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The Ancient Near East and Egypt in the Netherlands

Overview of Dutch Societies and Initiatives in the 19th and 20th Century

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This contribution describes societies and institutes in the Netherlands that played key roles in scholarly research on the Ancient Near East and Egypt. Public interest followed academic developments at a distance. Leading figures, almost all academics, are briefly discussed.

After a promising start in the 19th century, development in Dutch Egyptology was mostly limited to religious studies. Assyriology was largely a side-interest for theologians. While other European countries founded national scholarly societies and financed grand expeditions, attention in the Netherlands was mainly directed to the Dutch East-Indies, with Oriental studies mostly a function of colonial administration, in combination with Semitic languages (connected to Bible studies).

During the first quarter of the 20th century, Oriental studies in the Netherlands were marked by proliferation and specialisation – albeit with a continued emphasis on language studies, and usually from a biblical perspective. The general public was not yet involved. The second quarter of the 20th century saw further diversification of the field, a failed marriage between Ancient Near Eastern and Classical studies, and a broadening audience.

After World War II, the range of history, language studies, and archaeology fully developed in the Netherlands. Internationalisation, rising population and student numbers, and economic growth were instrumental. The fourth quarter of the 20th century was characterised by the definitive division between Middle and Far Eastern versus Ancient Near Eastern studies. State-funded research was the norm; the popular audience increased.

In the first quarter of the 21st century (not comprehensively addressed in this contribution) state-funded research declined while modest private initiatives (societies of museum and excavation “friends”) can be observed.

Prelude: 19th century

From King Willem I's accession to the throne of the Netherlands in 1813/1815, he was keen on establishing his kingdom on a par with other western European countries, and thus willing to spend money and effort on (re-) establishing national cultural institutions. Among those profiting from royal patronage in the first half of the 19th century was the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, established in 1818 as *Archaeologisch Cabinet der Hoogeschool* (“Archaeological Cabinet of

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the University”), later renamed *Rijksmuseum van Oudheden*. Caspar J.C. Reuvens (1793–1835), the director, acquired a major collection of Egyptian antiquities in 1828. When royal patronage stopped, so did the acquisition of Egyptian antiquities.¹ Dutch Egyptological activity was limited to the few staff members who worked on the publication and public display of the Egyptian collections, and the edition of texts on papyri. The museum started acquiring original Near Eastern objects in 1880, but was unable to purchase major collections or monumental pieces.

Several factors prevented the foundation of national and private societies for the study of the Ancient Near East in the Netherlands during the 19th century. Firstly, after a promising start, the country was left on a tight budget when Belgium gained independence in 1830; economic conditions were dire during the second and third quarters of the 19th century.² Secondly, the constitutional reform of 1848, crafted by Thorbecke during the European “Springtime of Nations,” instigated the creation or reorganisation of important national institutions while leaving little room for royal patronage of them (even if they bore the label “royal”).

Thirdly, the public generally lacked interest in non-national and non-biblical history.³ And, finally, exploitation of the Dutch East-Indies had been transferred between 1796–1800 from the privately-owned Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, VOC) to the Dutch government, necessitating establishment of new national institutions geared towards the administration of the colony. The focus on the Far East overshadowed existing (trade) relations with the Near East – traditionally strongest with Turkey and the Levant.

Thus the term “Oriental studies” in the Netherlands in the 19th century primarily referred to studies of the Far East, focusing on the Dutch colonial territory, with the study of Near Eastern languages included secondarily.⁴ This formed the foundation for studies of the Ancient Near East which only developed in earnest in the first quarter of the 20th century.

¹ No private individuals undertook initiatives after 1830 to compensate for the lack of governmental funding with the exception of Jan Herman Insinger (1854–1918): living in Egypt, his personal efforts during the last quarter of the 19th century enriched the Egyptian collections of the museum. Raven 2018: 140–141.

² Otterspeer 1989b: 3.

³ Raven 2021: 139.

⁴ Accordingly, none of the contributions in Otterspeer’s survey of Leiden Oriental Connections 1850–1940 (1989a) mentions Ancient Near Eastern studies – cited are only Hebrew and Syriac language studies, and a passing reference to Champollion in the volume’s Introduction is the only nod to Egyptology.

From Theology to History of Religions to Assyriology

The universities of Leiden, Groningen, and Utrecht had faculties of protestant theology, aimed at the education of prospective clergymen; in addition, the theological seminary at Kampen offered education towards Protestant ministry. Religious studies (theology or *godgeleerdheid*) at Dutch universities included Bible studies in the Protestant tradition, combined with the study of the languages which enabled students to read the Bible in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Leiden University had a strong tradition in the study of related and Near Eastern languages such as “Chaldean” (Aramaic), Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, etc. Talented students sometimes sought diversion in related subjects such as Egyptian language and religion, and Akkadian. The broader public – their prospective flock – largely deemed these subjects exotic, irrelevant, and bordering on paganism.⁵

Even when emancipation of the Roman Catholic segment of the Dutch population began, religious studies at Dutch universities remained throughout the 19th century solely a Protestant affair. New discoveries in geology, biology, and other sciences led to the development of a school of “modern theology” at Leiden University, incorporating modern scientific concepts and methods and shifting away from orthodox interpretations of the Bible. In 1877 Leiden established a new chair in the History of Religions for Cornelis P. Tiele (1830–1902). His inaugural lecture bore the title “The fruit of Assyriology for the comparative history of religions.”⁶ He bequeathed his collection of publications on history of religions (esp. Persian, Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian) to Leiden University, and his widow created the Tiele Foundation in 1902 to maintain and enlarge the collection.⁷ After Tiele’s retirement in 1901, W. Brede Kristensen (1867–1953; a Norwegian by birth who had studied in Leiden) was appointed to the chair. Kristensen (whose thesis was about Egyptian religion) became the founding figure in the study of Phenomenology of Religions.

This shift remained academic and did not lead to any broader initiatives for the study of the Ancient Near East: no archaeological initiatives were pursued nor societies of wealthy amateurs founded. No great Dutch journeys to explore the Near East were undertaken in the 19th century,⁸ and hardly any Dutch participated in the expeditions of other nations.⁹

⁵ Raven 2021: 139.

⁶ Describing Assyriology as an auxiliary subject of great worth and potential in service of the quest for Christian truth: Tiele 1877.

⁷ Molendijk 2002: 8–9.

⁸ The journeys of A.P.F. Tinne (1835–1869) through Egypt, Sudan, and present-day Libya did not lead to scholarly publications in her day and have been largely disregarded as “private adventures” until very recently (Van den Heuvel 2021). T.M. Lycklama à Nijeholt (1837–1900) undertook a grand journey through Persia, Mesopotamia, and the Levant, 1865–1867. He even briefly excavated at Babylon and Tyre. His four-volume publication on his activities (Lycklama 1872) made ripples in high society, but hardly in academia.

⁹ One notable exception is W. de Famars Testas (1834–1896), a painter in the French

(The activities and effects of Christian missions in the Dutch colonies, which spurred research into their languages, lie beyond the scope of this contribution.)

Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde

One new national institute was the *Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Neêrlandsch Indië (KITLV)*¹⁰, founded 1851 in Delft. Focusing primarily on cultures and languages of the Dutch East-Indies, the study of Islam and Islamic law was an important component in its programme. The institute was created at the request of Professor Taco Roorda (1801–1874), a theologian and orientalist who taught ethnology and languages of the Dutch Indies in Delft where a *Koninklijke Akademie* (“Royal Academy”) had been founded in 1842 with the aim of providing education in civil engineering and administration of the Dutch Indies. In 1864 the Delft Academy was transformed into a polytechnic college. Thereafter civil service programmes were offered both at Delft (municipal) and Leiden (national). *KITLV* moved to The Hague, close to the government’s Ministry of the Colonies, where the institute and the important “Colonial Library” (in cooperation with the *Indisch Genootschap*) remained until 1966.¹¹

For the first century of its existence, *KITLV* was an organisation of major importance both in the academic and political landscapes. Its board members were prominent academics, many of them *KNAW*¹² members. Membership in *KITLV*, considered prestigious, rose from 117 in 1853 to 725 in 1910 (the highest number pre-WW II). There were other colonial societies in the Netherlands, but *KITLV* enjoyed the status of *primus inter pares* at the start of the twentieth century. After Indonesia’s independence and decolonisation (1945/1949) the institute’s role as an important advisory organ to the government on colonial matters ended. In 1966, *KITLV* moved to Leiden and became a purely academic institute; membership soared from 660 in 1965 to 2,013 in 1995 (the highest to date).¹³ The institute has published journals and monographic series on linguistics, anthropology, history, and law since its inception and continues to do so. The *KITLV* Library was integrated into Leiden University Libraries in 2014.

expedition led by E. Prisse d’Avennes in Egypt, 1858–1860; see Raven 1988.

