

| A New Era for Museums in Egypt

by Zahi Hawass

Zahi Hawass is an archaeologist and Egyptologist, and has conducted excavations in Egypt for over thirty years. His most recent discoveries include the Tombs of the Pyramid Builders at Giza and the Valley of the Golden Mummies in the Bahariya Oasis. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, has taught at the University of California in Los Angeles, at Cairo University, and at the American University in Cairo which awarded him an honorary degree this year. Zahi Hawass has written many scholarly articles and academic books, as well as various books aimed at the general public. He has received many awards, including the Golden Plate from the American Academy of Achievement, and is an Explorer in Residence for the National Geographic Society. He is currently Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, whereby he is in charge of all antiquities in Egypt.

Museums in Egypt have traditionally been storage places for artefacts. Until now, no real philosophy or strategy has been put forward to guide their development. Institutions have been built all over the country to house artefacts from prehistory, the Pharaonic periods, the Greek and Roman eras, the Coptic and Islamic periods, and from modern Egypt until the era of Muhammad Ali. However, the precious objects they contain have been either hidden away in basements or poorly displayed in ways that fail to interest and inform the public. Egyptian museums are also generally lacking in educational programmes for the public. The curators have not devised cultural centres or classes for schools, programmes for children, or programmes for people with special needs.

Ideally, museums should be secure locations to display and preserve artefacts and also educational institutions to teach the public about ancient cultures, with a focus on the ways in which they can learn from and protect our common history. A nation without a past does not have a

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promising future. In Egypt we have a special mission, because our past does not belong to us alone, but belongs to the world as a whole. It is our shared history, our shared heritage.

The Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) and the Ministry of Culture have long recognized the importance of building great museums. However, until now, there has been no written philosophy to set out a vision for the future. No coherent plan was made to create engaging displays or develop cultural or educational messages for visitors. Until recently, only the Nubia Museum in Aswan and the Luxor Museum fulfilled any of these requirements. These two institutions, both designed by the late architect Mahmoud el-Hakiem, feature coherent themes and engaging displays. The Luxor Museum was created to focus on Thebes in the Golden Age of the Pharaohs. Ever since it was opened in 1975, the objects have been elegantly displayed. The Nubia Museum, which was built with the help and supervision of UNESCO, uses elements from Nubian cultural heritage in its design. The artefacts in this museum illustrate Nubian culture from prehistory to the present. The lighting and displays are in keeping with international standards. (The labels are currently being revised.) The circulation of visitors is also carefully planned. Four years ago the Aga Khan Foundation attributed its prize for architecture to the museum. However, neither of these museums has a cohesive educational message to convey to the public.

A new strategy

Over recent decades archaeology in Egypt has been moving from an era of exploration and exploitation

into a new era of conservation, preservation, and education. The SCA has begun to focus on site management plans and drafting, and is beginning to implement these important initiatives at a number of key sites around the country. We are committed to educating native Egyptians about their heritage, so that they will join with us in preserving and protecting the monuments we are privileged to safeguard for future generations.

Egyptian museums are a key to our conservation and education strategy. They can no longer be simply warehouses for storage with outdated displays. Instead, they are being transformed into centres designed to elucidate and protect the past. Egyptian museums are being updated and redesigned, and we are opening new museums throughout the country. These changes will span the entire nationwide system.

As part of this initiative, each museum will have a message along with a written proposal of action for the education of children and adults. The interior design of each museum will comply with international standards. Traditionally, Egyptian museums have displayed their artefacts in ways that focused only on death and the afterlife, but we will now have civilization museums elucidating our culture as a whole and specialized museums revealing specific aspects of life in ancient times.

In general, the people who work in our museums belong to the old era, and need guidance to move into the future. The curators in some of the largest and most frequently visited museums do not even know how many artefacts their museums hold. They do not have an easily

accessible record of each artefact that describes the movement of each item (to the conservation laboratory, to exhibitions inside and outside of Egypt, etc.) and the condition of each item. Plans are currently underway to create an effective computer-based inventory system and to train curators in its use, so that an accurate trace of objects can be kept.

There is a need to keep track of objects within an institution. A recent example is the loss of 387 pieces of jewellery (bracelets dated from the Roman period), which might still be at the Cairo Museum. This is the most serious problem that we face in Egypt because curators currently focus their efforts on helping foreign scholars and photographers. The scholarship of an Egyptian curator, in the eyes of our foreign colleagues, is too often mainly determined by how much assistance he or she is given by the museum. Scholarship of

The basement of the Cairo Museum is another illustration of the lack of global and streamlined organization. The basement is filled with artefacts, some of which have been in storage for more than eighty years. Once they reached the museum basement they were all but forgotten, left to collect dust on their sealed cases. Some boxes were never opened, objects were never examined, and no one recorded or even registered the artefacts. This situation needs to be rectified and is, in fact, being addressed now. An important part of this new initiative is an educational and training programme for curators to help them better understand the variety of responsibilities of curatorship.

