

RE-DISCOVERING ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TREASURES IN NARIWA

KEIKO TAZAWA* (THE ANCIENT ORIENT MUSEUM, TOKYO)

KYOKO IKARI (NARIWA MUSEUM)

THE FORMATION OF NARIWA MUSEUM

Nariwa Museum is located in Takahashi City, in the western part of Okayama Prefecture in Japan. The museum has two main collections, one of which is plant fossils of Nariwa. Plant fossils from the late Triassic period (230 million years ago) are constantly being unearthed in the Nariwa region. More than 110 species have been found there, of which at least a third are new species. Some of them are therefore named after Nariwa (e.g. *Nariwaensis* and *Nariensis*).¹ ‘Nariwa Flora’ are well known in the world of palaeontology. The other derives from the private collection of Torajiro Kojima (1881–1929). Kojima was an artist painter who was born and raised in Nariwa town (which merged with neighbouring Takahashi City in 2004). He collected European paintings and Egyptian artefacts with financial support from a local businessman, Magosaburo Ohara.² In honour of Kojima, Nariwa Museum was established in 1951 with the acquisition of some of Kojima’s paintings, and then opened in 1953. Following the donation to Nariwa Museum of Kojima’s paintings and artefacts, including the Egyptian objects he collected,³ a second building was constructed in 1967, adjoining a municipal cultural centre. Subsequently, these Egyptian objects were donated to the municipal cultural centre. They have been one of the museum’s main permanent displays alongside paintings collected and executed by Kojima. Now the museum is operated by a public body, the

* I am very honoured to contribute to this volume celebrating and appreciating Emily Teeter’s remarkable career and achievements in Egyptology and at the Oriental Institute Chicago. I am also deeply grateful for her unwavering hospitality and kindness to me since I joined CIPEG.

1 <https://nariwa-museum.or.jp/>.

2 Suzuki 1994; Matsuoka 2019; Kojima 2019.

3 Nariwa Museum 2019: 133.

Nariwacho Art Promotion Foundation. The museum values its Egyptian objects and currently dedicates a 200 square metre room to them (fig. 1). These objects help the museum fulfil its responsibility to support cultural activities of citizens and to help foster intercultural appreciation among Takahashi City's younger generation.⁴



FIG. 1: Overview of the exhibition area for Egyptian collection. (© K. Tazawa.)

THE EGYPTIAN COLLECTION OF NARIWA MUSEUM

Although Kojima was not particularly interested in ancient Egypt when he stayed in France and Belgium in 1908–12, where he studied art and painting with Ohara's support, he gradually devoted himself to ancient Egypt.⁵ During this first stay in Europe, he studied not only art and painting but also the spirit and traditions of Western/European oil painting, which differed greatly from Japanese art. After returning to Japan from Europe in 1912, he was confronted by the staggering differences between Europe and Japan. Following the advice of his teacher, Jean-Joseph Delvin (a Belgian painter who taught in the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in his hometown of Ghent), Kojima explored the spirits of the East.⁶ Delvin recommended that Kojima should not imitate indiscriminately the West which has a different history, manners, and customs

⁴ Sawahara 2019: 5.

⁵ Suzuki 1994: 8–10.

⁶ Suzuki 1994: 8; Kojima 2019: 56.

