

Scholarship across barriers – the social history of the *Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum*

By Philip Kenrick

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Table of Contents

Introduction and acknowledgements	49
The search for information	56
Securing the work	73
Scholarly and social challenges	110
Another perspective	130
Epilogue	137
Appendix: Obituary of August Oxé by Howard Comfort	144
Bibliography	145
Summary · Zusammenfassung · Résumé	147

Introduction and acknowledgements

The pages which follow derive from the correspondence files of Professor Howard Comfort of Haverford College, Pennsylvania, which came into the possession of the writer after the death of Professor Comfort in 1993. The relevant files tell, essentially, two stories. The first is about scholarly endeavour and collegiality, a sense of community which rises above differences of language or nationality; and the second is a matter of social history, the circumstances of survival of a family in a Germany which had suffered catastrophic military defeat in 1945, and the humane response of an American family who had barely met them. It is not implied that either of these stories is unique, but they were intensely personal to the actors concerned.

The *raison d'être* of the whole correspondence was the rescuing of the life's work of an elderly German archaeologist, August Oxé by name. This was a typical piece of research in the humanities: not here are there laboratories with complicated apparatus and teams of assistants around a professor, but rather a single individual – in point of fact a schoolmaster, not even in a university – working for years on his own, both in libraries and in museums with fragments of broken Roman pottery. He was painstakingly assembling thousands of individual items of data, which would eventually provide other historians and archaeologists with a detailed picture of a Roman industry, and with a tool which would have wide importance for the precise dating of archaeological contexts. The community



Fig. 1. Howard Comfort (RCRF Congress, Arezzo 1958; photographer unknown).

which would benefit from this research included a younger American university professor, Howard Comfort, who had been in contact with Oxé in the 1920s and 1930s, and who had very briefly met him twice.

Oxé lived in the Rhineland, in an area which had been subject to intensive bombing in the latter part of the Second World War; it was therefore of great interest to his American correspondent to find out, after the end of hostilities, what had happened to this man and his wife, and whether he and his papers had come through unscathed. The subsequent correspondence reveals how the scholarly community, bruised by war, could still come together to seek constructive outcomes; it also paints a picture of the terrible privations of life in the defeated country, and specifically in the Russian-occupied zone (Oxé and his wife having moved to Saxony in 1943). The primary correspondence extends between 1946 and 1952, and is known through originals received by Professor Comfort and carbon copies of many of his outgoing letters, currently in the possession of the writer. Use has also been made of papers in the archive of the Römisch-Germanische Kommission in Frankfurt (hereafter 'RGK'), a dependency of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (hereafter 'DAI')¹.

First, however, it is necessary to introduce the principal characters.

Howard Comfort (1904–1993: see *fig. 1*) was the son of William Wistar Comfort, who was Professor of Romance Languages at Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania, and subsequently President of the College. The Comforts (as indeed much of the Haverford

¹ References to these papers take the form RGK-A followed by a file no. and an item no. within that file.



Fig. 2. Typical makers' marks on Italian *terra sigillata* pottery (photos: Ph. Kenrick).

community) were Quakers. Howard took an interest in classical archaeology, and between 1927 and 1929 he held a Rome Prize Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome (a research institute in the humanities). There, he made the object of his studies the Academy's collection of Roman pottery tableware with makers' marks. This type of pottery is known by the modern term *terra sigillata*; it exemplifies the highest quality which Roman potters could achieve, and has a more or less impermeable glossy red surface. It was produced at a number of locations in Italy, the most notable and ample production being at Arezzo (ancient *Arretium*) in Tuscany. It is particularly noted for the fact that the vessels were regularly stamped with the name of the producer, impressed into the soft clay before the vessel was finished and fired (see *fig. 2*). The study of these marks, like those on other kinds of artefacts, has the potential to demonstrate the character, chronology and reach of the workshops which used them, and so to illuminate in unusual detail these aspects of an ancient trade. Again, as with other kinds of mark, it came to be recognized that in order to distinguish marks with the same lettering, but which might have been produced in different places at different times, it was important not only to record the texts, but also to record the actual appearance of the stamps. Comfort was one of the few scholars of his period to take an interest in this field of study, and in 1929 his study of the marks in the collection of the American Academy was published in the *Memoirs* of that institution. Not unusually for a classical study at that time, it was written entirely in Latin (*De collectione praecipue epigraphica vasculorum arretinorum apud Academiam Americanam conservata = On the largely epigraphic collection of Arretine vases held by the American Academy*)². During the course of his study, he entered into correspondence with August Oxé, who had already been working in the same field for some years.

August Oxé (1863–1944: see *fig. 3*) was a classical scholar and was from 1889 until his retirement in 1928 a secondary-school teacher at Krefeld, near Düsseldorf in the Rhineland. He was deeply engaged in Roman archaeology in Germany, and in 1897, when studying the stamped *terra sigillata* found at Neuss (Roman *Novaesium*) in the preceding year, decided that the only way to give a satisfactory account of the makers' marks on this

² COMFORT 1929.



Fig. 3. August Oxé (Reproduced from von PETRIKOVITS / STEEGER 1938).

pottery would be to compile an index of all the other places where they had been found, and where the producers were based. He worked on this, which he called his *Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum* (Catalogue of Arretine Vases) for the rest of his life, travelling widely, occasionally with financial support from the DAI or its subsidiary, the RGK. The advent of the First World War put an end to his travels, when there were still many museums that he wished to visit, and while he did manage to travel again in the 1930s, his powers were by then waning. The first letter from Oxé to Comfort that is preserved in Comfort's files is dated 16th February 1928, and was probably the first exchange between the two. (Comfort generally typed his letters and kept carbon copies; the letter to which this is a reply is not preserved.) The letter concerns the name of one of the Arretine potters, and Oxé was obviously pleased to be able to discuss this with a fellow enthusiast. Comfort generally wrote in English, which Oxé did not know. (Oxé referred on more than one occasion to the necessity of finding a translator, or excused himself for returning an extended document unread because it was too great a challenge to translate.) In due course, Comfort sent to Oxé a copy of his published catalogue of the material at the American Academy. Since this was written in Latin, there was no language problem – except for the necessity to point out a minor error in Comfort's Latin!

A. Oxé to H. Comfort, 26th May 1929

(1)

Krefeld, den 26. Mai 1929

Werter Herr Comfort,

Haben Sie vielen Dank für Ihren freundlichen Brief vom 17. Mai und die Zusendung Ihrer schönen Abhandlung „De collectione vas. Arret.“. Ich habe eine große Freude empfunden bei dem Lesen dieser Publication. Sie hat dadurch einen großen wissenschaftlichen Wert und eine bleibende Bedeutung, daß erstens die Töpfermarken in Facsimile abgebildet sind und zweitens die Formen der Gefäße im Durchschnitt daneben gezeichnet wiedergegeben sind. Nach meiner Meinung sind diese beiden Dinge noch wertvoller als das reichhaltige Verzeichniß der parallelen Töpferstempel, des Sie jedem Stempel beigefügt haben.

Ich habe die Arbeit bisher nur flüchtig durchsehen können. Dabei ist mir nichts wesentliches ausgefallen, „quod moneam, abs te iussus“ ...

Mit besten Wünschen und Grüßen, auch von meiner Frau und meinem Neffen Holstein,

Ihr

Oxé

qui olim 'omnia perlegit'; non, ut tu scribis, perlexit!

Krefeld, 26 May 1929

Dear Mr. Comfort,

Many thanks for your kindly letter of 17th May and for sending your fine article “De collectione vas. Arret.” It gave me great pleasure to read this publication. It has great scientific value and an enduring importance, in the first place because the potters’ stamps are illustrated in facsimile and secondly because the shapes of the vessels are drawn in section alongside. In my opinion, these two things are even more important than the exhaustive catalogue of parallel examples which you have attached to each signature.

I have so far been able only to skim through the work. However, nothing important has struck me “which I should draw to your attention, as commanded by you” ...

With best wishes and greetings, also from my wife and my nephew Holstein,

Yours,

Oxé

*Who once read it all ('perlegit'); not, as you wrote, 'perlexit'!*³

The reference to his wife and nephew suggests that by this time Comfort had met the family in person (see below, also *letter 69*).

