



the Creators of Eternal Egypt

**Scribes, Artisans, and Laborers
in the Service of the Pharaoh**

Basilica Palladiana
Vicenza
22 December 2022
7 May 2023





At the Basilica Palladiana in Vicenza

A major exhibition devoted to the treasures of Ancient Egypt

The exhibition *The Creators of Eternal Egypt. Scribes, Artisans, and Laborers in the Service of the Pharaoh* completes the cycle of the three exhibitions of international importance commissioned by the municipal administration of Vicenza with the aim of celebrating the cultural excellence of the territory by offering original exhibition proposals that spark public interest.

Buoyed by the presence of important objects and precious artifacts that comprehensively capture the iconic idea we have of ancient Egypt, the exhibition posits a parallel that can be established between the city of Vicenza and Deir el-Medina, the Egyptian village where the artisans who built and decorated the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings and Queens lived, on the west bank of the Nile, opposite the capital city of Thebes.

Just as Vicenza was an extremely important center of artistic and architectural production in the Italian Renaissance, the men of Deir el-Medina who devoted their lives to the creation of the splendid tombs of the pharaohs were largely the architects of our collective image of ancient Egyptian culture.

Despite the enormous distance separating them physically and chronologically, these two places witnessed periods of great development and experimentation that, thanks to the work and ingenuity of extraordinary people, each defined new images of the world that are still with us today.

After the major exhibition *The Factory of the Renaissance*, thanks to the invaluable collaboration of curator Christian Greco, this exhibition will welcome masterpieces arriving from the Museo Egizio in Turin along with a series of exceptional loans from the Louvre Museum in Paris.

This third great event is made possible by the longstanding collaboration between the Musei Civici, the Teatro Comunale, and the Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio, the Vicenza coalition that implemented the cultural operation that culminated in the three major exhibitions in the Basilica.

Francesco Rucco
Mayor of Vicenza

An imaginary journey from the Basilica Palladiana in Vicenza to the Egypt of the pharaohs.

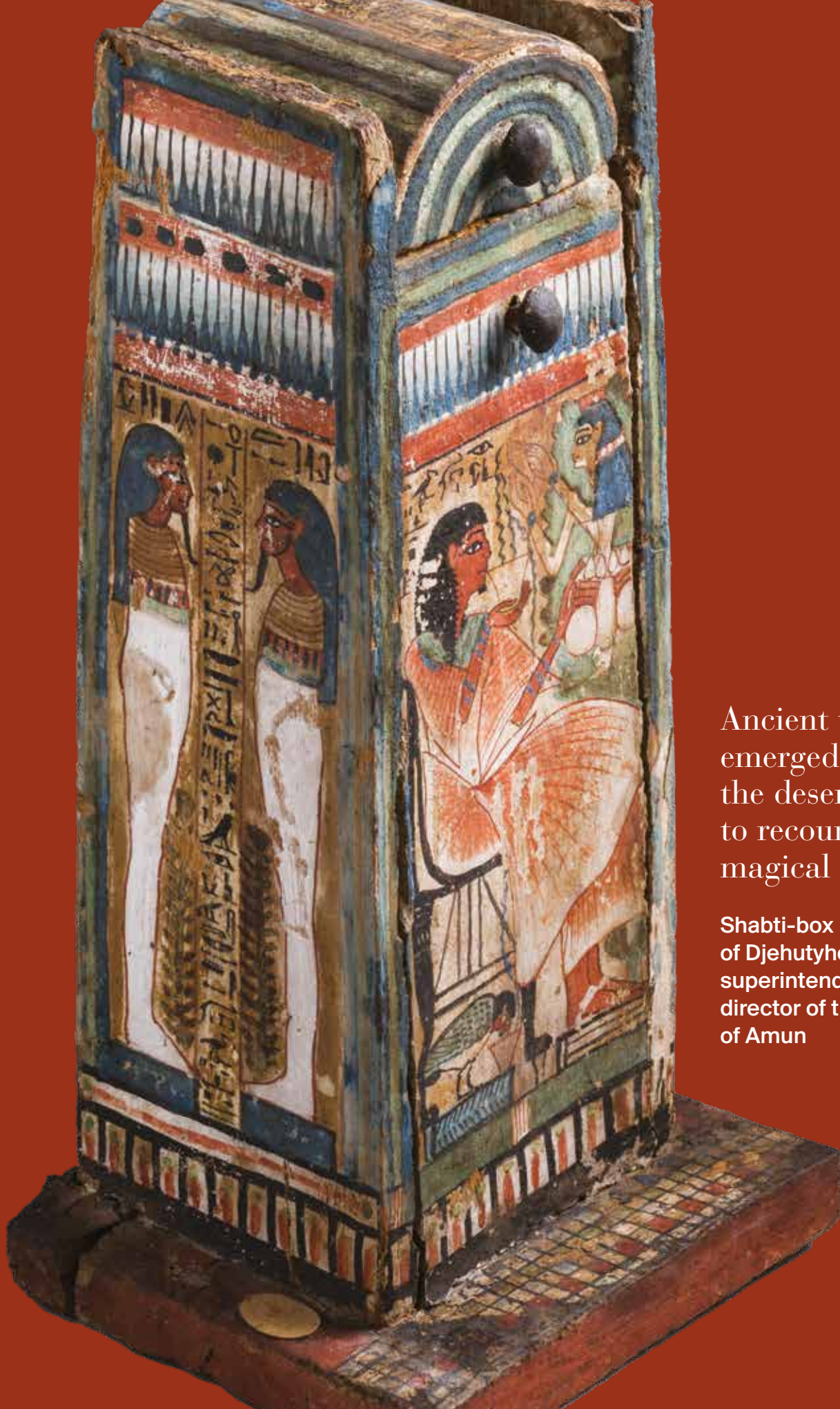
Stala dedicated to Amenhotep I and Ahmose Nefertari



