



## FRANTIŠEK LEXA AND THE NATIONAL MUSEUM IN PRAGUE

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*In 2005, the National Museum in Prague commenced a research project focused on the mapping of the relations of prominent personalities of Czech sciences and culture to the National Museum and on the assessment of their contribution to the development of the institution. The Department of Prehistory and Antiquity of the Near East and Northern Africa of the Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures joined the project with the objective to deal with the geniuses of Czech Egyptology František Lexa, Zbyněk Žába and Jaroslav Černý.*

*The connection of the mentioned personalities with the National Museum in Prague may be perceived not only in the terms of enrichment of the museum collections, within which it would be expressed by simply stating the number and assessing the cultural, historical or other value of the objects that came into the collections of the National Museum from private collections of the stated personalities, but also on a more profound level, on which a relation of a personality to a museum institution in the area of research, promotion and organisation becomes an important testimony to the possibilities, problems and priorities of scientific research in the field of Egyptology, and Oriental Studies in general, and to the overall awareness of and the interest of the society as a whole in the selected region at a particular period of time. By comparing the changing relations and connections of the selected three personalities with the National Museum at different times and under differing conditions for scientific research it is possible to come to the conclusion that the diversity of relations to and forms of co-operation with a museum institution in the case of the selected personalities shows an inverse proportionality to the conditions for scientific research in the field.*

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*The objective of this study is to elucidate the relation of František Lexa, the founder of Egyptology in Czechoslovakia, to the National Museum in Prague in the course of the first, formative phase of the history of Czechoslovak research on ancient Egypt.*

## František Lexa's scientific research on ancient Egypt

The work of František Lexa (1876–1960)<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 1) in the field of Egyptology constitutes the first, formative phase in the history of Egyptology in Czechoslovakia. František Lexa's Egyptological studies as well as his subsequent scholarly work in the field were far from straightforward and easy. Throughout his whole career, Lexa had to face a major problem, which consisted in the limited access to sources. At his time, Egyptian antiquities formed a minor part of the collection of the Museum Regni Bohemiae, which later became the National Museum in Prague, and otherwise were to be found in a few regional museums and private collections. In their majority, those were objects brought back from Egypt by individual travellers or acquired by occasional donations. They mostly lacked in information concerning the archaeological context and provenience, and thus made up a rather heterogenous collection with only little potential for study and elaboration.<sup>2</sup>

Besides the character of museum collections in Czechoslovakia at that time and the non-existence of a museum institution specialised in ancient cultures and devoted to the extending of collections

in a methodical and systematic manner, a major problem consisted in the non-existence of a specialised scientific institute that could get involved in archaeological excavations in Egypt, secure new source materials, and engage in a proper serious research into ancient Egyptian civilisation on the basis of such source materials. With no specialised



Fig. 1 – František Lexa as a young man (Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 688 – Photographs).

<sup>1</sup> Dawson, W. D. – Uphill, E. P. 1995. *Who was Who in Egyptology*. Revised edition by M. L. Bierbrier, London, p. 253; Suková, L. 2003. "Počátky výzkumu starého Egypta na české univerzitě", in: Onderka, P. (ed.), *Egypt za vlády faraonů*. Slováké muzeum v Uherském Hradišti, pp. 134–139; Verner, M. et al. 1989. *František Lexa, zakladatel české egyptologie*. Praha: AUC Philosophica et Historica 4 – 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Journals d'Entrées and records maintained in the archives of the Náprstek Museum's Department of Prehistory and Antiquity of the Near East and Northern Africa.

scientific institute and adequate conditions for scientific research, František Lexa was entirely dependent on the publications of his colleagues from abroad, which he could come by, however, only with a considerable delay and often even with great difficulty. The Egyptological Seminar established in 1925 could not fill the pressing gap, either. The stated difficulties in the scientific research are reflected in František Lexa's bibliography.<sup>3</sup>

