

# 'THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN'

An Exhibition in Turin Celebrates  
the Archaeological Adventures of  
Ernesto Schiaparelli  
1903-1920

by Lucy Gordan-Rastelli



Until September 10, 2017, the Egyptian Museum in Turin, Italy, is featuring a multi-media exhibition titled "Missione Egitto 1903-1920: L'avventura archeologica M.A.I. raccontata." The title is a clever play on words. M.A.I. stands for *Missione archeologica italiana*, the thirteen archaeological

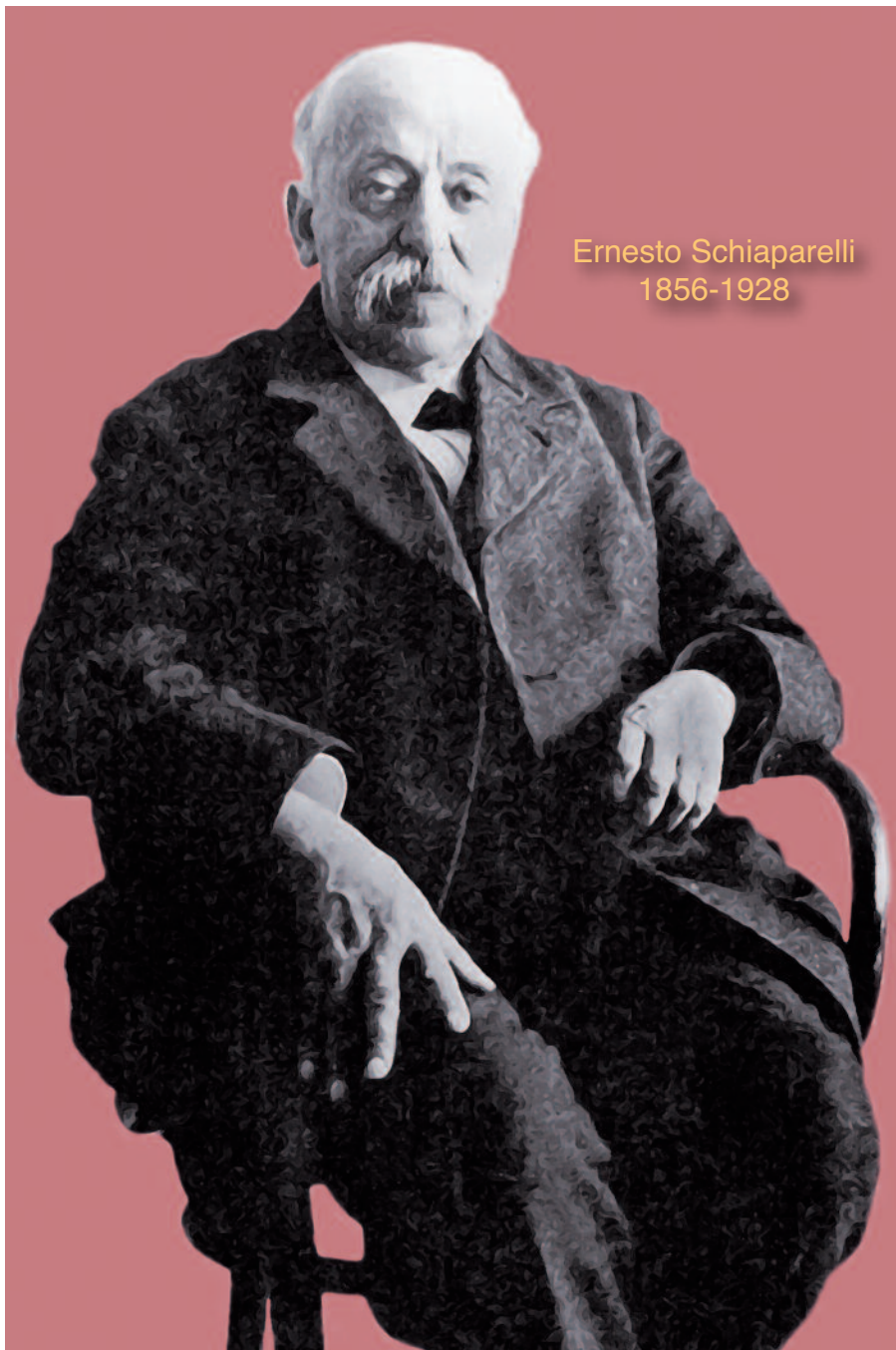




*View of the entrance to the Turin Egyptian Museum galleries with the "Missione Egitto 1903-1920" exhibition.*

Photo Museo Egizio





Ernesto Schiaparelli  
1856-1928

missions in Egypt directed between 1903 and 1920 by Ernesto Schiaparelli, who also was the first director of Turin's Egyptian Museum; but in Italian the word *mai* also means never. Thus the title translates both as "The Egyptian Campaign 1903-1920, the Story of M.A.I.'s Archeological Adventure" and "The Egyptian Campaign 1903-1920: Italy's Archeological Adventure Never Told Before Now." For this is the first time that an exhibition has been devoted to the M.A.I.: its founding in 1902; its excavations from 1903-1920; its archaeologists, Schiaparelli, Ballerini and Rosa; its anthropologist Marro; and their loyal collabor-

ators Ghattas and Savina; as well as their correspondence and documentation, written, drawn and photographic, much of which is still unpublished; and, of course, their many finds.

