

Museum International

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Egyptian collections

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April – June

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Talâtât (engraved and painted sandstone brick) from the ninth pylon of the southern Passage of the Processions in the Great Temple of Amon at Karnak, Eighteenth Dynasty.
© CFEETK. Photo: A. Bellod

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Temple of Philae, coloured lithograph executed by Lepère, taken from *Description de l'Égypte* (Vol. 1), nineteenth century. Private collection.
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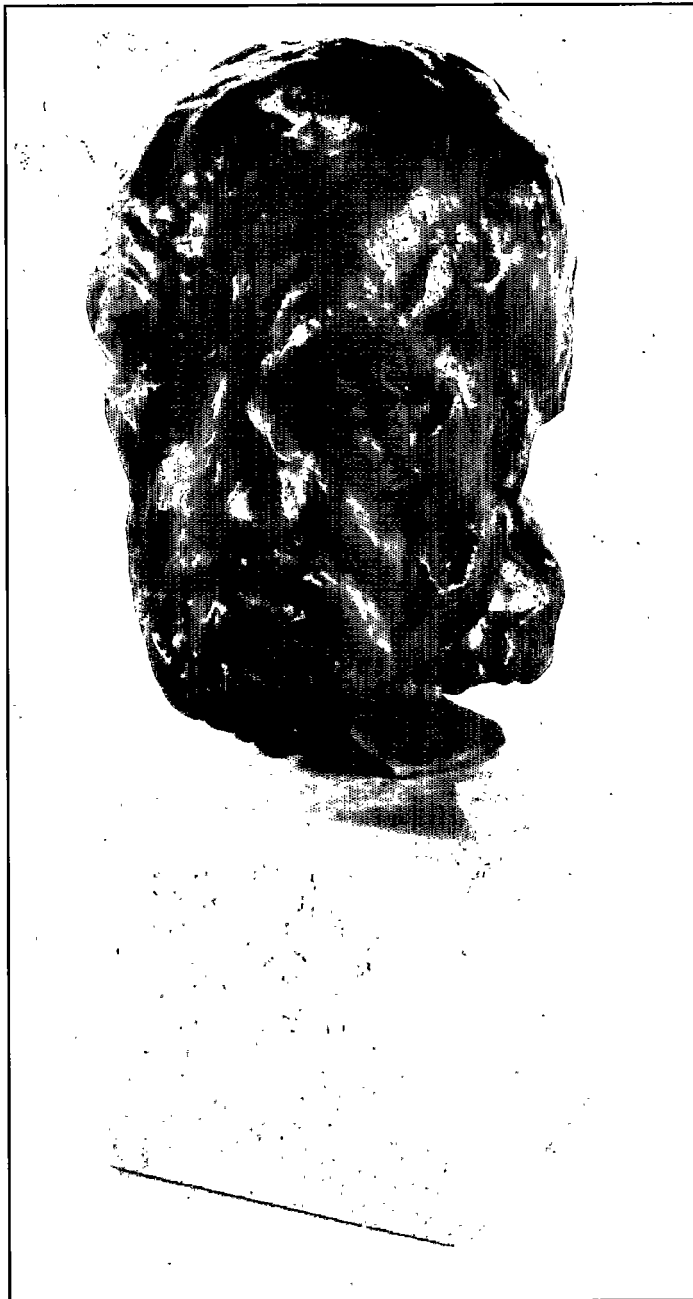
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STOLEN

Bronze statue entitled L'Homme au nez cassé (Man with a Broken Nose) by Rodin. Signed A. Rodin on the left side. Caster's mark on two lines on the right side: Alexis Rudier, Fondateur Paris.

Dimensions: 11.5 x 8.5 x 7 cm. The statue was stolen from a museum in Poitiers, France, between 16 June and 8 July 1993. (Reference 93/3209/SL Interpol France)

Photo by courtesy of the ICPO-Interpol General Secretariat

Editorial

Why Egypt?

If one is to believe Herodotus, Egyptians 'have existed ever since men appeared upon the earth'. More recent observers have noted that Egypt has a longer recorded history than any other country of the Western world, and have reminded us that our own epoch is closer in time to the great temples of classical Greece than the ancient Greeks were to the pyramids of the Old Kingdom. Reason enough for *Museum International* to take a close look at what a well-known Egyptologist has called 'the qualities traditionally attributed to Egypt: wisdom, excess, riches, immortality, mystery or simply exoticism'.¹

But there is yet another reason that prompted us to explore this fascinating and still timely topic: the science of Egyptology originated in museums. Without the wealth of museum objects and artefacts amassed by private and public collectors, modern man would know little about the meaning and significance of this ancient, rich and endlessly absorbing civilization, and would understand few, if any, of its contributions to contemporary life.

Until the end of the seventeenth century, Western Europe knew of Egypt largely through incidental references in the Old Testament and the works of classical writers. Herodotus made his famous journey through Egypt in the fifth century B.C. where he was later followed by a line of distinguished writers. But the beginnings of Egyptology as we know it came with Napoleon's campaign of 1798–99 and the publication of Denon's *Description de l'Égypte* in 1809–13. The sudden revelation of a strange and exotic civilization older than any so far known aroused immense public interest.²

This interest remains unflagging even today. The heritage of ancient Egypt casts its shadow far into later history. The art of Rome and of the Renaissance, the applied arts of the Napoleonic era, the ceramics of Josiah Wedgwood, the jewellery of René Lalique, the all-embracing movements known as Art Nouveau and Art Deco are but a few of the ways in which this epoch has influenced our own modern culture.

Egyptology is the study of Ancient Egyptian civilization during the 3,000-year-old Pharaonic era and the subsequent Graeco-Roman and Christian periods as well as the study of Nubia in the south. Museums have played a fundamental role in making Egyptian antiquities accessible to the largest possible public. Underpinning this effort is the indispensable scientific research that has led to rational and ethical collecting policies, technological progress in conservation and restoration, sound documentation and publication standards, realistic and creative displays, as well as a host of materials and approaches that explain, interpret and illustrate collections. These are the considerations that have inspired the broad range of subjects covered in our thematic dossier.

Readers should note that nomenclature in Egyptology may vary; for example, the Pharaohs known as 'Amenhotep' were also called 'Amenophis'. *Museum International* has in every case respected the author's designation.

A special word of thanks must go to Hans D. Schneider, Chairman of ICOM's International Committee for Egyptology, whose knowledge, experience and tenacity made this issue possible. His integrity and uncompromising commitment to the highest standards of scholarship have earned him a special place in the international museum community.

M.L.

Notes

1. Christiane Ziegler, 'Les sources d'inspiration de l'égyptomanie', *Dossier de l'Art* (Dijon, France), No. 17, February/March 1994, pp. 4–13.
2. See John Ruffle, *The Egyptians*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1977.

What visitors want to see

Dietrich Wildung

'In museum complexes in which the art and culture of the whole world, from prehistory to the present day, are exhibited, it is almost always the Egyptian departments that meet with the keenest interest on the part of museum visitors.' Dietrich Wildung thus challenges the received wisdom that has prompted many museums to give short shrift to their Egyptian collections, and explains why visitors have always flocked to view them. The author is Director of the Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection at the State Museums of Berlin and Professor of Egyptology at the Free University of Berlin. He is President of the International Association of Egyptologists and director of archaeological digs in Egypt and the Sudan.

'Ex oriente lux' – the light shines from the East – is of course a well-known saying in what we know as the 'Western world'. It describes the origin of culture and civilization, but the fact remains that the Western world perceives its roots almost entirely in the tradition of classical antiquity, in Greece and Rome. Cultures that predate the beginnings of classical Greece in the mid-first millennium B.C. are often described as 'pre-Greek' and that expression has distinctly negative overtones. It sees the ancient cultures of the Near East as childlike steps along the road to the high culture which did not blossom into full maturity until Athens and Rome. That attitude prolongs an evolutionary concept of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which understood their own culture as the end point and culmination of a process that becomes increasingly primitive the farther back in time we look.

That alienated attitude to ancient Mesopotamia and Anatolia, Egypt and the Sudan has its roots in scientific history. The interest in antiquity which began in the days of the Renaissance concentrates on written sources, that is, on Latin, Greek and Arabic texts. Information on the ancient eastern Mediterranean area and the Near East only reached Europe at second-hand through these later writings and was therefore not authentic, in the strict sense of the term. Direct access to the written sources of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia was impossible as neither the cuneiform script nor the hieroglyphs could be read and translated at the time. There was therefore no serious scientific confrontation with that period and when, in 1822, Jean-François Champollion solved the riddle of the hieroglyphs, an image of ancient Egypt coloured by magic and mummies had long since taken hold. Goethe's attitude to the ancient Egyp-

tians is a typical example: first, he enthused over their art, only to turn his back on it later under the influence of Herder because (in the opinion that was current in his day) they did not have a sophisticated system of writing.

It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the true wealth of ancient Egyptian culture began to become apparent as the literary heritage of Egypt was then made accessible. It provides precise information on the 3,000-year-long history of the Pharaonic empire. It explains the esoteric imagery of the ancient Egyptian religion recorded in temple reliefs, tomb paintings and on papyrus. It now also became clear just how much Greek and Roman cultures owed to the ancient Egyptians: the calendar and decimal system, the fundamentals of medicine and mathematics. The influence of ancient Egyptian religion, with its latent monotheism, on Judaism and Christianity was now also revealed by the written texts.

Astonishingly enough, this knowledge acquired in over 150 years of Egyptology has still not properly penetrated into the awareness of neighbouring disciplines. The texts of ancient Egyptian religion, philosophy, science and literature are admittedly available today in translation, but little attention is paid to them. This subordination of ancient Egypt to the cultures of classical antiquity brought about by the traditions of European classicism is mirrored in the status accorded, both now and in the past, to Egyptian art and archaeology in our museums. Ancient Egyptian objects first reached the collections of precious items in the European princely courts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the newly established museums of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – for example, in London,

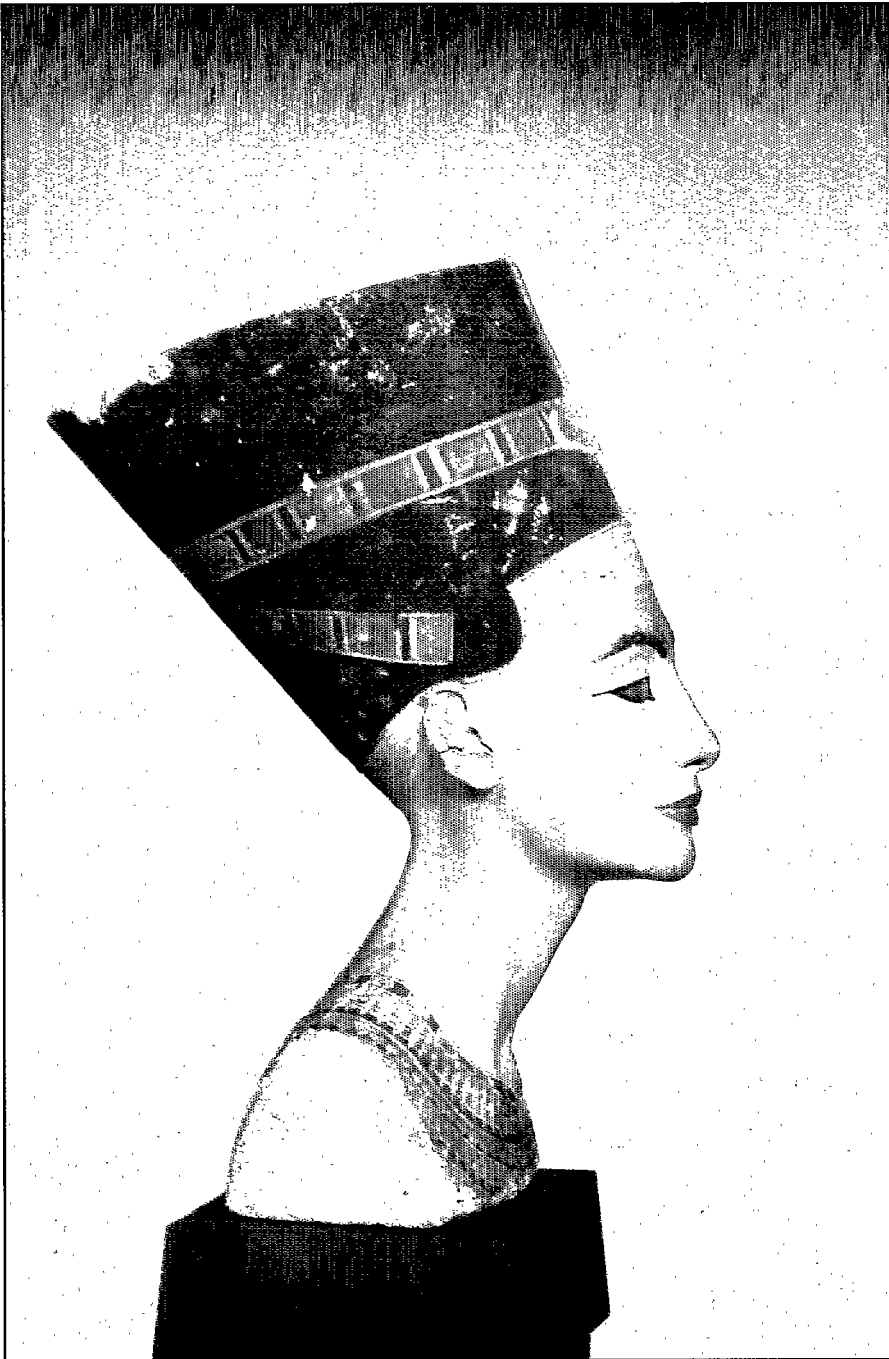
Paris, Leiden, Berlin and the Vatican – ancient Egypt was presented as no more than the precursor of classical antiquity. Seldom was a separate Egyptian museum set up, Turin being one of the few examples. Even today, the public collections of ancient Egyptian art and culture are generally departments of larger museum complexes covering a wider range of themes, and it is not unusual for them to receive the least support from museum management and little or no attention on the occasion of renovation projects or the construction of new buildings. For instance, many departments of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, in the United States, have been modernized and extended, but the Egyptian department which is one of the most important to be found anywhere in the world, remains completely obsolete. Plans for the extension of the state collection of Egyptian art in Munich, a jewel for Egypt-lovers, have repeatedly been sacrificed to the development of museums of European art. In the process of modernization, the Egyptian departments of the Louvre, Vienna and the Brooklyn Museum come last.

The predominance of European art, from Greek antiquity to the present day, in museum policy certainly does not reflect the interest taken by the general public in these museums. Statistics show a completely different picture. In museum complexes in which the art and culture of the whole world, from prehistory to the present day, are exhibited, it is almost always the Egyptian departments that meet with the keenest interest on the part of museum visitors. It is true to say that many museums live on their Egyptian departments. When special exhibitions are organized, the ancient Egyptian themes regularly attract the largest numbers of visitors and when we look at the associations of Friends of Muse-

ums, the Egyptian groups have the largest number of members. The question as to why ancient Egypt is so popular with museum visitors tends to be answered with the old clichés about Egypt (i.e. mysticism and mummies), which for a long time prevented any serious study of Egypt. As long ago as 1840, the small Egyptian department of the Imperial Museum in Berlin received over 400 visitors on some days; there can be no doubt that they were not attracted by the art of ancient Egypt but instead by the room in which mummies were on display. Even today, the attraction of mummies remains a strong motivation for children and young people to visit museums.

A complex heritage readily understood

However, there are many other factors that make ancient Egypt so appealing in museums. The artistic and material heritage of Egypt has a uniquely informative and perceptible content; what is more, it is readily understandable. This is attributable to the extraordinarily fine state of preservation of the archaeological finds. Because of the favourable geoclimatic conditions prevailing in the Nile Valley, all the materials have been preserved: not just stone, metal and pottery but also wood, textiles, papyrus and basketwork. The diversity of the archaeological heritage gives a complete picture of life in ancient Egypt. Another reason why these finds have survived for thousands of years in such perfect condition is that they were often new and unused when they were buried as funeral offerings intended to accompany the departed rather than the living. Today, they fulfil their function exactly in the way in which the ancient Egyptians would have wanted: they preserve life after death. By looking at these objects, every museum visitor experiences a kind of resurrection



The bust of queen Nefertiti in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin attracts thousands of visitors every day and therefore needs a special display for 'mass traffic'.

of their owners just as they were between 2,000 and 5,000 years ago. Later cultures, such as those of Greece and Rome, present far less information than those of ancient Egypt as they have only been handed down to us in resistant materials – metal, pottery and stone.

Because of the excellent condition of the finds, ancient Egypt is not just presented in the museums in the stone monuments of

high art but also in everyday utensils, and its statues and reliefs can be seen by visitors not just as ancient sculptures whose effect is diminished by the disappearance of their colours but in their original polychrome finish which imparts a vital character to them. The immediate and direct effect of ancient Egyptian works of art also resides in the basic structures of that art. Its lucid and perceptible formal language remains readily understandable. Its reliefs are vigorously clear with their principles which resemble those of cubism, but their content cannot be read without a knowledge of ancient Egypt. This direct encounter with ancient Egypt can only be experienced in front of the originals, either in Egypt itself – which remains beyond any doubt the most effective venue for such a dialogue spanning thousands of years – or in museums. Museums have a unique opportunity here. They are able to offer authentic information and more than mere information, namely, an impression that the observer and the observed object are contemporaneous. Confronted with the living character of an ancient Egyptian statue or a portrait head, modern visitors experience an invitation to a dialogue; they overlook the vast distance in time spanning thousands of years and discover timelessness, the modernity of ancient Egypt or, viewed from a different angle, the involvement of our modern age in tradition and history.

Many museums have actively helped to rediscover and preserve the cultural heritage of ancient Egypt. The large Egyptian collections in the United States consist mainly of objects found in diggings organized by these museums. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the University Museum in Philadelphia, have been continuously engaged in field research in Egypt, and to some extent also in the Sudan, since the early

twentieth century. Because of the division of finds which used to be the rule in Egypt and the Sudan (and still holds good today in the latter), the museums have kept some of the finds made in their diggings and therefore remain today, in a sense, cultural ambassadors of the country of origin of their exhibits. Because of the finds made in its diggings at Amarna and Abusir, the Egyptian Museum in Berlin, along with the Museum of Pergamon and the Museum of the Middle East, were to give ancient Egypt an identical ranking to the other ancient cultures and even to place it in the vanguard of public popularity.

Now that the ancient monuments of the Nile Valley are acutely threatened by climatic change, the population explosion and environmental damage, many other museums have decided in recent decades to play an active part in field research in Egypt. The Pelizaeus Museum in Hildesheim, the Brooklyn Museum in New York and the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden are outstanding examples.

Egyptian museums as research institutes

Research not only involves archaeological diggings in Egypt, but also includes publication by the museums of details of their own collections. In addition to the monuments of Egypt and the Sudan (i.e. the temples and tombs, the vestiges of population settlements and ancient quarries), the museum collections contain the memory of the ancient culture of the Nile Valley; they are an archive which has the technical, organizational, staff and financial resources necessary to conserve this cultural heritage in a responsible manner and to make it accessible to the public. Because of the diver-

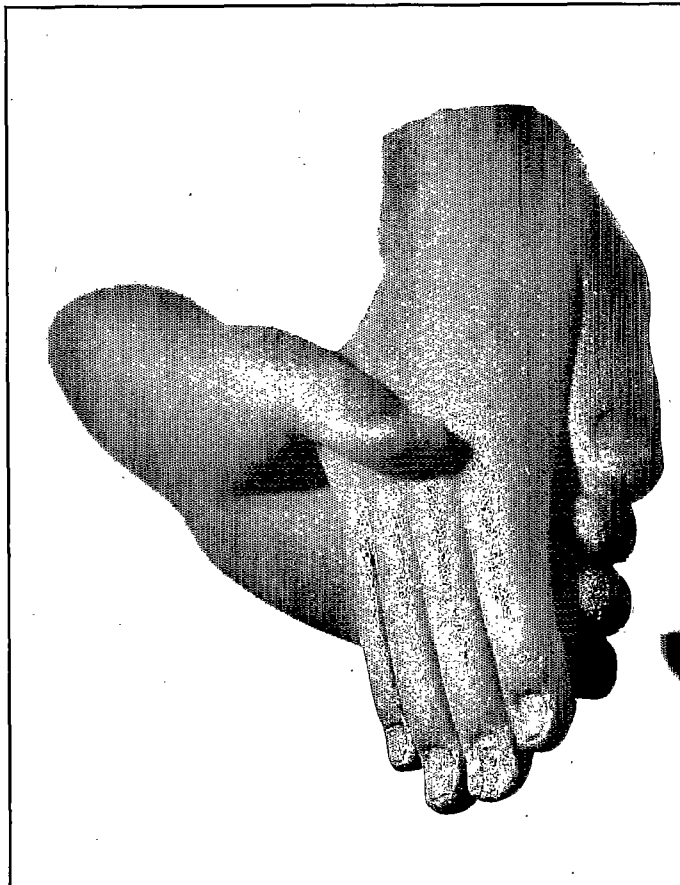


Photo by courtesy of the author

The hands of Akhenaten and Nefertiti in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin have particular appeal for connoisseurs.

sity of the heritage of ancient Egypt and the great influence of Egypt on classical antiquity, and hence also on our own age, the presentation of Egyptian objects in the museums must adopt many different approaches. Scientific studies are reported in specialized publications and reflected in the detailed classification of the items owned by museums. Exhibitions intended for the general public in an Egyptian museum should make suitable allowance for two different aspects: the specialized interests of Egypt-lovers, and the general enthusiasm of a mass audience for Egypt. The above-average numbers of visitors to Egyptian museums want to see the highlights in which they are interested read-

ily accessible with spacious and effective displays accompanied by easily understandable explanations. The individual visitor who is interested in specific items wishes to contemplate single exhibits without being disturbed by groups of visitors. Museums must therefore create an area for mass visits which does not conflict with individual exhibitions. In addition, the role of Egypt as one of the roots of world culture should be reflected in an exhibition concept which includes Egypt in a dialogue of world cultures across the boundaries of thousands of years and different continents.

The plans for the complex of archaeological museums in Berlin start out from these two basic concepts, the separation of mass

and individual visits and the integration of Egypt into the other thematic sections of the museums concerned.

It is to be hoped that other major museum complexes will also relax the strict separation between specialized areas and use the thematic diversity of their different departments in order to create situations of dialogue. Above all, it is to be hoped that the museums in Egypt and the Sudan will draw attention to the timeless, international importance of the old Nile Valley cultures in their exhibition concepts in order to bring home to visitors from their own countries, and in particular to young people, the fact that their region was already the focal point of world culture thousands of years ago. ■

The growth of museum collections

Morris L. Bierbrier

In the rarefied world of collectors and collections, Egyptian artefacts rank among the oldest specializations. How did these collections come to be? Who were the pioneers in bringing these works to widespread attention? Morris L. Bierbrier, Assistant Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum, provides a brief overview of how museums acquired these antiquities.

Ancient Egyptian antiquities reached Europe in small quantities through the hands of diplomats and merchants in Egypt from the Renaissance if not earlier. Most were small and easily portable and filled the cabinets of curiosities formed by discriminating collectors. These cabinets were to form the origins of the collections of the national museums of Europe. That of Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753) was the foundation of the British Museum's collection in 1753, while that of

the Comte de Caylus (1692–1765) passed into the French national collection. Larger pieces of Egyptian sculpture came mainly from excavations in Rome, where these objects had been taken at the time of the Roman Empire and many entered the Vatican collection. Only minor excavations took place in Egypt itself such as the work of Edward Wortley Montagu (1713–76), whose objects passed to the British Museum.

