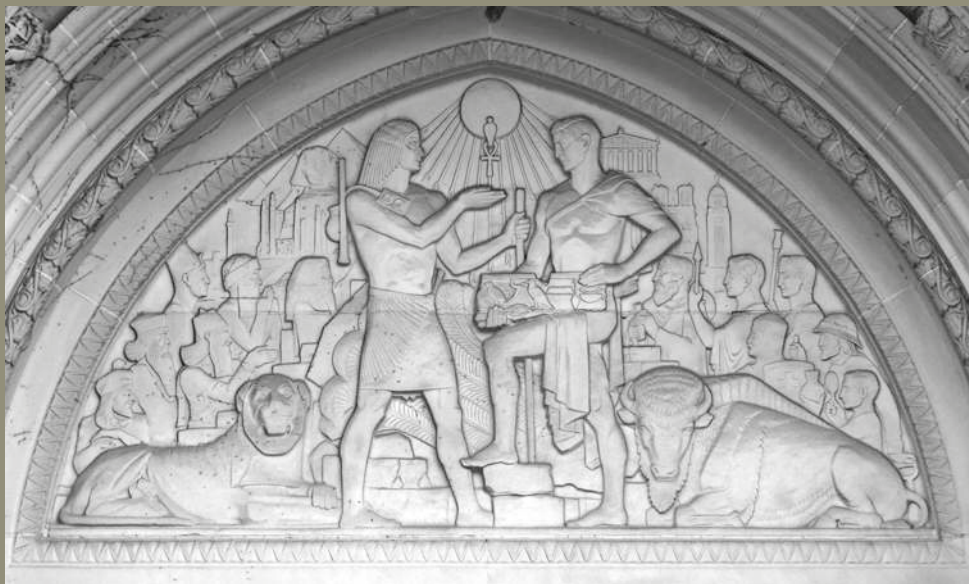


# Towards a History of Egyptology

Proceedings of the Egyptological Section  
of the 8<sup>th</sup> ESHS Conference in London, 2018



Edited by  
Hana Navratilova,  
Thomas L. Gertzen,  
Aidan Dodson and  
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Thomas L. Gertzen,  
Peter Heine,  
Ludger Hiepel und  
Hans Neumann

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Page 1: The tomb of Auguste Mariette and the Egyptological pantheon in the garden of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, © Aidan Dodson 2017.

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## ‘Germanic’ Egyptology?

### Scholarship and politics as resources for each other and their alleged binary relationship

Thomas L. Gertzen (Berlin)

The interdependency of scholarship and politics is one of the most striking characteristics of German academia. The humanities as well as science have benefited from state funding and a strong institutional framework since the era of the Wars of Liberation (1813–1815) and the reforms of the brothers von Humboldt, Wilhelm (1767–1835) and Alexander (1769–1859) onwards. Research should further national goals, culminating in the ‘mobilisation’ of science during the two world wars.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, German humanities, in particular, upheld the ideal of ‘independence of research’ [*Freiheit der Wissenschaft*]. The alleged ‘purity’ of scholarship led to the approaches of positivism and self-sufficiency, especially in the ‘exotic disciplines’, [*Orchideenfächer*] such as Egyptology.<sup>2</sup> To justify continuing public support, however, German Egyptologists promulgated the idea of their discipline as a means to achieve ‘international standing’ [*Weltgeltung*]. National rivalries (primarily with their French colleagues)<sup>3</sup> and the negative effects of national decline, particularly after the loss of the First World War, had immediate consequences.

During the 1920s, many German Egyptologists sought to re-model their discipline as *völkisch*,<sup>4</sup> shifting the focus of their research from (positivist) philology to anthropology – and ultimately to racial studies.<sup>5</sup> Remarkably, this did not lead the National Socialists to view the ‘Semitic’ discipline<sup>6</sup> of Egyptology positively, possibly because some of the foremost representatives of the ‘new’ Egyptology were of Jewish descent.<sup>7</sup> Others developed the concept of Egyptology as a ‘national’ discipline – not with regard to the object or methods of research, but rather as a source of international prestige (cf. the earlier aim of achieving *Weltgeltung*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bruch and Kaderas (eds) 2002; for the Second World War, see (recently) Flachowsky et al. (eds) 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Junge 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Gady 2012; Voss 2012.

<sup>4</sup> The term is often – quite inadequately – rendered as ‘national’ in English. Deriving from the German word ‘Volk’ (~ ‘people’), its meaning ranges from ‘people-powered’ to ‘folkloric’, referring ultimately to ethnicity.

<sup>5</sup> Voss 2016: 105–332.

