

ASTENE

ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF TRAVEL
IN EGYPT AND THE NEAR EAST

BULLETIN



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NOTES AND QUERIES

Number 37 : Autumn 2008

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Bulletin 37 : Autumn 2008

Submissions for the next Bulletin must be received by 1 December. We welcome articles, queries, replies and other related matters from members and interested readers. Please send contributions to the Editor.

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ASTENE NEWS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Holy Mountains of the Near East, Rewley House, Oxford, 5 July 2008

It was another delightful ASTENE weekend, with challenging lectures and, as always, the chance to catch up with old friends and meet new ones.

It all started off the evening before with a visit to the Griffith Institute, where our Vice-president, Dr Jaromir Malek, showed off a collection of drawings and photographs. Then two dozen members adjourned to the Al Shami restaurant, where the sight of Brenda Moon hitching a lift on Vivienne Sharp's buggy made a good conversational starting point. The conversation never flagged as we enjoyed a succession of delicious dishes.

The next morning we were ready to visit the Holy Mountains. First, Professor Malcolm Wagstaff gave us a brief introductory outline from which we could link the various sites and ideas that the day would encompass. He then introduced Dr Trevor Curnow, whom he had in fact met on Mount Athos. Dr Curnow's lecture ranged widely but was, to me at least, absolutely fascinating – taking me to parts of the world I did not know, and showing clearly how mountains and their equivalents come to be considered holy. Then Jacke Phillips brought us back to ASTENE's core area, talking of Jebel Barkal in the Sudan and its position in Egyptian and Nubian culture down even to the present day.

After lunch we met the agnostics: two people who seemed untouched by the holy environs they visited. Malcolm Wagstaff reported that as there was little Classical material on Mount Athos, Colonel Leake seems to have concentrated on topography, when the weather allowed, and the acquisition of useful information from the monks – even though he thought little of them themselves.

Then to Turkey and Bin Bir Kaliseon Karadag. Stephen Hill gave us a fascinating portrait of a frenetic Gertrude Bell rushing around measuring and photographing. She herself had described her first visit in the telling sentence: 'I had the most delightful day playing at being an archaeologist; it's the most fascinating study.' Despite the descriptions and the excellent photographs gleaned from her book and the Newcastle Archives (a collection we had a chance to see during the ASTENE conference at Edinburgh in 2001), I did not learn the answer to the

question that haunts me: Why all those churches amid ordinary dwellings? Perhaps the answer lies in her book. Stephen awed us by waving about his own copy – which had once been T.E. Lawrence's. I shall go back to it.

The final paper was by Dr Peter Frankopan on Mount Zion and Jerusalem, where the interplay of the multitude of holy sites in and around the city with the various hills seems to have resulted in competition for symbolic importance. I was reminded of the more specific paper on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre that we had heard from Professor Martin Biddle at a previous day school, and the influence of that building on the West. There was clearly much going on here – perhaps Jerusalem itself could be a theme for another day school.

Lisa French

The Lure of the East Study Day, with Leighton House, London, 3 October 2008

This study day about the wonderful exhibition at the Tate Gallery took place after the *Bulletin* had gone to press and will be covered in the next issue.

Eighth ASTENE Biennial Conference

ASTENE's next biennial conference will be held at Collingwood College, Durham University, from 10 to 13 July 2009. We are planning to include a visit to Hadrian's Wall – the northern boundary of the empire of Hadrian, the southern limits of which were in North Africa and along the Nile.

We attach the Call for Papers for the conference. Please let ASTENE have your proposals for papers, display the Call for Papers in your library or department and tell your acquaintances.

As in previous years, there will be a small number of bursaries for members to attend the conference. The booking form for the conference will be included with the next *Bulletin*.

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Exhibitions

Lure of the East: British Orientalist Art

This exhibition, which ASTENE members have enjoyed at the Tate Britain and on which ASTENE held a study day with Leighton House in London (noted above), is due to move on to the Pera Museum, Istanbul, from October to January 2009.

Babylon: Myth and Truth

Two worlds in one exhibition: the myth of Babel and the facts of Babylon. The truths revealed by archaeology expose the roots of western culture – focusing on one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Over 100 exhibits gathered from the British Museum, the Louvre, the Reunion des Musees Nationaux and the Municipal Museums of Berlin move from the Pergamon Museum in Berlin to the British Museum, to open on 13 November.

Excavating Egypt: Great Discoveries from the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London

This exhibition considers the lives of royal and ordinary Egyptians revealed by over 200 objects and works of art up to the late Roman period. It also tells the story of the archaeologist (and traveller) Sir Flinders Petrie (1853–1942), one of archaeology's greatest pioneers. The exhibition ends on 2 November at The Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida.



Napoleon and Egyptomania in Tennessee

This exhibition, curated by ASTENE's Elaine Evans, focuses on the growing obsession with Egyptomania in the wake of Napoleon's Expedition, and its lasting influence on design in 19th–20th-century America and Europe. At the Frank H. McClung Museum, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, until 18 January 2009.

Byzantium: 330–1453, Royal Academy, London, 25 October 2008–22 March 2009

The aim of the Royal Academy's 'blockbuster' exhibition this winter is to show the thousand plus years of the civilisation of Byzantium in a fresh light. Visitors will see 'a horde of glistening treasures', many hardly seen or never seen before by the public in the UK – or elsewhere.

The Royal Academy brings in 300 objects from a hundred sources, some never loaned before. Pieces are coming, for example, from St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, so may be familiar to some members – like the Ladder of Divine Descent, for example. The exhibition promises to enrich our education and to be a feast for our eyes. Forward booking is advised.

Father Justin, whom some of us met at St Catherine's Monastery on a recent ASTENE trip, will be giving a lecture at the Royal Academy to accompany the Byzantine exhibition. The lecture is entitled 'A Sinai Illuminated Manuscript of the Heavenly Ladder: Spiritual Ascent through Art' and will be delivered at 6:30 on Friday, 13 February 2009. Booking advised, on 020 7300 5839.

Renaissance in Pharaonic Egypt: The Last Golden Age of the Pharaonic Egypt is represented through statues, stelae and other tomb furnishings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, until 9 November.

Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past considers both the looting of the Iraq National Museum and the continuing looting of archaeological sites, which poses a great threat to the cultural heritage of Iraq and the world. The exhibition shows the damage and destruction, the routes by which looted artefacts leave Iraq for art markets, and the recovery efforts of the Iraq Museum. Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago, until 14 December.

Shrunkened Treasures: Miniaturisation in Books and Art highlights small-scale manuscripts and rare books, ranging from Books of Hours and copies of the Koran to almanacs and books of poetry, and explores the many reasons for miniaturising art. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland, until October 2009.

Event: I do! German and Turkish Wedding Culture and Fashion, 1800 to Today

This exhibition juxtaposes the customs and clothing of

what is a most important occasion, when a simple 'I do' changes lives – from the 19th century to today. Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Dortmund, Germany.

Homer: The Myth of Troy in Poetry and Art presents the historical Homer and the extraordinary influence of his epics. Reiss-Engelhorn Museums, Mannheim, Germany, until 18 January.

Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum, 9th–7th centuries BC
An exhibition exploring the emergence of the Assyrians as the dominating power in the Near East. Museum of Fine Art, Boston, until 4 January 2009.