The Napoleonic invasion of Egypt brought that country and its antiquities to the notice of a wider public. Napoleon intended to create a museum of Egyptian antiquities and brought to Egypt a large band of scholars to record and collect monuments. A dozen or so pieces of sculpture and texts including the famous Rosetta Stone were gathered together to be sent to France, but the surrender of the French army to the combined Ottoman and British forces prevented their dispatch. Under the terms of the surrender, the antiquities were ceded to Great Britain with Ottoman approval and sent to London where they entered the British Museum, and helped to inspire a growing interest in ancient Egyptian art.

The advent of peace in Europe in 1815 led to a steady growth of travel to Egypt. Collections of antiquities were formed by some travellers but primarily by diplomats and merchants in Egypt for sale to the national museums of Europe. The British Consul General Henry Salt (1780–1827) sold his first collection to the British Museum in 1823 after some heated negotiations and his second collection to the Louvre in 1826. A third collection was sold at Sotheby's in 1835 when most of the important lots were acquired by the British Museum. The important first collection of the French Consul-General Drovetti (1776–1852) was acquired by the Turin Museum in 1824, his second by the Louvre in 1827, and his third collection by the Berlin Mu-

Photo by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum



Wooden figure of an official. Late Eighteenth Dynasty, c. 1320 B.C. British Museum, Salt collection, 1823.

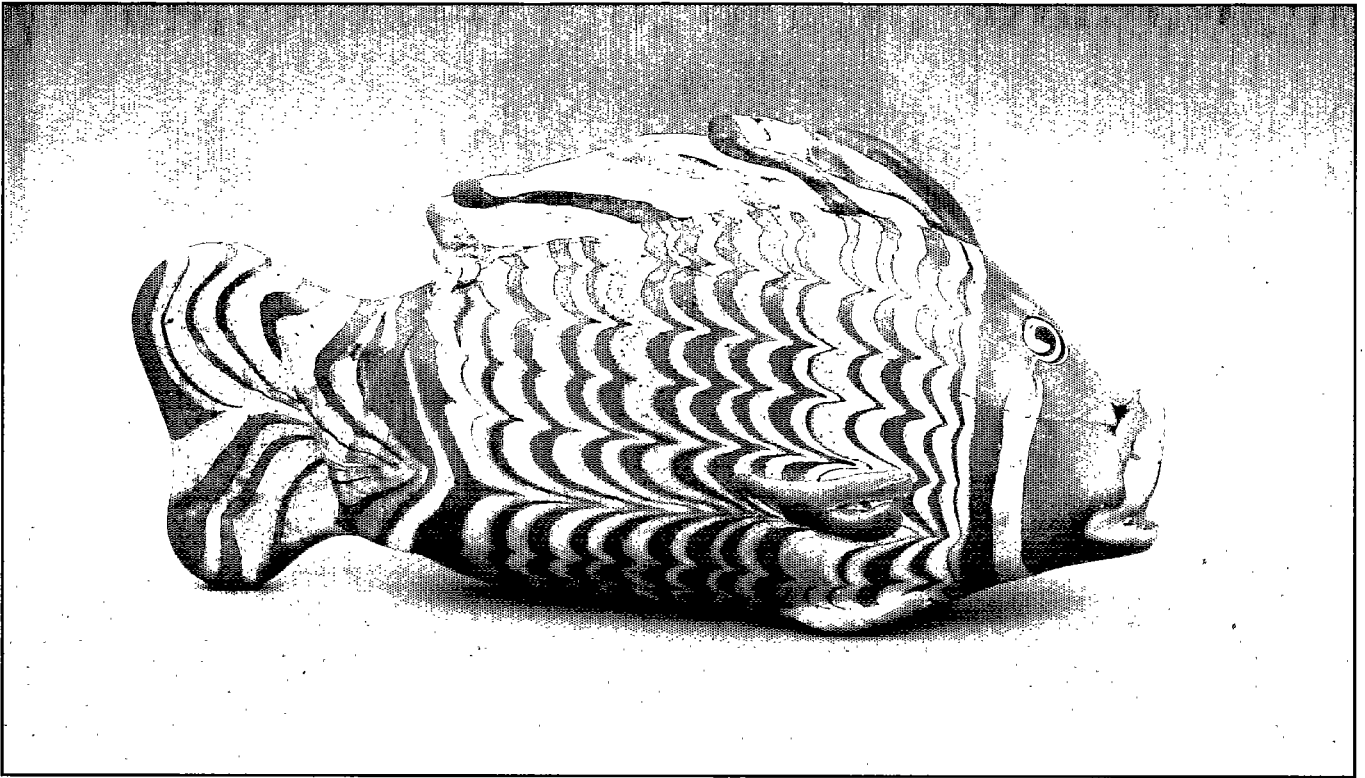


Ebony stool inlaid with ivory and leather covering. Eighteenth Dynasty, c. 1350 B.C. British Museum, Salt sale, 1835.

seum in 1836. The Austrian diplomat Nizzoli (fl. 1814–48) disposed of his collection in three parts to Vienna in 1821, to Florence in 1824 and to the collector Palagi in 1831 from whom it passed directly to Bologna. The Swedish Consul-General Anastasi (1780–1860) sold his primary collection to the Leiden Museum in 1828, a second to the British Museum in 1839 and a third was auctioned in Paris in 1857. The collection of Giuseppe Passalacqua (1797–1865) was purchased for the Berlin Museum, while that of Dr Henry Abbott (1812–59) was acquired by the New York Historical Society, later to pass to the Brooklyn Museum. Smaller private collections such as that of the dealer Joseph Sams (1784–1860) and the traveller the Earl of Belmore (1794–1843) passed to the British Museum in 1834 and 1843, while a second Sams collection was acquired by Joseph Mayer (1803–80) and formed the basis of the Liverpool Museum collection.

The core of collections of Egyptian antiquities in the national museums outside Egypt was thus formed through the purchase of collections of ancient Egyptian antiquities from individuals who had acquired them directly in Egypt. Several governments sent special expeditions to survey Egyptian monuments and collect antiquities. A joint French and Italian expedition under Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832) and Ippolito Rossellini (1800–43) acquired objects for the Louvre and Florence in 1828/29, while Karl Richard Lepsius (1810–84) led the Prussian expedition to Egypt and Nubia in 1842–45 which enriched the Berlin Museum. The number of Egyptian objects on the commercial art market was limited and this was not a major source of material for museums at that time.

The continuing interest in Egyptian antiquities and the increasing numbers of travellers stimulated the growth of local antiquities dealers in Egypt and uncontrolled excavations. Auguste Mariette (1821–81) had been sent to Egypt in 1850 on a mission for the Louvre when he discovered the Serapeum at Saqqara, the finds from which were divided between the Louvre and Egypt. In 1858 he was appointed Director of Antiquities by the Egyptian Government and took over the task of controlling and directing all excavations in the country. In 1863 he founded the Bulaq (later Cairo) Museum where his archaeological discoveries were exhibited. The organization of the Egyptian Antiquities Service was further developed under his successor Gaston Maspero (1896–1916). Foreign museums, universities and individuals were allowed to excavate in Egypt on the condition that all important finds go to the Cairo Museum, but a generous division was usually permitted to the excavator. Antiquities dealers were



licensed and the Cairo Museum itself had a sale room to dispose of unwanted material both to museums and individuals.

With the prospect of divisions, many museums and academic institutions began to fund excavations in Egypt to acquire objects for their collections. The Egypt Exploration Fund (later Society) was founded in 1882 to excavate in Egypt, and many of the finds were presented to the British Museum and other British, American and Australian institutions. Archaeologists such as Flinders Petrie (1853–1942) and John Garstang (1876–1956) excavated independently. Many of the finds went to University College London, and Liverpool Museum respectively, but all these excavations were supported by individual subscribers who received some of the divided finds. The French Institute in Cairo carried out excavations, and many of its finds passed to the Louvre and other French museums. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts financed the work of George Reisner (1867–1942) in Nubia and Giza and enriched its collec-

tions and similarly the Metropolitan Museum of New York maintained a team in Egypt, notably at Thebes, whose finds formed a major part of its collection. Notable German excavations provided material for the Berlin Museum and the Hildesheim Museum. Needless to say, the collection of the Cairo Museum continued to grow through the work of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization and the divisions with foreign institutions, and soon housed the largest and finest collection of Egyptian Antiquities in the world.

Following the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922, new and more stringent regulations on the export of antiquities and the operation of divisions were introduced, and, after 1952, the export of all antiquities apart from approved divisions was prohibited. It is the policy of the British Museum and many other institutions to acquire by purchase only material which can be shown to have been legally exported from Egypt before these regulations came into effect. ■

Glass perfume bottle from Amarna in the shape of a Nile fish. Eighteenth Dynasty, c. 1350 B.C. British Museum. Presented by the Egypt Exploration Society, 1921.

Museums and fieldwork: retrieving the past

Hans D. Schneider

Many of the objects in the oldest museum collections of Egyptian antiquities were acquired without any scientific purpose; their provenance and the circumstances of their find are often unknown.

Fieldwork – the study of the nineteenth-century archaeological sites – thus becomes an indispensable way of filling gaps in information and understanding. Hans Schneider describes one such project currently underway at the Memphite necropolis at Saqqara. The author is Curator in the Egyptian Department of the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (the Netherlands) and is Deputy Director of the Saqqara mission. He is currently President of the ICOM International Committee for Egyptology.

One of the tasks of the museum curator is the continuous study of the objects in his care. Why and how were the objects produced? How did they function in their original context? Which information do they procure for our knowledge of the cultures and civilizations from which they stem? Which message do they transmit to our present-day society? Last but not least, how did our curatorial predecessors acquire them? Such questions about the 'truth' of the objects, and the answers elicited by them, determine to no little degree the work programme of museums. Only on the basis of profound research on the collection can sound policies be established for acquiring other objects, for drafting conservation programmes, and for the presentation of the material in permanent installations or in temporary exhibitions. As regards, for instance, the acquisition of new objects – a prerequisite for keeping the collection and, for that matter, the museum itself, lively – we should always make certain that the pieces we wish to obtain would really make a valuable and substantial contribution to the collection we already own. Do they add new information to the collection or do they fill a gap? For Egyptologists working in a museum the best instrument for obtaining new, additional knowledge about the objects entrusted to their care is fieldwork. Nowadays the principal objective of excavating in Egypt is, as a matter of course, the collecting of information rather than actually acquiring the excavated material, since the finds are duly to remain in their country of origin and should be kept and exhibited on or near the site where they have been exposed. For many museums with Egyptian collections fieldwork in Egypt is a *sine qua non*, and thanks to the understanding, generosity and goodwill of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, teams from many countries in the world are yearly carrying out excavation projects in the Land of the

Pharaohs. At present at least twenty museums in Europe, Canada and the United States are active in the field.

Several excavations are organized by museums that have a long-standing tradition in fieldwork. Some of them are, in fact, the cradles of the science of Egyptology: the Musée du Louvre in Paris, the British Museum in London, the Museo Egizio in Turin, the Staatliche Museen in Berlin, and the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden. Especially for these museums and other old museum institutions in Europe (in Bologna, Florence, St Petersburg, Moscow and Vienna) which house the first large collections ever brought together in the early nineteenth century, the adage is: '*ad fontes*' – go back to the sources of your collections. In other words, re-explore those sites where, shortly after the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt during the first decades of the last century, hundreds of monuments and objects, now displayed in the old museums of Europe but also in Egypt itself, had been unearthed and brought to light, as a rule, without the benefit of scientific method. Numerous Egyptian pieces, many of which range among the finest works of art humanity has ever created, have been exposed by collectors and dealers who were oblivious to provenances and finding circumstances.

The Memphite New Kingdom Project

One of the long-term and large-scale excavation projects in Egypt illustrating this special type of field research is carried out by the joint expedition of the Egypt Exploration Society in London and the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, in the Memphite necropolis at Saqqara. The objective of this project is not to open new sites, but to re-investigate an area which has been dug and plundered in the past,



© EES–Leiden Museum Expedition (P. J. Bomhof)

and to relocate tombs from which, mainly during the early nineteenth century, thousands of antiquities were removed – material that was subsequently acquired by museums in Europe and in Egypt itself. The museum in Leiden boasts an outstanding Egyptian collection, large parts of which had been dug up in this particular area: the necropolis of the ancient capital of Egypt, Memphis. The objects had been acquired by William I of the Netherlands, shortly after the museum was founded in 1818. Many of them are of great historical importance and fine examples of the arts and crafts of the New Kingdom, the epoch when Egypt reached the zenith of its impressive civilization. The largest sector of the Memphite New Kingdom necropolis is located just south of the step pyramid of Djoser, on the western desert plateau overlooking the Nile valley, not far from the site of the city of Memphis, about 50 km south of Cairo. It was in this terrain, now resembling a moon landscape with craters and hills – these are in fact the courtyards, chapels and pylons of large, temple-shaped tomb structures of limestone and mud-

brick, covered by the desert – that the élite of Memphis were interred. They were the high officials, who pressed their mark on the civilization under the kings of the New Kingdom: the Pharaohs Amenhotep III, Akhenaten, Tutankhamun, Ay and Horemheb, of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and Sethy I and Ramesses II of the Nineteenth Dynasty, who ruled Egypt in the Fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C.

Memphis, once one of the largest and most affluent metropolises of the ancient world, is now an area of ruins covered by palm groves. Here were the royal palaces and administration offices, and also warehouses and workshops of craftsmen and artists; here was a harbour and, last but not least, the temple complex of Ptah, one of the leading intellectual and religious centres of Egypt. Ptah was the great creator-god, protector of intellectual and material creativity, and therefore the patron god of artists. Since the City of the White Walls, as Memphis was named by the Egyptians, has almost literally disappeared under the muddy soil of the valley, the archaeologist

Tomb of Maya and Meryt at Saqqara. Maya was Director of the Treasury in the reign of Tutankhamun, c.1330 B.C.

who wants to study the life, religion and arts of the ancient Memphites, is primarily dependent on the investigation of the necropolis along the rocky desert escarpment near Saqqara.

From documents left by early explorers and from sale and auction catalogues kept in museum archives, we know that several of the digging enterprises in this necropolis were joint ventures. Two or more collectors, or their agents, financed and supervised the digs and received their share of the finds, or they exchanged, bought and sold pieces between them. This is the reason why so many objects which belong to the same tomb contents ended up in so many different collections. Guiseppe di Nizoli, Consul of Austria, for example, joined forces with Jean d'Anastasy, Consul of Sweden and Norway. Among others they drew material from the tomb of Amenhotep-Huy, a high official under Pharaoh Amenhotep III. Anastasy's share was later sold with many other monuments and objects to the Leiden Museum. The collection of Anastasy, in total more than 5,000 pieces, also comprised three now famous tomb statues of Maya, director of the treasury of Tutankhamun. The partial 'excavation' of the tomb of Horemheb, commander-in-chief under Tutankhamun, was a common enterprise, too, in which several collectors participated, among others the British Consul Henry Salt and probably also agents of Anastasy. This explains why parts of this tomb are not only to be found in London and Leiden but in many other museums as well. Needless to say the British-Netherlands project is not confined to excavating and restoring ancient monuments alone. The on-paper reallocation of architectural and decorative elements such as reliefs to their original place in the tombs, and the reconstruction of the original contents of the burial chambers (grave goods, partly retrieved in the

excavation itself, and partly scattered over many collections) forms a large and pure museological component of the research.

In search of Maya

One of the first objectives of the British-Netherlands expedition was the relocation of the tomb of Maya and his wife Meryt. This tomb is one of several monuments marked on a map by the great German Egyptologist Richard Lepsius, the first scholar in modern times to explore the Memphite necropolis for scientific reasons, in 1843. The location of this tomb was presumably pointed out to Lepsius by Anastasy, who a few decades earlier had removed therefrom the statues of Maya and his wife. However, not the tomb of this famous couple, but that of his great colleague and later king, General Horemheb, was the first monument the expedition discovered, immediately at the outset of the project in 1975. This tomb, undoubtedly the most important building in this part of the necropolis, seems to form the centre of a sector reserved as a burial place for the high officials who lived under Pharaoh Tutankhamun and his immediate successors. The superstructure is built like a temple, comprising a pylon, colonnaded courtyards and chapels, and measures 50 by 15 m. The walls, 3 to 4 m high, were covered with superb limestone reliefs, great parts of which are still in place. Apart from new facts about the career of the general and deputy of the young king, and data concerning the funerary cults, the religion, art and architecture in the Memphite region, this discovery revealed important information on the original places and correlation of those reliefs which had been removed in the last century and are now scattered over at least fourteen collections. Among these reliefs are the famous jubilee scenes of General Horemheb in the mu-



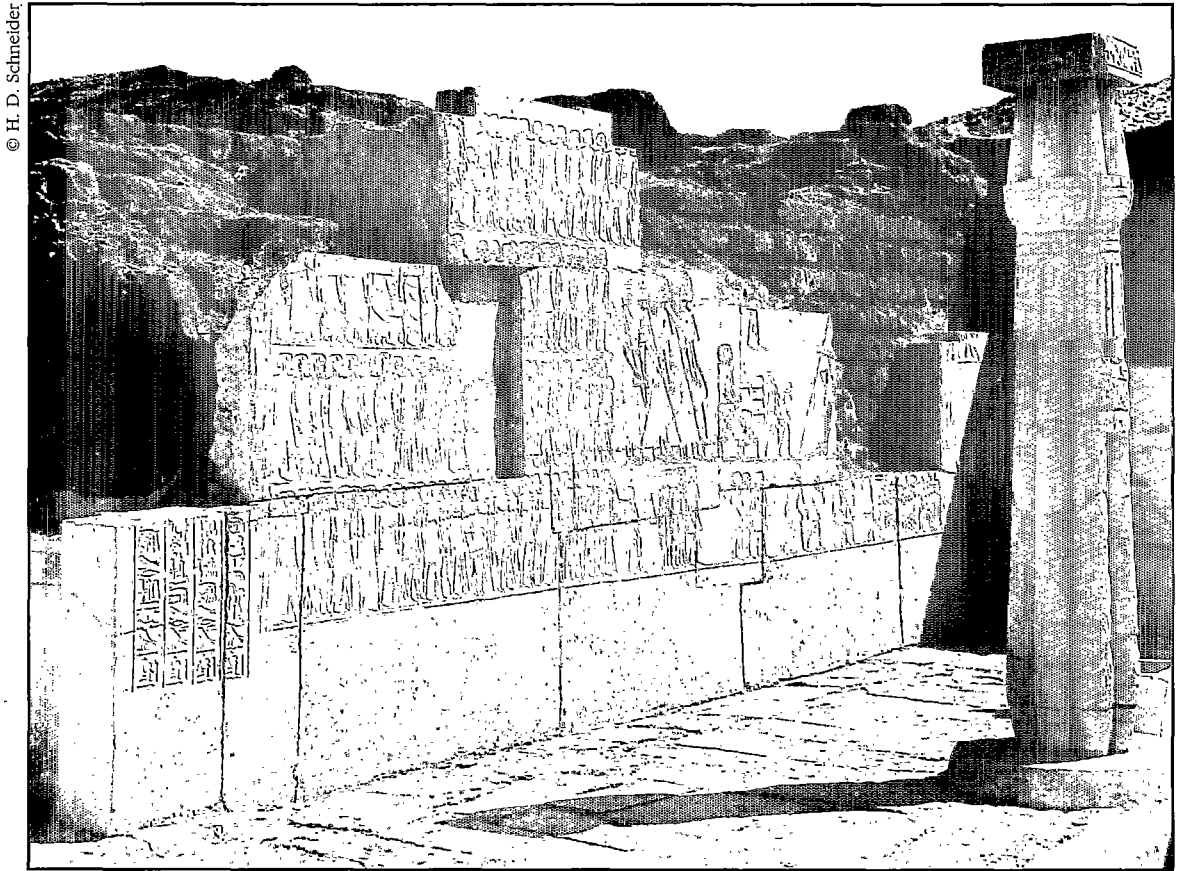
© EES-Leiden Museum Expedition (P. J. Bomhof)

seum in Leiden. Horemheb ascended the throne of Egypt around 1330 B.C. and was buried in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes around 1306 B.C. Finds in the impressive, rock-cut subterranean parts of his Memphite tomb at Saqqara suggest that one of the burial chambers was eventually used for Horemheb's queen, Mutnodjemet.

The excavation of the long-lost tomb of Horemheb was followed by a series of important discoveries, which shed more and important light on many museum objects. Successively the tombs of a great number of officials, already known from stelae, statues, funerary statuettes (shabtis), objects of daily life, and inscriptions, all in Egyptian and foreign collections, were

relocated and excavated: the burial chamber of Princess Baketanta, daughter of Ramesses II; the tomb complex of Princess Tia, a sister of King Ramesses, and her husband, the Director of the Treasury, who also was called Tia; tombs of the Goldwasher of the Lord of the Two Lands, Khay; the Head of the Bowmen of the Tradesmen, Pabes, a son of the latter; the Royal Scribe and Overseer of the Building-works, Paser; the Upper-musician of Ptah, Raia; the Head of the Bowmen of the Army, Ramose; and the scribe of the Treasury and secretary of Tia, Iurudéf. At long last, in 1986, twelve years after the outset of the project, the tomb of Maya and Meryt was found. This discovery, an archaeological adventure in itself, is in many respects

Fragment of a wall relief showing Maya. From the burial chambers of Maya and Meryt, 22 m below the superstructure of the tomb.



© H. D. Schneider

Wall reliefs, showing captives from foreign countries, in the inner court of the Memphite tomb of General Horemheb (who served during the reign of Tutankhamun, c.1330 B.C.) at Saqqara.

remarkable: the architecture of the superstructure, a part of which was last seen by Lepsius in 1843, is still reasonably preserved, and the wall reliefs are partly in place. The reveals of the pylon, which gives access to the building, are still covered with impressive, painted reliefs, showing Maya and his wife in the company of other members of their family and Maya's staff. Inscriptions tell us about his career as Director of the Gold House, the Treasury. Maya, who, quite appropriately, is addressed in the texts as 'The Two Eyes of the Gold House', served as a minister under Tutankhamun and Horemheb, and was, in his capacity of Director of the royal necropolis at Thebes, responsible for the burial of the young king. The tomb chambers where he himself and his spouse Meryt were buried are of royal allure. They are located at a depth of 21 m below the pavement of the courtyard above, and can be reached via two shafts and a spiral staircase. The walls are covered with reliefs showing Maya and Meryt officiating before the god Osiris and other divinities. All representations are painted yellow, the

magical colour substituting gold. It was in these golden surroundings that in the ninth year of the reign of Horemheb (c. 1325 B.C.) Maya's mummy was installed. The great man and his wife live on in the magnificent statues in the Museum of Antiquities in Leiden. These monuments were originally placed on pedestals which have been found *in situ* by the expedition in the superstructure of the tomb.

Archaeological research and museum presentation

Not only Egyptology as such, but the 'windows' and workshops of this science, the museums, greatly benefit from modern investigations in old and much exploited sites. This is once more demonstrated by the latest discoveries in the Memphite New Kingdom Necropolis at Saqqara. In 1993 the British-Netherlands expedition rediscovered the tomb of Iniuia, Overseer of the Cattle of Amun and High Steward of Memphis, under Tutankhamun. One chapel is decorated with exquisite paintings on mud-plaster,

and the walls of the second or central chapel were covered with a series of attractive reliefs representing the tomb-owner and his family. They give an impression of Iniuia's career. It appeared that these scenes were much influenced by the art style of Amarna, which was invented by Pharaoh Akhenaten. Parts of this relief decoration are in the Cairo Museum. The capstone or pyramidion of the little pyramid which once crowned the central chapel is in the Louvre, whereas the same museum also treasures Iniuia's impressive sarcophagus, once donated to King Louis XVIII of France. Two pillars of the central chapel are in Berlin; discovered by Lepsius, they were presented, together with many other antiquities, by the Egyptian Viceroy Mohammed Ali to the King of Prussia. A door lintel of the same chapel is in the Art Institute of Chicago and the lid of a shabti-coffin can be seen in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Considerable parts of the tomb complex of Pay and his son Raia, excavated in 1994, are also still intact. Painted scenes and fine reliefs represent the tomb-owners, who were both overseers of the royal harem in Memphis. Other monuments from this tomb are in Berlin, Brussels, Florence, London, New York, Paris (the Louvre and the Musée Rodin), and Vienna.