In 1932, having completed a PhD at Princeton, Comfort joined the Classics staff at his father’s institution, Haverford College, where he remained until his retirement in 1969. The correspondence with Oxé continued with exchanges of publications and opinions on Roman pottery. They met only twice (see *letter 12*), but the first meeting is not referred to directly in any of the surviving letters. Writing in 1938 in a volume dedicated to Oxé on his 75th birthday, Comfort recalled ‘an inspiring afternoon spent at his home in Crefeld’ a decade earlier⁴. Comfort later reported an occasion – surely in his ‘penniless student’ days – when Oxé had offered to accompany him to the important Roman site of Haltern, if Comfort could afford the travel fare for them both. Comfort declined, which he deeply regretted in later life⁵! On occasion Oxé expressed his appreciation that Comfort had found someone to translate his letters into German before sending them. In July 1938

³ Oxé corrects the sentence in which his extensive help is acknowledged by Comfort in the article.

⁴ COMFORT 1938.

⁵ H. Comfort, verbally to the writer.

a printed card acknowledged the many greetings and expressions of good wishes which Oxé had received on the occasion of his special birthday. Then in December of that year, Oxé wrote on a postcard 'An dem Archeol. Congress in Berlin im August werde ich voraussichtlich nicht teilnehmen' ('I shall probably not attend the Archaeological Congress in Berlin in August'). This Sixth International Congress of Archaeology took place in Berlin on 21st–27th August 1939. Comfort evidently visited Germany in order to attend the congress⁶ and had hoped to call on Oxé. However, on a postcard postmarked 'Krefeld 18.8.39', addressed to 'Herrn Howard Comfort, Haverford Pa, USA, Nordamerika', Oxé wrote in Latin.

(2) A. Oxé to H. Comfort, 18th August 1939

Augustus Oxé senex Howardio Comfortio iuveni s.d.p. [= salutem dicit plurimam]

Quod scribis te Crefeldiam venturum multaque ex me quaerere velle, scribo vaccam quam tibi mulgendam statuisti, stabulo solito relicto propediem Crefeldiam relicturam atque in saltus prataque eductum iri. Medicus enim domesticus nervis meis graviter afflictis scientiae litterisque studere me per hosce tres menses severe vetuit et tantummodo valetudini recreandae operam navare strenue iussit. Qua de re certiores te fieri volo, ne frustra Crefeldiae ianuam domus meae desertae pultes. Fac valeas.

The elderly August Oxé wishes the best of health to the youthful Howard Comfort.

Since you write that you will come to Krefeld and wish to ask me many things, I write that the cow whom you have decided to milk, having shortly abandoned its accustomed stall, will leave Krefeld and be led out into the woods and fields. For my nerves are badly afflicted and my family doctor has severely forbidden me for the next three months to study science and letters; he has strenuously commanded me to devote my energy to the recovery of my health. I wish to inform you of this situation, lest you should vainly beat at the door of my deserted house in Krefeld. Be well.

It seems unlikely that Comfort would have received this information before setting off for Berlin, though later letters (*nos.* 4 and 12) make clear that Comfort did in fact manage to visit the family after the congress. In a letter dated 7th October 1939 and written (apologising for its inelegance) in German, Comfort reported on researches he had been carrying out since his return to America and closed with the hope that Oxé was fully recovered from his illness.

The last letter in Comfort's 'Oxé' file is a reply from Oxé dated 11th November 1939, recording that he had on that day received Comfort's letter of 7th October. He responded to the technical queries about Arretine potters from his catalogue, complimented Comfort on his German and sent, as usual, best wishes from himself and his wife.

Luise Oxé (1871–1952, born von Elten), the wife of August Oxé, emerges only through her correspondence with Howard Comfort after the war. The style of her letters suggests that she was an educated woman. At no point did she refer to difficulties of translation, and

⁶ At which he gave a paper on 'Collections of terra sigillata in North America': COMFORT 1940.

she did refer at one point (when writing in German, *letter 27*) to having read with pleasure *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, presumably in the original. She also wrote (*letter 68*) that ‘Here in our family there is not much with studying, not one word of Latin’ – which rather suggests that she would have learned Latin at school. Part way through the correspondence (see *letter 36*) she began to write in English, explaining that she had been studying it – and this is in her seventies! I have transcribed her hand-written letters without alteration; occasional expressions are difficult to understand, but in general the meaning is quite clear. She had shared her husband’s travels and had a clear idea of the importance of his work. Comfort always addressed her in his letters as ‘Frau Dr. Oxé’, but this is an old-fashioned courtesy, addressing her as the wife of ‘Dr. Oxé’ rather than implying that she herself had academic qualifications. If what she wrote seems sometimes repetitive, we must forgive her for the natural anxieties of old age in a particularly uncertain world.

The Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum

The compilation of the corpus of signatures on Arretine (or, more correctly, Italian) fine table ware, a type of pottery produced approximately between 50 BC and the middle of the second century AD, was a preoccupation of August Oxé for much of his life. The DAI had provided funds in 1901 and 1912 for Oxé to travel and to record in detail examples of this pottery in many European museum collections, and therefore had a financial interest in its eventual publication. When it was finally published, it included records of some eighteen thousand items, of which approximately three thousand were illustrated by careful line-drawings. These drawings were made not by Oxé but by a draughtsman, Dr. Wilhelm Pelster⁷, whose work was paid for out of the DAI grants.

The existence of the catalogue, and the fact that it was allegedly complete and ready for publication, was known to other scholars before the outbreak of the Second World War, but no publication had appeared. Howard Comfort was well aware of the importance of this work, and of the risks posed to both Oxé and his work by the fact that he lived in an area that was subject to heavy Allied air raids during the latter part of the war. The file in the Comfort papers which documents his subsequent enquiries opens in 1946.

Acknowledgements

The correspondence files of Professor Howard Comfort were entrusted to me after his death by his daughter Laura Comfort Kesel, since they included much scientific correspondence associated with Professor Comfort’s researches into terra sigillata pottery. Amongst these, however, were the files alluded to above. As soon as I read them, I felt that they recorded an important piece of social history that deserved to be more widely known; but it was not until 2020, when all activities were constrained by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, that I found an opportunity to give them the attention they deserved. The transcriptions and translations of the hand-written German letters have mostly been made by myself, though on occasion I have been greatly aided by the advice of my long-standing friend Susanne Zabehlicky-Scheffenecker of Vienna. She also read a first draft of this paper and, with great diligence, succeeded in clarifying several obscurities which I had been unable to resolve.

⁷ It seems likely that this is the same Wilhelm Pelster who did his doctorate on medieval bishops in

Cologne at the University of Bonn under Aloys Schulte (1857–1941) which was published in 1909.



Fig. 4. Germany, showing the zones of occupation in 1945 and places mentioned in the correspondence (base map: <http://mapswire.com/> [CC BY 4.0], edited by Ph. Kenrick).

Since much of the story involves the RGK, it seemed likely that certain aspects might be further clarified by reference to the Institute's archives. A wish to visit the Institute for this purpose was encouraged by the current Directors Esther Bánffy and Kerstin P. Hofmann, but was frustrated by the continuance of the pandemic. However, the need has been entirely removed by the generous engagement of the Librarian / Archivist Sandra Schröer, who located on my behalf the relevant files and arranged for them to be scanned and sent to me in digital form. I am deeply grateful for this support.

The search for information

At the end of the Second World War, there were many academics who were serving in the armed forces of the victorious Allies, and there were undoubtedly opportunities for these people to make use of their former connections. Comfort, being a Quaker and a pacifist,

had not served in the armed forces during the war, though he had been in Rome in 1940, working for the American Friends Service Corps (a Quaker organization) to rescue and evacuate Jewish families from Italy. In 1946 he contacted a Scottish classical scholar, Gilbert Highet (1906–1978), who had been a fellow of St. John’s College, Oxford from 1932 until 1938, when he took up a position at Columbia University in New York. On the outbreak of war, Highet had offered his services to the British Army, had subsequently served in Intelligence, and in 1945, as a fluent German speaker, was sent to a defeated Germany⁸. There, he seems to have been engaged in the recovery of reserves of gold hidden by the Nazis, but this was not a social environment which offered him great satisfaction. Oxé’s home in Krefeld was now in the British-occupied zone and in the circumstances, it may have been a welcome distraction for Highet to be asked by a colleague to trace a fellow classical scholar. Comfort’s enquiry is not preserved, but Highet’s response marks the beginning of a new line of correspondence.

