

# Philhellenism and Orientalism in Germany

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## Introduction. The divergence of the disciplines

Most readers of *Lynchos* will probably know something about the history of classical scholarship, and, understandably, regard the period of post-1790 secularization and specialization as one of great progress. That it was, in many respects; the sharpening of text-critical skills and the driving out of wild speculations and politicized argumentation did indeed lay the foundations for the professionalization of classical scholarship, especially in the university-rich territory of German-speaking central (and especially northern) Europe. But a great part of this professionalizing process – and one under-reported in such classic accounts as Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's *History of classical scholarship* (1921) – also entailed the closing of some doors.<sup>1</sup> Most obviously being slammed shut were the passageways that once allowed scholars to wander between classics, theology, and the study of the ancient Near East; and as classics and classicists increasingly claimed one set of rooms in the house of ancient history for themselves, they compelled others, too, to adapt to new accommodations. That accommodation is by no means so well-known a story; in part this is the result of the way in which the history of nineteenth-century orientalist scholarship, too, fails to recognize not only the deep roots of the discipline but also its ongoing focus on the ancient world, and long-lasting classics-envy.<sup>2</sup> It is my contention that one gets a much richer and better picture of changes in the disciplinary landscape and the significance of the disciplinary divergences that began around 1790 by recognizing that *Orientalistik* was, like classics, a child of Christian humanism; it was, importantly, the sibling left to tend the cavernous old house when the classicists remodeled their rooms and locked the doors. By viewing the story of philological specialization from the perspective of this younger sibling – rather than that of the older brother – I hope to illuminate some of the institutional as well as intellectual consequences of the closing of the doors referred to above. At the conclusion of the essay I will discuss a certain sort of re-convergence of classics and *Orientalistik* at the end of the nineteenth century in the hopes of sparking further inquiry into the relationship between disciplines that once were sister sciences, and now, all too often, view one another as strangers.

As numerous works – new and old – have shown, there were vigorous debates in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries about the

origins of religion and the Bible's historical veracity and philosophical originality; arguments raged over who came first, Moses, Plato, or Hermes Trismegistus, as well as over New Testament variants.<sup>3</sup> Some of the most respected scholars were men who worked on both biblical and classical texts (or even, too, on some 'heathen' ones): examples here would include Joseph Scaliger, Isaac Casaubon, Richard Bentley, and C. G. Heyne. If we take Heyne – the youngest of these figures – as our example, we find a man who, like most other Christian humanists and professional philologists of his day, read both Greek and Hebrew, and moved easily between West and East.<sup>4</sup> Thinking more broadly of Heyne's era, one might recall Friedrich Schlegel's enormous enthusiasm both for the Greeks and for the ancient Indians, or Herder's extensive writings on Hebrew poetry; the learned world of Gibbon and the young Goethe found oriental pagans nearly as fascinating as Hellenic ones. Heyne well knew that in his day, most of those with refined philological skills found employment as pastors (as was the case for Herder) or (like himself) as professors in the theological faculty. No wonder that Heyne advised his student F. A. Wolf that matriculating as a classical philologist in the *philosophical* faculty would be to set out on "the straight road to starvation".<sup>5</sup> But Wolf, of course, did it anyway.

The story of Wolf's successful pioneering of this specialized path and Prussia's founding of the classical *Gymnasien* as gateways to the universities (and thereby, to jobs in the state bureaucracy and to status as a 'cultured citizen,' or *Bildungsbürger*) has been told many times, and need not be told again here.<sup>6</sup> What we need to be reminded of is that Wolf's great triumph in institutionalizing the secular study of the classics was accompanied by a narrowing of the field of 'scientific' inquiry; now respectable classicists were supposed to leave the New Testament and other religious questions to the theologians, and the study of the Near East to those who specialized in 'oriental' languages.

### The importance of the *Creuzer Streit*

What might happen to a classicist who continued to act as an eighteenth-century *érudit* was demonstrated by the experience of Friedrich Creuzer, whose wide-ranging, multi-volume *Symbolik* (1810–12, 1819) became the antithesis of Wolf's narrowly Greek-focused *Darstellung der Altertumswissenschaft* (1807).<sup>7</sup> Creuzer – a Greek philologist interested precisely in the subjects Wolf avoided, namely, Greece's debts to the East, religion, and sexuality – relied upon Hellenistic literature (and some translated oriental texts; he was already typical of the new age in knowing no oriental languages himself) to trace the origins of Greek ideas to eastern ancestors, a project that might have been popular a half-century earlier, but which flew in the face of the philhellenic norms and emerging scientific

standards of the early nineteenth century. As George Williamson argues, the words used by Goethe to praise one of Creuzer's opponents, Gottfried Hermann – "critical, Hellenic, and patriotic" – are telling: "critical, Hellenic, and patriotic" was precisely what Creuzer's work, in the eyes of the increasingly powerful, liberal Protestant classicists, was not.<sup>8</sup> Instead, critics argued, Creuzer's book gave succor to 'Romish' priests, conservative Christian mysticism, and dilettantes. Johann Voss, translator of the Homeric epics – as well as, in the 1780s, of the *1001 Nights*<sup>9</sup> – penned a two-volume *Anti-Symbolik* (1824–6) in which he called Creuzer "an agent of the Jesuits" and deplored his sinking of the ideal Greeks in the sexual swamp of the Orient.<sup>10</sup> In an 1821 letter to the Austrian diplomat and scholar Joseph von Hammer Purgstall, Creuzer described the vehemence of Voss's polemics, for him comparable to the condemnation of Bruno by the Inquisition:

You must read Voss's review of the *Symbolik* to learn how entirely misguided and crazy we are to believe that there were before and after Homer and in addition to this great hero other people in the world. Yes, we must be burnt, along with all others who think anything of the Orient, and of Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha and whatever else the liars are called. We are mystagogues and seducers of the young. In a word, we should renounce the devil and embrace Voss's *Mythologische Briefe* as the book of books.<sup>11</sup>

In the wake of the *Anti-Symbolik*, Creuzer's style of scholarship was dead, and the classicists, especially the newfangled specialists, carried the day. If we examine the next generation of German classicists, we find men of extraordinary learning such as Karl Otfried Müller and August Boeckh, but even so, men who largely ignored 'oriental' and biblical questions, and did not care for non-Attic or Hellenistic Greeks; J. G. Droysen was a great exception in this regard.<sup>12</sup> Classical philology became *the* model of scientificness, and the Germanies (and especially Prussia) became the place to study the subject. When the Altes Museum opened near the Royal Palace in Berlin in 1830, it was stocked chiefly with classical sculptures and plaster casts. Philosophers, artists, and Gymnasium teachers regularly reiterated their belief that Greek sculpture represented the ideal union of natural beauty and artistic excellence and epitomized ancient civilization as a whole.<sup>13</sup> It was that civilization – rational, natural, beautiful, manly, and free from any taint of religious superstition or aristocratic sumptuousness – that German liberals, in particular, longed to recreate on their own soil.

### **The difficulties of professionalizing *Orientalistik***

Having now very briefly traced the consequences of specialization and the rising influence of philhellenism on the history of classical scholarship

from about 1780 to the mid-nineteenth century, let us now do the same for classics' 'sister' discipline, *Orientalistik*. It is the case that as early as the 1750s, J. D. Michaelis (who specialized in Hebrew, but also read Arabic and Persian) had begun to treat the Old Testament essentially as an ordinary national history, and to separate theological concerns from the study of secular, oriental history and literature. Appointed to the theological faculty at the University of Göttingen, Michaelis did manage to move to the philosophical faculty – but he did not manage to extricate himself from theological debates, for his work, which fueled the fires of the 'higher criticism,' was quite clearly connected to a particular, denominational (that is, liberal Protestant) strain of thought.<sup>14</sup> Unlike in France, where, after the Revolution, *Orientalistik* was chiefly pursued by non-believers, in the Germanies, the field as a whole would never fully extricate itself from the religious questions that were so central to the major texts in Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, Persian and even Egyptian literature.<sup>15</sup>

This is not to say, of course, that German orientalism was apolitical; on the contrary, debates over the proper means to reconcile science and faith during the *Vormärz* and after were political debates, as were, too, more ominously, discussions about relations between 'Aryans' and Jews; and the latter subject was, incidentally, at mid-century, one that theologians and orientalists, not biologists, were thought competent to address. As the examples of young Hegelian theology professors D. F. Strauss, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Bruno Bauer suggest, warfare between theological schools, and between the theological faculties and the orthodox clergy, was bitter, rampant, and especially after Friedrich Wilhelm IV's ascension to the Prussian throne in 1840, often career-ending.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, it was far safer to stick to the classical world, and let the orientalists and biblical critics suffer the wrath of the clergy and conservatives as, indeed, in the case of the Semitist and champion of the 'higher criticism' Julius Wellhausen, they did.<sup>17</sup>

Secularization and depoliticization, then, proved difficult for orientalists. But there was another move in the Wolfian direction that was already rendered impossible by events in the later eighteenth century, and that was the specialization in one (or two) languages. Eighteenth-century orientalists typically learned Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic; some learned Persian as well. This was already enough for Michaelis to worry, in 1755 that "because of the machines that have been designated 'Professores Linguarum orientalium'. [*Orientalistik*] has become uninteresting in the eyes of all the lovers of the humanities".<sup>18</sup> But then William Jones showed Sanskrit to be not only readable but hugely significant, and Anquetil Duperron stumbled his way through Avestan; soon hieroglyphics too would be added. By no means did positions proliferate as quickly as did the canon of necessary oriental languages, and by the middle of the nineteenth century, the teaching of *Orientalistik* was less specialized than had been the case a

century earlier. Heinrich Ewald, professor at Göttingen and Tübingen from 1823 to 1867, for example, taught not only ancient Hebrew (his specialty), but also Arabic, Sanskrit, Persian, Coptic, Turkish, and Armenian. Heinrich Fleischer, a great linguist whose students were more famous than his publications, would serve as doctor-father for leading scholars in Old Testament criticism (Julius Wellhausen), Arabic literature (Theodor Nöldeke), Islamic Law (Ignaz Goldziher), Assyriology (Friedrich Delitzsch), Ethiopian linguistics (August Dillmann), Indology (Walter Roth) and Near Eastern history (Eduard Meyer).<sup>19</sup>

