

Cover image:
Two fragments of the mantle of Thais,
KTN 619 (DM138), radiocarbon dating
(95.4% probability) AD 430-612.
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Thais wearing her mantle decorated with
the two bands on the book cover (KTN 619
[DM138]).
Photo from 1944, Musée de l'Homme, Paris.

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Explorers, First Collectors and Traders of Textiles

from Egypt of the 1st millennium AD

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PREFACE

Antoine De Moor, Cäcilia Fluck and Petra Linscheid

From 25–27 October 2019 the eleventh conference of the research group ‘Textiles from the Nile Valley’ took place at HeadquARTers in the heart of the Katoen-Natie Company in Antwerp. The event marked the 10th time that the group met to explore a specific topic around textiles from the Nile Valley. On the occasion of the small jubilee, a retrospective theme was chosen, dedicated to the explorers, first collectors and traders of textiles from the Egypt of the 1st millennium AD. The participants explored the biographical background of the pioneers who researched and collected these textiles, what motivated them and how the textiles found their way into museums and collections worldwide. The contributions presented in this volume are a first step towards establishing a network for the systematic indexing and recording of the provenance of the textiles and of the interconnections between 19th- and early 20th-century explorers, collectors and traders, on the one hand, and the then growing textile collections, on the other.

Nearly 100 scholars from twelve nations attended the meeting in Antwerp – which as we notice in retrospect – was one of the last live-events before the outbreak of Covid. Three posters and 25 papers were presented, of which 18 are included in this book. The volume is complemented by a contribution by Anne Hedeager Krag that was presented during the 2017 conference, but which perfectly fitted the main subject of the 2019 conference.

The first and largest section of the book is devoted to the people who discovered and spread the textile treasures from Late Antique Egypt to museums and collections worldwide. Benjamin Hinson, Sumru Belger Krody, Veerle van Kersen, Anna Głowa, Olga Osharina, Anne Hedeager Krag, Glendda Susan Marsh-Letts, Candace Richards and Rosanne Livingstone acknowledge the merit of various personalities like the Reverend Greville John Chester, George Hewitt Myers, Alfred Wiedemann, Emil Brugsch, Robert Forrer, Vladimir de Bock, Charles Nicholson and others who have significantly contributed to the emergence and growing of collections with a focus on textiles from 1st millennium AD Egypt.

Kosuke Goto, Fleur Letellier-Willemin and Claudia Nauerth concentrated on special types of textiles and extraordinary pieces that were discovered by the turn of the 19th century in Antinoopolis and Qarara.

The impulse of the hitherto unknown tapestries with their multicoloured patterns and often strikingly bizarre motifs on the artists of the early 20th, particularly the Fauves, marks the second chapter of the proceedings, represented by Nancy Arthur-Hoskins’ paper. With her monumental portrait in acrylic painting of a tapestry showing a female dancer (see illustration on p. 132), New York-based artist and special conference guest Gail Rothschild demonstrated how these testimonies from Late Antiquity can be transferred into the art of the 21st century even now, more than 100 years after their discovery.

The third part of the book covers research on textiles in public collections. Roberta Cortopassi and Mohamed Dallel present the results of thorough scientific analyses of mini-weavings from Gebel Zeit of the pharaonic period, while Anna Harrison, Elisabeth R. O’Connell and Frances Pritchard provide insight into the conservation and documentation methods of archaeological textiles in the British Museum. Petra Linscheid and Ina Vanden Berghe provide surprising results based on various scientific methods applied to an embroidered liturgical vestment in the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz.

The final section of the proceedings deals with textiles from recent excavations. Anne Kwaspen and Kristin South concentrate on the lavish textile equipment from a single burial in the Fag el-Gamus necropolis. Béatrice Huber introduces an unusual garment, namely a coat, recently found during her own excavations at Qarara. Sabrina Tatz sheds new light on textiles from the excavations at the monastic site of Deir el-Bachît.

Last but not least, Amandine Mérat offers an overview of her studies on the textiles found in Hisn al-Bab, a site so far less known in textile archaeology, situated between Egypt and Nubia.

A brief note on the need for ¹⁴C-redating

Antoine De Moor

Over the last years more and more ancient textiles have been radiocarbon dated. A probability of 95.4% (two standard deviations) is mostly used. However, we should not forget that with a probability of 95.4% the real date lies out of the calculated range for one out of twenty measurements. The results for these pieces lie between two and three standard deviations and show too long a period. In such cases a new dating would be most useful. Since the use of AMS dating in the early 1990s, the standard deviation is much lower and there is less chance of obtaining an excessively long dating. Furthermore, textile sampling is now being carried out more carefully in order to avoid later contaminations.

A good example of the benefits of redating is the linen tunic inv. KTN 614 (DM 133) where the old dating (95.4% probability) was AD 710–750 (4%) and AD 760–1000.¹ It is easy to see that the year 1000 is much too late a date for this tunic. It was redated in 2013 and the result (95.4% probability) was between AD 650 and 780, a much more accurate dating.

The same problem is found in the woollen stole or belt KTN 616 (DM135), published in this book, p. 9. The old dating (95.4% probability) was AD 260–280 (2%) and AD 330–610 (93.4%). It is almost certain that this time span of 350 years is too long. Redating this piece would most probably provide us with a more precise date.

Another piece that should be redated is the red woollen tunic inv. KTN 768-01 (DM 113d) where the old dating (95.4% probability) is also more than 300 years: AD 250–570.²

Acknowledgements

Every two years since 2005 Karine and Fernand Huts have been welcoming the 'Textiles from the Nile Valley'-research group for an academic conference and scholarly exchange. We cannot thank them enough for their hospitality, for their permanent support and for the generous funding of the publication of the conference papers.

Our deepest gratitude also goes to Paul De Loose, Danaë Emilia Vermeulen and a team of helpers from Katoen Natie/The Phoebus Foundation for another perfect practical organisation of the conference and for their tireless attention to making the stay pleasant for all participants.

The publication of the conference proceedings would not have been possible without the help of several people. John Peter Wild polished the English of the papers written by non-native authors in his usual safe manner. Danaë Emilia Vermeulen assisted the editing by compiling the bibliography. For the first time, the proceedings are published by Hannibal Books under the direction of Gautier Platteau. The layout of the book was in the hands of Tim Bisschop, who, together with Hadewych Van den Bossche, was also responsible for entering the corrections and completing the indexes. We warmly thank them for all their efforts.

Finally, we sincerely thank the authors for sharing their knowledge with us and for contributing to this book.

¹ DE MOOR/VERHECKEN-LAMMENS/
VERHECKEN 2008, 200–201.

² DE MOOR/VERHECKEN-LAMMENS/
VERHECKEN 2008, 160–161.

