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“Prokesch and Goethe teach traveling like nobody else”: Anton Prokesch’s Travel Account of the Holy Land (1831)

In the summer of 1829, Friedrich von Gentz (1764–1832), a close associate of the Austrian State Chancellor Klemens Wenzel Lothar von Metternich (1773–1859), wrote the following lines to a thirty-three-year-old young man from Graz. The addressee, Anton Prokesch (1795–1876) with the military rank of captain, had been traveling across the Levant since 1824 on a mission from Vienna. Once again, he earned the recognition of the political elites as a result of his successful diplomatic assignment in the Holy Land, but Gentz requested more: “Your expedition report, however informative it may be, has left me with one major request. Without any doubt, you did not visit such interesting places as St. Jean d’Acre, Jerusalem, Alep[po], Cyprus, Rhodes, etc. without keeping a journal [...]. If you can find the time to put the journal in order, you could make a precious gift of it to me and others of your friends [...].”¹

The biography of Anton Prokesch von Osten, who died in 1876 after a long career as a diplomat, was strongly influenced by countless (aristocratic) patrons, benefactors, and mentors, but a special call to publish his travel experiences was no longer necessary by July 1829. On reading Prokesch’s diary of his travel years,² it immediately becomes evident that the author was aiming at an audience and seeking grandeur in his professional life. Consummate social graces and communication skills were indispensable to this goal. When Prokesch returned to the Habsburg Monarchy in the spring of 1830, he did so with a wealth of experience

1 “Ihr Expeditionsbericht, so lehrreich er auch ist, hat mir doch noch einen großen Wunsch zurückgelassen. Ohne allen Zweifel haben Sie so interessante Gegenden, wie St. Jean d’Acre, Jerusalem, Alep[po], Cypern, Rhodus u. s. f. nicht besucht, ohne ein Journal zu führen [...]. Wenn Sie Zeit finden, das Journal in Ordnung zu bringen, könnten Sie mir und andern Ihrer Freunde ein köstliches Geschenk damit machen [...].” Friedrich Gentz to Anton Prokesch, Vienna, 17 July 1829, Vienna, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Nachlass Prokesch-Osten (henceforth NPO), Karton 27, fols. 61r–64v, here fols. 61v–62r. This and all following translations are by this article’s author. See also Daniel Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten (1795–1876): Ein Diplomat Österreichs in Athen und an der Hohen Pforte. Beiträge zur Wahrnehmung des Orients im Europa des 19. Jahrhunderts (Munich 2005), p. 214.

2 See NPO, Karton 12.

and the recognition of his emperor. From then on, he was accompanied by his reputation as seaman, traveler, scholar, soldier, and negotiator.³

Why is it worthwhile to look at the travel account *Reise ins heilige Land* (Journey to the Holy Land) and at its author Anton Prokesch von Osten in the context of this volume? First, we can proceed from exceptional sources due to the preservation of his estate and compare his published work with diaries and letters. Second, when Prokesch set off for the Holy Land his personality had already been formed by the state of knowledge acquired over several years of journeying.⁴ Third, there are good reasons for considering this travelogue about the Holy Land among all the Austrian Orient travelogues of the nineteenth century. The European interest in Palestine reached a zenith after the 1840s as a result of a blend of new technological developments, political events, and historical mentalities. Group travels became more and more popular, culminating in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the so-called peoples' pilgrimages (*Volkswallfahrten*, very well-organized groups of 500 participants). This trend had a strong effect on the literary genre of travelogues, which boomed in the nineteenth century. In this context, Prokesch's travel books benefited from their early date of publication at a time when norms and standards were still being set in the genre, and the book market and the reading public were not yet saturated with travel reports about the Orient.

It is significant that the connections between Europe and the Holy Land had never been cancelled completely. Europeans had visited the Holy Land since the fourth century and there had always been a rich travel literature with a focus on religious concerns, mostly simple itineraries or practical travel guides for visiting the Holy Sites. There was less attention paid to the characteristics of the Oriental landscapes and foreign cultures than in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though.⁵ Anton Prokesch was convinced that European civilization had

3 See Ernst Münch (ed.), Julius Schneller's hinterlassene Werke, vol. 1: Julius Schneller's Lebensumriß und vertraute Briefe mit seiner Gattin und seinen Freunden (Leipzig, Stuttgart 1834), pp. 152–153. Anton Prokesch von Osten was one of the few commoners to be elevated to the status of count in the course of their lives in the Habsburg Monarchy. As early as 1830, he was awarded the Order of Leopold and elevated into the nobility with the title of knight (*Ritter*) "von Osten."

4 Prokesch had discarded "die Brillen [...], wodurch Europa den Orient sieht" (the spectacles with which Europe sees the Orient). Prokesch to Julius Schneller, Golf von Salonnich, 20 August 1828, NPO, Karton 3.

5 See Muhammad as-Sayyid Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten: Ein österreichischer Diplomat im Orient (Frankfurt am Main et al. 1993), p. 110. Regarding earlier German pilgrim reports see e.g., Reinhold Röhrich and Heinrich Meisner (eds.), Deutsche Pilgerreisen nach dem Heiligen Lande (Berlin 1880).

been in decline for centuries. Therefore, Roman and Greek authors were in general more important to him than his early modern predecessors.

When the title of the present volume poses the question: “On the Way to the ‘(Un)known?’”, this question must be asked with reference to the Holy Land in particular, as for many Europeans it was the land of the Bible and the setting for the Christian history of salvation. Many mental maps were associated with this region over the centuries: “Here, even the unknown was somehow familiar.”⁶ Viewed as the home of Christians, in the nineteenth century it was referred to with far fewer exotic elements than other regions.

1 The author and his travel experiences

Anton Prokesch's biography reads like a coming-of-age novel.⁷ Born to a bourgeois family in 1795, from the age of eleven he attended the *Akademisches Gymnasium* and the *Lyceum* in Graz (Styria, Austria), where the historian and philosopher Julius Franz Schneller (1777–1833) taught world history and the history of the Holy Roman Empire. Schneller, a proponent of the Enlightenment, became a paternal model in Prokesch's youth, which was privately clouded by the deaths of both his parents and coincided with the Napoleonic Wars. In 1815, Schneller, who undertook journeys to Paris, London, Venice, and Belgrade, eventually even married his protégé's stepmother Gabriele (1789–1849).

The young Prokesch was inquisitive and talented. He learnt the classics, Latin and Greek, and then English and French (later also Italian). In addition, he took a keen interest in history, philosophy, physics, and higher mathematics. However, the central focus of grammar school education at the time was on reading the classical authors. Prokesch was an avid reader even at a young age. His preference was for works by poets, but also travel accounts, and he familiarized himself with German, French, and English literature in particular. In this respect, reading circles played a major role in his life. Schneller's reading society, consisting of gifted students, the sons of middle-class families in Graz, and aristocrats, was the first one Prokesch participated in. While garrisoned in Mainz, Prokesch himself founded a reading group. Later in Vienna, another one became established in the house of the Schwarzenberg family, where many important works of contemporary literature were discussed. It was also in the Schwarzenbergs'

⁶ Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem 1983), p. 12.

