

# ASTENE

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

# BULLETIN



**NOTES AND QUERIES**

**Number 42 : Winter 2009/10**

# Bulletin : Notes and Queries

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Submissions for the next *Bulletin* must be received by  
**31 March**. We welcome articles, queries, replies and  
other related matters from members and interested  
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# ASTENE NEWS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## Obituary: T. G. H. (Harry) James (1923–2009)

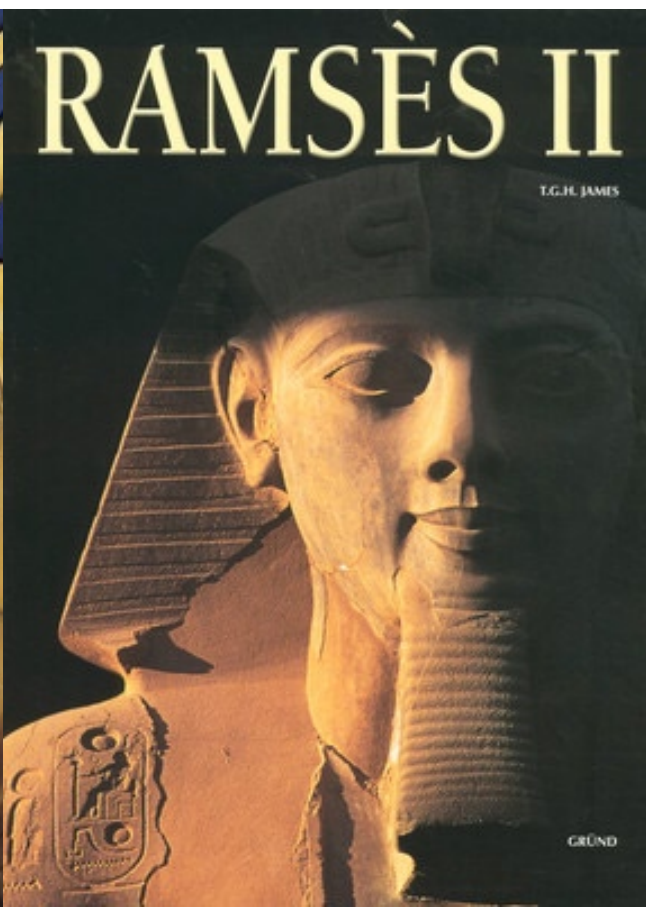
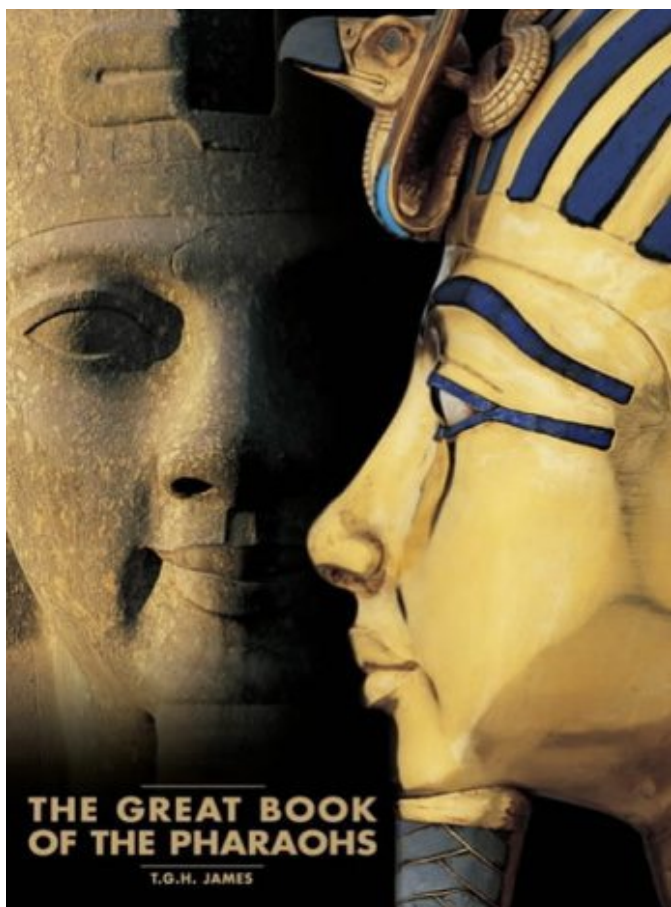
ASTENE's President, T. G. H. James, known universally as 'Harry', died on 16 December after a long illness. He was 86.

One of the foremost Egyptologists of his generation, Harry James was a highly respected figure, not only in the academic world but among all those who had an interest in Egypt. His numerous publications ranged from the scholarly to the popular, and for many years he was equally well known as a lecturer, editor and member of various committees.

His interest in Egypt developed gradually during his teens. His first degree at Oxford, interrupted by military service in the Second World War, was in 'Greats' (Classics), but he followed this with a further degree in Egyptology, and joined the staff of the British Museum in 1951 as a curator in the then Department of Egyptian

and Assyrian Antiquities (now Ancient Egypt and Sudan). In the course of a career there spanning 37 years – the last fourteen as Keeper (head of department) – he worked tirelessly to put the Egyptian collection back in order after wartime disruptions, and to create fresh and innovative long-term displays. This work went hand in hand with penetrating studies of the objects in his care. Accessibility was important to him: he regarded the items that were not on display as crucial raw materials for the growth of knowledge: 'A museum doesn't collect just to exhibit, but to be a centre for study.' His own contributions to the subject were substantial: he carried out fieldwork in Egypt (mainly epigraphic studies) at Saqqara and Gebel el Silsila and published important groups of ancient texts not only from the British Museum but from the collections at Brooklyn and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

His fascination with Egypt was wide-ranging. He delighted in seeing the ancient monuments in context, not just in the historical sense as products of the environment and society in which they were made, but



as part of a vibrant continuum which also embraces the Egypt of today – a continuity explored in his *Egypt: The Living Past* (British Museum Press, 1992). He was also keenly interested in the history of Egyptology. One of his most appealing books, *Egypt Revealed: Artist-Travellers in an Ancient Land* (Folio Society, 1997), tells the story of the early British travellers who recorded and copied much evidence that is now lost about the Egypt of the early nineteenth century. Harry was instrumental in opening some of this material to wider view, such as the vast treasure of drawings made by William John Banks. He was equally diligent in researching the lives of key figures of more recent times, producing the definitive biography of Howard Carter (*Howard Carter: The Path to Tutankhamun* (IB Tauris, 1992)). It was these interests that led him to play a crucial role in establishing ASTENE and in guiding the young society through its first decade. Even when failing health began to impose a less active lifestyle, he remained a staunch supporter of the Association and a regular attender at its conferences.