Abbreviations

Abb.	Abbildung	Kat.	Katalog
acc. no.	accession number	KGM	Kunstgewerbemuseum Berlin
AD	Anno Domini	KIK	Koninklijk instituut voor het kunstpatrimonium
ÄMP	Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung Berlin	KTN	collection Katoen Natie (now The Phoebus Foundation)
Anm.	Anmerkung	L, L.	length, Länge
AMS	acellerator mass spectromety	LMU	Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
A & H	Art & History Museum, Brussels (former Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire / Koninklijke musea voor kunst en geschiedenis)	MAGH	Musée d' Art et d' Histoire Genève
BC	before Christ	MBK	Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
BM	The British Museum, London	MNG	National Museum in Gdańsk
BM COL	The British Museum collections online	MNK	National Museum Krakow
BP	before present (before 1950, the start of radiocarbon dating)	MT	Musée des Tissus, Lyon
BYU	Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah	MUJ	Jagiellonian University Museum in Krakow
c., ca.	circa	µm	micrometer
cal	calibrated	NCG	Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek
cat.	catalogue	NM	Nicholson Museum
CCI	Chambre de Commerce et d' Industrie	no., nos, Nr.	number/s, Nummer
CEA	Commissariat Energie Atomique	MAH/MKG	Musée d'Art et d' Histoire/Museum voor Kunst en Geschiedenis, Brussels
CESA	Curt- Engelhorn-Zentrum für Archäometrie, Mannheim	MRAH/KMKG	Musée Royaux d' Art et d' Histoire/ Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst en Geschiedenis, Brussels (today Art & History Museum)
cf.	confer	Ms.	Manuscript
cm	centimeter	ÖAI	Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut
CT	computer tomography	ÖAW	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften
¹⁴ C	carbon 14 analysis	p.	page
DAI	Deutsches Archäologisches Institut	PDA	photo-diode array
DAIK	Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo	PhD	Doctor of Philosophy (grade)
DAI, AZ	Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Archiv der Zentrale Berlin	pl.	plate
ed.	edition	RGZM	Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz
EEF	Egypt Exploration Fund	RMO	Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden
e. g.	exempli gratia	RPM	Reichspostmuseum, Berlin
esp.	especially	s.	siehe
et al.	<i>et alii</i>	s. o.	siehe oben
FIG./S	figure/s	s. u.	siehe unten
FJ	Fundjournal	S	yarn spun in S-direction
fl.	flourished	SBM	Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
FRAe	Freiburg, Adelhausermuseum/ Museum Natur und Mensch	SEM	Scanning Electron Microscopy
h.	height	St.	Saint
HD	Heidelberg, Ägyptologisches Institut der Universität	S ₂ Z	two S-spun yarns plied in Z-direction
HPLC	high-performance liquid chromatography	Taf.	Tafel
HPLC-DAD	high-performance liquid chromatography-diode array detector	UK	United Kingdom
i. e.	<i>id est</i>	V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum, London
IFAO	Institut français d'archéologie orientale	vol.	volume
in	inches	w.	width
inv., Inv.	inventory, Inventar	WAG	Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
IRPA	Institut royal du patrimoine artistique	Z	yarn spun in Z-direction
Jh.	Jahrhundert	Z ₂ S	two Z-spun yarns plied in S-direction

Wool belt or stole KTN 616 (DM135), radiocarbon dating (95.4% probability) 260-280 AD (2%), 330-610 AD (93.4%).
© The Phoebus Foundation, photo H. Maertens





Engraving by Marius Michel,
Photograph of a mummy,
c. 1891.

© Prisma Archivio / Alamy Stock Photo.

Chapter 1

**EXPLORERS,
FIRST COLLECTORS
AND TRADERS**

A very Victorian tourist: The Reverend Greville John Chester and 19th-century textile collecting at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Benjamin Hinson

The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) is home to one of the most important Egyptian textile collections in Britain. This collection, today numbering well over a thousand pieces, has been continuously developed for over a century. This paper focuses on one of the key figures responsible for helping to begin the collection in the late 19th century – the Reverend Greville John Chester. Greville Chester is not unknown to either Egyptology¹ or museology.² However, although his life and career has increasingly received scholarly attention, discussions of his association with museums tend to mention the V&A either tangentially or not at all. The specific details of his relationship with the V&A, whilst very interesting, are little known outside of the museum itself.³ This paper aims to fill that gap.

TEXTILES AND THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

What is today known as the V&A was established in 1852, in the wake of 1851's Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace. This exhibition, designed to showcase the crafts and industry of all nations, included some 100,000 objects; following its closure, plans were made to turn the concept into a permanent museum. This new museum was intended to house the United Kingdom's national collection of design and applied and decorative art. It had a very clear mission statement – to make works of art available to all, and to educate and inspire contemporary British designers and manufacturers. As well as being of artistic merit from a design perspective, the collections were also to illustrate manufacture and technique from across history. This practical, pedagogical aspect distinguished the V&A from the 'high art' of other contemporary museums.⁴

Despite the geographical scope of the V&A's collection, it today has certain chronological boundaries.

Although the museum historically acquired some objects from ancient Egypt and the classical world, antiquity is today formally beyond its collecting remit, differentiating it from the British Museum. The museum's 2009 Acquisition and Disposal policy (Section 1.4, 'Chronological boundaries') states:

"There are no time restrictions on objects from East, South and South-East Asia. Pre-Islamic objects from the Middle East are not acquired except for textiles."⁵

As this statement shows, however, textiles form the one significant exception to the chronological boundaries, as the V&A also holds the UK's national textile collection.

The V&A's interest in Egyptian textiles dates back to the late 19th century, when the discovery of late-antique cemeteries at sites such as Akhmim and Antinoopolis led to textiles being discovered and sold wholesale to museums across Europe and North America.⁶ Alongside this, the V&A's interest was also fostered through the growing 'Arts and Crafts' movement in Britain, which led to a revival of interest in historic patterns by contemporary designers. Late-antique textiles, with their preponderance of Christian themes, were seen by Arts and Crafts figures as both evidence supporting Biblical narratives and as proof of the moral and ethical value intrinsic in early 'humble' craft, something felt to be lacking in contemporary manufacture. As many figures associated with the movement were also linked to the early V&A, there was, therefore, a keenness within the museum to add this material to its collection. A particularly good example of this intersecting of interests is none other than designer William Morris, who acted for the museum as a 'referee' regarding textile purchases and even made reproductions of some of its Late Antique textiles (FIG. 1A-B).⁷ Morris' daughter May likewise wrote about 'Coptic' textiles, again making heavy reference to the V&A's collections.⁸

¹ DAWSON/UPHILL 1995, 96–97.

² For Chester as a collector, see most recently JEFFERSON 2019. The most comprehensive treatment of Chester's life and career generally is provided by SEIDMANN 2006a, 2006b, 2007.

³ See mainly PERSSON 2012, 7–8, which references Chester in the context of a wider overview of the formation of the museum's Egyptian textile collection.

⁴ The early development of the V&A is covered by BURTON 1999, as well as in an article series by WAINWRIGHT 2002.

⁵ Available online at: http://www.vam.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/176967/v-and-a-collections-development-policy.pdf, accessed 30/10/2019. The section quoted here, 1.4, is listed as Appendix 1.0.

⁶ For the excavations of Akhmim, see MASPERO 1886 and FORRER 1895; for Antinoopolis, see GAYET 1902. A useful summary of the discovery of late-antique sites is provided by MÜLLER 2005, and the early collecting of textiles by art and design museums is discussed by THOMAS 2007.

⁷ For Morris as an art referee, see MORRIS 1975.

⁸ MORRIS 1899.

FIG. 1 A
Tapestry woven band,
V&A 1327-1888.

© Victoria and Albert Museum.
Photo Benjamin Hinson.

FIG. 1 B
19th-century reproduction,
V&A CIRC.423-1911.

© Victoria and Albert Museum.



FIG. 1A



FIG. 1B

THE REVEREND GREVILLE JOHN CHESTER

It is at this point of the story that its central figure enters. Greville John Chester was born in Denton, Norfolk, in 1830. He was an Oxford alumnus and later attended theological college before being appointed to parishes in Yorkshire. Even at a young age, Greville Chester demonstrated an interest in archaeology, writing as a student to archaeological journals.⁹ Unfortunately, ill health forced him to retire from his parish in 1865. As was common at the time, Greville Chester was encouraged to go to Egypt for his health, and subsequently wintered each year across the Mediterranean, Levant and Egypt.

