

Introduction

Neal Spencer

Former Keeper of Nile Valley & Mediterranean Collections

The British Museum's Collection Online was relaunched in Spring 2020, replacing a system dating to 2007 (with Egyptian and Sudanese objects from 2008). With new features, including deep zoom for object images and powerful search filtering, this will make the collection more accessible, whether you are in our galleries or elsewhere. The release of the new version also sees catalogue data and photography undertaken in recent years made available for the first time. Detailed imagery of over 2900 shabtis is now available, thanks to Kelly Accetta's work in 2017–2018 as part of the Breem Bequest Internship. The full corpus of 800 inscribed vessels from Amarna – the ancient city that was the focus for last year's Annual Egyptological Colloquium – is now online, made possible by Micol de Teodoro's documentation work (2018). An acquisition of 1255 objects from Amara West in 2016, from the Egypt Exploration Society excavations of the 1930s and 1940s, was catalogued and photographed by Manuela Lehmann. Over 2400 of the papyrus frames in the collection have been scanned and are now also available to view in high resolution, a project overseen by Ilona Regulski, Elisabeth O'Connell and Adrienn Almásy.

As ever, the *Newsletter* evokes the chronological range covered by the Museum, from modern artists' postcards through early travellers' diaries and back to pharaonic papyri. A major exhibition, *Inspired by the East: how the Islamic world influenced Western art* allowed museum visitors to explore in detail one period of European fascination with Egypt, while The BP exhibition *Troy: myth and reality* reminded us of how excavations in Egypt yielded ancient copies of stories transmitted across the millennia. The rich tapestry of collection histories is again evident, epitomised by the donation of a new papyrus. A Theban contract from the reign of Cleopatra III was owned by William Henry Fox Talbot – a pioneer of 19th century photography – reflecting his fascination with Egypt.

Alongside an intriguing (and exciting) 'round thing' at Dangeil, and collaborative work with Egyptian colleagues and European Museums to help transform some the Egyptian Museum galleries in Cairo, a growing focus on community engagement continues to characterise the Museum's work in Sudan and Egypt. Fieldwork at Shutb near Asyut prompted the creation of a book, *A Tale of Shutb*, working with local schoolchildren. After 12 years of excavation at Amara West in northern Sudan, the British Museum helped support the creation of the Beit Abri



lil-Turath – the only place within a 170km radius where people can consult books on the ancient past, or see displays of objects (ancient and modern) that reflect their local heritage.

Finally, the Museum's *Circulating Artefacts* project has revealed how widespread the illicit trafficking of pharaonic antiquities has become, identifying numerous cases that are now under investigation by law enforcement agencies. The Museum was awarded further funding through the Cultural Protection Fund, and the project has since researched social media sites, where many looters and traffickers operate; the project completed its second round of development in February 2021 and is now closed.

This Newsletter was almost finished in March, when the Museum closed due to the covid-19 pandemic. I write as we work through a third period of closure, in early January. Though the galleries have been closed, and access to the collection and library are very restricted for staff, colleagues progressed research and certain projects kept going, including our work in Cairo and a new project on pharaonic statues funded by David and Molly Lowell Borthwick. Millions have accessed the collection through the online database, blogs, YouTube talks and beyond: an unexpected chapter in the 268-year history of the British Museum.

Exhibitions and galleries
The BP exhibition **Troy: myth and reality**

Lesley Fitton

Visiting Academic, former Keeper of Greece & Rome,
British Museum

The BP exhibition *Troy: myth and reality* explored the enduring power of the story of the Trojan War, which has been told and retold for some three thousand years. Greek, Roman and Etruscan objects outlined the tale, while works of art of many different kinds showed responses to it from the Medieval period to the present day. The archaeology of Troy was presented using material from the collection of Heinrich Schliemann, the pioneer of archaeology who conducted the first large-scale excavations in the ancient city. Visitors thus encountered Troy as a real place as well as a place of the imagination, enabling exploration of the fascinating interfaces between history and poetry, reality and myth.

In a section introducing the ancient storytellers, papyrus manuscripts from Egypt, lent by the British Library, showed parts of Homer's two great epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Revered in the ancient world, the poems

were intensively studied and repeatedly copied. The same was true of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Rome's national epic that was written in conscious imitation of Homer. A small papyrus fragment from the UCL collection took visitors straight into the schoolroom of Egypt in the Roman period. On this fragment, a school pupil has repeatedly copied out a line from the *Aeneid*. In a large, sprawling hand, it reads

'non tibi Tyndaridis facies [inuisa Lacaenae]'
(*'not for you the hated face of the Laconian woman, daughter of Tyndareus'*).

This line, referring to Helen of Troy, comes from a passage in the poem where Venus, mother of the Trojan hero Aeneas, is explaining to him that Troy is now beyond hope. He must leave, and go to fulfil his destiny as founder of Rome. She says that the gods, not Helen and Paris, are responsible for the city's sad fate.

The BP exhibition *Troy: myth and reality* was shown at the British Museum from 21 November 2019 to 8 March 2020. Supported by BP.



Papyrus from Soknopaiou Nesos with copy of Book 3 of the *Odyssey*. British Library Papyrus 271.

View of the exhibition, with the marble statue of The Wounded Achilles by Filippo Albacini (Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth House, 1825).



Exhibitions and galleries

Inspired by the east: how the Islamic world influenced western art



Julia Tugwell
Project Curator, Department of the Middle East

Inspired by the east: how the Islamic world influenced western art explored how Western artists have been inspired by the Islamic world for centuries, and charted the long and complex interactions between Europe and North America in the 'West', and North Africa and the Middle East in the 'East'. At its core was an examination of the art movement known as Orientalism, where representations of the East by Western artists often blurred the lines between fantasy and reality. This art movement reached its height during the 19th century in Europe and North America, yet the exhibition traced its roots to the early 1500s through instances of travel, trade, pilgrimage, diplomatic exchange and warfare, among others. The exhibition further demonstrated that Orientalism inspired the production of a wide range of works including paintings, works on paper, ceramics, glass and photography, to name a few, but also extended more widely to include architecture, theatre and music. The exhibition concluded with four contemporary reactions to the imagery of Orientalism by Middle Eastern and North African female artists.

The most prolific example of Orientalist artwork is 19th-century paintings, created by Western artists to satisfy an enormous public market, and ranging from accurate depictions to highly romanticised scenes. The heart of the exhibition featured a 19th-century salon-style hang of paintings along one wall, with subject matters ranging from images of Muslims engaging with their faith to places of interest or scenes from everyday life including urban and rural settings. Sites depicted included ancient monuments such as the Giza pyramids, Christian and Muslim religious sites.

years, Lewis stands out among the Orientalist painters as one who immersed himself in the culture he depicted. He lived in a traditional upper-class house, learned some Arabic and wore variations of the local dress. When visited by his friend, novelist William Makepeace Thackeray, he was described as a 'languid Lotus-eater', enjoying a 'dreamy, hazy, lazy, tobaccified life'. Lewis' exquisitely detailed and colourful paintings, often depicting scenes from bazaars or harems with particular attention paid to the architectural surroundings, were greatly admired in Europe.

He continued to paint images from Cairo and other travels when he returned to England in 1851, drawing upon his collection of sketches, photographs or textiles to reinvent scenes. While he painted primarily in watercolour, Lewis also produced works in oil – often duplicates – as they fetched higher prices. On loan from the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, *Portrait of a Memlook Bey* (1863) is also known in a larger, oil version (1868) exhibited at the Royal Academy. Lewis regularly inserted himself into his Orientalist scenes, and here he depicts himself wearing a white cloak holding an Ottoman *kilij* sword over one shoulder. He also bears a sash around his head, which appears in several other paintings, possibly not realising that it was both contemporary and Indian. His wife donated the sash to the V&A, describing it as 'supposed to be 1000 years old and came into the possession of my late husband... when he was in Constantinople in about 1840 or 41'.

Inspired by the east: how the Islamic world influenced western art was shown at the British Museum from 10 October 2019 to 26 January 2020.

Supported by Jack Ryan

Sponsored by Standard Chartered Bank

The exhibition was organised with the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.

One of the artists featured in this section was John Frederick Lewis, a British painter who travelled extensively around Europe and the Middle East including Spain, Italy, Greece, Albania, Turkey and, finally, Egypt. Arriving in 1841 to Cairo, where he would remain for the next ten



View of the salon-style hang in section four of the exhibition

Portrait of a Memlook Bey (1863) by John Frederick Lewis R.A. (1804-1876), Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.



Ibrahim El-Salahi,
Tree (2001).
Coloured inks
on paper, AOA
2010,2037.1.
Donated by the
artist.

Ibrahim El-Salahi,
*By His Will We
Teach Birds How
to Fly* no. 4 (1969).
Pen, ink and
wash on paper,
ME 2019,6003.1.
Funded by
CaMMEA.

Osman Waqialla,
Kaf ha ya ayn sad
(1980). Ink and
gold on vellum,
ME 1998,0716.1.
Brooke Sewell
Permanent Fund.

Exhibitions and galleries Sudanese modernism: Ibrahim El-Salahi at the British Museum

Venetia Porter

Department of the Middle East

In 2019, the British Museum acquired a rare drawing by the renowned Sudanese Modernist Ibrahim El-Salahi. Entitled *By His Will We Teach Birds How to Fly* it is part of a series of black and white drawings he made in the late 1960s. A major figure of African Modernism, 'a vital part of world history' as he has been described, El-Salahi's work has, in recent years, been the subject of major exhibitions: at Tate Modern and the Ashmolean Museum.

