WHILST cataloguing the post-Mingana accessions of Arabic manuscripts to the John Rylands University Library, there came to my attention a slim sheaf of correspondence inside the front covers of Rylands Arabic MS. 834. The manuscript is itself of considerable interest. It comprises an Arabic-Italian dictionary and classified vocabulary, and may have been copied around or before the middle of the eighteenth century; the "useful phrases" of colloquial Arabic given in it point to an origin in the Syrian region.

According to a note on the flyleaf, the manuscript was acquired by C. L. Meryon at Jaffa (Yafa) in 1813. Charles Lewis Meryon (1783-1877) is well-known as the personal physician and companion of Lady Hester Stanhope and as the compiler after her death of Lady Hester's *Memoirs... as related by herself in conversations with her physician; comprising her opinions and anecdotes of some of the most remarkable persons of her time* (London, 1845, 3 vols.) and her *Travels... narrated by*...
her physician (London, 1846, 3 vols.). The salient details of his life can be gained from Thomas Seccombe’s article in the *DNB*, whilst both Lady Hester’s *Memoirs* and *Travels* contain much material relating to Meryon himself. He first entered her service in 1810 and was with her in Lebanon on and off until the summer of 1838, a year before her death; despite this long and faithful service, Lady Hester eventually treated him, in Ian Bruce’s words, “more like a head servant than a doctor”.

It may be surmised that Meryon purchased the Arabic-Italian manuscript dictionary to help him with the Arabic studies which he took up after his first arrival in Lebanon, for it contains some annotations, apparently in his own hand, mainly English equivalents of Italian words and phrases. According to *The Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope*, i. 269, Meryon and Lady Hester were in Nazareth in June-July 1812. Meryon lodged in a Franciscan monastery there, and in its library searched for books to assist his learning of Arabic; he was rewarded by finding copies of Erpenius’s grammar and a dictionary, and so began his studies there and then. Later in life, Meryon practiced medicine in London, and ultimately died a nonagenarian; presumably the Arabic-Italian dictionary containing these letters came from his library after his death.

The Swiss traveller and orientalist John Lewis Burckhardt (1784-1817) requires little introduction. Amongst articles on him in standard reference books, that in the *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*, vol. iii (Leipzig, 1876), is especially good, and his posthumously-published *Travels in Nubia* (London, 1819), edited by W. M. Leake, contain a sympathetic memoir of Burckhardt by Leake. Though possessed of indomitable courage and bravery in his travels through parts of northeastern

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1 In a letter to Lord Hardwicke, written after Meryon had spent the better part of twenty-eight years in her service, she could say, “Should you see the Doctor in England recollect that his only good quality in my sight is, I believe, being very honest in money matters. No others do I grant him; without judgement, without heart, he goes through the world, like many others, blundering his way, and often, from his want of accuracy, doing mischief everytime he opens his mouth” (cited in Catherine, Duchess of Cleveland, *The Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope... by her niece the Duchess of Cleveland* [London, 1914; originally privately printed London, 1897], p. 93.)
Africa and the Islamic Near East to which hardly any European scholars had previously penetrated, Burckhardt had none of the flamboyance and aura of diablerie, or the all-consuming interest in curiosities of sex, displayed by another traveller to the Holy Cities of Arabia later in the nineteenth century, Sir Richard Burton. Accordingly, whereas Burton has been accorded no fewer than eleven biographies in the 80 years or so since his death, 1 Burckhardt has attracted far less attention. After Leake's *Memoir*, there was a further *Memoir* of Burckhardt by Dr. A. Crichton prefixed, in a strange juxtaposition, to volume xxxi of the Naturalist's Library, R. H. Schomburgk's *Ichthyology. Fishes of British Guiana. Part 2nd* (Edinburgh, 1843). Thereafter, nothing of note seems to have appeared till Katherine Sim's *Desert traveller, the life of Jean Louis Burckhardt* (London, 1969).

During his travels, Burckhardt passed as Shaikh Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abdallāh, a Syrian merchant and pilgrim, and in this guise was able to make his journeys through the interior of Syria and what is now Jordan (1810-12), through Nubia and Merowe to the Red Sea coast at Suakin and thence to the Hijaz and Sinai (1813-15), and, finally, into the Sinai peninsula again (1816). But all these years were really a preparation for the grand design of his life, a charge undertaken from Sir Joseph Bankes of the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior of Africa (more commonly known as the African Association), that of crossing the Sahara with a pilgrim caravan returning westwards from Egypt to the Fezzan region and ultimately to the Niger. But in these years, there were no suitable caravans to the Maghrib, and before Burckhardt could join a caravan which did at last appear, he died of dysentery at Cairo in October 1817.

There are nine letters contained in Rylands Arabic MS. 834. They comprise a letter from Meryon to Burckhardt, which must be the copy Meryon kept for himself (No. 1); five autographs of Burckhardt addressed to Meryon (Nos. 5-9); and three copies by Meryon, one being entire and the other two being extracts of letters to Meryon from prominent members of the

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1 So according to Fawn M. Brodie, whose own biography of Burton, *The Devil drives, a Life of Sir Richard Burton* (London, 1967), makes the eleventh.
European community in Egypt and referring to Burckhardt (Nos. 2-4). Burckhardt is invariably referred to in the letters as "Shaikh Ibrahim". He was very zealous in preserving his incognito as far as possible, even amongst the Franks of Egypt and Syria, lest word of his disguise come circuitously to Muslim ears via reports in Europe of western travellers to the Levant. Burckhardt was a prolific correspondent, and only a part of his letters have been edited. A good amount of his correspondence is in the British Museum and the Cambridge University Library, to which latter university, one of his almae matres, Burckhardt bequeathed a rich collection of some 400 oriental manuscripts.

Meryon clearly used these nine letters concerning Burckhardt when he was compiling the Memoirs and Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope. He does not quote from them verbatim, but he has marked on the letters references to his manuscript copy and/or the printed text of the Travels. The letters show that during the period concerned (31 October 1815–28 March 1816), an initial cordiality in relations between Burckhardt and Meryon disappeared. They had met at Nazareth in June-July 1812, when Lady Hester Stanhope had herself first encountered Burckhardt. She took an immediate dislike to him. In Meryon's words, "Lady Hester's opinion of him was not a favourable one, and she never altered it. He took occasion, in conversation, to point out to Lady Hester the practicability of procuring certain objects of antiquity, which he supposed to come within the reach of her purse and influence, although not of his own". Katherine Sim is doubtless correct in detecting jealousy at work here: Burckhardt already had a great reputation for his oriental learning and for his travels in Syria, and at this meeting, others of Lady Hester's party, including her lover Michael Bruce (see below, p. 46), tended to lionize Burckhardt.

