

American Research Center In Egypt, Inc.

NEWSLETTER



AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT, INCORPORATED

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This Newsletter contains the report of the Annual Meeting. Following a custom inaugurated last year, it will begin with the report of the President, Mr. Edward W. Forbes. This will be followed by letters from the Fellows of the Center at present in Cairo and by other archaeological notes, and these, in turn, will be followed by the detailed reports made to members present at the Annual Meeting of November 18.

Report of the President to the Annual Meeting

In spite of unsettled conditions in the Middle East, the work of the American Research Center in Egypt during the season 1957-1958 has been carried on quietly and effectively by the two Fellows of the Center appointed under the grant so generously given to us by the Bollingen Foundation. The fact that the Center is completely divorced from political or sectarian interests, but is devoted entirely to scholarly activities, has stood it in good stead during these troubled times.

Both the Fellows in Cairo have contributed greatly to the Center, while pursuing their own studies. They have furnished excellent material for the Newsletters issued to members, have conducted tours of the monuments for members in Cairo, and have established cordial relations with Egyptian and European scholars. While the interests of both Fellows, previous to their appointment, had been chiefly historical and philological, they have reported that they have derived much benefit from the emphasis placed by the Center on archaeological studies.

Mr. Edward F. Wente, the Egyptological Fellow, who has shown great ability as Director of the Center in Cairo, has returned to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago to complete the requirements for his doctorate. Dr. John Alden Williams, the Islamic Fellow who has aided Mr. Wente as Co-Director, has been appointed to a teaching position in the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, Montreal, his duties to begin in the autumn of 1959.

Since Dr. Williams wished to remain in Egypt for another season to prepare for his work in Montreal and since he served the Center very ably during the past season, he has been granted a renewal of his Fellowship for 1958-1959. Last summer, he travelled in Spain and North Africa, visiting Islamic monuments, and sent interesting accounts of the monuments and what is being done to preserve them, which have been incorporated in the Newsletters.

The Egyptological Fellowship for the coming season has been awarded to Mrs. Helen K. Wall, a very able scholar with undergraduate and master's degrees from Barnard College and Columbia University respectively and a doctorate from the École des Hautes Etudes, Paris. Mrs. Wall has been working in Egypt on a book entitled Old Kingdom Funerary Estate Names, a preliminary study for which was submitted for her diploma at the École des Hautes Etudes. She knows the country and its people well and has a good knowledge of Arabic.

With the assistance of the two Fellows, Mr. John Goelet will act without compensation as Director in Cairo for the coming season. Mr. Goelet is a student of Islamic art, who has travelled extensively in the Middle East and who wishes to continue his research in art and to perfect his knowledge of Arabic in Egypt.

On the home front, the Center is happy with the Treasurer's report of a gift from an anonymous donor of \$10,000 and a second gift, of an equal amount, from Mr. and Mrs. John Dimick. It is hoped that, with this modest beginning, the Center may be able to establish a capital fund which will enable it to continue its activities in Egypt, which have been of great value to American scholarship.

It is obvious that \$20,000, however wisely invested, will not yield enough to support a Director and maintain an office in Cairo. It is hoped that some means will be found, as in the past, to provide by Fellowships for the stipend of a Director and to maintain an office with suitable, if modest, dignity. Naturally, we should aim at increasing the capital fund to such an extent that its interest will provide for current expenses. Such an aim, which seemed impossible a few years ago, now seems, as the result of the expression of confidence given us by the donors of the \$20,000, by no means unattainable.

It should be mentioned here that, aside from the salary of the Director in Cairo, the Center has been able to meet all expenses from the dues received from its members. The report of the Membership Secretary has shown that there has been a decline in membership during the past season. This decline is not as serious as it may seem. It is caused mainly by the dropping out of members in Cairo, who have been connected with the United States Government there but who, upon being transferred from Egypt, have allowed their memberships to lapse. The fact remains, however, that we need to build up our membership in order to continue to function effectively. While the funds received from dues are still adequate to cover running expenses, they are barely so, for the cost of everything from paper and printing to postage stamps has increased greatly. We are glad to say that we have acquired a number of new members during the past year and that several old members have increased their contributions, for which we are most grateful to them, but I should like to urge upon you all the desirability of adding to the membership. If every present member could enlist only a single additional member, the financial burden of the Center would be greatly eased.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to Dows Dunham and his secretary, Miss Mary Cairns, who have fulfilled the office of Treasurer; to Richard Parker, our Membership Secretary, and to Mrs. Elizabeth Riefstahl, who has done such a large amount of work, editing the Newsletters and attending to the business of the Center.

In closing, I should like to express to you my own satisfaction in the work that has been done by the Fellows in Egypt and by the officers and members here in the United States for the advancement of the purpose for which the Center stands. Let me add, in repetition, that the purpose of the Center is the encouragement of scholarship in the field of Egyptian studies, ancient and medieval. I wish to thank all of you who, in a materialistic age, have given us support and confidence.

Edward W. Forbes, President

Letters from Dr. Helen K. Wall

Cairo, October 12, 1958

Dear Members:

Thanks to my early arrival in Egypt (the 14th of September), I was able for the first time to see the Nile at its maximum height. That is an impressive sight. It gives one quite another opinion of the river from that formed in seeing it, modest and placid, during the winter. Now it expands seemingly to twice its ordinary width and swirls along forming eddies around every obstacle in its way, bridges, boats, trees. Comparatively few feluccas make the trip up or down the river during the flood season, and those that do so hug the coast to make headway going upstream and come swooping downstream without sails and more or less at the mercy of the current.

