Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology

Egyptian Education and Cultural Bureau Display Project

Project Plan

Tonya Nelson

2010-2011
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Background

The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology is considered one of the top specialist collections of ancient Egyptian artefacts in the world. The collection is unique in that the large majority of its objects come from documented excavations led by Flinders Petrie. Petrie was a pioneer in the field of archaeology. By organising objects into types (i.e. pottery) and carefully noting stylistic changes in these typologies, Petrie was able to create a relative dating system that forms the foundation of our understanding of the chronology and evolution of Egyptian civilization. As a university museum, the collection is used to disseminate Petrie’s teachings but it is also used to challenge his
interpretations based new scientific methods (i.e. carbon dating) and new understandings about western subjectivity.

**Problem Statement**

The Petrie Museum holds over 80,000 ancient artefacts. However, due to its small facility, it is only able to display 10% of these objects. Because the meaning of the collection and Petrie’s pioneering interpretative techniques come from the comparison of many similar objects, much of the significance of collection is lost due to space limitations. Furthermore, the Museum’s ability to expand and interrogate western interpretations of Egyptian artefacts has been limited due to difficulties in building relationships with source communities and
the tension between western European and Egyptian governments related to issues of repatriation.

**Project Description**

The Petrie Museum has entered into negotiations with the Egyptian Education and Cultural Bureau (ECB), an arm of the Higher Education ministry in Egypt and London Embassy, to create displays in its newly refurbished space in London. The ECB has identified three spaces for the display and agreed to install appropriate security, lighting and temperature controls in these rooms for museum objects. The Petrie will develop the displays in conjunction with Egyptian source communities in partnership with Fayoum University. The collaboration will be
facilitated by use of an online exhibition design tool that will allow participants to select and organise objects within a virtual reconstruction of the ECB space. The display will be completed and opened to the public in autumn 2011.
Aims & Objectives

#1: Expand access to the Petrie collection

#2: Use digital technologies to facilitate source community participation in the curatorial process

#3: Build stronger links with Egyptian governmental institutions
Aims & Objectives

Aim #1:
Expand Access to the Petrie Collection

The objective is to display at least 100 previously unseen objects at the ECB under a 2-3 year loan agreement with the possibility to rotating new objects onto display at the end of the loan term.

Aim #2:
Use Digital Technologies to Facilitate Source Community Participation in the Curatorial Process

The objective is to invite 10-20 individuals from Fayoum, a city in northern Egypt where Petrie made some of his most famous finds. The individuals will be identified through a partnership with Fayoum University’s Tourism department (which includes Egyptology). Lecturer Ibrahim Ibrahim will support workshops with selected individuals where they will learn to use the exhibition design tool and then feedback display recommendations electronically and focus group meetings.

Aim #3:
Build strong links with Egyptian government institutions

The objective is to embed links with the Egyptian embassy through this project which is intended to result in rotating objects loans every 2-3 years. This project will also allow us build an ongoing
relationship with Fayoum University. The expectation is that faculty will incorporate the online exhibition design tool into their museums studies/Egyptology teaching in the future.
Team Structure & Processes

Project Management
- Tonya Nelson, Project Sponsor, Petrie
- Nader Mattar, Project Sponsor, ECB
- Subhadra Das, Project Manager

Curatorial
- Stephen Quirke, Head Curator
- Ibrahim Ibrahim, Lecturer, Fayoum Univ.

Exhibition Design and Display
- Giancarlo Amati, IT developer
- Susi Pancaldo, Head Conservator
- Susie Chan, Exhibition Design/Installation
Team Structure & Processes

Project Management

Tonya Nelson and Dr. Nader Mattar, Head of the Cultural Office at the ECB will oversee the project. They will be responsible for drafting the principle loan agreement, terms and conditions of access to the ECB, and determining the scope of the project. Subhadra Das will be project manager (starting 13 December 2010) responsible for day-to-day management of the project. She will be responsible for coordinating weekly project meetings, facilitating communications between members of the project team, and ensuring project milestones are met in a timely fashion.

Curatorial

Stephen Quirke will lead the curatorial process by identifying potential exhibition themes and object groups and facilitating the exchange of knowledge about the collection. Ibrahim Ibrahim will coordinate the selection of participants in Fayoum, act as facilitation and translator, and assist with the final selection of objects.

