

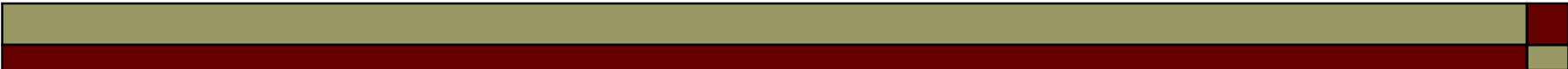
Week 4

History of collecting and museums

Dr. Katharina Zinn

AHAN7030

Exhibiting the Past: Museums,
Collections and Heritage



Preserving The Past

□ Humans

- have a long history of preserving artefacts of the past.
- Collecting things is a basic need!

Book Label of Amenhotep III



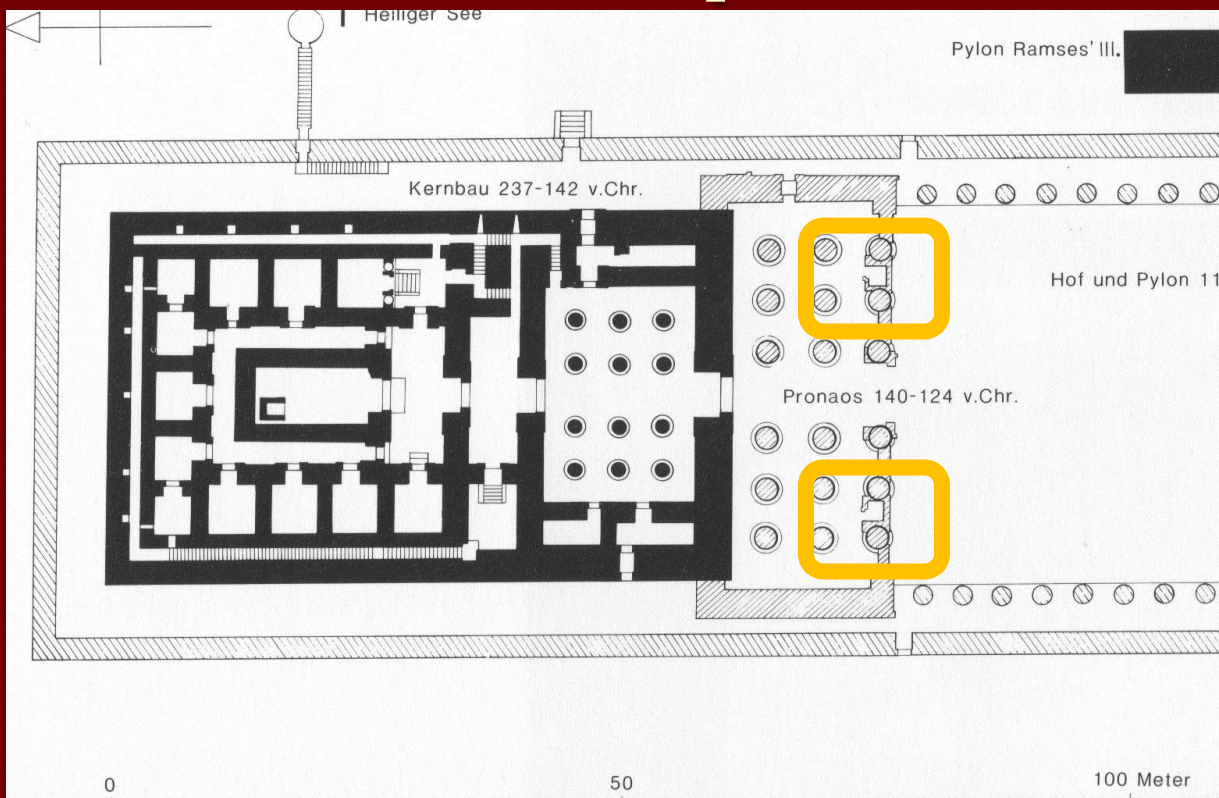
Book Label of Amenhotep III



- Egypt, Thebes, 14th cent. BC
- Glazed composition book-label of Amenhotep III and Queen Tiye
- "Beloved of Ptah, the king of the Two Lands, the good god Amenhotep III, may he be given life; the wife of the king, Tiye, may she live"; "the book of the moringa tree."
- **Dimensions**
Length: 6.3 centimetres
Width: 3.8 centimetres