The river attained and maintained over a period of several weeks an unusually high level, the rains in the south having been so heavy that the Assuan Dam (usually opened from the end of July until the middle of October to let the inundation flow through) was closed about the middle of August in order to prevent floods in Lower Egypt. One of the secondary results of this early closing was that the temples of Lower Nubia, which usually stand free of water until the end of October, were already submerged in September. In consequence, the Mission of the Egyptian Documentation Center, sponsored by UNESCO, which had been scheduled to leave for Kalabsha on September 15 to continue its recording of the temple, had to be cancelled. This is the more regrettable, because it prevented the Mission from ascertaining the extent of damage caused to the north wall of the court during the previous winter. A gap had appeared in the wall just behind the pylon as early as the winter of 1956-57, and according to the report of workmen sent to Kalabsha in

August to clear the temple of mud before the arrival of the Mission, a further portion of the wall had collapsed, leaving the north part of the court open and exposing the front of the hypostyle hall to the action of wind and waves. Fortunately the Documentation Center has a full set of photographs of this part of the temple, taken by its photogrammetry experts, which will enable the Department of Antiquities to restore the fallen wall whenever it may be inclined to do so.

Some new appointments have been made in the Department of Antiquities during the past month. The position of Director of the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, vacant for almost a year, has been assigned to Maurice Raphael, long one of the most active of the Museum's staff. Victor Antoun, former Director of the Alexandria Museum, has been appointed as his assistant, and Mr. Antoun's place at Alexandria will be filled by Henry Riad, papyrologist and specialist in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.

The committee which approves applications for excavation permits met on September 29. Permits were granted to the University of Leyden Expedition, under the direction of Dr. Classens, for continuation of its excavation of the early dynastic cemetery at Abu Roash; to the University of Warsaw Expedition, headed by Professor Michalowski, for work at Athribis in the Delta; to the German Institute, whose Director, Dr. Stock, plans to start work at Amada in Nubia, later in the season; to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, which will continue the Epigraphic Survey at Medinet Habu, as well as its excavation, conducted jointly with the Department of Antiquities, of the tomb of Kheref.

Professor Donadoni of the University of Milan has just returned to Cairo after spending a fortnight in Nubia. He and his architect were investigating and surveying the site of Ikhmind, a fortified town of the Byzantine period, which lies just south of the temple of Maharaqqa on the west bank of the Nile. They mapped out the fortress, churches, vaulted buildings, and a curious covered street. Several important inscriptions were found. Professor Donadoni hopes to continue work next year, both at Ikhmind and at Maharaqqa.

One of the late dynastic tombs found last year at Matarieh (see Newsletter Number 29) has yielded, among other objects, an anthropoid sarcophagus of white limestone, the exterior of which is decorated with figures and inscriptions in low relief. The workmanship is excellent. At the head and foot of the sarcophagus are the name and titles of the deceased and along each side is a procession of mummified figures--the judges of the dead. The lid, broken into several pieces, presents a series of gods being adored by the deceased. It is now being reassembled in the laboratory of the Cairo Museum, and the sarcophagus will be placed on display there after restoration.

The German House at Qurna village, under sequestration since the Second World War, has now been returned to the German Institute, and Dr. Hornung, a young member of the Institute's staff, will soon take charge there.

On September 26 was celebrated one of the most colorful festivals of the Muslim calendar, the Mulid el-Nabi, the anniversary of the birth-day of the Prophet Mohammed. In former years, the center of festivities was the section around the Muski and al-Azhar University. This year, however, the celebration was transported to the Kubri Gardens on the southern tip of Gezireh Island. There booths hung with embroidered tapestries were set up, to which the people came to sip coffee, to greet their friends, to listen to readings from the Koran, chanting in response. Restaurants and cafés set their tables under the banyan trees, and the whole park was made as bright as day with festoons of colored lights. Vendors of sugar dolls gaudily dressed in crêpe paper and tinsel threaded their way through the crowds, their wares balanced precariously on their heads. A band blasted out military music, and everyone laughed and shouted, enjoying the holiday to the full.

Sincerely,

Helen K. Wall

Cairo, Egypt  
November 13, 1958

Dear Members:

The first excursion for local members of the Center was planned for last Sunday. A schedule of Sunday morning visits to monuments for November and December had been printed in the Embassy Bulletin during the week, but so far as we could find out in advance, everyone seemed to be engaged elsewhere for that day. I decided accordingly, at the last moment to postpone the trip, but nevertheless I went to the appointed rendezvous at Giza, just in case someone should turn up. To my surprise, six persons were waiting there. Since they were all newcomers, we started out by examining the interior of the Great Pyramid. Then, with the kind help of Mohammed Abd el-Magoud, the chief ghafir of the Giza region, we visited two of the best preserved tombs of the Giza necropolis. The first was that of Queen Meresankh III, granddaughter of Cheops, excavated by Reisner, which lies among the great mastabas in the Eastern cemetery, the second, the small tomb of Idw, a royal scribe of the time of Pepi II, situated just east of the Cheops pyramid, near the boat-pit which adjoins the causeway.

Both tombs are decorated with statues of the deceased and with painted reliefs, the colors of which are still remarkably bright and clear. One of the scenes in Meresankh's tomb has received considerable notoriety, because the queen is there shown with her mother, whose hair is painted a bright golden yellow. This has given rise to the theory that the mother was a foreigner, perhaps of Libyan origin, but it is possible that she is simply wearing a yellow headcovering. The false door in the tomb of Idw is curious, in that Idw is shown at the bottom of it, as if emerging from his burial chamber, which lies behind and below. His body is visible only from the waist up, and he stretches out his hands toward an offering table placed in front of him ready to receive the offerings brought to him by his friends and relatives.

