

Editorial

— Tine Bagh

CIPEG news

CIPEG *Museum Matters III*, with the theme 'Museum Storerooms and Care for Collections', was scheduled to take place online on June 15th. However, this has had to be postponed until a later date, most probably November 2024, as the Annual CIPEG Meeting in Madrid will be held in end of September. We will inform you when we have set the new firm date for *Museum Matters III*.

ICOM news

Medea S. Ekner has been appointed **Director General of ICOM**. Ms Ekner had previously been elected Vice Chair of the ICOM Advisory Council, and held this role until her appointment as interim Director General. She is a former Chair of ICOM Sweden and a Board Member of the ICOM Nord Regional Alliance.

The Annual ICOM General Assembly 2024 was held in Marseille, France at the Mucem - Museum of Civilizations

of Europe and the Mediterranean. The Meetings took place on Tuesday 11 June, with the Scientific Programme and Reception, and Wednesday 12th, with the 96th Session of the ICOM Advisory Council and the 30th Ordinary General Assembly. Owing to the venue's limited space, only one member could represent each committee in person and Tine Bagh, Chair of CIPEG represented CIPEG. ■

> cipeg.icom.museum

> [Facebook](#)

CIPEG Annual Meeting 2024 in Madrid, 23-27 September 2024

— Esther Pons and Isabel Olbés

We look very much forward to welcoming you to Madrid in September at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (see more on the next page). The theme this year is 'Making the old new again: refurbishing museums spaces', and the 1st Call for papers was sent to the CIPEG mailing list at the end of April. Remember the deadline for the abstracts is 15 June, 2024 and please also let us know if you wish to participate without presenting a paper. We will send out the preliminary programme, with more information about the venue, excursions and practical information concerning hotels and restaurants.

The Meeting will include visits in Madrid to:

- **Museo Nacional del Prado**, one of the most important art galleries in the world, including a huge collection of European and Spanish paintings from the 15th to 19th century.
- **Palacio de Liria**, a manor belonging

to the Duke of Berwick and Liria, with a family archive comprising letters of friendship between the former Duke of Alba and Howard Carter.

- **Templo de Debod**, which was gifted to the Spanish Government in gratitude for helping save Egyptian and Nubian heritage. It arrived in Madrid in 1968, and may now be seen in La Montaña Park, very close to Plaza de España. The temple was built in the 2nd century AD, under the reign of the Meroitic king Adikhalamani, with

a chapel honouring Amun and Isis. Later the sanctuary was expanded and new areas were added under the Ptolemies and the Roman Empire, with Augustus, Tiberius and Hadrian.

Outside of Madrid, a trip to **Toledo** will be arranged. The city was once the capital of the empire under the reign of king Charles I and is also known as 'The capital of the three cultures', in reference to the Christian, Muslim and Jewish religions. ■

The Debod Temple at sunset. (Photo © Tine Bagh)



The Egyptian and Nubian Antiquities collection at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Spain

Past, present and future

— Dr. Esther Pons Mellado, Head curator, and Isabel Olbés Ruiz de Alda, Assistant curator of the Egyptian Antiquities and Near Eastern Department, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Spain

The Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid was founded in 1867, during the reign of Queen Isabella II, and was inaugurated on 5 July, 1895. From the outset there was already an incipient Egyptian collection that had previously belonged to the Royal Collections. Nowadays, the Egyptian Antiquities and Near Eastern Department comprises a collection of about 15,000 pieces, which covers a wide chronological frame from Predynastic times to the Christian-Byzantine period, the pharaonic period being the most represented.

In the Museum, an important variety of objects has been displayed in rooms 32 to 35, with the collection distributed according to the following scheme: History of the Museum, Daily Life, Religion and Death. Within the collection we may find, among the highlights, human and animal mummies, cartonnages, polychromed wooden coffins, sculptures in stone, bronze and terracotta; an important number of amulets, made mainly of faience, stone, metal, lapis lazuli and carnelian; a large quantity of stone and pottery vessels, many decorated with plant, floral and zoomorphic motifs;



Room 33 with a backlit image of the river Nile. (Photo © Esther Pons)



Room 35. Display case 6 with polychromed and gesso masks. (Photo © Esther Pons)

funerary masks made of polychromed wood and gesso; offering tables, objects made of glass; false doors, personal adornment objects such as rings, bracelets, earrings, necklaces; Coptic textiles displaying a rich iconography; bandages and papyri with hieroglyphic

inscriptions and representations of funerary nature; models of boats with rowers; models of tombs; shabtis and canopic vases.

