EGYPT RETURNS TO MANN

(The Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli)

by Lucy Gordan-Rastelli

Photos Courtesy the MANN

The palace which houses the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (The Naples National Archaeological Museum)— known by its abbreviation MANN — was built in 1585 as a cavalry barracks. It's located at the western edge of the neighborhood called "Quartieri Spagnoli" (Spanish Quarters), because in the Sixteenth Century the Spanish occupied and ruled Naples. In those days the building was just outside the city walls, in an area (St. Teresa) that had once been one of the many ancient Greek cemeteries of Neapolis.

Between 1612 and 1615, the Viceroy Pedro Fernández de Castro (1560-1622) had the palace transformed into the University of Naples; he gave the job of restructuring and enlarging the building to the highly respected architect/engineer Giulio Cesare Fontana. Then in 1777 King Ferdinand IV (1751-1825) transferred the University to the Jesuit convent and started to make this palace the Museo Ercolanese (of the artifacts from the early excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum), the Collezione Farnese (the Farnese painting collection), the library, the

Above, One of the new state-of-the-art installations of the MANN Egyptian collection.

School of Art and the laboratories for art restoration — although the idea of having a single museum devoted to archaeology had been that of his father, Charles III (1716-1788). Then in 1816 Ferdinand established the Real Museo Borbonico (the Royal Bourbon Museum). With the unification of Italy in 1860, the Museum building and all its contents became the property of the Italian government and its name was changed again to Museo Nazionale. In 1920, 335 years after its initial construction, its final rooms were added. Between 1929 and 1932, the Museum was enlarged to the north with the addition of a new wing. In 1925 the library was moved to Palazzo Reale di Napoli (the Royal Palace in Naples); and in 1957 the painting galleries went to the Royal Palace of Capodimonte, so from then on the contents of the Museum have been devoted entirely to archaeology.

Today, with its 3,000,000 artifacts, MANN is one of the world's most important classical-archaeology museums and certainly the most important in Italy. It houses extensive collections of Greek and Roman antiquities. Their core is from the Farnese collection, which includes the already-mentioned large Roman copies of Greek marble statues and numerous engraved gems, among them the Farnese Cup, (a Ptolemaic bowl made of sardonyx agate and the most famous piece in the "Treasure of the Magnificent," or gems collected by Cosimo de Medici and Lorenzo the Magnificent in the Fifteenth Century), as well as Roman bronzes, mosaics, and frescoes and erotica (still kept in a locked section, where visitors under the age of fourteen must be accompanied by an adult), all from the excavations of Pompei, Herculaneum, Stabiae and Boscoreale. Also of particular note here are the Herculaneum papyri, carbonized by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD, and found during early excavations in the Villa of the Papyri in 1752.

Also noteworthy is MANN's Egyptian collection, which I visited on December 16th, 2016. Dottoressa Valeria Sampaolo, chief curator of all the collections at MANN, graciously arranged for the Egyptologist Dottoressa Rita Di Maria to accompany me on my tour. A Neapolitan interested in archaeology since childhood, especially after seeing the movie "Atlantis, The

One of the oldest objects in the MANN Egyptian collection is a small granite statue today called "Dama di Napoli" ("Lady of Naples"), which dates to the beginning of the 3rd Dynasty (2686-2613 BC). It originally was in the Borgia collection & probably was found at Sakkara.

Lost Continent," Dr. Maria, who had originally wanted to be an astronaut, studied Egyptology at the University of Naples "L'Orientale." *"My special interest is Predynastic and Dynastic Egypt and its relationship with Mesopotamia of the time,"* Dr. Di Maria told me. *"I excavated at the University of Naples's dig at Naqada. At the Museum I'm in charge of public relations and communications. I organize conferences, guided tours and all educational activities, but also write entries for the permanent displays and temporary exhibitions, as well as for exhibition catalogues."*

With its 2,500 artifacts — some 2,250 of which are on display[1] — MANN houses the largest collection of Egyptian antiquities in Italy after Turin (which has more than 30,000), Florence (some 15,000) and Bologna (over 4,000). *"All these artifacts except some Egyptian or Egyptianizing pieces of the Roman period found in excavations carried out in the time of the Bourbon kings of Naples — were acquired between 1803 and 1917 from private collectors. They hence reflect different tastes and times, and were put together under different circumstances,"* Dr. Di Maria told me. Thus this collection is of great importance for the history of collecting as well as for the artifacts it contains.

What makes the MANN collection different from all Egyptian collections outside of Egypt is that it includes objects made there, but which also were in use in Herculaneum and Pompeii and other sites in Campania near Naples when Vesuvius erupted. These artifacts were found during the early Bourbon excavations at these sites in the second half of the Eighteenth Century, the same period of time as the gradual transfer of the Farnese collections from Rome and, most importantly of all, before Napoleon's expedition to Egypt (1798-99).

