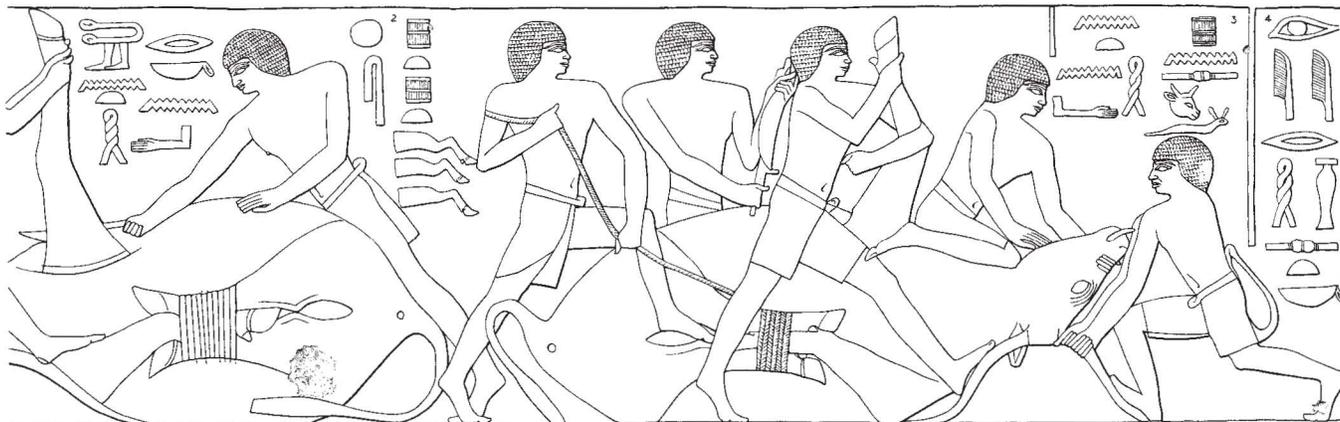


The Oriental Institute

# News & Notes

*Issued confidentially to members and friends*

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## ARTISTS IN EGYPT

An Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by artists employed by  
The Oriental Institute in Egypt, 1920-1935

by

John Carswell

Curator, Oriental Institute Museum

WHEN I CAME TO THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE last December, I noticed that many of the offices in the building were decorated with what appeared to be reproductions of Egyptian tomb paintings. A few weeks later, we had to take down the paintings in the Museum Office in order to repaint the walls, and I found that what I had thought was a color reproduction of a Nile boat with its crew was, in fact, an original watercolor by Nina M. Davies. Encouraged by this discovery, I checked on the other paintings in the Institute and found that many of them were originals too.

A little later still, in the process of reorganizing the office, we had to move a bulky metal cabinet; it was very heavy and, in order to do so, we had to empty it first. In this way, I came across more original paintings, this time by Amice M. Calverley and Myrtle F. Broome. There was also a large quantity of black-and-white line drawings, originally used as illustrations for

the Oriental Institute's publications of the Epigraphic Survey

The drawings and paintings were very fine, and we decided that they would make an interesting exhibition. Most of them, however, had been poorly framed, and a number had suffered from being hung in areas where they had been exposed to too much light. Then we came to frame them in a uniform style, we found that many of the paintings had been originally pasted on poor-quality board; although it has not been possible to do anything about it at this stage, at some future date it will be necessary to attempt the delicate task of removing them from their supports and mounting them on acid-free stock. As a preliminary step, we have replaced all old mats and backings with acid-free material. Collecting the paintings in order to reframe them has given us the opportunity to make a detailed inventory and identify the artists and the sub-

jects. Many of the paintings have notes made by the artists on the back of the sheets about the condition of the subjects they were copying.

All of this information has been included in the illustrated catalogue, which is being produced to accompany the exhibition. At the same time, I have tried to investigate the exact role played by the artists in the organization of the Epigraphic Survey and relate it to the larger subject of the visual response of artists to the Near East over the centuries. I was fortunate in having Charles F. Nims and George R. Hughes close at hand—in fact, almost next door—for both of them have had first-hand experience working in the field with the artists employed by the Oriental Institute for the Survey, and they were able to give me much valuable information about the methods which were used to record the material. They have also both published accounts of the techniques which were developed, providing a valuable insight into the working methods involved.

