Investigatio Orientis 10

# Oriental Societies and Societal Self-Assertion

## Associations, Funds and Societies for the Archaeological Exploration of the 'Ancient Near East'

Edited by Thomas L. Gertzen and Olaf Matthes

Zaphon

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# Investigatio Orientis

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Oriental Societies and Societal Self-Assertion: Associations, Funds and Societies for the Archaeological Exploration of the 'Ancient Near East'

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Investigatio Orientis 10

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## Editors' Foreword

The cover of this book clearly illustrates that there are always two sides to a coin, and, basically, the same applies to the proceedings of the Workshop held online, 23–25 February 2022, at Freie Universität Berlin, hosted by the DFG-KFG 2615 "Rethinking – Governance in the Ancient Near East". However, as the title indicates, by that time we were aiming at more than just an event commemorating the achievements of European scholarly exploration on the one hand, and, on the other, its exploitation of 'the Orient'. Leaving aside the coin-metaphor – and with it, a simplistic binary perspective – behind us, we intended a multi-facetted approach, taking into account not only the differences between various European nations and societies engaged in Near Eastern Archaeology and Egyptology, but also the interdependencies between modern states and ancient civilisations. Although exploration was closely associated with imperial as well as colonial aspirations and acquisitions for national self-representation, our focus was different. We proposed to consider the ancient Orient as a point of reference, for political, social, and religious self-reflection and/or self-assertion, either by distancing from the 'Oriental other' or by identifying (or being identified) with a glorious (or inglorious?) past. That not only applies to archaeologically interested, if not necessarily gifted European monarchs, such as Kaiser Wilhelm II,[1] but even more so to a social grouping, which had asserted itself during the 19th century, best described by the German term *Bürgertum*. The rise in society of this class was only realisable thanks to the dynamics of industrialisation, itself not possible without *Bürgertum*. The middle classes created capital-rich, global enterprises, but also helped to create modern academic infrastructures which rapidly became more complex in the last third of the 19thcentury, hosting i.a. the relatively new discipline of *Altertumswissenschaften*. Alongside Classical Philology and Egyptology, new subjects such as Assyriology entered academia. Archaeology, in addition to discovering objects deemed worthy of becoming museum exhibits, began to acknowledge larger topographical and socio-economic contexts to provide better understanding of ancient civilisations, and, consequently, to appropriate them intellectually and assimilate them culturally.[2]

During the 19th century, that increase of knowledge became more and more significant for numerous states of the 'Western' world for defining roles in prestige and higher ranking among nations. Consequently, archaeology rapidly turned into competition, among European states and the United States of America.[3] Nearly all of them were concerned with being the first to explore the origins of

[1] Beigel/Mangold-Will 2017.
[2] Celik 2016; Voutsaki/Cartledge 2017.
[3] Trümpler 2008.

'civilisation' in ancient cultures. This search was also concerned with cultural origins and ultimately academic appropriation for the purpose of enhancing status internationally and historically.

Thinking in national(istic) categories, based primarily on modern bourgeois values, increased during the second half of the 19th century. The implementation of this development was only possible due to the augmentation of mainly economic, if not necessarily political, power of the bourgeoisie, asserting itself at the latest around 1870 as the leading social class in 'Western' societies. Acting in national(istic) frameworks suited the aims of European monarchies as well.

It was therefore no coincidence that from this time onwards private societies and associations played an increasingly important role in almost all European countries and the US. Learned associations and association-like structures existed for every conceivable purpose, and they served as an instrument of civic action par excellence outside state institutions. Private associations were usually of manageable structure and size, and therefore flexible and able to act more quickly than the state with its complex and often ponderous ministerial bureaucracies. When successful, some of these societies were patronized by monarchs.

Extremely wealthy, powerful, and influential Jewish entrepreneurs were among the representatives of *Bürgertum*. They played an important role – trying to gain a foot hold amongst their Christian peers and forced to continuously ward off ugly but ubiquitous anti-Semitism on both sides of the Atlantic. Strangely enough, their engagement, which the National-Socialists tried to eradicate from collective memory, has nowadays been the subject of intensive study[4] – so much, in fact, that these studies might serve as a template for the analysis of a more general study of *bürgerliches Mäzenatentum* (~ civic/bourgeois patronage)[5] in our case, which seems a rather promising endeavour and would fit into the pre-existing framework of *Bürgertumsforschung*.[6]

Widening our perspective, however, renders it necessary to define the scope of our discourses on the history of Oriental Societies, applying first and foremost to the term 'Orient'. Since Edward W. Said published his seminal – if controversial – study on "Orientalism",[7] THE Orient has been generally perceived as a reference to the Middle East, but not so long ago it referred to the Far East as well. We were prepared to include contributions on the exploration of these wider areas of 'the Orient' in our Workshop, but the geographical focus is basically on the Middle or even the Near East, centred around the 'Lands of the Bible' or the 'Fertile Crescent', with Mesopotamia and Egypt included.

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[4] Heuberger 1997; Lehmann 2007; Kraus 2008 & 2013, the latter for a systematic introduction.

[5] As an example for direct comparison: Heil 2011.

[6] Kichgässner and Becht 1997; Kocka and Frey 1998; Frey 1999; Biedermann 2001; Hettling and Pohle 2019.

[7] Said 1978.

Further, regarding the geographic/national focus of our Workshop, a somewhat limited scope, concentrated around central and western Europe must be conceded. Although we reached out to colleagues in Poland, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland, contributions from these countries were for various reasons not forthcoming. A contribution from Japan was a welcome consolation for not securing another overseas speaker.

An anonymous commentator remarked another desideratum on the 'conference-padlet', which was provided as a platform for discussion during the Workshop, namely that Oriental societies in Egypt and other countries of the Middle East might also be considered. But since the Workshop was meant to initiate, rather than conclude a new area of research, "we few, we happy few" might form an even larger "band of brothers" – and sisters of course – in the near future. We would certainly wish for this to happen.

'Stocktaking' leads us to ask whether we are actually entering entirely new territory. Of course, the answer cannot be a simple 'yes', for various researchers and institutions have already published on the history of private and public endeavours in ancient Near Eastern studies, the funding of institutions, and the biographies of leading amateurs and dilettantes engaged in Oriental archaeology.[8] Perhaps it is even more difficult to define what actually constitutes an 'Oriental Society'. Our focus is on privately funded associations supporting archaeological excavations. But what about societies established by museums to acquire papyrus for their collections on the antiquities market? In this particular context, down to the present, the singular case study of the *Deutsches Papyruskartell* deserves to be mentioned.[9]

And what about associations for the advancement of Oriental research and funding publications? And the fact that the state, represented by the monarch Wilhelm II, was one of the most important stakeholders in the particular case of the *Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft*?[10] Apart from such basic issues there are many others relating to the inner structure of these societies and associations, particularly with regard to social structures. Did profession, class, religion, or gender play a relevant role? How were these associations organised? On what financial basis did they operate? And who were the protagonists?

Public interest and conflicts represent another focus. What were the main features of the association's *modus operandi* and what can we learn about their publicity? How attractive was membership in an Oriental society from one to another?

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[8] To name just some examples: Moon 2006; Spencer 2007; Matthes 2000; Helmboldt-Doyé/Gertzen 2017; cf. also the research project "Pyramids & Progress. Belgian expansionism and the making of Egyptology, 1830–1952": https://www.pyramidsandprogress.be/ [30.01.2023].

[9] Primavesi 1996; Holger Essler (Würzburg) is preparing an extensive study of the History of the Papyruskartell.

[10] Wilhelm 1998; Marzahn and Wicke 2023.

How did the public view them? What role did these associations play in the academic, social, and cultural life of their constituencies? And, generally speaking, what opportunities for identifying with a certain societal framework did these associations provide?

The possibility of interaction between Oriental associations, the state, and, if applicable, the monarchy, raises numerous questions. Did these associations contribute to excavations funded by the state? Were they considered disruptive factors or advantageous? Did they perhaps even force state action? Or, conversely, was it the state that encouraged the founding of such associations – if only through inaction? Were the Oriental associations embedded in the framework of national academia and imperialist politics? How did relations with state institutions and the officials and scholars who represented them develop? Moreover, how did institutional overlaps play out in this context? Did this incite new dynamics in the national and transnational scientific enterprise?

The Workshop was meant to address at least some of these issues, highlighting hidden – or not so hidden agendas, financial structures, peer- and perhaps pressure-groups 'behind the scenes', and also complex interdependencies as well as identities of scholars, *Bürger*, monarchs, and politicians involved, assuming that research into the history of the ancient Near East served from the very first to reflect 'Western' self-perception and to provide the foundation for the projection of *Weltanschauung*.

Against the background of increasing professionalization of archaeological disciplines, the learned societies also enabled laypersons, amateurs, and dilletantes to participate in scholarly debate and to promulgate concepts of what was perceived as the 'Ancient Orient'. Behind these developments lay various motivations but respective 'national' cultures in academia as well. In fact, while economic and strategic interests during this 'Age of Empire' played a pivotal role, other factors must not be disregarded. Given ancient Near East's significance as the 'cradle' of no less than three world religions and home of the earliest states (even empires) in world history, it became a matter of prestige for European and other 'Western' nations to fill their museums with objects from that distant past related to the origins of their 'own' culture – as they perceived it.

Furthermore, the exotic appeal of 'the Orient' must not be forgotten, for it served as a means of self-affirmation, in contrast to the Oriental 'other', legitimizing the colonial exploitation and semantics of 'white man's burden' or civilizing 'mission', but also defining a cultural responsibility. After the many upheavals caused by World War I, new forms of associations evolved to compensate for the loss of state-funding but also to remedy the loss of previously firmly established worldviews.[11]

The Workshop brought together historians, archaeologists, and representatives of other disciplines from different countries, to engage in a truly interdisciplinary

[11] For this period: Melman 2020.

discourse about the systematic and transnational history of associations like the Palestine Exploration Fund (est. 1865), the Egypt Exploration Society (1882), the *Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft* (1898), the *Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth* (1923), and the *Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap* (1933). The contributors opened a new field of research into the history of Ancient Near Eastern Studies und Egyptology and it is our hope that this will be pursued further in future.

In this volume, the key-note lecture of Christoph Jahr, which provided the historical setting for our Workshop and discussed the complexities of political, economic, and scholarly interests in the imperial spheres of 'the Orient' at the turn from the 19th to the 20th century, is followed by diverse case studies, subdivided into four parts. In Part I "Early Encounters" we go to the homeland of antiquarianism, where Marco Bonechi introduces us to the situation in Italy during the 19th century and highlights the complexities and the practical difficulties of private societies entering 'the field'. Taking up the thread, Felicity Cobbing confronts us with the history of one of the most venerable institutions for the research into the 'Lands of the Bible', the Palestine Exploration Fund, focusing on the religious motivations, so pivotal for the Anglo-Saxon engagement with 'the Orient'.[12] Stefania Ermidoro then covers the history of early societal engagement in the archaeology of Mesopotamia with the interrelationship and cooperation between early Italian and British Near Eastern Archaeology.

In Part II "Imperial Self-Reflections", Sebastiaan Berntsen traces the development of Semitic Studies in the Netherlands, the role of Prof Frans Böhl[13] and the creation of one among the earliest learned Dutch Oriental societies, the Sichem Committee. Silvia Alaura addresses Hittite studies in the societal framework of Victorian England, whereas Reiko Maejima deals with the entanglement of Japanese elite society and the political far-right with the Babylonian Society.

Turning to Egypt, in Part III "Egyptian Stakeholders", Marleen De Meyer, Jean-Michel Bruffaerts, and Jan Vandersmissen introduce the *Fondation Reine Élisabeth* and the engagement of Belgium in Egyptian archaeology, building both national and international research infrastructures, while Stephanie Boonstra tackles the financial side of archaeological explorations and accounts for the "Fundraising for Amarna", providing insight into the archives of the Egypt Exploration Society. Thomas Gertzen then discusses an intriguing case study for the sole attempt of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (~ Central Association of German citizens of the Jewish Faith) to engage, or rather to invest in Near Eastern Archaeology.

Part IV "Absences and Adaptions" starts with another round of stocktaking, dealing with those case studies which did not exactly fit our focus. Katalyn Kóthay addresses the Hungarian archaeological presence in the Near East and Egypt before World War I and its aftermath, always considering the national discourse

[12] Kuklik 1996; Gange 2013.
[13] Böhl 2021.

at home, while Hana Navratilova reflects on “Bohemian absences” and what lay behind them. Willemijn Waal and Caroline van Zoest provide us with a comprehensive account of the development of private associations in the Netherlands with emphasis on the institutional history of the Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO), before Olaf Matthes brings the Proceedings to a – preliminary – conclusion, discussing aspects of the *Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft* as a private-public partnership.

We, the organizers of the Workshop and editors of this volume of proceedings, would like to thank the contributors, chairs, and discussants for their participation and engaging in fascinating and constructive exchanges of differing viewpoints and perspectives on a multifaceted topic, enabling us to produce this publication, which is meant as another step towards better understanding of *Oriental Societies and Societal Self-Assertion*. We also wish to express our gratitude to Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum and Jörg Klinger who facilitated organizing the Workshop and publishing its results within the framework of the DFG-KFG 2615 “Rethinking – Governance in the Ancient Near East” research group. A special word of thanks is due to Andreas Effland, who provided the technical infrastructure and excelled in creating an atmosphere for a most efficient and less ‘zoom-fatigued’ online Workshop as possible. Marianne Eaton-Krauss edited the volume, enhanced the stylistic quality, and harmonized the language of the various non-native-speaker contributions.

We are indebted to Kai Metzler and Zaphon for a professional, efficient, and amicable publication process, resulting in an attractive new volume of the *Investigatio Orientis* series.

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Thomas L. Gertzen and Olaf Matthes
Berlin and Hamburg 2023

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# Europe and the Orient

## Bourgeois Scholarship and Imperial Sense of Mission in the Long 19th Century

Christoph Jahr*

The 19th century was an age of great emotions – and many of them were evoked by the Orient. According to the "Neue Rheinische Conversations-Lexicon" of 1835, in the field of culture "the Orient is associated with the concept of a mysterious grandeur, majesty, and tranquility hovering above the grave of primeval times."[1] Why was "Europe" in the "long 19th century" obsessively fascinated by the "Orient"? And what do we mean at all when we speak of "Europe," the "Occident," the "Orient," and the "long 19th century"? In the following, I shall try to provide some answers to these questions from a historical perspective. First, I examine the major lines of policy in the long 19th century in terms of continuity and change, and then, in a second step, I look at Europe's specific interest in the Orient in economic, political, and military terms. Finally, the third step views the Orient in the European imagination. All three points can, of course, only be presented in the form of theses in all due brevity.

### The "long" 19th century

The Soviet writer and journalist Ilya Ehrenburg, born 1891 in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, was probably the first to speak of the nineteenth century lasting "longer than its apportioned share of time – it began in 1789 and ended in 1914."[2] However, this assertion of a "long 19th century" only became popular thanks to British historian Eric Hobsbawm.[3] He referred to the idea of an epochal unit from the French Revolution to the First World War, because the foundations for the modern world in which we still live were laid in those 125 years.

---

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[1] Quoted in Polaschegg 2005: 82. Unless otherwise attributed, all translations from other languages into English are my own. This essay is partly based on earlier reflections: Jahr 2006.

[2] Ehrenburg 1961: 21. Gusejnov 2011 suggests that Ehrenburg in turn was inspired by Osip Mandelstam's 1922 essay "The Nineteenth Century" (Mandelstam 1975), in which he evokes the "great wings of the nineteenth century."

[3] Stearns 2009.

Fig. 1: Europe 1700.

To understand the different levels of this attribution it is first advisable to examine the map of Europe around 1700. Western Europe was home to a number of highly centralised states that already had their present-day shape to a large extent: Great Britain, France, The Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal. Thanks to their location on the Atlantic, they also possessed large territories overseas. To the East, there is a zone in Central Europe, stretching from northern Germany to southern Italy, which contained small and medium-sized states whose horizons were largely – though not entirely, as current research reveals[4] – limited to Europe and the Mediterranean. In Eastern Europe, several large empires existed around 1700: Sweden, Poland-Lithuania, and Hapsburg. The biggest of them all was the Ottoman Empire, which still dominated large parts of Southeastern Europe, even after the forced retreat from Vienna in 1683, as well as the Middle East and North Africa. The Tsarist Empire was not yet present in Central Europe.

The “transatlantic revolutions” substantially transformed this “old Europe” – in 1776 with the secession of the United States of America from Great Britain, and in 1789 with the French Revolution. In 1792, the military intervention of the other European powers with the aim of undoing the revolution began a phase of

[4] See, for example, Křížová and Malečková (eds) 2022; Huigen, Emmer and KoŁodziejczyk 2018.

warlike conflict lasting almost a quarter century on a global scale, which can with some justification be called a world war. Lasting French hegemony over Europe was, however, ultimately prevented by the combined resistance of the other European powers.

In 1815, 18th century Europe was at once restored and substantially modified at the Congress of Vienna. This peace agreement remained essentially intact until the First World War. The aim was to contain the constant rivalries between the European states through a balance of power to such an extent that no power alone would dominate the European continent and a renewed period of war like that of 1792 to 1815 would be avoided.

The centre was formed by the so-called pentarchy of the five great European powers: France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Austria (since 1867: Austria-Hungary), Prussia (since 1871: the German Empire), and Russia, which had by then extended its territory far into Central Europe. In addition, the Ottoman Empire, although it did not actually belong to the European concert of powers, nevertheless continued to play a crucial part in it. Until 1912/13 still present in the Balkans, it held strategically important positions with the Dardanelles and the Middle East, and so played a major role in the considerations of all European powers.

Measured by the standards of the times, when war was considered a legitimate means of politics,[5] the agreement of 1815 was quite successful. Although revolutions, uprisings, and even interstate wars occurred again and again, especially during the emergence of the Italian and German nation states, a major long lasting war involving several great powers was avoided between 1815 and 1914, with the exception of the Crimean War.[6] Phenomenally, a belligerent environment was not to return until 1914, and then, admittedly, with a destructive force that would have bewildered even the contemporaries of the Napoleonic Wars.

The fact that the stability of the European power system became increasingly precarious from the 1890s, at the latest, was primarily due to the age of high imperialism, in which the major European powers finally divided the world into increasingly formalised areas of colonial rule. While South America, already colonized in the early 16th century, was largely able to free itself from European tutelage during this period (at least formally), Africa as well as the disintegrating Ottoman Empire were largely divided up among the European states. Apart from its primary function of brutal economic exploitation, high imperialism also had the effect of diverting internal political-social and mutual nationalist tensions in Europe into imperialist aspirations on other continents. But when there was nothing left to distribute, the rivalries of the European powers once again violently conflicted in Europe itself.

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[5] Fundamental change occurred only in the late 19th century when modern pacifism emerged as a social and political movement. cf. Ceadel 2020.

[6] Cf. Dülffer, Kröger and Wippich 1997.

The 19th century, however, brought about not only fundamental changes in the geography of political power, but also that profound “transformation of the world” encompassing all areas of human life, which Jürgen Osterhammel described in his monumental world history of the 19th century.[7] Characteristic of this epoch is the path to “modernity,” which rested upon several supporting pillars. Few things have changed Europe and the entire world as much as the industrialisation that started in England. Closely related to it was the emergence of capitalist economic and social order in which “all that is solid melts into air,”[8] to quote Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels’s famous formula from the Communist Manifesto of 1848. In the second half of the 18th century, technical inventions such as the steam engine, the mechanical loom, and the railroad, enabled a previously unimaginable increase in productivity, wealth, and mobility. From the 1830s, industrialisation also took foot in the European continent, although this process took place very differently from region to region.

There were zones of high level industrialisation, urbanization, and dynamic growth, especially in the heavily industrialised heartland of Europe along a strip running from the Midlands in England through London, Belgium, and northern France to the Ruhr area, along the Rhine, and into northern Italy, the famous “blue banana.” Other highly industrialised areas included Paris and the Île de France, Saxony, Bohemia, and Upper Silesia, Greater Berlin and parts of Austria along the Danube. However, large swathes of Europe were still little or virtually not at all industrialised. These included large parts of the Mediterranean region, Scandinavia, and especially Eastern Europe, where there were only scattered islands of industrialisation. Roughly speaking, a west-east divide, as well as a north-south divide, can be observed in Europe. In this respect, the southeast, along with the Ottoman Empire and “the Orient,” were doubly off the continent’s main economic development lines. The only “oriental” nation of the era that managed to catch up with the West in terms of technological innovation as well as economic and military strength was Japan in the other half of the globe. When in 1905 Japan delivered a crushing defeat on Russia, it triggered disbelief and panic in Europe; the “yellow peril” was no longer embodied by China, but by Japan.[9]

Rising productivity through industrialisation meant not only an increasing lead for Europe and North America in the production of cotton shirts, and steel, but also of cannons. Europe’s military superiority enabled a handful of soldiers and administrators to control vast colonial territories. The industrialisation of Europe – and quickly also of North America – had as a prerequisite the colonisation of large parts of the world starting with the subjugation of the Americas since the

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[7] Cf. Osterhammel 2014.

[8] Available online: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/manifesto.pdf.

[9] Linhart 2005.

early 16th century, both in terms of raw materials and exploitable labour. Industrialisation massively exacerbated this imbalance of power. Colonialism is the most visible and most ghastly expression of the "first globalization," which started from Europe and North America in the decades before the First World War, bringing with it globalisation of communication.

Industrialisation also massively intensified demographic change in Europe. During the 19th century, the population on the continent increased by 140%, from 170 to 400 million. By contrast, elsewhere the rate of increase was only 65%. And in the Ottoman Empire, population even remained constant, between 17 and 19 million in the three decades before the First World War. An increasing trend towards urbanisation accompanied Europe's growth in population. While only 10% of Europeans lived in cities around 1800, the number had tripled by 1890. Of course, the range of variation here was also very large.[10]

As a result of the French Revolution, the idea of the nation state, latent in the 18th century, had begun its triumphal march through Europe. The nation-state was based on the idea of the identity of national territory with a homogeneous population. The nation, and with it the nation-state, claimed primacy over all other ties and loyalties, be they religious, cultural, linguistic, or of any other kind. More strongly than before the Napoleonic era, the boundaries of the nation state now also defined the boundaries of individual and social action, which was increasingly oriented towards the internal space of the nation – right up to the idea of a "national" literature or "national" music, for example. Nationalism and the nation-state based upon it released many emotions and sought legitimacy – looking to history, claiming a leading role in education, civilization, and culture. It created new windows of opportunities, providing the framework for modernisation, liberalization, and, later, democratisation. But it also, and inextricably so, produced supposed enemies, minorities to be excluded, who were not to belong to the nation. There were many supposed reasons for this: linguistic, cultural, religious, and/or ethnic and racist.

The nation-state principle has its origins in Western Europe where its enforcement meant those population groups seen as not fitting into or rejecting the respective hegemonic conceptions of nation had a high price to pay. Given the greater diversity of identities, ascriptions of foreignness, and self in Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe, the conditions there were even more complex. It is no coincidence that there were no nation states in Eastern Europe. Instead, there were the three great multinational empires whose very nature prohibited transforming themselves into nation states: the Tsarist Empire, the Hapsburg Monarchy, and the Ottoman Empire. All three were existentially threatened by the nation-state principle.

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[10] In England and Wales, 62% of the population already lived in cities, in Belgium 35%, but in Poland only 15%.

Closely related to industrialisation, urbanisation, nationalism, and the nation state is the "bourgeoisification" of society. The nobility remained powerful, but increasingly had to share power with the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie's growing power rested above all upon its enormously increased economic strength resulting from industrialisation. In various gradations, the division of power looked like this: political power in the narrower sense continued to rest in the hands of the nobility, although no longer exclusively. The bourgeoisie prospered in the economy. At the same time, science and education increasingly gained status and became accessible to broader classes. The Western and Central European societies prior to 1914 were thus dominated by an aristocratic-bourgeois elite, which represented only a narrow section of the total population even in the comparatively democratic countries. The cooperation of the nobility and the bourgeoisie in the exploration of the Orient was a perfect expression of this compromise of the ruling classes.

**Europe's economic, political and military interests in the Orient**

The 1908-edition of Meyer's Konversationslexikon presented the "Oriental question" to readers: due to "the viability of the Turkish Empire" and the many attempts by subject peoples, "such as the Greeks, to escape Turkish rule, 'oriental questions' repeatedly arose, in which the other European powers intervened, partly in an inhibiting, partly in an encouraging way."[11]

In fact, it was the undeserved misfortune of the "Orient" that in the long 19th century it lay at the intersection of the expansion lines of several European powers. Once again, the young general Napoleon Bonaparte played a crucial role.[12] His expedition to Ottoman Egypt in 1798 aimed at disrupting Britain's supply lines to India. After some initial successes, the British Empire struck back. The British crushed the French fleet off the Egyptian port of Abukir, while resistance to the French also arose among the Egyptian population. The failure of the advance into Syria ultimately ended the French presence in Egypt in 1802. But scientifically and culturally it left lasting traces. In Egypt in particular, the French expedition had a long lasting impact. Muhammad Ali Pasha, an officer of the Ottoman army, who came to power in 1805, was a man who had seen the technological superiority of the French with his own eyes. During his long reign until 1849, he employed a mixture of reforms and brutal power politics in an attempt to catch up with the developmental lead of the European countries.

[11] Meyers Großes Konversations-Lexikon 1908.

[12] Consequently, Depelchin 2010 makes Napoleon's expedition to Egypt his starting point.

Fig. 2: Ottoman Empire ca. 1900.

In the end, however, his policies succeeded only to a limited extent. When the Greek War of Independence began in 1821, Ali Pasha delivered a military defeat to the Greeks, unlike his Sultan Mahmud II. Nevertheless, due to military interventions by the British, Russians, and French, the Ottoman Empire finally had to grant Greece independence with the Peace of Adrianople in 1829. Even at this point, however, the British interest became particularly clear in weakening the Ottoman Empire on the one hand, but on the other hand, in keeping it alive enough to resist Russian expansion towards the Dardanelles and the Mediterranean.

The next crisis in the Orient was also triggered by Ali Pasha's attempt, supported this time by the French, to free Egypt from the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire. The allies of 1815 – Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia – once again joined forces against France, ensuring Ali Pasha's withdrawal in 1840 while simultaneously inflicting a severe diplomatic blow to France and setting nationalist emotions in Europe ablaze. The French government compensated for its failure on the Nile by demanding the Rhine border in Europe – the Oriental crisis became the Rhine crisis and the Rhine became a 'tributary' of the Nile. On the German side, we owe this Rhine crisis some pearls of nationalistically overheated poetry, such as Max Schneckenburger's "Die Wacht am Rhein" ("The Watch on the Rhine") or Nikolaus Becker's poem "Sie sollen ihn nicht haben, den freien deutschen Rhein" ("They shall not have him, The free German Rhine"). Significantly, the French poet Alphonse de Lamartine, who incidentally had seen the

Orient with his own eyes in 1832/33, responded to Becker with lyrical political geography in his "Marseillaise de la Paix":

> Roule libre et superbe entre tes larges rives,
> Rhin, Nil de l'Occident, coupe des nations!
>
> (Flow freely and clearly between your banks,
> O Rhine, Nile of the West! Chalice of Nations!)[13]

This Oriental crisis had yet another repercussion in Europe, for there was a ritual murder accusation against the Jews of Damascus in 1840. In a newspaper article, German poet and journalist Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) charged the French consul in Damascus, Count Ratti-Menton, with "(…) implanting the occidental superstition in the Orient" that the Jews murdered Christians and distributing the accusation in writing among the rabble in Damascus.[14]

The return of the medieval ritual murder legend to supposedly enlightened Europe via the purportedly backward Orient is one of the bleakest chapters in the history of occidental-oriental relations in the 19th century. This so-called "Damascus Affair" was also a European-transatlantic media event of the first order, raising interest in Palestine to a new level within Jewish communities. It is no coincidence, then, that Jewish scholars played a leading role in promoting the scholarly study of the Orient in various disciplines.

Other "Oriental crises" deserve mention – such as the Crimean War which ended in 1856. It resulted from dispute between Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic monks over access to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and quickly escalated into a conflict which involved the Ottoman Empire and all the major European powers (except Prussia). On the one hand, the resulting defeat of the Tsarist Empire pushed it back from the Balkans and, on the other hand, the "Western powers" England and France guaranteed the Ottoman Empire's existence, preventing Russia's further expansion.

Through this de facto protectorate, the Ottoman Empire finally became the stage for European fantasies and the playground of merchants and heroes, missionaries and politicians, adventurers and explorers. From 1859 when the French embarked upon building the Suez Canal, the Ottoman Empire began, thanks to economic penetration, sinking into semi-colonial status. Europe's increased interest in the Orient, and also in the "oriental Jews," became manifest with the founding of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in 1860, the undisputed model of all later Jewish philanthropic associations.

Another example is the Turkish-Russian War of 1877/78, which ended in a Russian victory. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, however, Russia's far-reaching

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[13] Quoted in Pásztorová 2022: 139.

[14] http://www.zeno.org/Literatur/M/Heine,+Heinrich/Essays+II%3A+Über+Frankreich/Lutetia/Erster+Teil.

ambitions were once again curtailed, as the other European powers continued to support the Ottoman Empire.

Although European trade with "the Orient" was relatively small in quantitative terms, it was nevertheless important because it could compensate for economic crises in the industrialised countries. Moreover, the power imbalance between the "Orient" and the "Occident" not only led to asymmetrical trade relations, but also to the further sharpening of Europeans' sense of superiority, racially as well as culturally.[15] The construction of the Baghdad Railway, begun in 1903, is yet another form of informal imperialism by the German Empire. Not only a major economic-infrastructural project and constructional masterpiece, it was also inserted into the larger historical framework as a matter of course. The Prussian government architect Georg Stephan wrote in 1911 in the magazine "Kolonie und Heimat in Wort und Bild" (Colony and homeland in words and pictures):

> Since the Phoenicians and Egyptians of antiquity, the general cultural progress of the peoples has gone hand in hand with (…) ever-improving connections for trade and traffic. One of the most important feats in this field is to be the construction of the Baghdad Railway, which will bring us at least another week closer to the wonderland of India and the areas of the Persian Gulf, which are so important in terms of trade policy (…). But this is not the sole purpose of this great (…) enterprise. It is, after all, our aim (…) to open up grateful sales areas (…) for European trade, especially for German and Austrian trade (…).[16]

It is no coincidence that two trips to the Orient by Emperor Wilhelm II in 1889 and 1898 marked Germany's entry worldwide into the imperialist age. This staging not only deliberately played with the imaginary world of the medieval crusaders, but was also intended to open up the great past of the Orient as a resource for the future of Germany.

But reality followed a different yet no less frightening script. The Balkan Wars of 1912/1913 were in many ways "the beginning of the First World War,"[17] not least because they were fought with excessive violence on all sides, anticipating what would soon follow. The next Balkan conflict, in 1914, culminated in the First World War. In the discourse among the European powers, the problem of how the political order in the area of the collapsing Ottoman Empire could or should be reshaped was once again known as the "Oriental question."

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[15] Cf. Birken 1980: 141–144; Hauser 2019.

[16] https://www.schule-bw.de/faecher-und-schularten/gesellschaftswissenschaftliche-und-philosophische-faecher/geschichte/unterrichtsmaterialien/sekundarstufe-I/19jahrhundert/bagdadbahn (last consulted 2 April 2023).

[17] Hall 2014.

**The Orient in European imagination**

Here, too, it is helpful to start with Meyer's Konversationslexikon of 1908. There we read that the concept of the "Orient" had undergone

> various changes in the course of history, depending on the point of view of the observer and the breadth of the horizon, especially with regard to its extent. (…) The ancient Orient is usually understood to mean the Near East and Egypt together with the areas of influence of the cultures radiating from there. (…) [But since the] split of the Roman Empire (395 A.D.), the Eastern Roman Empire (…) or Byzantium was usually understood to be the Orient. But with the enormous spread of Islam from Arabia, the term Oriental soon came to include North Africa and even Spain for a time.

As if that were not enough, the encyclopedia continues, in the "19th century with its colonisation of the great powers spanning the globe (…) 'Orient' is also understood to mean East Asia, which is also used to be called the Far East (…) in order to distinguish it more precisely from the East proper."[18] Obviously, every era had and still has its very own Orient.

The image developed by the German geographer Ewald Banse in 1908 – the idea of "cultural continents" – is probably still influential among the general public today. In the Orient, Banse included

> the countries of North Africa and the Near East, which an essentially arid climate has endowed with a great possession of vast steppes and deserts, so that most parts have few or no outlets and relations with the sea. The monotonous steppe causes pretty much the same way of life and thinking everywhere (…). Almost all Orientals are followers of Islâm, i.e. a way of thinking conditioned by uniform nature, which is less an outflow of profound religiosity than a consequence of the unworldly expanse of arid space.[19]

In only slightly modified form, these ideas live on to this day. The idea that "the Orient," despite its continent-spanning extent, was relatively homogenous and therefore monotonous and could not compete with the diversity of Europe can be traced back to Friedrich August Wolf, the founder of modern classical studies. In the mid-1790s, he wrote that "in ancient times there were only two nations [that] attained a higher intellectual culture, the Greeks and the Romans." The Hebrews, Egyptians, and Persians created civilizations but not any "high culture," expressed in the arts, sciences, and literature. For this reason, "antiquity" should be employed only with reference to Greece and Rome.[20]

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[18] Meyers Großes Konversations-Lexikon 1908: 116.

[19] For the following cf. Escher 2011; quote from Banse 1909: 129.

[20] Quoted in Meyer-Zwiffelhoffer 2007: 501.

The image of the Orient had not always been so negative. Egypt in particular had become fashionable in France at the latest since the publication of the novel “Sethos, anecdotes de l’ancienne Égypte” by Abbé Terrasson in 1731. Egypt also played an important role for Freemasonry.[21] The best-known manifestation of the link between Egyptomania and Freemasonry is certainly Mozart’s last opera, The Magic Flute. In the Age of Enlightenment, often unencumbered by too deep a knowledge of details, criticism of one’s own encrusted society could still be in terms of the cultural hegemony of the Christian churches, by holding up the mirror to it of a “wise Orient.” Mozart’s “Abduction from the Seraglio” confronts us with a different, more ambivalent Orient. After the unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1693, the fear of the Turks turned a few decades later into a true fashion for the Turk; the foreign, martial, oriental became a fascination. This was also reflected in the music of the 18th century – see, once more the Salzburg wunderkind’s sonata “A la Turca” for piano.

The further cultural appropriation of the Orient by Europeans is closely linked to Napoleon’s Egypt expedition of 1798: “Soldats, songez que du haut de ces pyramides quarante siècles vous contemplent!” (Soldiers, be aware that forty centuries look down on you from these pyramids!) – supposedly the command shouted to his soldiers, and thus actually to all Europeans. With indignation, however, the Egyptian chronicler Al-Jabarti documented a completely different side of the French: “They then entered the al-Azhar mosque with their horses, which they tied to the prayer niche”[22] – a scene heroically glorified in 1875 by the Henri-Leopold Lévy (1840–1904) in his painting “Napoleon at the Great Mosque in Cairo”.[23]

Nearly 200 French scholars from widely differing disciplines in the entourage of the troops explored the land of the Nile. Flora and fauna were meticulously documented, pharaonic heritage was surveyed and classified, and the clothing, customs, and traditions of contemporaneous Egyptians were also recorded. In Europe, this flood of information triggered a veritable Egyptomania, which manifested itself in handicrafts, tableware, furniture, architecture, and much more, in imitation of the expedition’s documentation. Even in the most remote, southwestern corner of England, for example, the “Egyptian House” in Penzance, Cornwall, built in 1835, still bears witness to this enthusiasm for the Orient.[24]

Heinrich Heine described in one episode how long and profoundly Napoleon’s Egyptian expedition resonated among his contemporaries. In London, ca. 1830, he found himself in the India Docks, intoxicated by the vividness of the Oriental, wanting to make contact with the foreigners “and reverently, stretching out my hand as if in love greeting, I called out the name: ‘Mahomet!’ Joy suddenly

[21] Cf. Assmann 2007.

[22] https://de.qantara.de/inhalt/napoleon-in-agypten-drei-kurze-jahre-und-ihre-folgen.

[23] Cf. Aïsha 2019, 137–138.

[24] Cf. Koppelkamm 1987.

flooded the dark faces of the foreigners, they crossed their arms reverently, and as a joyful counter-greeting they called out the name: 'Bonaparte!' "[25]

The scientific highlight of Napoleon's Egypt expedition was certainly the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, which enabled Jean-François Champollion two decades later to decipher the hieroglyphic script. At last, the writing of an ancient oriental civilisation, which, unlike Hebrew, Arabic, Greek and Latin, had not emerged from the Phoenician alphabet, could be read. As early as the 1780s, progress began to be made in the decipherment of Sanskrit. Georg Friedrich Grotefend's first decipherment of Persian cuneiform laid the foundation for making the other cuneiform scripts accessible in the following decades. The "ancient Orient" now became legible, and was no longer scrutable only as reflected by Biblical, Greek, and Roman authors. This also enabled the separation of "Oriental Studies" from theology and the emergence of Islamic Studies as an independent academic discipline.[26]

On the other hand, in the course of the Egypt expedition, Orientalism developed in literature and art, reaching its peak in the later 19th century with the works of French painter Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) continuing to shape the West's image of the Orient to this day. From 1870 onwards, Thomas Cook's travel agency scheduled journeys to Egypt, touted as the "cradle of mankind," and to the "Holy Land" that were affordable for broader sections of society.[27]

Obviously, there was also a deep-seated longing of many Europeans for the Orient, which was not fed by the search for raw materials and sales markets, but for meaning. The sociologist Max Weber had described the modernisation of the world as disenchantment that created a vacuum of meaning. To fill this void, Europe's poets, artists, and intellectuals sought "imaginary counter-worlds in which they believed they could find the lost values again (…). Feeling, community, law, religion, slowness, duration, intuition. One such counter-world was the 'Orient.' "[28]

The various imaginary "Orients", for all their diversity, usually referred either to the past or a present trapped in it but could also point the way to modernity, as the current boom of the Berlin-Babylon comparison shows. Ancient Babylon, in its 'unboundedness' to the point of licentiousness, appears as "the image of a genuinely modern antiquity (…) [standing at the cradle of humankind's cultural history, it] points the way for modernity."[29] Early examples of this would be Alfred Döblin's novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* or his "Babylonian Wanderings" (*Babylonische Wandrung*) of 1934. Cuneiform writing, too, could appear "modern" because of its highly abstract and serial character. The 1903 "Babylon Issue"

[25] Quoted in Mostafawy 2010: 27.
[26] Cf. Mangold 2004.
[27] Cf. Haupt 2015.
[28] Thum 2010: 34–36.
[29] Polaschegg and Weichenhan 2017; quote: 8.

of the satirical magazine *Lustige Blätter* featured a caricature of a cuneiform typewriter, and in 1909, Rudolf Ernst Brünnow, professor of Semitic languages at Princeton University, actually commissioned type shuttles for cuneiform writing from the Hammond Typewriter-Company.

Nevertheless, the argument that the Orient was "deficient" prevailed throughout the 19th century and could be exploited at any time in contemporaneous disputes. The German Orientalist Theodor Nöldeke, for example, wrote to his Dutch colleague Michael Jan de Goeje in 1866, a few weeks before the beginning of the Prussian-Austrian War: "Austria, a Turkey little clothed in educational varnish, must get out of Germany!"[30] The Orient could obviously be located in the centre of Europe. And even in the middle of one's own society, as exemplified, for example by Heinrich von Treitschke when he defamed those Jews who, in his opinion, were unwilling or unable to fully assimilate into German national culture, as "nothing more than German-speaking Orientals."[31]

The prominent role of German Jews in the emergence of Oriental studies as an academic discipline is explicable insofar as they can be considered inhabitants of a "third space" between Orientalism and Occidentalism.[32] The complex mixture of fascination and repulsion that the imagined Orient exerted on Europe's Jews is reflected, for example, in the debate about Theodor Herzl's ideas of a Jewish State. His friend Max Nordau defended "Altneuland" from attacks by Achad Ha'am, who had accused Herzl, among other things, of having completely ignored the oriental roots of Hebrew culture and language: "Indeed, 'Altneuland' is a piece of Europe in Asia," as Nordau emphasised, because in his opinion Herzl rightly insisted on "the reunited liberated Jewish people to remain a cultural people, insofar as it already is."[33] Such paternalistic views of the "Oriental Jews" were typical of most "Western Jews" at the time.[34]

## Summary and prospects

Reflections on the European view of the Orient would be incomplete without quoting Goethe who emphazised their close interconnectedness: "Wer sich selbst und andre kennt / Wird auch hier erkennen: / Orient und Occident / Sind nicht mehr zu trennen."[35] – He who knows himself and others / Will also recognise here: / Orient and Occident / Can no longer be separated. In the Anglophone world, Rudyard Kipling almost inevitably comes to mind: "Oh, East is East, and

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[30] Maier 2013: 18.
[31] Quoted in Levy 1991: 73.
[32] Cf. Adorisio and Bosco 2019: 9–15.
[33] Quoted in Feuchert 2011: 116.
[34] Bar-Chen 2003.
[35] Draft of a poem by Goethe that was eventually not included in the West-Eastern Divan (1819), quoted in Goethe 2010: 614; see also http://www.ismailmohr.de/goethe_orient_und_okzident.pdf.

West is West, and never the twain shall meet."[36] What at first glance sounds antipodal to Goethe appears in a somewhat milder light on closer reading. And although Kipling depicts East and West as two different cultures that will always look at the world in different ways, he nevertheless admits that they can mutually respect each other.

Kipling's imperialist and racist ideas should and cannot be ignored; yet he too epitomizes the contradictory views many Europeans have of the Orient, often oscillating between unbearable arrogance and secret admiration. In this context, finally Eduard Said must be mentioned.[37] Said developed his concept of Orientalism on the basis of Great Britain and France, both with massive economic and military interests in the Orient in the early 19th century. By contrast, Said largely ignores the role of German scholars, who at that time still had a purely scholarly interest in the Orient. This only changed under the banner of imperialist "Weltpolitik" (world politics) before the First World War.[38]

But this is not the only reason why the debate about "Orientalism" has meanwhile gone far beyond Said. There were and are not only one-sided, essentialising, often pejorative attributions in "the West" about "the Orient," but also the inverse phenomenon, for which Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit coined the term Occidentalism.[39] Contrary to Said's influential book, neither "Europe" nor "the Orient" has ever been a fixed entity, but always with fluid boundaries, affiliations, and exclusions, in their mutual perceptions.[40] The Orient often served as a counter-image, but also as the "origin" of Europe – ex oriente lux. After all, wasn't Europa a king's daughter abducted from Phoenicia by Zeus, the Greek father of the gods? The study of the Orient could emphasise the cultural-religious genealogies and interconnections along the shores between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – or inspire the search for alternatives to this monotheistic triad.

The Orient has so strongly occupied the European imagination, but also reality, not although, but *because* demarcation between Orient and Occident is hardly possible. The Orient was so close to Europe – indeed, depending on definition, it was a part of Europe for centuries and still is today. Europe did not have "an Oriental question," but was "the Oriental question." For centuries, "the Orient" was Europe's most obvious "other" in the literal sense of the word. Ultimately, "the Orient" should not be understood as a real place in space and time, but primarily as a place in our imagination. And as such, it will not cease to fascinate us.

[36] The entire poem is accessible online: https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poem/poems_eastwest.htm.
[37] Said 1978.
[38] Cf. Marchand 2009; Hanisch 2003.
[39] Buruma and Margalit 2004. Most recently: Mersmann and Ohls (eds) 2023.
[40] Cf. Wiedemann 2012; Wyrwich 2013: 9–38; Cumart and Waas 2017.

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# Part I

# Early Encounters

# The Rise and Fall of the *Società Asiatica Italiana*

Marco Bonechi*

The history of the *Società Asiatica Italiana* began when the Italian scholar Angelo De Gubernatis undertook a journey to India in 1885–1886.[1] On his return to Italy he founded a museum and an Oriental society in Florence. The name of the museum was *Museo Indiano* and that of the society, *Società Asiatica Italiana* (SAI). In the same year the "Orient" was a fashionable rage in the city motivating the municipality to sponsor a large carnival focusing on Arab culture, including a reconstruction of Islamic Baghdad in the Jewish ghetto of Florence which elicited a vast echo.[2] In fact, the foundation of the SAI in 1886 marked the culmination of the golden age of Florentine Orientalism. It originated ca. 1860 with the creation of chairs of Orientalist disciplines at the *Regio Istituto di Studi Superiori* (which later became the University of Florence) and achieved crucial worldwide acknowledgment in 1878, when Florentine scholars, led by De Gubernatis, organized the 4th International Congress of Orientalists which turned out to be a triumph.[3]

For a few decades, the existence of the *Museo Indiano* and the *Società Asiatica Italiana* proved not as prosperous as their founder had hoped. And in the end, neither survived into modern times. The *Museo* soon became part of the Florence Museum of Ethnology and Anthropology,[4] while the *Società* ceased to exist at the beginning of World War II. During its 'lifetime,' the *Società* enjoyed a scholarly reputation internationally, but nowadays, its memory is faded, surviving primarily in academic publications by Italian scholars specializing in *modern* history, not in *ancient* Oriental studies.[5]

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[1] On Angelo de Gubernatis, see Strappini 1988, Taddei 1995–1998, Solitario 1996, Solitario 2001, Taddei and Sorrentino 2001, Sorrentino 2004.

[2] For the 1886 Oriental carnival in Florence, see Stasolla 2013: 19–31.

[3] An overview of the Orientalist scholarly milieu in Florence during those years is provided by Rosi 1984, Marrassini 2007, Stasolla 2013: 3–19, and Lelli 2016.

[4] On the Florence *Museo Indiano*, see Roselli 2016 and Roselli 2018; on De Gubernatis and India, see Baldissera 2018 and Vicente 2021.

[5] For instance, one finds the SAI quoted in the authoritative investigation of Italian Orientalism recently published by Fabrizio De Donno (De Donno 2019: 148). However, in De Donno's book the term 'Orientalism' does not include anything connected with professional studies of Near Eastern preclassical antiquities (archaeological, Egyptological, or Assyriological).

When De Gubernatis made his journey to India, he was a forty-five-year-old professor of Sanskrit at the University of Florence. He had been a pupil in Berlin of influential scholars, such as the Indologist and historian Albrecht Weber and the linguist Franz Bopp. Upon his return to Italy, he engaged in an amazing series of academic, literary, and artistic activities, drawing upon a wide-ranging network of relationships. He founded (what turned out to be short-lived) societies (and contributed to their publications, such as the *Rivista Orientale* in 1867), the *Società Italiana per gli Studi Orientali* (in 1871, founded by the historian Michele Amari) with its journal *Annuario della Società Italiana per gli Studi Orientali*, and the *Accademia Orientale* (in 1877) with its journal *Bollettino Italiano per gli Studi Orientali*.[6] All failed, due to chronic lack of funding. "Volcanic" is an adjective often used to describe the personality of Count De Gubernatis. A true polygraph and polymath, he was also politically eclectic, with anarchist sympathies during his youth (when he married Mikhail Bakunin's cousin). He was also a fervent monarchist, and formally (but only formally) respectful of the Catholic Church, which did not, however, preclude conflict with the Jesuits, as discussed below. Moreover, his multifaceted initiatives resulted in a life of financial ups and downs; he never achieved great wealth, but rather, on the contrary, several times he was reduced to poverty. As a matter of fact, in its early period the SAI mirrored the personality of its founder: visionary and generous, but also unmethodical; cosmopolitan and internationalist, but also nationalistic; in the end, he was unrealistic and his influence inevitably superficial.

By the time De Gubernatis published his lengthy autobiography in 1900, in which his creation of the *Società Asiatica Italiana* is mentioned only *en passant*,[7] he had become professor of Sanskrit at the University of Rome. Beginning in 1891 the Semitist Fausto Lasinio at the University of Florence was the director of SAI while De Gubernatis served as honorary president, working tirelessly to organize the 12th Congress of Orientalists in Rome, held in 1899 under the auspices of the *Società*. This was his (and the society's) final major initiative. Thereafter, circumstances began to change, slowly but so profoundly that the fate of the SAI was sealed, with decline and miserable failure inevitable.

The provisional Council of the *Società Asiatica Italiana*, meeting in Florence for the first time on 17 October 1886, consisted of De Gubernatis and Lasinio, Carlo Puini (Sinologist, Japan scholar, and historian of religion), Ernesto Schiaparelli (Egyptologist), and Count Giulio Cesare Bruto Teloni (Assyriologist). Senator Amari was elected honorary president. The SAI was managed by the steering council with De Gubernatis as president, Lasinio and Puini as vice-presidents, general secretary Schiaparelli, secretary Teloni, and the Sanscrit scholar Girolamo Donati as treasurer. The honorary members were both from Italy and

[6] See Diringer 1937: 1146 and Lelli 2016: 300–307. See also De Gubernatis 1900: 265–266 and 382.

[7] De Gubernatis 1900: 448.

abroad. The Italians among them, besides Lasinio, were Gaspare Gorresio (Indologist), Graziadio Ascoli (linguist), Giovanni Flechia (linguist and Indologist), Emilio Teza (linguist), Giacomo Lignana (philologist), and Antelmo Severini (Sinologist and Japan scholar).[8] There were two categories of foreign honorary board members – on the one hand, twelve "westerners" (from Europe and North America) and, on the other, twelve "easterners" (mainly from the Indian subcontinent). The official opening of the SAI and the affiliated *Museo Indiano* (which served as its seat) took place in Florence on 14 November 1886, with King Umberto I (its patron), Queen Margherita, and the Prince of Naples in attendance.[9]

The SAI's journal, *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana* (GSAI), was published between 1887 and 1935 (in all, 32 volumes, 29 of them in an initial series between 1887 and 1920, and 3 volumes in the second, from 1925 to 1935). In the first issue the aims of the SAI are clearly stated:

> Scopo della Società è promuovere in Italia ogni maniera di studii orientali, specialmente tutti gli studii scientifici riferentisi all'Asia, in connessione coll'opera che già gloriosamente si presta da altre Società Asiatiche straniere, e di agevolare le relazioni fra l'Asia e l'Italia.[10]

In practice, the SAI intended to promote scientific publications, to activate new teaching of Oriental languages in Italy, to support travel of Italian scholars in Asia, and to award prizes for meritorious studies. Activities in the East were limited to generic "travels," with no mention at all of more specific initiatives, such as excavations. Ancient Near Eastern archaeology was clearly beyond the financial and political possibilities of the Society, practically and conceptually. De Gubernatis was interested in acquiring objects and manuscripts, rather than sponsoring excavations. When working to establish an Indian museum together with an Asiatic society in Florence, he certainly had in mind what many years before (in 1823, in Paris), Silvestre de Sacy had urged (in vain): viz., the establishment of a *Musée indien* closely connected with the *Société asiatique* of which de Sacy was president:

> Un des besoins indispensables de cette Société est un *Muséum asiatique*, vaste dépôt d'objets de toute nature, de dessins, de livres originaux, de cartes, de relations de voyages, offert à tous ceux qui se livreront à l'étude de l'Asie; en sorte que chacun d'eux puisse se croire transporté, comme par enchantement, au milieu de telle tribu mongole ou de telle race chinoise dont il a fait l'objet particulier de ses recherches (…) Il est permis de dire

[8] See Diringer 1937: 1145–1146. For the international connections of the Florence Orientalists in those years, see, in general and among others, Rosi 1984, Marrassini 2007, and Lelli 2016.

[9] De Gubernatis 1887: IV and XV–XVII. See also the first-hand description of the *Museo*'s opening and the preparations for it in De Gubernatis 1900: 442–464.

[10] De Gubernatis 1887: XVII (§2 of the *Statuto fondamentale* of the SAI).

> (…) qu'après la publication des livres élémentaires des langues de l'Asie, rien n'est plus important que de jeter les premières bases du Muséum, que je regarde comme le commentaire vivant des dictionnaires et leur indispensable truchement.[11]

Among the merits of the SAI was the creation of a veritable Oriental library hosted in Florence by the *Regio Istituto di Studi Superiori* (at Piazza San Marco 2); it remained the most important library of its kind in Italy for many years. Through exchanges with its *Giornale*, the *Società* was able to procure the leading Orientalist journals from all over the world, and a great number of publications were sent to it for review or as gifts:

> Per mezzo dei cambi col suo Giornale, la Società è riuscita a procurarsi le principali riviste orientalistiche di tutto il mondo, e numerosissime pubblicazioni le vennero – ed in parte vengono ancora – inviate per la recensione nel suo Giornale, oppure per omaggio. Fra le più importanti pubblicazioni accenno in primo luogo agli splendidi volumi dell'India Office ed alle pubblicazioni dei vari stati indiani; l'Archaeological Survey of India e il Linguistic Survey of India; la Biblioteca Buddhica; le Bombay Sanskrit Series; le Harvard Oriental Series; i Lady Meux Manuscripts; l'ediz.[ione] monum.[entale] dei diplomi di Mohamed Ali (dono del compianto Re Fuad I), una raccolta di libri cinesi, pubblicazioni ufficiali del Giappone, della Manciuria ecc. ecc. Se, a causa della frequente sospensione (nell'epoca bellica e postbellica) della pubblicazione del Giornale, la biblioteca oggi certamente non può essere considerata come aggiornata, sotto certi riguardi, e particolarmente per quanto concerne l'ultimo ventennio del secolo passato e i primi anni di questo, essa può tuttavia essere considerata come la meglio fornita di tutta l'Italia.[12]

Clearly, as in the case of the *Museo Indiano*, the establishment of this library also shows how much the *Società Asiatica Italiana* emulated the *Société Asiatique*.[13]

Some features of the presentation of the SAI as formulated by De Gubernatis in the first issue of the GSAI seem significant to me. The first is the following crystal clear statement: in Florence, the SAI was born following the example of societies based in Calcutta, Bombay, London, Paris, Leipzig, and New Haven. It implies that the Orientalists of the recently established Kingdom of Italy were

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[11] See Finot 1922: 6f. (de Sacy himself had in mind Dutch-Indonesian and Anglo-Indian forerunners). Various facets of the *Société asiatique* have been recently discussed on the occasion of the celebration of its bicentenary; see Mouton – Grimal (eds) 2022 (and especially Charpin 2022, as well for the *Société Asiatique* and the beginnings of Assyriology in Paris).

[12] Diringer 1937: 1152. See also Furlani 1940.

[13] The library of the *Société asiatique* is discussed by Fenet 2013.

now in a position to emulate their colleagues among the English, French, and German-speaking scholars. In fact, De Gubernatis wrote in his own words:

> Stando nell'India, pensai tosto al modo di promuovere, al mio ritorno in patria, una duplice istituzione, della quale l'una servisse a complemento dell'altra; un Museo Indiano che raccogliesse materiali di studio, ed una Società Asiatica Italiana che, ad esempio delle Società Asiatiche di Calcutta, di Bombay, di Londra, di Parigi, di Lipsia, di New-Haven non solo li illustrasse nelle sue dotte Memorie, ma contribuisse ad accrescerli, promovendo ogni maniera di coltura in Italia. Ma un Museo non intesi, al modo consueto, che dovesse riuscire una sola raccolta di ruderi, iscrizioni, antichità dell'India, per uso esclusivo degli eruditi; nè mi parve che una Società Asiatica si avesse a proporre soltanto quelle investigazioni che piacciono tanto ai soli eruditi, e delle quali, mezzo erudito anch'io, non nego di certo nè il merito, nè l'utilità scientifica; ma sento pure tutto il gelo, quando vogliono rimanere intieramente segregati dal mondo de' vivi, temendo ogni soffio di poesia, ogni sorriso d'arte, ogni impeto e volo di genio poderoso. Come nella vita vi sono ore gravi ed ore geniali, così dovrebbero ritrovarsi negli studii, e la scienza e la poesia, anzi che contrastarsi il campo, come fanno troppo spesso, dovrebbero darsi la mano per fare insieme più luminoso cammino e salire più alto. Nel Museo Indiano ebbi dunque cura di far entrare manoscritti, scolture, oggetti antichi, intorno ai quali i nostri pochi eruditi, se il desiderio li seconda, avranno ad esercitare, per lungo tempo, la loro paziente industria; e prometto di accrescere, per quanto potrò, anche questa venerabile suppellettile; ma, sopra ogni cosa, è mio intendimento far del Museo Indiano e della Società Asiatica, due cose, due persone vive, di cui l'Asia e l'Italia abbiano di continuo a sentire il palpito.[14]

On the lexicographic level, De Gubernatis opted for "Asiatic" (as did the founders of the early British and French societies) rather than for "Oriental" (like the founders of the later American and German societies, as well as the founders of the preceding, short-lived Florence-based *Società Italiana per gli Studi Orientali* and *Accademia Orientale*, mentioned above). Furthermore, Asia was probably also preferred to "the Orient" in order to evoke the underlying preference for the *Northern* Aryans rather than for the *Southern* Semites. This formally excluded the Mediterranean region and Africa, but in fact, the GSAI published many studies on non-Asiatic cultures and topics, from the Maghreb to Madagascar, and the presence of articles on Arabic and Islam, besides those on Hebrew and the Bible, was considerable. Many of the co-founders of the SAI (Lasinio, Donati, and Teloni) were not inclined to engage in ideological battles, and passively accepted De Gubernatis's ideas. Significantly, they are omitted from De Donno's book,

[14] De Gubernatis 1887: VII–VIII.

while Puini, who shared with De Gubernatis the idea that Christianity had to be liberated from the oppressive rule of the Roman Catholic Church, is mentioned. Things are more complicated, however, since Schiaparelli, the great Egyptologist (who is the only scholar of this group who can confidently be quoted today in scientific publications) actually was a fervent Catholic, committed to charitable works.

The second significant feature is the connection between science, the arts, and business. In 1887, De Gubernatis suggested in a rhetorical passage that trade with Asiatic countries can be more remunerative than with those in Africa:

> Non incresca ai benemeriti nostri colleghi della Società Africana, se io penso e dico che l'Asia, quando la visitassimo con quell'ardore infelice e perseverante con cui i nostri viaggiatori tentano da vent'anni in qua la penisola africana, sarebbe a noi molto più rimuneratrice per ogni verso e per ogni ragione. È più civile, più ricca, più ospitale; è un fuoco eterno di luce; e con tutti i popoli asiatici apriremo più facili commerci che con qualsiasi popolo africano. Forse alcuno può pensare che non dovrebbe essere scopo di una società promossa da uomini dediti a dotti studii, il commercio d'Italia nell'Asia; per questo, si può dire od almeno pensare, esiste un Ministero del Commercio; esso dovrebbe dunque provvedere. Ma provvederà, senza dubbio, assai meglio, quando la Società Asiatica gli verrà in aiuto. Nessuno di noi può, di certo, attendere al commercio. Ma tutti possiamo e dobbiamo ricordarci, che fu un mercatante quel Marco Polo il quale primo descrisse l'Asia all'Europa, che un mercatante fiorentino lasciò il suo nome all'America, che il fiorentino Filippo Sassetti studiò primo tra gli Europei il sanscrito, stando, per ragioni di commercio, a Coccino ed a Goa. I nostri mercanti erano nelle antiche repubbliche d'Italia gli uomini più colti; la coltura li spingeva a viaggi lontani, e dai loro viaggi tornavano in patria ricchi di tesori, per i quali la conoscenza dell'Asia s'apriva al nostro paese. Ora i nostri mercanti e banchieri, mutati, con la condizione, gli ufficii, sono, in generale, assai meno colti che nel passato; e però viaggiano meno ed intendono più meschinamente il loro commercio. La Società Asiatica Italiana potrebbe dunque far risorgere tra noi uno stato di coltura tale da permettere ai nostri viaggiatori che si recano in Oriente, di trovarvisi poi meno stranieri, ed ai nostri consoli di acquistare, per l'anticipata conoscenza de' popoli in mezzo ai quali si recano, del culto, delle lingue, della storia, dei bisogni loro, una maggior simpatia ed autorità.[15]

Citing the historical ability of Italian merchants to penetrate Asiatic markets, De Gubernatis proposed joint-ventures between "uncultured" Italian traders and diplomats, and the well educated members of the SAI.[16] Actually, the Italian Ministry

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[15] De Gubernatis 1887: VIII–IX.

[16] Vicente 2012a: 140–147, Roselli 2016: 325–328, Vicente 2021, and Crafa 2022 consider

of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce was among the financial supporters of De Gubernatis's trip to India.[17] De Gubernatis also quoted the Italian African Society (*Società Africana d'Italia*), founded in Naples a few years earlier (in 1880), at the time of the debate on the potential establishment of Italian colonies in Eritrea. In fact, the 1880s were the years when Italian colonialism began, at first limited to some coastal areas on the Red Sea; thus it is not surprising to find the generically progressive De Gubernatis among the supporters of the colonial impulse of the young Kingdom of Italy pursued by the Left-led government headed by Agostino Depretis. In 1885 the Italian annexation of the Eritrean harbour of Massaua was interpreted by De Gubernatis as a good sign for a future penetration into India, going so far as to long for the Italian purchase from Portugal of the Diu territory (in southern Gujarat) – small but strategic for navigational purposes.[18]

The third significant feature of the presentation of the SAI published in the first volume of the GSAI deals with the 1886 choices of foreign honorary members for the *Società*. Ostensible signs of alliance with analogous British, French, German, and American scientific milieus, the twelve Westerners were scholars from Germany and Austria (Arabist Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer along with Indologist and Sanskrit scholar Otto Böhtlingk, Leipzig; Indologist and historian Albrecht Weber and Egyptologist Heinrich Brugsch, Berlin; Indologist Rudolf Roth, Tübingen; linguist and ethnographer Friedrich Müller, Vienna); from England (Assyriologist Henry Rawlinson, London; Indologist Max Müller and Sinologist James Legge, Oxford); from France (Egyptologist Gaston Maspero and Semitist Ernest Renan, Paris); and from the USA (Sanskrit scholar and linguist William Dwight Whitney, New Haven). It is noteworthy that some among these scholars played major roles in the most important Oriental societies of the period: Fleischer had been among the founders of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*, Rawlinson had been president of the *Royal Asiatic Society*, while Renan was the president of the *Société asiatique*, and Whitney was the president of the *American Oriental Society*. All twelve honorary members wrote enthusiastic letters of approval for the birth of the new Italian society.[19] A significantly warm welcome was extended by Renan on behalf of the *Société asiatique* as a sister learned society:

> L'existence d'une *Société Asiatique Italienne* était sûrement un des *desiderata* de la science dans l'état actuel. Je suis infiniment heureux d'apprendre que vous allez le combler. L'Italie qui a déjà tant fait pour les

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the intertwining of scientific and commercial interests in De Gubernatis's vision during this period.

[17] De Gubernatis 1900: 441; cf. Roselli 2016: 327.

[18] De Gubernatis 1886–1887, vol. I: 7 ("Ero in Ungheria, quando mi giunse la novella che gli Italiani uscivano finalmente anch'essi di casa e andavano ad occupare Massaua. Ci siamo, dissi allora fra me: ecco il primo gran passo all'India") and 231–233.

[19] These "thank you" letters were published in De Gubernatis 1887: XX–XXVI.

> études orientales, qui, à l'heure présente, est si éminemment représentée dans le cercle de ces hautes études, avait besoin d'un recueil servant de déversoir à sa grande activité scientifique. Le *Journal Asiatique* italien aura sans doute une importance au moins égale à celle des recueils du même titre que possèdent l'Allemagne, la France, l'Angleterre. La Société Asiatique de Paris salue avec enthousiasme l'apparition de cette nouvelle sœur. Nous en augurons le plus grand bien pour le progrès de nos chères études. La moisson est immense et les ouvriers sont peu nombreux. Groupons, du moins, nos efforts. Les études orientales ont fait, de nos jours, une révolution dans les idées qu'on peut presque comparer au mouvement de la renaissance. Et ce qui reste à faire surpasse peut-être ce qui est déjà fait. Salut donc à votre Société naissante, qui, sans aucun doute, deviendra pour ces recherches un centre fécond.[20]

Eight out of twelve Asian honorary members of the SAI in 1886 were from British India (Bombay, Calcutta, Pune, Brahmapur, and Colombo). Eminent scholars among them were, for example, the archaeologist and Sanscrit scholar Ragendralala Mitra, president of the Calcutta branch of the *Royal Asiatic Society*; historian Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar from Pune; and the archaeologist Bhagwan Lal Indraji, whom De Gubernatis had met during his Indian journey, when the Italian scholar was elected a member of the Bombay branch of the *Royal Asiatic Society*.[21] The remaining four members represented various Near Eastern areas and cultures. The Armenian monk Leo Alishàn, a writer and theologian, was a close friend of Teza, with whom he corresponded for many decades.[22] The Chaldean Catholic Hormuz Rassam, the archaeologist who had procured so many Mesopotamian cuneiform inscriptions for the British Museum, belongs to this group with a noteworthy reference to Persia. The Ottoman politician, historian of Turkish civilization, and playwright Ahmed Vefik from Constantinople was a liberal and a close friend of Osman Hamdi Bey, director of the Imperial Museum. Interestingly, his letter concludes with the hope that the GSAI will not be completely drowned in "Indianism" (that is, Aryanism), the current Western fashion ("Plusieurs personnes veulent bien se mettreau rang de vos associés, après qu'ils verront si la nouvelle revue ne sera pas, comme ses sœurs ainées, complètement noyée dans l'Indianisme").[23] When in May 1887 the SAI held its first public meet-

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[20] See De Gubernatis 1887: XX.

[21] Vicente 2012b. On this particular achievement of De Gubernatis, see the "Abstract of the Society's Proceedings", The Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society 43 (1885): xxvi–xxxiii.

[22] Munarini 2013.

[23] Vefik's letter and some other "thank you" letters from Asian honorary members of the SAI were published in De Gubernatis 1887: XXVI–XXVII. On Vefik's letter, see Vicente 2010: 31.

ing, its secretary Bruto Teloni emphasized the success represented by one-hundred-thirty-one members (a number, of course, low in comparison to the sister societies in France, England, and Germany, but very significant from an Italian perspective). Then he reassured Vefik that the Society would promote not only Indian studies, but also those focused on Hebrew, Arabic, the Far East, ancient Egypt, and cuneiform.[24] The Maronite Arabist Najib al-Bustani from Beirut was a son of the modernist and pro-western writer Butrus al-Bustani, who started the first Arabic Encyclopedia. Najib was to publish, in the second issue of GSAI, a *Chronique du mouvement intellectuel en Syrie* which includes these extraordinary statements:

> On peut dire que depuis quelques années la Syrie commence à suivre, à quelque distance, il est vrai, le grand mouvement de progrès des pays civilisés (…). La civilisation nous envahit comme une marée montante – en dépit du régime retrograde sous lequel nous vivons (…). Vous voyez des Syriens dépenser toute leur ardeur dans la recherche des vieux manuscripts, documents arabes, syriaques, hébreux (…). L'histoire de la Syrie est encore un champ où il y a beaucoup à glaner, et nous ne nous laisserons plus enlever par les étrangers les nombreux épis qui restent à ramasser (…). Le temps viendra et l'heure n'est pas éloignée où on verra les Syriens se ranger à côté des autres peuples civilisés pour tout ce qui regarde la science et l'industrie (…). Des malheureux événements sans nombre qui rendent notre pays fameux entre tous, par le sang qui y a été versé, vinrent atrophier les nouvelles générations qui, pressurées et abattues, tombèrent dans un état lamentable. Des siècles ont passé·sans apporter de remède, et ce n'est que grâce à la civilisation avancée et profonde de notre siècle, que nous devons d'être arrachés, pour toujours, espérons-le, à notre misère et à notre ignorance.[25]

As for the funding of the *Società*, the second volume of the *Giornale* included the report of its first year of operation, recording an income of about 3,500 liras and expenses of about 2,500 liras, so that around 1,000 liras remained in the society's coffers. Each member paid a membership fee of 20 liras which accounted for the major part of its revenue. In 1887 the cost of publishing Teloni's handwritten book *Crestomazia assira* – the first volume of the new series *Pubblicazioni della Società Asiatica Italiana* – was covered by a ministerial grant of 500 liras. The expenses for other print initiatives (circulars, letters, invitations, the first issue of the GSAI) amounted to little more than 1,000 liras. These data clearly reveal that the *Società Asiatica Italiana* was not wealthy; financial problems were persistent throughout its existence, as bitterly recognized by David Diringer in his overview

[24] See Teloni's "breve ragguaglio delle condizioni odierne della Società" in GSAI 1, 1887, pp. xxxv–xxxvii.

[25] Al-Bustani 1888.

of the history of the SAI published in 1937.[26] For instance, already in 1891, after De Guberantis's move to Rome, Lasinio, the new president in Florence, tried unsuccessfully to convince the Oriental Institute of Naples to pay the costs of publishing the GSAI.

During the period in which Lasinio was president of the *Società* (1891–1914), some members were involved both in the ideological struggles and academic debates characterizing the turn of the 20th century, a topic that deserves consideration. De Gubernatis repeatedly collided with the Jesuits, not only as scholar, but also as member of the SAI. Furthermore, by means of the reports and reviews published by SAI members, such as Hirsch Perez Chajes and Teloni himself, the readers of the GSAI were informed about the main international disputes in the Ancient Near Eastern scholarly milieu.

De Gubernatis's endeavours have been described as "the first Italian attempt to reconstruct the divine history of Europe, and Italy within it, by replacing the Bible with the Vedas" and by developing "a specific Italian religious and racial Aryanism".[27] Actually, some decades earlier the first Italian to oppose Aryans and Semites had been the great Indianist Gorresio, translator of the Ramayana (1856), in Paris a pupil of Eugène Bournouf and a friend of Joseph Arthur de Gobineau and Renan himself. De Gubernatis should rather be credited with having developed the project of identifying, within the 'Aryan genius', the specific traits of the Italian people.[28] Unsurprisingly, in the final two decades of the 19th century De Gubernatis experienced sharp disagreements with the Jesuits because of his Aryanism.

Initially, in 1883, the abbot Cesare Antonio De Cara[29] frontally attacked De Gubernatis in a book citing his errors in mythology resulting from his secular approach and obsession with India (thus anticipating Vefik's remark mentioned above).[30] However, a few years later, in two reviews published in the GSAI, Schiaparelli significantly praised a work of De Cara,[31] while De Cara himself in the journal of the Jesuits, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, positively reviewed De Gubernatis's book on his Indian journey which resulted in the foundation of the *Società* (but playing cat-and-mouse, by inviting him to visit the Holy Land rather than India).[32]

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[26] Diringer 1937.
[27] De Donno 2019: 179.
[28] Aramini 2018.
[29] On De Cara as Orientalist, see Alaura 2012: 51 fn. 3 and 58–64.
[30] De Cara 1883.
[31] Reviews by E. Schiaparelli of C.A. De Cara, *Gli Hyksôs o Re Pastori di Egitto. Ricerche di archeologia egizio-biblica*, Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1889 (and of related articles De Cara had published shortly before on *La Civiltà Cattolica*), in GSAI 2, 1888, pp. 134–136, and GSAI 4, 1890, pp. 231–233.
[32] De Cara 1887 and De Cara 1888.