⁷ For Prokesch's biography, including his meeting with Goethe see Bertsch, *Anton Prokesch von Osten*, pp. 22–40.

house that Prokesch met Friedrich von Gentz and Prince Klemens Wenzel Metternich, two of his many mentors.⁸

Schneller's influence notwithstanding, Prokesch opted professionally for joining the Austrian Imperial Army. This was the reason why he was put under the command of Field Marshal Prince Karl Schwarzenberg (1771–1820), the victorious commander-in-chief against Napoleon. Schwarzenberg's family was subsequently to become a kind of "second home" to Prokesch. When, shortly prior to his death, Prince Schwarzenberg was taking homeopathic treatment in Leipzig, he instructed Prokesch and Count Johann Paar (1780–1839) to visit the famous Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and wish him well on the occasion of his seventy-first birthday.⁹ After the unannounced meeting on 25 August 1820, which lasted deep into the night, Prokesch noted in his diary: "Embraced by him! Splendid day!"¹⁰ The diversity of the topics discussed was in keeping with Goethe's formidable personality. Beyond the difference in age, what linked Prokesch and Goethe was the fact that they were both interested in foreign cultures, that traveling had a profound impact on their lives, and that they met the challenges of editing travel journals. At the time he talked to Prokesch, it had only been a few years since Goethe had first published his *Italienische Reise* (Italian Journey) in 1816/17, although under a different title.¹¹

Prokesch's meritorious biographer Daniel Bertsch surmises that his meeting with the German universal genius had a greater impact on Prokesch than he was initially aware of. This judgment is closely associated with another work by Goethe, whose image of the Orient was characterized by high esteem for Islamic poetry and religion. For Goethe, the Orient and classical antiquity were on a par. The young Prokesch, in turn, was enthusiastic about classical antiquity and

⁸ See Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, pp. 13, 15–16, 21, 35; Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten, p. 27.

⁹ Schwarzenberg's circle had made Goethe's acquaintance in Karlsbad in 1818. See August Sauer (ed.), *Goethe und Österreich: Briefe mit Erläuterungen*, vol. 1 (Weimar 1902), pp. LXXXI–LXXXVIII, 139–147.

¹⁰ "Von ihm umarmt! Herrlicher Tag!" Tagebuch von 1820 und 21, NPO, Karton 12. Prokesch corrected the date of the entry from 24 to 25 August. See also Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Tagebücher*, vol. 7, 1/2: 1819–1820, edited by Edith Zehm, Sebastian Mangold, and Ariane Ludwig (Stuttgart, Weimar 2014), pp. 211–212/1220–1222. On 27 August, Goethe's son took Prokesch to Goethe's garden in Weimar and showed him his father's personal album. From it, Prokesch also noted the name of Johann Gottfried Seume (1763–1810), the author of the *Spaziergang nach Syrakus im Jahre 1802* (Walk to Syracuse in the Year 1802), a travel book in a new style. The same day, they also visited the house and the widow of Goethe's friend Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805).

¹¹ "Aus meinem Leben. Zweiter Abteilung Erster und Zweiter Teil." See Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, edited by Herbert von Einem, 13th ed. (Munich 2016).

open to further inspiration, but without suspending his judgment towards authorities. Thus, it is possible that the private reading from his *West-östlicher Divan* (West-Eastern Diwan) the admired man held on his visitors' request affected the way Prokesch dealt with the intellectual and material world of the eastern Mediterranean.¹² In 1836, in the home of Prokesch, now Austrian envoy to Athens, Prince Hermann Pückler-Muskau (1785–1871) was reminded of Goethe's household "by the tasteful arrangement of classical fragments".¹³

The first edition of Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan* had been published in 1819. It is well-known that this late poetic work was inspired by the oeuvre of the Persian poet Hafez (c. 1315/25–1390). However, it is less well-known that Goethe also called the collection of poetry *Reise*. He considered himself a traveler "who inquisitively and with astonishment explores the manners and customs of the Orient, who views what is alien with the object of learning from it and thereby learning to know himself better."¹⁴ In 1773, Goethe had already familiarized himself with Arab and Persian culture for the project of his *Mahomet* drama. Together with the Old Testament, which he read as poetry, as he did the Qur'an, this world was a single cultural sphere for him.

Although Goethe set great store by the *West-östlicher Divan* within his oeuvre, the young Prokesch did not really warm to it. But Goethe prophesized to his discussion partner: "When you are twenty years older, you will judge differently."¹⁵ By and large, the poet's forecast was correct. A few years later, it was Prokesch who portrayed the Orient in multifaceted literary forms, drawing on experiences he had gained himself and with a different view of cultural "otherness."¹⁶ Prokesch was to spend more than thirty-five years of his life in the Orient and not least through his publications he made a significant contribution to expanding knowledge about it in the Habsburg Monarchy. The foundations for his evolution

¹² See Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten, pp. 24–26.

¹³ "[D]urch die geschmackvolle Disposition antiker Fragmente". Cited after Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, p. 59.

¹⁴ "[...] der neugierig und staunend Sitten und Gebräuche des Orients erkundet, der das Fremde erschaut, um daraus zu lernen und – um sich selbst besser zu erkennen." Rüdiger Safranski, Goethe: Kunstwerk des Lebens. Biographie, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt am Main 2019), pp. 561 (quotation), 546.

¹⁵ "Wenn Sie zwanzig Jahre älter sein werden, werden Sie anders urtheilen." Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten, p. 25. In 1819, Prokesch had already passed a negative sentence on Goethe's *Divan*. See Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, p. 34.

¹⁶ See Daniel Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten und der Islam, in Karl Peitler and Elisabeth Trinkl (eds.), Anton Prokesch von Osten: Sammler, Gelehrter und Vermittler zwischen den Kulturen. Akten des Internationalen Symposiums Graz, 20.–22. Oktober 2016 (Graz 2019), pp. 94–103, here p. 94.

into a preeminent cultural arbitrator and bridge-builder were laid at an early age through his travel experiences and his special sensitivity towards different cultures and people. In 1823, Prokesch was relocated to Trieste, at the time part of the Austrian Empire, where he was transferred to the navy. The following year, he was granted authorization to use any vessel of the Imperial Navy, his duties still being unclear. Through the mediation of Franz Xaver Freiherr von Ottenfels-Gschwind (1778–1851), the Austrian internuncio in Constantinople from 1822 to 1832, soon his mission became to report to the Court War Council (finally to Metternich directly) about the course of the Greek War of Independence. The starting point for all his fact-finding missions and trips was the port of Smyrna.

Prokesch usually held his conversations with his informants in French, Italian, modern Greek, and English. He was not a graduate of the famed Oriental Academy in Vienna and did not command the local languages.¹⁷ Nevertheless, even during his traveling years, which his son viewed as years of diplomatic apprenticeship, he had envisaged Constantinople as a long-term professional goal.¹⁸ Ultimately, he had to bide his time until the Crimean War. But then his tenure in Constantinople (1856–1872) outlasted five foreign ministers.