Born in Omdurman in 1930, El-Salahi began his studies at the School of Design, Gordon Memorial College and the School of Fine & Applied Arts in Khartoum, graduating in 1951. In 1954, he won a scholarship to the Slade School, part of a group of Sudanese students sent to art schools in London during the 1950s, including the calligrapher Osman Waqialla (1925–2007) who studied at Camberwell School of Art. The artist and writer Nour Amir, born in Shendi in 1939, also trained at the Slade, a little after El-Salahi. He recalled that on their return, these students had to teach at Khartoum's School of Fine Arts: 'We were hopeful, enthusiastic, energetic, and filled with ideas and dreams. However we were faced with an utter lack of recognition.'

Shocked by this, El-Salahi told Maya Jaggi in an interview with the Financial Times; 'for two years I was completely silent' Undeterred, these artists discovered that Sudan itself was to become their source of inspiration and creativity. Nour Amir describes how, as part of the curriculum, there were field trips to Wadi Halfa in Northern Sudan, to the port city of Suakin, to the Nuba mountains, where the students drew and painted. They also studied the ancient Kushite collections in the Sudan National Museum. El-Salahi travelled extensively around the country with the writer Tayyib Salih, author of the



1966 novel *Season of Migration to the North*, whose books he would later illustrate. During this period of 'silence', El-Salahi became aware of the gulf that existed between what artists were trying to achieve, and any kind of common ground with the public. Wanting to discover what people had in their homes, he discovered 'Arabic calligraphy and African art'

The art that he and his contemporaries went on to make is known as 'the Khartoum School' *Sudanawijyya* – a 'visual modernism' and a way of expressing the cultural fabric of Sudan. Another example of El-Salahi's work in the British Museum that exemplifies this is *Tree* (2001) evoking the *haraz* (acacia) which grows on the banks of the Nile. Leafless during the rainy season, it blossoms in dry weather and, for Salahi, it symbolizes steadfastness and individuality. In its shape, *Tree* also echoes the *jibba* the patched Sudanese cloak worn by Sufis.

In 1973, he was appointed Sudan's Undersecretary of Culture, a role that was abruptly terminated in 1975 when he was wrongly implicated in a political coup, and he spent 6 months without trial in jail. It was during this time that he created *The Prison Notebook*, a remarkable document, now in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, that includes drawings and notes on random pieces of paper including cement casings which he would bury in the sand to escape detection. Among the drawings in the notebook are sketches of birds, a recurring motif in much of his work: 'The bird... is almost like my conscience, reminding me of what should be done.' The British Museum drawing and the series it is part of, also draws its inspiration from a verse in the Qur'an: 'Do they not look at the birds, held poised in the midst of [the air and] the sky? Nothing holds them up but [the power of] God. Verily in this are signs for those who believe!' (Qur'an, Surat al-Naml verse 79). The figure in the work holds an arm outstretched and points his index finger outwards. This delicate hand gesture which creates the beak of a bird, was one that El-Salahi's father, a devout Sufi, would make as he prayed.

Ibrahim El-Salahi is included in Reflections: contemporary art of the Middle East and North Africa (Room 90 until August 2021) and the accompanying book by Venetia Porter with Natasha Morris and Charles Tripp. The exhibition and the acquisition of modern works are supported by the Contemporary and Modern Middle Eastern Art (CaMMEA) acquisitions group. For further details visit: britishmuseum.org/support-us/become-patron/cammea-group



Above:
*The World Exists To Be Put on A Postcard: an exhibition of artists' postcards from 1960 to the present, drew from a collection of 1000 gifted to the Museum by the novelist and former art dealer, Jeremy Cooper. This includes parts of Michael Langenstein's series *Fantasy and Surreal Postcards* (1986), subverting commercial postcards. *Excalibur*, pictured here, shows an Air France Concorde passing through the Great Pyramid of Giza.*

Above right:
The fourth venue for the touring exhibition *Faraó - Rei d'Egipte* (20 February – 25 August 2019) was hosted within a Medieval building in the centre of Girona, now converted into a LaCaixaForum. © Fundació Bancaria "la Caixa"

Right:
The Musée des Beaux-Arts in Montreal displayed *Momies égyptiennes – passé retrouvée, mystères dévoilés* (14 September 2019 to 28 June 2020). Photo MMFA, Denis Farley. The exhibition has now been seen by over 1.6 million visitor across 5 venues.



Collection
Domestic artefacts from Qasr Ibrim

Ruiha Smalley,
British Museum Volunteer and Independent Researcher

I have been helping catalogue finds from Qasr Ibrim, a site on the east bank of the Nile in Lower Nubia, in southern Egypt. The site is known for its New Kingdom shrines, Meroitic temples, Christian cathedral and exceptional preservation of organic remains, with occupation through until the end of the Ottoman era. Excavated by the Egypt Exploration Society from the 1960s onwards, the site was once atop a cliff top overlooking the Nile, but it is now an island in the reservoir created by the construction of the Aswan High Dam. The British Museum holds 6403 objects from the site, and important archives relating to the excavations.

Amongst the objects, I have recently catalogued a small assemblage of brush and broom ends, dating to the Ottoman period (19th century). It might be surprising how much variety can be found in such simple objects, with differing construction, binding and materials.

The simplest brushes or brooms (Type A) are formed by tying palm fibre strips, reeds or twigs into a bundle and then binding the bundle with a cord. The palm fibre bundles are turned over themselves and bound where the strip reverses. The cords are made of palm fibre, flax thread or cotton thread. In one instance a suspension loop remains tied to the binding while other variants are formed using reed strips and bound with a scrap of plain weave, woollen fabric. Type B is more complex. Bundles of palm fibres are turned over themselves and bound with palm cords, as before, and the bundle is divided into three, four or five branches. The cord is wrapped around the bundle several times, then moves diagonally along to wrap the first of the branches and continues along to wrap each branch in turn, before finishing in a knot.

Many of the brushes are worn down to their binding and may have been intentionally discarded at the end of their useful life. Preserved in the arid conditions at Qasr Ibrim, these artefacts provide a glimpse at the everyday: domestic items that rarely survive on archaeological sites.



Left: type A brush.

Right: type B brush.

Collection
A spell against the evil eye



Susanne Beck
Curator of Egyptian Written Culture (2019-2020)

An interesting and unusual papyrus was found unregistered in one of the storerooms in the British Museum in 1925. The circumstances as to how it came to the British Museum are entirely unknown. The handwriting sets out a spell against the evil eye; only ten other examples of this spell survive which are rarely attested in ancient Egypt.

The evocative spell states:

[...] You slay [...] burn every illness/pain which comes to Hor who Ta-dit-Isis has born!
Sekhmet shall shoot her arrow at you.
The magic of Thot is in your limbs.
Isis shall vilify you.
Nephthys shall punish you (and) Horus shall slaughter [you] <with> the knife twice.
He shall give you to the altars of Horus who-is-in-Shenut (?)
...
He shall slaughter you like Apepi.
You will not live forever and evermore [...]

The charm was for the protection of a man named Hor born of Ta-dit-Isis. In the text, he is identified with Horus: the legitimate heir, son of Osiris and his mother Isis. Horus

was often associated with sufferers, as in his youth, the god had to hide in the Delta from his uncle Seth who pretended to Osiris' throne. In this marshy landscape, Horus was endangered by scorpions and snakes. The spell also invokes the power of the ferocious lion goddess Sakhmet and Nephthys the sister of Isis, who will slaughter the evil eye like Apepi, arch enemy of the sun-god, had been.

Another feature of the spell is that the reciter 'will not let rise the sun above the western hill while descending (?) to the east': every possible precaution is being taken to make sure that Hor will not suffer from any illness or the bad intentions send by the evil eye.

The papyrus is illustrated with falcon-headed crocodile gods. Crocodile deities played an important role in ancient Egypt, often being worshipped on account of their dangerous nature, as one of the most feared creatures in ancient Egypt, alongside hippopotami and lions. In order to mitigate this risk, crocodile deities were associated with more popular, benign, gods, such as the heavenly god Horus. This affiliation goes back to a legend originating in the Delta, in which Horus turned into a crocodile to recover and bring the body of his murdered father Osiris (god of the dead) to a sanctuary. The falcon-headed crocodile god seated on the shrine containing the head is most likely Horus who-is-in-Shenut (?), and the head is that of Osiris, his father.

Papyrus British Museum EA 10563.

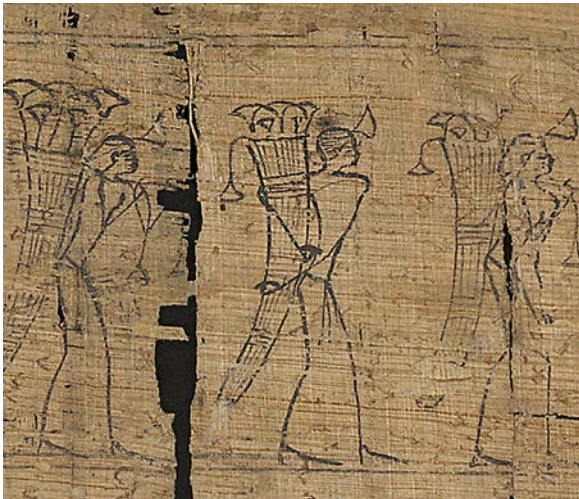
Fowling in the marshes / Isis & the seven scorpions

Marie Vandenbeusch

Project Curator: Egyptian Touring Exhibitions,
Department of Egypt and Sudan

The British Museum acquired papyrus EA 9961 in 1868 from the collection of Scottish traveller Robert Hay (1799-1863), yet only recently has it been studied and published. The papyrus, now in two frames and somewhat fragmentary, features a skilfully executed scene of papyrus gathering and fowling scenes, taking place in the marshes. The depiction of men on a large papyrus boat, gathering birds, takes up the whole height of the papyrus. Other actions – papyrus gathering, rope making, and more fowling – are depicted on the top register, while the lower one was left empty, perhaps with the intent of adding extra scenes at a later stage. These smaller scenes are not as detailed, perhaps made by less experienced artists than the masterful main scene. Nonetheless, they are very vivid, illustrating for example the chaos of birds flapping their wings as they try to escape. Monotony is also avoided: in the row of men carrying papyrus bundles, each one has a different posture, conveying the struggle of holding such cumbersome loads. Such scenes are more commonly found on tomb walls, especially those decorated during the Old and Middle Kingdoms, several centuries, if not millennia, before the production of this papyrus.