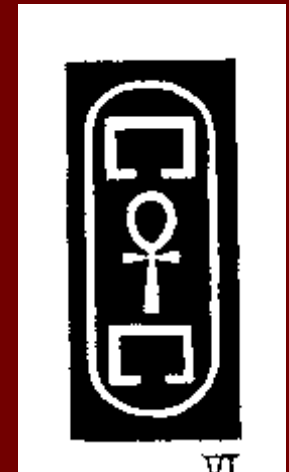
Edfu: Library (*pr-md3.t*)

pr-md3.t

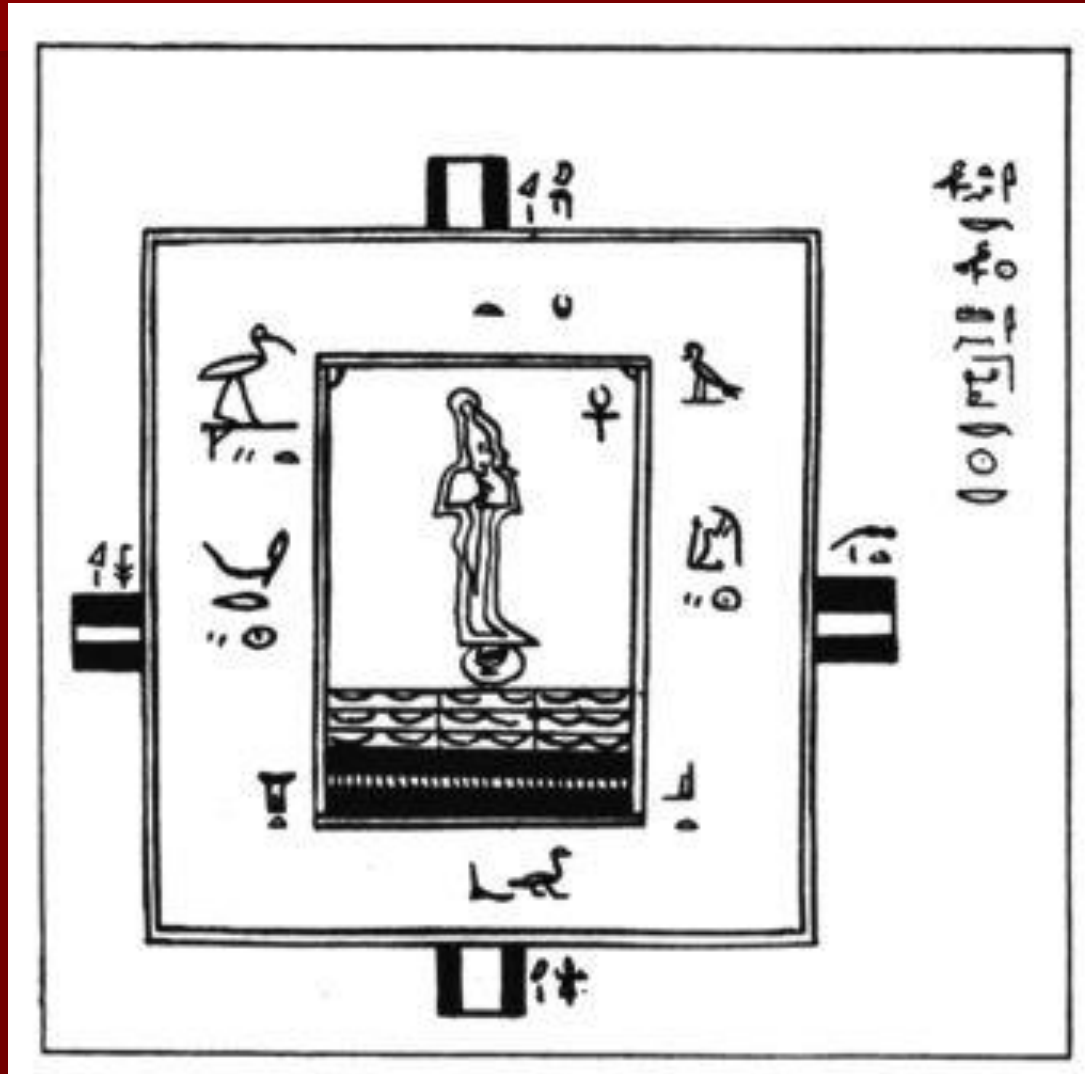


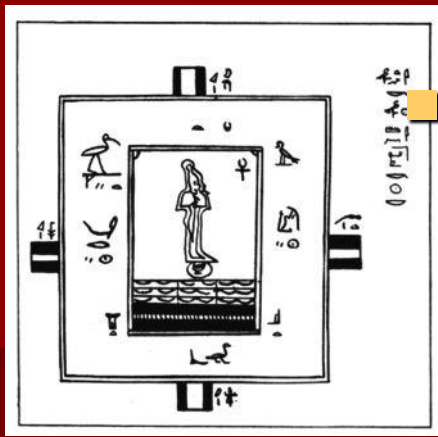
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Amarna: House of Life (*pr-^ḥnḥ*)

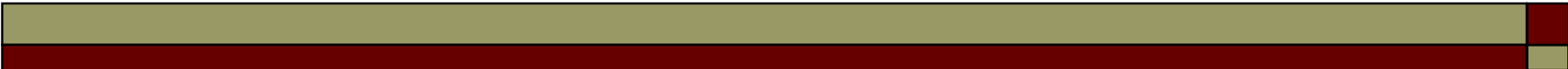


The house of life in Pap. Salt 825





There are four mansions of life at Abydos, (each) is built four stories high and is internally waistcoated with palm wood. There are four mansions of life, Osiris is master thereof. The four houses are Isis, Nephthys, Seb and Nu. Isis is placed in one, Nephthys in another, Horus in one, Tahuti in another, at the four angles: Seb is above, Nu is below, The four outer walls are of stone. It has two stories, its foundation