
Yale and the Study of Near Eastern Languages in America, 1770-1930*

Benjamin R. Foster

“The very peculiarity of our national destiny, in a moral point of view, calls upon us not only not to be behind, but to be even foremost, in intimate acquaintance with oriental languages and institutions. The countries of the West, including our own, have been largely indebted to the East for their various culture; the time has come when this debt should be repaid.”

-Edward Salisbury, 1848

Introduction

As the reverend Johann Christoph Kunze journeyed from Halle to Philadelphia in 1770, he noted with distaste that his shipmates were no representatives of the best educational traditions of his land. Yet the sturdy farmers who accompanied him were to fare better professionally, as a group, than the learned Kunze, for events were to prove that no American college had then a place or resources for a German scholar of Hebrew. Scarcely more than a century later, two American universities, one of them in Philadelphia, were proud to recruit two Leipziger Assyriologists to their nascent Semitic departments. What had occurred in the meantime?

The history of American scholarship in biblical, Semitic, and Near Eastern languages may be divided into eight main

Benjamin R. Foster, Professor of Assyriology
Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations
Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

phases: (1) the Colonial period, in which biblical scholarship was honored in New England along the lines set by Cambridge, Oxford, and Scottish universities; (2) the early Republic (1780-1815), in which biblical languages declined in the colleges and remained vital only in the lonely studies of a few polymaths; (3) the revival of Hebrew and the beginning of a broader Oriental studies (1815-1860), characterized by (a) German-style professionalization of biblical philology in divinity education under Moses Stuart (1760-1852), Edward Robinson (1794-1863) and others, and (b) creation of secular oriental studies in America by Edward Salisbury (1814-1901); (4) an interim period, in which Indo-European philology dominated oriental studies and Semitic languages were a minor aspect of divinity school education (1860-1880); (5) incorporation of reinvigorated Semitic studies as a graduate subject in new American university curricula, especially by Germans or by Americans trained in German philological methods, with increasingly important Jewish participation (1880-1930); (6) beginning at the end of the nineteenth century, American eagerness to develop archaeological programs in the Near East and to found American research institutes there; (7) a new American professionalism enriched by immigration and absorption of German and German-trained scholars (1930-1960), even though American orientalist scholarship had declared independence from German models after 1914; and (8) substantial growth of interest in “area studies” and contemporary languages and civilizations of the Near East, partly as a consequence of World War II and America’s new strategic position in the post-war world, though some modest initiatives had been started as early as 1902. This last departed from traditional emphasis on philology and interpretation of classical texts, giving preference to spoken forms of Near Eastern languages, and in some cases came to value

anthropological, socio-political, or economic “expertise” over linguistic competence.

This essay will give a rapid survey of (1) to (5) above, focusing on Yale University, and will illustrate (6) by telling the story of Yale’s efforts to launch an archaeological expedition to the Near East in the 1920s and Yale’s role in the creation of American institutes in the Near East. Space does not permit discussion of (7) and (8) here.

(1) The Colonial Period

Kunze settled in Philadelphia as a Lutheran minister and founded a German secondary school (Seminarium) along the educational lines familiar to him at Halle. This school enjoyed some success until the British occupation of Philadelphia in 1777 and was afterwards revived as a German language institute within the new “university” of Pennsylvania, with Kunze in charge (1780). Hebrew was appended to Kunze’s teaching responsibilities, as he knew the language well and envisioned his institute becoming a training center for the Lutheran ministry. However, few students signed up for either Hebrew or German and the institute was eventually suppressed with the creation of Franklin College in Lancaster (1787), a new foundation intended to serve the German-speaking population of Pennsylvania.

In the meantime, a better opportunity seemed to present itself with Kunze’s call to a pastorate in New York City (1784). Columbia College took advantage of his presence to offer Kunze an unsalaried professorship of oriental languages (1784-1787). Kunze was at first elated by the prospects and ordered a supply of oriental books from Europe. He planned courses in Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, even Arabic, and sought outlets for publishing his own Hebrew grammar. However, no students presented themselves for any of these subjects. The

trifling salary finally attached to the position (1792-1799) was terminated by the state legislature as an economy measure, so Columbia's first program came to an end.¹

Yet Kunze fared better than a compatriot, the reverend J. G. Kals, who also opened a German school in Philadelphia prior to the Revolution. Seeing an opportunity in the absence of Hebrew type fonts in America, Kals thought to make his fortune by importing a supply of Hebrew grammars (of his own authorship) and Hebrew dictionaries to Philadelphia, where he must have thought he could corner the market among aspiring ministers. To his astonishment and grief, he learned that a knowledge of Hebrew was not required for ordination in any American church, even among the German Lutherans. His school did not succeed nor did his books sell. So dire did his straits become that the very ministers whose ignorance he berated took up a collection to save him from starvation. The ungracious Kals could think of no warmer thanks than to call himself Elijah fed by the ravens. If, as an old anti-clerical English joke went, Hebrew roots grew best in barren soil, colonial America was beyond barren.²

Nor were Kunze and Kals the first Germans to be so disappointed in scholarly opportunities in the New World. Christian Ravis, author of a widely-used Hebrew grammar published in both Germany and London, apparently sounded out President Dunster of Harvard about 1649 concerning the possibilities of a chair in Hebrew there, but Dunster responded, without giving reasons, in what must be America's first rejection letter for a teaching position in oriental studies, "Wee professe ourselves unable to answer the Tender of your good will and propensity of spirit towards us ..."³

These German scholars need not be dismissed as absurd dreamers, even if their careers set a pattern for students of oriental languages not blessed with independent means. Hebrew

and Aramaic, even Arabic, had been well established in the English universities, particularly in the seventeenth century, although few outside of aspiring ministers probably studied these languages. Perhaps twenty or more of the earliest settlers of Massachusetts Bay were graduates of English universities and brought with them a belief in the importance of understanding the original languages of the Bible. The English Pilgrims and Puritans alike made significant use of the Old, as well as the New Testament in their theology and discourse and tended to read it as if it was composed to be a guide for their living.⁴ So it was that in the earliest Harvard curriculum, when presidents such as Chauncy and Dunster were Hebraists, a full day a week for three years was devoted to Hebrew and Aramaic, and various Harvard dissertations prattled on trivial points of Hebrew grammar, or on such topics as the antiquity of the vowel points.⁵ In the mid-eighteenth century, a converted Jew, Juda Monis, was employed to teach Hebrew and he printed a small grammar that included Hebrew translations of Christian texts such as the Lord's Prayer and the Apostolic Creed.⁶ The first professorship endowed in the New World by an American was the Hancock Professorship at Harvard, the incumbent of which was supposed to teach Hebrew and other oriental languages (1764).⁷ It would be easy to imagine from this a learned congregation and ministry.

In fact, for most students Hebrew was a vexatious requirement. An early Harvard tutor, Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705), had already poured out in his diary his grief at his students' outright refusal to proceed.⁸ A Yale student of the Class of 1788 recalled, "We learned the alphabet, and worried through two or three Psalms, after a fashion; with the most of us it was mere pretense ..."⁹ The rugged realities of agricultural and commercial life left little room for acquisition of Hebrew.

The English Bible was good enough for most people and even Hebraists did not see a need to correct the 1611 translation, but rather to understand difficult passages better through recourse to the original. Ministers saw no need for Hebrew, as their positions depended rather upon doctrinal correctness and preaching skills. Nor did further stimulation come from England, as few rose up to replace the great antiquaries of the seventeenth century. If the earliest American oriental scholarship, like its Protestantism, owed much to England and Holland (the Pocockes, Schultens, Erpenius), by the end of the eighteenth century these names had been replaced by Germans, such as Eichhorn, Buxtorf, Michaelis, and Mosheim. English prelates seemed to devote most of their energies to sermons, pamphlets, and vindication of their ecclesiastical rights. The slender grammars of Hebrew then in use among Christian ministers purveyed much misinformation and a false sense that the language was simple, primitive, and easy to read. The students of Stanley Willard, professor of Hebrew at Harvard (1807-1831), for example, learned, by his own admission, very little, and sometimes felt aggrieved if asked to identify which English words corresponded to which Hebrew ones in their facile Jacobean translations.¹⁰

2) The Early Republic

There were a few scholars in the early American republic who studied Hebrew, Aramaic, and even Arabic. For men like Ezra Stiles (1727-1795), president of Yale (1777-1795), or William Bentley (1759-1810), a Unitarian minister, this activity was a personal quest and recreation. Stiles learned Hebrew well from educated Jewish teachers and found himself drawn down the same exotic mystical paths where earlier European Hebraists, such as Pietro della Valle and Johannes Reuchlin, had gone

before him. He also was capable of translating a simple Arabic prose text into English, with an earlier English translation to hand.¹¹ William Bentley was reputed a great linguist, but little of this emerges in his voluminous diaries; he was consulted when no one in Washington could read the credentials of the ambassador from Tunis.¹² Oriental scholarship had no place in education or public life, even the tractate or the pulpit, nor did America's first "Near Eastern crisis" with the Tripolitan states (1786-1805) stimulate Arabic language study.¹³

This was all to change in a few decades, largely through the zeal of a Connecticut minister, Moses Stuart. His destiny was the stranger for summoning him to the cause of German scholarship from perhaps the last place one might have sought it in New England, a conservative divinity school. Fate decreed likewise that the first place German scholarship had begun to be noticed, Harvard College, brought forward no orientalist of note, despite its head start.

Indeed, a circle of able, serious-minded, ambitious young men from Harvard and vicinity brought the first significant experience of German academic life to America. Whereas the Boston preacher Joseph Buckminster (1784-1812) puzzled over his copy of the German biblical scholar Johann Eichhorn's *Einleitung* (Introduction to the Old Testament) in his Cambridge home, George Ticknor (1791-1871), Edward Everett (1794-1865), Joseph Cogswell (1786-1871), and George Bancroft (1800-1891) went to Germany, learned the language, and studied hard at Göttingen and Berlin. Ticknor and Everett, as pioneers, were given a send-off no American graduate student after them could enjoy: letters of introduction from Madison and Jefferson to many notables of Europe. They dazzled European high society with their looks and brains of Apollo, their purses of Croesus, and their absolute certainty that the future of the world lay with the United

States, the over-all superiority of which was to them a bedrock fact of existence. Oxford seemed too much like Harvard to be worth lingering in and required subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican church to receive a degree, so they went to Germany in the afterglow of Madame de Stael's fulsome praise for German universities (1814).¹⁴

In fact, these Harvard men may not have absorbed much from their German experience save better language training than was available in America. Ticknor became the founder of modern language studies in America and her premier connoisseur of contemporary European culture, as well as her first "author prince" (using the phrase of Van Wyck Brooks, see note 14) of the type exemplified later by the historians William H. Prescott (1796-1859), John L. Motley (1814-1877), Francis Parkman (1823-1893), and Henry C. Lea (1825-1909) - wealthy independent scholars and self-proclaimed leaders of a new literate American aristocracy. Cogswell became a librarian at the New York Public Library and bibliophile. Everett taught Greek mythology at Harvard, but then turned to a career in diplomacy and politics, culminating in a short-lived presidency at Harvard. Bancroft, who went to Germany with the intention of studying Oriental languages and learned some Hebrew and Syriac, went on to become a historian of the United States.

