

## ALOIS MUSIL AND THE ORIENTAL STUDIES FELLOWSHIPS IN THE 1920S

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**ABSTRACT:** Professor Alois Musil, Orientalist, Arabist, theologian, traveller, and writer of popular novels, is well known as an explorer of the Middle East, discoverer of Amra castle, and as a founding father of the Oriental Institute in Prague. According to the recent research of his correspondence, an incredible network of contacts, with scholars settled in high positions in learned societies, politicians, and state officials, was found. Alois Musil was not only a receiver of donations and grants but also asked his 'pen friends' to donate money or arrange a suitable job for his colleagues and students. In my study, I would like to focus on (not only) Musil's role in the creation of academic positions for Orientalists as well as on the other possibilities that enabled Orientalists to continue in the job they dreamed about during their university studies.

**KEYWORDS:** Alois Musil – Oriental studies – Oriental Institute – academic career – fellowship

### Introduction

The development of Oriental studies at the Czech Charles University in Prague received a new impetus with the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic in late 1918. The early years of the new state brought funding, and a formal and informal support for established scholars and for a new generation of their pupils. However, the funding and support were received via complex channels that depended significantly on the personal network of the academics and on a willingness to make strategic deals with the trade and diplomatic interests of Czechoslovakia. This paper follows the main figure of the Orientalists's network, orientalist and biblical scholar, ordinary professor at Charles University Alois Musil,<sup>2</sup> and his strategies to secure both institutional prestige and funding for a broad range of 'Orientalist' subjects, as well as his strive to promote the next generation of Orientalists in the early 1920s.

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2 Alois Musil (1868–1944) – Orientalist, Biblical scholar, Catholic prelate, and explorer; he was a member of the faculty of theology at Olomouc from 1902, from 1909 he transferred to Vienna. His research travels in 1908 to 1912 covered Palestine, Syria, and Iraq. Named ordinary professor at the Czech Charles university in Prague in 1920. He undertook several study trips to the USA and the UK in the 1920s, finalising an English edition of his historical and ethnographical works. A key founding member of the Oriental Institute; Filipský 1999, pp. 340–343; Žďárský 2014 pp. 54–60.

## Institutions

At the university, the discipline of Oriental studies was at first conceived broadly and represented by polymath figures of Rudolf Dvořák<sup>3</sup> and Josef Zubatý<sup>4</sup>. Both had a comprehensive philological training that ranged from select languages of the Indian subcontinent to Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish. Dvořák dabbled in Semitic studies as well as in Chinese, whilst his teaching and research activities centred on Arabic and Turkish. In 1919, the eminent Assyriologist and Hittitologist Bedřich Hrozný<sup>5</sup> obtained a chair at the Faculty of Arts; his entry to the faculty ranks was followed by the appointment of Alois Musil. Hrozný and Musil had a versatile training comprising fieldwork in archaeology and epigraphy and a good grasp of local geography of Western Asia. Finally, the Semitic studies and Arabic specialist Rudolf Růžička was given a chair in 1923.

The new faculty expertise was built using academic resources and training of specialists who developed their careers under the Habsburg monarchy, and their activities were targeting a new disciplinary development at the republican university. It was a major step funded by Czechoslovak governmental resources and aimed at an establishment of a solid base for Oriental studies at the Charles University.

The state interest in Oriental studies in the early years of Czechoslovakia led also to a foundation of a second institutional base for Oriental studies. In 1922, the Oriental Institute was established, although its practical operations took six years to materialise.<sup>6</sup> The driving force behind the Oriental Institute negotiations was Alois Musil.

Musil's view on the institutionalisation of Oriental studies was based on a long-term view on the usefulness of Oriental studies, not only as research disciplines, but as intermediaries for diplomatic, political, and business contact. Musil's knowledge base was substantial; he had visited Northern Africa and Western Asia for a number of years before World War I and his disciplinary view of studying the 'Orient' included rigorous philology as well as geography and modern political history of the region formerly controlled by the Ottoman Empire.

Musil's concept of the Oriental Institute was based on two departments: the research department and the business department, to answer the needs of the Oriental studies as well as a Czechoslovak export. The sustainability of Oriental studies as well as of the Czechoslovak international trade and diplomatic position was conceived as a cooperative effort.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Rudolf Dvořák (1860–1920) – Czech Orientalist, Professor of Eastern Languages at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University. He instigated a Library of Oriental Philology together with Josef Zubatý, already in 1903. This library was later transformed into an Oriental Studies Seminar; Filipický 1999, pp. 117–119.