The orientalists who lived through the period certainly recognized that they were playing on an uneven field. Franz Bopp, for example, found it hard to stick to Sanskrit in the early 1810s, not only because teachers, readers, and texts were so rare, but also because the classicists, he claimed, believed the study of anything but Greek to be a sin against scholarly criticism.<sup>20</sup> Creuzer's friend Hammer Purgstall is justifiably famous for his work in Ottoman history – perhaps precisely because no one else was writing on the subject in early nineteenth-century Central Europe. We often forget how slowly academic cultures move – and the slow pace of acceptance of the hieroglyphic and cuneiform decipherments are a good case in point. Even the study of Sanskrit – so eloquently recommended by Friedrich Schlegel in 1808 – took a good 25 years to get off the ground, and even in the 1860s was considered, as Paul Deussen reflected, a “Luxusstudium” and “ein völlig brotlose Kunst” – after all, you could not get a job as a pastor or, crucially, as a Gymnasium instructor, by learning Sanskrit.<sup>21</sup> To choose to be an orientalist was to choose to be a non-classicist, and even – if one insisted on pursuing secular science, rather than biblical exegesis – to choose obscurity or iconoclasm. In the cultural ecosystem of mid-nineteenth-century Central Europe, to be an orientalist was to choose ‘otherness,’ not to reiterate Europeanness.

### **A lonely profession.**

#### **German orientalism in the mid-nineteenth century**

One had, however, to minimize one's otherness in order to be accepted by other academics, something orientalists typically did by embracing the philological and positivist approaches of their classicist brethren. Taking Wolf and B. G. Niebuhr as their models, and outlawing Creuzerian speculation, the orientalists of the mid-nineteenth century tended, at least in their publications (if not their lectures) to stick to specialized language study, and to avoid ‘big picture’ and origins questions that might have provoked criticism from classicists. Orientalists focused heavily on grammatical matters which seemed appropriate, in an era which saw the flooding of European libraries with hard-to-decipher new texts; it was an era in which, as Raymond Schwab once put it, “In hacking his way through

the underbrush, the pioneer had to stop at each step to reinvent the ax.”<sup>22</sup> Cutting away the grammatical underbrush also seemed the necessary prerequisite to the writing of scientific cultural and political histories of the Oriental world in its own terms – and the difficulties of applying the classical models to the Eastern texts were considerable. Orientalists were dogged by the problem of trying to fit Indian or Chinese texts into western chronologies, and by the desire to attribute individual authorship and intention to texts that had been continually, and usually anonymously, revised. Separating myth from history was extremely difficult, not just in the Old Testament but also in the Indian epics; dates for the life of the Buddha or the rise of Mazdaism varied wildly. Much pioneering work was done, the fruit of Herculean labor and remarkable erudition. I will offer just two examples, the first of which is Otto Böhtlingk’s *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch* (St. Petersburg, 1852–1875), which ran to 7 volumes and 9478 double column pages in large folio.<sup>23</sup> The other is Ferdinand von Richthofen’s massive atlas of China (*China*, 4 vols., Berlin, 1877–1883) the research for which he completed in the course of four years of rigorous travel, accompanied by only one European helper, and a few native servants charged with diffusing local antagonisms and preparing the indispensable *Eierkuchen*.<sup>24</sup>

It is worth underlining the point that mid-century German orientalism was almost exclusively concerned with the ancient, indeed, the ur-ancient world, and with its texts. While their French, English, and Dutch brethren were out conquering and administering, mapping and excavating the colonial world, the Germans took possession of the Orient’s past. Concentrating especially on the oldest texts in each field – the Vedas, pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, Old Testament Hebrew – German scholars earned a reputation for caring almost exclusively about *dead* Oriental languages; the Orientalists’ maxim was, as one later commentator remarked, “je älter, um so interessanter.”<sup>25</sup> This was one way to convert romanticism into positivism, and to again mimic classics; another was to treat religion – which simply couldn’t be driven out of oriental texts – as a purely cultural matter. This was the tactic taken by Herder, and adopted, for example, by Wolf’s student Leopold Zunz. Zunz, one of the founders of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, argued in 1845 that rabbinic texts should be treated as the cultural patrimony of the Jewish nation, not as religious texts.<sup>26</sup> Theodor Nöldeke, in his *History of the Koran*, published in 1860, took much the same approach, using the Muslims’ holy book to shed light on the history and mentality of the ancient Arabs. All of this distanced orientalist scholarship from the less respectable pursuits of journalism and pastoral care, and it also prevented orientalists from challenging philhellenic paradigms, which many of them, in fact, continued to share. Nöldeke, in fact, in a letter written late in his life, confessed that he had never really liked Semitic literature. There was too much religion in it, he

swore; all of it, from beginning to end, he claimed, could not rival the power of a single Greek play.<sup>27</sup>

