

Bulletin of the Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East: Notes and Queries

No 32

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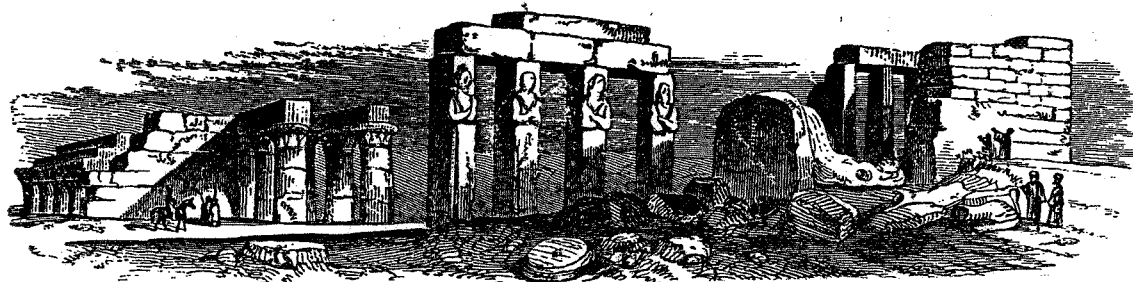
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standing order or pay in advance for three years.

BULLETIN 33 The deadline for articles, reviews,
queries etc for Bulletin 33 is 1st October



Astene News and Forthcoming Events

ASTENE Biennial Conference, 12-16 July at Southampton University

The full programme of the ASTENE Conference is on the ASTENE website (WWW.ASTENE.ORG.UK). Members came from eight countries and gave papers covering the whole ASTENE region from the Mani area of Greece, through Turkey and Syria, into Arabia and down the Nile beyond the cataracts, discussing topics from the early incense trade to the plague season and from lordly Scottish preparations for Eastern travel to General Gordon's pilgrimage to Jerusalem and travellers' accounts of the discomfort and comedy of the camel. The Conference dinner celebrated the tenth anniversary of ASTENE's foundation – and many of the founding members were present. We greatly appreciated the work of Pat Wagstaff in making the conference run so well and so imaginatively – ending with a picnic under the cedars of Lebanon at Highclere Castle.

Conference Review

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of this year's conference was the skilful way in which the programme had been put together. This is never an easy task with such a potentially eclectic range of presentations, covering the full range of ASTENE interests. But it was clear from the questions that were posed in the scheduled sessions, and from the discussions that took place on the fringes of the official timetable, that many of us were actively looking for thematic development across the programme, and for comparisons of approaches and methods to the material with which travellers had constructed their journeys and responses to place. Needless to say, we found it.

My own response to the over-arching themes – and these things are inevitably idiosyncratic – is a home-spun classification of papers that began to take shape with the thought-provoking address of the key-note speaker (Professor Emilie Savage Smith) on the first afternoon and emerged in its final form over a conversation at the conference dinner table some three days later. It is an attempt to structure the material we digested in terms of three questions that participants seemed to be posing of their travellers and the journeys they undertook – the emphasis *what*, the *how* and the *why* of travel in Egypt and the Near East – and is offered here with an implicit nod of acknowledge-

ment of the direction of all who participated in Southampton, without whom there would be no foundations on which a review could elaborate.

The first of these three questions, the 'what', was addressed by papers that were broadly historical in their approach. Drawing on a wide range of documentary evidence to construct, and, in some cases, to re-construct, the 'facts' of the journey, they demonstrated the quality and the detail of original archive research undertaken by ASTENE members. The historical approach to travel and place was further supported by the additional resource sessions, which focused on both the opportunities and the obstacles that present themselves to anyone keen to 'make' travel history from its original sources.

The distinction between history as 'what happened' and literature/art as 'how it came to be seen' is not always an easy one to draw. But the papers that addressed the representational 'fictions' of the traveller, as opposed to the observable 'facts' contained in their sources, often picked up on the thorny questions of perspective, authorship and audience, among others. Covering a range of travel 'products', from the apparently ephemeral to works with conscious literary and artistic ambitions, these papers were motivated by questions about the internal and external factors that shape the written and visual record left by travellers, questions which often blurred the distinction between representation and explanation.

It is this interest in explaining travel (the 'why' of this little typology) that leads me to the third and final category of papers, many of which were concerned with what I will loosely label travel 'culture': the practices and values by which categories, types or modes of travel and traveller are defined by a society at any given point in time. There were, of course, the usual suspects who muddled the tidy distinctions between pilgrim, explorer, tourist, artist, courier or scholar. Nevertheless, the sense of there being cultural shifts between one travel 'era' and another, and the questions posed by a 'tradition' reaching the end of its shelf-life, arguably offer some of the most exciting opportunities for synthesis that straddle the varied interests and approaches of individual members of the Association.

Paul Robertson



Summary of Chairman's Annual Report, 2006-2007

The full annual report was delivered to ASTENE's Annual General Meeting on Sunday, 15 July.

A decade of achievements

I feel very honoured and privileged to be the Chairman of ASTENE in the year that the Association celebrates its tenth anniversary, following its founding conference at St Catherine's College, Oxford in July 1997. Chaired initially by Professor Paul Starkey and then by Professor Malcolm Wagstaff, ASTENE's first decade has been a highly successful one with a worldwide membership and a succession of academic conferences, study days, publications and visits (coupled with conferences) to countries in the Near East.

As part of its 10th anniversary celebrations, ASTENE hosted its biennial conference at the University of Southampton (co-ordinated by Mrs Pat Wagstaff) which has included a programme of papers, day trips, an exhibition (by Peta Ree) based on the Association's many achievements, and an anniversary dinner, with Neil Cooke, a founder member, as after dinner speaker.

Executive Committee Meetings

Since the AGM on 1 July 2006, four Executive Committee meetings have been convened and, apart from items specifically referred to in this report, your committee has discussed: a poster to advertise the aims and objectives of ASTENE (discounted), a business card for members, future study tours abroad, non-financial support for the Melville Conference in Israel in 2009, a possible exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford on travellers to the East in 2011, the biennial conference at Durham University in 2009, and enlarging the ASTENE website to include abstracts from past conferences.

The Bulletin and Website

Four issues of the Bulletin (28-31) have been published, thanks once more to the unstinting efforts of the Editor, Deborah Manley, and the Reviews Editors, Tom Rees and Dr Edwin Aiken, and reviews, news and articles by the membership.

The Bulletin and the website represent our means of communicating news and forthcoming events to members across the world, and, as such represent important and indispensable pot-pourris that enable the membership to keep in touch with virtually everything (and anybody) related to the Association's aims and objectives.

Publications other than the Bulletin

In May Stacey International finally published a re-vamped edition of *Travellers in the Near East* (originally issued in 2004). In July this year Oxbow published *Who Travels Sees More*, a collection of travels linked to art and architecture,

edited by ASTENE's Treasurer, Dr Diane Fortenberry. (see elsewhere in this Bulletin.)

Committee Membership

Dr Alix Wilkinson (Secretary) and Dr Henrietta McCall (Resources Project) retired from the Committee. Dr Philip Sadgrove withdrew because of pressure of work. Lorien Pilling was co-opted to the Committee in the spring and subsequently produced a membership 'plan'. [He was elected (as ASTENE Secretary) along with Janet Rady at the AGM.]

