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difficulties which the Egyptians overcame increases admiration for their artistry. The chapter is divided into short sections on each craft; these are the portion of the guide most likely to be useful during an actual tour of the collection. Roman and Christian Egypt are concisely and lucidly treated in the final chapter by Mr. Shore. A list of the principal kings of Egypt, the names of the majority of whom are drawn out in hieroglyphs by Mr. James, and a full and accurate index, close the volume.

Thus the new guide treats in a logical order and an integral manner of those aspects of ancient Egyptian civilization about which any interested person might most reasonably wish to be informed. Though, through circumstances beyond the authors' control, it is not as full as its predecessor, its scope is adequate, and it benefits from advances in knowledge since the publication of Dr. Hall's edition. The factual information is, as one would expect, reliable. Many of the matters of greatest interest to the general reader are however questions, not of fact, but of the interpretation of facts. Here scholars disagree; and it must be admitted that there are views expressed in this work to which certain Egyptologists would take strong exception. However, where disagreement exists, all that the authors of a short general work of this character can do is to select from current interpretations or advance their own, and ensure that their work is self-consistent. This they have done; and those who read the book and study the collections with its aid will be inspired to pursue their interest in the ancient Egyptians, and will discover for themselves the many fascinating controversies which exist concerning them.

We therefore welcome this introductory guide and recommend it to the public, whose heritage the splendid collection of Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum is. In particular we hope that it will be used by students and teachers to bring to life the exhibits in the cases. It is to be feared however that the price (10s. 6d.), though reasonable in comparison with commercial productions of similar scope and format, may be just a little more than most schoolchildren can afford or be induced to spend, however enthusiastic they may be. Clearly the authors have done everything in their power to keep the price down, by curtailing the text, by avoiding hieroglyphic type, by re-using old blocks for the plates, and by binding in paper covers. It seems a pity that they should be reduced to such stints, and that in the interests of true education such publications cannot be more heavily subsidized by the Treasury.

H. S. SMITH

Gli scavi italiani a El-Ghiza (1903). By SILVIO CURTO. Centro per le Antichità e la Storia dell'Arte del Vicino Oriente. Monografie di Archeologia e d'Arte I. Pp. 110, 47 figs., 39 pls. Rome 1963. No price given.

In 1903–1904 an Italian expedition under Professor Ernesto Schiaparelli began excavations at a number of sites in Egypt, including the extensive Old Kingdom necropolis round the Great Pyramid of which Francesco Ballerini took charge. The following winter, however, Schiaparelli transferred his activities to the more profitable area of the Valley of the Queens at Thebes, the objects discovered were deposited in the museum at Turin, and the Giza concession was taken over by the German–Austrian and Harvard–Boston expeditions; the results of this brief but fruitful season have, however, remained unpublished ever since. In recent years the entire necropolis has been dealt with in great detail by Reisner, Junker, Selim Hassan, and others, and now this small remaining gap has at last been filled by the researches of Dr. Curto. His task has been a very arduous one, the only sources available being Schiaparelli's meagre notes consisting of lists of objects with no details or inscriptions, and a summary description by Ballerini with plans and copies of some of the monuments. By a careful study of this scanty material and comparison with actual objects in the museum, Dr. Curto has succeeded in equating almost all the mastabas concerned with those in Reisner's plans of the necropolis, and in giving a complete account of the tombs and objects discovered.

The Italian excavations at Giza were confined to four separate sites: the Mortuary Temple of Cheops, two sets of mastabas east of the Great Pyramid, and a strip in the central part of the Great West Cemetery which yielded practically all the false doors and relief fragments recorded and studied here. The Mortuary Temple itself proved a disappointment, and it was left to later expeditions to explore and to attempt to reconstruct the building and its causeway.

