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## A Museological Exercise in Modern Egypt: The Renovation Project of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo in 1975-1977

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### Keywords

The Egyptian Museum  
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Restoration of Tutankhamun's objects  
The artifacts display sequence

### Abstract

Due to the deteriorating state of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, the Egyptian and American governments agreed in 1975 that the proceeds of Tutankhamun Exhibition in the USA 1976-1979 would be assigned for the renovation of this museum or any other cultural projects in Egypt. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, as the main organizer of the exhibition, accomplished an assessment process of the situational condition of the Egyptian Museum which showed that it needed a general cleaning, repainting, rearrangement of the display sequence of Tutankhamun's objects and the restoration of several Tutankhamun's items before their removal to be displayed in the USA. This research illustrates the importance of this project, the role of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the renovation process. This paper utilizes primary source documents in the Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives in New York as raw evidence to analyze and interpret this museological exercise in 1970s.

## Introduction

According to the agreement which was signed between the American and the Egyptian governments on October 28, 1975, the Egyptian Government approved the USA to host an exhibition of Tutankhamun material from 1976 to 1979 in six American cities (Washington, Chicago, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Seattle, and New York). Both parties agreed that the net financial proceeds of the exhibition would be granted to Egypt to be used in the development of the Egyptian Museum<sup>♦</sup> in Cairo or in any other cultural or archaeological projects in Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

In Egypt, there was a great interest in the economic aspects during Sadat's period following the October 1973 War, in what was known as the open-door policy (*Infitah*) when there were persistent attempts to attract foreign investment and foreign currency and to transfer foreign resources to the Egyptian national economy.<sup>2</sup>

The Egyptian Museum project was not only considered a cultural project, but also an economic one that would contribute to the Egyptian national economy by attracting hard currency. There was a belief that any money that would be spent on this project would return to the Egyptian economy exponentially.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art (the MMA) played the main role in the renovation project of the Egyptian Museum as the main organizer of the Tutankhamun exhibition series in the USA and was responsible for financial matters, which would eventually be in the interest of the project. The MMA was responsible for providing technical support, proposals for development, and supervising the renovation work in the museum.

The assessment of the museum condition at the beginning of the project demonstrated that the Egyptian Museum needed extensive basic renovation due to its deteriorating state. The museum galleries needed more cleaning. The glass of many vitrines was cracked. The galleries needed internal and external painting. The display place of Tutankhamun's collection, in the second floor, was in need of renovation and the objects needed to be rearranged. Many of the Tutankhamun's items were in need of restoration before their removal to be displayed in the USA in 1976-1979.

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♦ The Egyptian Museum is situated at the northern edge of El Tahrir Square. The Museum of Egyptian antiquities was originally established at Boulak in 1858. It was transferred to Giza in 1890, and then it was moved to the current building which was built between 1897 and 1902. It contains important collections of Egyptian antiquities dated back to Ancient Egypt and Graeco-Roman period. The Egyptian Museum, Box 1, Folder 17: General. Background information on project. 1975-1977, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>1</sup> Agreement between Henry Kissinger, the US Secretary of State, and Ismail Fahmy, the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2-3, on October 28, 1975, Box 43, Folder 9: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Contracts. List of objects (2 of 2). 1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>2</sup> Sabine Frerichs, "Egypt's Neoliberal Reforms and the Moral Economy of Bread: Sadat, Mubarak, Morsi," *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol. 48 (4), (2016): 612-613.

This article casts the Egyptian Museum in a new and different light, by examining its renovation project in 1975-1977. It analyzes the importance of this project and the role that was played by the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a think tank institution providing the Egyptian party with advice and ideas on developing the museum.

The research also investigates the assessment of the physical condition of the museum at the beginning of the project in 1975 followed by identifying its needs and then prioritization of these requirements. This paper also considers the rearrangement proposal of Tutankhamun's objects on the second floor of the museum and the restoration of a number of pieces from this unique collection.

This research adopted historical and analytical research methods through researching primary materials represented in letters, notes, reports, and telexes which were circulated among the competent parties. These primary sources are located in the Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives in New York.

### **The Importance of the Renovation Project and its Finance**

The employees of the MMA tried to take advantage of the Egyptian Government's desire to pay attention to the economic aspects after the October War. They tried to convince them of the need to look at developing museums from an economic perspective and that it would have an economic feasibility that would contribute to strengthening the Egyptian economy. The MMA officials seem to believe in the importance of museums from an economic point of view as in terms of urban regenerators, regional competitiveness, city marketing, and tourism magnets, cultural infrastructures could be quite important. The direct beneficial effects of art and cultural institutions on income, employment, and productivity are well acknowledged.<sup>3</sup>

The MMA officials claimed that as the highest leadership of Egypt had special interest in the economic development, the potential of the Egyptian cultural, artistic, and archaeological resources should be part of the economic development of Egypt. They acknowledged that there is not a country in the world, "except for Greece", that has greater cultural resources than Egypt and the Egyptians should make the best use of these cultural resources. The development of these cultural resources would benefit not only scholarship and research, but also enhance the State revenues related to the tourism sector. They emphasized that the development of the archaeological sites and the museums could constitute a fundamental part of the economic growth in Egypt, and to maximize tourist revenues. The MMA administrators advised the Egyptian Government to adopt a plan to expand and to modernize the Egyptian museums. As new hotels were established, transportation means and roads were developed, museums in Egypt, from economic point of view, should be put into a comprehensive

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<sup>3</sup> Maria Llop and Josep-Maria Arauzo-Carod, "Economic impact of a new museum on the local economy: The Gaudí Centre," *Letters in Spatial and Resource Sciences*, Vol. 5 (2012): 18.

plan of development, “it is extremely important to look at an over-all program of museum renovation and expansion as an integral part of the growing tourist industry and not only as a museological exercise,” the MMA reported.<sup>4</sup>

To encourage the Egyptian Government to take a decision to develop and finance museums, the MMA officials presented a case in point of the MMA developing plan which cost \$55 million US in the ten years before 1976. This renovation and building program in the MMA itself had increased revenues on all sides, especially in the merchandise operations; the revenues after expenses were \$125,000 US in 1967, this amount increased to \$1,500,000 US in the fiscal year of 1976. The MMA officials claimed that since the Egyptian Museum and Giza plateau were among the most important tourist attractions in Cairo, the same development plan of the MMA could be conducted to the museums in Cairo and the results would be better.<sup>5</sup>

The MMA reported that the Egyptian Government should participate in funding the proposed project of the Egyptian Museum renovation. From an economic perspective, every pound spent by the Government would return numbers more. Given the economic importance of cultural properties to the economic development of Egypt, the MMA employees advised the Egyptian Government to propose an application on a formal basis to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) whether in the USA or in Egypt.<sup>6</sup>