Wonderful Things: The Harry Burton Photographs and the Discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamun
An exhibition of 50 of Harry Burton's photographs explained. Carlos Museum, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. Opens 15 November.

Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium BC focuses on the extraordinary art of this period, with 350 objects from palaces, temples and tombs as well as a unique shipwreck. Many materials have been recently excavated or never shown abroad. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, From 18 November 2008 to March 2009.

Beyond Boundaries: Islamic Art across Cultures
The long awaited opening exhibition of Qatar's new Museum of Islamic Art, Dohar, from 22 November.

Lectures and Study Days

Bonaparte and Egypt: Shadow and Light
British Egypt Society lecture by Dr Jean-Marcel Humbert, Heritage General Curator and Inspector of French Museums, at the English Speaking Union, 37 Charles Street, London W1J 5EA. Lecture at 6:30, followed by a drinks reception.

Two centuries after Napoleon's French army landed in Alexandria, the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris is re-examining the French expedition to Egypt and its long-term impact in a major exhibition. Dr Humbert is in charge of the exhibition – 'Bonaparte et l'Égypte' – and this is a rare opportunity, not to be missed. Admission is free by ticket from Noel Rands, Secretary of the BES (0208 681 7200 or noelrands@compuserve.com).

Archaeology of the Holy Land: The Contribution of British Scholars
Saturday, 24 January 2009, at Rewley House, Oxford. Introduced by Hugh Williamson, the day includes 'The Exploration of Warren and Conder in Jerusalem', by David B. Jacobson; 'Kathleen Kenyon at Samaria',

by Rupert Chapman; 'John Garstang at Jericho: A Cautionary Tale', by Felicity Cobbing; 'Solomonic Megiddo: The Contribution of PLO Guy', by Jack Green; and 'Benchmarks in Archaeology: K.M. Kenyon at Jericho and Jerusalem', by Kay Prag. To register, telephone 01865 270 368 or email pofdayweek@conted.ox.ac.uk.

British Museum Study Programme

Through the autumn and winter 2008–09 the British Museum is offering a series of study days and courses. Those of special relevance to ASTENE members include:

David Roberts and the Holy Land, 14:00–17:00 on Saturday, 21 February 2009. To mark the bicentenary of Roberts' death.

Certificate of Higher Education Programmes:
Is not this great Babylon? 11 Thursday evenings from 2 October.

Isis and Aphrodite in Cleopatra's Egypt. 11 Thursday evenings from 2 October.

Byzantine Palestine: The Art and Architecture of Co-existence. 11 Monday evenings from 27 April.

Beauty and Magnificence: The Imperial Arts of the Ottoman Court. 11 Monday evenings from 27 April.

For information and booking, see www.britishmuseum.org or telephone 020 7323 8000.

Autumn Programme at the Petrie Museum, London

All activities are free and do not need to be booked unless otherwise stated.

Black Civilisations in the Nile Valley. A new film on Sudan archaeology and black heritage. Thursday, 23 October, 6–8 pm.

When We Ruled. Angelina Osborne in conversation – a discussion of Egypt's place in ancient and medieval history in Africa. To be held in GO6, Sir Ambrose Fleming Lecture Theatre, Roberts Building. Followed by a drinks reception at the Petrie Museum, 7:15–8 pm on 30 October. Tickets available on first come basis.

Seminar Lecture: Ancient Egypt and Slavery in 19th-century United States, by Margaret Malamud. Tuesday, 4 November, 6–8 pm.

Drawing Egypt – Architecture and Monuments. Workshop on Saturday, 8 November, 1–5 pm. Material provided. Booking essential.

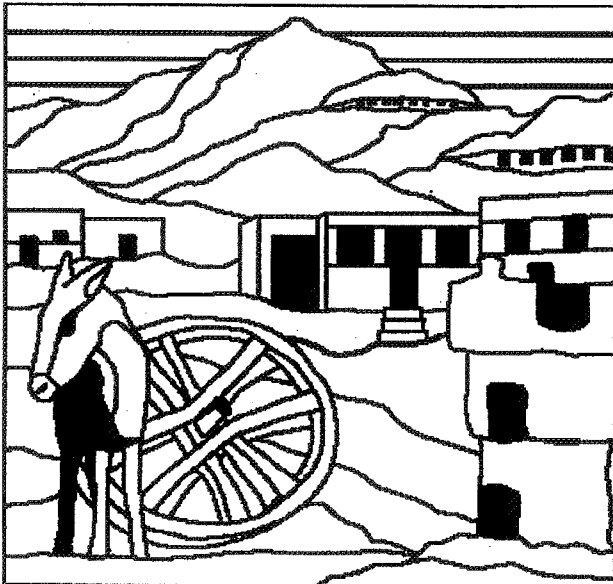


QURNA HISTORY PROJECT

The Qurna History Project

The History Project, started by ASTENE founder member Caroline Simpson in the late 1990s, has gone through a difficult period; but with the help of Dr Zahi Hawass of the Supreme Council for Antiquities of Egypt, it has now settled again into a rehabilitated building on the hillside above Qurna, on the west bank of the Nile.

Visitors can again see the early 19th-century houses and the record of life in the area. This new, Qurna-made, metal screen near the entrance shows the buildings on the Qurna hillside.



Caroline Simpson and her Egyptian and international team of supporters, working closely alongside local people, have maintained – and even extended – this important record of Egypt's historic, rather than only her ancient past.

A Query

The exhibition in the Zawaya of Qurna includes 19th-century photographs. The new *Newsletter of Qurna Discovery* of August 2008 asked if anyone knows about the photographer/traveller Mr J. Nicholson, who visited Qurna with Henry Rhind in 1855. It was he who took the photograph that Rhind copied as the well-known scene of 'Yanni's House'. Caroline is searching, too, for other early photo collections of the area.

If you would like to become a friend of Qurna Discovery and/or support this project, contact Caroline Simpson on caroline@forbury.demon.co.uk. For more information, visit www.qurna.org.

'Yanni's' House in 1832

Serendipity often guides one to unexpected knowledge. Not long after Caroline Simpson's newsletter arrived, I chanced to read Visit to the Great Oasis of the Libyan Desert (London, 1837) – the account of George Alexander Hoskins' travels in 1832–3. In Gournah he met Robert Hay and Frederic Catherwood. They were living in a tomb, but he lived in a house....:

A house built by Signor d'Athanasi (familiarily known as 'Yanni'), a Greek gentleman formerly in the employ of Mr Salt (the British Consul Gneral), was my head quarters. It was situated in the western suburb of the city among the ancient tombs, which are now converted into habitations by the peasants of Giurnah. A Greek named Trianta-delas, a worthy honest merchant, occupied part of the house. Besides accommodation for cooking and for my servants, I had two good rooms. One of them served as a sleeping and at the same time store-room; but this combination had its inconveniences, as it attracted around my bed swams of rats, with which nearly every house in Egypt is infested: and often when they seemed to fancy that I was asleep, I have been amused with watching their squabbles for my cheese and macaroni.

A few rude chairs, a roughly manufactured table, some shelves for my books and antiquities, and a couple of commodious Turkish divans of cotton wool covered with a smart English chintz, gave a more comfortable appearance to my sitting-room. The earthen floors of both chambers were covered with clean mats, which are more convenient than carpets; as during the excessively hot weather, I was enabled to create a freshness by having them daily saturated with water. Compared to the other habitations in the village, my house was a little palace; and indeed it was very habitable, though destitute of many comforts which in England we should consider indispensable requisites.