None of these talents had any appreciable effect on American biblical and oriental scholarship, despite the luminous example of Buckminster, who died young. Moreover, Boston theology tended to concentrate on the New Testament, seeking pristine Christianity, reason, and beauty, the humanity of Jesus. In such a milieu, the Old Testament could seem like an imperfect forerunner, even a work of old Puritan or Jewish literature to be left aside in favor of more progressive source material and individual reason. Despite the

new opportunity of contacts with Germany, Hebrew did not flourish in the new “era of good feeling” at Harvard, and cognate tongues vanished from thought.¹⁵ Yale was unscathed by what was happening in Cambridge but had never cultivated Hebrew much beyond a short-lived freshman summer requirement during the presidency of Ezra Stiles.

(3a) Hebrew and German Philology

To the majority of New England conservative ministers and theologians outside the Boston area, the liberal doctrines preached there were anathema: denial of the Trinity, of predestination, of the inherent depravity of the human race, in short, of fundamental tenets of New England orthodoxy. On the one hand, the orthodox saw some of the country’s best educated men were forsaking the faith of their fathers for what they considered pernicious doctrines. On the other, education of the clergy, as Kals had already found, was in a parlous state, owing to Congregationalism and the secularization of the college curricula. Aspiring New England ministers, such as Moses Stuart, learned their trade by reading church history and theology with an established minister, normally after a college course. In this way they learned the practicalities of pastoral life and in many cases chose a wife from among the senior pastor’s daughters. All this meant strong personal ties and pronounced regionalism, but often scant booklearning.¹⁶

With the election of a prominent Unitarian to the Hollis professorship of divinity at Harvard in 1805, conservatives felt that urgent measures were needed to save orthodoxy. The colleges had forsaken their original mission in favor of general education and ministerial apprenticeships were impractical. The solution was to found new academies to train Protestant ministers, so in the early nineteenth century divinity schools sprang up across the landscape: Andover (1808), Princeton

(1812), Harvard (1815), Bangor (1816), Auburn (1818), General (1819), Yale (1822). In this movement American oriental studies were reborn.

Andover's mission was to give ministers a good education and to safeguard New England orthodoxy.¹⁷ Article VI of its Constitution and Statutes (1807) provided for instruction in Hebrew, the Septuagint, the use of ancient manuscripts and versions, the canons of biblical criticism, and the authenticity of the several books of the Bible. Article XXIV provided, "Each student, once at least in every year, shall ... be examined in the original languages of the Old and New Testament ..." Implementing such a program was a major challenge. First was faculty - few people could pass such a test even among the faculty of the colleges. Second was books: Hebrew and Greek Bibles, grammars, and dictionaries were difficult to obtain in America, and usually passed down from student to student. Third was the approach to Hebrew itself, which had by and large consisted of pedantic re-creation of the King James Bible from an unpointed Hebrew text.

The Andover trustees offered the chair in Hebrew to Eliphalet Pearson (1752-1826), who had held the Hancock Professorship of oriental languages at Harvard (1786-1806) but who seldom seems to have taught more than a smattering of Hebrew there.¹⁸ He soon resigned the Andover post and the trustees offered it to Moses Stuart (1780-1852), then a well-known preacher in New Haven.¹⁹ Stuart barely knew the Hebrew alphabet and so candidly advised the trustees, but the then-current American practice — to appoint the man to the academic post, expecting him to learn its subject matter — paid off handsomely. Moses Stuart was a genius as a teacher and Hebrew became the most popular subject in the Andover curriculum. He first used Pearson's grammar, then dictated his own grammar to his classes, soon printed it at Andover,

importing and setting up the Hebrew type himself (*A Hebrew Grammar without the Points* [1813]).

But in the same year the German philologist Wilhelm Gesenius (1786-1842) published at Halle his *Hebraische Grammatik*, followed in 1817 by his *Historisch-kritische Lehrgebäude der hebraischen Sprache*. Gesenius's work was such an advance over older Hebrew grammars that later generations considered his publications the beginning of professional Semitic studies in Germany.²⁰ Gesenius's works were to enjoy, indirectly, the same status in the United States. This was because Stuart immediately saw their superiority to his own work and arranged for them to be translated, revised, and printed in Andover. In 1821, therefore, Stuart published an enlarged Hebrew grammar, the first of its kind in America, *Hebrew Grammar with a Copious Syntax and Praxis*. This was a great success and ran through several editions. The fourth edition was reprinted in England by Edward Pusey, biblical scholar at Oxford, who managed to avoid any reference to its American origin in the process. When the Yale orientalist Edward Salisbury called at Cambridge in 1836, he was gratified to find an American textbook of Hebrew in use in one of the old English universities that had once exported Hebrew to Massachusetts Bay.²¹

Stuart turned his attention to German biblical scholarship with well. All factions of New England orthodoxy had regarded Germany with the greatest suspicion as the land of "cloudy metaphysics and learned atheism."²² Although Stuart had emerged as a champion of Trinitarianism, his dissemination of German scholarship in his classes and publications caused alarm in conservative circles, to the extent that a public prayer meeting was once held at Andover for the souls of his pupils. Yet he persevered and by his retirement had taught Gesenius's Hebrew to more than 1500 American ministers and seventy

future professors and presidents of colleges. Nearly all the leading American missionaries in the Near East had been among Stuart's students, and of sixty-eight charter members of the American Oriental Society (1842), at least twenty-three had studied with Stuart.²³ Stuart had remade American oriental scholarship, single-handedly and in the face of bitter opposition. The careers of two of his most prominent students, Josiah Gibbs and Edward Robinson, show what momentum he had created.

Edward Robinson (1794-1863) grew up in rural Connecticut.²⁴ Eventually he found his way to Hamilton College, whence he graduated in 1816 and returned as tutor in Greek and mathematics. He married but his wife soon died and left him a farm where he filled his spare hours preparing a new edition of the Iliad. The only place to print such a book was at Andover, so Robinson went there in 1822 to see his work through the press, and boarded with Moses Stuart. Inspired by the great teacher, Robinson stayed on in Andover from 1823 to 1826 as instructor in Hebrew. He mastered German and collaborated with Stuart on Hebrew and New Testament Greek reference works for Americans. Stuart's enthusiasm moved Robinson to consider study in Germany, though he had difficulty raising the funds. Without fanfare or presidential letters, the serious young Connecticut Yankee set sail for Germany in 1826, where he spent four years studying Hebrew and theology at Göttingen, Halle, and Berlin, including courses with Gesenius himself. Unlike the Cambridge swells, he called on no nobility, artists, or poets; his touristic excursions included the birthplace and convent of Luther and a discouraging search for the graves of the orientalist Heyne and Michaelis at Göttingen.

Although Robinson and men like him were to bring German university values to America, they were critical,

sometimes even contemptuous, of German university life and of German scholars. To the American historian George Bancroft, for example, the German students were vulgar and did not wash their clothes with needful frequency. The professors were “neither polished in their manners nor elevated in their ways of thinking, nor even agreeable, witty, or interesting in their conversation.”²⁵ Some American students told wondrous tales of German scholarly work habits: the biblical scholar Johann Eichhorn was said to study from 5 A.M. to 9 P.M., with half-hour intervals for meals; the Classicist Dissen had labored over Greek sixteen hours a day for eighteen years and was still a slow reader.²⁶ To Robinson, the Germans had “little practical energy but ... vast intellectual exertion.”²⁷ He and other Americans attributed this to the absence of opportunity in civic life under a despotic, though enlightened, government. In Germany, unlike England, freedom of thought had not led to freedom of action. Germans put great reliance on history; her students were fluent in Latin and Greek, but knew little math, belles lettres, or “practical information.” This absence of practical knowledge could lead Germans to espouse absurd abstract theories and systems that any Yankee farmboy could see through.²⁸ All else but scholarship was cut off to thinking Germans; public assembly and eloquence, staples of New England life, were unknown. Most Germans went to universities in hope of receiving a government post. Fewer Germans, however diligent, earned real distinction in their fields compared to American youths in their colleges, so Robinson opined. In fact, American colleges had higher enrollments in proportion to the national population than did German universities. Americans possessed “a character of serious earnest, which is unknown in Europe.” Germans knew how to relax after hours, a quality Robinson admired, and he saw little evidence for their rumored heroic work habits (“we

may usually set it down as an exaggeration”). To Robinson, German scholars were sedentary in their habits, giving their literature more learning but less “elasticity and nerve” than was typical of the more vigorous English. Robinson too noted, as did Salisbury after him, that German professors were not always very entertaining.²⁹

From the German perspective, Americans did not have the necessary background to take full advantage of a university course, but they were often more faithful in their attendance than the mass of German students, whose idleness, drinking, sentimentality, and dreaming seemed outrageous to the serious-minded young New Englanders who had come such a distance to study. Americans seemed to German academics to be young tradesmen and tourists. American religion, with its unstable pastorates serving at the will of mere peasants and shopkeepers, seemed primitive. The American government was decidedly unchristian in its pretensions, unlike the German courts and the Holy Empire. Yet young Edward Salisbury of Yale, for instance, aroused warm friendship and admiration in Georg Freytag, his Arabic teacher, who commented on his “talent, industry, reflective capacity, and exactitude.”³⁰

Of all the American “pioneers” in Germany, Robinson and his contemporary Edward Salisbury perhaps derived the most scholarly benefit from their experiences in Germany, at least in terms of bringing what they had learned to America and teaching it there. Robinson returned for a distinguished career at Andover, Boston, and the Union Theological Seminary in New York. In 1831 he founded a periodical called *The Biblical Repository*, which became an important medium for translation and dissemination of German biblical scholarship in America. He served as first vice president and second president (1849-1863) of the American Oriental Society. His

monumental *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea* (1841, 1856), based on first-hand explorations in 1837 and 1852, was a turning point in the historical geography of the Holy Land. It was the first important original American contribution to biblical scholarship of the first half of the nineteenth century, and virtually the only one to achieve international standing.

Although Germany provided the model and impetus for American oriental studies in the mid- and late nineteenth century, and American scholars admired German learning and industry, fundamental differences between American and German culture did not undermine American self-assurance. If German philological methods were to come to the United States and American universities were to be organized, they would be ultimately American institutions in their values and style.

So it was that Bela Edwards, newly appointed to Andover as successor to Stuart, could express the new appreciation of Germany as follows (1838): “In the field of literature, the Germans are unsurpassed. As intellectual explorers, they rise up by thousands. They have hardiness of body, iron resolution, patience, a sustaining enthusiasm, a spirit of vigorous competition, a high hereditary character to be maintained, and a learned and munificent government ...”³¹ But a contemporary could sound the caveats as well: “There is no danger that the sentimentality and dreaming propensities of the Germans will ever infect the mass of American intellect ... It would, therefore, be profitable for us to open our eyes a little wider upon the great world that lies towards the rising sun, to grapple with the ideas of the most learned and reflecting of modern nations; to study a literature which is enriched with all other literatures, the treasured knowledge of a Mithridatic nation, who read all languages from Japan to the Rocky

Mountains. It would raise us to a higher summit of knowledge, would give freer scope to thought, would lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of our tabernacle, and rid us of the greatest weaknesses that now attach to our national character.”³²

Josiah Gibbs (1790-1861), another student of Stuart, graduated from Yale and, like Robinson, worked as Stuart’s assistant for some years, translating Gesenius’ *Handwörterbuch* (1815) into English (1824).³³ This was the standard Hebrew dictionary in America for the next decade. He became professor of Hebrew at Yale College, later in the Yale Divinity School, and was considered by a shrewd contemporary to be a “German scholar who had landed on American soil a little too early to be understood by dogmatic men ...”³⁴ Gibbs never went to Germany but read widely in German oriental philology, which he painstakingly conveyed to his often bored students. Although he is best remembered today for his role in the *Amistad* affair, as it was he who first established communication with the captives, his most lasting philological contribution was his encouragement of Edward Salisbury, destined to become America’s first university professor of Arabic and Sanskrit.

