

Introduction

Gustav Adolf Deissmann, third of five children, was born on 7 November 1866, in the Lutheran *Pfarrhaus* of the small Hessian village of Langenscheid, where his father was *Pfarrer* of a small congregation. At the end of 1873 the family moved to Erbach (Rheingau), a predominantly Catholic community, where Deissmann grew up. From 1879-85 he attended the Wiesbaden *Gymnasium*, followed by theology studies at Tübingen (1885-88), a *Kandidatenjahr* at the Herborn Theological Seminary (1889), and the final theological examination at Wiesbaden. During the ensuing winter he acted as *Vikar* at Dausenau (on the river Lahn) to relieve the small community's sick *Pfarrer*, after which he began to study for his licentiate at Marburg. Instead of a theological dissertation on baptism, as initially planned, he produced a philological *Habilitationsschrift* on the Greek preposition ἐν in its postclassical usage, and by doing so set course for an academic instead of ecclesiastical career. For personal, strategic reasons he subsequently took up a position as *Pfarrer* for the Herborn parish, to which was attached a tenure as lecturer at the town's influential Theological Seminary. Two-and-a-half years later he became professor of NT at the University of Heidelberg (1897-1908), as well as *Geheimer Konsistorialrat*, and in 1908 succeeded Bernhard Weiss on the Chair for NT theology at Berlin.

While it is in the nature of this study to touch on a number of specialist fields, its focus is strictly on Deissmann's intellectual contributions; and although it is biographical to some degree, it is intentionally not designed to be a 'cradle-to-grave' account of his life. Instead, it aims to demonstrate both the breadth and far-reaching impact of his various outstanding achievements and pioneering ideas, on both a national and international level.

However, since Deissmann was virtually forgotten not long after his death (especially in Germany) the question must be posed whether his contribution might perhaps have been of little overall consequence after all – despite the recognition he received in his lifetime. Moreover, his long but unsuccessful struggle to complete a pioneering and internationally anticipated NT lexicon could further suggest to some that he was a failure in terms of his own goals. Neither paints a true picture. For the causes of his

eventual obscurity were primarily circumstantial, rather than of his own making; and the same can also be said, even though to a lesser degree, with respect to his inability to complete the lexicon. Like with many other German academics at that time, WWI and the subsequent postwar years completely dislocated and redirected his personal goals. Thus, Deissmann's strong prewar engagement with the philology of postclassical Greek lessened, while his international profile as a humanitarian 'voice of reason' began to grow by way of his regular bulletins to America – the *Protestant Weekly Letter*. This, in turn, generated an extensive network of well-connected individuals, which put him in an ideal position for his *Verständigungsarbeit* (i.e. self-appointed task of building bridges of understanding), and also enabled him to bring about a revival of the archaeological excavations of Ephesus.

Numerous scholars have been able to lay claim to dominance of a particular branch of erudite learning. What set Deissmann apart was his ability to perform at such a high level in each of several disparate disciplines and undertakings. The following selection of his national and international intellectual associations illustrates this: for he was a member of both the German and Austrian Archaeological Institutes; a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Lund; a foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy in Stockholm; a member of the German Commission for Academic Cooperation; an honorary member of various overseas bodies, such as the Oxford Society of Historical Theology, and the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis of North America; chairman of the Branch Committee for Evangelical Theology in Germany's *Notgemeinschaft* (see ch. 5, n. 37); the president of the ecumenical 'Life and Work' Theological Commission; vice president and executive member of the 'Faith and Order' movement, and chairman of the 'Life and Work' Committee for East-West Cooperation.

The research for this study is based heavily on a substantial databank of source material, obtained in the first instance from some 25 archives in countries including America, Australia, Austria, England, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. To this is added a large collection of valuable information from non-archival and private sources, and also incorporates information gleaned from personal interviews with family and non-family members, as well as from an unfettered access to Deissmann's private library, memorabilia and diary.

Part 1

Δύο τάλαντά μοι παρέδωκας



Figure 1
Gustav Adolf Deissmann, aged about 30, c. 1895-1898

Ch. 1: Deissmann the discoverer

Die Sprache des Neuen Testaments und damit auch die in dieser Sprache gefaßte Sache des Neuen Testaments wurde nunmehr geschichtlich und lokal in der Welt des Vorderen Orients der Spätantike angesiedelt. Diese Sprache wurde von Deissmann entdeckt und festgelegt als spät-griechische Umgangssprache.¹

1.1. The language of the New Testament in the late 19th century

Before Deissmann's seminal book, *Bibelstudien*, was published in 1895, the language of the NT was routinely isolated from 'profane' Greek, as a separate 'biblical', 'Jewish', 'Christian', 'Hebraistic', or even 'Holy Ghost' Greek, and considered to be seriously indebted to the Alexandrian translation of the OT that had become known as the Septuagint. This general consensus was based on the fact that the writers of the NT had made copious use of this Greek translation, and because their language did not seem to fit the grammatical conventions of classical literature. Confirmation for this could readily be found in existing Greek grammars and lexicons, which helped to perpetuate this misconception.

In 1822 Georg Benedikt Winer (1789-1858) published his *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms*, an epoch-making work for NT studies. Although Winer was a product of the Cartesian-rationalist tradition and saw no connection between the Greek of the NT and that of the vernacular *koine*,² it brought about 'an enlightened philology', which triumphed over the previously 'unbridled [grammatical]

¹ G. Harder/ G. Deissmann, *Zum Gedenken an Adolf Deissmann. Vortrag anlässlich des 100. Geburtstages von Adolf Deissmann am 7. November 1966, gehalten am 26. April 1967 vor den Dozenten und Studenten der Kirchlichen Hochschule in Berlin, Bremen, 1967, 3.*

² In this work I shall use the term 'koine' in line with Albert Thumb's definition: "'hellenistisch' ist also alles, was dieser Culturepoche angehört, und 'hellenistische Sprache' ist nichts anderes als was wir sonst kürzer mit Κοινή bezeichnen". *Die griechische Sprache im Zeitalter des Hellenismus. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Beurteilung der KOINH.* Strassburg, 1901, 9.

license'.³ His work was subsequently revised by Georg Konrad Gottlieb Lünemann (1819-94), and later again by Paul Wilhelm Schmiedel (1851-1935).⁴ Yet the latter's introductory paragraphs in his eighth edition (1894-97) showed, according to Deissmann, '... still too much Winer and too little Schmiedel,' although, he conceded that the book itself 'marks a characteristic and decisive turning point in NT philology'.⁵ The Grammar's title remained the same, however, revealing the author's and editor's fundamentally unchanged assumption that the Greek of the NT was an isolated language, separate from the rest of ancient Greek. The book's influence quickly spread beyond Germany, especially after 1859, when Edward Masson's English translation was published.⁶ This, too, was later revised, first by Joseph Henry Thayer (1828-1901), and then by William Fiddian Moulton (1835-98). But despite the book's fundamentally sound philology, it did little to dispel the notion of a separate, 'biblical' Greek. In 1859, Alexander Buttmann (1813-93) produced another such grammar in Germany, entitled, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachgebrauchs*; Thayer's translation appeared in 1891 as *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. In 1896 yet another one appeared on the market, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, by Friedrich Blass (1843-1907), but it barely took Deissmann's groundbreaking philology into account.

Each of these grammars was a monumental work, and their philological methodology exerted enormous influence on the sociolinguistic perception of the following generations of scholars – particularly in the fields of philology and theology. For if lexicons are the lifeblood of ancient linguistic studies, grammars are their very heart, since they provide the underpinning systemic structures for these disciplines. Yet they all shared an elemental flaw: the common assumption that the language of the NT was a grammatical peculiarity, and therefore subject to its own laws.

In bold opposition to this consensus, Deissmann wrote with youthful zest (1898): 'Theoretisch lässt sich eine NT Grammatik ebensowenig rechtfertigen, wie etwa ein

³ A.T. Robertson, *A grammar of the Greek New Testament in the light of historical research*, London, 1919³ (1914), 4.

⁴ Although he revised only the first part, before stopping mysteriously in mid-sentence on page 192. Robertson, 'New Testament grammar after thirty years', in K.L. Schmidt, ed., *Festgabe für Adolf Deissmann, zum 60. Geburtstag 7. November 1926*. Tübingen, 1927, 83.

⁵ *Philology*, 114, 115.

⁶ W.F Moulton had begun to re-edit Masson's translation, but died before completion, leaving the work to his son, James Hope Moulton (see below). New linguistic discoveries convinced the latter to abandon the project and he created an entirely new work: *A grammar of New Testament Greek, based on W.F. Moulton's edition of G.B. Winer's grammar. Vol. 1: Prolegomena*, Edinburgh, 1906. Robertson, 'New Testament grammar', 82-3.

Hierozoikon. Es gibt so wenig eine NT Sprache wie es biblische Tiere gibt.⁷ His three major books on the philological topic of linguistic history and lexicography, *Bibelstudien*, *Neue Bibelstudien* and *Licht vom Osten*, have conclusively succeeded in proving the truth of his graphic metaphor. With them Deissmann opened the door to a new era in postclassical Greek studies, and systematically set the language of the biblical books into their correct historical setting.

1.2. Academic preparation

When Deissmann arrived in Marburg during the Easter break in 1891, having enrolled for the regular licentiate, the young *Pfarrer* – a graduate from Herborn and Wiesbaden – had no lofty aspirations. The Faculty of Theology offered three separate degrees: the lesser licentiate, the somewhat more prestigious Doctor of Theology, and the purely academic *Habilitation*,⁸ but he affirmed: ‘an Habilitation dachte ich zunächst noch nicht’.⁹

In the course of the previous twelve years, the Theological Faculty of Marburg’s nearly 400 year-old Philipps-University had gained a steadily growing reputation for academic excellence and open-mindedness to new ideas.¹⁰ The fundamental criteria for the selection of lecturers was no longer allowed to depend on a candidate’s theological or political views, but rather on their research productivity, academic objectivity and teaching qualification. Enrolments rose from sixty in 1878 to 241 a decade later,¹¹ particularly boosted in 1886 by the arrival of Adolf Harnack (1851-1930).¹² He was ‘der fleißigste, originellste Kirchenhistoriker von ungewöhnlicher Produktivität und wissenschaftlicher Forschungsgabe sowie der anregendste Dozent unter ihnen [i.e.

⁷ GAD, *Schulblätter*, 1898.

⁸ E.C. Ranke, *Bestimmungen über die Promotionen und die Habilitation bei der theologischen Fakultät zu Marburg*, Marburg, 1874, §1, §8-9.

⁹ *SD*, 8.

¹⁰ G.A. Jülicher, ‘Zur Geschichte der theologischen Fakultät’, in H. Hermelink/ S.A. Kaehler, eds., *Die Philipps-Universität zu Marburg, 1527-1927, fünf Kapitel aus ihrer Geschichte (1527-1866)*, Marburg, 1927, 569. From its beginning in 1866 until 1879, when J.W. Herrmann’s influence ushered in a new era, the Faculty was seriously fragmented by infighting: ‘die einzelnen Professoren lasen über die verschiedensten Dinge, wie wenn jeder das Ganze allein zu vertreten hätte und dem anderen nichts überlassen dürfte; unmöglich können dabei ihre Vorlesungen gleichwertig geworden sein’ (Jülicher, 569).

¹¹ Jülicher, 569-70.

¹² The preposition ‘von’ was added at his ennobling on 22.3.1914.

German theology professors]’.¹³ During his three years at Marburg, students kept flocking in from every part of Europe as well as the USA; nevertheless, in 1889 he transferred to Berlin, where he remained until his retirement 32 years later. Therefore, Deissmann missed him at this early point in his development.¹⁴

It was to this thriving university that Deissmann wrote a lengthy autobiographical application letter on 14 April 1891, in which – on the grounds of parental financial strains – he successfully requested a stipend that would enable him to pursue further studies for the licentiate. The application ended with an earnest undertaking that ‘in jedem Falle, sollte ich die Licentiatenprüfung bestehen oder nicht, ist es meine Absicht, zunächst wieder in den Dienst der Nassauischen Landeskirche zu treten’.¹⁵

Since Deissmann wanted to focus his studies on the NT, his main teacher at Marburg was Carl Friedrich Georg Heinrici (1844-1915), who had held the Chair of NT since 1874 and was also a member of the Kassel Consistory. At the very end of his life, in spring of 1915, he founded the Religionsgeschichtliches Forschungsinstitut at the Leipzig University, with the specific task of re-editing¹⁶ the mid-18th century Wettstein.¹⁷ To achieve this, he set up a small team under his leadership and with Deissmann’s collaboration.¹⁸ Although Heinrici’s main interest was in early Christianity, with a particular penchant for the Apostle Paul regarding whom he had written several

¹³ F.W. Bautz, ‘Harnack, Adolf v. (1851-1930)’, *BBKL*, 2, Hamm, 1990, 556.

¹⁴ For an argument that Harnack may also have influenced GAD to some degree, see Appendix 1, c.

¹⁵ For a transcript of GAD’s ‘Lebenslauf’, dated 14.4.1891, see Appendix 1, a.

¹⁶ Heinrici’s real objective was far grander, although ultimately unrealistic, for he wanted ‘eine möglichst vollständige Sammlung der Parallelen für das Neue Testament aus dem Gebiete des Hellenismus herzustellen’. G. Strecker/ U. Schnelle, *Neuer Wettstein, Texte zum Neuen Testament aus Griechenland und Hellenismus*, 1, Berlin, 1996, x.

¹⁷ In 1751-2 Johann Jakob Wettstein (1693-1754), one of the most noteworthy 18th century NT text critics, produced a monumental edition of the Greek NT, in opposition to the commonly accepted Textus Receptus. Beneath his Greek text he provided a comprehensive running commentary, consisting of masses of parallel material drawn from classical and rabbinical sources, thus forming a valuable textual thesaurus for later commentators.

¹⁸ In *LvO*⁴ GAD added an informative footnote that also shows his erstwhile enthusiasm for this project: ‘Gewiß, es wäre eine Aufgabe, wohl wert der Lebensarbeit eines Forschers, das großartige über anderthalb Jahrhunderte alte Neue Testament von Johann Jakob Wettstein ... neu herauszugeben.’ 2, n. 3. It is worth pointing out that he only meant an updated re-edition and not, as Heinrici wanted, a complete reworking based on the old Wettstein. It cannot be determined with any certainty when GAD’s role in this team ended, but from the tenor of this footnote, it appears that the extremes of Germany’s postwar economic conditions caused the project’s temporary suspension. Although it recommenced in 1921, Heinrici’s unworkable ideal proved too overwhelming, and the work lapsed for almost three-quarters of a century, despite numerous later attempts. The *Neuer Wettstein*, published in 1996, finally succeeded because it consciously followed GAD’s above-mentioned narrower parameters, instead of Heinrici’s unrealistic goals. See *Neuer Wettstein*, xi.

books, he was also an outstanding classical scholar.¹⁹ The suggestion that his young *protégé* should consider applying himself to Paul's teachings on water baptism came, therefore, as no surprise.

Heinrici's colleague, Wolf Wilhelm Graf von Baudissin (1847-1926), specialised in OT theology, but stood in decisive opposition to Julius Wellhausen. Some 26 years after attending his lectures Deissmann celebrated Baudissin as a founding father of modern religious history, and eulogised him as one who had done more than others to liberate the OT from isolation, by bringing it into line with Semitic and general religious history.²⁰

Church history was Deissmann's third subject, taught by Carl Mirbt (1860-1929), who had only recently (20 December 1890) been appointed as the Ordinarius. He was a zealous Protestant, whose passion for missionary work was equalled only by his ardent anti-Roman Catholic convictions (attested by his many writings on the topic).²¹ Despite his robust orthodoxy, he obtained some distinction through his new historical methodology that integrated church and secular history.

Deissmann's fourth field of study was systematic theology, the domain of Johann Wilhelm Herrmann (1846-1922), who had occupied this Chair since 1879. He was a foremost disciple of Albrecht Ritschl (1822-89), but had also studied under Friedrich August Gotttreu Tholuck (1799-1877) – who, incidentally, had been one of the teachers of Deissmann's father.²² A pious evangelical, Herrmann's emphasis on the relationship between religion and ethics was akin to Harnack's and Ritschl's and brought him widespread influence. Several of his pupils eventually surpassed him in achievement and public profile, among them Karl Barth (1886-1968), Rudolf Karl Bultmann (1884-1976) and Deissmann himself.

Finally, there was Ernst Christian Achelis (1838-1912), who taught applied theology and simultaneously acted as University chaplain. In 1890 and 1891 he published the

¹⁹ e.g. he edited *Die Leipziger Papyrusfragmente der Psalmen. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Erklärung des Neuen Testaments*, 4, Leipzig, 1903.

²⁰ GAD gave this tribute at Marburg (26.9.1917), in honour of Baudissin's 70th birthday. The address is reprinted in *Ev.Wbr.*, 21.10.1917, 4-5 (for *Ev.Wbr.*, and *Pr.WL* citations, see explanation, ch. 7, n. 2).

²¹ These include: *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums und des römischen Katholizismus*. Tübingen, 1967⁶ (1895); *Die Entstehung des Papsttums*, 1890; *Der deutsche Patriot und die Jesuitenfrage*, 1893; *Die preußische Gesandtschaft am Hofe des Papstes*, 1899; *Geschichte der katholischen Kirche von der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zum Vatikanischen Konzil*, 1913.

²² *SD*, 4. For GAD's father, see ch. 3.2.

first two of his three-volume *Lehrbuch der praktischen Theologie*, for he had more than two decades experience in pastoral work and also established a new church in Hastedt near Bremen.

However, these five teachers were not the only ones to influence Deissmann's intellectual development at Marburg, for in his later years he also paid tribute to three other professors who had acted as 'leuchtende gute Sterne'. There was Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), a philologist who taught with 'einsame[r] Wucht';²³ the church historian Adolf Jülicher (1857-1938), an independent and self-professed liberal theologian²⁴ and representative of the strictly historico-critical school, with his 'geschliffene[m] Scharfsinn', and Hermann Cohen (1842-1918), a neo-Kantian philosopher, logician and authority on Judaism, full of 'ironische[m] Pathos'.

Returning now to Deissmann's aforementioned application: he had evidently made contact with Heinrici some time before his Dausenau *Vikariat* of 1890/91, in the hope of furthering his NT knowledge. At first he tried to take up Heinrici's challenge, but soon became disheartened with the difficulties of 'home studies' and, for practical reasons concluded that he should enrol at a university once again:

Herr Consistorialrat Professor D. Heinrici zu Marburg hatte die Güte, mir vor einiger Zeit "die Aussagen des Apostels Paulus über die Taufe" als Thema für dieses Examen zu empfehlen, und ich habe bereits angefangen, dieses Thema zu bearbeiten. Während meines Vikariates zu Dausenau hat sich mir jedoch die Erfahrung aufgedrängt, daß man fernab von jeder besseren Bibliothek nicht in der zureichenden Weise wissenschaftlich arbeiten kann und daß man auch sonst durch die großen Schwierigkeiten, welche das praktische Amt für den Anfänger hat, zu einer planmäßigen und intensiven Wissenschaftlichen Arbeit von sonst kaum gelangen wird. So habe ich dann nach reichlicher Überlegung den Entschluß gefaßt, nochmals an einer Universität zu studieren. Ich gedenke das kommende Sommersemester mich in Marburg zum Licentiatenexamen vorzubereiten.²⁵

²³ *Ev. Wbr.*, Apr., 1921, 185.

²⁴ Unlike the later 'Ritschlian liberalism of the 1880s early 19th century German liberalism was a two-pronged philosophical trend: 1) Liberalism of doctrine, which questioned and rejected traditional Christian beliefs. 2) Liberalism of biblical scholarship, which challenged the historicity and divine inspiration of Scripture. Although David Friedrich Strauss (1808-74) published his dissenting landmark, *The life of Jesus*, in 1835, its roots were in the 18th century Enlightenment. Kant's mantra 'dare to know', issued a universal challenge to exercise the mind's intellectual faculties instead of an unthinking acceptance of church dogma. See C. Clark, *Iron Kingdom: the rise and downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947*, London, 2006, 247-83; also S.N. Williams, 'The enlightenment', in D. Preston, et al., eds., *New dictionary of theology*, Downers Grove, 1988, 223-4.

²⁵ GAD's 'Lebenslauf', 14.4.1891; see Appendix 1, a.

Deissmann had not rushed lightly into this decision, but first sought advice from some of his earlier teachers, namely, Emil Kautzsch (1841-1910), Max Wilhelm Theodor Reischle (1858-1905) and Eugen Friedrich Ferdinand Sachse (1839-1917).

He had first come under Kautzsch' influence in summer 1885, during his theology training at Tübingen, where he studied three semesters under this Hebraist and OT exegete.²⁶ For Deissmann it was Kautzsch's literary criticism and captivating OT exegesis which had 'die größte Anziehungskraft' and impressed on him the value of the OT.²⁷ Max Reischle also came to know him at Tübingen, but only during Deissmann's last semester, when he attended his classes on 'Dogmatische Controversfragen der Gegenwart'.²⁸ But Reischle's easygoing gentility endeared him to his students and also had the effect of influencing Deissmann's later style of teaching in his own classes.²⁹ Eugen Sachse met him first in 1889 at the Herborn Theological Seminary,³⁰ which the former directed, but other than encouraging the young graduate to undertake further studies, he appears to have had no perceptible impact on his academic development. These then, were the three men who, more than others, guided him towards the crucial decision to enroll in the Marburg University.

1.3. The formula ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

Immediately after Easter 1891, Deissmann made a renewed start on Heinrici's suggested dissertation apropos early apostolic baptism³¹ – this time at the University itself, where he had access to an extensive library. It was not long, though, before the innocuous but constantly recurring Pauline formula ἐν Χριστῷ began to draw his attention away from his broadly exegetical topic towards the minutiae of Greek

²⁶ For GAD's subject enrolment lists at Tübingen see Appendix 3 (I-VI).

²⁷ GAD, 'Lebenslauf', 27.3.1889. For a transcript see Appendix 1, b.

²⁸ Subject enrolment list, WS 1887/88.

²⁹ A quarter of a century later GAD wrote of Reischle that he 'früh erkannt hatte, daß ein von jugendlicher Begeisterung mit fröhlichen Augen vorgetragenes Problem junge Menschen mehr anzieht und fördert, als der spitze höhnische Schulmeisterton des übergescheiten Griesgrams'. *Ev.Wbr.*, 14.5.1917, 4. For GAD's own teaching style see Appendix 9, 1.

³⁰ Before a graduate theologian could be licensed as Pfarrer within the duchy of Nassau, he had to complete two semesters of supplementary studies at this institution. J. Wienecke, ed., *Mitteilungsblatt des Geschichtsvereins Herborn e. V.*, 40, 1, Herborn, 1992, 5.

³¹ GAD recalled: 'Er hatte mir schon vorher geraten, über die urchristliche Taufe zu arbeiten, und es lag in diesem Rat zugleich der Hinweis auf eine Untersuchung der antiken Mysterien und ihres etwaigen Ertrags für das Verständnis der altchristlichen Sakramente.' *SD*, 8.

philology.³² A quick commentary search revealed that disappointingly few analytical studies had been made on the unpretentious ἐν with a singular dative, but for Deissmann it looked like a much more stimulating problem than the project topic he had accepted from Heinrici.

He was, of course, not the first to be struck by Paul's unorthodox grammatical construction, for some 164 instances are known in which the Apostle employed this oddly worded phrase, although ἐν with a singular personal name rarely occurs in other Greek literature. In particular, however, it was Paul's metaphysical application of this preposition in relation to a person that caught his attention. A little over a year later, when Heinrici assessed Deissmann's new and upgraded dissertation (see below, ch. 1.3), he made the point that this particular preposition had long baffled NT commentators and stated: 'Der Verfasser bestätigt durch seine Leistung das Urtheil Buttmanns, daß die Präposition ἐν ein Buch erfordere'.³³ However, it was not Buttmann, but the versatile Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834), who first realised the far-reaching consequences this construction could have for NT hermeneutics,³⁴ and any topical commentaries written in the intervening decades between him and Deissmann rested squarely on the former's inconclusive observations:

In den Kommentaren oftmals übergangen oder mit einer gewaltsamen dogmatischen Interpretation des 'in' auf den 'historischen' Christus und sein Heilswerk gedeutet, erschien [die Formel] mir je länger je mehr als eine eigenartige inhaltsschwere Schöpfung wahrscheinlich des Apostels Paulus selbst, als das eigentliche Kenn- und Lösungswort seiner Gemeinschaft mit dem pneumatischen, ihm gegenwärtigen Christus, seiner Christumystik.³⁵

However, it was no mean task to produce a thorough study on this topic, not least because of the relative scarcity of experienced and willing philologists the young researcher could turn to, for these traditionally tended to patronise theologians and generally distanced themselves from biblical language studies.³⁶ Moreover, despite the intensive multilingual training theologians underwent in at least three ancient languages (Greek, Hebrew, Latin), no specific branch of learning existed in Germany that specialised in the philology of the Greek Bible.

³² GAD likened it to 'Pürschgänge', *SD*, 10.

³³ Heinrici, 'Referat über die Probeschrift des Repetenten G.A. Deißmann: Die Formel ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ untersucht', 9.6.1892. For a transcript see Appendix 1, d.

³⁴ *En Chr.*, 71.

³⁵ *SD*, 8.

³⁶ *SD*, 9. See also ch. 3.1.

Nevertheless, Heinrici agreed to continue the supervision of Deissmann's new topic, although its philological character was somewhat alien to him. However – probably on his *Doktorvaters* suggestion – Deissmann made frequent visits by train to the aged Karl Johannes Tycho Mommsen (1819-1900) in Frankfurt. Although retired by then, the latter had been a very successful director of the *Gelehrten-schule*³⁷ in Frankfurt since 1864, and over the decades had sedulously accumulated a comprehensive collection of Greek prepositions from classical literature, which he now made freely available to his young colleague. It was here where Deissmann first began to comprehend 'was treue Kleinarbeit im Laufe eines Gelehrtenlebens leisten kann'.³⁸ The septuagenarian's indefatigable methodology greatly facilitated Deissmann's research in the non-biblical literary corpus, but it also inspired him with resolve for his own research, for to be able to make a thoroughgoing and well-grounded evaluation of the prepositional ἐν required precisely this kind of systematic tenacity.

In den Monaten, als ich mich als Spezialisten für das Wort 'in' gern necken ließ, habe ich versucht, den Sprachgebrauch der gesamten literarischen Gräzität, soweit die Präposition ἐν mit dem persönlichem Dativ in Frage kam, festzustellen.³⁹

By 'gesamte Gräzität' he also included the Septuagint and NT, which Mommsen did not seem to have trawled. When Deissmann embarked on this wearisome undertaking, the Hatch and Redpath concordance for the Septuagint had not even reached the letter epsilon. Thus, although the double-columned layout of the old Leander von Ess edition made his task somewhat easier, he was forced to search through the entire 650,000 words, to hunt down where the tiny two-letter word occurred.⁴⁰ Despite its mechanical aspect, Deissmann was unabashedly proud of this particular achievement and claimed, not without some justification, that he began:

... um des ἐν willen, die ganze Septuaginta rasch im Fluge durchzulesen und habe sie in einigen Wochen auch glücklich bewältigt ... Man kann zweifeln, ob es viele abendländische Zeitgenossen gibt, die den ganzen Septuagintatext gelesen haben. Meist wurde und wird er nur stellenweise oder buchweise benutzt ... und ich übertreibe nicht, wenn ich sage, daß mir

³⁷ i.e. roughly corresponding to English Grammar Schools.

³⁸ *SD*, 10.

³⁹ *SD*, 9.

