

From the Gustavianum Collections in Uppsala, 1974

The Victoria Museum

for Egyptian Antiquities: Introduction —

A Royal Epitheton — L'iconographie

d'un sarcophage (21. dyn.) — Funerary Statuette

of Hekaemsaf — Isis auf der Sau — Grabreliefs

aus Oxyrhynchos



UPPSALA 1974

**ACTA UNIVERSITATIS UPSALIENSIS
BOREAS. Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean
and Near Eastern Civilizations. 6**

Editors: Sture Brunnsåker and Hans-Åke Nordström

Assistant editor: Robin Hägg

Editors' address: Gustavianum, S-752 20 Uppsala, Sweden

**Distributor: Almqvist & Wiksell, Box 62,
S-101 20 Stockholm 1, Sweden**

**This volume was published with the aid of a grant
from *Uppsala University***

**The texts have been revised by Mrs Lana Troy
(English) and Dr. Robert Heeger (German)**

**Photographs: Dr. Georg Gerster (the frontispiece),
and Messrs Gunnar Eriksson and Sven-Olof Lindman**

Drawings: Mrs Britta Eriksson.

Printed in Sweden by
TEXTGRUPPEN I UPPSALA AB, 1974

ISBN 91-554-0223-2



Torgny Säve-Söderbergh

TO

TORGNY SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH

ON HIS 60TH BIRTHDAY

29TH JUNE 1974

Sylvia Starck

The Victoria Museum— An Introduction

The Victoria Museum for Egyptian Antiquities, located in Uppsala, is probably one of the least known museums in Sweden. In spite of the fact that it has been established for nearly one hundred years, it is likely that not even half of the adult population of Uppsala, much less those who live outside of the university town, is aware of its existence. Inasmuch as the collection was at one time in the possession of the university, it is perhaps appropriate with the coming 500 year anniversary of the University of Uppsala, to present the museum and its small but representative collection through the following essays contributed by staff members and students at the Victoria Museum and the Institute of Egyptology.

The beginning of the museum was modest. According to a French traveler, A. de la Motraye, as early as the 17th century the university had on display a human mummy, whose later fate is, unfortunately, unknown. However, Claes Annerstedt did not mention any Egyptian antiquities in his book on the history of the university (Annerstedt, C., *Uppsala universitets historia*, Uppsala 1877–1914). The first inventory of Egyptian artifacts in the possession of the university, from c. 1882 only names 33 items. At that time this small collection was still part of the university's museum for Scandinavian antiquities, which had but a decade earlier become independent of the numismatic collection whose history dated back to the 18th century. During the years that followed this small group of objects was greatly increased through numerous donations made by Dr. Karl Piehl, the senior lecturer in Egyptology at that time. Dr. Piehl's first donation, made in 1883, consisted of 268 ostraca, which included a fragmentary inscription from the the pyramid Pepi I at Sakkara (displayed in Case C). An additional 175 ostraca plus 334 other objects were included in the donation made by Dr. Piehl in the year that followed. All of the objects donated by Dr. Piehl were collected during his travels in Egypt.

Piehl's third donation of 553 artifacts and 358 Greek and Roman coins was made during the 1887/88 university year. This donation brought the number of items to over one thousand, thereby motivating the decision of the university administration, made on the 11th of May 1889, to allow the collection to form a separate institute with Dr. Piehl as its director. The original location of the collection was S:t Larsgatan 2, now occupied by the Institute of History. The following year plaster reproductions of Egyptian art (no longer on display) were purchased with private funds, while 1891/2 saw the inclusion of the collection of Commodore Liljehöök.

During the years 1892–95 Victoria of Sweden (1862–1930), at that time crown princess, presented to the collection a well-preserved female mummy (Case 16), a sarcophagus of wood which, according to the information which accompanied it, belonged to Tau-her (Case 15) plus additional "original monuments proceeding out of the excavations which H.R.H. allowed to be instituted in the Nile Valley". These excavations

had taken place during the winters of the eighteen eighties which she had spent in Egypt due to her fragile health. In 1895, in gratitude for these donations the university requested to be allowed to name the collection of Egyptian antiquities after its royal benefactress. This request was granted.

This same year, 1895, Oscar II (reigned 1872–1907) donated two sarcophagi of wood and several faience ushebti figures to the collection.

“Due to this considerable gift the premises of the collection became as good as overflowing” (Piehl in the anniversary publication for Oscar II) and consequently the question of a permanent location for the museum became one of immediate importance. However in the decades that followed the collection occupied several different addresses in Uppsala, among them Svartbäcksgatan 27 and the cellar under the present biology museum. Upon the death of Karl Piehl in 1904 no successor was appointed and the condition of the museum deteriorated. The valuable library which Dr. Piehl had donated to the museum had to be removed from the museum’s storeroom which had become increasingly crowded as the collection was enlarged. A donation of circa 100 Greek oil lamps was received in 1888 from Axel Lanner, an export agent in Alexandria, and through arrangements with the Swedish consul in Alexandria the museum had received a gift of approximately 100 objects from the Egyptian government.

