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‘A matter of duty’: the Egyptian collection at the Auckland War Memorial Museum

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Abstract

The Auckland War Memorial Museum houses nearly 2000 Egyptian artefacts dating from the Palaeolithic to the modern era. Artefacts were obtained from professional institutions and societies including Cairo Museum, the Egypt Exploration Society, and the British Museum in the early 20th century. In addition, a number of objects were obtained from ‘soldier collectors’ during World Wars I and II. The collection is made up of objects from around Egypt, but mainly consists of collections from Amarna, Saqqara, Kharga, Abydos, and Matmar, amongst others. Here the history of the collection is examined.

Keywords

Egypt; soldier collectors; Egypt Exploration Society; history of museum collections; Fred Waite; archaeology.

INTRODUCTION

The acquisition history of the Egyptian archaeological collection in Auckland Museum mirrors that of other large museums in New Zealand which sought to increase their holdings of material for purposes of display and education. The majority of the acquisitions were small, peaking in the years of WWI and WWII, and immediately after. In the intervening years the museum also acquired material from institutions in Egypt and England, and in some cases targeted objects from specific periods of Egyptian history, based on the shifting interests of the curators and directors over time, and the goal of having a “representative” collection.

This paper has been developed out of a Collection Readiness project to make the museum collections more accessible and to improve the descriptions of items in the Egyptian collection. Previously uncatalogued material was also described and records created, and records for Egyptian items in the archaeology collections increased from 1436 to 1918. Many objects have been imaged and the records are accessible online: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/collections>. In addition, research was carried out into the internal provenance of many of the items obtained from known archaeological excavations. An earlier study of the history of the collection (Bol 2006) was drawn on and expanded with research into provenances of individual objects.

Since 1983 the removal of objects from Egypt has been restricted to only those authorised by the Antiquities Service. This directive has affected museums and

fieldwork research teams around the world, for example the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology (Stevenson and Challis 2015), but during the late 19th and early 20th century thousands of artefacts were distributed from foreign-led projects to institutions, museums, and individuals around the world. A research project entitled *Artefacts of Excavation* has traced many of the Egyptian artefacts sent by British institutions to local and global museums between 1880 and 1980 (Stevenson 2014; Stevenson et al. 2016). This project has provided data on where specific objects are now, resulting in an online database of object destinations and guides relating to the distributed material (egyptartefacts.griffith.ox.ac.uk). The project has helped establish the original contexts of many of the objects in the collection of Auckland Museum, much of which were unknown due in part to the lack of published data from sites at the time of object distribution. In addition to the professional sources, a small but significant component of the collection was obtained by New Zealanders who were stationed in Egypt during WWI and WWII.

The Egyptian collection in the Auckland War Memorial Museum spans a time period from the Palaeolithic through to the modern day, and come from around the country, but primarily from the Nile Valley (Fig. 1). The Annual Reports of Auckland Institute and Museum from the 1870s and 1880s list the few Egyptian acquisitions received from well-known Aucklanders including L.D. Nathan, James Russell, and John Logan Campbell. Many of the wealthy individuals of the time undertook ‘Grand Tours’ of Europe and the



Figure 1. Map showing provenance of objects in the Auckland Museum Egyptian collection.

Mediterranean, returning with objects and curios to decorate their residences and to donate to institutions such as Auckland Museum. For instance, Logan Campbell's gifts to the museum in 1877 included beads and a kohl pot (Hamilton 2015). Thomas Cheeseman, Curator of Auckland Institute and Museum from 1874–1923, actively sought to increase the collections of the museum by corresponding with individuals and overseas institutions and arranging exchanges of surplus objects of New Zealand origin for new items to

increase the diversity of the museum's collections. One such arrangement, with Professor Enrico H. Giglioli of Florence Museum, resulted in the acquisition of a mummy in 1896, which is discussed further below. Cheeseman also solicited objects, such as his request to the director of excavations at Beni Hasan, upon reading in a periodical that there was surplus pottery available for museums (letter, Cheeseman 5 April 1904). No items were received and a reply to Cheeseman's letter has not been found.