In Vienna, Prokesch's reports, including those concerning Egypt, aroused attention and admiration. Friedrich von Gentz gushed with superlatives: "Prokesch is a diamond of the purest water, one of the rare geniuses that shoot up, abruptly, almost without intermediary steps, to the highest degree of usefulness. What this man has become in two years seems to me like a miracle. The Prince and I gape at each other in astonishment whenever we read his reports and letters. Even quiet Ottenfels can hardly find the words to describe him."¹⁹ The value of Prokesch's reports finally resulted in the length of his sojourn in the Levant being extended to five and a half years; Prokesch himself had initially reckoned on only one year. And although Prokesch, under Schneller's influence, had

17 See Daniel Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten und Griechenland: Vom Kriegsberichterstatte des griechischen Freiheitskampfes zum ersten österreichischen Gesandten in Athen, in H.-D. Blume and C. Lienau (eds.), *Der fremde und der eigene Blick: Reisen und Reisende in Griechenland* (Münster 2006), pp. 61–101, here p. 77; Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, pp. 277–278.

18 See [Anton Graf Prokesch-Osten] (ed.), *Aus dem Nachlasse des Grafen Prokesch-Osten: Briefwechsel mit Herrn von Gentz und Fürsten Metternich*, vol. 1 (Vienna 1881), p. X; Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten, p. 222.

19 "Prokesch ist ein Diamant vom ersten Wasser, eines der seltenen Genies, die sich plötzlich, fast ohne Zwischenstufen, zum höchsten Grade der Brauchbarkeit erheben. Was aus diesem Mensch in zwei Jahren geworden ist, erscheint mir wie ein Wunder. Der Fürst und ich staunen einander an, so oft wir seine Berichte und Briefe lesen. Selbst der ruhige Ottenfels findet kaum Worte mehr, um von ihm zu sprechen." NPO, Karton 27. See also Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, p. 43.

evolved into anything but a religious zealot, he wanted to seize the opportunity to travel across the Levant for a prolonged period, “so as to see perhaps the holiest places in the world.”²⁰

In the initial years of his stay in the Orient, homesickness had not been alien to Prokesch, but from the very outset he was fascinated by what was “different” about the Orient. Life was perhaps more pleasant on the streets of Paris and London, he thought, “but educated Europe [...] has too much family likeness. By contrast, the Orient [...] is so very different, in matters both large and small, from the people and states I have otherwise seen that it is highly attractive to observe the development of humankind on the other side of the street.”²¹ These lines reveal a salient motif in the perception of the Orient up to the mid-nineteenth century. Unlike other regions of the world, the Orient was viewed as a different culture or civilization and hence as a culture parallel to the West.²²

During his journey through the Levant, Prokesch always adhered to the principle of linking his activity as an informant and war reporter to Vienna to literary, historical, and cartographical work.²³ Originally, Prokesch nurtured the plan of publishing his travel experiences in ten volumes with the preliminary title *Tagebuch meiner Reisen* (Journal of my travels).²⁴ However, a conflict arose with the Viennese publisher Carl Armbruster (1797–1840) concerning the publication of *Erinnerungen aus Aegypten und Kleinasien* (Memoirs from Egypt and Asia Minor) and the original editorial project failed. Instead, he published three

20 “[...] um die vielleicht heiligsten Stellen der Welt zu sehen.” Venice, on 19 June 1824, in Ernst Münch (ed.), Julius Schneller's hinterlassene Werke, vol. 2: Briefwechsel zwischen Julius Schneller und seinem Pflegsohne Prokesch (Leipzig, Stuttgart 1834), pp. 76–79, here 77 (quotation), 76.

21 “[A]ber das gebildete Europa [...] hat doch gar zu große Familien-Aehnlichkeit. Der Orient dagegen [...] ist so sehr, im Großen wie im Kleinen, von Völkern und Staaten, die ich sonst gesehen, abweichend, daß es höchst anziehend wird, der Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechtes auf dieser andern Straße beobachtend zu folgen.” Constantinople, 21 Feb. 1826, in Münch (ed.), Julius Schneller's hinterlassene Werke, vol. 2, pp. 117–121, here p. 117.

22 See Andrea Polaschegg, Die Regeln der Imagination: Faszinationsgeschichte des deutschen Orientalismus zwischen 1770 und 1850, in Charis Goer and Michael Hofmann (eds.), Der Deutschen Morgenland: Bilder des Orients in der deutschen Literatur und Kultur von 1770 bis 1850 (Munich 2008), pp. 13–36, here p. 19.

23 See Daniel Bertsch, “Seit ich ein Fremdling in das Zelt Des Beduinen trat, Begreif’ ich endlich, was die Welt an Werth und Wahrheit hat!” Der österreichische Diplomat Anton Prokesch von Osten (1795–1876) und das Heilige Land, in Sabine Rogge (ed.), Zypern und der Vordere Orient im 19. Jahrhundert: Die Levante im Fokus von Politik und Wissenschaft der europäischen Staaten. Symposium, Münster 27.–28. Oktober 2006 (Münster 2009), pp. 43–62, here p. 55.

24 The sequence being: Egypt (two volumes), Volume 3: Nubia, Volume 4: Asia Minor, Volume 5: Syria and Palestine, Volume 6: Constantinople, Thracia, Macedonia, Volume 7: Islands, Volumes 8 to 10: Greece.

monographs, one of which was divided into three parts. For *Das Land zwischen den Katarakten des Nil* (The country between the Nile cataracts) and *Reise ins heilige Land*,²⁵ which will be analyzed here, Prokesch moved to Carl Gerold (1783–1854), one of the leading publishers in the Habsburg Monarchy.²⁶ Gerold had close contacts to German companies, including Cotta in Stuttgart, the most important publisher of contemporary German literature. Carl Gerold's publishing program was strongly marked by the natural sciences and the development of science and technology in general.²⁷

Das Land zwischen den Katarakten des Nil and *Reise ins heilige Land* both appeared with the original preliminary title and, like the third volume of the *Erinnerungen aus Aegypten und Kleinasien*, were published in 1831. In Gerold's bookshop on the Stephansplatz in Vienna, *Reise ins heilige Land* could be purchased for 45 kr. C.M.²⁸ In biographical entries on Prokesch in encyclopedias, his travel works are always referred to as classics of the genre.²⁹ Amongst other things, his publications made him one of the early authors within the literary genre of "travel diaries" in the nineteenth century. This century provided a new framework: To start with, there were technical inventions which forced changing travel patterns and led to increasing processes of globalization. In addition, there were channels for a much wider diffusion of literary works. At the dawn of the professionalization of the sciences, Prokesch communicated the research he had conducted in the fields of topography, numismatics, epigraphy, archaeology, art, and culture in the form of depictions and observations.³⁰

Prokesch's *Reise ins heilige Land* is based on a two-week and a half stay from 13 April to 1 May 1829. This means that his sojourn in Palestine took place only a few years prior to Egyptian rule. The Egyptians were the ones to make conditions

25 A[nton] Prokesch Ritter von Osten, *Reise ins heilige Land*. Im Jahr 1829 (Vienna 1831).

26 See Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten, pp. 164–168.

27 See Ingrid Jeschke, *Der Verlag Carl Gerold's Sohn: Seine Bedeutung für die österreichische Literatur der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (PhD thesis, University of Vienna 1990), pp. 54–58. For the famous Johann Friedrich Cotta (1764–1832) and his heirs see Reinhard Wittmann, *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels*, 4th ed. (Munich 2019), pp. 150, 239–240.