Thanks to the reconstruction of the original context and setting of objects from old and uncontexted collections, such objects obtain a new dimension in the museum presentation. In many cases it is now possible to match pieces originally belonging to the same tombs or to the burial equipment of the same owners, but which are dispersed over various museums in the world. By means of photographs and architectural drawings, by casts or even by bringing together the actual objects themselves through loans, 'old' museum acquisitions can be presented to the public in a new and more evocative arrangement. Through the

additional information provided by field research such pieces are no longer exclusively exhibited as fine examples of Memphite art of the New Kingdom, but as more complete archaeological documents of the history and civilization of their epoch.

The architecture of most tombs found so far by the Memphite New Kingdom expedition at Saqqara has been consolidated and restored, finds such as reliefs and architectural elements put back in their original places, and wall paintings in tomb chapels conserved. In one case, the tomb of Horemheb, casts of a number of reliefs in foreign collections, have been mounted on the walls, in order to complete those scenes which give highlights of Horemheb's pre-royal career as a general. The area, once buried under sand dunes and heaps of debris and potsherds left by the nineteenth-century explorers, has, during the combined process of excavating and restoring, gradually been transformed into an open-air museum. During the 1980s another sector of the same site was investigated by the University of Cairo. The Egyptian colleagues have exposed at least twenty large tomb structures, some with small pyramids, dating to the Nineteenth Dynasty. Several of these monuments are partly restored, others await reconstruction. The ground broken so far by both research teams is only a relatively small part of the whole New Kingdom necropolis. From inscriptions (including names and titles of several well-known personalities who lived and worked in Memphis), and from iconographical and style features to be found on many antiquities in the Cairo Museum and other collections, may be inferred that the number of treasures still awaiting rediscovery in this part of Saqqara must be considerable. This means that the reconstitution of the original background of museum objects coming from this part of Egypt has only just begun. ■

The Nubia Museum at Aswan

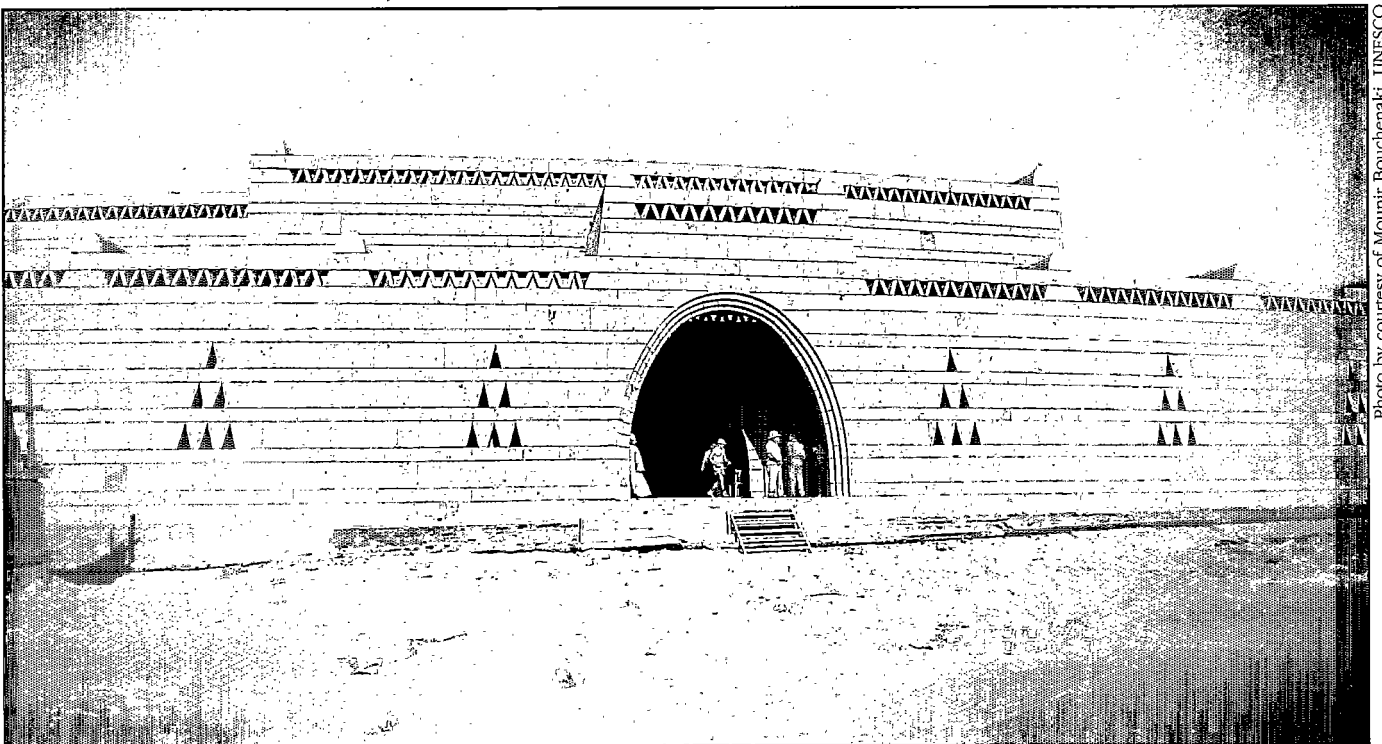
A Museum International report

Launched with an international appeal by UNESCO on 3 March 1982, the Nubia Museum at Aswan is scheduled to be completed by the end of 1995 or early 1996. It is intended to become the most important centre for the scientific study of Nubian civilization from ancient times until the modern era. The new museum is located at the top of a rocky hill of sandstone and limestone in a historic area containing ancient Egyptian quarries and a Fatimid mausoleum. The total surface area of 8,486 m² is shaped to reflect the traditional square or rectangle of ancient Egyptian structures in the region, apparent in the forms of temples, fortresses and domestic architecture. The two-storey building is comparatively low and is equipped with devices to protect against heat and glare, as well as special lifts and conveniences for the physically handicapped. The roof and façades of the building are of local stone and blend with the landscape of

stepped stone terraces. The curved catenary vault, a noted element in Nubian architecture since prehistoric times, is glorified in a functional way by being incorporated in the museum design, notably in the roof over the main entrance porch and in skylights that filter the sun through thermal glass. An outdoor exhibition site in the hollow between the museum and the neighbouring Fatimid mosque will present large archaeological objects and will feature a prehistoric zoo cave and a Nubian village.

The museum will illustrate the history of the region from prehistoric times to the construction of the Aswan High Dam and will primarily display archaeological collections, objects as well as documents, up to the Islamic period as well as ethnographic material. Prehistoric graffiti and architectural elements removed from their original setting may also be shown. The exhibit will emphasize the particular fea-

Entrance of the museum.



tures of Nubia, a region that played a fundamental role in the relationship between the Mediterranean area and central Africa. It will cover such themes as: the Nubian environment and its origin; prehistory; the Early Nubian phase; the pyramid age; the Middle Kingdom and the Middle Nubian phase; the Nubian kingdom and Hyksos period (sixteenth century B.C.); the New Kingdom – Nubia under Egyptian rule; the 'Ethiopian' Twenty-fifth Dynasty; the Meroitic occupation of Lower Nubia; the last pagans; the rulers from Ballana and Qustul (fifth and sixth centuries A.D.); Christian Nubia and Islamic Nubia (A.D. 1500–1800). Museum staff are currently preparing the list of selected exhibits that will eventually be displayed.

In order to fulfil its scientific and educational functions, the museum will house: a laboratory for restoration, including X-ray fluorescence; a photographic laboratory; up-to-date computer equipment; a library on Nubian history and the Nubian Campaign; and equipment

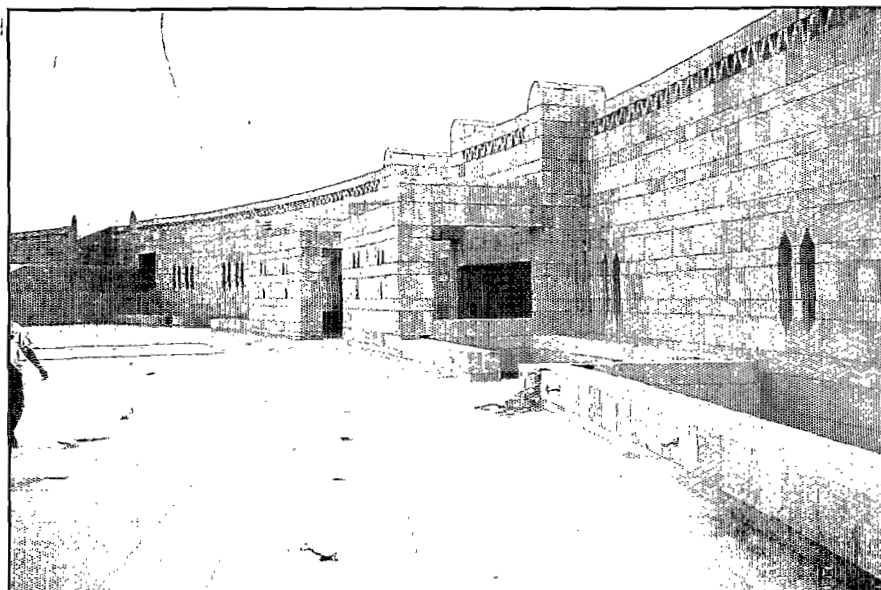


Photo by courtesy of Mounir Bouchenaki, UNESCO

and materials for the preparation of an audiovisual educational programme. Following a recommendation of the Executive Committee for the Aswan Museum, which is convened regularly by UNESCO, the training of senior staff was organized by ICOM. It began in May 1993 when the six candidates selected for the principal posts were sent abroad for six months to different cities. Further *in situ* training will also be co-ordinated by ICOM.

The museum will provide an overall picture of a region that not only has its own

Above: The terrace of the museum overlooking the landscaped surroundings.

Below: View of the Fatimid mausoleum and the modern city of Aswan.

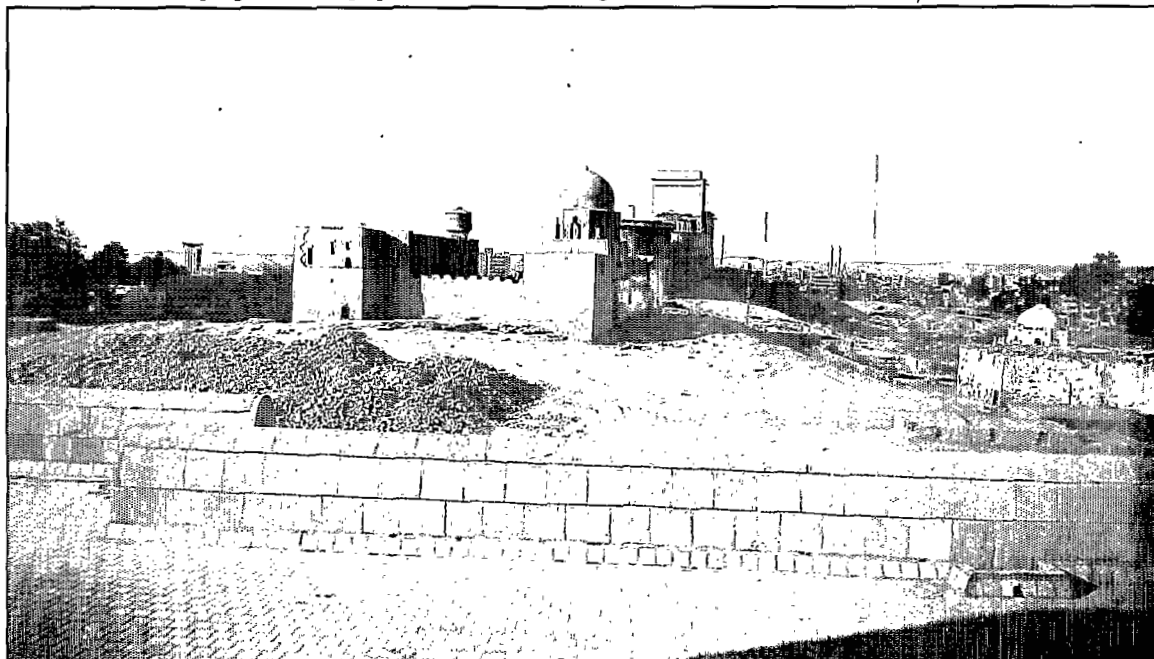


Photo by courtesy of Mounir Bouchenaki, UNESCO

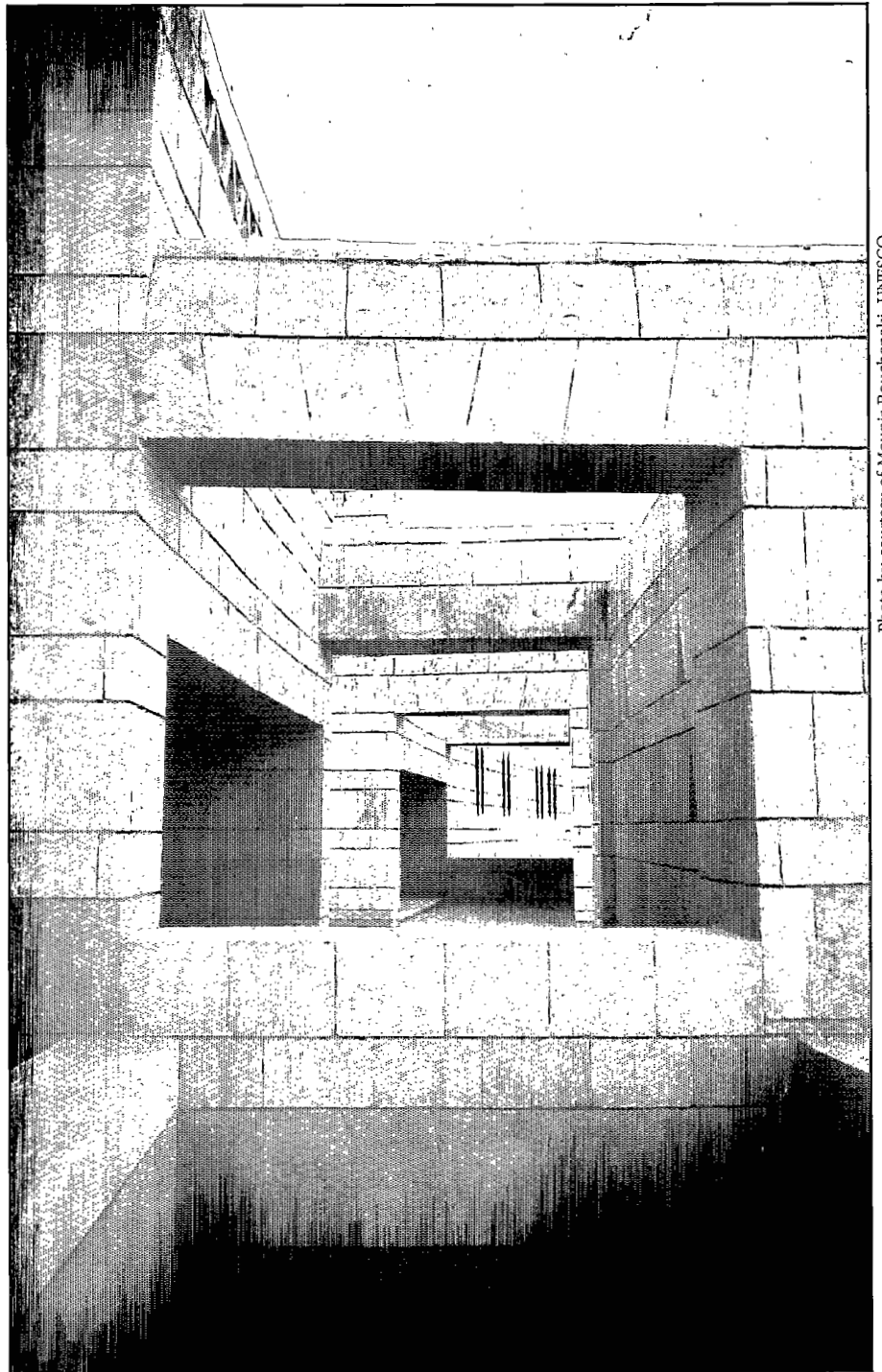


Photo by courtesy of Mounir Bouchenaki, UNESCO

Architectural detail of the terrace.

well-defined cultural patterns and rich heritage – both movable and immovable – but that has also been in modern times deeply transformed due to the construction of the Aswan High Dam, and has been the scene of an international archaeological cam-

paign, under UNESCO auspices, unique in its day. The newly created International Association of Friends of Egyptian Museums will allow the international community to continue to participate in the work of the museum. ■

Computerizing the Egyptian collections in the Louvre¹

Christiane Ziegler

The computerization of the Egyptian collections in the Louvre has created a research tool and knowledge base which is unique in the world. Christiane Ziegler is Chief Curator and Head of the Department of Egyptian Antiquities at the Musée du Louvre and professor of Egyptian archaeology at the École du Louvre. Ms Ziegler also directs the archaeological mission at Saqqara near Cairo, and is a member of the UNESCO International Committee for the new museums in Aswan and Cairo.

With its 55,000 works of art, the Egyptian Department of the Musée du Louvre houses one of the most remarkable archaeological collections in the world, enabling visitors to browse through 4,000 years of art and history. It is too frequently forgotten that the collection originated with Jean-François Champollion, the man who deciphered the hieroglyphs in 1822 and founded the science of Egyptology. On 15 May 1826, a

decree signed by Charles X set up a division of Egyptian monuments within the royal museum of the Louvre, and named Champollion Curator. Contrary to popularly held belief, the museum owes nothing to the celebrated Egyptian campaign conducted by Napoleon in 1799. Its core is formed by an exceptional collection assembled by Henry Salt, the British Consul, which was purchased by France on



View of a series of rooms in the Musée Charles X. The first Egyptian museum, it was established under the direction of Jean-François Champollion.

Champollion's initiative. By the time the pioneer Egyptologist died in 1832, the Louvre already possessed an Egyptian department inspired by revolutionary museographical concepts and containing more than 9,000 pieces. The rooms have been continually embellished and the collections increased ever since, with numerous donations and acquisitions, and the sharing of archaeological finds generously granted by Egypt to the many teams of archaeologists who have never ceased working along the banks of the Nile. The sheer size of the collection as well as its remarkable diversity meant that using the handwritten file patiently developed by the curators with conventional methods was a long and arduous task. Comprising tens of thousands of identity files – one for each piece, with its inventory numbers, photographs, a copy of the inscriptions, descriptions, and bibliographic items – the file was a valuable addition to the less systematic older ledgers.

It was mainly on the basis of this handwritten file that the Department of Egyptian Antiquities developed its computerized database. Code-named 'Pharaoh', the file was started in 1975. Today, more than 37,000 pieces have been indexed, more than three-quarters of the entire collection. The project began with the French Ministry of Culture's decision to protect the nation's cultural heritage by cataloguing and studying its artistic, archaeological and ethnological works. The computerization of the Egyptian collections is therefore part of an undertaking of national scale, which explains why the hardware and software used were chosen by the Ministry of Culture: the department works with the Ministry's computing centre, which is equipped with a Bull DPS 8 mainframe, running under the UNIX operating system. Installed within its offices, the department has two terminals and printers, linked to

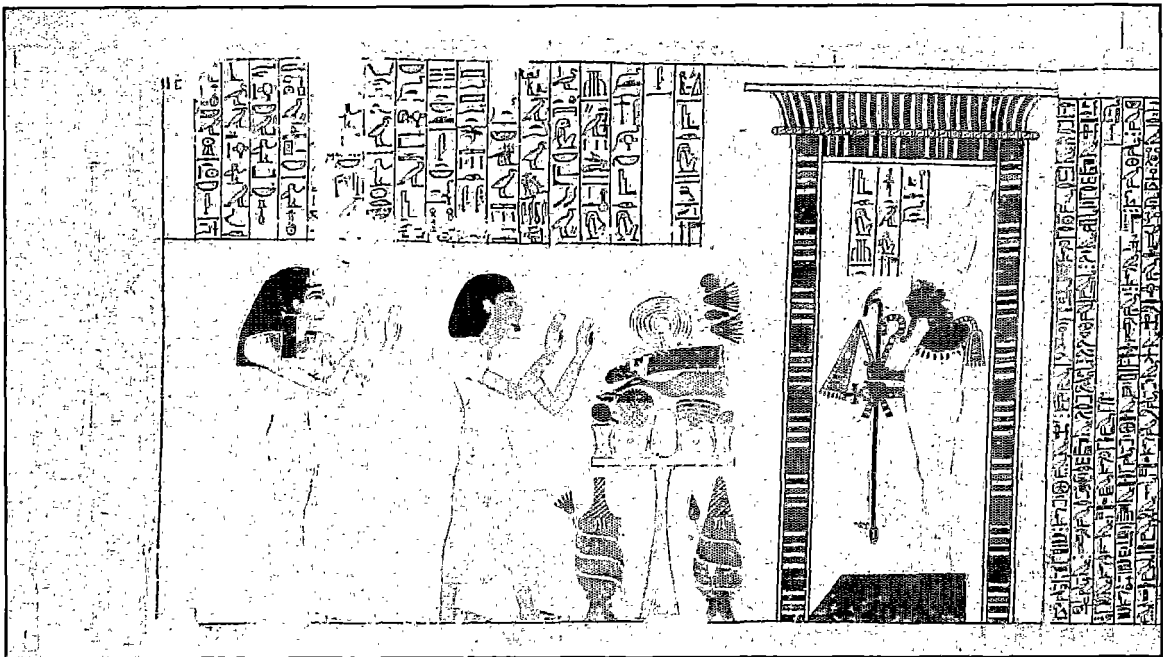
the host computer via the Transpac telephone network system. The department uses the MISTRAL V5 documentary research software system, developed by Bull.

The use of computers was made necessary by the number of items and analyses that had to be taken into account, and the considerable volume and dispersion of the data concerning them. As in all major Egyptological collections, the 55,000 objects housed in the Louvre are extremely diverse: temple walls, chapels and colossal statues stand side by side with inscriptions on stelae and papyrus, epigraphed vases and amulets, scarabs, human and animal remains, and food. Data processing in this context involves a certain number of constraints, which are not always obstacles but can in fact help in furthering research. The mass of data to process is so great that one must select only what may be considered essential. Computerization also implies the use of a standard terminology. The methods used to record and thereafter process the data can be broken down into three subsystems: developing descriptive systems, creating documentary databases, and documentary research.

Descriptive system

The development of the descriptive system and the lexicons it uses gave rise to the most fruitful reflection. The data concerning a given piece are organized into fields, that is, into 'analytic criteria common to every work in a given domain.'²

While a system of this type is easier to use when applied to a single category of objects, such as stelae or scarabs, in this case the entire collection was the subject of research, resulting in the creation of a new tool, an analytical matrix (see p. 26). In it, the description of an object is organized



© Musée du Louvre, Paris

into fifty fields defined by a four- or five-letter sort key. It is not limited to a simple inventory of the works, such as their identification, the materials they are made of, their dimensions, dating or location. On the contrary, it also takes into account research criteria used in archaeology and the history of art. With the exception of the categories reserved for the management of the collection, the analytical matrix is the result of a global inquiry into the priority questions for researchers today, and into the answers that the works housed in the museum are capable of providing.