Thomas Hoving, Director of the MMA, stated that he received a pledge from an anonymous donor who promised to pay \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 which would enable the MMA to provide technical assistance, expertise, and basic equipment for the Egyptian Museum renovation.<sup>7</sup> This donor was the Lila Acheson Wallace Foundation<sup>♦</sup>.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> White Paper: Proposed Renovation of the Egyptian Museum and Creation of a New Museum at Giza devoted to the History of the Pyramids, the Glory of the Pharaoh and Tutankhamun, in June 1976, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1-2, Box 1, Folder 13: Egyptian Museum. White paper on proposed renovation. June 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>5</sup> White Paper: Proposed Renovation of the Egyptian Museum and Creation of a New Museum at Giza devoted to the History of the Pyramids, the Glory of the Pharaoh and Tutankhamun, in June 1976, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 3, Box 1, Folder 13: Egyptian Museum. White paper on proposed renovation. June 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>6</sup> White Paper: Proposed Renovation of the Egyptian Museum and Creation of a New Museum at Giza devoted to the History of the Pyramids, the Glory of the Pharaoh and Tutankhamun, in June 1976, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 4-5, Box 1, Folder 13: Egyptian Museum. White paper on proposed renovation. June 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>7</sup> White Paper: Proposed Renovation of the Egyptian Museum and Creation of a New Museum at Giza devoted to the History of the Pyramids, the Glory of the Pharaoh and Tutankhamun, in June 1976, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17, Box 1, Folder 13: Egyptian Museum. White paper on proposed renovation. June 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>♦</sup> DeWitt and Lila Acheson Wallace, the founders of The Reader's Digest Association in 1922, formed The Wallace Foundation as an independent, private, and national organization. Its mission was to give

The Foundation expressed its desire to appoint Hoving as a consultant to the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities for three years with \$10,000 as an annual stipend and the donor would pay this stipend for the first year. Without such an agreement, the only funds which would come to Egypt was the revenue from Tutankhamun Exhibition at the end of the show in 1979.<sup>9</sup>

William Harrison, President of the International Business Associates company, which was the MMA liaison office in Cairo, argued that the appointment of Hoving as a Consultant to the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities was a way of proving the seriousness with which the Egyptians officially viewed the relationship with the MMA. Ahmed Kadry, Director of the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities, opined that: "of course, if we went to look for someone in museum development, we would seek Hoving." Kadry thought about appointing Hoving as Adviser in the entire museum development sector.<sup>10</sup> Hoving tried to persuade the Egyptians, through his agent in Cairo, Harrison, to assign him a consultant, as he would be useful to them in carrying out their tasks and would be a reason to assuage the donor.<sup>11</sup>

The Egyptian Organization of Antiquities confirmed to Hoving that all expenditure would be debited from the donation promised for the renovation of the Egyptian Museum; purchasing equipment and material as well as technical supervision and training based on the agreement between the Egyptian and the USA governments.<sup>12</sup>

Exhibitions were considered effective ways of producing revenues for cultural projects in Egypt such as Tutankhamun exhibitions to France, Japan, Britain, and the United Socialist Soviet Republic. Most of the profits of these exhibitions were devoted to the rescue project of Philae Temples. In 1976, there were three exhibitions whether in progress or in the planning phase: Akhenaten in West Germany, Ramses II in Paris, and Tutankhamun in the USA. The revenues of the first two exhibitions

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institutions the tools they need to increase chances for learning and enriching cultural participation for everyone and to increase participation in culture and arts.

"Wallace Foundation Mission Statement," *The New York Times*, Last modified February 10, 2023, [https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial3/ll\\_wallacemission.html](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial3/ll_wallacemission.html)

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Thomas Hoving, Director of the MMA, to Douglas Dillon, President of the MMA Board of Trustee, 4, on February 22, 1977, Box 43, Folder 3: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Chronological. 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>9</sup> Letter from William Harrison, President of the International Business Associates, to Ahmed Kadry, Director General of the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities, in May 1977, Box 43, Folder 3: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Chronological. 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>10</sup> Telex from William Harrison to Thomas Hoving on May 23, 1977, Box 43, Folder 3: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Chronological. 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>11</sup> Telex from Thomas Hoving to William Harrison on May 19, 1977, Box 43, Folder 3: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Chronological. 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Ahmed Kadry to Thomas Hoving in May 1977, Box 43, Folder 3: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Chronological. 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

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would support Philae, while the profits of the third exhibition was designated for the renovation of the Egyptian Museum or any other archaeological projects such as the renovation of the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria. The MMA Director suggested a series of exhibitions outside Egypt for at least ten years, the Egyptian museums would be renovated during that period. This exhibitions series would provide Egypt with hard currency cash flow.<sup>13</sup>

The MMA Director propounded the idea of sending the fifty-five pieces of Tutankhamun treasures to several countries, including Canada, Germany, Britain, and Australia, after completing their tour in the USA 1976-1979. The Chinese Exhibition, which was displayed in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada in 1974<sup>14</sup> resulted in 600,000 visitors in a nine-week presentation. The Tutankhamun exhibition was expected to surpass the Chinese exhibit. The Tutankhamun Exhibition catalog could be reprinted in American edition of 400,000 and could be easily reprinted and distributed in Canada, Australia, and Britain. The MMA Director expected that this catalogue would sell 75,000 copies in Canada, 150,000 in Germany, 75,000 in Australia, and 75,000 in Britain, the catalogue might bring \$1,550,000. In addition to the catalogue, they could produce other publications, jewelry, reproductions, scarves, calendars, and other types of merchandise.<sup>15</sup>

The MMA administrators also recommended a number of touring Egyptian exhibitions within ten years period after 1976 such as the exhibitions of 3,000 Years of Egyptian Masterpieces and the Beauty of Ancient Egypt which would focus on the Egyptian art and its relation to Greece.<sup>16</sup> Hoving believed that as Tutankhamun was not the only material in Egypt, and there were other fabulous pharaonic materials in addition to Graeco-Roman and Islamic objects, it would be better if these exhibitions included also Graeco-Roman art objects and Islamic art items.<sup>17</sup>

To promote Egypt and its heritage internationally with benefits to tourism, to create new coin designs to attract collectors globally, and to generate financial returns to the

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<sup>13</sup> White Paper: Proposed Renovation of the Egyptian Museum and Creation of a New Museum at Giza devoted to the History of the Pyramids, the Glory of the Pharaoh and Tutankhamun, in June 1976, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 7-9, Box 1, Folder 13: Egyptian Museum. White paper on proposed renovation. June 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>14</sup> John Russell, "Beauty Fills the Chinese Exhibition in Toronto," *The New York Times*, August 9, 1974, 35.