<sup>4</sup> Josef Zubatý (1855–1931) – Czech Indologist and etymologist. His main area of interest consisted of comparative philology; in 1906, he was named ordinary professor of old Indian philology and comparative philology. He was rector of the Charles University in 1919–1920, and chairman of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts in 1923 to 1930; Filipický 1999, pp. 539–540.

<sup>5</sup> Bedřich Hrozný (1879–1952) – Assyriologist, Hittitologist, habilitated in 1905 at the University of Vienna. He was appointed to the Chair of Cuneiform studies and History of the Ancient Near East in Prague in 1919, and served as the dean of the Faculty of Arts in Prague in 1926/1927. A key founding member of the Oriental Institute and co-founder of the periodical *Archiv Orientalni*. His 1920s and 1930s activities included expeditions and study trips mostly in Turkey; Filipický 1999, pp. 200–201; Velhartická 2015; Velhartická 2019.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. Jůnová Macková 2016, pp. 129–144; Lemmen 2014, pp. 119–143.

<sup>7</sup> Musil, 1920, pp. 270–281.

Next to the preparatory phase of the foundation of the Oriental Institute just referred to, it is also remarkable to note that the actual Oriental Institute activity was preceded by several years of Musil's dealings with Czechoslovak authorities. His main arguments – research and business in cooperation, a need to gain international expertise, and a development of new disciplines at the institute and the university – remained consistent throughout this early phase, and can be seen both in Musil's own projects and the projects he promoted for other scholars.

## Alois Musil and the early projects

Musil identified the need to involve politicians and economics specialists in the support of Oriental studies at an early stage. He approached both the President, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, and the leading personality at the Export Office, Rudolf Hotowetz<sup>8</sup>. Hotowetz was a key contact, as he fought the case for developing international trade relations and succeeded at speed to convince the Czechoslovak government to release a sum of four million crowns already in November 1920. The monies were obtained from import and export fees, and were intended to provide a starting grant for the planned Oriental Institute.<sup>9</sup> The sum was administered temporarily by the Masaryk National Foundation. The network on political connections behind the institute's financing could not have been more evident.

Hotowetz had already aimed at organising a research trip of Alois Musil and Zdeněk Fafl<sup>10</sup>, to be undertaken during 1920 to investigate international contacts in the target area, but it had to be cancelled as Alois Musil had been otherwise occupied in Britain and the US. Its financing was yet again to be based on income from export and import fees and a portion of that sum covered Musil's British and American trip *in lieu*. In effect, Musil had become the first 'fellow' of the Oriental Institute. The remaining part of the funding was added to the Oriental Institute endowment and later used for travel and research grants of the institute in the 1930s.

In the early 1920s, the financial organization of the endowment was more complex. The endowment as such was left untouched for almost seven years, but the interest paid on it was used to support diverse individuals with projects in the area of Oriental studies. Alois Musil was not convinced of the practicality of the approach at first, and

<sup>8</sup> Rudolf Hotowetz (1865–1945) – economist and lawyer; employed first by the Governor's office in Prague under the Habsburg monarchy, and from 1891 in the Prague Chamber of Commerce. After the Great War, he was named chairman of the Czechoslovak Export and Import Committee, 1920–1921, minister in charge of the Export Office, and later minister of industry, trade and finance. He was nominated Chairman of the Oriental Institute in 1928, and led its business department from 1929; Jůnová Macková 2019, pp. 41–50; Jůnová Macková et al. 2019, pp. 26–29.

<sup>9</sup> Archiv Kanceláře prezidenta republiky [Archive of the Office of the President] (further AKPR), fonds Kancelář prezidenta republiky [Office of the President] (further KPR), The Oriental Institute 1920–1937, box 129, no. D 8620/20. Presidium úřadu pro zahraniční obchod pro KPR, listopad 1920. Informace o jednání ministerské rady dne 6. listopadu 1920. [Presidium of the Export Office for KPR, November 1920. Minutes of a ministerial meeting 6 November 1920].

<sup>10</sup> Zdeněk Fafl (1881–1961) – lawyer; employed by the Chamber of Commerce from 1907; in 1918 chairman of the export committee of the Prague Chamber of Commerce and Industry; official at the Ministry of Trade, and active in a number of Czechoslovak and international institutions. In the 1930s Fafl served as a chairman of the Czechoslovak Export Institute, and became the secretary general of the Prague Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1932. His professional interest focused on international trade and customs policies; Fafl served as an executive director of the business school of the Oriental Institute, and later of the Institute of Slavonic studies; Jůnová Macková et al. 2019, pp. 30–34.

approached Rudolf Hotowetz, arguing for a ring-fencing of the interest for the nascent Institute (the peculiar tone of Musil's letter has been retained):

Dear and esteemed Minister, you provided 4 million crowns for the Oriental Institute. Please assure that the endowment is not dissolved in the Masaryk Foundation. We have been losing the interest money since November 1920, without knowledge when these monies will become accessible to us, or whether we will be able to access the entire sum, as the Foundation handles a large number of requests for support, gives generously and uses any funds they can get their hands on.<sup>11</sup>

Eventually, Musil came to terms with the redistribution of the interest money and indeed became a prominent user of this funding resource. The account of the Oriental Institute is well documented with a number of statements showing its transactions. The account was administered by the Zemská banka on behalf of the Office of the President.<sup>12</sup> The Oriental Institute account was one among several administered under the auspices of the Masaryk Foundation.