The exhibition's curators are Paolo Del Vesco and Beppe Moiso. Del Vesco is an archaeologist and presently is the vice-director of the excavations at Sakkara, a joint mission of Turin's Egyptian Museum and the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, the Netherlands. He is also a curator at Turin's Egyptian Museum, where he is responsible for the displays in the galleries concerning the







Museo Egizio photos

*Two views of the installation of the Museo Egizio's "Missione Egitto 1903-1920" exhibition.*







*Left, The exhibition's display of the view camera used by the Missione Egitto; & Below, A folding cot, such as would have been used by the Missione's excavators, in a tableau about life in the field. Museo Egizio photos*



Old Kingdom, the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom.

Beppe Moiso is one of the founders of A.C.M.E. (Associazione Amici e Collaboratori del Museo Egizio or the Association of Friends and Collaborators of the Egyptian Museum) and is the curator of numerous Museum exhibitions; he's also the author of several publications, including a history of the Museum published last year; since 2014 Moiso has been in charge of the Museum's archive.

#### **An equally appropriate title of this exhibition**

— with some 400 items on loan from over thirty Italian institutions, but also from the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art — could have been: “Ernesto Schiaparelli, His Life and Career.” Schiaparelli was born in 1856, at Occhieppo Inferiore in the Piedmontese province of Biella, into a distinguished family of scholars. His father, Luigi Schiaparelli, was a history professor at the University of Turin. Astronomer Giovanni Virginio Schiaparelli, Arabist Celestino, photography pioneer Cesare, agronomist Carlo Felice, pioneer of industrial chemistry Giovanni Battista and fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli were all his relatives.

Ernesto studied literature and philology at the University of Turin, before going to Paris to study Egyptology with Gaston Maspero between 1877 and 1880. After reorganizing and directing the Archeological Museum of Florence from 1880-1892, in 1894 he became director of the Regio Museo di Antichità ed Egizio (The Royal Museum of Antiquities and Egyptian Museum) in Turin. “Here,” an exhibition wall-panel tells us, “he devoted himself to expanding the collection first with well-aimed purchases and later, from 1903 to 1920, with fortunate excavation campaigns in Egypt. In 1907, he also became superintendent of the Antiquities of Piemonte, Valle D’Aosta and Liguria. He was later appointed Senator of the Kingdom and became a professor at the University of Turin.” Never having married, he died in Turin without heirs.

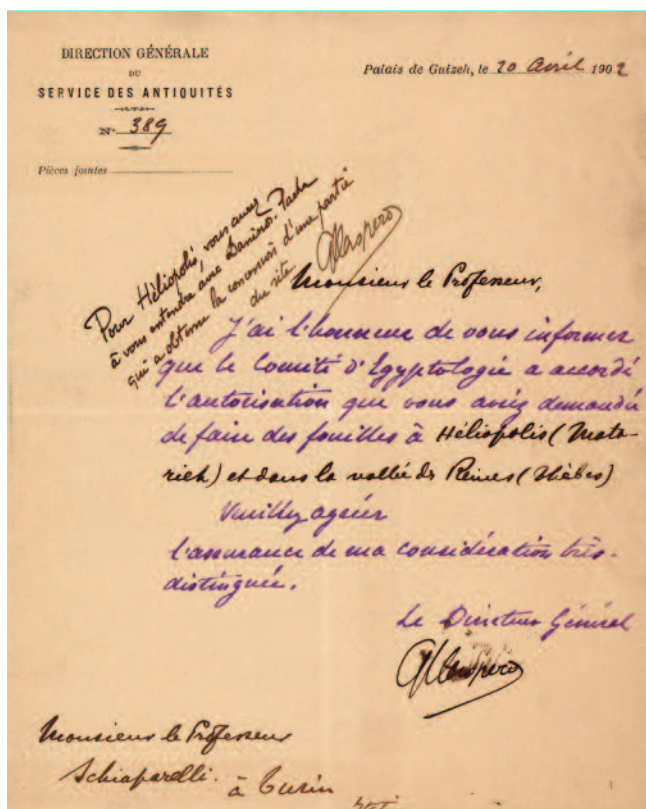
When Schiaparelli was still director of the museum in Florence, he went to Egypt twice to purchase artifacts to enrich the collection. During his first visit in 1885, he was a guest of the Franciscan Mission in Luxor, which had been operating there since the mid 1600s under barely survival conditions. He became a friend of the friars and, learning of