František Lexa spared no effort to deal with the mentioned difficulties and obstacles to scholarly work by gradually building and extending the library at the Egyptological Seminar. Moreover, there is evidence, dating to the mid 1920s, of his attempts at establishing a collection of Egyptian art attached to the same Seminar.<sup>4</sup> At the beginning of 1930s, he enriched the resources of the Seminar with his extensive photographic documentation from his study trip to Egypt and with copies on photographs of fundamental publications that were meant to complement and enliven the university lectures. Lexa's own growth and progress in the field was facilitated by study trips to European cities, in the scope of which he got acquainted with new museum acquisitions, studied insufficiently published written documents, and in several cases even prepared texts from such museum collections for publication.<sup>5</sup> Lexa's study trips as well as his occasional publication of materials from the European museum collections were practicable merely on the basis of special single-purpose grants and supports granted by the Czechoslovak Ministry of School System and National Education and by the Office of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic.<sup>6</sup>

The mentioned single-purpose grants and supports enabled Lexa to engage in scholarly work and contributed to his professional growth, the very field of Egyptology, however, was developing at a rather slow pace. The Czechoslovak Republic lacked in the resources and possibilities of the great European countries, such as France, Germany and Great Britain, which would enable it to establish and operate specialised scientific institutes in the Orient. Nevertheless, it was necessary to represent and promote the Czechoslovak Oriental Studies in the Orient in one way or another. And that is why in 1930 František Lexa and Felix Tauer, both members of the Oriental Institute in Prague, a newly established institution dedicated to the promoting of economic, cultural and scientific relations with the countries of the Orient, presented a proposal to the Ministry of School System and National Education for the setting up of three positions of scientific and cultural attachés with the Czechoslovak embassies in the Orient, namely for northern Africa, the Near East, and India and Eastern Asia, to which Czechoslovak Orientalists or, as the case may be, other scholars or artists would be assigned or appointed on the basis of

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of the Office of the President of the Czech Republic, *Professor Lexa's File*, Inv. No. 984/23, and Archives of the Charles University, *Personal File of František Lexa*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 323 – *Lexa's correspondence with the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs*; and Archives of the Office of the President of the Czech Republic, *Professor Lexa's File for 1924*, rec. Nos. 452, 453, and 589 – note on the audience of Lexa with the Chancellor in the Office of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1924.

<sup>5</sup> He was familiar with the collections in Vienna, Munich, Berlin, and Paris. Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 20 – *Lexa's economic and property affairs*.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 20 – *Lexa's economic and property affairs*; Inv. No. 267 – *Lexa's correspondence with Přemysl Šámal*; and Inv. No. 309 – *Lexa's correspondence with the Office of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic*; and Archives of the Charles University, *Personal File of František Lexa*.

an employment relationship.<sup>7</sup> The objective of the proposed institution was, among other things, "to assist the country's Orientalists in their scientific work...; to study certain cultural phenomena, entrusted to the members of the institution, to explore libraries and archives; to draw attention to random opportunities beneficial to the country's institutions dedicated to sciences and art (such as purchases of books, manuscripts, period objects and objects of art); to purchase scientific objects and objects of art for institutions as well as individuals; to search for suitable sites for excavation, and to carry out such excavation."<sup>8</sup>

The benefit supposed to be brought by the proposed institution consisted, on the one hand, in allowing Czechoslovak Orientalists to reside in the countries of the Orient on a long-term basis under the auspices of the Czechoslovak state and, on the other hand, in promoting the Czechoslovak Republic in the Orient, and increasing the interest in the Orient in our country, together with creating the foundations of scientific, historic and art collections focused on the Orient, which were missing in our country at that time. The proposal went beyond the narrow definition of Egyptology and was presented from the point of view of the Oriental Studies as a whole. The significance of the proposal consisted in the idea of securing a consistent and common direction for the development of the Oriental Studies by incorporating some of the Orientalists within the framework of the bodies of the state, thus providing the necessary patronage and extending the possibilities of their scientific and other activities in the Orient. Nevertheless, the proposal failed to go through, and the Oriental Studies in Czechoslovakia, and Egyptology in particular, continued to develop at the previously established pace. In this context, Lexa's study trip to Egypt in 1930 and 1931 must be perceived as another failed attempt at extricating oneself from isolation and at getting involved in the international research in Egyptology.