<sup>6</sup> Berve 1934: 228; for Berve, cf. Rebenich 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Gertzen 2017b.

through Egyptology), which remained an effective strategy at least until the earlier phases of Socialism as practiced within the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

This article analyses the interdependence of scholarship and politics as complimentary resources (a concept proposed by the historian of science, Mitchell Ash) and their development through German history. The observation of David Gange and William Carruthers that research and politics in the historiography of German Egyptology should be perceived as ‘two stable worlds’ or a ‘binary’ system is addressed before possible methodological alternatives are proposed.

### Germanic? German? Prussian?

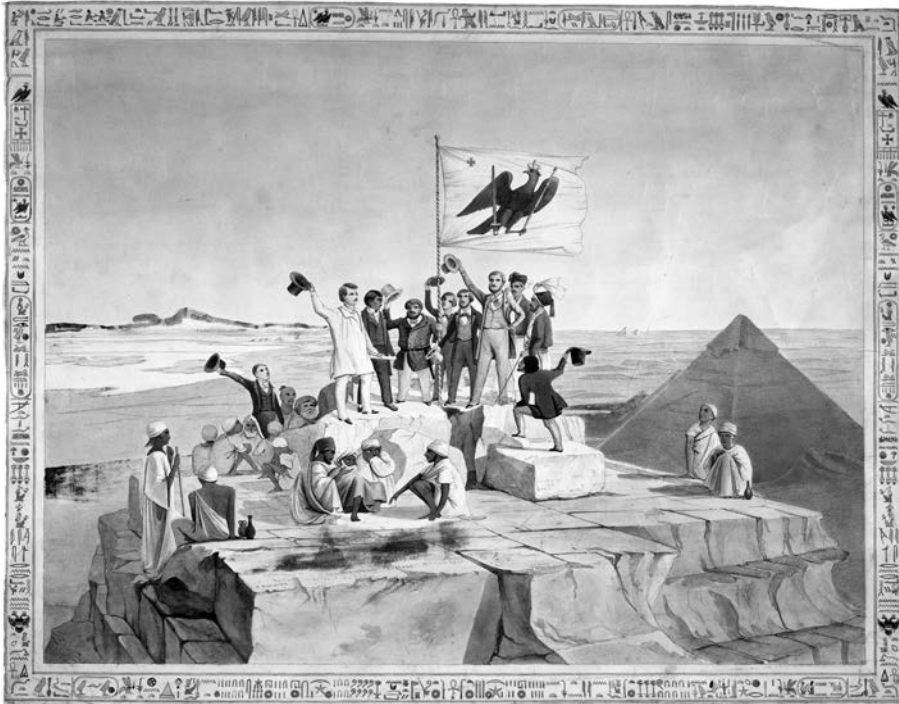


Figure 10: The Prussian Expedition celebrating the birthday of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV at Giza.

The famous drawing depicting the celebration of the birthday of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1795–1861; reigned 1840–58) atop the pyramid of King Khufu at Giza, by members of the Royal Prussian Expedition to Egypt and the Sudan (1842–45), headed by Carl Richard Lepsius (1810–1884), is doubtless an icon of German Egyptology, illustrating the close ties between the German – or, rather, at that time, Prussian – state and state-funded Egyptology: German scholarship is presented ‘on top’: Egyptians are represented as bystanders and on a lower level than the Europeans. The Prussian flag is planted on the pyramid: ancient Egypt

seems to be conquered. This postcolonial interpretation seems straightforward and generally applicable, but what this contribution will demonstrate, however, is that postcolonialism might well be a misleading label when dealing with the history of Egyptology in Germany.

First, terminology must be defined,<sup>8</sup> starting with 'Germanic', which I have chosen to employ in my title. The *Oxford English Dictionary* associates 'Germanic' with Germany and Germans, especially in the pre-First World War era; secondarily, it describes characteristics or qualities attributed to Germans.<sup>9</sup> In fact, a certain 'German-ness' has been detected in the development of the discipline in Central Europe as a whole. Suzanne Marchand aptly described those characteristics:

Lepsius devoted his scholarly efforts to specialised topics in philology. He was instrumental in institutionalizing an austere, analytical method of Egyptological research; this 'German school' advocated careful, historical classification of observations, in contrast to the 'French school', whose members prided themselves on their aesthetic sensitivity and holistic comprehension.<sup>10</sup>

It must be stressed that Marchand describes here self-representations: how French and German Egyptologists viewed themselves, which did not necessarily reflect reality. This Franco-German antagonism is not a paradigm created by disciplinary history, although one adapted and employed as a means of interpreting its sources. Whether these characterisations were actually true is of less importance here: it is the self-stylisation or national conception of Egyptological research that shall be dealt with below.