G.A. Hoskins

G.A. Hoskins (1802–63), an amateur artist, visited Egypt in 1832–3, worked with Hay at Qurna and visited Kharga Oasis with him. His drawings are in the Griffith Institute, Oxford University. He revisited Egypt in 1860–1 and published A Winter in Upper and Lower Egypt (London, 1863).

RESEARCH RESOURCES

The Sudan Archive, Durham University Library

Next summer ASTENE returns to its birthplace at Durham University for its Eighth Biennial Conference. The university holds one of the most fascinating archives of our travellers in the Near East.

In 1957, the year after Sudan independence, the Archive was founded 'to collect and preserve the papers of administrators from the Sudan Political Service, missionaries, soldiers, businessmen, doctors, agriculturalists, teachers and others who had served or lived in the Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian condominium.' It now comprises over 300 collections of public and private papers of both British and Sudanese men and women.

The core period covered is 1898–1955, but there is a significant amount of earlier material, as well as material relating to other areas of the Near East: Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, Palestine, Transjordan, Syria and the African states bordering on Sudan. As well as papers, there are photographic records in various formats, including cine-films, which we hope we may be able to view while in Durham. Most of the material is in English; a small amount is in Arabic. There are also many reports, pamphlets, periodicals etc.

The handlists can be purchased by post (prices in the UK are given):

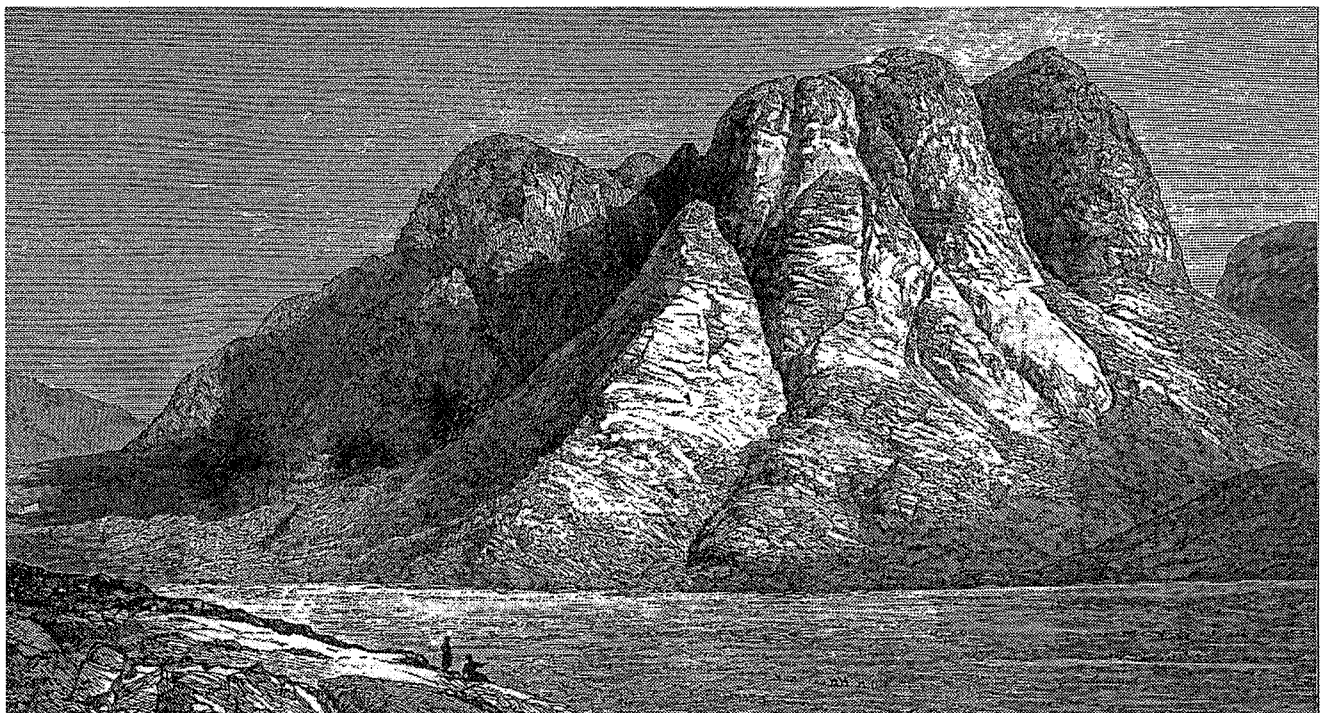
- Summary Guide to the Sudan Archive – a brief description of each collection. £5.00 or online.
- Handlist of Arabic manuscripts and lithographs by E.L Hill. £5.00.

More or less at random I give you brief examples of the material in the archive:

- Letters home by an officer's wife 1939–55.
- Report on the slave trade from Abyssinia, 2928.
- Memoirs of a District Officer and his wife, 1949–55.
- Journals of an American doctor journeying through Egypt and the Sudan in 1862.
- Report of navigating on the Blue Nile in 1902.

The Summary Guide makes fascinating reading, and there is a website: http://flambard.dur.ac.uk:80/dynaweb/handlist/sad/@Generic__CollectionView. Contact address: Sudan Archive, Durham University Library: Archives and Special Collections, Palace Green, Durham DH1 3RN. Telephone: 0191 334 2972.

If you are interested in coming the Conference early or staying on afterwards to work in the Archive – or to enjoy the local attractions – please contact the ASTENE Conference Organiser, Janet Starkey, on j.c.m.starkey@durham.ac.uk.



BOOK REVIEWS

The ASTENE Bulletin Book Reviews Editor is Ashley Jones. He can be contacted at Waters End, Broom Water West, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9QH, or on ashleyjones40@hotmail.com.

***Pilgrimage to Mecca* by Lady Evelyn Cobbold, biographical introduction by William Facey and Miranda Taylor, notes by Ahmad S. Turkistani. London: Arabian Publishing, 2008 ISBN 978-9544792-8-2. H/b 352 pp, 50 photos, index. £25.**

Anglo-Scottish aristocrat, mother, landowner, deer-stalker, gardener, traveller, writer, socialite, Arabic-speaker and Muslim, Lady Evelyn Cobbold presents an intriguing mixture of facets and accomplishments. But perhaps above all she was a seeker after enlightenment and meaning in life – though strictly on her own terms.

Thus do William Facey and Miranda Taylor, in their 80-page introduction, classify the multiple identities of a person who is sometimes referred to as the first known female European Muslim to perform the *hajj*. More than a reprint of the original edition of *Pilgrimage to Mecca* published by John Murray in 1934, this publication is a well considered and sophisticated repackaging of both author and text. The promotion leaflet (included in Bulletin 36) picks out further areas of interest: Islam, *hajj*, Arab world; Saudi Arabia; Muslim Holy Cities, British Muslim, Scotland; female convert to Islam, women travellers. The website of the publishers of *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, Arabian Publishing, fills us in further on Lady Evelyn's background.

She was in her mid-sixties when she decided to go on the *hajj*. Daughter of the distinguished Scottish explorer, Lord Dunmore, grand-daughter of the Earl of Leicester and grand-niece of the notorious romantic Lady Jane Digby el-Mezrab, the young Evelyn had spent childhood winters in North Africa. There she had been imbued with the Muslim way of life, becoming, as she puts it, 'a little Muslim at heart'.

