

ASTENE BULLETIN



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ASTENE Bulletin

Number 85 : Autumn 2021

Editor: Robert G. Morkot

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Cover Illustration:

Frederick Leighton, *Temple of Philae*. See
article by Pola Durajska

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We welcome articles, queries, replies and
other related matters from members and
interested readers. Please send
contributions to the Editor Robert Morkot:
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ASTENE NEWS AND EVENTS

Bulletin

The Bulletin relies on contributions, so do please send them. **New e-mail:**

chair.bulletin.astene@gmail.com

ASTENE seeks a new Bulletin Editor to take over during the year.

ASTENE AGM 2021

Our thanks to the Members who attended the virtual AGM. There have been a number of changes to the Committee, and some members are undertaking two jobs until the next AGM (at the Conference). Robert Morkot is Chair and Bulletin Editor; Gemma Masson is Secretary and Treasurer; Daniele Salvoldi is webmaster; newly elected member Chris Elliott has kindly offered to take on some of the duties of Reviews Editor; Aidan Dodson has kindly taken on Membership Secretary; Rosalind Janssen and Ines Aščerić-Todd continue. Dr Chris Elliott was elected to the Committee; Dr Kathleen Sheppard (Missouri) has been co-opted.

We are very grateful to the outgoing Committee members who have served their terms (in some cases longer than their terms) and given much (unpaid) time to their various jobs: Carey Cowham, Emmet Jackson, and Tessa Baber. Also to those who have resigned: Maddie Boden, Lauren Bruce.

We are very grateful to Professor Paul Starkey for his work as Chair and especially to Dr Jaromir Malek for his many years of service as President.

ASTENE Online Lectures 2022

Three lectures are planned for the Winter season.

The first talk by Alice Bitto (Sapienza Università di Roma) will be on Thursday, January 13: "Felice De Vecchi and Gaetano Osculati: Persia Through the Eyes of Two Italian Travellers". The Eventbrite link was sent in the Newsletter.

The second talk by Omar Coloru (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro) will be on Thursday, February 10: "Louise de la Marnierre: A French Woman at the Qajar Court and the First Travelogue of Fars Intended for Iranians".

ASTENE Postgraduate Conference 2021

The first conference was a success. Our thanks to the organiser Maddie Boden for the huge amount of work that she put into this initiative. Two papers from the conference are published here.

ASTENE Conference Bristol 2022

The postponed ASTENE Biannual Conference is scheduled to take place the weekend of 23/24 July 2022, at Wills Hall, University of Bristol. It is firmly booked-in, although like everything nowadays is dependent on developments in the COVID pandemic. It is intended that booking forms and calls for papers will be issued in the January. Provision is being made for an on-line meeting in case yet another cancellation is forced on us.

Robert Hay Seminar Duns Castle

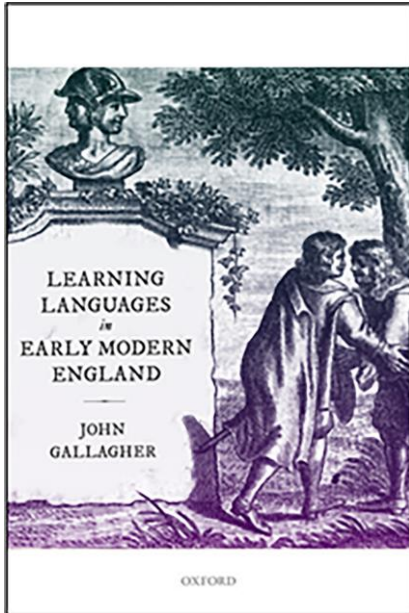
The Postponed conference is planned to go ahead April 10 – 12, 2022: see website for details.

TIOL – Sarajevo Conference

Travellers in Ottoman Lands: The Balkans, Anatolia and Beyond. Sarajevo 24 – 26 August 2022. Everything is prepared for the Conference to go ahead. More in the next Bulletin and see the website.



REVIEWS



‘A veritable Babel’: language, knowledge, identity and power. *Learning Languages in Early Modern England*, by John Gallagher, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, 288 pp, illustrated, £60 (hardback) ISBN 9780198837909.

There can be few ASTENE members who have not, at some time or other, wondered about the linguistic competence (or incompetence) of travellers. Terms such as dragomans crop up constantly, and the travellers themselves, to whatever extent they were dependent on these interpreters and fixers, must have known that to acquire some knowledge of other languages would help to protect them from all sorts of difficulties and pitfalls. Though *Learning Languages in Early Modern England* is largely about western European languages, it will be of great interest to ASTENE readers, since it raises questions about power and identity that apply equally to travellers venturing further afield. For example, in 1670, Richard Lassels wrote that if a traveller hired servants who spoke the local language when they did not, there could be unintended consequences, in that the servants ‘by reason of their prerogative of language, which their masters want at first, [...] they

come often times to be too bold and sawcy with them’ (p.193): this may recall some dragomans.

Gallagher begins by reminding us that since ‘English in the early modern period was the little-known and little-regarded language of a small island out on the edge of Europe’ (p.1), people at all levels of society had good reasons to learn to speak other tongues. They did not, in any case, live in a monolingual environment. In some areas there were native speakers of Celtic languages and one might also encounter visitors and refugees. England is described as ‘abuzz with a veritable Babel of tongues’ (p.2). Language-learning went on in a wide variety of contexts. In this period, the first books printed in Arabic appeared in England and chairs of Oriental languages were founded in the universities. There were also a great number of informal opportunities for learning. Gallagher refers to George Buck, who wrote that in the early seventeenth century, in the ‘third universitie’ of London, it was possible to learn Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, ‘Morisco’, Turkish and ‘Sclavonian’ alongside European languages (p.16). Of course, it is also the case that Italian, or rather a pidgin version with Spanish and Arabic words mixed in, as a *lingua franca* of trade, was of immense importance throughout the Mediterranean (p.66-7). Gallagher describes a manuscript collection of Italian phrases (British Library Harleian MS 3492), written by ‘B.S.’ and dedicated to Levant Company officials who ‘have always been justly esteemed the proper Patrons of the Italian Language which is soe useful to their Factorys in the Levant’ (p.67). Much of this manuscript was written under the roof of Dudley North in Constantinople, a man who is also known to have compiled a Turkish dictionary, though unfortunately, according to his brother and biographer Roger, it was ‘pirated out of his house and he could never find who had it’.¹

Throughout, Gallagher stresses that language-learning was about listening and speaking as much as about reading and writing. A large part of the book is a close study of manuals used as text-books by learners. The author argues that ‘the early modern

ideal of linguistic competence was fundamentally a social one, and [...] we should think less about one single ideal of competence, and more about multiple, variable, situational, social competences' (p.100). As a small example of this we know that Edward Pococke, first appointee to the chair of Arabic at Oxford, was able to make the Moroccan ambassador to England laugh by making a joke in Arabic. In a very hierarchical world, it was particularly important to speak in the right register, with respect not only to the subject of the conversation but also to the social status of the speakers. In this context, it would have been interesting to see Gallagher's take on the very curious work of 1660 attributed to George Fox, *A Battle-door*, which lays out the formal and informal forms of address in a whole range of languages.

Given that we have no aural or oral evidence, Gallagher has skilfully reconstructed a multi-faceted world of language-learning, and makes a strong plea for the importance of this field for historians: 'Thinking about soldiers in multilingual armies, polyglot merchants and factors, and spies for whom language was a tool of the trade (or an instrument of disguise) has the potential to transform how we think about the histories of war, trade, empire, diplomacy, and politics' (p.210). He raises questions about how we can use the different kinds of evidence to understand the processes and contexts of language-learning in the period. And finally, he reminds us of the relevance of his arguments in these post-Brexit days, when we are going to have to learn all over again how, from a small island on the edge of Europe, we can speak and listen to the world.

My only criticisms are minor ones: I found the bar charts, with their differently-shaded bars, very difficult to read and there are some unacceptably long strings of page numbers in the index. However, I strongly recommend this book, which is beautifully written as well as full of interest.

Lucy Pollard

Dr Lucy Pollard is a former Reviews Editor of the Bulletin.

¹ North, Roger, ed., A. Jessopp, *The lives of... Francis North... Dudley North; and...John North*, vol. 2, London (George Bell), 1890., 51-2.

The Architectural Embodiment of Europe in Egypt

Shepherd's of Cairo: The Birth of the Oriental Hotel, by Tarek Ibrahim, Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2019, 116 pp, illustrated, €49 (hardback). ISBN 978-3-95490-368-9.

Shepherd's in Cairo was always more than just a place for travellers to stay, as this new study by Tarek Ibrahim recognises. Its site had previously been occupied by the palace of the Mamluk leader Mohammed Bey al Alfi, used by Napoleon as his headquarters during the French occupation of Egypt, and subsequently by Khedive Muhammad Ali as a language school. Its eponymous founder was granted permission by Khedive Abbas to build the hotel's first incarnation in 1849, and it was completely rebuilt in 1891. A meeting place for expatriates and the local elite, it was used as the British HQ during the First and Second world wars before finally being burned to the ground during riots in 1952. As the author notes, it was 'the embodiment of Egyptian politics from Napoleon to Nasser' (p.18).

Despite this prominence, however, its almost total destruction meant that apart from views of the exterior and its famous terrace, and a few images of its lobby, there was virtually no record of its architecture and interiors. Even its architect was unknown, although it had been incorrectly attributed to the English architect and archaeologist Somers Clark. This book finally provides much of that missing information. Originating in MA and doctoral theses by Ibrahim, it is based on every researcher's dream: a previously unexplored archive of primary source material. In this case, working drawings, photographs, correspondence and other material from the estate of the hotel's architect, the German expatriate Johann Adam Rennebaum. This material had been tracked down through an 1895 guide booklet published by the hotel, sold on eBay, and was later supplemented by more material held by Rennebaum's descendants.

