

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

Albany Institute of History & Art

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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 27, 2013

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ALBANY INSTITUTE ADDS ROSETTA STONE REPLICA TO EXHIBITION

GE Presents: The Mystery of the Albany Mummies

ALBANY, NY- Thanks to a generous donation by Excelsior College, the Albany Institute of History & Art has added a full-size replica of the famous Rosetta Stone to the exhibition, GE Presents: The Mystery of the Albany Mummies. The exhibition explores how the Albany Institute acquired two mummies as part of their collection in the early twentieth-century and the story of the Rosetta Stone helps contextualize the Western world's understanding of Ancient Egypt.

The Rosetta Stone was discovered in 1799 by Napoleon and his army when they were near the town of el-Rashid (Rosetta) in Egypt. After the British defeated Napoleon, the stone and other antiquities his army acquired during their trip to Egypt were turned over to the British. The stone was placed on display at the British Museum in 1802 and has been on continuous exhibition since then, except for a period during WWI when it and other "important" objects were moved underground to guard against the threat of heavy bombing.

This full size replica of the Ancient Egyptian stele (original made of granodiorite), is inscribed with a decree issued in 196 BC on behalf of King Ptolemy V (reign 204-181 BC). The same decree appears on the stone in three different scripts, with only minor variations among them: hieroglyphic, demotic (a native writing used for daily purposes), and Greek. The Greek portion was the first to be translated. Then, through the work of scholars such as Thomas Young and Jean-Francois Champollion, the known Greek letters were used to identify similarly contextualized letters in the unknown text. Because the inscriptions recorded essentially the same text, this stone provided the key to understanding Egyptian hieroglyphs.

"We are proud to be sponsoring the Rosetta Stone exhibit. It's a natural for us," said Excelsior College President Dr. John F. Ebersole. "Excelsior's mission is all about access to knowledge. As the Stone was the key to unlocking ancient texts, helping us to understanding the many mysteries of the past, access to success through education holds the key to the future."

The replica is cast polymer made by Mannetron in Michigan. It is lent by the Freeman Institute Foundation. The GE Presents: The Mystery of the Albany Mummies exhibition runs through June 8, 2014.



Excelsior College President Dr. John R. Ebersole studies the replica Rosetta Stone at the Albany Institute of History & Art.
Photo by Aine Leader-Nagy

GE Presents: The Mystery of the Albany Mummies is the largest exhibition on Ancient Egypt ever presented in New York's Capital Region. Art and artifacts from around the world, combined with advanced medical technologies help unravel the mystery of the Albany Mummies. Acquired directly from the Cairo Museum in 1909, the Albany Institute's mummies have kept secrets that only recently have been revealed. Visit the exhibition to discover how new research, new technologies, and a team of experts have helped uncover their hidden stories. Learn about their lives and the ancient practice of mummification, all at the Albany Institute of History & Art.

- **From Cairo to Albany** highlights the 1909 acquisition of the two mummies and their coffins from the Cairo Museum.
- **Preparing for the Afterlife** examines the science of mummification through interactive stations and shows the results of new CT scans and x-rays taken at Albany Medical Center.
- **Ankhefenmut and His World** explores the daily life and culture of ancient Egypt during the 21st Dynasty.
- **Egyptomania** will showcase our ongoing fascination with ancient Egypt.

Interactive stations include: How to Make a Mummy, Pharaoh for a Day, Learn Hieroglyphs, and more!
Family Festivals, Art for All activities, and an **International Lecture Series** will be offered.
A special **Museum Shop** will offer Egyptian-themed items.

The museum is open Wednesday-Saturday 10AM-5PM, Thursdays until 8PM and Sunday Noon-5PM. On Tuesdays, the museum is open to registered groups only. The museum is closed on Mondays and major holidays. Admission is FREE for Albany Institute members; \$10/adults; \$8/seniors and students with ID; \$6/children 6-12; FREE/children under 6. For more information, visit www.albanyinstitute.org or call (518) 463-4478.

The Albany Institute's distinguished collections and acclaimed exhibitions comprise the definitive expression of the cultural, historical, and artistic heritage of Albany and the upper Hudson Valley. From its world-renowned Hudson River School collection, to the famous Albany Mummies, to the wide range of lectures, outstanding educational and family programming, and special events, this distinctive and engaging institution provides visitors of all ages and interests with a splendid museum experience. One of America's oldest museums, the Albany Institute of History & Art was founded in 1791, during the presidency of George Washington, making it older than the Louvre, the Smithsonian, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

For more information, please visit www.albanyinstitute.org and be sure to follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/albanyinstitute).

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