

## INTERLUDE

DECEMBER 1937–NOVEMBER 1938

Having ended the brief excavation sojourn on Tortoise Island, of which there is no record in the official reports, Olov and Ronny returned to Saigon and embarked on the luxury US ocean liner SS *President Coolidge* bound for Honolulu, on 23 December 1937. After a dramatic journey through storms and earthquakes, and stopovers in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Kobe, and Kyoto, they arrived on 21 January 1938 in Honolulu where they made a month-long stop to allow Olov to rest and recover from his liver condition, while taking the opportunity to study the collections of the Bernice Bishop Museum. Ronny later wrote in glowing terms to friends in Sweden about their month in Hawaii, how they were “surrounded by true-hearted and sympathetic friends”, and “everything and everyone in this fairytale land was, quite simply, wonderful”.<sup>580</sup> They departed from Hawaii on 23 February on the SS *President Taft*, and arrived in San Francisco a week later, on 1 March. There they took the opportunity to visit Los Angeles and see Hollywood, before they travelled north to Buffalo, NY, where they arrived on 20 March 1938.

The official reason for the turn towards the United States was an invitation from Chauncey J. Hamlin, the Director of the Buffalo Science Museum, to spend some time studying the museum’s collections from

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<sup>580</sup>. Letter from Ronny Janse to Birger and Barbro Nerman, 23 March 1938. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941. In the Swedish original: “I Honolulu stannade vi över en månad och kände oss omgivna av trogna och sympatiska vänner och alldeles glömde att vi äro utlänningar. Allt och alla i denna sagoland äro underbara helt enkelt.”

the Pacific on a special grant made by the Rockefeller Foundation. They ended up spending eight months in the United States. Most of the time they were in Buffalo, NY, where they rented an apartment in the city centre on 401 Delaware Avenue, and Olov worked in the Museum's new "Hall of Primitive Races", studying relations between Western, Far East, and Pacific arts.<sup>581</sup> Over the eight months in Buffalo they also took the opportunity to travel and study other museum collections, at the Field Museum in Chicago,<sup>582</sup> and at Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

If the official reason for the stay in the United States was the work for the Buffalo Museum, the unofficial reason was to establish a new professional platform away from Europe, and find means to continue their successful excavations in Indochina. The political situation in France and the debacle over the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm had left them with little choice other than to look for a new base to work from. And the United States stood out as a good place to be when Europe was in turmoil. Soon after their arrival in Buffalo, Ronny wrote to Barbro Nerman who was pregnant with her second child in Stockholm:

We are very happy to stay here some time and work in peace and quiet. The Americans we have met are remarkably nice, sensible and humane, and you can sense it in their conduct. This is a country of great opportunities and built on people's capacity.<sup>583</sup>

In fact, already during their month-long stopover in Hawaii, Olov began to work on his plans for the future. He wrote to Serge Elisséeff, a Russian-French Japanologist whom he knew from Paris, who had recently

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581. E.g. *Buffalo Evening News*, 30 March 1938: "Museum adds aide"; Letter from O. Janse to M. Mauss, 5 February 1938. Fonds Marcel Mauss au Collège de France: mauss-janse-0034.pdf.

582. Notice in *Field Museum News*, no. 4, April 1938: "Distinguished Visitors: Dr. Janse spent several days at Field Museum to study this institution's Chinese, Melanesian, and Filipino collections."

583. Letter from Ronny Janse to Birger and Barbro Nerman, 23 March 1938. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941. In the Swedish original: "Vi äro mycket glada över att stanna här någon tid och arbeta i lugn och ro. De amerikanerna som vi har träffat äro utomordentligt trevliga, förståndliga och mänskliga och detta känns i deras uppträdande. Detta är en land av stora möjligheter och byggd på människornas kapacitet."

been appointed Director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts.<sup>584</sup>

Janse, who was actively on the hunt for funding for a third expedition and even more importantly for him personally, for affiliation and support for his future career, also met and discussed the matter with Langdon Warner, legendary Harvard archaeologist and collector of Asian art.<sup>585</sup> But it was with Elisséeff, his and Ronny's old acquaintance from Paris, that the ideas got rooted. Through Ronny, Janse also had a personal connection with Serge Elisséeff. Similar to Ronny's upbringing and experiences of the Russian Revolution, he was born and raised in a wealthy Russian family in St Petersburg. After returning home from university studies in Japan, he saw the devastating consequences the revolution had on his family and relatives, and fled with his wife Vera and their two young sons in the summer of 1920. They escaped on a fishing boat to Finland and via Stockholm, Sweden, to Paris, where they settled and he continued his academic career and eventually became acquainted with Janse.<sup>586</sup>