Visitors arriving in Cairo by train these days will be surprised to find that the central railway station has had its face lifted. After the colossus of Ramses II was erected in the station square, it was found that the Arabic-style facade of the station did not provide a harmonious background for the statue of the great Pharaoh. So the old red-and-yellow striped facade has now disappeared under a uniform revetment of white stone and the arabesque-decorated windows have been removed and replaced by plain rectangular frames. The square has taken on a new and quite different appearance.

The UNESCO-sponsored Egyptian Documentation Center, which was housed for the past year and a half in the buildings of the French Institute, has moved into its new quarters, directly behind the Museum and next to the Anglican Church. It is said that in the near future the French Institute, which has been under sequestration for the past two years, will be returned to the French Government.

In the framework of the Documentation Center's activities, UNESCO last month sent Doctor Cesare Brandi, Italian expert in the preservation and restoration of ancient monuments, to Cairo to consult with authorities in the Department of Antiquities about applying methods developed in Italy to Egyptian monuments. Dr. Brandi was particularly requested to examine certain painted tombs in the Theban necropolis, among others that of Queen Nofretari (see Newsletter No. 27), which are in a dangerous condition owing to saline exudations which tend to separate the painted surfaces from the stone and thus destroy them. According to Dr. Brandi's preliminary report, it will be possible to save the paintings in the tomb of Nofretari, which present the most urgent problem.

Dr. Brandi's voyage up the Nile took him as far as Abu Simbel, and on the way he visited, among other sites, the temple of Wadi es-Sebua and the small chapel of Horemheb at Abu Hoda. Both of these buildings were used in the early centuries of our era as Coptic churches. At that period, the original reliefs were covered with a coat of plaster and painted with biblical subjects. Since these paintings are extremely interesting documents of Coptic art, it is highly desirable that they be preserved. On the other hand, a thorough study of the temples requires that the paintings be removed so that the inscriptions under them may be recorded. The problem is how to remove the paintings, which are not true fresco but simply tempora on plaster, without harming them. Dr. Brandi hopes to be able to determine some method of accomplishing this end.

Speaking of Coptic paintings, I had the opportunity last Spring of seeing some of the most interesting and best preserved that Egypt can boast. These are in a little church belonging to the famous monastery of St. Anthony, which lies in the desert between the Nile and the Red Sea. According to legend, the monastery was founded by St. Anthony himself, although in all probability it was built considerably after his time. Its position in the midst of the completely arid wastes of the Eastern Desert was determined by the presence on the spot of a tiny spring flowing out of the mountain against which the monastery is built. Although the spring gives forth only a trickle of water, it suffices for the needs of the small community of monks, who by careful husbandry manage to cultivate

several feddans of land with tomatoes, onions, dates, figs, and even grapes. The buildings and gardens are surrounded by a high wall, which effectively isolates them from the outside world. Visitors arriving before the great door have to pull a bell-string attached to a large gong and wait for the monks to determine who they are, where they come from, and what their business is. Once assured that the strangers are neither thieves nor brigands, the monks open the massive gates and bid them enter. The gates are a fairly recent development. Fifty or a hundred years ago, the only entrance was through a trap-door in the floor of an overhanging tower of the girdle wall, through which visitors as well as all supplies coming from the outside world were hoisted.

The monks are very hospitable and welcome travellers to stay over night in their guest-room. But the visitors must bring their supplies with them. The monks themselves live frugally, mainly on bread and water, supplemented by fruits and vegetables from their garden, which is barely able to supply their needs.

The great glory of the monastery is the Church of St. Anthony, the interior of which is entirely covered with frescoes, some of them from as far back as the 11th century or even earlier. There is a long procession of saints on horseback, a representation of Christ enthroned, surrounded by angels, and a delightful scene of Nebuchadnezzar in his palace with his warriors about him. Owing to the isolated position of the monastery and the difficulty of access, these paintings have never been adequately studied and recorded. A certain amount of material concerning the monastery was gathered by the late Professor Thomas Whittemore, founder of the Byzantine Institute, but it unfortunately was still unpublished at the time of his death. The library, which contains a number of ancient Coptic manuscripts, should also be investigated.

During the past summer, Dr. Ramses Wassef, whose experimental weaving school may be known to some of the Center's members, held an exhibition of tapestries made by the children of the school in Basel, Switzerland, which was a great success. For those who have not heard of the school, I may explain it briefly. Dr. Wassef constructed a number of pleasant ateliers in a garden on the desert road near the pyramids of Giza. To these he invites boys and girls of the neighborhood between the ages of seven and fifteen, provides them with looms such as are used in the villages and with wool, and sets them to weaving tapestries, following their own designs. They are instructed in the technique of weaving, but are left completely free to use their imaginations when it comes to choice of subject, composition, and the combination of colors. Each child thus produces a highly individual work, and some of the results are extraordinarily interesting and beautiful. This is an experiment in the fostering of native handicrafts that might be well worth duplicating in other parts of the country.

Sincerely,

Helen K. Wall



Letters from Dr. John A. Williams

Dr. Williams suffered a serious illness immediately upon his arrival in Egypt around the middle of September. We are happy to report, however, that he is completely re-established. We are publishing here a report from Tunisia, which arrived too late to be included with his other reports from North Africa in Newsletter No. 31, together with some notes recently received from Cairo.

