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# Encounters with the Orient

This summer, the Allard Pierson Museum brings the fascinating Far East to Amsterdam in a three-part exhibition. Egypt, Turkey and North Africa are all examined through the eyes of academics, each of whom introduces their own personal story.

The exhibition focuses on the Oriental travellers who engaged in dialogue with academics from the Dutch Republic, allowing interest in Arabic language and literature to flourish and helping to gradually blur prejudices against Islam. It also concentrates on Flinders Petrie, the eccentric archaeologist famed for his fanatic documentary work and photography, but also for throwing tins of food against the wall to test if last year's provisions were still edible. And last but not least, the exhibition features Emilie Haspels, the first female Director of the Allard Pierson Museum. In the 1930s, she donned long trousers and headed to Turkey to supervise excavations. Throughout this summer, be inspired by the human stories behind the scientists, from 24 June to 18 September at the Allard Pierson Museum.



## Arabs in the West

In 1609, an extraordinary friendship burgeoned between the Moroccan diplomat Abd al-Aziz and Arabist Jan Theunisz, after the latter invited the former to stay at his Amsterdam residence at Oudenbrugsteeg 23 for four months. In a time in which Islam was generally viewed as being frightening and threatening, this was certainly unique. The two discussed Islam and Christianity at length, and with Abd al-Aziz's help, Theunisz became one of the Dutch Republic's leading Arabists. Other writers, traders, adventurers and diplomats from the Middle East and North Africa also added to the expertise and contributed to the creation of a more realistic image of the Orient and the Islamic world. The exhibition illuminates several of these figures. Drawing on original letters and books that they copied or acquired for their Dutch acquaintances, the exhibition explores who these travellers were, how they set to work and their significance for academia in the Netherlands.

## Flinders Petrie

Late in the 19th century, Englishman Flinders Petrie started a series of excavation campaigns in Egypt. Up until then, excavations in the country more closely resembled treasure hunts, and the academics primarily concentrated on finding precious artefacts. The eccentric Petrie took a different approach, deciding to extensively document and photograph what he found. It is for this reason that he is also considered to be the founding father of thorough documentation within Egyptian archaeology. He also introduced an ingenious distribution system in which museums could participate. He founded the British School of Archaeology in Egypt and invited contributors to register at the school. They then decided which excavation campaigns they would like to be involved in by contributing financial support. Once the excavations were completed, they would receive artefacts in proportion to their initial contribution. Museum Scheurleer, which later became the Allard Pierson Museum, was involved in the school between 1921 and 1924. For the sum of 56 pounds and 6 shillings, they received approximately 350 objects, ranging from earthenware to jewellery. This system meant that the objects found their way into collections all over the world. The exhibition reunites many of these finds in the form of reconstructions.

### **Note for editors, not for publication:**

The curators of the exhibition will be available for interviews in the days leading up to the opening. If you would like to arrange an interview or require additional information, please contact Amber van Schagen, PR & Marketing at the Allard Pierson Museum by calling +31 (0)20 525 2436/+31 (0)6 3005 8181 or sending an email to [a.e.vanschagen@uva.nl](mailto:a.e.vanschagen@uva.nl).

The official opening of the exhibition will take place on Thursday, 23 June 2016, from 16:00 to 17:30. As there is limited capacity, journalists interested in attending the opening are requested to register before 18 June by sending an email to [a.e.vanschagen@uva.nl](mailto:a.e.vanschagen@uva.nl). It is also possible to visit the exhibition between 19:30 and 21:30. Registration for this evening viewing is also required; to register, please send an email to the above address.

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