Message to the Members

Egypt has been in turmoil for the last three years, ever since January 25, 2011. Egyptians felt that they had reached a turning point in their history and that they were on the threshold of a total change in their political life: from a totalitarian, corrupt regime into a modern, democratic political system. Hopes were high, immediate and spontaneous principles were required to be fulfilled “bread, liberty, dignity and social justice”. These basic principles had never been practiced throughout the earlier regime that had prevailed for six decades. The result had been wide discontent and disappointment among many young people who had found their salvation in

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emigration where they could find work and a decent life.

The interim period that followed the fall of Mubarak, proved a series of disasters, both under the Supreme Military Council and under the Moslem Broutherhood’s rule. Resentment and discontent were widespread. No sign of a serious attempt was ever made to implement the four principles of the January Revolution. The ultimate aim of the conflicting parties was to attain complete power of control and rule.

Accordingly the political conflict developed into a kind of sectarian hostility and religion became an effective weapon in the struggle. This development proved disastrous, because it resulted in a total misconception of the nature of the whole political situation.

It was once said that the only correct way of solving any problem is to have a clear vision of its true nature. In simpler words, to see things as they are, not as you have been told. In the words of the poet Ahmed Shawky; “Forms of blindness are numerous, but the worst form is when one looks with the eyes of

وأثارت النتيجة أن شاعر السخط الذي
تحول إلى يأس بين أجيال الشباب الذين
شعروا أن سبيلهم الوحيد للنجاة هو
 الهجرة إلى حيث يمكنهم أن يجدوا العمل
والحياة الكريم.

في الفترة الانتقالية التي أعقبت سقوط
حكم مبارك وقعت سلسلة من الكوارث،
سواء تحت سيادة المجلس الأعلى للقوات
المسلحة أو حكم الإخوان المسلمين، مما
ساعد على انتشار السخط وعدم الرضا،
أديا بدورهما لمزيد من الكوارث. لم
يشعرا الناس بأى محاولة لتحقيق أى من
المبادئ الأربعة التي نادت بها ثورة
يناير، بل أصبح هدف القوى المتصارعة
هو الحكم والسيطرة الكاملة على مقدار
السلطة، وهكذا تحول النزاع السياسي
إلى نوع من العدوان الطائفي والديني.
هذا التحول كان كارثيا، نتج عنه سوء
تصور لطبيعة الموقف السياسي بأسره.
لقد قيل من قبل: "إن السبيل الوحيد لحل
أى مشكلة هو الإدراك الواضح لحقيقة
طبيعتها"، أو بعبارة أخرى، هو القدرة
على رؤية الأشياء كما هي في واقع
أمورها، وليس كما قبل لك عنها، أو كما
قال الشاعر أحمد شوقي:
In view of this misconception, instead of resorting to reason and persuasion, criminal designs and devices were employed. Thus massacres and ruthless destructions were committed in cold blood, thousands of innocent soles were killed and scores of historic and vital monuments were burnt down or obliterated.

Feelings of hatred and distrust ran very deep, and no points of reconciliation could be reached. A situation, not known to have existed previously in Egypt’s long history. I mean the willful and carefully planned demolition and burning down of historic and invaluable monuments.

Everybody will remember with sorrow the looting of the Egyptian Museum, the burning down of l’Institut d’Egypte, the destruction of the Museum of Malawi and the burning and destruction of the Islamic Museum, without forgetting the destruction of many state monuments with innumerable official archives and documents. These disasters reflect darkly on the culture of the Egyptian nation, in the sense that...
we are drifting away from the course of modern world cultural development. We seem to be unaware of the nature of modern thinking which is motivated by the desire to explore the Unknown, wherever that Unknown might be.

In other words modern mind realized that the Unknown existed in two regions: in man’s inaccurate and distorted knowledge of the human past; and in the limited and partial knowledge of the existing universe. In the light of this realization, the human mind moves towards exploring the two regions, the past world and the contemporary universe. The result has been over the last five centuries an ever accelerating expanse in human knowledge of both the past and the present as the threshold into the future.

In the course of this process of exploration, the modern mind was able to discover scores or hundreds of new sciences in all fields of learning. One of the new sciences is archaeology in the area of studying the past, it concerned itself with the study of the material remains of mankind.

Archaeology is assumed to have...
developed into a full-fledged modern science in the nineteenth century. Its development is associated with the institution of museums; yet more important in association with the contemporary technological revolution (e.g. the use of Carbon 14, sun-light radiation ‘Archaeometry’ and the development of Under-water archaeology ... etc.); a laboratory or laboratories became essential components of museums.

The ultimate aim of archaeology is to capture or recreate a vision or virtual image of civilizations. As such, archaeology became a necessary companion to the study and better understanding of our history. In the light of this fact we realize the grave loss caused by the destruction of a museum. In our specific present incident, we realize the magnitude of our loss when we know that the Islamic Museum in Cairo housed one of the richest collections of Islamic material heritage in the world.

However, I sincerely hope that this vandalism will stop; for once more the prophetic words of Ahmed Shawky come to mind: “Should a nation its heritage destroy. They are in fact,
themselves destroying!"