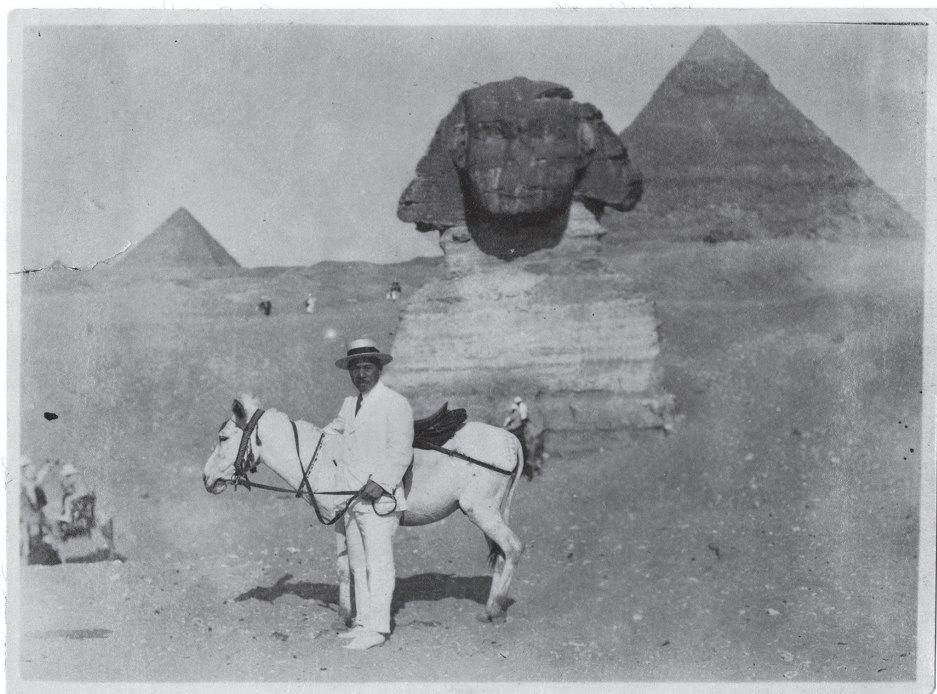


FIG. 2: Kojima in front of the Sphinx at Giza. (Courtesy of the Kojima family.)

to Japan. Kojima then decided to visit China and Korea to learn the origins of Eastern art and antiquities in 1918. It is plausible that this may have given Kojima a chance to take an interest in ancient Egypt while studying ancient history, art and culture. During his second stay in Europe in 1919–21, Kojima suddenly showed a keen interest in ancient Egypt and visited museums in France, Spain, Belgium, and Holland to make sketches and drawings of Egyptian objects. Finally, Kojima purchased about thirty Egyptian artefacts as well as paintings by Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and other French artists.⁷ In 1922, Kojima made a trip to Egypt and visited the pyramids (fig. 2) and bought some Egyptian objects there. On his way back home in 1923, he stopped in Egypt again. He visited Cairo, Luxor and Dendera and purchased a significant number of Egyptian artefacts that now form the majority of the current Egyptian collection in Nariwa Museum. After Kojima's return home, some of his Egyptian objects were exhibited with Persian and Turkish artefacts in a special exhibition organised by the Kurashiki Cultural Association in Okayama prefecture,⁸ which was very successful. Kojima housed his Egyptian collection in the showcases he designed and displayed in his atelier at his house (fig. 3). He also adorned the walls around the fireplace in his newly constructed small house called 'Mui-Do' with decorative panels inspired by Egyptian designs and

7 Suzuki 1994: 9.

8 Kurashiki City is located less than 50 km to the south-east from Nariwa where Kojima lived. Kojima's supporter Magosaburo Ohara was a businessman in Kurashiki.

installed an Egyptian-style column with a lotus capital in the same room.⁹ Kojima's passion for ancient Egypt is clearly evident.

Kojima died in 1929 at the age of 47. The following year, his financial and moral supporter Magosaburo Ohara established the Ohara Museum of Art in Kurashiki in his memory, and some of his Egyptian objects were displayed in the permanent exhibition. It is noteworthy that Egyptian artefacts were already exhibited to the public in a museum in the first half of the 20th century in Japan. This is in contrast at that time to

the collections of Kyoto University¹⁰ and the Takeuchi collection in Tokyo University of the Arts of the day,¹¹ which were established for educational purposes at the time when Kojima was collecting. Kojima's collection in Nariwa Museum was open to the public, with its artistic value emphasized from the beginning,¹² while the university collections were academic and educational materials with limited access to the public. Consequently, the Egyptian



FIG. 3: Egyptian objects displayed in a showcase in Kojima's room. (Courtesy of the Kojima family.)

