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## **Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen**

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

### **Brief von Alan Henderson Gardiner an Adolf Erman**

**Gardiner, Alan Henderson**

**Luxor, 28.09.1911**

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Geantw.: wir hätten weder Geld noch Per-  
sonen. Sollten wir einmal unter der  
Hand zufällig Weigall helfen können,  
so haben wir das gern; jetzt könnten  
wir aber bei aller Sympathie nichts tun.  
LUKOR  
UPPER EGYPT.

11/10.11.

28. Sept. 1911

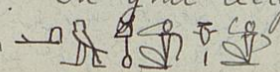
Dear Professor Eiman

It was a very great pleasure to me to receive your letter and to know that you and all the family Eiman are well and prospering. You don't mention my particular friend Anne-Marie, who I know has been troubled with symptoms of appendicitis throughout the summer; but I take it from your silence with regard to her that she is causing you less anxiety now.— give her my special love! For a long time past I have had it in my mind to write you a full account of our doings and prospects, but I have intentionally postponed doing so in order to despatch my letter from the very centre of our common interests; on this subject I shall have quite a lot to tell you about before I close my envelope. —

My summer was a very strenuous one, full of practical considerations and cares very distant from the ordinary sphere of my interests and studies. The very serious question of our new home was of course the central problem, and I think we have now solved it in a way that is likely to be satisfactory. We wanted a house in the country, near enough to London to make it possible for us to keep in touch with London interests and with our London friends; at the same time we wished to be out of range of the money-grabbers of the City, and in a healthy place where our children can have the full benefit of country air and country spots. We have now fixed upon a house at the village of Penn in Buckinghamshire, high up upon a hill, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  English miles from a railway station from which we can reach London in thirty-five minutes. There is a fine

large garden, with magnificent views in several directions. In order to proceed with due caution and circumspection we are first taking the house furnished for a period of four months and after this we have an option of a long lease or of purchase. My wife will be in the house before I get back from Egypt towards the middle of November. — Another problem successfully solved was that of a governess for the children; we have found a well-educated lady who will teach the children together for a year or so; after that I shall send Rolf to school, and shall have to think seriously of the best way of dealing with Margaret.

It is wonderful what an amount of time these practical arrangements took up; I hardly did any serious Egyptological work at all, beyond revising the remainder of my notes on Sinuhe and writing a long article on Egyptian Ethics for an Encyclopaedia. The latter subject interested me greatly, and though I don't think I have discovered much which a scholar conversant with Egyptian texts does not know, yet I have become much clearer in my own mind as to the probable character and

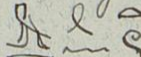
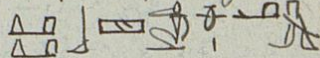
moral outlook of the Ancient people. The main point of difference between them and the modern fellahin seems to me to be the absence in the former of that deadening fatalism which is the chief characteristic of the latter. Of course the ancient Egyptians believed in fate, but fate seems merely to have been thought to determine the events of their lives, and not their actions - that is, to no very great extent. Sinuhe certainly pleads that he was led astray by the god who "decreed this flight" but after carefully looking through the texts I do not find this idea often emphasized. Elsewhere it is usually implied that a man is free to follow his heart, "the god that is within man"; but he may also disobey the commands of his heart, i.e. he is a true agent. I have found examples, too, of gratitude, which imply that a man is responsible for his conduct towards other men, and if he does them kindnesses, deserves to obtain credit for his action. - May I venture on a small criticism on a philological point of detail? In your religion you interpret the words  as referring to the sin



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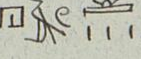
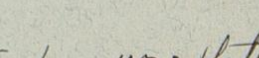
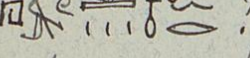
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of "unnötige Reue". However in the Puisse I find a passage where it is said that a messenger should not allow "his heart to swallow" the message entrusted to him, i.e. he should not suppress any part of the message. Also I recollect

in a London state of a  a passage where he says that he was 

 "one who caused the heart to disgorge what it had swallowed" i.e. to disclose the entire truth. Since you are at  still in the Wb, perhaps this note may be of some use to you.

— Does the Wb. know the etymologies of  $\text{ZEBWN}$  and  $\text{ZENOPYE}$  — clearly  and  and  ?