is sand, its exterior is jasper, one is placed to the South, another to the North, another to the West, another to the East. It is very hidden, unknown, invisible, nothing save the solar disk sees it. It escapes men that go there. The Sun's librarians, the Treasure Scribes are within. pSalt 825

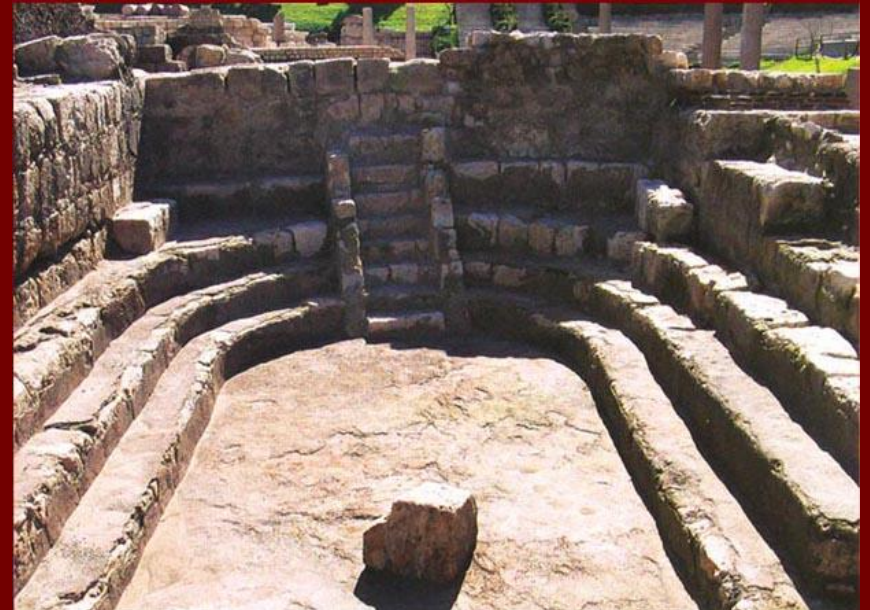


Preserving The Past

- ❑ The ancient Greeks coined the term *mouseion* when they first built a temple to "the Muses," spritely goddesses who kept watch over the arts and sciences.
- ❑ The Greeks filled their temples with both sculpture and scholars. The tradition was copied in the kingly treasure houses that followed — spoils of war were displayed in the halls of royal palaces and the cages of royal zoos.

