



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**



Egypt in Australia





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Gina Sinozich, We are Sailing the Suez Canal on Our Way to Australia, 2003. Australian National Maritime Museum Collection Gift from Gina Sinozich. Inv. No. 00037916

Colonial Connections



'No country in the world, except Egypt itself, is more deeply interested in the fate of that famous kingdom than is Australia' Ovens and Murray Advertiser, 7 Dec 1888, p.4.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 was fundamental to Australia's access to the European world, allowing the movement of people, goods and ideas between the colony and Europe at unprecedented speeds. The first two decades of the canal's commercial operation showed Australia's participation in global affairs was uniquely tied to this new 'great highway'. And with the 1888 Convention of Constantinople guaranteeing international shipping passage through the Suez Canal, even a regional Australian newspaper could see how colonial Australia's interests aligned to Egypt. However, Australia's cultural connections with Egypt, like other western countries, began several decades earlier following the French and British led explorations of the ancient monuments of the Nile.

In the early 19th century, newspapers throughout Europe and North America regularly reported on the latest archaeological finds of Egypt's ancient past. Australia's colonial papers picked up these headlines and ran them across the major and minor daily newspapers (Ockinga 2021, 488–50) which, significantly, kept the elite members of colonial society in intellectual step with their international peers. The popularity of these discoveries translated into new ancient Egyptian-inspired architectural and design styles, known as 'Egyptian revival'. In Hobart James Alexander Thomson, pardoned-convict-turned-architect, established a new synagogue in 1843–45, architecturally inspired by Egyptian design complete with papyriform columns and cavetto cornices (Merrillees 1991, 2). In Sydney in 1857, a duct shaft required to vent gasses from the

underground sewer system was built in the shape of an obelisk, modelled on London's 'Cleopatra's Needle', with added Egyptianising details including couched sphinxes and imagery connected with the sun god Ra (Sydney Water). Obelisks in particular had been a popular architectural choice for land markers across Europe since the Roman period and were increasingly popular across the 19th century anglosphere. The revival of their popularity and incorporation into Australian monumental architecture, particularly as memorial markers, was likely a second-hand trend coming from European styles rather than direct Egyptianising influence on the colony (Hope 2011, 166–168).

The middle of the 19th century saw the establishment of higher education institutions within the colonies, with the first university established in Sydney in 1850. Its architectural and intellectual design closely followed the model of the British elite institutions, Oxford and Cambridge. Charles Nicholson, co-founder of the University, took it upon himself to set up Australia's first antiquities museum in the same vein as the Ashmolean and Fitzwilliam Museums (of Oxford and Cambridge, respectively). Between 1856 and 1858, Nicholson amassed an extensive collection of Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Medieval artefacts for this purpose. In Egypt, Nicholson purchased material directly from dealers in Luxor, Cairo, and likely Alexandria, as well as used his personal connections to secure items from recent excavations. In doing so, Nicholson created a representative teaching collection spanning Pre-historic to Late-antiquity Egypt (Sowada 2006,



1–8). The University of Sydney's Museum of Antiquities opened on the newly built campus in 1860 with over 400 Egyptian artefacts (Reeve 1870). Today, the Nicholson Collection is Australia's largest collection of Egyptian artefacts with over 5000 items maintained as part of the Chau Chak Wing Museum.



State museums, galleries and libraries were also being established in the major colonial centres of the country during this period. However, unlike the University of Sydney, antiquities were not the focus of these collections. Rather each collection's focus closely followed the colonial tastes and intellectual priorities of their local benefactors. While the foundation of these collections often included some reference to the classical Greek and Roman past, they rarely incorporated Egyptian heritage. In Victoria, one of the earliest private collections of artefacts, brought to Australia by Egyptologist Arnold Weidenbach in the 1840s, was offered to the State Library for purchase, who declined the offer (Hope 2011, 164).



Egyptian heritage may not have been a specific collecting priority, but state institutions were the recipients of many significant works of art and artefacts from Egypt's ancient past through private donations throughout the second half of the 19th century. The National Gallery in Victoria received a range of Egyptian artefacts during this time including a small collection from prominent Melbourne James Sherrard in 1881, of significance: a votive stela of Ta-Kharu (1-D1A), Jackal headed Canopic Jar (2.a-b-D1A) and decorative base for a Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figure with model burial (6.a-d-D1A).

The Suez Canal opened in the very middle of the Australian gold rush which drew new waves of migrants to the colony. Between 1851 and 1871 the national population increased from 400,000 to 1.7 million people, with new arrivals from across the globe (nma.gov.au). However, very few were Egyptian migrants; only 108 Egyptian-born people were counted in the 1901 census (DFAT 2016). The earlier favoured route to Australia was known as the Great Circle, which circumnavigated West Africa and passed far south of the Cape of Good Hope. However, the Suez Canal offered a much shorter route, reducing the overall journey by up to 40 days. First used as a mail route, the development of new steam ships that could make the Suez route under their own power led to an increasing number of passenger ships passing through Egypt (museums victoria.com.au). This new route effectively integrated Egypt into the Australian migrant experience, affording migrants the opportunity to acquire artefacts of Egyptian heritage along the way. One example is T.S. Henry, who purchased a mummified snake on his journey between London and Perth, now part of the Western Australia Museum collection. The Egyptian stopover would typify Australian immigration throughout the following century.

SIR CHARLES NICHOLSON (1808-1903)

Charles Nicholson first arrived in Australia in 1835, a medical graduate of the University of Edinburgh. He quickly became a prominent citizen of the colony, amassing property and status with wealth inherited from his uncle William Ascough, a maritime trader and convict transporter. In 1843 Nicholson was elected to the new Legislative Assembly of New South Wales and served as Speaker on multiple occasions. When the NSW parliament was reformed in 1855, Nicholson became part of the interim Executive Council which ushered in the new era of 'Responsible Government'. In 1860 when the State of Queensland was first formed, Nicholson served as President of its inaugural Legislative Council. During this period, Nicholson was incredibly active not only in the politics of the colony, but also in the educational reforms of the day. He assisted fellow councillor William Wentworth in establishing The University of Sydney, becoming its first Vice-Provost in 1851. His influence over the institution are manifest in the Museum of Antiquities he established, and the books and manuscripts he donated to help form the Fisher library. It is also during this period that Nicholson was knighted (1852) and awarded the status of Baronet (1859).

Nicholson returned to England, permanently, in 1862. His return journey saw him continue to collect Egyptian antiquities for the University Museum, which were shipped over the next few years, pre-catalogued by Egyptologist Joseph Bonomi (curator of the Sir John Soane's Museum). In England, Nicholson married Sarah Keightley and had three sons, Archibald, Charles and Sydney, and continued to be an engaged member of the intellectual elite, pursuing his interests in classics and archaeology. Unfortunately, a house fire in 1899 destroyed Nicholson's personal library, including his detailed diaries and any documentation relating to his remaining antiquities collection (Turner 2012, 112-121; Macmillan 1967).



MAXIMILLIAN (ARNOLD) WEIDENBACH (1823-1890)

Maximillian Weidenbach was born in Naumburg, Germany, in 1823. A talented artist, Arnold was drawn to Hieroglyphs, and while studying in Berlin, under the famous Egyptologist Richard Lepsius, he and his brother Ernst were invited to join the famous Lepsius-Expedition to the Nile Valley, funded by Prussia's King Frederick William IV (1842-1845). Arnold was to remain in Egypt for the next three years, during which he gathered an extensive collection of artefacts, including funeral statuettes. In 1849, he moved to Australia, initially drawn by the Victorian gold rush, although eventually settling in Adelaide, where he became a pioneer of that city's nascent wine industry. He continued to develop his Egyptian collection, through the purchase of additional artefacts, until his death in 1890. Much of the collection was later donated to the South Australian Museum by the Weidenbach family – including a recently rediscovered diary, written in Old German, from his three years in Egypt.

