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NEWSLETTER NUMBER NINETEEN

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S REPORT DATED SEPTEMBER 28

During the summer Dr. Simpson returned to New York, whereas I visited a number of Egyptian collections in France and England. The office was reopened early in September, and now, several weeks later, it seems to us as if we had never been absent from Egypt since last year. Once again the Nile has risen, and the muddy swift-moving waters barely seem to get through under the bridges. The crest of the flood was reached in the beginning of the month, but it will take several weeks before the inundation subsides visibly. The Cairo bridges, incidentally, are being illuminated at night by neon tubing which lines the contours of spans and girders. The new Sheppard's Hotel with its eight stories, to which the structure has now risen, already dwarfs the Semiramis in the next block, and lovely fountains have been installed on the Midan el Tahrir and the Opera Square. They incorporate sets of colored lights which change every few seconds and attract vast crowds in these pleasantly cool September evenings. The Corniche has been extended further and now follows the Nile embankment well north of the Bulaq Bridge. The palm trees on the street leading from the railroad station toward Heliopolis, once cut down by order of Farouk fearing assassination, have been replanted, and new buildings of 13 and 16 stories have sprung up all over town.

We made the customary visits and called on colleagues and old friends. Professor Abdel Moneim Abubakr and his family have left the house below the Second Pyramid at Giza and moved to the opposite side of the Nile. They now live at House 26, Road 100, Meadi, Cairo (telephone: 35767). Professor Ahmed Fakhry has transferred the fine reliefs from the valley temple of Snofru to the new museum adjoining his workroom where they are installed exactly as they had been found at Dahshur. It is a solid building with a good roof which will assure that neither wind nor weather will damage these priceless examples of early Fourth Dynasty Royal art. Dr. Iskander Badawy received a Fulbright grant for teaching and research at the Oriental Institute and by now should have arrived in Chicago.

At Giza, the northeastern part of the Western Cemetery has indeed been cleared, but a careful examination of the ground shows that nothing has to be added to Reisner's excellent map of the Cemetery En Echelon. At the northeastern end of the plateau north of the Cheops Pyramid the slope has been consolidated for the construction of a nightclub, and there is some talk that the Pyramid itself will be illuminated at night by powerful floodlights.

The site of the Cheops Boat Grave looks deserted, somewhat disfigured by the large red brick building between the pit and the base of the Pyramid which will serve as workshop and laboratory when the pit will be unsealed early in October. The Office of Public Works of the Ministry of the Interior has made a model of the Museum to be erected next to the Pyramid if and when the boat can be reconstructed from the thousands of pieces, large and small, which are piled up in the pit. Even those who proclaimed widely that this was a complete boat, and a Solar Ship at that, no longer insist very strongly on these two theories. The coming season will probably furnish a good deal of sounder information.

The second colossus of Ramesses II from Mitrahine has finally been set up in the square in front of the railroad station of Cairo. It faces southwest, thus offering a view of its right side to those who arrive by train and venture out into the square. The missing base and feet have been restored in granite, and there will be a pool in front of the statue once the area has been landscaped. Since the part between the eyes of Ramesses II and the lower part of the double crown is missing, an odd problem presented itself regarding the reconstruction of headcloth and uraeus. The lower part of the crown shows two vertical projections which run up from the break symmetrically to the right and left of the center line. They are about 4 inches wide and somewhat worn off so that their original form can only be surmised. Various theories have been put forward as to their meaning: that they are the tails of a double uraeus; the remainder of the Upper and Lower Egyptian crown resting on the head of a single uraeus; the traces of the cow horns (with sun disk) with which the Atef crown of Ramesses II had been adorned; or merely a prop to which a colossal cobra shield and head had been affixed, but none of these suggestions seemed acceptable to the Municipality which finally restored the missing headcloth without any accoutrements and placed the crown on top by means of a huge steel crane.

Earlier in the summer a plan had been discussed to transfer the only remaining obelisk of Heliopolis to Cairo; this scheme has fortunately been dropped. But the people of Qurnah will definitely be compelled to relinquish their houses in the course of the winter, and thus the Theban necropolis should be cleared of modern buildings a year from now.

