

From Baghdad to Paris



FROM BAGHDAD TO PARIS: 1897

*Journal of a Journey to Europe
By Land Road via Damascus and Beirut*

By Alexander Svoboda

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To the late Prof. Henry A. Svoboda who for decades trusted me affectionately to share his passion and work on Joseph-Mathias Svoboda's diaries and the journal of Alexander R. Svoboda.

To my beloved late father Abdul-Majid and late mother Feriha who by their sincere and deep faith in Allah taught me to find inner peace of the heart and true love and respect for all humankind.

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Lastly we would like to dedicate our work to the memory of Prof. Henry Alexander Svoboda who is in most ways the father of this project.

Nowf A. Allawi

Walter G. Andrews

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Preface

by Nowf Abdul-Majid Allawi

*Finding the Diaries and Translation of the Journal to Europe by Land Road
via Damascus and Beirut, Starting on the 10th of April, 1897*

IN SEPTEMBER, 1977, after finishing a degree in architecture at the University of Baghdad, I applied to the National Center for Architectural and Engineering Consultancies in Baghdad. Accordingly, I completed the application form and no sooner did I have a meeting with the Director General than I was at once accepted to join the Center. In the seventies and eighties, the Center was considered one of the best, if not the best, engineering bureau in the Middle East. Every aspiring engineer and executive aspired to take part, although few made it through the vigorous screening process. The Center was housed in a five-story building.

On that first day, I found my desk in a very nice spacious office with walls of windows and a beautiful view of the Tigris River. However, the one main disadvantage was that it sat adjacent to a long and narrow corridor that led to the office of the Head of the Department: Professor Henry Louis Svoboda. A very particular person in all ways, he was tall and upright with a serious fair face framed by red hair that was accentuated by a strong booming voice. Professor Svoboda had notoriously exacting standards and was very difficult to please. Starting my first day of work, his secretary informed me that the professor – Professor Henry – summoned me to his office. I had been expecting this moment. Nevertheless I found myself speechless and my heart pounding. I grinned and looked around at the staff in my office; they were all looking at me

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sympathetically; I prayed to God to help me make it through this inevitable meeting. I knocked on the professor's office door and entered. Feigning a smile, I walked towards his desk and greeted him. I stood there unsure of what to do next but did not dare to take a seat until invited. He sat behind his desk turned half towards the window and reviewed my application. Turning his head, he looked at me intently over his glasses and then said with a mix of irony and cordiality:

"Ha, Basmuhandisa,¹ how do you do?" **

"Well, thank you," I murmured. He resumed scanning my file while I remained standing in front of his desk, half hiding behind a black leather chair. Looking around the office, my attention was drawn to a very strange painting amid other peculiar paintings hanging on the walls and the glazed metal wall that separated his office from ours. I gazed at the painting more closely, then realized it portrayed awkwardly drawn toes. "Oh," I said to myself, "what can that be?" Years later, I understood this was a famous painting of a foot done by a famous painter whose name I have since forgotten. Then, lifting his head, the professor grimaced and asked me my name, even though it was clearly written on the form in front of him. He continued reading silently, his right arm outstretched on his desk and me standing behind the chair. I noticed his right forefinger moving up and down. "Sit down!" he ordered impatiently. Misunderstanding the tone, I took a seat at once and watched him while he continued to read, sometimes asking questions about my thesis and my studies, sometimes silently. He suddenly asked if I had been one of his students at the university, like others working at the Center. Professor Svoboda, however, was neither professor nor mentor to me, as he had long been occupied with establishing and developing the Center. I knew I had lost some credibility on this point. My reputation was quickly revived though, when he realized that I speak French, "Ha! You speak French, is that so?" Testing me, he asked me to tell him in French where and how I learned the language. I told him of my early studies with nuns in Baghdad and abroad, and a gentle smile spread over his face. We conducted the rest of the interview in French. When it was over, I excused myself

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and returned to my desk with a smile.

That was the beginning of a long acquaintance filled with esteem, consideration, respect and trust. I affectionately recall that for many years, I was his ‘petite’² when talking about issues outside of architecture and work. My keen interest in the Center’s Architectural Library, one of his favorite projects, only solidified our friendship and we often discussed books. Professor Svoboda regularly recommended books useful for my work. In the beginning of 1980 he encouraged me to write Arabic translations of architectural articles from well-known books to publish in a local magazine. He even introduced me to a literary scholar living in Baghdad to verify my translations.

I remember one particular morning in October, 1985. Professor Svoboda called me to his office and I hurriedly complied. He handed me a large open file with hand written pages and asked me to read the text aloud. The pages were unclear and dark gray. I chose a paragraph and began to read aloud with some difficulty until my eyes adjusted to the writing. Professor Svoboda corrected me from time to time, but afterwards, I saw him smiling with satisfaction. “How well you read that Now! Now look over and find a date somewhere.” It was only much later, in early 2005, that the professor fully acquainted me with the travel diaries written by Alexander Svoboda in 1897. That March, Professor Svoboda walked to the end of the long bookshelves in his sitting room and brought me a white file: the file containing the diaries. Fascinated, I anxiously began turning over the pages. I was excited to read back from a time when my grandparents were still alive. The date and subject of the diaries were enough to arouse my interest and my curiosity piqued. The phrasing and grammar were slightly different from the regular standard written Arabic, and unbound by formal rules. Moreover, the language of the written texts resembled a dialect commonly used and well-known among the Christian inhabitants of Baghdad. I was surprised and amused to find that the inconsistent spellings were Alexander Svoboda’s transcriptions of foreign words in Turkish, Persian, English and French. Most of these words were familiar. My mother’s family was of Turkish origin, and she encouraged me to

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learn the language. Inevitably, I became even more interested as I came across a familiar and frequently used dialect in my own parents' home, and my grandparents before them. I was then determined to "do something about it" as Professor Svoboda suggested and began to peruse the papers in earnest.

It was his intention to have the document edited and printed, with an elaborate index that would include the names of places and officials mentioned in the text and a list of all the foreign words and phrases with notes explaining their origins and meanings. He also meant to include a preface, introduction, and map of the travel itinerary. Professor Svoboda wanted to compose a note explaining his family's Austrian origins and their immigration to Iraq in the mid-eighteenth century. Thus, having decided the basic objectives, I proceeded with all tasks simultaneously, always referring to the professor for verification and discussion. He had originally wished to have the book printed in England but put off making the necessary contacts. We thought of publishing the book in Baghdad, and obtained information about printing, dimensions, size, and copies. I attempted to make a prototype that conformed to the diarist's original.

Months passed and our work progressed until the intense heat of the summer of 2005, when work slowed and came to a halt until that Autumn. By then, the Professor's health began to fail him and to my utter devastation, he passed away the last week of October. Thus ended a friendship that spanned three decades. For several months, I could not bring myself to resume working. I eventually gathered the strength to return to the Svoboda residence, where his family graciously allowed me to gather the manuscripts so that I could complete our project. Past conversations, anecdotes, and memories came flooding back to me as I continued to work. "Really, Nowf, didn't you know that!" I remember his usual reply to my questions about the most obscure trivia related to "our great plans for our travel book." I had given my word to finish the project.

Despite the support of the Svoboda family, and the help of my own family and friends, I found myself in need of the larger

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academic community. In one of those rare coincidences, while searching out Ottoman language dictionaries, I made the acquaintance of Professor Walter Andrews, Professor of Ottoman and Turkish literature in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Washington. Professor Andrews has since lent his expertise, researchers, devoted his time and energies to help the book of Alexander Svoboda's travel journey come to fruition.

¹ Turkish for Chief Engineer

² French term of endearment, meaning "Child"

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Introduction

by Walter G. Andrews

Alexander Svoboda's Journals

ON APRIL 15, 1897, a young man, named Alexander Svoboda, born to a family of Slovak origin, set out with his parents and several other travelers on a long journey from his home in Baghdad to Europe. The journey began with a caravan trek through the deserts of western Mesopotamia, passing through Syria and Lebanon on the way to Egypt whence they crossed the Mediterranean to Brindisi and then continued on to Paris by train. Although only nineteen years old, young Alexander, despite the difficulties of overland travel, faithfully kept a daily travel journal documenting the conditions, events, and high points of his journey. The journal of his travel to Europe is written in Arabic and entitled “Journal of a Journey by Land to Europe via Damascus and Beirut Starting on April 10th 1897”. This account begins with a description of the plans for the journey, the assembly of supplies, and farewells to friends and family. It concludes abruptly on July 16 of the same year, as the writer is leaving Paris and traveling to London with his parents. In his account, Alexander reveals that they were planning to go to Vienna afterwards.

We do not know why Alexander suddenly stopped keeping the Arabic journal but more than three years later he began writing a second journal, in English, documenting the return journey to his homeland in the company of his young French wife. This second journal is quite short—only 13 pages—and was originally entitled “Journey to Baghdad from Europe via Der-el-Zor and Mosul, Oct. 1900”, which was later changed to “Our Journey to Baghdad by Mossul from Deir-el-Zoor”. The return journal begins on October 21, 1900, as the travelers were preparing to leave Dayr az-Zawr and

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ends unexpectedly with an incomplete first line written for Sunday October 28.