Visits and Study Days

ASTENE's Events Organiser, Elisabeth Woodthorpe has continued her impeccable arrangement of opportunities for members in this country and abroad. These visits, study days and tours abroad have been reported in the Bulletin.

Conclusion

I should like to thank all members of the Committee (past and present) for their support and encouragement and for giving up so much of their time and expertise on behalf of ASTENE. I should also like to thank Dr Diane Bergman of the Griffiths Institute, Oxford, for her work on the ASTENE Bibliography, and the Association's web-master, Peter McConachie for his continued work on our website – which reaches out beyond the membership.

Brian Taylor

Discovering Egypt: the Ancient and the Oriental

On 21st April Dr Robert Morkot organised and hosted a delightful study day at Exeter for ASTENE and the Egyptian Exploration Society on (mainly) British 18-19th century explorers and travellers in Egypt.

Brian Taylor, Chairman of ASTENE, gave the first lecture: "Lusting all his Life: the insatiable, incorrigible and incomparable 4th Earl of Sandwich". This gentleman – also known as John Montagu – was an inveterate rake-hell and close friend of Sir Francis Dashwood of Hellfire Club fame. It was appropriate that he should feature as at the time the wonderful exhibition of William Hogarth's works was at the Tate – there a micro portrait of Montagu could be seen leering out of a halo perched above Dashwood's head.

In 1748, at the age of twenty, Montagu with a posse of his dilettante friends - including the artist Jean Etienne Liotard, set off on a grand tour of all the great centres of ancient civilization: Rome, Athens, Constantinople, and later the Eastern Mediterranean, Alexandria and Cairo – which they reached in 1739. Although a rake, who took great personal interest in the brothels and harems he came across, Montagu and his party also studied to some effect the ancient art and architecture that they saw in such abundance. As Dr Taylor said, "He certainly deserves to be recognised as one of

the foremost Orientalists of his generation." His erudite *Voyage around the Mediterranean* was published seven years after his death in 1792.

Less sensational but equally enjoyable was Robert Morkot's description of Giovanni Belzoni at Abu Simbel in 1817 with the two half-pay naval captains, Charles Irby (1789-1845) and James Mangles (1786-1867). Very appropriately this day school was held at St Loyes in Exeter which incorporates Fairfield House – the one time home of James Mangles from 1852 until his death. The previous afternoon Robert Morkot had shown an ASTENE group around the still recognisable garden.

This was Belzoni's second visit to Abu Simbel. The immense Ramesside structure was virtually buried in wind blown sand and Belzoni and his small party set about clearing the entrance. A local work force was recruited with the promise of a share of the 'treasure' when the work was completed. After great difficulty with the sand, heat and recalcitrant labour force, they completed the work in 23 ten-hour days. An amazing achievement.

Soon after Belzoni met a Mr John Fuller who presented him with a three-part mummy case complete with its deceased. It needs to be remembered that antiquities at this time were abundant and perceived of little value. On occasions, Belzoni and his wife Sarah camped in rock-cut tombs – and wood from burial artefacts were often used for kindling. The fate of Mr Fuller's mummy was only slightly less tragic: the mummy itself being buried in Exeter and one of the mummy cases being destroyed.

Bryony Llewellyn, our excellent third lecturer, never fails to inform and entertain. The majority of her lecture was taken up with David Roberts – the self-taught Scotsman who produced the splendid and immensely popular paintings and engravings of Egypt and the Holy Land.

Librarian of the Egypt Exploration Society, Chris Naunton's theme was "Careful Coloured Drawings"- the title Howard Carter gave to the facsimiles he produced at Beni Hasan and other sites in the 1890s. Carter's work recording reliefs and inscriptions in line drawing and watercolour was to a standard that many believe has never been surpassed.

Some of the original coloured drawings are still at the EES, some elsewhere, and some are lost. The practice of recording decoration in this way has long since been abandoned, largely due to inexpensive colour photography. The splendid results achieved by Carter and his contemporaries are valuable for the light they shed on techniques employed by the Egyptologists at the end of the 19th century. Many are works of art in their own right and great credit is due to the custodians at the

EES for their present day conservation and presentation.

The day's organisation was excellent – the audio-visuals worked well, the lunch was excellent too – all in all a day ASTENE could be proud of.

Ashley Jones

ASTENE'S NEW BOOK: Who Travels Sees More

Who Travels Sees More: Artists, Architects and Archaeologists Discover Egypt and the Near East edited by Dr Diane Fortenberry and published by Oxbow Books, Oxford was launched at the Southampton Conference and will be reviewed in the Autumn Bulletin. There is an order form in this Bulletin. The ISBN is 978-1-84217-273-5.

This new ASTENE title brings together a range of papers from ASTENE conferences and study days in Britain and abroad. The articles describe the travels and observations of such people as Robert Ker Porter in Mesopotamia, Charles Fellows and the Xanthian Marbles, American artists in Egypt, James Athenian Stuart in Greece, Charles Barry and Owen Jones in Egypt, C.R. Ashbee in Jerusalem and German journeymen builders in Cairo.

Forthcoming ASTENE Events

A Visit to the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan of the British Museum

On Tuesday 20th November Dr John Taylor has arranged a special visit for ASTENE members to the British Museum. The programme will be:

11:00 : Visit the archives of the Egyptology Department with Dr Patricia Usick:

12:30 Lunch break – own choice either in the Museum or outside

2:00 Visit behind the scenes, in the stores etc with John Taylor

3:30 Tea in the Department

4:00 – 5:00 Handling with Dr Henrietta McCall to include jewellery, drawings, Assyrian objects, Lady Layard's portrait etc.

The maximum group for this visit is 12-15 people, so very early booking is recommended. The cost is £6 each, including tea but not lunch.

To book, please telephone the ASTENE Events Organiser, Elisabeth Woodthorpe on 020 7622 3694 or fax her on 020 7627 4151.



Other News and Forthcoming Events

Auction

Ahmad Mohammed Hassanein Bey (1889-1946)
On 14th November. Sotheby's are to offer, in one lot, a collection of travel notes, photographs and books from the library of Ahmad Mohammed Hassanein Bey, the noted Egyptian diplomat, explorer and royal adviser. A graduate of Oxford University and an Olympic fencer, he was best known for his explorations in the Libyan Desert and his discovery of the Gilf Kebir and Uwenat oases.

At the 2001 ASTENE conference Barnaby Rogerson delivered a paper "Ahmad Mohammed Hassanein Bey: Explorer in Egypt and Libya and Royal Chamberlain, 1920s and 1930s". *The Lost Oases* by Ahmad Hassanein Bey with a foreword by Michael Haag was re-issued in 2006 by the American University in Cairo Press and brought "one of the great classics of desert exploration back in print". It is copiously illustrated with Hassanein's own photographs. ISBN 977-424-980-1, 270 pp p/b £19.95.

Also in the Sotheby's auction will be a collection of photographs by the noted Egyptian photographer Muhammed 'Al Effendi Sa'oudi (1865-1955) who took photographs on his pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina in 1904 and 1908. These will be offered alongside printed books, photographs and manuscripts relating to the Near and Middle East, as well as general voyages and travel, natural history, atlases and maps.

For further information please contact Richard Fattorini on 020 7293 5301.

