

Politics, *Partage*, and Papyri: Excavated Texts Between Cairo and Ann Arbor (1924–1953)

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Following its nominal independence from Britain in 1922, Egypt increasingly protested continued European control of the Service des antiquités de l'Égypte, the office that administered archaeology and the antiquities trade. Public conflicts were frequent, pitting Western researchers against Egyptian nationalists who advocated for the decolonization of the Service. Research in the University of Michigan's archives reveals the impact of these conflicts on the university's papyrus collection, specifically the papyri and ostraka excavated in the Fayyum between 1924 and 1935. Unlike other objects, excavated texts were not subjected to immediate *partage* but were instead loaned to Michigan on the understanding that they would be divided after publication. In response to Egyptian pressure in the 1930s, however, the Service began to assert its right to recall the loans and frequently urged Michigan to expedite their publication and return. By the early 1950s, the largely Egyptianized postwar Service finally issued a recall, thereby abrogating the promised *partage*. Some 1,900 excavated texts nonetheless still remain in Ann Arbor, Michigan, their ownership status uncertain. In view of the recent series of controversies involving papyri of uncertain ownership and provenance, this research is of considerable salience and represents a move toward full transparency at papyrus-holding institutions.¹

INTRODUCTION

On 17 April 1952, the *Ann Arbor News* printed a brief single-column story in its local news section under the headline “University Denies Its Expedition Took Egyptian Mummies.”² Nebulously attributed to the “Egyptian government,” the otherwise anonymous allegation concerned the 1929 season at the northeastern Fayyum site of Kom Aushim (Karanis), which the University of Michigan had excavated between 1924 and 1935. When reached for comment, the excavation's former director and keeper of the university's archaeological collection, Enoch E. Peterson, issued an unqualified denial: “The University of Michigan has taken no mummies from Egypt. . . . We

¹This article expands on research presented on 5 August 2016 at the 28th International Congress of Papyrologists in Barcelona. My thanks to Mollie Fox, Kajsa Lundeen, Neena Pio, Megan Milewski, Brent Nongbri, Rosario Pintaudi, Foy Scalf, Monica Tsuneishi, and Jill Unkel for their research assistance; to Katherine Blouin, Todd Hickey, Rachel Mairs, Roberta Mazza, Donald M. Reid, Arthur Verhoogt, and Terry Wilfong for their helpful feedback; and to the University of Michigan's Dean of Libraries James Hilton, Associate University Librarian Bryan Skib, and Jack Bernard of the university Office of General Counsel for reviewing this piece and providing institutional support. Thanks finally to *AJA* Editor-in-Chief Jane Carter and the anonymous reviewers for the *AJA* for improving this paper with their thoughtful critiques. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

²*Ann Arbor News*, 17 April 1952, 5. Clipping preserved in Box 34, Subseries K, Kelsey Museum of Archaeology. Library Clipping File, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

have no mummies in our possession.”³ Peterson further remarked that the Egyptian Antiquities Service (Service des antiquités de l’Égypte, hereafter Service) kept a record of every object removed from Egypt, including those taken by the University of Michigan, and suggested that the Egyptian government consult Abdullatif Ahmed Aly, a Michigan-educated scholar at Cairo’s Fuad I University, who was familiar with the University of Michigan’s archaeological collections.⁴ Peterson’s rebuttal notwithstanding, the column concluded with reference to an unnamed report recently issued by “the Egyptian state audit department.” The report allegedly claimed that thousands of artifacts were missing from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and further accused the University of Michigan of failing to return a number of artifacts it had received on loan from Egypt. The “audit department” therefore urged that these unspecified items be returned to Egypt and that a ban be placed on all future loans to foreign institutions.

Whatever the source of these two accusations, the first was scurrilous. In 11 years of excavation at Kom Aushim and its single 1931 season at nearby Dime (Soknopaiou Nesos), Michigan never discovered a human mummy.⁵ The only human remains recovered were four skeletal burials unearthed during the first season at Karanis in 1924 and brought to Ann Arbor legally as part of the annual division of finds between the university and the Service referred to as the *partage*.⁶ The second accusation had at least some

technical merit due to a quirk in the Service’s own administration of the annual *partage*. Although a variety of small, portable object types—glass, pottery, agricultural implements, botanical specimens, coins, textiles—were formally divided with Michigan at the conclusion of each excavation season, excavated papyri and ostraka were provisionally loaned to the university on the understanding that they would be divided only after publication. Although the excavated ostraka had already been divided and the majority returned to Egypt by April of 1952, most of the excavated papyri still awaited publication and *partage* in Ann Arbor.

This unfortunate incident was one of many public quarrels over antiquities during Egypt’s semi-colonial period, the roughly three decades between the formal end of the British protectorate in 1922 and the 1952 revolution that deposed the British-backed King Faruq (r. 1936–1952) and set Egypt on the path to full independence. To the dismay of Egyptian nationalists after 1922, Britain continued to defend the long-running French control of the Service, lest Europeans be driven from the bureau altogether. This policy ensured that Western scholars and collectors continued to enjoy privileged access to Egyptian material culture.⁷ The European administration of the Service consequently weathered increasingly frequent attacks from nationalists in the Egyptian government, the Egyptian press, and even the lower ranks of the Service itself, all of whom advocated for an end to the colonial status quo. Although the Europeans at the head of the Service attempted to appease critics by increasing administrative control over excavations, tightening the rules governing *partage*, and restricting the antiquities trade, their efforts were ultimately futile. By the late 1940s, Egyptians had come to occupy every office in the Service except the directorship, leaving its last French Director-General, Étienne Drioton (dir. 1936–1952), isolated and powerless save for the continued personal support of King Faruq.⁸

The University of Michigan’s papyrus collection, established in 1920 through purchases on the antiquities

³ This was not technically true. The child mummy Kelsey Museum (KM) inv. 1989.03.0003 was on the University of Michigan campus as of 1906 as part of a group of objects (including the Djehutymose coffin) donated by Kalamazoo businessman Albert Todd, who had acquired it in Egypt (Wilfong 2013, 92–93), although none of this material had yet come to the museum. KM inv. 88821, a mummy in the shape of a dog (but containing human bones) was purchased by Peterson on behalf of the museum in 1952 from dealer Phocion Tano (Wilfong 2015, 59–63), but it may not have arrived in Ann Arbor until 1953, given the long shipping times from Egypt.

⁴ Aly earned his Michigan Ph.D. degree in 1949 under Prof. A.E.R. Boak with a dissertation entitled “The Roman Veterans of Egypt.” He returned to Egypt in 1951 to teach at Fuad I (later Cairo) University.

⁵ While Michigan’s single 1935 season at Kom Abu Billou (Terenouthis) unearthed more than 200 burials that might be considered mummies, none came back to Michigan or were even recorded as being “mummies” (Wilfong 2014, 98–101).

⁶ For description of one of the skeletons, see Burial 1924.100 in Landvatter 2014.

⁷ The Service had been under French leadership since its founding in 1858. Britain committed to maintaining a French Director-General in Article 1 of the 1904 Franco-British *Entente Cordiale*. For the text, see https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/entecord.asp.

⁸ For historical background, this article relies extensively on Reid 2015. For the political context of papyrology in particular, see Davoli 2015.

market and soon expanded with the Fayyum finds, was frequently caught up in these conflicts.⁹ By the early 1930s, Egyptian denunciation of the papyrus trade had begun to impede the university's continued purchasing activities, particularly of the high-quality Biblical manuscripts that had begun to attract significant attention in the international press. However, it was the loans of excavated papyri and ostraka that remained the principal source of tension throughout this period. Although initially open-ended and premised on a future division favorable to Michigan, the loans were subject to increasing Egyptian criticism after 1930, sparking persistent rumors of a mass recall and eventually all but eliminating the possibility of a *partage*. Scholarship on excavated texts was also conducted under constant pressure from the Service, which repeatedly urged Michigan faculty to accelerate the publication and return of the loaned texts. By the early 1950s, the de facto Egyptian leadership of the postwar Service had indeed issued such a recall, prompting a series of returns between 1950 and 1953. Communications regarding the remaining excavated papyri in Ann Arbor thereafter ceased and no additional returns were made.

It should be noted that the research underlying what is presented in this article is ongoing, and some questions remain unanswerable at present because of gaps in Michigan's archival record. The university's archives are also one-sided and provide only occasional glimpses of the internal workings and political calculus of the Service. The following narrative must therefore be regarded as provisional and in need of supplementation, corroboration, and/or correction from other sources.¹⁰ Its limitations notwithstanding, this preliminary analysis allows us to observe the effects of Egyptian cultural politics on both the disposition of objects in the Michigan papyrus collection and the production of papyrological knowledge during Egypt's late colonial period. In so doing, it offers valuable insight into the underappreciated entanglement between Western papyrology and the long unraveling of Egypt's colonial antiquities regime.

This research is of considerable salience at the present moment, for it appears in the wake of several

ongoing controversies within the field of papyrology that have revealed not only thriving black and gray markets for papyri but also a discipline still struggling with openness and accessibility even at established institutional collections.¹¹ Indeed, although Michigan's already ranks among the most accessible of the world's large papyrus collections, owing to its comprehensive online catalogue, digitized acquisition records, and its openness to nonresident scholars, discussion of the status of the remaining excavated papyri in the collection has been notably absent.¹² The issue was revisited only in 2017 by University of Michigan papyrologist Arthur Verhoogt, whose tentative remarks indicated how much was still unknown.¹³ The present article builds on Verhoogt's initial research in order to make public everything that Michigan's archives reveal about the custodial history and legal status of these texts. At one level, then, this work represents a response to Roberta Mazza's call that papyrologists both engage with the discipline's colonial legacy and stake out a clear position on pressing contemporary ethical issues.¹⁴ At a broader level, however, this discussion complements the recent increase in international cooperation within papyrological scholarship, a phenomenon that Bagnall already described a decade ago as "a willingness to share resources, to be open to others and welcome them, and the courage to believe that openness and generosity are good things for all involved rather than a threat to those who have."¹⁵ This article is offered in a spirit of such openness and cooperation in the hope that it may spark wider conversations on the history

⁹ For the University of Michigan's papyrus collection, see Boak 1959; Verhoogt 2017, 6–17.

¹⁰ The author is at present unable to access the archives of the contemporary Ministry of State for Tourism and Antiquities. Attempts to contact personnel at the ministry have been unsuccessful.

¹¹ The controversy surrounding the so-called "Jesus' wife" papyrus is now documented in full by Sabar (2020). See also Sabar's investigation of the Green Collection's acquisition of Biblical papyri from the Oxyrhynchus collection at Oxford in the June 2020 issue of *The Atlantic*, "A Biblical Mystery at Oxford," www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/06/museum-of-the-bible-obink-gospel-of-mark/610576. See also the special issue of *Eidolon* devoted to the issue of ethics in papyrology: <https://eidolon.pub/special-issue-on-papyrus-thefts-f06cb996510e>, esp. C. Michael Sampson and Anna Uhlig, "The Murky Provenance of the Newest Sappho," which reviews the dubious and conflicting evidence for the provenance of the recently published Sappho papyri *PSapph. Obink* and *PGC inv. 105*.