Altogether ten projects by five Oriental studies specialists were supported in 1923 to 1928. The sum amounted to 508,500 crowns. Alois Musil and Bedřich Hrozný obtained the largest grants and multiple awards.

Alois Musil left for the US in June 1923 to finish an English edition of his book series that was to appear as *Oriental Explorations and Studies*. The material was based on his 1908–1917 travels, and the project had a substantial financial backing by Charles Richard Crane, a relative in-law of Masaryk. The American trip was followed by Musil's stay in London, where he lived from the late 1923 to the summer of 1924 and used the libraries of British institutions to access materials otherwise unavailable to him, but vital for his new publications. He was awarded two grants of 100,000 crowns. His professorial salary, or more accurately, paid leave, amounting to 50,000, respective 75,000 crowns<sup>13</sup> was paid in full as well.

The same scenario applied to his study grants in 1926 (supported by another 100,000 crowns) and in 1928 (60,000 crowns), covering his further sojourns in New York, where he was proofreading and finalising his publication series. Altogether, Musil obtained 360,000 crowns from the interest paid on the Oriental Institute endowment.

The next prominently subsidised project consisted of a series of expeditions by Bedřich Hrozný in Syria, Iraq, and Turkey. Hrozný obtained 50,000 crowns twice, in 1924 and 1925, and an additional sum of 20,000 crowns for his research work in 1927, so altogether 120,000 crowns. The funding for Hrozný's research projects displays a close relationship of research institutes and industrial and banking sector in the first decade of Czechoslovakia.

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11 Archiv Národního technického muzea – Archive of the National Technical Museum (further ANTM), fonds Rudolf Hotowetz, box 1, sign. 2.II. Musil to Hotowetz, 14 April 1921.

12 AKPR, fonds Národní fond Masarykův [The Masaryk National Foundation], box 5, the Oriental Institute 1922–1924 and the Oriental Institute ledger 1925–1929.

13 Personal files of Alois Musil, either in the fonds of the Ministry of Education, or in the Archive of the Charles University in Prague, do not contain any salary information directly from this period. Salary grade information is preserved from 1925/1926 in context of a new university salaries act. Musil's salary grade for 1925 was 50,592 crowns, and the new act raised the sum to 75,600 crowns from 1926.

Like Musil, Hrozný mobilised his social network, and used his cultural and social capital to achieve a remarkable result for his research interests. Hrozný's expeditions, moreover, had further financial resources, amounting eventually to 533,640 crowns in total:

Contributions include: President of the Czechoslovak Republic 50,000 (-500 on stamp duty),<sup>14</sup> the Ministry of Education 150,000 (-1,500 stamp duty), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 100,000 (-1,000 stamp duty), the Academy of Sciences and Arts, first class, 25,000, third class 25,000, the Regional Committee requiring antiquities for the National Museum 10,000 (-100 stamp duty), the Chamber of Commerce in Prague 25,000 (-260), expecting reports on the export situation, the Sugar Factories Union 50,000, the Metal Industry Chamber 25,000, The Škoda Works 25,000, Company A. Růžička 20,000, Živnobanka 10,000, Anglo Czech Bank 5,000, Metal Works Vítkovice 5,000, Mr Josef Bartoň 5,000, Mr Petschek 5,000, and the Union Bank 2,000 crowns.<sup>15</sup>

The Oriental studies specialists, moreover, were not the only group of academics who were in position to mobilise a similar network. Professor of Classical History Antonín Salač<sup>16</sup> led Czechoslovak excavations in Cyme in Turkey in 1925–1927 and obtained 20,000 crowns as a fellowship destined to support this activity. Smaller sums were disbursed to Egyptologists Jaroslav Černý<sup>17</sup> and František Lexa<sup>18</sup> to support their research activities. Jaroslav Černý obtained amalgamated funding for his research co-operation with the IFAO (Institut français d'archéologie orientale) in the 1920s.<sup>19</sup> He was paid directly by the Masaryk National Foundation, and supported indirectly also by Jaroslav Preiss, the director general of the Živnobanka, who tolerated Černý's long absences in the bank. A one-off donation to the Egyptologist was provided by famous entrepreneur Paul Petschek (co-owner of Bankhaus Petschek & Co.) and amounted to 20,000 crowns.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The funding was most probably taken from the account of the Oriental Institute administered by the Masaryk National Foundation. Bedřicha Hrozný obtained altogether 120,000 crowns.