Fifteen years later, the second and much more serious confrontation with the Jesuits was caused by a long letter about the situation then current in Palestine, authored by De Gubernatis in Jerusalem in October 1898 and published in the secular, but moderate, journal *La Nuova Antologia*.[33] De Gubernatis's Levantine journey (during which he visited his brother, the Italian consul at Beirut) took place against the background of the momentous state visit of the German emperor Wilhelm II to the Ottoman Empire at the very same time.[34] Immediately the Jesuits attacked De Gubernatis's letter in *Civiltà Cattolica*.[35] Defending the *Ostpolitik* of Pope Leo XIII, they mockingly depicted the expert on the *ancient* Orient De Gubernatis as a politician of the "dirt poor" Italian state who, improperly, runs amok in *modern* religion and politics, imprudently underestimating the vivid contrast of religious, political, and national ideas raging in Palestine. With hostility, they characterized Wilhelm's trip as pompous and pictured the Ottoman Empire as a carcass, always on the verge of disintegrating, to which heretics, schismatics, and Jews greedily rushed. In particular, they highlighted the "propaganda incalzante de' protestanti tedeschi, inglesi, americani (…), sovvenzionati opulentemente dai milioni delle *Società Palestiniane* e delle *Società evangeliche*".[36]

The next serious clash occurred in 1899, when De Gubernatis, on behalf of the *Società Asiatica Italiana*, was organising the 12th International Congress of Orientalists, to be held in Rome 4–15 October,[37] and intended as the culmination of SAI's activity. On October 1st, he published in *Nuova Antologia* a long resumé of the preparations, including aggressive remarks against the Jesuits, accusing them of boycotting the congress by persuading the Vatican to caution Oriental scholars who were members of the clergy against participation. After listing the multitude of scholars from all over the world converging on Rome to attend the Congress, De Gubernatis wrote:

> Qualche dotto ma timido ecclesiastico poi, che aveva aderito con entusiasmo al Congresso degli orientalisti, all'ultima ora, avendo inteso che la loro presenza, a Roma, non sarebbe stata gradita, espressero il loro rammarico di doversi trattenere da un viaggio e da un convegno, ove avrebbero avuto degna accoglienza e avvertito il rispetto con cui vi sarebbero state trattate

[33] De Gubernatis 1898.

[34] On Wilhelm II's *Orientreise* see Mangold-Will 2017. This topic has been also discussed by Lars Petersen during the Berlin workshop.

[35] Anonymous 1899a (probably the author of this text was not De Cara).

[36] Anonymous 1899a: 59f.

[37] The proceedings of the Congress were published as *Actes du Douzième Congrès International des Orientalistes. Rome 1899. Tome premièr: Résumé des bulletins – Inde et Iran; Tome deuxième: Extrême Orient (Chine, Japon, Malaisie), Asia Centrale; Tome troisième, Première partie: Langues sémitiques et monde musulman, Deuxième partie: Mythologie et religions, Linguistique, Grèce et Oriente*, Florence: Société Typographique Florentine, 1901–1902.

tutte le questioni religiose. Non ne nomino qui alcuno, perchè ogni nome segnalato potrebbe fare involontaria denuncia ad una Curia, dove regna, pur troppo, lo spionaggio e l'intrigo, dove s'insidia ogni libertà, dove la stessa libertà del Sommo Gerarca della Chiesa pare circuita e contrastata da un potere occulto, insidioso e maligno, che s'è immaginato non potersi tenere un Congresso di dotti orientalisti il quale non sia auspicato dalla Propaganda e dal Sommo Pontefice, e di cui sia invece alto patrono il Re d'Italia. (…) Il Congresso che s'apre ora in Roma non avrà preoccupazioni di sorta, nè religiose, nè politiche; è un puro e semplice Congresso intellettuale, ove chi cerca, chi studia, chi sa, viene a dire quello che ha trovato sopra la via dell'Oriente, sopra la via della luce, dove tutti possiamo ritrovarci, onde siamo venuti, onde ci ha illuminati da prima un raggio della mente divina di Platone e più tardi la parola buona, la parola santa del Vangelo di Cristo. Perchè dunque i Gesuiti non vogliono che i più dotti fra gli ecclesiastici vengano a studiare accanto a noi e a scambiare le loro idee con le nostre? Che cosa credono dunque impedire col loro veto? (…) Che vuol dire cotesto stato di guerra perpetua che volete mantenere, coi vostri astii, nell'umanità già troppo travagliata e divisa? E in che consiste ella dunque mai la carità vostra, o padri reverendi? E il Cristianesimo senza la carità che cosa diventa? Nomino voi soli, e non altri, dico voi, padri Gesuiti, perchè è notorio che voi e non altri armate di sospetti il Vaticano contro di noi, e lo disturbate dal suo vero apostolato; perchè noi sappiamo tutti che, senza di voi, cesserebbe presto un dissidio doloroso, funesto, che tiene divisa in Italia non solo la società civile, ma la stessa società religiosa. Chi non si sottomette al vostro arcano potere, chi non cede alla vostra prepotenza, diviene tosto un reprobo, e non vi è puntura o flagello che gli si risparmi. Ma il mondo incomincia ad aprir gli occhi, e questa corda già troppo tesa minaccia, in fine, di rompersi. Nessuno era più di noi disposto a rendere omaggio all'opera del Papato nelle missioni cattoliche; ma noi comprendiamo il Papato come una istituzione pura, che può far tutto alla luce piena del sole; e tutto ciò che si può fare in piena luce è buono. Solo il delitto si medita e si compie nel mistero e nella tenebra. Noi vogliamo dunque squarciata ogni tenebra; e il dodicesimo Congresso degli orientalisti ne rimuoverà molta; anche quella che si addensa intorno al Vaticano, e tende a coprire di una sola vasta tenebra tutta l'Italia regia, che riconosce soltanto a patto di poterla dominare. L'Italia vuole essere religiosa, come è stata fin dalle sue prime origini latine; ma il Pontefice massimo del primo mondo latino era il pontefice della luce e guardiano del fuoco sacro della casa della patria; bisognerà, se si vuole salvare insieme la religione, la famiglia e la patria, ritornare ai principii. Le odierne compiacenze e i tripudii di via Ripetta ci possono forse ricondurre ad un'Italia ieratico-Hetea, ma

> non promettono lunga vita alla nobile Italia vibrante de' plebisciti nazionali.[38]

From Via Ripetta, once again the Jesuits reacted immediately in *Civiltà Cattolica*, on 21 October 1899.[39] Their radical rebuttal of De Gubernatis's attack was based on the militant defence of the legitimate papal refusal to host Oriental church scholars at this congress organised by the Kingdom of Italy within the "Stato del Papa".[40] Therefore, the real political issue was the status of Rome (the so-called *questione romana*). While presenting positively the Congress organised by De Gubernatis as the most important event for Rome at the time, with many scholars coming from all around the world,[41] the Jesuits (De Cara, actually) paid attention to De Gubernatis's peculiar reference to a "hieratic-Hethean [i.e., Hittite] Italy" (*Italia ieratico-Hetea*). Obviously their answer was written by De Gubernatis's target, viz. De Cara, Italian pioneer of "Hittitology before the Hittites". Based on what the latter had written a few years earlier in his book on the Hethean-Pelasgics in Italy,[42] the Jesuits thus make it clear that the real scientific disagreement was concerning the earliest history of Italy: De Gubernatis promoted an Orientalism (blasphemous in its linking Christianity to Vedism) that came to privilege the Latin culture as belonging to the northern Aryan world, branded "barbaric" by the Jesuits. They instead considered it more likely that the ancient populations of Italy descended from the Hetheans (that is, the Hittites), following their migration from Anatolia to southern Italy, and accordingly this facilitated reconciling their non-Semitic, but Near Eastern, language and culture with the Near Eastern, Semitic (not Indian!), origin of Christianity.

Some years later, another debated issue – the 'Aryan Jesus' – surfaced in the pages of the *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana*, where, however, it was not dealt with in detail. In 1908 a report on the 15th Congress of Orientalists, recently held in Copenhagen, appeared in the 21st volume of the GSAI. It was written by Rabbi Chajes, Professor of Hebrew at the University of Florence, a member of and representing the *Società*, who presented a paper on the Hebrew lexicon in the Semitic Section of the Congress. Chajes briefly recalled the paper presented there by one of Friedrich Delitzsch's pupils, the Assyriologist and Biblist Paul Haupt, then professor at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Haupt discussed the ancient population of Galilee, presumed to be Aryan, in order to demonstrate that Jesus had Aryan blood, a thesis he had also presented in Oxford and Berlin. Chajes recommend that interested readers of the GSAI should consult his brief article

[38] De Gubernatis 1899: 391, 394.

[39] De Cara 1899.

[40] The Papal State had been suppressed a little less than thirty years earlier by the Kingdom of Italy, however, without the Pope formally acknowledging the fact.

[41] Anonymus 1899b.

[42] De Cara 1894. See Alaura 2012: 58–63.

published shortly before in the Florentine weekly literary and art magazine *Marzocco*, where he disagreed with Haupt, adding that even in Berlin and Copenhagen there were dissenters.[43] By contrast, when in Oxford Haupt had just presented his lecture at the 3rd International Congress on the History of Religions, the reaction of some of the audience was favourable.[44] Clearly, it was a hot topic, and the reception of Haupt's thesis uneven. It is interesting that in the GSAI, Chajes only quoted Haupt's obsessive statements on the Aryan Jesus, while publishing in the non-professional magazine *Marzocco* his own sympathy with the opinion of the great Biblist Hermann Gunkel, who in Copenhagen, as Chajes reported, countered Haupt, arguing that the teachings of Jesus have a clear and unambiguous Jewish character.

How were these ideological and scientific struggles viewed by the Assyriologist Teloni, founding member of the *Società*, a very prudent man who detested scholarly and political radicalism? Until the 12th International Congress of Orientalists in 1899, his relations with the Italian Jesuits who studied the Ancient Near East (including De Cara) had been good.[45] He obviously knew the importance of the Assyriological work of the German Jesuits Johann Nepomuk Strassmaier, Joseph Epping, and Franz Xaver Kugler.[46] Teloni's approval for the Jesuits' contribution in support of Ancient Near Eastern studies surfaced on various occasions. In Teloni's review, published in the GSAI in 1891, of Archibald Henry Sayce's book on the Hittites, rather incredibly he claimed that *Civiltà Cattolica* was the *only* Italian journal that paid attention to Oriental archaeology.[47] Many years later, in 1922, Teloni would implicitly admit that in the library of the secular University of Rome there are not enough books to practice Assyriology, unlike in the library of the *Pontificio Istituto Biblico* recently founded by the Jesuits, a German *enclave* in Rome directed by Anton Deimel.[48] Understandably, Teloni was proud to have been a pupil of Delitzsch and to be a friend of one of his few equitable students, Carl Bezold.[49] Moreover, Teloni cultivated a special interest in the history of religions. But he probably already understood what was boiling in the Leipzig pot, including the road leading to the *Babel-Bibel-Streit* and *Panbabylonismus*.[50] In

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[43] Chajes 1908a and Chajes 1908b.

[44] See Frahm 2017: 60–62 and also Machinist 2020: 193f. fn. 9 (both emphasize the influence of Paul de Lagarde). For additional commentary in general on Haupt and de Lagarde, see Wiedemann 2020, especially pp. 55f. with fns 45f. in regard to Haupt's thesis of 1908. See also Stroumsa 2021: 138 fn. 29 and 181–183.

[45] See Alaura 2012: 60 and fn. 52, and Bonechi 2020: 212f. with fn. 28.

[46] In particular, on Teloni and Kugler, see Bonechi 2020: 224f. For Kugler, see Hiepel 2021.

[47] Teloni 1891: 200.

[48] See Bonechi 2020: 233 (letter of Giulio Cesare Teloni to Giorgio Levi Della Vida, dated May 18, 1922).

[49] See Bonechi 2020: 201–212 and 220f.

[50] On the *Babel-Bibel-Streit* and *Panbabylonismus*, see Cancik-Kirschbaum and Gertzen

1905 he went so far as to write that the *Babel-Bibel* controversy did *not* harm the Bible, mediating in the controversy and welcoming Gunkel's moderate position.[51] In 1908, the same year as Haupt's Aryan Jesus, Teloni published in the GSAI a prudent review of the book on Marduk as a prototype of the Christ, written by the German-born American Assyriologist Hugo Radau (a pupil of Hermann Hilprecht, Fritz Hommel, Julius Wellhausen, and Delitzsch himself). In Teloni's words, Radau deals with an "attraentissimo argomento" and after his work "il problema è enunciato e in parte rischiarato".[52]

The GSAI's approach to Ancient Near Eastern studies was not characterized by militant articles on the most controversial and avant-garde issues, but rather the journal hosted many reviews with only occasional articles by its members.[53] From the point of view of cuneiform studies, the *Società* and its *Giornale* maintained initiatives aimed to inform readers about the progress of unfamiliar and foreign disciplines. Together with those of Egyptological content, the essays of Assyriological and Hittitological interest (a dozen articles and more than fifty reviews) which appeared in the GSAI from 1887 to 1935 constitute a secondary, but not negligible, subset of publications in a journal where different and often chronologically later topics, dealing with the Middle and Far East, as well as the Semitic world, dominated. These essays mainly were the work of three Italian scholars: Teloni himself,[54] Gerardo Meloni,[55] and Giuseppe Furlani.[56] Between 1908 and 1911, when Meloni published four essays on the GSAI, he was a rising star, before his untimely death in Cairo in 1912 at the early age of 30, deprived Italian Assyriology of his learning. Later, Furlani's contributions in the 1930s introduced a novelty in the pages of the *Giornale*: his eleven-page article of 1934 provided the first archaeological report on Italian field work in the Near East, promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[57] In 1930, when he was professor at the University of Florence, Furlani conducted a field survey in Iraq, and in 1933,

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(eds) 2021, with literature.

[51] Teloni 1905: 276; cf. Bonechi 2020: 222.

[52] Teloni 1908; cf. Bonechi 2020: 222. On Radau, see Foster 2020: 194–201.

[53] Unlike what happened, for instance in the *Journal asiatique*, see Charpin 2022: 160 ("Certains articles d'Oppert publiés dans le Journal Asiatique [in 1891] furent suivis d'une controverse. Ainsi en va-t-il de son étude d'un « Annuaire astronomique babylonien », où il se rallia à certaines propositions du P. J. Epping, tout en critiquant d'autres de ses positions. Le jésuite allemand demanda un droit de réponse, qui lui fut accordé. Sa réponse (en français) fut immédiatement suivie d'une réponse d'Oppert, que la Rédaction publia en indiquant que le débat était clos.").

[54] On Teloni (1857–1943), see Bonechi 2020 (with a list of his publications pp. 234–238) and Baldi 2020.

[55] On Meloni (1882–1912), see Levi Della Vida 1911 and the remarks in Bonechi 2020: 223 and fn. 104.

[56] On Furlani (1885–1962), see Levi Della Vida 1957, Ebeling 1958, and Taviani 1998.

[57] Furlani 1934.

near Erbil, he excavated the site of Qasr Shamamuk, ancient Kilizu, discovering an Assyrian necropolis. For a short time it seemed that the Fascist government was interested in inaugurating a series of Italian archaeological campaigns in Mesopotamia. But instead, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided unexpectedly not to resume the excavations, thanks to a change in Italy's foreign policy.[58]

Shortly thereafter, the Fascist government decreed (Royal Decree Feb. 25, 1937–XV, No. 377) the new statute of the SAI and, by Ministerial Decree, confirmed as its President Paolo Emilio Pavolini, who had overseen the fortunes of the SAI since 1916, and as Vice-President Carlo Formichi, holder of that position since 1917. The Secretariat was entrusted to Furlani, in that role since 1925 and who published in April 1940 a resumé of the SAI's history.[59] Nevertheless, in that very same year, the Florence-based *Società Asiatica Italiana* ceased to exist.

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[58] On Furlani's excavations at Qasr Shamamuk see Anastasio 2012: 11–19.

[59] Furlani 1940.

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# The Motivations of the Palestine Exploration Fund

## Hidden and not-so Hidden Agendas at Work in a Learned Society in the Late 19th Century

Felicity Cobbing*

The Palestine Exploration Fund was founded to widespread acclaim in June 1865. The highly schizophrenic nature of the new society was apparent from the outset with diverse personal, religious, ideological, political, and academic interests reflected in its membership. The opening speech by the Bishop of London lays many of these seeming contradictions on the table. Surely, with so many competing agendas, the new society was bound to fail? And yet, over 150 years later, it survives, and in its own modest way, continues to flourish. This paper examines some of these numerous agendas, and the mechanisms by which the PEF managed, on the whole, to retain its good name and reputation throughout, despite the challenges it has faced.

The motivations and agendas of the founders and early members of the Palestine Exploration Fund have occupied the thoughts of researchers for some time. Since the relationships between the different and sometimes competing agendas have always been in flux, new interpretations continue to challenge older ones.

On 22 June 1865, a meeting held in the Willis Rooms, formally brought into being a new society for the exploration and study of the region then known as 'Palestine' or 'The Holy Land', which covered what is now Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Lebanon and southern Syria, the Sinai Peninsula and to some extent, Cyprus. In the Chair was William Thompson, Archbishop of York, a Fellow of the Royal Academy and member of the Royal Geographical Society. Archibald Campbell Tait, Bishop of London (and a notable moderate in the ecclesiastical world), delivered a stirring address, crafted to galvanise enthusiasm for the new society, to appeal to the multiple interest groups who were present, and to set out its *modus operandi.* The text is an illuminating document, filled with ideology and sentimentality, prejudice and contradiction, and also including some firm guidelines under which the new society, and by extension its members, was to operate. It was remarkably effective, managing to satisfy the multiple and, one would think, contradictory aims of scientific endeavour and religious and patriotic zeal. The Bishop opened with some well-chosen phrases, appealing to the assembled audience's patriotic piety and sense of its own superiority and Protestant work ethic:

* Palestine Exploration Fund, London.

> This country boasts, and with justice, that it takes the greatest interest in the Bible, and the illustration of the Bible; but it cannot boast that this particular branch of inquiry it has done everything it could do to make the Bible better known and understood, and there can be no doubt that an accurate examination and better knowledge of the Holy Land would throw a light on many important parts of the sacred text. (Hear, hear).[1]

A little later, however, a notable change in tone can be detected.

> our object is strictly an inductive inquiry. We are not to be a religious society; we are not about to launch into any controversy, we are about to apply the rules of science, which are so well understood by us in other branches, to an investigation, into the facts concerning the Holy Land.[2]

This is the meaningful section of his speech which is least frequently quoted. After this important moment of clarity, he quickly returned to his previous combination of piety and patriotism to justify the establishment of the PEF, in its most quoted excerpt:

> This country of Palestine belongs to you and me, it is essentially ours. It was given to the Fathers of Israel in the words; 'Walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee.' We mean to walk through Palestine in the length and in the breadth of it, because that land has been given unto us.[3]

The Bishop might have been speaking spiritually and intellectually, but it was left open for anyone to interpret it as a directly colonial statement, which cannot be ignored.

The Bishop's speech briefly focused on his own interest, which unsurprisingly, was concerned with how exploration might contribute to the understanding of biblical scripture, before he handed over the gathering to other speakers, including Austin Henry Layard, the Count de Vogüé, Sir Roderick Murchison, Professor Richard Owen, the Dean of Westminster, Henry Tristram, the Dean of Canterbury, and Gilbert Scott. The range of subjects with which the new society would concern itself was discussed, and quite clearly, gentlemanly disagreements were already making themselves apparent, particularly in the field of Natural History.

The overarching emphasis of all these studies related to how they might inform an understanding of the Bible. For example, Dean Stanley's speech on the 'Manners and Custom' of Palestine's modern population, considered them exclusively from the perspective of how kernels of culture from biblical times might be preserved in them, rather than as relating to interesting individuals in their own right.[4]

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[1] Proceedings 1865: 3.

[2] Proceedings 1865: 3.

[3] Proceedings 1865: 4.

[4] Proceedings 1865: 16–20.

Professor Richard Owen of the Natural History Museum, a proponent of the biblical creationist theory, was particularly keen on studying biblical flora and fauna, to further furnish knowledge of scripture.[5] By contrast, however, Henry Tristram was just as keen to emphasise the value of studying the same subject because of its interest to the naturalist, regardless of its biblical connections:

> Its importance is not to be measured by its size, or extent, or position, nor only by its hills and valleys, which illustrate the parables, the prophecies, and the history of Holy Writ. It has, apart from every scriptural interest, this further interest for the mere naturalist, that its local position, though a part of the Mediterranean region, impinges on the fauna and fauna of India on the east, and of Africa on the south.[6]

Similarly, the architect Gilbert Scott, looked forward to discoveries in his field relating to all periods of Palestine's history, whether Jewish, Roman, or Arab.[7] Clearly, this new society was, from the outset, a complicated affair.

Equally worthy of examination is who was listed as a committee member on the first pages of the PEF's initial publication, the *Proceedings and Notes of the Palestine Exploration Fund 1865–1869*. There are plenty of high-ranking aristocrats and clerics. Very influential figures in the former category include the Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and Baron Lionel de Rothschild. The bulk of the committee was made up of Anglican clergymen – archbishops, bishops, deans, canons and reverends, with some notable academics such as Sir Henry Rawlinson, Professor Owen, Austin Henry Layard, and William Sandys Wright Vaux making up most of the remainder. The presence of such a large number of clergymen serving on the society's committee would seem to give out a very uniform message – as the title of the meeting announced, the PEF was to be "*A Society for the Accurate and Systematic Investigation of the Archaeology, the Topography, the Geology, and Physical Geography, the Manners and Customs, of the Holy Land, for Biblical Illustration.*" And this is very true. But it wasn't that alone, and closer look at some of these clergymen reveals that they were far from a uniformly traditional group. The rivalry between the respected naturalist Reverend Henry B. Tristram and Professor Owen of the Natural History Museum has already been mentioned. Joining Owen on the Committee in the creationist camp was Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, but listed among the subscribers, donating eight guineas, is Mr. Charles Darwin. Neither Wilberforce, Owen, nor Darwin actually had much to do with the new society.

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[5] Proceedings 1865: 13–15.

[6] Proceedings 1865: 15.

[7] Proceedings 1865: 22.

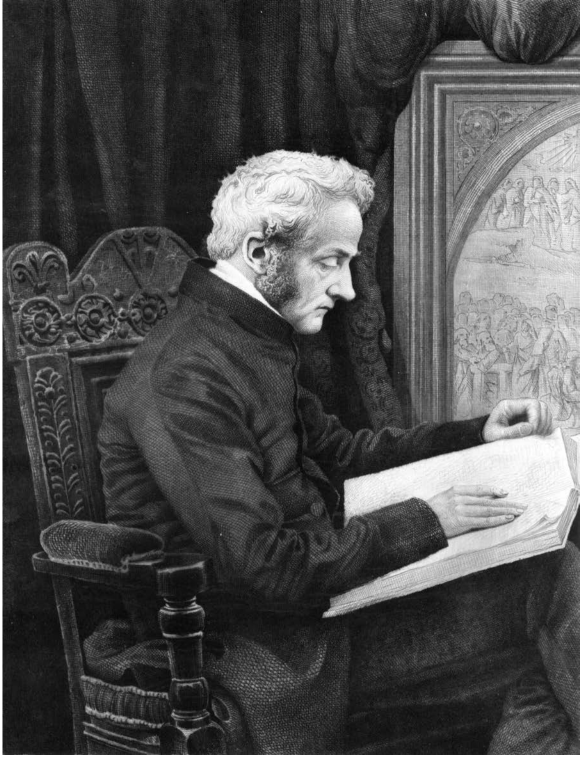

Fig. 1: Engraving of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, Dean of Westminster, with George Grove, co-founder of the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1865.

Most importantly, Dean Arthur Stanley of Westminster – with George Grove, co-founder of the PEF – was a very forward-thinking and influential cleric. He was sometimes referred to as the Queen's Chaplain, as he had the ear of the British monarch, and was a liberalising voice in the Anglican church and in education as well. Like Tristram, he was also interested in science, and was a close friend of the Darwinian theorist, Thomas Huxley.

Another of those signing up was Dr. J.D. Hooker of Kew Gardens. His letter to George Grove of 16 April 1865 expresses his feelings quite clearly: "(…) I confess I detest seeing my name mixed up with Dukes and Parsons and Owen!!!"[8] This quotation is from just one of eighty-two letters written by those approached by George Grove to join the new society. Among those agreeing to join, a huge range of interests and some very real differences of opinion are documented. What this tells us is that there were many, sometimes conflicting interests. When the Bishop of London said in his speech: "there are many who have contested to forego important differences for the purpose of acting together upon this common

[8] PEF-DA-PEF-1865-1.34.

ground, (…)".[9] he was being very serious. The founders of the PEF were trying to pull off a difficult hat trick, viz. establishing what was basically a scientific society, with a scientific approach, but with its focus on a part of the world that was, and remains, fundamentally associated with the biblical texts.

Moreover, many of the non-clerical committee members had very strong ideological beliefs and agendas for which the new society could provide supportive data and information. Baron Lionel de Rothschild was one of the PEF's most prominent Jewish members, along with Sir Moses Montefiore a little later. The PEF was particularly pleased with their support, as it demonstrated to the British Jewish community that it was not a proselytising, missionary society. For the British Jewish community, the PEF would provide new and fascinating data about the past of the Jewish people in Palestine, which in turn would furnish the emerging cause of Zionism with useful and pertinent facts that it could employ in its campaigns to gain support for Jewish colonisation of Palestine (see further below).

There were also prominent political figures like Walter Morrison, a liberal MP and industrialist, who served as the PEF's treasurer for 54 years, and even Edward Smith-Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby, leader of the Conservative Party, and occasional Prime Minister. Clearly, the PEF's usefulness to British politicians interested in the UK's relationship with the Ottoman Empire was a strong incentive to get involved. And then there were the academics – orientalists, archaeologists, architects, natural historians, and geologists. Each of these had his own more scholarly interests invested in the new organisation.

It must be stressed that this large committee was not actually involved the day to day running of the PEF. From its ranks a smaller executive committee was very quickly formed which met at regular intervals to organise and devise strategies for raising funds and beginning projects to carry out the aims of the society. Consequently, there evolved a difference between the multiple interests of the wider committee, and even wider membership, and the actual work of the PEF itself, defined by the smaller 'Executive Committee' which understood far more fully how these various interests needed to be controlled for it to function effectively. Examining some of these interests in turn makes it possible to assess the real influence they had on the organisation.

Freemasonry was a powerful cultural force in 19th century Britain, and further afield as well. It provided a network for ambitious and capable men, particularly those who hadn't received the benefit of an Etonian or Oxbridge education. An excellent example is the artist William 'Crimea' Simpson, who gained his sobriquet covering the Crimea War for the renowned lithographic firm of Day and Son and Colnaghi in London. Simpson was born into a very modest household in Glasgow, had little formal education, and worked his way through apprentices at lithographers firms in Glasgow before coming to London. It was whilst working for the *Illustrated London News*, that he came to be in Jerusalem, covering Lieut.

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[9] Proceedings 1865: 3.

Charles Warren's explorations there in 1871. Warren was an enthusiastic Freemason, as was his right-hand man in Jerusalem, Sergeant Birtles. Warren described the advantages of Freemasonry whilst working in the Holy Land:

> Freemasonry is a strong bond of union between the Christian and the Jew, and now I found even the Moslem was rendered amiable owing to the mutual tie; and no doubt the Greek Protestants of Es-Salt owe their property, even their lives perhaps, to Freemasonry, for it was on this score that the Governor-General in 1867 had, when looting the city, listened to my appeal, and protected these people.[10]

The Lodges also provided members with a venue to flex their academic muscles, both on the lecture circuit, and in print, in the pages of their journals.

The 'Holy Land' is clearly central to the ideology of Freemasonry, and thus the PEF was an organisation of great interest to the Brotherhood, providing new information about the region, biblical events, places, and sometimes people. Indeed, several lodges made donations to the PEF, which are sometimes listed in the pages of the Quarterly Statement.[11] However, the PEF's connections to Freemasonry are not clear cut. There were as many important and influential PEF committee members who were not Freemasons as those who were.[12] PEF masons

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[10] Warren 1876: 542.

[11] See, for example, the list of Masonic Lodges which subscribed to the PEF in the December issue of the Proceedings and Notes for 1868.

[12] Below is a list of some prominent members of the PEF who were also Freemasons, followed by a list of some who were not. I am grateful to Martin Cherry at the Museum & Library of Freemasonry for supplying the information.
PEF Freemasons: Charles Warren (leader, PEF exploration of Jerusalem 1867–1870, PEF Committee member); Sergeant Henry Birtles R.E. (member of the Jerusalem excavation team, 1867–1870); Walter Besant (PEF Assistant Hon. Sec 1868–1887, Hon. Secretary 1887–1910); Prof. Hayter-Lewis (PEF Committee Member, advisor on architectural plans for Survey of Western Palestine); Dr. James Glaisher FRS. (PEF Chairman 1880–1901); Colonel Sir Charles Moore Watson (PEF Chairman, 1906–1916); Dr. Thomas Chaplin (PEF member & Jerusalem resident –1860s, 70s, and 80s); Edward Henry Palmer (PEF Member, and Orientalist on The Ordnance Survey Sinai, 1868–1869, & The Desert of the Tih Survey, 1869); PEF non-Freemasons: Sir George Grove CB (Joint Founder of PEF and Hon. Secretary, 1865–1881); Dean Arthur Penhryn Stanley of Westminster (Joint founder, PEF); General Sir Charles Wilson (PEF Chairman 1901–1906); William Hepworth Dixon (PEF Chairman 1875–1880); Claude R. Conder (leader, Surveys of Western and Eastern Palestine and PEF Committee member); Walter Morrison MP (PEF Treasurer 1866–1919); Sergeant George Armstrong (member of the Survey of Western Palestine team and PEF Committee Member); What this suggests is that Freemasonry was another interest group with a stake in the PEF and its research, but that it did not have a greater or lesser influence on the PEF than any other interest group invested in the PEF. It must also be remembered that at this date, the Freemasons were not associated with the charges of corruption which beset the organization in the late 20th century; thus the PEF would have

like Charles Warren went to some lengths to keep the two sides of their interests separate, to protect the PEF's status as an independent academic society as much as anything else, and there is no evidence to suggest that the Freemasons had any particular influence on the PEF, its agenda, or its motivations. Warren's work was finally published alongside the research of Charles Wilson in the PEF's monumental *Survey of Western Palestine* in 1880, a very academic publication, with speculation and whimsy kept to a bare minimum. But he allowed himself a greater degree of personal interpretation in *Underground Jerusalem* than in the more scholarly publications. In particular, he emphasised characteristics of the Old City that were important to Freemasonry, and coloured his descriptions of them to fit Freemason's narrative – such as a hall he discovered, which, in the *Survey of Western Palestine* is defined as an 'Ancient Hall', while in *Underground Jerusalem* as a 'Masonic Hall'.[13]

Fig. 2: Lieut. Charles Warren R.E. in Jerusalem with some of his team. From left to right, seated: Charles Warren, Rev. Dr. Joseph Barclay, Corporal Henry Phillips R.E. Standing: Jerius Salame, the expedition's Dragoman, and reclining, Mr. W.F. Eaton. Photograph by Cpl. H. Phillips, 1867.

no reason not to accept support from Masonic Lodges.

[13] Warren and Conder 1880: 201; Warren 1876: 370.

British colonial interests are clearly apparent in the address of the Archbishop, and this aspect of the PEF's character has been pointed out by many authors. Certainly, colonialism imbued everything the PEF did at this date, both overtly at an organisational level, through the agendas of those sitting on its committee and designing its research strategies, and at a more personal level, through the attitudes and actions of those people working for the PEF in Palestine. It is impossible to look at projects like the Ordnance Survey of Sinai, in which the PEF was deeply involved, and its own Survey of Western Palestine, without being aware of their significant intelligence application. And it is worth noting that many of the top people directly involved in the PEF's board and in the field, had military and intelligence credentials. Its first explorers in the field were recruited directly from the Royal Engineers (R.E.), thanks to the connections of George Grove, one of the PEF's founders.

Fig. 3: Lieut. Claude R. Conder R.E. at Ain es Sultan, Jericho.
Photograph by Lieut. H.H. Kitchener R. E., 1874/75.

Captain Charles Wilson R.E. conducted the Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem just prior to the PEF's founding, the PEF's reconnaissance survey in Palestine in 1865–1866, and the Ordnance Survey of Sinai in 1868–1869. He became the Chairman of the PEF, and a key player in setting up British government's field intelligence organisation, now known as MI6. Claude Conder's second in command on the Survey of Western Palestine, Lieutenant H.H. Kitchener R.E., enjoyed a positively stellar military career. Despite these clear colonial activities, Palestine was not a British colony but rather a part of the Ottoman Empire, another

colonial power, so there was a different nuance at work than that of direct colonial power and subject territory. There was a four-way relationship; between (1) the PEF in London, (2) interest groups like the military and the government for whom influence, and to some extent control, in the region was of prime concern, (3) the other colonial power, the Ottoman government, and (4) the local population. Whilst Palestine was very much a part of the Ottoman Empire at this stage, there were clear strategic benefits for Britain to establish strong cultural and political relations in the region, and to exert an influence. Directly adjacent to Palestine, in Egypt, Britain established a foothold in the region from 1882 to 1954, maintaining a presence there until 1922. The first phase of this, up to the outbreak of WW1 is often referred to as the 'Veiled Protectorate', with the Ottoman *Khedive* effectively supported by British forces against anti-western parties in the country. There were some high-profile PEF figures who played important roles in Egypt at this time, most notably Colonel Charles Watson, the future chairman of the PEF, who had been a major player in the Expeditionary Force that seized control of Egypt in 1882. He ended up occupying a rather schizophrenic role as both a high-ranking British military officer, and as general and *pasha* in the Ottoman controlled Egyptian army.[14] There was also concern about Russia. Ever since the Crimea War (from 1853–1856) the European nations had been all too aware of the potential supremacy of Russia to the East. The Ottoman Empire was a helpful buffer between the two realms; one view was that Russia's influence in the Holy Land should be kept in check.

The early surveying and mapping operations undertaken by the PEF were clearly as much for the benefit of Her Majesty's Government, as they were for scholarship.[15] The independence of the organisation is what made it useful, because it gave it credibility – or at least plausible deniability. As an independent organisation, it was also at liberty to set its own agenda.

The writings of people like Warren in *Underground Jerusalem* make the western opinion quite clear that Turkish rule was unsustainable, and a European administration in Palestine would be a wonderful thing: "It suffices to know that with a good rule similar to that which holds up our Indian Empire, with honest officials and just laws, with equal civil rights among the people, and religious tolerance, Palestine would be transformed".[16]

Linked to this colonial agenda was the rise of British interest in Zionism**,** an ideological and social cause which was very important to several PEF members for various reasons – religious, social, and political. Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Earl

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[14] Talbot: 2019.

[15] The 2000 publication Measuring Jerusalem by John Moscrop examines in considerable detail the complex and evolving relationship between the PEF and the British government and military, revealing how this partnership was crucial in enabling the PEF to achieve some of its early goals, such as the completion of the Survey of Western Palestine.

[16] Warren 1876: 454.

of Shaftesbury – a member of the PEF, but not on the decision-making Executive Committee – made his opinions very clear in his speech to the PEF Annual General Meeting (AGM) in 1875.[17] For many British politicians, above and beyond any ideological or possible social benefits, Zionism was a mechanism for establishing a friendly, western looking society – and ultimately a western style government – in the region. For PEF members and explorers such as Warren,[18] Conder,[19] and Oliphant.[20] colonial concerns dovetailed rather nicely with their religious beliefs, and to varying degrees with their social aspirations for the region. Underlying their enthusiasm for Zionism was the belief that the local inhabitants were incapable of self-determination, largely due to what they saw as debasement through miss-government suffered at the hands of the Ottomans. They saw Zionism as a mechanism for not only creating a western-friendly country in the region, but also, through the injection of motivated and energetic new people who also had, to their minds, a compelling religious and historical claim to the territory, for uplifting the region back to healthy productivity and towards good western moral virtues.

Conversely there were those who worked for the PEF, such as Frederick Jones Bliss, and perhaps most famously T.E. Lawrence, who supported Arab nationalist aspirations, and others who might not have had any particular political opinion at all. The PEF had no official position on Zionism or any other social or political movement. A significant amount of the pro-Zionist opinion published in the pages of the *Quarterly Statement* (PEFQst) by Conder and others is reprinted from the *Jewish Chronical*, because the subject was of great interest to PEF subscribers and readers of the *Quarterly Statement*.

There is no doubt that whatever the sympathies of the PEF's committee or of those working for the PEF, the work it undertook, in Jerusalem and in the wider country, was extremely useful to the Zionist movement and to the British Government in general. By the early 20th century, prominent Zionists began nurturing an enthusiasm for archaeology as a way of developing the narrative of an ancient Jewish identity in Palestine, buying land in Jerusalem and elsewhere to carry out excavations specifically to uncover evidence for this ancient heritage. This trend started in 1910 when the French Baron de Rothschild purchased land in Silwan in an attempt to stop the notorious Parker expedition discovering the Ark of the Covenant.[21]

The PEF did not, and could not support the idea that Palestine was an empty land, ripe for wholesale unhindered colonisation. The explorers of the PEF knew full well and documented widely the existing Palestinian population, consisting

[17] AGM Report 1875: 115–117.
[18] Warren 1876: 446–489.
[19] Conder 1879: 6–7; 1880: 116–118 and 1881: 85.
[20] Oliphant 1880: 519–524.
[21] Addison 2021: 131.

of Arabs, Samaritans, Jews, Druze, and Armenians. But they did think the country was under-populated due to what they characterised as Turkish misgovernment. They tended to see Zionism as a way of improving the situation, even if in a deeply patronising way that denied the indigenous population autonomous agency. It is important to note that the Earl of Shaftesbury, an arch-Zionist who saw Palestine as a land without inhabitants, never worked in the field and never served on the Executive Committee of the PEF. At first, the progress of Zionism saw the settlement of western Jews in Palestine under Ottoman control, through the purchase of land and an implementation of a new management style, but as time passed, and war drew ever nearer, the alignment of direct colonial and Zionist ambitions became increasingly closer.

At the general meeting in 1918 this was reiterated by one PEF member, Sir Edwin Pears, for many years a key PEF ally in Constantinople, who stated: "We [the British] are at present in occupation of Palestine. I for one trust that the time will arrive when the Jews will be in occupation in Palestine. That, however, is a detail, and as a Society, we have nothing to do with the political issues."[22] As for the proposal to invite General Allenby and Ronald Storrs to join the PEF Committee, he continued: "The Military Governor of Jerusalem sounds rather political but, of course, we have no idea of politics in this matter." The Chairman, Dr. Masterman, was at pains to add: "(…) this Society has not the least desire to be associated politically with the conquest of Palestine."[23] I can imagine that there was some degree of relief to know that the PEF was unlikely to be further burdened with issues beyond its own remit, but given what we know about the PEF's activities in Palestine, and the people who were directly involved, this statement seems a little disingenuous to say the least. The PEF was up to this point most certainly involved in the region's politics, to some extent, probably through necessity. But in any event, PEF found itself removed during the Mandate period from any political discourse – whether this was welcome or not is difficult to say, but with the British in charge in Palestine itself, the need for the administration to acquire intelligence from surveyors and archaeologists had disappeared. Neither General Allenby nor Ronald Storrs accepted the PEF's invitation to join the Committee, although, interestingly, later Colonel Newcombe (T.E. Lawrence's commanding officer in the field) did, serving as Treasurer from 1933 to 1939.

Biblical and religious concerns were the main interest for most members, who in the 19th century consisted of individuals well-educated in biblical literature and concerned with all matters of the Holy Land across all classes of society. This broad appeal was one of the strengths of the new society to which Austin Henry Layard, among others, referred at the inaugural meeting.[24] To know the land was to understand The Book. This was also where the PEF had the most potential to

[22] AGM Report 1918: 107.
[23] AGM Report 1918: 108.
[24] Proceedings 1865: 4.

come unstuck with its membership, as its explorations increasingly revealed the mismatch between biblical accounts and reality, both archaeological and historical. Again, this was well understood right from the outset by the PEF's founders. Dean Arthur Stanley, speaking at the inaugural meeting stated:

> What we have to do is simply to know and to get at the facts. It is more agreeable if we arrive at those positive illustrations of which I have spoken before, but it is equally important and falls equally within the range of this association to learn that there is nothing to be found (…) Even then we have gained a great point, because what we want to know is the exact truth.[25]

Warren, writing some years later in *Underground Jerusalem*, described his brief excavations at the mound of Tell es-Sultan at Jericho. The soundings were carried out to determine if the mounds so visible in the landscape of the Jordan Valley were natural features, or if they were the product of human activity. His soundings revealed that they were indeed man-made, although he failed to recognise the significance of the site he had been exploring, characterising it as a fortress or watchtower of unknown date. The real significance of his work was that it identified a whole new type of archaeological site that would come to dominate the development of the subject in future years. In his description of this episode, Warren lamented the lack of really spectacular biblical finds. And he blamed the British Public for their 'Great Expectations', which were doomed to disappointment. The archaeology of the Holy Land did not live up to such expectations. It is noteworthy that despite Warren's own unshakeable Christian beliefs and Freemasonry credentials, his clarity of recording was never compromised. He was quite clear that what's there was there, and his job, given to him by the PEF, was to find out what really was there – not to invent further fairy tales. To do so would be, according to Warren himself, tantamount to ignoring the truth of 'God's Word'. Expressed differently, to be true to one's faith you had to tell the truth about what was discovered. In this way, Warren reconciled his obligations to research with his religious beliefs.[26]

The following years saw increasing scepticism in the PEF's inner circle regarding the reliability of religious texts as historical documents. If this scepticism was not always expressed openly, it was expressed in private, a discrepancy reflected in the growing gap between the goals of the PEF and the interests of the public. In a letter to J.D. Crace (PEF secretary in 1905), Robert Stewart Macalister, who was then excavating at Tell Abu Shusheh – biblical Gezer, proposed writing a popular book focusing on the biblical character of the site. He explained:

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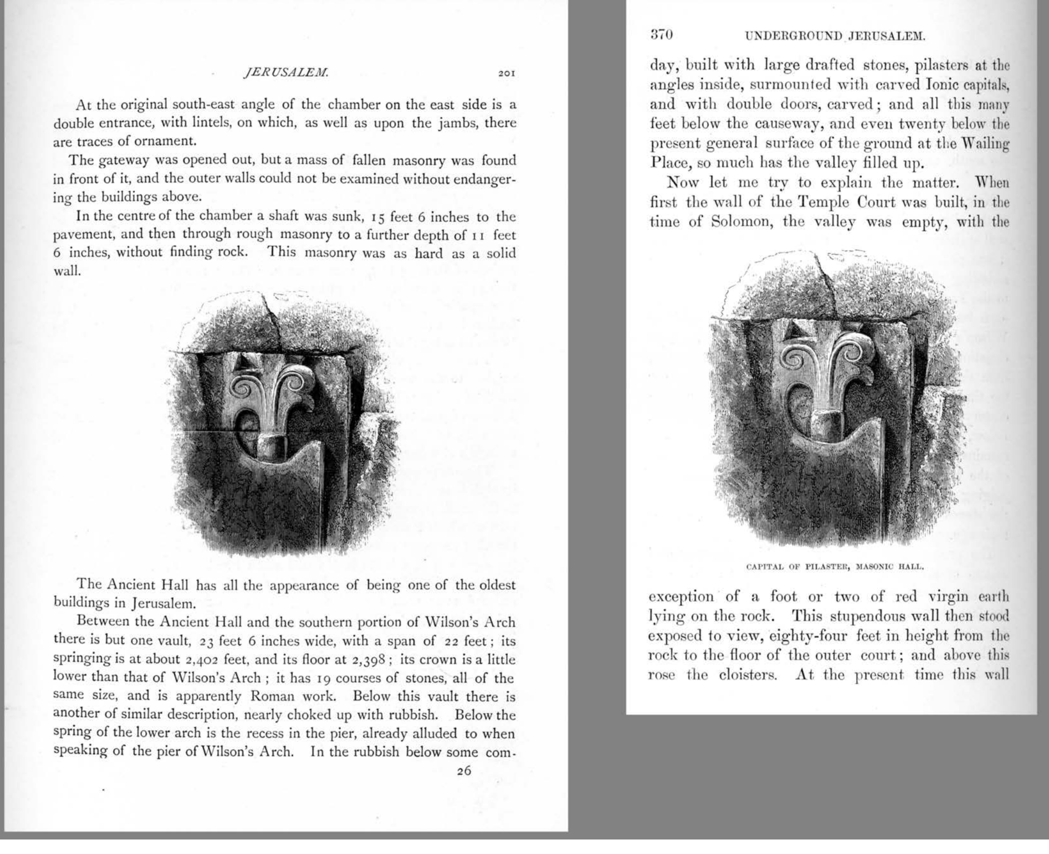
[25] Proceedings 1865: 18.

[26] Warren 1876: 169–172.

"(…) the only thing the public, as a rule, cares about is Biblical as opposed to archaeological matters."[27]



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At the original south-east angle of the chamber on the east side is a double entrance, with lintels, on which, as well as upon the jambs, there are traces of ornament.

The gateway was opened out, but a mass of fallen masonry was found in front of it, and the outer walls could not be examined without endangering the buildings above.

In the centre of the chamber a shaft was sunk, 15 feet 6 inches to the pavement, and then through rough masonry to a further depth of 11 feet 6 inches, without finding rock. This masonry was as hard as a solid wall.

The Ancient Hall has all the appearance of being one of the oldest buildings in Jerusalem.

Between the Ancient Hall and the southern portion of Wilson's Arch there is but one vault, 23 feet 6 inches wide, with a span of 22 feet; its springing is at about 2,402 feet, and its floor at 2,398; its crown is a little lower than that of Wilson's Arch; it has 19 courses of stones, all of the same size, and is apparently Roman work. Below this vault there is another of similar description, nearly choked up with rubbish. Below the spring of the lower arch is the recess in the pier, already alluded to when speaking of the pier of Wilson's Arch. In the rubbish below some com-

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day, built with large drafted stones, pilasters at the angles inside, surmounted with carved Ionic capitals, and with double doors, carved; and all this many feet below the causeway, and even twenty below the present general surface of the ground at the Wailing Place, so much has the valley filled up.

Now let me try to explain the matter. When first the wall of the Temple Court was built, in the time of Solomon, the valley was empty, with the

CAPITAL OF PILASTER, MASONIC HALL.

exception of a foot or two of red virgin earth lying on the rock. This stupendous wall then stood exposed to view, eighty-four feet in height from the rock to the floor of the outer court; and above this rose the cloisters. At the present time this wall

Fig. 4: Warren's 'Ancient' or 'Masonic' Hall, published in the *Survey of Western Palestine* (left), and in *Underground Jerusalem*.

It is misleading to regard the PEF as being interested only in subjects relating to biblical history and archaeology. Whilst the biblical texts were their main frame of reference, there were other ancient and historical texts, such as the Quran, the accounts of the Hellenistic invasion and rulers, the Crusades, and the writings of Josephus and Eusebius. Several articles published in the PEQ covered Islamic, Byzantine, Classical, and prehistoric material. Prehistoric and Islamic archaeology became more prominent in the 20th century as these fields developed and exciting discoveries were made in the region. In Islamic archaeology, sites which had been previously characterised as Byzantine, or even Crusader, began to be understood for what they were.

[27] PEF-DA-MAC-183.

A fine example of this is the Umayyad country estate at Khirbet al-Mafjar in Jericho, popularly known as 'Hisham's Palace'. Originally thought by Warren to be a Crusader site, it was visited in 1894 by Canon Tristram and Frederick Jones Bliss. They wondered if the remains might be those of Herod's palace (subsequently identified at another nearby site, Telul Abu Alayek, on the Wadi Kelt). Bliss went to some trouble to investigate the ruins more fully. He recovered fragments of stone stucco decoration, and consulted the PEF's architectural expert, Professor Hayter-Lewis, who thought that they were of Byzantine workmanship, not earlier than AD 600.[28] It took further excavation in the 1930s and 40s by Palestinian archaeologist Dimitri Baramki and Robert Hamilton (then Director of the Department of Antiquities), to assign the site correctly to the Umayyad period.[29]

Genuine scientific and academic interest as a powerful motivator for the PEF's early pioneers is often overlooked by researchers nowadays, particularly by those interested in exploring the PEF as an agent of colonialism and/or a religiously motivated organisation. As a result, this factor is frequently airbrushed out of the equation. I would argue that this is a mistake. For the core of the PEF's committee and explorers, scientific and academic interest was, and remains, the single most powerful – and unifying – motivation. Without it, other interests would not be well served at all. It is this genuine interest, covering a huge range of subjects and disciplines that is evident in the reports and articles filling the pages of the *Quarterly Statement* and the larger publications of the PEF, such as the *Survey of Western Palestine*. The influence of academia is as strong, if not stronger, than the influence of religious and political interests. And forward-thinking science was well represented among the founding members of the PEF, and its committee.

Canon Henry B. Tristram, the naturalist and supporter of Darwinian theory who wrote the volume on the flora and fauna of Palestine for the *Survey of Western Palestine,* has been mentioned above, but he is by no means the only scientist of note to make a significant contribution to the PEF's work. Professor Edward Hull, Director of the Geological Survey in Ireland, who conducted the geological study of the Wadi Arabah, and the famous meteorologist James Glaisher (subject of the recent film 'The Aeronauts') were two others. Glaisher, who served as the PEF's Chairman from 1880 to 1901, introduced regular meteorological measurement to the PEF's activities. The rigorous methodology brought to surveying and recording, which the various Royal Engineers – Charles Wilson, Warren, Conder, and H.H. Kitchener among them, added to the body of reliable data on the region, much of which had very little to do with biblical subject matter, and far more with the land of Palestine itself. This genuine interest and insistence on scientific objectivity were safe-guards of the PEF's high standards, presenting measurable,

[28] Bliss 1894: 181.
[29] Baramki 1936–1944.

useful data mattered which enabled the organisation to build an impressive reputation as a research institute. This motivation is clearly expressed in Dean Arthur Stanley's brief speech at the 1880 AGM on the eve of the Survey of Eastern Palestine – the project which evolved from the Survey of Western Palestine beyond the Jordan River into Transjordan. As at the inaugural meeting, there were several speeches, some lengthy, all describing the knowledge anticipated from an expedition to the east. Biblical subjects feature as before, but Stanley primarily concerned himself with the excitement of discovery:

> Of all the features of interest that struck me when I first went to Palestine – a feature altogether undescribed, and of which I had not the least idea till I went there, of which no book of travel and given the slightest information – was the constant view of the mountains of Moab, and the great wall of the east of Jordan. Wherever we went, that wall, rising up from the purple chasm which separated us from it, was a beautiful source of mystery and tantalization, filling us with a sense of ignorance, and with a desire to know what there was beyond it.[30]

Granted, he admitted he would love to have seen the site of Manahaim where, according to the Bible, Jacob had a vision of angels,[31] but it is the journey of discovery that appears to have mattered more.

A consequence of this curiosity, coupled with the application of the most advanced scientific thinking and techniques of the day, was the PEF's genuine attempt to adhere to the principals of objectivity and to focus on factual exploration, as exemplified by Warren's separation of his Masonic interests from his responsibilities to the PEF described above. This is not to say that such efforts always succeeded. Of course, innate biases affected questions and approaches as much as ours do today, and perhaps awareness of those biases was not as it should have been, but the need to try for some degree of objectivity was recognized. This enabled the PEF to convince the Ottoman authorities of its good intentions, and to act as a non-political source of reliable information for whoever expressed interest. The published works of the PEF were as available to the Ottoman state as they were to the British Government. Concerning the map of the Survey of Western Palestine, Kitchener wrote in a letter to the PEF secretary, Walter Besant: "(…) I should much like to have a run up to Constantinople to present it to the old Sultan with a little description in my best Turkish (no small accomplishment now) to tell who did it, and how glad he ought to be to get it (…)."[32] The private conversations in the club rooms of London, which are not recorded and can only be imagined, were for the ears of those alone who attended. In addition, the private correspondence and reports from the field to the PEF office were absolutely unavailable to

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[30] Report 1881: 25.
[31] Genesis 32:2.
[32] PEF-DA-KIT-17.

the Ottoman Administration. The PEF of the 19th and early 20th century was of course a thoroughly British organisation, and would always have acted as a loyal subject of the British Empire. It was fronted by the great and the good of Victorian society, and to behave in any way which was contrary to British interests in the region would have been unthinkable. After all, the Queen herself was Patron, and this lent a distinct bias to much published by the PEF – not so much as regards facts themselves perhaps, but in how they were presented, particularly in the more popular publications, in the pages of the AGM reports, and in the notes and news of the PEFQst.

## Conclusion

Where does this leave the historical PEF? Was it an agent of colonial ambitions, an organisation with religious and ideological motivations, or was it at the forefront of the western scientific revolution? The answer is "all of these," to varying degrees at different times depending on the pressures and interests at the time. But I do think that the very progressive academic underlying principles and scientific methodologies are most important, providing a unifying factor often overlooked by commentators. These characteristics afforded the PEF a basic integrity which was the key to its success and longevity as a research organisation.

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# The "Assyrian Society" and the Early Exploration of Ancient Mesopotamia

Stefania Ermidoro*

## "What's in a name?"

In the 6 August 1853 issue of *The Literary Gazette*, a news item entitled "Assyrian Society" appeared on page 768. It opened with the words:

> We have the pleasure this week of announcing one of the most interesting and spirited undertakings that it has been our lot to record. The light that has been so unexpectedly thrown upon the Bible history of the world by the discovery and interpretation of the Nineveh marbles, and the knowledge that many earlier and more important sculptures remain behind, have awakened an anxious desire among antiquarians and literary men for further acquisitions. (…) The Government not being disposed to give more money, and the Museum not having funds for the purpose, it is evident that to secure these valuable historical records to the pride and glory of our country must be the work of private enterprise.

The official name of the newly created institution was "Society for Exploring the Ruins of Assyria and Babylonia; with especial Reference to Biblical Illustrations". However, as contemporary sources attest (newspaper articles and archival materials *in primis*), it has primarily been referred to ever since as the "Assyrian Society." Its ultimate purpose was to raise enough money to ensure the continuation of British excavations in the Near East. In the prospectus, the stated presumption was "(…) the sum of 10,000£ will be required to commence operations at once in various parts of Mesopotamia, and to sustain necessary activity during a period of three years".[1] Despite the reference to both Assyria and Babylonia in the official name, the goal was to ensure Great Britain's continued precedence at Nineveh and Nimrud, the two principle ancient Assyrian sites, and to prevent the French archaeological mission from encroaching upon the British claim, despite a chronic lack of public funding in Britain and the difficulty of finding personnel to work at

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– I would like to thank the organizers Thomas L. Gertzen and Olaf Matthes, as well as all the participants in the International Workshop *Oriental Societies & Societal Self-Assertion. Associations, Funds and Societies for the Archaeological Exploration of the Ancient Near East* for the lively and productive discussions, from which this paper has greatly benefited. Thanks are also due to Nancy Charley, Archivist at the Royal Asiatic Society, who has kindly provided me with information on, as well as photographs of, the archival materials held in those premises.

[1] From the first "Report of the Assyrian Excavation Fund", p. 10 (= Barnett 1976: 73).

the sites. Consequently, members of the Assyrian Society themselves soon began to give their association another name, the "Assyrian Excavation Fund," and it was under this name that they published, at a later date, the only two reports issued under their patronage.[2]

At the end of the 19th century, a fourth name for the same society, viz. "Assyrian Exploration Fund," appeared in several newspapers, as well as in academic publications.[3] This resulted from amalgamating the two names the Society had given itself: the shorter Assyrian Excavation Fund and the longer, official name, which mentioned the intention of "Exploring the Ruins of Assyria." All these different labels highlight the various souls of such a short-lived and yet rather significant Society with a quite tumultuous existence.

**The social premises and the beginnings**

Particularly relevant for understanding the creation of the Assyrian Society is the addition of "with especial Reference to Biblical Illustrations" to the official name. The general impression in Europe after the early discoveries made by Austen Henry Layard in Assyria was that Nineveh had close connections with the Biblical account, even more than its renowned "classical" counterpart Babylon, since both Nineveh and Assyria are mentioned in the Old Testament. In a report Fulgence Fresnel, in charge of the French archaeological mission to Mesopotamia from 1851 to 1855, commented: "Nineveh belongs only to sacred history, while Babylon belongs to both sacred and profane history".[4] This statement expresses well how Victorian society in England also perceived the rediscovery of Assyria, and of Nineveh in particular.[5]

In 1850, following Layard's magnificent discoveries, *The Times* received a letter from an anonymous reader calling upon the British government to extend its financial support to the Assyrian excavations, referring to the finds as a "supplemental book of the Bible that is being revealed to us."[6] At this time, illustrations of Assyrian monuments began to figure in Bibles and Biblical commentaries. During the mid-19th century, the distribution of copies of the Bible had increased considerably; by 1861, nearly four million copies were printed yearly in Great Britain. The trend had begun decades earlier. Between 1831 and 1861,

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[2] The two reports are dated 28 April 1854 and 20 February 1855.

[3] See, e.g., Gadd 1936; Larsen 1996.

[4] "Ninive n'appartient qu'à l'histoire sacrée, tandis que Babylone appartient, et à l'histoire sacrée et à l'histoire profane": cf. Pillet 1922: 153.The quotation is taken from Fresnel's so-called "Testament", a long report written in Baghdad shortly before his death, dated 31 January 1855, and addressed to the minister of state and the imperial household, Achille Fould.

[5] For the idea that Assyria was considered fundamental in proving the truthfulness of the Bible, see Holloway 2001.

[6] "The Ruins of Nineveh: [Letter] To the Editor of The Times", *The Times*, 5 August 1850, p. 8.

the "British and Foreign Bible Society," formed in 1804 with the purpose of encouraging the "wider circulation and use" of the Scriptures, saw a rise in the distribution of the Bible by more than three hundred per cent.[7]

Strong religious feelings were, however, not shared by the active protagonists in the archaeological enterprise, such as Layard himself and Henry Rawlinson; they were neither religious men nor did they profess or observe a strictly pious etiquette. Regardless, many (or perhaps even most of the) people in Victorian Britain valued the Assyrian discoveries, primarily on account of their religious significance, and this reason was responsible for their readiness to support the continuation of excavations in the Near East.[8]

The Assyrian Society came into existence at a time when the British pioneer of Near Eastern archaeology, Austen Henry Layard, was yet in Assyria but had already decided to return to London, since the difficulties he had to face with the very limited budget provided by the State had overwhelmed him.

During the last few months of 1850, Rawlinson – soon to be appointed Consul-General in Baghdad (from 1851), and who was actively involved in the decipherment of the cuneiform writing, thanks to the copies of numerous inscriptions excavated by Layard – was in London, attempting to raise money to ensure the continuation of excavations in Assyria. To this end he created a special "Nineveh Fund" with a small group of people who defined themselves as "persons interested in Eastern Science, and acquainted with Mr. Layard's position." A pamphlet published to announce the creation of the Fund[9] clearly stressed that Layard was unaware of the plan to create it and that the newly created association was also independent of the British Museum. It was also incorrectly claimed that Layard was "prepared to devote the next six months" to investigating the ruins around Babylonia. In fact, many of the Fund's supporters had received letters from Layard in which he explicitly stated the opposite. Possibly the pamphlet's claim was an attempt to force Layard to remain at his post and continue excavations. The original contributors to the Fund included John Murray (Layard's publisher who was elected the Fund's official secretary); two of Layard's in-laws, Sir John Guest and the Earl of Aboyne; Layard's uncle, Benjamin Austen; the historian George Grote; Rawlinson; and, most significantly, Prince Albert, who, acting on behalf of Queen Victoria, gave his approval to the enterprise.[10]

However, in a letter of April 1851 to Sir Stratford Canning, the British ambassador to Constantinople, Layard expressed his firm decision to leave Mesopotamia and return to England permanently. Despite disappointment at the treatment which he had received from the British Museum, he refused to work for a private

[7] Esposito 2011: 79–80.

[8] Larsen 2009; Reade 2010: 100–101.

[9] A copy of this publication ("M.ʳ Layard's Researches in Assyria, Babylonia, &c.") is preserved amongst the *Layard Papers* in the British Library: Add MS 38980, ff. 20–21.

[10] Larsen 1996: 286–287; Turner 2021: 428.

association: “The plan appears to me objectionable in many respects and I have declined availing myself of funds so collected.”[11]

Although Layard vehemently disagreed with the creation of the Nineveh Fund – so much so that his refusal decreed the end of that institution – he nevertheless appears to have been one of the men who created the Assyrian Excavation Fund, an association that somehow ‘resurrected’ the former in July 1853.[12] This newly created body had as its official seat one room in the same building as the prestigious Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, at 5 New Burlington Street, London. By hosting its younger “sister institution,” the Royal Asiatic Society expressed approval of the Assyrian Society’s activities and purposes while, at the same time, keeping its distance and remaining entirely independent from it (see Appendix, Letter 1). Quite logically, many members of the Royal Asiatic Society, including Lord Ashburton, the president, who gave the remarkable sum of £50, were also subscribers of the Assyrian Society.

Later scholars have commented negatively on the creation of such a Fund. Cyril John Gadd, Keeper of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities at the British Museum from 1948 to 1955, wrote: “The project was indeed singularly *mal à propos*, for it created a new agency which was not merely superfluous but a potential competitor with those already in the field.”[13] One of his predecessors at the British Museum, R.D. Barnett, had earlier expressed the opinion that “(…) in some ways, the creation of this Fund at the time seemed to some both tactless and injudicious.”[14]

In any case, the Assyrian Society successfully raised sufficient funds to send the geologist William Kennett Loftus (who had already excavated in Mesopotamia during his appointment in the Turco-Persian Frontier Commission from 1849 until 1852)[15] to the Near East in October 1853, together with the artist William Boutcher. At this time, Layard’s friend and protégée Hormuzd Rassam was still busy at Kuyunjik, working for the British Museum. Due to the presence of two British excavation teams at the same time in the Near East, it was suggested that Loftus concentrate on Babylonia, while Rassam remained in Assyria.[16]

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[11] Larsen 1996: 288.

[12] Richard David Barnett, Keeper from 1932 to 1939 of the Western Asiatic Antiquities Department of the British Museum, wrote in his *Sculptures from the north palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh*: “(…) there is evidence that a leading part was taken in it [i.e. the Assyrian Excavation Fund] by Layard himself.” Barnett 1976: 10.

[13] Gadd 1936: 95–96.

[14] Barnett 1976: 71–73.

[15] Regarding Loftus, with bibliographical references to his life and a description of the few archival materials which he left behind, see Ermidoro 2020 and Curtis 2023.

[16] Larsen 1996: 322.

**The subscribers**

The first subscribers of the Assyrian Society were for the most part the same as those who had already sponsored the Nineveh Fund, but the number of signatories soon increased to comprise individuals from all across England. A detailed list was included in the first *Report of the Assyrian Excavation Fund* dated 28 April 1854.[17] The total number of subscribers for the first year amounted to 218 who raised ca. £2,400. The most generous were Prince Albert and “Miss Burdett Coutts” (i.e., the philanthropist Angela Georgina Burdett-Coutts, 1st Baroness Burdett-Coutts), each giving £105. They were followed by Walter Montagu Douglas Scott, 5th Duke of Buccleuch; Francis Egerton, 1st Earl of Ellesmere; Layard’s cousin Lady Charlotte Guest; and the politician and writer Samuel Laing, all contributing £100. In the next group of most generous subscribers, who gave £50, was Layard himself, together with twelve others including Lord Somers, the President of the Committee of the Assyrian Society.

As Geoffrey Turner recently pointed out, a remarkable number of subscribers of the Assyrian Society were rewarded at different times with original Assyrian ‘marbles,’ sent from Nineveh or Nimrud, in recognition of their financial support. For example, two reliefs were recently re-discovered in Herefordshire at Eastnor Castle, the home of Lord Somers, who was not only the President of the Assyrian Society but also a good friend of Layard. The latter must have given him these items as a gift to celebrate their friendship and/or to thank him for his generous donation to the Fund. A two-fold goal must have also driven Layard’s decision to present Lord John Russel with two other reliefs: in all likelihood, these were both tokens of gratitude for his donation to the Assyrian Society but also an attempt to obtain support while Layard was beginning his political career. Fragments were surely given to the architect Philip Charles Hardwick and the Dean of Durham (George Waddington), while others were lost from the records after they were inherited by subscribers’ family members bearing different surnames.[18]

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[17] Barnett 1976: 73. Local subscribers might have had some role in proposing how to reciprocate the giving of money: for example, in a note which appeared in *The Weekly Chronicle* on 3 June 1854, p. 348, it was stated: “ASSYRIAN EXCAVATION FUND – Many influential gentlemen at Manchester, including the Mayor, the Bishop, and several merchants have formed a committee towards assisting this fund. It is proposed to give photographs of the new excavations to the subscribers, and reports of those engaged in the exploration.” The activities of the Manchester supporters of the Assyrian Society are also documented by a letter in the archives of the Royal Asiatic Society with an invitation to attend “(…) a meeting of gentlemen interested in the discoveries made by M. Botta, Mr. Layard, and Colonel Rawlinson, in Assyria and Babylonia (…) the objects of the meeting are to afford information on the progress of the work, and to concert measures for aiding those now engaged, under the auspices of the London committee, in the further investigation of these interesting ruins.” Such a meeting was to be held in the Town Hall of Manchester, on 27 May 1854.

[18] Turner 2021: 704.

**In the field: the relationship with the British Museum**

The arrival of the Assyrian Society's representatives in Mesopotamia at the end of 1853 coincided with the exhaustion of the public funds available to Rawlinson for continuing excavations in Assyria. Despite the brilliant discoveries already made in the field, during the first few months of 1854 the British presence in Assyria was at risk. The British Museum no longer had funds available for Rassam to continue his work at Nineveh and Nimrud.

At this stage, as Barnett writes, "the role of the Fund in the Assyrian scene might seem already transformed from that of an unwanted and suspected interloper to that of a popular, benevolent and wealthy guest, or, to make a better comparison, a fairy godmother."[19] Indeed, Fund members were willing to take up the excavations which Rassam would have been forced to cease. In April 1854, an agreement was reached with the British Museum, and the accomplishment announced to the Fund subscribers in the First Report.[20] Accordingly, excavations would have been paid with the Society's money but any item found, which warranted being sent to England, would have been deposited in the British Museum.

Given that the only other possibility was to abandon the sites to the French, who were also active in the region at that time, Rawlinson reluctantly opted to hand over the excavations to Loftus[21] who, together with Boutcher, received authority from Rawlinson on 3 June 1854 to excavate at Nineveh and Nimrud on behalf of the "Assyrian Fund Soc$^{ty}$".[22] Rawlinson also reminded Loftus that the Trustees alone had been granted rights of excavation there by the Turkish Government, and that the Trustees maintained the right to reoccupy the ground at any future period, should British government funds be provided.[23] Indeed, in July 1854, news was received in Baghdad that the British Treasury had granted a further £1,500. Rawlinson then decided to authorize Christian Rassam, Vice Consul at Mosul and brother of Hormuzd, to resume excavations at Nineveh, while at the same time allowing Loftus to work there at the Fund's expense. The coexistence

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[19] Barnett 1976: 11.

[20] Barnett 1976: 72.

[21] Gadd 1936: 103–104; Turner 2021: 680–682.

[22] In his letters, Rawlinson uses "Assyrian Fund Society," the name of the institution to which he himself had originally subscribed. Later, however, he came to express rather critical comments about the Fund: he wrote to Norris that he "hated" it (Royal Asiatic Society, Rawlinson Papers, III/10(12)), and that he had come to the decision to "withdraw all further connexion$^{sic}$ with the Assyrian Fund Society (…) I hereby wash my hands of the Assyrian Fund Society & all that concerns them & shall merely consider how I can best carry out the wishes of the Trustees" (Royal Asiatic Society, Rawlinson Papers, III/11(09)). For the Rawlinson Papers, see https://royalasiaticsociety.org/list-of-the-ras-collections-of-sir-henry-creswicke-rawlinson-bart-1810–1895/ (last accessed 17/07/2022); cf. also Parsons 2015.

[23] Turner 2021: 680–682.

of the two teams in the same site soon became difficult. In an official letter written by Rawlinson and dated 13 September 1854, he complained that Loftus was

> (…) continually encroaching on the “terrain” reserved for the Museum operations and risking collisions between the rival workmen – I am thus very anxious to ascertain the view which is taken in England of the right which he claims for the Assyrian Society over the Nineveh mounds – According to my own opinion his persisting to excavate around the Northern Palace at Koyunjik, and the preparations he is making to appropriate the proceeds of his work, constitute an invasion, if I may so term it, of the rights of the Museum, and one moreover which may operate injuriously to the interest of the nation in enabling the Assyrian Fund Society to transfer to the Prussian Gov.t., in return for its contribution of 1,000 £, Sculptures to which the British Museum has a prior, if not an exclusive, claim.[24]

The news that the Prussian monarch Friedrich Wilhelm IV had offered one thousand pounds should an Assyrian collection be procured for the Royal Museum in Berlin, exacerbated the relationship between public and private archaeological teams.[25] On 7 June 1854, Sir Henry Ellis, Principal Librarian of the British Museum, informed Rawlinson that “[a]n application has been made by the Trustees from the Assyrian Society enquiring whether the Society might count on full authority being given to remove to England any such pieces of Sculpture as the Trustees might not desire to obtain for their own Collection. This is in consequence of an Agreement about to be entered into by the Assyrian Society with the King of Prussia who is becoming a large subscriber for the promotion of the Society’s objects.” The British Museum had no objections, provided that the best and most relevant pieces would be selected and sent to London for its own gallery. The Museum allowed Rawlinson to give the remaining slabs to “any other party (…) from whatever parts of the world they may come” (see also Appendix, Letter 2). Rawlinson then replied to Sir Henry

> It is unfortunate that this application has been made so late, for I have already permitted the French and Americans to secure almost all the fine slabs remaining at Nimrud, and I cannot of course revoke that permission now, merely because there are other parties who wish to share the spoil – At Kouyunjik, too, all the slabs which are tolerably well preserved are being packed by Mr Rassam, in order to be added to the Museum Supplementary Collection – and unless therefore Mr Loftus discovers a new Pal-

[24] *Ibid.*, 715.

[25] Friedrich Wilhelm IV acquired his first Assyrian monument (a stele of Sargon II) in 1846. Following this purchase, he instructed his representatives and agents abroad to search for similar relics. Cf. Turner 2021: 227; cf. also *ibid.*, 715.

> ace, I hardly know where he is to obtain marbles to meet the Prussian subscription of 1000£–.[26]

Indeed, it proved impossible to secure the required sculptures, and so the contribution was never paid.

In order to unravel such a troublesome situation, the Assyrian Society proposed a solution which somehow decreed the end of its own existence: it was suggested that its agents, Loftus and Boutcher, would be placed under the service of the Trustees of the British Museum (who would pay their salaries), while the Society would transfer all its available fund and any possible future donations to the Trustees. In return, the Society asked to continue reporting details of findings from the excavations to its subscribers and that any sculpture that was not requested by the British Museum should be placed at its disposal.[27] But shortly after the agreement was concluded, in November 1854, John Murray in his capacity as Treasurer of the Assyrian Society, informed the Trustees that there may be no money forthcoming from the Fund, and that Loftus and Boutcher would no longer act as the Society's agents in the field.[28] In December 1854, Rawlinson (who intended to leave Baghdad permanently in April 1855) asked the Trustees to decide, amongst many other points, whether the Museum would "(…) continue the excavations, either with a fresh Parliamentary grant, or with the private assistance furnished by the Funds of the Assyrian Society; or will they recommend the resuscitation of the said Society, and leave the further prosecution of Assyrian research in their hands, as an independent body?"