¹² Catalogue: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/apis>; Acquisition Reports: www.lib.umich.edu/locations-and-hours/papyrology-collection/acquisition-reports.

¹³ Verhoogt 2017, 9–10.

¹⁴ Mazza 2018, 23.

¹⁵ Bagnall 2010, 2.

of papyrus collecting and the impact of colonialism on the early history of the discipline.

THE EXCAVATION YEARS: 1924–1935

Michigan began its work at Karanis just as nationalist sentiment in quasi-independent Egypt had turned sharply against the loosely regulated transfer of antiquities to Western institutions.¹⁶ This shift in public opinion was in large part precipitated by Howard Carter's discovery and opening of the tomb of Tutankhamun (26 November 1922–6 February 1923), which marked an efflorescence in Egyptian interest in the country's ancient past. Although Carter's contract with the Service had entitled him to a fifty-fifty *partage* of the contents of tombs like Tutankhamun's that had been looted in antiquity, nationalists in the Egyptian press and government argued that the finds should remain entirely in Egypt. The onus of the decision fell on the Director-General of the Service, Pierre Lacau (dir. 1914–1936), who had already since 1920 been considering alterations to Egypt's antiquities laws, particularly the abrogation of the long-standing fifty-fifty *partage* regime. Lacau accordingly sided with the nationalists, announcing that Tutankhamun's treasures would not be divided and that future foreign expeditions would no longer automatically be guaranteed a share of their finds.¹⁷ The changes earned the ire of Egyptologists, including William Flinders Petrie, who in 1926 publicly repudiated Lacau and moved the work of the British School to Mandatory Palestine where more thoroughgoing colonial control granted Western archaeologists a freer hand.¹⁸

¹⁶ Goode 2007, 67–97; Reid 2015, 65–76; Thompson 2018, 14–15, 59–77; Stevenson 2019, 145–46.

¹⁷ According to Law No. 14 of 1912, the Egyptian state was already the owner of all antiquities found on or in the ground of Egypt (Article 1). Antiquities recovered by excavators operating under an official permit could nonetheless be traded on the market (Article 4), since such excavators were entitled to half of the movable antiquities they discovered in the course of excavation. See Khater 1960, 286–91; Fricke 2006, 181–85.

¹⁸ Drower (1995, 355–64) and Stevenson (2019, 144) cite “Petrie Forced to Quit Excavating in Egypt,” *New York Times*, 7 July 1926, 15. Here Petrie accused Lacau of asserting “practically despotic powers” and imposing “ludicrous” regulations and concluded that “the situation there from the viewpoint of archaeology is nothing short of farcical.” Cf. “British Excavation Work In Egypt,” *Times* [London], 8 July 1926, 16. For James H. Breasted's damning estimation of Lacau, see Goode 2007, 94.

The new regime was embodied in the standard excavation contract, the *Autorisation de Fouilles*, signed each year by institutional concessionaires like the University of Michigan. Michigan's archives contain two contracts for work in the Fayyum and one for excavations at Terenouthis (Kom Abu Billu).¹⁹ The contracts are divided into 12 articles, of which Article 10 was the primary point of tension between the Service and Western archaeologists:

Toutes les Antiquités trouvées pendant toute la durée des travaux seront remises au Service des Antiquités, à l'exception de celles que ledit Service décidera, dans sa discrétion, de donner au bénéficiaire; elles feront partie du domaine public.

All antiquities found during the whole duration of the work will be remitted to the Antiquities Service, with the exception of those that the aforementioned Service decides, at its discretion, to give to the beneficiary; they will be public property.

The implementation of the article is then described in an explanatory note, which distilled an *aide-mémoire* circulated by Lacau and the Egyptian government in April 1926 to assuage the concerns of Western archaeologists and their nations' ambassadors in Cairo:²⁰

Les principes scientifiques veulent que le Service des Antiquités puisse réserver librement tous les objets dont il estime avoir besoin pour ses collections. Ces mêmes principes veulent également qu'il donne largement les objets, même de première importance, dont il n'a pas besoin pour ses collections. Le Service, s'inspirant des dits principes, ne veut ni vendre les objets trouvés par les fouilleurs ni en faire des réserves pouvant être données à d'autres fouilleurs. Au contraire, le Service est disposé à donner au bénéficiaire de l'autorisation tous les objets dont il n'aurait pas besoin pour les collections de l'État tant au Caire que dans les autres villes et quelle que soit l'importance desdits objets. Il est toutefois expressément entendu que le Service constituera lesdites collections en toute liberté et qu'il décidera souverainement de l'octroi

¹⁹ Contracts survive for the 1926–1927 season at Karanis and the single 1935 season at Terenouthis. The university and the Service also signed a contract for excavations at Soknopaiou Nesos during the 1926–1927 season, although Michigan did not actually undertake work at the site until 1931–1932. Box 4, Folder 7, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁰ See the diplomatic exchanges in United States Department of State 1941, 71, for the original version, in English translation, of Lacau's statement of principles and the *aide-mémoire* from which Article 10 derives.

ainsi que du choix des objets qui seront donnés au bénéficiaire de l'autorisation.

Scientific principles desire that the Antiquities Service be able to reserve freely all the objects it deems necessary for its collection. These same principles desire equally that it generously give away objects, even those of prime importance, of which it has no need for its collections. The Service, inspired by these principles, desires neither to sell the objects found by excavators nor store up reserves that can be given to other excavators. On the contrary, the Service is disposed to give to the beneficiary of the [excavation] permit all the objects of which there is no need for the collection of the state both in Cairo and in other cities, whatever the importance of the aforementioned objects. It is nevertheless expressly understood that the Service will freely build up the aforementioned collections and that it will make a sovereign decision regarding the gift and the choice of the objects to be granted to the beneficiary of the permit.

Despite the fears of Petrie and others, this language demonstrates that the Service still considered *partage* as part of its remit. Lacau himself had promised as much, claiming that in practice the Service would continue to award excavators with a division.²¹ Indeed, Michigan's archives reveal that a yearly division of small, so-called "portable antiquities" was all but a foregone conclusion. As summarized in an undated document in Peterson's papers entitled "Memorandum Regarding the 'Division' of Antiquities" (ca. 1929), *partage* was simply the final stage of the excavation season, a flurry of paperwork and official inspections that eventually resulted in a sizable share of the small finds leaving Egypt legally as the property of the excavating institution.²²

The excavated papyri and ostraka, however, left Egypt for Ann Arbor en masse not as divided objects but as loans governed by contract. Nowhere in Michigan's archives is the origin of this policy described. The most plausible hypothesis is that it was impossible to discern at a glance the significance of the large number of texts excavated during each season. Only study

and publication by papyrologists at foreign institutions could reveal the content of these documents and thereby render possible a fair and equitable division.

Although no loan contracts are extant from the first seven seasons at Karanis (1924–1931), contemporary correspondence gives some idea of the initial arrangements between Michigan and the Service. Professor A.E.R. Boak was the senior faculty member on the Karanis team and coauthored several of its reports. According to his internal report on the conclusion of the first season, Michigan faculty understood that a *partage* of excavated texts would indeed follow publication and that the university would retain the lion's share:²³

Although under the present law all [excavation] contracts of this type require that all finds be at the disposal of the Department of Antiquities, the actual understanding under which we are working is that all papyri and ostraka from Karanis shall come to the University for publication, and that after publication the Egyptian Museum may require one or two specimens for itself. Other types of antiquities are to be divided before they are taken from Egypt, but for our present year at least it does not seem likely that any of our finds will be taken for the Museum. At least, such was the opinion of Mr. [James Leslie] Starkey after the visit of the chief Inspector in April. Such generosity is typical of the attitude of the whole of the European members of the Department of Antiquities towards our work, and from start to finish of the season our relations with them have been marked by the greatest cordiality.

Yet the terms of the loans were soon tightened. After the conclusion of the fourth season (1927–1928), Peterson wrote to Henry A. Sanders, professor of Latin at the university, that Lacau had imposed a time limit on the loan of texts from that season. Although Peterson's language is not entirely clear, it appears that the present loan was to last only five years:²⁴

The papyri found at Kom Aushim [during the 1927–1928 season] were stamped by Lacau and I signed a document to the effect that these papyri were being exported by us

²¹ Goode 2007, 95; Reid 2015, 82.

²² Box 5, Folder 5, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. The procedure outlined in the memorandum corresponds in its essentials with that prescribed in Ministerial Decree No. 5 of 8 December 1912, Concerning Regulations for the Exportation of Antiquities. See Khater 1960, 291–93; Fricke 2006, 187–88. For a dramatic account of the administration of *partage* under Lacau, see Chubb (1954, 188–93) on the division of Amarna material with the Egypt Exploration Society in the 1930s.

²³ Boak, "A report on the Conclusion of the University of Michigan's Excavations at Kom Aushim for the Season 1924–5," Kelsey Museum Archive, Karanis Box 16, 1st folder, item 3. James Leslie Starkey was a student of Petrie and had dug at Qau before being appointed director of Michigan's Karanis campaign for the first two seasons. My thanks to Terry Wilfong for bringing this document to my attention.

²⁴ E.E. Peterson to H.A. Sanders, undated (Spring 1928). Box 5, Folder 5, Institute of Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

on the express condition that any or all of them could be recalled when their publication had progressed sufficiently far to allow it or at any rate within a period of five years. This differs from previous agreements only in the matter of time. Hitherto, mention has only been made of “after publication.”

The shipment of these objects to Michigan nonetheless seems to have been delayed, since Peterson applied in the following year for permission to export together the texts from both the 1927–1928 and 1928–1929 seasons. The wording of his application confirms that Lacau had indeed imposed a five-year limit on the loans.²⁵

Sir,—

Would you kindly grant permission to the University of Michigan to export to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A., two boxes of papyri, all of which have been found at the excavations at Kom Aushim, during seasons 1927–1928 and 1928–1929? Photographs of all these papyri [*sic*] have been deposited with you. It is understood that these papyri are exported for the purposes of study and publication. It is further understood that any or all of these papyri may be recalled by the Department of Antiquities if they so desire within a period of five years.

While Peterson’s use of the word “within” initially suggests that the texts from these seasons would become Michigan property after five years, the evolution of contract language in the coming years, along with later correspondence with the Service, indicates that these objects were still subject to recall. Peterson’s somewhat awkward phrasing notwithstanding, it is therefore more likely that Lacau had simply brought the loans of texts into line with Article 8 of the *Autorisation de Fouilles*, which bound excavators to publish their finds within five years:²⁶

Le bénéficiaire de l’autorisation s’engage à publier d’une manière scientifique les résultats de ses travaux, dans un délai de cinq ans à partir de l’expiration de la présente autorisation. Ce délai expiré, et seulement après l’expiration de ce délai, le Service des Antiquités sera libre de pourvoir à la publication.

