

A Genizah secret

The Count d’Hulst and letters revealing the race to recover the lost leaves of the original Ecclesiasticus

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The discovery of the Cairo Genizah manuscripts (over 200,000 fragmentary texts, mainly written in Hebrew and Arabic) in the late-nineteenth century is an enigmatic tale. The early collectors of this material, unaware of its exact provenance or keen to safeguard their access to it, did not divulge their sources. However, a selection of unpublished letters preserved in the Bodleian Library, in the archives of the Egypt Exploration Society and in the National Archives help piece together more of the story which will be revealed here for the first time. The letters concern the unacknowledged role of the mysterious Count d’Hulst in the recovery of sections of the Oxford Genizah collection; the race between two eminent scholars, Adolf Neubauer and Solomon Schechter, to discover the missing manuscript leaves of the original Hebrew Ecclesiasticus and the unspoken competition between the Libraries of Oxford and Cambridge to expand their Oriental collections.

Some there are who have left a name behind them ... There are others who are unremembered (Ecclesiasticus 44.8–9)

THE discovery of the immense hoard of Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts (collectively known as the Cairo Genizah) in the Ben Ezra synagogue, Fustat, in the late-nineteenth century is not just the story of a historically momentous find, it is also a multifaceted tale tinged with rivalry and intrigue. To a large extent, it is the tale of two eminent scholars, Solomon Schechter¹ and Adolf Neubauer,² initially united in their attempt to prove the theoretical claim that the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sira) was originally written in Hebrew, but later divided as both separately strove to recover the actual manuscript evidence that proved the theory. In part, it is the tale of their two rival institutions – Oxford and Cambridge – and each man’s attempt to make his own library the richer in Oriental manuscripts. But it is also the account of another, less fortunate man: Count Riamo d’Hulst, who helped some of history’s great men to achieve their goals but for himself gained only ignominy and, later, obscurity.

The Genizah was a sealed room in the Ben Ezra synagogue in Fustat, Old Cairo, accessed only by a hole in the wall which itself was positioned several

feet above head height.³ The room was filled with a mass of written material predominantly in Hebrew and Arabic and mostly dating from the tenth to the thirteenth century but with some pieces as early as the fifth or sixth century (palimpsests) and some as late as the nineteenth (mainly documents). It is believed that manuscripts derived from the Cairo Genizah began to arrive in Europe in the 1890s. Oxford and Cambridge were the first institutions to receive them through collectors who purchased them either from the Ben Ezra synagogue officials or from local dealers. One Oxford scholar, the Bodleian Library’s sub-librarian Dr Adolf Neubauer, catalogued and published a number of these ‘Egyptian fragments’ between the years 1892 and 1895, but the exact origins of the manuscripts remained unknown. In 1896, the collector Elkan Nathan Adler,⁴ was allowed to remove a sack of manuscripts from the Ben Ezra synagogue. The fame of ‘discovering’ the Cairo Genizah, however, was accorded to Solomon Schechter who, with the necessary permissions, removed most of the manuscripts hidden away in the synagogue (around 190,000 fragments) and brought them to Cambridge in 1897.⁵ Thus, the basic story is recounted.⁶ However, a cache of letters held in the Bodleian, together with letters held by the Egypt Exploration Society and in the

National Archives in London, provide a clearer account of this collection's history, revealed here for the first time.

In July 1910, a report in the London-based *Jewish Chronicle* entitled 'A Geniza secret' quoted a recent addendum to the second volume of the *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library* (hereafter *Catalogue*).⁷ The author of the addendum, the Bodleian Librarian, E. W. B. Nicholson, wrote:

I grieve to find that I have failed to mention the great services of Count R. d'Hulst during the early part of 1898 in procuring Geniza fragments for the Bodleian. The Count's kind help had been enlisted by Professor Sayce, and he devoted himself for some months to employing and directing workmen to excavate in the neighbourhood of the ancient synagogue at Old Cairo.⁸

The Librarian added that the work of the Count d'Hulst was not recorded in the Library's *Annual Report* because:

... absolute secrecy as to the Cairo fragments was, for the time being, necessary to the interests of the Library ... Nothing but momentary forgetfulness can explain the fact that we did not testify to the obligations of the Bodleian to Count d'Hulst, whose work on its behalf had been absolutely a labour of love, and without return.⁹

D'Hulst had written to inform Nicholson that he had supplied Genizah material to the Bodleian in 1889 (through the Egypt Exploration Fund, hereafter 'the Fund') and again in 1893 and 1895. But Nicholson stated that he could not verify this claim:

Of these things I believe both Dr. Cowley¹⁰ and myself were unaware, and Dr. Neubauer, who might just possibly have been able to inform us, was totally incapacitated by ill health in 1899, and died on April 6th, 1907.¹¹

Who was the Count d'Hulst and what then was his mysterious connection to the Cairo Genizah manuscripts? The details of his life before he lived in Egypt are vague: the title 'Count d'Hulst' was once so common among the nobility of Flanders and Belgium that it defies detection.¹² In two separate documents, d'Hulst refers to himself as a German and as a subject of 'the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg'.¹³ The most informative source, however, is a letter from the Cairo 'Service des Antiquités' in response to a query about d'Hulst from the British High Commission in Egypt. Its author, Georges Daressey,¹⁴ wrote that Count Riamo d'Hulst had been a German officer in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1 and that he had

deserted and sought Luxembourg citizenship.¹⁵ However, d'Hulst's long-term associate, the Oxford scholar and collector, Archibald Henry Sayce¹⁶ believed that the Count had gone to Cairo as the result of a war wound.¹⁷

It is not known when the Count arrived in Egypt or, indeed, how he acquired enough knowledge of the Arabic language to superintend Arab workmen on major excavations.¹⁸ Nevertheless, d'Hulst makes his first appearance in a report in *The Times* where it is revealed that he was involved in the discovery of an early Christian cemetery in Alexandria.¹⁹ Two months later, another report in *The Times*, announced that the Fund had sent him to assist the renowned Egyptologist, Édouard Naville²⁰ with his famous excavations of the Great Temple of Bubastis in Lower Egypt.²¹ An account written by Naville's wife confirms that d'Hulst was a welcome addition; his enthusiasm for engaging in the (now controversial) process of taking wet paper squeezes was particularly appreciated:

The work of taking paper impressions has become very heavy, and there was much rejoicing when Count d'Hulst arrived the other day to the assistance of M. Naville and Mr. Griffith. I watched him yesterday going from block to block, clearing the sand and soil from the hollows of the hieroglyphs, washing the sculptured surfaces, damping the paper, and taking the impressions.²²

The Fund employed d'Hulst as an excavator and site supervisor from 1886 to 1893,²³ during which time he played an important role in the recovery of large monuments for British institutions and museums around the world (the Herishef column, excavated by Naville in 1891 and donated to the British Museum, is one noteworthy example). Naville described how at Bubastis he and d'Hulst even waded into a boggy pit, blindly waving their hands underneath to recover a near perfect Hyksos head.²⁴ D'Hulst's private letters to Amelia Edwards, dated between 1888 and 1889, depict the debilitating work involved in moving and shipping these treasures to England: the scorching Egyptian summers in a malarial region, the frustration of dealing with the local authorities and the lengths to which he went to protect the shipments from further damage, such as sleeping on top of the boxes as they waited on board ship.²⁵

D'Hulst also pursued a personal interest in photography and, in his spare time, he wandered the streets

of Cairo taking photographs of the mosques, courtyard interiors and street views. The resulting collection, reported the *Athenæum* of 2 June 1888, 'cannot fail to be of great value to architects and archaeologists, and indeed, all interested in the art of Cairo'.²⁶ That same year, d'Hulst exhibited his work and presented his findings on Arab houses to the Royal Institute of British Architects.²⁷ Images of Arab subjects were also exhibited in Berlin, Munich and Dresden and future exhibitions in the East were being planned.²⁸ In April 1889, aware of his interests, the Fund presented d'Hulst with a camera worth £15 to thank him for his 'valuable and generous' services.²⁹ Unfortunately, d'Hulst's collection of 'Mohammedan Art and its branches', which purportedly amounted to several thousand photographs and 15,000 negatives, has since disappeared.³⁰

Two months later, in July 1889, the Fund decided to send d'Hulst to excavate the mounds round Cairo for Coptic and Arabic antiquities.³¹ These excavations were also funded by A. W. Franks³² and directed by Henry Wallis³³ in the hope of recovering more Fatimid pottery for the British Museum collection.³⁴ Two letters sent from d'Hulst to the Fund refer to these activities. The first, dated 6 January 1890, reads:

I received your letter & cheque & I am sure to have sufficient funds to carry out the work at Old Cairo. The finds include besides pottery, coins, weights & Hebrew manuscripts, a small sphinx ... My attempt to excavate the Roman gateway has been stopped under some pretended futile reason & I am afraid that we will have to consider this work impossible, at least for the present.³⁵

In the second letter, dated 16 February 1890, d'Hulst wrote:

I had brought the excavations at Old Cairo to a close at the beginning of this week expecting the arrival of Mr. Naville, having however still funds in hand I shall take [up] the work again to finish what I could not do for want of time. Nine boxes I have forwarded through Mr. Large, they contain 4 Kufic tombstones (No. 1) & a number of fragments of some Hebrew manuscripts found at Fostat (No. 9) Fragments found outside Bab el Nasr (No. 4) pottery fragments of Tinis (No. 6). The other boxes contain fragments from Old Cairo, coins, glass-fragments, some small objects from Bubastis etc. ...³⁶

D'Hulst's letters prove that he unearthed Hebrew manuscripts in Fustat in 1889 and sent a box of them on to the Fund early in 1890. Although there is no mention of any manuscripts in the Fund's distribu-

tion lists, the Neubauer and Cowley *Catalogue* does record that 212 folios were given as a gift to the Bodleian from the Fund in 1890.³⁷ Ten years later, d'Hulst related to Nicholson that he had sent a request to the Fund for instructions concerning the remaining manuscripts.³⁸ D'Hulst recalled that 'all the papers could have been had at that time for £20'.³⁹ In later letters he repeated the observation that if anyone had responded to his call for instructions, the entire Genizah (now estimated at over 200,000 manuscripts) could have ended up in the possession of the Bodleian Library.⁴⁰

It seems that most of d'Hulst's excavations were situated by the Roman fortress and gate,⁴¹ not far from the Ben Ezra synagogue and its now famous Genizah chamber in which, it is commonly believed, most of the Cairo Genizah manuscripts were stored for over a millennium. In the course of his correspondence with Neubauer, d'Hulst explained that the synagogue had thrown the papers out into a big rubbish heap some months before he began his work there for the Fund.⁴²

D'Hulst's activities coincided with the demolition of the synagogue in 1889, which was precipitated by a collapsed roof. The Jewish community had deemed the building beyond repair and decided to replace it entirely; the synagogue was rebuilt in 1892.⁴³ It was a significant moment in the history of the Cairo Genizah, for the demolition resulted in the emptying of the Genizah chamber and the exposure of all its manuscripts in the synagogue grounds. It was at this stage that the synagogue beadle first realized the value that these bundles of old papers held for the enthusiastic dealers and collectors that began to arrive from around the world.⁴⁴

