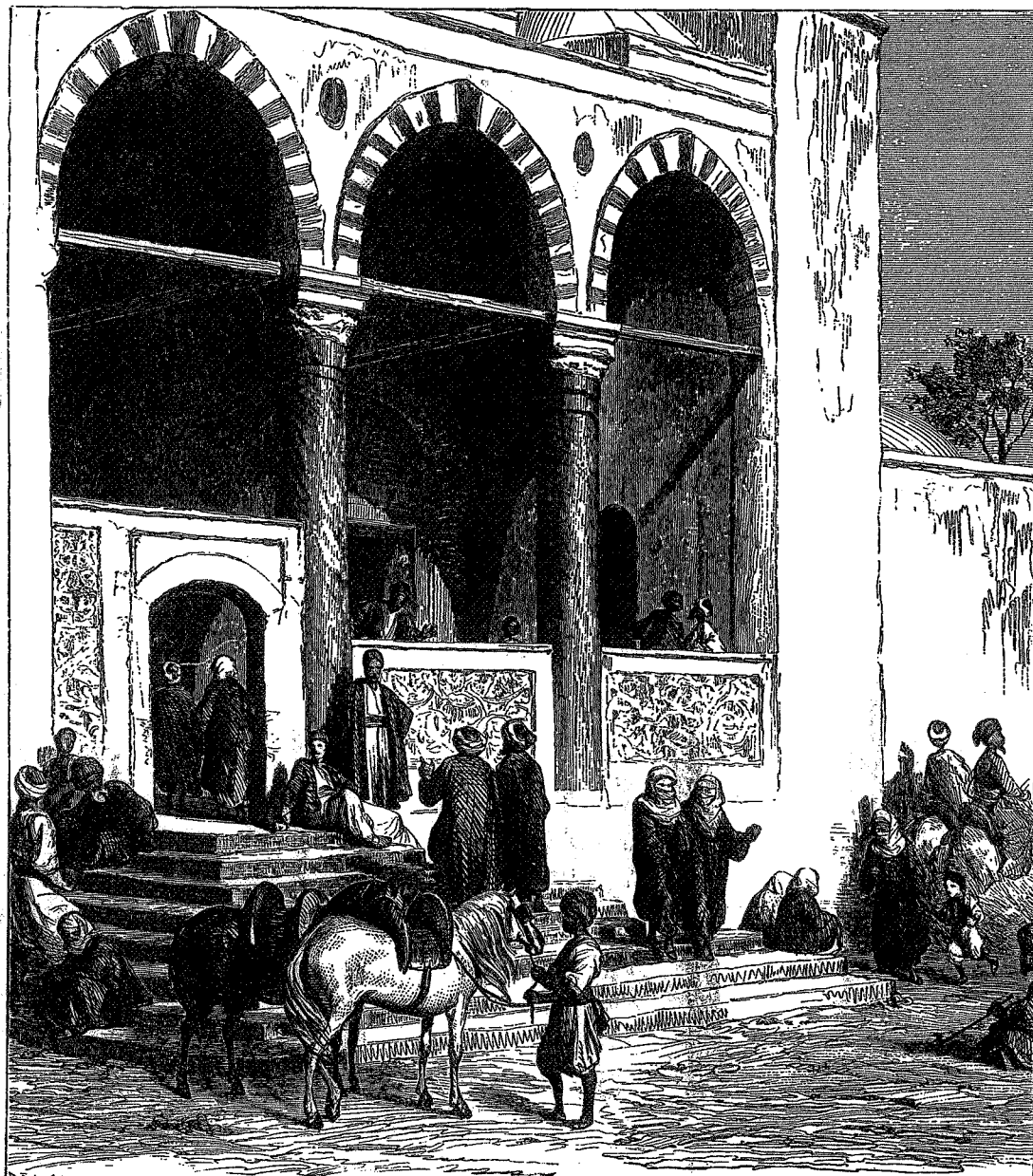


# Bulletin of the Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East: Notes and Queries

No 34

Winter 2007



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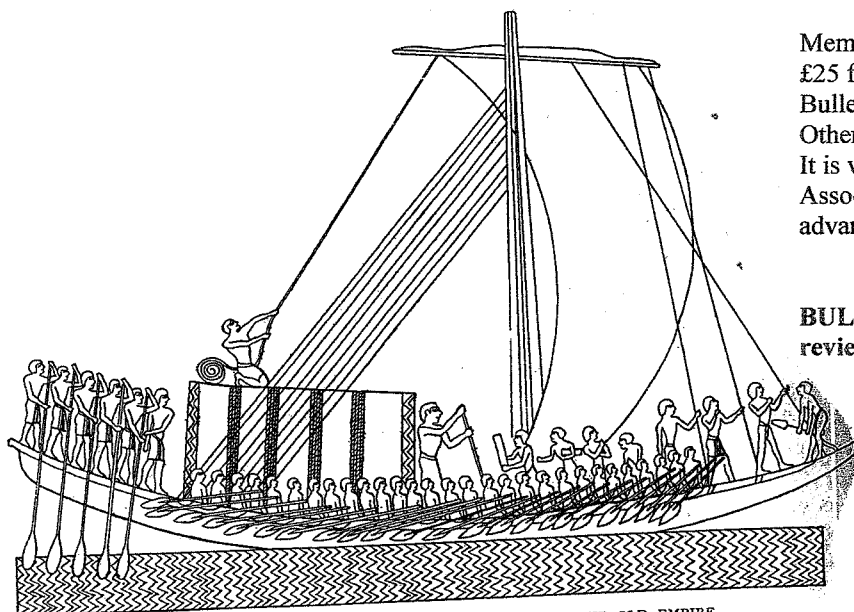
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Membership: Europe and North America £20 or £25 for two people at one address receiving one Bulletin.

Other areas and all students: £12

It is very helpful to the Treasurer and the Association if you pay on a standing order or pay in advance for three years.

**BULLETIN 35: The deadline for articles, reviews etc is 1March 2008.**



LARGE BOAT FOR TRAVELLING OF THE TIME OF THE OLD EMPIRE.  
The master is standing before the cabin, his scribes are bringing their reports to him

## ASTENE news, reports and forthcoming events

### ASTENE Tour of Syria, October 2007

It is always delightful to travel with ASTENE – with a group of cheerful friends, old and new, some very knowledgeable, but bearing their erudition lightly and sharing it willingly if requested. Non-specialists, such as myself, are never excluded. One feels like a traveller in the best ASTENE sense.

In Damascus we walked the Street called Straight and visited the enormous Umayyad Mosque – one of the most important monuments of Islam. In the souk we walked with women in long coats and headscarves and men in Arab, western and Kurdish dress – many queuing to buy icecream, a Syrian favourite. There were few other westerners or tourists and we were treated with great courtesy.

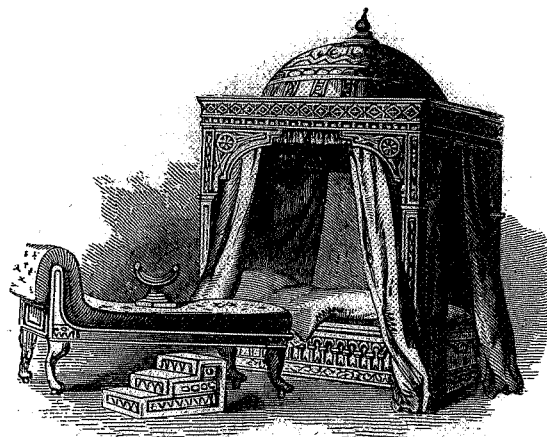
A highlight was the visit to Jane Digby's tomb in the Protestant cemetery. On her tombstone: "My trust is in the tender mercy of God for ever and ever." 26.lu.8. We visited part of her house too. Now in private ownership, this was a rare treat.

In Aleppo we stayed in the Old City and experienced fine examples of 17<sup>th</sup> century Aleppine architecture. A highlight of Aleppo was the newly opened 13<sup>th</sup> century hospital for nervous illnesses, where the amazingly modern treatment included simple vegetarian diet, music and water provided by fountains in the inner courtyards. We made a teatime visit to Barons Hotel – little changed since T.E. Lawrence, Agatha Christie, Dame Freya Stark and Gertrude Bell stayed here. Our conference was held one evening in Aleppo, when we were treated in true ASTENE fashion to six excellent and diverse papers.

