The 'Frame' at Adab

American Archaeological Misbehaviour in Late Ottoman Iraq (1899–1905)

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Abstract: This article uses archival sources from the US State Department to examine conflicts that arose between American archaeologists and the Ottoman state during the years 1899 to 1905 in Ottoman Iraq (Mesopotamia). While contextualising many of the practices of Western archaeologists, this article examines two conflicts that emerged between the American digs at Niffur and Adab and the Ottoman Imperial Museum. The article both augments and disputes aspects of Craig Crossen's article 'The Sting at Adab', published in the Spring 2013 issue of *Anthropology of the Middle East*. This article's main contribution is to argue that conflicts that emerged surrounding antiquities demonstrate the growing strength/maturity of the Ottoman state apparatus and the implementation and continuation of nineteenth-century governmental reforms known as the Tanzimat.

Keywords: Adab, archaeology, Edgar James Banks, Osman Hamdi Bey, Tanzimat, US State Department, University of Chicago

On 27 September 1904, Haidar Bey, a representative of the Ottoman Imperial Museum, handed a cease and desist order to the University of Chicago's archaeological expedition at the ancient Mesopotamian city of Adab (Bismaya in modern Iraq). This official remonstrance represented the culmination of an investigation into a robbery at the dig site. It was the second time in five years that the Ottoman state had officially interfered with the internal affairs of American archaeological work in Ottoman Iraq. This article examines the two sites of conflict that occurred between Ottoman administrators and American archaeological agents. The first instance occurred in 1899 at the dig site of Niffur, which was the first American dig in Ottoman Iraq. American officials at Niffur, a venture of the University of Pennsylvania, had a conflict with the vali

of Baghdad. This conflict was settled only when the University of Pennsylvania conceded to most of the demands placed upon them. Likewise for the dig at Adab, American archaeologists were forced to accede to Ottoman demands in order to keep their permits and conduct their work. This second event involved a staged robbery, a complicated conspiracy to obfuscate that robbery and an attempt to smuggle objects of cultural value out of the Ottoman Empire.

As noted above, between 1899 and 1905, both American archaeological sites in Ottoman Iraq were scrutinised and regulated by the Ottoman government. The conflict between Ottoman regulators and American archaeologists represents a conflict between the Tanzimat-era reforms that fundamentally reordered the Ottoman state and American cultural agents that sought to smuggle objects of cultural heritage out of the country. These incidents supply historical evidence that the Tanzimat reforms regarding antiquities were successfully implemented and utilised during the early twentieth century, particularly in Ottoman Iraq and particularly when it came to American endeavours. Furthermore, the ability of the Ottoman state to enforce its will over American archaeologists suggests that the Ottoman state prioritised control over its cultural heritage as represented in antiquities. The events described in this article also reflect an Ottoman state that was strong enough vis-à-vis the US, and that had significant leverage over American cultural agents, i.e. archaeologists. Ottoman officials prioritised curtailing the activities of cultural imperialism in these incidents. Furthermore, the United States had no choice but to accede to Ottoman demands, which demonstrates the boundaries and limits of American imperial reach in the region at the time.

Tanzimat

During the nineteenth century, the Ottoman state went through a fundamental top to bottom period of reordering. Starting with the Gülhane Decree in 1839, the Tanzimat period (1839–1876) shifted Ottoman notions of citizenship and equality before the law, altering the state's relationship to its subjects. The decrees issued by the Ottoman state also reordered the army, penal system, maritime codes, standardised weights and measures, created legal categories and records of land ownership, and created new governmental structures and institutions. Part of this process, and one that continued after the promulgation of the Ottoman Constitution (1876) that marks the formal end of the Tanzimat period, was the reimagining of what antiquities were and how they could be of use to the state. This process of realising the importance of curating materials for the national narrative occurred globally during this period.