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1 Thus his correspondence with his family in Basle has been recently edited by his descendant Carl Burckhardt-Saras as Scheik Ibrahim, Briefe an Eltern und Geschwister (Basle, 1956).
3 The Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope, i. 271; cf. The Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope, pp. 124, 205.
4 Desert Traveller, pp. 125-8.
It is also likely that Burckhardt's stout Swiss patriotism and vigorously-expressed detestation of the French Revolutionary invaders of his country (from which invaders his own family in Basle suffered much) did not endear him to the extravagantly Francophile Lady Hester.\(^1\) In as much as Meryon was the devoted mouthpiece of Lady Hester, her dislike of Burckhardt must have come to play some part in the final worsening of relations between Burckhardt and Meryon. Meryon as good as admitted this when he was putting together Lady Hester's *Memoirs* and observed that he had often acted as a sounding-board for her views: "It was not an unusual way with her to employ my name to repeat her opinions, by which people were offended, who afterwards vented their spite in some way or another: it was one of her many manoeuvres to keep people aloof from each other when it suited her purposes."\(^2\) Latterly, Burckhardt sensed that Lady Hester stood behind Meryon in the quarrel of the two men, as is abundantly clear from his strictures in Letter 9 on Meryon's weakness of character. Doubtless, too, Burckhardt's contemptuous dismissal of the serpent-stone as "one of those omnipotent simples of which the Arabick materia medica abounds" (see below, p. 56) was reported to Lady Hester, who credulously accepted its antitoxic efficacy.\(^3\) At all events, until towards the end of 1816, Burckhardt

\(^1\) The Duchess of Cleveland noted that "At the time when every English heart was still aglow with the glories of Waterloo, all her letters ... are full of invectives against the Allies, 'Who have violated the laws of nations to the utmost, by deluging France with foreign troops ... and degrading and imprisoning a man acknowledged King by every Power in Europe [sc. Napoleon]'". Lady Hester's good niece averred that this attitude was incomprehensible to her (*The Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope*, pp. 183-7).

\(^2\) *The Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope*, iii. 271.

\(^3\) Meryon himself confessed that, when he returned to Lebanon after having been back to England for taking his medical degrees in Oxford and London (1817), he found that "her ladyship had in the meanwhile completely familiarized herself with the usages of the East, conducting her establishment entirely in the Turkish manner, and adopting even much of their medical empiricism" (ibid. i. 3-4). The Duchess of Cleveland discussed Lady Hester's growing addiction at this time to astrology and the occult sciences, and how she may even have given some credence to stories which circulated in the Levant about her messianic mission as an Oriental Queen, and she noted that "She was, for so clever a woman, extraordinarily credulous, with a natural leaning to the marvellous and mysterious, which had always more or less attracted her" (op. cit. pp. 209-12).
and Lady Hester were engaged in an increasingly acidulous correspondence, and in writing to his mother in Switzerland, Burckhardt did not hesitate to express himself trenchantly about "that evil woman" and her "malicious tongue". Yet the rupture between Burckhardt and Meryon was unfortunate, since they had been on very friendly terms when Meryon came to Alexandria in the late summer of 1815, when Burckhardt was recuperating at the house there of Colonel Missett (on whom see below, p. 40 sq.), and the two men had made various expeditions together into the Delta to view Egyptian antiquities.

The final quarrel of Meryon and Burckhardt, bringing about an end to their correspondence, forms the main theme of Letters 6-8. The quarrel was over the form of payment for the engraving of a seal ring, with Meryon’s name on it in Arabic characters, in the Khan al-Khalili bazaar of Cairo. Burckhardt tendered his bill for the work, and expected to receive the equivalent in books. Meryon does, in fact, record that in December 1815 he dispatched to Burckhardt a copy of the Gospels, a Psalter and the Miracles of St. Athanasius, all printed in Arabic on Mount Lebanon. It appears that Meryon sent money as well, which Burckhardt regarded as a gratuitous act, and the latter protested that if he were not told the cost of the books, he would send them back (see Letter 8). Burckhardt certainly emerges from all this as a touchy and prickly character, but it must be remembered that he had returned from Mecca and Medina in June 1815 in a very exhausted and weak condition, one which the heat of the Cairo summer had done little to alleviate; he was to die within less than two years, whereas Meryon was to live on for another sixty.

In this brief introduction to the nine letters, there remains only to say something about the political state of the Levant at this time, and something about certain prominent members of the European community in Egypt referred to in the letters; three of these European noteworthies in Egypt are the writers to Meryon of Letters 2-4.

1 Cited in Sim, Desert Traveller, pp. 401-3.  
2 Ibid. pp. 359 ff.  
3 The Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope, iii. 283.
The years 1815-16 were those when the governor of Egypt, Muḥammad ‘Alī, had established himself in Egypt with a considerable degree of autonomy from the Sublime Porte in Istanbul. In 1811 he had overthrown the Mamelukes in Cairo, and a year or so later he overcame their survivors in Upper Egypt. Although his troops had suffered initially a series of reverses, he and his son Ibrāhīm were now waging a successful war against the Wahhābī sectaries of the Arabian peninsula, warfare which was to culminate in the sack of the Wahhābī capital Dir‘īyya in 1818. Meanwhile, there arose in the latter part of 1815 and the opening of 1816 fears (mentioned by Burckhardt in Letter 7) that once Britain and the Allies had finished with Napoleon at Waterloo, Britain might threaten the coasts of Egypt and Syria and attempt to re-establish the position there which she had held some years previously. There were also fears, alluded to in the same letter, of an attempt by the Sultan in Istanbul to assert closer control over his independent-minded governor in Egypt, by means of an expedition under the Ottoman High Admiral or Kapudan Pasha, Mehmet Khusrau Pasha (the later Minister of War and Grand Vizier), who had himself been governor of Egypt in 1802-3 just before Muḥammad ‘Alī’s seizure of power and who had accordingly a special hatred for his supplanter. Within Cairo itself, Muḥammad ‘Alī had at the beginning of August 1815 to deal with a revolt of his army when he attempted to introduce some of the principles of the “new military order”, the Niẓām-i jadīd, inaugurated within the Turkish parts of the Ottoman Empire by Sultan Selim III in 1792. Reacting against the prospect of European-type drill and formations, part of the Cairo garrison had mutinied, plundering the bazaars and attacking the Pasha’s palace at Uzbekiyya. The outbreak had been quelled after eight days, but Muhammad ‘Alī had to treat the offenders circumspectly; subsequent attempts at punishment of the mutineers are alluded to in Letter 7, but the projected military reforms had temporarily to be shelved.