The beneficiary of the permit undertakes to publish the results of the works in a scientific manner within a period

of five years from the expiry of the present permit. This period having expired, and only after the expiry of this period, will the Antiquities Service be free to provide for publication.

Peterson does not mention the five-year limit in his application to export the papyri from the 1929–1930 season, which simply requests permission to export the year’s finds “under the usual rules allowing exportation for the purposes of study and publication.”²⁷ Later documents discussed below nonetheless suggest that the five-year limit remained at least nominally in place, albeit essentially unenforced.

This modification to the terms of Michigan’s loans occurred against a background of increasing Egyptian hostility to the exportation of papyri, licit and illicit alike. Such critical scrutiny compelled Lacau to place modest restrictions on the legal trade of purchased papyri, beginning with the Biblical manuscripts and apocrypha that had begun to attract international attention during the early 1930s.²⁸ In a June 1930 letter to Boak, Peterson remarked that Lacau’s moves caused considerable trepidation during the acquisition of Michigan’s leaves of Chester Beatty XII (i.e., P.Mich.inv. 5552, 5553, fragments of the apocryphal Book of Enoch and Melito’s *Peri Pascha*):²⁹

I might add here that there has been some comment in the Egyptian Press lately about the exportation of papyri. This has applied especially to hieroglyphics but reference has also been made to the Greco-Roman period. There is a distinct tendency to stricter measures. Both [Reginald] Engelbach and [Battiscombe] Gunn warned me of this but also added that the Department [the Service] would be very generous to us as they knew us and also knew that if papyri went to us they would be going to very responsible hands. In regard to the complete sheets, which I do hope have reached you by now, I had some anxious days of waiting. In the first place I was undecided as to whether I should show them to Lacau or not. Finally I decided to try and push them through with his approval. He said it was the best he had seen for a long, long time. Gunn said he had never seen such nice specimens. Lacau asked to have a few days before giving his decision. I think he must have taken the photographs and shown them to [Pierre] Jouguet. The few days stretched into a week and the week into two weeks. You can well imagine I was

²⁵ E.E. Peterson to Director-General, Department of Antiquities, 20 March 1929. Box 5, Folder 8, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁶ Box 4, Folder 7, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁷ E.E. Peterson to Director-General, Department of Antiquities, 30 April 1930. Box 5, Folder 5, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁸ On this era and these papyri in general, see Nongbri 2018, esp. 116–56.

²⁹ On this purchase, see Nongbri 2014, 94–98.

anxious. Finally I was told that we could have them, since they were only parts of a “sermo” as Lacau said. You can be sure I had them sealed at once and hopped into a taxi to take them to the Legation [the American embassy]. There I was told they would go through by Diplomatic Post, registered, Special Despatch. So you surely must have them by now. But I think it unwise for the present for them to know that two of the pages are from this Apocryphal Book.³⁰

Peterson added that if additional pages of the manuscript became available, he would use a rudimentary code in future telegrams on the subject, a common practice in the period:³¹

That leads me to another matter. If I cable you I shall not use the word papyri. I shall use the word Enoch and people will think I am talking about myself. Supposing we get information about some more sheets which we think are like what we have sent you, I shall simply say Enoch has so and so many more. I will not say sheets. I will also say Enoch wants so and so many pounds. Supposing I cable you ENOCH HAS TWENTY WANTS THOUSAND POUNDS, that will mean we may be able to get twenty more sheets for £1000.000.

As Nongbri has already described, identical concerns dogged Michigan faculty in 1931–1932 during the acquisition of portions of Chester Beatty II (the Paul-Hebrews codex, P.Mich.inv. 6238). In a 26 December 1931 letter to Frank E. Robbins, Michigan professor of Greek and executive assistant to the university president, requesting funds for the purchase of the initial six leaves, Boak asked Robbins to “keep it out of the press, as it is going to be very difficult to get Biblical material out of the country.”³² In a letter to professor of Greek Campbell Bonner written some days later to acknowledge the purchase, Boak also cautions that it was “quite clear that the Museum will not approve

³⁰ The English Egyptologists Reginald Engelbach and Batiscombe Gunn were at this time, respectively, Assistant Keeper and Assistant Conservator at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo; Pierre Jouguet served in Cairo as Director of the Institut français d’archéologie orientale.

³¹ E.E. Peterson to A.E.R. Boak, 17 June 1930. Box 5, Folder 7, Institute for Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. The use of such codes in telegraphic communication protected the privacy of correspondents and the confidentiality of their communications; see Standage 2014, 105–26.

³² A.E.R. Boak to F.E. Robbins, 26 December 1931. Box 1, Folder 8, Institute for Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Cited from Nongbri 2014, 99.

our pages for export, so we are keeping the purchase quiet and shall have to devise ways and means of getting them through.”³³ Although there is at present no hard evidence that these leaves were removed from Egypt without inspection, the details of their export remain unclear.³⁴

Concurrent with the tightening of the legal papyrus trade in 1931–1932, Lacau added an additional term to Michigan’s annual loan contracts: the explicit right of the Service to recall the items at will. As Peterson remarked to Bonner, although the five-year time limit had not been mentioned, the new language concerning recall was clear:³⁵

They [i.e., papyri and ostraka] are permitted to be exported with the understanding that they can be recalled by the Department of Antiquities. Export is allowed for the purposes of publication. No mention is made of the time within which these publications must be made. It is left to the various institutions to decide that, trusting that they will not be held for an inordinate time without being published.

The earliest extant contracts in Michigan’s archives are two identical English-language texts dated to 12 April 1933 that respectively govern the ostraka and papyri from the 1932–1933 season at Karanis. They confirm that the Service had begun to assert in print its right to cancel the loans at will:³⁶

It is agreed between Mr. Enoch E. Peterson, representing the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A., and the Director General of the Department of Antiquities, that the three hundred fifty four papyri shown on the

³³ A.E.R. Boak to C. Bonner, 4 January 1931 [*sic* for 1932]. Box 1, Folder 8, Institute for Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Quoted from Nongbri 2014, 100.

³⁴ As described in Nongbri (2014, 101), these papyri were carried from Egypt to London by an agent of Beatty, one Captain Ernest Tanner. In a letter to Beatty dated 21 May, Boak relates that he retrieved the papyri from Tanner on 18 May and subsequently deposited them at the British Museum with the papyrologists Bell and Frederic Kenyon. This and related documents are archived in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, in the folder CBP/B/03/181, “Acquisition of papyrus fragments from the University of Michigan.” My thanks to Jill Unkel for making these documents available to me.

³⁵ E.E. Peterson to C. Bonner, 24 April 1932. Box 3, Folder 4, Ernest Enoch Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

³⁶ Box 5, Folder 9, Institute for Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

one hundred one photographs, numbering 63–163, of the accompanying album³⁷ are permitted to leave Egypt on condition that any or all of them can be reclaimed by the Department of Antiquities at any time. These papyri, briefly described in the accompanying note,³⁸ were all found in the excavations of the University of Michigan at Kom Aushim (Karanis), in the Province of Fayoum, during the season 1932–1933. On receipt of the publication of these papyri, the Department of Antiquities will advise the University of Michigan as to which of them are to be returned to the Museum.

The unlimited right of recall notwithstanding, this contract still guaranteed Michigan a *partage* along the lines described by Boak at the end of the first season as the recall by the Service of a selection of published documents. Yet, on the day this contract was signed, Peterson received a warning that suggested the possibility of a premature mass recall of the loans.³⁹

My dear Professor Robbins,

There is a very urgent matter I must refer to the Committee at once.⁴⁰ Yesterday I was at the Museum and in the course of the conversation with Mr. Engelbach we touched upon the papyri and ostraca that have been exported to the University from the previous seasons. Engelbach informed me that the Egyptian Government was becoming extremely restive about publications. I have just written Professor Winter⁴¹ a note, telling him about a conversation I had with Engelbach last Friday. Engelbach's conversation of yesterday convinced me more than ever of the seriousness of this situation. I seem to have a feeling that the University is publishing a volume of the ostraca very soon.⁴² I know that some of the papyri have been

published [in journal articles]. I might add that a volume of papyri would be most welcome at the Museum here. I am enclosing copies of the agreements [i.e., the export agreements for the 1932–1933 papyri and ostraca quoted above] that I was obliged to sign at the Museum yesterday. The originals will be kept by the Director General. I might say further that it is quite possible that the Committee of Egyptians in charge of the Museum will demand the return of all the papyri and ostraca, whether they have been published or not, if they think that there has been too great a delay in publications. I do wish we could get a whole volume of papyri publications out very soon. It would help us immensely here. Then I wish that copies of all the publications of any Karanis or Dimé finds, papyri or anything else, could be gathered together and two copies of each sent to the Museum here. One copy should be marked for the Department of Antiquities, Cairo, the other for the Royal Library, Cairo. Both copies should be sent to the Director General, Department of Antiquities, Cairo. It might be well to see whether a copy of our first preliminary report⁴³ has been sent to the Department and also to the Royal Library. I am quite sure that one has been sent to the Department of Antiquities but I am not certain about any for the Royal Library. I think it would be a wise plan to send copies of publications also to the following:

M. Lacau, Director General,
Department of Antiquities,
Cairo Egypt.

Mr. R. Engelbach, Curator,
Egyptian Museum,
Cairo.

M. Gauthier, Secretary General,
Department of Antiquities,
Cairo.

I also think it would be wise to send copies of papyri publications, at least, to M. [Octave] Guéraud,⁴⁴ Department of Antiquities, Cairo. These sent to the above addresses should be in addition to the two copies, for the Department of Antiquities and the Royal Library.

After bringing the matter to the next meeting of the Executive Committee of Michigan's Institute of Archaeological Research, Robbins laid out a tentative

³⁷ I.e., a photographic record of the year's excavated texts tendered to the Service in advance of receipt of export permission as required by the "Memorandum Regarding the 'Division' of Antiquities" (supra n. 22).

³⁸ I.e., a description of the excavated papyri in the photographs tendered to the Service. Box 5, Folder 7, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

³⁹ E.E. Peterson to Frank E. Robbins, 13 April 1933. Box 5, Folder 9, Institute of Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁴⁰ The Executive Committee of the Institute for Archaeological Research. First assembled by Francis Kelsey in 1924, an informal advisory committee on Near East research helped oversee and fund early work at Karanis, Antioch in Pisidia, Sizma, and Carthage. It was formalized as the Committee for Near East Research after Kelsey's death in 1927 and was renamed in 1931 the Institute of Archaeological Research. The institute continued to function until 1949 (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/b/bhlead/umich-bhl-89487>).

⁴¹ John G. Winter, professor of Latin at Michigan 1901–1954.