The two journals left by Alexander Svoboda more than a century ago provide us with a fascinating glimpse at life in parts of the Middle East and Europe in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Coming from a large extended family resident in Baghdad since late in the eighteenth century as members of a thriving European Christian community, the young traveler has a unique perspective on the lands he journeys through and the sights and peoples he encounters on the way. Suspended between Mesopotamia and Europe, Alexander represents a microcosm of the interplay and conflicts of values and traditions that marked the Middle East of his day. Much of the Middle East was still a part of the vast Ottoman Empire, which was engaged in a transformative program of modernization and westernization that trickled down unevenly to provinces and major cities far from the center in Istanbul. Baghdad, a city of glorious history and legend, had been left behind.

As Alexander traveled, he was fascinated by the unfamiliar trappings of modernity he observed in more fortunate cities and towns, such as colleges, public gardens, museums, trains and railway stations, omnibuses, restaurants, shop windows, and richly decorated houses open to visitors. His bitterness at the backwardness of his home town and its environs grew in concert with his astonishment at the progress visible in the places he visited after traveling through the deprived villages of Mesopotamia. Dayr az-Zawr, the first small town the caravan encounters is perceived as a modern wonder. Then Damascus struck him as a city enormously privileged in comparison to his beloved Baghdad but it was only to be outshone by the stunningly fashionable Beirut, Port Said, and Cairo with its extensive development imitating Baron Haussmann's Paris. Crossing the Mediterranean to Italy and proceeding to Paris, Alexander's astonishment rose to a peak. All of Europe seems to be in a frenzy of invention and technological progress, emblemized by Paris, gleaming in the dawn of a modernity that reflected the light of

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architectural splendor, social finesse, and *joie de vivre* onto Parisian life.

Three years later, the return journey fragment shows us a dramatically different Alexander. Beguiled by the relative excitement and luxury of European life, he displays a somewhat bitter regret at being obliged to return with his new French wife to a Baghdad that now seemed impoverished and drab in comparison. The naïve enthusiasm of the outward journey and its progressive unfolding of modern wonders is replaced by a sense of loss as he travels back to a homeland that he cannot ever again view with the same simple, youthful nostalgia that he showed on leaving it for the first time.

We do not know much about Alexander's life after the return to Baghdad. If he wrote any more journals they have not come down to us. We do know that he lived in Baghdad for some time, that his wife, Marie Derisbourg, eventually returned to France without him, and that he, at some point, moved to Istanbul where he remarried and lived out the rest of his life until his death in 1946 at the age of 68.

Throughout the Arabic journal, Alexander's youthful and unsophisticated observations provide us with a unique perspective on the Middle East. He notices things that a more seasoned traveler's familiarity might cause him to miss. He rides off on his own to view interesting sights or climbs hills to achieve exciting vistas. He reports regularly on the weather, the terrain over which the caravan passes, the fields and greenery, the rivers and water transport, the scenery, people, customs of the lands through which they passed, and the Christian churches, mosques, and communities in towns and villages along the way. He is traveling by caravan with a diverse group consisting of a British consular official and his entourage, some non-European Baghdad residents, Turkish military escorts, and assorted servants and camel, mule, and horse drovers. The outgoing British consul, Colonel Mockler, is a rather stereotypical British sportsman, who, whenever he can, hunts and hawks. He even brings a bicycle with him to the delight of Alexander. The presence of a British diplomat in the caravan appears to have alerted the Ottoman government and local officials

are sent out to greet them at major stages in their journey. The Svoboda family also has a wide acquaintance and, while in the Middle East, the news of their coming travels ahead of them and they are greeted by friends, relatives, and the priests and patriarchs of Christian churches of various sects..

Alexander and the Svoboda Family

Alexander Richard Joseph Svoboda (1878-1946) is the grandson of Anton Svoboda (1796-1878), born in Osijek³ in present day Croatia. In time, he moved to Vienna and became a crystal merchant. Early in the nineteenth century, he left Vienna heading for the Ottoman Empire and ultimately going via Istanbul where he received an Imperial Warrant from the Sultan to open a business in Baghdad. Upon his arrival, he rented a house within the city walls near to Christian churches and the European consulates. There, he established a business in Baghdad, at first, importing crystal from Bohemia and Istanbul and later expanding into other commodities. As a sign of his business, he wore a signet ring inscribed AS and Co. His business activities and closeness to the European diplomatic community combined with his proficiency in a number of languages including Italian, French, German, English and Arabic resulted in close relations between Anton Svoboda, envoys and missionaries from Europe and local dignitaries. These relations lasted during his lifetime and were continued by his sons and daughters. In February of 1825, he married native Chaldean Catholic girl from an Armenian trading family, named Euphemie Joseph Muradjian (d. 1868). With this marriage, Anton Svoboda founded the Svoboda family in Iraq and particularly in Baghdad. Subsequent generations of the family lived there, intermixing with and marrying members of the local Christian, resident European and Muslim communities.

By the first quarter of the 19th century, Anton had become an important figure in the city, with ties to Davud Pasha, the Mamluk ruler of the province, and to the powerful British resident. When Western scholars and travelers came to Baghdad, they were often hosted by Anton and assisted by his local contacts. For example,

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when the great Tibetan linguist, Alexandre Csoma de Köros left his native Transylvania for the Himalayas in 1820 and ended up by chance in Baghdad, he was housed, fed, and subsidized financially by Anton Svoboda for 45 days. During this time, Svoboda also put him in contact with the British Resident, Claudius-James Rich, to whom Csoma applied for a subsidy to enable him to complete his journey. A year earlier, Anton Svoboda had invited the inveterate traveler, adventurer, and self-proclaimed “physician”, the Fleming Johan-Martin Honigberger and his companion, a Transylvanian surgeon named de Tiurck, to enter the service of Davud Pasha. During their stay they too lived with Anton who later helped them resume their journeys.

With his business flourishing, Anton Svoboda bought the first house he rented upon settling in Baghdad. Subsequently, seeking a healthier environment for raising his large family, he built a new house in a most favorable location outside the city’s south gate overlooking Tigris River amid a vast green expanse of extensive farmlands and groves of date and fruit trees. Referring to an old irrigation system, known as kard⁴, which was widely used on river banks in this particular part of Baghdad, the district where the Svoboda house was located bore the name Kard-al-Pasha for many decades. With the passing years, the house underwent several changes but it remained occupied by Svoboda family members for more than a century down to its last occupant, the highly regarded Baghdad architect Prof. Henry-Alexander Louis Svoboda (1928-2005).

Anton Svoboda had four sons and seven daughters born of his marriage to Euphemie Muradjian. Those who survived infancy were educated by French Carmelite priests and nuns in Baghdad. His eldest son Alexander Sandor (1826-1896) was taken by his father to Venice and London to study art and eventually returned as a prolific painter with a special style of his own. Among a number of significant art works that he produced are a large painting done in 1858 of the Virgin Mary which hung above the altar in the Armenian Church in Baghdad and two other paintings displayed in the Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul, the largest in the Hall of the

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Ambassadors and the other in the harem. The location of these paintings hints that a certain amicable connection may have existed at the time between the Svoboda family and the Ottoman Sultan.

Anton's youngest son, Henry-Charles-Pierre (1847–1901) became a chief officer working for the British India Steam Navigation Company (known as the Lynch Company). He made a fortunate marriage in 1873 with Menūsha (Marie) Chanteduc (d. 1922) the daughter of a wealthy Aleppine of French origin living in Baghdad in the vicinity of the Svoboda house. Henry's father objected at first to the marriage because of a strange incident in the past. According to the story, as recounted by Evelyne Boukoff, a Svoboda descendent, a man hired to clean the Svoboda's septic tank discovered three jars in the tank. Anton told him to throw them back because they contained genies but later he and his secretary returned to the tank and brought out nine jars containing gold and silver coins. Anton kept two and gave the rest to his secretary for safe-keeping. When the tank-cleaner recounted the story of his encounter with genies in a local café, he was overheard by the servant of a neighbor of the Svobodas, the above-mentioned, M. Chanteduc. The servant relayed the story to Chanteduc, who reported the find to the Ottoman authorities. They dug up three more jars and confiscated the two held by Anton. This caused bad blood between the families until Henry's marriage established better relations. The marriage added enormous wealth to the Svoboda family, represented by acres of cultivated land with fruit and date trees in addition to a country house overlooking the Diala River in a village near the town of Baquba.

The middle son, Joseph-Mathias (1840-1908) lived for a number of years with his brother Alexander in India and particularly in Bombay, returning to Baghdad in 1857. In February of 1863, he started work with the Lynch Company as an officer on board the company's steamers making regular trips up and down the Tigris carrying cargo and passengers to different ports below Baghdad. At this time, Joseph Svoboda also started writing the diaries that he kept until his death in 1908. In these diaries he documents all the trips he made on the Lynch steamers, writing down names of official

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passengers and others with details of cargo and noteworthy events for every trip. In addition, he recorded many details of his life and that of his family and friends in Baghdad. The more than 40 years of diaries, constitute not only an invaluable source for the history of the Svoboda family (including this brief account) but are a precious resource for life and trade in Ottoman Baghdad and Iraq during the last half of the 19th century.

Living in the Christian quarter of Baghdad, the Svoboda family maintained social relations and ties with a number of neighboring Christian families. Among these was the Marine family. The two families exchanged visits and invitations and celebrated various special occasions together. Joseph Mathia Svoboda had a particularly close relationship with Eliza Jebra Marine and her family. Preferring to live in Baghdad, Eliza Marine (Sayegh) (1830-1910) had settled in the Christian quarter with her children and servants while her husband Fathallah Sayegh, assisted by their elder son Jebūry, remained at Amara where he had established a business dealing in trade and construction. Eliza's brothers, Antone and Yūsef worked at various jobs in Basra and Amara, Antone at the British Residency in Basra with her son Michael and with the Lynch Company. They lived in Amara but sometimes stayed with their sister when visiting or residing in Baghdad. Sometimes her aunts Seddy and Farida also came and spent time at her house.