At Palmyra our hotel was within the walls of Zenobia's sand-stone oasis city. The views from the terrace at sunset of the long lines of columns marching across the desert were unforgettable. Being able to walk straight out of the hotel into the ruins, it was easy to imagine oneself a traveller from a previous century.

Indeed, we were astonished one evening when out of the ruins stepped Mr Robert Wood in person, in full 18<sup>th</sup> century garb: tricorne hat, white stockings, breeches, lace ruff, waistcoat and buckled shoes, and, of course, his notebook. He explained that he had just arrived after a difficult journey and regaled us with details of this journey and his thoughts on Palmyra. He then excused himself as he had to go and assist his two companions with their task of mapping the site.

Sadly, our Chairman, Brian Taylor, was unaccountably absent and so missed this treat,



ORIENTAL COUCH AND BED—MODERN.

which he would have much enjoyed, being something of an expert on Mr Wood....

One late afternoon we spent a magical hour wandering through the immense, hilltop ruins of Hellenistic Apamea – silent except for birdsong. We lingered until the barleycorn columns were silhouetted blackly against the sunset.

Other highlights of a packed itinerary included the great castle of Crak des Chevaliers, the Roman waterwheels at Hama, the lady in the church at Ma'alula saying the Lord's Prayer for us in Aramaic, the amazing Hittite Tell at Ain Dara, complete with a splendid lion statue; the 'dead city' of Serjilla on our last afternoon, the vast and beautiful St Simeon's site which grew up after the death of the aesthete who spent more than thirty years preaching from a high column.

The tour was a huge success, in no small measure thanks to the exceptional organisational skills of Elisabeth Woodthorpe and to our excellent, patient, efficient and good-humoured guide Fayez-Alasa – now an honorary member of ASTENE.

*Sarah Wood*

#### **Papers given at the Conference in Aleppo**

Paul Hetherington: Travellers to the Cretan Labyrinth; Sonia Anderson: Sources for the English factory at Aleppo 1650-1700; Morris Bierbrier: Aleppo: city of trade; Deborah Manley: Consul Barker of Aleppo; Malcolm Wagstaff: Colonel Leake in Syria, Johanna Holaubek: The real life of the English Patient.

#### **400 years of the Dutch Consulate in Aleppo (1607-2007)**

Sadly ASTENE missed this celebration in Aleppo by two days, but fortunately publicity was delivered to our hotel. The celebrations included various exhibitions, with life-size reproductions of Rembrandt's portraits and a lecture series by distinguished Dutch speakers including 'Middle Eastern Travellers and what they can teach us about Iraq' by the present Dutch ambassador to Turkey. It was too late even to invite them to our conference.

## ASTENE visit to the British Museum

Ten of us arrived at the British Museum on Tuesday morning, 20 November, to a warm welcome from Patricia Usick who outlined a busy programme for the day ahead, organised for us by John Taylor.

We made our way upstairs to the Department of Ancient Egypt and the Sudan archive room, and Patricia explained to us the shortcomings of the various cataloguing systems, developed over the years, which now have to cope with over 100,000 objects. In particular we looked at the meticulous, handwritten records of Samuel Birch who spent around fifty years (1835-1885) cataloguing the 10,000 items in the Egyptian collection at that time. We were also shown Henry Salt's detailed plans of the Saqqara necropolis, and George Edward's beautifully coloured drawings of a collection of mummy cases.

The Department library was our next destination, and there Patricia introduced us to the intriguing Madame D'Orbiney, as revealed through her lively correspondence with Samuel Birch as she negotiated the sale of a papyrus to the Museum. English by birth, Madame D'Orbiney appears to have had several careers: the first possibly as a courtesan in the French court; the second, as a dealer in antiquities who travelled the world. (See later under *Queries*.)

When deciphered, the papyrus told a story similar to that of Joseph and Potifar's wife, except that it also involved magical spells and consequently was the first allegorical 'fairy' story to come out of Ancient Egypt.

After lunch John Taylor led us down to the basement, the home of the Egyptian stone store. We walked past shelves and alcoves packed with objects, from rows of stelae to armies of shabti, from two ton sarcophagi to carefully carved canoptic jars. A group of lion-headed Sekhmet were also of interest: some 760 of them were commissioned by Amenhotep III. Surely the ultimate Limited Edition!

A small seated statue of Queen Tetisheri, purchased in 1890, provides an insight into the difficulties that even the experts can have telling the genuine from the fake. Recent detailed assessment of this statue raised major concerns as to its authenticity. Hence its current position as a resident of the stone store.

We then inspected a collection of everyday items in use in Ancient Egypt. It included board games, chairs, stools, a wooden hoe, and musical instruments, collected by Henry Salt. Several of the objects were the original subjects of illustrations by John Gardener Wilkinson in his *Manners and Customs of Ancient Egyptians* (3 vols, 1837).

However, perhaps the most marvellous moment came when we were shown the recently restored collection of wall paintings, also collected by Henry Salt, from an unknown tomb. The scenes, involving numerous delicately painted cows and geese, flocks of wild birds and rows of elegant girls, are exquisite. To be able to examine these beautiful paintings so closely was an enormous privilege.

Then it was upstairs to the Papyri room where we saw an original section of the D'Orbiney papyrus, and the famous judgement scene from Ani's Book of the Dead.

Back in the library, Henrietta McCall completed our day with an absorbing talk regarding the discovery of Ancient Mesopotamia and the excavations of Austren and Henry Layard at Nimrud and Ninevah. She illustrated the effect his discoveries had on the early Victorians with a selection of commemorative ceramics and a gleaming array of golden jewellery, all emblazoned with the winged bull of the Assyrian

Altogether we had a wonderful day at the British Museum and would like to give a huge vote of thanks to everyone who made it such a truly memorable experience.

Angela Reid



## ASTENE around the world

Members of the Association are based in nearly two dozen countries of the world. We send out the Bulletin to them in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Syria and United States of America.

## Future Events

### To the Holy Mountains

This study day at Oxford University's Department of Continuing Education on Saturday 5th July is detailed in the enclosed registration leaflet.

The study day will be followed by ASTENE's Annual General Meeting and papers for that will accompany the next Bulletin and will include plans for an activity on the Friday preceding the study day.

We hope that another ASTENE event in June will be announced in the next Bulletin.

## Other forthcoming events

### Conferences

**Travel and Trauma: Suffering and the Journey**  
An interdisciplinary colloquium organised by Nottingham Trent University, the Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism and the University of Surrey, Roehampton on 11-12 April 2008 at St John's College, Oxford.

Many travellers are 'Dark Tourists' drawn to sites of devastation and destruction: battlefields, prison camps, places of disaster like Pompeii, which are now "as history becomes more swiftly commodified" and turned into spectacles. The colloquium will discuss the travellers and travel writers drawn to recreate these sites.

The deadline for proposals for papers is **5<sup>th</sup> January 2008**. For more information contact [Carl.Thompson@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:Carl.Thompson@ntu.ac.uk)

### **BRISMES Annual Conference 2008**

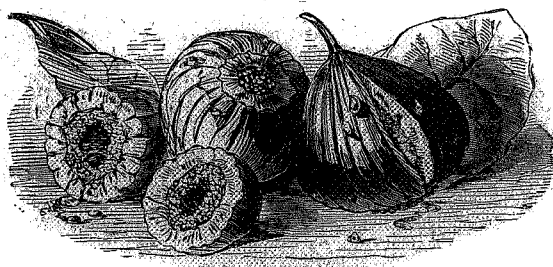
The British Middle Eastern Society's conference will be held at the Department of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies at Leeds University from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

The Theme will be "Mapping Middle Eastern and North African diasporas". BRISMES is looking for contributions which seek critical understandings of notions like 'diaspora', 'exile', 'globalisation', 'post-coloniality', 'xenophobia', etc as they relate to the Middle East.