⁴² The future *O.Mich. I* (*Greek Ostraca in the University of Mich-*

igan Collection, pt. I, *Texts*, ed. L. Amundsen, University of Michigan Humanistic Series 34 [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1935]). N.B.: Where a publication is mentioned in relation to the correspondence but is not otherwise cited in the discussion, publication information is given in a footnote only.

⁴³ A.E.R. Boak and E. E. Peterson. *Karanis: Topographical and Architectural Report of Excavations During the Seasons 1924–28*. University of Michigan Humanistic Series 25 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1931).

⁴⁴ The papyrologist Guéraud was Assistant Keeper in the Egyptian Museum 1931–1947; see Bierbrier 2012, 230–31.

schedule of publications in the hopes of allaying concerns in Egypt:⁴⁵

Dear Peterson,

We had an Executive Committee meeting on May 5 at which I read your letter of April 13. We all appreciate the importance of the matter and are making every effort to see that the papyrus publications go through as quickly as possible. The publication of a volume of Ostraka edited by Amundsen has been a part of the program for several years. You may know that Amundsen is a rather difficult person to deal with and that he has delayed this publication very seriously. The manuscript, however, is now in the hands of the printer. I do not think that the book will appear before the end of the fiscal year but it ought to during the fall. Boak's volume of Tebtunis Papyri⁴⁶ is expected to be out before the end of the fiscal year and as, of course, you know that the second report of the Karanis dig is to be issued very soon.⁴⁷ Bonner has had a publication of the Shepherd of Hermas papyrus in the works for quite a time.⁴⁸ We have even had page proof on [*sic*] some of it but he has so many irons in the fire that the appearance of the book has been seriously delayed. We confidently expect to include in the next year's budget of the Advanced Humanities Fund a volume of miscellaneous papyri, perhaps to appear in parts.⁴⁹ Of course it is to be remarked that neither the Karanis papyri nor the Dime papyri have been published as such. It is to be expected, however, that they will be. Last summer a bibliography of publications of our papyri was made up and it shows that 65 different papyri have been published in various journals, not counting the Zenon papyri which numbered more than

⁴⁵ F.E. Robbins to E.E. Peterson, 10 May 1933. Box 5, Folder 9, Institute of Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. In a letter from Winter to Robbins dated 27 October 1933, Winter proposed sending a copy of Boak's recently published *Papyri from Tebtunis* (infra n. 46) signed by university president Alexander Grant Ruthven directly to King Fuad. Box 2, Folder 14, Institute of Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁴⁶ *P.Mich.* II: ed. A.E.R. Boak, E.M. Husselman, and W.F. Edgerton, *Papyri from Tebtunis*, pt. I, University of Michigan Humanistic Series 28 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1933).

⁴⁷ A.E.R. Boak, *Karanis: The Temple, Coin Hoards, Botanical and Zoological Reports, Seasons 1924–31*. University of Michigan Humanistic Series 30 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1933).

⁴⁸ *P.Mich.inv.* 917: C. Bonner, *A Papyrus Codex of the Shepherd of Hermas* [facsimile]. University of Michigan Humanistic Series 22 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1934).

⁴⁹ The future *P.Mich.* III: ed. J.G. Winter, *Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection: Miscellaneous Papyri*. University of Michigan Humanistic Series 40 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1936).

200.⁵⁰ These publications included at that time 11 of the Karanis papyri. Would this bibliography be of use to you? I can very easily let you have a copy. . . . Returning to the matter of publications of papyri and Ostraka, I wish you would make any further comments on this matter that are needful. We shall certainly see that publications are sent as you suggest. I think in many cases they have already gone.

P.S. Since writing the above I have consulted with Miss [Cordelia D.] Haagen [Head of the University Library's purchasing department] and have asked her to be sure that copies of the first Karanis report⁵¹ and the Zenon papyri are sent to each of the six addresses you mentioned (the department, the library, and four individuals). Also, she undertakes to put in each package a collection of separates which we are getting together from the members of the staff who have published papyri from our collection.

Peterson's immediate concerns were overblown, and the Service continued as before to grant permission for the export of papyri and ostraka. Yet the contract governing the loans from the 1933–1934 season—the only French original in Michigan's archives—represents the most muscular language to date, for it clearly articulates the right of the Service to recall all loans “even before publication,” the first appearance of this wording. Dated to 7 April 1934, the text was signed by Peterson, Lacau, Assistant Keeper of the Egyptian Museum Octave Guéraud, and the Minister of Education Mohammed Hilmi Issa.⁵²

Il est convenu entre Mr. Enoch E. Peterson, représentant l'Université de Michigan, d'une part, et le Service de Antiquités égyptiennes, d'autre part, que Mr. Peterson est autorisé à emporter en Amérique, à titre provisoire et pour étude, un lot de papyrus et d'ostraca grecs trouvés pendant la saison 1933–1934 dans les fouilles exécutées par l'Université de Michigan à Kôm Ouchim (Fayoum). Les photographies et la description de ces objets se trouvent dans l'album et les listes ci-joints.

Le Service des Antiquités se réserve le droit de demander, avant même la publication, le retour immédiat de tout ou partie de ces documents. Après la publication, le Service des Antiquités fera connaître à l'Université de Michigan quels papyrus et quels ostraca devront être renvoyés au Caire pour être conservés au Musée égyptien.

⁵⁰ The bulk of which were the 120 texts published in C.C. Edgar, *Zenon Papyri*. University of Michigan Humanistic Series 24 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1931).

⁵¹ *Supra* n. 43.

⁵² Box 5, Folder 10, Institute for Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. The document is accompanied by a letter for Lacau signed by the Secretary General of the Service Henri Gauthier, which reiterates the terms of the agreement.

It is agreed between Mr. Enoch E. Peterson, representing the University of Michigan, on the one hand, and the Egyptian Antiquities Service, on the other hand, that Mr. Peterson is authorized to import to America, on a provisional basis and for study, a lot of Greek papyrus and ostraka found during the 1933–1934 season in the excavations carried out by the University of Michigan at Kom Aushim (Fayyum). The photographs and the description of these objects are found in the attached lists.

The Antiquities Service reserves the right to demand, even before publication, the immediate return of all or part of these documents. After publication, the Antiquities Service will inform the University of Michigan as to which papyrus and which ostraka must be returned to Cairo to be stored in the Egyptian Museum.

Once again, however, this contract still allowed for the eventual division of the finds through selective recall. But how and by whom the selection would be made and what percentage of the published documents it would comprise was no clearer than it had been in 1925.

It is in these final years of the Fayyum campaign that the links between the trade in purchased papyri, the security of Michigan's loans, and the continuation of its excavations are thrown into sharpest relief. When rumors began to circulate in 1934 of the existence of 20 or more codex leaves from the same source as the Beatty Papyri (i.e., the Greek Ezekiel now known as Scheide MS 97),⁵³ Peterson was hesitant even to contact the dealer for fear of purchasing a text the Service would not allow to be exported. In a long letter to Alexander Ruthven—University of Michigan president from 1929 to 1951 and an enthusiastic supporter of Michigan's work in Egypt who had encouraged Peterson to acquire these sheets—Peterson described it as “suicidal” to purchase any papyri whose legal export could not be guaranteed. His primary concern was the potential stain on Michigan's “unique reputation for absolutely honest dealing” that would come from either secreting the object out of the country after purchase or buying it in the United States or Europe from a dealer who had smuggled it out of Egypt. “If there were any suspicion of unfair dealing on our part,” he concluded, “it would not take the Egyptian Government long to stop our excavations.”⁵⁴ Encouraged by

Ruthven to pursue the matter further, Peterson then sought advance export permission from Lacau in the event that he was able to purchase the sheets. Should Lacau demur, he added that Michigan would accept temporary possession for the purpose of study and publication, after which it would return the papyri to the Service at cost:⁵⁵

I lay this matter before you to assure you that the University of Michigan will not attempt to export papyri from Egypt that does [*sic*] not receive the sanction of export from the Department of Antiquities. Furthermore, we will not under any circumstance inform any dealer in antiquities that we will purchase them abroad, if they are presented to us in some European or American center. We will not be partners to any such illegal dealing.

The seriousness with which Michigan faculty treated Egyptian scrutiny of the papyrus trade in this period is similarly evident during the controversy surrounding Harold Idris Bell's identification in 1935 of the fragments of an unknown gospel in the British Museum (i.e., the Egerton Gospel, B.L. Papyrus 2 + *P.Köln*. VI 255). Following the announcement of Bell's discovery in the 23 January edition of the London *Times*, the 5 February 1935 issue of the Egyptian paper *La bourse égyptienne* printed a polemical front-page attack on both Bell and the papyrus trade that argued that “ce document n'aurait jamais dû quitter l'Égypte” (this document should never have left Egypt) and listed several other notable papyri that had recently left the country, including hieratic texts from Deir el-Medina just published by Alan Gardiner.⁵⁶

Peterson was deeply upset with Bell, who had since 1920 supervised a papyrus-purchasing syndicate made up of Michigan and a few other American and European institutions.⁵⁷ As expressed in a letter to Robbins, Peterson's primary concern was the possibility that the Committee on Egyptology, the colonial administrative body that oversaw Egyptological research in the

⁵³ My thanks to Brent Nongbri for identifying the text from Peterson's descriptions.

⁵⁴ E.E. Peterson to A.G. Ruthven, 2 March 1934. Box 3, Folder 8, Enoch E. Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁵⁵ E.E. Peterson to P. Lacau, 15 April 1934. Box 5, Folder 6, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁵⁶ “Un Précieux Manuscrit Voyage: De la boutique d'un antiquaire au British Museum,” *La bourse égyptienne* (Edition du Caire), Mardi, 5 Février 1935, 1, 9. Cited from Zelyck 2019, 16–17. The publication in question is A.H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum: Third Series. Chester Beatty Gift* (London: British Museum 1935).

⁵⁷ Keenan 2009, 66–67.

country,⁵⁸ might respond to the popular outcry by banning the export of all antiquities, purchased and excavated alike, which would be disastrous for Michigan's own scholarly agenda:⁵⁹

Saturday Lacau is returning from up country to be present at a meeting of the Committee on Egyptology called unexpectedly and immediately to consider the proposition to forbid the export of all antiquities, bought or excavated, from Egypt. It is a direct result of the information given out by the British Museum and it has already hurt us more than I can tell you. It is too late to do anything about it, the damage is done. While there may not be an immediate stoppage of export of antiquities, it will come and soon. I wish you could write to Bell and give him this information. He certainly does not realize the seriousness of this situation. Prof. Bonner will recall the letter he wrote me some time ago relative to press comments on papyri we have received. I wrote him a very urgent letter in reply and, as you know, the Committee agreed with Prof. Bonner and myself. But now the problem has struck us from another angle. I might add that any communication from Bell to me should come from the University. I cannot write to Bell directly and that is why I ask you to do so. Please tell him not to write me in regard to this matter, but write to the University. Both Engelbach and Gueraud impressed upon me very strongly yesterday, when I saw them, that the matter is most serious.