1 The chaos caused by the lootings and the atmosphere of fear in Cairo are graphically described by the contemporary Egyptian historian ‘Abd ar-Rahmān al-Jabarti in his chronicle ‘Ajā‘ib al-āthār fi t-tarājim wa-l-akhbār (Cairo, 1322/1904), iv. 237 ff., sub anno 1230/1815.
The cities of Egypt and the Levant already in the opening decades of the nineteenth century included substantial colonies of Europeans, some with honest avocations as consular officials and merchants, others of more dubious background, refugees from justice and adventurers of all description. Travellers through the Near East at this time, such as William Turner and J. S. Buckingham, advert in strong terms to the shady origins of the greater part of the Franks in places like Cairo and Alexandria, as comprising the very dregs of European society. Thus Buckingham had to say of his stay in Cairo that "the number of political refugees, absconding debtors, and persons of equivocal character from almost every part of the Mediterranean, while it furnished great variety of entertainment in their miscellaneous assemblies, required great caution in forming more intimate acquaintance with them".1

Letter 2 is a copy of a letter from Colonel Edward Missett to Meryon, and he is frequently mentioned in others of the letters. Missett was a figure known at this time all over the Near East for his diplomatic skill, his hospitality to British travellers and, latterly, for his fortitude in the face of severe physical disability, being paralysed in all four limbs. Burckhardt valued his friendship greatly, and in a letter of 8 February 1816 to the Secretary of the African Association wrote that

His public and private virtues are such as will ever make him regretted by the Europeans of this country [sc. Egypt], whose zealous protector he has often been, in most trying circumstances, and to many a kind benefactor. I have known few men who treat and know Turks so well as he does. His rigid integrity, his accuracy in business, and his inflexible firmness, are the only checks which Mohammed Aly has experienced in his relations with European governments, for the other Consuls are under such great obligations to him that they never dare uphold their nation's interests when they are in opposition to those of the Pasha. Nevertheless, the urbanity and generosity of the Colonel's character

1 The Autobiography of James Silk Buckingham, including his Voyages, Travels, Adventures, Speculations, Successes and Failures faithfully and frankly narrated (London, 1855), ii. 158-9. The history of one element of the Levantine communities of the Near East, the Jews of Egypt, has recently been examined by Jacob M. Landau in his book Jews in Nineteenth-Century Egypt (New York, 1969); it is true, however, that the Jewish community in Egypt was in the early nineteenth century a numerically small, almost wholly indigenous one, though its numbers became vastly augmented by immigrants in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
SOME CORRESPONDENCE

conciliated the friendship of all the Turks who were known to him, and he departs sincerely regretted both by Egyptians and Europeans, but particularly by myself, who have always experienced from him the most friendly solicitude.¹

An officer in the Enniskillen Dragoons, Missett had been appointed British agent in Egypt at the Peace of Amiens in 1803, when Egypt was restored to the Ottoman empire, and in subsequent years had endeavoured to extend British influence there and to counteract the intrigues of the French.² Until he left for Italy in 1816, he was British Consul-General for Egypt, with his headquarters at Būlāq near Cairo. Lady Hester Stanhope sent Meryon to Missett in the summer of 1815, hoping that her physician would be able to provide some relief for his affliction, and it was at Missett’s house in Alexandria that Meryon and Burckhardt first met since their earlier Nazareth encounter (see above, p. 36).³

R. Thorburn or Thurburn, the writer of Letter 3 to Meryon, was Missett’s private secretary; but, as noted in Letter 7, after the Colonel’s departure for the medicinal springs of Pisa, Thorburn became a partner in the mercantile house of Briggs & Co, at Alexandria, and was still engaged in this business in 1827.⁴

Missett’s successor Henry Salt (1780-1827) had been in early life secretary to Viscount Valentia (after 1816 the second Earl of Mountnorris), and had toured India and the Red Sea coasts with him; his experience there and his knowledge of Ethiopic, gained from a mission in 1809-10 to the Emperor of Ethiopia, together with Lord Valentia’s influence, secured him in May 1815 the appointment from Castlereagh of Consul-General in

³ The Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope, iii. 215 ff.
⁴ Cf. J. J. Halls, The Life and Correspondence of Henry Salt, Esq. F.R.S. etc., his Britannic Majesty’s Late Consul General in Egypt (London, 1834), ii. 276-7.
Egypt. In Letters 6 and 7 his expected arrival in Egypt is referred to; in fact, he was delayed at Malta waiting for a ship, and did not reach Alexandria till March 1816.¹ In these first decades of the nineteenth century, the duties of consular officials were not continuously onerous, and consuls like Salt amongst the British, and Asselin and Drovetti amongst the French (see on these, below), could spend much of their time searching out Egyptian and classical antiquities. Salt collected both for Lord Mountnorris and other gentlemen, and also for the British Museum; and in company with Burckhardt he organized in 1816 the transporting of the head of the so-called Young Memnon (i.e. the head of Rameses II) from Thebes to Alexandria and eventually to London.²

One of Missett's and Salt's consular counterparts at the time of the Letters was the Frenchman Jean-Louis Asselin de Cherville (1772-1822), the writer of Letter 4 and himself an interesting figure. Described by Turner as "a little vif man with great volubility of conversation", he had been in Egypt since 1806; in 1816 he became Vice-Consul of France in Egypt. He was a great collector of Egyptian antiquities, and told Turner that he intended to take his collection, which included a mummified head, to England and sell it for over £5,000.³ Asselin was also a great student of Arabic and Persian literature, and also of Ethiopic, an interest which he shared with Salt. He had started lessons in Ethiopic (Ge'ez or Amharic?) on arriving in Cairo from Abram, the old Abyssinian Christian who is reputed to have taught James Bruce and Sir William Jones; Turner says that in 1814 he had sent to England a copy of the Book of Genesis translated into Ethiopic for forwarding to the Prince Regent.⁴ Asselin, in fact, played a significant role in preparing the first Amharic translation of the Bible, by his help

¹ Ibid. i. 60 ff., 403 ff., 442, 451.
² Ibid. i. 464-5, 485, 489 ff., ii. 31 ff., 178-9. Burckhardt and Salt were close friends, and Burckhardt's Travels in Syria and the Holy Land (London, 1822) contains a frontispiece entitled "Sheikh Ibrahim (I. L. Burckhardt) in his Arab bernous. Sketched at Cairo in Feb' 1817 by H. Salt Esq. ".
⁴ Ibid. ii. 396-9.
to the translator Abram or Abu Rumi, the arabized form of this name. The large collection of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Ethiopic and even Pashto manuscripts which he had amassed in the Near East was later acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale.

The French Consul-General in Egypt from 1807 to 1815 was Bernardino Drovetti (1776-1852), mentioned in Letter 7. A Piedmontese, he was like Asselin a devoted Bonapartist, and had been a captain in Murat's cavalry; it was only reluctantly that he restored the Bourbon flag on his consulate in Alexandria when the news of Waterloo came through. As appears from Letter 5, he lost his job as Consul-General after the first Bourbon restoration in favour of a nominee more acceptable to the government of Louis XVIII, so he entered the service of Muhammad 'Ali. But his expertise and profound knowledge of Egypt subsequently led in 1821 to his appointment there as Consul-General again, a post which he held till 1826, and in 1829 he played a significant role in persuading Charles X's minister Polignac to move against the Dey of Algiers. Drovetti was, like Asselin and Salt, an indefatigable collector of antiquities, employing many agents throughout Egypt; eventually, he sold

1 See E. Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible, the Schweich Lectures of the British Academy* 1967 (London, 1968), pp. 62-67. This Amharic translation was basically from an Arabic version, but with comparison of the Hebrew and Greek originals and the Syriac and Ge'ez versions; the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1820 paid Asselin the very large sum of £1,250 for his expenses, Abram himself having died of the plague in Cairo shortly before this (I am grateful to Professor C. F. Beckingham for bringing these facts and this reference to my notice).