### **Egyptology according to German nationalities**

The history of German Egyptology is linked to German history.<sup>11</sup> What seems at first sight to be a rather trivial remark is in fact pivotal for understanding the complexity of disciplinary history.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) had crushed the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and reduced the Kingdom of Prussia to a vassal-state. After the Congress of Vienna (1814/15), Prussia could

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<sup>8</sup> Of course, there is no standard definition of Egyptology (see the contribution by Andrew Bednarski in this volume); cf. the provisional discussion in Gertzen 2013: 4–40; Gertzen 2017a: 1–25.

<sup>9</sup> That is the reason I have chosen the term intentionally for my contribution; however, I shall employ the 'German' below, for convenience's sake; cf. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., March 2012, s.v. 'Germanic' A.1.a–b.

<sup>10</sup> Marchand 2000: 127.

<sup>11</sup> It goes without saying that it is impossible to review German history here in any great detail; for a convenient, reliable, and insightful, summary, see MacGregor 2014.

gain from the new order in Central Europe through implementing various internal reforms, for example in the field of higher education.<sup>12</sup> With the foundation of the second *Kaiserreich* in 1871 (fig. 8), Germany seemed to have finally attained its dreams of national unity and power.



Figure 11: Map of the German Kaiserreich, 1871.

When dealing with German history three factors must always be kept in mind:

1. Germany became a national entity comparatively late;
2. It was even then composed of various federal states;
3. Prussia, after the exclusion of Austria, was by far the most important among them.

German scholarship and German Egyptology developed and thrived within and outside the German Reich. The discipline also benefitted from the fact that Germany was a federal state: to the chair of Egyptology in Berlin which had been

<sup>12</sup> Clark 2006: 318–44.

created in 1845 were added professorships at the universities of Göttingen (1867 – until the previous year part of the independent Kingdom of Hanover) and Bonn (1897), not least as indicative of Prussian pretensions in academia within regions which had come under its suzerainty only recently. That also applies in particular to the case of Strassburg which acquired a chair of Egyptology in 1872.

Of course, other German states or principalities did not wish to lag behind, and so Leipzig (1870), Heidelberg (1872), and Munich (1905) got their Egyptologies. There were already two major collections of Egyptian objects outside Berlin, in Hanover and Hildesheim. Egyptology also became institutionalised at German Academies of Sciences and the Humanities in Berlin, Göttingen, Leipzig, and Munich. Even in remote areas of the Reich, such as Königsberg, Egyptology gained a foothold, if only as a *Privatdozentur*. No wonder that the era from 1882 to 1914 has been labelled the 'Golden Age' of Egyptology in Germany.<sup>13</sup> However, a number of universities, including those with chairs for Egyptology, which once belonged to the German state, found themselves outside the national framework after the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles (1919). Therefore, 'German Egyptology' was not always identical with Egyptology within the borders of the state of Germany and even if, regional differences must be taken into account.

As noted above, Egyptology in Germany began as a royal Prussian endeavour. The second chair for Egyptology – anywhere in the world – was established at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin. The University itself had come into being in 1810, thanks to the Prussian reforms instigated by Wilhelm von Humboldt<sup>14</sup> and his brother Alexander, who believed higher education should provide the state with qualified civil servants to ensure modern and more efficient administration. Complementary to this practical rationale – aimed to reinforce Prussia militarily – the brothers developed the concept of 'cultural power' [*Kulturmacht*] which seemed quite appropriate as a (temporary) substitute for real power. Following the example of the French expedition to Egypt, the Kingdom of Prussia sent its own<sup>15</sup> and made sure that the format of the plate volumes of the publication containing its results, the *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien* (1849–59) were larger than the volumes of the French *Description de l'Égypte* (1809–28). In effect, the Prussian state supported Egyptology as a means of competing with France, as well as with French culture and scholarship. Under the reign of Friedrich Wilhelm IV, whose birthday Lepsius celebrated on top of the Giza pyramid, Berlin developed into '*Spree-Athen*' [~Athens on the Spree]. Although the king favoured a joint episcopate of the Prussian Lutheran Church and the Anglican Church in Jerusalem,<sup>16</sup> Prussia kept out of imperial politics in the Orient,

<sup>13</sup> Kees 1959: 4–5.

<sup>14</sup> Who was himself engaged in the study of hieroglyphs; cf. Messling 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Hafemann (ed.) 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Lückhoff 1998.

as did the newly founded German Reich.<sup>17</sup> That changed – if only gradually – after the coronation of Wilhelm II who, as Kaiser, was certainly more ambitious than his predecessors, though German colonial aspirations were ridiculed at first by European powers already in possession of overseas colonies.