Susa, September 10, 1958

Dear Members:

One of the first things that strikes the visitor to Tunisia is that it is a friendly country. This is borne out by many spontaneous and thoughtful courteous acts on the part of the people, by the attitude of the children, who are too young to dissimulate but reflect what they have learned from their elders, and, to some extent, by the tenor of the Arabic-language press. Compared with Morocco, Tunisia is a poor country (despite poverty, there is a curious lack of venality here) and this has meant that the colons, also poorer, live on closer terms with the Tunisians than do the European settlers in other North African countries. Tunisia, moreover, has had a generation's start on Morocco in managing its own affairs. It has an adequate police force and bureaucracy and, in general, the cultural level of the country compares favorably with that of the Eastern Arab States.

The country is eager to modernize and this, as always, means some danger to the monuments of past generations. In the past month, for instance, the Qasbah of Tunis has simply disappeared. Bulldozers, like giant scarabs, crawl about the site, which will be used for modern government buildings. Large portions of the city walls have been leveled, which date back as far as the Hafsids, another of the dynasties that grew up, like the Nasrids of Granada and the Merinids of Fes, in the ruins of the Almohad Caliphate in the 13th century. The Hafsids belonged to the pure Almohad doctrine and broke with their masters in Marrakesh even before their fall, accusing them of laxness and Andalusian innovations, in spite of the fact that the Hafsid court at Tunis was largely made up of Andalusians, cultured refugees. The Hafsids also claimed to be the true Caliphs of the West until the end of the Middle Ages. It is unfortunate that few of their foundations have survived, especially since the petty dynasties of the 14th century produced some of the most beautiful monuments of any period.

A fairly typical story, in regard to modernization, is that of the Hafsid aqueduct in Tunis -- a fine long structure built partly with Roman-hewn stones, for the vast Roman ruins of Tunisia have served as quarries for the entire Islamic period. The Department of Antiquities requested some \$2,250 to repair the aqueduct, but was refused. Later, an inspector found a crew systematically destroying it.

He went to President Bourguiba and secured a presidential order halting the demolition. It turned out that the Ministry of Works had set aside several times as much to destroy the solidly built structure as had been asked for its restoration.

This story was told to me with sorrow and indignation, and I heard it with real pleasure, for the point of it is that Tunisia has a Department of Antiquities that is alert to save the country's most valuable monuments as well as a head of state who is willing to lend the Department his authority. One wonders who will act comparably in Morocco when the modernizers really get to work, as they will in a very short time.

It must be remembered that Islamic monuments are particularly vulnerable today, when all Muslim countries, laudably enough, are acting to bring to their people the amenities of contemporary city life. One thinks immediately of the current wholesale destruction of Old Istanbul. The monuments are usually situated in old towns, often in areas that have become slums or along twisted lanes that do not yield to modern traffic, or in cemeteries surrounding old centers, into which new suburbs of villas and business districts are expanding.

The President of the National Institute of Archaeology and Art, which corresponds to the Egyptian Department of Antiquities, is the revered elder scholar, Dr. Hussein 'Abd al-Wahab, and the chief inspector is the competent Mr. Mustafa Zbiss, also well-known to Orientalists. One feels that the protection of Tunisia's monuments, in a period which naturally exposes them to much danger, is in as capable hands as could be found.

One great disappointment faces the Western Orientalist in Tunisia: as in Morocco, he is not permitted to visit the majority of the mosques. Fortunately, the immensely important mosque of Sidi Uqba at Qairawan is an exception to the interdiction, and a considerable compensation for a great loss is found in the full files of photographs of all the places one cannot visit, which are in the custody of Mr. Zbiss. One still chafes, however, under a ruling so unnecessary, for it is not, as the local 'Ulema pretend, according to the Maliki law school, since in other Maliki areas the question never arises. In fact, as an Azharite scholar in Cairo said, when I told him of this North African restriction, "It has nothing to do with Islam. Even the Prophet used to receive non-Muslims in the courtyard of his house, which was the mosque of the Muslims at Medina, and besides, all the Sunnis here in the East agree that there is nothing wrong with People of the Book visiting a mosque if they respect the sanctity of the place -- the only exceptions are the Haramayn in the Hijaz." A noted Tunisian scholar commented, in reply to my questioning, "It is just fanaticism. I believe it stems from the days of imperialism, when the Muslims wanted to feel that there was at least one place where they were not answerable to or under the surveillance of foreigners, but there is no good reason for it now except that it has become a habit."

One is not too surprised to find such a state of affairs in Morocco, which is noted for its attachment to the past, but I have a feeling that if a number of Orientalists were to address themselves to the enlightened

and cosmopolitan President of the Tunisian Republic, some relaxation of the rule might be found, if not for tourists, at least for accredited specialists, whose respect for the mosques would be assured. It might be possible to permit such persons to visit the important sites between the dawn and the noontime prayers, when there are rarely any worshippers in the sacred edifices. I expect myself to address a letter to His Excellency advancing the pertinent arguments and I hope that other specialists may feel inclined to follow my example in this matter.

There are of course important monuments to be seen in Tunisia, aside from the mosques, and the Institute overwhelms one with courtesies -- letters and telephone calls to all parts of the country -- when it comes to visiting them. First of all, historically, come the Punic remains, especially interesting for their old Semitic iconography. Then come the late Roman and early Christian remains, in which Tunisia is especially rich. These are important, among other things, for such questions as the origins of arabesque and other elements of Islamic ornament. From the beginning of the Muslim period come the two earliest ribats (monasteries), that of Monastir, dating from the 8th century, though much altered in later additions, and that of Susa, from the 9th century, apparently modelled on the ribat of Monastir but better preserved.