<sup>15</sup> White Paper: Proposed Renovation of the Egyptian Museum and Creation of a New Museum at Giza devoted to the History of the Pyramids, the Glory of the Pharaoh and Tutankhamun, in June 1976, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 9-11, Box 1, Folder 13: Egyptian Museum. White paper on proposed renovation. June 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>16</sup> White Paper: Proposed Renovation of the Egyptian Museum and Creation of a New Museum at Giza devoted to the History of the Pyramids, the Glory of the Pharaoh and Tutankhamun, in June 1976, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 11-12, Box 1, Folder 13: Egyptian Museum. White paper on proposed renovation. June 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>17</sup> Letter from Thomas Hoving to Douglas Dillon, 6, on February 22, 1977, Box 43, Folder 3: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Chronological. 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

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Egyptian Government which could be used in the renovation projects of the Egyptian antiquities, the MMA officials suggested the creation of gold coin of non-circulating basis through allowing the Franklin Mint Corporation<sup>♦</sup> to design coins in cooperation with the Egyptian Mint and the two parties strike those coins outside Egypt on behalf of the Egyptian Mint. The Franklin Mint proposed a 15% royalty on the face value of five gold coins, in case of issuance of one coin per year, the estimated revenues would be \$200,000 per issue or a total of \$1,000,000 over five years.<sup>18</sup>

H. W. Broido, Vice-President of Corporate Program Development at the Franklin Mint, visited Egypt in July 1976 to cover the Egyptian Museum with special emphasis on Tutankhamun and other jewelry collections. He went to the Egyptian Museum on July 20, 1976, where Thomas Logan, Associate Curator of the Egyptian Art at the MMA, showed him Tutankhamun's jewelry and objects of other periods he wanted to see.<sup>19</sup>

The MMA, the Egyptian Mint, and the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities agreed to produce a number of coins of a non-circulating and legal tender variety. The MMA was responsible for designing the coins in coordination with artists of the Egyptian Mint, while the coins production would be the responsibility of the Egyptian Mint with the presence of an employee hired by the MMA to ensure the quality control over the material, "the fact that at present anyway their quality of the production of the Egyptian Mint is not as good as that of the Franklin Mint must be faced and solved", Hoving reported. It was agreed among the three parties that the net proceeds would be distributed three ways; the total profits were anticipated to be about \$6,675,000, with approximately \$2,225,000 for the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities.<sup>20</sup>

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♦ The Franklin Mint Corporation was founded in 1964. It was not only the largest private minting company in the world, specializing in the production of precious metal commemorative medals and coins, but it was also the top manufacturer of limited-edition collectibles.

Samuel A. Tower, "Stamps," *The New York times*, September 14, 1975, 130.

Agis Salpukas, "Franklin Mint Seeks Sport Chain," *The New York times*, August 10, 1979, 1.

<sup>18</sup> White Paper: Proposed Renovation of the Egyptian Museum and Creation of a New Museum at Giza devoted to the History of the Pyramids, the Glory of the Pharaoh and Tutankhamun, in June 1976, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13-14, Box 1, Folder 13: Egyptian Museum. White paper on proposed renovation. June 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>19</sup> Memorandum from Georgia El Monasterly, Special Assistant to William Harrison, to William Harrison on July 25, 1976, Box 43, Folder 7: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Contracts. Franklin Mint (2 of 2). 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>20</sup> White Paper: Proposed Renovation of the Egyptian Museum and Creation of a New Museum at Giza devoted to the History of the Pyramids, the Glory of the Pharaoh and Tutankhamun, in June 1976, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 15, Box 1, Folder 13: Egyptian Museum. White paper on proposed renovation. June 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

## Assessment of the Museum's Condition at the Beginning of the Project

Before the implementation of the renovation project for the Egyptian Museum, the condition of the Museum was assessed in 1975 when a team from the MMA paid a visit to the Egyptian Museum in June 1975. They reported that the Museum galleries were not clean enough, the vitrines had cracked glass, and the guards appeared to be unconscious. Because no drop cloths were used in a recent painting of the walls and ceilings, many of the statues in the Museum were splotted with yellow paint. Hoving reported that the Director's office was not clean and had no electricity. Because there was no electricity, there were no fire or burglar alarms. There were phones, but they weren't very functional.<sup>21</sup>

The rewiring process of the Egyptian Museum building which began in 1973 was a result of the Cairo Opera House fire, which was erupted on October 28, 1971 due to the electrical system when a few haphazard attempts to put it out.<sup>22</sup>

An annual 220 AC electrical system was being installed in the Museum, this work had been in progress for three years and it was expected to be completed within two months. The replacement of the showcases glass, roof glass, and laylights was difficult to get in Egypt during that time and if it was possible to get, it would take about six months. The MMA detailed that the large size glass, which was required for big cases was not possible to get, so the glass fronts in the mummy cases were cut in two pieces. There was no list of missing glass in the Museum; Fouad Zaki El Orabi, Projects' Director for the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities, undertook to have all the dimensions including thickness of the required glass.<sup>23</sup>

The building of the Egyptian Museum was in a deteriorated condition which required a massive effort to be made in basic renovation. The building needed a modern fire control warning system. the electrical system needed to be finished. the broken skylights and outmoded glass should be replaced with new tempered semi-reflecting glass. An air-circulating system should be installed. The museum needed modern track lighting, modern cases for the artifacts, and updated labels.<sup>24</sup> The building interior should be cleaned and painted. The Museum was in need of support facilities for administrative, curatorial, conservation, maintenance, and security departments. The storage facilities were described by the MMA report as confused and inadequate;

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Hoving, *Making the Mummies Dance* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 404.

<sup>22</sup> General Information, Box 45, Folder 4: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Personnel. 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York. Donato Somma, "A Tale of Two Houses: Opera Houses in Cairo and Cape Town," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 33, Issue 1-2. (2021): 137.