The origin of the collection is varied: acquisitions by means of purchase from both, individuals and auction houses, donations from individuals, donation from Egyptian Government divisions of finds, exchanges, deposits, rearrangement of collections, and own projects. ■

Room 35. Display case 3, with funerary objects. (Photo © Isabel Olbés)



> [Museo Arqueológico Nacional](#)

Egyptian Museum of Barcelona - Clos Archaeological Foundation

Thirty years of commitment to disclosure

— Mariàngela Taulé Delor, *Directora General, Clos Archaeological Foundation*

Since its inception in 1992, the Clos Archaeological Foundation, the entity that manages the Egyptian Museum of Barcelona, has been committed to the research, study and diffusion of the cultures from antiquity, especially that of Pharaonic Egypt. The Foundation has developed, with its own resources, a wide range of activities and programs to promote knowledge of the culture of ancient Egypt across different types of audiences. It is one of the few privately funded cultural entities, generating its own resources without receiving financial support from the public administration, making it a successful example of sustainability and self-management.

In March 1994, a small Egyptian Museum was inaugurated in Barcelona with 250 objects from the private collection of the collector and cultural patron Jordi Clos i Llobart. Today, after thirty years, the Egyptian Museum of Barcelona houses 1,250 artefacts, a comprehensive exhibit that offers visitors a look into to the life and customs of the ancient Pharaonic civilization. The main sources of the collection have been public auctions and, to a lesser extent, purchases from other museums, and from a number of national and international donors and collaborators. The great diversity of the exhibited pieces: sarcophagi, funerary masks, human and animal mummies, amulets, bronze figures, royal and

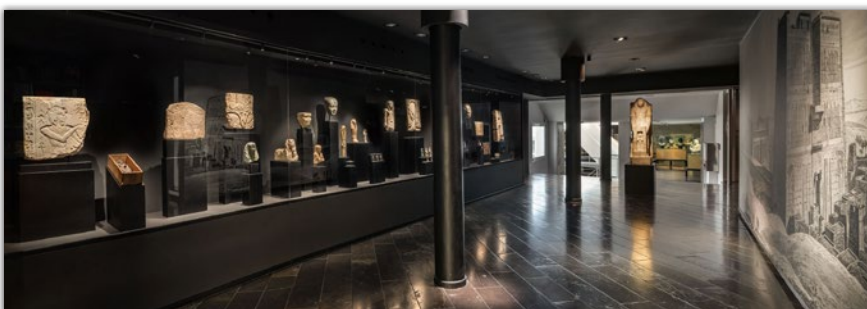
private statuary, *shabti* figures, jewels and daily life objects, gives the visitor a very complete vision of the pharaonic civilization.

Pursuing purely pedagogical objectives, the Egyptian Museum of Barcelona is organized thematically. The tour begins in the hall of the pharaohs, followed by a space featuring pieces that introduces people to hieroglyphic writing. Next is the section devoted to daily life followed by an area about mummification and a brief introduction to the Afterlife. The funerary equipment, the god and goddesses, and the cult in the temples complete our thematic exhibition proposal.

Thanks to its training programmes, the Egyptian Museum of Barcelona has become an essential educational resource for schools. Each year, some 35,000 children enjoy a wide array of activities even some that allow them to sleep in between sarcophagi and mummies.

Every year 220,000 people visit the museum. The centre has received more than 5.5 million visitors since its opening. The museum has also organized 22 temporary exhibitions, 22 collaborations with other cultural institutions involving the loan of works and 94 traveling exhibitions in Spain, Portugal, Andorra, Colombia and the People's Republic of China.

First thematic area of the Egyptian Museum of Barcelona, devoted to the Pharaoh and to the Egyptian monarchy. (Photo © J. Casanovas)



Statue of the god Bes in the temporary exhibition Ptolemy. Pharaoh of Egypt. Inv.: MEB E-433 and E-1107.

(Photo © Museu Egipci Barcelona)

Finally, I would like to highlight another fundamental element of the institution: the Jordi Clos Library specialized in Egyptology with more than 10,000 documents. The Library holds monographs, periodicals, auction catalogues, and true bibliographic jewels as the complete set of the *Description de l'Égypte* (1820 and 1830), one of the cornerstones of our entity. ■

> www.museuegipci.com

Statue of Gemefsetkap, a priest of the god Sobek. Limestone. 25th Dynasty (715-664 BC). Inv.: MEB E-1145.