In the letter to Elisséeff, Janse says that he is planning to spend some time in American museums, and that he has brought with him quite a few notes and drawings – “some rather unique” – of their investigations in Indochina, which he hopes to be able to continue to work with and publish. Considering the great interest in the United States in the archaeology and ethnography of the Far East, Janse writes, he is planning

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584. All correspondence between Janse and Serge Elisséeff is kept at Harvard University – Harvard College Library Harvard-Yenching Library/Harvard-Yenching Institute Archives. Janse, Olov Robert T. *Publication Projects and Expeditions. Correspondence, 1938–1940*. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass; and *Correspondence, 1941–1943*. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. In short: Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. *Correspondence, 1938–1940*; Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. *Correspondence, 1941–1943*.

585. Langdon Warner's (1881–1955) legacy is controversial, not least for his famous removal of original murals from the walls of the Dunhuang caves in the Gansu province of China. But Warner's contribution to the study of Asian art in the United States has also been celebrated, and in this vein he has been described as “the United States' first full-time teacher of Asian art” [whose] “true passion was in the field, where he worked as an explorer, archaeologist, and collector of Asian art. It has even been said that he is the inspiration for the character of Indiana Jones.” <http://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/the-heroes/the-monuments-men/warner-langdon>, accessed 15 May 2018; see also Hopkirk 1984: chapter 15; Fan 2009:257–258, Meyer & Blair Bryzac 2015. Letter from Serge Elisséeff to O. Janse, 26 March 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. *Correspondence, 1938–1940*.

586. Reischauer 1957.

to put together a course on Indochina for an American university, and asks Elisséeff for advice:

You have already so kindly promised to help me find a way in to the higher education of the United States, and I hope I am not being indiscreet by asking you for some good advice. May I ask which persons or universities you think would be willing to let me organize one or two courses with the title of “visiting professor” or “lecturer”? If you see a possibility for me to be admitted to Harvard, I ask you to think of me.<sup>587</sup>

The letter turned out to be the beginning of a whole new phase of Janse’s career, and a restart for the investigations in Indochina. Serge Elisséeff not only gave Janse an opportunity to lecture at Harvard but also saw an opportunity to expand the interests of his institute. A bit further on in their correspondences, Elisséeff writes:

Will it be possible for you to come and lecture at Harvard during the last two weeks of April, which would be the last opportunity to have lectures here this year and have enough students and persons interested in archaeology present?

I was much interested in your proposition to subsidize archaeological excavations in Indo-China, and I immediately put it on the agenda for the next meeting of the Trustees of the Institute, which will be held the 11<sup>th</sup> of April. I shall be very grateful if you can give me more information as to the conditions for such an expedition; what the tombs are; what things we could have here from the expedition; what our share in such an enterprise would be; when such a joint expedition would take place. I need more definite information to present to the Board of Trustees if the

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587. Letter from O. Janse to S. Elisséeff, 2 February 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940. In the French original: “Vous m’avez déjà si aimablement promis de vouloir me faciliter l’entrée dans l’enseignement supérieur aux États-Unis que j’espère ne pas être indiscreet en venant vous demander de me favoriser de quelques bons conseils. Puis-je vous demander quelles sont les personnes et les universités qui seraient disposes d’organiser pour moi un ou plusieurs cours à titre de ‘visiting professor’ ou ‘lecturer’? Si vous voyez une possibilité de me faire admettre à Harvard, je vous demanderais de penser à moi.”

expedition is to be undertaken next year, so that an appropriation for it can be inserted in the budget for next year, which is made up at this meeting of the Trustees.<sup>588</sup>