For Carthaginian and Roman antiquities there is the splendid Bardo Museum in the old palace of the Beys. This is perhaps the most important museum in North Africa. In addition to it, Tunisia boasts a number of smaller museums in lesser towns and in connection with important sites. The Institute for Archaeology and Art is now situated in a fine old Tunisian town-palace of the 18th century, in the lower story of which an excellent Islamic collection will soon be housed. A smaller Islamic museum is to be installed in the venerable ribat of Susa. Monastir already has a good museum, housed in the oratory of the ribat, which consists almost entirely of the private collection of Dr. 'Abd al-Wahab, which he has presented to the Tunisian people in memory of President Bourguiba's father, a leading citizen of Monastir.

Sections of the city walls of Susa go back to Aghlabid times and are thus among the earliest Islamic city walls in existence; they can be dated to 859, some thirty-eight years after the fortified ribat was constructed.

Of considerable importance are the ruins of Mahdia, the capitol of the Fatimids in North Africa before they succeeded in taking Cairo. The site of the Western Palace, built originally for the son of 'Ubayallah the Mahdi, is in process of excavation by the Institute and has yielded a number of small objects. The excavations will continue as convenience and funds permit. The site of the Eastern Palace, opposite that of Abu al-Qasim, which belonged to the Mahdi himself, is unfortunately covered by a Turkish fortress.

It should be of interest to residents of Cairo that the Tunisian scheme of two palaces with a maidan between them was used by the Fatimids in their new Egyptian capitol. The memory of this is preserved in the name of the district "Bayn al-Qasrayn" (Between the Two

Palaces) in the heart of the sugs. The site of the Western Palace in Cairo is covered by the mosque and maristan of Qala'un, with its beautiful, semi-Gothic façade.

Of greater artistic interest than the palaces is the great mosque of Mahdia. Here the traveller is permitted to go into the outer courtyard. The monumental entrance, not unlike an oriental version of a Roman triumphal arch, was something new in Islamic architecture. The entrance to the mosque of al-Hakim bi-Amr-Ilah in Cairo is rather similar and was no doubt built under the influence of the mosque of Mahdia.

But of course the major monument of all Tunisia is the mosque of Sidi 'Uqba in Qairawan. It is impossible to describe in the scope of a Newsletter a complex which presents so many important features for the study of Islamic art. Everything about it -- its minaret, its lustre tiles, the mihrab, the minbar, the maqura, the ceilings -- is of great excellence.

Aside from these major monuments, there are many minor bits of architecture to make a visit to Tunisia well worth while -- gates and houses and smaller mosques and minarets of very appealing lines and ornamentation. The ceramic decoration in Tunisia is extremely handsome and adds much to the architecture. One finds it rather regrettable that ceramic ornament was so little used in Egypt. The Tunisian tiles are rougher, however, than those of Morocco, which was earlier affected by Turkish and Western influences, and the art of ceramic mosaic, as opposed to tiles with painted designs, still found in Morocco, seems to have died very early in Tunisia.

In fact, one can say that all of Tunisian art, after the late Middle Ages, seems to lose confidence and deftness. One is at loss to explain this by anything but the Turkish domination, which introduced wholly alien influences. That domination, however, did not have the same effect in Morocco. There, while there was a certain loss of technique and an almost complete loss of native originality, Arab art seems to have continued with considerable elegance and decorative value down to the 20th century.

Sincerely,

John A. Williams

Cairo, November 18, 1958

Dear Members:

Owing to my temporary indisposition, I have been able to collect very little archaeological news since my return to Egypt. What I can offer here are only a few items of general interest.

Mr. Herbert Madison, an old friend of the Center, known to many past directors and members, who has been Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer at our Embassy for the past five years, has recently left Cairo to take up his post as Chief Cultural Affairs Officer of our Embassy in Ghana. He will be replaced by Mr. Claude Colvin, who was in Egypt as an exchange professor from 1953 to 1955. Mr. Colvin will arrive in Cairo in January.

A recent visitor in Cairo was Dr. Daniel Van der Meulen, a well-known Dutch orientalist and former Dutch minister to Saudi Arabia. He is known for his explorations of South Arabia and the Hadramaut and for his books on the Peninsula. He is returning to Saudi Arabia for a visit. Currently here is Mr. Richard A. Debs, on a joint grant from Harvard Law School and the Princeton Oriental Studies Program for research in Egyptian property law.

Professor Creswell's fourth major work, following his two tomes on early Islamic architecture and a third on Fatimid architecture, is nearing completion. It will carry the reader through the Ayyubid period and until 1326 in the Bahri Mameluke period. This is more than half-way through the third reign of Sultan Nasir Muhammad, son of Qalawun, who died in 1340. Professor Creswell explains that to have continued to the end of the reign was impracticable because of the added size and weight doing so would have imposed upon the volume with its many plates and illustrations.

A recent Presidential Decree concerning free (non-government) schools may be of interest to Members of the Center. The American University is, incidentally, exempted from this ruling.

This decree provides that no free school may be established or enlarged without prior authorization of the Ministry of Education. Article 3 provides that its equipment be of suitable quality and inspected by the Ministry and that the school be far from public, industrial, and commercial establishments and other places (to be designated by the Minister of Education) which may be counter to the educational objectives of the school. Article 4 stipulates, among other requirements, that the owners must be citizens of the United Arab Republic or Arabs accredited by the Ministry. If the owner is a juristic personality it must have a designee conforming to these and the other required standards. Article 5 requires that if owners fail to comply with these standards the school must be transferred to one complying. Article 7 stipulates that all headmasters and principals must be of these standards. All persons imparting knowledge or doing any work of teaching, supervision, discipline, or administration, must fulfill these standards and have the necessary qualifications for his post, to be designated by the Minister. However, the Ministry may grant authorizations to foreigners for teaching foreign languages.

