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Aristocrats and Archaeologists: An Edwardian Journey on the Nile. By TOBY WILKINSON and JULIAN PLATT. Cairo: THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO PRESS. 2017. Pp. xv + 144, illus., maps. \$29.95. [Distributed by Oxford University Press]

In December of 1907 Spencer Compton Cavendish, the fifth Duke of Devonshire, and a small party of family and friends embarked on a Nile cruise that began at Bulaq, the port of Cairo, and reached as far south as the Rock of Abusir in the Sudan. This was in no way unusual at a time when Egypt had become the winter destination of choice of the affluent for relief from the chill of England and its attendant ills. What was different about this voyage was that the participants included the Duke's personal physician, one A. F. R. Platt, who happened to be an amateur Egyptologist. Platt had previously visited Egypt. His letters to his wife describing this cruise form the basis for this book.

The doctor's letters were called to the attention of Egyptologist Toby Wilkinson by Julian Platt, one of his descendants, but it was not the letters that caught his attention at first but rather the way in which they had been preserved. The box that contained them had been decorated with careful copies of tomb paintings and with two inscriptions in hieroglyphs (included as the end papers of the book). These were in the nature of a dated dedication to his daughter, "Year 13 month 8 day 30 under the Majesty of George, fifth of that name"; the names of the dedicatee and family, "the maiden Violet, her mother was the mistress of the house, Mable, her father the physician Ferdinand"; and even a curse on one who might harm the box. Wilkinson was immediately intrigued because the inscriptions were composed by a person with "near professional knowledge of hieroglyphic writing."

Dr. Platt's letters to his wife at home were a general account of the cruise, the daily routine aboard the steamer, the personalities involved, and the social niceties observed. He accompanied members of the group to sites but he also had time to return to excavations he had previously visited to witness the ongoing progress of the work. His letters give an informed picture of the archaeological activities in Egypt at the beginning of the century. He remarked on the clearance of the Temple of Dendera since his last visit and on the number of new tombs exposed in the Valley of the Kings. He was able to meet and sometimes be guided at various sites by most of the Egyptologists involved, a veritable list of the important scholars and archaeologists at work at the time, ranging from Flinders Petrie

to the young Alan Gardiner and the American George Reisner, whom Platt found "not highly polished." He described a chance encounter with Winston Churchill, who was returning downriver from Uganda. Churchill visited the Duke on board, accompanied by his secretary, Eddie Marsh (better known later for his literary and poetic activities). Churchill and Marsh entertained the travelers with photographs and descriptions of their experiences in the south.

Of particular note was the time Platt spent on the west bank at Luxor with Howard Carter. Carter had recently been dismissed from the Antiquities Service and was without an income. He was supporting himself with the sale of his watercolors of tomb paintings and reliefs. He invited Dr. Platt to lunch at what is still known as "Carter House" and Platt later managed to interest the Duke of Devonshire in buying a painting. Fourteen years later Carter would become the most famous Egyptologist in the world with the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb.

To explain the context of Platt's letters, a map, a detailed itinerary of the voyage, and family trees of the participants are included. Wilkinson has provided an explanatory introduction to "Ferdy's tale" that addresses the circumstance of his interest in the letters, the modes of travel utilized by the well-to-do in Egypt in the Edwardian Period, the rigors of class division observed, and the archaeological scene in Egypt at the time. In the appropriate places there are text boxes with thumbnail biographies of archaeologists and other prominent individuals encountered. There is also a chapter on the future lives and careers of the passengers, a select bibliography, acknowledgements, photograph credits, and index.

This work, with letters and explanatory material, provides a thoughtful insight into the then vanishing tradition of the Nile cruise enjoyed by the English upper class at the turn of the century. The personal record of a turn of the century tour of Egypt, while not as detailed as many accounts of the time, brings a new sensibility to the experience. Dr. Platt was a knowledgeable observer and his observations are immediate and interesting because they describe a vanishing tradition as well as an unusually productive period in Egyptian archaeology.

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Like many upper-class Germans educated in the late nineteenth century, Kaiser Wilhelm of the German