

ANNUAL REPORT: MUSEOLOGY AND EGYPTIAN MATERIAL CULTURE *MUSEO EGIZIO, TURIN (ITALY), 2017 FIELD SCHOOL*

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Students and staff study an ancient Egyptian vessel in the collection of the *Museo Egizio*

This field school was not specifically focused on research, but rather on providing students a broad insight in the workings of a modern museum ranging from administration, fundraising and outreach, to the preservation, handling and presentation of ancient artifacts. Students received instruction from the staff of Museo Egizio, as well as external experts in conservation and restoration associated with the museum. Several of these teaching sessions took place in selected galleries of the museum or in specialized conservation laboratories, others while the museum was closed to the public or in the museum store rooms. Students were furthermore given the opportunity to handle and study exemplars of two groups of objects in the collection of the museum: sherds of ceramic vessels and fragments of textiles. The understanding of these materials was enhanced by practical instruction in the reconstruction of ceramic vessels, weaving, painting with ground minerals, and playing the ancient game of senet. When possible, students were involved in special events taking place in the museum, such as a workshop with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the moving back into place of a large stone statue of Ramses II after it returned from an exhibition abroad. On several occasions students of the field school interacted with the UCLA graduate students involved in research in Museo Egizio, as well as with the international group of volunteers.

Apart from instruction and hands-on work in Museo Egizio, a number of other museums and institutions in Turin were visited, often introduced with a guided tour, to investigate different approaches to

common issues concerning the conservation, presentation and appreciation of objects. These visits greatly enhanced the experience and insights of the students.

The final products of the students included the drawings, photographs, digital models and measurements of ceramic artifacts made during the handling sessions and entered into an online database. All this data was made available to the museum to be added to its documentation of the objects in the collection. The most important outcome was the critical review of five selected galleries in Museo Egizio, with suggestions for improvement. These were presented in a short lecture, attended by some of the curators and followed by discussion, as well as in a written final paper. These too were made available to the museum for future reference.