Museion in Alexandria

- Museion as place for the muses → becomes a place of memory and education
- 2007: lecture theatres discovered → thought to have belonged to Museion



Museion in Alexandria

- ❑ founded at Alexandria by Ptolemy I (305-285 BC)
- ❑ Mouseion at Alexandria, Musaeum or Μουσεῖον τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας
- ❑ not a museum as in modern terms but a learning institution (brought together some of the most brilliant scholars of the Hellenistic world): study of anatomy and mathematics (Euclid's geometry), astronomical observation and studies in engineering
- ❑ Location of the Library of Alexandria: Hellenistic scholars edited major works of Greek literary canon

Medieval Treasure Chambers



Medieval Treasure Chambers

- ❑ Medieval collections of antiquities
- ❑ Belonging to secular rulers and ecclesiastical orders
 - Relic collections → relics gained in addition to religious and ritualistic purpose a collective quality
- ❑ Treasures to legitimise rule and demonstrate wealth, not museums in the modern sense
- ❑ Sense for aesthetic

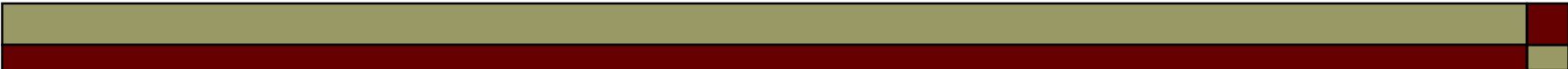


Cabinet of curiosities

- ❑ Encyclopaedic collections in Renaissance (mainly 16th / 17th cent.) Europe of all types of objects
- ❑ Called **Cabinet of Wonder**, and in German **Kunstkammer** ("art-room") or **Wunderkammer** ("wonder-room")
- ❑ Combined objects of natural history, geology, ethnography, archaeology, religious or historical relics, works of art (including cabinet paintings), antiquities and fakes of all kind

Ferrante Imperato's *Dell'Historia Naturale* (Naples 1599)

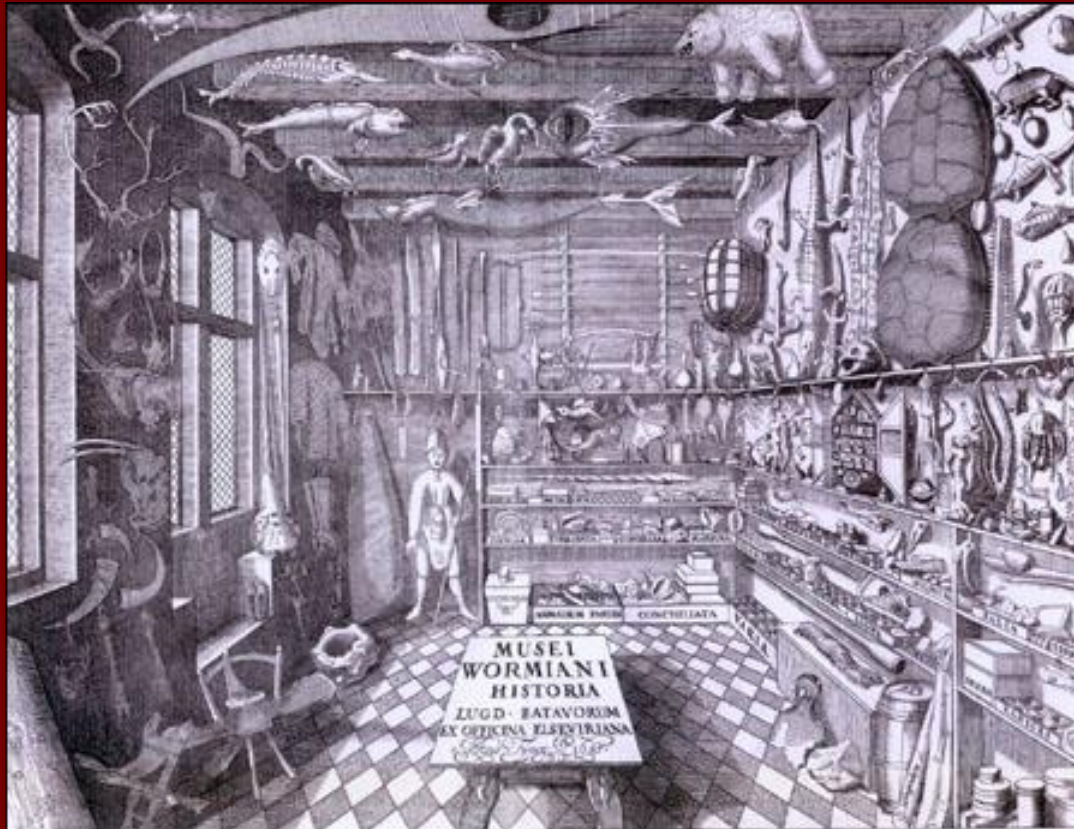




Cabinet of curiosities (Kunstkammer)