Before and after the First World War she travelled widely in Egypt, Syria and Transjordan. While strongly drawn to the Arab world, she maintained a conventional place in society at home, marrying the wealthy John Cobbold in 1891 and devoting herself to her Suffolk house and Scottish estate, gardens, and especially deer-stalking in the Highlands, of which she was a renowned exponent. When her husband, High Sheriff of Suffolk, died in 1929, Lady Evelyn decided to 'perform the pilgrimage'.

'Arriving at Jiddah by steamers from Suez in February 1933, she stayed with the Philbys and entered the life of Jiddah's foreign community while waiting to obtain permission to perform the Hajj. In doing so, she had to overcome the considerable suspicion surrounding foreign 'converts' who, Muslims felt, made the pilgrimage and then wrote about it as a dangerous and sensational adventure. While in Jiddah she received visits from various officials of the royal court, notably the King's (Abdul Aziz ibn Saud) son the Amir Faysal (later King Faysal).'

I have quoted these sources extensively because they give a flavour of the detail surrounding Evelyn Cobbold's story. It is not so much Cobbold's rather flaccid prose, with its extensive doctrinal and historical interpolations – apparently written for her by others – and occasional Orientalist and romantic flourishes (see the expostulation on p. 206 concerning 'a young Bedouin boy ... singing in the desert' – but more the detail of her story that will fascinate readers today. This is where Facey and Taylor excel: among the topics they open up are Lady Cobbold's relations with the Philbys during and after her stay in Mecca, her status as a British aristocrat with useful connections (a relative was chairman of a major bank), and the snobbish attitude towards her faith by establishment figures such as diplomat Andrew Ryan and a reviewer in the *Geographical Journal*. Her connection to the wider British Muslim community is also well set out, and a case is made for the apparent neglect of Lady Cobbold as an important female traveller.

There is further fascination in the notes appended at the end of Evelyn's narrative by Ahmad Turkistani, whose brief is clearly to supply it with a *halal* certificate. This in spite of the fact that Evelyn's Islam tends to be of the modernist reformist kind ably espoused by contemporary fellow-believer Marmaduke Pickthall, whereas the Saudi professor's is, unsurprisingly, of (to use Tariq Ramadan's terminology) the Salafi literalist type. Evelyn was clearly worried by the iconoclastic excesses of the Wahabi forces on taking over the twin holy cities in 1924. And there is at least one further interchange between the opinions of the deceased author and her earnest 'corrector' (n. 79) on the subject of the existence of beautiful and obliging houris in paradise – she is agin, he decidedly in favour.

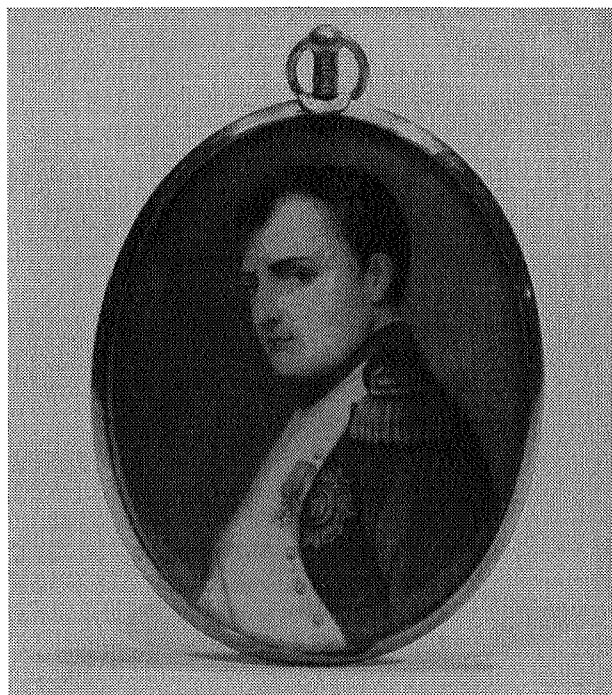
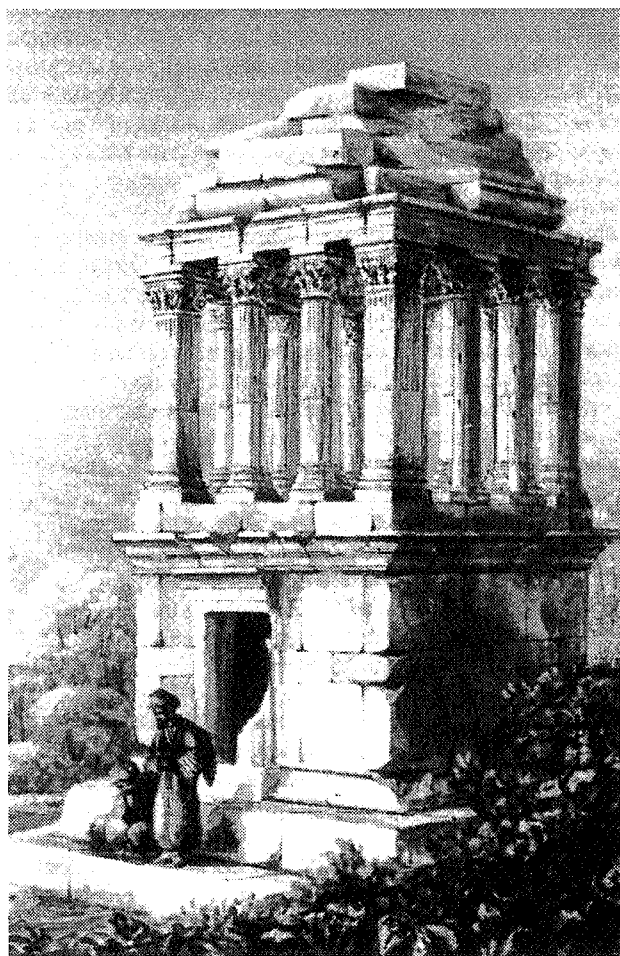
Geoffrey Nash

From the Harpy Tomb to the Wonders of Ephesus: British Archaeologists in the Ottoman Empire 1840–1880 by Debbie Challis. London: Duckworth, 2008. ISBN 978 0 7156 3757 9. P/b 210 pp, illustrated. £18.

The theme of this book is the fascinating story of those who travelled and documented the western and south-western areas of Asia Minor (when it was part of Ottoman Turkey) and to whom the British Museum owes its unique collection of major sculpture and other antiquities from these areas. The account has been welded together from a mixture of sources: well-known and lesser known publications, the travellers' journals and other writing, as well as the archives of the British Museum itself. The picture that emerges is a very varied one; they were certainly a mixed bunch with differing ideals and aims. I found the account filled in so many gaps in my background knowledge, and I have had the luck to live and work in Turkey and assist in an excellent library on the subject.

I was sad that the editors had not thought to help the reader who knows less of the area by a good map, and the general public by a *dramatis personae* such as has become such a useful feature of recent books of this type. The account is dense and not, indeed, an easy read, but the content is absolutely suited to ASTENE members.

Lisa French



Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East by Juan Cole. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-1-4039-6431 / ISBN-10: 1-4039-6431-9. H/b \$24.95 p/b \$16.95.