G. Highet to H. Comfort, 17th June 1946

(3)

From Major Gilbert Highet, Property Control Branch, Finance Division
 CONTROL COMMISSION FOR GERMANY
 (BRITISH ELEMENT)
 BERLIN,
 B. A. O. R.,
 via London
 17 June 46

Dear Professor Comfort –

Thank you for your letter of 8 April. As soon as I got it, I started enquiries about August Oxé and his library. It has taken a little time, but the answer has come through now. I am afraid the news is bad.

Oxé moved to Saxony during the war and died about 1942. His library was completely destroyed at Krefeld during an air raid. His wife, though, is believed to be alive, and to have saved the card index.

Her last-known address was:
 Frau Prof. Luisa Oxé
 Kavertitz bei Oschatz,
 Postleit-Sektor I0,
 SACHSEN.

This is in the Russian Zone of Germany⁹, and there is no direct action which we can take to find the index. I have, however, written to a friend of mine in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Branch to see whether, unofficially, he can take the matter up. It is also possible for you to write directly to Frau Oxé, I believe, although it is still forbidden to pass “transactional” correspondence – i. e., letters concerning money or property generally. I should have been glad to write her myself, and send greetings from you; but there is some rule forbidding British Army personnel to write directly to Germans in Germany.

⁸ See HIGHET 2002.

⁹ Cavertitz is a small village surrounded by farmland about 50 km to the east of Leipzig (see *fig. 4*). In 2018 it had approximately 400 inhabitants: the

figure in 1946 was perhaps 200–300 souls. See <https://www.cavertitz.de/cavertitz.html> (last access: 4.10.2022).

I am about to be released, and expect to be back in the U.S.A. by the middle of July. It has been an extremely interesting, though rather arduous, year; but I shall, as Housman once said, return with relief to my proper job.

Yours sincerely,

Gilbert Highet

The receipt of these enquiries by Frau Oxé is recorded in a letter in the archives of the RGK: see p. 130 (RGK-A 2587, item 236).

(4) H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 25th June 1946

June 25, 1946

My dear Frau Doktor Oxé:

A colleague in the British Army of Occupation has been kind enough to conduct a considerable investigation resulting in my having your address, which I hope finds you well! He tells me that it is possible for me to communicate directly with you; I trust that this is so.

He also added that during the war you and Dr. Oxé had moved to Saxony, and that he had died there in 1942. It is only after a long interval that I am able to send my condolences and sympathy in his loss, but I nevertheless wish to say that I feel as though I have lost a good and honored friend. When I bade you farewell in 1939, just before the War began, I feared that it might not be my good fortune to see him again, though I had hoped that we might correspond on matters of mutual interest; and after the War was actively carried onto the European continent I often thought of him and wondered how you were faring, especially as I read of raids over Krefeld. My friend had learned that Dr. Oxé's library was destroyed in one of these raids, but I daresay that this was after his death.

I hope that he did not have the sadness of knowing that this had happened¹⁰.

My friend also tells me that he believes that you have saved the card index of sigillata signatures. I do indeed hope that this is so, because although I never saw it in detail, I know that it represented a tremendous amount of work and that it could serve as the basis for a great deal of scholarly work in the future. I hope that it is in safe keeping where it may be used by others. Will you not please let me know where it now is, and what plans you have for it? At the same time, if you know, I should like to know how to get hold of a copy of an article which Dr. Oxé had finished, I think, in 1939, which was to appear in the forthcoming number of the *Mitteilungen aus Westfalen*. It was to deal with the potter Ateius, a subject on which I was eagerly awaiting the definitive publication of his views.

¹⁰ From *letters 6* and *10* it is clear that the house was destroyed in June 1943, that the couple went to their daughter in Saxony only after that, and that Dr. Oxé died in May of the following year. A more detailed, personal, account of these events is recorded in a

letter from Frau Oxé to the reinstated Director of the RGK, Dr. G. Bersu, in May 1951: see p. 133 (RGK-A 2587, item 117). It is remarkable, in the circumstances, that Oxé's work survived.

I should like to write a short obituary for Dr. Oxé for the American Journal of Archaeology. I wish that I had some more specific details, but I think that perhaps enough has been supplied. If a reply comes from you in time, you might include anything that you think would be of interest to scholars or friends, for his name was quite well known among a small circle of specialists here. Of course I already have his bibliography as published in the *Festschrift*¹¹. A reply from you will also indicate that I may send you a copy when and if it appears.

With greetings and renewed expression of my affectionate admiration for Dr. Oxé, believe me

Sincerely yours,

H. Comfort to G. Highet, 26th June 1946

(5)

June 26, 1946

Major Gilbert Highet,
Property Control Branch,
Finance Division
Control Commission for Germany (BE),
Berlin, B.A.O.R. (via London)

Dear Highet:

Your kind letter of June 17 arrived yesterday. Thank you ever so much for the efforts to which you and your colleagues went in locating Frau Dr. Oxé. I am sorry to hear of the old gentleman's death, but hardly surprised. He was already quite aged. I am only glad that it did not occur in the course of a raid or some other especially distressing circumstance. Naturally I am also sorry about the loss of his library, which must have been almost unique, but your remarks about the card index are at least reassuring, and I hope that your friend in Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives can do something about it. It should certainly be salvaged if possible. I have written to Fr. Dr. O. in a spirit of condolence and sympathy, mentioning my understanding that the index has been saved, but nothing further. I don't think that my tome will be such as to excite the cupidity of any Muscovite censor, and of course I made no offers to take it myself, – though it took some restraint not to!

I am glad that you will soon be back here. I can well believe that it has all been interesting, but if you are like most normal people, you will not regret a return to the classroom.

I shall be looking toward seeing you and expressing verbal appreciation for your good offices.

Cordially,
Howard Comfort

¹¹ VON PETRIKOVITS / STEEGER 1938: A 'Festschrift' is a volume of scholarly papers, written by friends and colleagues on a theme dear to the honorand, and published in his honour (in this case on Oxé's

75th birthday). This practice is not uncommon amongst members of the university world, but it is most unusual for such a volume to be dedicated to one who was professionally a mere schoolmaster.

(6) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, June 1946

Cavertitz Juni '46

Sehr geehrter Herr Professor!

Für Ihre freundlichen Grüße danke ich Ihnen über meinen Vetter aus Krefeld. Ich möchte aber meinen Dank und meine Freude über Ihr Gedenken an uns nochmals zum Ausdruck bringen da viele Briefe verloren gehen. Ich erinnere mich Ihrer noch sehr gut desgleichen mein Neffe. Oft denke ich an die schöne Zeit, wo mein Mann mit Wissenschaftlern des In- u. Auslandes verkehrte. Als im Juni 1943 unser schönes Haus mit Bibliothek und Besitz durch Bombenangriff in Flammen aufging, fuhren m. Mann u. ich zu unserer einzigen Tochter, die auf dem Lande in Sachsen lebt. Wir lebten hier wie im Exil und wünschten zurückzukehren als eine heftige Krankheit meines Mannes Leben im Mai '44 dahinraffte. Bis in die letzten Tage beschäftigte sich mein Mann mit s. Katalog, den er Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum nannte. Er blieb vollständig erhalten, ich schickte ihn lange vor Ausgang des Krieges in Sicherheit.

*Mit freundlichen Grüßen
Frau Luise Oxé*

Cavertitz, June '46

Honoured Professor,

I thank you for your kind greetings through my cousin from Krefeld. But I must particularly express my thanks and pleasure at your thinking of us, since many letters go astray. I remember you very well, as does my nephew. I often think of the wonderful time when my husband was in contact with other scholars, both at home and abroad. When our lovely house, with its library and our possessions, went up in flames in a bombing raid in June 1943, my husband and I went to our only daughter, who lives in the country in Saxony. We lived here as if in exile, and were hoping to return when a severe illness in May '44 took him from us. Up until the end, my husband was occupied with his catalogue, which he called the Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum. This is completely safe, and I sent it long before the end of the war to a place of safety.