As Peterson requested, Bonner duly wrote to Bell to express Michigan's displeasure at the threat to its scholarly activities posed by a "permanent tightening of regulations" and suggested that Bell be more circumspect in the future.⁶⁰

The Deir el-Medina hieratic papyri⁶¹ mentioned by *La bourse égyptienne* likewise came in for criticism the following spring. The Egyptian newspapers *al-Ahram* and *al-Balagh* reported that the documents published by Gardiner had been stolen from the excavations of the Institut français d'archéologie orientale (IFAO) at Deir el-Medina and sold illegally to Alfred Chester Beatty, who then donated most of the texts to the Brit-

ish Museum.⁶² Lacau, then in Florence at the Fourth International Congress of Papyrologists, faced calls to resign and was forced to launch an investigation, which resulted in the temporary suspension of the IFAO's concessions at Deir el-Medina and Edfu.⁶³

Peterson was in the process of preparing the last shipment of divided and loaned objects from Karanis while this latest controversy was still unfolding. He was at this point dubious about any future work in the country, writing to Ruthven that "everything points to the fact that the time is soon coming when it will not be possible to get antiquities out of Egypt" and that "there is very little [papyri] on the market and the prices of the few good specimens we do see are preposterous."⁶⁴ After learning of the IFAO–Deir el-Medina affair, Peterson warned Robbins that the event signaled the end of the papyrus trade and the impending cancellation of Michigan's loans:⁶⁵

You may be interested to hear that the French Institute of Cairo has lost their concession to dig at Deir el Medinet. The reason is that Gardner [*sic*] in England published very recently a group of Hieratic Papyri which had been purchased by Mr. Chester Beatty. All these papyri must have come from Deir el Medinet. None were seen by the Department of Antiquities for export. Its [*sic*] the beginning of the curtailment of export of antiquities, about which I wrote you not nearly forcefully enough last fall or early last winter. The rumor is out also that all papyri allowed to be exported for study and publication will be recalled at a very early date. Perhaps the machinery for that move will be started next fall. We are hoping that the Institute will be able to regain the concession, but it is a very serious and very disagreeable episode that has happened.

I am dreadfully happy to know that our antiquities [i.e., the final Karanis division] are as far along as they are. I will be in a much happier state of mind when I know they are in New York.

⁵⁸ The Consultative Archaeological Committee established by Cromer in the 1880s and comprised largely of Europeans (Elsharky 2015, 189).

⁵⁹ E.E. Peterson to F.E. Robbins, 7 February 1935. Box 5, Folder 11, Institute of Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁶⁰ Zelyck 2019, 19. C. Bonner to H.I. Bell, 25 February 1935. Box 5, Folder 11, Institute of Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁶¹ Gardiner, *supra* n. 56.

⁶² Gady 2005, 923–29. The sale of antiquities from active excavations was permitted by Article 4 of Law No. 14 (1912) but only after the objects had become the property of the excavator through *partage* (*supra* n. 17). Article 10 of the standard excavation contract likewise required all excavated finds to be remitted to the Service for inspections before any disposition could be made.

⁶³ Reid 2015, 279, drawing on Gady 2005, 923–29.

⁶⁴ E.E. Peterson to A.G. Ruthven, 7 May 1935. Box 3, Folder 6, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁶⁵ E.E. Peterson to F.E. Robbins, 25 June 1935. Box 3, Folder 6, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Peterson's fears were again overblown, since the IFAO regained its concession in 1936 and Michigan's excavated texts were not immediately recalled. The events of 1935 nonetheless informed the Egyptian government's abortive attempt to restructure the export of antiquities as a system of exchange in which Egypt would receive in return "something which she required in the way of art, science, natural history, etc., but not necessarily antiquities."⁶⁶ Although British pressure ensured that the proposed revision to the law was never passed, two long-running Western excavations—the Metropolitan Museum of Art at Lisht and the Egypt Exploration Society at Amarna, both already under financial strain because of the Great Depression—began to close down in response to the changing mood.⁶⁷ Although Peterson and Ruthven would continue to explore the possibility of resuming Michigan's work at another site in Egypt, the ambiguity surrounding *partage* remained a major stumbling block. As Peterson bluntly reminded Guéraud in 1938, "It is not so easy to get money for a project of excavation when none of the antiquities can be brought home."⁶⁸ If a new campaign was therefore unlikely, the loans contracted with the Service still entitled Michigan to a division of excavated papyri and ostraka to accompany the other divided objects acquired over the past 11 seasons.

⁶⁶ Vrdoljak 2006, 87; Reid 2015, 292.

⁶⁷ Reid 2015, 292. According to Stevenson (2019, 149), the Egypt Exploration Society, which departed its concession at Amarna in 1937, explicitly cited the increasingly restrictive export regime, remarking that "it would obviously be impossible to maintain public interest in excavations without antiquities to show for them and to present to museums."

⁶⁸ E.E. Peterson to O. Guéraud, 7 November 1938. Box 5, Folder 18, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Michigan continued to hope for a resumption of excavation into the 1950s, though the near impossibility of *partage* remained a major obstacle. During a visit to Michigan in the early 1950s, Egyptian archaeologist Ahmed Fakhry hinted that Michigan might take over the concession at Medinet Madi in the Fayyum with the promise of a division. Nothing came of these tentative plans. "Acquisition of Antiquities" (no date, after 1953), Box 7, Folder 2, Enoch E. Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

POLICY CHANGES AND PRESSURE: 1936–1939

After Lacau retired in 1936, the Egyptian press backed the candidacy of Egyptian archaeologist Selim Hassan. King Fuad nonetheless sided with the Europeans and supported the elevation of his own Egyptological mentor Director-General Étienne Drioton, who soon secured the position with Hassan appointed as deputy director. Hassan continued to campaign behind the scenes and was identified by his European colleagues as the source of multiple leaks to the Egyptian press that accused various European scholars of the theft of thousands of artifacts from the Egyptian Museum (the same tactic deployed against Michigan in 1952). With the support of Drioton, Fuad's successor King Faruq, and Britain's proconsul Miles Lampson, the Egyptian cabinet forced Hassan into retirement in September of 1939, just as the first events of World War II befell Europe.⁶⁹

The struggle with Hassan was still ongoing when Michigan received notice from Drioton of yet another change in the terms of the loans. Dating to early 1937, this policy change represented a significant alteration to both the letter and the spirit of the original loan agreements, which had depicted *partage* as the partial recall by the Service of published texts. Although the language of this document, an English translation of the French original, is somewhat muddled, it seems that under the new policy Michigan would apply for a division by returning published papyri to Cairo accompanied by a list containing the inventory number of each piece, a bibliographic reference to its

⁶⁹ Reid 2015, 279–90. In a letter to Peterson dated 18 December 1938, Guéraud described these struggles as "deux années terribles, entouré de suspicion, de jalousie, de mauvaise volonté, de ces mille formes de vexations et de persecutions mesquines que vous connaissez puisque vous avez vécu ici (two terrible years, surrounded by suspicion, jealousy, ill will, by those thousand forms of vexations and petty persecutions that you know since you have lived here). O. Guéraud to E.E. Peterson, 18 December 1938. Box 5, Folder 18, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. He wrote similarly to Youtie some months later, remarking on the recent troubles and adding "il faut avoir vécu parmi le peuple égyptien pour savoir de quoi ces gens sont capables" (one must have lived among the Egyptian people to know what these people are capable of). O. Guéraud to H.C. Youtie, 31 July 1939. Box 4, Folder 19, Herbert C. and Louise C. Youtie Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

publication, and the date that the object was originally permitted to leave Egypt via a contract of loan:⁷⁰

Pursuant to our letter of January 18, last, with regard to the articles which we had authorized you to take out of the country provisionally for the purpose of study and publication, I have the honor to inform you that, according to a new ruling of the Service des Antiquites, the collections of papyri and ostraca taken out for study or publication must return to Egypt in [*sic*] entirety, even though they are to form the share of a division.

In case that you should desire, after publication, that the lot sent back form the share of a division, I should be very pleased to accompany the return of the articles with a descriptive list of the documents (two copies) in the form of the model below:

No Reference to the Publication Date of the permission for provisional exportation

copied from an album in which all the documents will be photographed with a number referring to the descriptive list mentioned above.

While it is impossible on present evidence to ascertain the motives behind this rule change, it coincided with increasing Egyptian concerns over the slow pace of Michigan's publication of loaned texts. Since no volumes were immediately forthcoming after Amundsen's *O.Mich.* I of 1935,⁷¹ Bonner suggested in 1938 that Michigan organize a general-interest volume on the Karanis excavation in an attempt to ease "the strain with the Department of Antiquities clamoring so for a volume on the papyri." Peterson rejected the idea as insufficient, warning that "the Dept. [Service] wanted a volume on the papyri."⁷²

Still, the nature of this "clamor" is unclear, since Michigan's archives preserve no correspondence from the Service concerning papyrus and ostraka publication between the years 1935 and 1937. The first surviving evidence of mounting pressure is a 25 June 1938 letter to the office of Director-General of the Service penned by Robbins. Robbins' letter was a response to a 2 June communiqué that is sadly not preserved in

⁷⁰ É. Drioton to E.E. Peterson, 18 January 1937. This letter, a translation of the lost original, is archived with the portion of Youtie's personal papers kept in the University of Michigan Papyrology Collection, 807 Hatcher Graduate Library.

⁷¹ Supra n. 42.

⁷² E.E. Peterson to H.C. Youtie, 17 May 1938. Youtie Papers, University of Michigan Papyrology Collection, 807 Hatcher Graduate Library.

Michigan's archives. That it concerned Michigan's contractual responsibilities and the pace of scholarship on excavated texts is nonetheless clear from the content of Robbins' remarks:⁷³

My dear sir

Mr. Enoch E. Peterson has handed to me your letter dated to June 2 to which I am making reply as Secretary of the Institute of Archaeological Research of this University. My colleagues, the members of the faculty of the University of Michigan, who have especially interested themselves in papyrological research are fully aware of the obligations which rest upon the University of Michigan with respect to the study and publication of ostraca and papyri discovered in the course of excavations at Karanis. For a number of years preliminary work has been going on in charge of various members of the group with publication in an appropriate form as the end in view. One group of papyri has been prepared for publication by Dr. Elinor Husselman,⁷⁴ Curator of Manuscripts and Papyri in the University of Michigan Library, and Professor John G. Winter has nearly ready for publication a considerable number of the private letters which is the class of papyri in which he is especially interested and competent.⁷⁵ The business and official documents as a class are being dealt with by Professor Boak.