Whether or not the early nineteenth century experienced, as Raymond Schwab once claimed, ‘an oriental Renaissance,’ the fact remained that throughout the nineteenth century, the German states were far less generous in supporting and employing orientalists than they were classicists; the orientalists’ journals were less well financed and numerous; and sources continued to be harder to find and use than sources used by *Altertums-wissenschaftler*. Most libraries had few texts orientalists needed, and dictionaries tended to be too expensive for students to buy. Oriental art, when exhibited at all, was usually housed in museums for decorative art or ethnographic artifacts. Some high profile patrons – such as Alexander von Humboldt and Christian Bunsen – came to the orientalists’ rescue by subsidizing a large number of their ventures. But jobs continued to be scarce; Otto Böhtlingk worked as a private scholar, while Julius Olshausen spent most of his career as a librarian and cultural ministry bureaucrat. The Indologist Paul Deussen, though completing his degree at roughly the same time as his classicist friend Friedrich Nietzsche, waited an additional 19 years to get a paying job. Thanks to his connections with the Prussian royal family, Richard Lepsius went to Egypt in the 1840s, but few others could afford to travel; Hermann Wamberger, alias Arminius Vambéry, financed his travels in the Ottoman Empire by disguising himself as a dervish.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, though training in classical languages remained a given for orientalists, classicists increasingly lost touch with the scholarly developments of their brother philologists, and were quite often open about their contempt for the study of the East, as compared to eternally beautiful, ever-relevant Hellas. As *Gymnasium* professor Wilhelm Herbst wrote in 1852:

The sensibility and fashions of the age do not run East;  
at most it is a place:  
‘Where the waves of the Hellespont  
Coursing through the Dardanelles  
Crash against rocky gates.’<sup>29</sup>

The era of high positivism was, then, a lonely one for orientalists, and one in which research was focused on subjects that did not challenge the prevailing Graecophile interpretations of history or aesthetic norms.

Gradually, however, the collecting, editing, translating and deciphering projects of the mid-century created the conditions for the emergence of a new and more self-confident field. Archaeological exploits contributed centrally, in the period after 1880, to the realization, on the part of both the public and the academy, that the Orient could not be ignored. The cuneiform Flood tablets, for example, discovered by George Smith in 1871, created a sensation, both among orientalists and in the popular

press. These were followed by the uncovering of the Tell-el-Amarna letters, discovered in 1886, which testified to the power of the Assyrians and Hittites as compared with the better known Egyptians; next came the temples of Babylon and Assur, excavations for which began in 1898 and 1902, respectively. After the turn of the century, these were joined by Minoan artifacts from Crete, and Buddhist wall paintings and scrolls from the deserts of Central Asia.<sup>30</sup> The voices of those who had only been heard through the heresiologies of the Church fathers or the ventriloquism of ancient Greek writers now spoke. Periods previously little studied – perhaps because sources had been thin – now came to the fore, one example being the study of *Spätjudentum*, a real hot spot for both *fin de siècle* Christian and Jewish scholars, the latter of whom were, by the way, now entering *Orientalistik* in large numbers and no longer as converts. Of course, just having new texts does not mean one must use them in specific or objective ways – or that the processes of their transit to Europe do not structure their reading. In fact, many of these new texts and artifacts came to German desks by way of indigenous conservative elites – like the Brahmins or the Chinese Mandarins – or were expropriated in one of numerous proto-colonial treasure trawls. But, at the *fin de siècle*, the conditions were right for a new kind of reckoning with the East, and the return of that terrible, unphilhellenic question: just how much did Greece owe to the Orient?

The conditions for the revival of the East included the increasing pressure for school reform and powerful sentiment even among the *Bildungsbürger* for doing away with the artificial and stultifying ‘cast-antiquity’ taught in the higher schools. Specialization also played an important role – by the 1890s it *was* possible simply to be an Egyptologist rather than a professor of all the oriental languages. By this time, too, there were large quantities of angry young under-employed scholars, seeking fame by discovering some completely novel topic – such as, for example, Coptic art, which is the subject on which Josef Strzygowski, who would go on to be Europe’s first professor of non-European art history, cut his sharp teeth.<sup>31</sup> And there were numerous dabblers in ‘esoteric’ fields such as parapsychology or Buddhism and new readers of Bachofen, Friedrich Creuzer, and especially Schopenhauer. Last but certainly not least, there were publishers eager to publish the scholarly and the not so scholarly products of this generation, which meant that even without a chair, one could still, like the Jewish Arabist Ignaz Goldziher or the clergyman-cum-Assyriologist Alfred Jeremias, have a voice. By 1905, the Indologist Leopold von Schroeder was able to claim that Buddha was taking the place of Socrates among the educated elite.<sup>32</sup> If this was still wishful thinking, Schroeder was at least pinpointing a major shift in German cultural politics. Orientalism was coming of age.<sup>33</sup>