their economic and political difficulties, he promised to help. “In 1886” — recounts an article written by Beppe Moiso and Christian Greco, the present director of the Turin Egyptian Museum, published on [www.laboratoriorosso.com](http://www.laboratoriorosso.com) — “influential friends helped him found N.A.H.I.C.M., the National Association for the Help of Italian Catholic Missionaries [referred to later with the abbreviation A.N.S.M.I.]. Egypt was the first country to benefit from his interest, with the construction of the Antonio Stoppani School for Girls in Luxor in 1891, where he is remembered on a plaque and a photograph in the mission. This was shortly followed by hospitals, schools, dispensaries and orphanages in Tunisia, Turkey, Libya, Eritrea and in the Far East, even in Peking.... His was a very intense and weary life, long periods employed on excavations were alternated with travels to the Orient and the Holy Land where his presence was required by numerous charitable institutions.”

“Another not so well-known aspect about Schiaparelli,” Director Greco recounted at the Exhibition’s press conference, “was his deep devotion to research. Only because of his intense pre-excavation research, could his thirteen campaigns at eleven sites in Egypt



Right, The exhibition's display of one of the coffin lids found in the Tomb of Khaemwaset (QV44) & blowup of photo showing jumble of coffins.



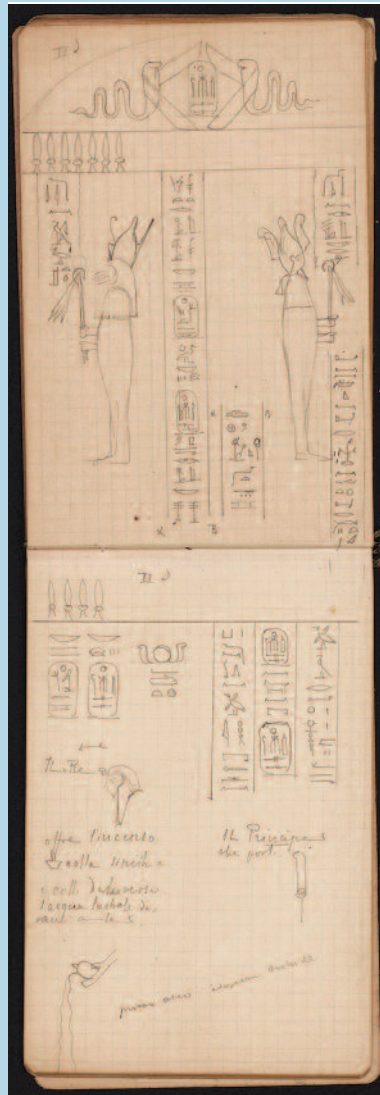
Maspero's official letter dated April 20, 1902, to Schiaparelli, authorizing him to excavate at Heliopolis & the Valley of the Queens. The addition in the upper left tells Schiaparelli that, in order to dig at Heliopolis, he must ask the permission of Daninos Pasha

Museo Egizio.

have been so carefully aimed at filling in the chronological holes of Turin's Museum collection. He explored both the capitals of ancient Egypt and a number of provincial towns. This exhibition aims to emphasize the importance of research for a museum. A museum is not just a building full of artifacts; it's about the people who made its collections, how they built them and those who work there today. It's also an archive of the on-site location or provenance of the artifacts and their subsequent documentation after study. At first Schiaparelli went to Egypt to make purchases for the Museum, but... complained, that, by not knowing their provenance, they were only intriguing artifacts. Hence his research and subsequent carefully chosen excavations."

"Although partage is no longer possible," continued Greco, "the Egyptian Museum has and will continue its excavations at Sakkara. In direct support of research, we are using the €800,000 profit from last year's entrance fees to digitalize our collection. Last but not least, from this exhibition and the research involved in setting it up, we have and our visitors will learn about the history of our Museum and its growth and about the life and work of its first director."





**The text of a wall panel at the entrance** to “Missione Egitto 1903-1920” clearly explains the political and cultural atmosphere in the Europe of those times. “*The decades straddling 1900,*” it says, “witnessed Europe’s rush to conquer Africa in the name of a ‘civilizing mission’ aimed at ‘primitive’ populations, which actually concealed strong economic and commercial interests. Italy took advantage of the few power voids on the African chessboard to launch its own colonial policy. An ill-fated Ethiopian campaign (1887-1896) resulted in Italy shifting its interest to the possessions of the declining Turkish Empire, namely to Libya in 1911 and to the Dodecanese in 1912. Italian archeologists’ presence in North Africa, Greece, and the eastern Mediterranean was therefore often motivated by scientific and cultural considerations supported by ideological nationalist beliefs, in the context of a broader political interest in these areas.”

**At this point the visitor enters the exhibition’s** first section, which, through posters advertising vermouth, cars and the World Expo held in Turin in 1911, film clips from its new-born movie industry, as well as movie cameras, projectors, tickets and programs, and models of the newly founded FIAT’s first cars and trucks successfully re-creates the vibrant, frenetic and projected-towards-the-future atmosphere of the city during the first two decades of the Twentieth Century.