In the same letter, Robbins also highlighted the impending arrival of a new research associate (Orsamus Pearl, unnamed in the letter) who would be tasked primarily with the documents excavated during the 1928–1929, 1929–1930, and 1930–1931 seasons. Robbins claimed that with Pearl's forthcoming assistance, the end of the publication project was in sight and the papyri were well cared for:

We are very much pleased, as I am sure the Department of Antiquities likewise will be, that by this means we can

⁷³ F.E. Robbins to Director-General, Department of Antiquities, Egypt, 25 June 1938. Box 3, Folder 6, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁷⁴ Husselman contributed to the future *P.Mich.* V (*Papyri from Tebtunis*, Pt. II, ed. E.M. Husselman, A.E.R. Boak, and W.F. Edgerton, University of Michigan Humanistic Series 29 [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1944]). Because of her many overlapping commitments on campus and the ending of the University of Michigan Humanistic Series in the 1950s, Husselman's own volume of Karanis Papyri, *P.Mich.* IX (Husselman 1971), did not appear until nearly three decades later.

⁷⁵ Youtie later joined the project, producing *P.Mich.* VIII (*Papyri and Ostraca from Karanis: Second Series*, ed. H.C. Youtie and J.G. Winter. University of Michigan Humanistic Series 50 [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1951]).

probably conclude in 1938–1939 the work in which we have engaged and, as soon thereafter as the means of publication can be found, present for the use of scholars the group of papyri from Karanis as a body. It is the fixed purpose, not only of the scholars who are studying the papyri, but also the administrative officers of the University to hasten the final publication; and you may rest assured that the University will cooperate with His Majesty's [i.e., King Faruq] Government to the fullest degree in satisfying the terms under which the University of Michigan was privileged to work in Egypt. Some of them, however, have been published in journals, a practice which we encourage inasmuch as it permits general criticisms and insures a more authoritative final publication.

I believe that I should include in this report the statement that these papyri are being carefully preserved at the General Library of the University which is a fireproof structure. They are under the care of a Special Curator of Manuscripts and Papyri, provided at the expense of the University, who permits access to them only by competent and duly authorized persons.

Robbins then listed the publications that had so far resulted from Michigan's work in Egypt, namely *O.Mich.* I and Youtie's *P.Mich.* IV.1 (the latter representing Karanis papyri acquired on the antiquities market), as well as the various reports on the excavation and special studies like Donald B. Harden's volume on Roman glass from Karanis.⁷⁶ He also included a bibliography of excavated Karanis and Soknopaiou Nesos texts that had appeared in journals, requesting that Michigan be allowed to retain these objects in view of the preliminary nature of their publication. As Robbins explains, this two-stage method of publication would allow the papyrological community to critique and improve the text in advance of its final publication, by which he meant its appearance in a volume of the Michigan Papyri series.⁷⁷ The message, in short, was that Michigan was well on its way toward fulfilling its contractual responsibilities:

All of these volumes have resulted from the excavations carried out by the University's archaeological expedition

to Egypt and may, we trust, be regarded by the Department of Antiquities as evidence of this University's determination to make definitive publication of all the Karanis materials as soon as financial considerations and the working time of our colleagues permit. We have deposited copies of these volumes with your department and shall be happy, if any further copies are needed for your use, to send them to you at any time. . . . The cooperation which we have received from the Department of Antiquities and its members individually has been more deeply valued by my colleagues at the University of Michigan than I can readily tell you. We hope that the record of publication already made together with the definite plan which I am happy to announce in this letter will be regarded by the Department as evidence of our desire on our part to continue this cooperation.

Robbins' letter was answered on 21 July 1938 by interim Director-General Octave Guéraud, who approved the request to temporarily retain all provisionally published texts. Yet rather than granting an indefinite extension of the loan, Guéraud allowed Michigan to retain these papyri "pour une période d'un an environ" (for a period of about one year).⁷⁸ Although this unrealistic deadline was not later enforced, its imposition marked a significant shift in the Service's attitude and spurred the Institute for Archaeological Research to create a "committee to have general supervision of a plan for the publication of these papyri" consisting of Winter, Boak, and Youtie.⁷⁹

The next direct communication from the Service was a letter sent directly to University of Michigan's president Ruthven. Dated 10 July 1939 and signed by Drioton, the letter requested information on the state of scholarship on the papyri, focusing this time on the 1925–1926 and 1926–1927 seasons and reminding Michigan of the five-year limit, now expired, on publication of excavation materials.⁸⁰

J'ai l'honneur de vous rappeler que, en vertu des conventions signées en date des 4/5/1926 & 20/4/27, nous vous avons autorisé à faire sortir du pays, à titre provisoire (aux

⁷⁶ *O.Mich.* I (supra n. 42); *P.Mich.* IV.1 (*Tax Rolls from Karanis*, ed. H.C. Youtie, University of Michigan Humanistic Series 42 [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1936]). D.B. Harden, *Roman Glass from Karanis Found by the University of Michigan Archaeological Expedition in Egypt, 1924–29*. University of Michigan Humanistic Series 41 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1936).

⁷⁷ Included in Robbins' list were *P.Mich.inv.* 2754, 2798, 2819, 2841, 2895, 2916, 2920, 2930, 4527–4529, 5474, 5766 (Karanis); 6051, 6160a–d, 6177a–e, 6181a–f (Soknopaiou Nesos).

⁷⁸ Service des Antiquités (O. Guéraud) to F.E. Robbins, 21 July 1938. Box 3, Folder 6, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁷⁹ F.E. Robbins to J.G. Winter, A.E.R. Boak, and H.C. Youtie, 2 November 1938. Box 3, Folder 2, Institute of Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁸⁰ É. Drioton to the University of Michigan, 10 July 1939. Box 3, Folder 2, Institute of Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. The body of the text is a mimeographed form letter to which the italicized text was added by typewriter. The underlining emphasis is original.

fins d'études et de publication, et pour un délai maximum de cinq ans) les objets figurant sur la liste ci-jointe.

Dans ces conventions, vous vous êtes engagé à nous retourner ces pièces aussitôt que la publication en aura été achevée, en nous reconnaissant, d'autre part, le droit de vous les réclamer en tout ou en partie, à n'importe quel moment.

Aussi pour nous permettre d'être au courant de la situation en ce qui concerne les documents que vous détenez, nous vous serions très obligés de bien vouloir nous faire connaître les mesures que vous avez prises en vue de leur publication et la date à laquelle vous espérez pouvoir nous les retourner.

I have the honor of reminding you that, in view of the agreements signed on the dates of *4 May 1926 & 20 April 1927*, we authorized you to remove from the country, on a temporary basis (and for a maximum term of five years) the objects appearing in the attached list.

Under these agreements you committed yourselves to return these pieces as soon as publication has been completed, while we acknowledge, on the other hand, the right to reclaim them from you in whole or in part, at any time.

In addition, in order for us to be up to date with regard to the situation concerning the documents that you possess, we would be very obliged if you would inform us of the measures that you have taken in view of their publication and the date at which you hope to be able to return them to us.

Robbins once again drafted Michigan's reply, this time in his capacity as Assistant to the University President.⁸¹ It was a relatively brief letter since the only major developments in 1938–1939 were the impending publication of *P.Mich.* IV.2 then in press,⁸² Youtie's initial emendations to *O.Mich.* I,⁸³ and the editing of the next batch of excavated ostraka (nos. 700–971).⁸⁴ Robbins nonetheless neglected to mention the fact

⁸¹ F.E. Robbins to É. Drioton, 30 October 1939. Box 3, Folder 2, Institute of Archaeological Research Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Robbins held the position of Assistant to the President from 1921–1953.

⁸² *P.Mich.* IV.2 (*Tax Rolls from Karanis*, pt. 2, *Text and Indexes*, ed. H.C. Youtie and O.M. Pearl. University of Michigan Humanistic Series 43 [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1939]).

⁸³ Youtie 1940; also Youtie, "New Readings in Michigan Ostraca," *TAPA* 72 (1941), 439–460; "Brief Notes on Michigan Ostraca," *AJP* 63(1) (1942), 72–77; "Critical Notes on Michigan Ostraca," *CP* 37(2) (1942), 142–49; "Critical Notes on Graeco-Roman Ostraca," *TAPA* 76 (1945) 140–56.

⁸⁴ *P.Mich.* VI (*Papyri and Ostraca from Karanis*, ed. H.C. Youtie and O.M. Pearl. University of Michigan Humanistic Series 47 [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1944]).

that Michigan was soon to return all but the first 97 of the 699 ostraka edited by Amundsen in *O.Mich.* I. The timing of this return is uncertain as no discussion of it has been found in the archives. Regardless, the objects were already in Cairo by 1939–1940, forcing Youtie to make his emendations entirely from photographs.⁸⁵

At this point, war conditions severed the lines of communication between Cairo and Ann Arbor. Michigan papyrologists made considerable progress on excavated texts between 1939 and 1945. By the end of the war, however, the European personnel in the Service were dwindling, and the Service accordingly began to press for the return of excavated texts in greater earnest.

RECALLS AND RETURNS: 1945–1953

The first piece of surviving correspondence between Michigan and the Service after the start of the war is a letter from Peterson to Drioton of February of 1945, which was carried by an Egyptian friend of Peterson's who was returning to the country:⁸⁶

In the first place, I hope that the Department of Antiquities has received the copies of our recent publications, the volume of Karanis Papyri and Ostraca by Youtie and Pearl⁸⁷ and the volume of Tebtunis Papyri by Mrs. Huselman and Boak.⁸⁸ They have been sent to you but war conditions may have prevented them from reaching you. We will see to it that copies do reach you, if any are lost.

Another volume of Karanis Papyri by Youtie and Winter is approaching readiness for publication.⁸⁹ I am working on the final volumes of the Topography and Architecture of Karanis.⁹⁰ Our Miss. [Louise] Shier has just about completed her manuscript on the study of the lamps of

⁸⁵ Youtie (1940, 623) simply remarks that the published ostraka "were returned to the Egyptian Museum at Cairo some time before I turned my attention to the unpublished ostraca."

⁸⁶ This was Salah al-Din Taha, a University of Michigan Ph.D. in bacteriology. E.E. Peterson to Director General, Department of Antiquities, Cairo, 20 February 1945. Box 5, Folder 17, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁸⁷ *P.Mich.* VI, supra n. 84.

⁸⁸ *P.Mich.* V, supra n. 74.

⁸⁹ *P.Mich.* VIII, supra n. 75.

⁹⁰ Peterson's complete manuscript, still extant, was never published due to its length and the prohibitive cost (Wilfong 2014, 20–22). It was later edited and summarized by Huselman as *Karanis Excavations of the University of Michigan in Egypt 1928–1935: Topography and Architecture. A Summary of the Reports of the Director, Enoch E. Peterson*. Kelsey Museum of Archaeology Studies 5 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1979).

