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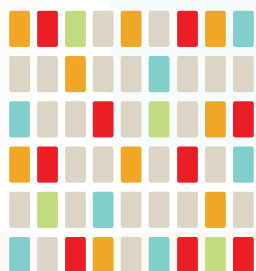
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**Lecture**

The two Ancient Egyptian Sarcophagi in Vipava: Assessment of Heritage Value and Conservation Concerns for Site Management

The Egyptian heritage in Slovenia is scattered across national and regional institutions, which poses a particular challenge for its preservation, management and interpretation. Among the most significant examples are two sarcophagi from the Old Kingdom in Giza, which were originally created as resting places for the high-ranking officials Iun-Min and Ra-wer. They were discovered in the tombs of the courtiers at the end of the 4th/beginning of the 5th Dynasty of Ancient Egypt near the Pyramid of Khafre. Anton Lavrin, one of the most important Austrian Slovenian consuls and collectors, brought these sarcophagi to Slovenia, where they were converted into family tombs in his hometown of Vipava and are now privately owned. When they were opened in 1987, it was discovered that the sarcophagus of Iun-Min contained the remains of Lavrin's parents, while the sarcophagus of Ra-wer contained a small lead coffin with the exhumed remains of his son Albert.

Today, the sarcophagi are located in a public cemetery which, although accessible, is highly vulnerable to environmental exposure and vandalism. Although a protective roof was erected in the 1990s, the sarcophagi are exposed to rain, frost, wind, temperature fluctuations and accelerated decay due to their open location. The site is also endangered by uncontrolled public access, a common problem in Slovenian cemeteries.



Figure 1 Location of the ancient egyptian sarcophagi in Vipava (photo: Abdelrazek Elnaggar)

Through intensive archival research, on-site consultations and an on-site risk assessment, this study addresses key questions: How can the conservation and presentation of the Vipava sarcophagi be systematically managed in the context of the museological and conservation framework? What gaps still exist in the understanding of their reinterpretation and use in out-contextual settings? How can sustainable management strategies be developed to create a balance between



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conservation, public engagement and community involvement? And most importantly, how can diverse stakeholders contribute to a long-term management plan that ensures both preservation and relevance to contemporary audiences? The study emphasises the need for a collaborative approach engaging the researchers, tomb owners, local authorities and communities, which could also consider formal recognition and possible inclusion on the National Heritage List. This will also contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which diplomatic, scientific and social networks have influenced the dissemination, study and re-contextualisation of Egyptian antiquities in Slovenia.



Figure 2 Fieldwork with students from the Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska, within the Heritage Science course (Photo: Abdelrazek Elnaggar)