The Trustees answered: "It is not the intention of the Trustees to apply to Parliament for any additional grant for continuing excavations in Assyria, and the Assyrian Society not having transferred any funds to the account of the Trustees, and not having given any answer to the representations made to them on the subject; the Trustees have had no alternative but that of acquainting the Society, that the arrangement made with them was at an end."[29]

**End and legacy**

Little is known about British excavations in Assyria in the years 1854–1855, under Loftus's and Boutcher's supervision. They never published any official chronicle of their achievements in Mesopotamia, so that their activities may only be partially reconstructed on the basis of the two accounts published by the Assyrian Society and a few other archival materials. Loftus did publish a book in 1857 with a broad description of his work as an archaeologist. In the introduction he reported: "On returning to England in the middle of last year [i.e., 1855] I

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[26] Turner 2021: 697–698, 715.
[27] Gadd 1936: 108–113.
[28] Turner 2021: 688–689.
[29] Turner 2021: 718–719.

hoped that the Committee of the above society [i.e., the Assyrian Society] would have published *in extenso*, and in another form, the fruits of its investigations in Chaldaea and Assyria; but, this plan having been abandoned, I am induced to embody the records of some portion of my journeys and researches in the following pages."[30] The reason for such a dearth was the Assyrian Society's decision at a meeting held with its subscribers on 20 February 1855 to end to its own existence, given that its finances had depleted and the Crimean War was raging in the East. During this gathering, the second and last printed *Report of the Assyrian Excavation Fund* was distributed with extracts from three letters written by Loftus, describing the discoveries which he had made between August and November 1854.[31] Gadd reports that, according to a letter from Murray, this pamphlet was actually written by Layard.[32]

The official archives of the Assyrian Society (reports, drawings, and letters, sent by Loftus and Boutcher while in the field) have, unfortunately, never been recovered or identified in any of the British repositories where they might, with any likelihood, have remained. Much information relating to the activities of the Society's two agents in Mesopotamia has been lost, except for the two published reports, a few pieces of indirect information extracted from Loftus's and Rawlinson's letters, the non-scientific descriptions included in Loftus's book, as well as some surviving drawings made by Butcher which are today in the British Museum archives.

Overall, the experience of the Assyrian Society may be considered an unsatisfactorily handled enterprise, if not a failure. Yet, when in 1865 (only 10 years after the Assyrian Society's dissolution) many British newspapers reported that a group of noblemen and gentlemen had suggested the creation of a Society for Exploring the Holy Land for Biblical Illustration, or the "Palestine Exploration Fund," the news was greeted: "The practicability of such an undertaking as that now proposed has been amply proved by the success of the 'Assyrian Excavation Fund', formed in 1853, for prosecuting researches in the Mounds of Assyria, for which a large sum was raised by private subscription, and by which, during the short time it existed, much was effected."[33]

## Appendix

Transcriptions of two letters related to the Assyrian Society are provided, courtesy of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (catalogue reference: GB 891 OS7). They document the relationship between the two institutions (Letter 1),

[30] Loftus 1857: v–vi. Loftus' letters recently published by John Curtis (2023) provide information only on Loftus' early travels and archaeological activities in Mesopotamia in 1849–1851, thus not on the years in which he acted on behalf of the Assyrian Society.
[31] Barnett 1976: 73.
[32] Gadd 1936: 108–113.
[33] See, e.g., *The Sun, London*, 22 April 1865, p. 3.

as well as between the Society and the British Museum, particularly with regard to the “Prussian *affaire*” (Letter 2).

**Letter 1**

Written on letterhead paper and bearing the information, “Assyrian Excavation Fund, 5 NEW BURLINGTON STREET,” it is dated 16 November 1853. The senders were the two Honorary Secretaries of the Assyrian Society (Viscount Mandeville and Samuel Phillips), and in all likelihood it was given *brevi manu* in the same building to the addressee, Richard Clarke, Honorary Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Sir,

We are requested by the Assyrian Excavation Fund respectfully to ask the Council of the Asiatic Society to be so good as to forward to each of their members a copy of the inclosed[*sic*] circular which gets fulli[*sic*] the object into which the Assyrian Excavation Fund has been established, and to help the exertions of the Assyrian Fund generally in any way the Asiatic Society may think practicable and right.

As it is the aim of the Assyrian Committee to further, however humbly, the cause to which the efforts of the Asiatic Society have been, for years, successfully devoted, and as the Asiatic Society has already, in the handsomest manner, expressed its sympathy with the proceedings of the sister institution by gratuitously approving her accommodation under this roof, the Committee of the Assyrian Excavation Fund venture to hope that their request may not be considered intrusive and improper to be complied with.

We are Sir

Your very obed. servants
Mandeville
Sam. Phillips

**Letter 2**

This document, dated 7 June 1854, was sent by Henry Ellis, Principal Librarian at the British Museum, to Samuel Phillips. It aimed to reassure the Assyrian Society that the British Museum would not object to the importing of slabs into England, which would then be sold to the Prussian king, following an agreement between him and the Society itself.[34]

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[34] This letter fits nicely into the small dossier of letters exchanged between the British Museum, Rawlinson, and Loftus, relating to the agreement between the Assyrian Exploration Fund and the Prussian king, which has been reconstructed by Turner 2021: 689–690 (Rawlinson to Ellis, letter dated 5 February 1855), 690–691 (Rawlinson to Loftus, letter dated 7 Febuary 1855), and 691–692 (Rawlinson to Loftus, letter dated 21 February 1855).

Sir,

Your letter accompanying the draft of a proposed agreement from the King of Prussia to the Assyrian Fund Society, containing also the question, ‘whether any objection would exist on the part of the Authorities of the British Museum, or whether on the contrary they might count on full authority being given to remove to England any such pieces of Sculpture as the Trustees might not desire to obtain for their own Collection” was on Saturday last laid before our Trustees.

In reply I am directed to acquaint You, for the information of the Assyrian Fund Society, that as long ago as $2^{d}$ July 1852 I wrote to Col. Rawlinson, under the Trustees’ direction what is, no doubt, as applicable now as it was then.

The instructions given, will appear more fully in a letter which I wrote soon after to the American Minister, a copy of which is enclosed, and will convince you how readily the Trustees have already exercised the liberality which you seek of them.

I have in a letter of this day’s date written to Col. Rawlinson, referring to the Instruction of 1852, adding that although slabs only are distinctly mentioned in that direction, I am quite satisfied that the Trustees considered it equally applicable to every Class[?] of Sculpture which he would contemplate to leave as unnecessary to be transported to the British Museum.

I have the honor to remain, Sir,

Your obedient faithful Servant
Henry Ellis
Pr. Lib.

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# Part II

# Imperial Self-Reflections

# The Sichem Committee

## A Case Study of Dutch Private Sponsorship of Near Eastern Archaeology

Sebastiaan R.L. Berntsen*

At the end of the nineteenth century, the developing science of archaeological excavation had become a promising tool in the biblical sciences. This case study looks at a Dutch initiative: the *Sichem-comité* ("Sichem Committee") and the role it played in gaining involvement and financial participation of a Dutch private audience in Near Eastern archaeology.[1]

### Frans Böhl and new directions in Bible studies

Fig. 1: Frans Marius Theodor Böhl (1882–1976) in 1925.

The main figure in this case study is Frans (de Liagre) Böhl.[2] His father was an Austrian protestant minister and theologian, his mother a Dutch baroness. As a

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[1] This paper is based on information found in unpublished and as yet un-catalogued documents left to the NINO archive by F.M.Th. de Liagre Böhl. I would like to thank C.H. van Zoest for her assistance in editing the present text.

[2] Franz Marius Theodor Böhl went by the German version of his first name, "Franz", in German-speaking environments. Upon moving to the Netherlands in 1912 he started habitually using the Dutch version, "Frans". He added "de Liagre" to his family name in 1949. For more on his life, see the recent biography by his son H. de Liagre Böhl (2021)

young boy living in Vienna, he became interested in archaeology after visiting the Roman excavations of Carnuntum. Böhl studied theology and oriental languages at the universities of Vienna, Leipzig, and Berlin. When a student, Böhl was influenced by Friedrich Delitzsch and his *Babel und Bibel* theory. Delitzsch taught that the Jewish religion and the Old Testament had their origins in Babylonia. His ideas caused a great debate on the uniqueness and originality of the Bible, and the newly developing archaeological science became a promising and interesting feature of this discussion. During his studies, Böhl also became acquainted with Ernst Sellin, the first excavator of Sichem.

At age 30, Böhl was appointed professor at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, teaching Hebrew and Israelite Antiquities. In 1927, he became Professor of Assyriology at Leiden, where he co-founded the Netherlands Institute for the Near East in 1939.[3] Böhl was a talented public speaker and writer, influential in popularizing his work among non-academic audiences.[4] Years later, in 1967, Martien Beek, who was one of his pupils, wrote to him:

> I always did admire you, because of the way you functioned as a scholar in the culture of our country: No one in your field has ever done this in a similar manner and I regret that, because I think we should be willing to descend from the lectern with our specialisms, reaching out to a broader audience of interested people. (…) To this day, I regularly encounter people, be they factory owners in Twente [a rural region in the eastern part of the Netherlands] or office clerks in Amsterdam, who have been captivated by your talks, and as a result developed a lasting interest in ancient civilisations, excavations and the Bible.[5]

As we shall see below (p. 97ff.), Böhl's talent for successfully addressing a broad audience is relevant for the present story.

**Ernst Sellin, first excavator of Sichem**

Around 1900, when the developing science of archaeology meshed with European colonialism and competition between the western powers, German scholar Hermann Thiersch (1874–1939) identified the archaeological site of Tell Balata (near Nablus in Palestine) with the biblical town of Sichem or Shechem. He kept his discovery quiet as he wished future archaeological exploration of Sichem to be a German project.

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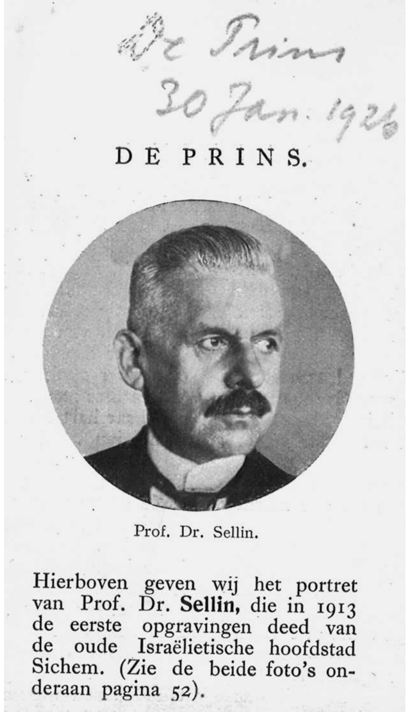
and the review on it by Raulwing and Van den Hout (2022).

[3] See Van Zoest and Berntsen 2014, and Waal in this volume.

[4] Burggraaff 2006: 168.

[5] Unpublished letter from M.A. Beek to Böhl, original Dutch text cited in De Liagre Böhl 2021: 329.


De Prins 30 Jan. 1926

DE PRINS.

Prof. Dr. Sellin.

Hierboven geven wij het portret van Prof. Dr. **Sellin,** die in 1913 de eerste opgravingen deed van de oude Israëlietische hoofdstad Sichem. (Zie de beide foto's onderaan pagina 52).

Fig. 2: Ernst Sellin (1867–1946), magazine clipping from 1926.

The person taking up the project was Professor Ernst Sellin, a theologian and Old Testament scholar who became a biblical archaeology pioneer. He had made a name for himself as the excavator of the sites of Tell Ta'anach and Jericho. Sellin's excavations at Sichem which started in 1913 were interrupted by the First World War. Germany was able to keep the monopoly on the site and by 1925, Sellin returned to Tell Balata. Meanwhile, local inhabitants had become aware of the developing and profitable archaeological souvenir market serving growing Holy Land tourism, so archaeological research at the site was not to be postponed much longer.

Sellin planned to excavate at Tell Balata for several months in the spring and summer of 1926. For the project, he needed 75,000 Reichsmark – a small fortune. The relatively large budget was due to local landowners having become sharp negotiators concerning the rent. Moreover, Sellin wanted to employ a paid work force of no less than 200 local villagers at the site. He managed to secure

- 5,000 Mark from the German Protestant Church
- 5,000 Mark from the German foreign office
- 15,000 Mark from German scientific funds
- 25,000 Mark through the efforts of the American Methodist bishop DuBose

This left him with a deficit of 25,000 Mark. At this point, he turned to Frans Böhl in the Netherlands for cooperation.

Sellin was a friend of the Böhl family and one of Böhl's teachers at university. Both were also connected with father and son Delitzsch. In 1925, when Böhl was rector of Groningen University, he had visited the Holy Land for the first time, as a member of the Dutch delegation attending the inauguration of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Afterwards he toured the country, and he met with Sellin at Tell Balata, where he was impressed by its visible remains. The importance of the ancient city is clear from the words of Biblical scholar Albrecht Alt who famously described Sichem as the "uncrowned queen of Israel"[6]. Founded on a suitable location in the middle of ancient Israel's sphere of influence, Sichem played an important role before Jerusalem gained supremacy.

**Establishment of the Sichem Committee**

After his return to the Netherlands, Böhl began formally organising his own participation, along with that of his country, in Sellin's project. In October 1925, a first meeting was held in the offices of the Dutch National Bank in Amsterdam. The attendees were

- G.J. Thierry (Assyriologist)
- C.H.J. van Haeften, Esq. (lawyer, as 'Maecenas')
- F.W. von Bissing (Egyptologist, collector)
- Chr. Van Eeghen (banker)
- J. Six, Esq. (art historian)
- U.Ph. de Boissevain (historian)
- C. van Gelderen (theologian)
- F.M.Th. Böhl

Preserved correspondence between Böhl and Sellin from late 1925 and early 1926 gives us a detailed insight into how these gentlemen came to the final arrangement for official Dutch participation in the Sichem excavations. The Sichem Committee, through Böhl, would have to raise the remaining sum, set in Dutch currency at ca. *ƒ* 25,000[7], before 1 March 1926. Sellin and Böhl agreed upon the following terms:

1. Sponsors donating at least *ƒ* 150 (ca. € 1,218 today[8]) would receive the final publication free of charge and also, *nach Kräfte* ("to the best of our ability"),

[6] "Sichem-Nāblus ist in der Tat die ungekrönte Königin von Palästina." Alt 1925: 5.

[7] Dutch currency in 1925 was the *gulden* (Dutch guilder), designated *ƒ*. The Sichem Committee brochure (Fig. 4a and b) mentions the goal of *ƒ* 25,000 – apparently 1 Dutch guilder had about the same value as 1 German Mark.

[8] Calculation of *ƒ* (1925) to € (2021): Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis 2021. In 1925, *ƒ* 1000 had the "purchasing power" of € 8,122.41 in 2021.

the preliminary reports and off-prints. Sellin estimated the cost of the final publication at *ƒ* 20 to *ƒ* 30 (ca. € 163 to € 245).

2. Sponsors donating at least *ƒ* 50 (ca. € 400) were offered the option of purchasing the final publication at cost, and – if possible – they would receive published preliminary reports for free.
3. The finds of the excavation, in so far as Palestinian law did not reserve them for the Jerusalem archaeological museum, including "duplicates", would be equally split between the Netherlands and Germany. This well-established practice of *partage* would be of high interest to Dutch museums.

The contract stipulated, among other things, that Böhl was officially second-in-charge of the expedition, and, should the excavation yield any cuneiform tablets – so dear to Böhl – he had sole rights to study and publish the texts. Thus, the Sichem Committee was legally founded in October or November 1925. Its board consisted of no less than 26 gentlemen, among them[9]

— Prof. Dr. J. Six esq.,[10] chairman;
— Prof. Dr. F.M.Th. Böhl, secretary;
— Mr. J.C. Fabius[11], treasurer.

The Committee issued a brochure to interest prospective sponsors in raising the sum of *ƒ* 25,000 (ca. € 203,000 today; see Fig. 4a and b). It comprised a promotional text, a second page with the names of the twenty-six committee members, most of them prominent Dutch scholars, followed by citation of an impressive *Comité van Aanbeveling* (list of recommenders) of twenty-nine gentlemen, mainly scholars, captains of industry, nobility, and politicians. For the prospective sponsor's convenience, the brochure came with a donation form.

Raising the required *ƒ* 25,000 proved more difficult than initially expected. In a letter dated 30 December 1925[12], Chairman Six suggested to Secretary Böhl that working with local subcommittees would be a good option. He mentioned several unsuccessful attempts to obtain donations, but still had hopes that the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences would donate *ƒ* 1,000. Six concluded by expressing his regret that he had so far been unable to be more useful.

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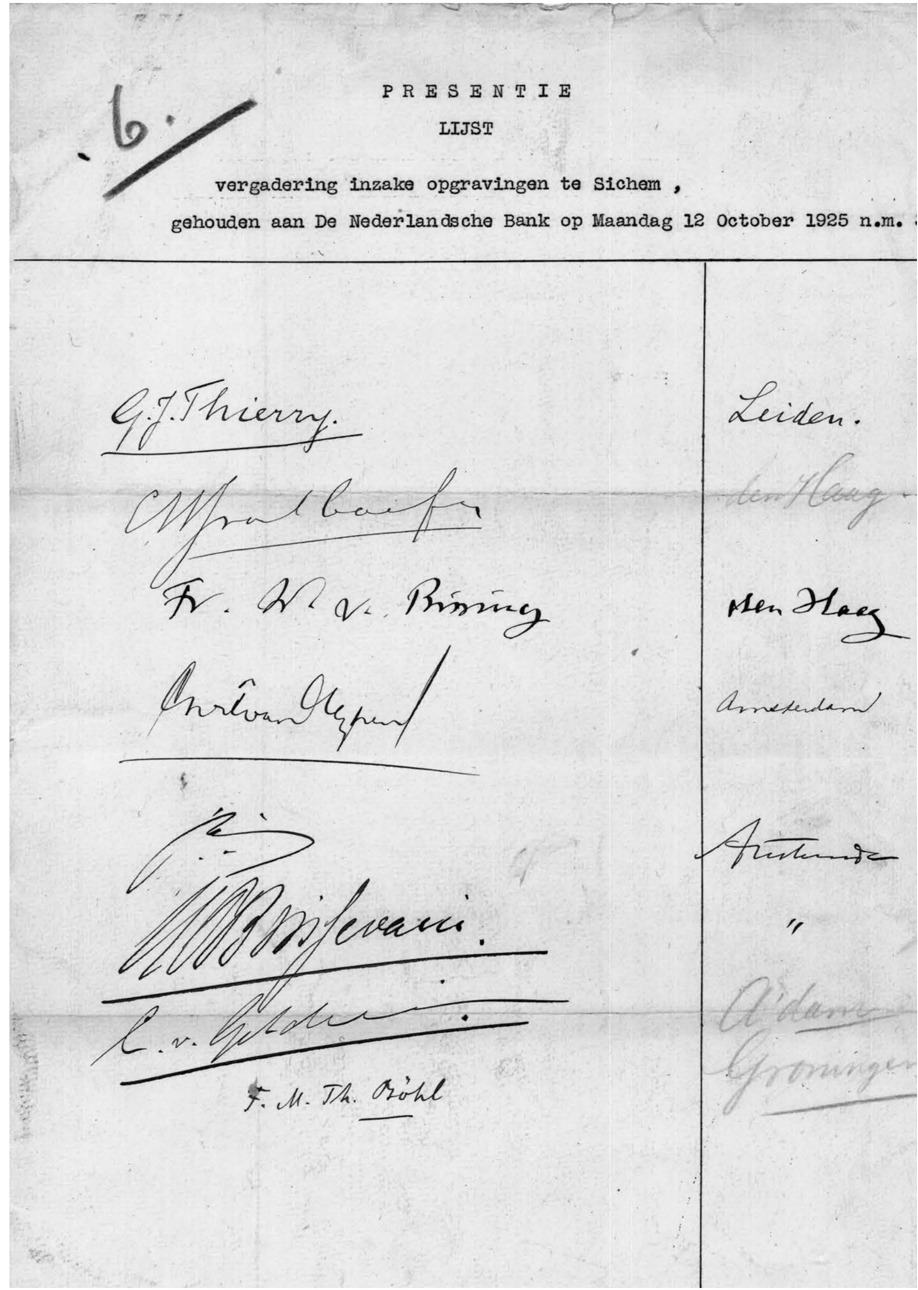
[9] For the complete list, see Fig. 3.

[10] Jan Six (VI), offspring of an important Amsterdam patrician family, was a prolific art collector and famous art historian (1857–1926) who taught at Amsterdam University (1889–1926). See Haspels 1979 [2013].

[11] Jan Fabius was an Amsterdam stockbroker and a brother of Böhl's deceased wife.

[12] Unpublished letter from Six to Böhl, 30 December 1925. NINO Archive, box 1033–8.



PRESENTIE

LIJST

vergadering inzake opgravingen te Sichem ,

gehouden aan De Nederlandsche Bank op Maandag 12 October 1925 n.m.

Fig. 3: List of persons present at the meeting regarding excavations in Sichem, held at the *Nederlandsche Bank* (Dutch National Bank) on Monday 12 October 1925 afternoon.

## De opgraving van Sichem

*Wij vragen Uwe belangstelling voor een gewichtige aangelegenheid. Iedereen weet hoeveel belangwekkends de oude graven en puinheuvels in Egypte en Babylonië opgeleverd hebben voor onze kennis van de oudste geschiedenis der menschheid. Maar juist in Palestina, het oude land van den Bijbel, kon een soortgelijk onderzoek op groote schaal pas beginnen, sedert ook voor dit land een nieuw tijdperk is begonnen.*

*In 1913 ontdekte de vermaarde Duitsche hoogleeraar en oudheidkundige Prof. Dr. Ernst Sellin in de nabijheid van het dorpje Balata bij Nabulus in Palestina de overblijfselen van de oudste hoofdstad en Koningsstad der Israëlieten:* **Sichem.** *De voorloopige opgraving, in het najaar 1913 en het voorjaar 1914 begonnen, heeft mooie resultaten opgeleverd, moest echter wegens het uitbreken van den wereldoorlog gestaakt worden. In April l.l. heeft Prof. Dr. F. M. Th. Böhl uit Groningen bij gelegenheid van zijn reis naar Palestina dit opgravingsterrein bezocht en onderzocht. Voor onze kennis der Israëlietische geschiedenis in het bijbelsch tijdperk en van de bijbelsche oudheden in het algemeen is Sichem een der belangrijkste plaatsen en een stelselmatige opgraving juist van deze stad is een der dringendste eischen der bijbelsche en der oudheidkundige wetenschap. Enkele mooie wapens en andere bronzen voorwerpen, die op dit terrein door bewoners van het naburige dorp Balata gevonden zijn, bevinden zich thans reeds in het Museum Scheurleer in den Haag. Deze vondsten zijn blijkbaar afkomstig uit ongeschonden graven, zoodat het zelfs niet onmogelijk zou zijn, dat in of in de onmiddellijke nabijheid van het bedoelde terrein de grafsteden der oudste koningen van het Noordelijk Rijk Israël worden teruggevonden.*

*Kort geleden is Prof. Sellin zelf van een verblijf in Palestina teruggekeerd, waar hij alle stappen gedaan en alles bereikt heeft wat ter voorbereiding van een stelselmatige opgravings-campagne noodig en wenschelijk is. De schriftelijke concessie der Palestijnsche Regeering en het pachtcontract, dat hem het recht geeft op de opgraving van den puinheuvel bij Balata zijn reeds in zijn bezit. De betrokken autoriteiten zijn tot medewerking en tot het verleenen van alle faciliteiten bereid gevonden. Alleen in financiëel opzicht zijn de benoodigde bedragen nog niet bijeen. Prof. Sellin hoopt ruim te kunnen volstaan met een bedrag van 75.000 gulden, waarvan hij ongeveer een derde uit Duitschland en een derde door bemiddeling van een Amerikaanschen Maecenas hoopt te verkrijgen. Indien de rest, dus ongeveer 25.000 gulden uit Nederland ter beschikking wordt gesteld, dan kan reeds in Maart van het volgend jaar een gemeenschappelijk werk beginnen, dat schitterende resultaten belooft en dat ook aan Nederland, de Nederlandsche Musea en de Nederlandsche Wetenschap tot eere zal strekken. Prof. Sellin heeft Prof. Böhl verzocht als plaatsvervangend leider der opgraving naast hem op te treden, zoodra de hervatting mogelijk zou blijken. De vondsten zouden (voorzoover die niet volgens de Palestijnsche Wet op de oudheden in het Museum te Jeruzalem worden geplaatst) gelijkmatig tusschen Nederland en Duitschland worden verdeeld. Voorts zou een regeling worden getroffen, dat ieder die ten minste 150 gulden bijdraagt later de groote publicatie,*

Fig. 4a: Brochure titled *De opgraving van Sichem* ("The excavation of Sichem"), 1925; page 1.

At the same time, however, Böhl wrote to Sellin that he had procured half of the agreed sum.[13] Apparently (in unpreserved correspondence) he provided some details of his efforts, as Sellin replied that he understood the Dutch psyche – probably meaning Dutch sponsors expected "quid pro quo". Sellin subtly remarked that he amassed German funds in silence, without any need of public attention.

[13] Unpublished letter from Sellin to Böhl, 26 December 1925: "Sehr hat mich natürlich Ihre Mitteilung gefreut, dass Sie die Hälfte der Mittel zusammen haben." NINO Archive, box "Sichem".

*waarin de resultaten van deze opgraving zullen worden neergelegd, desgewenscht gratis zal ontvangen, terwijl degenen, wier bijdrage ten minste 50 gulden bedraagt, voor dit werk slechts den kostenden prijs zullen betalen en ook de voorloopige berichten en afbeeldingen (indien zij dit wenschen) gratis zullen ontvangen.*

*Met vrijmoedigheid vragen wij Uw bijdrage voor dit mooie doel. Wij verzoeken U inliggend inteekenbiljet ingevuld te zenden of Uwe bijdrage ter beschikking te stellen van den Penning-meester J. C. Fabius (i. Fa. Aders & Fabius, Kerkstraat 363, Amsterdam, Postgiro No. 120386, postbox 664) of aan het adres van den Secretaris Prof Dr. F. M. Th. Böhl (Verlengde Heereweg 147, Groningen, Postgiro 72316),*

*Het Comité:*

Prof. Jhr. Dr. J. Six (Amsterdam), *Voorzitter*.
Mr. G. Vissering, President der Nederlandsche Bank, Amsterdam.
Prof. Dr. F. M. Th. Böhl (Groningen), *Secretaris*.
J. C. Fabius (i. Fa. Aders & Fabius), Amsterdam, *Penningmeester*.
Mr. A. J. L. van Beeck Calkoen, Chef van de Afdeeling Hooger Onderwijs, (Departement van Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen).
Prof. Dr. F. W. Baron von Bissing (Utrecht).
Prof. Dr. L. H. K. Bleeker (Groningen).
Prof. Dr. U. Ph. Boissevain (Amsterdam).
Prof. Dr. A. W. Bijvanck (Leiden).
Prof. Dr. D. Cohen (Leiden).
Mr. Chr. P. van Eeghen, Directeur der Nederlandsch-Indische Handelsbank (Amsterdam).
Prof. Dr. B. D. Eerdmans (Leiden).
Prof. Dr. C. van Gelderen (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam).
Prof. Dr. J. van Ginneken S. J. (Katholieke Universiteit, Nijmegen).
Dr. Joh. de Groot, Ned. Herv. Pred. (Den Haag).
Jhr. Mr. C. H. J. van Haeften (Den Haag).
Dr. W. G. J. van Koeverden (R. K. Seminarie, Culemborg).
Prof. Dr. A. Noordtzij (Utrecht).
Prof. Dr. H. Th. Obbink (Utrecht).
Prof. Dr. L. S. Ornstein (Utrecht).
Prof. Dr. J. L. Palache (Amsterdam).
Prof. Dr. A. G. Roos (Groningen).
Dr. D. A. W. H. Sloet, Pastoor in Abcoude.
Prof. Dr. G. J. Thierry (Leiden).
Dr. J. Th. de Visser, Oud-Minister van Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen (Den Haag).
Dr. W. D. van Wijngaarden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden).

*De ondersteuning van dit plan wordt warm aanbevolen door:*

Exc. H. Colijn, Minister van Financiën (Den Haag).
Exc. Mr. W. H. Rutgers, Minister van Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen (Den Haag).
Dr. C. J. K. van Aalst, President der Nederl. Handel-maatschappij (Amsterdam).
A. Asscher (Amsterdam).
Mr. B. E. Asscher, Voorzitter van de Centrale Commissie tot de algemeene zaken van het Ned. Israëlietisch Kerkgenootschap (Amsterdam).
S. van den Bergh Jr., Lid van de Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal (Wassenaar).
Mej. M. C. van Eeghen (Amsterdam).
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Mr. L. E. Visser (Den Haag).
Dr. F. G. Waller (Delft).
Mr. P. J. van Wijngaarden (Rotterdam).

Fig. 4b: Brochure *De opgraving van Sichem*; page 2.

Fig. 5: Handwritten list of Dutch sponsors and their (pledged) donations to the Sichem excavations, 1925–1926 (first page).

The NINO archive contains a list which seems to date to early 1926, written in Böhl's own hand, of one hundred twenty-seven sponsors who donated or pledged a total of *ƒ* 12,440 (ca. € 101,000; see Fig. 5).

The document shows an interesting cross-section of prominent figures in contemporaneous Dutch society. Altogether, twenty-one persons bear the title Doctor

or Professor, indicative of academia members (17%) while at least forty-two others are patricians or of noble descent (33%). At least eleven Jewish names are clearly distinguishable (9%), demonstrating a marked interest by (affluent) Dutch Jews in the project. Furthermore, several societies are listed as donors: the Amsterdam Zionist Society, the Society for the Advancement of Knowledge of Ancient Civilisation, and the Dutch Zionist League. Four persons are bankers; four are industrialists or companies. There are politicians and high government officials. Even though it seems there were no official donations from the Dutch government, a few important officials (formerly) in the service of the Ministries of Education, Finance, and the Interior were favourably disposed personally towards the project.

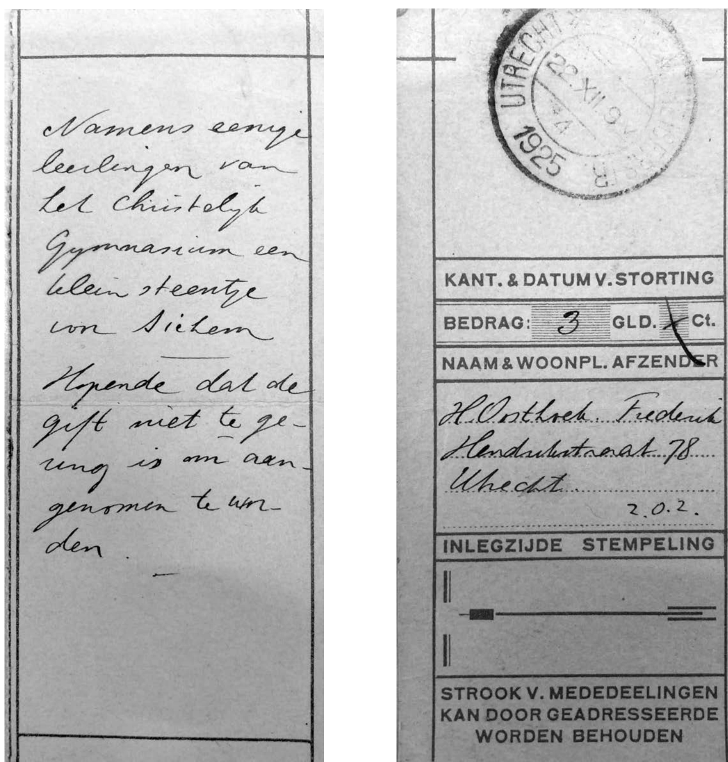
59 sponsors (47%) donated less than *f* 50 for contributions amounting to *f* 962.50 or 8% of the total sum.
42 sponsors (33%) donated *f* 50 to *f* 150 – thereby gaining the privilege of acquiring the final publication at cost. Their contributions amounted to *f* 3,035 or 24% of the total sum.
26 sponsors (20%) donated *f* 150 or more, and were to receive the final publication as a gift. Their contributions totalled *f* 8,450 or 68% of the total sum.
In the latter group, three sponsors (S. van den Bergh Jr., W.A. Mees, and H. Wintzen) donated lump sums of *f* 1,000 [14].

In total, 53% of the sponsors donated substantial amounts (in or above the two tiers defined in the project outline), amounting to 92% of the total donations.

Very clearly, the Sichem Committee and its activity depended heavily on Dutch higher society, at least in this first stage. An appeal to the royal family was unsuccessful: the private secretary of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands replied in a letter to Böhl that although Her Majesty appreciated the initiative, there were many needs in the kingdom and she regretted not sponsoring the campaign.

About 10% of the donations were small sums that most people would not sorely miss in 1925. Four sponsors donated less than *f* 5 (ca. € 41). For example, on 22 December 1925 the Committee received a donation from a Mr. Oosthoek of Utrecht, of *f* 3 (ca. € 24). On the back of the receipt is written in Dutch: "*On behalf of some students of the Christian Gymnasium, a small stone for Sichem, hoping that this gift is not too small to be accepted*" (see Fig. 6). Of course, it was accepted. The biblical story of Mark 12:41, "The Widow's Offering", comes to mind here and could well account for Böhl retaining this touching document among his papers.

[14] Van den Bergh continued to sponsor Böhl's projects in later years, above all his important trip through Iraq and Iran in 1939; see Van Zoest in this volume. Mees and Wintzen each donated another *f* 500 to the Sichem Committee at a later moment.


Namens eenige
leerlingen van
het Christelijk
Gymnasium een
klein steentje
voor Sichem
Hopende dat de
gift niet te ge-
ring is om aan-
genomen te wor-
den.

UTRECHT 22.XII.25 1925

KANT. & DATUM V. STORTING

BEDRAG: 3 GLD. Ct.

NAAM & WOONPL. AFZENDER

H. Oosthoek Frederik
Hendrikstraat 78
Utrecht
2.0.2.

INLEGZIJDE STEMPELING

STROOK V. MEDEDEELINGEN
KAN DOOR GEADRESSEERDE
WORDEN BEHOUDEN

Fig. 6: Receipt for *ƒ* 3, donation by H. Oosthoek
to the *Sichem-comité*, dated 22–12–1925.

**German-Dutch excavations at Sichem**

The full amount of 25,000 Reichsmark promised to Sellin was acquired before the deadline of March 1926, the start of the expedition. The first fund raising campaign for Sichem was a success, and the first major Dutch archaeological campaign was about to set off. The Netherlands had gained their place in archaeological fieldwork in the Ancient Near East. The Sichem campaign began on 1 March 1926, led by Sellin – Böhl arrived at the site in July.

When Böhl returned to the Netherlands in late 1926, he was full of stories about his work and adventures in Palestine. He gave countless lectures on the first discoveries at Tell Balata/Sichem and interpretations of them – to his students, to the Committee members and affiliates, and to interested audiences of diverse backgrounds. As mentioned above (p. 88), Böhl was a gifted and inspiring speaker. With his classic academic image, his German accent, and a wealth of lantern slides made from his own photographs, he conquered the country on his mission to advance Dutch archaeology abroad. Böhl's papers in the NINO Archive contain many manuscripts and typescripts of these lectures and a large number of newspaper clippings. Several Dutch magazines and newspapers reported these events, sometimes including extended summaries of Böhl's lectures. He kept the Dutch

public aware of the Sichem project and no doubt generated new donations to the cause.

Fig. 7: Sichem expedition team leaders in 1926. Top row from left to right: F. Datodi (chief supervisor of the workmen), Frans Böhl (2nd expedition leader), Ernst Sellin (1st expedition leader), Gabriel Welter (representative of the German Archaeological Institute), Heinz Johannes (architect).

In 1927 and 1928 Böhl returned in person to the site for fieldwork, again sharing information on his activities with the Dutch audiences afterwards. He published preliminary reports and campaigned for more Dutch excavations at sites in Palestine. Around 1930 the name of the Committee was even changed to "Dutch Committee for Excavations in Palestine".[15] The nation could read all about it in the press.

Beginning in 1927, another brochure, *De opgraving van Sichem* ("The excavation of Sichem"; Fig. 4), in the same format as the earlier brochure, mentions plans for excavations of the Biblical localities Pniel, Sukkoth, and Machanaiem

[15] *Nederlands Comité voor Opgravingen in Palestina*. The name change is documented by various newspaper articles (among which *Algemeen Handelsblad* 13–11–1928) and archival documents.

in the Trans-Jordan territory.[16] If *f* 15,000 (ca. € 122,000) would be raised, the Sichem campaign could be concluded properly with adequate funding remaining for a preliminary survey of one of these sites. This goal was achieved – Böhl did a survey at Pniel[17] – but without it resulting in any Dutch excavations at other sites in Palestine.

Financial records of the Sichem Committee from the period after the initial success of the 1926 campaign are difficult to reconstruct, as the preserved documents are far from complete. But apparently the required funds found their way to the coffers of the Committee, since the work at Tell Balata continued for several more seasons. In 1927, the German *Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft* paid for 300 meters of rail track with eight tipcarts.[18] This improved efficiency in the archaeological fieldwork, requiring fewer workers and decreasing costs. The 1928 Sichem campaign was again supported by the Committee; in March, Böhl participated for the last time in the excavations. In addition to Böhl, there were several other Dutch members of the excavation team: Th.L.W. van Ravensteyn (theologian), A. van Selms (theologian), and R.C. Mauve (architect). The archaeologist and future Sichem campaign leader Gabriel Welter was of Dutch origin, and was married to a Dutch woman.[19]

Perhaps the Sichem Committee's finest hour was the presentation of the "Dutch" finds from Sichem to the public in February 1929 at the National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden. It was the first substantial Dutch public collection of archaeological objects from Palestine. The Committee donated the finds to the state.[20] In his address, a representative of the Dutch ministry of Arts, Sciences, and Education, thanked the Committee and Böhl for their efforts and achievements.[21] The event was covered in the national and local press.

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[16] Brochure entitled *De opgravingen in Palestina* ("The excavations in Palestine"). NINO Archive.

[17] *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 29–1–1928. An incomplete typescript of Böhl's lecture, mentioned in this newspaper article, is in the NINO Archive.

[18] Wright 1965: 27; letter from Sellin to Böhl, dated 16 April 1927; Sellin ordered this equipment in Berlin. NINO Archive. Jaroš 1976: 18 mentions the use on site of two tipcarts and 80 metres of rail track provided by Pastor D. Schneller, who was affiliated with the Syrian orphanage in Jerusalem. (Perhaps these were used while waiting for the arrival of the Berlin delivery.)

[19] Nogarede 2012: 35.

[20] As part of the national archaeological collections, the Sichem objects are in the National Museum of Antiquities (RMO), Leiden. For the catalogue of the objects brought by Böhl from the Sichem campaigns in 1926, 1927 and March 1928 see Kerkhof 1969.

[21] *De Maasbode* 8–2–1929.

**End of the Sichem Committee**

But problems had arisen for the Sichem project. During the 1920's, archaeological methods and practices developed and improved considerably. Ernst Sellin, however, remained more of an old school archaeologist: he worked with trenches, not squares, and he was inclined to "prove" the Bible by archaeological means. This, combined with a shady scandal,[22] led in 1929 to his replacement as German excavation leader – "for reasons of old age" as it was euphemistically expressed by Welter[23]. However, Sellin kept the records and part of the finds from the campaigns at his home in Berlin, and he continued working on the scientific publication. In 1934, he was even reinstated as leader of the Sichem excavation with Welter going back to his archaeological work in Greece. In the end, the Dutch top sponsors never received their printed copy of the excavation publication. Allied bombing during WW II destroyed Sellin's home in Berlin and Sellin himself died on New Year's Eve 1945.[24] The archaeological research of Sichem came to a halt for another decade.

As mentioned above, Böhl had been appointed Professor of Assyriology at Leiden in 1927. In the light of the setbacks in the Sichem campaign, this change must not have been unwelcome, shifting his focus to other branches of ancient Near Eastern studies and archaeology. In the early 1930's, he sought to expand Dutch archaeological work to sites in Mesopotamia. A serious candidate was Tell Djid in Iraq, near Warka (Uruk), and Abu Shahrain (Eridu).[25]

The Committee meanwhile had plans for other excavations of Biblical sites, but they did not come to fruition due to lack of funding. A newspaper article published late in 1928 on the excavations in Sichem and the transfer of finds to the National Museum of Antiquities reported that a sum amounting to *ƒ* 30,000 would be needed for an independent Dutch campaign, and that the Committee did not have sufficient funding for a proper Dutch component in a foreign-led campaign. The article concluded with an appeal to readers for donations, to enable further Dutch archaeological activity in Palestine.[26]

Even though times were changing economically and politically, the Committee was apparently able to donate a sum to Sellin's Sichem campaign in 1934.[27]According to Böhl, Sellin still held hope of a renewed collaboration with

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[22] Niemann 2015: 523.
[23] List of excavation campaigns under Sellin, Böhl, and Welter: Jaroš 1976: 16–19.
[24] Wright 1965: 30. All excavation records and finds kept by Sellin at his home in Berlin were lost; however, in 2013 negatives of Sichem excavation photographs were found in the RMO archives. See Rijksmuseum van Oudheden 2014: 32. Böhl's papers in the NINO Archive contain site photographs, pictures of finds, and one (possibly original) field drawing.
[25] Nöldeke *et al.* 2008: 318.
[26] *Algemeen Handelsblad* 13–11–1928.
[27] Horn 1965: 294.

the Dutch Sichem Committee in 1939[28]. Böhl remained interested in Sichem and archaeological fieldwork in the Near East, even if he himself had no opportunity to participate in any excavations. He did not succeed in starting a new Dutch excavation project in the 1930's. But then WW II put a stop to Dutch archaeology in the Near East for about a generation.

The Sichem Committee / Dutch Committee for Excavations in Palestine was, however, revived after the war; it had a board and possessed modest financial means. The Committee later evolved into the Amsterdam-based *Nederlandse Stichting tot Opgravingen in het Nabije Oosten* ("Dutch Foundation for Excavations in the Near East"), a society that more actively sought cooperation with the Dutch government and other institutions to achieve its goals.[29] Böhl did not serve as a board member of this foundation, but throughout his long career he continued to be an important national figure promoting all aspects of research into the Ancient Near East. In the 1950's he assisted the team from the American Society for Overseas Research (ASOR), led by G.E. Wright,[30] in carrying out the last substantial excavation campaigns at Sichem, reconstructing the earlier campaigns from the surviving data.[31] In 1975, a year before his death, Böhl republished both Sichem cuneiform texts, first published by him half a century earlier.[32]

## Conclusion

In the history of Dutch archaeology, the Sichem Committee stands out as a unique initiative with a strong influence on the promotion of archaeological interest and awareness in the Netherlands between WW I and II, largely because of the active role played by its founding father Frans Böhl.

The Sichem Committee' role ended shortly after the Second World War, but the story of the excavations there does not, nor does Dutch involvement in them. A fitting epilogue is provided by the UNESCO Tell Balata Archaeological Park Project. This project, completed in 2012, was a collaborate effort of the Palestinian Department of Antiquities, UNESCO, and Dutch archaeologists, led by Gerrit van der Kooij (Leiden University).

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[29] Kampman 1948: 250–251.
[30] List of excavation campaigns 1956–1973: Jaroš 1976: 19–23.
[31] Correspondence between Böhl and W.J. Harrelson. NINO Archive.
[32] Böhl 1926 and Böhl 1975.

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# Oriental Societies and Hittite Studies in Victorian England

## Tracing the History of an Entangled Relationship

Silvia Alaura*

> The growth of the feeling that in endeavour, in action, in objects of every kind, union and united effort are better than individual effort has been very rapid during the nineteenth century and especially during the latter half of it. It is now well understood that if anything has to be done or attempted, if trade interests are to be defended, if injurious legislation is to be checked, if a grievance has to be removed and an evil prevented, then a Society must be formed.
>
> (Besant 1909, 253)

During the Victorian age many English learned societies, in cooperation with the British Museum and various gentlemen's clubs, were involved in different ways and at different times in the rediscovery of the Hittites and in the early stages of studies on pre-classical Anatolia.

Contemporaneous opinion during the 1870s held that the Hittites were a people not of Anatolia, but of Palestine and northern Syria. Thus, it is not surprising that study of them began in the framework of institutionalised research on Palestine in the last third of the nineteenth century, marking a new stage in Western interest in the Holy Land. The first Oriental society involved in Hittite studies was the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF),[1] with the Survey of Western Palestine (1871–1878) its main project during the 1870s. The PEF was founded as an independent membership society in 1865, with Queen Victoria as its Patron, for the purpose of the "(…) accurate and systematic investigation of the archaeology, the topography, the geology and physical geography, the manners and customs, of the Holy Land, for biblical illustration."[2] William Thomson, Archbishop of York, who served as chairman of the first PEF meeting in London, clearly stated in his inaugural address:

> [O]ur object is strictly an inductive inquiry. We are not to be a religious society; we are not to launch into any controversy; we are about to apply the rules of science, which are so well understood by us in other branches,

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[1] Moscrop 1996; Moscrop 2000; Jacobson 2019; Jacobson 2020. See also Felicity Cobbing's contribution in the present volume.

[2] Patron. Her Majesty the Queen, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 1:sup1 (1865), 1 (DOI: 10.1179/peq.1865.1–2.001).

> to an investigation into the facts concerning the Holy Land.[3]

The PEF became a model that led to the founding of a number of similar institutions. One of these was the short-lived (1870–1877) American Palestine Exploration Society (APES) based in New York,[4] which had a more pronounced religious orientation:

> The work proposed by the Palestine Exploration Society appeals to the religious sentiment alike of the Christian and the Jew; it is of interest to the scholar in almost every branch of linguistic, historical, or physical investigation; but its supreme importance is for the illustration and defense of the Bible. Modern skepticism assails the Bible at the point of reality, the question of fact. Hence whatever goes to verify the Bible history as real, in time, place, and circumstances, is a refutation of unbelief.[5]

Also modelled on the PEF was the *Deutscher Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas* (DVEP), founded in 1877 with its seat in Leipzig, and patronised by the Kaiser.[6]

Both the PEF and the APES played decisive roles in the study of the so-called Hama Stones, the first artifacts associated with the Hittites. They are several monumental blocks with Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions (at that time an unknown script and language) which we now know date to the 9$^{th}$ century BC.[7] They were found in and around the Syrian city of Hama, mainly embedded in the walls of various buildings. The British investigation of the Hama Stones in the first half of the 1870s was undertaken by scholars, diplomats, soldiers, and missionaries linked to the work of the PEF and APES, and, as they admitted, resulted from fortuitous circumstances and their own personal interest in history and archaeology.

For a long time, the APES continued to claim its priority in having given birth to Hittite archaeology: "The most valuable single operation performed by the Society was the procuring of casts of the five Hittite inscriptions at Hamath in Syria, in 1873 (see ANNUAL, p. 61), which may be recorded as the first event in Hittite archaeology."[8]

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[3] Report of the Proceedings at a Public Meeting Held in Willis's Rooms, St. James's, On Friday, June 21$^{st}$, 1865. His Grace the Archbishop of York in the Chair, in Patron. Her Majesty the Queen, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 1:sup1 (1865), 3 (DOI: 10.1179/peq.1865.1–2.001). See, in general, Lipman 1988.

[4] Moulton 1926–1927; Moscrop 2000: 95–96, 122–123, 129; Cobbing 2005.

[5] Concluding Appeal, PES, First Statement, New York, 1871: 34.

[6] Hübner 2006, especially 5 and 12, for a comparison of the DVEP with the PEF and APES. See also Kirchhoff 2005.

[7] Hawkins 2000, vol. I/2: 403–414.

[8] Quoted from The Hittite Inscription Casts of the American Palestine Exploration Society, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 34 (Apr., 1929), 8.

The Swiss Orientalist Ludwig Burckhardt had already noted the existence of the Hama Stones in 1812, but their first documentation is due to the activities of the APES and the PEF.[9] Indeed, the importance of these inscriptions and the need for available casts of them in England were pointed out to Walter Besant, Secretary of the PEF, by the explorer Edward Henry Palmer, later Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge. Palmer, who took part with Charles Tyrwhitt-Drake in the PEF's Survey North of Sinai of 1869–1870, came to understand the great historical significance of the Hama Stones during his stay in Beirut when he saw the copies of them just made by two Americans, the consul Augustus Johnson and the missionary Rev. Samuel Jessup.[10] At that time, Capt. Richard Burton, explorer and then British consul at Damascus, was acting in Syria as an intermediary between the Ottomans and the PEF. In 1871 Burton himself and Tyrwhitt-Drake made copies and squeezes of the Hama Stones which they published in 1872, with detailed drawings of them, in their monograph on the exploration of Syria.[11] In the same book, engineer and philologist Hyde Clarke argued that the inscriptions were genuine writing, employing alphabetical characters, not "vagaries of ornamentation."[12]

At the beginning of the 1870s, many scholars involved in the re-discovery of the Hama Stones (e.g., Palmer, Thyrwhitt Drake, and Besant) and in the study of their inscriptions (e.g., Clarke) were freemasons. Freemasons were among the members of the PEF; and by the end of the 1860s several lodges were providing funding.[13] Concurrently, freemasonry established itself in Palestine[14] while in 1869 the Masonic Archaeological Institute (MAI) was founded in London by a group of freemasons including Clarke and Besant.[15] The interest of Masonic members of the PEF (such as Sir Charles Warren) in the Hama Stones paralleled their more general interest in masonry and masons' marks. Among PEF's members interested both in the masons' marks and in the hieroglyphic signs of the Hama Stones was Claude Reignier Conder.[16]

The pages of the journals published by PEF and APES became the forum where pioneering discussions about the Hama Stones developed. In addition to the studies by Clarke and Conder mentioned above, those of Cambridge-based Rev. Dunbar Isidore Heath, Rev. William Hayes Ward of New York, and the

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[9] Hawkins 2000, vol. I/1: 6–7; Alaura 2017; Weeden 2017; Alaura 2021.
[10] Moulton 1926–1927: 61.
[11] Burton and Tyrwhitt Drake 1872, vol. I: 333–349; vol. II: 184–186.
[12] Clarke 1872a (quotation on 349); Clarke 1872b.
[13] Watson 1915: 28f.
[14] Morris 1872.
[15] Simpson 1889; Besant 1889; Besant 1902: 215–238. The short-lived MAI was the forerunner of the *Quatuor Coronati Lodge* No. 2076, established in London between 1884 and 1886 by a group of freemasons including Besant (cf. also below, n. 34).
[16] Conder 1883a; Conder 1883b; Conder 1883c. For Conder and the PEF, see Jacobson and Cobbing 2005.

French Orientalist Charles Simon Clermont-Ganneau must be recalled.[17] In the summer of 1873, the PEF exhibited newly acquired plaster casts of the Hama Stones in the Dudley Gallery of the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, a well-known entertainment venue in London, together with watercolour sketches and photographs of Palestine and a collection of various objects that came from this region.[18] For the educated, fascinated, and wealthy Victorian public, the main interest in the Hama Stones lay in their undeciphered script and mysterious language. The PEF played a very active role in disseminating and promoting to a wider audience the activities undertaken and the results achieved. Fund-raising presented a crucial problem for any Society, with publications and exhibitions among the solutions employed.[19]

During the 1870s other Victorian learned societies were also involved in the first attempts to interpret the Hama Stones and their enigmatic writing. On 4 March 1872 Burton himself gave a lecture on the Hama Stones in London at the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, which had in 1871 just resulted from a merger of the Anthropological Society of London (ASL) – whose presidential chair Burton himself first occupied – and the Ethnological Society of London (ESL).[20] This new institution was an ideal venue for the nascent debate on the Hittites and related topics.[21] Furthermore, at the Philological Society in London the Anglican clergyman Archibald Henry Sayce, then Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology and later of Assyriology at Oxford, expressly mentioned the Hama Stones in his report on Semitic and Assyriological studies delivered in May 1874.[22]

Casts of the Hama Stones had also been made in 1872 by the Irish missionary William Wright, supported by the British vice-consul in Damascus, W. Kirby Green. Green presented the original casts to Foreign Secretary Lord George Granville, who handed them over to the British Museum. Wright was in Syria on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), a non-denominational Christian Bible society with charity status, founded in 1804 with the purpose of making the Bible available worldwide.[23] Wright's interest in the Hama Stones formed part of

[17] Heath 1873; Ward 1873; Clermont-Ganneau 1873.
[18] For additional details concerning the display of the Hama Stones in the PEF's London exhibition of 1873, see Alaura 2017: 34–38; Alaura 2021: 26f.
[19] Thornton 2013 and Thornton 2018: esp. 105–107.
[20] Burton 1873. For the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, see Stocking 1971. Burton thought "the two Societies always should have been one" – Brabrook 1891: 297.
[21] Heath 1880.
[22] Sayce1873–1874: 368.
[23] At the time, the Society had already celebrated its jubilee meeting in Carnarvon Castle. And in 1904, it would celebrate its centenary with even greater emphasis in St Paul's cathedral, London. For a history of the BFBS, see Howsam 2002 and Canton 1904–1910 (and for Wright in particular, vol. 3: 27f. and vol. 4: 205f.).

what he himself described, years later, as "incidents of a residence in Syria during nine stirring years."

While in Syria, at the close of 1872, Wright wrote a historical overview of the inscriptions from Hama, arguing that they should be attributed to the Hittites. The manuscript which he submitted for publication to the PEF was not considered suitable for the society's *Quarterly Statement*, probably thanks to its religious overtones. Only a short *Memorandum* devoted to the making of the casts was printed.[24] Wright's manuscript remained unpublished until 1874 when it appeared in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*.[25] The proposal that the Hama inscriptions belonged to the Hittites had never been expressed before; its dissemination, however, was limited since published in a periodical better known to theologians than to Orientalists. Looking back around twenty years later, Wright gave a lecture before the casts of the Hama inscriptions at the PEF, describing how he had reached his conclusions.[26]

Another British society that played an important role in the advancement of the study of the Hittites was the Society of Biblical Archaeology (SBA),[27] founded at the end of 1870 by Samuel Birch (then Keeper of the Assyrian and Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum), as a London-based learned archaeological society. It was linked with the activities of the British Museum and of the Royal Asiatic Society (RAS), which incorporated the SBA in 1919.[28] According to its statutes, the aim of the SBA was to promote "(…) the investigation of the Archaeology, Chronology, Geography, and History, of Ancient and Modern Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, Palestine, and other Biblical Lands, the promotion of the study of the Antiquities of those countries, and the preservation of a continuous record of discoveries, now or hereafter to be in progress."[29] And more in detail, about the relationship of archaeology and the Bible:

> The new Society will be important to all who wish to examine the minute details of the various subjects, to perfect themselves in their knowledge, and to advance the study in which they are engaged. It deserves to be largely supported by the friends of Biblical archaeology. It is to be hoped that its operations may be extended, by the publication of its papers, and other means co-ordinate with its public utility. Its scope is Archaeology, not Theology, but to Theology it will prove an important aid. To all those it must be attractive who are interested in the primitive and early history of

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[24] Wright 1873.

[25] Wright 1874.

[26] Wright 1892. Cf. Alaura 2017: 36f., 41–43, and 48f.; Alaura 2021, with additional references.

[27] Legge 1919 and Beckingham 1979a.

[28] Beckingham 1979b.

[29] Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology (TSBA) 1 (January 1872), ii (Introduction).

> mankind; that history which is not written in books nor on paper, but upon rocks and stones deep in the soil far away in the desert; that history which is not to be found in the library or the mart, but which must be dug up in the valley of the Nile, or exhumed from the plains of Mesopotamia.[30]

From the outset, the SBA showed awareness of the Hama Stones' importance, as seen in Birch's reference to them in his Presidential Address on "The Progress of Biblical Archaeology" held in March 1871, at the Society's inaugural meeting in London.[31] Then in a lecture delivered to a meeting of the SBA on 2 May 1876, Sayce claimed that the Hama script was most probably Hittite: "Who the inventors [of the Hamathite characters] were it is of course impossible to determine with certainty, but it is extremely likely that they belonged to the great Hittite race."[32]

Almost simultaneously, George Smith, Senior Assistant in the Assyriology Department of the British Museum, came to understand just few days before his death in Syria that inscriptions found at Jerablus, ancient Karkemish, were also Hittite. The news was made known officially by Sir Henry Rawlinson on 29 May 1876 during the Anniversary Meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society. Smith had communicated his discoveries to Birch, also suggesting that excavating at Karkemish would be easier and more fruitful than at Nineveh.[33] Following Smith's suggestion, and thanks to Austen Henry Layard (who was then ambassador at Constantinople), Patrick Henderson, consul in Aleppo, could conduct the first excavations at Karkemish on behalf of the British Museum (continuing intermittently between 1878 and 1881), where more inscribed stone blocks were recovered and shipped to London. Attempts of Sayce and Smith to decipher Hittite hieroglyphs in 1876 were highly significant, demonstrating the strong interest of both the SBA and RAS to 'decode' the Ancient Near Eastern scripts. Moreover, due to the great interest of the SBA in Hittite inscriptions, its secretary William Harry Rylands prepared special type for printing the characters.[34] This was later remembered "among other good works" of SBA, and Rylands was praised as "(…) a pioneer indispensable in the decipherment of this still mysterious language."[35]

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[30] Birch 1872: 12.
[31] Birch 1872: 10f.
[32] Sayce1877a: 27. Sayce's groundbreaking lecture appeared in the fifth volume of the Transactions of the SBA, before the advent of the speedier Proceedings, published monthly, launched the following year.
[33] Alaura 2017: 43–46; Alaura 2021: 32–34.
[34] Announced by Rylands during the SBA meeting on 11 January 1881, see *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 3, 1881: 32. A few years later, Rylands was, with Warren and Besant, one of the founders of *Quatuor Coronati [Freemason] Lodge* No. 2076 (see above, n. 15).
[35] Legge 1919: 36 n. 1; Legge 1922: 638f.

It has been recently argued that:

> (…) for Birch the field of analysis for archaeology lies primarily within the post-excavation stage of the archaeological process. Hence, an essential part of the specialist's intellectual labour was 'to examine the contemporaneous monuments' of the different nations mentioned in the Bible. With Birch's emphasis on the post-excavation stage of the archaeological process, his version of archaeology positioned the museum as the ideal context to examine artifacts illustrative of biblical history.[36]

In the spring of 1876, just when Sayce had given his lecture on the "Hamathite Inscriptions," classes in Assyrian were being held at the SBA by Sayce himself. The innovative character of this initiative promoted by the SBA is palpable in Sayce's 'Introduction' to his *Lectures upon the Assyrian Language and Syllabary*:

> It is with mingled feelings of gratification and diffidence that I come before you this evening to open a series of lectures, the character and object of which are new and even revolutionary in the history of our studies and education. For the first time in this country an attempt will be made to found a system of instruction in languages, which it has been the glory of the present century to recover from the past, which are clothed with all the modern interest that attaches to the great problems of the development of civilization, and which demand, not mere memory or dependence upon the authority of others, but the new methods of patient scientific induction.[37]

These lectures were considered to be an "experiment," in the hope of leading to the establishment of Assyriology as an academic discipline – an aim not declared programmatically by the SBA.[38] Indeed, at this time there was no university teaching of Assyriology in England. (Sayce was not appointed at Oxford until 1891.)

Sayce's description of the SBA in his 1923 autobiography is particularly instructive. It openly reveals, fifty years later, that the society, despite its name, did not limit itself to Biblical studies but was a scholarly, rather than religious, society. Its interest in the Bible was also aimed at attracting funding with the teaching of Assyriology among its main goals:

> The Society of Biblical Archaeology was founded December 9, 1870, under the presidency of Dr. Birch, and I was naturally asked to join it. It was intended to restrict its work to the Biblical lands of Egypt, Palestine and Western Asia generally, India and the Far East being left to the Royal Asiatic Society, and Birch insisted upon the word "Biblical" being introduced

[36] Cuéllar 2019: 148ff.

[37] Sayce 1877b: 1.

[38] On this topic, see Alaura 2017: 47; also Alaura and Bonechi, forthcoming. Furthermore, see Legge 1919: 27.

> into the title of the Society in order, as he said, "to attract subscriptions." The theological interest was still strong in Great Britain. Cooper, the Secretary of the Society, was an enthusiast, and in spite of his delicate lungs, which eventually killed him, was never weary of looking up likely young students and starting new schemes for disseminating a knowledge of Oriental archaeology. Boscawen, Pinches and Budge all owed to him their first start in a scholar's life, and among his other attempts to introduce Egyptology and Assyriology to the British public were courses of lectures on the scripts and languages of Egypt and Assyria. Le Page Renouf undertook Egypt and its hieroglyphs, while I undertook Assyria and the cuneiform inscriptions.[39]

Parallel to the activities of the societies, the Orientalists also pursued their strategies as members of clubs, characterised by informal gatherings where men with similar interests could share new ideas and information in a friendly milieu. Numerous learned societies that existed in England during the 19th century started as informal dining clubs.[40] Many members of the learned societies cited here above were also fellow members of the Athenaeum Club – William Thomson, Archbishop of York,[41] and Sayce included.[42] Membership of the Athenaeum and a membership of a learned society often went together. In 1884, 290 Athenians were fellows, mainly of the Royal Society, in whose rooms the Athenaeum's first committee meeting had been held sixty years earlier.[43] Many of the British Museum's Trustees soon became members of the Athenaeum Club.[44] According to its founders, the new club could provide members of their neighbouring learned societies with a setting for relaxed and lively exchanges of views on science and the arts, leaving the Royal Society to focus upon being a professional scientific body that could engage with government.[45]

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[39] Sayce 1923: 55.

[40] The chapter "Societies and Clubs" in Besant 1909: 253–258 (societies) and 259–264 (clubs) provide an overview of learned societies and clubs in London during the 19th century.

[41] Wheeler 2020: xviii and 147f.

[42] For Sayce and the Athenaeum Club, see Sayce 1923: 124.

[43] Wheeler 2020: 5. Also instructive is the case of the relations between the X Club (whose members were scientists) and the Royal Society – Jensen 1970. Moreover, the members of the Oriental Club, established 1824 in London, had to be members of the Royal Asiatic Society – cf. *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany* 17 (1824): 473f.

[44] The relations between the Athenaeum Club and the British Museum are considered by Wilson 2001 (see esp. 231f.). For the relational interplay in general between Trustees of the British Museum, scientific societies, and antiquarian explorers, see Cuéllar 2019: 6 and 25f.

[45] Wheeler 2020: 17.

The Athenaeum Club, south of Burlington House at Pall Mall, was particularly popular among the political, scientific, artistic, and literary elite. Its members included William Gladstone, Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Oscar Wilde, the poet and playwright Robert Browning, and the painters of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood William Holman Hunt and Edward Burne-Jones. It was also one of the places where the Orientalists of the 1870s could meet and engage in discussions. The latter were at the same time members of a smaller dining club within the Athenaeum, including, among others, Rawlinson, Layard, Sayce, Burton, James Fergusson, and William Sandys Wright Vaux (Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society from 1875 until his death).[46]

The Athenaeum exemplified a place of privilege for gentlemen of culture, thanks to the predominance of its libraries. Members of the Athenaeum were familiar with Burton, the habitué of the South Library, described by Henry Tedder (the club's librarian) as doggedly working on his translation of the *Arabian Nights* in the 1880s, "snuff-box at his side." (Burton had petitioned, unsuccessfully, for smoking to be allowed in the hall.)[47]

In 1879 Sayce came to the conclusion that all the monuments with associated hieroglyphic inscriptions from Syria and Anatolia (including the reliefs located at the Karabel Pass and in the Sipylos Mountain) should be attributed to the Hittites. Sayce himself described this as "my Hittite theory of 1879." He presented his hypothesis in a lecture given at the Athenaeum Club, published a few days later in the weekly periodical *The Academy*.[48]

The new theory that the Hittites were a people not from Palestine, but from northern Syria and Anatolia, shifted the axis of Hittite research northwards and brought another British society into the picture. A few days after the lecture, Sayce began the first of his travels through the East to acquire first-hand knowledge of Asia Minor.[49] Due to the absence of a learned society specifically focused on the exploration of Anatolia (an area then still so little explored that it was likened to interior Africa), Sayce was compelled to rely on British diplomats and American missionaries. Layard was probably responsible for initiating Sayce's fruitful relationship with the American institution at Istanbul known as Robert College, and, in particular, with the Methodist missionary and scholar Albert L. Long who played an important role in the beginnings of the acquisition and recovery of Hittite antiquities.[50] The reconstruction of these networks of collaborations between the founders of Ancient Near Eastern studies, diplomats, and missionaries, sheds

[46] Alaura 2020: 28–30, with additional references; also Alaura and Ermidoro, forthcoming.
[47] Wheeler 2020: 132.
[48] Sayce 1879.
[49] Alaura 2017: 49; Alaura 2020: 30; Alaura 2021: 34f. with additional references.
[50] On the Robert College, see Fincancı 1983, and for Sayce, Layard, and Long, Alaura 2020: 43f.

light on the intellectual complexities, the practices, and methods of the Orientalists in the mid-Victorian era.

In the 1880s Robert College was part of a large network of Protestant American colleges scattered from the Bosphorus to inner Anatolia and beyond, such as Anatolia College in Merzifon and Armenia College in Harput (later renamed Euphrates College).[51] Archaeology was undoubtedly among the interests of these missionary schools, as indicated by the existence of an Archaeological Club in Anatolia College, particularly fitting "(…) in a country where the historical strata begin with the Hittite sculpture and cuneiform script and represent all the intervening ages [down] to the present."[52] The Archaeological Club, with a membership of about sixty students, corresponded with the British Museum and learned societies, simultaneously collecting fragments for the campus museum. This activity of the American colleges played a crucial role in influencing the value, reception, and understanding of Hittite antiquities.

Sayce therefore shifted the focus of Hittite studies to Anatolia, while PEF's work continued to advance research on the Hittites in Palestine and Syria, thanks mainly to the work of Conder. The latter proposed to identify the archaeological site of Tell Nebi Mend, on the Homs plain in present-day Syria, as Qadesh, where Egyptian and Hittites fought the most famous battle of pre-classical antiquity.[53] Conder also later devoted himself to Hittite studies.[54] Sayce instead developed an extensive research programme in Asia Minor to promote the study of Anatolian culture, especially to ensure Britain's monopoly in Hittite research. This programme began life within the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies (commonly known as the Hellenic Society), founded in 1879 by a group of scholars including Sayce himself and the archaeologist Charles Thomas Newton, then Keeper of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum.[55] The purpose of the society, as outlined in Newton's inaugural address, held at Freemasons' Tavern, London, was the promotion of the study of all aspects of Greek civilisation (among them language and literature, art and architecture, manners and customs) from the earliest times to the present day.[56] The founding members of the Society included Oscar Wilde, who sat on its first Council. Anatolia and Hittite studies then gravitated to the world of the Classicists. As Sayce recalled in his autobiography: "In the forefront of the Hellenic Society's

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[51] Alaura 2019: 22f.
[52] Alaura 2019: 23 with additional references.
[53] Jacobson and Cobbing 2005: 171.
[54] Conder 1883d; Conder 1887; Conder 1888; Conder 1898.
[55] For an account of the first fifty years of the Society (1879–1929), see MacMillan 1929 together with The Jubilee Celebrations in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 49 (1929), xcix–cxxii. Stevens 1979 provides a centenary retrospective.
[56] See Newton 1880 for the address delivered at the Inaugural Meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, 16 June 1879.

objects were placed archaeological exploration and excavation, not at all to the liking of the old-fashioned classical scholar, whose views found expression in a review of the first volume of the Society's *Journal* in the magazine *Spectator*."[57]

To organize the archaeological exploration of Anatolia within the framework of the Hellenic Society, Sayce involved the Oxford classical scholar and archaeologist William Mitchell Ramsay whom he had met for the first time in the 1870s at Max Müller's house in Oxford.[58] This shows again that a striking characteristic of British archaeological exploration, until at least the mid-20th century, was the dominant role of individual initiatives, even if within the framework of learned societies, by contrast to the more structured approach of the French and the Germans, whose activities tended to be far more coordinated.[59]

Ramsay and his wife sailed in May 1880 for Smyrna, where they met Major (soon to be Sir) Charles Wilson, a military engineer and mapping expert who had worked in Palestine, conducting the survey of Jerusalem and the surrounding country which led to the formation of the PEF. In February 1879 Wilson had been appointed British military consul-general in Anatolia. According to Ramsay, it was Wilson who encouraged him to go beyond the relatively well-studied coast of Anatolia into the interior:

> We [i.e., Ramsay and his wife] dreamed now of Athens; but Newton said 'Don't go to Athens, which is pre-occupied by the Germans and the French; go to the west coast of Asia Minor, where the great Greek cities offer a better field to a new man.' (…) Sir Charles Wilson, hearing of Newton's advice, said 'Come into the inner country of Anatolia. The coast-lands are open to explorers; any one can go there, but the inner country is unknown. People think that it is difficult to travel in the centre of Turkey, but it is not really so. Come and make a journey with me; and you will soon learn how to travel.'[60]

In spring and summer 1881, before Wilson was transferred to Egypt in 1882, he and Ramsay went on two major expeditions together which gave the latter a unique introduction, before he started travelling on his own:

> I must also express my obligation to Sir C. Wilson. It was in a journey in his company from Smyrna to Angora, Sivas, and Samsun, May 15 to July 14, 1881, that I gained the knowledge of the country and people which alone made the second journey possible for me; difficulties that had before seemed insurmountable diminished with experience. Moreover, I then learned where were the best districts for exploration, and we could thus

[57] Sayce 1923: 171f.
[58] Alaura 2020: 51f.
[59] See Roueché 2013: 249 n. 1.
[60] Ramsay 1915: 25f. See Roueché 2013: 252f.

pass by places which would have employed our time less profitably.[61]

Ramsay's objectives within the framework of the Society included founding a British School at Smyrna to compete with those of the French and Germans in Athens.[62] This idea is detailed in a letter dated 11 June 1881, addressed to Sayce by Ramsay while surveying Inner Anatolia with Wilson.[63] The Ramsay correspondence with Sayce, kept at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, documents the agenda of the Society, with interests in Classical and Oriental (actually Hittite) antiquities intertwined, ranging from attempts to undertake archaeological excavations to the purchase of antiquities. In particular, the idea of Ramsay and Sayce in spring 1881 to found a branch of the Hellenic Society dedicated also to oriental excavations and studies took concrete form, with a specific interest in areas of Anatolia still almost completely unexplored and dangerous. In this framework, Sayce also tried to encourage Heinrich Schliemann, a member of the Hellenic Society, to excavate Boğazköy.[64] In 1882, as a consequence of Ramsay's activity, the Asia Minor Fund was set up as an initiative of the Hellenic Society, clearly modelled on the PEF, to support Ramsay in his exploration of Asia Minor (while the Smyrna School plan came to nothing). Key individuals on the Hellenic Society's Council ensured that a location was found in Athens. The British School at Athens eventually came into being in 1886.[65]

In the following years Ramsay continued to travel widely in Asia Minor but he did not devote himself primarily to the study of the Hittites. Rather, he became the recognized authority on all matters relating to St Paul's missionary journeys and on Christianity in the early Roman Empire.[66] Lady Agnes Dick Ramsay (née Marshall) accompanied him on many of his expeditions and herself authored *Everyday Life in Turkey*.[67] She contributed as well to her husband's publications, providing almost all the photographs for his books along with a few chapters related to Turkish women.[68] Later Lady Ramsay was an active campaigner for women's suffrage and eventually became President of the Aberdeen branch of *Women's Social and Political Union* (WSPU).[69] Women's active participation in their husbands' archaeological endeavours and in the social life of learned societies was the first step in integrating women into Oriental studies.