<sup>23</sup> Egyptian Trip: June 4 – June 11, 2, 1975, Box 44, Folder 8: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (2 of 2). 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>24</sup> Renovation of the Egyptian Museum – July 11, 1976 - Stage one, 2, on July 11, 1976, Box 43, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Cairo briefing paper (1976). 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.



the existing storage should be renovated, and the museum basement need to be updated to be acceptable for this purpose.<sup>25</sup>

Several Egyptian experts were consulted regarding the development of the Egyptian Museum. The Director of the Egyptian Museum, Abdel Qader Selim, prioritized work in renovating the Museum including flooring by putting marble over most of downstairs which would help in keeping the place cleaner. Selim recommended glass replacement of broken windows, security system, and equipment for moving artifacts and for cleaning floors. The Museum's immediate needs, according to the opinion of Henri Riad, former Director of the Museum, included illumination system, security system, sales items, and refurbishment of old showcases. To Ibrahim El Nawawy, Curator at the Egyptian Museum, the main requirements were painting, lighting, labelling, and new vitrines with special lighting.<sup>26</sup>

In the examination of the Egyptian Museum in June 1975, the MMA team critiqued the lack of supervision by the Egyptian Museum administrators of the guards and cleaning workmen. They reported that the Museum needed a general cleaning "from roof to basement", and inadequate supervision was given to the workmen. There was no oversight of the Museum's cleaning process and there was no official responsible for the appearance of the building nor the collections. They recommended that "one person must be selected to be responsible for the cleaning crews and for the appearance of the museum." The MMA recommended that a group of eight workmen should be appointed for rigging and heavy cleaning who should clean from 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM and be used from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM as riggers.<sup>27</sup>

The MMA team put a list of priorities during their examination of the Egyptian Museum; they recommended general cleaning of the building; pyrotronics and exterior alarms; glass replacement; repainting the Museum; cleaning and rigging equipment; and uniforms for cleaning workmen.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> White Paper: Proposed Renovation of the Egyptian Museum and Creation of a New Museum at Giza devoted to the History of the Pyramids, the Glory of the Pharaoh and Tutankhamun, in June 1976, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 33-34, Box 1, Folder 13: Egyptian Museum. White paper on proposed renovation. June 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>26</sup> General Information, Box 45, Folder 4: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Personnel. 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York. Donato Somma, "A Tale of Two Houses: Opera Houses in Cairo and Cape Town," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 33, Issue 1-2. (2021): 137.

<sup>27</sup> Egyptian Trip: June 4 – June 11, 1975, 2, Box 44, Folder 8: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (2 of 2). 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>28</sup> Egyptian Trip: June 4 – June 11, 1975, 3, Box 44, Folder 8: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (2 of 2). 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

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## The Role of the MMA in the Renovation Project

The MMA pledged in 1975 to support the renovation of the Egyptian Museum by providing technical support and expertise in different areas of museology including equipment for the cleaning, maintenance, security of the building, moving of objects of art and renovating a part of the museum such as the galleries of Tutankhamun.<sup>29</sup>

In April 1975, Hoving reported to Gamal Mokhtar, President of the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities, that he had been able to secure the required money necessary to support the Egyptian Museum in various aspects. One of these aspects was providing the Museum with a number of essential museological equipment such as tools for moving objects, fork-lift trucks; glass for reglazing some of the skylights and windows; lighting and electrical fixtures; required material to build a temporary storehouse building in the Museum; showcases, labels, shelving, ...etc., painting of the entire museum interior except for some parts on the first and second floors which were painted in 1974, and sealing the concrete floors on the first floor. The representative of the MMA in Cairo, William Harrison, was responsible for securing the bids and for making payments in hard currency to the Egyptian contractors. The International Business Associates would receive 20% as a management fee to implement the bids and to supervise the previous project.<sup>30</sup> The MMA officials pledged to support the Egyptian Museum without interfering or imposing, "we want to cooperate," Hoving emphasized.<sup>31</sup>

The Museum fire detection system had not worked since 1967. There was a small building behind the Museum, but it was on the Museum grounds, which housed the central alarm system.<sup>32</sup>

The MMA was entering into a contract with "Graviner", a fire detection company in England to provide the Egyptian Museum with a fire detection system. Fouad Zaki El Orabi considered this procedure to be inconsistent with what was concluded with the Egyptian Minister that the \$1,000,000 would be deposited to the Egyptian Government account, and the Egyptian authorities would approve such a contract and would pay all bills. As Mokhtar was absent in Germany, El Orabi stated that he could

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<sup>29</sup> Letter from Thomas Hoving to Gamal Mokhtar, President of the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities, on June 16, 1975, Box 1, Folder 7: Cairo. Correspondence Thomas Hoving and Gamal Mokhtar (Egyptian Organization of Antiquities). April, June 1975, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from Thomas Hoving to Douglas Dillon, 6, on February 22, 1977, Box 43, Folder 3: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Chronological. 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>31</sup> Memorandum from Thomas Hoving to Gamal Mokhtar on April 10, 1975, Box 1, Folder 7: Cairo. Correspondence Thomas Hoving and Gamal Mokhtar (Egyptian Organization of Antiquities). April, June 1975, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>32</sup> Egyptian Trip: June 4 – June 11, 1975, 2, Box 44, Folder 8: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (2 of 2). 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

not approve this contract as he could get another one for 20% less from at least two companies without indicating what those companies were specifically.<sup>33</sup>

John Dorman, Director of American Research Center in Egypt, who was involved in such arrangements in Cairo with the MMA claimed that El Orabi was reacting to personality problem considering his attitude as "power-struggle". He advised the MMA administrators not to react to El Orabi's attitude and he would raise this issue with Mokhtar when he returned to Egypt.<sup>34</sup>

In a meeting between Mokhtar and John Dorman, Mokhtar emphasized that no agreements had been concluded with the MMA on how funds for the Egyptian Museum renovation would be handled. Mokhtar indicated that if the MMA would assist the Egyptian Government in the renovation of the museum, in this case the funds would be turned over to the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities to sign the contracts and to pay the bills, while if the MMA intended to undertake the museum restoration with the advice of the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities, in which case the MMA would negotiate the contracts and would pay the bills. Mokhtar said that it depended more on the donor as he might set certain conditions.<sup>35</sup>

Douglas Dillon, President of the MMA Board of Trustees, recommended that the MMA should provide the Egyptians with technical assistance and not be involved in carrying out construction or renovation projects in Egypt.<sup>36</sup> The MMA Director followed the Dillon's recommendations and emphasized that they would hold and pay monies, but they did not want to be responsible for the work and its acceptance in the Egyptian Museum or elsewhere; it should be the legal responsibility of the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities. This means that the Egyptian authorities would get the bids, decide on the contractors, and would tell the MMA to pay their liaison office in Cairo. Hoving stated that "the MMA never was to be the responsible party. Legally it cannot be."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Letter from John Dorman, Director of American Research Center in Egypt, to Christine Lilyquist, Curator of the Department of Egyptology in the MMA, on October 4, 1975, Box 43, Folder 9: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Contracts. List of objects (2 of 2). 1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>34</sup> Letter from John Dorman to Christine Lilyquist on October 4, 1975, Box 43, Folder 9: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Contracts. List of objects (2 of 2). 1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>35</sup> Letter from John Dorman to Christine Lilyquist on October 16, 1975, Box 43, Folder 9: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Contracts. List of objects (2 of 2). 1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from Douglas Dillon to Thomas Hoving on April 4, 1977, Box 43, Folder 10: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Contracts. Museums. 1975-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>37</sup> Telex from Thomas Hoving to William Harrison on April 13, 1977, Box 43, Folder 10: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Contracts. Museums. 1975-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