In the Spring 2013 issue of *Anthropology of the Middle East*, Craig Crossen explored events surrounding the University of Chicago's archaeological expedition at the ancient city of Adab, in Bismaya, Ottoman Iraq, from 1903 to 1905. Crossen's piece provides an overview of the expedition and discusses

its origins, the narrative thread of the expedition and the difficulties that the dig encountered. The main contribution of the article, 'The Sting at Adab', is to discuss and analyse the motivations of Edgar James Banks, field director of the University of Chicago's expedition. Although Crossen correctly identifies many of Banks's archaeological practices as unlawful, Banks was neither the 'grifter' nor 'huckster' alleged in the article (Crossen 2013). The activities that Crossen accuses Banks of – antiquities smuggling – were standard practices for Western archaeologists at the time. Western archaeologists and diplomats frequently ignored Ottoman laws that prohibited the export of antiquities. However, as the Ottoman state found it increasingly important to maintain control over these antiquities, it therefore became more vigilant both at oversight over Western digs and at stopping antiquities smuggling. As laws regarding antiquities began in the Tanzimat period and continued to be promulgated after the official end of the period, I argue that these antiquities laws and their enforcement should be seen as both the legacy of, and a continuation of, the Tanzimat reforms.

The University of Pennsylvania's dig at Niffur and the University of Chicago's expedition to Adab encountered Ottoman governmental regulation within the context and continuing legacy of the Tanzimat's structural reforms, particularly the ones that fundamentally changed the nature of Ottoman governance and the central state's relationship to its resources. These reforms altered the central state's relationship to the periphery of the empire, the central state's relationship to antiquities as well as Istanbul's relationship to the collective historical narrative of the empire. Cognizant of many of the institutional changes taking place in the nation-states of Europe in the nineteenth century, the Ottoman state realised the importance of bringing the peripheral areas, like Ottoman Iraq, closer to the core. Tanzimat reforms regulated legal codes and local governance, and prioritised technological advances such as the telegraph, thus making this reorganisation possible. Furthermore, there was a growing awareness in Istanbul of how acquiring, using, controlling and curating antiquities would allow the state to generate and control its own historical narrative. Thus, antiquities became literal and valuable building blocks for creating and manipulating that historical narrative. The Ottoman state therefore moved to establish firm oversight over dig sites and to confront the constant attempts by Westerners, in this case Americans, to either smuggle out antiquities or to transgress the limits of their archaeological permits. This oversight, done by both Ottoman governors, or *valis*, and by the officials of the Ottoman Imperial Museum, sought to gain control over the Ottoman historical narrative and to thwart the general ambitions of Western cultural imperialists/archaeologists.

The Ottoman state's regulation of archaeological resources began officially with the 1874 designation of antiquities as being under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and with provisions for allotting the finds of the excavations. At least one-third of antiquities from a site were to be earmarked for the Ottoman state. The following year a school was created to train archaeologists,

and further legislative changes gave the Ottoman state full control over any and all antiquities excavated (Bernhardsson 2008). Wendy Shaw details the rise of the Ottoman Imperial Museum – which was built adjoining the Topkapi palace grounds – and notes that by 1884, all antiquities were considered the property of the Ottoman state (Shaw 2003). Ahmet Ersoy has argued that Tanzimat-era reforms regarding antiquities led to the rise of art history as a discipline of study within the Ottoman Empire and that the creation of an Ottoman artistic and architectural heritage was necessary for the construction of a national Ottoman identity (Ersöy 2010). This national identity was not particularly successful at creating the community it was supposed to, and the failure to create a coherent Ottoman identity is documented particularly within literature analysing the Armenian genocide; Taner Akçam and Vahakn Dadrian list it as a major precondition of that event (Akçam 2004; Dadrian 1995). Likewise, the difficulty associated with creating cohesive national identities after the fall of the Ottoman state has also been much documented, particularly by scholars of Lebanese, Jordanian and Iraqi history. In the twentieth century, nation-states employed archaeology to create and foster national identities by presenting a curated version of their own history and to specifically exclude narratives that conflicted with the official history (Baram and Yorke 2004).

According to Shaw, the Ottoman Imperial Museum disregarded the Western art history narratives of progress and universalism, instead using their antiquities, particularly those collected by museum director Osman Hamdi Bey, to emphasise how the Ottoman Empire was part of the Western family of powerful, modern nations (Shaw 2003). Regardless of how the Ottoman state used the antiquities, exerting control over them was also part of the ongoing, ceaseless struggle with Western imperialists to control the resources that existed within the boundaries of the empire. The question at the core of the incidents at Niffur and Adab was a resource allocation issue – which nation got to use those archaeological resources and antiquities to construct their narrative? As Benjamin Porter notes, Western archaeology was an imperial pursuit, therefore, it should be seen as an extension of colonialism. The legacy of these early archaeology digs has informed the modern states of the Middle East's desire and ability to 'construct narratives that legitimate postcolonial circumstances' (Porter 2010: 51). Control over antiquities was/is control over history, and history is a necessary ingredient for nationalism and the nation-building process (Bernhardsson 2008).