<sup>15</sup> Archive of the Charles University (further AUK), fonds Faculty of Arts; Personal file Bedřich Hrozný, inv. n. 301. Zpráva Bedřicha Hrozného pro profesorský sbor FF UK, projednáváno dne 15. června 1926 [report by B. Hrozný for the professorial convocation dated 15 June 1926].

<sup>16</sup> Antonín Salač (1885–1960) – Classical philologist and archaeologist; began his career as a grammar school teacher; appointed professor at the Faculty of Arts in 1929; in 1925 to 1927 led the archaeological expedition in Cyme in Asia minor, later in the 1930s worked on barrow downs in Varna, Bulgaria.

<sup>17</sup> Jaroslav Černý (1898–1970) – Egyptologist specialised in hieratic script. His academic career began in the role of *privatdozent* in Prague, in 1946 he emigrated to Great Britain and accepted professorial chairs in London and Oxford; Filipický 1999, pp. 95–97; Jünová Macková and Onderka 2010; Navrátilová 2018; Růžová 2010.

<sup>18</sup> František Lexa (1876–1960) – one of the founders of Czech Egyptology. He led an Egyptological seminar at the Faculty of Arts from 1925, and was named an ordinary professor of Egyptology in 1927. A founding member of the Oriental Institute and secretary of its research school; dean of the Faculty of arts in 1934 to 1935. He was the first director of the Czechoslovak Institute of Egyptology founded in 1958; Filipický 1999, pp. 297–298; *František Lexa, zakladatel české egyptologie* 1989.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Jünová Macková and Navrátilová 2015, pp. 89–150.

<sup>20</sup> AKPR, fonds KPR 1919–1947, Slovanský a Orientální ústav, [Institute of Slavonic studies, and The Oriental Institute] box. 129, inv. n. 1015, D 1474/29. Paul Petschek to President's chancellor Přemysl Šámal, 24 February, 1929, Berlin.

It would appear that the funding coming from the Oriental Institute endowment was divided among a number of significant research projects including fieldwork expeditions. It had also attracted further donors. However, the funding had mostly benefited a select group of scholars, with Musil and Hrozný dominating the group, as they obtained 90 % of the awards.

Musil was undoubtedly the driving force behind the Institute, but had also managed to use the funding well before a formal establishment of the institution. His activities – both to promote the Oriental Institute and to promote himself – dominated the 1920s; he later focused on his academic activity and Hrozný and Hotowetz were left in control of the Oriental Institute.

## Heyday of Oriental studies?

Following the Oriental Institute's formal foundation and its initial generous funding, plus the establishment of a number of professorial chairs in the 1920s, the overall impression was that Czechoslovakia was cultivating the Oriental studies. The university programmes grew and the official proclamations regarding the Oriental Institute were brimming with plans outlining activities for both its research and business department. Yet, in fact, the process of institutionalisation was very slow and hampered by competing ideas. The Oriental Institute and its full and functional establishment remained Musil's prime target, which would enable to provide stable positions for researchers and develop into a solid institutional base with outreach and impact beyond scholarly publications. Musil pursued this argument, used the aegis of Masaryk's support and repeatedly approached Rudolf Hotowetz where the Institute was concerned. But other options had to be sought as well.

Musil realised where the problem lay for a future capacity building of Oriental studies in Czechoslovakia. With the Oriental Institute not functional and the universities having a restricted number of chairs, with Oriental studies centred in Prague, the Orientalists faced career challenges. Bedřich Hrozný and Alois Musil began their regular university career at Charles University in 1919 and 1920 respectively.<sup>21</sup> Their pupils and younger colleagues did not get a similar opportunity. Consequently, most of these younger scholars accepted teaching or clerical jobs.

The promising students of Hrozný, Musil, Dvořák, or Zubatý were leaving the academic career and joined the ranks of grammar school teachers or ministerial officials. Musil was no less interested in their predicament than he was in his own success – he felt a duty of care for his students and sought possibilities to keep them in the academe. Moreover, he realised the loss of potential for the budding Oriental studies in Czechoslovakia. Many of the younger scholars developed specialisations different from their teachers, and represented an asset for any future university scheme that would comprise a broader number of Oriental languages and cultures. The next generation of Orientalists was moving from the polymath to the specialist.