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[61] Ramsay 1882: 2.

[62] Alaura 2006: 25f. and 36–41.

[63] This letter has been partially published in Alaura 2006: 36.

[64] Sayce 1923: 220. See Alaura 2006: 25f.; Alaura 2017: 51; Alaura 2020: 52.

[65] Alaura 2020: 52 n. 84.

[66] A List of the Published Writing of Sir William Mitchell Ramsay compiled by his daughter Agnes Margaret, xiii–xxxviii, in Anatolian Studies Presented to Sir William Mitchell Ramsay, Manchester by W.H. Buckler and W.M. Calder in 1923.

[67] Ramsay 1897. She also published the novel *The Romance of Elisávet* (Ramsay 1899).

[68] Ramsay 1909.

[69] Weiß 2018: 433 n. 108.

During the late 1890s two further simultaneous developments gave German archaeology a privileged position in Anatolian Hittite archaeological research: the trip Wilhelm II made to the Orient in 1898, which marked the beginning of the personal friendship between the Kaiser and the Sultan, and the founding of the *Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft* (DOG).[70] This society succeeded in excavating Boğazköy, where the Berlin Assyriologist Hugo Winckler found the cuneiform tablets allowing the site's identification as the Hittite capital Ḫattuša.[71]

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[70] See Olaf Matthes's contribution in the present volume.

[71] Alaura 2006.

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# Babylon Society, a Private Japanese Association in the Early Years of the 20th Century

Reiko Maejima*

Modernisation in Japan began in the mid-19$^{th}$century. The new government in the Meiji era (1868–1912) invited foreign professors from western countries and founded Tokyo University in 1877 to provide opportunities for the study of European theory, ideas, law, technology, and medicine.[1] In Tokyo and Kyoto two imperial universities were founded in 1897, since by the end of the 19$^{th}$ century a new Japanese intellectual class had developed based on imported disciplines. More Japanese professors who studied at Japanese state institutions or abroad began to offer courses at these two imperial universities, and many of the graduates who studied the western system worked for the newly modernised government. Modernisation in Japan was 'westernisation' from above, unlike in European countries.

In the Taishō era (1912–1926), the liberal trend of the times led to flourishing academic activities by independent researchers outside state institutions like the two imperial universities. Masanao Kano designated this movement *MINKANGAKU* (民間学 Nonofficial Academic Association), as opposed to *KANGAKU* (官学 State Academic Institution) in the Meiji era, citing the example of the Japanese native folklore study of Kunio Yanagida (柳田國男 1875–1962) as representative of *MINKANGAKU*. Yanagida, who studied agricultural politics at Tokyo University, was a member of the typical new Japanese elites. When employed as a bureaucrat in the Department of Agricultural Administration, he started to study Japanese native folklore of the countryside. In 1910, he organised the private research association *Kyoudokai* (郷土会) under the patronage of Inazō Nitobe (新渡戸稲造 1862–1933). Intellectuals and administrative bureaucrats discussed local Japanese culture, a great starting point for Japanese folklore research.[2] Kano pointed out that the features of *MINKANGAKU* include inquiries

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[1] We call the foreign professors in Meiji period "Oyatoigaikokujin." See Umetani, N., *Oyatoi Gaikokujin; Meiji Nihon no Wakiyaku tachi*, Tokyo; Koudan sha (Koudan sha gakujyutsu bunko), 2007. See also Meißner, K., 'Responsivity within the Context of Informal Imperialism: Oyatoi in Meiji Japan', *Journal of Modern European History* 14/2 (2016): 268–289.

[2] Satani, M., *Minzokugaku • Taiwan • Kokusai Renmei; Yanagida Kunio to Nitobe Inazo*, Tokyo; Koudan sha (Koudan sha Sensho Mechie), 2015.

into uniquely Japanese life and culture and their affinity with nationalism.[3]

We can re-examine the origins of Assyriology in Japan in the context of *KANGAKU* and *MINKANGAKU*. Interest in Assyriology in Japan grew slowly, in comparison to the evolution of the discipline during the 19th century in Europe. Sumerology began to develop in the department of history at Kyoto Imperial University due to the friendship between Kōsaku Hamada (濱田耕作 1881–1938), the institution's professor of archaeology, and A. H. Sayce (1845–1933), professor at Oxford University in the early decades of the 20th century.[4] On the other hand, professors of Roman law (or comparative law) at Tokyo Imperial University were greatly interested in Assyriological research because of the Code of Hammurabi.[5] But Assyriology was not yet ready to offer courses in *KANGAKU*, in terms of personnel and institutions. It would be another decade before Yomokurō Nakahara (中原与茂九郎 1900–1988) in Kyoto studied Sumerology and learned to read cuneiform at Oxford University at the end of the 1920s.[6] Another twenty years would pass before Keikichi Harada (原田慶吉 1903–1950), a professor of comparative law at Tokyo Imperial University, published his work on the Code of Hammurabi.[7]

By contrast to the slow beginnings of Assyriological studies in *KANGAKU*, they quickly gained prominence in *MINKANGAKU*. In 1917 Keigo Harada (原田敬吾 1867–1936), a Tokyo lawyer, founded the Babylon Society, a private association of forty members, to study Assyriology. Prince Takahito Mikasa (三笠宮寛仁親王 1915–2016), the first president of the Society of the Near Eastern Studies in Japan, founded in 1954 after World War II, evaluated the Babylon Society years later, at the end of the 1960s:

> It is a matter of some interest that the persons who were dissatisfied with this academic vacuum in the historical study of the Ancient Orient, and

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[3] Kano, M., *Kindai Nihon no Minkangaku*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983.

[4] A.H. Sayce came to Kyoto Imperial University in 1912 and met Hamada. Two years later Hamada visited Sayce at Oxford and received about 50 Sumerian tablets from the other Assyriologist in Oxford, C.J. Ball, who published *Chinese and Sumerian* in 1913. See A.H. Sayce, *Reminiscences,* London, 1923, Chapter 19 The Far East, and Hamada, K., 'Preface' in Nakahara, Y., *The Sumerian Tablets in the Imperial University of Kyoto*, Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko no. 3., 1928. See also Nakahara, Y., 'Nishi Asia gaku no hassyo', *Seinan Asia Kenkyu (Middle Eastern Studies)* 1 (1) (1957): 5–6.

[5] Yatsuka Hozumi (穂積八束 1860–1912), a professor of law in Tokyo Imperial University, gave a lecture about Hammurabi's Code to *Tenno* in 1908, and Kaoru Nakada (中田薫 1877–1967), a professor of comparative law in Tokyo Imperial University, published his article about the code and Roman law in 1913.

[6] Maeda, T., 'Assyriology Part 1: It All Started with Fifty Sumerian Tablets', *Orient* 36 (2001): 35–41.

[7] Harada, K., *Kusabigata Moji hou no Kenkyū*, Tokyo; Koubun do, 1949.

> who devoted their young passion to such a study were not professors of this national university but interested volunteers among the non-professionals (…). In 1917 a research group whose purpose was to study the history of the Ancient Orient was established for the first time in our country. The ideal of the group, it is true, was to cover the whole history of the Ancient Orient, however, its name was the "Babylon Gakkai." "Gakkai (学会)" means a research society in Japanese. Anyhow, it was of great significance that such a group appeared in Japan[8].

Prince Mikasa remarked the presence in particular of "non-professionals" who supported the first Japanese association to study the history of the Ancient Orient. Several scholars have mentioned the motive and purpose of the Babylon Society, the private, "non-professional" organisation.[9] But private organisations in *MINKANGAKU* were not viable without the human and financial support of the civilian sector over and above that of Keigo Harada. The structure of the Babylonian Society as a *MINKANGAKU* organisation is deserving of review.

The members of the Babylon Society can be seen as belonging to four groups: the founder, supporting members, members involved in research, and 'guests.' The biographies of those belonging to each group reveal their motivation for joining the Babylon Society and their role in it. Arguably, Harada's racial theory and passion for inquiring into purely Japanese law attracted Japanese "new elites" seeking something uniquely Japanese in contrast to westernisation. Moreover, the Society was well organised and well funded for a private association.

**The founder: Keigo Harada**

The founder of the Babylon Society was Keigo Harada, a lawyer in Tokyo. He was born in Akita into a *Samurai* family in 1867, the last year of the Edo era. Akita had betrayed its neighbours and fought on the side of the new government, but no reinforcements came from that source and Akita was badly devastated. Harada was not raised in a wealthy family because of this situation in Akita. But thanks to being highly intelligent, he could go to Tokyo as a teenager to study western learning at Keio School.[10] After graduation from Keio School, Harada had no connection with the state academic institutions in Japan but rather studied law at Cornell University in the U.S.A. as a privately-funded international student.

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[8] Mikasa, T., 'Near Eastern Studies in Japan', *Orient* 5 (1969): 2–3.

[9] Mori, S., 'Bengoshi Harada Keigo to Babylon gakkai no setsuritsu', *Bulletin of Modern Japanese Studies* 4 (1987): 161–179. See also Maejima, R., 'Harada Keigo to nihonjin Babylon kigensetsu', in Ozawa, M. (ed.), *Kindai Nihon no gishi gensetsu*, Tokyo, Bensei Syuppan, 2017, Chapter 10, 296–333.

[10] Keio School in Tokyo was established by Yukichi Fukuzawa (福沢諭吉 1835–1901) as a private institution in 1858, towards the end of Edo period. For the history of Keio School, see the Keio University Homepage (https://www.keio.ac.jp/en/about/). Harada was a student there from 1881 to 1885.

When he returned to Japan in 1889, he became a civil lawyer in Tokyo. His career shows him to have been a typical model of success in the Meiji era's warrior class (*Shizoku*).[11] His colleagues described him as well educated, a person with detailed knowledge of European academic fields and Chinese classical philosophies.[12]

Harada decided to establish the Babylon Society in 1916, the fifth year of the Taishō era, when he was 48 years old. He printed 1,000 copies of a prospectus in October 1916 and sent them to his colleagues, asking them to join and to support the society. In July 1917, the Babylon Society was founded – as Harada noted, it was 70 years since Sir H. Rawlinson (1810–1895) had successfully copied the Behistun Inscription.

Harada was not only the founder of the Babylon Society, but also the leading scholar among the members. According to the society's bulletin entitled simply *Babylon*,[13] Harada wrote about 45% of the 38 articles contributed to the journal between 1917 and 1919, the most comprehensive among them being "Japan and Babylon" which, due to its length (115 pages), appeared in installments in consecutive issues.[14] Judging from this article, Harada tried to examine the similarities between Japan and Babylon from several perspectives but Harada himself did not compose any article about law, neither in Babylonia nor in Japan.

The purpose of Babylon Society was to inquire about the ethnic origin of the Japanese nation. In the prospectus in 1916, Harada had already summarized his theory:

> I believe that the civilisation in Babylon also influenced Asia. It came to India, cultivated the concept of Aryan, and came to China, where they combined Babylonian and Chinese culture together. Aside from these groups, one or several groups of Babylonians left their mainland and drifted from

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[11] After the Meiji restoration, the old feudalist hierarchy was replaced by a system with three orders: court nobles and former feudal lords became *kazoku* (華族); former samurai, *shizoku* (士族; all others (including outcast groups) now became *heimin* (平民). Harada's family belonged to *shizoku*, whose members needed to build new careers because they lost privileges that Samurai families enjoyed in the Edo period. For further details of the career building of Shizoku, see Takeuchi, Y., *Risshi / Kugaku / Syusse; Jyukensei no Shakai shi*, Tokyo; Koudan sha (Koudansha gakujyutsu bunko), 2015.

[12] Kobayashi, S., *Watashi no atta Meiji no meihousou monogatari*, Tokyo; Nihon Hyoron sha, 1973.

[13] *Babylon* is the primary source for the Babylon Society. The members of the society held research meetings several times a year. Younger members – not Harada – edited the journal. A list naming seventy-seven members and citing forty-four articles was published. Today only four volumes can be accessed: Vol. 1 (Aug. 1917) with ten articles; seven in Vol. 2 (Dec. 1917); eight in Vol. 3 (May 1918); and eleven in Vol. 4 (Dec. 1919). All that is known about the "forthcoming" 5th volume is the table of contents with the names of authors and titles of 8 articles.

[14] According to the index of vol. 5, this discussion was left unconcluded.

> one province to another for some time. Finally, they found Japan in the far east and established the country.[15]

Harada noted the difference between Japan and the other Asian countries affected by Babylonian civilisation. He believed that ethnic groups came from Babylon directly to Japan and only there established the government. He argued there had been cultural influence, and especially a racial link between the Japanese and Babylonians.

The importance of Harada's theory is its originality which was strongly related to his interests in law. He argued in his article:

> The most central theme of studies is the relationship between original Japanese law and the law of Babylon. The result of this study should overturn many precedents from their roots, totally change the interpretation of statutory laws and provide new principles and policies to establish law in the future.[16]

This statement reveals that he had indeed significant interests in Babylonian law. He desired to re-examine the "oldest" law in Mesopotamia from the viewpoint of ancient law in Japan. Moreover, Harada wanted to provide a new principle for establishing a code of law in the world, based on the results of his study, to resist the dominance of modern European law. It is the most notable characteristic of his theory. True, the idea of Babylonian origin was not his own; European scholars like Kaempfer had argued that approach in the 18th century.[17] But no one had specifically mentioned the law before. For Harada, this theory was the inevitable precondition for his study of law.

Harada stated his racial theory because of two conflicting attitudes. One was a sense of danger that westernisation would destroy Japanese traditions. The other was pride in overcoming the reality of 'westernisation' in Japan.

The feeling he experienced of danger to Japanese tradition resulted from Japan's ascendant status in international relations. The first step was the proclamation of the constitution for the Empire of Japan in 1889, the same year that Harada became a lawyer. Regardless, unequal treaties still existed between Japan and western countries because Japan lacked "international law." Harada's interest in unequal treaties was the subject of his thesis at Cornell University. At the end of the 1890s, the relationship between Japan and western countries entered a new phase when the first Japanese civic code and the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation came into force. International law came to govern the lives of ordinary Japanese citizens, and foreigners were allowed to live mixed together

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[15] 'Babylon Gakkai setsuritsu syuisyo (The Prospectus of the Babylon Society)', 1916.
[16] Harada, K., 'Japan and Babylon I', *Babylon*, vol. 1, 1917.
[17] Oshima, A., 'Engelbert Kaempfer no "Shinto" kenkyu to sono haikei', *Kyusyu Shigaku* 142 (2005): 46–64.

with Japanese locals. Harada feared the situation[18] and desired to protect local Japanese tradition based on ancient pure *Shintō* religion and law.

The pride at overcoming European culture was probably motivated by frustration and rivalry with "Yellow Peril" since the 1890s. There were two different reactions in Japan against the global concept of "yellow peril." One reaction was the argument of the "white peril" and Pan-Asianism, with Japanese hegemony aimed at replacing the worldwide order in Asia.[19] The other reaction proposed accepting the theories of Japanese-Caucasian origin. For example, Ukichi Taguchi (田口卯吉 1855–1905) published a work entitled *Ha okaron* (破黄禍論 Destroy the Theory of a Yellow Peril) in 1904, in which he insisted that the Japanese were not a "yellow" race.[20] We can conclude that Harada's and Taguchi's theories shared the same purpose. Both tried to break a "glass ceiling" between the western powers and Japan that still existed after Japanese modernisation in the early twentieth century.

To sum up, Harada was the typical model of success in the Meiji era's warrior class. He desired to study Assyriology to inquire about the unique Japanese ancient law in Taishō era when he recognized the high wall that still persisted between the western-centred international community and Japan. The inquiry into the uniqueness of Japanese culture and society is the feature of *MINKANGAKU* that Kano suggested. According to the list of members published in the first issue of *Babylon* in August 1917, forty people supported his call in the prospectus.[21]This documents that Harada's aim of exploring Japan's uniqueness from the perspective of the law struck a chord with the new elite class.

**Supporting members of the Babylon Society: Sanji Mutō**

Harada held the initial meeting of the Babylon Society on 21 July 1917 at Tsukiji Seiyouken, the first European restaurant in Japan. The inductees up to this founding meeting numbered twenty-nine. Harada explained that these individuals represented various interests; there were business people, bankers, traders, lawyers, parliamentarians, factory owners, judges, academics, and educators, all highly motivated to learn.[22] He also mentioned that fifteen members attended the found-

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[18] Harada read a book when in the U.S.A. about Egypt being controlled by great western powers which he translated to inform the Japanese people about the danger. Harada, K., 'Syogen (Preface)' in *Egypt sanjyo: Naichi kansho (Japanese Translation of the Book: The Conflict of East and West in Egypt by J.E. Bowen)*. Tokyo, Hakubun-do, 1890.

[19] Matten, M.A., 'Fighting the White Peril: Japan's Turn to Spatiality', in *Imagining a Postnational World*, Brill, 2016, Chapter 5, 162–224.

[20] Mutou, S., 'Taguchi Ukichi no nihonjinsyu kigenron', *Nihon Keizai Shisoushi Kenkyu* 3 (2003): 47–64.

[21] *Babylon* vol. 1, member list.

[22] *Babylon* vol. 1, Report.

ing meeting, and the first issue of *Babylon* listed the names of forty people (including Harada himself) who had joined the Babylon Society by August 1917. Along with the names, the occupation of each member was included.

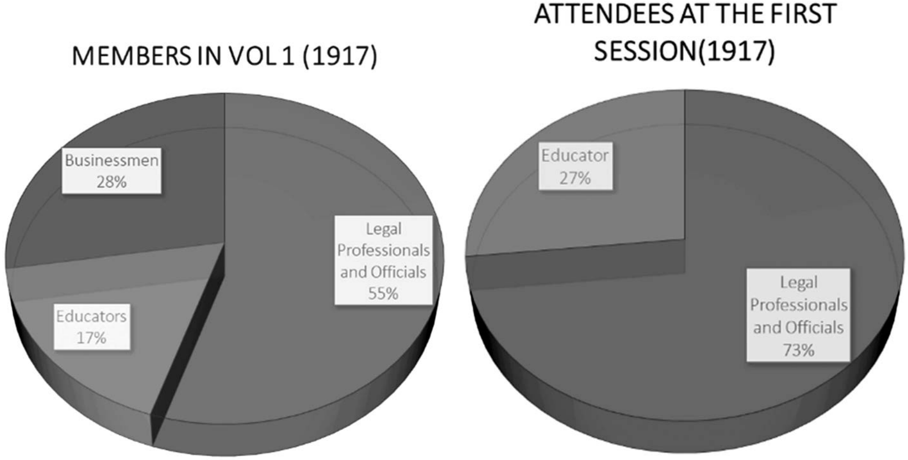


Chart 1: Members of the Babylon Society in 1917.

The chart to the left summarises the members according to profession. Legal professionals and officials like lawyers, judges, members of parliament, and bureaucrats scored the highest at 55%. Educators who had no permanent position in the state institutions amounted to 17%. More members, about 28%, can be categorised as from the world of business, including bankers, factory owners, and traders. However, the chart to the right demonstrates that no business members attended the first session. Moreover, they contributed no articles to the publication of the society. Business people in the Babylon Society can be defined as supporting members who donated money for research.[23]

Sanji Mutō (武藤山治 1867–1934) is an excellent example of a supporting member. Mutō was born in Gifu, the son of a *Samurai* family like Harada. He was a Christian, influenced by his father, and he became a classmate of Harada at the Keio School. They went to the U. S. A. almost simultaneously as privately-funded students. After returning to Japan, Mutō became a banker and, in 1908, was appointed president of Kanegafuchi Spinning K.K.[24] One of Japan's leading indus-

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[23] According to the prospectus, the annual membership fee, the same for everyone, was five yen. See 'Babylon Gakkai setsuritsu syuisyo (The Prospectus of the Babylon Society)', 1916.

[24] Kanegafuchi Spinning K.K. was the cotton spinning and trading company in Tokyo. See the History of Kracie (http://www.kracie.co.jp/eng/profile/history.html).

trialists of the early 20th century, he attended the First International Labor Conference in 1919 as an employee.[25]

Harada talked with Mutō about his plan to organise the Babylon Society before distributing the prospectus; Mutō donated 30,000 yen.[26] Prince Mikasa explained that Mutō constantly made donations following the foundation of the Society.[27] Mutō joined and donated to the Babylon Society because he also had original ideas regarding Japanese law. After attending the First International Labor Conference, he published a short essay about Japanese politics and law. Mutō stated that more Japanese had to engage in debate in the parliament to enact laws consistent with Japanese society, not Western law.[28]

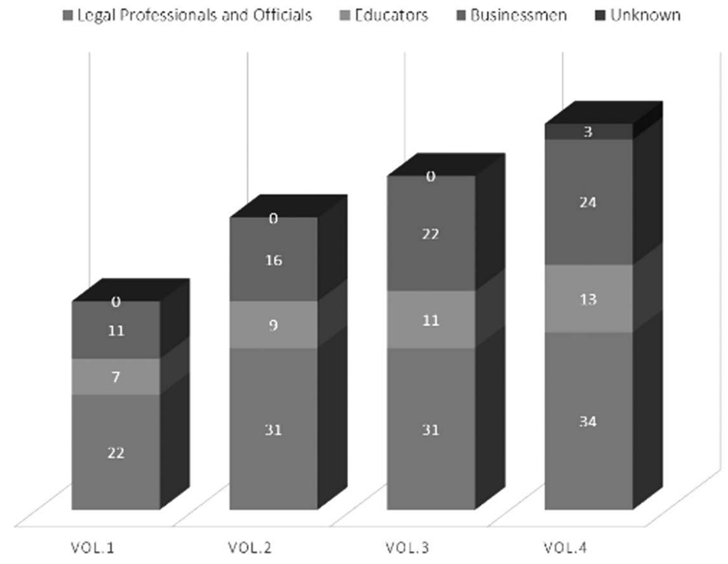


Chart 2: Members of the Babylon Society from 1917 to 1919.

The number of supporting members increased after 1917. Determining what motivated these individuals to join the society and how much each donated presents

[25] International Labor Conference, First Annual Meeting, October 29, 1919–November 29, 1919. Pan American Union Building, Washington, D.C., U.S.A, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920. See also Cobble, D.S., 'Who Speaks for Workers? Japan and the 1919 ILO Debates Over Rights and Global Labor Standards', *International Labor and Working Class History* 87 (2015): 213–234.

[26] About 15 million yen in today's currency.

[27] Mikasa, 'Nihon ni okeru kodai orient bunmei kenkyu shi', *Orient* (in Japanese) 43 (2000): 1–14.

[28] Muto, S., *Seiji Isshin Ron (New Ideas of Politics)*, Tokyo: Diamond sha, 1921.

a challenge since no evidence is forthcoming in the society's bulletin. The chart does demonstrate that the growth rate of legal professionals in two years reached 54.5% while, by contrast, the growth rate of members from business was 118%. Moreover, each volume of *Babylon* contains a statement thanking donors. Over time, the private association would gain more donations. Harada managed the assets which he used to acquire books about Assyriology from abroad and to pay an allowance to research members until September 1923, when a major earthquake hit Tokyo, resulting in a fire which destroyed most of the books in the society's collection.[29]

**Research members of the Babylon Society: Shunzō Kobayashi and Chishū Naitō**

As noted above, about half of the articles published in *Babylon* were written by Harada. He devoted many pages to the theory that Japan originated from Babylon. Notably, 37% of the 38 articles were Japanese translations of articles on Assyriology, not by Harada but by legal scholars and those labeled 'educators' in the list of members. We can classify them as research members – relatively young persons who attended regular meetings with Harada to read articles in English and German about Ancient Near Eastern History. It is reasonable to presume that these meetings played a role similar to seminars given by professors in state institutions. Reading books and articles from abroad was very valuable for younger researchers outside state institutions.

| Author | Title | Magazine or Publisher | Year | Translator | *Babylon* vol. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| L. Messer-schmidt | "Die Entzifferung der Keilschrift" | *Der alte Orient* 5 | 1903 | S. Kobayashi | 1, 2 |
| H. Winckler | "Die politische Entwicklung Babyloniens und Assyriens" | *Der alte Orient* 2 | 1901 | S. Matsumoto | 1 (not finished) |
| B. Meissner | "Aus dem babylonischen Recht" | *Der alte Orient* 7 | 1905 | S. Kobayashi | 3, 4 (and 5) |
| H. Winckler | "Geschichte der Stadt Babylon" | *Der alte Orient* 6 | 1904 | C. Naitō | 3, 4 (and 5) |
| C.H.W. Johns | *Ancient Babylonia* | Cambridge Univ. Press | 1913 | S. Shibusawa | 4 (and 5) |

Table 1: Translated articles on the organ paper *Babylon.*

[29] Mori's article quotes a retrospective text written by Harada a year after the earthquake. Harada had tried to protect his books, but was helpless in the face of the onslaught of fire. See Mori, op. cit., 173–174.

The research members read at least seven articles in Japanese translation during these sessions. Translators cited only the names of the authors but not the original titles nor year of publication; however, five of seven works translated can be identified, viz.

It is significant that four articles originally appeared in *Der alte Orient*, the journal of the Vorderasiatisch-Ägyptischen Gesellschaft. This society was established by Hugo Winckler (1863–1913) in 1895 to promote Near Eastern studies. The society published two different types of magazines: *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft,* for exclusively scientific theses and research by scholars, and *Der alte Orient*, which provided access for a wide range of the members to generally understandable descriptions of the varied results of academic research. *Der alte Orient* encouraged the members' support and subsidised plans for further research, especially for journeys to and excavations in the Near East[30].

The research members who translated the German articles were the main participants in the research meetings and were responsible for the administration of the society. Shunzō Kobayashi (小林俊三 1888–1982) and Chishū Naitō (内藤智秀 1886–1984) are prime examples of research members.

Kobayashi was born in Tokyo; he studied German law at Tokyo Imperial University and graduated in 1914. When Kobayashi was 28 years old and opened his law firm in 1916, he visited Harada and Harada invited him to join the Babylon Society. In 1934 Kobayashi became a law professor at Chuo University and, after WW II, a justice on the Supreme Court. Naitō was born in Yamagata and studied European history at Tokyo Imperial University. After graduation in 1912, he worked as a librarian at the same institution. Naitō continued his research, publishing some papers and books about the history of the Balkan peninsula and Middle Eastern area. Naitō joined the society at the end of 1917 when he was 31. How and why Naito joined the society are not known. However, according to Prince Mikasa, Naitō was so very excited about studying and discussing during the research sessions that he lost track of the time spent.[31] Naitō became a professor at Tokyo Women's Teachers Education School in 1929 and a professor of history at the University of the Sacred Heart after WW II.

These two examples show that the research members joined the society after graduation, before they secured a place in the legal profession and/or a regular academic position.

We can say that Harada's private association played a role as a training institution for young researchers in the humanities and law, after they had graduated

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[30] Renger, J., 'Die Geschichte der Altorientalistik und der vorderasiatischen Archäologie in Berlin von 1875 bis 1945', in Arenhövel *et al.* (eds), *Berlin und die Antike : Architektur, Kunstgewerbe, Malerei, Skulptur, Theater und Wissenschaft vom 16. Jahrhundert bis heute.* Berlin: Dt. Archäolog. Inst, 1979: 151–192.

[31] Mikasa, 2000: 10.

from the state institutions. Were all research members fascinated by and in agreement with Harada's theory of Japan's origin?[32] We may well never know for sure, but young researchers from state institutions could have opportunities to read books in foreign languages and articles and to publish their own articles in *Babylon*. Moreover, each researcher could get a "research fee" of 15 to 20 yen, almost the same as the beginning salary of primary schoolteachers.[33] Opportunities and research fees would be excellent livelihood support, enabling them to continue their research between graduation and finding permanent positions.

**Guests: Katsuhiko Kakei**

More noteworthy is how Harada knew of Assyriological research in Germany and Europe, and how he obtained *Der alte Orient*. Winckler died in 1913, and because of WW I, there was no new journal available in 1916 when Harada wrote his prospectus. Furthermore, Harada himself had no opportunity to study law and Assyriology in Germany. It remains a gap in story of the Babylon Society but Katsuhiko Kakei, one of the guests of the third session, may be the crucial link.

According to Kobayashi's account, when the third session was held in Tsukiji Seiyouken with twenty-two members and three guests, Harada's presentation, entitled "Relationship between the Place Names and Religion in Japan," was the focus. We are not sure of the details, but Kobayashi mentioned that the discussion between Harada and the guests became heated afterwards.[34] One guest was Yoshimichi Hara (原嘉道 1867–1944), the president of the Tokyo Lawyers Association who became Minister of Justice in 1927. Harahad agreed to Harada's purpose for founding the society, donated some money, and joined the session as a guest.[35] Another was Ichiro Haruki (春木一郎 1870–1944), a professor of Roman law at Tokyo Imperial University. The third guest on this occasion was Katsuhiko Kakei (筧克彦 1872–1961).

Katsuhiko Kakei was born in Nagano, the son of a *Shizoku* in 1872. Kakei desired to become a technical engineer of ships. But then he changed his mind, deciding to study law after promulgation of the constitution. He studied English law at Tokyo Imperial University, graduating at the top of his class in 1897. He then studied in Berlin from 1898 to 1903 and became a law professor at Tokyo Imperial University.

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[32] Kobayashi explained, with somewhat negative implication, that Harada in the Taisho era stopped attending court and "got involved in the research of Babylon." See Kobayashi, op.cit., 280.

[33] Mikasa, op.cit., 9–10.

[34] *Babylon*, vol.4, Report.

[35] See Hara's letter to Harada on *Babylon* vol. 3.

Kakei would be the person who knew about the progress of Assyriology in Berlin at the end of the 19th century, including the Babel-Bible controversy.[36] Although his stay in Berlin as a state sponsored exchange student was to study German law under Otto von Gierke, he became interested in the modern spirit of Europe, especially Christianity. Kakei desired to extend his time in Germany privately to study classical antiquity, religion, and Christianity under Karl Gustav Adolf Harnack (1851–1930), Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1848–1931), and Wilhelm Christian Ludwig Dilthey (1833–1911).[37] After Kakei returned to Japan he became an advocate of Shintō nationalism, publishing *Koshintō Taigi* (Theology of Old *Shintō*) between 1912 and 1915, and developing his theory of national identity.[38]

There is no evidence that Harada and Kakei were acquainted before the third session of the Babylon Society. Kakei and Haradaco-wrote the preface and the epilogue of Atsuo Mishima's book, published in 1927 with the title *Tensonjinshu 6000 nenshi no Kenkyū* (Study of the 6000 years history of the Tenson Race). In it the origin of Japanese *Shintō* is traced back to ancient Sumer.[39] Kakei's contact with Assyriology in Berlin and the relationship between Kakei, Harada, and Mishima remains a subject for future research.

## Conclusion

Harada, the founder of the Babylon Society, stated his racial theory clearly when he wrote the prospectus in 1916. Admittedly, his theory and his passion for inquiring about original Japanese law had the power to attract an audience looking for the "original Japanese way." The private association was relatively well funded by bankers and business people and supported by some young researchers engaged in advancing their careers. The Babylon Society was a typical *MINKANGAKU* organisation in the Taisho era, focused on inquiries into a unique Japanese culture and with an affinity to nationalism. Moreover, this *MINKANGAKU* society had links to professors of law in *KANGAKU* with its great interest in the nationalistic idea.

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[36] Lehmann, R.G., *Friedrich Delitzsch und der Babel-Bibel-Streit*, Freiburg, Schweiz / Göttingen, 1994. See also Cancik-Kirschbaum, E., and T.L. Gertzen (eds), *Der Babel-Bibel-Streit und die Wissenschaft des Judentums : Beiträge einer internationalen Konferenz vom 4. bis 6. November 2019 in Berlin*. Münster: Zaphon, 2021.

[37] Nishida, S., *Yakudou suru "Kokutai"; Kakei Katsuhiko no Shiso to Katsudou*, Tokyo: Minerva Shobo, 2020.

[38] Skya, W.A., *Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shinto Ultranationalism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009, 185–225.

[39] Mishima, A., *Tenson Jinshu Rokusennenshi no Kenkyu (Study of the 6000 years history of the Tenson Race)*, Ehime; Sumera gakusha, 1927.

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# Part III

# Egyptian Stakeholders

# The Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth in Belgium and the Creation of National and Transnational Egyptological Research Infrastructures in the 1920s–1940s

Marleen De Meyer, Jean-Michel Bruffaerts and Jan Vandersmissen*

When in 1923 Jean Capart 'baptised' the *Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth* (FÉRÉ) in Brussels, it was a relative latecomer in the world of Oriental Societies. Moreover, the scope and aims of the FÉRÉ were somewhat different from those of other such organisations: it was not primarily created to finance excavations or acquire antiquities for the Royal Museums of Art and History, but rather to help the development of Egyptology in Belgium in its broadest sense for professionals and laymen alike. Making good use of his connections with industrialists and other wealthy patrons of his time, both in Belgium and abroad, Capart managed to finance the FÉRÉ mainly with private funding. It soon established itself as an active and vibrant organisation, scheduling lectures, conferences, and exhibitions; building a richly furnished Egyptological library and photographic collection; prolifically publishing and creating its own bulletin (Chronique d'Égypte, beginning in 1925); and undertaking study trips and excavations in Egypt. This was noted by colleagues, and Brussels came to be recognised as an ideal centre of international Egyptological research. A small country geographically located in the heart of Europe, Belgium was both convenient and non-threatening for the larger national powers surrounding it. In this paper the place of the FÉRÉ amidst other Oriental Societies is evaluated, its networks of support and influence are mapped, and ultimately also its role is discussed as motor of the creation of transnational research infrastructures for Egyptology.

## Introduction

In the world of Oriental Societies, Belgium lagged behind the surrounding greater nation states when the *Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth* was created in 1923. This was mainly due to the fact that Belgium in general had a much later start in the disciplinary development of Egyptology, and only really became a player on this stage at the beginning of the 20th century.[1] A happy concurrence of

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* M. De Meyer, KU Leuven & Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo; J.-M. Bruffaerts, Université libre de Bruxelles & Fonds Jean Capart; J. Vandersmissen, Ghent University. The research for this contribution was pursued within the framework of several projects and initiatives investigating the development of Egyptology as a scientific discipline in Belgium in the late 19th to early 20th centuries: "Pyramids & Progress: Belgian expansionism and the making of Egyptology, 1830–1952" (EOS Project 30885993 funded by the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) and the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique – FNRS); the Fonds Jean Capart (under the auspices of the King Baudouin Foundation,

events in 1923 paved the way for the FÉRÉ to see the light of day, and since then it gradually grew into a platform with a broad societal base on which Belgian Egyptology could deploy many of its activities.

Reflections on the FÉRÉ's work and activities have appeared in print, helping to reconstruct the organisation's history. Arpag Mekhitarian (1911–2004), one of the original members of the FÉRÉ, published a booklet on the occasion of its 20th anniversary[2], and much later his musings on its creation[3] and his memories of its heyday.[4] Jean Capart (1877–1947) published a lecture he gave about the FÉRÉ on 8 November 1945 at the *Lycée Français du Caire* with the title '*Un conte que Schéhérazade n'a pas connu*'.[5] A year later Marcelle Werbrouck (1889–1959) wrote about Capart and his 'brainchild' FÉRÉ on the occasion of his death.[6] And finally, the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the FÉRÉ provided grounds for Baudouin van de Walle (1901–1988) to record his thoughts on the subject.[7]

## Origins of the FÉRÉ

The two protagonists in the creation of the *Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth* are Elisabeth of Bavaria and Queen of the Belgians (1876–1965), and Jean Capart, curator of the Egyptian collection at the Royal Museums of Art and History (RMAH) in Brussels, and chief curator at that same museum since 1925. In 1923 the Egyptian and British governments invited the queen to preside over the official opening of the burial chamber in the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun discovered only months before.[8] She asked Jean Capart to accompany her and her eldest son Crown Prince Leopold (1901–1983; later King Leopold III) as their guide. On 18 February 1923 the trio attended the ceremony in the Valley of the Kings, an event that received a great deal of media attention (Fig. 1).[9]

www.jeancapart.org); and the SURA Project (funded by BELSPO as part of the research program Belgian Research Action through Interdisciplinary Networks (BRAIN-be 2.0 2018–2023, www.sura-project.be). We warmly thank Wouter Claes for valuable comments on the draft of this paper, and Luc Limme, Joffrey Liénart, and Mathieu Geeraerts for their help in the archives of the FÉRÉ and the RMAH, as well as the entire Pyramids & Progress and SURA teams.

[1] For general overviews of the development of Egyptology in Belgium, see Bruffaerts 2013, De Meyer and de Cartier d'Yves 2020, Bruffaerts 2021, Bruffaerts 2022, all with further references.

[2] Mekhitarian 1943.

[3] Mekhitarian 1991.

[4] Mekhitarian 1997.

[5] Capart 1946.

[6] Werbrouck 1947.

[7] Van de Walle 1974.

[8] Bruffaerts 1998.

[9] For the larger Belgian delegation present at this event, see Warmenbol 2019: 5–19.

TRENTE-NEUVIEME ANNEE. — No 10 40 CENTIMES LE NUMERO 11 MARS 1923

# LE PATRIOTE ILLUSTRÉ

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1. - L'arrivée de S. M. sur le théâtre des fouilles. Bien que voyageant incognito, notre souveraine est reçue par M. Carter, l'égyptologue, Lord Allenby, gouverneur général britannique, Lord Carnarvon, et les représentants du gouvernement égyptien.— 2.- Après l'ouverture du caveau Le pharaon Tout Ankh Amon, enseveli depuis 33 siècles, dans un déploiement d'or, d'œuvres d'art et de pierreries, vient de donner audience à une reine...

L'hypogée de Tout Ankh Amon le dimanche 18 février. Ce coin de la Vallée des Rois, nécropole des pharaons qui régnèrent sur l'Egypte 15 siècles avant l'ère chrétienne attire l'attention du monde entier. Malgré l'atmosphère étouffante, la reine Elisabeth a passé une demi heure dans les salles intérieures de la tombe monumentale. « C'est vraiment merveilleux », a-t-elle déclaré à la sortie.

## La Reine à l'ouverture de l'hypogée de Tout-Ankh-Amon à Louqsor

Fig. 1: Front page of *Le Patriote Illustré* (11 March 1923) documenting the travels of Queen Elisabeth, Prince Leopold, and Jean Capart in Egypt.

Four days later, on 22 February 1923, aboard the ship transporting Queen Elisabeth from Luxor to Dendara, Capart had a conversation with Yassa bey Andraos Bishara (1882–1970), the Belgian consular agent in Luxor.[10] This discussion concerned the state of the Egyptian section of the RMAH in Brussels. Capart described the growth of the Egyptian collection, thanks to his subscriptions to the British excavation societies (i.a. Egypt Exploration Society, Egyptian Research Account) and of the Egyptological library, which was initially his personal library but which he had donated to the State, and thus the museum, in 1901. Capart was concerned about the future development of the library and regretted the absence of a well-equipped study centre for Egyptology in Belgium. When Bishara asked him how much money would be needed to achieve his goal, Capart replied that a sum of LE 1.000 would suffice. Bishara then announced that he wanted to be the first subscriber and offered Capart LE 100. Full of enthusiasm, Capart proposed to the queen that she give her patronage to a fund, of which he would be the director, intended to promote Egyptology in Belgium. Queen Elisabeth eagerly accepted.

In the days that followed, Capart presented his funding project to several influential members of the Belgian community in Egypt. Among them was Henri Naus bey (1875–1938), general manager of the *Société Générale des Sucreries et de la Raffinerie d'Égypte*,[11] who offered LE 100, like Bishara. To raise the missing LE 800, and in agreement with the queen and Auguste Dauge (1865–1947), Belgian Minister in Cairo, Capart launched a public appeal, relayed in the Egyptian and Belgian press in the first days of March 1923. On 5 March 1923, during a visit to Edfu, Capart had another conversation with Queen Elisabeth and the Belgian Minister Dauge. At Capart's suggestion, they decided to name the fund the *Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth* in commemoration of the queen's presence at the opening of Tutankhamun's burial chamber. They also decided that the income from the FÉRÉ would be used primarily for the acquisition of books for the Egyptological library of the RMAH. Any remaining funds would be used to build up a photographic archive and then for any expenditure likely to promote the study of ancient Egyptian monuments. In April 1923, following Capart's return to Belgium, he tried to raise the necessary funds. He obtained the support of Baron Édouard Empain (1852–1929), while Henri Naus in Cairo and Baron Ernest Eeman (1854–1935) in Alexandria launched a campaign for donations. Quite quickly, the amount acquired exceeded even the most optimistic forecasts. Capart decided to expand the initial plan: he would turn the FÉRÉ into a real research institute.

[10] For Yassa bey Andraos Bishara, see Weens 2014, and Huskens 2023.
[11] For Naus, see Kupferschmidt 1999.

## Statutes

On 1 October 1923 an *association sans but lucrative* (a non-profit association according to Belgian law) was created under Capart's leadership. It was officially named *Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth* (FÉRÉ), in Dutch *Egyptologische Stichting Koningin Elisabeth* (ESKE) with its seat in Brussels, on the premises of the RMAH. Article 3 of the statutes, registered on 26 November 1923 and published in the *Annexes au Moniteur Belge* on 14 December, sets out its objectives:

> Art. 3 – Établie en souvenir du 18 février 1923, jour où S.M. la Reine Élisabeth est entrée dans le tombeau de Toutankhamon, la fondation a pour but de favoriser le développement des études égyptologiques en Belgique. La fondation se préoccupera de l'enrichissement de la bibliothèque égyptologique des Musées Royaux du Cinquantenaire, de la constitution dans les dits musées d'archives photographiques sur l'Égypte ancienne; elle favorisera la participation aux fouilles dans la vallée du Nil, accordera des subsides de voyage, organisera des conférences et des expositions, etc. Cette énumération n'est pas limitative, mais simplement exemplative.

Beginning in 1929, the statutes of the FÉRÉ were revised several times. In 2004, for legal reasons, FÉRÉ was renamed the *Association Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth* (AÉRÉ), in Dutch *Egyptologisch Genootschap Koningin Elisabeth* (EGKE).[12]

## Organisational structure

### *1. High patronage and royal support*

The FÉRÉ was set up under the high patronage of both Belgian and Egyptian royalty. In Belgium, Elisabeth, Queen of the Belgians, gave her name in support of the society since its foundation in 1923, and she remained its patron until her death in 1965. Her son, the Duke of Brabant, Crown Prince Leopold, was honorary president of the FÉRÉ since 1928.[13] Elisabeth was succeeded by Queen Fabiola, wife of King Baudouin, until she passed away in 2014. Thereafter no member of the Belgian royal family assumed patronage.

In Egypt King Fouad I (1868–1936) was patron of the FÉRÉ from 1923 until his death in 1936. His successor King Farouk I (1920–1965) remained patron until the Egyptian revolution of 1952.

[12] http://www.aere-egke.be/aere.eng.htm (accessed 2 August 2022).

[13] Capart 1928a: 1.

*2. Directorship*

The FÉRÉ enjoyed stable management throughout Capart's directorship, from its foundation until his death in 1947 (Fig. 2). Marcelle Werbrouck[14] remained at his side as deputy director from 1933 and took over the directorship after her mentor passed away, holding that position until 1958, when deputy director Pierre Gilbert (1904–1986) took over. He remained in office until renouncing it in 1973[15] when Papyrologist Jean Bingen (1920–2012) became the director, after having been co-director with Gilbert since 1963. In 1975 Egyptologist Herman De Meulenaere (1923–2011) joined Bingen as co-director.[16] The fact that these men joined forces for the following decades reflects the double focus on Egyptology and Papyrology which characterises FÉRÉ. For Papyrology Alain Martin took over from Bingen in 2002, and Luc Limme became director for Egyptology after De Meulenaere's death in 2011. In 2023 René Preys became the new director for Egyptology and Alain Delattre for papyrolgy.

Fig. 2: The FÉRÉ team around 1930 in the new library at the RMAH. Standing (from left to right): Marcel Hombert, Arpag Mekhitarian, Jean Capart, and Sergei Miasnikoff. Sitting (from left to right): Claire Préaux, Marcelle Werbrouck and Suzanne Berger.

[14] For Werbrouck, see Bruffaerts 2018.

[15] Bingen 1987.

[16] Limme and Martin 2012.

*Directors of the FÉRÉ*[17]
1923–1947: Jean Capart
1947–1958: Marcelle Werbrouck
1958–1963: Pierre Gilbert
1963–1973: Pierre Gilbert and Jean Bingen
1973–1975: Jean Bingen
1975–2002: Jean Bingen and Herman De Meulenaere
2002–2011: Herman De Meulenaere and Alain Martin
2011–2023: Luc Limme and Alain Martin
2023–today: René Preys and Alain Delattre

*3. Board of administrators*

The presidency of the board of administrators underwent but few changes in the course of the past century. A change of management was often due to the advanced age or death of the person concerned. The board in general reflects the FÉRÉ's close ties with networks of influence (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: A selection of FÉRÉ board members (top from left to right: Henri Naus bey, Firmin van den Bosch, Georges Theunis, Émile Francqui; bottom from left to right: Félicien Cattier, Jean Willems, Henri Lavachery, Sadek Wahba Pasha).

[17] All persons in this list were curator of the Egyptian collection of the RMAH, except Bingen and Martin, and recently also Preys and Delattre. Three of them (Capart, Gilbert, and De Meulenaere) were also chief curator of the museum.

During Capart's lifetime there were only two presidents: Henri Naus bey in the years 1923–1938 and Georges Theunis (1873–1966) in 1938–1958 (surviving Capart). As mentioned above, Naus was a leading Belgian industrialist in Egypt. The Egyptian sugar industry owed its prosperity to his business acumen. He had excellent contacts with politicians and cultural institutions in Egypt and in Belgium, and with the royal houses of both countries. Theunis was a key figure in the Belgian industrial, financial, and political world. He was twice Prime Minister of Belgium (1921–1925 and 1934–1935) before becoming president of the FÉRÉ. As a director of many companies belonging to the Empain group he was familiar with the business world. He served as Minister of Finance, as ambassador of Belgium to the USA during WW II, and afterwards as governor of the National Bank of Belgium. The FÉRÉ was thus assured a promoter who could open all doors, both nationally and internationally. His successor as the FÉRÉ's chairman in the 1950s was the banker Paul Ramlot (1879–1967), whose career began in Egypt and who had served as vice-president of the *Chambre de Commerce belgo-égyptienne*.[18]

*Presidents of the FÉRÉ*

1923–1938: Henri Naus bey (general director of the *Société Générale des Sucreries et de la Raffinerie d'Égypte*)
1938–1958: Georges Theunis (former prime minister of Belgium)
1958–1964: Paul Ramlot (banker)
1965–1972: Henri Lavachery (former chief curator of the RMAH in Brussels)
1973–1985: Baron Emmanuel de Bonvoisin (general director of the *Banque belge et internationale en Égypte*)
1986–today: Count Arnoul d'Arschot Schoonhoven (businessman)

The board of administrators was almost exclusively composed of Belgians, many of them with excellent contacts in Egypt. The board at the creation of the FÉRÉ in 1923 provides an example[19], but its composition would change throughout the years. These changes are documented in the front matter of *Chronique d'Égypte*, the FÉRÉ journal that appeared twice yearly. Firmin van den Bosch (1864–1949) had been attorney general at the Mixed Courts in Alexandria, and had held a position on the board of the *Société royale archéologique d'Alexandrie*. In 1940, he became vice-president of the FÉRÉ, and wrote his memoires of his earlier years in Egypt.[20] The engineer and businessman Léon Rolin (1871–1950) was a dominant figure in the Egyptian construction industry. Through his companies he had

[18] 'Ramlot, Paul,' *Made in Belgium. Industriels belges en Égypte (1830–1952),* https://industrielsbelgesenegypte.omeka.net/items/show/1180 (accessed 6 August 2022). For Belgian industrialists in Egypt, see also Urbain *et al.* 2020.
[19] Capart 1925: 3.
[20] Van den Bosch 1932.

made a fortune, transforming Cairo into a modern city, and he had contacts at all levels. Moreover, he was a collector of art with an influence on cultural activities in Cairo.

*Members of the Board of Administrators of FÉRÉ at the time of its creation in 1923*

President: Henri Naus bey
Director: Jean Capart
Members:
- Léon Rolin (engineer in Cairo)
- Adolphe Stoclet (engineer, financier, and member of the Supervisory Commission of Museums)
- Firmin van den Bosch (attorney general of the Mixed Courts of Egypt)
- Eugène van Overloop (chief curator of the RMAH in Brussels)
- Maurice van Regemorter[21] (director of the *Banque belge pour l'Étranger* in Cairo and treasurer of FÉRÉ in Egypt)

Secretary: Marcelle Werbrouck
Treasurer for Belgium: Marie Paul

In later years, several personalities among the highest Belgian elite joined. Émile Francqui (1863–1935) was a business magnate who rose to the top of Belgian banking and business after first making a name for himself in Congo and China. Thanks to his American contacts and their food shipments, Belgium survived WW I, and with the money left over, he ensured the reconstruction of the universities and provided the financial foundation for scientific research in the interwar period.[22] After Francqui's death his place was taken by his friend Félicien Cattier (1869–1946), a lawyer, professor of law at the *Université libre de Bruxelles*, and banker. Moreover, like Francqui had been, he was governor of the *Société Générale de Belgique*, Belgium's most important financial institution. After WW II Jean Willems (1895–1970), director of the Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research, the country's main financier of research, joined the FÉRÉ's board.[23]

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[21] Maurice was the brother of famous Belgian book binder Berthe van Regemorter, who designed the luxurious cover of a copy of Capart's *Memphis* (1930) that was presented by Belgian Queen Elisabeth to King Fouad during their 1930 official state visit to Egypt (11 March 1930). For a photo of this cover, see Capart 1930: 169. On Berthe van Regemorter, see Cockx-Indestege 2014. We thank Wouter Claes for this addition.

[22] In 1932 he created the *Fondation Francqui* together with Herbert Hoover to promote the development of higher education and scientific research in Belgium, and the Francqui Prize is still awarded yearly today; http://www.francquifoundation.be/ (accessed 2 August 2022).

[23] Willems 1945.

The FÉRÉ had two treasurers, one in Belgium and one in Egypt. In Belgium the function was originally in the hands of Marie Paul (d. 1981), one of Capart's close collaborators and confidantes. For the position in Egypt Maurice van Regemorter (1876–1938) appeared the ideal man. He was a banker and general director of the Egyptian branch of the *Banque belge pour l'Étranger* in Cairo, which would be transformed into the *Banque belge et international en Égypte*. This institution became key to the FÉRÉ's financial operations in Egypt. Van Regemorter was succeeded as treasurer in Egypt by Oscar Ellsworth Lambiotte (1898–1969) and Louis van Damme, his successors as directors of the *Banque belge et international en Égypte*.

The ties with the RMAH remained strong, too. Before and after Capart's term as chief curator at the RMAH, other chief curators had a seat on the board – for example, Eugène van Overloop (1847–1926) and Henri Lavachery (1885–1972). Finally, among the FÉRÉ administrators there were wealthy capitalists who were known especially as collectors and philanthropists. Two prime examples are baron Armilde Lheureux (1872–1957), who donated several ancient Egyptian artefacts to the RMAH, and Adolphe Stoclet (1871–1949), an industrialist who assembled an eclectic collection for his impressive mansion in the style of the 'Vienna Secession' at 281 Avenue de Tervuren, Brussels, known as the Stoclet Palace. There were only two Egyptian board members: diplomat Sadek Wahba Pasha (1885–1971), during his term as Egyptian minister in Brussels, and Arakel Nubar (1881–1954), son of Édouard Empain's business partner Boghos Nubar, who had helped build Heliopolis.

### 4. *Membership categories*

There were different categories of membership in the FÉRÉ. Initially, in 1923 they numbered three.

*Membres protecteurs* (= institutions, societies, individuals, and even some cities)
*Membres effectifs*
*Membres adhérents*

Later, two other membership categories were added:

*Membres correspondants* (= scientific members)
*Membres donateurs* (since 1930, a select group of wealthy individuals contributing the largest donations)

The positioning of the FÉRÉ at the heart of a wide-ranging network of influence, supported by big business, is also apparent when considering the two main categories of supporting members: the *membres donateurs* and the *membres protecteurs*. Perhaps one of the main assets to win over these personalities was the fact that the FÉRÉ stood under the patronage both of Elisabeth, Queen of the Belgians,

and of the King of Egypt, successively Fouad I and Farouk I. Among the donors were Belgians who belonged to the highest elite: Stoclet and Lheureux, mentioned above, but also engineer Louis Solvay (1876–1952) and his wife Odile Fontaine (1877–1962), of the leading chemical firm Solvay; banker and entrepreneur Louis Empain (1908–1976, Édouard's son); and industrialist and financer count Paul de Launoit (1891–1981). But Capart also actively recruited donors internationally, especially during his many voyages abroad. His tenure as advisory curator of the Egyptian collection at the Brooklyn Museum in the 1930s gave him a broad American network.[24] Prominent New Yorkers like Julius Goldman (1852–1938) of the well-known American banking family Goldman-Sachs, and Edward C. Blum (1863–1946), president of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, became FÉRÉ members. Mention should also be made of Marius de Zayas (1880–1961), a wealthy Mexican artist and gallery owner in New York City who would end up financing the first Belgian excavations at Elkab in 1937.

There were also several Egyptian donors, among them the previously mentioned Yassa bey Andraos Bishara; Wasif Boutros Ghali (1878–1958; Egyptian writer, diplomat, and politician who was Foreign Minister of Egypt four times in the 1920s–1930s); Theodore Cozzika (1899–1965; a wealthy Greek businessman and President of the Greek community of Cairo); and Moïse Lévy de Benzion (1873–1943; born into a wealthy Jewish family in Alexandria, and an Egyptian department store owner who built an important collection of art and antiquities).

The broader category of *membres protecteurs* illustrates the international mobilisation of funding and influence all the more. Apart from the rank and file of Belgian nobility, haute finance, and industry, many Americans were involved, addressed, and their support encouraged during Capart's various stays in the USA in the 1920s and 1930s. For the maintenance of contacts abroad and the recruitment of foreign members, the FÉRÉ had for a time specific secretaries for the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, and Romania, respectively Irène Donne Duke Burton, Anton Hoynck van Papendrecht, Marcelle Baud, and Georges Matei Cantacuzino.

### 5. *Egyptology and Papyrology*

From the outset, the FÉRÉ was concerned with the study of pharaonic Egypt, the first section created. In 1926 the scope broadened to include Graeco-Roman Egypt and Papyrology; the latter would gradually become a separate branch within the foundation with its own director (cf. supra). In 1927–1928 Capart also attempted to create a section on Christian (or Coptic) Egypt, approaching Jozef Vergote (1910–1992) at the Catholic University of Leuven. But Capart failed, notably because the Orientalist Institute of Leuven seemed to view his initiative as competition.

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[24] De Meyer 2023 and forthcoming.

Capart gathered around himself a number of collaborators, primarily women, contrary to common practice at the time (Fig. 2). The main cast of characters from the early days of the FÉRÉ consisted of:

1. **Pharaonic Egypt** (from 1923): Jean Capart (director), Marcelle Werbrouck (secretary, then deputy director, and director from 1947), Arpag Mekhitarian (assistant, secretary, then secretary-general), Eléonore Bille De-Mot (assistant), Suzanne Berger (assistant), Marie Weynants-Ronday (assistant), Pierre Gilbert (assistant; later director)
2. **Graeco-Roman Egypt/Papyrology** (from 1926): Marcel Hombert (director), Claire Préaux (assistant from 1928; co-director from 1945)

**The FÉRÉ at the RMAH**

The offices of the FÉRÉ were (and still are) located at the RMAH in Brussels. This also means that the library, the photographic archive, the archive of correspondence, and the stock of publications are located within the museum. The FÉRÉ kept up an active international correspondence, of which a new inventory has recently been drawn up in the framework of the Pyramids & Progress Project, and the digitisation of a selection of the material is in progress. While there is some more recent material in these archives, most files cover the period from 1923 to the late 1950s, the heyday of the FÉRÉ.

Establishing a photographic archive, not just for use by the members of the FÉRÉ but at the disposition of the international community, was one of Capart's strategic goals.[25] The collection of glass plate negatives kept in the Library of Antiquity at the RMAH was compiled by him and his collaborators throughout their careers, feeding it with photos they took during their travels throughout Egypt and in museums worldwide, and with photos bought from colleagues and institutions abroad. The oldest photographs date back to 1901 when Capart made his first trip to Egypt, while the most recent relate to the excavations of Pierre Gilbert at Elkab in 1955. This collection thus documents the pioneering years of Egyptology in Belgium in the first half of the 20$^{th}$ century. Momentarily, the historical collection of ca. 7,000 glass plate negatives is being worked on within the framework of the SURA Project.[26]

**Activities of the FÉRÉ**

The FÉRÉ pursued activities both in the fields of communicating and popularising scholarship, as well as in professional Egyptology. For the general public, lectures (Fig. 4), tours, and temporary exhibitions were organised. The first exhibition took place at the RMAH in 1924, *Peintures thébaines* (Fig. 5), followed by several others, among them *L'Art d'Amarna* in 1933. Occasionally a special event was

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[25] Capart 1928a: 9–10.

[26] Gräzer Ohara *et al*. 2023; Claes *et al.*2022; Van der Perre *et al*. 2021.

orchestrated, such as the fundraising event 'Réception chez Toutankhamon' in 1926 (Brussels) and 1927 (Heliopolis).[27] Disseminating scholarship was Capart's forte, which translated itself into the (re-)organisation of the RMAH under his directorship between 1925–1942.[28]

Fig. 4: Poster of a lecture by Jean Capart for the Liège section of the FÉRÉ, 9 May 1947. This was one of the last lectures Capart ever gave.

[27] Capart 1926.
[28] Capart 1931.

Fig. 5: The exhibition *Peintures thébaines* at the RMAH in 1924.

More importantly, the FÉRÉ established itself as a respected association in the field of Egyptology through the organisation of scientific colloquia, excavations, and an extensive program of publications. Twice the team organised a *Semaine égyptologique et papyrologique de Bruxelles* (1930 and 1935), which is discussed in more detail below (see p. 158). These were the first international conferences ever held exclusively for Egyptologists and Papyrologists. In Egypt, archaeological activity was only gradually undertaken, beginning modestly with short seasons at Sheikh Fadl (1924) and Tell Hiw (1927), then growing into a long term project at Elkab, starting in 1937.[29]

In terms of publications, the journal *Chronique d'Égypte: Bulletin périodique de la Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth* was initiated in 1925 with two issues annually. As Capart stated in the first volume, the journal's aim was not to be yet another scholarly journal – many were already established in the field – but rather to form a direct link between the FÉRÉ and its members everywhere.[30] Much like today's *Egyptian Archaeology* (the contemporary publication of the EES), *Chronique d'Égypte* originally was intended to keep its membership *au courant* with news, short reports about recent excavations, book reviews, obituaries, etc. In 1932 the FÉRÉ started its own series, *Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca*, with the

[29] Bruffaerts 2012.
[30] Capart 1925: 1.

goal of publishing ancient Egyptian texts and inscriptions.[31] To date, nineteen volumes have appeared (1932–2006). Another, shorter series is *La medicine égyptienne*, initiated after the Belgian physician Frans Jonckheere (1903–1956)[32] published the volume on the so-called mummy of Butehamon at the RMAH. Three volumes appeared in this series (1944–1958), all authored by Jonckheere. Several monographs were published independent of a series, but often related to the collection of the RMAH and its excavations. The publisher for most of the FÉRÉ volumes during its heyday was Vromant in Brussels. In later times, long after the death of Capart, several other series were initiated by the FÉRÉ:

*Rites égyptiens*: 11 volumes, 1962–2005
*Papyrologica Bruxellensia*: 40 volumes, 1962–2020
*Monumenta Aegyptiaca*: 15 volumes, 1968–2020
*Monographies Reine Élisabeth*: 16 volumes, 1971–2015
*Elkab*: 8 volumes, 1971–2010

**Influence of the FÉRÉ on other societies**

When in 1923 Jean Capart brought the FÉRÉ to life in Brussels, it was a relative latecomer in the world of oriental societies. Moreover, the scope and aims of the FÉRÉ were somewhat different from those of other such organisations: it was not primarily created to finance excavations or to acquire antiquities for the Royal Museums of Art and History, but rather to foster the development of Egyptology in Belgium in the broadest possible sense for professionals and laymen alike. Making good use of his connections with industrialists and other wealthy patrons of his time, both in Belgium and abroad, Capart managed to finance the FÉRÉ mainly with private funding, and it soon established itself as an active and vibrant organisation. Colleagues took note of this, and Brussels was quickly acknowledged as an ideal place to form the nucleus of international Egyptological research. Belgium – a small country geographically located in the heart of Europe – was both convenient and non-threatening for the surrounding larger national powers. In this regard, it also played a role as a model for other societies, both in Belgium and abroad.

Various institutes and associations were set up in Brussels within the RMAH following the example of the FÉRÉ. In each case, Capart (as chief curator of the museum since 1925) played a direct or indirect role.

*Société des Américanistes de Belgique* (1927)
*Les Amis du Musée Historique de la Voiture* (1927)
*Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises* (1929)
*Les Amies de la Dentelle* (1929)

[31] A list of the monographs published by the FÉRÉ over the years can be consulted at http://www.aere-egke.be/publications-publicaties.htm (accessed 6 August 2022).
[32] On Jonckheere, see Oeters 2023.

*Société des Amis de l'Orient* (1930)
*Ars Photographica* (1935)

To the *Académie Royale de Belgique* Capart declared in 1931:

> Chaque fois que des circonstances favorables le justifieront on pourra créer successivement des instituts, dont chacun aura la mission de réaliser, pour un des départements de nos musées, ce que la Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth a réussi à faire pour le département égyptien.[33]

**A model and an inspiration**

In the 1930s and 1940s, the FÉRÉ had a special relationship with at least two societies abroad, which were also at home in fairly small nations: the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap 'Ex Oriente Lux' in Leiden, the Netherlands. In 1919, when Capart visited Denmark for the first time, he offered Valdemar Schmidt (1836–1925),[34] with whom he had been corresponding for twenty years, two boxes of photographic plates of Egyptian artefacts intended for the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. This was the beginning of close collegial ties between Capart and various Danish Egyptologists: Valdemar Schmidt, Frederik Poulsen (1876–1950), Maria Mogensen (1882–1932), etc. In 1938, Hans O. Lange (1863–1943), Director of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, wrote to Capart that his and the FÉRÉ's achievements "*servent et continuent à servir de modèle à la Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.*"[35]

In the Netherlands inspiration was taken from Capart's FÉRÉ for the creation in 1933 of its own Oriental Society 'Ex Oriente Lux', and both organisations set up collaborative ties.[36] Arie Abraham Kampman (1911–1977), the General Secretary of EOL, wrote to Capart on 14 March 1939:

> In April I plan to come to Belgium for a few days and I would highly appreciate it if during my stay in Brussels I could exchange thoughts with you about a closer cooperation between the Fondation Égyptologique and 'Ex Oriente Lux'. Our board thinks that it should be possible to work together much more than has so far been the case. This collaboration could in the first place take the form of mutually inviting speakers. We would highly appreciate it should you come and speak personally to our departments Amsterdam, Utrecht, and The Hague, in return for which Mr. de Buck could give a lecture in Brussels. I merely mention this to indicate the direction in which our collaboration could take form in the beginning. Secondly, we could work together in inviting Egyptologists from England,

[33] Capart 1931: 87–88.
[34] On Schmidt, see Alm 2023.
[35] Archives of the RMAH, AÉRÉ-EGKE: BE/380469/2/504, folder Lange, Hans Ostenfeld: Letters from Lange to Capart, 8/04/1938 and 20/11/1938.
[36] Kampman 1947.

> France, and other countries. Thirdly we could join forces in publishing special publications and exchanging information.[37]

The substantial folder of correspondence between EOL and the FÉRÉ preserved in the archives of the RMAH forms tangible testimony to their resulting collaboration. Kampman wrote in Dutch, a language Capart was perfectly capable of reading but not writing.[38] However, a language shared by Belgium and the Netherlands, and the close ties that historically existed been the two countries likely contributed to this proposal for cooperation on the eve of WW II. On 1 August 1939 EOL granted Capart honorary membership in the society, an honour that included free copies of EOL publications. Kampman declared: “Our Society considers the embodiment of your organisational activities, the Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, always as the shining example and the principles according to which this Society was erected, as the right ones as proven by practice.”[39] Their ties continued throughout the war.

Admiration for the active society under the directorship of Capart was also expressed in 1944 by Henri Asselberghs (1887–1980),[40] the director of the Dutch Railway Museum in Utrecht and Egyptologist ‘on the side’: “A country that has come to the fore in a completely new way is Belgium, where the interest in everything concerning Ancient Egypt has found an unrivalled pacesetter in Jean Capart since the end of the last century. The Egyptian section of the Cinquantenaire Museum in Brussels grew to its full glory under him and the Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth is the first institution I know of that specialises exclusively in Egypt. It is thanks to its initiative that much has been achieved in Belgium and beyond, that would otherwise not have been achieved.”

**The FÉRÉ and the creation of international Egyptological research infrastructures**

In the 1920s there were several voices calling for the FÉRÉ to become an international study centre for Egyptologists. In 1926, Günther Roeder (1889–1966, Hildesheim) told the Berlin newspaper *Der Tag*: “Brussels is easily accessible from England, France, Holland or Germany, and is also favourably situated for Americans coming to Europe. Professor Capart should make it an international

[37] Translated from Dutch. Archives of the RMAH, AÉRÉ-EGKE: BE/380469/2/319, folder Ex Oriente Lux: Letter from Kampman to Capart, 14/03/1939.

[38] During the linguistic survey made by the Germans during WW I, Capart averred: “I speak Flemish as it is spoken in Brussels”. But he also declared being unable to write in Dutch (Archives of the RMAH, Dir./59/12 and 134/2).

[39] Translated from Dutch. Archives of the RMAH, AÉRÉ-EGKE: BE/380469/2/319, folder Ex Oriente Lux: Letter from Kampman to Capart, 07/08/1939.

[40] For the relationship between Asselberghs and Capart, see De Meyer 2021, and p. 333 for this quote in particular.

centre for joint Egyptological work."[41] In 1928, at the 17th International Congress of Orientalists in Oxford, Capart emphasised the centralising role he wished to give the FÉRÉ: "La situation géographique de la Belgique facilite à nos collègues l'utilisation des matériaux ainsi réunis. (…) Si notre institut est belge par sa formation, il aspire à devenir une œuvre plus générale, utile aux progrès de la science."[42]

In response several European Egyptologists – Wilhelm Spiegelberg (1870–1930), Henry R. Hall (1873–1930), and Alan H. Gardiner (1879–1963) among them – testified to the importance of the work the FÉRÉ had already accomplished and asked that it become the Egyptological documentation centre of Europe. They proposed that Egyptologists deposit not only their books and articles in Brussels with the FÉRÉ, but also their photographs of Egyptian antiquities. Finally, they suggested that *Chronique d'Égypte* should act as a bulletin for Egyptologists to keep their colleagues informed of their research and to solicit their collaboration, thereby eliminating needless duplication. From that moment on, more and more Egyptologists felt that the FÉRÉ was destined to play an international role. In 1929, for example, Bernard Bruyère (1879–1971, IFAO) declared, "this centre for Egyptological studies would soon become the meeting place for all scholars and artists who were interested in Egypt."[43]

In 1930, Capart organised the *Semaine égyptologique et papyrologique de Bruxelles* (14–20 September 1930), the first international conference that brought together Egyptologists and Papyrologists only (80 participants), and no longer all orientalists. Here it should be mentioned that the FÉRÉ had the same ambitions for Papyrology as it did for Egyptology, in terms of becoming an international study centre for Papyrologists. And so, in that same *Semaine égyptologique et papyrologique* in 1930, the Papyrologists in attendance decided to establish an International Papyrology Committee with a permanent secretariat at the RMAH. This still exists today as the 'International Association of Papyrologists' (AIP).[44]

The first *Semaine* was a great success, and the FÉRÉ organised a second one, 7–13 July 1935, again bringing numerous Egyptologists to Brussels. Five years later, a third *Semaine* could not take place due to the outbreak of WW II. After the war, Europe licked its wounds. Not all oriental societies, generally speaking, survived this ordeal unscathed. Capart, too, feared for the continued existence of the FÉRÉ; thus he reacted enthusiastically when his Danish colleague Constantin-Emiel Sander-Hansen (1905–1963) proposed to him the idea of an International Egyptological Association, bridging national borders and creating a united international society. This idea appeared in print for the first time in *Chronique*

[41] *Der Tag* (Berlin), 20 June 1926.
[42] Capart 1928b: 20–22.
[43] Archives of the RMAH, AÉRÉ-EGKE: BE/380469/2/127, folder Bruyère, Bernard: Letter from Bruyère to Capart, 11/09/1929.
[44] https://aip.ulb.be//index.html (accessed 8 August 2022).

*d'Égypte* on 1 October 1945.[45] In April 1947, Capart discussed the statutes of the future body with Sander-Hansen in Brussels and they decided that Capart should become its first president, with the initial meeting to be held at Copenhagen in August 1947.[46] But Capart's unexpected death on 16 June 1947 intervened, and Adriaan de Buck (1892–1959) of Leiden University became the first president.[47] While in August 1947 the International Association of Egyptologists (IAE) was officially founded, it would take almost thirty years before the first International Congress of Egyptology (ICE) was held, in Cairo, 2–10 October 1976. Until that moment, Egyptology remained merely a section in the International Orientalist Congresses, as it had been since the late 19th century.[48] Capart's *Semaines* were thus in many ways visionary, cut short by WW II and his demise. The IAE itself also did not really physically exist until it was (re)vivified at the 1976 ICE, having existed literally only on the title page of every volume of the 'Annual Egyptological Bibliography' (AEB) that appeared since 1947.[49]

The creation of the AEB at the first meeting of the IAE in Copenhagen under the presidency of de Buck – and, since then, a Dutch undertaking until its transfer to Oxford in 2009 as the 'Online Egyptological Bibliography' (OEB)[50] – also did not come *ex nihilo*, but seems to have had its roots in the activities of the FÉRÉ. During the 1935 *Semaine* in Brussels, the attending Egyptologists expressed the wish that the FÉRÉ would distribute *fiches bibliographiques* for Egyptological publications, just as it already had for papyrological ones since 1932[51] (Fig. 6).

> Les égyptologues réunis en congrès à Bruxelles, en juillet 1935, ont émis le vœu que la Fondation Égyptologique leur distribue, à partir du 1er janvier 1936, des fiches bibliographiques semblables à celles qu'elle envoie, depuis 1932, aux papyrologues. L'instrument d'études le plus utile pour eux, ont-ils déclaré, est la masse abondante de références sur les divers problèmes de l'archéologie et de la philologie égyptiennes. Par suite de la grande dispersion des ouvrages scientifiques, c'est, pour chacun, une tâche presque irréalisable de se tenir au courant des publications récentes.

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[45] Bruffaerts 2013: 236.

[46] Bruffaerts 2013: 236–237.

[47] Werbrouck 1948: 10.

[48] Reineke (ed.) 1979: 3.

[49] Janssen 1979: 333.

[50] In 2009 the AEB changed into a digital online format (OEB), and its seat was moved to Oxford where the University of Oxford and the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich jointly collaborate on it.

[51] The history of the papyrological *fiches bibliographiques* is presented in Martin 2010.

BREASTED James Henry, The Dawn of Conscience.