9 Nariwa Museum 2011: 102, 105 and 108.

10 The Egyptian collection in Kyoto University was established with a substantial group of objects donated by Flinders Petrie of University College London in the early 20th century. This donation was achieved by the strong bond between Petrie and his disciple Kosaku Hamada (1881–1938), who became the first professor of the first archaeology course in Japan in Kyoto Imperial University (currently Kyoto University). For more details, see Kyoto University, *The Kyoto University Museum and Nakano* 2011, Kyoto University and *The Kyoto University Museum* 2016, and Kawai 2017.

11 This collection is presently housed in Shimonoseki City Art Museum in Yamaguchi prefecture. It was originally collected by Kinpei Takeuchi (1872–1960), who was a vice president of Yokohama Specie Bank. When he worked in London as an expatriate, he collected these artefacts on behalf of Keiichiro Kume, professor of western art in Tokyo Fine Arts School (currently Tokyo University of the Arts), as reference materials for the module of western archaeology. These objects were displayed in the special exhibition of Egyptian, Greek and Roman artefacts in 1915. However, it was a fixed term exhibition, while Kojima's collection is showcased as a permanent exhibition to the public. For more details, see Suzuki 2007.

12 Suzuki 1994: 10. Suzuki has pointed out that Kojima's personal interests and aesthetic views as an artist influenced the choice of the objects he collected. She also mentioned that the panels with Egyptian motifs around the fireplace and the column in ancient Egyptian style in Kojima's guest room show that he was a highly respectable Japanese 'Egyptomaniac'.

collection in Nariwa Museum can be described a successful ambassador of both Egyptology and art since the moment of its inauguration.

Last but by no means least it should be pointed out that the Egyptian collection in Nariwa Museum is well balanced and diverse, and that it documents the entire chronology of ancient Egypt from the Predynastic Period through to the Graeco-Roman Era. The collection includes religious and funerary material such as parts of coffins, ushabtis, amulets, and stelae as well as other types of artefact like architectural fragments, ostraca, and glass vessels. The collection is diverse from a materials perspective as well: wood, faience, bronze, stone, clay, glass, and cartonnage. It is worth noting that Kojima's collection of ushabtis, although small, covers a wide range of materials and dates, although we cannot ascertain whether he made a conscious decision to form such a representative collection.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN NARIWA MUSEUM AND THE ANCIENT ORIENT MUSEUM, TOKYO

As mentioned above, Nariwa Museum opened in 1953 after purchasing Kojima's paintings. The second building of the museum, adjoining Nariwa municipal cultural centre, was constructed in 1967 and housed Kojima's cherished Egyptian artefacts, moved from his former atelier to display them to the public. At the opening of a third building for Nariwa Museum in 1994, some of these Egyptian objects were studied and published in a museum catalogue written in Japanese (fig. 4). Unfortunately, the entire collection has yet to be comprehensively studied, catalogued and pragmatically managed since the museum has never had Egyptologists as curators who could examine and take care of these Egyptian objects. This, sadly, is a common situation in Japan, not just at Nariwa Museum, and assistance from Egyptologists at other institutions is warranted.

A longstanding relationship exists between Nariwa Museum and The Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo (hereafter AOM). Prior to the renovation of Nariwa Museum in 1994, AOM presented the special travelling exhibition 'Egypt - Emergence and Development of Dynastic Civilisation' in 1990, to which Nariwa Museum loaned some Egyptian objects. At this time, the late Egyptologist Madoka Suzuki,¹³ AOM's former part-time researcher, examined



FIG. 4: Cover of the 1994 catalogue. (© Nariwa Museum.)

13 For Madoka Suzuki and her career as an Egyptologist, see Sakamoto 2018.

and wrote commentaries for selected objects. This work was instrumental for Nariwa Museum and helped publish the aforementioned catalogue. In 2014, AOM and Okayama Orient Museum co-organised a special exhibition on ancient Egypt that borrowed Egyptian objects exclusively from museums in Japan, including Nariwa Museum.

