

Introduction

Daniel Antoine

Keeper, Department of Egypt and Sudan

As we emerge from the pandemic, the department has now adapted and is reassuringly busy. Testament to this measured return to business-as-usual is the diverse range of ongoing research projects, collaborations, exhibitions, new displays and discoveries highlighted in this issue. Over the past two years, periods of closure driven by the pandemic have also resulted in a significant growth in the public's appetite for our online offerings, including our very popular podcasts, blogs and short films known as 'Curators' corners'. Following a major relaunch of the Museum website, new research project pages have now started to appear (<https://www.britishmuseum.org/research>), many of which feature projects in the Nile valley. Among them are a collaboration with our British Museum Scientific Research colleagues on the molecular analysis of ancient Egyptian burial residues; the bioarchaeological methods used to provide new insights into the past inhabitants of the Nile valley; and the multi-disciplinary approach employed to document, conserve and present the sacred Kushite landscape at Dangeil, Sudan. Other newly launched pages detail the Museum's successful fieldwork projects at Asyut, Middle Egypt, and Naukratis, in the Delta.

For the first time, both the W.Y. Adams colloquium on 'Sudan: past and present' and our Egyptology colloquium, originally due to take place in 2020 and focusing on the 'Art of embalming: practice, evolution and materiality', were presented online. This new approach resulted in large attendance figures, with many of our colleagues in Egypt and Sudan able to contribute and join remotely for the first time. Meeting up with our colleagues and friends, however, was greatly missed! As we once again look forward to a better future, we can, in this special year for Egyptology, celebrate the past with the anniversary of the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, 100 years ago this year, and the bicentenary of the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs. While both events will feature in new temporary displays, the latter will be the focus of the exhibition *Hieroglyphs: unlocking ancient Egypt*, supported by bp, thus thus marking the key development that transformed our understanding of ancient Egypt.



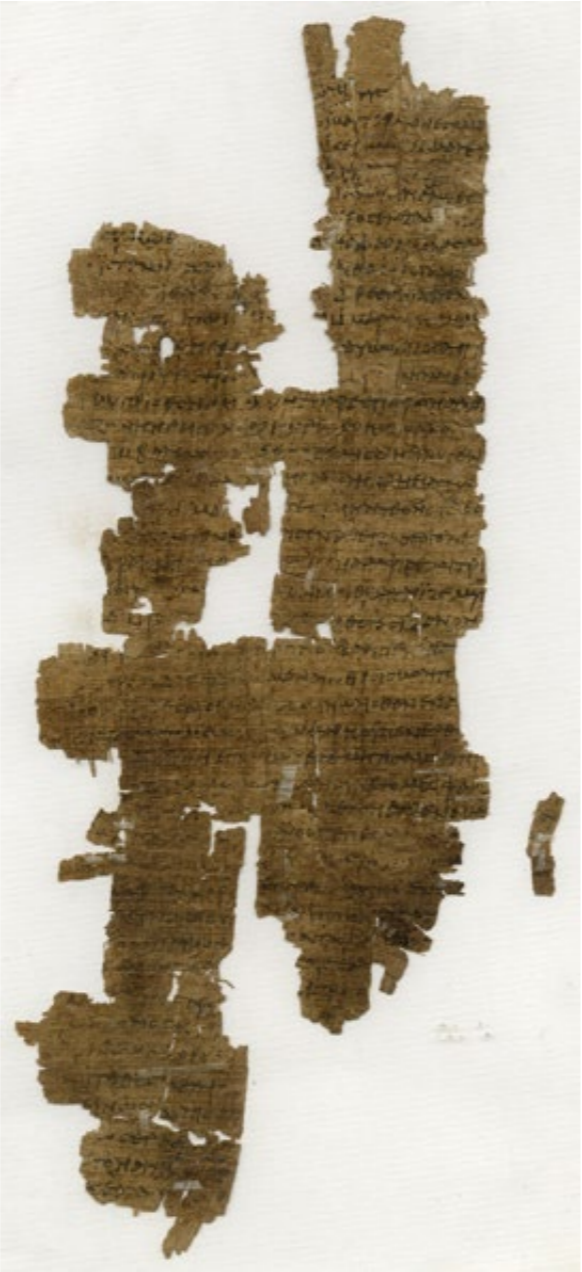
Exhibitions and galleries
Nero: the man behind the myth

Thorsten Oppen
Curator Roman Collections, Department
of Greece and Rome

The special exhibition *Nero: the man behind the myth* took a fresh look at one of Rome's most notorious emperors. A highly partisan, posthumous ancient source tradition described Nero (AD 54–68) as deluded would-be artist, megalomaniac matricide and arsonist. Yet during his reign, he was widely popular with the masses, and his memory remained contested for a generation after his death. Objects help to balance the established elite source narrative, revealing the inner tensions of Neronian society and the processes involved in re-shaping the ruler's image after his demise.

Among many other crimes, Nero was accused of having killed his beautiful second wife, Poppaea Sabina. However, the accounts (Nero viciously kicking her in a fit of rage while she was heavily pregnant) arouse suspicion: many other alleged tyrants were blamed for the same outrage, and it is highly likely that a fatal miscarriage or other complications during Poppaea's pregnancy were used by his enemies to malign the emperor. At the time, Nero was beside himself with grief and the senate passed a decree to deify the late empress. A fascinating late 3rd-century AD papyrus fragment from Egypt, first published in 2011, may belong in this context. It preserves 42 lines of a fragmentary poem in Greek hexameters that imagines Poppaea among the gods, lovingly waiting for Nero to re-join her and their children (a daughter had died prematurely) after a long and fulfilled reign. This could be a much later compositional exercise, but it seems to fit the period between Poppaea's passing in AD 65 and Nero's end in AD 68, reproducing a poem written to console Nero over the loss of his beloved empress. The truth will never be known, but there was an alternative version that still left traces two centuries after Nero's death.

The exhibition Nero: the man behind the myth, supported by bp, was shown at the British Museum from 27 May to 24 October 2020.



Two views of the exhibition.

Papyrus fragment from Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. LXXVII 5105) bearing a poem perhaps written to console Nero over the death of his wife Poppaea Sabina (Image courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society and the University of Oxford Imaging Papyri Project).



Pentandria Monogynia.

Coffee from Bussorah. Coffea arabica, f. Linnaeus

Watercolour painting of Coffea Arabica, part of an album compiled in Calcutta in the 1800s depicting botanical specimens (bequest of Major J P S Pearson).

Postcard, dated 1920s-1930s, showing a group of men in conversation over tea in a coffeehouse in Cairo. Coffeehouses were frequent themes represented on postcards published in Egypt and aimed at visiting European travellers.

Next page:
Following page:
Gallery view of
Life in a cup with
a display of a
variety of artefacts
used throughout
the Islamic world
for the roasting,
grinding, brewing
and serving of
coffee.

Exhibitions and galleries

Life in a cup: coffee culture in the Islamic world



Zeina Klink-Hoppe

Phyllis Bishop Curator for the Modern Middle East

A member of the Shadhiliyya Sufi order based in the town of Al-Mukha in Yemen is said to have introduced his companions to a beverage of brewed coffee beans sometime in the late 14th century or early 15th century. This beverage, and the caffeine it contained, enabled the members of the order to ward off sleep and enhanced their mystical experience during dhikr, remembrance rituals that involved the meditative recitation of God's names and attributes and other religious phrases. Coffee drinking soon spread beyond the confines of the order to the wider community. As coffee consumption spread, establishments developed to supply the demand for coffee. Coffeehouses became places where people met to socialise, rest, exchange information and be entertained around a cup of coffee.

Coffee consumption spread along pilgrimage routes and trade routes across the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant, and North Africa to reach Egypt, Syria and eventually Istanbul in the early 1500s. Cairo, with its established trading networks, became the main coffee exchange. Yet as coffee spread and coffeehouses seemed to spring out of thin air, both aroused the suspicions of religious and political authorities and led to debates as to whether the drink

itself was permissible and whether the places where it was consumed obeyed the law. Prohibitions and bans occurred frequently in the 16th century and were often revoked and overturned. By the end of the century, the juridical view was that coffee itself was permissible, and the public spaces where it was consumed were subjected to laws and taxed, generating enormous revenue for the Ottoman treasury.

Coffee soon sparked the imagination of European travellers who encountered it on their travels through Ottoman lands, particularly in Istanbul, Damascus and Cairo. The passion for coffee spread across Europe and led colonial powers to establish in the early 1700s coffee plantations in territories under their control, turning the humble coffee bean into a global commodity. Coffee's use and spread led to dramatic changes in social interaction, both in the lands of its origin and beyond, and eventually led to a number of innovations, many of which affect and determine the way we live our lives today.

Life in a cup: coffee culture in the Islamic world explores the role coffee plays in the Islamic world and examines the place coffee-related traditions, customs and artefacts hold in daily life.

On display in Room 43a, The Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world, until 18 September 2022.

Preparing coffee: roasting and grinding

Like to like the coffee of the tradition, like and beautiful, like saying.

Every aspect in the preparation of coffee is important, from roasting and grinding to brewing and serving. The source, type and quality of coffee beans and, naturally, the time of harvest are of great importance to the preparation of the coffee experience.

Coffee can be prepared in numerous ways, but most involve the roasting of coffee beans. Roasting is a process that involves the removal of moisture and the development of flavor. The time and temperature of roasting are crucial to the final result. In some cultures, the beans are roasted over an open flame, while in others, they are roasted in a specialized roaster. The roasting process is a key factor in determining the flavor and aroma of the coffee.

Once roasted, the coffee beans are ground to a fine powder, which is then brewed to create the final coffee experience.



Brewing and serving

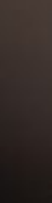
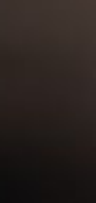
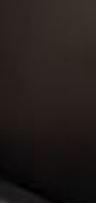
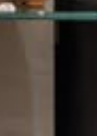
A cup of coffee is a small, but it is a world of its own.

There is a great pleasure when it comes to coffee, from the roasting and grinding to the brewing and serving. The source, type and quality of coffee beans and, naturally, the time of harvest are of great importance to the preparation of the coffee experience.