Each piece analysed on the basis of this descriptive system leads to the editing of a data form which then supplies the documentary database. The fields defined are different in nature: the headings noted in capital letters use a standardized vocabulary, key-words organized according to a rigorous syntactic system; the headings in lower-case letters authorize the entry of free text which is not subject to the constraints of standardization, while still other fields are purely numeric. The lists of key-words form lexicons which are collected together in the Thesaurus of the Egyptian department. Creating each of these lexicons has given rise to considerable classification work, and some have even resulted in research on the language of

Egyptology itself. Based on the terms used by modern-day science, the necessity of giving a hierarchical order to the terms, or of attaching to them a highly specific meaning, resulted in choosing some and in excluding others, in creating certain specific terms and hitherto non-existent typologies, and in disrupting conventional classification systems. The excessive rigidity which a system of this kind necessarily engenders was counterbalanced by the creation of synonymic relations.

The Thesaurus in the department today comprises 12,612 descriptors, but that number varies from day to day as a result of the addition of new terms and the deletion of others. The Thesaurus was neither built in a single day nor in linear fashion. It stems from on-going interchange between theory and practice. Rudimentary frameworks were used as the foundations for certain lexicons which were then enhanced by experience as the museum pieces were gradually computerized: this was the case for vase typology, in which an entire vocabulary for in-house use had to be developed, based on terms with clear meaning: 'peanut' vases for the pre-dynastic period. Kerma 'tulips' and so on: collectors' lists grow with time. On the other hand, imported wholesale from reference works, some lexicons have turned out to

Detail of the anonymous Book of the Dead: the deceased and his wife render homage to the god Osiris, who is standing under a canopy. Papyrus attributed to the New Empire.

be too detailed to be used in full for the analysis of the collection: the EPOQ lexicon, for instance, inspired by *The Cambridge Ancient History*³ and the DECV lexicon, based on the sites listed by Porter and Moss.⁴ Despite their imperfections, the analytical matrix and the Thesaurus, the collective work of the entire department, still stand out as pioneers in their field. These new tools, whose efficiency and value are being confirmed with each passing year, are available to the entire scientific community. Consulted on a daily basis for in-house use, but equally accessible on request to Egyptologists around the world via the documentation service of the Department of Egyptian Antiquities, the 'Pharaoh' database benefits from the vast resources that computers make available to documentary research. From the mass of the 37,000 objects already on record, it is possible to select the documents pertinent to a given question. A primary query using a logical combination of key-words belonging to one or several lexicons associated with different fields can comprise several independent questions, the answers to which may be combined. A so-called 'secondary' search enables the results to be narrowed down. The possibilities the system enables are infinite and the gain in time considerable.

Simple, speedy accession

The year of the bicentenary of the opening of the Louvre, 1993, was also the occasion for the 'Pharaoh' database to be given a face-lift.⁵ The museum was recently fitted out with its own data-processing system, thereby encouraging departments to develop applications on the in-house network, and as part of the 'Grand Louvre' project, large-scale budgets were allocated to computerization. Without questioning

the scientific content and usefulness of the database, thought was given to the desirability of making the information it contained accessible to the greatest number and at the highest speed. After due consideration, the solution chosen as being the most cost-effective for linking a textual base to an image bank was the regular, partial downloading of MISTRAL data to a local network base running under *Oracle*, together with the development of an accession software system and the creation of an image module to run under *Windows*. Three phases were defined for the application: the retrieval of data output from MISTRAL, the loading of the data into an *Oracle* base, and finally the accession to and editing of the data in question. The aim was to create a new, lighter base, without having to re-acquire data. Out of the forty-eight fields in the MISTRAL system, fourteen were retained as being the most apt for defining a work: inventory, denomination, title, description, context, text, proper name, material, dimension, discovery, dating, museum, history file and MISTRAL reference. The retrieval of the hierarchical lexicons from these fields was the high point of the operation, the aim being to maintain the hierarchical and synonymic relations between terms within the same lexicon. End-users wanted the tool to offer advanced performance characteristics in terms of information access times, enhanced ergonomics and user-friendliness, and above all to enable searches by associating key-words with the logical operations 'and', 'or', 'without' and 'except'. The results can be printed in full (the fourteen fields) or in abbreviated form (inventory, denomination, material, location, reference). To this base for in-house use has been added a location field, which can be acquired, modified, consulted and printed in local mode and in real time, which is a highly appreciated capability for the computerized management of the movement

of objects at a time when, as part of the 'Grand Louvre' operation, the department is currently redeploying all the collections. Finally, it would also be practical to add new, more confidential fields, such as restoration work and insurance value, which are very useful for managing the multiple loans made to exhibitions.

For a number of years, extending the MISTRAL base by adding image media has gone from an idea to a necessity. To carry out the operation, the data-processing department of the Louvre decided to opt for a scanning solution, and a campaign to scan the department's manuscript file, still illustrated with black-and-white photographs, is currently under way. Image accession is managed by a module under *Windows*, with the MISTRAL file reference serving as the link between the textual base and the image. The main information on 37,000 objects in the department is now accessible to Curator members of the Egyptian department using PC-compatible 386 or 486 microcomputers running under *Windows 3.1*, which are connected to the Louvre network (Ethernet 10 Base T, 10 Mbit/second). Simple, high-speed accession, the real-time management of object locations and the photographic display of objects are the major advantages of this radical change, which research workers outside the museum can also use simply by making a request to the department head or through the documentation department.

Facilitating the flow of scientific information, and establishing connections between different databases are the way to the future. The Department of Egyptian Antiquities in the Louvre is an active participant in two projects that are heading in that direction. The first, an initiative of the French Museums Administration, aims to establish a major national base combining data from all the archaeological collections

of French museums, to enable accession from terminals connected to the computers at the Ministry of Culture. The principle is analogous to that of the 'Joconde' database for paintings, sculptures and drawings, which is run by the same ministry and is currently in operation, the intention being for the second base to integrate part of the MISTRAL system. Connected to INTERNET, a form of world co-operative combining several thousand networks in scientific or university disciplines, the new database could eventually be consulted, subject to access-right authorization, by the whole of the INTERNET community, as is the 'Joconde' base today.

The second project is purely Egyptological. Conducted under the auspices of ICOM's International Committee for Egyptology (CIPEG), it has the active support of the Computerization and Egyptology Group, a section of the International Association of Egyptologists led by Nicolas Grimal, director of the French Institute of Archaeology in Cairo, and Dirk Van der Plas, Professor at the University of Utrecht. Within this framework, with Dirk Van der Plas as coordinator, a multilingual thesaurus (in Arabic, English, French and German) has been developed over the last six years, directly inspired by the thesaurus developed by the Louvre Museum. It will make it possible to connect existing databases and those being compiled in some of the major Egyptological collections (the Louvre, the museums of Cairo, Leiden, Moscow, St Petersburg, Turin, etc.), as well as giving access to outside research workers. In parallel, the search is going on for a user-friendly freeware system, as the follow-on to the CDS ISIS system which was developed and supplied free of charge by UNESCO many years ago. Transcending frontiers and boundaries, projects such as these will be a boon to end-users both within and outside the scientific community. ■

Diorite statue of the goddess Sekhmet, from Karnak. Eighteenth Dynasty, attributed to the reign of Amenophis III.



Notes

1. I particularly wish to express my thanks to Sylvie Guichard, the research engineer in the Department of Egyptian Antiquities in charge of computerized documentation, whose help with this contribution has been invaluable, and Bruno Zeitoun, head of the computer project at the Louvre.

2. Sylvie Guichard, 'Informatisation des collections égyptiennes du Musée du Louvre', *Informatique et égyptologie* (Paris), Vol. 1, pp. 51-62, 1990.

3. *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. 1 (Part 2: Early History of the Middle East), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1971.

4. B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings*, Oxford, Warminster, 1939-88.

5. Sylvie Guichard, '1993: la base Pharaon fait peau neuve', *Informatique et égyptologie* (Utrecht/Paris), Vol. 4, pp. 65-8, 1994.

Analytical matrix for the statue of the lion-headed goddess Sekhmet

REF : AE006332
 INV : A 4-N 4
 DENO : STATUE
 DESC : SEKHMET (LION-HEADED GODDESS, SEATED, OUSEKH NECKLACE, TRIPARTITE HEAD-DRESS, UREUS SOLAR DISK, SUPPORTER, SIGN OF LIFE)
 PDES : ACCORDING TO TEXT
 ETAT : LEFT ARM MISSING
 INSC : HIEROGLYPHIC
 TEXT : DEDICATORY INSCRIPTION - CORONATION NAME - BIRTH NAME
 DNOM : AMENHOTEP III - SEKHMET
 DECV : KOM EL HEITAN(?)
 EPOQ : AMENHOTEP III
 PDAT : ACCORDING TO TEXT
 MATR : DIORITE
 TECH : SCULPTURE IN THE ROUND
 DIMS : 189.5 H
 LOCA : PARIS
 EDIF : PARIS LOUVRE MUSEUM AE
 PROP : PARIS LOUVRE MUSEUM AE
 BIB : YOYOTTE (BULL. SOC. FR. D'EG., 1980, T. 87, 88, P. 47, CITATION) - VANDIER (MANUAL, 1958, T. III, p. 383 - CITATION) - GAUTHIER (ANN. SERV. ANTIQUITIES, 1919, T. XIX, P. 383, CITATION)

Procedure or search phase 2

The *Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum*: setting standards for documentation

Arne Eggebrecht and Regine Schulz

The Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum aims at the publication of scientific information on Egyptian antiquities in an international context, on the basis of standard rules and procedures. The guiding spirit behind this monumental effort is Arne Eggebrecht, Director of the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum in Hildesheim, Germany, and founder-member and past President of ICOM's International Committee for Egyptology (CIPEG), where he holds a permanent seat on the board. His scientific collaborator Regine Schulz shares her time between the Pelizaeus Museum and the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich, and is also a member of CIPEG.

In the late 1960s a discussion started concerning binding standards for scientific publications on Egyptian objects in museums and collections. The compatibility between different documentation standards was and is one of the main problems in this discussion as is the variable use of terms. For this reason a working group was established within the framework of the International Committee for Egyptology (CIPEG) in ICOM and in the International Association for Egyptology (IAE). The result of this working group was the creation of a special standard with an optimum of compatibility of dates. The name of the standards, of the publications using these standards and the working group itself is *Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum* (CAA). Although it is always difficult to standardize scientific dates, the project has until now produced good results.

The standards are based on the following requirements:

1. The catalogue should present the material in a compact, distinct and comprehensive way.
2. The rapid location of certain objects should be possible and without extensive searching.
3. The catalogue should be complete or allow completion.
4. It is equally important that the catalogue be easily accessible for both large and small institutions. That again means that the price for the catalogue must not be too high.
5. The catalogue must not contain detailed commentary or discussion since this would make it too voluminous.
6. All objects must be illustrated with sufficient quality.

To meet these requirements the working group created specifications for the publication of Egyptian Antiquities in loose-leaf form, with few changes in recent years. The CAA catalogue will give all specific data for each piece in concise form and with as many photographs as possible. The catalogue is to appear in individual issues with an arbitrary number of loose sheets of a special binding standard with regard to size, layout and quality of paper. The sheets may be sorted according to the location of the objects (museum and inventory number). Indices will be drawn up in order to facilitate access to the content of the issues. The information for each block is specified in general as follows:

A. Title page

It has a fixed standard with the international designation, the national designation, the name of the museum with its location and the number of the issue, year of publication and publisher.

B. Text

B1. *Location.* Place and museum, if the allotted space is not large enough, abbreviations are to be used.

B2. *Inventory number.* Indication of number or number-letter combination, which guarantees, in combination with the location, a special identification of the object. Any other numbers should be listed under 'Detailed treatment' (B10).

B3. *Pagination.* It refers only to the catalogue sheets (text and plates) for the individual object and comprises two numbers separated by a dash: the running pagination and the total number of sheets. ▶

B4. *Designation of the object.* Particulars of the piece with its essential features: type of object; name, if present; preserved fragment; special details; characterization of the inscription, when present, etc.

B5. *Dating.* In this block the dating of the object is to be given in the most exact form possible. Inferred dates should be put in square brackets. If the dating is problematic, it will be followed by a question mark in parenthesis.

B6. *Provenance.* Location of the provenance: place, building (when applicable), tomb number, or 'provenance not known'. Type of provenance: surface find, excavation (with authorizing institution). Date: year. Person (finder, excavation director): name (with 'by' added). Inferred data should be put in square brackets. More extensive information may be fully specified in 'Detailed treatment' (B10).

B7. *Acquisition details.* Type of acquisition: purchase, gift, exchange, division, or 'acquisition not known'. Date: year. Seller: name (with 'from' added), place. Intermediary: name (with 'through' added), place. Agent (of the museum or collector): name (with 'by' added). Previous owners (including location and dates) and additional particulars (further details may be given, when necessary in 'Detailed treatment').

B8. *Material.* Specification (in commonly used terms, with the addition if necessary of specialized terminology). When more materials are present, enter only the primary material or use a collective designation. Colour of the material itself (exact description according to the Munsell chart wherever possible). Characteristic peculiarities. Condition. Origin (when unequivocally known). Detailed data (elucidation of collective

designation used, results of analysis, etc.) to be given in 'Detailed treatment'.

B9. *Measurements.* Principal (maximum) dimensions: height, length or width, depth, diameter. All measurements in centimetres (cm). Enter measurements of parts in 'Detailed treatment'.

B10. *Detailed description of the object.*

B10a. *(General) description.*

B10b. *Representations(s) and text(s).*

B10c. *Commentary.*

B10d. *Technical details.*

B10e. *History of the object.*

B10f. *Photographs, drawings, squeezes, casts, reproductions, documentations.*

B10g. *Bibliography.*

B10h. *Literature.*

B10i. *Compiler.*

C. *Sheet signature*

In accordance with the technical requirements of publishers and librarians as well as for the compilation of indices, each sheet is to have a signature entered at the lower right of B10. It includes: museum designation or a comprehensive reference, analogous to the title page, number of the issue of CAA sheets of the museum and the consecutive sheet number.

D. *Illustrations*

The type (photographs, drawing) and number of illustrations provided must be

sufficient to guarantee a comprehensive visual publication of the piece in question (including details), so that scientifically relevant information is conveyed. In particular, for the treatment of sculpture in the round, as a rule at least three views should be provided. Smaller objects should be reproduced on a scale not larger than 2:1 and several objects can be published together on one sheet. They have to be consecutively numbered in order to facilitate citation. When necessary, the respective negative numbers, order numbers, etc., may be indicated.

E. Indices

Each *CAA* issue includes a number of indices.

F. Series

Large number of homogeneous objects (mass-produced pieces) can be published on a single *CAA*-page in the following manner: One object should serve as prototype and the data in B2–10b will refer to it. To the inventory number in B2 an asterisk (*) will indicate the presence of other similar pieces.

Between B10b and B10c a new division called 'Other similar pieces' should be

added. For each individual piece the following data should be given: inventory number, measurements, discrepancies and divergences from the prototype with regard to appearance, origin, state of preservation, etc. A photo should furthermore accompany each object. The text may be written in English, French or German.

Twelve museums in Cuba, Europe and the United States have thus far participated in the project.

The question has arisen as to whether publications, and especially those of a certain size, should be made accessible on paper only or also by means of electronic media. The possibilities represented by CD-ROM in particular should be used for the *CAA* project as well. For that reason a special working group was founded under the name of Egyptological Documentation on Computers (EDOC) at the end of the 1980s. The realization of EDOC in *CAA* will have a great impact on the possibilities for museums and institutes of scientific research to exchange information. But the system will also provide a new attraction for the general museum public by providing the possibility of obtaining direct information. Co-operation with the International Documentation Committee (CIDOC) has already begun with the goal of facilitating information exchange. ■

New technologies focus on mummies

A Museum International report

An innovative and low-cost storage and display case designed by the Getty Conservation Institute made possible the return of Egypt's royal mummies to public view at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo in March 1994. The prototype case, designed to preserve fragile organic materials, features a nitrogen atmosphere and a system for monitoring temperature, relative humidity and oxygen. The nine cases manufactured by the Egyptian Antiquities Organization (now the Supreme Council of Antiquities), based on the Getty model, are the first public use of this new preservation technology.

Perfectly preserved for several millennia in the stable underground environment of the Egyptian desert, mummies once excavated are threatened by fluctuations in light, temperature and humidity as well as by the attack of micro-organisms and insects. In 1987, as part of a joint Getty Conservation Institute–Egyptian Antiquities Organization project, Getty scientists used an anonymous mummy to develop an ideal micro-environment for the long-

term display and storage of the Pharaonic mummies. They experimented with humidity levels and oxygen concentrations in nitrogen atmosphere until they established levels low enough to halt microbiological activity, but not so low as to render brittle or otherwise harm delicate organic materials.

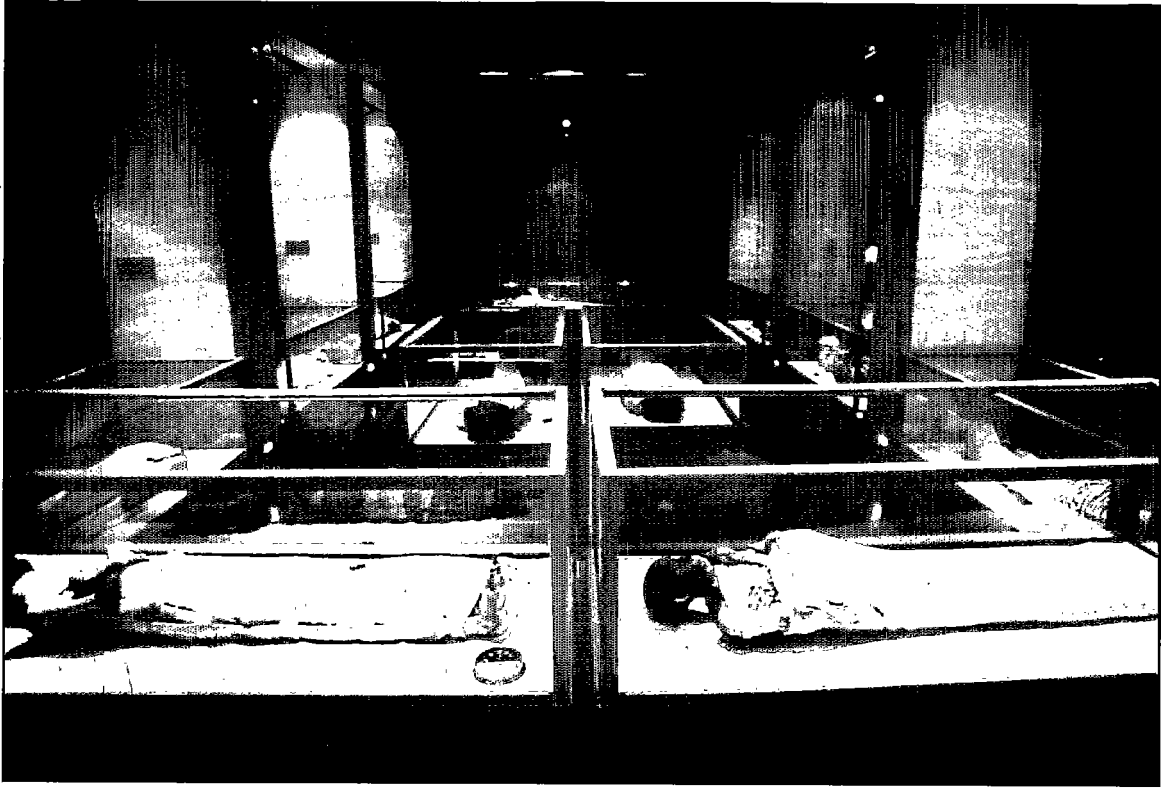
The resulting prototype storage/display case, which requires no mechanical or electrical operating systems, has a number of distinctive innovations: it uses nitrogen, an inexpensive, readily available gas; a flexible bellows to adjust for external changes in pressure; and an oxygen scavenger to absorb traces of oxygen. Unveiled at the Getty laboratories in California in 1988, the case was formally presented one year later to the Egyptian Museum and the Egyptian Antiquities Organization in Cairo. Construction specifications and training were provided so the Egyptian museum staff could manufacture their own cases on site. Throughout the project, Getty continued to provide technical advice and specialized components for construction of the nine cases.



© The Getty Conservation Institute

Shin Maekawa, Getty Conservation Institute environmental scientist (second from left), training Egyptian Antiquity Organization staff at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, in the handling and testing of the prototype storage and display case.

© Barry Iverson/The Getty Conservation Institute



This micro-environment technology offers a practical way to preserve other fragile organic material, such as manuscripts on parchment, textiles and embroideries, works of art on paper, and a variety of ethnographic objects made of materials such as leather, bone and wood.

* * *

On 18 August 1994, a unique scientific investigation took place at the George Washington Medical Center in Washington, D.C., when two Egyptian mummies and one Peruvian child mummy, which are part of the physical anthropology collections at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, underwent three-dimensional CT scans using state-of-the-art tomographic equipment and software.

The first mummy, an unknown individual from the Ptolemaic period (approximately 2,200 years old), was found in Luxor around 1883 and given to the United States Ambassador to Turkey by the Egyptian Government in 1884. The mummy is still completely wrapped and lying in its original

sarcophagus. The CT images helped to identify the individual as a 40–45-year-old male who had been eviscerated and had had his brain removed through his nose, a normal practice for mummification of middle- to higher-status individuals at that time. No clear signs as to the cause of death were illustrated by the CT imaging. The head of a second Egyptian mummy, from

Above: *Interior view of the newly installed royal mummy room at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.*
Below: *Radiology technician Lisa Hopper adjusts CT-scanning equipment.*

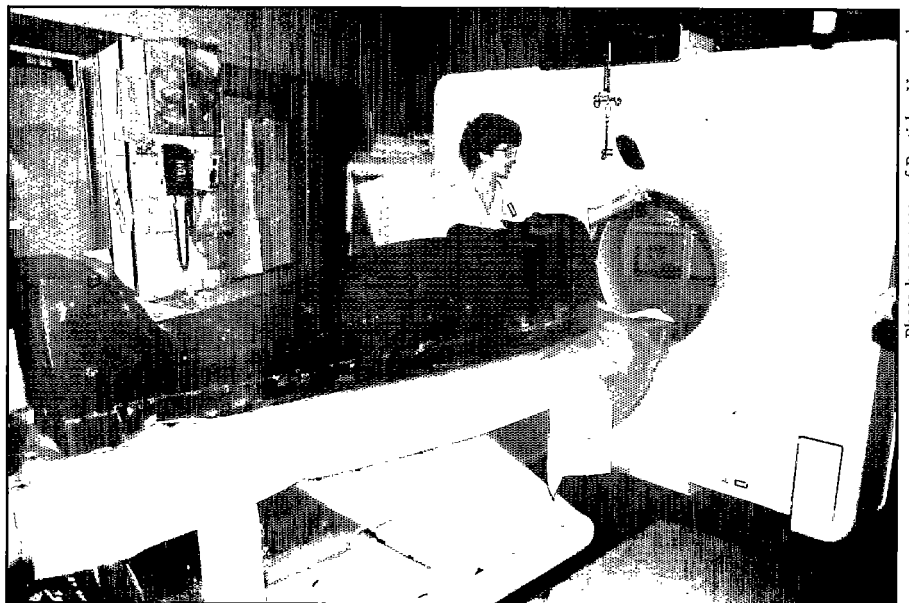


Photo by courtesy of Rostislav Vygovsky

Photo by courtesy of Rostislav Vygovsky



Three-dimensional images reveal a wealth of new information.

the Twenty-fifth Dynasty (approximately 3,000 years ago), was scanned for comparative purposes; the investigation revealed an individual of lower status who had not had his brain removed. The third mummy scanned was a young child from Peru who died between A.D. 1300 and 1400 was naturally mummified in the manner customary to the culture during that time.