The export of antiquities, while officially illegal within the Ottoman Empire, continued as common practice or attempted practice for Westerners. Antiquities were occasionally listed as an official export in American consular dispatches, such as the US\$660 worth that US Vice-Consul Rudolf Hürner listed as exports in the fiscal quarter ending in September of 1904.¹ Yale University's collection of Near Eastern seals and bricks received a significant contribution of artefacts that were bought and removed from the Ottoman Empire by James B. Nies, an Episcopal minister from New York City. Nies

visited the US vice-consul, Rudolf Hürner, in Baghdad after writing to him in November of 1904. Already in Basra, Nies wrote to inquire where he and his wife, the daughter of the president of the New York Chamber of Commerce, could find accommodations in Baghdad. Nies further requested Hürner's help in acquiring an 'English speaking servant or dragoman who knows the country and people, as well as a cook'.² It was Nies's intention to take his wife to meet Edgar James Banks and see both his dig site at Adab/Bismaya and the other American-led excavations at Niffur. Nies took a steamship up the Tigris and arrived in Baghdad safely, where he acquired 82 of the 180 autographed Babylonian tablets in his 1904 collection (Nies 1920). In fact, Mesopotamian antiquities were common enough in the US that a high school in Sparta, Wisconsin, contacted Hürner asking for a replacement ancient seal; theirs had apparently been damaged in a fire. Additionally, the Rose Brick Company of New Jersey possessed their own Mesopotamian bricks and contacted Hürner to acquire more. Hürner replied eagerly that 'I have many bricks now in my office taken out of the hill you indicated'.³ Banks, by smuggling or attempting to smuggle antiquities out of the Ottoman Empire, was merely trying to do what Western travelers and merchants did and had done since the first documented Mesopotamian antiquities were brought to Europe by Italian traveler Pietro della Valle in 1615 (Fagan 2011).

Trouble at Niffur

Before the University of Chicago's expedition to Adab, discussed in Crossen's article, there was only one other US-led dig in Mesopotamia. That dig's administrators encountered conflict with the Ottoman state and had to cooperate in order to survive. The University of Pennsylvania dig at Niffur began in 1889. In 1899, Namik Pasha, the vali of Baghdad, complained about the buildings that had been erected on the site. Namik Pasha insisted that the structures in question were not covered or permitted by the excavation agreement between the university and the Ottoman government. The fear that Western archaeologists were part of the vanguard of imperial territorial annexation was prevalent within the Ottoman government (Shaw 2011). Namik Pasha likely saw the building being erected as a possible staging ground for a future exhibit, no doubt one that was smuggled out of the Ottoman Empire to a US museum.

This specific conflict proved to be straightforward, and a compromise was preferable for both sides. The vali was willing to allow the buildings to remain and the dig to continue as long as J.H. Haynes, the director of the dig, signed a document stating 'that these buildings are only for his staying there, and in the end of the excavations, he must submit to deliver all that in its real state, to the Government, and in the future he will have in every way no right to pretend that these buildings would be his own'.⁴ This preoccupation with the physical plan may also indicate that the Ottoman officials saw the archaeologists, as

Shaw suggested, as just the vanguard in the invasion of further Americans. American missionaries had indeed already arrived in both Basra and Mosul before 1899, so these fears would not be unfounded. It should be noted that Haynes was a professor at Roberts College in Istanbul, a school founded and run by American missionaries. Haynes was originally the business manager of the dig when it began in 1888 under the direction of the Reverend Dr Peet of New York. Haynes was eventually appointed director of the project during its third campaign at the site (Peet 1897). The expedition in question was the fourth campaign of the dig and was also led by Haynes, and procured 'many thousands of tablets and antiquities of other kinds' (Williams 1909: 611).