On his travels, Greville Chester made a habit of acquiring large numbers of artefacts which he sold or donated to museums back in England, the lion's share of items coming from Egypt. Due to the sheer amount of material he brought back and his dealings with multiple institutions, items associated with Greville Chester form a substantial backbone of the early collections of many British museums. He is perhaps most well known in relation to the Ashmolean, the museum of his *alma mater*, where he wrote the first catalogue to its collections¹⁰ and was instrumental in setting up archaeology as a discipline at Oxford.¹¹ He is also well known in the context of the British Museum, where his many donations included both pharaonic and late-antique artefacts.¹² In comparison, Greville Chester's relationship with the V&A is less well known, yet his relationship with this institution was just as important.

Although Greville Chester's own diaries do not survive, he frequently appears in the travel accounts of Egyptologists and other figures, crossing paths with them or even joining them for legs of the journey, enabling us to reconstruct his travel patterns. For example, in 1891 he accompanied Percy Newberry on the way to Egypt, passing through Italy:

"I had a very jolly time in Venice & saw most of what was to be seen. I also stopped 6 hours at Milan & saw the Cathedral. Yesterday we got to Ancona & G. Chester & I went ashore to see a triumphal arch (fine Roman) & the Byzantine Cathedral. Today we have been round Brindisi & seen everything of interest."¹³

As Greville Chester did not source specifically for one museum, rather acquiring material for multiple institutions in the same trip and writing back about new objects he had found, his itineraries can also be reconstructed through his communications with other institutions. For example, the Bodleian Library, Oxford holds a number of Greville Chester's letters dating between 1889 and 1892 dealing with his purchase for them of large numbers of manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah. These include communications sent from Beirut, Jaffa and Jerusalem.¹⁴

Greville Chester was not an uninformed traveller. Alongside his background interest in archaeology, he cultivated friendships with prominent contemporary Egyptologists such as Flinders Petrie, Wallis Budge and Edwin Wilbour. He often travelled alongside Egyptologists or met with them once in Egypt, as seen in Newberry's letter above. The effect of this was twofold. Firstly, friendships with Egyptologists helped Greville Chester to build his artefact knowledge further. Secondly, Greville Chester's contacts and relationships with local dealers benefited the Egyptologists. Greville Chester had a keen ear to the ground and was well acquainted with local dealers, often pointing his friends in the direction of intriguing objects:

"Guided by Greville Chester I went about Cairo and made the acquaintance of several dealers, and also visited a number of private houses where antiquities were stored."¹⁵

"Before leaving Aswan, I had a telegram from Chester saying that he had important news for me at Luqсор."¹⁶

"Next day Chester took us round the dealers, & G[reville] and I splashed in a good deal, but I do not in the least repent it for I got several first class things."¹⁷

Greville Chester's local knowledge was particularly useful to the V&A. As well as acquiring pieces of his own volition, Chester was furnished with money by the Museum to act as an agent on its behalf in Egypt, and to source and acquire material it wished to add to its collections. In 1870, the V&A commissioned Greville Chester to acquire examples of stone mosaic from Cairo. However, he also identified some woodwork he felt the museum might be interested in:

"Sir, I am obliged by the receipt of your letter of Oct 14 stating that the Department wish me to purchase mosaics to the value of £50. I will do my best to obtain some good specimens for the Museum ... for the £50 I could probably obtain some specimens of woodwork as well."¹⁸

"I beg to inform you that I have already met with some success with the sum submitted to me for the purchase of Arabic antiquities. I have obtained several characteristic specimens of woodwork."¹⁹

This correspondence demonstrates how the V&A's relationship with Greville Chester was different from that of other museums, because its remit was not strictly antiquity but contemporary Egyptian art and craft. As a figure on the ground, Greville Chester was well placed to source such material for the museum. The woodwork described above was in fact architectural salvage, gathered from houses and other buildings which were otherwise due to be demolished as part of the ongoing 'modernisation' of Cairo which began under Mohammed Ali Pasha.

⁹ CHESTER 1847, 1849, 1855.

¹⁰ CHESTER 1881a.

¹¹ SEIDMANN 2006a; see, for example, CHESTER 1881b.

¹² For Chester's textile donations, see O'CONNELL 2008, 2012, 98–99; MÉRAT 2017, 280–281; MÉRAT 2020, 202–204.

¹³ Letter from P. Newberry to F. Griffith, 25th December 1891 (EES.XII.d.49).

¹⁴ JEFFERSON 2019, 273.

¹⁵ BUDGE 1920, 85.

¹⁶ PETRIE 1931, 82.

¹⁷ W. M. F. Petrie, *Journal* 1886–1887, page 21. Digitised by the Griffith Institute as Petrie MSS 1.6 (accessible at

http://archive.griffith.ox.ac.uk/uploads/r/null/f/5/8/f584c25dd7968f2ef8080573d7dda4c5406172a6738ddad7ea719de893c6aa9a/Petrie_MSS_1.6_-_Petrie_Journal_1886_to_1887_p_01-50.pdf). Greville Chester appears frequently in this journal and travelled alongside Petrie for some time.

¹⁸ Letter from Greville Chester to the V&A, October 18, 1870. All correspondence between Greville Chester and the V&A cited in this paper comes from Greville Chester's Nominal File today held in the V&A archives (file MA/1/C1212).

¹⁹ Letter from Greville Chester to the V&A, January 6, 1871.

²⁰ Letter from the V&A to Greville Chester, July 19, 1887.

²¹ Letter from Greville Chester to the V&A, April 25, 1888.

²² Henry Wallace was a painter, collector, and one of the circle of figures responsible for raising awareness of the destruction of heritage in Egypt during the late 19th century. He was also one of the V&A's key textile donors, presenting a substantial number of fragments between 1886 and 1898. For Wallace as a collector and antiquarian see WILSON 2002a, 2002b.

GREVILLE CHESTER AND TEXTILES

For the V&A, Greville Chester's most important and numerous donations were of late-antique and early Christian textiles. As cemeteries were uncovered and the extent of textile material became clear, Greville Chester's good contacts with dealers in Egypt meant that he was well placed to take advantage of these discoveries for museums back in England. Between 1887 and 1892, Greville Chester brought huge numbers of textile fragments back to England. The quantity which the V&A accepted is staggering:

"A selection of 97 pieces has been made differing from those already in the Museum. They are of great interest, and will add much to the completeness of our collection. The cost will be £29.9.6."²⁰

"Case unpacked. Contents:

722 pieces textiles and fragments, [including]:

12 pieces textiles with inscriptions

2 pieces papyrus

3 shoes leather

76 pcs embroidery, in tin box

...

8 pieces textiles with inscriptions

2 pieces papyrus

3 shoes - leather."²¹

Of the 1888 lot alone, in the end 21 pieces were presented to the museum as gifts, whilst 147 were purchased for the price of £90 17s, with some of these intended to be in turn passed on to Dublin Museum. Meanwhile, in 1889, another 50 pieces were purchased for £37 16s. In total, Greville Chester's contributions to the V&A between 1887 and 1892 came to 339 fragments. Alongside Henry Wallis²² and a later bequest of textiles from the Petrie Museum in the 1970s – which actually included material originally given to Petrie by Greville Chester – Greville Chester was the largest single donor of Egyptian textiles to the V&A; his contributions are enumerated in TABLE 1 (note that one object number can often cover multiple pieces).