There are many other provisions concerning the physical plant, standards expected of all pupils, whether of UAR nationality, other Arabs, or resident foreigners, who must pass the Government standards

in religion (each in his own religion), Arabic, Arabic history and geography, and Arabic civil and social institutions. But it is primarily the condition that foreigners will be allowed to teach only foreign languages which is of interest here. It might be relatively simple to find headmasters who comply with the stipulations of the decree, but it is difficult to see how the foreign religious orders, for instance, can continue to maintain their schools at all, for the difficulty of securing enough qualified citizens of the UAR or other Arab countries who can meet all the requirements of the government and those of the schools as well will be almost insuperable. However, the decree is not dated nor followed by the usual sentence indicating when it will become effective, so it is therefore not yet effective law. If and when it becomes so, it will have far-reaching consequences for foreign educational and cultural efforts throughout the United Arab Republic.

The following Arabic books, recently published or to be published this month, may be of interest to the Orientalists of our membership:

Al-Muhkam fi-l-Lugha, of Ibn Sida al-Andalusi, ed. by Prof. Mustafa Saqa and Dr. Hussein Nassar and published by Mustafa al-Halabi Press.

Diwan al-Sharif al-Murtada, ed. by Rahid as-Saffar, an Iraqi scholar, and published by Aissa al-Halabi. Two volumes have appeared and the third is about to be issued.

Diwan al-Sharif al-'Aqil, a Fatimid work ed. by Dr. Zaki al-Muhasimi and published by Aissa al-Halabi.

The Revue of the Cultural Section of the Arab League, published from time to time, lists Arabic texts edited or revised throughout the Arab world.

Sincerely,

John Alden Williams.

Important notice. Members who wish information from the Fellows of the Center now in Egypt should address them as follows:

Dr. Helen Wall  
Morland House  
16 Sharia el Sheikh Barahat  
Kasr el Doubara  
Cairo, Egypt  
U. A. R.

Dr. John Alden Williams  
C/o American University  
Sharia Kasr el-Aini  
Cairo, Egypt  
U. A. R.

Other Archaeological Notes

A letter from Dr. Jozef Janssen reports that he has returned to Soleb, Nubia, as epigraphist for the expedition of the University of Pisa (see Newsletters No. 26 and 29).

Professor Emery is continuing his excavation in Buhen, Nubia, during the present season. Chiefly owing to the difficulty of procuring trained workmen, he does not plan to go below the New Kingdom level.

An item in Le Figaro (Paris) under date of September 16, announces on the authority of the Egyptian newspaper Al Ahram that "the largest archaeological museum in the world" will be built on the site of the present Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo and the adjacent gardens. The contract for the new structure, which will cost in the neighborhood of a million Egyptian pounds and will take three years to build, will be submitted for international bids. The article adds that a delegation of Egyptian archaeologists will soon visit world-capitals to study modern museum techniques.

Publications by Members of the Center

Calverley, Eleanor T. My Arabian Days and Nights. A Medical Missionary in Old Kuwait, 1958.

Dr. Calverley was one of the first woman doctors to go to Arabia from America. She lived for eighteen years in Kuwait and then, twenty-five years after she left there, she and her husband, the Rev. Dr. Edwin E. Calverley, returned in 1955 to visit a once familiar country, which they found vastly changed because of new-found oil wealth. Her book describes both her earlier experiences and her recent visit.

Hayes, William C. "Varia from the Time of Hatshepsut," in Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo, Bd. 15, 1957, pp. 78-90, plates (Festschrift Junker).

Unfortunately, lack of space prevents our giving more than the titles of these "Varia," each of which contains matters of historical and archaeological interest, presented with Dr. Hayes' usual charm and clarity. The titles are as follows: 1. Dated Inscriptions of "Regnal Year 7"; 2. Sennemut Behind the Doors at Deir el Bahri; 3. Sennemut Presents a Sistrum to Mût; 4. The Naville Statuette of Sennemut; 5. An Administrative Letter to Thuty.

Jesi, Furio. La ceramica egizia dalle origini al termine dell'età tinita, Torino, Editrice S. A. I. E., 1957, 259 pp., illus., plates.

This monograph, by a learned Italian member of the Center, discusses prehistoric Egyptian ceramics, presenting a number of unusual and hitherto unpublished pieces. Dr. Jesi is editor of the Archives internationales de l'ethnographie et de la Préhistoire, an annual publication, the first volume of which has just appeared (1958). This volume contains two articles on Egyptian archaeology.

Parker, Richard A. "The Length of the Reign of Amasis and the Beginning of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty," in Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo, Bd. 15, 1957, pp. 208-212 (Festschrift Junker).

This article, based on recent evidence, offers a revised table of reigns for the XXVIth Dynasty.

Scott, Nora E. "The Cat of Bastet," in The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, Summer, 1958, pp. 1-7.

This handsomely illustrated article describes a life-size bronze cat recently acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and offers fascinating lore about cats in ancient Egypt and the cat-goddess Bastet and her city, which should appeal greatly to those interested in Egyptian civilization as well as to those interested simply in cats.

Smith, William Stevenson. "The Judge Goes Fishing," in Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, v. LVI, no. 304, 1958, pp. 56-62, illus., including color plate on cover.

Here is a lively account of fishing scenes in the Old Kingdom, as illustrated by reliefs in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. As is most of Dr. Smith's work, this article is related to the stylistic development of art in Egypt and thus represents more than the passing interest the title might seem to indicate.

Smith, William Stevenson. "A Painting in the Assiut Tomb of Hepzefa," in Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo, Bd. 15, 1957, pp. 221-224 (Festschrift Junker).