The reverse side features no scene, but fifty-two columns of cursive hieroglyphs, again with a lot of unused space on either side. The inscription relays the *Tale of Isis and the seven scorpions*, a mythological text typically found on magical statues, and previously unknown on papyri. These statues were meant to help a doctor/magician cure patients suffering from bites from venomous animals, such as scorpions and snakes.



Why would a papyrus combine marsh scenes and a magical text with healing properties, and bring together content usually found on stone not papyrus? Research on its dating, materiality and provenance suggests that its content was copied from several original pieces that had likely been produced at different periods. Such a copy could have belonged to an archive – some were held in temples for priests and scribes to consult – although we cannot exclude that the owner of this papyrus was building his or her own archive, and copied this document for a private use.

For a more detailed study of this papyrus, see
M. Vandenbeusch, 'Evidence of an Ancient Archive?
The Papyrus British Museum EA 9961', *Journal of
Egyptian Archaeology* 104.2 (2018), 177-194
(<https://doi.org/10.1177/0307513319856861>)

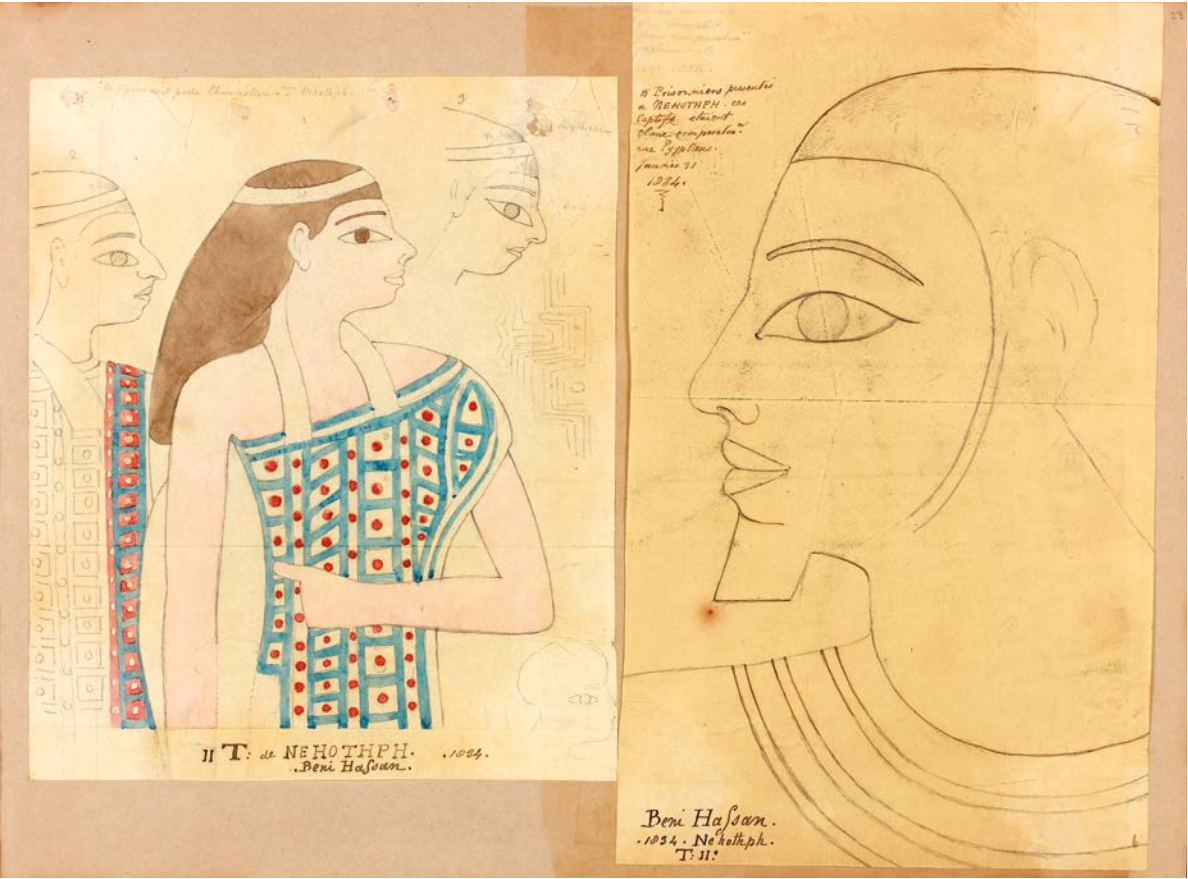


Top: Papyrus
gathering.
Detail of papyrus
EA 9961.

Bottom: Reverse
of papyrus
EA 9961.

Right: Fowling on
a papyrus bark.
Detail of papyrus
EA 9961.

Collection
A curious and convivial traveller:
Edward Roger Pratt in Greece and Egypt (1832-34)



Patricia Usick
Visiting Academic, Department of Egypt and Sudan

In 2001, when the British Museum acquired the Dynasty 19 stela of Kenro (EA 74847), the first of two ancient Egyptian stelae to come to the Museum from the collection of the wealthy landowner Edward Roger Pratt (1789–1863) of Ryston Hall (Norfolk), his unpublished journal of travels in Greece and Egypt in 1832–34 was discovered. Pratt had kept a series of private diaries with brief day-to-day entries throughout his life, and his classical education at Oxford was preceded by annual tours, accompanied by his tutor, throughout the United Kingdom and then to the Continent, where he spent three years on a Grand Tour. His journal for Egypt was accompanied by a 136-page album with his own drawings, watercolours, and, unusually for that time, paper impressions of bas-reliefs, from a solo Nile voyage to the Second Cataract.

A gregarious and enthusiastic traveller, Pratt was supported by extensive consular networks, expatriate communities and introductions from other travellers. Arriving in Egypt at the start of 1834 – after the first phase of intrepid exploration but before the emergence

of guide-books and tourism – Pratt assiduously recorded ancient monuments with views of temples and tombs, plans of sites, and architectural and textual details, many of which were later damaged or destroyed. In Greece Pratt travelled widely and adventurously in the company of scholarly architects and artists studying ancient Greek monuments, while in Egypt he followed in the footsteps of the French Egyptologists Jean-François Champollion, and Dominique Vivant Denon.

The antiquary, artist and scholar Denon had travelled with Napoleon's expedition in 1798 and Champollion himself, then still working on his decipherment of the hieroglyphic script, had only recently returned from the joint Franco-Tuscan expedition to Egypt and published his travel diary in 1833, just before Pratt made his own journey. Pratt used Champollion's diary as a guidebook, looking out for particular monuments and sites described by him. Pratt also met the British traveller and collector Robert Hay on his voyage which led to his making paper 'squeezes' of reliefs and inscriptions and visiting then little-known sites such as Amarna. Pratt's own drawings in the album are augmented in a scrapbook fashion by cuttings from Denon's publications and other relevant prints.



Just after completing my forthcoming book, Pratt's previously lost album for Greece was rediscovered at Forum Auctions, London, and through their generosity Pratt's drawings of Greece and Smyrna (Izmir) will now be included. Pratt's original collection of Egyptian antiquities, now-dispersed, can also be reconstructed. It contained several important stone stelae, canopic jars and shabti figures, perhaps purchased later on his return as he does not record purchases in Egypt except for one shabti figure and some coins. The project forms part of ongoing archival research into the provenance of the Egyptian collections of the British Museum.

Patricia Usick, *A Curious and Convivial Traveller: Edward Roger Pratt in Greece and Egypt, 1832-34 (British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 6)*, Leuven, 2020, can be ordered from [peeters.be](https://www.peeters.be).

Album page 23.
Left: coloured tracing, two Asiatic women with patterned dresses, 'les figures dont parle Champollion. T. Nehothph', and 'Il T: de Nehothph. Beni Hassan. 1834'; the tomb of Khnumhotep, Beni Hasan, with additional studies of a profile and a pattern, and additional colours indicated, one 'light flesh colour'.

Right: a line-drawn tracing of a male profile with close cap, faintly in pencil and again in ink: '15 Prisonniers présentés à Nehothph, ces captifs étaient blanc comparativement aux Egyptiens. Janvier 31 1834' and 'Beni Hassan. 1834. Nehothph. T: Ilo'; the tomb of Khnumhotep, Beni Hasan. The words 'étaient blanc comparativement aux Egyptiens' are a direct quotation from Champollion's description in his letter to Champollion-Figeac of 5 November 1828 (Champollion, J.-F. c.1986. *Lettres et journaux écrits pendant le voyage d'Égypte*, recueillis et annotés par H. Hartleben. Paris, 133).

Album page 32.
Top: watercolour drawing of the façade of the rock-cut tomb of the Dynasty 12 nome official Djefaiha'py II, Asyut.

Bottom left: print (Denon, V. 1990. *Voyage dans la basse et la haute Égypte*. Vol. II, *Planches*. Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire. Cairo, no. 3, pl. 33) showing the façade of the rock-cut tomb of the Dynasty 12 nome official Djefaiha'py I, title of the print cut out and stuck in separately: '2. Tombeau Egyptien à Lycopolis [Asyut]'.

Bottom right: watercolour drawing of the façade of the same tomb [Djefaiha'py I] as shown in the print from Denon above.