Under the new programme, Egyptian museums will fall into one of five categories:

1. Regional civilization museums
2. Site museums



1. Alexandria National Museum.



2. Pyramid Complex of Djoser, 3rd Dynasty at Saqqara.

Egyptian curators should be measured in terms of the care they take of the artefacts under their supervision, and by how much they have published from their collections.

3. Specialized museums
4. Greek and Roman, Coptic and Islamic museums.
5. The three great Cairo museums

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Regional civilization museums

Under the new concept, civilization museums will be dedicated to the entire span of Egyptian history, from the prehistoric period through to the era of Mohammed Ali, and will illustrate the lives of the majority of Egyptians. Museums of this type are being built in Aswan, Sohag, Hargahda, El-Arish, Suez, Alexandria, Qena, and Sharm el-Sheikh. These museums will inform their visitors specifically about the history of the area in which they are built. They will focus on how ordinary Egyptians, not just royalty and the élite, participated in ancient society. These museums will tell the history of the region through artefacts from excavations carried out in nearby sites.

The first civilization museum to be completed is in Alexandria, and is now open to the public. It was originally the villa of the American consul in Alexandria, and was bought and redesigned as a museum by the SCA. The artefacts housed here inform the visitor about the activities of the common people and their culture in Pharaonic, Greek, Roman, Coptic, and Islamic times and also in modern Alexandria of the twentieth century. The museum also displays recent discoveries from underwater excavations.

The new civilization museum in Aswan will be located on the west bank of the Nile, linked with Elephantine Island. The artefacts will concentrate on the history of Aswan – the southern border of ancient Egypt, from prehistory until modern times. The Sohag Museum in the northern part of Upper Egypt, near the ancient site of Abydos, will concentrate on Osiris, the god of the afterlife, the Early Dynastic period and the

development of writing, and will also include the history of the nearby site of Akhmim. The museum is already designed to be built on the east bank of the Nile in Sohag and we have begun its interior design. We are now working on completing the civilization museums in El Arish, near the entrance to Sinai, Suez, and Rashied.

The Qena Civilization Museum will be built on the east bank of the Nile near the site of Denderah; it will focus on the history of the region from predynastic to Graeco-Roman times, highlighting the importance of the temple of Denderah, dedicated to the goddess Hathor. The new museum in Harghadah will elucidate the impact of Sinai on the history of Egypt throughout the ages.

In Sharm El Sheikh, we are now building a museum that will contain masterpieces from the Pharaonic period. This museum will be important for those staying in Sharm El Sheikh and cannot or do not wish to travel to Cairo. It will be open late so people who spend the day at the beach can visit it in the evening. We are considering sending the magnificent golden mask of King Tutankhamun to the museum for a three-month exhibition to attract the public.

Site museums

These museums will be built near the entrances to specific archaeological sites to house artefacts that have come from local excavations, with a special focus on recent discoveries. They are designed so that visitors will enter the sites they serve with accurate, sound information about the history of the material they are about to see.

There is only one site museum currently in existence in Egypt. This is the site museum at the mortuary temple of Merenptah on the west bank at Luxor. This museum contains artefacts that have come from the recent excavations by the Swiss archaeological mission at this temple.

The first new site museum planned is the Imhotep Museum at Saqqara. Imhotep was the architect who designed the Step Pyramid of Djoser; he became deified in the Late Period and was later associated with the Greek god of medicine. The site of Saqqara is very important, and contains many outstanding monuments from the first Dynasty (c. 3000 BC) to the Late Period. Many Old Kingdom pyramids and elite tombs were built here, and it was the burial place for many leading officials of the New Kingdom. Many foreign and Egyptian missions have excavated at the site and have made valuable discoveries. Most of the artefacts from these expeditions are now stored in two new warehouses that have been built at the foot of the plateau, replacing sixty-five primitive storerooms used previously.

Our plan is not to build any structures within the site, but to remove all of the modern structures which currently impinge on the ancient monuments. The museum will be to the east of the plateau, near the flood plain. In this area, we shall also have the following: an administration building for personnel, which will include lecture facilities; conservation laboratories; a department for architectural restoration; a photographic laboratory; and two new storerooms to house artefacts. These storerooms will allow the display of artefacts, and will be open to scholars. They will be connected with the conservation

laboratory, and will be electronically guarded. This site museum will be unique. It will be small, but capable of housing artefacts that tell the story of the history of Saqqara throughout the Pharaonic period. It will also have a special room to honour Jean-Philippe Lauer, who dedicated his life to the restoration of the Djoser pyramid complex. This will be known as the Lauer Library, and will house his books, plans, notebooks, and his famous hat.