A large, light-colored stone statue of the goddess Meretseger, shown from the waist up. She has a serene expression, closed eyes, and a slight smile. She wears a long, flowing garment that covers her body. The statue is set against a dark background.

The story of
a thousand-year-old
civilisation that
reveals itself through
its iconic images.

**Statue of the
goddess Meretseger**



Ancient treasures
emerged from
the desert
to recount
magical beliefs.

Shabti-box
of Djehutyhotep,
superintendent and
director of the festival
of Amun

Egypt in Vicenza

Colossal statues, decorated tombs and sarcophagi, bas-reliefs and painted stela, papyrus scrolls and millennial finds: these are the ingredients of the exhibition *The Creators of Eternal Egypt. Scribes, Artisans, and Laborers in the Service of the Pharaoh* which, through about 200 artifacts from the Museo Egizio in Turin, tells about the community of Deir el-Medina, the ancient village that housed the architects of the monumental tombs of the pharaohs in the Valley of Kings and Queens.

The exhibition is curated by the Museo Egizio in Turin, under the coordination of the director Christian Greco, Corinna Rossi and the curators Cédric Gobeil and Paolo Marini worked with the collaboration of the curatorial team.

The exhibition itinerary takes visitors on a journey to discover ancient Egypt and its imagery through the material expressions of a complex and articulated world: from everyday tools, to the opulence and sacredness of the pharaohs. Over the centuries, the tombs have preserved the objects, memory, and splendor of this ancient civilization, whose fascination we still experience today.

The exact location of the royal burials was secret, known only to the priests, to ensure the safekeeping of the remains and great wealth of the rulers during their journey to the afterlife. For this reason, workers and their families lived isolated from the rest of society in a small village, now known as Deir el-Medina, nestled among the rocky hills not far from the royal necropolis on the opposite bank of the Nile from Thebes. It is to the ingenuity and labor of the inhabitants of Deir el-Medina that we owe much of our current understanding of ancient Egypt. As part of the three-year project “Exhibitions in the Basilica”, *The Creators of Eternal Egypt*, which opens on 22 December at the Basilica Palladiana,

follows the exhibition *The Factory of the Renaissance. Creative Processes, Market, and Production in Vicenza*, which delved into the ways that the artistic inventions and practices generated in Vicenza during the Renaissance influenced Western art history. Similarly, many of the images and ideas that have entered our collective imagination of ancient Egyptian art and culture were developed in Deir el-Medina.