In his seminal – if highly controversial – study *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said explicitly excluded the Germans from his analysis. He might:

regret not taking more account of the great scientific prestige that accrued to German scholarship by the middle of the nineteenth century. ... [But, he reasoned that] the German Orient was almost exclusively a scholarly, or at least a classical, Orient: ... never actual.<sup>18</sup>

Suzanne Marchand subsequently provided a comprehensive analysis of German Orientalism, showing the links between ‘Religion, Race and Scholarship’.<sup>19</sup> However, the question remains whether any postcolonial concepts can be employed in the disciplinary history of German Egyptology since the German state never ‘actually’ had any imperial access to Egypt, leaving aside the aforementioned proposal, not to conflate the German state and German Egyptology.

### **‘Imperialist’ agendas and Wissenschaftspolitik**

The establishment of an Imperial German Institute for Egyptian Archaeology in 1907 followed the appointment in 1899 of Ludwig Borchardt (1863–1938) as scholarly attaché at the German Consulate-General in Cairo. It is worthwhile, however, to look at some of the detailed background information compiled by Susanne Voss.<sup>20</sup> Borchardt, or rather his wife, Emilie (née Cohen), actually provided the funding for the Institute’s premises. He never acquired any diplomatic status, and he had explicit orders not to interfere with the internal politics of Egypt. German Egyptology was thus never directly involved with nor acted as an instrument of German imperial politics.

However, the concept ‘*Kulturmacht*’ was transmogrified into the new imperialist Zeitgeist and the German demand for ‘*Weltgeltung*’. One Egyptologist in particular would transform what had been a more or less lofty ideal into a veritable strategy to win state funding for his large-scale projects: Adolf Erman (1854–1937),<sup>21</sup> probably one of the most influential figures in the history not only of German but of international Egyptology. Appointed as Lepsius’s successor as Professor in Berlin and acceding to the post of Director of the Egyptian as well as Near Eastern Department at the Royal Museums in 1885, he subsequently accumulated even more influence when, in 1888 he became editor-in-chief of

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<sup>17</sup> Particularly with regard to Egypt cf. Kröger 1991.

<sup>18</sup> Said 1979: 18–19.

<sup>19</sup> Marchand 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Voss 2013: 53–63; 115–30.

<sup>21</sup> Gertzen 2013b: 93–153.

*Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, at the time the only scholarly journal devoted exclusively to Egyptology.<sup>22</sup> But his power stemmed primarily from his membership in the Prussian Academy of Sciences and the Humanities, to which he was elected in 1895, and especially from his close ties to the unofficial Prussian Minister of Culture and Education, Friedrich Althoff (1839–1908).<sup>23</sup>

When, in 1898, Erman attempted to convince his government to support a permanent post for a German scholar in Egypt, the State Secretary in the Prussian Ministry of Culture and Education (and a close confidante of Althoff), Friedrich Schmidt-Ott (1860–1956) gave him the following suggestion:

Die Hauptsache wird sein, ihn [den Kaiser] für die ganze Frage in Aegypten zu interessieren. In dieser Hinsicht würde ich ganz eingehend sein, die Akademieeingabe wie auch Ihre eigene wegen des äg.[yptischen] W[örter]b[uch]s. vom vorigen Jahre einfach ausschachten, damit es rascher geht, u. alles erzählen, was das Allerhöchste Interesse wachrufen kann.<sup>24</sup>

The Academy application referred to the inauguration of the ‘Berlin Egyptian Dictionary Project’ [*Altaegyptisches Wörterbuchvorhaben*] in 1897, a project headed by Erman until his death, which has continued until today.<sup>25</sup> It was a joint venture involving all the German Academies of Sciences and the Humanities, in Berlin and Göttingen (Prussia), Leipzig (Saxony) and Munich (Bavaria). When Erman applied for funding for the project, he had elaborated upon a ‘deal’ that he offered to the government, set into the framework of international competition:

Der Ruhm, zuerst der Erforschung des alten Aegyptisch Bahn gebrochen zu haben, gebührt den Franzosen. Aber als unsere junge Wissenschaft nach dem frühen Tode Champollions, ihres Begründers, in Frankreich zu erlöschen drohte, da war es Deutschland, wo sie zuerst wieder ernste Pflege und eine neue Heimath fand.

<sup>22</sup> Gertzen 2013a: 63–112.

<sup>23</sup> Brocke 1980.

<sup>24</sup> Schmidt-Ott to Adolf Erman, 9 September 1898: ‘It is essential to interest Him [the Kaiser] in Egyptian affairs. I would argue extensively in that line, copy from the application of the Academy as well as your own, regarding the dictionary of last year, exploit anything which might arouse the interest of H.M.’ (translation TLG); German original quoted by Voss 2013: 55.

