The Revival of the Egyptian Museum
Transforming Cairo’s landmark at Tahrir Square
The Revival of the Egyptian Museum Initiative is done through collaborative efforts: between private and public, between institutions, experts and volunteers, Egyptians and foreigners. It is in our best interest that we remain attentive to promoting this synchronicity among all concerned.

... Dr Mounir Neamatalla, Founder of EQI
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  This initiative would not be made possible without the assistance of these entities and individuals. A special thanks to their continued efforts.
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A special thanks to their continued efforts.

Acknowledgements

The landmark Revival of the Egyptian Museum Initiative was made possible thanks to the continued technical and administrative assistance provided by the Ministry of Antiquities of Egypt and the Supreme Council of Antiquities. It is the result of the foresight and generous financial support of several esteemed institutions and individuals, notably the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany through the German Embassy in Egypt, which funded the initiative’s initial research, studies, conceptual development and field verification works. Thanks are also due to Dr Raouf Ghabbour and the late Mrs Ola Ghabbour for their generous sponsorship of the revival of Skylight Hall 45; to Eng. Salah Diab for the sponsorship of Hall 40; to the Suez Cement Company for the sponsorship of Hall 30; and last but not least, to SC Exhibitions for the sponsorship of Skylight Hall 35 and the provision of continued management and technical support.
I am pleased to present the Revival of the Egyptian Museum Initiative Yearbook for 2014. The Ministry of Antiquities has been implementing this initiative in collaboration with Environmental Quality International (EQI) since May 2012. The decision to restore the museum to its original state, as designed by the internationally acclaimed French architect Marcel Dourgnon in the late 19th century, has proven to be effective, particularly from a heritage conservation vantage point.

Since its inception, the Revival Initiative has been participatory, not only on the operational level, but also in the envisioning and decision-making process. The strategy adopted to achieve sustainability in implementing and financing the works emphasises the cooperation between the private and public sectors. The initiative includes interventions in architectural, restoration, maintenance and conservation activities and is also designed to cover the entire Tahrir area and its environs. The overarching goal of the initiative is to enhance not only Cairo’s position as a cultural travel destination, but that of all of Egypt. The revival of the home that houses some of the world’s most valued treasures is one of our Ministry’s priority contributions towards the achievement of this goal.

A multi-pronged strategy was adopted to facilitate the implementation of the initiative. It consists of: 1) advancing architectural restoration works for the rehabilitation of the museum building by employing fresh university graduates with the requisite skills and providing them with the necessary supervision, training and guidance; 2) providing technical and managerial training for the museum staff to preserve the monuments and enhance the visitation experience; and 3) implementing educational and awareness activities to engage the local community.

Where buildings are concerned, our approach to the physical works is guided by four basic principles: 1) sound environmental management and energy conservation practices; 2) prevention as a means for improved conservation of the monuments; 3) implementation of labour intensive works; and 4) maximisation of the impact of on-the-job training of the young university graduates engaged in the restoration works. The physical works currently underway are limited to the restoration of walls, floorings and ceiling skylights in four halls situated in the east wing of the Tutankhamun Gallery. By the end of 2016, we plan to complete not only the restoration of the entire east and north wings of the gallery, but also to address the pressing issues of proper lighting, clean-up and redisplay of some of the world’s most precious artefacts.

To help develop the community, a series of programmes and events engaging the museum staff will be implemented. Museum tours, lectures, art/craft/educational workshops and public meetings will periodically be organised in the museum grounds to reinforce the relationship between the museum, its surrounding community and visitors.

As we progress in the implementation of this landmark initiative, the Ministry of Antiquities is intent on improving the experience of every traveller coming to Egypt to visit the Egyptian Museum. It also endeavours to make a major contribution to the understanding and appreciation of Egypt’s hospitable and inclusive cultural heritage. As such, the ultimate success of this seven year initiative may be measured by the extent to which it contributes to the steadfast revival of Egypt’s multi-cultural identity and the commitment of its people to its renaissance.

Sincerely yours,

Prof. Dr Mamdouh Eldamaty
Minister of Antiquities
Yet, despite its place among the most important museums in the world, the Egyptian Museum has suffered significant deterioration over several decades due to neglect, inadequate maintenance and unfortunate circumstances. Many factors have led to this, from Cairo’s heavy vehicular traffic and pollution problems, to deficiencies in the management of the museum grounds and resources. Even the interior of the museum is ailing, as the exhibition galleries have been crammed with thousands of artefacts to accommodate an ever-growing number of new discoveries, resulting in a severe shortage of display space. Many of the objects on display are now in urgent need of conservation, a problem that is compounded by the lack of environmental monitoring and security systems.

The Ministry of Antiquities of Egypt has endeavoured to address these critical challenges by launching an ambitious programme for the construction of new museums across the country, which will provide new exhibition areas for thousands of invaluable artefacts in accordance with modern museum standards, as set by the International Council of Museums. However, emptying the Egyptian Museum of its bursting contents raises the question as to the future of this architectural jewel, home to a world-class cultural heritage since 1902, and the heart of Cairo’s pulsing downtown area.

