

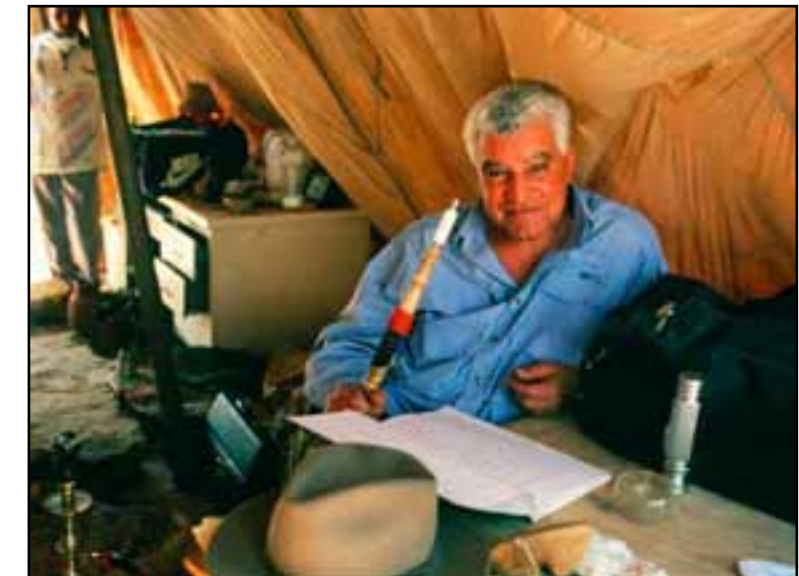
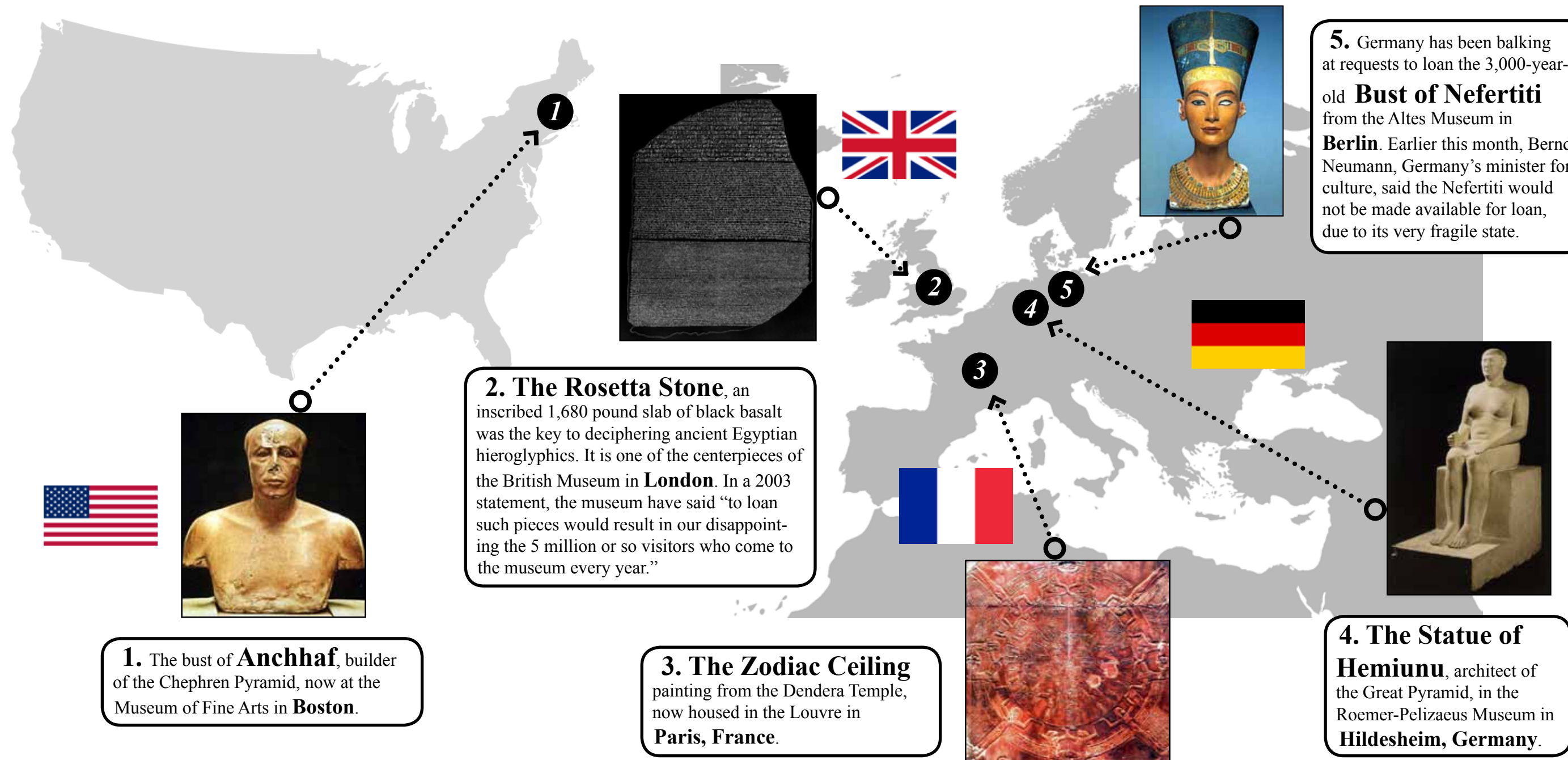
# The Arts

## Fighting for Ownership

### *Egypt Wants Ancient Artifacts Returned*

Egypt is requesting museums loan artifacts so they can be exhibited either at the **2011** opening of the Egyptian Museum, near the site of the Great Pyramids at Giza, or the Atum museum, which is set to open in the Nile Delta city of Meniya in **2010**, the Supreme Council of Antiquities said in a statement. Egypt said it would

request the loans from **the British Museum, Paris' Louvre, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and two German museums**. Some countries are already **saying no**. But **Zahi Hawass**, head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, believes that **these five objects should be in their homeland**.



Zahi Hawass, Egypt's chief archaeologist is on a mission to retrieve his country's past.

## One Man's Quest To Make It Happen

*Theft abroad and at home, are big issues*

Since the days of the pharaohs, priceless artifacts from Egypt have been falling into the wrong hands.

Currently Hawass is at odds with the St. Louis Museum of Art in Missouri.

"There is currently a case of a mask in the St. Louis Museum of Art, which was stolen from the storage magazine at Saqqara [just south of Cairo] after 1959," Hawass said.

"Evidence of this theft was given to the director of the St. Louis Museum of Art, but he does not think that we have enough evidence. I cannot imagine why this man says this."

Back in Egypt, illegal digs are a continuing problem for Hawass in a land with many valuable artifacts and many poor citizens.

Many people dig inside houses to find antiquities, since many of the modern

cities [and villages] are built above ancient ones," Hawass said.

Illegal artifacts regularly end up on the international auction block.

Some items appear for sale online, where Egyptian officials can easily identify them. For others, Hawass depends on a global network of contacts to tip him off when notable objects surface.

For Hawass, these relics quite simply belong to the land of their origin.

And with Hawass energetically pursuing them, they just might end up there.

*"These artifacts belong to everyone, and their return is of the utmost importance, because the past is important to our future."*

**- Zahi Hawass**