



EGYPT in Wallonia

Room A of the Royal Museum of Mariemont, with Greek & Egyptian antiquities displayed together in a state-of-the-art fashion.

by Lucy Gordan-Rastelli

Photos courtesy of the Royal Museum of Mariemont

Located in Morlanwelz, approximately halfway between Mons and Charleroi — the second largest city in Wallonia or French-speaking Belgium — the Royal Museum of Mariemont owes its existence to the generosity of industrialist Raoul Warocqué (1870-1917). A bachelor so without official descendants, he bequeathed to the Belgium government his park, its castle, his library and fabulous collections of ancient Egyptian, Greek, Roman (some excavated locally) and Etruscan antiquities, plus Asian artifacts (from Japan, Vietnam, Korea and the most complete collection of Chinese antiquities in Belgium), as well as illuminated manuscripts, musical scores by Schumann and Chopin, letters from Rembrandt and Champollion, lace, rare artistic book-bindings, and the largest collection in the world of Tournai porcelain.

On May 2, 1920, three years after Warocqué's death, the museum he'd envisioned opened to the public in the family chateau, built by his great-grandfather Nicolas in the 1830s, and later renovated in 1909-1910 for Warocqué by architect Georges Martin, with additional

wings for his library and his collections of ancient and Asian art. Its first curator was Richard Schellinck, who'd been Warocqué's personal secretary and librarian.

Although a large part of the castle burned down on Christmas Eve in 1960, most of the artifacts were saved, thanks to the Museum's third director, Germaine Faider, whose husband, Paul Faider, had been her predecessor. The current Museum, inspired by Le Corbusier and designed and built by Belgian architect Roger Bastin (1913-1986) — also the architect of the Museum of Modern Art in Brussels — was inaugurated in 1975. The "new" concrete bunker-like Museum is surrounded by the castle's 45-hectare park in the style of an English landscape garden, which also houses an arboretum — the largest in Wallonia — with some 2,000 centuries-old trees from around the world, the ruins of a castle



Left, An unfinished portrait of Raoul Warocqué by J. Cran. Above, The industrialist's original chateau, which was destroyed by fire in 1960. On its site was built the present-day Royal Museum of Mariemont, the entrance to which is at right. The contemporary concrete "bunker-like" structure was inspired by the architecture of Le Corbusier.



Raoul Warocqué (1870-1917)

Raoul Warocqué — tall, round-faced, broad-shouldered and very corpulent, with a firm chin and a penetrating expression from behind gold-rimmed glasses — was the fourth generation of an extremely wealthy Belgian family. His great-grandfather, Nicolas (1773-1838), came from Mons to Morlanwelz at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century and opened coal mines. At first very successful, he ran into opposition over his strong support for Dutch rule in Belgium, losing his political and social clout, undergoing numerous trials, and having to bail out his bankrupt brother, Isidore. Nicolas's son, Abel (1805-1864), greatly increased the family's number of coal mines and thus its wealth; and his son, Arthur (1835-1880), Raoul's father and a promoter of Belgian horticulture, took over; but he died young, leaving Raoul an orphan ten years old.

When Raoul came of age — both a *bon vivant* and a scholar — he too, like his great-grandfather, paid off his older brother's enormous debts, but also took charge of the family businesses and added other Belgian enterprises, as well as foreign ones in France and, especially, in China to his investments. Warocqué was also devoted to cultural exchanges between Belgium and China; and he headed Belgium's mission in 1909 to announce to the Chinese emperor the death of King Leopold II and Albert I's succession to the throne. He also subsidized the education of Chinese students in Belgium.

Warocqué life-long interest in politics began when he studied law for four years at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB). In 1896 he entered active politics as the elected provincial counselor of Hainaut, serving until 1900. That year he was elected a member of the Belgian Parliament and a year later became the mayor of Morlanwelz, holding both offices until his death in 1917, forever a member of the opposition. It could be said that his political viewpoints were ambivalent and contradictory.