The conditions for scientific research in the field of Egyptology in Czechoslovakia throughout Lexa's life did not make it possible for the field to overstep the boundaries of university environment and philological orientation, and necessarily called for intensive work in the sphere of teaching, organising, and promotion. By means of articles in Czechoslovak newspapers and magazines, which elucidated various aspects of life and culture of ancient Egyptians and informed of the latest discoveries and other achievements of Egyptology, by means of lectures and discussions organised for the public, which presented Egyptology as a quite topical branch of sciences, and by means of exhibitions, which made the public acquainted through the objects deposited in the museum collections with specific forms and expressions of ancient Egyptian civilisation and which were organised in the National Museum, Náprstek Museum and in other institutions that were thereby fulfilling the function of a platform for the dissemination of knowledge of ancient Egypt, it was possible to gradually build an awareness of ancient Egypt in the Czechoslovak public and to increase the interest of the whole society in the field. Once the interest sprung up, the field could begin growing and developing in the desired direction.

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 305 – *Lexa's correspondence with the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University*; and Inv. No. 684 – *Organisational and scientific work, Faculty of Arts, Charles University: Proposal for the setting up of the position of scientific and cultural attachés for the region of the Orient*; cf. also Archives of the Office of the President of the Czech Republic, *Slavonic and Oriental Institutes*, Part II, 1930–1931.

<sup>8</sup> See footnote 7 above.

Správní rok 1928

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# LEGITIMACE

P. T. Dr. Frant. Lexa  
v Praze XII.

Jest členem příspěv.

SPOLEČNOSTI NÁRODNÍHO MUSEA V PRAZE

Členský příspěvek 10 Kč 10 h splacen byl dne 6. III. 1928.

Jednatel: Dr. K. Domin

Za pokladníka:

S.

Podpis majitele legitimace:



A

Fig. 2 – Membership card issued in 1928 and certifying Lexa's contributor membership in the Society of the National Museum in Prague (Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 6 – Identity and membership cards).

1932. - LEGITIMACE

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P. T. Dr. František Lexa  
Praha XII. Mántsova 59

Jest členem činným

SPOLEČNOSTI NÁRODNÍHO MUSEA V PRAZE

Členský příspěvek 21 Kč 21 h splacen byl exp. 21. 12. 1. 32

Jednatel: Dr. K. Domin

Za pokladníka:

S.

Podpis majitele legitimace:

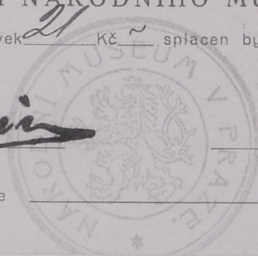


Fig. 3 – Membership card issued in 1932 and certifying Lexa's active membership in the Society of the National Museum in Prague (Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 6 – Identity and membership cards).