⁴⁰ 'My work was much helped at that time by the fact that there was no possibility for me to use the Septuagint Concordance. That seems to be a paradox: but it is true: Hatch and Redpath in those days had not got as far as the preposition "ἐν", and in consequence I was driven to reading through the whole of the Septuagint for myself, with the special view of discovering the uses of "ἐν." I wonder whether it would have been possible for me to read the whole Old Testament in Greek otherwise.' *Selly Oak Lectures*, 165. See also *SD*, 10.

jene Septuagintawochen die Entdeckung einer griechischen Weltbibel bedeuteten, ohne welche die andere griechische Weltbibel, diejenige, die den Nachlaß der Evangelisten und Apostel gerettet hat, nicht verstanden werden kann.⁴¹

Even though he wrote this almost thirty years after the event (1925), he appears to have inflated the undertaking in his mind, for instead of reading ‘den ganzen Septuagintatext’ he had merely trawled it to discover how its writers had employed the prepositional *ἐν*. By Deissmann’s own account he scanned with rapid speed but little concern for textual comprehension and scoured ‘nicht nur Wortbilder, sondern auch Zeilenbilder mit einem einzigen Blick’.⁴² Ironically, since his scanning was narrowly focused he subjected himself to the very same charge of selective content utilisation that he would later bring against his colleagues. Nevertheless, he engaged sufficiently with the wider context of each *ἐν* to discover that the Septuagint was something other than a Semitic book in Greek dress, as was commonly being taught at that time.⁴³ Even thirteen years later, Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare (1856-1924) and St. George William Joseph Stock (1850-1922) still clung with stubborn determination to the by then largely discredited view that:

If we want to understand the Greek of the New Testament, it is plain that we must compare it with the Greek of the Old, which belongs, like it, to post-classical times, is colloquial rather than literary, and is so deeply affected by Semitic influences as often to be hardly Greek at all, but rather Hebrew in disguise.⁴⁴

However, Deissmann’s systematic scanning had convinced him that, far from being ‘Hebrew in disguise’, the Greek of the Septuagint reflects the process of the Hellenisation of Semitic monotheism, and consequently it should be read and understood as a Greek book in its own right. That it is a translation goes without saying, yet since it does not slavishly follow Hebrew *Vorlagen* (as Aquila’s, for example), its text is frequently ‘ersetzend’ instead of ‘übersetzend’.⁴⁵ His initial findings were later confirmed by his papyrological research (see ch. 1.4), and in 1902 he presented a paper at the International Congress for Oriental Studies in Hamburg, where

⁴¹ *SD*, 10.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ F.C. Conybeare/ St.G.W.J. Stock, *Grammar of Septuagint Greek, with selected readings, vocabularies, and updated indexes*, Peabody, 1995 (1905), 21.

⁴⁵ *SD*, 11.

he urged that Septuagint studies be reoriented in line with his findings.⁴⁶ Yet three years later Conybeare and Stock were still arguing that

the language of the Septuagint, so far as it is Greek at all, is the colloquial Greek of Alexandria, but it is Biblical Greek, because it contains so large an element, which is not Hellenic, but Semitic ... One of our difficulties in explaining the meaning of the Greek in the Septuagint is that it is often doubtful whether the Greek *had* a meaning to those who wrote it.⁴⁷

Despite a general lack of enthusiasm for Deissmann's chosen topic amongst theologians, historians and philologists alike, he had succeeded in upgrading his status midstream from licentiate to *Habilitand* and on 14 May 1892 successfully submitted his completed *Habilitationsschrift*.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that he neither aimed for, nor obtained a doctoral degree with his *Habilitation*, although Marburg certainly offered this option (see ch. 1.2). In fact, he received his first doctoral degree *honoris causa* – from Marburg – at Christmas 1897, in recognition of his two *Bibelstudien*, when he was already teaching at Heidelberg.

He had originally started on a 'sensible' theological dissertation for his licentiate, but this was now transformed into an unconventional but respectable philological *Habilitationsschrift*. It took Heinrici three and a half weeks to assess it, before he concluded:

Fasse ich mein Urtheil zusammen, so darf ich sagen, daß die Abhandlung mir eine fruchtbare und förderliche Behandlung einer wichtigen exegetischen Frage darzubieten scheint und ich daher sie als ein Specimen eruditionis im Sinne und nach der Bitte des Verf.[assers] anzusehen beantrage.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, the dissertation failed to excite his enthusiasm, for he remained unconvinced by its fundamental argument that Paul had created the ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ formula as a 'bequemer Ausdruck' for his Christology. On the other hand, he commended Deissmann's methodical treatment of the Septuagint, as well as his observations and rejection of 'Judengriechisch'.⁵⁰

The dissertation, together with Heinrici's written assessment, was then passed on to the

⁴⁶ *SD*, 11.

⁴⁷ Conybeare/ Stock, 22-3 (Italics their own).

⁴⁸ i.e. a prerequisite dissertation for Habilitation.

⁴⁹ Heinrici, 'Referat'. See Appendix 1, d.

⁵⁰ GAD had cautioned: 'Das Griechisch der LXX darf nicht mit dem von den jüdischen Hellenisten gesprochenen Griechisch identifiziert werden'. *En Chr.*, 134.

34-year-old *Dekan* of the Faculty, Adolf Jülicher,⁵¹ who endorsed Heinrici's general appraisal, adding: 'Der Fleiß und die Sorgfalt D's verdienen die höchste Anerkennung'.

Yet he too was not overly impressed and went so far as to say:

Die sprachgeschichtlichen Untersuchungen D's in dem ersten Teile der Arbeit erscheinen mir fast als etwas Überflüssiges, denn ich meine, dass man zu dem richtigen Sinne des paulinischen ἐν Χρ. auch ohne diese [?. illegible] durch die griechische und judengriechische Litteratur gelangt wäre.

Notwithstanding this critique, Jülicher's report is particularly significant in that he was the first to recognise formally Deissmann's aptitude for Greek philology and lucid writing style, for he concluded his *Referat* with the prescient prediction: 'Wenn er eine gewisse Steifheit überwinden haben wird, so darf man – anliegende Arbeit gibt dazu das Recht – noch recht tüchtige Leistungen von ihm erwarten.'⁵²

When Deissmann received the news that his *Habilitationsschrift* had been accepted, he immediately began preparations to have it printed by the Marburg publishers, N.G. Elwert, hoping that it may appear in bookshops with the beginning of the winter semester in October. However, to save costs with the copies he was expected to provide at his dissertation defence, Heinrici suggested he print only a small number of part one for that event,⁵³ but since Jülicher considered that section as almost superfluous Deissmann ended up producing merely the second, a copy of which is still held at the Marburg State Archive.

The public dissertation defence was his final hurdle before he could be formally habilitated and took place at noon on Thursday 20 October, in the University's assembly hall. An open invitation had been posted and details printed on the front cover of the inaugural dissertation itself;⁵⁴ his two disputants were *Privatdozenten* and

⁵¹ Although young, he had a reputation as an analytical thinker: 'wer etwas lernen und nicht gerade sich unterhalten will, wird viel besser an Jülicher gewiesen, als an Harnack'. F. Overbeck, cited by H.J. Klauck, in G. Schwaiger, ed., *Historische Kritik in der Theologie; Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte*, Göttingen, 1980, 99.

⁵² Jülicher, 'Correferat über die Probeschrift des Repetenten G.A. Deissmann: „Die Formel ἐν Χρῆστῷ Ἰησοῦ untersucht“', 3.7.1892. For a transcript see Appendix 1, e.

⁵³ GAD, letter to Theological Faculty, 8.8.1892. The dissertation's first part dealt primarily with Greek philology, the second with GAD's thesis that Paul had conceived the formula ἐν Χρῆστῷ specifically for his Christology.

⁵⁴ Besides the title, the cover states that it was an 'Inaugural-Dissertation, welche samt den beigefügten Thesen zur Erlangung der Würde eines Licentiaten der Theologie sowie der *venia docendi* mit Genehmigung der Hochwürdigen Theologischen Facultät zu Marburg am 20. Oktober 1892, 12 Uhr, in der Aula der Universität öffentlich verteidigen wird G. Adolf Deissmann, Repetent an dem Seminarium Philippinum. Opponenten: Lic. theol. Johannes Bauer, Privatdocent an der Universität Marburg; Lic. theol. Bernhard Bess, Privatdocent an der Universität Marburg.'

licentiate theologians. Johannes Bauer (1860-1930), whose recent *Habilitationsschrift* had only just been published,⁵⁵ and Bernhard Bess (1863-?), whose first monograph appeared less than a year earlier.⁵⁶ No record of the *apologia* appears to exist, but Mirbt, who had by now succeeded Jülicher as *Dekan*, wrote a brief note, probably to the *Kultusminister* (no address is included), confirming that ‘... am heutigen Tage Herr Lic. theol. Adolf Deißmann als Privatdozent an der geistigen theologischen Fakultät sich habilitiert hat’.⁵⁷

Deissmann had never thought of his habilitation as an end in itself, but rather as a necessary learning exercise to gain clearer insight into the language, culture and history of early Christianity, since he fully intended to return to the *Pfarramt* after completion of his studies (see ch. 1.2). Nonetheless, his dissertation initiated him into the world of academia and drew him away from parish ministry even though his prepositional research had created little interest and few recognised its implications. However, since not even his *Doktorvater* and Faculty *Dekan* showed much enthusiasm for the topic, it is no wonder that it took some time before its significance began to be understood by other scholars. Yet three decades later he listed 27 separate works, which either sprang from, or were influenced by his *Habilitationsschrift*.⁵⁸

Deissmann was fighting an uphill battle against deeply entrenched beliefs within the international fraternity of biblical scholarship. In England, for instance, the Grammarian Samuel Gosnell Green (1822-1905) argued that the NT writers only used ἐν with the dative because of the influence a similar Hebrew preposition had exerted on early Greek speaking Christians via the Septuagint. His explanation of the Pauline formula bordered on mysticism:

The frequent phrase ἐν Χριστῷ (so ἐν Κυρίῳ, &c.), means, not simply attached to Christ as a follower, but *in Christ*, in the most intimate abiding fellowship. So “Christ in you, me,” [*sic*] Rom. viii. 10 ...⁵⁹

⁵⁵ *Die Trostreden des Gregorius von Nyssa in ihrem Verhältnis zur antiken Rhetorik*, Marburg, 1892.

⁵⁶ *Zur Geschichte des Constanzer Konzils. Studien I; Frankreichs Kirchenpolitik und der Prozess des Jean Petit*, Marburg, 1891. Bess was editor of *ZKG* since 1891, and in Feb. 1912 wrote a 10-page letter to GAD (‘Du’ form), together with a preliminary contract, in an unsuccessful attempt at securing his co-editorship of a new publication: the *Theologische Zeitschrift*, planned to be launched that summer.

⁵⁷ Mirbt, note (unaddressed), 20.10.1892.

⁵⁸ The lengthy listing of what he termed the ‘wichtigsten Arbeiten’ occurs in the second edition of *Paulus* (1925), 111-2, n.1, whereas the first edition (1911) merely refers to his *Habilitationsschrift*.

⁵⁹ S.G. Green, *Handbook to the grammar of the Greek Testament, together with a complete vocabulary, and an examination of the chief New Testament synonyms*, London, 1880, 261-2.

Two years after Deissmann's *Habilitationschrift* was published, Friedrich Blass – a widely respected classical philologist at the University of Halle, and one of the foremost authorities on the language of the NT – wrote an article in which he declared, 'das neutestamentliche Griechisch ist als ein besonderes, seinen eigenen Gesetzen folgendes anzuerkennen'.⁶⁰ His grammatical influence was so pervasive that his views left a very long shadow indeed. For more than eighty years later, the standard (revised) Blass-Debrunner Greek grammar – by then in its 10th edition – still claimed that the NT 'use of ἐν owes its extension especially to the imitation of Hebrew constructions ...'; Deissmann's work received only grudging acknowledgement:

The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ (Κυρίῳ), which is copiously appended by Paul to the most varied concepts, utterly defies definite interpretations; cf. Deissmann, *Die nt. Formel 'in Christo Jesu'*, Marburg, 1892.⁶¹

This continual – almost defeatist – shoulder-shrugging by theologians and philologists alike, was perhaps most colourfully described by the theologian and philosopher August Detlef Christian Twesten (1789-1876), when he asked:

Was heisst das: in Gott leben? Ein hebraisierender Ausdruck, den zu meinem Ärger auch Fichte⁶² immer im Munde führt. Von gleicher Art ist das Aufgehen in Gott. Das sind hohle Worte, die kein Mensch versteht, und vor denen gerade deswegen jeder Ehrfurcht hat, als läge recht etwas Hohes darin.⁶³

Deissmann repeated these same sentiments in his dissertation, but concluded with a stern challenge against such arcane presuppositions.

Hört man z. B. in einer Predigt, dass der Sünder seinen Frieden »in Christo« findet, dann weiss man weder, wie das zu denken ist, noch auch – und das ist das Schlimme – wie das zu erreichen ist. »In Christo«? Soll das heissen: »in einem Raisonement über den Menschen Jesus der evangelischen Geschichte« oder »in dem Vertrauen auf eine Thatsache, durch welche Gott versöhnt ist und die ich kurzerhand „Christus“ nenne«, oder »in einem persönlichen Gebetsverkehre mit dem lebendigen Christus«? Die Wendung »in Christo« gehört heute zu den vieldeutigsten unserer gesamten religiösen Terminologie ... Jedenfalls darf keiner, der das »in Christo« gedankenlos braucht, sich einbilden, er rede paulinisch.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *TLZ*, 19, 1894, 338.

⁶¹ F. Blass/ A. Debrunner, *A Greek grammar of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*, R.W. Funk, transl., London, 1961⁹ 10 (1896), 117-8. The 17th German edition of 1990 makes use of GAD's *Bst.* and *LvO.*

⁶² Immanuel Hermann Fichte (1797-1879). German philosopher.

⁶³ A. Twesten, cited by GAD, in *En Chr.*, 73. Twesten succeeded Schleiermacher and was the immediate predecessor of Bernhard Weiss at Berlin (see below, ch. 1.4) who, in turn, was succeeded by GAD.

⁶⁴ *En Chr.*, 133.

Deissmann's study offered for the first time a systematic linguistic explanation of what hitherto had been primarily based on tradition. He demonstrated that the Greek preposition ἐν must be understood in a locative sense, but also relate to a living person; it was not meant to be a replacement for διὰ, or any other preposition, and the accompanying dative of the formula does not signify the 'historical' Christ or his work.⁶⁵ Instead, it characterises the metaphysical relationship of a Christian's spiritual being (*Sichbefinden*) with a living but spiritual Christ. In an attempt at elucidating this idea Deissmann resorted to metaphorical language: air is inside us, he wrote, since we inhale it, yet at the same time we are also 'in' air (locative), since it fully envelopes us.⁶⁶ His research further convinced him that Paul's formula is neither a Semitism,⁶⁷ nor Septuagint-dependent Greek, but the Apostle's own creation in the particular way in which he used it for his fundamental Christological philosophy.⁶⁸

Despite the value of Deissmann's research, *Die neutestamentliche Formel ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ untersucht* was not one of his enduring works and is barely known today. Nevertheless, with it he successfully accomplished what many before him had shied away from: a systematic philological study of an apparently unfruitful grammatical peculiarity within the Greek NT texts. Although his findings created no headlines, it was a crucial first step towards his subsequent discovery that the commonly-held idea of widespread Semitisms in the NT is unsupportable.⁶⁹

1.4. *Bibelstudien*: breakthrough to discovery

After his habilitation Deissmann began to work almost immediately at the Marburg University as *Privatdozent*; at first it was only a part-time job for non-staffed teaching and paid for by private tuition fees. At the end of January he applied to the Faculty for

⁶⁵ *En Chr.*, 79-80.

⁶⁶ *En Chr.*, 98. He also employed this metaphor in *Paulus*. 87. D.J. Timms, in his unpublished PhD dissertation, concluded: 'It is appropriate to regard Adolf Deissmann as the father of the modern mysticism interpretation of ἐν Χριστῷ.' *The Pauline use of en Christo: Re-examining meaning and origins – a linguistic analysis*, Macquarie University, 2000, 237.

⁶⁷ i.e.: including both true Aramaisms and true Hebraisms.

⁶⁸ 'Paulus hat ihn gebildet, um dadurch irgend etwas Eigentümliches, was nur ihn interessierte, auszudrücken. Er ist der Bildner der Formel, nicht in dem Sinne, als hätte er zum ersten Male ἐν mit dem persönlichen Singular verbunden, sondern so, dass er unter Benutzung eines bereits vorhandenen Sprachgebrauches einen ganz neuen terminus technicus schuf'. *En Chr.*, 70.

⁶⁹ Compare, G.H.R. Horsley, 'The fiction of "Jewish Greek"', *New Documents illustrating early Christianity*, 5, Sydney, 1989, 5-40.

an additional subsidy, but it took another three months before the University registrar replied that his request was granted and he entered into contractual state employment. It was a modest stipend,⁷⁰ for his position had not changed; but at least it enabled him to continue his philological research for a new and much more consequential book than his initial one. Moreover, he had now, as it were, a ‘foot in the University door’. The agreement was backdated to 1 April, 1893 and for administrative purposes, this became the official starting date from which Deissmann’s employment as a civil servant was reckoned and ended only upon retirement, 41 years later to the day (see ch. 9.2). Although he was now formally employed as a *Repetent*,⁷¹ he also taught concurrently at the Faculty’s closely linked Seminarium Philippinum.

While doing some research in the University library some time during 1893, Deissmann briefly noticed a new publication, which his colleague, the Indogermanist Wilhelm Schulze (1863-1935), was reading: it was a philological volume on papyri entitled, *Berliner Griechische Urkunden*.⁷² The photographic reproductions of ancient autographs immediately caught his attention, but no sooner had he begun to thumb through its pages than he noted a curious Greek phrase, and this chance find marks a watershed in Deissmann’s life.

Dieser Augenblick bedeutete mir eine plötzliche Befruchtung, für die ich nicht dankbar genug sein kann: er wies mich in die Papyri, oder besser gesagt, zu den unliterarischen Resten der Umwelt der Septuaginta und des Neuen Testaments.⁷³

What he saw was the phrase ἔτους ἑ[χ]του καὶ τριακοστοῦ [τῆς] Καίσαρος κρατήσεως θεοῦ υἱοῦ.⁷⁴ Its honorific epithet (θεοῦ υἱοῦ) fed his growing suspicion that the Greek of the NT might, in fact, not be so very different from the *lingua franca* of early Christians, and if this proved to be true, the NT could then be read as a kind of repository of 1st century Hellenistic (i.e. *koine*) Greek.⁷⁵ Such an idea flew directly in

⁷⁰ The official letter states: ‘... [ich] benachrichtige hierdurch ... daß der Herr Minister ... Ihnen ein Stipendium von jährlich 500 M. vom 1. April d. J. ab auf zwei Jahre bewilligt ... und dieselbe durch ihre Hauptkasse in vierteljährlichen Raten praenumerando zahlen zu lassen’. Steinmetz to GAD, 26.4.1893.

⁷¹ This academic teaching position was primarily provincial and more commonly associated with Tübingen. The position formed an integral part of the academic staff in non-Prussian Universities and Seminaries. See also *Ev. Wbr.*, 14.5 1917, 4.

⁷² The item, Pap. Berol. 7006, was edited by Fritz Weber, *BGU*, 1, 6, 1893, 174.

⁷³ *SD*, 11.

⁷⁴ See further *Bst.*, 167.

⁷⁵ For a concise discussion on koine, see Horsley, ‘Koine or Atticism – a misleading dichotomy’, *New Documents*, 5, 41-8.

the face of the contemporary consensus on the character of this language. One long ‘established’ tenet was, ‘»das Neue Testament« redet die Sprache der Septuaginta’, implying that the latter was written in a distinctively idiomatic language, well known to the NT writers.⁷⁶ The corollary of this kind of reasoning was that no parallels of such ‘biblical’ Greek should have existed outside the Septuagint and Scripture. But the papyri, whose publication rapidly became a torrent of texts with considerable linguistic prospects, had the potential to raise serious questions which challenged the consensus – though someone was needed to articulate that challenge to the theologians.

The first papyri finds had already been made in the 18th century, but the strongest influx to reach European museums began to arrive during the last two decades of the 19th century. This unexpectedly large quantity of ancient texts provided a new lease of life for the study of antiquity, including its languages, history, culture, law, economics and religion. By the late 1900s, many thousands of papyri had been found and catalogued, with a considerable number published.⁷⁷ Deissmann began to immerse himself in the mass of these published papyri, as well as some of the published inscriptions.

Ich las mich bald in viele ägyptische Papyrusblätter und Mittelmeerweltinschriften ein und konnte die Fülle des auf mich einströmenden Materials an sprach- und religionsgeschichtlichen Parallelen ... zur griechischen Bibel kaum bergen.⁷⁸

Most of his textual database had, therefore, been available for some time,⁷⁹ but it was his methodical analysis of this material that was to distinguish his work.⁸⁰

It was around this time that he first began to correspond with the historian and papyrologist,

⁷⁶ *Bst.*, 59.

⁷⁷ Although Stuart Pickering’s claim that ‘by the late 1900s ... some 40,000 had been published’ appears excessive. See, ‘Papyri, Biblical and early Christian’, in J.D. Douglas, ed., *New twentieth-century encyclopedia of religious knowledge*, Grand Rapids, 1991² (1955), 626.

⁷⁸ *SD*, 11.

⁷⁹ e.g. *BGU*, *SIG*, or *IMA*.

⁸⁰ J.S. Banks wrote: ‘He sets himself to illustrate from the great collections of inscriptions and papyrus records published at Berlin and Vienna in 1895 the orthography, grammatical forms, and especially the meanings and idioms, of the N.T. text.’ ‘New Testament Greek’, *ET*, 9, 6, 1898, 272. J.H. Moulton later wrote: ‘But the use of the papyri is the most characteristic feature of the book [*BS*]. There the material has been accumulating during the last ten years with bewildering rapidity. How rapid the growth has been is best realized by observing that in the four years since Deissmann’s *Neue Bibelstudien* was published there have appeared four goodly volumes of papyrus texts from Drs. Grenfell and Hunt, – apart from the theological *Amherst Papyri*, – while the Berlin papyri have grown from one and a half volumes to two and a half big folios; moreover, the *Inscriptiones Maris Aegaei*, from which Deissmann gathers great spoil, are now in three volumes instead of one.’ *ET*, 12, 8, 1901, 362.

Ulrich Wilcken (1862-1944).⁸¹ But from Deissmann's writings it appears that it took another decade before the two professors met each other for the first time: when Wilcken came to visit Heidelberg for a few days in early October 1901.⁸² Deissmann proudly acknowledged the latter's influence on his philological work, and wrote of '... zahlreichen immer ergiebigen Begegnungen und einem dreißigjährigen brieflichen Austausch, bei dem ich immer der Nehmer war ...'.⁸³

He had somewhat oddly – but quite deliberately – entitled his new book *Bibelstudien*, although this technical work is not a devotional or inspirational aid to the Bible.⁸⁴ It is the wordy subtitle⁸⁵ that was meant to alert the reader that the book is a philological treatise on a historical aspect of the Greek language and has little to do with religion itself.

Bibelstudien is dedicated to one of Deissmann's former teachers at Tübingen, Karl Heinrich von Weizsäcker (1822-99), and also to his *Doktorvater* at Marburg, Georg Heinrici. The book is divided into six chapters, with the third one taking up some 40% of the entire work and entitled: 'Beiträge zur Sprachgeschichte der griechischen Bibel'.⁸⁶ It is in this chapter where the author developed and tested his new methodology for his thesis that the language of the NT reflects the contemporary vernacular, and successfully began to demolish the deep-rooted myth of a 'biblical' Greek. He did this through philological discussions of 75 Septuagint words, idioms and phrases,⁸⁷ most of which occur in the NT as well, but had thus far been considered as

⁸¹ See G. Poethke, 'Ulrich Wilcken (1862-1944)', in M. Capasso, ed., *Hermae: scholars and scholarship in papyrology*, Pisa, 2007, 81-96.

⁸² So the AK, 7-9.10.1901; see also *SD*, 13.

⁸³ *SD*, 13.

⁸⁴ 'Bibelstudien nenne ich die folgenden Untersuchungen, weil sie sich alle mehr oder weniger mit den geschichtlichen Fragen beschäftigen, welche die Bibel, insbesondere die griechische Bibel, der Wissenschaft stellt. Ich bin freilich nicht der Ansicht, als gebe es eine besondere Bibelwissenschaft. Wissenschaft ist Methode ... die Wissenschaft, die hier in Betracht kommt, ist dieselbe, mag sie sich mit Plato oder den sieben Dolmetschern und den Evangelien beschäftigen. Das sollte selbstverständlich sein.' *Bst.*, vii.

⁸⁵ *Beiträge, zumeist aus den Papyri und Inschriften, zur Geschichte der Sprache, des Schrifttums und der Religion des hellenistischen Judentums und des Urchristentums.*

⁸⁶ The other chapters are, I: Griechische Transkriptionen des Tetragrammaton; II: Ein epigraphisches Denkmal des alexandrinischen Alten Testaments; IV: Zur biblischen Personen- und Namenkunde; V: Prolegomena zu den biblischen Briefen und Episteln; VI: Spicilegium.

⁸⁷ i.e. ἀγάπη, ἀγγαρεύω, ἀδελφός, ἀναστρέφομαι, ἀναφάλαντος, ἀναφέρω, ἀντιλήπτωρ, ἀντίλημψις, ἀξίωμα, ἀπό, ἀρεταλογία, ἀρετή, ἀρχισωματοφύλαξ, ἄφεις, βαστάζω, βεβαίωσις, γένημα, γογγύζω, γραμματεὺς, γράφω, διάδοχος, διαδεχόμενος, δίκαιος, διῶρξ, εἰς, ἐκτός εἰ μή, ἐν, ἐνταφιαστής, ἐντυγχάνω, ἐντευξίς, ἐντυχία, ἐργοδιώκτης, εὐίλατος, εὐχαριστέω, τό θεμέλιον, ἴδιος, ἰλαστήριος, ἰλαστήριον, ἰστός, καρπύω, κατά, λειτουργέω, λειτουργία, λειτουργικός, λίψ, λογεία, μειζότερος, ὁ μικρός, νομός, ὄνομα, ὀψώνιον.

exclusively ‘biblical’ or ‘Hebraistic’. Yet by comparing their usage with a range of contemporaneous non-literary and often fragmentary texts from papyrus or inscriptional sources he demonstrated successfully that each one of them belonged, in fact, to the *lingua franca* of that time. What Deissmann did, in essence, was to amalgamate papyrology – which scholars like Wilcken regarded simply as a branch of philology – with NT linguistics; and through this he originated the academic discipline of NT philology (see ch. 3.6).

The point Deissmann made with his new methodology was sound, although it could perhaps be argued that isolated occurrences of individual words outside the ‘biblical’ corpus are insufficient evidence for the existence of an entire language branch (i.e. late Greek vernacular). However, he did not merely write comparative philology centred on a few papyri, or amass pointless examples; instead, he focused on noteworthy words contained within non-literary texts; on morphology, orthography and syntax – and that not only from Egyptian papyri and ostraca, but also of inscriptions from diverse other locations. By demonstrating their common, ‘secular’ usage – ranging from funerary stelae to reminder lists, and from building inscriptions to personal letters – he was able to contextualise these words philologically for the first time, and thereby disprove the whole idea of a ‘biblical’ Greek.

It was not a smooth battleground that Deissmann had picked, and he described what he was up against as follows:

So kam es zu den in meinen ‘Bibelstudien’ (1895) und ‘Neue Bibelstudien’ (1897) niedergelegten Forschungen, die vor allem die eine Wirkung hatten, daß das von Theologen und Philologen unnötig und gewaltsam isolierte besondere ‘Bibelgriechisch’ ... aus dieser Einzelhaft befreit wurde.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, his broad generalisation could give the impression that no other serious philological work was being done on the Greek Bible, or that he was a lone voice within the halls of academia. This was far from true, as his closest British friend, James Hope Moulton (1863-1917), rightly observed: ‘Deissmann was not of course the original patentee of his central thesis’.⁸⁹ The first ‘modern’ scholar, who used Greek

παράδεισος, παρεπίδημος, παστοφόριον, περιδέξιον, περίστασις, περιτέμνω, πῆχυς, ποτισμός, πράκτορ, πρεσβύτερος, πρόθεσις, πυρράχης, σιτομέτριον, σκευοφύλαξ, σπυρίς, σφυρίς, στάσις, συγγενής, συνέχω, σῶμα, ὑποζύγιον, φίλος, υἴος (τέκνον), ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.

⁸⁸ *SD*, 11-12.

⁸⁹ Moulton, ‘Deissmann’s ‘Bible Studies’’, *ET*, 12, 8, 1901, 362. See also W.L. Lorimer, ‘Deissmannism before Deissmann’, *ET*, 32, 7, 1921, 330. It appears that the pejorative term ‘Deissmannism’ was

inscriptions to elucidate parts of the NT, appears to have been the German classicist and palaeontologist, Johann Ernst Immanuel Walch (1725-78), whose work *Observationes in Matthaeum ex graecis inscriptionibus* was published posthumously in 1779. This was followed in 1814 by *Observationum ex marmoribus graecis sacrarum specimen*, written by the Danish theologian and bishop Friedrich Münter (1761-1830).⁹⁰ Fifty years later, Joseph Barber Lightfoot (1828-89), professor of divinity at Cambridge University, commented presciently on a NT word found until then only in Herodotus:

You are not to suppose that the word had fallen out of use in the interval, only that it had not been used in the books which remain to us: probably it had been part of the common speech all along ... if we could only recover letters that ordinary people wrote to each other without any thought of being literary, we shall have the greatest possible help for the understanding of the language of the New Testament generally.⁹¹

However, according to James Rendel Harris (1852-1941),⁹² it appears that Lightfoot may, in fact, have been indebted to Edward Masson for this often quoted prediction.⁹³ Two years earlier the latter had published substantially similar thoughts in the prolegomena to his translation of Winer,⁹⁴ a grammar with which Lightfoot was certainly familiar. Writing a full generation prior to Deissmann, Masson had not arrived at his conclusions via the papyri, but used his knowledge of Modern Greek instead;⁹⁵ nevertheless, his linguistic conclusions were astonishingly advanced.