In March 2019, AOM and Nariwa Museum co-organised a workshop ‘How to make your own ushabtis’. The programme brought together the authors for this collaboration: an Egyptologist from AOM (Tazawa) and a Nariwa Museum educator (Ikari). The authors gave a short lecture on ushabtis – their history, function and chronological features – in the exhibition area (fig. 5), before moving to the activities studio. After another short lecture on colours in ancient Egypt, participants painted ready-made plaster ushabtis (fig. 6). The activity closed with a small exhibition that allowed participants to see and enjoy all the ushabtis produced during the programme (figs 7–8). Another collaborative workshop on faience was co-organised by AOM and Nariwa Museum in February 2020, in cooperation with the Department of Aesthetic Design of Okayama Prefectural University (hereafter OPU). As with the previous workshop, the event included a lecture in the exhibition hall about the Egyptian collection and Egyptian faience, and a hands-on activity that allowed participants to craft their own faience works (fig. 9).¹⁴



FIG. 5: Short lecture during the ushabti workshop taught by K. Tazawa & K. Ikari. (© Nariwa Museum.)



FIG. 6: Colouring an ushabti made of plaster. (© AOM.)



FIG. 7: Evaluation: participant feedback form in front of the ushabti. (© AOM.)

¹⁴ This workshop is a starting point for another collaborative research project on ushabtis made of Egyptian faience in which AOM, Nariwa Museum and OPU work together. This project has just launched and we hope to have a chance to present our working results in the near future.



FIG. 8: Exhibition: All participants enjoyed all the works displayed together. (© AOM.)

These successful activities led Nariwa Museum to seek the assistance of AOM to re-examine and re-organise its Egyptian collection in order to revise the current permanent display and catalogue the artefacts. AOM agreed to provide Nariwa Museum with Egyptological support. As previously pointed out, most Japanese museums with Egyptian holdings lack curatorial positions for Egyptologists.¹⁵ Consequently, Egyptian artefacts in such museums have sometimes not been examined thoroughly and displayed in the proper manner. Therefore, this cooperative work between Nariwa Museum and AOM is a crucial step for the future of Egyptian collections in museums in Japan. In addition to the above, the research project also aims to understand Egyptian objects comprehensively and make the collection of Nariwa Museum better known to the Egyptological community, the public and school children through object studies, exhibitions, and workshops.



FIG. 9: Faience crafting. (© Nariwa Museum.)

The initial step, which has just begun, is the creation of a definitive inventory, collating data gathered separately and sporadically over the years since the

¹⁵ Fujii 2016: 179; Suzuki 2006: 29; Tazawa 2018: 3. For Japanese museums storing Egyptian collections, see Tazawa 2017 and 2018. Suzuki additionally emphasises that Japanese museums housing Egyptian objects lack not only Egyptologists as curators but also conservators with specialist knowledge of Egyptian artefacts. Unfortunately, 15 years later, the situation remains unchanged.

collection was donated. In parallel, we have started the re-examination of each object to revise identifications and names, and cataloguing data such as date, material, context and so on. The task is tedious as we have the disadvantage of unknown provenience; this is a problem typical of small collections acquired through donations rather than excavations like many other Egyptian collections in Japan and elsewhere in the world. Nevertheless, it is inspiring work that will allow for a better understanding of Japanese Egyptology and Egyptian material culture.

The goals of this cooperation can be summarized thus: (1) Updating the current permanent exhibition and catalogue of Egyptian objects with revised labels and commentaries based on the latest research results; (2) Publication of the results of our scientific research in articles, monographs and, if possible, an online catalogue; (3) Development of a more effective and accessible educational programme for all generations.

A NEW PROJECT: WHY ANCIENT EGYPT IN NARIWA?

A new project called *Why ancient Egypt in Nariwa?*, in which AOM, Nariwa Museum, and OPU are collaborating, was launched in 2020 with financial support for one year from Fukutake Foundation. This project is strongly connected to the third goal of the ongoing cooperation between AOM and Nariwa Museum discussed above. *Why ancient Egypt in Nariwa?* focuses on making Nariwa citizens aware of the valuable ancient Egyptian objects in their small town and fostering their interest in a culture distant across time and space. They should know that ancient Egypt shares commonalities with their own culture. We hope the project will provide the people of Nariwa with opportunities to review and re-evaluate Japanese culture through exhibitions and workshops. This objective is inspired by Kojima's own experience after his return to Japan from his first trip to Europe: exploring and evaluating his own history, manners, customs and mentality in Japan and the East.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

It is unusual for museums in Japan to have an education department and there are thus few full-time educators with whom curators can collaborate on exhibition planning and interpretation. This situation significantly reduces benefits of exhibitions and educational programmes for visitors. It is fortunate that Nariwa Museum's experienced museum educator and an Egyptologist from AOM are now able to work together with the Egyptian collection at Nariwa. The cornerstone for the collaboration is the elaboration of precise and clearly defined educational goals and take-home messages for the project and its associated learning activities, all based on rigorously researched content and information.