Computerized tomography was first performed on mummies from the Smithsonian

at the George Washington Medical Center using conventional two-dimensional CT scanning in 1992. This latest investigation expands the body of knowledge previously acquired by providing researchers with these new three-dimensional images of the scanned subjects. The Egyptian mummy will be exhibited beginning in mid-1995 at the National Museum of Natural History, along with further findings that these non-destructive methods have revealed to Smithsonian scientists. ■

Ancient Egypt in Russia, Ukraine, the Caucasus, the Baltics and Central Asia

Svetlana Hodjash

In addition to the major collections of Egyptian antiquities in Moscow and St Petersburg, museums across the territory of the former Soviet Union house important and largely unknown objects. The story of how these materials were brought together for the first time is told by Svetlana Hodjash, Head of the Sector of Oriental Antiquities of the A. S. Pushkin State Museum in Moscow. The author has published 160 works on the art and culture of Egypt, the Near East and Urartu in Armenia where for twenty years she led the archaeological expedition to excavate this eighth-century-B.C. village.

In the summer of 1982, Nona Grach, the leader of an archaeological expedition sent by the Hermitage Museum to Nymphaeum, near Kerch' in the Crimea, found a stucco painting in an ancient sanctuary of a large, richly decorated ship which had the name 'Isis' inscribed on its prow. What had brought it to Tauride from the distant banks of the Nile: trade or diplomacy? Had it carried merchants or representatives of the Egyptian ruler on a diplomatic mission? No one knows. One thing we do know, and that is that 'Isis' was not the first Egyptian envoy.

Egyptian artefacts – amulets, scarabs, jewellery – have been found throughout the vast territory stretching from the banks of the Kama in the north to the Tien Shan in the south, and from the Baltic in the west to eastern Siberia. They are particularly common in the Greek colonies around the Black Sea, on the banks of the Volga, Don, Dnieper, Dniester and Kuban, and in the Caucasus; a bronze figurine of the supreme Egyptian god Amun was found in the Perm district of western Siberia, and at Orsk in the Orenburg region a large alabaster vessel was found with an inscription in four languages (Akkadian, Babylonian, Persian and Egyptian), which read 'Artaxerxes, great pharaoh'. Archaeologist Konstantin Smirnov has concluded that the vessel was made in Egypt and given as a gift to the Persian king. However when the mighty Persian empire went into decline its enemies invaded it more and more frequently, the royal palace was plundered by Scythians and so this royal gift, along with other valuable objects, ended up in the southern Urals. Bronze statuettes of gods were discovered in a kurgan in Lithuania. Amulets and scarabs portraying cats and dogs have been found in Chechen-Ingushetia; and amulets and scarabs decorated with serpents have been discovered in burial grounds on the banks of the Koura near

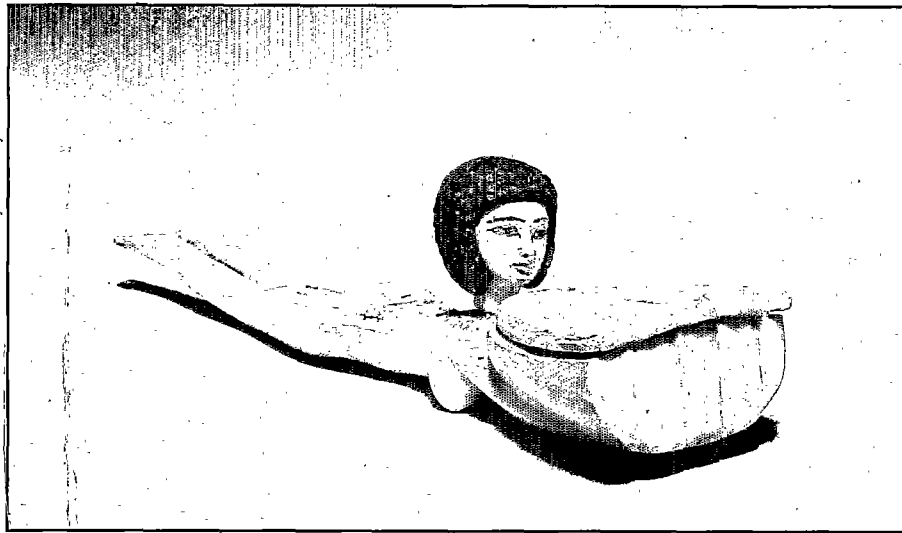
Tbilisi in Georgia. In Azerbaijan a bronze statuette of Bastet – the goddess of love in the form of a woman with a cat's head – was found in a burial jar at Mingechaur. A considerable number of Egyptian beads and amulets have been discovered in Central Asia: in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, and a bronze statuette of Isis was found near Ashkhabad. In these distant lands the objects were probably put to the same uses as in the Nile Valley. But, like everything that is alien and consequently not fully understood, they were believed to have miraculous powers. Figurines of the god Bes, the protector of children, women and the home, depicted as a rabbit with a lion mask and a long tail, are often to be found in children's tombs in particular.

The most ancient Egyptian artefact was found in Armenia. During the Medzamor excavations, Professor Emma Hanzadian found a cylindrical cornelian seal with the image of a man sitting in an armchair next to a large pitcher used for wine and a woman standing. The picture is accompanied by an inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphs: 'Great ruler Kurigalzu'. Kurigalzu, a Babylonian ruler, was a contemporary of the Egyptian pharaoh Amenophis III, the father of the famous Akhenaten, who reigned in the fifteenth century B.C.

Most of the Egyptian artefacts found at one time or another on the territory of what used to be the Soviet Union have ended up in museums. However that was not the only or indeed the main source for collections of Egyptian antiquities in the former Soviet Union.

One Russian traveller, Agafenii of Smolensk, visited Egypt as early as the 1370s. In the middle of the fifteenth century the monk Varsonofii also went there, as, at the end of

Photo by courtesy of A. P. Kozloff



Painted ivory and ebony spoon with sky goddess holding a lotus. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

the century, did the Chancellor of the great prince Mikhail Grigoriev, one of the most educated people in Muscovy. Colourful descriptions of the Nile Valley in the fifteenth century have been preserved in a manuscript known as *The Travels of the Merchant Vasilii Pozdnyakov*. In the seventeenth century the traveller Aleksei Sukhanov reached Egypt, and in the eighteenth century, Vasilii Grigoriev-Barskii came back from Egypt with 150 sketches.

In 1824 the first collections of Egyptian antiquities were bought by a Russian prince; they are now in the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Baron Otto Friedrich von Richter, renowned for his travels in the East, brought back a large quantity of Egyptian antiquities to Estonia.

On the establishment of the Odessa Archaeological Museum its first director, I. Blaramberg, presented it with his own Egyptian collection in 1825. More than 150 years ago the collection of Captain I. Butenev was brought to Russia. He had visited Egypt in 1833 on the brig *Paris*, and brought back a most interesting Egyptian

collection which had been given to him by the Swedish Consul in Alexandria, Anastasi. This collection eventually found a home in the museum of Revel (Tallinn). In 1894, on the order of the Khedive of Egypt, several objects were given as gifts to Russia which had been discovered in 1891 by the Egyptian Antiquities Service not far from the capital of Ancient Egypt, Thebes, at Deir el-Bahri, in a priest's hiding-place where the priests of the god Amun were buried. They included six sarcophagi which were distributed among various museums in university towns, among them Kiev and Kazan.

In 1888 a collection of very beautiful Egyptian artefacts of the Christian period – 'Coptic textiles' – belonging to the well-known collector of medieval art, Franz Bock of Aachen, found its way into the Lvov Museum of Artistic Production. At the same time the brilliant archaeologist and historian Nikolai Pol' donated his collection, including a statue of Ramesses VI carved out of grey-green sandstone, to the Ekaterinoslav Museum.

Several well-known cultural figures of the turn of the century collected Egyptian antiquities: art historians, architects and painters. For instance, the Armenian Museum of History holds a collection of multicoloured wooden masks given by the great Armenian artist Martiros Saryan.

Register of ancient Egyptian artefacts

The idea of compiling information on all the Egyptian artefacts held in various museums and private collections in Russia was first mooted by the famous Russian historian and oriental expert Boris Turaev, who himself wrote descriptions of the Egyptian collections of St Petersburg, Oedessa, Kiev, Kharkov, Riga, Revel, Mitava and Kazan. The First World War, revolu-

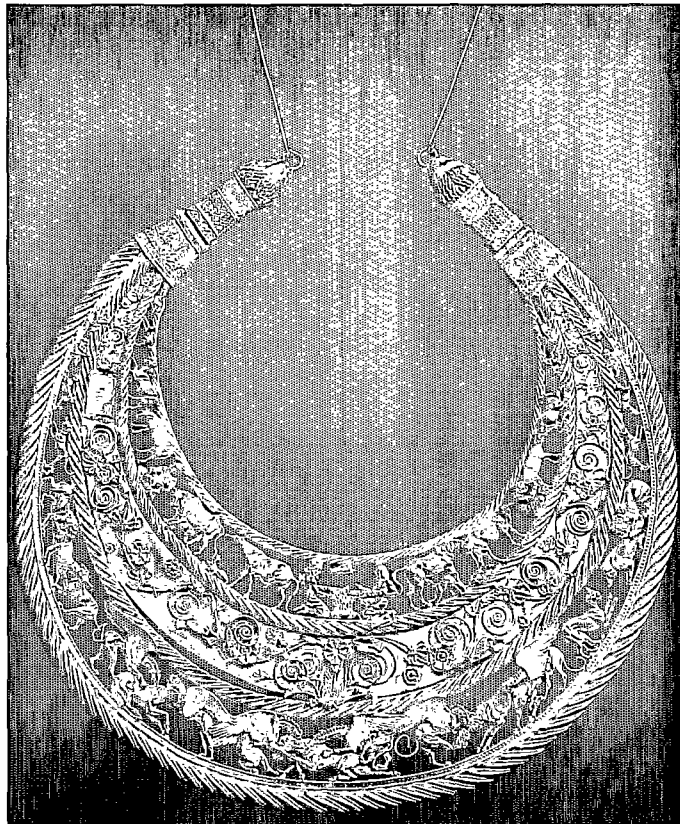
tion, civil war, and the Second World War took their toll, however. Egyptian collections were evacuated from a whole range of towns as the fighting came nearer. After the revolution private collections were nationalized and their contents shared out among the museums. During the Second World War Egyptian collections held on territory occupied by the Nazis paid the price: the one at the Poltava Museum of Local Lore (regional museum) was seriously damaged by fire and Egyptian antiquities from the museums of Kharkov, Minsk, Novgorod and other towns disappeared without trace.

Before we could list, study or restore the Egyptian artefacts on our territory, we first had to find out where they were. At the end of the 1970s, on the initiative of the Oriental Department of the A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow), it was decided to draw up a *Register of Ancient Egyptian Artefacts in the Museums of the USSR*.¹ The first step was to send out over 1,000 questionnaires to all kinds of museums – art, historical, archaeological, local and memorial – and also organize research trips to dozens of towns. The staff of many museums with Egyptian collections worked hard to identify certain items, search archives for information on their provenance, and ascertain previous ownership. A senior member of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences, Oleg Berlev, and the author of this article studied and processed the material collected and proceeded to compile the Register. It was written in English, and divided into nineteen sections: predynastic objects, sarcophagi, masks, reliefs and stelae, sculpture, statuettes of gods, shabti, vessels, funerary jars, papyri, household and toilet articles, inlaid work, jewellery, amulets, scarabs, Graeco-Roman and Coptic lamps, and Coptic textiles. A separate section was reserved for Egyptian articles found on the

territory of the USSR. In all the Register covered 4,000 objects. All the ancient Egyptian inscriptions were translated into English and commentaries provided. The Register comes with an index of Egyptian names, titles and toponyms. Unfortunately it has not yet been possible to publish it, although the publication of this list of several thousand previously practically unknown objects would be an event of some importance for Egyptologists.

The Moscow exhibition

One interesting side-product of this teamwork was the exhibition *Ancient Egyptian Artefacts in the Museums of the USSR*, which was staged by the A. S. Pushkin State



© Bridgeman-Giraudon

Pectoral from the Ptolemaic period (333–330 B.C.). Russian Museum, St Petersburg.

Museum of Fine Arts with the active participation of the museum's director, Irina Antonova, and the Chairperson of the ICOM International Committee for Egyptology, Professor Hans Schneider (the Netherlands). The head of the Department of Art Museums and Exhibitions of the USSR Ministry of Culture, Henrich Popov, gave invaluable assistance with the organization and financing of the exhibition.

It was held from 12 July to 18 August 1991 in Moscow in the White Hall of the Museum of Fine Arts. Around fifty museums from ten Union Republics co-operated on it providing 565 pieces which were brought by air, rail and road. The design of the exhibition by Ada Karbatova was interesting and contemporary and at the same time brought out the originality of Egyptian culture. The artist and the exhibition organizers, while observing chronology and the need to classify the material, used space and light to create the most appropriate artistic environment for each exhibit. Slides and photographs were prominent in the layout, showing the museums in which the exhibits were permanently housed, and archaeological sites where they had been found.

The exhibition started with Neolithic flint blades, scrapers, arrowheads, spears, slate palettes in the shape of fish and birds for grinding paints and also predynastic modelled vessels with ornamental patterns of zigzags and triangles and pictures of many-oared religious boats and flamingos on the banks of the Nile. On some vessels there are pictures of a mother-goddess, a symbol of fertility and motherhood. The vessels come from tombs and were intended to ensure that the dead enjoyed their sojourn in the world beyond the tomb.

Work on the Register and the exhibition enabled some articles to be identified and

objects from the same tomb which had been in different museums to be shown together. For instance, an inner sarcophagus in the shape of a human body made for an Egyptian woman called Ni-si-ta-Udzhat-akhet was in the State Regional Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, while the outer sarcophagus was in the Odessa Archaeological Museum. It also emerged that the plaster mould for the canopic jar of military leader Pa-di-Khorem-kheba, described by Professor Rostislav Holthoer was a copy of the one held in the Historical Museum of Estonia, in Tallinn. Two further canopic jars made for the same person from the Budapest Art Museum were described by Professor Vil'mus Vesetskii. A fourth is in the A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts.

Reliefs and stelae were prominent in the exhibition. They were highly varied in composition and style, from the austere graphic outlines of stelae dating from the beginning of the third millennium B.C. to the more elegantly decorative stelae of the middle and second half of the second millennium B.C.

The exhibition contained some world-famous pieces of free-standing sculpture. A portrait of an old man carved out of black granite with red flecks, from the Kiev State Museum of Western and Eastern Art, was remarkably severe and monumental. At the beginning of the second millennium B.C. the head of Sesostris III was carved out of grey granite. It once belonged to Nikolai Golovanov, the principal conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre, and it is now in his apartment-museum. The Voronezh Regional Art Museum provided a statue for the exhibition of the kneeling figure of an Egyptian woman and the god Amun in the form of a ram. An important place in the exhibition was occupied by statuettes of gods and shabti, small mummy-shaped

figures intended to replace the deceased at work in the fields of the kingdom beyond the tomb. In the process of compiling the Register a total of 265 shabti with inscriptions was brought to light. It was the first time that the names carved on some of them had been made public. The exhibition also contained many pieces of jewellery, seals and scarabs.

There was a special section in the exhibition for Egyptian objects found in the territory of the USSR: statuettes, shabti, seals, scarabs and jewellery. A map showing the places where they had been discovered allowed visitors to see by which routes Egyptian objects had found their way into their country. The exhibition was visited by over 100,000 people: some were Muscovites, some came from other Soviet towns, and some were foreign tourists. The exhibition catalogue was published in Russian and English.

A conference on the history of the Egyptian collections was timed to coincide with the exhibition. It was attended by about 100 specialist museum staff who had helped to prepare the exhibition, together with around fifty foreign Egyptologists.

New trends in Egyptology, the desire to work together and the specific role of computerization were all obvious con-

cerns at the conference. The representative of the Liverpool Museum of Antiquities, Petr Benkovskii, reported on the computerization of its Egyptian collection. The Swiss Egyptologist Jean-Luc Chappaz introduced his enterprising and wide-ranging plan for cataloguing the thousands of shabti held in museums throughout the world. A number of appeals were adopted by the participants at the conference calling for the preservation, study and popularization of Egyptian collections.

The Moscow Egyptology conference was the last congress of Egyptologists of the USSR. In December of that year, 1991, the Union collapsed and fifteen states arose on its territory. Long-standing professional links were abruptly cut short, and it will probably be some time before it will be possible for us to work together again. ■

Note

1. All the ancient Egyptian items in Soviet museums were listed in the Register, with the exception of the Egyptian collections at the A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow) and the State Hermitage Museum (St Petersburg). These collections are so vast that they require a special separate catalogue for each section.

Presenting Egyptian objects: concepts and approaches

Richard A. Fazzini

The rich variety of Egyptian antiquities found in many museums poses special problems of installation and display, which are detailed by Richard A. Fazzini, Chairman of the Department of Egyptian, Classical and Ancient Middle Eastern Art at the Brooklyn Museum (New York). Under his supervision, the museum recently inaugurated a new and ground-breaking installation of its collection. The author is also Director of the museum's archaeological expedition to the temple precinct of the goddess Mut at South Karnak.

Ancient Egyptian civilization was conservative, but it was never as static as is often believed. Museum installations of ancient Egyptian objects have also suffered from a similar, equally unfounded perception in the public mind. Yet they have rarely undergone change to the degree and in such numbers as during the past two decades. In a brief article such as this the writer can only mention (and illustrate) some installations, especially as the article must, for a very good reason, go beyond installations of Egyptian objects alone.

Given the numerous and varied political and cultural links between Egypt and Nubia in antiquity, it is no wonder that Egyptologists and universities and museums concerned with Egyptology have played important roles in excavating, studying and publishing documentation on the cultures and civilizations of Nubia. Nor is it surprising that Nubian materials, especially those most related to Egyptian materials, have sometimes been an important part of the installations of museums with Egyptian collections. The most obvious are the installations of Nubian Egyptian temples in Leiden, Madrid, New York and Turin that resulted from the Nubian archaeological campaign of the 1960s. In very recent days, however, Nubian installations whose scope goes well beyond the relation to Egypt have become a prominent feature in some museums. Thus, since 1991 the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University has opened a renovated display of Nubian antiquities, and new Nubian galleries have been created at the British Museum, the Royal Ontario Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Although these installations are concerned with relationships between Nubian and Egyptian cultures, each is concerned with Nubian cultures in their own right. Also each is arranged in part on the basis of chronology, beginning with the prehistoric period and ending some

time between 350 B.C. and the present. However, each installation also has thematic sections, such as the Royal Ontario Museum's illustration of patterns of everyday life with finds from the town of Gebel Adda or the Museum of Fine Arts' large vitrine containing objects representing the various aspects of a royal tomb of the Napatan Period. Here and in other aspects of some of these installations, there is also a degree of organization by kind of objects.

These Nubian installations differ from almost all Egyptian installations in that they do not end chronologically with the advent of Christianity or Islam. On the other hand, they utilize basic modes of organization applicable to Egyptian installations: by chronology, typology, media and special themes.

Especially for museums with holdings representing the long time-span of ancient Egypt's prehistory and history, comprehensive, chronologically ordered installations are still used to help visitors appreciate more easily both change and continuity in Egyptian civilization. The British Museum's sculpture gallery, as renovated and reinstalled in the early 1980s, introduced Egyptian history through a chronological treatment of one of ancient Egypt's major art forms (i.e. it is also typological), this being a useful prelude to the mainly thematic galleries to which the sculpture gallery leads. In terms of modern undertakings, the largest chronologically arranged Egyptian galleries are those of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Yet this chronological organization also includes an exhibitions gallery for shows on special themes. Moreover, there are areas within the general chronological organization devoted to specific finds, sites, personalities, etc. One unusual aspect of the Metropolitan Museum's installations, especially given its large size, is that virtually all the objects in the

collection are on view. Side rooms along the main chronological track hold groups of objects and study material organized in the same chronological sequence.

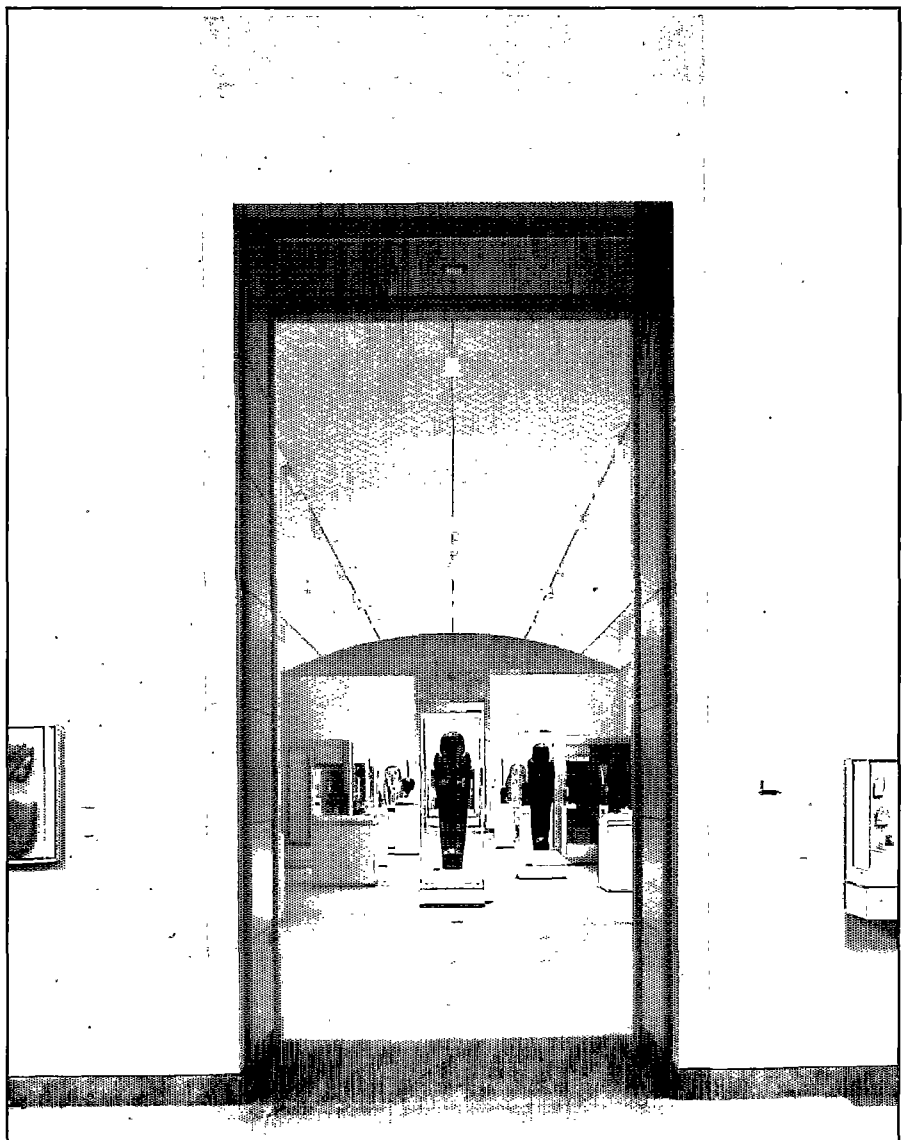
The Egyptian galleries in Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum, are another 'two-track' installation. Opened in 1992, the goal of illustrating both ancient Egyptian history and daily life (defined quite broadly) was accomplished by creating a 'history spine' accompanied by a 'daily-life perimeter wall'. In this combination of chronological and thematic installations, the new galleries of the Royal Ontario Museum are in keeping with the growing tendency for installations of ancient Egyptian art not to be simply chronological or thematic or, indeed, simple at all. The new installations in the Museo Egizio in Turin, for example, will combine thematic (Nubia, daily life), topological (material from sites excavated by Schiaparelli will be re-united), and chronological approaches.

