
The Membership Program

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The membership program for 1976/77 was largely oriented to the Treasures of Tutankhamun Exhibit and this orientation was reflected in the topics of lectures, members' courses, and special events. We began with the special courses on Egyptology offered to members of both the Oriental Institute and the Field Museum of

Natural History. Last fall, Charles Francis Nims, professor emeritus in the Oriental Institute, presented a lecture course on the artistic and cultural milieu of the period of the Eighteenth Dynasty, "Tutankhamun and Egyptian Art of the Second Millennium." During the winter months, another lecture course, "Religion of Ancient Egypt," was offered by George R. Hughes, David P. Silverman, and James Allen, each lecturer presenting a different aspect of the religious beliefs of the Ancient Egyptians. In the spring, James Allen introduced members to the intricacies of Egyptian writing in "Reading Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs."

The Institute also greatly expanded its Egypt tour program with great success. In cosponsorship with the Field Museum, this year's program offered eight departures in January, February, and March. Each tour lasted eighteen days and visited the major sites of ancient Egypt in Cairo, Middle Egypt, Luxor, and Aswan, including a brief flight to the rescued temple of Abu Simbel and a cruise on the Nile River. In all 157 members participated in these tours and their contributions will greatly support the research work here. We are especially grateful to David P. Silverman for organizing the tour program and working out the exciting itineraries.

Our program also supplemented the main Tutankhamun Lecture Series made possible by the National Endowment for the Humanities. In December we showed the Time-Life film "Ancient Egypt" and in April Robert Anderson of the Egypt Exploration Society in London spoke on "Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt." The October issue of *News & Notes* contained a feature article on the identification of Queen Tiye's mummy by Edward F. Wente of the Oriental Institute and James R. Harris of the University of Michigan. Members also enjoyed the privilege of previewing both the Treasures of Tutankhamun Exhibit and the Institute's "The Magic of Egyptian Art" exhibition before they were opened to the public as well as free and preferential admission to the Tutankhamun exhibit during its stay in Chicago.

Lest we overemphasize the impact of Tutankhamun, we should remember that the membership program opened and closed this year with Mesopotamia. Last October, a special preview of the new Mesopotamian Hall of the Institute Museum was preceded by a preview dinner and a lecture by Edward L. Ochsenschlager, "Modern Marsh Arabs and Ancient Sumerians," a discussion of the modern inhabitants of the southern portion of Mesopotamia and their cultural affinities with the Sumerians. In June, the formal opening of the entire gallery featured a slide presentation by the acting curator Judith Franke, a preview of the gallery by members, and a

dinner in the museum sponsored by the Visiting Committee to the Institute. In November, C. J. F. Dowsett of the University of Oxford touched on another area of the Middle East in a lecture entitled "Armenian Miniature Painting in the 13th Century, A.D." On sudden notice another lecture was scheduled in November by Paolo Matthiae of the University of Rome who discussed the excavations at Tell Mardikh, Syria (ancient Ebla) and the important archeological and linguistic finds made there.

Still it was the Tutankhamun Exhibit and the special privileges attached to membership that were basically responsible this year for the great increase in members. At the end of June 1976 membership stood at 1550, increased during the next 12 months to 1850, and jumped to 2775 by August 15, 1977. We hope that all these new friends will find the coming year with us rewarding and enjoyable.

In closing I wish to remark that the scope of programs attending the Tutankhamun Exhibit was due to the initial inspiration and organization of our late curator Gustavus F. Swift who died before the success of his efforts was seen.