The Egyptian Museum is quite literally the home of all of Egypt’s ancestors and the archive of our life as we know it. The building itself, the walls that hold all this history, is very special. Designed by the brilliant Marcel Dourgnon, who won the international competition held in search of worldwide architectural talent by Khedive Abbas, the building was a purpose-built museum. Many of the world’s best museums today were not, in fact, built for that purpose at all, such as the Louvre for example, which makes this building even more architecturally exciting. Bringing it back to its

**EGYPT’S TREASURY**

**WHERE HISTORY REMAINS**
The way the work is displayed is basically a narrative; everything from the walls and the displays to the labels should tell the story of the work and enhance the viewing experience. Over the years, this story has become fragmented and deteriorated. Reviving this story will help the works shine.

... Sanaa Fouad, Egyptian Museum
original state means reclaiming the country’s heritage and its glory.

In the words of Mariette, a French conservator of Egyptian monuments, and later founding father and first Director of the Egyptian Museum: “I knew I would die or go mad if I did not return to Egypt immediately.” This was said upon his departure from his first visit, echoing the thoughts of many of our modern-day tourists. The Revival of the Egyptian Museum Initiative serves to keep that sentiment alive. Today, Mariette’s body lies near the artefacts he struggled all his life to collect, protect and place on display: he rests beneath his mausoleum and bronze statue in the garden of the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir Square, with the Revival Initiative commemoration stone in his full view.

The Revival of the Egyptian Museum Initiative is dedicated to defining the future role of the Egyptian Museum within the local and international museum landscape and giving it the credit it has been long overdue. This initiative was instigated in May 2012, with the aim of studying the museum’s existing conditions and developing a practicable plan for its full rehabilitation. The initiative was funded by the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Centre for International Migration and Development. It was executed by Environmental Quality International (EQI), an internationally acclaimed investment and consulting firm specialising in natural and cultural heritage conservation and sustainable development. Together, the Ministry of Antiquities and a high-calibre team of local and international architects, engineers, conservators, Egyptologists, environmentalists and botanists worked closely to define and launch the execution of the Revival Initiative. The implementation of the initiative was made possible by an exemplary public/private partnership, engaging members of the business community, research institutions and scholars, both locally and internationally.

The museum building, as it stands today, appears to have undergone significant modifications over the past decades, most of which have harmed the overall homogeneity of the building and its architecture. The Revival Initiative’s aim is to address the pressing physical needs of the Egyptian Museum and to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to present the museum as it was originally intended to be seen, so that it remains a reference destination for both national and international visitors.

To this end, the Revival Initiative team has carried out a series of physical rehabilitation works inside a limited section of the museum’s display galleries, notably in Halls 30, 35, 40 and
45, in the east wing of the Tutankhamun Gallery. This initiation zone is designed to serve as a living example for what will be museum-wide renovation and rehabilitation works in later stages, and provide a lasting testimony to the value of public-private partnerships in the conservation and revival of cultural heritage. Within this zone, sustainability issues such as preventive conservation of the museum’s priceless artefacts and the maintenance of the display galleries will be thoroughly addressed.

The studies carried out during the first phase of the Revival of the Egyptian Museum Initiative were expanded to also cover the museum’s outdoor surroundings, which have had tremendous negative impacts on the museum itself, its collection and visitation potential. In this sense, the Revival Initiative is not only about the museum building itself, but its entire grounds, as well as its surroundings. This holistic approach to the entire area aspires to raise the quality of life of the surrounding community and benefit one of Cairo’s liveliest urban centres and tourist attractions. The Egyptian Museum in Cairo should remain a cultural hub where Egyptians and tourists alike can contemplate the past, discover shared histories and reclaim their national identity in a setting that inspires and elevates consciousness. In a country at such a transitional and critical moment of its history, the Egyptian Museum can function as a place of inspiration and pride.

“The Egyptian Museum is one of the most famous museums in the world. Everyone in Germany learns about ancient Egypt in school - we learn about the technology, the culture and daily life. Therefore, every German child grows up with a love and respect for this world heritage.”

... Ramesh de Silva, Head of Culture and Education, German Embassy
Since the 23 July 1952 Revolution, the museum has been swept by a wave of neglect. Transport infrastructure projects in the area were one of many aspects that have caused lasting physical damage to the structure and led to the seemingly irreversible aesthetic degradation of the museum’s surrounding environment. This regrettable disregard for the museum meant that the building was given no consideration in the planning and construction of projects in its vicinity. The changes occurring in the museum and on its grounds have also caused damage that has been painful to witness. The Revival Initiative aims to give the museum the attention it has lacked, but more than rightfully deserves.

