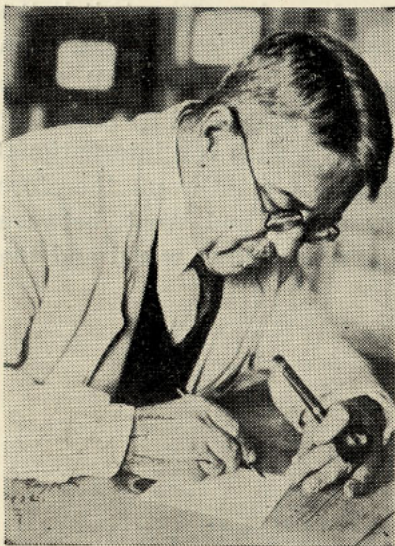


AMERICAN ACTIVITIES IN EGYPT & THE NEAR EAST

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The American Archaeological Expeditions in Egypt and the Near East



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At the beginning of the last century (1800) the attention of Europe was directed to Egypt by Napoleon's campaign in that country. Napoleon brought out to Egypt a group of French scholars who produced a monumental archaeological work "Description de l'Egypte" recording all the monuments visible at that time. Then the great viceroy Mohamed Ali Pasha organized the modern government of Egypt and opened the country to Europeans. In 1825 Champollion deciphered the ancient hieroglyphics and the attention of scholars was directed to the unravelling of the history of Pharaonic Egypt. Many foreign residents in Egypt and a number of travellers in the following thirty years collected Egyptian antiquities in the Valley of the Nile most of which are now exhibited in public museums all over the world. The Prussian expedition led by Lepsius and the English expedition led by Vyse and Perring worked each for several years between 1830 and

1850. The Department of Antiquities was founded by the Khedive Mohamed Said Pasha in 1858, and the Viceroy appointed Mariette Pasha as the first director. Ever since the Director of the Department of Antiquities has continued to be a Frenchman.

The great period of archaeological excavation began about 1881 when Maspero succeeded Mariette as head of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities and called on foreign scholars to assist the Egyptian Government in recovering the archaeological evidence and to save the buried monuments and tombs from the pillage carried out by dealers in antiquities. The French Archaeological Institute was founded and Sir Flinders Petrie began his long career as the first scientific excavator, first privately and then in the service of the Egypt Exploration Fund of London. The Society was extended to America and many American museums participated in the excavation carried out under the auspices of the E.E.F. This was the first interest taken by Americans in archaeological work.

In the last few years of the century (1897-1899), certain American institutions turned their attention to the organization of individual expeditions in Egypt. The first American Expedition was the Hearst Expedition of the University of California supported financially by Mrs. Phoebe Apperson Hearst and organized by myself, assisted by another Harvard man, Mr. A.M. Lythgoe. This expedition was transferred to Harvard University and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1905 and has worked in the Nile Valley up to the present time, thirty nine years in all. In 1906, Mr. Lythgoe was engaged by the Metropolitan Museum of New-York to organize an expedition to carry out excavation in Egypt and the work of the Metropolitan Museum has also continued to the present day, 32 years. In 1907, the University of Pennsylvania engaged Dr. Randall Maciver to organize an expedition to Egypt with the financial support of Eckley B. Coxe. In 1915, Mr. Coxe bequeathed a million dollars for the maintenance of an archaeological expedition in the Near East. This expedition worked in Egypt at several periods 1915-1920 under Dr. Fisher and in 1929-1931 under Mr. Alan Rowe. In 1923, the University of Michigan organized an expedition for work in the Fayoum which continued to 1935. In 1927, Mr. Rockefeller endowed the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

under the direction of Prof. Breasted, and that Institute organized a number of expeditions in the Near East. Two of these expeditions were settled in Egypt, one at Luxor and the other at Saqqarah. The chief work of these two expeditions was copying the reliefs in the temples of Thebes and those in the mastaba chapels at Saqqarah. The work at Luxor under Dr. Nelson has proceeded to the present time. That at Saqqarah under Mr. Duell was discontinued in 1935. The Institute has also provided funds for the recording of the reliefs at Abydos by Miss Calverley working for the Egypt Exploration Society.

All these expeditions have been financed entirely with American money. Each of the campaigns of these expeditions has required an expenditure from five to ten thousand pounds expended in Egypt mostly on wages to Egyptians. Whole villages have been made prosperous by the employment of efficient and faithful workmen by these expeditions.

The American expeditions have cooperated with expenditures of all nations in the development of scientific methods of archaeological research. Such research requires (1) systematic methods of excavation, (2) the training of the faculty of observing and interpreting the facts exposed in excavation not only in the archaeologists but in the staff of workmen, (3) the development of systems of recording by means of diary, object register, photographs, maps and plans and (4) the publication of the results of the research in a way which enables other scholars to control all the historical deductions. In addition, the American Expeditions have been actuated by the principle of intellectual honesty and maintained strict adherence to the principles of scientific research. The early development of the American expeditions is emphasized by the fact that in 1907, the Egyptian Government selected an American expedition to carry out the first Survey of Nubia preparatory to the raising of the Assuan Dam.