¹⁰ “Royal Institute of Linguistics, Geography and Ethnology of the Dutch Indies.” The official name of the institute is nowadays *Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land en Volkenkunde (KITLV)*, “Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies.”

¹¹ Kuitenbrouwer *et al.* 2014: 32–33; 36–37; 225.

¹² *Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, “Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.”

¹³ Kuitenbrouwer *et al.* 2014: 280; 288–289.

Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje

Oriental studies in the Netherlands at the turn of the 20th century cannot exclude mention of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936; see Table 1). Much has been written about him, his eventful life, his activities, and his multiple legacies.¹⁴



Fig. 1: Detail of stained glass window depicting key figures in the history of Leiden University: Prince William of Orange (above); Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, Johan Rudolph Thorbecke and Cornelis van Vollenhoven (from left to right). Academy Building, Rapenburg 73, Leiden.

¹⁴ Most recently: Buskens *et al.* 2021 (with a bibliography of works by and on Snouck Hurgronje). – “Fierce debates have been waged about the man, the scientist and the government advisor Snouck Hurgronje. Striking is the unilateral, single-dimensional assessments by supporters and opponents alike. Van den Doel (1998), for example, exaggeratedly praised him as the ‘shining sun of the Leiden universe’ and Van der Veer (1995: 17–186) exaggeratedly criticized him as an imperialist and orientalist. The anthropologists among his students in Leiden praise his journey to Mecca as an example of ‘participating observation’, but Van Koningsveld (1987: 9–39) refers to it as ‘espionage’. Snouck was and did all this and much, much more.” (Kuitenbrouwer *et al.* 2014: 72).

In Leiden he is still revered as a founding father of Arabic studies. Snouck Hurgronje studied, spoke, and taught an impressive number of languages, many Semitic languages among them. As government advisor for the Dutch Indies, he spent about fifteen years in the colony, notably during the war between the Netherlands and the Sultanate of Aceh. After his return to the Netherlands, he was appointed Professor of Arabic at Leiden in 1906 and served as President of the *KITLV* for many years between 1911 and 1927. Snouck Hurgronje was the leading figure in oriental studies during the first quarter of the 20th century, as well as a prominent political figure. Among other things, he shaped the discipline of “Indology” (study of language, culture, law, and colonial administration of the Dutch East-Indies)¹⁵ and assigned a place for the studies of the Near East within the rapidly expanding field of oriental studies.

Table 1: Key dates in the life of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje
(mainly based on Witkam 2021).

<i>Year</i>	<i>Event</i>
1857	Birth
1874–1880	Student of Theology and Semitic languages, Leiden University; doctoral thesis “ <i>Het Mekkaansche Feest</i> ” (on the origins of the Islamic pilgrimage)
1881–	Teacher, Municipal School for Colonial Civil Servants, Leiden; id., Higher War School, The Hague
1884–1885	Spent a year in Jeddah and Mecca under the name Al-Sayyid Abd al-Ghaffar, converted(?) to Islam
1887–	Senior lecturer Institutions of Islam, Leiden University
1890	Turned down chair of Malayan language, Leiden University
1889–1906	Lived in Batavia as adviser to the Dutch colonial government for Arab, Islamic and indigenous affairs
1898–1905	Advisor to Military Governor J.B. van Heutz (Aceh War)
1906–1933	Returned to the Netherlands; adviser to Minister of Colonial Affairs
1906–1927	Professor of Islamology and the Arabic and Acehnese languages, Leiden University

¹⁵ “[Snouck Hurgronje] had been familiar with the training of Indologists for a long time, because he had taught at the Leiden as well as at the Delft municipal institute in his younger days. It was he more than anyone else who left his mark on Indology at Leiden and who finally engineered its conversion into a fully-fledged scholarly discipline.” Fasseur 1989: 197.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Event</i>
1911–1915, 1916–1920, 1921–1925, 1926–1927	President, KITLV (The Hague)
1921–1922	Rector magnificus, Leiden University
1927	Retired; foundation <i>Oostersch Instituut</i>
1931	President, 18 th International Congress of Orientalists, Leiden
1936	Death

20th century – first quarter

Although theologians and historians of religion at the universities of Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Groningen studied and taught Egyptian and Mesopotamian languages and religion, Assyriology and Egyptology were first established as autonomous fields of study (with dedicated chairs) at Leiden University during the first quarter of the 20th century.¹⁶ Extraordinary chairs for material culture and art existed at the Universities of Amsterdam and Utrecht at a time of proliferation and further specialisation in Ancient Near Eastern studies in the Netherlands, albeit with a continued emphasis on language studies and usually from a biblical perspective. Interest in these highly academic specialisations was very slow in trickling down to non-academics.

Snouck Hurgronje firmly dominated Oriental studies at Leiden University from his appointment in 1906 until his death in 1937. He recognised new fields and was no doubt behind the creation of the new academic positions in Leiden (see Tables 2 and 3). One professor could no longer be expected to cover the multitude of languages and cultures of “the East,” as had been customary in the 19th century – exemplified to an extraordinary degree by Hendrik Kern, founding father of another branch of Oriental studies in the Netherlands.¹⁷

To combine efforts and connect the growing number of scholars in rapidly diversifying Oriental studies, the first oriental society in the Netherlands was founded in which Ancient Near Eastern studies were recognised as academic subjects in their own right.

¹⁶ Kaper 2014; Stol 2014.

¹⁷ Johan Hendrik Caspar Kern (1833–1917), Professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Linguistics at Leiden University (1865–1903); see 't Hart 1989: 139–140. Kern was the longest-serving president of *KITLV* – six terms between 1882 and 1911 (Kuitenbrouwer *et al.* 2014: 78–81, 286). The *Instituut Kern* (see Table 4) was named after him.

Table 2: Key dates and persons in the study of Assyriology in the Netherlands, 1857–1940 (based on Stol 2014).

<i>Years</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1877–1900	C.P. Tiele (1830–1902) Professor of History of Religions, Leiden.	Inaugural lecture on Assyriology. Second secretary, 6 th Congress of Orientalists, Leiden 1883. Ordained minister.
1905–1945	C. van Gelderen (1872–1945) Professor of Hebrew, Amsterdam.	Studied in Leipzig; doctoral thesis “ <i>Ausgewählte Babylonisch-Assyrische Briefe</i> ”. Taught all Semitic languages, published on cuneiform texts. Ordained minister.
1913–1939	H.Th. Obbink (1869–1947) Professor of History of Religions, Utrecht.	Also taught Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian languages and religions.
1913–1927	F.M.Th. Böhl (1882–1976) Professor of Hebrew, Groningen.	Studied in Berlin and Leipzig; doctoral theses “ <i>Die Sprache der Amarnabriefe</i> ” and “ <i>Kanaanäer und Hebräer</i> ”. Collected cuneiform inscriptions. Involved in ecumenical movement.
1913–1918 [1] 1918–1927 [2]	G.J. Thierry (1880–1962) extraordinary Professor of Assyriology [1], ordinary Professor [2], Leiden.	Doctoral thesis with W.B. Kristensen “ <i>De religieuze beteekenis van het Aegyptische koningschap</i> ” (1913). First Assyriology chair in the Netherlands. Ordained minister.
1927–1952	F.M.Th. Böhl Professor of Assyriology, Leiden.	The switch of chairs between Böhl and Thierry had been decided by C. Snouck Hurgronje.
1927–1950	G.J. Thierry Professor of Hebrew, Leiden.	
1933–1938	H. Frankfort (1897–1954) extraordinary Professor of Archaeology and History of the Near East, Amsterdam.	Studied in Amsterdam and London; doctoral thesis in Leiden. Permanently moved abroad in 1938.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1940–1963	P.E. van der Meer (1895–1963) extraordinary Professor of Archaeology, History and Languages of the Near East, Amsterdam.	Collected a small group of archaic Sumerian texts. Dominican friar.

