Documentation History in the Egyptian Museum Cairo and its impact on Collections Management

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1- The history of Egyptian Museum Cairo
2- Documentation history of Egyptian Museum Cairo
3- Documentation impact on collections management.
4- Defects of EMC documentation system
1- The Egyptian Museum Cairo

is one of the oldest museums among Egypt's museums. The first idea for building this museum dates back to the reign of the ruler to Egypt Muhammad Ali Pasha in 1835. when he issued a decree contained three articles as follows; Article 1 describes "what is an antiquity thing?", Article 2, is for collecting old things in a certain place (Ezbekiyya museum), and Article 3 is for prohibiting the export of antiquity things to outside Egypt.
As for the Current Egyptian Museum, was opened in 1902, and now is considered one of the largest museums all over world contains ancient Egyptian antiquities telling the history of ancient Egyptians' lives. It contains more than one hundred sixty thousand object are on display, besides the thousands else are in the basement and upper floor magazines. Those objects are representing different periods from the lithic periods to Greco-Roman via Pharaonic periods.
Egyptian Museum contains 7 sections as follows:

Section 1: The antiquities of Jewelry, Tutankhamun, and Royal Mummies objects.
Section 2: The antiquities of Prehistoric Periods through Old Kingdom.
Section 3: The antiquities of Middle Kingdom
Section 4: The antiquities of New Kingdom
Section 5: The antiquities of Third Intermediate Periods through Greco-Roman
Section 7: Ostraca, Coffins, and Scarabs
The actual history for scientific documentation in Egyptian Museum Cairo dates back when Auguste Mariette (1858-1881) was appointed as a director of Egyptian Antiquities service and Egyptian museum in 1858. In the following year, he started to build a new museum at Boulaq quarter on the eastern bank of the Nile River, and he set procedures for recording the objects collected from the discoveries through archaeological sites Egypt wide.
So, as soon as possible the object was arriving to a museum, it should be recorded in a register book called "Journal d'entrée". The Journal d'entrée (JE) is a main inventory register book which its pages are divided to columns with French metadata about: Accession number (ID No), provenance and date of discovery, Material, Description & Illustration, Dimensions, Position, Remarks.
Then, in 1872, He published the first Catalogue General called Album du Musée de Boulaq.
In 1883, Gaston Maspero issued a guide book about principal objects of Boulaq museum entitled “Guide Du Visiteur Au Musée De Boulaq”
When the current building was opened in 1902, Guston Maspero, Museum director (1899-1914), and his assistants started to publish a series of Catalogue General (CG).
and if the objects | objet will stay for short loan in
should be recorded in another register book entitled
“temporary register books (TR)”.
Then later, the **Journal d'entrée format was changed and its pages were divided to columns with English metadata ordered as follows:** Accession number, Position, Description, Material, Date, Dimensions, Provenance, Finder, Excavation number, Remarks, and photograph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Finder</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66094</td>
<td>R 3 A 2a</td>
<td>Shell, almost cylindrical</td>
<td>Time of excavation</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>L 0.067</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Time of excavation</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>66103</td>
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<td></td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
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<td>R 3 B A</td>
<td>Vase fragment</td>
<td>Opalescent yellow blue and white designs</td>
<td>Glass</td>
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<tr>
<td>66106</td>
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<td>Shell fragment</td>
<td>Here &amp; mouth</td>
<td>Glass</td>
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<td>El. Amarna</td>
<td>Pendlebury</td>
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<tr>
<td>66107</td>
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<tr>
<td>66108</td>
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<td>White slip, mouth broken</td>
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<tr>
<td>66109</td>
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<td>Saucer</td>
<td>Red slip inside and out</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>H 0.013</td>
<td>El. Amarna</td>
<td>Pendlebury</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>66110</td>
<td>R 3 B 2a</td>
<td>Bowl used for red paint</td>
<td>THAT RIM BROKEN OFF ALL ROUND</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>H 0.072</td>
<td>El. Amarna</td>
<td>Pendlebury</td>
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<tr>
<td>66111</td>
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<td>Bowl</td>
<td>Unframed</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>H 0.085</td>
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<td>Unframed</td>
<td>Pottery, buff slip</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>66114</td>
<td>R 3 B 2a</td>
<td>Handle</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>66115</td>
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<td>Shell</td>
<td>Shell</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>Max 0.0066</td>
<td>El. Amarna</td>
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<td>66116</td>
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<td>Shell in red paint</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Max 0.017</td>
<td>El. Amarna</td>
<td>Pendlebury</td>
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<tr>
<td>66117</td>
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<td>Shell</td>
<td>Shell in red paint</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Max 0.009</td>
<td>El. Amarna</td>
<td>Pendlebury</td>
<td>544</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In 1940, the metadata of the Journal d' entrée has changed to Arabic and English but sometimes the data is in English or French.
In 1954, a column was added to the Journal d' entrée pages for registration date and the data were written by English or Arabic.
Later, to give objects more securing, and to ease its accountability and inventory, another register books were added for each section entitled “Special register books (SR)”. 
In 2000, it was the first trial for a digital documentation Project in Co-operation with the Ministry of Communications, but it failed because of lack of funding.

