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**DFG-Projekt "Digitalisierung und Erschließung des Nachlasses des
Ägyptologen Adolf Erman (1854-1937)"**

**Brief von James Henry Breasted von Oriental Institute
(Chicago, Ill.) an Adolf Erman**

Breasted, James Henry

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The University of Chicago

The Oriental Institute

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Chicago
May
Twenty-second
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Geheimrat Adolf Erman,
Peter Lenne-Strasse, 36,
Berlin-Dahlem, Germany.

My dear Friend:

On my arrival in New York, I took up with Mr. Rockefeller's office the two important questions regarding the support of the Dictionary of which you have written me.

- 1st. The remittance to you of the second installment of the promised appropriation:

I am informed by Mr. Rockefeller's office that the remittance of this second installment already has been made, and has perhaps reached you before the receipt of this letter.

- 2nd. I have put very urgently before Mr. Rockefeller the question of additional support of the Dictionary about which you wrote me, amounting to 8672 Gold Marks. No action has yet been taken, but I have the expectation that the additional appropriation will be made, in view of the fact that it is not Mr. Rockefeller's custom to begin the support of a project like the Dictionary and then to abandon it. I am looking forward therefore with much confidence to an additional appropriation for the final completion of the Dictionary.

I have just received this morning your letter regarding the criticisms of the Berlin newspapers which have been reporting that Germany was left out of consideration in the organization of the Cairo Museum project. In replying to these criticisms, it should be noted:

In the first place, that Mr. Rockefeller's resources are being devoted to the support of all sorts of work in Germany, in very generous measure. The Rockefeller Foundation is doing extensive work in Germany in the support of scholarships, fellowships, publication of medical literature and the purchase of laboratory supplies. In the last three years, this Foundation has spent in Germany for this purpose 1,600,000 Gold Marks (\$400,000.).

Far reaching work in the support of Science in Germany is also being done by the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial Foundation,

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a Foundation which was established as a memorial for the deceased wife of the elder Rockefeller. This Memorial Foundation work is largely in the social sciences.

The International Education Board, founded exclusively by Rockefeller money, is supporting German work in the physical sciences. It would seem therefore that there has been, as a matter of history, no discrimination of any kind against Germany in the distribution of Rockefeller benefactions in the past.

Now, in the Cairo Museum project, the first fact to be borne in mind is that the situation there was controlled by the French, who are fortified in this control by a Treaty agreement between Great Britain and France. This was a historical fact which we could do nothing to alter. The plan was intended to develop in two chronological stages:

- 1st. The erection of the buildings, by an exclusively American Board of Trustees.
- 2nd. The transfer of the buildings and the supporting capital funds by the American Trustees to a controlling Commission to be called the Cairo Museum Commission. This Commission was to be made up of two Egyptians and two members from each of the interested nations. This Commission would be then free to appoint a scientific staff both of the Museum and of the Research Institute which was to be built along side the Museum.

The fact of the Treaty between Great Britain and France, and the control of the Service des Antiquités by the French, made the problem of the organization of the Museum Commission a very difficult one. It was the desire of Mr. Rockefeller and the American Trustees that Germany should be represented, like every other nation, on this Commission. It was realized, however, that in bringing this about, the greatest caution must be observed, or the entire project would be destroyed. The proposal for the Commission therefore read that it should

"consist of two representatives each of the United States, Great Britain, and France, and, if the Commission from time to time so decides by a two thirds vote of its members, it may elect for a stated term or terms one or two representatives of another, or of each of two other nations, preferably nations conducting archeological work in Egypt".

This was as far as it was possible to go and, at the same time, hope to succeed in avoiding French opposition.

Probably the best answer to the newspaper criticisms in Berlin is the fact that, even framed as above, the project did not secure the approval of M. Pierre Lacau, the French Directeur-Général of the Service des Antiquités; on the contrary, Lacau flatly opposed and denounced the whole Museum project from the beginning to end, and his opposition probably had something to do with the failure of the project. The project is therefore placed in the position of being denounced both by the German newspapers, who regard it as anti-German, and by the adherents of Lacau, who regard it as pro-German.

It is quite obvious what would have taken place if the Egyptians had agreed to accept the plans: The erection of the buildings would have required at least three years, during which time the whole project would have been in charge of an exclusively American Board of Trustees. Toward the end of the three years, the Museum Commission would have been organized, possessing the expressly stipulated power to elect members from two additional interested nations, and would then have elected two representatives from Germany, so that by the time the Museum had been installed in the new building, Germany would have been fully as represented as any other people.

I think that the facts in the case would justify you in stating quite clearly to the German newspapers that, to your certain knowledge full provision was made for the representation of Germany on the controlling Commission of the Cairo Museum.

To you, as an old friend, I can state one additional fact and of course in the strictest confidence. The history of Borchardt's policy in Cairo made the whole matter of German representation an exceedingly difficult one. Lacau's first remark to me when I discussed the project with him was this: "And you will at once elect Borchardt as one of the German members of the Museum Commission". The certainty that Borchardt would eventually have been a member of the Museum Commission was a constant source of difficulty and one of the reasons why the enterprise met with so much opposition. There were both English and Americans who had had unfortunate experiences with Borchardt and who shook their heads very critically over the prospect of seeing him a member of the controlling Museum Commission.

Finally, I am sure I do not need to reassure you regarding my own attitude throughout the entire history of the Cairo Museum project. My own feeling and loyalty to my German colleagues, and particularly to my old teacher and friend, have never altered. I hope that these assurances may enable you to convince the German newspapers and my German friends of the decided friendliness of our efforts on behalf of fairness and justice towards Germany.

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If you need to show this letter to such friends as Sethe and Schaefer, please do so, but I should dislike that any hostile remarks I may have made regarding Borchardt were given a wide distribution.

Please believe me,

Very faithfully yours,

James F. Braisted