The only testimony to d'Hulst's Genizah discoveries in 1889 survives in the two short missives he dispatched to the Fund. Yet, d'Hulst and his wife, Laura, also sent letters to the Bodleian in which they enclosed quotes and copied extracts of letters from the originals in their possession as proof of their claims.⁴⁵ One such extract copied by Laura d'Hulst in 1932 from a letter sent by Neubauer in March 1898 reads:

The fragments which you sent to the British Museum in 1890 and of which you asked Mr. Nicholson what became of them, I may tell you with pride that they are now in the Bodleian Library, bound in red to distinguish them from later acquisitions. Indeed these valuable MSS stimulated further researches in which I was very fortunate. Now they

form the nucleus of our large collection of Egyptian fragments. In the preface to the catalogue of them, your name will appear first. This catalogue is far advanced and will be concluded with the description of the fragments about which you are now busy.⁴⁶

D'Hulst was therefore one of the first people in the late nineteenth century to become aware of the existence of and to extract material from the Cairo Genizah. His collection in the Bodleian slightly predates the manuscripts supplied by the Revd Greville John Chester (1831–92),⁴⁷ who was accorded the fame of being the first person to bring the contents of the Genizah to notice in Oxford,⁴⁸ and Rabbi Solomon Wertheimer⁴⁹ who, along with Chester, supplied Genizah material to Cambridge in the early 1890s.⁵⁰

In the same period, growing concern in England over the treatment of antiquities in Egypt resulted in the establishment of the Society for the Protection of the Monuments and Antiquities of Egypt. At the Society's second annual meeting, it was decided that Lord Cromer⁵¹ should press the government of Egypt to appoint an effective inspector of antiquities: not a Frenchman 'who would not command the confidence of the English public'.⁵² Thus, with recommendations from leading Egyptologists, d'Hulst was invited to be an inspector. D'Hulst considered himself a 'pronounced anglophile';⁵³ his wife was English, and he even referred in one letter to *The Times* to 'our King Alfred the Great'.⁵⁴ But it was hoped that d'Hulst's German background might prove an acceptable compromise to the French who felt that the Antiquities Department belonged under their sphere of influence. There was, however, an outcry and the French Consul pressed Naville to withdraw his support. D'Hulst was not appointed to the post.⁵⁵

By 1891, Naville and d'Hulst were beginning to elicit open disapproval from the leading Egyptologist, Flinders Petrie.⁵⁶ Naville and Petrie belonged to different schools of archaeology. Naville was an expert in hieroglyphics, an authority on Egyptian religion and a discoverer and excavator of large monuments. His work was lauded in the early days of Egyptology when the recovery of large objects was considered exciting and paramount. But Petrie's notions of site mapping and his emphasis on the importance of recovering small finds became the standard for all subsequent archaeological excavations.⁵⁷

In 1892, Petrie heard that Naville and d'Hulst were to excavate Deir el-Bahri on the west bank of the Nile

and he warned the Fund that they would damage the delicate reliefs for which the temple was famed.⁵⁸ His chief complaint was against Naville, but he also revealed that 'Count d'Hulst told me, with superior wisdom, that in order to copy the graffiti at Meydum I ought to have put a wet paper on the wall and beaten it so as to bring the ink away on the paper!!!'⁵⁹ Petrie listed a set of ideal criteria for the excavation of Deir el-Bahri, concluding that 'not one of these requirements will be fulfilled by Messrs. Naville and D'Hulst'.⁶⁰ In that same year, d'Hulst clashed with the new director of the Antiquities Service in Egypt, Jacques de Morgan.⁶¹ D'Hulst had approached him over the question of site preferences for the coming archaeological season and de Morgan took offence at his manner. The Fund promised to suspend d'Hulst's work until the matter was investigated.⁶²

D'Hulst wrote a long letter of defence to the co-founder of the Fund, Reginald Stuart Poole,⁶³ citing seven years of loyal service.⁶⁴ But Poole was keen to establish good relations with de Morgan in order to secure excavation sites. Finally, this clash, coupled with Petrie's criticisms of him, and the expense of his recent supervision of the site at Behbeit el-Hagar, meant that by March 1893 the Fund had decided to dispense with d'Hulst's services. At the bottom of their terse letter of dismissal, a note in pencil (presumably by the guilt-ridden Poole) was added: 'I write with the utmost regret knowing your loyalty & hard work'.⁶⁵

The Count had, prior to his dismissal, begun dealing in antiquities. Letters held in the British Museum from d'Hulst to Francis Llewellyn Griffith,⁶⁶ offering Arab weights and scales for sale, bear witness to his activities in this area.⁶⁷ The aforementioned Archibald Henry Sayce, in a quote from a letter sent in 1923, described d'Hulst as someone 'in whom private collectors also found always an instructive and helpful friend'.⁶⁸

At the same time, manuscripts emanating from the Cairo Genizah were steadily finding their way into libraries and institutions around the world, primarily through collectors of antiquities who purchased them from dealers like d'Hulst or directly from the synagogue beadles.⁶⁹ Yet the exact source of these so-called Egyptian fragments continued to remain a secret to the outside world.⁷⁰ Indeed, not all the manuscripts emanating from the East were greeted with universal enthusiasm nor was their significance broadly appreciated.⁷¹

Following his appointment as a Bodleian sub-librarian in 1873, Neubauer had been 'indefatigable' in his attempts to expand the Library's Oriental holdings and to enrich its collections with valuable manuscripts.⁷² In 1894, comparing its material to that of the Imperial Library of St Petersburg, he proudly announced that 'the collection of Hebrew and Arabic fragments, coming from a *Genizah* in Egypt, and lately acquired by the Bodleian Library, rivals that of St. Petersburg, if not in quantity, certainly in quality'.⁷³ Neubauer was steadily cataloguing and publishing these fragments and, at that stage, did not hesitate to reveal that they emanated from Cairo.⁷⁴ He was also willing to share his discoveries with Solomon Schechter, his friend and academic counterpart at Cambridge University.⁷⁵ Schechter published a few of these fragments, including one of the oldest dated copies of the Babylonian tractate *Keritot*.⁷⁶

In addition, the two were united in their fight to prove that the apocryphal work *Ecclesiasticus*, authored by the Jerusalemite Jeshua ben Eleazar ben Sira in 180–175 BCE, was originally written in Hebrew. Ben Sira's grandson had transported the book to Alexandria where it was translated into Greek (and later Syriac). The Hebrew version was quoted extensively in talmudic literature since the early rabbis considered it almost as important as the Book of Proverbs, but Hebrew editions were no longer extant after the time of the great medieval polymath, Saadiah Gaon who had a copy in the tenth century.⁷⁷ For modern scholars of the nineteenth century, the Greek and Syriac versions were considered the most reliable for the restoration of the original text. Much of the debate surrounding this was sparked by the inaugural lecture of the Laudian Professor of Arabic, David S. Margoliouth, who dismissed the evidence from the rabbinic literature out of hand. Leading Hebraists disagreed with Margoliouth's reconstruction, and Neubauer and Schechter responded by separately publishing the Hebrew quotations scattered in the rabbinic literature as proof of their argument. For Schechter, however, the question was more than academic; it became a matter of principle; a passionate defence of Jewish literary traditions.⁷⁸

In that same period, Neubauer was nursing a secret. In his desire to secure a great collection of Hebrew manuscripts for the Bodleian,⁷⁹ it appears that he had asked his colleague Sayce if, during one of his trips to Egypt, he could try to locate the exact source of the

Egyptian fragments. From 1890, on account of his health, Sayce had spent every winter living on a houseboat on the Nile, visiting archaeological sites around Egypt and Palestine and recovering important manuscripts. In June, each year he travelled home to resume his academic life in Oxford.⁸⁰

Sayce's autobiography reveals nothing about the Cairo Genizah. Only in a letter sent in 1903 to Elkan Nathan Adler did he recall his connection to it: 'Some years later (I think in '92 or '93 ...) I heard of the Geniza, paid a visit to it, and arranged to purchase the whole of it for £50 for the Bodleian.'⁸¹ D'Hulst later claimed that he was first approached by Sayce about the matter in 1892,⁸² but it was not until 1895 that Sayce reported the following back to Neubauer:

I have just heard from my Cairo friend that he has succeeded in discovering & entering the old subterranean place from which the Hebrew MSS have all come. It is still filled with MSS & books, the larger & more accessible of which have been torn to pieces in order to sell the papers which have come to Europe. The Jews in charge of the place have offered to sell the whole collection for £50 with £5 bakshish. But the difficulty is how to get such a large quantity of things out of the country. Could the Bodleian get the government or rather Lord Cromer to do it? I hope to reach Cairo by April 15th where a telegram would reach me.⁸³

Sayce's letter also discloses that he had the help of a 'friend' in Cairo to locate the Genizah. Further proof that this friend was d'Hulst is confirmed in the abovementioned letters that he sent to the Bodleian in 1915 and that his wife sent again in 1932. One such letter, purportedly sent from Sayce to d'Hulst on the same day that he wrote to Neubauer, reads:

I think that the Bodleian Library would agree to the terms, but how are the MSS. to be got out of the country? If that could be arranged I would telegraph to Oxford for the money could be paid over at once. Let me congratulate you upon your success.⁸⁴

Sayce is quoted again under the date of 2 April:

How many boxes do you think will be necessary? I hope to reach Cairo about the 15th or 16th, & I should be much obliged if you could then come & have lunch with me when we could settle everything about the Hebrew MSS. I hope by that time to have had an answer from Oxford about them. If there were no difficulties about sending them out of the country, your plan would be the best to adopt.⁸⁵

These extracts repeat the same details that Sayce had discussed independently with Neubauer in his letter of 26 March. Furthermore, a letter sent from

Laura d'Hulst to the Bodleian Library in 1915 reveals the following about her husband's connection to the Genizah chamber:

For some MSS he had daily to climb by ladders through a small high aperture – the door of the room having been sealed for ages, the suffocating dust of years the only air – here he worked sorting out from sodden piles of ancient [lore] the records of a by-gone past & when I helped to cleanse & sew down the fragments in sacks, their odour was anything but sanitary ...⁸⁶

Thus, it appears that at some point early in 1895, d'Hulst was the first person to physically enter the Genizah chamber since Jacob Saphir (and perhaps Abraham Firkovitch) in the 1860s (although he would not have seen the same room since the Genizah chamber had been altered in 1892).⁸⁷ It is also probable that d'Hulst was the first visitor to the reconstructed Ben Ezra synagogue to have been granted permission to remove material from its Genizah chamber. Indeed, a summary of the Bodleian's financial accounts indicates 'payments to Professor Sayce, amounting to £27, remitted by him to the Jewish community in Cairo as the price of Hebrew fragments acquired through Count d'Hulst between 1893 and 1896'.⁸⁸

