

AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT

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FOGG ART MUSEUM
CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

January 14, 1953

Newsletter Number Six

Dear Member:

The Annual Meeting of the Center was duly held on November 18, 1952, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. One hundred and six members were present or represented by proxy; and Mr. Forbes presided.

Mr. Keller presented the Treasurer's Report, which he summarized as follows:

SUMMARY OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS October 1, 1951 through September 30, 1952

<u>Boston Account (U.S. Dollars)</u>		
Balance in Bank September 30, 1951	\$2,136.85	
Received as dues and donations	<u>1,685.00</u>	\$3,821.85
Expenditures		
Newsletter	290.33	
Expenses on account of Administrative Officer in Egypt	300.00	
Stationery, Office Supplies and Expenses	52.99	
Postage	79.51	
Travel	70.87	
Expenses of Meeting and Statutory filing fee	<u>21.76</u>	<u>815.46</u>
Balance in Bank September 30, 1952		\$3,006.39
<u>Cairo Account (Egyptian Pounds)</u>		
Balance September 30, 1952, representing donations received during the period		LE 225.880

Note: At the Official Rate of Exchange (\$2.88 1/4) the Egyptian currency is equivalent to \$651.0991 U.S.

Professor Parker's Report upon Membership showed 124 Regular Members, 35 Contributing Members, 19 Sustaining Members, Six Associates, One Fellow, and Three Life Members.

After Mr. Forbes had reviewed the year's activities, Mr. Dunham read the following report which had been sent from Egypt by Director Cooney.

"I left New York on 27 August with many other Fulbright grantees, including Prof. John A. Wilson of the Oriental Institute, on the S S Constitution. As most of the group were bound for Egypt and would be in close contact during the present winter it was decided a few days out to hold a meeting, over which I was requested to preside, to introduce all members of the group and to answer questions on Egypt. The voyage was otherwise uneventful and I reached Genoa early in September where I had two days stop-over during which visits were made to the museums and local sights. During the latter part of the journey another stop of two days was made at Athens but little use could be made of the time as all museums were closed for a week of mourning in respect to the memory of the late Minister of Education and the intense heat precluded any extensive sightseeing.

"Early on the morning of 12 September we arrived at Alexandria where the efficiency and consideration of the Egyptian customs authorities and the excellent planning of the Fulbright Office gave everyone a pleasant introduction to Egypt, a country that was new to almost the entire group. After settling in Cairo and attending to routine matters we commenced attendance at the orientation course, a series of lectures mainly by Egyptians but organized by the U S Educational Foundation to introduce grantees to the customs, organization and contemporary problems of Egypt. Only a very brief part of the program is devoted to ancient

Egypt. Attention is centered on economic, educational and social problems, those fields in which the majority of grantees will work. Everyone was favorably impressed by the frankness of the lecturers who stressed the numerous difficulties facing Egypt in these fields and clearly pointed out the defects of present systems. With the completion of the orientation course early in October all grantees were free to commence work on their particular projects.

"I at once paid visits to the various officials of the Antiquities Service commencing with Dr. Abbas Bayumi who has been appointed Acting Director of the Service in addition to his duties as Director of the Museum. The marked friendliness with which all foreign scholars are now received is one of the most striking characteristics of the new and purely Egyptian management of the Service and is, I think, typical of every individual in that organization. It is an admirable result of the pride the Egyptians take in managing their own affairs. I have been given every possible assistance and courtesy and from my own observation I know that other visiting scholars have been equally well received.

"In view of the numerous disturbances that Egypt has experienced during the past year some comment on general conditions is in place. I had anticipated a difficult atmosphere and unsettled conditions but the reverse is true. The new government has the enthusiastic backing of the entire country and everyone seems eager to welcome and assist foreigners in order to implement the official policy of complete cooperation. One is no longer annoyed on the streets, passport regulations have been eased and officials try to give prompt and courteous service. In every respect a new atmosphere prevails and Egypt has regained much of the calm and friendliness that characterized the country years ago.

"Early in the season visits were made to the excavations at Giza and Dahshur before this years work had commenced. At Giza Dr. Abu Bukr showed us the finds from his recent work including several Fifth Dynasty sculptures and a particularly interesting series of figurines of enemies, each inscribed with exceptionally well preserved reliefs. Some of them are of excellent quality and preserve their colors almost in mint condition. Among the tombs uncovered in this excavation is the long-lost tomb of Per-sen which was recorded by Lepsius over a century ago, since when its location had been lost. It is still in the condition recorded by Lepsius with the great incense stands remaining in front of the false-door.