New York - London, Ch. Scribner's Sons, 1934, 8°, XXVIII - 431 pp., pls.

C.R. par A.M. Blackman, Ann. of Archaeol. and Anthrop. 1934, p. 141.- H. Bonnet, Oriental. Lit.zeit. 37 (1934) coll. 599-600.- ( J.Capart ), Chron. d'Eg. 9 (1934) pp. 278-281.- A. de Buck, Jaarbericht n°2 van ...Ex Oriente Lux 1934 pp.26-27.- R.O. Faulkner, Journ. of Eg. Archaeol. 20 (1934) pp. 219-221.- S.A.B. Mercer, Eg. Relig. 2 (1934) pp. 70-71.- Journ. of the Manchester Eg. and Orient. Soc. 19 (1935) pp. 53-54.

BOESER P.A.A., Demotic Papyrus from the Roman Imperial Time.

Egyptian Religion 3 (1935) pp. 27-63.

Traité de morale au Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden

Fig. 6: Two specimens of the *fiches bibliographiques*, showing that references to (book) reviews were also included (CR = *compte rendu*) and sometimes brief comments on the contents, just like in the later AEB.

La Fondation va donc entreprendre ce travail. Pour le mener à bien, elle croit devoir compter sur la collaboration et l'adhésion des savants et des organismes qui s'intéressent au développement de l'égyptologie. Elle espère qu'ils voudront bien lui signaler sans délai leurs nouvelles publications (spécialement celles qui paraissent dans des revues non égyptologiques) ou, si possible, les lui faire parvenir pour un compte rendu dans la « Chronique d'Égypte ». Elle estime pouvoir recueillir ainsi, en moyenne, six cents références par année, qu'elle enverra périodiquement à ses abonnés sous la forme de fiches bibliographiques. Elle mettra de la sorte à la disposition des égyptologues un moyen d'information particulièrement sûr et rapide. La première série de fiches sera expédiée aux adhérents vers le début d'avril.

> Le prix de l'abonnement annuel sera de 10 belgas. Il a été intentionnellement fixé à un taux bien inférieur à celui des frais réels de reproduction et d'envoi pour permettre à tous les égyptologues, et même aux étudiants, de se préparer une sérieuse documentation bibliographique. La Fondation, en acceptant la mission que lui ont confiée les membres de la Semaine Égyptologique de 1935, n'a pour but que de rendre service aux chercheurs qui consacrent leurs efforts à l'étude de l'histoire pharaonique.[52]

Until now, it has gone unnoticed in the literature that these *fiches bibliographiques* that the FÉRÉ distributed among its members worldwide, are in fact the immediate forerunner of the AEB and ergo also of the OEB.[53] Since its creation in 1947 at the International Congress of Egyptologists in Copenhagen, the AEB had its home in Leiden where de Buck was Professor of Egyptology, and it remained there for sixty years. Perhaps things would have gone differently had Capart not died in 1947, just before he was to have become president of the IAE. The work on the AEB might have gone to Brussels, as a logical continuation of the *fiches bibliographiques*.

After the death of Capart, Werbrouck reported in 1948:

> Les informations bibliographiques ont été une des activités sérieuses de la Fondation Égyptologique. La section papyrologique pourra maintenir l'impression et le service des fiches; pour la section pharaonique nous verrons ce que les circonstances d'après guerre et l'association internationale nous suggéreront de faire.[54]

The distribution of the Egyptological *fiches bibliographiques* was abandoned not long after Capart's demise.

Nevertheless, the FÉRÉ played an important role in the creation of an international research infrastructure for the discipline of Egyptology – by organising the first international conferences of Egyptology, collecting and distributing references in Egyptological literature, setting up a photographic archive available to everyone, and compiling one of the most exhaustive Egyptological libraries worldwide. Possibly, it is because of the much smaller *Hinterland* that a Belgian society – by contrast to those in the surrounding larger nation states – transcended national concerns and instead took transnational and international research infrastructures to heart. Moreover, the presence in Brussels of the Mundaneum in the *Palais du Cinquantenaire*, the same premises where Capart presided over his Royal Museums of Art and History, may have influenced his mindset in the wish to create an overarching universal documentation centre for Egyptology.[55]

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[52] Anonymous 1936.

[53] Not mentioned in historical overviews of and reflections on the AEB/OEB such as Arnaudiès 2003; Baines 2020.

[54] Werbrouck 1948: 11.

[55] For the Mundaneum, see Wright 2014 and the comments by Van Rinsveld 2017: 77,

**Aftermath**

The creation of the FÉRÉ owed everything to the personal ambitions and aspirations of one man, Jean Capart. His enduring enthusiasm and energy made the society thrive throughout his lifetime; after his death in 1947 the society would never again reach the zenith that it had known before. Moreover, during the mid-twentieth century privately funded learned societies, as a means to support academia, lost traction to the benefit of national research councils. In Belgium the *Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique* (FNRS) / *Nationaal Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek* (NFWO) – the National Fund for Scientific Research – was created by King Albert I (1875–1934), the husband of Queen Elisabeth, on 27 April 1928. It was one of the first research councils on the European continent. Several of the same individuals who were on the board of administrators of the FÉRÉ also were key figures in the creation of the NFWO: bankers Émile Francqui and Félicien Cattier signed the document while the start-up capital of just over 109 million Belgian francs came primarily from businesses.[56] Jean Willems, who was also in the board of administrators of the FÉRÉ, was in charge of the day-to-day management of the FNRS/NFWO from its foundation until his death in 1970. Willems also managed the University Foundation, which stemmed from the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB) in 1920, in charge of the provision of food to the suffering population during WW I. After the war the remaining funds were used to set up a foundation to support higher education and scholarship, and it is this foundation that funded Capart's visiting professorship to the USA in 1924–25.[57] Thus Capart tapped networks and resources of wealthy businessmen and bankers, politicians and administrators, to set up his own foundation for the benefit of Belgian Egyptology, and to navigate the current of upcoming national scientific research councils. Having the FÉRÉ embedded in the RMAH has helped sustain its position, and in 2023 the FÉRÉ celebrated its first 100 years as an active society.

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[56] https://www.fwo.be/en/the-fwo/profile/history-of-the-fwo/ (accessed 5 August 2022).

[57] De Meyer, 2023 and forthcoming.

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# Fundraising for Amarna

## Evidence from the EES Archive

Stephanie L. Boonstra[*]

The Egypt Exploration Society (EES) has been organizing and supporting fieldwork in Egypt and Sudan since its founding in 1882. Unlike other international archaeological institutions, the Society, over much of its existence, has not regularly received governmental grants and thus has had to rely on various means of 'crowdfunding' to pursue its goals. The costly 1930s excavations at Amarna provide an informative case study to demonstrate the ways in which the Society and its field directors raised funds for excavations in a period shortly after Egypt gained partial political independence from Britain. These fundraising methods included public exhibitions in London, promotion in the popular British press, appeals to the EES Committee and members, soliciting funds from museums and collections desiring display-worthy artefacts, and even melting down a 'crock of gold'. This paper provides evidence for this multifaceted crowdfunding from the EES Tell el-Amarna dig notebooks, documentation, and correspondence, EES Committee minutes, photographs and records from the exhibition held at the Wellcome Museum, film footage, distribution lists of finds, and a popular memoir from one of the British archaeologists on site.

### Introduction

The Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF; the Egypt Exploration Society/EES from 1919 onward) was founded in 1882 with a mission to excavate, record, and publish ancient sites throughout Egypt then later to present the resulting antiquities to museums and public institutions internationally.[1] Since its founding by Victorian novelist Amelia B. Edwards (1831–1892[2]) the Egypt Exploration Society has surveyed and/or excavated more than one hundred fifty sites and monuments in Egypt and Sudan, published over three hundred fifty monographs and periodicals,

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[1] EEF 1887 Report; Stevenson 2019: 10; Graves and Garnett in Edwards 2000: xxx; Jones 2022: 75.

[2] All birth-death dates after Bierbrier 2019.

and distributed tens of thousands of excavated artefacts to dozens of museums and collections worldwide.[3]

The EES's excavations at Tell el-Amarna (Amarna hereafter) in the 1930s led by a young, charismatic, and inexperienced director, John D.S. Pendlebury (1904–1941), provide an informative case study for the funding of British-led excavations in Egypt. Due to a lack of governmental funding for the excavations, Pendlebury and the EES Committee utilised a wide variety of fundraising strategies. Some were considered standard practice at the time, while others were more unusual.

## The beginnings of distribution

Since the Society's inception in 1882, the EEF/EES has relied on donations from individuals and institutions to fund its work. It was very quickly recognised that the EEF could better solicit donations from institutions if it was able to provide a 'gift' in recompense, i.e., a *quid pro quo*.

After the bombardment of Alexandria and the resulting British protectorate over Egypt, the British, in particular, had a political advantage in the bending of antiquities laws. Although the export of Egyptian antiquities was illegal at the time,[4] William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853–1942), on behalf of the EEF, was able to negotiate with Gaston Maspero (1846–1916), the head of the French-run Service des antiquités de l'Egypte and the Boulaq Museum (later the Egyptian Museum in Cairo), to create the *partage* system in 1883, which would allow a near 50–50 split of excavated, non-monumental antiquities between the Museum in Cairo and the excavator.[5] The justification for the *partage* system, in juxtaposition to the earlier Egyptian laws prohibiting the removal of antiquities, was that the artefacts were destined for public and educational institutions globally.[6] Reid noted that the political situation enabled Maspero to 'persuade' the Egyptian government to give a 'generous share' of excavated antiquities to the excavator as a 'gift'.[7] The nebulous terminology surrounding the (hostage) Egyptian government 'gifting' antiquities (an act that was only reaffirmed as illegal earlier in 1883) masks the European political machinations of the period.

## The Egypt Exploration Society at Amarna

The so-called 'interwar years' (the 1920s and 30s) was a unique period in the history of the EES. Globally, this era was a time of great change with the post-

[3] EES website; Artefacts of Excavation.

[4] 1880 Decree of Muhammed Tawfik on the Prohibition of the Export of Antiquities meant that all monuments and antiquities belonged to the state (Stevenson 2019: 259).

[5] Stevenson 2019: 30–37.

[6] Stevenson 2019: 223.

[7] Reid 2002: 179.

World War I 'Roaring Twenties' followed by the economic collapse of the 'Great Depression' at the beginning of the 1930s.

Between 1882 and 1922, Egypt was a British protectorate.[8] After WWI, Britain's attempts to quell Egyptian calls for independence by deporting popular Egyptian politicians from the Wafd party led to a nationwide uprising, the 1919 Revolution.[9] Due to increased pressure on the occupying forces, Britain issued a unilateral declaration of Egyptian independence on 28 February 1922.[10]

The rise of Egyptian nationalism was then echoed in Egypt's French-run Service des antiquités de l'Egypte with the tightening of antiquities laws in line with the demands of Egyptian politicians who insisted on more control over their country's cultural heritage.[11] Instead of the *partage* system that the EEF had negotiated in 1883, all Egyptian artefacts were to stay in Egypt; but the Egyptian Museum curators could, at their discretion, allow foreign missions to take artefacts deemed of lesser importance out of the country.[12] In practice, these items were usually seen as 'duplicates' of items already held by the museum or objects that were fragmentary.[13]

This change in law was enacted most dramatically later in 1922 when the excavations directed by Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon uncovered the tomb of Tutankhamun and its many 'wonderful' artefacts. Carnarvon believed that this discovery would be a great boon to western Egyptology collections and was greatly disappointed to be told that every artefact from the tomb was to stay in Cairo.[14] This became quite a dilemma for western Egyptology – the phenomenal rise in the public's interest in the aesthetics of Egyptology (i.e., Egyptomania) was in stark contrast to the political climate and the resulting inability to export show-stopping antiquities.[15]

Nevertheless, EES-run excavations continued, and in the 1920s and 30s the Society held three of its largest concessions simultaneously in Abydos, Armant, and Amarna. Armant was largely funded by its co-director and benefactor Sir Robert Mond (1867–1938), a wealthy chemist.[16] Likewise, the work led by Amice Calverley (1896–1959) and Myrtle Broome (1888–1978) in the Temple of Seti I at Abydos received generous donations from the philanthropic American business magnate John D. Rockefeller (1839–1937).

[8] Reid 2002: 172–173; Reid 2015: 159.
[9] Reid 2019: 42–43.
[10] Reid 2019: 51.
[11] Reid 2015: 159.
[12] Stevenson 2019: 145.
[13] Reid 2015: 161.
[14] Reid 2015: 159; Stevenson 2019: 145–146.
[15] Reid 2019: 51.
[16] Newberry 1938: 209–210; Bierbrier 2019: 323.

The EES excavations at Amarna, however, relied heavily on the donations of individuals and museums, particularly those in the United States. This was in large part due to the US not suffering the same financial losses that much of Europe did in WWI and thus Americans, both individuals and institutions, had more funds available to devote to archaeology than their European counterparts.[17] The EES experienced stiff competition for these donors as the first half of the twentieth century saw the rise in US museum-led excavations in Egypt, particularly from New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art), Boston (Harvard and the Museum of Fine Arts), and Philadelphia (Penn Museum).[18] Some funds were generated from EES membership subscriptions, but others were more closely related to the *partage* system – that is, financial donations made before the start of an excavation season in order to secure 'donations' of artefacts from the season's work. As mentioned above, this system was specifically set up between the EEF and the Service des antiquités as it provided an opportunity for the financial sustainability of excavations, deemed appropriate by those in power at the time.

The EES excavated at the Middle Egyptian site of Amarna from 1921 to 1937. The 1920s excavations were managed by a series of directors, including Thomas Eric Peet (1882–1934), Charles Leonard Woolley (1880–1960), and Francis Llewellyn Griffith (1862–1934), but from the 1930–1931 season until the excavations ceased in late 1936, the work was directed by the young and inexperienced Classicist and archaeologist John Devitt Stringfellow Pendlebury. Despite having only worked as an archaeologist in Egypt for one season (1928–1929 at both Armant and Amarna), Pendlebury was primarily chosen for this role because Henri Frankfort (1897–1954), the director of the previous season who had taken on a post with the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, recommended him to the EES Committee.[19]

Pendlebury's staff, which changed over the seven seasons under his direction, included several key non-Egyptian members. Hilda Pendlebury (1891–1970), John's wife, joined the excavations on and off over the years and assisted with the archaeology as well as running the Dig House. From 1930–1932, Mary Chubb (1903–2003), the Society's assistant secretary, was employed to keep records, assist in writing reports, and to occasionally join the archaeological work on site. Chubb's most notable contribution, however, was the memoir that she penned about her time at Amarna, entitled *Nefertiti Lived Here*,[20] which provides an engaging, although not always entirely accurate, view of life on the excavation. Hilary Waddington (1903–1989) and his wife Ruth (1905–1978) both joined the excavations in the early 1930s. Hilary's skills as an architect and artist are visible in the EES archive (EES.TA.WAD; see Fig. 2 below). Herbert Walter Fairman

[17] Goode 2007: 4.
[18] Reid 2019: 28.
[19] Bierbrier 2019: 168; Grundon 2007: 112.
[20] Chubb 1998.

(1907–1982) joined the team as an epigrapher and language specialist after Pendlebury fired John C. Bennett (1908–1977) after the 1930–1931 season. Ralph Lavers (1907–1969), Margaret (Peggy) Drower (1911–2012), and Charles Brasch (1909–1973) were a few of the other non-Egyptian members of the team led by Pendlebury.

Most of the excavation personnel at Amarna in the 1930s were Egyptians from the local villages of el-Hagg Qandil and el-Till and from further south in the Upper Egyptian village of Quft. Little is known about the local workers from el-Hagg Qandil and el-Till; there are lists of names but with virtually no context in the Amarna archive.[21] In contrast, the names of the personnel from Quft are recorded. These men include Umbarak Mohammed (Selim) el Bedawi (who was chief *reis* for the entirety of Pendlebury's directed excavations, 1930–1936), *reis* Ali Mohammed Sherraif, *reis* Hussein Sawag, and *reis* Mahmoud Umbarak (all of whom were also employed as *reis'* for the duration). The 1930s Amarna excavations employed up to thirty-four Qufti archaeologists in a single season (1931–1932) but other seasons far fewer men were employed (e.g., the 1934–1935 season there were only sixteen).[22] Some, often anecdotal, information can be gleaned about Qufti involvement in the excavation in other parts of the Amarna archive. The Waddington collection (EES.TA.WAD) includes some photographs of Kassar Umbarak (son of chief *reis* Umbarak, employed as an archaeologist at Amarna from 1930–1933) and letters (largely in English) between Kassar and Hilary.[23] Furthermore, a series of twelve letters (within EES.TA.COR.03.a) in English and Arabic document direct correspondence between some Quftis and the EES London staff.

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[21] In recent years, the work of scholars such as Gemma Tully has increased our knowledge of the local workforce at Amarna. For example, the Amarna Project's current–cook is Abdu, the son of the *ghaffir* (guard) of the Dig House, Mohamed Omar. Mohamed Omar, in turn, is the son of one of the Hagg Qandil excavation personnel, Omar Osman Abed Shargawi, from the 1930s EES Amarna excavations (Tully in Stevens 2020: 53; Barry Kemp, personal communication, 05/09/2022). Stephen Quirke's *Hidden Hands* also cites the known names of the Egyptian workforce at Amarna during Petrie's 1891–1892 excavation; it may prove possible to cross-reference Petrie's lists with the notebook in the EES archive (Quirke 2010: 227–234; EES.TA.08.03, see n. 25).

[22] Although the archaeologists from Quft are mentioned in various areas throughout the EES Amarna archive, much of the information cited here (including the anglicized spellings) is from a register in the archive written by Pendlebury with Waddington and Chubb as 'Wytnesse' entitled 'Moneys of the Men of Qupht: With some animadverciouns on the characters and habytes of the same' (original spelling retained). Although this register is helpful in providing a full record of Qufti archaeologists employed at Amarna for each season in the 1930s and their titles, many of the character judgments made by the British archaeologists are demeaning.

[23] Biddle 2017.

The key non-Egyptian staff members received salaries and/or paid expenses. For the three-month 1930–1931 season, Pendlebury received a salary of £150 plus £80 travel expenses; Waddington and Bennett each received a salary of £100 plus £100 travel expenses.[24]

The Egyptian personnel all received wages dependent on their position with the Quftis receiving higher wages as recorded in the register in the EES archive. In contrast to the salaries of the non-Egyptian members of staff, the Egyptian salaries, in total for the thirty-one Quftis and dozens, if not more,[25] local men and children, for the 1930–1931 season amounted to £1,346.37 Egyptian pounds – the Egyptian pound was roughly equal to the British pound in 1930.[26]

**Egypt Exploration Society Tell el-Amarna Archive (EES.TA)**

Much of what we know about the 1930s work at Amarna can be found in the large archive of the excavations, held in the EES office in London. There are excavation notebooks; object cards for the finds; find registers; photographic negatives of the excavation work in progress and of artefacts; photographic prints in personal albums; footage from films made on site; correspondence between members of the team, the EES London office, and key stakeholders; records of the distribution of finds; the EES Annual Report to members; and the minutes of the Committee meetings.

The Amarna correspondence archive (EES.TA.COR) contains discussions of the archaeology and finds, as well as comments about the personnel involved in the excavations but one of the most common themes throughout the letters, telegrams, and documents is finances. This is vividly documented by a telegram exchange from 1935. On 7 February 1935, the EES office received a telegram from the excavation simply stating, ‘I WANT MORE MONEY – PENDLEBURY’, to which a telegram response was sent: ‘SENDING TWO THOUSAND SUPPLEMENT TO AMARNA EXPEDITION’ from the Brooklyn Museum.[27]

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[24] According to the Bank of England, £100 in 1930 was roughly equivalent to £4,563.73 in 2021.

[25] The sources for the number of local men and children for the 1930–1931 season are conflicting. Chubb (1998: 54) stated that roughly seventy-five men were selected for work and an unspecified number of children as basket boys and girls. In a letter to Glanville (EES.TA.COR.01.c.04, 12/11/1930), Pendlebury noted that fifty local men were hired for the season. Citing this letter, Grundon (2007: 129) wrote that fifty local men plus two-hundred forty children were hired for this season. An accounts book titled ‘Bakshish’ in the archive (EES.TA.08.03) contains lists of names of local workers, some accompanied by dates, others are incomplete. In what appears to be a list of workers from the 1930–1931 season, thirty-five local men are listed but the names of only four children are mentioned. This book has many passages and pages crossed out and others removed and thus cannot be considered reliable for numbers of workers, but it does helpfully include the names of the local staff.

[26] Issawi 1966: 524; Denzel 2010: 599.

[27] EES.TA.COR.02.a.104 and EES.TA.COR.02.a.105, respectively.

Many other documents in EES.TA.COR are dozens of letters between major donors/institutions and the EES. This includes personal letters from excavation team members to wealthy individuals whose financial donations led to artefacts being donated to their local museums, and regular reports to major donors, along with correspondence between museum officials and the EES London office regarding their donations.

**Division and distribution**

The fifteen seasons of EES excavations at Amarna resulted in the discovery of over 7,500 artefacts[28] that were subsequently distributed to over seventy institutions globally.[29] Documentation of the relationship between donors (both individual and institutional) exists in the records of the distribution of the finds of the season (EES.DIST). Following the division of finds between the Service des antiquités de l'Egypte and the excavators, the artefacts destined for the UK were distributed amongst the institutional donors which had supported the work. The lists and correspondence regarding the EES office distribution of Amarna finds from the 1930s can be found in EES.DIST.52, EES.DIST.54–58, and EES.DIST. 60–61. Furthermore, the object cards (EES.TA.OC) often bear the name of the collection to which the object was sent. These hand-written notations might have been added later by the EES secretary, Mary Jonas (1874–1950).

During the 1930–1931 season, a beautiful, small 'princess' head (now believed to depict a non-royal male; MMA 31.114.1, Fig. 1) was discovered. Pendlebury reportedly adored this find and was particularly pleased when it was not selected for the Egyptian Museum in Cairo by Pierre Lacau (1873–1963) the director of both the museum and the Service des antiquités de l'Egypte.[30] During the division the head was 'donated' to the Metropolitan Museum in thanks for a £1,000 donation from Helen Hubbard (called Mrs John Hubbard in most EES correspondence) in memory of her husband John and their only child.

The EEF/EES would frequently state that artefacts were 'gifted' or 'donated' to museums, institutions, and even occasionally to individuals,[31] when, in fact, they were in recompense for financial donations or subscriptions to the Society. In common charity dialogue, this transactional approach to giving is called 'exchange theory'. Modern fundraising experts Adrian Sargeant and Elaine Jay outline that donors engage in such exchange theory 'because of the tangible rewards

[28] It must be noted, however, that far more than 7,500 artefacts were discovered at Amarna. Most objects that were not taken to Cairo for the division were discarded in spoil heaps or buried in 'dumps' (Kemp 2013: 26; Barry Kemp, personal communication, February 2022).

[29] Stevenson 2019: 148.

[30] EES 1931: 11.

[31] Stevenson 2019: 14.

they receive for their donation'.[32] Therefore, although the terminology of 'gifted' or 'donated' used by the Society and/or a museum makes the exchange appear philanthropic or altruistic on the surface, the financial support received by the EES came with clear expectations of receiving quality artefacts for their collections.

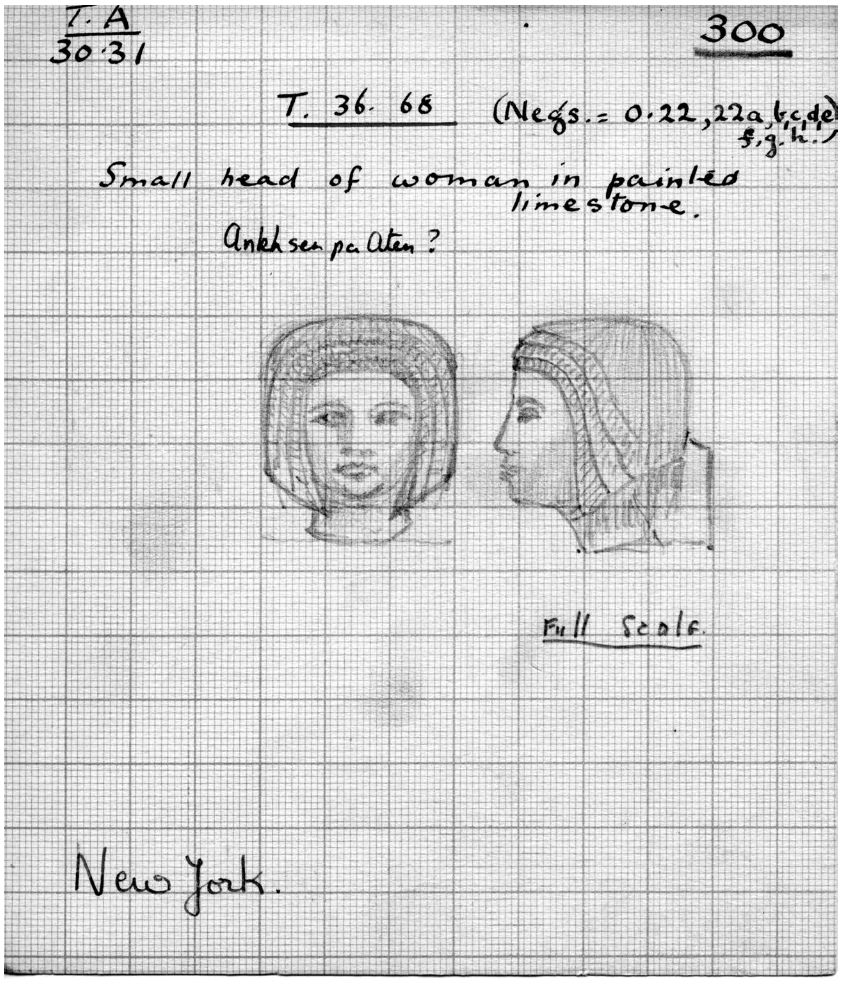


Fig. 1 (pp. 174–175): The object card (EES.TA.OC.30–31.0300) and negative (EES.TA.NEG.30–31.O.107) of the 'princess' head, donated to the Metropolitan Museum (MMA.31.114.1) in recompense for a large donation from Helen Hubbard (EES.TA.COR.02.b.20). Courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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[32] Sargeant and Jay 2014: 71.

10th December, 1931.

Dear Mrs. Hubbard,

I am asked by the Committee to let you know that the beautiful little head of the Princess found last year at El Amarna has been sent to the Metropolitan Museum of New York in recognition of the valuable support you have given us for these excavations. You have already received photographs of this head, and will find it illustrated in the last issue of our Journal.

Mr. Pendlebury writes that work is going forward satisfactorily this season, and that the whole party is working well and happily.

Yours very truly,

Secretary.

The twenty-five letters between the EES and Helen Hubbard constitute a sizeable section of the Amarna correspondence archive. They exemplify the efforts of the EES to cultivate and hold on to major donors. The team sent Hubbard regular reports on the excavation's progress, met with her in Europe, ensured that some of the finest objects were donated to the museum of her liking, and even presented her with a cast of a bust of Nefertiti – the original, excavated in 1933, remained in Egypt and is on display in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (JE 59286). These efforts appear to have been successful, as Helen Hubbard continued to donate large sums (at least £1,800 as evidenced in EES.TA.COR) to the Amarna excavations throughout the 1930s.[33]

The Brooklyn Museum was the leading institutional donor for the Amarna excavations during the same years, and thus similarly received some of the more choice finds. The museum donated an annual 'subscription' of $5,000 USD (roughly £1,000 GBP[34]) plus some additional sums, totalling $28,000 USD (roughly £5,600 GBP), to the Amarna excavations between 1932 and 1936.[35] The intention behind this financial support was made clear in a letter from the museum's director William Henry Fox in a letter dated 13 October 1933, in which he states 'I hope that the work [at Amarna] will be successful and produce good results both for the Egypt Exploration Society and for ourselves. We have received the objects allotted to us from the last winter's work and speaking for myself, I am extremely pleased with them'.[36] These financial donations, or 'subscriptions', were largely arranged through the Belgian Egyptologist Jean Capart (1877–1947), who worked as an advisory Egyptology curator and exercised great influence over the museum. Capart acted as a broker or 'middleman' between the Society and the museum.[37]

This system of distribution, with the highest financial donation leading directly to the most desirable artefacts being 'donated' to the donor museum (or the donor's chosen museum), was not only transactional rather than altruistically charitable in nature, but it also occasionally backfired.

In late 1933, a typo in a letter from the Society's secretary Mary Jonas to donors in Copenhagen stated that the Brooklyn Museum donated $1,000 USD to the Amarna excavation rather than the £1,000 British pounds actually pledged, which was a significant difference considering the exchange rate at the time.[38] This error

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[33] Another notable US donor to the EES Amarna excavations was the wealthy philanthropist Ellen Browning Scripps (1836–1932) who donated $9,000 to the EES during her lifetime and then left a legacy of $10,000. This endowment in part allowed the excavations to continue during the difficult financial crises of the 1930s (Stevenson 2019: 156).

[34] See n. 38 below regarding the exchange rate.

[35] EES.DIST.55.

[36] EES.DIST.55.25.

[37] Grundon 2007: 156, 171, 173; EES.DIST.55.11; EES.DIST.55.33.

[38] See EES.TA.COR.02.b.03 and EES.TA.COR.02.b.04. According to the World Econom-

led the Carlsberg Foundation to donate £300 GBP (roughly £100 GBP more than what was believed to have been given by the Brooklyn Museum) to the excavations. Upon learning that the Brooklyn Museum had actually donated £1,000 GBP, more than triple the Carlsberg Foundation's pledge (which would thus mean Brooklyn would receive the 'best' of the artefacts), Copenhagen promptly withdrew their donation in full. This exchange reveals starkly the core reasoning behind much of the 'charitable' donations to the EES excavations while the distribution of artefacts was a common practice.

**Crowdfunding**

The media was also a useful fundraising tool for the Amarna excavations in the 1930s.On the more academic side, there were the first two volumes of the excavation reports – the *City of Akhenaten* Excavation Memoirs[39] – published by the EES, and also a number of short preliminary reports in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*[40] at the end of each season. While the season was still ongoing, some of the spectacular finds were also published in the Illustrated London News,[41] the New York Times, and the Daily Telegraph (see below). This dissemination of the fieldwork to the general public was a commonplace practice for the EES in the 1930s, as an attempt to generate financial support from a wider, non-academic audience.

Perhaps a bit less conventional were the reels of film footage that Pendlebury and his team produced during their seasons on site (EES.TA.VID). This film footage shows overviews of the archaeological site, excavations in progress, daily life for the British team at Amarna, *fantasias* (parties) and games with the Egyptian archaeologists and labourers, and even the seemingly more mundane aspects of an excavation such as the sorting of finds for the division at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. These films were created primarily by Pendlebury and Waddington between 1930 and 1933, likely as a marketing tool in the hope of securing further financial supporters for the fieldwork.

As had become standard practice in British Egyptology, exhibitions were held to showcase the antiquities excavated each season which the Society acquired in accordance with *partage*. The exhibitions generally took place in London, including at University College London, Burlington House, and King's College (EES. EXHIB). But the 1931 exhibition, held at The Wellcome Historical Medical Museum in Westminster, London, was organised to be especially grand in order to solicit donations to fund the next season's excavation. As the Society no longer

ic Forum, due to the devaluation of the US dollar in 1933, a single British pound was worth as much as 5 US dollars. Thus, a $1,000 donation would only be worth around £200 (www. weforum.org).

[39] Peet and Woolley 1923; Frankfort and Pendlebury 1933.

[40] E.g., Pendlebury 1933a.

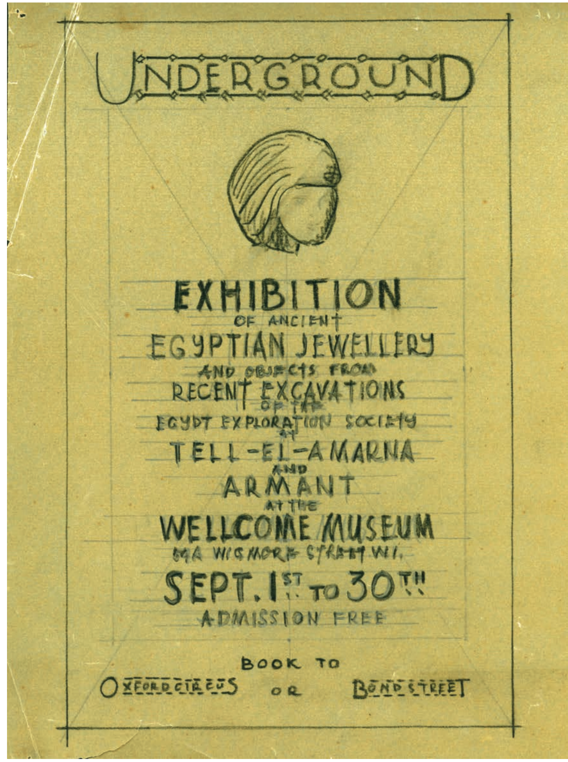
[41] See, for example, the multi-page, well illustrated article by Pendlebury 1933b: 629–633.

had access to the same calibre of artefacts that were received in the division after 1922, the 1930s exhibitions increasingly relied upon plaster casts of finds that remained in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, and photographs, plans, models, and paintings made during the archaeological work. The 1931 exhibition even included a large number of loans, from a variety of collections, of ancient to modern jewellery in the hopes of attracting a larger audience.[42]

The exhibition would only be a success if it was well attended. Thus, Hilary Waddington, the excavation's architect, was commissioned to create posters to advertise the exhibition. Figure 2 shows the first draft of one of the posters – complete with errors, including misspelling the name Wellcome – alongside a revised version. To attract a wide range of audiences, the EES Committee was even granted special permission to advertise the exhibition in London Underground stations as seen in the third illustrated poster.

Fig. 2 (pp. 178–179): A draft of one version of the exhibition poster (EES.TA.WAD.02.003.1) and the final version (EES.TA.WAD.02.003.2); below, a draft of the exhibition poster for display in the London Underground (EES.TA.WAD.02.007.6); all by Hilary Waddington. Courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society.

[42] EES 1931: 5; EES.COMM.1931: 93, 100–101, 103; EES Exhibition Sub-committee minutes, 23/7/1931.




The exhibition was very well attended with more than 6,000 visitors – and was even extended by almost a full month. However, this attendance and interest unfortunately did not lead to an 'admirable' increase in donations to the excavations. Pendlebury's father Herbert even noted in a letter to Mary Jonas that the core reason for this was the UK's general financial crisis in the early 1930s and he stated that everyone he spoke to wanted to donate more but instead felt the need to reduce their spending.[43]

**The 'Crock of Gold'**

Arguably the most bizarre 'fundraising' method from the 1930s excavations at Amarna centred around a somewhat more sensational and unexpected find from the 1930–1931 season. In an area of the North Suburb described as a 'bewildering labyrinth of slums',[44] the excavators discovered numerous pots that had been buried under the floors of the houses. One intact jar in house T36.63 still had a bowl over the mouth protecting the jar's contents.[45] When the archaeologists removed the lid, they were astonished to see what the jar held. Pendlebury described

[43] EES.TA.COR.02.a.164; Grundon 2007: 145.

[44] DT 18/12/1930.

[45] Bell 1986: 148–149; Chubb 1998: 132–133.

it to the Daily Telegraph: ‘there poured out a flood of gold, ingot after ingot as bright as the day they were buried, and after that silver, rings and bars and bent and broken cups, and last of all as though he were guardian of this treasure a tiny silver figure of a Hittite god with a gold cap. Eight pounds of gold and three of silver poured out while the workmen looked on with open mouths’[46] (Fig. 3).

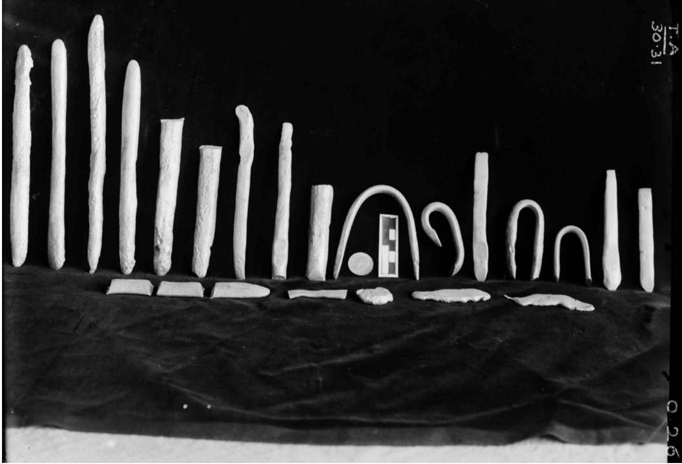
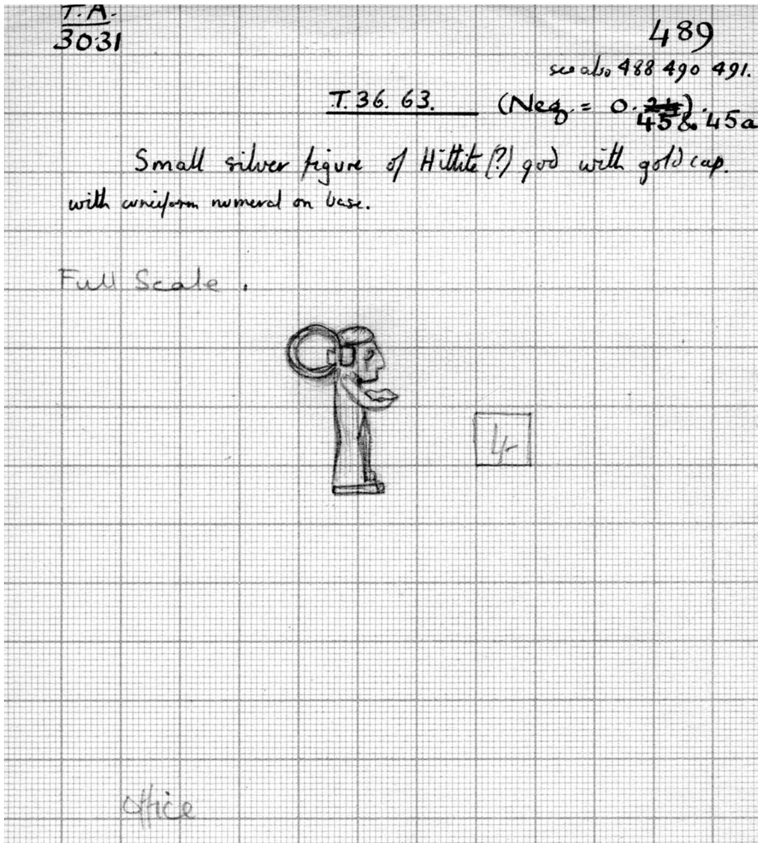


Fig. 3 (pp. 180–181): From top to bottom: negative recreating the discovery of the ‘crock of gold’ (EES.TA.NEG.30–31.O.024b), negatives of the gold and silver (EES.TA.NEG.30–31.O.026), and object card (EES.TA.OC.30–31.489) of the ‘Hittite god’ (JE 55408). Courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society.

[46] Daily Telegraph 18/12/1930.




Mary Chubb's recollection in her memoir *Nefertiti Lived Here* is a bit more fanciful as she recounts a morose conversation between Pendlebury and the team, when he remarked that in order to finish the season, they required £200 more and to 'hope for buried treasure'.[47] Chubb's retelling continues that a few days later, the vessel, or 'Crock of Gold' as it became known, was discovered and she describes the gold and silver that 'tumbled' out of the pot.[48] The team believed it to be the loot of an ancient robber who had hidden the treasure but was unable to retrieve it when the city was abandoned.[49] According to Chubb, Hilda Pendlebury joked with John saying that, before the discovery, he had asked for buried treasure, to which he replied:

> "Yes, so I did – £200 of it." He laughed. "I suppose Cairo will take it all in the Division – but if they *do* divide it with us, I wonder if we could possibly

[47] Chubb 1998: 120.
[48] Chubb 1998: 133.
[49] Chubb 1998: 133.

> convert our share into funds for the dig next year – I'd *like* to dig on funds which had actually been left to us by an eighteenth-dynasty robber."[50]

During the division at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, Pendlebury wrote to EES Honorary Secretary Stephen Glanville (1900–1950), keeping him and the London office informed of the progress.[51] As recounted, the 'crock of gold and its lid' (i.e., the vessel itself) and its Hittite guardian were to be retained by the museum in Cairo but, rather generously, the museum only kept a portion of the gold and silver and allowed the EES to take the rest.

Like most finds from EES excavations, the silver rings and other items were distributed and are now in the British Museum (EA 68503). However, the gold met a different fate. The EES Committee did indeed sell the majority of it to the Bank of England which paid £256 for it. That sum then went towards financing another season's work, as can be seen in a letter from Pendlebury to Mary Jonas outlining the finances for the 1932–1933 season (Fig. 4). Just below the mention of the substantial donation by Mrs Hubbard, Pendlebury noted the £256 from 'Gold / to be kept secret'.[52]

Although this action is treated rather glibly in Mary Chubb's later retelling,[53] the lack of transparency from the EES Committee to its members and the wider public about the fate of the gold from the 'crock of gold', along with Pendlebury's note that it should be 'kept secret' belies the fact that this was not only far from a standard fundraising practice but that it also went against the Society's own mission to 'ensure the preservation' of EES excavated Egyptian antiquities.[54]
This action is not completely without precedent. Following the 1911 season at Meroë, John Garstang (1876–1956), along with his primary supporter Robert Mond, retained a number of items in the division, including a gold spacer bead (Brooklyn 49.29) and 1474.2 grams of gold dust and nuggets,[55] all of which was excavated on site. The majority of this anciently mined gold was used to make replicas of the spacer bead, which were then given to museums as well as to individual sponsors for their personal collections. However, before these replicas were made, nearly 160 grams of the ancient, un-worked gold was directly given to two of the excavation's donors.[56]

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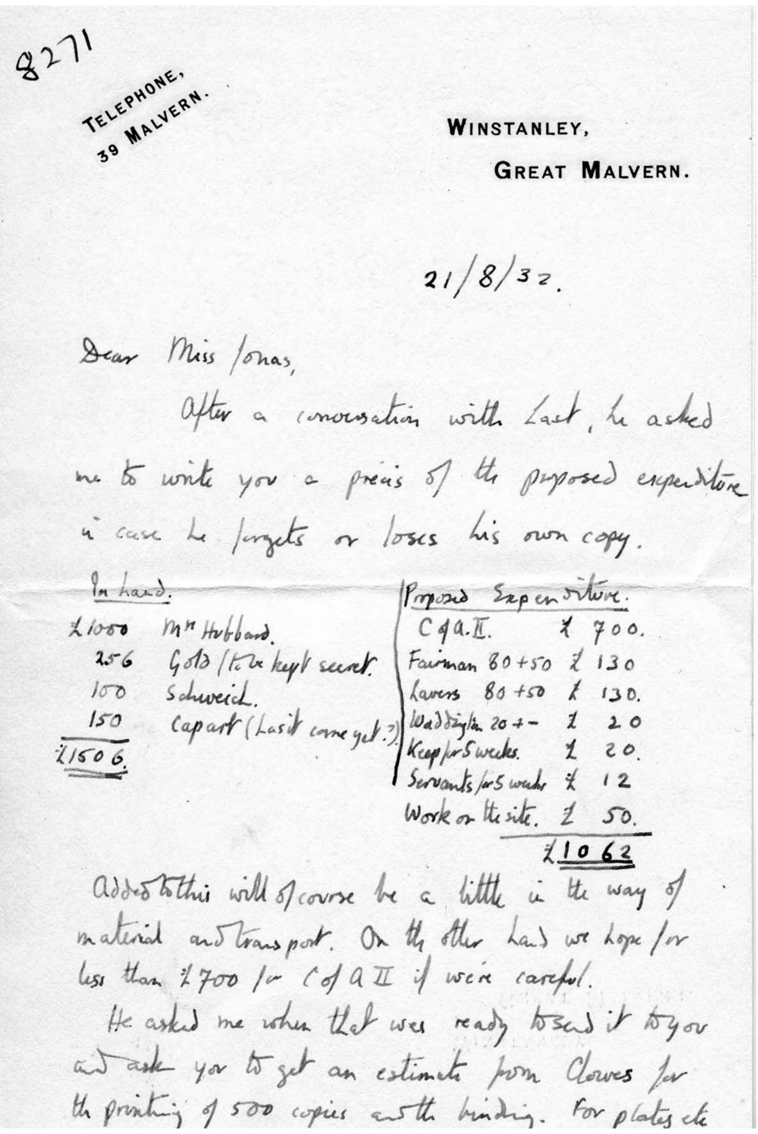
[50] Chubb 1998: 134, original emphasis retained.
[51] EES.TA.COR.01.c.08.
[52] Yellow-gold painted plaster casts were made of the ancient gold bars. They are now in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology, UC72491.
[53] Chubb 1998: 134.
[54] Stevenson 2019: 10; EEF 1887 Report: 25.
[55] In 1911, 1,474.2 grams of gold was worth £206.40 (www.chards.co.uk). According to the Bank of England Inflation Calculator, £206.40 in 1911 would be worth £16,942 in 2021.
[56] Dan Potter, personal communication, 29/06/2022; Bleiberg 2015: 44, 47.

The gold dust and nuggets from ancient Meroë along with the gold ingots from Amarna are archaeological discoveries of import for the study of ancient mining and metalworking; but their modern monetary value was deemed of greater significance to the archaeologists and committees involved in their excavation.



8271

TELEPHONE,
39 MALVERN.

WINSTANLEY,
GREAT MALVERN.

21/8/32.

Dear Miss Jonas,

After a conversation with Last, he asked me to write you a precis of the proposed expenditure in case he forgets or loses his own copy.

| In hand: | |
|---|---|
| £1000 | Mr Hubbard. |
| 256 | Gold (to be kept secret). |
| 100 | Schweich. |
| 150 | Capart (has it come yet?) |
| £1506. | |

| Proposed Expenditure. | |
|---|---|
| C of A. II. | £ 700. |
| Fairman 80+50 | £ 130 |
| Lavers 80+50 | £ 130. |
| Waddington 20+- | £ 20 |
| Keep for 5 weeks. | £ 20. |
| Servants for 5 weeks | £ 12 |
| Work on the site. | £ 50. |
| | £1062 |

Added to this will of course be a little in the way of material and transport. On the other hand we hope for less than £700 for C of A II if we're careful.

He asked me when that was ready to send it to you and ask you to get an estimate from Clowes for the printing of 500 copies and the binding. For plates etc

Fig. 4: Letter regarding financing the 1932–1933 season of excavation at Amarna (EES.TA.COR.03.b.25). Courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society.

**Conclusion**

The EES ceased excavating at Amarna after the 1936–1937 season due to growing financial pressure and the impending Second World War. It was not until 40 years later, in 1977, when Barry J. Kemp, the director of the current work at Amarna, recommenced the EES' archaeological investigations at Amarna.[57] During the intervening four decades, the EES continued the systematic distribution of artefacts to donors, as evidenced, for example, by the many bronzes from the Society's 1960 and 1970s excavations at the Saqqara Sacred Animal Necropolis now in museums such as the Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology (e.g., UC 30479). It was not until 1983 that this practice ceased, after Egypt fully abolished the export of antiquities.[58]

Although the EES no longer resorts to melting down gold artefacts or distributing antiquities to the highest bidder, much of the crowd sourcing mentality of fundraising for excavations and preservation work in Egypt continues to this day. Most recently, the EES held a successful Heritage at Risk Grant appeal in 2020 to provide funding for urgent heritage projects in Egypt. Furthermore, the Amarna Project team has similarly launched fundraising appeals for materials to expand their on-site storage magazine and to reconstruct the Great Aten Temple (which was originally cleared under Pendlebury's direction in the 1930s).

Although the fundraising efforts of the Egypt Exploration Fund/Society have been ongoing for one hundred forty years, the 1930s EES excavations at Amarna truly demonstrate the flexibility and occasional ingenuity, both positive and negative, of the EES personnel in securing funding for excavations in Egypt during changes in the political atmosphere.

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[57] Griffiths 1977: 3.

[58] Stevenson 2019: 260.

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# Jews excavating in Egypt?

## An Archaeological Endeavour of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*

Thomas L. Gertzen*

### Some introductory remarks on Israeli-Egyptian Relations in Egyptology

To say that Israeli-Egyptian relations are complicated would be an understatement. After the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 and after the Six Day War in 1967, the considerable Jewish population of Egypt fled the country.[1] With the Camp David agreement of 1978, the Sinai Peninsula which had been occupied by Israel was restituted to the Egyptians, and in 1982, Israeli Defence Forces withdrew completely.[2]

The Near East conflict impacted Egyptology and continues to do so down through the present with Israeli Egyptologists barred from attending international conferences taking place in Egypt and from pursuing research in the country. In 2011, Zahi Hawass, then head of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities, characterized himself in an interview for "Biblical Archaeology" as an anti-Zionist, since being a 'Semite' he could not be an anti-Semite,[3] and he blustered in a TV-interview about an alleged Jewish world-wide conspiracy, controlling the US-American economy and media.[4] Earlier, in 2001, Hawass had prevented DNA analyses of 18th Dynasty royal mummies, suspecting that the international research team might have been infiltrated by Mossad, to falsify evidence that the Egyptian pyramids had been built by Hebrews.[5] (This particular theory of pyramid-building originated with the so-called British Israelites and pyramidiots of the 19th century; it had actually been taken seriously, for example by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, when he visited Egypt in 1978.[6])

However, as long as Hawass was in charge of Egyptian antiquities, including responsibility for more recent monuments, he continued to harass or rather to "slap the Zionist enemy", preventing the official reopening of a restored Cairo synagogue in 2010.[7]

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* Centre for Advanced Study in the Humanities 2615 "Rethinking Oriental Despotism", FU Berlin.

[1] Douer 2009.

[2] Zadoff 2020: 76–81; 100–105.

[3] Cf. the interview with Shanks 2011.

[4] Cf. MEMRI TV.

[5] Cf. Glain 2001.

[6] Gertzen 2021: 118.

[7] Haaretz 2010.

That such attitudes are yet prevalent in Egypt and might also affect foreign archaeological missions could be experienced recently when a German-Egyptian team hoisted the fragments of a monumental statue of an Egyptian pharaoh at the site of ancient Heliopolis. The fragments, at first identified as deriving from a statue of Ramesses II, soon turned out to belong to a colossus of Psammetichus I, a pharaoh of the Late Period. Given the latter's Levantine background, some Egyptian conspiracy theorists suspected that the foreign archaeologists were trying to turn 'their' Egyptian pharaoh into an Israeli.[8]

In 2007, Egyptian lawyers affiliated to the juridical faculty of Zagazig University intended to file a lawsuit against Israel, since the Jews when they left Egypt, would have purloined valuable assets – the claim referring to the Biblical Exodus, not to the modern 'Exodus' of Jews which began in 1947.[9]

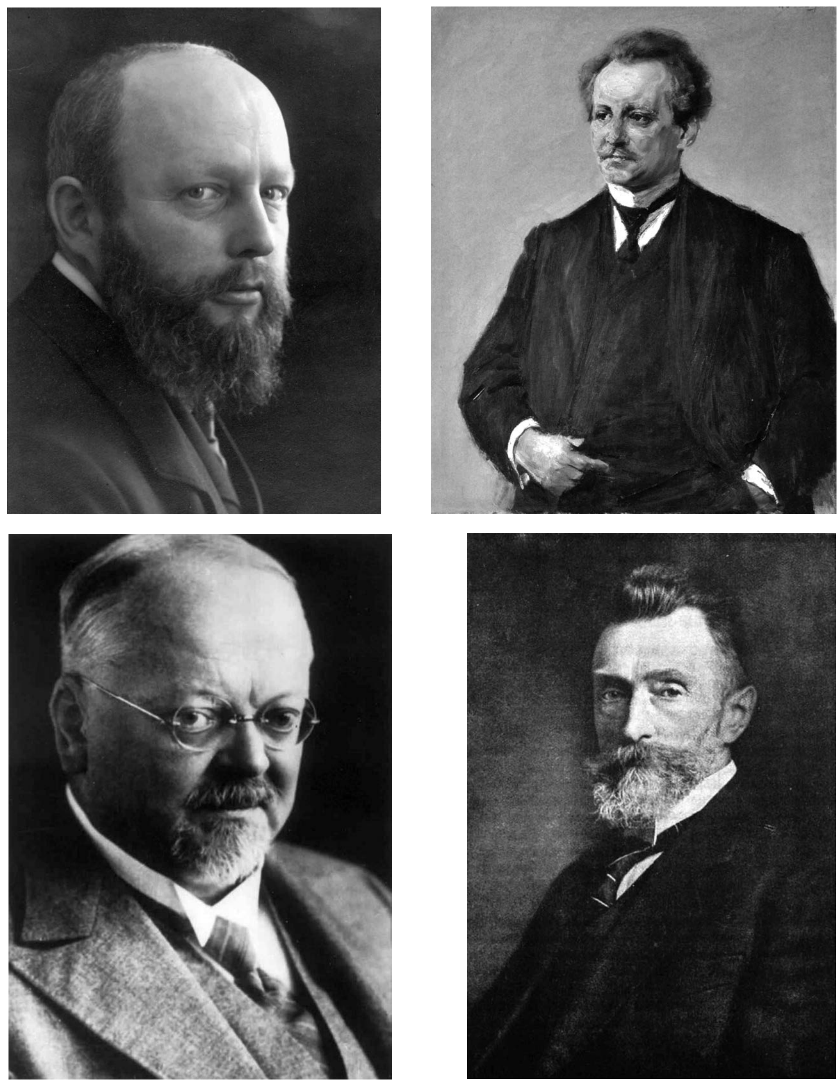
Turning to the history of earlier archaeological endeavours, it must be kept in mind, that Egypt has a very long history which includes references to biblical events.

## Dramatis personae

The main characters, institutions, and sources for the remarkable case study at hand must be introduced briefly, beginning with two German-Jewish archaeologists whose correspondence forms the basis for the reconstruction of events; nowadays the letters are divided between the Swiss Institute for Egyptian Architectural History and Archaeology in Cairo and Berlin's Jewish Museum Archives. These individuals are Otto Rubensohn (1867–1964), a classical scholar, Papyrologist, and agent for the German Papyrus Cartel[10] (although when our story takes place already living in Germany) and Ludwig Borchardt (1863–1938) – world famous (alternatively, infamous) discoverer of the painted bust of Queen Nefertiti – at the time, however, more actively engaged in prolonging the Kulturkampf against both Catholics and Zionists in Cairo.[11] Others involved in the story include: Kurt Heinrich Sethe (1869–1934), Germany's foremost Egyptian philologist, feared for his outspokenness, though himself not entirely immune to fanciful theories;[12] Bruno Güterbock (1858–1940), long-term secretary of the German Oriental Society, which later expelled him because of his Jewish background;[13] Hubert Grimme (1864–1942), an orientalist in Münster with a special penchant for both Qur'anic as well as Biblical Studies;[14] Moritz Sobernheim (1872–1933), German diplomat, head of the *Referat* for German-Jewish relations at the Foreign

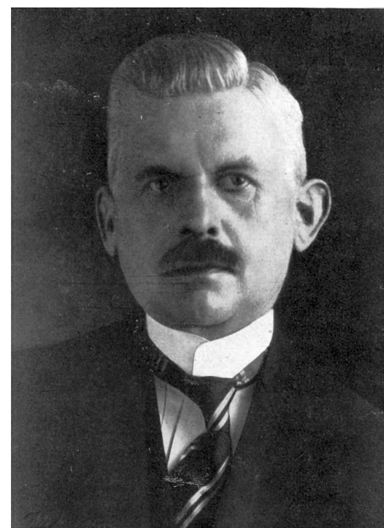
[8] Personal communication of a colleague.
[9] N-TV 2007.
[10] Kuckertz 2020.
[11] Gertzen 2017: 91–100.
[12] Gertzen 2013: 153–193; 361–378; Gertzen 2021: 154–176.
[13] Matthes and Raulwing, forthcoming.
[14] Hiepel, forthcoming.

Ministry and a Zionist;[15] and finally, Ernst Sellin (1867–1946), theologian and a pioneer in German Biblical archaeology.[16]



Figs. 1–4: Otto Rubensohn; Ludwig Borchardt;
Kurt Sethe; Hubert Grimme.

[15] Nicosia 1988.
[16] Palmer 2011.



Figs. 5–7: Bruno Güterbock; Ernst Sellin;
Moritz Sobernheim.

The *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (~ Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith) was founded in Berlin in 1893 as an association of German-Jewish intellectuals determined to fight the rising anti-Semitism and to establish an equal place for Jews in German society. It was not the only national Jewish association, but in some way superimposed upon or rather to complement the much older *Gesellschaft der Freunde* (~ Society of Friends), in existence since 1792 down until 1935 when the Nazis came to

power.[17] There was also the *Verband nationaldeutscher Juden* (~ Association of German National Jews), representing a decidedly German interpretation of Jewish identity.[18] Founded in 1921, the latter opposed a boycott of German goods, in response to the discriminatory measures taken by the Nazi-government against German Jews, even officially welcoming the election results of January 1933 which enabled Hitler to assume power.

Propitiously, the history of the *Centralverein* has recently gained scholarly attention, even if the loss of the association's archive constitutes somewhat of an impediment.[19] However, to the best of my knowledge, no one has yet discussed archaeological activities planned by the *Centralverein*.[20]

**Proto-Sinaitic script**

At the beginning of the 20th century, the intrepid British archaeologist William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853–1942) – later author of one of the still rare Egyptological publications on "The Status of the Jews in Egypt"[21] – conducted research under the auspices of the Egypt Exploration Fund, tracing ancient Egyptian mining activities on the Sinai Peninsula. As was his custom, he published his findings shortly after the expedition completed its work; a report on some inscriptions he had found was included. Thereafter, the script employed by those who wrote the texts became known as Proto-Sinaitic Script.[22]

Petrie's discovery at once intrigued scholars from various fields since this script was recognized as a precursor of alphabetic writing and seemed to – possibly – link Egyptian hieroglyphs with Semitic scripts such as Phoenician or even Hebrew.[23] The discovery of the texts in Sinai inspired various scholars, among them Hubert Grimme, to speculate on a link between Petrie's inscriptions and Biblical texts. Grimme's public lecture[24] on the alleged connection between Proto-Sinaitic writing and the twelve tablets of Moses, attracted the attention of the *Centralverein* and led to the organization's proposal to finance an expedition to make paper squeezes of the inscriptions and possibly also to conduct some minor archaeological excavations.

The art historian Rudolf Hallo (1898–1933), husband of Gertrud Rubensohn and therefore related by marriage to Otto Rubensohn, published a critical assessment in the Jewish periodical "Der Morgen",[25] to the obvious embarrassment of

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[17] Panwitz 2007.
[18] Hambrock 2003.
[19] Barkai 2002; Genz and Gempp-Friedrich 2021.
[20] Cf. the earlier discussion in Gertzen 2017: 68–80.
[21] Petrie 1922.
[22] Petrie 1906: 129–132.
[23] Cf. recent discussion in: Morenz 2019.
[24] He later published his conclusions in: Grimme 1923.
[25] Hallo 1925.

representatives of the *Centralverein*, but nonetheless, they intended to pursue the matter. Taking the bull by the horns, they invited various experts to a conference in Berlin. Kurt Sethe, an Egyptologist, and outspoken critic of Grimme, was among them. Thanks, in all probability, to Sethe's directness, they had clashed on various occasions. Sethe averred: "Wenn man Hypothesen zu erledigen hat, über die man so denkt wie ich über die Grimme'schen Forschungen, kann es nicht mit sanftem Säuseln geschehen, sondern da muß kräftig geblasen werden."[26] He further stated that Grimme's research would constitute "eine nicht zu unterschätzende Gefahr für die Ehre der deutschen Wissenschaft."[27] Sethe had recently dealt with this topic in a publication on "Die Deutsche Aegyptologie", as opposed to *Entente*-Egyptolgy.[28] He argued that Grimme was unable to contribute anything substantial, or new ("nichts Tatsächliches oder Neues") and that he might have confused scratches on the stone with actual letters, questioning whether "die wunderlich verschlungenen Linien, aus denen Grimme alle seine 'Lesungen' gewonnen hat, überhaupt für Schriftzeichen gehalten warden können". Sethe completely dismissed Grimme's theories.[29]

**Reports to Cairo**

Otto Rubensohn gleefully reported the developments to his friend Borchardt in Cairo: "Der Centralverein Deutscher Bürger [sic] jüdischen Glaubens war auf die Geschichten von Grimm [sic]-Münster hereingefallen".[30] The Verein, which had estimated the budget for the planned expedition at 30,000 Marks and was now, as Rubensohn suggested, compromised by the dubious theories of Grimme, but obviously already tied to him, was trying to extricate itself by involving the German Oriental Society and the *Aegyptisch-Vorderasiatische Gesellschaft* (~ Egyptian-Near Eastern Society). The intention was to transfer the academic responsibility to experts and established players in the field, while the *Centralverein* would merely provide the funding. Involving a number of scholars also had its disadvantages of course. Rudolf Hallo had seemingly hoped to replace Grimme as the leading figure in this endeavour and was now disappointed, although the *Centralverein* invited him to the Berlin conference. Given the tense post-World War I relations between Germany and Great Britain, along with the strategic importance of the Sinai Peninsula, the planned expedition also faced some diplomatic challenges. According to Rubensohn, British Egyptologist Alan Henderson Gardiner did not oppose the idea – still recuperating from the quarrels with Germany's

[26] Sethe 1926: 153 ~ "If one has to deal with hypotheses, with an opinion such as mine about Grimme's research, it cannot be done with gentle whispers but you have to give them a strong blast."
[27] ~ "a danger to the honour of German scholarship, not to be underestimated."
[28] Sethe 1921.
[29] Which the latter continued to defend: Grimme 1926b; 1929; 1934; 1937; 1942.
[30] SIK, Nl. L. Borchardt, O. Rubensohn to L. Borchardt, 15.11.1925.

foremost Egyptologist Adolf Erman over the EES takeover of the German excavation-concession at Amarna[31] – whereas Flinders Petrie did not want any German interference in what he could rightfully consider his archaeological discovery. Choosing Borchardt as a possible candidate for leading the expedition seemed to ease the inner-German tensions and rivalries, for no one would doubt the archaeological expertise of the director of the now no longer 'Imperial' German Archaeological Institute in Cairo. On the other hand, by this time Borchardt had come to be considered the *enfant terrible* of German Egyptology, disliked and mistrusted by some of his colleagues, not least due to doubts concerning how the painted bust of Nefertiti had come to Germany, but far more so because of his independent dealings in the politics of the Institute.[32] If possible, he was even more unpopular with the British, who had occasionally experienced Borchardt's competitive attitude as a German patriot, even engaging in scientific espionage.[33] After all, the British for their part during the war had blown up the 'German House at Thebes' (built by Borchardt), ostensibly on the allegation that it had been a centre of "illegal antiquities trade". Moreover, the property of the German Institute in Cairo had been sequestrated, although it was in fact Borchardt's own.[34] There certainly was no love lost between the two parties.

Borchardt replied to Rubensohn's letter by informing him that he had already been approached by Ernst Sellin – represented by a lawyer named Dr Weil – though he did not know that the budget amounted to 30,000 Marks. He further told Rubensohn that he had agreed in principle and that he thought the budget should be increased, particularly given the public profile of the endeavour: "Sie scheinen die Sache sehr grossartig machen zu wollen, aber wenn's was ordentliches werden soll, ist das wohl auch nötig."[35]

Rubensohn could then report the events during and – more importantly – after the conference in the *Dessauer Garten* – probably a local Berlin beer garden. Sethe had immediately left, but Bruno Güterbock seems to have been more sociable and talkative. He told Rubensohn that the *Centralverein* had now decided to have the entire expedition documented by a newspaper reporter: "Der C.V. will einen Pressemann mitschicken!", even a filmmaker, documenting local folklore while an expert in Semitic studies would accompany the Egyptologist and architect [Borchardt]. Furthermore, they had raised their calculations and now proposed a budget of 50,000 Marks.[36]

Borchardt obviously was bemused by Rubensohn's account of the proceedings and – being the ardent anti-Catholic he was – inquired whether Grimme was a

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[31] Gertzen 2015a; Gertzen, forthcoming.

[32] Voss 2013: 182–203.

[33] Voss 2013: 154–156.

[34] Voss 2013: 168–177.

[35] SIK, Nl. L. Borchardt, L. Borchardt to O. Rubensohn, 02.12.1925.

[36] SIK, Nl. L. Borchardt, O. Rubensohn to L. Borchardt, 10.12.1925.

Jesuit: “Ist denn Grimme SJ?”[37] Sitting in Cairo he was disquieted, however, by the news that Moritz Sobernheim, the head of the Jewish department of the German foreign ministry and a sympathiser of the Zionist movement (which Borchardt, a member of the Association of German National Jews, despised) intended to publish a donation appeal together with the director of the Berlin Egyptian Museum, Heinrich Schäfer, with whom Borchardt had recently clashed over the Nefertiti affair. Fearing further diplomatic tensions, Borchardt commented: “Hoffentlich lassen sie aber den Schäfer-Sobernheimschen Aufruf nicht eher los, als bis man weiss, dass hier keine politischen Schwierigkeiten dagegen sind.” He expressed no objections, however, to a reporter accompanying the expedition which he expected would result in a lot of “fulus”[38] – money.

At the beginning of the following year, Borchardt indicated to Rubensohn that he no longer could be bothered with the *Centralverein*’s expedition to Sinai: “An und für sich ist mir die Sinai-Sache ziemlich piepe.”[39] He would only take on the commission to prevent German money being wasted. The *Centralverein* had seemed to have lost its interest – or its heart? – in financing an archaeological mission to Sinai. Looking at the chain of events today, it may be posited that Kurt Sethe had put the lid on it with the criticism and arguments he uttered at the Berlin conference and subsequently published.

**Orientalism and Anti-Semitism**

But why had an association of German Jews wanted to engage itself in archaeological research in the first place? An answer to that question requires contextualizing this episode in German-Jewish intellectual history. At the beginning of the 20th century, Assyriologist Friedrich Delitzsch had publicly discussed the indebtedness of Old Testament texts to Babylonian precursors. His Babel-Bible lectures developed into some kind of *politicum* and when *Kaiser* Wilhelm II, as patron of the German Oriental Society, but also head (*summus epsicopus*) of the Prussian National Church, withdrew his previous public endorsement of Delitzsch’s statements, the latter reduced his argument to a critical assessment of the alleged lack of originality of the Old Testament texts.[40]

After the German defeat in World War I Delitzsch became radicalized in reaction to the shocking breakdown of the social order which had characterized the Prussian monarchy. In 1921/22 he published “The Great Deception”, suggesting that the ‘Jewish’ Old Testament could no longer form the basis of a true German Christian faith. Delitzsch was not alone. But before turning-attention to rising anti-Semitism in German academia, and in Orientalist and Ancient Near

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[37] SIK, Nl. L. Borchardt, O. Rubensohn an L. Borchardt, 22.12.1925.
[38] فلوس – *fulūs*.
[39] SIK, Nl. L. Borchardt, O. Rubensohn an L. Borchardt, 27.01.1926.
[40] Gertzen 2019; for the Babel-Bible Controversy most recently: Cancik-Kirschbaum and Gertzen 2021.

Eastern Studies in particular, mention must be made of contemporaneous *völkisch* publications which aimed at transmogrifying Christianity into an originally German-Aryan cult.[41]

Delitzsch was but one example of a common phenomenon within German academia. Göttingen Orientalist Paul de Lagarde, originator of one proposal, among others, to deport all German Jews to the island of Madagascar, had argued for the idea of an antithesis between *Deutschtum* and *Judentum* – Germanness and Jewishness, and he did his level best to denigrate the representatives of Jewish scholarship. His French counterpart (and old friend) Ernest Renan was actually appalled by the German *völkisch* movement. Nonetheless, Renan was totally convinced that the 'Semitic race' was inferior to the 'Aryan' and inapt in bringing about achievements of civilization, apart from displaying a penchant for religious thought.[42] German ancient Historian Eduard Meyer was in many ways a representative of the mainstream of German scholarship in showing some respect for the people of 'old' Israel, which – in his view – were characterized by national coherence and a law-abiding as well as god-fearing way of life, in contrast to contemporary, earlier 20th century Jewry, the epitome of internationalism, treachery, and capitalism.[43] – Or, as Theodor Mommsen, despite being an outspoken critic of German anti-Semitism, had written in his Roman History: "Judaism is a powerful ferment of cosmopolitism and national decomposition."[44] Given the intellectual climate at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century in Germany, it is unsurprising that, as Veronika Lipphardt has demonstrated for the fields of biology and anthropology,[45] German Jewish scholars engaged in scientific racial discourses to defend themselves against the anti-Semitic onslaughts perpetrated against them by representatives of German academia. Similar tendencies can be observed within German Egyptology in the 1920s, as has been thoroughly examined by a research project based on the personal papers and correspondence of Georg Steindorff in Leipzig (whose *Doktorvater*, by the way, was none other than Paul de Lagarde).[46]

**Conclusion**

The engagement of the *Centralverein* in archaeological research – strange as it may seem at first glance – was directed against the anti-Semitic tendencies in German society and academia, with the intention of disproving the alleged oppo-

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[41] Cf. Puschner 2021.

[42] For Lagarde and Renan cf. Gertzen 2020: 170–176.

[43] Hoffmann 1988: 133–189.

[44] Cf. Malitz 2005: 150, to the originally intended positive evaluation of the role of the Jewish people.

[45] Lipphardt 2008.

[46] Voss and Raue 2016; Gertzen 2015b.

sition of *Deutschtum* and *Judentum*, as well as demonstrating that Jewish intellectuals were also *Bildungsbürger*. Tracing the origins of modern alphabetic script to Sinai and linking it with events in the Old Testament (or rather *Tanakh*) meant that the ancient Hebrews had played a pivotal role in the history of humankind and actually contributed something in use till today, implying that there was not such a distance between these ancient forefathers and their modern-day Jewish descendants.

Of course, the idea provoked numerous challenges. Relying on the findings of a Catholic theologian instead of the still predominant representatives of Protestant academia, or *Kulturprotestantismus* as it was then still known, meant allying one religious minority with another whose interests and research objectives were not necessarily identical. The *Centralverein* had neither the necessary professional expertise nor the required organisational framework for such an expedition, making the endeavour dependent on the benevolence of established players in the field who brought along their own research and political objectives. Funding gaps, personal rivalries, and vanities, but also diplomatic implications further aggravated the situation.

In the end, a combination of these various factors brought the planning to a halt. Given the scholarly rebuttal of Kurt Sethe, the dire situation of the German economy, and other priorities of the *Centralverein* within the society and politics of the Weimar Republic, the Sinai expedition seemed an inauspicious undertaking and came to nothing.

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# Part IV

# Absences and Adaptions

# Hungarian Archaeological Presence and Absence in Egypt and the Orient at the End of the Long 19th Century and during the Interwar Period

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## History and broader context

Although this volume limits its geographical and temporal scope to the ancient Near East, in the present paper the term 'Orient' will be more broadly defined to include the Middle and Far East. The reason for this is a peculiarity of Hungarian research during the period covered here, its embeddedness in and dependence on a particular aspect of Hungarian public, academic, and, to a lesser extent, political interest in the Orient. Fuelled by the Hungarians' idea of their eastern origin, as well as by their perceived ethno-linguistic isolation within Europe, Hungarian thinking about the Orient constructed links of kinship with various linguistic and ethnic groups originating from anywhere to the east. The issue of linguistic kinship sparked a major academic (and public) debate, the so-called Ugric-Turkish war, on the Finno-Ugric versus Turkic origin of the Hungarian language. Contemporaneously, speculations on relationships with a range of other languages and ethnicities, ancient and modern (e.g., Sumerian, Egyptian, Scythian, Parsi, or Japanese), were also propagated by lay persons and among some non-specialist scholars.