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#### DELTA SITES - IV

The western part of Lower Egypt, the region which lies between the Rosetta branch of the Nile and the Libyan Desert, has a number of antiquities which can easily be visited from Alexandria. One of them is Canopus to which this writer was taken one afternoon in June by a fellow member of the Center, Mr. Lucas A. Benachi, the well known collector. One follows the highway from Alexandria northeast toward Abuqir, and about four kilometers before reaching the town there is a turnoff on the left leading to the former officers' club of the old British airbase. We drove past the club, turned left again and after about two hundred yards reached the sea which is bordered here by a fine beach, directly below the edge of the once enormous kom of Canopus. It runs from here, with many ups and downs, in a northeasterly direction, nearly to the edge of Abuqir, and only a very small sector shows any signs of

archaeological excavations. Here Breccia found some brick buildings and the remnants of a large temple of which big fluted granite column shafts and some marble capitals still remain. There are also mosaics, now gradually disintegrating, and there may have been soundings in other sectors as well, but on the whole the site makes an untouched impression, especially since it has not been attacked for sebakh. Some R.A.F. installations were cut into the hills and were again removed which gives an opportunity to study the stratigraphy of the kom with its masses of broken limestone, bits of marble and black granite, and masses of pottery of Greek times. There is much Attic and Cnidian ware among it, and Mr. Benachi picked up a few stamped Rhodian amphora handles on the surface.

The highest portion of the kom rises to about 25 feet above the large area to the southeast which was leveled many years ago to serve as an airfield. The latter as well as the kom proper are overgrown uniformly with low desert shrubbery -- a sure sign that the ground is dry, and since the area lies well above sea level it looks like a promising site for long-range excavations. Even the former airfield cannot be irrigated, and some barley grown near the former officers' club has to subsist on whatever rainfall the Mediterranean offers. The place, incidentally, is strewn with rusty barbed wire and fragments of concrete installations. It is hoped that somewhere there is a photographic and topographic record of the area which was leveled off for the airfield and once, at the then still existing mouth of the Canopic branch of the Nile, was the most important city of the northwestern Delta after Alexandria.

About one mile to the south, toward Alexandria, a find was made last year to which attention is drawn by three sentences and one illustration in the special issue of the Revue du Caire (see NL XVII, page 11). There is a fine beach belonging to the former estate of El Sultan Husein Kamil at Ma'mura which has been taken over by the Army and is now a military reservation. In leveling the grounds near the beach with a bulldozer, some large statue fragments were found which prompted the Chief Inspectorate of the Antiquities Department for Lower Egypt to initiate a small dig. It uncovered, about 6 feet below ground, or rather beach, level a limestone building, with walls and doorways complete to a height of 8 feet. The building is about 30 yards long and the only decorations are large swastikas carved into the masonry as well as into the plaster with which some of the walls are still covered. There are pieces of red Assuan granite nearby and at least one well polished bit of Imperial porphyry. The most unusual find at this rather unusual site are, however, the statue fragments which must have belonged to a group made of fine white marble-like limestone. The base, which is about 5 feet long, shows two gigantic feet in typical Pharaonic stance and, in the left rear, the feet of a female figure. The main fragment is illustrated in the Revue du Caire, fig. 40, consisting of the left lower leg of the main figure and, to its left, the statue of a lady in Hellenistic costume, with uraeus, who may be a queen or a deity. This fragment is about 6 feet high so that the complete group must have measured at least 20 feet. What the report does not mention, however, is a third fragment of this group which is lying nearby, a piece of the lower abdomen and upper right thigh of an adult male, completely naked, in very realistic modeling though still in the Egyptian tradition, for which there are no parallels so that an interpretation is difficult to find. The visit to this restricted area was kindly arranged by the Consul General in Alexandria, Mr. Donald Edgar, who himself is much interested in the antiquities of the region.