Year	V&A numbers	Manner of acquisition	Number of pieces
1887	242 to 297-1887	Purchased (9s 6d)	61
	298 to 302-1887	Gift	8
	348-1887	Gift (indirectly, through Mrs Anne Goodison)	1
			70
1888	1260 to 1385-1888	Purchased (£90 17s)	147
	1651 to 1665-1888	Gift	18
	1667 to 1668-1888	Gift	3
			168
1889	256 to 266-1889	Gift	9
	267 to 308-1889	Purchased (£37 16s)	50
	327-1889	Gift	1
	360-1889	Gift	1
			61
1890	218-1890	Gift	1
	243 to 261-1890	Purchased (£28 9s)	23
	305-1890	Gift	1
			31
1891	304 to 306-1891	Gift	3
			3
1892	611 to 615-1892	Purchased (£8)	6
			6
TOTAL			339

TABLE 1

Tally of textile donations from Greville Chester to the V&A, 1887-1892

Greville Chester's donations were reflected not only in quantity but quality. His textiles include some of the museum's most famous examples, with several displayed prominently today (FIGS 2–3).

Greville Chester's working relationship with the V&A might have been well established, but it was not always harmonious. His correspondence with the museum reveals frustrations over its slowness to respond to him, and there were disagreements over outstanding payments for the textiles, lasting until his death:

“More than a week ago I wrote to the Secretary of the SKM to ask whether the Museum would like to acquire any specimens of ancient Coptic textiles to supplement the fine collection ... as I have had no acknowledgement of the letter I fear it may have miscarried. I should be thankful for an immediate answer.”²³

“I am sorry to trouble you again, but the delay in the Department's payment for my textiles has been so long, that I must ask whether those taken by South Kensington cannot be paid for without further writing.”²⁴

“Will you please sanction payment of £9 to the executors of the late Rev G. J. Chester through Mr Aug. J. Coe, Solicitor.”²⁵

Given that these grievances were written in 1887 and 1888, it may be no coincidence that whilst these years proved by far the highest in terms of number of donations, after this point the amount tailed off considerably.

Greville Chester tailored his donations to specific museums depending on their preferences; as the V&A was particularly interested in late-antique textiles, these formed the focus of his collecting for them. However, for Greville Chester, as a clergyman his interest in such textiles was personal and religious as much as academic. As mentioned earlier, the designs found on Late Antique textiles were considered to be supporting evidence for Biblical narratives, with which early Egyptology was heavily concerned.²⁶ The Egypt Exploration Fund (now Society) itself was initially established to excavate sites believed to be related to the Exodus; Amelia Edwards' announcement of the Fund, in *The Times* of March 30th 1882, appealed to the Christian sensibilities of the British public to fund and support it.

Greville Chester was not ignorant when it came to Egyptian Christianity. He travelled widely across the monastic sites of the country²⁷ and wrote several papers on biblical archaeology in Egypt, trying to elucidate sites from the exodus narrative based on its geography.²⁸ Many of his museum donations reflect his interest in Egyptian religious material, most overtly his manuscript donations from the Ben Ezra synagogue to the Bodleian library.²⁹ Greville Chester's writings on

FIG. 2
Tapestry woven panel depicting Adonis, V&A 269-1889.

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FIG. 3
Tapestry woven panel, V&A 258-1890.

© Victoria and Albert Museum.

FIG. 4
Tapestry woven panel, V&A 1261-1888.

© Victoria and Albert Museum.

FIG. 5
Tapestry woven panel with cross and doves within a roundel, V&A 247-1887.

© Victoria and Albert Museum.

FIG. 6
Tapestry woven roundel from a tunic, with winged erotes around a central cruciform motif, V&A 1279-1888.

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FIG. 7
Tapestry woven panel from a tunic, with a lion surrounded by cruciform designs, V&A 1273-1888.

© Victoria and Albert Museum. Photo Benjamin Hinson.

FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4



FIG. 5



FIG. 6



FIG. 7



his travels across monastic sites also reflect his pre-occupation with finding religious manuscripts; of one site he writes “I did not visit Dayr Mari Bolos...as I was assured that not a single fragment of any ancient MS had escaped the wreck of the eighty years of abandonment.”²³ Greville Chester’s donations to other museums also reflect a Christian interest; a search of the British Museum’s collection database reveals 42 pilgrim flasks and 184 Coptic ostraca, and to the Ashmolean he gave 38 St. Menas flasks.³¹

Given Greville Chesters’ religious background, he would obviously have been interested in Late Antique textiles. Indeed, it is hard not to wonder if his beliefs and interests were further reflected in the *specific* pieces he selected as being worth the V&A’s attention. It is understood that, after the emergence of Christianity, many earlier ‘pagan’ motifs became re-understood and re-associated with a Christian context. In that sense, therefore, most Late Antique Egyptian textiles contain

‘Christian’ iconography. Even if Greville Chester was unaware of the specifics of this historical context, however, it is likely that he would also have readily seen Christian ideas embedded in even superficially decorative designs. For example, floral scenes could be understood as a reference to either Jesus (cf. John 15:5, “I am the Vine”), the gardens of paradise, or depicting Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (FIG. 4).

However, beyond this, a substantial number of fragments given by Greville Chester contain more immediately overt Christian iconography, such as crosses, haloed figures, lions and cherubim. The frequency of such occurrences makes it difficult not to suggest a conscious preference on Greville Chesters’ part. Thirteen fragments contain crosses (FIG. 5), and a further 22 designs could readily be seen as ‘schematic’ crosses (FIG. 6). Lions occur prominently 21 times (FIG. 7), a reference either to the idea of Jesus-as-lion, or the story of Daniel; indeed one fragment, 302-1889

²³ Letter from Greville Chester to the V&A, June 1, 1887.

²⁴ Letter from Greville Chester to the V&A, July 14, 1888.

²⁵ Correspondence from the executors of Greville Chester to the V&A, 26 July, 1892.

²⁶ GANGE 2006.

²⁷ CHESTER 1872, 1873.

²⁸ CHESTER 1875, 1880.

²⁹ JEFFERSON 2011, esp. 175–176. Between 1889 and 1892 Chester sent 991 manuscripts from the synagogue.

³⁰ CHESTER 1873, 116.

³¹ SEIDMANN 2006b, 149.



FIG. 8



FIG. 9

FIG. 8
Tapestry woven panel
possibly depicting Daniel in
the Lions' Den, V&A 302-1889.

© Victoria and Albert Museum.
Photo Benjamin Hinson.

FIG. 9
Tapestry woven *clavus* from
a tunic, with a central haloed
figure, V&A 1274-1888.

© Victoria and Albert Museum.

FIG. 10
Tapestry woven panel
depicting The Visitation,
V&A 1283-1888.

© Victoria and Albert Museum.

FIG. 11
Tapestry woven panel from
a tunic, with lions and
horsemen showing gestures
of blessing surrounding
a roundel with vines in a
cruciform arrangement,
V&A 244-1887.

© Victoria and Albert Museum.
Photo Benjamin Hinson.

(FIG. 8) potentially depicts Daniel in the lions' den, and five depict lions hunting deer or antelope, a metaphor for the triumph of good over evil. Horsemen, viewable as military saints such as George or Demetrius, occur 13 times, and indeed seven figures are haloed (FIG. 9). Birds such as quails and doves occur 29 times. There are also three fragments containing winged cherubim, and a fragment depicting the Visitation (FIG. 10). On some pieces many themes combine, as on 244-1887 (FIG. 11). There is, therefore, a real tendency towards explicit Christian iconography in piece selection.