By November 1895, Sayce was able to inform Neubauer that he was sending 'a box on ahead so that you & Cowley may have something to amuse yourselves with'.⁸⁹ The rest of the consignment, another three boxes, should have arrived by 6 February 1896.⁹⁰ In January, the collector Elkan Nathan Adler, during one of his visits to the East, was shown the Genizah chamber and allowed to remove a sack of manuscripts.⁹¹ Sayce, on the other hand, was struggling to negotiate the sale of all the manuscripts. It was not a question of ownership rights that was delaying the purchase of the Genizah, Sayce told Nicholson, but the problem was that 'as soon as any money is paid to the old Rabbi and his colleagues they immediately get dead drunk upon it, & nothing can be done with them until their funds are exhausted'.⁹²

While Sayce and d'Hulst were busy trying to resolve the deadlock they had encountered, two women were travelling around Palestine and Cairo. These women, the twin sisters, Mrs Agnes Smith Lewis (1843–1926) and Mrs Margaret Dunlop Gibson (1843–1920) were both scholars of Syriac and Arabic and already recognized for their explorations in the Near East and for their discovery of the earliest known Syriac version of the gospels in St Catherine's

Monastery on Mount Sinai. Situated on the periphery of Cambridge academic life, the sisters became friends with other 'outsiders' like Schechter. In the spring of 1895, unable to resist the rumour that good finds were to be made in Cairo, the twins set off on their travels again.⁹³ On this occasion too, Schechter asked them to purchase some Hebrew manuscripts for him.⁹⁴ Upon their return, one of the fragments they showed him was to transform his life; for as a result of his great familiarity with the rabbinic quotations, Schechter quickly realized that he held in his hand a medieval copy of the original Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus. It took him just a few hours to confirm his initial suspicions and to relate his momentous discovery in 'haste and great excitement' to the twins. Aware of the manuscript's tremendous value, he told the ladies 'do not speak yet about the matter' and to Mathilde, his wife, he declared: 'Wife, as long as the Bible lives my name shall not die'.⁹⁵

Yet this great achievement, announced by Mrs Lewis in the *Athenæum*, on 16 May 1896, brought the alliance between Neubauer and Schechter to an end.⁹⁶ Schechter subsequently told his associate Alexander Marx that immediately upon its discovery, he sent a note about the Ecclesiasticus leaf to Neubauer.⁹⁷ Neubauer, for his part, replied a fortnight later to tell him that he could not read the note and that he had discovered nine leaves of Ben Sira at Oxford.⁹⁸ A notice about Neubauer's discovery was placed in the *Athenæum* on 27 June, just forty-two days after Mrs Lewis' announcement.⁹⁹ When they came to publish the fragments in 1897, Neubauer and Cowley further declared that: 'almost simultaneously the Bodleian Library acquired, through Professor Sayce a box of Hebrew and Arabic fragments, among which we recognized another portion of the same text'.¹⁰⁰ However, the abovementioned letter from Sayce to Nicholson in February 1896 indicates that the consignment should have reached the Bodleian before February and not 'almost simultaneously' in April or May.¹⁰¹ It appears then that either Schechter's note or his announcement in the *Athenæum* was the catalyst that induced Neubauer and his assistant Cowley to search their manuscript collections for further leaves of Ecclesiasticus.¹⁰² Schechter was outraged by Neubauer's apparent game of one-upmanship and complained bitterly to his friends.¹⁰³

Thus, in the wake of the great discoveries made in the late spring of 1896, an undeclared race to recover

the remaining leaves of the Hebrew version of Ecclesiasticus was underway. Neubauer (and no doubt Schechter too) had calculated that ‘the whole according to the description ought to be 30–36 leaves’.¹⁰⁴ While Neubauer had already tracked down the source of his Egyptian fragments, Schechter had waited until the advent of the Ben Sira fragment to start slotting the pieces of the puzzle together. He now realized that this fragment and the manuscripts purchased lately by the Bodleian and Cambridge University Library probably all derived from the same source: the Genizah in Old Cairo from which the aforementioned Adler had recently obtained a collection of manuscripts.¹⁰⁵

As everything fell into place, Schechter grew ever more anxious to travel to find the source, so much so, his wife recalled, that ‘the wish to be able to carry out this ambitious plan and to recover if possible the rest of the Hebrew original of Ben-Sirah incessantly occupied Dr. Schechter’s mind and gradually [*sic*] almost became an obsession’.¹⁰⁶ Luckily, he found support and enthusiasm for his ideas from the Cambridge dons, Professor Henry Sidgwick and Dr Donald Macalister, but it was the Hebraist, mathematician and Master of St John’s College, Charles Taylor (1840–1908) who insisted on providing private financial backing. With Taylor’s help, Schechter did not have to resort to the University’s travelling fund and was thus able to keep his proposed mission to Cairo from becoming public knowledge.¹⁰⁷

Another extract sent by d’Hulst’s widow reveals for the first time how extremely close this surreptitious race between Oxford and Cambridge to recover the Genizah manuscripts had been. In October 1896, knowing that the distinction of finding the remaining fragments of Ecclesiasticus was now at stake, Sayce wrote to d’Hulst to inform him of their new plan to purchase the Genizah:

I have persuaded the University to send Dr. Neubauer out to Cairo, since being a Jew he may be better able to get the MSS from the Jews than we were. He is therefore to depart as soon as his lectures for the Term have been delivered. But I have heard a rumour that the brother of the Chief Rabbi has been at Cairo and has bought certain of the MSS. Could you find out whether this is the case?¹⁰⁸

In October or November of that year, Schechter responded to an invitation from Adler to his brother’s house in London to see the manuscripts he had brought back from the Ben Ezra synagogue. Schechter (with

his excitable habit of underscoring) wrote to Adler ‘do expect me there *do* but do not show your treasures till you see me’.¹⁰⁹ Adler himself later recalled that:

... I showed my treasures to Dr. Neubauer and to Dr. Schechter. Neubauer was very angry with me for not ransacking the whole Genizah. I told him that my conscience, which was tenderer then than now, reproached me for having taken away what I did, but he said that science knows no law.¹¹⁰

Another extract of a letter from Sayce, dated November 1896, reveals that had it not been for something d’Hulst wrote and for Neubauer’s miscalculation, Schechter would not have been the only one travelling to Cairo. Sayce told d’Hulst:

I have just heard from Dr. Neubauer that in consequence of what you told me he has postponed his visit to Cairo. He says he will be entirely guided by the Count’s advice. He further tells me that he has seen the Chief Rabbi’s brother, who has brought with him ‘a lot of worthless rubbish’ for which he paid high prices. I have told him that he had better leave the matter in your hands.¹¹¹

Thus, while Neubauer had decided against travelling that winter, Schechter, with clear indications that a Genizah in Old Cairo was the source of his manuscript, set off for Egypt in December 1896. He had several other advantages too, including a letter of recommendation to Aaron Raphael Ben Shim’on, the Grand Rabbi of Cairo, from Dr Hermann Adler, England’s Chief Rabbi or from his younger brother, Elkan Nathan Adler.¹¹² He also went armed with introductions to leading members of the Cairene Jewish community (particularly the Cattai family) again, it seems, from the younger Adler,¹¹³ and a letter of introduction to Lord Cromer from the University’s vice-chancellor.¹¹⁴ These contacts, combined with his erudition, knowledge of Hebrew and engaging personality,¹¹⁵ enabled Schechter not only to locate the Genizah but also to negotiate the purchase and removal of most of its contents and, crucially, with Lord Cromer’s help, to ship them out of the country. Schechter’s fortunate policy of taking away as much as he could was based, however, on his discovery that ‘in the Genizah itself ... which is dark, dusty and full of all possible insects, there is no opportunity of examining the content of the MSS’.¹¹⁶

It was not all plain sailing, however, for while in Cairo, Schechter struggled with all the petty negotiations necessary to secure the cooperation of the locals and to acquire every possible manuscript. Afterwards

he recalled that ‘all this led to great deal of haggling and bargaining for which I was sadly unprepared by my former course of life, and which involved a great loss of money and time’.¹¹⁷ Schechter also lost a number of fragments, which he now considered as his, to local dealers in antiquities. One such dealer, whom he declined to name, had ‘some mysterious relations with the Genizah, which enabled him to offer me a fair number of fragments for sale’.¹¹⁸ Schechter complained about the ‘plundering’ to the Jewish authorities who responded quickly and helped make sure that the sacks of fragments were protected, but not, he wrote, ‘before I had parted with certain guineas by way of payment to this worthy for a number of selected fragments, which were mine by right and on which he put exorbitant prices’.¹¹⁹ Yet, to his friend, Herbert Bentwich, Schechter conceded that, although the dealers were buying stolen manuscripts, ‘by buying from them I get what is most valuable’.¹²⁰ Lewis and Gibson joined Schechter in January and they too helped gather as much of the material as possible by buying back manuscripts that had been ‘lifted’ by some ‘light-fingered gentry’ and sold in the Cairo shops.¹²¹ Schechter also visited other Genizot in the area to purchase manuscripts, although he maintained that most of his collection was derived from the Ben Ezra synagogue.¹²² Then, having made sure that his estimated ‘40,000’ fragments were securely packed in the offices of the British Consul and that the scholars in Cambridge would not open them before his return home, he left Egypt to visit his family in Palestine.¹²³

In the meantime, Neubauer and Cowley had finished preparing their leaves of Ecclesiasticus for publication and, in January 1897, the volume appeared in the bookshops.¹²⁴ But Schechter’s notable acquisition from Cairo meant that their acclaim was short lived. D’Hulst had presumably informed them that Schechter had left some of the contents of the Genizah behind, for in May of that year, Sayce wrote to d’Hulst on behalf of Neubauer to urge him to ‘keep an eye on the Hebrew MSS and let him or me know whenever you think anything can be done in regard to them’.¹²⁵ The three arranged a meeting in Oxford to discuss their way forward and whether it would be advisable for Neubauer to travel to Cairo the following winter. A plan was devised to excavate the area surrounding the synagogue and the local rubbish mounds for more manuscripts.¹²⁶ D’Hulst offered his services to supervise the dig for free.¹²⁷

In June, Neubauer instructed the Clarendon Press to send d’Hulst a copy of his edition of the fragments of Ecclesiasticus to help him identify what he was looking for.¹²⁸ D’Hulst noticed that his help in locating the Genizah and the help that he had given to Sayce in dispatching manuscripts to the Bodleian (including the Ecclesiasticus manuscripts) had not been acknowledged in the Preface. Sayce explained to him that he and Neubauer feared that such a disclosure might impede his pending work in the rubbish mounds. The Count did not object, particularly as he was encouraged by the promise of being named the finder of any further leaves that he might recover.¹²⁹

Back in Cambridge, the University Librarian, Francis Jenkinson (1853–1923), recorded in his diary for July 1897 that ‘Schechter found a double leaf of Hebrew Ecclesiasticus, & nearly went off his head’.¹³⁰ Schechter announced his find in a letter to *The Times*,¹³¹ adding that only a small proportion of that vast collection had been examined and he hoped further searches would yield more.¹³² Jenkinson’s diary entries also reveal how Schechter did everything that year to ensure that every item of Ben Sira had been found and dealt with, to the extent that it even caused some discord with the usually mild Librarian.¹³³

The following month, *The Times* published Schechter’s detailed account of his recent exploits in Cairo.¹³⁴ But someone clearly disagreed with his version of events for just one day later a letter to the editor stated that:

Mr. Schechter omits to mention that the honour of the discovery of this treasure belongs truly to the learned librarian of the Bodleian, Dr. A. Neubauer, who was the first to light upon it ... The other who went to that ‘hiding-place’ of the ancient synagogue in Cairo was Mr. Elkan N. Adler, who ... practically gave the key to it to Mr. Schechter.¹³⁵

The letter was sent anonymously and signed ‘Suum Cuique’ (a phrase derived from Roman law *Jus suum cuique tribuere* ‘to give every man his right’).¹³⁶ Adler, it seems, wrote immediately to Schechter to reassure him that he was not the author of the letter, for a day later Schechter replied that he had suspected him at first but realized that the English was not consistent with Adler’s style and that he was ‘too kindhearted for such mean tricks’.¹³⁷ In a second letter to Adler, a week later, Schechter wrote that he did not think that ‘N. wrote it’.¹³⁸

Further indication of Schechter’s determination to find more fragments of Ecclesiasticus is found in letters to and from Adler in the final months of 1897.