Coffee can be prepared in numerous ways, but most involve the roasting of coffee beans. Roasting is a process that involves the removal of moisture and the development of flavor. The time and temperature of roasting are crucial to the final result. In some cultures, the beans are roasted over an open flame, while in others, they are roasted in a specialized roaster. The roasting process is a key factor in determining the flavor and aroma of the coffee.

Once roasted, the coffee beans are ground to a fine powder, which is then brewed to create the final coffee experience.

Once brewed, the coffee is served in a small, dark, wooden coffee pot (dallah). The serving process is a key factor in determining the final coffee experience.



Marie Vandenbeusch
Project Curator: Egyptian Touring Exhibitions
Daniel Antoine
Keeper, Department of Egypt and Sudan

After the success of the touring exhibition *Egyptian mummies: exploring ancient lives*, which was seen by more than 1.6 million visitors in six venues across three continents, a new exhibition focusing on six different mummies was developed and opened in Tokyo in October 2021. Over the past three years, these six individuals were at the centre of intense research, from CT scanning to imagery and scientific analyses, revealing unique insights into their past lives.

Among the six mummies, Ameniryrt was a high official working for the estate of the Divine Adoratrice of Amun, Amenirdis. Based on the style of his three wooden coffins, we can estimate that he lived around 600 BC. The CT scan not only revealed the embalmers' skills, as his body is remarkably preserved. The data also provided a better understanding of Ameniryrt's life and state of health. He was between 35 and 49 years old when he died and suffered from several illnesses, which could have been the cause of his death.

In addition to atherosclerosis, a cardiovascular disease observed on several other adult mummified individuals examined in the past years, destructive lesions had also formed within Ameniryrt's pelvis. They are characteristic of a soft tissue cancer that has spread to the skeleton known as a metastatic carcinoma. As most of his internal organs were removed during embalming, it is unclear where the cancer originated. The location of the lesions suggests that it may have begun in the prostate, kidneys or gastrointestinal tract. This rare archaeological example provides new insights into cancer's considerable antiquity. While having lived more than 2500 years ago, Ameniryrt suffered from diseases that are still some of the leading causes of death in the world today.

The Museum of Science and Nature in Tokyo (14 October 2021 – 12 January 2022) displayed Mummies of ancient Egypt. Rediscovering six lives, followed by the Kobe City Museum (5 February – 8 May 2022).

Ameniryrt's inner coffin (EA 6668).

Semi-transparent visualisation of the skeleton revealing the packing material filling Ameniryrt's ribcage and abdomen.

Cross-section showing hollowed-out areas where the bone has been destroyed by tumours.

Translucent mode visualisation of Ameniryrt's pelvis, revealing numerous destructive lesions (highlighted in white).

Exhibitions and galleries
A coffin 'elevation': a handling solution for the coffin of Takhenemet

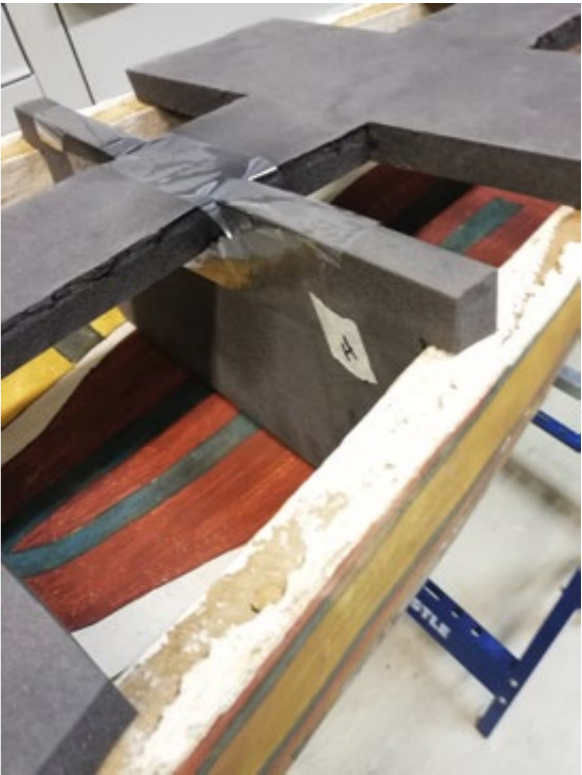
Caroline Barton
Assistant Collection Manager, Collection Care

One challenge often faced in the Museum is to mount objects with unique handling issues. One such case arose after completion of conservation work for a coffin due to travel in touring exhibition *Mummies of ancient Egypt: rediscovering six lives*. Housed in Museum storage, the inner coffin of Lady of the House Takhenemet (EA 6691) was considered for a loan to another institution for the first time. The conservation work undertaken to make it fit for travel created new display and storage challenges.

The coffin had a modern wooden lip screwed into the edges. Its removal revealed extremely vulnerable edges of plaster and paint underneath. Though it had been regrettably screwed into the coffin, this modern intervention had in fact been custom formed to provide a flat edge for the lid to sit on the base. Without this construct, the lid could no longer be placed on top of the base or be laid flat without risking damage.

To protect the fragile edges of the coffin lid, a profile of the inside was taken to allow the manufacture of an internal support that enabled the coffin to sit elevated on a shaped handling board. A custom Plastazote® support was hand-cut to follow the inner profile and distribute contact along the unpainted portion of the edge. Working with the lid upside down enabled construction and fitting of the bespoke shaping. Once the lid and support were inverted and fitted upon the handling board the fragile areas were elevated away from potential damage, to the relief of us object handlers.

The Museum of Science and Nature in Tokyo (14 October 2021 – 12 January 2022) displayed Mummies of ancient Egypt. Rediscovering six lives, followed by the Kobe City Museum (5 February – 8 May 2022).



Inner coffin lid of Takhenemet (EA 6691).

Coffin lid interior pre-conservation (left) and post-conservation (right).

Bespoke Plastazote® support.



Exhibitions and galleries

Displaying new insights into mummification

Marie Vandenbeusch
Project Curator: Egyptian Touring Exhibitions
Rebecca Whiting
Project Curator: Bioarchaeology
John Taylor
Curator, Department of Egypt and Sudan
Daniel Antoine
Keeper, Department of Egypt and Sudan

The closure of the Museum during the pandemic provided an exciting opportunity to make changes in the Roxie Walker Galleries of Funerary Archaeology. The mummified remains of Padiamenet (EA 6682), enclosed in a beautifully decorated cartonnage case, were added to the display in Room 63. The remains of Padiamenet had been scanned for the exhibition *Ancient lives: new discoveries* (2014–15) using the latest generation of CT (Computed Tomography) scanners and therefore offered greater scope for research. Padiamenet replaces the mummified remains of a female individual, who has now been taken off display so that she too can be studied in greater detail.

Combining Padiamenet's CT scan data with the inscriptions on his cartonnage case and coffin allowed us to learn about his life, family, mummification and state of health at the time of his death, providing a wealth of information that can now be shared with Museum visitors. Padiamenet was a chief doorkeeper and chief barber at the temple of Karnak in Thebes. He lived during Dynasty 25 (about 700 BC) and was between 35 and 49 years old when he died. He had poor dental health, with several abscesses and signs of tooth decay. Additionally, calcified plaque in his femoral artery suggests that he was at risk of cardiovascular disease. CT scans also revealed some unusual mummification techniques, including poles holding the neck and skull in place.

This redisplay is an excellent example of how advances in technology and re-examination of mummified remains can provide new discoveries about ancient lives.



The new display with Padiamenet in his colourful cartonnage case (EA 6682).

CT scan section showing Padiamenet's head and shoulders. The cartonnage case, as well as the packing of the nose, mouth and throat, can be seen.

CT scan image of Padiamenet's skeleton with the poles, which were positioned to support his head, highlighted in green.



200 AD 1000 BC 400 BC 600 BC 1000 BC 1700 BC



ネスペルエンネブウ テーベの神官 コフム



ネスペルエンネブウの棺の銘文は、彼がテーベ(現在のルクソール)で最も重要な宗教施設であったカルナク神廟の神官であり、高い身分の家系出身であったことを示している。彼は、神廟内の神像(おそらくコンス神像)の前で毎日行われる儀式に参加し、その職務は神像が安置された神聖の室を開け、香油を捧げることであったと考えられる。

ネスペルエンネブウのミイラは、古代エジプト人が死者に対し、ミイラ化以外にもさまざまな手立てを行っていたことを物語っている。CTスキャンによって数多くの臓器や材料が各層の中に配置されていたことや、それらの臓器や材料も明らかにされた。これらは死者を保護し、永遠の命を得る手助けをすると思われていた。

Nesperehneub, a priest from Thebes

Throughout his long life, Nesperehneub was a priest in the temple of Amun, the most important deity in Egypt. He was a member of the elite who lived in the temple and was responsible for the rituals performed there. His tomb, located in the Theban Necropolis, contains a wealth of information about his life and the practices of the priesthood.

Nesperehneub's mummy was found in a tomb that was built for him by his son. The tomb was discovered in 1898 and contained a large number of objects, including a mummy, a coffin, and a large number of smaller items. The mummy was found in a position that suggested it was being prepared for burial.

The mummy was found in a position that suggested it was being prepared for burial. The body was wrapped in linen and was accompanied by a large number of smaller items, including a coffin and a large number of smaller items. The mummy was found in a position that suggested it was being prepared for burial.



MUMMY RECORD
02

【名前】
ネスペルエンネブウ

【年代】
紀元前1000年頃
ネスペルエンネブウのミイラは、紀元前1000年頃に制作された。このミイラは、ネスペルエンネブウのミイラである。

【性別】
男性

【身長】
約1.75m

【年齢】
約40歳

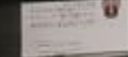
【埋葬場所】
テーベの墓地

【発見場所】
テーベの墓地

【発見年】
1898年

【発見者】
リチャード・ヘンリー・ウィグモア

【現在所蔵】
エジプト博物館、カイロ



The Museum of Science and Nature in Tokyo (14 October 2021 – 12 January 2022) displayed *Mummies of ancient Egypt. Rediscovering six lives*. This was the first venue for this exhibition which will continue to travel in Japan and Spain. This view shows the section dedicated to Nesperehneub. Photo © Noriko Yamamoto.