(Photo © J. Casanovas)



Imhotep Museum, Saqqara. Heritage and identity

— Dr. Mamdouh Farouk Mohamed, Director Imhotep Museum

The idea of founding the Imhotep Museum dates back to 1997, and it was originally opened in 2006 in the honour of the architect Imhotep, as he was the first to invent stone architecture, influenced by buildings made of plant materials, which was applied in the pyramid complex of the King Djoser. The museum's mission is to shed light on the architecture of Imhotep, and the wood and stone styles of Saqqara. The museum also commemorates the French architect Jean-Philippe Lauer, who devoted most of his life to excavating and restoring King Djoser's complex.

The museum extends over an area of three acres (12 thousand square meters), and occupies a single level, containing six halls, displaying more than 390 unique objects, all discovered from the Saqqara

Architecture hall of King Djoser.



Saqqara Tombs Hall with cheese preserved in a pot and fruit doum palms.



site. By the end of 2023, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities completed a project to redevelop and raise the efficiency of the museum, to be more accessible for visitors, including elderly and disabled, in addition to developing the museum display. In addition, a cafeteria, gift shop and a visual setting hall, that displays short videos about Saqqara in Arabic, English, and French, were also developed.

The Imhotep Museum reflects the identity and heritage of the capital, Memphis, from the Early Dynastic Period to the Ptolemaic era, especially the intangible heritage, with varied themes.

Medical heritage:

Imhotep was chancellor to Djoser, architect of the step pyramid, and high priest of Ra at Heliopolis. He was later deified as a physician with chapels in the temples at Karnak, Medinet Habu, Deir el-Bahari and Philae.

Musical heritage:

Two wooden parts of the harp instrument are in the collection of the vizier Aperia of the New Kingdom, whose tomb was discovered in Saqqara.

Food heritage:

The ancient Egyptian was keen to preserve the foods as offerings to be placed with the deceased in the tombs, especially in front of the false doors.

Heritage crafts and professions:

Carpenter: Nedjer. The museum displays sculpture tools of copper, and three models of boats of different sizes, the most important of which is the funerary boat of Khenu, the supervisor of the funerary temple of King Teti of the 6th Dynasty.

The weaver: Qenuy. Represented by the



Imhotep statuette of bronze.

faience tiles of King Djoser, imitating reed matting.

Sculptor: Hemu. Saqqara Styles Hall, contains a variety of wood and stone sculptures, and the Saqqara School style appears in using wooden wedges between the shoulders and the body. Another skill is to make alabaster vessels, by using a drill to hollow it out and then polish it.

The museum displays other unique masterpieces; for instance, a mummy, possibly attributable to King Merenre, a famine scene from the pyramid-complex of King Unas, and two measuring cubits, made of wood and schist from the reign of King Amenhotep III.

The museum welcomes the visitors daily, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ■

The oldest surgical tools, pots and pottery dishes, belonging to the physician Qar, 6th Dynasty.



Funerary boat of Khenu, 6th Dynasty.



Gustavianum, Uppsala University Museum

Reopening

— Sofia Häggman

In the autumn of 2019, the Gustavianum was closed for a badly-needed renovation, which aimed to improve the environment and security. Now, after five years of renovation, it will reopen on 24 June 2024, with a new display of its Egyptian collection, alongside ones of the cultures around the Mediterranean, the Vikings, the history of art and scientific discoveries, including Rudbeck's Anatomical Theatre, and the famous art cabinet from Augsburg. The Gustavianum was built in 1622 and is Uppsala University's oldest extant building, which also formerly housed the Victoria Museum of Egyptian Antiquities.

The updated museum will present windows on world history, and include

Coffin of the temple singer Tayheret, end of New Kingdom, c. 1000 BCE. Crown princess Victoria bought the coffin in Egypt 1890-91 and donated it to the Uppsala University.
(Photo © Mikael Wallerstedt)



connections between Sweden and Egypt from the point of view of Uppsala. Thus, the history of the collection gets a much more prominent position than was previously the case. Stories about various events or time periods will be told through selected objects with an audio guide. For example, an ivory label from the tomb of King Djer will illustrate the formation of the Egyptian state, and a shabti from the burial of Pinedjem II tells the story about the end of the Theban necropolis and the discovery of the royal mummies. It will also be possible to read these 'micro stories' in a catalogue.