Titles and abstracts (250 words) for 20 minute papers with a short biographical statement should be sent by **31 January 2008** to Dr Zahia Smail Salhi, Dept of Arabic and Middle East Studies, Leeds University, LS2 9JT or e-mailed to [z.sahia@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:z.sahia@leeds.ac.uk) marked "MENA diasporas". Proposals will also be considered for panels of six or more papers.

The conference will include a publishers' exhibition, filming screening and musical performance.

For further detail see [www.brismes.ac.uk](http://www.brismes.ac.uk). This BRISMES website also outlines scholarships, fellowships and other information in our field of interest.



POMEGRANATES.

### Exhibitions

#### **Egypt's Sunken Treasures**

There is still just time to see the spectacular finds made between Alexandria and Aboukir Bay which shed new light on the history of Egypt. Exhibition Hall, Bonn, Germany until 27 January, 2008.

#### **Gifts from the Gods: Images from Egyptian Temples**

This exhibition of artefacts from the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, New York closes on 18 February, 2008.

#### **Phoenicians and the Mediterranean**

This exhibition about these great navigators and travellers focuses on commerce, trade and craftsmanship. Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris until 30 March, 2008.

#### **European Cartographers and the Ottoman World, 1500-1750**

This exhibition (until 2 March, 2008) considers how maps, sea charts and atlases linked to the intellectual and geographical studies of the 15<sup>th</sup> century undermined the medieval view of the cosmos. Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago.

#### **Babylon**

This exhibition shows (until October, 2008) the unexpectedly close connections between the ancient Near East and Europe over several millennia. Museum of the Ancient Near East, Pergamon-museum, Berlin.

#### **Impressed by Light: Photographs from Paper Negatives, 1840-60**

A range of works by well known and less familiar practitioners show the development of the art. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC from 3 February to 4 May, 2008.

**Treasures: Antiquities, Eastern Art, Coins and Casts** at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, presents the most significant objects in the Museum's renowned collection, until the end of 2008.

**Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs** includes 130 works from the Egyptian National Museum illustrating the wealth and development of burial practice during the New Kingdom. The exhibition is twice the size of the 'King Tut' exhibition in London many of us remember. O2 (The 'Dome), London until 1 September, 2008.

**Maps: Finding our place in the world** presents more than 100 rare and beautiful artefacts, including maps on cuneiform tablets, medieval maps, explorers' maps, globes and much else. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore March 16-June 8.

**Objects of Instruction: Treasures of the School of Oriental and African Studies: Islamic manuscripts, ceramics, African textiles, and archaeological finds.** Brunei Gallery, SOAS, London

## Study days and weekends

The University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education runs residential courses of interest to ASTENE members at Madingley Hall, near Cambridge. See [www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk) or write for Residential Courses at Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge CB23 8AQ. These courses cost about £204 residential weekend or £127 non-residential with meals; longer courses are proportionately more.

18-20 July: Ancient Egypt: A Journey down the Nile with Dr Jenna Spillane.

21-25 July: The Ottoman Empire with William Tyler.

11-13 August: Mapping the Middle Ages with Dr Lucy Donkin, looking at a wide range of cartographical material from illustrated itineraries to mappaemundi.

15-17 August: Crusader Cyprus (1191-1489) with James Petre who promises 'a lavishly illustrated' course.

22-24 August: Religious minorities in the modern Middle East with Dr Erica Hunter.

14-16 November: The architecture of Islam: The first 1000 years with Dr Frank Woodman.

The Petrie Museum of Egyptian, University College, London WC1, runs a number of study days and talks of interest to members. Where you need to book, please ring 010 7679 4138.

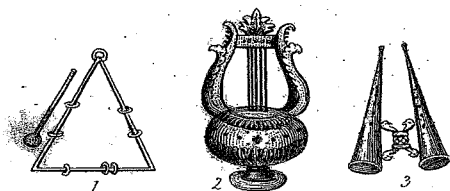
Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2-5 pm *Ancient Bling: Adornment and Hidden Histories* – a behind the scenes visit to consider jewellery in Ancient Egypt. (Free but book in advance.)

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March, 3 p.m.; and Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March 11 a.m. *Pick Your Brains!* Talks on medicine, dissection, and Ancient Egypt. (Free, just turn up.)

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2-5: Family Day: Mummification at the Petrie and then more about the dissection process at the Hunterian Museum (at the Royal College of Surgeons). Free but book.

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March: Joint study day with the National Portrait Gallery: *Roman Portraits from Hawara* (early travellers in Egypt). £20/£30. Book through the NPG on 020 7306 0055 – ask for course and study day bookings.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April 10 – 1, and Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2-5: *Drawing Faces* – a practical art workshop using the Roman portraits as inspiration. £5 entry includes materials. Book in advance.



## Research Resources

This section of the Bulletin appears only within the Bulletin and is not available on the ASTENE website.

**“I keep no journal but my friend Hobhouse scribbles incessantly”**

So Lord Byron wrote to his mother from Smyrna in March 1810. Now Dr W.J. Eliot, formerly President of the University of Prince Edward Island, has edited the *Athenian Calendar: the Diary of John Cam Hobhouse* for the days December 25 to March 5, 1810 (together with selected contemporary quotations from the published works of J.C. Hobhouse, Gordon Lord Byron and John Gall and explanatory notes). As a colleague of long standing he knew of my interest and sent me a copy. I hasten to bring it to the notice of other ASTENE members.

This is a fascinating Mss, unfortunately not yet published but at last true to Hobhouse, easily read and studied. It is an annotated transcript of British Library Add. Mss. 56527 by one who knows Athena and its environs extremely well. This work complements, even though not widely available, that of Dr Peter Cochran whose adapted Hobhouse extracts are available on his website: [www.Hobby-o.com/](http://www.Hobby-o.com/).

### The Guardian and Observer on line

Early in November the Guardian launched a searchable digital archive which will before long contain all the copies of the two newspapers: the Guardian since 1821; the Observer since 1791 – some 900,000 pages in all!

The advantage of the system used is that you can pinpoint the exact information you want but also read it in its contemporary setting and in the context of the issue in which it was reported.

The newspapers are available as an online subscription service at:

[www.guardian.co.uk/archive](http://www.guardian.co.uk/archive)

You can buy timed access with unlimited downloads. There are three options:

- \* 24 hours @ £7.95
- \* 3 days @ £14.95
- \* A month @ £49.95

You can arrange longer periods by e-mailing archive. [help@guardian.co.uk](mailto:help@guardian.co.uk)

To arrange access for your library or university, contact [syndication@guardian.co.uk](mailto:syndication@guardian.co.uk)

We would welcome a report on this service by ASTENE members who have used it for research on our region.

We would also welcome reports on other means of accessing contemporary 19<sup>th</sup> century news. We particularly welcome information about countries other than the UK.



## Queries and Replies

Please send your queries to the Bulletin Editor. They will appear in the next Bulletin and on ASTENE's website. However, the replies will only appear in the Bulletin and be sent to the person looking for information.

### A Query

#### *The Mysterious Madame D'Orbiney (1803/4-1893)*

Patricia Usick introduced Madame D'Orbiney to those who went to the British Museum with ASTENE, but she wonders if other readers (particularly those from the countries she visited) have any further information.

Born Elizabeth Fearnley, she died in New York, dubbed by the *New York Times* "The Mysterious Madame D'Aubigny". Family legend has it that she was governess at the French court of Louis Philippe (reigned 1830-48) and then became the King's mistress. There seems to be no evidence for this, but her claim to have travelled 'among the Arabs' appears to be true.

Her correspondence in the British Museum documents the 1857 negotiations for the sale of a papyrus, now known as the D'Orbiney Papyrus, which she is said to have acquired in Italy. Her letters mention Mount Lebanon and the late Lady Hester Stanhope (so perhaps after 1839), Jerusalem, Sinope (a city on the Black Sea) and possibly Algeria, and now it is known, also Egypt. She signs herself, on occasion, 'Hadji Isabey'.