<sup>25</sup> For a historical overview, see Reineke 1999; for the current, continuing project, see the link on the home page of the academy for Strukturen und Transformationen des Wortschatzes der ägyptischen Sprache. Text- und Wissenskultur im Alten Ägypten <http://aaew.bbaw.de/projekt/das-projekt-altaegyptisches-woerterbuch-1992-bis-2012> (29/11/2018). A concise summary of the earlier project is also provided.

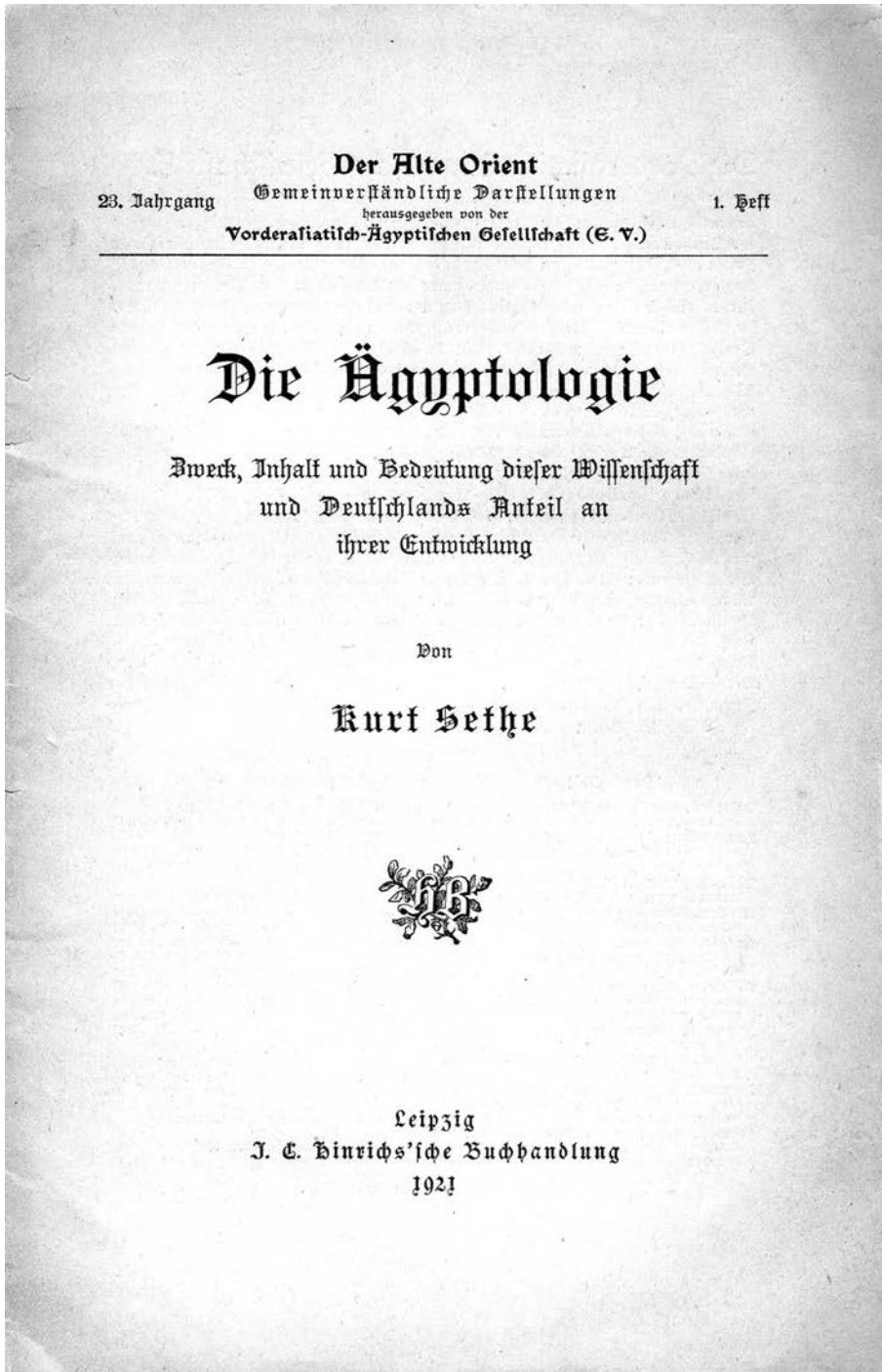


Figure 12: Title page of Kurt Sethe's *Die Ägyptologie* (1921).