Another example of this tendency is the Brooklyn Museum's first phase of gallery reinstalls which opened in 1993. One section of the new galleries is devoted to art from the Amarna Period to the Roman Period, part of what will eventually be a complete chronological sequence of galleries of Egyptian art beginning with the Predynastic Period.

Sections within the chronological installations do and will treat objects by type, media, provenance and a number of themes. However, the increase in gallery space resulting from the total renovation of one wing of the museum also allowed Brooklyn to create a suite of three galleries devoted to a thematic installation on ancient Egyptian art as the expression of ancient Egyptian religion and of beliefs concerning creation, the nature of the universe and Egypt's place in it, the roles of the pharaoh,

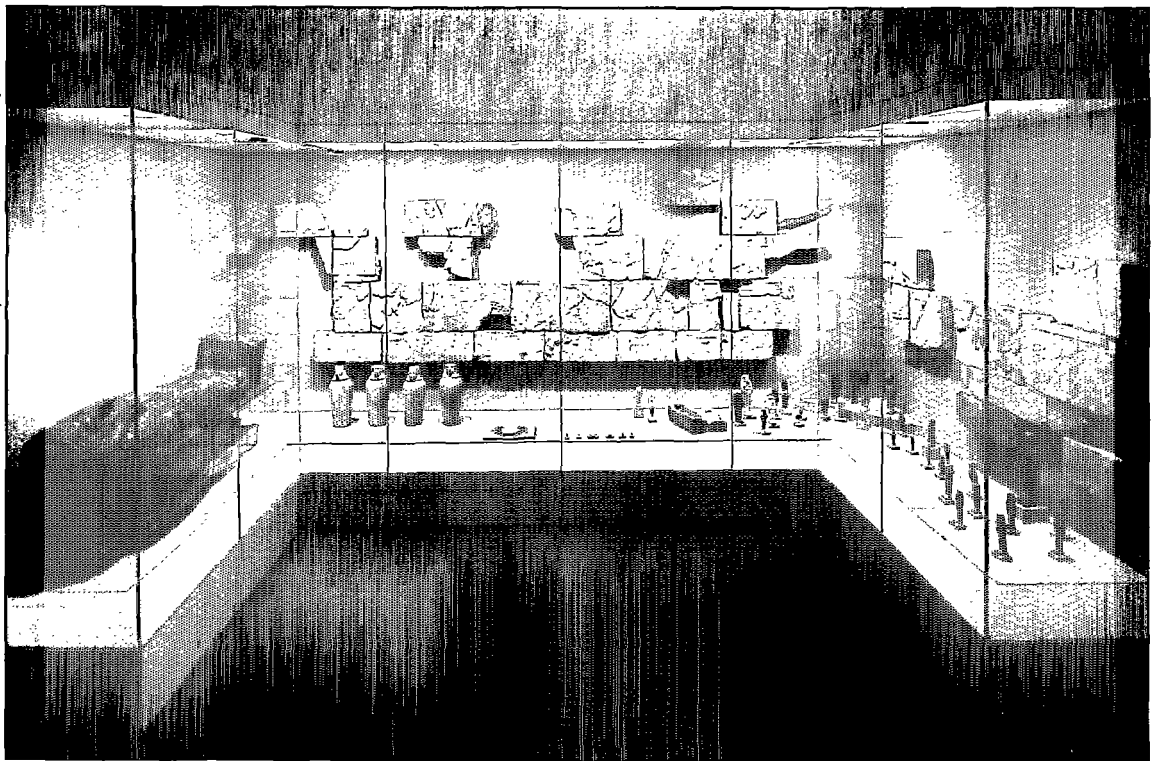
the varied layers of meanings of temples and tombs, and the relationships between the funerary and non-funerary. Entitled *Temples, Tombs, and the Egyptian Universe*, it attempts to provide visitors with an introduction to why most ancient Egyptian art was made, its main contexts and subject matter, and why it looks as it does. The focus of Brooklyn's new thematic installation is geared specifically to the museum's

View of the new chronological installations at the Brooklyn Museum, designed by Jeffrey Streaan.



© Patricia Layman Bazelton, the Brooklyn Museum

© Patricia Layman Bazelon, the Brooklyn Museum



View of a gallery of the Brooklyn Museum's new installation.

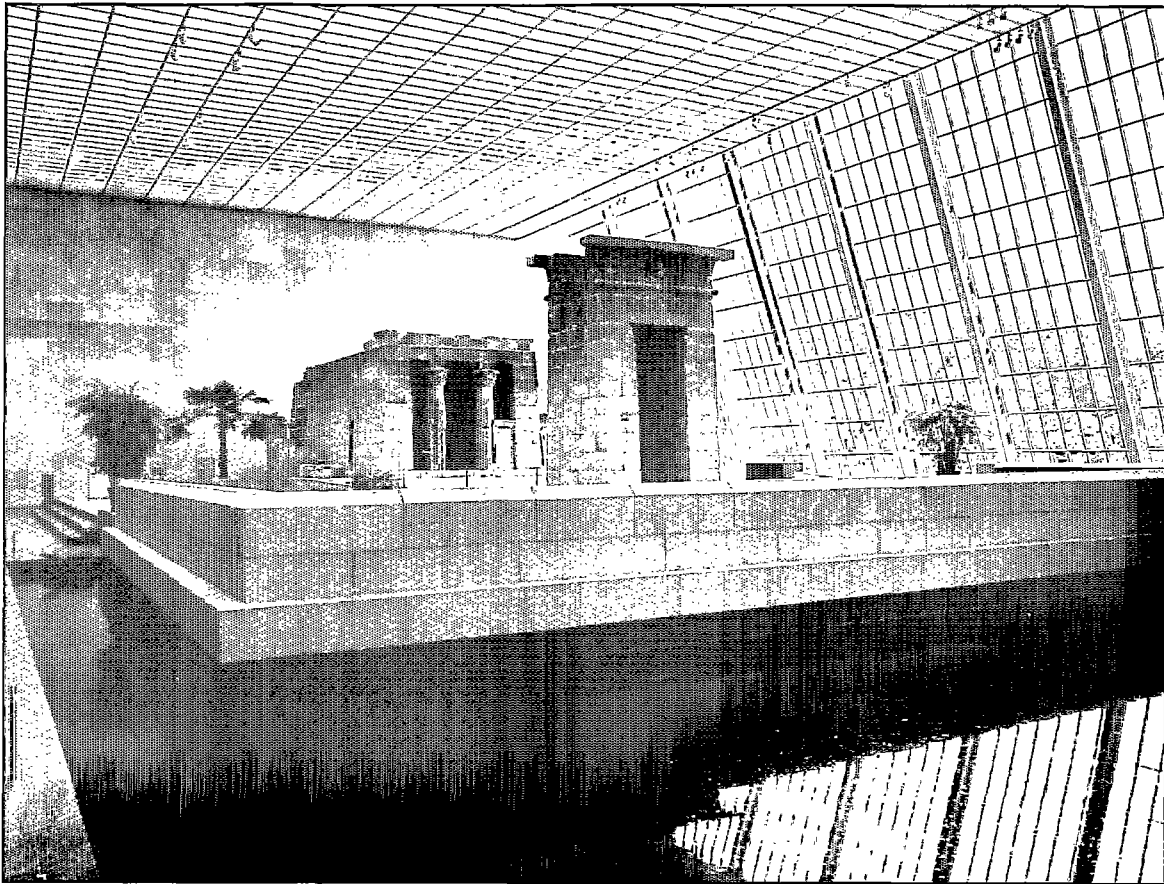
nature as a museum of art. Nevertheless, as the collections include objects whose significance is mainly or totally other than artistic, plans for future installations include space for temporary installations on subjects not normally treated in the galleries.

Interpreting Egyptian culture

Of course, art museums are not the only museums with Egyptian collections, and so approaches to installations of Egyptian objects differ. The Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for instance, has recently opened a permanent installation of about 600 objects where chronology and aesthetics are not featured. Instead, the installation is based on an anthropological perspective, using the objects (and the collection's strengths) to interpret ancient Egyptian culture in terms of a variety of themes: cultural evolution and history, world-view, nautical traditions, social organization, daily life, and funerary religion.

In re-united Berlin changes are also taking place. Since 1994, the Egyptian Museum in Charlottenburg has displayed

the best of Berlin's Egyptian art from the Predynastic Period to Roman times, while the Bode Museum has featured thematic installations on Egyptian and Nubian civilizations. However, according to Dr Dietrich Wildung-Schoske, Director of the *Aegyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung* in Berlin, in the next decade Berlin may become home to one of the most varied thematic installations of Egyptian objects. Present plans call for all of Berlin's Egyptian objects to be housed once again in the reconstructed and expanded Neues Museum as they were in the past. The new installations will be organized around such themes as 'The Ordered Cosmos', including 'The Egyptian Temple' and 'God-King-World'; 'The Tomb and the Afterlife'; 'Life in Ancient Egypt', with sixteen thematic subdivisions; 'Amarna'; 'Egypt and the Classical World', which will help link the Egyptian collection to other nearby collections on Museum Island; and 'Berlin and Ancient Egypt', presenting Berlin's role in Egyptology past and present, and changes in Egyptological methodology. Methodology is certainly not normally a part of museum installation, and a section on 'Ancient Egyptian Art' will



© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, designed a new wing to house the Temple of Dendur, given to the United States by Egypt in 1965.

also be somewhat unusual, being organized not chronologically but by themes such as stylistic evolution, the formal typology of sculpture, basic iconography patterns, and working methods of artists. Indeed, only the Nubian and Sudanese section of the installation will be presented historically.

As already indicated, not all recent and ongoing Egyptian installations have wholly or even mostly abandoned chronology as a significant organizational principle. According to Christiane Ziegler, Chief Curator of the Egyptian Antiquities Department of the Louvre Museum, the new Egyptian installations, on which construction work has just begun, will be in essentially two parts, one treating aspects of Egyptian culture, the other being a chronological installation of masterpieces of Egyptian art. Like the Metropolitan Museum, the new installations will also include smaller rooms with study/storage exhibits, though not all the objects in the collection will be on view.

Space, light and visibility

Of course, the organization of materials in an installation depends on the size and nature of the available space. One problem frequently faced by venerable old institutions is that spaces available for use as galleries are historically or artistically significant and cannot be radically altered. For example, the Vatican's Museo Gregoriano Egizio, which opened in 1839, created an Egyptianizing ambience through the use of blue-painted, star-studded ceilings, cavetto cornices at the tops of walls, Egyptian columns supporting doorways, and even *trompe-l'œil* paintings of Nilotic landscapes. When the galleries were renovated in 1989, these elements were left in place and remain effective, as many of the most prominent pieces in the collection are large Roman Egyptianizing sculptures. However, such historical spaces sometimes cannot accommodate climate control or a flexible lighting system, which can limit the types of material that may be safely displayed in them.

Lighting, in fact, is one of the most crucial factors in designing an installation of Egyptian objects which vary greatly in size, material, and tolerance to light. It can determine which objects may be exhibited together and their position in the gallery. Because of the need to control both the level and the focus of light, most recent installations rely primarily on artificial light. Extensive ceiling-mounted track-lighting systems allow several lights to be focused on a single object, thereby illuminating the often subtle details of Egyptian sculpture and relief. Vitrines in such installations now frequently have light boxes with multiple fixtures that illuminate the vitrine's contents from several angles. The Museo Egizio in Turin¹ has experimented recently with fibre-optic lighting, which does a remarkable job of lighting small objects evenly and to their best advantage, though it does not seem to work as well for larger objects.

In a related vein, making three-dimensional objects visible in the round is also very important. This is why, for example, the new Brooklyn Museum installations include more free-standing vitrines than the museum's earlier Egyptian installations. The galleries housing these installations subtly suggest Egypt in their floors of stone or light wood, the limestone of the door frames and lintels, the curved ceiling of the largest of the new galleries, and the pyramid-shaped ceiling in the central gallery of *Temples, Tombs, and the Egyptian Universe*. In the installations themselves, natural materials, such as the wood trim or borders of vitrines, and neutral colours were chosen as the most appropriate setting for the objects on display. In the British Museum's Egyptian sculpture gallery, a material simulating Egyptian stone was used for the new architectural elements (doorways to the side galleries, ramps) to create a general 'feel' of ancient Egypt. At

the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, the designers used familiar Egyptian architectural features – battered walls, pyramidal shapes – and simulated stone to give visitors a sense of place.

Just as there is considerable variety in the organization and design of Egyptian installations, so, too, is there increasing variety in the types of didactic material that accompany these installations. While a possibly eternal debate continues about how didactic materials add to or detract from the objects they concern, museums are increasingly playing the role of educator to a public that is demanding to know and understand more about what it is seeing.

Written information, placed in or near the exhibits and installations, is still the most common form of didactic material, though it can take many forms. Wall panels, sometimes including photographs and/or maps as well as text, are often placed at gallery entrances or the junctures between sections of an installation to introduce visitors to what they are about to see. Most museums also use labels in or near the vitrines themselves, some dealing with the vitrine's contents in a general way, others commenting on specific objects. As the new installations at the Royal Ontario Museum and the Carnegie Museum of Natural History demonstrate, models, dioramas and reproductions are also being used extensively to help visitors understand some facets of ancient Egyptian civilization. At the Royal Ontario Museum videotapes have also been created in addition to the written materials.

Some installations also provide places where visitors may spend a more extended period reading about ancient Egypt. For example, at various points in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Egyptian installation, there are light table displays with seating where

visitors may examine texts and pictures that relate to adjacent displays of objects. And at the Brooklyn Museum a resource centre near the juncture of the chronological and thematic installations is stocked with books on a variety of subjects relating to ancient Egypt where visitors may sit and read at their leisure. Computers with interactive programs are also slowly making their appearance.

To supplement the museum experience, many museums also produce written materials that visitors may take away with them. These materials range from the Brooklyn Museum's series of thirty gallery guides, each dealing briefly with specific aspects of Egyptian culture or history and providing a short bibliography, to booklets or books such as the Carnegie Museum's publications or the British Museum series.

But what is new in all this? As Christine Lilyquist relates,² in 1959 Curator William Hayes reported to the trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art that the museum's collection of Egyptian art was essentially complete, that the days of museum excavations and acquisition were over, that the time of analysis and publication had ar-

rived and that 'some adjustments in display were required'. He was more or less correct: while collections continue to grow, the days of acquiring masses of objects have passed and today the purpose of excavations is to search for knowledge. Attitudes toward collections have also changed: museums now focus on preserving and studying what they own and on doing better by their collections, both in terms of display and interpretation. All of the organizational approaches and most of the types of didactic materials described in this article have long existed. What is new is the way these approaches are being combined, and the emphasis now placed on creating installations that help people understand and appreciate the objects in a collection and the cultures that created them. ■

Notes

1. See *Museum*, No. 172 (Vol. 43, No. 4, 1991), pp. 206–7.
2. *Museum*, No. 142 (Vol. 36, No. 2, 1984), pp. 85–91.

The temporary exhibition, or how a (serious) theme show can also be a (popular) treasure show

Arielle P. Kozloff

The era of huge museum treasure shows with only spectacular pieces seems to be waning; many curators now consider them an expensive burden and, frequently, of dubious scholarly value. There are, however, exceptions as this article amply demonstrates. Arielle P. Kozloff is Curator of Ancient Art at the Cleveland Museum of Art, where she has worked for twenty-five years. She has acquired and published articles on works of art from Egypt, the ancient Near East, the Caucasus, Greece, Etruria, the Roman Empire, and Bronze Age central Europe.

A recurring museum debate argues the merits of 'blockbuster' (expensive treasure) exhibitions versus more serious (scholarly theme) shows as though the two are by definition mutually exclusive. They are not. Combining the two, however, takes quite a measure of devotion in time, funds, staff, and heart. Above all, it takes a refusal to compromise both aesthetic and scholarly standards. The following is a personal chronicle of the efforts behind such an exhibition, *Egypt's Dazzling Sun: Amenhotep III and His World*.

It started with an idea

In the 1970s, I was the assistant and student of the Cleveland Museum of Art's Curator of Ancient Art, John D. Cooney, perhaps the premier connoisseur of Egyptian art in the United States. His special delights were Egypt's decorative arts: glass and faïence vessels, jewellery, wood and ivory cosmetic objects, semi-precious stone amulets, and so on. For Cooney, identifying Amenhotep III's *œuvre* was simple. If it was small and exquisitely crafted in the finest materials and in the richest colours, it probably came from the late Eighteenth Dynasty palace workshop of Amenhotep III.

My own interest lay in the colourful and detail-rich Eighteenth Dynasty tomb wall paintings, created by anonymous artists, which I felt could be studied with the same techniques Sir John Beazley had used for Greek vases. National Endowment for the Arts fellowships gave me the chance. Cooney's interests, however, also rubbed off on me. I felt that modern scholarship's lopsided emphasis on the Renaissance and later Western art, and traditional Egyptology's own emphasis on text and disinterest in art prevented this fact from being widely known. A great exhibition, I thought, could rectify this problem.

Amenhotep III was perhaps the greatest builder in Ancient Egypt's history and a pharaoh of uncompromising aesthetic standards. He was also, as his texts suggest, a ruler with a sense of history. He was the perfect subject for a serious blockbuster.

While I worked in Cleveland, Betsy M. Bryan was studying the monuments of Amenhotep III's father, Tuthmosis IV, for her dissertation at Yale University under the aegis of one of the country's foremost Egyptologists, William Kelly Simpson, not only professor at Yale but also Chairman of the Egyptian and Near Eastern Department at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. We met accidentally in Egypt and found in each other a kindred appreciation of the importance of Amenhotep III's reign in the history of art. She immediately embraced my idea.

By 1980, Cleveland's renowned director, Sherman E. Lee, had his eye on retirement. Not wanting to saddle his successor with a huge and perhaps unwanted project, he declined my request for permission to enter into such an enterprise.

In 1983, Lee's successor, Dr Evan H. Turner, champed at the bit for exhibition ideas for Cleveland to originate, produce, and circulate to major venues. Amenhotep appealed to Turner, but he affirmed that he wanted something more than the current round of blockbusters known for their cost, splashy titles, and total insurance values. He certainly desired splash, but not without both aesthetic and academic content.

Betsy Bryan and I promised both. Naturally, we wanted the greatest masterpieces in the show itself, but in our research preparations we wanted to examine every relic – large or small, complete or fragmen-

tary, near or far – from the reign so that we could write a careful study of the pharaoh's *œuvre*. Turner pledged full moral and financial support in return for our promise that if the exhibition fell through, we would at least write a book based on our findings.

Our desires stretched the limits of our Egyptological colleagues' curatorial generosity. Since Amenhotep III's reign produced some of the most beautiful works of art in Egypt's history, the loans we wanted were treasures, such as the Metropolitan Museum's yellow jasper lips and turquoise blue sphinx, whose absences are noticed by their many fans. Other objects were

quite fragile, such as the ivory spoon in the A. S. Pushkin Museum in Moscow. Earning our peers' support required convincing them of the scope and the seriousness of our project. Furthermore, many academic scholars throughout the world were working on various theses involving the art of Amenhotep III and wanted to be involved in our plans.

To this end we held a two-day scholarly symposium, inviting nine Egyptologists from Belgium, Egypt, Germany, Poland and the United States to speak on their specialities. Nearly 100 scholars mostly from the United States attended, and contributed strongly during the question-and-

Entrance to the exhibition Egypt's Dazzling Sun: Amenhotep III and His World. The Cleveland Museum of Art

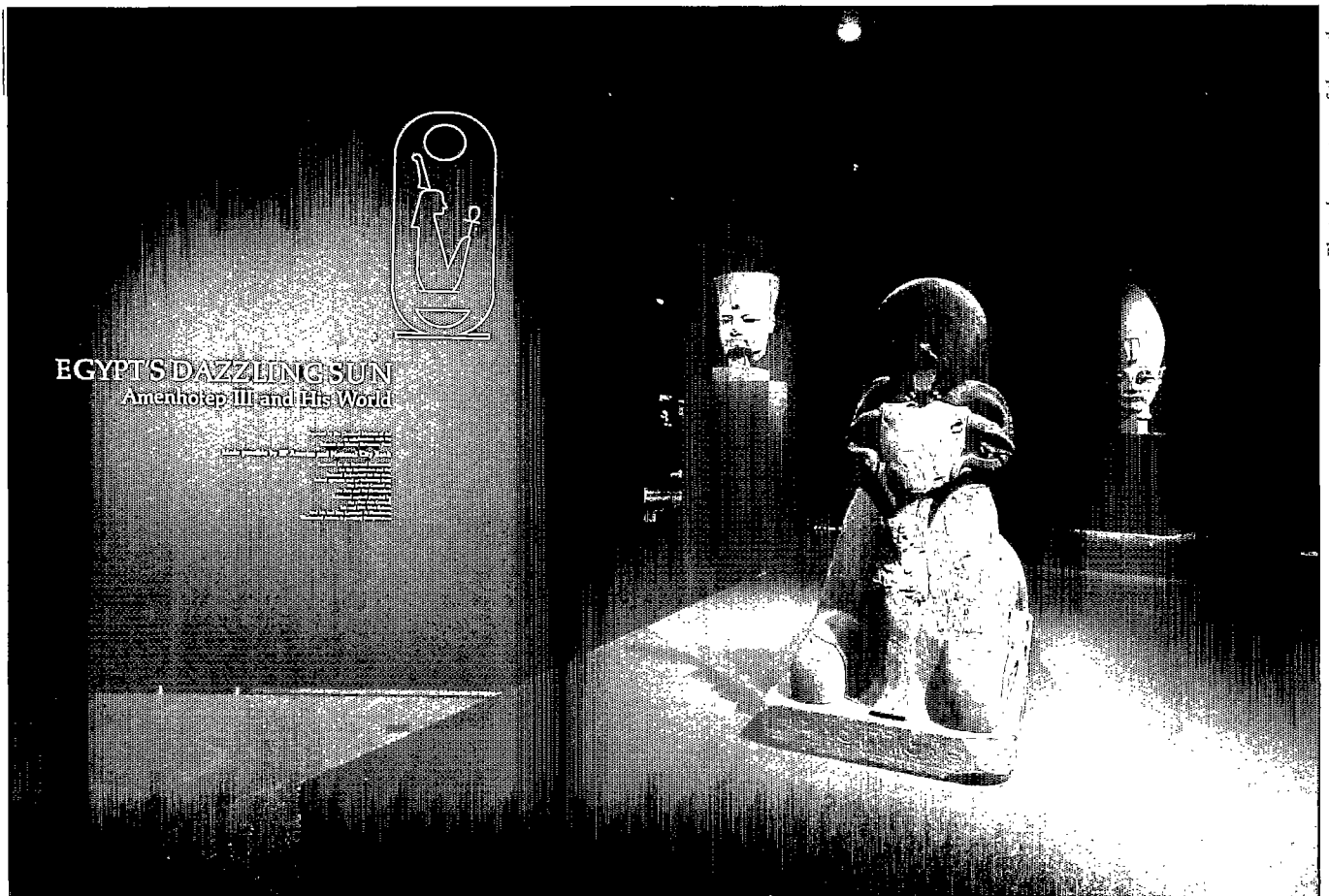
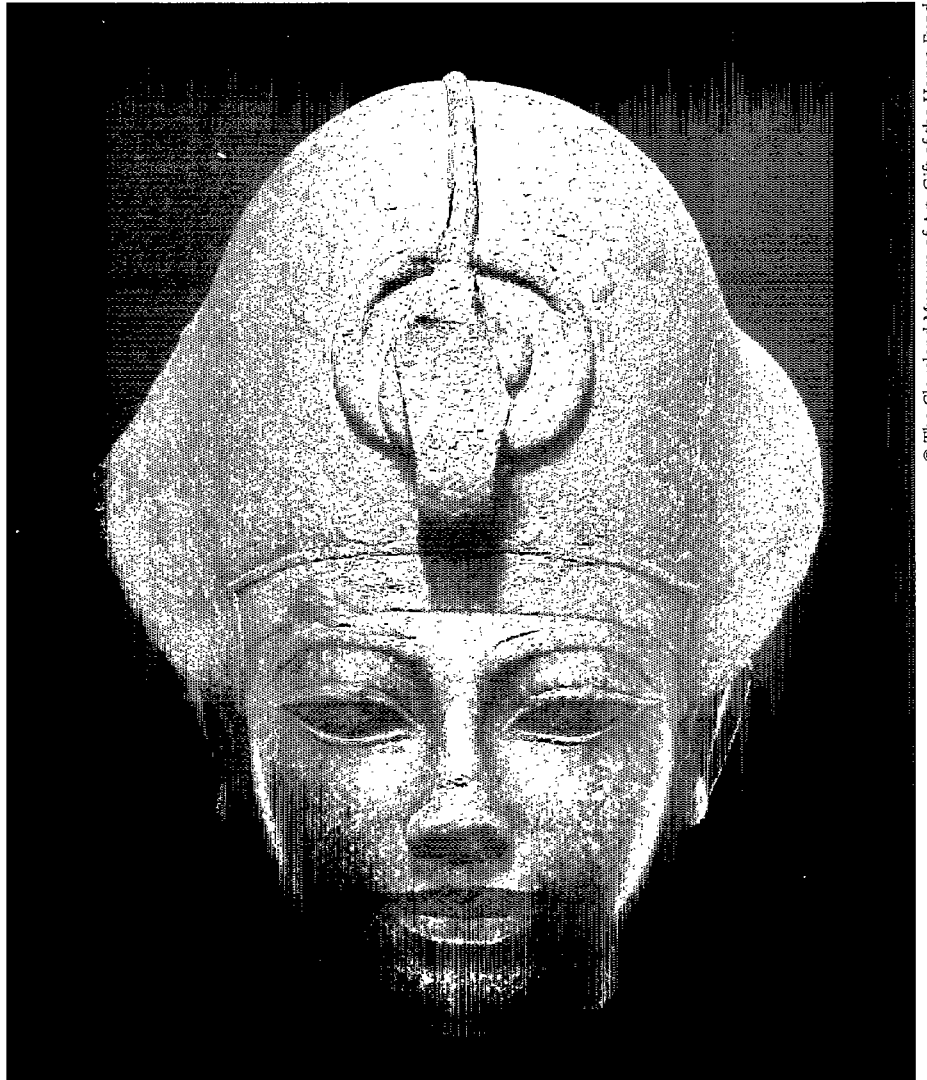


Photo by courtesy of the author

Granite head of Amenhotep III wearing the blue crown. Eighteenth Dynasty, c. 1391–1353 B.C.