The separation of the library and the antiquities collection was not, however, to be permanent. During the university year 1919/20 the Victoria Museum in its entirety was finally located in the Gustavianum. Until 1928 assistant Pehr Lugn was acting director for the museum. Purchases made during his time included models, sarcophagi and ceramics, among other things, from Petrie’s excavations at Sedment (now displayed in Case 1), a Proto-dynastic baboon figure from Abydos (Case C) and Predynastic slate palettes from Capart (Case B). The most important acquisition made during that time was acquired at a London auction from the estate of Lord Amherst. It consisted of a group of glass fragments from the glass workshop of Molgatta (Case 8), the area around the site of the palace of Amenophis III.

Queen Victoria was the active benefactress of the museum during this period as well. Not only did she donate a richly varied collection of Pharaonic and Coptic textile fragments, but she also allowed her private collection of over 500 items, previously stored at her summer residence, Tullgarn, to be on permanent loan. Upon her death in 1930, this collection was transferred to the ownership of the Victoria Museum. The Fayum portrait found in Case 25 is from the collection of Queen Victoria, as is the collar in Case 5. The objects which formed this donation are carefully documented in an unpublished work by the senior lecturer, Dr. S.V. Wängstedt.

During his time as acting director of the Victoria Museum, Lugn was able to publish some of the Museum’s more outstanding pieces in *Ausgewählte Denkmäler aus ägyptischen Sammlungen in Schweden* (Leipzig 1922).

Upon the appointment in 1928 of Pehr Lugn as director of the Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm, followed yet another period of inactivity in the history of the Victoria Museum. However in 1936, after a great deal of discussion, the purchase of a private collection was negotiated. Originally the possession of Zoltan Beöthy of Budapest, the collection had been purchased by Professor Ede Mahler and described in his publication *Beöthy Zsolt egyiptologiai gyűjteménye*, Budapest 1913. The collection contained both objects of great interest and pieces of more dubious origin. The year 1942 represents a turning point in the history of the museum with the appointment of the present professor, Torgny Säve-Söderbergh as assistant. Under his guidance, a systematic inventory was made of the museum’s collection. This included a photographic record of each item and the compilation of an easily



Fig. 1. The Victoria Museum for Egyptian Antiquities. Part of the present exhibit.

accessible card file. The manner in which the museum's display was organized was also modernized. During this same period progress was made in the publication of the museum's collection. Professor Säve-Söderbergh's *Einige ägyptische Denkmäler in Schweden*, published in Uppsala, appeared in 1945. And an unpublished inventory of ushebti figures compiled by Dr. Wängstedt was completed in 1952–53.

In the Spring of 1965, in connection with the renovation of the Gustavianum, the entire exhibit was dismantled and put into storage in anticipation of the restoration and expansion of the museum location. This period of enforced inactivity was given over to the restoration of these objects which were most urgently in need of attention. This work was carried out by the conservator, Miss Maud Bennel. This period was also used to set up the program for the coming exhibit. The different categories of artifacts were examined and discussed in a series of seminars during the years that followed, however for the students and staff alike, there can be no doubt that the project's motivating force was indeed Professor Säve-Söderbergh.

In spite of inadequate funds for display cases and other furnishings, and delays of a different nature, the museum was re-opened in December 1970 (Fig. 1). The present exhibit testifies to the aesthetic sensibility, the sure colour sense and most of all the desire for a pedagogic presentation, which characterizes Professor Säve-Söderbergh in all his works. Each display is explained and described with information concerning the relevant era and dynasty and other facts which relate the object to its specific period. The museum location consists of two rooms. The smaller of the two contains these exhibits which are devoted to the prehistoric period and the Old Kingdom (Cases A–E). This room is also used for seminars in Egyptology and for classes in Ancient Egyptian and Coptic and is consequently not always open to the public. In the larger room the exhibits relating to the First Intermediate up to the Arabic Period are displayed. The

14 Sylvia Starck

topographical map of the Nile Valley, complete lights signifying the location of the more important pharaonic cities, fortresses, well sites and natural resources, pre-dates the re-organization of the museum. The first description of the museum was published in 1972 (*Uppsala universitets Victoriamuseum för egyptiska fornsaker*, by S. Starck, Uppsala 1972). This guide is intended primarily for the benefit of the many teachers who each year bring their classes to visit the museum.

Today the museum's collection consists of more than 4000 items, of which approximately 600 are currently on display. As the museum is only meant as a student's collection the acquisition is small and only allowed to fill pedagogical gaps, not to compete with the Egyptian Department of the Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm. However, with the co-operation of the County Labour Board, it has been possible to keep the museum open for the public four hours a day during the week.