Conferences, Study Days and Lectures

The Frontiers of the Ottoman World: fortifications, trade, pilgrimage and slavery

Dr Robert Morkot reports: The Frontiers of the Ottoman World is an initiative supported by the British Academy. It was launched at a packed two-day symposium held at the British Academy 15-16 February 2007 that was organised by the British Institute in Ankara, the British Institute in Eastern Africa, the British School of Athens, the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, the Council for British Research in the Levant, the Egypt Exploration Society and the Society for Libyan Studies. Papers covered the entire region from Sudan to the Balkans, Libya to the Black Sea.

The longer-term project aims to bring together the research findings of the different schools and institutes that relates to the subject, and to relate archaeological work to the textual evidence.

Bead and Beadwork Conference, Kadie Has University, Istanbul, Turkey, 22 – 25 November
The theme is The Global Perspective of Beads and Beadwork including History and Trade. See the Call for Papers and Programme on the website: www.istanbul-boncuk.org

The conference programme includes tours of the lesser known regions of Turkey to see village life and virtually extinct nomadic lifestyles. There will at the same time be an exhibition at the Istanbul Archaeological Museum of beads through time from the Eastern Mediterranean.

Madingley Hall, Cambridge runs a wide programme of residential and other courses on a wide range of subjects from archaeology and the Ancient World to music, language and the natural sciences. The catalogue up to July 2008 is now out (Institute of Continuing Education, Madingley Hall, Cambridge CB23 8AQ; 01954 289399; www.ws.cam.ac.uk) Here are some courses which link to ASTENE interests.

Botanical Buccaneers: The life and times of the John Tradescants with Jennifer Potter looks at two great gardeners and plant hunters of the 17th century.. 10-12 August.

Crusader Cyprus (1191-1489) with James Petre looking at the conquest by Richard I and the following centuries. 17-19 August.

Eastern Christianity Study Day, 9th November, with Dr Erica Hunter

An exploration of Christianity in the Middle East, India and Ethiopia from the 2nd century to the present. How the churches are distinguished by their distinct theologies and cultural factors.

Mapping the Middle Ages with Lucy Donkin – considering how maps reflect geographical knowledge and express religious and cultural ideas. 30 November-2 December.

Institute of Continuing Education, Cambridge
The Institute runs a number of part-time courses which might interest ASTENE members at various regional sites. See more on their web site www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk We list a few briefly.

Byzantine Art and Architecture – Cambridge;
Medieval Architecture in the Mediterranean World – Cambridge; Beginner's Guide to Family History – Burghley House; Christianity and Islam – Bedford; The Religions of Iraq – Burgate; The World's Great Religions – St Albans.
And there are many more fascinating courses on other subjects.

The Department of Continuing Education, Oxford University

Some of the courses and study days offered by OUDCE will be of special interest to ASTENE members.

Britain and the Middle East, 1914-1967 on Saturday 10 November. Expert historians will examine Britain's 'moment' in the Middle East.

Jesus: A Sufi Perspective: Ibn 'Arabi, Rumi and the Universal Saint on Saturday 1 December – the role of Jesus in major texts of Sufism by the great 13th century masters.

Sacred Landscapes of Crete on Saturday 19 January 2008 considers the Greek, Roman, Venetian and Turkish epochs of Cretan history.

Exhibitions

A Passport to the Egyptian After-Life: The Book of the Dead of Ramose

Exhibition of the 20 metre papyrus scroll from around 1200BC. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge until 16 September. Free.

Sacred: Discover what we share

This major exhibition at the British Library, 96 Euston Road, London until 23 September considers the world's greatest collection of Christian, Jewish and Muslim holy books. The exhibition and accompanying talks are free, but timed tickets with advance booking are recommended. (01937 546546).

The programme includes among much else:
Monday 6 – Friday 10 August, 12:45 and 17:30
.Summer Sounds on the Piazza

Tuesday 4 September 18:30 – 20:30 Preserving the Oldest Library in Christendom: The St Catherine's Monastery Library Project on Mount Sinai in the Conference Centre.

Wednesday 12 September 18:30 – 20:00 Barnaby Rogerson explores ways that all people can get closer to the message of Islam through the power of its original sound.

Monday 20 – Friday 25 August 12:00 – 14:00 daily Islamic Calligraphy Workshop.

Gallery talks each Tuesday on a variety of subjects at 12:30 or 18:30.

Egyptian Antiquities from the Louvre: Journey to the Afterlife

A wide range to artefacts showing the links between ancient Egyptians and the afterlife. Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth until 28 October.

Treasures of Ancient Egypt

More than 200 artefacts shed light on the ancient Egyptians and their lives. Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax until 19 August.

The Jazira: A cultural Landscape between the Euphrates and the Tigris

An exhibition presenting the arts and culture of the petty princes of this region in the 12th-13th centuries. The exhibition's 70 objects include hardly known masterpieces. Pergamonmuseum for Islamische Kunst, Berlin until 2 September.

Blue and White: Objects in Blue and White from Egypt to China

The history of cobalt blue objects and the trade that spread them around the world. For centuries 'blue and white' remained a symbol of intercultural relations. Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna until 9 September.

Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16-17th centuries

300 objects reflecting the unprecedented cross-cultural dialogue following the establishment of Portugal's world trading network. Sackler Gallery, Washington DC until 16 September.

Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs

130 objects from the Egyptian National Museum and 50 spectacular objects excavated from Tutankhamun's tomb. The exhibition is more than twice the size of the great 'Tut' exhibition just over a quarter of a century ago. Franklin Institute, Philadelphia until 30 September.

Gaza at the Crossroads of Civilizations

Objects excavated by the Palestinian-French expedition of 1994 testify to the variety of national and ethnic groups who have lived here: Greek and Egyptian pottery, Byzantine mosaics, Ottoman architectural fragments ... Musee d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva until 7 October.

Horsemanship: The art of the knight in the Lands of Islam

The exhibition presents groupings of objects related to their forms and means of production from the knights' garb to their tack and riding skills from 8th to 18th centuries. Institute du Monde Arabe, Paris until 21 October.

Amarna: Ancient Egypt's Place in the Sun

Over 100 objects from the unique royal centre of Amarna, the ancient city of Akhetaten University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia until end of October.

Daily Magic in Ancient Egypt

From amulets to scarabs, figurines and ritual objects associated with the power of magic in ancient Egypt. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland until 18 November.

Threads of Pride: Palestinian traditional costumes

Embroidered dresses and ceremonial costumes from the Mimayyer Collection. Arab American National Museum, Dearborn, Michigan until 25 November.

Egypt's Sunken Treasures

A spectacular collection recovered from the seabed off the coast of Alexandria to Aboukir Bay. More than 1000 objects brought to light since 1992. These finds have shed new light on the history of Alexandria and of Egypt. Exhibition Hall, Bonn, Germany until 27 January.

Greeks on the Black Sea: Ancient Art from the Hermitage

An exhibition of some 175 objects showing the Greek and Roman travellers links through the Black Sea. Getty Villa, Pacific Palisades, California until 3 September.

Islam: Treasures from the Collection of Nasser D. Khalili

Some 300 objects that provide a comprehensive survey of the arts of the Islamic world from the 8th to the late 19th centuries. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney until 23 September.

Gifts from the Gods: Images from Egyptian Temples

A wide range of artefacts from the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in this exhibition from 16 October to 18 February.