Each disputed the other's claim to first refusal on a collection of manuscripts brought from Cairo to England by the Jerusalem-based dealer W. S. Raffalovitch. One particular letter from Adler reveals the extent to which the promise of discovery had reduced them to quibbling over every fragment:

I accept your explanation but it does not alter the fact that I knew the man first, ordered the MSS. first, sorted these particular fragments first ... Probably the fairest thing will be for each party to pay £10 & to choose fragment by fragment in succession.¹³⁹

In the meantime, Neubauer, knowing that Schechter had still not managed to find the whole copy of Ecclesiasticus, continued to be obsessed about finding it himself. In December, while Schechter and Adler were bickering over manuscripts, Neubauer's excavation plans were confirmed and even the vice-chancellor's help was enlisted in writing to Sir William Garstin for permission to dig.¹⁴⁰ In January 1898, Neubauer wrote again to d'Hulst:

Mr. Schechter has begun in the Jewish Quarterly the continuation of my text of Ecclesiasticus, but does not say expressly how much he has. It is certain at least that he has not the whole of the remainder and so we may hope that you will be the fortunate discoverer of some part of it in your excavations.¹⁴¹

In February 1898, d'Hulst informed Neubauer that the fragments remaining in the Ben Ezra synagogue were mostly printed matter. He also advised him that the price for them was too high: 'Since Schechter has been here the people have very much increased their pretensions; for a lot like that forwarded they expect as much as 8 [shillings].'¹⁴² A decision was made to leave the synagogue material and concentrate on the excavations. On 4 March, Nicholson wrote to d'Hulst:

It has taken Dr Neubauer and Mr Cowley some days to go over the fragments, and estimate the value of them. Now that we know what is likely to be the contents of the rest of the rubbish heaps, we shall be very thankful if you will kindly incur a further expenditure. But as regards the synagogue itself, after the important information contained in your letter, I don't propose to take any steps.¹⁴³

Thirteen days later, d'Hulst told the Bodleian Librarian that he was relieved not to have to deal further with the locals, for:

... it is quite possible that they would no longer adhere to their offer. I am sorry to say that with Egyptians it is rather

a rule not to adhere to agreements; they do not consider it dishonorably [*sic*] but only clever to do so, when they see an advantage. And in our case they had an advantage, having had hundreds of pounds from Prof. Schechter.¹⁴⁴

At the end of that month, Sayce wrote to the Bodleian Librarian: 'D'Hulst tells me that the Hebrew MSS you have already received from him are unfortunately not "earth-shaking".' Furthermore, the excavations were also beginning to get more expensive than planned: 'am I right in telling him to go on?' he asked Nicholson.¹⁴⁵

Yet, writing to Neubauer a week later on 8 April 1898, d'Hulst announced:

I shall with my present work more than double the quantity of Egyptian fragments at the Bodleian. I have already recovered more than two big grain sacks full & an unusual large quantity of these papers are manuscripts; there is also a larger amount of parchment amongst them.¹⁴⁶

But the excavations caused difficulties too:

The dust is ... a fine, sharp, black dust which severely dries the eyes & respiratory organs; many workmen I had to replace, they leaving on account of the dust. But the worst trial are [*sic*] the carcasses of dead animals which are thrown in the neighbourhood. Last Saturday, after the prayer in the synagogue, we were attacked by a number of Jews armed with sticks. They pretended that the ground upon which we worked belonged to the synagogue. Sir William Garstin was kind enough to give me on Monday an introduction to Mr Cattai, the chief of the synagogue ...¹⁴⁷

The silent race between Oxford and Cambridge was even being conducted behind the scenes. A letter from Mr Reginald Henriques¹⁴⁸ in Cairo to Schechter reads:

I have been having a most exciting time lately *re* your Genizah ... but for my timely intervention everything that is left would now have been carried off to the Bodleian ... I was out there last Saturday, and found a gentleman who introduced himself as the 'Comte de Hulst' digging outside the enclosed space of the synagogue ... on my asking on what authority he was digging in private ground, he produced letters, etc., from the Ministry of Public Works and Finances ... He seems an interesting sort of man ... He went yesterday to Cattai and got ... a full permit to take away whatever he could find within and without the precincts of the synagogue. I ... got Cattai to rewrite the same, giving authority only to dig outside the precincts where there is probably nothing of value ...¹⁴⁹

Later that month, d'Hulst told Nicholson that 'I am working every day, Sundays & holidays included; it would not be wise to stop even for one single day,

because the caretaking people at the synagogue are a troublesome & illwilled set of neighbours'.¹⁵⁰ Sayce also reported to the Librarian that:

I have settled all Count d'Hulst's difficulties ... Mr Cattani tells him that he will be able in the course of the summer to excavate in the garden of the synagogue itself where, it seems, no end of MSS are buried ... There are more MSS under the ground than we had anticipated.¹⁵¹

In May 1898, d'Hulst reported to the Librarian that he had finished his work of fifty-five days costing £26 16s. 8d. The result, he announced, was 'sixteen big grain sacs [*sic*] full of fragments' sent in 'four big wooden packing cases'.¹⁵² That same month, Nicholson is quoted as writing:

I shall take an early opportunity of asking the Curators to express their sense of your most unusual services to the Bodleian, and I am only sorry that I can't let the University know of them without risk of hindering our future design on the rubbish heaps ...¹⁵³

In June, d'Hulst received an official vote of thanks from the Bodleian Curators.¹⁵⁴ Unfortunately for the Count, no further leaves of Ecclesiasticus were recovered from his hoard and, as Neubauer's health was rapidly deteriorating, the notion of conducting future searches was abandoned. The manuscripts still buried underground would have to wait until the Cairene businessman and collector, Jacques Mosseri, began his excavations in 1909.¹⁵⁵ Curiously, the material unearthed by d'Hulst which filled 'four big wooden packing cases' was never catalogued and seems to have disappeared.¹⁵⁶

Schechter and Taylor found another eleven leaves of Ben Sira in their Genizah collection and published them in an edition of the Hebrew Ecclesiasticus in 1899. Another edition, *Facsimiles of the Fragments hitherto recovered of the Book of Ecclesiasticus in Hebrew*, was published jointly by Oxford and Cambridge in 1901. That same year, Neubauer left Oxford to be cared for by his nephew in Vienna. During his tenure as a Bodleian sub-librarian, he had increased the Bodleian's original Hebrew holdings almost tenfold.¹⁵⁷ Suffering, it seems, from some form of dementia, Neubauer died in 1907.¹⁵⁸ When Schechter left Cambridge in 1902 to direct the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, he could confidently boast that he had made its Library 'as important for Hebrew literature as Oxford at least'.¹⁵⁹

But of the Count d'Hulst, nothing more was heard until 1903¹⁶⁰ when, it seems, he contacted Cowley, now

a sub-librarian, to inform him about a Samaritan Pentateuch for sale.¹⁶¹ A year later d'Hulst wrote to Cowley again to ask for the Bodleian's influence to help secure him an unnamed position. Cowley replied that the Bodleian was unable to exert such influence but hoped that, given the Count's services to learning, he would gain the position he desired.¹⁶²

The next time the Count appears is in 1909, three years after the publication of the Neubauer-Cowley *Catalogue* and two years after Neubauer's death. The Count first contacted Sayce then Nicholson to complain that the catalogue did not, as Neubauer had promised it would, mention his work for the Bodleian:

I ask myself what may possibly have been the objection to passing over my services but mentioning two Oxford men [Chester and Sayce] whose services in the matter have been comparatively slender ... Your proposition of redress whenever there will be issued a new catalogue sounds somewhat like a mockery [*sic*]; knowing as you do that by that time all of us shall long have been dead and gone.¹⁶³

D'Hulst threatened to go to the press with the details and to publish all his correspondence, concluding that:

I feel sorry that you & Mr Cowley should be so overworked in your position, but at any rate you have not to look back as I have upon a life ruined and embittered by ingratitude & disgraceful behaviour in return for services rendered to the E.E.F. and others.

Nicholson responded by offering to publish an addendum to be attached to all the copies of the catalogue; a solution, he stressed, that 'would involve a great deal of trouble'.¹⁶⁴ But the idea satisfied d'Hulst who replied, 'if you had gone through the experiences which unhappily have fallen to my share, you would quite understand my writing the last letter'.¹⁶⁵ When d'Hulst received his proof copy of the addendum, however, he noticed that his work in 1889, 1893 and 1895 was still unacknowledged and he wrote again to insist upon its inclusion.¹⁶⁶ Nicholson maintained that he was unaware of the Count's work in those periods and simply reported it as an unverified claim.¹⁶⁷

Five years elapsed before d'Hulst was heard from again. On this occasion, a Revd James Egan wrote on his behalf to the Curators of the Bodleian asking for financial help. 'The Count', he reports, 'is in a state of indigence ... and left to suffer extreme poverty in his declining years'.¹⁶⁸ Sayce also sent a letter

to the Librarian, Falconer Madan (1851–1935), reporting that:

I have lost sight of him for the last three or four years, but when I last saw him he was in considerable financial trouble as the Bank in which he had invested all of his savings had just failed ... I know that he has had to sell his house ... for the sake of his creditors.¹⁶⁹

Sir John Grenfell Maxwell (1859–1929), Commander of the British forces in Egypt, also told Madan:

I know all about Count d’Hulst. He is very nearly destitute & has several times been denounced as a spy – if it were not for his age & poverty he could have been sent to the Fatherland long ago ... He is now, to all intents and purposes, an unfortunate beggar.¹⁷⁰

Madan wrote to various institutions including the British Museum, Cambridge University Library and the Fund to find out more about d’Hulst’s work. The response was negative, they either did not know of the Count or, like the Fund, felt that he had already been sufficiently paid for services rendered.¹⁷¹

In February 1915, a committee led by the Regius Professor of Hebrew was set up to consider the case of Count d’Hulst. The committee addressed his work in 1898 only and concluded that even though d’Hulst had offered his services free of charge, he deserved more now that he was asking for it than a ‘handsome vote of thanks’. They regretted the omission from the 1906 catalogue and proposed that, in spite of previous efforts to make amends, the Count should now be offered £25.¹⁷²

But the matter did not end there. D’Hulst was dissatisfied with the committee’s decision and he continued to write to Madan to complain that his years of service previous to 1898 had been ignored. By this time, d’Hulst had become aware of the monetary value of the Ecclesiasticus manuscripts, comparing them to the perceived worth of the Codex Alexandrianus and Pierpont Morgan’s Coptic manuscripts.¹⁷³ Again he was informed that he would not receive any further funds. Letters of protest were also sent from Laura d’Hulst in 1915, but without result.¹⁷⁴

Laura d’Hulst reappears in 1921 in a series of forty-two letters to and from the British High Commission in Egypt.¹⁷⁵ The Count had been interned as an enemy alien during the First World War and during this time their possessions were sold at public auction. The sale

included some antiquities, their vast collection of negatives and photographs and some cameras. D’Hulst had died of malaria shortly after his release and his wife was left destitute.