In 1851 Madame appears to be writing on crested paper from Woburn (Woburn Abbey is home to the Dukes of Bedford). Her other English contacts include 'Northumberland' (formerly Lord Prudhoe to whom she offered the papyrus in 1857). In Paris the Duc D'Albert de Luywers, (a collector) and E. de Rouge, papyrologist at the Louvre, and in Italy the Cardinal Mezzofanti, Vatican Librarian and Giovanni Pietro Campana, who was exiled by the Pope for an inability to distinguish between Vatican funds and his own when collecting antiquities.

Short of cash in 1857, Madame died with money in the bank.

*Has anybody out there met her on her travels?  
Please reply to the Bulletin Editor.*

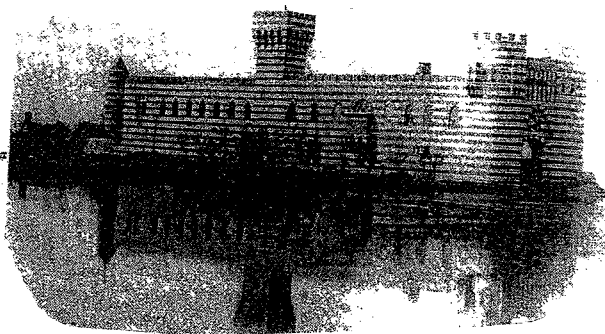


## Replies

### **Insinger's House at Luxor**

Dr Patricia Usick asked for information about 'Insinger's House' at Luxor in Bulletin 33 (see below).

Almost by return Anthony Sattin was able to report that he had just been watching a film of Egypt in 1937, shot by Rosie Newman, from the Imperial War Museum archives. There was this building, labelled as 'The Sultana's Palace' – but clearly 'Insinger's House'. The house was still standing in 1937. There were no interior shots – just the view from the Nile as Rosie Newman passed.



### **The Pillar at Rumeli Feneri**

Lucy Pollard asked in Bulletin 33 whether anyone knew of the pillar – the so-called 'Pompey's Pillar' commented upon by 17<sup>th</sup> century travellers on the Bosphorus which then disappeared.

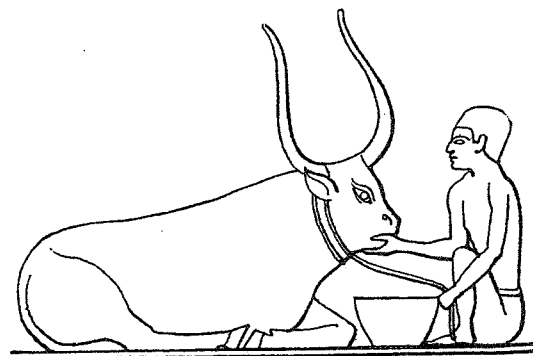
Lisa French had just come across information about this same pillar while looking for something else. "It is," she wrote, "an altar on top of the rock at Rumelli Feneri lighthouse on the European side of the east end of the Bosphorus. It is described well by Freely in his *Strolling through Istanbul*" – a book Lisa has always considered the best ever guide to the city.

Freely says, "The column itself with its Corinthian capital toppled down in April 1680 and had utterly disappeared by 1800." (p. 435)

\* Sumner-Boyd and Freely; *Strolling through Istanbul*, London, 2003.

## Book Reviews

The Book Reviews Editor is Dr Edwin Aiken who can be reached at 1 Ulster Avenue, Annalong, Co. Down, Belfast BT34 or on email at EJAiken@hotmail.co.uk



### ***A Tankee Engineer Abroad, 1855-57 (Part II The East)* by Frederick Hubbard, AuthorHouse**

Frederick Hubbard was an engineer who helped build a railroad in the United States, and he looked on his journey to the East from an engineer's point of view. He observed and commented upon building materials. He delved into Egypt's new railroads. He took notes on the weather.

He was on the Nile at the same time as fellow American, George Frances Train, said to be the prototype for Phileas Fogg in *Around the World in 80 Days*. Train also wrote a journal, reporting that there were "more Americans up the Nile this season than any other nation". If the two met, they do not mention it. Hubbard seems to have travelled alone and mentions no names.

Hubbard found Alexandria filthy and uninteresting. From Cairo he chose to make the Nile journey in a slow moving *dahabeyyah* instead of a steamer. He made the classic journey up to Wady Halfa and back again. Then he went off to Suez and Sinai. A staunch Episcopalian, Hubbard compared his odyssey to Moses and the Exodus.

Hubbard recorded the weather daily in his journal, and drew copious graphs and charts which are included in the Appendix to the current book. Unusually there was rain in January in Cairo, amazingly in Asyut and north of Luxor – almost unbelievable. Then in March there was rain and lightning in Suez – another unusual experience. This is invaluable information for those who keep track of such events.

Hubbard felt strongly about antiquity dealers who practically forced him to buy for "the dealers in antiquities ... dog the visitor from place to place with coins, scarabs, dried hands, feet and heads, mummy shawls, fragments of coffins, vases, mummified birds and reptiles, and a thousand and one curiosities, real and imitated, which the visitor is importuned to purchase. He cannot deny them; they cling to him like shadows..."

Where others commented on the amazing effort of moving a boat through the cataracts, Hubbard observed that the cliffs were full of felspar, shales and sandstone. A true rock hound's delight....

Back in Cairo, Hubbard went to the Pyramids twice, and climbed them twice: first amid the turmoil of travellers, donkeys and flowing-robed Arabs, and second, alone, a much richer experience.

The book is illustrated by enticing images: mostly his drawings, maps, plans and even a chart of the

chemical composition of the Dead Sea. There are photographs (by other travellers) in the text, but also an appendix from the collection of his brother Robert's work: unique enough to be refreshing.

The book is not well presented: published by AuthorHouse, one of the growing number of print-on-demand publications who offer the opportunity of putting all the hidden journals into print. What a bonanza for researchers!

For those interested in pursuing Frederick Hubbard further, the Hubbard Family Papers are in the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan.

Cassandra Vivian

### ***Power and Passion in Egypt: A Life of Sir Eldon Gorst, 1861-1911*, by Archie Hunter, I.B.Tauris, London, 2007; 276 pp., ISBN 9781845113643, £35**

Sir Eldon Gorst served as British Consul General 1907-11, during the British occupation of Egypt – a time that came to be called "the veiled protectorate". Despite his modest title, Gorst was effectively the ruler of Egypt, wielding authority that many kings and sultans would have envied. In the historical record, however, he is overshadowed by his well-known predecessor, Lord Cromer, and his even more famous successor, Lord Kitchener. Yet, Gorst is intrinsically a much more tragic one, therefore, his story is well worth the telling.

Gorst came to power at the moment when the grip of the British occupation had grown stronger than ever, but had awakened nationalist forces determined to loosen that grip, indeed to throw it off entirely.

Things had come to a difficult pass and the appointment of the highly-qualified Gorst shows that the new Liberal government in London recognised the need for change. Eschewing Curzon's heavy-handed methods, Galt's approach, in his own words, was one of "pulling the strings in the background and let others do the shouting, provided I had my own way." (p.187) as he persuaded the immediate goal of increasing Egyptian participation in government. After a promising beginning, he soon found it impossible to steer a steady course between Egyptian nationalism and British imperialism. The nationalist thought his measures did not go nearly far enough nor fast enough; the British believed he was giving away too much.



Gorst made his difficult task even harder by some naïve but serious political mistakes, such as an ill-advised scheme to extend the concession of the Suez Canal Company. Toward the end of his tenure in Egypt, he admitted that things were not going altogether well and reversed some of his lenient policies, while remaining optimistic about the long-term prospects. Although Galt's resignation was forced by declining health, his replacement by the autocratic Lord Kitchener was a clear repudiation of his policies.

When Galt died in 1911, at the age of 50, his tenure in Egypt was widely viewed as a failure. Only with the passing of time did it become apparent that he almost certainly left the situation in Egypt more hopeful than it would otherwise have been.

As a work of Anglo-Egyptian history, and especially of the Western encounter with Egypt, *Power and Passion in Egypt* does not have many new things to offer. The political reforms, which were Galt's greatest contribution, and his greatest failure, all passed over in too few pages to convey any true understanding of their dynamics or significance. Despite the many years that Galt spent in Egypt – he first arrived as a junior officer in 1886 – one never gets a strong sense of geographical place, the Fayoum, for example, is described simply as an oasis" and as "a very extensive one covering a huge area" (p.86) Moving to the other side of the Nile into Egypt's breathtaking Eastern desert, the prose waxes somewhat more lyrical.