Warocqué strongly believed that his wealth gave him the duty to enrich society. A supporter of compulsory education, he firmly believed that scientific discoveries through research and education were the best ways to emancipate his less-fortunate fellow citizens; so he founded the Anatomical Institute at the University of Brussels and what is today the Faculty of Economics at the University of Mons; he also financed a high school in Morlanwelz. At the start of the First World War, he organized an ambulance service and fought — through negotiations — deportations of Belgian workers to Germany. His opponents considered this behavior capitulating to the enemy, however.

His attitude towards philanthropy was the same as to politics: that it was his duty as a wealthy man to help the less fortunate. Thus Warocqué opened dormitories in Brussels (1891), which distributed soup and bread to the poor. He supported the ULB, the École des Mines and founded the Institut Commercial in Mons, as well as the Athénée du Centre in Morlanwelz, an orphanage, childcare facility and maternity hospital. Warocqué was also one of the financiers of the World Fairs of Brussels (1897 and 1910) and of Charleroi (1911).

built by Mary of Hungary in 1564 — and the Warocqué's family's winter garden. The most recent major donation to Marie-mont Museum's some 100,000 artifacts in 2013 are forty-two objects, mostly ancient Chinese and Pre-Columbian, from the collection of then recently deceased Count Yves Boël, one of the wealthiest businessmen in Belgium, and his wife, Countess Yolande.

Similar, predominantly one-man collections like Warocqué's — which are now museums — are those of Henri of Orléans, Duke d'Aumale (1822-1897) in Chantilly; of Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon (see my article: "Ancient Egyptian Art at Lisbon's Calouste Gulbenkian Museum," *Kmt*, winter 2008-09); and of J. Paul Getty in Malibu, California.

It seems that Warocqué's first travels abroad were for business — for railroads and coal mines in China, tobacco in Portugal, minerals in the Congo and Russia — before going to Egypt for the first time in 1911, to purchase artifacts for his collection. By that time Warocqué had already acquired several ancient Egyptian artifacts on the French market. The first items he purchased were not, in fact, ancient, Egyptian or even artifacts, but they sparked Warocqué's curiosity. While still a student, he was already a bibliophile and rare book collector and followed the advice of his friend and fellow bibliophile Georges Van der Meylen (1871-1935) to scout rare bookstores and auctions to



A unique fragmentary greywacke mortar of Second Dynasty date, inscribed on its side with the name of King Den (detail), purchased by Raoul Warocqué in 1904 from a sale of Egyptian antiquities belonging to French Egyptologist Émile Amélineau.

find the best treasures. Thus in 1888, in Paris, he purchased a copy of *Description de l'Égypte ou Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites pendant l'expédition de l'armée française, Paris, Imprimerie Impériale, 1809-1813*, the first item of Warocqué's Egyptology collection. "From then on," recounts *Antiquités Égyptiennes au Musée Royal de Mariemont* (2009), the splendid catalogue of Mariemont's Egyptian collection (sadly only in French), "he continued to enrich his library with works

about Egyptology, Egyptological autographs, photographs and literature inspired by Egypt."

"But he didn't wait too long," continues the catalogue, "encouraged by his friend Franz Cumont, before he began to get interested in ancient Egyptian artifacts too." In a letter Cumont wrote to Warocqué in 1903, he informed him that the Greek antiquarian Triantaphyllos — who'd recently opened a business in Paris — had two small bronzes for sale. Warocqué bought them both: one for 600

francs (inv. B.2 in the 2009 catalogue), made of silver, dating to the Third Intermediate Period, of unknown provenance, probably representing a lion-headed version of the goddess Wadjet; the other, with traces of gilding for 150 francs, representing a kneeling pharaoh (inv. B.3) made of bronze, dating to the Twenty-ninth/Thirtieth Dynasty or Ptolemaic Period, of unknown provenance.

Once intrigued Warocqué never stopped buying; his next purchases were both still in 1903. One was a limestone fragment of a coffin cover (inv. B.1) Thirtieth Dynasty, probably from Memphis; and the other a diorite standing statue of the goddess Isis, dating to the late Ptolemaic-early Roman Period (inv. 130), which he bought from another Parisian antiquarian, Madame Raymond Serrure.