Beyond Canopus, on the beach dominated by Fort El Taufiqiya, are some strange ruins known locally as Hammam Fara'un, undoubtedly an ancient bathing establishment which, like all the land around here, has slipped into the sea. About 30 yards offshore a semicircular rock ledge rises above the water, and 'windows' had been cut into it in antiquity so as to let the water into a large stone bath house, the foundations and walls of which are now worn smooth by the waves. On the Alexandria side huge granite blocks are lying in the water, and among them is a statue base with one fairly well preserved foot which disappears every few seconds when the waves break. The beach is only a few yards wide, bordered inland by dunes which rise toward the koms of Canopus, and about 6 feet above beach level are the remains of a gigantic basin, a sort of ancient swimming pool, made of brick and mortar.

On the Abuqir side one has the impression that the shore consists of solid rock, but on closer inspection it turns out to be ancient cement in which pottery fragments are imbedded. It must have formed a magnificent staircase leading into the Mediterranean and one can still see the steps which disappear under water.

Abuqir is a sleepy little town, a middle class summer resort with many small new houses, but unpaved streets, and on the southwestern outskirts the Antiquities Department continued last year a dig undertaken many years ago by Breccia. Surrounded by modern structures on three sides, a little kom rises there, not 50 yards inland from the so-called West Beach. Just a few feet below ground a necropolis was discovered which, judging by the remains, belongs to the Graeco-Roman period. Its access was bordered by what must have been a hemicycle of life-size statues similar to the one of the Serapeum at Saqqara, but only shapeless blocks of limestone, six in all, have survived. There are several stelae, about five feet high, on which the deceased is represented in Graeco-Egyptian high relief. One of them, that of a man, is well preserved and is interesting because though draped he is uncovered and holds in his right hand the strange ornament, shaped somewhat like a string of dried figs or the end tassel of the Egyptian menat, which is also shown in the hand of the reclining old man in the Alexandria Museum (no. 3897) on a marble sarcophagus lid, also from Abuqir. Another stela, fairly low but six feet long, represents a reclining lady in high relief, the head three quarters in the ground. It is hoped that these remarkable sculptures will be removed to the Museum before they suffer further damage.

After crossing the Abuqir peninsula to the East Beach one drives along the shore on the wet sand hard by the water's edge since the high dunes reach here all the way down to the sea. Behind them lie the truck gardens and orchards of the estate of the late Prince Omar Toussoun, a scholar who contributed much to the history of the Delta and the topography of the region. After two miles one reaches the little beach house which he built between the two wars and around which he displayed the ancient monuments brought up from the bottom of the sea in this part of Abuqir Bay, sometimes as far away as 2000 yards offshore. There are fragments of granite columns, granite statue bases, the inevitable basalt sphinxes, headless, of the Graeco-Roman period, and three fine quartzite sphinxes, of which two are inscribed for Nectanebo I of Dynasty XXX. A marble block, about 5 feet in height, shows the seated figure of a lady in Hellenistic relief, and viewing this strange assembly on

the beach one is not surprised to learn that divers with aqualungs on fishing expeditions in the bay often report having seen masses of architectural elements and numerous statues at the bottom of the sea. Granite and marble seem to suffer little from exposure to salt water, and even the quartzite sphinxes show little damage beyond ordinary breakage. The latter were probably brought to Alexandria from Heliopolis; there is a fine quartzite sphinx of Ramesses II in the southwestern sector of Abuqir which comes from there, and several quartzite sphinxes of Dynasty XXVI in the Alexandria Museum bear inscriptions which indicate that they were originally dedicated in the temple of Heliopolis. Also the basalt slabs decorated for kings of Dynasty XXVI and XXX, which found their way from Alexandria to London, Bologna, and Vienna (erroneously called intercolumnar slabs), bear inscriptions which show that they once formed the enclosure of a naos at Heliopolis before their transfer to the Ptolemaic capital.

