

MESOPOTAMIAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND TRAVEL LITERATURE: SHIFTING RELATIONSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

Studying the links between travel, travel literature and the archaeology of the Near East has, over the course of the past decade, slowly developed from a side-step of archaeology into a more 'proper' field of enquiry. However, much of what has been published so far has remained focussed on the nineteenth century, on site-specific issues or on highlighted individuals. Research into the early explorers, the broad developments of academic interests in the region and the potential practical use of travel writing have yet to become fully integrated into the Near Eastern archaeological discipline. With the present vogue of travel studies and the recent publication of several overviews offering significant new insights, the time seems at hand for an examination of how the relationships between travel literature and Near Eastern –specifically (lower) Mesopotamian– archaeology have developed over time. This paper argues that the development of Mesopotamian archaeology as a distinct discipline and a specific perception of its history have during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries drawn a wedge between the archaeologist and the traveller, as well as between archaeological research and travel literature. As a general overview of changing relationships between the two, the paper pleads for a more thorough integration of travel studies into the field of archaeology.

RESUMEN

El estudio en la última década de las relaciones entre viajes, literatura de viajes y la arqueología del Próximo Oriente antiguo ha pasado de ser un tema eludible de la arqueología a tener su propio campo de investigación. Aun así, mucho de lo que se ha publicado hasta el momento se ha centrado en el siglo XIX, en cuestiones de yacimientos concretos o en personajes destacados. La investigación sobre los primeros exploradores, el desarrollo general de intereses académicos en la región y el potencial uso práctico de los escritos de viajes todavía tienen que integrarse plenamente en la disciplina arqueológica del Próximo Oriente antiguo. Con la moda actual de los estudios sobre viajes y las recientes publicaciones de algunas visiones generales que ofrecen nuevos elementos significativos parece que ha llegado el momento de ver cómo se ha desarrollado la relación existente entre la literatura de viajes y la arqueología del Próximo Oriente -en concreto de (la baja) Mesopotamia-. Este artículo defiende que el desarrollo de la arqueología mesopotámica como una disciplina aparte y una percepción concreta de su historia han introducido durante los siglos XIX y XX una cuña entre el arqueólogo y el viajero, así como entre la investigación arqueológica y la literatura de viajes. Como visión general del cambio en las relaciones entre ambos, este artículo aboga por una mayor integración de los estudios sobre viajes en el campo de la arqueología.

KEYWORDS

Archaeology, travel, Mesopotamia, literature, disciplinary history

PALABRAS CLAVE

Arqueología, viaje, Mesopotamia, literatura, historia disciplinaria

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the study of links between the literature of travel and the early archaeologies of the Near East has slowly but gradually developed into a specific sub-field of archaeological enquiry, with lectures, conference themes and a slowly expanding collection of secondary literature to boot. Disciplinary histories are starting to assume a wider stance when dealing with the nineteenth century Age of Excavation, allotting a more significant place to political and socio-cultural elements surrounding the early excavations,¹ while the Near Eastern enterprises of lesser famed nations have also started to receive a degree of attention formerly lavished only on the more famous French, British and German adventures.² These new angles of research are slowly altering our attitudes towards ourselves as scholars and towards our (perceived) disciplinary ancestors. However, much of what has been published over the years has remained focussed on the nineteenth century and on site-specific issues. Furthermore, this research remains often conceptually differentiated from ‘real’ archaeological work, and implicitly labelled a ‘petite histoire’ which, while interesting, shouldn’t really take up too much of our time. In-depth study of early explorers has yet to become a fully integrated aspect of the Near Eastern archaeological discipline.

Given the broad variety of studies on the subject of travel and early archaeology contained in this volume, it seems opportune to take a closer look at how the relationships between archaeologist and traveller – and more specifically the literature of travel – have actually developed over the past centuries. Focussing on the region of lower Mesopotamia – contained roughly between the Twin Rivers, the latitude of Samarra and the head of the Persian Gulf – this paper argues that travellers and travel literature have slowly been pushed out of archaeological study since the nineteenth century. This, in turn, has long led archaeologists to maintain an emphasis on perceived great names and achievements of disciplinary history, rather than studying the more complex development of the knowledge systems out of which Mesopotamian archaeology was eventually born. Once we understand how this situation came about, we may start to develop a broader appreciation of the links between the ‘mere’ traveller and the ‘specialised’ explorer/archaeologist. Perhaps this new appreciation will also entice us to study travel literature more directly as a potential source of information on archaeological phenomena.

2. THE EARLY DAYS: TRAVELLER AND ARCHAEOLOGIST, SIDES OF A COIN

2.1 Advent

The advent of Mesopotamian archaeology proper is generally taken to have occurred in the final decades of the eighteenth century. The first ‘real’ archaeological accomplishments are generally stated to have taken place in the first decades of the nineteenth century, with the excavation of the sites of Nineveh and Babylon in the 1840s as major achievements. Obviously, the impact of these discoveries cannot be understated; at

¹ E.g. N. Chevalier, *La recherche archéologique française au Moyen-Orient 1842-1947* (Paris: 2002) and V. Krings and I. Tassignon, *Archéologie dans l’Empire Ottoman Autour de 1900: entre politique, économie et science* (Rome: 2004). See also further.

² Most notably J. M^a Córdoba (Ed.), ‘Españoles en Oriente Próximo (1166-1926),’ *Arbor* CLXXX (2005); J. M^a Córdoba and M. C. Pérez Díe (Eds.), *La Aventura Española en Oriente (1166-2006). Viajeros, museos y estudios en la historia del redescubrimiento del Oriente Próximo Antiguo* (Madrid: 2006) with reduced English translation: *The Spanish Near Eastern Adventure (1166-2006)*; and A. Invernizzi, *Il Genio Vagante. Viaggiatori all scoperta dell’antico Oriente (secc. XII-XVIII)* (Alessandria: 2005).

the same time, it is also evident to any scholar that Mesopotamian archaeology didn't erupt *ex nihilo* from the minds of European academics. Rather, like any science, it grew gradually out of a variety of interests that had for centuries brought Europeans into this part of the world or enticed them to study its past. Such interests ranged from the academic (e.g. the study of Bible lands or the search for Arabic documents), political (e.g. the search for a Persian ally against the Ottoman Empire),³ or economic (e.g. caravan trade and the quest for rapid passage to the Indies),⁴ to the religious (e.g. missionary work) or more purely personal (e.g. pilgrimage or leisure travel)⁵.