Karanis and Dimé.⁹¹ Now she is preparing to study those in the collections of the Toronto Museum, dating from Grenfell and Hunt days, as you know. The Karanis coins have all been cataloged and described, but the war has delayed that publication since the person in charge is in military Service.⁹²

Apart from this letter, there is no extant correspondence between Cairo and Ann Arbor until the summer of 1949. By this time, most of the senior Egyptological positions in Egypt were filled by Egyptians including the directorship of the administration of the Service (a nonscholarly position), the directorship of the Egyptian Museum, and the Chair of Egyptology at Cairo University (then Fuad I University). Drioton nonetheless remained at the head of the Service thanks to the patronage of King Faruq.⁹³

It appears to have been the Egyptian staff of the Service who initiated the first papyrus returns via a letter from the office of the Director-General dated 10 August 1949. Certainty is again impossible since this document is not preserved at Michigan. Robbins' surviving response nonetheless strongly suggests that the letter requested the return of at least the published papyri:⁹⁴

My dear Sir:

I am writing in response to your letter of August 10 addressed to the University of Michigan. We are fully cognizant of our obligations in regard to the return to the Department of Antiquities of the papyri and ostraca which the Department so kindly allowed the University of Michigan to export for study and publication.

⁹¹ Another volume that would turn out to be long delayed, presumably by Shier's many responsibilities as Curator at the Kelsey Museum and her time as acting director in the late 1960s and early 1970s: L.A. Shier, *Terracotta Lamps from Karanis, Egypt: Excavations of the University of Michigan*. Kelsey Museum of Archaeology Studies 3 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1978).

⁹² It would be 19 years before the volume saw publication: R.A. Haatvedt and E.E. Peterson, *Coins from Karanis: The University of Michigan Excavations 1924–1935* (Ann Arbor: Kelsey Museum of Archaeology 1964). Haatvedt served in the U.S. Navy until 1946 and received a Ph.D. degree from Michigan in 1950. At the time of Peterson's letter, Haatvedt was serving as a naval attaché to the U.S. Foreign Service in Stockholm (United States Department of State 1945, 39).

⁹³ Reid 2015, 334–36, 349.

⁹⁴ F.E. Robbins to Director-General, Antiquities Service, 29 September 1949. Box 5, Folder 7, Ernest E. Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Before the war, as you know, we returned to the Department some of the ostraca. The remaining ostraca from Karanis are being prepared for shipment.

The published papyri will be returned as soon as arrangements can be made. At the present time there is a volume of papyri and ostraca in press and these will be returned in due order.⁹⁵

There is another matter in this connection that should be mentioned. As the [*sic*] know Abd el Lateef Ahmed Aly, a Lecturer in Classics and Graeco Roman History, is now at the University of Michigan for the study of papyri. He received his doctor's degree from the university of Michigan last June. The Egyptian government has kindly allowed our request to have Abd el Lateef remain at the University for postdoctoral studies of Karanis documents. It is hoped that he will be able to prepare for publication a number of Karanis fragments.⁹⁶ It would be a great favor both to him and to us if we could delay the return of a number of the documents so that he may work from the originals. It would also be of great advantage to him if those just now prepared for publication might be retained for a time to enable him to use this original comparative material.

We will inform the Department of Antiquities as the shipments are made.

The office of the Director-General responded to Robbins seven months later in a letter signed not by Drioton but by Abbas Bayoumi, a Paris-trained Egyptian archaeologist who had worked in the Service since 1931 and had served as Chief Inspector of Antiquities in Upper Egypt.⁹⁷ While Bayoumi permitted the temporary retention of Aly's papyri, he explicitly requested the prompt return of all other excavated material not currently under study:⁹⁸

En réponse à votre letter en date du 29 Septembre 1949, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire savoir que nous n'avons pas d'objection à donner suite à votre demande relative à remettre l'envoi des documents de Karanis pour être étudiés par la Prof. Abdul Latif Ahmed Ali. Toutefois, je

⁹⁵ *P.Mich.* VIII, supra n. 75.

⁹⁶ The papyri that Abdullatif Ahmed Aly was working on were later published as "Some Michigan Papyri from Karanis (i)," *Ibrahim University Studies in Papyrology* 1 (1952), 2–32. The texts, now in Cairo, are *P.Mich.inv.* 2890, 4737, 4791, 4801b (1), 4801b (2), 5279, 5644a, 5984, 6000, 6552.

⁹⁷ Bayoumi would later serve as acting Director-General after the July 1952 revolution and as its second official Egyptian Director-General in 1956–1957. See briefly Bierbrier 2012, 47; Reid 2015, 117. Bierbrier does not mention Bayoumi's attachment to the office of Director before his brief stint as acting Director-General in 1952.

⁹⁸ A. Bayoumi to F.E. Robbins, 16 April 1950. Box 5, Folder 7, Ernest E. Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

vous prie de nous expédier tous les documents dont il n'a pas besoin dans ses études et de hâter l'envoi du reste dès qu'il aurait fini de les étudier.

In response to your letter dated 29 September 1949, I have the honor of informing you that we have no objection to acquiescing to your demand relating to postponing the sending of documents from Karanis which are to be studied by Prof. Abdul Latif Ahmed Ali. However, I ask you to send all the documents not needed for his studies and to hasten the sending of the remainder as soon as their study is complete.

Sadly, Michigan's archives contain little substantive documentation pertaining to these recalls and returns. It is nonetheless clear that political pressures exerted considerable influence on the scholarship of Michigan papyrologists in these years. Having been asked by New York University's Casper J. Kraemer in 1950 to partner in the publication of the Nessana papyri from the Israeli Negev, Youtie regretfully replied that, though willing, his scholarly freedom was tightly circumscribed by the demands of the Service and the threat of a minor political incident:⁹⁹

There is, however, one temporary obstacle to immediate participation on my part which I must explain carefully. We have been under constant pressure from the Egyptian Museum at Cairo since 1945 to return our Karanis papyri, which in accordance with Egyptian law are here only on loan—a loan which goes back to 1934. For whatever reason no one worked on these papyri up to 1939, when the first 5-year was up and the Egypt. Mus. demanded their return. It was only then that I became aware of the situation; I had not been told and had always thought that the papyri belonged to us. At any rate, the war broke out and made their return impossible. I then undertook to publish them without delay. I planned three volumes to take care of the best stuff I could find in the collection. I enlisted Pearl's help and together we issued the first volume in 1944 [*P.Mich.* VI]. The second volume, in which I used preliminary transcripts prepared over the years by Winter, is now going into page proof; it will appear as a joint publication by Winter and myself [*P.Mich.* VIII]. Fortunately, Pearl, Mrs. Husselman, and I have been engaged in preparing the third volume since early last year. I say "fortunately" because we had a letter from the Egyptian Ministry of Education last week setting next August as the ultimate date for the return of all the papyri and ostraca. Since the University must not get involved in what would be a minor but disagreeable international incident, I am putting on a power-drive to finish the volume by June.

⁹⁹H.C. Youtie to C.J. Kraemer, 2 October 1950. Box 4, Folder 25, Herbert C. and Louise C. Youtie Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

And I've got to stay with it or my collaborators will melt away like snow in the spring. They are not enthusiastic.

Not all the details in Youtie's letter can be harmonized with information elsewhere in the archives. For one, no evidence of postwar correspondence from the Service regarding excavated texts is preserved until Robbins' 1949 reply to the Director-General cited above. Youtie's description of the loans as dating only to 1934 also seems to be a misunderstanding; as documented above, the Service was concerned about material that spanned the whole of the excavation campaign. The "ultimate date" of August 1951 as the deadline for the return of all excavated texts is likewise not explicitly attested elsewhere. The only document that resembles such an ultimatum is an undated single sheet that accompanies the Robbins–Bayoumi correspondence of 1949–1950. Bearing the Arabic watermark of the Egyptian Government (*al-Hukūma al-Miṣriyya*), it appears to be a recall of excavated papyri and ostraka:¹⁰⁰

University of Michigan Expedition

Liste des objets réclamés

Medinet Habu

Kom Aushim	Saison	1928–1929
		1929–1930
		1930–1931
		1931–1932 pap.&Ostra.
		1932–1933
		1933–1934
		1934–1935 Ostr.&pap.

To judge from the canceled text at top, this document derives from the same period during which the Service began to recall excavated Medinet Habu ostraka from the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, which had similarly received the objects on loan for study and publication.¹⁰¹ A similar *liste des objets réclamés*, signed by Bayoumi and dated 16 April 1950, was received by the Vitelli Institute in Florence and requested the return of a number of loaned documents excavated by Italian teams at Tebtynis

¹⁰⁰Box 5, Folder 7. Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan (strikeout original).

¹⁰¹Two cases containing 1,210 Medinet Habu ostraka were returned by the Oriental Institute in June of 1950 and their receipt was acknowledged by Bayoumi in October of that year (Foy Scalf, pers. comm. 17 April 2017). Director of the Egyptian Museum Mahmoud Hamza had demanded the return of the loans as early as 1946. See Reid 2015, 338–39.

(1929–1939), El Hibeh (1934–1935), and Antinouspolis (1936–1939).¹⁰² The surviving letter that accompanies this list nonetheless refers to a “definitive *partage*” (*partage définitif*), albeit without further clarification. In the end, only published texts from excavations were returned to Egypt in the winter of 1953–1954, while a large number of unpublished pieces remained in Italy.¹⁰³ Yet, in the absence of such accompanying documentation it is difficult to assess what was being demanded in the list sent to Michigan: all loans from the given seasons or only those of the 1931–1932 and 1934–1935 seasons? If the latter, the request was never fulfilled since many of the texts from these two excavation seasons remain in Ann Arbor. Moreover, the returns that would be made between 1950 and 1953 included papyri from all 11 excavation seasons at Kom Aushim (Karanis) and the single season at Soknopaiou Nesos rather than only from the Kom Aushim seasons on the list. Further, unlike the Italian returns, Michigan would return substantial numbers of both published and unpublished texts. Whether or not Bayoumi envisaged a similarly “definitive *partage*” with Michigan is also tantalizingly unknown, though the possibility must remain open.

While much obviously remains uncertain, the evidence strongly suggests that the Service, seemingly under the de facto authority of Bayoumi, had begun to recall at least a selection of excavated texts in Michigan, Chicago, and Florence in 1949 and 1950. Picking up where it had left off at the outbreak of the war, Michigan first returned the rest of the excavated ostraka in its possession. Most had been published in *P.Mich.* VI and VIII and the remainder could later be read from photographs.¹⁰⁴ The date of their departure from Ann Arbor is nonetheless unknown. In a letter to the Service dated 1 November 1950, Peterson states that the ostraka had been packed and were ready to ship, but difficulties in securing insurance coverage from Ann Arbor to Cairo had delayed their dispatch.¹⁰⁵

By 1951, Michigan’s attentions were focused on preparing a selection of papyri for return. While no surviving archival documents describe any returns dating to 1951–1952, the university president’s annual report

to the Michigan Board of Regents contains the following summary:¹⁰⁶

At the beginning of the year, the papyri from the University excavations at Karanis were photographed and returned to Egypt, in accordance with the terms under which they were brought to the United States. Only those were retained which are in the process of being edited.