Collection

A papyrus of William Henry Fox Talbot

Brian Muhs

Associate Professor of Egyptology, University of Chicago
Tasha Vorderstrasse
 University and Continuing Education Program Coordinator,
 University of Chicago

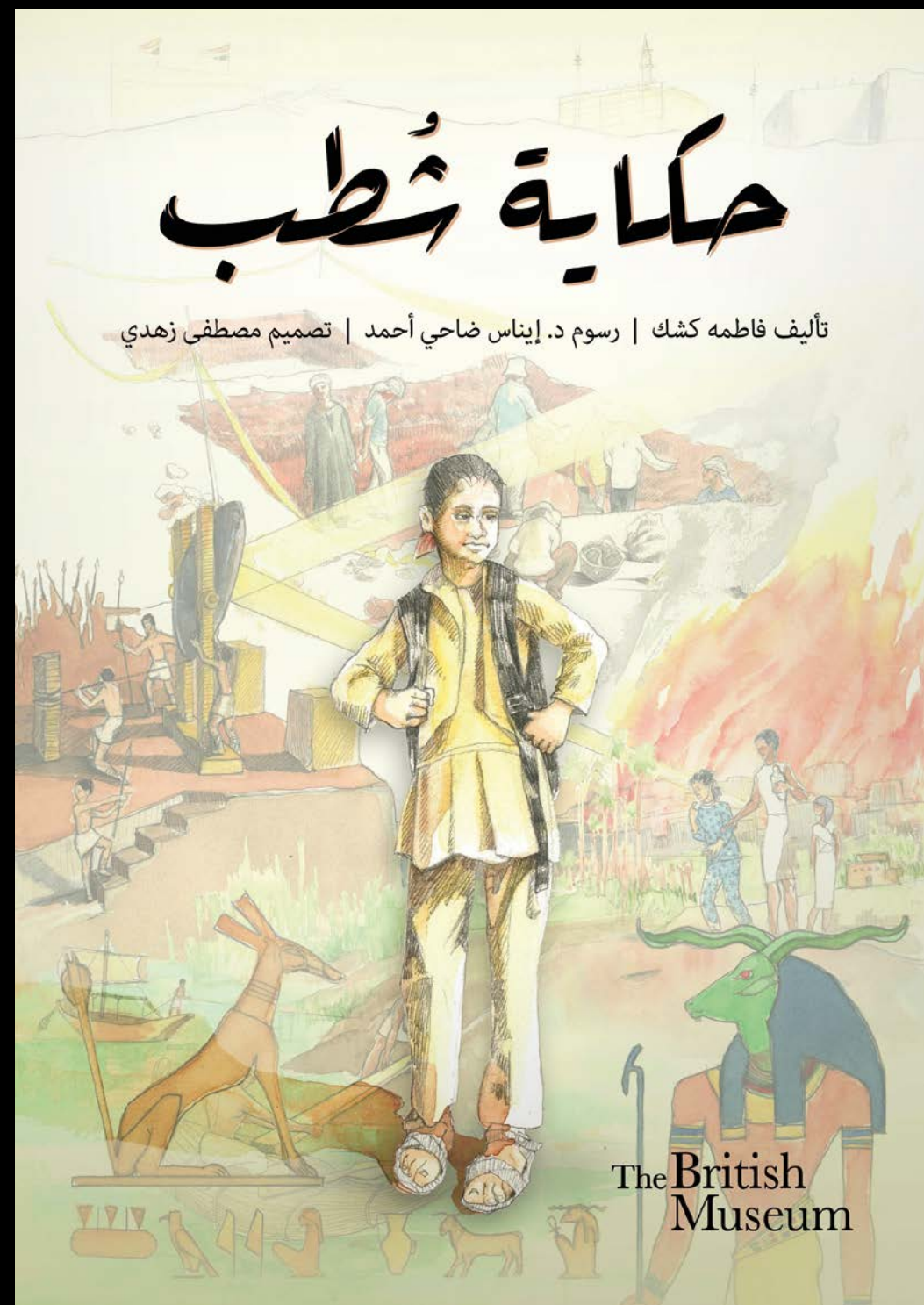
The Talbot Papyrus is a recent donation to the British Museum (EA 95852) that is an ancient Egyptian loan contract written in the Demotic script. A notary wrote the contract at Djeme – modern Medinet Habu near Luxor – in the tenth year of Queen Cleopatra III, corresponding to 21 November 109 BCE. In it, the borrower promises to repay the lender three hundred *deben* (or six thousand drachms) of money and forty-six *artabas* (about eighteen hundred liters) of wheat. The lender, a woman named Nachoutes daughter of Hasos and Taieous, is known from other papyri with which this papyrus may originally have been found. The loan may represent an extension of a similar loan contract between the same parties, written by the same notary one year earlier (Papyrus Field Museum of Natural History [Chicago] 31323).

Muhs identified and described the Talbot Papyrus from an image of the obverse published in association with an auction at Christie's (28 April 2009), which included a group of papyri formerly belonging to William Henry Fox Talbot. Alongside this demotic papyrus, the group consisted of several Book of the Dead fragments dated to Dynasty 18 and belonging to individuals named Tui, Senhotep and Mahu, and one of Nesy-Nefer-Hr dated to the late New Kingdom. After the demotic papyrus re-appeared for auction at Bonhams (28 November 2018), the purchaser of the papyrus donated it to the British Museum, where it is available for study, joining another Fox Talbot papyrus from the 2009 auction, the Book of the Dead of Tui (BM EA 79431).

The importance of the papyrus is not only the fact that it is closely connected to other papyri, but also due to its 19th century owner, William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877), who is best known for being a pioneer of early photography. He also had a myriad of other interests, including antiquarian ones, such as Assyriology and Egyptology. His small collection of papyri, the production of the book, *The Talbotype applied to Hieroglyphics*, and the contents of his notebooks, now held in the British Library, attest to his passion for Egyptology.

It is not entirely clear when Fox Talbot acquired his Demotic papyrus, but evidence from his correspondence (now digitised) suggests that he owned a Demotic papyrus by 1827, perhaps this one. Fox Talbot probably also acquired his fragment of the Book of the Dead of Tui at an early date, because other fragments in the British Museum (EA 9913) were purchased from the Henry Salt sale of 1835.

For further information see Brian P. Muhs, "Appendix: P. Talbot" in "A Loan Contract in Chicago from the Archive of the Theban Choachytes (Second Century BCE)," in R. K. Ritner (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat: Studies Presented to Janet H. Johnson on the Occasion of Her 70th Birthday (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 70)*. Chicago, 2017, 205-226.



In Egypt A Tale of Shutb

Fatma Keshk

Founder and Manager of The Place and The People for Heritage

Ilona Regulski

Curator, Department of Egypt and Sudan

The British Museum project in the Asyut region (Middle Egypt) aims to appeal to local interests and supports that through deploying methodologies drawn from archaeology and heritage preservation. In an attempt to share the latest discoveries of our archaeological fieldwork in the village of Shutb with its local community, the project undertook several initiatives to disseminate the somewhat technical and scientific data in a digestible and accessible way.

A Tale of Shutb is an invented story to which historical data and recent discoveries have been added. The content was inspired by the children of Shutb, and their eagerness to explore their heritage, which became apparent during several workshops. The protagonist of the story is an 11-year old girl, called Nadia, who is in the 5th primary grade and lives in Shutb village. One morning on her way to school, Nadia spots archaeologists working on the ancient Kôm. As she returns in the afternoon, an antiquities inspector agrees to explain the work of the archaeological team; that they are excavating the ancient layers of the village in order to reconstruct its history. Nadia and her friends are particularly puzzled by the patience with which some of the team members record tiny pottery sherds and remove centimeters of soil. She is so impressed by the experience that her dreams that night take her back 4000 years in history, to ancient Shashotep. She walks through the vanished city with her new friends Khnum-hotep and his sister Meret, and passes by houses, shops, workshops, markets and

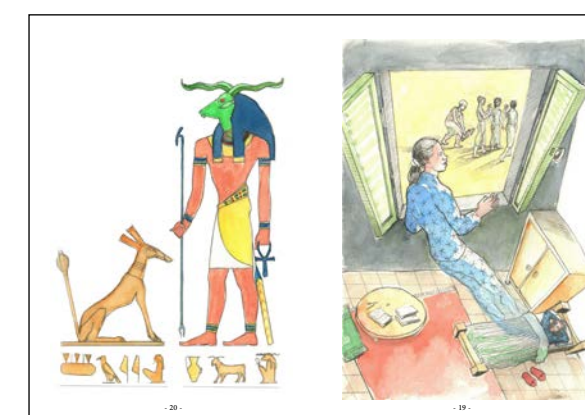
the main temple. Khnum-hotep explains that his name refers to the most important Egyptian deity 'Khnum' who is figured as a ram-headed man and considered the guardian of the sources of the Nile, and that the city's name celebrates Sha, the god of fate who was figured as a donkey and resembles the famous Seth. As Nadia wakes up and walks to school again the next morning, she sees the traditional brick houses of Shutb in a new way and queries her grandparents about old folk stories as she tries to hold on to the magic of her dreams.

Produced in Egyptian Arabic by Fatma Keshk, the Tale is intended to both entertain and educate. By adding historical information to a fiction story, young generations are encouraged to make their own links with the past and explore how this past can feature in their present.

A Tale of Shutb is available for download at britishmuseum.org

A Tale of Shutb was illustrated by Enas Dahy Ahmed from the Faculty of Specific Education at Asyut University, and designed by Mostafa Zohdy. The Arabic text has been translated into English by Said Ahmed Aboudaif, Sarah Adel, Sara Abd El-Nasser, and Yara Hosam from the translation department of Asyut University. It was created and printed with the support of an institutional links grant, ISN 274662441 through the Newton-Mosharafa fund partnership. The grant is funded by the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial strategy and executed by the British Council.

Follow on Twitter: Fatma @fkeshk and Ilona @ilonareg



In Egypt Transforming the Egyptian Museum in Cairo



Ilona Regulski
Curator, Department of Egypt and Sudan

Building on the extensive partnership between Egypt and the European Union (EU), the project *Transforming the Egyptian Museum Cairo* is a unique collaboration bringing together, for the first time, five European museums with major Egyptian collections and associated Egyptological and museological expertise. The consortium of museums comprises the Museo Egizio (Turin, Italy), the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung (Berlin, Germany), the Musée du Louvre (Paris, France), the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden, The Netherlands) and the British Museum. This consortium has partnered with the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities (MoTA) in a collaborative effort to reconsider the vision and mission of the historic Egyptian Museum in Cairo (EMC), in light of the opening of two new museums in Cairo (Grand Egyptian Museum, National Museum of Egyptian Civilization).