THE REVIVAL INITIATIVE
THE MUSEUM IS CHANGING

By far the biggest offence was the encroachment on the museum grounds by the Cairo Municipality in the late 1950s, which led to the construction of the headquarters of the Arab Socialist Union and then of the National Democratic Party building. Not only did it create an eyesore that obliterated all connection between the museum and the Nile, but according to Dr Mounir Neamatalla, founder of EQI, “both the building’s encroachment history and the burnt state it is in send a negative message to the world, captured by every camera and communicated in different forms in social and conventional media circles”. Dr Neamatalla goes on to say that “the Revival Initiative is designed to put a stop to all of this by sending a positive message about the birth of a new Egypt, which cherishes its peaceful identity and inclusive heritage”. Demolishing this building and incorporating this land within the museum’s grounds provides what was meant to be an eternal connection between the museum and the River Nile. This connection is as important today as it was in ancient times. The banks of the Nile will always remain the cornerstone of a great ancient Egyptian civilisation and the Egyptian Museum the internationally revered home of our ancestors. This initiative is in part a testimony to our commitment to a deeply rooted and harmonious evolution.

Within the museum’s original enclosure, new facilities were built, modifying the layout and aspect of its gardens from the original plans. Physical changes were also made to the museum building, both from within and without. Emad Farid, architect on the Revival Initiative team, explains: “Marcel Dourgnon [the French architect behind the museum’s conception] had a vision for the museum as a whole. As the years went on and the management changed, those in charge were less and less aware of what this vision was and dealt with each aspect separately. This resulted in what is now a haphazard concoction of elements, rather than the harmonious work of architecture it was meant to be.”

Such changes include the addition of bomb shelter structures that have impeded the natural lighting from the skylights and increased the load on the museum building, the partitioning of its exhibition halls for the creation of storage spaces and the haphazard modification of its interior design. The museum lost its original lighting scheme, wall colour schemes and terrazzo floors. Ramez Azmy, architect of the Revival Initiative team, explains the difficulty in trying to understand the extent of the damage that had occurred to the original museum design: “It was rather difficult to get all the information, since there were no official records of how exactly the walls of the museum looked. Each hall had a different look and feel. We had to strip down the walls ourselves and slowly reveal details, ornamentations and original colours.”

The Revival of the Egyptian Museum Initiative
The museum was here first. Tahrir Square at the centre of downtown, was shaped around it later. We aim to make the museum the heart of this entire area, as it should be.

... Mr Ramez Azmy, Architect at EQI
also addresses issues with regard to the museum curation and conservation limitations. After having spent more than a year researching and surveying the museum, the team is equipped to propose methods to improve visitor experience and enhance artefact preservation and display. This is an indispensable resource, as currently the curators and conservators lack the materials and tools to carry out their work, which means that the techniques used for curatorial work, maintenance or presentation of the artefacts are, for the most part, below current international standards, if implemented at all. The layout of the showcases themselves does not maximise the potential for visitor satisfaction, being both difficult to follow and unflattering to some of the exhibited items. The scarcity of labels and information provided on these items makes it difficult for visitors to place them within their archaeological or historical context. According to Sanaa Fouad, Senior Curator at the Egyptian Museum: “The displays themselves are valuable. They were made to best represent the works and they are part of the historical value of the building. Restoring them is vital to the visitor’s viewing experience.”

The Revival of the Egyptian Museum Initiative proposes to follow some simple rules for the construction of eventual buildings on the western side of the existing museum. The functions allocated in the area should benefit the museum and should relate to its current cultural and scientific activities, including temporary or permanent exhibition halls, new restoration laboratories, administrative offices and other museum facilities. The buildings that will welcome these functions will be single-storey structures. The existing commercial buildings constructed recently along the western courtyard of the museum will be kept, and their present functions (bookstore, gift shop and restaurant) maintained and revitalised. It is important to note that any complementary light structures envisaged on the museum ground will always be much lower and smaller than the existing museum to ensure that it remains the main monument of the site. The architectural style of the newly built facilities should be in harmony with the existing neo-classical architecture of the historical building.

The proposed new facilities to be constructed on the western side will be built around a Pharaonic Garden, designed as Egyptian gardens used to be in ancient times. The Pharaonic Garden will be surrounded by a portico, along which there will be rooms open to the public, such as temporary exhibition spaces, as well as restoration laboratories.

The team also proposes a pedestrian tunnel and docking facilities that would allow visitors to go to the banks of the Nile, or visitors coming from the Nile (by boat) to enter the museum’s site through its western river frontage. This tunnel will be built under the existing thoroughfare (the Corniche) and will directly connect the riverbank to the museum site.

A public garden, named Tahrir Garden, will extend from the southern boundary of the museum to Tahrir
Every aspect of the museum needs to be improved. It will be expensive, but if we manage to go through with the revival, we will be able to maintain it as a vital piece of our own heritage. It is now the home of all the artefacts. It needs to be revered and honoured.