Sold by Shepherd in 1860 to the hotelier Philip Zech, the original building was replaced in 1891 by a huge new one. A series of subsequent redesigns and additions, including an entire extra storey, are well reconstructed in the book from often limited

evidence. The building mixed European, Islamic, and Pharaonic styles, and a variety of specific sources for these have been adeptly identified. For Pharaonic elements they range from the *Denkmaeler* of Richard Lepsius via illustrations in the Baedeker *Guide to Egypt*, to Owen Jones's *The Grammar of Ornament*, and for 'Moorish' and Arabic elements Julius Franz Pasha's *Die Baukunst des Islam* (The Architecture of Islam).

These elements, of course, can be considered primarily from an architectural perspective and one section of the book is entitled 'Style, Quotation, Replica or Pastiche?'. In another section, the use of Pharaonic and Islamic styles during the nineteenth century at Expositions, World Fairs and the Neues Museum in Berlin are employed as comparisons, reflecting among other things the relative interest in and status of these styles outside Egypt. Their use in Shephard's was not only an architectural choice, but also reflected the role of this hotel and others like it as an 'embodiment of European involvement in Egypt' (p.13).

Here, the book adopts a somewhat equivocal position. Because of the archival material, it can demonstrate that rather than being intended to accurately reproduce specific models or prototypes, the 'exotic' elements of Shephard's were constrained by the functional structure of the building as a whole and the use of painted rather than carved decoration by cost and practicality. It also usefully suggests that the transfer to the Hilton in Cairo of the role of Shephard's as a social nexus, rather than to the new hotel bearing the Shephard name, reflected a shift from British to US power. However, as well as briefly invoking Edward Said's *Orientalism*, the book also suggests that 'Shephard's and other grand hotels in the Near East would seem to fit the model of the hyperreal as described by... Umberto Eco, Jean Baudrillard, and Michel Foucault' (p.102).

Defined in a quote from Eco as a "substitute for reality, something even more real" (p.102), we are also told that an important component of it 'is the seamless blending of the authentic with the reproduction in order to prevent the viewer/visitor from distinguishing between the two' (p.103). An anecdote quoted from Nina Nelson's book *Shephard's Hotel*, where a wife, asked what she

wanted to see first in Cairo, allegedly replied "'Why! I thought Shephard's was Cairo'" (p.88) is returned to as possibly 'point[ing] to an audience that was unaware of or uninterested in distinguishing the real from the copy – or believed the copy and original were the same' (p.102). While the anecdote is not read as an ironic comment on the centrality of Shephard's to the expatriate colonial communities another secondary source, Pennethorne Hughes's *While Shephard's Watched*, is immediately referred to as suggesting 'another reception and reaction to the architecture that recognized and criticized the spaces as being imitations' (p.102).

Whether equivocal or balanced, this attitude to the cultural theories of Eco and others does not prevent this being an extremely valuable and well written title and a very useful contribution to the literature on the role of architecture in the transcultural dialogue between Europe and Egypt. Although relatively short, it is extremely well produced, with good paper quality and binding and is extensively illustrated throughout from a variety of sources. There is a useful bibliography, but no index.

Chris Elliott

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ARTICLES

‘By the early train to Ephesus’: Locating the Railway in Alexander Svoboda’s *The Seven Churches of Asia* (1869)

Alexandra Solovyev

In 1869, the London publishing firm Sampson Low, Son, and Marston published *The Seven Churches of Asia*, written and illustrated by the photographer Alexander Svoboda. The book is a historical and descriptive travel account written by Svoboda of his journey around the Seven Churches in Western Anatolia, then a region of the Ottoman Empire. The Seven Churches of Asia, comprised of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, had long been a fixture of European pilgrimage and travel writing before the mid-nineteenth century. Since the sixteenth century, clerics, diplomats, and tourists from Europe had visited western Anatolia to view the ruins of the seven early Christian churches discussed in the Book of Revelation in the New Testament, producing a large body of travel literature focused on these sites.¹ What differentiates Svoboda’s travel account are the twenty full-page photographs interspersed among the publication’s text. These landscape and urban photographs, taken by Svoboda, were the first ever to be produced and published of the Seven Churches sites.

While broader European interest in the Seven Churches was great, travel to the sites had historically been restricted by the availability, accessibility, and cost of transport into the Anatolian interior. Tourists would need to rent horses, supplies, and personnel from Ephesus or Smyrna before embarking into the heartland for weeks at a time. With the advent of the railways in the mid-nineteenth century, the landscape of travel drastically changed. The first two railway lines in Ottoman Anatolia were constructed by private British firms: the Ottoman Railway Company and the Smyrna Cassaba Railway, to be referred to henceforth as the ORC and SCR, respectively. After a myriad of

scandals and delays, the ORC officially opened its line from Smyrna to Ayasoluk, the Ottoman village outside Ephesus, in 1862.² The ORC opened the remainder of its line from Smyrna to Aydın in 1866, the same year the SCR completed its line from Smyrna to Kasaba. By 1878, John Murray’s *Handbook for travellers in Turkey in Asia* could discuss how railways had changed the itineraries of travellers visiting the Seven Churches sites,³ and, by 1895, could claim that all Seven Churches, except Pergamos, were easily accessible by rail.⁴

The publication of Svoboda’s *The Seven Churches of Asia* in 1869, thereby, marks a transitional period in the history of travel to the Seven Churches sites. Both its photographs and text, produced in the 1860s, are representative of a historical moment when the railways in Western Anatolia were beginning to be used for travel, but before they were a ubiquitous form of transportation for British tourists visiting the region. In its capacity as both a travelogue, dictating Svoboda’s experiences traveling around the Seven Churches, and as a guidebook, offering its readers an itinerary to follow, the publication presents a vision of how the ORC and the SCR ought to have been understood by its Victorian audience on the precipice of more widespread British tourism to the Ottoman Empire. Focusing in on Svoboda’s text, this paper will demonstrate that the railway in *The Seven Churches of Asia* serves to represent British soft power in the Ottoman Empire. I will complicate this narrative by considering Alexander Svoboda’s personal and professional connections to the railway to argue that it was these connections that grounded his favourable representation of the railway.

The Seven Churches of Asia is divided into three primary sections: an introduction written by English clergyman and Biblical scholar Reverend H. B. Tristram, Svoboda’s personal travel account, and an itinerary detailing Svoboda’s route. The itinerary includes a timetable delineating the amount of time it would take the traveller to journey from one location to another, either by horse or by rail. In addition to chapters on all Seven Churches, subsections are included on places of ‘special or classical interest.’⁵

The publication's twenty albumen silver print photographs are individually mounted throughout the book.

The narrative in *The Seven Churches of Asia* follows Svoboda's journey from Smyrna, the imminent port city of Western Anatolia, through the Seven Churches and adjacent sites of interest, and through the return journey back to Smyrna. The photographs in the book follow the same chronological path, documenting the journey from the point of departure. Both the textual and photographic narratives begin in Smyrna. Having arrived in the city by sea, Svoboda describes the shock of the European stranger, upon going on shore, to find that the 'civilized Turks, Greeks, and Armenians' of the city 'have adopted European manners and dress.'⁶ Such description is followed shortly thereafter by Svoboda's claim that Smyrna 'will in short time be a formidable rival of Constantinople' as a result of its 'present rate of progress.'⁷ This progress was instigated, in part, by the advantageous position of the city as the singular export location for products from the Anatolian interior. Helping to capitalize on this export was the railway, namely the ORC and SCR lines that had been constructed out of Smyrna, one running to Ephesus and Aydın, the other running to Magnesia and Kasaba. In this, Svoboda's first mention of the railways, they are equated with progress, modernity, and the improvement of Smyrna's economic status as a rising port city.

Having prepared for his journey in Smyrna, the tourist, Svoboda writes in the itinerary, can depart Smyrna by the early train for Ephesus via Ayasoluk around 06:30.⁸ Leaving Ayasoluk by the early train at 09:30 the following day, the tourist could arrive at Aydın by noon. Aydın was the final stop on the ORC's Smyrna-Aydın line, which had opened in 1866, suggesting that Svoboda had travelled on the newly opened line between 1866 and 1868. Continuing eight hours by horse past Aydın, the traveller would reach the town of Nasly, where Mr. Victor Mirzan, an agent of the ORC, would kindly show the traveller any requisite attention and advise as to any difficulties he might encounter going forward.⁹ Mr. Mirzan's nationality is not mentioned in the text; rather his only identifiable and thereby relevant identity is that an ORC agent. Svoboda references further ORC agents of unknown

nationality at Denisly and Sarakeni, who might similarly advise travellers. The mention of the agents engenders two primary understandings for Svoboda's audience of the role of the ORC inside Anatolia. The first is the perception of railway agents as sources of aide and safety. Peppered around Svoboda's text and itinerary are mentions of difficult environmental conditions and Zeibeck robbers; that is, warnings of threats and potential dangers. The railway personnel, as representatives of both the railway and the British-owned firm, are imagined as sources of stability and familiarity. The second understanding of the agents' role is the expansion of the ORC. Stationed in small towns, far from the existing railway lines, the agents function as representatives of future lines, the extension of the railway's economic grasp into the interior, and British intervention in the Ottoman Empire.

A similar sentiment is echoed in Svoboda's description of the route from Sardis to Kasaba, the final stop on the SCR's Smyrna-Kasaba line. Svoboda suggests that instead of returning to Sardis, 'it is better to pass the night at the Kassaba Railway Station, or near it, so as to be in time for the early train to Magnesia.'¹⁰ Much like the railway employee, the railway station serves as a place of stability, a familiar and reliable destination for the British traveller having spent six days on horseback.