Although far apart in space and time, both places were important centers of artistic and architectural production during two crucial periods of their history: the Renaissance in Italy and the New Kingdom in Egypt, which lasted nearly the entire second half of the second millennium BC.

In both cases, the successful combination of artistic sensibility and technical prowess grew out of tradition and gave rise to a period of great experimentation that shaped a new worldview and laid the foundation of our vision of the period. In this sense, the previous exhibition was the curators' starting point for the project of *The Creators of Eternal Egypt*, taking the opportunity to propose a parallel between the two situations and highlight, beyond the inevitable differences, the continuity represented by humankind's desire to understand and represent the surrounding world through art, architecture, and artisanal virtuosity.

As such, the exhibition takes visitors on an imaginary journey from the Basilica Palladiana in downtown Vicenza to the monumental Thebes of 3,300 years ago, and then across the Nile to the small village of Deir el-Medina, to discover the city of the dead and the spectacular afterlife that awaited them, created by the patient and expert workmanship of those in the service of Pharaoh.

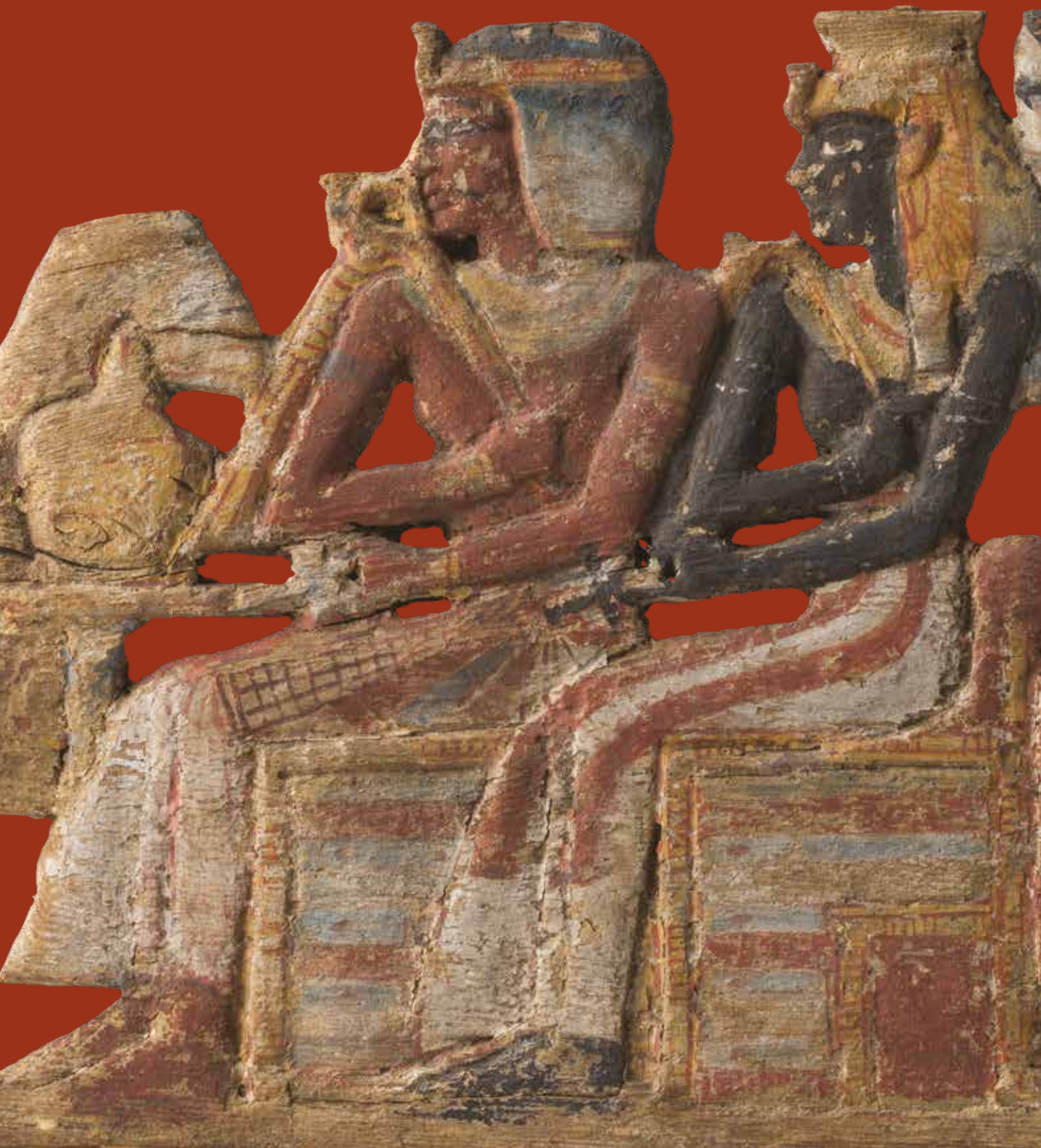


The master craftsmen in the service
of the pharaohs in the hidden village
protected by the serpent goddess.

Ostrakon decorated with hieroglyphic text
dedicated by Amenkhau to Meretseger

A look at the daily life of the people of 3000 years ago
through the objects of the inhabitants of Deir el-Medina.

Decorative element of sedan chair





Symbolic aspects and technical issues, religious cult and work organization.

Ryramid chapel tip of Ramose



Structure of the exhibition

The itinerary unfolds inside the Basilica Palladiana among a wide selection of about 200 artifacts from the Museo Egizio in Turin and a group of about 20 works on loan from the Louvre Museum in Paris, ranging in scale from the smallest, most precious objects to sarcophagi and monumental statuary. A series of multimedia installations accompany the visitors' experience, breaking and expanding the boundaries of material culture: physically present objects are virtually 'reinserted' into their original historical context, now inevitably lost.