With friendly greetings,
Mrs. Luise Oxé

This surely pre-dates receipt of Comfort's letter (*no. 4*), and must have been written in response to the initial enquiries through other parties: see the letter reproduced on p. 130, in which Frau Oxé declares on 10th June her intention to write to Comfort. A later letter (*no. 20*) reveals that Oxé's widow must have been 74 or 75 years old at the beginning of this correspondence.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 5th August (?) 1946

(7)

Cavertitz, 5.7.46

Cavertitz, 5.7.46

Sehr geehrter Professor!

Honoured Professor,

Am 29. Juli erhielt ich Ihren freundlichen Brief, ich freute mich sehr darüber und hoffe, das auch mein Brief, den ich aus Krefeld senden ließ, in Ihre Hände kam. Jetzt schreibe ich aus der russ. Zone.

I received your kind letter on the 29th July¹²; I am very pleased, and hope that my letter also, which I arranged to send from Krefeld, came into your hands. Now I am writing from the Russian zone.

[There follow observations about both the honours that Oxé received from other scholars, the difficulties and frustrations that he encountered during his work on the Corpus and the sacrifices that he made in order to pursue it – information that Comfort had requested for an obituary. She then writes about the corpus.]

Nach diesem verlorenen Krieg ist an eine Drucklegung in Deutschland nicht zu denken. Es fragt sich ob die Philologische Gesellschaft in Amerika das Werk zum Druck erwerben will? Der Katalog müsste den Namen Oxé tragen Das wäre der beste Nachruf.

After this lost war there is no question of publication in Germany. I wonder whether the Philological Association in America might purchase the work for publication? The catalogue must bear Oxé's name. That would be the best memorial.

Die Funde von Haltern seit 1925 (Sonderdruck aus Bodenaltertümer Westfalens) wurde 1944 fertig, mein Mann erfuhr es noch. Ich werde Ihnen ein Exemplar durch einen Freund meines Mannes zugehen lassen. Von hier kann ich keins senden. Briefe kann ich erhalten u. senden.

The finds from Haltern since 1925 (offprint from the Bodenaltertümer Westfalens)¹³ was published in 1944: my husband just learned of it. I shall get a copy to you through a friend of my husband. I can send nothing from here. I can send and receive letters.

Ich hoffe, dass meine Mitteilungen vorläufig genügen. In meinen ersten Brief gab ich die Daten an. Gerne beantworte ich weitere Fragen.

I hope that I have given you enough information [for an obituary] for now. In my first letter I gave you the facts. I shall be happy to answer any other questions.

*Mit freundlichen Grüßen,
Ihre Luise Oxé*

With friendly greetings,
Your Luise Oxé

Two postcards from Frau Oxé, dated 27th August 1946 and 15th September 1946, report that she has arranged for a copy of the requested article to be available from Professor Rembert in Krefeld, if Comfort's English friend will go there to collect it.

¹² Comfort's letter was dated 25th June; the reported date of receipt is likely therefore to be correct, and the date of Frau Oxé's letter was surely therefore 5th

August, not 5th July.

¹³ Oxé 1944. Comfort had asked about this in his letter.

- (8) G. Highet to H. Comfort, 4th October 1946

Columbia University
In the City of New York
DEPARTMENT OF GREEK AND LATIN
4 Oct 46

Dear Professor Comfort –

Another report has come through about Oxé's collection, the Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum. It is in the U.S. Zone of Occupation, and has been deposited with Professor von Merhart (Vorgeschichte)¹⁴ of Marburg University. My colleague received the impression that either the material or the right to publish it was for sale.

I thought I should drop a line to the *Journal of Roman Studies*¹⁵ and the *A. J. Phil*¹⁶, giving them this news. It is better than we might have expected, isn't it?

Yours sincerely,
Gilbert Highet

- (9) H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 9th October 1946

October 9, 1946

Frau Dr. Luise Oxé,
Cavertitz ueber Oschatz (Sachsen)
Russische Zone, Deutschland.

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

I am afraid that I have been very slow in acknowledging your kind letters. I have received one from Cavertitz written in June, and one dated July 5, as well as a postcard dated August 27.

The earliest of these was used to compile a brief notice of Dr. Oxé's death. I wish that I had had the second letter at hand when I did this, but I was able to fill in a good many details from material in the *Festschrift*, and I think that enough has been said to indicate the principal aspects to American scholars. I did not know that he had received the Goethe Medal; it would have been good to have included that item.

I thank you very much for having someone send to me "Haltern seit 1925." It has not yet arrived, but I am looking forward to it with great interest. Unfortunately it cannot be sent through my British friend in the Army because he has now been discharged and is back in civilian life in the United States again.

A few days ago I had a letter from him in which he indicated the present whereabouts of the *Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum*, and I have written to a friend in the American Military Government to try to make the proper contacts. My colleague gave

¹⁴ Prehistory.

¹⁵ The archive of the RGK includes a brief exchange of correspondence in 1946/47 between G. von Merhart and Miss M. V. Taylor, the Secretary of

the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies: see RGK-A 2587, items 209, 216 and 217.

¹⁶ *American Journal of Philology*.

the impression that publication might be possible, and you had also suggested the same thing. I suppose that I should discuss the matter with the present custodian, but it might be possible to do something about it in this country. One cannot tell without a little more information than we now have. I shall be greatly interested to see what reply comes back. It is certainly very important to Roman archaeology and to classical scholarship that the Corpus be made available through publication if possible.

With cordial personal greetings and best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Howard Comfort

Comfort wrote on the same day to Maurice De Vinna (1907–2004), an American who had been one of the ‘Monuments Men’ in the Office of Military Government for Greater Hesse¹⁷, asking if he could make contact with Professor von Merhart of Marburg University¹⁸. A few days later, he wrote to Professor Rembert at Krefeld (1868–1966), who had been named by Frau Oxé as an intermediary for the article that Comfort had requested, suggesting that he could send it through the agency of Mr. De Vinna.

On 18th October, De Vinna wrote to Comfort, reporting a conversation with Professor Merhart about the Corpus, its safe existence and possible interests in its publication. A further letter dated 22nd November reported that ‘Dr. Wagner of the Römisch-Germanische Kommission of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut informs me that the photographs which will constitute the second part of Dr. Ochsé’s work are the property of the Institut, which financed his studies. The text, as you already know, is the property of Frau Ochsé. The Institut plans to publish the work as soon as paper and funds are available. It is expected that this will require at least two years.’

¹⁷ See <https://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/devinna-maurice-a-jr> (last access: 4.10.2022). This was probably the contact previously mentioned by Hight, in the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Commission (MFAA). See *letter 3*.

¹⁸ Prof. Gero von Merhart (1886–1959) was an Austrian prehistorian, who in 1927 was appointed to the first Chair in Prehistory at the University of

Marburg. In 1938 he was suspended from his post by the Nazi authorities but, for lack of a replacement, continued in practice until formal retirement in 1942. In January 1944, due to the absence of all existing academic staff, he was appointed Acting Director of the RGK. See KRÄMER 2001, 26; VON SCHNURBEIN 2001, 228.

(10) K. Rembert to H. Comfort, 28th October 1946

Krefeld, 28. Okt. 1946
Uerdinger Str. 254

Sehr geehrter Herr Professor!

Frau Prof. Oxé bat mich, Ihnen die letzte Arbeit ihres im Sept. 1944 verstorbenen Gatten, meines letzten Duzfreundes und bewährten Kollegen, zu überlassen. Diese wissenschaftliche Publikation hat Oxé noch auf seinem Sterbelager gesehen, sich ihrer gefreut, da er etwa 10 Jahre vergeblich auf den Druck warten mußte, und bestimmt, daß ein Exemplar auch mir übersandt wurde, das erst nach seinem Tode auf Umwegen endlich in meine Hand kam. Die „Terra-sigillata Halterns“ bezeugt das in langem Studium gewonnene Wissen dieses im Kleinsten so großen Gelehrten. Wie oft legte er mir bei Besuchen freudestrahlend die neuen Zeichnungen vor und entwickelte neugewonnene Einsichten in Entstehung und Transport dieser für die Datierung so wichtigen Bodenfunde! Natürlich gab ich sein letztes Werk nicht gern her, aber beeile mich doch, den Wunsch der im russisch-besetzten Gebiet in bedrängtesten Verhältnissen weilenden Gattin meines in 50 Jahren der Freundschaft bewährten Kollegen Oxé zu erfüllen und gleichzeitig Ihnen zu helfen.