Collection
Neo-hieroglyphs, a universal language of the Renaissance



Ilona Regulski
Curator of Egyptian Written Culture

In ancient and contemporary sources related to ancient Egypt, Renaissance readers of the 15th and 16th centuries encountered a land of prodigious kings who built splendid monuments to honour their gods. Material remains were direct testimonies to Egypt's former greatness, such as the hieroglyph-inscribed obelisks, statues and other artefacts brought to Rome as trophies of Augustus' conquest of Egypt or tokens of devotion to the popular Roman cults of Egyptian gods. Italian humanists began to study them from a more historical perspective, as they provided 'authentic' texts that had survived from antiquity.

However impressive the obelisks, they could no longer speak, since knowledge of hieroglyphic script had long since vanished. Renaissance scholars turned to classical authors for their accounts of Egypt's monuments, collecting, copying and 'correcting' manuscripts of the Greeks Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch and Strabo, and the Latin authors Apuleius, Pliny the Elder and Ammianus Marcellinus. Italian humanists concluded that the inscriptions on the obelisks brought to Rome by their ancestors were once legible but secret 'scriptures' of the ancient Egyptians.

The Platonic conception of hieroglyphs as symbols, as opposed to a written language, became the basic principle for their interpretation. According to this Neoplatonist misconception, hieroglyphs were not phonetic and in no way formed a language, which obeys rules of grammar and syntax. As signs directly connected to the ideal realm, they

required a symbolic reading. In searching for a universal language, Egyptian hieroglyphs seemed to express ideas more immediately than the sound-based way.

A leading figure of this movement, Italian architect and polymath Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) interpreted hieroglyphs as a system of allegorical image-signs whose meanings were derived from knowledge of the essential nature of the depicted things. Like their alchemist predecessors, Alberti and fellow humanists believed that secrets of the highest order were entombed in the stone-carved texts, awaiting resurrection. Alberti maintained that 'Egyptian letters' were the basis of all representational art and monument inscriptions, and consequently held the promise of a universal, image-based language that could transcend the limitations of ordinary speech. Just as medieval Arabs had made symbolic interpretations related to alchemy, so hieroglyphs provided a vehicle for the idiosyncratic inventions of the Renaissance.

Alberti became the father of the 'neo-hieroglyphic' tradition, re-inventing hieroglyphs and short inscriptions to be used on monumental buildings, and choosing the winged eye as his personal icon. The first neo-hieroglyph (1432), the winged eye is emblematic of 15th century scholars' fascination with an idealized concept of ancient Egypt. By the end of the 15th century, the exalted status of the Egyptians as founders of the arts and sciences had set the stage for an outbreak of 'Egyptomania' in the visual arts.

Alberti's medal will be on display in the exhibition Hieroglyphs: unlocking ancient Egypt, supported by bp, at the British Museum, 13 October 2022 – 19 February 2023.

Medal of Leon Battista Alberti, Italy, 1446–50 (C&M G3JP.1).

Collection
'The writing of birds'

Lee Keith
Independent Researcher, Journalist

A black granite sarcophagus is at the centre of one of the most magical tales of Historic Cairo: the Enchanted Basin.

The first hint of it appears in the 15th century in a story told by the Mamluk historian, ibn Iyas. He writes that centuries earlier in the 900s, there was a mysterious basin, made of 'dark stone and inscribed with the writing of birds' that magically floated back and forth across the Nile. People used it as ferry to cross the river. The *wazir* at the time, Kafour al-Ikhshidi, an enslaved Ethiopian who had risen to become Egypt's de facto ruler, wanted to understand its secret, so he ordered it removed from the river for examination. But as soon as it touched land it lost all its powers.

The basin then vanishes from history until 1615, when an Italian nobleman, Pietro della Valle (1586–1652), came to Cairo.

Back home in Italy, della Valle had had a disastrous love affair and was considering suicide, until a friend suggested he take a trip to the East. Cairo was one of his first stops. He wrote of visiting the basin, which he said was set in a marble niche near the ruins of a palace not far from Cairo's Citadel.

It was known, he says, as the Lovers' Fountain, and he describes it as a large dark stone filled with water, inscribed with hieroglyphs and an image of the ancient god Anubis. Residents told him it had been 'left by the ancient sages' and had magical powers: Whoever was suffering from romance could drink from it and 'be relieved of the torments of Love'.

Despite his painful affair, della Valle did not try it out. 'I do not want Love to pass me by', he declared. Also, the water was murky and livestock drank from it, he wrote.

The Lovers' Fountain was visited by multiple travellers over the next 200 years, and it kept its aura of magic. An Ottoman governor tried to incorporate it into a fountain of his own, but the workmen couldn't move it, one story said. Other tales said that at midnight during the Islamic holy month of Muharram, the *jinn* hold a market by the basin; if a passer-by, not realizing who they were, happened to buy dates or cakes or fruit from them, he would find his purchase transformed into gold.

When the Napoleon and the French invaded Egypt in 1798, his savants encountered the Enchanted Basin while documenting Egyptian antiquities: 'A beautiful, black granite sarcophagus, about which the locals tell many absurd stories', they sniffed.

Their trove of antiquities was seized by the British, and the Basin was instead taken to London. It now sits in the British Museum, identified as the sarcophagus of Hapmen, who was probably a nobleman of Dynasty 26, living around 600 BC.

The Cairo neighbourhood where the sarcophagus was located is still known to this day as 'al-Houd al-Marsoud', Arabic for 'the Enchanted Basin'. In 1909, Egypt's British colonial rulers built on the site a venereal disease hospital where registered prostitutes were required to report for annual medical exams, preserving its legacy as a place that cures the torments of love.

Hapmen's sarcophagus will be on display in the exhibition Hieroglyphs: unlocking ancient Egypt, supported by bp, at the British Museum, 13 October 2022 – 19 February 2023.



The sarcophagus of Hapmen (EA 23).

Collection
Documenting statues in storage

Jennifer Turner
Project Curator: Egyptian statues

In April 2020, a new cataloguing project was launched to systematically improve existing documentation of Egyptian stone sculpture held in the Museum storerooms. To date over 460 objects have been photographed, including 284 objects which previously had no images available at all. Almost 300 objects now have expanded catalogue descriptions to accompany these photographs via Collections Online, with more written and visual content continuously being uploaded to enhance remote access to the wider Egyptian collection.

Just one of many exciting objects held in storage, but now accessible online for the first time is a Ramesside female figure. Acquired by the British Museum in 1843 from Somerset Lowry-Corry, the 2nd Earl of Belmore (1774–1841), she bears impressive surviving traces of linen and plaster upon limestone. The linen is particularly visible on her proper left side and was used to secure the top layer of plaster. This use of the textile recalls a similar technique for lining Egyptian wooden coffins before finishing touches of painted decoration were applied. Her features are further enhanced with black, yellow and red paint to denote her wig, skin and modius crown. While numerous objects within the project bear traces of colour, this figure is the only one encountered thus far to also include textile fragments. While her crown could indicate divine or royal status, the figure could also potentially fit within a wider corpus of objects collectively known as ‘anthropoid busts’. Typically represented by a head and flat body, these are exclusively New Kingdom in date and often associated with the site of Deir el-Medina. They are often perceived as objects connected to the reverence of deceased ancestors and the interaction between the dead and the world of the living, but may have had wider religious or funerary functions. Surviving busts from other museum collections feature a similar crown and, by bringing these fascinating objects to light through this project, such research avenues and possibilities can continue to be explored and shared online with wider audiences.

This project has been generously supported by Molly and David Borthwick.



Three-quarter views of the left and right profile.

Opposite page:
The head of a
Ramesside female
figure wearing a
lappet-wig and
modius crown
(EA 13509).

Collection
Henry Salt's first collection of Egyptian antiquities



John Taylor
Curator, Department of Egypt and Sudan
Marie Vandenbeusch
Project Curator: Egyptian Touring Exhibitions

The British Consul General in Egypt, Henry Salt (1780–1827) assembled three extensive collections of Egyptian antiquities, the first of which was shipped to England between 1817 and 1821 and bought by the British Museum (although only after long and difficult negotiations) in 1823. This collection, dispatched in 128 crates, was rich in large sculptures, stelae, coffins, human and animal mummies and objects from the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings. Its arrival transformed the British Museum's then still limited collection of Egyptian antiquities into one of world-ranking significance.

Despite its huge importance, there exists no complete inventory of Salt's first collection. Only some relatively brief and selective lists were made at the time, and because of the meagre documentation, distinguishing