On 1 April Janse wrote to Elisséeff with a list of proposed sites and monuments for investigation in a forthcoming expedition: 1) Han graves in Thanh Hoa (with transportation of a whole brick tomb set to the United States for reconstruction); 2) Pottery kilns from Han and post-Han periods, in Thanh Hoa and probably in Tonkin; 3) Traces of a Han village near Lach-truong in Thanh Hoa; 4) “Indonesian” settlements and cemeteries from the T’sin and Han periods in Laos, Tonkin, Annam, and Cambodge; 5) Neolithic sites such as Samrong Sen and Lung-prao in Cambodia; [*no. 6 absent*]; 7) Miscellaneous monuments outside Indochina (for instance in Kwang-Tcheon-Wan in China, and Siam, Malaysia and India for comparative studies of the material found in Indochina). In addition to these archaeological investigations he also proposes some ethnographic investigations of “the many primitive peoples isolated in the mountains” whose customs would be of great interest from a comparative point of view, and as explanations for the finds in the excavations.<sup>589</sup> He also offers to collect ethnographica for American museums that lack collections from Indochina. To realize these plans, he would need at least two years of continuous work, and estimates that he could do it for US \$ 8,000 per year.<sup>590</sup> Three weeks later, Elisséeff wrote to Janse with good news:

I am happy to inform you that the proposition for an archaeological campaign in Indochina I presented to the Trustees at their recent meeting was accepted, and they voted that \$ 8,000 may be put in the budget for two years for this purpose.<sup>591</sup>

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588. Letter from S. Elisséeff to O. Janse, dated 26 March 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940.

589. In a memorandum for internal communication at the Harvard-Yenching Institute, Elisséeff writes: “During the excavation a scholar interested in racial anthropology could collect data concerning the local people”, which means a tentative expansion of Janse’s object-collecting ethnographic pursuit, to more race-oriented anthropological research (See document, n.d. “Item 13. Archaeological Excavations in Indochina.” Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940.)

590. Letter from Janse to Elisséeff, 1 April 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940.

591. Letter from Elisséeff to Janse, 21 April 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940. See also document “Memorandum in regard

The Harvard-Yenching Institute had been founded in 1928 with funding from the estate of the aluminium industry magnate Charles Martin Hall, as a legally and fiscally independent public charitable trust located at Harvard University and with an office at Yenching University in China. The purpose of the Institute was to promote Western-style humanities education in Asia (particularly China) and humanist knowledge about Asian cultures in the United States.<sup>592</sup> These official aims reflected an American self-image of superiority in terms of knowledge and education vis-à-vis Asia and China in particular. Hence modern scientific methods of the West would be the key to help the Chinese people to learn and appreciate their own cultural heritage, which would solve social problems caused by uncontrolled industrialization and national unrest.<sup>593</sup> As such, the establishment of the Harvard-Yenching Institute rested on a foundation of Wilsonian internationalism, and was preceded by a project called the “Big Scheme”, where pre-existing Asian or Oriental interests at Harvard were strategically refocused on China and the humanities, and hence reformatted to fit within the restrictions of Charles Martin Hall’s testament.<sup>594</sup>

The Fogg Museum (the oldest of the Harvard Art Museums) played an important role in defining the focus of the “Big Scheme”. In 1925, the Fogg Museum had sent Langdon Warner, an archaeologist and collector of Asian art who was then a staff member at Fogg, on a mission to China. The official purpose of Warner’s journey was to survey the possibilities for collaboration with Chinese university institutions along the lines of the “Big Scheme”. Another purpose was to revisit the Dunhuang Caves in Gansu province of Western China, an important stop at an oasis on the Silk Road with a series of caves containing important Buddhist art dating back to the fourth century AD. Already in 1913, Langdon Warner had

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to item 13 of agenda” in the same file. All correspondence between Janse and Elisséeff about the expedition and its funding has been saved and is kept in the Harvard-Yenching Institute archives. It is possible there to follow in detail how the expedition was set up over the course of eight months, from the first tentative proposal via all phases of negotiation, to realization.

592. Shuhua Fan moreover describes the foundation of the Harvard-Yenching Institute as “[reflecting] post-World War I American cultural internationalism, and [being] part of American private initiatives to export benevolence and to spread American dreams overseas” (2009:256).