The project's three goals have a broad perspective. Visitors should learn (1) Nariwa Museum's Egyptian collection is one of the best in Japan;

(2) The museum's Egyptian artefacts were collected by Torajiro Kojima 100 years ago; and (3) The museum's Egyptian collection is of global importance for historical and cultural research.

TAKE-HOME MESSAGES

Take-home messages are nuggets of information that help achieve educational goals. These were developed from visitor comments given after gallery tours and responses to the general questionnaire, placed at the exit. Visitors shared how and why they had an interest in ancient Egyptian culture, or what they know about it.

- 1) There are many ancient Egyptian artefacts collected by Torajiro Kojima during his visits to Egypt and Europe
- 2) Kojima collected ancient Egyptian artefacts because he was deeply impressed by ancient Egyptian art and culture.
- 3) Nariwa Museum's Egyptian collection remains unique and important today because it was collected by an individual for the first time in Japan.
- 4) The Egyptian collection is of high quality compared to other Egyptian collections in Japan.
- 5) Many objects are very colourful, which reflects Kojima's sense of beauty and his aesthetic view as an artist.
- 6) Most artefacts are burial objects from tombs and some of them are daily commodities of the Egyptians.
- 7) The collection spans all periods of ancient Egyptian history.
- 8) Kojima visited Egypt in the early 1920s when the discovery of the tomb of King Tutankhamun raised interest in ancient Egypt worldwide.

ACTIVITIES

To achieve the educational goals and take-home messages mentioned above, the following three activities were planned. At the time of writing (summer 2020), the schedule had not been fixed due to the COVID-19 pandemic (therefore the Fukutake Foundation extended the date of completion of this project to the end of March 2022). However, we are turning this difficult time into an opportunity to improve the content of each activity.

1) *Satellite museum in Takahashi City*

A small temporary exhibition of ancient Egypt featuring the replicas of some Egyptian objects from Nariwa Museum will be held in local commercial

complexes and galleries in Takahashi City. We will provide the participants with learning opportunities and the chance to chat with Egyptologists and other researchers about ancient Egypt.

2) *Outreach at elementary schools*

We will provide all the elementary school students in Takahashi City (15 schools) with the opportunities to learn about ancient Egypt using replicas of Egyptian artefacts housed in Nariwa Museum. They will learn about Torajiro Kojima, who was born and raised in Nariwa and also collected ancient Egyptian artefacts, which were given to Nariwa town. This activity aims to give younger generations in Nariwa an opportunity to consider their hometown and Japanese ways of thinking and life by learning about a completely different (but similar in some ways) ancient culture distant both in time and space. The activity was elaborated as an in-school visit by the authors, who would bring replicas and hands-on activity kits; however, it might be revised as a virtual programme with online lecture and learning packages posted to the schools in advance because of COVID-19.

3) *Training university students as museum educators*

Through this project, we will accept some OPU students as museum educator trainees. The students are taking museology modules in the university and interested in working in the museum. This is a sort of on-the-job training. They will have lectures on objects and ancient Egypt in general beforehand and then they will help the participants during the workshop.

CONCLUSIONS: BEYOND LOCALITIES - SUSTAINABLE UTILISATION OF EGYPTIAN COLLECTIONS IN JAPAN

Nariwa's Egyptian collection is relatively small and lacks provenience; however, the objects provide us with valuable and essential opportunities to develop and improve exhibitions and educational programmes that enhance understanding of ancient Egypt for local people and others. Furthermore, this project's cooperation between Nariwa Museum and AOM offers a good example of productive and progressive collaboration between museums, curators and educators, as well as between Egyptologists and non-Egyptological educators.