In Egypt, a special method was devised to record the elaborate series of carvings and hieroglyphs on the ancient monuments, which made use of the skills of Egyptologists, photographers, and artists. This collaboration has been neatly summed up by Harold Nelson in his introduction to the first volume of *Medinet Habu*; he says, "The ideal recording system...must unite in one record three things: the speed and accuracy of the camera, the reading ability of the experienced orientalist, and the drawing skill of the accurate draughtsman." Exactly how these three talents were combined may be briefly described here. First, a large photograph was made of the

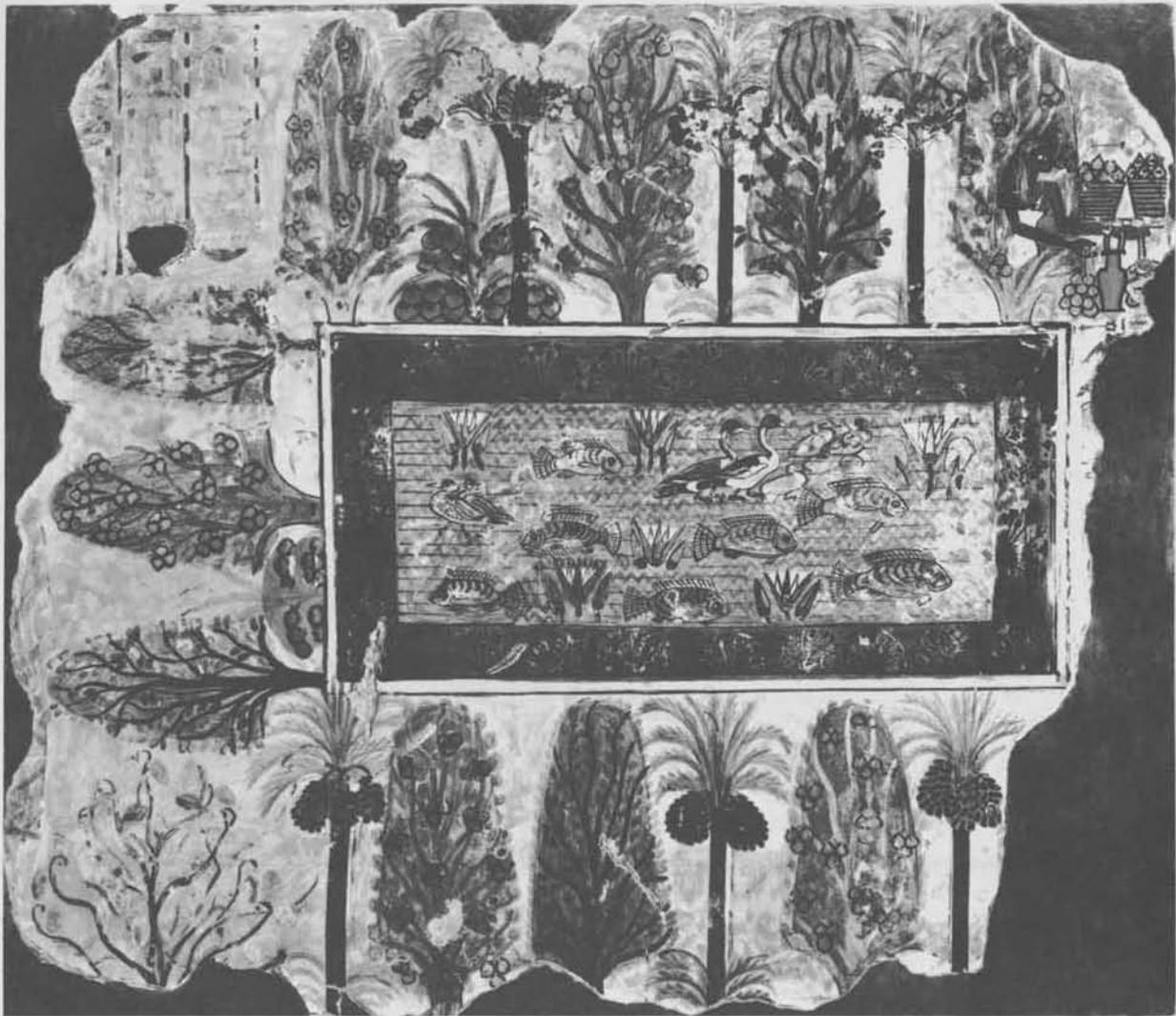
subject to be copied and printed on matt white paper. This photograph was taken by the artist to the site, where he pencilled in the details. Later he inked them over in the studio. The photographic background was then bleached out, leaving the artist's drawing, which was then copied as a blueprint. The blueprint was cut up, and the pieces were pasted onto sheets of paper. These sheets were taken by the Egyptologist back to the site, where they were checked twice for corrections against the original. The corrections were then incorporated by the artist into the original drawing and the final version used for publication.

Besides the black-and-white drawings, many tomb paintings and painted reliefs were copied in full color. Here a different technique was used, relying more on the artist's ability to reproduce the character of the originals. In this respect the paintings of three women—well represented in the present exhibition—are outstanding; Nina M. Davies, Amice M. Calverley and Myrtle F. Broome were all highly-gifted artists. Whereas Nina Davies was a master at capturing the spontaneous quality of the tomb paintings, Amice Calverley and Myrtle Broome were particularly skilled at conveying the taut finely-drawn quality of the painted reliefs.