Joseph Svoboda maintained good relations with Eliza Marine's brothers and husband. He regularly called on them when he made trips down river to Amara and Basrah, where the steamers would halt for a number of days taking on and discharging cargo and passengers or when the steamers were held up by quarantines established to prevent spread of the plague or cholera which were wide-spread in the region. They also assisted one another in business matters involving trade and real estate. At one time, the Eliza's husband and brothers assisted Joseph in looking for a garden that he intended to purchase on the riverbank at Basra and, another time, he even took the side of Eliza Marine's husband in a dispute with Fatūhi Kasperkhan, his sister Eliza's husband, about some of

Fathallah Sayegh's property, a garden on the outskirts of Baghdad that was managed by Kasperkhan.

Joseph Svoboda's diaries dating back to the early 1860s give accounts of several calls made on Eliza Marine upon his returns from river trips. He usually indicated his hostess by her initials (*EM*) or simply used ellipsis (...) when referring to her in recording the many visits that he made to her house, often several at different times in a single day. The frequency of his visits, in addition to other indications, reflects that their houses lay close together and within sight of each other. Sometimes Joseph's visits would last for hours, during which they would sit, talk, and take meals together or play backgammon. When calling during the day in summer, they would usually sit in the *serdab*, the coolest place in every Baghdad house on hot summer days. In the long summer evenings, they would sometimes sit in the terrace or on the roof and enjoy the fine cool nights with a refreshing breeze until the late rising of the moon. They would take tiffin⁵ together or enjoy some refreshing lemonade with grapes, a watermelon or a cold melon that had cooled for some time in the well, or, perhaps, a cup of violet flower tea when Joseph felt unwell and feverish with an irritated chest and throat. However, at times he would call and find her out, gone to the bath⁶ herself or with the children, as was customary among residents of Baghdad, or even calling upon her aunts and acquaintances. Sometimes, they would go out together to gardens in Baghdad, bringing with them her young son Rufā'il. One day he even took her to see the new steamer launched by the Lynch Company. He also seems to have looked after some of Eliza Marine's needs, making purchases for her such as portable iron bedsteads and cotton velvet from Baghdad and, when he traveled, he brought back for her a number of items such as tobacco, ghee, and rose water from Basra.

While away on extended business trips up and down the river or aboard the Lynch steamers, Joseph included Eliza Marine in the regular correspondence he kept up with his family and others, writing in both Arabic and English. Eliza was illiterate at this time. Her son Rufā'il wrote her letters for her and must have read to her the letters from Joseph. He would send his letters by any available

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means: with the steamers that passed each other coming and going along the river, with Arabs living on the outskirts of Baghdad, and at times, when nearing his hometown, just before entering the city he would disembark and hand over the letters to an Arab water carrier who would hurriedly gallop on the back of his donkey along the riverbank to deliver them. Together with her replies, Eliza would sometimes send him a box of pancakes or *ka'ak*⁷ for his long journeys. At times, when sending each other telegrams, Eliza would sign hers with the alias "Shaw".

On May 12th 1877, news came of Fathallah Sayegh's death at Amara. He had been complaining of asthma in his chest for some time. Several months earlier, particularly on November 30th 1876, his eldest son Jebūry had written to his mother informing her that his father was seriously ill and intended to come up from Amara to Baghdad. On a trip downriver at the time, Joseph Svoboda did not believe at first the news of his death to be true. He had gone to see Fathallah only few days before embarking on his return to Baghdad and heard directly from him that he was feeling better. Arriving in Baghdad and calling on Eliza, he found them putting seats and chairs all around in the courtyard for the customary condolences reception and he knew at once that her husband had truly passed away. The reception lasted for three days. Men were received down in the courtyard while the women's reception held on the floor above, in the *iwan*⁸ and verandah. Eliza had black mourning clothes made for her and the children too wore the black *izār*⁹. A ceremony was held at the Armenian Church in Baghdad. Many Christians attended, among them the Svoboda family, and prayers were recited for Fathallah Sayegh's soul.

During the days of the condolence receptions, it was difficult for Joseph to call on Eliza and find a moment with her alone, even though both of them shared a mutual desire to talk during these emotional days shadowed by grief and sorrow. At times he summoned her young son Rūfā'īl to meet him outside and handed him a message to her asking for a meeting after all the visitors had left. At another time, when they found a brief moment to exchange few words, Eliza took Joseph's handkerchief. The next day when a

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party of visitors was on its way to the terrace Joseph Svoboda stole a moment to receive Eliza's handkerchief and one of her stockings as a token. This poignant event sorely grieved Eliza, who felt ill and took to her bed in a near faint. Joseph could hardly bear to see her in this state.

Following the funeral and property settlement, Joseph Svoboda continued his regular calls on Eliza Marine. On July 7th 1877 they had a long talk and spoke of their relationship and the possibility of marriage. Eliza related to Joseph that she had complained to the Assyrian Priest Kass Makarios and that he recommended to her that they marry quickly and lose no time, saying that it would be the most beneficial thing for them and the best plan. She had also talked the matter over with her daughters who had known about their relationship and were glad of it as were her aunts and a number of acquaintances.

On the following day Joseph Svoboda approached his sister Medula on the subject. However, before he even mentioned the name of his intended, he was exceedingly vexed to hear his sister say that everyone who knew of the relationship had been asking her when the marriage would take place, adding that she disapproved because of the age difference (they were nearly the same age and Eliza, at 38, was the older by less than a year) and the number of her grown children. He called on her again the next day and found her attitude toward him drastically altered and the way she talked about her opposition to this marriage greatly grieved and upset him. He departed, resolved never to broach the subject with Medula again.

This was only the beginning of difficult times for the couple. The saga, worthy of a novel, is detailed in Joseph's diaries. Friends reported to Eliza that Joseph's sisters, Eliza (Elizabeth Svoboda) and Medula had spoken publically about their opposition to the relationship and had harsh words to say about her. Eliza's brothers objected to the match arguing that she was too old and wondering why he did not marry a young virgin. They also felt it unbecoming of her to wish to marry at her advanced age. Joseph's pleas that he could love no one else went generally unheeded. His sisters continued to abuse Eliza. He fought with his father who was

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adamantly opposed to the marriage and even knocked Joseph down with his cane during an argument about it that saw an enraged Joseph get his gun and threaten to shoot the lot of them. A letter from his sister Caroline's husband Thomas Blockey, remonstrating with Joseph concerning the impending marriage, was somehow made public. As a consequence, the dispute finally spread into the tight-knit Christian community and became a matter of general gossip, upon which Joseph resolved to go forward with the marriage without great ceremony and to move out of the family home.

The Roman Catholic Church would not marry the couple outside of the church and without the prior publication of the banns. However, the priest, Father Joseph, suggested that the bishop would recognize the marriage if performed by an Assyrian priest. The Assyrian Bishop agreed and, on October 11, 1877, sent a priest, Kass Yūsef, to the house where the marriage was performed before a small company including Eliza's brother Anton and Razūk Tessy, the son of her friend Toni, and some neighbors who showed up unexpectedly. The bride exchanged her mourning black for white linen and Joseph gave her a diamond ring which his mother had left to him for his future bride some 12 years earlier. In the days following, many visitors called to congratulate them, including French Catholic, Chaldean, Assyrian, and Armenian priests as well as notable members of the local community both Muslims and Christians.

Some of the rancor surrounding the marriage persisted in the family after the wedding but the couple appears to have been quite happy and the bitterness eventually passed away. Some ten months after the wedding, on July 7, 1878, the author of our journal, Alexander Richard Svoboda was born to Joseph and Eliza Marine Svoboda.

The whole story of Alexander's life must wait on the study of Joseph Svoboda's 60 diaries, a project that is now only in its infancy. In a fragment from 1888-1889 that we have explored, there is some information about Alexander at the age of 10-11 years, which will give an idea of the life of a boy in late 19th century Baghdad.

In December of 1888, it is recorded that Alexander was often ill, especially with the Basra fever and was attended to by one Dr. Bowman, who treated him with his own special concoction. There continue to be mentions of his illnesses throughout the next year. His youthful bouts of illness seem to have affected Alexander's self-perception, for in the travel journal, we will also observe that even at 19 he shows an extraordinary concern for his own health. In January of 1889, Joseph, still traveling with the Lynch Company steamers, received Alexander's first letter written in Arabic and subsequently took him to the school run by French fathers at the Latin (Roman Catholic) Church where the head teacher was Father Policarp. February saw Alexander still in school from 9 am to 2 each day, attending church regularly, and still beset by fevers treated with Dr. Bowman's elixir. At one point, Joseph even took him on a steamer-ride downriver to Basra for his health. His mother's daughter Medula (his half-sister) was very pregnant and about to give birth. Meanwhile, he wrote to his uncle Alexander (Sandor), the painter who was, at the time, in London.