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CAPTIONS

Hyde Park Obelisk, Sydney

Façade of the Hobart synagogue

Egyptian room of the Sydney University Museum of Antiquities before 1900. Macleay Collections, Chau Chak Wing Museum, HP83.5718

Canopic jar with lid representing Duamutef Third Intermediate Period, Dynasties XXI-XXV 1069 BCE-664 BCE, Egypt, (Qurna, Thebes). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Presented by James E. Sherrard Esq., 1881 Photo: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Mummified snake purchased by TS Henry on a voyage between England and Perth, 1897. Western Australia Museum ACM22.01

Johann Jakob, Lepsius Expedition to Egypt: Raising of the Prussian flag on the Great Pyramid of Giza, 1842. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

Excavating Egypt



The most significant collections of Egyptian heritage in Australia are largely the product of Australian institutional engagements with the British Egypt Exploration Society (EES). Originally established by Amelia Edwards as the Egypt Exploration Fund in 1882, in the same year as the British conquest of Egypt, the Society was created as a response to what Edwards saw as the imminent destruction of much of Egypt's heritage due to an international desire for 'treasures' and the haphazard digging of sites to meet market demand (Rees 1998, 53-54). The Society raised funds to support the work of foreign-led expeditions, at a time when the science of excavation and the discipline of archaeology was beginning in earnest. Funders were incentivised to contribute with an allotment of the next season's finds, or as the EES themselves put it, a "share of the spoil" (Stevenson 2014, 93).

In 1884 the first Australian contribution was made to the Society. Josiah Mullens, a Sydney stockbroker, committed £100, with the institutional support of the University of Sydney. Mullens had recently returned from London, via Egypt, which had sparked his interest in the Egyptian past, and connected him with the London-based operation. The University and 'the people of Sydney' were rewarded for Mullen's generosity with a near 4-tonne capital recently uncovered by EES excavations of the Temple of Bastet, Bubastis in 1887 directed by Édouard Naville (Edwards 1889). The University of Sydney maintained this relationship for the next 60 years, receiving approximately one thousand artefacts from sites including Abydos, Antinoë, Behnesa, Bubastis, Diospolis Parva, El Amarna, El Mahasna, Naukratis, Oxyrhynchus, Qasr Ibrim, Tanis, Tell el-Yahudiya.

Across the nation, further agreements with the EES were set up by state museums and galleries as well as universities interested in establishing their own archaeological collections at the turn of the 20th century. News of the most recent discoveries from the excavations were widely reported in the national papers, often appearing in the 'women's pages', which undoubtedly helped stoke the public's interest in visiting a local museum that boasted a collection of Egyptian antiquities. The Australian Museum, also based in Sydney, received their first allotment of artefacts in 1898, remaining actively engaged with the society until the First World War. Sites excavated by the EES represented in the Australian Museum collections include Abydos, Antinoë, Defenneh, Deir el-Bahri, Ehnasya, El Mahasna, Oxyrhynchus, Sedment, Serabit el-Khadim, Wadi Magharah.

The National Gallery in Melbourne engaged in a sponsorship arrangement, beginning in 1899. This was largely co-ordinated by Norman de Garis Davies, a Unitarian minister turned Egyptologist who worked with Flinders Petrie at Dendara (Ockinga 2021, 455).



The Gallery secured several important artefacts, as well as utilitarian materials, from the sites of Dendara and Diospolis Parva. The Gallery's ongoing relationship with de Garis Davies led to the acquisition of several key items directly from his own excavations including a head of Nefertiti from a boundary stela uncovered at the site of el-Amarna, donated by N. de Garis Davies in 1907 (Dusmore *et. al.* 2004, 6, 21). The gallery also began sponsoring the British School of Archaeology, Egypt in the 20th century, which led to the acquisition of a small group of artefacts from the site of Sedment.

In Western Australia, a small collection of archaeological artefacts from the sites of Esna, Hissayeh and Hierakonpolis were obtained by the WA Museum in the early 20th century through the EES. For the South Australian Museum, the majority of Egyptian archaeological material did not arrive by way of the EES, but rather through the collecting of Reverend Roy Fletcher. However, in 1892, the collection did receive a monumental granite pillar from the Temple of Arsaphes at Heracleopolis (Ockinga 2021, 456). Outside of these relationships, the South Australian Museum was also the recipient of a small collection of archaeological materials from the tombs of Beni Hassan, where Weidenbach had been an active participant in the Lepsius-Expedition of 1842-1845.

Institutional engagement with the EES began to decline in Australia after WWI. The finds received were not often the extravagant sculptures of Pharaohs or golden luxuries reported in the paper, but rather 'everyday' ceramics and small portable materials in repetition. However, with the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922, a fresh wave of 'Egyptomania' was felt around the western world, including Australia. This renewed enthusiasm led to the establishment in Sydney of a new Australian branch of the EES, under the leadership of Hugh McIntosh, member of the NSW Legislative Council (1917-32), former boxing promoter, and owner of the *Sunday Times* Newspaper (Ockinga 2021, 458). Macintosh pledged an initial £500 donation to the branch, with the guarantee of the same annual donation for the next seven years. He promoted his pledge through the *Sunday Times*, which secured the support of more than 70 others (Stevenson 2019, 150). While the initiative was heralded as "a substantial service to the community" by Sir W. J. Snowden, President of the Board of Governors of the South Australian Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery (*Sunday Times*, 17 June 1923), other prominent Egyptologists were critical of Macintosh and the broader EES model which drove support based on artefact rewards rather than scientific discovery (*Sunday Times*, 3 Jun 1923).

The Australian branch of the EES was very short lived. In 1924-25, the finds sent to Australia did not live up to the expectations generated by the international news of the wonders of Tutankhamun's tomb, and stoked by McIntosh's *Sunday Times* headlines. This was partly due to the scarcity of materials excavated in these years, but also a result of new export controls established by the Egyptian Antiquities Service after the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. These determined that all finds from that discovery should be kept in Egypt in their entirety. While international distribution of finds continued for other sites, including Amarna and Abydos, the lack lustre finds sent to Australia saw the rapid disbandment of the Australian branch soon afterwards (Stevenson 2019, 153; Ockinga 2021, 459). The Australian Branch allotment was acquired



by the Nicholson Museum. Although described as disappointing at the time, it included significant examples of Amarna ware pottery and a large segment of a floor fresco from the Maru-Aten complex at Amarna.

During the early 20th century, museums employed a variety of methods for circulating collections and specimens around the world. In addition to direct excavation, specimen exchange was a popular method for museums or individual scientists to build up collections of diverse materials. These exchanges often occurred across the fields of natural history, anthropology, and archaeology. In 1902, the Queensland Museum received a small group of Egyptian artefacts – including a significant fragment of the Book of Dead made for Amenhotep, a high official during the reign of Amenhotep II (circa 1420 BCE) – from Edgar Crookshank, Professor of Comparative Anatomy and Bacteriology at Cambridge, in exchange for examples of Australian mammals, birds and lungfish (Asmussen 2021; Ockinga 2021, 457).

Through much of the 20th century, Australian scholars of Egyptology were often trained at an undergraduate level in Australia, before seeking further education and careers in the field internationally, including 'trowel blazer' Veronica Seton-Williams. In 1989, the Australian Centre for Egyptology was established at Macquarie University, with the mission of training Australian scholars in Egyptology and establishing Australian-led excavations in conjunction with the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, under the direction of Professor Naguib Kanawati. Kanawati, born in Alexandria in 1941, moved to Australia to undertake his doctoral degree in Egyptian Archaeology at Macquarie University and has become a leading figure for Egyptology, receiving the Order of Australia in 2007. Since the Centre's founding, Australian-led field work in Egypt has been undertaken across many significant sites of antiquity including Dendara, Tehna, Thebes, Abu Rawash, Wadi Araba, El-Qusiya, Helwan and Beni Hassan.