28 See *Wiener Zeitung*, *Allgemeines Intelligenzblatt*, 6 December 1832, p. 616.

29 See e.g., Karl Vocelka, *Prokesch von Osten, Anton Graf*, accessed 4 April 2022, <https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1_P/Prokesch-Osten_Anton_1795_1876.xml;internal&action=hilite.action&Parameter=anton%20prokesch>.

30 See Gerhard Seewann, *Prokesch von Osten, Anton Graf*, accessed 4 April 2022, <<https://www.biolex.ios-regensburg.de/BioLexViewview.php?ID=1560>>.

for travelers much easier.³¹ *Reise ins heilige Land* belongs to two popular genres of the nineteenth century: the genre of travel reports, more specifically travel accounts about the Orient, and the text corpus of the so-called Palestine literature. The latter included articles, periodicals, and all varieties of books dealing with the topic of Palestine and regarded as beneficial to understanding it.³² Growing academic interest, but also the increase in pilgrims' literature, contributed a great deal to the boom in this text corpus. However, *Reise ins heilige Land* aimed at a more elitist audience. On returning from the Levant, Prokesch was highly in demand as a knowledge broker in aristocratic and bourgeois circles in Vienna. Here, he could also disseminate his travel books; he presented Princess Melanie Metternich (1805–1854), for instance, with a copy of his *Reise ins heilige Land*.³³ With his mind still in the Orient, he adroitly drew attention to himself by making gifts of coveted souvenirs from the Holy Land.³⁴ Thus, it came to pass that the later Emperor Franz Joseph (1830–1916) was baptized with water from the Jordan that Prokesch had taken with him.³⁵

2 The travelogue

On his journey, Prokesch was everywhere in search of the relics of classical antiquity.³⁶ At the same time, his travel account of the Holy Land refers to the Christian motif of pilgrimage. The very use of the term “Holy Land” in the title indicates that the author takes a particular stance. It is certainly no coincidence that Prokesch coordinated his diplomatic mission with the opportunity to spend Easter, the most popular season for pilgrimages, in Jerusalem.³⁷ The

31 In his travelogue, in which he mentions Muhammad Ali of Egypt (1769–1849) in two passages, Prokesch himself spoke of a land in a permanent state of war. See Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 127, 128, 147.

32 See Markus Kirchhoff, *Text zu Land: Palästina im wissenschaftlichen Diskurs 1865–1920* (Göttingen 2005), p. 13.

33 See Prokesch an Gentz, 29 March [1831], in [Prokesch-Osten] (ed.), *Aus dem Nachlasse*, vol. 1, pp. 422–423.

34 For the purchase of devotional objects in Bethlehem see Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 118; *Verzeichniß*, NPO, Karton 2.

35 For Prokesch's meeting with Archduchess Sophie (1805–1872) on 10 May 1830 see *Mein Tagebuch 1828–1830*, fol. 368, NPO, Karton 12; Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, p. 53.

36 A few times, the Crusades of the Middle Ages are also mentioned in the context of dating the remains of buildings. See Prokesch, *Reise*, first on p. 30.

37 However, Prokesch did not omit to mention that Muslims celebrated holy feasts in Jerusalem at the same time. See Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 74.

cover names “A. Prokesch Ritter von Osten, Austrian major” as being the author. The very fact that the work is prefaced with a psalm from the Old Testament shows that Europeans travelled with the Bible in their hands. The first sentence, “The surface of the Earth is an open book”, is hardly suitable for producing tension, but highly typical of the age. The paragraph ends with an explanation of what made up the fascination of the Holy Land for Prokesch. For him, it was one of those pages of the book of the earth that grip “the eyes in admiration, in astonishment and awe” and whose “ancient text eternally breaks through the overlay of later centuries.”³⁸

Reise ins heilige Land is a continuous account in report form, without any subdivisions into chapters. Whenever a narrative perspective is taken, it is “we,” “I,” “you,” or “one.”³⁹ The 148 printed pages correspond to pages 197 to 248 in Prokesch’s diary.⁴⁰ The inhomogeneous structure of the text sometimes even creates the impression of stylistic inconsistency. Different textual building blocks were put together, usually without transitional sentences and always aiming at different purposes.⁴¹ A few years after the meeting described above and shortly prior to his departure to the Levant, Prokesch had given Goethe a copy of his recently published *Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Leben des Feldmarschalls Fürsten Carl zu Schwarzenberg* (Memorable moments from the life of Field Marshal Prince Carl zu Schwarzenberg, 1823). The verdict the Renaissance man pronounced on the first monographic work penned by Prokesch can easily be transferred to the structure and hence the literary quality of *Reise ins heilige Land*: “the good author,” in Goethe’s words, “lacks a certain higher aesthetic education, which gives one the ability to make a unified whole out of existing parts.”⁴²

Anton Prokesch was very well-read and certainly a man with literary ambitions. Since his early youth, for instance, he had tried his hand at poetry. Poems have survived from his traveling years in the Orient,⁴³ and from Jerusalem, letters have been preserved to Julius Schneller and Princess Maria Anna Schwarzenberg

38 “Die Oberfläche der Erde ist ein aufgeschlagenes Buch. [...] den Blick in Bewunderung, in Staunen und Ehrfurcht, und ihr uralter Text bricht unvergänglich durch die Überlage der späteren Jahrhunderte.” Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 5.

39 See Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, p. 280.

40 Mein Tagebuch 1828–1830, NPO, Karton 12.

41 See Veronika Bernard, *Österreicher im Orient: Eine Bestandsaufnahme österreichischer Reiseliteratur im 19. Jahrhundert* (Wien 1996), pp. 8–9.

42 “[...] dem guten Verfasser fehlt [...] eine gewisse höhere ästhetische Bildung, wodurch man in den Stand gesetzt wird, aus vorliegenden Theilen ein Ganzes zu schließen und abzurunden.” Cited after Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, p. 33.

43 For Prokesch’s poetry from the Holy Land see Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten, pp. 294, 296–297.

(1768–1848). In general, his letters display great vividness.⁴⁴ In keeping with the genre, in *Reise ins heilige Land* he adhered quite strictly to the non-literary field, confining his literary claims to the individual use of picturesque verbs or operating with colors (a reference to Romanticism) in the course of describing landscapes (e.g., grey for the environs of Jerusalem⁴⁵). Although Prokesch was not a professional writer, in view of the prescribed character of linguistic and stylistic creativity at his time, literary activity was regarded as something that could be acquired. The outcome consisted of texts that sometimes endeavored to be literary, but at the same time had scholarly claims, ultimately turning out to be of a documentary nature.⁴⁶ It is not least due to the ensuing limitation of subjectivity and emotionality that the later Orientalist horror at the real state of reality in the Holy Land plays no role in Prokesch's work. Since the author of *Reise ins heilige Land* sought extra precision in his landscape descriptions, the image of the whole becomes blurred through its very accuracy and detail.⁴⁷ But we owe to Prokesch's gift of observation one of the best portrayals of conditions in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the most famous sacred site in Christianity.⁴⁸

There is no travel account about the Holy Land that does not focus on Jerusalem. In Prokesch's account of the history of Jerusalem,⁴⁹ it becomes clear where his interests lay. One hundred and nine lines cover the time from Jerusalem's first mention in the Bible up to the Crusades, whilst only eleven lines are devoted to the modern period. But, all the same, as in the descriptions of other cities, there are up-to-date population figures: according to this information, a total of 21,000 inhabitants included 8,000 Muslims, 3,000 Greek Orthodox, 5,000 Jews, 4,000 Armenians, and about 1,000 Catholics and Maronites. On seeing the Holy City for the first time, Prokesch used a comparably subdued emotional expression, only to word a stronger reaction a few pages later: "You cannot stand on this spot, which, in historical terms, is the mother of one of the

⁴⁴ See NPO, Karton 3 and 6. See also Schneller to Rotteck, Freiburg, 18 September 1829, in Münch (ed.), Julius Schneller's hinterlassene Werke, vol. 1, pp. 384–385, here p. 385. Alexander von Warsberg also appreciated Prokesch's letters more than his other literary products. See A[lexander] W[arsberg], Graf Prokesch-Osten. I., in Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung, 17 December 1876, pp. 5385–5387, here p. 5386.