2 See *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, iii (Paris, 1939), 1292-3.

3 Turner, op. cit. ii. 312, 517.


5 See Halls, *The Life and Correspondence of Henry Salt*, i. 472-3, where, in a report to Lord Mountnorris, Salt complains that "For some time after my arrival, owing to the plague, I met with no antiques, which are becoming difficult to purchase; and I found that Monsieur Drovetti, the quondam French consul, was in Upper Egypt, buying up everything there to complete a collection upon which he has been engaged some years ...". Burckhardt described Drovetti's collection as "the finest of all those extant, in Italy, France, and England" (Memoir of Burckhardt, prefixed to *Travels in Nubia*, p. lxxix).
his Egyptological collection to the Turin museum after the French had refused to buy it.  

Finally, one should note the appearance in the Letters of a great friend of Burckhardt’s, the Armenian chief secretary and confidant of Muḥammad ‘Alī, Yūsuf Boghoz. It was to his house in Cairo that Burckhardt first went to recuperate on his return from the Hijaz, before moving out to a house in the Bāb al-Ḥadīd quarter of Cairo, as is referred to in Letter 4 of Asselin.  

II. THE LETTERS

1. Meryon-Burckhardt 31.10.1815 (copy in Meryon’s hand)  

Dr Meryon to Sheykh Ibrahim  
Mlle Lebanon Octr 31 1815  
My dear Shaykh [sic],  

If your progress up the Nile was as slow as mine over the sea you are but now arrived at Cairo. I was eight days on the water before I saw the coast of Syria and almost as many more before I landed at Tyre, whence I proceeded with mules to our hamlet of Meshmūshy, leaving my luggage to be sent after me as soon as the vessel should have discharged a part of her cargo consigned  

1 See Dictionnaire de biographie française, xi (Paris, 1967), 836-7. The rich gains of men like Asselin and Drovetti from the sale of antiquities doubtless compensated for the fact that for several years after the power of Napoleon first began to wane, many of the French consuls in the Levant received no pay from France, cf. Turner, op. cit. ii. 398.  

2 al-Jabarti mentions Bughūṣ at-Tarjumān al-Armanī (sc. “the Armenian Dragoman”) in connection with a monster which had appeared from the water at Damietta in 1817; the stuffed body of this monster was given by Muḥammad ‘Alī to Boghoz, who sold it at a high price to some Franks (‘Ajā‘ib al-āṯār, iv. 312-13). It appears that this “monster” was actually a hippopotamus; Henry Salt saw the skin in 1818 and made a drawing of it (Halls, The Life and Correspondence of Henry Salt, i. 489).  

3 In giving the text of the letters, the original spelling, punctuation and orthography are retained, with the exceptions that the abbreviations sometimes used by Burckhardt are usually expanded and the doubled consonants, which Burckhardt often marks with a bar above, in medieval fashion, are written out in full.
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to that place and have reached Sayda. You will thus understand that I have not yet been able to forward the watch to Selim, that being together with whatever I had not about my person in my trunk.

Your letter to Lady Hester I have delivered and I believe she intends answering it immediately, which induces me to write to you forthwith rather than lose the opportunity, though I have nothing else to say but that I hope you are got safe to Cairo.

Were you not affected by the melancholy end of poor M. Boutin? I am sure you were: for national indifference must give way to feelings of sorrow when a fellow being perishes in a foreign country the victim of an unknown assassin. The particulars of his death are as yet in mystery. He left Hamah intending to traverse the Ansâry mountains and was no more heard of.

I was speaking to Lady Hester about the stone which she

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1 Lady Hester Stanhope had in 1813 rented the monastery of Mar Elias, an occasional residence of the Patriarch of the Greek Catholics, which lay two miles from Sayda. But a severe bout of fever in the winter of 1813-14 left her ill-fitted to withstand the summer heat and humidity of the Levantine coastland, and Meryon therefore got her to move up the Bisri river valley to the highest parts of the mountain, to the Druze village of Dair Mishmushi, where the Emir Bashir Shihâb, the Druze ruler of Lebanon (1788-1840), gave her the use of a house. See the Duchess of Cleveland, *The Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope*, pp. 169-71.

2 The fate of Boutin excited much concern amongst the European communities of the Levant, conscious of their own vulnerability to outbreaks of local fanaticism and violence. Boutin had been a colonel of engineers in Napoleon’s army, and in 1813 had entered the French consular service in Egypt. He had met Lady Hester Stanhope and Meryon at Sayda in March 1814, and Lady Hester had given him one of her servants for his journeys in the Syrian interior. His death was reported in October 1815; he had been travelling from Hama by the direct route across the Jebel Anşariyya mountains to Latakia and had been murdered at some point beyond Shaizar. Lady Hester was much roused by this attack on a European. When it became clear that the Turkish governor of Tripoli, Muştafa Agha Pasha, intended to do nothing, she set on foot her own enquiries into the circumstances of Boutin’s death. Her representations, together with those of the French minister in Istanbul, prodded Muştafa Agha into sending a punitive expedition into the mountains, and in the spring of 1817 a Turkish force devastated the village where Boutin had been killed and robbed. See *The Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope*, ii. 335-6, iii. 254-6, 333 ff., and *The Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope*, pp. 194-6.
sent to M. Asselin, of which you told me something (I now forget what) at Alexandria. This stone, Lady H. says, has the property of sucking out the poison of venemous reptiles; and she herself, as she avers, was an eye witness to it's attaching itself like a leech to a wound, when she caused it to be applied by a Turkish barber on the bubo of a boy who had the plague, the bubo having first been slightly grazed by a lancet so as to draw a drop of blood.¹ On another occasion Mr Bruce² and herself were witnesses to it's sticking on for four hours to a man's arm at Latakia, which had been bitten by a serpent, and the man recovered.

I need not tell you that the above paragraph embodies Lady Hester's opinions, which she desires me to communicate to you.

I remain, dear Sheykh,

etc. etc.

C. L. Meryon

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2. Missett-Meryon 10.1.1816 (copy in Meryon's hand)

Copy of a letter from Col¹ Missett to Dr M.
Alexandria, 10th Jan' 1816.

My dear Sir,

Your letter of the 31st of October is at last come to relieve me from the uneasiness I had felt on your account, not having heard any tidings of you since your departure from Damietta and knowing the danger of travelling through Syria in its present distracted state.

