



Ministry of Antiquities

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES



- The Egyptian archaeological mission in Dahshur uncovered remains of a pyramid south of Snefru's Bent Pyramid. The inner construction of the pyramid and part of a ramp leading to the pyramid have so far been uncovered, in addition to an alabaster block with a hieroglyphic inscription of ten columns and the cartouche of King Imeny-Qemaw of the thirteenth dynasty. These remains are quite close to another thirteenth dynasty pyramid which was discovered in 1957, where a fragment of a canopic jar was found also carrying the cartouche of King Imeny-Qemaw.

- The Egyptian archaeological mission in Dra' Abu al-Naga in Thebes has uncovered the contents of the tomb of "Userhat", an official during the eighteenth dynasty. The tomb has actually been known since mid-twentieth century, but this is the first time it has been excavated. Six coffins with well-preserved mummies were found in the tomb, in addition to ceramic vessels and over one thousand and four-hundred ushabtis.



Field Work

Several archaeological projects have continued their field work this month in several governorates, including: Alexandria, Suez, al-Sharqiyyah, Giza, Assiut, al-Minya and Aswan, in addition to the MacDonald Institute, Cambridge University, UK mission working in Tell al-Amarna, which started its field work this year after a five year hiatus.

Temporary Exhibitions



Local Exhibitions

- In celebration of fifty years since its inauguration, The French-Egyptian Centre for the Study of the Temples of Karnak organised a photo exhibition reviewing the Centre's achievements and projects (18 April, 2017).

International Exhibitions

- The "Golden Pharaohs and Pyramids" exhibition was inaugurated in the Japanese city of Shizuoka, where it will be on display for two and half months before it moves to its last Japanese stop in Fukuoka. The exhibition was inaugurated by Dr Mahmoud Afifi, head of the Egyptian Antiquities Sector (9 April, 2017).



International Participation

Dr Mostafa Amin, General Secretary of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, participated in a number of lectures in Spain in cooperation with the Egyptian Institute for Islamic Studies, the Egyptian Archaeology Museum, and the Central University of Madrid.

Several colleagues were granted approval for international travel, including: Moamen Mohamed Othman (General Director of Conservation Administration, EMC) has travelled to France; Somaya Mohamed al-Hendawy (Chemist, EMC) to Morocco; Marwa Abd al-Razek (Director of Registration Department, EMC) to Germany; Mohamed Abd al-Halim al-Sa'dany (Head of Islamic Conservation of Daqahliyyah and Damietta) to Japan; Hanan Mahmoud Mohamed (Helwan Inspectorate) to Switzerland.

Projects

Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM)

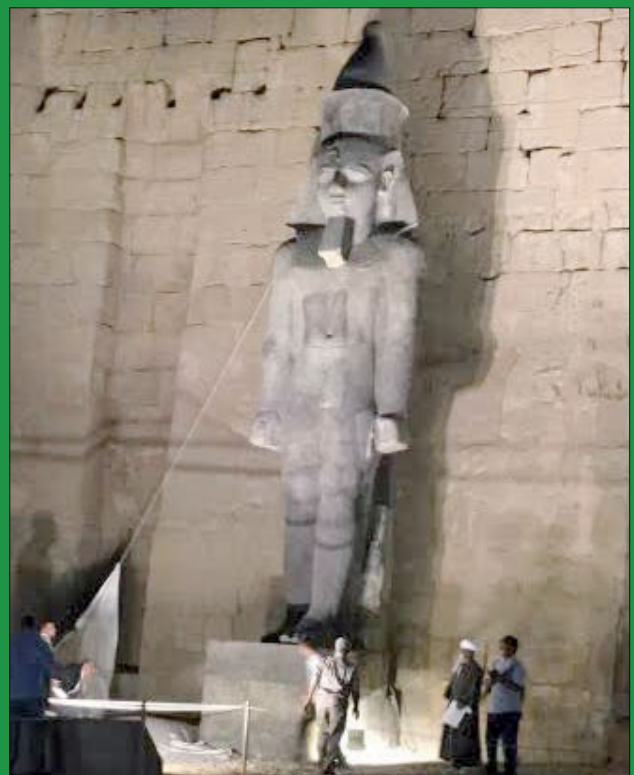
- Engineer Ibrahim Mehleb, Assistant to the President for National and Strategic Projects, visited GEM (5 April, 2017).
- Fifty-eight percent of the construction works have been completed, including 32% of the internal finishings and 46% of the outer areas and landscape.
- Preparations for the transport of the temple of King Snefru from the storehouses in Giza to GEM-Conservation Centre are underway. The temple is originally from Dahshur.