⁴⁵ See Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, pp. 281, 289. For the environs of Jerusalem see Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 44. In Prokesch's description, green strips run through the otherwise grey color of the landscape. See also pp. 81–82.

⁴⁶ See Bernard, *Österreicher im Orient*, pp. 2, 7–9.

⁴⁷ See Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, p. 288.

⁴⁸ See Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 51–54.

⁴⁹ See Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 44–49. In this section (p. 45), Prokesch refers to a work of his own, i.e., the second volume of his *Erinnerungen aus Aegypten und Kleinasien*.

greatest world transformations, without the mind being overwhelmed by the most profound earnestness, clothing it in the hues of the landscape itself.”⁵⁰

Muhammad as-Sayyid Omar has analyzed the extent to which Prokesch edited the diary entries for publication. Whereas the relatively frequent abridgements in the diary were all resolved in the published version, in some passages amendments can be discerned in terms of diction and style, but only few intrusions as regards content.⁵¹ Prokesch describes what he experiences and sees. The descriptive passages and meticulous historical digressions may both seem at least long-winded to readers today. At the very beginning of the book, in the name of scholarship, Prokesch discusses on more than five pages the different names of his destination (from “Holy Land”, via “The Land of Israel” to “Palestine”).⁵² Up to the period of the British mandate, there was no political entity called Palestine, but after 1516/17 all of it was part of the Ottoman Empire.⁵³ That Palestine belonged to the Ottoman Empire is mentioned as little by Prokesch as by the vast majority of his fellow travel writers in the nineteenth century.⁵⁴ Because of what he saw, he comments at one point: “The sultan is only nominally master of this land.”⁵⁵

Ultimately, the text should be examined from several perspectives. First, it is a travel account of the format and size of a paperback that has the very clear claim to be used as a tourist guide.⁵⁶ The real or only imaginary traveler is provided with all kinds of useful information. We find, for instance, references to the *Casae Novae* of the Franciscans as the only accommodation available to travelers then. Prokesch also gives indications of time and distances between places and

50 “Man kann nicht auf dieser Stelle stehen, die, geschichtlich betrachtet, die Mutter einer der größten Weltumwandlungen ist, ohne daß tiefer Ernst das Gemüth überkomme und es in die Farbe der Landschaft selbst kleide.” Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 42, 44, also 122.

51 See Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, pp. 255–261.

52 See Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 5–10.

53 However, the relationship between Europe and the Ottoman Empire experienced a fundamental change around 1800. See Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Entzauberung Asiens: Europa und die asiatischen Reiche im 18. Jahrhundert*, 2nd ed. (Munich 2010). Not feared anymore, the latter was seen by many as being in a weak (international) position. In contrast to the prevailing opinion, Anton Prokesch von Osten was convinced until his death of the importance of the existence of the Ottoman Empire and its inner strengths.

54 The monograph by Barbara Haider-Wilson, *Österreichs friedlicher Kreuzzug 1839–1917: Das Heilige Land in Außenpolitik, Gesellschaft und Mentalitäten der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna 2021), discusses, amongst other sources, more than 100 travelogues from the nineteenth century.

55 “Der Sultan ist nur dem Namen nach Herr in diesem Lande.” Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 142.

56 See Ernst Czerny’s appraisal of Prokesch’s travelogues about Egypt: Ernst Czerny, Anton Prokesch von Osten und sein Beitrag zur frühen Ägyptologie, in Peitler and Trinkl, Anton Prokesch von Osten, pp. 154–177, here p. 159.

warnings when there is no water in a region. That such an approach can also involve risks for reception is shown by Julius Schneller's criticism of the first volume of *Erinnerungen aus Aegypten und Kleinasien*: "The book is informative, accurate, useful for any traveler, as practicable on the Nile as a signpost on the Rhine from Mainz to Bingen. What you wanted to do, you have achieved perfectly. But readers do not want a signpost for Egypt; they want either sublime reflections or profound emotions."⁵⁷

In *Reise ins heilige Land*, the demand for "sublime reflection" is ensured by the second main strand of the narrative, as it was extremely important to the author to provide scholarly contributions towards researching the Holy Land. This implied, above all, identifying and visiting as many biblical locations as possible. In this context, Prokesch wrote some Arabic village names according to the acoustic impression made by the pronunciation of local informants.⁵⁸ He ranked among the pioneers of surveying the Holy Land by pacing along and around buildings etc., with a major physical effort, and recording the measurements. He was constantly on the lookout for inscriptions, and even his interest in numismatics can be glimpsed in *Reise ins heilige Land*.

However, at no time can a book about Palestine dispense with the dimension of religion. For the journey to Jerusalem, a caravan came together, consisting of Catholics, Greek Orthodox believers, Armenians, and Muslims, which caused Prokesch to exclaim in astonishment: "all united in a pilgrimage to one and the same spot, the Holy Sepulcher!"⁵⁹ In Jerusalem, too, Prokesch experienced the peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians, whilst he did not shy away from pillorying the envy and hatred between the Christian confessions, especially in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. His view of the arbitrating role of the Ottoman administration on this confrontational soil could only be a positive one: in his narrative, hatred and envy are contrasted with composure and dignity.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, he was one of the first to inform the interested public in the

57 "Das Buch ist lehrreich, genau, brauchbar für jeden Reisenden, auf dem Nile so anwendbar, wie man auf dem Rheine einen Wegweiser von Mainz bis Bingen hat. Was Sie wollten, haben Sie vollkommen geleistet. Aber die Lesewelt will bei Aegypten nicht einen Wegweiser; sie will entweder eine hohe Betrachtung oder eine tiefe Empfindung." Freiburg, 22 September 1829, in Münch (ed.), Julius Schneller's hinterlassene Werke, vol. 2, pp. 350–355, here p. 351.

58 See Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, p. 115.

59 "[...] alle zur Pilgerschaft nach der einen und selben Stelle, dem heiligen Grabe, vereinigt!" Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 39–40. See also p. 35. On the Jordan, too, he watched Christians, Muslims, and Jews bathing with the same devotion (p. 138).