The existing lines of the SCR in late 1860s could only accommodate the journey from Kasaba to Magnesia and from Menemen to Smyrna. It is thus only on the final section from Menemen to Smyrna that the tourist is able to complete his journey by rail. Approaching Smyrna after twenty-four days on horseback, Svoboda writes, the traveller will be cheered, 'finding himself again in a seaport, where he can communicate with his friends and with the world far away, take a little rest, and start again in any direction he pleases...'¹¹ In this final description of the railway, it is connoted as a path out from the rural interior back into the connected world. Guiding the traveller out from the unknown and inaccessible, the railway line leads back to the familiar, the comfortable, and the global.

It is through these descriptions of the railway journeys, personnel, and stations available to Svoboda in the late-1860s that we can begin to

construct a comprehensive understanding of how the author intended the railways to be perceived. Ultimately, the railways are a source of safety and familiarity for the British tourist, a marker of modernity and connection to an increasingly global world. Beyond this, however, I argue that the railways are intended to function as emblems of British soft power in the Ottoman Empire. As Ronald E. Robinson has argued, railways not only served as servants but as generators of empire.¹² Although the politics of British Prime Ministers Palmerston and Gladstone both supported Ottoman territorial unity, the shift from Palmerston to Gladstone was accompanied by a more adversarial view of the Ottoman Empire by the late 1860s.¹³ Support for the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire by both the British government and British public may have contributed to a broader interest in British control in the region. As British engines and rails extended into Ottoman domains, with personnel stationed in the interior, the railways could be perceived as creating the material conditions for the British to exert more influence on the Ottoman Empire from within. For an armchair traveller or a prospective tourist reading *The Seven Churches of Asia*, the railway's sense of safety and familiarity would be grounded in the presence and power of the British.

At face value, Svoboda's decision to portray the railways in this manner could be attributed to a political or expansionist agenda. Elevating, if not informal imperialism then the efficacy of British intervention, it would appear that Svoboda's favourable perception of the railways is tied to their political significance. However, this narrative is complicated if we take the author's personal and professional background into consideration. Locating the railway in Alexander Svoboda's own life, a more nuanced understanding of his favourable perception of the railways begins to emerge.

Alexander Svoboda was born in Baghdad in 1826 to a mother from a prominent local Armenian Christian family and a Hungarian father who worked as the regional agent of a Bohemian crystal firm and the East India Company. First studying painting in Baghdad and then in Budapest, Svoboda then moved around Venice, Rome, and Florence studying painting and exhibiting his work. He became an Academician of the Academy of Venice likely

between 1845 and 1849, before moving to Bombay in 1850. It was likely in India that he learned to photograph. By 1857, Svoboda had returned to Baghdad, where he photographed ancient sites along the Tigris, before opening a photography studio in Smyrna in 1858.¹⁴

Alexander Sandor Svoboda.

Image from Levantine Heritage

(<http://www.levantineheritage.com/svoboda.htm>)



Svoboda's move to Smyrna, the primary Anatolian port and centre of rising economic activity, was likely dictated by the search for new audiences and markets. The increased number of European communities living in Smyrna affiliated with the Ottoman Railway Company, whose concession had been granted in 1856, as well as the promise of heightened European tourism due to the railways, may have had an effect on Svoboda's decision to move to the city.

The move to Smyrna did, in fact, expand his audience and renown. In addition to producing *cartes de visite*, portraits, and photographs of ancient and archaeological sites, Svoboda was commissioned to photograph official events, including the visit of Sultan Abdülaziz to Smyrna in 1863.¹⁵ During his visit, the Sultan inspected the newly constructed line of the ORC and travelled via train from Smyrna to Ephesus with members of the royal family and high-ranking railway officers, including a representative of the ORC to the Ottoman state, Hyde Clarke.¹⁶ The

Sultan was reportedly pleased by the images Svoboda produced after having personally spent time with the artist examining the photographs.¹⁷

It was perhaps during the preparations for the Sultan's visit that Alexander Svoboda became acquainted with Hyde Clarke, or perhaps it was due to an already existing personal relationship that Svoboda was recommended for the commission. Certainly by July of 1866, Clarke had commissioned Svoboda to photograph a number of ancient monuments in Western Anatolia.¹⁸ Outside his official position an ORC representative to the Ottoman government, Clarke was a keen antiquarian and amateur archaeologist, contributing his observations and research on Anatolian archaeology to publications including the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. To support his arguments, Clarke sent Svoboda's photographs to the Society, whose editors, while not publishing the images, did acknowledge them as evidence of Clarke's historical claims.¹⁹

On 7 July 1866, Clarke wrote to the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* that Mr. Svoboda had proposed to him the publication of a joint work.²⁰ While Clarke hoped that it would focus on Magnesia on the Meander, no joint work was ever produced. Clarke went on to relay that Svoboda has also taken fourteen views of Ephesus for a publication proposed by John T. Wood, an ORC railway station designer who had secured funding from the British Museum to excavate Ephesus.²¹ Wood would become the first European to do substantial archaeological excavations at the ancient site and go on to publish his *Discoveries at Ephesus* in 1877.²² Like the proposed publication with Hyde Clarke, the joint work between Wood and Svoboda never came to fruition.

Michèle Hannoosh has convincingly argued that it was after these joint publications failed to materialize that Svoboda conceived of *The Seven Churches* project. The photographs he compiled for the unrealized projects with Clarke and Wood, as well as his broader archive of images of archaeological sites in Western Anatolia, would serve as the basis for the publication.²³ At the same time as these failed ventures served as groundwork for the publication, I argue that it was Svoboda's personal and professional relationships with Hyde Clarke, J. T. Wood, and perhaps other railway personnel that informed the

way he represented the railway. Svoboda's favourable representation of the railways is not grounded merely in its political significance; rather, it is filtered through the individual connections Svoboda developed with railway personnel, through the experience of living in Smyrna, the centre of British railway construction in the Ottoman Empire. For Svoboda, the railway company was a patron as well as a source of British soft power, and I argue his positive perception was grounded more in personal rapport than in expansionist ambition.

In 1867, Svoboda moved from Smyrna to London, a move that was likely made with the aide and support of the British community at Smyrna. The following year, he showcased his photographs at the rooms of the Arundel Society, before publishing *The Seven Churches* in 1869.²⁴ After the book's publication, Svoboda seemingly concluded his career as a photographer. Little is known about what transpired in his life and career over the next thirty years. A letter from Hyde Clarke to *The Athenaeum* in October of 1892 mentioned that Svoboda was now in Cairo, suggesting that the men or their circles of connection had kept in contact over the years.²⁵

I conclude with an anecdote from *The Seven Churches of Asia*, Svoboda's only mention of the railway that differs in tone from the remainder of the publication. In his chapter on Sardis, Svoboda laments the desecration of the Temple of Cybele by Anatolian inhabitants who sell ancient fragments at local markets. He writes, 'the destruction will be still more rapid when the railway in a year or two passes by Sardis to Philadelphia, and the country becomes more explored and the traffic easier.'²⁶ While elsewhere the railway had been associated with stability and progress, here it is connotated with the desecration of ancient sites and the visitors responsible for the destruction. Though these visitors could be local inhabitants, it appears that Svoboda is in fact implicating foreign tourists, the prospective audience of his publication. At the same time that he views the railways as a source of security, soft power, and economic prosperity, they pose a threat to the ancient structures that Svoboda built his career photographing. Representing British influence, personal amity, and the risks afforded by this new technology, Svoboda offers a complicated and sometimes contradictory vision of the British

railways in Ottoman Anatolia on the eve of expanded tourism to the region.

Notes

¹ On the travel accounts of European visitors to the Seven Churches of Asia see I. Vingopoulou, 'Travelers to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor,' J. C. Davis (trans.), *Archaeologists & Travelers in Ottoman Lands*, accessed 17 January 2021, http://www.ottomanlands.com/sites/default/files/pdf/Vingopoulou_Essay.pdf.

² 'Opening of the Ottoman Smyrna and Aidin Railway to Ephesus,' *Smyrna Mail*, I, 1, 23 September 1862, 2-3.

³ J. Murray, *Handbook for travellers in Turkey in Asia including Constantinople, the Bosphorus, plain of Troy, isles of Cyprus, Rhodes, Smyrna, Ephesus, and the routes to Persia, Baghdad*, London, John Murray, 1878, cited in E. Cobb, 'Railway Crossings: Encounters in Ottoman Lands', unpub. PhD thesis, Cornell University, 2018, 182.

⁴ C. Wilson (ed.), *Handbook for travellers in Asia Minor, Transcaucasia, Persia, etc*, London, John Murray, 1895, quoted in Cobb, 'Railway Crossings,' 185.

⁵ Rev. H. B. Tristram, M.A. L.L.D. F.R.S., intro., in A. Svoboda, *The Seven Churches of Asia: with Twenty Full-Page Photographs Taken on the Spot, Historical Notes, and Itinerary*, London, Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1869, vii.

⁶ A. Svoboda, *The Seven Churches of Asia: with Twenty Full-Page Photographs Taken on the Spot, Historical Notes, and Itinerary*, London, Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1869, 6.

⁷ Svoboda 1869, 7.

⁸ Svoboda 1869, 62.

⁹ Svoboda 1869, 65.

¹⁰ Svoboda 1869, 71.

¹¹ Svoboda 1869, 74-75.

¹² R. E. Robinson, 'Introduction: Railway Imperialism,' in C. B. Davis and K. E. Wilburn Jr. (eds.), *Railway Imperialism*, Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1991, 2.