In 1904 Warocqué made purchases at two important sales: from Émile Amélineau (1850-1915), a priest, French Coptologist, archeologist and Egyptologist, whose reputation was destroyed by Flinders Petrie, who re-excavated at Abydos and showed how much damage Amélineau had wrought; and from Leon De Sombzée (1837-1901), who, like Warocqué was an industrialist, member of the Belgian Parliament and collector. From Amélineau he purchased a huge greywacke vase, basin or "mortar" dedicated to the pharaoh Den, from Abydos and dating to the Second Dynasty. "It's one of the collection's stars," said Dr. Marie-Cécile Bruwier, director of the Royal Museum of Mariemont, "although it's missing about one third. Luckily some of the missing pieces are in the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels. It's the biggest 'mortar' we know from such an early period. Since it's an unicum [one of a kind, unique], we have no comparative information. We don't know what it was used for." With a Ph.D. from the Catholic University of Louvain-la Neuve in Egyptology, where she is a professor of Egyptology, Dr. Bruwier has worked at the Museum since 1980, when she founded its education department.

According to the collection catalogue, we know a lot about the outcome of the Amélineau sale from a copy annotated by Capart, with the artifacts mark-



Silver statuette of a lion-headed goddess, dating to the New Kingdom/Third Intermediate Period. A similar statuette is in the collection of the Walters Gallery, Baltimore. This is one of Warocqué's first Egyptian antiquities purchases.



ed L for the Louvre's purchases, W for Warocqué's and X for The Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels, where Capart was assistant conservator of the Egyptian collection (see my "Egypt in Brussels at the Museums of Art and History," *Kmt*, fall 2012).

At the Amélineau sale, Warocqué purchased several other Pre- and Early Dynastic vases; a special Eighteenth Dynasty limestone statue of Horus, from a chapel dedicated to Osiris in the Tomb of Djer at Abydos, considered one of the collection's highlights by Dr. Bruwier; a Second Dynasty faience gameboard from the tomb of King Peribsen; and some special ushabtis. But the catalogue also informs us that seemingly Warocqué passed on the purchase of many special ivories from Abydos, bronzes and terracotta objects, so as to not incur Capart's wrath. Nonetheless, we know that he purchased no fewer than twenty-nine artifacts for a sum of 7,860 francs and 24 centimes. This sale marked a turning point in Warocqué's Egyptian collection, for — although the number of artifacts he acquired was small, they were of the highest quality.

Another important 1904 sale was that of Léon De Somzée, at which



Above, Room B of the Royal Museum of Mariemont, displaying Greek, Roman & Egyptian antiquities. High on the end wall is the three-meters-tall fragmentary granite statue of a Ptolemaic queen excavated in Alexandria. Weighing more than five tons, it was purchased by Warocqué in 1911 from French Egyptologist Albert Daninos. He was told it depicted Cleopatra. The colossal sculpture is a centerpiece of the RMM today.

Warocqué spent not less than 166,000 francs. Following the advice of Franz Cumont, he bought many statues of Isis, not all of which were Egyptian in the strict sense. His motive was twofold: 1) he wanted to show the spread and importance of her cult all over the Mediterranean; and 2) to increase his number of artifacts from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Besides the statues of Isis, he bought a head of the god Serapis, which had been found in the Tiber and showed that Egyptian gods were already being worshipped in the Eternal City.

The all-out competition between Capart and Warocqué took place again at the Philip sale in April 1905, but each came away with stars. (For an essay on the stormy relationship between Capart and Warocqué, read Jean-Michel Bruffaerts's "Capart-Warocqué: Une Amité Manquée," in the Mariemont Museum's





At the 1905 sale of the Philip collection of Egyptian antiquities, Warocqué purchased the stone head of a young woman in the Grecian style. With traces of polychrome & gilding, it was identified in the 1960s as depicting Ptolemaic queen Berenike II.

catalogue of the Egyptian collection). Warocqué's purchases were around eight Pre-Dynastic and Old Kingdom vases, some made of calcite; a bronze statue of wrestlers and a glass plate, not to men-

tion the head of a young lady and that of a bearded young man, the importance of which he didn't know. "During the 1960s," reports the catalogue, "Roland Tefnin identified the female head as portraying Queen Bérénice II; and more recently Cécile Evers suggested that young man was a portrait of the Pharaoh Ptolemy X." "The Bérénice head," Dr. Bruwier told me, "is very special because of its traces of polychrome paint, gold and gilded wax."