Musil consequently expanded his argumentation targeting Hotowetz. The Export Office controlled export and import licenses in the early 1920s, collected the import tax, and administered enormous financial flows. It was still possible to promote using some of these for research fellowships. In fact, as Musil well knew, it was urgent to uti-

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<sup>21</sup> Havránek and Pousta 1998.

lise this access to funding to the full, as the expected relaxing of trade restrictions was about to bring an end to this financial resource. Musil besieged Hotowetz:

The [planned] institutes will not be able to work without personnel. I have discussed the matter repeatedly with Mr President and he urged me to select for you talented citizens, who may benefit from extending and intensifying their education and training by their stays abroad – with your support. At our most recent meeting, I updated Mr President that Dr Tauer<sup>22</sup> is already in Istanbul, Dr Rypka<sup>23</sup> plans to leave in early September, and that it would be beneficial to send an Indologist to inner regions of India to expand his professional knowledge and to build a rapport to the local elites that may be subsequently used to enable local business contacts. Mr. President was very pleased to know that Dr Tauer and Dr Rypka have already been supported by you, and he had no doubt that a funding for an Indologist's trip could be found as well.<sup>24</sup>

A similar line of argument can be seen in Musil's communications with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edvard Beneš and with the Minister of Education (and a promoter of international cooperation in academic research) Josef Šusta<sup>25</sup>. In the latter case Musil did not suggest a solution via a non-university institution, but via the Faculty of Arts, and proposed international travel and training for its experts:

I would like to see our future professors spending some time abroad, broaden their horizons, and develop their understanding of their own discipline. The homebodies have only a local view! This motivates me to help individuals to stay abroad and would like to ask you, Minister, to aid me in this endeavour. I am sure you will do so, as you are most interested in the benefit to our country.<sup>26</sup>

Musil's narrative of integrating a research interest and a business interest was an effective key that opened possibilities for Oriental studies that other disciplines never gained access to. The effort to reach foreign markets, including distant market targets, was discussed in detail as part of the Oriental Institute's remit; it motivated Hotowetz to support suitable experts in their international travels (Musil being a case in point), and eventually it was a decisive element for the planning of a network of Czechoslovak consulates and legations. As a result, Musil's double plan of entwined expert and business activity garnered a considerable support of the Czechoslovak political elite in the early 1920s.

22 Felix Tauer (1893–1981) – a student of Rudolf Dvořák and Rudolf Růžička, Arabist and Oriental studies specialist; *privatdozent* at the Charles University, taught at the Faculty of Arts since 1929, 1945 Professor of History of Islamic Countries; Filipský 1999, pp. 485–486.

23 Jan Rypka (1886–1968) – Specialist in Oriental Studies, *privatdozent* of Turkish and Farsi philology since 1924; extraordinary professor at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University from 1927, and a founding member of the Oriental Institute. In 1939 and after 1945, Dean of the Faculty of Arts; Filipský 1999, pp. 424–425.

24 ANTM, fonds Rudolf Hotowetz, box 1, sign. 2.II. Musil to Hotowetz, 3 August 1921.

25 See Lach 2003.

26 Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd ČR, v. v. i. Archiv Ústavu T. G. Masaryka [Masaryk Institute and archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences] (further MÚA, AÚTGM), fonds Edvard Beneš, Correspondence 42, sign. 38. Letter of Musil to Beneš, 23 June 1920.

## The new generation of Orientalists

The Oriental studies specialists recommended by Musil to Hotowetz came from a cohort of alumni of the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in Prague and as promising scholars had already been awarded fellowships of a year or two year's duration at diverse European universities in Austria, Germany, or Great Britain. As shown, the continuation of their professional career in Czechoslovakia was nonetheless limited.

Jan Rypka held a position of a director of the Czech typographical union, and was later provided with an academic-related job as a librarian at the Comenius university in Bratislava. This was due to an intervention of Alois Musil, who had approached the Minister Josef Šusta.<sup>27</sup> Vincenc Lesný<sup>28</sup> continued his grammar school teaching career as did Felix Tauer – whilst both were considered by Musil as potentially vital for the Faculty of Arts and/or the Oriental institute. Their interest in Turkey, Iran, and India complemented effectively the existing Oriental studies modules at the faculty. Musil explained to Šusta:

Our faculty lacks a professor of important Islamic languages Turkish and Persian, there is no systematic work on the Islamic culture, no attention is given to the Chinese and Japanese culture. And yet, our people are talented in languages and used to be jewels in the crown of foreign universities and ministries. I keep searching and probing, and trying how to help and to promote opportunities for those who display interest in Oriental studies and work systematically and constantly.<sup>29</sup>