With the exception of a handful of pre-sixteenth century narratives, European presence in lower Mesopotamia and published accounts thereof only reached significant numbers in the latter part of the 1500's. During this early period of exploration, travellers of any kind played an important part in creating and disseminating information on both the present and past state of this region, as travel writing became an important part of the gathering of scientific data on the foreign. Accounts of Mesopotamian travellers helped to shed light on the modes of travel through the region and helped point out important cities and towns; they contained the first (partially) observation-based historical geographies of the land and provided European readership with descriptions of such sites as Ctesiphon, 'Aqar Quf or Samarra. Humanist scientific philosophy gave prime place to travel as a means of collecting information on the globe and encouraged the production of travelogues and anthologies of travel literature, and Mesopotamian travel formed no exception.⁶

While qualitative differences can be noted between the various traveller-writers, at this early stage of exploration no strict distinction yet existed between the specialised and non-specialised traveller. Narratives differed from one-another in terms of descriptive detail and attempted historiography, but both the more schooled author (e.g. physician Leonhardt Rauwolff) and the traveller with less academic concerns (e.g. merchants John Eldred or Gasparo Balbi) became added to contemporary overviews. Similarly, while the study of the remoter past of this region was almost exclusively the field of historical and linguistic scholarship, antiquarian concerns can already be noted in some of the earliest traveller's accounts. Georg Fernberger's unpublished diary is one such example of the merging of personal interest with scholarly concerns. His journey through the region in 1589 was driven purely by personal curiosity, yet in his diary the nobleman also attempted on occasion to interpret the land through the help of classical and biblical authorities. His removal of a brick from 'Aqar Quf, which he took to be the Tower of Babel, reveals the vogue of antiquarian collections of the time.⁷

Some of the observations made in the field also entered into academic studies on the nature, history and geography of the East that were being produced within Europe. This shows the academic importance allotted to these types of sources, even though no attempt seems to have been made to integrate all the available travel writing in such works. Olfert

³ L. Lockhart and P. Jackson (Eds.), *The Cambridge history of Iran. Vol. 6, The Timurid and Safavid periods* (Cambridge: 1986), pp. 373-378.

⁴ E.g. W.P. Andrew, *Memoir on the Euphrates valley route to India* (London:1857); D. Carruthers, *The desert route to India, being the journals of four travellers by the great desert caravan route between Aleppo and Basra, 1745-1751* (London: 1929) (Hakluyt Society, Second Series, n° LXIII), pp. xiii-xxxiv.

⁵ E.g. J.H. Stocqueler, *Fifteen months' pilgrimage through untrodden tracts of Khuzistan and Persia, in a journey from India to England, through parts of Turkish Arabia, Persia, Armenia, Russia, and Germany. Performed in the years 1831 and 1832*, 2 Vol.'s (London: 1832)

⁶ For a more detailed examination of the nature of Mesopotamian travel during this period and the individuals mentioned here and in the following paragraphs, see B. Ooghe, 'The rediscovery of Babylonia,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17/3 (2007), in press.

⁷ R. Burger and R. Wallisch (Eds.), *Reisetagebuch (1588-1593): Sinai, Babylon, Indien, Heiliges Land, Osteuropa* (Berlin: 1999), p. 58, p. 66.

Dapper's 1680 overview of the past and contemporary state of the Middle East, for instance, included information from such varied traveller-types as rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, merchant traveller Gasparo Balbi and scholar of Persian history Pedro Texeira. It also refuted the widespread belief that the site of Babylon was to be found in the region of Baghdad, an idea nevertheless still upheld in the *Bibliothèque Orientale* two decades later.⁸ Arthur Bedford's *Scripture chronology* mentioned in passing how Benjamin of Tudela had identified Nineveh as extending eastward of Mosul.⁹ Edward Wells, though equally preoccupied with the biblical and classical accounts of the region as was Bedford, referred in his *Historical Geography of the Old Testament* to observations made by Mediaeval traveller Maundrell in his attempt to locate Eden.¹⁰ Clearly, travel narratives formed a potential source of information for the study of the Mesopotamian past alongside the more prominently studied historical sources (i.e. classical and biblical, but also local Arabic and Persian documents) of assumed greater authority.

2.2 Specialisation and connection: 17th – early 19th century

During the later 17th century, travel continued to form an important way of gathering scientific data and more specific instructions were developed which aimed to guide this process of data-collection. With the blooming of Enlightenment philosophies in the eighteenth century came the first inland explorations and multi-disciplinary scientific expeditions. The first of these to reach Mesopotamia was the Danish expedition of 1761-1767, to which Carsten Niebuhr was connected as mathematician,¹¹ though the organised study of the Near East through expeditions is often symbolically benchmarked by the large-scale Egyptian expedition of Napoleon at the close of the century.

During this period, a negative view of the ancient civilisations that once resided in this region and that had featured so negatively in the Old Testament slowly began to give way to an appreciation of their potential accomplishments. The possibility of finding written records that could corroborate or expand upon the Old Testament likewise raised interest in the region, even though as yet no significant breakthroughs had been made in the decipherment of cuneiform writing.¹² Archaeological/antiquarian concerns which had already spread throughout (western) Europe were now focused on the more conspicuous sites of the Mesopotamian region, which became cause for increasingly specialised study. This development slowly began to increase the distinction between the academic or

⁸ O. Dapper, *Naukeurige beschryving van Asië behelsende de gewesten van Mesopotamië, Babylonië, Assyrië, Anatolië of Klein Asië ... Arabië* (Leiden: 1680); D. Van der Cruysse, *Le courrier du Roi en Orient: relations de deux voyages en Perse et en Inde 1668-1674* (Paris: 2005), p. 1061 note 2; B. d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale* (Paris, 1697), entry 'Babylon'.

⁹ A. Bedford, *The Scripture Chronology* (London: 1730), p. 102.

¹⁰ E. Wells, *An Historical Geography of the Old Testament: In Three Volumes* (London: 1711), pp. 4-5.

¹¹ M. L. Pratt, *Imperial eyes. Travel writing and transculturation* (London: 1992), pp. 15-37; L. Koerner, 'Purposes of Linnaean travel: a preliminary research report,' in: *Visions of Empire: voyages, botany and representations of nature*, eds. D. P. Miller and P. H. Reill (Cambridge: 1996), pp. 117-152.