Also unearthed in Pompeii between 1764 and 1766 was the Temple of Isis, made famous by travelers on the Grand Tour in the decade 1770-1780.[2] As the collection's guide recounts: *"In Italy and in Europe the Temple became a source of inspiration for the earliest forms of Egyptomania, long before the rediscovery of the world of the Pharaohs after the Napoleonic expedition…."* An Egyptomania before the official

Centerpiece of the MANN Egyptian collection, the 26th Dynasty naos statue of Priest of Horus Uahlibramerinet is 97.5 cm. h. & carved in black basalt (Inv. 1068). Part of the Farnese collection, it was the first Egyptian antiquity to enter the Museum's collection.

The monument of Amenemone (Inv. 1069) came to MANN as part of the Borgia collection. Made of black granite, it is 4.5 cm h., 81.5 cm w. & 36.8 cm d. It dates to the 19th Dynasty, with a Luxor provenance.

post-Napoleonic one!

Another major difference from other Egyptian collections is the fact that the majority of its ancient Egyptian artifacts came to MANN not as single objects, but as parts of already established collections, in particular two: the Borgiana and the Drosso Picchianti. For the most part they were purchased and not donated, even though the most recent, a scarab, was a gift by otherwise unknown Alfio Scaramella, in 1917.

"Although our collection owes its fame to two major collections and has been more or less stagnant since 1917," said Di Maria, *"we do lend our artifacts to temporary exhibitions elsewhere and we host temporary exhibitions which include our Egyptian artifacts as well as those on loan from other museums. The most-recent exhibitions to which we loaned artifacts include: 'The Nile in Pompeii: Visions of Egypt in the Roman World', from March 5-September 4, 2016, at the Egyptian Museum in Turin; and 'Egypt Pompeii', from April 16 to November 2, in Pompeii. The most-recent temporary exhibition we hosted with ancient Egyptian artifacts on loan to us was: 'Egypt Naples: Oriental Cults in Campania', from June 29 to October 8th, the same day our permanent collection reopened. In actual fact it's not a temporary exhibition because it has become part of our permanent display."*

Closed for over six years because of poor ventilation, the MANN Egyptian collection reopened after fifteen months of restoration in the same rooms where it has been since 1864, with a state-of-the-art layout, at a cost of €2,200,0000, on October 8, 2016, in eight rooms. One with five plaster casts of ancient Egyptian monuments is on MANN's ground floor and the others on the floor below. The artifacts, which represent every era of ancient Egypt, from Early Dynastic to the Byzantine (3000 BC-640 AD), are displayed in chronological order by theme.[3] The first two downstairs-rooms explain the history of Naples' collection and the history of collecting Egyptian antiquities, plus how the perception of ancient Egypt has changed over time. In the first room there is also an Egyptianizing exhibition-case dating from 1821. Now it is filled with fakes and non-Egyptian artifacts, mostly catalogued in the Borgia collection — MANN's first-to-arrive large assemblage — mistakenly as Egyptian. There is also a gigantic photograph of a painting by Paolo Vetri (1875) showing two women visiting the then-early mummy room, designed by Giuseppe Fiorelli between 1864 and 1866. The display case shows how Naples' Egyptian artifacts were displayed during Bourbon times, and the painting how they were displayed just after the unification of Italy. The other five downstairs-rooms concern "The Pharaoh," "The Tomb and Funerary Artifacts," "Mummification," "Religion and Magic," and "Writing, The Arts and Professions," with a section here devoted to Egyptian artifacts found in the Naples area.

The Farnese collections of ancient sculpture and paintings were moved from Rome to Naples, gradually, during the last decades of the 1700s and the first of the 1800s. Its relocation took such a long time

Opposite, Also from the Borgia collection is a limestone sculptor's model (Inv. 894). It is 9.0 cm h. & 7.0 cn w. Dating from the 30th Dynasty or early-Ptolemaic times, it is probably from the Delta.