This book joins two earlier productions in English covering the same ground – Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798 and the first year of the French occupation, which lasted until 1801 – from slightly different angles: J. Christopher Herrold's excellent *Bonaparte in Egypt* (1963), a ground-breaking work that is still valuable, and Paul Strathern's recent and popular *Napoleon in Egypt: 'The Greatest Glory'* (2007), an elegant treatment written from a French vantage point, which was reviewed by Edwin Aitken in the *ASTENE Bulletin* number 34 (January 2008).

Cole's focus, as his title indicates, is not on Bonaparte, but on Egypt, a fact that makes his book quite different from either Herrold's or Strathern's. Such a focus leads to two methodological innovations: a carefully considered rejection of the entire output of the Bonapartist propaganda machine, which was in fact created and perfected during the Egyptian campaign and would provide exemplary service to Napoleon throughout the brief remainder of his career; and a closer and more detailed attention to individual contemporary narratives in both French and Egyptian sources. But Cole is also excellent on the diplomatic manoeuvres by which Bonaparte attempted to legitimise his depredations.

Juan Cole is a professor of modern Middle Eastern history and the author of several other books, ranging from studies of Shi'ism, the Baha'i faith, and the colonial inheritance in the contemporary Middle East, to translations of Arabic and Persian prose and

poetry. His blog, *Informed Comment*, is well regarded for its coverage of current affairs in the Middle East, especially Iraq. He has lived in Lebanon and Egypt, and his languages include Persian, Urdu and three forms of Arabic. The book under review is the outcome of a project that began in the late 1970s, when he was a student in Cairo.

Cole sees in the Bonapartist invasion a pattern that has repeated itself right down to our own time, most obviously in the current series of Western misadventures in Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq and Lebanon. Once the moonshine of Napoleonic propaganda is cleared away, the parallels become so obvious that they hardly need underlining. Bonaparte's project in Egypt displays itself as doomed from the outset, a colossally expensive enterprise based on fatuous delusions and outright lies. Bonaparte himself came to understand the inevitability of failure sooner than anyone else: abandoning his army to the hapless Kléber, he prudently sailed for home after only a year. The chief upshot of the exercise was to introduce the poison of Anglo-French imperial rivalry into the Eastern Mediterranean, with dire effect down to this day and not merely throughout the whole of the Middle East.

Cole's basic method has been to scour French and Arabic materials, especially journals and mémoires, most of them well known. Since far more has survived in French than in Arabic, most of his information naturally comes from French sources. These writers are generally quite candid, however, and offer us a great deal of first-hand observation about the invasion and occupation that has been ignored hitherto. They describe both French suffering and French atrocities – the massacre of entire villages, brutal executions, and the casual slaughter of 2000 prisoners of war. Anyone who reads this book should emerge well inoculated against Edward Said's preposterous claims that Napoleon's invasion of Egypt was 'uniquely benign and selective' and that the Egyptian populace, which Cole's French diarists show us to have remained continually embattled, 'lost its distrust of the occupiers'. It is thus a little odd to find Said cited as an authority in this book, though Cole correctly identifies him not as a historian, but as a literary critic.

There are other oddities that should certainly be repaired in future editions. On p. 37, for example, Cole's text says that Cairo was 'nicknamed "Masr" or "the fortified city".' But *Masr* is not just a nickname. It means many things – 'Egypt', 'metropolis', 'capital', 'that which is inhabited and civilised' – but it also happens to be Cairo's real, correct, authentic, traditional, popular and historic name, as even Napoleon's savants knew quite well. The Egyptian media and the Egyptian government may have opted recently to use the inadequate and misleading term *Al-Qahirah* as a convenience, but only fools and foreigners would take them seriously. Cole (or an editor) also appears to have confused *Masr* with

the epithet *Al-Mahrusa*, 'the well-guarded', which is sometimes heard when Cairenes are feeling affectionate or nostalgic about their city. Another example is on p. 190, where *fuul madammis*, the national dish, which millions of Egyptians eat for breakfast every day, is weirdly defined as 'mashed broad beans in butter', a description that could be roughly appropriate only for *bissara*, a completely different fava-bean concoction. And on p. 244 General Kléber's assassin, who was a young Syrian Kurd, is described as a disgruntled Egyptian student.

John Rodenbeck

***Lyrics of the Sands* by Gloria Kifayeh, with an introduction by Max Scott. London: Stacey International, 2005. ISBN 1 900988 895 £15.70.**

It is a mere sixty years since Wilfred Thesiger first traversed the Rub'al Khali – the 'Empty Quarter' of Saudi Arabia – and provided us with his classic account in *Arabian Sands*. The illustrations of the volume were taken using a Leica camera and continued his use of black-and-white images, although colour photography was, by then, beginning to be more commonly used. He included photography as an adjunct to his prose descriptions, and his grainy images are mainly of his travelling companions, with only a modest attempt to show the terrain through which he was travelling.

In this book, Gloria Kifayeh, who has lived in the United Arab Emirates since 1985, brings us right-up-to-date with golden-brown images of the Arabian desert, sparsely peopled, with only the occasional camel or bush, and with marvellous linen-fold and interlocking dunes reaching into far distant horizons. These empty landscapes illustrate the ever-changing beauty of the desert, and Gloria Kifayeh provides aphoristic extracts from classic pre-Islamic poetry of almost biblical resonance to accompany each image and stimulate the imagination. This 'Jalili' verse – ambiguously translated as being from 'the period of ignorance' prior to arrival of Islam – is not easily accessible to the West, but the phrases used will surely evoke new interest in the subject. As always, the conjunction of the deserts and poetry provides an irresistible source of inspiration.

Should the reader wish to start with a survey of European poetry relating to the deserts of the Middle East, he or she could do no better than turn to *Desert Air: Arabia, Deserts and the Orient of the Imagination*, being poetry selected by Barnaby Rogerson and Alexander Monro, and published in a new edition by Eland (London, 2007). This contains desert-related verse by, among others, Beaudelaire, Byron, Cavafy, Goethe, Heine, Longfellow, Milton and Shelley, as well as works by Omar Khayam, Rumi and other Middle Eastern writers and translators. It is very good value at £6.

George Hutcheson

Anton Prokesch von Osten (1795–1876): Ein Diplomat Österreichs in Athen unter der Hohen Pforte by Daniel Bertsch. Munich: R. Oldebourg Verlag, 2005. 754 pp.

This is a short note to draw the attention of *ASTENE Bulletin* readers to an interesting and most valuable contribution to the understanding of Austrian-Ottoman relations in the 19th century. *Who was Who in Egyptology* by Maurice Bierbrier (Egypt Exploration Society, 1995) presents some biographical details and published works and references to encyclopedias where Prokesch-Osten is mentioned. Now Daniel Bertsch has written not just about Prokesch-Osten's fascinating career, but has provided the comprehensive work that was missing until now, based on his researches at the Austrian State Archive in Vienna. There he found many documents stored in dozens of file-boxes (carefully listed at the end of the book). Bertsch also extended his research to many other sources. The result is very impressive and an important contribution to this era.

Gottfried Hammernik

Review from the *Quarterly Review*

Contemporary reviews of travellers' accounts of their journeys show us how their work was received at the time. Often such reviews were not much more than a summary of the book itself, and so, although they may have given fame to the authors, they may also have reduced sales...