Frau Oxé hat in Krefeld am 21.6.1943 ihr schönes Haus und die wertvolle Bibliothek durch Brandbomben verloren. Sie entfloh dann mit ihrem Gatten zur Tochter nach Cavertitz bei Oschatz in Sachsen. wo der Schwiegersohn ev. Pfarrer war, aber als Sanitäter in Nord-Afrika immer noch gefangen ist. 3 Kinder verlangen nach dem Vater. Das Vermögen der Frau Oxé und die Pension ihres Mannes sind blockiert. Nichts kann davon in die russische Zone überwiesen werden. Kehrt sie nach Krefeld zurück, ist ihr die Rückreise zur Tochter verwehrt. So sitzt sie mittellos unter einem Regiment, das eben asiatisch bleibt.

Was ein anständiger deutscher Mensch, der von all den später aufgedeckten Grausamkeiten nichts gewußt hat, heute auch noch zu leiden hat unter dem

Krefeld, 28th October 1946
Uerdinger Street 254

Honoured Professor,

Frau Prof. Oxé has asked me to let you have the last work of her husband, who died in September 1944 and was my last close friend and trusted colleague. This scientific publication was seen by Oxé on his deathbed with pleasure, since he had waited in vain for ten years for it to appear. He instructed that a copy should be sent to me too, which came into my hands circuitously only after his death. The “Terra-sigillata of Haltern” bears witness to the knowledge gained through long study by one who was so learned in such tiny things. How often on his visits to me did he excitedly show me the new drawings and explain newly-won insights into the origin and diffusion of these artefacts, which are so important for dating! Naturally, I was unwilling to part with the last work of Oxé, my trusted friend of fifty years, but I hasten to fulfil the wish of his wife who languishes in the most dire circumstances in the Russian-occupied zone, and to help you at the same time.

Frau Oxé lost her beautiful house and its precious library to firebombs on 21.6.1943. She then fled with her husband to her daughter at Cavertitz near Oschatz in Saxony, where her son-in-law was a protestant minister, though he is still in a prison camp in North Africa as a medical orderly. Three children pine for their father. The assets of Frau Oxé and the pension of her husband are frozen. None of it can be transferred into the Russian zone. If she returns to Krefeld, she will not be permitted to go back to her daughter. So she stays destitute under a regime that is really Asiatic.

What a decent German man, who had known nothing of all the subsequently revealed atrocities, has now to endure through lack of food, can hardly

Kalorienmangel, kann sich der Fremde im wohlerhaltenen eigenen Hause, bei reichlicher Verpflegung, ohne Diffamierung etc. gar nicht vorstellen, besonders wenn er das Wohnungselend der zerstörten Städte ansieht, das noch verschlimmert wird durch den Zustrom der Ostflüchtlinge und die Beschlagnahme der wenigen besseren Häuser für die fremde Besatzung und deren Familien. Wenn auch die Brotversorgung mehr als dürftig ist und die Fettzuteilung für 4 Wochen pro Karte 200 Gramm beträgt [unlesbar] etwa 7 Gramm pro Tag, so bin ich persönlich doch dem Himmel dankbar, daß ich noch arbeiten kann und darf und daß mir meine umfangreiche Bibliothek erhalten blieb, während ringsum die Bomben einschlugen. Grausam will es einem 76jährigen Mann (wie mir), der sein Leben lang rauchte, erscheinen, wenn jede Art Nicotiana fehlt. Und doch! Ich hoffe, daß die Menschheit endlich den Weg zum Frieden findet, da ein neuer noch schlimmerer Weltbrand bei den raum- u. zeitüberwindenden neuen Waffen den Rest an Wohlstand und Völkerglück und damit den Glauben an christliche Gemeinschaft zerstört. Gebe Gott den verantwortlichen Männer(n) die nötige Kraft!

Gerade 10 Jahre sind jetzt vergangen, seitdem ich auch Pennsylvanien auf einer Reise besuchen durfte und den Spuren der ältesten deutschen Siedler in Philadelphia-Germantown u. Lancaster County (Kloster Ephrata etc.) folgte. Was Mars und Bellona zerstört haben, wird die voraussetzungslose Wissenschaft und Forschung wieder aufbauen müssen. Raum für alle Völker hat die Erde, und endlich wird auf Erden doch wieder der Friede erblühen, den alle ersehnen, die wirklich guten Willens sind.

Hoffentlich bald erreicht Sie Oxé's Schrift durch die amerikanische Militärverwaltung schneller als dieser Brief. Wäre uns der Versand von Drucksachen ins Ausland erlaubt, hätte ich Ihnen die Schrift gern sofort gesandt.

be understood by a foreigner, in his own sound house, with an ample food supply, without being insulted etc., particularly when he sees the wretched living conditions in the ruined towns, which are exacerbated by the flood of refugees from the East and the requisitioning of the few better houses for the foreign occupiers and their families! While the bread supply is wholly inadequate and the fat ration of 200 grams per [ration] card for 4 weeks amounts to about 7 gm per day, yet I am personally thankful to Heaven that I have work and can do it, and that my extensive library has survived, while the bombs fell all around. It will be awful for a 76-year-old man (like me), who has smoked all his life, when there is no tobacco of any sort to be had. And yet! I hope that Mankind will eventually find the way to peace, for a new and even more horrible inferno brought about through weapons that transcend time and space¹⁹ threatens what remains of the well-being and happiness of nations and therefore belief in the Christian community. May God give those responsible the necessary strength!

A full ten years have passed since I too was in Pennsylvania on a trip and followed the footsteps of the earliest German settlers in Philadelphia-Germantown and Lancaster County (Ephrata Cloister etc.). What Mars and Bellona²⁰ have destroyed, impartial science and research will have to build again. The Earth has room for all peoples, and eventually Peace will flourish once again on the Earth, for this is what all of truly good will long for.

I hope that Oxé's paper will shortly reach you through the American military authorities, more rapidly than this letter. If we were permitted to send printed matter abroad, I would happily have sent the article immediately.

¹⁹ Nuclear bombs.

²⁰ Ancient god and goddess of War.

In meinem von mir verwalteten Stadtmuseum blieb gottlob auch der Bronzeabguß von den ersten deutschen Siedlern (13 Krefelder Weberfamilien, Quäkern u. Mennoniten), die am 6.10.1683 landeten, errichteten Denkmals von Germantown erhalten, das mir 1932 von der Crevelt Society gestiftet wurde. Sollten Sie einmal nach Deutschland kommen, bitte ich um Ihren Besuch.

*Mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung
Ihr erg. Prof. Dr. Rembert,
Leiter des Stadtmuseums*

In my town museum, run by me, there is still, thank God, the bronze copy of the monument erected in Germantown to the first German settlers (13 families of weavers, Quakers and Mennonites) who landed on 6.10.1683²¹; this was entrusted to me in 1932 by the Crevelt Society. Should you come at any time to Germany, please come and visit.

Very respectfully,
Your devoted Prof. Dr. Rembert
Director of the Town Museum²²

In a letter dated 8th November, Frau Oxé wrote out the specification which her husband had drawn up for his Corpus: it consisted of a handwritten text on 1,185 sheets of A4 paper, while a second part, including essays on various topics, included 30 pages of illustrations.

The 8th of December was a busy correspondence day for Howard Comfort, as much had transpired since October.

²¹ This reference has proved to be more intriguing than expected, and for enlightenment I have to thank Alex Bartlett, Archivist of the Germantown Historical Society, and Boris Schuffels, ‘wissenschaftlicher Dokumentar’ of the Museum Burg Linn in Krefeld. The bronze, now in the stores of the museum, is NOT a copy of the Pastorius Monument by Albert Jaegers in Vernon Park, Germantown, erected in 1921 (see <https://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2015/06/monumental-complications-in-germantown/> [last access: 04.10.2022]) but one of two models made at 1:30 scale of a rival proposal for the monument by the Swiss sculptor J. Otto Schweizer, which was never adopted. For the full story, see HOWARD 2014.