Table 3: Key dates and persons in the study of Egyptology in the Netherlands, 1822–1940 (based on Kaper 2014).

<i>Years</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1799–1839 [1] 1839–1850 [2]	D.J. van Lennep (1774–1853) Professor of Classical History and Languages [1], of Humanities and Philosophy [2], Amsterdam.	Studied Law in Amsterdam. Highly interested in Champollion's decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs; collected and studied Egyptian antiquities.
1815–1818 [1] 1818 –1825 [2] 1825–1835 [3]	C.J.C. Reuvens (1793–1835) Professor of Classics, Harderwijk [1]; extraordinary Professor of Archaeology and Director, National Museum of Antiquities [2], ordinary Professor [3], Leiden.	Studied Classics (with Van Lennep) and Law in Amsterdam, Leiden, and Paris. Independently studied ancient Egyptian from Champollion's publications. First Archaeology chair worldwide. Acquired important collections of Egyptian antiquities for the museum; studied and started publishing them.
1834–1835 [1] 1835–1891 [2] 1864–1880 [3]	C. Leemans (1809–1893) Curator [1], Director [2], National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden; Director, Museum of Ethnography, Leiden [3].	Studied Theology and Archaeology in Leiden; doctoral thesis on Horapollo. Started assisting Reuvens from 1827 onwards (as a student, without formal appointment). Published catalogue of museum's Egyptian antiquities; studied Egyptian papyri. Board member, 6 th Congress of Orientalists, Leiden 1883.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1869–1891 [1] 1891–1903 [2]	W. Pleyte (1836–1903) Curator of Classical and Dutch antiquities [1], Director [2], National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden.	Studied Theology in Utrecht. Independently studied Egyptology from 1862; doctor h.c. (Leiden, 1875); studied and published Egyptian papyri. Treasurer, 6 th Congress of Orientalists, Leiden 1883. Ordained minister.
1877–1900	C.P. Tiele (1830–1902) Professor of History of Religions, Leiden.	Also taught Egyptian language and religion. Ordained minister.
1901–1937	W.B. Kristensen (1867–1953) Professor of History of Religions, Leiden.	Also taught Egyptian language and religion, attracting many students.
1901–1937	B.D. Eerdmans (1868–1948) Professor of Hebrew, Leiden.	Also taught Aramaic, Assyrian and Egyptian languages and religions. Ordained minister; active in municipal and national politics.
1892–1924 [1] 1902–1910 [2] 1910–1924 [3]	P.A.A. Boeser (1858–1935) Vice-director and keeper of Egyptian antiquities, National Museum of Antiquities [1]; <i>privaatdocent</i> [2], lector Egyptology [3], Leiden.	First university position in Egyptology in the Netherlands (from 1910 with ius promovendi).
1913–1939	H.Th. Obbink (1869–1947) Professor of History of Religions, Utrecht.	Also taught Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian languages and religions. Ordained minister.
1918–1946	G. van der Leeuw (1890–1950) Professor of History of Religions, from 1926 also of Egyptian Language and Literature, Groningen.	Studied Egyptology in Berlin and Göttingen. Doctoral thesis “ <i>Godsvoorstellingen in de Oud-Aegyptische Pyramidetexten</i> ” with Kristensen. Ordained minister; shortly active in national government.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1922–1926	F.W. Freiherr von Bissing (1873–1956) extraordinary Professor of Egyptian and Near Eastern Art History, Utrecht.	Collection of Egyptian antiquities exhibited in <i>Archeologisch Museum Scheurleer</i> (1924–1932).
1924–1928 [1] 1928–1932 [2] 1932–1946 [3] 1934–1946 [4]	G.A.S. Snijder (1896–1992) <i>privaatdocent</i> [1], extraordinary [2], ordinary Professor of Classical Archaeology [3], Amsterdam; Director [4], Allard Pierson Museum.	Acquired collections of <i>Archeologisch Museum Scheurleer</i> (including larger part of Von Bissing Collection) for University of Amsterdam.
1925–1927 [1] 1927–1950 [2]	H.P. Blok (1894–1968) <i>privaatdocent</i> Egyptology, Leiden [1]; extraordinary Professor of Egyptian and Near Eastern Art History, Utrecht [2].	Doctoral thesis “ <i>De beide volksverhalen van Papyrus Harris 500 verso</i> ” with Thierry. Professor of African Languages, Leiden (extraordinary 1950, ordinary 1957–1964).
1928–1939 [1] 1939–1949 [2] 1949–1959 [3]	A. de Buck (1892–1959) lector [1], extraordinary Professor of Egyptology [2], ordinary Professor [3], Leiden.	Doctoral thesis “ <i>De Egyptische voorstellingen betreffende den oerheuvel</i> ” with Kristensen. 1924–1931 travel and fieldwork for Coffin Texts project (OI Chicago). First Egyptology chair in the Netherlands. Ordained minister.
1930–1936 [1] 1936–1938 [2] 1938–1954 [3]	R. Miedema (1886–1954) <i>privaatdocent</i> History and Art History of Eastern Christianity, Leiden [1]; idem, Utrecht [2]; Director, Institute for Religious and Ecclesiastic Art, Utrecht [3].	Studied Theology in Leiden; doctoral thesis on Saint Menas. Ordained minister.
1933–1938	H. Frankfort (1897–1954) extraordinary Professor of Archaeology and History of the Near East, Amsterdam.	Studied in Amsterdam and London; doctoral thesis in Leiden. Also taught Egyptian art and archaeology. Permanently moved abroad in 1938.

Oosters Genootschap in Nederland

At the initiative of J.Ph. Vogel¹⁸ the *Oosters Genootschap in Nederland* ("Oriental Society in the Netherlands") was established in 1920,¹⁹ with its base in Leiden. The society covered all oriental studies, from the Levant and Egypt via the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian subcontinent to the Far East, including the East-Indies, China, and Japan. The emphasis was again on languages and religions, with material culture ("archaeology") and society ("anthropology") coming second. At its start, the society's provisional committee included C. Snouck Hurgronje (Arabic and Islam), W.B. Kristensen (History of Religions), Ph.S. van Ronkel (Malay and Indonesian linguistics), and A.J. Wensinck (Hebrew and Syriac (all were professors at Leiden University). Members numbered one-hundred eighty-three.

The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the Société Asiatique de Paris, the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, the American Oriental Society, the Società Asiatica Italiana, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and the École Française d'Extrême-Orient were promptly informed. In Snouck Hurgronje's presidential address to the first congress of the Society on 4 January 1921, he answered the question of why an Oriental Society in the Netherlands had not been founded at the same time as these "foreign sister societies":

An Oriental society in the Netherlands, had it been founded in 1860, would not have brought together more than one tenth of the members inscribed on our list today (...). India, Indonesia, China, Japan, Assyria and Babylonia, now all represented by worthy men, would have been either unrepresented or underrepresented. (...) Egyptology entered [Leiden] already a century ago, due to special circumstances, and has from that time continuously been represented by a few excellent scholars. (...) It will not surprise anyone that we (...) also included Hellenism and Byzantium in our circle.²⁰

¹⁸ Jean Philippe Vogel (1871–1958), Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Antiquities at Leiden University (1914–1939), founder of the *Instituut Kern* for the study of Indian languages and cultures (1925).

¹⁹ Drewes 1971: 1.

²⁰ "Een Oostersch genootschap in Nederland, gesteld het ware in 1860 opgericht, zou niet meer dan een tiende deel bijeengebracht hebben van het aantal leden, dat thans op onze lijst ingeschreven staat (...). Indië, Indonesië, China, Japan, Assyrië en Babylonië, thans alle hier vertegenwoordigd door mannen, wier namen genoemd mogen worden, zouden toen deels niet, deels schaars vertegenwoordigd zijn geweest." "Aan bijzondere omstandigheden was het te danken, dat de Egyptologie hier reeds bijna eene eeuw geleden hare intrede deed en sindsdien steeds door enkele voortreffelijke geleerden vertegenwoordigd was." "Dat wij (...) ook het Hellenisme en Byzantium gaarne in onzen kring opnamen, zal niemand uwer verwonderen." (Oosters Genootschap 1921: 6, 4, 6).