A description and drawing of a charming pastoral scene of fine quality, now largely obscured, but presenting unusual features which indicate a school of superlatively excellent craftsmen flourishing at Assiut in the reign of Sesostris I.



AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT, INC.

ANNUAL MEETING, November 18, 1958

The Annual Meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt was called to order in the Study Room of the Egyptian Department of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, on November 18, 1958, at half-past two in the afternoon. The President, Mr. Edward W. Forbes, was in the Chair and 134 members were present, in person or by proxy.

The minutes of the previous meeting were presented by the Executive Secretary, and it was unanimously voted to accept them without reading.

The next item on the agenda was the report of the Treasurer, Mr. Dows Dunham, which was accepted by unanimous vote. This report, together with a summary, here follows:

SUMMARY OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

October 1, 1957 through September 30, 1958

REGULAR ACCOUNT

Balance in Bank, September 30, 1957 (not including Bollingen Fund)  
\$1,351.88

Receipts:

|                              |                            |                 |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Dues -----                   | \$ 1,644.50                |                 |
| General Electric Dividend -- | 40.00                      |                 |
| Gifts -----                  | <u>1,743.55</u> +\$10,000* | <u>3,428.05</u> |
| Total Receipts-----          |                            | \$4,779.93      |

\*Gift of 385 shares of stock when sold amounted to \$11,533.55; \$10,000; transferred to Custodian Account and \$1,533.55 put in regular account. See itemized list of receipts.

Expenses:

|                                                              |              |                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Honorarium, Director in Egypt -----                          | \$ 445.00    |                   |
| Honorarium, Executive Secretary -----                        | 650.--       |                   |
| Honorarium, Assistant Treasurer ----                         | 225.00       |                   |
| Newsletters -----                                            | 350.04       |                   |
| Station ry, Office Supplies and<br>Incidental Expenses ----- | 152.21       |                   |
| Postage, Telephone and Petty Cash ----                       | 43.63        |                   |
| Expenses of Meeting and Filing Fee ---                       | <u>83.54</u> |                   |
| Total Expenses -----                                         |              | <u>\$1,949.42</u> |

Balance in Bank, September 30, 1958  
\$2,830.51

BOLLINGEN FOUNDATION GRANT

|                                                       |                    |             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Balance in Bank, September 30, 1957 -----             |                    |             | \$ 8,000.00 |
| October 8, 1957                                       | Williams -----     | \$ 2,000.00 |             |
| November 18, 1957                                     | Wente -----        | 1,000.00    |             |
| December 13, 1957                                     | Williams -----     | 1,000.00    |             |
| April 2, 1958                                         | Wente -----        | 2,000.00    |             |
| April 7, 1958                                         | Williams -----     | 2,000.00    |             |
|                                                       |                    |             | <hr/>       |
| September 30, 1958, Grant received for year 1958-1959 |                    |             | \$10,000.00 |
| September 30, 1958                                    | Williams -----     | \$ 500.00   |             |
| September 30, 1958                                    | Mrs. Helen Wall -- | 500.00      |             |
|                                                       |                    |             | <hr/>       |
|                                                       |                    |             | 1,000.00    |
| Balance in Bank, September 30, 1958 -----             |                    |             | \$ 9,000.00 |

CAIRO ACCOUNT

LE 11.91 withdrawn from National Bank of Egypt closing out Egyptian account, March, 1958. Proceeds used as petty cash by Director in Egypt (about \$30.00).

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CUSTODIAN ACCOUNT

July 29, 1958 -- Opened Custodian Account with 2nd Bank State Street Trust Co. with \$10,000.00 out of Anonymous Gift of 385 shares of stock (see Gifts under receipts) ----- \$10,000.00

Invested by Second Bank-State Street Trust Co. as follows:

August 21, 1958 10 shs. American Tel. & Tel. Cap. at 182 1/2  
15 shs. Consolidated Edison of N. Y. at 102 1/4  
30 shs. Tri-continental Corp. \$2.70 Cum. Pfd. at 53 3/4.

September 17, 1958  
15 shs. Insurance Co. of No. America Cap. at 106 1/2  
100 shs. Lehman Corp. Cap. at 29 1/2 G. T. C.

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Note: Since October 1, we have received a further gift of \$10,000.00 from Mr. and Mrs. John Dimick, which has been placed in the regular account pending decision by the Executive Committee as to its disposal.

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Following this report, the membership unanimously voted that the Executive Secretary write to the anonymous donor of a gift of \$10,000, to Mr. and Mrs. Dimick for their gift in an equal amount, and to Mr. Robert Baldwin of the Second Bank - State Street Trust Company, Boston, for his kind offer to handle the investment of this sum without compensation, expressing the thanks of the Center for their generosity.

The Membership Secretary, Professor Richard A. Parker, next submitted the following report, which was accepted by unanimous vote.

REPORT OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER  
IN EGYPT

For the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 1958

During the last year we lost two members by death, nine who resigned, and forty-eight who permitted their membership to lapse. Eighteen new members were admitted. This is a net loss of forty-one in membership.

Our present total of 206 members is divided as follows:

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Regular Members      | 146 |
| Contributing Members | 41  |
| Sustaining Members   | 8   |
| Associates           | 5   |
| Fellow               | --  |
| Life Members         | 6   |

signed: Richard A. Parker  
Membership Secretary

Following this report, the President requested a minute of silence as a memorial to the members who had died during the year: Mr. Lyneham Crocker, a regular and contributing member since 1951, and Professor David M. Robinson, a regular member since 1950.