On this trip to Abuqir the courteous guide was Mr. Ahmed El Taher Mohammad, the Antiquities Department's Inspector of the Western Delta and Western Desert. He has a vast region to supervise within the area Alexandria-Rosetta-Khatatba (south of Kom Abu Billo)-Siwa Oasis-Zawiet Umm el Rakham (west of Mersa Matrouh)-Alexandria. He has 19 ghafirs under him; the chief ghafir is Dahshur, one of Reisner's men and, like all good Quftis, from El Qella. Several of the ghafirs have to guard more than one site, and it is interesting to note which places west of the Rosetta Branch of the Nile the Antiquities Department considers important enough to warrant such guard. They are Kom Abu Billo, Kom el Hisn, Kom Ferin, Kom Kertas, Kom el Barnughy, Kom Sawan, Kom Barsiq, Kom el Hammam, Kom Truga, Kom el Ahmar (Mahmudiya Province), Abuqir, Abusir, Abu Mena, Mersa Matrouh, Zawiet Umm el Rakham, and Siwa. Storerooms of this Inspectorate are at Alexandria, Abuqir, Abusir, Abu Mena, Kom Ferin, and Kom el Hisn. The office of Mr. El Taher is at no. 13, sharia Shohadaa, Alexandria.

Before the middle of June, Mr. Labib Habachi reopened his dig at Zawiet Umm el Rakham. Considering the importance of this newly discovered temple fortress of Ramesses II near the Libyan border, on which he published a report in the aforementioned issue of La Revue du Caire (pp. 62 ff.), there is much to be expected from Mr. Habachi's excavations this season.

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#### EXCAVATIONS AT MITRAHINE 1955

The idea for a joint archaeological operation in the vicinity of Mitrahine was conceived by The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania. The plan was guided to its fulfillment by Rudolf Anthes, Professor of Egyptology at the University. After conferring with the Director and certain members of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities, Professor Anthes developed an agreement with that body under which the work was carried on. Work commenced February 15th and closed as scheduled April 22nd. The University personnel consisted of myself as Project Director and mapper, Professor Anthes as Field Leader and Chief Egyptologist, Dr. Henry G. Fischer, assistant to Professor Anthes, and Mr. Jean Jacquet, expert in architectural research. The Egyptian Dept. of Antiquities was represented by Dr. H.S.K. Bakry, an able assistant to Professor Anthes and a scholar in inscriptions and artifacts.

For a factual accounting of the work accomplished and its results I quote the communication of Professor Anthes to the Egyptian Department of Antiquities after the close of operations:

COMMUNIQUE CONCERNING THE EXCAVATION AT MITRAHINE

February 15th to April 22nd, 1955

"The excavation was conducted by the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, in cooperation with the Egyptian Department of Antiquities. The staff consisted of the archaeologists Dr. Rudolf Anthes, the leader in the field, Dr. H.S.K. Bakry and Dr. Henry G. Fischer, and Mr. Jean Jacquet, the expert in architectural research. On the American part, Mr. John Dimick attended the work as a project director and surveyor, while the enterprise was most valuably supported by the officials of the Department of Antiquities. There was a maximum of 54 workers in the field, including 17 special workers from Qift.

"The area of Memphis was chosen for the joint excavation because, on the one hand, the exploration of this site, the ancient capital of Egypt, is of particular archaeological interest since almost nothing is known of it; while on the other hand, the examination of this site is of practical interest, as it is situated in the cultivated land.

"The site of the dig lies about 300 meters to the south and east of the village of Mitrahine. Several monuments had been uncovered there previously by the Department of Antiquities, including (from the west towards the east) tombs of about the ninth century B.C., two buildings of Ramses II, and (from the east towards the north) a chapel of Sety I and the embalming house of the Apis bulls (sixth century B.C.). The question how these buildings were related to one another was the more interesting as this area was thought to be situated at about the southwest corner of the precinct of the great temple of Ptah, the enclosure wall of which was traced by Petrie forty years ago.

"The main points of the excavation were as follows:

- (1) The discovery of the enclosure wall of the precinct of the main temple of Ptah. It is more than eleven meters wide, but its original height is not preserved. Both the southwest corner of this wall and the adjoining section of its south face were uncovered, and a cut was made through the wall.
- (2) The colonnade (or hypostyle hall) in front of the sanctuary of Ramses II was uncovered; brick structures, which were in it and to the south of it in a four meter high sequence of levels, were excavated; they included dwelling places and an intact tomb with some fine gold jewelry.
- (3) The eastern building of Ramses II proved to be the northern section of a gate leading from the east to the west; the southern section of this gate was discovered.