Largely through the efforts of Stuart and Robinson, German philological scholarship in Hebrew and cognate languages was taught and studied in American divinity schools. German reference works were made available in good English translations, frequently reprinted, for Hebrew, Aramaic, and New Testament Greek. Outside of biblical studies, study in Germany became the norm for serious students of many branches of higher learning; it is estimated that some 9000 Americans went to Germany prior to the First World War, many of whom returned to convey the fruits of their training in American colleges and universities.³⁵ Indeed, nineteenth-

century American historical scholarship, insofar as it had forsaken Moral Philosophy and made recourse to sound philology, lower and higher criticism of sources, and contemporaneous European professional work, owed much to the German-style scholarship cultivated in the seminaries prior to the Civil War, because these were the first to demonstrate how German university education could be adapted to American classrooms.³⁶

(3b) The Birth of Oriental Studies

But Hebrew and biblical studies were only one part of this picture. Already Ezra Stiles was fascinated by the publications of the Englishman William Jones (1746-1794), who had aroused considerable interest among European savants in “oriental literature,” including Arabic and Persian prose and poetry.³⁷ Although he was not the first to draw attention to the possibilities of Arabic literature, he achieved a wide readership and published acclaimed translations of classical Arabic poetry. Posted to India in 1783, he mastered Sanskrit and printed in a new Indian historical journal a series of “Anniversary Discourses” on the languages, religions, philosophies, and material cultures of the Asiatic peoples, including Arabs and Persians. Through these, American readers like Stiles learned for the first time of the relationship between Sanskrit and Greek and Latin, as well as Persian, and the world view of a thoughtful man like Stiles was changed forever. Embedded in language itself was historical information about relationships among peoples and their migrations that no text, including the Bible or any Classical sources, referred to. No longer need the Bible be the only source for the earliest history of the human race - the very grammatical structure of biblical Hebrew, and, indeed, of all languages, even modern vernaculars, contained more data about the human race than all the

texts transmitted from antiquity. Not all Americans were ready for this. Stiles recommended Jones to his prize Hebrew student, Ebenezer Grant Marsh (1777-1803), who was to become Yale's first professor of Hebrew (1802, no salary attached to the position!), but Marsh saw little in it to interest him. Gibbs was intrigued by the possibilities, and no doubt recommended Jones to Edward Salisbury, but Gibbs still believed in absolute etymologies, seeking the "real meaning" rather than the processual development of words in their linguistic setting.

Edward Salisbury (1814-1901) graduated from Yale in 1832 and stayed on New Haven to study Hebrew with Josiah Gibbs.³⁸ Gibbs urged his attention to Sanskrit and Arabic, but there was no one in America who could use either language for philological scholarship, and probably very few who could even read the respective writing systems. Blessed with ample wealth and an understanding wife, Salisbury embarked on a grand tour of Europe, which included inquiry into the possibilities of studying Sanskrit and Arabic. Sanskrit at Oxford did not seem attractive (1836), so Salisbury settled in Paris (1837), where he began Arabic with A. I. Sylvestre De Sacy, the founder of modern Arabic studies in Europe, whose teaching method was founded on the theory of universal grammar referred to as "Porte Royale" grammar.³⁹ The following year Salisbury went to Germany, where he attended the lectures of Franz Bopp in Berlin on Indian antiquity, studied Sanskrit with Christian Lassen at Bonn, and continued Arabic with Georg Freytag, a former student of De Sacy. Freytag was a kindly mentor but seemed at the time less interested in Arabic literature than Salisbury had hoped. Salisbury learned Arabic well and translated it with felicity and accuracy. Upon his return to Yale, he was made (unsalaried!) professor of Arabic and Sanskrit (1841), the first such appointment in the

United States. His early essays on Arabic and Islam, not to mention Buddhism (based on his work with E. Burnouf at Paris), were the first professional scholarship of their kind published in America.⁴⁰

Salisbury stood alone and knew it. When he began, there was no such thing as a “professional scholar” in America; there were no universities, no research in the colleges, no graduate schools or meaningful graduate degrees, no “doctrine of expertise” in higher education or academic specialization, no professional societies or periodicals in what are now called the “humanities,” no facilities for formal language training outside of Greek and Latin, with occasionally some French and German, no “research libraries” with collections of orientalist books, periodicals, or manuscripts. Salisbury, with a strong New England sense of duty, made himself the shy, modest pioneer by seeking to create professional oriental studies in the United States.

The major desiderata were identifying and properly training good students and providing employment for them, building a professional society and journal to diffuse European scholarship in America and to present American scholarship, in due season, to Europe, and bringing oriental books and manuscripts to America as tools for research. Salisbury devoted the next decade of his life to all these objectives, with what now seems like singular foresight. Upon De Sacy’s death in 1838, Salisbury had acquired various lots at the auction of De Sacy’s magnificent library of over 6000 books and 364 manuscripts, augmenting his collection with numerous purchases during his travels. Through friends and agents in India, he acquired Sanskrit books, among the first of their kind to reach America, and enlisted the aid of American missionaries throughout the world to collect and send him materials.

When Salisbury was elected to membership in the American Oriental Society, at one of its earliest meetings in 1842, the Society was little more than a club of like-minded gentlemen and a shelf or two of books. Salisbury took on the title of “corresponding secretary” and carried out a worldwide, longhand correspondence and proposed a scholarly journal. Since the Society had no funds, Salisbury paid the costs of the new periodical himself. Oriental type fonts were not available in America, so Salisbury commissioned a wide range of them cast at his own expense, including Tamil, Syriac, and Japanese. With the help of missionary printing presses, he purchased abroad other fonts already cast, such as Chinese, to be crated and sent to New Haven on clipper ships. The early numbers of the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* were densely-set book-length volumes, the editing of which he did himself, besides finding the time and energy to contribute substantially to each volume scholarly papers, notes, and reviews. His intention was to launch the *Journal* as a serious scholarly outlet of high standards, based on comprehension of oriental sources and of current European scholarship. His model was the Société Asiatique in Paris and its distinguished *Journal Asiatique*. Salisbury became president of the Society in 1863 and was an active member for nearly sixty years. In 1852 he established contact with the newly founded Syrian Academy of Sciences, at that time based in Beirut, with a view to enhancing educational opportunities in the Ottoman Empire and to improving American understanding of contemporary Syria.⁴¹

In 1842 he returned to Germany to read Arabic privately with Freytag and to continue Sanskrit with Lassen. His formal instruction began at Yale in 1843, where he was the first professor in the United States to hold a purely graduate appointment. Salisbury addressed the Yale faculty with honest

modesty: “You perceive, gentlemen, that my field of study is broad and requires much minuteness of research in order to know it thoroughly. I profess only to have set foot upon it, to have surveyed its extent, to have resolved to spend my days in its research, believing, as I do, that it may yield rich and valuable fruits, and to do what may be in my power to attract others into it, though I am aware that I must to expect to labor, for a time, almost alone ...”⁴² Graduate study was in fact slow to organize and to develop plans, goals, and degrees, but by 1847 a formal course of study was possible.⁴³ Salisbury offered courses in Arabic and Sanskrit four days a week until his retirement from the Yale faculty in 1856, but in thirteen years only two students signed up: the Classicist James Hadley and a dour young Yankee named William Dwight Whitney. But Salisbury’s program was to take unexpected direction.

(4) American Philology and Linguistics

Gibbs and Robinson died with a few years of each other (1861, 1863), and the American Civil War brought oriental studies to a standstill. Beginning in mid-century, Hebrew gradually shrank in importance from divinity school requirement to an elective. Practically nobody except missionaries took advantage of opportunities to study other oriental languages. But the study of language was in the air. If the American fascination with language had at first been a philosophical and religious question (what was language, what was the first language, in what sense could human language be the word of God, were there absolutes in language or was it simply a socially reinforced convention, etc.), gradually Americans were to follow German initiative by undertaking detailed study of individual languages as an essential humanistic endeavor. The most important American figure in this enterprise was William Dwight Whitney (1827-1894),

who became America's most prominent linguist of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

After commencing Sanskrit with Salisbury, Whitney went to Berlin and Göttingen, where he studied Sanskrit and comparative philology with Bopp, Albrecht Weber, and Rudolph Roth, and ancient Egyptian with Karl Lepsius. Salisbury, with characteristic generosity, offered to vacate the Sanskrit portion of his chair at Yale and to provide an endowment for it, so in 1854 Whitney returned to Yale as professor of Sanskrit. Over the next forty years he published more than three hundred philological studies, the most important of which were editions of Sanskrit texts, the first of their kind by an American, and a *Sanskrit Grammar* (1879), which is still the standard classroom text for the language. His interests in language were broad-reaching and included popular works in linguistics (*Language and the Study of Language*, 1867; *The Life and Growth of Language*, 1875, translated into five languages), as well as grammars of English, German and French. He worked tirelessly to expand and develop the American Oriental Society and its library, and between 1857 and 1885 wrote nearly half the contents of the *Journal*.

As fortune would have it, Whitney was little interested in the Semitic languages and the Near East. He shared the scholarly consensus of his time, especially in Berlin, that differences in the structures of languages were crucial to human cultural advancement: the more "primitive" the language seemed when compared to Indo-European, the more primitive the culture was doomed to be.⁴⁵ Whitney considered the Semitic-speaking peoples inferior to the Indo-European, for example, because the Semitic languages could not form compound words to the same extent as Greek or English, thus hampering their progress; the Semites had "shown themselves decidedly inferior to the other great ruling

family [the Indo-Europeans], and their forms of speech undeniably partake of this peculiarity.” As for Hebrew, “it is now fully recognized as merely one in a contracted and very peculiar group of sister dialects, crowded together in a corner of Asia and the adjacent parts of Africa, possessing striking excellences, but also marked with striking defects ...”⁴⁶ The new professionalism had not served, therefore, to elevate the languages and cultures of the Near East to a higher position in American linguistic thought, a consequence neither Moses Stuart, nor even Salisbury, could have anticipated.