Harry's many other roles – including Vice-President of the Egypt Exploration Society and Visiting Professor at Memphis State University – are too numerous to list here. He will be greatly missed not only on account of his scholarly achievements but also as a popular figure at

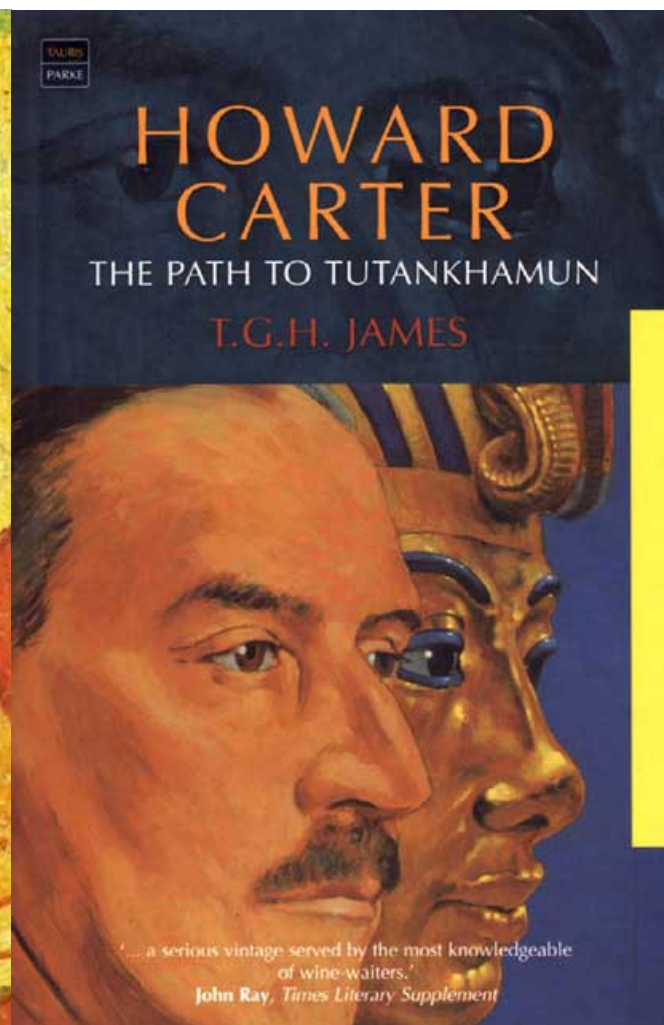
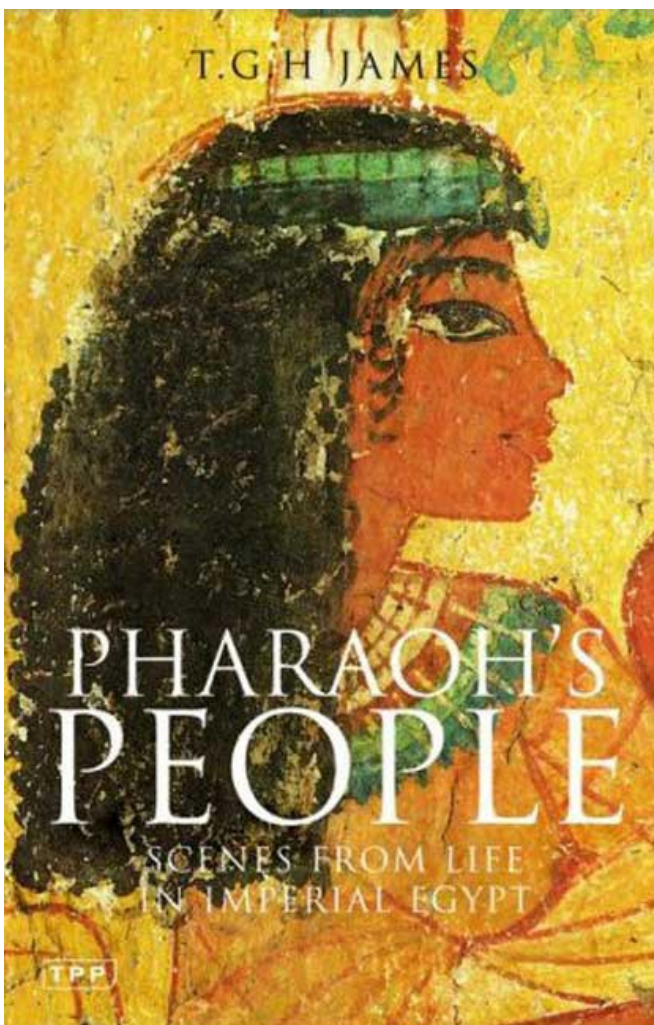


T. G. H. James

social gatherings. His mischievous sense of humour and inexhaustible fund of anecdotes (sometimes risqué but never coarse) meant that there was always laughter when he was in the room. His good humour and enjoyment of life made him approachable, and he was ever ready to help colleagues and younger scholars beginning their careers, many of whom have benefited from his wisdom and experience. His passing marks the end of an era.