WILLIAM ROBY FLETCHER (1833-1894)

William Roby Fletcher was born in Manchester in 1833, and educated at schools in Yorkshire and Lancashire, and at the University of London, before immigrating to Melbourne in 1856. The son of a Reverend, and a member of the Congregational Church, Fletcher served in Pastorates in both Bendigo and Richmond, before moving to Adelaide. A man of great learning – he had won the University Gold Medal as an undergraduate in London – Fletcher went on to have a great impact upon educational institutions in South Australia, but especially at the University of Adelaide (where he eventually served as Vice-Chancellor, from 1883-1887). In 1890, he travelled to Egypt on a well-funded archaeological tour, during which he purchased artefacts for the South Australian Museum. The objects Fletcher purchased formed the foundation of the Museum's Egypt Collection. Perhaps the most famous item Fletcher bought on his tour is the original mummy and sarcophagus of a woman called Renpit-Nefert, who appears to have died from chronic disease around the year 400BCE (later X-Ray and CT scanning has revealed).

EARNEST JULIUS WUNDERLICH (1859-1945)

Ernest Wunderlich was born in London, in 1859, and studied in both UK and Europe, before moving to Sydney with his wife Fanny Hoesch, in 1885. Along with his brothers Alfred and Otto (who also emigrated to Australia, in 1887 and 1900, respectively), he set up the major construction firm, Wunderlich Patent Ceiling and Roofing Company, which eventually had branches across Australia, and in New Zealand. Although Ernest remained chairman until his death in 1945, from the time of his arrival in Australia he dedicated an increasing amount of his time to his many interests in the arts and sciences, which included collecting Egyptian artefacts. From the late-nineteenth century onwards, he began donating his Egyptological collection, and that of his brothers, to the Australian Museum, Sydney. In 1926, Ernest was made President of the Museum, and worked tirelessly to build up the Museum's Egypt Collection via variety of sources. Today, the Wunderlichs are credited with having contributed roughly one-third of the institutions approximately 1,100 Egyptian artefacts.

ALAN JENVEY ROWE (1890-1968)

Alan Rowe was born in Deptford, England in 1890 and had a passion for Egypt from a young age, teaching himself to read hieroglyphs. Rowe immigrated to Australia in 1912, bringing his personal notebooks and research conducted on the British Museum's collection with him (Thorn 2006, 71). Although Rowe spent only ten years in the country, his impact upon the Egyptian collections in Australia is significant. In 1914, Rowe began working on a new catalogue of the Egyptian collections at the South Australian Museum and was appointed to Honorary Custodian of Archaeology in 1918. Rowe was the first to publish Egyptological research in Australia, alongside other significant contributions to other areas of archaeology (Merrillees 1991, 36). Rowe's catalogue of the South Australian collections was completed in 1921 and although it was never published, this research was seminal in the establishment of the 'Egypt Room' at the South Australian Museum opening in 1939, which remains largely unchanged to the present day. In 1922 Rowe left Australia and began a long and celebrated career as an archaeologist. However, Rowe remained actively connected to Australian institutions. He secured for the Melbourne collection, the coffin and remains of Tjebty from the excavations at Sheikh Faraf in 1925 and made several purchases for the National Gallery of Victoria, and the Australian Archaeological Institute from Cairo's antiquities dealers (Ockinga 1921, 455-456).

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CAPTIONS

Head of Queen Nefertiti, from sculpture flanking Boundary Stela Q 1353 BCE-1337 BCE, El-Amarna, Egypt.

limestone
34.3 x 21.0 x 20.5 cm (approx.)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Presented by N. de Garis Davies, 1907

Jar, Predynastic Period, Naqada II 3500 BCE-3200 BCE, Diospolis Parva, Egypt.
marl clay
24.3 x 23.9 cm diameter
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Presented by the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Fund, 1899

Ceramics from Diospolis Parva on display at the Nicholson Museum, The University of Sydney, circa 1901. HP2019.59, Macleay Collections, Chau Chak Wing Museum.

EES sponsored excavations of el-Amarna, 1923. Courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society.

Portion of the Maru-aten floor fresco, 1352-1323 BCE. Nicholson Collection, Chau Chak Wing Museum NM64.415.3

ANZAC Experiences



Batallion have a day out

With the outbreak of the First World War, most formal excavations in Egypt were interrupted or suspended (Stevenson 2019, 94–99). However, this hiatus did not end the practice of Australians collecting Egyptian objects. The war, instead, opened the practice to an entirely new cohort of collectors: Australian soldiers. ANZAC soldiers began arriving in Egypt from late-1914 and were stationed at Mena Camp, and later at Maadi south of Cairo. Mena Camp was located at the base of the Giza plateau, within walking distance of the Great Pyramid. The camp could accommodate up to 25,000 soldiers for their training rotation and was used in the lead-up to the Gallipoli campaign, and its subsequent withdrawal. Maadi was initially established for the 1st Light Horse Brigade (LHB) and later the 2ndLHB. From 1916, ANZAC soldiers were active in the Middle East, defending the Suez Canal, and they pushed into the Sinai to capture Jerusalem. Field hospitals within the training camps saw Australian doctors and nurses also deployed in Egypt throughout the war.

While stationed in Egypt, Australian soldiers, officers, doctors and nurses spent their leave time as “enforced tourists” exploring the ancient sites and visiting Cairo in great numbers (Nicholson and Mills 2017, 206). Many soldiers in uniform were photographed in front of the Sphinx, with the Great Pyramid in the background, which was an obligatory tourist experience (Doull 1916). The Australian War Memorial, National Museum of Canberra, Western Australia Museum, State Library of NSW, Museums Victoria, and the University of Sydney’s Chau Chak Wing Museum, all hold significant archival collections of WWI photographs of Australian Imperial Forces (AIF) in Egypt.

For working-class Australian soldiers, this would have been their first experience of tourism in a ‘faraway’ location. The desire for souvenirs and tokens to send

home to loved ones drove a boom of Australian collecting in Egypt. Soldiers mailed home a range of ephemera ranging from textiles to coins, ‘sweetheart brooches’ and postcards throughout their deployment. They were also able to purchase antiquities from the Egyptian Museum shop in Cairo and street vendors (although many of the latter sold fakes) which were brought back to Australia. These items have often been kept as family heirlooms, and subsequently donated to museums throughout Australia, as mementos of the ANZAC experience. The Australian War Memorial also includes a significant collection of artworks created by AIF personnel during their wartime experiences, which include artistic representations of the cultural life and landscapes the ANZAC soldiers encountered during their time in Egypt.

The ‘object habits’ of military collectors marked a distinct shift in Australian engagement with Egyptian material culture. Prior to WWI, only elite and wealthy Australians had regular access to the antiquities markets and excavations, from which to develop private collections. The opportunity presented to soldiers stationed in Egypt enabled them to make considered choices about what objects to collect. Decision-making was influenced by price, personal knowledge or tastes, and advice from respected sources including Charles Bean, who wrote a guide for AIF personnel on buying authentic antiquities (Bean 1915). An examination of the artefacts of AIF personnel that have made their way into Australian institutions demonstrates that portability of objects was also a consideration. This is hardly unexpected when one considers the limited storage and shipping capacities of personnel during the war.

AIF personnel also acquired objects from Turkish prisoners of war in Egypt. By 1917, approximately 14,000 Turkish prisoners were being held in Egypt, many of whom



produced small beaded objects which were sold or bartered for food and other items (Kimball 2007). The most commonly produced beaded items were small snakes. A particularly fine example appears in the Queensland Museum, Brisbane, acquired by Dr John Hardie, Australian Medical Corps, who served in Egypt 1915–16. This object was donated to the museum by his sister, Jane Hardie. Similar beadwork can be found in the Australian War Memorial collection in Canberra.

The outbreak of the Second World War resulted in similar disruptions to formal excavations across Egypt, but also provided another opportunity for Australian military personnel to access the cultural heritage of the country in new ways. The AIF was once again stationed in Egypt for training, before being deployed to various war fronts in Europe, occupying the same camps as its predecessor. However, due to the different location of war fronts, and the additional training camps established in Palestine, the AIF spent less time in Egypt, limiting their tourist opportunities and to an extent their collecting practices.