## Forms of František Lexa's co-operation with the National Museum

The relation of František Lexa to the National Museum seems to have been the strongest in the 1920s and at the beginning of the 1930s. At that time, Lexa was appointed an inspector of collections of the National Museum in Prague several times (between 1925 and 1931)<sup>9</sup> and designated a contributor (1928) and an active (1932) member in the Society of the National Museum in Prague (Figs. 2 and 3).<sup>10</sup> The mentioned membership in the institution fits into his overall activity at that time, which is noticeable in other spheres as well – in his associate membership in the Royal Society of Sciences (as from 1925),<sup>11</sup> regular membership in the Syndicate of Czech and Slovak Writers and Composers in Prague (as from 1927),<sup>12</sup> proposal for membership in the cultural and scientific section of the emerging Oriental Institute,<sup>13</sup> his subsequent appointment as a regular member in the same institution, and his long-term working within its framework (as from 1927).<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, from the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s and from the end of the 1950s we have evidence of intensive co-operation of František Lexa and his Egyptological Seminar in the framework of preparations of exhibitions in the Náprstek Museum of General Ethnography and in the National Museum in Prague. Those included the exhibition entitled *Egypt Ancient and New*, which was held in the Náprstek Museum in 1949 and the objective of which was to present the most beautiful objects from the collections of the museum,<sup>15</sup> and the exhibition entitled *Deir-el-Medina*, which was organised in the National Museum in 1950 and which offered a closer view of the everyday life of craftsmen and artists who had built and decorated the tombs of Egyptian kings in the New Kingdom.<sup>16</sup> In co-operation with Dr. Jiří Neústupný and his colleagues from the Department of Prehistory of the National Museum in Prague, Lexa prepared 500 off-prints of his article entitled "The life of the working classes in ancient Egypt"<sup>17</sup> for the purposes of the exhibition in order to offer more detailed information on the subject. From 1959, we have evidence of Lexa's involvement in the preparation of an exhibition entitled *Asia*, which was held in the Náprstek Museum and, to a certain extent, touched upon Egypt as well.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 328 – *Lexa's correspondence with the National Museum in Prague*.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 6 – *Lexa's identity and membership cards*.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 1 – *Lexa's identity papers*.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 1 – *Lexa's identity papers*.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 342 – *Preparatory committee for the economic and cultural relations with the Orient, Prague*.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 335 – *Lexa's correspondence with the Oriental Institute*, cf. also Archives of ASCR, *Oriental Institute*, box No. 4 and 11.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 515 – *Lexa's opening speech*.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 516 – *Lexa's opening speech*.

<sup>17</sup> Prague 1950, 23 pp, originally in *Nový Orient* 5 (1950): 205-209. Cf. also the Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 516 – *Lexa's opening speech*.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 328 – *Lexa's correspondence with the National Museum in Prague*.

The co-operation of František Lexa as an Egyptologist was not limited to the National Museum and Náprstek Museum but was pursued also with other museum and special-interest institutions, such as the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague,<sup>19</sup> Regional Museum of National History and Geography in Olomouc,<sup>20</sup> Archaeological Institute in Prague,<sup>21</sup> Czech and Slavonic Ethnographic Society,<sup>22</sup> and the Oriental Institute in Prague. The co-operation did not focus only on organising exhibitions, but also involved holding of lectures and discussions or producing of expert opinions and appraisals of individual Egyptian antiquities as well as whole collections,<sup>23</sup> whereby Lexa actually rendered services of a specialised museum institution, which was missing in his time.