### ***Orientalistik comes of age***

It is important to underline that one of the ways it was coming of age was by challenging its old rival, classics. This shift in the East/West cultural gradient was occurring in a number of ways. German businessmen seeking to exploit the Kaiser's 'friendship' with the Sultan began to travel and trade more extensively in the Ottoman Empire; archaeologists and museum bureaucrats found the prospects for finds richer in Babylon and Tell-el-Amarna than in Olympia and Mycenae. Now that orientalists could read numerous Sanskrit texts and study in person ancient Indian monuments, they became increasingly critical of the older Greek sources; entranced by newly accessible, or previously spurned sources, like the Mandaeen texts, cuneiform tablets, and Greek magical papyri, they denounced the work of their all-too-humanistic predecessors.<sup>34</sup> Capitalizing on the religious nature of most oriental texts – rather than cringing from it, as had their forefathers – orientalists now tried to address the spiritual crisis felt by many citizens of the Wilhelmine Empire using tools and texts from their field. Here classics, champion of the secular humanities, was no match for Indology, which increasingly emphasized its usefulness as a purer alternative to Christianity. Unlike Christian faith, Buddhism was not tainted, as many emphasized, with Judaism. Seen as more proximate to primitive art than to desiccated academic classicism, oriental design could inspire a younger generation of modern artists in a way now impossible for the Elgin marbles (though the Hellenistic Pergamon Altar was much more readily absorbed). Scholars of oriental art, for example, began to emphasize the superior modernity of Islamic design – adaptable for train-station ironworks, for example – over outmoded Greek styles; connoisseurs of Egyptian, Islamic and Indian art began to explain the differences in eastern forms not as failures, but as the product of different intentions and worldviews.<sup>35</sup>

For some admirers of the East, however, progress was not swift or thorough-going enough, and indeed, though orientalists did gain many new academic positions, new public visibility, and some new state patronage, German Graecophilia persisted. Fault for these continuing prejudices, critics argued, should be laid at the doors not only of the philistines, but also of haughty, stubborn, and ill-informed classicists. In that most popular of pseudo-histories, *The foundations of the nineteenth century*, completed in 1899, Houston Stewart Chamberlain complained that classicists were still ignoring facts established by decades of orientalist scholarship:

That Indian thought has exercised an influence of quite a determinative character upon Greek philosophy is now a settled fact; our Hellenists and philosophers have, it is true, long combated this with the violent obstinacy of prejudiced scholars; everything was supposed to

have originated in Hellas as *autochthon*; at most the Egyptians and Semites were allowed to have exercised a moulding influence – whereby philosophy would in truth have had little to gain; the more modern Indologists, however, have confirmed the conjectures of the oldest (particularly of that genius Sir William Jones).<sup>36</sup>

The other, related reason for Europeans' ignorance, he claimed, was the outdated and narrow-minded school curriculum:

That to-day, for example, – when so much that is great and important claims our whole attention, when we have piled up endless treasures of thought, of poetry and above all of knowledge, of which the wisest Greeks had not the faintest idea and to a share of which every child should have a prescriptive right – that to-day we are still compelled to spend valuable time learning every detail of the wretched history of the Greeks, to stuff our poor brains with endless registers of names of vainglorious heroes in *ades, atos, enes, eiton*, &c., and, if possible, wax enthusiastic over the political fate of these cruel, short-sighted democracies, blinded with self-love, and based upon slavery and idleness, is indeed a hard destiny, the blame for which, however, if we do but reflect, lies not with the Greeks but with our own shortsightedness.<sup>37</sup>

By quoting Chamberlain at such length, here, I certainly do not mean to suggest that his views were identical with those of all professional orientalists – though I think many more of them shared his anti-classical frustrations than conventional histories of scholarship ever acknowledge. The footnotes to the *Foundations*, indeed, show that Chamberlain has read the work of virtually every important German orientalist of his era, as well as that of major French and English scholars, such as Ernest Renan, William Robertson Smith, Gaston Maspero and Edwin Hatch. The point, however, is that this generation felt much more emboldened, not only in arguing for equal or greater achievements of eastern cultures to those of the Greeks, but even in *blaming* the classical establishment for thwarting public access to new knowledge.

