In Memoriam

Rudolf Anthes

David O'Connor

Dr. Rudolf Anthes died peacefully on January 5th, 1955, in West Berlin. He was 89 years old. Dr. Anthes was Curator Emeritus of the Egyptian Section, University Museum, and Professor Emeritus in the Department of Oriental Studies, University of Pennsylvania.

Rudolf Anthes arrived in the United States in September 5th, 1950. He was met at the airport in New York by Henry Fischer, a graduate student from the University of Pennsylvania who had been sent to escort the emeritus scholar to Philadelphia. Fischer was Anthes’s student and later a friend and colleague, but, he recalls, this first contact somehow unnerving. Anthes seemed very German indeed, and not of the old school. Having lost the sight of one eye in the First World War, he wore a monocle, and he also had a guard. However, as the photographs seen here show, Anthes soon adopted a more American appearance and, although he was indeed a serious and formal person, a certain lightheartedness that won him many friends in the Museum and elsewhere in the University. From 1931 to 1943 he was Curator of the Museum’s Egyptian Section and Professor of Egyptology in the Department of Oriental Studies, and oversaw the research of Henry Fischer and Alan Schulman, the recipients of the first two Ph.D.s in Egyptology ever awarded by the University of Pennsylvania.

As for that slightly forbidding garb, it was a small sign of a strong character that had been severely tested during the eleven years preceding Anthes’s arrival in Philadelphia. Fischer learned that the beard was intended to show his fellow Berliners that he was indeed of the old school, and not pro-Nazi, and it was not merely a token symbol. By 1939 Anthes had been for several years Acting Director of the Egyptian Museum in Berlin, responsible for the greatest collections of ancient Egyptian art and archaeology, and was a well-known scholar. But he was also opposed to any form of totalitarian government, and he was ousted from the Museum as anti-Nazi in 1939, arrested and fined. He continued to work at the Museum from 1941 to 1943, but so secretly that he was compelled to serve as a low-grade customs official in Czechoslovakia from 1943 to 1945. In the terrible days following the collapse of Nazi Germany, Anthes was also imprisoned for several months by the Russians in 1945.

Subsequently, Anthes was re-appointed Director of the Egyptian Museum, located in what had become East Berlin, and held that post until 1950. Given his beliefs, however, he was not sympathetic to the political regime of the German Democratic Republic, and he was happy to accept the invitation of Friedhelm Raddatz and Ephraim Speser to join the University of Pennsylvania. Anthes enjoyed his years in the United States and seriously considered becoming a citizen. Unfortunately, this was a period when distinguished Americans were denied passports to travel abroad because of their political beliefs. This reminded Anthes unerringly of repression he had encountered elsewhere, and he decided to retain his German citizenship. In 1963 he was thus able to retire to West Berlin where he continued to live an active and productive life, although death overtook him at the death of his wife Agatha, whom he had married in 1947 and who preceded him in death.

The University Museum and the Oriental Studies Department were indeed fortunate to have secured Anthes’s services, for he was one of the outstanding Egyptologists of this century, born in 1867 in Schwerin in Mecklenburg. Anthes had served in the German army from 1914 to 1918 and then dedicated himself to theoretical work and later to Egyptological studies, receiving his Ph.D. in 1923. Germany’s defeat left it with a leading center for Egyptological research and training, and Anthes was particularly fortunate in studying under Adolf Erman, one of the greatest of Egyptologists. Erman’s approach to ancient Egypt was extremely comprehensive, covering history, religion, literature, and daily life, and although Anthes himself was particularly interested in Egyptian religion, as a scholar and museum curator he too had to learn how to draw upon all aspects of Egyptian culture that probably owed much to Erman’s influence.

Anthes’s subsequent career exposed him to all major facets of Egyptological research, so that his scholarship was continually being enriched by new experiences. After receiving his Ph.D., he spent seven years as an Assistant on the staff of the Berlin Dictionary of Ancient Egyptian, a multi-volume reference work based on a minute analysis of all types of Egyptian texts that is still the fundamental resource for all serious philological study of Egyptian material. Given this experience, it is not surprising that Anthes was an excellent Philologist, deeply familiar with the complex literary data on ancient Egypt, but his knowledge went far beyond that. From 1927 to 1929 he was an Assistant at the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, and so had the opportunity of experiencing at first hand the unique Egyptian environment that so profoundly shaped the ancient Egyptian culture, and of becoming familiar with the archaeological sites. Later, in 1931–32 and 1932–33, he participated in the excavations of Uvo Hölscher for the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago at Medinet Habu, the exceptionally well preserved mortuary temple of pharaoh Ramesses III near Luxor.