593. Fan 2009:251.

594. Fan 2009:255–256.

been sent on a mission to Asia by the Smithsonian Institution, but the First World War had interrupted his plans for further work on behalf of the Smithsonian. When he was later recruited to the Fogg Museum, they saw an opportunity to benefit from the unfinished work he had done for the Smithsonian, and sent him off on another mission along the Silk Road to China, in 1922–1924. On this mission Warner and his team removed, by means of strong glue and cheesecloth, more than twenty Tang period (AD 618–907) murals from the cave walls at Dunhuang. The removed murals were shipped back to Harvard and the Fogg Museum along with other artworks and heritage objects acquired along the way. When he was later criticized for the strong-glue removal (and subsequent damage) of parts of the cave sites, Warner defended his actions and referred to them as selfless, heroic acts by which he purchased the murals from the local community to secure and protect them from destruction by Russian soldiers.<sup>595</sup> But it is difficult to ignore the fact that large art institutions in Europe were already pursuing a rather ruthless race to acquire original artefacts from Dunhuang, and the Fogg Museum was keen not to lag behind.<sup>596</sup> So Warner's 1925 mission had the double purpose of finding suitable collaboration partners for the new Institute for Asian Humanities at Harvard *and* enriching the Fogg Museum's collections of desirable pieces of art from China, particularly from Dunhuang. For this purpose, the Hall estate trustees allocated US \$ 30,000 for Warner's expedition.

When Olov Janse contacted Serge Elisséeff some thirteen years later, the Harvard-Yenching Institute had officially been running for ten years, and Elisséeff had been its Director (and Professor of Far Eastern Languages at Harvard University) for four years.<sup>597</sup> At the Institute, Janse's proposal attracted special interest in the Board of Trustees. Later on in their correspondence, Elisséeff writes that “[s]ome of the Trustees are intensely interested in the problems of the relations between China and India”,<sup>598</sup> and this personal interest appears to have been instructive for their decision to sponsor Janse's work.

In terms of the official goals of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, Janse's proposed work in Indochina did not comply in any way with the aim of

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595. Meyer & Blair Brysac 2015: chapter 4.

596. Fan 2009: 264–265.

597. Reischauer 1957.

598. Letter from S. Elisséeff to O. Janse, 18 November 1939. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940.

promoting Western-style humanities education in Asia, and only contributed to some extent to the furthering of humanist knowledge about Asian cultures in the United States. Although the funding allocated for Janse's expeditions also included time for writing and publication of the research results under the auspices of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, it appears that there never were any concrete plans to offer Janse a permanent position at Harvard in order to secure the intellectual investment they had made in him as an expert in Asian humanities. Rather, the trustees of the Harvard-Yenching Institute and Serge Elisséeff expressed a remarkably strong interest in the future ownership of the excavated collections. Much like the French museums and official institutions backing the first two expeditions, the Harvard-Yenching Institute was in fact – and in contrast to their official aims – more interested in the material property than the intellectual property that would come out of Janse's expedition. This interest may in part be due to Elisséeff's links to and experiences from French museums from his time in Paris,<sup>599</sup> but it was also likely due to the Institute's historical connection with Langdon Warner's expeditions, and the kind of "art collecting" they represented.

Olov Janse was well aware of the "booty" being one of his main assets to acquire funding, and shrewdly presented his planned expedition as an opportunity for the Institute to gain possession of original artefacts. Hence the artefacts, through his ability to ascribe ownership over them, became means to pursue his own professional goals. His own goals were in this case to complete the excavations in Indochina, write up and publish the results, and most importantly, to find himself a secure professional platform for the future.

So to acquire funding, Janse entered negotiations with George Coëdès at the EFEO about the ownership and future location of their expected finds. Coëdès, whose resources were strictly limited by the crisis in France, was equally willing to allow the tentatively excavated artefacts to become part of an economy that also involved the United States, and welcomed the idea of a US-funded expedition. Janse wrote to Elisséeff on 1 April that Coëdès has told him that "he would be very pleased to see the establishment of a French-American collaboration", and that Janse himself "is sure that the division of the products of the excavations will

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599. Serge Elisséeff worked as a research assistant at the Guimet Museum (the French national museum of Asian art in Paris) after he had arrived as a refugee from Russia in 1921 (Reischauer 1957:21).

present no difficulty”, because the EFEO “has no desire to store these things indefinitely”.<sup>600</sup>

But Elisséeff, who was not content with Janse’s reassurance, wrote to Cœdès to make sure that his institute would have formal ownership over the excavated collections. In his response, Cœdès writes that Janse is always welcome in Indochina and at the EFEO, of which Janse is a corresponding member, to continue a research collaboration with the EFEO with means provided by the Harvard-Yenching Institute. When it comes to sharing the finds (Fre: *partage des fouilles*) Cœdès writes:

[...] I am sort of the master of the situation, with a permanent delegation from the Governor General. Even though I must in certain sensitive cases ask for Government authorization to make a donation or transfer to a foreign museum, I have never met the least opposition.<sup>601</sup>

Cœdès suggests a *partage*<sup>602</sup> of the finds according to the model applied in Johan Gunnar Andersson’s excavations in Tonkin (which he also funded by his own means, and carried out in direct collaboration with the EFEO, Cœdès adds), where Andersson’s museum in Stockholm were given “the best duplicate collection”, while the EFEO reserved for their own museum any unique pieces that they missed in their collections. Cœdès explains further that “our museum [Musée Louis Finot, now the National History Museum in Hanoi] is the only museum in the world with a considerable quantity of objects from Dongson and the Han in

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600. Letter from O. Janse to S. Elisséeff, 1 April 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940.