In March he was still in Basra and on his return entered Baghdad riding on a donkey. By April it was spring and the time for outdoor activities. He went out with a servant to ride a donkey in the Manimgar Garden¹⁰ and with his father to ride on the river in a goffa¹¹. On another occasion, the whole family—Joseph, Eliza, her daughter Tūkyeh, and Alexander—took a goffa to the Farhat Garden¹² where his aunt Medula and Grezeski, her husband, were camping. Alexander then returned from the gardens on a donkey.

In May, Alexander wrote a letter to his cousin Cecile (Uncle Alexander's little daughter). A family group consisting of Alexander, Tūkyeh, Rufā'īl, Eliza, Joseph, and Artin, his uncle on his mother's side, made an excursion by goffa to an island across from Kher to spend the day. The men shot doves; they roasted a fish, and sat beneath the poplar trees. They walked home along the Kerradah¹³ because the donkeys they had arranged for did not show up. Alexander felt unwell and became feverish because of the heat. Sometime later, Eliza made plans to go with Alexander, Tūkyeh, and Rufā'īl to the Shifteh Garden¹⁴ in Baquba, which was owned by the

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Marine family. Accompanied by Razūki Sayegh, Rufāʿil and Tūkeyh's uncle, Fetūhī Kasperkhan and the garden agent they all traveled to the garden. Razūki sent a telegram to Joseph aboard ship telling him that they were enjoying themselves in Baquba, but they suffered from mosquitoes and sun flies¹⁵ and on their return Alexander grew feverish from the heat.

During this period, Joseph had begun taking photographs of his family, preparing the film and developing the pictures himself. Later in his life, Alexander would expand his father's hobby into a business of his own taking photographs all over the Middle East and selling them as picture postcards.

In June Alexander suffered from an inflamed liver (possibly childhood hepatitis) and was kept out of school. He was attended by Dr. Woods but his mother rejected the medicine prescribed by the doctor and used instead a compound mixed with wine that was recommended by Mr. Greziski. Alexander was out of school for more than twenty days following his return from Shifteh.

In July, Joseph, one day, when preparing to sail downriver, sent to Alexander's school to have his son come to the ship to breakfast¹⁶ with him. The head teacher, Father Policarp refused permission for him to go. Joseph sent for him again and they made his servant wait at the school. Then he sent a third messenger but they again delayed the servants and finally sent them and Alexander to the boat at 11:30. When they finally showed up, Joseph was enraged and sent for his son's books and communicated to the school that he would not be sending him there again. In the end he sent a servant to explain to Father Policarp that it was his wish that his son come and take breakfast with him every morning an hour before noon on the days he was scheduled to make a trip downriver. Father Policarp finally consented to this and Alexander was returned to the school.

In late July and August, the hot weather seems to have bred sickness throughout Iraq. Many Christians died because of the heat and fever. Cholera was spreading north, with Jews and Christians fleeing Basra in large numbers. A quarantine station was established on the Tigris across from Kut but the disease reached Baghdad regardless. Alexander spent the Holiday of the Virgin Mary on the

steamer with his father. On the 20th of August, his aunt Caroline, Joseph's sister and the wife of Thomas Blockey, died of cholera. Finally Alexander and his mother fled Baghdad as people in the Christian neighborhood shouted and wept in fear and sorrow. They made their way to the Nawāb Garden¹⁷ below Gerarah¹⁸ where they planned to stay until the danger passed. Meanwhile, the Blockey's daughter Jessy, a five year-old, died of cholera just a few days after her mother on August 22.

Such was the life of a boy in the Christian community of Baghdad in the last years of the 1880s. In the travel journal, we will pick up his life some 8 years later and see what kind of a young man this boy became. His grandfather Anton died about a month short of a year after the dramatic wedding of his mother and father. His father lived until 1908 and continued to keep his diaries. His mother died in 1910.

Sources:

The above information about the life of Alexander and the rest of the Svoboda extended family are from Joseph Mathia Svoboda's diaries. The majority of the diaries are in the Iraq National Manuscript Center in Baghdad and, with the exception of some digital photographs of three diaries given us by the center and 10 on loan from the Makiya family for digitizing, they are not now available. However, in the 1970s, Margaret Makiya, received a small grant from the Gülbenkian Foundation to transcribe some of the Svoboda diaries. These transcriptions were never published but a typescript copy was given to Prof. Henry Svoboda (d. 2005) who turned them over to his assistant, Nowf Allawi. The material in this introduction was digested by Ms. Allawi from the following diaries and transcriptions:

The Publication of the Travel Journal

This publication is the initial product of the "New Book Project", an endeavor of the Ottoman Texts Archive Project, partially funded by

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the National Endowment for the Humanities and the University of Washington Royalty Research Fund. “New book” is our shorthand describing a new model for the publication of original texts. The print-on-demand version of “the book” is only one feature of a constellation of web-based digital resources including, but not limited to, the print book, a web version with side-by-side translation and transcription of the original Arabic from which it is possible to access digital images of the original journal pages, numerous notes, a “wiki” (the Svobodapedia) with copious information about the people, places, and history behind the journal, scanned rare books and articles—published and unpublished—providing background for the journal, maps including a Google Maps version tracing Alexander’s journey, images of Iraq and elsewhere from many sources among them postcards with images taken by Alexander later in his life, genealogical material on the family, and more. All of this material and the print book will be continuously updated as new information emerges from study of the Joseph Mathia Svoboda diaries and the participation of scholars and researchers world-wide.

³ [note source: document from Carole B. Duester]

⁴ kard: a kind of water lift that uses a raised pulley mechanism and large water sack pulled by a draft animal going down an incline.

⁵ tiffin: a light lunch or snack usually eaten in mid-day.

⁶ the bath: the Joseph Mathia Svoboda diaries give the names of several baths but we have not yet been able to identify them from his transcription of their names.

⁷ ka’ak: [note]

⁸ iwān: This is an second story chamber open on one side.

⁹ izār: a black garment or wrap.

¹⁰ We have not been able to find reference to the gardens mentioned by Joseph Mathia, perhaps because of difficulties in

his transcription of their names. The Manimgar Garden may be from the Persian mun'imkār "beneficence granting" but we cannot be sure.]

¹¹ goffa: the round flat-bottom craft used to ply the rivers of Iraq.

¹² Farhat Garden: We have not found independent reference to this garden.

¹³ Kerradah:

¹⁴ Shifteh Garden: We have not found independent reference to this garden.

¹⁵ sun flies: [note]

¹⁶ breakfast: The custom was to have a very light meal (Alexander calls it "tea") upon arising in the morning. "Breakfast" was the first substantial meal of the day and was often eaten late, in mid-morning or even at what we today call "lunch time".

¹⁷ Nawāb Garden: We have not found independent reference to this garden.

¹⁸ Gerarah: [note]

The Language of the Journal

THE LANGUAGE of Alexander's journal has numerous features that make deciphering it a daunting task. The primary problems encountered in working with the Alexander's language (as represented solely by the journal) are these:

Iraqi colloquial Arabic [IA] in the late 19th century was fragmented into a number of local, ethnic, and confessional dialects that varied more or less widely depending on the relative cohesiveness of the communities which spoke them. We know this to be the case in a general sense but specific information about most of these dialects is lacking because there are few early studies—none in the cases of most dialects—and, while many varieties of these dialects survive today, they are not necessarily similar in all respects to their 19th century ancestors. For this reason, although it is not the best practice to read back from today's dialects to earlier versions, in this case, it is all that one can do.

We assume that Alexander's Arabic was some form of the Christian Arabic dialect [CA] spoken in Baghdad [BCA], although his mother, Eliza Marine, was probably from Mosul and may have spoken a Mosul sub-dialect of CA. One of the features of CA is that it incorporates many features of the Muslim Arabic dialect of Baghdad (MBA) but differs from it in significant ways.

Alexander's linguistic background is quite diverse, a characteristic of the language competency typical of the educated residents of Eastern Europe and the Austro-Hungarian Empire from whom he is descended. He clearly knew and spoke Arabic fluently. There are records in Joseph's diaries (diary number 30- April 1887- Nov 1887) where he speaks of his son taking Arabic lessons at the age of nine from Shamas Hanna at the Chaldean Church and of his writing to his father in Arabic at the age of 10, (JMS Diary 33- Dec. 1888- Sep. 1889) just before he entered the Latin Church School in Baghdad

run by French monks, where he may also have studied classical Literary Arabic [LA]. We have found evidence that Father Anastas (b. 1866), a noted expert in classical LA, taught at the Carmelite Fathers' school at the age of 16 but in 1886, he left Baghdad and went to Beirut returning in 1893. Alexander was then 15 years of age but we do not have any evidence that Father Anastas taught him after his return. His father kept his diaries in English and, in addition to Arabic and English, knew Italian, French and some Persian. One of the JMS diaries (31- Nov. 1887 – May 1888), records that Joseph Svoboda interpreted for the Afghan Emir Eyub Khan when traveling board the Lynch Steamer which transported the Afghan refugee Prince and his followers. He worked for a British firm (the Lynch Company), and he was obviously friendly with high-ranking members of the British diplomatic corps, yet they were also French protégés because the French consulate provided diplomatic services for Austrian citizens in Baghdad on behalf of the Austro-Hungarian State. The fragmentary journal of Alexander's return (accompanied by his French wife) is written in English. In short, it is difficult to say what Alexander's native language was, what language was commonly spoken at his home (there may have been several), or what language he was most comfortable speaking, or even why he chose to write his travel journal in Arabic. It is also possible that he was to some extent familiar with languages that he does not mention. For example, we do not know whether or not conversations with Ottoman officials, military personnel, and travelers were at times carried out in Turkish.