Smaller investigations included:

- (4) Some foundations of the Apis embalming house;
- (5) A trial trench between the main area of excavation and the colossus of Ramses II;
- (6) Work on a general survey of the area of Memphis.

"The development of the area covered by the excavation appears presently as follows: around 1270 B.C. Ramses II built a temple about 200 meters to the south of the main temple of Ptah; it faced east with its front consisting of a pylon-like gate and its rear of a colonnade or hypostyle hall, pillar hall, and three chapels. It was dedicated to Ptah, with whom two other deities, apparently Sokaris and Sakhmet, were worshipped. This temple was still in use, or renovated, under Sety II about 1200 B.C. To the south of the colonnade, or hypostyle hall, dwelling places grew up, and tombs adjoined the temple sometime during the first centuries after 1000 B.C. The temple was no longer in use, however, when the enclosure wall of the area of the main temple of Ptah was built, probably in the first half of the first millennium B.C. The southwest corner of this wall adjoined the Ramses temple and consequently the wall cut those sections of colonnade and gate which protruded to the north. Then the brick buildings extended from the south into the area of the deserted temple and gradually overgrew it. The period between Ramses II and the latest structures in this area was hardly longer, and probably shorter, than one millennium.

"Among the finds the tomb with jewelry should be especially mentioned. It was built of masonry, in the shape and size of a sarcophagus. The deceased, apparently an old man, was laid on his back with his face turned to the right, i.e. toward the north. Examination showed that there were no remains of either mummy cloth or cartonnage. The body was held in its position by limestone splinters. Beneath the head, and covering parts of it, was pink plaster. In the corner of the tomb at the left foot of the body were two large alabaster jars. Beneath and around the head ten jewelry pendants were deposited, apparently not lined up, including a figure of Amun in solid gold, a relief of Ptah in gilt silver sheet, a faience figure of Sakhmet, two gold figures of the Horus falcon, and nonfigural pieces of gold, gilt silver, and lapislazuli. The most striking object was a scorpion of solid gold, which was laid at the angle of the back of the head and neck. Most of the gold and silver eyes of the pendants were worn out and in a few pieces the engraved surface of the gold had become dimmed. We may assume that these pieces had been for a long time in the possession of the man and his family.

"The examination of the lower levels of this excavation has been either much hindered or made impossible by the high water level."

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After closing the excavations for the season permission was granted the Museum to continue some urgently needed exploration at the site during the period of low water. That work will be done in the vicinity of the sanctuary and colonnade and near the Ramses II gate. If time permits there will be done some important work also near the foot of the enclosure wall. Mr. Jean Jacquet remained in Egypt and will be in charge of that phase. It is hoped that work will be resumed on the same site at approximately the same date in the coming year.

JOHN DIMICK

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ALEXANDRIA - JUNE 1955

The splendid view of the old harbor with the Fort Kait Bey on the site of the famous Pharos, as seen from one of the modern buildings which dominate the boulevard along the seawall, lets one forget that about three meters below the present street level lie the ruins of the ancient city. The coast has sunk into the sea on this side of the Delta, and wherever construction work requires excavation for new foundations a representative of the archaeological branch of Alexandria's municipality has to be present. In digging the new subway station for the suburban line to Ramleh, granite column shafts were encountered recently, and on the day when this writer called, for the first time, on the Director of the Greco-Roman Museum, Dr. Victor Anton Girgis, his telephone rang and the find of an undisturbed burial was reported. We drove out immediately, in the direction of Sidi Gaber, where just beyond Shatby the Ramleh line runs through a deep cut, the two sides of which are to be connected by an overpass. Not ten feet from the rails the contractor's workmen had come upon some Roman bricks, which are nothing unusual at Alexandria, and digging further with a pick had opened a completely preserved vaulted tomb chamber, about 3 by 3 by 7 feet in size in which a human body, covered with now brownish linen, was lying on its back. The bones had obviously deteriorated because the corpse offered a somewhat flattened-out aspect, but there was no doubt that the chamber was undamaged except for the hole through which we look and which had been made not more than 15 minutes ago. The brickwork was very neat, and one saw how the fresh mortar had run down on the inside in several places. Work was immediately stopped at this particular point until the Museum's draftsman and photographer could be summoned.