¹³ For British official policy and public perception of the Ottoman Empire, see D. Steele, 'Three British Prime Ministers and the Survival of the Ottoman Empire, 1855-1902,' *Middle Eastern Studies* L, 1, 2014, 43-60; and D. Gürpınar, 'The Rise and Fall of Turcophilism in Nineteenth-Century British

Discourses: Visions of the Turk "Young" and "Old,"' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* XXXIX, 3, 2012, 364.

¹⁴ For a comprehensive history of Svoboda's life and career, see M. Hannoosh, 'The Art of Wandering: Alexander Svoboda and Photography in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean,' in E. A. Fraser (ed.), *The Mobility of People and Things in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Art of Travel*, New York, Routledge, 2019, 131-151.

¹⁵ 'Visit of the Sultan,' *Smyrna Mail* I, 32, 28 April 1863, 3.

¹⁶ 'Visit of the Sultan', 2-4.

¹⁷ 'Local News,' *Smyrna Mail* I, 35, 19 May 1863, 3.

¹⁸ 'Proceedings at New Haven. October 24 and 25, 1866,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, IX, 1868-1871, ix.

¹⁹ H. Clarke, 'On the Assyro-Pseudo-Sesostris,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* VIII, 1866, 381. Clarke also sent his arguments about the Assyro-Pseudo-Sesostris, accompanied by a Svoboda photograph, to the New-York Historical Society. New York, New-York Historical Society, Hyde Clarke papers, 1863-1865, 4113077-10.

²⁰ 'Proceedings at New Haven,' viii.

²¹ 'Proceedings at New Haven,' viii.

²² J. T. Wood, F.S.A. *Discoveries at Ephesus: Including the Sites and Remains of the Great Temple of Diana*, Boston, James R. Osgood and Co., 1877.

²³ Hannoosh, 'The Art of Wandering,' 139-140.

²⁴ For reviews of the exhibition see 'Photographs From the Seven Churches of Asia,' *The Art Journal* LXXIV, February 1868, 29; and 'Photographs of the Remains of the Seven Churches of Asia and the Adjacent Sites of Interest,' *The Building News* XIV, 27, December 1867, 900.

²⁵ Hannoosh, 'The Art of Wandering,' 145.

²⁶ Svoboda, *The Seven Churches of Asia*, 42.

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Frederic Leighton's *Temple of Philae* Revisited

Pola Durajska

The lure of Egypt to nineteenth-century British artists, such as David Roberts, John Frederick Lewis, or Edward Lear, has enjoyed extensive scholarship to date. In addition to the painters immediately recognised for a production concerned with Egyptian culture and landscape, the only peripherally discussed open-air work of Frederic Leighton (1830-1896) deserves a closer look. Leighton's reception of the Nile and its landmarks is relevant as he was a major historical figure, being a widely influential Victorian painter and President of the Royal Academy from 1878. Precisely a decade earlier, in October 1868, Leighton set out from Cairo on a monthly voyage up the Nile, the island of Philae being his final stop. Recommended by the Prince of Wales, Leighton was lent a steamboat by the Viceroy Ismail Pasha, the Ottoman ruler of Egypt.¹

This journey resulted in a series of open-air sketches unparalleled in the artist's oeuvre. Leighton's typically Nilean mode of transportation, a boat, was central to his thematic focus in Egypt for it determined the passing views of the river's banks as Leighton's primary experience. To complement his

oil studies, he kept a detailed travel journal in which he painted vivid mental images of the landscapes and atmospheric phenomena encountered. Leighton's adventure undoubtedly galvanized his interest in Egyptian legacy, and between 1885 and 1894 he even provided regular support for the Egypt Exploration Fund.²

The heat-stricken atmosphere of Egypt, and its landscape, of which the ancient sites were an inextricable part, unleashed Leighton's perception of nature both pure and transformed through the lens of recent developments in physics and geology, as well as his anthropological understanding of ancient cultures. As I argue, his oil sketch of the temple of Philae serves as a primary example of the ways in which his scientific interests and active interactions with the leading intellectual circles manifested themselves in his open-air art (Figure 1).

Leighton's *The Temple of Philae*, depicted earlier also by David Roberts and Edward Lear, is one of his few Egyptian oil sketches which have enjoyed some, albeit not extensive, scholarship.³ It depicts a fragmentary view of the temple of Isis complex located on the island of Philae in Aswan (Figure 2), before it was relocated to the nearby Agilkia Island in the 1960s due to the construction of the Aswan dams. Despite the popularity of the temple site which dates

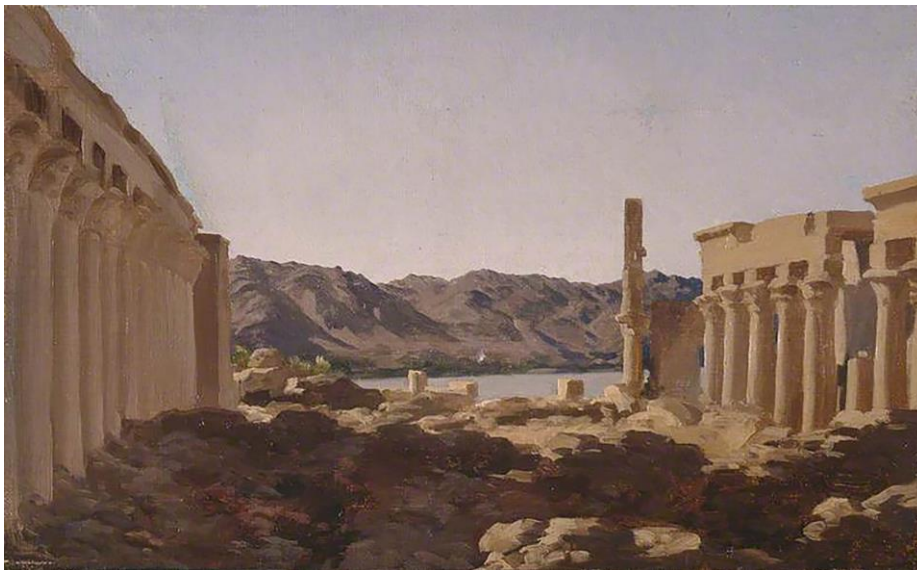


Figure 1.

Frederic Leighton,
The Temple of Philae,
1868. Oil on canvas, 18.7
x 29.3 cm.

Manchester Art Gallery,
Manchester (1934.416).

Image courtesy of
Manchester Art Gallery.

back to the fourth century BC, Leighton's initial impression of its surroundings was one of disenchantment: 'The scenery about Phylae has been spoken of as Paradise; I never saw anything less like my notion of paradise, and so far, therefore, I am disappointed. Original and strange it is, in a high degree.'⁴

In spite of this initial setback, the artist decided to paint a fragment of the site's colonnade forming the Outer Court, now engulfed in ruins, which overlooks the river and the mountains on the opposite bank.

Facing south, Leighton was deliberately turning away from the second pylon which leads to the temple of Isis, a landmark depicted by most other visiting artists. Leighton's bizarre reversal of traditional principles of structuring the landscape view around the architectural motifs, and the ostentatious rejection of the widely admired architectural wonders, are apparent when compared with the more conventional depictions.

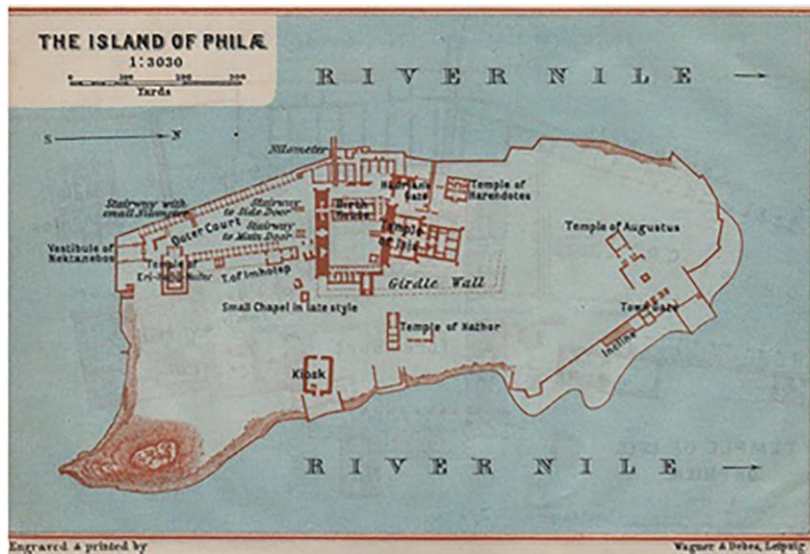


Figure 2. Baedeker's map of the Island of Philae. Reproduced in Karl Baedeker, *Egypt and the Sûdân: Handbook for Travellers* (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1914), 364.

An earlier vision of the Great Colonnade at Philae by Charles Barry already presents a more modern approach as it does not focus exclusively on the

second pylon, but incorporates also fragments of the extant colonnade and the unappealing rubble covering the ground (Figure 3). However, even Barry's view is the exact opposite of Leighton's, as he situated himself by the Nile and looked up towards the Pylon across the long outer court, thus completely omitting the context of the sacred river. Furthermore, as most open-air depictions of Philae, it is done in watercolour which allowed for a more precise rendition of architectural detail. Leighton, meanwhile, was not interested in such accuracy; his priorities lay in the effects of light and shade permeating both the man-made and the natural landscape.

Leighton painted from a spot in the outer court that is closer to the river than to the temple buildings. At the end of the right-wing colonnade springs a broken obelisk marking the entrance to the oldest part of the temple complex, Nectanebo's vestibule (Figure 4).⁵ This singular vertical element disrupts the monotony of the colonnade as much as it signposts the spatial recession and guides the eye into the distance.