Foundation of the *Oosters Genootschap* was driven not only by the recognition of new fields of study and new university chairs, but also from the desire to give a new impulse to existing studies, e.g., new dimensions to the study of Arabic. Its aims were to maintain national and international academic connections between orientalists. Or, in the words of Snouck Hurgronje: “meeting each other, drawing up the synthesis of what has been done in the Netherlands and what needs to be done to draw up a spiritual rapprochement between the East and the West; promotion of harmony, division of labour, exchange of thoughts leading to new points of view (...).”²¹ It was also an initiative for international reconnection after WW I; in Scandinavian countries similar views were held and efforts made.

With the Orientalists of these other “small populations” close ties were maintained. The journal *Acta Orientalia* was issued yearly from 1923 onwards, in co-operation between Danish, Dutch, and Norwegian Oriental Societies.²² The editorial board of *ActOr*, published in Leiden, consisted of F. Buhl (Copenhagen) for Egypt and the Near East, C. Snouck Hurgronje for all subjects related to Islam, Sten Konow (Oslo) for India and ancient Iran, and Ph. S. van Ronkel (Leiden) for East Asia. Contributions were primarily by the members of these societies.

The International Congress of Orientalists was held every one or two years and hosted in a different city each time, from 1873 until the outbreak of WW I. After the war there was a period of discontinuity until Oxford offered to host the Congress in 1928. Next was Leiden; the *Oosters Genootschap* contributed to the re-establishment of international relations and hosted the 18th congress in 1931. In his opening address, Snouck Hurgronje remarked that the “studies of the East” had progressed enormously since the Leiden congress in 1883, which had led to intense specialisation. The ultimate goal was still “that East and West would learn to understand one another, so that the ideal of the oneness of the human race may be approached.”²³

From the first, the *Oosters Genootschap* held regular members’ meetings featuring a presentation by one of their number. A larger congress was held every

²¹ “(...) elkander te ontmoeten, samen de synthese op te maken van wat er in ons land gedaan is en het programma van wat er te doen valt om het Oosten in geestelijken zin nader bij het Westen te brengen, de harmonie, de economische arbeidsverdelingen de onderlinge hulpverlening in dit soort werk in ons land te bevorderen, gedachtenwisseling te houden, die nieuwe gezichtspunten opent, overleg te plegen over wetenschappelijk werk, dat de krachten van enkelingen te boven gaat.” (*Oosters Genootschap* 1921: 6, translation: Drewes 1971: 1–2).

²² Anonymous 1923: “Simul voces audiebantur nostris ut parvis populis summi fore momenti si inter se foedus fecerint” (“At the same time, voices were heard that it would be of great importance to our small peoples if they made a treaty with each other”).

²³ “Notre but commun à nous tous, qui malgré tout est resté invariablement le même, c’est la pénétration intellectuelle réciproque de l’Orient et de l’Occident, qui a son tour pourra servir de base à la réalisation de l’idéal suprême de l’unité du genre humain.” De Goeje 1932: 22–23.

two years. Membership dwindled to 150 in 1936. Thereafter, the members' meetings were held every month, but during WW II, they could take place only intermittently. In 1941 the society held its 10th congress, considered a great success by the members, at the *Oosters Instituut*. The 11th congress, in 1943, was a much more modest occasion lasting only one morning. However, regular meetings resumed in 1944 (with a maximum of nineteen persons permitted during the German occupation). Clearly, the members valued maintaining the society highly: celebration of its 25th anniversary took place at *NINO* on 8 May 1945 – while Canadian forces marched into Leiden to liberate the city. The celebratory volume, published in 1948, bore the title *Orientalia Neerlandica*.²⁴

After the war, the *Oosters Genootschap* returned to its regular rhythm of members' meetings and biannual congresses. A few times the society assembled in Groningen, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, but Leiden was the usual location. Cooperation with *NINO* seems to have continued, but larger gatherings – such as the celebration of the society's 40 years of existence in 1960 – were also held at the *Oosters Instituut* premises.

Publication of the journal *Acta Orientalia* ceased during the war. In 1948 Volume 20 was published in Leiden; it then absorbed the Swedish journal *Le Monde Oriental* and from Volume 21 (1953) onwards, was published in Copenhagen, still in cooperation with the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish Oriental Societies. In 1956, Dutch involvement with the journal officially ended, making it solely a Scandinavian publication from Vol. 23 onwards.

Despite specialists narrowing and deepening their fields of interest in the 1960s and 1970s, the keynote presentations at the *Oosters Genootschap* meetings continued to span the full range of subjects, from Ancient Near East to Far East. From 1969 until 2001, one presentation per year was chosen for print.²⁵ The society's 50th anniversary in 1970 was celebrated with a jubilee congress, a small exhibition of papyri in the National Museum of Antiquities, an exhibition on oriental manuscripts in the Bibliotheca Thysiana, and a volume entitled *Acta Orientalia Neerlandica* containing the congress proceedings. While celebrating, the board and members of the *Oosters Genootschap* were aware of rapidly changing times and their effect on the role and position of the society – less as a meeting place for scholars, more as a centre for the distribution of scientific and practical knowledge of the Orient. Simultaneously, a number of institutes dealing with foreign cultures and languages were reorganised or newly formed: *KITLV* (see above, p. 272) moved from The Hague to Leiden, while *Afrika Studiecentrum* and Sinological Institute at Leiden University were (re)formed and Dutch scholarly

²⁴ Drewes 1971: 3–4.

²⁵ Until 1986 these were published and printed by Brill; from the 1990s the publisher was the Sinological Institute (or the Department of South-East Asia) of Leiden University (ISBN publisher's prefix 90-74956-, after 1995 90-72865-; the *Oosters Instituut* used the latter prefix for their publications 1989–1995 (see below, p. 287).

institutes were established in Jakarta and Cairo (see Table 6).²⁶ In the 1980s and 1990s, keynote presentations tended to attract audiences of colleagues and students in the speaker's specialisation rather than scholars from different fields.²⁷ Today the society's board members are Far Eastern scholars, and the *Oosters Genootschap* has in the Netherlands mostly lost its relevance for Ancient Near Eastern studies. A reboot of the *Oosters Genootschap* is being planned at the time of writing; goals and outcomes yet unknown.

Oosters Instituut

When Snouck Hurgronje turned 70 in 1927, he was a famous, celebrated personality in academic circles – he was also despised by colonialists. He retired that year, and a number of his former students (now professors themselves) offered him a collective sum of *f* 27,000 (ca. € 230,000 nowadays)²⁸ for the foundation of a “Snouck Hurgronje-Stichting”. Instead he founded the *Oosters Instituut* (“Oriental Institute”), an umbrella organisation encompassing almost all Leiden societies and foundations related to Oriental studies.²⁹ The *Oosters Instituut* aimed to stimulate study of “the East”, to unify various initiatives, and to function as a central venue where various institutions could meet while maintaining formal autonomy (see Table 4). Several member institutions owned valuable collections of books and study materials; the smaller ones – neither owning nor renting premises – were given use of space in the *Oosters Instituut*. The *OI* also held collections of its own: among these were archival documents from and materials collected by Snouck Hurgronje (i.a., during his time in Mecca), a collection of rare Ancient South Arabian inscriptions, and the Said-Ruete Collection³⁰.

²⁶ Drewes 1971: 5.

²⁷ Personal communication by W.J. Boot, *Oosters Genootschap* board member in the mid-1980s [5–4–2023].

²⁸ Calculation of ‘purchasing power’ of Dutch guilders (*f*) in 1927 to Euros (€): Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis 2021.

²⁹ Until the Dutch spelling reform of 1947, the name was spelled *Oostersch Instituut*.

³⁰ The collection consists of the library collected by Emily Ruete, born *Sayyida* (Princess) Salme of Zanzibar and Oman (1844–1924), and her son Rudolph Said-Ruete (1869–1946), together with archival and related materials, and a large bookcase with glass doors. Said-Ruete intended to create a monument to his mother by donating the collection to the *OI*, which Snouck Hurgronje – who was friends of both mother and son – encouraged; the donation materialised a year after his death. The Said-Ruete library was located on the first floor of Rapenburg 61, in what had been the study. See Van de Velde and Vrolijk 2018 [2020]: 6–7. See also below p. 294 fn. 47.

Table 4: *Oosters Instituut* member organisations,
mentioned in annual reports 1927–1941.