60 See Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 52–53, also 64, 122. Unlike many of his successors, Prokesch did not write in disgust about the Greek and Armenian fire ceremony in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, but saw it as being the "Reste uralter, längst verschwundener Religionen" (vestiges of an-

Habsburg Monarchy about the financial difficulties of the Franciscans in the Holy Land⁶¹ – for a long time the only representatives of Catholicism there. What is also well known is his depiction of the awarding of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher by the head of the Franciscan Custody in the Holy Land, which was disrupted by the loud clattering of horses' hooves. Prokesch had the text of the award certificate published in his travel book.⁶² But the few drawings from his diary, produced by Prokesch himself for want of an artist,⁶³ were not included in the published version.

If we wish to understand Prokesch's stance towards religion,⁶⁴ we must look at his first formative teacher, Julius Schneller, by birth and upbringing a Catholic. Schneller retained an appreciation of the spirit of Christianity and an attachment to the Catholic faith. But along the lines of the Enlightenment, he particularly esteemed the ethical values of Christianity and therefore the basic doctrines common to all the confessions. In short, Schneller was quite indifferent to doctrinal differences among various confessions.⁶⁵

In his *Reise ins heilige Land*, Schneller's stepson constantly quotes the Bible, but also occasionally refers to the Qur'an and the Talmud, and that is what forms his approach. Just how much he admired the Qur'an can be gathered, for instance, from a diary entry of 11 June 1829: "On this journey, I again read the whole Quran, to my great satisfaction. How little we know about this admirable book back home [...]!"⁶⁶ Prokesch was open-minded about the cultural value of the Qur'an, in which he also saw a reader in the manners and customs of the Arabs. In his mindset, all religions had their justifications, yielding significant values for the functioning of social coexistence.⁶⁷ Due to its genesis, the language of the Qur'an and the geographical location of the Holy Sites, in the history of its reception Islam had an Arab origin, but was simultaneously perceived

cient, long bygone religions). Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 58. See also Bernard, *Österreicher im Orient*, p. 68.

61 Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 113 (regarding the monastery and church in Bethlehem), 123. See also Prokesch to Princess Nani Schwarzenberg, Jerusalem, 22 April 1829, NPO, Karton 6.

62 Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 102–109. See award certificate, NPO, Karton 16.

63 See Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten und Griechenland, p. 97.

64 See Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten, pp. 536–598.

65 See Andreas Posch, Julius Schneller, ein Grazer Historiker zwischen Aufklärung und Liberalismus, in *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereines für Steiermark* 48 (1957), pp. 3–21, here 7–8.

66 "Während dieser Reise auch den ganzen Koran wieder gelesen und zwar zu großer Befriedigung. Wie wenig kennt man dieses achtungswerthe Buch bei uns [...]!" *Mein Tagebuch 1828–1830*, fols. 287–288, NPO, Karton 12.

67 See Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten und der Islam, pp. 95–96.

as being even more the religion of “the Turks.”⁶⁸ This also worked the other way round in the sense that in his *Reise ins heilige Land* Prokesch frequently employed “Turkish” as a synonym for “Muslim.” Whereas he regarded the centuries “when religion occupied the hearts and minds of Christians in all freshness”⁶⁹ as long bygone, he thought Muslims by no means lax in matters of religion,⁷⁰ something that he appreciated.

The numerous references to earlier authors should be placed in the context of Prokesch's claim to scholarship, representing not least a demonstration of his erudition. Authors of travel accounts of the Orient always linked their own impressions to earlier authors by way of comparison.⁷¹ Among the authors of classical antiquity, Omar identified seven Greek writers (including Herodotus [c. 485–424 BCE], Manetho [third century BCE ?], Pausanias [c. 115–180], Polybios [c. 200–120 BCE], and Strabo [c. 63 BCE–23 CE]), and four Roman ones (Eusebios of Caesarea [c. 260–339], Flavius Josephus [c. 37/38–100], Pliny the Elder [23/24–79], and the church father St. Jerome [c. 347–420]), all of whom Prokesch mentions or quotes in his *Reise ins heilige Land*. But Prokesch also used some works by medieval authors (including the Arab writers al-Idrisi [c. 1100–1166] and Abu'l-Fida [1273–1331]) and modern writers (including the English traveler Henry Maundrell [1665–1701] and the Dutch theologian and Orientalist Hadrian Relandus [1676–1718], who never left the Netherlands). As regards the nineteenth century, names such as François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848) or James Silk Buckingham (1786–1855) show the pioneering role of the French and the English in the genre of travel literature regarding Palestine at that juncture and reflect its international interconnectivity.⁷²

In many accounts of travels to the Holy Land in the nineteenth century, concern with the knowledge corpus of the Western world takes up more space than engaging with the locals in the Holy Land. This was also true to some degree of Prokesch's travelogue. However, the people in the Holy Land are not absent from the narrative, but come to our attention as representatives of the Ottoman admin-

⁶⁸ See Andrea Polaschegg, *Der andere Orientalismus: Regeln deutsch-morgenländischer Imagination im 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, New York 2005), p. 88.

⁶⁹ “[W]o die Religion in voller Frische Herz und Einbildung der Christen beschäftigte [...]” Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 67, see also p. 73.

⁷⁰ See Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 26.

⁷¹ See Bernard, *Österreicher im Orient*, p. 137.

⁷² See Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, pp. 110–113. For general remarks see Bernard, *Österreicher im Orient*, pp. 137–141, 222–231.

istration, as European Franciscan monks,⁷³ and as the elders and inhabitants of Bedouin villages. Whereas Prokesch stresses the (much more frequent) friendly reception on the part of the population in his account,⁷⁴ he prefers to leave the occasional hostile reception, with stones thrown by women as well as by men, without any comment.⁷⁵ In *Reise ins heilige Land*, the “other” is seen in the people and their architecture, in the landscape and nature. Against the backdrop of his critical stance of his own civilization, the author is usually fascinated by cultural “otherness,”⁷⁶ recording his observations in the awareness of a constitutive link between the Orient and the Occident.

On page 10, we find a succinct explanation for Prokesch’s mission to the Holy Land,⁷⁷ which was to become one of the final stages on his journey: the suppression by the Pasha of Acre, Abdallah (b. 1801), of Christians and Jews, who were under the protection of the Austrian emperor as a result of capitulation treaties from earlier centuries.⁷⁸ He had even compelled the Austrian Vice Consul Antonio Catafago (d. 1841) to flee to Nazareth together with his family⁷⁹ and had the Austrian flag torn down from the consulate building. It was to take until the 1840s, which marked a significant turning point in the European presence in the Holy Land, for an Imperial-Royal (vice) consulate to be established in Jerusalem (1849). The fact that the pasha of the town of Acre, which is steeped in history,⁸⁰

73 In Nazareth Monastery, which he describes as being spacious and like a fortress, Prokesch met a father superior from Moravia. At that time, Nazareth asserted itself in a kind of autonomy from the Pasha of Acre. See Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 131.

74 Depicting the friendly reception in a Bedouin village, the headmen of which offered Prokesch and his fellow travelers the mosque as overnight accommodation: “Wir wurden weder durch Neugierde, noch Mißtrauen, noch durch Zudringlichkeit geplagt.” (We were inconvenienced neither by curiosity, nor suspicion, nor intrusiveness). Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 26. See also pp. 41, 112, 123, 126, 137, 139–140.

75 See Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 36, 74, also 82. The depiction of the hazards of the sea voyage is in striking contrast to this reticence (pp. 11–14).