Much of Anthes’s career, however, combined teaching and curatorial responsibilities, a tradition with which we are very familiar at The University Museum. Anthes became an Assistant at the Egyptian Museum in Berlin in 1929 and served there for 21 years, rising eventually as noted above to the position of Director, while from 1931 to 1937 he lectured in Egyptology at the University of Halle, and later taught Egyptology at Berlin University from 1945 to 1950. He was therefore well equipped to take up similar dual responsibilities at the University of Pennsylvania, where he re-installed some of the Museum’s exhibits on Egyptian art and archaeology, encouraged his students to carry out research on major unpublished Museum excavations at Deir el-Bahri and Memphis, and maintained a significant teaching schedule. Anthes by no means confined his activities to the Museum, and he became especially familiar to his distinguished colleagues in the Department of Oriental Studies through his enthusiastic participation in a graduate seminar “Interconnections of the Ancient Orient.” This course was maintained for some years and was a source of great intellectual stimulation and pleasure to faculty and students alike.

Dirk Bodde, Emeritus Professor of Chinese in the Oriental Studies Department, has described Anthes’s participation in the seminar. “When Professor Anthes came to Penn,” Bodde writes, he had not “ever had much previous experience in lecturing or even extensively speaking in English. This meant that his participation in the seminar was by no means easy, the more so because he was the one who always had to start with Egypt in the fall.” At each meeting, one faculty member made a presentation which was the subject of discussion. Sometimes, too, an atmosphere of rivalry could be detected between proponents of Egypt and of Mesopotamia . . . with regard to the chronological priority and cultural originality of their respective civilizations. Yet despite these obstacles, Anthes always succeeded in presenting his topic lucidly, convincingly and with unfailing good humor.”

Like other curators, Anthes also undertook excavations in Egypt on behalf of The University Museum, picking one of the most important but archaeologically most challenging sites, the ancient royal city of Memphis near Giza. This vast wasteland, devastated in part by farmers, who removed the nitrogenous soil to put on the fields as a kind of fertilizer, and in part by earlier, somewhat unsystematic excavations, intruded...
Upon modern villages and fields, and saturated close to the surface by a high watertable, had housed royal palaces and great temples since the Old Kingdom (from about the 26th century B.C.) and Anthis typically chose it from a sense of responsibility. It is the ruins in the cultivated land and those monuments which are already uncovered that we have to look to first of all," he wrote. During the course of two seasons' work (1955, 1956), Anthis excavated a small temple of pharaoh Ramesses II as well as other structures and recovered many items of great archaeological interest. Prior to this, he had had little direct experience of excavation (at Medinet Habu he had concentrated on recording the site and he candidly admitted to some mistakes of technique and interpretation in the first season; but his correspondences and publications reveal that Anthis' powerful scholarly mind was rapidly grasping the archaeological techniques necessary to solve the major archaeological and historical problems of Memphis. "Only a coordinated system of horizontal and vertical cuts is adequate for the understanding of a site which has accumulated under changing living conditions in contrast to the consistent activity of wind and sand in the desert," he observed; and he was keen to continue work at the site. Circumstances beyond Anthis' control prevented this, but he published two volumes on Mit Rahineh (the modern name of the site) that presented the results in detail, accompanied by a characteristically learned and perceptive commentary.

These volumes were but two of a series of important books and articles that spanned Anthis' long career (and he was still publishing up to the year of his death). Anthis' writing covered many aspects of Egyptian language, culture, and history and included studies in German of the historically important tank inscriptions from the alabaster quarries of Hatnub in Middle Egypt, of the wisdom literature of ancient Egypt, and of masterworks of Egyptian art. To the general public in the English-speaking world he is best known through his contribution to the book Mytholo-

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**Dorset Shamanism**

**Excavations in Northern Labrador**

**CALLUM THOMSON**

**Introduction**

In 1977, a Dorset Eskimo site on Shuldhull Island in northern Labrador was found by a biologist intent on examining the flora of the richly-vegetated terrace on which the site stood. Upon noting several human-like depressions, he alerted his colleagues, archaeologists with the Smithsonian Institution/Bryn Mawr College Torgat Archaeological Project, and the site was tested. Evidence was found of an occupation that extended the known Dorset culture history of the region by several hundred years and suggested that this outer part of the coast was an important exploitation zone during the Middle and Late Dorset periods. In 1978, a short return visit to the site resulted in the excavation of three miniature soapstone figurines (see Fig. 4) associated with Late Dorset stone tools. During the summers of 1980 to 1982 and with the generous support of members of the Torgat Archaeological Project, I investigated two of the winter houses at this site, "Shuldhull Island 9."

**Excavation**

June 26

At times during the past 30 hours I had wondered whether we would be here on Shuldhull Island tonight. Late yesterday afternoon a representative from Petro-Canada, the company conducting exploratory work from drill rigs on the Labrador Shelf, called to inform us that there was room for our small archaeology crew on this morning's flight from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Sagleg Bay in northern Labrador. After a hectic night of final purchasing and packing, we hauled all our gear out to the airport and by 6:30 a.m. the Convair was climbing out of St. John's en route to Goose Bay, where we stopped briefly to pick up the rest of our five-person crew.

As we flew over the thick boreal

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[Image: View northeast over Shuldhull Island 9. House 1 on extreme left, House 2 to right.]