CAIRO MUSEUM

Prior to 1914 the museum had a small Egyptian collection. This changed after the start of WWI when the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) was based in Egypt for further training prior to being sent to Gallipoli. The museum acknowledged public interest by seeking to expand the Egyptian collection:

“The active and historical part taken by the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in Egypt has attracted the attention of the Dominion to that country, and for many years will continue to do so. Under these circumstances, the Council considers that it is almost a matter of duty to commence the formation of a small Egyptian collection, which to a certain extent will allow the citizens of Auckland to personally inspect some of the remains of the oldest known civilisation. Negotiations were consequently opened with the Gizeh Museum at Cairo, and a collection of over 70 articles has been obtained... If circumstances permit, the Council hopes to gradually follow up this beginning by future consignments.” (*Annual Report of the Auckland Institute and Museum 1916–1917*: 11)

Thomas Cheeseman initiated correspondence with James Quibell, Keeper at Cairo Museum 1914–1923 (Bierbrier 2012: 450), after an introduction by Dr A. Challinor Purchas, medical officer with the NZEF (*Auckland Star*, 29 January 1918; *New Zealand Herald*, 30 January 1918). Auckland Museum sent 10 Egyptian Pounds (LE) to Cairo Museum, with Cheeseman requesting as many objects as the sum would buy. Until 1970 Cairo Museum had a sales room where objects from excavations could be bought (Piacentini 2011). Quibell in a letter to the Cheeseman (31 January 1916), pre-empted what he saw as predictable questions such as “Why do you not send me a list of objects on sale and let me pick what I want?” to which he answered his own question by saying “it would be difficult to hold [objects] back for the necessary time. Good things sell like hot cakes”. This highlights one of the issues of being so far away as correspondence could take months or more, and the market that the dealers of objects were operating in was of a faster pace. In addition, the correspondence was occurring in the context of World War I, which would cause other issues for the shipping of the objects.

The material sent to Auckland is described briefly in the *Annual Report of the Auckland Institute and Museum for 1917–1918*: 9. The consignment consisted of “about”



Figure 2. Alabaster vessels from Mastaba 2407 after excavation. The objects in the figure are now in the Auckland Museum collection. Photo 2878 copyright Università degli Studi di Milano, Egyptological Library and Archives, Quibell Collection (Orsenigo 2017).

100 artefacts, with the “most interesting” being a series of vessels excavated by Quibell at Saqqara. While the Annual Report would suggest that the acquisition was routine, the consignment was delayed by some months due to an unspecified hold-up at the Suez Canal. In addition, an Australian Maritime Strike in 1916 delayed both mail communication to New Zealand and the objects themselves (letter, Cheeseman 1918). The objects eventually arrived in good order and were immediately put on display in a dedicated cabinet in early 1918.

The material from Saqqara was from Mastaba (tomb) 2407, located south of the Teti Pyramid and was excavated between the years of 1910 and 1914 (Fig. 2) (Quibell 1923). In the correspondence between Quibell and the museum there is no mention of age of the items from Saqqara, and the original consignment sheet has not been retained. In the newspaper account, the Annual Report for 1917–18, and ethnology register, the objects are attributed to an 11th Dynasty tomb. In the later publication of the excavation however, Quibell (1923) attributed the tomb to the late second or early third dynasties, and comparison of vessel forms with others from the period (Aston 1994) would support this attribution. This error possibly occurred if the consignment note accompanying the objects stated “II Dynasty” as it is the custom to write dynasty numbers in Roman numerals, which was then transcribed as 11th dynasty.

In addition to the Saqqara material, 52 of the objects received from Cairo Museum were from other locations. These included a canopic vase, cloth with hieroglyphic writing, amulets, ceramic vessels, statuettes, and ushabti figures. The pieces are what could be described as “odds and ends” as none of them form an assemblage from a single excavation, but they did provide the museum with a wide range of material culture from Egypt that could serve as the foundation for a larger collection. Of the more curious objects obtained, three samples of “mummy wheat” were sent from a tomb at Deir el-Bahari attributed to the 20th Dynasty. No direct provenance information for the wheat samples is possible, but based on the attribution to the 20th Dynasty and Dier el-Bahari, it is possible that the samples originated from Theban Tomb 320 (also referred to as DB320) (Reeves and Wilkinson 1996: 194–6). Mummy wheat itself has a complex history, and the term had several uses including wheat found inside of mummies, or found in tombs, including inside miniature granaries. In some cases cultivation of samples was attempted, with no success (Moshenska 2017).

THE EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY AND BRITISH EXCAVATIONS IN EGYPT

After the acquisition of material from the Cairo Museum, attention was directed to obtaining artefacts through the Egypt Exploration Society (EES). During the early 20th century there were extensive ongoing excavation projects throughout Egypt, following the tradition of archaeological investigations which started in the mid-19th century. A key participant in some of these excavations was the Egypt Exploration Society (founded in 1882 as the Egypt Exploration Fund, and the name was

changed in 1920). The Society carried out archaeological excavations and funded the work by having institutional members who paid a subscription or made a monetary donation. In exchange surplus objects were sent to the subscribing institutions, or to institutions in proximity to subscribing members. The system worked very well for museums worldwide which otherwise would not have the opportunity to acquire items, and they were able to obtain genuine artefacts for their collections. The amount paid by each subscriber varied, and the number of artefacts received was commensurate with the subscription amount. Several New Zealand museums subscribed to the society. For several years Auckland Museum purchased from EES a subscription to the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, and in 1924 the society was approached for an artefact subscription service. Beginning in 1926, a £10 subscription was paid on an annual basis.