It can be argued, I think, that this generation as a whole saw itself as engaged in an aggressive new search for truth, one which might require defiance of academic expectations and bourgeois norms. New truths, it seems, might even require massive changes in the Reich's institutions. In 1907, Ferdinand Bork (Assyriologist and longtime coeditor of the important orientalist newsletter, the *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*) attacked the *Gymnasien*'s persistent treatment of non-classical history as inessential and the training of all ancient historians as classicists:

In the realm of humanistic scholarship, what counts as ancient history has always been classical history. From this standpoint, Egyptian, Assyrian-Babylonian, Iranian history and the like are *adiaphora*. This narrow-minded view, which could have been contradicted in the strongest terms more than 50 years ago, is however still the prevailing

one. [...] Without exaggerating, I can say that all [ancient historians trained in classical philology] from [Alfred von] Gutschmid to Eduard Meyer have demonstrated themselves incapable of evaluating the unique role of ancient oriental cultures. Their understanding of global connections is destroyed by their preference for Greekdom. If this concerned them alone, one could contently leave them to their fate, but there are other consequences. We cannot tolerate the raising of one generation after another on ideas which have been superceded. We must wrench the classical philologists out of the area which they still today, wrongfully, dominate: ancient history.<sup>38</sup>

To cure this situation, Bork argued, in future ancient historians should have to learn an oriental language – his preference was of course for cuneiform.

What is interesting, here, is that the institutionalization of oriental *Bildung* did not, of course, happen, despite the efforts of racist Indologists, as well as the Assyriologists, to replace the classicists. The reasons for this were multiple, and include racial prejudice, as well as the fragmentation of the orientalist lobby. But it is perhaps worth noting that this second oriental Renaissance did result in an intense, if brief, revitalization of historicist theology, both Christian and Jewish. It is striking to me how many classicists of the first two decades of the twentieth century turned their attention to the New Testament and the Church fathers (including Eduard Schwartz, Eduard Norden, and Adolf Deissmann);<sup>39</sup> this was, I believe, one way in which to absorb the impact of the second oriental Renaissance without entirely abandoning the study of things Greek. Orientalists, as I argued above, had never entirely left the Bible aside; but it is striking how many scholars of the post-liberal generation – from Friedrich Delitzsch to Heinrich Zimmern, from Richard Wilhelm to Gershom Scholem – unapologetically devoted themselves to the study of religious texts. A whole generation of theologians, Martin Buber, Rudolf Otto, Hermann Gunkel, Ernst Troeltsch, Wilhelm Bousset, Hans Lietzmann, made it their special task to apply the new orientalist scholarship to the fuller understanding of the history and phenomenology of religion – though few of them, strikingly, actually went so far as to learn oriental languages other than Hebrew – and an extraordinary number of classicists took up the study of Greek mystery religions – a subject that had been virtually taboo for nearly a century.<sup>40</sup>

At the *fin de siècle*, the Creuzerian questions returned with a vengeance, and the Orient could not be avoided. And as its texts crowded around and in some cases shouldered past the Old Testament, as the Hellenistic world gradually enveloped and reduced to banality the lives of Jesus and the apostles, the new philologies further undermined the old promise of Christian humanism to clean up the Bible and secure its authority. But the 1920s cut short this reconvergence of the disciplines, for the theologians, to save

Christian belief, were forced to go another way, while those who had learned to see ‘oriental’ cultures from the inside at last recognized fully the Eurocentric prejudices to which even the most scientific Christian humanism gave rise.<sup>41</sup>

### **Conclusion. How the disciplinary dimorphism of the nineteenth century reshaped the humanities**

Let me conclude with a brief discussion of cultural barriers, and of the German philological tradition as a whole. There was perhaps nowhere in Europe where crossing the *linguistic* Aryan/Semitic divide was more common – at least in one direction, that is, from those who knew Hebrew (including Jewish-born scholars, orientalists and Protestant theologians) to Greek. The traffic was, however, after about 1800, lamentably light in the other direction, that is, from Greek and Latin to oriental languages. There are two simple reasons for this: classicists no longer had to interpret the Old Testament, nor thought it was necessary to discuss ‘oriental’ origins; orientalists, on the other hand, still needed to know western languages in order to be scientific. The ways in which Europeans became orientalists, too, were very much shaped by standards and practices first developed by classicists, and always rather difficult to apply to the cultures and texts of the East. This disciplinary dimorphism has shaped our scholarship – modern and ancient – in subtle and not-so-subtle ways, and even in an age in which world history courses are replacing those dedicated to ‘western civ’, it would be useful for us to reflect on the many legacies left us by the nineteenth century’s partitioning of the house of Christian humanism.

### **Summary**

*Philhellenism and Orientalism in Germany.* By Suzanne Marchand. This essay describes the ways in which classical and oriental philology diverged in their interests and in their practice during the nineteenth century. It focuses on German scholars, who were the pacesetters of these fields after about 1830. Telling the story from the perspective of the ‘orientalists,’ the article shows how difficult it was for these scholars – whose work regularly involved the learning of multiple languages and the study of difficult to date religious texts – to imitate the classicists’ successful secession from the theology faculty. Moreover, the orientalists were unable to make their studies central to German cultural life as a whole. Only at the end of the nineteenth century, as archaeological expeditions and imperialist politics pushed the Orient into the limelight, did *Orientalistik* really manage to obtain significant state patronage and attract the interest of the non-scholarly public. Even so, many orientalists remained bitter about their long

subordination to classics, and about the classicists' unwillingness to engage in conversations with them about religious and cultural origins and about the wider history of the ancient Near East. The disciplinary dimorphism that marked the history of the two philologies – both descendant from early-modern Christian humanism – in the German-speaking world is an important one for both classicists and orientalists to understand as we move into an era marked by the pursuit of a more inclusive, global form of the humanities.