The site of Kom Ombo is a regular stop for tourists, especially those taking Nile cruises. This small temple was dedicated to the crocodile god, Sobek, and features exquisite reliefs, including a unique carving of a set of medical instruments. Sobek was the principal god of this region of Upper Egypt, and the temple also houses many crocodile mummies. Our site management programme for Kom Ombo includes a new museum, a new visitors' centre, and conservation laboratories. Visitors will use the Pharaonic entrance to the temple, and a fence will delineate the site. The site museum will provide guidance to visitors and educate them about the temple and the surrounding area, and will house the crocodile mummies and other interesting artefacts from local excavations.

The Bahariya Oasis in the Western Desert has been the site of a number of major discoveries over the past decade. The most famous of these discoveries is the Valley of the Golden Mummies, an enormous cemetery full of family sepulchres dating from the Graeco-Roman era. We have excavated only a fraction of this site, but have made remarkable finds, including several hundred mummies adorned with plastered and gilded



3. The Temple of Sobek and Horus at Kom Ombo, Greco-Roman period.

masks. In the capital of the oasis, el-Bawiti, we are currently carrying out excavations in an area known as Sheikh Soby. This is the location of a group of 26th Dynasty tombs belonging to the governor of the oasis and his family. There are a number of other important sites in Bahariya, including a temple dedicated to the god Bes, a temple to honour Alexander the Great, the tomb of a high official from the Eighteenth Dynasty, the tombs of merchants from the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, and the temple of Ain el-Muftella. The Bahariya site museum will contain mummies and other artefacts from the excavation of these sites.

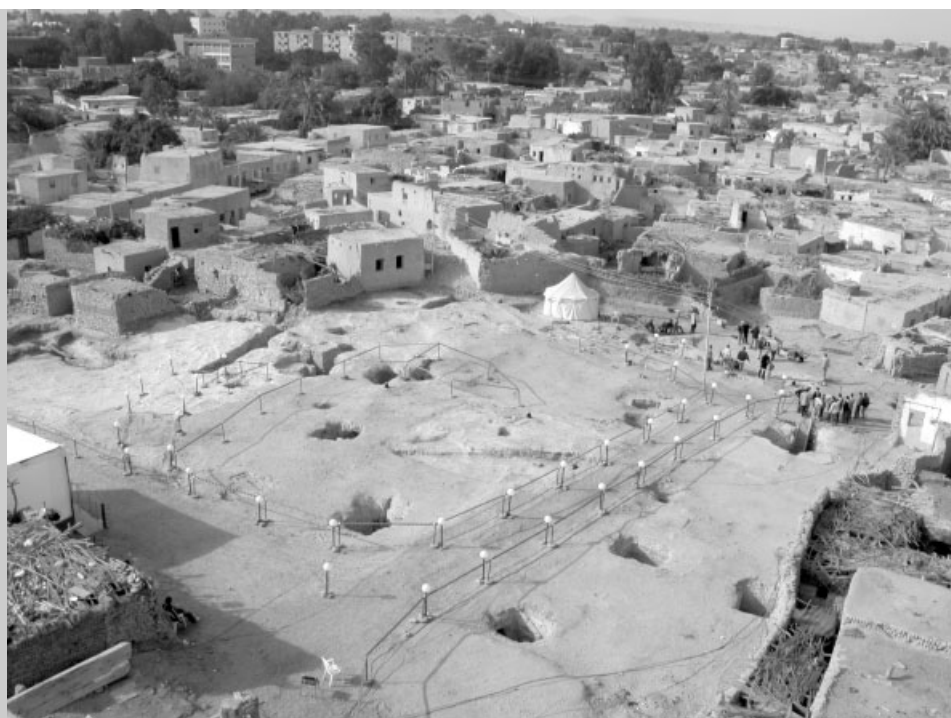
We are also planning to build site museums in Siwa, another oasis in the Western

Desert, best known for its oracle to the god Amun; the Delta site of Tell-Basta, capital city of Egypt for part of the Third Intermediate Period; and Kom el-Shokafa, Alexandria.

Specialized museums

Specialized museums will focus on some aspects of the history and cultures of Egyptian civilization. For example, we are in the process of building a museum on the east bank of the Nile at El-Minia in Middle Egypt. Shaped like a pyramid, it was designed more than twenty-five years ago by the Hildesheim Museum under the late Dr Arne Eggebrecht, who waited for years for this museum to be built. Now we are making his dream come true. We have solved all the problems that previously held up the construction and have created a museum that will concentrate on the history of the city of Akhenaton, now known as Tell El Amarna. It will also highlight Akhenaton and Nefertiti and their role in the religious revolution that brought their god, the Aten, into prominence. The artefacts mainly come from Amarna and other sites where Akhenaton built temples for the worship of this god.