Also in this section are documents and finds from excavations at Liguria, Valle d’Aosta and Piemonte, where Schiaparelli was the superintendent beginning in 1907, plus the “false cover” of Twenty-first Dynasty scribe Butehamen’s coffins, which came to the Museum in 1824, as part of the Drovetti collection along with some other 5,300 artifacts.

“In order to show an example of Schiaparelli’s important scholarship as a philologist,” Moiso told me by phone, “in the same exhibition case as Butehamen’s ‘false cover’ is one of the five volumes, two of text and three of ‘reproductions,’ titled *Il Libro dei Funerali degli Antichi Egizi* by Schiaparelli — but better known as *The Ritual of the Opening of the Mouth* — and published in 1882,

**Top left, Francesco Ballerini in native attire, 1909. He would die prematurely in 1910 at only 33 years of age.** Archives of CEFB-Centro di Egittologia Francesco Ballerini, Como

**Top right, One of Ballerini’s field notebooks with sketches, 1905.** State Archives, Turin

**Left, Ballerini (far left) at the M.A.I.’s 1905 encampment at the quarry of Qau el Khebir, with his reis Kalifa & youthful workman Buhus.** Archives of CEFB-Centro di Egittologia Francesco Ballerini, Como





*Photograph of 24-year-old Virginio Rosa at Mombarone Castle in Piemonte shortly before his departure for Egypt in 1910. He would document the M.A.I. excavations at Gebelein in 1911, returning to Genoa in a poor state of health & dying of a mysterious illness in 1912, age 26. Archive of the Museum of the Holy Shroud*

when he was still at the museum in Florence. Schiaparelli based his research of the ritual on three different sources: the Hieratic text on the inside of Butehamen's 'false cover' and on the inside of his coffin (on display in the Museum but not in the exhibition), which he had in hand at the Museum; on the Hieratic text of a papyrus (No. 3155) of the Roman period in the Louvre, probably put at his disposal by his teacher Maspero; and on the text of the inscriptions and the illustrations in the Tomb of Seti I. For this last text he used Ippolito Rosellini's precious copy from his archives at the University of Pisa, which Schiaparelli compared with a more recent version put at his disposal by Édouard Naville. Next to the volume is a page showing a 'reproduction' of part of the 'false cover's text. Nearby are a 'reconstruction' of Schiaparelli's desk and an authentic 1907 Remington typewriter, like one he could have used."

**The Exhibition's next section,** "Italian Arch-

aeology in the Eastern Mediterranean," concerns excavations there which both sparked and frustrated Schiaparelli's desire to excavate in Egypt, in order to fill the chronological holes in Turin's Egyptian collection. It gives a concise picture of the several excavations, all competing with each other for the same scarce funds of Italy's Ministry of Education. On display are finds from Crete, Rhodes, Turkey and Libya. Thus this section could also have been entitled "Italy's Early Archaeological Campaigns Abroad".

The introductory wall panel here presents an overall picture: "At the end of the nineteenth century, quite belatedly compared to other European nations which had long begun archaeological explorations beyond their borders, the first Italian archaeological mission abroad reached the island of Crete, in spite of scarce financial resources — which from 1903 onward they had to split with the Turin museum's mission in Egypt — Italian scholars achieved brilliant results in the Aeg-

ean and on the coasts of Libya. Their work often went hand in hand with diplomatic action and paved the way for Italy's future military penetration in Cyrenaica, and the Dodecanese."

**The next section returns to Egypt** and its ever-increasing economic, cultural and touristic importance. France, England, Germany and Austria were building enormous collections of Egyptian antiquities in their museums; and Schiaparelli, aware of the gaps in Turin's collection, wanted Italy to be on equal footing. In 1900-1901 he went to Egypt and bought some 1,400 artifacts; but, since the provenance of most was unknown, he was dissatisfied and evermore determined to set up his own archaeological mission known as the M.A.I.

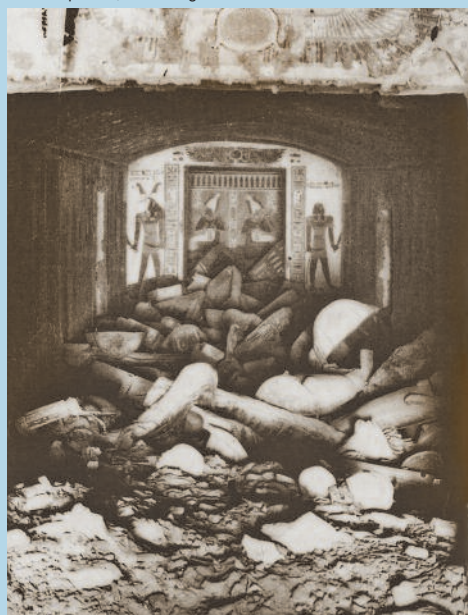
On display is his first letter of intent to the Ministry of Public Education, dated November 23, 1901, in which he explains the advantages Italy would gain from archaeological excavations in Egypt. Also displayed is a letter dated April 20, 1902, from his former professor, Gaston Maspero — director of the Service des Antiquités in Cairo from 1899-1914 — giving him permission to excavate at Giza, Heliopolis and the Valley of the Queens, along with his letter of thanks and acceptance to Maspero dated June 9.