And he continued:

es waren die Könige Preußens, die diese zu neuem Leben erweckten. König Friedrich Wilhelm III schuf ... ein großes Museum ägyptischer Alterthümer. König Friedrich Wilhelm IV aber gebührt der unvergängliche Ruhm, ... jene preußische Expedition nach Ägypten entsendet zu haben.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, Erman expected the Kaiser to carry on the good work of his forbearers. Indeed, Wilhelm did so, sponsoring not only the Dictionary, but the Archaeological Institute in Cairo and the German House at Western Thebes.<sup>27</sup>

None of this should be interpreted as part of an imperialist agenda, but there was undoubtedly interdependence between German scholarship and politics. Egyptology would provide international prestige rather than either direct material or political imperial gains. Of course, this still might be interpreted in some measure as German appropriation of Ancient Egypt, allowing a postcolonial or 'Orientalism'-approach to the subject, though mainly on an intellectual level rather than on a political or 'actual' one.

### **Ruptures and continuity from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century**

Not only because the British had destroyed the German House at Western Thebes during the First World War, but also since German scholars were excluded from international conferences immediately after the War, the nationalist conception of German scholarship came to be emphasised at the beginning of the 1920s in opposition to the Entente. Kurt Sethe (1869–1934), Erman's student and his successor (in 1923) as Professor in Berlin, published a little leaflet on the status of Egyptology and Germany's contribution to the field<sup>28</sup> in which he wrote:

Hierin zeigt sich aber auch ein grundsätzlicher Unterschied, der zwischen der heutigen Wissenschaft und der Wissenschaft der in der Entente gegen uns verbündeten Völker besteht. England, Frankreich und Amerika haben ... sich vorwiegend in der Herbeischaffung immer neuen Materiales durch Ausgrabungen und Ankäufe für ihre Museen betätigt, während Deutschland ... die Verarbeitung dieses Materials übernommen hat.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Adolf Erman to Wilhelm II, 26 February 1897: 'The honour to have established [modern] research into the ancient Egyptian language goes to the French, but when the existence of our young discipline became endangered by the sudden death of its inaugurator, Champollion, Germany was where it found a new home. ... It was the Prussian monarchy, who revived it. King Friedrich Wilhelm III created a huge museum for Egyptian antiquities. But the glory to have sent the Prussian Expedition to Egypt belongs to Friedrich Wilhelm IV.' (translation TLG), German original quoted in Gertzen 2013b: 211.

<sup>27</sup> Polz 2007.

<sup>28</sup> This publication had already been discussed by Sledzianowski 1974, which was not exactly welcomed by the German Egyptological community.

<sup>29</sup> Sethe 1921: 41: 'Here one of the fundamental differences between current scholarship

After the lost war and the downfall of the Prussian-German monarchy, Egyptology had to find a new concept, to offer a new proposal in order to receive further state funding. ‘Them’ against ‘us’, the German nation and its embodiment – also in German scholarship – must be supported against Entente competitors or, as Sethe put it:

Uns darin zu unterstützen, wird eine nationale Ehrenpflicht der leistungsfähigen Kreise unseres Volkes und der maßgebenden Kreise unserer Regierung sein müssen.<sup>30</sup>

The deal was nevertheless still pretty much the same: national prestige in exchange for state funding, especially during times in which both resources were scarce.

The concept of science or scholarship – always keeping in mind that the German term *Wissenschaft* also includes the humanities – and politics as resources for each other originates from the writings of Mitchell Ash.<sup>31</sup> He clearly pointed out that resources should not be interpreted exclusively in financial terms but might also include an institutional framework, or even more idealistic or ‘symbolic capital’ (Pierre Bourdieu comes to mind), such as titles and honours. Accordingly, resources provided by *Wissenschaft* would also comprise immaterial gains such as prestige and authority.

This fruitful interrelationship proved to be extremely durable and successful throughout the history of German Egyptology. Interestingly enough, the era between the world wars witnessed for the first time the creation of a new approach to justify public funding of Egyptological research. Georg Steindorff (1861–1951), yet another student of Erman, and, like many representatives of the discipline, of Jewish origin, tried to reshape Egyptology into a *völkisch*, anthropological or racial branch of study. Steindorff had obtained his doctoral degree under the supervision of Paul de Lagarde (1827–1891), whom Fritz Stern considered one of the leading representatives of ‘Germanic Ideology’;<sup>32</sup> indeed, it was Lagarde who convinced Steindorff to convert from Judaism to Protestant Christianity.<sup>33</sup> Yet another incentive derived from the development of anthropology, as represented by scholars such as Felix von Luschan (1854–1924). Racial studies in Egyptology had been until then mainly propagated by the British, primarily by

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[in Germany] and the allied nations of the *entente* becomes apparent: England, France and America ... concentrated primarily on the acquisition of new material by excavation and purchase, while Germany ... shouldered the responsibility for processing [it].’ (translation TLG).