*John H Taylor*

*The Editor would welcome from ASTENE members their personal reminiscences of Harry James, a selection of which will be printed in the next issue of the Bulletin.*



## ASTENE's website: [www.astene.org.uk](http://www.astene.org.uk)

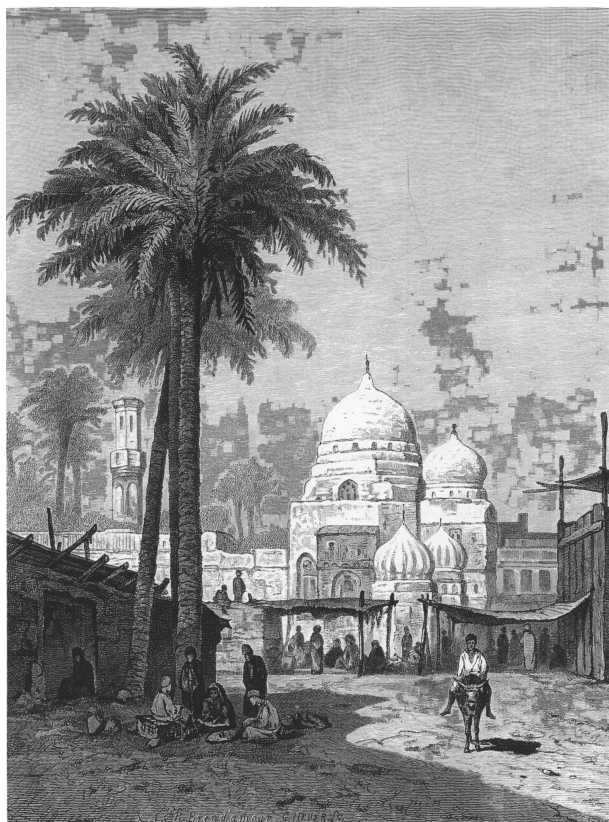
Peter McConachie, who lives in Sunderland in the Northeast, has for some dozen years been ASTENE's highly respected webmaster. In the summer he decided that it was time for him to retire. Peter designed and established the ASTENE website, which has won praise on both sides of the Atlantic, and has been responsible for maintaining and updating it since its inception. While we are very sad to lose him, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt thanks for his sterling and imaginative work, as well as for his patience with those of us sadly lacking in technological expertise.

Adam Cole has now joined the ASTENE team as webmaster. There will be some changes in our site, but it will still be firmly based on the respected work of our first webmaster, to whom ASTENE again offers deepest appreciation and many thanks.

## An Evening at the Palestine Exploration Fund

On 29 October twelve ASTENE members gathered for a talk about the Palestine Exploration Fund at the PEF premises at 1 Hinde Mews, off London's Marylebone Lane. Executive Secretary and Curator Felicity Cobbing explained the organisation's history and purpose. The PEF was founded in 1865, and during the first half of its 150-year history its surveying work flourished. Among the first generation of explorers, mainly officers and men from the Royal Engineers, Felicity mentioned Charles Wilson, who in the mid-1860s carried out survey work in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Palestine; Captain Charles Warren, who a few years later continued Wilson's survey work, while also making important discoveries concerning ancient Jerusalem; and in the 1870s two young lieutenants named Claude Condon and his assistant, a certain Horatio H. Kitchener, who together surveyed Western Palestine. Eventually a full relief map of the area was created. As time was limited, Felicity could only refer briefly to others who furthered the work of the Fund, and to the intrigues and personality clashes that occurred. Among later luminaries were Sir William Flinders Petrie, Sir Leonard Woolley and T.E. Lawrence.

From the 1930s onwards the PEF has been mainly a museum, archive and library for all the work that was done earlier. In a basement room below the library Felicity showed us a splendid collection of original hand-drawn maps of Jerusalem and Palestine, as well as drawings, paintings and high quality photographs by PEF surveyors. The PEF is entirely funded by voluntary contributions and membership, apart from income derived from letting the greater part of its wholly-owned premises in Hinde Mews.



Our visit was followed by drinks in Sonia Anderson's home around the corner and dinner at a Middle Eastern restaurant. This was the first event organised by Dr Patricia Usick, ASTENE's new Events Organiser, and we are grateful to all who made it such a good evening.

*Russell McGuirk*

## ASTENE Conference in Greece

As is usual on our ASTENE journeys abroad, we will be holding a short conference to coincide with the planned trip to Greece and Albania in May 2010. Elisabeth Woodthorpe, who is organising this trip, informs us that the conference will be held in the early evening, probably 6–8 pm, on Sunday, 9 May, the last day of the trip. Chaired by Dr Brian Taylor, it will take place at the Hotel Cavalier in Corfu town, where the group will be staying, and will be followed by dinner at the Rex Restaurant. We hope to present five or six 20-minute papers. Our Greek members and friends of members of the group are most welcome.

## ASTENE/ODUCE Study Day: Near Eastern Monasteries and Western Travellers

The next of our continuing series of conferences in collaboration with the Oxford University Department of Continuing Education, ASTENE will hold a study day at Rewley House, Oxford, on Saturday, 13 July

2010. Papers will be presented on the theme of Near Eastern Monasteries and Western Travellers, and will be followed by the ASTENE AGM. On the evening of Friday, 2 July, there will be an ASTENE gathering, details of which will be announced in the next *Bulletin*.

Western European travellers to the Near East in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries frequently visited monasteries. Many simply found them convenient places to stay. Others hoped to discover interesting manuscripts of both Biblical and Classical texts. But what did they actually find? How were the travellers received? What was the accommodation like? What were the monks like, and what was the state of spiritual life? How did the travellers react to forms of Christian worship and theology different from their own? These are the questions to be tackled by the day's presenters.

Booking leaflets will be included in the next *Bulletin*, or you may reserve your place for the study day via the Oxford University Department of Continuing Education website, at

[http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/results.php?search=Monasteries#a\\_togg\\_O09P220THJ](http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/results.php?search=Monasteries#a_togg_O09P220THJ)

## Bulletin Guest Editors

ASTENE members Russell and Sheila McGuirk have kindly accepted our invitation to act as Guest Editors of the *Bulletin* for the Spring 2010 issue.

Sheila has lived in Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, working mainly in banking (including eight years in Riyadh). She speaks French and Farsi fluently, as well as Arabic. She is researching unexplored aspects of the Persian Tobacco Crisis of 1889–92. Russell read Modern Languages, including Arabic, and then Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard. He has lived in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, where he worked as a translator on Economic Cooperation. From 1983 to 1998 he was the owner and manager of Arabic Translation Associates in London. He now researches aspects of Egypt under the British Occupation. Among his publications are *Colloquial Arabic of Egypt* (Routledge 1986) and *The Sanusi's Little War: Forgotten Conflict in the Western Desert 1915–17* (Arabic Publishing 2007), which was reviewed in this *Bulletin* that year.

The McGuirks can be contacted at 646 West Point, 116 Cromwell Road, London SW7 4XF. Telephone: +44 (0)20 7835 0063; email: [rmcguirk@hu.edu](mailto:rmcguirk@hu.edu).