I can easily imagine how much you must have been affected at finding Lady Hester so distressed as she appears to have been at the death of Mr Boutin ... in so melancholy a manner. Knowing the gratification she would derive from the recovery

¹ On Lady Hester and the serpentstone, see above, p. 37, n. 3.
² Michael Bruce (1787-1861), of the Stirlingshire family of the Bruces of Stenhouse, was Lady Hester Stanhope's lover from 1810 until towards 1815, accompanying her and Meryon, for instance, on her famous Palmyra trip in the spring of 1813. His letters to her came to light only in 1944, and have now been edited by his great-grandson Ian Bruce in The Nun of Lebanon, the Love Affair of Lady Hester Stanhope and Michael Bruce. Their newly-discovered Letters (London, 1951).
of his papers and from having it in her power to communicate to her friends the real circumstances of his fall, I sincerely wish she may fully succeed in obtaining the information she desires.

The Sheikh had a long voyage to his destination; for he was nearly a fortnight in reaching Cairo; where, on his arrival, he had the mortification to find Mr Schutz’s door shut against him: a misfortune which, I understand, he shares with every person capable of exciting that gentleman’s jealousy.¹

Lady Hester appears to be very angry with our friend for taking upon himself to censure the conduct of M. Asselin, whose fair speeches and well turned phrases have imposed upon her Ladyship.

Permit me, my dear Sir, to avail myself of this opportunity to repeat the expression of my gratitude for the interest which, since the commencement of our acquaintance, you have been so kind as to take in my health, and believe me with the most sincere regards faithfully yours

E. Missett

3. Thurburn-Meryon 10.1.1816 (extract copied in Meryon’s hand)

Extract of a letter from Mr Thurburn to Dr Meryon dated Alexandria 10th Jan’y 1816

My dear Sir

... ... ...

The Sheikh (in order to console himself for the cold reception he met with from the bride) was going to throw himself into the arms of a young Babashee slave, when he discovered that his intended had got the itch. He is likely to be detained some months longer in Egypt, as there is no prospect of any caravan setting out soon in the direction he intends travelling.

¹ J. S. Buckingham met Schutz in September 1813 in the house of Peter Lee, then British consul (later the Levant Company’s consul) in Alexandria, and described him as “a wealthy merchant just returning to Europe, after acquiring a large fortune in the corn trade of Egypt” (Autobiography, ii. 130).
We are at a loss to conjecture what has become of Turner. He had not reached Smyrna the 12th of last month.\(^1\)

Believe me, my dear Sir,
Yours most faithfully,
R. Thurburn

N.B. For Babashee Mr Thurburn should have written Habashy which means an Ethiopean or Abyss[in]ian woman.\(^2\) The Sheykh, however, did take for his concubine a girl of that people; and he could hardly do otherwise, if he wished to pass as a true Mussulman and conform to the usages of the respectable classes of society in Cairo.\(^3\)

4. Asselin-Meryon 10.2.1816 (copy in Meryon’s hand)

From Mons' Asselin de Cherville to Dr M.
Kaire 10 Fevrier 1816

Monsieur

En conversant avec le Cheikh Ibrahim il m’a assuré que vous aviez eu la complaisance de m’écrire et que je ne vous ai pas repondu. Si votre lettre m’étoit parvenue je serois sans excuse auprès de vous, et j’ose me flatter que vous me connaissez assez

\(^1\) William Turner (1792-1867) was, as a protégé of Canning’s, from 1811 onwards attached to the British embassy in Istanbul, which he used as a base for extensive travel in Asiatic Turkey and Greece; the results of these journeys are embodied in his discursive *A Journal of a Tour in the Levant* (see above, p. 41, n. 1). Turner did not in fact reach Smyrna till 15 January 1816, see his *Journal*, iii. 137-8.

\(^2\) To be completely accurate, “an Ethiopian or Abyssinian boy”; for “girl” or “woman”, one would require the feminine form *Habashiyya*.

\(^3\) The truth of Meryon’s observation here is confirmed by the experience of Edward Lane when he was living in Cairo (and openly as a Frank, and not as a Muslim, moreover) a decade or so after Burckhardt’s time. He states that he found difficulty in leasing a house in Cairo because it was considered improper, and even disreputable, for a man not to marry; the agent for the house would have been glad to admit him if only he would have purchased a female slave as concubine. See Lane’s *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, written in Egypt during the years 1833-1835* (Paisley and London, 1895), pp. 169-70, ch. vi “Domestic Life”.

pour être persuadé que je suis incapable d'une pareille negligence, surtout à l'égard de votre personne pour laquelle j'ai toujours conservé la plus parfaite estime. Si les reflexions d'un solitaire, souvent infirme et quelquefois grondeur, n'avoient rien d'effrayant pour vous, j'oserois vous proposer d'établir entre nous une correspondance, que j'aurois intérêt de ne plus laisser languir puisqu'elle seroit toute à mon avantage.

Pour la commencer je vous dirai en confidence que le Cheikh Ibrahim, dont vous connoissez la resolution de vivre en bon Musulman, a quitté depuis quelque temps la maison de Mr Boghoz pour aller se loger dans l'intérieur de la ville je ne sais où; car il fait un mystère de son habitation actuelle, soit pour dérouter les curieux, soit pour avoir ses coudées plus franches.1 On se dit même tout bas à l'oreille qu'il a voulu mettre à exécution, mais à la maniere Musulmane, le précepte de Eternel qui a dit : "crois et multipliez". mais, chut ! honni soit qui mal y pense.

Quelques soient les circonstances où je puisse me trouver, grand ou petit, riche ou pauvre, heureux ou malheureux, je vous prie d'être bien persuadé du parfait et sincère attachement que vous a voué pour la vie

Monsieur
Votre très humble et très obeissant serv
Asselin de Cherville

5. Burckhardt-Meryon 29.11.1815

Louis Burckhardt
Cairo 29 Nov. 1815

My dear Sir

I see that you are determined to keep up your silent gravity, even at a distance, but it shall not engage me to lay aside my loquacious merriness, for all that—and if you think that by not writing to me you will keep clear of my epistles you are quite mistaken. We parted on the Nile, the 8th of last month, I wrote to you from here the 22d or thereabouts, and have not yet received the shortest line from you altho' it is full 7 weeks that

1 See above, p. 44.
you gave me the solemn assurance of speedy news. —Mr Asselin has informed me some time ago of poor Boutin's fate; and is expecting, as he says, shortly the full details. His friends no doubt must deeply lament him, and horrible it certainly is to fall alone, unreveled, and in desert climes under the knife of the Assassin—but Boutin’s loss, I am convinced is none for the public or for litterature. Browne’s and Seetzen’s was, but their names will ever outlive them.