76 See Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten, pp. 71–132.

77 For Prokesch’s special mission to the Holy Land see also Bertsch, *Seit ich ein Fremdling*, pp. 46–54; Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten, pp. 197–213.

78 The best-known were the treaties of Karlowitz (1699), Passarowitz (1718), Belgrade (1739), and Sistov (1791). See Barbara Haider-Wilson, *Das Kultusprotektorat der Habsburgermonarchie im Osmanischen Reich: Zu seinen Rechtsgrundlagen und seiner Instrumentalisierung im 19. Jahrhundert (unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Jerusalems)*, in Marlene Kurz et al. (eds.), *Das Osmanische Reich und die Habsburgermonarchie. Akten des internationalen Kongresses zum 150-jährigen Bestehen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung Wien, 22.–25. September 2004* (Vienna 2005), pp. 121–147.

79 See Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 132. Prokesch met Catafago in Nazareth (pp. 129–130).

80 For Prokesch’s military appraisal of the fortress there see Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 145.

was initially reluctant to receive Prokesch provided the latter with the opportunity to travel through the region on horseback.⁸¹ At the end of the book and in keeping with the diary entries, the meeting with Abdallah is finally depicted.⁸² Prokesch's reflections on his original expectations in the context of experiencing this personal encounter are characteristic: "I expected to see a sinister man, from whose eyes the blood stains could never be washed away [...]. Sitting on the divan [...], I found an amiable man, not more than thirty-three years old [...]."⁸³ The amiable man handed Prokesch a bunch of roses. Against the backdrop of his experiences on the journey and with his distinctive tact, the Austrian negotiator managed to present all his demands to the Pasha of Acre and have them met.

At that time, as Prokesch explained, he had already formed an understanding of diplomatic negotiations in the Orient:

In the Orient, all business is contingent on form, and even the most difficult deal will succeed if the form is not breached. Suspicion of Europeans is too strong for them easily to achieve their goals through written negotiations; but in an oral meeting and by adhering to the customary calm, serenity, and consideration a deal cannot be made more easily with anyone than an oriental, since, with very few exceptions, the foundations of his character are based on truthfulness.⁸⁴

This passage already reveals everything that was to make up the future diplomat Prokesch von Osten. It is by no means devoid of stereotypes, but in the case of Prokesch these testify to his fundamentally positive stance towards the "other," be it the Orient *per se*, the people there, or a specific personality. Two additional components should also be mentioned in this context. Prokesch was one of those people whose image of the Orient was formed from criticism of their

⁸¹ See Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 21–23. See writ of protection for Prokesch from the Pasha of Acre, NPO, Karton 16.

⁸² Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 142–144.

⁸³ "Ich erwartete einen finsternen Mann zu sehen, aus dessen Augen die Flecken des Blutes nicht wegzutilgen wären [...]. Ich fand auf dem Divan sitzend [...] einen freundlichen Mann, nicht über drei und dreißig Jahr[!] alt [...]." Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 143.

⁸⁴ "So sehr hängt im Orient jedes Geschäft an der Form, und auch das schwierigste gelingt, wenn diese nicht verletzt wird. Das Mißtrauen in die Europäer ist zu groß, als daß diese durch schriftliche Unterhandlung leicht zum Ziele kommen; aber im mündlichen Zusammen-seyn, in Beobachtung der landesüblichen Ruhe, Heiterkeit und Schonung ist mit Niemanden leichter ein Geschäft glücklich zu Ende zu bringen, als mit dem Morgenländer, da, mit sehr seltener Ausnahme, die Grundlage seines Charakters die Wahrhaftigkeit ist." Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 144.

own civilization.⁸⁵ Moreover, he set forth as a philhellene, to return as a friend of “the Turks.”⁸⁶ With a solemn farewell and Prokesch’s departure for Cyprus,⁸⁷ the book analyzed here has an open ending, so to speak.

In November 1831, there appeared a generous review in the periodical journal *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode*, in which Prokesch himself had published since 1824.⁸⁸ It justifiably stressed the sections concerning Jerusalem, and, unsurprisingly, the reviewer hoped for further publications of Prokesch’s diary. In the light of public interest in the geography of the Bible, the work could be certain of broad attention. The European (scholarly) reception repeatedly referred to the rather slender scope of *Reise ins heilige Land*, which was translated into Czech in 1836 and into Danish in 1839. As the issue of the authenticity of the sacred sites was moving more and more into focus, in Protestantism especially, the new geographical information was also appreciated by Palestine scholars such as the Swiss Titus Tobler (1806–1877) or the American Edward Robinson (1794–1863). Prokesch’s travelogue was indeed readily employed for private journeys and, in keeping with the genre, had a long-term impact. Jacques Mislin (1807–1878), for instance, one of the best-informed travelers who made the journey from the Habsburg Monarchy to the Holy Land in the 1840s and 1850s, referred to Prokesch in his work. However, despite his aim for accuracy, Prokesch had made errors concerning locations, which were corrected by later authors such as Joseph Salzbacher (1790–1867).

The discourse within the growing body of travel literature on the Orient in the course of the nineteenth century is characterized by intertextual references and quotations. This approach indicates not only the great interest in and the circulation of the texts, but also demonstrates the contemporary understanding of a static Orient.⁸⁹ In such an interpretation, descriptions by earlier travelers retained their validity.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, at his post in Athens Prokesch called on the Graz-born Maria Schuber (1799–1881) to use her pilgrimage of 1847/48 to

⁸⁵ See Bernard, *Österreicher im Orient*, pp. 45, 50.

⁸⁶ See Bertsch, *Anton Prokesch von Osten*, pp. 79–88.

⁸⁷ See Prokesch, *Reise*, pp. 147–148.

⁸⁸ For the reception of *Reise ins heilige Land* see Bertsch, *Anton Prokesch von Osten*, pp. 213–220; Bertsch, *Seit ich ein Fremdling*, pp. 54–58. See also NPO, Karton 3.

⁸⁹ When Prokesch is having a meal with a few Maronite priests in Bethlehem, he comments: “Es war mir als säße ich mit Abraham zu Tische.” (It felt as if I were sitting at the table with Abraham). Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 117.

⁹⁰ See Caroline Herfert, *Orient im Rampenlicht: Die Inszenierung des Anderen in Wien um 1900* (Berlin 2018), p. 51.

write her own travel report: “to express her observations and views frankly and regardless of other travel descriptions, be they his own”.⁹¹

3 A yearning for the Orient

None other than Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) described Prokesch as “a perfect explorer, if ever there was one”.⁹² The Orientalist Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer (1790–1861) expressed the opinion that Prokesch’s travel accounts constituted “a model of reliable accuracy and comprehensive brevity”.⁹³ The travel writer Alexander von Warsberg (1836–1889), whom Prokesch met decades later in life, added a further aspect in his detailed obituary for Prokesch: “[...] they teach us how to view the Orient. Whoever does not do it the way these books show, casting his eyes everywhere, keeping them open and receptive to everything, should stay at home [...]. [...] Prokesch and Goethe teach traveling like nobody else.”⁹⁴ Warsberg, almost a son to the old Prokesch, reported that Prokesch was unfamiliar with fatigue or exhaustion, always traveling with the best map and binoculars⁹⁵ within reach. Nothing escaped his eyes, and in the evenings “the first thing he did [...] was to set down in detail in pen and ink in his diary or in letters to friends the key words he had noted underway in pencil.”⁹⁶

91 “Beobachtungen und Meinungen unumwunden ohne Rücksichten auf andere Reisebeschreibungen auszusprechen und sei es auch die seinige”. Maria Schuber, *Meine Pilgerreise über Rom, Griechenland und Egypten durch die Wüste nach Jerusalem und zurück*, vom [!] 4. October 1847 bis 25. September 1848 (Graz 1850), pp. V, 371 (quotation).