Between the end of 1905 and 1910

Warocqué seems to have lost interest in ancient Egypt and bought very few ancient Egyptian artifacts: two little bronze statues of Harpocrate, one from Algeria and one from Tunisia; and a coin showing Ptolemaic princess Arsinoë II, wife of Ptolemy II. His lack of interest seems to have been compensated by the numerous gifts sent to him from Egypt or bought in Paris by his friend and advisor, Franz Cumont, and Cumont's cousin, René Orville: a superb Hellenistic torso of Aphrodite; a lamp; a small bronze statue of a seated cat of unknown provenance; and a bronze uraeus, dating to the Late Period, which Orville had purchased in Paris, but of unknown provenance.

Beginning in 1907 Warocqué listened to Cumont's and Orville's accounts of their trips to Egypt; especially enticing were their shopping sprees to antiquarians. The two continued to press him to accompany them. Then, finally, he took their advice; and at the end of December, 1911, he went for a month with his bibliophile friend Georges Van der Meylen; his mistress Berthe Foulon; and a Mademoiselle Kleene, otherwise unidentified. Sadly we do not know their exact itinerary, except that they arrived in Alexandria; went to Giza and to Cairo, where they stayed at Shepheard's Hotel; and on to Karnak and Luxor, where they probably stayed at the popular Winter Palace Hotel.

Since Warocqué made many purchases in Cairo: three serpentine statues of seated men from the Middle Kingdom; as well as scarabs, one of which came from the collection of Sultan Omar Bey; a magnificent small statue of Ptah; and two ushabti, one of stone dating to the Middle Kingdom and one of Hekaemsaf, dating to the Late Period, Twenty-sixth Dynasty, reign of Amasis (570- 526 BC), probably from a tomb in the necropolis at Sakkara; not to mention gold jewelry; at Abydos (at least forty black-topped vases dating to the Nagada period); and at Edfu (calcite vases from the Middle Kingdom) — we can also assume that the foursome went to all three places. He bought postcards of other destinations, like Philae, Aswan, Kôm Ombo, Esna

and the Suez Canal; but there is no proof that they visited these sites.

If up until then Warocqué's collecting of Egyptian artifacts could be considered erratic, after he met Auguste Mariette's student and assistant, the archaeologist Albert Daninos (1845-1925) in Cairo, his collecting became methodical and professional. The archeologist invited Warocqué to admire his recent discoveries around Alexandria; and Warocqué couldn't resist proposing to him the purchase of a monumental granite bust of a Ptolemaic queen and a granite fragment of two clasped hands.

According to Arnaud Quertinmont — its curator since 2013 — the Royal Mu-

*Below, Early 18th Dynasty painted-limestone pair-stature of Hetep & daughter Mut-
ui, purchased for the RMM in 1981.*

Right, 18th Dynasty limestone statue of Horus from the Umm el Qaab necropolis at Abydos, one of the "stars" of the RMM collection.



seum of Mariemont's permanent Egyptian collection contains 555 objects. Nearly half of them — 255 to be exact — are displayed in two rooms on the first floor. In Room A the exhibits are by theme: Egypt's Origins, Egyptian Society, Egyptian Beauty and Jewelry, Egyptian Funerary Beliefs, Egyptian Myths and Cults, and Ushabtis. Room B is dedicated the Ptolemaic period.

"We have artifacts from almost every period of ancient Egyptian history, but very little from the Middle Kingdom, no monumental sculptures, very few papyri, and almost no mummies. We have a mummified human head and a mummified human foot, both in our storerooms. Our only complete human mummy on display is on long-term loan from Leiden's museum. It's the mummy of a man named Hor, a priest of Amen at Karnak. He lived during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.

*Royal Museum of Marie-
mont's Ptolemaic Period
painted-wood coffer for
mummified viscera; these
had replaced the earlier
canopic vessels.*



We have no information of the place he was buried, maybe Thebes.”