The plague has begun at Rosetta with very bad omens. The 2 daughters of Duclos died within the 24 hours; their father is quite distracted. Other instances have happen’d but still the Franks are not yet shut up. The Pasha is still at Alexandria, building a palace at Ras et-teen, and loading his ships with corn. The Colonel has been very badly during the Easterly winds of last month, but is now greatly recover’d, and tells me in his last letter of the 16th that he never eat with better appetite, and enjoyed his sleep more than at present. Mr Salt remains a desideratum, particularly for the Colonel, who seems determined to go to Upper E. —No news from Turner. But I have had lately a letter from Nerciat, dated the 29th Sept. who announces the arrival of Wiets family at Cyprus, on their way to Constantinople. Turner must have met them there, and Mr W.'s fine eyes have no doubt spoken stronger to his imagination than all the fairy ruins of Upper Egypt; I am sure he join'd their party to proceed, in triumph, to the Capital.

1 Both Browne and Seetzen had been the victims of assassination in the wilder parts of the Middle East only a few years before Boutin’s killing. William George Browne (1768-1813), his imagination fired by reading Bruce’s travels and the reports of the Africa Association, had in 1793-6 been the pioneer European visitor to Darfur. In 1812 he again left England, aiming to travel via Persia to Central Asia, but was in 1813 murdered by bandits between Tabriz and Tehran. See DNB, s.v. (Richard Garnett). Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767-1811) had travelled in the Near East since 1802 under the patronage of Duke Ernest of Gotha, preceding Burckhardt himself by penetrating to Mecca and Medina in the guise of a pilgrim, and sending back to Gotha valuable antiquities, manuscripts and scientific reports. But in 1811, when about to embark from Mocha on the Yemen coast for the Eritrean coast opposite, he was mysteriously killed, suspectedly on the orders of the Imam of San’a’. See Allgemeine deutsche Biographie, xxxiii (Leipzig, 1891), 590-2.

2 Not surprisingly, Turner does not mention in his Journal his meeting in
Mr. Bankes is still in Upper Egypt, and we have heard nothing of him; but I expect him within a fortnight.1 Mr. Buckingham return'd last week from Bombay, and stop'd here only a few hours on his way to Alexandria, where as it seems his affairs are not likely to succeed, for the Pasha peremptorily insists now upon 10 pr. cent duty being paid at Suez; alledging that he must secure the passage through the desert, and thus put himself to vast expense.2 Mr. Babington from the Company's Civil establishment came over with Buckingham on his way home, and is at present here; an extremely [sic] amiable, wellinformed young man, fully stock'd with Indian litterature, but rather bashful & awkward, which however is not enough to d... him in my eyes, for I'd rather see a bashful but sound-

Cyprus with the Wiet family, apparently the occasion of the grande passion mentioned in Letter 6 below. Wiet was a friend of Burckhardt's, and in December 1813 Burckhardt had commended J. S. Buckingham to various friends of his in Syria, including Wiet (Buckingham, Autobiography, ii. 186).

1 William John Bankes (d. 1855), oriental traveller and friend of Byron and John Cam Hobhouse, in 1824 M.P. for Cambridge. Bankes was one of J. S. Buckingham's numerous enemies; his accusations were refuted by Buckingham in an excuplatory appendix to his Travels among the Arab Tribes (see next note), and in 1826 Buckingham obtained £400 damages from Bankes in a libel action. See the article on Bankes in DNB (G. Vere Benson).

2 James Silk Buckingham (1786-1855), business man and traveller in India and the Near East, and in 1832 M.P. for the newly-formed constituency of Sheffield. Buckingham originally enjoyed the friendship and help of Burckhardt, but this amity became soured, and Buckingham's Travels among the Arab Tribes inhabiting the Countries east of Syria and Palestine... (London, 1825) includes an appendix containing a refutation of certain unfounded calumnies industriously circulated against the author of this work, by Mr. Lewis Burckhardt, Mr. William John Bankes, and the Quarterly Review. According to Buckingham, Burckhardt only became hostile through misunderstandings that Buckingham, by publishing his own travels in Palestine and Syria, was going to pre-empt Burckhardt's own account of explorations there (op. cit. pp. 627, 652-67).

The reference in this Letter 5 to Buckingham's stay in Egypt at the end of 1815 is explained at length in Buckingham's Autobiography, ii. 413-17: he wanted to promote trade between Egypt and India, with lighter Egyptian customs, protection and transit duties than prevailed at that time and with an agreement guaranteeing safe conduct for merchants and their goods across the desert to Suez. Despite the pessimism of Burckhardt expressed here in the letter, the persuasive Buckingham did succeed in obtaining from Muhammad 'Ali the desired reductions in duties and also a firman authorizing Buckingham as the Pasha's commercial representative in India.
minded and soundhearted John Bull, than an elegant, impudent, swaggering but shrew’d Parisian blockheaded flatterer.¹

Schutz continues to bear his parts most fiercely, keeping his bride entirely hen-coop’d. Babington had a credit & a recommendation for his house, but has never been ask’d by Schutz to a cup of coffee, nor even seen Madame.

You will remember a certain Nahabet at Alexandria who had sent for a lady from Smyrna, and made every preparation for her reception. The lady arrived, but was too handsome for poor Nahabet, Mr Boghoz saw her, made her proposals which were accepted, and Nahabet was thus cuckolded before the marriage. Boghoz is now looking for a large house here, and will set up his bride in a most dashing stile.

Asselin is plaguing me to write to London to find a purchaser for his Arabick MS., but I never wish to enter into money dealings with a loose and double dealing chap. He passes now his whole days in the garden, having no other titles to become a philosopher than in planting his own cabbage and salad. His Dame is big-bellied again.

Mr Drovetti had no sooner given up his public situation at the arrival of the new French Consul Mr Tetna² from Marseilles, than he enter’d the Pasha’s service, as Directeur general des arts & manufactures, it is said with 200 pounds p’ annum salary; and the same man who could not bear the thought of living again in tyrannised Italy, becomes now a slave to a vile Turk. He is the whole day with the Pasha and meddles in all the Court’s intrigues.

Cairo is quiet and the soldiers behave decently. I am well, and hard writing at my journal, but still find time to blab—all scandal—like an old woman. Therefore good by.

¹ Benjamin Babington (1794-1866) was in fact proceeding to England with the aim of securing from the directors of the East India Company (his employers) a licence for his friend Buckingham to trade in their territories, see Buckingham, Autobiography, ii. 416-17; it was to Babington that Buckingham later dedicated his Travels among the Arab Tribes (see previous note). An extremely able man, Babington achieved fame both as a writer on medical topics and on the lore and languages of South India; see DNB, s.v. F. Payne).

