

Egypt unveils ancient coffins, statues found in Saqqara

November 14 2020, by Samy Magdy



Journalists gather around an ancient sarcophagus more than 2500 years old, discovered in a vast necropolis and Mostafa Waziri, the secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, center, in Saqqara, Giza, Egypt, Saturday, Nov. 14, 2020. Egyptian antiquities officials on Saturday announced the discovery of at least 100 ancient coffins, some with mummies inside, and around 40 gilded statues south of Cairo. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)

Egyptian antiquities officials on Saturday announced the discovery of at least 100 ancient coffins, some with mummies inside, and around 40 gilded statues in a vast Pharaonic necropolis south of Cairo.

Colorful, sealed sarcophagi and statues that were buried more than 2,500 years ago were displayed in a makeshift exhibit at the feet of the famed Step Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara.

Archaeologists opened a coffin with a well-preserved mummy wrapped in cloth inside. They also carried out X-raying visualizing the structures of the ancient [mummy](#), showing how the body had been preserved.

Tourism and Antiquities Minister Khaled el-Anany told a news conference that the discovered items date back to the Ptolemaic dynasty that ruled Egypt for some 300 years—from around 320 B.C. to about 30 B.C., and the Late Period (664-332 B.C.).

He said they would move the artifacts to at least three Cairo museums including the Grand Egyptian Museum that Egypt is building near the famed Giza Pyramids. He said they would announce another discovery at the Saqqara necropolis later this year.

The discovery at the famed necropolis is the latest in a series of archaeological finds in Egypt. Since September, antiquities authorities revealed at least 140 sealed sarcophagi, with mummies inside most of them, in the same area of Saqqara.



People look at ancient sarcophagi discovered in a vast necropolis in Saqqara, Giza, Egypt, Saturday, Nov. 14, 2020. Egyptian antiquities officials on Saturday announced the discovery of at least 100 ancient coffins, some with mummies inside, and around 40 gilded statues south of Cairo. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



An ancient sarcophagus that buried more than 2500 years ago, is on display in Saqqara, Giza, Egypt, Saturday, Nov. 14, 2020. Egyptian antiquities officials on Saturday announced the discovery of at least 100 ancient coffins, some with mummies inside, and around 40 gilded statues south of Cairo. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



Mostafa Waziri, the secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities speaks about an ancient sarcophagus more than 2500 years old discovered in a vast necropolis, as archeologists carry out an X-ray visualizing the structures of the ancient mummy, in Saqqara, Giza, Egypt, Saturday, Nov. 14, 2020. Egyptian antiquities officials on Saturday announced the discovery of at least 100 ancient coffins, some with mummies inside, and around 40 gilded statues south of Cairo. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



People look at ancient sarcophagi on display, discovered in a vast necropolis in Saqqara, Giza, Egypt, Saturday, Nov. 14, 2020. Egyptian antiquities officials on Saturday announced the discovery of at least 100 ancient coffins, some with mummies inside, and around 40 gilded statues south of Cairo. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



Ancient sarcophagus, discovered in a vast necropolis, are on display in Saqqara, Giza, Egypt, Saturday, Nov. 14, 2020. Egyptian antiquities officials on Saturday announced the discovery of at least 100 ancient coffins, some with mummies inside, and around 40 gilded statues south of Cairo. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)

Egyptian archaeologists found other "shafts full of coffins, well-gilded, well-painted, well-decorated," Mostafa Waziri, secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, told reporters on Saturday.

The Saqqara site is part of the necropolis at Egypt's ancient capital of Memphis that includes the famed Giza Pyramids, as well as smaller [pyramids](#) at Abu Sir, Dahshur and Abu Ruwaysh. The ruins of Memphis were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1970s.

Egypt frequently touts its [archaeological discoveries](#) in hopes of spurring a vital tourism industry that has been reeling from the political turmoil following the 2011 popular uprising that toppled longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak. The sector was also dealt a further blow this year by the coronavirus pandemic.

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