(5) Semitic Studies in New American Universities

The Harvard faculty had watched developments at Yale with some envy and a concerted effort was made to lure Whitney, even Salisbury himself, to Cambridge. Failing this, Harvard broke new ground in 1880 by inviting Crawford Toy (1836-1919), a southern Baptist minister who had studied theology and Semitic languages at Berlin, to the Hancock professorship and to found a Department of Semitic Languages there.⁴⁷ Toy’s mission was much broader than Stuart’s had been at Andover. By 1880, Semitic languages had expanded considerably from the old regime of biblical Hebrew and Aramaic to include Ethiopic, Akkadian, Arabic, and Egyptian. A good Semitist was expected to have some competence in all of these. Like many biblical scholars of the period, Toy was fascinated by the possibilities of the new field of Assyriology, in which the ongoing discovery of literature, inscriptions, and documents from ancient Mesopotamia was rapid and exciting. Assyriologists were making extravagant claims for the importance, even primacy, of their discipline within Semitic studies. The discovery of a Babylonian deluge story in 1872 had galvanized public interest with the realization that Mesopotamian clay tablets might contain information

directly related to events known from the Bible, but far earlier in date than any biblical book. Excavations and explorations in the Near East, or “lands of the Bible,” occasioned a flood of popular books dealing with the Bible and “the monuments” and anthologies of ancient Near Eastern literary works thought to be of biblical interest began to enjoy a wide circulation. Popular accounts of the English explorer A. H. Layard’s discoveries at Nineveh sold thousands of copies in America. Toy therefore felt that an Assyriologist was needed for his nascent program, and appointed a former student of his, David Lyon (1852-1935), urging him to go Leipzig to study with the great German Assyriologist, Friedrich Delitzsch.⁴⁸ Lyon’s first student in Assyriology was a young Canadian Quaker, George Barton (1859-1942), who was to have a long career in American Near Eastern studies as an Assyriologist, biblical scholar, and student of “Semitic origins.”⁴⁹ The new broader emphasis of American oriental studies was eventually reflected in the title changes of one of its leading periodicals: *Hebraica* from 1884 until 1895, then *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, finally *The Journal of Near Eastern Studies* in 1942.

The Yale faculty had watched with its own envy developments at Harvard, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Pennsylvania. Yale, conservative as always, was chary of hiring a foreigner for a professorship, but fortunately, remarkable native talent was close to hand, William Rainey Harper (1856-1906).⁵⁰ Harper’s impact on Semitic studies in America was comparable to Moses Stuart’s and presented a peculiarly American revivalist spirit, even a certain hucksterism. Harper had graduated from Muskingum (Ohio) College in 1873, giving a commencement address in Hebrew, showing that the old New England custom lingered on much later in the “old Northwest” than on its native soil. Harper came to

Yale as a graduate student in 1875, studied with William Dwight Whitney, and wrote a dissertation on Indo-European prepositions, receiving the doctorate at the age of eighteen. His classmate was John P. Peters, later to be leader of the expedition to Nippur.

Harper had rapidly gained national recognition as a lecturer and teacher. At Chautauqua, for example, he typically taught 1200 people in his summer courses on biblical history and literature. He started an institute and promoted correspondence courses in Hebrew and biblical studies, as well as a periodical called *The Hebrew Student*. Therefore, when Yale was considering developing a Semitics department, Harper was an obvious choice, for at the time only a little Hebrew was available from George Day, professor in the Divinity School. Harper arrived at Yale in 1886, bringing his institute with him. His impact on the Yale community was astonishing. His first course in Hebrew attracted sixty students; his new course on Bible attracted first dozens, then hundreds, and had to be repeated for the citizenry of New Haven. He taught eight hours a week of Hebrew, four of Arabic, four of Babylonian, and one each of Syriac and Aramaic. His Institute of Hebrew filled three floors of a building on one of the principal streets of New Haven and he often received more mail than the rest of Yale University combined. It was said that ladies in sewing circles had put aside their needles to study Hebrew and that New Haven policemen were memorizing Harper's Hebrew vocabularies on their beats.

In 1887 Harper's younger brother, Robert Francis, an Assyriologist who had studied at Leipzig, joined the faculty, though without University compensation, and in addition four more instructors were added to cope with burgeoning enrollments. A Semitics Club and a Hebrew Club were formed. By 1890, the department faculty stood at six, with

twenty-five graduate students and undergraduate enrollments in the hundreds. Doctoral dissertations began to flow in at the rate of about a half dozen a year, mostly in Assyriology.

Harper always had an eye to his financial status, but was such a success that Yale's president, Timothy Dwight, who would not pay for gas illumination in faculty offices, arranged for him to receive the emoluments of two professorships simultaneously, and paid for a vacation for the Harpers in Europe. The frugal old Yankee even assumed the debts of the institute, which had never made a profit and eventually left its shareholders, except for Harper himself, with nothing to show for their investment. But a magnificent offer from John D. Rockefeller of a professorship, chairmanship of a new department, and the presidency of the new University of Chicago, induced Harper to resign from Yale in 1891. He took his brother and most of his staff with him, leaving one young Semitist, Frank Knight Sanders, to run the collapsed program at Yale. Yale's Semitics department had been a boom and bust. Timothy Dwight, who considered Harper to have acted dishonorably, was in no hurry to do more for Semitic studies and his successor as president of Yale, Arthur Twining Hadley (son of James Hadley, Salisbury's student in Sanskrit), was a railroad economist who saw little of value in Semitic languages. However, some sort of Semitist was needed on the faculty of Yale University, so in 1899 Yale invited Charles C. Torrey (1863-1956), an accomplished orientalist, who had begun his career at Andover Seminary, to take over instruction.

Although American intellectual interests had expanded sufficiently to include subjects such as Babylonian in graduate school curricula, another important change in American life provided crucial impetus for these studies. This was the American tradition of philanthropy, arising directly from the growth of great personal fortunes. Prior to 1860, \$100,000

was a great fortune, whereas the annual salary of a Yale professor might be \$600.00 a year. Perhaps thirty-five people in America, living in New York City and Philadelphia, had as much as \$100,000. By the late 1880s, however, there were perhaps 3000 millionaires living throughout America and a great fortune might be a hundred million dollars or more, with no income tax.⁵¹ Many wealthy Americans assumed the role of promoting culture by endowing colleges, universities, libraries, museums, and concert halls. Culture usually implied, however, the secular culture of European and Classical arts and letters rather than “oriental learning.” The creation of American universities and museums, beginning in the 1880s, depended heavily on private donations. Fortunately for oriental learning, these new universities were dominated by an American academic elite that had studied in Germany and come home imbued with the importance of language study as the key to the human past. Professorships in oriental languages, therefore, appeared both at the old colleges that had created graduate programs, such as Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, and Yale, and in the newly founded research universities such as Johns Hopkins and, eventually, the University of Chicago with its Oriental Institute. The ties were close between the new secular discipline of “Semitic Languages & Literatures” and the old divinity programs, in that most of the graduate students in the new Semitic philology were ordained Protestant ministers, but divinity schools, with their increasing emphasis on social aspects of the Christian ministry rather than on biblical learning, provided no real competition for the fledgling programs.

It was only natural, then, that orientalist should seek financial support for their programs and projects from private donors. At Harvard, David Lyon interested a prominent philanthropist, Jacob Schiff, in creating a Semitic Museum, of

which Lyon was appointed curator in 1891; a splendid building was opened in 1903. In Philadelphia, a group of wealthy, civic-minded gentlemen, led by E. W. Clark, laid plans for a University Museum, which, when opened, dwarfed the Harvard museum. The University of Pennsylvania had moreover two professorships in Semitic languages, one in Assyriology, held by Herman Hilprecht (1859-1925), a German who had taken his degree at Leipzig with Friedrich Delitzsch, and another in Semitic Languages, held by Morris Jastrow, Jr. (1861-1921), a native of Breslau and one of the first learned Jews to secure a secular university senior position in Near Eastern studies.⁵² In Baltimore, the new program at Johns Hopkins had appointed another Leipziger scholar, Paul Haupt (1858-1926). Haupt had established a reputation for himself in Germany as an Assyriologist, but at Johns Hopkins his interests turned to biblical studies, culminating in the gigantic “polychrome Bible” publishing project, in which supposed individual sources for the Hebrew text of the Bible were printed in different colors.⁵³ In New York, a dynamic young Lutheran minister named Albert T. Clay (1866-1925),⁽⁵⁴⁾ who had studied Assyriology with Hilprecht, interested the financier J. Pierpont Morgan in Babylonian antiquities. Morgan stood at the apogee of the new super-rich generation, having formed America’s first billion-dollar corporation, United States Steel, in 1901.

So it was that one November day in 1909, the president of Yale, Arthur Twining Hadley, was astonished to receive a letter from Morgan offering Yale \$100,000 in preferred stock of U.S. Steel, the income of which was to provide first for a handsome professorial salary in Assyriology (about \$6000 a year, the usual Yale salary of the time being about \$4500). The balance of the income was to be used to create a collection of Babylonian antiquities. It was Morgan’s express wish that Clay

should be the first incumbent. Hadley was not interested in Near Eastern languages and did not support their expansion in the Yale curriculum. Morgan had not gone to Yale and no one had contemplated asking him for money or had even thought of Assyriology as a priority. There was even some prejudice against Assyriology because of controversy aroused by Hilprecht at the University of Pennsylvania, which had made the national press and unfavorably preoccupied the small community of American orientalist, who generally considered Hilprecht both vain and dishonest. But Yale took the money, Clay was appointed, and he arrived at New Haven full of new projects, including a Yale Museum and an expedition to Mesopotamia.

(6) Yale, Semitic Studies, and a Yale Expedition to the Near East

As early as 1884 the American Oriental Society had called for an American archaeological expedition to the Near East, to take its place alongside the British and French national missions which were filling the British Museum and Louvre with spectacular treasures. John P. Peters (1852-1921), who had studied philology with William Dwight Whitney at Yale and had become an Episcopal minister in New York, joined the group which set about to raise funds for such a purpose. There was no question of United States government support, and no university or scholarly organization had the resources to undertake such an enterprise. The answer was private philanthropy, and a wealthy New York woman, Catherine Lorillard Wolf, offered \$5000 for the funding of a Mesopotamian expedition. This was never launched (though Wolf subsequently paid for an expedition to Asia Minor). Peters was, however, able to find support among a group of distinguished Philadelphians for a Mesopotamian expedition. In 1893 this went out to the ancient Sumerian city of Nippur,

in southern Iraq, under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania and its newly founded University Museum.⁵⁵

In Peters' own words, the significance of the American and other projects of the time was that they "opened new vistas of ancient history. They have shown us that men in a high state of civilization, building cities, organizing states, conducting distant expeditions for conquest, ruling wide-extended countries, trafficking with remote lands, existed in Babylonia 2000 years before the period assigned by Archbishop Ussher's chronology for the creation of the world. Our work at Nippur has carried our knowledge of civilized man 2000 years farther backward, an enormous stride to make at one time."⁵⁶

The student of so-called "orientalism" will note that there is no implication here of dominance or appropriation of the region or its past, both unthinkable to an American of the time, nor any reference to a Christian or biblical agenda, beyond suggesting that a well-known seventeenth-century chronology of ancient history based on Bible study alone was incorrect.⁵⁷ America had neither the ideology nor the military strength to consider colonizing the Near East. Americans were convinced of the superiority of their culture, morality, and way of life over all others, including those of Europe and the Near East, but this attitude had little impact on contemporaneous oriental philology, which tended, on the German model, to be universalist and secular in character. Language study was not a political act but an expression of personal interest. The Christian idea of universal history, from Eusebius to the nineteenth century, had always embraced far more than the Christian world and era, so "construction of the Orient," as the critics would have it, lay more in the realm of faith and aesthetics than in philology. As American attitudes towards Germany, noted above, illustrate, Americans generally considered the entire world, including the Near East, inferior to the

United States, and were unperturbed if British, French, Germans, or Turks viewed them as brash, naive, infidel, materialistic, and uncultured.