The diction of the New Testament is the plain and unaffected Hellenic of the Apostolic Age, as employed by Greek-speaking Christians when discoursing on religious subjects. It cannot be shown that the New Testament writers introduced any word or expression whatever, peculiar to themselves; ... the history and doctrines of Christianity had been for some years discussed in Greek before any part of the New Testament was written ... Apart from the Hebraisms – the number of which has, for the most part,

coined by Lorimer, see also ch. 9, n. 72. On Moulton, see Horsley, 'Moulton, James Hope (1863-1917)', in S.E. Porter, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation*, London, 2007, 230-1

⁹⁰ Compare *LvO*, 7, n. 1.

⁹¹ Quoted in G.R. Treloar, *Lightfoot the Historian: the nature and role of history in the life and thought of J.B. Lightfoot (1828-1889) as churchman and scholar*, *WUNT*, H/103, Tübingen, 1998, 319. Also cited in German by GAD, *LvO*, 42, n. 3.

⁹² Harris had held various distinguished academic positions in succession, at the Johns Hopkins University, Haverford College, Cambridge University and Leyden University (NT Greek, theology and paleography). After rejecting Congregationalism during the 1880s he joined the Society of Friends (see ch. 8.1) and in 1904 became the first director of studies at the Quaker's 'Woodbrooke' study centre in Birmingham.

⁹³ J.R. Harris, 'The so-called Biblical Greek', *ET*, 25. 2, 1913, 54-5.

⁹⁴ However, because of the highly compressed translator's prolegomena, where Masson fleetingly stated his own understanding of Greek linguistic history, Harris speculated that since the translator's views clashed with the original author, Masson may have been editorially curtailed.

⁹⁵ He was professor of modern history at Athens University in the 1830s.

been grossly exaggerated – the New Testament may be considered as exhibiting the only genuine *facsimile* of the colloquial diction employed by *unsophisticated* Grecian gentlemen of the 1st century, who spoke without pedantry – as ἰδιῶται and not as σοφισταί.⁹⁶

These brief excerpts lead to the plausible conclusion that Moulton alluded to Lightfoot and Masson as ‘the original patentee[s] of [Deissmann’s] central thesis’, for Harris’ assumption that Moulton would have been unaware of Masson’s prolegomena, in the front pages of the very book he was to re-edit himself, is certainly untenable.⁹⁷ Deissmann was, therefore, not unique in his work on the language of the NT, but thus far no one had been able to come up with a tangible methodology that could systematically prove what this ‘biblical’ language really was.

Whether from a philological or a theological perspective, linguistic research was not lacking for the NT, but most newer publications of the late 1880s and early 1890s were still very much under the spell of ‘biblical’ Greek, as a few of the more prominent titles demonstrate. In 1889 Edwin Hatch (1835-89) published *Essays in Biblical Greek*,⁹⁸ seven years later, Hermann Cremer (1834-1903) produced his eighth edition of *Biblisch-theologisches Wörterbuch der neutestamentlichen Gräzität*.⁹⁹ Furthermore, two NT grammars also came on the market, both with similarly revealing titles: *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms* (1894 and 1897),¹⁰⁰ by Paul Schmiedel, and the first edition of Blass’ *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (1896).

Deissmann’s closest English counterpart was certainly James Moulton at Cambridge (1887-1901), and later (1908-17) Greenwood Professor of Hellenistic Greek and Indo-European philology at Manchester. In the same year in which Deissmann published *Bibelstudien* he, too, had his first major book printed: *An introduction to the study of NT Greek*. Both scholars agreed on their central philological postulates; nevertheless, it

⁹⁶ E. Masson, cited in Harris, ‘The so-called Biblical Greek’, 55.

⁹⁷ Harris knew Moulton well, but concluded his brief article with: ‘Even Professor Moulton, who had the re-editing of Winer in hand, does not seem to have been aware that any one had arrived some fifty years since, by the road of modern Greek, at the main conclusions of the papyrologists.’ Harris, ‘The so-called Biblical Greek’, 55.

⁹⁸ Full title: *Essays in biblical Greek. Studies on the value and use of the Septuagint, on the meanings of words and psychological terms in Biblical Greek, on quotations from the Septuagint, on Origen’s revision of Job, and on the Text of Ecclesiasticus*, Amsterdam, 1970 (1889). Hatch’s book is squarely founded on the presumption of Semitic Greek.

⁹⁹ Gotha, 1866.

¹⁰⁰ Schmiedel’s complete revision of Winer’s *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms als sichere Grundlage der neutestamentlichen Exegese*, Leipzig, 1830, appeared in two parts: *Einleitung und Formenlehre*, Göttingen, 1894, and *Syntax. Erstes Heft*, Göttingen, 1897.

was Deissmann, not Moulton, who first developed the method of systematic papyrological comparison with the NT texts to demonstrate the latter's vernacular roots, an achievement for which Moulton explicitly credited his German friend. Thus, he wrote in a review of the combined 1901 English translation of both *Bibelstudien* and *Neue Bibelstudien*:

Of course there are few scholars who would dare to confess that they had not read the books in the original, for they undeniably belong to the exceedingly small class to which the much-abused term 'epoch-making' properly belongs ... Deissmann ... is the first to seize upon the new material that the last decade provided, and use it in a way which gives us a wholly new and indispensable tool for the study of the Greek Bible ... the use of the papyri is the most characteristic feature of the book.¹⁰¹

Since Deissmann's philological approach to the study of the NT language was novel for theologians as well as philologists, it made him vulnerable to opposition from both camps. On one side arose theological conservatives with strongly traditional views concerning the sacredness of 'biblical languages', and on the other were progressive philologists, whose 'linguistic supremacy' was based on their claim to specialist knowledge of these newly discovered texts. The latter's low opinion of theological researchers as a group was evident, but Deissmann singled out two of his main opponents:

Ähnlich ging es mir mit der Veränderung der Gesamtauffassung vom Charakter der Sprache des Neuen Testaments. Als sich mir die Überzeugung mehr und mehr aufdrängte, daß die Apostel in der Hauptsache das unliterarische Griechisch des Volkes gesprochen und geschrieben haben, wurde diese Theorie von Hermann Cremer und Friedrich Blass als Depravation des Neuen Testaments scharf bekämpft.¹⁰²

Cremer was professor of systematic theology in Greifswald, but served simultaneously as acting senior pastor of the local St. Mary's Church until 1890. His thinking was underpinned by a deeply religious conviction of the inerrancy of Scripture and Paul's teaching of justification by faith in Christ. Moreover, he enjoyed a distinguished reputation ever since his highly successful lexicon was first published in 1867. In contrast, Blass was not a trained theologian, but a leading classical philologist with a well-established name as a NT linguist. Nevertheless, he was a deeply religious man and opposed to liberal Christianity and critical theology and, therefore, not favourably inclined towards Deissmann's research. Even though he was in the process of changing

¹⁰¹ Moulton, *ET*, 12, 8, 1901, 362. GAD's first publication in English was probably 'Prolegomena to the epistle to the Romans – a word to students of theology', *ET*, 11, 3, 109-11.

¹⁰² *Ev.Wbr.*, 19.10.1918, 6.

his views on Semitisms in the NT his *Grammatik* still betrayed his earlier convictions that the ‘New Testament Greek’ was a distinctive language with unique grammatical rules.¹⁰³ It was because of these men’s predominant but disparate philosophical viewpoints that Deissmann singled them out as chief opponents of his work.

However, similar notions were also held by the Septuagint lexicographer Edwin Hatch, who lamented that philological research in the NT was being neglected and that ‘there is no good lexicon. There is no philological commentary. There is no adequate grammar’.¹⁰⁴ Yet he did not call for a changed approach to the study of postclassical Greek; on the contrary, what he advocated was that ‘the NT language’ be taken seriously as a philological subject in its own right, and as historically distinct from ‘secular’ Greek; ‘Biblical Greek’, he wrote, ‘is thus a language which stands by itself’.¹⁰⁵

As mentioned above (1.4), the implications of the emerging torrent of papyrological and inscriptional data had also stirred the imagination of other researchers in NT linguistics, but none had made the necessary systematic research to prove a connection between these non-literary writings and the NT texts. What Deissmann achieved was remarkable because of his innovative philological methodology, by which he was able to demonstrate that the language of these ancient texts had clear parallels in the NT and Septuagint. His philological comparison between the biblical texts and the language used in the papyri, ostraca and inscriptions was a completely new approach to an old problem. Yet it provided conclusive evidence that the Greek of the NT was not dependent primarily on the Septuagint, but was squarely based on the language commonly used by Greek speakers of the 1st century, namely the Hellenistic *koine*. *Bibelstudien*, therefore, dealt a major blow to the traditional argument that the Bible was written in some kind of special language.

However, Deissmann’s findings provoke the question how one is to account for the various grammatical styles and idiosyncratic vocabularies within the NT. He attempted to answer this in his second largest chapter (pp. 187-252), entitled ‘Prolegomena zu den biblischen Briefen und Episteln’. The book’s fundamental argument that the sociolinguistic and religious history of early Christianity can be studied via the vernacular usage of

¹⁰³ Blass, *TLZ*, 19, 1895, 487. For Blass’ philological about turn, as documented by GAD in *NBst.*, see Appendix 1, f.

¹⁰⁴ Hatch, 1.

¹⁰⁵ Hatch, 11.

contemporaneous papyri and inscriptions depends to a large extent on the treatment of the idiomatic distinctions between these colloquial writings and the extra-biblical literature of that time. The corollary to his argument, however, is that since the bulk of these non-literary papyri is demonstrably written in *koine* – whose grammar, syntax, form and vocabulary are clearly reflected in the NT – the latter, as a whole, must be rooted in the same colloquial language. Since at least 21 of the 27 NT books are either letters or epistles, Deissmann reasoned that it was essential to make a distinction between these two kinds of communications, since only ‘true’ letters would be written in the vernacular of the day. He defined letters, therefore, as ‘something non-literary’, intimate and personal, intended only for the eyes of specific recipients and never for a wider public. In contrast, he described epistles as a literary art form; a genre within literature that shares with letters only their external appearance, while their content is always intended for a wider public. Form never differentiates between letters and epistles, as Isocrates’ letters prove, ‘sondern in letzter Linie nur die Absicht des Verfassers’.¹⁰⁶ Although Deissmann cited various authors who had written on this topic, a difficult dilemma lay in the questions of how a writer’s actual ‘Absicht’ could be determined, and at what point a private letter would turn into a public epistle. He reasoned that even if someone were to write to a group of people (a club, for example), it could be done in the form of a ‘personal’ letter and, therefore – depending on the writer’s intent – would not necessarily constitute a public epistle, but as a letter could serve to illustrate the writer’s everyday language.¹⁰⁷

With this weak argument Deissmann attempted to bolster his contention that most NT ‘letters’ were written in the non-literary *koine* instead of a special kind of Greek. However, perhaps his boldest assertion (and also one of the most difficult for him to maintain), occurred when he asserted:

Der Brief unterscheidet sich seinem innersten Wesen nach in nichts von der mündlichen Zwiesprache; er ist persönliche, vertraute Mitteilung so gut wie diese, und je mehr der Brief den Ton der Zwiesprache trifft, um so brieflicher das heisst besser ist er.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ *Bst.*, 218. Even three decades later, he wrote: ‘nach dreißig Jahren dauernder Beschäftigung mit diesem Problem glaube ich sagen zu sollen, daß hier alles abhängt von der Frage der Absicht des Briefschreibers.’ *SD*, 14.

¹⁰⁷ *Bst.*, 229.

¹⁰⁸ *Bst.*, 189. Thirteen years later he had become somewhat less rigid on this distinction, writing: ‘[ein Brief] unterscheidet sich in keiner wesentlichen Weise von der mündlichen Zwiesprache’. *LVÖ*, 158.

In his attempt at justifying the argument that epistles are philologically distinct from letters, he compared them with the differences between formal dialogues and private conversations, historical dramas and actual past events, or stylistic obituaries and the comforting words of a father. Epistles, he claimed, were as different from letters ‘wie die Kunst von der Natur’;¹⁰⁹ for letters were a reflection of the writer’s actual speech, while epistles were a calculated creation of literary art. From this he concluded that letters could be used to reconstruct the ‘true’ vernacular of a language. However, it was a rather narrow-minded thesis and heavily dependent on his tenuous notion of intent versus spontaneity. What mattered to Deissmann’s mind was primarily whether the writer *intended* his work to be read by a broad public audience or by a privately casual one. This could include a family, a club, a church, or a fellowship – regardless of size. Style, form, syntax, grammar, address, content, or vocabulary itself, are of no immediate consequence in making a distinction. For he argued that while some letters read like *libelli*, certain epistles could be full of endearing prattling with an engaging style to mask insincere motives.¹¹⁰ As unconvincing as his basic premise may appear, he certainly did not dissociate himself from traditional systematic epistolography, for he had in mind to write a separate book on this very topic himself.¹¹¹ Unfortunately, like so many other commendable projects he had envisaged – one need only call to mind his planned lexicon – the consequences of WWI caused his plans for this as well to come to nothing.

The young theologian was certainly not the first to research, or indeed, to write about epistolary genres in the NT; even Eusebius had long ago shown some awareness of such matters.¹¹² Where Deissmann differed was in how he applied this knowledge to his sociolinguistic research with regard to the *koine* of the NT. In 1699 the English philologist Richard Bentley (1662-1742) had published his *Dissertation upon the epistles of Phalaris*, in which he presented the hypothesis that Deissmann now

¹⁰⁹ *LvO*, 159.

¹¹⁰ *Bst.*, 218. GAD made no mention of the ancient practice of reading even private letters aloud, with the corollary that they were written to be heard. ‘Throughout antiquity even private reading was done aloud – Augustine found it strange that Ambrose read in such a way that his ‘eyes glanced over the pages’, while ‘his voice and tongue were silent.’ W. Doty, *Letters in primitive Christianity*, Philadelphia, 1973, 7.

¹¹¹ *Bst.*, 235, n. 1. GAD had already collected some material, and made a rough plan for this book, in which he intended to treat subjects such as addresses, introductions, endings and style. This is doubtless why he revisited this topic in *LvO*.

¹¹² Eusebius, *HE*. 7.26.2.

expanded and adopted for his own use.¹¹³ The latter's predecessor in Berlin, Carl Philipp Bernhard Weiss (1827-1918) had also written on this, but held firmly to the commonly accepted idea that an epistolary distinction was only necessary in private letters, as distinct from *Gemeindebriefe*.¹¹⁴ However, for Deissmann this was not specific enough, since it failed to deal with the essential nature of the manuscript itself and was solely conditional on who its recipients were.¹¹⁵ But it appears that a few pages from Wilamowitz¹¹⁶ have managed to give him a clearer grasp of this topic than those from any other writer,¹¹⁷ for of the sixteen times he cited him in *Bibelstudien*, ten were from these nine pages. Besides, he lamented, 'Schade, dass manche der neusten Kritiker der Paulusbriefe diese paar Seiten nicht vor sich hatten. Sie hätten dann vielleicht gemerkt, was ein Brief und was Methode ist'.¹¹⁸ Although his 'intent hypothesis' is too nebulous, he did succeed in calling attention to what had been overlooked before, namely that unpretentious letters could be used to demonstrate the vernacular of a language.

Deissmann had never intended *Bibelstudien* to be 'the final word' with regard to this aspect of the historical development of the Greek language. On the contrary, in the preface of the first volume he cautioned:

Wie viel ist allein noch zu thun, bis die Sprache der Septuaginta, das Verhältnis des sogenannten neutestamentlichen Griechisch zu ihr, die Geschichte der religiösen und ethischen Begriffe, des griechischen Judentums und des älteren Christentums auch nur in ihren Grundzügen deutlich geworden ist ...¹¹⁹

Five years later, when the English edition of *Bible Studies* appeared, he made it known that those ancient texts he had made use of were but a minute selection of a much greater quantity of historical material, for which reason he appealed for researchers to engage in this new work that he had pioneered yet could not possibly complete on his own.

I have so far availed myself of portions of the more recent discoveries ... but what remains for scholars interested in such investigations is hardly less than enormous, and is being augmented year by year. I shall be greatly

¹¹³ *Bst.*, 207, n. 2.

¹¹⁴ *Bst.*, 205.

¹¹⁵ *Bst.*, 205.

¹¹⁶ Enno Friedrich Wichard Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848-1931).

¹¹⁷ *Bst.*, 218. GAD referred to Wilamowitz' *Aristoteles und Athen*, II, Berlin, 1893, 391-9.

¹¹⁸ *Bst.*, 218, n. 3.

¹¹⁹ *Bst.*, vii-viii.

pleased if yet more students set themselves seriously to labour in this field of biblical research.¹²⁰

It is undeniable that *Bibelstudien* was a philologically groundbreaking work, and the author successfully demonstrated the far-reaching implications his new comparative papyrological and inscriptional methodology had for the study of early Christianity and its linguistic history. When the book appeared it began to open substantial new horizons among theologians and philologists alike; but Deissmann knew that his work had only just begun.¹²¹ It was crucial to keep the momentum going, especially since some leading religious conservatives remained unconvinced on account of their personal belief in divine inspiration.¹²² To persuade such influential sceptics it was imperative that he consolidate the gains made by his research, which is why *Neue Bibelstudien* followed so hard on its heels.

1.5. Backdrop to *Neue Bibelstudien*

While Deissmann was working on *Bibelstudien* his income came from the two part-time teaching positions, at the Marburg University and the local seminary. His private life was about to change considerably, for he had fallen in love with Henriette Elisabeth Behn (1873-1955), the daughter of Theodor August Behn (1816-86)¹²³ and his third wife Eleonore Henriette Katharine Wendt (1848-1926).¹²⁴



Figure 2
Henriette Elisabeth Behn in 1891, aged 18

¹²⁰ *BS*, viii. Re: 'augmented', see Moulton, *ET*, 12, 8, 1901, 362-3.

¹²¹ In the introduction to *Bst*. GAD wrote metaphorically: 'da, wo ich gearbeitet habe, muss noch mancher Quader zurecht gemacht werden, ehe man an die Ausführung des Baues denken kann'.

¹²² e.g. Hermann Cremer, see above, ch. 1.4; also ch. 2.1. On 19.2.1908 GAD wrote to his friend Moulton: 'Ich bin anlässlich der Berufung [Berlin] von der konservativen [kirchlichen] Presse heftig angegriffen worden, da ich überhaupt kein Theologe sei und keine Beiträge zum Verständnis des N.T. gegeben habe, sondern bloß zum Missverständnis des N.T. und gewagt hätte, die beiden größten Sprachforscher Cremer und Blass anzugreifen.'

¹²³ A Hamburg shipping magnate, judge, and Bremen's first consul in Singapore (1844-51). Between 1815 and 1871 the small state of Bremen was an independent country.

¹²⁴ In a private letter to this author, GAD's youngest son, Gerhard Deissmann (1911-), wrote (30.3.2003): 'Die Mutter meiner Mutter war die dritte Ehefrau von Theodor August Behn, der 1886 verstarb. Sie hat nach seinem Tode, soweit ich mich entsinnen kann, noch zweimal geheiratet ... Offenbar begegnete GAD bei seinem Aufenthalt in Marburg an der Lahn der damaligen Henriette Wendt (verwitwete Behn) und ihrem Mann sowie ihrer Tochter Henriette Behn aus ihrer ersten Ehe,

The prospect of matrimony had compelled the young *Privatdozent* to search for a better-paid position, and towards the end of 1894 an opportune vacancy presented itself as *Pfarrer* of the Herborn parish.¹²⁵ The wedding date had already been set for 18 April 1895, but the preceding three months became very hectic for Deissmann. Not only was he labouring over the final proofs for *Bibelstudien*, but his new post as *Pfarrer* had come into effect on 1 January, although he still lived at Marburg and continued to teach there.¹²⁶ For thirteen weeks he commuted regularly between the two towns by train, yet in spite of giving sermons in the one and lectures in the other, he managed to complete his proofs well before the wedding, and concluded the book's preface thus:

Ich habe das Buch nicht als Pfarrer sondern als Marburger Privatdocent geschrieben, aber freue mich es als Pfarrer veröffentlichen zu können.
Herborn (Bezirk Wiesbaden), den 7. März 1895.¹²⁷

The first printed copy of *Bibelstudien* arrived in his mail three weeks later, a mere five days before his termination at Marburg. During that week he had begun to move into the Herborn manse to make it ready for his bride, and on the same day when he left Marburg he also commenced as resident *Pfarrer* at Herborn, where one of his more enjoyable concomitant duties entailed teaching at the Theological Seminary (see below, ch. 1.5).

The Herborn parish included not only the town itself, but also the three nearby farming communities Hörbach, Sinn and Hirschberg. According to the national census of 1880 Herborn's population was 3044, while Hörbach consisted of 394, Sinn of 674 and Hirschberg of 175. It is safe to say, therefore, that Deissmann's responsibility fifteen years later probably included some 5000 individuals, as the overwhelming majority of these towns were made up of Lutherans.¹²⁸

Hörbach is situated along the Rehbach, a small tributary of the river Lahn. Since the village had no public transport it took a good half-hour's walk from the manse to its

meiner Mutter, gesellschaftlich und lernte sie schätzen. Als sie sich kennen lernten, war meine Mutter 19 (1892) und als sie in der Elisabeth-Kirche Marburg 1895 heirateten 22 Jahre alt.'

¹²⁵ In later years, GAD described Herborn as 'meine Heimat', because 'wie mein Vater und mein Großvater, so war auch ich selbst als Kandidat sein [i.e. Predigerseminar] Schüler gewesen und hatte von beiden Eltern her, die hier jung gewesen waren und sich, wie schon die Großeltern, hier gefunden hatten, eine Fülle verwandtschaftlicher und persönlicher Beziehungen zu dem alten schönen Städtchen und seiner Nachbarschaft.' *SD*, 16-17.

¹²⁶ *SD*, 16-17. Also in an undated Standesliste (Karlsruhe GArch.).

¹²⁷ *Bst.*, x.

¹²⁸ *Kreisblatt für den Dillkreis, Amt Herborn, Herborn*, 14.9.1882.

mid-13th century chapel that, with partial modifications, survives intact to this day. Hirschberg was even more difficult of access, for Deissmann regularly had to walk over an hour to reach its tiny 14th century chapel. Sinn, on the other hand, was easily reached by train and the trip took less than five minutes from Herborn. Today an impressive stone church (built in 1900) dominates the town, but the little hillside chapel in which Deissmann preached remains well preserved and stands just a few metres across the road from the church itself. Years later Deissmann described his ministry among these villagers as an important part of his theological maturing process.

Für besonders wichtig halte ich es, daß ich damals in meinen Dörfern Hörbach, Hirschberg und Sinn, besonders in den beiden ersten, inmitten einer aus Kleinbauern und zwergbäuerlichen Hüttenarbeitern gemischten Bevölkerung, den Laienpietismus der Stillen im Lande, der Gemeinschaften, in einer kirchentreuen, biblisch nüchternen und doch (namentlich im Missionsgeiste) überaus aktiven Lebendigkeit kennenlernte. Schon mein Vater hatte mir mit großer Bewegung von diesen Bauernpietisten des Dilltales erzählt.¹²⁹

These hardworking farmers revered the position of *Pfarrer*, since they believed it existed by divine appointment, but this had the effect of generating a strong dependence on the clergy's spiritual guidance, which could be extremely demanding, especially for a young and newly married man like Deissmann.¹³⁰ Some of his Marburg colleagues were of the opinion that this *Pfarramt* was 'eine Art von Erniedrigung'.¹³¹ Nevertheless, he decided in its favour because it offered an immediate opportunity for him and Henriette to establish their own household; later he described his decision as one of the better ones he had made, and explained: 'mir ist dadurch ... die Begründung meines Hausstandes möglich geworden und eine vielleicht lange und lähmende Wartezeit als Privatdozent erspart geblieben'.¹³² But besides the financial appeal, he also believed the position would help him to keep his newly found academic momentum going, at least until such time as some university would offer him a professorship, for he had already begun to work on a follow-up volume for *Bibelstudien* and aimed at completing it as soon as possible. But compounding the many recent changes in his life

¹²⁹ *SD*, 18.

¹³⁰ 'Ich gestehe offen, daß mir, ganz erfüllt von wissenschaftlichen Interessen wie ich war, die mannigfachen ungeistlichen Tätigkeiten, die der geistliche Beruf mit sich brachte, nicht ganz leicht geworden sind. Und das regelmäßige und viel zu häufige Predigenmüssen (nicht das Predigen als solches) hat mir wieder schwere Nöte bereitet.' *SD*, 17.

¹³¹ *SD*, 17.

¹³² *SD*, 16.

at that particular time was the added fact that Henriette fell pregnant almost immediately with their first child: Henriette Marie was born on 27 January 1896.

Deissmann came to Herborn for the practical *Pfarramt*, but it was his academic *Nebenamt* as teacher at the Theological Seminary that tipped the scales in favour of making this move, as it gave him an opportunity to continue his work in a scholarly environment. The Seminary, a former Gothic palace adjacent to the church, had gained a somewhat misleading reputation for conservatism during the latter half of the 19th century. But in 1890, when Eugen Sachse was succeeded by the new director, Karl Friedrich Zimmer (1855-1919),¹³³ the latter was certainly not a conservative but rather a liberal theologian, who wrote of the Seminary: ‘man brachte dem Herborner Seminar das Vorurteil entgegen ... es sei eine orthodoxe Presse’,¹³⁴ but then proceeded to make the case that this bias had been ill-founded for some time. Besides Zimmer, there were three other principal teachers: Heinrich Maurer (1834-1918), Karl Haussen (1855-1943) and Deissmann himself;¹³⁵ these men enjoyed an academically stimulating camaraderie among themselves.

This then is the backdrop to Deissmann’s companion volume to *Bibelstudien*, for it is here, in the relatively well-stocked library and tranquil study rooms of the Herborn Theological Seminary, that he was able to complete his *Neue Bibelstudien*,¹³⁶ which was published in May 1897.

1.6. Consolidation of discovery: *Neue Bibelstudien*

Neue Bibelstudien is essentially an expansion of *Bibelstudien*, for it provides additional discussions on another 92 words, idioms, technical expressions, or phrases, which were generally accepted as ‘biblical’ or ‘Hebraistic’ peculiarities. Importantly, it is in this second work where Deissmann first publicised his principal objective, namely that the two *Bibelstudien* should establish an initial basis for a forthcoming NT Lexicon, founded on an entirely new lexicographical methodology (see ch. 2.2). ‘Derartige Untersuchungen

¹³³ Sachse accepted a professorship at the University of Bonn.

¹³⁴ Wienecke, 25.

¹³⁵ *SD*, 16. See also Wienecke, 32-3. 36.

¹³⁶ *SD*, 16-17.

auch fernerhin anzustellen, ist meine Absicht: sie sollen – sub conditione Jacobea – dereinst zu einem Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament führen.¹³⁷

This second volume consists of three parts; the first deals with orthography, particularly vowel and consonant changes, while the second focuses on morphology, declensions, some personal names and verbs. Most of the book, however, is taken up by the third (p. 22-96), which is subdivided into six chapters wherein the author expands on the topic he first raised in *Bibelstudien*, namely that the new papyrological evidence demanded a thorough revision of the linguistic history of the Greek language in the postclassical period. The alleged high number of biblical Hebraisms, and the notion of ‘Jewish Greek’, with its ‘biblical’ or ‘New Testament’ words and grammatical constructs, were clearly no longer tenable. Even though *Neue Bibelstudien* is smaller than its predecessor, it achieved its purpose of consolidating Deissmann’s position as a philological trailblazer in NT studies. The combined effect of these two books was pervasive throughout Germany; even in England Moulton gave a glowing report and referred to them as genuinely ‘epoch-making’ (see ch. 1.4).

Since Deissmann’s language studies had opened up new papyrological and methodological possibilities, he became an international trendsetter among biblical and Greek scholars. He had developed a new empirical rationalism for the philology of the NT and with it demystified its language. Widespread and supportive international interest was fast becoming the norm for the author, who many years later looked back on this era and somewhat lyrically wrote:

Unter der Sonne der Welt erlebte die lange steril gewesene biblische Philologie eine Zeit hoher Blüte. Eine ganze kleine Bibliothek von Einzeluntersuchungen und zusammenfassenden grammatischen und lexikalischen Arbeiten wurde uns geschenkt, und besonders auch in den neueren Kommentaren zum Neuen Testament wirken diese ganzen Forschungen sehr stark mit.¹³⁸

On 17 June 1897, only days after publishing *Neue Bibelstudien*, Deissmann presented an address at a theological conference in Giessen,¹³⁹ 55 km. south-east of Herborn. His

¹³⁷ *NBst.*, vii. This Latin caveat, with its intimation of mortality, is based on James 4:14-15. GAD used this same qualifier at other times as well: e.g. letter to Söderblom, 29.7.1908. GAD clearly planned to expand on *Bst.* and *NBst.* and reiterated this intention in the preface to *BS*: ‘I must, however, reserve further items for future Studies’.