The exhibition is organized by interrelated themes. The evocative space beneath the vault of the Basilica is divided into two large sections: the first illustrating the everyday life and creation of these millennia-old masterpieces, and the second devoted to the life of the deceased after death.

The first stop on the journey is Thebes, the monumental city that spread along the east bank of the Nile, home of the great temples and capital of the New Kingdom for nearly three centuries. Here one encounters large sculptural groups of rulers and monumental statues of deities with attributes from the animal world.

While the eastern bank hosted the city of the living, the opposite bank, where the sun sets, housed the vast city of the dead: all the tombs and places of worship dedicated to the defunct and, above all, the great funerary temples of the pharaohs. The exhibition route then moves to the western shore and the humble village of Deir el-Medina, protected by the serpent goddess Meretseger and located at the foot of the great pyramidal mountain, in whose belly the tombs of the Valley of the Kings were excavated.

The exhibition offers a detailed account of the building of a pharaoh's tomb, whose long and demanding construction combined different skills and knowledge, from symbology to engineering, from theology to the logistical organization of labor. In addition to tools and implements, one can admire the papyri that conveyed the wisdom of these men through plans and descriptions of buildings and design studies.

This is followed by an in-depth look at the daily life of the laborers, artisans, and scribes who lived there, devoting themselves to the creation and preparation of the sumptuous tombs of the rulers. The scenes painted on the walls of the tombs and the artifacts unearthed are like the tiles of a complex mosaic, giving us insight into their way of life, which combined traditional arts handed down over the generations with colors, prayers and songs, as evidenced by the decorated stelae and ostraka (fragments of vases or stone chips), as well as some very rare musical instruments from both the Museo Egizio and the Louvre. Other objects, such as the decoratively carved and painted wooden sedan chair, testify to the affluence and luxury in which some members of the Deir el-Medina community lived.