Throughout both conflicts the Suez Canal played an important role in the transport of Australian troops. For most AIF troops, their first sighting of Egypt would have been of the sites of Suez, before they disembarked at Port Said at the edge of the Mediterranean. During WW2 Port Said also played an important part of the movement between Palestine and the Egyptian bases. The return of one battalion of troops overnight through the Canal was captured in an informal photograph disseminated from official government sources to be republished in the papers of the day, including the Newcastle Morning Herald, on Tuesday 15th Oct 1940.

When WW2 finally came to an end in 1945, Australian troops, as well as those seeking a new homeland away from war-torn Europe, travelled to Australia via Egypt. The process of movement was not immediate, and afforded some a chance to acquire souvenirs, both modern and ancient, to bring home to loved ones. Although some Egyptian souvenirs collected by Australian soldiers during WW2 have made their way into Australian institutions, the collections of WW2 participants are not as well represented as their WWI predecessors. This may in part be due to the more limited capacity of soldiers to participate in tourist opportunities. However, it may also be reflective of mementos from this period that are still largely in private family collections – perhaps to be still donated to public institutions at a later date?

In Australia, Egypt has become entangled with the ANZAC legend, the surviving photographs, ephemera, diaries and antiquities merging with oral histories, to embed Egypt's place within a key moment for the construction of Australia's national story. Later archaeological excavations near the camps of Australian soldiers, including those of the German Archaeological Institute at the Predynastic site of Maadi, uncovered items left behind from the soldiers stationed there, including sheets from the 'Cootamundra Liberal' dated to 19 December 1914. However, in Egypt, this interconnectedness may be best represented by the 2500 Australian soldiers, named and unnamed, who are buried in the war memorial cemeteries of Alexandria, Cairo, El Alamein and Kantara (dva.gov.au).

ON PYRAMID

Perhaps the singularly most iconic image of the Anzacs in Egypt is a photograph known colloquially as "On Pyramid". The photograph was taken on 10 January, 1915 on the Great Pyramid of Khufu at Giza, featuring the 11th Battalion,

3rd Brigade AIF. 703 men appear in the photograph, over 200 of whom have been identified through diligent work by the Western Australian Genealogical Society, and the Australian War Memorial (WAGS 11btn Project; Trigger and Tucack). The striking visual image has done much to entwine the Anzac experience and Egyptian history (both modern and ancient). The image was a centrepiece in the travelling exhibition *Spirit of Anzac Centenary Experience*, where it featured as an interactive display. The popularity of the image, and the largely unknown identities of many of the soldiers, has led to the development of a number of modern myths around the photograph and its subjects. These demonstrate how the image has taken on 'a life of its own' and is playing an active role in the formation of, and responses to, collective memories about WWI. The Australian War Memorial holds multiple copies of this image, having first been loaned a print by Colonel K McLennan MBE in the 1930s, from which a copy negative (A02875) was made. It is this copy that has spawned numerous collectable postcards and online versions.



JOHN BASIL ST VINCENT WELCH (1881-1919)

Dr John Basil St Vincent Welch was perhaps the most prolific soldier-collector of Egyptian objects to serve with the AIF. St Vincent Welch undertook his training at Mena Camp as part of the first convoy to arrive, in December 1914, and he served with the 1st Field Ambulance at Gallipoli (during which he was twice wounded). St Vincent Welch convalesced in Egypt and, during his time there, acquired 185 ancient Egyptian objects, as well as a range of contemporary ephemera. His collection of antiquities demonstrated a genuine passion for Egyptology. Boxes and business cards retained with the artefacts suggest he may have travelled as far north as Alexandria, and as far south as Luxor, the latter being an opportunity not experienced by many Australians during the war. His collection consisted primarily of small objects, which would have been easily transportable: scarabs, amulets, coins, bronze figurines, as well as a mummified cat, and a fragment of cartonnage. In 1916, he was promoted and redeployed to France where he served with distinction. After the War, St Vincent Welch returned to Australia where he shared his fascination with, and experiences of, Egypt in a series of public lectures complemented by an extensive collection lantern slides. Following his death in 1919, his collection remained with his family, in a private display case, until 2017, when it was donated to the Nicholson Museum by his descendants (Richards 2019, 18-21).



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- '11th Battalion AIF - Cheops Pyramid' <http://11bbtn.wags.org.au>
- 'Embroidered 'Souvenir of Egypt' cloth' <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C119418>

CAPTIONS

- 'Battalion have a day out', World War I, 1914-1915
Photographer: Capt. E.A. McKenna
Museums Victoria MM 50636
- Group Portrait of Nurses in Front of the Great Sphinx of Giza, Egypt, 1915-1917. Creator: Sister Selina Lily Mackenzie
Museums Victoria MM 107466
- Glass beaded snake made by a Turkish prisoner circa 1915. Queensland Museum CH61112
- On pyramid as part of the touring exhibition *The Spirit of Anzac Centenary Experience*
- Mummy case cartonnage fragment, circa 1070-713 BCE. Nicholson Collection, Chau Chak Wing Museum, NM2017.263
- Embroidered doily of British and Australian Flags and pyramids, 1915. Queensland Museum, SH58343

Tourism and the Migrant Experience



From the beginning of the 20th century, the Australian experience of Egypt was most commonly an incidental experience as part of their travel to and from Europe. Before WWI, leisure travel was largely restricted to the elite. However, throughout the interwar period and following WWII, tourism became increasingly common, with an emerging middle class able to travel and access tourist experiences. This included Egypt, which was often 'on the way' due to the commercial travel routes. Ocean liners were the primary form of transport, with companies such as Thomas Cook and Orient Lines offering affordable passage between Australia and London via Sri Lanka, Egypt, Italy, France and Spain. From the 1930s, air travel began to cater to the needs of businessmen and public officials, with flights between Europe and Australia making several stopovers, including in Cairo (Pirie 2008). The local transportation services and tour operators were closely connected with the maritime transport industry, offering package deals and bespoke tours for incidental tourists, as well as for those with more time to spend (Ockinga 2021, 468-9).

Tourists usually began their adventure in Cairo before setting off along the Nile, their route dependant on the length of their stay. These trips were often accompanied by a dragoman, who ensured access to heritage sites and negotiated markets for their clients, although there are some accounts of individuals who eschewed this method of travel (Mairs and Muratov 2015, 11-40). The acquisition of souvenirs was a key aspect of the travel experience, serving as "a tangible proxy for the image of a country and its past" (Hassan 2016, 113). While contemporary-made souvenirs were readily available and purchased, authorised

sellers were able to also trade in authentic antiquities – including the Cairo Museum, which was active as an antiquities dealer until 1952 (Reeves 2013, note 113). While records of these dealers are rare, the receipts accompanying museum documentation and archives, particularly those of diaries of prominent citizens and travellers, allow insight into the operations of the major dealers active in Cairo until the middle of the century, when authorised sales became much rarer (Hagan and Ryholt 2016). Items purchased by tourists were as varied as the interests of the individual: faience objects, jewellery, ceramics and small sculpture were frequently acquired, with portability and durability perhaps key factors in decision making. During the 1920s and 1930s, ancient items such as amulets and scarabs were regularly turned into modern jewellery reflecting the Egyptianising contemporary fashions. Over time the personal effects of tourists, particularly those of genuine antiquity, or connected to prominent citizens, have been donated to public institutions. Recent research has attempted to untangle the collecting histories of tourists from an Australian perspective and is presented as part of the contemporary exhibition *Pharaonic Obsessions: Ancient Egypt, an Australian Story* at the University of Sydney (Richards 2021).