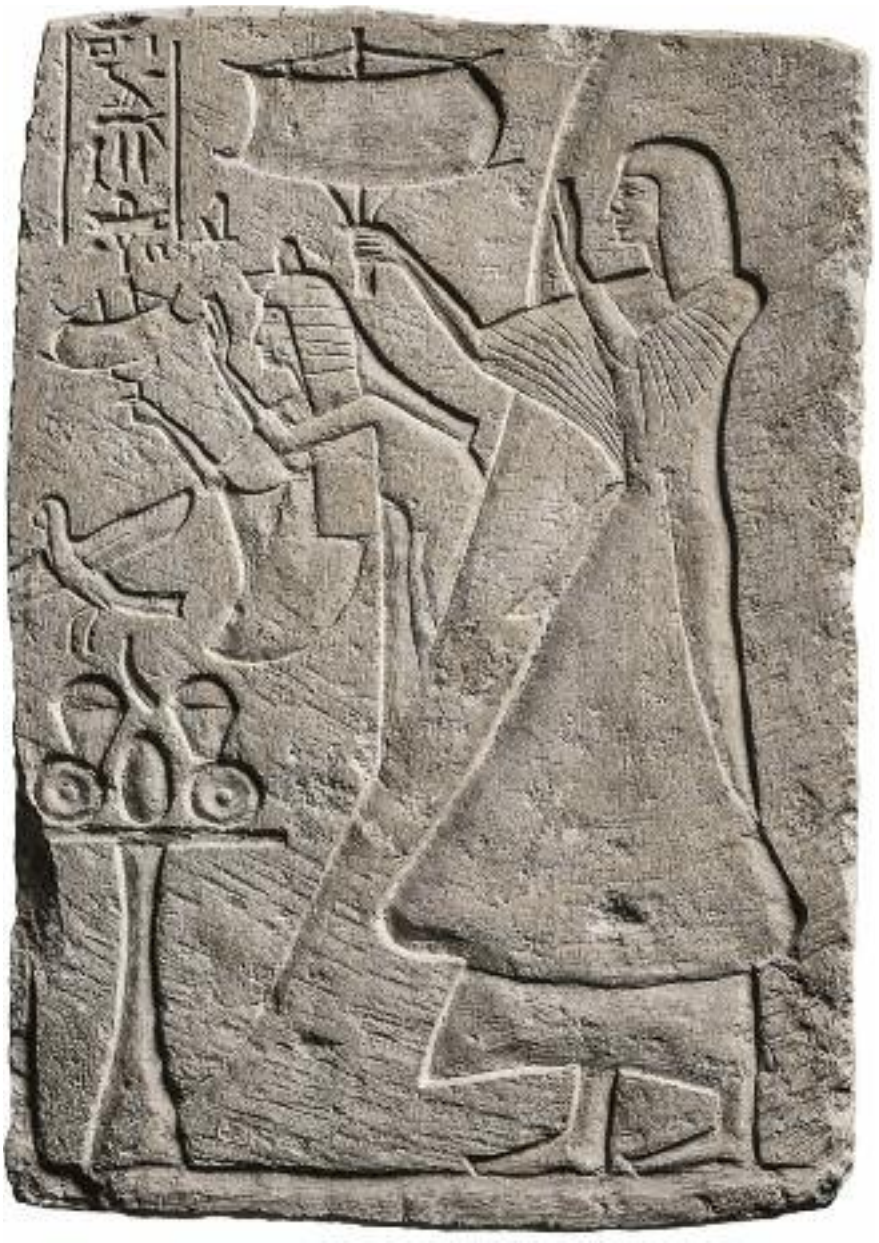
because it had been vetoed by Pope Pius VI, who was against allowing this unique patrimony in Rome to be transferred elsewhere.

The MANN Egyptian collection was officially inaugurated in 1821, when the director of the Royal Bourbon Museum, Marquis Michele Arditi (1746-1838) — also a lawyer, antiquarian and archaeologist — created the "Portico of Egyptian Monuments," the oldest section of Egyptian antiquities to be established in a major European museum.[4] There he displayed the Late Period naophoros of Uahibramerinet, which is MANN's first ancient Egyptian artifact, now placed in the collection's downstairs entrance, to greet visitors,[5] as well as two statues he believed to be of Isis,[6] alongside Egyptian and Egyptian-style artifacts found in Campania, the region of Italy of which Naples is the capital. He also put on display the Egyptian collection acquired from the Borgiano Velletri Museum in 1814 by Joachim Murat, during the decade, 1806- 1815, when the French controled Naples.

As had been the case with the Temple of Isis two generations earlier, many illustrious visitors came to Naples to see the collection. The most notable of them was Jean-François Champollion in 1825. He was received by King Francis I, for whom he translated the inscriptions on a group of canopic vessels, which had recently been unearthed in Pompei. He also gave lessons in hieroglyphs to Queen María Isabella.

Regarding the aformentioned naophoros of Uahibramerinet, *"We know that it already belonged to the Far-*

Limestone stela of Amenhotep called Huy, director of the festival of Osiris during the reign of Seti I (1292-1279 BC). Inv. 1016, it is 81.5 cm h. by 9.0 cm wide. It was donated to the Museum in 1823 by the Duke of Calabria.



19th-20th Dynasty limestone fragment with a sunk-relief depicting the naval pilot Pasanesut & his wife, Tanetmehyt; 63 cm h., 45 cm w.; from the Borgia collection, Inv. 1004.

nese collection during the second half of the Sixteenth Century," said Di Maria, *"more precisely in 1556.*[7] *It was already mentioned in the Museum's inventory in 1803. It's the whole Egyptian collection here in Naples that is noteworthy, not one piece in particular; but the naophoros — a kneeling figure carrying an* aedicule *or* naos *(hence the term naophoro), which contains a small statue of the god Osiris — is important because it is one of the few ancient Egyptian sculptures which has come down to us integral and undamaged. Made of basalt, it dates to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty (664-525 BC) and depicts the nobleman and priest of Horus Uahlibramerinet, the son of Taqerenet. It was the only ancient Egyptian artifact in the Farnese collection. That is why we placed it at the entrance; thus it's a link between the Roman statues of the Farnese collection upstairs and our Egyptian collection downstairs."*

To return to MANN's first collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts, it came to Naples in 1814, seven years before the Egyptian collection was officially inaugurated, at the urging of Count Carlo Zurlo, Murat's minister of the Interior. These artifacts had been inherited or purchased by Cardinal Stefano Borgia (1731-1804), who kept them at his home in the hilltown Velletri outside of Rome. The cardinal's nephew and heir, Camillo, could not afford to keep the collection, so he sold it to Murat, but only after making a catalogue and organizing the objects' display. The Borgia collection focused on sculpture and architectural pieces and is described in the collection guide as having "a scholarly character." Although it reached Naples after Napoleon's expedition, almost all of it had been collected beforehand. *"Camillo's sale,"* said Di Maria, *"was a precursor of the Nineteenth Century bourgeois tendency to regard antiquities as commodities or as a commercial investment."*

The Museum's website tells us

Late-18th Dynasty steatite (?) ushabti of Ptahupepu; 24.3 cm h., 7.8 cm w.; of uncertain provenance.