After exploring aspects of the earthly world, visitors are greeted by the sarcophagus of Khonsuirdis and cross the threshold into the second part of the exhibition, devoted to the journey of the deceased to the afterlife. Here they are led along a path that tells the story of the preparation of body and soul for eternal life, from the making of the splendid painted sarcophagi to the arrangement of the grave goods. A selection of objects from Queen Nefertari's rich burial trousseau is accompanied by fascinating turquoise faience objects, such as the Louvre bowl or Pharaoh Sethi I's coterie of Ushabtis, the little servants whose task was to ease his labors in the afterlife. The itinerary leads to an artifact that, perhaps more than any other, inspires deep reflection on the dichotomy of life and death: the mummy and sarcophagus of Tariri.

As a final counterpoint, this material journey into the realm of the dead culminates in an immersive, immaterial experience that illustrates the burial of the scribe Butehamon and the deceased's final journey. Visitors walk through a videomapping installation built on a 3D-printed reproduction of the great sarcophagus, which reveals the secrets it contained and brings to life the human story behind this incredible find.

Life after death: the tombs, sarcophagi and mummies that have shaped the image of Ancient Egypt in our minds.

Coffin of Tariri



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The Jewellery Museum



**Gallerie d'Italia
Leoni Montanari Palace**



Basilica Palladiana



Thiene Palace

1. Teatro Olimpico
piazza Matteotti, 11
T. +39 0444 222800
teatrolimpico@comune.vicenza.it
infocultura@comune.vicenza.it
www.museicivicivicenza.it
www.teatrolimpico.vicenza.it

2. Civic Art Gallery of Palazzo Chiericati
piazza Matteotti, 37/39
T. +39 0444 222811
museocivico@comune.vicenza.it
www.museicivicivicenza.it

3. Museum of Risorgimento and Resistance
viale X Giugno, 115
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museorisorgimento@comune.vicenza.it
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4. Natural History and Archaeological Museum
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5. The church of Santa Corona
contra' S. Corona, 2
T. +39 0444 222811
museocivico@comune.vicenza.it
www.museicivicivicenza.it

6. Palladio Museum
contra' Porti, 11
T. +39 0444 323014
accoglienza@palladiomuseum.org
www.palladiomuseum.org

7. Diocesan Museum
piazza Duomo, 12
T. +39 0444 226400
museo@diocesivicenza.it
www2.museodiocesanovicenza.it

8. The Jewellery Museum
piazza dei Signori, 44
(Basilica Palladiana)
T. +39 0444 320799
info@museodelgioiello.it
www.museodelgioiello.it

**9. Gallerie d'Italia
Leoni Montanari Palace**
contra' Santa Corona, 25
T. 800 167619
vicenza@gallerieditalia.com
www.gallerieditalia.com

10. Basilica Palladiana
piazza dei Signori
T. +39 0444 222850
basilicapalladiana@comune.vicenza.it
www.museicivicivicenza.it

11. Thiene Palace
contra' San Gaetano, 11
T. +39 0444222817
museocivico@comune.vicenza.it
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It enables you to visit four museums of your choice from the eleven indicated. It is valid for eight days from the first use and provides a single visit to each site.

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The **Vicenza Card** and the **Card 4 Musei** are on sale at the following box-offices: IAT office, Gallerie d'Italia - Leoni Montanari Palace, Palladio Museum, Diocesan Museum, The Jewellery Museum and Basilica Palladiana.

* (for groups min. 10 people, for residents of Vicenza and its province, students aged 25 and under, members of FAI, TCI, CTG, ISIC)

Other masterpieces



**Villa Capra Valmarana
'La Rotonda'**



Villa Valmarana 'Ai Nani'



Sanctuary of Monte Berico

Villa Capra Valmarana 'La Rotonda'

via della Rotonda, 45
T. +39 0444 321793
info@villalarotonda.it
www.villalarotonda.it

Villa Valmarana 'Ai Nani'

via dei Nani, 8
T. +39 0444 321803
info@villavalmarana.com
www.villavalmarana.com

Sanctuary of Monte Berico

viale X Giugno, 87
T. +39 0444 559411
museomonteberico@gmail.com
www.monteberico.it