We expect to achieve the following three goals:

- 1) To educate local people in Nariwa about their hometown. It is very important for younger generations to have a chance to learn and consider their hometown.
- 2) To develop an effective educational programme with instructive

goals and take-home messages. These innovative methods¹⁶ can be applied to other museums housing Egyptian collections.

3) To showcase a proactive example of collaboration between museums without Egyptologists and Egyptologists from other institutions. This collaborative model can be replicated elsewhere and benefit Japanese Egyptology in the future.

Egyptian collections in Japan face many challenges, and, in an ideal world, one would like to see more Egyptologists as curators and educators in museums. However, at present, the collaboration between institutions, and museum educators and Egyptologists, in the way in which we are currently engaged, is another viable solution. The important thing is to explore the sustainable utilisation of Egyptian collections in Japan. ♪

REFERENCES CITED

Fujii, N. 2016. 'The Egyptian Collections in Japan'. *The Journal of Center for the Global Study of Cultural Heritage and Culture* 4: 177–87.

Kawai, N. 2017. 'Egyptological landscape in Japan: Past, Present, and Future'. *CIPEG Journal: Ancient Egyptian & Sudanese Collections and Museums* 1: 51–59.

Kojima, K. 2019. 'Journey of Kojima Torajiro'. In *Kojima Torajiro and Nariwa Museum*, edited by Nariwa Museum, 45–84. Okayama: Nihon Bunkyou Shuppan. (In Japanese.)

Kyoto University, The Kyoto University Museum and T. Nakano. 2011. *Egyptian Antiquities of Kyoto University. Entrusted Dreams from Petrie to Hamada, Two Giants of Archaeology*. Kyoto: Kyoto University and The Kyoto University Museum.

Kyoto University and The Kyoto University Museum. 2016. *Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection in the Kyoto University Museum*. Kyoto: The Kyoto University Museum.

Matsuoka, T. 2019. 'Achievements of Kojima Torajiro'. In *Kojima Torajiro and Nariwa Museum*, edited by Nariwa Museum, 23–44. Okayama: Nihon Bunkyou Shuppan. (In Japanese.)

Nariwa Museum 2011. *General Designer Kojima Torajiro – Life is Art*. Okayama: Nariwa Museum. (In Japanese with English summary.)

Nariwa Museum (ed.) 2019. *Kojima Torajiro and Nariwa Museum*. Okayama: Nihon Bunkyou Shuppan. (In Japanese.)

¹⁶ Educational goals and take-home messages are very common in the UK and the US; however, not in Japan unfortunately. It is true that many Japanese museums have fewer positions for professional museum educators, which causes a mismatch between the purposes of educational programmes and their effects.

- Sakamoto T. 2018. ‘Madoka Suzuki (1945–2018): Le parcours d’une égyptologue’. *CIPEG Journal: Ancient Egyptian & Sudanese Collections and Museums* 2: 1–2.
- Sawahara, K. 2019. ‘Preface’. In *Kojima Torajiro and Nariwa Museum*, edited by Nariwa Museum, 5–6. Okayama: Nihon Bunkyou Shuppan. (In Japanese.)
- Suzuki, M. 1994. ‘Kojima Torajiro and Egyptian Art’. In *Nariwa No Orient (Orient in Nariwa Museum)*, edited by Nariwa Museum, 2–13. (In Japanese.)
- Suzuki, M. 2006. ‘Egyptian Antiquities in Japan: Their Restoration and Preservation’. *The Bulletin of Kurashiki University of Science and the Arts* 11: 25–36. (In Japanese with English summary.)
- Suzuki, M. 2007. ‘The Origin of the Egyptian Collection in Shimonoseki City Art Museum’. *The Bulletin of Shimonoseki City Art Museum* 11: 3–19. (In Japanese.)
- Tazawa, K. 2017. ‘Egyptian Collections in Eastern Japan’. *CIPEG e-News* 2017 07: 2.
- Tazawa, K. 2018. ‘Egyptian Collections in Western Japan’. *CIPEG e-News* 2018 09: 3.