Left, Ushabti box of Chantress of Amen Mutemyia; 21st Dynasty; 40.7 cm h., 42,5 cm w.; Picchianti Coll. In. 1097. Above, Steatite pectoral of Lady of the House Ankhipen; 19th-22nd Dyn.; 10 cm h., 9 cm w.; Picchianti Coll. Inv. 1350 .

that *"Cardinal Stefano Borgia* [was] *a person of great learning who was interested in history and antiquities. He had already inherited a collection of ancient objects found around Rome and Velletri*[8] *and was passionately interested in increasing his collection to the extent that he turned it into a museum. His involvement in political and religious fields, and the posts he was given by the papacy, helped Borgia in his interest in collecting ancient objects. In particular, his post as Secretary and later Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, which he held at a particularly delicate moment for the Jesuits and the Catholic missions abroad, was of fundamental importance to the Church. Indeed, he encouraged the formation of indigenous priests in the missions, especially in the East, and this reduced the hostility of local populations to religious institutions. The success he obtained earned him the esteem and gratitude of missionaries and foreign envoys, who started to bring him back gifts from the places they were working. Borgia began to receive many objects from Egypt, as well as Coptic manuscripts, which he managed to obtain at his own request, so that he was able to create the largest collection of its kind to be established during this period."*

On the cardinal's death in 1804, part of his collection was donated to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and what remained went to his nephew, Camillo. Although Murat gets the credit as purchaser, Camillo had previously offered it to the king of Denmark The details of the sale were not finalized until the return of the Bourbons under King Ferdinand IV in 1815.

Roman-era bronze situla; 14 cm h., 7.8 cm max dia.; Borgia Coll. Inv. 724.

"The Borgia collection," continues MANN's website, *"one of the oldest in the history of collecting, illustrates a phase of interest in Egypt that predates the interest created by the Napoleonic expedition (1798-1799) and reflects the typical antiquarian taste of the period of its formation, shown by the statues turned into busts of head-portraits, or by many objects of a funerary and magical-religious nature discovered mainly in the areas which were most easily accessible to Europeans in the eighteenth century, namely the area of the Delta and Memphis."*

The *Museum Guide* gives a more detailed inventory of the Borgia collection, which it reports, *"included more than 600 items of various types, including shabtis, small and medium-sized sculptures, such as the so-called 'Lady of Naples' and the 'Monument of Amenemone', sarcophagi, bronzes, and also some fakes.*[9] *Yet the Bourbon Museum received only a part of the collection,*

about 590 exhibits; the rest, still dispersed, consisted mainly of small objects, including bronze statues, amulets, and thirteen scarabs."

I was curious about Cardinal Borgia's connection to Denmark and therefore why his nephew Camillo gave the king of that country first option to purchase the collection. The answer is simple. Located on the corner of present-day Via Borgia and Via della Trinità, the cardinal's home in Velletri was a stopping place on the Grand Tour for those traveling from Rome to Naples. "*It was not a place to arouse 'wonder', like the seventeenth-century 'Wunderkammer',"* the collection guide states, *"but a setting where the objects could be studied on innovative scientific principles."* Since the Cardinal was not omniscient, he was constantly on the look out for young scholars, *"who were willing to offer their work for the sake of gaining a knowledge of the materials he kept in his home."* Thus, starting in 1779, he developed a fruitful relationship with several young Danish researchers: Jacob Georg Christian Adler (1756-1834), a theologian interested in Coptic studies; Greges Wad (1755-1832) a mineralogist, who in 1794 studied Borgia's Egyptian artifacts and published *Fossillia Egyptica Musei Borgi-ani Velletris*; and Georg Zoëga (1755-1809), historian, archeologist, numismatist, and first and foremost an Egyptologist, who in 1784 published a *Catalogo dei monumenti egiziani esistenti in Velletri nel Museo Borgiano composto e ordinato dal Sig. Giorgio Zoega dotto danese nel mese di ottobre 1784*.[10] Here 628 ancient Egyptian artifacts are divided into classes of materials, measured, described and accompanied with personal annotations and drawings of decorative and iconographic motifs or hieroglyphic inscriptions.

The next addition to the collection was a single item, a beautiful stela of Amenhotep, called "Huy," scribe of the board and director of the festival of Osiris. The *Museum Guide* tells us: *"The personage is mentioned in an accounting papyrus in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, where an entry dated to the second year of the reign of Seti I (1292-1279 BC) states that Huy was in charge of the delivery of bread baked in the storehouse of the palace of Memphis. This enables us to date the find and conjecture its origin."* Limestone with painted reliefs, it was a gift of the Duke of Calabria, (the traditional title of the heir to the Bourbon throne), in 1823.