601. Letter from G. Cœdès to S. Elisséeff, 20 July 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940. In the French original: “[...] je suis un peu le maître de la situation, ayant une délégation permanente du Gouverneur Général. Lorsque, dans certains cas particulièrement délicate, j’ai eu à solliciter l’autorisation du Gouvernement pour un don ou pour une cession à un Musée étranger, je n’ai jamais rencontré la moindre opposition.”

602. James Cuno has recently brought new light to the concept of *partage*, as a policy under which “foreign-led excavation teams provided the expertise and material means to lead excavations, and in return were allowed to share the finds with the local government’s archaeological museum(s).” Cuno proceeds to argue for a restoration of the *partage* concept as an alternative to nationalist claims, and writes: “That is how the collections of archaeological museums at the University of Chicago, the University of Pennsylvania, and Harvard and Yale Universities were built [...]” (Cuno 2011:14).

Indochina”, and that he would be happy to provide the Harvard-Yenching Institute with a collection of excavated materials from Janse’s expedition, as long as it did not cause any lacunae in their own artefact series.<sup>603</sup> This solution was not quite to Elisséeff’s satisfaction and was, as we will see a little further on, later revised to the benefit of the Harvard-Yenching Institute. But the first agreement was settled according to Cœdès’s wishes to reserve the unique pieces for the Louis Finot Museum in Hanoi.

In the same letter to Elisséeff, Cœdès also suggests that the Harvard-Yenching Institute should provide funding to pay for Paul Lévy (1909–1998), a young ethnologist and prehistorian at EFEO, to assist Janse with the stratigraphic and prehistoric work. Janse, Cœdès says, is by taste and to some extent by necessity, mostly interested in the objects he can retrieve from the excavations. Cœdès believes that is why he has so far focused on the brick tombs, which, if they were not disturbed, have delivered a large quantity of objects in a restricted space, which has been rather easy to establish:

If, as I hope and believe, Janse’s future campaigns will focus on the Dong Son cemetery, where he has so far only done quick sondage, he will face a more difficult situation. The burials are found directly in the ground, without trace of constructions, the objects are often much deteriorated, so when excavated they are more instructive by their disposition and their stratigraphy than their form or material. Therefore, I would be very pleased if it could be arranged so that Janse could be assisted by Paul Lévy.<sup>604</sup>

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603. Letter from G. Cœdès to S. Elisséeff, 20 July 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940. In the French original: “Notre musée étant le seul au monde à posséder en quantité considérable du dongsonien et du Han d’Indochine.”

604. Ibid. In the French original: “Le Dr. Jansé, par goût, et aussi un peu par nécessité, recherche surtout des objets: c’est pourquoi il s’est surtout attaqué jusqu’ici aux caveaux de briques qui, lorsqu’ils n’ont pas été violés, livrent une quantité d’objets dans un espace restreint dont le relevé coté est facile à établir. Si, comme je le suppose et l’espère, les futures campagnes de fouilles du Dr. Jansé l’amènent à s’occuper de la nécropole de Dông-so’n, où il n’a fait auparavant que de rapides sondages, il se trouvera en face de problèmes infiniment plus délicats. Les sépultures sont en plein sol, sans traces de constructions, et les objets, toujours plus instructifs par leur disposition, et leur stratigraphie que par leur forme ou leur matière. Sur ce point, j’aimerais qu’il fût convenu que le Dr. Jansé aura l’assistance de M. Paul Lévy.”