Because we lack adequate information about 19th century BCA, it is impossible to draw definite conclusions about Alexander's language. His writing does not show evidence of a close relation to the Baghdad Christian Arabic discussed by Farida Abu-Haidar in her study entitled *Christian Arabic of Baghdad* (Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden, 1991). Moreover, the Arabic script does not accurately represent the phonology of any particular dialect and so any conclusions about dialectal peculiarities that we have reached are highly tentative. It is also likely that Alexander's Arabic in the journal is somewhat idiosyncratically contaminated by the other languages he spoke.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE JOURNAL

Moreover, the journal is most probably intended as a personal document. It is not necessarily meant to be read by anyone else or, at least, anyone outside the family. If so, it would not be written—and seems not to have been written—with much care to reflect LA or even the more generally understood Muslim Iraqi Arabic dialect of Baghdad [BMA]. Nonetheless, it is a written text, which distances it to some uncertain degree from actual speech, even considering that its context is personal and informal. The result is a heterogeneous text difficult to translate by appeals to the usual sources: grammars, dictionaries, linguistic analyses, published collections of modern recorded speech, etc. A complete linguistic analysis of the text will be the business of scholars with different training and expertise than ours. For these reasons, our approach depends heavily on the personal expertise of the translators: Nowf Allawi's familiarity with the languages and cultures of Baghdad, including IA, BMA, BIA, BCA, LA, French, and English—a linguistic and cultural background that in many ways mirrors that of the Svobodas, and Walter G. Andrews' long experience with Ottoman Turkish, Persian, and LA, as well as his familiarity with the requirements and practices of scholarly translation.

Alexander's journal is the only example of his Arabic that we have. As a result, we do not have enough samples of the oddities in his writing to draw definite conclusions about their origin. Nonetheless, we will give a few examples (among many) of some of the features of his language that struck us and mention our suggestions as to what these features may represent.

The Influences of Ottoman Turkish:

Because Iraq and Baghdad were, for long stretches since the first half of the 16th century, under the administration of the Ottoman Empire, all of the Iraqi colloquial dialects show many and varied Turkish influences. In the area of vocabulary many of the borrowings that show up in Alexander's journal are quite ordinary [e.g. [006:25] قوناغ IA, CA *qonağ*, Trk. *konak* (station, stopping place), [007:17] جول IA, CA *jul*, Trk. *çöl* (desert), [013:13] طوز IA

tūz, Trk. *toz* (dust)]. In several other cases, the vocabulary is tied to the language of Ottoman administration [e.g. [002:09] باليوز IA *balyoz*, Trk. *balyos* (foreign consul), [005:03] بيورلدي IA *beyüraldi*, Trk. *buyurldu*, *buyrultu* (decree)]. In addition, there are a number of administrative terms that are adaptations from Persian which most likely entered the Iraqi dialects through Ottoman [e.g. [003:06] شهادتنامه IA *ṣahādatnāme*, Trk. *ṣehādetnāme* (declaration, testimony) from the compound, Arab. شهادة (*ṣahādat* = witness) + Pers. نامه (*nāme* = letter, document)].

In other cases, Alexander appears to have adopted some of the phonetic features of the Ottoman pronunciation of Arabic vocabulary. For example, he writes [001:02] رحلت *rihlat* (journey) with a final “ta” (*tā tawil*), when the final letter should be “ta marbuta” and be pronounced as the vocalic “ha” (*rihlah*) in the pause form in Arabic. This is a common way of expressing the “ta marbuta” in Ottoman, however, and Alexander does not do this regularly. His language also seems to reflect Ottoman phonology in some cases: for example, زريف for ظريف [*Zarīf* pronounced *dharīf* in IA but *zarīf* in Ottoman] A more complex case is when he writes [005:02] زابطيه *zabitiyah* for “gendarme”. The standard word and spelling is ضابط, which would be pronounced *dhābit* in IA. However in Ottoman the first letter ض is pronounced “z”, which produces *zābit* (and we have no other indication that this pronunciation difference was a regular feature of Alexander’s dialect). In addition, we have not been able to locate a use of the form ضابطيه *ḍabitiyah*/*ẓabitiya* in either Arabic or Ottoman. Clearly, Alexander was thinking of the Ottoman borrowing from Arabic, ضبطيه (IA. *dhabitiyah*, Trk. *ẓaptiye*), which vulgarly comes to mean “gendarme” in Turkish. In this he combines Ottoman influence on the popular language with a form of creative misspelling, of which we will give a few other examples below.

Borrowings from Persian

The origin of Persian vocabulary in Alexander's Arabic is difficult to account for with any certainty. Ottoman Turkish borrows copiously from Persian, which makes it difficult to say if Persian borrowings are a result of Persian occupations of Iraq or of Ottoman occupations. Some examples of Persian vocabulary are [004:16]

كفشكان *kefşekan* (storage room, cloakroom) from the Persian **كفشكن** *kefşken* [Pers. *kefş* = shoe + *kan/kaniden* = to pull off (place where one removes one's shoes)]; [006:10] **جادر** *jādir* [Pers. *chādar*, Trk. *çadır* (tent); [016:21] **جاربایات** *jārbāyāt* [Pers. *çārpāy*: *çār* = four + *pāy* = foot (iron bedstead) + the Arabic plural *āt*.

Peculiarities of the Baghdad Christian Dialect

While Alexander's Arabic shows similarities to what we know of the Christian Dialect of Baghdad, for example, the use of **عمل** 'amala (to do) as an auxiliary verb, we are not in a position to make an accurate assessment of the grammar and morphology of his language.

Spelling Peculiarities

Alexander's spelling shows several types of deviation from standard writing conventions. The most prominent are the following:

Spellings that reflect his speech: for example, when giving the time he writes [003:19] **ساعه** with a final vocalic "ha" *sā'ah* (o'clock/hour) instead of the usual **ساعة** *sā'at* with "ta marbuta" (although in some cases he does write **ساعة**). [It is interesting to note that the Ottoman influence we suspected in the writing of *rihlat* with a final "ta tavil" instead of "ta marbuta" does not apply here, where Ottoman influence would result in **ساعت** *sā'at*.] We also see unexpected substitutions of "ta marbuta" (ة) for "ta" in some verb phrases: for example, the standard **مطرت** *matarat*, 3d pers. fem., (it rained) becomes [009:03] **مطرة**.

Spellings that seem to reflect the phonology of his dialect: for example, substitutions of "ta" (ت) for "tha" (ث) as in [024:03] **تخين** *tikhīn* for **ثخين** *thikhīn* (thick) or the substitution of "dal" (د)

for “dhal” (ذ) as in [002:05] هذا *hadā* for هذا *hadhā* (this), although for instance, in [014:14] Alexander writes هذا.

Misspellings by substitution of letters: for example, he spells the word for “francolin” دراج in two non-standard ways by substituting ط (ta) and ض (dhad) for د (dal) (طراج - [008:19], - ضراج [022:09]) and خ (kha) for غ (ghayn), for example, in the word for “mule” بغال *baghāl* [007:16] resulting in بخال *bakhāl* and in many other cases.

Unknown or Indecipherable Vocabulary

There are some words in Alexander’s text that are not obvious minor misspellings and yet are not familiar to speakers of contemporary Iraqi dialects. These fall into several categories:

Some of these appear to be vocabulary from LA that Alexander remembers imperfectly: for example, he writes the word [010:10] سحاب *sahāb/sihāb* which in LA, Persian and Turkish usually means “cloud” in a context in which “cloud” makes no sense. (He also uses the common term [013:07] غيم – غيوم *ghim/ghaym pl. ghuyum* whenever he mentions “cloud/clouds”.) What does make sense in context is that he intends to use the LA word سهوب *sabb pl. subūb* which means “plains, level land” and simply mistakes the form. The same sort of uncertainty occurs with the word [009:19] ترکه *(?terke/tireke)* which, in context, must mean “a remedy, cure”. There is no attestation we have been able to discover for this word in this sense. Our best guess is that Alexander intends ترياق or ترياقى *tiryāq/tiryāqī* (at times spelled ترياك in Pers. and Trk.) in the sense of “antidote or remedy or theriaca”.

In other cases, indecipherable words seem to be simple spelling problems of the type mentioned above, in which Alexander records what he says and hears rather than the actual spelling of the word (for example, substituting “ghayn” for “qaf” on occasion). Also there are some cases in which he is just making errors in writing: dropping a letter or transposing letters—perhaps a natural consequence of writing hurriedly or under difficult circumstances.

The Transcription of Foreign Words into Arabic

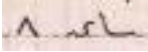

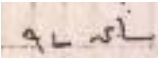
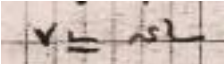
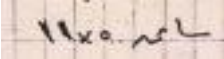

Alexander's journal contains a significant number of vocabulary items transcribed into Arabic from foreign languages, for the most part from French and English. This is not uncommon for the time. Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish were borrowing extensively from European languages, primarily from French, during the latter half of the 19th century in order to fill gaps in the lexicon left by the introduction of European customs and technologies. Alexander is also from a European community and some of his borrowings (and their spellings) may simply have reflected his personal vocabulary. Some of the Europeanisms were wide-spread such as [015:18] **بوسطة** *būstab/būstat* (post, mail, "posta" Trk. **پسته**) or [012:16] **تلگراف** *telegraf* (telegraph), [014:04] **فوتغراف** *futughrāf* (photograph). Others seem more bound to the language of his British travel companions: [002:21] **ميجر** *mayjir* (major), [003:02] **كرنل** *karnal* (colonel), [010:20] **تفن** *tiffin* (tiffin). Yet others record the Arabic pronunciation of European names: for example, [003:19] **هندري** *hendry* (Henry) or [014:03] **زبويده** *zbyyda* (Svoboda).