¹² Such ideas could already be seen in Jacques Villotte's archaeological inclination in his account of travels in 1696 ([J. Villotte], *Voyages d'un Missionnaire de la Compagnie de Jesus, en Turquie, en Perse, en Armenie, en Arabie, & en Barbarie* (Paris: 1730), p. 643) and were possibly implicit in the historical geographies and sparse site-based investigations of several earlier explorers. The studies on Nineveh and Babylon carried out since the first half of the 18th century, most notably by Jean Otter, Emmanuel de Saint Albert and Jean Bourignon d'Anville, likewise show that a possibly negative appraisal of ancient civilisation didn't hinder the academic interests of these individuals. However, the explicit disapproval of a prevalently negative view of these early civilisations may have come only with Carsten Niebuhr (C. Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und den umliegenden Ländern*, Vol. 2 (Graz: 1968 [1774-1778]), pp. 290-291.

specialist and the non-specialist traveller. The former began to focus on a more impersonal mode of writing academic texts, as noted in the works of such oft-cited ‘early archaeologists’ Niebuhr or de Beauchamp, whereas the latter relied more on personal appreciations of the foreign lands.¹³ Although at this time the distinction between the two writing types was still vague, certainly in relation to our study area, the detached style of writing became increasingly important in the early nineteenth century. By that time when science as a whole developed into more stringently positivist terms and absolute and detached information became an essential part of its working apparatus.¹⁴

Despite the slow specialisation of Mesopotamian exploration many ties continued to exist between the travellers and the academic study of the region. Until the first decades of the nineteenth century, little excavation had yet taken place; the few sites that were written about were mainly the focus of traveller-explorers. D’Anville’s *Mémoire sur la position de Babylone* (1755) relied heavily on Della Valle’s account, as well as on the unpublished manuscript of French Carmelite missionary Emmanuel de Saint Albert.¹⁵ Niebuhr referred to several travellers’ descriptions of the region and the posthumously published narrative of Claudius Rich, who through his explorations at Babylon is often cited as the first true Mesopotamian archaeologist, explicitly summarised a number of travelogues of preceding centuries, some of which had to date received little scholarly attention.¹⁶ Significant pieces of information on sites such as Babylon or Borsippa were provided in the work of early 19th century travelling artist Robert Ker Porter, who also published an anthology of travel literature.¹⁷ Outside of the archaeological field, too, travel literature maintained some relevance: F. Hofer’s 1852 overview of Near Eastern history *Chaldée, Assyrie, Médie, Babylonie, Mésopotamie, Phénicie, Palmyrène* (Paris) for instance referred (briefly) to travellers’ reports on a specific canal believed to be of Islamic or pre-Islamic age (pp. 362-364). To sum up, while the importance of specialised travel and early archaeology had slowly increased during the course of the 18th century, by the 1830’s Mesopotamian research had not yet reached the level at which less specialised individuals or modes of writing had become incompatible with the academic field.

¹³ C. Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und den umliegenden Ländern*, Vol. 2 (Graz: 1968 [1774-1778]); J. De Beauchamp, ‘Voyage de Bagdad à Bassora le long de l’Euphrate,’ *Journal des Sçavans*, May (1785), pp. 285-303; J. De Beauchamp, ‘Mémoire sur les Antiquités babyloniennes qui se trouvent aux environs de Bagdad,’ *Journal des Sçavans*, Dec. (1790), pp. 797-806; C. Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour. Travel writing and imaginative geography 1600-1830* (Manchester: 1999), p. 14, p. 28; P.D. Smecca, *Representational Tactics in Travel Writing and Translation: A Focus on Sicily* (Roma: 2005), pp. 62-63.

¹⁴ On the appreciation of detached writing in travelogues, see for instance a reviewer’s praise of Rich’s *Narrative: Anon.*, ‘Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, and on the Site of Ancient Nineveh: With Journal of a Voyage down the Tigris to Bagdad; And an Account of a Visit to Shirauz and Persepolis,’ *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 6 (1836), p. 351.

¹⁵ R. W. Rogers, *A History of Babylonia and Assyria*, Vol. 1 (New York: 1900), p. 101.

¹⁶ C. Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und den umliegenden Ländern*, Vol. 2 (Graz: 1968 [1774-1778]), p. 237, p. 239, p. 280, p. 306; C.J. Rich, *Narrative of a Journey to the Site of Babylon in 1811* (London: 1839), xxix-xlii. Most important in the introduction to Rich is the inclusion of Vincenzo Maria di San Catarina di Siena, whose account seems never before to have been printed outside of Italy.

¹⁷ Ker Porter’s notes and drawings were originally bound as *The Caucasus, Persia, Babylonia, etc., with notes, maps, plans, surveys, views, and other drawings of interesting objects; by Sir Robert Ker Porter, K.C.H., during his travels in those countries in the years 1817-1820, forming a large folio volume; the maps, views, and plans in which are described in separate entries* (Manuscript held in the British Library, London); R.K. Porter, *A General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels, Arranged in Systematic Order: Forming a Complete History of the Origin and Progress of Navigation, Discovery, and Commerce, by Sea and Land, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time. 18 Vol’s* (London: 1811-1824).

3. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY DIVIDE

While travel writing continued to play some part in the creation of knowledge within academic circles, from the 1840's onwards the emphasis on archaeological exploration became much more direct. The starting point of this change lay in the intensive excavations at Nineveh and Babylon, followed by the survey and excavation of large parts of the region. The close relationship between travel and archaeology continued throughout the greater part of the century, but the importance of specialists continued to increase over time.

Famed early explorers such as James Silk Buckingham, Kennett Loftus, Henry Blosse Lynch, Austen Henry Layard and Felix Jones combined exploratory travel with archaeological-historical research, sometimes made possible through relations with European economic and political bodies in the Middle East. Archaeologically driven journeys into the lands between Tigris and Euphrates or in the Shatt al-Kâr region likewise retained their exploratory nature, as little or no knowledge was yet available on these sub-regions.¹⁸

The writings of these early archaeologists-explorers still exhibit some formal distinctions found in earlier travelogues, while at the same time their archaeological and descriptive sections increase in length, detail and presumed objectivity. The texts are often still written as chronological narratives, denoting travel times, halting places, descriptions of sights and peoples, diversionary excursions, folk tales and the like. They still include occasional references to older travel narration as a way of creating a conscious link with forbearers and, in many cases, of proving the supremacy of one's own investigations. This explicit interest in earlier travelogues also showed how these often provided the sole basis of information they were widely read and quoted or rectified upon actual observation *in situ*. The inclusion of travel accounts in Rich's Narrative and Ker Porter's interest in travelogues have already been noted. Another evident example of continuing narrative traditions is the fact that Austen Henry Layard's printed travels and explorations, which combed well-known themes from the travel genre with more specialised excavation reports, were a financial hit in a society where travel literature had for over two centuries been a widely loved literary form. In comparison, the much more elitist and more purely scientific French excavation reports of Botta failed to arouse much interest (though this was also due to their unwieldy size and significant cost).¹⁹

Over the course of the century, the superiority of a relatively detached mode of writing finally reached supremacy over the more personal aspects of travel and travel writing. As already illustrated, this process had been ongoing since at least the sixteenth century; it peaked in the course of the nineteenth century discourse of positivism and disciplinary separation, which furthered the desire for detached descriptions of the region and its respective geology, geography, archaeology, history and ethnography. Through this

¹⁸ e.g. J. Ross, 1841. 'Journey from Baghdad to the Ruins of Opis, and the Median Wall, in 1834,' *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 11 (1841), pp. 121-136; J.F. Jones, *Memoirs by Commander James Felix Jones, I.N.* (Bombay: 1857) (Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government, New Series, XLIII); H.B. Lynch, 1839a. 'Note accompanying a Survey of the Tigris between Ctesiphon and Mosul,' *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 9 (1839), pp. 441-442; H.B. Lynch, 1839b. 'Note on a Part of the River Tigris, between Baghdad and Samarra,' *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 9 (1839), pp. 471-476; W.K. Loftus, 1856. 'Notes of a Journey from Baghdad to Busrah,' *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 26 (1856), pp. 131-153; A.H. Layard, *Early adventures in Persia, Susiana and Babylonia including a residence among the Bakhtiyari and other wild tribes before the discovery of Nineveh*, Vol. 2 (London: 1887).

