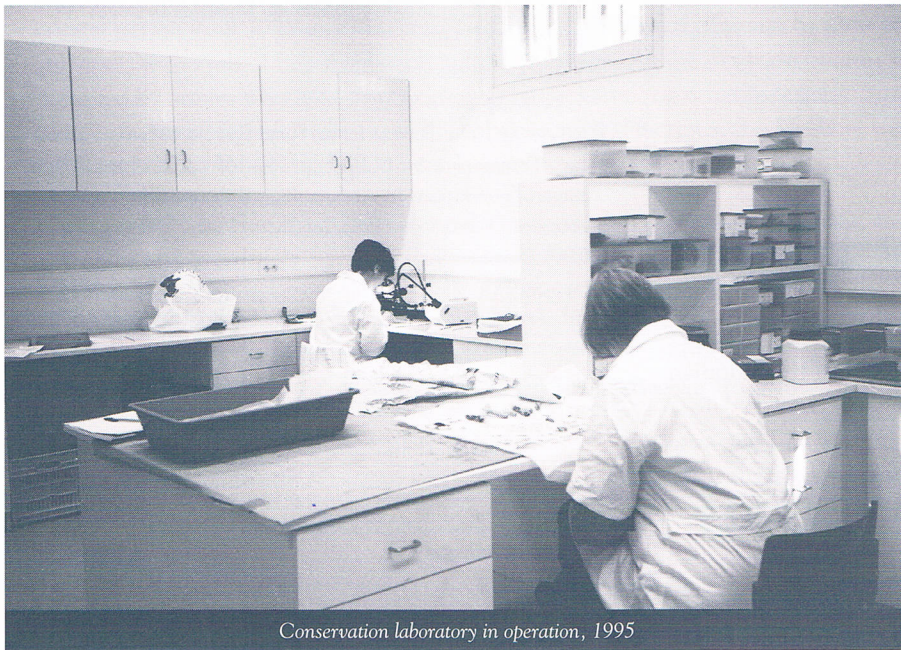




State in which the storage rooms were found, 1994



Broken pottery due to ravages of war



Conservation laboratory in operation, 1995

After seventeen years of war, the Beirut National Museum no longer holds the prestigious position it held during the first four decades of its existence. Despite years of abandonment, a unique antiquities collection can still be found behind shattered walls waiting for its eventual restoration, conservation, and exhibition. The museum faces, therefore, the colossal task of rescuing this extensive collection, which has not been seen since 1975. It is, hence, in support of such a culturally vital endeavor that an independent association, the Lebanese British Friends of the National Museum, was established in London in order to provide technical and financial assistance to the Lebanese Department of Antiquities. British and Lebanese archaeologists, architects, historians, scientists, and volunteers are thus helping rebuild the National Museum as a center for exhibitions, education, and research. This initiative began with a total review of all the museum needs and has been raising funds primarily for urgent projects:

The Laboratory

All donations received since 1993 in London were allocated to rebuild and equip the laboratory. This refurbishment was a prerequisite to opening storage rooms wherein the museum's collections had laid for over a decade and which at present require restoration and conservation. We are planning to invite fellows from other museums and institutions to assist with conservation work.

The Library

Another of our major priorities, as its seventeen thousand books were found in 1993, lying in rubble and in critical condition. A team of volunteers has been cleaning, indexing and classifying all the books. Some donations in 1994 enabled us to refurbish the library (furniture, shelves etc...) but more will be needed to pursue this project.

The Mummies

In November of 1994, following an extraordinary discovery in the Kadisha valley in northern Lebanon, the museum added six mummies from the 13th century to its collection. Funds were raised in London for the purchase of specialized storage and display cases (see articles of Isabelle Doumet-Skaf and Farès el Dahdah).

The National Museum's role may have traditionally been to preserve relics of Lebanon's past, yet it is our objective to exceed this condition and rebuild an active museum wherein exhibitions, lectures, fellowship programs and other such activities can take place. This newsletter is the document, therefore, that will disseminate the progress of our work. We will hopefully reach a wide range of readership that will above all, include an entire generation of young Lebanese who have not known their museum. It should also be mentioned that

all the projects, mentioned above, are funded by private donors and would not have been possible without the staunch support and benevolent help we have received from Maryse Salamé for the laboratory and Anne-Marie Afeiche, Carole Codsí, Lydia Debbas, Nina Jidéjian, Nouhad Salamé, Norma Sfeir, Catherine Younès for the library. A debt of gratitude is also owed to the staff of the Department of Antiquities for having not only contributed long hours but for having at times risked their lives in order to save the museum's collections: Jean Samaha, Joseph Chamoun, Joseph Chammas, Raphael Boutros, Abd el-Houry, Josephine Abd el-Massih, Tanios Chahine, and Antoine Khoury.

Founding Committee

Mrs. Nada Akkari
Mrs. Nayla Al Assaad
Mrs. Nada Al A'war
Mrs. Ralda Boulos
Mrs. Zeina Corban
Mrs. Claude Doumet-Serhal
Mrs. Marlène Malek
Mrs. Anne Rabate
Mrs. Andrée Resek

Trustees

Dr. Claude Doumet-Serhal
Dr. Farès el-Dahdah
Mrs. Marlène Malek
Dr. Georges Resek

Advisors

Mr. James Black, *International Academic Projects*
Mr. John Carswell, *Sotheby's*
Dr. Dafydd Griffiths, *Institute of Archaeology*
Prof. Susan Pearce, *University of Leicester*
Dr. Dominic Perring, *English Heritage*
Dr. Venetia Porter, *British Museum*
Dr. John Scofield, *Museum of London*
Mr. Nadim Shehadi, *Center of Lebanese Studies, Oxford*
Mrs. Kathy Tubb, *Institute of Archaeology*

Honorary Members

Mr John Matossian, *Legal Adviser*
Mr Taji Gill, *Accountant*

Donors

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Abela
Mr. & Mrs. Ramzi Akkari
Mr. & Mrs. Georges Asseily
Mr. & Mrs. Rafik Azzam
Mr. & Mrs. Maroun Boulos
Mr. Elie Calil
Mr. & Mrs. Nemr Diab
Mr. & Mrs. Mansour Foustok
Mr. & Mrs. Philippe Jabre
Mr. & Mrs. Rony Karam
Mr. & Mrs. Michel Klat
Mr. & Mrs. John Ricciardi
Mr. & Mrs. Mouhamed Shaker
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Taktouk
Mrs. Sandra Tarazi
Mr. & Mrs. Georges Zakhem
Mr. & Mrs. Khalil Zantout