— Dr Mahmoud El Halwagy, Director of the Egyptian Museum

Square itself, over an area where an underground garage is presently being built. Together with the proposed western extension towards the River Nile, this southern extension will create a vast, open L-shaped garden in the middle of which would stand the historical building. The Tahrir Garden will create a pedestrian thoroughfare and visual continuity from the front of the museum to the subway stations located at Tahrir Square. The importance of dealing with the entire Egyptian Museum site in a holistic manner is fundamental, according to Dr Mounir Neamatalla, who believes that “if this initiative is realised, it would not only survive and be well-managed, but it will kick-start a self-propelling change in downtown Cairo in its entirety.”

The Revival Initiative further proposes the redesigning of the museum’s main garden to the south as an Egyptian Botanical Garden, which will serve as an encyclopaedia of indigenous Egyptian plants, extending towards the Nile.
In order to develop a realistic and practicable plan for the revival of the Egyptian Museum, two halls have been selected for research, to pollinate the engineering and curatorial efforts envisaged. It was the only way to illustrate, on the ground, the dire need for change.

THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ZONE
FROM THEORIES TO REALITIES

These two halls, which have been defined as a “research and development zone”, have set the benchmark for works to be initiated in Halls 30, 35, 40 and 45 of the Tutankhamun Gallery, which will ultimately serve as a pilot test for the works to be carried out museum-wide. Ramesh De Silva, Head of Culture and Education at the German Embassy in Cairo, one of the backbone supporters of this initiative, explains the merits of the research and development zone: “We aimed for an overarching idea and plan, covering technical and aesthetic considerations, on how to revive the museum. However, as we could not fund the entire renovation at that point, we were definitely interested in seeing this plan materialise in actuality, with the support of other potential funding parties, in order to actually witness what the Revival Initiative is all about.”

Making this initiative happen will signal the rebirth of Egypt – its modern renaissance. This entire zone of downtown Cairo is vital. It has become a centre of attention worldwide for a myriad of reasons in recent years. This attention is an opportunity for us to show Egypt in its best attire and offer its guests an unforgettable experience.

… Dr Mounir Neamatalla, Founder of EQI
The selection of the two research and development zone halls from among the museum’s multitude of rooms was based on architectural parameters, as well as on the fact that they contain some of the most well-known masterpieces of the collection. The two halls comprising the research and development zone are Hall 32 (ground and upper floors) and Hall 37 (ground floor). From an architectural point of view, it is known that Dourgnon’s design of double-height rooms, with mezzanines and sunlight penetrating through a glass ceiling, gave him an edge over his competitors in the eyes of the jury. These distinctive architectural features allowed natural light to sufficiently illuminate a two-floor building, and it is believed that Dourgnon won the competition for the museum mainly on the grounds of this design, which is very much visible in the selected area.

Moreover, the adjacent hall, Hall 37, was originally supposed to be used as a storage area, although it was subsequently modified and divided into two separate floors (through the construction of a new intermediate floor). The area above this new floor is used for storage, while the ground floor is used for the display of objects and is open to the public. This transformation turned Hall 37 into a dark windowless room. Halls 32 and 37 contain most of the design and engineering features present in the seven other atriums of the museum (there are eight atriums altogether), so any works could easily be replicated in these other areas.

From a historical-cultural point of view, these halls have on display several important and world-renowned pieces from the 4th and 5th Dynasties, including sculptures of Nofret and Rahotep, the dwarf Seneb and his family, Sneferu, Khufu, as well as the unique funerary goods of Queen Hetepheres. In addition, the first floor of Hall 32 contains wooden miniature models depicting the daily life of the ancient Egyptians. The
current display and conservation conditions of all the above-mentioned masterpieces need to be upgraded, so the proposed works also include measures to ensure the sustainability of the artefacts and to enhance their viewing potential.

The museum was designed with a natural ventilation system, which the Revival Initiative team believes is the best system for such a building, eliminating the need for the installation of a centralised, heavy and expensive air-conditioning system. On the other hand, the existing lighting system, which relies both on the skylights and, over more recent decades, on artificial lights, is obviously insufficient to provide adequate lighting for all the displayed artefacts. Restoration of the skylights with Triplex UV-filtering glass panes, to reduce the negative effects of sunlight, has been carried out in Hall 32 during the research and development phase.

The Revival Initiative team’s colour investigation plan is based on a study of Dourgnon’s original drawings as well as on a scientific analysis led by Rolf Ernst, the team’s Conservator and Colour Research Consultant, of the original paints that were applied at the time of the museum’s inauguration. It was complemented by a field investigation in several longitudinal sections of Halls 32 and 37, where no less than eight layers of paint were removed to unveil the original four basic colours: Pompeian red on the lower part of the wall, pistachio green on the upper part of the wall, grey stripes at different levels of the walls and a light beige/sand colour for the upper mouldings. This was done by a team of conservators. The restoration plan for the original colours was based upon the removal of the multiple layers of invasive paints and the application of differently coloured, naturally abundant Egyptian oxides instead of acrylics for wall retouching and restoration.