Also Galt's life would be an excellent vehicle for studying the sealed social barriers that had developed in Egypt between British and Egyptian society – something that is not done in this book. Finally, through Galt we could learn more about some of his distinguished subordinates, whose sojourns in Egypt could provide fascinating insights into cultural encounters, as well as political and diplomatic history, but those avenues are not followed.

The strength of *Power and Passion in Egypt* lies in its characterisation of Gorst, which the author (who is Gorst's great-nephew) presents with a sure touch. By intimately exploring his subject's personal life, Archie Hunter convincingly explains the combination of ambition and tenacity, and sheer ability, that carried Gorst to the top of the British administration in Egypt. The reader sees a real person confronting forces that were stronger even than the considerable talents of Sir Eldon Gorst that takes us a step closer to understanding what lay behind the veil that concealed the British protectorate of Egypt.

Jason Thompson

*The Sanusi's Little War: The amazing story of a forgotten conflict in the Western Desert 1915-17* by Russell McGuirk, Arabian Publishing, London, 2007, 332 pp, 10 maps, 50 ills,

In November 2007 the Sunday newspapers reported the fascinating discovery of a soldier's dispatch bag, uncovered in the sands of the Western Desert where it had lain since the Second World War. How much more fascinating is McGuirk's thorough, well-researched and well-presented account of an earlier war when the Turco-Sanusi army invaded Egypt.

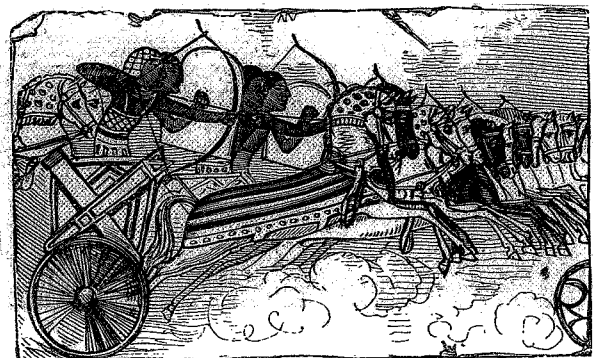
Based on meticulous research of archives in the Sudan Archive in Durham, the Middle East Centre, Oxford, and the Foreign Office and War Office, published sources and family archives, McGuirk relives long-forgotten campaigns and provides insights into military manoeuvres. There are insightful portraits of extraordinary characters from the Coastguards, including Leopold Royal to the Orientalist Baron Max von Oppenheim and the tragic Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif al Sanusi and the Sanusiyya movement.

The book revolves around 92 mainly Welsh survivors of *HMS Tara* torpedoed off Sollum, who were captured by Turkish and Libyan forces and kept as prisoners-of-war in the Libyan Desert until they were liberated by the Duke of Westminster, leading Rolls Royce armoured cars and Model T Fords.

McGuirk provides fascinating excerpts from contemporary sources and personal archives of Coastguard officers, including Andre von Dumreicher's camel patrols of the Egyptian Coastguard Administration in search of smugglers, excerpts from the diaries of D.J. Davis and A. Marsh of *HMS Tara*, and the U-35 logbook, details of early Royal Flying Corps reconnaissance of Suez, Captain Gwatkin-William's account of his attempts to escape from Bir Hakim, revelations of secret missions by Germans and Turks to al-Sanusi, as well as accounts of the colonial and British servicemen and Western Desert intelligence. Most surprising is to discover the role played by T.E. Lawrence just before he became a legend

Not only a very enjoyable read, but an exemplary piece of research with a comprehensive index, Arabic names correctly transliterated and a useful bibliography – a fabulous discovery!

Janet Starkey



EGYPTIAN WAR CHARIOTS.

*Napoleon in Egypt: 'The greatest glory'* by Paul Strathern, Cape, London, 2007, 480 pp., 9780224076814, £20

Paul Strathern, author *The Medici*, has produced an important new book of much interest to many ASTENE members. *Napoleon in Egypt: the greatest glory* is a vivid and comprehensive portrait of the famous emperor's Egyptian campaign. Thoroughly contextualised and rich with the fruits of research, this work adds significantly both with the collection of literature on the French Empire and on travel in Egypt. Dealing at length with the fascinating amalgam of political perspectives among Napoleon's fellow military leaders, Strathern paints a much fuller picture of the invasion of Egypt than readers of non-specialist texts have been accustomed to seeing and this is very welcome.

By the detail on the activities of the savants and soldiers, Nelson and the Battle of the Nile, the eventual departure of Napoleon from Egypt and the aftermath of his campaign, this book ensures that there historical data and perspectives to suit a range of readers, from historians to geographers to post-colonial scholars.

Edwin Aiken

*The Sultan's Procession: The Swedish Embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657-1658 and the Ralamb paintings* by Karin Adahl, London, 2007

Claes Ralamb was the Swedish envoy to the Ottoman Court in 1657. While there, he commissioned twenty paintings depicting an imperial procession through Constantinople. Here, these paintings are reproduced with a technical analysis of their conservation, and a full history of Ralamb and his mission and 100 watercolours of people in Ottoman society – providing a wonderful insight into the 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman court ..

Janet Rady

*Crimean Journal: An Eye-Witness Account of the Charge of the Life Brigade* by Fanny Duberly, 1855, foreword by John Barham, 2006, The Long Riders' Guild Press ([www.classictravelnooks.com](http://www.classictravelnooks.com)), ISBN 1-59048-235-2, £10.99

Fanny Duberly's journal speaks strongly for itself; The introduction considers – in rather conventional terms – the background to this strong-willed, horse-loving English heroine who travelled – almost uncomplaining through the horrors of war and the beauties of the country. Fanny was pretty and vivacious and articulate and eager to take advantage of these attributes to advance her husband and get to places ladies did not even try to reach – often being too dangerous and certainly too nasty and uncomfortable. It was then customary for civilians to watch pitched battles and Fanny was one of such an audience. Her book is an excellent account of travel through war and stands up very well to the test of time.

Deborah Manley

*The Bradt Travel Guide to Syria* by Diane Darke, Bradt, 2006, ISBN 077 68 354 613, £14.99

Inevitably this review must be based only on our recent trip and on this one guide to Syria. The guide, however, seems to be a master of its class. The introductory background information is particularly good, especially in its warm praise for the kindness and hospitality of Syrian people, which provided answers to the nervous questions of family and friends, who felt that a decision to travel to Syria was tempting fate.

The tourist information was equally sound, in our experience. Some quibbles could be raised; some were. The all-enveloping and unlovely outer garment imposed on foreign ladies entering the great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus did not appear 'grey'. However, colour perception varies. Other complaints had no more substance. The necessity for selectivity on our short visit to the National Museum was made clear, but the details given about the principal exhibits facilitated this.

The guide would scarcely be expected to evoke the peace and tranquillity of the stone buildings of the Seydnaya Convent in their setting of pines, nor the pleasure of the walk through the astounding defile between the monasteries of Mal'lula. Its description of the extraordinary Baghdad Café was satisfyingly accurate, as also that of Palmyra, but again it could scarcely suggest the impact of the astonishing ruins.

The term 'magnificent' applied to the Krak des Chevaliers seemed thoroughly justified, despite the difficulty of forming a clear idea of its plan on a short visit. The visit to the water-wheels at Hama failed to detect their promised 'moaning', but allowed astonishment at their structure, and regret that their service to irrigation had been replaced by a more efficient, but less environmentally-friendly method. The long walk through the Cardo at Apaamea was relieved by plants, birds and lizards seen along the way, and also by the villagers offering antiquities, as correctly predicted – although they were scarcely 'furtive'.

The site of the Hittite Temple at 'Ayin Dara was indeed 'quite lovely, as promised, and gave an excellent view over the 'fertile and heavily treed' landscape northwest of Aleppo. The Basilica of St Simeon is beautifully described in the guide, with some attempt to suggest the feelings it evoked in many.