Founded	Name	Founders, Presidents	Aims, remarks	Location
1909	Stichting De Goeje	M.J. de Goeje, C. Snouck Hurgronje	Arabic language and literature, publications of Arabic manuscripts/texts.	
1917	Adatrecht-stichting	KITLV, C. van Vollenhoven	Research into customary law of Muslim communities, publications.	
1920	Oosters Genootschap in Nederland	(see pp. 280–283)		
1925	Instituut Kern	J.Ph. Vogel	Sanskrit, languages and cultures of India. Library, photographic collections. Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology. Integrated into Leiden University in 1960.	Gravensteen
1927	Islam-Stichting	C. Snouck Hur- gronje, A.J. Wensinck, C. van Arendonk, J.H. Kramers, C. van Vollen- hoven	Collection of Islamic objects and images of Islamic architecture.	Halls of the Oosters Instituut
1927	Assyriologische Werkkamer	F.M.Th. Böhl	Concise library on the languages of Bab- ylonia and Assyria, study collection of cuneiform tablets.	Rapenburg 53 (Böhl's private home)
1930	Nieuw Guinea Stichting		Languages and eth- nography of New Guinea. Fund dissol- ved 1981.	
1930	Sinologisch Instituut		Languages and cul- tures of China. Li- brary. Integrated into Leiden University.	Rapenburg 71

Founded	Name	Founders, Presidents	Aims, remarks	Location
1933	Ex Oriente Lux	(see pp. 290–293)		
1935	Stichting voor Oud-Semietische, Hellenistische en Joodsche Rechtsgeschiedenis	W.J.M. van Eysinga, B.A. van Groningen, A.H. Hartogh, F.M.Th. Böhl, J. Huizinga, L. Levisson	Foundation aimed at establishing a chair for Ancient Oriental Law. Chair established at Leiden University in 1937 and M. David appointed.	
1939	Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten	(see pp. 293–298)		
Not included in <i>Oosters Instituut jaarverslagen</i> :				
1935	Leidsch Papyrologisch Instituut ³¹	M. David, B.A. van Groningen, J.C. van Oven	Collection of Greek and demotic papyri.	University Library (Rapenburg 50); from 1962: Breestraat 155a; since 1982: University Library (Witte Singel 27)
1947, 1958	Afrika Studie Centrum		Research institute with library; founded as the scientific branch in Leiden of the <i>Afrika Instituut</i> (“Africa Institute”), Rotterdam.	Rapenburg 8; since 1966: Faculty of Social Sciences (Wassenaarseweg 52)

For the first decade of its existence, the *OI* had its home at Hooglandse Kerkgracht 17B on the upper floor of the *Heilige Geest- of Arme Wees- en Kinderhuis* (Orphanage) where Snouck Hurgronje’s wife Ida was a board member.

After Snouck passed away in 1936, his townhouse at Rapenburg 61 was too large for his widow alone; she sold it to the *Leids Universiteits Fonds*.³² Space in

³¹ This foundation was founded in the same year as the *Stichting voor Oud-Semietische, Hellenistische en Joodsche Rechtsgeschiedenis*. The two foundations had related, but clearly separate aims; the overlap between initiators/involved persons is partial. Personal communication F.A.J. Hoogendijk, 9–9–2022.

³² Leiden University’s alumni/general support fund, founded 1890.

the “Snouck Hurgronje House” was rented by several institutes: the *Oosters Instituut*, the *Adatrecht-stichting* and the *Islam-stichting* occupied the ground and first floors while the Institute for Criminology had the second. The stately house with Snouck Hurgronje’s name chiselled into its lintel became Leiden University’s centre for study of the Middle East and Islam in 1938 and remained so for many decades.

Between 1955 and 1965 the *Oosters Instituut* issued a brochure announcing courses intended “for those who either have found a professional assignment in the East or in Africa, or wish to prepare themselves for such an assignment.” These intensive courses of twenty hours per week (over three or seven months) were expressly meant for a well-educated, but non-scholarly public. There were four sections: Indonesia and Malaysia, the Arab countries, Japan, and China.³³ One incentive for offering courses to non-academics must have been the independence of Indonesia and the consequent abolishment of state-organised education for future colonial civil servants. We might also suspect the hand of A.A. Kampman with his extensive experience setting up courses on the Ancient Near East (see Waal in this volume), who was named among the organisers of the *OI* courses.



Fig. 2: Snouck Hurgronjehuis (Rapenburg 61, Leiden), home of the *Oosters Instituut* 1938–1982.

³³ The brochure is undated; no written sources on enrolment, frequency, and further course subjects were available to the author.

The *Jaarverslagen van het Oostersch Instituut* (annual reports of the *OI*), comprising those of the *OI* member institutions, appeared from 1929 until 1941. Other than these annual reports, the *OI* did not issue a regular publication series except between 1989 and 1995, when five doctoral theses appeared as “*Publicaties van Het Oosters Instituut*”. At that time, the institute had moved into the newly built premises of the Faculty of Humanities (see below p. 298) where the *Oosters Instituut* lost its former visibility and function. Its goal of unifying efforts with regard to the studies of the East had long been taken over by structures within the faculty. At the time of the move, its collections were given on loan to Leiden University Libraries and *NINO*. Its publications were distributed by *NINO*, which also took on distribution of the publications of *OI* member *Stichting De Goeje* (a series of some thirty volumes published 1909–2000). Ownership of the *OI* collections was transferred to Leiden University Libraries on 6 November 1996,³⁴ except the Said-Ruete Collection which was on loan at *NINO* (see above p. 283 fn. 30, and below p. 294 fn. 47). The private foundation forming the financial basis of the *Oosters Instituut* is still extant; since 1976 it aims to promote the study of Islam, of Arabic and Indonesia through funding scholarly purposes – specifically, for special academic chairs, travel, and publications.³⁵

Vereeniging tot Bevordering der Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving

One of the first societies that successfully sought to share knowledge on ancient civilisations outside purely academic circles was the “Society for the Advancement of Knowledge of Ancient Civilisation,” founded in 1926. The leading figures in this “society with the long name” were:

- C.W. Lunsingh Scheurleer (1881–1941), owner and director of the *Archeologisch Museum Scheurleer* in The Hague (1924–1932), lector (1933) and extraordinary professor (1936) of Greek Archaeology, Leiden University;
- A.W. Byvanck (1884–1970), Professor of Archaeology and Ancient History (1922–1954), Leiden University;
- H.A.L.E. Byvanck-Quarles van Ufford (1907–2002), *privaatdocent* for Classical Archaeology (1945), Leiden University.

The society issued an annual journal named “*Bulletin van de Vereeniging tot Bevordering der Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving*,” shortened to “*Bulletin Antieke Beschaving*” – referred to as “*Bulletin Byvanck*” in jest during many years when husband and wife Byvanck habitually contributed multiple articles to each volume. (Mrs. Byvanck served as the editor from 1941 to 1981.) The journal

³⁴ Van de Velde and Vrolijk 2018 [2020]: 6–7.

³⁵ Stichting Oosters Instituut 2022: /subsidies and /aims [accessed 21–8–2022]. A catalogue of the *OI*’s important collection of palm-leaf stalks and sticks inscribed in Ancient South Arabian script appeared in 2016.

started out as a Dutch-language members' magazine, but in the 1970s it evolved into a scholarly journal now titled BABesch, Annual Papers on Mediterranean Archaeology. This journal, together with the BABESCH Supplement series, and the annual Byvanck Lecture, presently represent the society's main activities.

For a short time, and mainly thanks to Lunsingh Scheurleer, *VBKAK* included "archaeology of the Ancient Near East," but the primary focus of the society remained classical antiquity. The need for a society dedicated to the Ancient Near East was felt, and in 1933 *Ex Oriente Lux* filled this gap (see below p. 290–293).³⁶

F.M.Th. Böhl

On Frans Böhl (1882–1976), see Berntsen, and Waal, in this volume. Böhl and Egyptologist Adriaan de Buck were the first co-directors of *NINO*. In the 1920s and 1930s Böhl brought together the largest collection of cuneiform inscriptions in the Netherlands, for use in academic teaching and research. It was kept first in the *Semitistische Werkkamer* in Groningen, and later in the *Assyriologische Werkkamer* in Leiden – "Study Rooms" where Assyriology classes were taught and relevant publications were available to students. *NINO* acquired the Böhl Collection upon his retirement.