National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC)

- The lighting network of the public site is being completed, and equipment is being installed in the central research laboratory.

Conservation Projects

- Conservation of a colossal statue of the King Ramesses II was recently restored in front of the first pylon of Luxor Temple. The statue was discovered broken into fifty-seven fragments. Restoration works began in November 2016 by a team of Egyptian archaeologists and restorations. The statue black granite statue is about 11 meters from the base to the crown, weighing about seventy-five tons, wearing a double crown standing in advance his left foot forward. His wife, Queen Nefertari, appears by his side.
- The restoration team at al-Jawhara Palace in Salah al-Din Citadel have successfully restored an oil painting of a royal woman from Muhammad Aly Palace in Shubra. The painting, which shows a royal lady, will hopefully go on display soon. Restoration is continuing on other paintings in the same collection.



Meetings and Visits



- H.E. the Minister of Antiquities visited and inaugurated a new visitor route at Kom al-Dikka in Alexandria, which includes the Roman amphitheatre, baths, and the so-called Bird Villa, in addition to a number of Hellenistic buildings (1 April, 2017).
- The Minister of Antiquities, the Governor of Alexandria and members of the parliamentary committee for “Media, Culture and Antiquities” and the committee for “Tourism and Aviation” to discuss challenges facing archaeological sites and museums in Alexandria (1-2 April 2017).
- Engineer Ibrahim Mehleb, Assistant to the President for National and Strategic Projects, visited the Giza Plateau development Project and the Grand Egyptian Museum, accompanied by the Minister of Antiquities (5 April, 2017).
- The Minister of Antiquities was accompanied by MoA officials on visits to: Cairo (Salah al-Din Citadel, Museum of Islamic Art, al-Mu’ezz Street); Giza (Giza Plateau Development Project, GEM, Bahareyyah Oasis); Luxor (Amun-Re Temple at Karnak, Luxor Museum, Userhat Tomb in Western Thebes, Amenhotep III Mortuary Temple in Western Thebes); Alexandria (Mosaic Museum, Greco-Roman Museum, Villa of the Birds).
- The Minister of Antiquities received several high official guests including the Director of the Egyptian Museum in Turin and the Director of the Egyptian-German Mission working in Tuna al-Gebel.



Protocols

- Dr Mahmoud Afifi, Head of the Egyptian Antiquities Sector, on behalf of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, signed a protocol of cooperation with the National Organization for Urban Harmony (24 April, 2017).

Cultural Events and Community Outreach

- Several museums celebrated the World Orphans Day, including: the Textile Museum, the Museum of Islamic Art, the National Museum of Suez, and the Rasheed National Museum.



- A celebration was held in the garden of the Museum of Islamic Art to announce that the museum will now be open every Saturday evening from 5 to 9 pm. The event was attended by ministers, parliament members, university professors, ambassadors, and heads of foreign archaeological institutions in Egypt.
- MoA celebrated World Heritage Day in Luxor in the presence of the Minister of Antiquities and a number of foreign ambassadors, who attended several events there (18 April, 2017).
- Several archaeological sites and museums celebrated World Heritage Day, including: Mallawi Museum which organized an exhibition of traditional crafts products; the Department of Archaeological Awareness in Marina, which organized an exhibition for traditional crafts made by Al-Alamein School; and the Department of Archaeological Awareness in Qena, which organized a conference in the Temple of Dendera in collaboration, including a guided tour of the temple (April 18, 2017).



- The Rommel Cave Museum, located in one of the natural caves in Marsa Matrouh, is being refurbished. The cave was used by German General Erwin Rommel to run military operations there during World War II. In 1997, the cave was turned into a museum housing a collection of weapons and a map of military sites during World War II.
- On the occasion of the Sinai liberation, Ministry of Antiquities opened all museums and archaeological sites for free for Egyptians and Arabs residing in Egypt (25 April, 2017).