© The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the Hanna Fund

answer periods. Both the symposium, held in November 1987, and the papers published in January 1990, were important steps towards establishing the project's credibility and seriousness.

Crucial to gaining support were Cleveland director Dr Evan H. Turner's personal visits to some prospective lenders. In those instances where Egyptian collections are in their own specialized museums, protocol required that Dr Turner call on his peers in

person. In order to meet these needs, he shoe-horned side-trips to Turin, both parts of Berlin (a month before the Wall came down), and Munich into his overburdened travel schedule. He made one three-week trip to Egypt and then a sudden three-day one (on the way to Tokyo) for final negotiations.

Local support in garnering loans came from a surprising source, the Cleveland Clinic, whose director telephoned Evan

Turner one day to ask the museum to host a dinner for Egypt's visiting Prime Minister and his wife. Dr Atef Sedkey loved hearing about the proposed exhibition and could not imagine its transpiring without important loans from Egypt. He gave me his promise of aid and was as good as his word, even returning to see the exhibition.

At least a dozen museums in Europe and the United States asked to show *Egypt's Dazzling Sun*. However, even the most generous lenders would not part with their treasures for more than one year, limiting us to three venues, including Cleveland. We decided to choose one venue in the south-western United States, Forth Worth, Texas, and one European location, Paris, the home of modern Egyptology. Both were generous with encouragement and trust, but never interfered.

Obviously such an ambitious project was extremely expensive. Cleveland's development department found a variety of corporate sponsors, including BP America, National City Bank, and Continental Airlines. The museum staff spent over 1,000 hours writing grant requests to the two national endowments, eventually receiving generous support from both. The Getty Trust underwrote a large portion of the catalogue costs. The Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities provided indemnification for the foreign loans. Other support came from the Ohio Arts Council, Mr and Mrs Max Ratner, and Mr and Mrs Lawrence Fleischman.

Teamwork, trenchwork and trust

Before long we realized the need for a third scholar on our team. Having written his Yale dissertation on Amenemhet I, Law-

rence M. Berman specialized in the Middle Kingdom, the period before Amenhotep III's time. His interests, however, are wide-ranging, and he delights in attacking new areas. His understanding of Egyptian art is rare in this text-oriented field.

Joining us in July 1988, his first job was to edit the symposium papers and oversee their publication. His next task was to aid our research and to prepare the vast bibliography for the eventual exhibition catalogue. Soon, however, he became a full partner with his own areas of research and chapters in the catalogue. We divided up the scholarly work as follows: Betsy Bryan studied the architecture and sculpture, I took the tomb decorations and decorative arts, and Lawrence Berman covered the funerary furniture and equipment. In addition, he wrote a chapter on the history of Amenhotep III's reign and the individuals important to it. Together, we tackled the most outstanding collections worldwide – Cairo, the British Museum, the Louvre, the Metropolitan Museum, Turin – as well as smaller collections in the United States, Europe, the Russian Federation, Scandinavia and the Sudan.

In Egypt we three visited the great temples and grand sites of Amenhotep III's reign. On museum trips we saw several thousand objects, 2,000 of which we measured in intricate detail for compilation on an electronic database of monuments and works of art from the reign of Amenhotep III. Our measurements included not only the usual height, width and depth, but also such details as height and width of a portrait's eyes, nose and ears, width of shoulders, chest, and waist, and similar measurements for parts of arms and legs. This information served as the foundation of our 500-page, densely-packed exhibition catalogue. We still maintain the database as a resource for scholars.

Analysing our measurements resulted in a canon of proportions for Amenhotep III's statuary and allowed us to make two joins – a head of Amenhotep III in the Cairo Museum fit a body in Durham, United Kingdom, and the head of a coffin lid in Poughkeepsie, New York, fit fragments of the same lid in Egypt. It also confirmed our identification of a 'lost' coffin from the royal workshop that we found in a store-room in St Louis.

Our biggest problem was communication. Despite constant contact by telephone and/or modem, situations, problems, and questions arose in Cleveland requiring immediate treatment or response without a partner conference. This demanded a tremendous amount of mutual trust and patience.

The last four months were difficult, with final proofing of the catalogue, label-writing, educational programming, public-relations campaigns, last-minute changes to shipping, design, and installation plans all competing for the same precious time. Because of the weight restrictions of the floor in the museum's special exhibition gallery, supports had to be custom-constructed for the heaviest pieces, each weighing 3 to 5 tonnes. Construction advisers were called in repeatedly to bless the plans. The museum's front doors had to be removed and special pathways built for the requisite motorized moving equipment. Cleveland's chief conservator was sent to Egypt for a month to oversee the deinstallation and crating of the three Egyptian loans, two in Cairo and one in Luxor.

Gradually the loans and their exhausted couriers began to arrive, some after travelling by plane and truck for thirty hours. One museum, despite our registrar's carefully written instructions and repeated assurances of compliance, sent a crate 50 mm too tall for our doorway. Another sent three

couriers first class trans-Atlantic at our expense with a small, but particularly precious loan.

Weighing most heavily – in more ways than one – was whether or not the three Egyptian loans, two of which weighed 3 tonnes, would arrive on time, if at all. With ten days left to go, everything else was installed. The 'grand entrance' held a five-tonne granite ram from Berlin in front, a one-tonne British Museum brown quartzite portrait of the pharaoh high and to the left, and to the right a prominent, but empty, pendant space for the three-tonne Luxor Museum head. Finally, after myriad diplomatic and administrative paperwork delays, the last weekly Egyptair freight flight capable of arriving on time for the opening was loaded with our loans and took off from Cairo airport.

A community celebrates

Everything was in place, but would anyone come? It was July, not usually a high attendance time for an art museum. We knew we were taking a chance, but special efforts had been made. *Egypt's Dazzling Sun* was the third major exhibition organized to celebrate the museum's seventy-fifth anniversary. The development and public relations departments planned new marketing strategies to make these three shows successful. The education department scheduled a brilliant array of support programmes. Evan Turner campaigned with unrestrained vigour and enthusiasm, constantly working to build the museum's audience.

Early signs of success came through the museum's special-events office which asked me to deliver my opening-day lecture three times in a row to accommodate a triple-sell-out crowd in our 750-seat auditorium.

Three months later, a record-breaking 186,000 visitors had seen *Egypt's Dazzling Sun*. Families came by the carload, day-camps came by the busload. Tourists, not known for putting Cleveland high on their list of vacation spots, filled local hotels or long-unseen relatives' homes on weekends. A day rarely passed without mention of Amenhotep III in at least one of the local media, not to mention the number of local,

regional and national interviews on television, radio and in print.

Fort Worth had similar success, drawing 163,000 visitors. Paris pulled an astounding 463,000 visitors for *Le Pharaon soleil*. *Burlington Magazine* called it the best Egyptian exhibition in 'many, many years'. *Apollo* magazine named it 'Exhibition of the Year'.

© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Carnarvon Collection, gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1926



Fragment of a bead of Queen Teye in yellow jasper. Eighteenth Dynasty.

A break with tradition: the Groninger Museum

Gitte Brugman

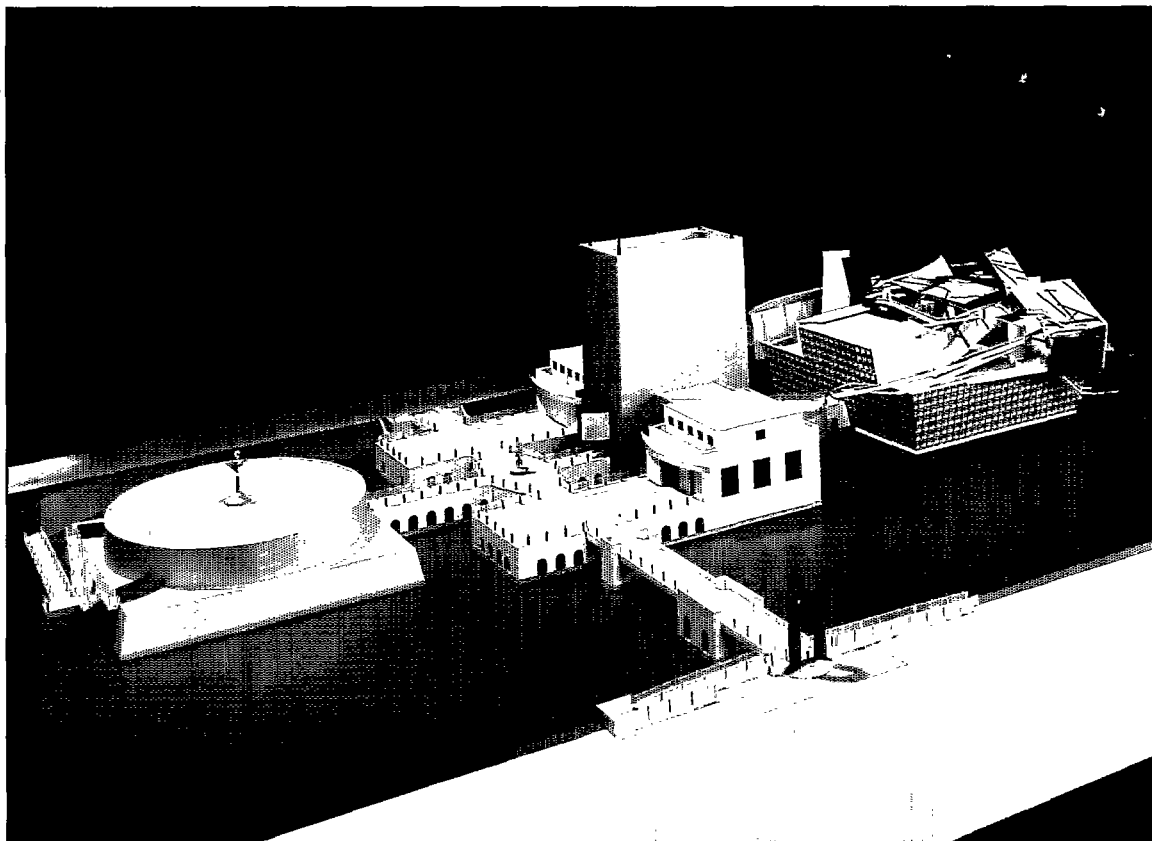
Some gifts are more complicated than others. What began as a generous donation from the local gas company to the city of Groningen in the Netherlands towards the building of a new museum, in the process created unexpected political and legal turmoil. Today, after eight years, a very unusual museum has been completed on an island that used not to exist. Gitte Brugman, freelance journalist and video producer, tells the story of the long way the gift had to go before it could become a museum.

In 1987, NV Nederlandse Gasunie (the Netherlands Natural Gas Company, henceforth: Gasunie) celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary by donating 25 million guilders (approximately \$13 million) to the municipality of Groningen. Both parties signed a declaration of intent stating that the money would be used to build a new museum: the Groninger Museum. There were two important reasons for this decision. On the one hand, the old museum had become too small; on the other, it was thought that a new, prestigious museum could help further the development of tourism and consequently enhance the business climate in Groningen. The latter reason was particularly important to the donor, who also wished the gift to contribute to 'strengthening the

image of the northern region of the Netherlands.

A preparatory committee was established with representatives from the three parties involved: the Groninger Museums, Gasunie and the City Council. The committee submitted proposals concerning location, the choice of architects and contractors, design, planning and budgeting, and defined major objectives: the museum was to reach high aesthetic and qualitative standards within a budget of 39.5 million guilders (approximately \$20 million), while at the same time maintaining annual operating expenses below 900,000 guilders (approximately \$470,000); it was to achieve prominence as an example of contemporary international museum architecture, and should

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Model of the new Groninger Museum.

emphasize the role of Groningen as the centre of the northern region of the country. Lastly, the building had to accommodate in the best possible way all the museum functions, a general section including bookshop, library, restaurant, etc., as well as the three museum sections devoted to sculpture, applied art and regional history, and archaeology.

The political hurdle

First of all, a suitable location had to be found. After much speculation and debate, four possible sites were retained. One of them, in particular, captured the committee's imagination.

The older part of the city of Groningen is surrounded by canals. The houses in the streets bordering these canals often date back one or two centuries, and some are even older. Among these old buildings lies the railway station, facing a canal called the *Verbindungskanaal* which connects two of the city's most important waterways. The old Groninger Museum is, moreover, situated on a branch of this canal. Near the railway station the *Verbindungskanaal* widens out to enable ships to pass one another, and this is where one of the proposed sites for the new museum was found. Someone boldly suggested constructing an artificial island in the middle of the canal and to build the museum on the island. This would not only give the museum the desired prominence and unique character, but would make it a direct link between the station and the town centre. The proposal was put forward in the City Council – and met with strong opposition, both from within the Council and from the general public. A survey conducted by a regional newspaper in fact showed that the vast majority of the population was against

the idea of creating a 'museum island'. Nevertheless, the proposal received the support of three political parties and a small majority was reached on the City Council. The first hurdle had been crossed.

After a number of possible candidates had been considered, the Italian architect Alessandro Mendini was appointed to head the project. However, after his first design had already been worked out, a new urban development plan was adopted, and the design had to be altered accordingly. His second proposal consisting of three buildings in the canal interconnected by bridges was greeted joyfully by the City Council in March 1989.

The legal hurdle

In March 1990, the City Council announced that construction would begin in October. As it turned out, they were somewhat optimistic. The majority of the population still strongly opposed the choice of location, and some urban preservation groups proceeded to take legal action against the project.

Members of the City Council, however, remained committed and one remarked that public opinion 'will hopefully soon change. It's a remarkable project trying to create a visual relief in an existing cityscape. Only after the building is completed will people see the beauty of it.'

Bearing in mind that legal objections could be circumvented by a so-called Article 19 procedure, the City Council wished to start building immediately. The procedure allows the provincial authorities to issue a preliminary construction permit even though the urban development plan for a specific area has not yet been approved, particularly in

cases where it is anticipated that objections will be overruled.

There was, however, a catch. The judge was wary of the fact that the Article 19 procedure had begun to be used too frequently, thereby undermining legislation. He therefore deemed it necessary to set an example by postponing the application. Nine objections against the urban development plan were pending in the Justice Department of the Council of State and he wished to await their conclusion before proceeding. On 14 February 1992, the last difficulties were finally settled. The notices of objections against the urban development plan issued by the Association for the Preservation of a Valuable Cityscape were turned down. Nothing now stood in the way of the new Groninger Museum.

The artistic hurdle

In April 1993, the first concrete pillar was driven into the ground. This was, however, only a symbolic action, since the *Verbindungskanaal* would have to be drained at the spot where the museum island was to be created. Once this had been done, ten-metre-high concrete pillars were sunk as the foundation, and concrete for the lower floor was poured. This was no ordinary operation, as the lower rooms are situated 50 cm below the water level and have elevated corners rising 80 cm above the water level, thus creating a sort of watertight basin in which the pavilions could be built.

Each pavilion has walls of different shapes, one straight, others oblique, tilting inwards or outwards. As the limited space on the island did not allow for large operations, most of the wall elements were specially designed and prefabricated elsewhere, with

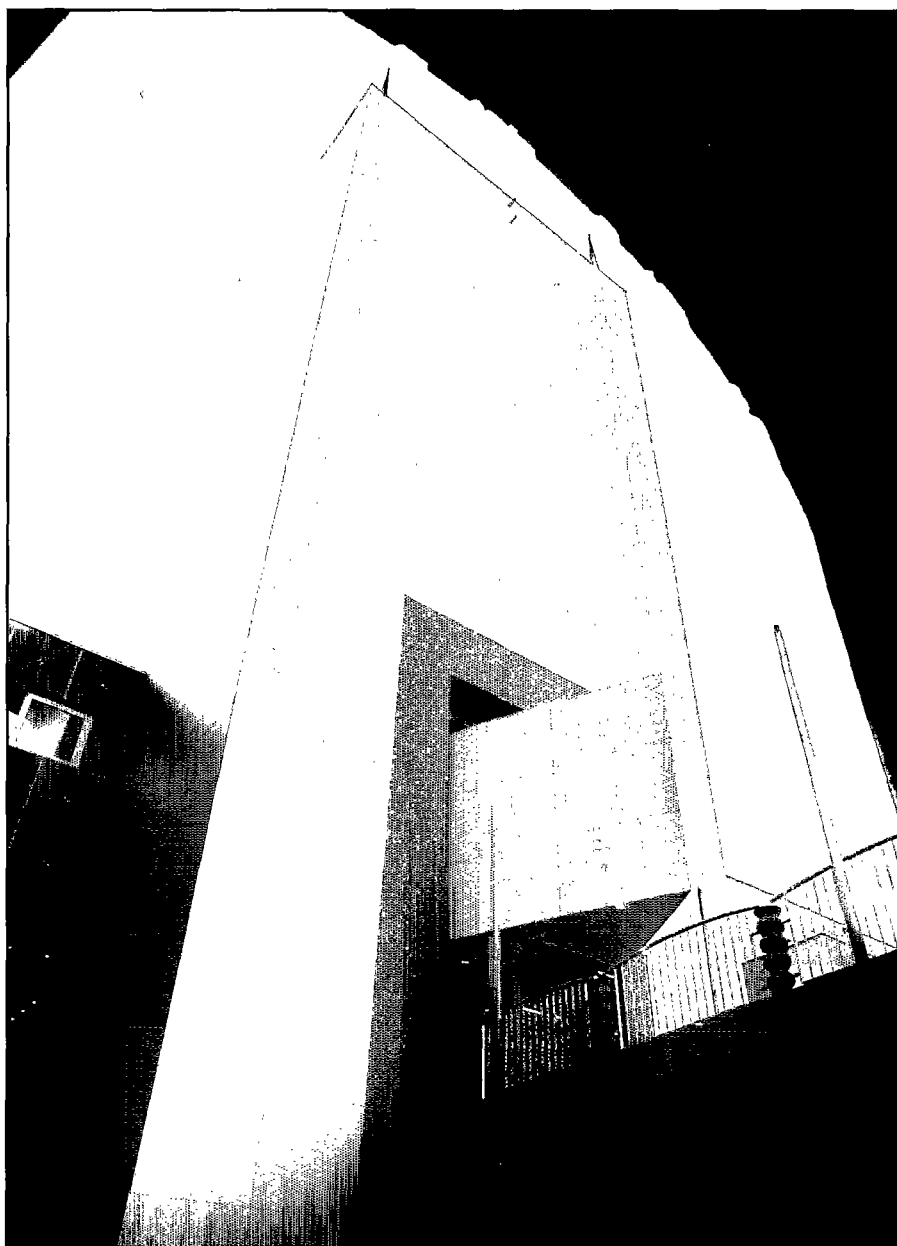
the exception of a circular drum-like structure which was poured in steel on site. The western pavilion is covered in red brick of various, unconventional sizes, while the eastern pavilion is clad in synthetic panels with pastel-coloured stripes. Other materials were also specially designed and produced for the building as, for example, concrete of different colours with various motifs.

The interior design of the individual parts of the building was confided to several guest architects, which is Mendini's usual way of working, and in fact this was one of the reasons why he was chosen to head the project. Thus the Department of Archaeology and History was designed by the Italian architect Michele de Lucchi and the Applied Arts pavilion by the French designer Philippe Starck. The American artist Frank Stella was given the task of designing both the interior and the exterior of the Sculpture pavilion. However, his leaf-shaped design proposal turned out to be both impractical and too expensive, and after much debate the Viennese architectural firm Coop Himmelblau was given the assignment. They came up with a design based on steel plates arranged at variable angles, which was immediately approved. The plates can be moved, making it possible to create a variety of spaces and rooms where sculptures can be viewed from all possible angles. The lighting system, designed by Peter Struyken, is computer programmed to change the wall colours by a simple pushbutton, thus making it unnecessary to repaint the walls for every new exhibit.

Within such an innovative building complex, it is not surprising that decisions have been made to adopt more innovative working methods as well. The director Frans Haks has stated that in the search for new, more imaginative ways of exhibiting, he

will draw inspiration from theme parks such as Disneyland. In the various pavilions, atmosphere and decoration should speak for themselves, and explanatory signs are banned. If visitors wish to know more about the exhibited objects, they can buy a catalogue.

The new museum opened in October 1994. It remains to be seen whether it will turn out to become the landmark it was intended to be and, more importantly, whether the inhabitants of Groningen will learn to appreciate the new island with its strangely shaped museum. ■



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View of the depot tower designed by the Studio Mendini.