In commenting on his report, Professor Parker pointed out that the decline in membership was due chiefly to the failure of renewal by members in Cairo attached to the U. S. Government there, who, upon transfer out of Egypt, allowed their memberships to lapse, usually without notification to the Center. Professor Parker suggested that, while two years were usually allowed to pass before dropping members for non-payment of dues, some other arrangement should be made concerning the members temporarily resident in Cairo, on account of the expense involved in sending Newsletters via foreign mail. Mr. Dimick suggested that a final notification be sent to such members three months after their membership had expired, and that they should be dropped within a reasonable time after the sending of such notice.

The next item on the agenda was the report (see p. 16) of the President, which was unanimously approved.

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following officers were nominated, and the Executive Secretary was authorized by the meeting to cast one ballot for their election:

|                       |                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| President:            | Mr. Edward W. Forbes                                                                             |
| Vice-Presidents:      | Hon. William Phillips<br>Mr. Frederick Foster<br>Hon. Robert Woods Bliss<br>Prof. John A. Wilson |
| Treasurer:            | Mr. Dows Dunham                                                                                  |
| Assistant Treasurer:  | Miss Mary B. Cairns                                                                              |
| Membership Secretary: | Prof. Richard A. Parker                                                                          |
| Executive Secretary:  | Mrs. Elizabeth Riefstahl                                                                         |

The Executive Secretary was also authorized to cast one ballot for the election of the Executive Committee, as follows:

Mr. Edward W. Forbes, Chairman, ex-officio  
Mr. John D. Cooney  
Mr. Dows Dunham  
Mr. Frederick Foster  
Prof. Richard A. Parker  
Hon. William Phillips  
Mr. Ashton Sanborn

The meeting voted to express its regret to Mrs. Joseph Lindon Smith, who has been such a valued member of the Executive Committee since the inception of the Center and who indeed was largely instrumental in the Center's foundation, that she no longer feels able to take an active part in the Center's work, and unanimously approved a motion that she be retained as an Honorary Member of the Committee, to receive all reports and to attend such meetings as she is able to attend.

The Executive Secretary was authorized to cast one ballot for the re-election of the following Trustees whose term expires November 30, 1958, to serve until November 30, 1963, and for the election with this group of Mr. Bernard V. Bothmer, who has served the Center with distinction, first as Executive Secretary and Assistant Treasurer, and subsequently for two years as Director in Egypt:

#### Trustees for Term November 30, 1958-November 30, 1963

Prof. Edwin Brown Allen  
Mr. John D. Cooney  
Mr. Dows Dunham  
Dr. George C. Miles  
Mr. Bernard V. Bothmer

The meeting confirmed the appointment to the Board of Trustees of Mr. Lauriston Ward, who was appointed by the Executive Committee January 15, 1958, in accordance with the By-laws, to fill a vacancy in the group scheduled to serve until 1961.

The Executive Secretary next read the following reports received from Mr. Edward F. Wente, Director in Cairo during the season 1957-1958, and Dr. John Alden Williams, Co-Director, on their personal studies in Egypt under the Bollingen grant.

#### Report of Edward F. Wente

The chief work in which I have been engaged during my stay in Egypt has been the preparation for publication of the ostraca now in the library of M. George Michailides. This task has been undertaken in co-operation with Dr. Hans Goedicke, formerly of Brown University. There are approximately ninety ostraca in the collection, principally from Deir el Medineh. They include a high percentage of literary texts, including "The Instructions of Amenemhet," the "Book of Kemit," and hymns. A unique ostrakon offers a version of the Amun liturgy. Others deal with the daily-life affairs of the group of workmen who were employed in decorating the royal tombs at Thebes. Our work has involved the making of facsimiles and transcriptions of the hieratic texts.

In addition to this study of the ostraca, a sojourn in Luxor enabled me to add to the material I had already collected on the Ramesside population of Thebes, particularly those who were connected with the Tehban temples.

Edward F. Wente

#### Report of John Alden Williams

1. My primary activity in Egypt during this past year, as it will be in the coming year, has been not so much new researches as the acquisition of competence in a (to me) new field; the history of Islamic art and architecture. This has been of great value to me, especially since it has become almost impossible in American universities to receive training in this field, which has, moreover, been traditionally rather neglected by Western cultural historians of the Islamic East. All my work in Islamic studies, up to the present, has been heavily oriented to its historical and literary aspects. As a cultural historian, I am very much aware that buildings and artifacts are documents, clues to the inner life of civilizations, and I have profited much from the chance given me to study monuments in the field, with access to the excellent library and competent tutelage of the greatest living scholar of Muslim architecture (i. e., K. A. C. Creswell).

2. I have been able to make a good beginning of a collection of slides and other materials relevant to the history of Islamic art, in preparation for a course I shall teach on that subject at McGill University, where I

have accepted a post as Assistant Professor, to begin in the autumn of 1959. I have also begun the preparation of lectures on Islamic political and cultural history. I may add that I look upon my appointment to McGill as very largely due to the training which the Center Fellowship has afforded me.

3. I have found two hitherto unknown manuscripts of the mystical work of which my doctoral dissertation was an edition and translation, have collated them with my previous work, and will publish a definitive critical edition of the text on my return to Cairo in the Fall. I expect also to prepare the English text for publication.

4. I have been able to make a beginning on the study of Islamic epigraphy and expect to continue it during the coming season.

5. I have begun lessons in ground-plan drawing and analysis of buildings with a competent architect in Cairo.

6. I have been able to build up my library of texts in Classical Arabic, including a number of texts of historians.

John Alden Williams

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 P. M.

Elizabeth Riefstahl  
Executive Secretary.