

## PRELUDE

The preparations for the first expedition took several years.<sup>313</sup> In his memoirs Janse describes how his interest in Indochina was first sparked in Paris, when Henri Hubert was still alive and Johan Gunnar Andersson came to visit the Musée des antiquités nationales in Saint Germain.<sup>314</sup> Andersson had taken an interest in some bronzes from Indochina in the comparative collections and contracted Janse to write a paper comparing them with some specimens in his Stockholm collection.<sup>315</sup> A few years later, when Henri Hubert was dead and Janse had fallen out with Salomon Reinach over the Glozel affair, he renewed his interest in Asia and approached René Grousset, director of the Cernuschi Museum. In his memoirs Janse says that he was driven by a life-long fascination with China when he decided to pursue his plans for an archaeological expedition to Indochina. China would normally have “offered the richest harvests and should have best furthered the scientific purpose of an expedition” and hence it was, he says, the political circumstances of the 1930s, when foreigners were no longer welcome to pursue archaeological missions in China, that made him focus on Indochina – “little China” – instead.<sup>316</sup> But is this the full story? On closer inspection there seem to have been at least three other

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313. Janse 1959; *Östergötlands Dagblad*, 1 September 1934: “Prof. Olov Janse till Indo-Kina.”

314. Janse 1959:18.

315. Janse 1931. He would later regard these artefacts as representing the Dong Son culture, e.g. Janse 1959:18.

316. Janse 1959:18–20.

factors involved in his move towards Indochina, which are not mentioned in any official accounts.

One is Janse's long association with France, his familiarity with French official institutions and his fluency in the French language. At the immensely successful *Exposition Coloniale* in Vincennes 1931, Indochina was described as the Pearl of the French Colonial Empire (a paraphrase of India as the Jewel of the Crown in the British Empire), and a full-scale replica of Angkor Wat was the star turn of the exhibition. The exhibition was staged at a time of colonial anxiety, with the explicit aim of turning the public opinion in favour of the French colonial project. It was a tremendous success, and was followed by a wave of procolonial sentiment in metropolitan France.<sup>317</sup> Olov and Ronny Janse visited the *Exposition Coloniale*,<sup>318</sup> and they began to plan for their expeditions around this time, characterized by procolonial fervour. Moreover, working in Indochina was literally the same as working in France when it came to official language and bureaucratic structure. It was in every sense more practically accessible to him than China, where he lacked all such skills.

A second important factor is Ronny. When Olov was first contracted by Johan Gunnar Andersson to do the comparative study of bronze artefacts, Ronny had not yet entered his life. A few years and a wedding later, her presence as a constant assistant – and his obligation to support her – meant that he could, and needed to, pursue larger and more independent professional projects.

A third factor, related to the second, is the prospect of Johan Gunnar Andersson's retirement. With a less favourable situation at the Musée des antiquités nationales after Hubert's death,<sup>319</sup> he and Ronny were looking for opportunities to settle in Sweden. With the prospect of achieving valuable knowledge and experiences from "little China", Andersson's upcoming retirement seemed like an effective opportunity to seize a secure position in Stockholm. All these circumstances (along with Janse's childhood fascination with China and the impossible situation with Reinach, which is also mentioned in his memoirs as a crucial factor) must have contributed to the decision to approach René Grousset and start planning for an expedition to Indochina.

René Grousset had recently been appointed director of the Cernuschi

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317. Norindr 1996; Morton 2000; Källén 2015: chapter 5.