A CHEERFUL PICNIC IN KING ROWDEEDOWSES HIS TOMB. Mrs. MacFishy's bonnet assumes the most erratic positions.

# OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## Museums and Exhibitions

### **Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford.**

Although the Ashmolean Museum never fully closed during its recent reconstruction, it has been much reduced for the last few years. It opened again with a great fanfare in mid-November and is certainly worth a visit, whether you have been there before or not.

The Ashmolean's collections, reflecting four centuries of evolving knowledge at this very first public museum in the world, founded in 1683, are extraordinary. The artefacts from pre-Dynastic Egypt, for example, are probably the finest outside that country. The objects from Sir Arthur Evans' excavations of the Bronze Age Minoan civilization of Crete, which used to be exhibited in a manner that reflected the necessity of accessioning his discoveries too fast, now get the display they deserve. A visit to the earliest collection in the museum – the Tradescant collection of the early 17th century – reminds one that a visit here was said to be like 'going around the world in a day'. Arthur Evans believed that displays should give 'a real understanding of art and archaeology', and for ASTENE members there is much to see, including even T. E. Lawrence's robes.

In 1845 the architect Charles Cockerel created the great Neoclassical building on Beaumont Street. Outwardly it has not changed, but Rick Mather, the architect responsible for the new extension, has linked the old and the new seamlessly into a single integrated museum, in which the relationship between galleries is often as important as the contents of the galleries themselves. The theme of the museum has become that of 'crossing cultures, crossing time' – a message that ASTENE shares. As one moves around the collections, always, out of the corner of one's eye, one can see the next display.

We hope that there will be an opportunity for an ASTENE visit in July, in connection with the study day on monasteries and the ASTENE AGM (see above, pp 3–4), if not before. Entrance to the Ashmolean is free.

*Deborah Manley*

### ***Crossing Borders: Hebrew Manuscripts as a Meeting Place, at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.***

This exhibition reflects the theme of 'crossing cultures' in Oxford exhibitions, seen also in the newly renovated Ashmolean Museum, explaining how Jews, Christians and Muslims have together contributed to the development of the book. Until 3 May 2010.

***The Egypt of Gustav Flaubert at the Rijksmuseum, Leiden, Netherlands.*** This exhibition at the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden combines fragments from Flaubert's journals and letters with his companion De Camp's detached professional photography. There are also Egyptian objects referred to in Flaubert's correspondence, and photographs of the excavations and monuments they visited. For more information, see <http://www.rmo.nl/english/current/exhibitions/the-egypt-of-gustave-flaubert>. Until 4 April 2010.

***In the Footsteps of Isabella Bird: Adventures in Twin Time Travel, at the Royal Geographical Society, London.*** Victorian writer and explorer Isabella Bird travelled across Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the United States recording her observations. This exhibition retraces her journeys in contemporary photographs. The exhibition runs from 15 February to 12 March 2010.

At 2 pm on Monday, 15 February, Professor Kiyonori Kansaka will present a lecture entitled 'In the Footsteps of Isabella Bird', at the RGS Education Centre, Lowther Lodge, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR. Admittance is £5 for non-RGS members, and booking is required. Telephone 0207 591 3044, or email [showcase@rgs.org](mailto:showcase@rgs.org).

***Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs, at the De Young Museum, San Francisco.*** Includes 130 works from the Egyptian National Museum, 50 of them from the tomb of Tutankhamun. Until 28 March 2010.

***Splendour of Damascus: Textiles and Artefacts, at the Antiochan Heritage Museum, Ligonier, Pennsylvania.*** Open through March 2010.

***Arts of Islam, at the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris.*** Treasures from the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, with more than 500 objects, including manuscripts, paintings, rugs, ceramics and glassware. To mid-March 2010.

***Egypt (Unclassified), at the Petrie Museum, London.*** A quirky exhibition by artist Gemma Aboe, delving into Egypt's history and culture. Artist talk at 6:30 pm, Thursday, 28 January 2010. From 12 January to 1 April.

***Alexander the Great and the Opening of the World, at the Reiss-Engelhorn Museums, Mannheim, Germany.*** Focuses on the changes unleashed by Alexander's passage to India. Until 21 February 2010.

***Visions of the Cosmos: From Milky Ocean to Black Hole, at the Rubin Museum of Art, New York.***

Examines ways in which different cultures viewed their place in the universe. Until 10 May 2010.

***Pioneers in the Past: American Archaeologists in the Middle East, 1919–20, at the Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago.*** Highlights James Henry Breasted's travels through Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. January through August 2010.

## Conferences, Lectures and Talks

***Jewels of the Pharaohs***, by Peter Clayton. Egyptian Cultural Centre, 4 Chesterfield Gardens, London W1. Thursday, 14 January, 6:45 pm. All welcome.

***Ancient South Arabia and the Near East***, by Alexandra Porter. Stevenson Lecture Theatre, British Museum, London WC1. Thursday, 21 January, 6 pm. All welcome.

***Come, Tell Me How You Dig: Living and Working in Egypt***, by Joanne Rowland. A Friends of the Petrie Museum lecture. Lecture Theatre G6, Institute of Archaeology, University College London, 31 Gordon Square, London WC1. Friday, 29 January, 6:30 pm. All welcome.

To be followed by a New Year party: tickets from Jan Picton (020 7679 2369) or [www.ucl.ac.uk/FriendsofPetrie](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/FriendsofPetrie).

***Travel to Ancient Kush, Petrie Museum Family Workshop.*** North Cloisters, Wilkins Building, University College London. Wednesday, 17 February, 11 am–4 pm, and Thursday, 18 February, 1–4 pm.

***Back to the Petrie?*** Christopher Ingold Lecture Theatre, Chemistry Building, University College London, Gordon Street. Thursday, 25 February, 6–7:30 pm. Film at 6:30: behind-the-scenes return from the USA of the exhibition, *Excavating Egypt*.

***Horror at the Museum: The Mummy's Shroud.*** Screening of a Hammer Horror film at the Petrie Museum. In the 1920s archaeologists excavate the mummy of a boy Pharaoh... with dire consequences. Not suitable for children. Thursday, 11 March, 6:30–8:30 p.m. Free – over 18 only. Pre-book via 020 7679 4138 / [d.challis@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:d.challis@ucl.ac.uk).