Given Šusta's own academic background of a professor of general history and his professional interests, Musil considered him a natural ally, who was in position to divert some much needed cash toward Musil's promising 'Orientalists'. Musil used the opportunity offered by Šusta's ministry to the full. Although the historian did not hold the governmental position for long, both Rypka and Tauer benefitted. Rypka's librarian position has already been mentioned – moreover he had been considered for a ministerial librarian post before being assigned to Bratislava. Either option was to allow him leeway for philological studies. For Tauer, Musil proposed first a participation at a geology expedition in Iran and Pakistan, and as this option failed, a fellowship was sought to allow Tauer a study trip to Iran.<sup>30</sup>

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27 'As an excellent philologist, he became a copyeditor at the printer, Holzhausen's, specialising in Oriental studies works printed for the Academy in Vienna and learned societies in Britain, France, and Egypt. At wartime, he was trusted as Holzhausen's deputy. His connections with learned societies and other typographical businesses grew and after the coup [= founding of the republic] he was taken over by the Union and now he is among its esteemed directors. ... My suggestions is to use the systemised posts at the Bratislava University library, and he could occupy one with assigned place of work at the Ministry [= in Prague].' See Národní archiv [the National Archive, Prague] (further NA), fonds Josef Šusta, box 7, inv. n. 5. Correspondence Alois Musil to Josef Šusta. Letter 11 December 1920.

28 Vincenc Lesný (1882–1953) – specialist in Bengali and Sanskrit (translator of R. Tagore's work), a founding member of the Oriental Institute, and later a Professor of Indology at the Charles University in Prague. In 1952 one of the founding members of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences; Filipský 1999, pp. 293–296; Smékal 1990, pp. 7–152.

29 NA, fonds Josef Šusta, box 7, inv. n. 5. Correspondence Alois Musil to Josef Šusta. Letter 11 December 1920.

30 'Dr Tauer, a pupil of Drs Dvořák and Grunert, is following my advice and specialises in Persian and Afghan dialects. He should accompany a geology and mining expedition to Persia and Baluchistan as an interpreter. I expected him to leave, but the negotiations [regarding the expedition] with [officials in] Bombay are protracted. If this does not work, I will work in getting him to Persia for a year or two in some other way. Upon his return he could habilitate and we would gain another professor in due course.' See NA, fonds Josef Šusta, box. 7, inv. n. 5, Correspondence Alois Musila to Josef Šusta. Letter 11 December 1920.



Finally, as noted above, both Rypka and Tauer obtained funding from the Export Office and were due to travel to Istanbul. Jan Rypka was first allowed a paid leave by his employer, the Ministry of Education, from September 1921 to May 1922, and this was prolonged for the rest of the year.<sup>31</sup> The application form repeats yet again Musil's articulation of research going hand in hand with a business analysis for the purposes of Czechoslovak export:

The University Professor Musil is referencing him warmly and recommends Rypka as a talented philologist specialised in Oriental languages, who systematically prepares himself for a university chair. The Export Office provided Rypka with 50,000 crowns for his sojourn in Turkey on the condition that he will also consider the economic interests [of Czechoslovakia].<sup>32</sup>

Felix Tauer left for Istanbul in January 1921 and continued his studies in the local libraries until the end of 1922.<sup>33</sup> The condition for his fellowship award was the same – to provide an economic interests report. In October 1921, Musil attempted a further fellowship for Tauer, but this time Hotowetz declined,<sup>34</sup> and the remaining part of Tauer's stay was financed by the Ministry of Education via an unspecified method. A paid leave might have played a role, although Tauer was only a grammar school teacher at that point.<sup>35</sup>

Another scholar, who was promoted by Alois Musil, was the Indologist Vincenc Lesný. Musil approached Edvard Beneš in 1920 to secure a fellowship for Lesný's proposed stay in London. In June 1920, Musil outlined Lesný's plans including the option to continue the trip to India, where Lesný would obtain a unique language training opportunity as well as an insight into the local economic situation. Musil implied that Lesný was to be used as a link for future Czechoslovak-Indian relations:

I would like to intervene now on behalf of *privatdozent* V. Lesný. He had already obtained a state award to study in London for several months. The travel there and back would cost him more than the sojourn. I would therefore apply to you, Minister, to send him to London as a diplomatic courier. It will be of considerable help to him and he will not disappoint us, I dare say. I would hope I could secure a job for him at a major company active in India to provide him with two years of study in India itself.<sup>36</sup>

A year later, Musil succeeded in getting 5,000 crowns for Lesný from Hotowetz. The Musil – Hotowetz correspondence offers an insight into Musil's role in connecting Lesný to the Export Office. The conditions for the award were yet again that Lesný would

31 See AUK, fonds Faculty of Arts, inv. n. 635. Personal file Jan Rypka. NA, Fonds Ministry of Education 1918–1949, box. 198, Personal file Jan Rypka.