Dr. Curto's excellent publication is admirably produced. At the beginning is an interesting history of the rich collection of Egyptian antiquities in the Turin Museum from the time of Drovetti in the early nineteenth

century, and a useful account of the successive excavating expeditions in the cemeteries at Giza during the last sixty years. This is followed by line drawings taken from Ballerini's manuscript, photographs of the museum objects, and a translation with commentary of the inscriptions. Very full indexes complete the volume, which is a valuable addition to our knowledge of Old Kingdom monuments.

ROSALIND MOSS

The Records of a Building Project in the Reign of Sesostri I. Papyrus Reisner I. Transcription and Commentary by WILLIAM KELLY SIMPSON. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1963. Folio. Pp. 142, pls. frontispiece + 31 colotype + 23 lithographic (transcriptions). Price not given.

Whilst excavating at Nagr ed-Deir in 1904 for the University of California Dr. G. A. Reisner found four papyrus rolls lying on a coffin in a Middle Kingdom tomb. Eventually these papyri were sent to Berlin to be unrolled and restored by Dr. Ibscher. By the outbreak of war in 1939 only one had been sent back to the United States and is the subject of this book. Happily the other three have survived in Germany and these also it is hoped to publish in due course.

Papyrus Reisner I contains, on both the recto and the verso, only accounts, largely in a disorderly scatter both as regards subject-matter and date. To me they give the impression of being the result of collecting together material from the day-to-day records that must have existed, for the purpose of writing up a finished report to the appropriate authorities justifying the expenditure in labour and rations incurred.

These accounts belong to the early part of the Twelfth Dynasty. Some are dated in years 24 and 25 of an unnamed king, probably Sesostri I. The hieratic in which they are written thus falls between that of the Hekanakhte papers and that of the papyri from Illahun, presenting in consequence a valuable palaeographic record. 15 pages are devoted to tables displaying the forms of the signs, thus making all the evidence readily available for use.

The individual accounts have been labelled in sequence from A to Q, but are discussed in four groups, to each of which a chapter is devoted.

The first group (A, B, D, P) although comprising four accounts reduces, in effect, to two because D and P contain mainly material which is reused in B. Account A tells how many men were at work each day over a 122-day period extending from the first month of Inundation to the first month of Winter. Account B deals with the same period but gives the names of the individuals involved, how many days each worked, and other dates applicable to each case. For 34 days the work was at Koptos. Then it removed to Per-Kay for the remaining 88 days. The situation of Per-Kay is unknown but it appears to have been at no great distance south of Koptos. All looks straightforward. Nothing should be simpler than to draw up a table showing the number of men at work daily, from account A, and who they were, from account B. Especially should this be true of the supplementary gang which worked during the last 61 days of the period and for which the relevant figures are preserved largely intact. In fact it proves quite impossible to do this. I have tried several methods without success. Simpson, facing the same difficulties, suggests certain possible explanations but has no real solution. It is clear that these accounts, for all their apparent simplicity, contain factors which are not understood at all.

The ordinary men involved are referred to as *hbsw* which Simpson renders, confessedly without elegance, as 'enlistees': I would prefer 'the enrolled'. These particular *hbsw* are further described by the word *my* suggested to mean 'labourers', 'fieldhands', which seems likely enough. The activities of these men are divided between 'what he spent upon the road', 'what he spent upon the project (?) (*mhw*)', and 'what he spent fleeing (*wrrw*)'. The first of these is, of course, obvious, but the others occasion great uncertainty. The meaning suggested for *mhw* is a guess. If the word could be derived from the verb *mh* 'to fill', one of the meanings of which is 'set about', 'begin' doing something,¹ then *mhw* would be 'what has been set about'. This would support Simpson's plausible meaning 'project'. Unfortunately the spelling and the determinative of the word are rather against such a derivation. *Wrrw*, literally 'fleeing', is the most awkward of all. Few workers complete the entire period, some do nothing at all, but in what sense are they 'fleeing'? Simpson writes at length upon the matter, but is unable to reach any definite conclusion. Some specialized

¹ Caminos, *Late Eg. Misc.*, p. 97; Faulkner, *Concise Dict. of M.E.*, p. 113.