For 36 months, the Egyptian-European team are sharing and exchanging expertise to redisplay the entrance galleries of the EMC as well as the material from the Tanis Royal Tombs, whilst also creating a detailed strategic vision (masterplan) for the future. The actions, together, will provide a strategic framework for attracting future funding to the EMC and pave the way for a UNESCO application to recognise the EMC as a World Heritage Site.

The British Museum is working together with Egyptian colleagues on the redisplay of rooms 49 and 50, presenting Late Period and Graeco-Roman Egypt (380 BC-395 AD), and assist with strategies related to Audience Engagement and Interpretation, Communications, Income Generation, Loans and Touring Exhibitions. In addition, BM staff have delivered condition assessments for redisplaying organic material (April 2019) and provided photography training and equipment for the EMC photographers and other staff (October 2019).

To achieve maximum impact in terms of audience engagement, Egyptian colleagues at the EMC were familiarised with empirical quantitative and qualitative research upon their audiences and enhanced object narratives during an interpretation workshop (1-4 July 2019) delivered by the British Museum's Head of Interpretation Stuart Frost. Several exercises, including surveys and diverse visitor scenarios, enhanced understanding of audiences' motivations for visiting, their interests and behaviours. Some results were surprising. For example, many visitors turn right upon entering the EMC; hence they start their visit at the end of the chronological circuit. Reasons for this could be cultural – the majority of interviewees came from the Arabic world – or a lack of clear signage.

When asked for the reason of their visit, most people expressed a general interest in learning about Egypt's history through objects. Contrary to the general assumption, the royal mummies or the Tutankhamun collection was rarely mentioned as a specific purpose of the visit. The analysis led to the creation of interpretation plans for each gallery selected for redisplay, identifying key messages and a new structure for the redisplay. The plan will provide the basis for improved visitor experience and signage by introducing (and evaluating) a new information/text hierarchy and templates for labels addressing each of these levels.

A workshop in March 2020 focused on how the EMC will communicate with its audiences, through marketing, media and advocacy, and support the MoTA in wider income generating targets. In November, conservator Bianca Stella started working with Egyptian colleagues to conserve the oldest tomb painting from the Nile Valley, from Tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis.

The Transforming the Egyptian Museum project is funded by the European Union.



View of the
Egyptian Museum
in Cairo (photo by
Ilona Regulski).

Egyptian Museum
Head of Section 5
Wafaa Habib with
BM conservator
Barbara Wills
during conservation
assessment.

In Egypt
**Redisplaying Gallery 49 in the
Egyptian Museum in Cairo**

Wafaa Habib and Heba el-Latif
Curators, Egyptian Museum Cairo
Ilona Regulski
Curator, British Museum

Galleries 49 and 50 are located on the ground floor in the south wing of the Egyptian Museum Cairo (EMC) and display objects from the Late Period and the Graeco-Roman era (380 BC-395 AD). They are situated at the end of a chronological circuit and represent the final phase of pharaonic history as well as the transition into a new imperial era. New displays will seek to present these objects as examples of transition and globalisation.

Currently, Gallery 49 mostly displays large rectangular and anthropoid sarcophagi in a symmetrical layout responding to the classical architecture of the rooms. While the large stone sarcophagi are diverse in date, the anthropoid sarcophagi (stone and wood) along the walls date more consistently to the Ptolemaic period. The centre is occupied by a random display including the famous coffin of Petosiris, a mummification bed, an offering altar, and a large basalt anthropoid sarcophagus. A pair of colossal statues graces the transition between galleries 49 and 50.

The curatorial team defined a number of key messages that will steer the redisplay: (1) the Late Period and Graeco-Roman era is characterised by both the CONTINUATION of 3000 years of ancient Egyptian history and CHANGE through the arrival and influence of different peoples and cultures; (2) the presence of foreign rulers, cultures and peoples affected Egyptian IDENTITY; (3) this period saw the ASSIMILATION of Egyptian, Persian, Greek and Roman cultures; (4) the contact between local Egyptian and Greek traditions, led

to a unique HELLENISTIC culture emerging in Egypt after 332 BC; (5) despite foreign influence with religion and the afterlife, the Egyptians PRESERVED their old traditions.

In style and concept the funerary objects in gallery 49 display consistency and continuity in following earlier ancient Egyptian traditions. The large stone sarcophagi, in particular, resemble their Old Kingdom predecessors on the opposite side of the museum. The idea of preserving the memory of the deceased and their position in society on earth through mortuary rituals is fundamental to the ancient Egyptian worldview. Yet, each stone container holds the story of a human being who adopted an increasingly international lifestyle while defining his or her identity. The new display will invite the visitor to look beyond the world of the dead to discover what it was like to live in a changing Egypt. Did people feel Egyptian or Greek, or Roman? What is foreign and what is Egyptian? Which language did they speak?

Such questions can be answered through the information provided by the elaborate decoration of many of the objects currently on display. Name and titles of the deceased on the sarcophagi reveal 'professions', 'identity', and 'family' connections. Persistence and preservation of ancient beliefs will be addressed in the two narrow spaces behind the columns in gallery 49, where rows of anthropoid stone sarcophagi and wooden coffins are placed vertically against the north and south walls. The repetitiveness of this display is visually appealing and will be preserved. An almost warehouse-like display allows us to address the diversity in decoration and craftsmanship, and personal preferences when preparing for the afterlife.

The Transforming the Egyptian Museum project is funded by the European Union.



View of the anthropoid sarcophagi in Room 49 at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (photo by Ilona Regulski).

In Egypt
**In the land of the Tjehenu: Kom Dahab, an unknown
Old Kingdom settlement in the Western Nile Delta**

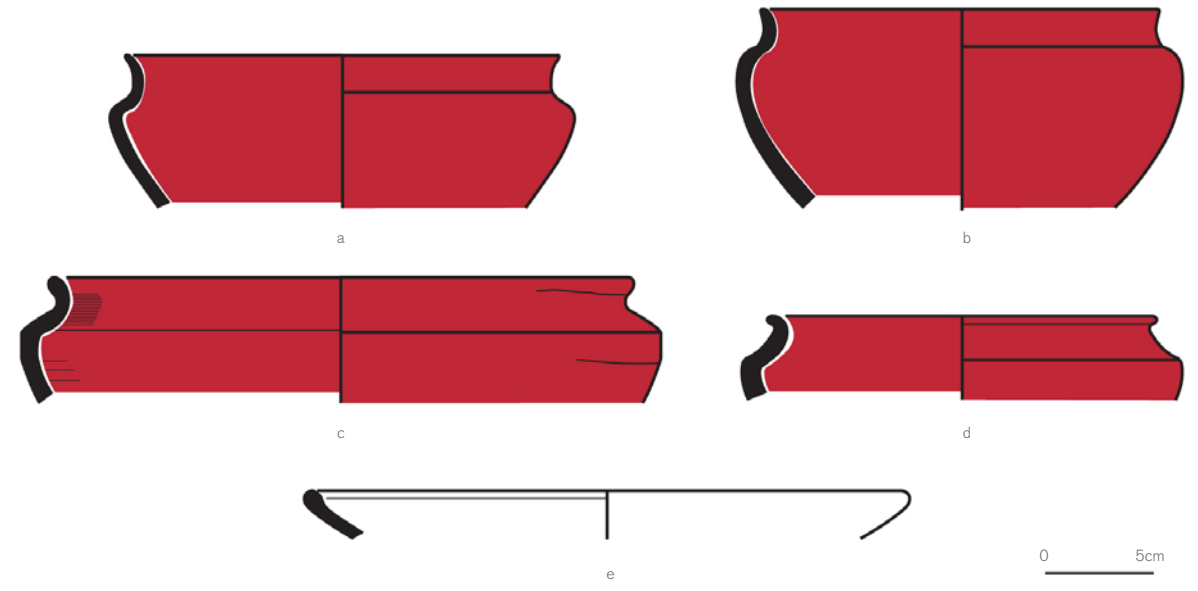
Aurélia Masson-Berghoff,
Project Curator, Department of Greece and Rome

A survey conducted by William Coulson in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with his collaborators Albert Leonard Jr. and Nancy Wilkie, explored more than thirty sites in an area of about 800km² in Egypt's Western Nile Delta. The vast archival documentation of this ambitious, but little published, project is currently being reappraised at the British Museum. It is transforming what we knew about settlement patterns and the historical development of this under-studied region of Egypt, which was a dynamically changing natural landscape and an important zone for inter-cultural contact.

Kom Dahab is one of the five sites the American team excavated. It is usually perceived as an industrial quarter or a hamlet that sprung up suddenly in the Ptolemaic period, 500m from the major Ramesside foundation Kom Firin. An augering campaign conducted by Judith Bunbury, as part of British Museum excavations at Kom Firin, suggested that a canal may have separated the two sites in the past. The mound of Kom Dahab does not exceed two hectares and a meter in height. The 1980 survey of the site was complemented by four small trenches opened between 1981 and 1983, which revealed that the site was an important pottery production centre during the Ptolemaic period and still occupied in the Late Roman era.

The reassessment of the excavation documentation shows, however, that more than three meters of archaeological deposits dating back to the Old Kingdom and possibly earlier are found directly beneath the Ptolemaic layers. Numerous Meidum bowls, in both alluvial and marl clays, were recorded together with other characteristic shapes of this period. The early Old Kingdom is particularly well represented in the ceramic assemblage, while Dynasty 6 material is almost entirely absent. These early levels also yielded several flint blades and a number of stone vessels – including some of fine craftsmanship – and a worked shell.