Expressions of Time

Alexander uses a bewildering variety of scales and notations representing time. At times, he records "Turkish time" [002:17] **ساعة تركيه** *sa'ah turkiyah*, which by the late 19th century meant 24 standard hours of equal length beginning at sunset (as determined by the official time of the evening prayer). Turkish time required that all clocks be reset every evening. "European time" [002:20] **فرنكيه** *sa'ah firankiyah* was based on a "universal" meridian and, by this time, corrected against "official" clocks in post offices and railway stations.

More of a problem is the variety of notations that Alexander uses to record times in his journal. These include:

FROM BAGHDAD TO PARIS

1. The simple form of registering the hour:  (sā' ah 8 o'clock).
2. A form with a symbol resembling a small dash before the number (reading l-r), for example, , indicating the quarter hour (here 4:15)
3. A form with a symbol resembling a dash with an upward stroke before the number (reading l-r), for example , indicating the half hour (here 9:30).
4. A form with a symbol resembling parallel dashes with an upward stroke on the top dash before the number (l-r) as in , indicating the three quarters hour (7:45).
5. A form that indicates the hour fraction by separating the hour and the fraction with an “x” as in , which expresses 11:05.
6. A form indicating the hour and hour fraction separated by comma, which is used to record train schedules after the party reaches Europe. For example: , which expresses 7:55.

In the end, we leave it to historical linguists specializing in the dialects of Iraq to provide a more detailed and satisfactory analysis of Alexander's language.

FROM BAGHDAD TO PARIS

	Elboomahomed (tribe)
Abdulla Malcolm	Eliahoo Gubbai
Abdulnebi	Eliza
Abdulrahman Pachachy	Eliza Erame
Abdulrezack	Emilia
Ahmed Nadif	Fathalla Abood
Ali Gherbi (place)	Fehmy Pasha
Alice	Fetoohi Kasperkhan
Amara (place)	G. Tonietti
Antone Apykyan	Gherarah (place)
Arabi Pasha	Guisseppina
Arbid	Hamadi
Arteen Apikyan	Hannosh Tessy
Assyria (Steamship)	Hassan Effendi
Azeir (place)	Hasseh (place)
Aziz ibn Elias	Humenieh (place)
Azizieh (place)	Hussein Effendi Oorfali
Babel Shergi (place)	Hussein Rujub Ali
Baghdad (place)	Ibrahim Agha
Baghdadieh Fort (place)	Jeboory Asfar
Bakub	Jeddah (place)
Basreh (place)	Kadem Pasha
Beker	Kadumein (place)
Beshlic (currency)	Kalat Saleh (place)
Bostan (place)	Karoon (river)
Bughela (place)	Kassem Zheir
Carolina	Kaymakam (position)
Catherina Yaghchi	Kerrada (place)
Cherd el Pasha (place)	Khalifah (Steamship)
Ctesiphon (place)	Khdeiry
Cumary (coin)	Khedeir
Derwish Effendi	Khoory Yacoob
Diala (place)	Ledj (place)
Dijleh (Steamship)	

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Maghil (place)	Seyd Abbass (place)
Mahmood	
Mahomerah (place)	
Major Mockler	
Mansoor Aboo	
Marine	
Medula	Shalom Abdulla Yousef
Mejidieh (steamship)	Sheikh Eassa Kartass
Menusha	Sheikh Saad (place)
Michael Sayegh	Sheikh Wadi
Michail	Soofair
Mohamed	Stifan Andrea
Mokhtar (position)	Sultan Abdulhamid
Monsoor Pasha	Sussan Sayegh
Mossul (place)	Taboor Aghassi (position)
Motserrif (position)	Taghar (weight)
Mudeer	Tally Pasha
Mudeer Shookry Effendi	Tell Affer (place)
Mufettish el adliyah (position)	Tom Tessy
Nadir Ookaf (position)	Tomb of Selmán (place)
Naoom Abood	Tucki ed Din Pasha
Nasryeh (place)	Um el Adjaj (place)
Nawab Ikbalo Dowleh	
Nedjid (place)	
Petrak	
Ressafah (steamship)	
Ressafah (steamship)	
Rezooki Serkis	
Roofaeel	
Roofail ?	
S.V. Phrate (steamship)	
Saleh Isack Saleh Sassoon	
Sansom	
Serai (place)	

FROM BAGHDAD TO PARIS

SPACEHOLDER

LIST OF MAPS and ILLUSTRATIONS

List of Maps and Illustrations

Page 1. Map of Baghdad

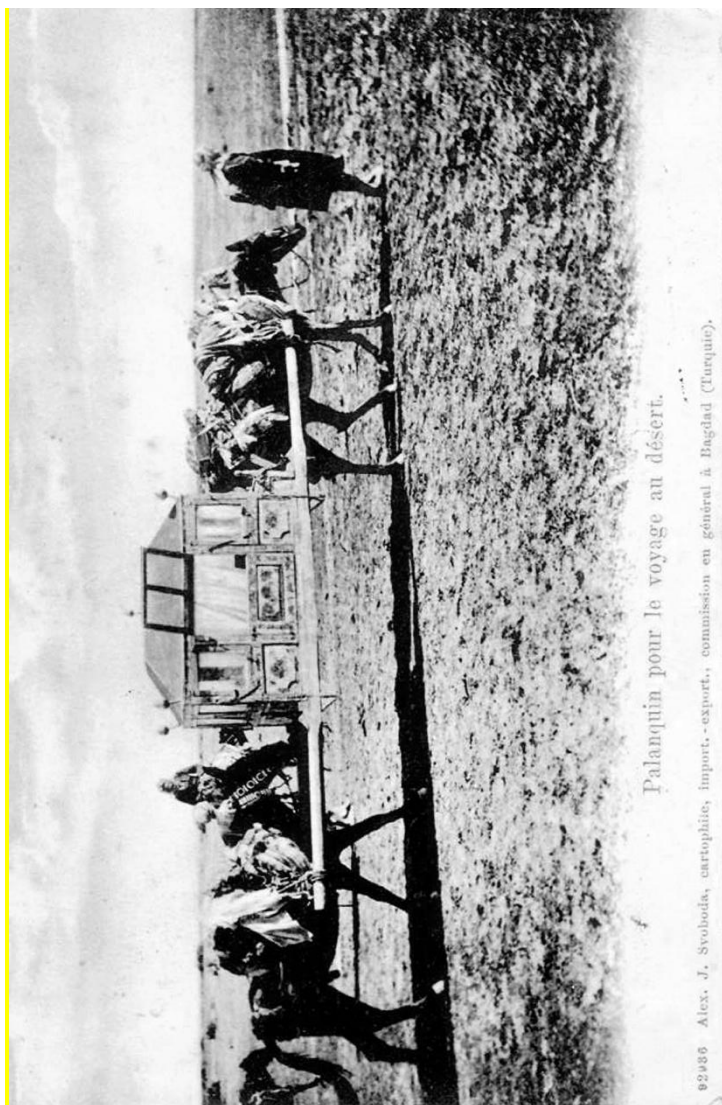
Page 10. Route to Damascus

FROM BAGHDAD TO PARIS

FROM BAGHDAD TO PARIS

Journal of a Journey to Europe
By Land Road via Damascus and Beirut:

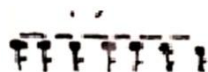
The Diary of Alexander Svoboda



Palanquin pour le voyage au désert.

9235 Alex. J. Svoboda, cartophile, import.-export., commission en général à Bagdad (Turquie).

CHAPTER 1



Departure from Baghdad and Farewells

1897

April 10th

002.50 AND SO, we decided to travel to Europe. Our departure from here will be on Wednesday morning, that is, on the 13th of this month. We have already hired the riding animals and a mule-litter and have arranged everything, nothing is left but to put Baghdad behind us. For the past three days till now, many visitors have come and are still coming to bid us goodbye, especially our family who are coming often to visit us. We are traveling in the company of the English Consul-General¹ Colonel Mockler² who has decided to go to London. Therefore, we shall take the land road that is to ad-Dayr ,
002.10 Damascusand Beirut, and thence to Cairo, God willing.

April 11th

As today is the last Sunday for us in Baghdad, we therefore started after hearing mass to go around and bid our friends goodbye. We made visits to nearly as many as twenty houses and a good number of people came to say goodbye and wish us a happy journey. At sunset, we came together with my paternal Aunt Elizaat the house of her husband Kasperkhan and we returned at 3 Turkish time very pleased and happy. I also heard at sunset today, by telegraph coming from Basrahto Lynch's, that they had been informed of Iskander Wakil's death in Basrahdue to tuberculosis. Yesterday at 10 Western time , the new English Consul-Generalwhose name is Colonel Loch, had come to Baghdad from Basrah together with his wife and Major

FROM BAGHDAD TO PARIS

Fagan who is the Consul in Basrah. Since we have decided to travel with Colonel Mockler who has for quite some time been awaiting Colonel Loch's arrival to go from Baghdad to London for his retirement, it is therefore more certain now that our journey will be on Wednesday.