In the interval Schiaparelli had written a letter dated April 29 to King Vittorio Emanuele III, explaining the importance of Maspero's offer for Italy and requesting financial support. Upon the receipt of the king's first installment of funds, Schiaparelli wrote him a detailed report, dated June 12 (also on display), of his intended early archaeological campaigns and their cost estimates. A wall map shows all the subsequent locations and the dates of each, as he excavated several times in some: 1902-03 Heliopolis, Hermopolis, Giza and the Valley of the Queens; 1904 Heliopolis, Hermopolis and the Valley of the Queens; 1905 Deir el Medina, Heliopolis, Hammamiya, Qau el Kebir and the Valley of the Queens; 1905-1906 Asyut, Deir el Medina, Heliopolis, Hammamiya and Qau el Kebir; 1908-1909 Deir el Medina and Hermopolis; 1909-1910 Asyut, Gebelein and Bahnasa; 1910-11 Asyut, Gebelein and Bahnasa; 1912 Asyut and Bahnasa; 1913 Asyut; 1913-14 Aswan and Gebelein; and 1920 Gebelein.

In this same section the typical furnishings of an archeologist's tent have been reconstructed, as well as displays of site photographs and clothing and jewelry worn by Schiaparelli's female workers, on loan from the British Museum.

**The Italian excavator's understanding** of the importance of research, anthropology, photography, documentation and drawing to ex-





*M.A.I.'s 1903 excavations in the Valley of the Queens yielded KV44 (left) & KV66, Tomb of Q. Nefertari (above).*



Internet photo



*The Tomb of Q. Nefertari (views above & below) has been called the "Sistine Chapel of ancient Egypt" for its beautifully painted & well-preserved wall decorations. It had been thoroughly looted in antiquity, so Schiaparelli & his excavators were able to recover only a few minor funerary fragments (left).*



Internet photo

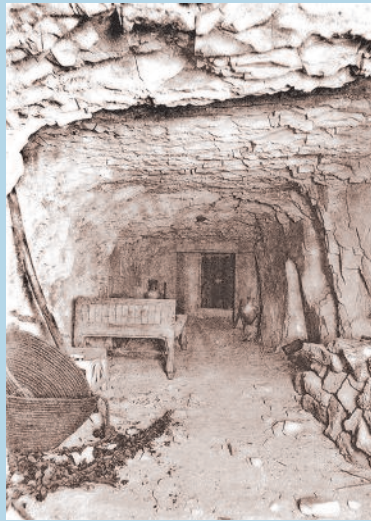
cavations made him an archaeologist ahead of his times. After this last campaign in 1920, Schiaparelli spent the rest of his arduous career studying, cataloging and creating displays of the over 30,000 artifacts he'd sent to Turin. Particularly noteworthy are masterpieces of inestimable value: wall paintings from the Tomb of Iti and Neferu at Gebelein (First Intermediate Period); some 500 funerary objects from the intact Tomb of Kha and Merit at Deir el Medina (TT8, Eighteenth Dynasty); and artifacts from the beautifully decorated Tomb of Nefertari in the Valley of the Queens (KV66, Nineteenth Dynasty).

The wall panel "The Life of an Archaeologist" points out that "The logistics of his missions required detailed planning. Once the permits [some are displayed] had been obtained, travel arrangements were made and materials and equipment prepared. Contact was made with trusted local collaborators, such as the dragoman Bolos Ghattas. Some expedition members traveled ahead to hire workers, prepare storerooms for finds, set up the tent camp and the service annexes, and stock food provisions. Franciscan friars often gave the Mission valuable support in finding trustworthy personnel and storing materials."

**Schiaparelli had numerous workmen** (he and his collaborators employed up to 400 workers at a time), but he could rely on very few trained collaborators. The exhibition catalogue's essay "La Missione Archeologica Italiana in Egitto," by Beppe Moiso and Giacomo Lovera, mentions several and the exhibition's wall panels also give short biographies of the three most important ones: archaeologist Francesco Ballerini, archaeologist Virginio Rosa and anthropologist Giovanni Marro. Two others, the already-mentioned Bolos Ghattas and Benvenuto Savina, were indispensable for the excavations' daily logistics and security.