Cœdès's suggestion is both peculiar and interesting. This is the only time we have come across the idea that Janse was not using proper scientific methods in his excavations. On the contrary, he is, as we have mentioned, elsewhere referred to as the archaeologist who brought proper methods to the investigation of Dong Son.<sup>605</sup> And with his training and many years of field practice in the methodologically oriented Scandinavian archaeology, it should be safe to say that he did not lack skills or competence to perform the kind of excavation procedure (with stratigraphic method, on sites lacking clear built structures) that Cœdès refers to. True, we have seen how his excavations became more and more rushed, in order to provide his funding agencies in Paris with the revenue they expected in terms of valuable objects for their museum collections, and we have seen how he was present at the excavation site mostly in time for the valuable objects to be excavated and removed. But this appears to have been owing more to pressure than lack of competence in excavation methodology. So in this respect George Cœdès's suggestion is peculiar.

The following correspondence between Janse and Elisséeff may offer some further clues. In a letter to Elisséeff on 6 October, Janse writes that he has known Paul Lévy for a long time, and likes him a lot. They have already worked together before, and he would be very happy to have him as a collaborator. However, he adds with emphasis, only if it does not affect the budget of the mission.<sup>606</sup> Four days later, Elisséeff responds:

[...] I think that we can arrange for the collaboration of Paul Lévi [sic]. Since he is an official attaché of the school, I do not see any reason even to think of paying him anything, because, as I wrote in my letter to you, he will taking advantage of the excavation only for his personal research work. He is not going there at our request.<sup>607</sup>

After this, we see no more mention of Paul Lévy anywhere in the correspondence concerning Janse's third expedition, and he appears not to have been included on the excavation team. Hence we believe this can be read as an attempt on Cœdès's part to acquire funding for one of

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605. Groslier 1966:160.

606. Letter from O. Janse to S. Elisséeff, 6 October 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940.

607. Letter from S. Elisséeff to O. Janse, 10 October 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940.

his younger colleagues,<sup>608</sup> in times of great financial difficulty. When the funding-fishing attempt failed, Coédès and the EFEO were no longer so keen to let Paul Lévy join the excavation team.

The correspondence surrounding the second and third of Janse's expeditions is indeed characterized by frequent reference to funding, and a very tight attitude to the same by all parties involved. Overall there is very little serious discussion of scientific quality or intellectual benefits, unless it had the potential to contribute to more funding and larger collections. It was the opportunity to fund one's own projects, and the value of the excavated collections that was at the centre of attention.

The irony was that despite their explicit desire to acquire and own the "booty" after Janse's expeditions, the Harvard-Yenching Institute had no previous experience of dealing with archaeological collections, nor had they any premises suitable for housing collections of excavated materials. The archaeological expeditions pursued by Langdon Warner and his team had been directed at objects of fine art, which fitted the profile of the Fogg Museum. Most of Janse's excavated materials were of a quite different character, with masses of unspectacular potsherds and artefacts that were valued by their age, authenticity and places in typological series, rather than masterful artistry. The Fogg Museum would neither have the capacity nor interest to house such collections. Janse therefore initiated a dialogue with the Peabody Museum, which housed anthropological collections on the premises next to the Institute, to see if they would support excavations of the prehistoric sites Samrong Sen, Lung-prao, and Cau-Giat.<sup>609</sup> Lauriston Ward, Curator of Asiatic Archaeology, although interested and sympathetic towards the idea, explained that the museum was unable to back it:

The trouble is, of course, the money. I have talked this matter over with Mr. Scott and he informs me that at present the Museum has no money whatever for any new expedition – indeed it is having a hard time raising the funds to carry through the commitments already made.<sup>610</sup>

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608. Paul Lévy was in 1938 Curator for Prehistory and Ethnology at the Musée Louis Finot, became a permanent member of EFEO in 1939, and later succeeded George Coédès as Director of the EFEO 1947–1950. We will meet him again in the chapter "Darling, Dearest".

609. Letter from O. Janse to L. Ward, 20 June 1938. Peabody Museum.

610. Letter from L. Ward to O. Janse, 9 July 1938. Peabody Museum.

So for the time being, it was the Harvard-Yenching Institute alone that contributed the funding for the expedition, and the storage of the collections would be a problem to solve in the future.<sup>611</sup> Most of the plans for Janse's third expedition were made by mail sent between Elisséeff at Harvard, and Janse in Buffalo. Olov and Ronny visited Harvard in early May, when Olov gave two lectures at the Fogg Museum, hosted by the Harvard-Yenching Institute. On 2 May he talked about his "Latest Discoveries of Ancient Han and Sung Monuments", and on 3 May about "The Mysterious Culture of Dong-son". The lectures were followed by dinners at the Faculty club with members from Elisséeff's department. On the following day Olov had lunch with Elisséeff and the trustees of the Institute, to "talk about the possibilities of the archaeological excavations in Indo-China", while Ronny was invited to a separate lunch with Vera Elisséeff.<sup>612</sup>