Although Leighton depicted an ancient landmark, he included it only partially and with the purpose of framing the view with the colonnade rather than fitting the backdrop landscape around the architecture. This peculiar vantage point allows the viewer's eye to synthesise the ruins with the unfolding landscape. Leighton's attempt was to evoke the experience of the ancient worshippers, which is demonstrated also by his selection of the processional route leading from the river towards the temple. The crux of the cult of Isis, to which Philae was dedicated, was the Nile, and its thin but vivid strip is placed at the very centre of Leighton's composition, providing a connection between the sacred temple and the object of its devotion. This unorthodox take on the famed temple complex can be argued as an essentially anthropological sensitivity to the experience of the original builders and worshippers. Indeed, Leighton's interest in ancient cultures is testified not only by his knowledge of texts by leading British and German

archaeologists, but also by his active role in the British Museum from the 1870s onwards.⁶

the dramatic transition from the shaded foreground to the brightly lit distant planes, a sense of calculated



Figure 3. Charles Barry,
Great Colonnade in a Temple at Philae, c.
1817-1819.

Watercolour, dimensions unknown. Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton and Hove.

Image courtesy of Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove.

On the whole, The Temple of Philae follows closely the classical landscape painting formula, with ‘arbitrarily placed darks in the foreground, with sombre theatrical “wings” of trees or buildings to right and left’, and ‘the scene growing systematically paler towards a luminous horizon’.⁷ Flanking the composition with two rhythmical rows of columns guides the eye into the distance in a primarily linear perspective. On the other hand, Leonée Ormond has pointed out that Leighton did not attempt to correct the asymmetry of the rows of columns or the uneven structure of the ground,⁸ choosing to remain faithful to the observed scene.

Although the sun’s disc is absent from the painting, the distribution of shadows imply that it is illuminating the scene from the left. To balance out

continuity is introduced as the foreground rubble is only subtly divided from the distant mountains by the thin strip of the Nile, while the row of columns on the left is perfectly aligned with the mountain tops.

Deliberate artistic processing of the natural world was a sign of the artist’s virtuosity and intellectual abilities, understood as his co-creation rather than simply re-creation of nature. Such an individualistic interpretation of landscape is particularly evident in the treatment of the rocky ground. As both Charles Barry’s watercolour and the photograph taken in the 1850s demonstrate, in all the chaos of the rubble of the Outer Court stand out regularly cut blocks of granite. Meanwhile, in Leighton’s rendition the rocks lose their sharp edges, transitioning into fluid forms with softened contours. To provide counterbalance to the unorganised mass, Leighton enclosed it within the two rows of columns which dictate the rhythm of the composition. Half of the capitals on the left are completely blurred, which seems to attest for only superficial interest in the architectural forms.

Just as in Charles Barry’s picture, stone is the fibre of Leighton’s painting, yet perceived not through its use in the feats of ancient architecture, but through its natural states. The rocky ground occupies nearly half

of the canvas in question but is far from a picturesque motif – both in its nature and artistic execution. In fact, Leighton emphatically recorded in his travel diary ‘the ugliness of rocks’ in Philae.⁹ Another entry confirms his fascination with the seemingly unattractive aspects of the site:

‘Started for Phylae at half-past seven; arrived there at nine o’clock. The road leads through a broad tract of yellow sand (where, I believe, an arm of the Nile is supposed to have flowed in remote antiquity) along which on either side crop up, in wild, irregular fashion, bumps and hillocks and hills of dark red granite, covered in the most incredible confusion, and having rather a ludicrous appearance of having been left about and forgotten. You could get an excellent notion of the thing in miniature, by hastily spilling a coal-scuttle on a gravel walk and running away. [...] the same breaking up of the rocks into a myriad of fragments, putting all grandeur and massiveness of form out of the question [...].’¹⁰

Figure 4.

Félix Teynard,
*Ile de Fîleh (Philæ),
Édifice du Sud et
Partie de la Colonnade
Occidentale Vue du
Point, 1851–52*
(printed 1853–54).

Salted paper print from
paper negative, 23.7 x
30.5 cm.

Metropolitan Museum
of Art, New York.

Image courtesy of the
Metropolitan Museum
of Art, New York.



ochre colour in the sunlit areas, but also by the visual merging of the two in the more distant plane. Leighton achieved an effect of the undulating gravel consisting of ‘a myriad of fragments’ as virtually swallowing up the colonnade.

The softness of the igneous granite rocks in *The Temple of Philae*, trapped between the solid and the fluid states, captures the moment of transition from a functioning site to an abandoned ruin, as the superior force of nature claims back the stone used for the colonnade. Indeed, the wave-like horizontal brushstrokes of the foreground rocks suggest a flowing movement of form, corresponding to the flowing waters of the Nile. They emphatically lose their solidity, becoming more like waves, washing ‘ashore’ at the bases of the columns. This peculiar representation might be a deliberate reference to the notion of water as the force shaping landscape, which was prevalent in the nineteenth-century science and exemplified by Charles Lyell’s *Principles of*

Leighton correctly identified the rock in Philae as granite, and his decision to visually unite the ground and the columns of the temple is indeed accounted for by the fact that the granite of which the island is made up was used as the base for the entire temple complex.¹¹ The kinship of the rocky rubble and the colonnade is enhanced not only by the corresponding

Geology, reprinted frequently between 1830 and 1875. Leighton’s suggestion of the fluid dynamic of constant change could have also stemmed from the art of William Turner, which the critic John Ruskin famously analysed through the prism of geology, praising Turner for capturing the ongoing geological processes.

Leighton's dematerialisation of hard, solid stone in order to demonstrate more explicitly the 'unity of all matter' anticipates shortly the lecture 'On the Physical Basis of Life' by Thomas Henry Huxley of November 1868.¹² Huxley, a prominent biologist known as 'Darwin's bulldog', discussed the interconnectedness of all matter which theoretically allowed for the unlimited flux of various organic as well as inorganic elements. This discourse was not novel, nor was it endemic to professional scientific circles. In fact, these ideas largely formed the cultural debate of the time, entering numerous disciplines. Gillian Beer has pointed out that the ancient authors primarily associated with the notion of flux, Heraclitus, Lucretius, and Ovid, were commonly read in Victorian Britain, and that the transformative state of matter often pertained to the 'wavelike flow of energies', which became easily absorbed in general consciousness with the 'wave theory', as thermodynamics was described.¹³

In addition to being exposed to such notions through the wider cultural discourse, it has largely escaped scholarly attention that Leighton actively engaged with the leading scientific figures and institutions of his time. As President of the Royal Academy, from 1878 Leighton was also directly overseeing the selection of speakers for its annual banquets, including the choice of William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) in 1893.¹⁴ As early as in 1855, the artist was put forward to become a member of the prestigious Athenaeum Club which comprised representatives of various disciplines and was considered 'the organizational embodiment of cultural authority.'¹⁵ Among Leighton's seconders, current members who supported his candidacy, was not only Huxley but also John Tyndall, Professor of Physics at the Royal Institution.¹⁶ Over the years, both Huxley and Tyndall were often recruited to deliver scientific replies at the Royal Academy,¹⁷ always stressing the kinship of art and science.¹⁸

Previously unrecognised,¹⁹ Leighton's lifelong relationship with Tyndall in particular is a key to unlocking the artist's engagement with modern science, and its potential applications to his landscape art. Tyndall's work on energy physics, gases and optics gained him as much esteem as his glacial studies,²⁰ and his very successful publication, *Fragments of Science for Unscientific People* of

1871, was to be found in Leighton's library.²¹ Just as Huxley, Tyndall too was a notorious advocate of the idea of universal flux and as if with this concept in mind Leighton utilised the fluidity of the oil medium and the undulating brushstrokes to represent the unsolid state of things. The rhythmic repetition of the stone columns enclosing the 'sea' of rocks invokes also Tyndall's notion that the seemingly chaotic flow of matter in fact takes organised forms through the music-like modulations of the flux's rhythm.²²

Similarly, the sunburnt Egyptian landscape, with the transformative effects of the intensely warm atmosphere fluidising the sun-drenched rocks, embodies the principle of heat as a mode of motion. This was another topic with which Tyndall was closely identified, having published a cornerstone essay on the subject in 1863, five years before Leighton's trip to Egypt. The rhythm of the flanking colonnade contributes to the effect of a visual lullaby, further conveying the effect of 'infernal' heat, in Leighton's own words.²³ As the artist described the landscape in his journal: 'with the exception of a few palm trees and a sycamore or two, the same barrenness [...]. Here, at last I have found that absolutely clear crystalline atmosphere of which I had so often heard; I own it is not pleasing to me; a sky of burnished steel over a land of burning granite [...].'²⁴

Leighton achieved the effect of a hot atmosphere with long, upward brushstrokes of the cloudless sky imitating the heat vapour. He skilfully captured the heat palpating from the Egyptian firmament by unifying the colour palette of all elements of the painting. Leighton also depicted the characteristic gradation of the intensity of the clear sky's colour, from light blue to darker tones farther away from the horizon. These aspects of the firmament were again areas of Tyndall's expertise, which he was exploring in the 1860s.

All in all, Leighton's oil sketch of *The Temple of Philae* signifies the vision of Egypt as not only the ultimately exotic and romanticised destination for nineteenth-century artists, but also a fascinating environment to observe and study, where the forces of nature and the glorious feats of ancient architecture emerge in perfect unison.

Notes

¹ E. Barrington, *The Life, Letters and Work of Frederic Leighton*, II, London, George Allen, 1906, 132.

² Leighton's Coutts Bank account records, Leighton House Museum, London.

³ L. Ormond, 'The Temple of Philae', in S. Jones, et al., *Frederic Leighton 1830-1896*, London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1996, 153. See also K. Kilinski II, 'Leighton on the Nile', *The Burlington Magazine* 145, 1206, 2003, 646–48.

