

filed P General

23rd March 1934.

COPY.

Mr. Philips

Mr. Barnet Philips,
Architects Building,
101 Park Avenue,
New York City.

Dear Mr. Philips,

I am writing to you at last about the plans of the entrance to the Institute and those of the waiting room.

We have shown them to a good many people, both lay and of the medical profession. Without exception they have all been thrilled by the general plan, the coloring and especially the background for the statue.

I think, however, there has been almost unanimous objection to the brain on the ceiling. We have had considerable discussion about the use of Aries the Ram on the ceiling. There have been the objections offered that it is too bold and conspicuous a figure and would take away from the importance of the statue and the room. Also that people would enquire "Why use the goat?" and make jokes of various sorts. The criticism has been offered that if the round table is placed directly in the centre, as I think is your intention, it would hide the view of the statue from those who were entering, coming up the stairs. It has been suggested that a long bench might be substituted in place of the table, which would be seen over readily and which would at the same time separate off the room. These are all observations which you may or may not find of use.

Letter to Mr. Philips continued.

Dr. William Francis has been of great help to us in working out legends and in other ways in regard to hieroglyphics. He made the suggestion that you might use in the place of Aries the hieroglyphics which mean "brain" and which are found in the Smith papyrus. The Smith papyrus in any case dates from 3000 B.C., as you know no doubt, and has been found in Egypt. It contains the first mention of the brain in literature and the brain is represented by four hieroglyphics, namely a vulture, a feather, a long slender hook and what looks like a long-tailed "q" upside down with the tail to the left.

After having discussed the thing with all these various people I would make the following suggestion. That you use Aries if you think best, in a circle; that you include with in the circle, also only if you think best, the hieroglyphic representation of the brain. This you can find in a book entitle "The Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus" Volume 1. Edited by Breasted and published by the The University of Chicago Press. It will be obtainable, of course, in the New York Library. You will find on page 166, last paragraph, a discussion of the hieroglyphics and the representation of the brain. Further, in Volume 2. of the same book, on Plate 2. you will see the actual carving of these hieroglyphics; and in Plate 2A which faces it, the eighth line from the bottom, you will find the word "brain" written in those hieroglyphics. You may use those two thingsⁱⁿ in the centre if you think best, and I would suggest that the ^{goat} itself be made not to dominate the whole room with his personality.

x. The ram and the hieroglyphics.

Letter to Mr. Philips continued.

In regard to a legend which could go ^{about} into the circle and which corresponds, I think, fairly accurately with the number of letters which you would like, is the following: "ECKEPHALON TROTHENTA EIDOMEN IATHENTA". Inasmuch as "PH" and "TH" are written as one letter this makes 31 letters and 4 spaces. This has an excellent meaning for our purposes. Galen is commenting on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates. I believe that Hippocrates has made the statement that a wound of the membranes of the brain ends in death. Galen adds the above, namely "We have seen a wounded brain healed." As you see, this could mean a great deal allegorically to us. Your workmen will, of course, know how to render this inscription in Greek letters.

I am quite clear that we want those benches to be of wood and not leather, although they may have cushions if you desire.

This scheme for decoration will serve to express exactly what I had in mind for it. It will be a Hall of Fame and will contain a statue which represents the ideal of biological research. As you know, at the base of the statue there will appear the words, "La Nature se dévoillant devant la Science."

Very sincerely yours,

WGP/HL
encls.