It was deemed best to keep the Carrara marble flooring on the ground floor and invest in its sanding, polishing and clean-up, rather than its replacement. However, on the second floor, the Revival Initiative team determined that the removal by a team of specialised conservators of the recently added multiple layers of awful linoleum rolls, tiles, bitumen and cement was indeed absolutely necessary to uncover, repair
and restore the original beautiful terrazzo carpet floors.

In every instance, the top priority was always the maintenance, safety and conservation of the exhibited artefacts. For this purpose, the team proposed to change current work practices by developing a fully-fledged curatorial training programme and reinforcing it with a comprehensive assay of the tools and equipment needed to perform professional cleaning and re-display. The tools and equipment are part of a mobile workstation that will accompany the Revival Initiative at its various stages of evolution, to inculcate a culture of preventive care for the monuments.

The Revival of the Egyptian Museum Initiative Report is a thoroughly researched document of the highest international scientific standards. It provides us with all the information necessary to restore the building and save its collection. Germany provided generous financial support for initial research, masterplan development and field verification works. It also extended technical support through its Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM). We are grateful that Semmel Concerts from Germany decided to finance the publication of this brochure and make it accessible to a wider public. This should contribute to raising both awareness of, and funds for, the initiative.

... Hansjörg Haber, German Ambassador, Cairo, Egypt
As of November 2013, the Revival Initiative has focused on initiating the implementation of the action plan in the halls housing one of the world’s most valued treasures, the Tutankhamun collection. The fourteen halls comprising the Tutankhamun Gallery – the Revival Initiative’s initiation zone – house the hundreds of artefacts that were found in the virtually intact tomb of the boy-King of ancient Egypt more than 90 years ago. The discovery of these treasures by H. Carter and G. Herbert in 1922 is considered to be one of the most significant and spectacular archaeological finds in the world in our modern history. The full restoration of the original walls, floors and skylights in these halls is currently being carried out.

THE INITIATION ZONE
THE HOME OF TUTANKHAMUN

As of December 2014, restoration works have been completed in four halls, situated at the entrance of the east wing of the Tutankhamun Gallery, namely Halls 30, 35, 40 and 45. While EQI is committed to completing the rehabilitation of the initiation zone in two years, a work plan by hall has been devised to cover the revival of the entire museum over a period of seven years.

Architects Emad Farid and Ramez Azmy elaborate on the gruelling process behind this task: “A lot of what we discovered in the research, development and initiation phases was the staggering amount of unrecorded engineering modifications to the museum building, infrastructure and its environs that have accumulated over the past 60 years. It was like a landmine of details,” explained Ramez. Emad added: “But because of that, a feat of paperwork and approvals that allowed us to work on reviving the museum in the best possible manner was attained. It is precisely because of this success that we have the requisite level of assurance that the museum revival plans will indeed be executed to the desired standards over the next six years.”

As they are being implemented, the revival activities currently underway in the first four halls of the east wing of the Tutankhamun Gallery will send an important message to the outside world and to all Egyptians that Egypt is proud of its history and strongly wishes to preserve its cultural heritage. Dr Mahmoud El Halwagy, Director of the Egyptian Museum, put it best: “This initiative reinforces the relevance of the Egyptian Museum and highlights its historical importance in the light of all the new museums that are currently being built in the city. Reviving
Marcel Drougon did not create a duplicate of an ancient Egyptian tomb, which most of the architects competing for the design of the museum opted to do. On the contrary, he created a conceptual building to house the precious artefacts, without obscuring them.

Emad Farid, Architect at EQI

"it will make the centre of the city remain an important tourist attraction: the hospitable urban oasis that it will surely become.”

The rehabilitation activity package was carefully assembled with a view to achieving immediate enhancement of visitation experience, as well as the stimulation of public and media interest. It is thus worth mentioning that the rehabilitation strategy is light-touch, causing minimal disturbance of showcases. There will be no heavy works where large numbers of showcases have to be moved. The proposed works will be carried out without necessitating closure of the rooms under rehabilitation. As much as possible, the Revival Initiative is designed to avoid having to interrupt the visits and to demonstrate that Egyptians are taking care of their cultural heritage.

... Emad Farid, Architect at EQI
Future plans will not only see the Revival Initiative team pursue its architectural restoration works, but added emphasis will be placed on the curatorial needs of the museum staff, as well as the development of community engagement activities. The Revival Initiative aims for a lasting change that will propel a deeply rooted transformation in how the museum and its surrounding environment will be run and treated from here on.

**FUTURE PROSPECTS**

**WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

Where monuments are concerned, curatorial training on clean-up and redisplay will be provided to museum staff, allowing them to carefully maintain the showcases and objects on display in the gallery. A set of guidelines of best practices has already been drawn up by EQI and will be applied for the purpose of preserving and protecting the monuments.