**Curator's Choice talks at the Sir John Soane Museum.** Last Friday of every month at 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London. Meet at 1 pm for talk beginning at 1:15. Donation but no charge. There are also many opportunities at the Soane Museum for adult drawing, painting, modelling etc.

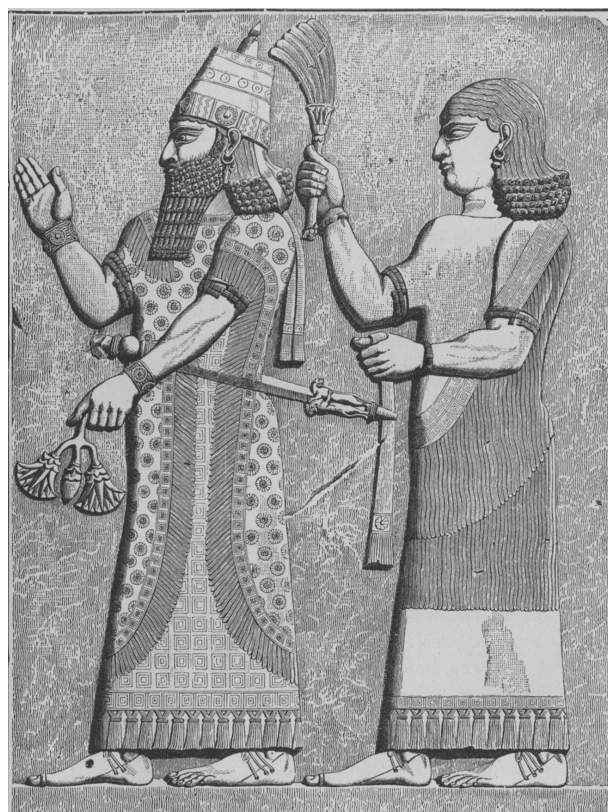
**7th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East.** Hosted jointly by the British Museum and University College London, April 12–16. For more details email [admin@7icaane.org](mailto:admin@7icaane.org).

**Snapshot Traveller.** This monthly newsletter of the International Society for Travel Writing has a website at <http://istw-travel.org/newsletter.html>, which includes among other material calls for papers for various conferences.

## Courses and Study Days

**Great Egyptologists.** Rosalind Janssen is presenting this course of ten sessions, which starts not with Napoleon in 1798 but with Classical tourists, and continues to present-day Egyptologists. Classes will encompass also lesser-known medieval Arab scholars and the contribution of women to the discipline. Janssen will discuss the personalities and discoveries of great archaeologists, philologists and travellers, and will assess the potential of oral reminiscences and archival resources in reconstructing the history of Egyptology.

This course is run in association with the Thames Valley Ancient Egypt Society ([www.tvaes.org.uk](http://www.tvaes.org.uk)) and Oxford University Continuing Education Department. 10 meetings at Ewert House in Oxford's Summertown (parking available), 2–4 pm, starting on 13 April 2010. The cost is £125. Contact Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA. Telephone 01865 280892 or email [ppweekly@conted.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ppweekly@conted.ox.ac.uk).





# BOOKS AND REVIEWS

*ASTENE's Bulletin Reviews Editor is Myra Green. If you would like to suggest a book for review, or if you are interested in reviewing books for the Bulletin, please contact her on mg@myragreen.f9.co.uk.*

***The Last Crusaders: The Hundred-Year Battle for the Centre of the World*, by Barnaby Rogerson. London, Little Brown and Company, 2009. 481 pp, b/w drawings, maps. ISBN 9 7803 1686 1243. £20.**

Barnaby Rogerson's latest book covers the turbulent period from 1415 to 1570 in Europe, North Africa and the Ottoman Empire. His introduction is concise and gives a flavour of what is to unfold in the coming pages. Our conception that the Crusades, and by inference the Crusaders, ended with the Fourth Crusade (1202–61), the sacking of Constantinople in 1203–4 and the creation of the Crusader States in the Balkans, has now been dashed by Rogerson's use of the terms in this later and more global period.

Jerusalem was, of course, the focus for the early Crusaders. Their monumental battles and disputes with the Muslims from 1099 to the late thirteenth century established the history of medieval Europe and the Middle East at the time, but Rogerson's use of the word 'Crusader' might imply that Jerusalem was also the reason for these later uprisings. Not so. Portugal, that small country abutting onto Spain, became – perhaps unwittingly – the cause of great upheaval in medieval Europe, Morocco and the lands of North Africa to Egypt, and even up the coasts of what are now Israel, Lebanon, Turkey, Greece and the Balkans. Portugal's quest for trade was paramount: from 1415 Prince Henry the Navigator encouraged his navy to trade with nations as far afield as West Africa and eventually to India. This relatively peaceful activity was soon to be overshadowed by the Portuguese invasion and conquest of Ceuta, a town on the shores of North Africa. The story of this battle unfolds in the first vivid and well-researched chapter of Rogerson's book.

But this is only the beginning of a marathon work, in which Rogerson dramatizes for the unsuspecting reader the horrors of battle on both sides of the divide. The battle for Ceuta became the catalyst for the quest for power by competing nations throughout the Mediterranean region for years to come. The rise of Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella and the banishment of the Moors from southern Spain, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire under various sultans, and the

formation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire under the Hapsburgs is documented in great detail, chapter by chapter.

Rogerson's overview of such a turbulent period of history is told in an easily digestible manner, although many of the tortuous aftermaths of battles leave one in no doubt of the horror that was inflicted on the poor mortals who were caught up in them. Calling the main protagonists 'Crusaders' is perhaps beyond the bounds of historical fact, although the Knights of St John, the Order of Christ and the Order of Golden Fleece (to mention a few) inevitably became caught up in the melée, though without Jerusalem being the main target this time round. It is not a book for the faint-hearted or squeamish, but it is one that will be of great interest to those attracted by this period of history.

*Priscilla Frost*

***Pashas, Traders and Travellers in the Islamic World*, by James Mather. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2009. 302 pp, ISBN 9780300 12639 6. £25.**

Aside from its curious title (of which more later), this book is a lively and interesting account of the lives of merchants of the Levant Company from its beginning in the late sixteenth century up to its demise in the early nineteenth. As a contribution to the historiography of the Company it is hugely welcome, since the two book-length accounts we have previously had (Epstein and Wood) date from 1908 and 1935 respectively. It is also a useful addition to the post-Said debate about the ambivalence of English/British attitudes to the Ottoman Empire, before those attitudes hardened into imperialism.