² The name Tetna is written by Burckhardt with unmistakable clarity, but in the article on Drovetti in the Dictionnaire de biographie française (see above, p. 44, n. 1), Drovetti’s successor is named as one Mimaut.
SOME CORRESPONDENCE

My compliments to Beaudin,\(^1\)

Truly Yours Ibrahim

P.S. I hope you have not forgotten my compliments to old Chabarçau?\(^2\)

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6. *Burckhardt-Meryon 20.12.1815*

Cairo 20 Dec. 1815

My dear Sir

This is really too bad, no news from you at all, and I have already written you twice; nor should I do it now for the 3\(^{rd}\) time were it not for the departure of Mr Bankes, who hastens to Syria when he will be guided by yours and her Ladyship’s advice as to his proceedings. You will no doubt find him a very pleasant & extremely well informed man, of distinguish’d talents, and not less suavity of manners. —I take this opportunity of sending you your sealring, but am sorry to say, that there is at present no eminent engraver here; you will never have a true elegant seal but from Constantinople. —As you particularly desired to know the price of the seal, I add the full note of my expenses—

Turner was at Cyprus on the 11\(^{th}\) of Oct. from whence he wrote a most silly letter to the Colonel giving numberless details of a new passion, which he treats exactly in the same manner as his Alexandria one; and will be probably equally disappointed. —The Colonel is much improved in health according to the last accounts, but the delay of Salts arrival\(^3\) has made him abandon his travelling plans to Upper Egypt. —The

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\(^{1}\) Beaudin, a Levantine of French extraction from Aleppo, was Lady Hester Stanhope’s dragoman in Lebanon.

\(^{2}\) Dr. Richard Chabarçau or Chaboceau (the name is variously written in contemporary sources) was a well-known figure of the European community in the Levant, where he had been a physician for some fifty years, being by this time almost an octogenarian. His memory extended back to James Bruce’s stay in Cairo, and he had known the explorers Browne and Seetzen (see above, p. 50, n. 1), as well as being a friend of Burckhardt’s. See Buckingham, *Travels among the Arab Tribes*, pp. 299-300, 353, 372, 385, and idem, *Autobiography*, ii. 185-6.

\(^{3}\) See above, p. 42.
plague is little more talked of, it is said that Duclos’ children died by eating poisonous mushrooms. Their mother died 5 days after, and the poor man is now quite alone.—

The Pasha makes no preparation for his return to Cairo. Egypt is quiet; Moallem Ghaly is imprisoned for a sum of no less than 30000 pounds demanded by the Pasha. He will no doubt pay it in full, and in the meanwhile has been 3 times bastonnaded.¹

I remain, my dear Sir,

ever Yours
Sheikh Ibrahim I

Note of the Sealring

Prime cost of the carnelian, which is of the species called ² عقيق يمانى 500 paras
To reduce its size 12
To engrave it 600
For the gold 940
To make the ring 140
Hire of a Jackass to go to Khan Khalily ³

¹ Muhammad 'All was at this time away from the capital in the Mediterranean coastal areas organizing coastal defences there in case of invasion. The episode of the arrest of Mu'Allim Ghali, the Pasha's Coptic former Chief Secretary, together with the arrest of his brother Francis and his personal treasurer Mu'allim Sim'an, is described by al-Jabarti, 'Ajā'īb al-ʻathār, iv. 259, sub mense Muharram 1231/December 1815. According to this account, arrears of taxation amounting to 6,000 purses of gold, plus the monies currently held by Ghali, were demanded, and the treasurer Sim'an was beaten to death.

² 'Agīq yamānī, sc. "Yemeni cornelian", the Yemen being famed in early Islamic times for this semi-precious stone; the term is also used for the very similar agate.

³ The Khān al-Khalilī bazaar, today one of the supreme tourist attractions of Cairo and still to some extent a working bazaar, was originally founded as a khan (i.e. a building with artisans' shops grouped round a central courtyard) for the silver and gold brocade weavers by the Mamluk commander Jahārka al-Khalīlī (d. 791 (1389), Master of the Horse under Sultan az-Zahir Barquq. See the account of its foundation in the fifteenth-century historian Taqī d-Dīn Abū l-'Abbās al-Maqritzī's Kitāb al-mawā'īẓ wa-l-i'tibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭṭat wa-l-ʻathār (Cairo 1324/1906), ii. 94.
where the engraver lives, my own
Jackass being laid up by belly aches 15
a kake,¹ for breakfast in the Khan Khalily 2
a cup of coffee, ibid. 2

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Prs 2211

Cahireen Piasters 54-11PRS

in Dollars, at 8½ piasters p Dollar D$ 6-3 Prs-11p

in Syrian currency 6 dollars 2 Prs-16 paras²

7. Burckhardt-Meryon 20.1.1816
Cairo 20th of Jan’y 1816

My dear Sir

Your letter of the 31st Oct. was 2 days ago deliver’d to me, and the delays it had undergone had often caused me to entertain great apprehensions about your safe arrival, until the Colonel inform’d me about a fortnight ago that you were in good health. My thoughts on Boutin are known to you through my 2 former letters; a man for whom I felt no friendship, although I can truly say that I never heard or knew anything of him which could have withhold [sic] from him my esteem, such a man if he falls, be it in battles or in nobler pursuits is certainly to be lamented by all

¹ Arabic ka’ka, meaning any kind of baked comestible like a bread roll or bun.
² The total sum here was something in the region of £2 sterling. Turner has a preface to his A Journal of a Tour in the Levant, i. pp. xvii-xxiii, in which he gives some remarks on the money, weights and measures of Turkey; he states that in 1816 a bill on London drawn in Turkey procured 30 piastres for one pound sterling. It emerges from Burckhardt’s figures that 40 paras = 1 piastre or ghurush, and 8½ piastres = 1 dollar. The equivalence of 40 paras to the piastre accords with that recorded by the French scholar E. Belin for the reign of the Ottoman Sultan ‘Abd al-Mejid I (1839-61), cited by S. Lane Poole, “On the Weights and Denominations of Turkish Coins”, The Numismatic Chronicle, 3rd series, ii (1882), 176, and the dollar here must be the Maria Theresa one. As Burckhardt implies, there were slight variations in the standard of coinage in the different provinces of the Ottoman empire, such as Egypt and Syria, and rather larger variations between these provinces and the capital Istanbul, as is emphasized by Lane Poole, art. cit.
his fellow creatures, but I can pay him no other tribute than that which I pay to [a] thousand others who have fallen before him, & which I necessarily expect will be likewise my case if my hopes of quick success are thwarted. It affords me great self satisfaction to think that in that case no good man can \textit{rejoice} at my death because I have always endeavoured to be worthy of their esteem, but if a few, very few sincere friends are kind enough to \textit{mourn} over my fate that is all what [sic] I reasonably can hope for, and it would be unjust to expect poignant sorrow for my loss from those who either little knew me or never liked me.