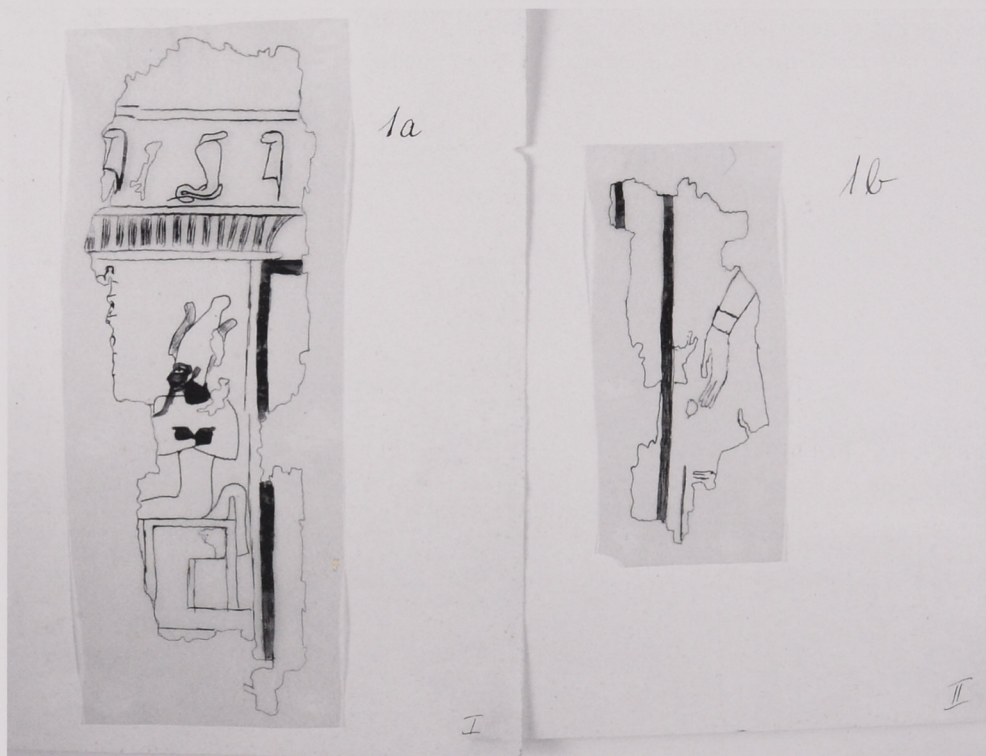


Fig. 4 – Lexa's drawing of two fragments of a papyrus from the collection of the Museum Regni Bohemiae made in 1907 and featuring the illustration to the 125<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of the Dead (Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 584 – *Fragments of an Egyptian papyrus from the collections of the Museum Regni Bohemiae*).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 349 – *Lexa's correspondence with the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague*.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 312 – *Lexa's correspondence with the Regional Museum of National History and Geography in Olomouc*.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 294 – *Lexa's correspondence with the Archaeological Institute in Prague*.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 330 – *Lexa's correspondence with the Czech and Slavonic Ethnographic Society*.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 687 – *Materials corroborating Lexa's performance of the duties of an expert in Egyptian antiquities*.

## František Lexa and the Czechoslovak collections of Egyptian art

At the time of Lexa's engagement in Egyptology, there was no museum institution in the Czechoslovakia, which would specialise in ancient cultures and which would also manage and extend the collections of Egyptian art in an appropriate manner. At the time under review, Egyptian antiquities formed part of the collections of the Department of Prehistory of the Museum Regni Bohemiae, which later became the National Museum in Prague, and could be also found in several regional museums and private collections.

Lexa got acquainted with the collections of the Museum Regni Bohemiae at the very beginning of his studies. In the scope of his own study in 1906 and 1907, he selected several objects bearing hieroglyphic texts from the collection, and in order to practise his knowledge of the language he studied and worked on the objects for his own purposes. Lexa proceeded from rough draughts, made in pencil concisely and with little care, to a