The Greco-Roman collection is displayed in the same hall as the Egyptian, and here they meet through the Mediterranean Sea during the Hellenistic and Roman period, with finds from a Roman bath in Asine in Greece and Demotic texts about bath taxes from Egypt.

The general idea is to show the Egyptian objects in a chronological order, with highlights such as a fragment of the pyramid texts from the pyramid of Pepy I, a coffin of the chantress of Isis Tayuheret from Akhmim, and the coffin of Khonsumose from the Bab el-Gasus at Deir el-Bahari. Also on view will be the bouquet of flowers that Emile Brugsch picked-out from the royal mummies for the Swedish Crown Princess Victoria when she visited Egypt in 1891.

Ceramic coffin returned to Gustavianum, found by Flinders Petrie at Gurob in 1920.
(Photo © Marcus Holmqvist)



Gustavianum.

(Photo © Jarvis, Wikimedia Commons)



Preparing for the new display of the Egyptian collection at Gustavianum.

(Photo © Ludmila Werkström)

It will be possible to see part of the collection of Uppsala University from the Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia in the 1960s, when UNESCO carried out an international campaign to save Nubia's antiquities. Professor Torgny Säve-Söderbergh from Uppsala University was head of the Scandinavian expedition.

For the first time visitors will also be able to see the ceramic coffin belonging to the boy Peneferneb that was stolen from Gustavianum in the 1960s, and which has now been returned from the Museum of Fine Arts Boston that unknowingly bought it in 1985. It will be put on display after the summer when it has been under conservation. ■

> [Gustavianum](#)

Elephantine: Island of the Millennia

James-Simon-Galerie and Neues Museum, Museumsinsel Berlin. 26 April to 27 October 2024.

— Verena M. Lepper & Eid Mertah

Elephantine, the island on the Nile River in southern Egypt was, as a trade and border centre, home to a uniquely diverse population. Here, a whole range of languages, cultures and religions existed side by side. It is the only place in the world where 4,000 years of unbroken cultural history can be traced through written sources. Thousands of texts may be found on papyrus or clay shards written in ten different languages and scripts. Today, they are held in 60 collections in 24 different countries.

In this comprehensive, world-first, exhibition on Elephantine, outstanding objects from Berlin's collections are shown alongside highlights from around the world. The diverse contents of the texts are contextualised by archaeological objects and interpreted by contemporary artists, giving audiences a unique, first-hand experience of the island of Elephantine.

Berlin is home to one of the world's largest collections of objects from Elephantine, next to the Musée du Louvre and the Brooklyn Museum, which are the two cooperation partners for this exhibition. The texts gathered here tell stories of pluralism, family, religion, trade, and medicine. What can we learn from Elephantine today? In dialogue with scholars from the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA), contemporary perspectives on Elephantine have been

King Ptolemy I's sacrificial basin for the goddesses Satis and Anuket. (Photo © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung / Sandra Steiβ)



produced for this exhibition. The show also provides the chance to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the AGYA, marking a decade of successful German-Arab research collaborations and science diplomacy.

The entire exhibition is trilingual, carried out in Arabic, English and German, and was brought together in close collaboration with the Egyptian Ministry for Tourism and Antiquities.

Ranging from the third millennium BCE, through to the era after the Arab conquest, the sources displayed here tell of the diversity of social life on the island, allowing visitors to interact with Elephantine by way of seven thematic islands through which they can walk.

Elephantine is a unique model of historical diversity that can teach us lessons for the present and the future. Following the principle of seeing, hearing, touching, and smelling, the materiality of the different textual media is made palpable to audiences, while contemporary artists interpret the themes of the texts in their own ways: a European scent artist and two Egyptian sound artists offer a unique

Hieroglyphic magical papyrus fragment from Elephantine. A royal scribe can use magic to reattach a severed head. (Photo © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung / Sandra Steiβ)



Boxes with papyri from the Elephantine excavations. (Photo © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Sandra Steiβ)

experience of Elephantine through their compositions.

A large model presents the island within its regional context followed by a papyrus thicket, offering visitors an interactive hands-on experience including a digital papyrus puzzle. After a seven-year research project funded by a European Research Council, for the first time, more than 10,000 papyri and ostraca from the island have been digitally unlocked by an international research team. Thanks to collaborations with mathematicians and physicists, it is possible to "virtually" unlock closed papyrus packages, making them legible for the first time in history. ■

> [Elephantine Exhibition](#)

Elephantine exhibition poster. (Photo © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)



Egypt: Obsessed with Life

A narrative exhibition about Egyptian mortuary practices and beliefs.