Volume XXVIII of the *Quarterly Review* in 1823 commented on the outpourings of travellers.

The accounts of 'the voyageurs in Egypt' included Frederic Cailliaud's travels in 1815–1818, Colonel Drovetti's voyage to Dahel, Dr Robert Richardson's account of Lord Belmore's tour around the Mediterranean and some later journeys. The article began, slightly wearily: 'If the old "Land of Egypt" be not thoroughly known, it is not from want of travellers and travel writers....'



Stop Press

As we were going to press, word was received from *ASTENE* member Caroline Williams of the mid-October appearance of her *Islamic Monuments in Cairo: The Practical Guide*. One reviewer referred to it as the 'veritable warhorse of Cairo guides', and it is now about to charge out of the stables once more in its sixth caparison. According to Lonely Planet, 'this book ought to be in the luggage of every visitor to Cairo'. Published by the American University in Cairo Press.



PORTRAITS OF THE TRAVELLERS



The recent exhibition at the Tate Gallery in London enabled us to look into the faces of some of the travellers to the Near East. There was Edward Wortley Montague and David Roberts but, sadly, not the portrait of Richard Poccoke.

Joseph Banks (1743–1820)

Banks, explorer and botanist, is not at first thought an obvious candidate for inclusion among ASTENE travellers – traveller, indeed, he was, but to regions far removed from the Near East. However, he was, during the latter part of the 18th and the first two decades of the 19th centuries, at the hub of what was going on in exploration, particularly in his role as President and founding member of the African Association.

Those of the explorers that the Association sent into Africa, usually to their deaths, who chose to travel towards the heart of the ‘mysterious Dark Continent’ by way of Egypt included John Ledyard, Friedrich Horneman, John Lewis Burckhardt, John Gordon and Louis Maurice Linant de Bellefonds. The Association also gave some support to Henry Salt in his second journey into Abyssinia. So, by association, may we say, Banks was indisputably important to many of our travellers.

There are two portraits of Banks frequently reproduced – that of him as a young man, in about 1772, by Sir Joshua Reynolds RA (National Portrait Gallery), and that of him as a very dour-looking, overweight man not long before his death in 1820, by Thomas Phillips RA, which belongs to the Royal Horticultural Society.

Less well known is that which belongs to the Guildhall Museum in his home town of Boston, Lincolnshire,

painted in 1814 also by Thomas Phillips, shown here and available at the Guildhall Museum as a postcard. Though his expression is that of a man who does not suffer fools, there is at least a suggestion that he might occasionally smile, though not just now.

The Corporation of Boston, which commissioned the portrait as a tribute to a man whose ‘judicious and active exertions improved and enriched this borough and neighbourhood’ (he was Recorder of the town), paid Phillips 100 guineas. He made rather a career of painting Banks: besides the two already mentioned, there is a portrait of 1810 in the National Portrait Gallery, and one of 1815 in the Royal Society, and altogether there exist about two dozen likenesses of Banks, in pictorial or sculptural form.

He may too be added to our list of Where are They Buried? – his grave is in the parish church of Heston, Middlesex.

Peta Ree



Sir Joseph Banks, by Thomas Phillips RA, 1814

QUERIES AND REPLIES

Queries appear in the Bulletin and on the ASTENE website; replies appear only in the Bulletin.

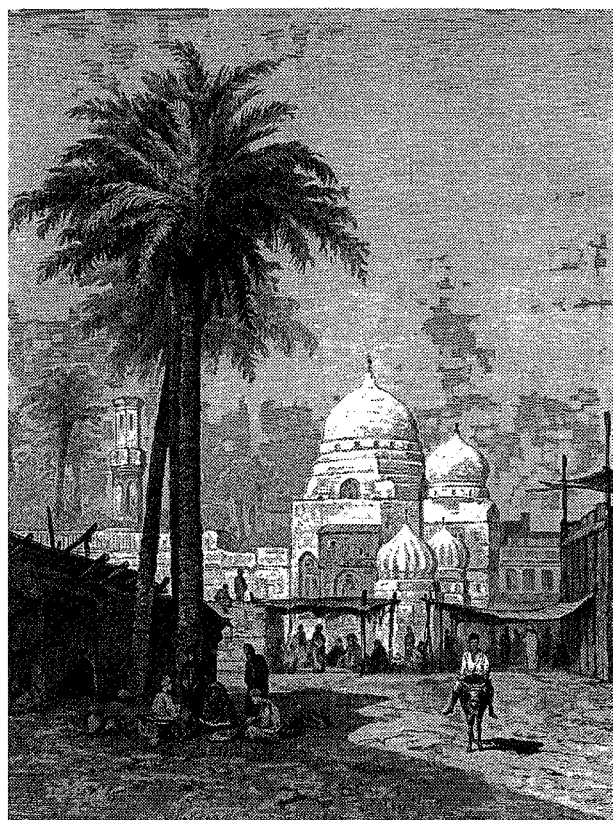
Who were the travellers at Cosseir in 1825?

Anne Katherine Elwood, one of the most delightful of the travellers through Egypt, was en route to India with her husband, an officer in the East India Company, in 1825. Cosseir was busy with passing travellers of many nations. One day Mrs Elwood was sitting 'in the verandah' by herself when suddenly the servant stood before her with a man beside him. 'I had', she wrote, 'been so long among turbans and flowing robes, that the sight of a stranger in Frank costume almost frightened me.'

The man proved to be a Frenchman – perhaps once 'a military follower of Napoleon'. He had become separated from his companions in the desert, and hearing of some 'Franks' at the house came in hopes of rejoining his friends. After some refreshment he went off to seek his friends, and next day brought them to 'call'.

'They were two Germans – literary adventurers, who were travelling in these remote countries, ultimately intending to find their way into Abyssinia, of which enterprising undertaking they spoke with as much *sang froid* as if they were arranging a trip from London to Brighton or Cheltenham. Like a true Frenchman, our first acquaintance was carrying a beautiful little poodle about with him.'

Does anyone know who these three men might have been and what happened to them? Please reply to the Editor.



Does anyone know of Herberts or McClures in Egypt?

A visitor to ASTENE's website is researching Mrs Mary Louisa McClure, nee Herbert (c. 1843–1918). She was a member of the Egypt Exploration Society. Her younger sister Hilda married the novelist Maurice Hewlett and became a pioneer aviator, eventually writing an unpublished autobiography. She visited Egypt with her parents around 1883, and Mary was probably also on the trip, since she later translated from the French a number of works on archaeology and history, and collaborated on a translation of the *Pilgrimage of Etheria*. Their father was the Reverend George Herbert, vicar of St Peter's, Vauxhall. Mary married the Reverend Edmund McClure, Editorial Secretary of SPCK from 1875 to 1915. He is described in an SPCK history as having friends in archaeological circles, whose work he published.

Has anyone come across references to these Herberts, or the McClures, especially visiting or writing about Egypt? Please reply to the Editor.

WHERE ARE THEY BURIED?

Edward Henry Palmer

Edward Henry Palmer (1840–82), a British Orientalist scholar, is buried in St Paul's Cathedral in London, according to *Who was Who in Egyptology* (Egypt Exploration Society, 1995). Becoming a Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, Palmer mastered a number of Oriental languages and wished to visit the Near East, where he might use this skill. In 1868 he was chosen to accompany a survey of Sinai carried out for the Palestine Exploration Fund. His responsibility was to collect place names from the Bedouin in order to establish these

names correctly for the first time. In 1869 he returned to Sinai with C.F. Tyrwhitt Drake and walked 600 miles to Jerusalem without an escort. Palmer published *The Desert of the Exodus* in 1871.