The first consignment of 22 objects was received from the 1925–26 excavation of Abydos (accession no. 1926.225). This excavation was of burial contexts dating from the Predynastic to Ptolemaic periods. Thirteen of the objects were beads or necklaces, which prompted a request from Cheeseman for objects “other than beads” to be sent the following year (letter, Jonas 1927). One object of note from this acquisition was a large fragment of a greywacke palette with a falcon head (10429) (Fig. 3). This palette is of a fine finish and is attributable to tomb 1636 at Abydos, in which was also found five ceramic vessels (*Egypt Exploration Society*: AB.TC.25-26.1636). Animal shape palettes are common in Predynastic contexts, particularly those attributed to the Naqada I and II periods, as the form declined from Naqada III onwards (Stevenson 2009). The falcon headed palette is not an uncommon form, but rather the thickness (18 mm), and general size (L: 243 mm, W: 120 mm) of the artefact make it one of the larger examples.

From the 1926–27 season onward material was received from excavations at Amarna (accession no. 1928.40; 32 items). The following year, 1927–8, there was no EES expedition to Egypt due to a lack of funding, and therefore no material distributed to the subscribing institutions (letter, Jonas 1928). Instead, the museum received a plaster cast of the bust of one of the daughters of Akhenaten (Fig. 4), with the original (which was retained by the Cairo Museum) published by Frankfort (1927: LIII). Copies of the bust were sent to several institutions that year in lieu of the usual range of artefacts (*Records of Excavation*: DIST.51.21). The following year excavations resumed at Amarna, and material was sent to Auckland from the 1928–29 (accession no. 1929.340; 21 items) and 1930–31 (accession no. 1932.34; 27 items) seasons. Many of the letters sent by Auckland to acknowledge receipt of items requested more information about the objects. Brief descriptions were provided but it was stressed that information about particular objects was difficult to provide. The results of the relevant excavation at Amarna were not published until later, when Frankfort and Pendlebury published their *The City of Akhenaten* series; volumes two (Frankfort and Pendlebury 1933) and three (Pendlebury 1933) include reference to material sent to Auckland.



Figure 3. Palette from Abydos 1925-1926, tomb 1636. Auckland War Memorial Museum. 1926.22, 10429.



Figure 4. Plaster cast of the bust of a daughter of Akhenaten. Auckland War Memorial Museum. 1928.6, 1389.

Amongst the material obtained from the EES from Amarna were large blue-painted vessels (Fig. 5). One of the vessels (2013.x.40) is marked 24/223 which implies it is from the 1923-24 season at Amarna and was distributed to the museum in 1926 (C. Hamilton, Monash University, pers. comm. 14 January 2014). The vessels are among those repaired by W.H. Young of the Ashmolean Museum (letter, anon. 1925-26). According to the EES distribution lists, Auckland should have only received one of the blue-painted vessels from the 1926-1927 field season (*Egypt Exploration Society: DIST.REG.03*). It seems that an error on the part of the EES meant that a vessel meant for the Dominion Museum in Wellington was sent to Auckland, as well as an additional one. These vessels sat uncatalogued in the museum collections until 2013.

The final acquisition from the EES to Auckland was in 1935 (1935.260; 28 items), as the subscription was suspended from 1932 to 1934. The reason for this is unknown, but it may have had something to do with the lack of material sent from the 1931-1932 season and a corresponding lack of communication from the EES (letter, Archey 7 May 1935). A final payment of £10 was made in 1935, and in return some faience objects from Deir el-Bahari were sent, along with two ushabti and one string of beads of unknown provenance. Gilbert Archey, Director of Auckland Museum at the time, in correspondence to the EES (letter, Archey 7 May 1935) was unsure if funds could be secured to continue the subscription to the society, and no further items were received from the EES after that year.