32 NA, Fonds Ministry of Education 1918–1949, box 198, Personal file Jan Rypka. Prezidium ministerstva školství a národní osvěty [Presidium of the Ministry of Education and National Information], 3. 6. 1921.

33 See also Storchová 2012.

34 MÚA, A AV ČR, fonds Orientální ústav, box 2, inv. no. 10. A copy of a letter from Musil to Fafl, 13. October 1921: 'I have applied for another subvention to support Tauer but the Minister rejected it.'

35 NA, Fonds Ministry of Education 1918–1949, box 245, Personal file Felix Tauer. CV enclosed to his habilitation application dated on 14. 10. 1924.

36 MÚA, AÚTGM, fonds Edvard Beneš, Correspondence 42, sign. 38. Musil to Beneš, 23 June 1920

procure information pertinent for a development of economic relations, and particularly for the Czechoslovak export.<sup>37</sup>

Musil's perseverance and keen interest in supporting the younger scholars can be illustrated well on the Lesný example. As the negotiations were ongoing, Lesný managed to make a mistake. Keen to secure further funds for his life in India, he decided to use his position of a *privatdozent* (unpaid assistant professor, which he held for four years already, working simultaneously as a grammar school teacher) at the Faculty of Arts, and approached the Faculty's convocation with an application for support of a fellowship application to the Ministry of Education. To strengthen his position, Lesný was not averse to a medial presentation – and appeared in the newspapers as a 'distinguished Czech Indologist'<sup>38</sup>. The convocation was not amused. Musil noticed the controversy, including the newspapers and the professorial anger at the Faculty, and explained to Lesný:

Surely, you are aware of professorial jealousy, and the danger of provoking it. It had been provoked and the results were seen in the convocation. I do not understand how you came by the idea that the professorial convocation would support your application for 50 000 crowns. Many ideas sprouted in the professorial heads as a result! How keen they were to protect the state finances and the Ministry of Education in particular. You are a naive baby!<sup>39</sup>

Musil's strategy was clear – Lesný ought to have applied for a paid leave (he needed to support his family – a wife and a son), and for a smaller sum to cover his expenses:

I could have applied to the Minister in writing or in person to obtain a certain sum for you. The matter could have been dealt with without any unnecessary fuss.<sup>40</sup>

Musil was as good as his word. He wrote to Edvard Beneš and enquired if Lesný could possibly be supported from a propaganda budget (the so-called 'propagation fund'). Moreover, Musil approached Fafl and via Fafl yet again reached out to Hotowetz (in July 1921). The latter enquiry had a negative result, but Musil and Fafl tried to secure at least a discount at the Lloyd Triestino ships for Lesný.<sup>41</sup>

Do not begin your trip yet, before having collected the funds. Even if you were to wait for a year, I am confident we will collect the required funding... Of course I shall support you from the background, but please do not make it more difficult

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37 LA PNP, fonds Alois Musil, Correspondence Rudolf Hotowetz, a letter 3. 5. 1921 in correspondence series of Musil and Hotowetz.

38 Indolog dr. Lesný do Indie [Indologist Dr L. on the way to India]. *Venkov*, 1921, vol. 16, issue 156, p. 4: 'Národní listy announce that a distinguished Czech Indologist dr. Lesný was invited by Rabindranath Tagore to lecture at the university of Santiniketan, and should start for India in September.'

39 MÚA, A AV ČR, fonds Vincenc Lesný, box 4, inv. n. 210. Musil to Lesný, 28. 7. 1921.

40 MÚA, A AV ČR, fonds Vincenc Lesný, box 4, inv. n. 210. Musil to Lesný, 28. 7. 1921.

41 'I negotiated with Minister Hotowetz in the matter of Dr Lesný. Hotowetz explained that further funding in addition to the 50,000 crowns is not possible, as it would have to be approved by the ministerial committee again.' See MÚA, A AV ČR, fonds Orientální ústav, box 2, inv. n. 10. A copy of a letter from Fafl to Musil, 25 July 1921.

for me. Until and unless you are an ordinary professor, you need to curry the favour of the professorial convocation, hence you must not goad the esteemed colleagues needlessly.<sup>42</sup>

Musil's comment illustrates the situation of the younger generation of scholars in the interwar period. They had to muster considerable enthusiasm and stamina to run a double career – a paid employment, often at the grammar schools, and the unpaid *privatdozent* status at the university, which required them to provide university level research and teaching essentially in their own free time. This difficult stage of their careers was followed by an extraordinary professorship, which removed the necessity of a double job, but the resulting university remuneration was often less than the grammar school salary. Only an ordinary professorial chair could provide a decent salary and a ring-fenced time for research.

