

**Thomas Aquinas Lamont** (1938-1997) died on 31 January 1997 in Switzerland from an aneurysm that he suffered a week earlier in Cairo. He was at that time a professor of English and Comparative Literature at the American University in Cairo. Institutions have their own virtues which may flourish even if no individual within the institution embodies them. The American University in Cairo has been lucky. Its commitment to represent the best traditions of two cultures, to provide a forum where communication would flow in both directions, found an exemplary practitioner in Tom Lamont.

Friends often use the term "Sufi" to describe his style. Indeed, he was interested in the institutions and poetry of Sufism, but when we apply the term to him personally we describe his attitude of detachment and benevolence, his honesty and austerity, his ability to see the broad picture and the individual in one vision. The trajectory of Tom's career illustrates it. He began teaching at AUC in 1963, a recent MA in English literature from the University of Arizona. He met his wife Madalyn in Cairo, and Cairo became their spiritual home. There were two departures from that home: first to the University of Iowa where he completed a doctorate in Comparative Literature (1972). He rejoined the faculty of AUC as an assistant professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature and, in 1974, as Dean of Faculties. The second departure was to direct the New York office of AUC. Madalyn was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1980 and a move to New York, where Tom would also be executive secretary to the Board of Trustees, seemed expedient. For a family of five which felt so at home in Cairo (there were by now three children—Elizabeth, Clarissa, and Mairi Bryn) those years must have seemed a kind of exile, though they never spoke of it in those terms. His devotion to the family after Madalyn's death was an additional example of the virtues (benevolence, patience) we try to describe with the word *sufi*.

The New York interval lasted twelve years. In 1993 Tom returned to his old department at AUC and slipped into his pre-dean role as teacher in that distinctive bi-cultural program. A capable dean who returns to teaching is a rarity. A capable dean who preferred teaching all along shows an attitude towards power which reminds us again of Sufism. He married his colleague and parallel spirit Nur Elmessiri in 1994. When my family and I visited them in Maadi in the spring of 1997 Tom was, as ever, eager to discuss popular culture and literary theory with the same energy and eloquence with which he described flea market discoveries, Ibn Tufayl, Sufism, and motorcycling in the desert. When a tire went flat on his car we ended up at a garage where he was greeted as an old friend. He introduced them as his gang.

His contributions to the profession were not those of a researcher or a publishing scholar, though he was enviably well read in his field and in neighboring disciplines. Those who knew him think of him as an enabling spirit for others and as a role model. He was an accomplished, spontaneous, and inventive teacher who helped create an honest, forthright, and fine-grained dialogue between cultures. He seemed to see the world of knowledge as a complex Piranesian machine with numerous interchangeable parts, subject to constant retrofitting, the way many of us view Cairo. As Saad El-Din Ibrahim said, Tom

aspired to make AUC not just an American university "in" Cairo (as its name says) but also the American University "of" Cairo.

The aneurysm that would kill him struck suddenly, while he was doing something he loved, browsing in a Cairo flea market. Fifty nine years seems an unlikely age for someone who loved to motorcycle around the outskirts of Cairo, and an unlikely age for Tom, who seemed so very much younger. They will miss him at that garage in Maadi the way friends and colleagues at AUC will miss him, and for the same reason, as a person whose humanity spanned cultures.

AUC is planning in his memory the Thomas A. Lamont Distinguished Visiting Professorship, a fund to bring new voices to the institution where he was such a distinct voice. Contributions can be sent to The American University in Cairo's New York Office, 420 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10018.

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**Theodora (Theo) MacKay** died of cancer on January 17, 1998, at the age of 59. Theo served as Associate Editor of the *MESA Bulletin* (1980-1992), compiler of the *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin Index: Volumes 1-20*, and creator and coeditor of *Edited Works & Collections on the Middle East: Tables of Contents and Author Index (volumes 1-4)*. Theo's association with the Mediterranean began at age eight when she accompanied her parents, Richard and Agnes Stillwell, to the American School of Classical Studies excavation site in Corinth, even while the Greek civil war was still raging. A dozen years later, after taking a BA in Latin from Bryn Mawr College, she joined the regular session of the American School and, in the spring of 1960, she took part in the Corinth excavations. This was one of the first serious examinations of the mediaeval remains at Corinth, and the experience inspired Theo to undertake her lifelong work on the mediaeval pottery of Greece. Theo returned to Bryn Mawr College in the doctoral program in Latin, and continued there through 1963-1964, marrying Pierre MacKay in 1963. In the autumn of 1964 they traveled to Cairo where she joined George Scanlon's excavation team at Fustat. The following summer, together with the Egyptian dog they had adopted from the excavation site, they returned to Greece, from where they set out on a year-long tour of Turkey and Syria. During this tour Theo took an interest in the small Roman client state of Olba in Rough Cilicia, which she visited several times. Olba became the subject of her dissertation. After moving to Seattle in 1966 when Pierre joined the University of Washington faculty, Theo returned to Greece as a member of the Heraclion excavation team under George Miles, the noted Islamic numismatist.

Turning to Theo in 1980 to help edit the *MESA Bulletin* after my first two years struggling with numerous Associate Editors was the best decision I ever made as editor. Theo was fantastic in turning a mess of material into a beautifully formatted, well organized, properly edited, readable journal. We worked as an effective team although she was much better fighting Cambridge University Press, which finally succumbed to her professionalism and just followed her directions, including page sizing. For 12 years we met regularly, wondering why we were so foolish to keep going and then stepping back to take pride in the final product.