

Archaeological  
Institute  
of America

THE FOUNDING OF THE SCHOOL AT ATHENS

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NOTE. — At the annual meeting of the Managing Committee of the School at Athens, held in New York, May 8, 1903, the following vote was adopted: "That Professor Charles Eliot Norton be requested to prepare a memorandum upon the early history of the Institute and of the School at Athens." Professor Norton has found it impossible to comply fully with the request of the Committee. While we regret this fact, we take great pleasure in publishing without delay the following brief account of the foundation of the School at Athens which he has been so good as to send us for publication. — ED.

THE First Annual Report of the Archaeological Institute of America, dated May 15, 1880, begins with the words, "In April, 1879, a circular was issued stating that it was proposed to establish a society for the purpose of furthering and directing archaeological investigation and research, and setting forth in general terms the objects contemplated and the methods suggested for procedure." This circular had been drawn up by me, and I had obtained for it the signature of eleven persons representing the scholarship, the intelligence, and the wealth of our community. The chief motive which had led me to undertake this task was the hope that, by the establishment of such a society, the interests of classical scholarship in America might be advanced, and especially that it might lead to the foundation of a school of classical studies in Athens where young scholars might carry on the study of Greek thought and life to the best advantage, and where those who were proposing to become teachers of Greek might gain such acquaintance with the land and such knowledge of its ancient monuments as should give a quality to their teaching unattainable without this experience. It had become evident that, if Greek literature and art were to

have their proper place in the education of American youth, fresh effort must be made and new means taken to promote their study. It seemed possible that this object could be accomplished through a society such as was proposed in the circular, and that it was not unlikely that such a society could be formed without great difficulty, because of the widespread and deep interest which Dr. Schliemann's remarkable discoveries, as well as the splendid results of the German investigations at Olympia, had aroused, not merely among scholars, but in the community at large.

The circular met with an encouraging response. A meeting of persons interested in the formation of the Society was held on May 10, 1879; a committee of five, of which I was made chairman, was appointed to draw up a constitution for the Society, and at an adjourned meeting, on May 17, this committee reported a set of Regulations, which was adopted, and the Society was constituted under the name of The Archaeological Institute of America, and organized by the election of myself as President, of Mr. Martin Brimmer as Vice-President, of Mr. Alexander Agassiz, Professor W. W. Goodwin, Mr. H. W. Haynes, Mr. Francis Parkman, and Professor William R. Ware as members of an Executive Committee, of which the President and Vice-President were members *ex officio*. In this Committee—the parent of the present Council—the government of the Institute was vested, and power was given to it to determine the work of the Institute, and the mode of its accomplishment. The means at the disposal of the Committee were not sufficient to enable it to undertake at once any work of great importance, but, contenting itself at first with modest enterprises, it laid out the ground for more considerable achievements. The record of the work of its first year is contained in its First Annual Report. After stating what it had accomplished and what it proposed to do in the field of American as well as of Classical Archaeology, I added: "France and Germany have their schools at Athens, where young scholars devote themselves, under the guidance of eminent masters, to studies

and research in archaeology. The results that have followed from this training have been excellent; and it is greatly to be desired, for the sake of American scholarship, that a similar American School may before long enter into honorable rivalry with those already established."

The project of the foundation of the School was fully discussed during the year after the making of this Report. The importance of such a school was generally recognized, but the difficulties attending its establishment were great, especially that of obtaining the requisite means for its support. In the Second Annual Report of the Committee, presented at the meeting of the Institute on May 21, 1881, the project was again urged, and a plan which had suggested itself to me for the provisional establishment of the School was thus set forth:

"The maintenance and direction of such a school as is proposed might well be undertaken by our chief universities. A common effort on their part could not fail of success. The general features of the scheme are simple. It requires the securing of a proper local establishment at Athens, and an agreement between the universities to support alternately, for such periods as should be determined upon, a professor at the head of the school, who should have charge of its conduct during his term of residence. The details of the project would require discussion, but would hardly present serious difficulties.