“Our strong point are the Ptolemaic and Roman periods,” Dr. Bruwier told me. “Besides the Second Dynasty mortar, the other star of our Egyptian collection,” she continued, “is a huge [three meters tall] bust of a Ptolemaic queen, weighing more than five tons. It was Warocqué’s favorite artifact. He was a Free Mason and had a special room with Egyptian decoration built for her in his castle. She was excavated in Alexandria and Warocqué bought her from the French archeologist Albert Daninos in 1911, when he was in Egypt. He was told she represented Cleopatra VII.

“At the same time he also purchased the head and the left leg of a male figure, as well as a pair of clasped hands. Of course the sellers told him that the male figure was Mark Antony and that the two statues were of Cleopatra and Mark Antony holding hands. It’s a nice romantic story; that’s why Warocqué bought them; but the story is not true. The head and the left leg are not here. They are in the Greek and Roman Archaeology Museum in Alexandria.”

“For the past 20 years,” continued Bruwier, “I have been researching the bust’s provenance. Finally I discovered in the diary of an Eighteenth Century traveler where she came from.

“In 1743 Richard Pococke (1704-65), a British prelate and anthropologist, wrote, ‘Two miles from the Rosetta Gate in Alexandria, you can find lying in a marshy field huge statues.’ Finally other travelers also wrote about this group; one of them in 1851 was Florence Nightingale. Lastly I took maps from the Nineteenth Century and made a survey and a calculation. I discovered that ‘the marshy field’ was a schoolyard today; and, after a number of years, I was given permission to do excavations there.

“So from 2008 to 2012, I excavated and uncovered a huge building, of course only remains; but, nonetheless they were huge blocks of granite and columns, as well. We are studying them now, because the excavation is completely finished. We discovered a major monument. It is outside ancient Alexandria in a place called Smouha, which is part of Alexan-

dria created in 1925 because there was a lake here in the Nineteenth Century. Called 'Lake Hadra' it was drained by Joseph Smouha, an Iraqi Jew who'd immigrated to Manchester, England, where he'd been a cotton trader, before moving to Egypt. Smouha built a completely new city here. I found one of his grandsons, Richard, who is now living in Switzerland. With him and an Italian architect, Cristina Pallini, also a professor at the University of Milan, we've written a book about the

Below & detail bottom, Twenty-first Dynasty anonymous fragmentary papyrus with chapters 11 & 12 of the Book of Amduat. It was acquired by the Royal Museum of Mariemont in 1990.



city. The Smouha City Venture: Alexandria 1923-1958 (2014), available on Amazon."

When Warocqué bought "Cleopatra" he made an agreement with Daninos to subsidize his excavations of the necropolis at Heliopolis. In a letter dated January 12, 1912, just after Warocqué had returned to Belgium, Daninos reminded Warocqué that after the Cairo Museum took its half share of the finds, that he and Warocqué would divide the other half in equal shares. Warocqué agreed to these terms in a reply dated February 1, 1912.

Unfortunately, in spite of his regular requests for funds from Warocqué, Daninos's excavations at Heliopolis uncovered next to nothing, certainly not the treasure troves he had been certain to find. He discovered that robbers had violated the tombs during Roman times. All Daninos sent to Mariemont was a crate containing human and animal bones, cloth from the Islamic period and a mummified human head and foot. Very small pickings!

Daninos promised to make up for this disappointment; so — even after the Heliopolis fiasco — Warocqué trusted Daninos to send him top artifacts with no preliminary description. Thus, in May 1912, Daninos shipped to Mariemont some remarkable artifacts, for a price of course: around thirty high-quality amulets and several small faience statues. One is of the god Nefertum standing on a lion, a veritable small masterpiece, dating to the Saite-Late Period; and another of Ptah astride a crocodile, also dating to the Late Period.