92 “[E]inen vollendeten Forschungsreisenden, wenn es je einen gegeben hat”. Cited after Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, p. 61.

93 “[Ein] Muster zuverlässiger Genauigkeit und allessagender Kürze”. A[lexander] W[arsberg], Graf Prokesch-Osten. II., in *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, 20 December 1876, pp. 5429–5431, here p. 5430.

94 “[...] man lernt durch sie[,] wie man den Orient zu sehen hat. Wer es dort nicht so macht[,] wie diese Bücher weisen, so überall das Auge hingerichtet, so es für alles offen und empfänglich haltend, der bleibe zu Haus [...]. [...] Prokesch und Goethe lehren wie kein anderer das Reisen.” W[arsberg], Graf Prokesch-Osten. II., pp. 5430–5431.

95 See e.g., Prokesch, *Reise*, p. 77.

96 “[W]ar es sein erstes [...], die mit dem Bleistift unterwegs festgehaltenen Schlagwörter mit der Feder und der Tinte in dem Tagebuch oder in Briefen an Freunde breiter auszuführen”. W[arsberg], Graf Prokesch-Osten. II., p. 5431. For the friendship between Prokesch and Warsberg see Bertsch, Anton Prokesch von Osten, pp. 437–447. For the influence of Prokesch’s views on Warsberg see Bernard, *Österreicher im Orient*, p. 115.

Prokesch and Goethe did not meet again after August 1820 but had an intensive exchange then. Despite a life rich in meetings, the younger man never forgot this specific one.⁹⁷ He read the poet's works again and again. In their travel-ogues, we can follow how both men, the great writer and the future diplomat, at different times underwent the essential experience of any genuine traveler: the enrichment of one's own personality. However, the experience of "otherness," which always serves as a mirror to the "self," ultimately estranged Prokesch from his original home in the Habsburg Monarchy. With a pessimistic view of history and ensuing doubts concerning Western civilization,⁹⁸ throughout his life he was remote from the feeling of supremacy usually displayed in European perspectives on the Ottoman Empire, especially in the later nineteenth century.⁹⁹ As early as 1825, he had written in a letter: "The European thinks he alone gives laws to the world, and his standards of value and happiness are the only valid ones."¹⁰⁰

When the celebrated Goethe died on 22 March 1832, Anton Prokesch von Osten was on a second diplomatic mission to the Papal State, as he had been during the publication of his *Reise ins heilige Land*. On 5 April, he noted in his diary: "He is said to have died on the 22nd! Can such an intellect have been extinguished?"¹⁰¹ For Prokesch, the Orient was and remained that space, or rather that "constructed geo-civilizational entity"¹⁰² that was never to let him go: "On

97 See Omar, Anton Prokesch-Osten, p. 34; also Münch (ed.), Julius Schneller's hinterlassene Werke, vol. 2, passim. In view of Prokesch's diverse interests, his first biographer, Anton Berger, saw himself induced to make a comparison with Goethe: "Prokesch hatte gleich Goethe das Verlangen, stets ins Ganze zu arbeiten, stets auf die großen Zusammenhänge zu achten, und so das Einzelne im Großen wiederzufinden." (Like Goethe, Prokesch had the desire to work towards the whole, always to heed the overall context and thus to re-discover the detail in the whole). Anton Berger, Prokesch-Osten. Ein Leben aus Altösterreich (1795–1876) (Graz, Vienna, Leipzig 1921), p. 23.

98 See Friedrich Engel-Janosi, Die Jugendzeit des Grafen Prokesch von Osten (Innsbruck 1938), p. 168.

99 For a description of the generation to which Prokesch belonged see Osterhammel, Die Entzauberung Asiens, pp. 377–378.

100 "Der Europäer glaubt, er allein gebe der Welt Gesetze und sein Maßstab des Werthes wie des Glückes sey der allein richtige." Prokesch to Princess Carl zu Schwarzenberg, Nauplia, 15 October 1825, NPO, Karton 2.

101 "Am 22. soll er gestorben sein! Kann ein solcher Geist denn ausgeloschen seyn?" Tagebuch 1831–1833, fol. 225, NPO, Karton 12.

102 Almut Höfert and Armando Salvatore, Beyond the Clash of Civilisations: Transcultural Politics between Europe and Islam, in Almut Höfert and Armando Salvatore (eds.), Between Europe and Islam: Shaping Modernity in a Transcultural Space (Brussels et al. 2000), pp. 13–35, here p. 34.

20 January of the year 1830, Prokesch landed in Trieste. He was freezing to the bone on returning home. He never really warmed to it again. He had become an alien, at home abroad. His heart was with the Orient and its peoples, and any love, any faith that is acquired is more eagerly nourished than the one you are only born with.”¹⁰³

The analysis of travelogues over the centuries shows that the Holy Land had a special place in this relationship beyond state borders and continents. When one is familiar with the specific features of the Holy Land in this genre, on the one hand the diversity of the counter-concept of the Orient shows up. This result thwarts nineteenth-century Orientalism. On the other hand, the fact that there was a distinct Habsburg Orientalism was only revealed long after Edward Said.¹⁰⁴ The traveler, author, and diplomat Prokesch-Osten was one of its prominent actors.

103 “Am 20[.] Januar des Jahrs 1830 landete Prokesch in Triest. Es fror ihn beim Wiederbetreten der Heimath. Ganz warm ist ihm dort nie wieder geworden. Er war ihr fremd, der Fremde heimisch geworden. Sein Herz hing am Orient und seinen Völkern, und jede Liebe, jeden Glauben[,] den man sich erworben, hegt man eifriger als den nur mitgebornen.” A[lexander] W[arsberg], Graf Prokesch-Osten. III., in Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung, 22 December 1876, pp. 5465–5468, here p. 5465.

104 See Johannes Feichtinger, *Komplexer k.u.k. Orientalismus: Akteure, Institutionen, Diskurse im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, in Robert Born and Sarah Lemmen (eds.), *Orientalismen in Ostmitteleuropa: Diskurse, Akteure und Disziplinen vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Bielefeld 2014), pp. 31–63; Johannes Feichtinger, *Nach Said. Der k. u. k. Orientalismus, seine Akteure, Praktiken und Diskurse*, in Clemens Ruthner and Tamara Scheer (eds.), *Bosnien-Herzegowina und Österreich-Ungarn, 1878–1918: Annäherungen an eine Kolonie* (Tübingen 2018), pp. 307–324. With good reason, as early as 1996, Veronika Bernard already looked for the specific features of Austrian travel literature on the Orient: Bernard, *Österreicher im Orient*.