The Western Nile Delta is normally regarded as a sparsely populated zone during the Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom, in stark contrast with more eastern regions. The only other known Old Kingdom sites in the area are Kom el-Hisn and, much further south, Kom Abu Billo. The former is usually identified as *Hwt-ih(w)t*, the capital city of the 3rd nome of Lower Egypt. While the unsuspected antiquity of Kom Dahab should not necessarily drastically transform the idea of a less urbanised region, it nonetheless conveys a sense that the Egyptian state had perhaps a tighter control along the western border in this period than what was previously thought.



Selection of material from the early phase of the site (a. Meidum bowl; b. plate in calcite; c. worked shell; d. chert blades).

Meidum bowls (a-d) and a plate with a marked inner lip in calcite (e).



Kom Dahab was settled along the westerly branch of the Nile that connected Kom el-Hisn with Lake Mareotis. During the Old Kingdom, this region was wooded, a rich eco-system with significant water resources, ideal for cattle grazing. Juan-Carlos Moreno García has demonstrated that it acted as a porous border with the Libyan region known as the land of Tjehenu. Sedentary and nomadic populations may have coinhabited the area, with the Egyptians seeking control of the commercial routes held by the Libyans. Was Kom Dahab an 'early Kom Firin', a checking point for the control of the trading and military activities in this strategic location along the western border of Egypt? Was it inhabited by troops, traders and/or officials that answered to representatives of the Egyptian state in Kom el-Hisn? Environmental changes, such as the migration of the branch of the Nile or more secondary canals, could have forced the relocation of the settlement across ages. Tombs that may date back to the Middle Kingdom-Second Intermediate period were also discovered in the vicinity, at Silvagou.



Questions relative to the nature and status, but also the chronological and physical extent, of this site will only be identified with a thorough geological survey and new archaeological investigation. Kom Dahab has the potential to shed some light on this poorly known period of the Western Nile Delta, on local/Libyan early cultures and on how the Egyptian state gained control over this marginal, but military and economically strategic region in the time of the Pyramids.

Western Nile Delta: The American survey in the region of Kom Firin and Naukratis is supported by a grant from the Shelby White and Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications.

Follow Aurélia on Twitter @aurelia_masson

Above: 1982 excavations in Naukratis, Kom Hadid trenches 62, 63 and 76.

Middle: Preparing for aerial views of Kom Barud with helium balloon and remote-controlled camera in 1982.

Bottom right: Camel transporting hay across Kom el-Hisn in 1980.

Opposite page: Bipod photography over Trench III at Kom Dahab in 1982.





In Sudan Round thing, you make my heart sing¹

Julie Anderson

Curator for Sudan and Nubia,
Department of Egypt and Sudan

For several years, colleagues have been encouraging the archaeological expedition at Dangeil to explore a large mound in the ancient sacred precinct, situated beside the 1st century AD late Kushite Amun temple. This mound (Kom G) was nick-named 'The Telekom' because for the longest time it was the only place with mobile phone reception. Standing 4.5m above the surrounding ground, it covered an area of about 23.5 by 26.5m, with lime plaster, fired and mudbrick fragments all that was visible on its surface.

Based upon the mound's close proximity to the Amun temple, prior to excavation it was believed to be an altar as had been discovered at other similar late Kushite temple sites in the vicinity, such as at Naqa and el-Hassa. This proved not to be the case. As excavation of the mound progressed, it became shockingly apparent that the structure being unearthed was circular, not rectilinear. A massive round brick building, 15m in diameter and preserved to roughly 4m above the modern surface, was discovered. Its wall comprised a mudbrick core faced on the exterior with lime-plastered fired bricks. The brick courses gradually stepped inward towards the centre of the building, with the wall core tied together by regularly spaced wooden beams, inserted crosswise through its thickness. An entrance faced west, and the building may have been roofed with a corbelled brick dome, now largely collapsed.

The interior has yet to be explored and the building's enormous size, unusual structural form and function remain enigmatic. Theories concerning its purpose range from silo to shrine. Round structures have often been associated with expressions of local culture and circular buildings, constructed from a variety of materials, have been noted in Kush from as early as c. 7500-7000 BC, such as was found for example at el-Barga near the 3rd Nile Cataract. The closest parallel to the Dangeil building – in size, construction, materials and shape – is an unusual Kushite round building (WBN 50) near the Amun temple at Wad Ban Naqa. Excavated by Thabit Hassan Thabit (1958-1959), and further explored by Friedrich Hinkel (1980s) and the Czech National Museum (2009, 2010, 2013), its function remains unknown. Few associated artefacts or deposits were preserved that might provide a clue.

An object that might shed some light on the nature of Dangeil's round building is a small, circular, domed, sandstone shrine (62.5x59.2cm) now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA 21.3234).² Excavated from the Amun temple at Jebel Barkal by George Reisner in 1916, a statuette of a cult figure, now missing, would have been placed inside; the socket for its attachment within



remains. The name of Amanakhareqerema, who ruled Kush towards the end of the 1st century AD, is inscribed on the naos and the king, followed by a winged goddess, is depicted on either side of the shrine's entry with his arms raised in praise. A frieze of lotus flowers, much like that depicted in a wall painting found on the gate of Dangeil's Amun temple, encircles the base of the shrine.

Prior to the Kushite conquest of Egypt in the mid-8th century BC, religious beliefs remain little known and poorly understood. While some Kushite deities are familiar from the Egyptian pantheon, among them Amun, Isis, and Osiris, many indigenous gods and the religious practices associated with them are still unclear or unknown. With the small shrine from Jebel Barkal in mind, it is tempting to suppose that Dangeil's mysterious round building may have been an indigenous Kushite shrine. This is not inconceivable, but it is too early to draw any conclusions. Hopefully, excavation of the structure's inner chamber will clarify the function and purpose of this enigmatic edifice.

Since 2013, fieldwork at Dangeil, a project of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (Sudan) in cooperation with the British Museum, has been funded through the Qatar-Sudan Archaeological Project, the Institute for Bioarchaeology and the generous support of Dr. D Bird and N.K. Adams.

Follow Julie on Twitter @Amesemi

Round building
during excavation.

Round structure
at the end of
excavation,
autumn 2019.

¹ With apologies to The Troggs.

² <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/144530>

In Sudan
The Beit Abri lil-Turath
(Abri House of Heritage)

Neal Spencer

Former Keeper of Nile Valley & Mediterranean Collections

Archaeologists increasingly consider how the results of their work are shared with local communities, who might not have access to the scholarly publications, which are often in a different language and available only in distant libraries. As we wound up fieldwork at Amara West, after 12 years, we wished to consider the most effective legacy that would benefit the local communities. Having published three Arabic books – targeting both general and young audiences – and produced Arabic and Nubian podcasts, we considered the construction of a small display space with information on Amara West. Abri was the favoured location, as the nearest major town with government offices, schools and a busy market.

Rather than decide the approach ourselves, we sought the community's opinions. Tomomi Fushiya, a researcher at Leiden University who led our community engagement programmes, interviewed 200 residents of Abri, and the villages of Amara East and Ernetta island. The response was clear: a display on the past cultures and history of the region was of interest, but more important was a space to celebrate 'our memory and heritage'. We decided to let the community take the lead: decide the location, the design and the content, through a committee of schoolteachers, government officials and community council representatives, alongside recent graduates in folklore, history and geology.

Thus was born the Beit Abri lil-Turath, the 'Abri House of Heritage', a name chosen by the Committee (after some debate!). An abandoned *nadi* (community club) near the main schools and market was renovated using materials that evoke the long history of the area – from mud plaster to red bricks and concrete – to create a performance space, a library room, an office area, two display rooms and a shaded area for socialising or other activities. The first display room, curated by colleagues from the National Corporation of Antiquities & Museums and the British Museum team, tells the archaeological story of the region, from the first evidence of human settlement in 10,000 BC through the Kerma civilization, Egyptian occupation, the empires of Napata and Meroe, medieval Christian kingdoms, the Ottoman Empire and Anglo-Egyptian rule

(until Sudan's independence in 1956), using archive images and drawings. This information was previously almost entirely inaccessible to these communities. Objects from Amara West – a reassembled sandstone doorway, a selection of stone tools, an offering basin and a reconstructed funerary bed (*angareeb*) – were included in the display.

The second room was curated by local graduates supported by Sanaa el-Batal, an anthropologist from the University of Khartoum. They worked with local communities to borrow objects that reflect 'living heritage', and then grouped these into themes: life stages, music, faith, the culture of food and drink. These displays reflect both local traditions and crafts – from a *tambour* (stringed instrument) and carved wooden serving bowl – to the objects reflecting modern trade and materials (metal oil-lamps and enamel plates).

Teaming up with *Sudan Memory* – a King's College London project to document and make available Sudanese photographic and film archives, funded by the Cultural Protection Fund – enabled the graduates to train in scanning and documenting family photograph albums. Such photographs are incredible sources for the culture, fashion and clothing, traditions, and architecture of the area over the last 70 years, at a time when rapid modernisation is transforming life and the recent past becomes easy to forget.

The local government has committed staff to maintain the Beit Abri lil-Turath, and both local communities and visitors to the area can visit for free. I look forward to seeing how the community decides the activities, displays and events that will take place in the new facility.

British Museum work at Amara West, and the Beit Abri lil-Turath, was supported by a grant from the Qatar-Sudan Archaeological Project, and took place under the auspices of the National Corporation for Antiquities & Museums (Sudan). The Arabic books and podcasts created by the project can be accessed at britishmuseum.org, with further support from the Toyota Foundation and the Arts & Humanities Research Council. The library books in the Beit Abri lil-Turath were donated by Al-Faisal Cultural Centre in Khartoum.



Left: the Beit Abri lil-Turath on opening day.

Opposite page: Sanaa el-Batal (right) with graduate trainees discussing the display of objects relating to living heritage.