Another specialized museum currently at the planning stage is the Mosaic Museum in Alexandria. This museum will be built at El Shatby, an area where excavations have revealed many mosaics. Many of the mosaics that have been discovered in Alexandria will be displayed in this museum. The Fayum Portrait Museum will be built at El-Fayum, south-west of Cairo. It will display many of the exceptional Roman period mummy portraits found in the area.



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4. Overview of Sheikh Soby, Bahariya Oasis.

At the Citadel in Cairo, a new Coin Museum will be built to display and describe the history of coins from the Graeco-Roman Period up to modern times. A Medical Museum at Kasr el-Sakkaking, also in Cairo, will display artefacts related to medicine from the Pharaonic period to the present and educate visitors about ancient Egyptian medicine and surgery. This collection will include Old Kingdom surgical instruments recently discovered by the author in the fifth Dynasty tomb of the physician Qar in Saqqara. Other planned specialized museums include the Jewellery Museum in Alexandria and the Textile Museum in Old Cairo, which will feature Egyptian textiles throughout the ages. Another important museum will be the Furniture Museum in Damietta, a town famous for making furniture,

which will display beds, chairs, chests, and the like from the Pharaonic period to today.

Another specialized museum is the Muhammad Ali Museum at Manial el-Roda, which primarily contains artefacts from the royal family. We are working on the development of this museum, creating a new scenario, new installations, modern lighting and other amenities. Similar changes are being made to the Chariot Museum in Boulaq. The modifications to these museums will allow the principal artefacts they contain to interest and inform their visitors in spectacular ways.

Two of the new specialized museum projects have already been completed. The first is

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the Mummification Museum in Luxor. This is an underground facility focused around a large, atmospherically lit gallery that introduces visitors to the history of mummification throughout the Pharaonic period. The mummies in this exhibit are displayed for educational purposes.

The other completed specialized museum recently opened to the public is the extension of the Luxor Museum. This was already one of the most modern museums in the country, with clean, uncluttered displays. We now have a visitors' centre with a film produced by the National Geographic Society to introduce the museum to the public. I would like to present here the scenario of this museum as an example of our new museums and the strategy we are adopting for the permanent collections in regional specialized museums.

The main galleries in the new wing are devoted to an exhibition on the military in the New Kingdom, called 'The Army in the Golden Age'. There are about one hundred masterpieces on display here, transferred from the Cairo Museum, other museums, and storerooms around the country. The new exhibition is designed to complement the original interior of the museum. The space is dramatically lit, and the exhibit is clearly labelled. Two specially designed rooms hold the mummies of Ahmose I, founder of the New Kingdom (c. 1550 BC to 1081 BC), and a king believed to be Ramses I, the first king of the 19th Dynasty (a gift from the Michael C. Carlos Museum in Atlanta, Georgia, USA). Glass cases set into the wall between the rooms hold some of the treasures from the burial of Ahhotep, mother of Kamose and Ahmose: three golden flies and the

ceremonial dagger and axe that belonged to Ahmose.

Another highlight of this exhibition is a seated statue of the great warrior king, Tuthmosis III, found at Deir el-Bahri by the Polish Expedition several decades ago. This statue was badly restored after it was originally found and left in storage on the west bank; it was recently reconstructed by a talented Egyptian conservator. Other important pieces are a hunting chariot from the tomb of Tutankhamun, a group of spectacularly displayed bows and arrows, a colossal alabaster statue of Seti I (son of Ramses I and father of Ramses II), a statue of Nebre, commander of the western border under Ramses II, and the crystalline limestone head of Nakhtmin (an army commander and son of a king).

A ramp leads from the lower galleries to the upper level. At the top of the ramp, the visitor is confronted with three images of Sekhmet, lioness-headed goddess of war. The opposite wall is devoted to an imposing statue of the last great king of the New Kingdom, Ramses III. Part of this was found in the 1930s; more pieces were discovered recently, and the statue was reconstructed for this new exhibit.

The remainder of the upper level is dedicated to an exhibition on technology, art, and writing. There is a statue of May, an architect under Ramses II and Merneptah; a small purple porphyry statuette of Senenmut, the favoured architect and steward of Hatshepsut; and a figure of Ramessunakht, a high priest of Amun during the 20th Dynasty, depicted as a scribe. The cases here contain architect's tools, pigments, palettes, and

objects relating to bronze and faience working. A short film shows the process of making papyrus, and also children learning at a school for scribes.