In this case, the Ottoman state, through the vali, and the University of Pennsylvania through Haynes, brought a quick resolution to the issue. This suggests that significant incentives existed for Americans to acquiesce to Ottoman demands and cooperate with the Ottoman state. It also suggests that Ottoman oversight over antiquities had matured to an extent that the state was aware of the minutiae of the individual digs and willing and able to exert control over that minutiae. While this represents an increasing focus on antiquities, it also reflects the Ottoman concern with its territory and its watchful guardianship over the value and usage of its land. The vali established his ability to act by getting Haynes to sign a document officially declaring that he would not only leave the buildings, but actually turn them over to the Ottoman government. The Ottomans would therefore realise an actual infrastructural gain, albeit small and symbolic, while preventing the Americans from hiding and then smuggling antiquities. The Sublime Porte's officials were able to pressure the American archaeologists into an agreement that was to their benefit, largely due to their knowledge about the dig site and their supervision over it. The Ottoman regional government, as represented by the vali, thus demonstrated a significant amount of oversight over antiquities and Western archaeological digs.

The Heist at Adab

Before his tenure as the director of the Adab site, Edgar James Banks tried to engage the official apparatus of the US Foreign Service, and he was nominally briefly a diplomat. Banks originally applied on 18 January 1897 to be US consul in Harput in Eastern Anatolia (Wilson 2013). This appointment did not come to fruition, and Banks applied to be consul at Baghdad. While Crossen writes that Banks was vice-consul in Baghdad from 1898 to 1900, he, in fact, was not. Rudolf Hürner was vice-consul from 1897 to 1906 – Banks was appointed a full consul in March 1898, making him Hürner's supervisor. Banks, however, did not arrive in the Ottoman Empire until July or August 1898, and he left on a steamboat by late September, resigning his commission in the diplomatic corps when it became clear that the Ottoman State meant to enforce regulations banning foreign diplomats from engaging in archaeology

(Banks 1912). Banks was, in reality, in possession of the office of consul for a very short time period, possibly just a few days, before handing control of US interests in Baghdad back to Hürner.⁵ Waiting until late September to leave allowed Banks to sail directly to the US on a boat carrying the first fruits of that year's date harvest.

If anyone involved in the Adab smuggling attempt was, as Crossen suggests, a nefarious character, it would have been US Vice-Consul Rudolf Hürner. Arriving in Baghdad from Switzerland in 1876, Hürner established himself in the local business community. When the chance arose to assume the office of US vice-consul – a relatively new office opened in 1894 – Hürner used it to enrich himself by promoting his own import-export business, by locating and selling antiquities, through moneylending, and by overcharging consular fees and pocketing the extra. Banks and Hürner started their relationship unpleasantly and seemingly with mutual loathing. Hürner complained that Banks's appointment to a position above him was disrespectful to his own position.⁶ Likewise, while acknowledging his indebtedness concerning a loan Hürner floated him in 1898, Banks complained that Hürner tried to use that debt to 'bring me under obligations to him that he might injure my reputation later, as he did my predecessor's'.⁷ Despite their initial disdain for each other, within a few years Banks and Hürner would be working together to defraud the Ottoman Empire.

Thus began the partnership that launched the most thrilling case of archaeological misbehaviour in the period. The way that Banks initially reported the story was that he, in the summer of 1904, suspended the dig activities due to the harsh climate and retired to Baghdad to avoid the severe summer heat. There Banks lived in a house that he rented from Hürner (Banks 1912). When Banks returned in September, he was informed by the sheikh he had paid to guard the site that the dig had been robbed. Hamesh, a former watchman at the site, was accused of being in possession of antiquities and selling them, particularly a statue that Banks had uncovered. The statue in question was the most significant find of the dig. Hamesh, the alleged thief, was imprisoned in a well and was ready to be turned over to the authorities. Banks stated that in total, 209 Turkish lira (about US\$919 in 1904, which would have a current value of approximately US\$25,000) worth of both his own and the site's property had been damaged or stolen. He accused Haidar Bey, the Ottoman official appointed to oversee the dig, of being complicit in the robbery, claiming that Haidar Bey had some unstated previous knowledge of the affair.⁸ Although Banks could and did produce two supposed witnesses, Hussein and Ahmed, who swore Hamesh was guilty, Haidar Bey decided not to prosecute Hamesh. Hamesh presumably soon escaped from his detainment in the well.⁹