You have gone to somewhat unnecessary labor, in detailing to me all the virtues of the serpentstone etc. I give you my word, that this stone when I saw it in the hands of Asselin, was look'd upon by me as one of those omnipotent simples of [sic] which the Arabick materia medica abounds, & that I was sure that her Ladyship altho' she might have tried some experiments with it, would not place implicit faith into its efficacy. — |

Mr Bankes will have given you all the late news from Egypt. —Since his departure, Mr Drovetti has passed here on his way to Upper Egypt where he says he goes to increase his collection; on his return he is to make a journey to Europe for the account of the Pasha. We have likewise here Mr Vigouroux French consul of Bassora, who is shortly to set out for Syria; he is a very worthy man, who was known to several Franks now in Egypt, during his capacity as French consul at Pinsk, when Bonaparte's power was yet unshaken, and then everybody liked him for his justice & integrity & moderation.

The Pasha is preparing to meet an English expedition on the coast with the phalanx of his Arnauts,\textsuperscript{1} and all Cairo is in a bustle. Others say that Syria is to be attacked, others that a few hundred soldiers, the late head mutineers, are to be cut down, and for that reason to leave the capital, others that the Capudan Pasha, is expected with a squadron\textsuperscript{2}; the fact is that nobody

\textsuperscript{1} I.e. the Albanian mercenary troops who formed the backbone of Muḥammad ‘Ali's personal forces in Egypt; on the role of Albanians as forces used by independent-minded governors and commanders in the Ottoman empire at this time, see \textit{The Encyclopaedia of Islam}, 2nd edition (Leiden-London, 1960-71), article “Arnawutluğ” (Halil Inalcık).

\textsuperscript{2} See above, p. 39.
knows anything, but that the Pasha openly declares that his armament is to secure his dominions from a surprize from the English.

Mr Salt is not arrived yet, and at the beginning of this month had not yet reach'd Malta. —You will be glad to hear that after the departure of Col Missett, Mr Thurburn is to become a partner in the house of Briggs at Alexandria.¹

I might add several little anecdotes, but as I begin to apprehend that you are much less reserv'd in communicating to others what you hear from me, than you evinced in Alexandria, in telling me what you had heard of me, I must henceforward be more upon my guard, and my future letters shall all be duly weigh'd and measured, with a proper diplomatic pro and epilogue, while I must beg you to excuse the lazy stile & handwriting of this, which I was written under some accidental pressure of business.

I shall ever remain, my dear Doctor,
truly & sincerely yours
Sheikh Ibrahim.

P.S. Joseph the French Mammelouk accompanies Dovetti to Upper Egypt. The Wahabees have again begun to commence disturbances, in attacking several of the Arab tribes, allies of the Turkish government. Ibrahim Pasha, is going to the Hedjaz.² —The Pasha is not well; and no doubt is overcramm'd with medicines. Ismail Cobtan, from Malta, who is now here, is soon to take his departure for England with presents—horses for the prince regent, and I understand that he has precise orders to send a distinguish'd physician from London to Cairo, coute qui coute.

My best compliments to Beaudin

8. Burckhardt-Meryon 24.1.1816

Cairo 24 Jan. 1816

Dear Sir

I have just received your favor of the 8th which I shall take a future time of answering more at large. I have not received

¹ See above, p. 41. ² See above, p. 39.
any books nor the 4 rubbies\textsuperscript{1} you mention to be enclosed. It would be well you had recollected your word given to me at Damietta, as well as I did mine. Fifty piasters are as of little value to me as they are to you, but you will recollect I promised you to let you know nevertheless what the ring would cost, and that you was [sic] to send me for the countervalue books from Syria. I have given you my bill, but you pay it & send me the books.\textsuperscript{2} —How few people are there who strictly follow that principle: to do as they wish to be done by. —Therefore you must either acquaint me speedily with the cost of the books or I shall send them back to you with the first opportunity. For I dislike this—because it shows a want of sincerity.

And thus in a great passion, I remain

less young than before

Sh. Ibrahim.

9. Burckhardt-Meryon 28.3.1816

Cairo 28\textsuperscript{th} March 1816

Doctor,

You have much offended me by your reports to Lady Hester, as well as by the flippant manner in which you acquainted me that you had made these reports, full 4 months after you had been guilty of such bad faith towards me. If you knew it already at Alexandria “to be your duty nothing to conceal from Lady Hester” which of course was unknown to me who supposed that you had no other employment but that of her Ladyship’s Physician, why did you not tell me so, why did you on the contrary encourage the questions & conversations which gave rise to these back-dealings? Pumping a person with the intention of using his declarations against him, is insidious & vulgar, to give it the least offensive term & altho’ I believe you had no

\textsuperscript{1} Sc. the small gold coin called a rub’iyye (literally, “quarter-piece”), which was a quarter of the gold ducat or sequin (the zar-mahbūb). Its equivalence fluctuated at various times of Ottoman history. See J. W. Redhouse, A Turkish and English Lexicon (Istanbul, 1921), p. 963a, and Samuel-Bernard, Mémoire sur les monnaies d’Égypte, in Description de l’Égypte. État moderne, ii/1 (Paris, 1813), 328-9, 393, 398; Turner, Journal, i. xvii, says that it was in his time made up of 2\textfrac{1}{2} (read 2\textfrac{2}{3}) piastres.  

\textsuperscript{2} On the books sent by Meryon, see above, p. 38.
personal motive against me, yet it is clear you acted upon a low cunning design, and you little cared whether you might hurt me or not provided you could give proofs of your devotion. In one instance your memory seems to have forsaken you. I never advised Lady H. to discontinue her correspondence with Mr Asselin, but I advised you to tell her Ladyship with what the public voice charged A., and that her name might suffer from it being known that she still continued correspondance [sic] with him; I did not charge you with any message or advice to her Ladyship, no, it was to you I gave the advice. |

Now that Lady H. calls me curious and talkative, you are of course her echo, but I shall ask you, modestly reserved Doctor, who was it that continually asked questions about myself, my family, my earlier history, my concerns & friends in England and my ultimate plans & destination? The former I told you because I never make a mystery about insignificant facts of which I need not be ashamed neither, my plans I would not disclose to you because they are not my own, yet you distinctly returned 3 or 4 times to this same polite inquiry. With what a view could that have been done? On the other side, you will recollect that I never enquired into any of your own concerns, therefore your remark “that my not knowing who Mr Babington’s father is could not be from want of curiosity” in coming from you is certainly quite out of place. The only datum of your history & concerns that came to my knowledge is, that you were educated at Oxford, but in what school you learnt good breeding I am still ignorant of. You may bristle your crest with the idea that you have made a fool of me, and have been the cause of my receiving a lecture; if you could not understand that the real tendency of many of my conversation & questions at Alexandria was to puzzle you, or to laugh at your slavish adoration of Lady H. so much the worse for your intellects! Lady Hester may have reason to complain of me, but myself I have infinite more cause against you, and I shall finish in declaring that you have play’d me a Levantine trick.

Sh. Ibrahim

P.S. As you conceal nothing from her Ladyship, you of course likewise communicate to her your correspondance [sic]?