Moreover, Oriental philology had, for much of its history, preferred to ignore living representatives of the cultures it studied (Arabic in spite of the Arabs, Hebrew in spite of the Jews), for reasons that must be sought in its origins and transformations in Latin Christian Europe both before and after the formation of European universities. The techniques, approaches, and values of European oriental scholarship had coalesced by the first half of the sixteenth century and the introduction of historicism, beginning with Sir William Jones, but especially through German university education, served only to broaden the orientalist's view to include the possibility that any human language would reward careful study, in preference to mastery of only Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and elaboration of a traditional group of texts from antiquity. In short, languages were, to the philologist, of much greater interest than individual speakers of them in specific cultural contexts, as anatomy to a physician need not imply interest in the larger human community.⁵⁸

Partly for this reason, the American missionary movement, though it generated a spate of grammars and dictionaries of modern Near Eastern languages and made the printing of them much easier, had surprisingly little direct effect on American philological education in the nineteenth century. The missionaries, many of whom knew Near Eastern languages well, remained all their lives in the field. Their educational enterprises in Beirut, Istanbul, Teheran, and elsewhere, served eventually to create a new local scholarly and political elite who would in some cases enrich American higher education with their combination of native competence and American academic training, but this lay far in the future. The

missionaries' emphasis on education also created a large group of younger Americans who were born or had significant living experience in the Near East, some of whom, such as the Yale explorer, geologist, and climatologist Ellsworth Huntington (1876-1947), were to reinvest their knowledge in American higher education, but this too lay in the future.

Exploration of Mesopotamia, Egypt, or the Levant was, therefore, even to a devout clergyman like Peters, a voyage of exciting discovery of unknown human history, pure and simple. Human history belonged to everyone. As Americans saw it, the modern peoples of Mesopotamia or Egypt had no more historical connection with the ancient civilizations there than the Spanish with Aztec culture or Americans of English descent with the builders of the Indian mounds of Ohio. Like the English, French, Dutch, and Spanish in the New World, the Arabs and Turks were in Iraq or Egypt by right of conquest and had no more claim on the more ancient cultures of the region than Americans did, beyond the chance that they lived there, a fact which Americans accepted as naturally as they did their own residence in the New World. The money of Catherine Lorillard Wolf or the Philadelphians was put up with no conditions attached beyond the hope of finding new information about the human past. The would-be American archaeologists, like their colleagues in Europe, were impatient with what they saw as the idleness, greed, perfidy, and obstructionism of the local authorities but hoped that a cadre of people in the Ottoman Empire sharing their enthusiasm for exploration might someday be created and even discussed plans for how this might be done.⁵⁹

The career of Charles C. Torrey, who replaced Harper at Yale in 1900, exemplified the transformation of the old New England tradition of biblical scholarship, such as the work of Stuart, Gibbs, and Robinson, by the newer German university

philology.⁶⁰ Torrey, whose grandfather had been the first president of the University of Vermont and whose father was a Congregational clergyman, graduated from Bowdoin College and Andover Seminary, where he had intended to remain on the faculty. The Seminary sent him for further training to Germany, where he studied Arabic with Theodor Noeldeke, the greatest Semitist of his time (and perhaps any time), Assyriology with Peter Jensen, and Epigraphy with Julius Euting. He went on to write a doctoral dissertation on commercial terminology in the Qur'an and returned to America as the most capable and best-trained Semitist his country had yet produced.

Torrey took his first year as Yale professor (1900) in Constantinople and Palestine with a view to establishing an American School for Oriental Research in Jerusalem. He negotiated for the necessary permissions from the Ottoman government, found temporary quarters for the School, and undertook an archaeological excavation near Sidon, the results of which formed the subject of one of the School's first publications.⁶¹ He then returned to Yale to begin a distinguished career as a Semitist, biblical scholar, and Arabist. Among his many noteworthy publications was the first scientific edition of a classical Arabic text published in the United States, a historical work dealing with the Arab conquest of Egypt.⁶² Salisbury, eighty-seven and blind, had lived long enough to see professional Arabic studies re-established at Yale by an American-born scholar. The next step should be a Yale expedition to the Near East.

The aftermath of the Nippur Expedition was one of bitter controversy and recrimination that dragged on for more than a decade and resulted in the discrediting of America's leading Assyriologist, Herman Hilprecht. The successes and failures of this first American expedition in Mesopotamia impressed

themselves deeply on the community of American Semitists. The idea of opening another project, preferably in Mesopotamia or the Holy Land, held strong appeal. In 1913, at the initiative of George Barton, then at Bryn Mawr College, the Archaeological Institute of America created a “Mesopotamia Committee” to investigate ways and means for opening a second American school and research center in Baghdad. Besides Barton, this Committee included Clay, James B. Nies, a clergyman of independent means with a strong personal interest in Assyriology; Morris Jastrow, an Assyriologist at the University of Pennsylvania, and later William Hayes Ward, collector and connoisseur of Mesopotamian antiquities.⁶³

Clay brought his remarkable energy, vision, and fund-raising skills to this enterprise, the first step of which was the decision by Ward to will his valuable library to such a school if it could be created within a decade of his death, which took place in 1916. Even at the height of the World War I, there was much talk of an expedition as soon as hostilities ended. The Assyriologist Stephan Langdon, an American by birth who held a professorship at Oxford and a post at the University Museum as well, was eager to lead the University Museum back to Mesopotamia, taking advantage of British control there. Clay, Barton, and James Montgomery, professor of Semitics at the University of Pennsylvania, were eager to launch one under their own leadership, preferably under the auspices of the Mesopotamia Committee. Only the United States would have the resources and energy for such undertakings on a large scale in a world exhausted and bankrupt by war. American orientalist were also eager to throw off their intellectual subservience to Germany and go their own ways.⁶⁴ There was a strong sense of competition among

American universities as to which would be first in the field and how.

In the early spring of 1920, Clay set out for Baghdad on behalf of the Mesopotamia Committee and was pleased to receive the support of Arnold Wilson, Acting Civil Commissioner in Iraq, and through him the British authorities in the region. The Ward bequest had been enhanced with bequests of books from John P. Peters and Morris Jastrow, so Clay had the nucleus of a fine research library to bring to Baghdad, though he was worried that the British archaeologists might steal the books. Prospects seemed favorable enough that when the American School in Jerusalem was incorporated in 1921, its corporate name was changed to the "American Schools for Oriental Research," in anticipation of the creation of the Baghdad school. A large bequest from James Nies provided in 1922 the necessary funding for an American School building in Jerusalem. Under Torrey's auspices the School had bought a choice tract of land before the First World War, but had no funds available for building. Everything had fallen into place therefore for a new project that would be dominated by Clay and his associates. No permanent housing was available for the proposed Baghdad school; a proposal that the British government confiscate the house of the German archaeologist Koldewey for such a purpose was not implemented.

Clay's next project was to wrest control of the Archaeological Institute of America from the Classicists that had dominated it since its foundation. Most of the Institute's annual budget, about \$10,000, went to publish a stodgy journal, whereas the group around Clay felt that some money should be made available for actual archaeology. Clay ran unsuccessfully for president of the Institute in 1921 and was particularly annoyed at the Institute's policy not to publish

papers on "oriental" topics. When it became clear that the Classicists would continue as they had been, Clay and his group initiated incorporation and formal separation of the American School from the Archaeological Institute, which had served as its umbrella organization since its foundation. This was accomplished in 1921 after much legal chaffering. Plans for a new journal and annual bibliography of Near Eastern archaeology, put forward by Clay, did not materialize.

Finally, it was of utmost importance to the Yale group to see that a sympathetic person was appointed to the professorship of Assyriology at the University of Pennsylvania left vacant at the death of Morris Jastrow in 1921. Their happiness was complete when the choice fell upon their ally, George Barton, so Yale and the University of Pennsylvania could at last make common cause (1922). The group was, however, much disappointed when they found that the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, backed by Rockefeller millions, would not join them but intended to operate on its own and create its own expedition. This meant that the School and any Yale excavations had to find their own funding.

There were several initiatives being pursued at once. One was a project in Palestine. A site called Tell el-Qadi was first proposed then abandoned in favor of a small site called Tell el-Ful, just south of Jerusalem, recommended by W. F. Albright. Montgomery and others favored a pagan site, such as Sebaste or Tyre, as more likely to produce substantial finds than a "thoroughly Jewish site," and the School tried at various times to get permits from the British mandatory authorities to dig at Megiddo, Taanach, and Dan, but to no avail. In any case, the School had no funds to mount a major project. Another Yale professor, Benjamin Bacon, carried on his own search for a suitable excavation, this one to be under the sole auspices of Yale. He went to Constantinople in 1920, with advice from

two experienced Anatolian archaeologists, Carl Blegen and Sir William Ramsay. To him, a promising site was Antioch in Pisidia (modern Yalvaç), about sixty miles west of Konya, and he felt that ample funding would be found by forming a group called "Friends of Yale Archaeology." In the uncertainty over the future of Turkey, Bacon was convinced that the Konya region would eventually pass to Greece. Even though the permit had to be issued by the Turkish government, Bacon envisaged his project as undertaken jointly with the American School of Classical Studies in Athens in the future Greek portion of Turkey, so thought the Turkish official too easily offended who remonstrated with the tactlessness of his application. Bacon was also in favor of a Yale project in Palestine and hoped that Clay would see to its realization.

Clay served as annual professor in Jerusalem in 1920, revitalizing the School, and founding the Palestine Oriental Society (1920), modeled on the American Oriental Society. He hoped that this organization would transcend the national and religious rivalries in the region to bring together all who had a scholarly interest in the history of Palestine. His sheer enthusiasm and force of personality led to some successful meetings with a substantial and varied attendance. This organization was later to become the Israel Academy of Sciences, a transformation Clay was not to live to witness.

The strongly anti-Zionist position of the Yale faculty involved made fund-raising for excavations in Palestine a tricky matter. Clay published a strongly-worded attack on "Political Zionism" in the February, 1921 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. The riposte on Clay's paper was not slow in coming: he was denounced as "devious" and "anti-Semitic," neither of which was true, and the *Jewish Daily News* opined that "Prof Clays may shout and scream, success will ultimately crown the ages old effort to make Palestine once more the

Jewish Homeland."⁶⁵ Nothing daunted, Clay continued to write against extensive Jewish immigration to Palestine, though he did advocate limited revival of Jewish culture there, and was intrigued by his old friend Jastrow's proposal that a Jewish university be created in Palestine.⁶⁶ Other trustees of the American School felt that Clay was endangering their efforts with his outspoken views, even though many of them agreed privately with him. Not only would Jewish money be cut off from the School, the School might be drawn into the local political turmoil in Palestine. In any event, Clay began to lose interest in Palestine in favor of greater opportunities elsewhere and W. F. Albright, as director of the School, proved more adept at avoiding political controversy.