In conclusion, I may be permitted to end my fair-well message on a happier note. On Thursday 13 February 2014, I attended the ordinary General Assembly of the members of the Society. It was perhaps the last meeting I attend in my capacity as President since I stepped down from that post which I had the honour and pleasure of holding for almost twenty years. I consider myself very fortunate to have worked with a group of the members of the executive council in the cordial spirit of friendship and trust, especially my colleagues who carried the burden of the post of Secretary General, namely Soheir Zaki Bassyouni, Mervat Seif and last but by no means least Mona Haggag. It is well known, that the Secretary General bears the heavier share of the Society’s administration. The three of them deserve a warm vote of thanks from me personally and all other members of the Society. It also gives me pleasure to mention Farouk Abaza, the Vice-President, and Suzan El-Kalza, Treasurer, who were ideal in their performance of their duties in modesty and devotion. It so

لتدمير بعض المتاحف نتيجة لما مر بنا من أحداث دامية خلال السنوات الثلاث الماضية، وأخص بالذكر آخرها وهو المتحف الإسلامي بالقاهرة، ذلك أنه كان يضم واحدة من أغنى مجموعات التراث الإسلامي في العالم، وأمل مخلصاً ألاً يصدق علينا قول الشاعر شوقي:

إذا ضيعب التاريخ أبناء أمي
فأنفسهم في شرعة الحق ضيغوا

في الختام اش院长 لى أن أنهى كلمة الوداع هذه على نحو أقل قنامة وأكثر تفاولاً. في يوم الخميس 13 فبراير 2014، شاركت في اجتماع الجمعية العمومية العادية لأعضاء جمعية الآثار، وهو ربما آخر اجتماع أشهدته بصفتي رئيساً، بعد أن تتحيت عن هذا المنصب، الذي شرفته به طيلة نحو من عشرين سنة. وأعتبر نفسى من أسعد الناس بالعمل مع مجموعة أعضاء مجلس الإدارة، حين عملنا معا بروح المودة والتأخى العائلية. وأخص بالذكر الزميلات اللاتي تحملن أعباء منصب الأمين العام، وهن سهير زكي بسيوني ومرفت سيف وأخيراً وليس آخراً منى حاج. فمن المعروف أن الأمين العام
happened that the three of us withdrew this year from being members of the Executive Council, for personal reasons. In addition to these three members, we add the name of Madiha Bayoumi who missed her chance to apply in time to be nominated member of the Council. I shall always recall her assiduous participation in the Society’s activities. Thus the vacancies of the Council became four members. It also so happened that only four new members applied to be members of the Executive Council, namely Mohamed Awad, Hassan El-Saadi, Ezzat Kadous and Hassan El-Maghrabi. As a result of this situation, elections were not held in the normal way, and there was a unanimous approval of the four new candidates. In this way, fresh blood is fused into the Council, together with all seven members. I believe that the old experience with the addition of new thoughts, will work well together in revitalizing the Society as well as doubling its activities on the sphere of archaeological studies as well as contributing to the cultural life of Alexandria.

It is also with great pleasure and appreciation that I mention the

يتتحمل النصيب الأول من أعباء إدارة الجمعية. وكانت مني حجاج أكثرهن عطاء في عدد السنوات وتحمل الأعباء الأدبية والثقافية، فلها، مع زميلتيها، منى ومن سائر أعضاء الجمعية جزيل الشكر والامتنان. كما يحولى ذكر فاروق أباظة (نائب الرئيس) وسوزان الكلزة (أمن الصندوق) اللذين كانا مثالًا للمشاركة في العمل بالجمعية وأوجه نشاطها، مما أضفوا على العمل معهما روح التفاني في العطاء والالتزام. ومن محض الصدف اتفق انسحابنا معاً من عضوية مجلس الإدارة على غير اتفاق لأسباب شخصية محضة. وإذا أضيفنا إلى هؤلاء الثلاثة الزميلة مديحة بومى التي تخلفت مصادفة عن الترشح لعضوية المجلس، رغم إسهالها الإيجابي في شتى أنشطة الجمعية. وهكذا أصبح عدد العضوية الشاغرة أربعة أعضاء، وصادف أن تقدم للترشح أربعة من أعضاء الجمعية، هم: محمد عوض وحسن السعيد وزعت قادوس وحسن المغربى. ونتيجة لهذا الوضع لم تجر عملية الانتخاب كالعادة، وتمت موافقة الحاضرين بالتركية. هذا انضمت إلى
three members of the Secretariat, Salwa Mohsen (Librarian), Ahmed Mohamed Amin (Secretary) and Hassan Mahmoud (Administrative assistant), who have wholeheartedly rendered vital services to the Society. I would also like to mention on this occasion, Manal Refaat who occupied the post of Secretary for almost two decades, she will always be cordially remembered.

I also trust that the respected Council under the leadership of its new President Mona Haggag who is known for her energy, determination and inventive spirit will work in collaboration and coordination as has been known of the Archaeological Society of Alexandria.

Mostafa El Abbadi
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The Coptic Museum in Cairo in one Hundred Years
Dr. Sherine Sadek
Lecturer of Coptic and Islamic Archaeology
Faculty of Arts – Ein Shams University
In Arabic

الثلاثاء 14 أبريل
المتحف القبطي في مائة عام
د. شيرين صادق
مدرسة الآثار القبطية والإسلامية  
كلية الآداب – جامعة عين شمس

In English

All lectures to be held at the Society premises at 6. p.m. unless mentioned.

Announcement

- Publications of the Society are now sold at a discount of 25%

Excursions
Octobre – Decembre 2014

Friday 20 March
A visit to Pompy's Pillar and Kom El-Shokafa cemetery, Alexandria

Members 15 LE │ Guests 20 LE

Friday 10 April
A visit to the archaeological sites of Rosetta

Members 30  |  Guests 35 LE

Edited by: Mona Haggag