¹⁹ F. N. Bohrer, 'Inventing Assyria: Exotism and Reception in Nineteenth-Century England and France,' *The Art Bulletin* LXXX/2 (1998), p. 342-344.

process, travel literature lost most of its relevance for scientific study in general and for archaeological research in particular.²⁰ It may be worth noting, for instance, that the same canal mentioned earlier as appearing in Hoefer's historical work now featured in George Rawlinson's *Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World* (London: 1879) rather matter-of-factly and without reference to traveller's observations.²¹

As time progressed, archaeology grew to perceive itself as positivist and empirical, as material remains of the past were deemed to contain a single truth, which in turn directly revealed some aspect of a human past. It bore close relationships with geography, with which it shared a reliance on physical evidence and a 'natural-scientific', i.e. empirical approach.²² Over the course of the nineteenth century, the collection of (arte-)facts was perceived as the main basis for science. This view gradually separated archaeology from history and art history.²³ In its subsequent development, archaeology necessarily created its own theories, methodologies and philosophy (though the existence or impossibility of any philosophy of archaeology is in itself remains cause for debate). Historical disciplines, likewise, distanced themselves from the archaeological fields: whereas antiquarian interests had in earlier periods fuelled much historical study, the nineteenth century saw the discipline revert largely to purely text-based study.²⁴ Historical material retained its use mainly as a source of additional site-information, in particular post-abandonment history or site-localisation.²⁵ The link between the two disciplines did continue on a less conspicuous level, though, as archaeological digs remained a vital means of collecting textual material.²⁶

Through these various processes, which may now be understood to develop more strictly after the middle of the eighteenth century, the Mesopotamian archaeologist increasingly took the foreground to the adventurer. The wide range of new information that had become available through excavation and cuneiform research, and the attention that until very recently remained lavished on the more distant phases of regional history, reduced the relevance of travel literature as sources of relevant information.²⁷ By the early twentieth century archaeology had to a large extent cut its ties with travel on both an academic and a conceptual level. Excavation reports might still make use of travel literature as introductory notes on post-abandonment site history, but in most cases these

²⁰ J. Deledalle-Rhodes, *L'Orient représenté. Charles Montagu Doughty et les voyageurs anglais du XIXe siècle* (Berlin: 2000), pp. 20-24; P.D. Smecca, *Representational Tactics in Travel Writing and Translation: A Focus on Sicily* (Roma: 2005), pp. 47-48.

²¹ G. Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World*, Vol. 3 (London: 1879), pp. 57-58.

²² J.M. Wagstaff (Ed.), *Landscape and Culture. Geographical and Archaeological Perspectives* (Oxford: 1987), pp. 1-5; A.S. Goudie, 'Geography and Archaeology: The Growth of a Relationship,' in: Wagstaff, J.M. (Ed.) *Landscape and Culture. Geographical and Archaeological Perspectives* (Oxford: 1987), pp. 11-25.

²³ S.L. Dyson, 'From New to New Age Archaeology: Archaeological Theory and Classical Archaeology - A 1990's Perspective,' *American Journal of Archaeology* 97/2 (1993), p. 195.

²⁴ A. Andren, *Between Artifacts and Texts. Historical Archaeology in Global Perspective* (New York: 1998), p. 120.

²⁵ J.H. Steward, 'The Direct Historical Approach to Archaeology,' *American Antiquity* 7/4 (1942), pp. 337-343.

²⁶ A. Andren, *Between Artifacts and Texts. Historical Archaeology in Global Perspective* (New York: 1998), pp. 43-49.

²⁷ S. Vernoit, 'The Rise of Islamic Archaeology,' *Muqarnas* 14 (1997): 1-10; U. Baram and L. Caroll (Eds.) *A Historical Archaeology of the Ottoman Empire. Breaking New Ground* (New York: 2000), pp. 4-8; T. Wilkinson, *Archaeological landscapes of the Near East* (Tucson: 2003), p. 5. For more on the relationships between traveller and academic and on the ways in which non-specialists might position themselves in these changing academic discourses, see B. Ooghe, 'Visions of Pallacopas: on the relationships between travel and science in Mesopotamia (18th – 20th century),' *Astrolabe, revue du Centre de Recherche sur la Littérature des Voyages* 8 (2006) (online publication: http://www.crlv.paris4.sorbonne.fr/revue_crlv).

bore little more than a pictorial function. In travel accounts they are reduced to little more than marginal references.²⁸ Travel literature, which continued to divert as well as attempt to instruct readers, may have continued to play an important part in the dispersal of knowledge, images and ideals on the orient,²⁹ but it played little or no part in the actual academic study of the region or its history.

4. ACADEMIC RIGIDITY AND DISPLACEMENT

Up to this point, I have argued that the gulf between travel literature and archaeological writing is closely related to the latter's development as a positivist branch of human science and the major increase of data brought about by excavation and the decipherment of cuneiform script. In the course of the nineteenth century, however, the already feeble relationships between the two were toned down further through what may be called a purely academic process. This occurred not in the field of archaeological practice, but rather in the disciplinary histories that were now being developed. The close of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century saw the creation of the first overviews of the origins and development of this relatively young discipline. Befitting the period in which they were written, when history was primarily conceived as consisting of important people and events, these disciplinary histories focussed heavily on actual archaeological breakthroughs. With few exceptions, they highlighted only those explorers who made what were deemed significant contributions to the field. In doing so, they created a canon of perceived disciplinary ancestors beyond which few archaeologists of the 20th century would expand their research.