²² Elsewhere described as the “Heimatmuseum” (local history museum), this is presumably now comprised within the Burg Linn complex in Krefeld.

H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 8th December 1946

(11)

December 8, 1946

Frau Dr. Luise Oxé,
Cavertitz bei Oschatz,
Russische Zone,
Germany.

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

Thank you for your letter of November 8, which arrived here within the past week. Communication is now not as rapid as in pre-war days, but it commences to approach it, and it seems about as reliable.

I did not know that Dr. Oxé's *Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum* was as extensive as it is. I had seen parts of it at Krefeld, but for some reason I was not aware of the photographs of the Römisch-Germanische Kommission. In the meantime I have been in correspondence with an American officer²³ who has in turn spoken with Dr. Wagner of the Kommission in Frankfurt, who assures me that "the Institute plans to publish the work as soon as paper and funds are available. It is expected that this will require at least two years." Under these circumstances, I think it is probably better that the whole matter be handled in Germany; do you not agree with me? You rightly remarked that even in peace times the difficulties of getting such things done is great, and it goes without saying that the cost over here would be very high. Perhaps you have been reading of the various labor unrests which we have been having and, I fear, may continue to have²⁴. Especially if there are precious photographs involved, I should be reluctant to ask the responsibility of handling them. The main thing is, after all, that the whole text and the photographs are still intact; and while it will be a disappointment to have to wait for two or three years before the work appears, nevertheless, it would probably take as long as that to get the thing through the press over here. I have just had a somewhat comparable experience in the printing of the first volume of the great edition of Servius undertaken by the American Philological Association, of which I am at the moment Secretary and Treasurer. We waited for years before the completed volume was finally distributed, and shall wait for a considerable further time before the next one appears.

Meantime I have had a letter from Dr. Rembert, also in the last week. He wrote me quite fully on a number of matters of interest to us both. I think from the way that he spoke that he was sending me his only copy of Dr. Oxé's "Haltern seit 1925," which I hope is not the case. It has not yet arrived, but I am looking forward to receiving it and reading it. The difficulties of life in a Germany divided into four administrative zones must be very great; we are informed of some aspects of the situation by our correspondents, but there is a great deal that we do not know. One supposes that much is deliberately hushed up, inferring from some of the stories that emerge. Should you have occasion to write to Dr. Rembert, thank him for his kindness for me; of course I also shall write to him very shortly.

One hesitates to wish a Merry Christmas to friends in such difficulties as our German colleagues now are, and yet I cannot let the season pass without expressing the greetings of Christmas from my wife and me.

Sincerely,

²³ Maurice De Vinna. See RGK-A 2587, item 213, a letter from G. von Merhart to De Vinna.

²⁴ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strike_wave_of_1945-46 and references (last access: 4.10.2022).

(12) H. Comfort to K. Rembert, 8th December 1946

December 8, 1946

Dr. Rembert
Uerdingerstr., 254
Krefeld,
Germany

My dear Dr. Rembert:

Your letter of October 28 [*no. 10*] has arrived only this last week, about the same time as one from Frau Dr. Oxé and from some others who have been in correspondence about the *Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum*. I am greatly indebted to you for writing so fully, especially about Frau Dr. Oxé herself. I never knew her particularly well, but met her only on the two occasions when I called upon her husband at Blumenthalst. 33, – most recently in the week before the war broke out in 1939. I knew that they had a daughter, but knew nothing of her nor of the difficult circumstances in which they find themselves now. Nor did I have any first-hand picture of the difficulties of life in a land divided into four administrative districts. I suppose that with the number of displaced persons still in Germany, it is hardly practicable to permit free travel from place to place.

From your letter I assume that you have but one copy of Oxé's *Haltern seit 1925*, and that you have already sent it to me through whatever official channels are available. I do hope that I have misinterpreted your words, and that one of them remains to you; or, in case you have not already sent it, I should like you to keep it for as long as it may be useful to you. Yet I should appreciate your doing whatever circumstances allow to secure one for me also, since *terra sigillata* is my principal academic interest and since Dr. Oxé assured me that this article would be of considerable importance on the *Ateius*-frage, which has always been difficult²⁵. No one was better qualified to speak on it than he.

Your letter was also the first direct correspondence which I have had describing the lack of food and other conveniences. I particularly feel for the case of a man deprived of tobacco, and I am therefore going to try to send you a pound of the variety which I myself smoke. It is not the most expensive (rather the reverse!), but it suits me, and I trust will not be too unlike what you have been used to. At least, I assume that pipe tobacco, rather than cigarettes, has been your habit as it has chiefly been mine.

Your hopes for a better future world under divine inspiration and guidance find a quick echo in the hearts of most Americans, as of most Germans, but for myself I find it hard to visualize unless men make more of an effort to change their patterns of thinking and of acting than appears likely, – and I say this without reference to any specific national pattern but rather in general. I am greatly afraid that, while everyone gives lip-service to the necessity for peace and the Christian virtues, nearly everyone has reserved for himself some consideration which he finds more important than those aims, – whether it be personal greed, or patriotic sentiments of one kind or another, or mere security against personal assault. And it is very difficult to place one's finger upon these considerations because they are never admitted to exist until it is too late and they have

²⁵ The 'Ateius question' is an issue concerning the workplace locations of a number of Roman potters

under the collective (personal or management) name of *Ateius*.

done their damage. Personally, I feel quite sure that the world is not yet through with wars and rumors of wars; and if there is another war, I cannot imagine that Russia and the United States will be on the same side. Where it will be fought I am not strategist enough to determine, – perhaps everywhere in the world. But I doubt very much whether the responsible men of the world want peace sufficiently to make the sacrifices necessary for it; rather, they want peace on their own terms, which is a very different thing.

Since you mention having travelled in this part of the country, you perhaps recall that there is still a Crefeld Street in Germantown, recalling some of the original settlers of the area. My own ancestors came from the Pfalz, where their name was spelled Wuester; it has now been changed into Wister and Wistar. It was only last summer that my wife and children and I visited the Ephrata Cloisters²⁶, and found them interesting and charming.

With best greetings, including those appropriate to the season,

Believe me sincerely yours,

Howard Comfort

In January of the following year, Frau Oxé expressed to Comfort her mistrust of the German academics and her wish for him to do something with her husband's Corpus in America.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 6th January 1947

(13)

Cavertitz 6.1.47

*Sehr geehrter und lieber Herr Comfort,
In meiner dringendsten Angelegenheit wende ich mich an Sie. Um die Lebensarbeit meines Mannes, den Katalog zu schützen, schickte ich ihn Ende 44 nach Frankfurt a. Main; wegen Gefährdung wurde der Katalog von dort nach Marburg (Lahn) geschickt, wo der stellvertretende Direktor des Archaeologischen Instituts lebt. Diesem Herrn v. Merhart schrieb ich gleichzeitig: „trotz der Hergabe des Lebenswerks meines Mannes verzichte ich nicht auf mein Eigentum“. Mein Mann hatte den Katalog durch die zwei Weltkriege u. andere Störungen 47 Jahre in seinen Händen. Er setzte mich als Erbin ein. Es ist mir fraglich ob Herr v. Merhart meine Interessen vertritt. Ich setze mein Vertrauen auf Sie u. hoffe Sie helfen mir, dass die Rechtsnachfolger des Forschers in den Genuß der Verdienste des Forschers*

Cavertitz, 6.1.47

Honoured and dear Mr. Comfort,
In my most urgent concern I turn to you. In order to protect the life's work of my husband, his catalogue, I sent it at the end of [19]44 to Frankfurt-am-Main; because of the danger, the catalogue was sent from there to Marburg (Lahn), where the Acting Director of the Archaeological Institute lives²⁷. At the same time I wrote to this Mr. von Merhart: "Despite the handing over of the life's work of my husband, I renounce none of my ownership." My husband had the catalogue in his hands through two world wars and other troubles for 47 years. He appointed me as the heiress of it. I question whether Mr. von Merhart is representing my interests. I put my trust in you and hope that you will help me to ensure that the legal heirs of the researcher will reap the benefits

²⁶ See <https://ephratacloister.org> (last access: 4.10.2022).