A ramp then leads the visitor down and out of the exhibit, ending in front of a final niche which will be devoted to new findings from the Luxor area. The first object to grace this display is a master's board, found recently by the Spanish Mission to Dra Abu Naga. This fragmentary board is made of wood covered with stucco, and bears artists' sketches along with three copies of an ancient text, written once by a teacher and twice by a student.

In addition to the exhibition halls, the Luxor Museum now has a museum library, a cafeteria, and a new bookstore, as well as rooms for children's education. Every visitor will see that we are entering a new era, changing our museums from storerooms to centres for culture and education.

Greek and Roman, Coptic and Islamic museums

These three important periods in our history tend to be neglected by the public. The reason for this neglect is that the museums dedicated to these periods have traditionally had uninteresting displays, poor lighting and a lack of available parking. These museums are closed for renovation, so that they can be completely refurbished, with new lighting, new scenarios, libraries, educational facilities, and other amenities for visitors. The new design for the Greek and Roman Museum in Alexandria has one floor set aside for a library, administration offices, and conservation laboratories. The museum will concentrate on showing the artefacts in a new, pleasing, and more

understandable way. We are keeping the façade of the building but renovating the interior completely.

A master plan provides for special treatment of the Islamic period. The existing Islamic Museum in Cairo will be dedicated to the history of Islamic architecture. It is currently closed for renovations. The new design was carried out by an Egyptian architect and a French designer, whose salary was provided by the Aga Khan Foundation as a contribution to the restoration of the museum.

A second Islamic museum is being built at the Citadel. This museum will be devoted to Islamic art. Both museums are scheduled to open in mid 2005 in conjunction with the centennial of the Greek and Roman Museum in Alexandria. The Coptic Museum in Cairo is now under renovation, with a new scenario and displays. Paintings, which are poorly attached to the walls of the museum, are being moved and restored. The work will take one year, and the museum will be re-opened in October 2005. We are planning celebrations to mark the re-opening of each of these museums.

The great Cairo museums

There will be three principal museums in Cairo that will be addressed by our new programme: the Grand Museum of Egypt, to be built near the Pyramids, the National Civilization Museum at Fustat and the existing Egyptian Museum in Tahrir Square. Our philosophy is that each museum will have its own character, something special that will attract people. The main feature of the new Grand

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Museum near the Giza pyramids will be the 5,000 artefacts from the tomb of Tutankhamun but its collections will be extensive. The Civilization Museum in Fustat will depict the entire historical landscape of Egypt and will also house the royal mummies. The Egyptian Museum will display the history of art in the Pharaonic period and will also have exhibitions dedicated to the history of Egyptology.

The Grand Museum, scheduled to be completed in 2009, will illustrate the historical, cultural and territorial evolution of Pharaonic Egypt, as documented by archaeological discoveries and historical and epigraphic sources. The collections and individual objects will be used as instruments to illustrate the development of the ancient civilization in its various aspects. Although the main discourse of the exhibitions will not be art history in the traditional sense, objects will still be displayed in ways that highlight their aesthetic value. In addition, the items will be accompanied by related materials such as photographs, drawings, and maps, which will enhance their informational value.

The museum will be organized around five themes: The Land of Egypt, which will focus on the geography and landscape of the country; Kingship and the State, which will focus on the activities and responsibilities of the king, his family, and his highest officials; Man, Society, and Work, depicting the lives of ancient Egyptians; Religion, dealing with gods, their state and folk cults and also including mortuary beliefs; and Culture, Scribes and Knowledge. These themes will be arranged in parallel galleries and will be linked through hypertextual nodes, such as key objects

and special exhibitions. Tours of varying lengths and intensities will be available to visitors.

The National Museum of Egyptian Civilization is being built at Fustat, facing Old Cairo and the Pyramids. This museum will introduce visitors to the sweep of Egyptian history, from the prehistoric period up to the time of Muhammad Ali. Like the Grand Museum, the Fustat Museum will display its artefacts thematically. The Nile, writing, crafts, trades, the arts, agriculture, government, society, beliefs and folklore have already been identified as themes of exhibitions.

The Egyptian Museum in Tahrir Square will be dedicated to the history of Pharaonic art. A major renovation of this museum is planned, with newly designed galleries offering facilities for modern displays. The front doors will be used only for entry, and visitors will exit through a new wing to be constructed on the west side of the museum. There will be two additional, underground floors in this wing, where a cafeteria, bookshop, administration offices and a children's museum will be housed. Galleries devoted to the history of Egyptology will feature stories and displays of the major discoveries of Pharaonic monuments.