A large, but incomplete, photo-documentation of the Tutankhamun treasures was done by H. Carter’s photographer, H. Burton. These black-and-white photos, which were taken between 1922 and 1924, cannot serve as reliable references for restoration. However, these photos had to be used by the Egyptian Museum’s restorers when part of the Tutankhamun collection was damaged by vandals who had managed to penetrate the Egyptian Museum during the 25 January 2011 Revolution. At that time, the then former Minister of Antiquities had to call on Mr Sandro Vannini, the Photographer of the Revival Initiative, to use some of his digital high resolution stock of images for restoration purposes. Unfortunately, Mr Vannini’s records cover less than ten percent of the collection. The total number of the discovered treasures come to 5,398 pieces, of which some 4,500 are on display in the Egyptian Museum. The remaining 900 partly reside in the storage spaces of the Egyptian and Luxor Museums and are partly exhibited in Luxor.

All the objects on display in the Tutankhamun Gallery and residing in its
storage spaces will be photographed by Mr Vannini in digital form, at the highest resolution, using the most up-to-date photographic and lighting equipment. During the shoot, each object will be cleaned, analysed and labelled and its data recorded in a file, together with images from all sides and detail shots, where necessary. In this fashion, it will be possible to check the conservation status of the monuments in the long-term. These photos will also serve as a unique and essential reference for restoration and reconstruction purposes in the regrettable event of any deterioration or damage. They may also serve as the sole visual record of irreparably damaged or stolen objects. Where archiving is concerned, it may be worthwhile to mention that the photo records kept of the artefacts at the time of the discovery, now part of the Griffith Institute collection, do not correspond to the archives kept at the museum. Every effort will be made to create a one-to-one correspondence between the institute’s and the museum’s archives. Mr Vannini has already obtained the approval of the Griffith Institute for accessing and using its archives.

To help develop the community, a series of programmes and events engaging the community will be implemented. Museum tours, art/craft/educational workshops and walking tours in the Tahrir neighbourhood will periodically be organised to reinforce the relationship between the museum, its surrounding community and visitors. For example, various activities will be developed specifically for children’s education and education through entertainment. These include the organisation of workshops where children can craft their own replicas of the artefacts on display by hand and learn about ancient Egyptian music, ancient crafts and hieroglyphics. A scientific component will be added in the design of these activities to ensure educational content is passed on to the children. A practical reference is Dr Zahi Hawass’s book entitled The Golden Boy – History for Kids. These enjoyable and interactive workshops will explore ancient Egypt, archaeological science and the value of cultural heritage preservation in a fun and engaging way. Artists will be encouraged to animate art workshops and engage with the museum staff in implementing the various workshops to be carried out in the museum.

Furthermore, to increase contact between museum visitors and the local community, a walking tour in the Tahrir zone will be planned and made accessible to visitors. This will ensure that they experience the surrounding community’s wealth of urban history, art, cultural spaces and architectural landmarks, as well as cafés and restaurants. Overall, this activity will encourage visitors coming to the museum to visit other educational, artistic and commercial institutions present in the area. For example, we want visitors to the Egyptian Museum to enjoy the diverse attractions in the neighbouring streets of Maarouf, Champollion, Antiquexhana and Abd El Moniem Riad Square. The above-mentioned activity is not only designed to enhance visitor experience, but equally to help build the local economy of the Tahrir zone.

The strategy adopted to achieve sustainability in implementing and financing the works emphasises the importance of the collaborations between the private and public sectors. To this end, it is envisaged that about half of the works will be funded by private individuals, companies and foundations and the other half by public organisations internationally. The same principle applies to the harnessing of technical support and partnerships. Cooperation protocols with world museums and some of their retired staff will be established to benefit from their accumulated knowledge and build upon the Revival Initiative. Likewise, the project will establish partnerships with NGOs acting not only in the conservation and cultural heritage domain, but also in the field of education.

The whole Tutankhamun Gallery, including the remaining halls of the east wing and the north wing, will be inaugurated on 15 November 2016, on the 114th anniversary of the museum. The event will feature several lectures by scholars and will honour the sponsors of the restoration initiative in a highly mediatised forum, which will bring together, in force, members of the local and international press. A special exhibition showcasing selected artefacts from the Tutankhamun collection will be planned to accompany the event. A museum catalogue containing photographs of the Revival Initiative works will be written and published. This event will constitute a major milestone in the history of exhibitions on Egyptian Pharaonic art, sending a message to the world of Egypt’s commitment to revitalising its inclusive and hospitable tri-continental identity – African, Asian and European – and reinforcing its inextricable link with world culture.
In 1858, Khedive Said appointed the French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette as Director of the newly established Antiquities Service, acknowledging his care for Egypt’s cultural heritage and his systematic supervision of many archaeological excavations across the country. The same year, Mariette was awarded a modest house in Boulaq, located close to the present-day Television Building and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This house had originally accommodated the River Navigation Company of Boulaq, one of Cairo’s ports, and had became the nucleus of the first museum of Egyptian antiquities. This is where Mariette transferred the antiquities discovered during his excavations.