Enhancement of university and museum collections, begun late in the preceding century, was a strong factor in ongoing planning. Clay was tireless in his efforts to create an archaeological museum at Yale. A Museum Committee was formed that made many plans and drafted many proposals. A public display of Mesopotamian antiquities and casts of famous objects in the British Museum and the Louvre had been opened on the Yale campus by 1912. Clay also secured a superb collection of Judaica, formed by the Kohut family of New York, for the Yale library. Torrey had been instrumental in building a large collection of Arabic, Turkish, and Persian manuscripts, as well as a fine numismatic collection. The Peabody Museum, which concentrated on natural history and anthropology, received objects from ancient Egypt in acknowledgment of its participation in the Egypt Exploration Fund, based in London, and individual collections, such as Greek vases and Palestinian pottery, were also given to Yale by benefactors.

Political and social conditions in Iraq were much better than they had been in the days of the Nippur expedition. The

problem was that one could no longer simply raise money, seek a permit from the Ottoman government, and send anyone to the field who wished to go. There were definite standards to be met and the redoubtable Gertrude Bell, honorary inspector of antiquities, sought to keep a constructive balance between scientific excavation and her hope that the new Iraq would conserve and understand the relics that lay in her soil.

Clay set out for Iraq again in 1923, with the benefit of a private pullman car provided by the British authorities, visiting Byblos, Kedesh, and Carchemish. He was initially interested in the possibilities of Qatna, a large untouched mound in northern Syria, but pushed on to Mesopotamia. Under his auspices, the American School in Baghdad was at last opened at the British Officers' Club that fall. The plan for it was to offer living quarters, a library, training in archaeological techniques and Mesopotamian languages and epigraphy, at least until such time as Baghdad University could create a viable Semitics department. Clay was dazzled by the prospects of the hundreds of mounds he saw around him; his initial hope was to find the site of ancient Mari, which he thought would reveal a whole new chapter in the early history of the Semites.⁶⁷

By 1925 there were at least nine major expeditions at work in the Near East: the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania at Ur (the University of Pennsylvania was also digging in Egypt and at Beishan in Palestine), Oxford and the Field Museum of Chicago were digging at Kish in Mesopotamia, Harvard was working in both Egypt and Nubia, the University of Chicago was working on a large scale at Megiddo in Palestine (not to mention maintaining long-term projects at Karnak and Luxor), Princeton was planning to return to Sardis, the French were digging at Byblos in

Lebanon, the University of Michigan had dug at Antioch and was now at Carthage, the Metropolitan and Harvard-Boston Museums were working in Egypt, the British School of Archaeology was at Ophel, and so forth, but Yale was not yet in the field!

Clay decided to trump them all by opening two sites at once: either Uruk or Larsa in Mesopotamia, and Harran near the Turkish-Syrian frontier, both under the direction of the only available American with significant Near Eastern archaeological field experience, Clarence Fisher (1876-1941). Fisher was a talented field worker and architect. He was a volatile and sometime difficult person to work with, his personal insecurity perhaps intensified because he had never held a permanent post at the University Museum despite his years of work on Museum excavations. Hence he was dependent for his livelihood upon whatever project happened to be in the field and had funds. He was on bad terms with various of the American archaeologists working in the Near East, and was quick to resent perceived slights. Clay's solution to the problem of how to enlist Fisher for Yale was to get him appointed at Yale for three years as a Research Associate "to excavate and to conduct a training school in scientific excavation" and to serve simultaneously as annual professor in the American School in Baghdad. Fisher drew up at budget, about \$30,000, and a list of equipment needed for a Yale project; all that was needed was funds and a site.

Clay wavered between Larsa and Uruk: there were thousands of tablets from Larsa already at Yale, so there was the hope of finding more, but Uruk was a much larger and more complex site. Gertrude Bell promised him either one, in principle, if he would undertake to mount a five-year project to high professional standards. As these plans were in ferment, Clay suddenly died, in August, 1925.

When the Yale faculty concerned regrouped themselves after this catastrophe, an expedition committee was formed under Charles C. Torrey, which drew up a list of distinguished potential patrons, including Adolph Ochs of the New York Times. Although Rockefeller was already supporting a joint Penn-British Museum expedition to Nippur, the Yale Committee felt encouraged to approach him for long-term support. A new Assyriologist, Raymond Dougherty, was eventually appointed to replace Clay, with the understanding that Yale would send an expedition to Mesopotamia under his aegis. Dougherty had been a student of Clay's and had served at the Baghdad School. He knew and respected Bell and was keenly interested in Uruk, the source for thousands of Babylonian letters, administrative documents, and literary texts, many of them at Yale. The Yale budget for a project was reduced to \$25,000 a year. If Rockefeller would put up the first three years, Yale could easily find the balance through her patrons. But in the meantime Clarence Fisher had been hired by the Oriental Institute to work at Megiddo, so was no longer available. Bell therefore recommended an English archaeologist, Ernest Mackay, to head the proposed Yale expedition. Mackay was approached in some secrecy, but there was concern that American funding could not be found unless the project was headed by an American. Next Mackay did not prove to be available after all, so the Yale project still lacked a field director. At this point, Rockefeller's agent announced that Rockefeller was doing enough by spending \$15,000 a year at Ur, so Yale would receive nothing from him.

Dougherty, undiscouraged, took over leadership of the enterprise from Torrey, and proposed an even grander scheme than Clay's: there would be a southern Mesopotamian site, either Larsa or Uruk (projected budget for five years, \$125,000), a "Middle Mesopotamian" site at Dura Europos

(projected budget for five years, \$125,000), work in Transjordan at Gerasa (budgeted for ten years at \$10,000 a year), plus two lesser projects at Arles and Tarragona in Europe, for a grand total of \$367,500 - an impressive sum for a group that had no resources at all, not to mention no field experience. Since no qualified director was yet available, Dougherty wrote to a British architect, A. Stuart Whitburn, who had spent a season with Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur. Woolley was flabbergasted:

"... Mr. Whitburn showed me last season your letter outlining the programme of a Yale expedition at Dura & Warka & offering him the direction of this twofold work. Frankly I was shocked, & in two ways. First, no archaeologist however experienced could possibly do justice to those two important sites at once: either of them is a full-time job. At Ur, with a good staff to help, I am getting right behindhand & shall soon have to stop fieldwork in order to publish results: I could not dream of undertaking a second site - indeed have definitely refused to do so when it was suggested, because I knew that the work would be badly done. I do most earnestly hope that any work undertaken out there may be undertaken in a way which will make good work possible. Secondly, while I quite agree that on certain sites the direction of an expedition might well be confided to an architect, provided that he has with him a thoroughly trained archaeologist field-worker (& Doura is perhaps such a site: Warka is emphatically not), yet the offer of such a direction to Mr. Whitburn was not in any way justified. In this I am not saying anything against Mr. Whitburn: he is a good architect & an admirable assistant to me, but he has none of the qualifications for directing an archaeological excavation, & he was the first to recognise this, I am thankful to say, & so to refuse the offer made to him. Actually had he accepted the post the expedition would, I

think I can safely say, not have taken the field; because before a permit is issued the name & qualifications of the director have to be submitted for approval to the archaeological committee of the British Academy, & I am sure that they would not have accepted him. You see, it would have been impossible to provide Mr. Whitburn with a properly trained archaeological assistant simply because none such was available! That is the main difficulty at present, & I am myself doing my best to train men for responsible jobs, but it takes time - after all, I'm still only a learner myself after 20 years in the field.

I sincerely hope that Yale may send an expedition to Mesopotamia - the more work done the better - but equally I hope that it may be entrusted to someone properly experienced. And really, a season under me (if I may refer to your letter) does not qualify a man! I've had some pretty useless people before now whom I should be sorry to see even as assistants! My own experience in the country is that there must be on the staff 3 specialists, an archaeologist (i.e., a field worker) an architect, & an assyriologist: failing any one of these proper results cannot be obtained ...

I was not the only person to be shocked by the scheme outlined in your letter to Whitburn: other people in Iraq whom he consulted, though perhaps they knew the work only from the outside, realised that the scheme would never work unless the responsibilities were regarded more seriously ... "68

Dougherty wrote back, explaining that each expedition would be more or less independent of each other, even if there was the same field director. Capable assistants would take care of the actual field work. Woolley no doubt reacted to this by writing off Dougherty as hopeless and surely communicated his views to the British authorities. The grand old days of amateur exploration and adventure in Iraq were over. In due

course the Germans reasserted their claims and a German team returned to Uruk in 1928, so all hope of a Yale project there had to be abandoned.

Dougherty turned his interests to a project in Arabia, consulting Philby and Musil about desert routes. Dougherty's mental collapse and his death by suicide in 1933 brought the project to an end. Under the influence of Michael Rostovtzeff, professor of Classics at Yale, Yale next concentrated her energies on Dura Europos and Gerasa - but those are other stories that cannot be told here.

Conclusion

My narrative has two main morals. First, Americans were primarily motivated by a desire to explore and discover and were willing to spend a lot of energy and money in the process. Their interest in the ancient Near East had nothing to do with colonial or imperialist aspirations. If anything, Americans were frustrated by the new higher standards of European colonial administration of antiquities in the mandated Near East after World War I. Few Americans saw a necessity that the civilizations of Mesopotamia be explored as culturally relevant to their own, even if Mesopotamian cities were mentioned in the Bible or classical histories. Indeed, in the competition for expedition support at Yale between geographers and ethnographers on the one hand, and orientalist on the other, the geographers and ethnographers tended to prevail, though they were exploring strange lands and peoples that could in no way be considered related to American culture. Second, there is surprisingly little influence of what is known as "biblical archaeology" in this quest. Biblical archaeology is now out of fashion in the social sciences and even suspect as pseudo-scientific.⁶⁹ Clay, Peters, Dougherty, and many of the other American actors in this tale

were ordained protestant ministers, but were interested in Larsa and Dura Europos, scarcely what anyone would call biblical sites. Whereas, among orientalist, American biblical scholars enthusiastically appropriated for their own disciplines discoveries in the ancient Near East and considered the whole of Western Asia the "biblical world," this had surprisingly little effect within American oriental and ancient Near Eastern studies. American Egyptology, furthermore, which had a much narrower base in universities than Semitics, had even less involvement with biblical studies.⁷⁰

Like their German counterparts, American oriental philology and archaeology considered themselves both non-political and non-religious in their fundamental values, and still do. Their researches were motivated by the same complex impulses that had drawn Christian Europeans to study Semitic languages for more than a millennium, but in which intense personal interest in the subject was almost always primary. On the one hand, the public rhetoric of American Semitists in defense of their interests, in which the Bible was often mentioned, was conditioned by the necessity of raising money and maintaining institutional support for their undertakings, a necessity which had affected American Near Eastern archaeology and Semitic language study more than their European counterparts, which were generally supported by government funding. On the other, the German immigrant scholars to America in the 1930s reinforced the non-religious emphasis of university Semitic studies, and by 1945 the old notions of inherent Semitic inferiority had been discarded as racist and pseudo-scientific, not to mention tainted by Nazism.

The hundreds of thousands of dollars Americans spent in their field projects and researches during the period 1893-1940 were solicited and put up with no strings attached: no

one knew what would be found or how it would be interpreted - they just wanted to discover what was there.

Notes

*This essay reuses and updates an essay “A Mithridatic nation: Germany and the Beginnings of American Semitic Scholarship” in J. Marzahn, H. Neumann, ed., *Assyriologica et Semitica, Festschrift fuer Joachim Oelsner, Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 252 (2000), 53-65, and is part of a larger study of the American academic approach to the Near East and its languages and peoples.