Department of Cultural Development

A vital component of the new Egyptian museums is education. A new department dedicated to fostering greater awareness among Egyptians of their ancient past has been opened within the SCA, in liaison with the office of the Secretary General. By educating the public, we both encourage people

to assist us in protecting and understanding the past and help them to acquire skills for the future. A number of significant educational and cultural initiatives have been launched from this office.

Museum Schools

In 2002, the Cairo Museum School for Adults was opened, offering classes on ancient Egypt. Classes are given in Arabic three times a week in two-hour sessions. Students are given a general grounding in various Egyptological subjects, including language, religion, history, and literature, and graduates are prepared to attend the School of Higher Education. The activities of the Cairo Museum School include visits to the museum itself and to archaeological sites. Part of the tuition goes towards providing each student with a free pass to museums and archaeological sites countrywide. This school is currently functioning at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo; the same concept will soon be implemented in other museums around the country.

The School of Higher Education is an advanced school for graduates, which is part of the Cairo Museum School for Adults. Based at the SCA building in Zamalek, this six-month programme focuses on a specific topic each year (last year was art, this year will be architecture). Classes meet three times a week; in addition, there is a practical session twice a month in which the classes travel to archaeological sites or museums, accompanied by professors or specialized archaeologists.

The Cairo Museum School for Children offers school-age children the opportunity to learn about ancient Egypt. During the summer, we

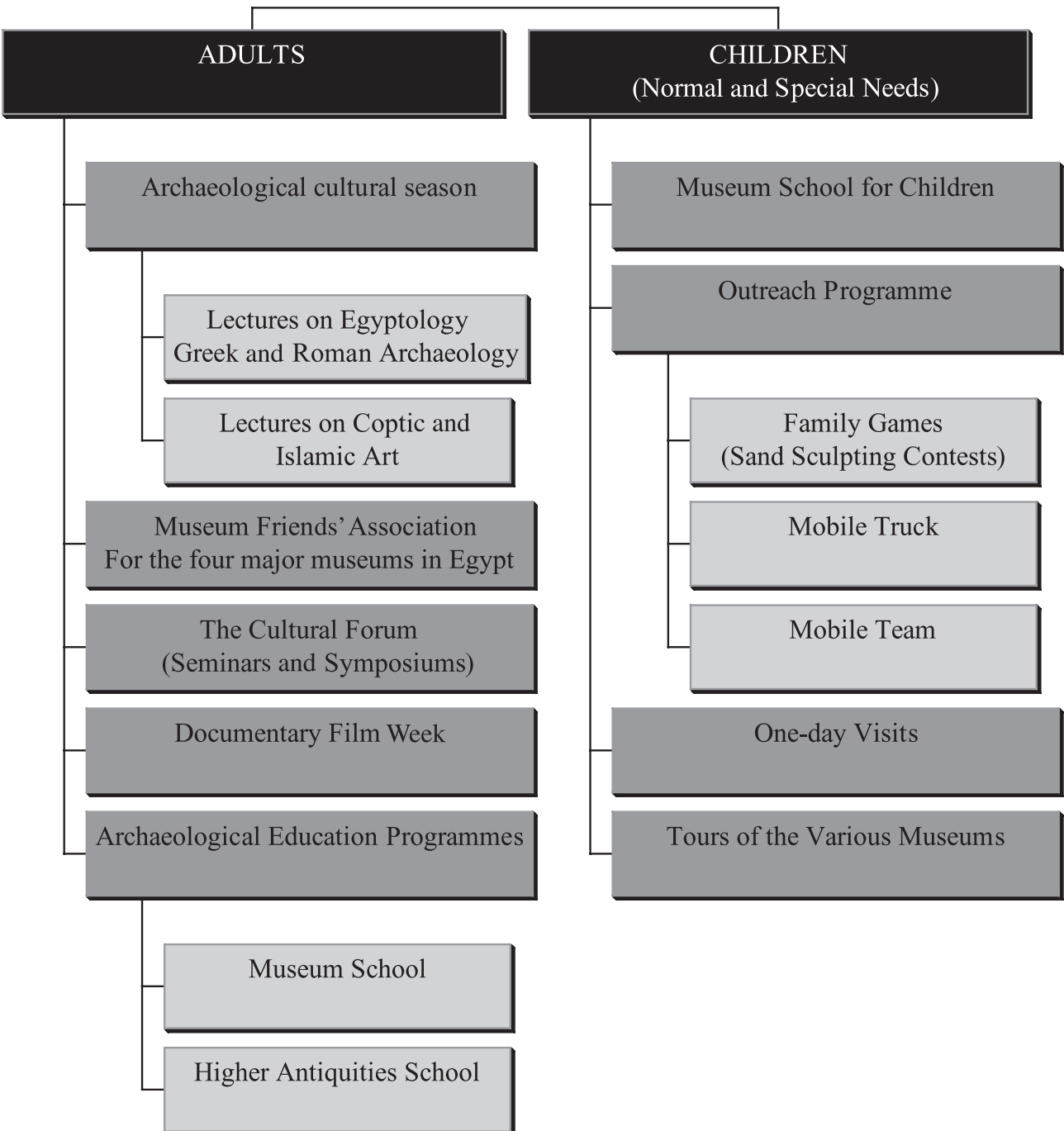
have a special tent set up next to the museum to be used as a workshop where children can learn to draw and sculpt statues. Last summer, the children made a series of plaster dioramas depicting ancient temples and tombs as they would have looked in ancient times. These are lively, colourful scenes, filled with details such as workmen dragging stones or kings visiting their monuments.

