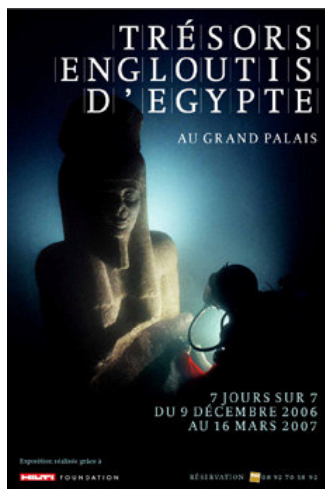


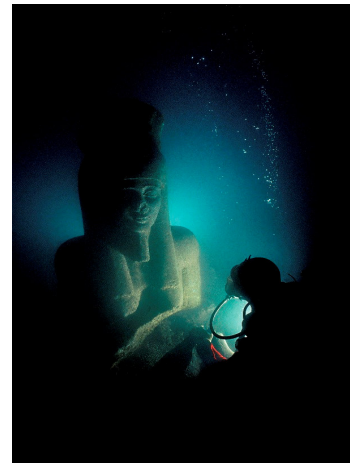
The collection of the submerged antiquities of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum on display in Paris

Opening in Paris on 9 December, the exhibition *Egypt's Sunken Treasures* offers marvels from the depths of three submerged ancient Egyptian sites.

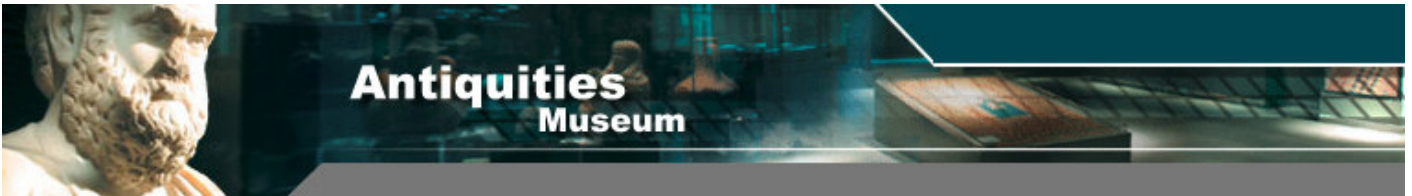


For the first time some 500 items – only an infinitesimal part of the underwater archeological discoveries made since 1996 by Franck Goddio and his team at Abu Kir bay and the harbor of Alexandria – is being presented to the French public. Among them is the tallest statue of the Nile god Hapy— symbol of fertility and plenty—ever found in Egypt. Over 2000 years old, it rivals the colossal pink granite sculptures of a king and queen, each more than five meters tall. Further testimony to the richness of this culturally mixed civilization: a head of the god Serapis, reminiscent of Zeus and Osiris; statues of Osiris; jewelry and gold coins; pottery, some of which are intact; a sphinx bearing the features of Nectanebo II; and – so far the only one of its kind – a naos inscribed with the Egyptian calendar .

The finds represent an archeological feat “that ranks with the discovery of Pompeii”, according to Gereon Sievernich, director of the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin, where the exhibition was presented in May–September 2006. Tens of thousands of hours of exploration and diving were needed to uncover the ancient submerged sites of Alexandria, Heracleion and Canopus, lost beneath the sea as a consequence of natural disasters. “We went exploring electronically both on the Portus Magnus site at Alexandria and in the Bay of Aboukir,” explains Franck Goddio, founder and president of the European Institute for Maritime Archaeology (IEASM).



(001) The discovery of the colossal pink granite statue of Hapy, God Of The Nile, At Heracleion. It Is Now Held By The Maritime Museum In Alexandria. Height 5.4 Meters, depth 90 centimeters, weight 6 tons. Early Ptolemaic period, 4th century BC . © Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation - Photo : Christoph Gerigk



(002) Colossal head of a statue, identified as that of Caesarion. Black granite, 1st century BC.

© Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation - Photo : Christoph Gerigk

By the use of sophisticated geophysical technology – including a nuclear magnetic resonance magnetometer designed by France’s Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) – Franck Goddio’s team succeeded in restoring “a topographical and even physical reality” to these hitherto legendary sunken cities. We now know that the ancient harbor of Alexandria covered 600 hectares; that the city of Heracleion, discovered 7 kilometers from today’s coastline was more than a square kilometer in area; and that the submerged eastern part of Canopus covered 25 hectares.

Another mystery has been solved, too: Heracleion (in Greek) and Thonis (in Egyptian) were in fact one and the same city. This is revealed by the hieroglyphic inscriptions on a black granite stela found intact on the site of Heracleion. “The port area of Alexandria shows the intelligence, engineering skills and artistic sense of the people of the time,” continues underwater archaeologist Goddio. Retracing 1500 years of the history of ancient Egypt, from 700 BC to 800 AD, the exhibition covers the periods of the last pharaonic dynasties, the Ptolemies, the Romans, the Byzantines and the beginning of the Islamic era and will begin at the Grand Palais in Paris on 9 December.



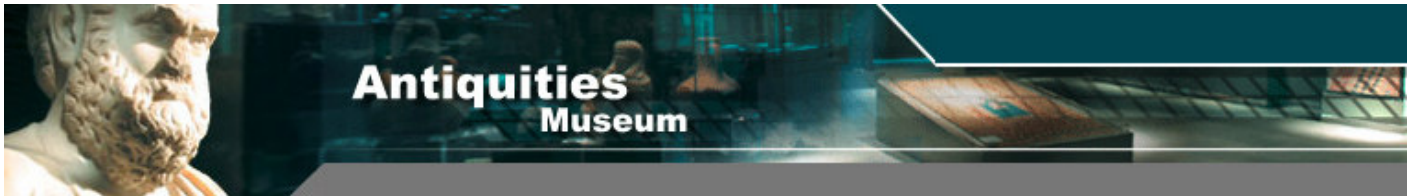
(003)Vase in the form of Osiris -marble, 2nd–1st century BC

© Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation - Photo : Christoph Gerigk



(004) Portrayed as Aphrodite, goddess of love, rising from

Frank Goddio hopes that the remains discovered by the nearly 50-strong team of archaeologists, experts, electronic engineers and divers which were restored and kept in Alexandria before being transported by sea and air – some items aboard an Airbus Beluga – to Europe that they can be brought together on a single site to be shown to the Egyptian public, when they return.



the waves. Black granite, 3rd century BC.

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(005) Grand Palais, Paris

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