The view of the Citadel in Aleppo justified its description as 'dramatic'. The description of the Souk seemed largely to deal with areas we did not visit – but the pervasive scent of spice stalls was entrancing, and the excellence of the baked goods was evident from our subsequent lunch. However, for many, the star of the day went to the imaginative displays at the 'remarkable' mental hospital, the Bimaristan Arghoun.

The last afternoon we set off for Serjilla. A tearing wind made it difficult to appreciate the appreciate the 'eerie attraction' promised, but the buildings lived up to the guide's description, and a few autumn crocus flowers in bloom made it easier to believe in the former fertility of the land.

In short, the Bradt Guide proved thorough and trustworthy and an excellent background for the information provided by our ever-helpful Syrian guide.  
*John Revell*



*"The all-enveloping and unlovely outer garment imposed on foreign ladies...."*

***Egypt through Writers' Eyes by Deborah Manley and Sahar Abdel Hakim, published by Eland, London, 2007, ISBN 9780955010 56 9, £12.99***

*Egypt through Writers' Eyes* is an excellent primer for the corpus of travel literature. The book's contents dispel the notion that every traveller's account is written in the same style, that all travellers see the sights in the same way, and all travel for the same reasons.

The book is well organised starting with a brief introduction and a map of Egypt labelling the sites mentioned by the writers. Then follow 44 excerpts from travel accounts dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century Granadine traveller Ibn Jubayr up to the present. The excerpts are arranged in broad geographical categories based on the contents of the excerpt. The book concludes with a chronology of the extracts, short biographies of the writers, a bibliography with full details of the books quoted from, and an index.

The two editors, both founding members of ASTENE, have made excellent choices to illustrate the great variety of style, interest and form of travel accounts. I was very happy to see that fiction excerpts by Naguib Mahfouz, for one, were included for I have long felt that much can be learned about time and place from contemporary fiction. Autobiography can give a very strong impression of what a place is like at a point in time and selections from Sayyid Qutb and Jean Said Makdisi are good illustrations. The anthropology of Winifred Blackman, the pious thoughts of Ahmad bin Tuwayr al-Janna and the storytelling of Roger Lancelyn Green give an indirect impression of the milieu in which these thoughts were created.

In this collection is also demonstrated the great variety within 'classic' travel writing. There is

much to be learned on the practical level from Deborah Manley's experiences of getting from point A to point B, while Florence Nightingale's thoughts go to flights of fancy as she gazes upon and into the temples of Abu Simbel. We experience Cairo through the four senses of the blind Taha Hussein and the harsh beauty of the desert with the military officer James Hanson.

Coming to the bibliography at the end of the book provides the welcome means of ticking off those items to read in full after the taste of the extracts. I recommend this book to all readers because all lovers of the written word will find something irresistible.  
*Diane Bergman*

***Syria through Writers' Eyes by Marius Kociejowski, published by Eland, London, 2006, ISBN 0 907871 84 4, £12.99***

Sitting reading on the terrace of the Zenobia Hotel with Palmyra at the gate is the perfect setting for this book. One can populate the site with Robert Wood's arrival in 1751; and Lady Hester Stanhope's extravagant 'crowning' as Queen of the Desert in 1813 – no wonder it all rather went to her head!

Marius Kociejowski has brought together a wonderful range of writers from the Acts of the Apostles as Saul arrives in Damascus, to Isabel Burton's introduction to shopping in the wondrous 'bazaars' in 1870 – where she chose – just as the ASTENE travellers did this October – "pretty things inlaid with choice woods" and remembered "to cover all our heads and bare our feet to show respect when we visited the mosque." We, like Mrs Burton, could resist "the incense burners, rose-water stoups . . . and what not." But they are all still available... And we, like Mark Twain, knew that Damascus "measures time not by days, months or years, but by the empires she has seen rise and prosper and crumble to ruin..."

This collection by bringing travellers through the centuries right into one's present gives a new perspective to journeying. I cannot recommend it too highly as a book that should be with you in Syria. It includes a word of warning in planning your itinerary from Robin Fedden: "Any castle after Krak is an anti-climax ... and for this reason it should be visited last."  
*Deborah Manley*

***Egypt and Austria III: The Danube Monarchy and the Orient (Proceedings of the Prague Symposium 11-14 September, 2006, edited by J. Holoubek, H. Navratilova and W.B. Oerten, Prague, 2007, ISBN 978-80-86277-57-8, 272 pp., illustrated, paperback***

This carefully edited and handsomely produced volume contains 25 papers presented at a symposium organised by the Czech Institute of Egyptology, and financed mainly by the Czech Academy of Sciences, and held in Prague in 2006.

In the introduction the symposium is charmingly described as 'a joint workshop', which somehow reminds one of William Morris, but the meeting was faithful to the term.

The papers are factual, informative, wide ranging and mostly of high quality. The title does not cover all the permutations of the main theme of the symposium, which ranged as far as the spread of Egyptianizing motifs in the Czech lands, the history of Egyptology, the battle of Vienna in 1683, and other topics. Some are truly original, such as Sarah Lemmens' paper on travelogues on Egypt as a mirror of Czech self-perception around 1918, or J. Janach's discussion of the connection of the northern bald ibis (*Geronticus eremita*) with Austria and Egypt.

I should single out the following articles as being of particular interest to ASTENE members:

A. Blaschek: \* Alfred von Kramer (1829-1889): Orientalist, Diplomat, Kulturisker (pp 27-36); M. Chahrour: A peaceful conquest: Austrian physicians and natural scientists in Egypt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (pp. 37-50); Fr. Dospel: Fr. Ramedius Prutky OFM and the Holy Roman Emperor Francis I; G. Hamernik: \* Anton Rittervon Laurin, Diplomat, Sammler und Ausgraber Betrachtungen zu einer nich gerwurdigten Karriere; J. Holaubek: \* Leo Reinisch, a great Egyptologist and a patron of women's scholarship; T. Kajfez: \* Ignacij Knoblehar (1819-1857): A missionary and explorer of the Nile; A. Mackova: \* Travel Clubs; W. Sauer: Egyptian migration to the Hapsburg Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; A. Selander: Kronprinz Rudolf's Begegnungen mit der wissenschaft auf seine Agyptenreise; L. Storchova: Orientalische Gegenwelten zur Altentatskonstruktion des Nahen und 'Femeren' Ostens in Dohmischen Reisebwncchten du Frihen Neuzeit; M. Sedivy: Metternich und Mehemet Ali; M. Vesela: Alois Musil and Islamic archaeology.

I feel there is one defect in the publication: it is an absence of an index of personalities mentioned in the text. But, otherwise, well done! We look forward to the next symposium. *Jaromir Malek*

\* ASTENE members

## Other books etc

### The Long Riders' Guild Press

This company boasts that they publish "the world's finest collection of classic travel books". There are not many titles of travel in our region apart from Hassanein Bey's *The Lost Oases*, Frederick Burnaby's *On Horseback through Asia Minor* and Christina Dodwell's *A Traveller on Horseback* (through Eastern Turkey in the 1980's). See their website: [www.classictravelbooks.com](http://www.classictravelbooks.com). Perhaps you might suggest some titles worthy of inclusion in their list.