Then again in September, 1912, Daninos sent Warocqué seven serpentine pieces that had been found together. All of Ptolemaic date, they were extremely rare funerary amulets representing the four sons of Osiris and a *djed* pillar, plus a heart scarab and a second *djed* pillar. Later that year he also sent, without asking permission first, three extraordinarily refined statues of Isis. Again "because he was a Free Mason," Dr. Quertinmont told me, "Warocqué loved Isis, because she was a mother with a capital M." Inventory number B.478, a tall twenty inches, not counting its stand, is a seated

Isis nursing Horus and dates to the Third Intermediate Period, the Twenty-sixth Dynasty; number B.480 is ten-inches tall, also a seated Isis nursing Horus and dating to the Late Period; and B.482, the most beautiful of all, is also of a seated Isis nursing, but with Horus missing; it dates to the end of the New Kingdom/beginning of the Third Intermediate Period.

In addition to those pieces already cited by Dr. Bruwier as highlights, these three statues are among the stars of the Mariemont Egyptian collection. Still others include:

-A wooden box, used from Ptolemaic times onwards for the vicera rather than canopic vases;

-An Eighteenth Dynasty once-painted limestone statue of the falcon-god Horus, purchased at the Amélineau sale in 1904, *“because of its inscription, which tells us that the statue was dedicated to the priest Ahmes; then, a few years later another priest, Yuyu, restored it and put new gold leaf on the statue, adding another inscription saying what he had done. The fact that there are two different inscriptions from two different periods makes this artifact very special,”* Dr. Quertinmont told me.

-A heart scarab, *“because it is made of steatite which is quite unusual”*, continued Dr. Quertinmont.

-And a scorpion-shaped silex dating from the Pre-Dynastic period.

At the beginning of 1912 Daninos began searching for a high-quality set of four canopic vases to send Warocqué. He didn't find one until October and then it took until December to get through all the red tape for shipment, which weighed approximately 250 pounds. It arrived at Mariemont in January 1913 and was Warocqué's last purchase for his Egyptian collection.

With the ever-threatening political situation in Belgium and then the outbreak of the First World War, Warocqué turned his attention to humanitarian causes. Although he had had every intention of returning to Egypt, he never did because blocked by the First World War.

“At his death Warocqué's Egyptian artifacts numbered 170,” Quertinmont told me. *“There have been numer-*

ous acquisitions since then.” The first, the Brassine Collection, dates to 1955. Joseph Brassine (1877-1955) was a Medieval historian from Liège. A bibliophile he became the head librarian at the University of Liège in 1920. He was also a passionate collector, buying his first artifact in 1891 at fourteen years of age. Between 1890 and 1910, he purchased a collection of artifacts from the area around Cologne. Although they were mostly Roman bronzes, two Egyptian artifacts in particular are worthy of mention: a bronze situla of Nesnakhetiou, who was probably a priest, of unknown provenance but probably from the Luxor area, dating to 200-250 BC; and a small, still very beautiful statue of a child-god, maybe Harpocrates, gilded and polychrome, with encrusted eyes and pierced ears, and decorated with a uraeus.

After Brassine's collection Mariemont acquired, sometimes with the help of the Friends of Mariemont, individual artifacts: in 1964 the Ptolemaic Period painted-wood visceral box topped with a Horus, mentioned to me by Dr. Bruwier as a highlight; in 1978 a limestone fragment of a stela, attributed to the sculptor Qen from Deir el Medina and showing offerings being presented to Amenhotep I; in 1981 the stuccoed-and-painted statue of Hetep and her daughter, Mutui, both seated, dating from the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and, although of unknown provenance, another highlight, according to Dr. Bruwier; in 1985, at an auction of J.-L. Despras's collection in Paris, a bronze Eighteenth Dynasty mirror of unknown provenance, its handle in the shape of a woman; also in 1985 a calcite sculpture, of unknown provenance but probably from Upper Egypt, dating to the Late Period, showing Horus standing on some crocodiles; and in 1990 an incomplete and anonymous *Book of Amduat* dating to the Twenty-first Dynasty and illustrating the Eleventh and Twelfth hours.

Between 1991 and 1993 the Museum was closed for asbestos removal. During that two-year period the arrangements of the collections were reorganized and new bigger and better lighted display cases installed.

RMM's New Kingdom calcite-with-pigment set of canopic vessels with Four Sons of Horus stoppers. This was Warocqué's final purchase for his Egyptian collection, made in 1912 from Danios. It weighed 250 lbs. when shipped to Belgium from Cairo.