²⁷ See note 18.

kommen. Ich bedaure nicht die Arbeiten aus der Hand gegeben zu haben, meine Koffer mit Büchern meines Mannes wurden hier im Keller zerrissen und beschmutzt.

In den langen Jahren des Briefwechsels zwischen m. Mann u. dem jeweiligen Leiter des Instituts handelte es sich lediglich um eine Drucklegung, die leider nie zustande kam. Deshalb wurde meinem Mann die Arbeit oft leid. Seine Zeit war ihm viel zu schade für eine Sache, die keine Aussicht auf Erfolg hatte. Aber immer wieder setzte er seine Arbeit fort. Er hat selbst niedergeschrieben, dass der Katalog sein Eigentum sei u. nur die Zeichnungen eines jungen Philologen vom Institut bezahlt worden seien.

Bitte, sorgen Sie, dass die amerikanische philologische Gesellschaft oder eine andere wissenschaftliche Unternehmung die Drucklegung ausführen lässt u. den Rechtsnachfolgern des Gelehrten gerecht wird. Wer könnte heute eine solche Arbeit fertig bringen? Das ist heute unmöglich.

Meine Tochter und ihre Kinder sind nächst mir die Erben des August Oxé. Wir haben unsere Heimat u. alles verloren.

Mein Schwiegersohn Pfarrer Gottfried Fuß ist noch in Tunis in frz. Gefangenschaft. Er hatte viel zu leiden, weil er für die Kirche u. gegen Hitler kämpfte. Sein väterlicher Freund Professor Tillich ist längst in U.S.A. emigrierte letzterer, wurde amerik. Staatsbürger u. Prof. am Union Theological College in New York.

*Indem ich Ihnen u. Ihrer Frau Gemahlin ein gutes, neues Jahr wünsche, grüße ich Sie freundlichst,
Ihre Luise Oxé*

of his work. I do not regret having let the work pass out of my hands, my trunks in the cellar here with my husband's books have become damaged and spoiled.

In the long years of correspondence between my husband and the then Heads of the Institute it was only ever about printing, which unfortunately never came about. Thus the work was often a source of grief to my husband. His time was too precious for him to spend it on something that had no prospect of success. But he always stuck at his work. He himself set on record that the catalogue was his property and that only the drawings made by a young philologist²⁸ had been paid for by the Institute.

Please try to arrange that the American Philological Association or some other scientific body will undertake the printing and do justice to the scholar's legal heirs. Who could today complete such a work? Now it is impossible.

My daughter and her children are after me the heirs of August Oxé. We have lost our home and everything.

My son-in-law Rev. Gottfried Fuß is still in Tunis in a French prisoner-of-war camp. He had much to suffer, since he fought for the church and against Hitler. His fatherly friend [mentor?] Professor Tillich has long been in America: he emigrated, later became an American citizen and is Professor at the Union Theological College²⁹ in New York.

Wishing you and your lady wife a Happy New Year, I send you warmest greetings,
Your Luise Oxé

In the meantime, Professor Gero von Merhart had taken the opportunity provided by the Christmas break to have a look at the papers deposited by Frau Oxé, which included a copy of Oxé's last article on Haltern (see *letter 14*). On 2nd January 1947 he wrote a long letter to Comfort, explaining that, as a prehistorian, Oxé's work lay outside his own

²⁸ Wilhelm Pelster, acknowledged in the eventual publication. See p. 55 and *note 7*.

²⁹ Correctly, 'Seminary'. For the famous philosopher

and theologian Paul Tillich (1886–1965), see <http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/bce/tillich.htm> (last access: 4.10.2022).

field of competence; nonetheless, he listed the extent of the catalogue itself (as previously described by Oxé), and of the accompanying discursive chapters. While the former, with a little editorial work, might be ready for publication, the latter, however, only amounted to rough drafts and would need to be worked up by another scholar. In view of the length of the catalogue and the necessity to incorporate thousands of facsimiles of the stamps (the eventual publication included around three thousand), he could see no practical possibility of carrying out the publication. He noted from the correspondence between Oxé and the RGK, that the Commission had asked for samples of text and a scheme for publication, which it had never received³⁰. He also formed the opinion that Oxé himself had never made a serious estimate of what would be involved. Von Merhart's letter was nonetheless constructive in tone and he expressed willingness to answer further questions.

Frau Oxé wrote again on 21st January, attaching a typed copy of the statement which her husband had made concerning his work, and which she had already quoted in her letter of November 8th.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 21st January 1947

(14)

Cavertitz, 21.1.47

Lieber Herr Comfort,

Zunächst danke ich Ihnen für Ihren freundlichen Brief u. Ihre Mitteilungen. Es freut mich ungemein, dass Sie endlich in den Besitz des Sonderdrucks kamen. Ich sandte das Heft an Herrn v. Merhart Ende 44 mit dem Katalog.

Sie werden sich über meinen letzten Brief gewundert haben Ich war ärgerlich weil die Herren vom Institut (auch Berlin) tun als hätten sie ein Anrecht auf den Katalog. Großes Interesse haben sie, aber kein Anrecht. Die Korrespondenz in all den Jahren drehte sich ständig um die Drucklegung, die aber nie zustande kam.

Mag das Institut auch Zeichnungen nach Angabe meines Mannes bezahlt haben u. einige Photographien. Was mein Mann darüber schreibt lege ich bei.

Ich danke Ihnen daß Sie mir schreiben: „die Herren wollen in zwei Jahren mit der Drucklegung beginnen.“

Cavertitz, 21 January 1947

Dear Mr. Comfort,

First, I thank you for your kindly letter [no. 11] and your news. I am delighted that the offprint has finally come into your hands³¹. I sent the volume to Mr. von Merhart at the end of '44 with the catalogue.

You will have been surprised by my last letter. I was angry because the gentlemen of the Institute (also Berlin³²) behave as if they have rights over the catalogue. They have a great interest in it, but not rights. The correspondence in all the years has been exclusively about the printing, but nothing came of it.

The Institute may have paid for drawings on the instructions of my husband, and for some photographs. I attach what my husband wrote about it.

Thank you for writing that "the gentlemen intend to start on the printing in two years."

³⁰ This is confirmed by one of the earliest letters in file RGK-A 2587 (item 249) addressed to August Oxé on 8 June 1939 by W. Schleiermacher (1904–1977), who at that time was Acting Director of the RGK.

³¹ This is a misunderstanding. When she wrote on 15th April she again expressed the hope that the article had arrived; while a letter from Comfort to

Dr. Rembert dated 30th April asserted that it had arrived safely 'some little time ago' (but certainly later than January).

³² She means not only the staff of the RGK in Frankfurt, but also those of the parent body, the DAI in Berlin.

Ob es gelingt? Wir sind ja so arm geworden. Es fehlt an allem. Denken Sie, jetzt im Winter fehlt es an Leder, die Kinder haben keine Schuhe, sie können nicht repariert werden. Man muß zufrieden sein wenn man in einem warmen Raum sein kann, viele haben auch das nicht. Wir selbst dürfen nicht klagen, sind noch gesund, aber für Kranke ist das Leben furchtbar schwer. Es kann oft nicht geholfen werden u. der Arzt kommt nicht aus Mangel an Betriebsstoff. Alle leiden Hunger u. sind dadurch böse, viele stehlen. Bisher ist unsere Familie gut durch die schwere Zeit gekommen außer dem Verlust an Sachwerten. Aber mein Schwiegersohn ist schon 4½ Jahre in französischer Gefangenschaft, als Lagerpfarrer ist er 3 Jahre in Tunis. Er hat viel gelitten soll aber bald entlassen werden. Darauf freuen wir uns alle, besonders seine Kinder Michael (14), Christof (12) u. Monika (11 Jahre). Für meine Tochter war es eine schwere Zeit, wir hoffen er bleibt gesund.