In addition to forming his own collection, Böhl added to the Near Eastern collections of the National Museum of Antiquities. The finds allotted the Dutch from the excavations at Sichem entered the museum in 1929. On several occasions, Böhl purchased objects from antiquities dealers in the Near East and Europe at the expressed request of the museum. His 1939 journey to Iraq and Iran was sponsored by the *Van den Bergh-Willing Stichting* (see below p. 299); the *Reuvens Fonds* provided funding for the items he acquired for the museum during this trip (see Table 7).

³⁶ "Het is de in 1941 overleden Prof. Dr. C.W. Lunsingh Scheurleer geweest, die in 1926 in de *Vereeniging tot bevordering der kennis van de antieke beschaving* de belangstellenden in de archaeologie der klassieke oudheid verenigde met hen, wier belangstelling meer specifiek uitging naar de opgravingen in de oud-Oosterse landen. Doch al spoedig bleek het niet mogelijk, dat deze belangstellenden hun centrum vonden in een vereniging, waarin uiteraard de klassieke oudheid, dus Griekenland en Rome, leiding gaf. Toen volgde in 1933 de oprichting van het *Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap Ex Oriente Lux*." ("It was Prof. Dr. C.W. Lunsingh Scheurleer (passed away 1941) who in 1926 united in *VBKAB* those interested in the archaeology of the Classical world with those more specifically interested in excavations in Ancient Near Eastern countries. However, it soon proved impossible for the latter to find their centre in a society where Classical Antiquity – Greece and Rome – was in the lead. Hence the establishment of *Ex Oriente Lux* in 1933.") Kampman 1948: 246.



Fig. 3: Prof. F.M.Th. Böhl shows clay tablets from his collection, shortly after ownership was transferred to *NINO* in 1951.

20th century – second quarter

In the second quarter of the 20th century, the discoveries of the tomb of Tutankhamun and the royal tombs at Ur caught the attention of the Dutch audience³⁷ and it has remained so engaged ever since. A new generation of students set out to share their enthusiasm for and knowledge of the Ancient Near East – now boosted by the adventure of archaeology – with the broader public; the most prolific among them was Arie Kampman.

A.A. Kampman

Arie Abraham Kampman (1911–1977) enrolled as a student of History and Ancient Near Eastern studies at Leiden University in 1931; his professors were F.M.Th. Böhl and A.W. Byvanck. For more on Kampman, see Waal's contribution in this volume.

The multitude of Kampman's activities is impressive. His talents for organising, networking, and inspiring people outweighed his own scholarly achievements – although his professorship at Istanbul University (1965) was certainly the fulfilment of an ardent wish. He was responsible for creating important infrastructure for Dutch scholarly study of the Near East, as well as public interest in it. He actively maintained the organisations he founded for multiple decades, allowing others to further the pursuit of Oriental research in the Netherlands.³⁸

³⁷ Kampman 1948: 245.

³⁸ Having spoken with scholars who personally witnessed or interacted with Kampman



Fig. 4: HRH Prince Bernhard (centre) visits *NINO* and is shown objects from the Böhl Collection, 1959. Left A.A. Kampman, right R. Frankena.

Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap “Ex Oriente Lux”³⁹

Kampman and seven other young Leiden students plus one slightly older student took an important step in May 1933. The latter, Bob A. van Proosdij (1901–1990), was a classicist as well as *repetitor* (tutor) for Assyriology, who worked at Brill. No doubt inspired by Böhl’s compelling lectures and the example set by the *Vereniging tot bevordering der kennis van de antieke beschaving* (see above p. 287–288), the group decided to start a society for the study of the Ancient Near East called “Near Eastern and Egyptian Society Ex Oriente Lux” (*EOL*). Van Proosdij was named president with Kampman as secretary and treasurer (a position he held from 1933 to 1974, assisted by a “Second Secretary” from 1962 onwards).

The society’s envisaged activities were offering lectures, courses, meetings, and an annual journal to its members – generally, promoting knowledge about the Ancient Near East to a broad audience. Ambitious aims also included sending expeditions to the Near East or participating in them, and the establishment of an

during the 1970’s, the author noted an anecdotal emphasis on his self-important demeanour, rather than on his accomplishments, perhaps resulting from incompatibility with contemporaneous personalities who valued academic achievements higher than organisational skill.

³⁹ On *EOL*, see the contribution of Waal in this volume as well as Veenhof 2008 and Stol 2008.

institute for the Ancient Near East. A circular announcing the new society and calling for members was posted on the door of Böhl's Assyriological Workroom in his townhouse. When the elderly Snouck Hurgronje was asked for his endorsement, he not only agreed to become a supporting member, but also included *Ex Oriente Lux* under the umbrella of the *Oosters Instituut*.

The *EOL* head office was, of course, in Leiden; in larger Dutch cities, branches (*studiekringen*) were created which typically consisted of a representative or small committee responsible for organising local meetings. To this day, *EOL*'s head office provides a list of speakers to the branches from which they can compile their programmes. Local *EOL* branches were among the many societies, clubs, lobby groups, etc. scheduling "lectures with lantern slides," to provide a range of social gatherings in towns throughout the Netherlands.⁴⁰

In addition to lectures, courses, the members' meeting each year, and the annual *Jaarbericht*, members were granted discounts on publications of selected third parties and access to the growing library that the society was actively creating. In the 1930s the "Tiele Kamer" in the University Library did apparently not keep up with international research into all aspects of the Ancient Near East and Egypt, which now expanded outside the realm of comparative religions. Between 1933 and 1938 *EOL* sent a monthly *Rondschrijven* ("Circular") to its members, but it proved too labour-intensive to maintain. Instead the Dutch-language *Phoenix* was initiated in 1955; since 1982 it appears thrice yearly. The *Jaarbericht* (*JEOL*) grew from a Dutch-language annual members' magazine with articles, news etc., into an international peer-reviewed journal. Van Proosdij diligently edited Supplements to the *Jaarbericht* (*SEOL*).⁴¹ The series *Mededelingen en Verhandelingen* (*MVEOL*) was set up as the publication series for scholarly monographs, but has in recent years also included Dutch-language titles aimed at a broader audience.

Board

The founders of *EOL* proved highly loyal to its ideals and activities. Van Proosdij served as president for nearly thirty years and found it difficult to step down; the transition to a new president was laborious. Eventually, another founding father, the Old Testament scholar Martien A. Beek, was elected and went on to serve as president for twelve years; other board members also served (very) long terms and/or in consecutive roles (see Table 5).

⁴⁰ Da Rocha Gonçalves, 2023.

⁴¹ Veenhof 2008: 16.

Table 5: Ex Oriente Lux primary board members.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Years</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Discipline</i>
President	1933–1962	B.A. van Proosdij	Classics, Assyriology
	1962–1974	M.A. Beek	Old Testament Studies, ANE History
	1974–1994	M.S.H.G. Heerma van Voss	Egyptology
	1994–2004	K.R. Veenhof	Assyriology
	2004–2015	D.J.W. Meijer	ANE Archaeology
	2015–2023	R.J. van der Spek	Assyriology, Ancient History
	2023–	B.J.J. Haring	Egyptology
Secretary	1933–1974	A.A. Kampman	Hittitology
	1962–1974	K.R. Veenhof	
	1974–1999	M. Stol	Assyriology
	1999–2006	A. Egberts	Egyptology
	2007–2012	R.B. ter Haar Romeny	Hebrew and Old Testament
	2012–2022	T.J.H. Krispijn	Assyriology
	2022–present	P. Sanders	Old Testament Studies
Treasurer	1933–1974	A.A. Kampman	
	1974–1991	E. de Ranitz-Labouchere	Egyptology
	1991–1996	various persons	
	1997–2000	A.C.V.M. Bongenaar	Assyriology
	2001–2009	B.J.J. Haring	Egyptology
	2010–2015	W. Hovestreydt	Egyptology
	2015–2018	M. Hanegraaff	Assyriology
	2018–present	R. de Boer	Assyriology

Membership

At the ten years' celebration in 1943, *EOL* had 3,000 members, eighteen branches in the Netherlands and four in Belgium. In 1947 membership peaked at 3,500 members. One partial explanation for the increase is that during WW II, with opportunities for recreation progressively more scarce, the lectures and courses offered by *Ex Oriente Lux* were an attractive diversion.