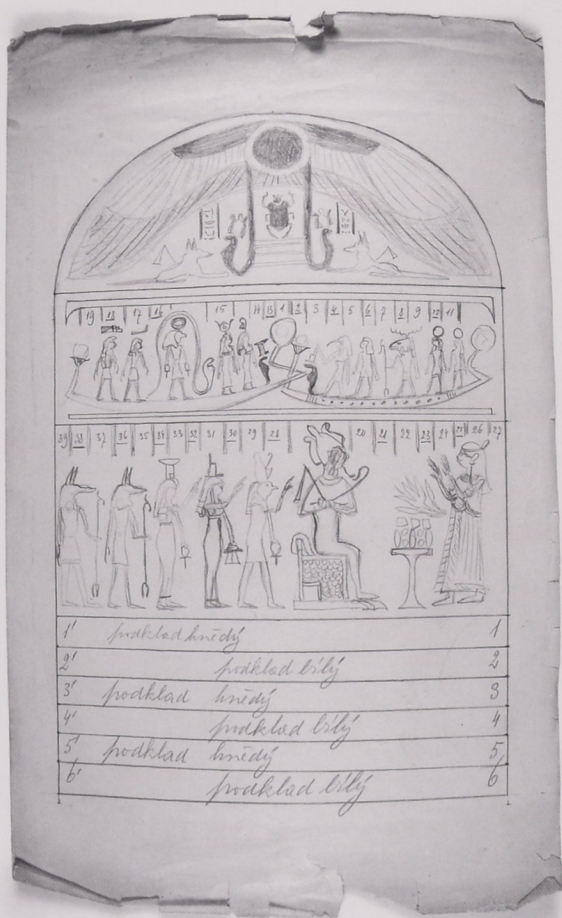


Fig. 5 – Lexa's drawing in pencil of the wooden stela from the collection of the Museum Regni Bohemiae made in 1907 (Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 583 – *Wooden Egyptian stela from the Museum Regni Bohemiae*).



carefully rendered fair copy with a differentiation in colour of the individual parts of the original, and enclosed translation and comments. The objects Lexa worked on included two coffins,<sup>24</sup> fragments of papyrus (Fig. 4),<sup>25</sup> a wooden stela (Figs. 5 and 6),<sup>26</sup> and several ushabtis and scarabs.<sup>27</sup> Lexa did not indicate the inventory numbers or another classification of the objects in use at that time. At present, the objects are part of the collection of the Department of Prehistory and Antiquity of the Near East and Northern Africa of the Náprstek Museum in Prague and are registered under the indicated inventory numbers.

Lexa never published any of the objects studied in his early days. His bibliography features only one article from 1931 which was dedicated to the Egyptian antiquities in the National Museum and which bore the title "Egyptian Antiquities from the Collections of the National Museum and Karásek's Gallery, donated by the late ambassador Dr. Cyril Dušek".<sup>28</sup>

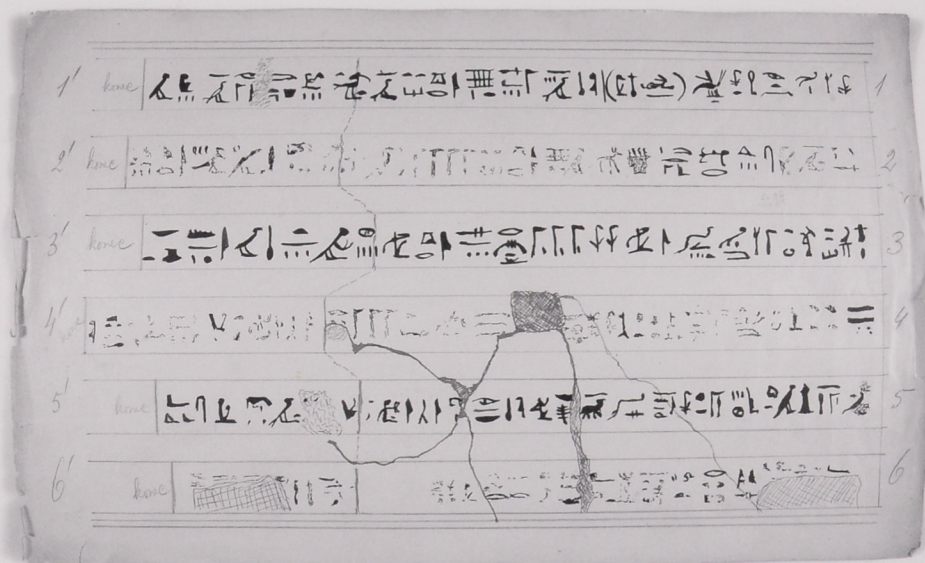


Fig. 6 – Hieroglyphic transcription of 6 lines of the text in the lower section of the same wooden stela. Lexa used black and red ink and a pencil to differentiate the individual features of the piece (Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 583 – *Wooden Egyptian stela from the Museum Regni Bohemiae*).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 364 and 365. At present, the coffins are deposited in the collection of the Náprstek Museum and are registered under the Inv. Nos. NpM P 621 and NpM P 625.  
<sup>25</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 584. At present, the papyrus is deposited in the Náprstek Museum under the Inv. Nos. NpM P 2457 and P 5721.  
<sup>26</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 583. At present, the stela is deposited in the Náprstek Museum under the Inv. No. NpM 1636.  
<sup>27</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 365 (inserted into the paper on the coffin).  
<sup>28</sup> "Egyptské starožitnosti ze sbírek Národního musea a Karáskovy galerie, darované zemřelým vyslancem dr. C. Duškem", in: *Pestrý týden* 6 (1931), No. 6.