In 1995 acquisitions resumed with Irethoreru's polychrome anthropoid coffin, dating to the Late Period or the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period. In the thirteen years that followed, up to the publication of the catalogue, the collection acquired several artifacts: in 1997 Iahiridi's Ptolemaic high-quality grey-wacke libation tablet, noteworthy for its iconography; in 1998 the already-mentioned scorpion-shaped silex dating to Nagada II-III or between 3700 and 3000 BC; in 1999 a standing bronze statue of Isis-Hathor from the Twenty-fifth Dynasty; and in 2006 a seated bronze statue of the goddess Maat, dating to the Third Intermediate Period.

The most recent acquisitions are donations. In 2004 the descendants of Eugène Wiéry (1862-1901), a Belgian who practiced international law in Cairo, donated seven fragments of mummy bandages. Six of them have extracts from the *Book of the Dead* written in hieratic. He'd acquired them in Egypt between 1892 and 1894. They also donated three papyri fragments (one with text in Greek, one in Coptic and the third in Arabic) and the mummy of a falcon.

Although most of the artifacts of the 2013 Boël bequest are Pre-Columbian or ancient Chinese, three are ancient Egyptian: a small bronze statue of the lion-headed goddess named Wadjet; a bronze statue of a cat, both on display; and a faience snake not on display.

A year earlier, "in 2012," said Dr. Quertinmont, "Wallonia's regional government lent us on long-term loan the Goreux collection, with some 300 (345 to be exact) ancient Egyptian artifacts, which thus brings the total of ancient Egyptian objects to approximately 900 items: 170 from Warocqué, 345 from Goreux, 385 from other purchases, gifts and deposits. We know very little about Goreux's identity, except that he was a doctor who lived near Mons and collected Egyptian and Near Eastern artifacts. Around 150 of the objects now on display come from this loan. So to recapitulate, when Warocqué died, he left 170 ancient Egyptian artifacts. Now our permanent collection has 575 artifacts, including the three bequeathed by Boël. Of these about one half are on display.

“GODS, GENIES AND DEMONS”

The day I visited the Royal Museum at Mariemont was the occasion of a press preview about a temporary exhibition opening there: “Gods, Genies and Demons in Ancient Egypt,” on through November 21. A specialist in the iconography of hybrid divinities, particularly in those canine, Dr. Arnaud Quertinmont, curator of Mariemont’s Egyptian collection, was responsible for assembling the special exhibition.

“The reason for presenting this exhibition was twofold,” Dr. Quertinmont explained to me. *“Firstly, ancient Egyptian gods sometimes familiar, sometimes frightening, often strange and complex, have fascinated people certainly since ancient Roman times, and yet before our ‘Gods, Genies, and Demons’ there has never been a major exhibition dedicated to them.*

“With this exhibition,” he continued, *“we want to show that non-Egyptians have long had a misconception about Egyptian gods, because we look at them from a European point of view. We shouldn’t view them as connected to religion like the ancient Greek and Roman gods. In ancient Egypt gods are not about dogma; they are an explanation of the world. We use the word religion for lack of another. For example, the gods of creation are different from one city to another. In Memphis Ptah created the world, while at Elephantine it was Khnum. Thus you can have several gods who do the same thing depending on your location.*