## Notes

1. See for example Mayotte Bollack et al. (eds.), *Philologie und Hermeneutik im 19. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2 (Göttingen, 1983); Christopher Stray: *Classics transformed. Schools, universities and society in England, 1830–1960* (New York, 1998); William M. Calder III et al. (eds.): *Men in their books. Studies in the history of classical scholarship*, vols. 1 and 2 (Hildesheim, 1998 and 2010); Wilfried Nippel (ed.): *Über das Studium der Alten Geschichte* (Munich, 1993); Karl Christ: *Hellas. Griechische Geschichte und Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft* (Munich, 1999). This is also true in the history of archaeology. See, for example, Stephen L. Dyson: *In pursuit of ancient pasts. A history of classical archaeology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (New Haven, Conn., 2006).

2. This is one of the chief deficits, in my view, of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (New York, 1978), and of the many studies shaped by his approach to the subject. For a more extensive critique of Said and of the existing literature on orientalism, see Suzanne Marchand: *German Orientalism in the age of empire. Religion, race and scholarship* (New York, 2009), xvii–xxix.

3. See, for example, Paoli Rossi: *The dark abyss of time. The history of the earth and the history of nations from Hooke to Vico* (Chicago, 1984); and Frances Yates: *Giordano Bruno and the hermetic tradition* (Chicago, 1970). Giovanna Ceserani describes arguments on such subjects in early modern Italy in her recent *Italy's lost Greece. Magna Graecia and the making of modern archaeology* (Oxford, 2012), 48–59.

4. On Heyne, Michael C. Legaspi: *The death of scripture and the rise of biblical studies* (Oxford, 2011), especially 55–84.

5. Wolf quoted in John Edwin Sandys: *A history of classical scholarship* (New York, 1964), vol. 3, 52.

6. See Anthony La Vopa: "Specialists against specialization. Hellenism as professional ideology in German classical studies" in Geoffrey Cocks & Konrad Jarausch (eds.): *German professions, 1800–1950*, (New York, 1990), 27–45; and Suzanne Marchand: *Down from Olympus. Philhellenism and archaeology in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton, 1996), 3–35.

7. As Alfred Körte explained in 1915, after 1820, the scathing critiques of Creuzer's *Symbolik* had snuffed out this sort of research almost to the present day: "the chilling hail shower of pitiless criticism and insipid rationalism destroyed not only the mischievous frauds and the extravagant fake-flowers of Neoplatonic and romantic speculation, but also many green stalks, that would have born good fruit". Lobeck's derogatory view of the mysteries made them insignificant and absurd; "Small wonder, that for a long time no one who cared about his scholarly reputation would have anything to do with the Eleusinian mysteries". Körte: "Zu den eleusinischen Mysterien", in *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 18 (1915), 116–117. Walter Burkert says that Lobeck's *Aglaophamus* "reduced the speculations about Mysteries and Orphism to tangible but undeniably banal realities." Burkert: *Greek religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), 1.

8. George Williamson: *The longing for myth in Germany* (Chicago, 2004), 137.

9. Remarkably, Voss himself rarely mentioned this translation (from the French) later in life, preferring to simply be known in connection with his translation of the *Odyssey*. See Ernst-Peter Wieckenberg: *Jo-*

hann Heinrich Voss und 'Tausend und eine Nacht' (Würzburg, 2002).

10. For an extract (in German) of Voss's comments, see Ernst Howald: *Der Kampf um Creuzers Symbolik. Eine Auswahl von Dokumenten* (Tübingen, 1926), 39–41.

11. Creuzer to Hammer Purgstall, 3 December 1821, in Joseph Freiherr von Hammer Purgstall: *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben, 1774–1852* (Vienna, 1940), 543.

12. See Marchand: *German Orientalism*, 72.

13. See Esther Sophia Sünderhauf: *Griechensehnsucht und Kulturkritik. Die Deutsche Rezeption von Winckelmanns Antikenideal 1840–1945* (Berlin, 2004).

14. On Michaelis, see Jonathan Sheehan: *The Enlightenment Bible. Translation, scholarship, culture* (Princeton, 2005), 184–217; and Michael Carhart: *The science of culture in Enlightenment Germany* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008), 29–68.

15. This is one of the major arguments of Marchand: *German Orientalism*, especially 249–332.

16. See John Toews: *Hegelianism. The path toward dialectical humanism, 1805–1841* (Cambridge, 1980), 268ff; Williamson: *Longing for myth*, 158–165.