In 1863, Khedive Ismail approved the construction of a museum of Egyptian antiquities in the city centre, but the project was postponed due to financial constraints, and Mariette was thus merely granted more space in front of the house in Boulaq to expand his museum. During the same year, the Boulaq Museum was officially inaugurated and opened to the public. In 1878, an unusually high Nile flood caused much damage in Boulaq and many artefacts were destroyed. The Boulaq Museum was closed for renovation and repair until 1881, after which it was reopened. Mariette passed away that same year and was succeeded by Gaston Maspero as Director of the Boulaq Museum and Department of Antiquities.

In 1890, since the overall size of the collection at the Boulaq Museum had increased, it was transferred to the Ismail Pasha Palace in Giza, which was located at the present-day Giza Zoo. Upon his appointment as Director of the Museum and Department of Antiquities, the scholar Jacques de Morgan reorganised the collection in the new museum, which was then known as the Giza Museum.

After several calamities in the Boulaq and Giza Museums, which resulted in huge damages and even the loss of invaluable artefacts, the construction of a new Egyptian Museum building became urgent.

An announcement for a competition for the best architectural design was made. In 1895, the prize went to the French architect Marcel Dourgnon. The cornerstone of the Egyptian Museum was laid on 1 April 1897. On 15 November 1902, the
Egyptian daily newspaper *Al Ahram* announced the official opening of the Egyptian Museum. Based on European architectural models, the museum is typical of large public and institutional buildings – libraries, theatres and city halls – built at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century all over Europe and America. Such buildings were mostly isolated, monumental and designed in a classical style known as the “Beaux Arts Style” that was prevalent during this period.

The Egyptian Museum was the first museum in Egypt to be designed with massive internal spaces to house large numbers of Pharaonic monuments. The building features a symmetrical and T-shaped composition along a main and perpendicular north-south axis with the Grande Galerie Centrale at its centre, accentuated by rows of arches and columns on its longitudinal sides. The Galerie d’Honneur runs perpendicular to it and parallel to the museum’s south facade. It is designed as a sequence of double-height rectangular and circular spaces from east to west, with a Rotunda in the centre, located right after the museum’s main entrance.

Along each side of the Grande Galerie Centrale is a series of seven rooms, the atriums. These are double-height rooms topped by a skylight and connected by an outer and inner ring gallery on both floors, which surround the whole edifice. It seems that the proposal for this type of room, which offered a brilliant solution in terms of natural lighting, was decisive in the final choice of the jury.

Today, a total of 89 spacious display halls occupy two floors, although the museum originally comprised more than 100 display halls. The lost halls are a result of the gradual conversion of exhibition space into storage facilities due to a pressing lack of space. The inner ring gallery on the ground floor is no longer accessible to the public and is used as a storage area. The library and administrative offices have separate entrances and are located on the western and eastern corners of the museum’s south facade.

The Egyptian Museum presented from the outset a series of architectural and construction challenges for the building contractors. According to available documents, they had not been resolved by the time of the museum’s inauguration in 1902. Thus, from 1907 to 1909, the roof of the
building was modified for ventilation, lighting and structural purposes. Repair works had to be realised to ease the weight burden off the concrete roof, as the reinforced concrete construction system, pioneered by the French engineer François Hennebique, had not been mastered at the time. The terrace had to be almost completely reconstructed, and the original glass skylights covering the double-height atriums, which allowed too much sun and heat inside the rooms, were transformed into skylights, as used in the traditional houses of Cairo. The topmost horizontal glass panes of the skylights were replaced by wood covered with thin metallic sheets. Furthermore, it was decided that the ground floor level of the Grande Galerie Centrale should be lowered, as it was not high enough, and its floor was too weak to accommodate the monumental sculptures and artefacts.

The upgrading and development of the Egyptian Museum and its surroundings according to the original plans continued until the Revolution of 23 July 1952. Since then, political instability, heavy bureaucracy and a lack of systematic planning have led to an array of negative impacts that threaten the Egyptian Museum’s position as the world’s largest establishment dedicated to Ancient Egyptian artefacts.

One of the challenges faced by the Egyptian Museum is the breakdown of the natural ventilation system and the high fluctuations of humidity due to the absence of a system for air control. Consequently, many windows are left open, especially in the summer, to get fresh air inside the museum. This, in turn, has caused great damage to many artefacts. Missing window panes in the skylights on the roof also contribute to the deterioration of objects, in addition to allowing easy access to the museum by thieves, as proven during the recent January 2011 Revolution.

In other instances, wholly inadequate protective measures have been used. For example, following the 1967 defeat in the Six-Day War with Israel, the government decided to build concrete roofs on top of the skylights to protect the museum from potential air raids. This was done without taking into account the increased load on the roof structure.