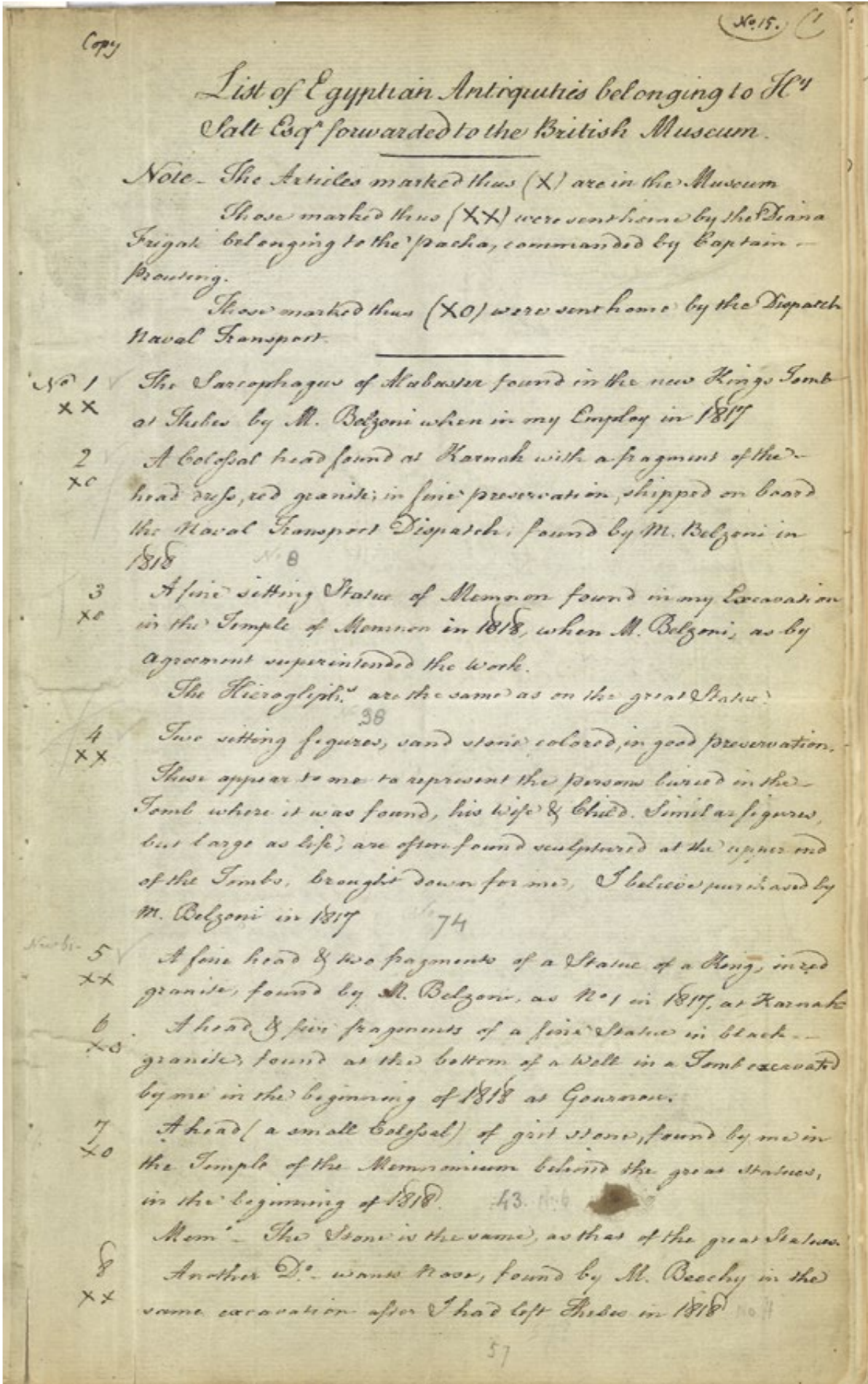


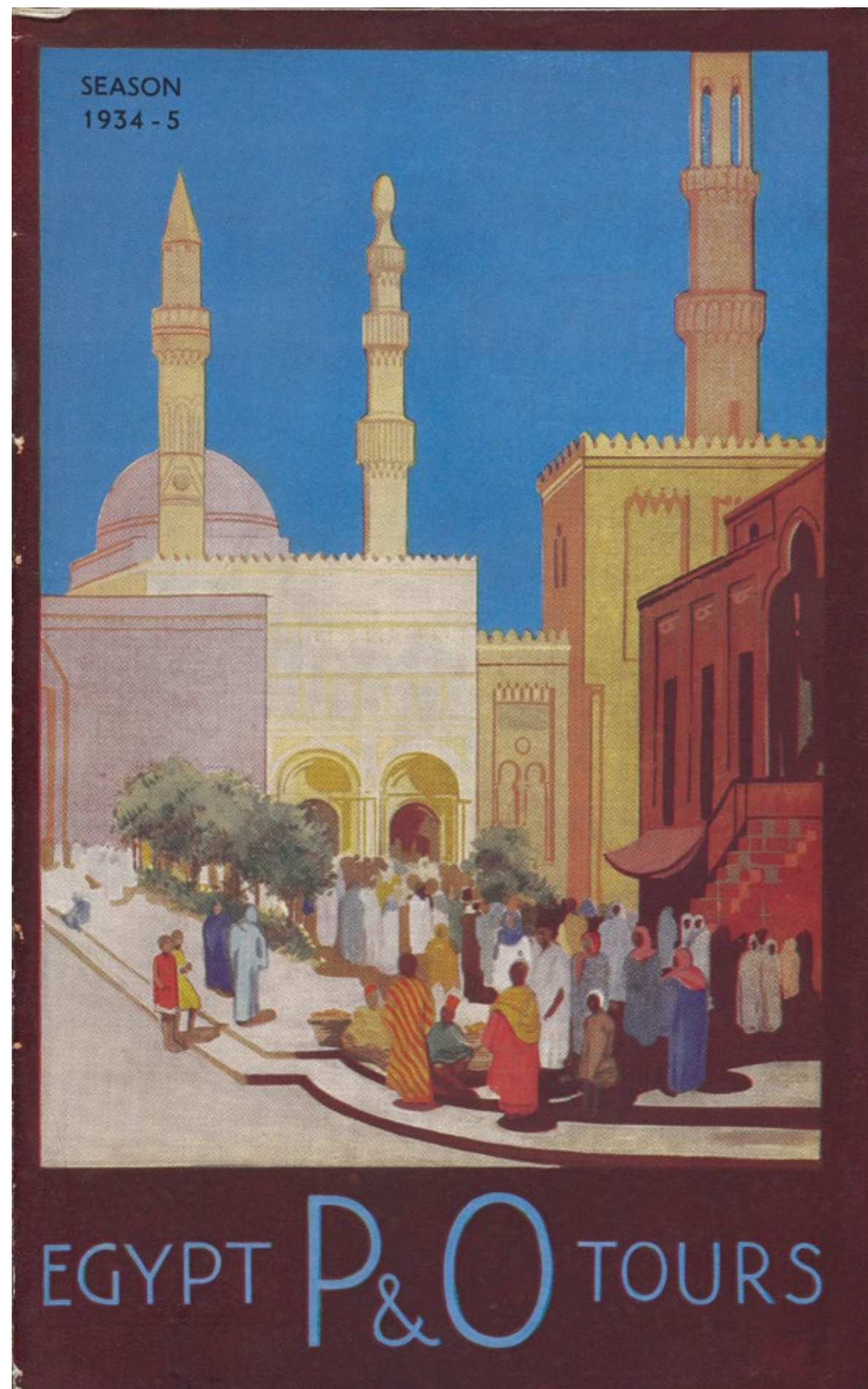
between objects from this collection and from other early 19th century sources has always been problematic. The most detailed list we have, drawn up by Salt in 1821, has been used by various scholars to try to identify pieces. Many of the major items are recognisable as they are individually described but even some of the larger sculptures are difficult to identify. Even worse is the situation with smaller objects such as shabtis, stone vessels, and particularly papyri – there were over 240 of these but only a handful were identified at the time of acquisition. To try to remedy this situation we have compared the 1821 list with a variety of other sources – the original handwritten catalogue of the Museum's Egyptian collections, begun in the 1830s; later typological lists; old labels; references in early publications, etc. In this way several of the problem pieces can now be identified with greater confidence. This project aims at publishing the 1821 list in its entirety with notes identifying the items in order to make this important material available to future researchers.

Bust identified as Amenhotep III described by Salt as 'A male bust colossal (nose broken) in white marble, found by me (...)' (EA 3).

Wooden figure identified as 'Typhone with the Masque' by Salt (EA 61283).

First page of the document listing Salt's first collection (AES Ar. 235.15).





Patricia Usick

Visiting Academic, Department of Egypt and Sudan

Through a long, dark, Covid winter, who has not longed to take a 'sea voyage by Luxurious Mail Steamers' to Egypt, 'blazing with sun and sparkling with stars' with 'the incomparable beauty of the ruins of a bygone civilisation'. The monuments are 'easily accessible by rail' or a de-luxe Nile River cruise offering hot and cold running water and every convenience. Dry invigorating desert air benefits convalescents and 'cases of nervous breakdown'. Dip then, into the twelve boxes of 1923–38 tourist brochures in our department's archives. Lavishly-coloured art-deco scenes of this 'Winter Playground' provide timetables and rates for over twenty-six steamship lines from Europe, with useful and detailed information on a wide choice of hotels, and excursions by motor car, donkey, or camel-ride. In Cairo, Shepheard's Hotel terrace 'has been the rendez-vous of all the greatest writers, explorers, politicians, and notables of every nation' and 'an orchestra plays daily during meals'. Ladies require evening gowns

and furs 'for the gay Cairo season'. Veils and glare glasses, for desert trips, can be purchased locally with face creams to 'protect the skin from the ravages of the Egyptian climate'. Men need only ordinary spring and winter attire. See the recently discovered treasures of Tutankhamun in Cairo Museum, and do not fail to visit the Government Permanent Exhibition of Egyptian Industries. The Sudan is accessible by steamship and rail, with sleeping and dining cars.

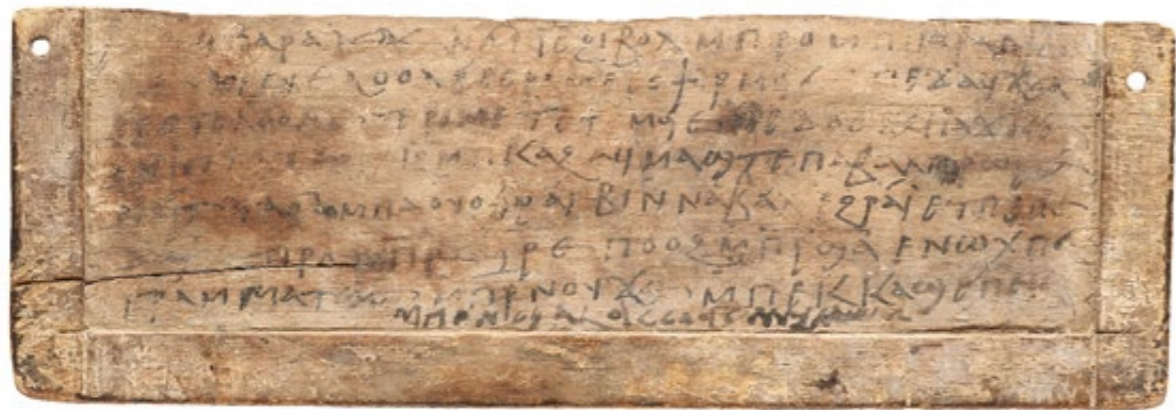
Strapped for cash in 1932? Try a fourth-class passage on the Victoria, offering very basic facilities but at least promising guaranteed water-tight compartments and plenty of life-boats.