In 1952 and 1958 there were 2,500 members in thirty-two branches. Their number dropped to twenty-six in 1964, while in the 1990s there were sixteen to eighteen branches (not counting one or two in Belgium)⁴². Membership dropped to 1,430 in 1972, 1,300 in 1975, and ca. 1,180 in 1981, but began increasing, to

⁴² Stol 2008: 92.

1,300 in 1994 and by 1999 to 1,355.⁴³ In the early 1980s, *EOL* moved with *NINO* to the new University buildings; the society saw renewed initiatives and a very welcome legacy from J.A. Goderie.

Today, the society is active with twelve branches in the Netherlands and one in Flanders. The program of the annual central members' meeting includes lectures on a central theme, and publications are regularly issued. Most Dutch-speaking orientalist are involved – giving lectures, contributing to *Phoenix*, and/or serving on the board or editorial board.



Fig. 5: Celebration 10 years *Ex Oriente Lux*: group portrait in the back garden of *NINO*, 1943.

The Netherlands Institute for the Near East⁴⁴

The notarised deed founding the Netherlands Archaeological and Philological Institute for the Near East, signed 17 August 1939, lists its organizational set-up and aims (see Waal in this volume), adding: “The institute envisages the term ‘archaeological’ in a broad sense, as it is used in a. o. France (Institut de France, Collège de France), where ‘archaeology’ also encompasses ‘inscriptions et belles lettres’.”⁴⁵ The reference to foreign institutes, as well as the fact that amendment of

⁴³ Stol 2008: 81, 84, 88.

⁴⁴ See Van Zoest and Berntsen 2014, and Waal in this volume.

⁴⁵ Deed of foundation (copy), 17 August 1939. *NINO* Archive. Original Dutch text in Van Zoest and Berntsen 2014: 4.

the articles in 1955 cited the official name of the Institute in its Dutch, English, and French versions, indicates the desire to make it not only nationally but internationally relevant.

Library

An important core of the library was formed of publications acquired by *Ex Oriente Lux* since its foundation. As copies of numerous letters in the *NINO* Archive testify, curator-librarian Kampman intensified his efforts to acquire as many books and journals as possible in the months before the official establishment of the institute. *EOL* and *NINO* publications served as means of exchange. Other collections of books integrated into the *NINO* library in its earliest years were donated or legated by C.H.J. van Haeften, R.J. Forbes, and Frank Scholten.⁴⁶

De Buck, the first president of the International Association of Egyptologists (founded in Copenhagen, 1947), saw to the establishment of the Annual Egyptological Bibliography. J.M.A. Janssen, charged with compiling the bibliography, produced the first volume in 1948. For many decades it was customary for authors and publishers to send a copy of their Egyptological publications to Leiden for inclusion in the AEB, a practice that greatly benefited the *NINO* library. In 1977, after complaints that the Said-Ruete library (above p. 283 fn. 30) was not accessible enough at the *Oosters Instituut* (Rapenburg 61), the boards of *OI* and *NINO* agreed to relocate it to *NINO* (Noordeindsplein 4a–6a).⁴⁷

Publications⁴⁸

From 1943 onwards *NINO* published the journal *Bibliotheca Orientalis*; monographic series dedicated to the memories of A. de Buck and F. Scholten, respectively, followed. The use of long series titles in Latin may have been coined by *EOL* President B.A. van Proosdij, who worked at Brill (Deputy Director 1958–1965; for Van Proosdij see also above p. 290–292. Until the 1970s, E.J. Brill was responsible for printing Dutch publications on (ancient and modern) oriental studies and *NINO* was no exception. This changed in the 1970s when developments in printing technique made publishing non-Latin characters easier and less costly.

⁴⁶ Oostersch Instituut 1941: 57; Oostersch Instituut 1942: 38. On Van Haeften and Scholten, see Waal in this volume.

⁴⁷ The monumental bookcase moved with *NINO* to its new premises at Witte Singel in September 1983, into the Director's office on the first floor. Van Donzel – Director of *NINO* (see below p. 297) and President of the *OI* board – had a keen interest in Sayyida Salme/Emily Ruete. Upon his retirement the bookcase moved into the *NINO* library on the second floor. The books of the Said-Ruete library have recently been transferred into Leiden University Libraries' Special Collections. I thank A.G.M. Keizers, *NINO* librarian, for sharing her unpublished (archival) research on the Said-Ruete Collection with me.

⁴⁸ For a complete overview of *NINO*'s publications up to 2014, see Anonymous 2014.

NINO's journal *Anatolica* (started 1967) and publication series *Publications de l'Institut historique et archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul* (started 1956) were both initiated with the institute in Istanbul in mind (see further below): the journal was suitable for exchange with other institutes, and moreover, the monographs in the *Publications de Stamboul* (later *PIHANS*) series underlined the academic character of the Istanbul institute. Monographs on Egyptological subjects (initially appearing in the *PIHANS* series) were given a separate series *Egyptologische Uitgaven* in 1982.

Istanbul

After a few years of preparations, *NINO* opened a subsidiary institute in Istanbul in 1958 – *Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul (NHAI)* – as an early instance of a trend to establish Dutch academic institutes abroad (see Table 6), spurred by national and international developments of decolonisation, economic prosperity, and population growth.

Kampman had put much effort into assembling a library for the new institute, finding influential board members, and attracting a director. Byvanck, his former professor, had declined because of advanced age. Former *KITLV* secretary Prof. A.A. Cense⁴⁹ agreed to take up directorship for the first six years of the new institute's existence. H. Alkim⁵⁰ was appointed secretary and librarian. The offices, library, and a few guest rooms of the institute were housed in an annexe of the *Palais de Hollande*, the historical seat of the Dutch consular service in Istanbul. In what was undoubtedly a very proud moment for Kampman, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands willingly took a seat on the board, and even agreed to participate in the opening ceremony on 31 March 1958.

Table 6: Dutch academic institutes abroad.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Name (abbreviation)</i>	<i>Founding institution</i>
1904–	Rome	Nederlands Historisch Instituut te Rome; since 2004: Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut Rome (KNIR)	Dutch national government
1958–	Florence	Nederlands Interuniversitair Kunsthistorisch Instituut (NIKI)	Utrecht University

⁴⁹ Anton Abraham Cense (1901–1977) was a Dutch Indologist, civil servant, and scholar in the Dutch East-Indies (University of Batavia). In 1958 he had recently retired from his position at *KITLV*, but because of his lasting fondness for Arabic and Turkish (part of his Indological education) he accepted the position in Istanbul.

⁵⁰ Handan Alkim (?–1985), Turkish archaeologist, spouse of Turkish archaeologist Bahadır Alkim (1915–1981).

<i>Years</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Name (abbreviation)</i>	<i>Founding institution</i>
1958–	Istanbul	Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut (NHAI); since 2004: The Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT)	The Netherlands Institute for the Near East
1969–	Jakarta	KITLV Jakarta	KITLV
1971–	Cairo	Nederlands Instituut voor Archeologie en Arabische Studiën in Cairo (NIAASC); since 1999: Nederlands-Vlaams Instituut in Cairo (NVIC)	Leiden University
1976–	Athens	Nederlands Instituut Athene (NIA)	University of Amsterdam
1997–	St. Petersburg	Nederlands Instituut in Sint-Petersburg (NIP)	Joint Dutch universities
2001–2012	Damascus	Nederlands Instituut voor Academische Studies in Damascus (NIASD)	The Netherlands Institute for the Near East
2006–2015	Ankara	Nederlands Instituut voor Hoger Onderwijs in Ankara (NIHA)	Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
2006–	Rabat	Nederlands Instituut Marokko (NIMAR)	Leiden University

When no successor could be found after Cense's retirement, Kampman became acting director. From 1965 he habitually spent four to five months a year in Istanbul, also teaching at Istanbul University and giving much attention to relations with the local academic community. During his absence, Alkim was in charge. In 1972, Kampman retired from *NHAI* and around the same time, from *NINO* and *EOL*. Alkim's retirement in 1975 marked the end of an era.

NHAI was renamed Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT) in 2004; the institute and its library are housed at Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations.