GREVILLE CHESTER AS A COLLECTOR

In one sense, Greville Chester was unusual for a collector of his time, with a level of academic rigour; his many publications, as well as his Ashmolean catalogue, were mentioned above. Greville Chester was not an uninformed traveller, but a savant with an interest in and history of writing about archaeology. Additionally, when known, he recorded where items were brought or sourced from, a rare level of provenance information for the time.³² In his letters to the V&A regarding textiles, he frequently located them for the benefit of the museum:

"I beg to inform you that I have this year brought back from Egypt a considerable number of ancient textiles found in Echmîm, some of which I believe differ from the specimens in the splendid collection acquired for the museum by W.H. Wallis."³³

"I enclose a thin scarf and a leather object embroidered with Coptic crosses, of which I do not know the use, and beg to offer to give them to the South Kensington museum. They were found at Echmîm. Believe me."³⁴

"I leave at the same time four specimens of textiles from Echmîm."³⁵

"I enclose 3 pieces of Ancient Arabic silk ... these were found at Erment, Upper Egypt. I send also a wonderful yellow silk handkerchief from Echmîm, for which I will ask £4."³⁶

"I enclose another piece of ancient Arabic silk found at Edfoo, upper Egypt."³⁷

With textiles, however, a pinch of salt is needed. With the exceptions noted above, when Greville Chester provided a specific location for his donations, this tended to be Akhmim.³⁸ This is at first glance entirely reasonable. Akhmim was recognised even in antiquity as one of the key weaving centres in Egypt, an association apparently stretching back into Pharaonic times (see for example Strabo, *Geography* XVII, 1.41), and huge numbers of the textiles now in museum collections were indeed found there (or more specifically in the necropolis of al-Hawawish northeast of the town).



FIG. 10



FIG. 11

³² THOMPSON 2016, 125–126;
JEFFERSON 2019, 271.

³³ Letter from Greville Chester
to the V&A, May 25, 1887.

³⁴ Letter from Greville Chester
to the V&A, September 30, 1887.

³⁵ Letter from Greville Chester
to the V&A, June 4, 1888.

³⁶ Letter from Greville Chester
to the V&A, December 28,
1891. The piece from Akhmim
is today 611-1892, and those
from Armant 612 to 614-1892.
Further Greville Chester pieces
with an Armant provenance
are 1385-1888, 1668-1888 and
260-1889.

³⁷ Letter from Greville Chester
to the V&A, January 1st, 1892.
This piece is today 615&A-1892.

Rafed El-Sayed provides a further problematisation of the terms Akhmim and al-Hawawish, as well as detailed topographical study of the multiple areas variously brought under those labels in previous works.³⁹ We know that, in 1889–1890 at least, Greville Chester's travels took him to Akhmim itself, so he definitely visited the site at this point.⁴⁰ Furthermore, stylistically, several pieces attributed by Greville Chester to Akhmim also match textile types known to have been produced there. Examples include several covers with panels incorporating a central medallion, itself connected to four corner compartments with a repeated series of motifs within and between the compartments, the whole framed by long pile (FIG. 12).⁴¹

However, for other years, surviving traces of Greville Chester's movements cannot place him in Akhmim definitively, and it is entirely possible that he bought pieces from elsewhere which were simply reported to him as from Akhmim. Indeed, dealers tended to attribute textiles to Akhmim whether or not that was their original provenance, as the name was considered an additional selling point and therefore made an item more valuable. In the last years of Greville Chester's life, as textiles flooded the market and could be purchased directly from Cairo, Luxor and Alexandria, it is likely that many of his purchases in fact came from dealers based there.⁴² Therefore, a certain level of caution must be placed in the attributed textile provenances.

In certain respects, Greville Chester's writings also suggest a somewhat forward-thinking attitude towards cultural heritage. He was associated with the Society for the Preservation of Egyptian Monuments, and more than once wrote to decry the destruction of sites. In a letter dated February 23rd 1890, Greville Chester wrote with some alarm regarding the state of Beni Hasan and Deir el-Bersha.⁴³ The letter is only one of several public denunciations Greville Chester made of the state of antiquities in Egypt.⁴⁴ These writings demonstrate something of both Greville Chester's sense of social justice and his outspoken nature. His early sermons in England had earned him some notoriety for their castigating of social injustices,⁴⁵ and he had also been an outspoken campaigner for the rights of Christians in the Ottoman Balkans, albeit here writing with a disconcertingly anti-Semitic slant.⁴⁶ Indeed, Petrie himself referred to Greville Chester's "strong preferences and objections and his outspoken manner".⁴⁷

However, the truth is inevitably far more nuanced. Greville Chester's activities also force us to consider the ethics and practices of collecting of this time. When Greville Chester pops up in other Egyptologists' accounts, they paint a picture of a man with a much more complicated and questionable attitude to antiquities this his writings might suggest. Greville Chester was completely aware of the legislation preventing export of antiquities but was blatantly not averse to smuggling,



FIG. 12

FIG. 12
Tapestry woven panel from
a cover, surrounded by loop
woven pile, V&A 1260-1888.
© Victoria and Albert Museum.



FIG. 13

FIG. 13
Fragment of a tapestry woven
panel, V&A 1288-1888.
© Victoria and Albert Museum.

and built up quite a contemporary reputation for his brazenness in doing so:

“He filled many travelling bags with his collections, and we always marveled how he managed to pass his treasures through the Custom Houses of Egypt, Turkey and Greece. He got into difficulties with the officers of Customs in every port, and baffled them by feigning ignorance of the language and making a judicious use of bakhshish. His friends never understood how he managed to persuade the officials that his heavy leather bags contained nothing but “wearing apparel” when they were filled with pottery, bronze statues, stone stelae and even parts of coffins.”⁴⁸

“At Beirut also he was arrested, but a native fellow passenger was induced by him to declare that Chester’s bags were his property, and the Mudir of Customs apologised for his mistake in thinking that they were Chester’s.”⁴⁹

We can also see the destruction that Greville Chester’s patronage of antiquities dealers caused in contemporary excavation reports. In 1871, Greville Chester presented to the V&A pieces of inlaid tile from the 19th dynasty palace at Tell el-Yehudiyeh.⁵⁰ In the EEF reports written slightly later, Greville Chester was singled out by the excavators for the damage he had caused:

“Mr. Greville Chester, Prof. Hayter Lewis, and Brugsch-Bey have directed the attention of travelers to that locality ... but the discovery has been fatal to the mound. There is no place in Egypt where the fellaheen have worked such wanton destruction, or so thoroughly carried away whatever could be taken.”⁵¹

Whatever his feelings about the state of monuments in Egypt, it is undeniable that Greville Chester still profited from what we would today consider the destruction of cultural heritage, and his patronage of the dealers in Cairo and Luxor kept the trade going. We can see this explicitly in the case of the textiles he gave to the V&A. He would have seen first-hand at Akhmim how the textiles he purchased were cut from larger garments and furnishings, and so he cannot have been ignorant that the objects he brought back to England were the product of the exact same sort of destruction he lambasted.⁵² Indeed, of the 339 pieces given to the V&A by Greville Chester, only four (284-1887, 290-1887, 51-1890 and 257-1890) could be considered largely intact. The vast majority are represented by these smaller, cut-up fragments that now make up the majority of museum collections worldwide (FIG. 13).