The most expansive of the early overviews – though not strictly focussed on our study area – is Robert W. Rogers' *A History of Babylonia and Assyria* (Third edition New York: 1900; facsimile reprint Long Beach: 2003). In two volumes Rogers attempted to create a relatively complete picture of travel and exploration to and in Persepolis. The focus on this specific site lay in Rogers' wish to display the evolution of cuneiform studies and his account is valuable in revealing a less purpose-driven view of travel history: Rogers paid attention to the entire spectrum of explorers, from the uninformed passer-by to the misinformed would-be decipherer and the eventual successful decipherment of various types of cuneiform writing. His overview of Mesopotamian travel, of greater relevance to us, was more restricted. It mentioned only a handful of travellers preceding the eighteenth century academics. These are, in chronological order: Benjamin of Tudela, Petachia of Ratisbon, Marco Polo, John Eldred, Anthony Sherley, John Cartwright, Gasparo Balbi, Alexander Hamilton, Don Garcia de Silva y Figueroa and Pietro Della Valle. The selection is relatively straightforward: a rabbi with centuries of fame behind his name (Benjamin), another rabbi of slightly lesser fame (Petachia), the famous Italian globetrotter (Polo), one of the first British travellers to provide a more detailed account of Babylonia (Eldred), the leader of the first British ambassadorial expedition to Persia (Sherley) and an oft-reproduced clergyman (Cartwright) and the single most renowned pre-eighteenth century traveller (Della Valle). Balbi, Hamilton and Figueroa were probably less famed, although Balbi had been integrated into Dapper 1680; making 'no advance in their investigations beyond that which had been seen by their predecessors' (p. 97) Rogers passed quickly over them.

²⁸ e.g. E.A.W. Budge, *By Nile and Tigris: A narrative of Journey's in Egypt and Mesopotamia on behalf of the British Museum between the years 1886 and 1913 etc.*, Vol. 2 (New York: 1970 [1920]), p. 185.

²⁹ F. N. Bohrer, 'Inventing Assyria: Exotism and Reception in Nineteenth-Century England and France,' *The Art Bulletin* LXXX/2 (1998), pp. 336-365.

The cited eighteenth century travellers were all of more strictly academic schooling, thus belonging to the group of ‘specialist’ traveller denoted higher. They were: Jean Otter, later professor in Arabic and directly interested in visiting the sites at Mosul and Babylon; Emmanuel de Saint-Albert, whose account of Babylon made its way into d’Anvilles’ *Memoir*; Carsten Niebuhr; and Joseph de Beauchamp, who made several historical and geographical observations on the region. French physician Guillaume A. Olivier, who had little knowledge of the land’s ancient history, did form an exception to this rule. Finally, Rogers took Rich and Ker Porter to be the final representatives of the pre-archaeological period, which he envisioned to begin with Botta’s excavations at Nineveh in 1843. The remainder of the overview focussed on excavation archaeology and on the development of Assyriology as a separate discipline.³⁰

While portraying a relatively broad selection of early explorers, Rogers in other words primarily produced an account of ‘important’ individuals within the discipline’s history. These were qualified as such either because they were believed to be the first travellers of a particular type or because they revealed specific archaeological awareness. Major focus of the overview lay in the nineteenth century, a period which was more closely related to what to Rogers would have been contemporary archaeology and which witnessed the first large-scale excavations in these parts. In the eyes of the writer, this period could and should achieve greater attention both out of practical and ideological concerns.

In 1903 H.V. Hilprecht wrote his expansive overview of archaeology in the Near East.³¹ The volume relating to Babylonia and Assyria had little to add for the period preceding the nineteenth century and a heavy focus again lay on specific archaeologically ‘important’ travelogues. For the early days, Benjamin of Tudela, Anthony Sherley and John Cartwright were mentioned in relation to the site of Nineveh. Compared to Rogers’ list we note the addition of the famous sixteenth-century German doctor-botanist Rauwolff. Next followed the internationally famed Italian Pietro Della Valle and Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, dismissing the fact that the latter, while claiming an inquisitive mind, showed little interest in the remains of antiquity.³² The overview then moved directly onto the more purely academic travellers: Otter and Niebuhr. In his overview of the site of Babylon Hilprecht mentioned Marco Polo, Balbi, Eldred, Master Allen, Boeventing, Texeira, Vincenzo Maria di S. Caterina, Emmanuel de Saint-Albert, Abbé de Beauchamp, Ives and Guillaume Olivier. Again the choice is straightforward: all authors had either gained some historical fame, were among the first to visit or mention the site or were mentioned in Rogers and in the introduction to Rich’s narrative. Boeventing and Texeira were mentioned only in passing as having little to say; the same applied to ‘a number of other travellers of the same general period’, which as a result remained unnamed.³³ The core of the study again lay with the ‘true’ archaeological researches which took place in the nineteenth century.

After these two important overviews, Near Eastern archaeology retained a largely result-driven view of the discipline’s development despite historians shifting their interests to more general cultural phenomena, in following of the French 1930’s *Annales* publications and connected historical school. The corpus of names was remained largely

³⁰ W. Rogers’ *A History of Babylonia and Assyria* (Third edition New York: 1900; facsimile reprint Long Beach: 2003), pp. 84 ff.

³¹ H.W. Hilprecht, *Explorations in Bible Lands during the 19th Century*. 2 Vol.’s (Edinburgh: 1903).

³² D. Van der Cruyse, personal communication; viz. his uninterested look at the remains of Persepolis noted by H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg in Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J.W. Drijvers (Eds.) *Through travellers’ eyes. European travellers on the Iranian monuments* (Leiden: 1991) (Achaemenid History VII), pp. 9-10.

³³ H.W. Hilprecht, *Explorations in Bible Lands during the 19th Century*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: 1903), p. 16.

untouched and even in those instances when some new names were added others were simultaneously omitted from the new overviews. André Parrot's disciplinary history, for instance, added Thomas Herbert and Dominico Sestini to an otherwise significantly shortened list of early explorers. French botanist André Michaux was added to the eighteenth century academics since he was the first to bring a *kudurru* – a Kassite border stone – into Europe, but of the other Enlightenment explorers only de Beauchamp and Olivier were mentioned.³⁴ The remainder of the volume dealt with the archaeological era of the nineteenth century.

A decade later, Svend A. Pallis mentioned only Della Valle, de Beauchamp and Thomas Herbert among the 'early explorers' – at least as far as our study area is concerned – before turning to the nineteenth century.³⁵ Poignantly enough, it was precisely this overview which reviewer Prof. Ignace Gelb found the most interesting part of Pallis' book, of which he felt that it needed only some geographical expansion.³⁶ The enlarged edition of Seton Lloyd's *Foundations in de Dust* (1980) reduced the 'yet earlier travellers' to the two rabbi's, Rauwolff, Eldred, Della Valle, Tavernier, Vincenzo Maria, de Saint-Albert, Otter, Niebuhr and de Beauchamp.³⁷ Mogens T. Larsens *Conquest of Assyria* (1996) once again emphasised the mid-19th century as the starting point of Assyrian studies in a semi-colonialist style of writing for which he was duly criticised.³⁸

While some of the traveller-writers mentioned in these overviews provided no significant information on archaeological sites, a matter which somewhat nuances the general result-oriented nature of these overviews, we cannot escape the fact that forty years after Rogers' and Hilprecht's overviews the corpus of 'important' traveller-explorers remained almost static. To a degree it even diminished in size in the new overviews. This process may be interpreted as the academic counterpart to the earlier bifurcation between traveller and archaeologist. With archaeologists limiting themselves to these secondary studies as revealing their disciplinary origins, they seem instrumental in institutionalising the existing conceptual wedge between archaeologists and their disciplinary ancestors.

