

Egypt Dead and Alive

Archæology

JEAN CAPART, in *Lectures on Egyptian Art* (University of North Carolina Press):

Let us begin with their architecture. At once the idea of the colossal comes to our minds. We think of the pyramids, of the temples with their obelisks and their gigantic statues; we see the hypostyle halls with columns and architraves, the proportions of which surpass what has been executed in other countries. Assuredly, the idea of their constructors was to consecrate to the gods "Temples of Eternity"—as the texts say—capable of resisting all causes of destruction. Nevertheless—let us not forget this—these are but transpositions into stone of architectural forms realized in other materials for the houses and the palaces. Here it was granite, sandstone, limestone; there it was brick and wood which constituted the elements the architects combined. The misfortune is that they did not seek to create two distinct types of architecture to correspond to the essentially different characters of the materials they utilized.

To a considerable extent, the stone monuments are but the translation,

heavy and strained, of constructions destined for the living, which, being ephemeral, could not have sufficed to lodge the gods and the dead whose existence was to be eternal. The unbaked bricks have gone back to the earth; the wood has disappeared through the action of time, of men, and even of ants. Once only, for the town of Tell el-Amarna, have special circumstances preserved the remains of habitations sufficient to allow of our studying the plan and making restorations in which fancy has no share.

These houses were constructed in the middle of large and beautiful gardens, with ponds and pleasure pavilions; the outbuildings, which included the warehouses, the work-shops, the granaries, and the servants' quarters, were grouped separately. For the master's dwelling a type had been adopted, which, frequently repeated with slight variations, had become the classical model of a comfortable residence.

If we glance at a plan, we shall be struck by its clearness, to a certain extent modern. The house with its verandas, its central hall, its suites of

rooms in which a bathroom is generally included; all that is well conceived and could still be used nowadays. The restorations of the hall, whether they be made by a German or an English archaeologist, are practically identical. They give an impression of airiness and gaiety very different from the feeling one experiences in the hypostyle halls of the temples, the columns of which thickset and crowded, left insufficient space between them. The doors which led from the hall into the principal rooms were often ornamented with open-work designs of which we have happily faithful copies sculptured in the stone of the tombs. In the upper part, carved ornamentations combined different designs: falcons' heads, tufts of papyrus, protective amulets, little columns; sometimes, but more rarely, figures of sphinxes or cats; the whole mixed with hieroglyphic inscriptions. The simplicity of the plan of these houses at once reveals a veritable science of architecture in a country where dwellings, long since, had passed beyond the stage of merely utilitarian construction.

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Study Mountains In the Making—*Continued*

scarcely touched the East Indies. The only exception of note is the important Dutch Siboga expedition of 1899, the object of which was largely zoological. The number of existing off-shore soundings is still very small for a region with such intricate relief. This becomes very clear if we compare the area with any mountainous district on land. It would be as if the relief of the Alps in Switzerland were known from only 40 to 50 date levels!

A new oceanographic expedition in the Moluccan seas is now in preparation under Commander P. M. van Riel, chief of the Oceanographic Section of the Netherlands Meteorological Institute at De Bilt, near Utrecht, with the support of the Home and Colonial Governments and several institutions and individuals. The funds have been secured to a sufficient amount to permit about 15 months of active work. The expedition is to leave early in 1929. It will use a newly launched surveying vessel of the Dutch Government, the "Willibrord Snellius".

In addition to an extensive program of physical, chemical and biological

research, particular stress will be laid on the configuration of the bottom and the sediments now being deposited there. In addition to the latest oceanographic sounding and sampling equipment and the biological outfit, the vessel will carry sonic sounding apparatus with which it is expected to make at least 10,000 new depth determinations, in order to obtain a reliable and fairly detailed map of the submarine topography of this most interesting region. It is planned that a submarine of the Dutch Navy will cooperate with the expedition, in order to make gravity observations at sea by the method developed by Prof. Vening Meinesz.

A geologist, Dr. Ph. H. Kuenen of Leiden, is added to the staff to assist in these observations, which promise to become of such paramount interest for the study of structural and sedimentary geology. Dr. H. Boschma will give special attention to the plankton in these regions and its relations to the bottom sediments.

The leader of the expedition and Dr. Kuenen have promised to cooperate with the committee in charge

of Project No. 4 of the research work undertaken by the American Petroleum Institute: the study of present-day sediments which can be considered as future source rocks of petroleum now being deposited. The members of this committee are Alex W. McCoy, Austin H. Clark, T. Wayland Vaughan, S. A. Waksman and W. A. J. M. van Waterschoot van der Gracht; research fellow is Parker D. Trask, assisted by C. C. Wu. The Moluccan seas, constituting a tropical region subject to both active sedimentation and contemporaneous diastrophism, is of the greatest possible interest for this research. Dr. Trask will cooperate with Dr. Kuenen in the study of the samples of bottom sediments to be taken by the expedition. Their organic contents and other characteristics of interest for the study of the genesis of petroleum will be determined. This promises to be a most valuable contribution to the work already performed by the committee around the North American continent and in the seas of Central America and Northern South America.

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