, a training course was held on digital marketing within the Technical Education Reform Program (3 June - 3 October, 2017).

- The training program on genetic research was launched



- in cooperation with the Egyptian Academy of Scientific Research. Such research can be used in the analysis of mummies, identification of Egyptian species and management of genetic laboratories in GEM, NMEC and EMC (15 June - 15 September, 2017).

# International Participation

Several colleagues travelled abroad on official trips, including 'Ali 'Abd al-Rahman (head of the New Kingdom sector, GEM), Basem Magdy (archaeologist in the New Kingdom sector, GEM), Anwar Mohamed 'Abd al-Hamid (Conservator, GEM) to Italy; Sa'eed Helmi Ezzat (Head of the Islamic Antiquities Sector), Dr Mamdouh Hassan (Director General of the Museum of Islamic Art), Adel Mamdouh Mokhtar (Archaeologist at the Museum of Islamic Art), Walaa' Hamdi (Archaeologist at the Museum of Islamic Art), Omneya Samih (MoA Media Office), Wagdi Abbas Abu Hamad (Director General of the Technical Office of the Islamic Antiquities Sector), Ashraf Labib Abd al-Salam, (Director of Conservation of Souq al-Selah) to Kazakhstan; 'Essam 'Emad al-Din (conservator, GEM) to Japan; Ahmed Mohamed Abd al-Latif, (Conservator, GEM) to Greece; Hossam Mohamed Mustafa (Director of West Kafr al-Sheikh Antiquities) to Switzerland: Amr al-Tibi (Executive Director of the Replica Production Unit) to Poland.

## Varia

- MoA in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and governorates succeeded in removing encroachments on archaeological lands in different governorates.



- The MoA held a lottery for the pilgrimage for its employees who have exceeded 50 years in age. Forty employees won in the draw (June 20, 2017).





# Cultural Events and Community Outreach

- The Egyptian Museum, Cairo held a children's competition on the history and culture of ancient Egypt. The winners received an annual pass to museums and open archaeological sites, in addition to a guided tour inside the museum. This competition comes within the framework of "the Egyptian Initiative for Teaching and Learning", in which 35 children were selected from five schools to participate (12 June, 2017).



- The Resala Charity Association, in collaboration with MoA, held an Iftar during Ramadan for 300 orphans at the Muhammad Aly Palace Museum in Manial (20 June, 2017).
- During Eid al-Fitr, the Egyptian Museum, Cairo organised guided tours about celebrations in ancient Egypt (25-27 June, 2017).



## Appointments

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- Dr Bassem Gehad (Assistant to the Minister of Antiquities for Human Resources) was appointed supervisor of the Human Resources, Training and Capacity Building Department.
- Ashwaq Ahmed Mosleh (Department of Scientific Publishing) was appointed to work on the MoA's newsletter.
- Shaimaa Ahmed Yamani (Conservator, MoA) was appointed to the Minister's office.
- Hussein Abd al-Moneim al-Sayed was appointed General Director of the Department of Budgeting in the Museums Sector.
- Ahmed Mohamed Awad was appointed General Director of Asyut Islamic Antiquities.
- Samir Qutb was appointed General Director of the Department for Regional Affairs and Revenue in the Finance Sector.
- Mohamed Rashad Abd al-Hamid was appointed General Director of Antiquities, Mr 'Issa Zaghloul, Director of Antiquities in al-Minoufiyyah Governorate.
- Mohamed al-Sayed al-Sawaf was appointed General Director of Antiquities, and Mimi Ibrahim Abd al-Samie' has been appointed Director of Antiquities in al-Gharbiyyah Governorate.
- In Kafr al-Sheikh, Salem Ahmed Ali has been appointed General Director of Antiquities, Qutb Waziri was appointed director of Antiquities, and Abd al-Nasser Hijazi was appointed General Director of excavations.

## Decrees

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- The Mosque of 'Aisha and Hassiba Mosque in Sarsamous district in al-Minoufiyyah were registered as an Islamic monument.
- The Somers Clarke House in Edfu was registered amongst Islamic and Coptic antiquities.
- The storeroom in Sheikh Hamad in al-Wadi al-Gadid is newly named after Dr Yehya al-Masry.
- The Permanent Committee now requires scholars working in antiquities storerooms to deposit a copy of their documentation at storeroom.

## Committees

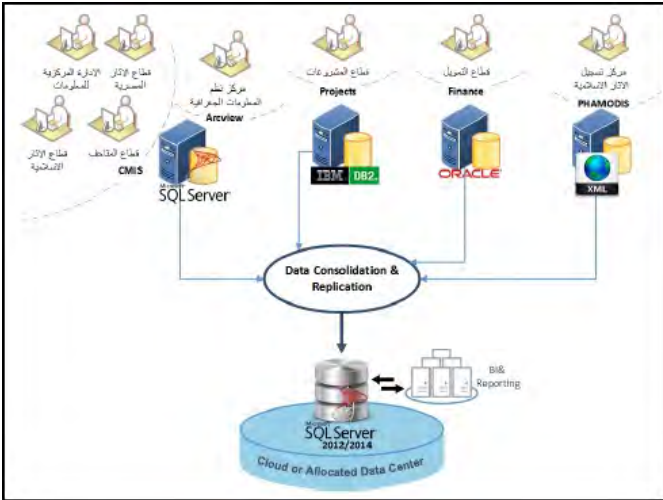
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- A higher committee was formed to follow up critical medical cases resulting from accidents and work injuries as well as chronic illnesses.
- A higher committee was formed for the development of gift shops located in various museums.