## František Lexa's study trip to Egypt in 1930 and 1931 and his part in the extending of collections of the National Museum and the Náprstek Museum

František Lexa's study trip to Egypt in 1930 and 1931 constitutes an important turning point in his scholarly work.<sup>29</sup> Lexa's study trip was made possible by financial supports granted by the Ministry of School System and National Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic, and the Oriental Institute. In spite of the mentioned financial supports, the study trip must be regarded as a purely private trip, the realisation of which did not arise out of any delegation of a specific scientific task and was entirely at the discretion of the traveller himself.

From the very beginning, Lexa planned his study trip to Egypt as a long-term one and among the reasons for and objectives of his trip<sup>30</sup> he mentioned the necessity to experience directly the subject of his studies, university lectures, and research work, to take photographs of unpublished historical objects as well as of modern life, and to study astronomical plates on coffins in the Cairo Museum dating back to the late Old Kingdom.<sup>31</sup> In addition to these official reasons for the trip, however, we learn from Lexa's letters to his wife Irena of yet another reason for his trip, specifically his wish to establish personal contacts with his colleagues from abroad and to secure for himself some work in Egypt.<sup>32</sup> Unlike the above-mentioned objectives, this one remained unfulfilled, the fact of which significantly determined Lexa's subsequent orientation in Egyptology.

In the course of his stay in Egypt,<sup>33</sup> Lexa expended a lot of time and effort collecting artefacts and antiquities and was often calling on antiquarians and antique dealers. Lexa's limited budget did not allow him to purchase any "treasures" of ancient Egyptian art. The character of objects which he brought back from Egypt indicates that he attempted to acquire, on the one hand, representative collections of selected groups of objects – such as flint knives (Fig. 5) or ancient Egyptian weights, and, on the other hand, antiquities, which were tied in some way with his philological orientation, such as Demotic and

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<sup>29</sup> Suková, L., "František Lexa in Egypt (An account of the 1930-1931 study trip to Egypt, undertaken by the founder of Egyptology in Czechoslovakia", in: Holaubek, J. – Navrátilová, H. (eds.), *Egypt and Austria I. Proceedings of the Symposium. Czech Institute of Egyptology, August 31st to September 2nd, 2004*. Praha: SETOUT, pp. 149-160; and Suková, L., "František Lexa: setkání s Egyptem", 66 pp. of mss., *forthcoming*.

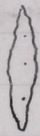
<sup>30</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 323 – *Lexa's correspondence with the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (in particular the draft letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> October 1930).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Lexa's earlier article on "Die astronomischen Tabellen auf den ägyptischen Särgen des Mittleren Reiches", in: *Prager Presse*, 18. 5. 1924.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 27 – *Lexa's correspondence with his wife Irena* (in particular the letters dated 25<sup>th</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup> March 1931).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 15 – *Lexa's diary from his study trip to Egypt*.

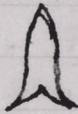
Nabídka parobkových nástrojů.



asi 30 cm dlouhý, asi 10 cm. největší šířka, asi 4 mm. nej-  
větší tloušťka, velice jemně vypracovaný  
cena 40 L. Š.



asi 25 cm. dlouhý - 10 cm - 4 mm, velice jemně  
vypracovaný // jiný, o něco menší, jemně vypra-  
covaný 20 L. Š.  
cena 40 L. Š.



asi 25 cm dl - - 3-4 mm, velice jemně vypra-  
covaný, cena 6 L. Š.



asi 25 cm, tloušťka asi 5-6 mm.  
méně jemně pracovaný 3 L. Š.