Osman Hamdi Bey, the director of the Imperial Ottoman Museum, detected fraud almost immediately after Hürner and Banks declared that the statue, the most significant item excavated by the expedition at Adab, was stolen.¹⁰ Haidar Bey, who answered directly to Hamdi Bey, returned with several officials and

ordered Banks to close the excavations and leave Adab/Bismaya. Later, when Banks wrote and published an account of the excavation, he actually foreshadowed stealing the statue, indicating that he planned to smuggle it out of the Ottoman Empire from the moment it was discovered. First, Banks wrote that he hid the initial discovery of the statue from the workers that uncovered it, telling them it was 'merely a stone'. The day of the initial discovery, Banks waited until Haidar Bey was called from the camp with his assistant before returning with three workmen: the original discoverer of the statue, Abbas, an unnamed foreman of his crew, and Banks's servant (and future witness/robber), Ahmed. Under cover of night this team excavated the headless statue and secreted it to Banks's room. While Banks intended to keep the statue a secret from the very moment of its discovery, the missing head to the statue was discovered a month later. The general rejoicing around the camp meant that the statue became public knowledge and, as such, would be harder to smuggle out of the country (Banks 1912). What might have been a simple, quiet case of smuggling thus evolved into an elaborately staged robbery.

After being told to leave Bismaya, Banks traveled to Kut, where, on 1 October 1904, the local commissioner of police, Sadek Effendi, interviewed him. Banks wrote that Sadek arrived intoxicated and demanded to, on the orders of the vali, search Banks's luggage. Banks, likely to cover up the embarrassment of being caught, alleged that the official was drunk and that during his search Sadek broke 'various glass objects' and was 'injuring many things'. The police officer confiscated some 'shells and other curios' and some 'worthless tablets'. Banks said that these items were the dig site's engineer's property, referring to Jason Paige.¹¹ Banks listed the objects taken from Mr. Paige's baggage as 'About 50 sea shells/A Syringe/A modern Arab Skull/4 Modern engraved vases/The few tablets above mentioned [the 'worthless ones']/Other modern curios/Service cartridges'. Banks continued to list items taken out of baggage, this time belonging to his wife: 'A tin of corral beads/2 broaches from Europe/A wedgewood sugar bowl and cream pitcher'. Banks demanded that Sadek Effendi be removed from his post and that the seized objects (antiquities!) be returned. Banks angrily alleged that the telegraph operator in Kut colluded with Sadek Effendi by refusing to send a telegram with the excuse that 'he was [busy] reading a Koran'.¹²

Despite Banks's presentation of his set of facts, Osman Hamdi Bey and Haidar Bey ascertained that Banks and Hürner were the masterminds of the dig site robbery. Banks and Hürner had apparently sent two of their servants, Ahmed and Hussein, to stage a fake robbery. As the subterfuge unraveled, Hürner defended his actions, writing that they stole and hid the statue to keep it from being destroyed in unrest that he alleged was occurring in the area.¹³ Allegations of unrest or brigandage were not uncommon by Westerners in the period and did not necessarily reflect reality. Rather, these allegations reflect the paternalistic attitude these Westerners held towards the Ottoman Empire and particularly to its peripheral areas. According to Hürner, the objects

confiscated by the Ottoman police at Kut, particularly the antiquities, were, in fact, the property of Banks and not those of Paige.¹⁴ Despite Banks's statement that the other antiquities confiscated were worthless tablets, it was, of course, still illegal for him to be transporting them away from the dig site with the intent of removing them from the country. Complicating things further, Banks, at the urging of Hürner, made an official complaint about Haidar Bey attacking his character. This involved denunciations and allegations about Haidar Bey's level of sobriety (to Banks, the whole world seemed drunk), his moral fortitude and supposed ties to revolutionary groups.¹⁵

Despite his recalcitrance, Banks initially received instructions from his directors at the University of Chicago to return to Bismaya and continue the excavation.¹⁶ However, the board of directors back at the University of Chicago rapidly lost faith in Banks, and Ottoman officials worked diplomatically to prevent him from returning to the excavations. Under Article 20 of the Ottoman Regulations on Archaeological Excavation, the Sublime Porte had authority to shut down the dig at any time. The regulation stated that it 'empowers the Ministry of Public Instruction to suspend temporarily any excavation work should any objections be found'.¹⁷ Additionally, Ottoman officials argued that since Banks's servant, Ahmed, had committed the robbery, they wanted to arrest Ahmed and put him in jail.¹⁸ Eventually, the Imperial Ottoman Museum insisted that Banks be removed or the excavation at Adab/Bismaya shut down. Robert Harper, an Assyriologist with the dig and the brother of Professor William Rainey Harper, chairman of the Semitic Languages Department at the University of Chicago, was appointed to lead the dig. Harper had previously been part of the University of Pennsylvania dig at Niffur, providing an interesting, though coincidental, link between the two expeditions. Banks was removed from his position officially by January 1905.¹⁹