In 2006, a digital documentation project called "Egyptian Museum Database Project" funded by the United States of Agency for International Development (USAID) and the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), using KE EMu system has started to record the displaying objects with creating a digital photos archive. At the present, a number of objects recorded arrived for more 160,000 object.
Impacts on Museum Organization

Documentation supports a museum in accountability its objects as follows:
• Knowing numbers of objects that a museum holds in its possession.
• Digital Documentation enables keepers for accounting and checking its objects and knowing if there are missing objects or not.

3- Documentation impacts on collections management

Documentation has acted important roles in collections management of Egyptian Museum Cairo, since it was set registration and documentation systems in the second half of 19th century to now. It has served a museum, collections, and users.
Documentation Guides a museum on procedures and decision-making on:

- How to acquire, access, de-access, disposal, loan in, or out, move objects, so on.

Control over intellectual property rights issues

- Marketing objects
- Promotion.
- Publications.
- Production Multimedia (documentary films, virtual museum, hologram.
- Reproduction
the 25th January 2011 revolution actions

Documentation aided a museum to secure its objects because it provides descriptions and evidence of ownership in the event of theft so it helped a museum to repatriate
hundreds of objects stolen before, and during the 25th January revolution actions. Moreover, digital documentation helped the curators in quick inventories and accounting total numbers of the recorded objects at the risk time.
Documentation helped museum to account objects types, material, dimensions, date, provenance, finder.
As it helped a museum in its Collections management and making decisions concerning for setting Loan out policy, movement and Conservation.
Documentation facilitated to know a position of objects, if it is in a display, Storage, or Loan out (local or international exhibition), Lap and so on.
- Large collections that museum holds allowed to de-access its objects to many museums through Egypt to be displayed in proper exhibitions such as; Grand Egyptian museum, NMEC, Suez, Alexandria, Saqqara, Cairo Air port, Ismailia, ....
Users

- Documentation facilitated for the authorized users and researchers to have access to data in different ways; paper, digital, or media documentation or all of them.
- Helps to find object in collections quickly when they are needed.
- Enables the creation of inspiring and engaging services;
As digital documentation has facilitated to a museum to outreach new public in Egypt and all over world, in particularly, the researchers, and who are interested in Egyptology to visit the Egyptian museum or at least to communicate with it by e-mail to request data or digital photos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Requests</th>
<th>Filing</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>A year of starting the digital documentation project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>235</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>186</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Starting paying fees for images</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Statistics of numbers of the foreign researchers requested to digital documentation centre in Egyptian Museum Cairo from 2007 to May 2016
Documentation increased the object values and provided us Historical Archive and information for each object and collections which helps a museum to manage its collections for a long time.
4- Defects of EMC documentation system:

- Some objects are still unregistered in a manual or digital system because the complex procedures should be done to inventory these objects.
- No a documentation manual for a paper based system.
- Some register books are written in French, or English only and the others written in Arabic.
- No agreed guidelines of list of terminology used in Arabic.
- No updates to information of old catalogues.
- A lot of objects without photos in register books, or new photos.
- No filing system or organized archive.
- No a web site or publications on line / or off line yet.
- Digital documentation is written by English only.
- No accurate accounting for the researchers, public or staff who are using documentation resources.
- There are administrative problems and conflicting duties among the different departments with less co-operative and co-ordination among them.
- Lack of documentation specialists.
- Lack of facilities and equipment.
Finally, Museum collections should be documented according to accepted professional standards. Such documentation should include a full identification and description of each object, with its associations, provenance, condition, treatment and present location, and this process is not optional.

**Head of God Serapis**
- **R. 6882**
- **Date:** Greek period
- **Provenance:** Saqqara
- **Material:** Marble
- **Dimensions:** 20 cm h
- **Remark:** Good condition
- **Position:** Fustat magazine

**Description:**
Head of God Serapis made of marble, shows him in Greek, barbed human face with moustache there are some cracks and scratches on the whole surface.
References

• The 25th January revolution actions
• Collections Management and Documentation Department; Protocol Book. Cairo, 2010.
• Documentation of Museum Collections for the Museum Section, Cultural Heritage Division of UNESCO, 2009.
Acknowledgement

Finally, I would like to present my all thanks and great appreciations to the Getty foundation for supporting me to attend this important conference, to CODIC Chairman, CODIC Board members, the National committee of ICOM Greogia, All members of the organizing committee, All instructors for their great kindness and helpfulness.