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

Brief von Alan Henderson Gardiner an Adolf Erman

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Mynedd Ednyfed

Criccieth

North Wales

2 Sept. 19

Dear Professor Eiman

It was good to receive a long and friendly letter from you after all these years of bloodshed and misery, the folly and wickedness of which I recognize and deplore as fully as yourself. That the Twentieth Century should ~~be~~ witness such a display of hatred combined with brainlessness had appeared to me (though with some haunting premonitions) to be incredible, and though the past five years have taught me a good number of unavoury facts about human nature I still am puzzled and often feel unable to understand. The time has not arrived, and will not arrive for some time, when I am willing and able to express to you what Heddie

and I have felt about the whole business; and how we have acted. I will only tell you this — that she has worked regularly at the Friends' Emergency Committee for Aliens in Distress, and that I myself used (until my time was commandeered for other purposes) to give three afternoons a week to the same occupation. As it seems to me, the Chauvinism bred by this war has been as little confined to one country as the Influenza which followed the war; there is not much difference between diseases of the heart and brain and diseases of the body. In my part I desire to suffer from neither. And this is all I want to say, and will say, on the subject of Politics. I will repeat to you what I said to Selma both at the beginning and at the end of the war: my mouth is and ought to be closed, but you must judge of my opinions from your pre-war experience of my nature and character. Someday I hope we shall be able to talk calmly together about all these things, with the definite and

specific intention of making, so far as lies in
one poor individual power, a repetition of this
iniquity impossible.

In the meantime let me tell you that my
personal friendships (so far of course as they are
reciprocated in the same spirit) remain absolutely
intact and that my belief in the Internationalism
of Science remains as strong as ever. That
you, my friends, should be suffering from
hunger and want pains me to the quick;
it greatly marred the pleasure I derived
from receiving your letter. But I pray
and trust that that your healths are not
in any way permanently damaged. It is
so much worse for the young, and that
Henri and my poor Anne-Marie should
have suffered permanently through this thing
that has come upon them would be an
intolerable thought. We have been luckier;
I hardly like to tell you that we all are
well and strong and as happy as people
living in such a world can be.

And now with regard to my attitude to our
Science. I have told you and wish again to
repeat with all emphasis: I am a whole-hearted
believer in the Internationalism of Science, and will
not encourage or take part in any attempt to

adopt or foster the contrary spirit. Indeed, if I believed in the practical utility of a mere gesture my first impulse would be to write an article for the Zeitschrift. I shall not do so, because I think that to range myself openly against the Chauvinists at the present moment would be to sacrifice and throw away such influence as I have for promoting the welfare of our Science. Please tell any of my friends whom this may concern that such is my standpoint, and that they will do their Science an ill turn if they should be ill-advised enough to claim me as a colleague and ally at the present juncture. You have written to me about Laean's views: well, I shall have to talk and work with Laean (whom, moreover, I regard as a friend in spite of his opinions, which horrify me but which I must try to understand). In spite of all things, I believe that one trait about our human idiosyncrasy is its shortness of memory, and even in this dark world I remain incurably optimistic. My German colleagues must please believe that I shall work unceasingly for the best advantage of our Science under existing conditions, and I hope they will help me by not asking me to co-operate with them before it is opportune. We don't want to see the system of offensive alliances repeated in a smaller field.

I hope you will approve and encourage my attitude. In excuse of the opposite view it must be remembered that neither you nor I have been citizens of an invaded and ravaged country. How unsupple our imaginations are! It is not easy to be sure what our feelings and reactions would be under such a trial.

How greatly I agree with what you have to say about the utility of scientific work at such a time. At the very beginning of the war I felt that all my efforts and researches were at stake, and I worked doubly and trebly hard to produce results which might stand as a protest against the abandonment of all rational purposes and ends. Alas, for how little the efforts of a single unimportant individual count!

Someday, when the post is safer I will send you assortments of all that I have written during these times. I don't want to do so at present, as I might find it difficult to repeat sendings that had gone astray.

We have no direct news from my sister-in-law in Venia, and I am growing anxious, although we receive messages and reports from an aunt of ours.

Heddie and I often think back with sorrow to those happy days and hours we have passed in your home. Give, please, our most affectionate greetings to Fran Profenna and to all your children.

Yours very sincerely

Alan H. Gardner