- ❑ Kunstkammer = regarded as microcosm / theatre of the world → memory theatre, were precursors to museums
- ❑ conveyed symbolically patron's control of world through indoor, microscopic reproduction
- ❑ Charles I of England used his *Kunstkabinett* as a form of propaganda
- ❑ most famous and best documented cabinets = of European rulers and aristocrats
- ❑ But also important: Kunstkammer of members of the merchant class and practitioners of science also formed collections

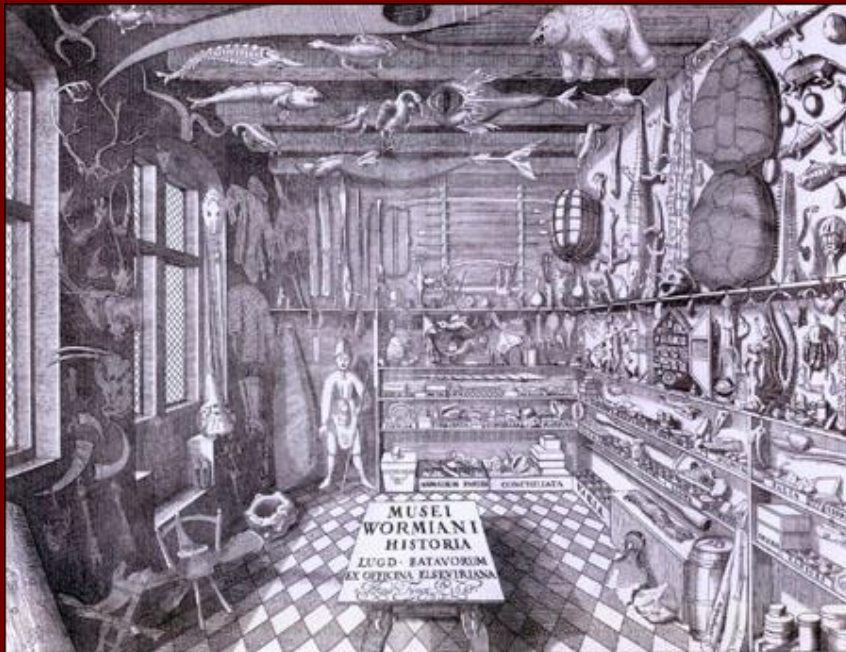
Kunstkammer of Ole Worm (1588-1654) – professor of medicine



