

Article. 2

No. 4002 July 13, 1946

NATURE

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SCIENCE IN EGYPT

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Handwritten note: Born, Max, F.R.S., 1946

FOLLOWING invitations to lecture in Cairo, the authors of this article had the opportunity to visit Egypt during two consecutive periods (February–March; March–April) and to see something of ancient and modern Egypt. We wish to give a short account of our experiences in regard to Egyptian sciences.

Cairo has the oldest institution in the world which deserves the name of a university, namely, El Azhar, founded in 974 *A.D.* (361 of the Hegira), a school of Mohammedan religion, law, history and literature which in pre-war times had about 17,000 students and at present has more than 12,000. In fact, Mohammedan students from all over the world attend this institution, which is the chief theological seminary of Islam. Teaching of the Qur'an (Koran) is its

physics are behind that again. On the right is the library. At some distance off to the left are the Faculties of Agriculture and Engineering. There will be scarcely any European university which can compete in lay-out and architectural beauty with this campus. The Egyptians had the advantage of the past experiences of most other universities, and they have not lost this unique opportunity. What we have seen of the lecture rooms and laboratories, the Great Auditorium (Fig. 2) and the administration quarters, is well designed and in excellent taste. Behind the campus stretches a wide area for sport and physical exercise, with large stadia, swimming pools and other buildings, all in the same grand manner. The Faculty of Medicine is situated on Roda Island (where according to tradition the babe Moses was discovered), and at Kasr el Ani.

Buildings for mathematics, chemistry, etc., are completed and those of other sciences are planned or in construction. The Departments are to-day provisionally crammed partly (junior classes) into the existing



Fig. 1. GENERAL VIEW OF PART OF THE NEW UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. IN THE CENTRE IS THE GREAT HALL WITH ITS IMPRESSIVE ROTUNDA; TO THE RIGHT ARE THE LIBRARY AND CLOCK TOWER; TO THE LEFT IS THE FACULTY OF LAW WITH PART OF THE BIOLOGICAL BUILDINGS BEHIND. THERE ARE MANY OTHER BUILDINGS (MAINLY SCIENCE) BEHIND THE GREAT HALL. THE FACULTIES OF AGRICULTURE AND ENGINEERING ARE OFF THE PICTURE TO THE LEFT

main object, and the full course lasts seventeen years. Parts of civil law, in particular everything concerned with family life, marriage, divorce, are still in the hands of courts based on this School, while the rest of juridical life is practised by courts of more modern origin and education, coming from the law school of Cairo's new University.

The new University was founded in 1925 by King Fouad I with the purpose of developing and teaching modern ideas and techniques. Fouad I University (as it was called after 1940) has at present eight faculties—arts, science, law, engineering, medicine, commerce, agriculture and veterinary medicine. Most of them are housed on a magnificent campus situated on the left bank of the Nile, in the suburb of Giza, on the road to the Pyramids, in a group of splendid modern buildings. Fig. 1 shows only a part of the central University area. The Great Auditorium with its magnificent rotunda is opposite the main gates. On the left is the Faculty of Law and (behind) some of the biological buildings. Chemistry and

buildings, partly (advanced classes and research) still at the original site of the University, at El Zafaran Palace in Abbassia—a northern suburb of Cairo. This partition is most inconvenient as the distance between Giza and Abbassia is more than six miles. It is hoped, however, that the whole Faculty of Science will have settled at Giza by 1950.

The rector of the University is Ali Ibrahim Pasha, the well-known surgeon. The present dean of the Faculty of Science is Prof. A. M. Mosharrafa Pasha, professor of applied mathematics. His publications are mostly concerned with problems of relativity, but he is interested in all branches of theoretical physics. Mosharrafa is a brilliant administrator and organiser; and he, together with former deans of the Faculty of Science and of other faculties, have, under the eminently wise guidance of Ali Ibrahim Pasha, been responsible for the developments which have led to the establishment and growth of this University. The head of the Department of Pure Mathematics is Prof. M. Mursi Ahmad, trained at