Apart from this short notice, the surviving record of the 1950s returns amounts to only two documents. The first is a list entitled “Papyri Ready for Shipment as of May 19, 1952,” and the second is a packing list enumerating the contents and organization of a large return dating to the summer of 1953.¹⁰⁷ The 1952 list contains 450 inventory numbers, of which 404 were still awaiting return in the following year, as indicated by their inclusion in the 1953 packing list.¹⁰⁸ This list comprises 1,412 inventory numbers organized chronologically by excavation findspot and spanning all 11 years of excavation at Karanis plus the single season at Soknopaiou Nesos.¹⁰⁹ Sadly the only extant commentary on this return is Husselman’s summary description in the introduction to her edited volume of Karanis papyri *P.Mich.* IX:¹¹⁰

The papyri from the excavations at Karanis were all brought to the University of Michigan by arrangement

¹⁰⁶ University of Michigan 1953, 280.

¹⁰⁷ Both are to be found in Box 6, Folder 1, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

¹⁰⁸ Of the remaining 46, 45 are in Cairo and must have been returned at some point between the spring of 1952 and the summer of 1953. Only *P.Mich.inv.* 5217 remains in Ann Arbor. The 45 returned texts are *P.Mich.inv.* 5154, 5160, 5169, 5172, 5176, 5180, 5211, 5213–5215, 5220, 5222, 5223, 5225, 5266, 5284, 5308, 5325, 5343, 5354, 5359–5361, 5363, 5364, 5366–5369, 5371, 5382, 5384, 5387, 5422, 5427, 5428, 5432, 5435, 5439, 5442, 6270, 6327, 6567–6569.

¹⁰⁹ Box 6, Folder 1, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

¹¹⁰ Husselman 1971, 1. Fifty-six inventory numbers included on the 1953 packing list were not successfully returned: *P.Mich.inv.* 2819, 2830, 3016, 3018, 3041, 4389, 4607, 4650, 4680, 4682, 4689, 4690, 4692, 4705, 4711, 4716, 4723, 4729, 4731, 4733, 4735, 4736, 4739, 4748, 4759a, 4794e, 4797, 4800a–e, 4803f, 4816, 4832, 4833, 4838, 4873, 5121, 5143, 5190, 5237, 5238, 5437, 5452a–n, 5469, 5524, 5538, 5663, 5758b and c, 5774, 5947, 6052–6054, 6292a and b, 6312b and c, 6312e and f, 6463, 6835. A handwritten note in the files of the University of Michigan Papyrology Collection dated 19 June 1986 and labeled “conversation with Mrs. Youtie” records Youtie’s recollection that “O.M. Pearl picked out some Karanis papyri before the rest were returned to Cairo (Egypt, Dept. of Antiquities)—ones that have good possibilities for publication.”

¹⁰² Bastianini 2015, 52 with n. 8.

¹⁰³ Bastianini 2015, 57.

¹⁰⁴ Youtie would finish the project in the 1970s: “Ostraca from Karanis (O.Mich. IV),” *ZPE* 18 (1975), 267–82.

¹⁰⁵ E.E. Peterson to Director-General, Antiquities Service, 1 November 1950. Box 5, Folder 17, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

with the Egyptian government and with the proviso that after study and publication they were to be returned. . . . In 1953 at the request of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities, the bulk of the fragments and the more complete documents that had been published were returned to Egypt. The University was generously permitted to keep those documents on which its scholars were actively working, among which are those that are here published.

Husselman's characterization thus accords with the archival evidence: the returns of the early 1950s were made at the express request of the Service. That the returns were made under some duress is further indicated by the anonymous allegations against Michigan leaked to the press and published in the *Ann Arbor News*.¹¹¹ The repatriation of the papyri therefore does not appear to have been a gesture of goodwill by Michigan, as has been suggested elsewhere.¹¹² Whether Michigan ever made specific plans to return subsequently published texts such as those collected by Husselman in *P.Mich.* IX¹¹³ is unknown. Indeed, following the 1953 return and the decolonization of the Service, communication between Michigan and Cairo seems to have ceased, and there is accordingly no evidence of any additional recalls.¹¹⁴

CONCLUSION

Sometime during or after 1953, Peterson circulated the following internal memorandum at Michigan:¹¹⁵

All Papyri from the University of Michigan Excavations in Egypt were granted export by the Department of Antiquities in Cairo to the University of Michigan for study and publication. All are required to be returned to the Department of Antiquities in Cairo. The agreements for all export were signed by me as Director of the Excavations.

Those on exhibit now in the Kelsey Museum are labelled as "on loan from the Department of Antiquities in Cairo." The Department of Antiquities has been informed of this.

¹¹¹ *Supra* n. 2.

¹¹² El-Maghrabi and Römer 2014, vii.

¹¹³ Husselman 1971.

¹¹⁴ Drioton left Egypt in the summer of 1952 for his normal summer leave and did not return after the 23 July 1952 revolution. He was officially dismissed as head of the Service on 8 October 1952. See "French Abbe Dismissed as Museum Head by Cairo," *New York Times*, 10 October 1952, 3. My thanks to Donald Reid for this reference.

¹¹⁵ Box 5 (Museum Files), Folder 7, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Since the text refers to the "Kelsey Museum" it cannot date earlier than 1953, when the Archaeological Museum was renamed in Kelsey's honor.

On 3 May 1954, Peterson requested a salary increase for Husselman, citing her important ongoing work on the Karanis papyri. Since these items were on loan from the Egyptian government, he wrote that "their publication should take precedence over all other papyri in the University Collections."¹¹⁶ Peterson's contribution to *The University of Michigan: An Encyclopedic Survey* also contrasts excavated Egyptian objects housed in the Kelsey Museum with excavated papyri; the former were Michigan property as the result of division, while the latter were to be returned to Egypt after their publication.¹¹⁷ As late as 1959, Boak echoed these remarks in his brief history of the university's papyrus collection in the *Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review*. "The papyri recovered in the course of these excavations," he writes, "were entrusted to the University by the Egyptian Department of Antiquities for study and publication and are subject to return when the work on them is completed."¹¹⁸ Upon Elinor Husselman's retirement in 1965, Peterson also submitted a memorandum to the university library that summarized the legal status of all papyri in the Michigan collection and reminded the university of its longstanding obligations. In this document he distinguishes between "Class 1" papyri acquired by purchase and granted export permission as property of the University of Michigan and "Class 2" papyri, which were granted export permission as property of the Service and were therefore subject to return. Although he notes that there was at this point no set date for their return, he nonetheless concludes, emphatically, that these texts "SHOULD NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES BE ACCESSIONED BY THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OR BY THE KELSEY MUSEUM EXCEPT AS PROPERTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT."¹¹⁹

Such testimony accordingly suggests that *partage* was a virtual dead letter after the early 1950s and that the remaining excavated texts at Michigan would have to be returned to Cairo at some point by order of the Service. Why no additional major returns were made and why regular communication between Michigan and the Service ceased are both unknown. It is possible

¹¹⁶ 3 May 1954. Box 5 Folder 10, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

¹¹⁷ Peterson 1956, 1455.

¹¹⁸ Boak 1959, 39.

¹¹⁹ E.E. Peterson, 1 September 1965. "Papyri from Egypt at the University of Michigan Years 1924–1935." Administrative Files, University of Michigan Papyrus Collection, 807 Hatcher Graduate Library (capitalization original).

that the Egyptian leadership of the newly nationalized Service simply moved on to more pressing business, abandoning a campaign that had been only one small front in a larger war for control over Egyptian material culture. Yet the increasing political friction between Nasser's Egypt and the United States may also have played some role in the severing of ties. In an interview with Donald Malcolm Reid, Abdullatif Ahmed Aly recalled "the terrible isolation of the Nasser years, during which I lost touch with all my American connections, and even with Americans here in Cairo."¹²⁰ Indeed, apart from some personal correspondence with Peterson dating to 1952–1953¹²¹ and a single exchange with Youtie in 1955,¹²² Aly seems to have had no further contact with his former instructors and advisers in Ann Arbor.

This is mere speculation, however, and more documentation is necessary to explain in full the legal status of excavated papyri still present in Ann Arbor. Yet, despite these lacunae, the foregoing narrative serves as a microhistorical case study in the entanglement between the fraught cultural politics of late colonial Egypt and the work of Western papyrologists. On the one hand, the haphazard administration of the loans to Michigan by the European leadership of the Service—the frequent changes to the terms and the eventual abandonment of the promised division—can be read sympathetically as an attempt to negotiate between the competing and conflicting expectations of Michigan scholars and increasingly empowered Egyptian nationalists.¹²³ This attempted balancing act nevertheless subjected Michigan to the repeated redefinition of its responsibilities to the excavated texts, with unfeasible publication deadlines and the apparent abrogation of the long-expected *partage*. These external pressures contributed far more than was previously understood to the shaping of Michigan's papyrus collection, with excavated papyri presently amounting to just over 39% of the total number of texts excavated by the univer-

sity during its 11 years in the Fayyum, the remainder having been returned to Cairo.¹²⁴ On the other hand, Michigan was not altogether candid in its correspondence with the Service by seriously underestimating the amount of time and effort that would be required to publish the loans in their entirety. The internal exchanges of Peterson and Youtie cited above also suggest that scholarly attentions at Michigan were diffuse, which further hindered the publication project.

Most significantly, then, this examination of the correspondence contributes to our appreciation of Egyptian agency in the establishment and early development of papyrology at one Western institution. While much contemporary work on the history of Egyptology rightly stresses the role of Western agents in the evolution of Egyptological collections, institutions, and scholarly agendas, Michigan's archives reveal the importance of Egyptian interventions. Although these Egyptian voices are obscured in an archive dominated by European and American documentation, Michigan's record still makes clear that Egyptian activism helped restrain the university's purchasing activities, informed its scholarly publishing, and eventually compelled the return to Egypt of large numbers of unpublished documents. These Egyptians deserve a place in the larger history of papyrology at the University of Michigan and beyond.¹²⁵

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¹²⁰ Reid 1996, 19, from an interview of 18 October 1987.

¹²¹ Box 5, Folder 1, Enoch Ernest Peterson Papers. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

¹²² A.A. Aly to H. Youtie, 5 November 1955. Youtie Papers, University of Michigan Papyrology Collection, 807 Hatcher Graduate Library.

¹²³ See Goode 2007, 79–80, on Lacau's position.

¹²⁴ Of the 4,868 papyri and ostraka excavated in the Fayyum and assigned P.Mich.inv. numbers, 2,936 are now in Cairo, while 1,903 remain in Ann Arbor (data from Michigan's APIS Papyrus Database: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/apis>).

¹²⁵ Egyptian scholars have recently returned to Michigan's excavated papyri through their contributions to the first published volume of texts returned to Cairo, El-Maghrabi and Römer 2014. A second volume is forthcoming.

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