Wooden coffin of 26th-30th Dyn. date; from Sakkara, 190 cm l., 43.5 cm w.; Borgia Coll. Inv. 2342-2346.

The second large collection of some 1,500 Egyptian artifacts came to MANN in two installments. They were accumulated by the married couple Venetian Countess Angelica Drosso and her Tuscan husband, Giuseppe Picchianti, who, almost certainly inspired the circus performer, Paduan explorer, and pioneer Egyptologist Giovanni Battista Belzoni, who lived in Egypt for about ten years, 1814-1825.[11]

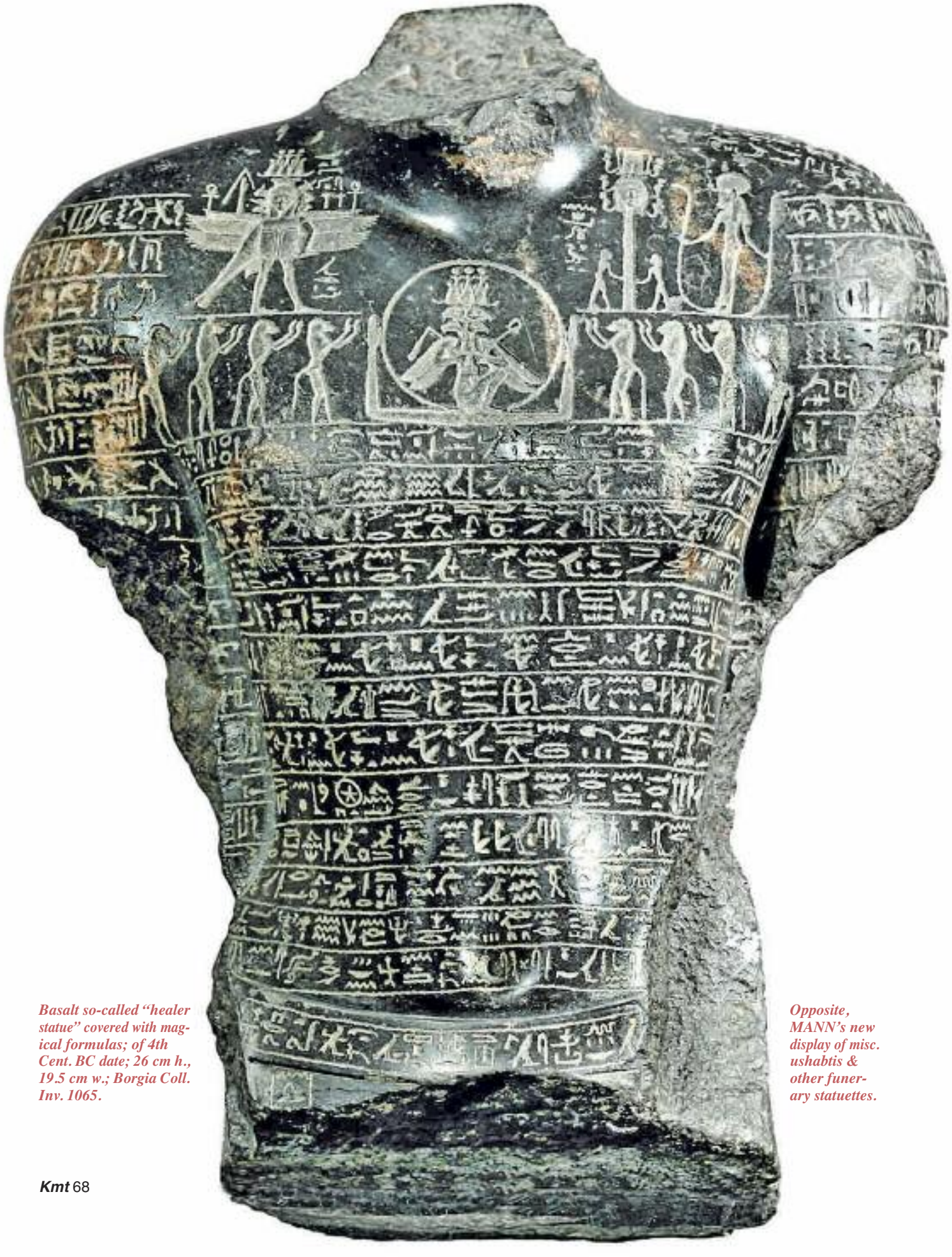
"Until recently we did not know much about the Drosso-Picchianti stay in Egypt and the sites they visited or provenance of their collection," Di Maria told me. *"The discovery of new archival documents*[12] *allows a partial reconstruction of their collecting, more appropriately called 'a treasure hunt', in Egypt and a complete reconstruction of the events after their collection arrived in Italy."*

"The origin of the collection," the *Museum Guide* states, *"is illustrated in the opening lines of a petition the Picchiantis presented on May 19, 1827, to the Marquis of Fuscaldo, Ambassador and Minister Plenipotentiary of the King of Naples to the Holy See. He was asked to file a report about the collection for his sovereign, who may have been interested in purchasing it, so that negotiations could be begun for sale to the Museum."*

In the petition Countess Angelica writes that she *"conducted excavations for ten continuous years in the ancient city of Thebes, at Zaccara, and at Ghisa, where after great expense and effort,* [I] *unearthed many antiquities."* She also lists her finds: funerary objects: human and animal mummies, sarcophagi, canopic jars and ushabtis; and artifacts of daily use: jars of food and cosmetics, mirrors, and sandals. Subsequent lists include some objects from Dongola, in the stretch of Sudanese Nubia between the Third and Fourth Cataract of the Nile, an area made accessible by an Egyptian military expedition only in 1820 and 1822.