The Count’s widow protested that the sale of her husband’s property was illegal and that many valuable items had been sold for much less than their true worth.¹⁷⁶ A subsequent investigation concluded that the sale was legal and that public auctions during wartime and for rent arrears usually brought low returns. Laura d’Hulst responded that the amount needed to cover the rent was far less than the value of the goods taken from them. In the end, she was advised to seek help from the British institutions that had supposedly benefited from her husband’s work.

Thus, in 1925, she wrote to the Bodleian again but with no success.¹⁷⁷ Seven years passed and the Countess d’Hulst sent another letter. In the intervening years, she had managed to lift herself out of poverty by teaching but, following accidental poisoning by strychnine, she was disabled and, at the age of seventy-four, unable to help herself.¹⁷⁸ Two months later she sent the six pages of extracts mentioned above. The final page contains a copy of a letter written by Sayce in 1923. Praising d’Hulst’s work, Sayce wrote:

It was in fact, to the Count’s knowledge of the language and manners of Egypt that the discovery of the MSS was originally due. Among the MSS was the lost original of the book of Ecclesiasticus ... Both Oxford and the Egypt Exploration Fund are much indebted to him, as well as Egyptology in general.¹⁷⁹

In a final letter to Laura d’Hulst, the Curators of the University Chest concluded that her case did not meet statute ‘Tit.xx.Sect.III.§ 2,cl.2’ and that they were unable to do anything further in the matter.¹⁸⁰

In sum, nearly 100 years after his initial call for redress, this paper has attempted to accord to the Count d’Hulst his rightful place in Genizah history. As Schechter observed in his veiled retort to the unidentified Suum Cuique: ‘The honour of discovering the Genizah belongs to the “nameless” dealers in antiquities of Cairo.’¹⁸¹

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Notes and references

- 1 Solomon Schechter (*c.* 1847–1915), reader in Talmudic and Rabbinic Literature at Cambridge University (1890–1902) and curator of the Oriental Department of Cambridge University Library (1900–2). For more biographical details see S. C. Reif, 'Solomon Schechter', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) (online edition, hereafter *ODNB*).
- 2 Adolf Neubauer (1832–1907), reader in Rabbinic Hebrew at Oxford University (1886–1900) and a Bodleian sub-librarian (1873–99). A thorough assessment of Neubauer's life appears in the unpublished lecture by S. C. Reif, 'A fresh look at Adolf Neubauer as scholar, librarian and Jewish personality' which he delivered to the Jewish Historical Society of England (forthcoming).
- 3 A first description of the Genizah chamber was provided by Jacob Saphir in *Even Sapir* (Lyck, 1866). Previous to 1892 access was through an entrance in the roof and, according to Saphir's curious description, was (or at least, seemed to be) two and a half 'storeys' in height. The entrance to the chamber was altered in 1892 (and perhaps its dimensions were altered too). Solomon Schechter was the first to describe it in 'A hoard of Hebrew MSS', *The Times*, 3 August 1897, p. 13.
- 4 Elkan Nathan Adler (1861–1946), Anglo-Jewish bibliophile, collector and author and son of the Chief Rabbi Nathan Marcus Adler. For more biographical details see C. Roth, 'Adler, Elkan Nathan', in M. Berenbaum and F. Skolnik (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 1, 2nd edn (Detroit, 2007), p. 396 [Gale Virtual Reference Library].
- 5 An inventory of the Cambridge collections was compiled in 2006 revealing a total of nearly 193,000 fragments. Approximately 3,000 of these were acquired by Cambridge University Library some before and some after Schechter brought back his hoard from Cairo.
- 6 Good accounts of the discovery of the Genizah can be found in A. M. Habermann, *The Cairo Genizah and other Genizoth. Their Character, Contents and Development* (Jerusalem, 1971) [in Hebrew] and in S. Hopkins, 'The discovery of the Cairo Geniza', in *Bibliophilia Africana IV: being the Proceedings of the Fourth South African Conference of Bibliophiles ...* (Cape Town, 1981), pp. 137–9. Further important details about the 'cast' of characters involved in the discovery are provided by S. C. Reif, *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo. The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection* (Richmond, 2000).
- 7 A. Neubauer and A. E. Cowley, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford ...*, vol. II (Oxford, 1906).
- 8 'A Geniza secret', *Jewish Chronicle*, 1 July 1910, p. 22. E. W. B. Nicholson: Bodleian Librarian from 1882 to 1912 (for further biographical details, see M. Clapinson, 'Nicholson, Edward Williams Byron (1849–1912), librarian', *ODNB*).
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 10 Sir Arthur Ernest Cowley (1861–1931): Semitist, assistant sub-librarian and co-editor of the *Catalogue* (for further biographical details, see S. Tomlinson, 'Cowley, Sir Arthur Ernest (1861–1931)', *ODNB*).
- 11 See 'A Geniza secret', *op. cit.* (note 8).
- 12 See 'Notice historique sur les concessions de titres suivie d'une liste des marquis, comtes, vicomtes et barons régulièrement créés avant le 4 août 1789', in *Annuaire de la Noblesse de France* (Paris, 1857; trans. T. F. Boettger, 2000), pp. 340–9.
- 13 University of Oxford, Bodleian Library Records (hereafter Oxford BLR) d.1084, document 18 (Cairo, 16 November 1909) and document 48 (Cairo, 1 April 1915). The set of records in BLR d.1084 is not individually paginated, so I have given each letter or document a number from 1–73 corresponding to their order in the record book.
- 14 Georges Daressy (1864–1938): French Egyptologist, Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur, Commander of the Order of the Nile (see M. L. Bierbrier, *Who was Who in Egyptology*, 3rd rev. edn (London, 1995), p. 116). Daressy worked at the Egyptian Museum in 1887 which is probably how he knew d'Hulst.
- 15 The National Archives (hereafter NA), FO 141/671 (Cairo, 10 October 1921). It is not clear to what extent Daressy's unflattering portrait of d'Hulst can be vouchsafed, given that d'Hulst had clashed with the French Egyptologists (see the letters cited in note 62).
- 16 Archibald Henry Sayce (1845–1933): Assyriologist and collector (for biographical details, especially his connection to Egypt, see Bierbrier, *op. cit.* (note 14), p. 375).
- 17 See Oxford BLR d.1084, document 33: A. H. Sayce to the Bodleian Librarian, Falconer Madan (Edinburgh, 27 October 1914). Again, this testimony may be unreliable given that Sayce erroneously describes the Count as 'Austrian'.
- 18 Information about d'Hulst's role appears in a disparaging note written by the Fund's co-founder, Amelia Edwards, to the archaeologist, Flinders Petrie (see M. S. Drower, *Flinders Petrie. A Life in Archaeology* (London, 1985), pp. 281–2). Sayce also confirmed that d'Hulst was very familiar with the Egyptian language and culture (see Oxford BLR d.1084, document 68: extract dated 26 May 1923, p. 6). D'Hulst, writing about his attempts to draw architectural plans of Arab houses, divulged that: '[I] have had access to many an interior but only so by a never measured patience ... & not little assisted by my knowledge of the people and their ways' (Egypt Exploration Society archives (hereafter EES), Box III, j.66: Count d'Hulst to R. S. Poole (Cairo, 6 January 1890)).
- 19 See 'Discovery of an early Christian cemetery near Alexandria', *The Times*, 4 May 1887, p. 15.