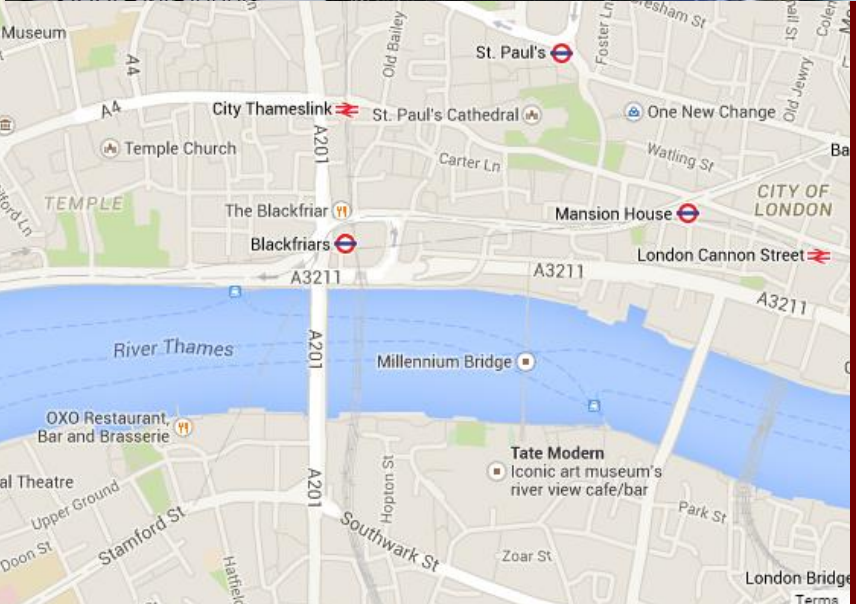
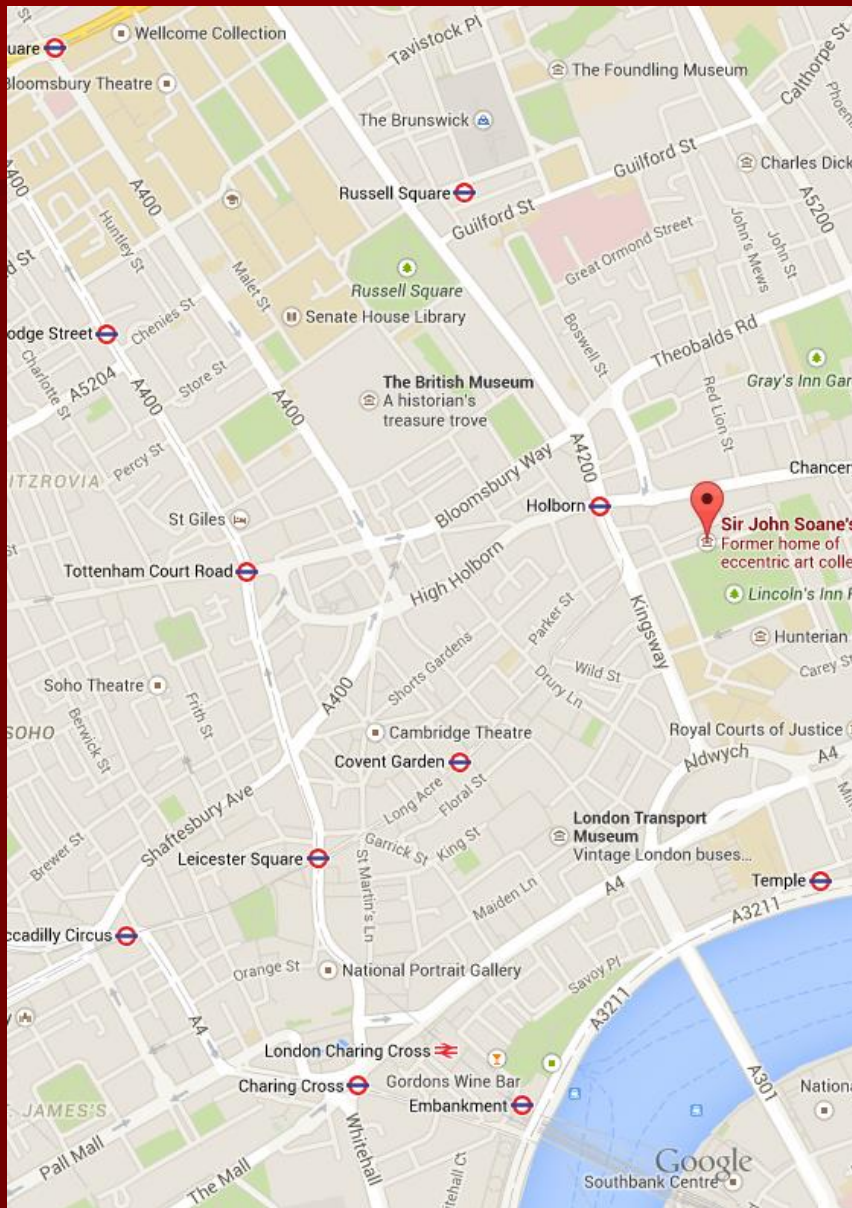
- Believed, that learning comes about through the observation of nature - "through empiricism and experiment" - and not just through the study of texts.

assembled a museum in his Copenhagen home: filled with ethnographic curiosities, skulls, stuffed animals, and the latest in optical and experimental devices

We know what the museum looked like from the detailed frontispiece in the 1655 catalogue called "Worm's Museum, or the History of Very Rare Things, Natural and Artificial, Domestic and Exotic, Which Are Stored in the Author's House in Copenhagen."