## The Initial Stages of the Renovation Project

In August 1975, Hoving ordered and paid for various equipment for the initial stages of the Egyptian Museum renovation including cleaning equipment and machinery for moving artifacts. The rigging equipment and the cleaning materials included cotton filled moving van pads, heavy duty nylon web slings, hydraulic jacks, lift truck, pry lifts, telescoping lighting platforms, complete steel scaffold with five ton hoist and trolley, 12 foot step ladders, solid platform Dolly trucks, cotton mops, mop squeeze wringers, scrubbing machines with attachments, glass cleaner, brass window squeegees, paint remover, push brooms, vacuum cleaners with wet and dry attachments, vacuum cleaners for fabrics, vacuum cleaners for case interiors, oil drum cradle and truck, liquid floor cleaner, floor wax, and sweeping compound.<sup>38</sup> The shipment of rigging and cleaning equipment arrived in Egypt in January 1976.<sup>39</sup>

In December 1975, the MMA had purchased other equipment for cleaning, moving of artifacts, and glass replacement of certain cases. Hoving planned to send a team to the Egyptian Museum to train its staff in how to use this equipment. The MMA officials were waiting for the electrical wiring to be finished in the second floor to begin working in this part of the Museum; it was the Egyptian Museum share. The previous steps constituted the basic phase to renovate some part of the Egyptian Museum.<sup>40</sup>

The electrical work in the second floor of the Museum was not completed until February 1976. The MMA officials asked for a guarantee that the electrical wiring would be completed by May 1976. The cleaning team had originally planned to arrive on May 1, or Richard Morsches, the MMA Vice-Director for Operations, and his crew would postpone the cleaning work and rigging training until September or whenever this work completed.<sup>41</sup>

Thomas Hoving had assigned J. H. Farmer Associates Limited to examine the fire alarm system in the Egyptian Museum. John H. Farmer, Director of this company, visited the Museum on July 17, 1976 and found out that the fire alarm system was installed in the Museum some 25 years ago, the alarm zone indicator panel might have some antique value, this panel was in the Police Guard Post, behind and outside the main structure. Farmer observed 35 push-button break-glass panels throughout the

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<sup>38</sup> Letter from Thomas Hoving to Gamal Mokhtar on August 20, 1975, Box 43, Folder 9: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Contracts. List of objects (2 of 2). 1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from Thomas Hoving to Gamal Mokhtar on January 8, 1976, Box 45, Folder 9: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Renovation. Giza. 1975-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>40</sup> Memorandum from Thomas Hoving to Kevin Roche, 1-2, on December 22, 1975, Box 1, Folder 11: Egyptian Museum. Reports and correspondence. December 1975-July 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>41</sup> Telex from Thomas Hoving to William Harrison on February 20, 1976, Box 1 Folder 11: Egyptian Museum. Reports and correspondence. December 1975-July 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

two floors of the museum, many of them had no signs indicating their presence which reduced the effective use of them. There was no fire detection system other than portable fire extinguishers and there was no sprinkler system. J. H. Farmer Associates Limited firm was assigned to examine the fire protection problem in depth, and to design a fire protection system. This work costed \$15,000.<sup>42</sup>

## **Cleaning the Egyptian Museum**

It seems that the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities did not have money or trained staff to clean the Museum and its exhibits befitting the importance of the Museum. The standards of cleanliness were not only necessary for the building and its visitors, but also for the preservation of its objects.<sup>43</sup>

In a meeting between Mokhtar, Richard Morsches, and Christine Lilyquist, the Curator of the Department of Egyptian Art at the MMA, they discussed the possibility of using a company to do the initial cleaning of the Egyptian Museum and to train its staff to continue the upkeep of the building. Pritchard Services firm, a British cleaning firm and a professional services organization which specialized in the cleaning of public buildings, was selected to undertake this job in the Egyptian Museum.<sup>44</sup>

In December 1976, the Pritchard Services Group Ltd. sent the responsible person for the Europe and Middle East Division in the company, Barrie J. Messenger, to visit the Egyptian Museum to examine its condition and to give his suggestions regarding the cleaning of the Museum and the training of its Egyptian staff.<sup>45</sup> Messenger offered several recommendations and services, he suggested an experienced wall and ceiling restoration from interior and exterior, training of the existing staff in the museum in the methods of wall and ceiling cleaning using the equipment sent from the USA for a period of one month, training of the museum staff in the methods of building cleaning, staff control, and the use of the equipment sent from the MMA by an experienced building cleaning manager from the UK.<sup>46</sup>

Messenger's cleaning plan for the Egyptian Museum included the following steps: sweep floors, dust stands, and toilet cleaned on a daily basis; cleaning glass cases and mopping all floors every two days; scrub all the floors twice a week; washing all

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<sup>42</sup> Letter from John H. Farmer, Director of J H Farmer Associates Limited, to Thomas Hoving on July 19, 1976, Box 45, Folder 9: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Renovation. Giza. 1975-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>43</sup> Letter from Pritchard Service Group to William Harrison on March 17, 1977, Box 45, Folder 9: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Renovation. Giza. 1975-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from William Harrison to Gamal Mokhtar on December 6, 1976, Box 44, Folder 7: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (1 of 2). 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>45</sup> Letter from William Harrison to Thomas Hoving on December 9, 1976, Box 44, Folder 7: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (1 of 2). 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>46</sup> B. J. Messenger, Europe and Middle East Division – Pritchard Services Group Ltd., Re: Egyptian Museum, Box 44, Folder 7: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (1 of 2). 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.



stands and cleaning internal windows monthly; and wash all walls and ceilings every six months.<sup>47</sup>

Although cleaning had not progressed as originally planned, floors and case glass of Tutankhamun galleries were on second round of cleaning in March 1977. The cleaning team asked for bleach to clean marble balustrades which were cleaned but were not very white.<sup>48</sup>

During the renovation process, there were only seventy workers, forty of whom were new ones. Because of workers moving and absenteeism, the showcases were seldom cleaned. Those workers were being trained in moving incoming and outgoing cases of antiquities coming from or going to outside exhibitions.<sup>49</sup> Pritchard Services Group Ltd. was appointed to train the workmen of the Egyptian Museum to clean. Members of the MMA visited the Egyptian Museum from January 31 to February 23, 1977 including Hoving, Morsches, Joseph P. McMahon, Manager of Department of Buildings at the MMA, and Franz J. Schmidt, Assistant Manager of Department of Buildings at the MMA. This team visited the Egyptian Museum to initiate the training of workmen in the use of modern rigging and cleaning equipment, and to supervise Pritchard Services Group Ltd. in the training of an additional 30 workmen to do general cleaning.<sup>50</sup>