Apart from the visit to Harvard, and later in May to Philadelphia to attend an American Museum Conference,<sup>613</sup> where they also on the way back visited Washington, DC, for the first time and thought it was "a wonderful city",<sup>614</sup> they spent most of the spring, summer, and autumn of 1938 in Buffalo, NY. Olov worked at the Buffalo Science Museum,<sup>615</sup> while they also kept an eye on the happenings in Stockholm. In a series of letters to Birger and Barbro Nerman,<sup>616</sup> and one to Ture and Nora Nerman,<sup>617</sup> Olov and Ronny goes from being agitated and antagonistic,

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611. After the completion of the third expedition, the excavated collections ended up in the stores of the Peabody Museum, where they remain today, as a loan from the Harvard-Yenching Institute, which still has formal ownership of it.

612. Letter from Serge Elisséeff to Olov Janse, 25 April 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938-1940.

613. Mentioned in letter from Olov Janse to Birger Nerman, 16 May 1938. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935-1941.

614. Letter from O. Janse to B. Nerman, 3 June 1938. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935-1941.

615. Notice in *Buffalo Evening News*, 30 March 1938: "Museum adds aid"; Article in *Buffalo Courier Express*, 4 November 1938: "Fabled Lands of Cambodia Described by Museum Aide; Dr. Olav Janse gives thrilling talk on Indo-China at first travel lecture."

616. Letters from O. Janse to B. Nerman, 21 March, 31 March, 16 May, 3 June, 21 June, 18 October and 19 November 1938. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935-1941; Letter from Ronny Janse to Barbro Nerman, 23 March 1938. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935-1941.

617. From O. Janse to T. Nerman, n.d. Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek. Ture Nerman 3.1.7.

to despairing and resigned. In a letter from 21 March, Olov writes to Birger Nerman arguing that *Vitterhetsakademien* had acted in a way that is incompatible with the judiciary principles of a democratic society, for example in the external review process (which ranked Karlgren number one and did not even include Janse on the list), and the silencing of all critique and opposition by demonstratively invoking H.R.H. (i.e. the Crown Prince). In a letter to Barbro Nerman a couple of days later, Ronny writes that they must absolutely put up a fight against the beasts who sit in nice secure positions and make life impossible for others, and that it is a shame that the “most European civilized” are pushed back. Ronny continues with a sense of bitter wit, in a comment on Karlgren’s claim that there was no room in the museum’s budget to offer Janse a position:

They say that there are no funds to maintain the scientific work, but there is clearly enough for people like An[dersson], who spent an enormous sum of Swedish State money on journeys in China and found nothing, except a nice girl, who will probably be brought to Sweden since she travels with him everywhere, – but she is not yet an antiquity.<sup>618</sup>

The nice girl referred to is probably Miss Dorf, Johan Gunnar Andersson’s young secretary and companion on his journey to Indochina. Regardless of what the relation between Dorf and Andersson was in reality, it is interesting to see how Olov and Ronny have so quickly turned so drastically in their views on Johan Gunnar Andersson (who less than two years earlier was officially referred to as Janse’s teacher and friend) and the sly games for position and prestige involving the Crown Prince (which they recently appeared more than happy to be involved in) from the days in 1936 when they considered themselves to be part of the inner circle around Andersson, to now when they had been omitted from that privileged circle.

Only a week later, at the end of March, the tone has changed, from antagonistic to resigned. Here in a letter from Olov to Birger Nerman:

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618. Letter from R. Janse to B. Nerman, 23 March 1938. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941. In the Swedish original: “De säger, att de har inte pengar att uppehålla vetenskapsarbetet, men det finns tillräckligt nog för sådana som An., som utkastade en enorm summa av svenska statens pengar på resor i Kina och ingenting hittade, utom en trevlig flicka, som skall förmodligen tas över till Sverige, då hon reser med honom överallt, – men hon är inte än en antikvit.”

It was a pity that the article on M.F.E.A. was distorted by Soc[ial] D[emokraten]. The main parts had been removed. It is perhaps best not to let me appear in the press for the time being. I think we have to regard the game as lost. There is no point bothering Lindhagen and best not to involve H.R.H. Would you please ask Ture and Lunkan to make sure that my letters and missives do not end up in other hands, since they could easily be abused.