¹ C. F. Haussmann, *Kunze's Seminarium, Americana Germanica Monographs* No. 27 (Philadelphia, 1917); G. B. Wood, *Early History of the University of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1896), 88, 89; A. B. Faust, *The German Element in the United States* (New York, 1927), 2:207-208; S. B. Miller, *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1803), 2:67-69. The purse-conscious New Yorkers did the same to the German Jewish scholar Isaac Nordheimer in 1835, who “received from the University of the city of New-York the nominal appointment of Professor of the Arabic and other Oriental languages, and acting Professor of Hebrew. With this appointment were connected no specific duties and no salary ...,” E. Robinson, *Bibliotheca Sacra: Or Tracts and Essays ...* (New York, 1843), 386. For Nordheimer, see further S. Goldman, “Isaac Nordheimer (1809-1842) ...,” *American Jewish History* 80 (1990/1), 213-229. Yale's first professor of Arabic and Sanskrit was also appointed without salary (1842), but he, at least, was a wealthy man.

² Miller, *Retrospect* (note 1), 2:67; Haussmann, *Kunze's Seminarium* (note 1), 67. For the quip on Hebrew roots, see, for example, Anselm Bayly, *A Plain and Complete Grammar of the Hebrew Language, With and without Points* (London, [1773]), xxii: “Hebrew roots are often found / To flourish best in barren ground.”

³ S. E. Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), 202.

⁴ For a classic statement, see, for example, W. B. Selbie, “The Influence of the Old Testament in Puritanism,” in E. R. Bevan, ed., *The Legacy of Israel* (Oxford, 1927), 407-431, who writes of “crude bibliolatry.” In general, S. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, 1972), 128-130; E. S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma, The Story of William Winthrop* (Boston, 1958), 80-81.

⁵ See further Morison, *Harvard College* (note 3), 200-207; *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge, 1935), 74-76; R. H. Pfeiffer, “The Teaching of Hebrew in Colonial America,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 45 (1955), 363-373; I. S. Meyer, *Hebrew at Harvard (1636-1760)*, *Publications of the Jewish Historical Society* 35 (1939), 145-170. For the controversy over the antiquity of the vowel points used in biblical Hebrew, see W. Gesenius, *Geschichte der hebraischen Sprache und Schrift* (Leipzig, 1815), 182-218 and H.-J. Kraus, *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Untersuchung des Alten Testaments* (Neukirchen, 1969), second edition, §14. American Hebraists, prior to Moses Stuart, preferred to consider the vowel points later additions to the text that they could safely ignore. They could have followed the main arguments in H. Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connected ...*, which had run through eight printings in London alone by 1720, and was widely read in the colonies (discussion under “An. 446”), or in one of the major Hebrew grammars represented in the colleges. Cotton Mather, in his Harvard master’s thesis, defended an older Protestant position that the vowel points were of divine origin, but later changed his mind.

⁶ For Judah Monis, see, for example, DAB 13:86-87; ANB 15, 674-675; G. Kohut, “Judah Monis, M.A., The First Instructor in Hebrew at Harvard University,” *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 14 (1898), 217-226; L. Friedman, “Judah Monis, First Instructor in Hebrew at Harvard University,” *Proceedings of the American Jewish Historical Society* 22 (1914); G. F. Moore, “Judah Monis,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 52 (1919), 285-312; J. K. Miklizanski, “First of Hebrew Printing in America,” in J. M. Baron, ed., *Steeled by Adversity, Essays and Addresses on American Jewish Life* (Philadelphia, 1971), 104-105; E. Silberschlag, “Judah Monis in Light of an Unpublished Manuscript,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 46/7 (1980), 495-529.

⁷ For the first incumbent of the chair (1764-1785), see T. J. Siegel, "Professor Stephen Sewall and the Transformation of Hebrew at Harvard," in S. Goldman, ed., *Hebrew and the Bible in America, the First Two Centuries* (Hanover, NH, 1993), 228-245.

⁸ E. S. Morgan, *The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth 1653-1657, The Conscience of a Puritan* (Gloucester, MA, 1946), 41: "My pupils all came to me this day to desire they might cease learning Hebrew: I withstood it with all the reason I could, yet all will not satisfy them ... thus am I requited for my love; and thus little fruit of all my prayers and tears for their good." (August 29, 1653).

⁹ Quoted by G. A. Kohut, *Ezra Stiles and the Jews* (New York, 1902), 103.

¹⁰ S. Willard, *Memories of Youth and Manhood* (Boston, 1855), 2:201-202. Of his own college education he writes, "Our knowledge of Hebrew, if any, was very limited; in this language, our study, while undergraduates, was confined to a part of the Hebrew Psalter, without the vowel-points ... those of us who had made any proficiency had probably forgotten a great part of what little we had learned ..." (2:99).

¹¹ E. S. Morgan, *The Gentle Puritan — A Life of Ezra Stiles* (New Haven, 1962). His knowledge of Hebrew has been assessed repeatedly but the best study remains Kohut, *Ezra Stiles and the Jews* (note 9). G. F. Moore, "Ezra Stiles' Studies in the Cabala," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (March-April, 1918), 290-306; E. Wolf 2nd, "Ezra Stiles Writes a Hebrew Letter," *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman*, ed. M. B. Harin et al. (Leiden, 1962), 516-546. Stiles's work in Arabic was noted briefly by Kohut, *Ezra Stiles and the Jews* (note 9), 21 and 99. My study of Stiles's notes (Yale University Library Stiles Papers Misc. 502, 503) shows his close dependence on publications of Richard and Edward Pococke (1658, 1671).

¹² *The Diaries of William Bentley D.D., Pastor of the East Church, Salem* (Salem, Mass., 1905-1914), see I, xviii.

¹³ William B. Hodgson was one of the first Americans sent abroad by his government to learn a Near Eastern language, posted to Algiers by John Quincy Adams in 1826; see J. A. Field, Jr., *America and the Mediterranean World 1776-1882* (Princeton, 1969), 193-194.

¹⁴ H. A. Pochmann, *German Culture in America* (Madison, 1957), 66-75; J. W. Brown, *The Rise of Biblical Criticism in America* (Middletown, CT, 1969), 3-44; V. W. Brooks, *The Flowering of New England* (New York, 1952), Chapters II, IV, V; C. Diehl, *Americans and German Scholarship 1770-1870* (New Haven, 1978), 70-100. The most detailed study is O. W. Long, *Literary Pioneers: Early American Explorers of European Culture* (Cambridge, MA, 1935).

¹⁵ Bancroft, quoted by Diehl, *Americans and German Scholarship* (note 14), 81, wrote in 1818: "Who at Cambridge knows the languages of the East? Have you one thorough critic even in Hebrew?"

¹⁶ R. Bainton, *Yale and the Ministry* (New York, 1957), 49-61.

¹⁷ H. K. Rose, *History of Andover Theological Seminary* (Newton, MA, 1933). For the importance of seminaries in the formation of nineteenth-century American higher education, see N. A. Taylor, "The Theological Seminary in the Configuration of American Higher Education: The Antebellum Years," *History of Education Quarterly* 17 (1977), 17-30.

¹⁸ For Eliphalet Pearson, see DAB 14, 358; ANB 17, 210-224.

¹⁹ For Moses Stuart, see J. H. Giltner, *Moses Stuart, The Father of Biblical Science in America* (Atlanta, 1988). Briefer and more topical studies of this crucial figure include Brown, *Rise of Biblical Criticism* (note 14), 94-110; Bainton, *Ministry* (note 16), 90-93; J. Herbst, *The German Historical School in American Scholarship* (Ithaca, 1965), Chapter IV; E. A. Park, "Moses Stuart," *The New Englander* 10 NS 4 (1852), 42-55 (also published separately as *A Discourse Delivered at the Funeral of Professor Moses Stuart* [Andover, 1852]), and C. C. Torrey, "The Beginnings of Oriental Study at Andover," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 13 (1896), 249-266. Stuart himself wrote of the late eighteenth century, "There were no schools, no books, no teachers to aid in the study of the original Scriptures," *Dissertation on the Importance and Best Method of Studying the Original Languages of the Bible by Jahn and Others ...* (Andover, 1821), 5. His justification for studying German appeared as "Letter to the Editor, on the Study of the German Language," *The Christian Review* 6 (1843), 446-471 (with autobiographical remarks).

²⁰ E. Sachau, in *Die deutschen Universitäten* (Berlin, 1893), 508-510; E. F. Miller, *The Influence of Gesenius on Hebrew Lexicography* (New York, 1927), 18. Robinson wrote a fine appreciation and personal memoir of Gesenius in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 1 (1844), 361-379.

²¹ Manuscript Diary for July, 1836, Yale Archives Record Group 429 Box 5 Folder 247 folio 68.

²² B. B. Edwards, *Writings* (Boston, 1853), 2:216. For Edwards, see note 31.

²³ Figures derived from an unpublished manuscript by C. C. Torrey, "Two Great Teachers," Yale Divinity School Archives Record Group 30.

²⁴ For Edward Robinson, see J. G. Williams, *The Times and Life of Edward Robinson, Connecticut Yankee in Solomon's Court* (Atlanta, 1999). Individual aspects of his contribution to American scholarship are commented on by J. Bewer, "Edward Robinson as a Biblical Scholar," F. M. Abel, "Edward Robinson and the Identification of Biblical Sites," A. Alt, "Edward Robinson and the Historical Geography of Palestine," and W. F. Stinespring, "The Critical Faculty of Edward Robinson" in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 58 (1939), 355-387. See further Brown, *Rise of Biblical Criticism* (note 14), 111-124 and the tribute of Edward Salisbury and Elijah Barrows, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 8 (1863), iii-vii.

²⁵ Quoted by Pochman, *German Culture* (note 14), 73. Bancroft was influential in deepening the distrust of contemporary German theology in early nineteenth-century New England by repeatedly assuring his Harvard mentors, who, as he supposed, had a professorship waiting for him, that he was untainted by German atheism: "There is a great deal more religion in a few lines of Xenophon, than in a whole course of Eichhorn ..." (quoted by Brown, *Rise of Biblical Criticism* [note 14], p. 43). Upon his return to Harvard, however, the ultra-American Bancroft assumed such continental airs, salting his pompous discourse with phrases in German, that he was encouraged to depart; in fact, none of the "pioneers" remained long on the Harvard faculty.

²⁶ Brooks, *Flowering of New England* (note 14), 85.

²⁷ E. Robinson, "Theological Education in Germany," *The Biblical Repository* 4 (1831), 1-51, 201-226, 409-451, 613-637, of which 40-51 offer comparisons of American and German higher education and Robinson's personal reactions to salient features of German university life. He was fond of this topic and returned to it in "The Aspect of Literature and Science in the United States, as compared with Europe," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 1 (1844), 1-35.

²⁸ Charles Hodge (1797-1878), Hebraist of the Princeton Theological Seminary, whose career was similar to Robinson's (see DAB 9, 987), wrote that "Germans can believe anything," and that they "could see wonders in nonsense," quoted by M. A. Taylor, *The Old Testament in the Old Princeton School (1812-1891)* (San Francisco, 1992), 78. Because of its durable conservatism, the Princeton School was less open to German influence than Andover.