Meanwhile Archey was pursuing other avenues for acquiring objects. An approach was made to the British Museum in June 1932 for duplicates of Roman and Greek objects. The response was negative but the offer was made that “some early Egyptian Antiquities may shortly become available, and if any of these would be desirable for your Museum a small selection could be reserved” (letter, British Museum 30 June 1932). At that time Guy Brunton was excavating at Matmar, and the British Museum likely put Archey in direct communication with Brunton, although the introductory letter from Archey requesting assistance with purchasing particular objects to the value of £10 has not been located. Archey’s request for material from a specific period of Egyptian history, the Predynastic, suggests the museum, for the first time, was assessing the Egyptian collection and seeking to fill in the gaps. Gertrude Caton-Thompson, a colleague of Brunton, advised Archey that no suitable objects were to be found at the dealers in Cairo, and offered to provide items from Brunton’s excavation at Matmar which were stored in the over-stocked British Museum (letter, Caton-Thompson 1932a). Auckland Museum sent a payment of £10 and in return received nine vessels and some beads from tomb 5109 at Matmar (letter, Caton-Thompson 1932b; Brunton 1932a) (18727 - 18737). These eleven objects are erroneously identified in Auckland Museum’s accession register (1932.558) as being purchased from the British Museum. The Matmar excavation was carried out under the auspices of the British Museum, which had

the first choice of objects, but as Brunton had organised funding of the four excavation seasons (1928-31) himself, the remaining items were owned by Brunton and were his to distribute (letter, Brunton 1932b; Caton-Thompson 1932c). However, packing and freighting was facilitated through the British Museum due to Brunton’s travel commitments (letter, Brunton 1932a). A total of 92 objects were provided by Brunton (1932.559), dating from the Predynastic to the Coptic periods, and as he noted to Archey (letter, Brunton 1932b), they were worth more than the payment made. Also included were alabaster vessels, scarabs, and beads dating to primarily the First and Second Intermediate Periods. The distribution of objects to Auckland Museum is noted in the publication of the excavation (Brunton 1948).

The final group of artefacts obtained from British excavations in Egypt came from Caton-Thompson in 1937. At this time Caton-Thompson was working on the publication from her survey and excavations of prehistoric material from Kharga Oasis, which occurred between 1930 and 1932. Due to the time required to draw the relevant artefacts, and the expense involved, the publication of Caton-Thompson’s work at Kharga Oasis did not occur until 1952 (Caton-Thompson 1952; 1983: 154-5). None of the artefacts sent to Auckland Museum are depicted in the final publication, whether this is because they were shipped before drawing or that those artefacts were just not included, is unknown. The material sent by Caton-Thompson consists of 92 Palaeolithic stone artefacts from Kharga Oasis, and originate from KO20 and related locales. In a letter to Archey, Caton-Thompson (1936) alluded to sending a second box of material that would contain Neolithic material as well as pottery; however, this second box never eventuated.

SOLDIER COLLECTORS

The Egyptian collection also benefited post-WWI from donations from soldiers and their relatives. Donors names carried their military title such as Major Guy Cheeseman (son of Thomas Cheeseman) and Dr A. Challinor Purchas (17 items) who served as a surgeon in Egypt during the war. Items from each donor were generally small in number and also scale, able to be carried in kitbags as souvenirs. Items included beads, ushabti, figures, small pots and mummified animals. Notable donations after WWI included 48 objects by W.H. Gummer, architect, who had not enlisted to fight, but was in England from 1908-1912 where there would have been opportunities to acquire the small objects including figures, small bronze boxes and scarabs (Lochhead 1998). The collections also benefited from the gift of Rev. Angus MacDonald, chaplain to the armed forces in Egypt, who donated 24 objects in 1925: 16 items were purchased from Cairo Museum, and others acquired “mostly in the neighbourhood of the pyramids”, at Saqqara and Memphis. This was the first collection by a private individual with some indication of where the objects were obtained beyond a general



Figure 5. Ceramic pots from Amarna, most likely excavated in the 1923-24 season. Left, 2013.x.39; middle 2013.x.40; right 2013.x.41. Auckland War Memorial Museum.

Egypt attribution. Another large collection of 43 items was donated by the widow of Charles Mackesy who reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Sent to Egypt, then Gallipoli in 1915, he returned to Egypt for the remainder of WWI to take charge of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade (Green 1996).

While New Zealanders also served in Egypt during WWII, the subsequent donations of material to the museum were few in number, with a notable exception of the large collection made by Colonel Fred Waite. During both wars New Zealanders were primarily camped at Maadi, but were also stationed in the Libyan Desert and the Mediterranean coast, along with smaller camps in the greater Cairo area. During leave, soldiers were free to travel around Egypt as they could, and most spent their time in Cairo (Hedley and Hutching 2009). The objects collected represent the range of tourist trinkets that would be expected from any tourist to the country. However, opportunities were taken by some to carry out their own digging. For example, two bead necklaces [51224.1 & 51224.2] collected by Mr Moller during World War I were accompanied by an account:

“Beads from Zeitoun, Egypt. I dug these up in the old city of On [Heliopolis] just outside our camp in Zeitoun in Dec 1914... A mate of mine Jack Heasberry and I got shovels from the quarter-master and started to dig. We struck a wall for a start and then got inside it, and found a tomb... We were stopped by two officers who told us a French syndicate has the rights for excavating there, so we stopped.”