April 12th

A cloudy and rainy morning today with an east wind. The clouds were thick and dark but the weather cleared after a few hours. I went to the office in the afternoon and asked Colonel Mockler for a certificate of my two years service at the Consulate¹¹ and he gave me his word to have it ready for me tomorrow. We went at sunset for a last visit to the home of my maternal Uncle Antone and they said that their intention is to send with us their son Joury who will go to school in Beirut. One hour before sunset, I also brought the harmonium I have at home to my Uncle's house to leave it in their care while we are away. Today too, many people, friends and relatives came to bid us goodbye.

April 13th

An extremely miserable night, cloudy with thunder that never ceased. A very heavy rain fell at midnight. It soaked all the streets and made them like rivers but it broke up and cleared in the morning with an extremely lovely sun and it became a nice spring day. Today again, many people came to bid us goodbye but when I went to the office, I heard that Colonel Mockler had changed his mind from leaving on Wednesday to leaving Thursday afternoon. Truthfully, I felt very bad because of these changes, with something new every day. Thus, we decided that we would hopefully travel on Thursday afternoon. The family of Uncle Henry on my father's side, came to visit us at sunset with Aunt Medula and their sons Jany and Artine. They stayed with us till half past one but they did not bid us a final goodbye. I went in the afternoon to bid some friends goodbye and afterwards I went to see the mule-litter in which we are to travel.

DEPARTURE FROM BAGHDAD AND FAREWELLS

April 14th

Today is a very happy day; the sun is shining with no clouds at all and the mud has somewhat dried in the streets. After visiting some friends and family, I came home and heard that Uncle Antone, feeling very grieved for his son, had changed his mind and his son Joury will not travel with us. What a pity for Uncle Antoneto miss an opportunity like this that may not present itself again. My paternalwe asled Aunt Emiliacame to our house before noon today. We asked her to have breakfast with us and she accepted. After breakfast, my friend Jamil Abdelkarim came to see me and he brought with him a letter that I took and put with my private papers. It is addressed to the son of Dinha Razookwho lives at Dayr az-Zawr. Catherine Yaghechicame to bid us goodbye, and she was very sad about our parting.

April 15th---al-KhirrToday is the day of our journey. As we had understood yesterday, we will cross to the other bank in the afternoon today. This morning was cloudy and windy, a very unpleasant morning, but the weather cleared two hours after sunrise and the day became nice and lovely. After I had been to church and received Holy Communion because today is Easter Thursday, I returned home at 8- Western time. I was there preparing my things and sealing the closet doors at the kefeshkan when some friends came to see me and I bid them goodbye for the last time. At noon, we were awaiting the arrival of the mules to take the things and when it turned one o'clock in the afternoon, all our family started coming to our house for the last goodbye. Truthfully, I found it very difficult when I began to talk to them about parting for they were all very grieved. At last, when it turned 2:00 Western time, our mules came and they started loading the baggage. So all our family and I too cried loudly, I did not think that the parting would be so difficult. After they had tied on the loads, they left the house with an officer whom we had taken on by means of an official decree and we ordered them to cross to al-Khirr and wait for us there where we would spend the night. When it was time to part and the hour neared, our family- my paternal Aunts Emilia, Eliza, and Medula and Aunt Emilia's

FROM BAGHDAD TO PARIS

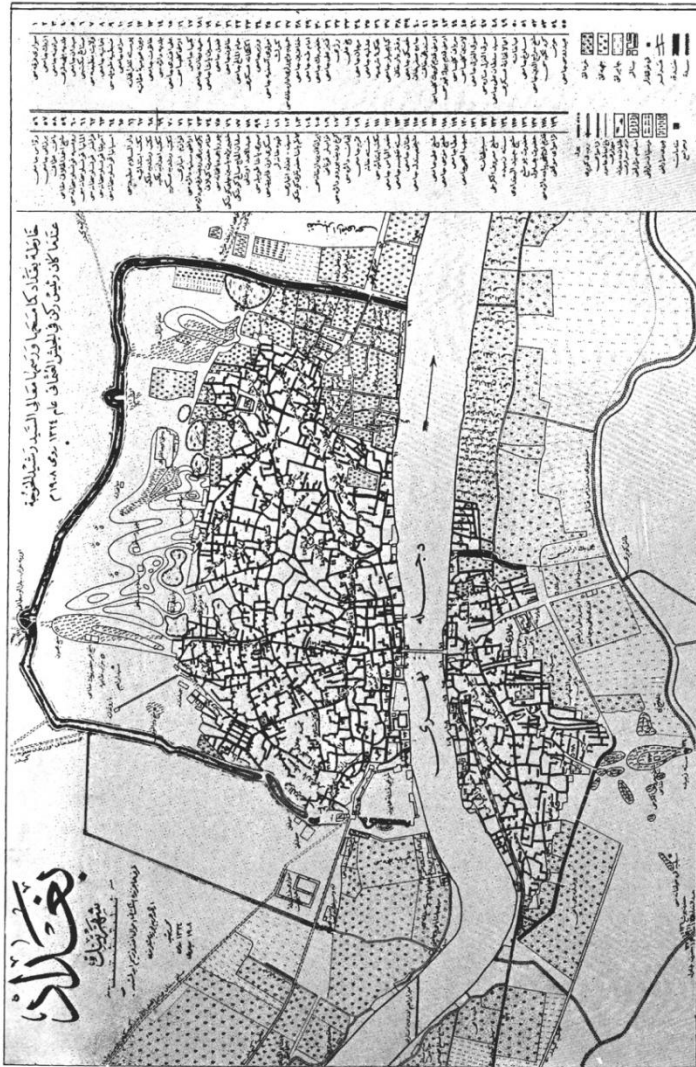
daughter, Alice with Uncle Henry's daughter Louise and her mother, Aunt Eliza's daughters Tarousa and Régina, and the wife of my maternal Uncle Antonewith her daughters Rosieand Hélène- all began to cry loudly in sorrow at our parting. For the first time in my life, I found myself so unhappy to be saying goodbye that the tears did not cease for a moment. The affection that they showed on their part for me was very strong and I had not thought that they loved me so much. At last, it turned 4 Western time and I went up for the last time to the kefeshkan. I put on the iqaland the kufiya¹⁵ and came down from my dear kefeshkan for the last time bidding it farewell and saying 'Adieu, who knows when I will see you again'. As I joined our family wearing full riding outfit, they all burst into tears, at which my father arose and said: "We must leave you all." Thus, together with my mother and father, we kissed all our family, each in turn, with tears pouring down like rain. We came down to the inner court and they stood on the balcony waving to us, so I turned my eyes and said:

"I commend you to God's protection. O, all my family, pray for me and wish me luck!".

When I went out by the door, they were all at the window waving to me. I turned for a final look and waved back to them with my kufiya for the last time but copious tears were running down my cheeks. Thus, I bade our family and our house goodbye and turned my head toward the market. While walking down the road to the bridge, I met my friend Jamil Krekor and he accompanied me together with Jamil Abdulkarim, Shukrullah Sayeghand Yacoob Tessy, the husband of my sister Medula¹⁷, who were going with us. We walked across the bridge and then, since Uncle Henry was on board the Khalifah steamship that is due to leave today, he came up on the ship's deck and saluted us. Likewise, we waved to him until we passed him and crossed over the bridge. We came to Allawi al-Hillah and there we found the riding animals ready to take us to al-Khirr. Thus, the time to bid farewell to the rest neared too, so we kissed each other and then turned towards al-Khirr, and so dear Baghdad was left behind us. I turned back towards my homeland and said "Farewell to thee, land of the beloved, land of the dear ones,

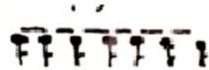
DEPARTURE FROM BAGHDAD AND FAREWELLS

when will we meet again?" The hour was 4- Western time and we mounted the animals and set out. At 4-, we came to al-Khirr bridge and crossed over. We went a little farther and we found the entire caravan ready, our tent pitched with the baggage around it. Colonel Mockler's tents and baggage had also arrived and the tents of Issa Al-Zhair who will travel with us to Damascus with his little son Abdullahin order to take him to school there. We entered our tent and rested, but I was feeling very pained by the parting that for the first time struck me with grief. Then, I summoned up patience and put my trust in God for sorrow is of no avail. After we arrived I was pleased to write to my dear Louise and tell her how grieved I was at parting with her. So I took paper and pen out of my satchel and wrote a few lines. A half an hour before sunset, I saw Colonel Mockler coming bringing the bicycle and following him were Mrs.²⁴ Mockler and Ms. Tanner with Uncle Antone. After they dismounted, Uncle Antone came to see us and we bade him stay for dinner and to spend the night. A few minutes after sunset, Aunt Eliza's son Jany came from town and I was truly quite happy to see him come from our family. He stayed with us overnight and we all dined together and went to bed but we absolutely could not sleep because we were still confused and unsettled. Jany bedded down in the mule-litter and Uncle Antone on the carpet covered with the woolen cloaks. This is the last day we are near Baghdad, as the arrangement with Colonel Mockler was to wake up at 8:00 Western time tomorrow and go on to the first station (konag).