Still restless, he gave up his academic life for journalism, and in 1882 went on a secret mission to Egypt at the time of the Arab Rebellion. He tried to obtain the support of the Bedouin sheiks for the immunity of the Suez Canal. He acted the part of an adventurer in the area and was murdered by robbers on 11 August 1882.



ARTICLES

Did Dr Richardson visit Karnak in 1819?

Michel Azim's researches on early 19th-century travellers' accounts of Karnak has led him to an interesting discovery...

Dr Robert Richardson (1779–1847) accompanied the Earl of Belmore and his family to the Mediterranean in 1816–18 as travelling physician. He published a two-volume account of their travels in 1822.

Dr Richardson is quite justified in his appreciation of the archaeological riches of the right bank of the Nile, but on reading his descriptions of Karnak, Luxor and Medamoud in his *Travels Along the Mediterranean*, published in 1822, one might legitimately wonder whether he ever explored these ruins, given the astonishing errors and inexplicable lacunae, and the strange Iconographical Plan of Thebes at the beginning of his study.

At Karnak, at the beginning of 1818, Richardson noted three obelisks standing, when in fact only two remained upright, and he described the monumental gate of Evergete as built of granite instead of sandstone. Moreover, the boat shrine that should have attracted his particular attention, not only because of its appearance but also because Lady Belmore (his patron's wife) had had it excavated, he presents with a most unlikely diagram.

A processional alley 200 metres long, with four large pylons decorated with bas relief, is dismissed in under seven lines, and with the plan in the book is a travesty.

The description of the decoration of the temple is unusually succinct, although vague about the walls, pylons and columns. In the Hypostyle Hall, not a word is said about the roofing or the thickness of accumulated material round them, nor whether the columns had fallen or were leaning. He expresses no emotion here, compared to the strong emotion evoked during his visit to the tomb of Seti I (discovered by Giovanni Belzoni on the west bank), which takes 35 pages to describe. While the boats decorating the third pylon are well described, one is at a loss to explain the extraordinary faulty brevity with which he describes the war scenes of Seti I, though these had already been described in detail by Hamilton in

his *Aegyptica* of 1809: 'the wood and pastoral scenes on the north wall at Karnak!'

The brief description of the temple of Kuonson differs from the plan, and its ornamentation – including the celebrated representation of the second pylon, omitted – deserved better than this harsh summary: 'although I noted the greatest part of them, I consider it unnecessary to lay them before the public. ... The sculpture and hieroglyphics are of the same description as on the other temples'. The author would certainly have written at greater length if he had really observed the monument, since in the Ramasseum, at Medinet Habou or Dendera – sites duly visited – his description of the walls occupies some dozen pages.

The complete temple of Luxor is dealt with in less than five pages. 'The propylon is provided with stairs The visitor passes easily from one end of the propylon to the other over the top of the ruined gateway, and ascends completely to the summit.' *La Description d'Egypte* – which Richardson does not hesitate to criticise – or Hayes' engravings and drawings in the *Aegyptica* clearly show it was impossible to go from one wing to another. The description of bas reliefs on the pylon is admittedly borrowed from Hamilton, and all the decoration is swept into one phrase: 'although I noted the greatest part of them, I consider it unnecessary to lay them before the public.'

At Medamoud he conjures up imaginary granite columns and one wretched Coptic cult establishment on the edge of the desert – as though the numerous churches in Luxor and its neighbourhood – notably St-Pacome – did not exist.

While such examples can be multiplied, this is not to detract from the value of the *Travels* or the author's observations. But as for the left bank of Thebes, he clearly had not visited the monuments, cobbling together his text from other publications – notably from Pococke and Hamilton – to ensure that his study did not appear to omit them and thus perpetuating a popular 18th-century tradition.

Indeed, did not Richardson take the sensible precaution in his Preface of writing 'to tell as much truth ... as possible.'

Michel Azim
(translated by Maureen Hadfield)

FOOTPRINTS

They Enter the Pyramid

Dr Samuel Johnson's novel Rasselas: Prince of Abyssinia (1859) clearly draws on the experiences of travellers to Egypt and their writings. Linking one to the other would be interesting. Here the main characters enter the Pyramid.

They passed through the galleries, surveyed the vaults of marble, and examined the chest in which the body of the founder is supposed to have been deposited. They then sat down in one of the most spacious chambers to rest awhile before they attempted to return.

'We have now,' said Imlac, 'gratified our minds with an exact view of the greatest work of man, except the wall of China.' [He then 'explained' the building of the Wall, and continued ...] 'But for the Pyramids, no reason has ever been given adequate to the cost and labour of the work. ... He that has built for use till use is supplied must begin to build for vanity, and extend his plan to the utmost power of human performance that he may not be reduced to form another wish ...'

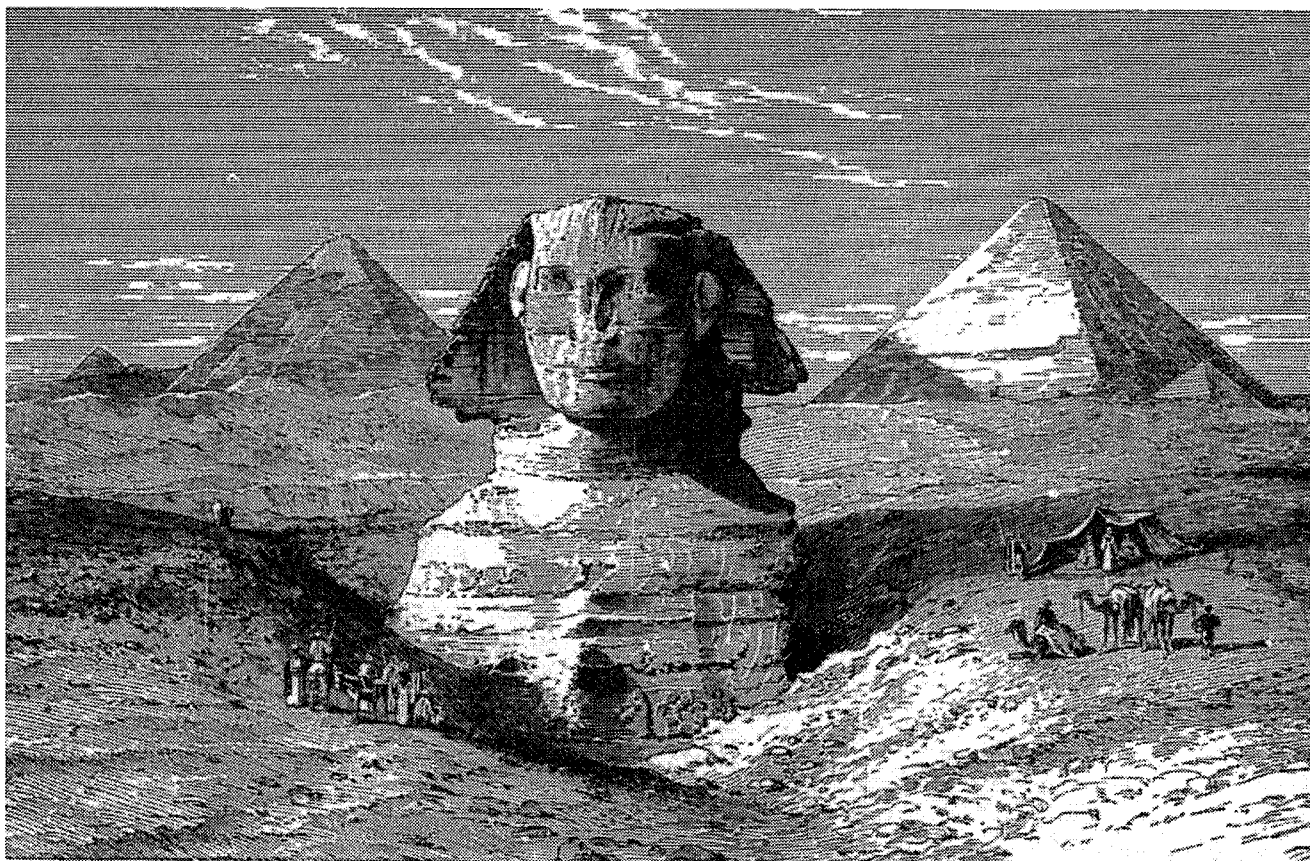
Meanwhile, as the main party pondered the mystery of the Pyramid... 'The Princess meets with an Unexpected Misfortune', and the story continues ...