In Sudan
**Documenting a disappearing tradition:
 Nubian *angareeb* beds**



Manuela Lehmann
 Project Curator: Amara West,
 Department of Egypt and Sudan

Over one hundred wooden fragments excavated from the cemetery at Amara West in northern Sudan, dating to around 1200-800BC, were identified as parts of wooden beds. The ancient components were produced in different shapes and with diverse types of decoration, often incised with horizontal lines as a predominant pattern. In trying to find parallels for the ancient beds we looked to modern Nubian *angareeb* beds, still built in the same tradition and visible in the houses and streets of the area. These beds, the main furniture in these houses, are used to sleep upon, sit, rest, work and for meals.



While trying to find modern Nubian carpenters still producing wooden *angareeb* beds it became clear very soon that old tradition – which dates back to the third millennium BC – is dying out rapidly. People switched, around 20 years ago, to use metal beds with plastic stringing, as this material is less susceptible to termites.

Mustafa Ali Al-Amin Bashab, a resident of Maqasir island near Dongola, was found with the help of Mohamed Hassan, director of Kerma Museum. He still produced complete wooden *angareeb* beds. We invited Mustafa to join our fieldwork season and recreate an Amara West bed, based on the ancient fragments excavated in the tombs. This enabled us to interview Mustafa and observe and document the process of production. He provided insights into the choice of wood, working places, the tools he uses and all other steps in the process.



The bed we recreated was only 1.8m long and 60cm wide, similar to the modern *hababar*, a travel version of the bed. In this variant the legs can be taken off and the frame, and the stringing can be rolled up for easier transport. Mustafa needed a day and a half to produce four legs and a frame, and about half a day for the stringing of the bed using *halfa*-grass. Five different patterns can be used for the stringing, mostly creating zig-zags or lozenge patterns. Typically, Mustafa uses body parts - hand-span, arm-length – for measurements, perhaps also used by the ancient carpenters.

Mustafa only used his handheld tools and chose a place sheltered from the wind, sitting on the ground or on a mat. He sometimes used a stone or an older plank as a working surface. No traces were left for future archaeologists to identify, which reminds us how difficult it can be to understand where activities took place in the ancient town.

One newly created *angareeb* was shipped to the British Museum and is now part of the collection, while the other is displayed in the newly created Abri House of Heritage.

British Museum work at Amara West was supported by a grant from the Qatar-Sudan Archaeological Project, and took place under the auspices of the National Corporation for Antiquities & Museums (Sudan).



Left: Mustafa consulting drawings of ancient bed fragments (with Mohamed Hassan), pre-shaping a bed leg, cutting a long beam and stringing the bed.

Right: completed bed, with Mohamed Hassan, Mustafa and Manuela.



In Sudan
A new facility for bioarchaeology in Sudan

Mohamed Saad
Bioarchaeologist National Corporation for
Antiquities and Museums, Sudan
Daniel Antoine Curator of Bioarchaeology,
Department of Egypt and Sudan

With the support of the British Museum and the Institute for Bioarchaeology, Sudan's National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums [NCAM] opened the M. Bolheim Bioarchaeology Laboratory in February 2019, with the then Director General Abdelrahman Ali Mohamed and British Museum Director Hartwig Fischer. The first facility of this kind in Sudan, it provides a dedicated laboratory and storage space for the analysis and long-term curation of ancient human remains and other biological material recovered from archaeological excavations. Located in the grounds of the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum,



the laboratory offers a focal point where archaeologists, students and researchers are able to learn and apply bioarchaeological methods.

To mark its opening, a colloquium was held in the Sudan National Museum's Nigm Ed Ein Mohamed Sharif Hall. Daniel Antoine, Michaela Binder, Tina Jakob and Mohammed Saad presented different examples of new bioarchaeological research on Sudanese collections.

The opening of the laboratory is the latest phase in a long-term collaboration between the British Museum and NCAM aimed at supporting bioarchaeological, curatorial and conservation training. This includes UK-based training and teaching for Mohamed Saad, and fieldwork training in the cemetery at Amara West. The laboratory provides a centre to develop further collaborative projects and creates a base for Mohammed Saad and his colleagues to teach and apply bioarchaeological techniques.

The analysis of biological materials from archaeological sites, including human remains, is one of the most important sources of information about the past. Allowing us to study migration, genetics, diet, health, life expectancy and burial practices, bioarchaeology enables us to gain unique insights into past populations that are rarely found in other archaeological sources of evidence. Many of the illnesses we suffer from today have, for example, been affecting people for thousands of years. The research conducted at the bioarchaeology laboratory will offer valuable information on the living and environmental conditions in ancient Sudan that have contributed to the emergence and spread of disease through time. The Laboratory will allow NCAM to continue and expand its bioarchaeological research programme, providing new insights into the lives of its past inhabitants.

The M. Bolheim Bioarchaeology Laboratory was made possible with the generous support of the British Museum and the Institute for Bioarchaeology.



Above: Mohamed Saad by the front entrance to the Bioarchaeology Laboratory.

Below: Storage room for human remains.

In Sudan
Hartwig Fischer visits colleagues and sites in Sudan



Neal Spencer
Former Keeper of Nile Valley & Mediterranean Collections

Following the opening of the M. Bolheim Bioarchaeology Laboratory in Khartoum, the British Museum Director Hartwig Fischer spent several days in Sudan to visit museums, see colleagues working on projects with the British Museum, and visit sites from which important parts of the British Museum collection were excavated.

At Meroe, we saw the impressive new visitor facility created by NCAM, before visiting the temple where the famous head of Augustus, loot from a Meroitic attack on Roman Egypt, had been found by John Garstang in 1910, under the doorway of a small temple. At Dangeil, co-directors Rihab Khader (NCAM) and Julie Anderson (British Museum), showed us around the excavated temple, with its impressive steel shelter that allows the temple decoration to be protected yet still lit by diffuse natural light. In the nearby city of Berber, we visited a colonial era building that NCAM wishes to convert into a museum, in collaboration with the British Museum.

Many other sites were visited en route – from Old Dongola to Jebel Barkal – providing inspiration for a future redisplay of the Museum's Sudanese collections.



Hartwig Fischer with Abdelrahman Ali Mohamed (then Director General of NCAM) at the opening of the M. Bolheim Bioarchaeology Laboratory.

At the Visitor Center at the Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe: Daniel Antoine (British Museum), Murtada Bushara (NCAM), Neal Spencer (formerly British Museum), Mahmoud Suleiman (NCAM) and Hartwig Fischer (British Museum).

In the UK

Circulating Artefacts: new developments in the fight against art crime

Marcel Marée,

Curator, Department of Egypt and Sudan

As reported in the previous issue of this *Newsletter*, growing levels of looting are causing catastrophic damage to archaeological sites, resulting in cultural objects illegally entering the international art market. Law enforcement and heritage professionals are insufficiently equipped to tackle the problem, and the problem is compounded by minimal scholarly engagement with the problem. Only a fraction of circulating illicit material is ever identified and recovered. The CircArt project brings together various parties to identify more objects that might have illicit provenances.

Our closed-access database can record objects in circulation, complemented by training to appropriate parties, a bilingual eLearning platform and advice to those interested in combatting illicit trafficking of antiquities. We gather publicly available data from sale catalogues and websites, but also receive information directly from archaeologists, dealers, collectors, police and members of the public. Registered users communicate objects to us in exchange for expertise on questions of provenance. We have now identified more than 4,700 artefacts with strong evidence to suggest illicit provenance, many of which are now under investigation. As our data improve, it becomes ever easier to identify such objects, so that we can alert registered users of the platform and, where it is required, the relevant authorities.

CircArt's research reveals that dozens of dealers in the Middle East, the Gulf, Turkey, the Far East, across western Europe and in North America are offering illicit artefacts for sale, many of which come from a limited number of archaeological sites.

The sale and trafficking of illicit antiquities from Egypt and Sudan often includes fabricated histories of previous

collections before sale via auction houses or online sellers. An even less accountable trade takes place on social media: looters advertise their finds in closed groups on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, where they show freshly exposed artefacts or even the excavation itself, conducted in the dead of night at undisclosed locations, in fields or underneath people's houses. The looters hit upon rich burials, blocks of previously unknown temples, colossal statues and huge sarcophagi. We have entered a partnership with the Antiquities Trafficking and Heritage Anthropology Research Project (atharproject.org), which monitors social media for posts from looters and traffickers in North Africa and the Middle East. The CircArt and ATHAR data complement each other remarkably, revealing links between specific local actors and certain sellers in the West. Objects seen by the two projects exhibit matching features, which are moreover diagnostic of certain archaeological sites, or even of the same makers and burials. Such connections greatly facilitate the unmasking of false provenance information and can support criminal investigations instigated by law enforcement agencies.

We have also worked with the World Customs Organisation, Interpol and the Association for Research into Crimes against Art, sharing expertise and data where possible. Meanwhile, in Khartoum, a fully equipped office dedicated to the CircArt project has been created by the National Corporation of Antiquities & Museums, led by the four trainees who came to London for training in 2018 and 2019. In Egypt we have hosted webinars for universities teaching the heritage professionals of the future including from the Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport (Aswan) and Misr University (Cairo).

Circulating Artefacts was supported by the Cultural Protection Fund, run by the British Council for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.



Attendants of the CircArt-ARCA workshop in Khartoum, 13–15 October 2019.

Two freshly looted coffins for sale on Facebook. The page was posted by a trafficker in Turkey and captured by the ATHAR Project. CircArt identified the archaeological site.



In the UK
**The Annual Egyptological Colloquium:
Amarna – The Lived City**

Anna Stevens

Amarna Project

One of the most significant developments in Egyptology in recent decades has been the growth of settlement archaeology – the study of where people lived in the past. Settlement archaeology helps to rebalance our understanding of ancient Egypt, which is dominated by evidence from funerary and elite contexts. It is a field that continues to grow, with a noticeable recent shift to the issue of how the cities and towns of ancient Egypt were experienced by their inhabitants.