Twelve boxes of Egyptian Travel Brochures, AES Ar.113–124, were acquired as a group through the Egypt Exploration Society by W. Vivian Davies, former Keeper of the Department of Egypt and Sudan, and are now housed in the departmental archive.

Travel brochure,
P&O Tours Egypt
(AES Ar.115).

Travel brochure,
Heliopolis Palace
Hotel Cairo (AES
Ar.116).

Collection
Wooden writing tablets from Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Egypt



Elisabeth R. O'Connell
Byzantine World Curator

Recent work on the development of the codex as a writing technology has emphasized its development from Roman wooden tablet codices and overturned the long-held view that its wide-spread adoption depended on the ascent of Christianity. The adoption of the codex by the 4th century AD is now understood to be a result of Romanization, not Christianization.

Since 2017, a joint British Museum (BM), British Library (BL) and University of California, Berkeley, (UCB), project has aimed to improve the documentation of BM and BL wooden writing-tablet collections from Roman and Byzantine Egypt.

Among writing substrates used in Egypt, wooden-writing tablets are poorly studied compared with hundreds of thousands of papyri and ostraca in international collections. Examples from Egypt account for c. 3500 of the c. 5100 documented items. The language of writing tablets found outside of Egypt is Latin in 99% of cases, mainly texts from Vindolanda, Britain, the location of a 1st–2nd century Roman fort. At the other end of the empire, the vast majority of writing tablets from Egypt have been dated to the 2nd–3rd century AD and are written in the scripts of Roman Egypt, demotic and Greek and, in some later examples, Coptic. By comparison with recorded wooden tablets from Roman Britain, the descriptive terminology is underdeveloped and employed inconsistently in collections from Egypt. Documentation by Andrew Hogan at UCB aimed to standardize BM records, distinguishing between stylus tablets and inked writing boards, and confirming the language and script for each of c. 30 items. Whereas demotic appears on writing boards, Greek and Coptic are found on both writing boards and stylus tablets.

Wooden stylus tablet bearing an inked healing charm for an eye problem in Coptic, 7th century (EA 29528).

Collection
Coptic liturgical prayers in the British Museum



Ágnes T. Mihálykó
Postdoctoral Mobility Fellow University of Oslo/Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna

Among the thousands of Coptic ostraca stored in the British Museum, there are a handful bearing Christian liturgical prayers in Sahidic Coptic. Most of them originate from the monasteries and hermitages in the Western Theban area. They are inscribed with various prayers for the Eucharist, for the communal evening prayer, and for the rite of monastic initiation. Most of them were published by W.E. Crum in 1901 and H.R. Hall in 1905. However, these first editions did not include a commentary or even a translation, and they often failed to recognize the nature of the prayers, or their significance for the history of Coptic liturgy. A new project, 'Early Christian prayers on papyrus', aims to prepare a corpus with new editions of liturgical prayers preserved on papyri, ostraca and wood, 'including around 10 British Museum texts.

In the course of my work, I have identified several of the texts with prayers in medieval and modern prayer books, including three that are used in the Coptic liturgy up to this day. Four other British Museum texts are also attested on items stored in other international papyrological collections. I have also discovered direct joins between fragments. For a 'prayer of offering', I found a joining piece in Berlin. For an ostrakon with a prayer for the vesting of the monk, I found a joining fragment unearthed during the 2008 excavation season of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Deir el-Bakhit. The provenance of these British Museum fragments, which were purchased from two different sources, is thus now secure.

The postdoctoral project 'Early Christian prayers on papyrus' is funded by the Norwegian Research Council.

Wooden writing board bearing the *anaphora* (Eucharistic prayer) of Saint Mark, 6th–7th century, findspot unknown (EA 54036).

Collection
Conservation survey and rehousing of ivory and bone collection



Caroline Barton
Assistant Collection Manager, Collections Care
Alicia de la Serna Saenz
Conservator, Organic Materials

In 2017, the storage of a collection of 253 ivory and bone objects was identified as requiring improvement. The majority of the objects were stored in a unit with thin Plastazote® lining and acid free tissue overlay. The drawers were densely populated and the objects had the potential of movement during their regular opening and closing. In addition, some were not marked with their object numbers, making identification difficult. The initial aim of the project was to improve the collection storage by creating bespoke supports for each object. The scope quickly expanded into a collaboration between ES Care and Access, curatorial and conservation staff. The project had three main objectives.

Re-housing and re-grouping: The department's collection of ivories was assessed, and their storage locations consolidated. Objects were regrouped by typology and ordered by EA number. Plastazote® foam blocks and securing pins were used to custom-support most objects, and fragile objects had individual cut-outs made. Groupings and identifying numbers were clearly labelled to ensure that objects could be identified without unnecessary handling.

Survey: Conservation condition assessments were undertaken for all objects before rehousing: surface condition, physical damage, past treatment interventions, future treatment priority in an A–D scale (with D requiring urgent treatment), a treatment proposal and time estimate were noted, as well as the presence of pigments and future analytical tests that could be carried out.

Documentation: All objects were photographed and measured, with details updated on the Museum database.

In addition to achieving each of these three aims, the project led to a sub-project to identify the materials for each object and update the records.



Discussion of housing method and order, Caroline Barton and Alicia de la Serna Saenz.

Caroline Barton creating bespoke cut-out for bone and bead stylised figure, EA65665.

Storage drawer before re-housing.

Completed re-housing.

Collection
Identifying ivory and bone



Rebecca Whiting
Project Curator: Bioarchaeology
Daniel Antoine
Keeper, Department of Egypt and Sudan

As a result of the project to improve the storage and documentation of bone and ivory objects in the collection, each object will be assessed in order to confirm its material. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Bioarchaeologist Daniel Antoine began the systematic identification of materials with Volunteer Shenali Boange updating the object records. To date, 80% of the object records have been updated.

Bone and ivory may appear superficially similar but are quite different. Bone comes from the skeleton and ivory from the tusks, which are in fact teeth. These two tissues have different biological processes underpinning their formation. Bone has a rich blood and nerve supply, and a network of tiny channels throughout the bone, called the Haversian system, carry these vessels and nerves. The remnants of the Haversian system can indicate when an object is made of bone. Ivory is a hard dental tissue called dentine, which has a crystalline structure formed in many layers. The appearance of these layers can help identify ivory and may tell us if it came from an elephant or hippopotamus.

Knowing the material of an object can identify potential storage issues, and different materials, particularly ivory, are subject to strict regulations should they ever travel abroad on a loan. Perhaps most importantly, the material's identification can give us insight into the object's context, for instance how it was made or the trade and popularity of materials over time.

The Project Curator role is generously supported by the Institute for Bioarchaeology.



Elephant-ivory inlay from Tell el-Yahudiya (EA 6227e) with detail on right. The ivory is structured with intersecting layers creating the appearance of crossed lines.

Third Intermediate Period hippopotamus-ivory mirror handle from Matmar (EA 63478), with detail on right. The cross section through the hippopotamus tusk carved into a female figure shows the ivory is structured in parallel layers, visible as lines.

Roman-period bone panel (EA 69201), with detail on right. The remnants of the Haversian system appear as holes in the exposed surface and cross section.

Collection
'Pandora's box'

Elisabeth R. O'Connell
Byzantine World Curator
Dan O'Flynn
X-ray Imaging Scientist
Barbara Wills ACR
Senior Conservator, Organic Materials
Alex Owen
Senior Conservator, Organic Materials

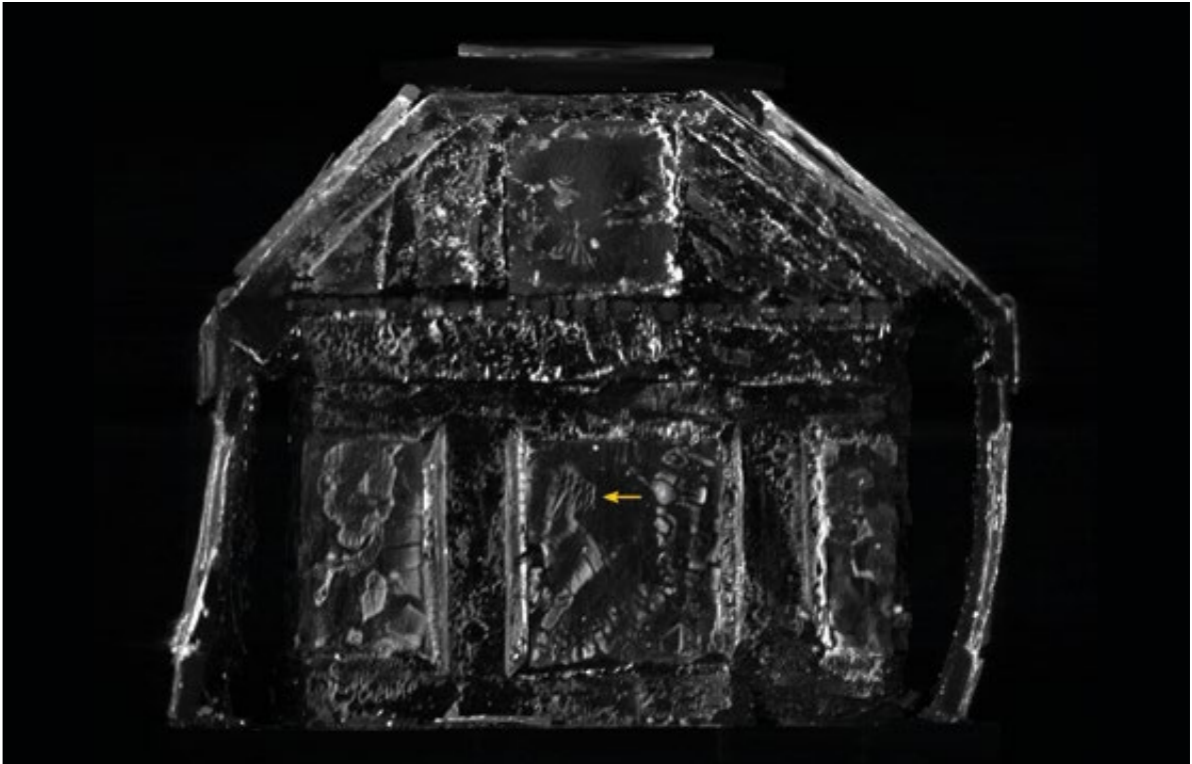
Bone panels depicting *erotes* and other figures in Classical style are well-known among objects from Egypt now in international collections. Only rarely do the wooden structures of the boxes they once decorated survive. On the basis of these and other elaborately decorated boxes in different materials surviving from throughout the late Roman Empire, they are understood to have been received as bridal gifts or wedding presents. Until recently, three boxes now in Cairo, Baltimore and London have been cited as relatively complete examples. Close examination of the British Museum's box suggests that, like the Baltimore example, it too may be a composite.