In my last letter to Ture I forgot to answer the question regarding the possible purchase of land on Blidö. As long as I have no position in Sweden, it would be precarious to acquire land there.<sup>619</sup>

From here on, they appear to have accepted the situation, and were slowly letting go of the idea of returning to Sweden.<sup>620</sup> Janse wrote in June to Birger Nerman about an upcoming visit to Stockholm by Chauncey Hamlin, the Director of the Buffalo Science Museum and his wife, asking Nerman to make a programme for them with visits to the most important historical museums and archives.<sup>621</sup> Meanwhile he wrote in positive terms about his whereabouts in the United States. On 14 July they had been invited to a large function at the French counsellor's residence, and Janse was "compelled" to give the oration.<sup>622</sup> When Birger Nerman (who was appointed Director of the History Museum in Stockholm in October 1938, after a feud over a professorship at Lund University) and his other Swedish friends tried to find possible positions for Janse as curator, or temporary lecturer in Stockholm, his responses were lukewarm with a

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619. Letter from O. Janse to B. Nerman, 31 March 1938. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941. In the Swedish original: "Det var synd att artikeln om Ö.S. blev förvanskad av Soc. D. Det viktigaste partierna hade strukits. Det är kanske bäst att tills vidare icke låta mig synas i pressen. Jag tror vi få anse spelet förlorat. Det är ingen idé att besvara Lindhagen och lämpligast att ej blanda in H.K.H. Vill Du vara vänlig bedja Ture och Lunkan blott se till att mina brev och skrivelser ej kommer i andra händer då de lätt skulle kunna missbrukas. // Glömde att i mitt senaste brev till Ture besvara frågan angående ev. jordköp på Blidö. Så länge jag ej har någon befattning i Sverige är det vanskligt att förvärva jord där."

620. But see a letter to Birger Nerman, 5 March 1939, which indicates some lingering hope. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941.

621. Letter from O. Janse to B. Nerman, 3 June 1938. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941.

622. Letter from O. Janse to B. Nerman, 21 July 1938. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941.

touch of bitterness. There was no point in returning to Sweden, he wrote in one letter, for someone who to such a degree was “*persona ingratis-sima*” there. Instead he suggested that Nerman should come to the United States to see the “modern American museums” and lecture about Nordic archaeology: “Lecturers are well paid here, 75 to 100 dollars for a lecture is not too bad.”<sup>623</sup>

While warming more and more to the idea of a new life in the United States, they continued their work in Buffalo and planned for the upcoming expedition. The departure was postponed from mid October to late November in order to secure enough funding,<sup>624</sup> and Serge and Vera Elisséeff travelled to Buffalo to discuss the final details of the plans and their mutual agreement. On 24 October Janse sent Elisséeff a letter in English (he had previously written in French, while Elisséeff wrote in English) with the outlines of an official agreement. Added in pencil in the upper right-hand corner of the letter is “Contract with Dr Janse”:

Dear Professor Elisséeff,

The archaeological expedition which will be conducted by me in Indo-China under the auspices of the Harvard-Yenching Institute and the Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient shall be called the Harvard-Yenching Institute Indo-Chinese Archaeological Expedition.

A bank account to finance the expedition shall be opened in the Banque de l’Indo-Chine in Hanoi in the name of the Harvard-Yenching Institute Indo-Chinese Archaeological Expedition and all checks drawn against it will be signed by me.

The place or places where excavation shall be made will be fixed by me, as the Director of the Expedition, after consultation with the Director of the École Française d’Extrême-Orient. All the objects which are found will belong to the Harvard-Yenching Institute, with the exception of the rare pieces of which there is no specimen in the Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient, according to the letter of July 20, 1938 of Professor George Cœdès.

It is understood that all the scientific data and materials and

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623. Letter from O. Janse to B. Nerman, 18 October 1938. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941.

624. Letter from O. Janse to S. Elisséeff, 10 October 1938. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940.

informations will be the property of the Harvard-Yenching Institute for publication purposes and will be prepared by me.

Sincerely yours,  
Olov Janse

On 19 November, they wrote Elisséeff from Buffalo to say “god-by” [sic]. The next day they left Buffalo for San Francisco, and on 24 November 1938 they embarked on the MS *Asama Maru* bound for Kobe.