"Angelica Drosso Picchianti's brief account," the *Museum Guide* continues, *"suggests that, at least in part, their artifacts came from excavations carried out by third parties or even purchases on the local antiques market. Confirmation is provided by the presence in the collection of a jar of the sem priest Ptahmose, 'great master of the craftsmen', whose tomb in the New Kingdom necropolis at Saqqara supplied materials to several collectors: Passalacqua, Nizzoli, D'Anasthasi, and the Picchiantis. This also explains why the provenance of the artifacts cited in the lists is not always confirmed by archeological study."*

The first records that the collec-



Basalt so-called "healer statue" covered with magical formulas; of 4th Cent. BC date; 26 cm h., 19.5 cm w.; Borgia Coll. Inv. 1065.

Opposite, MANN's new display of misc. ushabtis & other funerary statuettes.

tion had reached Italy date to early 1826. One is an anonymous document dated February 22, an "explanation," attributed to Champollion of some artifacts in the collection he'd just examined. The second is a petition, sent by Picchianti to the commissioner of the Interior, dated February 24, in which he asked "to show the public his cabinet of antiquities" in Livorno. *"By comparing the dates,"* explained Di Maria, *"of Champollion's visit to Tuscany with the arrival of ships from Egypt arriving with a cargo of antiquities during 1825, it seems almost certain that the Picchianti collection arrived in Livorno aboard the brigantine Teseo on May 7, 1825."*

From Livorno the Picchiantis moved their collection to Rome, hoping to sell it to the king of Saxony, who turned it down. Afterwards they offered it to the Museum in Naples. The negotiations lasted from August 10, 1827 to March 7, 1828 and were only partially successful.

That same year, *"in 1833,"* continues the *Guide*, *"the Bourbon Museum received a small collection (13 artifacts) donated by a 'dottor inglese,' actually a native of Glasgow named James Edward Hogg (1783-1848). In 1832-33 he made a trip to Egypt in the retinue of Ibrahim Pasha, when he probably picked up the relics he later donated partly to the Naples Museum in 1833, and partly to the British Museum in 1840."*

"Hogg himself gave an account of the stages of this journey in his book, Visit to Alexandria, Damascus, and Jerusalem, During the Successful Campaign of Ibrahim Pasha*, published in 1835. On returning from Jerusalem, on August 21, 1832, Hogg landed at Damietta and, later, traveled overland to Alexandria, where he began the long journey (lasting five months) to the Second Cataract. On the way he visited some of the sites famous at the time. As Hogg himself stated, on January 18, 1833, he sailed from Cairo for Naples with four plants of* Ficus Sycomorus*, two of which he would donate presumably in the same period, to the city's Botanical Garden.*

"This collection, previously unknown and recently identified together with the identity of its owner, originally consisted of 10 'bundles' (animal mummies), two head rests and a scribal tablet. Unfortunately, in the second half of the nineteenth century the organic remains, moved to the plaster store because of 'putrefaction' would be lost forever, while the three artifacts donated by Hogg and still in MANN have been identified as some artifacts previously ascribed erroneously to the Picchianti Collection...

"In 1842, Carl Wilheim Schnars, a surgeon, traveler and correspondent of the Ausburger Allgemeine Zeitung, presented the Bourbon Museum with a small collection of 22 Egyptian artifacts collected during a trip to Nubia in 1841-42."

Other small collections or single items

acquired by MANN are: mummy heads purchased in 1857 from an otherwise unknown Mr. Rudhart; a papyrus purchased from a Mr. Andreana in the 1860s; a mummy donated by Emilio Stevens in 1885; head and feet of mummies donated by Mrs. Acquaroli Canettoli in 1911; a Sixteenth Dynasty ushabti unearthed at Capua's excavations; and a large calcite canopic vessel reused in Augustan times as a funerary urn, from Quarto near Pozzuoli, both excavated between 1983 and 1985.

"As I said before," Di Maria continued, *"the uniqueness of Mann's Egyptian collection is its two different styles, pre-Napoleon and post-Napoleon. Moreover, the Borgia collection is the largest anywhere of ancient Egyptian artifacts collected in Egypt before Bonaparte's expedition. As for the Picchianti collection, we are uncovering information in various diaries about the couple's relationship to other more important collectors, in particular Nizzoli, Drovetti and Salt; but it is a slow process. This is because the diaries of the consul-collectors do not mention the Picchiantis, so our new information comes from the diaries of travelers and other minor collectors. This new information will appear in our collection's new catalogue, which is forthcoming in in-*

stallments in 2017 or 2018. It's an update on our 1989 catalogue.

