THE EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION
1930-1931

The past season saw completed twenty-five years of continuous work by the Metropolitan Museum’s Egyptian Expedition, and it seems appropriate to sum up its accomplishments.

When Albert M. Lythgoe accepted the post of Curator of the Department of Egyptian Art in October, 1906, the conduct of excavations in Egypt was the most essential part of his program for building up a well-rounded collection in the Museum. Immediately after his appointment he had broken ground in the royal cemetery of the early Twelfth Dynasty pyramids at Lisht, with the late Arthur C. Mace and myself as assistants. Since then the work has continued without interruption. Its major operations have been at the pyramids of Amen-em-hêt I and Se’n-Wosret I at Lisht and the temples of Mentu-hotpe and Hatshepsüt and the palace of Amen-hotpe III at Thebes, but incidental to the work on them there has been the discovery of such important tombs as that of Senebtisi at Lisht, those of the early Eighteenth Dynasty under Ḥat-shespsüt’s valley temple, and those of Sen-Mūt, Queen Meryet-Amnūn, and the Twenty-first Dynasty princesses at Deir el Bahri. Belonging to the later periods of Egyptian history have been the tomb of Pebes near Deir el Bahri and the temple of Hibis in Khargeh Oasis. Important work has also been done on the early Christian necropolis of El Bagawāt in Khargeh, the monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes, and the monasteries of the Wādy ‘n Natrūn.

Meanwhile, it was one of the cardinal points in Mr. Lythgoe’s program that a survey should be made of the decorated tombs of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties at Thebes, and in 1907 Norman de Garis Davies joined the Expedition for this purpose. Except for an interruption during the War, this survey has proceeded, and the Museum’s collections have been enriched by an incomparable series of facsimiles of Egyptian mural decorations which, from their very nature, can never be obtained in the original.

Work on many of the Expedition’s problems has been concluded—for example, the present report marks the probable ending of the excavations at the temples of Deir el Bahri. Much of the work has been published—particularly that done on the decorated Theban tombs by Davies. Further volumes, one on the tomb of Queen Meryet-Amnūn and the second and third volumes of the series on the monasteries of the Wādy ‘n Natrūn, are in press, and still others will be prepared as rapidly as the personnel of the Expedition can be given the opportunity. Meantime, the field work at Lisht has been resumed, and upon its conclusion excavations will be taken up once more upon the still unfinished parts of the concession at Thebes.

In 1928 Mr. Lythgoe, feeling that he could no longer find the opportunity for the active direction of the work in the field, had me appointed Director of the Expedition. In 1929, upon his becoming Curator Emeritus, I was appointed Curator of the Department of Egyptian Art in his stead but continued to direct the work in Egypt during the following two seasons. Now, upon assuming the responsibilities of Director of the Museum, I in turn must relinquish the direction of the Expedition to my colleague Ambrose Lansing.

Mr. Lansing joined the Expedition in 1911, first assisting me at the palace of Amen-hotpé III and then Mr. Lythgoe in the removal of the tomb of Per-nēb from Saqākareh. He has worked at Lisht, both with Mr. Lythgoe and independently, in Khargeh Oasis, and on our concessions at Thebes. From 1915 to 1919 he was in sole charge in Egypt, during the absence of many of the Expedition, and in the Museum itself he has had equally important duties.

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