<sup>30</sup> Sethe 1921: 42: ‘Supporting us must be an honourable national obligation of our people and the decision-makers in our government.’ (translation TLG).

<sup>31</sup> Ash 2002.

<sup>32</sup> Stern 1965: 3–96.

<sup>33</sup> Gertzen 2015b.

Flinders Petrie (1853–1942)<sup>34</sup> who, inspired by the eugenic studies of Francis Galton (1822–1911), eventually even bequeathed his skull to science. The head (sic!) of Professor Petrie remains down to the present stored at the Royal College of Surgeons, London.<sup>35</sup>

But what could have motivated a German-Jewish scholar to engage himself in racial studies? In fact, many Jewish scientists and scholars tried to use such studies as a defence against ever-increasing anti-Semitism in Germany.<sup>36</sup> This branch of racial studies had a wider popular appeal than the elitist idea of German scholarship adding to national prestige, but the proponents were unable to establish their approach, at least as the ‘official’ motivation for Egyptological research, primarily because in 1933 the National Socialists seized power in Germany and did not tolerate independent thinkers in racial studies (and especially no Jews). Secondly, after the Second World War racial studies were not considered particularly appropriate.<sup>37</sup>



Figure 13: Stamp-seal of the Egyptological Seminar of Berlin University during the Third Reich – The Prussian Eagle carries a swastika; motto above reads: *Gott mit uns* (God with us).

<sup>34</sup> Challis 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Silberman 1999 (see also the contribution by Rosalind Janssen in this volume).

<sup>36</sup> Lipphardt 2008.

<sup>37</sup> Which does not imply that anthropological research and racial, or rather racist, agendas did not play a role in the post-Second World War German states on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Hermann Grapow (1885–1967) – yet another student of Erman – is a striking example of intellectual continuity, but in his case, of the positivist traditions of the Berlin School, from the *Kaiserreich* to the GDR.<sup>38</sup> During the Third Reich he became one of the leading figures in German Egyptology, and although he certainly tried very hard to adopt an opportunistic attitude towards the new regime, he had a very limited grasp of politics. What he offered to the National Socialist administration, however, was obviously quite attractive: politically impartial positivist-philological research, which also gained international prestige for the regime, combined with personal loyalty (or opportunism). In return, the state would help Grapow and German Egyptology regain their former international standing. Referring to the scholarly journals published by other nations, Grapow stated in a letter to the ‘literary agency of the Reich’ [*Reichsschrifttumskammer*] in 1942:

Jedes kleine Land glaubt sich berechtigt, seine eigenen Zeitschriften herauszugeben, anstatt sich der deutschen Führung auch auf diesem Gebiet anzuschließen. – Ich denke an Dänemark, Belgien, Holland und andere Länder.<sup>39</sup>

Considering the expansion of the Third Reich, into those countries, such a remark to the National Socialist authorities could have had immediate consequences for scholars and publishing houses under German occupation.<sup>40</sup>

With Germany’s defeat, the subsequent occupation by the Allied powers, and the division of Germany into two states, the situation changed: Grapow could regain at least some of his former positions of which he had been deprived for a brief period. He may have been *de-facto* president of the Prussian Academy of Sciences and Humanities during the Nazi period, but he was still able to give the keynote address for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the now-‘German’ Academy in 1950 under the auspices of ‘real existing’ socialism and receive the ‘National Prize’ [*Nationalpreis*] of the GDR not once, but twice. In his keynote address he said:

daß nicht irgendeine Akademie ihre Zweihundertfünfzigjahrfeier zu begehen im Begriff ist, sondern die Berliner Akademie, die ihren neuen Namen der Deutschen allerdings im Hinblick auf das, was sie der Wissenschaft gegeben hat und erst recht auf das, was sie ihr geben will, mit gutem Recht führt.

And ...

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<sup>38</sup> Gertzen 2015a.

<sup>39</sup> 13 October 1942: ‘Every little country feels entitled to publish its own journals instead of following the German lead. I am thinking of Denmark, Belgium, Holland and other countries’ (translation TLG); German original quoted by Gertzen 2015a: 104.

<sup>40</sup> Which indeed it had for Jean Capart (1877–1947) and the *Chronique d’Égypte*; cf. Gertzen 2015a: 101–8.