In the process of assembling the paintings for the exhibition, I remembered that Charles K. Wilkinson, formerly Curator of Near Eastern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York had begun his distinguished career as just such an artist in Egypt. He had been a student at the Slade School of Art just after the First World War and had



*Tutankhamun Hunting Lions*, detail of a watercolor painting by Nina M. Davies



*The Pool in the Garden*, painting by Nina M. Davies

gone out to Egypt as a young man to copy tomb paintings. I contacted him and found that he was already engaged in his own research on artists working in the Near East, and by curious coincidence, was also gathering material in order to write about it. He was just off to England to interview one of the survivors of an earlier generation of Egyptologists and to look at the work of the pioneer 19th century Egyptologist, Sir Gardiner Wilkinson. Again, by coincidence, the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford has recently mounted an exhibition of Sir Gardiner Wilkinson's drawings.

Charles Wilkinson has generously consented to come to Chicago and give a lecture on the results of his research immediately upon his return from Europe. This will take place at the opening of the exhibition at 7:30 P.M. in Breasted Hall, on May 17th; the title is *Western Artists in Egypt in the 1920's*.

I mentioned the fact that Mr. Wilkinson was coming to Dr. George Hughes, who informed me that he and his wife possess two oil paintings done by Charles Wilkinson at Thebes in the thirties. They have kindly consented to lend them to the exhibition, and in this way we will be able to confront our lecturer with two examples of his own early work! Also on loan to the exhibition are two original watercolors by Howard Carter, belonging to Professor Edward F. Wente. We also hope to include examples of the photographs, blueprints, and annotated drawings to show exactly how the drawings were produced that formed the basis for the work of the Epigraphic Survey. The exhibition is intended to give the general public an insight into the methods used in field recording and the part that the artists played in this undertaking. As the Oriental Institute is fortunate in possessing some of their finest work, it should also be a very attractive show.

ART TREASURES OF PERSIA

Sponsored by

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

In Iran, a three-day bus drive from Teheran will allow tour members to see the excavations near Qazvin, the 6th-century B.C. reliefs of Darius at Behistun, the Seleucid-Parthian temple of Kangavar, the impressive mound of Nush-i Jan, Chogha Zanbil, largest and best preserved of the temple towers, the archeological site of Haft Tepe, and Susa, one of the capitals of the Achaemenian Kings of Persia.

The tour is scheduled to stay two days at Persepolis, allowing ample time for the grandiose ruins, Naqsh-i Rostam tombs of Achaemenian Kings and that of Cyrus at Pasargadae, as well as the ruins of the Islamic city of Istakhr and the fine Sassanian reliefs of Naqsh-i Rostam.



The highlights of Shiraz and Isfahan and Teheran will be visited, and an optional trip to the Caspian Sea will terminate the sixteen-day long Art Treasures of Persia, under the guidance of our guest lecturer, Paul E. Zimansky, whose knowledge of Iran and its ancient history will bring alive all sites visited.

The cost of the tour from Chicago is:

\$2,885.00

and includes air transportation, hotel accommodations (deluxe in Teheran and Isfahan, first-class in Shiraz, best available in Hamadan and Ahwaz), most meals and a tax-deductible contribution to the Oriental Institute of \$300.00 per person.

The tour group will fly to and from Iran via New York. Stopovers in London for members of the tour (minimum of 5 persons) can be arranged at the additional cost of \$15.00 per stopover plus land accommodations.



Art Treasures of Persia departs Sunday, October 22, and returns Tuesday, November 7, 1978. If you wish to join us for this marvelous journey, please return the following reply coupon with your deposit of \$250.00 per person. The group is limited to 30 persons.

**THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE**

The University of Chicago, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637

Attn: Bernard A. Lalor

Please enroll me in the Art Treasures of Persia, departing October 22, 1978.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Business \_\_\_\_\_ Residence \_\_\_\_\_

\* I will be accompanied by: (If children, please give ages) NAME \_\_\_\_\_

\* I wish to share hotel accommodations with: NAME \_\_\_\_\_

\* I am enclosing the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as my deposit.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send me the detailed itinerary.

ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE.

The Oriental Institute cordially invites you to attend a lecture:

MUMMIES AND MAGIC: AN INTRODUCTION TO ANCIENT EGYPTIAN  
FUNERARY BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

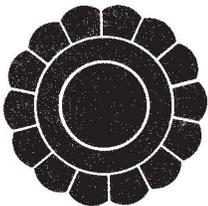
by Lanny D. Bell  
Director, Chicago House

Monday, May 22

8:00 P.M.

Breasted Hall  
1155 E. 58th Street

*(The Quadrangle Club, 1155 East 57th Street, will be open to Oriental Institute members who wish to make dinner reservations. Please call Mrs. Schlender, 493-8601. Please remember that the privilege of the use of the dining room at the Quadrangle Club is a courtesy extended to members of the Oriental Institute only on nights when there is an Oriental Institute lecture.)*



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