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#### "UNWANTED" ANTIQUITIES

Under this title an article has been published in the July issue (price PT 10) of The Egyptian Economic and Political Review (address: Box 2118, Cairo). It deals with the overcrowding of the Cairo Museum and the consequent lack of storage space for objects of secondary importance unearthed in past and current excavations. The writer, whose name does not appear, cites the mass of fine stone vessels at Saqqara and tens of thousands of well preserved pots from all sites which are being neglected because they merely form duplicates, and he strongly advocates that they and similar antiquities of which Egypt has large quantities be made available to foreign institutions and private collectors.

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#### ANNALES DU SERVICE 53 no. 1 (1955) PUBLISHED

The first fascicule of volume 53 of ASAE came out in August.

The price is PT 200; its contents are:

pp. 7-20 H. Chevrier: Rapport sur les travaux de Karnak  
1952-1953 (7 illus., 9 pls.)



- pp. 21-42 H. Chevrier: Rapport sur les travaux de Karnak 1953-1954  
(1 illus., 26 pls.)
- pp. 43-48 L.-A. Christophe: Deux notes sur le rapport de M. Chevrier  
(Karnak, 1953-1954)
- pp. 49-62 L.-A. Christophe: Un monument inédit du Grand Majordome  
de Nitocris, Aba (1 pl)
- pp. 63-68 L.-A. Christophe: Deux inscriptions du Temple de Philae concernant  
la cérémonie "Donnant la Maison à Son Maître" (1 pl.)
- pp. 69-78 L.-A. Christophe: Nécrologie d'Alexandre Varille
- pp. 79-118 A. Varille: La grande porte du temple d'Apet à Karnak  
(9 illus., 33 pls.)
- pp. 119-134 J.-P. Lauer: Le temple haut de la pyramide du roi Ouserkaf  
à Saqqarah (4 illus., 4 pls.)
- pp. 135-138 Mustafa el Amir: Note on "t *hyr.t*" in boundaries of Ptolemaic  
houses at Thebes
- pp. 139-152 J. G. Griffiths: Three notes on Herodotus, Book II
- pp. 153-166 J.-P. Lauer: Fouilles et travaux divers effectués à Saqqarah  
de novembre 1951 à juin 1952 (7 illus., 11 pls.)
- pp. 167-194 J.-P. Lauer and Z. Iskander: Données nouvelles sur la momification  
dans l'Egypte ancienne (13 illus., 2 pls.)
- pp. 195-202 L. Habachi: Preliminary report on Kamose Stela and other  
inscribed blocks found reused in the foundations of two statues  
at Karnak (2 illus., 1 pl.)
- pp. 203-207 M. Hammad: Die "Weisse Mauer" war der erste Steinbau in  
Ägypten, und ihr Name rührt von dem Baumaterial her (4 illus.)
- pp. 209-219 M. Jungfleisch and J. Schwartz: Jetons de faïence et moules à  
monnaies ptolémaïques (3 illus.)

Meanwhile the price of ASAE 52 (1954) has been set at PT 600 per volume.

THE CENTER'S OFFICE AND STAFF IN CAIRO

In the beginning of September, the Cairo office of the Center reopened at the old address

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in the block facing the American Embassy and opposite the north wall of the garden of the British Embassy, two blocks south of the Semiramis Hotel. The staff for the season 1955-56 consists, as before, of Mr. Bothmer (Director), Dr. Simpson (Research Associate), and Mrs. Bothmer (Administrative Officer). Members are reminded to file requests for photographs, information, books and other data as early as possible. During the coming season the staff will be unable to make hotel reservations or arrange for housing; for that the services of a travel agent should be engaged. The Cairo office, however, will be glad to assist members in planning their trips and activities while in Egypt.

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