While the collecting practices of tourists varied greatly based on an individual's own level of wealth and connections, one common feature was photography. Museum, library, and archival collections across Australia frequently include photographs of the tourist experience of Cairo, with Western tourists sitting on camels, and occasionally donkeys, led by unnamed Egyptian guides in front of the Sphinx and great pyramids of Giza. Studio photographs were also a common tourist purchase, including stereographs in the 19th century, and prints increasingly collected in the early 20th century. These images were of the ancient, Coptic and Islamic monuments of Egypt as well as portraits of Egyptian people often dressed in an exoticising and provocative manner including young children. It is important to note that this exploitive type of imagery was by no means exclusive to Egypt, or North Africa. Colonial and 'first world' constructions of a fictional orientalist 'East' through early photography is being increasingly examined and criticised in scholarship. Examples of these studio images have found their way into the nation's collections through donations of family photo albums reflecting individual tourist journeys and will be of increasing importance to the advancement of scholarship on photography as part of the mechanisms of colonial exploitation, and current decolonisation discourses.



The location of Egypt, on the key routes between Australia and Europe, was central not only to the tourist experience, but also to the migrant experience. However, the introduction of the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, an aspect of the White Australia Policy, dramatically changed the demographic of migrants to almost exclusively English-speaking people from the United Kingdom. Ships carrying new immigrants queued at Port Said, for passage through the Canal. This time delay allowed passengers a chance to explore the markets of Port Said and take tours to the Pyramids. Souvenirs were often small items like wallets or postcards. However, one immigrant, Robert Bedford, who arrived in Australia from Britain in 1915, bought with him a collection of Egyptian antiquities including a coffin. In 1922 he opened a local museum in Kyancutta in regional South Australia. The museum continued in operation until the early 1960s, although its principal focus became its geological and natural history collection (Cooper and Jago 2018, 423–24).

The White Australia policy ensured that few immigrants were from Egypt itself, with only 500 Egyptian born people living in Australia by 1933 (Ashton and Ho 2008). While very limited, a few prominent Egyptian immigrants were reported in the newspapers of the day, including the sisters Helen and Dina Mitchnick, linguists who worked for the predecessor of Australian High Commission in Cairo. Their arrival in 1939 was heralded in the women's section of several papers ('Egyptian Sisters' 1939).

Following the Second World War, the Chifley government began to relax some of the testing criteria associated with the White Australia policy, effectively allowing individuals from a range of European backgrounds to move to Australia. One of the first ships to dock in Australia following this policy change was the SS Misr. Beginning its journey at Port Said, Egypt, the SS Misr carried 624 passengers from a variety of European and Middle Eastern nationalities, arriving in Melbourne in April 1947 (National Archives, *The Voyage of the Misr 1947*). Over the next two decades, migrant arrivals from Europe, North Africa and the Middle East were via the Suez Canal, with some individuals spending considerable time at the port, or further afield, before taking the final leg of their journey. The stories of migrants during this period, and the artefacts they carried with them, have become of increasing interest to the national story, with collecting institutions including the National Maritime Museum, Immigration Museum SA, Migration Museum, Victoria, and National Archives prioritising collecting materials related to migration stories and using digital portals to promote the histories of migrants. The connectivity of Egypt to the Australian migrant experience, has up until now been seen as a minor aspect of this broader national narrative. However, future research will hopefully bring the entanglement of Egypt to the migrant experience and individual stories to life.

FREDERICK SEPTIMUS KELLY (1881-1916)

Frederick Septimus Kelly was born in Sydney in 1881 and attended Sydney Grammar School before moving with his family to England where he completed his Bachelor and Master degrees at Oxford University. Kelly was a gifted pianist and composer as well as world class rower, winning a gold medal at the 1908 Olympic Games. His musical career saw him perform throughout England and Sydney to critical acclaim until the outbreak of World War One when he enlisted in the Royal Naval Division (Carmody 1983). Kelly was part of the upper elite of British society, with connections affording him leisurely travel throughout the Mediterranean and Egypt prior to his enlistment. His diaries, held by the National Library of Australia, record his travels and shed light on the Egyptian experience afforded to wealthy tourists of the day. In 1910, Kelly and his sister Maise employed Hugh Whittaker, an amateur archaeologist, as the guide for their Egyptian adventure. Much to Whittaker's annoyance, Kelly insisted on taking a grand piano on the Nile journey. He purchased ancient necklaces from dealers in Cairo and Luxor, including Mohammed Mohassib, whose name appears in museum provenance records world-wide. On one evening he met with Howard Carter, who advised him that some of his purchases were fakes, leading him to return the pieces (Richards and Jones 2014, 13). Kelly returned to Egypt during his wartime service. He was wounded twice and suffered the loss of his close friend Rupert Brooke, for whom he composed *Elegy for a String Orchestra*. Kelly was killed in action on 13 November 1916, during the last battle of the Somme. His personal collection of Egyptian artefacts were passed down through the family before being donated to the Nicholson Museum by his niece Beatrice McPhillamy in 1968.



JOHN S. WARD AND THE ABBEY MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY, CABOOLTURE

One of the more unusual collections in Australia is the Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology, Caboolture, which includes approximately 4500 artefacts of ancient and medieval European, Middle Eastern and Egyptian heritage. The collection was established by John Sebastian Ward (1885–1949) as part of the Abbey Folk Park in England, which opened in 1935 as an interactive open-air heritage site that included displays of ancient and medieval material alongside modern replicas and demonstrations. Ward was also the founder of the Confraternity of the Kingdom of Christ, a Pentecostal religious sect, whose community lived at the Abbey Folk Park (Ginn 2009). The original collection numbered over 40,000 items. However, due to the events of WW2 and increasing scrutiny over the religion, Ward and the community moved to Cyprus, selling nearly 90% of the collection to fund the move (Descœudres and Harrison 1996, 77). Ward died in Cyprus in 1949 and his wife Jesse became leader of the religious group. The community moved again in the 1950s first to Egypt and then Sri Lanka, before finally settling Caboolture, Queensland in 1965 (Agnew and Strong 1988, 87). In 1986, after decades of work on the remaining collection, the Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology was opened at Caboolture, named for the original estate. The collection today includes ancient Egyptian ceramics, stone tools, faience jewellery, and mummy net beads, a gilded cartonnage mask as well as items from the Islamic period.

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CAPTIONS

Ihad Hulusi
Atelier Kalfa, designer
Egyptian State Railways, publisher
'Egypt welcomes you 1930s'
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
1990.1789.21

Stereoscopic photograph, 'The Farewell Offering, Leaving for the Desert, Egypt', Underwood & Underwood, Egypt, 1896. Macleay Collections, Chau Chak Wing Museum. HP2014.3.195

Faience necklace from the collection of FS Kelly. Nicholson Collection, Chau Chak Wing Museum NM68.30

Egyptian studio photographs from Eileen Gilroy's 'A trip to Europe' photo album, 1929. Chau Chak Wing Museum HP91.1.1



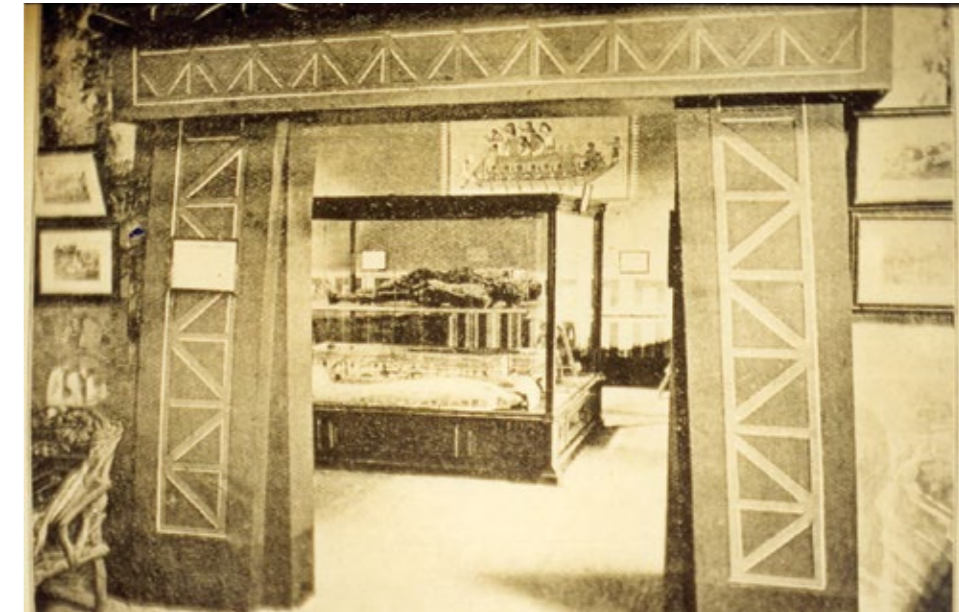
Ancestral remains in Australia



An important component for understanding Egyptian cultural heritage in Australia is the identification of Egyptian ancestral remains and their dispersal throughout international collections. They were collected as curiosities, museum specimens, and tourist souvenirs throughout the 19th and well into the 20th century, until the ethics of such endeavours began to be questioned and international legislation was created to help countries, including Egypt, protect their ancestral remains from being acquired by foreign institutions or sold on international art markets.

