

Currently on display at **Pacific Science Center** for the last time in North America, *Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs* will be open through January 6, 2013. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience treasures from King Tut's tomb and other artifacts from over 2,000 years of ancient Egyptian history. Read on for ways that you can learn more after your visit.

## THE KARNAK CACHETTE

By Sarah L. Ketchley, Ph.D.

Many of the artifacts in the *King Tut* exhibit were originally found in the 'Cachette' (or hiding place) in Karnak Temple, Luxor. The story behind this unique discovery is quite remarkable. Excavated between 1903 and 1907 by the French archaeologist Georges Legrain, the Cachette contained the largest number of statues ever found in Egypt—some 800 made of stone, a large number of wood and around 17,000 of bronze.

Gaston Maspero, director of the Service d'Antiquités in Egypt, tasked Legrain with clearing the rubble-filled temple site in the fall of 1895. This he did, establishing the ground plan and restoring the monument as he went. At one point 11 columns in the great Hypostyle Hall collapsed, so Legrain constructed earthen ramps to maneuver the colossal pieces of stone back into place. In 1901, while exploring the courtyard of the seventh pylon, Legrain came upon a large fallen stela of Seti I reused as a paving slab. This he removed and found to his surprise three statuettes lightly covered with sand underneath. Further exploration over the next four seasons' digging revealed that these statuettes were the first of an outstanding collection.

Excavation was not easy – work began during the Nile Inundation when the water table was high. The fight against rising groundwater was a constant thorn in Legrain's side with thick mud obscuring everything, including the workmen who labored stripped down to the waist. Maspero described the work of retrieving artifacts less as excavation, more as 'fishing.'

More than 120 royal statues were discovered in the Cachette, depicting Old Kingdom through Ptolemaic rulers. Representations of a number of prominent courtiers and lower ranking clergy were also found. Legrain wrote: *Each of them has, at least for me, its history and I have my favorites among them, those which remind me of the moment filled with incomparable emotion when the worker took the statuette out of the mud and passed it to me. We would then wash it like a newborn baby, and as I would remove the mud that covered it, the features of his smiling face and its frail silhouette would appear. Then I would decipher the name of its owner from among the inscriptions that covered it, and that's how I made the acquaintance of kings, princes, high priests of Amun, the whole clergy of the god of Thebes, as well as other rich citizens.*

Since the Karnak discovery, many other temple caches have been found in Egypt and Nubia, although none as large as this one. This suggests that this process of temple clearance was ongoing and not uncommon, whether for ritual reasons or simply to create space. The majority of the Karnak Cachette statues ended up in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo and other regional museums in Egypt, and a number were sold or given as gifts at the time of discovery and now reside in museums around the world. Unfortunately, Legrain's work has never been completely published and his excavation notebooks disappeared long ago – along with the 17,000 bronze statuettes! Perhaps they lie in the basement of the Egyptian Museum to this day, waiting to be discovered all over again.

## ANCIENT EGYPT DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS LECTURE SERIES BEGINS OCTOBER 2

This fall you'll have an extraordinary opportunity to hear from world-famous experts about ancient Egypt and the newest discoveries using the latest scientific tools available. Starting October 2 at Seattle's Town Hall, fascinating and sometimes controversial topics will be covered by the most eminent scholars in this rare lecture series including Nicholas Reeves, Ph.D., Dr. Mark Lehner and Dr. Kent R. Weeks.

Nicholas Reeves is Lila Acheson Wallace associate curator in the Department of Egyptian Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. As an archaeologist Reeves is best known for his work in Egypt's Valley of the Kings, using ground penetrating radar survey. He is the author of *The Complete Tutankhamun*.

Dr. Mark Lehner is an American archaeologist with more than 30 years of experience excavating in Egypt. He is currently director of Ancient Egypt Research Associates. His international team runs the Giza Plateau Mapping Project, excavating and mapping the ancient city of the builders of the Giza pyramid complex, which dates to the fourth dynasty of Egypt.

Dr. Kent R. Weeks grew up in Washington state where he developed a strong childhood interest in ancient Egypt. In 1987, Dr. Weeks began examining an area to the northeast of the entrance to the tomb of Rameses IX where he felt a long-neglected tomb might be located. By 1995, Dr. Weeks realized that he had unearthed the largest tomb in the Valley of the Kings.

For a full list of lectures in this series and to purchase tickets please visit [pacificsciencecenter.org](http://pacificsciencecenter.org). A full list of lectures is also featured in the calendar of events on pages 8-9. General admission tickets are \$10, \$5 for Pacific Science Center members and are free for Platinum members and above.



A few of the Karnak Cachette pieces on display in the *King Tut* exhibition

Photos by Sarah Ketchley

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Walt Disney Pictures' *Fantasia/2000*, the first ever feature-length animated IMAX film, opens at the Boeing IMAX® Theater. Laser theater is renovated and renamed **Adobe Laser Dome** in February.

01

*Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition* opens, marking the west coast premiere of an international exhibit witnessed by over 7 million people worldwide. *Genetics: The Code of Life*, created by Pacific Science Center, opens.

04

Pacific Science Center receives free and clear title to property after 42 years of bringing science education to the community.