The MMA officials were not fully satisfied about this firm's performance in the Museum. Their mission was not accomplished according to Richard Morsches's report "I really am not pleased with the Pritchard operation at this point." Morsches's point of view was that the Egyptian Museum should have its own cleaning crew, he believed that if a number of workmen from the Egyptian Museum were given proper instruction, they could be effective.<sup>51</sup>

Morsches pointed out that it would be cheaper for the Egyptian authorities to improve the skills of the existing staff and to double their salaries than hiring Pritchard Company "which will only decrease the morale of their own workmen." He proposed

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<sup>47</sup> Egyptian Museum: Service Covered 7-Day per Week by B. J. Messenger, Europe and Middle East Division – Pritchard Services Group Ltd., Box 44, Folder 7: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (1 of 2). 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>48</sup> Telex from William Harrison to Richard Morsches, the MMA Vice-Director of Operations, on March 7, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>49</sup> Telex from William Harrison to Richard Morsches on March 30, 1977, Box 1, Folder 8: Cairo. Telexes. February 1976-October 1977, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>50</sup> The Metropolitan in Cairo - Egypt, on May 6, 1977, Box 44, Folder 7: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (1 of 2). 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>51</sup> Telex from Richard Morsches to William Harrison on March 10, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.



forming a group of workmen for specialized cleaning and another one for general cleaning.<sup>52</sup>

Harrison justified the use of this cleaning company by trying to demonstrate to the Egyptian authorities and staff in the Egyptian Museum “what a clean museum could look like.” He pointed out that Pritchard company had not got the personnel mass that they asked for or were promised which could be a justification of negligence in the task entrusted to them.<sup>53</sup>

The liaison office of the MMA had another point of view regarding the cleaning process of the Museum. On March 14, 1977, Harrison reported that many cleaning tasks were accomplished in the Egyptian Museum including marble staircases on the right and left hand sides, balustrades of gallery; floors, windows, and display cases of the first floor; floors, glass of display cases, and statues of the gallery in front of the main entrance; the Middle Kingdom and Old Kingdom rooms’ floors and the display cases of the rooms to the left of the entrance which were numbered 21-26-31-36-41; and Tutankhamun galleries. Harrison reported “museum definitely looks better as floors clean.”<sup>54</sup>

The Spanish Royal family’s, King Juan Carlos and his wife Queen Sofia, accompanied by Jihan Sadat visited the Egyptian Museum in March 1977. This visit was described as a “spectacular” visit because the Museum was beautifully clean.<sup>55</sup> “Mrs Sadat reported to be both shocked and ecstatic during her recent visit with Juan Carlos,” Harrison claimed.<sup>56</sup>

Following a visit to the Egyptian Museum by Ahmed Kadry, the Undersecretary of State of Ministry of Culture, and Gamal Mokhtar on March 7, 1977, they met the representatives of the Pritchard Services Group Ltd and recognized that it would not be possible to finish the work by March 13, 1977 according to the contract with this company.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Telex from Richard Morsches to William Harrison on March 10, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>53</sup> Telex from William Harrison to Richard Morsches on March 16, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>54</sup> Telex from William Harrison to Richard Morsches on March 14, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from William Harrison to Richard Morsches on March 23, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>56</sup> Letter from William Harrison to Thomas Hoving on March 28, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from Pritchard Service Group to William Harrison on March 17, 1977, Box 45, Folder 9: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Renovation. Giza. 1975-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

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Kadry asked Hoving to extend the mission of this company for one more month “for the sake of the standard of efficiency of the group of workers drilled for this purpose.”<sup>58</sup> The MMA officials asked the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities to authorize the MMA to regularize the continuation of expenditure for the then ongoing projects in the Egyptian Museum including the several weeks extension of the Pritchard Services.<sup>59</sup> The Egyptian authorities authorized the Board of Trustees of the MMA to continue the series of renovation process which was underway in the Egyptian Museum. They recommended that the cleaning project should be expanded to include painting of the museum and repair of all glass installations and lighting. The extension of these projects in the Egyptian Museum costed \$250,000 which were taken from proceeds due the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities.<sup>60</sup>

Gamal Mokhtar, President of the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities, approved the continuation of Pritchard’s employee George Barbagallo’s services of training and management duties in the Egyptian Museum.<sup>61</sup> “This is the result of the shining museum when the king of Spain visited,” Georgia El Monasterly, Special Assistant to Harrison, claimed.<sup>62</sup>

It was reported on March 28, 1977 that new efforts were made from the George Barbagallo’s Services to train the workmen in the Egyptian Museum. Harrison indicated that their work was done under close supervision from him or from his Assistant Georgia El Monasterly.<sup>63</sup> A new shipment of cleaning supplies and equipment was sent from New York to the Egyptian Museum on May 12, 1977.<sup>64</sup>

### **Glass Replacement and Museum’s Painting**

In March 1977, Abdel Qader Selim, started to replace several missing glass windows on the first floor in the Egyptian Museum, for the windows on roof and dome they were getting bids which was described as a hard and slow-going business. Mokhtar,

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<sup>58</sup> Letter from Ahmed Kadry to Thomas Hoving on March 9, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from William Harrison to Gamal Mokhtar on March 23, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>60</sup> Letter from Ahmed Kadry to Thomas Hoving on March 24, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>61</sup> Letter from Gamal Mokhtar to Thomas Hoving on March 22, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>62</sup> Letter from Georgia El Monasterly to Thomas Hoving on March 25, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>63</sup> Letter from William Harrison to Thomas Hoving on March 28, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>64</sup> Letter from Richard Morsches to Dorris Devine, Chief Operator at the MMA, on May 6, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

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Kadry and Selim were pressing for outside paint of the Museum, Harrison was asking for bids for inside and outside as a two-phase job.<sup>65</sup>

Richard Morsches informed the Egyptian authorities that he agreed the outside of the building to be painted, but it was a low priority considering the shabby condition of the interior. The interior painting of the building must come first among the priorities as it would have a bigger impact than the cleaning from the point of view of Morsches. However, the painting must be of a first-class job, the cleaning, the glass replacement, and the interior painting were only the first steps in the project but the most important.<sup>66</sup>

The MMA supported the Egyptian Museum with conservation equipment such as comfort indicators; paintings materials; the artists handbook of material and technique; 3 blade holders; sterile stainless mini blades; lifting knives; deacidifier; spatulas (Italian steel tools); hypodermic syringes; and needles.<sup>67</sup>

The MMA provided the Egyptian Museum with some materials needed for renovation such as grease guns for rolling tools to be lubricated periodically; nylon pads for scrubbing machines for the marble floor in the museum; steel wool pads for the concrete surface of the back area of the museum; rawl plugs to be used as the fastener to the wall when they drill a hole for its exact size; hammer gun percussion carbide bits for concrete, masonry, and brick only, they were not to be used on wood, steel or on any other soft material.<sup>68</sup>