— Ole Herslund

Moesgaard Museum, Aarhus, Denmark, is presenting the exhibition 'Egypt: Obsessed with Life', from 13 October 2023, to 18 August 2024. This exhibition features objects generously loaned from the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Florence; the National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen; the Papyrus Carlsberg Collection, University of Copenhagen; and the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden.

The exhibition is based on storytelling, narrative flow, and visitor immersion, with objects, scenery and interactive features grouped across five sections. It begins by introducing ancient Egypt as a cyclical world that humans and gods must maintain and uphold. Egypt's cyclical nature is illustrated by the inundation, crop cycles, celestial movements, and beings that disappear and reappear. Here, the main gods of cyclical rebirth, the sun god and Osiris, are also introduced. The mythology surrounding Osiris is dealt with in more detail, following which the visitors enter the mummification workshop. Here, the deceased finds rebirth by being

The ancestor cult with the statue of the priest Henat wearing a Persian robe and holding a shrine depicting the facade of the temple of Neith at Sais. Persian Period, 525-404 BCE (the Archaeological Museum, Florence). (Photo © Tine Bagh)



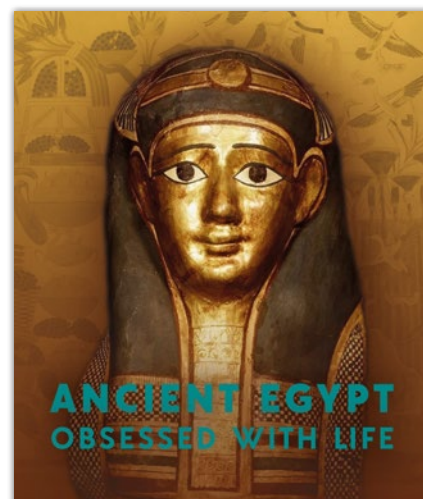
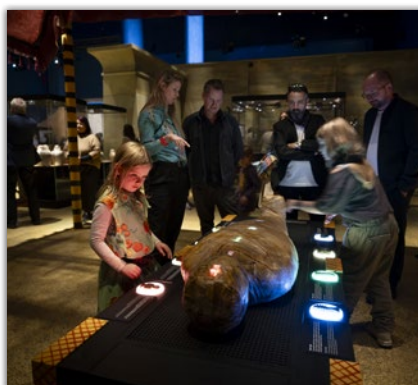
transformed into an Osiris, the ultimate forefather and god of all that lives, dies and is reborn.

From the workshop, the visitors follow the now reborn ancestor into the afterlife. Here the focus is put on how the living dead are not prisoners inside their coffins and tombs. They are rather like spirits (*ba*) that can travel freely, to and from the tomb, and manifest themselves in heaven, earth, or the underworld. Armed with rituals written on coffins, tomb walls and papyri the ancestors actively participate in upholding the gods, the world and its life-giving cycles, and in return gain continuous rejuvenation and rebirth.

Like the dead, visitors return to the tomb in the fourth section, which focusses on the interaction between living and dead in the offering cult. In exchange for the offerings, the ancestors (*akh*) can benefit the living by bestowing them with protection, healing, and, of upmost importance, the procreational life force that runs through the generations (*ka*).

In the final section, objects and scenes of daily life are recontextualised back into the tombs, as ways of creating a home for the forefathers/mothers and

Interactive "mummy" with amulets. (Photo © Poul Madsen, Moesgaard Museum)



The book cover.

extend parts of their lives in Egypt into the afterlife. Hence, the exhibition emphasises that the cult of the dead was rather a life cult. The ancients were not morbid and obsessed with death, they were obsessed with life.

A guide featuring articles by Egyptologists has been published, titled: *Egypt: Obsessed with Life* (Danish edition: *Egypten: Besat af Livet*.) Jysk Arkaeologisk Selskab: ISBN 9788793251571. Price: 239 DKK. ■

> [Egypt: Obsessed with Life](#)

The mummification workshop. Part of the medical text Papyrus Louvre-Carlsberg with the oldest surviving manual on mummification yet discovered, c. 1450 BCE (Papyrus Carlsberg Collection, University of Copenhagen). (Photo © Tine Bagh)

