Review

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NOTICES OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Beschreibung der Aegyptischen Sammlung des Niederländischen Reichsmuseums der Altertümer in Leiden, XI: *Mumiensärge des Neuen Reiches, Vierte Serie*. By Dr P. A. A. BOESER. 8 pp. 15 photographic plates. Haag, Nijhoff, 1920. Price, 25 Gulden.

The Government of the Netherlands was early in the field to form a National collection of Egyptian antiquities. The foundation was laid in 1825 by purchases at the sale of Henry Salt's collection in London; two entire collections of moderate size were added in 1826 and two years later the highly important collection made by Signor Anastasy, the Danish Consul-General at Alexandria. Since those earliest days the growth has been slow. For some years there was no place in which the accumulated treasures could be housed. At length a substantial building was acquired, and in the summer of 1838 the Museum was opened to the public. Meanwhile Leemans, one of the earliest followers of Champollion, had succeeded to Reuvens, the first custodian, in 1835, and was destined to preside over the museum for no less than fifty-six years. Not only were the antiquities carefully classified in the new galleries and a useful guide published, but, wondrous to relate, a systematic publication was begun in 1839 which in the course of Leemans' long life gave to the outside world of scholars almost the entire contents of the museum in stately volumes of coloured and outline drawings. For no other large collection is such a record to be found except the vast Cairo catalogue, which was not commenced till 1904, more than sixty years after the *Leyden Monuments*. It was a wonderful enterprise and of high value to students of Egyptian antiquities, inscriptions and papyri.

Leemans died in 1891 and was succeeded by Pleyte, who was followed in 1903 by Dr Boeser, the present custodian. Under his rule there has been a thorough reorganization of the collection resulting in a particularly clear and admirable display of its treasures in the best light. The old method of publication, remarkable though it was for the time, was through the medium of somewhat inartistic and coarse drawings which often contrast strangely with the fine workmanship of the originals; Dr Boeser, first a directorial assistant in the museum of antiquities under the direction of Dr Holwerda, and then independently as keeper of the Egyptian section, inaugurated a new system of publication in which the fullest advantage was taken of photography. In 1905 the first volumes of this character reproduced an important demotic papyrus of moral sayings, and, in a very large *format*, the whole of the monuments of the Old Empire including a mastaba-chapel and some very early and remarkable statues. They have been followed since 1908 by annual portfolios of convenient size, each containing a number of photographic plates of the finest quality with a few pages of concise description. By 1915 the statues, stelae, sculptured slabs, shrines and other substantial monuments in stone had been completely published.

The museum possesses a number of exceptionally fine wooden coffins and cartonnages—stuccoed, painted and then varnished—dating from the New Kingdom or later, and these were chosen for the continuation of the series. The present volume forms the fourth instalment of these coffins. In it eight are described, all from the Anastasy collection. Twelve plates are devoted to the coffin of the Theban priest 'Ankhaf[n]khons, the lid, back, sides and interior of which are covered with symbolic representations, inscriptions and scenes from the Book of "That which is in the Underworld (Tei)," finely executed. For the details here, as often elsewhere, it is necessary to compare the old copies in Leemans' publication, which also offers a sample of the colouring. Next come three nested coffins of Pnehasi (Phinehas), a priest with many titles, son of Zekhonsef'onkh. These are fully represented in the old publication together with Phinehas' canopic vases and the portable case in which the vases were put; a photographic plate in the new series however is devoted to the neatly decorated mummy-cartonnage. The last two plates represent the cover of the inner coffin and the mummy-cartonnage of a woman, Ta-choire(?), whose two coffins also are preserved in the museum. Neither of these had been published before. Visitors to the charming and old-fashioned town of Leyden should not fail to spare a day for the examination of the Egyptian collection.

F. LL. GRIFFITH.

14—2