The Phoenicians and the Mediterranean

An exhibition looking at aspects of the culture of these great navigators and travellers, including household objects and furnishings of great refinement. The exhibition looks at their commerce and trade, and their craftsmanship. Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris from 16 October to 30 March.

European Cartographers and the Ottoman World 1500-1750

The collection of D. J. Sopranos - maps, sea charts, and atlases begins the intellectual and geographical discoveries of the 15th century that undermined the medieval view of the cosmos. Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago November 2 to 2 March 2008.

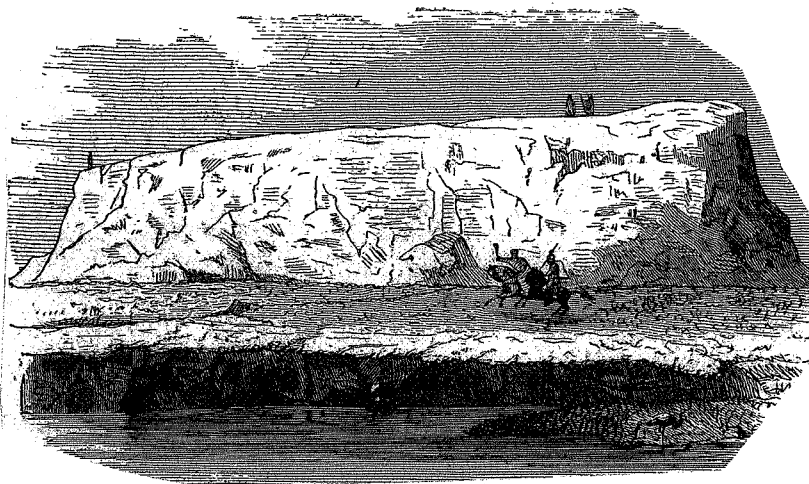


Meeting Mrs Baldwin

Some years ago when the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography was being revised I was writing the entry for George Baldwin (c. 1743-1826), British Consul General in Egypt (1785-96). Visiting Constantinople on his way to England, he met and married his agent's daughter took her onwards with him. En route through Vienna she was very much sought after by the gentry. Arriving

in England the great portrait painter Joshua Reynolds saw her and determined to paint her.

I had never seen that painting and then, suddenly this summer, at the wonderful gallery at Compton Verney near Stratford-on-Avon, I came upon her. Small wonder, I thought, that this beautiful creature of the 'Orient' turned heads! In the portrait she sits forever in her billowing striped Turkish gown, a crested turban on her head, turned seductively slightly away from the viewer. Her home now is in the permanent collection at Compton Verney, but she is not always on show. *Deborah Manley*



British Travellers and Equestrian Enthusiasts in Great Syria and Arabia Conference

This was held at the new Centre for Studies in the Lond 18th Century at the University of Kent in May. Naturally many ASTENE members were involved among the 60 academics, independent scholars, travellers and travel writers, blood stock experts and horse-breeders and others from seven countries who took part.

The papers and the discussion ranged through Anglo-Arab and Anglo-Ottoman relations of trade, diplomacy and artistic reciprocity. The historic range covered early pilgrimage to present day travel – on horseback.

Professor Donna Landry reported to us that "Many unexpected and useful connections were made and exchanges begun across disciplines, specializations, livelihoods, and areas of interest. Many of those attending remarked that it was the most enjoyable and the most multi-disciplinary conference they had ever attended.... and hoped that this will be the first of a series of related events on East-West relations, travel and re-enactment, animal studies and other multi-disciplinary perspectives on the long 18th century. A volume of essays based on the conference papers will be forthcoming and will be reviewed in these pages.

Contact D.E.Landry@kent.ac.uk for further information.

Book Reviews

Dr Edwin Aiken is the Reviews Editor of the Bulletin. Please send catalogues, books to review or reviews to him at 1 Ulster Avenue, Annalong, Co. Down, BT

An Account of Palmyra and Zenobia with Travels and Adventures in Bashan and the Desert by Rev. Dr. William Wright D.D. (London, 1895) recently re-published by Darf Publisher, London (ISBN 1850771155), £32.00

In 1865 the Presbyterian Church in Ireland sent William Wright to Damascus as Missionary to the Jews. Eighteenth century scepticism had given way to nineteenth century piety. Any Church which sought the salvation of the Jews, would itself prosper. The Jews were not interested in being converted to Protestantism, and so instead Wright concentrated on bringing education to the poor. Unlike many other missionaries, he believed that educating people in subjects such as mathematics, geography, and Arabic, was as important as studying the Bible. He believed in education for women, and he was proud that he had Moslem, Druze and Christian children sitting side by side in his classrooms.

First published in 1895, it was his final book written shortly before his death in 1899. Its initial concept was as a memoir of sorts of his ten years residence in Syria. It ran into several editions and was considered a bestseller on both sides of the Atlantic.

It was written partly in the saddle as he toured the countryside and later written up upon his return to Britain. Written in two parts, part one primarily described two separate routes he undertook to Palmyra in 1872 and 1874. Part two describes a visit to the Druzes and to Bosra – a trip that he made many times.

The routes described were dangerous, with Bedouin robbers willing to strip anyone that came across their path. Yet there is humour, and, unlike many of his contemporaries, it is honestly written, and not in an overly prosaic manner. The landscape, the people, their dress, and their customs bring Ottoman Syria to life. It is a way of life that has mostly vanished, but is still relevant to those interested in this volatile region. *Huw Owen-Jones*

Five Years in Damascus by J.L. Porter, London, 1855. (Copies of the first edition of this work now sell for more than \$1100/£550 per pair of volumes. Adamant Media has republished the second edition of 1870 in one volume in the Elibron Classics series (ISBN 9781402193699) for \$18.99

Kidnapping. Plague. Palaeontology. Political intrigue. Religious apologetics. Topography. J.L. Porter's book has them all. First published by John

Murray in 1855 in two volumes, this book is a gripping read. Directly delivered and delightfully detailed, Porter's almost autobiographical account of the activities in one of the world's most enduring cities between 1849 and 1854 is a work that should still be attracting attention today. Porter's pleasing prose enthusiastically evokes the Syrian scenery – in the terms of both artist and scientist – and provides powerful portraits of the people who lived there.

Porter's main work was as a missionary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, intent on converting Jews to Christianity. Initially geography had been his hobby, however, in the face of nineteenth century scientific knowledge that seemed to disprove the strictly historical nature of the Bible, that sideline assumed a salient role in locating the sites of biblical events and proving the reliability of the biblical record by demonstrating the accuracy of the Bible's geography. This book was Porter's most comprehensive contribution to a developing nineteenth century Bible geography industry, and contains many such discoveries made on many journeys through Syria. Porter's religious fervour shines from every page and it is impossible to stop reading after the first volume. *Edwin Aiken*

The Bradt Travel Guide to Syria by Diana Darke, Bradt Travel Guides, Chalfont St Peter and Globe Pequat Press, Guilford, Connecticut, 2006, ISBN 1 84162 162 5, p/b £14.99; \$22.95.

This guide will be reviewed 'in action' in the next issue after ASTENE members have visited Syria and can assess its worth. Also of interest to ASTENE members, guides in the same series for *Oman* (ISBN 9781641621685, £13.99/\$23.95) and *Iran* (ISBN 9781841621234, £14.99/\$21.95) have been received.