Mehemet Ali's Reading

The British 19th-century civil servant Nassau Senior travelled in Egypt in the late 1850s – the period leading up to the construction of the Suez Canal. His Conversations and Journals in Egypt was published thirty years after his death by his daughter.

Mehemet Ali was not a safe master, but he was an agreeable one. He was very generous. He had a quick and lively appreciation of character, and his conversation was charming. Although he did not learn to read until he was 47, he had more literary taste than any Turk that I have known. He had every book about Napoleon that he could find translated for him, and read to him with avidity.

He told me one day that he had read much about



Machiavelli's *Principe*, and begged me to translate it for him. I set to work, and gave him the first day ten pages, and the next day ten pages, and ten more the third, but on the fourth he stopped me.

'I have read,' he said, 'all that you have given me of Machiavelli. I did not find much that was new in your first ten pages, but I hoped that it might improve; but the next ten pages were not better, and the last are mere common-place. I see clearly that I have nothing to learn from Machiavelli. I know many more tricks than he knew. You need not translate any more of him.'

The Child Dragoman

Aboudi, the senior Thomas Cook dragoman at Luxor, recalled, with a confusion of dating, that his grandfather was overseer to the excavations of Mariette and Petrie, and that his father, Mohamad Aboudi, guided by Sayce, became a dragoman and guided Amelia Edwards up the Nile. His own memory of these times is clearer.

It was when I was ten years old that I first began to think of following my father and found a desire to read the books belonging to him. Sometimes he took me with him on the Nile and once, I remember, when he was accompanying the Duke of Devonshire, who was painting pictures of many splendid things, I went with them to Karnak where the Duke wished to make a painting of the Sacred Lake, but the goats used to drink the water intended for his colours so I had to chase them away.

You know at that time goats and sheep were allowed to go anywhere they wanted – even into the temples – and the kids were running and jumping so that it wasn't possible to paint unless someone chased them off; and there were many flies that used to get into the big beard of the Duke and they made him angry, so it was my work to whisk them away. I was very happy running about after the animals, and the Duke often smiled at me and always looked kind. Moreover my father gave me five piastres for each day that I went with them.

From *Aboudi Man of Luxor* by L.J. Craven,
The Ladymead Press, Wiltshire, 1984

Impromptu Songs

Mary Rowland's family lived in Egypt for three generations and in 1956 published their story: A Family in Egypt. Here she writes of how the Egyptian labourers used their impromptu songs as they worked.

A certain Egyptologist, when in charge of excavations, used to get stray tourists poking about while his men

were at work excavating. Though the most patient and hospitable of men, there were times when he felt that over-inquisitive and unheralded tourists interfered with the gang at work. If he was at another part of the dig and his workmen saw one of these individuals getting suspiciously near, they would start a chant as they worked, and with impromptu rhythmic words in form their master of what was happening.

'He's coming too near – he looks suspicious – three ladies are in the party – they are poking with their sticks – you had better come quickly' – such phrases as these would float across the desert air, all woven into song, while the subjects of the running commentary would stand by, smilingly delightedly at the music and quite unaware of its meaning.

Some travellers recorded the words and music of such songs. We would be interested in including examples in future Bulletins. Anne Katherine Elwood, travelling through Egypt to India in 1825, wrote of the camel drivers' songs as they marched across the desert.

Their wild melodies had a very pleasing effect, falling upon the ear from the distance, or, reverberating among the rocks, awaking the sleepy echoes of the Desert.

*By chance, Mrs Elwood had evidently read Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*, and commented that when her husband lost sight of her litter in the dark: 'Not meeting me, he began to be apprehensive I had encountered Pekuah's fate, and had fallen into the hands of the wandering Arabs'*

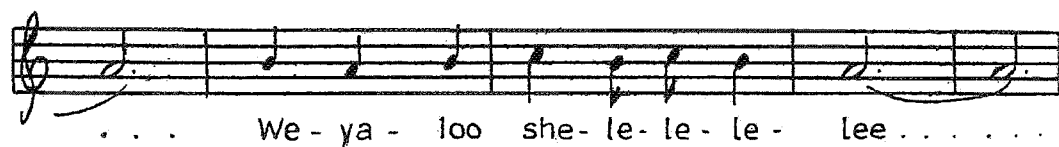
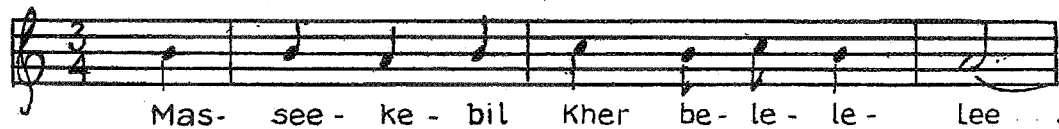
*A song from the collection *Ten Oriental Songs* arranged by the Reverend Samuel Schor appears overleaf.*



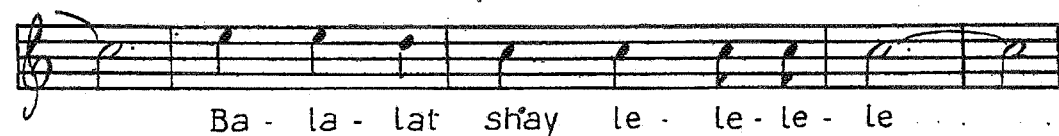
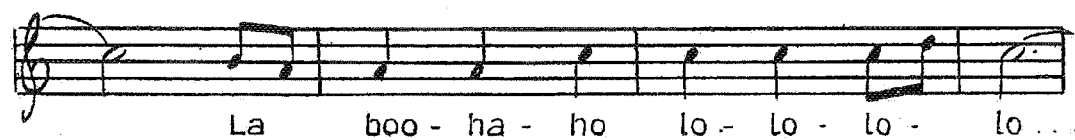
Arab Mill Song.

No 6.

Slow. Chorus.



Solo



Repeat first part till Cap Repeat whole song three times.

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