

NEWS OF ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS

American Research Center in Egypt

The American Research Center in Egypt, the only private North American organization devoted exclusively to scholarly research in Egypt, is a non-profit, tax-exempt consortium of 26 universities and museums. Founded in 1948, the ARCE, through both its U.S. headquarters (Princeton) and its Cairo Center, funds research on topics spanning all periods of Egyptian history and civilization, from the earliest times to the present. Its broad aims, in addition to promoting scholarly research, are to train American specialists in Near Eastern Studies in academic disciplines that require familiarity with Egypt, to disseminate knowledge of Egypt and, thereby, a better understanding of the entire Near East, and to promote U.S./Egyptian cultural relations.

In pursuit of these goals, the ARCE:

- supports archeological projects conducted by research teams under the direction of senior American scholars;
- a research fellowship program for dissertation students and post-doctoral scholars; and
- special historical and literary projects.

Each spring an Annual Meeting is convened in the U.S., providing a forum in which ARCE members and Fellows can share the results of their research. While projects in archeology and Egyptology provided the focus for the ARCE's work during the first two decades of its history, research in medieval Islamic studies, as well as the social sciences and the humanities, are now also being supported. Each of these areas of scholarship will continue to be encouraged as long as the research climate permits and the funds exist.

Scope

The American Research Center in Egypt enjoys a broad base, both as a professional society in North America actively promoting scholarship on Egyptian studies and as the major American base for advanced work in Egypt itself. The responsibilities of the Cairo Center include:

- assisting archeological and scientific expeditions by renewing existing concessions annually and negotiating new ones;
- expediting the entry and exit of archeological equipment and objects through customs;
- assisting in the local purchase of supplies;
- storing and maintaining precision instruments and motor vehicles;
- assuring that all expenditures by expedition directors conform to the terms of the contracts by which the program is funded;
- dispensing stipends to ARCE grant recipients;
- assisting Fellows in obtaining work permits, residence visas and living quarters, and expediting their access to research institutions in Egypt;
- arranging an orientation program of lectures and trips to historic sites and maintaining a reference library for their use;
- maintaining close liaison with the appropriate Egyptian government agencies, including primarily the Ministry of Culture (of which the Department of Antiquities is a part), the Ministry of Education, and the Cultural Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- replying to an increasingly large number of requests for infor-

- mation from non-ARCE sources; and
- receiving hundreds of visitors to the Center each year, most of whom require information or assistance.

Organization

ARCE's academic consortium is composed of 26 Research Supporting Member institutions and Institutional Members, who contribute limited dollar support—\$2,500 and \$500, respectively—to the association annually. ARCE also maintains seven categories of individual membership as follows:

Membership Category	Yearly Dues
Student (full-time)	\$ 20
Regular (residents of U.S. and Canada)	25
Regular (residents of foreign countries)	30
Contributing	50
Supporting	100
Sustaining	250
Patron	\$500

At present, total individual membership—which is open to all those interested in the study of Egyptian culture and civilization—numbers approximately 650.

Affairs of the American Research Center in Egypt are directed by a Board of Governors, which includes leading U.S. and Canadian scholars in Middle Eastern affairs. The majority of the Governors is elected by the general membership and the others are appointed by the institutions that qualify as Research Supporting Members. An Executive Committee, elected from their number by the Board of Governors, supervises the general operations of the Center. These operations are conducted by officers elected by the Board of Governors: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Assistant Treasurer. The Executive Committee appoints the U.S. and the Cairo Directors.

Relations with Host Country

Relations between the ARCE and the host country are excellent. Even in the days when political and diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Egypt were severely strained, neither the staff nor the Fellows of the Cairo Center experienced special security or related problems. For example, during the exodus of Western—and particularly U.S.—institutions from Egypt in June 1967, the ARCE closed its Center for only two days and immediately thereafter resumed its operations. In 1974, a protocol was signed between the ARCE and the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department of Cultural Relations & Technical Cooperation), establishing its fellowship program on a permanent basis. This Protocol had the additional effect of greatly facilitating access of ARCE Fellows to museums, libraries, archives and other places of research.

The improved climate between the governments of Egypt and the U.S. in recent years has enabled the ARCE to sponsor an increasing number of collaborative projects on both an individual and a group scale. The establishment of the positions of adjunct Egyptian professors at the Cairo Center, for example, allows ARCE scholars considerable access to their Egyptian counterparts and institutions. Many ARCE projects—in

archeology, cataloging, editing, publishing and restoration work—involves the active participation of Egyptians. And, finally, the ARCE has recently extended fellowship support to a limited number of Egyptian students on the doctoral level. These Egyptian Fellows are selected in such fields as those represented by American senior scholars resident at the Cairo Center in a given year.

Funding

Support for research abroad is provided by the Smithsonian Institution's Special Foreign Currency Program and by the Department of State's former Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, now the International Communication Agency. Moneys from these two sources are transmitted to the ARCE's Cairo Center in the form of Egyptian counterpart funds, under Public Law 480. In addition, the ARCE is the recipient of a dollar grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for research fellowships to senior scholars.

While salaries and operational expenses of the Cairo Center are covered by an excess currency grant from the Smithsonian Institution, the U.S. operation of the ARCE at Princeton depends almost exclusively on the annual dollar support of its individual, institutional and corporate members. These moneys are required to meet continuing administrative, staff, publications, annual meetings, and overhead costs. The Princeton office publishes a quarterly *Newsletter*, as well as the annual scholarly *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*. ARCE members receive both these publications regularly.

Grants from the Smithsonian Institution, in Egyptian currency, have represented approximately 75% of the ARCE's total annual foreign currency budget to date. State Department and NEH awards for fellowships abroad have accounted for roughly 15 and 5%, respectively. Annual dollar gifts and membership dues constitute only 5% of the combined, overall budget.

The question of continued support from Egyptian counterpart funds is the most critical one for us at this time. According to 1978 estimates, something in the neighborhood of \$93 million (in its Egyptian pound equivalency) remained unobligated in the U.S. government's account. The tremendous increase of U.S. activity in Egypt during the past six years has caused these funds to plummet to dangerously low levels. Thus, the major and most significant problem confronting the ARCE is that Egypt is soon to be taken off the "excess currency" list. The well, quite simply, is about to dry up. The responsibility now rests with the Office of Management and Budget, in concert with the Department of State and Treasury, to issue the final allocations to the ten or so specialized agencies (including the Smithsonian Foreign Currency Program), which have enjoyed the use of PL-480 funds. The amount which is earmarked for the Smithsonian—which, as we have stated earlier, has been supplying us with about 75% of our own overseas research funds—will represent its "final" share for the next two to three years. This, combined with the increasing scarcity of dollars required to support our U.S. office and related activities, weighs most heavily on our minds at present. There remains little doubt that the ARCE must seriously seek and secure alternate sources of funding if future research activity of the kind we have supported for 30 years in Egypt is to continue.

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