- 20 Édouard Naville (1844–1926): Swiss Egyptologist and biblical scholar (for biographical details, see Bierbrier, *op. cit.* (note 14), pp. 307–8).
- 21 See ‘The discovery of the Great Temple of Bubastis’, *The Times*, 1 July 1887, p. 3.
- 22 The letter is transcribed in A. Edwards, ‘Bubastis: an historical sketch’, *Century Magazine* 39/3 (1890), p. 334.
- 23 The Egypt Exploration Fund (today: the Egypt Exploration Society) was a London society established in 1882 to sponsor professional excavations sanctioned by the Egyptian authorities. The dates of the archaeological seasons during which d’Hulst was employed are listed by the Fund in a letter to the Bodleian Librarian (Oxford BLR d.1084, document 41; 9 November 1915). The minutes of the Fund’s committee meetings show that d’Hulst was given a basic salary of 10s.– (raised to £1 per diem for two set periods (13 April 1888 and 15 April 1891).
- 24 Edwards, *op. cit.* (note 22), pp. 335–7.
- 25 See the correspondence in EES Box III, k.69–123. A report of the EEF from 1886–7 preserved in BLR d.1084, document 70 also describes d’Hulst’s ‘onerous and ungrateful task’ and adds that ‘the Egypt Exploration Fund does not possess a more able and devoted officer’.
- 26 A. L. Frothingham Jr, ‘Archaeological news’, *American Journal of Archaeology and of the History of the Fine Arts* 4/3 (1888), p. 336.
- 27 See R. d’Hulst, ‘The Arab house of Egypt’, *Royal Institute of British Architects: Transactions* new ser. 6 (1890), pp. 221–7.
- 28 F. B. Goddard, ‘Report on recent excavations and explorations in Egypt during the season of 1888–89’, *American Journal of Archaeology and of the History of the Fine Arts* 5/1 (1889), p. 76.
- 29 See the Fund’s Committee minutes of 11 April 1889 (EES archives). £15 in 1889 would be worth around £898 today (for a currency converter, see the website: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/>)
- 30 D’Hulst’s widow, Laura, reported that the photographs were the result of their joint work and that they were once offered £1,000 for them. The photographs were seized by the d’Hulst’s Egyptian landlord and sold at public auction (see NA FO 141/671: Countess Laura d’Hulst to the Oriental Secretary of the British High Commission, dated 30 July 1921).
- 31 See the Fund’s Committee meeting minutes of 25 July 1889.
- 32 Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–97): Keeper of the British and Medieval Antiquities Department at the British Museum from 1866 to 1896 (see David M. Wilson, ‘Franks, Sir (Augustus) Wollaston (1826–1897)’, *ODNB*).
- 33 Henry Wallis (1830–1916): painter and collector of Italian and Islamic ceramics (see Bierbrier, *op. cit.* (note 14), p. 431). From 1888, Wallis tried to encourage the British Museum to develop its collections of Islamic pottery (see T. Wilson, ‘A Victorian artist as ceramic-collector: the letters of Henry Wallis, part 2’, *Journal of the History of Collections* 14 (2002), p. 231).
- 34 Writing to Franks on 8 December 1890, Wallis reported that: ‘Count d’Hulst did not expend last winter the whole of the fund we raised for the digging in the Cairo mounds ... D’Hulst thinks he has found a new place that promises well, and I certainly think it would be worth while to continue the work as far as funds permit it’. It is probable that Franks helped fund the excavations personally. Fifteen days later, Wallis wrote to Franks that he was ‘doing it at the expense of the fund you subscribed to ... all will belong to the BM’ (Letters to A. W. Franks, Department of Prehistory and Europe archives, British Museum). Describing Franks’s contribution to the British Museum’s Islamic pottery collection, Rachel Ward notes that Franks had built up ‘a spectacular collection for the British Museum ... Few objects had been paid for from public funds’ (R. Ward, ‘Islamism, not an easy matter’, in M. Caygill and J. Cherry (eds.), *A. W. Franks. Nineteenth Century Collecting and the British Museum* (London, 1997), p. 276).
- 35 EES Box III, j.66: Count d’Hulst to R. S. Poole (6 January 1890).
- 36 EES Box III, j.73: Count d’Hulst to R. S. Poole (16 February 1890).
- 37 Neubauer and Cowley, *op. cit.* (note 7), pp. xii–xvi. According to d’Hulst, Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, Director of the British Museum and committee member of the Fund, was responsible for re-distributing the manuscripts to the Bodleian (see Oxford BLR d.1084, document 18; 16 November 1909).
- 38 To date, no document to prove that d’Hulst had asked the Fund for such instructions has been found.
- 39 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 5 (Cairo, 17 March 1898).
- 40 *Ibid.*, document 18 (Cairo, 16 November 1909) and document 47: a postcard from d’Hulst to the Librarian Madan in 1915.
- 41 D’Hulst mentions the Roman fortress and gateway in the aforementioned letters in EES Box III, j.66 and j.73, *op. cit.* (notes 35–6). The Eastern section of the Roman wall was just 10 metres away from the synagogue (see P. Sheehan, ‘The Roman fortifications’, in P. Lambert (ed.), *Fortifications and the Synagogue. The Fortress of Babylon and the Ben Ezra Synagogue, Cairo* (Montreal, 1994), p. 49).
- 42 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 4 (Cairo, 17 February 1898).
- 43 For further details, see C. Le Quesne, ‘The synagogue’, in Lambert, *op. cit.* (note 41), p. 89.
- 44 The American scholar Cyrus Adler was one of the first collectors to benefit from the exposure of the material. In a letter to the Hebrew poetry scholar Israel Davidson, he wrote: ‘I got this [poetry] manuscript in Cairo in March or April 1891 along with a considerable number of other fragments which were probably among the earliest pieces from the Cairo Genizah to be brought to the Western World’ (see the letter dated 10 October 1911 in I. Robinson (ed.), *Cyrus Adler. Selected Letters*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, 1985), p. 197).
- 45 See Oxford BLR d.1084, document 52 (20 May 1915) and document 68 (16 October 1932).
- 46 *Ibid.*, document 68 (extract dated 31 March 1898), p. 3.
- 47 Some biographical details of Chester’s life are provided in Bierbrier, *op. cit.* (note 14), pp. 96–7, and a short, charismatic portrait is also provided by E. A. Wallis Budge in his memoir *By Nile and Tigris. A Narrative of Journeys in Egypt and Mesopotamia on behalf of the British Museum between the Years 1886 and 1913*, vol. 1 (London, 1920), pp. 84–5. Yet, despite filling various British institutions with treasures, little has been written about Chester to date; the lacuna is now being filled by Gertrud Seidmann’s doctoral thesis (Wolfson College, Oxford).
- 48 See the preface in Neubauer and Cowley, *op. cit.* (note 7), p. iv. When Cowley wrote the introduction to the *Catalogue*, he did not know the provenance of the manuscripts acquired in 1889, only that they came from the Fund. He knew that Chester had supplied them with material in 1890 which was derived

- from the Cairo Genizah. It appears, however, that Chester had bought them from a dealer and probably did not know where his manuscripts came from. D'Hulst, for example, claimed that Chester had told him personally that he had 'none of the Old Cairo MSS' (BLR d.1084, document 38: 24 December 1914) and that he had 'nothing to do with it' (document 52: 20 May 1915). The idea that Chester got his manuscripts directly from a dealer is also evinced from the fact that he supplied the Bodleian with good quality, early biblical and rabbinic material unlike the papers excavated by d'Hulst which were great in bulk but, according to Nicholson, 'of very little value' (see BLR d.1084, document 19: 25 November 1909). This aspect of Genizah history is discussed in greater depth in a forthcoming paper, R. J. W. Jefferson, 'The Cairo Genizah unearthed', in S. Bhayro and B. Outhwaite (eds.), *Cambridge Genizah Studies I: Proceedings of the First International Conference on Genizah Studies, Westminster College, Cambridge 2007*, Études sur le Judaïsme Médiéval (Leiden) (in preparation).
- 49 Rabbi Solomon Wertheimer (1866–1935): rabbinic scholar and Jerusalem-based bookseller. Wertheimer published Genizah manuscripts in 1890 and sold fragments to the Bodleian between 1892 and 1896 and to Cambridge University Library between 1893 and 1896. The original postcards and letters sent from Wertheimer to the Librarian are stored with Genizah manuscripts in the 'Or.' collection: in one such manuscript, preserved in Box Or.1080 13, Wertheimer writes that he has a 'Sepher Tora' for sale that was found 'in one of the Genizas of Old Egypt' (Jerusalem, 8 June 1893).
- 50 For details of Chester's contribution to Cambridge University Library, see S. C. Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library. A Description and Introduction* (Cambridge, 1997).
- 51 Evelyn Baring (1841–1917) was the 1st Earl of Cromer and Consul-General to Egypt (see R. Owen, *Lord Cromer, Victorian Imperialist, Edwardian Proconsul* (Oxford, 2004) for further biographical details).
- 52 Drower, op. cit. (note 18), p. 170.
- 53 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 18: d'Hulst to Nicholson (Cairo, 16 November 1909).
- 54 R. d'Hulst, 'The Arab monuments of Egypt', *The Times*, 15 October 1889, p. 3.
- 55 Drower, op. cit. (note 18), p. 179.
- 56 Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853–1942): Egyptologist and father of modern archaeological methods (for biographical details, see Bierbrier, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 320–32).
- 57 M. S. Drower, 'The early years', in T. G. H. James (ed.), *Excavating in Egypt: The Egypt Exploration Society 1882–1982* (London, 1982), pp. 18–19.
- 58 W. V. Davies, 'Thebes', in James, op. cit. (note 57), p. 52.
- 59 Drower, op. cit. (note 18), pp. 283–5.
- 60 Davies, op. cit. (note 58), p. 52.
- 61 Jacques de Morgan (1857–1924): French geologist, archaeologist and prehistorian (see Bierbrier, op. cit. (note 14), p. 297). His efficiency commended him to Flinders Petrie and, by extension, to the Fund (J. Tyldesley, *Egypt. How a Lost Civilization was Rediscovered* (London, 2006), pp. 159–60).
- 62 See the letters in the Fund's record of outgoing correspondence: Reginald Stuart Poole to Monsieur de Morgan (London, 15 November 1892) and to Count d'Hulst (London, 17 November 1892).
- 63 Dr Reginald Stuart Poole (1832–95): Keeper of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum; co-established the Fund with Amelia Edwards (1831–92) in 1882.
- 64 EES archives Box xv (Cairo, 25 November 1892). D'Hulst concluded his letter: 'I should think that nearly seven years service for the EEF in whatever capacity it may have been, during which I have shown that my devotion to the Fund's work & interest is unlimited, during which I have sacrificed my health without expectation of thanks & without complaint, would place me above suspicion of doing anything harmful to the Fund's interest. Instead I find that the accusation of a man, who has just stepped into office, the holder of which has always been the opponent of the EEF is considered of such weight that all my proved devotion cannot prevent me from being condemned unheard.'
- 65 See the Fund's records of outgoing correspondence: a form letter from the Fund to d'Hulst (30 March 1893). Poole wrote to Naville asking him for an opinion of the Count's outlay, for the matter had 'vexed' him greatly (2 March 1893). Informing Naville of the committee's decision to dismiss d'Hulst, Poole subsequently wrote: 'Pray say all that is kind to him from me. The Count has been very loyal to the Fund.' (Poole to Naville, March 1893).
- 66 Francis Llewellyn Griffith (1862–1934): Egyptologist and assistant in the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities at the British Museum (see Bierbrier, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 179–81).
- 67 British Museum, Department of Prehistory and Europe Archives: d'Hulst to Griffith (Behbeit el-Hagar, 17 December 1892 and Cairo, 24 October 1895).
- 68 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 68 (extract dated 26 May 1923), p. 6.
- 69 One of the known dealers was W. S. Raffalovitch who supplied Oxford, Cambridge and London (see D. Rowland Smith, 'Genizah collections in the British Library' in D. Rowland Smith and P. S. Salinger (eds.), *Hebrew Studies. Papers Presented at a Colloquium on Resources for Hebraica in Europe ... London, September 1989* (London, 1991), pp. 20–5).
- 70 Unfortunately those involved never revealed exactly how they had procured their collections, only that they were from 'Egypt' or 'Cairo' or 'from a Genizah', and the manuscripts themselves were referred to only as the Egyptian fragments. There may have been a deliberate attempt to maintain exclusive access or perhaps it was because the Genizah's significance was still unknown. Some Genizah stories remain a complete secret; for example, the Russian Archimandrite Antonin Kapustin, who resided in Jerusalem between 1865 and 1894, acquired a collection of Genizah fragments: of their provenance, however, nothing is known.
- 71 For example, a list of manuscripts acquired from Wertheimer in 1894 (Or.1080 13) is accompanied by occasional comments like 'worthless' or 'not wanted'!
- 72 See Neubauer's obituary in *The Times*, 8 April 1907, p. 8.
- 73 A. Neubauer, 'Review: grammatical and lexicographical literature', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 6/3 (1894), p. 567.
- 74 See A. Neubauer, 'Miscellanea liturgica: the Etz Chayim', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 6/2 (1894), p. 348.
- 75 See the J.T.S. Schechter archives, Series IV, Box 28 [microfilm reel 7]: Mathilde Schechter Papers (JTS MSP) – Writings, The Library/The University. Mathilde recalls that 'whenever the Bodleian acquired new MSS he [Neubauer] sent for