DEPARTURE FROM THE HOMELAND AND
THE JOURNEY FROM AL-KHIRR

CHAPTER 2



***Departure From the Homeland and
the Journey from al-Khirr***

1897

April 16th

Abu Ghraib

WE WERE up at dawn today, all of us awake from this cursed night. After we drank tea, we heard that the Khalifah steamship will pass by our place and we saw its smoke from a distance. We hurried off at once and went towards the river. We saw the steamship coming and just then we also caught sight of Aunt Eliza's son Artine who had come from Baghdad to see us. When the steamship passed, Uncle Henry was standing on deck waving to us and so did we until he was out of sight. When it turned 8:00 Western time we struck the tents and they tied on the loads and prepared the caravan. They lifted our mule-litter as we must sit in it now and they put up the wooden ladder at its door. My mother got in and so did I and we sat inside. That was the first time in my life that I sat in a mule-litter. Thus, the entire caravan was ready and we were prepared to march. We put our trust in God, the mule-litter set out with us in it, the caravan following behind and Uncle Antone together with Jany and Artine, who were accompanying us. After traveling a half hour's distance, Uncle Antone approached us and we stopped the mule-litter. He dismounted and came to bid us goodbye as he had to return hastily

FROM BAGHDAD TO PARIS

to town. So we bade each other goodbye and our eyes shed tears afterwards because of the parting. Then we drove the mules on. Here, the entire desert is dry and much in need of rain. After we had gone for some 2 hours, in the distance, Baghdad still glittered at us and the minarets too were visible. Finally, I bade the town goodbye from afar until we lost sight of any sign of Baghdad. When it turned 11:00 Western time, Jany and Artine too bade us goodbye. They were the last who had accompanied us this far and so I gave Artine letters, one to Louise, another to my dear friend Jany Pahlawan and the third to my friend Antoine Julietti, and I expressed to them my great sorrow at parting with them. Thus, we marched on unaccompanied, cutting across lands, wastelands and rough terrain.

At 12:00 we approached 'Akarkūf' on our right and passed it. It remained in view until 2:00 o'clock when finally, it appeared as a dot to us until we could see it no more. And so, we urged the riding animals on. Sometimes I get out of the mule-litter to ride in place of my father. At other times I walk and then get in the mule-litter again. Now and then we pass tents of the Arabs who are all az-Zoba Arabs in these lands. The countryside is very much in need of rain. Some of it is cultivated with rain-fed plantations and every two hours we pass low hills and some desert areas with greenery. At 2:00, we passed, at a distance on our left, the

small shrine of an imam²⁹ with a nearby well. At 2:00, we crossed a small arched bridge beneath which runs a narrow stream flowing from the Euphrates River. We stopped and drank a little from the stream and some people washed in it. Half an hour later, we came to another shrine, it is larger than the first and called 'Imam Abu Dhafer Al-H'mud'. Thus we were near to the first station, that is to say Abu Ghraib. At the end, we came to a land covered with stones. We were across from a station called the 'Sinniye³¹ depot'. It has a few officers to watch over the depot, where the provisions of the Sinniye³¹ are kept. This place seemed good to us and so we stopped the caravan. They took down the loads and pitched the tents. It was then 3- Western time. This land is also called Abu Ghraib. Our caravan has fifty riding animals and 3 mule-litters. After we had dismounted and settled down here, I took up the pen to write the

*DEPARTURE FROM THE HOMELAND AND
THE JOURNEY FROM AL-KHIRR*

above. Then having finished writing, I lay down and rested a little. When sunset came, we heard on all sides the cry of the francolin whose voice is very pleasant. It appears that this bird is abundant here. I took the opportunity to write a letter of few lines to our family telling them, among other things, about our health and my grief at parting with them. I decided to send it with the sons of the Nawab who traveled with us to go hawking at Fallujah. We had an early dinner at sunset and slept the night through, because we were tired from the caravan's march.

April 17th--Abu Ghraib

We were up in the morning today and found the day extremely pleasant with a cold west wind. The night had been very cold, and almost like winter nights. It had rained a little at midnight but the morning was nice with clear weather. While we were in our tent, Tommy Dexter who is with Colonel Mockler came to tell us that Colonel Mockler said that he cannot travel today because Mrs. Mockler is in poor health, and so he must break the journey here. Truthfully, we regretted very much to hear this because today we had planned to travel to Fallujah. However, we had in the end to consent to this. Then I asked Colonel Mockler to ride the bicycle for a while. I took it and tried to learn how to ride it. Sometimes I fell off and at other times I went on riding. This was the first time in my life that I tried myself on a bicycle and I kept on trying for almost one hour. I found that I was very swift and I rode by myself with no help about 10 times, but when I got off afterwards, I felt tired to the utmost degree and as if all my bones were broken. However I think that I will learn to ride it in time. We were obliged to spend the day here. So, at 9:00 Western time, we all went to the Sinniyeh depot across from our campsite and we toured around in it. It has a big roof and some stores containing the provisions of the Sinniyeh. After breakfast, Sheikh Dhaher Al-H'mud came to visit us and sat in our tent. He is the son of the imam whose shrine we passed yesterday afternoon at 3:00 Western time. The Sheikh, almost 80 years of age, as he informed us, seems.....

THE RETURN JOURNAL

THE RETURN JOURNAL

THE RETURN JOURNAL

Journey to Baghdad from Europe
Via Der-el-Zor and Mosul
Oct. 1900

THE RETURN JOURNAL

Our journey to Bagdad by Mossoul
from Beir el Jeir.

21st October. Beir 1900

My wife being still unwell & weak
I preferred to go to Bagdad from here by Mossoul
as we will have only eight days only with the
caravan to this last place & from there we will
have to go by Kuteh to Bagdad. It was very hard for
me to induce The Consul to come by this way as he is supposed
from Aleppo to Bagdad direct, anyhow I induced
him to undertake this route by giving him
a £ extra.

The Archbishop Monsignor Rahmandany
also to Mossoul thus we decided to accompany
him. The hour of our departure was announced
for noon. Therefore we hastily packed our luggage
& other things and at 12 exactly we left the house
of Mr. Razzaki Dinkne (who is coming with us) & we
went on foot to the other side of Beir-el-Jeir
the small bridge & went again further road
and then is again another crossing of a small
embouchement of the Euphrates, but this fearful

OUR JOURNEY TO BAGHDAD BY MOSSOUL
FROM DEIR EL ZOR

[Small Introduction to this part]

CHAPTER 1
Our Journey to Baghdad
by Mossoul from Deir el Zor

1900

21st October.

Deir

MY WIFE being still unwell & weak I preferred to go to Bagdad from here by Mossoul as we will have only eight days only with the caravan to this last place.& from there we will have to go by Kelek to Bagdad. It was very hard for me to decide The muleteer to come by this way as he is engaged from Aleppo to Bagdad direct, anyhow I enticed him to undertake this route by giving him a £ extra.

The Archbishop Monseigneur Rahmani is going also to Mossoul thus we decided to accompany him. The hour of our departure was announced for noon. Therefore we hastily packed our luggage & other things and at 12 exactly we left the house of Mr. Razooki Dinha (who is coming with us) & we went on foot to the other side of Deir & crossed the small bridge & went again further more where there is again another crossing of a small embranchement of the Euphrates, but this fearful crossing is made by a kind of small barge all dirty & chapless. We arrived to this place at half past twelve & stayed till 4 awaiting the crossing of our mules & luggage. we were very annoyed thus awaiting & incircled by hundreds of savage arabs & brutes. At last the Archbishop arrived from town with a hundred persons and at 4½ p.m. we crossed the river to the other side where all the caravan was awaiting with our tektersin & the carriage of M Rahmani.

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22.10.900 We started all together at 5 p.m. exactly towards the plain desert & we intended to march till the morning as our station is about twelve hours. Marie mounted the horse & I walked till 7, then Marie stayed in the tektersin & I mounted the horse. At 10 p.m., we felt anyhow hungry, then I gave my horse to Razook & I entered the tektersin where we dined & stayed uneasy till 4. a.m. exactly when we arrived to our station called El-Sooioir *الَصَوْرَ* we put only 11 hours from Deir instead of 12. Hastily we put up the tent & tried to sleep but at 7 we were again up as the sounds of the mules were insupportable. At 8 we had our tea & afterwards Monseigneur Rahmani came to see us. We are here on the bank of the small river Khabour *خابور* which is about 25 yards large. This river comes from Aboo el Ain & continues till Miadin & unites with the Euphrates & we will have to cross it tomorrow in a place called Shaddadi.

At 1 p.m. we arranged again to start & hurry our journey, therefore after 5 minutes we moved & went towards a Western direction keeping on our right hand the river Khabour for an hour. The desert here is very dry except near the bank of the river where there are very seldom some arabs with very small plantations of Maïse or Idra. The plains in these places are all infested with the Shammar and Iniza Arabs & today at 4 p.m. we witnessed from a far distance these two renowned tribes in dispute & the Shammar people have taken many Camels item from the Iniza & these latter were on their pursuit with hundreds of horses.

Our caravan is escorted with the gendarmes, two of them have gone two days ago with the greater part of the big caravan & await for us tomorrow & here we are only with about 15 mules & 8 gendarmes. I was very tired this afternoon from this successive march but anyhow at half past seven we reached our station called Bregda *برقده* on the river Khabour again & exactly opposit the commen-cement of a rang of mountains on the left. Here we found our big Caravan e has not yet gone & crossed the Khabour before us. Our arrival here was very nasty one, the darkness was terrible & we were all pell mell with so much people & mules about 200 beasts. We heard that we will start again from here tonight at 3 in the.....