As reported by Moiso and Lovera, "Bolos Ghattas (1880-1947), was a Christian from Luxor. He was the son of a rich businessman from Girge (a little bit south of Sohag) and had learned Italian from the Franciscan fathers in Luxor. Schiaparelli, who was looking for a trustworthy local who understood the problems connected to antiquities and excavations, decided Ghattas was the right person for the job and was pleased to have him as a collaborator. Ghattas knew how to fulfill Schiaparelli's every expectation and worked alongside him for ca. 20 years. He organized the site of the excavations before the archaeologists' arrival, set up the camps and hired the workmen. Schiaparelli often asked him to undertake some preliminary explorative surveys, in order to direct the excavations more efficiently once the archaeologists arrived. He discovered several



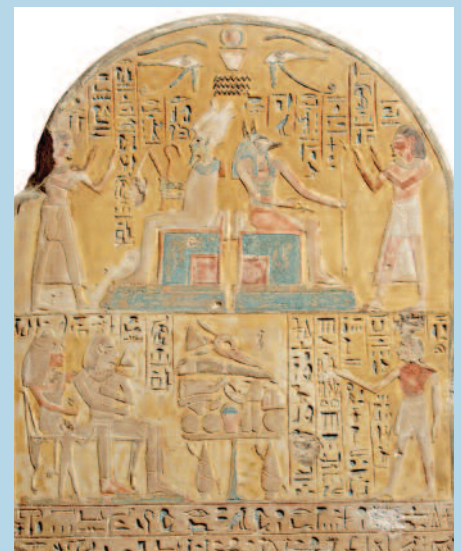


Arguably Schiaparelli's & the MAI's greatest discovery was the undisturbed & so totally intact Tomb of Kha & Merit (TT8) at Deir el Medina in 1906, having earlier found their tomb chapel there (above left) & removed its painted stela (bottom right). The tomb's entry corridor (above center) & single chamber well-filled with burial goods (right) were photographed, as were the M.A.I. Egyptian workmen carrying the objects from the tomb (below). Among the TT8's treasures were the gilded-cartonnage funerary mask of Merit & her wig (below).

Archival photos, Museo Egizio



Museo Egizio photos





places where Schiaparelli afterwards uncovered his most successful finds. Ghattas's son, Bisada, accompanied Virginia Rosa to Gebelein during the 1911 campaign. That same year Ghattas came to Italy, where Schiaparelli introduced him to King Vittorio Emanuele III."

Schiaparelli was devoted to Benvenuto Savina, his favorite custodian at the Museum in Turin. Savina participated in the daily organization and practical support of the 1905, 1906 and 1909 excavations, as well as the packing and shipment of artifacts. "His grandson, who now lives in Rome, lent us this wedding picture of Savina and his new bride Rosa Forneris," Moiso told me.

### **There is documentation from the exhibition's**

wall panels, the Museum permanent exhibitions' wall panels and the exhibition's catalogue about Schiaparelli's three devoted close collaborators, two of whom died very young, almost certainly from diseases they caught in Egypt, "in all likelihood," Moiso said, "from bacteria or viruses that had survived and spread in the environment of sealed tombs, or directly from mummies' still-contagious germs."

The first of these collaborators, and Schiaparelli's favorite, was Francesco Ballerini, born in Como on January 28, 1877. After graduating with a thesis in Egyptology in 1899, he came into contact with Schiaparelli, who, in 1901 requested the Ministry to assign the young man to the Egyptian Museum in Turin. Ballerini collaborated with Schiaparelli from 1902 onwards, was active in founding the Italian Archeological Mission and established its first work sites at Deir el Medina and in the Valley of the Queens. His great ability and competence, combined with his mild-mannered and reserved disposition, soon earned him the trust and appreciation of Schiaparelli, whom he accompanied to every excavation until 1909. He excavated at Giza in 1903 and at Heliopolis and Asyut between 1903 and 1906, as well as at Oua el Kebir, providing logistic and archeological assistance, and, above all, leaving a detailed documentation of the excavations he worked on.

"Schiaparelli increasingly counted on Ballerini," a permanent-collection wall panel reports, "to organize the excavation campaigns. He often preceded the group of archaeologists to lay the groundwork for the dig and hire the workers. These early years of the Italian Mission's explorations are documented in his valuable notebooks enriched with technical and artistic drawings. Moreover, his ability in the field of photography, which Schiaparelli so appreciated, allowed him to document in detail the progress of work and the discoveries with hundreds of photographic plates."

"Although Ballerini was crowned

with great professional success, he sorely missed his wife, Lucia Nosedà, and their two sons, Piero and Lorenzo, who remained in Como. Of frail health, on May 5, 1910, Francesco Ballerini, Franz to his friends, died at only 33 years of age. He was remembered by his Maestro [teacher or mentor] in a touching commemoration that ended: 'Ballerini was truly one of those noble souls who, once you have known them, you can never forget.'"