"At Dahshur Dr. Ahmed Fakhry has made discoveries of the utmost importance for the history of the early Old Kingdom in the Valley Temple of Snefru. The excavations revealed a large mass of temple reliefs, terribly shattered but adequate to establish that the standard scenes of the sed festival and the king among the gods etc. were already in use at the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty. Adjoining the temple were six chapels for statues of the king. In one of these chapels was found a statue of Snefru complete except for the lower legs and in another a life-size head of the king wearing the white crown was uncovered. The importance of these sculptures to the history of Old Kingdom art is evident when it is recalled that we have almost no knowledge of the royal statues of the first kings of Dynasty IV.

"Despite the results reported above, and they are only a part of the research completed during the past year, the immediate prospect for excavations in Egypt is not favorable. Dr. Fakhry had intended to continue his work at Dahshur - an immense site when the cemeteries are included, not to mention the North Pyramid - and at the pyramid complex

of Isesi at Sakkara during the present season but his appointment as professor at Fuad I University has necessitated the cancellation of all his field work and there are no present plans for continuing the work. In an essential economy move the government has had to reduce all excavation budgets, in some cases to an extent which will permit only routine clearance. The excavation of the archaic cemetery at Helwan which had been financed by the former king is also, at least temporarily, in abeyance. The numerous French excavations closed by government order about a year ago remain closed and at this writing there is no indication that they will be resumed in the near future.

"If the last two months are an indication of the entire year I think it is safe to say that the activities of the Research Center will consist of serving as an information service for scholars and lecturing in Egypt. Already I have received numerous requests for aid in obtaining photographs, in collating tests, detailed information on certain objects in the Cairo collection, queries on recent publications etc., most of which have come from the United States but a considerable number have been received from England and France. This is a useful, if time consuming, service which we can render. It will probably be impossible to yield to all requests for lectures. Already I am committed to give a series of three lectures on Egyptian art to the students of the Higher Institute of Art for Men in Cairo during the month of December, another, open to the general public, at the American University at Cairo early in December, a series of three lectures at Alexandria University during the winter, two lectures at Fuad I University and one other at the Sudan Institute on the results of our research at Tangasi during next January. All these are but a beginning. Prof. Wilson is equally heavily committed and is giving a lecture at the American University at Cairo

early next month in the name of the Research Center. The Egyptians are extremely eager to have foreign scholars lecture to their students for, as they justly say, each lecturer has a different point of view. Other Egyptians tell me that Egyptian art as such is hardly treated here and they are eager to have the great collection in Cairo appreciated for its artistic quality. Much of the lecturing must be elementary and educational and it has proved difficult to prepare lectures with any conviction that they are correctly keyed to the particular audience. Doubtless these lectures are worth the effort they require but it would be advisable to instruct the next director to come out prepared to deliver numerous lectures.

"In October Mr. B. Abd el Malik of the Voice of America while on a visit to Egypt had an interview with Prof. Wilson and the Director to obtain sufficient information to compose a talk to be recorded and broadcast on the Voice of America. The broadcast will outline to the people of the Middle East the history and purpose of the Research Center and explain our activities in Egypt. An enquiry was received from Mr. Hopkinson of the March of Time concerning the possibility of photographing an excavation, these shots to be used for a forthcoming movie. As Mr. Hopkinson had been instructed to contact the Center by a cable received only a few hours earlier and was leaving in a few hours for Syria it was impossible to aid him at that time. It was decided to discuss the problem when he returned to Cairo later this month."

As our former Director, Mr. W. S. Smith, pointed out at the Meeting, the increased demand for lectures is impressive and shows that we are managing, even if still on a narrow scale, to fulfil our purposes in Egypt.

The Officers of the Center were re-elected for the present

year; and in place of the retiring Trustees the following were elected to serve:

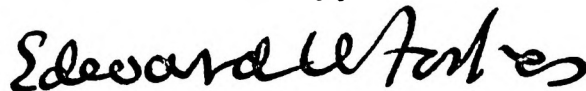
Ludlow Bull, of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; Carleton S. Coon, of the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania; Mrs. Joseph Lindon Smith; Edward W. Forbes; William S. Smith, of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

During the discussion which followed upon official business the question of future excavation in Egypt was brought up. The difficulty of obtaining funds for purely scientific excavation appears to be the principal obstacle.

The reprint of an article on the Wild Deer Mathnawi, which is enclosed, will appear to have little connection with Egypt, since it brooks a Persian topic. But the influence of Persia on mediaeval Islamic art was so pervasive that without some insight into its mood and rationale it is difficult to understand how an almost exclusively decorative style of art could have replaced the figural style which Egypt and the other Muslim lands had practised so long in earlier times.

With all good wishes for the New Year, I am

Yours sincerely,



Edward W. Forbes
President