⁴ Barrington, *Life*, II, 151.

⁵ Ormond, 'The Temple of Philae', 153.

⁶ During Charles Thomas Newton's residency as Keeper of Antiquities between 1861 and 1886, Leighton played a salient role at the museum. He enjoyed an unofficial advisory capacity already in the 1870s, while in 1881 he was elected a member of the Standing Committee of Trustees, in which he remained active until his death: R. Asleson, 'On Translating Homer: Prehistory and Limits of Classicism', in T. Barringer and E. Prettejohn (eds.), *Frederic Leighton: Antiquity, Renaissance, Modernity*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1999, 75.

⁷ A. Callen, *Techniques of the Impressionists*, London, Tiger Books International, 1990, 18.

⁸ Ormond, 'The Temple of Philae', 153.

⁹ Barrington, *Life*, II, 154.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 150-151.

¹¹ 'Philae', Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed 12 May 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Philae-island-Egypt>.

¹² T. Cosslett, *Science and Religion in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 18.

¹³ G. Beer, *Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, 298.

¹⁴ 'Royal Academy Banquet', *Times*, 33939, 1 May 1893, 10.

¹⁵ R. Barton, "'Huxley, Lubbock, and Half a Dozen Others": Professionals and Gentlemen in the Formation of the X Club, 1851-1864', *Isis* 89, 3, 1998, 429.

¹⁶ See the Leighton's Certificate of Candidate for Ballot, reproduced in K. Bailey, 'Leighton – Public and Private Lives', *Apollo* 143, 408, 1996, 22.

¹⁷ R. Barton, *The X Club: Power and Authority in Victorian Science*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2018, 386-387.

¹⁸ 'Banquet at the Royal Academy', *Morning Post*, 30704, 6 May 1872, 2.

¹⁹ So far, only Matthew Potter has vaguely recognised that 'Leighton corresponded with leading members of London's intelligentsia', and that Tyndall was among the Royal Academy banquets: *The Inspirational Genius of Germany: British Art and Germanism, 1850-1939*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 2012, 110.

²⁰ See R. Jackson, *The Ascent of John Tyndall: Victorian Scientist, Mountaineer, and Public Intellectual*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018.

²¹ Christie, Manson and Woods, *Catalogue of the Valuable Library of the Right Hon. Lord Leighton of Stretton*, London: William Clowes, lot 117.

²² Beer, *Open Fields*, 298.

²³ Barrington, *Life*, II, 152.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 151-152.

Pola Durajska has recently completed her PhD in History of Art at the University of York where she remains an affiliate. She is currently curating an exhibition stemming from her doctoral project on 'Nature, Science, and Myth in the Landscape Art of Frederic Leighton (1830-1896)', scheduled for a 2023 opening in London and subsequently moving abroad.

For larger images see:

Sire Frederick Leighton, *The Temple of Philae*:-
<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-temple-of-philae-205420>

Sir Charles Barry, *Great Colonnade in a Temple at Philae*:-
<https://www.watercolourworld.org/painting/great-colonnade-temple-philae-tww0041c1>

Félix Teynard, *Ile de Fileh (Philæ), Édifice du Sud et Partie de la Colonnade Occidentale Vue du Point*:-
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/261892>

Pierre Loti's Middle Eastern Travel Accounts, The Levant, Persia and Turkey

G. Rex Smith

Pierre Loti (1850-1923) was a hugely popular French writer during his lifetime and beyond, although this popularity has never extended in the same way into the anglophone world. Leaving aside his novels, which were in general the product of his earlier years, his travel accounts were, with one or two exceptions, translated into English, but this certainly did not ensure a great readership within the English-speaking world.

Louis-Marie-Julien Viaud (he became Pierre Loti during his stay in Tahiti in 1872) was born in 1850 in Rochefort, in the Saintonge area (present-day Charente Maritime) of South-West France, the youngest child of a middle-class Protestant family. He spent his early years being educated within the family. He had a lonely childhood and was greatly spoiled by two aging grandmothers and an aging aunt who all live with the family and was doted on by his mother. He was twelve before he entered the local college. In 1866, he left Rochefort for Paris where he attended the Lycée Napoléon in order to take the French-Navy examinations, which he succeeded in passing, and he entered the naval school at Brest in Brittany in the autumn of 1867. He was for the next 42 years an officer in the French Navy and his naval duties and private visits took him literally to every continent of the world, with the exception of Australia.

His first novel was published in 1879 with the title *Aziyadé* and set in Constantinople which he had first visited in 1876. Other novels followed, perhaps the best known being *Pêcheur d'Islande* (1895), depicting the life of the Breton fishermen who fished in northern waters and their families, and *Ramuntcho* (1897), a love story set in Basque country on the Franco-Spanish border. Apart from his personal diary (*Journal intime*) which covers a lengthy period from his childhood through to 1918, Loti wrote extensively of his travels in North Africa, Egypt, Sinai and the Levant, Persia and India, apart from his journeys to the Far East and Indo-China. He was elected a member of the French Academy in 1891.

Loti was an artist and, wherever he went, he painted remarkable pictures of the landscape and the sky, the sea and the desert, the peoples he met, their behaviour and appearance, and the flora and fauna in his path. And his pen was not the only tool of his trade. Much encouraged from an early age by his sister Marie, herself an artist who encouraged and coached him, Loti was himself no mean wielder of the brush. He illustrated many of his writings, which in the first instance appeared in magazines and journals with his talented drawings and paintings. Added to that particular talent, he was also, for the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, an accomplished photographer.

Loti died in 1923 in Hendaye, in Basque country, on the Franco-Spanish border, and after a state funeral was buried in his mother's ancestral home in St-Pierre-d'Oléron on the Île d'Oléron, one of the Atlantic islands near the mouth of the Charente in South-West France and close to Rochefort, the town of his birth.

Three of his Middle Eastern travel works which are not as yet translated into English are briefly described below.

Loti in the Levant and Turkey (1894) – La Galilée and La Mosquée verte

Having been granted six months' unpaid leave, Loti set sail from Marseilles on 4 February 1894 for Alexandria. Taking in Cairo, Suez and the Red Sea, he passed through Sinai, to Aqaba and north to Jerusalem by camel and with a bedouin escort. His journeys as far as and including Jerusalem produced two books, both published in 1895, *Le désert* and *Jérusalem* (see Bibliography below). He left Jerusalem on 17 April 1894 and travelled on horseback to Beirut, via such important biblical sites as Nablus, Samaria, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, as well as making stops in Damascus and Baalbek. He left Beirut on 6 May 1894 and arrived in Constantinople on 12 May. 29-30 May found him in Bursa, the ancient capital of the Ottoman empire south of the Sea of Marmara, seemingly at the invitation of the French ambassador who had a residence in a village close to Bursa. In 1895, Loti also published *La Galilée*, the account of his journey from Jerusalem to Beirut, to which he added within its covers *La Mosquée verte*, a description of the

famous Green Mosque and an account of his stay in Bursa (see Bibliography below).

Loti was brought up in a strict Protestant family, in which Sunday services in the Rochefort temple and home bible readings were *de rigueur*. By the year 1894, he was clearly losing his faith and this private journey to the Holy Land was motivated in the main by his desperate attempts to recover it. Of course, places like Jerusalem and Damascus would always have attracted his wanderlust, but he hoped that, by treading in the footsteps of Jesus, some peace of mind might return. So, there is rarely a day goes by on this journey when he does not muse: Jesus must have stood here; Jesus must have taken in this particular view; Jesus must have dressed and looked like that. Alas, neither Jerusalem, nor the haunts of Jesus brought him spiritual respite.

As he moves northwards, Loti finds the mainly fertile countryside deserted, meeting only the occasional shepherd and ‘bedouin’, whereas in times gone by, there had been such frequent military activity. He recalls snippets of the long history of the area from earliest times, involving the Assyrians, the Romans, the Saracens and the Napoleonic armies. His interactions on his travels with the various religious groups are of great interest: Christians, Muslims, Jews, Samaritans and Druze.

Not surprisingly, Damascus and Baalbek attract Loti’s attention in particular. He arrives in the former to find the Umayyad mosque in ruins, after a fire a few months earlier in 1893. The two temples of Baalbek he describes in some detail, using the ruins as fine examples of what the ancient world could produce which can no longer be matched in our own era.

Loti in Persia and Muscat (1900) – Vers Ispahan and ‘En passant à Mascate’

In the period 17 April to 6 June 1900, Loti travelled in a private capacity from Bushire on the Persian Gulf, via Shiraz, Persepolis, Isfahan and Tehran, then on to Kashan, Qum, Qazvin and Rasht on the Caspian Sea, where he took a ship to Baku and on to Constantinople. He had come to the Gulf from India, where he had been in order to present a medal of distinction to the Maharajah of Travancore on behalf of the French Academy.

Loti makes it clear that his true motivation for undertaking the exhausting journey to Isfahan was his desire to see the town in the rose season. He appears to have read a version of the Persian poet Sa’di’s *Gūlistān* as a child and this provided his initial interest. The account of his two-day stay in Muscat on 5-6 April 1900, on his way up the Gulf to his Persian adventure, tells of the offer of the sultan to permit and indeed facilitate an expedition into the interior of Oman, and of his polite decline of the offer. This was, he says, because it was already April and he was anxious to see Isfahan in the rose season.

Loti recounts in daily sections this extraordinary trek on horseback. The only travel between the coast and the highlands is by night because of the fierce burning heat, and the consequent hardships for men, horses and pack mules are described in some detail. The filth and squalor of the primitive village caravanserais along the way also figure large in his writing. His enthusiasm for the past causes him to linger in Persepolis and his love of the remarkable Islamic architecture that he found in places like Shiraz and Isfahan is only tempered by the woeful condition of some of the buildings. He is fascinated by the religious festivals he encounters and describes them in some detail.