All are handily sized, illustrated and mapped and contain useful glossaries, phrase lifts, webographies, and very comprehensive guides to further reading. A particular feature of note are information boxes in the text that provide glorious little nuggets of detail on local issues, travelling personalities (many of them relevant to ASTENE research) and historical vignettes.

No Place for Ladies by Helen Rappaport, Aurum, London, 2007. 272 pp, biblio, index, ills, map. ISBN-13 978 1 84513 220 0, £18.99

This is an account of chaos and courage, appalling conditions and amazing initiative during the Crimean War (1853-4). The author has digested the mountain of material of this period including that most likely to have disappeared: the accounts of the wives of other ranks who the army allowed to rot and die in drunken cellars – perhaps about 1000 of them went of whom only a quarter returned home. Descriptions of these women and their children still tear at one's heart. As do the descriptions of the

hospitals: "four miles of beds only half a metre apart", "soldiers lying in places no gentleman would allow any horse he cared for to be stabled."

Out of the chaos of the war, Helen Rappaport brings order, providing a woman's eye view where there is one, as when, after the battles, the women went out to search for their men and comfort them as they died. Then came the famous call for help from *The Times* and soon female reinforcements were on their way led by Florence Nightingale who would rightly become "the most famous woman in Britain next to the Queen". The French army had already set a good example with their Sisters of Charity – often local Levantine nuns – and a follow up of trained nurses from across Europe.

Miss Nightingale was determined that the nurses should not be bleeding hearts or Mrs Gamps but professionals, like the Catholic and Anglican sisters who had been fighting a serious cholera epidemic in England. Now they were under strict instructions "to be cautious in matters of religion" – though not all of them were.

Miss Nightingale's iron will helped turn medical disaster into a proud memory. But her presence was so great that few of us have heard the names of the other nurses and women volunteers who made her triumph possible.

This is an important book – in the history of war and of travel. It tells many individual stories of bravery and initiative – and success even (like the crèche set up in the hospital cellars to care for soldiers' children. The respect the women earned must have both encouraged others and made their world judge women rather differently.

Deborah Manley

The Sphinx Revealed: A Forgotten Record of Pioneering Excavations by Patricia Usick and Deborah Manley, British Museum Research Publication 164, British Museum Press, 2007, ISBN 13:978 086 159 1640; ISBN 10: 086 159 164 X; ISSN 0142 4815, 80 pp large format p/b with 79 illustrations and fold-out, £25.

This book, unravelling the work of travellers at the Sphinx in the early 19th century will be reviewed in the next Bulletin.

Lucie Duff Gordon: A Passage to Egypt by Katherine Frank was re-issued this February by I.B. Tauris in paperback. ISBN 13.978 1 84511 331 5, 416 pp, £11.99

The New York Times Book Review commented originally "Katherine Frank orchestrates her account with depth and subtlety ... this biography stands as a masterpiece in its own right."

Nurse Sarah Anne: with Florence Nightingale at Scutari by Sarah Anne Terrot, edited by Robert G. Richardson, John Murray, London, 1977; ISBN 0 7195 3385 6, £4.95 (now about £20)

Of the contemporary and historical accounts of the British nurses and other women at Scutari and the hospitals of the Crimean War (1854-6) none have I found so moving as this. It is based on Miss Terrot's journal which was published 80 years after her death. It was edited by her or the modern editor so, although the journey to Turkey appears as a dated diary, from the time she reached Scutari it is presented as continuous prose.

Sarah Anne was not writing for publication nor even for others' eyes. Thus she could mull over the problems between the nurses in the awful situation in which they worked. She is interestingly original about the local people and the beauty of the Turkish setting. Her reports of the soldiers under her care, their terrible wounds and disease, and their sensitive philosophy and amazing courage, is a testimony to true bravery.

If you can get hold of this book, I highly recommend it.

Deborah Manley

Other Books etc

How Many Miles to Babylon?

In July 2003 Anne Wolff took delivery of her book, *How Many Miles to Babylon?: Travels and Adventures to Egypt and Beyond from 1300 to 1640* (Liverpool University Press) at the ASTENE conference in Oxford. Now it has been translated into Arabic by Professor Qassem Abdou Qassem, professor of Medieval History at Egypt's Zagazig University and published by the Supreme Council of Culture, Cairo as *Kam tab'ud al Kahira?*.

Oxbow has moved

Oxbow who publish and distribute ASTENE's books and much else of interest to members has moved from one side of Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford to the other – and lower down! Their new address is 10 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford OX1 2EW where they will continue to welcome visitors between 9 am and 5:30 pm. Their website is www.oxbowbooks.com. Customers in America should order through The David Brown Book Company, PO Box 511, Oakville CT 06779.

The Napoleonic Survey of Egypt

Lisa French drew our attention to an important book published in 2001, but not reviewed then.

The Napoleonic Survey of Egypt: Description de l'Égypte: The Monuments and Customs of Egypt, Selected Engravings and Texts edited by Terence M. Russell in two large volumes and published by Ashgate Publishing, Burlington, Vermont at \$165. ISBN 1-85928-248-2.

The books were enthusiastically reviewed in the *American Journal of Archaeology* Vol 3 #2, April

2007. The first volume includes a historic context including the advance into Egypt and the subsequent withdrawal. This provides a background to the selection of plates and commentary on them. These volumes give access to non-French speakers to one of the most important publications of the 19th century.

The Royal Danish Expedition, 1761-2

F. Nigel Hepper's article in Bulletin 31: "A Year spent in Egypt by the Royal Danish Expedition in 1761-2" – which was based on a paper given at ASTENE's Manchester conference in 2005 was a precursor to a longer article by him on the Red Sea/Yemen travels of the expedition which is to be published by Archaeopress, Oxford. the title. It will, of course, be reviewed in the Bulletin.

Belmore: The Lowry Corrys of Castle Coole, 1646-1913

Peter Marson has written an account of the family who created a great fashionable and beautiful house, Castle Coole, in Co. Fermanagh – now open through the National Trust. The 2nd Earl, Somerset Lowry Corry, is known to us through Dr Robert Richardson's fascinating description of the family's travels around the Mediterranean, up the Nile to the second cataract and into the Holy Land in 1816-18. They met many travellers, dug for antiquities at Luxor and astonished everyone with their grandeur. Ulster Historical Foundation, 2007, www.booksireland.org.uk hardback, 304 pp., 70 colour illustrations, 52 b/w, ISBN 978 1 903687 64 9, £29.99

Cultural Objects in the Age of Enlightenment

Neil Cooke drew our attention to an article by Helger Hoock of Liverpool University in History Journal 50, 1 (2007), pp. 49-72.

The article "seeks to contribute to a revisionist account of the role of the British state and the nation in building the British Museum's early antiquities collections", which ASTENE members will be visiting in the autumn. The article considers "the harnessing of political, diplomatic, and military resources to archaeological work" around the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East, and "considers the connections between archaeology and diplomacy ... and the origins of debates about preservation and spoliation." It is a well researched and well argued article on this question of should "we" have taken the antiquities – and shifts some of the blame put on British individuals like Henry Salt and Charles Fellows to the shoulders of the Royal Navy and the Foreign Office. The real 'villain' was, perhaps, the competition between European governments to gain cultural objects in the Age of Enlightenment.