Archaeological Area of Corte dei Bissari

Access from the main entrance
of the Palladian Basilica.
piazza dei Signori
T. +39 333 5764122
didattica.museivicenza@scatolacultura.it
www.museicivicivienza.it

Querini Park

Entrances in viale Mariano Rumor 7
and 1, and viale Rodolfi 25
T. +39 0444 221459
T. +39 0444 221512
parchistorici@comune.vicenza.it
www.comune.vicenza.it

Roman Cryptoporticus of Piazza Duomo

piazza Duomo 6
T. +39 0444 226400
museo@diocesivicenza.it
www2.museodiocesanovicenza.it

Archaeological Area of the Cathedral

piazza Duomo 12
T. +39 0444 226400
museo@diocesivicenza.it
www2.museodiocesanovicenza.it

Tower of Porta Castello

corso A. Palladio, 1
T. +39 0444 043272
info@fondazionecoppola.org
www.fondazionecoppola.org

Salvi Garden

Entrances in contra' Mure Porta Nova 1
in piazzale De Gasperi 16
and in corso Santi Felice e Fortunato 2
T. +39 0444 221459
T. +39 0444 221512
parchistorici@comune.vicenza.it
www.comune.vicenza.it



**Archaeological Area
of Corte dei Bissari**



Querini Park



**Roman Cryptoporticus
of Piazza Duomo**



**Archaeological Area
of the Cathedral**



Tower of Porta Castello



Salvi Garden

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**Discover Vicenza and its surrounding area,
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Our offers start with a 'basic package' composed of overnight stay and a visit to the exhibition, to be structured into guided tours, tastings at wine cellars and distilleries, moments of relaxation and wellness, artisan and food and wine experiences.

We can also arrange 'made-to-measure' tourism services for both groups and individuals.

Tourist reception services

Consorzio di promozione Turistica Vicenzae'

T. +39 0444 994770
info@vicenzae.org
www.vicenzae.org
Mondays to Fridays 9am-1pm / 2-6pm

Hotel bookings

Vicenza booking
T. +39 0444 994770
info@vicenzabooking.com
www.vicenzabooking.com

The Creators of Eternal Egypt

Scribes, Artisans, and Laborers in the Service of the Pharaoh

Coordination by Christian Greco
Curated by Corinna Rossi, Cédric Gobeil and Paolo Marini

Basilica Palladina, piazza dei Signori, Vicenza
22 December 2022 – 7 May 2023

Call center – booking

(reservations required for groups)
+39 0444 326418
biglietteria@mostreinbasilica.it
from Monday to Friday
10am – 1pm / 3pm – 6pm

Where to buy tickets

IAT Office
piazza Matteotti, 12
(next to the garden of the Teatro Olimpico)
T. +39 0444 320854
iat@comune.vicenza.it
every day 9 – 17.30

Basilica Palladiana Box Office
piazza dei Signori
(open from 22 December)
T. +39 0444 326418
biglietteria@mostreinbasilica.it
every day 10am – 6pm, closed on Monday

Tickets can be purchased online
www.mostreinbasilica.it

Info

info@mostreinbasilica.it
www.mostreinbasilica.it

Opening hours

Open daily 10am – 6pm;
last entrance 30 minutes before the closing time.
closed on Monday

Tickets

Full price: € 13,00

Reduced price: € 11,00
over 65, university students, partner discounts

Reduced under 18: € 5,00
valid for children between 11 – 17 years old

Open Special: € 16,00
This ticket allows you to visit the exhibition at any time without the need to book a specific date and time slot. Open tickets can be purchased both at the ticket office and online. *Also recommended as a gift.*

Groups: € 11,00
Price valid for groups of at least 10 people, with 1 accompanying person free.

Schools: € 5,00
per student
There are free tickets for 2 adults accompanying a school group.

Free entry
Valid for children up to 10 years of age (not in a school group);
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The reduced or free rates are applicable only by presenting a valid, unexpired document, card or badge that certifies the right to the reduced price.