Mather uses the names of three cities – Aleppo, Istanbul and Alexandria – as headings for the sections of his book, though his material is more wide-ranging than this would suggest, and sometimes fits awkwardly into his scheme. He discusses the background to the formation of the Company in terms of the opening up of trading opportunities with the Ottoman Empire after the separation of the English Church from Rome, and of the growing consumerism of English society. One of his best sections analyses the different strands in European views of Islam, and how these altered over time. He makes use of a range of sources to demonstrate what the daily lives of traders were like, and he keeps us aware of the constant tension between the Company and the Crown in the early days, though occasionally he gets his facts wrong: Burbury travelled in 1664, for example,

not 1684, so he could not have been commenting on the siege of Vienna ((1683). A glossary of terms such as *dar al-harb* would have been useful for the general reader.

To return to the title: Mather writes in the preface that the word *pasha* was 'coined by contemporaries for the merchants who traded in the parts of the world now known as the Middle East'. This is extremely misleading. The word *pasha* is Turkish (probably deriving from Persian) and describes the rank of Ottoman official below that of vizier. In the seventeenth century it is frequently used in European travel accounts (often in the form *bashaw*) to refer to Ottoman officials. In the nineteenth century the title was occasionally conferred by the Ottoman authorities on Europeans (e.g. Glubb pasha), but to use it of European traders is confusing at the very least. Mather does not quote any original use of it in this sense.

This is certainly a book to arouse interest in British-Ottoman trade and its wider ramifications, but anyone wishing to pursue the subject further might want to turn to Alison Games' masterly *The Web of Empire* (2008), which uses a broader geographical focus and an impressive array of detail to reflect on how what began as accommodation to Ottoman cultural ways began to shift towards colonialism and imperialism.

Lucy Pollard

***The Last Hammams of Cairo: A Disappearing Bathhouse Culture*, by May Telmissany and Eve Gandossi, photographs by Pascal Meunier. Cairo and New York, American University in Cairo Press, 2009. 134 pp, colour plates, Darel Kutub No. 16145/08; ISBN 978 977 416 243 5. £34.50.**

The nostalgic title of this beautifully produced book invites the reader into a sensuous voyage of personal anecdote and memory, mingled with fragments of historical narrative through the sadly decaying hammams of Cairo. The three contributors approach their subject as well-informed and affectionate outsiders – Meunier and Gandossi are French, while Telmissany, of Egyptian origin, is a novelist and academic, resident in Canada.

The *hammam* as public bath is one of the great institutions of the Islamic Mediterranean and Middle East, built as an act of pious and civic charity by rulers, officers of state, wealthy merchants and private citizens. While the Roman prototype was a grand leisure centre of immense baths, libraries, gymnasia and theatres, the Islamic *hammam* concentrated on hygiene for religious, personal and therapeutic reasons. The interior of the *hammam* – which progressed from a reception vestibule furnished in varying degrees of ease and comfort through a series of cold, hot and steam rooms to a pool and sometimes a fountain – offered social amenities especially to women, who would spend hours in bathing

and personal grooming, fortified by delicious picnics and snacks. *Hammams* were also the setting for the rituals of the bridal henna party and purification after childbirth.

Cairo was famous for its *hammams*, reputed to number 365 during the Mamluk period of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, each one associated with a specific quarter of the city. This number declined from the nineteenth century, as Muhammad Ali and his successors, together with their European advisers, drastically remodelled Cairo on Western principles of town planning by building squares, wide streets and residential suburbs furnished with private baths. The traditional *hammams*, huddled in the congested area of old Cairo, are now associated with the poor. Only about fifteen survive, of which six are still precariously active.

The authors treat the buildings as a background to a thematic approach that highlights the personalities and traditions of the *hammam*, rather than as examples of Islamic civic architecture. Telmessy contrasts the changing social and emotional context of the *hammam* with that of the modern bathroom. She also devotes an interesting section to the role of the *hammam* in Egyptian cinema, where its enclosed world allows a focus on the drama of plotlines and the interplay of characters.

Gandossi interviewed local people and presents both their problems and efforts to solve them. Ashraf, for example, owner of the Bishri *hammam*, has to combine his day job as an accountant with renting out space as cheap accommodation while vainly trying to repair his dilapidated building. The masseur Said, of the Mishri *hammam*, who also works as a waiter, talks about the long training and skills necessary to his craft. Umm Zeinhoum, overseer of the Margush *hammam*, still supervises her female customers and is a fount of information on rituals, superstitions, beauty products and treatments. Two owners – Okal of the al-Arba *hammam* and Mishmish of the al-Talat *hammam*, which has belonged to his family for over two hundred years, have transformed their properties into cafes, where customers drink tea and watch television as well as bathe. They lovingly embellish their hammams with colourful and eccentric furnishings. Okal has resourcefully constructed a gymnastic room with equipment made from scrap iron.



Meunier's fine photographs, rich with suffused colour, wave through and illuminate the text, capturing the crumbling and brightly painted wall of the *hammams*. The book concludes with a selection of quotations from visitors to Cairo and a select bibliography.

The future of the surviving *hammams* is uncertain, as the owners of those still active have a constant struggle to maintain them. *Hammams* that are now permanently closed, while officially on the list of antiquities, are trapped in a limbo of bureaucratic delay. Various projects sponsored by Britain and the European Commission aim to survey and document the Mamluk *hammams* and prepare proposals for their restoration. While the book makes an eloquent case for these historic buildings, it would help the reader to navigate the text by including a handlist of all the surviving *hammams* in order of date and a map locating them within Cairo.

*Jennifer Scarce*

*We would be interested to know about early travellers' accounts of visits to the hammams of Cairo. Here is what John Gardner Wilkinson reported in Murray's Guide to Egypt (1847):*

There are many baths in Cairo, but none remarkable for size and splendour. They are all vapour baths, and their heat, the system of shampooing, and the operation of rubbing with horse-hair gloves, contribute not a little to cleanliness and comfort; though it is certainly disagreeable to be pulled about by the bathing men.