5. MAINTAINING THE DISTANCE

Throughout most of the twentieth century the literature of travel and early exploration rarely made it into archaeological studies. Disciplinary histories themselves remained fairly scarce and largely focussed on the nineteenth century. Individuals were lifted out on several occasions: e.g. Robert Ker Porter,³⁹ Pietro Della Valle,⁴⁰ Jane Dieulafoy,⁴¹ Cornelis de Bruijn,⁴² Adolfo Rivadeneyra or Ernst Herzfeld.⁴³

³⁴ A. Parrot, *Archéologie mésopotamienne, les étapes* (Paris: 1947), pp. 11-22.

³⁵ S.A. Pallis, *The antiquity of Iraq: a handbook of Assyriology* (Copenhagen: 1956), pp. 19-93.

³⁶ I.J. Gelb, 'The Antiquity of Iraq: A Handbook of Assyriology - Svend Aage Pallis,' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 20/2. (1961), pp. 136-138.

³⁷ S. Lloyd, *Foundations in de Dust* (London: 1980), pp. 7-10.

³⁸ Z. Bahrani, 'The Conquest of Assyria: Excavations in an Antique Land, 1840-1860, Mogens Trolle Larsen,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118/4 (1998), pp. 573-574.

³⁹ R.D. Barnett, 'Sir Robert Ker Porter: Regency artist and traveller,' *Iran* 10 (1972), pp.19-24.

⁴⁰ A. Invernizzi, 'Discovering Babylon with Pietro Della Valle,' in: P. Matthiae, A. Enea, L. Peyronel and F. Pinnock (Eds.) *Proceedings of the First International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, Vol. 1 (Rome: 2000), pp. 643-64.

⁴¹ E. Gran-Aymerich and J. Gran-Aymerich, *Jane Dieulafoy 1854-1916* (Paris: 1991)

⁴² J.W. Drijvers, J. De Hond and H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (Eds.) *Ik hadde de nieuwsgierigheid: de reizen door het Nabije Oosten van Cornelis de Bruijn (ca. 1652-1727)* (Leiden: 1997)

⁴³ F. Escribano Martín, 'Adolfo Rivadeneyra, un diplomático español al servicio del estudio y del viaje por Oriente,' in: Córdoba, J.M^a (Ed.) *Españoles en Oriente Próximo (1166-1926)* (Madrid: 2005), pp. 789-804.

As potential sources of contemporary information on the Ottoman period, European travellers' records likewise rarely made it into studies of this region. Historical and geographical studies were largely unconcerned with lower Mesopotamian as such. This left landscape archaeology as the only likely field in which physical and textual studies could be developed simultaneously, and indeed numerous such studies on the brink between archaeology and Assyriology were conducted over the years.⁴⁴ However, most of this research focussed on the pre-Ottoman period, since Mesopotamian and more generally Middle Eastern archaeology strongly perceived itself as the study of the remote past of this region.⁴⁵

Lone exceptions do exist as proof that travel writing could indeed be used to reconstruct the landscapes of Ottoman Mesopotamia. In 1927 Raymond Dougherty published the results of a survey in the Shatt el-Kâr area, which included an overview of descriptions of the land from Loftus (1849-1854) to Albright (1925) and the reconstruction of the regime of the Shatt el-Kâr on the basis of these accounts.⁴⁶ Robert McCormick Adams' publication relating the Diyala survey included a brief but chronologically expansive study of pre-twentieth travel accounts relating to the region.⁴⁷ Finally, McGuire Gibson's *City and Area of Kish* included a very brief summary of landscape descriptions of the Hillah and Hindiyah branches of the Euphrates since the Islamic period,⁴⁸ as did Steven Cole's historical geography of the Borsippa region.⁴⁹

Yet while the potential value of European records of the Ottoman period was intuitively acknowledged in all of these studies, most didn't expand the corpus of travel literature as it had been created in the first half of the century. They also shared a distinct emphasis on the nineteenth century, either because little material was available for the preceding period (as in Dougherty's case) or because this earlier period was simply deemed of lesser importance.⁵⁰ Adams' work stood out as a holistic approach to landscape

⁴⁴ e.g. K. Mason, 'Notes on the canal system and ancient sites of Babylonia in time of Xenophon,' *The Geographical Journal* 56/6 (1920), pp. 468-481; G.A. Beazeley, 'Surveys in Mesopotamia during the war,' *The Geographical Journal* 55/2 (1920), pp. 109-127; O.G.S. Crawford, 'Air Photographs of the Middle East,' *The Geographical Journal* 73/6 (1929), pp. 497-509; T. Jacobsen, *Salinity and Irrigation Agriculture in Antiquity. Diyala Basin Archaeological Projects: Report on Essential Results, 1957-58* (Malibu) (Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 14); S. Lloyd, *Twin Rivers. A brief history of Iraq from the earliest times to the present day* (Oxford); E. De Vaumas, 'L'Écoulement des eaux en Mésopotamie et la provenance des eaux de Tello,' *Iraq* 27 (1965), pp. 81-99; H.J. Nissen 'Geographie,' in: Lieberman, S. *Sumerological studies in honour of Thorkild Jacobsen* (Chicago: 1976), pp. 9-40 (Assyriological Studies 20); J.A. Brinkman, 'Settlement surveys and documentary evidence: regional variation and secular trend in mesopotamian demography,' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 43 (1984), pp. 169-180.

⁴⁵ N. Khaled, 'Archaeology in Iraq,' *American Journal of Archaeology* 94/2 (1990), pp. 259-289; A.C. Praetzelis, 'Review: Archaeology Yesterday and Today: The Development of Archaeology in the Sciences and Humanities,' *Ethnohistory* 39/3 (1992), p. 398; S. Vermeit, 'The Rise of Islamic Archaeology,' *Muqarnas* 14 (1997), pp. 1-10; U. Baram and L. Carroll (Eds.), *A Historical Archaeology of the Ottoman Empire. Breaking New Ground* (New York: 2000), pp. 4-10; T. Wilkinson, *Archaeological landscapes of the Near East* (Tucson: 2003), p. 5.

⁴⁶ R.P. Dougherty, 'Searching for ancient remains in lower Iraq. Report on an archaeological survey made in southern Babylonia during the first quarter of 1926,' *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 7 (1927), pp. 1-93.