Other material collected by soldiers was less conventional, with rocks and sand from near the pyramids forming part of the collection. In addition, there are several pieces of polished granite said to be from the pyramid of Khufu at Giza and some limestone fragments from the top of the Sphinx. While some of these artefacts are likely genuine, most originate from the numerous stalls that sold “authentic” Egyptian artefacts to foreign troops and visitors.

The majority of material brought home by soldiers in the war came in the form of small isolated items. The exception to this is a collection of 152 stone artefacts, originally identified as from “Bargush”, being an English phonetic spelling of Ma’aten Bagush, which was also known as Baggush Box, a transit camp and fortification during WWII on the Mediterranean Coast east of Mersa Matruh (Fig. 1). This material consists of stone flakes collected from the general area around the camp. Little is known regarding the collection beyond this, and it is currently under investigation.

After World War II donations of material from soldiers or soldiers’ families came in over a period of time. Often items were part of personal effects or material bequeathed to the museum. Like the acquisitions following WWI, these offers tended to be small items such as bead necklaces, scarabs, and ushabti figures, some of which were genuine and others were not. Bead necklaces tend to be composites of mismatched beads from different periods, possibly assembled by vendors.

Again, military titles predominate in the acquisition information, for instance, Sgt. R.A. Scobie who worked at the museum as the education officer before and after the war, Gunner Laurie Birks, and Driver W.S. Baxter.

COLONEL FRED WAITE

One individual in particular made a notable contribution to the museum Egyptian collection. Colonel Fred Waite (1885–1952) was born in Dunedin and worked at the *Otago Daily Times* as a compositor. He enlisted in the NZ Expeditionary Force in 1914 as a lieutenant, served in Gallipoli where he won the DSO for gallantry and returned to New Zealand in 1916 where he became an instructor at NZEF training camps. He returned to civilian life after the war but during the second World War, as Lieutenant Colonel Waite, became the overseas commissioner for the National Patriotic Fund Board and was stationed in Cairo from 1941–44. He was then promoted to the rank of Colonel. It was during this period he was able to amass a number of artefacts. On his return to New Zealand he donated a large number of them to Otago Museum and became honorary keeper of Middle Eastern Archaeology (Green 1998). He published a volume on Predynastic pottery (Waite 1950), which received positive reviews internationally (Clark 1952).

Waite also had opportunities to collect Egyptian material during WWI and gifted it to Otago Museum. During his second secondment to Egypt during WWII, he collected substantially more material which Otago was also the beneficiary of but also gifted items to other main museums in New Zealand.

Whilst in Egypt Waite employed a soldier named Keith R. Collins, who was injured while on tour in Crete and did not want to be sent home as he was to marry an Egyptian woman (Collins 1952). Collins operated as a driver for Waite and helped to pack antiquities that were being sent back to New Zealand. Collins’ wife, Heda, was the daughter of an Egyptian doctor who knew many archaeologists in Egypt and passed these connections through to Waite (Collins 1952). He was introduced to Zaki Saad, who was at that time the Chief Inspector of Saqqara and Giza, and was excavating at Saqqara (Bierbrier 2012: 481). It was from Saad that Waite likely obtained the alabaster vessels from Saqqara he donated to the Auckland Museum in 1943. In addition, Waite knew Flinders Petrie, Walter Emery, and Guy Brunton, all eminent scholars in the early 20th century (Skinner 1952). His connections ran higher as well, with King Farouk gifting him one hundred vessels from Helwan, now distributed throughout New Zealand museums, including Auckland (Skinner 1952).

The willingness of Waite to obtain material for New Zealand museums was first communicated through E.H. McCormick (letter, 23 April 1942), in which he forwarded a circular prepared by Waite (1942) offering to purchase items himself for donation to museums, but if a museum wished to obtain a particular item then money for the purchases would have to be provided. The museum director Gilbert Archey, who was himself away at war during WWII, knew Waite personally, which

may have been a contributing factor in Waite sending material directly to Auckland Museum in 1942.

The majority of material obtained by Waite was of Predynastic origin as he had a particular interest in the period, at one time stating that he would "hate to venture into the ramifications of the Egyptian dynasties" (Waite 1942). In particular stone artefacts were sent in large quantities, as Waite (1942) highlighted in his circular "Flint stuff I can get in plenty, as no one wants it nowadays". Waite knew many of the dealers in Cairo and was the first to accompany any groups who were going into the desert and might come across antiquities (Bowie 1952). With dealers he had a "no questions asked" policy as to how the objects came into their possession (Bowie 1952).