Given this, how, therefore, do we reconcile the conflicting images of Greville Chester? He seems to have loathed the destruction of monuments while having no compunctions about supporting the antiquities

trade himself. Is it possible that Chester genuinely saw a distinction in what he did, contrasted with others, Egyptians or otherwise? Or could we perhaps ascribe more enlightened motives – he felt he was preserving pieces from destruction by buying them and giving them to museums, irrespective of how they were gained from the ground? Perhaps we can see his suggesting of architectural salvage to the V&A, discussed earlier in this paper, in this light. This would also be in keeping with prevailing Victorian attitudes to heritage conservation in Egypt; the rhetoric surrounding preservation, and the aims and intentions of those leading the conversation, often failed to match, and inevitably “for most Europeans, preservation continued to mean export to Europe”.⁵³

A broader context must also be remembered, of differing scholarly attitudes to Pharaonic and post-Pharaonic material. Christian Victorian Egyptologists tended to exhibit a surprising lack of concern for Coptic remains; most infamously, many Christian monuments which overlaid earlier sites were destroyed wholesale in order to better access the ancient archaeology underneath, a prime example being the Monastery of St. Phoibammon constructed atop the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri. Even figures like Petrie, the giant of progressive Victorian archaeology, treated Coptic textiles as nothing more than “a convenient currency for thanking his sponsors”,⁵⁴ and is believed to have given out fragments as party favours. To the excavators of Late Antique cemeteries, the supply of material must also have seemed quite inexhaustible, further decreasing the ‘rarity’ of each individual piece.

The above attempts to delve into Greville Chester’s psyche must ultimately remain speculative, in the absence of further documentation. Compared to the surviving records of his dealings with other institutions, it is unfortunate that the limited records of Greville Chester’s dealings with the V&A offer only second-hand glimpses into a very complex figure, and his close connections with the textile trade of the late 19th century.

³⁸ Attribution to Akhmim can be seen in the entries for the many pieces donated by Greville Chester and listed in KENDRICK 1920–1922.

³⁹ EL-SAYED 2020. On Akhmim as a textile centre, see also FLUCK 2008 and 2021.

⁴⁰ JEFFERSON 2019, 277. This same year Greville Chester presented a textile whose provenance he gave as from Deir Mar Girgis in Sohag (now V&A 251-1890), lending further weight to his physical presence in the region that year. Items given to other museums, such as Bodleian MSS Copt. (P) a. 4, were also bought from Sohag (CRUM 1893, Appendix p. 77).

⁴¹ For the Akhmim provenance of covers in this style, see FLUCK 2008, 217–218; SCHRENK 2004, nos 41–42.

⁴² BUDGE 1920, 87 describes material from Akhmim stored in Luxor; for similar at Cairo, see FORRER 1891a, 10.

⁴³ Letter by Greville Chester to Cecil Torr, February 23, 1890 (EES.VIII.b.5).

⁴⁴ See also CHESTER 1892.

⁴⁵ SEIDMANN 2006c.

⁴⁶ See JEFFREYS 2019, 273 and note 20.

⁴⁷ PETRIE 1931, 23.

⁴⁸ BUDGE 1920, 85.

⁴⁹ BUDGE 1920, 85.

⁵⁰ Originally grouped under numbers 1522-1871 and 1523-1871. Most fragments were subsequently transferred to the British Museum; only one example remains at the V&A under number 1522-1871. Greville Chester’s travels to the site are alluded to in CHESTER 1880, 136–138.

⁵¹ NAVILLE 1887, 6. Despite his friendship with Greville Chester, Petrie was also unwilling to ignore the state of the site when he later came to excavate there, writing “the sad history of the destruction of this place may be seen” (PETRIE 1906, 8).

⁵² Indeed, FORRER 1895, 40–41 gives some indication of the treatment of the bodies post-excavation, writing “Sofort nachdem so die erste Mumie ans Tageslicht gezogen, stürzten sämtliche Arbeiter und meine koptischen Führer herbei, um des Toten Hüllen loszureissen und ihn auf seinen Reichtum zu prüfen”.

⁵³ GANGE 2015.

⁵⁴ WILD 2006, 24. In his later accounts of the excavations at Hawara, Petrie himself admitted that upon discovering the Roman cemetery he “was going to give it up as not worth working” (PETRIE 1893, 97).

The question of “What went before?” and George Hewitt Myers: The formation of The Textile Museum archaeological collection

Sumru Belger Krody

For George Hewitt Myers, founder of The Textile Museum, the underlying pursuit in collecting was the question of “what went before a certain piece to make it as it was.” He was intrigued by design and the ways textiles were made, and how changes over time were adapted by different weaving traditions or practiced independently of each other. This appears to be his strongest motivation in collecting archaeological textiles from the eastern Mediterranean dating to the Late Antique and early Islamic period.¹ The majority of The Textile Museum’s archaeological textile collection was acquired during Myers’ time; therefore, it is easier to understand the principles behind its formation in the context of Myers’ collecting philosophy and approaches (FIG. 1).

Myers began collecting textiles in the 1890s, more or so casually, but starting in the early 1920s, he became a serious collector with a real obsession for collecting textiles and inspiring others to appreciate textiles as art. He embarked on methodically assembling a collection that was as diverse as possible in order to build a comprehensive picture of non-Western textiles. He eventually established The Textile Museum in 1925 and was at the helm of the museum until his death at age 82 on December 23, 1957.

The mission of The Textile Museum has always been educational and scientific. Myers’ education-leaning blueprint for the new institution was articulated clearly in the museum’s incorporation document dated to June 1, 1925.² During the museum’s first 32 years, as the president of the board of museum trustees, director of the museum, and the main benefactor for its collections, Myers set the course for the institution based on four principles: acquire, preserve, research, and disseminate.

It is very clear from the projects and textiles that were pursued by Myers and his staff after the establishment of the museum that “establishing a

public institution” had a big effect on Myers’ collecting philosophy and habits. Once Myers had orchestrated the transformation of his private collection into a public one, his focus in collecting increasingly shifted from only aesthetically pleasing textiles towards those that were historically important or technically unusual, regardless of their condition. He began to buy some less-than-pristine objects, because of their historical importance as valuable material for primary research. He believed that research conducted on these textiles would then lead to the reconstruction of traditions and the understanding of the cultures that produced them.

Myers also understood the critical difference between a private collection and a museum collection; a private collection is an evolving personal entity and the other is a series of concepts embodied in an institution operating for public benefit. He defined the institutional collecting with a broad educational intent. He was a collector who sought to maximise the utilisation of his collection for the purposes of research, interpretation, and presentation as well as one who recognised accompanying responsibilities for collections management, records management, and institutional management and encouraged scientific research on the care and conservation of textiles. When Myers died in 1957 at age 82, The Textile Museum’s collections included 4,423 textiles from Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Today the museum’s collections include more than 21,000 textiles.³

During a lecture George Hewitt Myers delivered to the Oriental Society about the museum in 1949, he stated that “As to why this collection exists, of course the answer really is by accident. When I first bought a few rugs in the 1890s, I had no thought of buying several thousand. One thing led to another, and the only underlying thought, if any, was to find out what went before a certain piece to make it as it was. This, of course,

¹ Myers had also amassed a collection of archaeological textiles from Central and South America; it was as large as his archaeological collection from the eastern Mediterranean. Both of these collections were acquired concurrently, and Myers always saw structure and design relationships between these two textile traditions, although he knew they were developed independently of each other.

² The mission of the new museum was dictated in the incorporation document as “... to acquire and maintain a collection of rugs, tapestries and other works of art by establishing in connection with the collection a library for use by students of the fine arts and to foster and develop the fine arts by exhibiting and making loans of textiles, giving talks and more formal lectures on the subject of textiles. ...”

³ Besides the increase in the number of objects in the collection, the biggest transformation of the museum since Myers’ death was in 2014–2015, when The Textile Museum moved from its old Dupont Circle/Kalorama neighbourhood to its new location in Foggy Bottom in Washington, DC, and partnered with the George Washington University Museum. The museum is now in two locations. The first is a custom-built public museum building located at G and 21st streets, in the center of George Washington University’s main campus in the Foggy Bottom neighbourhood. The second, the main base for collections management, conservation, and the exhibition production departments, is in the Avenir Foundation Conservation and Collections Resource Center, which is located at the George Washington University’s Science and Technology Campus in Ashburn, Virginia. This is where scholars, faculty, and students access The Textile Museum’s collection.