I am really delighted to hear your flattering verdict on my Admonitions. It was a terrible task, and I am thankful to have it behind me. Anastasi I was much more to my liking. I think I should really

be glad if you ever find time to study my edition and translation; I really am quite enamoured of that text, and let me shamelessly add, of my version of it — though I recall your saying that it is always our "miserablene Kinder" that we love most!

I should have found your article on the Theban stelae very useful had it appeared before my "Ethics" article was ready. These stelae seem to me to illustrate the nearest approach to penitence that the light-hearted Egyptians ever made — of course our enemies the Babylonians delighted in gloomy penitential psalms.

As I sit writing to you I can see the Ramensium straight in front of me; beyond that the inundation, out of which the Colossi rise; beyond these again the temple of Luxor on the banks of the Nile, and in the extreme distance the Arabian

hills. It is an exceedingly hot afternoon, and I prefer to sit writing than to be clambering up and down the hill of Sheikh Abd el Gurna, though Weigall and I do not often pander to such lazy instincts! I finally decided that the children were better kept out of Egypt, and I myself made arrangements, accordingly, only to spend two months in Thebes, lending Weigall a hand in his work on the Theban private tombs, and finding new work for my industrious friend Mrs. Davies.

I hope it is not oriental Mirage, but here at Sheikh Abd el Gurna the preservation of the private tombs seems to me the most important archaeological work being undertaken in Egypt. So much damage had been done to the Theban tombs during the years which preceded Weigall's advent in Thebes, that these all-important monuments of the most interesting period of Pharaonic history were in a fair way to disappear and to be lost for ever. Weigall would be the first to admit that he has no claims to scholarship, but

it is my firm conviction that if ever he gets his due he will be recognized as one of the persons who has done most and best to save no small a portion of history for science. Sometimes I have heard his methods of conservation criticized, and some have complained that it would be far better to bury the tombs with sand than to open them out and fit iron doors to them and have them watched and inspected at regular intervals of time. It is just because there is a specious semblance of truth in these criticisms that I have gone into the matter - not only now but also two years ago - very carefully, and we have come to very definite and clear results. (I am most anxious to enlist your sympathy and if it is possible, also, your practical aid ~~there~~ I want to put the matter before you at length, and I beg you to read what I have to say with patience and to forgive me if I seem long-winded). We have found by repeated experience that the fellahin are perfectly well acquainted with most of the tombs that have been seen by tourists and Egyptologists during the last half-century, and although

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many of these are completely buried, the natives  
have access to them and from time to time  
cut out pieces for sale to tourists or Museums.  
They destroy however about ten times as much  
as they get, and what does a picture look  
like when the face of the principal person  
has been cut out, or when a great ugly  
gash surrounds an otherwise charming scene?  
I have no idea what becomes of all the  
fragments thus cut out; they do not seem  
to find their way into Museums to any  
great extent, though Capart and some others  
~~may~~ have sinned in this respect to my  
knowledge. At all events the fact is  
undeniable; the tombs were disappearing  
rapidly until they were safeguarded and  
watched. I myself feel that it is a  
positive duty to lend a hand in altering  
this state of things; and Weigall feels  
considerable bitterness that he has received no

† Maspero is totally indifferent to this work, neither encouraging or discouraging it.

great support from just the persons whose interest, it might be supposed, lay in nothing else so much as in protecting these monuments.

The department of Antiquities gives W. a free hand, and that is something; but it gives him help<sup>†</sup> neither in the form of money or otherwise, and above all things W. has no assistant of any kind, while he himself has to watch the whole of Upper Egypt, from Abydos to the Sudan frontier. Such money as W. has obtained for the protection of the Theban tombs comes either from Mond, who contributes about £200 a year, or is begged from tourists, given by royal personages who come to Thebes or the like.

The principal points in W's plan of work, and the actual results are as follows.

(1) W. received no list of private tombs from his predecessor, and was totally in the dark as to what had to be protected and watched by him. He set out therefore to try and discover what tombs (with paintings or sculpture worth recording) have been known to Egyptologists, at any time, or are now known to the fellahin; the exact location and present state being carefully investigated. — W. has now on his list 242 numbers, these of course containing many which have been found incidentally and are unknown to Egyptologists. Of these 242, there are 13 still inhabited, and W. is trying hard to buy the possessors out; 11 tombs were until recently inhabited, but their owners have been expropriated. About 50 of the 242 tombs are not yet located; some of them were seen by Sethe, and I hope he will be able to tell us where they are to be found.