Exhibition Design and Installation

Giancarlo Amati will continue to develop the exhibition design tool by imputing the selected range of objects into the system and “building” the ECB space. Susi Pancaldo will evaluate selected objects for transportability, select mounts and ensure the display environment and apparatus are appropriate. Susie Chan will source display cabinets and prepare the installation plan and facilitate the packaging and transportation of objects.
**Timescale**

The project divides into four phases:

**Phase #1:**
**Project Scoping and Fundraising (Nov-Dec 2010)**
- Draft ‘Agreement in Principle’ with ECB confirm intention enter into a loan agreement and setting terms and conditions of access to ECB. (Tonya & Nader)
- Fundraise for additional support to purchase of display cases, mounts and staff support. (Tonya)
- Finalise scope of display space based on funds available (Tonya, Nader, Subhadra, Stephen and Susi P and Susi C)
- Finalise budget (Subhadra, Tonya)
- Add range of potential objects into the exhibition design tool (Giancarlo)
- Schedule telephone meetings with Fayoum University to discuss participant selection, design process and focus group schedule (Subhadra, Stephen and Ibrahim)

**Phase #2:**
**Display development/object selection (Jan-Mar 2011)**
- Finalise and test internally exhibition design tool (Giancarlo)
- Select and brief participants (Subhadra, Stephen, Ibrahim)
- Introduce exhibition design tool and run focus groups in Fayoum (Tonya, Stephen and Ibrahim)
- Review resulting display designs and information gained from focus groups (Stephen/Ibrahim)
- Finalise list of objects and start developing story line/narrative (Stephen, Susi P.)

Phase #3:
Exhibition Production (April - July 2011)
- Design final display layout (Susi C. And freelance designer)
- Design and order mounts (Susi P and Susi C)
- Write interpretative text (Subhadra and Stephen Q)
- Source and order free standing display cases & advise architects on permanent display cases (Susi P and Susi C)

Phase #4:
Installation (Aug- Sept 2011)
- Package and transport objects to ECB
- Oversee installation on objects (Susi C, Stephen and Susi P)
## Outline Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHOWCASES/ MOUNTS</td>
<td>£30k</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBJECT PACKING/ TRANSPORT</td>
<td>£4K</td>
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<tr>
<td>INSTALLATION (CASES AND OBJECTS)</td>
<td>£5K</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBJECT/CASE LABELS/ PAMPHLETS</td>
<td>£5K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT MANAGEMENT/STAFF COSTS</td>
<td>£5K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAVEL</td>
<td>£1K</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£50K</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Outputs, Outcomes & Legacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Legacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aim #1: Expand Access to the Petrie Collection</strong></td>
<td>Display of 100+ never before seen objects</td>
<td>• Increase awareness of collection</td>
<td>• Exhibition catalogue</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Increase visitor numbers</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Increase access for Arabic-speaking communities</td>
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<td>• Increase understanding of collection/Petrie’s contribution</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• New public programme venue</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Aim #2: Use digital technology to facilitate source community</td>
<td>10-20 proposed exhibition designs curated electronically by selected</td>
<td>• Awareness and meaningful use of exhibition tool by source communities</td>
<td>• Expanded object records for artefacts reviewed by project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation**</td>
<td>participants from Fayoum</td>
<td>abroad</td>
<td>participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Relationships with individuals that can be strengthened over time</td>
<td>• Archive of exhibition designs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>through ongoing collaborations</td>
<td>• Published paper related to public participation in</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Refinement of tool for use in university setting in UK and abroad</td>
<td>exhibition design</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aim #3: Build relationships with Egyptian governmental institutions</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing exhibition/event programme at ECB in conjunction with display</td>
<td>• Establish ongoing working relationship with ECB official and ambassador</td>
<td>• Publish paper related to cultural diplomacy and repatriation</td>
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<td>• Discuss touring exhibitions in London/Egypt using collections from</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fayoum and Petrie</td>
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## Risks & Assumptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Probability/Impact</th>
<th>Mitigating Action</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building works delay</td>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>Packaging and transportation can be delayed and extra time used for extra consultation in phase 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change of Personnel at ECB (Nader Matter due to end term in 2011 but potential for a 2\textsuperscript{nd} term)</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>Agreement in principle will layout requirements of each party regardless of personnel changes and major construction works scheduled to be complete before end of Dr. Mattar’s term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confiscation of objects by Egyptian government</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>Agreement in principle will lay out terms of loan and candid discussion about issue will take place during negotiations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loan agreement rejected by UCL Museums and Heritage Committee</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>Committee has been made aware of loan and support the project; Petrie team working with UCL administration to gain further support of the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resistance from source communities/ineffective consultation process</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>Team member will travel to Egypt to introduce project and explain intention behind loan.</td>
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