318. E.g. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

319. Janse 1959:21-30.

Museum, which is the Paris city museum of Asian art, located at Parc Monceau. Founded on the private collections of Italian banker Henri Cernuschi, the museum housed collections of fine art rather than archaeological material. But Grousset, himself an armchair historian, came in with strong support for Janse's expedition plans. Janse was elected to the museum's advisory board<sup>320</sup> where he argued, along with Grousset, for the need to include excavated archaeological artefacts in the collections. Grousset suggested that the Cernuschi Museum would be formally responsible for Janse's expedition and offered a first contribution of funding. Janse, in turn, promised to return to Paris with a unique set of original artefacts to enrich the museum's collections.<sup>321</sup>

As a second step, Grousset informed George Cœdès, Director of the French research institute École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) in Hanoi, about their plans. The archaeology at EFEO had so far focused either on the art and epigraphy of monumental architecture, or on scientific investigations of prehistoric sites akin to geology and craniology.<sup>322</sup> Cœdès saw an opportunity to have some known archaeological sites systematically investigated by an archaeologist with methodological training from Scandinavia, and hence fully endorsed Janse's plans.<sup>323</sup> The influential art collector and patron David David-Weill, who was at the

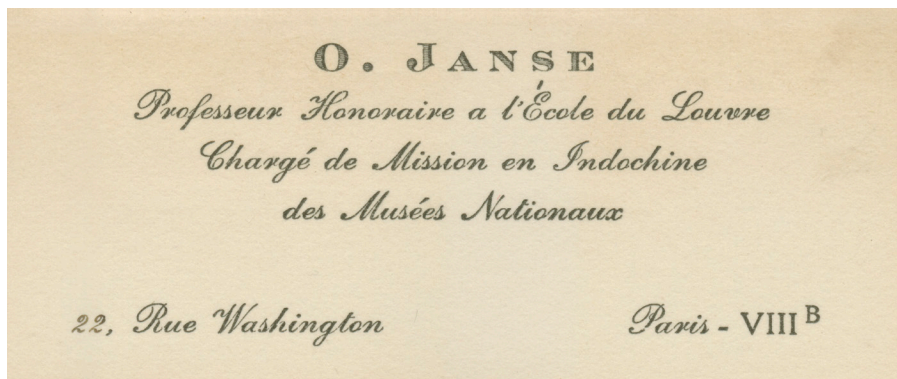


Fig. 29.  
Olov Janse's  
business  
card.

320. The decision to elect Janse to the Scientific Committee of the Cernuschi Museum was made on 30 April 1933. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

321. Janse 1959:21-22. For a more detailed analysis of the relations between Janse and his patrons, see "Conclusion".

322. Clémentin-Ojha & Manguin 2001; Källén 2015.

323. Janse 1959:23. See also Dias 1991 for a more general discussion of French and Scandinavian archaeology in the early twentieth century.

time President of the Council of the National Museums in Paris, also contributed with funding and support for the project. Georges-Henri Rivière at MET, the ethnographic museum at Trocadéro, offered support and got a promise of ethnographic collections in return. Further scholarly support was secured from renowned scholars like Paul Pelliot, Georges Salles, and Joseph Hackin, and smaller contributions of funding came from the wealthy art collectors Gabriel Cognacq and Jacques Orcel in Paris, and the Musée du Cinquantenaire in Brussels, Belgium. Janse also reached an agreement with Gerhard Lindblom, Director of the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm (Swe: *Statens etnografiska museum*). While in Indochina, he would acquire ethnographic objects and produce ethnographic documentation that he sent back to Lindblom and the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm.<sup>324</sup> The formal sponsors of the expedition were the French Department of National Education, the Museums of Paris, the French Government of Indochina, and the École française d'Extrême-Orient.<sup>325</sup>

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324. Letters from O. Janse to G. Lindblom (1934–1952, 33 in all) are kept in the archive of the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm (*Statens museer för världskultur*). Inkl skrivelser. Huvudserie 1934 (E1:7); 1935 (E1:8); 1936 (E1:9); 1937 (E1:10); 1938 (E1:11); 1945 (E1:19); 1946 (E1:20); 1947 (E1:21); 1948 (E1:22); 1952 (E1:27).

325. The “Ordre de Mission” was signed by Henri Verne, director of the French National Museums, 24 September 1934. NAA: Janse 2001-29; Janse 1947: vi-x; 1959:23, 31–32.