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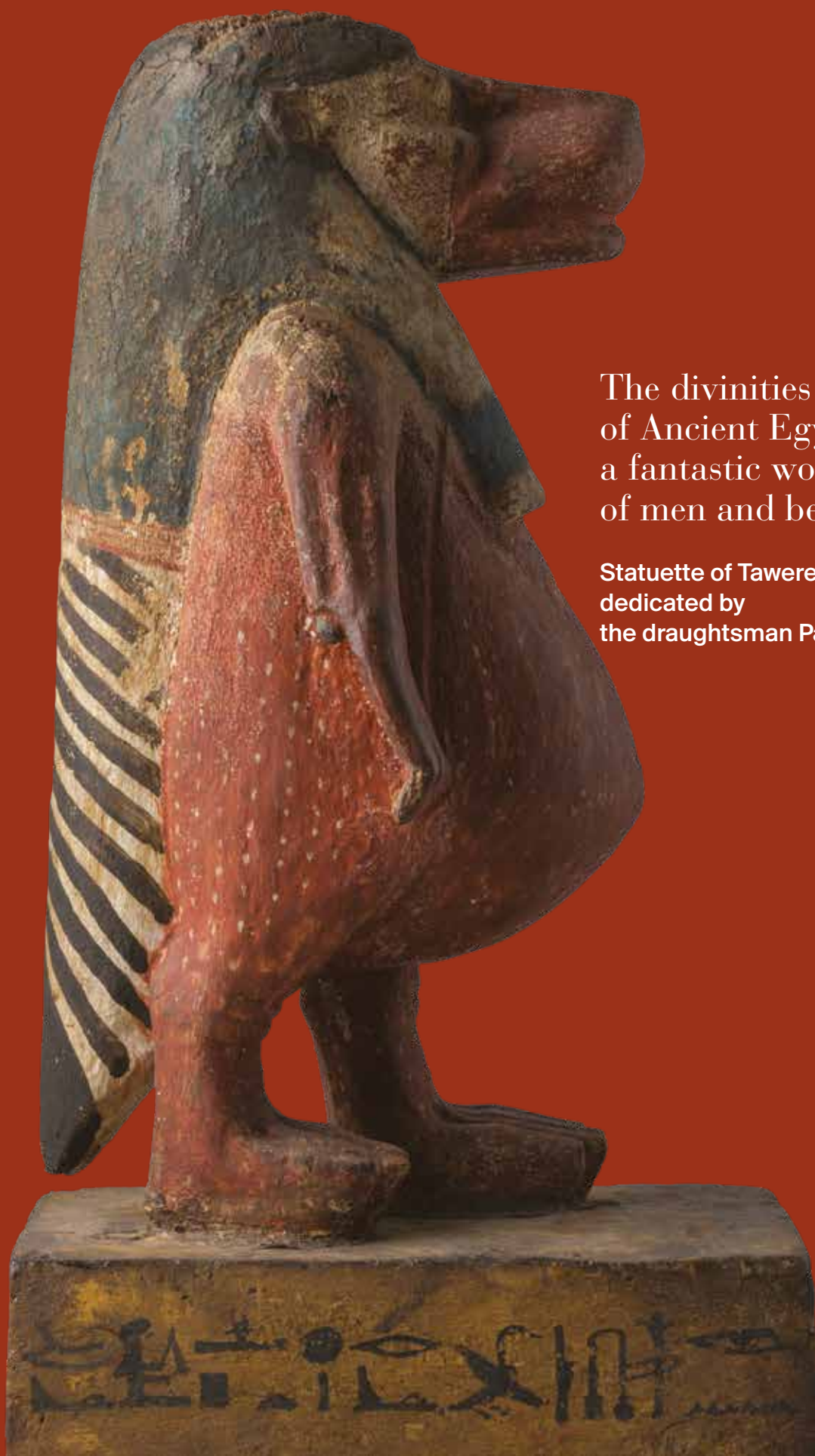
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Museo Egizio, Torino
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Organization of Marsilio Arte



The divinities
of Ancient Egypt:
a fantastic world
of men and beasts.

Statuette of Taweret
dedicated by
the draughtsman Parahotep

