

Nora Elizabeth Scott 1905-1994 by David P. Silverman and Barbara S. Lesko

Nora Elizabeth Scott spent over forty years of her adult life in curatorial positions in the Department of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, but early in her career participated in excavations in Egypt and Syria. She retired from the Metropolitan Museum as Curator and Head of the Department in 1970.

Born in Prestwick Scotland on July 14, 1905, Nora moved with her family to Kingston, Ontario, Canada in 1908 where her father Ernest F. Scott had been appointed Professor of New Testament Literature at Queen's College. In 1919 the family moved to the United States when Professor Scott accepted the Edward Robinson Professorship of Biblical Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Nora was educated in New York City at the Horace Mann School and Barnard College, where she earned a B.A. in Classics.

Due to her interest in ancient Egypt, Nora sailed for England in 1927 and matriculated at Oxford University, as a student of the Egyptology professors F. Ll. Griffith and A.M. Blackman, under whom she earned a second Bachelors degree and then received a Master of Arts. She recalled those years in her tribute to Rosalind Moss for whose friendship and helpfulness she was immensely grateful.

Nora's first archaeological field experience was with the Egypt Exploration Society's expedition to Armant, south of Luxor, the season of 1929-30. Returning to New York with her newly acquired degrees and experience, she was given employment on the staff of the Metropolitan Museum's Department of Egyptian Art where her first job was

to deal with expedition photos: filing negatives, mounting and labeling their prints for archival use. She left the museum briefly in 1933 to join the archaeological expedition of Copenhagen's Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek at the site of Hama in Syria. She never married.

During her tenure at the museum, Miss Scott was responsible for recording the notes and registering the artifacts from the Department's expeditions in Egypt. Over the years, she organized a variety of exhibitions, and carefully analyzed the private tombs at Thebes that the Department had excavated. Her primary areas of interest were the artifacts of daily life and decorative arts such as jewelry, scarabs and seals. She was a frequent contributor to the *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (see bibliography below). Scott's publications on a wide variety of objects and topics are a testament to her expertise, and she frequently shared her knowledge in the many public lectures she delivered in New York and around the country. She was, for many years, the Secretary of the New York Society of the Archaeological Institute of America, ultimately serving as its President. She also taught, as an Adjunct Professor, at Columbia University for several years.

By 1968, Nora Scott had been appointed Department Head as Curator. In addition, she served as editor for several volumes in the Metropolitan Museum's monograph series. Miss Scott also compiled comprehensive notebooks on daily life in Ancient Egypt and exhaustive indices of the scarabs, seals, and names in the Department's collections. Over the years, these valuable research tools were frequently consulted by many scholars from both the United States and abroad. In 1972, Scott retired as Curator Emerita and a few years later moved to Crosslands at Kennet Square, Pennsylvania, where she died on April 4, 1994.

Publications by Nora E. Scott:

- 1942 "Egyptian Cubit Rods," *BMMA* N.S. 1, 70-75
- 1944 *The Home Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 1945 "The Lute of the Singer Har-Mose," *BMMA* N.S. 2, 159-63.
- 1946 *Egyptian Statuettes*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- 1947 "Egyptian Accession," *BMMA* N.S. 6, 62-65.
- 1948 "Memy-Sau and His Wife," *BMMA* N.S. 7, 95-100.
- 1949 "The Metternich Stela," *BMMA* N.S. 9, 201-17.
- 1950 "Two Statue Groups of the Vth Dynasty," *BMMA* N.S. 11, 116-22.
- 1956 "Recent Additions to the Egyptian Collection," *BMMA* N.S. 15, 79-92.
- 1957 "Amun-Hotpe the Magnificent," *BMMA* N.S. 15, 148-49.
- 1958 "The Cat of Bastet," *BMMA* N.S. 17, 1-7.
- 1961 "Two Reliefs of the Early Old Kingdom," *BMMA* N.S. 19, 194-97.
- 1962 "A Stela and an Ostrakon: Two Acquisitions from Deir el-Medineh," *BMMA* N.S. 21, 149-53.
- 1963 "Egyptian Jewelry," *BMMA* N.S. 22, 223-34.
- 1964 "Our Egyptian Furniture," *BMMA* N.S. 24, 129-50.
- 1969 "The White Hatshepsut," *The Connoisseur*, 213-20.
- 1970 Entries in *Metropolitan Museum of Art, Masterpieces of Fifty Centuries*.
New York: Dutton.
- 1971 Co-author, "Origin and Influence, Cultural Contacts: Egypt and the Ancient Near East and the Classical World," *BMMA* N.S. 29, 318-26.

1973 *Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.