The box was acquired in 1834 from the British bookseller and antiquities dealer Joseph Sams (1784–1860) following his trip to Egypt and the Levant in 1832–23. It was considered for display for a 2015–16 BM exhibition, when we realized that it would need far more conservation hours than could dedicated at that time. The Curator Elisabeth O'Connell and Organics Conservator Nicola Newman revisited the box in 2016 and began to investigate the object with a view to improving its appearance for publication and, pending conservation advice, future display. As a first step, Scientist Dan O'Flynn took an X-ray CT scan of the box so that we could have a better idea of the structure, what may be original and what may be reconstructed. Some of the reconstructed elements are obvious and have long been identified as such, foremost the supporting wooden base and the top,



upon which a carved panel has been unceremoniously attached. From the X-ray images, we can see the adhesives attaching the panels to the box, the textile lining its interior and the presence of metal-containing colours enhancing the figures. Following consideration for another exhibition in 2020–21, further investigation by Conservators Alex Owen and Barbara Wills suggested that there are some fundamental anomalies in the organization and layout of the panels and their surrounds, the thin ivory and bone framing pieces and the beading along the edges.

As a result of these preliminary investigations, it seems apparent that there has been at least one significant intervention in the box in its past. Indeed, was the box assembled at an early post-excavation stage from available material, perhaps under Sams, who is known to have 'restored' other antiquities? Thus the questions arise, what was added and when? It seems increasingly likely that once the scientific investigation and conservation commences, we may well be opening a Pandora's box of possible outcomes.



The front of the box showing panels with Aphrodite Anadyomene on the lid and an *erote* and birds below (EA 90103).

X-ray CT projection showing the distribution of adhesives (bright regions) on the front of the box.

Collection

Faunal representation in the Meroitic pottery from Faras

Loretta Kilroe

Project Curator: Sudan and Nubia

Faras, 40km south of the 2nd Cataract in Lower Nubia, contained one of the richest burial sites known from the Kingdom of Kush. The cemetery contained at least 2000 graves and was likely in use throughout the Meroitic period (4th century BC – 4th century AD). Although the site is now lost below Lake Nasser/Nubia, material excavated by Francis Llewellyn Griffith in the early 20th century enables us to continue to research the site today. A recent documentation project has aimed to study part of this material in more detail, and ensure photographs are available for public use.

The British Museum holds c. 750 objects from Faras, dating from the A-Group (c. 3800 BC) to the medieval period (c. AD 500–1500), with a particularly large contingent of Meroitic objects from the necropolis and nearby distribution hub, including 156 pottery vessels. These ceramics were made by skilled craftsmen and show that the city was linked with many trading routes, with material imported from the Mediterranean, Upper Egypt and sub-Saharan Africa.

During the Meroitic period, a new ceramic industry arose that produced very fine, wheelmade vessels. Their decoration gives us a glimpse into the visual world of the Meroitic kingdom, with iconography familiar from the Egyptian ideological world paired with a distinct Meroitic personality.

Many pots show the flora and fauna of the Kushite Kingdom. Some are finely painted to a high standard of detail. One BM drinking cup shows elaborately painted toads sat among lotus plants, replicating a scene that Faras inhabitants may have observed along the banks of the Nile, as well as perhaps representing themes of regeneration and fecundity known from Egyptian contexts. Others are much more schematic, such as a cup showing two roughly painted birds with no identifying features, perhaps intending to convey a broad artistic sense of a bird, rather than a specific species. Drinking cups were common grave goods and were often placed atop beer jars, likely indicating the importance of feasting in the Meroitic world. A fine wheelmade collared jar shows simplified red painted giraffes standing among trees, accompanied by a human figure. By the Meroitic period, giraffes were extinct in northern Sudan and the presence of this jar at Faras attests to the exchange of ideas along the Nile valley as well as the potential trade of foodstuffs with the Meroitic heartland further south. Giraffes feature on many Meroitic pots, both wheelmade and handmade, attesting to their importance in Meroitic iconography although any additional meaning remains as yet unknown.

The Project Curator role is generously supported by the Institute for Bioarchaeology



A Meroitic wheelmade collared jar with elongated paintings of giraffes and a human figure among trees (EA 51561).

A Meroitic drinking cup showing a red painted bird, probably a wader, on a plain background (EA 51460).

A Meroitic drinking cup showing painted toads sat among lotuses (EA 51448).





In Egypt
Shutb 2021



Ilona Regulski
Curator of Written Culture

Since 2016, the British Museum survey of the Asyut region is documenting the pharaonic and post-pharaonic history of the village of Shutb within the broader landscape of the Asyut region. Today, Shutb is both a farming town and a multi-layered archaeological site perching atop the remains of the ancient capital of Shashotep.

Fieldwork undertaken at Shutb in May 2021 focused on completing the study of the pottery from the 2018 excavations in the ancient tell. This pottery dates overwhelmingly to the New Kingdom, in particular Dynasty 18, with a few examples from the Ramesside period. This material was consistently mixed with pottery from the Ptolemaic, Roman and Byzantine periods, and the medieval era (mainly Mamluk) due to *Sebakhin* activities in this area.

The work was carried out with the support of the British Museum's Research Board (in synergy with Newton-Mosharafa fund/British Council grant ISN 274662441) and in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (locally represented by Lisa Khalil Beshay) and Sylvie Marchand from the IFAO, Cairo.

More information can be found here:
<https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/projects/regional-identities-middle-egypt>

View of the ancient tell against the modern village.

Niazy Mostafa (MoTA, Asyut inspectorate) and Valentina Gasperini (ceramologist, IFAO) processing pottery fragments.

In Sudan
Progress at the M. Bolheim Bioarchaeology Laboratory

Mohamed Saad

Bioarchaeologist, National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (Sudan)

Rebecca Whiting

Project Curator: Bioarchaeology

Daniel Antoine

Keeper, Department of Egypt and Sudan

In 2019, Sudan's National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) with the support of the British Museum and the Institute for Bioarchaeology, opened the M. Bolheim Bioarchaeology Laboratory in Khartoum. The facility provides a dedicated laboratory and storage space for the analysis and curation of ancient human and biological remains recovered from archaeological sites. This was the first laboratory of its kind in Sudan.

Since opening, Mohammed Saad, bioarchaeologist for NCAM, and his colleagues have been providing bioarchaeological training for NCAM archaeologists and students from many universities including the University of Khartoum's department of archaeology. Mohammed has also facilitated visits for national and international colleagues who wish to study the collections, including students and lecturers from University College London and Durham University. The lab has developed a collaboration with the Khartoum Dental Centre and plans to run a series of lectures on bioarchaeological methods, issues and analysis later this year.

An archaeological mission excavating human remains in Central Sudan at al Kidy have used the facilities at the laboratory for analysis. Mohammed and his colleagues have been directly involved in excavations and analysis of remains from a Meroitic cemetery site at Berber, Kweika cemetery and rescue excavations at Tinga. The human remains from these excavations will come to be stored, analysed and curated in the bioarchaeology laboratory in Khartoum. This facility is thus allowing NCAM to expand and continue its bioarchaeological research, providing new insights into the lives of Sudan's ancient inhabitants.

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



Students from the Department of archaeology at the University of Khartoum, learning about handling, identifying and analysing human remains.

MA student from the Institute of Archaeology at University College London, collecting data for her thesis.

Colleagues from the Khartoum Dental Centre examining ancient teeth.



In Sudan
Conservation in challenging environments: Dangeil and COP26

Julie Anderson

Curator for Sudan and Nubia

Francesca Guiducci

Freelance Archaeological Conservator

Tracey Sweek

Senior Conservator, formerly with the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research

Entitled *Finding Sustainability in the Desert*, the ongoing conservation of the monumental 1st century AD Amun temple at Dangeil, Sudan, was selected by the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) as part of their contribution to the UN Climate Change Conference UK 2021 (COP26) held in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November 2021. The IIC presentation took place within COP26's Green Zone, both a physical and virtual space created for informal discussions, workshops, and events addressing the dangers posed by climate change and the various responses being enacted to combat it. The work of conservators preserving natural and cultural heritage in a variety of climatically extreme and challenging milieus across the world was showcased forming the basis of the IIC presentation.

The excellent preservation of Dangeil's temple complex makes the site unique in Sudan and an important part of the country's cultural heritage. A tension always exists between archaeological excavation which is essentially destructive, balanced against the need to conserve, present and preserve excavated structures and artefacts for future generations. The goals of the Dangeil project are to ensure the site is protected and preserved for the long term in the best condition possible, and to enhance the site's cultural value by improving its accessibility and interpretation for varied and diverse audiences. Since the project's inception, ongoing engagement with and the direct participation of the Dangeil communities with their cultural heritage, through educational outreach, economic engagement, skills exchange and social interactions, have been and remain crucial components in ensuring the site's preservation and sustainability.

The harsh desert environment in which Dangeil is situated poses numerous challenges for its conservation and preservation. The site's building materials, sourced locally in antiquity, are inherently fragile. They include a mix of poor-quality sandstones, mud brick, fired brick, and mud and lime mortars and plasters. Climatically, the region is



subject to broad temperature fluctuations with hot and dry summers potentially reaching over 50°C, while at night in winter it may drop to below 10°C. Sudden heavy rains fall during the rainy season and strong desert winds carry abrasive sand and dust. Located near the centre of the modern village, the site is used as an access route and a network of paths crisscross it. This includes both human and animal footfall. It is part of the community. All of these factors can threaten the preservation of the site. Dangeil's remote location and limited access to conservation materials are also considerations and it can be difficult and expensive to import expertise and supplies from abroad.