Lesley Blanch, 6th June 1904 – 6th May, 2007

Lesley Blanch, who died in May shortly before her 103rd birthday, will be known to many members of ASTENE as the author of a number of books about travel and travellers in the region. The most famous, *The Wilder Shores of Lover* (1954), presented four portraits of women who travelled, or lived, in the Near East and North Africa: Isabel Burton, Jane Digby, Aimee Dubucq de Rivery and Isabelle Eberhardt. It was a best seller, and has been frequently reprinted.

In our post-Said world of deconstructed Orientalism, Blanch's romantic approach and florid prose could be dismissed, but for the obvious research, intelligence and perception that lies behind it.

Blanch's fine biography of the then neglected French Romantic Pierre Loti (1982 and recently reissued) carries the subtitle *Portrait of an Escapist*, which might apply as well to herself as to her subject. Indeed Blanch and Loti share much in common, including an unashamed indulgence in the romance and mystery that the Orient holds for the western European. Her own persona was, like Loti's, carefully crafted and controlled – only limited fragments of autobiography were ever revealed: so the identity of her first husband remains unknown! She was the last in the line of travellers of the type she wrote about: changing worlds and attitudes no longer allow for such unashamed romanticism. The obituaries also reveal a little of her self-mockery and sense of the ridiculous – which perhaps explains how she managed to carry her readers with her in her indulgences. *Robert Morkot*

Thomas Allom's Constantinople and the Scenery of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor

In 1837 Allom travelled through Constantinople, Bursa and the Aegean region making his drawings. Rev. Robert Walsh was commissioned to write the text to accompany Allom's drawings, and in 1838 their classic collaboration appeared – and has been pored over in libraries for decades. Now you can have your own copy – for £108.00 from Gorgias Press through Oxbow Books. ISBN 1-59333-139-9.

Memories of Almira Carnarvon

The review of Victor Winstone's biography of Howard Carter in Bulletin 31 reminded Henry Keown-Boyd of his family's links with her.

As a boy I knew her quite well as she was a friend of my parents. In fact I was born in her nursing home in London. I believe it went bust not long after as Almira thought it bad taste to send bills to the less affluent patients.

When I was about eighteen I remember driving us from our home in Herefordshire to catch the London train at Newport. A First Class

compartment had been booked for her and on arrival at the station we were greeted by the Station Master and a porter. As she was handed onto the train she turned and gave a pound to the Station Master, ten bob to the porter and ten bob to me. *Noblesse oblige!*

A surprising translator

Ann Revell came across a link between Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), the creator of the great dictionary, and the ASTENE region. Johnson's first published work, in 1735, was a translation from the French of Jeronimo Lobo's *Itinerario*. It was one of Johnson's efforts to make money after his father died. It earned him £5. It is interesting that he thought it worth a venture, saying as it does a fair amount about the interests of the public at the time. Lobo (1593-1678) was a Jesuit missionary, born in Lisbon. In 1621 he went to India but in 1625 he left for Abyssinia as superintendent of missions in Tigre for nearly ten years.

Fictional Travellers in the ASTENE region

Dr Robert Morkot has added another fictional references to this interest – more to follow...

From Barsestshire to the Orient

In Anthony Trollope's *Dr Thorne* (1858), set about 1853-54, Frank Gresham, heir to Greshambury:

"... had taken his degree, as arranged, and had then gone abroad for the winter, doing the fashionable things, going up the Nile, crossing over to Mount Sinai, thence over the long desert to Jerusalem, and home by Damascus, Beyrout and Constantinople, bringing back a long beard, a red cap, and a chibouk, just as our fathers used to go through Italy and Switzerland, and our grandfathers to spend a season in Paris."

Whilst writing the book Trollope was himself travelling to Egypt on his Post Office business, in order to negotiate for the transport of mail through the country. A few years later, Dr Arabin, the Dean of Barchester, travels to Jerusalem, leaving his wife to holiday in Florence on the way.

Research Resources

This section appears only in the Bulletin for members and is not transferred to the ASTENE web- site.

Who Was Who?: Index 1897-1990

If you sometimes enjoy a distraction from your main researches while you are in the library, seek out this annual biographical dictionary of people in *Who's Who* who have died during the previous year

– which has been published by A & C Black since 1849. This cumulative index – of names and dates and the volume of the entry only – is a useful introduction to the series. Covering the early years of the 1900s, you will not be surprised to learn that it includes few women. Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) is in Volume 1 (covering 1897-1915) and Winifred Blackman (who died in 1950) is there.

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Research Resources on the ASTENE website

The password for members is EBERS (all upper case).

Where are they buried?

We welcome contributions to this section which might include queries. Please send your contribution to the Bulletin Editor.

Anthony Charles Harris (1790-1869) and Selina Harris (c. 1827-1890)

Gottfried Hamernik has recently been studying the Anthony C. Harris manuscripts kept in the library of the Graeco-Roman Museum of Alexandria and some of the graves and monuments in the British Protestant Cemetery near the demolished Rosetta Gate in Alexandria, and sent photographs of the Harrises' tomb.

Harris was a British merchant in Alexandria and commissariat official (with a duty of providing food, stores and transport to the military). Apart from his mercantile activities, Harris was a collector of and dealer in antiquities (including papyri). He formed a significant collection which he gave to Seline, his natural daughter by an 'African' lady. He died on 23 November 1869.

Selina was educated in England, but, when possible, was her father's constant companion. After his death she may have had financial difficulties and part of the collection was acquired from her by the British Museum in 1872. She died at Ramla in Alexandria on 18 March 1899 and is interred with her father.

The residue of the Harris collection was left to Waynman Dixon (1844-1930). Dixon was a civil engineer from Newcastle-on-Tyne. He was associated with Benjamin Baker in the transportation of 'Cleopatra's Needle' (the fallen obelisk at Alexandria given to the British government by Pasha Mehmet Ali, which now stands by the Thames in London). While in Egypt in 1872 he also explored at the Pyramids and discovered the air passages from the 'Queen's Chamber'. He died in Great Ayton in Yorkshire on 24.1.1930.*

Florence Nightingale met the Harrises in Cairo on her return from Nubia in 1850 and is one of the few people who left a personal record of them:

*The next day we sat at home, we were weary, and the H-----s came to wish us goodbye, and to see my sacred Ibis, and compare it with the ancient sculptures – they had never seen one, it has become so rare. Mr Harris is now the best antiquarian in Egypt, and his daughter is very learned too. I was very sorry to part; she is almost the only person I can talk to about Egypt – we "understand each other". **

*(References: * Morris Bierbrier, Who was Who in Egyptology, Egypt Exploration Society, 3rd edition revised, 1995. ** Letters from Egypt: A Journey on the Nile 1849-50 (page 185) by Florence Nightingale edited and introduced by Anthony Sattin, Barrie and Jenkins, London, 1987)*

John Tweddell (1769-1799)

Tweddell was a most promising scholar who, after graduating from Cambridge, wished to become a 'diplomatist'. For this purpose he set out in 1795 to travel to the East to study "the manners and institutions" of the countries through which he passed. He kept minutely detailed journals of all he learned – but these journals are lost. While engaged in archaeological works at Athens (including with the help of the French artist Preaux, "copying every temple, every archway ... every stone, every inscription.") he died of fever on 25 July 1799. He was buried, at his own request, in the Theseum or Temple of Theseus in Athens. His burial is recorded in E.D. Clarke's *Travels* (1810-23) In 1810 Byron and others arranged that "the spot be marked with a block of marble that had been cut from the bas reliefs of the Parthenon" with a Greek inscription written by Reverend Robert Walpole. Many memorials were composed in his honour.