Once in the high mountains, the going becomes a little easier for Loti, his one French servant and his Persian muleteers and escorts. Once in Isfahan, he is forced to hire a carriage, as his French servant is too ill to suffer the rigours of the road further on horseback. His final destination is Rasht on the Caspian Sea, where he takes a Russian ship to Baku, and then on to Constantinople by land.

Loti on the Bosphorus and in Constantinople (1910 and 1913) – Suprêmes visions d’Orient

Loti, the great Turkophile, spent a total of 34 months in Turkey during his lifetime, his first stay in 1870. In 1921, when Loti was in poor health (he died in 1923), together with his son Samuel, he published *Suprêmes visions* (see Bibliography below). In it, Loti describes in diary form two of his stays in Turkey, from 15 August to 23 October 1910, on the Bosphorus and in Constantinople, and from 11 August to 17 September 1913, mainly in Constantinople, but also visiting Edirne. He never returned to Turkey after 1913.

Loti's marine expertise brings a special flavour to his life as the guest of friends living on the Asian side of the Bosphorus and his frequent expeditions by caique are of special interest. He eventually moves into Stamboul, as he calls it, the area of the Ottoman mosques, the true Turkish Constantinople, where he feels so much at home. Here, sometimes despite a high fever which dogged him, he dresses exactly like the local Turk (including wearing the mandatory fez!), in order to while away the hours in the shady cafés, drinking coffee, smoking his hookah and practicing his Turkish with his fellow 'dreamers' (*rêveurs*). He even joins his Turkish friends in prayer! Apart from his diary entries covering these two visits, *Suprêmes visions* includes nine brief articles in which Loti tackles some hot political topics of the time. In the main in these articles, with the Balkan wars hardly over, Loti gives vent to his fury against Greeks, Armenians and Bulgarians with equal vigour and to his support for Edirne to remain within the Ottoman empire.

Two subjects surface with regularity in all Loti's Middle-Eastern travel accounts. Firstly, his attitude to Islam, and secondly, his subtle, though not infrequently occurring, political manoeuvring on behalf of the French government. Loti shows extreme sympathy with Islam. Although he never overtly became a Muslim, it is well worth mentioning his famous declarations, both in the context of Islam: 'I feel my soul to be half-Arab' and 'I shall turn myself into a Turk'. Paradoxically, he does on occasions speak of the depressingly grim, grey, windowless houses and walls of certain Muslim towns, reminding him (if there was any need to so do!) of death.

In May 1894, Loti's stay in Bursa from Constantinople was at the invitation of the French ambassador whom he was proud to introduce to the imams of the Green Mosque during his visit. During his brief stay in Muscat in May 1900, officials of the French consulate had clearly arranged his audience with the sultan in advance and he expressly tells us that the subject of Franco-Omani relations did arise in his conversations with the sultan. In May 1900, in Isfahan and Tehran in Persia, Loti met with almost every member of the ruling royal family with the exception of the shah himself who was absent in Europe. In Tehran too, he stayed in the French legation and it must have been French officials who

arranged his audiences with the shah's family. All this and remarks here and there point to the highly likely conclusion that, even during his 'private' journeys, Loti was being used by the French government to fly the tricolour and promote cultural, at least, if not also political relations with his host, whoever it happened to be. As well as being a serving French naval officer, he was of course a highly successful writer and a member of the elite *Éternels*, the forty-member French Academy.

Apart from the sheer joy of the travel narratives they contain, Loti's writings deserve careful scrutiny by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historians; scholars of Orientalism too will find rich pickings. Edward Said's listing of Loti in *Orientalism* (London, Penguin Books, 2003, p. 252) under the heading of 'minor writers' tells us much more about Said than it does about Loti!

Bibliography

There follows below a Loti bibliography relevant to the contents of this article, with full references to his works in French, followed by the English translation, where it exists. A brief word is in order here regarding the latter. It has already been noted that Loti's works never really caught on in the anglophone world. Translations of his travel accounts appeared in the USA only well in the 1910s and '20s. It is difficult to criticise the substance of these translations, though they do appear to the modern reader's eye pedestrian and somewhat literal. They too lack what is surely an essential introduction (who, after all, was Pierre Loti?!) and any attempt to explain any of his sometimes obscure allusions, be they French, classical, or, in the context, local and cultural. References are added also to his journeys to Morocco, the Sinai, Jerusalem and Egypt, in order to complete the Middle Eastern picture. The bibliography ends with three biographies of Loti, references to Loti's most recently edited diary and his work as an artist and photographer. All sections of the bibliography provide titles in chronological order.

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'En passant à Mascate' in *Le Château de la Belle-en-bois-dormant*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1910
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VIEW OF THE ENGLISH BURIAL GROUND AT LEGHORN † VEDUTA DEL CIMITERO INGLESE A LIVORNO
Magnitudo incultu a tunc Reverend Co. Vob. British Chaplain at Leghorn.
* D. ... * Al. ... B. B. ... M. ...

A view of the 'English' Cemetery at Livorno (Leghorn), Grand Duchy of Tuscany, in 1833

Ernest Missett, Britain's Consul-General in Egypt was buried here, 25th September 1820

Ernest Missett, Britain's Irish (Roman Catholic?) Consul-General in Egypt, 1803-1816

Robert G. Morkot

Ernest Missett has received far less attention than Henry Salt, although he was active in Egypt from 1801 to 1816. The *Who Was Who* entry is quite brief and cites references in the works of a number of well-known travellers, most of which are rather uninformative. Biographers of other travellers include various details and anecdotes, many of which go back to James Silk Buckingham's quite lengthy account – rather oddly omitted from *WWW*.

This note began as a conversation with Emmet Jackson as to whether Missett was Irish in origin: the name Missett is not particularly common, but occurs in Ireland (although doubtfully indigenous), suggesting the possibility. James Silk Buckingham states quite clearly that Missett was Irish. It would seem very likely that Missett was Roman Catholic, although like many employees of the British Government at the time, he may have to some extent conformed: his period of residence in Sicily and retirement to Pisa and Florence, and the number Italian staff at the consulate, might suggest only a very loose adherence to Protestantism. I have not been able to find when the first CofE chaplain is recorded in Egypt and the Consulate. There were certainly missionaries by the period 1818-1820, as recorded by, for example, John Fuller. Elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, there had been chaplains attached to the factories of the Levant Company, notably at Aleppo, since the 16th Century.

Appointed as Consul-General in 1803, Missett retired due to ill health in 1816 and took up residence in Italy to take the waters at Pisa. Missett's death, at Florence in 1820, was recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine*,¹ but gives little information. Missett's will was drawn up at Pisa 20 Sept 1819. Translated from the Italian, it was proved in London in 1821 by Thomas Bidworth of the Foreign Office, one of the named executors, the other being his doctor. His will left bequests to servants: Giorduni (?) Egerseghi 'a native Hungarian', Giorgio Vincenzo 'a native Greek (?)', and Giuseppe Conti 'a native Piedmontese' and his

wife Giuseppa; his female servant Lucia, and chairmen Paulo and Cassano. One of the witnesses was 'Sam. Briggs' of the Alexandria business.²

Missett was buried in the 'English' cemetery at Livorno ('Leghorn').³

Ernest Missett late Colonel in H.B.° M.y's service died at Florence on the morning of the 22^d of Sept^r 1820, at 3 O'Clock, and on the 25th next following, was entered (*so*) in the English burial ground at Leghorn, by me in the 56 year of his age. Thomas Hall.

This dates Missett's birth at around 1765, but there is no evidence for the place.

The impression conveyed by *WWW* and the *Army List* is of a conventional career, but a number of sources suggest otherwise. Philipp Elliott -Wright gives the Officer Lists for Pitt's Irish Brigade 1795-97.⁴ This rather unexpected element of the British Army was formed out of officers, mostly émigré Irish Roman Catholics, formerly in the French Service, but who had left France at the Revolution. There were numerous issues relating to the role of Roman Catholics in the British army, and there was opposition to the creation of a new Brigade, notably from the Irish Catholic gentry and the Lord-Lieutenant's office in Dublin Castle. Despite opposition, William Pitt and Henry Dundas – both sympathetic to the issue of Catholic emancipation, especially in Ireland – in coalition with the equally sympathetic Whigs, Portland and Windham, were able to create the British Army's first regiment officered by Catholics. Established by October 1794, the opposition from some quarters continued, and recruitment of Irish Catholic soldiers was not as numerous as anticipated. The regiments were despatched to the Caribbean, an unpopular destination for all troops. The Brigade was reduced, due to financial expediency, in 1798, with soldiers being discharged and officers either retiring or joining other regiments.

The Irish Brigades in France were commanded by émigré Irish officers, although the soldiers were recruited from many countries. Some of the 'Irish' officers belonged to families that had lived in France since the overthrow of James II and were French citizens, cause of further problems at a time of war:

indeed, one of the Regiment's was that of the Duc de FitzJames, the king's direct descendant. Another of the regiments was that of Count Walsh de Serrant, and it is here that Captain-Lieutenant Ernest Missett is listed. Missett is described as "émigré, Sous-Lieutenant" and was promoted Captain on the death of Mathew Meade in a duel, in November 1796: he also appears as adjutant for the same Regiment, the senior officers being the brothers Colonel Count Antoine Walsh de Serrant, Lt Col. Charles 'Viscount' Walsh de Serrant, and Major le Chevalier Philippe Walsh de Serrant.⁵

Following the capture of Minorca in 1798, a new Foreign Brigade was formed by John Stuart (1759-1815) who was appointed as its Colonel. Originally called the Minorca Regiment it was renamed as the Queen's German Regiment. In 1805 this became the 97th Regiment of Foot or Queen's German Infantry. The *Army List* tells us that Missett was appointed Captain in this Regiment in 1799 and had presumably joined it after Walsh's was disbanded late in 1798. Another Captain in Walsh's Regiment was Nicholas Trant, who appears as Lt Col (promoted 5 Apr 1801) in the new Regiment; Matthew Sutton appears as Lieutenant in both regiments; Teige MacMahon was promoted to Lieutenant from Ensign in Walsh's; other names in Walsh's officer list can be identified in other Regiments.