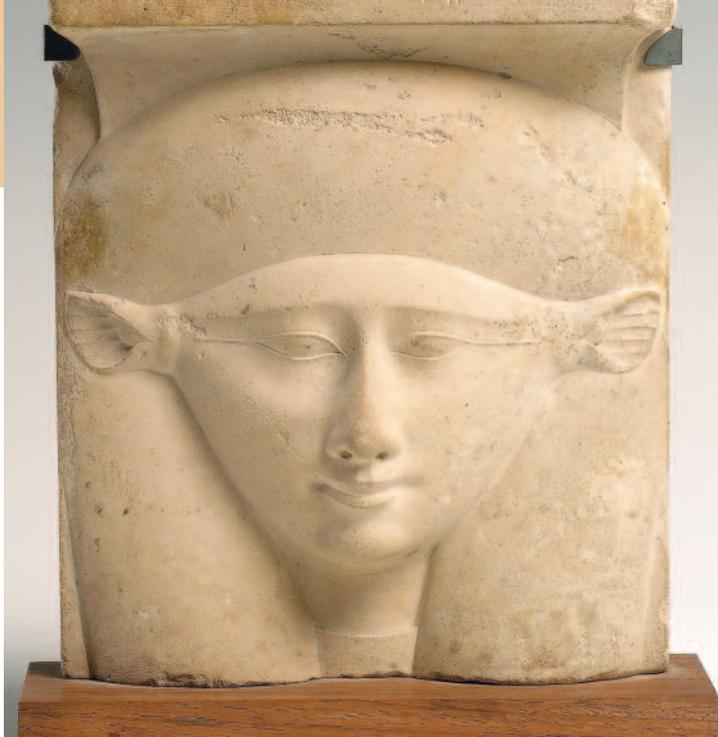
“The word used by the ancient Egyptians to mean god is neter, which is quite similar to another word in ancient Egyptian, seneter, which means to transform someone into a god. Seneter also means incense, so the ritual using incense is making someone a god, rendering someone divine. All human beings can become gods during their funeral, but only the most important members of the community can become a god worshipped throughout Egypt. An example is Imhotep.

“In ancient Egypt there were the greater gods, such as Amen, Osiris, Isis and Re; but there were also the lesser gods, sometimes personifications, gods for the days, for the hours, gods for the flooding of the Nile, who are our genies. For example, Hapi is a genie. So are the four sons of Horus who protect the organs in canopic vases.

“About the demons, they are gods who are really ugly, really frightening, for ex-



Faience statuette of Bes as a nurse from a private collection.



Right, Ptolemaic faience statuette of Pataikos, MRM collection.

Far right, Sculpor's model of Hathor, Frits-Lugt collection.

Left, Late Period bronze statuette of lioness-headed Wadjet, MRM collection.

New Kingdom faience scarab, Frits-Lugt collection.

ample Bes; but if you look at him, he is not bad; he is good because he protects children and pregnant women. In fact, most of the demons, like the gatekeepers to the Underworld, are not really evil, they are just doing their job. Even the demon Ammit or 'The Devourer,' who ate the heart of the deceased if it weighed more than Maat's feather during his trial for worthiness of the Afterlife, was only doing her job. Rituals were the key for protecting yourself against the evil demons."

The more than 150 artifacts of "Gods, Genies and Demons" include statues, reliefs, amulets, jewelry, papyri and a coffin. Some come from Mariemont's own Egyptian collection, but most are on loan from several other European museums and private collections.

The exhibition is divided into five sections. The first defines who is a god, a genie and a demon, and explains the misconception that Bes is so ugly, not to scare wo-

men and children, but to protect them from other — but evil — demons.

The second is about the various names and body shapes a god may have. For example, a god can look completely human or be an animal or even a hybrid, the combination of both human and animal, as seen in a small bronze of Horus with the body of a man and the head of a hawk; or of Anubis with the body of a man and the head of a dog. A statue of Isis is 100 percent a woman but with wings.

The third tries to illustrate the various myths concerning the creation of the cosmos. This variety allowed priests in different regions of Egypt to invent new myths about creation and new rituals to preserve them.

The fourth explains the cycle of the sun. In the morning, the rising sun is represented by the scarab or beetle, Khepri, which means "coming into existence." At midday,

when the sun is at its zenith, it becomes Re and takes on the appearance of a man wearing a sun-disk on his head. In the evening at sunset, the sun is sheep-headed Atum and travels to the Underworld or Dudat, where the sun confronts the huge snake Apep, which represents primordial chaos and wants to destroy the world by drinking all the water in the Nile.

The fifth and last section depicts the cycle of death via the myth of the god Osiris, the god of the Afterlife, who'd been killed by his brother Set. Osiris presides at the divine judgment of the deceased, when it is determined whether or not he or she is worthy of rebirth into the Afterlife.

Aside from an audio-guide, also available in English, there are hands-on touch screens in each room explaining each artifact.

L. G.-R.