## Classical Geographical Dictionary by Laurence Echard, 1715

*This Dictionary published in London in 1715 was drawn to our attention and gives an insight into what early 18<sup>th</sup> century travellers knew of Egypt.*

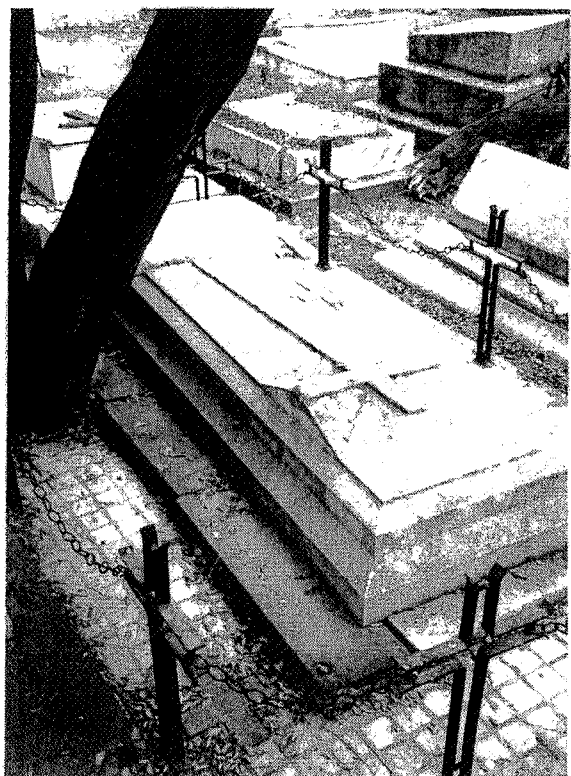
*Aegyptus, Aegypt* The country to all call'd by the Ancients, was part in Asia and part in Africa. 'Twas divided into *Inferior* and *Superior*. Of its antiquity, and the Discipline of its Priests, we find Remembrances in Innumerable authors, here Dadalus (sic), Melhampus, Pythagorus, Homer, Solon, Mufans, Plato, Democritus, Apollonius, Tyaneous study'd, and carried home to their own Countries, the Learning of the Aegyptians, who are thought to be the first inventors of the Arts. Macrobius calls *Artium Matrem*, its Inhabitants are term'd *omnium philosophce disciplinarum Parentes*. As to the Fertility of the Country, all the antient Authors are full of it.

## Where are they buried?

*We welcome information for this section of the Bulletin from members. It would be especially interesting to have information about graves in countries across the world – particularly those in the ASTENE area itself.*

### Jane Digby

During the ASTENE visit to Damascus we visited the Protestant Cemetery and particularly lingered at the grave of Jane Digby.



## William Martin Leake

Malcolm Wagstaff provided the following information.

Colonel Martin Leake is buried in Kensal Green Cemetery in London and features on their website list of *prominetti*. According to Leake's biographer, J.H. Marsden ( *A Brief Memoir of the life and writings of the Late Lieutenant-Colonel William Martin Leake*, London, 1864) this is the inscription:

*In Memory of  
William Martin Leake, FRS etc,  
Late Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Artillery  
Second Son of John Martin Leake, Esquire, of  
Thorpe Hall, Essex*

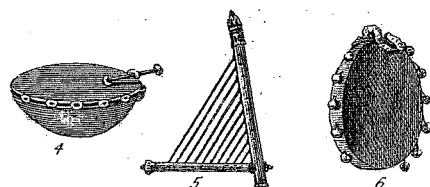
*An accomplished scholar,  
and unwearied searcher after truth,  
He rescued the early history of Greece from  
obscurity,  
and the modern from misrepresentation,  
in a series of learned works  
which have caused his name to be honoured  
in every country  
where literature is cultivated.  
His life  
was illustrative of those grave, modest, noble traits  
of character  
which adorn intellectual pre-eminence.*

*He was born January 14, 1777,  
He died January 6, 1860*

## Major Adrian Lowry-Corry

Lord Belmore, descendant of the third Earl of Belmore who was accompanied around the Mediterranean, to Egypt and the Near East in 1816-7 by his wife and two sons and by Dr Robert Richardson, who published the account of their journeying, would like someone to assist him.

His grandfather, Major Adrian Lowry-Corry of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps died while on military service in Egypt on Saturday, 21 February 1921. He is buried in the Military and War Memorial Cemetery, Chatby, in Alexandria. Lord Belmore would very much like to have a photograph of his grandfather's grave. Will any reader be in Alexandria and be willing to visit the cemetery and record the grave? The registration reference is Q580. If you can help, please contact the Editor ([debmanley@beeb.net](mailto:debmanley@beeb.net) or by telephone on 01865 310284) and I will put you in touch.



## The Desert Poets of the Second World War

Why did the poets come to the desert?  
They learned the meaning of an oasis,  
the meaning of heat, fellahin's phrases,  
tents behind the Khamsin-blasted dannert\*  
Edwin Morgan (a)

\* Barbed wire

We are accustomed to reading accounts of solitary travellers to the Near East, of the scholars, archaeologists and artists who opened up the colourful desert lands to the self-absorbed, complacent European world. What we fail to recall, perhaps, is that by far the most numerous European visitors to these countries over the one hundred and fifty years, from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were the members of the British armed forces. They first landed in numbers in 1801 to oust the remnants of Napoleon's brutal but unsuccessful army. This had established, nevertheless, the *savants* which he had so perceptively recruited for Egypt. In 1882 there was a further occupation and the virtual annexation of the whole country under the pretext of securing the Suez Canal and ensuring that the financial debts in respect of its construction were repaid. The troops remained, in substantial numbers, until 1898 to provide for the incursion into the Sudan to rescue General Gordon and to confront the Mahdi. During the First World War the country was used as a base for the Gallipoli landings, the Palestinian Campaign and, famously, for the adventures of T.E. Lawrence and the Arab Revolt.

The Second World War involved the return of servicemen in large numbers from Britain, the then Empire and from friendly but occupied European countries, with the need to defend Egypt and the Suez Canal. This was initially from the Italians, but subsequently from the more threatening Deutches Afrika Korps under General Erwin Rommel. Accounts of the war in the desert in Egypt, Libya and eventually Tunisia, form the basic fare of military history. These range from the 'Official Histories' down to the personal memoirs describing the hardships of fighting not only the enemy but also the heat and thirst on barren featureless sand and rock. The soldiers, apart from a small percentage of regular servicemen who may well have already served in Egypt or India, were a mixture of conscripted men and volunteers who were unlikely to have been abroad – anywhere – and were demonstrably disgusted to find themselves in a very hot, dusty and dirty country after a long, uncomfortable and crowded journey around the Cape of Good Hope. Warfare soon became their main concern and they experienced

the desert in all its fury together with the ever-present dangers from the enemy.

Into this unpromising scenario, however, came a remarkable flowering of poetry which deserves a much wider audience than it presently obtains. These were young men of all abilities, from recent schoolboys to undergraduates, labourers and tradesmen, all scooped up into a new and dangerous world where their verses echoed the great themes of all poetry – of love, of death, of exile and, inevitably, of war. Their writing found its way into newspapers and regimental magazines, to families at home and, in some cases, into small volumes of collected verse. In due course, anthologies were made by soliciting contributions from an army which was by now disappearing away to the west – to Tunisia, and from there either to land in Italy or to return to the United Kingdom to prepare for the invasion of Europe.

Cairo, which houses General Headquarters and a vast assemblage of depots, barracks, training schools, and hospitals, was the hub of these literary activities and was also the home of many thousands of exiles and refugees who were employed in supporting roles. Consequently, the city, and to a lesser extent Alexandria, became a dusty, heaving metropolis providing not only the base for the logistics of war but a great soup of recreational outlets for all forms of self-indulgence – satirically described in the following rhyme:

We never went west to Gezira  
We never went north to the Nile,  
We never went past the Pyramids,  
Out of sight of the Sphinx's smile,  
We fought the war in Shepheard's and the  
Continental Bar,  
We reserved our punch for the Turf Club  
Lunch,  
And they gave us the Africa Star. (b)

In several verses G.S. Fraser wrote more seriously about Cairo:

The streets of Cairo now  
Call with too many colours  
In all their beggars' voices;  
And broken lights allow  
Sorrows to flow like odours  
From the ambiguous houses. (c)

The writers of verse, both military and civilian, were able to repair to clubs, libraries and private houses where a number of amorphous groups came into being of which the 'Salamander' and Personal Landscape' groups were the most prominent.

But the fighting was taking place in the desert.

The silence of vast spaces, where even  
The wind is soundless from the lack of any  
Obstacle to vent its opposition on.

Parched earth, whose sterile dust the burning winds,  
In choking clouds with aimless fury, sweep  
Across vast treeless plains without intent,

The yeastless flour of dread Death's bitter bread.  
(d)

There was vicious fighting in the desert but it was soldier against soldier – the native residents along the North African littoral were only peripherally involved, having to endure opposing armies as the fighting moved from east to west and west to east on several occasions. Even General Rommel was constrained to call it a '...war without hate.' But combat there was. Keith Douglas, the outstanding poet of the campaign, who had been a student under Edmund Blunden, the First World War poet and writer, wrote with piercing clarity about soldiering.