This perception of the east, while eclectic and far from static, permeated cultural, ideological, economic, and, to a lesser extent, political viewpoints, attitudes, and behaviour. Having been a topic since the Middle Ages, the eastern origin of the Hungarians was given a fresh impetus beginning in the first half of the 19th century, leading to a series of journeys and expeditions in search of kinsfolk. With time, genealogical and historical interest evolved to become associated with Hungary's cultural and economic ambitions in the east. From the second half of the 19th century, particularly following the *Ausgleich* with Austria and the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy in 1867, a fear of Pan-Slavism and Pan-Germanism, associated with a historically new, friendly attitude towards Turkey and the Turkish people, provided a general background for seeking new markets and cultural expansion to the Balkans, the Near East, and Central Asia.[1] Eastern expansion was also part of competition with Austria. Such a framework became even stronger towards the turn of the century, particularly in the first decades of the 20th century, when the 'eastern idea' attracted substantial academic,

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[1] Ágoston 2008: 15–19.

economic, and political interest, and received financial support from the government. Concern and aspirations in the east were strongly, though not exclusively, associated with Turanism, a multifaceted cultural and political idea and movement based on the belief in the shared ancestry and future cooperation/alliance with the 'Turanian' people. This hypothetical geographical and ethno-linguistic group originally was thought to comprise Ural-Altaic (Central Asian), and was increasingly extended to include a wider range of 'non-Semitic' and 'non-Aryan' languages and ethnicities, both in Asia and Europe, including Hungarian. Hungarian Turanism, like its counterparts elsewhere, was multifaceted. Its earlier phase attracted many outstanding scholars (particularly linguists and ethnologists) and influential politicians (including prime ministers and ministers), who founded a Hungarian Turanian Society in 1910 to promote general research into Asian cultures and to foster cultural and economic relations. During the interwar period (following Hungary's defeat in the First World War, the disintegration of the Dual Monarchy, and the Treaty of Trianon that reduced Hungary's territory to approximately one-third of its previous size), Turanism and the Turanian Society became radicalized and associated with a nationalist, rightward turn away from the west, with an almost exclusive concern for kinship, yet still in a multifaceted way. At the same time, the role and active participation of leading academic and political figures in the Turanian Society decreased.[2]

This environment created a specific context for travels, expeditions, and research concerning the east, a context that was partly similar, partly different from that of western Orientalism. In addition to a specific national background, ideology, and motive, the knowledge and perceptions of Hungarian Orientalists and those interested in the exploration of the Orient were certainly also influenced by western values, models, and global colonialism.[3] Moreover, even though Hungary was not a colonising power, its cultural and economic aspirations in the east had an expansionist flavour. In spite of this, Hungarian thinking about the east cannot be interpreted exclusively in the light of western colonialism and imperialism, as seen through the lens of Edward Said's Orientalism, focusing on a binary distinction between East and West, to emphasise the otherness of the former and its inferiority to the latter.[4]

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[2] On the Eastern idea and Turanism see Ablonczy 2022.

[3] Mészáros *et al.* 2017, particularly 479–482.

[4] Said 1978. While Said's Orientalism has been acclaimed by many authors, it has been also critized for its one-sided, monolithic interpretation of the west's engagement with the east, ignoring cultural and historical variations within Europe itself; for an important alternative interpretation of Orientalism in the German context, see Marchand 2009. Recent opinions on the nature of Hungarian Orientalism vary from an almost obligation to place and condemn Hungary in the context of global colonialism, through balanced analyses to an understanding in which Hungarian Orientalism is discussed solely in the context of the eastern decent. For some examples see, e.g., Pallag 2003: 117–119; Mészáros *et al.* 2017; Ginelli 2020.

Heavily influenced by the idea of eastern kinship, Hungarian attitudes towards peoples to the east often emphasized resemblance and scientific objectives. In the first half of the 19th century, Hungarian explorers had a purely scholarly motivation to travel eastwards, with a dedicated and sympathetic approach (which, as will be shown below, does not mean that they did not rely on western European colonialist networks). Sándor (Alexander) Kőrösi Csoma (1787/8–1842), the archetype of later Hungarian explorers, saw himself as a representative of both European and Hungarian culture when he set out to the east in 1819 with the aim of devoting his life "(…) to researches which may be afterwards useful to the learned world of Europe in general, and, in particular, may illustrate some obscure facts in our own [i.e. Hungarian] history."[5] Antal Reguly (1819–1858), ethnographer and linguist, who, following two years of study in Saint Petersburg, travelled in the 1840s to Siberia to study the Eastern Finno-Ugric peoples, wrote of the Voguls with romantic compassion:

> Some have painted a horrible picture of the Voguls. Yet there is no judgement in these [writings], only prejudice. According to their foreign and personal perception, they only see unpleasant forms, having no interest in the content whatsoever, and not realizing that a more human and unspoiled nature is at play here than in our world.[6]

In the era of the Dual Monarchy and later, the east became a territory to be culturally and economically conquered, but also remained a source for identity, albeit somewhat differently than before. Eastern ambitions were seen and construed by many Hungarians from a perspective at the interface of their eastern kinship and eastern selves, defining their nation's crucial role as the most capable mediator between West and East. An early example of this perception is attested by Ignác Helfy's parliamentary motion in 1872 for the establishment of an Oriental academy in Hungary: "If we want to search for Hungary's mission within Europe, there can be no doubt that the Hungarians, due to both the origin of their race and their [present][7] location, are called to bring Western culture to the East."[8] While this concept is an example of ethno- and Eurocentric thinking, eastern expansion was generally conceived as a programme based on mutual friendship to build cultural and economic ties with peoples whose cultures and mindsets were considered in many respects close to those of the Hungarians.

A good illustration of this attitude is an article by Márton Atlasz, a writer and economic specialist, on 'Hungarian cultural values in the East,' which was published in 1913 in the educational magazine of the *Uránia* Hungarian Scientific

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[5] Duka 1885: 25.

[6] Nagy 2021: 27–28.

[7] Remarks in angular brackets within quotations include my comments and amendments.

[8] Anonymous 1872: 17.

Association:[9] "The Hungarian race is the only one that in addition to its Eastern origin completely adopted Western culture (…) Thus we are the only ones who can serve as a bridge between Europe and Asia, between West and East." He also spoke of "instinctive attraction and sympathy" between the Hungarians and Eastern peoples: "There is something in our capital [i.e. Budapest], as well as in our attitude, manner of speaking, gait and actions, that speaks to the soul of the Oriental man, triggering his sympathy and a mysterious sense of blood kinship, so that he feels at home in our circle, likes to be with us, and learns our language easily." Atlasz then went on to discuss some practical strategies for developing relations with the east, including, e.g., scholarship programmes providing language, industrial, and trade education for the youth from the east in Hungarian institutions, as well as means to spread Hungarian culture 'on the spot.' Among the latter were scientific expeditions, which were considered an effective way to promote not only Hungarian culture, but also industrial products and technology. This twofold aspect of Hungarian Eastern policy expressed the special Hungarian concern for and attitude towards eastern relatives, intertwined with a strategy to follow western models of expansion, particularly the German pattern of economic expansion without political authority.[10]

Projects, plans, and beliefs concerning the ancient Orient were embedded in this specific Hungarian interest in the east, but the role of ancient Oriental civilizations in this context was ambiguous. The history of the ancient Near East and Egypt, being considered irrelevant for the history of the Hungarians, escaped the attention of many of those concerned with the 'Eastern idea.' In fact, during the interwar period, there existed a hierarchy of Oriental studies resulting from a cultural policy, which ranked ancient Near Eastern studies last – a policy that was also manifest in poor funding.[11] On the other hand, a supposed relationship between the Hungarians and ancient Near Eastern peoples offered the opportunity for some, typically laypersons and non-specialist scholars, to see their nation present at the birth of human civilization. The discovery of the Sumerian language, which, similarly to Hungarian, could not be linked to any known language, and which, according to one early scholarly hypothesis, was assigned to the Turanian group,[12] encouraged the belief already in the 19$^{th}$ century and continuing into the 20$^{th}$, that there had been a connection between Hungarians and Sumerians.[13] For some proponents of Turanism, the idea of eastern kinship fit in well with the idea of the role Hungarians played in the creation of human civilization. Alajos Paikert (1866–1948), agricultural specialist, as well as one of the founders and an active

[9] Atlasz 1913.
[10] A programmatic text on this is Penigey 1913.
[11] Kóthay 2019: 205.
[12] Cooper 1993.
[13] Komoróczy 1976.

member of the Turanian Society, founding and editing the journal 'Turan', believed in the kinship of Hungarians with the Sumerians, "(…) the true founders of human civilization, who earned humanity's eternal gratitude for their epoch-making and fundamental intellectual achievements."[14] But variations existed within this theme. Ignác Alpár (1855–1928), famous architect at the turn of the century who also believed in the Turanian relationship of the Hungarians, made journeys to the east, including Egypt, to learn about Oriental style, which he thought should be employed in the design of Hungarian buildings to evoke the Hungarian past: "We have to force our way forward to the East if we want to create a Hungarian style."[15] He emphasised the Sumerian-Hungarian relationship. In ignorance of the Mesopotamian writing system, he claimed the primacy of ancient Egyptian culture:

> Egypt is the oldest territory of human culture. We can observe here the first traces of historiography, i.e. the highest cultural ambition of humanity, which are engraved in stone with hieroglyphs rather than written down. From these we can learn about 5000 BC. This is certainly the oldest historical date, if we consider that our Turanian relatives, the Sumerians produced their first cuneiform scripts on terracottaboards in the Biblical Paradise, Babylon as late as 2800 BC.[16]

There were also attempts to find a relationship between the Hungarian and ancient Egyptian languages,[17] and many believed in the Scythian-Hun ancestry of the Hungarians.[18] Such beliefs to prove the ancient origin of Hungarians were propagated by amateurs, laypersons, and some scholars; none among the latter specialized in the study of the ancient Near East.[19] Experts in ancient Oriental studies – e.g., Assyriologists Mihály Kmoskó and Antal Dávid, or Egyptologist Ede Mahler – did not support the idea of any such relationship.

An alternative approach associated the appeal of the ancient Orient with its role as the cradle of civilization. In this western inspired concept, the role of the Hungarians was not defined in terms of linguistic and ethnic identity, but seen from a universal humanistic perspective. At play here was also a turn-of-the-century development in the academic study of the ancient world, viz., the extension of Antiquity to include ancient oriental civilizations, in addition to the earlier academic focus on the classical Greek and Roman world. Proponents of this concept, many of whom were involved at the time in the professionalization of the

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[14] Paikert 1937.
[15] Kovács *et al.* 2015: 5–9, for the quotation see p. 9.
[16] Alpár 1910: 7.
[17] Kóthay and Liptay 2023: 91.
[18] Klaniczay 2011.
[19] Such beliefs recur down to the present in lay circles.

disciplines of ancient Oriental studies, emphasised the role of Hungarian academia in the study of the origins of human history. Through the nation's contribution to this exploration, they desired to demonstrate its belonging to 'civilized nations.'[20]

**General characteristics of Eastern projects and expeditions**

Despite the profound concern many Hungarians shared about the east, Hungarian archaeological presence in the Orient during the period under consideration was very limited due to lack of interest, experts, and financial support.[21] In fact, the history of Hungarian archaeological activity in the Orient is brief and more about absences and failures than successful projects, while it also includes alternative ways of exploration.

As a most important alternative, there were the expeditions motivated by the idea of the kinship with the east and the expansionist aspirations, with scholarly interest focused primarily on geography, linguistics, ethnology, and ethno-history. Fieldwork concentrated on surveying sites, collecting and documenting data, and collecting (not excavating) objects. There were also visions, plans, and attempts proposed by both scholars and laypersons to establish Oriental institutes abroad. A rare successful attempt was the foundation in 1916 of the Hungarian Institute for Science in Constantinople which, however, operated only until 1918 when the armistice with the Entente was concluded.[22] Such endeavours were often private initiatives of influential laypersons or professionals, frequently self-financed, although sometimes co-funded by learned societies. There were also efforts, rarely successful, to involve the government in such projects. The most important among learned societies was the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which had been established in 1825 at the initiative of Count István Széchenyi, a prominent figure of the Reform period (1825–1848). His offer of a year's income of his estates was followed by fellow aristocrats to establish a learned society – initially named Hungarian Learned Society – for the advancement of sciences, humanities, and arts in the Hungarian language.[23]Another important source for initiating and funding Eastern projects was the Hungarian Turanian Society (originally called Hungarian Asiatic Society). Among its many activities, the Society organised and funded expeditions, amply provided for during the first decades of the 20th century by the government.[24]

[20] Kóthay 2019; Kóthay 2021: 300–305.

[21] The archaeological works of Hungarian-born Aurél Stein (Sir Marc Aurel Stein) along the Silk Road were done with British support; see, e.g., Iklé 1968.

[22] Ágoston 2002; Fodor 2019.

[23] For a short English summary see: https://mta.hu/english/history-of-the-hungarian-academy-of-sciences-106111.

[24] Ablonczy 2022.

The ventures of early explorers travelling on their own were typically ill-funded, even if some were supported by foreign private individuals or governments. Kőrösi Csoma left Hungary in 1819 without any financial support to find the ancient homeland of the Hungarians; he ended up studying the Tibetan language in service of the British government.[25] Russian scholarly circles encouraged and would have funded Antal Reguly's expedition to Siberia but he chose to rely on Hungarian funding in order to serve his nation, eventually gaining support from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. But he received the funding, raised through a nationwide public campaign, late, and in smaller amounts. A loan from one of his patrons, Karl Ernst von Baer (1792–1876), a scientist and anthropologist, a member of the Imperial Academy of Saint Petersburg, enabled him to undertake his expedition in 1843.[26] In 1862–1864, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences supported the journey of Ármin (Arminius/Hermann) Vámbéry (1832–1913), another solitary explorer, to Central Asia to study the origin and connections of the Hungarian language.[27]

In Hungary, just as elsewhere in Europe, the last third of the long 19th century and the earlier 20th century witnessed an increased interest in the exploration of the Orient, in both professional and lay contexts. This, again, involved expeditions, typically undertaken as private initiatives and accomplished by teams including scholars and specialists, rather than by individuals. Generally, Oriental research continued to be dominated by the idea of kinship with the east and were aimed at finding kinsfolk; now there were some notable plans for study of the ancient Near East and Egypt, but only one of them was realized and that, too, only partly.

**Plans for the archaeological exploration of the ancient Orient**

In 1906, the Hungarian Fülöp (Philip) Back (1862–1958) decided to organise and fund excavations in the Nile Valley in order to offer the finds to his home country, thus contributing to the enrichment of the rather modest Hungarian national collections of Egyptian antiquities.[28] As the Cairo representative of the Orosdi-Back establishments, one of the world's first retail companies to operate a chain of department stores across the Middle East and Egypt,[29] Back was known in Cairo's diplomatic circles, and his plan was supported by two Polish diplomats of Austria-Hungary, ambassador Count Tadeusz Bolesta-Koziebrodzki and Antoni Stadnicki, an embassy attaché. The ambassador himself was eager for Austria-Hungary's participation in the international competition to explore ancient Egypt

[25] Duka 1885.
[26] Márton 2009: 21–22.
[27] Vámbéry 1864.
[28] The history of Back's excavations is discussed by several authors: Győry 2007a; Vörös 2008; Kóthay 2016: 203–206; Hölzl 2018: 127–131.
[29] Kupferschmidt 2007.

archaeologically, and was pleased to support Back, who wanted to engage his home country in the same competition.[30]

In 1907 Back received a concession to excavate the site of Sharuna in Middle Egypt. An episode of the organisation of the expedition is revealed in contemporaneous newspapers. According to an article in *Pesti Hírlap*, before Back started the project he asked the Hungarian government to send "an eminent Hungarian scholar" to Egypt to conduct the excavations. (The "eminent scholar," undoubtedly Ede Mahler, the only Hungarian Egyptologist at the time, is not named in the article). The government, however, demanded that Back not only fund the travel, lodging, and work of this scholar, but also his replacement at the University of Budapest which Back refused do.[31] An article in a different newspaper commented: "In another country, financial support would indeed be provided to someone who, by digging up antiquities, performs scientific work that also affects the nation's reputation." In 1908, reporting on the excavations by the German Oriental Society at Abusir, the *Tolnai Világlapja* (an illustrated weekly newspaper) but without explicit reference to Back's excavations, expressed a similar opinion:

> We can imagine the high cost of this scientific expedition. The Germans do not spare any sacrifice to advance science. What a happy country! Not only does it have money to improve the status of its officials, but it can finance higher cultural investments as well.

On the recommendation of Gaston Maspero, then director of the Egyptian Antiquities Service, Back finally entrusted the young Polish scholar Tadeusz Smoleński (1884–1909), who had no experience in fieldwork, with the direction of the excavations. He had studied history at the Jagiellonian University of Cracow and started his carrier as a specialist in Polish history. To treat his tuberculosis, he went to Egypt in 1905. When the antiquities displayed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo attracted his attention, he started to study Egyptology with Maspero at the French Institute of Archaeology.

On 1 January 1907, the work at the site of Sharuna began. The most important discoveries included finds from an Old Kingdom cemetery at the site of Sharuna and wall fragments of a Ptolemaic temple at Kom el-Akhmar, as well as from the Ptolemaic cemetery of Gamhud on the opposite bank of the Nile. Initially, the excavation of this latter site was not part of the concession. At the end of February, when the expedition was about to leave Sharuna, Smoleński's attention was drawn to looting of a hitherto unknown cemetery, close to the modern village of Gamhud. Back asked for permission to excavate the cemetery, and received it. Obtaining this concession was indeed a competition. The Englishmen Aylward Blackman, Berhard Grenfell, and Arthur Hunt, who had been in the vicinity searching for papyri, also wanted to excavate the newly discovered Gamhud cemetery, but

[30] Hölzl 2018: 127.
[31] Anonymous 1907.

Back already had received the permit.[32] Smoleński excavated forty-seven painted wooden anthropoid coffins with decorated mummies as well as other funerary objects from the site, but could not complete the work due to ill health, leaving the site after only three weeks. Ahmed Bey Kamal, on behalf of the Egyptian Museum, took over the excavations, discovering twenty-three more coffins and other objects in about a week. At the beginning of April the expedition finished its work.[33]

More than half the finds were Back's share. He donated the largest portion (more than two dozen whole coffins, seven large wall fragments, and many other finds) to the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, even assuming the transportation costs. He also gave coffins and wall fragments to Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum and to the Archaeological Museum in Cracow, as well as single coffins to additional institutions and individuals. Back acted out of patriotic fervour, but his gifts were carefully orchestrated, enabling him to ascend in rank and to enter higher social circles.[34] In 1909, at the instigation of the Hungarian Embassy at Cairo, and at Koziebrodzki's personal intercession, Back was granted status in the nobility. Hungarian authorities viewed such recognition not only as a honour for his generous benefactions, but also as a reward for his economic accomplishments. His company imported "(…) 7,000,000 francs worth of various industrial goods into Egypt, most of which is supplied by our [i.e. Hungarian] domestic industry," as cited in support of his ennoblement.[35]

After the first season of the excavations, Back and Koziebdrodzki planned to develop a permanent archaeological presence of Austria-Hungary in Egypt.[36] Through Koziebrodzki's intervention, Back obtained new concessions to excavate at several sites in Middle Egypt and the Fayyum. Koziebrodzki, in agreement with Back, submitted a report to the Foreign Ministry in Vienna, in which he proposed that the concessions be taken over by the state. He also suggested the establishment of an Austro-Hungarian archaeological institute in Cairo to carry out the excavations. In the meantime, Back's expedition returned to Gamhud in 1908, but not much work was done.

The attempt to create an archaeological institute failed. The Hungarian authorities did not support the plan. When Ede Mahler was asked to give an expert opinion about the proposed Austro-Hungarian joint institute, he rejected the idea altogether. As for the alternative option of establishing an independent Hungarian archaeological institute in Egypt, he maintained that the conditions were not yet favourable, arguing that finds from the excavations could not be accommodated

[32] Vörös 2008: 46.

[33] Kamal 1908.

[34] Kóthay 2019: 204–206.

[35] Győry 2007b: 1–2.

[36] Hölzl 2018: 128–131; Kóthay 2020: 308.

in Hungary. There was no appropriate museum to house those Egyptian antiquities already held in public collections. Moreover, he pointed out that no young Hungarian scholars were trained to work in such an institute. A Hungarian newspaper article told the story:

> We had already reported on the Egyptian excavations conducted in the vicinity of Cairo by Fülöp Back, our fellow citizen, who donated many of the antiquities found by his expedition to the Hungarian National Museum. Recently, he made a proposal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [the Imperial and Royal Foreign Ministry of Austria-Hungary] via the consulate in Cairo to establish a research institute in Cairo for Austrian and Hungarian scholars. He himself would finance the archaeological excavations, i.e. the actual work, of this institute. The Ministry forwarded the proposal to the Hungarian cultural government, which asked for experts' opinions. Yet the Hungarian experts refused Back's proposal, arguing that Hungary cannot establish a joint research institute with Austria. That would harm the interests of the Hungarian government, so much the more that in such a joint institute the Hungarian scholars would be pushed into the background, and the director would be Austrian. The establishment of a research institute in Egypt would be also impossible because there are as yet no such institutes in Rome and Athens, which would be considered more important and more prestigious by Hungarian experts.[37]

The Imperial Academy of Sciences in Vienna made further attempts, now without Hungary, to start an Austrian archaeological mission in Egypt, with the participation of the Vienna and Cracow academies of sciences, and with a planned budget of 16,000 crowns provided by Viennese governmental institutions (11,000 crowns), the relevant academies (2,000 and 1,000 crowns, respectively) and Back (2,000 crowns). Back's concessions would be passed on to the Austrians who have begun excavating at Turah in 1910.[38]

Even though Hungarian disinterest had become evident in 1908, Koziebrodzki did not give up his hope to establish a joint Austro-Hungarian institute until the following year when he was transferred to Stuttgart. At the Second International Congress of Archaeology held in Cairo in 1909, just before he left, he invited Austrian and Hungarian participants for brunch. When he outlined his plan for a joint institute to his guests, Koziebrodzki was made aware of the competitive milieu in Hungarian academia. János Csengeri (1856–1945), Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Szeged, reported on this event:

[37] Anonymous 1908.

[38] Hölzl 2018: 129–133.

> The Count (…) was not at all happy about his transfer to Stuttgart. This overruled his plan to involve Austria and Hungary in Egyptology by establishing an archaeological institute in Cairo to conduct excavations in order to cope with the most civilized nations of the world. We, Hungarians appreciated this nice plan (…), but pointed out that as yet we have not had archaeological institutes in Rome and Athens, which would be of higher priority. Yet the Count drew attention to the favourable circumstances (…): unlike in the cases of Italy and Greece, it is not forbidden to take out antiquities form Egypt, and it is easy to get archaeological concession. There is no denying that these circumstances could decide the question in favour of Egypt, but I wish it were indeed a question where to establish such an institute. Unfortunately, we do not deal with such issues at all, and we, Hungarians, the representants of ancient Pannonia, can only be shy audience at an international congress of archaeology.[39]

József Hampel, a classical archaeologist, who also participated at the congress and was present at the conversation, gave primacy to excavations in Hungary:

> In my opinion, if the Hungarian state has the financial means to carry out archaeological excavations, then the goal should be *to unearth and publish archaeological remains in Hungarian soil with more efficiency than before* [Hampel's italics]. This is what the scientific world expects from us, and rightly so. If, however, some noble patrons from among the entrepreneurs or magnates of the country embraced the nice idea, let us do it. But even then, we should perform the task by ourselves, without cooperation.[40]

As these quotations make clear, refusing participation in shared projects with Austria was prevalent among Hungarian intellectuals and academia. Furthermore, in both government and academic circles, the burden of funding archaeological excavations and costly research concerning the ancient Orient would be entrusted to wealthy private individuals, enabling governmental financing for projects deemed far more important for the nation (i.e., research related to the history of Hungary and Europe).

There was also a plan to establish an Oriental research institute in southern Mesopotamia.[41] Originally, the idea probably originated with Count Jenő Zichy (1837–1906), a politician and explorer nicknamed 'the industry count.' Convinced by the romantic notion that the ancient homeland of Hungarians should be sought in the Caucasus, he organised and funded several expeditions to Central Asia in 1895, 1896, and 1898, when China was reached.[42] He invited well-known

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[39] Csengeri 1910: 212–213.
[40] Hampel 1909: 369–370.
[41] My discussion of this failed plan relies heavily on the research of Zoltán Vincze: 2003; 2004; and 2014: 494–507. See also Pallag 2003.
[42] Zichy, Jankó and Posta 1897; Marácz 2010: 34–39.

specialists in linguistics, archaeology, folklore, ethnography, and history to join his undertakings although they did not do much fieldwork nor conduct archaeological excavations. For example, his first expedition visited many institutions and museums, while the material they collected consisted mainly of objects they purchased. His contemporaries[43] criticised his ideas about the origin of the Hungarians, as well as his scholarly methods, but the material he collected and brought back to Hungary, amounting to several thousand artefacts, has significant scholarly value.

Among the scholars he engaged for his expeditions was the archaeologist Béla Pósta (1862–1919) of the Hungarian National Museum, who later became Professor of Archaeology at the University of Kolozsvár (today Cluj-Napoca, Romania). Pósta embraced a plan for a Hungarian Oriental Institute abroad, originally proposed by Zichy probably in the 1890s.[44] In one letter of Pósta to geologist Jenő Cholnoky, he remarked that Zichy would fund the establishment of such an institute with a capital of 100,000 Ft, on the condition that the Ministry of Religion and Public Education contributes to its operation with the annual interest on the same amount.[45] The government's response is not known, but the plan did not come to fruition, despite Pósta's enduring engagement in its favour.

Pósta originally maintained that the study of the Hungarians' ancient history and Hungarian research on the Orient in general should focus on the investigation of the archaeological remains in eastern European and western Asian territories of the Russian steppes, and he envisaged a Hungarian archaeological institute in Russia or eastern Asia Minor.[46] It was probably in the first decades of the 20th century before his interest turned towards the ancient Near East. He emphasised that the archaeological remains of the Asian steppes, where the Hungarians originated, revealed major influence from Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization that "(…) infused human spirit with the same essence under different names (Assyrian, Median, Persian and Sassanid)."[47] Therefore, in the research for the roots of Hungarian culture, he assigned an important place to Mesopotamian civilization, and he developed the idea to establish the planned institute at the territory of 'Chaldea,' i.e. in southern Mesopotamia. He also maintained that "(…) among the specialists studying cuneiform, particularly ancient Chaldean [by which he meant Sumerian], texts should be also included someone whose native language is one of the Ural-Altaic languages (…)"[48] clearly attesting to the importance he attached to Hungarian scholarly participation in Sumerology. This suits well the idea that Hungarian was a Turanian language, as well as with the then-widespread concept

[43] E.g. Herman 1898.
[44] Pallag 2003; Vincze 2003; Vincze 2014.
[45] Vincze 2014: 495.
[46] Vincze 2014: 500.
[47] Vincze 2014: 496.
[48] Vincze 2014: 500.

of Hungary's role in cross-cultural mediation (see above). At the same time, he also intended to engage himself in the same scholarly competition in the exploration of human history as Back and Koziebrodzki. In addition to his own scholarly convictions, he probably came under the influence of his encounter with Fülöp Back at the Second International Congress of Archaeology in 1909. Then Pósta proposed the creation of a 'Chaldean institute,' modelled on western European associations and institutes carrying out excavations in the east. The Hungarian institute would be the centre for extensive excavations not only in Mesopotamia but also in Asia Minor, exploring the interactions of various cultures in the region, yet with special emphasis on discovering Mesopotamian sources that reveal information concerning the ancient Hungarians.[49]

Pósta worked systematically to realize his plan, seeking specialists suitable for the task from among his students. At the University of Kolozsvár, where he was a professor since 1899, he regularly offered courses on the art and archaeology of ancient Egypt, Chaldea, Assyria, and Phoenicia, and about Oriental religions.[50] His choice finally fell on Zsigmond Varga (1886–1956) and Balázs Létay (1888–1914). Varga was a Reformed theologian and linguist, who studied Oriental languages, including Sumerian, and he was convinced of the linguistic relationship between Hungarian and Sumerian. His task would have been to decipher the cuneiform texts unearthed during the excavations.[51]

Pósta encouraged Létay, who studied classical archaeology and philology, to widen his archaeological knowledge and study the languages in the cuneiform script systematically. In 1911 Létay received a two-month scholarship to study English in London and Oxford. In his application for the scholarship, he emphasised that he would like to improve his English in order to study the literature on Oriental archaeology. (Literature on the ancient Near East in languages other than Hungarian was available to a very limited extent in Hungary at the time). His application was the only one among seven submitted to be accepted. In England, he visited museums and pursued a systematic reading of Assyriological literature. In 1912, on faculty recommendation, he requested the Ministry to fund his planned one-year travel to England to study Oriental archaeology, and cuneiform in particular. Pósta's recommendation stressed that ministry funding of Létay's study trip would support Hungarian culture. Létay received the requested 2,500 crowns and set off the next year. On the way to London, he visited the Near Eastern collections of the Louvre. In London he spent most of his time in the British Museum, studying the collections, reading relevant literature, and learning Mesopotamian languages. As an archaeologist, he assessed critically the methods of Assyriology. In a letter to Pósta in February 1914, he concluded that

[49] Pallag 2003: 120; Vincze 2014: 497–498.
[50] Pallag 2003: 122–123; Vincze 2003: 643.
[51] Vincze 2014: 500–501.

> in addition to the great benefits, these archaeologists also did a lot of damage. With the exception of one or two of them, they were absolutely ignorant not only of science but also of the basic principles of carrying out systematic excavation. Luckily, the majority of the finds consisted of inscribed material, so it was possible to draw at least some scientific conclusions.[52]

He also blamed some excavators for neglecting the supervision of fieldwork. Taking all these issues into account, he prepared what he termed an 'inventory' of all the excavations carried out in 'Assyrian-Babylonian territory' in order to plan for his own excavation.[53]

Seeing his student's commitment and progress, Pósta considered the professional preparation complete. He expected the 'Chaldean expedition' to lay the foundation for the Oriental institute he wanted to establish, operating within the organisational framework of the University of Kolozsvár. No specific information on the exact location of the proposed excavation exists, and as for a location in Constantinople is implicit. The finds would have gone to the Numismatic and Archaeological Collection of the Transylvanian Museum Society, of which Pósta was director. Being realistic, he planned a low budget for the project. Perhaps he expected the University of Kolozsvárto to contribute funding for the excavations. Originally, he tried to involve the government in the financing through his friend Elek Lippich who worked in the Ministry of Religion and Public Education until 1913. In 1915, however, Pósta wrote disappointedly of his hopes: "We do not rely on the government for public education, we do not expect help from it; the most that I hope for is that it does not undermine our work."[54] Relying on his personal connections with scholars and politicians, many of them associated with the Turanian Society, he may have also intended to involve private individuals, associations, and societies in the financing. (He had become a member of the Turanian Society as late as 1916, and perhaps also of the Hungarian Geographical Society.) The activity of the institute would have included not only archaeology, but also zoology and mineralogy. In line with the policy of eastward expansion, the institute would have been also responsible for economic activity associated with Hungarian farming, industry, and commerce.[55]

The 'Chaldean expedition' was initially scheduled to start in December 1914, but the international political realities of the time made Pósta uncertain about departure. Indeed, history intervened. Motivated by patriotic feelings, Létay returned to Hungary just prior to the beginning of WW I and applied for frontline service. He fell in battle at the end of August 1914. Pósta was inconsolable, but continued with the plan, and intended to start the excavations immediately after

[52] Vincze 2004: 48.
[53] Vincze 2003: 57–58.
[54] Pallag 2003: 126–127.
[55] Pallag 2003: 127.

the conclusion of the war. He relied on intellectual support from circles associated with the 'eastern' idea, particularly the Turanian Society. According to the new plan, announced in 1918, the centre of the excavations (i.e. the institute) would have been at Nisibis (Nusaybin) in Turkey, an ancient commercial centre along a major migration route – a location that would have been ideal to study the interaction of cultures.[56] He had two experts to carry out the project, whose identity, however, remains unknown to us. The yearly budget would have been 20,000 crowns. According to his plans this would have been provided by the Numismatic and Archaeological Collection of the Transylvanian Museum Society, and he also counted on state support. He sent his plan to the Ministry, but there is no indication that he ever received answer. In 1918, Romania annexed Transylvania and the staff of the University of Kolozsvár was transferred to Szeged. Pósta died in 1919, and his project died with him.

There were two additional plans for possible archaeological excavations in the ancient the Near East. In 1916, Mihály Kmoskó (1876–1931), a Roman Catholic priest and Orientalist, was sent to the Near East by the government and the church to study the possibilities of missionary activity and to learn Arabic. He travelled to Constantinople, then on to Palestine, returning to Constantinople via Beirut. His responsibilities also included assessing the feasibility of establishing cultural institutes in Constantinople and/or a Biblical and archaeological institute in Jerusalem. There were only vague ideas about the function and site of the Jerusalem institute, which was also planned to accommodate pilgrims. Details about the practicalities of its archaeological activity, if any, are not known. Kmoskó concluded that no missionary work was possible until after the war, but he nonetheless proposed the future creation of the archaeological institute and pilgrim house in Jerusalem.[57] Eventually, in 1916, the Hungarian Institute of Science alone was established in Constantinople, remaining in operation only until the end of the war (see above).

In 1928, István Berta, a Hungarian engineer working in Turkey in the service of the Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry in Malatya Governorate, drew in several letters the attention of the Hungarian authorities to the ruins of unexcavated ancient towns within the territory of the governorate. He offered his help should the Hungarian government, "(…) following the examples of the North-American, German and Czech governments (…)" intend to participate in the exploration of any of these sites.[58] In response, Antal Dávid (1890–1967), an Assyriologist, was sent to Malatya with funding from the state and the government of Budapest, the capital. (Dávid was deputy director of the Metropolitan Library of Budapest.)

[56] Pallag 2003: 127–129; Vincze 2014: 504–507.

[57] Ormos 2017: 72–84.

[58] Anonymous 1929.

Dávid set out in the hope of discovering Hittite remains, particularly texts. Travelling alone, he started an adventurous journey. He was not even sure if he would find "(…) the Hungarian gentleman who wrote the letters." Eventually he did, and received considerable help from him. He carried out surveys and prepared an archaeological map. He selected two easily accessible sites, Samanköy and Arslantepe, as suitable for excavation with a small budget and which posed "(…) the least risk and the greatest result." He contacted the governor of Malatya, who suggested asking for a concession valid for several sites, and not only for Hittite but also for Roman remains.[59] Eventually, as in the case of other plans for the archaeological exploration of the ancient Near East, no excavations took place.

Dávid saw the importance of his journey primarily in a European context. Before his departure, he gave an interview to the Catholic daily newspaper *Új Nemzedék* stating: "European history began outside Europe, in Asia Minor." The newspaper's view of the journey, based on national and political considerations, placed Dávid's journey in the context of diplomacy, and, implicitly, in the context of eastern expansion: "Today science is no longer for its own sake, but also serves as a means to assist diplomacy (…), [which], at the service of national propaganda, can prove to be extremely useful." Dávid may have been aware of these expectations (or was the question asked by the interviewer?), because he concluded by echoing the interviewer's opening comment: "Scientific results are the best national propaganda."[60] *Magyarság*, another daily newspaper which was a significant voice of Christian intellectuals, published an article following Dávid's return, explaining the results of his journey:

> While the research in Asia Minor proposed by him does not promise results that would clear obscurities of the ancient history of the Hungarians, from a general scientific point of view, its importance would be great. Recently, the international scientific world has shown as much, if not greater, interest in Asia Minor as it did in Greece.[61]

Clearly, the journalist felt the need to explain to readers the absence of results directly associated with national history.

**Conclusion**

Hungarian research on the Orient from the end of the 19th century through WW I was strongly related to the definition of the role of the Hungarians in the history of humankind. This approach was complex, shaped by two primarily related ideas of Hungarian encounter with the Orient – indirectly through the influence of Western European patterns and directly, based on Hungary's own awareness of

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[59] Anonymous 1929.
[60] Anonymous 1928.
[61] Anonymous 1929.

and experiences with the east. Relying in general on models of 'Western Orientalism' – either following or diverging from them – Hungarian views of the Orient were under the influence of colonial ideology, while expeditions eastwards often depended on western (and Russian) imperial and colonial networks. Yet basic premises were particularly Hungarian, characterized by an aspiration to define the place and enhance the greatness of a non-colonizing country in terms of a west-east relationship that in many respects diverged from western patterns in both ideology and practice.

There were two main approaches to the east which differed in how they constructed the role of Oriental people/cultures in Hungarian self-perception and how they envisaged the role of the Hungarians in the exploration of the Orient. One was influenced by the idea of the eastern origin of the Hungarians, the associated search for eastern ancestors, and a programmatic aspiration of an economic and cultural expansion eastwards. This approach was rather complex with several versions prevailing among heterogeneous, often nationalist or extreme right-wing, social groups. One version defined the place of the Hungarians as mediators between west and east, while a later, rather radical version, particularly widespread following WW I, was characterised by a turn away from the west, as well as an extreme scholarly focus on Hungarian history at the expense of studies concerning cultures without direct relevance to Hungary. The attitude of this approach to Oriental cultures in the widest sense was twofold: it either neglected the study of those, mostly ancient Oriental civilizations whose history could not be connected to the Hungarian past, or constructed connections with such civilizations (e.g., the relationship of the Hungarian language to Sumerian or Egyptian). The other approach was supported by a less heterogeneous group of typically western-oriented scholars, intellectuals, and politicians with patriotic or nationalist ideals. They looked to the ancient Orient for the origins of human/European civilization and urged Hungary's contribution to its research in order to participate in 'the competition of nations,' as they put it, thus demonstrating belonging to 'civilized [i.e. western European] nations' (see Back's excavations).

This complex background set limits to the study of the ancient Near East. Costly enterprises such as archaeological excavations were few in Hungarian oriental research, which was rather directed to philology, ethnology, and history. Although the number of scholarly expeditions and eastward journeys increased towards the end of the long 19$^{th}$ century, government funding was rarely provided. Rather these ventures were typically financed by private individuals, associations, and societies. In addition, there was strong competition for funding among academia, and there was a general hierarchy of Oriental disciplines in which the research on ancient Oriental civilizations, as the least relevant to Hungarian history, was ranked last. Moreover, within the field of the study of ancient civilizations in general, priority was given to the exploration of ancient Greece and Rome.

While there was public and scholarly pressure on the advancement of study of the ancient Orient, Hungarian involvement in the archaeological exploration of these early civilizations was generally characterized by failures and absences, rather than successful projects, regardless of changes and variations in other patterns of Oriental research. Fülöp Back's initiative to start archaeological work in Egypt was a success only when he himself provided the financing and donated the finds to the Hungarian state. His efforts failed to mobilize government support for the establishment of a permanent Hungarian archaeological institute to take over the work he had started. His strategy – to involve the state in the participation of the archaeological exploration of Egypt by establishing and funding a project with a private contribution, which then would be operated by the state – was a general method employed by lay individuals concerned about the exploration of the Orient (cf. also Jenő Zichy and István Berta above). Pósta also relied on a mixed-funding model, but differently. As a representative of a state-run university, he wanted to involve the relevant Ministry, but he also looked for sponsors among learned societies and from private individuals. He, too, failed.

The lack of state interest was echoed by a prevailing view among non-specialist scholars and other intellectuals that the funding of ancient Oriental disciplines should be left to wealthy private individuals. However, some of these wealthy individuals refused to take over the task they thought should be performed by state-run archaeological/research institutes established on European models.

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# Bohemian Absences

## The Academy of Sciences in Prague and the Network of European Institutions Involved in Archaeological Research in Egypt in the 1900s

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In the early years of the 20th century, the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts declined to participate in jointly financing an Austro-Hungarian excavation in Egypt. The funding was then provided by the Austro-Hungarian state, imperial family and household funds, and private initiatives in Hungary and Egypt. It was a specific episode of a Bohemian absence, but it reflected a larger context.

In late 19th and early 20th century Bohemia, learned societies as well as privately funded projects with a strong 'Oriental' interest were conspicuous by their absence, although the notable Orientalist Josef von Hammer-Purgstall praised the earlier Learned Society of Bohemia (also known as the Royal Society of Bohemia) as a model academy. Interest in Oriental studies appeared to be largely driven by individuals, with limited links to select national institutions. Was this because Bohemia itself had no particular share in the framework of Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) foreign politics that could be seen as promoting some aspects of Oriental studies? The local nationalist factor also needs to be taken into account. Other elements of public discourse in Bohemia complement the locally oriented picture: the university was split along a nationalist dividing line separating Czech from German, while the role of museums as national 'Wissensorte' and specific realms of memory was mainly to promote the Czech national revival, strongly reflected equally in any public space with cultural capital (such as a theatre or a museum).

Individuals attempted to break the impasse of limited institutional encouragement and the confines of national(ist) provincial interest. Arguably Alois Musil, the most successful example, did so in a geopolitical framework of Austro-Hungarian international activities. But in fact, Musil was preferred by the Czech Academy in 1908/1909 for sponsorship, over and above an excavation project in Egypt. The interpretation of Bohemian absences requires further nuance.

### 1908–1909: Withdrawal

By the end of 1908, the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts in Prague had declined to co-finance a distinctly trans-regional, Austro-Hungarian academic project of archaeological research in Egypt.[1] Its decision was not welcomed by fellow

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[1] The correspondence and other related documents are in the Archive of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague and the Masaryk Institute (AAVCR–AUTGM), fonds

academicians across Austria-Hungary, nor did it much please diplomats and enthusiasts in Egypt who had already been involved in the project. The Prague institution was but one stakeholder in a complex network concerned with this venture. Institutions, political factions, and individuals as well as communities, were included in a process that could have resulted in a project resembling a research consortium, yet its impact was limited by sundry contingencies.

The Prague academy was an aspirational local institution, bearing the name of the emperor Franz Joseph in its own name, established in 1890, and supported to a large extent by its first president Josef Hlávka, an entrepreneur based in Bohemia and active throughout Austria-Hungary. The Academy's public profile combined dynastic loyalty with an element of national revivalism. In hindsight this might appear paradoxical, although a common lived experience for many citizens of Austria-Hungary who did not see or feel "(…) an inherent opposition between national consciousness and imperial loyalty."[2]

How did the Prague academy become involved with an excavation project in Egypt? The project had originally been conceived as a cooperative undertaking of academies in Vienna, Cracow, and Prague, with the possibility that institutions in Budapest might eventually join them. The idea also had some history and ramifications rooted in a network of scholars and institutions.

The excavations in Egypt, providing an impetus for cooperation were those undertaken earlier (1906–1907) by Fülöp Back (1862–1958), Hungarian entrepreneur and amateur Egyptologist.[3] Back selected first Sharuna, and then a site in Middle Egypt known as Gamhud. The excavation of Gamhud, and later also in neighbouring locations, was led by the Polish Egyptologist Tadeusz Smolenski (1884–1909). Later, following Smolenski's illness, the project continued under the Egyptian Egyptologist Ahmad Kamal (1849–1923)[4] who was among the founding figures of modern Egyptian academic Egyptology. Kamal's association with the Austro-Hungarian mission was thanks to his good working relationship with some German-speaking Egyptologists, including Heinrich Brugsch.[5] The outcome of several campaigns enriched both the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, and the participating Central European institutions. Eventually some finds seem to have ended in Bohemian collections as well.[6]

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ČAVU (Czech Academy), Correspondence and Meeting Minutes 1908/1909.

[2] Cole and Unowsky 2007: 3.

[3] See K. Kóthay in this volume.

[4] Bács *et al.* 2009: 21–22, also Vörös 2008, in detail, including transcripts of the Back and Koziebrodzki correspondence and memoranda since 1907.

[5] For Brugsch's school: Reid 2003: 116–118.

[6] A coffin from Gamhud in the Náprstek Museum – National Museum in Prague arrived via a different route. It was excavated at Gamhud, but Count Coundenhove-Kalergi bought it later (Onderka and Jůnová Macková 2011: 43). The travels of the other finds are mentioned in Back's correspondence, including requests from other museums wishing to join institutions which had already benefitted (March 1908, Graz; see Vörös 2008: 66).

After the early times of exploration supported by Back, further support was sought via diplomatic channels, including by the flamboyant Austro-Hungarian ambassador Count Tadeusz Bolesta-Koziebrodzki (1860–1916), who favoured the involvement of Back and Smolenski in any future project and supported the enterprise with some enthusiasm. In 1908, the ambassador urged his ministry in Vienna (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to secure another archaeological 'concession' in Egypt. Then the Ministry of Education and the Imperial Academy of Sciences in Vienna became involved.

That same year Smolenski was in contact with another institution, 'his' academy of sciences in Cracow. Apparently, Cracow academy members talked to Dr Čelakovský,[7] an academy member both in Cracow and in Prague. The diplomatic and social network in Cairo intersected with an institutional network within Austria-Hungary. The academic grapevine led the Viennese Academy, run by Orientalist scholar and librarian Joseph von Karabacek (1845–1918), to approach officially its institutional counterparts in Prague, Cracow, and Budapest. Viennese academicians wrote to their Prague colleagues proposing a memorandum to request support for excavations in Egypt, signed and addressed to the Ministry of Education. At first, the matter was welcomed, only later to be rejected.

**1908–1909: Timeline**

From the Prague perspective, the history of communications began in March 1908, when the secretary of the 1st class (or division) of the Academy (the Humanities), Dr. Zikmund Winter (1846–1912, cultural historian and novelist) wrote to his academy superiors in the *presidium* about a plan to support a memorandum initiated by the Imperial Academy of Sciences in Vienna (its full name). The intention was to create a consortium of institutions across Austria-Hungary which would then approach the respective ministries of education (and possibly also of foreign affairs), as well as the Imperial household, with a request to finance archaeological excavations in Egypt.

This was first communicated in a way best described as academic scuttlebutt circulating in Vienna, Cracow, and Prague. Winter's colleague Čelakovský

> "attended some meeting of the Cracow Academy and about the Czech academy he had said that it is likely to join the memorandum with pleasure, but cannot give anything [financially speaking], because it has nothing to give." Winter was clear that verbal support should be given loudly and clearly. "If we cannot get a plenary session together, we thought it might suffice to see the praesidium of the entire Academy, supported by the class vote, joining the memorandum; it is all the more important that there is no

[7] Either botanist Ladislav František Čelakovský (1864–1916) or Jaromír Čelakovský (1846–1914 Praha), lawyer and promoter of the Czech/German split of the Prague university (on which see below).

money involved, but a moral support, and a cooperation that will be a credit to our Academy."[8]

Winter clearly opined that it would be an honour for the Czech Academy of Sciences to support the Viennese-proposed memorandum, and that it need not (indeed could not) include a financial obligation. In general, the Academy felt that its financial position was not particularly stable. As the memorandum targeted the ministry and an imperial foundation with an application to support the excavations, the academies were not initially (intending to be) involved financially. But Winter was not aware of the complexity of the situation in Egypt, where swift action was seen as essential.[9]

In May 1908, the Imperial Academy in Vienna responded to Count Koziebrodski's new appeal for practical steps in Egypt, and submitted an application for an archaeological concession in Egypt. It also began to explore a possible financial commitment. In October, it was ready to commit 6,000 crowns for three years – i.e., 2,000 annually. And in December 1908, as the applications for ministerial and imperial money had not been not acted upon, the Prague colleagues were asked to chip in – which they politely but firmly refused to do. The Cracow Academy, in turn, pledged 1,000 crowns annually for three years, but conditionally, stipulating that Smolenski was to be involved. The evident withholding of the Czech or Bohemian financial component was, it could be argued, symptomatic of the more reticent approach of research institutions in this region to Oriental Studies. And yet, the wording of the rejection, when formally sent to Vienna in January 1909, indicates that a more nuanced view is required:

> muss das Praesidium leider mitteilen, dass es der böhm. Akademie zurzeit absolut nicht tunlich ist, eine Subvention zu den obergennanten Zwecke bieten zu können, zumal die böhm. Akad. die von Dr. Musil unter der Aegide der hochgeehrten Kaiserl. Akademie in Wien undernommenen Forschungsexpediton nach der Orient mit einer Subvention von 7000 Kr. zu unterstützen sich verpflichtet hat.[10]

This academic decision requires some contextualisation regarding the purpose and influence of the Academy, and the status of Oriental studies/Egyptology in the late 19th century, an era so closely tied to the changing cultural identity of Bohemia. More insight is called for into the developing academic structures of the time, as well as some reference to Alois Musil (1868–1944), an *enfant terrible* of Austro-Hungarian Oriental studies, and a leading figure in the future of Oriental studies in Czechoslovakia.

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[8] AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, 1908/584, undated draft, prob. March 1908, words underlined by Winter. Translation from Czech, HN.

[9] And Koziebrodzki appealed to the Viennese institutions to that effect; copies of his letters were then sent on to Prague: AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, 1908/768, 4 May 1908.

[10] AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, kart. 70, inv. III.B, 1909/157, 27 January 1909.

**1800s to 1900s: Context of local preferences**

What was the broader position of Egyptology (or Oriental Studies) in Bohemia at the time, beyond the confines of one institution that seems to have expressed a non-committal interest? A small subchapter cannot possibly do the topic justice,[11] but an outline should still provide context. Parallels from Egypt and Europe suggest that a lively landscape of research and public interest might have gradually developed, involving learned societies, university institutes with academic chairs, but also private collectors. Nationally and internationally, both individual and institutional stakeholders were linked in networks concerned with acquiring knowledge but also with identity politics. In general terms, aspects of just such a network of stakeholders can also be detected in Bohemia.

Yet, despite elements of a shared intellectual interest across borders, this landscape was shaped in a different way and in a dense local context in almost every single country,[12] and it also could and did become a stage for international competition.[13] Indeed, Back himself, the instigator of the excavation that applied for the academies' support, was reported (in May 1907) by his ally Koziebrodzki to have begun the excavations "(…) out of a patriotic urge to see his homeland as a participant in the rich and interesting finds on Egyptian soil." And Koziebrodzki added: "This would be all the more desirable because we have lagged behind almost all less prosperous cultured nations in this regard."[14]

Comparing other regions or countries with the Bohemian Orientalist landscape is likely to show both shared features and specific elements.[15] Societies or clubs of 'dilettanti' and later professionals with a subscription model that would have had a broader range of members did not take significant hold in the landscape of learned societies in Bohemia. This was due in part to Bohemia's structures for acquiring knowledge largely following the German model of a 'research university,' as developed in the 19th century.[16] Despite the rise of the research university, learned societies (if not gentleman scholars) nevertheless remained a feature of German (and many other European) knowledge landscape, but not in Bohemia.

Most of the development of Oriental studies in Bohemia is closely related to some form of institutional academic activity or its absence, and to individual ini-

[11] On Egyptology see Bednarski *et al.* 2021; Oriental Studies: Czech context Malečková 2021: Chapter 4.

[12] Cf. Bednarski *et al.* 2021.

[13] Outlined in detail by Reid 2003 (summarized 287–289), Reid 2015 and Thompson 2015–2018, vol. II and III, as well as Bednarski *et al.* 2021. For a succinct overview of national competition for Egypt's past in context of Egyptian national revival, see Reid 1997.

[14] Quoted in Vörös 2008: 32.

[15] For an early history of Bohemian/Czech Oriental Studies, see Malečková 2021, esp. ch. 4.

[16] Osterhammel 2015: 804.

tiatives. Long-term absence of chairs for major Orientalist disciplines and underfunding, combined with a lack of a public framework to support Oriental studies, presented limitations. The impact of institutional (dis)interest became even more noticeable throughout the later decades of the 19th century, when science (with humanities as well) experienced social change. Disregarding for the moment the difference between 'scientist', 'scholar,' and intellectual, the Bohemian region in particular adhered to a general umbrella term 'science,' *Wissenschaft*, or *věda*, covering both the natural sciences and the humanities.

In Prague, site of an important local university (established in 1348), Oriental Studies were represented mainly by Semitic languages, Hebrew, Arabic and Aramaic. These 'Oriental' languages had been taught at the Faculty of Theology since the 1620s, but without full professorships. The end of the 18th century brought some changes. A religious/missionary motivation for studying Oriental languages was complemented and eventually replaced by an interest in diplomatic, economic, and geopolitical ties (fostered by the Oriental Academy in Vienna beginning in 1754, preceded by a history of training interpreters at imperial legations).[17] Research interests had to navigate a new landscape of state educational support, accompanied by expectations of an étatist loyalty. It is also noteworthy that university teaching changed from using Latin to mostly German in the late 18th century (1781). The socio-political context was an important factor: the centralising monarchy promoted one administrative language, which was German, and it required homogeneously qualified personnel for its home administration and the foreign service as well.

Oriental languages and studies began to become established in the Faculty of Arts, and of Theology as well. In 1847, Hebrew classes appeared in the Faculty of Arts.[18] The reformation and growth of humanities' faculties were in step with European changes. "Humanities faculties began to take shape in European universities, especially in France and Germany, in the middle of the nineteenth century; the individualist gentleman-scholar held sway for a little longer in the British Isles. The academization of the human 'sciences' was something new."[19]

Wolfgang Wessely (1802–1870) was the first to teach Semitic languages in the Faculty of Arts. Next, after Wessely, was Saul Isaak Kämpf (1813–1892) who taught comparative grammar of Semitic languages. Ancient history teaching was usually focused on classical antiquity – Greece and Rome. Egypt was present to a limited extent in history classes and later also in classes on art history.[20] Czech/Bohemian students during the 19th century usually attended the University of Vienna, if they wished to pursue an Orientalist career. Several promising young

[17] For context of foreign language education in Austria see Schröder 2018; for the Sprachknaben, see 32–33.
[18] Segert and Beránek 1967: 173–174.
[19] Osterhammel 2015: 815.
[20] Navrátilová 2003: 101–103.

Orientalists of Czech origin passed away before they could leave a more systematic mark on the development of the subject.[21] There was no push from local notables to support Oriental studies or, more generally, 'the study of the other.'[22] Oriental studies were on the periphery even when represented by formidable scholars, such as Orientalist Rudolf Dvořák (1860–1920). [23] He studied several Oriental languages and was also interested in ancient Egyptian, finally earning his *Habilitation* (a post-doctorate degree) in 1884, and eventually becoming a professor of Oriental philology in Prague.[24] His career and the development of Oriental studies, mainly studies of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, coincided with a major change in the organisation of the university in Prague.

The development at the university in Prague was complicated by the nationalist rift between Czechs and Germans[25] which came to a head in 1882 when the *universitas* was divided into two universities – one Czech and the other German. Both then struggled to attain and uphold research and teaching excellence. The German university competed with major establishments in Austria and Germany (thus preferred by German-speaking students) while the Czech university, albeit it claimed nationalist loyalty of Czech students and professors, suffered from occasional isolationism.[26]

The nationalist rifts shaped non-university academe as well, such as the Royal Bohemian Society for Sciences (KČSN),[27] a non-university academic institution established in 1784. Its activities did not include Oriental studies to any significant degree, although a foremost Austrian Orientalist scholar Joseph von Hammer Purgstall became a member in 1843.[28] Themes appeared occasionally among the Society's research output that could be included in the Oriental studies remit.[29] The Royal Bohemian Society remained – from a language point of view –

[21] Malečková 2021: 165–166.

[22] So Osterhammel 2015: 814.

[23] For a recent review of Dvořák's career, see Lomová *et al.* 2020 (non vidi).

[24] Malečková 2021: 166–167. In the same decade when the Academy discussed whether to give its (moral) support to the archaeological project in Egypt, a grammar school professor of mathematics, František Lexa, was trying to build an Egyptological career. He began as an autodidact and continued his studies with some (Austrian imperial) state support in Berlin and Strasbourg. It would be almost two more decades, accompanied by a change of government, before a chair of Egyptology was created in Prague. For Lexa, see Verner 1989; for the creation of the chair in Prague, Navratilova and Jůnová Macková 2021.

[25] Cf. also Pánek, Tůma *et al.* 2009: 339 ff.

[26] Cf. Petráň 1997 and Pešek, Míšková and Hlaváčková 1997.

[27] See Pokorná 2010.

[28] Míšková 2008.

[29] For example, cf. Alfred Ludwig's studies of Indian literature in J. Kalousek, ed., *Děje Královské české společnosti nauk* 1885: 237.

'utraquist,'[30] which was not viewed favourably in the atmosphere of escalating nationalism.[31]

The protagonist of this paper, the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts, was founded in 1890, along with Gesellschaft zur Förderung deutscher Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur in Böhmen in 1891,[32] both without any specific Oriental studies focus, but with a well-defined aim of becoming *national* learned societies. Josef Hlávka, the benefactor of the Czech Academy, associated the new organisation with promotion of 'Czechness' research and "(…) he preferred Czechness of science and arts above other qualities."[33]

This was a significant determining factor that might have created a potential barrier as far as Oriental studies were concerned. The focus on the problematic quality 'Czechness' entered an environment where interest in extra-European territories was already not particularly strongly promoted in the public space. The purpose and influence of the Academy were also professionally specifically targeted. An earlier work on its history noted:

> The academy, up until its very end, had no opportunity to develop its own research activity at its own premises. It was limited to supporting research, some organisation thereof, and direct and indirect backing of publication and outreach [activities]. Unlike [an earlier concept of] J. E. Purkyně that saw a national academy as a powerful centre of research activity, most of those involved in the 1880s thinking about need for and future tasks of an academy, before Hlávka, understood this new institution only as an addition to the [Czech!] university.[34]

Hlávka, the dominant figure and chief sponsor of the new Academy after 1890, although a cosmopolitan entrepreneur, was known to recommend repeatedly that the Academy should to keep their activities local, due to the limited financial means at their disposal. This was seen clearly in his comments when on occasion various offers of international cooperation reached the *presidium,* i.e., the executive board of the Academy. One such communication inviting the Czech Academy to cooperate internationally with other academies reached the Philology class (3rd class) of the Academy in 1907. It concerned the publication of internationally important research, and Hlávka commented: "The project is concerned with valuable works of international importance, but the Czech academy has insufficient means for such opportunities, as it is concerned at present with tasks closer to home."[35]

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[30] Jiroušek 2016.
[31] Míšková 2008.
[32] Míšková 2008: 282.
[33] Jiroušek 2016: 33.
[34] Šlechtová 1989: ix–x.
[35] AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, Kn 9, i.č. 14, Protokoly I. tř 1901–1910, 12 January 1907 presidium meeting.

A response of this kind was probably realistic, but it set limits to the aspirations of the institution. Yet, it cannot be presumed that international perspectives were entirely foreclosed; rather that they applied in a specific manner. The Academy named corresponding and co-opted members, and it communicated with its counterparts throughout the monarchy and occasionally further afield. It elected corresponding members from a range of countries and institutions, from Oxford to St. Petersburg. William Richard Morfill (1843–1909), the first Professor of Russian and Slavonic languages at the University of Oxford[36] and author of publications such as *The Bohemians and Slovaks* (London 1879) and *A Grammar of the Bohemian or Čech Language* (Oxford 1899), was elected a member in 1905.[37] This was a symptomatic move, however. It showed an interest in positioning Czech scholarship within a respected international network (the idea of a global academic network itself being a relatively recent development), but also gave recognition to a scholar whose works and interests could be seen as promoting 'Czechness.'

Neither were Oriental studies or archaeology excluded entirely from the Academy's remit. Both its 1st class (humanities) and its 3rd class (philology) had expressed interest in these areas of research. Rudolf Dvořák obtained publication subsidies for translations from 'Oriental' languages into Czech,[38] and the Oriental disciplines were not infrequently cited in discussions of the philology board. Between 1905 and 1908, thirty-two meetings of the board took place, and Oriental studies featured in no fewer than six of them. Dvořák convinced the philology board (which also had an archaeology subcommittee!) that they ought to support Alois Musil's travel plans even if the board was initially strongly opposed![39]

| Year | Meetings including subsidy applications for varied projects incl. lexicographical and some classical studies. | Of which, meetings including Oriental studies |
|---|---|---|
| 1905 | 9 | 2 |
| 1906 | 7 | 0 |
| 1907 | 6 | 1 |
| 1908 | 10 | 3 |
| | **32** | **6** |

[36] Stone 2009.

[37] AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, sign. II.4, karton 13, III. Třída: Protokoly o schůzích, 6 June 1905.

[38] AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, sign. II.4, karton 13, III. Třída: Protokoly o schůzích, 3 March 1905.

[39] AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, karton 13, II.4, Protokol 87, 27 May 1908 meeting minutes.

Oriental studies had to justify their presence and often were supported only to a certain extent, in which they could be included in the 'Czech' cultural capital. Musil, buoyed by Dvořák, was almost exceptionally successful.

Reviewing the late 19th century results of the development of knowledge-fostering institutions, Bohemia visibly adopted the same institutional forms as elsewhere in Europe: "Modern institutional forms for the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge were created at that time: the research university, the laboratory, the humanities seminar."[40] The social and financial impact of institutionalisation was summed up by H.G. Wells in 1894:

> Time was when inquiry could go on unaffected even by the scornful misrepresentations of such a powerful enemy as Swift, because it was mainly the occupation of men of considerable means. But now that our growing edifice of knowledge spreads more and more over a substructure of grants and votes, and the appliances needed for instruction and further research increase steadily in cost, even the affectation of a contempt for popular opinion becomes unwise.[41]

Moreover, popular opinion, already operating in a new environment of an increasingly literate and schooled (to different degrees) population,[42] was also being transformed in the context of geopolitics and identity politics.

In Bohemia, the late 18th century, and especially the 19th brought a volatile growth of imagined communities that were refashioning their cultural identity, making the nationalist element in popular opinion sharper and more visible. Next to (and later against) the concept of being a Bohemian, the population of Bohemia was increasingly claimed by the Czech or German national(ist) community.[43] The national revival of the 'Czechs' clashed with the rising identity of the 'Germans,' resulting in language conflicts, political battles, and academic fragmentation. Although Bohemian/Czech identities must be seen in a plurality and were rather a spectrum than a uniform homogeneous block opposing anything else, the ideas of nationalist ownership of citizens, their minds and bodies, were gaining traction.[44] From individual to public space, national identity had to be articulated and enshrined.

The National Museum in Prague, a major 'realm of memory' (and embodiment of cultural capital) established in the late 19th century, had only a subdued visual reference to Egypt (or indeed other countries and cultures), not exceeding the visual reference to this distant land in the cosmopolitan decorative scheme of Prague's main Railway station in the early 1900s. Why was that the case? It was

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[40] Osterhammel 2015: 779.

[41] 'Popularising Science.' *Nature* 50.1291 (1894): 300–301.

[42] Osterhammel 2015: 788–798.

[43] The changes were aptly mapped by Wingfield 2007 and King 2018.

[44] Zahra 2008.

fitting in context of what a museum stood for; it belonged among 'Wissensorte' or 'lieux du savoir,'[45] planting the roots for a localised cultural identity. The concept of a national museum was linked to an idea of a 'shrine' to the nation, like the National Theatre built some years earlier and infused with similar legendary 'Czechness.' Bohemian museum specialists aimed at a very specific target – the encapsulation of national riches and history. The 1890s building of the National Museum in Prague is a case in point. It is almost entirely focused inwards: it captures Bohemian landscapes and realms of memory;[46] it is mostly disinterested in the world, almost as if there was no place for the world. Antonin Fritsch (Frič), Director of the Royal Bohemian Museum (an earlier name for the National Museum in Prague), preferred national museums to focus on local material, and although large metropolitan museums in imperial capitals were 'allowed' colonial exhibitions within his concept, he stated that "(…) world museums, which endeavour to bring together everything from all countries, are becoming more and more impossible, and are not at all desirable."[47] It was a tiered approach to the museums as catalogues of the world. For a *national* museum, a local world appeared to be enough.

How to interpret the process of disintegration of research communities is still debated. Bohumil Jiroušek opines:

> The disintegration process engulfing Bohemian – Czech and German – scholarship was impossible to stop (…) but in the end it went against the forces that understand scholarship as a unity, as a striving of the humanity for knowledge. On the other side, for a number of humanities it is very difficult, if not impossible to fully internationalise. The science was understood in opposition to technology as high-quality research including that in humanities, at least in the Czech perspective, and it was expected to address the Czech and Slavic history, culture and language.[48]

Although this view does capture well the inward thinking of some of the Czech elites, it does not address the vital transnational potential of humanities and the existence of humanities' disciplines that were then developing as global intellectual projects, even if caught in the fraught network of national and other narratives, such as Oriental studies.[49]

A 'Saidian' explanation might suggest that in the absence of colonies or colonial aspirations, there was no need for Oriental studies,[50] which could explain the

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[45] Osterhammel 2015: 7–14.
[46] A substantial number of publications on the subject are available in Czech (e.g., Sklenář 2001); in Anglophone research, the National Museum was addressed by Wilson 2010.
[47] Frič 1904: 253.
[48] Jiroušek 2016: 35.
[49] Lockman 2010.
[50] See outline of interpretations in Malečková 2021: 170.

low profile of Oriental studies in Bohemia. However, identifying scholarship with empire-building is reductionist,[51] and as such does not therefore seem to be sufficient.[52] In a multinational monarchy, the stakeholders in academe included not only the state but also local political factions and emerging imagined national(ist) communities.

Where identity projects of many European nations were concerned, Oriental studies had a specific, often highly complex role.

> [I]n the nineteenth century the ways in which European scholars, writers and artists analyzed, imagined and depicted the Orient were often intertwined, in complex ways, with the reality of growing European power over those peoples and lands. This is not to suggest that every Orientalist was a conscientious agent of imperialism or that every scholarly or artistic product of Orientalism served to justify or legitimate colonialism.[53]

The complex means included the use of the existing infrastructure and opportunities of empire, which does not constitute agreeing to its political framework.[54]

Yet, intertwining with political framework or intensive use of the infrastructures did not appear to be manifest[55] in responses of Central European nations to the 'Orient' which kept their revival narrative to the forefront, and on occasion pitched them against other European nations. Meanwhile, among the images of the 'Orient,' 'the Turk' stood as a representative figure, a historical threat, but also a fantasy.

> Czech images of the Turks emerged in times of war with the Ottoman Empire and reflected a "real" encounter with the Turks. This experience, influential as it proved to be, posed no actual threat to the survival of the Czechs and, as time passed, their interest in the Turks waned. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Czech intellectual elites were instead focused on rediscovering the Czechness of the population in the Czech lands, studying their own language, history, and culture, spreading national awareness among wider social groups, and, in the second half of the 19th century, pursuing Czech political objectives. Because the Czech lands were not vitally affected by combat with the Ottoman army, the Turks did not become an important part of the 19th century master narrative of Czech history and Czech self-identification. Nevertheless, Turkish subject matter never disappeared entirely from Czech culture, high or low. Memory of the "Turkish threat" was kept alive in folk songs and tales and in history books that told

[51] Osterhammel 2015, 819–820.
[52] Marchand 2009: xxv–xxx.
[53] Lockman 2010: 74.
[54] Ellis 2017; on 'academic traffic' within the British Empire see also Pietsch 2015: 109–124.
[55] It was not entirely absent – see Malečková 2021.

> the story of Czech participation in the Turkish wars, and Turks occasionally appeared as props or minor figures in emerging modern Czech culture.[56]

The wider world was eventually noted but did not need to be represented in the public space dedicated to the imagined community of 'Czechness.' Interest in Egypt, then, like interest in Turkey, Japan, or Africa, acted as a guest in public discourse concerned both with the past and the present 'Orient.'[57] Articles about ancient art and history are found throughout the late 19th century in the Czech-language press and in the production of short-lived periodicals[58] but they never sparked a major project or prominent interest. Notably, Bohemian Oriental studies were not linked in any prominent way to the study of the Bible[59] – even Musil used this argument sparsely.

The public's reception of Oriental studies was lukewarm, despite some protagonists' significant interest and expertise. In the study of Egyptian art, Miroslav Tyrš rejected the opinion that Egyptian art was sinister and stilted; he emphasised instead the impact of Egypt and Mesopotamia on the development of the cultural heritage of Greece; the former was indispensable for the latter. His admiration for Egyptian statuary was palpable, particularly for the so-called Louvre scribe. However, he expressed an evolutionary perspective: "Another nation [i.e. Greece] had to appear, fresh, with a more unrestricted, and flexible society, that took over the legacy of this art and raised it with remarkable talent to unexpected heights."[60] For him, Egypt was a fountainhead of civilization, although a symbol of concupiscence and cruelty, but mostly without some direct applicability in the Czech national narrative.[61]

If ancient Egyptian culture had its place and role, sparingly publicised, yet defined, then modern Egypt would appear to work its way to the Bohemian/Czech discourse even more gradually. Apparently there was little understanding of parallels in contemporary Egypt for national revival in Bohemia.[62] Paradoxically perhaps, these parallels in a national struggle for recognition were observed for Egypt and Poland by the very Egyptologist who led the research which the Academy in Prague refused to support, namely Tadeusz Smolenski.[63] Yet, where the Turkish national revival was concerned, the situation seems different: "Dvořák

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[56] Malečková 2021:199–200.

[57] Malečková 2021: 181.

[58] A selection of Egyptian themes, mainly brief reports on archaeology appeared in the periodicals *Osvěta* and *Athenaeum* throughout 1884–1894.

[59] Malečková 2021: 177–178.

[60] *Časopis Českého Musea*, 1883, pp. 285–300: 'O významu studia dějin starého umění orientalního'.

[61] Navratilova 2003: 221–222.

[62] Jůnová Macková *et al.* 2009: 558–569.

[63] Zinkow 2020.

was drawing a direct link between the Turkish national struggle and the Czech 'national revival.'"[64]

A first impression of the local preferences may be summed up as a developing imagined national community embroiled in its own identity project, and without a colonial interest. As a result, such a national community would appear to have very little involvement with Oriental studies, including study of the ancient world of the Near and Middle East. Yet, this impression is incomplete. A closer analysis reveals that this tepid atmosphere did not stop a development of research interests, and, ultimately, the careers of individual researchers who set themselves a double task: developing their subject matter (often inspired by German, French, and British Oriental studies[65]) and 'educating' their nation about other cultures and countries.[66] A third task may be added, that of representing the Czechs as a national community capable of contributing to international research networks. Yet, all three aims were pursued concurrently in the environment of the local identity project: tasks related to it were likely to take precedence in the new Czech (as opposed to Bohemian) public space. As a consequence, the local project implicitly undermined institutionalisation of Oriental studies and their impact on public discourse.

**1908–1909: Reticent academy in Prague?**

Weak interest and institutional links were particularly visible in the second half of the 19th century when there was large-scale development of Oriental studies research in other countries.[67] All of the above might indicate a level of contextual disinterest in Oriental Studies, but the picture painted by the archival material in the Academy is in fact more complex. The chief concern was the financial outlay necessary, although deliberations about the role of the Academy in general and the impact of this specific project were also included.

Let's review the statement of Zikmund Winter, who considered support for Egyptological research would be 'a credit to the Academy' as long as this was only verbal and moral support. A change of mind only came when the Academy's Viennese counterpart queried the possibility of a subvention. And it did concern only that element, not continuing support for the memorandum, i.e., of the idea of Egyptological research as such. From the Academy's viewpoint, it had exhausted

[64] Malečková 2021:186.