Given the aforementioned climatic and environmental issues combined with the friable nature of the ancient construction materials, it was critical to identify and develop sustainable practices and a resilient infrastructure. The aim is to ensure that all features excavated during the course of a field season are either conserved or protected at the season's end with nothing vulnerable left exposed. If a feature cannot be conserved shortly after being excavated, it is enclosed within a temporary water-proof cover or backfilled. Excavation and conservation function in tandem.

Our approach to conservation was founded on three basic principles: the creation of a long-term capacity building programme and knowledge exchange with the local community; the sourcing and use of local supplies; and the design and implementation of simple conservation techniques. This sought to ensure that suitable skillsets

and affordable materials would be available to the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums Sudan (NCAM) and the local community to care for and protect the site in the foreseeable future, independent of foreign participation. Senior members of our local conservation team now have many years of experience and share this with those newer to the role. As we work together, modern conservation techniques are being melded with the repository of local technical knowledge, ingenuity, and usage of traditionally produced constituents.

The ongoing and continued preservation of Dangeil depends upon the interaction and presence of all these factors. The direct participation of the local community, the use of local resources and skills in conservation, and a balanced coordination between excavation and conservation needs, together provide the essential framework ensuring the protection of the site. It is hoped that we can continue to achieve effective, suitable and sustainable results.

For the ICC presentation, see <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/sQVxLn6Trwagw>.

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 Mrs N. K. Adams, Dr D. Bird and Mr A. Giambrone.

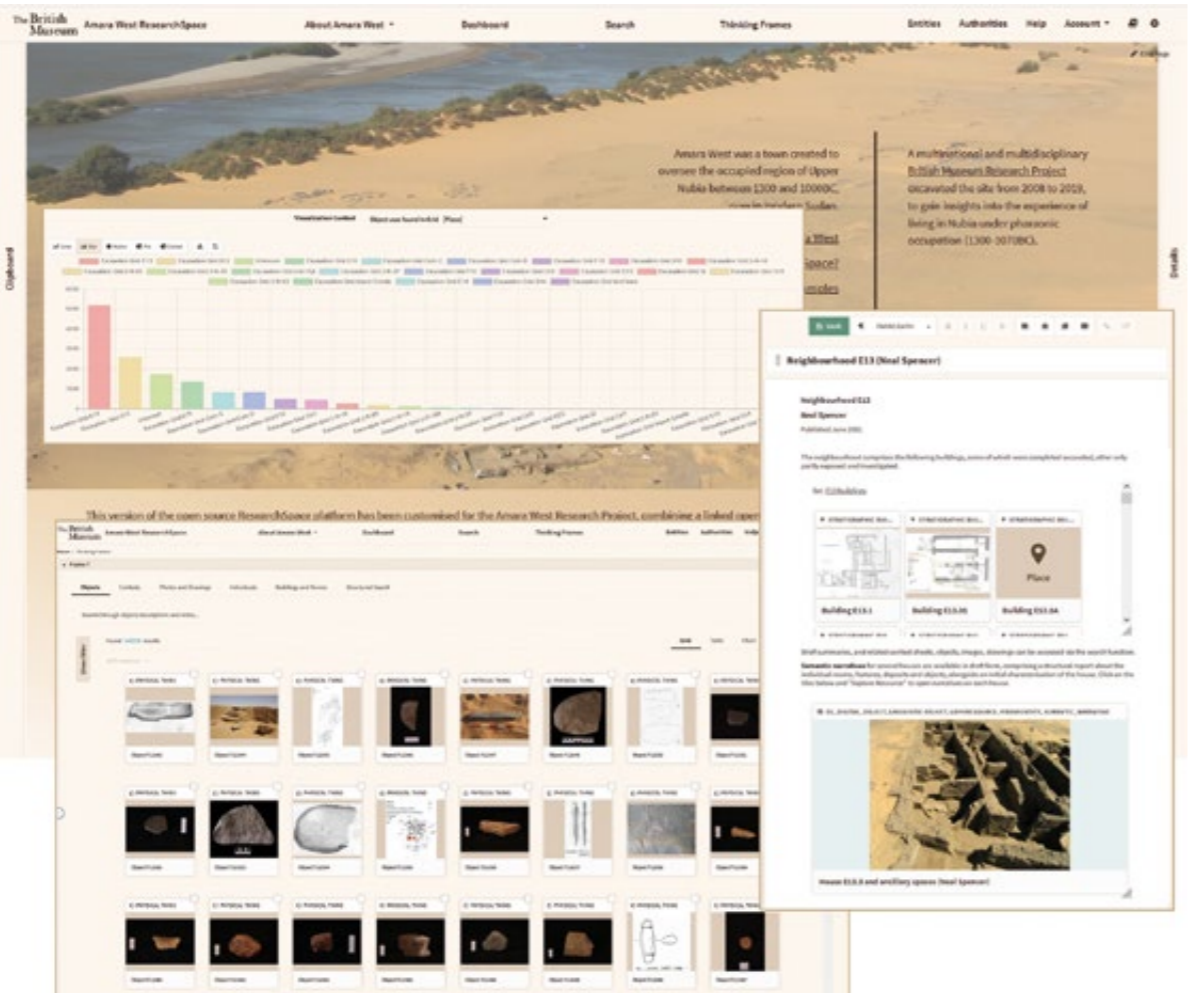
Follow Julie on Twitter: @Amesemi



Conserving sandstone facings in the temple's sanctuary.

Conservation work on a sandstone and fired brick dais within the temple.

In Sudan
Amara West ResearchSpace: a new approach to archaeological publication



Manuela Lehmann
Project Curator: Amara West

The British Museum undertook research fieldwork at the site of Amara West in Northern Sudan between 2008 and 2019, directed by Neal Spencer, former Keeper of Egypt and Sudan. The fieldwork focused on the settlement and related cemeteries and elucidated aspects of lived experience within a colonial foundation in Upper Nubia, part of the pharaonic occupation of Upper Nubia (Northern Sudan) between c. 1500 and 1070 BC. The data accrued from this fieldwork comprises over 40,000 interrelated data elements and many gigabytes: archaeological features and layers as well as the objects found within, including written documentation such as descriptions and interpretation as well as photos, drawings and maps of these features, and 3D data of objects and excavated areas.

To facilitate the research for the final publication of architecture and artefacts a traditional relational database (sql) was migrated into an instance of the semantic web research environment *ResearchSpace*, a project developed at the British Museum for cultural heritage and museum work. This open-source software allows the user to not only work with the data but also to conduct the actual research within the online platform, based on the CIDOC-CRM ontology to ensure sustainability of the data beyond the lifecycle of a particular software product. While the database allows an easy overview

of datasets via powerful search filters, visualisations, Semantic Narratives with embedded images and other digital content can be created without having to use other software programmes. Images can be manipulated, and data can be linked to images by marking certain areas and adding data to them or linking to existing entries. The Knowledge Map feature is a virtual canvas for displaying items and their relationships to others (as well as creating new relationships). Crucially, these narratives and other features are dynamically linked to live data allowing the user to investigate underlying datasets.

The project platform with all data is freely accessible allowing researchers to query and find fieldwork data long before final publication, but also provides access to reports on the individual houses and tombs, or specific groups of objects, such as the wooden funerary beds. The platform also includes a complete library of project publications, available for free download.

See <https://amara-west.researchspace.org>. The realisation of this archaeological research platform was only possible due to the help of the *ResearchSpace* team and other associated project partners. *ResearchSpace* was supported by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, while the Amara West Research Project was made possible with grants from the Qatar-Sudan Archaeological Project and The Leverhulme Trust, under the auspices of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (Sudan).

Amara West ResearchSpace platform with graph, search and Semantic Narrative.

In the UK
British Museum International Training Programme 2021

Claire Messenger
Manager, International Training Programme

The British Museum's International Training Programme (ITP) works to develop a sustainable global network of inspired museum and heritage professionals, through sharing knowledge, skills and experiences.

The annual programme is at the core of the International Training Programme. Here, fellows are introduced to a global network of colleagues and exposed to a variety of museum practices. In light of the uncertainty regarding travel, testing and vaccination regimes, in 2021 we reimagined the ITP into a blended learning experience of online distance e-learning and an on-site bespoke programme which took place in 2022.

While 2021 has been challenging and unexpected the ITP team has found new and exciting opportunities to engage with our network of fellows, our UK and programme partners and the wider heritage and cultural community. Further engagement projects are essential to the core objectives of the ITP. Finding ways to give our fellows the widest possible opportunities for further training and development is fundamental.

Post-fellowship opportunities provide further training and research opportunities and open-up potential collaborations. They directly link to the sessions delivered through the annual programme and to the analysis of the alumni and the wider ITP network, including partners across the UK. By extending the reach and life of the ITP beyond the annual programme, post-fellowship opportunities allow us to support our fellows' career progression and address challenges in their institutions.



Shreen Amin,
Director, The
Children's
Museum, Egyptian
Museum, Cairo.

Mohamed
Mokhtar, Curator,
Abdeen Palace
Museums, Cairo.



Legacy projects inspire a lifelong commitment to our network from ITP partners and fellows, supported by the British Museum and our legacy projects 2021 have directly supported colleagues from Egypt and Sudan.

ITP Futures is a co-design project aimed to capture the creativity of the programme's eight International Training Programme Senior Fellows. The team, including Mohamed Mokhtar (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2015, Senior Fellow 2019), Curator at Abdeen Palace Museums, have worked on ideas throughout 2021, to help shape the future of the ITP through a structured series of online discussions and networking events. The results of the collaboration will have a wide-reaching and long-term impact on the aims, objectives and delivery of the International Training Programme.

And throughout 2021, the ITP team have delivered ITP Online Subject Specialist Sessions (SSS) aiming to continue sharing knowledge, skills and experiences with the network. These sessions included virtual discussions, workshops, 'show and tell' tours and presentations and were led by BM colleagues, UK and programme partners and our ITP fellows. Online sessions were open to colleagues across the wider heritage sector both in the UK and around the world, allowing us to reach-out to museum professionals outside of the network.