Appointments

- Ahmed al-Rawy, Head of the Central Administration of Archaeological Units in Egyptian Ports, was appointed as Supervisor of the Airport Museum, in addition to his existing position.
- Basma Yousef Abd al-Hamid, Inspector at the Information and Statistics Center, was appointed to work with the Digital Services Team in the Minister's Office.

Decrees

Committees formed during March include:

- Establishing an Administration of Human Resources and Training.
- Establishing a Financial Resources Unit.
- MoA Board recently approved a new set of guidelines governing sponsorship, which will ease the procedures for sponsoring events or projects MoA sites.

Training

A study day was held in Sohag for MoA inspectors, administrators, as well as university staff and students. Lectures included: basics of photography, basic writing skills, archaeobotany, and applying for grants.



Conferences

The Center of Documentation of Ancient Egypt held its first annual conference about its work (24 April, 2017).

The Centre was established in 1975 / 1976 by the late Abd El-Rahman Abd El-Tawab, is considered an extension of the Committee for Preservation of Arab Antiquities which was established in 1881 to register and document Islamic monuments. The Committee continued until 1953 when it was annexed to the Egyptian Antiquities Authority. Since its establishment, the Centre has been documenting Islamic and Coptic antiquities, preparing complete files on each monument, including description and architectural drawings, in addition to collecting relevant



documents and publications. The Center is considered the main reference that provides the Islamic and Coptic Antiquities Sector of the MoA with documentation needed for excavation works or restoration projects.

In addition to participating in specialised committees for scientific research, the Centre spearheads the registration of Islamic and Coptic monuments, by preparing the proposals to declare monuments as antiquities and present their cases before the MoA's Permanent Committee.

The Center has a specialized library in the Islamic and Coptic monuments containing 2314 books. An engineering unit is also part of the Centre, and its documents old architectural drawings and maps of monuments, and compares them to new maps and drawings to document their conditions. One hundred and thirty-one monuments out of six hundred have been completely documented in Cairo alone. Researchers can contact the Center at its head office at Salah al-Din Citadel in order to access data required for their own research. The Centre's team is working towards a long term project to establish a comprehensive monument and architecture archive to be used in restoration works, for committees dealing with encroachments, or for committees deciding



on buffer zones. Digitising documentation and archival material is also planned, in addition to preparing a catalogue for decorative elements. The Centre is also continuing translating the forty Bulletins published by the Committee for Preservation of Arab Antiquities, of which twenty-seven have already been translated into Arabic and published.



The city of al-Fustat was an important economic centre in Islamic Egypt, and excavations in different parts of this ancient city have proven how diverse the economic activities there were. One particularly unusual archaeological find was a dye-facility, discovered by a French project working there in the 1930s. When plans for the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC) were underway, the dye-facility was taken into account, and is now – still in situ – in the museum's court yard.

The dye structure dates to Fatimid Period (A.H. 297–567 / A.D. 909–1171), based on the recovery of pottery sherds with a metallic lustre, that were characteristic of Fatimid Period. It has parallels in Morocco, which were instrumental in understanding how it would have once worked.

The structure consists of three rows of semi-circular basins made of red bricks. Each of the round basins is approximately 80cm in diameter and 70cm deep.

On the northern side of the dye structure, there are two rows of 10-red brick rectangular basins that were probably used to stabilize the dyes. According to the examined samples from the basins, the facility proved to have been used for dyeing both the textiles and leather.

The dying process was carried out in several stages, starting with processing the raw material meant to be dyed, whether fibres, textiles or leather. The raw material is then soaked in acid to soften it. Afterwards, it is soaked in plant-based dyes until it absorbs the required colour. This process may be done once, or can be repeated to obtain darker shades or more diverse colours. After obtaining the desired colour, the fibres or leathers are left on surfaces to dry before being made into the final product.

Recently, a team of Egyptian archaeologists began digitally documenting the dye structure, creating 3D photogrammetrical models to be better able understand the structure, its building techniques and to be able to present to visitors in a more dynamic manner.

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