Although the Cairo Museum is currently the only museum with a fully functioning school, a number of museums around the country will soon be launching new educational programmes. Here are some examples: the Sharqqiyah museum in the Delta will focus on the customs and heritage of modern Egypt. Workshops will be offered to children to help them understand the material presented in the museum. Here, they will have the opportunity, for example, to make clay statues and write stories and reports about the objects in the museum. The same programme will develop the Museum of San el-Haghar, an archaeological museum in Sharqqiyah that illustrates the history of the region through statues, coffins and other artefacts that have come from excavations in the area.

The archaeological museum in Ismailaya organizes a workshop where children make their own versions of the costumes of Greek kings and Roman emperors. Another workshop enables children to learn about an ancient king of their choice, and another introduces them to the hieroglyphic script.

The Beni Suef Museum is a regional archaeological museum whose collections range

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Cultural Development Strategy



5. Design for the Museum of San el-Haghar.

from prehistory up to the time of Muhammad Ali. Workshops here focus on ways of understanding the artefacts and history of Egypt through activities such as making an Egyptian calendar, making a pyramid, and learning some hieroglyphs.

The workshops of the archaeological museum in Minia include activities to help children understand archaeological artefacts such as coins and mosaics, drawings and sculptures, masks, and canopic jars. Visits to the site of the Beni Hassan tombs help children to learn about daily life, sports and other activities during the time of the Pharaohs.

The Malawi Archaeological Museum and the Greek and Roman Museum in Alexandria offer workshops designed to teach children the history

of Egypt during the Greek and Roman periods. They teach hieroglyphs and Greek, but also how to make pottery, draw on glass and make models of ships, temples and houses. There is also a workshop for the blind.

Museum Friends' Associations

We are beginning to organize a number of Museum Friends' Associations, following models in place at various museums around the world, such as the Louvre in Paris and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The principal goal of these networks is to use the resources of civil society to help Egyptian museums reach their full potential. For example, the Museum Friends' Associations will raise money for scholarships to train curators and antiquities staff, enabling them to take courses

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in languages, computers, public relations, and the like. Thus far, the Friends of the Egyptian Museum has been established; it is chaired by the famous actor, Nour al-Sherief.

Cultural events

Every month we arrange a Cultural Forum on a specific topic. At these gatherings prominent Egyptians and specialists in the field of Egyptology and related disciplines discuss the archaeological problems facing Egypt and its fellow Arab nations. In order to draw large and attentive audiences to these events, the seminar is followed by a cultural or musical performance by a famous artist. The goal of these forums is to open up new channels between the government and civil society, and to provide a place where views can be exchanged and new initiatives can be created to address crucial issues.

The Archaeological Cultural Season offers a series of lectures in English and Arabic by distinguished specialists in Egyptology, Greek and Roman archaeology, and Islamic archaeology. These lectures, given at the rate of two or three a month over the course of three months, highlight major archaeological discoveries and groundbreaking research in these fields.

During the documentary Film Week a selection of the latest documentaries, and other important films about archaeology in Egypt, are shown free of charge to the public. This festival takes place twice a year, first in Cairo and then in another governorate.

The SCA is mounting a number of mobile exhibitions that will travel around the country,

giving the provincial population an opportunity to see entertaining and educational displays. The content of these exhibitions ranges from ancient artefacts to rare archival photographs. These exhibitions are intended to raise awareness of our heritage among children and adults throughout Egypt. Another important initiative is a truck equipped as a museum and classroom, which will travel to rural villages around the country.

A number of other events, now at the planning stage, will raise public awareness of archaeology. For example, celebrations of the solstices will take place at the Temple of Ramses II at Abu Simbel, where the rays of the sun illuminate the inner sanctuary twice a year. The Cultural Development Office is also translating one hundred important books about archaeology into Arabic, giving access to this fundamental information to Egyptians in their native language.