Hürner, who had the statue hidden in his bedroom, was ordered to turn the object over to the Ottoman authorities.²⁰ John G.A. Leishman, the American ambassador, upbraided Hürner for his actions in stealing and hiding the statue, writing, 'while it is the duty of every officer of the Government to protect American interests in every way possible, this should not be carried to the point of protecting American citizens in the commission of a dishonorable act'.²¹ Hürner was also scolded by Leishman for requesting to know how much Haidar Bey's salary was; presumably Hürner was contemplating a bribe.²² Hürner was slow to comply with the demands of both the US legation and Haidar Bey to send the statue to Istanbul. At the end of July 1905, Leishman again reproached Hürner for his slow response and for entrusting the statue to someone 'whose very name is unknown to the Legation'.²³ A 14 August telegram sent by Hürner states that the statue was finally handed over to Haidar Bey.²⁴

Ultimately, Hürner's defense was that he had been trying to keep Banks from being arrested and the University of Chicago's name from being soiled. Hürner argued that the secreting out of archaeological finds was a common

practice (which it was) and that Banks had misled him into thinking the US legation in Istanbul was aware of and complicit in the subterfuge (which it was not). Leishman pointed out that it was an illegal practice, stating, 'The fact that most archaeologists make a practice of appropriating a certain portion of the hidden treasures they unearth cannot be accepted as an excuse for the acts of the University officials in misappropriating treasures found in the Bismaya expedition, as the permit distinctly states that all articles found shall remain the property of the Imperial Ottoman Government.'²⁵ Leishman further informed Hürner that due to the circumstances, a formal complaint would be filed against him.²⁶ Hürner was also accused of illicitly furnishing copies of official documents to private individuals, specifically to Harper.²⁷ There was a further breakdown in what had once been a friendly relationship between Leishman and Hürner. By January 1906 the normally excessively polite introductions that are common in these official diplomatic dispatches devolved into this greeting: 'I have to acknowledge the receipt of your No. 104 of December 7, 1905, the contents of which I find both irrelevant and disrespectful [*sic*].'²⁸

Conclusion

On 7 June 1904 Jason Paige, the engineer for the Adab dig, was traveling from Baghdad to Damascus as part of a small caravan. Paige and the group were attacked by brigands and were robbed.²⁹ Paige literally had his pants stolen off him in the attack. Paige applied for, and with Hürner's help ultimately got, recompense from the Ottoman government for his losses. However, of the 97 Turkish lira that was received in compensation, only 20 Turkish lira were remitted to Paige. Five Turkish lira went to Paige's servant, Ali, for undisclosed reasons, and 72 went to Hürner, for the purported loss of a carpet that Paige had been carrying.³⁰ While the historical records discussed here show that Hürner was a self-interested individual to the point of maliciousness, and that American archaeologists were smugglers, these revelations are neither exaggerated, unique nor surprising. Instead, the existence of self-serving businessmen/diplomats, smuggling and the violating of terms of archaeological permits were the normative operating style of Westerners in the Ottoman Empire. The question that arises in these two instances is not why the Americans acted as they did, but rather, why were they caught?

Indeed, what made the Ottoman state decide to intervene via the actions of the vali or of Osman Hamdi Bey and Haider Bey? That they could intervene demonstrates the relative strength of the Ottoman state, particularly as it could project power into its periphery and against Americans. Additionally, as I argue throughout this article, both of these archaeological conflicts illustrate the Ottoman state's interest in controlling its antiquities and historical narrative. This attitude grew out of the milieu of the Tanzimat era and should be considered a continuation of the Tanzimat-period reforms. Specifically,

the Niffur case demonstrated that Ottoman officials were able to oversee the activities of Western cultural agents and to, at least to some degree, control them. Due to the fact that the Ottoman state controlled access to these sites, they were able to impose conditions on the expedition and force them into signing an additional declaration of agreement. As regards the Banks case, the conflict at Adab demonstrates that the Ottoman government not only had effective oversight over the dig, but they were able to discern and then stop an attempt to commit a criminal smuggling act.

