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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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THE GRAND HOTELS CO. OF EGYPT

CAIRO : THE CONTINENTAL-SAVOY

PYRAMIDS : MENA HOUSE HOTEL

HELOUAN } GRAND HOTEL HELOUAN
HOTEL DES BAINS
SULPHUR BATH ESTABLISHMENT

ALEXANDRIA : HOTEL CASINO SAN-STEFANO

THE CONTINENTAL-SAVOY
CAIRO

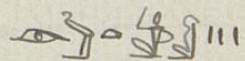
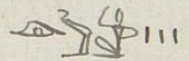
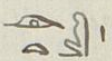



TEL. GRANHOTELS - CAIRO.

Cairo 12 April 1923

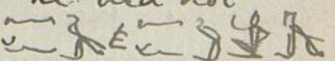
Dear Professor Eiman

Months have passed since last I wrote to you or heard of you, and now, as my visit to Egypt approaches its end I feel I must send you some sort of report on my doings here. But before turning to matters Egyptological, I want to tell you how deeply distressed Breasted and I have been at the political news. That our German friends should be imprisoned in their own land, impoverished and invaded seems to us terribly unjust and senseless; if only the war could be definitely and finally ended, instead of being carried on into peace-time in this insensate way. But the few of us who favour a real peace, and a generous reconciliation are too lacking in influence and power to make any impression. All we can do is to express our deep sympathy and to hope for happier times.

After three months steady work we now are beginning to have some sort of perspective of the task which we have undertaken. It is gigantic, and even if we utilize all the help which we may be able to obtain among younger students, I doubt whether we can begin to publish our edition of the Coffin Texts in less than about ten years. Here in Cairo there is a vast collection over which we now have a fairly good comprehensive view; many of the texts are badly damaged and carelessly written, and it is just those texts which, in our experience, are the most important textually. We shall require many visits to Egypt before we can feel we have exhausted the Cairo material, and after that will remain an almost equal amount of valuable coffins distributed among the various museums of the world. Lacau has been very good about lending us his material, and our opinion of his accuracy as a copyist has been greatly enhanced. His Textes Religieux are wonderfully accurate, the only errors which we find being due either to the use of type instead of autography, and the change from the vertical to the horizontal direction. I have little doubt myself that such

a form as that which he writes  really represents  , "helps male and female"; in the coffins the writing is usually , but I believe this stands for   in which the first and last signs are to be repeated twice.

The Catalogue des Sarcophages Antérieurs au Nouvel Empire is far less accurate than the Textes Religieux and obviously represents a stage when Lacaze was less familiar with the subject-matter.

Though we have worked hard we have not succeeded during our stay in collating and copying more than four or five coffins, but these we have dealt with pretty completely, and possess a mass of new texts besides early versions of a great many chapters of the Book of the Dead. The value and interest of the texts varies very greatly; much of it is what I think you would call "muster Zeug", and certainly I cannot summon up great enthusiasm over a knowledge of the names of parts of the fish-net, or the names of the guardians of the gates in the nether world! Some of the most interesting texts have cosmogonic allusions; there is one of special interest where the writer deliberately states that he did not begot her from his spittle, but 

☞☞☞ "blew me (Shu) out of his nose"! A very natural ripin for a breath or atmosphere god!

A very great deal of our time has been spent in searching for and identifying the various coffins, many of which were taken to pieces at the removal from the old Museum and have never been put together again. It has often happened that the lid of a coffin has been found in an exhibition room, the two long sides in another room, the floor in the cellars, while perhaps the short ends will still be missing! The disorder in the Cairo Museum is terrible, and I only wish two or three "tuchige Deutschen" could be here to help put the place in order. We have still a considerable list of missing parts, but quite generally speaking, I think we have found and collected together the great majority of the more important coffins. We have an admirable photographer and the coffins are rapidly being photographed, with very good results.

Conditions of work in the Museum are not very good, and it is much more fatiguing to work there than in one's study at home. One thing is clear to us: we shall have to find