(2). Tombs once located are visited and protected as well as is possible with the funds at W's disposal. Over 160 have been provided with doors and locks, are placed beneath the charge of ghaffirs, are for the most part completely cleared and available for study. In about 15 tombs doors have been deemed unnecessary. There are some five tombs exactly located but still buried.

(3) When tombs can be arranged into groups and are not in the neighbourhood of any modern houses, a small wall is built round them. Any native within the wall, unless a ghaffir or holder of a ticket, is a trespasser and can be prosecuted accordingly.

(4) The tombs are periodically inspected both by W. and his subordinates. Many of the past breakages have been photographed or otherwise noted. There is every chance of any serious new damage being noticed

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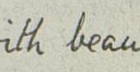
at once. The ghaffâr would be dismissed at once if any negligence on his part were discovered. — The only damage known to have been done since doors have been put on is in the "Tomb of the Vines" where the criminal is probably a man we know of who acted from motives of revenge; he was put on his trial, but the parquet did not accept the circumstantial evidence brought against him. There is every reason to think that the worst damage was done between 1900 and 1915, when many tombs had been opened by the French, Newberry etc. and had been left open without protection.

(5) It forms no part of W's scheme to find new tombs, none being sought except those which are endangered. Incidentally a few have been found, but W. always regrets this, as there is more than enough to study at present.

Unfortunately in clearing out many of the tombs fragments have been found, and the urgency of the primary work of protection has made it impossible to replace these fragments in the walls. They often lie on the ground in the tombs, and there is of course considerable risk of robbery. What can W. do, since he has to work single-handed?

It is exceedingly important that no time should be lost in putting the Necropolis in order; Maspero won't take any step, though he allows W. to do precisely as he wishes. There are several ways in which you might be able to give W. assistance; will you not try to stir some interest in this matter at Berlin. May I offer some alternative suggestions.


1) Money - any little contribution may serve to expropriate a native tomb-dweller or to protect a tomb.

2) Very much more valuable aid would be to get some student out to Thebes to help W. to replace fragments in walls, to watch the cleaning out of a tomb or the like. For example: there is one large tomb, that of , with beautiful sculpture and painting of the time of

Amenophis III. Hundreds of fine fragments of sculpture and painting lie on the ground, require classification, ~~and~~ mounting on the walls in plaster. The tomb was right in the midst of the Houses of Gurna, and was very accessible. Some of the sculptures showing above <sup>Some had already been</sup> ~~ground.~~ <sup>sawn out by natives</sup> It was therefore imperative to clear the tomb out and protect it, and this was done with ~~£20~~ contributed by the King of Saxony. If a student were sent out for six weeks, he could, if a handy man, have these fragments all disposed of in the time, and W. could doubtless find the money for the restoration. However the complete protection of the tomb, roofing over etc, would cost about £60, and I doubt whether W. could raise the funds for this. Would it be quite impossible for you to get, say, Burchardt sent out for

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a few months, with a mission to "work in the Theban Necropolis." In order not to cause any friction between French and Germans it would perhaps be well for such a student ~~to~~ be given a quite vague mission to study in Thebes. W. would then either concede him some particular tomb to patch up or else would be delighted to avail himself of such a student's help in general. I think such a brief mission ~~would~~ be immensely valuable to such a man as Burchardt, and the service he might render would be

very considerable. If he objected to  
working under Weigall's direction, a  
particular tomb such as that of  
†  might be assigned to him,  
the merely giving an undertaking  
to put it in order. Of course  
the situation would be intolerable if  
Borchardt were to be allowed to  
interfere, and perhaps take a different  
point of view to that of W.

I do hope you may be able to  
devise some scheme for helping along  
this all-important work. I myself

have Mrs. Davies copying here and that is all I can afford at present. Weigall is now preparing, with my help, a catalogue of all the tombs known, with diagrams showing their position and notes of a general kind.

I send you some photographs showing the way in which the Tombs have been damaged, and the way in which W. is restoring them.

Forgive this very long letter — I am afraid you will find it rather a bother! Best greetings to Fran Professor and all of you

Very sincerely yours

Alam Hardier