17. Julius Wellhausen's Old Testament criticism of the 1870s was sharply attacked by the orthodox clergy; in 1882, he resigned his full professorship in the theological faculty at the University of Greifswald to accept a lower-rank job in the philosophical faculty at the University of Halle. There are many other examples, too, such as that of C. M. L. de Wette, who lost his job in the wake of August von Kotzebue's assassination in 1819; Heinrich Ewald was fired by the University of Göttingen twice, once for refusing to sign an oath to the King of Hanover in 1837, and once for refusing to swear allegiance to Prussia, in 1868. Justus Olshausen was fired by the University of Kiel in the wake of the 1848 revolutions. On these figures, see Marchand: *German Orientalism*, 48–9, 76, 97, 106–108, 85–6.

18. J. D. Michaelis quoted in Ignaz Goldziher: *Renan als Orientalist*, trans. Peter Zalan (Zürich, 2000), 33.

19. Marchand: *German Orientalism*, 83.

20. Bopp's letter to his mentor Windischmann quoted in Ernst Windisch: *Geschichte der Sanskrit-Philologie und indisch-*

*en Altertumskunde*, pt. 1 (Strassburg, 1917), 68.

21. Paul Deussen: *Mein Leben*, Erika Rosenthal-Deussen (ed.) (Leipzig, 1933), 87, "brotlose Kunst", 88.

22. Raymond Schwab: *The Oriental Renaissance. Europe's discovery of India and the East, 1680–1880*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York, 1984 [French original published in 1950]), 90.

23. On Böhlingk, see Ernst Windisch: *Geschichte der Sanskrit-Philologie und indischen Altertumskunde*, pt. 2 (Berlin and Leipzig, 1920), 238–245.

24. On Richthofen, see Jürgen Osterhammel: "Forschungsreise und Kolonialprogramm. Ferdinand von Richthofen und die Erschließung Chinas im. 19. Jahrhundert" in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 69: 1 (1987), 150–195.

25. Eugen Wirth: "Orientalistik und Orientforschung. Aufgaben und Probleme aus der Sicht der Nachbarwissenschaften" in Wolfgang Voigt (ed.): *XIX Deutscher Orientalistentag* (28 September bis 4 Oktober 1975). *Vorträge, Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, supp. III, 1, Wiesbaden, 1977), 57.

26. Jonathan Sheehan: *The Enlightenment Bible*, 239.

27. Nöldeke to Becker, 5 August 1913: Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Berlin, Nachlass C. H. Becker, Mappe 3138.

28. Marchand: *German Orientalism*, 89, 147–153.

29. Wilhelm Herbst: *Das Classische Altertum in der Gegenwart. Eine geschichtliche Betrachtung* (Leipzig, 1852), 134–135. My translation.

30. On the excavations of Arthur Evans and their cultural contexts, see Cathy Gere: *Knossos and the prophets of modernism* (Chicago, 2009); on the Central Asian expeditions, see Peter Hopkirk: *Foreign devils on the silk road. The search for the lost treasures of Central Asia* (London, 1981); and Marchand: *German Orientalism*, 410–15.

31. Suzanne Marchand: "The rhetoric of artifacts and the decline of classical humanism. The case of Josef Strzygowski" in *History and theory*, Beiheft 33 (1994): 106–130.

32. Leopold von Schröder: "Buddha und unsere Zeit" (1905) in Idem: *Reden und Aufsätze, vornehmlich über Indiens Literatur und Kultur* (Leipzig, 1913), 216–217.

33. See Suzanne Marchand: “From liberalism to neoromanticism. Albrecht Dieterich, Richard Reitzenstein and the religious turn in fin-de-siècle German classical studies” in Martin Ruehl & Ingo Gildenhard (eds.): *Out of Arcadia. Classics and politics in the age of Burckhardt, Nietzsche, and Wilamowitz*, *British institute of classical studies supplement* 79 (2003), 129–160.

34. See here Suzanne Marchand: “Philhellenism and the Furor Orientalis” in *Modern intellectual history* 1:3 (2004), 331–358.

35. See Marchand: *German Orientalism*, 393–410.

36. Houston Stewart Chamberlain: *The foundations of the nineteenth century*, vol. 1, trans. John Lees, introd. by Lord Redesdale (New York, 1912 [1899]), 47.

37. Chamberlain: *Foundations* 1, 60–61.

38. Ferdinand Bork: “Die Weltgeschichte

in der Schule,” in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 10:1 (1907), 5–6, quotation, 6. My translation.

39. To give some relevant publications: Eduard Norden: *Agnostos theos. Untersuchungen zur formengeschichte religiöser Reden* (Leipzig, 1913); Eduard Schwartz: *Kaiser Constantine und die christliche Kirche. Fünf Vorträge* (Leipzig, 1913); Adolf Deissmann: *Licht von Osten. Das neue Testament und die neu entdeckten Texten der hellenistisch-römischen Welt* (Leipzig, 1907).

40. See Marchand: “From Liberalism to Neoromanticism”, 129–60.

41. The classic statement of this conviction in English was that of George Foot Moore, in, for example, his *Judaism in the first centuries of the christian era* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), but also in essays written earlier in the postwar era.