In the wake of Napoleon's conquest of the Nile, the mummified remains of Egyptian people became a point of morbid fascination for those in Europe and North America. Whole mummies, were purchased on the antiquities markets in Egypt and exported to European institutions, where they were unwrapped in front of audiences, often in the name of scientific discovery. These events became a particularly popular entertainment in Victorian England, with unwrapping parties held in private homes of the elite as well as in exhibition halls for public enjoyment. Once unwrapped, the remains of individuals could become part of museum collections, if part of a 'scientific' endeavour, or discarded in the private sphere. The popularity of such events and the ongoing fascination with the preservation methods used in ancient Egypt, increased illicit excavations of tombs to meet the demands of the market.

In Australia, only one such event is known to have taken place. In 1892 John Speechly Gotch, a prominent Melbourne businessman, imported two Egyptian mummies with the intention of hosting a public unrolling event and donating the remains to the National Gallery.

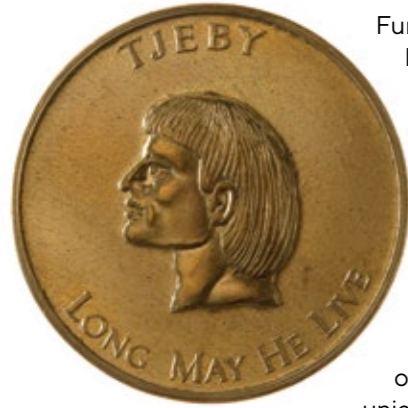


In August, *the Age* printed a call for assistance from Mr Gotch, who had hopes to establish a panel of experts to 'help in the ceremony' (Mummies in Melbourne, 8 Aug 1892). The following January, one of the mummies was unrolled on a specially made dais at the Exhibition Building Melbourne by Dr James Neild, Lecturer of Forensic Medicine at Melbourne University, in front of an audience of several hundred. Gotch had secured the expertise of Reverend D. Medowcroft to explain the process of mummification and facts of Egyptian history throughout the event. Newspaper reports indicate that many in attendance left before the mummy had been unwrapped, the sheer number of bandages delaying the 'reveal' too long for an impatient audience (*The Egyptian Mummies*, 21 Jan 1893). The reception of such an activity was very different to the events described in the packed exhibition halls of England that had been taking place for nearly a century, and thankfully did not begin a wave of mummy unwrapping parties on Australian shores. The two mummies were subsequently displayed in a dedicated mummy room in the Melbourne Exhibition centre decorated with reproduction of tomb scenes (Hope 2011, 164, Merrillees 1991, 14, Dustan and

Graham 1996, 247-49). These two individuals were acquired by Museums Victoria from the Exhibition Building trustees in the late 1930s and remain in their collections today (inventory numbers X83789 and X83760).

Mummified remains were primarily imported into the country as part of the collections destined for museums. The first ancient Egyptian human remains to arrive in Australia was a mummified head of an unknown individual, as part of the collection of M. Weidenbach in 1849. It is likely that this head is now part of the Museums Victoria collection, described as having small pieces of gold foil attached to the face (Hope 2011, 164).

In 1860, the first complete remains were shipped to Australia as part of the founding donation for the University of Sydney's antiquities museum. Charles Nicholson had acquired two mummies in coffins named for Padiashikhet and Meruah, a Roman period child mummy named Horus, a coffin for Mer-neith-ites filled with the disarticulated remains of a mummy, and several mummy parts including a head, 3 hands, cuttings of hair, and a pair of legs belonging to an infant. Both the head and legs were unwrapped when the collection was donated.



Further disarticulated remains have been incorporated into the Nicholson Collection including four hands, two feet and two toe bones and four teeth. These were donated by private citizens, often souvenirs belonging to former family members including AIF personnel. Two items, one foot and one hand, were uniquely donated in the Arnott's biscuit tins they had been previously

stored in. In 2010 the museum acquired a second mummified head of an unknown person, formerly in the collections of the Australian Museum, given to a Newcastle teacher in the 1950s, and then passed by descent, before being offered to the museum.

In 1882, the Australian Museum established their own Egyptian antiquity collection which included significant donation by Drs Schmidt and Mook of a collection of human heads, all in varied stages of wrappings. In 1910 a mummified hand was acquired, again from a private donation, and in 1912 two mummies were donated to the collection by Sir Robert Lucas-Tooth (Tristant et al. 2014, 151-153). Further donations in the 1920s and 1980s included three feet, two hands and two heads of unknown people. The majority of the remains were placed on long term loan with the Macquarie University Museum of Ancient Cultures, where many of these remains have formed the bases of the *Strangers in a Strange Land* research project, but have recently been reabsorbed into the State institution's collection.

The Tasmania Museum and Art Gallery collection includes the mummified remains of an adolescent man inside a wooden coffin, donated by Englishman J Harrold in 1897. Harrold has visited Tasmania early in the year and had proposed to donate a mummy from his private collections in England to the Tasmanian institution (Shaping Tasmania). The 'ancient stranger' arrived in Tasmania in November of that year (*The Mercury*, 6 Nov 1897).

The South Australian Museum acquired their first human remains through the agency of Reverend Fletcher. Fletcher, commissioned by the state, purchased at least one complete mummy and coffin belonging to Renpit-Nefert during his visits to Cairo in the 1890s. Today, the collection like others includes several further disarticulated mummified remains, as well as the hair from a mummy, donated by private citizens, including the head of a mummy donated to the museum in 1933 by Mr Gray from the country town of Orrorro (Head of mummy for museum, 19 Oct 1933).

In Melbourne, the National Gallery received the mummified remains of Tjeby, who was buried at the Naga ed-Der Cemetery, Thebes circa 1956-1870 BCE, in 1923 from the Harvard-Boston Egyptian Expedition. This is one of the few examples of mummified remains collected during scientific excavation, with a clear provenience held in an Australian institution. During the early history of the museum, the Gallery was co-located with the State Library and Museum. When the Gallery relocated in 1968, the mummified remains were left to the Museum collection (now known under the unified banner Museums Victoria) while the ancient artefacts were retained in the Art Gallery's collection (Merrillees 1991, 16).

The Australian Institute of Archaeology (AIA) was established in 1946 in Melbourne by businessman Walter Beazley, with a donation of Middle Eastern and Egyptian artefacts. In 1965 the AIA purchased the mummy of a child dated to the Greco-Roman period, with cartonnage adornments from Sotheby's auction house. No provenance information was supplied in the sale catalogue or to the AIA on receipt of the remains (Craig and Davey 2009, 16). The AIA collection, including the unnamed child, is now housed at La Trobe University. Also in Melbourne are the mummified head and a foot from unknown persons held in the Harry Brookes Allen Museum of Anatomy and Pathology, Melbourne University as well as a mummified hand in the Dodgson Collection of Queens College at the same institution. The remains of the former institution have reportedly been in the collections for over 100 years; however, the provenance of these items is unknown. The Queens College hand was acquired in Egypt by the founder of the Dodgson collection, who was closely associated with Flinders Petrie in the 1890s (Jameison 2007, 3).