(References: R. Tweddell, Remains of John Tweddell, 1815; DNB 1917, XIX 1312; DNB 2004, vol. 55)

Can this burial place and marking stone still be seen?

Mark Sykes (1880 – 1919)

Sykes was a senior diplomat in negotiations for the future of the Ottoman Empire and its Arab lands, where he was widely travelled. In 1919 he died of 'Spanish' flu while attending the Versailles peace conference. His body was sealed in a lead coffin to be returned to his estate in Yorkshire. He was buried nearby in the churchyard of St Mary's at Sledmere.

Now, ninety years after his death, this traveller's remains are to be disinterred for evidence they may provide of the avian virus which is similar to the



The grave of Anthony Harris and his daughter Selina. Photograph Gottfried Hamernik.

present feared H5N1 virus. His well preserved body could give insights into the mechanism by which bird flu kills. (Source: *Guardian*, 28 February, 2007, p.9)

Notes and Queries

Any reader can submit a query for inclusion in the Bulletin. Sometimes a response comes quickly – sometimes it may take time. These queries go on the ASTENE website in the Bulletin section. The replies are only published in the Bulletin.

Is there a portrait of Robert Pashley?

Dudley Moore is looking for an image: drawing, painting or any type of picture of the traveller to Crete Robert Pashley (1805-1859).- apart from the possible self-portrait in his own book.

Can anyone help? Please email him on dmoore@studygroup.com and also send your reply to the Editor of the Bulletin.

Research Resources on the ASTENE website

The password for members is EBERS (all upper case).

Articles

Vincere est Vivere

In May, when the Queen's visit to America turned our attention on Jamestown, Virginia, we discovered an unexpected ASTENE traveller.

Captain John Smith (1580-1651) was a controversial founder of the Jamestown colony in Virginia, which in May 1007 celebrated its four hundredth commemoration as the first permanent English settlement in America. Smith's larger than life statue stands on the banks of the James River. It speaks to Smith's multiple worlds and double life. With his left hand on his sabre, Smith gazes in the direction of Europe, Asia and Africa, where he began as a soldier-adventurer: behind him lies the American coastline that as ethnographer/ historian he was among the first Europeans to explore, map and describe – as evidenced by the book in his right hand.

The first half of Smith's life, 1580-1605, one of many "braves adventures" enabled the second. He was a self-made man, an Elizabethan soldier of fortune. Born in England, in Lincolnshire, the son of a yeoman farmer, he left at 16 to fight with the Dutch for their independence against the Spanish, and then with the Imperial army of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria against the Turks in Hungary

and Transylvania. For his valiant fighting he was promoted to Captain. Wounded in a "dismal battle" in Transylvania, Smith was captured and sold as a slave to a Turkish merchant who sent him to Constantinople as a gift to his sweetheart, who in turn sent him on to her brother, an army officer commanding a government *fief* near the Black Sea. Smith murdered his abusive master, and escaped.

He found his way back through Russia and Poland to Transylvania to collect the monetary reward and a coat of arms bearing the severed, turbaned heads of three Turkish champions he had defeated in individual combat in Transylvania, over the motto: *Vincere est vivere*.

In December, 1606, a year after his return to England, Smith sailed to America on the *Susan Constant* in time to participate in the settlement of Virginia: a man well primed for new challenges by his old experiences. Smith was regarded as a troublemaker (he arrived and left the colony in chains) but in his two and half years in Virginia he became the colony's strategist, drill master, interpreter, provisioner, map-maker, naturalist, negotiator with the Indians, and as council-president, supervisor of rebellious settlers and idle gentleman.

Smith was a polarizing man. He was physically strong and worldly-wise, and he made an excellent settler and leader. But Smith was also self-assertive and arrogant, opinionated and vocal, a great believer in "God helps him who helps himself" and "he that will not work, shall not eat". His personality, obvious qualifications and low social position infuriated many of the colony's leaders and settlers. To his superiors, whom Smith considered incompetent and arrogant, Smith was a vulgar commoner with pretensions above his station.

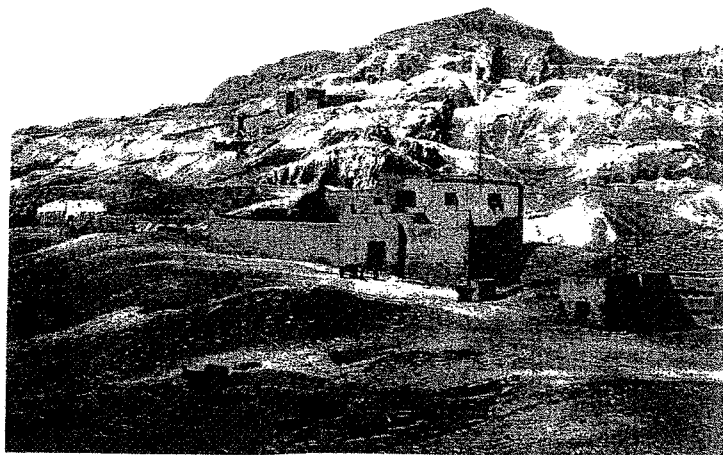
Smith returned to England in October, 1609, following an accidental gun-powder burn to the groin. Except for a short voyage, in 1614, to explore and map the Atlantic coast from Cape Cod to Maine – which he named New England – Smith remained in England. He wrote books which are among the most important sources on Virginia's founding, on early colonial policy, on the Algonquian. In 1630 he published his autobiography: *The True Travels, Adventures and Observations of Captaine John Smith. in Europe, Asia, Affrica and America*. Smith depicts a heroic figure towering above ineffectual counterparts, with a list of survivals, shipwrecks, mutinies, betrayals, captivities, encounters with Barbary pirates, and brushes with death that read larger than life.

John Smith is buried under the south aisle of St Sepulchre's church in London. His epitaph begins:

Here lyes one conquered
That hath conquered kings.
Subdu'd large territories, and done things
Which the world impossible would seem

But that the truth is held in more esteem. These words are apt. While his stories are long dismissed as bravado, modern archival and archaeological research confirms them as true.

Smith was among a group of far-sighted men (among others William Strachey, George Sandys) who had been to the Ottoman Empire before coming to the New World, and saw ahead of their time that England's fortunes would be built on shipping and trade. *Caroline Williams*



Footprints

John Smith in his own words

The Library of America in this four century celebration re-issued John Smith's writings as The True Travels of John Smith from Anno Domini 1593 to 1629, with the sub-title Captain John Smith's Writings with other Narratives 1608, selected by James Horn. Here is an excerpt.