⁴⁷ R. McC. Adams, *Land Behind Baghdad. A history of Settlement on the Diyala Plains* (Chicago: 1965), pp. 25-29, pp. 89-96.

⁴⁸ McG. Gibson and R. McC. Adams, *The City and Area of Kish* (Coconut Grove: 1972), pp. 26-30.

⁴⁹ S.W. Cole, 'Marsh foundation in the Borsippa region and the course of the lower Euphrates,' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 53 (1994), p. 98.

⁵⁰ It is also interesting to note that historical geography of the region may likewise have deemed pre-nineteenth century material of lesser value: Röllig's overview of Mesopotamian historical geography evidences the same focus on nineteenth century travelogues (W. Röllig, 'Historical geography: past and present,' in: Liverani, M., *Neo-Assyrian Geography* (Roma: 1995), pp. 117-125).

research, moving beyond the accounts mentioned in the overviews, but his later publications left the Ottoman period largely unstudied.⁵¹ The application of travel narratives on this level of research never became uniformly practiced and the accounts often served as little more than filler material to pass from the period of Arab Geography (6th – 14th century) to the better documented nineteenth century (Gibson 1972 26-30), or as illustrations rather than as a data-type to be critically examined.⁵²

Thus, until the latter part of the century the focus on archaeology of the 1800's and 1900's remained in other words firm. Neither direct (i.e. disciplinary history) nor indirect (i.e. the application of travelogues as sources of information) study managed to shed light on the full range of available accounts. This situation maintained the implicit belief that neither the sources themselves, nor the period to which they belonged, were of specific significance to archaeological research. The image that archaeology sprung out of the minds of individuals, most importantly Della Valle, in the seventeenth century and only gained scientific relevance during the second half of the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth century remained largely upheld. I have argued elsewhere that such an interpretation is far too narrow.⁵³

6. THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY

It was only at the close of the last century that greater attention came to be lavished on the travel accounts of the Mesopotamian region and, in particular, on the more complex nature of early archaeology. This new critique, though partly announced in some of the landscape studies mentioned higher, seems largely linked to the development of post-processual archaeology and post-modernism, which moved away from preceding empiricist appreciation of both archaeology itself and its objects of study.

The true rise in interest in travel literature occurred in the last two decades of the twentieth century. During this period, new critical approaches to this literary genre increased research interests in the relationships between text, context and representation.⁵⁴ Travel writing of the Middle East became particularly studied in light of postmodern readings of European ideologies and, of course, the discourses on Orientalism that followed the work of Edward Said. These new interests flourished for the most part in literary, sociological and historical research, and only reached the archaeologically schooled in the last decade of the century.

The first important exponent of this new critique can be seen in Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Jan Willem Drijvers' *Through Travellers' Eyes. European travellers on the Iranian monuments* (1991), most notably in Sancisi-Weerdenburg's own introduction to the volume, which maintained the widest disciplinary viewpoint. Central to the work was the realisation that early traveller's records provided insight both into the development

⁵¹ R. McC. Adams and H. Nissen, *The Uruk countryside. The natural setting of urban societies* (Chicago: 1972), pp. 67-68; R. McC. Adams, *Heartland of Cities* (Chicago: 1981), pp. 225-226; C.L. Redman, 'Archaeological Survey and the Study of Mesopotamian Urban Systems,' *Journal of Field Archaeology* 9/3 (1982), p. 376; T.C. Patterson, 'History and the Post-Processual Archaeologies,' *Man*, N.S. 24/4 (1989) p. 557; N. Yoffee, 'Robert McCormick Adams: An Archaeological Biography,' *American Antiquity* 62/3 (1997), p. 404.

⁵² B. Finster and J. Schmidt, *Sassanidische und Frühislamische Ruinen im Iraq* (1976) (Baghdader Mitteilungen 8), p. 49, p. 56; J.A. Black, H. Gasche, A. Gauthier, R.G. Killick and G. Stoops, 'Habl as-sahr 1983-1985: Nebuchadnezzar II's cross-country wall north of Sippar,' *Northern Akkad Project Reports* 1 (1987), pp. 3-46.

⁵³ B. Ooghe, 'The rediscovery of Babylonia: the development of European knowledge on Lower Mesopotamia between 16th and early 19th century,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17/3 (2007) (in press).

⁵⁴ P. Hulme and T. Youngs (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: 2002), pp. 8-9.

of disciplines, the state of specific sites and the altering European view of the Other. The work stand out as probably the first significantly new approach to this documentary type.

The subsequent two decades have witnessed the production of a number of publications which reflected these changing interests. Frederick Bohrer's insightful article *Inventing Assyria* exemplified the new and broader appreciation of the diverse ideological frames within which Mesopotamian archaeology developed.⁵⁵ Similarly new approaches to the subject could be found in Nicole Chevalier's study of the political factors influencing French archaeological interests during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in *La recherche archéologique française au Moyen-Orient 1842-1947* (Paris: 2003) and in Véronique Krings and Isabelle Tassignon's collection *Archéologie dans l'Empire Ottoman Autour de 1900: entre politique, économie et science* (Bruxelles: 2004). Works such as Joaquín M^a Córdoba's *Españoles en Oriente Próximo (1166-1926)* (Madrid: 2005) (Arbor, CLXXX), Antonio Invernizzi's *Il Genio Vagante. Viaggiatori all scoperta dell'antico Oriente (secc. XII-XVIII)* (Alessandria: 2005) and Joaquín M^a Córdoba and María C. Pérez Díe's exposition catalogue *La Aventura Española en Oriente (1166-2006). Viajeros, museos y estudios en la historia del redescubrimiento del Oriente Próximo Antiguo* (Madrid: 2006; with reduced English translation *The Spanish Near Eastern Adventure (1166-2006)*) further nuanced the empirical and scientific nature of archaeology and expanded the chronological and geographical boundaries of disciplinary history. My own publications have looked at the relationships between traveller, archaeologist and the development of knowledge on Mesopotamia, as well as investigating the factual use of early modern European materials in the landscape study of Ottoman Mesopotamia.⁵⁶

The concrete application of these documents as sources of information on the physical past – as occasionally performed since the 1920's – has yet to be developed more fully. Dan Potts' overview of perception history of the Khuzistani rivers stands as a refreshingly multidisciplinary approach to the development of knowledge structures within Middle-Eastern landscape research and its possible relationship to problems geographical problems.⁵⁷ My own work on the integration of early cartography and travel literature for the purpose of landscape study may hopefully provoke further use of this material in landscape research.⁵⁸ This aspect of the archaeological application of travel literature is, however, clearly still in its infancy.