¹³⁸ *SD*, 12.

¹³⁹ The paper was later (1898) printed in booklet form, entitled: *Die sprachliche Erforschung der griechischen Bibel, ihr gegenwärtiger Stand und ihre Aufgaben*. In the introduction GAD wrote: ‘Der Vortrag ist hier im wesentlichen so wiedergegeben, wie er am 17. Juni 1897 in Gießen gehalten worden ist.’ See further, ch. 3.3.

one hour paper was not only compelling by virtue of its extraordinary content, but also because it dared to challenge some of the most elementary theological and philological presumptions of that time, and named a number of their most ‘sacrosanct’ proponents. He drew attention to the recent upswing in linguistic biblical research and literature, but how – to the detriment of the Greek of the Bible – the large bulk of this material was devoted to, ‘nicht der griechischen Bibel, sondern des biblischen Griechisch’. He posited as erroneous the philological presuppositions on which most of these works were based,¹⁴⁰ and referred particularly to Hatch, Cremer and Blass – the latter two still alive and generally held in high regard throughout Germany.¹⁴¹ The single most visionary challenge Deissmann delivered that day was the urgent need for a complete overhaul of the entire existing Greek NT lexical corpus;¹⁴² many of his hearers would not yet have read the preface to *Neue Bibelstudien*.

Deissmann’s distinctive approach to the Greek of the NT had also come to the attention of Baden’s *Kultusminister*,¹⁴³ and when Karl Christian Johann Holsten (1825-97), NT professor ordinarius at Heidelberg’s Ruprecht-Karls-Universität,¹⁴⁴ suddenly died on 26 January, the Marburg graduate seemed a suitable replacement for him. Thus, on 18 July 1897 the Grand Duke of Baden formally approved Deissmann’s appointment to the ‘Professur für neutestamentliche Exegese und Kritik’ – just one month after the Giessen conference – although it became effective only with his release from the Herborn *Pfarramt* on 1 September.¹⁴⁵ Since his classes were to commence with the winter semester on 1 October he used the intervening time to relocate his young family from Herborn to Heidelberg and make himself acquainted with the workings of the University. Their new flat at Brückenstrasse 10 was pleasantly situated in a quiet side street on the opposite side of the river Neckar, but settling into the Faculty proved more difficult, for almost from the start he clashed with what he called the ‘mehr oder

¹⁴⁰ *Spr. Erforschung*, 6, 7.

¹⁴¹ Neither was present at the conference.

¹⁴² *Spr. Erforschung*, 24; see also ch. 2.2.

¹⁴³ *SD*, 20. See also below, n. 146.

¹⁴⁴ Founded on 1.11.1386, this is Germany’s oldest University. It was based on the Paris University, which served as pattern for all philosophical and theological Universities, whereas Bologna, established in 1119, was the model for all law schools. See P. Classen/ E. Wolgast, *Kleine Geschichte der Universität Heidelberg*, Heidelberg, 1983, 1-2

¹⁴⁵ Kultusministerium, letter to Heidelberg University Senate, 23.7.1897.

weniger doktrinären Gesamtauffassung des älteren Liberalismus ...'.¹⁴⁶ Yet he was not alone, for Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) was also a young theologian there, and he had held the Chair for systematic theology since 1894. Thus, it is not surprising that the two quickly formed a close friendship.¹⁴⁷ The Faculty had changed little since Troeltsch had written a colourful letter to Wilhelm Bousset: (1865-1920) three years earlier, in which he described its environment as well as his colleagues with undisguised antipathy.

Die Fakultät ist höchst kurios zusammengesetzt und durchaus kein Genuss. Merx¹⁴⁸ ... ist für mich die reine Qual, von einer so lächerlichen Eitelkeit und Vielwisserei ... man kann ihn nur durch schwere Beleidigung sich einigermassen vom Halse halten. Hausrath¹⁴⁹ ist absolut ungeniessbar, mit Gott und der Welt zerfallen, ein ... reizbarer und ungleicher Unterhalter, ein vollkommener Vernichter aller Theologie und aller Theologen ... Nun kommt noch der holdselige Lemme,¹⁵⁰ der von einer unglaublichen Unverschämtheit und Unkollegialität ist ... und hält sich für den Retter Gottes in Baden ... Es ist klar, dass es eine ziemlich krumme Fakultät ist.¹⁵¹

Ten months after Deissmann's arrival Troeltsch wrote in another letter to Bousset: 'Ein Glück ist nur, dass Deissmann ein sehr angenehmer College ist, ja mir bereits mehr als das ist. Durch ihn habe ich endlich wieder wissenschaftliche Anregung und Aussprache.'¹⁵²

Despite the somewhat strained Faculty environment, *Neue Bibelstudien* had demonstrated that the new professor was a force to be reckoned with. Moreover, his rather extraneous paper¹⁵³ at Giessen – that could almost have been perceived as a kind of inaugural lecture – had left no one in doubt that his two books were merely the

¹⁴⁶ *SD*, 20. Although Faculties submitted their candidates' proposals for a Chair to the Kultusminister, professors were commonly appointed at the latter's personal discretion, which could lead to internal discord within Faculties. Thus, 'wenn z. B. heutigen Tages die evangelisch-theologische Fakultät in Bonn notorisch unheilvoll in Partien zerklüftet ist, so trägt einen grossen Teil der Schuld davon das vom Ministerium befolgte Verfahren, Professuren ohne Rücksicht auf die Wünsche und Vorschläge der Fakultäten zu besetzen. Um so grösser ist die Befriedigung darüber, dass der neue Herr Kultusminister [Ludwig Holle, see ch. 2.4] in den bisher zu seiner Entscheidung gekommenen Besetzungsfällen, erst in Breslau und dann in Berlin und Halle, verständnisvoll den Vorschlägen der Fakultäten Rechnung getragen hat.' *ChrW*, 8, 18, 1908, 99. The same anonymous writer also claimed that when he once asked: '„Hat mich denn die Fakultät vorgeschlagen?“ – die brüske Antwort zuteil wurde: „Die Staatsregierung beruht Sie, was gehen Sie die Vorschläge der Fakultät an?“ Wir haben daher in den letzten Zeiten ma[n]che Ernennung erlebt, die gegen die Vorschläge der Fakultäten erfolgte.' 98.

¹⁴⁷ Later they fell out with each other for several years, over GAD's unwillingness to support Troeltsch's appointment as successor for Edvard Lehmann at the Berlin Theological Faculty. *SD*, 20-1.

¹⁴⁸ Adalbert Merx (1838-1909), professor of OT.

¹⁴⁹ Adolf Hausrath (1837-1909), professor of church history and NT exegesis.

¹⁵⁰ Ludwig Lemme (1847-1927), professor of systematic theology and a passionate opponent of Harnack.

¹⁵¹ Troeltsch, letter to Bousset, 12.10.1894, in E. Dinkler-von Schubert, 'Ernst Troeltsch. Briefe aus der Heidelberger Zeit an Wilhelm Bousset, 1894-1914'. *Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, 20, 1976, 23-7.

¹⁵² Dinkler-von Schubert, 32.

¹⁵³ For a comparison with other Giessen papers see Appendix 1, g.

groundwork for an undertaking of far greater consequence – an entirely novel Greek NT lexicon (see ch. 2.2). Nevertheless, his confidence in his new philological approach to the NT, together with his relatively young age (30), was perceived as theological ignorance by the Faculty members and contributed to the initial friction.

He had barely begun his teaching at Heidelberg, when Jülicher, his erstwhile *Habilitationsschrift* examiner at Marburg, wrote a memo to his Faculty in regard to Deissmann.¹⁵⁴ He had been the first to spot the young theologian's potential, and now advocated that his *Alma Mater* become the first to acknowledge their alumnus, by considering him for a doctorate of theology (*honoris causa*) at their next meeting. They quickly resolved to grant this sign of their recognition for the rising star, and on Christmas day he received a surprise package that he described as 'die höchste Ehre ... welche die Theologie ihren Jüngern zuteilen läßt'.¹⁵⁵ This was the first of a string of honours he was to receive during his lifetime.

Earlier that year, when Deissmann was still at Herborn, the Scot James Hastings (1852-1922), editor of *The Expository Times* and various major biblical dictionaries, had written him a letter, almost immediately after reading *Neue Bibelstudien*; it proved to be of considerable consequence, since it raised the matter of an English translation.

You may have seen some references in the Expository Times to your Bibelstudien and Neue St. [*sic*]. I believe that an English translation would be welcomed. But it would have to be edited for English readers. And I am glad to say that Professor W.M. Ramsay¹⁵⁶ is willing to undertake the editing, if you will grant permission ... the best possible translator would be found and the work would be published by the eminent firm of Messrs. T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh.¹⁵⁷

The letter's general tone suggests that Hastings did not know Deissmann personally and that the two had never met before. Still, here was a firm offer to have his works published in English, and to make them accessible to an international professional audience.¹⁵⁸ He had planned to consolidate his research, but publishing these technical

¹⁵⁴ A. Jülicher, memo to Marburg Theological Faculty, 14.11.1897.

¹⁵⁵ GAD, letter to Marburg Theological Faculty, 31.12.1897.

¹⁵⁶ William Mitchell Ramsay (1851-1939), since 1886 professor of Humanity at Aberdeen, knighted in 1906.

¹⁵⁷ Hastings, letter to GAD, 18.7.1898 (Underscore by Hastings).

¹⁵⁸ Like its two German originals, the book was not written for the general public, for it presumes a good deal of Greek knowledge and specific interest by the reader, which is why GAD wrote: 'what remains for scholars interested in such investigations is hardly less than enormous ... I shall be greatly pleased if yet more students set themselves seriously to labour in this field of biblical research'. *BS*, viii.

books in English would certainly give him a broader international opportunity to do this.¹⁵⁹ Thus, he agreed to a translation, but rejected the suggestion that Ramsay should be the principal editor, opting instead to do this himself, and proposing that Alexander Grieve, Minister of the United Presbyterian Church at Forfar (Scotland), be employed as the translator.

It appears that the two men had become acquainted first at Marburg, where the Scot's outstanding command of languages and finely tuned poetic intellect made a sufficiently deep impression on Deissmann to nominate him now as translator. As a student at Edinburgh, Grieve's success had been 'almost unprecedented', and he went on to further his studies at Berlin, Leyden, Marburg and Leipzig, where the latter 'conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy'.¹⁶⁰

Deissmann was obviously mindful that a wider international exposure through an English translation of his books was going to have consequences for his reputation. Accordingly, he added some supplementary material specifically for this version¹⁶¹ and also took 'the most active interest in the preparation of the translation, and [his] painstaking revision of the proofs had been of the highest service'.¹⁶² As a linguist, he was only too aware of the vagaries of translating one language into another, and this was particularly problematic with his esoteric treatment of some of the finer points of *koine* Greek encased in German technical jargon. If, therefore, this book was to convey the import of his discovery successfully amongst a wider Anglo-Saxon readership of theologians and philologists, it would have to mirror his own thinking precisely and not represent that of an interpretative translator. For a title he decided, therefore, simply to translate that of his German versions, and explained:

¹⁵⁹ From GAD's preface it is apparent that the translation was aimed at British, not American scholars: 'Having been honoured by a request to sanction an English translation of my *Bibelstudien* and *Neue Bibelstudien*, I have felt it my duty to accede to the proposal. It seems to me that investigations based upon Papyri and Inscriptions are specially calculated to be received with interest by English readers. For one thing, the richest treasures from the domain of Papyri and Inscriptions are deposited in English museums and libraries, for another, English investigators take premier rank among the discoverers and editors of Inscriptions, but particularly of papyri; while, again, it was English scholarship which took the lead in utilising the Inscriptions in the sphere of biblical research.' *BS*, vii. A letter from T. & T. Clark to GAD, dated 16.12.1910, reveals that by then '1128 copies [of *BS*] have been sold, of which 318 have gone to the United States of America and to British Colonies'.

¹⁶⁰ A. Reid, *The Bards of Angus and the Mearns: an Anthology of the Counties*, Paisley, 1897, 207-8. See also, Reid, *The Royal Burgh of Forfar*, Paisley, 1902, 168.

¹⁶¹ *BS*, viii. The original suggestion that the two German books should be published as a single volume in English came from Hastings, who wrote in his initial letter to GAD: 'I should greatly rejoice to see the volumes in the hands of English readers. I cannot say what sales the book might have ...'. Hastings.

¹⁶² A. Grieve, *BS*, xiv.

Bible Studies is the name I have chosen for the following investigations, since all of them are more or less concerned with the historical question which the Bible, and specially the Greek version, raises for scientific treatment.¹⁶³

Grieve's translation was published early in 1901 and is both an accurate and readable mediation of Deissmann's two books; a mark of his success is that it reads like an original English work and, similar to both its German precursors, received widespread acclaim. However, since it was intentionally aimed at a limited professional audience – primarily theologians and philologists – sales would be limited. Five years after publication T. & T. Clark wrote to Deissmann that his market was close to saturation. Sales had progressively dwindled and although they kept the book's title prominently advertised in their catalogue, a discouraging 28 copies had been sold during the entire past twelve months, which left the publishers still £ 50 in arrears.¹⁶⁴ By now, Deissmann was beginning to feel somewhat uncomfortable with them,¹⁶⁵ and four years later, when he discussed publication of his impending Lexicon in a letter to his friend James Moulton, wrote:

Die Frage des Verlegers ist sehr wichtig und muß sehr reiflich überlegt werden. Offen gestanden, habe ich zu T. und T. Clark keine besondere Lust da ich mit den Bible Studies keine gute Erfahrungen gemacht habe.¹⁶⁶

Despite the slow sales *Bible Studies* was well received in Britain, which is not surprising, since the free Anglo-German exchange of academic information (especially between Scotland and Germany) was a well-established tradition between the two countries.¹⁶⁷ Thus, Rendel Harris commended the book as a 'notable volume' that

... will bring [Deissmann] into the hands of a multitude of students, who have hitherto only known him by report, and by the significant applause of almost the whole company of New Testament experts.¹⁶⁸

His friend James Moulton had read both *Bibelstudien* soon after publication and immediately recognised the consequences of Deissmann's discoveries. Now he also

¹⁶³ *BS*, ix.

¹⁶⁴ T. & T. Clark, letter to GAD, 26.12.1905.

¹⁶⁵ The reason for his dissatisfaction with T. & T. Clark appears to have been primarily in the slow sale of *BS*, for on 26.12.1905 (see preceding note) their reply to an enquiry by GAD five days earlier, was apologetic: 'Unfortunately we are not able to write anything more encouraging about the sale of the English Translation'. Later he was evidently appeased, for he used the same publisher again in 1907 for *New Light on the New Testament* (see ch. 1.7), and in 1909 for *BS*², and 1923 for *BS*³.

¹⁶⁶ GAD, letter to Moulton, 27.12.1909. For a transcript of this letter see Appendix 1. h. See also Horsley, 'The origin and scope of Moulton and Milligan's vocabulary of the Greek Testament, and Deissmann's planned NT Lexicon. Some unpublished letters of G.A. Deissmann to J.H. Moulton', *BJRL*, 76, 1, 1994, 201-6.

¹⁶⁷ Compare *Ev. Wbr.*, 10.5.1918, 2.

¹⁶⁸ Harris, 'Deissmann's "Bible Studies"', *The Examiner*, 15.4.1901, 1.

recommended the English translation without reservation (see ch. 1.4), although he was careful to point out how the steadily growing mass of papyrus publications and inscriptions would keep this philological work in animated flux. For while Deissmann cited a single example of ἄρραβών (pledge) and eight of the orthographical variant ἄραβών, Moulton had since then already discovered twelve occurrences of the former and eleven of the latter. Similarly too, with εἶ μὴν, of which Deissmann gave two citations, but Moulton had now found six. He also estimated the occurrence of ἐλαιών (olive garden) to be doubled once the newly published texts were taken into consideration. Nevertheless, he raised the easily overlooked point that *Bible Studies*, although revised and updated, was essentially a translation of two books, of which the first had been published six years ago! Since he understood that Deissmann planned further similar studies, he expressed his hope that those would be translated ‘*pari passu* so that English readers will not have to wait’.¹⁶⁹

The two German *Bibelstudien*, together with their English translation, assured Deissmann a prestigious position among international and domestic colleagues alike, and his innovative method set in motion distinctive changes in Greek philology, theology and religious history. Yet because of the esoteric nature of the two ‘papyrological’ and ‘inscriptional’ books, his accomplishments remained largely unnoticed by the general public. Nevertheless, he had successfully achieved his goal of establishing and reinforcing his original ideas, which first emerged through his *Habilitationsschrift*, then were developed in *Bibelstudien* and confirmed with *Neue Bibelstudien* and *Bible Studies*. Now that Greek philologists in Germany, like Blass,¹⁷⁰ had begun to grasp the significance of his discoveries, Deissmann decided to make it known to a broader readership that could include the educated non-experts.

1.7. Popularisation of discovery: *Licht vom Osten*

During the decade following *Neue Bibelstudien* Deissmann was subjected to several significant personal changes. For one thing, the family had shifted their home from

¹⁶⁹ Moulton, ‘Deissmann’s ‘Bible Studies’’, 362-3.

¹⁷⁰ See above ch. 1.4. Blass also published a review of *Bst.*, in which he wrote that GAD ‘... verdient besondere Anerkennung wegen des Fleißes und der Sorgfalt, womit die ... entlegensten und am meisten versteckten Urkunden des Alterthums herangezogen und für die Bibel verwerteth worden sind’. *TLZ*, 19, 1895, 486.

Brückenstrasse 10 to a larger house at Römerstrasse 52,¹⁷¹ and by 1907 they had three children; the youngest, Liselotte, born in April that year.¹⁷² But what had brought about the most profound change in his academic life during that period occurred in 1906, when he was accepted as a member of a two-months study tour to Anatolia, Greece and Crete (see ch. 4.1). Within a year of returning from this tour he published another English book, entitled, *New light on the New Testament*,¹⁷³ a small but useful treatise, written to popularise the idea that ‘secular’ papyri can be applied to NT exegetical studies.¹⁷⁴ It was based on five lectures he had first given at Frankfurt between January and February 1905, and which his colleague Lionel Richard Mortimer Strachan (1876-?),¹⁷⁵ lecturer in English at the Heidelberg University, later translated for publication in *The Expository Times* (October 1906 to April 1907).¹⁷⁶ Deissmann now revised and compiled these journal instalments for print in book format,¹⁷⁷ and for a title proposed ‘The Book and the World’. But the publishers, T. & T. Clark, considered this unsuitable, after which Deissmann suggested ‘Light from the East’, only to be informed that this was ‘... unfortunately already the title of a book by Dr. Ball ...’.¹⁷⁸ *New light on the New Testament* formed, therefore, a forerunner and basis for Deissmann’s subsequent and much celebrated *Licht vom Osten*, although the defining motivation that underpinned the latter work was his Orient trip of 1906 (see ch. 4.1).

In die Heimat zurückgekehrt, schickte ich mich an, die Eindrücke der Studienreise mit früheren Beobachtungen am Studiertisch zu einem Buche zu vereinigen. Als Grundlage diente mir ein Lehrgang, den ich 1905 im

¹⁷¹ Heidelberg population registry, 1898 and 1903.

¹⁷² Born, 7.4.1907, although christened, Elisabeth Charlotte Theresa, she became known as Liselotte or ‘Lilo’. The eldest child, Henriette Marie, nicknamed ‘Ettchen’, was born 27.1.1896; Ernst Adolf (Ernst), was born 26.11.1899.

¹⁷³ Full title: *New light on the New Testament, from records of the Graeco-Roman period*, L.R.M. Strachan, transl., Edinburgh, 1907.

¹⁷⁴ The Scottish theologian Alexander Souter (1873-1949) wrote: ‘It is very fitting that Dr. Deissmann, with whose name this new aspect of New Testament study will always be connected, has saved some time from the more fascinating work of research for the important work of popularisation.’ Review of GAD, *New light on the New Testament*, in *RTP* 1907, 411.

¹⁷⁵ GAD later referred to him as ‘an old friend’, whom he had ‘learnt to know ... through his position as translator ...’, *Pr. WL*, 24.7.1915, 6.

¹⁷⁶ Since GAD used much of this material as a convenient ‘dry run’ for *LvO*, only a synopsis of these lectures was published in German, entitled, ‘Das Neue Testament und die Schriftdenkmäler der römischen Kaiserzeit’, *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts zu Frankfurt am Main*, Tübingen, 1905, 79-95.

¹⁷⁷ The book consisted of five chapters: ‘The problem – Nature of the evidence’; ‘The importance of the texts for the philological interpretation of the New Testament’; ‘The importance of the texts for the literary interpretation of the New Testament’; ‘The importance of the texts for the religious interpretation of the New Testament’; ‘Recapitulation – Problems for future investigation’.

¹⁷⁸ T. & T. Clark, letter to GAD, 17.4.1907. This appears to be the first time GAD had heard of Ball: see also below, ch. 1.7.

Freien Deutschen Hochstift zu Frankfurt am Main hatte halten dürfen und der dann englisch zuerst in einer Zeitschrift und später als Buch erschienen ist.¹⁷⁹

Similar to both *Bibelstudien* volumes, *Licht vom Osten* deals with material of an intrinsically technical and highly specialised nature, access to which had thus far been limited to a relatively small band of specialists. But with *Licht vom Osten*, Deissmann attempted something, which had not been achieved successfully before, namely to intrigue both a professional and non-professional readership with ancient papyri and inscriptions in connection with early Christianity. In other words, by taking what he later described as ‘den an sich sehr spröden Stoff unzähliger gelehrter Einzelbeobachtungen’,¹⁸⁰ he intended to popularise the notion of the relevance of papyri and inscriptions for the 20th century by freeing this material from its arcane confines. Although he attributed the popular final format of the text to his editor, Paul Siebeck,¹⁸¹ the idea of writing it for non-specialist readers was Deissmann’s own.¹⁸²

Although he expected the publication to be ready at the beginning of 1908,¹⁸³ printing took somewhat longer than expected and the first edition – with a print run of 1000 copies¹⁸⁴ – appeared on 7 May. The book proved so successful that within a matter of months after its first appearance a second and revised edition was planned for 1909,¹⁸⁵ and this time 2100 copies were produced.¹⁸⁶ The war years intervened, and not until 1923 was a fourth and thoroughly revised edition published;¹⁸⁷ its print run was

¹⁷⁹ *LvO*, vi.

¹⁸⁰ *SD*, 23.

¹⁸¹ *LvO*, vi.

¹⁸² *SD*, 23. See also J.C.B. Mohr, letter to GAD, 24.8.1907.

¹⁸³ GAD, card to Moulton, 26.11.1907.

¹⁸⁴ J.C.B. Mohr, invoice to GAD, 9.5.1908. GAD received M. 1500.40 for these books. In comparison, a Heidelberg University memorandum, dated 22.8.1907, states that ‘Professor Dr. Deissmann erhielt ... Gehaltszulage mit Wirkung vom 1. Juli 1907 an: zu bisherigen 5300 Mk jährlich 200 Mk. Von da an Einkommensanschlag 6700 Mk und zwar an Gehalt 5500 Mk an Wohnungsgeld 1200 Mk.’

¹⁸⁵ e.g. while the first edition included 59 plates, the second had 68 and the fourth 83 (see also following notes).

¹⁸⁶ J.C.B. Mohr, invoice to GAD, 23.7.1909. In their invoice the publishers referred to this edition as ‘2./3. Auflage’, although it was a single print run, and the cover of the books states that it was the ‘Zweite und dritte, verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage’.

¹⁸⁷ This edition is also remarkable for its fine presentation at a time when ‘es für mindestens 90% unserer produktiven Forscher ... unmöglich ist, ihre Forschungen zu veröffentlichen.’ GAD, *Die Gegenwärtige Lage Deutschlands und die christlichen Kirchen Amerikas*, Berlin, 1920, 3-4. By 1923 inflation was totally out of control and ‘Herstellungskosten für den Druckbogen wissenschaftl. Veröffentlichungen [ergeben sich] von 1½-2 Milliarden Mark’. Circular from F. Schmidt-Ott to Notgemeinschaft, 29.9.1923. GAD explained in a letter (27.6.1923) to his American friend H.A. Gibbons (see ch. 8, n. 224) how *LvO*⁴ had been published: ‘Der Verleger hatte das Papier schon seit Jahren reserviert, und so konnte er trotz der jetzigen Schwierigkeiten dieses Buch schön ausstatten.’

5000.¹⁸⁸ *Licht vom Osten* was Deissmann's most successful and enduring work: the latest edition (in English) was printed as recently as 2004.¹⁸⁹

However, neither the actual format in which *Licht vom Osten* was presented, nor its title, was altogether novel; but the insinuation by the Septuagint researcher Eberhard Nestle (1851-1913) that the book was modelled on an earlier English publication, cannot be sustained. He claimed:

Ich kann an dem Titel nichts Absonderliches finden, eher an seiner Verteidigung ... ist nicht 'Light from the East' der Titel eines schon 1899 erschienenen Werkes, dass in vielen Stücken geradezu ein alttestamentliches Gegenstück und Vorbild für das vorliegende genannt werden könnte, bis auf Format, Abbildungen und Einband hinaus?'¹⁹⁰

He referred to an outwardly similar book by C.J. Ball, entitled: *Light from the East*,¹⁹¹ consisting of 256 neatly indexed pages and a massive 255 illustrations, including a large range of photographic plates to which the written content played a secondary role. However, despite some technical resemblances,¹⁹² the book was not at all concerned with the philology or sociolinguistic history of the NT, but dealt primarily with the relevance and supportive role archaeology can have for OT students.¹⁹³ It appears certain that Deissmann did not know of Ball's book until mid-April 1907, when the manuscript for his own work was almost finished. Moreover, since 1895 he had been appealing for more NT researchers in the field of papyri and inscriptions, and any author he cited within his works was either commended or critiqued, but never used

Das Buch ist in keiner Weise typisch für unseren gegenwärtigen Zustand.' The publishers evidently rated *LvO* as exceptional (and saleable) enough to deserve printing on their paper reserves.

¹⁸⁸ No third edition exists (see above n. 186), and according to the Mohr Siebeck Verlag a total of 8061 copies of *LvO* had been sold.

¹⁸⁹ Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene. The first English translation of *LvO* appeared in 1910, entitled: *Light from the Ancient East; the New Testament illustrated by recently discovered texts of the Graeco-Roman world*, its translator was given as L.R.M. Strachan. However, it is generally not known that for the index Strachan had the assistance of Friedrich Pfister (1883-1967), for the former wrote to GAD: 'Mohr has settled up handsomely ... and he paid the sum (M. 240) that you named ... At my request he divided it between Pfister und me, Pfister receiving M. 100 and I the rest. I had the extra work of duplicating the proofs for you, but otherwise P. did as much work as I did, and of course detected lots of errors that had escaped me'. Letter, dated 31.7.1909. See also ch. 2, n. 169.

¹⁹⁰ E. Nestle, review of GAD, *LvO*, in *BPW*, 49, 1908, 1524.

¹⁹¹ *Light from the East; or the witness of the monuments: an introduction to the study of biblical archaeology*, London, 1899.

¹⁹² Judging from the correspondence between J.C.B. Mohr and GAD in respect to *LvO*, these were probably more due to the publishers (Eyre and Spottiswoode, London) than the author.

¹⁹³ In his introduction, Ball wrote (viii): 'The present work is the fruit of an honest endeavour to furnish Bible students who are not versed in the languages of the ancient East, with some of the chief results of recent Oriental research and discovery'. The topics included: Mesopotamian documents; Asiatics in Egypt; Egypt and Syria; the Pharaohs in Syria Israel in Egypt; the Exodus; OT ethnography; the so-called monuments of the Hittites; Assyrian warfare; Sennacherib; ancient monuments of the period of the captivity of Judah, and Phoenician monuments.

without accrediting. This applied even to authors such as, Cremer, Preuschen, or Schwartz.¹⁹⁴ In *Licht vom Osten* he referred to some 650 different scholars; Ball's absence seems to indicate either a lack of awareness or perceived relevance, particularly since his work had little in common with that of Deissmann. Moulton, the Englishman, certainly did not think of his compatriot Ball, when he reviewed *Licht vom Osten*. 'Deissmann', he wrote, 'has had predecessors, notably Canon Hicks and Sir W.M. Ramsay; but his work in this volume has quite a distinctive note of its own'.¹⁹⁵

Licht vom Osten is divided into five main sections, with a lengthy supplement and comprehensive indices. The first part identifies the problem: the necessity to reconstruct the historical socioreligious background of the NT and early Christianity. Deissmann argues that even if all of ancient literature were available, it would only show a limited aspect of the reality of its society, for literary texts were widely being overestimated in the historical reconstruction of the ancient world. Papyrological texts could do far more, however, than merely increase this literary source pool, in that they added an entirely new perspective on daily life as it was. In section two he discusses the meaning of newly discovered texts for the linguistic history of the NT, but although it is obviously patterned on *Bibelstudien* and *Neue Bibelstudien* its new range of demystified 'biblical' words offer yet another supplement to his expanding catalogue. In part three the author revisits and then expands on a theme he had first developed in *Bibelstudien*, namely, the problem of letter versus epistle. The penultimate section addresses the question of how the new texts affect scholarly understanding of cultural and religious history and provides some significant parallels from the technical language of the Christ and Caesar cults. The last part highlights the necessity of future tasks in the area of philology, theology and lexicography.