Although the career model had difficulties, the *privatdozents* could, as Lesný tried to do, obtain a fellowship and a paid leave, provided the grammar school and the faculty both approved of the scheme. Lesný was initially unsuccessful regarding the fellowship, but he did obtain a paid leave, sanctioned by the Ministry of Education, and left for India on 1 November 1922. He applied for a prolongation of the paid leave for the semester 1922/1923 and his application succeeded again.<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusions

Studies abroad brought new experience and resources for research work and publications, and empowered a number of academic careers. The names encountered in the early 1920s materials as struggling teachers and *privatdozents* went on to become key persons for the development of Oriental studies in Czechoslovakia.

Jan Rypka, who became a university librarian in January 1921 thanks to Musil's intervention and gained access to university books and materials, was privileged to obtain a paid leave and a fellowship of the Export Office already in September 1921. Following his studies in Istanbul, he became a *privatdozent* in 1925 and began his teaching career in the seminars of Rudolf Růžička. In 1927, Rypka achieved the status of an extraordinary professor, and finally in 1930 an ordinary chair. In 1934 he left for Persia, yet again with a state funding.<sup>44</sup> His career went on to include a position of a dean of the Faculty of Arts.

Felix Tauer was a grammar school teacher, but repeatedly obtained a fellowship and enjoyed a number of study trips to Istanbul, beginning in 1921 (which lasted for two years until 1923) and again in 1923, 1924, 1925, 1929, and 1933. He became a *privatdozent* already in 1925, but the next step, a professorial chair, repeatedly eluded him – he only became an ordinary professor in 1945.<sup>45</sup>

Vincenc Lesný began his career also as a grammar school teacher, but he had been a *privatdozent* already since 1917. One of his fellowships, in 1922, enabled him to

<sup>42</sup> MÚA, A AV ČR, fonds Vincenc Lesný, box 4, inv. n. 210. Musil to Lesný, 28. 7. 1921.

<sup>43</sup> NA, Fonds Ministry of Education 1918–1949, box 118, Personal file Vincenc Lesný. Ministry of Education, 19. 12. 1922, věc: Státní reálné gymnázium Smíchov, dovolená prof. Lesného. [re: The State grammar School Smíchov, a leave of prof. Lesný].

<sup>44</sup> AUK, fonds Faculty of Arts, inv. n. 635. Personal file Jan Rypka. NA, Fonds Ministry of Education 1918–1949, box 198, Personal file Jan Rypka.

<sup>45</sup> AUK, fonds Faculty of Arts, inv. n. 730. Personal file Felix Tauer. NA, fonds Ministry of Education 1918–1949, box 245, Personal file Felix Tauer.

pursue further studies of modern languages and cultures of the Indian subcontinent. He became an extraordinary professor in 1927 and an ordinary professor in 1930.<sup>46</sup> He became a director of the School of Oriental Languages at the Oriental Institute, and finally the Institute's director in 1945.

Musil's substantial effort in supporting his younger colleagues was successful. They had received funding for travel and study, and eventually reached positions of the ordinary professors. Musil's work and liaisons with Czechoslovak political, diplomatic, and trade network changed the format of Oriental studies in Prague – the original group of senior polymaths was complemented and followed by a boom of specialists in new disciplines and subdisciplines concerned with the Arab countries, Turkey, and Iran. The Oriental Institute obtained new teachers for its courses of Arabic, Turkish, Farsi, Bengali, and Hindi. In the later 1920s and 1930s, the Institute provided further fellowships including for Jaroslav Průšek, who studied Chinese and Japanese in China and Japan.

The postwar advances of the Oriental Institute used these structures, but the development of the Oriental studies was once more closely related to the political situation. After 1945, new disciplines began to get established at the Faculty of Arts, including languages of the 'Far East'. The Oriental Institute was rebuilt as a department of the new Academy of Sciences and became a purely academic institute. Established in 1952 to 1953, the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, modelled on a confluence of Soviet and European academies systems, had Bedřich Hrozný, František Lexa, Antonín Salač, Vincenc Lesný, and Jan Rypka as its founding members. Jaroslav Průšek became the director of the Oriental Institute and of a department of languages and history of the Far East at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University.

Alois Musil's plan to promote Oriental studies in Czechoslovakia via a system of funding for individual researchers and then by a dedicated institute developed slowly. A full institutionalisation of the Oriental studies came only under the otherwise limiting control of the Communist regime, in the atmosphere of a heightened interest in a decolonising 'Third' world.

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<sup>46</sup> AUK, fonds Faculty of Arts, inv. n. 446. Personal file Vincenc Lesný. NA, fonds Ministry of Education 1918–1949, box 119, personal file Vincenc Lesný.

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