7 kusů jemně pracovaných parobkových forem D A délky 10-15 cm  
za 50 L. Š.

4 kusy (jeden s postaveným hrotem, vypracování protřechné)  
12 L. Š.

15 kusů drobných vypracování protřechné 4 L. Š.

Fig. 7 - Overview of types and prices of flint tools in Lexa's diary from the study trip to Egypt in 1930 and 1931 (Masaryk Institute - Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 15 - Diary from the study trip to Egypt in 1930 and 1931).

Coptic ostraca, 3 small papyri, Coptic manuscript, sheets from a Coptic manuscript, and a fragment of an ancient Egyptian coffin, and which he could use as teaching aids in his lectures.<sup>34</sup> Upon his return from Egypt, Lexa donated some of the mentioned objects to certain individuals<sup>35</sup> and institutions.<sup>36</sup>

In 1940, Lexa donated 158 prehistoric stone implements collected in the course of his stay in Egypt to the Department of Prehistory of the National Museum.<sup>37</sup> The implements were recorded under the inventory numbers 42,426 through to 42,584 and are still part of the collection. The remaining objects constituted the basis of his private collection, which was handed over in 1962 to the Czechoslovak Institute of Egyptology of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague,<sup>38</sup> and in 1972 transferred from the Institute together with other collections of objects into the Nápřstek Museum's newly established Department of Prehistory and Antiquity of the Near East and Northern Africa.<sup>39</sup> Lexa's private collection transferred into the Nápřstek Museum included ancient Egyptian stone weights, 8 pottery ostraca, a fragment of glazed pottery, a bronze statue of a king, a model bowl and vessel, two fragments of decorated pottery, three funerary figurines (ushabtis), a statue of a woman (a model made of plaster), a fragment of ancient Egyptian textile, and small fragments of a papyrus with traces of a text, and an extensive collection of prehistoric stone tools.

## Conclusion

The character of Lexa's private collection does not show a significant artistic value. Rather than corroborating the collecting mania, interests and taste of Lexa, it bears testimony to the financial situation of the collector himself and, to a great extent, also to the opportunities for purchasing of antiquities at his time. Moreover, the fact that the collection did not get into the Nápřstek Museum directly, but via the Czechoslovak Institute of Egyptology, which constituted the only competent and specialised institution, in which a collection of Egyptian antiquities could be concentrated at the given time, suggest that the evaluation of the contribution of a particular personality to a museum institution on the basis of his part in the formation of museum collections can be in certain cases quite misleading and misrepresenting.

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<sup>34</sup> For the summary of objects, cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 15 – *Lexa's diary from his study trip to Egypt* (in particular the individual sheets of paper attached thereto).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 309 – *Lexa's correspondence with the Office of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic* (in particular the letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1931).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Oriental Institute, Inv. No. 34 – *Materials from the meetings of the Cultural Section in 1931* (in particular "The minutes of the meeting of the committee of the Cultural Section of the Oriental Institute held on the 1st June 1931").

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Masaryk Institute – Archives of ASCR, Personal Papers of František Lexa, Inv. No. 328 – *Lexa's correspondence with the National Museum*.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. "The report on the hand-over of the collection of the ancient Egyptian antiquities as a personal gift of Mrs. Milada Lexová, daughter of František Lexa, taken over on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1962 by the Institute's Secretary Evžen Hnátek" kept in the Archives of the Czech Institute of Egyptology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. "The agreement between Dr. Fr. Váhala, CSc., head of the Czechoslovak Institute of Egyptology, and Dr. E. Strouhal, CSc., head of the Department of Prehistory and Antiquity of the Near East and Africa of the Nápřstek Museum in Prague dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 1972" kept in the archives of the Department of Prehistory and Antiquity of the Near East and Northern Africa of the Nápřstek Museum in Prague.

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