## **The Restoration of Tutankhamun's Objects**

As the proposed Exhibition of Tutankhamun in the USA included several items that had not been displayed at the exhibits of Paris and London such as the gilded figure of Selket, many of these objects needed to be restored. It was difficult for the MMA in a short time to hire a new team and to certify it to the Egyptians. There were two French restorers who had already acquired the trust of the curators of the Egyptian Museum during their work for the Exhibition of Tutankhamun and His Time in Paris in 1967, they were M. Gaston Gaucherot and Madame Coquillon.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Telex from William Harrison to Richard Morsches on March 30, 1977, Box 1, Folder 8: Cairo. Telexes. February 1976-October 1977, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>66</sup> Telex from Richard Morsches to William Harrison on March 29, 1977, Box 44, Folder 2: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Exhibition traveling (1 of 2). 1976-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>67</sup> Conservation Equipment for the Egyptian Museum: A Gift from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Box 1, Folder 10: Egyptian Museum. Materials needed for renovation. 1977, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>68</sup> Materials for Cairo, on April 21, 1977, Box 1, Folder 10: Egyptian Museum. Materials needed for renovation. 1977, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>69</sup> Letter from Philippe Montebello, the MMA Vice-Director for Curatorial Affairs, to Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, Curator at the Department of Egyptian Antiquities at Louvre Museum, on

The MMA had asked the Louvre Museum in December 1975 to obtain a permission to contract its two French conservators; M. Gaston Gaucherot and his assistant Madame Coquillon to work on the restoration of the fifty-five objects which would be displayed in the USA in 1976-1979 and to work on the restoration of the Canopic Shrine.<sup>70</sup>

On December 2, 1975, discussions had been made between Philippe de Montebello, the MMA Vice-Director for Curatorial Affairs, and Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, Curator at the Department of Egyptian Antiquities at Louvre Museum, it was agreed that the two French restorers would be paid by the MMA upon completion of their work,<sup>71</sup> the MMA would pay their return flight ticket to Paris, surface transportation, boarding costs, and excess baggage costs if needed. The MMA would secure personal accident insurance for the two restorers during the period of their work for the MMA. The Louvre Museum offered to provide all the tools, instruments, materials, and chemicals required for the restoration process.<sup>72</sup>

In February 1976, it seems that the MMA Director, Hoving, canceled the use of the Louvre Museum restorers for the restoration work in the Egyptian Museum without contacting Noblecourt who showed her annoyance to Christine Lilyquist and Mokhtar. Noblecourt said that she made arrangements with the French Minister of Culture to get Gaucherot released from a prior commitment to be able to do the work asked by the MMA.<sup>73</sup>

The MMA appointed two of its restorers: Christine Faltermeier, Assistant Conservator; and Rudolph Meyer, Master Restorer, to restore Tutankhamun objects to be prepared for their long journey. Mokhtar emphasized that the costs of the MMA restorers would come out of Egyptian profits.<sup>74</sup>

A team from the MMA visited Egypt from January 18 to March 15, 1976 including Thomas Hoving, Richard Morsches, Christine Lilyquist, Lee Boltin, a Photographer of art, Christine Roussel, Manager of Reproduction Studio at the MMA, Bruce

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December 9, 1975, Box 43, Folder 5: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Conservation. 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>70</sup> Letter from Thomas Hoving to Gamal Mokhtar on December 31, 1975, Box 1, Folder 7: Cairo. Correspondence Thomas Hoving and Gamal Mokhtar (Egyptian Organization of Antiquities). April, June 1975, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>71</sup> Letter from Thomas Hoving to Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, on February 24, 1976, Box 43, Folder 5: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Conservation. 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>72</sup> Letter from Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt to Philippe Montebello on December 31, 1975, Box 43, Folder 5: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Conservation. 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>73</sup> Letter from Richard Morsches to Thomas Hoving on February 13, 1976, Box 44, Folder 8: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (2 of 2). 1976-1977, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>74</sup> Briefing Paper: Thomas Hoving trip July 12, - July 27, 1976, Cairo, Moscow, Leningrad, Paris, 4, Box 1, Folder 18: General. Briefing paper Hoving trip to Cairo, Moscow, Leningrad, Paris. July 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

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Hoheb, Master Craftsman at the MMA, Christine Faltermeier, and Kevin Roche. One of the purposes of this visit was to study the project of the Egyptian Museum renovation and to commence the restoration of Tutankhamun objects.<sup>75</sup>

Christine Faltermeier and Rudolf Meyer visited the Egyptian Museum again from June 1 to August 31, 1976 to restore the objects of Tutankhamun for the USA exhibition and to restore the Selket shrine.<sup>76</sup>

The restoration of the Shrine and the restoration and mounting of the Goddess Selket were given the highest priority by the MMA officials because they needed to begin the photography and the reproductions of those objects; "To a large degree, the upcoming visit, the completion of the photography, the completion of the model making and, indeed to some degree the exhibition itself depends upon the availability of the two restorers." Montebello stated.<sup>77</sup>

In May-June 1976, The MMA supported the Egyptian Museum with restoration equipment to be used in the restoration process of Tutankhamun objects such as heating spatulas; stability epoxy; filling compound; wax; optivisors; kleenex; sponges; string; hide glue; epoxy; toothpicks; rubber bands; putty; tapes; silicon coated mylar; bristle and hairbrushes; wetting agent; Japanese paper; paper towels; cotton swabs; watercolors; syringes and needles; gloves; paper clips; fish glue; cotton; palettes; abrasive paper; scalpels; thymol; resin; tweezers; casein; cement; acetone; isopropyl alcohol; ethyl alcohol; xylene; toluene; ethyl glycol; films; and cameras.<sup>78</sup>

### **The Display Sequence of Tutankhamun's Objects**

In December 1975, Hoving requested scale drawings of Tutankhamun galleries in the Egyptian Museum; the large room off the north balcony where the chariots were displayed, and the masterpiece hall on the West side of the second floor. He informed the Egyptian officials that he needed the west side gallery to be annexed with the existing galleries to display Tutankhamun's objects properly.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> The Metropolitan in Cairo - Egypt, on May 6, 1977, Box 44, Folder 7: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (1 of 2). 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>76</sup> The Metropolitan in Cairo - Egypt, on May 6, 1977, Box 44, Folder 7: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." General (1 of 2). 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>77</sup> Letter from Philippe Montebello to Thomas Hoving on December 29, 1975, Box 43, Folder 5: "Treasures of Tutankhamun." Conservation. 1975-1976, Thomas Hoving records, 1935-1977, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>78</sup> Restoration Equipment which will be used in the Restoration of Tutankhamun Objects by R. Meyer – Ch. Faltermeier May-June 1976, Box 1, Folder 10: Egyptian Museum. Materials needed for renovation. 1977, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>79</sup> Memorandum from Thomas Hoving to Kevin Roche, 2, on December 22, 1975, Box 1, Folder 11: Egyptian Museum. Reports and correspondence. December 1975-July 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