[65] Malečková 2021: chapter 4 on R. Dvořák, inspired by German and British works. Ancient Egyptian texts were often retranslated from French translations and some Egypt-related secondary literature from German and French resources (Navratilova 2003: 176–172).

[66] Dvořák translated regularly from Middle Eastern languages into Czech, and the resulting publications were financed by the Academy (meetings 1907/1909).

[67] Compare the contributions in this volume and the rich scenery of institutions in Marchand 2009.

immediately available funding by supporting another project in Oriental studies, Alois Musil's exploration of the regions of Arabia. The sum of 7,000 crowns pledged for Musil represented ca. 7 % of the Academy's entire annual budget, which amounted to just over 100,000 crowns, with each class receiving about 19,000 and ca. 30,000 reserved for general expenses. Within the class budget, it was over a third.[68]

It is noteworthy that the project was that of a Moravian scholar, hence a representative of a local intellectual community who had received Academy support before and had already delivered project results, viz. his earlier publications. From a pragmatic perspective, he might have been a safe option, and moreover, he fulfilled the paradigm of a 'Czech' intellectual presenting the success of 'Czechness' in a transnational research network. Musil was, after all, also sponsored by the Imperial Academy in Vienna, and most of his prominent social contacts at that point were in Austria, not in Bohemia. Musil's approach shows a scholar appealing to institutions for funding in exchange for delivering results of his own significant research. (To a certain extent, at least in Vienna, his own established position as a Catholic priest might have spoken in his favour, too, although it was ambiguous since his research commitments took him away from any pastoral duties.)

Nonetheless, even if reticent financially, the Academy was not averse to seeing its name associated with an Egyptological project. (It had not, however, articulated a wish to acquire objects as a benefit of *partage*). And its Viennese counterpart kept the Prague institution suitably updated on the project's progress even after Prague rejected the possibility of a financial contribution.[69] The Viennese academy followed up on its communication and sent a copy of the Cracow academy letter confirming its subvention of 1,000 K per year, especially to support a suitable scholar. They also had informed their Viennese colleagues that such a scholar was available in Egypt, namely Smolenski. Still no reply came from Budapest, even though Budapest had been asked again, and Back, a Hungarian, was involved.[70]

The Viennese academy kept talking to the Ministry of Education, as von Karabacek decided not to give up. Charting his determined efforts, copies of other ministerial communications were sent to Prague along with Karabacek's letters, affirming that the imperial family fund rejected the application and that the Ministry of Education was not in a position to promise anything for 1908, but considered 1909. The financial position of the plan was still very fragile.[71] And yet, it

[68] Information by Vlasta Mádlová and Adéla Jůnová Macková, based on archival records of CAVU, to be published in the forthcoming *History of CAVU* (working title, book to be published in Czech).
[69] AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, inventory, 1909/550: 19 March 1909.
[70] See also Kóthay 2019 for context.
[71] AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, inventory, 1909/550: 19 March 1909.

came to fruition. In late October 1909, the Viennese academy reported that the memorandum, which still represented the shared appeal of the three academies, did eventually succeed, in as much as the Ministry of Education provided an annual subvention of 8,000 crowns for 1910, 1911, and 1912, confirmed in August 1909. The ministry noted, via diplomatic channels from Cairo, that F. Back was involved as well in the sponsorship. An involvement of Hermann Junker was also envisaged on the professional side, for a 'Betrauung' of any future fieldwork project. The Viennese academy then proposed to support Junker and his excavation in Tura, not necessarily the previous project in Middle Egypt.

Another document outlined the final success in 1909 listing subventions from the imperial *Oberstkammereramt* (in a volte face of the administration of the imperial household), F. Back, the Academy, and the Ministry.

| | |
|---|---|
| Ministry of education | 8,000 |
| *Oberstkammereramt* | 3,000 |
| Academy Vienna | 2,000 |
| Ph. Back | 2,000 |
| Total | 15,000 |

The Cracow contribution of an additional 1,000 crowns still depended on the employment of Smolenski, who meanwhile enjoyed the support of Gaston Maspero in his Egyptological efforts and acted as an administrator of the international congress of classical archaeologists in Cairo, 1908–1909, but unfortunately, his health deteriorated, and he died later in 1909.[72]

The above list is an interesting merger of private and state sponsorship. However, the state sponsorship also determined where the research money was to be spent. The Viennese Academy did eventually decide to support Hermann Junker[73] in Tura, and provided further details about that plan. Consequently, the Cracow support, personalised for Smolenski, could not be used in this specific project.[74] The Imperial Academy's own political decisions are also of interest, putting a limitation on the original transnational appeal of the project. Originally, it comprised Polish and Hungarian-Jewish experts in Egypt, later in cooperation with the Egyptians, financed by a putative Austro-Czech-Polish-Hungarian academic consortium, whereas it ended up as a predominantly Austrian-German project in Egypt. In line with the institutionalisation of research, the private and less formal initiative, if vital in the early days of the project, was replaced by a more centralised vision.

The Czech Academy duly noted[75] the detailed reports from Vienna and on 15 November 1909 produced an official reply to the previous message of the Vienna

[72] Śliwa 2002 and 2008.

[73] About Junker: Gütl (ed.) 2017.

[74] AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, kart. 71, 23 October 1909.

[75] AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, inventory, 1909/1725, the memorandum taken into

academy. A congratulatory declaration was signed by Antonin knight Randa, president, and by Z. Winter, secretary of the 1st class of the academy.[76] In essence, where Prague was concerned, their involvement did succeed, as envisaged by Winter in 1908 in terms of 'moral' support.

**After 1918: National 'satisfaction' or continued mild disinterest?**

As the 1909 reticence of Czech Academy was related to a certain extent to a national identity project implicitly instigating limitations to its interests, it might be expected that a new independent state of Czechoslovakia (established in October 1918) would expand diverse areas of knowledge as national assets, with some capacity for doing so being now freed up by national success. But 'Czechoslovak' national success was in fact far from stable. It was like a small multinational republic being carved out of the larger multinational monarchy; furthermore, the newly constructed Czechoslovak identity could be also 'uncomfortable.'[77]

In this new atmosphere, advocates of Oriental studies could not take anything for granted, and had to build political, social, and cultural bridgeheads for their disciplines. In a new arrangement of state grants and subsidies and limited private sponsorship, state support, as opposed to private initiatives, dictated areas of interest.

Alois Musil, whose applications to the Academy had been successful at the beginning of the 20th century and who later also enjoyed imperial preferment,[78] transferred his loyalty from the Habsburgs to President Masaryk and the Czechoslovak administration.[79] And he continued pursuing his erstwhile idea of an institution that would combine scholarship, diplomacy, and business interests.[80] This unapologetic coalition was intended to secure a place for Oriental studies in any political setting. The Oriental Institute, when it came into being (its protracted gestation and birth occupied the years from 1922 to 1929), was largely a state-sponsored institution subject to vagaries of the Czechoslovak state budget.[81] The start, in a Baroque palace, Palais Lobkowicz,[82] with an ambitious programme was impressive, but curtailments came as soon as the Great Depression hit in the early 1930s.

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consideration at the meeting on 13 November 1909.

[76] AAVCR–AUTGM, fonds ČAVU, inventory, 1909/1839.

[77] Wingfield 2007: 188–189.

[78] Worschech 2009; for recent perspectives on Musil, see Collinet, Hiepel, Veselá and Weigl 2021.

[79] Not without difficulty – Galandauer 2021.

[80] About Musil and his projects – see also the edition of his correspondence, Musil *et al.* 2019.

[81] Lemmen 2014; Jůnová Macková 2016; Jůnová Macková 2020.

[82] Currently the location of the German Embassy in Prague.

Private sponsorship was ongoing in a limited manner, and new learned societies that would have enjoyed backing from multiple sources, and perhaps a degree of independence, were not formed in Czechoslovakia during the interwar period. The development of Oriental studies remained tethered either to state-backed institutions (with some private sponsorship, including input from President Masaryk and his international network), or to private initiatives of collectors and travellers. There was no body of scholars and interested laypeople helping to bridge the national(ist) and more cosmopolitan resources and discourses, and constituting a (perhaps) more independent basis for research activity and networking. Czechoslovak scholars were active in the cosmopolitan research network, including the CIC (an embryonic UNESCO[83] at the League of Nations, with historian Josef Šusta[84]) but their survival at home was mostly tied to the Czechoslovak state and its institutions.

Scholars, if they did not want to be 'owned' by the state, had to navigate a specific terrain – Musil succeeded in gaining and keeping both national and international support, tied to Charles Crane, an in-law of President Masaryk. Other Arabists built up university positions, but they never had comparable international impact (R. Růžička). Egyptologists' situation paralleled that of the Arabists. The internationally recognized scholar Jaroslav Černý obtained interwar sponsorship from resources based in four countries (Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, and England) while his teacher František Lexa linked his career with Prague, and continued wrangling with Czech authorities.[85] The complexity of interests and lack of resources were in fact comparable with those in the Austro-Hungarian and the Czechoslovak eras. Possibly, the maverick position of the Czech Orientalists allowed them to build a discursive space that touched, but did not copy, the *realpolitik* of the monarchy, the nationalists, or the republic.[86] Alois Musil, who was willing to use *realpolitik* if it also benefitted Oriental studies,

> claimed that hatred of the West and of Britain in particular had been rising because the Orient was scared of European imperialism. The Orient needed a revival, but the "help" that the West provided to the Turks and Egyptians in making their reforms reflected "neither love for one's neighbour nor enthusiasm for the flowering of culture" and arose rather from the Western pursuit of material gain, which is what had driven various powers to interfere in the affairs of the Orient.[87]

[83] Renoliet 1999.

[84] Lach 2003.

[85] Navratilova and Jůnová Mackova 2021; Navratilova 2023.

[86] See notes on this in Malečková 2021: 197–198.

[87] Malečková 2021: 189, quoting Alois Musil's 'Proč Orient nenávidí Okcidentu,' *Venkov*, January 22, 1922.

Although Musil himself was driven by distrust of the powers that contributed to the end of both the Habsburg and the Ottoman empires, he had also noted an important aspect of the early 20th century Middle East. At the same time, he found Central European nationalism, and particularly language chauvinism, limiting: “Who wanders across the world does realise that any language is but a tool, or outerwear. Use of language does not indicate nationality and certainly isn’t equivalent to it.”[88]

**Concluding remarks**

When considering the years 1908 to 1909, the discrepancy between the initial expression of interest, seen clearly to the credit of the Academy, and the final avoidance of any material commitment may seem incongruous at first. Yet, it fits into the puzzle of tensions within the Academy that reflected both its aspirations and its limits, set within the local scene of academic communities, public dis/interest, and, more broadly, within the politics of local identity. The national revival itself was a challenging conglomerate of narratives – of individual nations, of what constituted modern nations, and of what constituted the West and which nations belonged there.[89] The Czech intellectuals in Bohemia during the late 19th and for large parts of the 20th century were often rambling between different versions of their own imagined community. Was theirs a Slavic nation or a specific West European nation, but clearly diverse from the Germans? Were they idealised *Mittel-Europeans,* forming a bridge that might ultimately lead from East to West, South to North? Were they the struggling ‘colony’ of the Habsburgs?[90] Were they unique in their contribution to humanity in general – did they have a place in the evolutionary view of a succession of civilizations and nations?[91] In this sea of questions all related to the search for identity, the broader debate about worlds beyond national borders was only one guest, and not even one given much prominence.

The acquisition of knowledge was embedded, or caught, in this discussion. The key narrative of the history of science which seemingly captures the tension, has been articulated by Robert Fox. Internationalisation of knowledge ca. 1900 took the form of exchange at congresses and in early projects of research infra-

[88] Quote translated by HN from Galandauer 2021: 193.

[89] The complex, if not to say, messy interpretation of what sort of nation should a national revival lead to is reflected in more recent discussions – Pynsent 2003, and 2013.

[90] Anderson (2016: 110–111), put the neighbouring Slovaks on par with colonized Indians and Koreans.

[91] The problematic character of the ‘new (or renewed) insistence on differences among peoples and civilizations’ is one of the characteristics of the 19th century (Lockman 2010: 77–78), although opposing views did exist – on alternative perspectives also Lockman 2010: 92–93.

structures, such as bibliographies, and in a number of associations that were intended to link major research institutions. The congresses often accompanied major universal exhibitions (another characteristic phenomenon of the period). "The Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900 was such an occasion. No fewer than 127 congresses met in Paris that year."[92] But there were also ambiguities – national communities were seeking both recognition of their contribution to knowledge and control of it. France promoted the use, spread, and control of the metric system; the Swedish royal family and government officials were not above trying to corral a quintessentially international award, the Nobel prize, for Swedish scientists.[93] International organisations, meetings, and awards had a distinct quality of 'internationalism with a nationalistically tinged competitive edge,'[94] akin to the Olympic Games (whose modern incarnation was a product of the same era).

Finding the balance between national and international networks, between contributing to a wider research community and being a national 'asset,' may well have presented a challenge for research practitioners in national revivalist Bohemia, just as it was elsewhere. However, this challenge had perhaps sharper contours for Central European scholars than for scholars elsewhere. Whether during national revival under Austria-Hungary, or as representatives of the intellectual potential of the new state of Czechoslovakia, developing Czech humanities could have served as a national asset with a double role. First, there was an enrichment of national narratives, and second, a production of competitive research that would display national intellectual qualities. The two aspects were not always successfully wed, and some disciplines kept falling through the complex net of national, nationalist, and transnational intellectual interests, all of them rooted not only in intellectual adventures, but embedded in complex structures of political discourse and power. The first aspect could not be fully supplied by Oriental studies, even if the second was within their remit: "As far as science [including humanities] was concerned, internationalization and nationalization stood in a tense and contradictory relationship to each other."[95]

The Czech Academy of Sciences, with largely nominal imperial patronage and private funding, faced practical as well as conceptual limitations to its activity. The conceptual limits could be overcome verbally – by providing 'moral' support to trans-regional projects – but the Academy's influence and involvement in Oriental studies stalled, or manifested itself locally, in support for translations from 'exotic' languages into Czech. Alois Musil succeeded in linking the academies in Prague and Vienna in his research, but it seems to have been a rare occurrence, and a testimony to the strength of his personal network (in Prague represented by

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[92] Fox 2016: 19.
[93] Fox 2016: 22.
[94] Fox 2016: 23.
[95] Osterhammel 2015: 825.

Rudolf Dvořák[96]) and ensuring social capital across the regions of the Habsburg monarchy. The case for Back and Smolenski (and the Egyptian excavations) did not resonate with the same impact, and when the Egyptian project did succeed, the Imperial Academy in Vienna promoted a different mission, to be led by Hermann Junker. Cracow promoted Smolenski, cultivating its 'own' researcher. In the end, neither academy showed a sustained interest in a trans-regional or transnational perspective of the original project. The institutional goals were set from a different direction, and weighted toward cultivating an asset that could be seen as more established, and more 'localized,' be it Musil or Junker, or Smolenski – regardless of the intentions of the scholars concerned.

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[96] Summary of Dvořák's impact on Czech Oriental Studies Malečková 2021: 195–196.

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# From Wish to Reality

## The Foundation and Early Years of the Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO)

Willemijn Waal*

This paper discusses the early history of the Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO), which cannot be seen separately from that of the Society *Ex Oriente Lux* (EOL). Special attention is paid to the impact of World War II on the functioning of the young institute, and to Arie Kampman, who was instrumental in the creation and early development of NINO.[1]

**How it all began: the foundation of Ex Oriente Lux in 1933**

The Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO) was founded in 1939, but its history goes back several years earlier, with the foundation of the Society *Ex Oriente Lux* (EOL) in Leiden on 22 May 1933.[2] The primary aim of this society was to link people within the Netherlands who were interested in ancient Egypt and the Near East, and to generate more interest for these fields of study among the public. Initiators were some students of Frans de Liagre Böhl (1882–1976),[3] professor of Assyriology at the University of Leiden (Fig. 1), and of Adriaan de Buck, professor of Egyptology (1892–1959) at that same university (Fig. 2). One of these students was Abraham Arie Kampman (1911–1977), who would become the main driving force behind both EOL and NINO (see pp. 263–265).[4]

Kampman, who was then 21 years old, would later recall in an address delivered on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of EOL in 1958 that the students' initiative was at first not taken seriously by everyone.[5] However, the young society managed to gain the support of some influential scholars. Professors Böhl and De Buck were prepared to be members of the advisory committee and they

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[1] This paper is partly based on research conducted for the project NINO WO II. 360º funded by the Mondriaan Fund. Unless indicated otherwise, the information given here stems from the archives of NINO. I have further gratefully made use of Van Zoest & Berntsen 2014.

[2] The society was initially founded under the auspices of the *Oostersch Genootschap in Nederland* but became independent in 1940 (Veenhof 2008: 11).

[3] For F. de Liagre Böhl (hence: Böhl), see also the contribution of Sebastiaan Berntsen in this volume.

[4] The first chair of the society EOL was the classicist Bob van Proosdij. The other founding members were Lucie van den Bergh, A.E. Thierens, Martien Beek, Jetty Boas, Piet de Boer, Henk Brongers, and Theo Vriezen.

[5] Kampman 1958 [2008]: 64–65.

Fig. 1: Frans de Liagre Böhl (1882–1976) at Schiphol Airport in 1932 in front of the plane De Arend (The Eagle), ready for departure to Iraq.

Fig. 2: Adriaan de Buck (1892–1959).

were actively involved in EOL, giving lectures and courses.[6] Other noteworthy supporters included the archaeologist Henri Frankfort, field director of excavations in Iraq for the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, the Egyptologist/theologian Gerardus van der Leeuw, professor of history of religion at the university of Groningen, later Minister of Education, and Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, (retired) professor of Arabic and "Nestor" of Oriental Studies in Leiden.[7] The support of these individuals definitely contributed to the success and longevity of *Ex Oriente Lux*.

EOL started organizing lectures and courses about the ancient Near East for a general audience throughout the country. These activities were quite popular undoubtedly because the many exciting archaeological discoveries made at that time generated great public interest. In the main cities of the Netherlands the society founded several local branches called study circles ('studiekringen') which organized lectures in their vicinity. In the heydays of *Ex Oriente Lux* there were no less than thirty-two such branches. According to Kampman, the society organized over 3.000 lectures in twenty-five years.[8] In 1939, EOL started to look beyond its borders and initiated cooperation with Belgium (and Luxemburg), which was maintained during the German occupation.[9]

There were three different categories of membership in EOL: members-employees ('leden-medewerkers'), patrons ('begunstigers'), and donors ('donateurs'). Those belonging to the first category had specialized in ancient Near Eastern studies and were willing to be involved in EOL's activities as lecturers and/or authors. The second group mainly consisted of protestant clergy ('predikanten'), while the 'donateurs' included private persons and enterprises such as Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM) and Hofmarschallamt Haus Doorn.[10]

In addition to organizing courses and lectures, EOL initiated its own publications to further stimulate interest in the study of the ancient Near East among the public. The first volume of the journal *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux* (*JEOL*), which

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[6] Kampman commemorates the great indebtedness of EOL to these two gentlemen in his obituaries for Böhl (Kampman 1977), and De Buck (Kampman 1959). For the latter, see also Bob van Proosdij (1959: 118).

[7] On the occasion of Snouck Hurgronje's 70th birthday, the *Oosters Instituut* was founded in 1927, q.v. the contribution of Carolien van Zoest. In the address on the 25th anniversary of EOL, cited above, Kampman 1958 [2008]: 64 related the anecdote that when he and the other members of the board of EOL came to introduce themselves to Professor Snouck Hurgronje, they were announced as 'some people from Electrolux'. Fortunately, this misunderstanding did not prevent him from supporting the society.

[8] Kampman 1958 [2008]: 65.

[9] According to Kampman 1958 [2008]: 66, the name *Ex Oriente Lux* did raise some suspicion; the occupiers at first suspected they were dealing with freemasonry.

[10] Veenhof 2008: 10. Professor Böhl was a member of the Doorner Arbeitsgemeinschaft of Wilhelm II, see most recently Böhl 2021: 220–246 and Raulwing and Van den Hout 2023.

exists down to the present, appeared in 1933. A year later, the first volume in the – also still ongoing – series *Mededelingen en Verhandelingen* (*Communications and Discourses*) *Ex Oriente Lux* (*MVEOL*) was published.[11]

**An institute is born**

EOL's ambitions extended beyond the organization of lectures and publications. One objective mentioned in the statutes is the founding of a Dutch archaeological institute for the ancient Near East. In the fourth issue of *JEOL* (1936: 161–164), Arie Kampman, prompted by a proposal in the dissertation of H.N. Boon, explicitly expressed the need for a Dutch institute in the Near East.[12] Since Kampman did not consider such a project feasible in the foreseeable future, he suggested that this should be relegated to a second phase;[13] the first, more realistic and feasible step would be the creation of a historical institute for the Near East in the Netherlands.[14]

On 17 August 1939 this enduring wish became reality; the Foundation Dutch Archaeological-philological Institute for the Near East (*Stichting Nederlands Archaeologisch-philologisch Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten*, abbreviated N.A.I.N.) was founded.[15] The aim of the N.A.I.N., which later changed its name to *Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten* (NINO),[16] was to support and promote all types of research related to the civilizations of the ancient Near East. This objective was to be achieved by organizing courses and lectures, providing lodging for foreign scholars, and, perhaps most importantly, by building a library collection devoted to ancient Near Eastern studies.

The institute was based in Leiden, an obvious choice because of the ancient Near Eastern expertise at Leiden University and the proximity of the National Museum of Antiquities (RMO). It was initially housed at Noordeindsplein 4a in Leiden (the former residence of the Indologist Jean Philippe Vogel) and opened its doors in spring 1940, without an official opening ceremony due to the war. The

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[11] This first volume consisted of the proceedings of the 7th congress organized by the *Oostersch Genootschap* in Leiden in September 1933.

[12] This proposition read: "In light of the importance of the archaeology of the Near East it would be very desirable to create a Dutch Historical Institute there" [In verband met het belang van de archeologie van het Nabije Oosten zou het zeer wenschelijk zijn daar een Nederlandsch Historisch Instituut te vestigen].

[13] This second step would be realized some twenty years later with the foundation of a Dutch institute in Istanbul (see §2).

[14] Kampman 1936: 163, reiterated in *JEOL* 6 (1939): 3.

[15] The members of the Curatorium of the foundation included Ir.J.R. Forbes and W.A. van Leer (Amsterdam), Jhr. Mr. C.H. van Haeften (The Hague, see also p. 254), and Mr. A van de Sande Bakhuyzen (Leiden) and E. vom Rath, who passed away shortly afterwards.

[16] For the sake of convenience and consistency, I will use the abbreviation NINO throughout this article.

building encompassed a library (which could also serve as a lecture room), offices, and guest rooms for visiting scholars from abroad.[17] (Fig. 3).

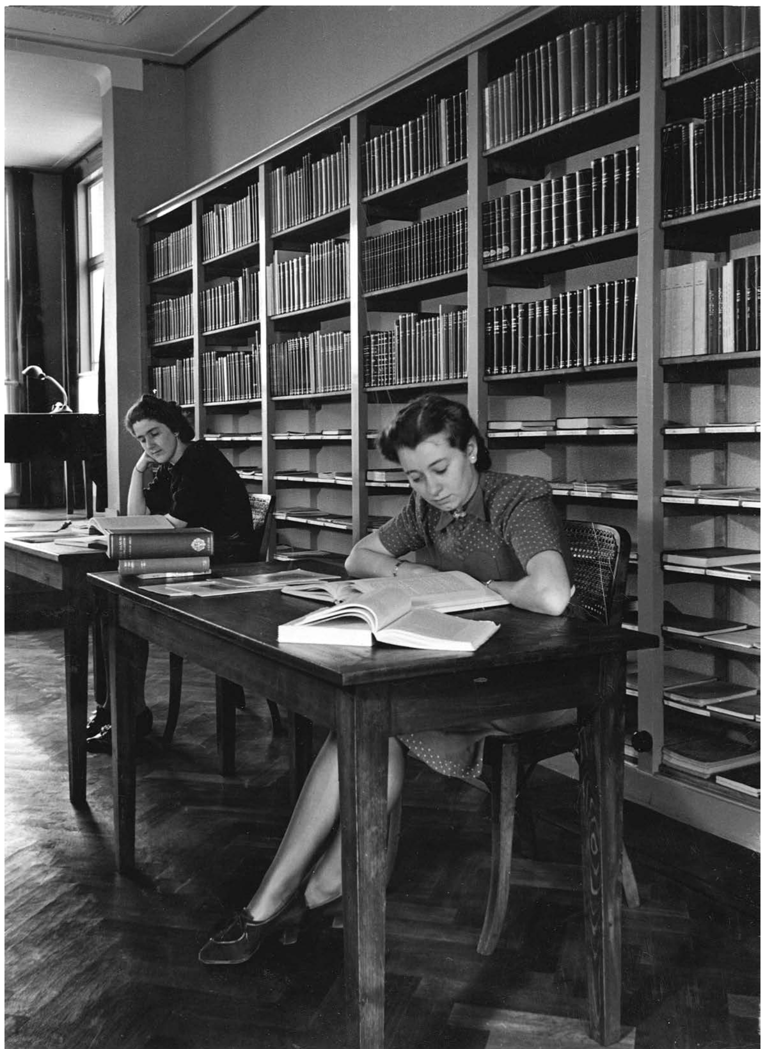

Fig. 3: The library of NINO at the Noordeindsplein in Leiden in the 1940's.

Leiden professors Böhl and De Buck shared the directorship. De Buck was head of the Egyptological section, assisted by curator Abbé Jozef M.A. Janssen while Böhl was responsible for Asia Minor, together with curators Van Proosdij (Assyriology) and Arie Kampman (Hittitology). Kampman was also responsible for the institute's library and administration. The staffing of the institute clearly

[17] Kampman initiated exchange programs for (junior) orientalists with several institutes (Kampman 1948: 272; Van Proosdij 1945–48: 229).

shows the overlap with EOL: Böhl and De Buck were in the advisory committee of EOL, Van Proosdij was its chair, and Kampman its treasurer/secretary, a post he continued to fill until 1974 (with remuneration since 1938). Officially, NINO catered to the needs of an academic public and EOL was aimed at a general audience, but in practice the two often intersected. EOL's offices were in the institute's building, and its library became part of the institute's library. This symbiotic existence was due in large part to the dual role of Kampman, who was intensely involved in almost all aspects of both organizations. As Kampman considered EOL and NINO to be share the same goals,[18] he felt no need to distinguish between them and in 1940 he merged their administration.[19]

The institute soon became the caretaker of the largest cuneiform collection in the Netherlands when, in the 1940's, Böhl moved his antiquity collection to its premises. In addition to several hundred objects of various kinds from the Near East, this substantial collection included some 3,000 clay tablets.[20]

**The financial side**

The founding of the NINO was made possible thanks to private enterprise. Though the institute generated its own income (see below), it owed its existence and success to several generous benefactors.[21] First of all, there was Mr. Cornelis Hendrik Johan van Haeften, Esq. (1872–1951), a painter who was also a member of the Sichem committee (see the contribution by Sebastiaan Berntsen). Van Haeften purchased the Noordeindsplein premises as housing for the institute – an indispensable contribution for the functioning and development of the NINO. He was also a member of the Curatorium (see n. 15), but wished initially to remain anonymous; his identity was only revealed in 1949.[22]

Another important benefactor was Frank Scholten (1881–1942), a gentleman scholar and amateur photographer (Fig. 4). Scholten, a gay convert to Catholicism, led a rich and remarkable life.[23] In the 1920's, he took thousands of photographs while travelling through the Middle East. His life-long ambition was to publish a series of books for the general public with photographs of the Holy Land accompanied by appropriate verses of Holy Scriptures from the Bible, Talmud, and Quran. He first published two volumes in French, which later appeared in

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[18] Cf. Veenhof 1978: 7.

[19] Kampman 1947: 271.

[20] In 1951, Böhl sold his collection to the NINO foundation, still the owner to this day.

[21] Kampman (1939–40: 560) mentions that the foundation also received funding from EOL and *Oostersch Genootschap*, as well as from private persons.

[22] In a letter of 4 March 1942, Van Haeften warned Kampman that he might be forced to discontinue the housing arrangement due to his financial losses, but apparently these problems were resolved, as the institute could continue to rent the premises on very generous conditions till Van Haeften's passing in 1951. See Van Zoest and Berntsen 2014: 9)

[23] For more about Frank Scholten, see most recently Zananiri 2021.

Fig. 4: Frank Scholten (1881–1942).

German, English, and Dutch translations.[24] Scholten's plan to publish many more volumes did not come to fruition due to various circumstances. After his untimely death in 1942, all his photographic material and documentation came to NINO. He also left a substantial sum to the municipality of Leiden, which was deposited in a fund, especially created to finance publication by NINO of several scholarly books in a series in Scholten's memory (*Studia Francisci Scholten Memoriae Dicata*, 1952–1982). It also provided a loan for the acquisition of the building in which the institute was housed when its owner Van Haeften passed away in 1951.[25] The loan from the Scholten fund not only enabled NINO to acquire the property, but even to expand the institute's quarters through the purchase of adjacent premises.

The institute generated its own income from book publications and services (such as the renting out of office) and the sale of maps and books.[26] These activities were mostly initiated and executed by entrepreneur Kampman, who was keenly aware of the fact that without donations the institute would not survive, and that its financial position was precarious. In a letter to the bank Lissa & Kann

[24] Scholten 1929, 1930, 1931, 1935.

[25] All Scholten's photographic material is now available online at the Digital Collections of Leiden University Libraries of Leiden, see: UBL Scholten collection. Link: https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/search/?type=edismax&cp=collection%3afrank scholten.

[26] In 1945, for example, Kampman succeeded in acquiring the complete library of Fredrik Muller (1883–1944), professor of Classics at Leiden University. Some books became part of the institute's library, while the remainder were sold to third parties.

dated 7 October 1944 regarding a proposal for a rent increase, Kampman explained that various sources no longer generated income and he feared other sources might be temporarily lost as well. In *JEOL* 7 (1939–1940: 560) he expressed the hope that the government would at some point step in to support the institute.

In the 1950's some important changes took place. In 1955, Arie Kampman became the sole director, and the name of the institute was changed to its current designation *Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten*. The objectives of the institute were altered to include the study of recent developments in the regions that had come to be known as the Middle East. Some countries there were experiencing economic growth at the time and the Dutch government was interested in establishing new trade relations. In 1958, NINO obtained its first state subsidy through the Netherlands Institute for International Cultural Relations. From 1960 onwards, NINO began to receive government funding on a structural basis. What had started as a private initiative was now state-sponsored. Moreover, the ties with Leiden University, which had been close from the start, grew even tighter. In 1982, the institute relocated to one of the newly built premises of the Humanities complex (De Vrieshof 4). Quite recently, in 2018, the NINO research center became fully embedded in the university; its staff members are employees of the university, and the NINO library is now part of Leiden University Libraries.

Another important event in the 1950's was the foundation in 1958 of the *Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut* (NHAI) in Istanbul which later would be renamed NIT (*Nederlands Instituut in Turkije*) as it is called to this day. The creation of a Dutch institute in the region was the above mentioned 'second step' long envisioned by Kampman, who served as its director from 1964 to 1972. His eagerness and impatience for this institute to become reality are evident from the fact that the first two fascicles of the monograph series *Publications de l'Institut historique et archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul* (PIHANS) had already appeared before it actually came into existence.[27] The institute was officially inaugurated on 31 March 1958 by Prince Bernhard, the spouse of then reigning Queen Juliana – a testimony both to the well-connectedness of Kampman, and the interest in ancient Near Eastern studies in Dutch royal circles.[28]

**The early years of the institute and WW II**

The start of NINO virtually coincided with the outbreak of WW II, which made the first crucial years extra challenging. In contrast to the University of Leiden, which had to close its doors in 1940,[29] NINO remained open and continued its activities as far as this was possible. In 1943, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (*BiOr*), the

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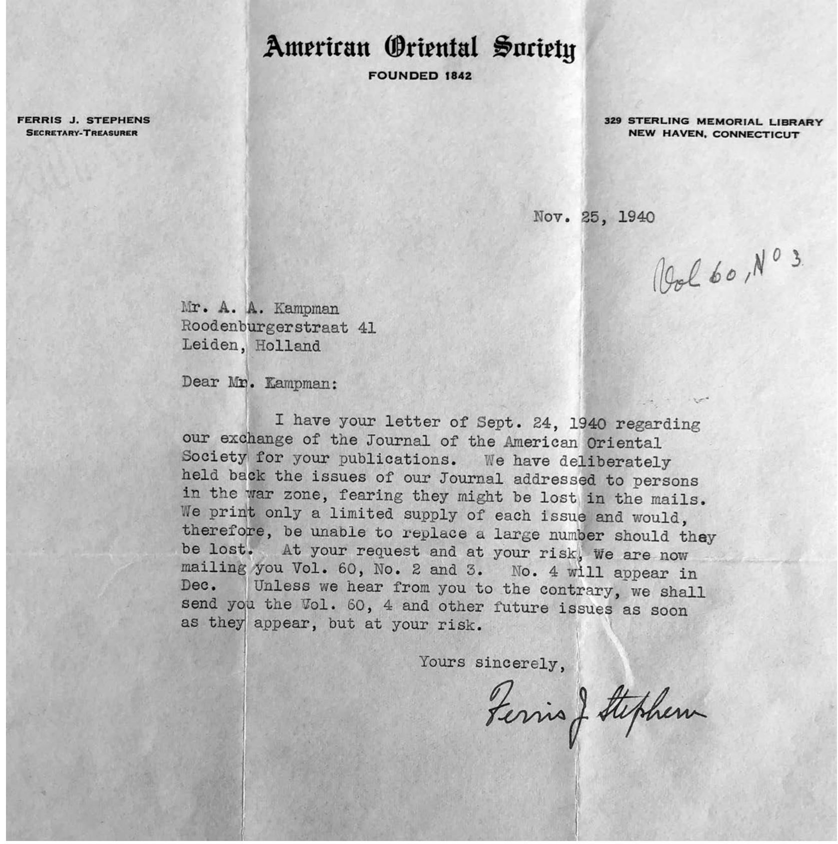
[27] Ryckmans 1956; Wallenstein 1957. From 1967 onwards, NIT also started to publish the journal *Anatolica.*

[28] See also note 37 below.

[29] For the role of Leiden University during the war, see Otterspeer 2019.

first publication of the institute, appeared. The initial issue of the journal was essentially a modest list (in Dutch) of acquisitions made by the library, but its scope rapidly expanded; first, short book reviews were added and, after the war, it also came to include contributions by international scholars in other languages.[30] Undoubtedly due to Kampman's wide international network, *BiOr* grew to be an internationally well-known and academically respected journal. Not only did it serve to make NINO (inter)nationally known, but it also provided a convenient item to exchange for other publications. As a librarian, Kampman worked very hard to expand the holdings. His extensive correspondence with numerous foreign institutions demonstrates his great efforts to acquire publications from all over the world. (Fig. 5).



American Oriental Society
FOUNDED 1842

FERRIS J. STEPHENS
SECRETARY-TREASURER

329 STERLING MEMORIAL LIBRARY
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

Nov. 25, 1940

Vol 60, No 3

Mr. A. A. Kampman
Roodenburgerstraat 41
Leiden, Holland

Dear Mr. Kampman:

I have your letter of Sept. 24, 1940 regarding our exchange of the Journal of the American Oriental Society for your publications. We have deliberately held back the issues of our Journal addressed to persons in the war zone, fearing they might be lost in the mails. We print only a limited supply of each issue and would, therefore, be unable to replace a large number should they be lost. At your request and at your risk, we are now mailing you Vol. 60, No. 2 and 3. No. 4 will appear in Dec. Unless we hear from you to the contrary, we shall send you the Vol. 60, 4 and other future issues as soon as they appear, but at your risk.

Yours sincerely,

Ferris J. Stephens

Fig. 5: Letter from the American Oriental Society to Arie Kampman regarding publication exchange, dated 25 November 1940.

30 As pointed out by Nijland 1977: iii, it was possible in those early years to publish reviews in *BiOr* of Agatha Christie's mysteries on account of their depiction of Near Eastern scenes. On the history of BiOr, see Stol 2018.

The outbreak of WW II complicated this task in several ways. Because of the war, many publications did not appear and/or could not be shipped. With respect to the printing of the institute's own publications, special dispensation from the prohibition of printing was required. When permission was obtained, a next obstacle was the lack of paper. Despite these obstructions, the library could expand. In a long letter to Frankfort dated 10 August 1945 (see further immediately below), Kampman proudly wrote that the library then held over two-hundred and twenty-five current journals and series.

Other challenges the institute faced included control and censorship. The Department of Public Information and Art would occasionally demand the content of certain lectures to be released before being presented. In the letter to Frankfort just cited, Kampman informed him that the Germans "invaded" the institute twice. The first time he and Böhl were taken in for questioning; the second time one of their assistants was arrested (Fig. 6):

> Robbed empty and looted by the ruthless *moffen* we have to start from scratch in many areas. That also applies to a large part of the area of science, but fortunately not for the studies of the ancient Near East. Restless we have over the last five years worked to further spin the thread of free research in the field of oriental studies. In order to do so, we have had to endure a lot. Twice the German police raided our institute with four men. After the first time Böhl and I were called to account by the SS in The Hague because we had been so 'frech' to invite a Jew to give a lecture (Prof. Cohen, who fortunately was left undisturbed), the second time illegal literature was discovered in the Institute, the stenciling machine was searched, but nothing else was found; however the 'gentlemen' took Caspar Kern, our assistant for archaeology, who was detained in Scheveningen in the 'Oranjehotel'[31] from April to August 1943. Our colleague for Iranian studies P. Eggermont was detained from 1942 till the end in Buchenwald and Dachau, our assistant for Assyriology Madelon Verstijnen was caught in Paris in March 1944 and detained in Buchenwald till the end.[32]

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[31] The Oranjehotel was a nickname for the *Polizeigefängnis* located in the penitentiary institution at Scheveningen.

[32] "Kaal gestolen en leeggeplunderd door de niets ontziende moffen moet op velerlei terrein van voren af aan begonnen worden. Dat geldt ook voor een groot deel van het terrein der wetenschap. Gelukkig niet voor de wetenschappen voor het oude Nabije Oosten. Rusteloos zijn we in de afgeloopen vijf jaren bezig geweest den draad der vrije wetenschap op orientalistisch gebied verder te spinnen. We hebben daar heel wat voor moeten trotseeren. Tweemaal deed de Duitsche politie met vier man een inval in ons Instituut; na de eerste maal werden Böhl en ik ter verantwoording geroepen bij de SS in Den Haag omdat we zo "frech" waren geweest een Jood te laten optreden (Prof. Cohen) die gelukkig ongemoeid werd gelaten), de tweede maal werd er illegale litteratuur in het Instituut ontdekt, de stencilmachine werd onderzocht, doch niets gevonden verder; echter namen de "heeren" toen

10 Augustus 5

Den Hooggeleerden Heer Prof.Dr H. Frankfort
Kimmeridge near Warcham
Dorset
Engeland

Waarde Heer Frankfort,

Uw brief van 31 Juli j.l. heb ik heden morgen ontvangen en ik haast mij er terstond op te antwoorden. In tegenstelling tot vorige jaren is het werk op het Instituut zoo ingedeeld, dat dit niet gesloten wordt in de eerste helft van Augustus. Daar is thans geen reden voor: we zullen hard moeten werken om er weer boven op te komen! Kaal gestolen en leeggeplunderd door de niets ontziende moffen moet op velerlei terrein van voren af aan begonnen worden. Dat geldt ook voor een groot deel van het terrein der wetenschap. Gelukkig niet voor de wetenschappen voor het oude Nabije Oosten. Rusteloos zijn we in de afgeloopen vijf jaren bezig geweest den draad der vrije wetenschap op orientalistisch gebied verder te spinnen. We hebben daar heel wat voor moeten trotseeren. Tweemaal deed de Duitsche politie met vier man een inval in ons Instituut; na de eerste maal werden Böhl en ik ter verantwoording geroepen bij de SS in Den Haag omdat we zoo "frech" waren geweest een Jood te laten optreden (Prof.Cohen, die gelukkig ongemoeid werd gelaten), de tweede maal werd er illegale litteratuur in het Instituut ontdekt, de stencil-machine werd onderzocht, doch niets gevonden verder; echter namen de "heeren" toen Caspar Kern mede onzen assistent voor arcaeologie, die van April tot Augustus 1943 in het "Oranjehotel" in scheveningen werd vastgehouden. Onze medewerker voor Iranistiek P.Eggermont vertoefde van 1942 tot het einde in Buchenwalde en Dachau, onze assistente voor Assyrisch Madelon Verstijnen werd in Parijs gepakt in Maart 1944 en vastgehouden in Buchenwalde tot het einde. Op de Allard Pierson Stichting in A. werd Mej. Groothand gearresteerd, die 2 jaren in concentratiekampen vertoefde. De heer Blok, de egyptoloog, zat gevangen van Jan tot Aug. 1944. Pater van der Meer werd ook achterna gezeten en heeft twee jaren als onderduiker in Leiden vertoefd.

Wat de personen betreft, waarnaar U informeert het volgende: Met den heer Böhl gaat het gelukkig goed, ook met zijn vrouw en 4 kinderen(jongste is 2½ jaar). Vorig jaar Augustus werd het geheele gezin door de Moffen-politie opgepakt, beschuldigd van heulen met den "vijand", doch enkele dagen later, toen bleek dat dit onzin was en Böhl ook geen Jood was, in Arnhem weer losgelaten. Böhl heeft in

Fig. 6: First page of a letter of Arie Kampman to Henri Frankfort about the hardships of WW II dated 10 August 1945.

Madelon (Lon) Verstijnen, mentioned at the end of the paragraph, was Böhl's only student during the war. She worked as his assistant and rented a room in the

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Caspar Kern mede onzen assistent voor arcaeologie (*sic*), die van April tot Augustus 1943 in het "Oranjehotel" in scheveningen (*sic*) werd vastgehouden. Onze medewerker voor Iranistiek P. Eggermont vertoefde van 1942 tot het einde in Buchenwalde (*sic*) en Dachau, onze assistente voor Assyrisch Madelon Verstijnen werd in Parijs gepakt in Maart 1944 en vastgehouden in Buchenwalde (*sic*) tot het einde."

attic of the institute. In 1944, she joined the resistance group of her brother Eric in Paris. The group was betrayed and arrested, and Madelon ended up in Buchenwald. NINO directors Böhl and De Buck endeavored to secure her release, but to no avail. Miraculously, Verstijnen managed to escape from the death march to Dresden in 1945.[33] After the war, she returned to NINO to resume her studies and her role as Böhl's assistant. They worked together on the publication of the volume *Akkadian Chrestomathy* which appeared in 1947.

A bit further on in Kampman's letter to Frankfort, he reported the arrest of Böhl and his family in 1944, which mercifully also ended well:

> As for the people you have asked about the following: mr. Böhl is fortunately doing well, and his wife and 4 children (the youngest is 2,5 years). Last August the whole family was arrested by the *Moffen*-police, accused of consorting with the 'enemy', but a few days later, when this turned out not to be true and Böhl was not a Jew, they were released in Arnhem.[34]

Kampman painted a vivid picture of daily life in the institute during the war.

> I have worked feverishly with my staff of 10 people from 1940 onwards. We do not ask for personal rewards; all that I hope to earn with my lectures will be for the academia as a whole. It was hard to keep working in the years 1940–1945; people became more and more hungry, but they persevered. The orientalists did protest, when they went to give lectures, but they did it for the good cause through wind and weather, snow and ice, packed in animal wagons, draughty stations and shaky busses. They wrote articles in cold rooms with tingling fingers, but they were writing, with clenched teeth to be ready when the enemy would be defeated. The teachers of our courses had to hide, they lost their libraries, they ate tulips and beet pulp, but the lessons continued, the pupils and students in hiding could go on with their studies to minimize the delay. My staff worked at a temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit (= ca. 7 degrees Celsius, W.W.) in the month of January, but the work continued, the stenciling machine was running, the [written] lessons were sent out, publications were shipped.[35]

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[33] Verstijnen recorded the gripping story of her heroic escape in her memoirs (Verstijnen 1991).

[34] "Wat de personen betreft waarnaar U informeert het volgende: Met den heer Böhl gaat het gelukkig goed, ook met zijn vrouw en 4 kinderen (jongste is 2½ jaar). Vorig jaar augustus werd het geheele gezin door de Moffen-politie opgepakt, beschuldigd van heulen met den "vijand", doch enkele dagen, toen bleek dat dit onzin was en Böhl ook geen Jood was, in Arnhem weer losgelaten." The episode of Böhl's arrest is also discussed by his son Herman de Liagre Böhl (Böhl 2021: 171).

[35] "Ik heb met mijn staf van 10 personen vanaf 1940 koortsachtig gewerkt. Wij verlangen geen persoonlijke belooningen; alles wat ik met mijn lezingen hoop te verdienen zal voor de wetenschap als geheel zijn. Het heeft moeite gekost in de jaren 1940–1945 aan het werk

Though some orientalists complained about the dire conditions in which they had to give lectures, they nonetheless persevered, and they had reason to do so; during the war, interest in the ancient Near East flourished, and the number of members of EOL peaked.[36] Fascination for the remote past in a distant region may have partly been fueled by the problematic situation of the present, a so-called ‘flight’ from reality into the study of ancient cultures. The fact that other forms of entertainment were not accessible undoubtedly also played a part (Figs. 7 + 8).

CURSUSSEN VOOR TALEN IN SPIJKERSCHRIFT

Docent: de Heer B. A. VAN PROOSDIJ, litt. class. doct<sup>s</sup>
Conservator aan het Ned. Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten
Adres: Roodborststraat 16, Leiden, tel. 25094

I. Cursus Akkadisch voor beginners: Assyrische koningsinscripties, verdeeld in 20 lessen, loopende van September 1943 tot Juni 1944.

II. Cursus Akkadisch voor gevorderden, verdeeld in 20 lessen, loopende van September 1943 tot Juni 1944; deze cursus is bestemd voor hen, die thans den begincursus in spijkerschrift volgen. De te behandelen stof zal nog nader worden bekend gemaakt.

Voorts ligt het in de bedoeling een schriftelijken cursus Hebreeuwsch te geven en eventueel ook een cursus Arabisch, indien blijkt, dat daarvoor voldoende belangstelling bestaat. Al deze cursussen zijn in de eerste plaats bestemd voor hen, die hun belangstelling in het Oude Oosten door eenige kennis van de Oostersche talen wenschen te verdiepen, doch die bij hun zelfstudie behoefte aan gezette leiding behoeven.

Belangstellenden wordt verzocht, zoo zij *in principe* tot deelneming aan één der cursussen besluiten, dit zoo spoedig mogelijk aan het secretariaat Roodenburgerstraat 41, Leiden, mede te deelen. Zij ontvangen dan te zijner tijd een prospectus met nadere bijzonderheden over de voorwaarden van deelneming, adressen der docenten, studiemateriaal enz.

De deelneming staat open voor alle belangstellenden. De lessen zijn zoo eenvoudig mogelijk ingericht, zoodat iedereen met algemeene ontwikkeling deze kan volgen.

*K 1673*

Fig. 7: Announcement of written courses in cuneiform languages offered by NINO from September 1943 to June 1944.

te blijven; de menschen kregen hoe langer hoe meer honger, maar ze hebben volgehouden. De orientalisten sputterden wel, als ze lezingen gingen houden, maar ze deden het ter wille van de goede zaak door wind en weer, sneeuw en ijs, opgepropt in beestenwagens, tochtige stations en rammelende bussen. Ze schreven artikelen in koude kamers met tintelden vingers; maar ze schreven, de tanden opeen om gereed te zijn als de vijand verslagen zou zijn. De docenten van onze cursussen moesten onderduiken, ze verloren bibliotheken, ze aten tulpen en suikerbietenpulp, maar de lessen gingen door, de leerlingen en ondergedoken studenten konden hun studie voortzetten om den achterstand zoo gering mogelijk te doen zijn. Mijn personeel werkte in den laatsten winter in een temperatuur van 40 graden Fahrenheit in de maand Januari, maar het werk ging door, de stencilmachine draaide, de [schriftelijke] lessen gingen weg, de publicaties werden verzonden.”

[36] In 1939 there were ca. 1,500 members, in 1943 ca. 3,000 and in 1947 ca. 3,500. Such high numbers have not been reached since; the society currently has some 660 members with 14 departments (one of them in Belgium).

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NEDERLANDSCH INSTITUUT VOOR HET NABIJE OOSTEN
Gevestigd te Leiden, Noordeindsplein 4a

CURSUS AKKADISCH VOOR BEGINNERS
(Assyrische Koningsinscripties)

Tiende les - 4 Februari 1943

GRAMMATICA. Behandeld worden de verba waarvan de eerste radicaal zwak is. Een bijzondere plaats nemen de verba met prima w in. Op verzoek worden bij de opsomming der vormen de participia en de Infinitivi nog eens gerepeteerd.
PRIMA ?: arâbu, IVvorm (VI 34) - a-u: abâtu: Ivorm (VI 11) IV vorm (II 14 V II 40, IV 25, V 26, V 22); adâru (V 9, I 6, III 62)
PRIMA ʾ of ʿ: a,u: alâku (I 60,III 11) - i: ekêmu (VI 16,VI 8,IV 57) - i-u: epêsu I vorm (II 77, I 5,III 11,III 49,V 19,V 57), III vorm (II 7,III 58,VI 41,VI 64); - a: anâhu (VI 76); - a-u: amâru I vorm (IV 24,VI 78), IV vorm (III 57,VI 63); - i: enêšu (VI 44); apâru (V 69)
PRIMA h: a i: alâku I vorm (I 6,I 68,II 37,IV 55,II 81,IV 17,V 66, IV 52, V 6; III 59, V 38, VI 26, VI 41); I 3 vorm (tn) (VI 22); III vorm (II 22); - e: edêšu (VI 77); - i?.u: ešêru, "convoquer" (V 42)
PRIMA w: N.B. de eerste en derde persoon sing. hebben beide, ook in den I vorm als eerste letter u. Als in de I vorm de tweede radicaal verdubbeld is, zou men het als een II vorm kunnen beschouwen. Soms liever niet. Daarom in Lexique onder wašâbu II 1 = I 1 geschrapt! De w maakt nu en dan een metamorphose mee, zoo naast wabâlu jongere vormen babâlu en tabâlu; zoo naast wašâru jongere vorm mašâru.
a-i: wašâbu I vorm (IV 8,V 16, I 12,III 53), III vorm (II 1,III 16,III 73,V 29); - i: wabâlu I vorm (III 12), III vorm (III 48,V 34); warâdu I vorm (V 24), III vorm (II 4,VI 4); esêru (III 29); - a-i: wašâru II vorm (I 26,II 14,III 66,VI 27,VI 31,III 14,VI 21); - i watâru III vorm (VI 56)
PRIMA j: i: (j)ešêru recht zijn III 2 vorm (VI 59,VI 65)
PRIMA g: u: erêbu I vorm (I 28 (nb.-mm = bm), IV 22,V 7,V 28), III vorm (IV 59,V 2, III 40)
PRIMA ?: i: ezêbu I vorm (I 17,I 23,I 59,IV 25,V 4,VI 49,IV 41), III vorm (VI 28); ebêru I vorm (IV 37,IV 35), III vorm (IV 43); emêdu I vorm (II 40, 3de pers., II 67 1ste pers.), IV vorm (IV 55); etêqu (VI 29); etêru (I 24); - i.u edêlu II vorm (V 19); ezêzu (VI 82 ss = zš)

INHOUD: merkwaardige teekens, gevolgd door de verba met eerste radicaal zwak (die met prima n volgen, om overlading te voorkomen, in les 11); de beteekenis van het Assyrische koningschap tegenover het Babylonische wordt besproken.
Oefening A is uit het Addendum III een voortzetting van de OB versie van het Gilgamesj-epos, terwijl onde oefening B ook vallen de geciteerde plaatsen in de Grammatica. Volstaan is met de regels op te geven, niet de getallen der teekens en de regels, het gros is toch opvulsel. Maar men mag natuurlijk zelf verder, als men tijd heeft, de zin opzoeken.

MERKWAARDIGE TEEKENS. NB uit Les 9 [cuneiform] is hetzelfde als [cuneiform], dat naar ik ten onrechte meende in de eerste vorm in Snh pr. IV 74 voorkomt. Van hout ( [cuneiform] ) is [cuneiform] g u - z a troon, kussû, en [cuneiform] PA(had) scepter, hattu, gis [cuneiform] b a n, de boog daštu.

CULTUURHISTORISCHE VERKENNINGEN. Voor het moderne staatkundig denken geeft de Oud Oostersche staat menige moeilijkheid. Eenerzijds zijn er elementen verbonden die bij ons gescheiden zijn, anderzijds zijn er elementen die bij ons slechts een ondergeschikte rol spelen. Zoo zijn vorst en staat, om een voorbeeld voor het eerste geval te noemen, identiek, terwijl als voorbeeld van het tweede de rol van de godheid meer dan een mystiek rudiment is, zooals tevelen het "Bij de genade Gods" uit den aanhef onzer wetten willen opvatten. Volgens de Oud-Sumerische gedachte is toch de godheid en het land primair, vorst en menschen zijn secundair; zij dienen om den dienst van de godheid en de vruchtbaarheid van het land en zoodoende het land zelve, in stand te houden. De vorst is de vicarius van de godheid eenerzijds, anderzijds representeert hij de bevolking. Wie nu, vorst of god, het meest bijgedragen heeft, tot de schepping van de gestalte van de godheid, of van den vorst, is moeilijk uit te maken. De vraag is of het aardsche geprojecteerd is of het goddelijke (een soort anthropomorphisme),

Fig. 8: Tenth lesson of written course Akkadian organized by the NINO, dated 4 February 1943.

**‘Who did not see Mr. Kampman?’**

Clearly, Arie Kampman played a crucial role in the creation and progress of both EOL and NINO (Fig. 9). Some brief background information about this remarkable character seems therefore in order. Kampman was born on 6 July 1911 in Dordrecht. In 1931, he came as a student to Leiden where he attended courses of renowned professors, such as Frans Böhl and Adriaan de Buck (already mentioned above), as well as classical archaeologist Alexander Willem Byvanck and historian Johan Huizinga. Kampman was fascinated by the Near East and took a special interest in Hittite civilization. In 1945 he defended his dissertation, *De Historische Beteekenis der Hethietische Vestingsbouwkunde* (‘The Historical Significance of Hittite fortification building’), written under the supervision of Böhl. Kampman is, however, not remembered for his academic achievements, but first and foremost for his organizational talent, tremendous energy, and strong networking skills. Illustrative of the latter is the anecdote in professor of theology Martien Beek’s obituary of Kampman. He recalled that he once picked up a professor from the airport, who returned from a conference also attended by Kampman. When Beek asked the professor if he had happened to see Mr. Kampman, the man’s dry reply was: “Who did not see Mr. Kampman?”

Fig. 9: Arie Kampman (1911–1977).

EOL and NINO were not the only organizations in which Kampman played a significant role. As a history student, he was co-founder of the *Leids Historisch Dispuut Robert Fruin* in 1932, and in 1942 he initiated, together with Professor

Alexander Byvanck, *Leidse Historische Kring* ('Historical Circle'), where he served as secretary for over thirty years.[37] Kampman was also active as treasurer of the *Vereeniging tot Bevordering van de Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving* ('Society for the Advancement of Knowledge of Ancient Civilization'). During his tenure, he developed the society's bulletin into an internationally recognized periodical.[38] In 1959, he founded the Netherlands-Iranian Association, after a state visit of the Shah of Iran to the Netherlands, and he became editor of the annual journal *Persica* in 1964.[39] In 1965, while serving as director of the NIT, he was appointed extraordinary professor in Ancient Arts at the University of Istanbul. Behind the scenes, he was active in establishing cultural relations between the Netherlands and Iran, and Turkey. It is difficult to imagine how he managed to combine all these tasks with a position as a high school history teacher in Schiedam – where he was beloved by his pupils because of his inspiring lessons.

Kampman combined his organizational and networking capabilities with a sharp commercial instinct, which is rare in academia. Though these qualities undoubtedly contributed to the success of EOL and NINO, they also had their drawbacks. His business-like and entrepreneurial attitude could come across as insensitive.[40] His unrelenting involvement also had its downsides. Kampman, like a spider in the web from his 'commando post'[41] at the Noordeindsplein, controlled almost all activities of NINO and EOL, leaving (too) little space for others.[42] Another shadow is cast on his character by the discovery of a membership card of the National Socialist Movement (NSB) of 1937 in his name. This Dutch political organization, led by Anton Mussert, sympathized with the German Nazi party. Though there is no evidence of collaboration on Kampman's part,[43] and the

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[37] The membership in this circle was kept limited to evade the prohibition of unauthorized assemblies of over 20 people by the occupier.

[38] See, e.g., Byvanck-Quarles van Ufford 1977–1978: vii.

[39] In 1971, Kampman presented the first copy of *Persica* 5 to Queen Juliana when he gave a speech in the Ridderzaal in The Hague at the event commemorating the 25th centenary of the founding of the Persian empire by Cyrus the Great.

[40] An example is his reply to a Jewish member of EOL, who after his safe return from Germany, reconnected with the society in 1945. Kampman welcomed him back, but not without pointing out that there were some outstanding dues, since the member in question had not paid any since 1942.

[41] In the words of Klaas Veenhof (1978: 7) in his obituary for Arie Kampman.

[42] In 1962, a new EOL board was installed, which assumed some of Kampman's tasks, and began disentangling the symbiotic existence of EOL and NINO, a process which was completed upon Kampman's departure in 1974.

[43] The *Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging* (CABR, *Central Archive for special Jurisdiction*) does not seem to contain any incriminating evidence against Kampman, nor do the records of the local police and the *Politieke Recherche Afdeling* (PRA) of Leiden. Likewise, the file kept on Kampman by the BVD (*Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst*, *Internal Security Service*) composed about Kampman (file no. 18293) does not mention any

Fig. 10: Photograph made on 17 December 1949 in the NINO library on the occasion of the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Institute. Centered in the middle are Arie Kampman, Frans de Liagre Böhl and Adriaan de Buck; on the left (between the ladies) is Bob van Proosdij.

card is not signed, its existence has nonetheless raised some uncomfortable questions. Though Kampman's persona may not be without controversy, his contribution to the study and valorization of the ancient Near East in the Netherlands is undeniable. As Pierre Eggermont observed, Kampman's great merit was that he was one of the first to perceive that in the Netherlands there was a growing interest in the Near East, and that he subsequently jumped to take advantage of the opportunity it provided.[44] Kampman himself would later reflect on this: "The revival of public interest in the Netherlands is a phenomenon peculiar to the 20th century, predominantly from 1920 onwards; its roots, however, already go back to the 17th century, and despite economic decline, loss of independence, and the slow awakening in the 19th century, these roots were strong enough to generate fresh, vivifying power from traditions embedded in the 17th century".[45] (Fig. 10)

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NSB sympathies or other implicating activities. I am greatly indebted to Mathijs Smith (*Nationaal Archief*) for this information.

[44] Eggermont 1975–1978: vii.

[45] "Het weer opleven der publieke belangstelling in Nederland is een verschijnsel uit de 20ste eeuw en dan nog in hoofdzaal na 1920; de wortels daarvan hadden zich echter reeds

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vastgezet in de 17$^{de}$ eeuw, die ondanks economische teruggang, verlies der onafhankelijkheid en het langzaam ontwaken in de 19$^{de}$ eeuw, toch nog krachtig genoeg waren verse groeikrachtige sappen te betrekken uit de in de 17$^{de}$ eeuw gefundeerde tradities.” (Kampman 1955: 162).

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# The Ancient Near East and Egypt in the Netherlands

## Overview of Dutch Societies and Initiatives in the 19th and 20th Century

Carolien H. van Zoest*

This contribution describes societies and institutes in the Netherlands that played key roles in scholarly research on the Ancient Near East and Egypt. Public interest followed academic developments at a distance. Leading figures, almost all academics, are briefly discussed.

After a promising start in the 19th century, development in Dutch Egyptology was mostly limited to religious studies. Assyriology was largely a side-interest for theologians. While other European countries founded national scholarly societies and financed grand expeditions, attention in the Netherland was mainly directed to the Dutch East-Indies, with Oriental studies mostly a function of colonial administration, in combination with Semitic languages (connected to Bible studies).

During the first quarter of the 20th century, Oriental studies in the Netherlands were marked by proliferation and specialisation – albeit with a continued emphasis on language studies, and usually from a biblical perspective. The general public was not yet involved. The second quarter of the 20th century saw further diversification of the field, a failed marriage between Ancient Near Eastern and Classical studies, and a broadening audience.

After World War II, the range of history, language studies, and archaeology fully developed in the Netherlands. Internationalisation, rising population and student numbers, and economic growth were instrumental. The fourth quarter of the 20th century was characterised by the definitive division between Middle and Far Eastern versus Ancient Near Eastern studies. State-funded research was the norm; the popular audience increased.

In the first quarter of the 21st century (not comprehensively addressed in this contribution) state-funded research declined while modest private initiatives (societies of museum and excavation "friends") can be observed.

### Prelude: 19th century

From King Willem I's accession to the throne of the Netherlands in 1813/1815, he was keen on establishing his kingdom on a par with other western European countries, and thus willing to spend money and effort on (re-) establishing national cultural institutions. Among those profiting from royal patronage in the first half of the 19th century was the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, established in 1818 as *Archaeologisch Cabinet der Hoogeschool* ("Archaeological Cabinet of

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the University”), later renamed *Rijksmuseum van Oudheden*. Caspar J.C. Reuvens (1793–1835), the director, acquired a major collection of Egyptian antiquities in 1828. When royal patronage stopped, so did the acquisition of Egyptian antiquities.[1] Dutch Egyptological activity was limited to the few staff members who worked on the publication and public display of the Egyptian collections, and the edition of texts on papyri. The museum started acquiring original Near Eastern objects in 1880, but was unable to purchase major collections or monumental pieces.

Several factors prevented the foundation of national and private societies for the study of the Ancient Near East in the Netherlands during the 19th century. Firstly, after a promising start, the country was left on a tight budget when Belgium gained independence in 1830; economic conditions were dire during the second and third quarters of the 19th century.[2] Secondly, the constitutional reform of 1848, crafted by Thorbecke during the European “Springtime of Nations,” instigated the creation or reorganisation of important national institutions while leaving little room for royal patronage of them (even if they bore the label “royal”).

Thirdly, the public generally lacked interest in non-national and non-biblical history.[3] And, finally, exploitation of the Dutch East-Indies had been transferred between 1796–1800 from the privately-owned Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, VOC) to the Dutch government, necessitating establishment of new national institutions geared towards the administration of the colony. The focus on the Far East overshadowed existing (trade) relations with the Near East – traditionally strongest with Turkey and the Levant.

Thus the term “Oriental studies” in the Netherlands in the 19th century primarily referred to studies of the Far East, focusing on the Dutch colonial territory, with the study of Near Eastern languages included secondarily.[4] This formed the foundation for studies of the Ancient Near East which only developed in earnest in the first quarter of the 20th century.

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[1] No private individuals undertook initiatives after 1830 to compensate for the lack of governmental funding with the exception of Jan Herman Insinger (1854–1918): living in Egypt, his personal efforts during the last quarter of the 19th century enriched the Egyptian collections of the museum. Raven 2018: 140–141.

[2] Otterspeer 1989b: 3.

[3] Raven 2021: 139.

[4] Accordingly, none of the contributions in Otterspeer’s survey of Leiden Oriental Connections 1850–1940 (1989a) mentions Ancient Near Eastern studies – cited are only Hebrew and Syriac language studies, and a passing reference to Champollion in the volume’s Introduction is the only nod to Egyptology.

***From Theology to History of Religions to Assyriology***

The universities of Leiden, Groningen, and Utrecht had faculties of protestant theology, aimed at the education of prospective clergymen; in addition, the theological seminary at Kampen offered education towards Protestant ministry. Religious studies (theology or *godgeleerdheid*) at Dutch universities included Bible studies in the Protestant tradition, combined with the study of the languages which enabled students to read the Bible in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Leiden University had a strong tradition in the study of related and Near Eastern languages such as "Chaldean" (Aramaic), Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, etc. Talented students sometimes sought diversion in related subjects such as Egyptian language and religion, and Akkadian. The broader public – their prospective flock – largely deemed these subjects exotic, irrelevant, and bordering on paganism.[5]

Even when emancipation of the Roman Catholic segment of the Dutch population began, religious studies at Dutch universities remained throughout the 19th century solely a Protestant affair. New discoveries in geology, biology, and other sciences led to the development of a school of "modern theology" at Leiden University, incorporating modern scientific concepts and methods and shifting away from orthodox interpretations of the Bible. In 1877 Leiden established a new chair in the History of Religions for Cornelis P. Tiele (1830–1902). His inaugural lecture bore the title "The fruit of Assyriology for the comparative history of religions."[6] He bequeathed his collection of publications on history of religions (esp. Persian, Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian) to Leiden University, and his widow created the Tiele Foundation in 1902 to maintain and enlarge the collection.[7] After Tiele's retirement in 1901, W. Brede Kristensen (1867–1953; a Norwegian by birth who had studied in Leiden) was appointed to the chair. Kristensen (whose thesis was about Egyptian religion) became the founding figure in the study of Phenomenology of Religions.

This shift remained academic and did not lead to any broader initiatives for the study of the Ancient Near East: no archaeological initiatives were pursued nor societies of wealthy amateurs founded. No great Dutch journeys to explore the Near East were undertaken in the 19th century,[8] and hardly any Dutch participated in the expeditions of other nations.[9]

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[5] Raven 2021: 139.

[6] Describing Assyriology as an auxiliary subject of great worth and potential in service of the quest for Christian truth: Tiele 1877.

[7] Molendijk 2002: 8–9.

[8] The journeys of A.P.F. Tinne (1835–1869) through Egypt, Sudan, and present-day Libya did not lead to scholarly publications in her day and have been largely disregarded as "private adventures" until very recently (Van den Heuvel 2021). T.M. Lycklama à Nijeholt (1837–1900) undertook a grand journey through Persia, Mesopotamia, and the Levant, 1865–1867. He even briefly excavated at Babylon and Tyre. His four-volume publication on his activities (Lycklama 1872) made ripples in high society, but hardly in academia.

[9] One notable exception is W. de Famars Testas (1834–1896), a painter in the French

(The activities and effects of Christian missions in the Dutch colonies, which spurred research into their languages, lie beyond the scope of this contribution.)

***Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde***

One new national institute was the *Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Neêrlandsch Indië (KITLV)*[10], founded 1851 in Delft. Focusing primarily on cultures and languages of the Dutch East-Indies, the study of Islam and Islamic law was an important component in its programme. The institute was created at the request of Professor Taco Roorda (1801–1874), a theologian and orientalist who taught ethnology and languages of the Dutch Indies in Delft where a *Koninklijke Akademie* ("Royal Academy") had been founded in 1842 with the aim of providing education in civil engineering and administration of the Dutch Indies. In 1864 the Delft Academy was transformed into a polytechnic college. Thereafter civil service programmes were offered both at Delft (municipal) and Leiden (national). *KITLV* moved to The Hague, close to the government's Ministry of the Colonies, where the institute and the important "Colonial Library" (in cooperation with the *Indisch Genootschap*) remained until 1966.[11]

For the first century of its existence, *KITLV* was an organisation of major importance both in the academic and political landscapes. Its board members were prominent academics, many of them *KNAW*[12] members. Membership in *KITLV*, considered prestigious, rose from 117 in 1853 to 725 in 1910 (the highest number pre-WW II). There were other colonial societies in the Netherlands, but *KITLV* enjoyed the status of *primus inter pares* at the start of the twentieth century. After Indonesia's independence and decolonisation (1945/1949) the institute's role as an important advisory organ to the government on colonial matters ended. In 1966, *KITLV* moved to Leiden and became a purely academic institute; membership soared from 660 in 1965 to 2,013 in 1995 (the highest to date).[13] The institute has published journals and monographic series on linguistics, anthropology, history, and law since its inception and continues to do so. The *KITLV* Library was integrated into Leiden University Libraries in 2014.

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expedition led by E. Prisse d'Avennes in Egypt, 1858–1860; see Raven 1988.

[10] "Royal Institute of Linguistics, Geography and Ethnology of the Dutch Indies." The official name of the institute is nowadays *Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land en Volkenkunde (KITLV)*, "Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies."

[11] Kuitenbrouwer *et al.* 2014: 32–33; 36–37; 225.

[12] *Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, "Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences."

[13] Kuitenbrouwer *et al.* 2014: 280; 288–289.

***Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje***

Oriental studies in the Netherlands at the turn of the 20th century cannot exclude mention of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936; see Table 1). Much has been written about him, his eventful life, his activities, and his multiple legacies.[14]

Fig. 1: Detail of stained glass window depicting key figures in the history of Leiden University: Prince William of Orange (above); Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, Johan Rudolph Thorbecke and Cornelis van Vollenhoven (from left to right). Academy Building, Rapenburg 73, Leiden.

[14] Most recently: Buskens *et al.* 2021 (with a bibliography of works by and on Snouck Hurgronje). – "Fierce debates have been waged about the man, the scientist and the government advisor Snouck Hurgronje. Striking is the unilateral, single-dimensional assessments by supporters and opponents alike. Van den Doel (1998), for example, exaggeratedly praised him as the 'shining sun of the Leiden universe' and Van der Veer (1995: 17–186) exaggeratedly criticized him as an imperialist and orientalist. The anthropologists among his students in Leiden praise his journey to Mecca as an example of 'participating observation', but Van Koningsveld (1987: 9–39) refers to it as 'espionage'. Snouck was and did all this and much, much more." (Kuitenbrouwer *et al.* 2014: 72).

In Leiden he is still revered as a founding father of Arabic studies. Snouck Hurgronje studied, spoke, and taught an impressive number of languages, many Semitic languages among them. As government advisor for the Dutch Indies, he spent about fifteen years in the colony, notably during the war between the Netherlands and the Sultanate of Aceh. After his return to the Netherlands, he was appointed Professor of Arabic at Leiden in 1906 and served as President of the *KITLV* for many years between 1911 and 1927. Snouck Hurgronje was the leading figure in oriental studies during the first quarter of the 20th century, as well as a prominent political figure. Among other things, he shaped the discipline of "Indology" (study of language, culture, law, and colonial administration of the Dutch East-Indies)[15] and assigned a place for the studies of the Near East within the rapidly expanding field of oriental studies.