Another constant problem since the foundation of the museum has been the implementation of projects in its vicinity, which in some instances have impacted the museum’s structure. Vibrations caused by tunnel-boring activities during the construction of metro lines and from traffic passing nearby, in Tahrir Square or over the 6th of October Bridge, have caused cracks in the museum’s walls, as well as in some of the artefacts.

The Egyptian Museum was managed by foreign directors until 1950, when Mahmoud Hamza became the first Egyptian Director. By 1949, the British military barracks to the southeast of the museum were removed, creating a larger public space within the museum’s grounds. Five years later, in 1954, the Cairo Governorate took a large section of land west and south of the museum to construct the headquarters of the Arab League, the Nile Hilton Hotel (now the Nile Ritz-Carlton Hotel) and a building for the Cairo Municipality, where, in the early 1960s, Egypt’s President Gamal Abdel Nasser established the headquarters of his Arab Socialist Union. The Union was converted to the National Democratic Party in 1978 by Nasser’s successor, Anwar El Sadat.

In the late 1970s, a number of transport infrastructure and tourism development projects were established on the northern side of the Egyptian Museum. The 6th of October Bridge and Ramsis Hilton Hotel in Abdel Moniem Riad Square were constructed without taking into account the development of the museum and its general layout. The All Saints’ Cathedral was demolished to make way for these developments. The garden on the eastern side of the museum was reduced to broaden the adjacent thoroughfare. To the south, the gardens were removed and replaced by a bus station, which itself was destroyed in the 1980s during the construction of the Tahrir metro station. This particular area now looks like a no-man’s land.

Since 1983, the Egyptian Museum building has been classified as a protected monument under the control of the Ministry of Antiquities, due to its unique architectural style. Law 117 stipulates that in no case shall protected buildings be tampered with, except through the Islamic and Coptic Sector within the Ministry. The Ministry of Antiquities can impose its control over all buildings within a 500-metre radius of the museum. The Protection Act allows for the modification of the museum building campus, which means that at least the land occupied by the former National Democratic Party to the west could be made subject to the Egyptian Museum. Giving this piece of land to the Ministry of Antiquities would greatly support the museum’s long-overdue rehabilitation, as envisaged in The Revival of the Egyptian Museum Initiative.
Those who are making the Revival Initiative possible.

Sponsors

Dr Raouf and the late Mrs Ola Ghabour - Dr Ghabour is a prominent businessman, who established GB Ghabbour, the largest auto-assembler and distributor in the Middle East, and Ghabbour Farms, which produces fruit and vegetables for local and international markets, among other successful enterprises. The late Mrs Ghabbour was one of Egypt’s most highly esteemed philanthropists and social benefactors. Dr Raouf and Ms Ola Ghabbour supported the restoration of Skylight Hall 45.

The Suez Cement Company is one of the largest grey cement producers in Egypt. The company serves the domestic market and also exports its products to Arab, African and European markets. The Suez Cement Company’s subsidiary in Tourah provided the cement for the construction of the Egyptian Museum from 1898 to 1902. The Suez Cement Company has funded the restoration of Hall 30.

Eng. Salah Diab - a leading Egyptian entrepreneur, Co-Founder and CEO of the PICO Group. His business ventures include the establishment of several companies under the PICO Group, dealing with investment, petroleum servicing and food production. Furthermore, he is the Founder of the world acclaimed independent Egyptian newspaper, Al Masry Al Youm. Eng. Salah Diab provided funding for the restoration of Hall 40.

SC Exhibitions is a division of Semmel Concerts, a German organiser of concerts, shows and cultural events. The company is an affiliate of CTS Eventim AG, Europe’s leading ticketing and live entertainment corporation. SC Exhibitions is the producer of the renowned international touring exhibition “Tutankhamun – His Tomb and His Treasures”, an exhibition entirely based on replica artefacts that retell the story of the discovery of King Tut’s tomb. It is SC Exhibitions’ concern to promote knowledge about Egypt’s ancient heritage and cultural tourism all over the world, doing so with the co-operation of the Egyptian Embassies, Egyptian Tourist Authorities and the Supreme Council of Antiquities. In appreciation of the cultural and scientific dialogue between Egypt and Germany, the company provided funding for the restoration of the Skylight Hall 35, and is endorsing the Revival Initiative with communication and marketing support.

Environmental Quality International (EIQ) is an internationally acclaimed investment and consulting firm specialising in natural and cultural heritage conservation, and sustainable development. Since 1981 it has designed and implemented sundry landmark initiatives nationwide. Its Siwa Sustainable Development Initiative is a notable example of how the private sector can conserve a region’s cultural and natural heritage, build local economies, and profit at the same time. EIQ is the leading institution behind the development and implementation of the Revival of the Egyptian Museum Initiative. The company has been privately funding some of the soft costs associated with the implementation of the Initiative, as well as the organization of public events.
The Revival of the Egyptian Museum
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This Yearbook is made possible through the support of SC Exhibitions.
Printed in Egypt.
Published by EQI, 18 El Mansour Mohammed St., Zamalek, Cairo, Egypt

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