Art exhibition transport: the case for alternative strategies

Peter Cannon-Brookes

Careful handling, responsible couriers and transport safety are paramount in moving a work of art. Various strategies must be considered and economic judgements made. Peter Cannon-Brookes explains the pitfalls and explores the possibilities for decreased risk and easier, cost-effective transportation. The author is joint editor of the International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship.

Central to the processes of planning any art exhibition transport and its insurance or indemnification is the 'transportation strategy' with its four components: (a) the mode of transport; (b) the packing specifications; (c) the transit insurance/indemnification; and (d) the decision whether or not to employ escorts/couriers. These are interdependent and no single component can be specified without reference to all the others.¹

The packing specification will, for example, depend upon whether the case is to be transported by air or only by road; whether it is to travel under escort or as part of a mixed consignment with other goods; and whether the insurer or indemnity administrator will specify certain requirements in fixing the premium rate or agreeing to provide indemnity cover. The function of the transportation strategy is as a risk management tool, to minimize both the hazards to which the object being transported is exposed and the cost thereof. By undertaking risk management in respect of the shipping and transit insurance/indemnification of art, a process is adopted whereby all four components are balanced against each other so as to achieve the desired result most economically. In other words, higher costs to be incurred in respect of one component can be traded against lower costs in respect of one or more of the others, so that the overall cost is minimized without compromising the security and well-being of the object being transported. For example, the cost of employing an experienced escort or courier may be more than compensated by less stringent packing specifications, lower air-freight charges and reduced insurance-premium rates.

The theory and practice of packing and transportation have made great advances since the pioneer researches of Nathan

Stolow and others, not least as a result of the campaign of work which culminated in the 1991 International Conference on the Packing and Transportation of Paintings in London. However, that conference unfortunately confined its attention to road and air transport, thereby ignoring both marine and rail transportation. Notwithstanding Cordelia Rose's admirable guide for escorts and couriers,² the training and thus the effectiveness of escorts and couriers remains an uncertain quantity, while considerable difficulties are currently being experienced in respect of both commercial insurance and the various indemnity schemes.

Effective risk management within this rapidly developing environment is a highly professional activity requiring a particular combination of talents coupled with practical experience, one increasingly provided in museums by the registrar, but the effective trading of the requirements of one component of the transportation strategy against those of the others can only be achieved if, in the planning process, all four components are brought together into a single pair of hands. This is currently not always the case and the achievement of the most economical transportation strategy can be compromised at the outset by rigid specifications for one component laid down in isolation from those for the others, or by advance commitments made during the negotiations to secure loans. Most registrars can quote examples of substantial unnecessary expenditure incurred in consequence of both.

Natural hazards and the question of security

Meanwhile, a better understanding of the realities of airline transit security has been gained by both the museum community

and the insurers, and Michael Kimmelman, in a recent article in the *New York Times*³ posed the question: 'What effect will a disaster have on the whole exhibition system?' and added the rider: 'The sub-text for every exhibition is: Does it justify the risk?' Nicholas Serota, Director of the Tate Gallery, had at the 1991 Conference in London drawn attention to the need for more rigorous risk management and ever more careful consideration of any loan and all the factors involved, not just cosy quid pro quos agreed privately between exhibition organizers. The present author has drawn attention to the dangers inherent in the intractable problems posed by the use of transportation by air, and the risk of avoidable catastrophic loss in transit.⁴

The various environmental hazards experienced in all forms of transportation can be effectively countered by adopting appropriate standards of packing and close control by skilled escorts or couriers. A consignment transported in a dedicated, environmentally controlled van with security escorts is exposed to a range of hazards which have been greatly reduced, though never entirely eliminated, but in the final analysis the standard of security achieved in respect of air freight is only as good as that being achieved for the remainder of the air freight being carried on that particular flight. The conviction of Pan Am, on 10 July 1992, for wilful misconduct, and the publicity given to repeated breaches of security in respect of passenger flights, have encouraged the museum community to look again at the standard of security actually being achieved by the airlines on a consistent basis, given the structure of the air-freight business and their moves to distance themselves from the legal consequences stemming from breakdowns in already inadequate security controls. At the 1993 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Museums, held in Fort Worth,

leading figures in the insurance world made it clear that in the aftermath of one single major catastrophic loss the attitude of the insurance market to the shipping of art exhibitions would change fundamentally. We can only assume that the administrators of the indemnity systems would immediately follow suit, not least in the face of the rise of cultural terrorism.

Alternative strategies for art exhibition transport and its insurance/indemnification are needed before a major catastrophic loss intervenes, and the first focus of attention must be on the current unreasonable dependence on air freight for most long-distance transportation. Within the transportation strategy the tendency has been, during recent decades, to seek to reduce the time of exposure and thus to equate speed with enhanced safety, thereby preferring on balance to expose consignments to marginally higher risks for shorter lengths of time. The reported major catastrophic losses experienced during those years have been due to fire and flood, but this may well have been due more to good luck than good management. The alternatives to air freight remain transport by road, rail and sea, and apart from small items carried by couriers, rail is rarely even considered today. Large consignments are difficult, but not impossible, to control during shipment by rail, and a minimum of two escorts is essential, but the overall costs can be surprisingly modest and with the advent of high-speed, low-vibration, air-conditioned trains in Europe, and the opening of the Channel Tunnel, serious consideration should again be given to exploiting these facilities more effectively.

Long-distance road transport of insulated, humidity-buffered consignments was developed by the present author for the British Council during the late 1960s and the subsequent improvements in vehicular

suspension systems, combined with air-conditioning and effective security control, both of the interior of the vehicle itself and of its immediate environment, have encouraged the transportation of consignments overland for ever greater distances, though the full potentialities of this mode have rarely been exploited. Marine transport, for all but heavy sculptures, also remains strangely neglected now that *ad valorem* rates have been abolished and the experience gained in shipping paintings in containers by sea has revealed that exceptionally stable environmental conditions can be obtained over weeks rather than days, coupled with vastly reduced freight charges, less sophisticated packing specifications and insurance premiums little different to those charged for air freight.⁵

Weighing risks

Lack of experience of other modes of transportation is a factor in the dominance of air freight, but the nub of the problem lies in manpower requirements and the extreme reluctance of most registrars to countenance assigning scarce staff to a single operation for more than a few days. Thus, in evolving alternative strategies for art-exhibition transport and its insurance/indemnification, careful consideration must be given to alternative transportation strategies in which the cost of employing more manpower is traded against reduced freight and packing charges. With marine shipments the exposure to catastrophic loss is much reduced, as compared with air freight, if for no other reason that large ships are more resistant to sabotage than aircraft. The balance will often be tipped by the application of the fundamental principle of commensurability, exemplified by Michael Kimmelman's rider: 'The sub-text for every exhibition is: Does it justify the risks?'

All too often, as mutual favours are solicited and deals struck, loans are approved for reasons unrelated to the merits of the particular exhibition in question, and a common commitment to the increasingly urgent necessity to generate additional cash flow from temporary exhibitions tends to cloud both curatorial judgements and the conservation needs of the object. The unfashionable principle of commensurability remains, at least for those public collections aspiring to the status of museums, that the inevitable acceleration in the rate of degradation of organic materials due to moving the object to a new environment, as well as the additional wear and tear to be sustained by it and the increase in external hazards, must be commensurate with the positive cultural gains to be made. Thus in evolving the most appropriate transportation strategy the long-term well-being of the object remains of paramount importance, and on balance any reduction in exposure to the risk of total loss, as against controllable wear and tear, is to be preferred.

Controllable wear and tear has been much reduced by the advances in packing and transportation techniques noted above, but traditionally escorts and couriers have paid particular attention to the minimization of the risks during transit stemming from criminal activity (above all theft) and fire, but the signals emerging from the insurance market indicate that claims stemming from mishandling and environmental damage now exceed those attributable to criminal activity and fire. The International Committee for Museum Security (ICMS) and the ICOM Conservation Committee (ICOM-CC) at their 1993 meetings recognized the significance of these developments and the need for escorts and couriers to focus greater attention on minimizing changes in ambient temperatures, and avoiding shocks, vibration and other en-

vironmental hazards. Liaison has been established between these two ICOM international committees in respect of the growing overlap in their respective fields of activity, encouraged by the greater importance now being assigned to preventive conservation and an uncomfortable awareness of the new dangers posed by cultural terrorism.

Rather more intractable are some of the problems currently experienced in respect of transit insurance/indemnity cover. Traditionally, the borrower has always offered the lender 'nail-to-nail' cover, that is to say, the policy comes into effect as soon as the object to be loaned is moved from its normal location, regardless of the person moving it. In other words, the owner or his agent was being insured for this phase of the transit, as well as the borrower or his agent after the transfer of the loan. The significance of this anomaly has become increasingly apparent as the interface between loan agreements and insurance contracts or indemnities has been scrutinized. With rocketing insurance valuations this is clearly a thoroughly unsatisfactory situation from the insurer's point of view, one potentially open to fraud and costly litigation, and premium rates not surprisingly reflect their reluctance to provide such cover.

The condition report, which sets out to establish the agreed physical state of the object at the commencement of the loan, presents its own problems because it cannot be drawn up without taking the painting, for example, down from the wall – an action which, in theory at least, would presumably not be necessary were it not for that loan. A growing number of museums in the United States require that such internal movements of works of art in connection with loans out are to be covered by the borrower's insurance policy or indemnity. The requirement is for the in-

surers to renounce their subrogation rights in respect of negligence or worse by museum employees when handling the loan as part of the traditional 'packers and carriers accepted'. Setting aside the problem of exposure to fraud, the premium rate to be charged will of course reflect the increased cover being purchased and the special nature of the risks encountered.

In major museums certain standards of handling, by specially trained staff, are generally presumed, but the risks attendant upon paintings taken down by his lordship's butler and the estate workers may be viewed somewhat differently. Disputes as to whether the work was already damaged or the damage was sustained during the process of taking it down, are likely to be acrimonious and costly. Nevertheless, the economics of art exhibitions rarely allow the shippers to undertake all the handling needed at the lender's premises, and local assistance, at least during the preliminary stages involving the preparation of condition reports, etc., is gratefully accepted, though the cost in increased insurance premiums payable may be very substantial.

At the 1993 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Museums it was emphasized that the loan agreement and the insurance/indemnity contract must interface exactly or the borrower will be deemed to be self-insured in respect of those components omitted. Insurance contracts, at a price, are extremely flexible and can be individually tailored to meet all requirements, but indemnity schemes are much more rigid and changes to them are exceptional. The logical conclusion is to draw up a loan agreement which exactly matches the cover being provided by the indemnity or standard insurance policy, and not to accept any liabilities in respect of the

handling of the loan prior to its physical hand-over to the borrower or his agent, and similarly after its return. This constitutes a marginal retreat from full 'nail-to-nail' cover, but lending institutions tend to be also borrowing institutions and enlightened self-interest indicates the desirability of such a compromise – of replacing 'nail-to-nail' by 'hand-to-hand'. Loans from private individuals and other bodies, however, are not negotiated within the museum environment of mutual self-interest and 'nail-to-nail' cover may continue to be demanded in respect of them. Also problematic is the question of weakness or damage which is claimed to have been pre-existing though not evident at the time of the preparation of the condition report and only manifests itself subsequently, during the course of the loan or after its return. In insurance terms this constitutes a form of 'inherent vice' and is not normally an insurable risk, but lenders increasingly tend to see it otherwise.

Alternative strategies for art-exhibition transport and its insurance require fresh thinking and, within the museum community, a certain willingness to compromise in everything but the well-being of the objects. There are no easy answers to any of the problems outlined above, but the minimization of exposure to major catastrophic losses, and the securing of the economic

future of major art exhibitions, will increasingly depend upon answers being found, and soon. ■

Notes

1. Peter Cannon-Brookes, 'The Evolution and Implementation of a Transportation Strategy for Works of Art', *International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 5, 1986, pp. 163–9.
2. Cordelia Rose, *Courierspeak*, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993.
3. Michael Kimmelman, 'When Art Takes Wing, Cross Your Fingers', *New York Times*, 7 March 1993.
4. See *ICOM News*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1993, pp. 13–14.
5. Peter Cannon-Brookes, 'Transportation of Works of Art by Sea', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 10, 1991, pp. 71–83; but for additional technical details see the present author's report to the Care of Works of Art in Transit Working Group in 'The Transportation by Sea from Southampton to Cape Town of Oil Paintings in a Container with Environmental Monitoring', *ICOM Committee for Conservation, 9th Triennial Meeting, Dresden, 1990*, pp. 401–4, Paris, ICOM, 1990.

What price success?

Vera Zolberg

In an ever-tightening worldwide economic situation, art museums have had to turn to a variety of fund-raising devices, the most spectacular of which has been the large-scale exhibition – the so-called 'blockbuster'. Although frequently successful in attracting a sizeable public, such activities may be financially hazardous and may push object- and research-oriented policies into the background. This is but one of the many ambiguities confronting art museums which were explored in depth at an international conference entitled 'Art Museums and the Price of Success'. Held in Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum from 10 to 12 December 1992, under the sponsorship of the Boekmanstichting, it brought together museum directors, government officials, and scholars from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States.¹ Vera Zolberg was one of the principal speakers. She is a professor of sociology at the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science at the New School for Social Research in New York.

Those who used to see the art museum as an ivory tower should be thoroughly disabused by now, considering the developments in recent years. The art museum's embeddedness in the social world from which it draws its sustenance is becoming increasingly evident. The communities that permit the art museum to exist also make considerable demands upon it. These demands may seem unreasonable, but those who work in art museums are not allowed the luxury of ignoring them. It was the museums' founders, after all, who persuaded their compatriots of their worth; having made themselves a necessity, their survival as institutions depends upon their ability to live up to their commitments by adapting to a changing social and intellectual environment. As difficult as this may be, far from requiring enclosure in a plastic bubble in order to live, many art museums seem to thrive in adversity.

If success is measured by the ability to provide high-quality exhibitions of many kinds of art to large audiences, then art museums are clear winners, as should be proved by the recent upsurge of 'blockbusters'. But this success comes at a high cost, not only in terms of money. Equally vital is the character of the museum experience, which many feel is impaired by overly large numbers of visitors and the disturbance they create. Another central concern is the quality of the art works that gain admission to the art museums, but seem inappropriate to their traditions. Finally, the decline in government support for museums, forcing them to turn to other funding bases, is seen as a threat by some museum people as it paves the way for inappropriate incursions of market forces.

There is frequently a discrepancy between intention and outcome. One critic exploring why art museums organize blockbusters found that, although regarded as a sure

way of drawing in huge numbers of visitors, and in spite of much hype and advertising, blockbusters sometimes fail to attract. Indeed, small scholarly exhibitions may turn out to be more successful in bringing in visitors. If blockbusters are actually akin to speculative investments, why use them? Part of the answer may be found in the way art museums are financed in the United States, where blockbusters have become the stock in trade of major museums, something which has influenced museum policies elsewhere. When museums in other countries adopt similar practices, they should be aware of the perils as well as the opportunities that they may be facing.

Nationhood, commerce and culture in American art museums

Although blockbuster exhibitions have only come to flourish in recent decades, their history goes back to the creation of art museums as institutions. Among the models that guided American museum founders were the great international fairs of the nineteenth century and, more directly, the 1876 Centennial of the American Declaration of Independence. Exhibitions designed by Protestant denominations to carry religion and other sources of culture (science, music, history) to many regions of the country, were another source of inspiration. These exhibitions, among others, provided ideas for wax museums and murals of biblical or other religious scenes, and gave rise to more commercial ventures.

We may think of art museums as primarily non-profit institutions, but both in their origins and their recent development they are imbued with commercial, nationalist, and religious elements according to which success is measured in the ability to draw large numbers of visitors – to be edified,

instructed and entertained. This has been sustained by the need for American art museums to seek funding wherever it might be found. Whereas in other countries the state provides most of the support for cultural institutions, this has almost never been the practice in the United States. With the exception of the national museums under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., most museums were conceived through the concerted action of local élites.

Structures of support

In the United States, art museums have three types of support structures to call upon: (a) public funds (from taxes) at the national, state, or municipal level; (b) private funds (from donors, trustees, foundations, firms); and (c) user fees, from admission charges or subscriptions, gift or book purchases. On the face of it, the possibility of receiving support from multiple sources is advantageous, since the museums are not at the mercy of a monopolized power. However, being able to turn from one source to another does not obviate financial need and may even drive some museums inexorably towards organizing huge events.

Unlike those of European countries, the United States Government has tended to avoid supporting the arts. As it was pointed out in Amsterdam, in spite of budget cuts and privatization, Dutch art museums continue to receive considerable financial support from their government. American art museums consider themselves lucky when the proportion of government funding from all levels – national, state, and municipal – reaches as much as 20 per cent of operating expenses. Even the national museums that charge no admission fees to visitors and are paid for by taxes have had to engage in

lucrative activities: elaborate gift shops, membership drives, magazine and book publishing, and support from foundations and corporations. Most other art museums rely largely upon the city and the state in which they are located for funds, direct and indirect, such as derogations from real-estate taxes as non-profit institutions. However, as cities and states struggle with fiscal problems, and the national government seeks ways to cut down on the relatively weak support that it has given, museums have to look elsewhere. This is where private support should be of help.

Private donations come in two principal forms: gifts of art works and gifts of cash from individuals. Trustees and major donors who aspire to become trustees are expected to make gifts to the art museum; the amount varies, but it may reach tens of thousands of dollars each year. The funds may come from the individual or through his influence on others to contribute. Trustees have a long association with private museums, and are sought out by state as well as federal institutions. It should not be forgotten that the trustees benefit from advantageous tax laws, nor that the glamour of providing art works does not extend to paying for ordinary operating costs.

Another form of private donation has been from foundations. Although today relatively few foundations are as involved in the arts as they used to be, some remain committed. Frequently, the foundations have oriented their support towards expanding the museum's public. For example, the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund has launched a series of grants totalling \$50 million over five years to help art museums shed their image as élitist institutions. Each museum is to target a specific new audience: young people, rural populations, the disabled, ethnic minorities. Among other things, the funds are to be spent on rein-

stalling exhibits to make them more appealing and to make better use of existing collections for these special publics.

American museums rely increasingly on support from corporations. This is not a simple relationship. While museums wish to avoid the overt commercialism of theme parks, such as Disney World, corporations desire visibility at a low cost, and need to justify the use of corporate funds to their shareholders. These divergent aims underlie the relationship between art museums and corporations, but because of business difficulties, the problem may become moot. Given the troubled conjuncture, many companies that were mainstays of support in the 1980s have dropped out.

Significantly, the Guggenheim Museum's Russian Constructivist exhibition, a highlight of the 1992/93 New York season, was extended for several weeks, not only because it was immensely popular, but because the museum was unable to attract sponsors for its next show. Furthermore, the 250,000 visitors to the Russian exhibition ended up costing the museum more money than they brought in, despite strong support from several large sponsors. This suggests that if museums had to go it alone, there would probably be no blockbusters at all. Even the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which is probably the best endowed of all museums, with a yearly budget of \$85 million, is cutting back. It allocates only \$1 million of its own money to exhibitions and tries to pick up \$6–8 million annually from corporate sponsors. The Museum of Modern Art's average annual costs for exhibits are between \$3 million and \$5 million of which only \$350,000 comes from the museum's endowment income. It is trying to increase its endowment funds to generate the total amount needed for exhibitions from interest, but it will take a long time to reach this goal.

Institutional survival in austerity

The matter of survival is on everyone's mind these days: in the Netherlands, where the national government has initiated partial privatization of cultural support; in the United Kingdom, where, in the wake of Thatcherism, cultural institutions find themselves hostage to a discourse and reality of cost-benefit accounting that drives them to turn to business sponsorship on terms dictated by the latter. European museum directors do this with some misgiving, because corporate patronage is difficult to divorce from a sponsorship akin to advertising. At the Amsterdam conference a number of museum officials expressed their apprehension with regard to the motives behind corporate largesse.

European museum officials, who disagree on many things, nevertheless share a common concern when they consider seeking funds from business. Governmental funding has safeguarded their autonomy as professionals, allowing them to manage their affairs in the interests of art. But, as fearful and resentful of corporate support as some museum people may be, they are also faced with the threat of having to live without it. Even more vexing than being at the mercy of business is to be ignored by it since corporate sponsorship remains something that only the most prominent and visible museums can count on. Small, isolated and underfunded museums have little to fear from corporations or from blockbuster exhibitions – to their undoubted regret.

Since American art museums have had a longer experience of living with a variety of support sources, they may be less likely to consider themselves victims of sponsor pressure. They also tend to be more entrepreneurial and in times of austerity to be

willing even to sell works from the museum's collection, which rarely happens in Europe.

It is probably an exaggeration to picture American art museums as being at the mercy of market forces. Despite the problems they face, their popularity and their adaptability have given them a solid position in society. European museums are even further from total dependence upon outside sources, despite trends to reduce governmental support. Yet they will need to develop, in their own social contexts, the sophisticated administrative devices for fund-raising and marketing that have become the norm in the United States. The challenge European art museums face is twofold: on the one hand, to gain support from their governments for legislation that encourages do-

nations, as well as to strengthen charitable foundations and the infrastructure of private support more generally; and, on the other, to do this without losing sight of their obligation to provide access to the arts for an increasingly socially diverse public. If they achieve one without the other, then the price of success has been too high.² ■

Notes

1. The papers from the meeting were published in 1993 by the Boekmanstichting, Herengracht 415, 1017 BP Amsterdam, and the Dutch Museum Association.
2. The author has provided a brief bibliography on this subject which is available from *Museum International* on request. – Ed.

Professional news

New publications

Bibliographie de l'histoire des musées de France, by Dominique Poulot. Published by Éditions du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche, 173, boulevard Saint-Germain, 75006 Paris (France), 1994, 182 pp. (ISBN 2-7355-0289-9).

The history of museums is a new territory for the historian and the subject of recent pioneering research. Locating and classifying the increasingly abundant literature on the subject is the aim of this new guide which, through thought-provoking essays and a number of thematic bibliographies, provides a glimpse of the social and intellectual history of museums in France.

Le tournant commercial des musées en France et à l'étranger, by Denis Bayart and Pierre-Jean Benghozi, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Direction de l'Administration Générale, Département des Études et de la Prospective, Paris, 1993. 296 pp. Distributed by La Documentation Française, 29-31, quai Voltaire, 75344 Paris Cedex (France). (ISBN 2-11-00300-2).

In the past, museums were content to maintain a small stand where visitors could purchase postcards, guides and reproductions. Recent years, however, have witnessed the transformation of these simple counters into veritable commercial galleries selling a broad variety of products. What has triggered this extensive commercial development? What does it bring to the museum and what are the problems it can pose? This publication explores the experience of a number of museums and describes how such activities may lead to a new understanding of the public and to the re-definition of the museum's role and image.

1994 International Directory of Training in Conservation of Cultural Property, compiled by the International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the Getty Conservation Institute. Distributed by Getty Trust Publications, P.O. Box 2112, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2112 (United States).

This fifth edition of the directory lists 30 per cent more programmes than the previous edition and also contains an easy-to-read international coding system and a complete subject index for easier use. It is designed to provide information on a wide variety of worldwide training opportunities at different levels and in various fields of conservation and restoration, and includes specialized multiyear courses leading to a degree, short-term courses for specialists, as well as conservation courses offered within degree programmes in other fields.

Southern African Art, journal published by the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, P.O. Box 8155, Causeway, Harare (Zimbabwe). Price per copy Z\$5.

The journal, launched in 1992, reports on the development of the visual arts in Zimbabwe and in southern Africa; it also examines those artistic and cultural forces from beyond the region which are of concern to the National Gallery. Recent issues have focused on 'The Art, the Community and the Environment of Southern Africa', 'The Arts and Development in Southern Africa', 'Art, Education and Development in Southern Africa' and 'Southern African Art - An International Perspective'.

museum *international*

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