The 59 photographs of various apposite papyri and inscriptions, which Deissmann insisted on including,¹⁹⁶ give the book a pleasing visual appeal. His language and almost conversational register is readily understandable and captures the reader's imagination from the start with its refreshingly engaging style. Thus *Licht vom Osten* stands in some way juxtaposed to the two *Bibelstudien* volumes, especially since it goes

¹⁹⁴ Erwin Friedrich Ferdinand Wilhelm Preuschen (1867-1920), Pfarrer and theologian (see ch. 2.3). Eduard Schwartz (1858-1940), classical philologist (see ch. 4.3).

¹⁹⁵ Moulton, 'Deissmann's 'Light from the East'', *ET*, 20, 1, 1908, 31.

¹⁹⁶ Although J.C.B. Mohr had stipulated he add no more than ten new images to his first draft. Publishing contract, 17.10.1907.

beyond NT philology, by attempting to reconstruct the milieu of those people whose language its author has been able to retrieve, while simultaneously reinforcing and popularising his specialised work for a wider audience.

In his later years Deissmann considered his three major works on the language of the NT as a logical trilogy: *Bibelstudien*, *Neue Bibelstudien* and *Licht vom Osten*. To his mind, the hiatus of eleven years between the first and third volume did not diminish this at all, for he correctly rated *Licht vom Osten* as ‘das Buch, das mit den „Bibelstudien“ und „Neuen Bibelstudien“ zusammengehört’.¹⁹⁷

Nevertheless, *Licht vom Osten* stands apart from *Bibelstudien* and *Neue Bibelstudien* in that its Greek content is conveniently rendered into German, and also because of its inclusion of many photographic illustrations. This was a deliberate change of direction for Deissmann, as he had written both *Bibelstudien* books exclusively for a specialist audience, whereas *Licht vom Osten* could now be understood and used by non-professionals as well. However, in keeping with his new philological method of comparing ‘biblical’ words with ancient non-literary fragments, he provided a new assortment of such examples, but this time mainly from inscriptions and ostraca, including material from his private collection.¹⁹⁸ This is not to say that he neglected the papyri; on the contrary, not only did he make good use of them, but he also explained in great detail their relevance, provenance, general history and even manufacturing technique. By using his distinctive methodology the book sheds ‘new light’ on various ‘old’ and seminal ‘biblical’ words, many of which, such as ἐκκλησία, ἁματωλός, or πλήρης, had previously been regarded as fully understood.

As indicated earlier, in *Licht vom Osten* Deissmann revisited the topic of letters and epistles, which he had earlier discussed in *Bibelstudien* (see ch. 1.4), but although he now acknowledged the existence of a *Mittelgattung* between the two types of letters,¹⁹⁹ he dismissed these scornfully:

Solche halb und halb auf die Öffentlichkeit berechneten »Briefe«, solche epistolischen Briefe, sind schlechte Briefe und können uns mit ihrer Frostigkeit, Geziertheit oder eitelen Unwahrhaftigkeit lehren, wie ein wirklicher Brief nicht sein soll.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ *SD*, 23.

¹⁹⁸ *LvO*², 375. Almost all his collection of 92 ostraca (published as *O.Deiss.*) is now held at the Nicholson Museum, Sydney.

¹⁹⁹ *LvO*, 160.

²⁰⁰ *LvO*, 160.

The corollary of this, however, is that letters would have to be subjectively rated according to a kind of psychological sliding scale on which a ‘good’ letter can drift across linguistically to where it may be treated as a ‘bad’ letter.

When Deissmann wrote *Bibelstudien* he had cautiously commented: ‘Für den zweiten und dritten Johannesbrief wage ich hier nicht die Entscheidung zu geben; die Frage Brief oder Epistel? ist da besonders schwer zu beantworten.’²⁰¹ Now, however, he had no more such scruples, for he added: ‘Noch zwei wirkliche Briefe stehen im Neuen Testament, der zweite und dritte Johannesbrief’.²⁰² Similarly with the Pastorals, which he now treated as genuine letters,²⁰³ whereas he had assessed them as epistles in *Bibelstudien*.²⁰⁴ The contrived distinction between epistles and letters was not fundamental to Deissmann’s contention that the language of the NT was a linguistic treasure trove of 1st century Hellenistic Greek; but he used it in an effort to further support his argument, even though it tended to affect his judgement on matters of authorship, dating and even provenance.²⁰⁵

While he was straining in his argumentative attempt to distinguish letters from epistles, his basic rationale was sound and can be summarised briefly as follows. Theologians, philologists and historians, in their attempts to understand the world in which the apostles lived, had traditionally based their investigations on the literature of that time, but this produced, so he argued, a distorted view of the social and linguistic history of early Christianity, by artificially elevating its writers to the higher middle or aristocratic classes.²⁰⁶ In contrast, Deissmann – deeply impressed by the experience of his first Orient trip – was convinced that they were part of a ‘grass roots’ movement, and declared:

Daß es im wesentlichen die Menschen der unliterarischen, der unteren und mittleren Schicht waren, ist auf diesen Blättern so häufig von den verschiedensten Erwägungen aus angedeutet, daß ich gar nichts dagegen

²⁰¹ *Bst.*, 242, n. 1.

²⁰² *LvO*, 175. He based this assessment primarily on Wilamowitz’s ‘Lesefrüchte, Hermes’.

²⁰³ *LvO*, 166, 201, 225, 273. In his Haskell lectures (1929) he acknowledged that ‘Real difficulties remain only in the case of the so-called pastoral letters, those to Timothy and Titus ... But it seems to me certain that also in the pastoral letters we have, at least, a good number of genuine lines by Paul’. *Haskell lectures*, 31.

²⁰⁴ *Bst.*, 247. Although GAD speculated that ‘vielleicht echte paulinisch-briefliche Bestandteile eingearbeitet sind’.

²⁰⁵ 166, 201, 224-5, 273.

²⁰⁶ *LvO*, 2-4.

einwenden würde, wenn man diese These als eine Hauptsache in meinem Buche bezeichnen wollte.²⁰⁷

In his eagerness to reconstruct the vernacular *koine* of the NT Deissmann tended to allow his academic objectivity to be swayed by his passion for the subject. Thus, he wrongly equated the Greek *lingua franca* of the 1st century with the lower to intermediate social strata, and overlooked the possibility that although a modestly educated individual may, indeed, be unable to create sophisticated writings, the reverse would not necessarily hold true. The great linguistic advances of later researches into register were not yet available during Deissmann's life.²⁰⁸ However, since register can be defined as 'the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with a situation type',²⁰⁹ it follows that educated aristocrats have a stylistic choice whether to exercise their linguistic *Hochkultur* or not. In private letters, for example, or in certain communiqués to non-cultured recipients, they may often have the cerebral wherewithal to adapt both style and vocabulary.

Yet it is important to understand *Licht vom Osten* principally as a didactic corrective against common trends, rather than the breaking of new ground *per se*.²¹⁰ Consequently, by laying such strong emphasis on the non-literary writings of the lower classes, he presented a feasible alternative to the dominant upper strata hypothesis, but it was only in the book's second edition that he drew attention to the intrinsic dangers of oversimplifying social stratification, by adding the following rider:

Daß es in vielen Fällen schwierig ist, die Schichtung nachzuweisen, daß oft die Grenzen zwischen der »Oberschicht« und den »unteren« Schichten fließend sind, ist mir wohlbekannt ... Das Problem der Schichtung beschäftigt mich stark.²¹¹

Fourteen years later, in his 4th edition, Deissmann showed a somewhat more even-handed approach to the question of social stratification, by adding a lengthy segment to the above footnote, wherein he stressed that '[ich] jetzt mehr pluralisch von

²⁰⁷ *LvO*, 209. For a brief comparison how GAD's views shifted in this respect between *LvO* and *LvO*⁴ (1923) see Appendix 6. c.

²⁰⁸ The concept was first mooted in 1956. M.A.K. Halliday, *Language as social semiotic; the social interpretation of language and meaning*. London, 1979² (1978), 110.

²⁰⁹ Halliday, 111.

²¹⁰ GAD stated: 'Als ein Versuch, die Arbeit an dem historischen Hintergrund des Urchristentums zu ergänzen und zugleich der Überschätzung der literarischen Denkmäler zu begegnen, wolle man es auffassen, wenn ich auf diesen Blättern die Bedeutung der nichtliterarischen Schrift Denkmäler der Kaiserzeit skizzieren werde.' *LvO*, 3.

²¹¹ *LvO*², 4. n. 1.

»Oberschichten« und »Unterschichten« spreche und ausdrücklich betone, daß in Einzelpersönlichkeiten verschiedene Schichtungstypen sich mischen können'.²¹²

Despite overestimating the significance of papyri to some extent as a vehicle for reconstructing the sociohistorical milieu of early Christianity, *Licht vom Osten* was a timely work whose primary objectives were fulfilled masterfully. The American grammarian and theologian, Archibald Thomas Robertson (1863-1934) summarised the thoroughly revised fourth edition (1923) well: 'this volume alone would guarantee fame to any scholar. It simply confirmed it for Deissmann'.²¹³ It succeeded in counteracting the heavy literary imbalance in contemporary Greek NT research by providing fresh perspectives and raising new debate in sociolinguistic, literary and religious historical research. Perhaps most importantly though, its author was able to effect a change in public perception with regard to the value of ancient textual studies, and raise a wider awareness of the connection such writings have with modern life. His uncomplicated style and the book's appealing format assured it not only of a lasting place as an indispensable teaching and resource tool for theologians and philologists, but also made it equally useful for students and non-specialist readers. However, although it made Deissmann's name widely known, the real groundbreaking work had been done in his two earlier books. *Licht vom Osten* was the popularisation of that prior achievement, and gave it a social-history context to help the linguistic significance of his work to be more readily digested by his readers.

1.8. Conclusion

Deissmann has earned a rightful place as a discoverer and pioneer in the field of postclassical Greek. It was he who first documented (and for the most part correctly weighed up), the value of the papyri and inscriptions in respect to the true character of the language of the NT. It was also he who led the way, with his innovative philological methodology, in the use of ancient papyrus fragments to discern the linguistic place of biblical texts within the broader historical and linguistic spectrum of the Greek language. With his trilogy – *Bibelstudien*, *Neue Bibelstudien*, and *Licht vom Osten* – he helped to initiate a greater appreciation of the nature of Greek in the period

²¹² *LvO*⁴, 6, n. 1. He credits principally the reviewers of *LvO* for his modified approach.

²¹³ Robertson, in Schmidt, *Festgabe*, 85.

in which Christianity came into being; and this had ramifications for the social and historical understanding of the Christian groups and its individual members.

In this chapter the main focus has been placed on Deissmann's unusual situation: a theologian intent on philological research. Mostly his contemporaries took some time to come to terms with this – both theologians and classical philologists. During the 1890s he conceived a larger goal – to produce a lexicon of the NT – and it is to consideration of this that we now turn.

Ch. 2: Deissmann the lexicographer

Von einem Wörterbuch darf jetzt verlangt werden, daß es die Ergebnisse der neueren Sprachwissenschaft berücksichtigt, daß es also speciell die Erkenntnisse nicht ignoriert, die uns durch die Funde der letzten Jahrzehnte ermöglicht werden.¹

2.1. The state of Greek lexicography in the 19th and early 20th century

The following pages are not intended as a history of Greek NT lexicons,² but rather to sketch the general context of Deissmann's own lexicographical undertaking.

Almost three decades after *Bibelstudien* first appeared, Deissmann wrote with a touch of unconcealed impatience: 'die immer noch wichtigste Aufgabe der neutestamentlichen Forschung ist: das Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament'.³ The year was 1923 and a large number of Greek language studies had been published by then, not least of which were two more recent Greek lexicons in Germany alone.⁴ How could such a claim be justified? J.A.L. Lee sheds some light on this question:

Over the course of the last five centuries there have been a great many New Testament lexicons. It is impossible to give an exact figure. One finds a constant succession of new works, as well as new editions and revisions of older works. The names of those who have compiled or revised a lexicon of some kind reach as many as a hundred. The major lexicons alone, the equivalents in their time of Bauer/BDAG, come to at least a dozen ... but [they] have depended on their predecessors: they simply take over most, or even all, of the material of an earlier lexicon ... but the foundation is usually a previous work.⁵

The basic idea of lexicography is almost as old as literature itself, but the earliest known

¹ *Spr. Erforschung*, 24.

² On this topic see J.A.L. Lee, *A history of New Testament lexicography*, New York, 2003.

³ *LvO*¹, 341. In both prior editions (1908, 1909) this sentence reads: '... zur Zeit wohl die wichtigste Aufgabe der neutestamentlichen Forschung ist: das Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament'. *LvO*, 294, *LvO*², 305 (underscore my own).

⁴ Erwin Preuschen's (1910) and that of Friedrich Preisigke (1921). The latter's *Wörterbuch* was not NT specific, but advertised in July 1914 as a five-year funded philological project to produce a comprehensive papyrological lexicon that would include virtually every Greek word in the papyri. Delayed by WWI, it began to appear in 1921. See also Lee, *A history*, 123-4, 133, 139-43.

⁵ Lee, *A history*, 6.

printed Greek-Latin glossary for the NT is the Complutensian Polyglot of 1514.⁶ A century later Theodor Georg Pasor (1570-1637) produced a more extensive work at Herborn, entitled *Lexicon Graeco-Latinum in Novum Domini nostri Jesu Christi Testamentum* (1619), and it was this latter that became widely regarded as the first NT lexicon.⁷ However, even in the 19th century such wordbooks were normally no more than Greek-Latin glossaries and not translated into modern languages, since it was wrongly assumed that Latin could express the ‘meaning’ of ancient Greek words much better than a modern language.⁸ A fundamental deficiency in all NT lexicons was the standard practice – extending well into the 20th century – of trawling words *en bloc* from predominantly classical literature, which had the effect of presenting a lopsided aspect of the sociolinguistic reality of ancient Christianity. Some of the main authors regularly cited included Herodotus, Thucydides, Homer, Anacreon, Pindar, Theocritus and Aristophanes. Thus, in 1908 Deissmann wrote:

Weder die großen Fortschritte der Etymologie, noch die Probleme des Bedeutungswandels, noch die gewaltige Bereicherung des statistischen Materials durch die neuen Texte sind heute in irgendeinem griechischen Handwörterbuch genügend berücksichtigt, wenn auch zu hoffen ist, daß die von Wilhelm Crönert in Angriff genommene Neubearbeitung des alten Wörterbuchs von Franz Passow den Anfang zur Besserung bedeuten wird. Auch der Umstand, daß die vorhandenen Lexika fast gar nicht in die gelehrte Diskussion einführen und fast gar keine offenen Fragen andeuten, gibt ihnen einen mehr dogmatischen, als wissenschaftlichen Charakter.⁹

⁶ Lee traces NT lexicography back via glosses, through the medieval period to the NT writers themselves, and concludes: ‘But 1514 marks a major turning point, when the first attempt at a full New Testament lexicon was printed’, *A history*, 51, 54-5. See also Lee, ‘Dimitrios Doukas and the accentuation of the New Testament text of the Complutensian Polyglot’, *NovT*, 47, 2005, 250-90.

⁷ GAD acknowledged Pasor as founder of NT lexicography, because his work was specifically published for this purpose: ‘Ihr Begründer ist der nassauische Theolog Georg Pasor, der 1619 in Herborn das erste Speziallexikon zum griechischen Neuen Testament drucken ließ ... und mit diesem Buche die neutestamentlichen Studien in allen protestantischen Ländern bis zum Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts stark beeinflußt hat.’ *LVO*, 299-300. See also Lee, *A history*, 49.

⁸ Lee, *A history*, 7, 20, 99-100. In 1894 Friedrich Zimmer (see ch. 1.5) wrote: ‘Allerdings hört die gründliche Kenntniss des Lateinischen in Deutschland immer mehr auf; die gegenwärtige jüngere Generation beherrscht das Lateinische nicht mehr. Man mag das beklagen oder als gleichgültig ansehen ... aber das Lateinsprechen und -schreiben hat aufgehört, und damit ist Werken, wie dem Grimm’schen, für den praktischen Gebrauch der Studierenden und Geistlichen der Todesstoss versetzt.’ Zimmer, review of S.C. Schirlitz, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testamente* (5th edn.), in *TLZ*, 12, 1894, 315. See also C. Stray, *Classics transformed: schools, universities, and society in England, 1830-1960*, Oxford, 1998, 96-102.

⁹ *LVO*, 296. Significantly (see ch. 2.6, Preuschen), GAD left this contentious paragraph entirely unchanged in his thoroughly revised *LVO*³ (342-3), except for some additions to the footnotes.

A further problem (particularly with Greek-English lexicons)¹⁰ – identified by the Master of the Classical School in Belfast, Thomas Dix Hincks (1767-1857) – was at the pedagogical level, that is to say, how the language was taught and learned.

The most glaring faults of School Lexicons are, that they take in words occurring only in obscure authors, omit great numbers that do occur in the authors most read, and make no distinction between the words actually used, and those which have been imagined by Grammarians in conformity with a supposed analogy.¹¹

Such shortcomings had the effect, particularly with NT lexicons, of producing a linguistically presumptive knowledge base that underpinned the Greek of most theologians. Although Hincks was not specifically referring to NT lexicons in the above citation his catalogue of ‘biblical’ words was sufficiently inclusive to classify this work as a lexicographical attempt to serve two subject areas: theology and classical philology.¹² His fundamental thinking can be seen as fairly representative of his time, in that it showed an unease with the lexical *status quo*, yet a tendency to denigrate, or even ignore, any ancient writings outside the traditional canon of Greek literature, while elevating the ‘classical’ authors as the only ‘true’ standard-bearers of the language.¹³

Hincks’ lexicon was entirely based on ‘indexes or particular dictionaries, like those of Dammius, Sturzins, and Schleusner’, although it was the lexicon of Franz Ludwig Carl Friedrich Passow (1786-1833) that he ‘constantly referred to’.¹⁴ In 1812 the latter had written an essay, entitled, ‘Zweck, Anlage, und Ergänzung griechischer Wörterbücher’,

¹⁰ ‘New Testament lexicography in English has had a chequered history. From beginning to end it is characterised by lack of continuity ... it has relied on infusions from elsewhere to produce the major lexicons ... only Parkhurst in the eighteenth made his own start, but then nothing followed, apart from a chain of revisions ... All this is true too of general Greek lexicography in England: the initiative lay elsewhere ... and when English was first tried in a major lexicon, that of Liddell and Scott, it involved translation of a foreign work, the German lexicon of Passow.’ Lee, *A history*, 97-8.

¹¹ T.D. Hincks, *Greek-English Lexicon. All the words that occur in the books used in most schools and collegiate courses*, London, 1843², (1831), iii. Hincks is not mentioned by Lee, but for an instructive extract of the former’s preface see Appendix 2. a.

¹² This is also evident from Hincks’ abundant inclusion of ‘biblical’ names, and from entries, such as Ἰησοῦς, which he rendered as: ‘Joshua, or Jesus, i.e. Saviour, the name of several Jews, and, by divine appointment, that of our blessed SAVIOUR’ (emphases his).

¹³ Hincks made the point that he ‘had read and concurred in many of the remarks made by Reviewers on the defective state of the Lexicons’, yet admitted that his ‘ideal’ Greek lexicon would be limited to a vocabulary, which was ‘used by writers who lived before Alexander the Great, and by some selected writers of a later period ... [but] would insert no meaning which was not illustrated by a quotation from a writer held in estimation.’ Hincks, iii.

¹⁴ Hincks, iv. Passow’s lexicon (1819-24) was an extensive revision of Johann Gottlob Schneider’s glossary, *Kritisches griechisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch*, Jena, 1797-8.

in which he formulated lexicographical guidelines,¹⁵ and set new standards for Greek lexicography. It was Passow's lexicon that Henry George Liddell (1811-98) and Robert Scott (1811-87) took 'as the basis of their work'.¹⁶

In NT lexicography Pasor's work was succeeded by the sweeping revision of Johann Friedrich Schleusner (1759-1831),¹⁷ but although this reached its fifth edition in 1825, it was supplanted by the new Greek-Latin lexicon of Christian Abraham Wahl (1773-1855).¹⁸ He cut back on Schleusner's extraneous material, included more of the smaller and regularly occurring words and paid better attention to the etymological background from Hebrew, Septuagint and traditional Greek literature. Just three years later the American Edward Robinson (1794-1863) broadened this book's usefulness through revision and translation of its Latin into English (1825).¹⁹ Nevertheless, German scholarship still tended to favour the use of Latin for scholarly works, and in 1841 Christian Gottlob Wilke (1786-1854) produced another Greek-Latin lexicon, *Clavis Novi Testamenti philologica*.²⁰ This work, in turn, was completely overhauled by Karl Ludwig Wilibald Grimm (1807-91) and published in 1868; he rated Wilke's lexicon as a book that had been compiled 'extremely hastily and without plan'.²¹

Four years before Grimm's publication, Joseph Henry Thayer (1828-1901), professor of sacred literature at Andover, had secured an arrangement with Grimm's German publishers to begin an augmented translation of this lexicon,²² but it took 22 years before it was finally published in 1886. Besides minor additions and the provision of a statistical list for 767 'biblical' (i.e. NT) words, Lee observes: 'what we have in Thayer

¹⁵ 'Passau had laid down, in his essay ... the canons by which the lexicographer should be guided, amongst which the most important was the requirement that citations should be chronologically arranged in order to exhibit the history of each word and its uses.' H. S. Jones, *LSJ*, iii.

¹⁶ Jones, *LSJ*, iii. This standard work first appeared in 1843 and has continued in its 9th edition since 1940, but its *Supplement* was last revised in 2005.

¹⁷ *Novum lexicon graeco-latinum in Novum Testamentum*, Leipzig, 1792.

¹⁸ *Clavis Novi Testamenti philologica: usibus scholarum et iuvenum theologiae studiosorum accommodata*, Leipzig, 1822.

¹⁹ Robinson also translated, together with Moses Stuart (1780-1852), the first edition of *Winer's Grammar of New Testament Greek* – published the same year as his translation of Wahl – before producing his own Greek-English lexicon of the NT in 1836. Apropos Robinson's translation of Wahl 'there were revisions, new editions and reprints, among them a number that brought the work to Britain. This line petered out in the 1870s'. Lee, *A history*, 95.

²⁰ Its full title is exactly the same as Wahl's (see above, n. 18), but it was written with a Roman Catholic (as opposed to Lutheran) bias and published in Dresden. Danker in BDAG (v) gives the publication dates as 1851² (1839), but see Lee, *A history*, 353.

²¹ Cited by Lee, *A history*, 106.

²² Lee, *A history*, 3; also BDAG, v.

is basically Wilke-Grimm'.²³ In 1908 Deissmann commended Thayer's corrected edition of 1896 as 'das beste bis jetzt vorhandene Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament', but advised: '... aber auch er ist heute veraltet'.²⁴

In 1867, approximately one year prior to the appearance of Grimm's revision, Hermann Cremer – at that time still *Pfarrer* in Ostönnen north of Düsseldorf – published his *Biblisch-theologisches Wörterbuch der neutestamentlichen Gräzität*, which was so well received that he revised it nine times before his death in 1903. It was based on his underlying belief that early Christianity had generated its own language through divine empowerment, an assumption he alluded to throughout his work. The first edition was published almost thirty years before Deissmann's *Bibelstudien*, at a time when lexicographers still stood 'unter dem Banne des »neutestamentlichen« Griechisch'.²⁵ Nevertheless, this lexicon enjoyed considerable prestige well into the 20th century,²⁶ possibly because Cremer had made it very clear that he regarded the Greek of the NT as a divinely created – and therefore, linguistically isolated – language.

Man kann in der That mit gutem Fug von einer Sprache des heiligen Geistes reden. Denn es liegt in der Bibel offen vor unseren Augen, wie der in der Offenbarung wirksame göttliche Geist jedesmal aus der Sprache desjenigen Volkskreises, welcher den Schauplatz jener ausmacht, sich eine ganz eigentümliche religiöse Mundart gebildet hat, indem er die sprachlichen Elemente, die er vorfand, ebenso wie die schon vorhandenen Begriffe zu einer ihm eigentümlich angemessenen Gestalt umformte. Am evidentesten veranschaulicht das Griechische des Neuen Testamentes diesen Vorgang.²⁷

Cremer's views were not uncommon amongst Lutheran clergy, from where they percolated to their congregations by way of sermons whose exegesis was supported by this or similar lexicons. Deissmann was well aware of the influence these books could have, as the following colourful excerpt illustrates:

Merkwürdig kontrastiert mit der weitverbreiteten wissenschaftlichen Geringschätzung des Wörterbuchs eine ebenso weitverbreitete sklavische Beugung unter die einzelnen Auskünfte des Wörterbuchs: »hier steht's, so

²³ Lee, *A history*, 114. On Thayer's strikingly high figure for 'biblical' words, see *LvO*, 46-7.

²⁴ *LvO*, 45, n. 6; 300. While Lee grants that 'some' give the publication date for Thayer's fourth edition as 1896, he admits: 'I have not been able to confirm any earlier than 1898' (Edinburgh). *A history*, 354. The 1896 edition that GAD used for all four editions of *LvO* was published in New York, see *LvO*, 46-7, n. 6.

²⁵ *NBst.*, 4.

²⁶ The ninth (1911) and tenth (1923) editions were revised by Julius Paul Kögel (1871-1928).

²⁷ Cited in *Spr. Erforschung* (6) from Cremer's eighth edition (1895).

ist's«, das ist die Meinung unzähliger, die ein fremdes Wort zu verdolmetschen haben und nun rasch das Wörterbuch zu Rate ziehen.²⁸

It is amidst this ongoing tide of widely held but erroneous linguistic presumptions, particularly in academic circles, that Deissmann's push for a more accurate lexicon must be understood.

2.2. Preparations for a new lexicon

Deissmann's lifelong passion for lexicography sprang originally from his research on the preposition ἐν (see ch. 1.3), although the idea of producing a NT lexicon had at that time not yet germinated in him, nor had he formulated any advanced thoughts on lexicography. But less than two-and-a-half years later, when his landmark *Bibelstudien* was published, the book showed a mature rationale behind his dissatisfaction with prevailing NT lexicography. The second volume in 1897 proved that he was not only uniquely capable, but already in the preparatory stages of creating a NT lexicon with his new philological method. This was even understood in England, where John Shaw Banks (1835-1917), professor of theology at Headingley College, wrote that Deissmann's *Bibelstudien* were 'intended, we are told, to lead, some day, – *sub conditione Jacobeae*, – to a N.T. lexicon, which will be a welcome addition to the works of worthy predecessors'.²⁹

As mentioned earlier (see ch. 1.6), immediately after publishing *Neue Bibelstudien* Deissmann took part at a theological conference in Giessen, where he practically spelt out his lexicographical plan. After first highlighting the urgent need for a Septuagint lexicon,³⁰ he openly declared: 'Die nächste große Aufgabe ist auch für das Neue Testament ein Wörterbuch'.³¹ As excellent as Grimm, Thayer or Cremer may have been, Deissmann's new research had proven them to be misleading, since none paid

²⁸ *LVO*, 294.

²⁹ Banks, 272. For GAD's Latin caveat see ch. 1, n. 137.

³⁰ Zacharias Rosenbach's *Lexikon breve in LXX interpretes et libros apocryphos* (Herborn, 1634), had long been obsolete and GAD made no mention of it. However, he passingly referred to Biel-Schleusner's *Lexicon graeco-latinum in Novum Testamentum seu lexicon in LXX*, 1819-21⁴ (1792), as 'eine ziemlich salzlose Verarbeitung der Konkordanz von Tromm', *Spr. Erforschung*, 14. The first complete Septuagint lexicon (based on Rahlfs' edition), is J. Lust/ E. Eynikel/ K. Hauspie (eds.), *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 1-2, Stuttgart, 1993-7 (revised, New York, 2004). It was based on the presumption of 'translation Greek', viii. The first one based on the Göttingen edition, is T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English lexicon of the Septuagint: chiefly of the Pentateuch and the Twelve Prophets*, Leuven, 2003. Like GAD before him Muraoka considers 'the language of the Septuagint to be a genuine representative of the contemporary Greek'. ix.