"Our other strong points are the ancient Egyptian objects on display from Latium and Campania, that we already had ancient Egyptian artifacts in situ *before receiving in 1814 with the Borgia Collection with its ancient Egyptian artifacts collected in Egypt."*

"The collection's oldest artifacts are three in number," continued Dr. Di Maria. *"The most important one of these is the so-called 'Dama di Napoli', a statue of a functionary at the beginning of the Third Dynasty (2686-2613 BC). It was in the Borgia collection and probably originated in Saqqara. The other two, both from the Picchianti collection, are vases from more or less the same date. One is cylindrical and made of alabaster* [calcite]*; the other is round and made of serpentinite. Unfortunately, we do not know their provenance, although recent excavations there make probable that they come from Nekhen, also known as Hierakonpolis, the religious and political capital of Upper Egypt at the end of the prehistoric period.*

"The stars of our collection are certainly the already-discussed naophoros and 'The Lady of Naples', as well as 'The Monument of Amenemone', a unique trapezoidal granodiorite funerary sculpture dating from the reign of Rameses II and probably was found in West Luxor. There is nothing similar in any other collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts. It came to MANN in the Borgia collection and illustrates the prestige of the head of the Megjay (a police corps [of Nubians] *during the New Kingdom) and of his family. On each of the twenty-two 'mummies' (two are his wives) sculpted in relief is inscribed his/her name, job and relationship to the deceased: father, brother, brother-in-law and wife. Along the monument's top and around its base are two inscriptions, the so-called 'Appeal to the Living', in which the deceased asks visitors for their prayers and offerings.*

"Other stars include several 'portrait sculptures' dating to the Intermediate/Late Period from the Borgia collection; our human mummies (thirteen) and our state-of-the art research on them; as well as a long-lost — during the bombardments of World War Two— document, now rediscovered in the State Archives in Naples, which tells us much more about the original owners of our Drosso-Picchianti collection, who were exiles in Egypt after the Austrians occupied Lombardy and the Veneto, from 1815 to 1866; and the 'Huy' stela I mentioned before.

MANN's limestone head of Alexander the Great, dating to the middle of the 4th Cent. BC; 23.5 cm h.; Borgia Coll. Inv. 1040.

"Our highlights," continued Di Maria, *"are many. One is a damaged portrait head, made of limestone in Egypt during the Fourth Century BC and depicting Alexander the Great, from the Borgia collection. Another is the mummy of a ca. two-and-a-half meter-long crocodile, dating to the Late Period (664-332 BC), a gift from Hogg. It's important because preserved with it are the mummies of two baby crocodiles and all its original loosely-woven bandages, palm-leaf supports and cords. MANN is the only museum in the world to display all the wrappings of a crocodile mummy. In other museums, if they still own the wrappings, which is seldom, they don't display them.*

"Another highlight is our black-basalt bust of a 'magic statue' or 'healer' fully inscribed with formulas. It dates to the Fourth Century BC and came to us in the Borgia collection. Water was poured over the statue and it was believed thus to have absorbed the therapeutic qualities of the statue's formulas. Still others are the round Third Dynasty cup, because the text of its inscription is a cough remedy, the same text as appears in Berlin's medical papyrus (Pap. 3038) dating to the Seventeenth Century BC; and a black-basalt sculpture from the Borgia collection, dating to the Nineteenth Dynasty and probably from Luxor. It depicts Pendua, a priest of Amen, and his

wife, Nescia, a singer of the same god, accompanied by their son Amenemope. Nescia's left leg is a step in front of her right, a position usually reserved for men.

"Not to omit," continued Di Maria, *"four red granite fragments of a partially recomposed obelisk unearthed in Palestrina in 1791 and drawn by Zoëga in 1797, during his research at the Borgia collection, the other two fragments (necessary for completion) having been excavated in 1881 and still remaining in Palestrina; a basalt offering table, dating to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty during the reign of Psammetichus II (595-589 BC), found in Pompeii (but from its inscription we know that it came from a temple dedicated to the god Atum at Heliopolis); a bronze statue base (probably for a cult statue, which is missing), decorated with fake hieroglyphs —unearthed at Palestrina in 1760, it dates to the First Century AD.*

"The collection's artistic weaknesses," continued Di Maria, *"are that, because most of its artifacts come from early private collections and not organized excavations, we do not know their provenance. Others are our scarcity of Predynastic, Early Dynastic, Old Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period artifacts; and that we do not own any monumental sculpture, because those are less accessible than later artifacts. Except for shabtis and amulets we have chronological holes in all our other categories of artifacts. Last but not least, unlike Florence, which participated in excavations in Egypt with Schiaparelli — and Turin which still does — MANN and its predecessors never officially participated in any excavations either in Egypt or in Campania, so we never had a share-right to finds.*

"On the financial side, since we are a national museum, we do not have money in our budget for purchases. The latest additions to our collection are those from the excavations in Capua and at Quarto.