Following Ballerini's premature death, documentation of the excavations of Gebelein in 1911 was entrusted to Virginio Rosa, a young collaborator of Schiaparelli's, born on September 30, 1886, in Pinerolo near Turin, where his father was a cavalry officer. After receiving his degree in chemistry he'd dedicated himself to botany, eventually becoming an assistant at the Botanical Institute of the University of Sassari, a position he left to answer the call of ancient Egypt.

A wall panel in the Museum's permanent collection recounts: "Rosa set sail from Genoa on December 26, 1910, and, after a short stopover in Cairo, continued on to Gebelein, where he began work on January 12. He was accompanied by Bolos Ghattas, Schiaparelli's trusted Egyptian collaborator, who was, however, forced to abandon Rosa almost immediately because of a serious illness. For the remainder of the excavation, Rosa kept a detailed report of the events. This valuable excavation diary, complete with drawings and photographs, still preserved [in the State Archives in Turin], allows us to follow the daily progress of the work and the discoveries."

"The excavations, particularly at Gebelein, gave extraordinary results. Many tombs were found still intact with their funerary goods. Some of these tombs were very ancient, others of monumental proportions. Work was completed at Asyut on April 2. After a brief layover in Cairo, Rosa continued to Alexandria and then on to Genoa, where he arrived on May 10 in a poor state of health. He had contracted a mysterious illness, which would soon prove fatal, and died a few months later, on February 20, 1912, at 26 years of age."

About Giovanni Marro the permanent exhibit says: "The remarkable quantity of anthropological material sent to Turin, primarily from the sites of Gebelein and Asyut, convinced Schiaparelli of the need for an anthropologist at the excavation site. Giovanni Marro, the future director of Turin's Museum of Anthropology, was soon chosen for the job."

"Marro was born in 1875 in Limone Piemonte, near Cuneo. After receiving his medical degree, he began working at the Psychiatric Hospital in Collegno, becoming Head Physician and then General Manager."

"Starting in 1913 Schiaparelli made him part of the archaeological mission at the

sites of Gebelein and Asyut: at the same time. Marro had already studied the human remains that had been sent to Turin from previous campaigns. Schiaparelli's decision to include Marro in his team expanded the scope of his research to include physical anthropology, at the time a virtually unexplored aspect of anthropology."

"Marro published numerous scientific studies on the abundant bone materials in Turin. He also has the merit of having documented (although in scattered papers) Schiaparelli's activities, discoveries and excavation techniques. He continued to participate in archaeological missions under Giulio Farina, who succeeded Schiaparelli as the Museum's director."

After his time in Egypt "Marro continued his investigation in his laboratory in Turin, at the Institute of Anthropology of the University. He based his studies on the anthropological archive he had put together during the missions in Egypt and on his assiduous frequenting of the Museo Egizio. His anthropological and anthropometric assessment of skeletons and mummies indicated that ancient Egyptians had a rather slight physical structure. He found that this trait was still observable among the population of modern Egypt. Marro's scientific production includes many descriptions of pathological lesions. His were some of the first studies of paleopathology ever carried out in Italy."

### **The rest of the exhibition concerns displays**

from Heliopolis and Giza, the Valley of the Queens, Deir el Medina, Gebelein and Asyut, ending with a small explanation of Schiaparelli's redesign of the Museum's layout and rearrangement of the artifacts already there to make room for the M.I.A.'s new arrivals during his tenure as director of both.

"Schiaparelli cut short his excavations at Giza, which began in 1903, after the first campaign," explained Moiso, "because there were already other nations, Germany and the United States, excavating there."

Excavations at Heliopolis lasted until 1906; but, according to a wall panel, "from the beginning, their archaeological record appeared to be severely compromised. The rock fragments and pottery sherds from various periods were jumbled, and ground-water invaded the dig. In spite of this, the remains of a wall built under the pharaoh Djoser and fragments of a tabernacle of pharaoh Seti I were found, as well as two anomalous and hard-to-interpret constructions, one with an elliptical plan, the other with a very elaborate inner layout."

Among the finds from Giza on display in the exhibition are a page of Evarista Breccia's excavation diary; watercolors by Ballerini of tombs; two fragments of a false-



door from the mastaba of Itjer and other reliefs; and the granite face with a broken nose; from Heliopolis: a page from Schiaparelli's diary; a modern model one-to-ten scale of an elliptical structure, unlike any other ever uncovered, that Schiaparelli was unable to finish excavating because of groundwater; a limestone Fourth or Fifth Dynasty statuary family group of three, now missing the child; a fragment of a ritual cubit made of graywacke, with drawings and photographs of it by Ballerini; and fragments of the Heliopolis Tablet, with a map of the temple of Hathor on its front and an inventory of the temple's sacred accessories on the back.