³¹ *Spr. Erforschung*, 24.

sufficient attention to recent philological advances. His paper was patently not intended to curry favour, but rather it was meant to test the reaction among theologians to his new lexicographical approach.

Was die Inschriften anlangt, so hätten sowohl Grimm als auch Cremer ihnen bereits vieles entnehmen können, dessen Nichtberücksichtigung sich strafen wird ... ebenso läßt sich bei vielen Wörtern, denen namentlich von Cremer eine specifisch „biblische“ oder „christliche“ Sonderbedeutung beigelegt wird, diese Bedeutung auch aus „profanen“ Quellen belegen ... Das künftige Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament wird, zu dieser Voraussage bedarf es keiner Prophetengabe, in noch höherem Grade als die Grammatik verweltlicht sein, das heißt befruchtet von den Ergebnissen der historischen Erforschungen der griechischen Sprache.³²

He did not say it in so many words, but his two *Bibelstudien* volumes had given him a considerable head start for the new lexical task he now championed, since he was already well advanced with its preliminary stages, as both books demonstrated. Moreover, that same year he also published an essay in which he contended that the historico-linguistic place of the language in the NT was not separate from the common Hellenistic Greek. But since both the ‘secular’ and ‘sacred’ *koine* – a distinction flatly rejected by Deissmann³³ – shared identical grammatical forms, vocabulary and syntax, they naturally also shared the same historical position. It followed for him that they were one and the same language, and that it was Atticistic Greek – not the language of the NT – that was a linguistic anachronism, even though the bulk of post 1st century Greek literature was written in this inflated style.³⁴ When Deissmann elaborated on this topic many years later, he described Atticism³⁵ as a cloud that began to form during the days of the Apostles, but went on to overshadow and hinder the development of the Greek language until the Middle Ages. But he aptly explained what in essence was a 2nd century purist movement, as a sweeping attempt to force the Hellenic language and its literary production into an artificial canon of grammatical rules, based on classical Attic prose when it was at its zenith.³⁶ His corrective observations on Greek linguistic

³² *Spr. Erforschung*, 24-5.

³³ *Spr. Erforschung*, 6-7, *Bst.*, 59-61.

³⁴ ‘Nicht die Profangräzität ist der sprachgeschichtliche Gegensatz zur ‘biblischen’, sondern das classische Griechisch. Die neueren Funde zur Geschichte der griechischen Sprache zeigen, daß die Eigentümlichkeiten des ‘biblischen’ Formen- und Wortschatzes (bei den original-griechischen Schriften auch der Syntax) im großen und ganzen Eigentümlichkeiten des späteren und zwar zumeist des unliterarischen Griechisch überhaupt sind.’ *ThR*, 5. 1, 1898, 465.

³⁵ See W. Schmid, *Der Atticismus in seinen Hauptvertretern von Dionysius von Halikarnass bis auf den zweiten Philostratus*, 1-5, Hildesheim, 1964 (1887-97). GAD correctly assessed these volumes as ‘Grundlegend’ and a ‘gediegenes Werk’: see *LvO*, 38, n. 2.

³⁶ *Ev.Wbr.*, Oct./Nov. 1921. 268.

history – as first presented at the Giessen conference and then expounded in *Bibelstudien* and *Neue Bibelstudien* – provide a good methodological perspective on how far his planned lexicon was intended to diverge from traditional NT lexicography.

Despite Deissmann's initial difficulties at fitting into the Heidelberg Theological Faculty (see ch. 1.6), he was elected *Dekan* on 4 November 1899. That year had been particularly difficult for him personally, since he suffered from recurring migraines, painful eye infections and a prolonged cold. Moreover, on Thursday 19 July his father, Carl Adolf Deissmann (1832-1900), suddenly fell gravely ill, and by the following Tuesday Deissmann received a telegram that he should come home at once. He arrived at the Erbach manse just in time to be alongside his father when he died.³⁷

2.3. Gearing up for lexicography

During the latter part of 1903, and in conjunction with the classical philologist Albrecht Dieterich (1866-1908),³⁸ a student colleague from his Marburg years, Deissmann founded an interfaculty philosophical study group for academics, aptly named *Eranos*.³⁹ Leading colleagues from every faculty were invited to join this exclusive club, whose stated purpose was to create an informal atmosphere, conducive to debates on various topics related to religious studies and contemplated from diverse perspectives. Meetings were held once a month on a Sunday evening (normally at 6 p.m.) in each other's homes and on a rotating basis. The host acted as both entertainer and speaker for the evening, and was expected to give a prepared talk on a topic of his choice, after which it was customary for a lively debate to ensue. These frequently lasted well into the night and it was not uncommon to hear spirited disputing to continue in the dark and otherwise silent streets, as members made their way home.⁴⁰ The first of these meetings was suitably held at the Deissmann home in Römerstrasse, and took place on the 31 January 1904, where the host quite unsurprisingly spoke on the 'Unterschichten in der

³⁷ So the AK. He died on Wed., 25.7.1900, aged 68

³⁸ He was professor of classical philology, specialised in ancient religions, and authored several books, incl. the influential *Eine Mithrasliturgie*. Leipzig, 1903.

³⁹ While this Greek word can simply be understood as 'the club', in their case it took on the more specific meaning of a commonly celebrated meal to which each participant contributed his share.

⁴⁰ *SD*, 22-3. GAD also asserted that he had neither before nor since experienced any other such collegial, stimulating and fruitful academic exchange of ideas as at *Eranos*. It was not comparable to *Graeca*, of which he later became a member at Berlin, but which was primarily for the purpose of reading ancient texts (see ch. 2.5).

antiken Welt'.⁴¹ The success of *Eranos* is undeniable, and resulted to a large degree from the diverse, professional backgrounds of its participants. Deissmann's membership list⁴² is instructive, for it comprised Wilhelm Windelband,⁴³ Albrecht Dieterich,⁴⁴ Friedrich von Duhn,⁴⁵ Erich Marcks,⁴⁶ Alfred von Domaszewski,⁴⁷ Georg Jellinek,⁴⁸ Karl von Lilienthal,⁴⁹ Eberhard Gothein,⁵⁰ Karl Rathgen,⁵¹ Max Weber,⁵² Ernst Troeltsch,⁵³ and Deissmann himself. In 1906 they were also joined by Hans von Schubert⁵⁴ who had newly come to Heidelberg. Thus, of *Eranos*' thirteen members named by Deissmann only three were from the Theological Faculty.

The regular interaction among these colleagues engendered various literary contributions, and in an indirect way also provided a significant impetus for Deissmann's lexicon. For it was through the archaeologist Friedrich von Duhn that he seized the opportunity of making his first journey to Anatolia, Greece and Crete (see ch. 4.1). That 66 days' study tour during April and May 1906 left him with such a profound impression that one month after returning home he wrote to Theodor Wiegand (1864-1936), his friend since schooldays:⁵⁵

Eine Wirkung meiner Reise war übrigens bei mir der Entschluß, mich jetzt ganz auf meine wissenschaftliche Arbeiten zu konzentrieren und die Nebendinge praktischer, besonders sozialpolitischer Art, die mich viel Zeit und Kraft gekostet haben, in der nächsten Zeit lieber anderen zu überlassen. So werde ich dann voraussichtlich oft auf den Boden wenigstens in der Phantasie zurückkehren, den Du bearbeitest: die Inschriften werden neben den Papyri mein Hauptarbeitsgebiet für die nächste Zeit sein, im Interesse des großen Wörterbuchs zum Neuen Testament.⁵⁶

⁴¹ So the AK.

⁴² As provided in *SD*, 22-3.

⁴³ (1848-1915). Professor of philosophy.

⁴⁴ Dieterich succeeded Erwin Rohde (1845-98) in the Chair of classical philology, but had also a special interest in the origin of Christianity.

⁴⁵ (1879-1920). Professor of archaeology and for forty years director of the Heidelberg Archaeological Institute (1880-1920).

⁴⁶ (1861-1938). Professor of modern history.

⁴⁷ (1856-1927). Professor of archaeology.

⁴⁸ (1851-1911). Professor of national and international law.

⁴⁹ (1853-1927). Professor of jurisprudence.

⁵⁰ (1853-1923). Professor of economics.

⁵¹ (1856-1921). Professor of economics (successor to Max Weber).

⁵² (1864-1920). Professor of economics.

⁵³ See ch. 1.6. A close friend of Max Weber, with whom he shared the same house for a number of years.

⁵⁴ (1859-1931). Professor of church history.

⁵⁵ They had both attended the Wiesbaden Gymnasium from 1879 to 1885, but see further, ch. 4.1.

⁵⁶ GAD, letter to Wiegand, 4.7.1906.

The veiled reference to a withdrawal from sociopolitical participation appears to refer primarily to his practical involvement with local politics and not to his association with Friedrich Naumann (see ch. 6.2), which lasted until the latter's death in 1919. This letter shows that the Orient expedition of 1906 had produced a distinctive shift in Deissmann's academic priorities by imbuing his lexicographical project with a new sense of urgency. Before he had the opportunity to experience the Eastern way of life firsthand his entire cultural knowledge of the region was founded on an abstract, bookish perception. Granted, he had access to the latest publications of papyri and inscriptions, yet for all their potential to link a reader with the ancient writers, by way of printed pages and a scholarly imagination, they could still not provide the tangible realism of the world within which they originated. However, this journey allowed him to enliven his lexicographical task by stepping away from his philological training and into the *realia* of the living, geographical and cultural context of the people and their language itself.⁵⁷

The lexicon was an ambitious task, a huge undertaking that involved the assistance of many contributors and helpers (see ch. 2.5). Deissmann's exposure to the 'real' Eastern cultures, the 'real' Greek language, the 'real' ancient world, gave him not only the energy-boost to persevere, but also many new and helpful contacts (see ch. 4.1). His lexical objective was not an enthusiastic language experiment, but a thoroughly planned philological enterprise for which he was well qualified and – as his *Bibelstudien* books demonstrated – better equipped than anyone else at that time.⁵⁸

The form that Deissmann's NT lexicon was going to take can be inferred from his polemic at the Giessen conference (see ch. 1.6), as well as from some of his published material⁵⁹ and private correspondence, but above all, from his two *Bibelstudien*. It was to be a comprehensive NT tool ('großes Wörterbuch'⁶⁰) based on his new philological methodology. To this end, he was drawing on all the newest research in connection with the Greek language, including papyrological and inscriptional, both literary and documentary; and any material neglected by Grimm and Cremer would be revisited.

⁵⁷ GAD, 'Study-travel in New Testament Lands', *ET*, 25, 11, 1914, 487. See also ch. 4.2.

⁵⁸ How large GAD's private library was is now uncertain, but when the ZLB acquired part of his Nachlass in 1937/8, it included '1520 Bdn, 879 Broschüren, 145 Kästen und 140 Konvoluten'. F. Krause/ P. Raabe, eds., *Handbuch der historischen Buchbestände in Deutschland*, 14, 1, Hildesheim, 1995, 236. Further to GAD's Nachlass at the ZLE, see also ch. 7, n. 23; ch. 9, n. 61.

⁵⁹ e.g. *Ev.Wbr.*, Oct./Nov. 1921, 275-6; *Philology*, 110-46.

⁶⁰ GAD's letter, 4.7.1906.

Although designed as a biblical aide, this lexicon was to be radically different to any of its predecessors, in that he intentionally ‘secularised’ – that is, put in its profane historical context – the ‘sacred’ language of the NT, by giving evidence from the contemporary vernacular.

The man who understood Deissmann’s lexicographical ambition better than any other was James Moulton, tutor at Didsbury College (Manchester) since 1902; but although they had correspondence for several years, the two men had not yet met each other. It appears that Moulton contacted Deissmann first in response to *Bibelstudien* or *Neue Bibelstudien*, probably soon after their publication: he had read these books and considered them truly ‘epoch-making’.⁶¹ Since Moulton pursued a philological direction similar to that of Deissmann, he had immediately recognised the ramifications of the latter’s work and apparently wrote to congratulate him. Unfortunately, very few of Moulton’s letters to Deissmann have survived; so far I have only been able to discover nine, all in the Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin.⁶² The earliest extant correspondence between them discovered so far is from Deissmann to Moulton and dated 1 January 1904, but it plainly belongs to a continuum of correspondence. For Deissmann felt sufficiently relaxed to write with unguarded colloquialism: ‘Sie haben auch ganz Recht mit Ihrer Wertschätzung von Palles. Die Recension in der Theol. Lit.-Zeitung ist eine Eselei; der Mann hat keine Ahnung ...’.⁶³

After this letter a lacuna of three years occurs, before another one – written by Deissmann on 12 January 1907 – appears.⁶⁴ It is a most informative document, as it starts off with an apologetic rejection of an invitation Moulton made in a now lost letter, dated 30 December 1906, that they team up together to produce an English NT lexicon. Moulton was already heavily committed to finish the second volume of his grammar of NT Greek,⁶⁵ and found that, although he had simultaneously been able to complete a first lexical draft of words beginning with ‘α’, he could not possibly do justice to a full

⁶¹ Moulton, *ET*, 12, 8, 1901, 362.

⁶² One from 1907 (ZLB DEI 534); four from 1910 (ZLB DEI 929); one from 1911 (ZLB DEI 168); two from 1912 (ZLB DEI 169), and one from 1913 (ZLB DEI 170).

⁶³ Letter, dated 1.1.1904.

⁶⁴ GAD, letter to Moulton, 12.1.1907. For a transcript of this letter see Appendix 2, b. For a commentary on this letter, see Horsley, ‘The origin and scope’, 194-6.

⁶⁵ He never completed it. The first one (*Prolegomena*) had recently been published (1906), but the second only appeared posthumously in 1919.

lexicon on his own.⁶⁶ Thus, in early December 1906, he ‘sought a colleague’ for what would eventually become the celebrated ‘lexicon’ he produced in conjunction with George Milligan (1860-1934).⁶⁷ Moulton’s first choice, however, had originally been Edward Lee Hicks (1843-1919), who lived only a short journey away from Manchester and whom Moulton described as a man with ‘expert knowledge, which no one in England can rival’.⁶⁸ It is a measure of the high personal and professional regard in which Moulton held Deissmann that when Hicks declined the offer Moulton did not then appeal to another of his countrymen, but instead called upon his German friend for collaboration.

Horsley observes that this letter ‘might give the impression’ that Deissmann proposed they should split the work, with Moulton confining himself to the papyri, while he himself would treat the later inscriptions.⁶⁹ However, Moulton’s request was not for raw new material, but rather that his existing papyrological entries be supplemented with additional epigraphical texts. Since he believed that his lexicon should be based on ‘a systematic search of the papyri, and to a less extent the later inscriptions’,⁷⁰ it is to be inferred that he found this ‘less extent’ more time consuming than he had anticipated. Perhaps more than anything else, this proposal demonstrates how far advanced Moulton thought Deissmann’s own lexicographical work to be. For he knew very well that, like him, his German colleague was predominantly converging on the massive papyrological data, for already seven years earlier he had written that ‘the most characteristic feature’ of Deissmann’s *Bible Studies* was his use of papyri (see ch. 1.4).

During the latter half of September 1906 the University of Aberdeen celebrated its 400th anniversary, and Deissmann was invited to travel to Scotland and there receive his first foreign honorary doctorate. The investiture ceremony took place on Wednesday morning 26th, and festivities were staged throughout the week, but although Deissmann had an opportunity to meet many notables for the first time during his nine-day stay Moulton was unable to attend. However, after leaving Aberdeen the former arrived in

⁶⁶ He wrote: ‘I had not, however, finished the draft of words in α , before I saw that the task was beyond my unaided capacity, especially as my time was primarily mortgaged to the completion of my grammar. I sought a colleague ...’. Moulton, ‘Lexical notes from the papyri’, *Exp.*, 7, 5, 1908, 51.

⁶⁷ *The vocabulary of the Greek Testament illustrated from the Papyri and other non-literary sources*, fasc. 1-8, London, 1914-29.

⁶⁸ J.H. Fowler, cited by J.L. North, “‘I sought a colleague’: James Hope Moulton, Papyrologist, and Edward Lee Hicks, Epigraphist, 1903-6”, *BJRL*, 79, 1, 1997, 198.

⁶⁹ Horsley, ‘The origin and scope’, 196.

⁷⁰ Moulton, cited by North, 196.

York on Sunday afternoon, and the following day the two professors met each other for the first time⁷¹ and were able to spend Monday and part of Tuesday together before parting. Since no records exist of their conversations, one can only guess at what they discussed, but it is certain that philological ideas were being compared and that Moulton was sufficiently impressed with Deissmann to ask for his help three months later.

Thus, two weeks after receiving Moulton's letter, when Deissmann reluctantly penned his decision to reject the request on the grounds of his own lexical work, he wrote no longer to a foreign colleague but a personal friend. This is reflected by the familiarity with which he addressed him: 'Mein lieber Moulton!' The entire letter is of considerable historical value, but the following extract will suffice here.

Und es wäre mir auch eine ganz besondere Ehre, mit Ihnen zusammen diese wichtige Arbeit zu tun. Aber ich fürchte, sie würde mich auf Jahre hinaus von der Veröffentlichung des Wörterbuchs abhalten. Je mehr ich meine Zukunftsaufgaben überlege, um so mehr empfinde ich aber die Verpflichtung, dieses *opus vitae* zuerst zu beenden. Jeder neue Jahresanfang ist mir eine Mahnung und eine Anklage. Ich bin ja gewiss nicht faul gewesen, ein sehr stattliches Material liegt in meinen Kästen ... ich [habe] mir aber ernstlich vorgenommen, jetzt alles andere nach Möglichkeit zurückzustellen, um bloß das Wörterbuch zu fördern. Ostern dieses Jahres hoffe ich nach Vollendung einer kleinen Arbeit so weit zu sein, dass ich sonst frei bin.⁷²

What is most striking here is that Deissmann evaluated his own lexicon as his personal *opus vitae* and that he had changed his academic focus from theology – which served primarily as his source of income – to the philological pursuit of NT lexicography. Six months had passed since he had confided to Theodor Wiegand that he would concentrate more fully on his *Wörterbuch*, yet his private engagements abated little and this letter to Moulton shows signs of frustration, since his progress was far from what he had hoped it would be by then. The first two-and-a-half months following his return from the Orient had given him little time for his lexicographical work, and immediately after semester's end (August)⁷³ he worked for four days with Lionel Strachan, in

⁷¹ AK. This belies Samuel Angus' claim: 'I had just recently returned from Berlin [1910] and Moulton had many questions to ask about Deissmann. There were four [!] outstanding Hellenists at that period – Deissmann of Berlin, Thumb of Marburg, George Milligan of Glasgow, and Moulton himself. At that time none of these four famous scholars knew another, but I, a student under Deissmann [Berlin, 1910] and Thumb [Marburg, 1908], had the privilege of knowing all of them.' *Alms for oblivion: chapters from a heretic's life*, Sydney, 1943, 171-2. GAD and Thumb also knew each other, for they were in correspondence since well before Oct. 1900; see Thumb, iv, 9.

⁷² GAD's letter, 12.1.1907; see Appendix 2, b.

⁷³ For an overview of GAD's teaching programs between summer semester 1904 and winter semester 1935/6 see Appendix 9, e.

connection with his English translation of *Licht vom Osten* (*LAE*) after which he took his family for a two-week holiday along Lake Geneva, before journeying to Great Britain (see above, ch. 2.3).⁷⁴ During his absence in Switzerland he was awarded the *Ritterkreuz 1. Klasse* from the Grand Duke of Baden.⁷⁵ It was a deep but unintended irony that the more notable his academic profile became, the less time he would find for the lexicon.

Deissmann's letter to Moulton appears, therefore, unnecessarily apologetic and even somewhat irritated: 'I have certainly not been idle ...'. However, this self-defensive urge was not a reaction to something Moulton had written, but rather it betrays Deissmann's own anxiety that others might beat him to the prize of creating the first NT lexicon based on his innovative methodology. For Erwin Preuschen was an industrious writer and well known to Deissmann,⁷⁶ and since the first test page for the former's lexicon had appeared a few months later (see ch. 2.5) one can confidently assume that Deissmann knew that work to be under way. This would certainly explain his frustration and sudden sense of urgency. However, the growing preoccupation with his lexicon must not be confused with an egotistic ambition to 'be first'. Instead, it stems from his fifteen years of preparatory labours, some of which he had put into the public domain in his two *Bibelstudien* books and could potentially be used as a lexical template by someone like Preuschen.

It was an understandable reaction and – in comparison to a similar situation Moulton faced some five-and-a-half years later – very restrained. For in early June 1912 the latter received a letter from Samuel Angus (1881-1943), 'from somewhere in Virginia' that Archibald Thomas Robertson (1863-1934) was not far from releasing a comprehensive new grammar.⁷⁷ Moulton was incensed and wrote to Deissmann:

I wonder if I can possibly get my one volume Grammar out first, and so prevent his annexing my public! For really I must say his book was so very

⁷⁴ GAD left Heidelberg for Aberdeen on 19.9.1906 and returned 9.10.1906.

⁷⁵ i.e. 'Orden vom Zähringer Löwen, Ritterkreuz I. Klasse'. Honours list, 27.8.1906. The exact reason why GAD received this distinction is not certain.

⁷⁶ See GAD, review of E. Preuschen, *Vollständiges Griechisch-Deutsches Handwörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur* (Fasc. 1), in *DLZ*, 30, p. 1882, where he wrote that Preuschen was an '... auf anderen Gebieten hochverdienten und wegen seines produktiven Fleiß von mir stets bewunderten Verfasser ...'. As Pfarrer in Steinbach und Wieseck near Giessen (1894-6) Preuschen would almost certainly have attended the Giessen conference and there made personal contact with GAD.

⁷⁷ A.T. Robertson, *A grammar of the Greek New Testament in the light of historical research*, Cambridge, 1914. Robertson was professor of NT at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

bad, and was so absurdly puffed, that I felt quite violated at his getting the *Priorität* [*sic*].⁷⁸

Two days after receiving Moulton's letter, Deissmann replied feelingly: 'Dass Robertson nun eine größere Grammatik machen will, ist mir neu gewesen. Die Analogie mit Preuschen liegt mir nahe'.⁷⁹

For the present, however, mounting social, professional and familial commitments were beginning to bear heavily on Deissmann; besides, Henriette was pregnant with their third child, Liselotte, due to be born 7 April 1907. Notwithstanding, he kept his lexical labours tirelessly on the move, collecting and evaluating masses of data, selecting useful examples for lexicon entries, and filing them appropriately. A glimpse of this tedious process can be gained from his complaint:

Schwer muß ich anderseits die Aufgabe ... deshalb nennen, weil von Aufgaben reden soviel bedeutet wie von Unfertigem reden, von Dutzenden übereinandergeschichteten aufgeschlagener Bücher, von hunderten beschriebener Zettel und Blätter, von Staub, trüben Nebeltagen und Lampenlicht, von Spannung und Enttäuschung und von dem täglichen und kläglichen Tauschhandel des Forschers, der ein einziges gelöstes Problem hingibt und zehn ungelöste dafür zurückerhält.⁸⁰

Despite these wearisome efforts, it became more and more evident that it would take impossibly long to complete his lexicographical work while he remained in his present position as a theology professor. He was not fooled by an unrealistic short-term goal, but understood well that the project would require many years; after all, he had toiled incessantly on it for well over a decade by now. Nevertheless, when he wrote to Moulton in January, he was under the impression that he could send him the first proofs for translation 'in a few years'.⁸¹ This is revealing on two accounts; firstly the forecast time span provides some indication of the magnitude of the project – bearing in mind that he had begun the work in the mid-1890s. But what is even more remarkable is the wording of the letter itself, for it takes it as settled that Moulton would be responsible for the translation of Deissmann's German lexicon, even though the former was still in the process of creating his own.⁸² The two men had not only become good friends, but also formed a mutual understanding that Deissmann's work would address a niche in the English-speaking world that Moulton's could not fill. Since the fundamental lexical

⁷⁸ Letter, dated 3.6.1912.

⁷⁹ Letter, dated 5.6.1912.

⁸⁰ *LO*, 291.

⁸¹ GAD's letter, 12.1.1907; see Appendix 2, b.

⁸² On this see Horsley, 'The origin and scope', 196. See also Appendix 2, b.

concepts of both men were virtually identical – that is to say both believed existing NT lexicons had exhausted the literary use of words and, therefore, now necessitated ‘a similar apparatus for the Greek of common life’⁸³ – Deissmann’s book would differ not so much in methodology as in comprehensive detail. For Moulton’s proposition that they collaborate rested on the understanding that, aside from Deissmann’s papyrological progress, the latter was also well prepared with inscriptional work.

However, if his *opus vitae* were to succeed, it became increasingly imperative that he implement some changes in his life. Thus, he made the decision to do whatever was necessary to finish the lexicon within a shorter timeframe; but as soon as his Faculty colleagues became aware of this a flurry of activities ensued.

On Tuesday 26 November 1907 Jellinek, the then *Rektor* of the Heidelberg University, wrote an urgent and lengthy letter on behalf of the Senate to the *Kultusministerium* at Karlsruhe. In it he registered the fact – and in a surprisingly ardent manner – that the entire Theological Faculty, together with the unanimous Senate, wished for Deissmann to remain at the University. But should the Ministry decline to take immediate action to facilitate his lexicographical project they feared that

die Universität eine so zweifellos hervorragende Kraft, wie Deissmann verlieren könnte, der auf die Dauer nicht in der Lage ist, in seiner gegenwärtigen gedrückten Stellung zu verharren, sondern sich bereits jetzt mit dem Gedanken trägt, eine Pfarrstelle in einem billigeren Orte anzunehmen, damit er die nötige Muße finde, sein Lebenswerk zu vollenden.⁸⁴

Deissmann’s mounting sense of urgency was being fuelled, on the one hand, by his growing frustration, and on the other, by his conviction that he now possessed sufficient data and the methodological experience to produce a lexicon that would set NT philology on a truly academic level. To reach this goal, he was evidently on the point of making far-reaching personal and financial sacrifices, and that despite the recent addition to his family with the infant Liselotte.

His expressed intentions were not idle talk. The note in his diary for Tuesday 19 November 1907 reads: ‘8 v. Duhn A.[bend] Essen’, followed the next Wednesday by an equally cryptic: ‘8 1/2 Dieterich A. Essen’.⁸⁵ These two entries are of significance, for,

⁸³ Moulton, cited by North, 196.

⁸⁴ Jellinek, letter to Kultusministerium, 26.11.1907. For a transcript see Appendix 2. c.

⁸⁵ Dieterich died five and half months later (6.5.1908), four days after his 42nd birthday.

given the quick developments,⁸⁶ it is safe to conclude that Deissmann sought their advice about his contemplated departure from University life unless a way could be found that would enable him to work on the lexicon with fewer distractions. To that end, one small hope remained, for he had recently proposed that a new department for Greek NT philology should be established within the Theological Faculty (see ch. 3.6). At this point it must suffice, however, to say that on the Thursday before Dieterich had dinner at the Deissmanns' – two days after von Duhn was there – Dieterich had already written a strongly worded letter to the University Senate, in which he stressed that

... die Vollendung von Deissmanns geplantem Wörterbuch des Neuen Testaments als der nächsten grundlegenden Leitung auf diesem Gebiet aufs dringendste gewünscht wird. ... Würde Deissmann, wenn er den einschlagenden Studien mehr und pflichtmässig sich widmen kann und muß, sein großes Wörterbuch besser vollenden, so wäre auch durch den erbetenen Auftrag der Wissenschaft ein nicht geringer Dienst erwiesen.⁸⁷

Deissmann's conception of how a NT lexicon should be constructed was quite sophisticated for his time. In his view lexicography was a 'historische Wissenschaft' and lexicons the 'historische Statistik des Wortschatzes', and consequently much more than a mere compilation of words with corresponding glosses.⁸⁸ When he posed the rhetorical question, 'was ist ein Wörterbuch?' he proceeded to explain with lucidity and passion:

Nach dem Urteil der Meisten etwas sehr Einfaches: da stehen in alphabetischer Reihenfolge hier die fremden Wörter, dort die deutschen Bedeutungen. Also gar nichts Besonderes und auch gar nichts besonders Wissenschaftliches, sondern vor allen Dingen ein geschäftliches Unternehmen und ein Buch für die Bedürfnisse des praktischen Lebens, etwa wie ein Kursbuch oder ein Adreßbuch, äußerlich betrachtet vielleicht ein recht stattlicher Band, innerlich aber mehr der Technik, als der Wissenschaft verwandt ... Die wissenschaftliche Betrachtung und die wissenschaftliche Lexikographie beginnt dagegen in dem Augenblicke, der uns lehrt, daß wir die Bedeutung eines einzelnen Wortes nicht ohne weiteres aus dem Buche ablesen können, vielmehr jedes Wort zunächst als ein

⁸⁶ GAD wrote: 'Als ich im Oktober des letzten Jahres das Buch zu drucken anfang, konnte ich nicht ahnen, daß es, vollendet, für mich den Abschied von der Ruperto-Carola [Heidelberg University] bedeuten werde'. *LvO*, viii. See also letter from Dieterich (see following note), where he wrote of, 'in der durch die Eile der Sache gebotenen Kürze'.