The most recent ancestral remains to be imported into Australia are those in the private collection of David Walsh and on display at the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Tasmania. These include the remains of Pausiris, a 70 year old Egyptian man who lived during the first century BCE or first century CE, and Ta-Sheret-Min, an Egyptian woman who lived during the Late Period, 664-399BCE. Walsh began his collection in the 1980s, buying significant contemporary as well as ancient artefacts representing African and European cultures which from the 1990s were stored on his private estate Moorilla and made accessible to the public (Loherly 2010-11, 78).

The ancestral remains of Egyptian people are dispersed in collections around the south eastern areas of Australia. No human remains are known in the collections of Western Australia, Northern Territory or Queensland at the time of writing. The manner in which these people, or parts of people, have been acquired by museums is foremost as artefacts to be studied by specialists or displayed for the public as educational

entertainment. Rarely are the names of individuals known nor their intended final resting places and they are wholly disconnected from their burial assemblages. There are no current overarching Australian guidelines for the display of human remains from global cultures, although there are international guidelines established by UNESCO, ICOM and UMAC that Australian institutions often used as guides for their code of ethics and policy decision. It is left to each institution to determine their own ethical principles regarding the display, research and publication of these Egyptian ancestors.

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GRAFTON ELLIOT SMITH (1871-1937)

Grafton Elliot Smith was a leading, yet controversial, figure of anthropology in the early 20th century. Smith, born in Grafton, NSW, graduated from the University of Sydney's medical school in 1892 and was appointed as demonstrator of anatomy at the University in 1894. In 1896, Smith was awarded the James King of Irrawang travelling scholarship and moved to St Johns College, Cambridge, where he began publishing on neuro-anatomy topics (Blunt 1988). In 1900 Smith took up the first professorship of Anatomy at the Egyptian Government School of Medicine in Cairo. Over the next decade, Smith was active in the development of new approaches to studying mummified remains of Egyptian people including X-Ray imaging, a newly discovered technology. During his years in Cairo, Smith was able to continue his studies of anatomy focussed on the brain and its structure, while publishing his discoveries of mummification methodologies. The building of the Aswan Dam, drove a rapid recovery of ancient Egyptians buried in the area, the documentation and research of which became the responsibility of Smith. He began to theorise on the role of ancient Egyptian society in the development of global cultures and advocated for cultural diffusionist models, that were controversial at the time and rejected by many of his peers (Waldron 2000, 381-387). While Smith's legacy is mired by his theories on race and culture, he is a key figure in the history of Egyptology and scientific approaches to mummified remains. During Smith's time in Cairo, he and his wife Kathleen kept in regular contact with their family in Australia, writing letters about their daily work, including the investigation of the Royal Mummies, accompanied by small mementos. Their nephew William, received just over 100 items from his aunt and uncle including amulets, figurines, a mummified kitten, a bank note from the time of Napoleon, and several samples of mummy wrappings, their owners identified in Kathleen's handwriting. The collection, including several of the letters, were donated to the Nicholson Museum in 1984 by Smith's grand-nieces Elwyn Andrews and Elizabeth Bootle (Callender 2006).



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CAPTIONS

Coffin of Padiashikhet, circa 750BCE. Collected by Charles Nicholson, Thebes Egypt 1856-57. Nicholson Collection, Chau Chak Wing Museum NMR.28

Mummy's Tomb at Exhibition Building (Melbourne), 1890-1900s, Photographer: David Tutchenor. Source: Museums Victoria

Medal for Tjeby Egyptian Mummy, Museum of Victoria, Australia, 1984. Museums Victoria NU 20134. Photographer: Jon Augier.

Fragment of mummy wrapping labelled Priest XXI, from the collection of Grafton Elliot Smith, circa 1900. Nicholson Collection, Chau Chak Wing Museum, NM84.6.4

Exhibiting Egypt



The exhibition of Egyptian cultural heritage in Australia has followed international museum trends in display techniques, marketing, and subject matter, offering visitors a firsthand encounter with the past. Overwhelmingly, exhibitions of Egyptian history have focussed on antiquity, especially the Pharaonic period, and are often promoted using evocative rhetoric, most frequently 'wonders' 'treasures' and 'secrets revealed'. These approaches, both in Australia and internationally, have created a sensationalised version of Egypt's past to the exclusion of contemporary Egyptian society (el-Gawad 2021).

The earliest Australian exhibitions of Egyptian culture were those of the University of Sydney, as a permanent display within the antiquities museum, and the 'Mummy Room' of the Melbourne Exhibition hall. As museums around the country began to amass larger collections of Egyptian artefacts, display rooms were added to galleries to cater specifically to these materials. The discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, and wave of Egyptomania that followed, invigorated the public's appetite for ancient Egyptian culture. In South Australia, the museum responded by making the entirety of their Egyptian collection temporarily available to the public (Egyptian Antiquities, 11 Dec 1924). Over the

next decade, the ancient Egyptian collection became a focal point for the museum, and the dedicated exhibition room was decorated with lavish wall-paintings, depicting ancient Egyptian cosmological scenes, under the leadership of curator Norman Tindale. The striking display captures the enthusiasm of the period, and has been preserved, almost unchanged, since 1939 in recognition of the exhibition's historical significance in an era obsessed with ancient Egypt (Merrillees 1991, 26-27).

Over the past 80 years the popularity for permanent exhibitions of Egyptian culture have waxed and waned in Australian institutions, particularly in response to changing priorities and limited display spaces. Today museums with long term or 'permanent' exhibitions dedicated to ancient Egyptian culture include the South Australian Museum, the Chau Chak Wing Museum at the University of Sydney, the Macquarie University History Museum and The Museum of Classical Archaeology at the University of Adelaide. The National Art Gallery of Victoria features significant artefacts from their Egyptian collection in the permanent exhibition *The Ancient World*. As an alternative to permanent galleries, which often do not suit the current missions of institutions, Egyptian artefacts are instead included in long term

'highlights' exhibitions. Recently opened examples of such displays include the Australian Museum's *200 Treasures* exhibition which opened in 2017, and the Western Australia Boola Bardip Museum's *Innovations* and *Stan Perron Western Australia Treasures* galleries which both opened in 2020.

Temporary exhibitions that explore Egyptian culture regularly feature across the country drawing on different aspects of ancient history, collectors and collecting practices and the modern receptions of ancient Egyptian culture. These exhibitions often rely on loans between institutions to develop specific themes and networks of curators and scholars to facilitate the in-depth research required to produce exhibition content. The Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne staged a very successful exhibition *Mummymania*, 29 Sep 2015 - 17 Apr 2016, which explored ancient mummification practices and the history of Egyptology alongside the concept of the 'mummy' in Hollywood horror films. This exhibition relied upon the collections of the University as well as items loaned from local institutions. The Museum of Tropical Queensland in Townsville, which does not have its own antiquities collection staged the exhibition *Antiquities Revealed* from May to October 2021, the entirety loaned from Queensland Museum.





In addition to the collections of Egyptian heritage in Australia, the nation's institutions have frequently welcomed international collections as part of large-scale touring exhibitions, frequently termed 'blockbusters'. These exhibitions require significant financial support, often from government and industry partners, are time limited and promoted in much the same way as a blockbuster feature film. The phenomenon of blockbuster exhibitions began in the 1970s, yet the first Egyptian exhibition to make its way to Australia was *Gold of Pharaohs* in 1988. The exhibition was negotiated between the heads of state of each country and set in place during Prime Minister Bob Hawke's visit to Egypt in February 1987. It toured from Brisbane to Perth to Sydney then Melbourne, accompanied by an in-depth, yet publicly accessible, catalogue written by Australian Egyptologist Colin Hope (Hope 1989). The exhibition while diplomatically framed as a gift incurred a one-million-dollar rental fee. Visitors were charged entry to cover some of the costs of institutions and large-scale support was sought from industry including the Australian Wheat Board, whose involvement was strategically aligned to Australian-Egyptian trade negotiations (Lawrenson and O'Reilly 2019, 105).