Als Ägyptologe kann ich jedenfalls nur sagen, daß ... nirgends in Deutschland so wie hier in Berlin im Rahmen der Akademie Ägyptologie als Wissenschaft von der Sprache ..., im Sinne Adolf Ermans und Kurt Sethes getrieben werden kann.<sup>41</sup>

The ‘deal’ Erman had offered to the *Kaiser*, Sethe to the government of the Weimar Republic, and Grapow to the Nazis, remained on the table in the new environment: national prestige in exchange for state funding.

### **Inherent Paradigm? – The national perception of a transnational discipline**

The ‘German School’ of Egyptology originated from the Prussian desire for ‘*Kulturmacht*’, emulating and competing with French scholarship. The term ‘*École de Berlin*’ still reflects this Franco-Prussian rivalry, but under the auspices of rising German imperialism, German Egyptology offered to contribute ‘*Weltgeltung*’ in the field of scholarship. Focussing on philology, lexicography, and providing editions of ancient texts, German Egyptology could survive the downfall of the German *Kaiserreich*.

However, the self-perception or self-advertising changed slightly: German Egyptology was no longer an international competitor but rather a national discipline. This strategy proved extremely successful during the Third Reich as well as during the first years of the GDR. Both regimes were ideologically not particularly keen on nationalism. The Nazis thought in racial or *völkisch* terms, whereas the Socialist Unity Party wished to promote a communist revolution on the international stage.<sup>42</sup> However, nationalism provided a more widely usable framework, capable of bringing the general public and, particularly, the German elites. Moreover, both parties needed the prestige of German scholarship to increase their international standing.

Discussing scholarship and politics as resources for each other already indicates that disciplinary history cannot and should not be isolated from its environment, as David Gange pointed out in a volume on ‘Histories of Egyptology’ published following a conference in London in 2010:

In studies of the history of Egyptology, the discipline can often appear to have been created and developed in a hermetic compartment, separated cleanly from its surroundings and isolated in purely disciplinary space.

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<sup>41</sup> ‘... it is not any Academy, which is about to celebrate its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but the Berlin Academy, which justly bears the name “German”, considering what it has contributed to research and particularly for what it intends to contribute in future. ... As an Egyptologist I can only say that ... Egyptology, nowhere but in Germany and in Berlin, within the framework of the Academy, can be pursued as linguistic study, according to the principles of Adolf Erman and Kurt Sethe.’ (translation TLG); German original quoted by Gertzen 2015a: 116.

<sup>42</sup> See also Loktionov and Navratilova & Podhorný, this volume.

Text without context, it seems to require theorizing only in its own terms, amenable to explanation only through its internal dynamics irrespective of the complex relations between Egyptology and society.<sup>43</sup>

In the very same volume, William Carruthers (its editor) made a striking remark about the (binary) German approach to that particular problem:

This binary is manifest in a recent ... lengthy piece by Thomas Schneider<sup>44</sup> on the relationship between German Egyptologists and the Nazi regime.... Schneider details the biographies of these individual [Egyptologists] with a view to understanding the relationship between their scholarly work and the wider political discourse ... in Germany. What emerges from this discussion ..., is a recounting of the evidence for and against the links between two stable worlds: ... of German Egyptology ... and another of National Socialism. In this frame, the implication ... is that Egyptology is at heart a 'pure' discipline.<sup>45</sup>

This assessment is unfortunately apt and applies to many publications on the history of German Egyptology. Dealing with the interrelationship of politics and scholarship, there always seems to be a temptation to separate them and so distance research from ideology or *Zeitgeist*. This, of course does not work: society and the international scientific community must be incorporated in the analysis.

However, the allegedly-binary concept offers some orientation around two poles. It also illustrates the fact that German politics and German scholarship, in this case German Egyptology, are not identical and are not necessarily arranged in a top-down order.

To sum up the main results from this perforce rapid ride through the history of German or German-speaking Egyptology, I would propose the following theses:

1. German Egyptology is not identical with Egyptology within the state of Germany and even then, regional differentiation applies.
2. Egyptology was supported by the Prussian, later German state as a means of competing with other nations in the field of scholarship in order to acquire '*Kulturmacht*' and '*Weltgeltung*'.
3. German Egyptology was not directly involved in nor an instrument of German imperial politics, but ancient Egypt was (intellectually) nonetheless appropriated.
4. The increasingly 'national' concept of Egyptology after the First World War generated popular appeal, without too much ideological compromise and commitment as, e.g., for the *völkisch* movement.

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<sup>43</sup> Gange 2015: 64.

<sup>44</sup> Schneider 2013: 120–247.

<sup>45</sup> Carruthers 2015: 3–4.

5. The ‘binary’ concept of scholarship and politics as resources for each other, should always consider the wider framework of the *Zeitgeist* as well as the varied interdependencies within society; it also clearly illustrates, however, that the German state and scholarship are not identical.

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