Place in the local and national landscapes

In the 1950s to 1970s student enrolment and staff appointments in Ancient Near Eastern studies grew at the universities of Leiden, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Groningen, and Nijmegen. While independently funded and governed, *NINO* closely cooperated with Leiden University; the university rented space at *NINO* for its sections of Assyriology and Egyptology; university staff members were deeply involved in the board and activities both of *NINO* and *EOL*.

Changes in the 1970s and 1980s

Kampman had ultimate responsibility for *NINO*'s and *EOL*'s activities and finances. By the time he retired in 1974, the administration and finances of his manifold undertakings (see Waal in this volume) seem to have been rather entangled.

His successor was the Ethiopist E.J. van Donzel⁵¹, who for many years was the driving force on the editorial board of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd edition), in addition to his fulltime directorship of *NINO*. He was responsible for disentangling the administration left behind by Kampman. Under Van Donzel, the organisational interwovenness of *NINO* and *EOL* ended, even though many persons remained involved in both. A successful appeal led to restructuring regular funding from the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science. Van Donzel strengthened ties with the Ministry, while revising and further formalising cooperation with Leiden University. The *NINO* library catalogue was digitised and integrated into Leiden University Library's online catalogue. *NINO* now appeared as a "location" of Leiden University Library, even though acquisitions and remuneration of the staff came from *NINO*'s independent budget. This meant, however, that its existence was broadcast through online library systems from the 1980s onwards.

During the third quarter of the 20th century, numbers of Leiden University students and employees rose considerably, necessitating more office space and classrooms for all humanities studies. The university built new premises (planning had started as early as the 1950s) for the Faculties of Humanities, Theology, and Archaeology in the new "*Witte Singel-Doelencomplex*." The new cluster of buildings brought together the various departments which were until then spread out over Leiden's city centre, as well as the University Library and a number of "*para-universitaire*" institutes, among them *KITLV*, *Instituut Kern*, and *NINO*. Dedicated spaces for the libraries of these institutes and other amenities were part of the designs for the new buildings. *NINO* sold its two houses at Noordeindsplein 4a and 6a in May 1982 and moved to Witte Singel.

The move into university premises changed the structural relationship between *NINO* and Leiden University. At Noordeindsplein, *NINO* was landlord; at Witte Singel, the institute was a comparatively small tenant, and would often be mistaken for a department of Leiden University. Becoming more embedded in university infrastructure had advantages – as a 1989 newspaper article put it: "*NINO* has taken a huge flight over the last five years, since it moved its library with over 35,000 titles into the new complex. There is now an open connection between *NINO* and university. (...) 'At Noordeindsplein we basically existed only for those who were familiar with us,' says Director Van Donzel."⁵²

⁵¹ Emericus Joannes van Donzel (1925–2017), Director of *NINO* 1974–1990. See Roodenberg 2017.

⁵² Leidsch Dagblad 19 October 1989; Dutch text in Van Zoest and Berntsen 2014: 25.



Fig. 6: Noordeindsplein. Left is no. 4a, right (bearing its construction year, 1872) no. 6a.

This change in balance was felt in all institutes that moved out of the premises where they had resided for many years or even decades, as described above (p. 287) for the *Oosters Instituut*.

Present and near future

The now dated *Witte Singel-Doelencomplex* is being currently renovated into a new Humanities Campus. *NINO* will again move, in 2024, this time within the campus. In 2018 a new agreement completed the process of incorporation into Leiden University which had begun in the early 1980s. The arrangement – in which the National Museum of Antiquities, with a view to professional responsibility for the Böhl Collection, is the third partner – included *NINO* staff members becoming university employees and transfer of the *NINO* library collections into the care of Leiden University Library. With a larger budget for scholarly activities, relations with other university staff in Ancient Near Eastern studies in the Netherlands have intensified. It is to be expected that the new premises, combined with full organisational embedding in Leiden University, will again lead to structural adjustments and changed perception of the institute.

Other societies and funds

A number of other funds and societies have played a role in financing initiatives, museum acquisitions, promoting interest in the Ancient Near East etc. (see Table 7). The *Van den Bergh-Willing Stichting* was a private fund, set up in 1937 from donations collected on the occasion of fifty years of marriage of Sam van den Bergh (1864–1941) and Rebecca Willing (1867–1946). Van den Bergh was a wealthy industrialist, founder of a margarine factory that later merged to form Unilever.⁵³ He contributed generously to the Sicheim Committee (see Berntsen in this volume). The fund financed Böhl's journey to the Near East in 1939⁵⁴ and was still active in 1975, but it is presently not registered in the Chamber of Commerce.

The *Allard Pierson Stichting* was established in 1926 to look after the books and antiquities bequeathed to the University of Amsterdam by Jan Six VI (see Berntsen in this volume). With the dissolution of the Museum Scheurleer in The Hague, Geerto A.S. Snijder (see Table 3), acting on behalf of the *APS*, acquired the larger part of the Scheurleer collections for Amsterdam which then formed the core of the Allard Pierson Museum, founded in 1934. Similarly, the *Vereniging Reuvens Fonds*, later *Reuvensstichting*, collected funds for acquisitions of the National Museum of Antiquities.⁵⁵ In addition to these sources, both museums also have societies of friends that organise lectures and activities, and issue a magazine. The Amsterdam society *VVAPM* was founded around the time of the museum's move from Sarphatistraat to Oude Turfmarkt (the move was initiated ca. 1967, the museum re-opened at its new location in 1976). Leiden's society *RoMeO* originated only in 1996, at the publicly expressed desire of those who became members for activities connected to the museum.

Not a society or coordinated initiative, but very influential on the public in the 1950's to 1990's were the publications of husband and wife Auke A. Tadema and Bob Tadema Sporry. Working independently, these two artists, publicists, travellers, and self-taught (art) historians, published a multitude of books and articles on Ancient Egypt for a broad audience. Their widely available books, rich in high-quality information, photographs, drawings and maps, have sparked an interest in (the study of) ancient Egypt with many Dutch-speaking people.

The most productive societies of friends supporting Dutch archaeological projects early in this millennium are perhaps *Friends of Saqqara* (founded by students who had participated in Dutch excavations at Saqqara) and the *Berenike Foundation* (main activity 1993–2003). Furthermore, several non-commercial societies dedicated to Ancient Egypt have sprung up since the 1970s with the activities of *Huis van Horus* and *Mehen* currently surpassing those of the societies of friends just cited. However, membership numbers in the Netherlands as high as

⁵³ Biography: Reinders 2016.

⁵⁴ Böhl 1940.

⁵⁵ Geerts 2018.

EOL's in the 1940s have never again been attained by any single society for the Ancient Near East.

Table 7: Dutch societies relevant to the study of the Ancient Near East, 20th and early 21st centuries.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Society</i>	<i>Founders and initial presidents</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1920–	Oosters Genootschap in Nederland	(see pp. 280–283)	
1925– ca. 1939	Sichem-comité	F.M.Th. Böhl	(see Berntsen in this volume)
1925–1938	Doorner Arbeitsgemeinschaft	Wilhelm II	Private society
1926–	Vereeniging tot Bevordering der Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving	(see pp. 287–288)	
1933–	Ex Oriente Lux	(see pp. 290–293)	
1926–	Allard Pierson Stichting		Fund for collections of / acquisitions for the University of Amsterdam
1969–	Vereniging van Vrienden van het Allard Pierson Museum		(see p. 299)
1937– after 1958	Van den Bergh-Willing Stichting	(see p. 299)	
1928– after 1953	Vereniging Reuvens Fonds		Fund for acquisitions for the National Museum of Antiquities
1974–1998	Reuvensstichting		Fund to hold income from sales of publications and souvenirs at National Museum of Antiquities; proceeds occasionally used for acquisitions
1996–	RoMeO		(see p. 299)

<i>Years</i>	<i>Society</i>	<i>Founders and initial presidents</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1970–2012	Sjemsoethot	W.J. de Jong	Egyptology courses and lectures, journal, Amsterdam
1993	Stichting Berenike	W.Z. Wendrich	Society of friends of the excavations at Berenike (Egypt)
2002–	Mehen	B. Koek-Overvest and J. Koek	Egyptology courses, grants, publication series, library for members in Elst
2003–	Friends of Saqqara	M.M. Vugts, J. van Wetering, M.C. Hulsman	Society of friends of the Dutch excavations at Saqqara
2007–	Huis van Horus	M.J.W.H. Zitman	Egyptology courses, publication series

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