ITP Fellows from Egypt and Sudan have been regular attendees at these sessions and Shreen Amin, Director, The Children's Museum, Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2016) delivered an extremely informative and resourceful session on Museum Education in Egypt During COVID-19.

The International Training Programme would not be possible without the generous support of many institutions and individuals. A full list of those who have sponsored the ITP since its inception in 2006 is available at britishmuseum.org and in each year's report. For further information on sponsors or how to support the ITP, email development@britishmuseum.org



Marie Vandenbeusch
Project Curator: Egyptian Touring Exhibitions
Daniel Antoine
Keeper, Department of Egypt and Sudan

After its postponement in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Annual Egyptological Colloquium took place online between 31 August and 3 September 2021. Over four afternoons, the ancient techniques of mummification were explored through a modern lens. The British Museum curates one of the largest collections of mummified remains from the Nile Valley outside Egypt and, over the past decade, they have been the focus of an intensive programme of bioarchaeological and Egyptological research. Despite this new work, many aspects of mummification remain relatively little-known, particularly how practices varied over time and by region, as well as their cultural and social significance. This colloquium provided the opportunity to discuss some of these questions, bringing together scholars using varying approaches, from examining ancient textual sources to

scientific analyses and archaeological work. For example, the physical and metaphorical transformation of the body was discussed using a study of terminology by Anaïs Martin and a new exploration of ancient texts by Sofie Schiødt. These notions were compared with the evidence from non-elite cemeteries of Tell el-Amarna. These excavations led by Anna Stevens provide insight into the preservation of the body and beliefs in life after death for a population with no or little access to mummification. The Distinguished Lecture in Egyptology was presented by José Galán who discussed his recent excavations at Dra Abu el-Naga and offered a new perspective on these Theban burials. Embalming caches and workshops present unique insights into mummification, and Ramadan Hussein closed the four days of discussion presenting a rare mummification workshop discovered in Saqqara.

The colloquium proceedings will be published in the BMPES series.

The mummy of a Singer of Amun (EA 25258). From left to right: CT slice, visualisation and photography.



Sahar N Saleem
Professor of Radiology, Kasr Al Ainy Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University

The ancient Egyptians believed that mummification would make it possible to preserve the dead body for use in the afterlife. To prevent the decay of the corpse, the embalmers took out the internal organs, which were often mummified and stored in canopic jars. The standard explanation for brain removal (excerebration) was that it would prevent bodily putrefaction and it has been supposed that the brain was discarded because it was not considered to be important. However, the oldest words for the brain and its parts in any language are recorded in the Edwin Smith medical papyrus (about 1550 BC). The ancient Egyptians recognized the value of the brain in controlling the body's movement and the ability to speak.

We revisited the treatment of the brain in Egyptian mummies using Computed Tomography (CT) scans. Excerebration can be observed in individuals who

beneficiated from the most expensive mummification, and yet it was not performed on the well-preserved mummies of royal individuals who lived in early Dynasty 18. In fact, it is a myth that the brain had to be removed during mummification to avoid putrefaction, as the organ is devoid of microbes. Ancient Egyptian embalmers sealed openings made in the head with resin, relying on its antimicrobial properties, and this process would also prevent insects from reaching the interior of the skull.

Mummification practice evolved during the several millennia of its use. The incidence of excerebration became increasingly popular from the Old Kingdom onwards with a peak of popularity in the Graeco-Roman period. While excerebration was first used in the embalming of the highest-status members of the population, it does not seem to have been a necessity, but rather a luxurious and sophisticated treatment, just one step in a very complex procedure to preserve the body in the best way possible for the afterlife.

CT scan image of the mummified head of King Thutmose II (about 1491–81 BC, early Dynasty 18). This 3D CT scan image in transverse section shows the intact bony walls of the ethmoidal sinuses (arrowed) and the well-preserved desiccated shrunken brain. The findings indicate that no excerebration was performed.



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From the early days of unwrapping mummies to the modern virtual examinations by CT scans, one of the substances most often seen on bodies and their wrappings has been resins. These fragrant products were used from Predynastic to Roman times but, as Egypt had no internal resin sources, their use in mummification reveals a dependency on valuable imported commodities. While the presence of resin is corroborated by chemical analysis, how does this scientific data compare to the botanical, textual and archaeological evidence for the use of resins in mummification?

Many resinous sources could have been used such as coniferous resins, liquidambar and labdanum from the north, and frankincense and myrrh from the south. From the few surviving texts relating to mummification and inscribed pottery jars from embalming caches, it seems that a variety of resins were applied to the body, both individually and as components in an assortment of unguents. However, in contrast, only two resin sources are commonly identified by the scientific analysis of samples, both imported from the eastern Mediterranean.

Most often found are coniferous products (resin, heated pitch and possibly a distilled product) from the family Pinaceae which includes pine and cedar and, less frequently, resinous products from *Pistacia* spp., which was also used as incense. These are typically found in different combinations with vegetable oils, animal fats, beeswax and sometimes, from about 1250 BC, bitumen. While textual evidence has suggested a possible link between coniferous products and mummification, the near absence of other resins apart from pistacia is intriguing. In addition, these same products were applied to some coffins suggesting a deliberate intent to associate the body to its container.

These inconsistencies between the scientific results and the textual and archaeological evidence raise a number of questions now under consideration. Has scientific analysis missed some resins or were only certain ones imported? Were variations in the methods of production for unguents enough to make the Egyptians name them differently or could their identities be changed by the recitation of spells? Whatever the reasons might be, it is only by collating all the data that we can begin to see such discrepancies more clearly.

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New publications

Fulcher, K. *Painting Amara West: the technology and experience of colour in New Kingdom Nubia*, British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 13, Leuven, 2022.

Nicholson, P. T., *The Catacombs of Anubis at North Saqqara: an archaeological perspective*, British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 12, Leuven, 2021.

O'Connell, E. R. (ed.), *Egypt and empire: the formation of religious identity after Rome*, British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 11, Leuven, 2022.

Regulski, I., *Tomb M12.3 at Asyut, a unique testimony to the late 12th Dynasty*, with contributions by U. Verhoeven and J. Korte, C. Maderna-Sieben, J. F. Quack and F. Wespi, The Asyut Project 19, Wiesbaden, 2022.

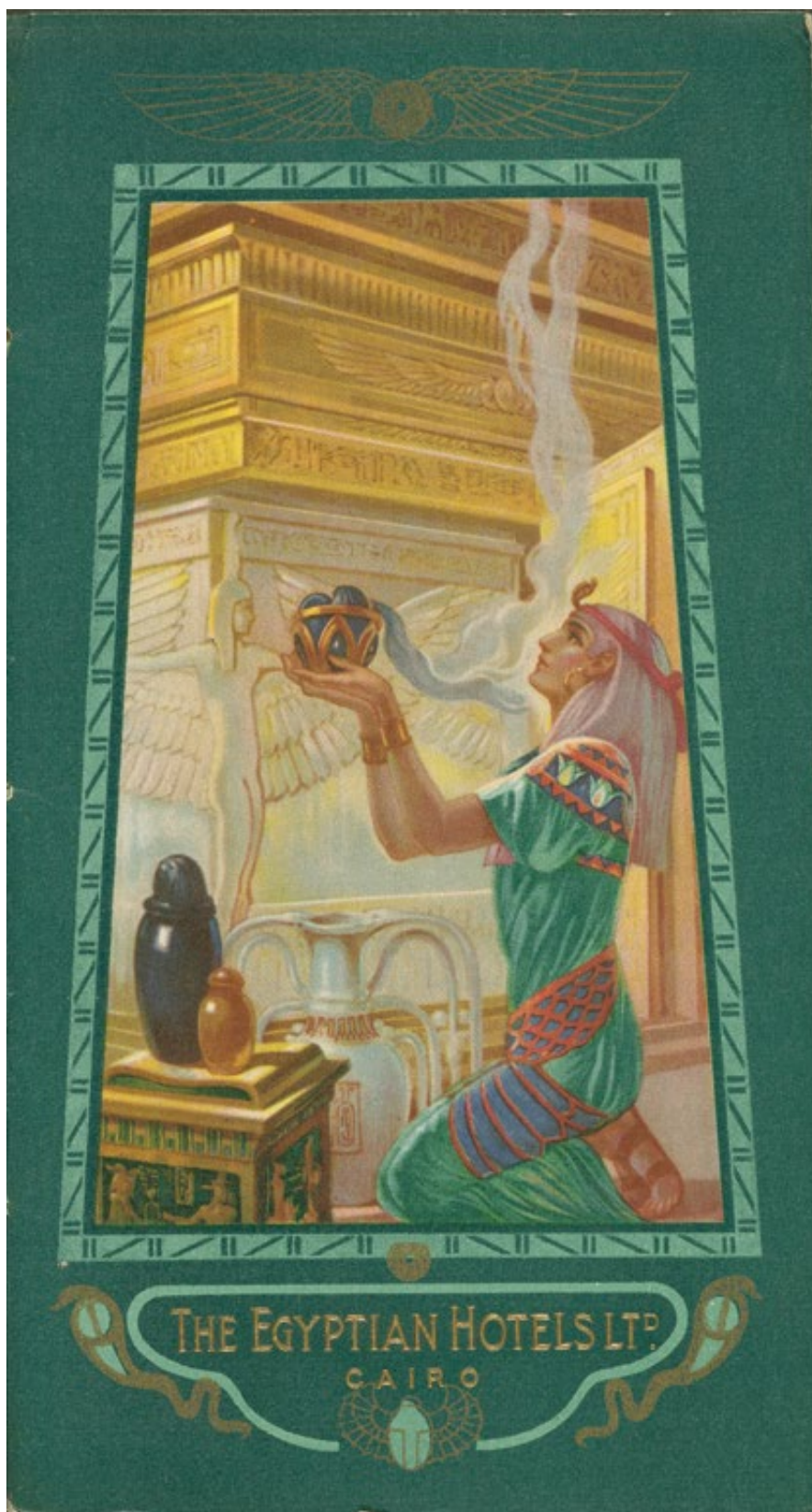
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