The largest bath is the Tumbalee, near the gate called Bab e' Shareeh, but it is less clean and comfortable than many others. One person, or a party, may take a whole bath to themselves alone, if they send beforehand and make an agreement with the master. In that case, care should be taken to see that the whole is well cleaned out, and fresh water put into the tank. You had always better use your own towels, or promise an extra fee for clean ones, which you cannot be too particular in rejecting, if at all of doubtful appearance.

***The Mistress of Nothing*, by Kate Pullinger. London, Serpent's Tail, 2009. ISBN 978 1 84668 709 9. £10.99.**

This is a fictionalised account based on the seven years spent in Egypt by Lucie Duff Gordon, from 1862 to 1869. It purports to be written by her maid, Sally Naldrett, and to be her story. It thus forms a study of the manners and customs of both the English and the Egyptians.

There was plenty of material on which to draw, and the author lists her sources carefully. ASTENE members will be aware of most of them. Pullinger is honest about

some but not all of her 'fabrications'. She is also honest about how long the book has taken to write. Personally, I feel that the process has swamped the result and that she has not managed to capture either the style and character of the maid or the environment in which the group were living. Others may well differ, and indeed do, if the quotes on the back cover are not taken out of context. It is an intriguing book but not entirely satisfactory.

*Lisa French*

***Desert Voices: Bedouin Women's Poetry in Saudi Arabia*, by Moneera Al-Ghadeer. London, I.B. Tauris, 2009. 288 pp, ISBN 978 1 84511 666 8. £49.50.**

The poetry of the Bedu is as the desert mirage: if you are not there when it occurs, it is gone forever. It is spoken verse, recited spontaneously or from memory. 'When someone started to recite poetry a hush fell over the camp ...' wrote Wilfred Thesiger in 1946, during his crossing of the Rub al-Khali. 'Poetry used to roam in my environment when I was a child' commented another writer of about the same era. It has been described, somewhat perversely, as oral literature. There are, however, few collections; there is no Hafiz, there is no Rumi, there is no Omar Khayyam.

Some sixty years after Thesiger wrote, life for most of the Bedu is changing, and scholars are now attempting to record and analyse the poetry that can be found before the invasive modern world dilutes and fractures the hard and simple life that they have endured for centuries. Primacy among these studies must surely be accorded to Clinton Bailey, who, having visited and lived with the Bedu in Sinai and the Negev over some twenty years, produced his monumental *Bedouin Poetry* (Oxford University Press, 1991). This is a compendious volume of recorded poetry both in Arabic and English, with full notes about the origins of each piece, where and when he found it, and by whom it had been recited. In *Ya Kundalzza Rays!: Politics and Poetry in Contemporary Society* (Garnet/Ithaca, 2009), Clive Holes and Said Salman Abu Athera follow a similar format, bringing the subject up-to-date with poetry that is concerned with wars, invasions, poverty, discrimination and other contemporary subjects.

Moneera al-Ghadeer approaches Bedouin poetry from a totally different perspective. Her purpose is to address a perceived lack of recognition and consideration of women's poetry, and to do this she has taken a limited selection of verses from a collection made in the 1950s by 'Abd Allah Ibn Raddas (*Sha'irat min al-Badiyah*, Riyaaadh, 1969). Her study is philosophically based on the literary theories to be found in the works of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Derrida and the more recent Judith Butler. The themes she takes are love, desire, longing and melancholy in the lives of Bedu women. There are also delightful and unexpected allusions to camels and the desert. The verses, as does Bedu poetry generally,

use allegory and metaphor as vehicles for explaining their concerns. For those who enjoy a detailed appraisal of literary effusions, this volume will be a delight and will provide a valuable insight into the mores of Bedu society.

For the poetry enthusiast, the book contains a fairly modest offering of some forty or so extracts of part-poems, and these are incorporated in the text of the study. Clearly, the translation of a poem from a tribal dialect into Arabic, from Arabic into English and from the English words into a clear expression of the intended meaning, and from there into a word pattern that reflects the melody of the original verse, is a difficult task and one in which the author achieves considerable success. A final short poem, written apparently by an orphan forced into an arranged marriage that proved unsuccessful, who subsequently terminated her life, shows that these difficulties have been overcome with a considerable degree of acumen.

I find comfort in taking poison,  
Better than the distress of a husband's presence.  
My desire is a man from Subay'I, who tracks  
His dispersed camels.  
He is better than Ibn 'Askar's castle and its building  
When I die, bury me in the centre of this  
Dry and endless space  
My grave in the path of departing camels  
That they may step there.

*George Hutcheson*

**Robert Stephenson Abroad: Egypt 1847–1859,**  
by Alan C. Clothier. Distributed by Robert  
Stephenson Trust Ltd, 20 South Street, Newcastle  
upon Tyne NE1 3PE. 44 pp. £4.50.

A whole field of travel as yet little explored by ASTENE is that of the impact of the railways of Egypt and the Near East in the latter half of the 19th century. Great names of railway history are linked, especially with Egypt, in this development, including Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Robert Stephenson.

## Forthcoming Books by ASTENE Members

No fewer than eight new books written or contributed to by ASTENE members were unfortunately published too late to include reviews in this issue of the *Bulletin*. They will be reviewed in future issues. In the meantime here is advance information.

*Scriptural Geography Portraying the Holy Land*,  
by Edwin James Aiken. London, I.B. Tauris Historical  
Geography Series, 3. 244 pp, illustrated, ISBN 978 1 845  
118 181. £45.00.

*Traveling through the Deserts of Egypt, from 450 BC to the 20th Century: An Anthology*, by Sahar Abdel Hakim and Deborah Manley. New York and Cairo, American University in Cairo Press. Illustrated, ISBN 978 997 416 313 5. \$24.95, £120.

*The History of Egypt from Earliest Times to the Present*, by Jason Thompson. New York and Cairo, American University in Cairo Press, distributed by Haus Publishing, 70 Cadogan Place, London SW1X 9AH. 382 pp, ISBN 9 781 9085 8044.

*Edward William Lane: The Life of the Pioneering Egyptologist and Orientalist*, by Jason Thompson. New York and Cairo, American University in Cairo Press, distributed by Haus Publishing. 747 pp, ISBN 9 781 1906 5984 71. £20.00.

*Shafik Gabr Collection*, edited by Dina Nasser-Khalidi, with contributions by Briony Llewellyn, Emily Weeks, Caroline Williams, Kritian Davies et al. New York and Cairo, American University in Cairo Press.