"Your committee recommend the appointment of a special committee to take this subject into full consideration, to correspond with the institutions that would be likely to derive benefit from its establishment and might wish to share in its direction, and to take such other steps in the matter as may seem desirable."

One portion of the plan it was thought best to leave for the proposed Committee to develop and to present to the institutions which they might seek to interest in the scheme. It related to the mode in which the means for the running of the School could be obtained. A permanent endowment would,

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of course, be the most satisfactory mode, but it appeared unlikely that a sufficient fund could be at once raised to provide from its income for the annual expenses. In the lack of such an endowment, it occurred to me that it was possible that the colleges and universities interested in the establishment of the School might each be asked to provide a small sum annually toward its support, for which the joint subscriptions might be sufficient. There was no precedent for such pecuniary subsidies, and none of similar united action on the part of our colleges and universities. The plan, when first proposed, met with little encouragement from many of the persons upon whose judgment I most relied. It had, however, the warm support of Professor John Williams White, who had from the beginning taken the most cordial interest in the scheme, and he consented to act as chairman of the committee appointed at the meeting of the Institute on May 21, 1881, to consider the establishment of the School, and to take such steps toward it as might seem advisable.

The Third Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the Institute, presented May 20, 1882, ended as follows: "The executive committee have the great satisfaction of presenting to you the First Report of the School at Athens, from which it appears that the establishment of the School is already secured under the most propitious auspices. Such a result is a matter of congratulation to the Institute, and of gratification to all scholars and lovers of classical learning throughout the country. It has been accomplished by means of the hearty coöperation of most of our leading universities and colleges, and their union in furtherance of a common object is one of the points in the scheme which appears to be of best promise for the School, while in itself it is a fact of no slight import in the mutual relations of the institutions that have in charge the interests of the highest education." In the report of the special Committee on the School it was stated that so favorable had been the answers from the colleges and universities that it had been determined to open the School in the autumn of 1882, and that Professor

Goodwin, of Harvard University, had accepted the directorship of the School for the first year. This fact at once assured recognition of the high character of the School by the world of scholars, and gave confidence in respect to the standard which it would maintain.

This auspicious beginning of the School was mainly due to the good judgment and energy of Professor White, and to him, during the six difficult years in which he remained Chairman of the Committee on the School, its successful operation and firm establishment as a permanent institution were due in no less degree.

It was inevitable that, during the early years of the Institute and of the School, much of the initiative impulse and much of the responsibility for action should fall to me, but it is to the members of the Executive Committee appointed at the meeting for organization of the Institute in May, 1879, that the chief credit for the work accomplished by it is to be ascribed, and for its present position as one of the important institutions for the advancement of learning in the United States. Their wise counsels and their ready sacrifice of time and labor to the work in hand laid the foundation well. Two of them in especial, neither of whom are now living,—Mr. Martin Brimmer and Mr. Francis Parkman,—effectively contributed to the success of the early undertakings of the Institute. In the difficult task of obtaining the means for investigations alike in the Old World and the New, the example and the efforts of Mr. Brimmer were of invaluable service, because of the just confidence reposed by the community in his sound judgment and wise liberality; while the name of Mr. Parkman was an assurance that the work of the Institute, especially in the field of American Archaeology, would be wisely directed. At the same time the name of Professor Goodwin was in itself an appeal to the scholars, and that of Professor Ware to the architects, of the country to give their support to an institution which promised to promote the highest interests alike of classical scholarship and good architecture.

The history of the first twenty years of the Institute remains to be written. Its highest service, perhaps, has been the establishment of the School at Athens, and subsequently of that at Rome. What the former has done to fulfil the object of its founders for the advance of classical scholarship in America has been well set forth by Professor Seymour, of Yale University, in his recent record of its work during its first twenty years.

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON.