The American expeditions supported by American money and usually directed by Americans have drawn their assistants from all nations. Whenever they have found an efficient man available they have employed him regardless of his nationality. The trained workmen are all Egyptian peasants trained by the

expeditions and directed by an Egyptian head foreman. In the office staff of our own expedition we have six Egyptians,—an assistant secretary and typist, an assistant surveyor, a head reis who keeps the Arabic Diary, an accountant, and two photographers. The Egyptians trained by the American expeditions, particularly head foremen and photographers, are now in use by a number of expeditions not only in Egypt but also in Palestine and Syria. The Americans have excavated a number of important sites and published a long series of volumes on the excavations and on the reliefs and paintings. The Metropolitan Expedition has worked at the Pyramid of Lisht, in the temples and tombs of Thebes, and in temples of the Oasis of Khargeh. The Harvard-Boston Expedition has excavated two thirds of the Giza Necropolis, including the temples of the Third Pyramid, the pyramid of Zawiet-el-Aryan, the provincial site of Naga-ed-Dar, the royal cemeteries of Barkal, Nuri, el-Kur'uw, and Begarawiah in the Sudan, the tombs of the Egyptian colony at Kerma above the Third Cataract, four of the Egyptian forts in the Second Cataract, and carried out the first Nubian Survey for the Egyptian Government. The Pennsylvania Expedition has worked on several sites in Nubia, in the cemetery around the temple of Denderah, and in the pyramid field of Medum. The Michigan Expedition which was particularly interested in the Ptolemaic and Roman period, completed the excavation of one site, in the northern edge of the Fayyum. The Oriental Institute of Chicago in addition to its work of copying reliefs has carried out excavations around the temple of Medinet Habu and cleared two temples and the palace of Ramses III.

The excavations of the Americans have added a large number of objects to the Cairo Museum, the greatest collection of the antiquities of its own land which any nation possesses. Some of these objects have been great masterpieces of the art of ancient Egypt,—the alabaster statue of King Mycerinus, the alabaster head of the same king, the three slate triads each showing Mycerinus, the goddess Hathor, mistress-of-the-sycamore-tree and a nome god, and five portrait heads in white limestone of Princes and Princesses of Dyn. IV. The most surprising discovery by

an American Expedition was the finding of the secret tomb of Hetep-heres I, the mother of Cheops, by the Harvard-Boston Expedition at Giza in 1924. The only household furniture which is preserved from the Pyramid age is that found in this tomb. The contents of the tomb are now on exhibition in the Cairo Museum in a room on the second floor and include not only the furniture of the queen but her personal utensils, her alabaster sarcophagus and canopic box of alabaster. The Egyptian Government very generously gave the expedition a representative collection of the pottery which has been gratefully deposited in the Boston Museum.

The work of the Americans in Egypt has assisted greatly in the reconstruction of the history of Egypt and the Sudan and has added imported antiquities to the national collection in the Cairo Museum. More than this it has built Egyptian collections in public museums in America which stimulate the American public to take an interest in Egypt and encourage the visits of travellers to that country.

American institutions have also sent out expeditions to Mesopotamia, Persia, Palestine and Syria. The first expedition was that of the University of Pennsylvania which worked at Nippur, 1889, 1890, 1893-6, and 1899-1900. The director was Mr. Haynes assisted in the last campaign by Dr. Fisher (see FISHER, Excavations at Nippur). An enormous number of clay tablets with cuneiform inscriptions was found, now partly in Constantinople and partly in Philadelphia. These tablets gave scholars an extensive insight into the early history of Babylonia, and were published by Prof. Hilprecht of the University of Pennsylvania. This university after the great war united with the British Museum in supporting the expedition led by Leonard Woolley at Ur of the Chaldees who discovered the tombs of a number of early kings of Ur and a portion of the great finds are now in the University Museum in Philadelphia, another portion in the British Museum and a major portion in the Irak Museum in Bagdad.

One of the important expeditions was that of Harvard University at Samaria, 1908-1910, which excavated the palaces of Omri, Ahad and Jeroboam II and traced the city walls of the He-

brew and post-Hebrew periods and that of Herod. This work was continued in 1926-8 by Crowfoot supported by Prof. Lake. Prof. Lake also led two expeditions to Sinai.

The most comprehensive series of excavations carried out by any nation was directed by Prof. J.H. Breasted, head of the Oriental Institute of Chicago. The Institute began work in 1919, extended its field of operation in 1927 and has continued to the present time. The expeditions sent out by the Institute have carried out excavations as follows:—

- 1) Megiddo in northern Palestine, 1925, directed first by Dr. Fisher, succeeded by Mr. Guy and finally by Mr. Gordon Loud.
- 2) In Syria, at Chatal Huyuk, directed by M. Claude Prost: in 1932.
- 3) In the region of the Halys River in the Hittite country in Anatolia: directed by Dr. von der Osten: began in 1926, assisted by Dr. Erich Schmidt (1927).
- 5) In Persia, at Persepolis, directed by Dr. Herzfeldt, 1930-31: succeeded by Dr. Erich Schmidt.
- 6) Work was also executed in Egypt, see above.

All this work carried out by the Oriental Institute of Chicago followed a plan conceived in the brain of Prof. Breasted who lived to see the plan in full operation employing a great number of scholars all over the Near East. His attractive personality which inspired confidence in all who met him enabled him to collect the needed financial support and hold the loyalty of his great staff of scholars.

A number of other expeditions have worked in the Near East. Prof. Butler and his assistants worked for some years in Asia Minor for Princeton University. Prof. Bade worked at Tell en-Nasbeh in Palestine for the Palestine Institute of Archaeology in California. An expedition sent by Yale University excavated the Roman site of Gerash in Transjordan. Mr. Oric Bates excavated the site of Marsa Matruh in the Western Desert of Egypt and a Meroitic site at Gamai in the Sudan. The University of Pennsylvania has supported expeditions at Beisan in Palestine and at various sites in northern Mesopotamia.