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To answer the question of how the objects should be grouped and ordered in the display galleries of Tutankhamun in the Egyptian Museum, the Director of the MMA, Hoving, thought that the objects of Tutankhamun should be exhibited in the same order of their discovery in the four chambers. Howard Carter discovered firstly the Antechamber, then the Burial Chamber, then the Treasury, then the Annex. They had two evidences according to which they could display the treasures of Tutankhamun as they were discovered in 1922; the first one was the complete set of Harry Burton's 1922-27 photos showing every detail of the tomb and its objects in situ and step by step removal as Burton was the MMA Photographer who was responsible for documenting the tomb discovery. The second guide was the Carter Journal d'entrée, Hoving considered it as a "gem." The Journal d'entrée was a handwritten book written by Howard Carter with a detailed description of each object discovered in the tomb, the exact place of each item and its size with a photograph of most of the objects. Hoving reported: "Carter is the Curator and Carter has made his irrevocable statement."<sup>80</sup>

Laying out the objects as they were originally discovered in the tomb would let the visitors experience the shock discovery of the tomb and make some sense of this huge assortment of items. Through using the original photographs and appropriate labels, visitors would get a fascinating understanding of this unique tomb.<sup>81</sup>

The MMA officials pledged to present to the Egyptian Museum the eighty-two vitrines which were manufactured for the USA exhibition 1976-1979 at the end of the show to be used in the installation process in the second floor of the Egyptian Museum.<sup>82</sup>

To Hoving, it was better to put, at the beginning of the permanent installation, photos of the Valley of the Kings and of the first steps of the fifteen that led to the tomb door, the door of the tomb itself, and the first views of the tomb chambers.<sup>83</sup> Hoving along with Kevin Roche, the Architect, paid a visit in January 1976 to Luxor to see the tomb

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<sup>80</sup> Memorandum from Thomas Hoving to Kevin Roche, 3, on December 22, 1975, Box 1, Folder 11: Egyptian Museum. Reports and correspondence. December 1975-July 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>81</sup> White Paper: Proposed Renovation of the Egyptian Museum and Creation of a New Museum at Giza devoted to the History of the Pyramids, the Glory of the Pharaoh and Tutankhamun, in June 1976, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 28, Box 1, Folder 13: Egyptian Museum. White paper on proposed renovation. June 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>82</sup> Letter from Thomas Hoving to Gamal Mokhtar on July 18, 1976, Box 1, Folder 18: General. Briefing paper Hoving trip to Cairo, Moscow, Leningrad, Paris. July 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

<sup>83</sup> Memorandum from Thomas Hoving to Kevin Roche, 4, on December 22, 1975, Box 1, Folder 11: Egyptian Museum. Reports and correspondence. December 1975-July 1976, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

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of Tutankhamun to complete their perception regarding the renovation of Tutankhamun's galleries of the Egyptian Museum.<sup>84</sup>

## Conclusion

The Egyptian Museum renovation project 1975-1977 was a result of successful negotiations between the Egyptian and the American authorities leading to the organization of Tutankhamun Exhibition in the USA 1976-1979. The profits of this exhibition were assigned to the development of the Egyptian Museum or any other archaeological projects in Egypt. There was other sources for financing this project such as the donation of the Lila Acheson Wallace Foundation which enabled the MMA and the Egyptian Organization of Antiquities to launch the project before the end of the exhibition in 1979 and without the need to wait for the financial returns of the show.

The MMA played a vital role in the renovation project as the main organizer of the exhibition in all the American cities which hosted the show. The Egyptian Organization of Antiquities was responsible for the work itself and its acceptance in the Egyptian Museum; the MMA, however, supported the renovation of the museum by contributing technical support and expertise in several museological areas.

This project did not only support the Egyptian Museum with the necessary equipment in different areas of museology, but also included training the museum's workmen on how to use these tools to ensure that the museum would continue to work with the same quality even after the completion of the project. The officials of the MMA had confidence in the abilities and competencies of the Egyptian workmen if they were trained in the use of such equipment, and that the Egyptian Museum must have its own skilled cleaning crew.

The MMA contributed to the restoration of a number of artifacts of Tutankhamun through two of its restorers, in order for these pieces to be ready for transfer to the USA to be displayed in Tutankhamun Exhibition tour 1976-1979.

The display sequence of Tutankhamun's objects in the second floor of the Egyptian Museum followed the same order of their discovery in the tomb based on two evidence; Harry Burton's 1922-27 photos showing every detail of the tomb and its objects and the Carter Journal d'entrée. Hoving stated in this regard: "Carter is the Curator and Carter has made his irrevocable statement."

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<sup>84</sup> Letter from Thomas Hoving to Gamal Mokhtar on December 30, 1975, Box 1, Folder 7: Cairo. Correspondence Thomas Hoving and Gamal Mokhtar (Egyptian Organization of Antiquities). April, June 1975, Irvine MacManus records related to "Treasures of Tutankhamun" exhibition, 1975-1979, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York.

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## ممارسة متحفية في مصر الحديثة: مشروع تطوير المتحف المصري بالقاهرة 1977-1975

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### المستخلص

اتفقت الحكومتان الأمريكية والمصرية في عام 1975 على أن يتم تخصيص عائدات معرض توت عنخ آمون بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية 1976-1979 لمشروع تطوير المتحف المصري بالقاهرة نظراً لتدهور حالة المتحف أو يتم تخصيصها لأى مشروع ثقافى أو أثرى آخر. قام متحف المتروبوليتان للفنون فى نيويورك – بوصفه المنظم الرئيسى للمعرض – بعمل تقييم لحالة المتحف المصرى التى أظهرت أنه يحتاج إلى عملية تنظيف عام وإعادة طلاء وإعادة ترتيب سيناريو العرض المتحفى لكنوز توت عنخ آمون وترميم العديد من القطع الأثرية الخاصة بتوت عنخ آمون قبل نقلها من المتحف المصرى لعرضها فى ست مدن أمريكية. توضح هذه الورقة البحثية أهمية هذا المشروع، ودور متحف المتروبوليتان للفنون وعملية تطوير المتحف المصرى. اعتمد هذا البحث على دراسة الوثائق المرتبطة بموضوع الدراسة والمحفوظة فى أرشيف متحف المتروبوليتان للفنون كمصدر لتحليل وتفسير هذه الممارسة المتحفية فى سبعينات القرن الماضى بالمتحف المصرى بالقاهرة.

### الكلمات الدالة

المتحف المصرى  
متحف المتروبوليتان للفنون  
مشروع تطوير المتحف المصرى  
ترميم مجموعة توت عنخ آمون  
سيناريو العرض المتحفى