Clearly, there were two reasons for the increasing Ottoman attention on retaining antiquities. The first, quite simply, was to thwart Western cultural imperialism. Archaeology, like missionary activity, was a form of cultural imperialism, and it drew Western researchers to all corners of the empire. Few Ottoman archaeologists existed to provide a direct challenge to Western ones, but by stymying the efforts of the Western archaeologists to secure and remove antiquities, the Ottomans kept those artefacts in their domain. Perhaps more importantly, these artefacts were kept out of Western museums. The statue from Adab/Bismaya still resides in Istanbul at the Istanbul Archaeological Museums. Called either the King of Adab or the Statue of Luguldalu, the artefact sits in a section on Southern Mesopotamia. It is also surprisingly small, considering the amount of official concern it elicited. While archaeological finds in Iraq contributed in the West to the narrative of Western civilisation, the Ottoman state would have been aware of potential narratives that these digs could provide to their own past and to the construction of an Ottoman nation-state and its historical mythologies. The retention of the artefacts allowed the Ottoman State to build its own museums and control its own historical narrative. Finally, these activities demonstrate the centralisation and growth of the Ottoman state during the post-Tanzimat period. The central government, based in Istanbul and represented in the periphery by the vali and the Ottoman Imperial Museum, clearly benefitted from the policy and ideological shifts that occurred during the Tanzimat period and continued to be implemented after the period officially ended in 1876.

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Notes

1. United States National Archives (NA), Record Group (RG) 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume iii, 'Annual Return of Exports', Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
2. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume x, James Nies, 12 November 1904, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
3. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume xiii, Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad, 14 August 1906, to The Rose Brick Company, Roseton, New York.
4. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume viii, Namik, *Vali* of Baghdad, 17 July 1899, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
5. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume vi, Alvey A. Adey, 2nd Assistant Secretary of State, Washington DC, 26 March 1898, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
6. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume vi, Thomas Cridler, 3rd Assistant Secretary of State, Washington DC, 28 May 1898, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
7. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume vi, Edgar James Banks, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 26 April 1899, to Thomas Cridler, Assistant Secretary of State, Washington DC.
8. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismya, 8 October 1904, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
9. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, 'Mazbata that our house was entered and robbed', 30 June 1905, and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismya, 8 October 1904, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
10. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, US Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, 8 January 1906, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
11. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismya, 8 October 1904, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
12. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismya, 7 October 1904, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
13. According to the account given in his autobiography, Dr Banks sent Hussein and Ahmed to recover the already stolen statue. They found it being guarded by two watchmen in a house. They 'silenced by the usual method' the guards and took the statue. Dr Banks, in trying to cover up his role in the theft of the statue, suggests Ahmed and Hussein were perhaps murderers (Banks 1912: 372).
14. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismya, 7 October 1904, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.

15. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismya, 9 October 1904, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
16. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Telegram from Pera Hotel, US Legation, Istanbul, 14 July 1904, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
17. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Peter Augustus Jay, US Charge d'Affairs, Istanbul, 4 November 1904, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
18. Hürner was concerned that, once in a Turkish prison, Ahmed would quickly besmirch Banks's name. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Peter Augustus Jay, US Charge d'Affairs, Istanbul, 4 November 1904, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
19. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Jason Paige, Washington DC, 31 May 1905, to J.G. Leishman, US Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul.
20. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Peter Augustus Jay, US Charge d'Affairs, Istanbul, 17 April 1905, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
21. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, US Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, 12 June 1905, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
22. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, US Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, 27 July 1905, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
23. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, US Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, 30 July 1905, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
24. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, US Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, 18 August 1905, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
25. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, US Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, 14 September 1905, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
26. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, US Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, 14 September 1905, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
27. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, US Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, 8 January 1906, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad, and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, US Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, 8 November 1905, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
28. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, US Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, 8 January 1906, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
29. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Jason Paige, Engineer for University of Pennsylvania dig at Bismaya, 13 June 1904, to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice-Consul, Baghdad.
30. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Jason Paige, Washington DC, 31 May 1905, to Leishman, Istanbul.

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