⁸⁷ Dieterich, letter to Jellinek, 21.11.1907. For a transcript of this letter see Appendix 2, d. This was a response to a letter from Jellinek three days earlier, which requested: 'Im Einverstehen mit den dem Engeren Senate angehörigen Mitglieder in der theologischen Fakultät, den Herrn Kollegen Bassermann und Troeltsch, bitte ich Euer Hochwohlgeboren Ihr fachmännisches Urteil über die Notwendigkeit des für Herrn Professor Deissmann von der theologischen Fakultät geforderten Lehrauftrags umgehend angeben zu wollen. Die Angelegenheit soll in der nächsten Montag stattfindenden Senatssitzung verhandelt werden.' Letter, dated 19.11.1907.

⁸⁸ *LvO*, 295.

Problem zu behandeln haben und daß wir erst wagen dürfen, wissenschaftlich über ein Wort zu reden, wenn wir seine Geschichte erkannt haben, d. h. seinen Ursprung, seine Bedeutung und seine die Bedeutung zersplittenden und die Bedeutung gestaltenden Schicksale.⁸⁹

Deissmann definitely intended to raise the standard of NT lexicography to a completely new level, and scholars on both sides of the North Sea anticipated his innovative work and made reference to it in print: Alexander Souter (1873-1949) at Oxford;⁹⁰ James Moulton at Manchester;⁹¹ James Iverach (1839-1922) at Aberdeen;⁹² Georg Pfeilschifter (1870-1936) at Freiburg/Br.,⁹³ and at Halle Johannes Leipold (1880-1965) wrote that Deissmann was ‘... wie kein zweiter dazu berufen’ to produce such a lexicon.⁹⁴

Nevertheless, the *Kultusministerium* remained unmoved by the petition from Heidelberg and through their negative reply became, in effect, instrumental in bringing about an end to Deissmann’s productive years at Heidelberg.⁹⁵

2.4. Berlin: a crucial decision

At about the same time, the eighty-year old Bernhard Weiss contacted Deissmann with a request to write ‘eine Anzeige seines Buches über die Religion des Neuen Testaments’.⁹⁶ The conservative ‘Altmeister’⁹⁷ of NT exegesis had met Deissmann for the first time almost two decades before that, when the latter was a student in his Seminars at Berlin during the summer semester 1888.⁹⁸ But his role as *Vortragender Rat* in the Prussian *Kultusministerium* also necessitated that he

oftmals und nicht ungerne akademische Erkundigungsreisen machen musste, um die theologischen Dozenten, besonders auch die jüngeren, persönlich kennen zu lernen. Wenn er dann etwa in Marburg auftauchte, unangemeldet

⁸⁹ *LvO*, 294-5.

⁹⁰ *RTP*, 1907, 412.

⁹¹ *ET*, 20, 1, 1908, 33.

⁹² *ET*, 22, 6, 1911, 251.

⁹³ *LR*, 1, 1912, 12.

⁹⁴ J. Leipold, review of GAD, *LvO*, in *TLBl.*, 47, 20.11.1908, 560.

⁹⁵ Kultusministerium, letter to Heidelberg University Senate, 9.12.1907.

⁹⁶ *SD*, 26. GAD received Weiss’ letter ‘Ende 1907’ (no longer extant). Weiss’ book was entitled: *Die Religion des Neuen Testaments*, Stuttgart, 1908² (= 1903).

⁹⁷ i.e. a respectful term GAD used repeatedly in the typed and hand-corrected draft of his commemorative address for the 100th anniversary of B. Weiss’ birthday, held in Berlin on 26.6.1927.

⁹⁸ GAD’s other teachers during that time were, ‘in den üblichen Fächern’, Julius Wilhelm Martin Kaftan (1848-1926), Otto Pfeleiderer (1839-1908), and ‘in der leider nicht üblichen Christlichen Archäologie’, Ferdinand Karl Wilhelm Piper (181 -89). *SD*, 6-7; for Piper see also ch. 5, n. 2.

wohl und ohne die Möglichkeit, inkognito zu bleiben, so war das immer ein kleines akademisches Ereignis. Wir älteren Kandidaten und Lizentiaten suchten dann die Hörsäle der abzuhörenden Privatdozenten nach Kräften zu füllen und erreichten einmal auch für einen jungen Kirchenhistoriker als Beweis seiner großen Anziehungskraft ein beängstigend überfülltes Auditorium, was dem alten Herrn aus Berlin aber nicht weiter imponierte, da er die wirkliche Hörerzahl längst vor der Quästur angefordert hatte.⁹⁹

Weiss had observed Deissmann's steadily developing international profile and deemed his unorthodox approach to NT studies of potentially more benefit to the Theological Faculty at Berlin than the 'positive Vertretung' of a traditionalist, because – the octogenarian reasoned – that Deissmann had earned 'wesentliche Verdienste und [hat] neue Bahnen eingeschlagen'.¹⁰⁰ According to the latter, Weiss could see that his own conservative ('positive') theology and his 'Lehrbücher' were no longer being cited by the younger generation and had begun to think of himself as somewhat of a theological anachronism.¹⁰¹

Deissmann accepted Weiss' invitation, but correctly interpreted it as a pretext for a personal meeting of more than literary substance,¹⁰² for shortly thereafter (4 January) he also received a formal request from the Prussian *Kultusministerium* to come and discuss the possibility of succeeding Weiss in his Chair (*Lehrstuhl für Neues Testament*).¹⁰³ By that time Deissmann had already arrived at a point where he realised that the necessary support to complete his *opus vitae* at Heidelberg would not be forthcoming, which is

⁹⁹ From GAD's commemorative address, 26.6.1927. 25.

¹⁰⁰ Weiss, cited in *Kreuzzeitung*, 31.1.1908.

¹⁰¹ In his commemorative address for Weiss (26.6.1929, 14) GAD noted: 'In allzu grosser Resignation hat der Herausgeber [Weiss] seiner Lebenserinnerungen gemeint, die Wissenschaft sei bereits während der letzten Jahre des Sich-selbst-Ueberlebenden über ihn hinausgegangen. Das trifft nicht zu.' However, in 1966 the Bishop of Berlin, Otto Dibelius (1880-1967), published a newspaper article that depicted Weiss unfairly as a scheming old 'kingmaker', and incorrectly claimed: 'Den Nachfolger [GAD] bestimmte er [Weiss] natürlich selber ... vor den anderen tüchtigen Fachkollegen, die ringsumher herangewachsen waren, hatte Bernhard Weiss eine gewisse Scheu. Sie könnten der neuen Generation vielleicht klarmachen wollen, wie völlig veraltet seine wissenschaftliche Einstellung inzwischen geworden sei ... Er wollte einen, der völlig andere Wege ging, Wege, die sich mit den seinigen nicht kreuzen konnten. Einen solchen hatte er vor Jahren persönlich erlebt, seither aber nichts mehr von ihm gehört. Das war Adolf Deißmann.' 'Vorkämpfer des Jahrhunderts der Ökumene, zum 100. Geburtstag des Theologen Adolf Deißmann', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 6.11.1966, 9. Compare GAD's more thoughtful appraisal of his predecessor: *Pr.WL*, 16.10.1915, 1; *Ev.Wbr.*, 11.6.1917, 1-2; 21.1.1918, 1-5, and GAD's commemorative address, 26.6.1929.

¹⁰² GAD recalled: 'Ich interpretierte seine Anfrage richtig; der Achtzigjährige wünschte tatsächlich eine Aussprache mit mir über die Hauptfragen unseres Faches, und zwar mit Rücksicht auf seine Nachfolgerschaft'. *SD*, 26.

¹⁰³ The AK reads: '11.40 Ruf Berlin kam'. A contractual agreement, signed by GAD and Ludwig Elster (1856-1935), and dated 9.1.1908, states: 'Herr Deissmann weiss, dass ihm in dieser Stellung die Verpflichtung obliegt, die neutestamentliche Theologie und Exegese sowie die Philologie der griechischen Bibel des Alten und Neuen Testaments in Vorlesungen und Uebungen zu vertreten'.

why he was eager to investigate this possibility of a transfer from provincial Heidelberg to Prussia's capital. A mere two days after receiving the invitation he sent a card with the news to James Moulton and confided that he would make the five-hours train trip to Berlin by Wednesday, 'um mit der Regierung zu verhandeln'.¹⁰⁴ When Deissmann arrived in the city two days later the streets were covered in a blanket of snow, but he received a warm and congenial welcome from the Faculty members, on both a personal and professional level.

When he met Weiss he did not play down their different theological 'Gesamtauffassung',¹⁰⁵ for he knew that the aged professor had always opposed the extreme liberalism of the Tübingen School,¹⁰⁶ even though it had fallen into decline after the death of Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860). Yet Weiss was able to tolerate – and under certain circumstances even admire – the ensuing more sophisticated Ritschlian liberalism,¹⁰⁷ of which his colleague, Harnack, was a forthright proponent¹⁰⁸ and Deissmann a moderate adherent. Weiss now raised this matter with his Heidelberg colleague, and Deissmann later recalled:

Den starken Unterschied der Gesamtauffassung konnte ich ihm da nicht verhehlen, der zwischen uns beiden namentlich in Bezug auf die sog. Neutestamentliche Theologie bestand und der ihm gewiß auch nicht unbekannt gewesen war. Ich konnte andererseits andeuten, daß ich in der Behandlung der Echtheitsfragen sein maßvolles Vertrauen zur ältesten Überlieferung im allgemeinen teile.¹⁰⁹

Their meeting evidently confirmed for Weiss that his choice was right, and an amicable and genuine bond began to develop between the two professors, which continued unabated until January 1918, when Deissmann gave a moving eulogy at his revered elder's funeral.¹¹⁰

During his 'Verhandlungen' with the *Kultusminister*, Dr. Ludwig Holle (1855-1909), the latter pointed out the significant financial benefits a relocation to Germany's most internationalised and prestigious University could mean for him. In fact, the offer was

¹⁰⁴ Card, dated 6.1.1908.

¹⁰⁵ *SD*, 26.

¹⁰⁶ See H. Harris, 'Tübingen School', in Preston, et al., 696.

¹⁰⁷ See P.N. Hillyer, in Preston, et al., 595.

¹⁰⁸ Although Weiss himself had taken no part in the Faculty's vote regarding Harnack – which was initiated by the Ministry during the 1887/8 winter semester to replace the church historian, Karl Semisch (1810-88), whose illness prevented his continuation – he assented to his appointment on the grounds that he was the most productive and original theological thinker of his time.

¹⁰⁹ *SD*, 26.

¹¹⁰ *Ev. Wbr.*, 21.1.1918, 1-7.

so generous that on the same day (9 January) Deissmann sent a message back to the Baden *Kultusministerium* at Karlsruhe with details of the offer, although this may have been no more than a courteous gesture to elicit an apposite response.¹¹¹ It informed them that Berlin had proposed an annual salary package that more than doubled his present one at Heidelberg, where he received M. 6700 plus some M. 400 in lecture fees,¹¹² for now he had an offer of M. 11,700, plus a guaranteed M. 4500 in lecture fees.¹¹³ This news caused a remarkable reaction in the *Kultusministerium*, for the Minister hastily posted a telegram to Heidelberg's Theological Faculty that they were willing to increase Deissmann's salary to M. 8800, and authorised him to create a department for NT philology with an additional remuneration of M. 1800. However, their proposition was ill thought-out. In the first place, it was only a short-term contract limited to the coming summer semester; and secondly, it would have removed him even more from his lexicographical project, since he was expected to set up and run the new department in addition to his present duties. More will be said about this later, but given that their decision came in the wake of Jellinek's letter (see ch. 2.3), their offer suggests it may have been primarily a 'face saving' exercise.

The warm reception at Berlin – and generous salary offer – made it relatively easy for Deissmann to decide in favour of a transfer from Heidelberg, and he formally accepted the position via telegram on 13 January, stating simply: 'nehme berufung berlin an: Deissmann'.¹¹⁴ Three weeks later he received a letter from Holle that the Kaiser¹¹⁵ had ratified his appointment,

mit der Verpflichtung, die neutestamentliche Theologie und Exegese sowie die Philologie der griechischen Bibel des Alten und Neuen Testaments in Vorlesungen und Übungen zu vertreten. Zugleich bestelle ich Sie zum Mitdirektor des Theologischen Seminars.¹¹⁶

Less than a week earlier he had explained in a private letter to Wiegand that his decision to accept had been decisively influenced while he was yet in Berlin, by 'viel Entgegenkommen auf persönlichem und wissenschaftlichem Gebiete', which evidently

¹¹¹ AK; GAD's letter is cited in a letter from Karlsruhe Kultusministerium to Heidelberg Theological Faculty, 14.1.1908.

¹¹² Einkommensanschlag, 30.8.1907. With the exception of a modest M. 200 increase on 1.7.1907, GAD's salary had remained unchanged since 27.10.1903.

¹¹³ Kultusministerium, letter, 14.1.1908.

¹¹⁴ GAD, telegram to Kultusministerium, 13.1.1908.

¹¹⁵ Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1941).

¹¹⁶ The fact that he was expected to teach NT and OT (Septuagint) philology did not mean that a separate department had been created. Holle, letter to GAD, 3.2.1908 (via Heidelberg University Senat). See also GAD, contract with Elster, 9.1.1908.

included recognition of his NT philology. But although he anticipated that progress on his lexicon might become temporarily impeded by the move, he expected it to last only for a short time and that it would soon be compensated for by his much increased ‘Wirkungskreis’.¹¹⁷

However, the letter also reveals a further incentive: it was going to be easier to reach the Orient from Berlin than from Heidelberg, since the Balkan train formed a direct link between the Prussian capital and the East,¹¹⁸ and the city had a considerable stake in oriental archaeological exploration. Wiegand himself – the instigator of the Pergamon-Museum on Berlin’s *Museumsinsel*, and excavator of such sites as Miletus, Didyma and Samos – was also director of the city’s museums, but lived in Istanbul (see ch. 4.1). It is significant that Deissmann now thought of Berlin as a kind of doorway to the East, for it suggests that his ‘Verhandlungen’ included a provision to organise a repeat journey to that part of the world which had so deeply impressed him in 1906. Indeed, less than a year after moving to Berlin he was leading a similar educational tour, plans for which must have begun shortly after – and as a result of – his ‘Verhandlungen’.¹¹⁹

From Deissmann’s letter it is clear he was under the impression that ‘Die Fakultät hatte mich einstimmig vorgeschlagen’.¹²⁰ But did it? For not long after his appointment Martin Rade (1857-1940), editor of the prominent paper *Die Christliche Welt*, published a polemic against Reinhold Seeberg (1859-1935), in which he focused on Deissmann’s recent ‘Berufung’ and expressly stated: ‘ein einstimmiges Votum kam hier nicht zu stande ... eine Mehrheit von fünf Fakultätsmitgliedern schlägt an erster Stelle Jülicher vor’.¹²¹ How then could Deissmann write to Wiegand that his nomination had been unanimous? The selection process was complex and various individuals were considered, at the end of which the Faculty’s *Dekan*, Adolf Harnack, wrote a 22-page letter of recommendations to *Kultusminister* Holle, in which he detailed their deliberations and explained:

Die Fakultät schlägt an zweiter Stelle Herrn Prof. Deißmann in Heidelberg mit vier Stimmen vor (Kleinert, Harnack, Graf v. Baudissin, Holl). An erste Stelle rücken ihn die Herren Weiß Exz., Kaftan, Seeberg, und die dritte

¹¹⁷ GAD, letter to Wiegand, 29.1.1908. For a transcript see Appendix 2, e.

¹¹⁸ GAD described it expressively in *Pr.WL*, 16.8.1916, 2.

¹¹⁹ For GAD’s 1906 and 1909 study tours, see ch. 4.1-2.

¹²⁰ GAD also makes this claim in a letter to Moulton: ‘Bernhard Weiß, ... dessen präsumptiver Nachfolger ich auf einstimmigen Vorschlag der Berliner Fakultät geworden bin’. 19.2.1908.

¹²¹ M. Rade, ‘Von aktuellen Sachen. 7. Das System Seeberg und die innerkirchliche Lage’, *ChrW*, 20.2.1908, 420.

Stelle D. Pfeleiderer, der an 2. Stelle D. Schmiedel - Zürich nennt; es haben sich also tatsächlich alle Stimmen, aber in verschiedener Weise auf D. [i.e. Deissmann] vereinigt.¹²²

For 31 years Bernhard Weiss had acted as *oikonomos* of the Faculty,¹²³ and now he interceded robustly on behalf of his protégé by arguing that Jülicher was too liberal and intractable.¹²⁴ It was often difficult to resist the will of the ‘Altmeister’,¹²⁵ but in this case the sometime *Vortragender Rat* (1880-99) was particularly passionate because he felt personally affected by the decision, a factor that is unequivocally expressed in Harnack’s letter.

Endlich erliegt Jülicher nach der Meinung der Minorität [e.g. Weiß] nicht selten der Versuchung, seiner Kritik abweichender Anschauungen eine verletzende Form zu geben und habe das auch gegenüber der von dem jetzigen Inhaber des neutestamentlichen Lehrstuhls vertretenen Forschungsweise nicht unterlassen, weshalb es der Minorität unbillig scheint, gerade ihn zu dessen Mitarbeiter und späteren Nachfolger zu berufen.¹²⁶

Thus, despite the divergence of opinion, a quasi-consensus was reached on the one commonly proposed name, since, in essence, every Faculty member agreed that Deissmann would be a worthy successor to Weiss.

Yet as soon as his appointment became known, the conservative Lutheran papers began to lambast the choice and even attacked Deissmann as if he were himself responsible for the Minister’s decision. Thus, while still at Heidelberg, he wrote to Moulton:

Ich bin anlässlich der Berufung von der konservativen Presse heftig angegriffen worden, da ich überhaupt kein Theologe sei und keine Beiträge zum Verständnis des N.T. gegeben habe, sondern bloß zum Missverständnis des N.T. und gewagt hätte, die beiden größten Sprachforscher Cremer und Blass anzugreifen. Man hat mich aber hauptsächlich politisch angegriffen, da ich hier [Heidelberg] auf Seiten der Arbeiter gestanden habe. Diese zum Teil blödsinnigen Angriffe haben zwar nichts geholfen, der Kaiser hat meine Ernennung schon Ende Januar vollzogen, aber schmerzlich sind sie doch gewesen. Ich dachte aber oft an England und Schottland, wo auch in konservativen Kreisen mehr Verständnis für meine Arbeit vorhanden ist, als bei unseren Parteifanatikern.¹²⁷

¹²² Faculty recommendations to Kultusministerium, 25.12.1907. For a transcript of this document see Appendix 2, f.

¹²³ So GAD, *Ev. Wbr.*, 12.1.1918, 4.

¹²⁴ *SD*, 26.

¹²⁵ O. Dibelius wrote less kindly: ‘Alle Welt nannte ihn schon seit langem „den Alten“ ... und was er einmal gesagt hatte, war immer „richtig“’, in ‘Vorkämpfer des Jahrhunderts der Ökumene’.

¹²⁶ Faculty recommendations, 25.12.1907; see Appendix 2, f.

¹²⁷ GAD’s letter, 19.2.1908. It was first published by Horsley in ‘The origin and scope’, 198-201.

The conservative press he referred to were the right wing religious papers,¹²⁸ which stirred up this journalistic ‘Hexentanz’.¹²⁹ However, as both the date and past tenses of Deissmann’s letter indicate, it was not an ongoing campaign, but a short, yet sharp reactionary outcry by religious traditionalists, who feared that progressive liberalism would undermine the old Lutheran faith that Weiss had long personified for them. It was this fear rather than some personal dispute with Deissmann that was at the core of their heated debate, as the following excerpt from an open letter to Reinhold Seeberg shows:

Warum sollen denn die positiv-kirchlichen Kreise nicht das Recht haben, ihre Stimme laut werden zu lassen, wenn sie die Zerstörung wahrnehmen, welche – wenigstens ihrer Überzeugung nach – der theologische Liberalismus je länger um so mehr anrichtet?¹³⁰

One has to wonder how Seeberg – this staunchly Prussian royalist, who was Berlin’s symbolic figurehead of right-wing church politics as well as of its press – was able to justify his primary choice of Deissmann to his *Glaubensgenossen*, who looked to him as their champion. Perhaps the likeliest answer to this question seems to be his collegial deference to Weiss, who believed that he had good reasons to push for Deissmann to succeed him.¹³¹

When Deissmann wrote to Wiegand that his lexical project would only be impeded temporarily by his move to Berlin he had elaborated no further. But in a letter written six months later to Lars Olof Jonathan (Nathan) Söderblom (1866-1931), he expressed what may, in fact, have swayed him more than anything else. Söderblom, professor of theology at the University of Uppsala,¹³² had sent the new Berlin professor an invitation to give a series of lectures at their Theological Faculty during the 1910 Easter break (see ch. 4.3). The next day Deissmann wrote an acceptance letter to which he added: ‘Mein eigenes Lexikon soll hier in Berlin sehr gefördert werden; ich hoffe in nicht allzu

¹²⁸ See also J.P. Wendland, review of GAD, *LvO*, in *DLZ*, 50, 1908, 3148: ‘Das Werk [*LvO*] ist die vornehmste Erwiderung auf die Angriffe, die die kirchliche Rechte gegen Deissmann zu richten sich veranlaßt fühlte.’

¹²⁹ So Rade, 421.

¹³⁰ N. Bonwetch/ C. Stange, open letter to E. Seeberg, in Rade, 422.

¹³¹ Despite Rade’s acerbic cynicism regarding Seeberg’s vote in favour of GAD, he accepted that loyalty to Weiss may have been the motivational factor, but censured Seeberg’s silence in the ensuing press outcry, since he was in a prime position to quell the entire clamour. Rade, 421.

¹³² From 1901-14 Söderblom was professor of theology at Uppsala University and, concurrently from 1912-4, also held the Chair of religious history at Leipzig University. He became archbishop of Uppsala in 1914.

ferner Zeit den Druck beginnen zu können'.¹³³ It appears, therefore, that the Prussian *Kultusministerium* had recognised Deissmann's far-reaching potential and hoped to add him to their scholastic halls of fame by promising every support to bring his lexicon to fruition. This, perhaps more than the pecuniary allurements, seems to have underpinned his ready acceptance of their offer. From Deissmann's point of view, therefore, the drawbacks of moving into the fast-paced Prussian capital were far outweighed by the distinct advantages, above all (so he thought) the facilitation of his *opus vitae*.

The winter semester at Heidelberg finished with the last week of February; Deissmann's final *Seminar* lecture was given on Thursday the 27th, with the *Proseminar* ending the day after. By Saturday morning the Deissmann family was bound for the south of Switzerland and a three-week holiday in Casaratte near Lugano, where they stayed in the same 'Villa Castagnola' in which they had spent a relaxing fortnight three years earlier. However, this time Deissmann carried with him the index for *Licht vom Osten*; the book had already been in the press since October and its publishers were pushing for the index to be finalised. It was not a restful time for him; assisted by Henriette, he laboured almost every day on the 26-page index, written in four columns, and suffered a series of stress-related headaches. Although he dedicated the book to Henriette he made no mention of her help, yet wrote in the *Vorwort* that Lionel Strachan 'half opferwillig beim Index',¹³⁴ but as soon as the latter read this he wrote immediately to Deissmann:

I noticed the altogether undeserved mention you have made of me in the Preface! You are more than just to me, and a little less than just to Mrs. Deissmann, I think, for she really did help you with the index! You might have mentioned her and left me out!¹³⁵

Three weeks after returning to Heidelberg the family moved to the flat in Berlin Wilmersdorf that was to be their home for more than a generation,¹³⁶ and on 28 April Deissmann gave his first lecture as successor to Bernhard Weiss.

2.5. Frustration and disappointment

The Deissmanns' transition to Berlin was considerably eased by the wide circle of professional colleagues who took a personal interest in the family; for already on the

¹³³ Letter, dated 29.7.1908.

¹³⁴ *LO*, vii.

¹³⁵ Strachan, letter to GAD, 18.5.1908.

¹³⁶ Prinzregentenstrasse 7. The number of this flat was later changed to 6, and is reflected in some of GAD's correspondence.

first Sunday in their new home (19 April) Bernhard Weiss came to welcome them, followed that evening by his son Bernhard Wilhelm Johannes (1863-1914). The next day appeared Adolf Harnack, Reinhold Seeberg and Karl Holl (1866-1926), and on Tuesday it was Carl Schmidt (1868-1938) who visited. By Wednesday Harnack shared the first of many meals with the Deissmanns,¹³⁷ and a month later Julius Kaftan's wife invited Henriette to her home. These social connections contributed a great deal in helping Deissmann and his family to settle into Berlin, but only after they were able to acquire a holiday house in rural Wünsdorf three years later, did they begin to feel 'völlig eingewurzelt'.¹³⁸

Although Deissmann was by nature a provincial Hessian and not a Prussian, his ethnicity was nothing unusual in the Berlin University. The church historian Karl Holl hailed from Tübingen; while both Harnack and Seeberg were from the Livland, one from the middle-sized University town Tartu and the other from rural Pööravere near Pärnu; and Kaftan – Harnack's friend for more than thirty years – came from the small village of Loit near Apenrade in North Schleswig. In fact, the widespread mobility of Germany's academics before WWI was thought to produce a healthy mix of pan-Germanic intellect, many of whom tended eventually to gravitate to Berlin.

Weiss had never set up a *Proseminar* for his undergraduates, so Deissmann immediately rectified this, but although he had the help of various assistants for the extra task¹³⁹ it soon became evident that his workload was going to be considerably higher than he had anticipated. It took considerable effort to lift the department from the moribund ways of his predecessor into a modern School; for one thing, the Faculty library had been weighted heavily towards Lutheran orthodoxy and there were not enough study rooms for students. Weiss had sought completely new blood and it was greatly to his satisfaction that Deissmann fulfilled this role perfectly, for he threw himself into the task of establishing his department in keeping with modern theological

¹³⁷ GAD described Harnack as a towering persona of German *vita activa*. '... mit dem mächtigen Bauernschädel und dem schmetternden Streitteno'. During GAD's postgraduate studies at Herborn he had attended some of the former's lectures at Marburg on the history of dogmatic theology, but their first personal conversations had only occurred in recent months, when they met at the Evangelisch-Sozialer Kongress in Strassburg (chaired by Harnack, 1902-11) and walked together up to the Hochkönigsburg, a restored medieval castle overlooking the city. *Ev. Wbr.*, 7.5.1921, 184-5.

¹³⁸ 'Völlig eingewurzelt in den Norden fühlte sich meine rheinische Seele aber erst, seitdem wir 1912 für uns und unsere Kinder weit draußen ein Stück märkischen Sandbodens und märkischen Kiefernwaldes am Gestade eines märkischen Sees erwerben und das „Haus Anatolia“ bauen konnten.' *SD*, 27. On 'Anatolia' see further ch. 5 n. 53 and ch. 9, nn. 85, 93.

¹³⁹ *SD*, 27.

studies and began to revitalise the Faculty. Gradually he was able to obtain more rooms and began to expand the library by adding new books, pictures, slides and maps; for his express aim was to set up a ‘Grundstock zu einer Biblischen Sammlung nach Art der Museen der Weißen Väter in Jerusalem und des Istituto Biblico in Rom ... die in besserer Zeit hoffentlich einmal fortgeführt werden kann’.¹⁴⁰ However, he took his position so seriously that he was fast becoming sidetracked from his *opus vitae*.

Three days after his first lecture he was invited to attend *Graeca*, a Greek reading club vaguely akin to *Eranos* at Heidelberg,¹⁴¹ and he became a regular participant until at least Jan. 1934. Moreover, he agreed to be on the roster to preach from time to time in the University’s newly commenced academic religious services, started devotional Bible-study evenings for students,¹⁴² and continued his organisation of the projected second journey to the East. To top it all off, his growing academic profile brought with it an onerous flood of daily correspondence.

One major consequence of Deissmann’s study tour of 1906 (see ch. 4.1) had been his firm resolve to allow fewer distractions to impede his progress on the lexicon, which is why he had declined to join forces with Moulton (see ch. 2.3). And when he came to Berlin he believed that his *opus vitae* would stand a much better chance of completion there than at Heidelberg. Yet it was now, when he had progressively less time to work on his lexicon, that Erwin Preuschen published the first fascicule (α – ἀρχυροκόπος) of his NT lexicon.