"However, I have a scoop for Kmt. *Exactly 100 years after Scaramella donated his scarab, we will receive a very special gift: at a press conference on October 21, the Neapolitan architect Claudio Grimellini 's pledge to donate his collection of Egyptian artifacts and Egyptomania at his death to MANN was announced. The collection was started by both of his grandfathers and one great-grandfather, but he has kept it current. Since he has no direct descendants, Grimellini wants his collection to be kept intact and taken care of by professionals.*

"To celebrate this donation, MANN will host the exhibition: "L'Egitto in salotto. La collezione Grimellini e il gusto moderno per l'Egitto antico" ("Egypt in the Living Room and Modern Enthusiasm for Ancient Egypt") from January 26 to March 15. Grimellini's small core collection of ancient artifacts, all purchased from antique dealers, is composed mostly of amulets and ushabtis. His Egyptomania dating from Napoleonic times covers many categories.

"The exhibition will be displayed in three different sections of MANN: the ancient artifacts in a case in our Egyptian collection; those connected to the cult of Isis in our new permanent section devoted to "oriental" religions; and "Egyptomania" near our artifacts from Pompeii's Temple of Isis.

Notes

1. "Most of the artifacts not on display are amulets," Dr. Di Maria told me. *"We have so many (they are our most represented category of artifact), that we had to make a selection. I don't have an exact account of the artifacts that came to us from the excavations or the very recent ones, but give or take a small variation, the Borgia collection counts 620 artifacts;Picchianti 1,544; Hogg 3; Schnarz 11; Andreana 1; Naples 12; Pompeii 30;Herculaneum 4; Stevens 3; Scaramella 1; Acquaruolo-Canettoli 1; Cassanova 1; Farnese 1; and in storage 22."*

2. Wikipedia tells us: *"The Temple of Isis is a Roman temple dedicated to the Egyptian goddess Isis....the only one ... outside Egypt. This small and almost intact temple, was among one of the first discoveries during the excavation of Pompeii in 1764."*

3. In the past the collection was displayed by collector, then within the collection by theme in chronological order.

4. The other early collections are: Berlin in 1823, Turin and Florence in 1824, the Louvre in 1826 and the Vatican Museums in 1830.

5. The first artifacts of the Egyptian collection on display in its first room upstairs in the new layout are five plaster casts made by the Italian Egyptologist and archaeologist Luigi Vassalli of important monuments in Egypt.

6. According to Dr. Di Maria , one does represent Isis, but is Roman, as is the other representing Ceres.

7. As the new *Guide to the Egyptian Collection*, published by Electa and available in Italian and English for € 12, tells us: *"It is not known how the sculpture came into the possession of the Farnese family in the sixteenth century. From 1556 on, the majority of the Farnese inventories document its presence in the 'Room of the Emperors' in the palazzo in Campo de' Fiori in Rome, where it was described again in the 18th-century guide, Giacomo Pinarolo's L'antichità di Roma." Yet the inventories are silent about the manner of its acquisition and provenance.*

8. The Borgia collection was begun by Stefano's grandfather Clemente Erminio Borgia (1640-1711), who amassed antiquities from Rome and Velletri in the family residence, later increasing them with a coin collection belong to the Archbishop of Fermo, Alessandro Borgia (1682-1764)."

9. The Museum Guide tells us that almost all of this small group of fakes come the Borgia collection, except for a bronze of local provenance and two ushabtis in the Drosso-Piccianti and a statue arrived with the Schnars collection. *"The fakes in the Borgia Collection exhibited here,"* the Guide tells us, *"were produced in the Eighteenth Century. By the end of the same century they had already been judged false by Zoëga, who described them as 'clumsy, coarse, and obscure'. He recognized that the workmanship, 'though old, is far more recent than the rest'."*

10. The manuscript is conserved in the the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

11. Although there are still many holes in the biographies of Drosso and Picchianti, recent research has uncovered that they lived a decade in Egypt.

12. This archival material was found in the National Archives of Naples and concerns the couple's political motives for going to Egypt.

13. *"From the recent state-of-the-art performed on our mummies,"* Di Maria told me, *"we learned that one was not a mummy, but pieces of several mummies. With the arrival in 1826 of the Picchianti collection were several mummies. We already had two coffins from the Borgia collection. Originally they were empty, but in 1821 were filled with pieces of two 'mummies' which came from two local 'pharmacies', the Pharmacy of the Monastery of St. Francis and the Pharmacy of the Holiest House of the Annunciation. In the Nineteenth Century the restoration lab of the Bourbon Museum added pieces of wood.*

"The presence of these ossami di mummia *documents the production in Naples of* polvere di mummia *(mummy dust), important for the preparation of magic potions capable of curing all sorts of phys- ical maladies. These remedies were commonly found until the Twentieth Century in Neapolitan pharmacies. It was also common to find in Eighteenth Century drawing rooms or libraries, a typical souvenir — mummified human parts under a glass bell. MANN possesses one such bell with a human head from the Picchianti collection and another of four feet from the Acquarulo-Canettoli collection. The feet were covered with a linen* sudarium *(shroud), both on display, but separately. The* sudarium *probably dates from an artisan workshop active in Luxor between the First and Third Century AD."*

About the Author Lucy Gordan-Rastelli is an independant researcher and writer living in Rome. She is the European correspondent for the Journal and has contributed numerous articles, most about European Egyptian collections.