**A gallery in the Turin Egyptian Museum, as it appeared in the early 20th Century. Museo Egizio**

***"In 1903," a wall panel relates, "the Italian Mission began to work in the Valley of the Queens. Here it explored about sixty tombs of dignitaries, princes and royal wives of the New Kingdom. The most important discovery was that of the Tomb of Nefertari (QV 66), wife of Rameses II. It had been plundered in ancient times, but still retained its splendid decoration. Another unexpected discovery was that of the tombs of princes Sethherkhepeshef and Khaemwaset (QV43 and QV44), sons of Rameses III. Their burials were full of coffins and grave-goods of members of Theban families of temple employees who had reused the tombs in later times."***

On display are one of Ballerini's excavation diaries, many of his drawings, a notebook describing several tombs; a letter by him to his family describing a mass performed by one of the Franciscan fathers inside the Tomb of Queen Tyti, as well as his account of the discovery of the Tomb of Khaemwaset, son of Rameses III; one complete coffin of Nakht-khonseru, as well as three coffin covers. One is of Lady of the House Tjesmutperet (Twenty-fifth Dynasty) and another of Nesimendjam (the same dynasty).

***"In 1905, the excavation campaign of Deir el Medina began," the wall panel continues. "This had been the site of the village of craftsmen working in the royal necropolis of West Thebes during the New Kingdom. Many arti-***

***facts were found among the village houses, but the most sensational discoveries were made in the necropolis of the craftsmen. They included the chapel of the painter Maya — whose decoration was removed, restored and exhibited in the Turin Museum — an archive of Demotic documents, and, above all, the Tomb of Kha, 'director of works in the Great Place,' and his wife Merit; the couple was already known from their funerary stela, which had been brought to Turin in 1824.... At the time of Schiaparelli's discovery, the burial of Merit and her husband Kha was exceptionally intact. At the end of a tunnel were the coffins and mummies of the couple, along with furni-***

***ture, food, clothing and personal objects. Among the finds, Merit's funerary mask of gilt cartonnage and glass paste stands out, along with her golden ring, and her fashionable wig of real human hair"*** (all three on display in the exhibition). According to the catalogue entry, Merit's ring — found within the pleats of her shroud, because of its placement — was more likely an amulet for protection and good luck in her new existence in the Afterlife than a piece of personal jewelry.

***"Gebelein," a wall panel recounts, "only a few kilometers from Luxor, is a very rich site where all the phases in Egyptian history are attested. Explored between 1910 and 1920, the necropolis yielded some intact tombs. One, dubbed 'Of the Unknown', is a rich burial of individuals, possibly from the same family, who lived at the end of the Fifth Dynasty. During the 1911 season, Virginio Rosa discovered the Tomb of Iti, 'head of the expeditions in the desert,' and his wife Neferu. Along with Iti's mummy, a rich and intact funerary assemblage was found in the burial.... It was graced with polychrome tempera paintings in the entrance portico and in the rock-cut main chamber. The paintings show scenes of rural life, the deceased's funeral and navigation. The paintings were detached from the walls, shipped to Italy and restored. Today they are displayed in the Museum."***

The artifacts and documents of spe-

cial note here are a small wooden statue of Iti and his coffin, as well as Rosa's letter to Schiaparelli, who was in Turin at the time, about his discovery of Iti and Neferu's tomb and Schiaparelli's complimentary reply, not to mention Rosa's small personal collection of finds which include plants.

***"Like Gebelein," a wall panel relates, "Asyut was a provincial town. It yielded important evidence from the burials datable between the late Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom belonging to common people, dignitaries and local governors. The Italian mission conducted a total of seven excavation campaigns here between 1906 and 1913. The cemetery of the city included many rock-cut tombs arranged on several levels along the mountain slope. The conformation of the site caused many difficulties. Large trenches were hence dug to detect tomb shafts. A total of 3,200 artifacts were found..."***

***"The burials of Asyut were of diverse types, from the simplest ones with the skeleton gathered in a small wooden coffin to more elaborate ones containing rectangular coffins graced with inscriptions and polychrome decorations, wooden statues of various sizes, funerary models depicting boats and individuals engaged in various kinds of work, and other personal objects. To study these different burial practices, in 1913 the mission recruited the anthropologist Giovanni Marro.... On the dig between 1913 and 1914 Marro's task was to collect and examine anthropological materials from the mission's excavations and study the local populations living near the sites. He analyzed biological features and complemented his observations with paleo-ethnological and ethnological information to search for common features between the past and the present."***

Displays of note here are Marro's notebooks, his photographic equipment, a Predynastic mummy in its basket, various skulls and mummified human heads, several human skeletons in wooden boxes, instruments for measuring head circumference, as well as full-sized mummy.

**Both curators Del Vesco and Moiso** contributed several of the exhibition catalogue's sixteen essays, sometimes jointly with other scholars, sometimes alone. This generously illustrated volume (cost: €35), published by Franco Cosimo Panini, has not been translated from Italian. Fortunately, for those lucky enough to come to Turin this summer, all the wall panels and exhibition cards, as well as the audio guide — with explanations and comments "by" Schiaparelli — are also in English.

**About the Author Journalist** Lucy Gordan-Rastelli is the European correspondent of this journal and is stationed in Rome.