During the 1930s and 40s there was a widespread trade in forged antiquities for sale to tourists, expanding on the previously established trade of high-end forgeries for the European market (Fiechter 2009). Waite (1942) was confident of his ability to avoid purchasing forgeries: "I have made some study of the modern village factories that now manufacture antiques, and think I can avoid the many clever copies now made for museums and tourists. I am also in touch with experts who can detect this modern material". Talking to one of the Egyptians selling cheap antiquities to the soldiers, Waite (undated) found that the man's father and uncle had both dug for Flinders Petrie, and now owned the land which the city of Memphis is situated on. Waite learnt that the men guarded the site for the Antiquities Service who were conducting excavations there, but also carried out "excavations" of their own, for *sebakh* (organic material used for fertiliser) and antiques, which they sold. Through these two men Waite was introduced to more antiquities dealers who sold real and fake objects, and with their advice, as well as that of Saad, and Raschid Bey of the Arabic Museum, was able to avoid forgeries.

Waite's collecting initially favoured Otago Museum, and he states in his circular, "Originally I set out to collect for the Otago University Museum, and of course my best stuff will go there, but there are many interesting duplicates" (1942). Once Waite learned of the wider museum interest for Egyptian antiquities, he approached all of the main New Zealand museums, including Auckland (letter, McCormick 1942). Auckland Museum received two consignments of material directly from Waite in 1942 (1942.106; 226 items) and 1943 (1943.84; 47 items) plus a few other items that were catalogued some years later as 'stock'. The Dominion Museum also received objects directly from Waite in 1943 (Oliver 1943) but also from Otago Museum the same year.

The final acquisition of Waite material was obtained by way of Otago Museum in 1946. Difficulties in transporting objects from Egypt to the different New Zealand museums prevented Waite from sending material directly to them (Skinner 1952), and instead he sent it all to the Otago Museum from where it was to be redistributed. As a result directors of other museums, including Auckland, were invited by H.D. Skinner to visit and make their selection.

Archey visited Otago Museum in 1946 and made his selection (1947.49; 261 items). While the majority of the

items were directly from Waite, there were also 91 objects catalogued by Otago Museum from 1943-1946 which Waite had previously gifted, and four objects which can be attributed to other sources. Skinner (1946), in a letter to Archey, insisted that the items were to be documented as a gift from Otago Museum, not Waite, contradicting a newspaper article in which Archey acknowledged the generosity of Waite (*Otago Daily Times*, 31 July 1946), and the Auckland Museum accession register attributes all of the items to Waite 'per Otago Museum'.

In total Auckland Museum received 546 objects which can be attributed to Waite. As mentioned, Waite had an affinity for Predynastic material, including stone vessels, slate palettes, and pottery. Reflecting Waite's (1942) comment that flint objects were easily obtained, 203 of the objects sent were stone artefacts, mostly of flint, and in the form of adzes and points. Much of the pottery sent includes the black-topped variety, one of which has an unusual potmark (Emmitt and Hellum 2015). Twenty-one of the Helwan vessels dating to the first dynasty, gifted to Waite by King Farouk, were also donated to Auckland, as were a large collection of lamps from the Greco-Roman period. Waite (1942) stated in his original circular that they were "easy to collect". Auckland Museum also obtained 30 ushabti figures attributed to Memphis.

Waite also gave objects to individuals, some of which eventually made their way to Auckland Museum. For instance, 10 Predynastic pots and Greco-Roman lamps were given to John William Kealy after WWI and donated by his widow in 1981. Kealy was also in Egypt during WWI where he met Waite. He also had a long association with Auckland Institute and Museum and was on the Council from 1939-1967, presiding as President from 1955-57 (*Annual Report of the Auckland Institute and Museum* 1970-71: 11).

OTHER NOTABLE ACQUISITIONS

There are two human mummies in the collection. One is an adult female, and the other a young boy. More is known of the history and health of the adult female.

The first mummy to be obtained was that of a boy. Thomas Cheeseman (letter, 19 September 1877) regularly corresponded from 1877 with Enrico Giglioli, Director of the Florence Natural History Museum in Italy (letter, 23 November 1877; Gill 2010), and they exchanged objects for their respective museums, including plants, animals, and ethnographic items. Cheeseman (letter, 17 June 1895) asked Giglioli to find him "...A really good Egyptian mummy..." for the new Anthropological Hall on the Princes Street site. In 1896 the mummified body of a boy in an open wooden coffin arrived in Auckland, but Cheeseman's acknowledgement of its arrival (letter, 12 October 1896) expressed his disappointment: "I am very pleased indeed to have the Egyptian mummy although of course I should have liked the mummy of an adult better than that of a child. Nevertheless it is very acceptable, and perhaps another opportunity may occur to obtaining a larger specimen."