FIG. 1
George Hewitt Myers,
by Atanas Tasev, 1960,
from an original pastel by
Arthur Ludwig Ratzka, 1924.





FIG. 2

FIG. 2
Curtain fragment, Egypt,
5th–6th centuries. Linen
and wool; plain weave,
slit tapestry weave.
111.00 x 133.00 cm
(43 11/16 x 52 3/8 in).

The Textile Museum 71.1, acquired
by George Hewitt Myers in 1926.

FIG. 3
Textile fragment, Egypt,
5th–6th centuries. Linen
and wool; slit tapestry
weave, plain weave,
supplementary-weft loop
pile. 13.34 x 11.75 cm
(5 1/4 x 4 5/8 in).

The Textile Museum 71.135, acquired
by George Hewitt Myers in 1955.

FIG. 4
Fragment with vessels
sprouting vines in roundels,
Egypt, 4th century. Wool
and linen; slit tapestry
weave, plain weave.
25.50 x 141.00 cm
(10 1/32 x 55 1/2 in).

The Textile Museum 71.119, acquired
by George Hewitt Myers in 1950.

led back to earlier and earlier forms.⁷⁴ And he became increasingly impressed by the history and longevity of this art form.

The Textile Museum collection includes about 1,351 textiles from the eastern Mediterranean that are considered archaeological; of these, 1,200 were collected by Myers from 1926 through 1955. Only 151 archaeological textiles have been added to the collection after Myers passed away and a few of these most likely were in Myers's possession, but they were not officially registered until after collections inventories were conducted after his death.

This large collection is composed of many subgroups and can be approached from many directions, allowing for study of a narrow subgroup or making comparisons between various subgroups. When Myers was acquiring them, however, he and his curators

grouped this material based on the geographic origin from which they believed each textile came. Thus, Egypt was designated with numbers starting with '7,' Mesopotamia with '31,' and Syria and Palestine with '11,' or '12.' Among the three regions, textiles found in Egypt are the largest group and require subdivisions based on historical periods.

The earliest group of textiles from Egypt was dated to the late Roman period of the 4th to the 6th century. Textiles in this group were numbered starting with '71' or '711'. The second group of textiles from Egypt date to roughly the 5th through the 7th centuries of the Christian era and were numbered starting with '72' or '721'. The third group was reserved for textiles coming from the Islamic period in Egypt (7th to 13th centuries) and they were numbered starting with '73'.

TEXTILES FROM THE LATE ANTIQUE PERIOD

The first textile in the Late Antique group ('71/'711' group) was acquired in 1926, a mere year after Myers established the museum. It is a humble little fragment with repeating design of green birds with red or pink feet and beaks, large eyes, and long, thin tails, in a lattice pattern consisting of small red buds and larger red and pink flowers divided into four sections by a green X-shape (FIG. 2). He continued purchasing throughout the rest of his life, the last example in this group being acquired in 1955⁵ (FIG. 3). Myers acquired the majority of the museum's Late Antique textiles through dealers based in New York, Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, Munich, and Cairo. Myers was known as a well-informed and highly intelligent buyer.⁶ Some of his major dealers in this category were Hagop Kevorkian, Paul Mallon, Maurice Nahman, Phocian Tano, and Joseph Brummer.⁷

This group includes some of the museum's well-published large hangings, five tunics, and numerous tunic fragments. The range of material and techniques represented in this collection is impressive, reflecting Myers' and the curators' interest in acquiring textiles that are not only beautiful, but tell a story through their design, shape, age, and structure to fill the gaps in our understanding of textile history and, as an extension, of human history (FIG. 4).



FIG. 3

⁴ George Hewitt Myers, Brief Statement RE Textile Museum to the Oriental Society by George Hewitt Myers. Typewritten lecture notes. January, 1949.

⁵ This collection contains about 193 objects and some of the largest archaeological textiles in the museum's collections are in this group.

⁶ Myers believed that "one must be firmly grounded in art and unusually independent and tenacious of opinions honestly formed, not to be utterly confused by what he sees." Many individuals contributed to Myers' efforts in building a comprehensive collection. He sought advice from a large network of respected scholars including curators of The Textile Museum and scholars associated with other institutions. See KRODY 2016.

⁷ Besides these dealers, Myers bought from Minassian, Yamanaka, Khawan Brothers, Pope, Weissberger, Oppenheim, Simkhovitch, Pullen, Abemayor, Costa.

FIG. 4



In the buyer (“Käufer”) column, there is either an institution or a person (sometimes a person representing an institution, sometimes a private collector). The museums listed in the notebook¹⁷ include the ones in Berlin, Mainz, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Magdeburg, Dresden, Munich, Leipzig, Worms, Nürnberg, Copenhagen, Christiania (today Oslo), Bergen, Mitau (today Jelgawa), Königsberg (today Kaliningrad), Breslau (today Wrocław), Danzig (today Gdańsk), Krakow, Budweis (today České Budějovice), Prague, Budapest, Boston, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, Lyon, Paris (Louvre), and Kawashima Textile Museum in Kyoto. Most of the listed above were the museums of decorative arts (a large percentage of them are Prussian Kunstgewerbemuseums) and archaeological ones.

The individuals appearing in the purchasers column include people connected with cultural institutions and (at least in some cases) acting on behalf of them, as well as private collectors, for example:¹⁸ Anton de Waal (Christian archaeologist, founder of the Collegio Teutonico del Campo Santo in Rome), Johann Peter Kirsch (professor of patrology and Christian archaeology, founder and director of the Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana), Victor Schultze (church historian at Greifswald University, specialising in Christian archaeology),¹⁹ John Evans (archaeologist, a keeper of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford),²⁰ Ludwig Lindenschmit (prehistorian, long-term director of the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum [RGZM] in Mainz), August von Cohausen (archaeologist, the royal curator of antiquities in the Wiesbaden district, a member of the board of directors of the RGZM in Mainz, and from 1885 of the board of directors of the GNM in Nürnberg), Julius Lessing (the first director of the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin), Herman Roemer (co-founder of the Hildesheim museum), Carl Koehl (prehistorian involved with the Worms museum), Otto Tischler (archaeologist, a keeper of the archaeological collection in the Provinzialmuseum in Königsberg),²¹ Richard Klebs (geologist, a colleague of Tischler in the Königsberg museum), Baron Theodor Funck auf Almahlen in Kurland (member of the Society for the History and Archaeology of the Baltic Provinces of Russia),²² Ludwig Müller (archaeologist from Copenhagen),²³ Hippolyte-Jean Gosse (director of the Musée archéologique and the Musée épigraphique in Geneva), Alfred Darcel (a keeper in the Musée de Cluny), Paul Blanchet (private collector from Rives),²⁴ Karl Gimbel (private collector from Baden-Baden),²⁵ David Reiling (antiquarian based in Mainz),²⁶ Lempertz (the famous auction house headquartered in Cologne), Anton Pachinger (art historian, collector and antiquities dealer), Gabriel von Max (painter and collector from Munich),²⁷ Friedrich Fischbach (textile designer, author of books on textile history), Leopold Iklé (producer of machine laces; his private collection of

historical fabrics enriched the holdings of the Textile Museum in Sankt Gallen),²⁸ Walter Crane (illustrator and textile designer), Cora Slocomb Countess di Brazza (a women's rights activist, a member of the Società per l'Esposizione Artistico Industriale and the Industrie Femminili Italiane foundation),²⁹ Stanislas Baron (a collector and antiquities dealer based in Paris),³⁰ and last but not least such eminent figures in Late Antique textiles collecting as Franz Bock and Theodor Graf. Some of those listed above were regular customers, buying considerable quantities of textiles repeatedly within several years; others figure in the notebook only sporadically or just once. With some of them, Forrer exchanged doublets (e. g. with Stanislas Baron). It often happened that both individuals and the museums purchased together with the textiles Forrer's publications on them, as his other notebook in the Strasbourg archives testifies.³¹

Forrer's notebook provides a quasi-encyclopaedic register of the museums and individuals interested in the Late Antique textiles at the end of the 19th century. A closer look at them gives a spectrum of reasons they got attracted by those textiles, whether it was the general interest in antiquity, Early Christian times, traditional handicraft of all kinds or more specifically weaving, the textile industry, “curiosities”, or merely commercial purpose.