We also have new programmes designed so that children and disabled people can visit various museums and participate in workshops. Two books have been published in Braille and we are working on other programmes for the blind. We are also mounting an exhibition of replicas that will be shown, accompanied by a programme of lectures, at universities, schools, and clubs.

Conclusion

The museums of Egypt are moving into a new era. The current facilities are being redesigned and upgraded. New displays and visitor amenities will transform our old museums into key educational institutions. At the same time, new museums, planned along modern museological lines, are

being built and will become part of this system. Tourists come to Egypt and stay for a short time and generally visit one museum. In this new era of museums, one of our principal goals will be to encourage tourists to visit many of these new museums, which will enormously enhance their experience of Egypt. Through our cultural development programmes we are reaching out to native Egyptians, offering many new ways and

opportunities to learn about their past, and providing them with new hope and new skills for the future. All these activities strengthen the value of our museums as cultural and educational platforms, and help build our nation. We are working to enhance both the aesthetic and informational value of our museums, offering unforgettable experiences to both foreign tourists and Egyptian visitors.

| Construction and renovation programme of museums

LIST OF EGYPTIAN MUSEUMS

Name	Location	Museum theme or purpose	Construction status	Planned completion date
Siwa Site Museum	Siwa Oasis, Western Desert	The archaeology of Siwa	Under architectural development	2006
Kom el-Shokafa Site Museum	Alexandria	The archaeology of Alexandria	Under architectural development	2006
Imhotep Museum	Saqqara	Site museum for Saqqara	Objects being chosen	January 2005
The Document Museum of Abdeen	Cairo	The royal documents of the Abdeen Palace		2005
Sharm el-Sheikh Museum	Sharm el-Sheikh, Red Sea	Pharaonic culture	Beginning second stage	First stage in 2004
El-Arish Museum	El-Arish, Sinai	Civilization of the area from prehistory to today	Beginning second stage	First stage 2004
The National Museum of el-Swiss	El-Swiss	Civilization of the area	Beginning second stage	First stage completed 2004
The Ikhenaton Museum	Minia, Middle Egypt	The Amarna Period		First stage February 2006
The Museum of Islamic Art	The Citadel, Cairo	Islamic art		May 2005
Museum of Islamic Architecture	Babel Khalek, Cairo	Islamic architecture		May 2005

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CONTINUED

Name	Location	Museum theme or purpose	Construction status	Planned completion date
The Coptic Museum	Old Cairo	Coptic art and architecture		March 2005
The National Museum of Rashied	Rashied	Civilization of Egypt from prehistory to today		February 2005
The Royal Jewellery Museum	Alexandria	The jewels of Muhammad Ali		June 2005
Kafr el-Sheikh Civilization Museum	Khafr el-Sheikh	Civilization of Egypt from prehistory to today		December 2005
The Chariot Museum	Boulaq, Cairo	the chariots of Muhammad Ali		December 2005
The Harghada National Museum	Harghada	History of the area		Starting in December 2004
The Sohag National Museum	Sohag, northern Upper Egypt	History of the area		Starting in October 2004
Port Said National Museum	Port Said	History	In progress	
The Greek and Roman Museum	Alexandria	Art and architecture of the Graeco-Roman Period		Started in November 2004
Site Museum of Sobek	Kom Ombo			Completion for December 2004
National Museum of Egypt	Fustat, Cairo	Civilization of Egypt from prehistory to today		2007
The Grand Museum of Egypt	Giza, Cairo	Pharaonic art, architecture, and culture		2009
The Egyptian Museum, Cairo	Tahrir Square, Cairo	Pharaonic art		Development beginning 2006
The Mummification Museum	Luxor	Mummification		Completed and open to the public
The Luxor Museum	Luxor	The glory of Thebes		Completed and open
Site Museum of Merenptah	West bank, Luxor	Artefacts from excavations at the mortuary temple of Merenptah		Completed and open
The Nubia Museum	Aswan	Archaeology of the Aswan area	Labels to be redone	Completed and open

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Name	Location	Museum theme or purpose	Construction status	Planned completion date
The Civilization Museum of Alexandria	Alexandria	The history of Alexandria throughout the ages		Completed and open
Aswan National Museum	Aswan	History		Starting in January 2005
The Library of Alexandria	Alexandria	The history of the library and of Alexandria in the Greco-Roman era		Completed and open
The Qena Civilization Museum	Qena	Civilization of Qena from prehistory to today		Starting in December 2004
The Fayoum Portrait Museum	Fayoum	Mummy portraits from the Graeco-Roman period.		Starting in December 2004
The Agricultural Museum	Cairo	Agriculture in Pharaonic times		Open

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