²⁹ Robinson, "Theological Education" (note 27), 29. Robinson contrasted the German capacity to unbend with the American obsession with improving one's condition and love of gain (wealth, reputation, comfort, happiness). Germans enjoyed possession of what they had, whereas Americans always wanted something better, "Theological Education" (note 27), 47.

³⁰ Freytag to Salisbury, March 14, 1843, American Oriental Society Letter Book I, Yale University Library, "Talent, Eifer, Bedächtigkeit und Genauigkeit."

³¹ Edwards, *Writings* (note 22), 2:217. For an appraisal of Edwards, who was a broader Semitist than Stuart and keenly interested in Arabic, see Torrey, "Beginnings," (note 19), 264-265; DAB 6, 27.

³² B. Sears, "German Literature; — Its Religious Character and Influence," *The Christian Review* 6 (1841), 283 (slightly rearranged here).

³³ For Josiah Gibbs, see ANB 8, 919-920.

³⁴ Timothy Dwight, *Memories of Yale Life and Men* (New York, 1903), 266. Dwight studied Hebrew with Gibbs and writes of his tedious but information-filled classes with humor and tolerant affection.

³⁵ Herbst, *German Historical School* (note 19), 1. In W. Somerset Maugham's novel *Of Human Bondage* (1915), the American student in Heidelberg, Weeks, is a New England Unitarian with a Harvard degree in Greek, so by this time the pioneers had become a type.

³⁶ Herbst, *German Historical School* (note 19), 96.

³⁷ For the importance of William Jones in the foundation of linguistics and philology, see H. Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England 1780-1870* (Minneapolis, 1983), 115-161 and more recently K. Paddaya, ed., *Bulletin of the Deccan College Post-Graduate Research Institute* 54/55 (1994-5), special numbers devoted to Jones.

³⁸ B. R. Foster, "Edward E. Salisbury, America's First Arabist," *Al-'Usur al-Wusta* 9 (1997), 15-17 and ANB 19, 206-208; F. Edgerton, "A Letter of Salisbury," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 64 (1944), 58-61; L. A. Stevenson, *Scholarly Means to Evangelical Ends, The New Haven Scholars and the Transformation of Higher Learning in America, 1830-1890* (Baltimore, 1996).

³⁹ For De Sacy and "Porte Royale," see J. Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1955), 140-157. An English translation of the Porte Royale grammar, *Principles of General Grammar, adapted to the capacity of youth ...* translated by D. Fosdick, was published at Andover in 1837.

⁴⁰ T. A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism 1844-1912, Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1992).

⁴¹ Salisbury's correspondence on behalf of the Society is preserved in American Oriental Society Letter Book I, Yale University Library.

⁴² *An Inaugural Discourse on Arabic and Sanskrit Literature, Delivered in New Haven, Wednesday, August 16, 1843 ...* (New Haven, 1843), 50.

⁴³ R. J. Storr, *The Beginnings of Graduate Instruction in America* (Chicago, 1953), 53-58.

⁴⁴ For Whitney, see DAB 18, 621-622, ANB 23, 310-313. His papers are in the Yale University Archives, Record Group 555.

⁴⁵ A. von Humboldt, *Linguistic Variability & Intellectual Development*, translated by G. L. Buck and F. A. Raven (Coral Gables, FL, 1971). The belief that the development of the Semitic peoples was restricted by the supposed limitations of their languages was universal in oriental scholarship; for a classic statement see, for example, S. A. Cook, "The Semites," *Cambridge Ancient History*, second edition (1924), Chapter V, especially 194-205.

⁴⁶ Quotations taken from *Language and the Study of Language, Twelve Lectures on the Principles of Linguistic Science*, sixth edition (1901, reprinted New York, 1971), 305, 308; *The Life and Growth of Language: An Outline of Linguistic Science* (New York, 1883), 248-249.

⁴⁷ For Crawford Toy, see DAB 18, 621-622.

⁴⁸ For David Lyon, see DAB Supplement 1, 518-519. Lyon wrote an account of the Semitics Department at Harvard in S. E. Morison, *The Development of Harvard University, 1869-1929* (Cambridge, 1930), 231-240.

⁴⁹ For George Barton, see ANB 2, 291-292.

⁵⁰ My account of the career of Harper at Yale is drawn from T. W. Goodspeed, *William Rainey Harper, First President of the University of Chicago* (Chicago, 1928); F. K. Sandars, "The Yale Period," *The Biblical World* 27 (1906), 177-181; The William Rainey Harper Personal Papers, University of Chicago Archives (which include a detailed history of Harper's institute and his correspondence with Dwight and others), and Torrey, "Two Great Teachers" (note 23).

⁵¹ Figures drawn from O. and M. Handlin, *The Wealth of the American People* (New York, 1975), 162.

⁵² For Hilprecht, see ANB 10, 825-827. For Jastrow, see ANB 11, 886-887. For the relationship between Semitic Studies and Jewish learning, see

P. Ritterband and H. Wechsler, *Jewish Learning in American Universities, The First Century* (Bloomington, 1994).

⁵³ For Haupt, see ANB 10, 320-321.

⁵⁴ For Clay, see ANB 5, 17-18.

⁵⁵ B. Kuklick, *Puritans in Babylon* (Princeton, 1996); J. P. Peters, *Nippur, or Explorations and Adventures on the Euphrates* (New York, 1897). Peters noted that the early seasons at Nippur cost more than \$70,000 (more than twenty times a professorial annual salary of the period). In general, see J. S. Cooper, "From Mosul to Manila: Early Approaches to Funding Ancient Near Eastern Studies in the United States," in A. Gunter, ed., *Culture and History II* (Copenhagen, 1992), 133-163.

⁵⁶ Peters, *Nippur* (note 56), I:vi, vii.

⁵⁷ The term was introduced to the humanities by E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978) and has been used by many writers since with a negative connotation, but in this essay "orientalist" is used in its traditional, non-pejorative sense.

⁵⁸ This thesis will be developed in my forthcoming historical study alluded to above, (*).

⁵⁹ One of the earliest orientalist historical journals published in the Near East was the *Journal Asiatique de Constantinople*, beginning in 1852.

⁶⁰ Torrey, see ANB 21, 756-757 and B. R. Foster, "Nobody's Pet Chicken: Charles C. Torrey and Theodor Noeldeke," *al-Usur al-Wusta* 11(1999), 12-15.

⁶¹ For the American Schools of Oriental Research, see P. King, *American Archaeology in the Mideast: A History of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Philadelphia, 1963). The diaries of Charles C. Torrey, which I have consulted through the generosity of his daughter, Nancy Frueh, provide much detail, which I will present elsewhere

⁶² Charles Torrey, ed., *Ibn Abd al-Hakam, The Futuh Misr* (New Haven, 1922). The book was originally scheduled to be printed in London for the Gibb Memorial Series, but the First World War brought that to a standstill. The Arabic type was set by E. J. Brill, Leiden, for the Yale University Press, as no American printer could undertake the task.

⁶³ The following narrative is principally constructed from the correspondence of G. Barton, E. Chiera, A. Clay, R. Dougherty, C. Fisher, M. Jastrow, S. Langdon, J. Montgomery, C. Torrey, and the "Expedition" files in the archives of the Yale Babylonian Collection, Yale University Library. In addition, I have used the correspondence files of Yale presidents Hadley and Angell in the Yale University Archives and the diary of Charles C. Torrey (note 55). Fuller documentation will appear in my forthcoming historical study, above (*).

⁶⁴ This theme is developed by C. C. Torrey, "The Outlook for Oriental Studies," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 38 (1918), 107-120. Although Torrey's scholarly values had been formed in his study with Noeldeke and he maintained warm relations with his teacher until Noeldeke's death, he felt that American Semitic scholarship had depended too long on German anthologies and texts edited by Germans, and that German biblical studies were becoming too anti-Semitic to be taken seriously. The time had come for Americans to strike out on their own.

⁶⁵ *Jewish Daily News*, Feb. 7, 1921.

⁶⁶ Jastrow set out his views on "political Zionism" in *Zionism and the Future of Palestine: The Fallacies and Dangers of Political Zionism* (New York, 1919).

⁶⁷ For an assessment of Clay's "Amorite Hypothesis," see A. Goetze, "Professor Clay and the Amurrite Problem," *Yale University Library Gazette* 36/3 (1962), 133-137.

⁶⁸ Woolley to Dougherty, April 14, 1927, Yale Babylonian Collection Archives.

⁶⁹ P. R. S. Moorey, *A Century of Biblical Archaeology* (Cambridge, 1991).

⁷⁰ American Egyptology found few positions in universities outside of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, so was largely established in major museums, whose work was built around expeditions to Egypt. See J. A. Wilson, *Signs and Wonders Upon Pharaoh, A History of American Egyptology* (Chicago, 1964).

Lecturer, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Yale University. Rachel Schine. "On Blackness in Arabic Popular Literature: The Black Heroes of the Siyar Sha'biyya, Their Conceptions, Contests, and Contexts" Tahera Qutbuddin. Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Studies and the Program in Judaic Studies, Princeton University. Rana Mikati. "The Creation of Early Islamic Beirut: The Sea, Scholars, Jihad and the Sacred" Fred Donner. Junior Research Group Leader, Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Studies, University of Tübingen. Rasheed Hosein. "Tribal Alliance Formations and Power Structures in the Jahiliyah and Early Islamic Periods: Quraysh and Thaqif (530-750 CE)" Fred Donner. The Department of Near Eastern Studies currently offers degrees in Near Eastern Languages & Cultures, and Islamic Studies. The following specializations are identified with the Near Eastern Languages & Cultures degree: (1) Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations, (2) Arabic, (3) Armenian, (4) Assyriology, (5) Egyptology, (6) Hebrew Bible, (7) Iranian Studies, (8) Near Eastern Archaeology, (9) Semitics, and (10) Turkic Studies. These must bear the actual signature of the Registrar and the seal of the issuing institution. International applicants whose first language is not English must certify their proficiency in English. Such applicants must submit scores received on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language testing System (IELTS). The Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, founded in 1841, is one of the world's leading centers for the study of the Near East. Throughout its long history, the Department has maintained its strong sense of traditional humanist values, as well as its outstanding leadership role in developing and evaluating the latest techniques, perspectives, and resources for study of the Near East, from earliest times to the modern era. The K. W. and E. K. Rosenthal Memorial Lectures in Ancient and Near Eastern Civilizations, endowed in memory of his parents by Franz Rosenthal, one of the Yale's most distinguished faculty members, feature eminent scholars in the Depa. Founded. 1841.

Benjamin Foster, "On the Formal Study of Near Eastern Languages in America, 1770-1930," in *U.S.-Middle East Historical Encounters: A Critical Survey*, ed. Abbas Amanat and Bernhard Magnusson (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007). Historian John H. Giltner notes that in the second half of the eighteenth century, serious training in biblical languages had been in decline in America. John H. Giltner, *Moses Stuart: The Father of Biblical Science* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 6. See also Mary Latimer Gambrell, *Ministerial Training in Eighteenth Century New England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968). The Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations is one of the world's leading centers for the study of the Near East. Though the present Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations did not formally come into being until the twentieth century, the origins of the Yale Department go back to 1841, when Arabic was first offered at Yale. Throughout its long history, the Department has maintained its strong sense of traditional humanist values, as well as its outstanding leadership role in developing and evaluating the latest techniques, perspectives, and resources for study o...