Preliminary research shows that most of the museum collections are still at their original location, although several of them have never been published (including a majority of textiles in Poland). Several collections changed ownership, and some were lost during the Second World War, their whereabouts unknown (e. g. Mitau). At this stage of research, it was more challenging to trace the history of private collections, except those that enriched the museum collections, like those of Gimbel, Max or Iklé. It is also worth considering that some textiles from Forrer might have made a roundabout way to the museums, first passing through other merchants' hands (e. g. Baron and Schmitz).

FORRER'S TEXTILES IN POLAND

All the data in Forrer's notebook turned out to be extremely useful while investigating the provenance of the textiles in Polish museums as well as searching for their parallels in other European collections.

As mentioned in the beginning, textiles deriving from Forrer's collection are stored in the National Museum in Gdańsk, the National Museum in Krakow and the Jagiellonian University Museum in Krakow. What follows is a brief description of those collections ranked by their dates of acquisition, which match with the sequence of Forrer's “Lots”. Each paragraph



FIG. 2
MUJ inv. 1239-9.

© Muzeum Uniwersytetu
Jagiellońskiego, photo Janusz Kozina.

will include a history of the collection (dates of acquisition, relocations if such happened), and a short characterisation of the textile types represented in the ensemble.

*Collection in the National Museum in Gdańsk*³²

The collection currently stored in the National Museum in Gdańsk originally belonged to the Prussian Stadt- und Kunstgewerbemuseum in the then Danzig, which acquired it from Forrer in 1890–91.³³ After the Second World War, some of the objects belonging to Prussian museums that were not evacuated to Germany made their way to Polish museums as so-called “substitute restitution” for the war losses suffered by Poland.³⁴ For several decades, the textiles were deposited in the Warsaw National Museum; at the beginning of the 21st century, they were relocated to the National Museum in Gdańsk.³⁵

According to Forrer’s notebook, the museum in Danzig (noted as “Mus. Danzig”, “Gew. mus. Danzig” or “Kunstgew. Danzig”) acquired a total of 39 textiles. In the National Museum in Gdańsk, there are only 29 pieces, as eleven textiles from the original Danzig collection are missing. Most of the preserved fabrics are tapestries (mainly monochromatic with geometrical and floral decoration);³⁶ there is also one example of *broché* and one *lancé* (both with geometrical design),³⁷ one fragment of linen with woollen loop pile, two fragments of silk samites (one with vine lattice and antithetic birds in medallions; the other a minuscule scrap of a textile possibly belonging to the so-called “Zachariasstoffe”), one fragment with pink-red stripes woven in silk weft on linen warp (FIG. 2), and one *taqueté*.³⁸

¹⁷ Forrer usually wrote down the name of the city with abbreviations suggesting the institution, for example a general “Mus.” or more precise “Kunstgew. Mus.”, “Gew. Mus.”, “K. G. Mus.”, “Kgw. mus.”, “K.G.M.”, “K. Mus.”, “G. M.”. Sometimes only the name of the city is written down.
¹⁸ I am giving here only provisional and general information. Forrer wrote down only the surnames, sometimes preceded by a title “Dr.” or “Prof.”; very rarely is the initial of the name given. In some cases a name of a city appears (in brackets). I have not been able to tie several names with specific persons yet nor confirm some suppositions – those names with uncertain identifications I have omitted in the list given in this paper.

¹⁹ On his collection, see NAUERTH/ROSENTHAL-HEGINBOTTOM 2001.

²⁰ A short mention of his collection of “Coptic” textiles: WALLIS BUDGE 1893, 444.

²¹ On the purchase of textiles from Forrer, see also TISCHLER 1891, 25.

²² Mentioned repeatedly in the session reports of the society (“Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands”).

²³ Written down by Forrer as Dr Müller (a sale in 1891, coinciding with a sale of Forrer’s publication, also in 1891, noted as: “L. Müller, Kopenhagen”) and Prof. Müller (sales in 1893, when Ludwig was already deceased). However, in the notebook registering Forrer’s sales of his publications one

can also find Dr Müller from Munich, which complicates the matter of identification of all “Dr Müllers” as the same person.

²⁴ Possibly also Adrien Blanchet, a French archaeologist and numismatist, who must have known Forrer as he revised Forrer’s book on Celtic coins. Nevertheless, at this stage of research it is difficult to unequivocally determine if he bought textiles from Forrer; in the notebook, Forrer sometimes writes just “Blanchet”, other times “Blanchet, Rives”, which suggests he differentiates between two Blanchets, but one cannot be sure if this is indeed the case before further research is accomplished.

²⁵ Currently his collection belongs to the Museum August Kestner in Hannover – see

MOLDENHAUER 2017, 58.

²⁶ For more on the antiquarian activities of Reiling, see NEUMAYER 2002.

²⁷ On his collection, see PAETZ GEN. SCHIECK 2009.

²⁸ One of the “Forrer’s textiles” from the Iklé collection is in the Musée d’art et d’histoire de Genève – see MARTINIANI-REBER 1989, 19 (and note 2 on p. 20 on Iklé).

²⁹ SOLDI 2012.

³⁰ He supplied, among many other museums, the Louvre and Musée de Cluny; see DESROSIERS 2004, 10. Numerous textiles were bought from him by Isabelle Errera for the collection in Brussels; see VAN PUYVELDE (forthcoming).

³¹ Kept in a folder entitled “Journal des vents ouvrages R. Forrer”.

³² Inv. MNG/SD/556/TH–MNG/SD/584/TH.

³³ URBANIAK-WALCZAK 1999, 402.

³⁴ On the collections of the Stadt- und Kunstgewerbemuseum in Danzig and its war losses, see DANIELEWICZ 2005.

³⁵ ŁOPUSKI/SZTYBER 2014.

³⁶ For example: URBANIAK-WALCZAK/PANENKO 2003, cat. 8, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21; ŁOPUSKI/SZTYBER 2014, figs on pages 31–33.

³⁷ URBANIAK-WALCZAK/PANENKO 2003, cat. 24 and 25.

³⁸ URBANIAK-WALCZAK/PANENKO 2003, cat. 4; for a profound technical, stylistic and iconographical analysis of this textile, see OLGAY-STAWIKOWSKA 1985; more on the technique, with other examples: DE MOOR/SCHRENK/VERHECKEN-LAMMENS 2006.

ABB. 3
Tunika aus Qarara,
HD Inv. 2871.

© Ägyptologisches Institut der
Universität Heidelberg, Foto R. Ajtai.



ABB. 4
Tunika aus Qarara,
FRAe Inv. 266.

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Freiburg, Foto E. Hofmann.



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