# Department of the Month

# Central Department for Information



Established in 1985 according to decree no. 634 of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, the Central Department for Information aims to document and record Egyptian archaeological heritage.

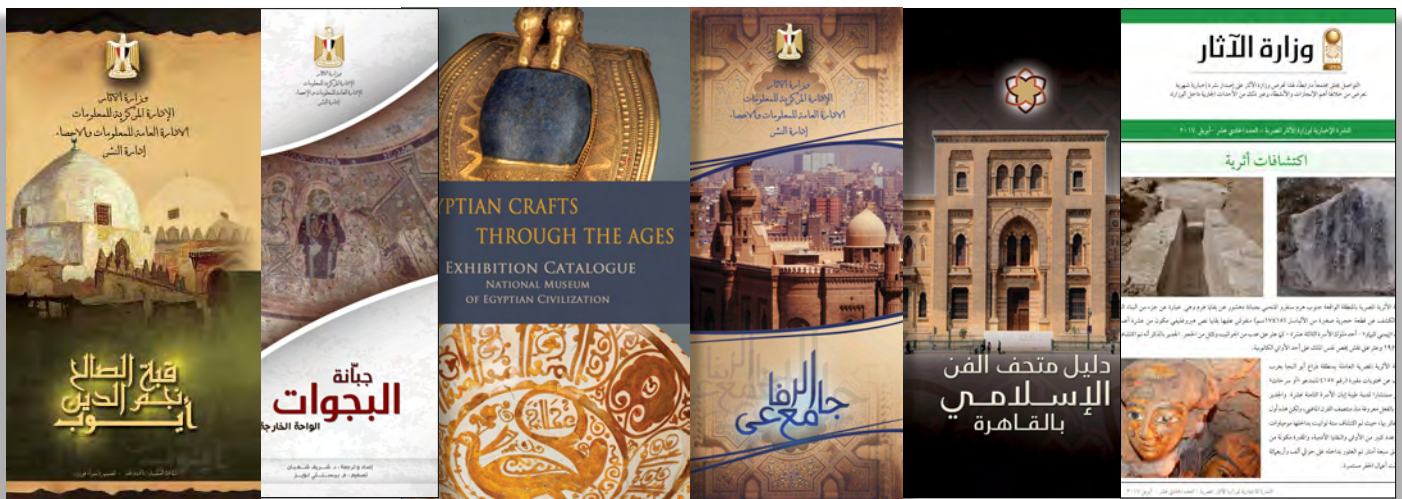
The Centre's establishment came as part of the government's plan to introduce digital services and technologies into the Egyptian governmental organizations in the early 1980s. The Centre offers a variety of services to researchers and MoA employees, to support their data collection.

The Centre designs programs and collects a variety of data pertaining to archaeological sites and objects, and inserts it into its databases which are accessible by different MoA sectors to allow easy access and data management. In addition to information on sites and objects, bibliographies, photographs and digitized glass negatives are maintained in the database. All this data is available for digital browsing or can be printed.

Moreover, the centre aims at raising archaeological and historical awareness. Using its rich and exhaustive database, the Centre produces a variety of CDs and brochures for museums, which serve to advertise museums and promote their collections to the public, make visits more enjoyable and informative, and can be kept as souvenirs. With the development of information technology systems, the Centre seeks to extend its services outside the MoA, allowing remote access to their databases to scholars and governmental authorities.

The Centre includes three main departments: Statistics Department that includes computer management, decision support management, publishing and graphic management; General Administration of Libraries and Documentation; and General Administration of the MoA's governmental portal.

The Centre is located at the MoA's headquarters: 3 al-Adel Abu Bakr Street, Zamalek, and Cairo, Egypt. Telephone: 02-27353431.



## Oedipus Fresco

Moamen Othman  
Head of the Conservation Laboratory at the EMC



Photo: EMC Conservation

Most museum objects require conservation work at some point. Objects may need to be restored multiple times, due to their fragility or because new techniques are developed.

Although conserved after its discovery, the 'Oedipus Fresco' needed additional restoration using new conservation procedures that are being used in Egypt for the first time.

The fresco depicts the tale of the mythical Greek king, Oedipus. It dates to the second century and was once part of a wall in a funerary house in modern day Tuna al-Gabal in Middle Egypt. It was discovered in 1934 by Dr Sami Gabra, who published it in 1984.

The conservation process began with a detailed survey of the fresco. The fresco's wood and glass mount was removed and it was placed horizontally for ease of cleaning and conservation. Cleaning was, of course, an important and delicate first step, which was started manually, and later with organic solutions being used to further clean the surface. Paraloid, an acrylic polymer, was used to strengthen weakened spots.

Several layers of Japanese paper soaked in various concentrations of Paraloid were applied to the painted side of the fresco. Each layer was put in place after ensuring that the previous one had thoroughly dried. After the final layer had completely dried, the fresco was turned, and the back support was revealed.

After conservation work was completed, it was vital to ensure that the new mount for the fresco would be safe and stable. For this, we used what are called 'honeycomb' supports, which are aluminium supports often used for mounting paintings. Fiberglass dipped in resin, which acts as an adhesive, was placed on an aluminium frame in a honeycomb formation, hence the name of the support. Such a support is both chemically stable and lightweight. The structure of honeycombs allows the heavy weight of the fresco to be transferred to each separate cell, evenly spreading the weight on the mount.

The fresco measures 98x239cm, and is registered as JE 63609.



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