Having listed his fellow countrymen who died in the 'dismal battel', Smith recounted his experience:

...Smith among the slaughtered dead bodies, and many a gasping soule, with toile and wounds lay groaning among the rest, till being found by the Pillagers hee was able to live, and perceiving by his armor and habit, his ransome might be better to them, than his death, they led him prisoner with many others, well they used him till his wounds were cured, and at Axopolis they were all sold for slaves, like beasts in a market-place, where everie Merchant, viewing their limbs and wounds, caused other slaves to struggle with them, to trie their strength, hee fell to the share of Basha Bogali, who sent him forthwith to Adrianopolis, so for Constantinople to his fair Mistresse for a slave. By twentie and twentie chained by the neckes, they marched in file to this great Citie, where they were delivered to their severall Masters, and he to the young Charatza Tragabigzanda. (pages 717-718)

Yanni's Collection at Gournu, 1826

Anne Katherine Elwood passed through Egypt in 1826 on her way to India with her husband. They stayed with Consul General Henry Salt in Alexandria and visited his agent at Gournu – the village on the west bank at Luxor - (the Greek Yanni d'Athanasii) before travelling across the desert to the Red Sea. This excerpt comes from Volume I of her Narrative of a Journey Overland by ... Egypt and the Red Sea ... to India (1830).

We had been up for several hours, and the sun was becoming intensely hot; we had been wandering amongst these interesting scenes so long, that at length I became quite exhausted with heat, fatigue,

exertion, and excitement; and the party* kindly proposed adjourning to the house of a Greek, a *ci-devant* agent of Mr Salt's, where we might have both shade and shelter from the sun, and where we might obtain some repose and refreshment. Here we were treated with some *modern* coffee and cakes to eat and drink, and with some *ancient* bread to look at, which had just been discovered in the Kings' Tombs, and which was supposed to be not less than three thousand years old! We also saw some bows and arrows, wrapped in cloth of saffron hue, and of very even texture; shoes and sandals of leather, made right and left, and some curious models of boats, such as were formerly used to convey the dead across the river.

She described other items – comparing them with the everyday objects of her time.

... Grinning ghastly and horribly around, "revisiting the glimpses of the moon" in their fleshly forms, were ranged several mummies, their countenances uncovered, and their features disclosed to view. They were erect, and standing against the wall. I passed close to them, and ere I had perceived in what neighbourhood I was, I had almost touched them. A sickening and a loathing sensation came over me, at being thus surrounded with the dead.

She continued to discuss her reactions, concluding ... it may be presumed they anticipated a more glorious resurrection from the grave than being thus ignominiously torn from their tombs, and exposed and examined in a manner so revolting to humanity, to satisfy the curiosity of the traveller.

* The 'party' was almost certainly Robert Hay and Joseph Bonomi who had welcomed them warmly to Luxor.

Facing the Plague in Baghdad

ASTENE accounts have seldom considered such travel hazards as the plague, although Janet Starkey offered some horrid insights into the dreaded plague season in her Southampton paper. Here, excerpts from the journal of the mission teacher, A.N. Groves in Baghdad in 1831. The outbreak was first reported on 29 March. His entry for 10 April reads:

The accounts brought us of the number of those who have died of the plague all agree that in little more than a fortnight there have perished about 7000. Besides which, an inundation of the Tigris has destroyed about 2000 houses on the other bank. The misery of the place is now beyond expression.

On 16 April he wrote:

The accounts of yesterday are worse than those of any former day. An Armenian girl told me she saw, in about 600 yards, fifty dead bodies carried to burial. The son of our next neighbour is dead.

On 19 April:

The moolah called to tell us that the number is now stationary, at about 1500 or 2000 a day. But this is out of a population which cannot now exceed 40,000!

On 28 April:

Mrs Grove's ransomed spirit took its seat among those dressed in white.

By 18 May Mr Groves could write:

Our poor servant died last night, and has left one little orphan boy with us. The water has fallen in price, and, as far as we can judge, God has nearly withdrawn this desolating plague.

Reference:

Merriment in Aleppo

Still in this comparatively little travelled area of records of travellers in the Near East one can find surprises – like Letters from the East 1837-57 by Henry James Ross, son-in-law of Lady Lucie Duff Gordon. Here he enjoys Aleppo – not quite in the manner in which the ASTENE tour plans to do.

Aleppo, where I disposed of the Mesopotamian camels and the rest of the animals, thus closing my official mission*, is the best built, best paved and cleanest town of Asiatic Turkey, and I greatly enjoyed my stay there. Many of the native Christian girls spoke French, and others who did not were in society, as nearly all the residents among themselves speak Arabic.

There was a *soiree dansante* at Yussuf Pasha's, one of the great men of the place of old family. It was given in the garden; in front of an immense basin of water, an oblong some thirty yards long, called Bahr, or Little Sea; across it were suspended many lamps, which were reflected brightly from its surface. Unluckily we had no European music, as Agmy Pasha, the military Governor, being at feud with our host, had refused the regimental band. The native musicians, however, played polkas and quadrilles after a fashion, and our host's nephew and son, Ali Pasha and Kadry Bey, danced with the ladies.

A Spectacle in Malta

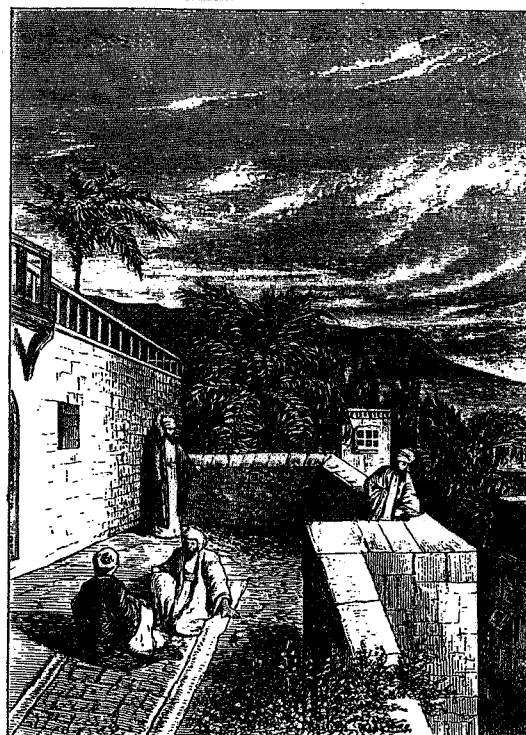
Ross was born in Malta and his description of meeting the young Benjamin Disraeli is even more delightful

When I was about twelve, Disraeli, accompanied by Mr N. Willis, the American author, came from Alexandria to Malta with letters of credit to my father, and presented himself at the office dressed in a silk dressing-gown with a guitar suspended by a broad riband round his neck. My father asked him to dine and go to the opera afterwards, and we boys were allowed to come down to dessert and to accompany the party to the theatre. Disraeli wore lace ruffles on his shirt-front and his wrist-bands, and his fingers were covered with jewelled rings; so we looked much more at him than at the scene on the stage.

Past behaviour at Palmyra

When the ASTENE group visits Palmyra in October and stays in the hotel on the site, they may look back with disapproval to the advice given visitors by Baedeker in 1906.

The modern village of Tadmor, consisting of about 50 huts, lies amidst the ruins of the old city, and is built in part of fragments of columns and other ancient material; long village-streets traverse the ruins in various directions. Visitors to the ruins need have no hesitation in entering the houses or climbing on their roofs. On account of its spring, the trading-caravans between Damascus and Baghdad all call at Palmyra.



HOUSE-TOPS.