- Schechter'. The invitation extended both ways and Neubauer, she records, was made very welcome by the Schechters when he visited them 'for vacations'.
- 76 See Neubauer, *op. cit.* (note 73), p. 568. Several months earlier, Israel Abrahams, reported in the *Jewish Chronicle* that: 'The Bodleian, thanks to Dr Neubauer's keen watchfulness, has again acquired from Egypt a number of very valuable fragments of Hebrew manuscripts. Among these, Mr. S. Schechter has found a fragment of the [*Sifre Zuta*] (transliteration mine) and the discovery is an important one'. ('Books and bookmen', *Jewish Chronicle*, 3 November 1893, p. 19).
- 77 M. Segal and B. Bayer, 'Ben Sira, wisdom of', in M. Berenbaum and F. Skolnik (eds.), *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. III, 2nd edn (Detroit, 2007), pp. 376–8 [*Gale Virtual Reference Library*].
- 78 For a full and detailed account of the Ben Sira controversy, see S. C. Reif, 'The discovery of the Cambridge Genizah fragments of Ben Sira: scholars and texts', in P. C. Beentjes (ed.), *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research. Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference, 28–31 July 1996, Soesterberg, Netherlands* (Berlin and New York, 1997), pp. 1–22.
- 79 Sir Edmund Craster reveals how Neubauer had, at a very early stage in his career, 'drawn the University's attention to a source from which Bodley's store of manuscripts might be increased, to the "treasures which Rabbanitic synagogues might offer from their Genizoth in the East"' (see E. Craster, *History of the Bodleian Library 1845–1945* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 210–11).
- 80 A. H. Sayce, *Reminiscences* (London, 1923), pp. 282–3.
- 81 'The Cairo Geniza: how it was found', *Jewish Chronicle* (5 May 1933), p. 34.
- 82 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 38 (24 December 1914). The impetus to find someone to search for the source of the Egyptian fragments was perhaps also occasioned by the death of Chester in May of that year.
- 83 *Ibid.*, document 1 (26 March 1895). Sayce's depiction of the Genizah chamber as 'subterranean' is unexpected given that the Genizah in the Ben Ezra synagogue was not underground but, rather, on the second storey of the building. One has to assume that the word subterranean was the only way to describe the strange sensation of standing inside the deep, dark, airless Genizah chamber (it was probably between 3 and 4 metres in depth, based on Agnes Smith Lewis's observation that the entrance to the chamber appeared about 14 feet above the level of the gallery floor: see A.S. Lewis and M.D. Gibson (eds.), *Palestinian Syriac Texts: from Palimpsest Fragments in the Taylor Schechter Collection* (London, 1900) p. viii) Indeed, Solomon Schechter used similar language to describe his experience: writing to Jenkinson in January 1897, Schechter reported that 'I feel fairly well and am rather thankful that it is cold. Otherwise it would be unbearable to live in this dus[t] & underground' (Cambridge University Library, MS 6463.3416).
- 84 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 52 (extract dated 26 March 1895).
- 85 *Ibid.*, document 52 (extract dated 2 April 1895).
- 86 *Ibid.*, document 58 (Cairo, 11 December 1915).
- 87 Jacob Saphir was the first and only person to describe the Genizah chamber as it appeared before the rebuild in 1892 (*op. cit.* (note 3), fol. 21, a–b). Firkovitch visited numerous Genizot in the East and extracted material from them, but it is still not clear whether any of the material in the Firkovitch collections emanated from the Ben Ezra synagogue (see the discussion in M. Ben-Sasson, 'On the question of the origin of the second Firkovitch collection: remarks on the historical and traditional sources' [in Hebrew], *World Union of Jewish Studies* 31 (1991), pp. 46–67). It is also something of a mystery as to who else may have gained entry to the Genizah in that early period. The publications of scholars such as Moses b. Abraham, A. E. Harkavy and, perhaps, R. N. Rabinovicz provide hints about the source of their work which suggest they may have seen the Genizah (see Hopkins, *op. cit.* (note 6), pp. 156–8). Agnes Smith Lewis names Dr Lansing (presumably the Revd Gulian Lansing (1859–92): an American missionary in Cairo whose collection of papyri is in the British Museum) as the first person to bring fragments from the Genizah to Europe, but provides no evidence for this statement (see A. S. Lewis, 'Zu H. Duensing, Christlich-palästinisch-aramäische texte und fragmente', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 61 (1907), p. 631). Elkan Nathan Adler first visited the Ben Ezra synagogue in 1888 but was not shown the Genizah, a circumstance he later attributed to the fact that the chamber and its contents were only rediscovered during the rebuilding of the synagogue in the 1890s (see 'Ecclesiasticus', *Jewish Chronicle*, 11 March 1904, p. 29).
- 88 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 70. But the *Catalogue* itself does not list any material given through Sayce in 1893. There are several entries which simply describe the provenance as 'From the Geniza, 1892' (see the entry for MS Heb. d.54–55 on p. xiii, for example), as well as one enigmatic entry for MS Georg. c. I described as 'From the Geniza (1894?)'. In fact, only Wertheimer is credited with supplying material in 1893 (see MS Heb. b. 5 on p. xii, for example). This discrepancy is explored in greater depth in 'The Cairo Genizah unearthed', *op. cit.* (note 48).
- 89 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 2 (Cairo, 29 November 1895).
- 90 Bodleian Library MS Eng. Misc.d.69, fol. 70 (Luxor, 6 February 1896). Sayce wrote to Nicholson: 'I hope he [Neubauer] has received the Hebrew MSS by this time.'
- 91 See Adler's account in 1904, *op. cit.* (note 87).
- 92 See the letter from Sayce, *op. cit.* (note 90).
- 93 A. S. Lewis and M. D. Gibson, *In the Shadow of Sinai. Stories of Travel and Biblical Research* (Great Britain, 1999), p. 142. See also S. C. Reif, 'Giblews, Jews and Genizah views', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 55/2 (2004), pp. 332–46 for a fuller account, including quotations not published in the twins' own book.
- 94 Mathilde Schechter relates that 'In 1895, when we went to Castle Brae to say goodbye [*sic*] to them on the eve of one of their trips, they asked us if there was anything which they might bring back as a gift to us. Dr Schechter replied that if they could buy Hebrew MSS. from the little antiquity shops, they should do so.' (JTS MSP – Writings, Discovery of Jesus Ben Sira).
- 95 The quote is from Schechter's note to Lewis and Gibson dated 13 May 1896 (preserved with CUL MS Or.1.102). The comment to his wife is quoted in JTS MSP – Writings, Discovery of Jesus Ben Sira.
- 96 See the *Athenæum* no. 3577 (1896), p. 652. Observing Neubauer's reaction to Schechter's discovery, Mathilde Schechter wrote that 'for a long time [Neubauer] could not forgive Dr. Schechter. He was very bitter about many things.' (JTS MSP – Writings, The Library/The University).
- 97 A. Marx, 'The importance of the Geniza for Jewish history', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 16 (1946–7), p. 184. Marx records that Schechter told him this information in 1898.

- 98 Neubauer's eyesight and memory had deteriorated greatly by the spring of 1895, so much so that the other librarians complained about him and Arthur Cowley was appointed as assistant sub-librarian to help him with his work. Neubauer's decline is detailed in Reif, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 14.
- 99 See the *Athenæum* no. 3583 (1896), p. 846.
- 100 A. E. Cowley and A. Neubauer, *The Original Hebrew of a Portion of Ecclesiasticus (XXXIX. 15 to XLIX. 11) together with the Early Versions and an English Translation ...* (Oxford, 1897), p. xii.
- 101 See the letter from Sayce, *op. cit.* (note 90). It is also possible that the Ecclesiasticus fragment was part of an earlier consignment sent by d'Hulst between 1893 and 1896. Curiously, the *Catalogue* only assigns the date 1896 to the material purchased through Sayce.
- 102 In her memoirs (JTS MSP – Writings, The Library/The University), Mathilde Schechter speculated that: 'he [Neubauer] overhauled the Bodleian MSS. and found there some leaves of the same. So he maintained that he had found them "simultaneously"'.¹⁰²
- 103 A letter from Schechter's friend, the scholar Israel Abrahams (1858–1925), dated 2 September 1896, reveals the extent of Schechter's displeasure at the time: 'Why worry about Neubauer? Do try to keep calm about this pirate ... He has indeed treated you [scurvily], but you cannot afford to waste your mind on anger against him.' (JTS Solomon Schechter Papers (SSP), Box 1/6 [microfilm reel 1] – correspondence: Abrahams, Israel).
- 104 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 68 (extract dated 29 December 1897), p. 3.
- 105 Schechter had been given a number of other clues too. For example, both he and Neubauer had seen Cyrus Adler's collection of Genizah manuscripts in 1891 (see the letter from Adler, *op. cit.* (note 44)). Elkan Adler believed that when Schechter examined his fragments, he 'used his eyes and nose to very good purpose, for it was its characteristic odour and appearance that enabled him to recognize the Gibson fragment as one of the family': see Adler, *op. cit.* (note 87). Mrs Lewis attributed Schechter's realization to the fact that the name 'Postar' appeared on a number of their manuscripts (Lewis and Gibson, *op. cit.* (note 93), p. 156).
- 106 JTS MSP – Writings, Discovery of Jesus Ben Sira.
- 107 *Ibid.*
- 108 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 68 (extract dated 26 October 1896), p. 1.
- 109 JTS SSP, Box 1/15 – correspondence: Elkan Adler. The date is smudged and it is not clear whether Schechter has written the Roman numeral x or xi for the month.
- 110 Adler, *op. cit.* (note 87). Later, in 1914, he recounted that 'I got official entry into the Geniza, took away the first sackful and announced my discovery to Neubauer and Schechter. The first rated me soundly for not carrying the whole lot away, the second admired my continence but was not foolish enough to follow my example' (E. N. Adler, 'The Hebrew treasures of England', presidential address delivered on 9 February 1914, *Jewish Historical Society of England* 8–9 (1915–7), p. 16).
- 111 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 68 (extract dated 29 November 1896), p. 1. Ironically, Adler's collection did contain a fragment of Ecclesiasticus (see E. N. Adler, 'Some missing chapters of Ben Sira', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 12/3 (1900), p. 466).
- 112 Schechter acknowledged the Chief Rabbi's help in his article for *The Times*, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 13. But in a letter to Elkan Adler, Schechter wrote: 'Many, many thanks for your kind letter to the [rav] in Cairo. I did not know that I am either a [lamdan] or a [tsadiq]' (transliteration mine) (JTS SSP, Box 1/15 – correspondence: Elkan Adler, dated 1896). The Genizah scholar, Paul Kahle, also claimed that Adler told him that it was he and not his brother Hermann who had given Schechter the recommendation. Astonishingly, Adler also claims to possess a letter from Schechter 'in which he undertook, quite voluntarily ... not to take anything away with him from Egypt' (Adler, *op. cit.* (note 87)).
- 113 Following his visit to Cairo in 1888, Elkan Adler provided a lively description of his hosts, the Cattaus (see 'Notes of a journey to the East', *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 December 1888, p. 6). It was perhaps due to Adler's acquaintance with this influential family that prompted Schechter to write 'I should like to have an introduction to Catui (or some such name) in Cairo ... Can you give me one or get one for me from a friend[?]' (Letter dated 14 December 1896 in JTS SSP, Box 1/15 – correspondence: Elkan Adler).
- 114 See JTS MSP – Writings, Discovery of Jesus Ben Sira.
- 115 Agnes Lewis reports in a letter to Mathilde Schechter that 'Dean Butcher the English chaplain at Cairo, is quite delighted with your husband, and calls him "a delightful fellow"'. Lord Cromer's secretaries speak in the same strain' (Cairo, 7 February 1897, JTS SSP, Series iv, Box 27 [microfilm reel 3] – correspondence: Agnes Lewis).
- 116 CUL MS Add.6463(E).3416: a letter from Schechter to Francis Jenkinson (Cairo, 12 January 1897).
- 117 Schechter, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 13.
- 118 *Ibid.*
- 119 *Ibid.*
- 120 N. Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter. A Biography* (Cambridge, 1938), p. 130.
- 121 Lewis and Gibson, *op. cit.* (note 93), p. 161.
- 122 See Reif, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 80.
- 123 *Ibid.*, p. 82, and Bentwich, *op. cit.* (note 120), p. 131. Schechter also brought home manuscripts from Palestine. A correspondent writing from Jerusalem in March 1897, reported that 'Mr. Schechter has been rather successful in his search for Hebrew manuscripts not only in Egypt, but also in Palestine. His keen eye has not only discovered but also obtained in Hebron a few of these MSS., to acquire which, many other scholars before him have tried in vain' (*Jewish Chronicle*, 9 April 1897, p. 22).
- 124 See Neubauer and Cowley, *op. cit.* (note 100).
- 125 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 68 (extract dated 10 May 1897), p. 2.
- 126 These plans are discussed in the quoted letters from Sayce and Neubauer (dated between June and December 1897) in Oxford BLR d.1084, document 52 and in document 68, pp. 2–3. The idea of searching the surrounding area and rubbish mounds was no doubt based on d'Hulst's earlier experience of finding manuscripts in 1889.
- 127 See Oxford BLR d.1084, document 42 (26 February 1915).
- 128 *Ibid.*, document 68 (extract dated 21 June 1897), p. 2.
- 129 *Ibid.*, document 38: d'Hulst's letter to Madan (Cairo, 24 December 1914), and document 65, p. 2.