Stuart's Regiment served in the 1801 Egyptian Campaign. The accounts of the campaign, by Sir Robert Wilson and Captain Thomas Walsh, list the components of the Brigade commanded by Brigadier General John Stuart: Stuart's or Minorca Regiment; De Rolle's Regiment, and Dillon's Regiment.⁶ Dillon's Regiment was originally one of the Irish Brigade. It appears that Stuart's Brigade was the largest in the campaign with 2038 men. Wilson and Walsh list E. Missett as Brigade Major.⁷

Viscount Valentia in his description of Alexandria recounts events in Egypt in October 1802, when the French 'roving ambassador' Sebastiani arrived, keen to see the evacuation of the British forces. Valentia records that Major-General Stuart sent Missett 'his secretary' to greet him.⁸

Missett became the British Consul-General in Egypt in 1803 but was absent from September 1807 to July

1811. He was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel in 1810. Also elevated, Lt.-Gen Sir John Stuart (1759-1815) became commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean 1808-10.

Valentia tells us:⁹

"The consuls of the European powers live together in tolerable amity, except when a war between their masters reduces them to the necessity of not visiting in public. The British and French [Drovetti] Consuls General are indeed the leaders, and the rivalry between their countries rages with full force at Alexandria. Major Missett is a man admirably adapted for his situation. He is well acquainted with the chiefs who rule over the different parts of this once flourishing, but now distracted, country, knows their wants and wishes, and by a firm, but conciliatory, system of conduct, has baffled all the projects of the French, who still look back on Egypt with the steady determination of seizing on the first opportunity of re-conquering it. For this they have employed their emissaries in instigating the Beys against each other, and the Pacha against them all, and have thereby prevented tranquillity from being restored, which would, they justly think, preclude the possibility of their return."

The changing balance of power in Egypt created a problem for the British Government's policy. Britain's support of the Mamluk leaders had worked perfectly well during the French invasion and had been approved by the Sultan, but with the rise of Muhammad Ali, the situation changed. Ronald Ridley details the manoeuvring, with Missett actively encouraging military intervention. The result was the disastrous campaign of 1807, following which Missett retired to Sicily for a period.¹⁰

Letters of Saint-Marcel, the French Vice-Consul at Alexandria, to the Minister, the Duc de Bassano, describe Missett's triumphant return:

"Le colonel Misset, l'ancien Résident des Anglois en Égypte, lors de la retraite de l'armée angloise en 1807 se retira en Sicile et vient de retourner à son poste. Cet homme impotent, perclus des pieds et des mains, ne peut se mouvoir que par une chaise roulante. ... Il vient de faire une entrée pompeuse, 200 hommes de troupes albanaises escortoient la voiture entourée de cavaliers, c'est à dire des Anglois résidens ici, du commandant et des

officiers d'une corvette anglaise mouillée dans ce port. 2 chevaux de main précédoient sa voiture. Il est entré au bruit du canon de la Ville et des navires anglois, ses guinées ont opéré ce grand cortège." Saint-Marcel's letter of 14 July raises the number of Albanians to 500!¹¹

During his second term of residence in Egypt, Missett hosted – and entertained – numerous travellers, many of whom left some account of the consular house and activities. Amongst the first was Lady Hester Stanhope and her party. They record a number of other British travellers. In Cairo they met Henry Wynne, and Mr MacNamara (“an English gentleman” - *sic!*), and encountered J. L. Burckhardt in Damascus on his way to Egypt.

In November 1812, Thomas Legh and Charles Smelt arrived in Egypt: Missett was resident in Alexandria and Burckhardt had recently arrived in Cairo. Shortly after, Captain Light and James Silk Buckingham were also Missett's guests and give more detailed accounts.

Light details Missett's 'family': Major Vincenzo Taburno (Taberna) “whose history has been given by Mr. Hamilton, and is well known to the officers who served in Egypt, who acted as military secretary of the mission; and Mr. Thurburn, private secretary to Colonel Missett”. Mrs Thurburn is also mentioned, and Valentia refers to Taberna's brother as another member of the staff. The secretary, Robert Thurburn (1784-1860) was Scottish and became a partner in Briggs and Co in Alexandria, and later Consul in Alexandria, from 1833-38. Another member of the Consulate was Mr Jassuf Aziz, an Armenian, described as ‘interpreter’, but also the acting Resident during Missett's absence from Cairo.¹²

Light and Buckingham were present at the same time, and both took journeys upriver into Nubia. James Silk Buckingham's account was published many years later and adds more detail – but how much is directly from his journal and how much embellished is hard to know:

“I must here give a brief description of the worthy and estimable group of friends among whom I now sojourned for awhile. Colonel Missett was a distinguished officer of the Enniskillen dragoons, and a perfect specimen of an Irish gentleman; courageous

and chivalrous to the last degree, — an ardent admirer of the fair sex, — a *bon vivant* of great refinement, — as choice in his table and wines as in his companions, — an admirable recounter of anecdotes of military and diplomatic life, — an excellent singer of after-dinner songs, one his favourites being —

“I traversed Judah's barren sands,
At Beauty's altar to adore;
But there the Turk had spoiled the land,
And Zion's daughters were no more;”¹³

and though, from paralysis of all his extremities, he was quite unable to use either his legs or arms — being wheeled to table in a chair, and his food cut up him by his valet — his trunk, heart and head were perfectly sound; for though he lived freely or generously, he had excellent digestion, good sleep, and his benevolence and high spirits were both constantly overflowing. On the whole, I have never met, before or since, a more fascinating man than Colonel Missett. Forming part of his household was a merry and light-hearted officer of dragoons from Piedmont, Major Taberna, whose feats of arms and camp adventures formed endless materials for conversation; Mr. Thurburn, the colonel's secretary, a more quiet but more intelligent and instructive companion, and full of the gentlemanly qualities by which the colonel himself was so much distinguished; and Captain Molesworth, of some English regiment of dragoons, who was on a mission to Egypt to procure horses for the British cavalry. Nothing could surpass the pleasure of our lives : our breakfasts were sumptuous, — our dinners perfectly Apician, composed and prepared by the *ex-chef-de-cuisine* of the King of Naples ; our morning rides, on the most tractable Arabs, varied every day to different parts of the city and its environs, were exhilarating from the delicious nature of the climate and the novelty of the objects seen ; and our evening parties, often graced with the visits of European and Levantine ladies from Boulac and Cairo, and sometimes terminated by a ball, in which handsome Turkish women from the harems of distinguished men came as visitors and spectators, and allowed us to compare their beauty with that of other visitors, were sometimes exhaustingly pleasurable, and made an interval of rest an agreeable relief.”¹⁴

I have yet to confirm the claim that Missett was associated with the Enniskillen Dragoons: he always appears in Regiments of foot.

One of Missett's last travelling guests was W. J. Bankes. From Bankes's journals Patricia Usick tells us that Missett had a pet chameleon, another element to the consul's establishment.

Although Missett did not acquire antiquities on the same scale as Salt, he was the first to employ Yanni (Giovanni) d'Athanas. Light heads a chapter with the image of a squatting naophorous statue of granite found at Elephantine. It is said to be three feet high, so a substantial piece, and seemingly in a good state of preservation. This was presented to Missett, as was a coffin from Thebes, its lid covered with a 'profusion of coloured hieroglyphics'. The fate of these artefacts is unknown to me.¹⁵

Assembling these various sources, Missett emerges as a rather extraordinary appointment: Irish, probably Roman Catholic, and by the end of his service, severely physically disabled. Yet, he was clearly extremely hospitable and helpful to his numerous visitors and operated a cosmopolitan Consulate in the political changes of the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century in Egypt.

Notes

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* 1821 i p 185.

² PRO PROB 11: Will Registers, 1819-1822, Piece 1641: Mansfield, Quire Numbers 151-200.

³ PRO RG 33: Foreign Registers and Returns, 1627-1960 Piece 117: Leghorn: Births Baptisms, Marriages, Burials, 1784-1824 page 313.

⁴ Elliott-Wright 1997.

⁵ Elliott-Wright 1997, 326 and 328 n 12: PRO HO 100/61, f.233.

⁶ Wilson 1803; Walsh 1803.

⁷ Wilson 1803, II, 212; Walsh 1803, 80*, Appendix 20.

⁸ Valentia 1809, iii, 467.

⁹ Valentia 1809, iii, 466.

¹⁰ Ridley n.d. Chapter 2. Ridley gives some biographical detail, and references to the correspondence in the Foreign Office.

¹¹ Letters §67 3 July 1811; §68, 14 July 1811: Driault 1925, 130-134.

¹² Light 1818. 23, 27; for Taberna (fl 1788-1814) see WWW5 451; Thurburn WWW5 458.

Buckingham 1855, 153-154.

¹³ This is the first verse of *The Fair Pilgrim* by M'Nally. It continues in similar, if not worse, vein, across Europe to Albion. Full text, *The Universal Songster: Or, Museum of Mirth*, 1826.

¹⁴ Buckingham 1855, 152-153.

¹⁵ Light 1818, 54, 111, 117

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