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Wilhelm II.: Archäologie und Politik um 1900. Edited by THORSTEN BEIGEL and SABINE MANGOLD-WILL. Stuttgart: FRANZ STEINER VERLAG, 2017. Pp. 140, illus. €39 (paper).

Like many upper-class Germans educated in the late nineteenth century, Kaiser Wilhelm of the German

Empire was deeply interested in the history and culture of ancient Greece, but unlike most of them he was in a position to contribute directly to the recovery of the remains of Hellas through patronage of archaeological projects, in particular of excavations on the island of Corfu. Furthermore, his engagement extended to the lands of the ancient Near East, then part of the Ottoman Empire, where he helped support German expeditions from his privy purse. Indeed, his particularly warm relationship with Sultan Abdul Hamid was instrumental in securing concessions to excavate at Assur and Babylon, among many other sites, for the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (see p. 18 here for a full list).

Such engagement in antiquarian research on the part of a head of state, scarcely imaginable to an American today, was the subject of a conference held at the Bergische Universität Wuppertal in July 2012. This volume presents eight essays (all but one in German) written in connection with this gathering—by Suzanne Marchand, Matthias Steinbach, Dieter Vieweger, Julia Serr, and Marcel Serr, Sabine Mangold-Will, Lars Petersen, Thorsten Beigel, and Christoph Johannes Franzen.

In their introduction, the editors point out that Wilhelm's interest in Greece and Western Asia was part of a "lebenslanges politisches Legitimationsprogramm" (p. 12) intended to buttress his own claims to rule. In his own dilettantish efforts at scholarship, chiefly delivered as lectures to former courtiers attending his informal "Doorner Arbeits-Gemeinschaft" during his exile in Holland, but also as published in *Das Königtum im Alten Mesopotamien* (Berlin, 1938), Wilhelm sought to demonstrate that he was heir to a monarchical culture that arose in the Near East, spread to Hellenistic Greece, and was ultimately adopted in central Europe. He even draws a rather vague comparison between Hammurapi of Babylon and his own ancestor Friedrich Wilhelm I (*Das Königtum*, p. 27).

Other topics treated in this book include the monarch's 1898 state visit to Ottoman lands, during which he gave his well-known speech in Damascus proclaiming himself to be the protector of the world's Muslims; his quixotic decision to send a German expedition to uncover Baalbek; and his general relations with the intelligentsia of his realm, both before and after his abdication in November 1918.

Wilhelm II.: Archäologie und Politik um 1900 will be of interest not only to students of the intellectual history and diplomacy of "the long nineteenth century" CE but also to Assyriologists curious about how Germans came to play such a prominent role in the early history of our field.

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