Table 1: Key dates in the life of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (mainly based on Witkam 2021).

| *Year* | *Event* |
|---|---|
| 1857 | Birth |
| 1874–1880 | Student of Theology and Semitic languages, Leiden University; doctoral thesis *"Het Mekkaansche Feest"* (on the origins of the Islamic pilgrimage) |
| 1881– | Teacher, Municipal School for Colonial Civil Servants, Leiden; id., Higher War School, The Hague |
| 1884–1885 | Spent a year in Jeddah and Mecca under the name Al-Sayyid Abd al-Ghaffar, converted(?) to Islam |
| 1887– | Senior lecturer Institutions of Islam, Leiden University |
| 1890 | Turned down chair of Malayan language, Leiden University |
| 1889–1906 | Lived in Batavia as adviser to the Dutch colonial government for Arab, Islamic and indigenous affairs |
| 1898–1905 | Advisor to Military Governor J.B. van Heutz (Aceh War) |
| 1906–1933 | Returned to the Netherlands; adviser to Minister of Colonial Affairs |
| 1906–1927 | Professor of Islamology and the Arabic and Acehnese languages, Leiden University |

[15] "[Snouck Hurgronje] had been familiar with the training of Indologists for a long time, because he had taught at the Leiden as well as at the Delft municipal institute in his younger days. It was he more than anyone else who left his mark on Indology at Leiden and who finally engineered its conversion into a fully-fledged scholarly discipline." Fasseur 1989: 197.

| *Year* | *Event* |
|---|---|
| 1911–1915, 1916–1920, 1921–1925, 1926–1927 | President, KITLV (The Hague) |
| 1921–1922 | Rector magnificus, Leiden University |
| 1927 | Retired; foundation *Oostersch Instituut* |
| 1931 | President, 18th International Congress of Orientalists, Leiden |
| 1936 | Death |

**20th century – first quarter**

Although theologians and historians of religion at the universities of Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Groningen studied and taught Egyptian and Mesopotamian languages and religion, Assyriology and Egyptology were first established as autonomous fields of study (with dedicated chairs) at Leiden University during the first quarter of the 20th century.[16] Extraordinary chairs for material culture and art existed at the Universities of Amsterdam and Utrecht at a time of proliferation and further specialisation in Ancient Near Eastern studies in the Netherlands, albeit with a continued emphasis on language studies and usually from a biblical perspective. Interest in these highly academic specialisations was very slow in trickling down to non-academics.

Snouck Hurgronje firmly dominated Oriental studies at Leiden University from his appointment in 1906 until his death in 1937. He recognised new fields and was no doubt behind the creation of the new academic positions in Leiden (see Tables 2 and 3). One professor could no longer be expected to cover the multitude of languages and cultures of "the East," as had been customary in the 19th century – exemplified to an extraordinary degree by Hendrik Kern, founding father of another branch of Oriental studies in the Netherlands.[17]

To combine efforts and connect the growing number of scholars in rapidly diversifying Oriental studies, the first oriental society in the Netherlands was founded in which Ancient Near Eastern studies were recognised as academic subjects in their own right.

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[16] Kaper 2014; Stol 2014.

[17] Johan Hendrik Caspar Kern (1833–1917), Professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Linguistics at Leiden University (1865–1903); see 't Hart 1989: 139–140. Kern was the longest-serving president of *KITLV* – six terms between 1882 and 1911 (Kuitenbrouwer *et al.* 2014: 78–81, 286). The *Instituut Kern* (see Table 4) was named after him.

Table 2: Key dates and persons in the study of Assyriology in the Netherlands, 1857–1940 (based on Stol 2014).

| *Years* | *Person* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|
| 1877–1900 | C.P. Tiele (1830–1902)<br>Professor of History of Religions, Leiden. | Inaugural lecture on Assyriology. Second secretary, 6th Congress of Orientalists, Leiden 1883.<br>Ordained minister. |
| 1905–1945 | C. van Gelderen (1872–1945)<br>Professor of Hebrew, Amsterdam. | Studied in Leipzig; doctoral thesis *“Ausgewählte Babylonisch-Assyrische Briefe”*. Taught all Semitic languages, published on cuneiform texts.<br>Ordained minister. |
| 1913–1939 | H.Th. Obbink (1869–1947)<br>Professor of History of Religions, Utrecht. | Also taught Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian languages and religions. |
| 1913–1927 | F.M.Th. Böhl (1882–1976)<br>Professor of Hebrew, Groningen. | Studied in Berlin and Leipzig; doctoral theses *“Die Sprache der Amarnabriefe”* and *“Kanaanäer und Hebräer”*. Collected cuneiform inscriptions. Involved in ecumenical movement. |
| **1913–**1918 [1]<br>1918–1927 [2] | G.J. Thierry (1880–1962)<br>**extraordinary Professor of Assyriology** [1],<br>ordinary Professor [2], Leiden. | Doctoral thesis with W.B. Kristensen *“De religieuze beteekenis van het Aegyptische koningschap”* (1913).<br>**First Assyriology chair in the Netherlands.**<br>Ordained minister. |
| 1927–1952 | F.M.Th. Böhl Professor of Assyriology, Leiden. | The switch of chairs between Böhl and Thierry had been decided by C. Snouck Hurgronje. |
| 1927–1950 | G.J. Thierry Professor of Hebrew, Leiden. | |
| 1933–1938 | H. Frankfort (1897–1954)<br>extraordinary Professor of Archaeology and History of the Near East, Amsterdam. | Studied in Amsterdam and London; doctoral thesis in Leiden. Permanently moved abroad in 1938. |

| *Years* | *Person* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|
| 1940–1963 | P.E. van der Meer (1895–1963) extraordinary Professor of Archaeology, History and Languages of the Near East, Amsterdam. | Collected a small group of archaic Sumerian texts. Dominican friar. |

Table 3: Key dates and persons in the study of Egyptology in the Netherlands, 1822–1940 (based on Kaper 2014).

| *Years* | *Person* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|
| 1799–1839 [1]<br>1839–1850 [2] | D.J. van Lennep (1774–1853) Professor of Classical History and Languages [1],<br>of Humanities and Philosophy [2], Amsterdam. | Studied Law in Amsterdam. Highly interested in Champollion's decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs; collected and studied Egyptian antiquities. |
| 1815–1818 [1]<br>**1818–**1825 [2]<br>1825–1835 [3] | C.J.C. Reuvens (1793–1835) Professor of Classics, Harderwijk [1]; **extraordinary Professor of Archaeology** and Director, National Museum of Antiquities [2], ordinary Professor [3], Leiden. | Studied Classics (with Van Lennep) and Law in Amsterdam, Leiden, and Paris. Independently studied ancient Egyptian from Champollion's publications.<br>**First Archaeology chair worldwide.**<br>Acquired important collections of Egyptian antiquities for the museum; studied and started publishing them. |
| 1834–1835 [1]<br>1835–1891 [2]<br>1864–1880 [3] | C. Leemans (1809–1893) Curator [1], Director [2], National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden; Director, Museum of Ethnography, Leiden [3]. | Studied Theology and Archaeology in Leiden; doctoral thesis on Horapollo. Started assisting Reuvens from 1827 onwards (as a student, without formal appointment). Published catalogue of museum's Egyptian antiquities; studied Egyptian papyri. Board member, 6th Congress of Orientalists, Leiden 1883. |

| *Years* | *Person* | *Remarks* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1869–1891 [1]<br>1891–1903 [2] | W. Pleyte (1836–1903)<br>Curator of Classical and Dutch antiquities [1], Director [2], National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden. | Studied Theology in Utrecht. Independently studied Egyptology from 1862; doctor h.c. (Leiden, 1875); studied and published Egyptian papyri. Treasurer, 6th Congress of Orientalists, Leiden 1883.<br>Ordained minister. |
| 1877–1900 | C.P. Tiele (1830–1902)<br>Professor of History of Religions, Leiden. | Also taught Egyptian language and religion.<br>Ordained minister. |
| 1901–1937 | W.B. Kristensen (1867–1953)<br>Professor of History of Religions, Leiden. | Also taught Egyptian language and religion, attracting many students. |
| 1901–1937 | B.D. Eerdmans (1868–1948)<br>Professor of Hebrew, Leiden. | Also taught Aramaic, Assyrian and Egyptian languages and religions.<br>Ordained minister; active in municipal and national politics. |
| 1892–1924 [1]<br>**1902–**1910 [2]<br>**1910–**1924 [3] | P.A.A. Boeser (1858–1935)<br>Vice-director and keeper of Egyptian antiquities, National Museum of Antiquities [1]; ***privaatdocent*** [2], **lector Egyptology** [3], Leiden. | **First university position in Egyptology in the Netherlands**<br>(from 1910 with **ius promovendi**). |
| 1913–1939 | H.Th. Obbink (1869–1947)<br>Professor of History of Religions, Utrecht. | Also taught Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian languages and religions.<br>Ordained minister. |
| 1918–1946 | G. van der Leeuw (1890–1950) Professor of History of Religions, from 1926 also of Egyptian Language and Literature, Groningen. | Studied Egyptology in Berlin and Göttingen. Doctoral thesis *“Godsvoorstellingen in de Oud-Aegyptische Pyramidetexten”* with Kristensen.<br>Ordained minister; shortly active in national government. |

| *Years* | *Person* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|
| 1922–1926 | F.W. Freiherr von Bissing (1873–1956) extraordinary Professor of Egyptian and Near Eastern Art History, Utrecht. | Collection of Egyptian antiquities exhibited in *Archeologisch Museum Scheurleer* (1924–1932). |
| 1924–1928 [1]<br>1928–1932 [2]<br>1932–1946 [3]<br>1934–1946 [4] | G.A.S. Snijder (1896–1992) *privaatdocent* [1], extraordinary [2], ordinary Professor of Classical Archaeology [3], Amsterdam; Director [4], Allard Pierson Museum. | Acquired collections of *Archeologisch Museum Scheurleer* (including larger part of Von Bissing Collection) for University of Amsterdam. |
| 1925–1927 [1]<br>1927–1950 [2] | H.P. Blok (1894–1968) *privaatdocent* Egyptology, Leiden [1]; extraordinary Professor of Egyptian and Near Eastern Art History, Utrecht [2]. | Doctoral thesis *"De beide volksverhalen van Papyrus Harris 500 verso"* with Thierry.<br>Professor of African Languages, Leiden (extraordinary 1950, ordinary 1957–1964). |
| 1928–1939 [1]<br>**1939–**1949 [2]<br>1949–1959 [3] | A. de Buck (1892–1959) lector [1], **extraordinary Professor of Egyptology** [2], ordinary Professor [3], Leiden. | Doctoral thesis *"De Egyptische voorstellingen betreffende den oerheuvel"* with Kristensen. 1924–1931 travel and fieldwork for Coffin Texts project (OI Chicago).<br>**First Egyptology chair in the Netherlands.**<br>Ordained minister. |
| 1930–1936 [1]<br>1936–1938 [2]<br>1938–1954 [3] | R. Miedema (1886–1954) *privaatdocent* History and Art History of Eastern Christianity, Leiden [1]; idem, Utrecht [2]; Director, Institute for Religious and Ecclesiastic Art, Utrecht [3]. | Studied Theology in Leiden; doctoral thesis on Saint Menas.<br>Ordained minister. |
| 1933–1938 | H. Frankfort (1897–1954) extraordinary Professor of Archaeology and History of the Near East, Amsterdam. | Studied in Amsterdam and London; doctoral thesis in Leiden. Also taught Egyptian art and archaeology.<br>Permanently moved abroad in 1938. |

***Oosters Genootschap in Nederland***

At the initiative of J.Ph. Vogel[18] the *Oosters Genootschap in Nederland* ("Oriental Society in the Netherlands") was established in 1920,[19] with its base in Leiden. The society covered all oriental studies, from the Levant and Egypt via the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian subcontinent to the Far East, including the East-Indies, China, and Japan. The emphasis was again on languages and religions, with material culture ("archaeology") and society ("anthropology") coming second. At its start, the society's provisional committee included C. Snouck Hurgronje (Arabic and Islam), W.B. Kristensen (History of Religions), Ph.S. van Ronkel (Malay and Indonesian linguistics), and A.J. Wensinck (Hebrew and Syriac (all were professors at Leiden University). Members numbered one-hundred eighty-three.

The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the Société Asiatique de Paris, the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, the American Oriental Society, the Società Asiatica Italiana, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and the École Française d'Extrême-Orient were promptly informed. In Snouck Hurgronje's presidential address to the first congress of the Society on 4 January 1921, he answered the question of why an Oriental Society in the Netherlands had not been founded at the same time as these "foreign sister societies":

> An Oriental society in the Netherlands, had it been founded in 1860, would not have brought together more than one tenth of the members inscribed on our list today (…). India, Indonesia, China, Japan, Assyria and Babylonia, now all represented by worthy men, would have been either unrepresented or underrepresented. (…) Egyptology entered [Leiden] already a century ago, due to special circumstances, and has from that time continuously been represented by a few excellent scholars. (…) It will not surprise anyone that we (…) also included Hellenism and Byzantium in our circle.[20]

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[18] Jean Philippe Vogel (1871–1958), Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Antiquities at Leiden University (1914–1939), founder of the *Instituut Kern* for the study of Indian languages and cultures (1925).

[19] Drewes 1971: 1.

[20] "Een Oostersch genootschap in Nederland, gesteld het ware in 1860 opgericht, zou niet meer dan een tiende deel bijeengebracht hebben van het aantal leden, dat thans op onze lijst ingeschreven staat (…). Indië, Indonesië, China, Japan, Assyrië en Babylonië, thans alle hier vertegenwoordigd door mannen, wier namen genoemd mogen worden, zouden toen deels niet, deels schaars vertegenwoordigd zijn geweest." "Aan bijzondere omstandigheden was het te danken, dat de Egyptologie hier reeds bijna eene eeuw geleden hare intrede deed en sindsdien steeds door enkele voortreffelijke geleerden vertegenwoordigd was." "Dat wij (…) ook het Hellenisme en Byzantium gaarne in onzen kring opnamen, zal niemand uwer verwonderen." (Oosters Genootschap 1921: 6, 4, 6).

Foundation of the *Oosters Genootschap* was driven not only by the recognition of new fields of study and new university chairs, but also from the desire to give a new impulse to existing studies, e.g., new dimensions to the study of Arabic. Its aims were to maintain national and international academic connections between orientalists. Or, in the words of Snouck Hurgronje: "meeting each other, drawing up the synthesis of what has been done in the Netherlands and what needs to be done to draw up a spiritual rapprochement between the East and the West; promotion of harmony, division of labour, exchange of thoughts leading to new points of view (…)."[21] It was also an initiative for international reconnection after WW I; in Scandinavian countries similar views were held and efforts made.

With the Orientalists of these other "small populations" close ties were maintained. The journal *Acta Orientalia* was issued yearly from 1923 onwards, in cooperation between Danish, Dutch, and Norwegian Oriental Societies.[22] The editorial board of *ActOr*, published in Leiden, consisted of F. Buhl (Copenhagen) for Egypt and the Near East, C. Snouck Hurgronje for all subjects related to Islam, Sten Konow (Oslo) for India and ancient Iran, and Ph. S. van Ronkel (Leiden) for East Asia. Contributions were primarily by the members of these societies.

The International Congress of Orientalists was held every one or two years and hosted in a different city each time, from 1873 until the outbreak of WW I. After the war there was a period of discontinuity until Oxford offered to host the Congress in 1928. Next was Leiden; the *Oosters Genootschap* contributed to the re-establishment of international relations and hosted the 18$^{th}$ congress in 1931. In his opening address, Snouck Hurgronje remarked that the "studies of the East" had progressed enormously since the Leiden congress in 1883, which had led to intense specialisation. The ultimate goal was still "that East and West would learn to understand one another, so that the ideal of the oneness of the human race may be approached."[23]

From the first, the *Oosters Genootschap* held regular members' meetings featuring a presentation by one of their number. A larger congress was held every

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[21] "(…) elkander te ontmoeten, samen de synthese op te maken van wat er in ons land gedaan is en het programma van wat er te doen valt om het Oosten in geestelijken zin nader bij het Westen te brengen, de harmonie, de economische arbeidsverdeelingen de onderlinge hulpverleening in dit soort werk in ons land te bevorderen, gedachtenwisseling te houden, die nieuwe gezichtspunten opent, overleg te plegen over wetenschappelijk werk, dat de krachten van enkelingen te boven gaat." (Oosters Genootschap 1921: 6, translation: Drewes 1971: 1–2).

[22] Anonymous 1923: "Simul voces audiebantur nostris ut parvis populis summi fore momenti si inter se foedus fecerint" ("At the same time, voices were heard that it would be of great importance to our small peoples if they made a treaty with each other").

[23] "Notre but commun à nous tous, qui malgré tout est resté invariablement le même, c'est la pénétration intellectuelle réciproque de l'Orient et de l'Occident, qui a son tour pourra servir de base à la réalisation de l'idéal suprême de l'unité du genre humain." De Goeje 1932: 22–23.

two years. Membership dwindled to 150 in 1936. Thereafter, the members' meetings were held every month, but during WW II, they could take place only intermittently. In 1941 the society held its 10th congress, considered a great success by the members, at the *Oosters Instituut*. The 11th congress, in 1943, was a much more modest occasion lasting only one morning. However, regular meetings resumed in 1944 (with a maximum of nineteen persons permitted during the German occupation). Clearly, the members valued maintaining the society highly: celebration of its 25th anniversary took place at *NINO* on 8 May 1945 – while Canadian forces marched into Leiden to liberate the city. The celebratory volume, published in 1948, bore the title *Orientalia Neerlandica*.[24]

After the war, the *Oosters Genootschap* returned to its regular rhythm of members' meetings and biannual congresses. A few times the society assembled in Groningen, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, but Leiden was the usual location. Cooperation with *NINO* seems to have continued, but larger gatherings – such as the celebration of the society's 40 years of existence in 1960 – were also held at the *Oosters Instituut* premises.

Publication of the journal *Acta Orientalia* ceased during the war. In 1948 Volume 20 was published in Leiden; it then absorbed the Swedish journal *Le Monde Oriental* and from Volume 21 (1953) onwards, was published in Copenhagen, still in cooperation with the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish Oriental Societies. In 1956, Dutch involvement with the journal officially ended, making it solely a Scandinavian publication from Vol. 23 onwards.

Despite specialists narrowing and deepening their fields of interest in the 1960s and 1970s, the keynote presentations at the *Oosters Genootschap* meetings continued to span the full range of subjects, from Ancient Near East to Far East. From 1969 until 2001, one presentation per year was chosen for print.[25] The society's 50th anniversary in 1970 was celebrated with a jubilee congress, a small exhibition of papyri in the National Museum of Antiquities, an exhibition on oriental manuscripts in the Bibliotheca Thysiana, and a volume entitled *Acta Orientalia Neerlandica* containing the congress proceedings. While celebrating, the board and members of the *Oosters Genootschap* were aware of rapidly changing times and their effect on the role and position of the society – less as a meeting place for scholars, more as a centre for the distribution of scientific and practical knowledge of the Orient. Simultaneously, a number of institutes dealing with foreign cultures and languages were reorganised or newly formed: *KITLV* (see above, p. 272) moved from The Hague to Leiden, while *Afrika Studiecentrum* and Sinological Institute at Leiden University were (re)formed and Dutch scholarly

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[24] Drewes 1971: 3–4.

[25] Until 1986 these were published and printed by Brill; from the 1990s the publisher was the Sinological Institute (or the Department of South-East Asia) of Leiden University (ISBN publisher's prefix 90-74956-, after 1995 90-72865-; the *Oosters Instituut* used the latter prefix for their publications 1989–1995 (see below, p. 287).

institutes were established in Jakarta and Cairo (see Table 6).[26] In the 1980s and 1990s, keynote presentations tended to attract audiences of colleagues and students in the speaker's specialisation rather than scholars from different fields.[27] Today the society's board members are Far Eastern scholars, and the *Oosters Genootschap* has in the Netherlands mostly lost its relevance for Ancient Near Eastern studies. A reboot of the Oosters Genootschap is being planned at the time of writing; goals and outcomes yet unknown.

***Oosters Instituut***

When Snouck Hurgronje turned 70 in 1927, he was a famous, celebrated personality in academic circles – he was also despised by colonialists. He retired that year, and a number of his former students (now professors themselves) offered him a collective sum of *ƒ* 27,000 (ca. € 230,000 nowadays)[28] for the foundation of a "Snouck Hurgronje-Stichting". Instead he founded the *Oosters Instituut* ("Oriental Institute"), an umbrella organisation encompassing almost all Leiden societies and foundations related to Oriental studies.[29] The *Oosters Instituut* aimed to stimulate study of "the East", to unify various initiatives, and to function as a central venue where various institutions could meet while maintaining formal autonomy (see Table 4). Several member institutions owned valuable collections of books and study materials; the smaller ones – neither owning nor renting premises – were given use of space in the *Oosters Instituut*. The *OI* also held collections of its own: among these were archival documents from and materials collected by Snouck Hurgronje (i.a., during his time in Mecca), a collection of rare Ancient South Arabian inscriptions, and the Said-Ruete Collection[30].

[26] Drewes 1971: 5.

[27] Personal communication by W.J. Boot, Oosters Genootschap board member in the mid-1980s [5–4–2023].

[28] Calculation of 'purchasing power' of Dutch guilders (*ƒ*) in 1927 to Euros (€): Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis 2021.

[29] Until the Dutch spelling reform of 1947, the name was spelled *Oostersch Instituut*.

[30] The collection consists of the library collected by Emily Ruete, born *Sayyida* (Princess) Salme of Zanzibar and Oman (1844–1924), and her son Rudolph Said-Ruete (1869–1946), together with archival and related materials, and a large bookcase with glass doors. Said-Ruete intended to create a monument to his mother by donating the collection to the *OI*, which Snouck Hurgronje – who was friends of both mother and son – encouraged; the donation materialised a year after his death. The Said-Ruete library was located on the first floor of Rapenburg 61, in what had been the study. See Van de Velde and Vrolijk 2018 [2020]: 6–7. See also below p. 294 fn. 47.

Table 4: *Oosters Instituut* member organisations, mentioned in annual reports 1927–1941.

| Founded | Name | Founders, Presidents | Aims, remarks | Location |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1909 | Stichting De Goeje | M.J. de Goeje, C. Snouck Hurgronje | Arabic language and literature, publications of Arabic manuscripts/texts. | |
| 1917 | Adatrecht-stichting | KITLV, C. van Vollenhoven | Research into customary law of Muslim communities, publications. | |
| 1920 | Oosters Genootschap in Nederland | (see pp. 280–283) | | |
| 1925 | Instituut Kern | J.Ph. Vogel | Sanskrit, languages and cultures of India. Library, photographic collections. Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology. Integrated into Leiden University in 1960. | Gravensteen |
| 1927 | Islam-Stichting | C. Snouck Hurgronje, A.J. Wensinck, C. van Arendonk, J.H. Kramers, C. van Vollenhoven | Collection of Islamic objects and images of Islamic architecture. | Halls of the Oosters Instituut |
| 1927 | Assyriologische Werkkamer | F.M.Th. Böhl | Concise library on the languages of Babylonia and Assyria, study collection of cuneiform tablets. | Rapenburg 53 (Böhl's private home) |
| 1930 | Nieuw Guinea Stichting | | Languages and ethnography of New Guinea. Fund dissolved 1981. | |
| 1930 | Sinologisch Instituut | | Languages and cultures of China. Library. Integrated into Leiden University. | Rapenburg 71 |

| **Founded** | **Name** | **Founders, Presidents** | **Aims, remarks** | **Location** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1933 | Ex Oriente Lux | (see pp. 290–293) | | |
| 1935 | Stichting voor Oud-Semietische, Hellenistische en Joodsche Rechtsgeschiedenis | W.J.M. van Eysinga, B.A. van Groningen, A.H. Hartogh, F.M.Th. Böhl, J. Huizinga, L. Levisson | Foundation aimed at establishing a chair for Ancient Oriental Law. Chair established at Leiden University in 1937 and M. David appointed. | |
| 1939 | Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten | (see pp. 293–298) | | |
| Not included in *Oosters Instituut jaarverslagen*: | | | | |
| 1935 | Leidsch Papyrologisch Instituut[31] | M. David, B.A. van Groningen, J.C. van Oven | Collection of Greek and demotic papyri. | University Library (Rapenburg 50); from 1962: Breestraat 155a; since 1982: University Library (Witte Singel 27) |
| 1947, 1958 | Afrika Studie Centrum | | Research institute with library; founded as the scientific branch in Leiden of the *Afrika Instituut* ("Africa Institute"), Rotterdam. | Rapenburg 8; since 1966: Faculty of Social Sciences (Wassenaarseweg 52) |

For the first decade of its existence, the *OI* had its home at Hooglandse Kerkgracht 17B on the upper floor of the *Heilige Geest- of Arme Wees- en Kinderhuis* (Orphanage) where Snouck Hurgronje's wife Ida was a board member.

After Snouck passed away in 1936, his townhouse at Rapenburg 61 was too large for his widow alone; she sold it to the *Leids Universiteits Fonds*.[32] Space in

[31] This foundation was founded in the same year as the *Stichting voor Oud-Semietische, Hellenistische en Joodsche Rechtsgeschiedenis*. The two foundations had related, but clearly separate aims; the overlap between initiators/involved persons is partial. Personal communication F.A.J. Hoogendijk, 9–9–2022.

[32] Leiden University's alumni/general support fund, founded 1890.

the “Snouck Hurgronje House” was rented by several institutes: the *Oosters Instituut*, the *Adatrecht-stichting* and the *Islam-stichting* occupied the ground and first floors while the Institute for Criminology had the second. The stately house with Snouck Hurgronje’s name chiselled into its lintel became Leiden University’s centre for study of the Middle East and Islam in 1938 and remained so for many decades.

Between 1955 and 1965 the *Oosters Instituut* issued a brochure announcing courses intended “for those who either have found a professional assignment in the East or in Africa, or wish to prepare themselves for such an assignment.” These intensive courses of twenty hours per week (over three or seven months) were expressly meant for a well-educated, but non-scholarly public. There were four sections: Indonesia and Malaysia, the Arab countries, Japan, and China.[33] One incentive for offering courses to non-academics must have been the independence of Indonesia and the consequent abolishment of state-organised education for future colonial civil servants. We might also suspect the hand of A.A. Kampman with his extensive experience setting up courses on the Ancient Near East (see Waal in this volume), who was named among the organisers of the *OI* courses.

Fig. 2: Snouck Hurgronjehuis (Rapenburg 61, Leiden), home of the *Oosters Instituut* 1938–1982.

[33] The brochure is undated; no written sources on enrolment, frequency, and further course subjects were available to the author.

The *Jaarverslagen van het Oostersch Instituut* (annual reports of the *OI*), comprising those of the *OI* member institutions, appeared from 1929 until 1941. Other than these annual reports, the *OI* did not issue a regular publication series except between 1989 and 1995, when five doctoral theses appeared as *"Publicaties van Het Oosters Instituut"*. At that time, the institute had moved into the newly built premises of the Faculty of Humanities (see below p. 298) where the *Oosters Instituut* lost its former visibility and function. Its goal of unifying efforts with regard to the studies of the East had long been taken over by structures within the faculty. At the time of the move, its collections were given on loan to Leiden University Libraries and *NINO*. Its publications were distributed by *NINO*, which also took on distribution of the publications of *OI* member *Stichting De Goeje* (a series of some thirty volumes published 1909–2000). Ownership of the *OI* collections was transferred to Leiden University Libraries on 6 November 1996,[34] except the Said-Ruete Collection which was on loan at *NINO* (see above p. 283 fn. 30, and below p. 294 fn. 47). The private foundation forming the financial basis of the *Oosters Instituut* is still extant; since 1976 it aims to promote the study of Islam, of Arabic and Indonesia through funding scholarly purposes – specifically, for special academic chairs, travel, and publications.[35]

### *Vereeniging tot Bevordering der Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving*

One of the first societies that successfully sought to share knowledge on ancient civilisations outside purely academic circles was the "Society for the Advancement of Knowledge of Ancient Civilisation," founded in 1926. The leading figures in this "society with the long name" were:

- C.W. Lunsingh Scheurleer (1881–1941), owner and director of the *Archeologisch Museum Scheurleer* in The Hague (1924–1932), lector (1933) and extraordinary professor (1936) of Greek Archaeology, Leiden University;
- A.W. Byvanck (1884–1970), Professor of Archaeology and Ancient History (1922–1954), Leiden University;
- H.A.L.E. Byvanck-Quarles van Ufford (1907–2002), *privaatdocent* for Classical Archaeology (1945), Leiden University.

The society issued an annual journal named "Bulletin van de Vereeniging tot Bevordering der Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving," shortened to "Bulletin Antieke Beschaving" – referred to as "Bulletin Byvanck" in jest during many years when husband and wife Byvanck habitually contributed multiple articles to each volume. (Mrs. Byvanck served as the editor from 1941 to 1981.) The journal

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[34] Van de Velde and Vrolijk 2018 [2020]: 6–7.

[35] Stichting Oosters Instituut 2022: /subsidies and /aims [accessed 21–8–2022]. A catalogue of the *OI*'s important collection of palm-leaf stalks and sticks inscribed in Ancient South Arabian script appeared in 2016.

started out as a Dutch-language members' magazine, but in the 1970s it evolved into a scholarly journal now titled BABesch, Annual Papers on Mediterranean Archaeology. This journal, together with the BABESCH Supplement series, and the annual Byvanck Lecture, presently represent the society's main activities.

For a short time, and mainly thanks to Lunsingh Scheurleer, *VBKAK* included "archaeology of the Ancient Near East," but the primary focus of the society remained classical antiquity. The need for a society dedicated to the Ancient Near East was felt, and in 1933 *Ex Oriente Lux* filled this gap (see below p. 290–293).[36]

***F.M.Th. Böhl***

On Frans Böhl (1882–1976), see Berntsen, and Waal, in this volume. Böhl and Egyptologist Adriaan de Buck were the first co-directors of *NINO*. In the 1920s and 1930s Böhl brought together the largest collection of cuneiform inscriptions in the Netherlands, for use in academic teaching and research. It was kept first in the *Semitistische Werkkamer* in Groningen, and later in the *Assyriologische Werkkamer* in Leiden – "Study Rooms" where Assyriology classes were taught and relevant publications were available to students. *NINO* acquired the Böhl Collection upon his retirement.

In addition to forming his own collection, Böhl added to the Near Eastern collections of the National Museum of Antiquities. The finds allotted the Dutch from the excavations at Sichem entered the museum in 1929. On several occasions, Böhl purchased objects from antiquities dealers in the Near East and Europe at the expressed request of the museum. His 1939 journey to Iraq and Iran was sponsored by the *Van den Bergh-Willing Stichting* (see below p. 299); the *Reuvens Fonds* provided funding for the items he acquired for the museum during this trip (see Table 7).

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[36] "Het is de in 1941 overleden Prof. Dr. C.W. Lunsingh Scheurleer geweest, die in 1926 in de *Vereeniging tot bevordering der kennis van de antieke beschaving* de belangstellenden in de archaeologie der klassieke oudheid verenigde met hen, wier belangstelling meer specifiek uitging naar de opgravingen in de oud-Oosterse landen. Doch al spoedig bleek het niet mogelijk, dat deze belangstellenden hun centrum vonden in een vereniging, waarin uiteraard de klassieke oudheid, dus Griekenland en Rome, leiding gaf. Toen volgde in 1933 de oprichting van het *Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap Ex Oriente Lux*." ("It was Prof. Dr. C.W. Lunsingh Scheurleer (passed away 1941) who in 1926 united in *VBKAB* those interested in the archaeology of the Classical world with those more specifically interested in excavations in Ancient Near Eastern countries. However, it soon proved impossible for the latter to find their centre in a society where Classical Antiquity – Greece and Rome – was in the lead. Hence the establishment of *Ex Oriente Lux* in 1933.") Kampman 1948: 246.

Fig. 3: Prof. F.M.Th. Böhl shows clay tablets from his collection, shortly after ownership was transferred to *NINO* in 1951.

**20th century – second quarter**

In the second quarter of the 20th century, the discoveries of the tomb of Tutankhamun and the royal tombs at Ur caught the attention of the Dutch audience[37] and it has remained so engaged ever since. A new generation of students set out to share their enthusiasm for and knowledge of the Ancient Near East – now boosted by the adventure of archaeology – with the broader public; the most prolific among them was Arie Kampman.

***A.A. Kampman***

Arie Abraham Kampman (1911–1977) enrolled as a student of History and Ancient Near Eastern studies at Leiden University in 1931; his professors were F.M.Th. Böhl and A.W. Byvanck. For more on Kampman, see Waal's contribution in this volume.

The multitude of Kampman's activities is impressive. His talents for organising, networking, and inspiring people outweighed his own scholarly achievements – although his professorship at Istanbul University (1965) was certainly the fulfilment of an ardent wish. He was responsible for creating important infrastructure for Dutch scholarly study of the Near East, as well as public interest in it. He actively maintained the organisations he founded for multiple decades, allowing others to further the pursuit of Oriental research in the Netherlands.[38]

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[37] Kampman 1948: 245.

[38] Having spoken with scholars who personally witnessed or interacted with Kampman

Fig. 4: HRH Prince Bernhard (centre) visits *NINO* and is shown objects from the Böhl Collection, 1959. Left A.A. Kampman, right R. Frankena.

**Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap "Ex Oriente Lux"**[39]

Kampman and seven other young Leiden students plus one slightly older student took an important step in May 1933. The latter, Bob A. van Proosdij (1901–1990), was a classicist as well as *repetitor* (tutor) for Assyriology, who worked at Brill. No doubt inspired by Böhl's compelling lectures and the example set by the *Vereeniging tot bevordering der kennis van de antieke beschaving* (see above p. 287–288), the group decided to start a society for the study of the Ancient Near East called "Near Eastern and Egyptian Society Ex Oriente Lux" (*EOL*). Van Proosdij was named president with Kampman as secretary and treasurer (a position he held from 1933 to 1974, assisted by a "Second Secretary" from 1962 onwards).

The society's envisaged activities were offering lectures, courses, meetings, and an annual journal to its members – generally, promoting knowledge about the Ancient Near East to a broad audience. Ambitious aims also included sending expeditions to the Near East or participating in them, and the establishment of an

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during the 1970's, the author noted an anecdotal emphasis on his self-important demeanour, rather than on his accomplishments, perhaps resulting from incompatibility with contemporaneous personalities who valued academic achievements higher than organisational skill.

[39] On *EOL*, see the contribution of Waal in this volume as well as Veenhof 2008 and Stol 2008.

institute for the Ancient Near East. A circular announcing the new society and calling for members was posted on the door of Böhl's Assyriological Workroom in his townhouse. When the elderly Snouck Hurgronje was asked for his endorsement, he not only agreed to become a supporting member, but also included *Ex Oriente Lux* under the umbrella of the *Oosters Instituut*.

The *EOL* head office was, of course, in Leiden; in larger Dutch cites, branches (*studiekringen*) were created which typically consisted of a representative or small committee responsible for organising local meetings. To this day, *EOL*'s head office provides a list of speakers to the branches from which they can compile their programmes. Local *EOL* branches were among the many societies, clubs, lobby groups, etc. scheduling "lectures with lantern slides," to provide a range of social gatherings in towns throughout the Netherlands.[40]

In addition to lectures, courses, the members' meeting each year, and the annual *Jaarbericht*, members were granted discounts on publications of selected third parties and access to the growing library that the society was actively creating. In the 1930s the "Tiele Kamer" in the University Library did apparently not keep up with international research into all aspects of the Ancient Near East and Egypt, which now expanded outside the realm of comparative religions. Between 1933 and 1938 *EOL* sent a monthly *Rondschrijven* ("Circular") to its members, but it proved too labour-intensive to maintain. Instead the Dutch-language *Phoenix* was initiated in 1955; since 1982 it appears thrice yearly. The *Jaarbericht* (*JEOL*) grew from a Dutch-language annual members' magazine with articles, news etc., into an international peer-reviewed journal. Van Proosdij diligently edited Supplements to the *Jaarbericht* (*SEOL*).[41] The series *Mededelingen en Verhandelingen* (*MVEOL*) was set up as the publication series for scholarly monographs, but has in recent years also included Dutch-language titles aimed at a broader audience.

### Board

The founders of *EOL* proved highly loyal to its ideals and activities. Van Proosdij served as president for nearly thirty years and found it difficult to step down; the transition to a new president was laborious. Eventually, another founding father, the Old Testament scholar Martien A. Beek, was elected and went on to serve as president for twelve years; other board members also served (very) long terms and/or in consecutive roles (see Table 5).

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[40] Da Rocha Gonçalves, 2023.

[41] Veenhof 2008: 16.

Table 5: Ex Oriente Lux primary board members.

| *Title* | *Years* | *Person* | *Discipline* |
|---|---|---|---|
| President | 1933–1962 | B.A. van Proosdij | Classics, Assyriology |
| | 1962–1974 | M.A. Beek | Old Testament Studies, ANE History |
| | 1974–1994 | M.S.H.G. Heerma van Voss | Egyptology |
| | 1994–2004 | K.R. Veenhof | Assyriology |
| | 2004–2015 | D.J.W. Meijer | ANE Archaeology |
| | 2015–2023 | R.J. van der Spek | Assyriology, Ancient History |
| | 2023– | B.J.J. Haring | Egyptology |
| Secretary | 1933–1974 | A.A. Kampman | Hittitology |
| | 1962–1974 | K.R. Veenhof | |
| | 1974–1999 | M. Stol | Assyriology |
| | 1999–2006 | A. Egberts | Egyptology |
| | 2007–2012 | R.B. ter Haar Romeny | Hebrew and Old Testament |
| | 2012–2022 | T.J.H. Krispijn | Assyriology |
| | 2022–present | P. Sanders | Old Testament Studies |
| Treasurer | 1933–1974 | A.A. Kampman | |
| | 1974–1991 | E. de Ranitz-Labouchere | Egyptology |
| | 1991–1996 | various persons | |
| | 1997–2000 | A.C.V.M. Bongenaar | Assyriology |
| | 2001–2009 | B.J.J. Haring | Egyptology |
| | 2010–2015 | W. Hovestreydt | Egyptology |
| | 2015–2018 | M. Hanegraaff | Assyriology |
| | 2018–present | R. de Boer | Assyriology |

***Membership***

At the ten years' celebration in 1943, *EOL* had 3,000 members, eighteen branches in the Netherlands and four in Belgium. In 1947 membership peaked at 3,500 members. One partial explanation for the increase is that during WW II, with opportunities for recreation progressively more scarce, the lectures and courses offered by *Ex Oriente Lux* were an attractive diversion.

In 1952 and 1958 there were 2,500 members in thirty-two branches. Their number dropped to twenty-six in 1964, while in the 1990s there were sixteen to eighteen branches (not counting one or two in Belgium)[42]. Membership dropped to 1,430 in 1972, 1,300 in 1975, and ca. 1,180 in 1981, but began increasing, to

[42] Stol 2008: 92.

1,300 in 1994 and by 1999 to 1,355.[43] In the early 1980s, *EOL* moved with *NINO* to the new University buildings; the society saw renewed initiatives and a very welcome legacy from J.A. Goderie.

Today, the society is active with twelve branches in the Netherland and one in Flanders. The program of the annual central members' meeting includes lectures on a central theme, and publications are regularly issued. Most Dutch-speaking orientalists are involved – giving lectures, contributing to *Phoenix*, and/or serving on the board or editorial board.

Fig. 5: Celebration 10 years *Ex Oriente Lux*: group portrait in the back garden of *NINO*, 1943.

**The Netherlands Institute for the Near East**[44]

The notarised deed founding the Netherlands Archaeological and Philological Institute for the Near East, signed 17 August 1939, lists its organizational set-up and aims (see Waal in this volume), adding: "The institute envisages the term 'archaeological' in a broad sense, as it is used in a. o. France (Institut de France, Collège de France), where 'archaeology' also encompasses 'inscriptions et belles lettres'."[45] The reference to foreign institutes, as well as the fact that amendment of

[43] Stol 2008: 81, 84, 88.
[44] See Van Zoest and Berntsen 2014, and Waal in this volume.
[45] Deed of foundation (copy), 17 August 1939. *NINO* Archive. Original Dutch text in Van Zoest and Berntsen 2014: 4.

the articles in 1955 cited the official name of the Institute in its Dutch, English, and French versions, indicates the desire to make it not only nationally but internationally relevant.

### *Library*

An important core of the library was formed of publications acquired by *Ex Oriente Lux* since its foundation. As copies of numerous letters in the *NINO* Archive testify, curator-librarian Kampman intensified his efforts to acquire as many books and journals as possible in the months before the official establishment of the institute. *EOL* and *NINO* publications served as means of exchange. Other collections of books integrated into the *NINO* library in its earliest years were donated or legated by C.H.J. van Haeften, R.J. Forbes, and Frank Scholten.[46]

De Buck, the first president of the International Association of Egyptologists (founded in Copenhagen, 1947), saw to the establishment of the Annual Egyptological Bibliography. J.M.A. Janssen, charged with compiling the bibliography, produced the first volume in 1948. For many decades it was customary for authors and publishers to send a copy of their Egyptological publications to Leiden for inclusion in the AEB, a practice that greatly benefited the *NINO* library. In 1977, after complaints that the Said-Ruete library (above p. 283 fn. 30) was not accessible enough at the *Oosters Instituut* (Rapenburg 61), the boards of *OI* and *NINO* agreed to relocate it to *NINO* (Noordeindsplein 4a–6a).[47]

### *Publications*[48]

From 1943 onwards *NINO* published the journal *Bibliotheca Orientalis*; monographic series dedicated to the memories of A. de Buck and F. Scholten, respectively, followed. The use of long series titles in Latin may have been coined by *EOL* President B.A. van Proosdij, who worked at Brill (Deputy Director 1958–1965; for Van Proosdij see also above p. 290–292. Until the 1970s, E.J. Brill was responsible for printing Dutch publications on (ancient and modern) oriental studies and *NINO* was no exception. This changed in the 1970s when developments in printing technique made publishing non-Latin characters easier and less costly.

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[46] Oostersch Instituut 1941: 57; Oostersch Instituut 1942: 38. On Van Haeften and Scholten, see Waal in this volume.

[47] The monumental bookcase moved with *NINO* to its new premises at Witte Singel in September 1983, into the Director's office on the first floor. Van Donzel – Director of *NINO* (see below p. 297) and President of the *OI* board – had a keen interest in Sayyida Salme/Emily Ruete. Upon his retirement the bookcase moved into the *NINO* library on the second floor. The books of the Said-Ruete library have recently been transferred into Leiden University Libraries' Special Collections. I thank A.G.M. Keizers, *NINO* librarian, for sharing her unpublished (archival) research on the Said-Ruete Collection with me.

[48] For a complete overview of *NINO*'s publications up to 2014, see Anonymous 2014.

*NINO*'s journal *Anatolica* (started 1967) and publication series *Publications de l'Institut historique et archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul* (started 1956) were both initiated with the institute in Istanbul in mind (see further below): the journal was suitable for exchange with other institutes, and moreover, the monographs in the *Publications de Stamboul* (later *PIHANS*) series underlined the academic character of the Istanbul institute. Monographs on Egyptological subjects (initially appearing in the *PIHANS* series) were given a separate series *Egyptologische Uitgaven* in 1982.

***Istanbul***

After a few years of preparations, *NINO* opened a subsidiary institute in Istanbul in 1958 – *Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul* (*NHAI*) – as an early instance of a trend to establish Dutch academic institutes abroad (see Table 6), spurred by national and international developments of decolonisation, economic prosperity, and population growth.

Kampman had put much effort into assembling a library for the new institute, finding influential board members, and attracting a director. Byvanck, his former professor, had declined because of advanced age. Former *KITLV* secretary Prof. A.A. Cense[49] agreed to take up directorship for the first six years of the new institute's existence. H. Alkım[50] was appointed secretary and librarian. The offices, library, and a few guest rooms of the institute were housed in an annexe of the *Palais de Hollande*, the historical seat of the Dutch consular service in Istanbul. In what was undoubtedly a very proud moment for Kampman, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands willingly took a seat on the board, and even agreed to participate in the opening ceremony on 31 March 1958.

Table 6: Dutch academic institutes abroad.

| *Years* | *Location* | *Name (abbreviation)* | *Founding institution* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1904– | Rome | Nederlands Historisch Instituut te Rome; since 2004: Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut Rome (KNIR) | Dutch national government |
| 1958– | Florence | Nederlands Interuniversitair Kunsthistorisch Instituut (NIKI) | Utrecht University |

[49] Anton Abraham Cense (1901–1977) was a Dutch Indologist, civil servant, and scholar in the Dutch East-Indies (University of Batavia). In 1958 he had recently retired from his position at *KITLV*, but because of his lasting fondness for Arabic and Turkish (part of his Indological education) he accepted the position in Istanbul.

[50] Handan Alkım (?–1985), Turkish archaeologist, spouse of Turkish archaeologist Bahadır Alkım (1915–1981).

| *Years* | *Location* | *Name (abbreviation)* | *Founding institution* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1958– | Istanbul | Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut (NHAI); since 2004: The Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT) | The Netherlands Institute for the Near East |
| 1969– | Jakarta | KITLV Jakarta | KITLV |
| 1971– | Cairo | Nederlands Instituut voor Archeologie en Arabische Studiën in Cairo (NIAASC); since 1999: Nederlands-Vlaams Instituut in Cairo (NVIC) | Leiden University |
| 1976– | Athens | Nederlands Instituut Athene (NIA) | University of Amsterdam |
| 1997– | St. Peters-burg | Nederlands Instituut in Sint-Petersburg (NIP) | Joint Dutch universities |
| 2001–2012 | Damascus | Nederlands Instituut voor Academische Studies in Damascus (NIASD) | The Netherlands Institute for the Near East |
| 2006–2015 | Ankara | Nederlands Instituut voor Hoger Onderwijs in Ankara (NIHA) | Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science |
| 2006– | Rabat | Nederlands Instituut Marokko (NIMAR) | Leiden University |

When no successor could be found after Cense's retirement, Kampman became acting director. From 1965 he habitually spent four to five months a year in Istanbul, also teaching at Istanbul University and giving much attention to relations with the local academic community. During his absence, Alkım was in charge. In 1972, Kampman retired from *NHAI* and around the same time, from *NINO* and *EOL*. Alkım's retirement in 1975 marked the end of an era.

*NHAI* was renamed Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT) in 2004; the institute and its library are housed at Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations.

***Place in the local and national landscapes***

In the 1950s to 1970s student enrolment and staff appointments in Ancient Near Eastern studies grew at the universities of Leiden, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Groningen, and Nijmegen. While independently funded and governed, *NINO* closely cooperated with Leiden University; the university rented space at *NINO* for its sections of Assyriology and Egyptology; university staff members were deeply involved in the board and activities both of *NINO* and *EOL*.

***Changes in the 1970s and 1980s***

Kampman had ultimate responsibility for *NINO*'s and *EOL*'s activities and finances. By the time he retired in 1974, the administration and finances of his manifold undertakings (see Waal in this volume) seem to have been rather entangled.

His successor was the Ethiopist E.J. van Donzel[51], who for many years was the driving force on the editorial board of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd edition), in addition to his fulltime directorship of *NINO*. He was responsible for disentangling the administration left behind by Kampman. Under Van Donzel, the organisational interwovenness of *NINO* and *EOL* ended, even though many persons remained involved in both. A successful appeal led to restructuring regular funding from the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science. Van Donzel strengthened ties with the Ministry, while revising and further formalising cooperation with Leiden University. The *NINO* library catalogue was digitised and integrated into Leiden University Library's online catalogue. *NINO* now appeared as a "location" of Leiden University Library, even though acquisitions and remuneration of the staff came from *NINO*'s independent budget. This meant, however, that its existence was broadcast through online library systems from the 1980s onwards.

During the third quarter of the 20th century, numbers of Leiden University students and employees rose considerably, necessitating more office space and class rooms for all humanities studies. The university built new premises (planning had started as early as the 1950s) for the Faculties of Humanities, Theology, and Archaeology in the new *"Witte Singel-Doelencomplex."* The new cluster of buildings brought together the various departments which were until then spread out over Leiden's city centre, as well as the University Library and a number of *"para-universitaire"* institutes, among them *KITLV*, *Instituut Kern,* and *NINO*. Dedicated spaces for the libraries of these institutes and other amenities were part of the designs for the new buildings. *NINO* sold its two houses at Noordeindsplein 4a and 6a in May 1982 and moved to Witte Singel.

The move into university premises changed the structural relationship between *NINO* and Leiden University. At Noordeindsplein, *NINO* was landlord; at Witte Singel, the institute was a comparatively small tenant, and would often be mistaken for a department of Leiden University. Becoming more embedded in university infrastructure had advantages – as a 1989 newspaper article put it: "*NINO* has taken a huge flight over the last five years, since it moved its library with over 35,000 titles into the new complex. There is now an open connection between *NINO* and university. (…) 'At Noordeindsplein we basically existed only for those who were familiar with us,' says Director Van Donzel."[52]

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[51] Emericus Joannes van Donzel (1925–2017), Director of *NINO* 1974–1990. See Roodenberg 2017.

[52] Leidsch Dagblad 19 October 1989; Dutch text in Van Zoest and Berntsen 2014: 25.

Fig. 6: Noordeindsplein. Left is no. 4a, right
(bearing its construction year, 1872) no. 6a.

This change in balance was felt in all institutes that moved out of the premises where they had resided for many years or even decades, as described above (p. 287) for the *Oosters Instituut*.

***Present and near future***

The now dated *Witte Singel-Doelencomplex* is being currently renovated into a new Humanities Campus. *NINO* will again move, in 2024, this time within the campus. In 2018 a new agreement completed the process of incorporation into Leiden University which had begun in the early 1980s. The arrangement – in which the National Museum of Antiquities, with a view to professional responsibility for the Böhl Collection, is the third partner – included *NINO* staff members becoming university employees and transfer of the *NINO* library collections into the care of Leiden University Library. With a larger budget for scholarly activities, relations with other university staff in Ancient Near Eastern studies in the Netherlands have intensified. It is to be expected that the new premises, combined with full organisational embedding in Leiden University, will again lead to structural adjustments and changed perception of the institute.

**Other societies and funds**

A number of other funds and societies have played a role in financing initiatives, museum acquisitions, promoting interest in the Ancient Near East etc. (see Table 7). The *Van den Bergh-Willing Stichting* was a private fund, set up in 1937 from donations collected on the occasion of fifty years of marriage of Sam van den Bergh (1864–1941) and Rebecca Willing (1867–1946). Van den Bergh was a wealthy industrialist, founder of a margarine factory that later merged to form Unilever.[53] He contributed generously to the Sichem Committee (see Berntsen in this volume). The fund financed Böhl's journey to the Near East in 1939[54] and was still active in 1975, but it is presently not registered in the Chamber of Commerce.

The *Allard Pierson Stichting* was established in 1926 to look after the books and antiquities bequeathed to the University of Amsterdam by Jan Six VI (see Berntsen in this volume). With the dissolution of the Museum Scheurleer in The Hague, Geerto A.S. Snijder (see Table 3), acting on behalf of the *APS*, acquired the larger part of the Scheurleer collections for Amsterdam which then formed the core of the Allard Pierson Museum, founded in 1934. Similarly, the *Vereniging Reuvens Fonds*, later *Reuvensstichting*, collected funds for acquisitions of the National Museum of Antiquities.[55] In addition to these sources, both museums also have societies of friends that organise lectures and activities, and issue a magazine. The Amsterdam society *VVAPM* was founded around the time of the museum's move from Sarphatistraat to Oude Turfmarkt (the move was initiated ca. 1967, the museum re-opened at its new location in 1976). Leiden's society *RoMeO* originated only in 1996, at the publicly expressed desire of those who became members for activities connected to the museum.

Not a society or coordinated initiative, but very influential on the public in the 1950's to 1990's were the publications of husband and wife Auke A. Tadema and Bob Tadema Sporry. Working independently, these two artists, publicists, travellers, and self-taught (art) historians, published a multitude of books and articles on Ancient Egypt for a broad audience. Their widely available books, rich in high-quality information, photographs, drawings and maps, have sparked an interest in (the study of) ancient Egypt with many Dutch-speaking people.

The most productive societies of friends supporting Dutch archaeological projects early in this millennium are perhaps *Friends of Saqqara* (founded by students who had participated in Dutch excavations at Saqqara) and the *Berenike Foundation* (main activity 1993–2003). Furthermore, several non-commercial societies dedicated to Ancient Egypt have sprung up since the 1970s with the activities of *Huis van Horus* and *Mehen* currently surpassing those of the societies of friends just cited. However, membership numbers in the Netherlands as high as

[53] Biography: Reinders 2016.
[54] Böhl 1940.
[55] Geerts 2018.

*EOL*'s in the 1940s have never again been attained by any single society for the Ancient Near East.

Table 7: Dutch societies relevant to the study of the Ancient Near East, 20th and early 21st centuries.

| *Years* | *Society* | *Founders and initial presidents* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1920– | Oosters Genootschap in Nederland | (see pp. 280–283) | |
| 1925–ca. 1939 | Sichem-comité | F.M.Th. Böhl | (see Berntsen in this volume) |
| 1925–1938 | Doorner Arbeitsgemeinschaft | Wilhelm II | Private society |
| 1926– | Vereeniging tot Bevordering der Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving | (see pp. 287–288) | |
| 1933– | Ex Oriente Lux | (see pp. 290–293) | |
| 1926– | Allard Pierson Stichting | | Fund for collections of / acquisitions for the University of Amsterdam |
| 1969– | Vereniging van Vrienden van het Allard Pierson Museum | | (see p. 299) |
| 1937–after 1958 | Van den Bergh-Willing Stichting | (see p. 299) | |
| 1928–after 1953 | Vereniging Reuvens Fonds | | Fund for acquisitions for the National Museum of Antiquities |
| 1974–1998 | Reuvensstichting | | Fund to hold income from sales of publications and souvenirs at National Museum of Antiquities; proceeds occasionally used for acquisitions |
| 1996– | RoMeO | | (see p. 299) |

| *Years* | *Society* | *Founders and initial presidents* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1970–2012 | Sjemsoethot | W.J. de Jong | Egyptology courses and lectures, journal, Amsterdam |
| 1993 | Stichting Berenike | W.Z. Wendrich | Society of friends of the excavations at Berenike (Egypt) |
| 2002– | Mehen | B. Koek-Overvest and J. Koek | Egyptology courses, grants, publication series, library for members in Elst |
| 2003– | Friends of Saqqara | M.M. Vugts, J. van Wetering, M.C. Hulsman | Society of friends of the Dutch excavations at Saqqara |
| 2007– | Huis van Horus | M.J.W.H. Zitman | Egyptology courses, publication series |

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# Financing Babylon

## The German Oriental Society and its Funding System

Olaf Matthes*

As early as 1887, the Orient Committee in Berlin was founded as the first German society to sponsor excavations in the entire Near Eastern region. Beginning the following year, it successfully explored the Aramean town of Sam´al (today Zincirli in southern Turkey) in several campaigns. The statutes of the Committee stipulated that the finds made in the process should be handed over only to the Royal Berlin Museums, as reimbursement for all expenses incurred.[1] The operating fund replenished in this manner was to be used to carry out subsequent excavation campaigns. This arrangement, however, functioned only for a few years. The museums were soon no longer in a position to reimburse the high costs, necessitating an end to cooperation in the mid-1890s.

Then, in January 1898, the German Oriental Society (Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, DOG) was founded. The instigators included some former members of the Orient Committee, but not all of them, since the majority were not willing to change its general structure. The new society took a different path. From the beginning, it saw itself as a society that made finds from its excavation available to the museums free of charge.

The major question important for understanding the activities of the DOG in the imperial period – and this era alone – is discussed here below. Who were the main protagonists and how did the DOG manage to finance major Mesopotamian excavations in Babylon, and later Assur?

From the first, the DOG tried to avoid the structural weaknesses of the Orient Committee. Thus, it initially attached crucial importance to involving the Prussian state institutions deemed essential for the undertakings planned, viz. the Royal Museums in Berlin, the Prussian Academy of Sciences, and the Prussian Ministry of Culture. The society was able to recruit representatives from these institutions as board members, and therefore had extremely strong strategic partners from the beginning, which the Orient Committee lacked. Moreover, during the first years, the DOG had in addition a scientific advisory board which also included representatives of the Berlin University.

A second major difference from the Orient Committee was that the DOG relied on a broad membership base. The annual membership fee of 20 Marks was moderate and through intensive advertising in the run-up to its foundation, the DOG

* Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, Hamburg.

[1] Cf. Ausgrabungen in Senschirli Vol. I, p. VII § 3.

managed to attract 500 members in early 1898. Only five years later the number increased to over 1,000 and peaked in 1913 at more than 1,500.

A third major difference between the Orient Committee and the DOG was that the latter saw itself from its founding as an independent place for research and, no less important, for its wider popularisation. After the excavations in Mesopotamia began in 1899, the DOG not only started to attract attention with regular reports in the press, but also held popular lectures which met with enormous interest straight away. The annual highlight was the so-called Kaiservortrag, the Emperor's Lecture, which from 1901 until 1914 was attended by the monarch, Wilhelm II (1859–1941; Fig. 1), himself. This event created a great stir year after year in the German media, especially after Friedrich Delitzsch's highly controversial Babel-Bible lectures in 1902 and 1903.[2]

Fig. 1: Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Fig. 2: Heinrich zu Schoenaich-Carolath.

The main protagonists of the DOG in the imperial era were the two chairmen, Heinrich Prinz zu Schoenaich-Carolath (1852–1920; Fig. 2) and Friedrich Hollmann (1842–1913; Fig. 3), Secretary of State of the Imperial Navy Office until 1897 and, furthermore, one of the Kaiser's few personal friends. This widely known fact, and this alone, opened many doors much more quickly for the society. In addition, Hollmann belonged to the Kaiser's entourage and was thus also well connected in court circles.

Heinrich zu Schoenaich-Carolath was a member of the Reichstag for many years and sat in the Prussian House of Lords, where he demonstrably and emphatically represented the interests of the DOG during the society's early years.[3]

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[2] Cf. Cancik-Kirschbaum, Gertzen 2021.

[3] Cf. e.g., Berliner Tageblatt Nr. 174 vom 5.4.1900.

In addition, he was in personal contact with representatives of individual imperial offices (see further below). Some board members with Jewish background were important as well. The Berlin merchant James Simon (1851–1932) (Fig. 4) was one of the richest Germans at the time and among the best-connected men in Berlin. He was also a driving force in the DOG and by far the principal private donor. Simon’s close friend Berlin banker Franz von Mendelssohn (1865–1935; Fig. 5) brought in the German banking network. Numerous other associations and societies were also members.

Fig. 3: Friedrich Hollmann.

Fig. 4: James Simon.

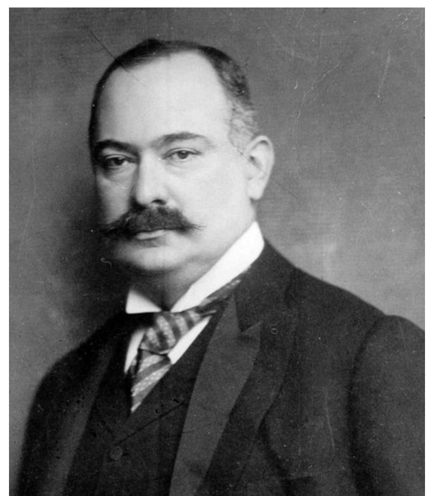

Fig. 5: Franz von Mendelssohn.

Thus, not only did networks complement and overlap; they also covered important strategic areas. The “other side” of the DOG comprised academics employed by universities and museums. None of these men – and they were only men – be it Alexander Conze (1831–1914), Friedrich Delitzsch (1950–1922), Adolf Erman (1854–1937), Eduard Sachau (1845–1930), and later Eduard Meyer (1855–1930) – played a significant role on the board that contributed to decision-making on funding. Even the Director General of the Royal Museums in Berlin, Richard Schöne (1840–1922), occupied no more than a mediating position.

How did the DOG intend to acquire and use funding? What were the strategic goals? Initially, most important above all was to obtain financial support from the Kaiser’s “All Highest Imperial Disposition Fund” (Allerhöchster Kaiserlicher Dispositionsfond). This fund, amounting to three million marks and granted annually by the Reichstag, allowed the Kaiser to underwrite whatever he and/or his advisors deemed sensible for reasons of content, strategy, and prestige – or simply for personal reasons. Theoretically, anyone could apply. However, all applications were subject to strict bureaucratic and professional selection procedures. But once these hurdles were overcome and the corresponding funds approved, the applicant earned enormous social prestige, which must not be at all underrated in those days.

The DOG immediately applied successfully for funding from this imperial fund. The society managed to receive annual support continuously from 1898 to 1914. No other association was as successful during the German imperial period. But how did the DOG succeed? What mechanisms were at work?

First of all, it is known that Friedrich Hollmann was in regular direct contact with the Kaiser at various places and on various occasions. It can therefore always be assumed that Hollmann kept the Kaiser personally informed about all important deliberations and decisions of the DOG, and he certainly also advised him how best to make funds from the Imperial Disposition Fund liquid for the DOG.

Interestingly, the DOG did not choose to take the route available via the Kaiser’s office – the secret civil cabinet (Geheimes Zivilkabinett) and its influential head Hermann von Lucanus (1831–1908) – but rather the official and formal one. This not only shows a deliberate strategy, but also demonstrates the power of the administration, which the DOG protagonists knew precisely. If the DOG wanted to be successful in the long run, it was imperative to depend upon the administration. Just a month after the DOG’s foundation, Heinrich von Schoenaich-Carolath approached Max von Thielmann (1846–1929; Fig. 6), the State Secretary of the Reich Treasury which administered the Imperial Disposition Fund and had the privilege of making proposals for granting of funds from it. It was generally known that Thielmann himself had a great interest in the Near East, a region that he also knew to some extent from personal experience and about which had also published. The DOG could hope for Thielmann’s personal support and was not disappointed in the end. As early as March 1898, Thielmann assured the DOG

that he was “prepared to support such a grant right now,” adding “but of course I cannot say anything about its amount at the present time."[4] In June renewed movement in the matter followed. Apparently Carolath received the terms of the formal application through Thielmann, and they sorted out privately the best way to proceed.[5]

Fig. 6: Max von Thielmann.

This illustrates that from the very beginning, the DOG was in close contact with key individuals in several imperial offices of the Reich. Moreover, also evidently from the first, the society was able to act much more flexibly through these personal contacts than through the administration of the Berlin museums with their complex and slowly functioning bureaucracies.

The importance of maintaining personal contact with the Prussian ministerial bureaucracy is demonstrated by the way the DOG dealt with the results of the journey through Mesopotamia by architect Robert Koldewey and the orientalist Eduard Sachau in late autumn 1897. Financed by James Simon, its goal was to find a suitable site for excavation by the DOG – at this time yet in the process of being founded. This was achieved in consultation with and on the formal instructions of Robert Bosse (1832–1901), the Prussian Minister of Culture, who had gotten the necessary approval from Wilhelm II for awarding the sum of 25,000 marks needed for the journey.

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[4] Max von Thielmann to Bernhard von Bülow 1.3.1898; BArch, AA, R 901, Nr. 468a (Wissenschaftliche Erforschung von Kleinasien), Nr. 37691, p. 89.

[5] Cf. Heinrich zu Schoenaich-Carolath to Paul Horn 4.6.1898; SMB-ZA, III/DOG I 6.13.

On 17 June 1897, State Secretary Thielmann officially informed the DOG that he was prepared to apply to the Kaiser for 20,000 Marks from the Imperial Disposition Fund for the DOG expedition to Mesopotamia.[6] The sum was granted, but proved not nearly enough to carry out the large-scale excavations planned. The DOG itself had only just under 35,000 Marks at its disposal – far too little. Pressure increased on the DOG in autumn that year, when the site chosen for excavation was Babylon, with Robert Koldewey (1855–1925) as director. Finally, in mid-January 1899, the Ottoman authorities issued the permit. At this point, at the latest, the DOG board could be sure that the first excavation project was going to go ahead. Now the treasurer of the society was not only able to announce that the current assets of the DOG amounted to more than 60,000 Marks, but also that the actual payment of the imperial funds for 1898 – hitherto only formally granted – would be made. The corresponding minutes of the society document the protagonists' great relief that the first year of the Babylon excavations was financially secured: "The enterprise planned by our Society, after overcoming many difficulties, is now being carried out. Let us hope that the results will correspond to the efforts made, bring honour to our Society, benefit to our museums, and satisfy the expectations of our members!"[7]

After these initial difficulties, down to 1914, it was more or less only a formality for the DOG to be granted funds from the Imperial Disposition Fund. It even seems to have been virtually the case that from 1900 onwards a minimum sum of 15,000 Marks per annum was set aside in advance from the Reich Treasury for the purposes of the DOG;[8] later the sum was increased to 20,000 Marks. (The allocation for 1903 was increased, due to the second long-term excavation in Aššur, Table 1)

Table 1

| Year | DOG funding by Kaiser |
|---|---|
| 1898 | 20,000 |
| 1899 | 15,000 |
| 1900 | 15,000 |
| 1901 | 15,000 |
| 1902 | 40,000 |
| 1903 | 65,000 |
| 1904 | 30,000 |

[6] Cf. Heinrich zu Schoenaich-Carolath to Paul Horn 17.6.1898; SMB-ZA, III/DOG I 6.13.

[7] Minutes of the DOG board meeting 28.1.1899, SMB-ZA, III/DOG I 3.5.

[8] This is suggested, for example, by James Simon in his letter to Paul Horn dated 24.3.1900: "Herr v. Thielmann has promised the Prince [i.e. Carolath] that he will again support 15000 Marks for us. The Prince asks you to set up the application as last year and to send it to him for signing in the Reichstag around April 25th." SMB-ZA, III/DOG I.6.90.

| **Year** | **DOG funding by Kaiser** |
| --- | --- |
| 1905 | 15,000 |
| 1906 | 15,000 |
| 1907 | 20,000 |
| 1908 | 15,000 |
| 1909 | 20,000 |
| 1910 | 20,000 |
| 1911 | 20,000 |
| 1912 | 25,000 |
| 1913 | 25,000 |
| 1914 | 40,000 |
| **Total** | **415,000** |

These funds brought the society not only enormous social prestige and thus cultural capital, in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu. The allocation undoubtedly also helped with the allocation of funds for the society provided by the Prussian state.

Just how was the DOG able to obtain funds from the Prussian state? After Wilhelm II returned from his trip to the Ottoman Empire where he also met Sultan Abdülhamid II (1842–1918), the emperor – still full of excitement for the site of Babylon where the German excavations were to begin – personally lobbied Prussia to guarantee the "provision of considerable funds from state funds" for the DOG, as the Prussian Minister of Culture had demanded just before the imperial journey to the Holy Lands.[9] To this end, only a few days after the excavations in Babylon began on 26 March 1899, Wilhelm II invited important top politicians and experts to the Berlin City Palace. The meeting took place on 7 April 1899; those present were the Prussian Minister of Finance Johannes von Miquel (1828–1901), the State Secretary of the Foreign Office Bernhard von Bülow (1849–1929), the head of the Secret Civil Cabinet Hermann von Lucanus, the second DOG President admiral Friedrich Hollmann, and the Director General of the Royal Museums of Berlin Richard Schöne, as well as the university professor and museum director Friedrich Delitzsch and the orientalist Eduard Sachau. At the Emperor's request, Delitzsch gave a lecture on Babylon. As reported in mass media, "the Kaiser kept talking about the subject of the lecture until midnight."[10] It was doubtless primarily a matter of demonstrating to the Prussian Minister of Finance the necessity of state funding for this large-scale scientific excavation project. The significance of the excavations in Babylon was also discussed in terms of foreign and cultural policy. It can be assumed that the decisive course was set that very evening – for the Prussian state subsidies for Babylon have been flowing

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[9] Robert Bosse to Kaiser Wilhelm II. 7.10.1898 (transcript); BArch, R/901, Nr.37692, Bl. 35–40.

[10] Cf. newspaper clipping 9.4.1899, SMB-ZA, III/DOG IV 3.

since the following year. In the formal application to the Prussian state budget, cultural minister Robert Bosse justified the funds especially with Germany's enormous backlog in the field of archaeological fieldwork in Mesopotamia when compared to France, Great Britain, and, more recently, the USA.[11] He applied for 100,000 Marks of state support for each of the next three years excavating in Babylon.

But the Prussian finance minister was hardly receptive to the very many pathetic formulations in Bosse's application. Johannes von Miquel was regarded as an outstanding authority in the state government: even Wilhelm II, too, held him in high esteem and regarded him with respect. Although the Prussian king had influence, he was constitutionally dependent on the decisions of the state government in all civil matters. This also explains why he personally tried to convince the finance minister of the necessity of state subsidisation of this project.

Despite all the explanations of Delitzsch and Bosse and the Kaiser's pleading, Johannes von Miquel nevertheless did not comply completely with the demanded allocation of funds to the DOG. For 1900, "only" 67,000 Marks were granted. And the Prussian treasury continued to withhold some of the funds demanded in the following years. Only in 1904, after the inclusion of the new site of Assur in the budget the previous year, were 100,000 Marks released for the excavations. However, this was still not enough for concurrently excavating two sites year-round. Finally, in 1905, the DOG received the sum the excavators considered necessary (Table 2).

Table 2

| **Year** | **DOG funding by Prussia** |
|---|---|
| 1900 | 67,000 |
| 1901 | 75,000 |
| 1902 | 93,200 |
| 1903 | 88,600 |
| 1904 | 100,000 |
| 1905 | 140,000 |
| 1906–1914 | 130,000 p.a. |
| 1915–1916 | 55,000 p.a. |
| **Total** | **1,843,800** |

Of course, the DOG was aware that about 70% to 80% of the funding for the two main Mesopotamian excavation sites came from Prussia and the Kaiser. Soon the society sought and found ways and possibilities to cushion this predominant state financing by expanding their excavation activities and funding them privately, rather than with government support. In fact, the year 1901 marked the starting

[11] Robert Bosse to Johannes von Miquel 10.7.1899, GStA PK, I. HA, Rep 151, Nr. 8235.

point for the expansion of DOG archaeological activity, unprecedented in dimensions and dynamics, although it cannot be discussed in detail here. Suffice it to mention that until 1914, numerous other sites in Egypt, in Palestine, and also in Asia Minor were to be financed only privately as a counterpole to the quasi-state excavations in Mesopotamia (Table 3).

Table 3

| **Year** | **total revenue DOG** | **funding by Prussia and the Kaiser** |
|---|---|---|
| 1898 | 68,000 | 20.000 |
| 1899 | 92,000 | 15.000 |
| 1900 | 130,000 | 82,000 |
| 1901 | 168,000 | 90,000 |
| 1902 | 251,000 | 130,000 |
| 1903 | 307,000 | 154,000 |
| 1904 | 278,000 | 130,000 |
| 1905 | 296,000 | 155,000 |
| 1906 | 271,000 | 145,000 |
| 1907 | 352,000 | 150,000 |
| 1908 | 289,000 | 145,000 |
| 1909 | 216,000 | 150,000 |
| 1910 | 192,000 | 150,000 |
| 1911 | 303,000 | 150,000 |
| 1912 | 332,000 | 155,000 |
| 1913 | 271,000 | 155,000 |
| 1914 | 255,000 | 170,000 |
| **Total** | **3,775,000** | **2,258,000** |

The design of the medal which the DOG had commissioned to celebrate the Silver Wedding Anniversary of the Imperial Couple in 1906 proudly includes on the reverse not only cuneiform, but also hieroglyphs and Hebrew letters, signalling the independent enterprises of the society (Fig. 7).

Finally, it should be stressed that from the very first, the DOG clearly did not rely solely upon financially strong representatives of the German middle class, but also on the state and the monarchy. It was this public-private partnership which enabled the DOG to carry out such far-reaching and long lasting excavation and research projects until the outbreak of the First World War.

Fig. 7: Medal of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society), issued on the occasion of the silver wedding anniversary of the Imperial couple, February 27th, 1906, vs. Wilhelm II and Auguste Victoria in portrait, rec. Logo of the German Oriental Society, bronze. Medalist: Georges Morin.

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Cancik-Kirschbaum, E., and Th.L. Gertzen (eds), *Der Babel-Bibel-Streit und die Wissenschaft des Judentums. Beiträge einer internationalen Konferenz vom 4. bis 6. November 2019 in Berlin*. Investigatio Orientis 6. Münster 2021.

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Fig. 4 Published in the Survey of Western Palestine (left), and in Underground Jerusalem.

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Fig. 1 Jüdisches Museum Berlin, Sammlung Otto Rubensohn, 2006/227/0.

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