When Deissmann wrote the previously mentioned letter to Söderblom (see ch. 2.4), he used the curious phrase, ‘mein *eigenes* Lexikon’, which can now be put in context. Four days before writing that letter, Deissmann’s review of Preuschen’s fascicule had been published (25 July 1908). This was not the first time he was forced to give careful consideration to Preuschen, as the latter had a single test page printed earlier in the year. At that time Deissmann reported to Moulton that the fundamental methodology of Preuschen’s lexicon was wholly inadequate, because the author ‘will gar keine Belege geben aus der Vulgärgräzität!’ and could, therefore, offer no advancement for the understanding of the linguistic history of Greek and early Christianity.¹⁴³ The

¹⁴⁰ *SD*, 27.

¹⁴¹ *SD*, 23. See also above, n. 39.

¹⁴² *SD*, 27.

¹⁴³ GAD, card to Moulton, 21.5.1908. See also below, n. 146 (Lee).

implication was that Preuschen was wasting his time, since Deissmann's own lexicon would assuredly eclipse it in every way. Nevertheless, Preuschen's forthcoming work was announced by its publishers with the ostentatious title: *Vollständiges Griechisch-Deutsches Handwörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur*.¹⁴⁴ Despite Deissmann's seeming lack of concern displayed in his letter to Moulton, the three acerbic book reviews¹⁴⁵ reflect the intensifying anxiety he had first shared with his British friend on 12 January 1907 (see ch. 2.3).

Preuschen's lexicon was not going to be an inconspicuous work that could easily be ignored, for it was planned to comprise 1120-1280 pages, and ended up with 1183 pages. This was a book on the scale that Deissmann had intended for his own lexicon; indeed, his review refers to Preuschen's 'großes Lexikonformat', which is how he had described his own book to Wiegand two years earlier. Thus, in his first review Deissmann made no attempt to hide his irritation and he allowed himself to slip into emotive and occasionally personal language, especially since the book claimed to take up where Grimm had left off.

Jedermann erwartet nun, dass das neue Lexikon da einsetzt, wo Grimm »nur noch teilweise entspricht« ... Statt dessen erleben wir etwas ganz Ungeheuerliches: diese neuen Sprachquellen werden von Preuschen nicht nur nicht ausgeschöpft, sondern auch das alte treffliche Material Grimms aus den Klassikern, Philo, Apokryphen usw. wird radikal ausgemerzt! Und Pr. wagt das einen seiner lexikalischen »Grundsätze« zu nennen.¹⁴⁶

Preuschen's lexicography was undeniably disappointing because of its perfunctory documentation, particularly as it was the first lexicon to appear since the papyri and inscriptions had been recognised in the 1890s for their potential to elucidate the NT vocabulary. On the other hand, it did have a significant positive feature, which Deissmann approvingly saluted: it was the first NT lexicon to include the vocabulary of the Apostolic Fathers and extra-canonical gospel fragments.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, a glimpse

¹⁴⁴ Published (from the first fascicle) by A. Töpelmann, Giessen, 1908-10.

¹⁴⁵ *DLZ*, 25.7.1908, 29.2.1909, 7.5.1910. Later, *ThR*, 1912, 356, GAD wrote: '... eine ungeheuer Reduzierung eines sicheren und notwendigen Wissensstoffes, in einem Zeitalter, das voll Mißtrauen ist gegen die wissenschaftlichen Qualitäten der Theologie!'

¹⁴⁶ *DLZ*, 25.7.1908, 30, 1878. Lee concurs: 'Far from incorporating any new documentary material, it cited no outside evidence of any kind. Even the LXX got short shrift ... But it was Preuschen's work that formed the basis of the next major lexicon. Bauer in his 1928 overhaul of Preuschen had to put back the literary (and LXX) parallels that Preuschen had stripped out, and begin the process of incorporating the new documentary evidence that Preuschen had failed to tackle.' *A history*, 123-4.

¹⁴⁷ GAD, review of Preuschen, *DLZ*, 30, 1880. In Lee's words: 'His big innovation (though he had a forerunner in Baljon) was the inclusion of other early Christian literature, hailed ever since as a significant advance', *A history*, 140.

of the emotions that Preuschen's first fascicle of 160 pages created in Deissmann, is betrayed in the conclusion to his review:

So bedeutet die erste Lieferung des neuen Wörterbuchs eine große und schmerzliche Enttäuschung, und nicht ohne Teilnahme wird man von dem auf anderen Gebieten hochverdienten und wegen seines produktiven Fleißes von mir stets bewunderten Verfasser sagen müssen, daß er sich in diesem Falle vorzeitig an eine Aufgabe gewagt hat, für deren Lösung er die Mittel noch nicht sämtlich beisammen hatte.¹⁴⁸

The ambiguities do not seem to be accidental; for this 'große und schmerzliche Enttäuschung' was something he was beginning to feel keenly. This is not to say that he entertained any personal animosity against Preuschen, despite the somewhat equivocal hint that the author may have acted rashly; for Deissmann was not a rancorous man. There could be no more doubt in his mind by then that Preuschen was going to be the first to produce a complete NT lexicon in the 20th century; yet Deissmann still maintained the hope of printing his own within the very near future.¹⁴⁹

As alluded to earlier (see ch. 2.3), his lexicographical work was no secret undertaking. On the contrary, it involved a great deal of anonymous contributors who helped to collect material on both sides of The Channel,¹⁵⁰ and several British publishers had already declared their interest in an English edition. In summer 1907, when he gave his four lectures at Cambridge on the philology of the Greek NT,¹⁵¹ he was approached by Peter Giles (1860-1935), Reader in comparative philology and Fellow of Emmanuel College at Cambridge, whether he would consider having the book published by the Cambridge University Press. Some time earlier, William Robertson Nicoll (1851-1923), editor of *The Expositor*, had asked that the lexicon should be entrusted to Hodder & Stoughton, while T. & T. Clark also showed a distinct interest in its publication. It was, therefore, no exaggeration when Deissmann commented to Moulton: 'an Offerten fehlt es nicht'.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ *DLZ*, 25.7.1908, 30, 1881.

¹⁴⁹ GAD's letter, 29.7.1908.

¹⁵⁰ The Faculty recommendations to the Kultusminister (25.12.1907) stated: 'Er hat bereits sehr bedeutende Proben seiner [lexikographischer] Arbeit veröffentlicht [e.g. *Bst.*, *NBst.*] und sich durch diese einen hohen Ruf auch in England und Amerika erworben'. J. Iverach wrote of GAD's work that '... there is in preparation a Lexicon of Patristic Greek, and that many workers are gathering material for it'. See Appendix 2, f. Also *ET*, 22, 6, 1911, 251; *LvO*, vii.

¹⁵¹ The lectures were held between Tue. and Fri. (30 July to 2 Aug.) and later published in book form (i.e. *Philology*), but appeared only in English (see ch. 3.5).

¹⁵² GAD's letter, 27.12.1909; see Appendix 1, h.

Although there was a widespread anticipation that the lexicon would come on the market within the not too distant future (see ch. 2.3) it was never completed. Deissmann's non-teaching time during his first year in Berlin was mostly absorbed by planning and organising his 1909 journey to the East: this was followed by preparations for his lectures at Uppsala. It was during this time that Deissmann's old determination to complete his *opus vitae* as soon as possible first began to weaken, for in reply to an enquiry from Moulton on how the lexicon was progressing he answered in the just-mentioned letter:

Zunächst einen kurzen Bericht über den Plan des Lexikons. Ich will ein Studenten-Buch machen, das aber gleichzeitig die wissenschaftliche Lexikographie des N.T. auf die neuen Grundlagen stellt. Das Buch soll viel kleiner werden als Thayer. Ich glaube, die übermäßige Anhäufung von Bibelstellen ist vom Übel, und Preuschens Absicht, eine Konkordanz möglichst zu "ersetzen", ist ganz töricht.¹⁵³

It is not entirely clear what finally tipped the balance in favour of this considerable change, but the underlying cause was almost certainly more his demanding professional commitments than the publication of Preuschen's lexicon.¹⁵⁴ Only a year earlier Moulton had announced in the *Expository Times* that Deissmann's 'next gift is likely to be on a yet grander scale', referring to his friend's forthcoming 'großes Wörterbuch' that would replace the old Grimm-Thayer. 'New Testament students', he wrote, 'know enough of Adolf Deissmann now to expect with lively satisfaction the Lexicon he is soon to give us'.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, this scaled-down student lexicon would still be a useful work, and in 1910 Deissmann and Moulton arranged for an English translation to be made as soon as it was finished.¹⁵⁶

Since the early 1890s Deissmann had steadily compiled a large collection of lexicographical material, much of which could by now be relatively easily organised for printing, and already in 1907 he had written to Moulton, 'ich bin ja gewiss nicht faul gewesen, ein sehr stattliches Material liegt in meinen Kästen'.¹⁵⁷ Dr. Gerhard Deissmann vividly remembers his father's 'Zettel-Kästen', of which there were approximately a

¹⁵³ GAD's letter, 27.12.1909; see Appendix 1, h.

¹⁵⁴ See above, ch. 2.5, also above, n. 146.

¹⁵⁵ *ET*, 20, 1, 1908, 33.

¹⁵⁶ GAD wrote to Moulton: 'Ich bin ganz damit einverstanden, dass Sie das zum großen Teil mechanische Werk der Übersetzung des Lexikons nicht selbst tun. Aber ich werde meinerseits später ganz besonderes Gewicht darauf legen, dass Sie die englischen sheets inhaltlich prüfen und anglisieren; denn niemand kann das Buch besser in England einführen als Sie.' Card, dated 7.5.1910.

¹⁵⁷ GAD's letter, 12.1.1907; see Appendix 2, b.

dozen in his study.¹⁵⁸ Each was painted black, sturdy and individually lockable from the top, measuring somewhere around 350 x 200 x 150 mm.¹⁵⁹ His description allows a cautious hypothesis to be raised as to the size and progress of Deissmann's original undertaking, since the boxes had been separately made and were solely dedicated to the lexicon. On a conservative calculation of a mere ten boxes filled to two-thirds capacity, one arrives at a figure of approximately 8000 'Zettel' in all. This admittedly rough estimate finds some support in Deissmann's explanation to Moulton that the boxes were full of lexicographical notes because he had not been lazy and, therefore, suggests that their content was far more than a mere collection of linguistic background illustrations.

In November 1907 Albrecht Dieterich had recommended to the Heidelberg Faculty of Theology that Deissmann's lexicon 'als der nächsten grundlegenden Leistung auf diesem Gebiet aufs Dringendste gewünscht wird',¹⁶⁰ an assessment the University Senate supported unanimously.¹⁶¹ Some eight months later, Deissmann confided to Söderblom that he hoped to start printing the lexicon in 'nicht allzu ferner Zeit';¹⁶² and by October 1908 Moulton announced that Deissmann's book would appear 'soon' (see ch. 2.5). It seems fair, therefore, to deduce that his 'Zettel-Kästen' contained at least a considerable amount of material that could have been ready for publication in fascicules. Moreover his *Bibelstudien* and *Neue Bibelstudien* were both designed 'dereinst zu einem Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament [zu] führen',¹⁶³ and, as Moulton reminded Deissmann, they were 'virtually only your lexicon in another form'.¹⁶⁴

A significant clue that further supports the argument that Deissmann was close to publishing is found in his diary on Sunday 30 October 1910, where it reads: 'End Oct 1910 MS an Moulton, Lexicon' – remarkably, the whole entry is struck through. He had a habit of noting various expected or planned events far in advance – sometimes in considerable detail – and there are more than thirty *post mortem* entries, of which the last one is dated almost eight months after his death. In this case, however, he explicitly (and uncharacteristically) wrote '1910', even though the entire booklet was specifically

¹⁵⁸ These should not be confused with the 145 'Kästen', which the ZLB obtained after GAD's death. See above, n. 58.

¹⁵⁹ G. Deissmann, letter to author, 30.3.2003.

¹⁶⁰ Dieterich's letter, 21.11.1907; see Appendix 2, d.

¹⁶¹ Jellinek's letter, 26.11.1907; see Appendix 2, c.

¹⁶² GAD's letter, 29.7.1908.

¹⁶³ *NBst.*, vii.

¹⁶⁴ Letter, dated 19.2.1912. For a transcript see Appendix 2, g.

produced for that year. It is, therefore, conceivable that he made this entry sometime during the last weeks of 1909,¹⁶⁵ in all probability as a result of Moulton's recent letter and postcard (apparently lost), both of which Deissmann answered on 27 December with the already cited but crucially informative letter, in which he also referred to these manuscripts, although in their advanced form as 'Druckfahnen'.

Ich werde Mr. Kellet und Ihnen die Druckfahnen (sheets) zusenden lassen. Natürlich sind diese noch nicht absolut korrekt und werden auch noch Veränderungen erfahren, am meisten wohl durch Sie selbst. Denn ich werde natürlich gern von Ihren Korrekturen, sachlichen Zusätzen etc. Gebrauch machen.¹⁶⁶

Evidently, he had planned for the first galley proofs to be ready in October 1910, and expected Moulton to begin the process of adapting his work for English theologians. However, since Deissmann's diary entry is crossed out one must assume that with the approach of the target date came also the realisation that it would have to be postponed yet again. These somewhat tenuous pointers combine to add further support to the above case, and also provide a new context for this letter.¹⁶⁷

Judging from this letter, it appears that Moulton had already obtained an agreement from Ernest Edward Kellett (1864-1950) to translate the lexicon, while he himself would subsequently make any necessary corrections and additions, a proposal that met with Deissmann's approval.¹⁶⁸ Significantly, a few months earlier Strachan had written a blunt letter to Deissmann regarding his translation of the *Licht vom Osten* index, which could account for Moulton proposing Kellett as a suitable alternative.¹⁶⁹

Four months after Deissmann made these arrangements with Moulton, the last seven fascicles (εἰ – ὀφέλιμος) of Preuschen's lexicon appeared in print for an introductory

¹⁶⁵ These diaries were regularly made available well in advance of year's end.

¹⁶⁶ GAD's letter, 27.12.1909; see Appendix 1, h.

¹⁶⁷ It was first published by Horsley in 'The origin and scope', but his conclusion that 'there is no evidence that [GAD] actually had any material ready' may now be questioned.

¹⁶⁸ Precisely two years later, however, GAD wrote to Moulton: 'Dass Strachan Ihnen die [Lexikon] Sheets senden wird, ist meine Absicht'. Letter, 27.12.1911. Either some change of circumstances had occurred in the interim, making GAD decide on Strachan rather than Kellett as translator; or more likely – to gain time – he arranged for Strachan (Heidelberg) to work in conjunction with Kellett (Cambridge). The latter was a successful translator of several German books, including Harnack's lectures, *Das Mönchtum, seine Ideale und seine Geschichte*, London, 1901. Moulton and Kellett knew each other well: see Horsley, 'The origin and scope', 203.

¹⁶⁹ 'Of course it is your book, and your index, so you do as you like with it ... The work on this index was not entertaining, and it was severe. The only pleasure one had was the thought that the new index would be more useful than the old. And I think you have thoughtlessly taken away some of that pleasure from us. I have only checked my part of the index, not Pfister's.' Letter, dated 14.7.1909. However, two weeks later, Strachan wrote a much more genial letter, and signed it: 'your grateful friend', 31.7.1909. On Pfister, see ch. 1, a. 189.

price of M. 14 each. Moulton himself was not perturbed by Preuschen's book, but Deissmann wrote to him that his lexicon would yet again be delayed, at least until the extensive reworking of his Swedish *Paulus* was finalised.¹⁷⁰ The relentless pressure of work obligations¹⁷¹ proved to allow him considerably less time for the lexicon than he had at Heidelberg, and at the close of 1911 he wrote with obvious frustration to Moulton:

Sie sind ein καρδιογνώστης! mein Lexikon ist 'a painful subject' für mich. Berlin ist ein Vampyr. Die Universitätsarbeit mit 2 großen, 1 kleinen Vorlesung und 2 Seminaren absorbiert die meiste Kraft; dazu Vorträge sonst in großer Zahl und eine nicht zu bewältigende Korrespondenz!¹⁷²

This stands in marked contrast to the keen optimism he displayed in his letter to Theodor Wiegand four years earlier.¹⁷³ The city with its onetime allures had become a 'vampire' for him,¹⁷⁴ in that she proved to be a debilitating drain on his private time. Yet Deissmann himself was not entirely without fault for the lack of progress on his lexicon. For in the same letter he indicated that he was approximately two-thirds through a revision of *Bibelstudien* and asked his friend 'Was meinen Sie dazu?'. For seven weeks Moulton was unable to reply,¹⁷⁵ but when he did, he concluded his amiable letter by mildly criticising Deissmann about his priorities:

You wouldn't think of stopping BS [*Bibelstudien*] now, I'm sure. But from the first I have wondered how you could draw the line between a new edition of BS. and what is virtually only your Lexicon in another form!¹⁷⁶

Even though he did not think Deissmann would abandon the process at this late stage, he certainly did not believe that this revision was a wise use of time, especially since any necessary alterations could have been moved directly into the lexicon itself. Berlin's pressured work environment had temporarily caused Deissmann to lose his sense of priorities, and Moulton tried to help him regain it with the reminder that the two *Bibelstudien* were originally produced as a means to an end: the NT lexicon. Deissmann had known all along that his chronic shortage of 'free' time was at least

¹⁷⁰ GAD, card to Moulton, 3.10.1910. For *Paulus* see ch. 4.3.

¹⁷¹ In addition, Henriette had given birth to the twins, Gerhard and Paul (12.5.1911), increasing the family from three to five children.

¹⁷² GAD's letter, 27.12.1911.

¹⁷³ GAD's letter, 29.1.1908; see Appendix 2, e.

¹⁷⁴ GAD's metaphorical use of 'Vampyr' almost certainly alludes to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), which had appeared in German less than two years earlier and proved to be a huge success.

¹⁷⁵ He mentioned his mother's death, and preparations for the six weeks of Hibbert Lectures to be given in Oxford and London; see following note.

¹⁷⁶ Moulton's letter, 19.2.1912; see Appendix 2, g.

partly due to his own inability to say ‘no’, for almost two years earlier he had confided to Moulton that ‘man ist hier in dem Tohu-wa-bohu der großen Stadt nicht Herr seiner selbst und ich hatte mir sonst zu viel aufgeladen’.¹⁷⁷

2.6. The fate of Deissmann’s lexicon

For a large part of his academic life Deissmann persevered in the hope that his *opus vitae* would one day have a tangible existence. But in Berlin this was progressively slipping away from him, and Emil Bock (1895-1959) a former student of his wrote:

Daß er mit dieser Arbeit nicht recht vorwärtskam, bedrückte ihn sehr. Denn mehr, als er nach außen sichtbar werden ließ, beschäftigte es ihn, daß man ihn wissenschaftlich nicht ganz für voll nahm und ihm die streng-exakte Methode absprach. Obwohl er die Einseitigkeit und Organlosigkeit seiner Kritiker wohl durchschaute, schwang er sich nicht voll zu der Souveränität auf, zu der er wohl ein gutes Recht gehabt hätte.¹⁷⁸

However, it would be wrong to assume that his lexicographical work had, therefore, left no mark on scholarship. For he had, for example, a particularly strong influence on Moulton’s and Milligan’s *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* and, besides Albert Thumb (see ch. 3.2), was the only collaborator named in the preface to Fascicle I (1914). But the increasingly tumultuous years leading up to and including WWI began to strangle Deissmann’s academic productivity; and at the end of 1921 he wrote the following poignant ‘obituary’ to his *opus vitae*:

Meine großen wissenschaftlichen Lebensaufgaben habe ich in aller dieser Zeit zurückgestellt. Oftmals ist mir’s dann in schlafloser Nacht wie eine Vision gekommen, es sei dieser, ja wirklich dieser eigentliche Teil meines kurzen Gelehrtenlebens, es sei insbesondere das Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament vorzeitig erwürgt durch die Elendsfaust dieses schlimmen Äon.¹⁷⁹

The hope of being able to complete his life work one day had still not left him completely.¹⁸⁰ However, the war years decisively shifted his focus to the far more pressing field of *Völkerverständigung* (see ch. 7), although this allowed him even less time for the lexicon. Adding to this was the tragic death of James Moulton (7 April

¹⁷⁷ GAD, card to Moulton, 2.3.1910. For ‘tohu-wa-bohu’ see Hebrew text of Gen. 1:2.

¹⁷⁸ E. Bock, ‘Adolf Deissmann 1867 [sic] – 1937’, *Zeitgenossen, Weggenossen, Wegbereiter*, E. Bock, ed., Stuttgart, 1959, 43.

¹⁷⁹ *Ev.Wbr.*, Oct./Nov. 1921, 275.

¹⁸⁰ *Ev.Wbr.*, Oct./Nov. 1921, 276.

1917), his most ardent British friend and supporter.¹⁸¹ Nevertheless, even at his sixtieth birthday he still received encouragement from well-wishers who looked for the completion of his lexicon, and Archibald Robertson observed: ‘It is to be hoped that Dr. Deissmann may yet be able to push on this important task to fruition’.¹⁸²

In reality, he had become far too heavily involved in the nascent ecumenical movement (see ch. 8.4) and an archaological venture in Turkey (see ch. 5) to re-immers himself in lexicography. Besides, it is likely he knew that the Göttingen theologian, Walter Bauer (1877-1960), was well advanced with his reworking of Preuschen’s lexicon, which duly appeared in 1928.¹⁸³ Finally, when Bauer published his third edition in March 1936, Deissmann reviewed the book – his last review – and applauded it as

... ein hocheufreuliches Ereignis im akademischen und kirchlichen Raum. Denn dank der Sachkenntnis und dem eisernen Fleiße Walter Bauers besitzen wir nun ein ganz auf den gegenwärtigen Stand der Forschung gebrachtes lexikalisches Hilfsmittel zur Erschließung des Urtextes unserer heiligsten Urkunde.¹⁸⁴

It was not the kind of lexicon he had originally planned, but at least Bauer had ‘put back the evidence from parallels that Preuschen had stripped out’, and further improved the lexicon’s quality by adding references to inscriptions – drawn from Moulton-Milligan – and to literary texts.¹⁸⁵ One week later Deissmann passed away suddenly on a heart embolism in his house at Wünsdorf.

After concerning himself for nearly five decades with the linguistic history of the Greek language, the obvious question arises as to what became of his extensive lexical collection. In July 1912, when he moved part of his private study¹⁸⁶ from Berlin to their

¹⁸¹ GAD wrote: ‘Am 4. April 1917 wurde im Mittelmeer der britische Dampfer „City of Paris“ von einem deutschen Unterseeboot torpediert. An Bord war, von Indien kommend, mein nächster und treuester englischer Freund Dr. James Hope Moulton. Schon vorher schwer leidend, starb er, von unserem gemeinsamen Freunde Dr. Rendel Harris bis zum letzten Atemzug betreut, infolge der furchtbaren Entbehrungen nach der Aussetzung einige Tage später im Rettungsboot, eines der Millionen unschuldiger Opfer des Krieges und eines der besten!’ *Ev.Wbr.*, June 1921, 209; also 14.5.1917, 5.

¹⁸² Robertson, ‘New Testament grammar after thirty years’, 84-5.

¹⁸³ *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur*, Giessen, 1928² (1910).

¹⁸⁴ GAD, review of W. Bauer, *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur* (1936³), *DLZ*, 13, 1937, 520. In 1928 Gerhard Kittel (1888-1948) also commenced work on the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. He edited the first four of its ten volumes, two of which appeared in GAD’s lifetime. GAD merely alluded to Kittel’s work in passing and seemed not to have evaluated it. *DLZ*, 13, 1937, 520.

¹⁸⁵ Lee, *A history*, 144-7.

¹⁸⁶ Until Mar. 1934 GAD had a study (and worked) in both Wilmersdorf and Wünsdorf. Compare above n. 138.

weekend house in Wünsdorf, he also brought along all his lexical storage boxes, which after his death remained untouched in their place. For another eight years Henriette continued to live in the house into which they had moved permanently a mere three years before her husband's death. But during a pincer attack on Berlin in April 1945 Wünsdorf and its neighbouring town of Zossen (one of the *Wehrmacht* command centres) were occupied by the Russian army; the Deissmann home was seized and turned into a military headquarter, and Henriette was evicted.

What happened to the lexicon can no longer be determined with certainty, but a private letter written by Deissmann's eldest son Ernst Adolf Deissmann (1899-1975), a lawyer, might provide some clues.¹⁸⁷ It describes how the house and contents were looted by soldiers and civilians alike:

Der schlimmste Strolch war der "wolgadeutsche" Nachbar nebenan, der gleich in den ersten Tagen in der schlimmsten Weise plünderte ... im Laufe der Zeit [ist] praktisch alles irgendwie Wertvolle auch an Möbeln aus dem Hause herausgetragen und weggeschafft worden, zumeist von der abziehenden Truppe.

At the risk of his life Ernst Deissmann repeatedly made the more than eighty km. round-trip from Berlin to Wünsdorf by bicycle, in an attempt to salvage as much of his father's personal possessions as he could, but focusing primarily on the books, which had been piled on a heap in an upstairs bedroom. His wife Gisela, too, had boldly walked into 'Anatolia' twice and was able to rescue a few small belongings. Despite these daring efforts, the lexical boxes disappeared and nothing has been recovered of their contents since.¹⁸⁸ There are two possible scenarios which can be offered.

In 1991, while visiting his father's grave in Wünsdorf after reunification, Gerhard Deissmann happened to meet a local resident who related how, shortly after WWII, he had found a copy of Gerhard's PhD dissertation lying in the garden of Deissmann's former home.¹⁸⁹ This may suggest the entirely plausible hypothesis that his father's *Fachliteratur* may eventually have been thrown out of the window and onto a heap behind the house to make room for the officers who had moved in. If, indeed, this was

¹⁸⁷ E. Deissmann, letter to G. Deissmann, 15.8.1946. For a transcript see Appendix 2, h. See also ch. 9, n. 55.

¹⁸⁸ In 1953 friends of the family conducted a thorough but fruitless search of the house and property. Moreover, despite intensive archival research in 2002 and 2004, I have thus far not found any tangible remains of GAD's lexicon.

¹⁸⁹ As told to me by G. Deissmann. The dissertation's title was, *Veränderung der Bevölkerungsverteilung im Raum Berlin-Brandenburg 1875-1925*, Berlin, 1936.

what happened, Deissmann's lexical labours would have quite literally been scattered to the winds.

An alternative course of events can be reconstructed from Ernst Deissmann's letter. He observed that when their house was taken over by the Russian officers, they began to heat it with whatever they could lay their hands on. Nevertheless, it is not likely that too many books were being burnt as these are difficult to incinerate, provide very little heat, lots of smoke and large amounts of residual soot. While 'Anatolia' itself was kept more or less intact, the smaller log cabin ('Blockhaus') – built behind it in 1934 for Paul Deissmann and his wife Ingeborg – had its timber stripped from the walls to provide heat for the house. It seems, therefore, most plausible that the thousands of loose pages and lexical notes, which for any non-specialist would appear utterly meaningless, might have been used as ready-to-hand kindling material.

2.7. Conclusion

For some two decades Deissmann kept viewing his lexicon as his *opus vitae*; yet this very way of speaking or thinking about the undertaking may help us understand why he never completed it. For the Latin cliché does not signal 'most urgent'; on the contrary, for him the phrase had the constant psychological effect of a 'long term enterprise', and demands of the urgent and the easily doable took priority over the important. Although the war certainly played its part in the lexicon's non-completion, blaming it on this alone leaves some awkward questions. For Deissmann allowed himself to become sidetracked with other time consuming tasks, of which the unproductive work on a second edition of *Bibelstudien* is a case in point. He also kept on assisting Moulton and Milligan with their lexicon project, without regard for his own progress. Was he over-ambitious to attempt the huge task of creating such a lexicon single-handedly? One might well argue that if he had followed Moulton's earlier lead and fully engaged the help of an assistant, his life work could have been accomplished. While in hindsight this would have been an obvious decision to make, it must be borne in mind that a suitable collaborator was, as Lee comments, 'seldom in fact found'.¹⁹⁰ It is to Deissmann's

¹⁹⁰ At least two of GAD's former students are known to have been working in the same field as he did, but died in WWI: Jean Rouffiac (see ch. 4, n. 74) and Gottfried Thieme. Rouffiac wrote, *Recherches sur les caractères du grec dans le Nouveau Testament d'après les inscriptions de Priène*, Paris, 1911; and Thieme (one year after graduating under GAD), *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Mäander und das NT*, Tübingen, 1906. Lee makes the salient point that NT lexicography is not only a frustratingly

credit, therefore, that he succeeded on his own as far as he did with his lexicon, and for a few years he was tantalisingly close to finishing at least part of this work. His association with lexicography was directly related to the strong interest he had long held in the language of the NT, that is to say, the philology of postclassical Greek. This aspect of Deissmann's work is what the following chapter will examine in some detail.

slow but also lonely task: 'at this stage we will be wondering how the work will ever be completed, and will be looking for some means – any means – of getting on faster. A collaborator? Not so easily arranged, and seldom in fact found in the history of New Testament lexicons: most have been the work of one person.' *A history*, 6.