This theme was explored in this year's colloquium, *Amarna – the Lived City*, co-organised by the British Museum and the Amarna Project (University of Cambridge). It was the first international conference devoted to the archaeology of Akhenaten's capital, one of the sites at the forefront of Egyptian settlement archaeology.

Participants were invited to present new excavations and long-term research projects, and to bring outside perspectives to this well-known site. A series of talks and poster presentations demonstrated how the reconstruction of ancient urban life extends far beyond fieldwork itself, to engagement with museums and archives, to heritage management, and to the study of landscapes, burial grounds, workshops and temples, as well as ancient dwellings.

Themes of community and domestic life were explored in papers on ancient housing by Kate Spence and Thais Rocha da Silva, while Pamela Rose and Anna Garnett considered how pottery was used and distributed around



the ancient city. The city's water supply was investigated by Delphine Driaux, while Katherine Rose highlighted the role of the natural landscape in shaping Amarna's urban environment. Anna Hodgkinson, Caroline Jackson and Paul Nicholson summarized long-term research at Amarna's important glass workshops, both formal and household-centred, while Bart Vanthuyne and Lucia Kuijper introduced a recently investigated industrial complex on the city's northern outskirts. The famous royal workshops and their outputs were explored in papers by Kristin Thompson, Dimitry Laboury and Christian Bayer, including case studies of the iconic bust of Nefertiti.

The ongoing excavations of Amarna's cemeteries spurred a range of papers on aspects of bioarchaeological research (Gretchen Dabbs, Cheyenne Lewis, William Schafer) as well the question of how non-elite populations approached death and burial at a time of religious

change (Amandine Mérat, Lucy Skinner, Anders Bettum, Anna Stevens). The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Foundation Distinguished Lecture in Egyptology was given by Barry Kemp who highlighted one of the great strengths of archaeological research: reconstructing the life histories of ruined buildings, here the Great Aten Temple. Jacquelyn Williamson explained similarly how a combined archaeological and art historical approach can help to elucidate the roles of sun temples for royal women at the site.

Researchers engaged at sites beyond Amarna offered invaluable perspectives, from Aude Gräzer Ohara's study

of the Aten cult in personal lives, to Daniel Soliman's comparisons of 'identity marks' from Amarna with those from Deir el-Medina, and Nadine Moeller's reflections, in a closing keynote lecture, on where Amarna fits in the broader urban landscape of New Kingdom Egypt. The later, and continuing, roles of Amarna as a 'lived landscape' were highlighted by Gillian Pyke in her overview of Early Christian occupation of the site, and in a series of papers exploring heritage management strategies for Amarna, which have recently included the development of a Site Management Plan, children's book, guidebook and educational film (Hamada Kellawy, Gemma Tully, Oliver Wilkins, Mustafa Naguib).



A view across Amarna. Copyright Amarna Project.

Excavation of a child's coffin at one of the Amarna cemeteries, where recent work is revealing new evidence for the realities of life under Akhenaten. Copyright Amarna Project.

Excavations at the Amarna cemeteries are revealing new evidence for the realities of life under Akhenaten. Copyright Amarna Project.



In the UK British Museum International Training Programme 2019

Claire Messenger

Manager, International Training Programme

In summer 2019 the British Museum and nine UK partner museums welcomed 23 museum professionals from 16 countries between 8 July and 16 August. Fellows took part in sessions, workshops, working groups, behind-the-scenes tours and study visits; designed to give a broad overview of museums and cultural heritage in the UK. The Department of Egypt and Sudan hosted four ITP Fellows as part of the summer programme. From Egypt, we were joined by Nagwa Abdel-Zaher Mohamed Bakr (Community Exhibition Officer at Community Engagement & Cultural Development dept. Technical Office of the Minister) and Yasser Abdelrady (Conservator of Antiquities at the Nubia Museum). Diana Digna (Designer at the Sudan National Museum) and Abdelrahman Sedeeg (Director of Sultan Ali Dinar Museum) came from Sudan.

During their 'departmental days', they spent time in the department with introductions to the work of the curatorial team and tours of the stores and gallery spaces. One day took them off site to Kew Gardens, where they were given a behind-the-scenes tour in the Economic Botany archives including organic materials from the tomb of King Tut.

We also welcomed Mohamed Mokhtar back to the British Museum for 10 weeks as the seventh ITP Senior Fellow. This role has now become vital to the ITP for each summer programme: alongside contributing to the planning of the summer programme before participants arrive in the UK, and working with the team during the Programme, the Senior Fellow role also includes a commitment to guest edit and help to develop the theme of the following year's ITP newsletter.

Mohamed has worked in heritage and culture in Egypt since 2000. In that time he has gained skills and experiences at sites and museums across the capital Cairo, including the Giza Plateau archaeological site and



the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization. He also spent time in the office of the Minister of Antiquities before taking on the role of Curator at the Abdeen Palace Museum, a former royal palace and residence and workplace of the Egyptian President.

Mohamed first joined us on the International Training Programme in 2015 as the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust Fellow and he has been a valued member of the ITP global network ever since attending the ITP Mumbai Workshop *Creating Museums of World Stories* held at CSMVS in November 2015 and the ITP+ Course on *Interpretation* in Aswan at the Nubia Museum in October 2018.

While here in the UK, as well as offering Mohamed the opportunity to gain further insight into the ITP, we were also able to arrange for him to connect with UK Partner staff at Norfolk Museums Service and to travel to National Museums Northern Ireland in Belfast, to discuss their collection and storage and to share expertise. He was also able to renew existing relationships, spending time with colleagues at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology and at Manchester Museum, discussing their current plans for redevelopment.



Participants at the British Museum in the 2019 International Training Programme, and (right) at a workshop in Mumbai on "Museums and education", to mark the opening of the Children's Museum at CSMVS.



International
Training
Programme
participants
with Mohamed
Mokhtar.

In the UK British Museum International Training Programme 2019



Mohamed Mokhtar,
Curator, Abdeen Palace Museum, Cairo.
Senior Fellow, International Training Programme 2019

Working one day on my master thesis in the Gayer Anderson Museum, a very peaceful location in Cairo, my phone lit up with an email that I'd been accepted to be the International Training Programme 2019 Senior Fellow. Different feelings and thoughts come into my mind: remembering the good times I spent as a participant in 2015 and the challenges and responsibility that this role may require. I was very happy to be back and to take part in this amazing experience, my participation in the summer programme of 2015 had helped reshape my ideas regarding working as a museum professional.

The Senior Fellow role is vital and important to facilitate the communications between the ITP team and the fellows, answering many questions fellows ask during their time on the summer programme. Also, the opportunity to talk about my museum in different cities around the UK was very important as it enabled me to try to ensure possible collaborations in the future. I also had the chance to participate in behind-the-scenes work for the programme, from preparing and organising the delivery of the content to the ITP fellows, to managing the posting of fellows' blog posts. I will also continue my role after returning home by editing the 2020 Newsletter.

I was also lucky that ITP team are based in the Department of Egypt and Sudan and I spent the whole time working in a place surrounded by very helpful colleagues supporting and helping all the time, including the ITP Team – Claire, George and Emily – who always made me feel that we are one family.

Finally, I am really grateful to the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust, for giving me the opportunity to come back to the ITP in this vital role as a Senior Fellow.



Further information

Further resources

To search the collection database and download free high-resolution images for non-commercial use, visit britishmuseum.org/research

For information on visiting the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan's collection, library and archive, or objects held in other Departments, click on Departments under 'About us' at britishmuseum.org

For *British Museums Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan*, the free online journal presenting the latest research including fieldwork, click on 'Publications' at britishmuseum.org

For membership of the Sudan Archaeological Research Society, and free online access to the *Sudan & Nubia* journal, visit sudarchrs.org.uk or on Twitter: @Sudan_and_Nubia

To order the monographs in the series *British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan* visit peeters.be

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Touring exhibitions

Egyptian mummies. Exploring ancient lives
Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum,
19 September 2020 – 21 March 2021

Faraó - Rei d'Egipte

CaixaForumTarragona, 11 February – 2 August 2020
Santiago de Compostela, Cidade da Cultura de Galicia,
20 April 2021 – 15 August 2021
CaixaForum Zaragoza: 15 September 2021 –
9 January 2022

New publications

Masson-Berghoff, A. and Thomas, R. (eds), *Naukratis in context. British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 24, 2019.
research.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/online_journals/bmsaes.aspx

Masson-Berghoff, A. (ed.), *Statues in context: Production, meaning and (re)uses*. British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 10, Leuven, 2020.

O'Connell, E. R. (ed.), *Abydos in the First Millennium AD*. British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 9, Leuven, 2020.

Regulski, I. (ed.), *Abydos: the sacred land of the western horizon. Proceedings of the Annual Egyptological Colloquium at the British Museum 'Abydos: the sacred land at the western horizon', on 9-10 July, 2015*. British Museum Publication on Egypt and Sudan 8, Leuven, 2019.

Regulski, I., *Repurposing ritual. Pap. Berlin P. 10480-82: A case study from Middle Kingdom Asyut*. Ägyptische und Orientalische Papyri und Handschriften des Ägyptischen Museums und Papyrussammlung Berlin. Band 5, Berlin, 2020.

Usick, P., *A curious and convivial traveller: Edward Roger Pratt in Greece and Egypt, 1832-34*. British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 6, Leuven, 2020.

Dates for your diary

The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Distinguished Lecture in Egyptology

The lives of others. Dra Abu el-Naga, a living necropolis

José Galan
2 September 2021

The Annual Egyptological Colloquium

The art of embalming: practice, evolution and materiality

2–3 September 2021 (TBC).

For further information visit britishmuseum.org or call 020 7323 8000



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Scarabs from
Amara West
(clockwise from
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