- 130 CUL, MS Add.7420 (1897).
- 131 S. Schechter, 'The original of Ecclesiasticus', *The Times*, 5 July 1897, p. 9.
- 132 In August, Schechter wrote: 'My most glorious Genizah day was last Friday when I discovered in one afternoon a piece of Greek, a Syriac palimpsest and the most important portion of Sirach [Ecclesiasticus]. Hoodoo L'Adonai! (quoted in F. I. Schechter, 'Schechteriana', *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 November 1922, p. 21).
- 133 See Reif, op. cit. (note 78), p. 12. The relationship between Jenkinson and Schechter is explored in full by Reif in 'Jenkinson and Schechter at Cambridge: an expanded and updated assessment', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 32 (1993), pp. 279–316.
- 134 Schechter, op. cit. (note 3), p. 13.
- 135 Suum Cuique, 'Hoard of Hebrew MSS.', *The Times*, 4 August 1897, p. 6.
- 136 See the forthcoming book 'On the Cairo Genizah' (Nextbook/Schocken Book Series) by Peter Cole and Adina Hoffman for more about the identity of 'Suum Cuique'.
- 137 JTS SSP, Box 1/15 – correspondence: Elkan Adler (letter from Schechter dated 5 August 1897).
- 138 Ibid. (letter from Schechter dated 12 August 1897).
- 139 Ibid. (letter from Adler dated 20 December 1897). A letter from Raffalovitch to Adler confirms that, in fact, he was invited to see the manuscripts first (see JTS SSP, Box 1/15 – correspondence: Elkan Adler (letter dated 9 December 1897)). The dispute was not taken very seriously: Adler signs his letter with 'all Maccabean greetings!'
- 140 Sir William Garstin (1849–1925): under-secretary in the department for public works and responsible for buildings and antiquities in Cairo (see E. Baigent, 'Garstin, Sir William Edmund (1849–1925)', *ODNB*).
- 141 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 68 (extract dated 18 January 1897 – the year was copied in error as Schechter's publication was out in January 1898 and d'Hulst began his excavations at that time too), p. 2.
- 142 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 3 (Cairo, 6 January 1898).
- 143 Ibid., document 68 (extract dated 4 March 1898), p. 3.
- 144 Ibid., document 5 (Cairo, 17 March 1898). In April of that year, Sayce also informed Nicholson that: 'Schechter's expenditure amounted to £300' (Oxford BLR d.1084, document 10; Cairo, 22 April 1898). This is roughly £17,000 in today's money (according to the currency converter mentioned in note 22).
- 145 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 7 (31 March 1898).
- 146 Ibid., document 8 (8 April 1898).
- 147 Ibid.
- 148 Reginald Henrique: an Anglo-Jewish businessman who had befriended Schechter in Cairo (see Bentwich, op. cit. (note 120), p. 133).
- 149 F. I. Schechter, op. cit. (note 132), pp. 20–1. It seems that Henrique also seized the opportunity to collect some of the manuscripts himself. His collection was acquired by Cambridge University Library in 1898 and is now catalogued as CUL, MSS T-S NS 172.1–170.
- 150 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 9 (Cairo, 21 April 1898).
- 151 Ibid., document 10 (Cairo, 22 April 1898).
- 152 Ibid., document 11 (12 May 1898).
- 153 Ibid., document 68 (extract dated 20 May 1898), p. 4.
- 154 Ibid., document 14: handwritten draft or copy of an unsigned letter from the Bodleian (17 June 1898).
- 155 See Mosseri's account of his activities and a description of the contents of his collection in 'A new hoard of Jewish MSS. in Cairo', *Jewish Review* 4/21 (1913), pp. 208–16. As to the location of some of the manuscripts, Mosseri wrote: 'we were able to unearth those fragments which had been thrown out and buried in the ground when the synagogue was pulled down'. (p. 211). Mosseri also removed the remainder of the manuscripts in the Ben Ezra synagogue during his first search in 1909.
- 156 A receipt sent to the Librarian for 'four packages' costing '5.13.11' is preserved in BLR d.1084, document 13 (16 June 1898). A summary of the Library's dealings with d'Hulst relates that 'four large cases of fragments reached Oxford on June 16' (BLR d.1084, document 70), but the *Catalogue* records only fifty-five 'Thalmud' fragments procured through Sayce in 1898. A further examination of d'Hulst's excavations and the mystery of the missing manuscripts can be found in 'The Cairo Genizah unearthed', op. cit. (note 48).
- 157 This amount was assessed by Craster, op. cit. (note 79), pp. 210–11. Neubauer's obituary, op. cit. (note 72), also concluded that he had 'carried on a vast correspondence with dealers and scholars on the Continent and in the East, and was thus enable to secure some priceless and unique MSS. for the Bodleian Library, which is now the greatest Hebrew library in the world' and that 'the Bodleian possesses the first and not the least valuable portion of the Genizah which has since become so famous'.
- 158 This information is based on Mathilde Schechter's description of Neubauer in her memoirs (see JTS MSP – Writings, The Library/The University). She wrote 'he suffered for many years before his death, when his mind failed him; it was tragic that a man of such wide knowledge forgot even his own identity'.
- 159 See the letter quoted in Reif, op. cit. (note 78), p. 13.
- 160 In the meantime, it appears that d'Hulst may have been involved in another grand scheme: a posting on an ancestry website about Esch Castle in Luxembourg reads: 'the Luxembourg Government sold the estate on the 11th November 1902 to Mr. Martin Riamo d'Hultz for the sum of 1,000 francs ... Martin Riamo d'Hultz, living in Egypt, planned to rebuild the castle. In 1906, the castle chapel was almost completed. However, now Count d'Hulst seems either to have lost interest in the reconstruction or he was short of money, for he did not pay the workers at Esch-Sure. The Luxembourg Government settled the outstanding salaries and seized the estate (see <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/ESCH/2000-03/>).
- 161 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 68 (extract dated 28 February 1903).
- 162 Ibid., document 68 (extract dated 17 May 1904).
- 163 Ibid., document 18 (Cairo, 16 November 1909).
- 164 Ibid., document 19 (Oxford, 25 November 1909). In this draft copy, Nicholson wrote, but then deleted, the following: 'if you knew the contents of the many parcels we had received from Mr. Chester ... you would know that the fragments dug up for us, under your kind supervision turned out to be of very little value indeed by comparison; in fact, had they been offered to us for the same money they cost to recover ... I don't think

- we should ever have *dreamt* of giving it.' Furthermore, not all the copies of the *Catalogue* were amended. There is no record of d'Hulst's contribution in the edition held by Cambridge University Library, for example.
- 165 *Ibid.*, document 21 (Cairo, 14 December 1909). D'Hulst adds: 'For me, it is not a question of mere vanity but of justice and having been repeatedly treated unjustly it has become a question of principle.'
- 166 *Ibid.*, document 23 (Cairo, 27 April 1910). Of his work in 1893, he writes rather confusingly that 'In 1893, I procured, through Prof Sayce, a small lot of MSS'.
- 167 See 'A Geniza secret', *op. cit.* (note 8), and the addendum pasted into the Oxford copy of the *Catalogue* (Z. Cat. 4/2) to which Nicholson added a handwritten note: 'The catalogue[r] of the next vol. should consult the vol. of library papers relating to the purchase of Hebrew MSS. and should remedy the accidental omission (in the present volume) of the mention of the services rendered by Count R. d'Hulst in obtaining Geniza fragments in 1898.'
- 168 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 32 (Cairo, 20 July 1914).
- 169 *Ibid.*, document 33 (Edinburgh, 27 October 1914).
- 170 *Ibid.*, document 51 (15 May 1915).
- 171 *Ibid.*, documents 35, 37 & 39–41. As far as the EEF knew, d'Hulst 'never had anything to do with MSS'.
- 172 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 42 (26 February 1915). According to the National Archives currency converter, £25 in 1915 is equivalent to £1,075 in today's money.
- 173 *Ibid.*, document 52 (20 May 1915). D'Hulst believed that the Codex Alexandrianus was worth £300,000 and that Pierpont Morgan paid £40,000 for his Coptic manuscripts. Consequently, he also believed that the Genizah manuscripts at Oxford were worth £40,000 (approximately £2,250,000 today) (see document NA FO 141/671 from Laura d'Hulst to G. W. Bennett Esq., Oriental Secretary at the British High Commission, dated 30 July 1921).
- 174 See Oxford BLR d.1084, documents 46–7, 56, 58.
- 175 These documents are part of the general correspondence of the Foreign Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Embassy and Consulates in Egypt that are held in the UK National Archives at Kew under the shelfmark FO 141/671.
- 176 See the letter from Laura d'Hulst to G. W. Bennett Esq., Oriental Secretary at the High Commission (20 July 1921), document NA FO 141/671.
- 177 Oxford BLR d.1084, document 62 (Cairo, 22 March 1925).
- 178 *Ibid.*, document 65 (Cairo, 22 August 1932).
- 179 *Ibid.*, document 68 (extract dated 26 May 1923), p. 6.
- 180 *Ibid.*, document 73 (1 December 1932).
- 181 Schechter, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 11.