The arrival of the mummy was briefly acknowledged as “mummy in its original wooden case – exchange from Prof H.H. [*sic*] Giglioli, Florence” but there was no further elaboration (*Annual Report of the Auckland Institute and Museum* 1896–97:15). There are no relevant letters from Giglioli related to the history of the mummy and attempts to trace the correspondence from Giglioli to Cheeseman has been unsuccessful (B. Gill, pers. comm.).

Cheeseman persisted in his attempts to acquire another mummy. In a letter (15 June 1916) to Quibell, he also asked, unsuccessfully, for assistance with obtaining one:

“Can you tell me what it would cost to obtain a really good mummy with its chief adjuncts. We have an inferior one at present, but if we obtain further articles through you, which I hope will be the case, I should like to have one which would be more satisfactory.”

The boy mummy was not put on display until 1929 when the current building in the Auckland Domain was opened, and he remained in the public gallery space until 1969 when he was put into storage due to the poor state of preservation.

Examination by Eric Young (ex-Associate Curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York) in 1971 indicated the boy was probably six or seven when he died and dates to the 4th century BC based on stylistic elements of inscriptions on his wrappings. A Greek influence can also be interpreted which may mean he came from the Memphis region. Unfortunately, there is no extant copy of Young’s report and information has come from a newspaper article of 1971 (*New Zealand Herald*, 14 January 1971).

An adult mummy was finally obtained in 1957 from Canterbury Museum in exchange for a coconut grater, a head rest from Tikopia, and a drum from New Guinea. The mummy did not rate a mention in the Annual Report, and she was not accessioned until 1986. The female mummy was one of two acquired by Canterbury Museum in the late 19th century. A donation of £50 to Canterbury Museum in 1889 came with the stipulation that it was to be used to secure two mummies along with other items which the director, Sir Julius von Haast, was to source while he was in London as the New Zealand Commissioner at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition (Fyfe 2006). Von Haast wrote to Giglioli, the director of the Zoological Museum of Vertebrates in Florence, who in turn contacted Ernesto Schiaparelli, Director of the Egyptian Museum in Florence, who finally contacted Émile Brugsch, the Assistant Director of the Egyptian Antiquities Service. Once this correspondence (which reads like a who’s-who of museum directors in the late 19th century) had run its course, von Haast was informed that, for £5, there was a “good plain mummy” from Akhmim that would be sent to Canterbury Museum. The second mummy was sourced through contacts in London as Brugsch could not supply a “fine mummy” until the following year. Payment was sent to Brugsch with shipping arrangements. Von Haast, unfortunately,

would not see his acquisitions as he died in 1887, and the female mummy arrived in Christchurch in June 1888 (Fyfe 2006).

After acquisition from Canterbury Museum, the female adult mummy was put on display in Auckland Museum, moving through various spaces, until she was removed for a lengthy four year conservation treatment in the early 2000s. A CT scan was obtained in 2005 indicated she was about 32 years old, with teeth worn from a diet containing abrasive material (Dennison 2010). She was apparently ill from multiple conditions including a non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma of a pretracheal lymph node, inflamed sinuses, and dental abscesses. The CT scan also determined that the internal organs had not been removed during mummification. There were also no amulets evident within the linen wrappings. The name Ta-Sedgement has been attributed to the mummy but is not confirmed.

The mummy likely comes from the excavations supervised by Gaston Maspero, then the Director of the Bulaq Museum and Antiquities Service, at Akhmim between 1884 and 1887 (Edwards 1884; Bierbrier 2012: 360; M. Claude, University Paul-Valéry Montpellier, pers. comm. 14 May 2014). This attribution is further supported by the fact that Brugsch was curator at the Bulaq and Cairo Museums under Maspero, with mummies being sold through the latter at this time (Bierbrier 2012: 83). Radiocarbon dating of the linen indicated the mummy lived within the mid-late Third Intermediate Period to early Late Period. The date range is 850-575 BC. Translation of hieroglyphics from the interior of the coffin is underway and will be reported on at a later date. The name “Souser” is present: only one other known example of the name is formed in the same way, Souser-dedes (known from a coffin once in a private collection in Brussels, and from mummy linen in the British Museum BM17177), and it may be a local name specific to the Akhmim region (M. Claude pers. comm.).

