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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 ORIENTAL INSTITUTE
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

JAMES HENRY BREASTED
Director

18 January, 1930.

My dear Friend:

It is a great pleasure to find on my desk this last day of my stay here, before a short vacation in California, your very welcome letter of the 3rd of January. Replying to your inquiry regarding my having been sick, - I am glad to say that this time the report was not true and, while I am very tired, I am in perfectly good health .

It is most welcome good news also to hear that the same is true of yourself. I envy you your freedom from official duties so that you can retire to your quiet study and devote yourself to the science which we all so much love.

I have returned the last proofs to the Oxford Press and the only delay in the publishing of the Surgical Papyrus is now the fact of distance, which always makes the production of a book very slow. Charles has just returned from the Orient, after having visited all our expeditions. He is filled with enthusiasm for the new developments, as I am myself. We are expecting now to put up a permanent headquarters on our own land near Luxor on the river bank southwest of Karnak. We shall have our own river front and a considerable garden surrounded by a wall. Besides out-buildings for servants, laundry, storage, and automobile garage (all of which will be at the back of the garden), we shall have two buildings for housing the Institute. One of these buildings will be solely for living and social purposes; the other will house the library and the epigraphic work. The purpose of the whole institution is the development of careful and exhaustive epigraphic copying and publishing, with which there may be connected also a good deal of work in architecture. It has seemed to me that such a center might better be placed in ancient Thebes than at Cairo. The work of making a definitive edition of the records on the walls of the Luxor and Karnak Temples will consume many years alone. After that there will still be many years' work on the west side of the river, as you know. We shall probably have to put in a little motor boat as our own ferry and, with a small automobile on each side of the river, the question of quick transportation is solved and distance is annihilated.

Included in this epigraphic program is an effort to salvage materials in the Sakkara Mastabas. These records have never been adequately copied and reproduced. Last winter Mr. Rockefeller became very much interested in the reproduction in color facsimiles of the ancient Egyptian records throughout the country. As I observed this interest it became more and more clear that practical measures for carrying out such a task would be welcomed by him. I first secured a subvention for the complete copying and publishing in color of all the wall records in the Temple of Seti I, at Abydos.

Next came the subvention for the publication of all the paintings which Gardiner has been employing Mrs. Davies to copy for many years past. To the collection which he already has we shall add a few more, including also a very few from the Old Kingdom which were already in the collection. But this series will, as a whole, represent the Empire, and chiefly the XVIIIth and XIXth Dynasties. In terms of plates, it means one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five plates in color. Finally, within the last few days, Mr. Rockefeller has assured me that he will support an effort to reproduce the wall scenes in the Sakkara Mastabas in color. Of course, as you know, there are a good many walls from which the color has been lost. I have calculated that Sakkara would furnish a total of toward five hundred plates, of which something less than half would be in color, and these would have to be issued in five or six folios. You will see that this program includes practically all the surviving paintings of early Egypt, with the exception of the Middle Kingdom, and later on it may be that we can undertake this responsibility also. The lovely colors in the interior of Philae, now forever lost, will then be the only such sources which will not be recovered by these plans.

I will not burden you further with a catalog of our Institute projects, but I knew you would rejoice with me in the new prospect of salvaging the paintings of ancient Egypt, now so much endangered by vandals, both tourists and natives, and of course always suffering a great deal of damage from weather and exposure.

You can understand that this sort of thing absorbs a great deal of my time and I have very little left for my own scientific work. I am deeply interested in the whole story of human development in the ancient Near East as an influence in modern education, and, as you know, I took away the time from personal researches to publish a text book of ~~the~~ ancient history, in which the Near East might be given its proper place. The progress of investigations has now made my book out-of-date, and very much behind the times, for it was published fifteen years ago. I expect to carry some materials with me to California and spend a month on bringing this volume down to date so that we may issue a new edition. It has wide circulation among the schools of the United States, Canada, Australia, and even England. You may be interested to know that it has been translated into Arabic by one of my students, who is professor of history in the American University of Beirut, and the book is now used in the schools of Iraq, Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul, of Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor. I have once or twice visited such a school and it gave me a curious feeling to find oriental boys handling maps and plans and discussions between the covers of this book - the whole in Arabic.

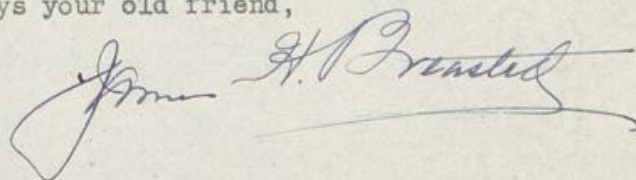
I did not intend to inflict such a long account of my own affairs upon you, and I hope you will forgive me. It was a real pleasure to have news of you and to learn that you are so successfully carrying on your own scientific enterprises, especially the Grammar of

New Egyptian. I have not yet seen the new Heft by Schott, but I shall look for it with the greatest interest. It must be very instructive to find a New Egyptian translation of an old classical text.

We have been very much concerned to hear of Henri's operation, and I sincerely hope that he may now be entirely freed from the physical afflictions with which he has suffered so much. He wrote an excellent letter to Frances and I thought I discerned in it a much more hopeful outlook on life than I have ever observed before in any of his letters. I sincerely trust that this is so.

With warmest good wishes to you and to all the household for the New Year, believe me

Always your old friend,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James H. Breasted". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Professor Dr. Adolf Erman,
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