*Ultimate Adventures with Britannia: Personalities, Politics and Culture in Britain*, edited by William Roger Louis, with a contribution on John Frederick Lewis and Nineteenth-century Cairo by Caroline Williams. London, I.B. Tauris, 2009.

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Joseph Attard Tabone reported the sad news of the death of Charles Catania at 65 years. He will be known to some readers as the author of *Andrea de Bono: Maltese Explorer on the White Nile*.

## ASTENE Travellers in Fiction

In the last issue we asked readers to tell us about fictional travels in Egypt and the Near East. Charles Plouviez responded: 'you may have opened the flood gates'. His initial list included 'the three great novels of fictional tours in the Ottoman Empire': *Les Aventures de Telemaque*, by Francois Fenelon (1699); *Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis en Grece*, by the Abbe Barhelemy (1788); and *Anastasius*, by Thomas Hope (1819).

His modern contributions are *The Towers of Trebizond*, by Rose Macaulay (1956), in which Aunt Dot (on her camel) and a group of high camp church people explore the possibilities of starting an Anglican mission to women in Turkey; and *The Mandelbaum Gate*, by Muriel Spark (1965), about travels between divided Palestine.

Any further contributions to the Editor please.

# RESEARCH RESOURCES

Please send to the Editor details of any research resources that may be of interest to other members.

## Alexandria and the Accounts of Travellers from the Sixth Century to 1798

We are delighted that ASTENE member Michel Azim drew our attention to the researches of a French scholar, Oueded Sennoune, who was living in Egypt while she worked on her PhD thesis about travellers to Alexandria over the centuries to 1798. This work was supervised by Jean Yves Emperor, Director of CEALEX, and will be published by them ([www.cealex.org](http://www.cealex.org)). Dr Sennoune writes:

With the intention of creating a comprehensive index of travellers to Alexandria using computer analysis, we compiled all the available material in chronological order. Each traveller is described with his or her biography and account. Some 251 travellers of various nationalities and all horizons were indexed. Thanks to this instrument, one can query these sources by keyword to find the selected subject.

Before applying the historical data to our analysis, a study of plagiarism in the literature of the travellers was essential. Indeed, during the compilation of texts, we recognised some chapters which were written by other travellers. It was important to underline these sources before being able to use them.

Starting with information from these sources we were able to index the material based on the following topics: the natural world, the human world and the architectural world. The study goes on to analyse selected topics on trade, interdict, personal hygiene, descriptions of Alexandria in the second half of the eighteenth century, access to the Alexander Canal, religious rites, and underground constructions.

## National Geographical Society of Egypt

In his introduction to *Robert Stephenson Abroad: Egypt 1847–1859* (Robert Stephenson Trust, 2006), Alan Clothier thanked the National Geographical Society

of Egypt – ‘housed in a former Khedive’s palace and still containing his extensive library’ – and the National Survey of Egypt, ‘which holds a fascinating collection of early maps.’

Have members used these resources, and can anyone tell us what they contain and whether, and how, a visitor to Egypt may access them?

## Howard Carter’s House, Luxor

Diane Fortenberry drew our attention to the news that Howard Carter’s mudbrick house on the west bank at Luxor has now been restored and is open to the public as a museum. Carter was living there when he made his great Tutankahmun discovery.

Descendants and relations of both Carter and his patron, Lord Carnarvon, were among the first visitors to the museum. The present Lord Carnarvon is quoted as saying, ‘My grandfather was so persistent and determined to find objects of beauty, and Howard Carter was such a great organiser, draughtsman and scholar.’ The museum displays the tools Carter used in his excavations and photographs of the work on the tomb underway.

Carter lived in the house for some time after his discovery, meticulously cataloguing the tomb’s contents. His nephew Stuart told how his uncle worked from 1922 to 1931 ‘on unlocking the secrets of the tomb’.

‘It was time,’ said Mustapha Al-Wazen, Director of the Valley of the Kings, ‘to take good care of Carter’s house.’



Restored and reconstructed house on Luxor’s west bank, used by Howard Carter while excavating in the Valley of the Kings.

# QUERIES AND REPLIES

*Sharing knowledge is a basic purpose of ASTENE. If you have a query, or can answer one published here, please reply both to the person who asked the question and to the Editor of the Bulletin so the knowledge can be more widely shared.*

## Giovanni Finati's Manuscript

Francesca Radcliffe wondered whether the 'Giovanni' who accompanied 'George and Nichol' to Aleppo with the architect Charles Barry in 1819 (*Bulletin* 41, pp 9–10) could have been Giovanni Finati, the Italian-Muslim janissary who accompanied William Bankes on his travels in the Near East.

Francesca has for some years been seeking the twelve 'little exercise books of Giovanni's dictated memoirs'. (In the boxes of the Bankes Archive in the Dorset History Centre in Dorchester, she has found many small exercises books with marbled paper covers – but alas, not the Finati manuscript. She also found one, even rarer, on the internet – for £3500.) She wonders if anyone has compiled a list of who Finati accompanied as dragoman and guide during the period when he was earning his living in Egypt. Most of the travellers who employed Finati referred to him by his Moslem name, Mohammed, and thus he appears in their accounts.

The manuscript of his memoirs was dictated to a fellow Italian while he was in England and Wales in 1822. An Italian author, Michele Visani, interested in Finati, searched for the manuscript in the late 1930s. He did not find it in the British Museum nor the Ferrara Archive (Finati's home town, where Bankes might have left it). Visani translated the English version into Italian in 1941; it was published by Grafiche Amedeo Nicola and Co., Milano-Verese.

Visani also researched the Ferraro Archives with a measure of success. He found a Giuseppe Alfonso Finatti who would fit the time of birth, having been baptised on 12 January 1786. His parents were Francesco and Anna Finatti. In the published version of his memoirs Giovanni wrote that in 1805, at the age of about 18, he enrolled in the Napoleonic army. The dates fit, but one must wonder about the name.

Professor Chinarelli, an archivist in the Ferrara Archives, suggested that it was customary in those days to use a different name from the one given at baptism. The last record Francesca has of Finati is when he accompanied Lord Prudhoe on his lengthy travels in 1829.

Does anyone know more? Please reply to the *Bulletin* Editor and to Francesca Radcliffe direct at [mail@francesca\\_radcliffe.com](mailto:mail@francesca_radcliffe.com).



# Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East

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