Now in my dial of glass appears  
the soldier who is going to die.  
He smiles and moves about in ways  
His mother knows, habits of his.  
The wires touch his face: I cry  
NOW. (e)

Keith Douglas was killed in France a few days after D-Day.

Another young soldier wrote wistfully about home a few months before he was to die at Anzio in Italy.

Tell me the heather on the hill,  
Is it still  
So brightly beautiful?  
Do the willows, where the swallows  
wheel,  
Still fill the eye  
With shadow-woven imagery? (f)

The very recent death (17 November 2007) of Vernon Scannell removes from us one of the pre-eminent poets of the later years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who served in the desert and revisited, in verse, his time in North Africa; another is Edwin Morgan. Desert poetry is to be found in anthologies of Second World War verse, some under the 'Oasis' imprint. Collected verse of men who served and wrote their poetry 'in the field' may be found for Norman Cameron, John Cromer, Keith Douglas, Gavin Ewart, G.S. Fraser, Hamish Henderson, John Jarman, Sorley Maclean, Erik de Mauny, Edwin Morgan and Victor Selwyn.

For fairly obvious reasons, service in the desert was not conducive to the writing of novels or longer narratives. Two considerable works did, however, have their gestation during this time – *The Alexandrian Quartet* (*Justine*, *Balthazar*, *Mountolive*, and *Clea*) by Lawrence Durrell, who was a Press Officer in both Cairo and Alexandria, and *The Levant Trilogy* (*Danger Tree*, *The Battle Won or Lost* and *The Sum of Things*) by Olivia Manning, who was married to a British Council lecturer. Two Egyptian novelists also produced significant works relating to the war period – the Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz and Stratis Tsirkas.

But the story has not quite ended. General Sir Archibald Wavell who was the British Commander in Cairo and deployed his troops over several



campaigns in the Near East and North East Africa in addition to the Western Desert, had as his relaxations riding and reading poetry. On departing Egypt for India in 1941, he began to compile his significant anthology of poetry in English, all of which he 'had' by heart. The resulting volume, *Other Men's Flowers*, was a major achievement and it remains in print today.

Do seek out these verses, read and enjoy them and remember the soldier-travellers who wrote them. They should not be lost where '... boundless and bare, The lone and level sands stretch far away.'  
George Hutcheson

#### References

- a. From 'North Africa' by Edward Morgan in 'Sonnets from Scotland, Carcanet Press, 1994
- b. Apparently anonymous, quoted in 'Alamein' by John Bierman and Colin Smith, Penguin/Viking, London, 2002
- c. G.S. Fraser, from 'The streets of Cairo' in poems of G.S. Fraser edited by Ian Fletcher and John Lucas, Leicester University Press, 1981;
- d. M. St J. Wilmoth, from 'The Desert' in 'Poems from the Desert', George G. Harrap and Co, London, 1944;
- e. Keith Douglas, from 'How to Kill' in 'Poems from the Desert' in Keith Douglas 'Collected Poems', Faber and Faber, London, 1966;
- f. D.G.S. Mc Murtrie, from 'Say All These Things' in 'Diary of a Heart', privately printed, Oxford, 1951.

#### A Soldier-traveller's loss is found

As mentioned earlier, the media were intrigued in November by a British traveller's bag which was found in the Egyptian desert not far from Cairo. It had belonged to a British soldier and lain there since 1942 until it was discovered under a thin layer of sand by a tour guide. Inside it were letters written to the soldier (Alan Ross of Burnley, Lancashire) by his sister and other family members. Mr Ross died three years ago, aged 86, and the bag will now be sent to his sister.



BEDOUIN WOMEN GRINDING CORN.

## Footprints

### Encampment of Ibrahim Pasha, near Jaffa, 1836

Pat Wagstaff drew attention to John Carne's description of Consul John Barker's villa at *Suadeah In Syria, the Holy Land, and Asia Minor* etc a book of illustrations by the great topographical artist W.H. Bartlett. On the following page (page 30) there was a description and commentary on the camp of Pasha Mehemet Ali's son and general, Ibrahim Pasha.

The animated scene of the camp of Ibrahim in the environs of Jaffa, was visited on a lovely day in May, the heat tempered by a fresh sea-breeze: the foliage and the fruits on every side were out in their fullest glory. The usual stillness without the walls had given place to the sounds of a busy but not tumultuous camp: order and discipline were everywhere visible; the Arab, the Nubian, the Turk, the Frank, all met under the same banner; the knolls, the sands as well as shades, the dells, were white with tents, and peopled with flashing piles of arms, and beautiful coursers feeding, and officers smoking at their ease. The tents of the Pasha were on a lofty mound fronting the sea, on whose bosom he waited to see afar off the coming of his succours, ere he advanced into the interior.

### Wary of travellers

Yanni d'Athanasi, who inhabited a house at Gournu on the west bank of the Nile at Luxor in which there is much interest at present, saw many travellers and wrote of them with the weary voice of a latter day tour guide. From his *Researches and Discoveries in Upper Egypt*, 1836.

Amongst the numerous travellers, who from time to time proceed to Memphis and the pyramids. there are very few who observe with attention what they come across, and reflect upon what they see. The great number of them content themselves with entering the pyramids, and casting a glance at the anthro-sphinx and a tomb; then mount their asses and make their departure, writing upon their tablets that on such a day, in such a month, they had examined with the greatest attention the pyramids, &c.&c. We very soon see them on their way to the second cataract, having left behind them as many beautiful curiosities which they promise themselves to examine more carefully on their return; but before this comes they have lost their taste for travel, and discouraged by the heat or the weather or by sickness, they beat a speedy retreat, after having paid a hasty visit to the places considered most worthy of remark, in order to be able to say on some future day that they have been there. Another



disadvantage under which these gentlemen labour is, that they do not always know how to choose their interpreters, a circumstance upon which mainly depend the correct or erroneous ideas which they may form of the places through which they travel.

### Near disaster for Disraeli

*Benjamin Disraeli travelled around the Mediterranean 1830-31. His journey included sailing up the Nile. This account of his experience was published in Home Letters 1830-52.*

It had been excessively close, but had been a fine clear day. I walked nearly a mile from the shore; in an instant very dark, with a heat perfectly stifling; saw a column of sand in the distance. It struck me directly what it was. I rushed to the boat with full speed, but barely quick enough. I cannot describe the sense of horror and confusion. It was a simoon. The wind was the most awful sound I ever heard. Five columns of sand, taller than the Monument (in the City of London) emptied themselves on our party. Every sail was rent to pieces, men buried in the earth. Three boats sailing along overturned; the crews swam to shore. The wind, the screaming, the shouting, the driving of the sand, were enough to make you mad. We shut all the windows of the cabin, and jumped into bed, but the sand came in like fire. I do not offer this as a description, but as a memo, for further details.

*Do such simoon still occur in Egypt. Has any reader seen one?*

### A meeting at Luxor

We were a week at Thebes, with the advantage of the society of Mr Wilkinson \*, an Englishman of vast learning, who has devoted ten years to the study of hieroglyphics and Egyptian antiquity, and who can read you the side of an obelisk, or the front of a pylon, as we would the last number of "Quarterly" (Review). *Benjamin Disraeli*

\* Afterwards well known as Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (sic).

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### STOP PRESS!

We are beginning to plan ASTENE's next tour – a journey along the Nile by dahabeeyah. This is planned for about 10 days in the latter half of November 2008.

Already people are showing great interest. If you want to put your name on the list, please tell the ASTENE Events Organiser, Elisabeth Woodthorpe on 020 7622 3694.

Egyptian and other non-UK members will be able to join the tour at Luxor. If you are interested please e-mail [debmanley@beeb.net](mailto:debmanley@beeb.net), titling it E. Woodthorpe.

The final plans will include a short conference – probably in Luxor.

When the trip is finalised the members on this list will be given first refusal.

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TOWN OF SUEZ.