7. LOOKING FORWARD

The past 20 years have started to lay a firm conceptual and practical groundwork for the study of travel literature in an archaeological context. This may eventually help us to reevaluate the situation called into life during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and urge us to rethink a number of disciplinary preconceptions regarding our place as scholars and the origins and development of our field. As the writings and

⁵⁵ F. N. Bohrer, 'Inventing Assyria: Exotism and Reception in Nineteenth-Century England and France,' *The Art Bulletin* LXXX/2 (1998), pp. 336-365

⁵⁶ B. Ooghe, 'Visions of Pallacopas: on the relationships between travel and science in Mesopotamia (18th – 20th century),' *Astrolabe, revue du Centre de Recherche sur la Littérature des Voyages (Université de Paris – Sorbonne)* 8 (2006) (online publication: www.crlv.org/revue_crlv); B. Ooghe, 'The rediscovery of Babylonia: the development of European knowledge on Lower Mesopotamia between 16th and early 19th century,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17/3 (2007) (in press).

⁵⁷ D.T. Potts, 'Elamite Ula, Akkadian Ulaya, and Greek Choaspes: A Solution to the Eulaios Problem,' *Bulletin of the Asia Institute N.S.* 13 (1999), pp. 27-44.

⁵⁸ B. Ooghe, 'Felix Jones and the land behind Baghdad: site-centred study of a 19th century narrative,' *Akkadica* 127 (2007), in press; B. Ooghe, *Off the Beaten Track: Travellers, Maps and the Landscapes of Ottoman Mesopotamia* (unpublished PhD: Ghent 2007).

accomplishments of travellers from the post-Medieval period are becoming re-exposed, a fuller picture is being painted of the roots of our discipline. Already in the course of the past decade this research has shed light on the more complex relationships between travel and science in this part of the world. The primary focus on French, English and German explorers in Mesopotamia is slowly being enlarged to include lesser famed nations of the Mediterranean region. Still, Mesopotamian –and more generally Near Eastern– archaeologists with an interest in early modern travel are likely to face some specific hurdles. In conclusion to this overview it is useful to point out the most significant elements to keep in mind as guidelines for future research.

The first two hurdles are the continued disparity between textual and non-textual research, crystallised in the distinction between historical and archaeological research, and the closely related disregard for the Ottoman timeframe. It is true that the archaeology and history of the Near East are very closely related to one-another and that positive cooperation between the two has often been achieved with regard to the pre-Islamic timeframe. However, it is also evident that the distinction between the disciplines remains particularly strong with regard to the Ottoman period. It has already been noted that archaeological research for this period remains sparse, with most work being done by historians and linguists. The subfield of landscape archaeology offers a marginal exception to this, as also exemplified higher, but even here the dualism between either type of research remains quite firm. This is implied quite clearly in one of the most important landscape archaeological overviews of the past decade: Tony Wilkinson's *Archaeological Landscapes of the Near East* (Tucson: 2003). This almost encyclopaedic book provides a thoroughly researched picture of the various methodological, practical and conceptual facets of Near Eastern landscape archaeology. In it, Wilkinson pleads directly for a merging of cultural historical, processual and postprocessual methodologies and attests that the resulting 'landscape archaeology' is much more than a mere physical reconstruction. In his view, it also encompasses cultural phenomena and the complexities of environmental studies. Wilkinson attests the great value of including historical records within Medieval and post-Medieval research;⁵⁹ throughout the volume, he also quotes numerous interdisciplinary studies in which textual research, mainly of earlier periods, has been a vital part. However, in setting out the sources which need to be integrated into a complete landscape archaeology only the more absolute forms of data are mentioned: (modern) cartographic material, aerial photographs, satellite imagery, archaeological survey and excavation, geo-scientific information of various kinds and environmental studies applied to excavated material.⁶⁰ Evidently historical material thus remains conceptualised as significantly distinct from even such interdisciplinary archaeological study. In this light, it seems unsurprising that little fundamental work has as yet been done into combining Ottoman period literature with Mesopotamian landscape research, despite the latter's flourishing for over half a century.

A third issue to be tackled is the continued emphasis on a disciplinary history of great names. Despite the fact that the canon produced by the early twentieth century is now gradually becoming replaced by a more expansive one, the accounts of lesser famed travellers have yet to be integrated into broader disciplinary overviews and (landscape) archaeological studies. We have not yet reached the point where the lesser names have become commonly known and research interests more fully extended to include them more thoroughly. Thus, the individualist approach remains noticeable, for instance in many of the lectures chosen as part of the 'History and Method of Archaeological Research' sessions at the 5th ICAANE meeting in Madrid, 2006.

⁵⁹ T.J. Wilkinson, *Archaeological Landscapes of the Near East* (Tucson: 2003), 5.

⁶⁰ T.J. Wilkinson, *Archaeological Landscapes of the Near East* (Tucson: 2003), chapter 3.

However, if the publications of Invernizzi, Córdoba, Pérez Díe and myself are any indication, the following years may witness the instatement of a new and more expansive canon which looks beyond the ‘significant’ accounts and places these in the proper context of developing knowledge systems. I would hope that continued research may also help bridge the gap between historical and archaeological studies in this particular sub-field, making it more straightforward for the archaeologist to study the published and archival records of early exploration in ever greater detail and having historians and historical geographers focus more eagerly on the lower Mesopotamian region.

The fourth and final hurdle that remains to be crossed is the continued emphasis on the nineteenth century. Evidently, the excavation archaeology and factual discoveries of this period are still perceived as of greater worth than the intellectual and practical opening-up of the region to European scholarship. Early travellers are simply not yet fully perceived as early archaeologists and thus overlooked in all but a handful of studies. As with the expansion of the canon of studied material, it seems likely that a chronological expansion will eventually become unavoidable, as disciplinary history moves away from a focus on Mesopotamian archaeology’s first ‘major’ accomplishments. Here, too, we note that the expansion of research into preceding periods has so far mostly been undertaken with regard to nations that didn’t participate in the largely British, French and eventually also German dominated Age of Exploration.

8. CONCLUSION

Once these four conceptual steps have been taken, a fuller application of travel studies within archaeological frames may eventually be reached. The merits of these applications have already been partially exposed in past decades, and one expect that the expansion of existing research will likewise yield interesting results. The history of Mesopotamian research, of which archaeology is but one of the facets, will no doubt continue to be refined; the major developments of the nineteenth century will become placed in perspective to earlier developments within and outside of Europe. The international nature and national differences of early modern research, the ways of disseminating knowledge and the creation of hypotheses and academic traditions will become better understood, in turn revealing how ideological influences may have shaped the development of our discipline. Finally, and importantly, as the written accounts and the maps and images created alongside them become better known to the archaeologist, so their use in concrete study of specific sites and of Ottoman landscapes may be explored more fully. As my own research indicates, there is significant potential in such an approach. Looking at European historical records from this angle may therefore prove an important step in bringing existing landscape studies of the region into the early modern period, which in turn furthers the more general understanding of this period of history.