The collection has two examples of Fayum mummy portraits, one of a woman and the other of a man (Fig. 6). Fayum mummy portraits were likenesses painted on board and commissioned by the elite to adorn their mummy after death (Borg 2010). The paintings are likely from the site of er-Rubayat in the Fayum, which was found by Bedouin salt miners working in the area (Graf 1893; Thompson 1982: 4; Bierbrier 2000). The portraits were originally acquired from a dealer in Cairo by Herr Theodor Graf, a Viennese art trader, in 1887, who subsequently put them on display in Vienna (*Auckland Star*, 2 November 1935). Some portraits were sold off, but at least 200 were kept in the collection until the early 1930’s when they were sold at auction (Thompson 1982:4). Hoffman, an Austrian merchant, acquired the two paintings from this auction and deposited them in Auckland Museum in 1935 soon after his arrival in Auckland. His intention was to have them displayed to encourage a buyer to come forward, but this was unsuccessful and the same arrangement was made with the Dominion Museum where they were transferred in May 1939 (letter, Oliver 1939). Hoffman made it clear to



Figure 6. The Fayum mummy portraits: 22218 (left), 22219 (right). 1935.314. Auckland War Memorial Museum.

Oliver, that he would sell them for cash or exchange for a farm (letter, Hoffman 1939a) and the museum would receive a commission (letter, Hoffman 1939b). They were insured for three months by the Dominion Museum, then removed from display and returned to Auckland in late November of the same year (letter, Archey 1939), still under the original deposit arrangement. In a letter to Oliver (14 June 1940) Hoffman expressed his regret that no one could be found to purchase the portraits and donate them to a museum as he (Hoffman) intended to donate the money he received to “Returned Soldiers Organisation of NZ in favour of whose “Widows and Orphants-Fund [*sic*]”.

Fayum mummy portraits are found in many Egyptology collections in the world, however, due to the lack of specific provenance information for many of them, including those acquired by Graf, until recently little was known about their purpose and manufacture (Borg 2010).

Egypt at the Auckland War Memorial Museum

The range of the material in the collection is remarkable for a museum on the other side of the world, and whose collecting activity was primarily through soliciting artefacts. The material from Cairo Museum and the EES puts the collection on par with many British and American collections. Cheeseman and subsequently Archey in the early 20th century acquired material from Egypt in the way that many institutions did, however it was also the personal contact with the likes of Brunton and Caton-Thompson that meant Auckland received more and higher-quality material than it otherwise may have. This is in spite of the attitude of some of the subscription services towards non-English institutions, as highlighted in a letter from the EES regarding the distribution of el Amarna pots restored by W.H. Young at the Ashmolean Museum:

“I think these are the special ones for England and I want these sent off first so that there should be no

mistake. With the foreign ones it is less important which pot goes to which museum.” (*Records of Excavation: DIST.46.35a-c*).

Approximately 72% of the Egyptian Collection at Auckland War Memorial Museum was obtained through subscription services, bulk purchases as described above, or large donations such as those by Waite, leaving approximately 550 artefacts donated to or purchased by the Museum over time. While some of these consist of purchases and exchanges, such as that for the female mummy, the majority were donations by New Zealanders who had obtained objects on their military tours, travels, or through purchases in Europe. The material that was acquired from the Cairo Museum, EES, and other sources represents the contribution of New Zealand to excavations in Egypt, at a time when large scale, effectively “crowd-funded” excavations, were occurring in the country. The connections that were made by the museum directors or through the likes of Waite tie the collection to the history of archaeology in Egypt, and in return the collections serve as a reminder of New Zealand’s history in Egypt.

The original reason for the active solicitation and acquisition of the Egyptian collection has largely passed from public memory. However, the desire to educate and to present different cultures to the public, particularly school children, remained strong. Immediately post-WWII the Education Service was

actively promoting school visitations to the museum, and to satisfy the needs of provincial children, who could not visit the museum, school cases were constructed for loan to schools and were mobile displays. One of these wooden boxes, with doors, and glass-fronted display incorporating objects, was on Ancient Egypt and its creation is reported in the Annual Report for 1945–46: 18. A later version is shown in Fig. 7. Egyptian objects featured prominently in gallery spaces from 1918 when the material from Cairo Museum was exhibited, and the larger space in the new building allowed more objects to be shown as they were acquired. Egyptian material featured in The Hall of General Anthropology in 1929, in the Logan Campbell ceramic gallery in 1968, the Hall of Man in 1969 (renamed People of the World in early 1980s), Ancient Civilisations in 1999–2007, and a large part of the space in the current Ancient Worlds Gallery which opened in 2007 is devoted to Egyptian material.

There is renewed interest amongst researchers in the older excavations in Egypt. In part this is due to the difficulties of working in Egypt after the “Arab Spring”. Museum collections world-wide have become a substitute for excavations, allowing objects to be analysed and interpreted in new ways as more data is gathered and analytical methods have improved. The research being done in the archives of EES to track the destination of objects is complemented by work such as this, and Collections On-line, making the objects accessible to researchers elsewhere.



Figure 7. School case titled ‘Ancient Egypt’. Objects removed before being decommissioned.

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