Sir John Soane's Museum



Sir John Soane's Museum



- Born in 1753, died in 1837
- son of a bricklayer
- English architect, specialised in Neo-Classical style
- professor of architecture at Royal Academy, official architect to the Office of Works
- received a knighthood in 1831
- designed 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields as his home + setting for his antiquities and works of art
- established the house as a museum by Act of Parliament (1833) requiring that his romantic and poetic interiors be kept as they were at the time of his death



SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM

HOME | YOUR VISIT | THE MUSEUM | EDUCATION | COLLECT



The house and Museum of the architect Sir John Soane, R.A.

Born in 1753, the son of a bricklayer, Soane died in 1837 after a long and distinguished career. He designed 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields as his home and as a setting for his antiquities and works of art. After his wife's death he lived here alone, constantly adding to and rearranging his collections. He established the house as a museum by Act of Parliament (1833) requiring that his romantic and poetic interiors be kept as they were at the time of his death.

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showing 1-3 of 21 items

GUIDED TOURS

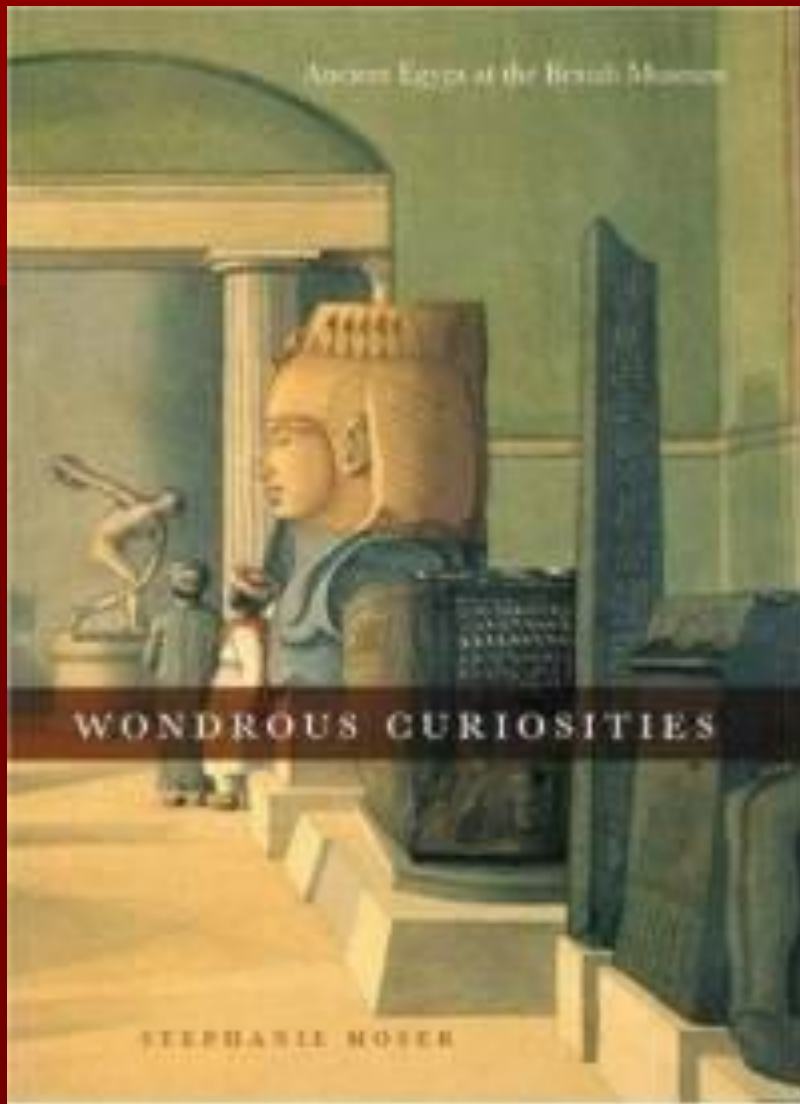
OUTS

SOANE SHOP

Wondrous curiosities



- American showman P.T. Barnum (left) and Commodore Nutt, pictured circa 1862. Nutt was "exhibited" at Barnum's American Museum in New York, which Barnum claimed attracted 15,000 visitors per day.



- Case Study:
- **Ancient Egypt at the British Museum**

Follow up reading

- ❑ Lee, Paula Young: The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-Century France. In: The Art Bulletin 79(1997)3, pp. 385-412
- ❑ URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3046259>