Since the staging of *Gold of the Pharaohs* Australian institutions have partnered with several European institutions including the Louvre, British Museum and Rijksmuseum Museum to bring mummies and Egyptian 'treasures' to Australian audiences with increasing frequency. However, loans from Egypt directly are rare. In 2012, the Melbourne Museum staged *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs* with direct support from Cairo Museum. The Australian Museum and Western Australian Museum had intended to stage a similar exhibition on *Tutankhamun* as part of a global tour on loan from Cairo Museum. However due to

the global pandemic of 2021-22, this tour was cancelled. In 2023 the Australian Museum will instead host *Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs*, the third travelling show from Egypt to be staged in Australia.

Significant exhibitions of Australian art and culture have also been staged in Egypt. In 1977, 63 contemporary Indigenous Australian art works were part of at the exhibition *Second Black and African World Arts and Culture Festival in Lagos* which then toured Africa, including Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt (Geissler 2020, 35). Their tour was supported by the Aboriginal Arts Board that was the driving force of large-scale international touring exhibitions of Indigenous Australian contemporary art in the late 20th century. More recently artists including designer Robyn Caughlan and award-winning photographer and curator Wayne Quilliam have exhibited their works to critical acclaim throughout Egypt (collection.maas.museum; headon.com.au). Although rare, Australian collections touring to Egypt has also occurred. Most recently the University of Adelaide's Centre for Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture exhibition *Early Egypt through the eyes of Australians* was staged in Cairo and Alexandria, before opening in Adelaide in 2019.

The enduring popularity of Ancient Egypt in Australia, like other Western nations, does not appear to be diminishing anytime soon. Up until recently, most exhibitions, either localised or international touring shows, have been focussed upon the Pharaonic ages, limiting the engagement to a single aspect of Egyptian heritage and culture (Macdonald 2000). However, with new museological discourse on decolonisation and international projects such as the UCL based 'Egypt's Dispersed Heritage' (gtr.ukri.org) we will hopefully see a new era of exhibitions that expands the perspectives of and engagement with Egyptian cultural heritage in Australia.

TOURING EXHIBITIONS

- *Gold of the Pharaohs* (Cairo Museum)
 - » Brisbane 1988
 - » Perth 1988
 - » Sydney 1989
 - » Melbourne 1989
- *Life and Death Under the Pharaohs* (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden)
 - » Western Australian Museum, 20 Feb- 27 April 1998
 - » Australian Museum, July-Oct 1998
- *Life Beyond the Tomb: death in ancient Egypt / Mummies: Ancient Egypt and the afterlife* (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden)
 - » Australian Museum, 11 Dec 2004 - 22 May 2005
 - » Melbourne Museum, July - Oct 2005.
 - » South Australia Museum, Oct 2005 - Feb 2006
- *Egyptian Antiquities from the Louvre: journey to the afterlife* (The Louvre)
 - » National Gallery of Australia, Nov 2006 - 25 February 2007.
- *Egyptian Treasures: Art of the Pharaohs*
 - » Australian Museum 2009
- *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs* (Cairo Museum)
 - » Melbourne Museum, April - Dec 2011.
- *Secrets of the Afterlife: Magic, Mummies and Immortality in Ancient Egypt* (British Museum)
 - » Western Australia Museum, 17 May - 22 September 2013
- *Egyptian Mummies: Exploring Ancient Lives* (British Museum)
 - » Museum of Arts and Applied Sciences, 10 Dec 2016 - 25 April 2017
 - » Queensland Museum, 16 March - 26 August 2018
- *Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs* (Cairo)
 - » Australian Museum scheduled 2023



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CAPTIONS

- The Egyptian Room, South Australian Museum.*
- View of Pharaonic Obsessions at the Chau Chak Wing Museum*
- Poster for 'Secrets of the Afterlife' Western Australian Museum 17 May - 22 September 2013. Courtesy Western Australian Museum and The British Museum*
- Installation view of 200 Treasures of the Australian Museum, Theban coffin and mummy. Courtesy of the Australian Museum, photographer: Abram Powell*
- Aboriginal Wedding Dress', designed by Robyn Caughlan. Powerhouse collections 99/135/2*
- Mummymania exhibition (29 September 2015 to 27 April 2016). Courtesy of the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne. Photographer: Christian Capurro*



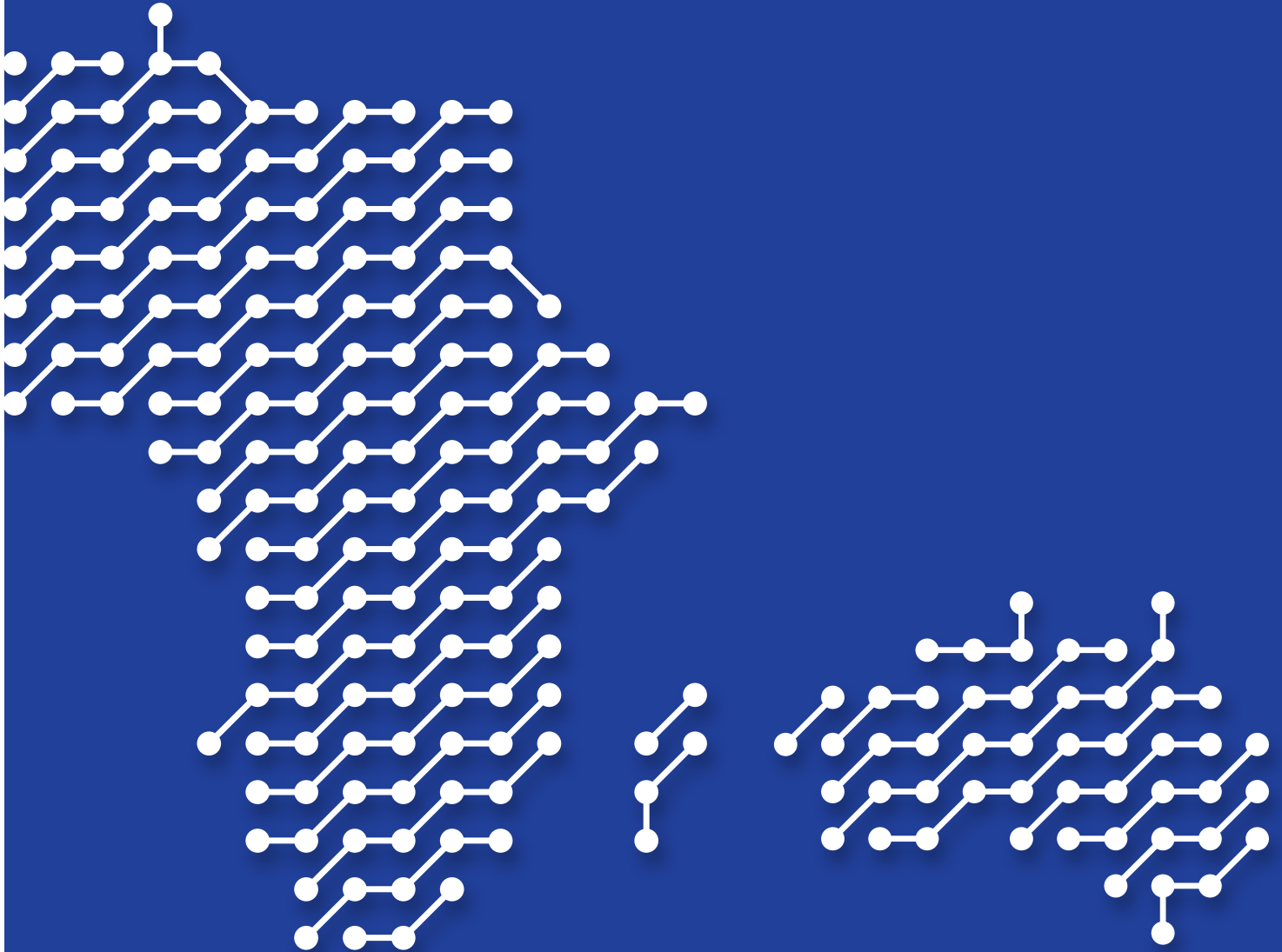


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