Für mich wird er dann die Regelung mit den Herrn des Instituts führen. Ich hoffe Sie geben mir Nachricht wenn Sie weiter über die Drucklegung hören. Mein Mann bezeichnete seine Arbeit als abgeschlossen. Herr v. M. meint der zweite Teil sei nicht abgeschlossen. Es wäre schade wenn eine andere Hand etwas ändern würde; das ist meine Meinung. Es freute mich, daß Herr Rembert Ihnen schrieb, ich schrieb ihm auch vor wenigen Tagen weil er Abschied nahm von seiner Tätigkeit als Leiter des Heimatmuseums u. der Zeitung „Die Heimat“. Letzteres Heft erschien viele Jahre, erfreute alle Krefelder weil es aus alter u. neuer Zeit vieles brachte an Bildern u. Aufsätzen.

Für Ihre u. Ihrer Frau freundliche Wünsche zu Weihnachten dankend, erwidere ich dieselben für ein glückliches Jahr 47.

*Es grüßt Sie herzlich,
Ihre Luise Oxé*

Ihr Brief vom 9.12. brauchte 4 Wochen bis hierher.

Will that happen? We have now become so poor. There are shortages of everything. Just think, that now in winter there is no leather: the children have no shoes, and they cannot be mended. One must be pleased when one can be somewhere warm: many do not even have that. We ourselves should not complain, we are still healthy, but for the sick life is really hard. Often there is no help and the doctor cannot come for lack of fuel. Everyone is hungry, and this makes them dishonest: many steal. Until now, our family has come through the difficult times well apart from the loss of property. But my son-in-law has now been in a French P.o.W. camp for four-and-a-half years, and for 3 years as a camp chaplain in Tunis. He has suffered much but should soon be released. We are all looking forward to that, particularly his children Michael (14), Christof (12) and Monika (11). It has been a difficult time for my daughter; we hope that he will stay in good health.

He will then manage my relations with the gentlemen of the Institute. I hope that you will give me news when you hear anything further about the printing. My husband described his work as completed. Mr. v. M. says that the second part is unfinished. It would be a pity if another hand were to change anything: that is my opinion. I am pleased that Mr. Rembert wrote to you; I also wrote to him a few days ago as he has retired from his position as Director of the local history museum and of the journal 'Die Heimat' (The Homeland). The latter publication appeared over many years, and pleased all the people of Krefeld because it contained many articles and photographs about both earlier and more recent times.

Thanking you and your wife for your kind wishes for Christmas, I return the same for a lucky year in 1947.

With warm greetings,
Your Luise Oxé

Your letter of 9 December took 4 weeks to get here.

Securing the work

The next flurry of letters from Comfort's hand, on 10–14th March, involved a prospectus for publication of Oxé's corpus, which he composed and sent to various American institutions, inviting their interest. He sent copies also to Prof. von Merhart and to Frau Oxé (expressing in his letter to the former the hope that the latter would not fall 'into a category which will displease the censor', and therefore fail to arrive).

Frau Oxé wrote again on 15th April; by then she had not received Comfort's letter of the previous month, nor did she know that the often-mentioned offprint had arrived. On the other hand, she was puzzled by an apparently unrelated (new) approach from the military authorities, asking about her husband's corpus. She continued with some family news.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 15th April 1947 (extract)

(15)

*Die schlimmste Zeit liegt noch vor uns.
Bevor die neue Ernte beginnt, werden noch
viele Menschen durch Hunger sterben. Gott
schütze Deutschland!*

*Mein Schwiegersohn, der nach seiner
Entlassung aus der Gefangenschaft in Tunis
seit einem viertel Jahr auf der Heimreise
ist, wird jetzt erwartet, er wird wie Odys-
seus viel von seinen Erlebnissen zu erzählen
haben. Wenn seine Gesundheit nicht zu sehr
gelitten hat, wollen wir dankbar sein.*

*Es würde mir sehr freuen von Ihnen ein
Lebenszeichen zu erfahren. Ich hoffe Sie
haben die Drucksache „Haltern seit 1925“
erhalten.*

*Indem ich Ihnen meinen Dank für alle
Mühe anspreche, grüße ich Sie u. Ihre Frau
sehr herzlich.
Ihre Luise Oxé*

The worst of times now lie ahead of us.
Before the harvest begins, many more peo-
ple will die of hunger. God save Germany!

My son-in-law, who has been for a
quarter of a year on his way home after his
release from the P.o.W. camp in Tunis, is
now expected; like Odysseus, he will have
much to tell of his experiences. We shall be
thankful if his health has not suffered too
much³³.

It would please me greatly to have some
sign of life from you. I hope that you have
received the offprint of 'Haltern since
1925.'

While expressing my thanks to you for
all your trouble, I send warm greetings to
you and your wife.
Your Luise Oxé

Comfort replied to this on May 19th, hastening to reassure her and reporting that he had sent further letters, which she had presumably not received. He had by now received two copies of the requested offprint, one from Dr. Rembert and another through the British military authorities! Comfort's letter crossed again with a letter from Frau Oxé, written on 16th May, in which she thanked him for his efforts to solicit interest in America in the corpus. The letter went on to make first mention of a food parcel.

³³ But see letter 20.

- (16) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 16th May 1947 (extract)

Am heutigen Tage kam Ihre angekündigte Sendung der Haverford Freunde in unsere Hände. Sie hätten die Freude der Jugend sehn müssen beim Anblick der vielen kostbaren Dosen mit Vorräten aller Art. Solche Produkte kennen wir nur noch durch dem Namen nach. Zunächst empfangen Sie selbst meinen aufrichtigen Dank für die erquickenden Gaben.

Für die Haverford Freunde lege ich ein Dankschreiben bei, ebenfalls für Mrs. Susan T. Dewas. Die guten Quakers haben auch in meine Heimat viele Gaben gesandt.

*In herzlich Dankbarkeit grüßt Sie u. Ihre Gattin
Ihre Luise Oxé*

Today your announced despatch from the Haverford Friends came into our hands. You should have seen the joy of the young ones at the sight of so many splendid cans of all sorts of supplies. Such products until now we have only heard of. In first place, you have my heartfelt thanks for these revitalizing gifts.

I enclose a letter of thanks for the Haverford Friends, and another for Mrs. Susan T. Dewas. The good Quakers have also sent many gifts to my home town.

In heartfelt gratitude and with greetings to yourself and your spouse,
Your Luise Oxé

In June, there came from Frau Oxé a long letter, for the first time typed, evidently by the son-in-law Gottfried Fuss, finally back at home³⁴. Frau Oxé began by apologising for the long delay in replying to Comfort's letter of 14th March, with the publication proposal, on the grounds of her diminished health. The body of the letter is concerned with this proposal and her concern, once again, to make absolutely clear the limits of any rights the DAI might claim over her husband's work. She quoted chapter and verse regarding the financial assistance received from the Institute, clearly having the evidence to hand. The letter concludes with a handwritten addition.

- (17) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 26th June 1947 (extract)

Da mein Schwiegersohn endlich aus der Gefangenschaft heimkehrte, bat ich ihn für mich zu schreiben. Das gleiche Schreiben sende ich an Herr v. Merhart. Es ist mir ein Bedürfnis Ihnen nochmals meinen herzlichsten Dank auszusprechen für die Zusendung des herrlichen Pakets der Haverforder Freunde. Wie angebracht diese Sendung war, ist kaum zu sagen. Wir leben hier in schweren Zeiten u. wissen nicht, wie wir sie überstehen werden. Gott lohne Ihnen Ihre Güte!

Since my son-in-law is finally home from captivity, I have asked him to write on my behalf. I am sending the same letter to Mr. von Merhart. I cannot help thanking you again most heartily for sending the wonderful parcel from the Haverford Friends. How fitting this despatch was can hardly be expressed. We live here in difficult times and have no idea how we shall survive them. God reward you for your goodness!

³⁴ It has been possible to discover the following, very limited, information about Pastor Gottfried Fuss. He was born in 1906 at Frankenstein (Kr. Flöha,

between Chemnitz and Dresden) and died in 1981 at Holzminden (in West Germany, between Kassel and Hanover). From 1932 he was minister

*Mit herzlichen Grüßen auch an Ihre Gattin und mit dem Ausdruck des Dankes von Seiten meiner Familie.
Ihre Luise Oxé*

With heartfelt greetings to your spouse too and with thanks on behalf of my family,

Your Luise Oxé

In July, Prof. von Merhart wrote to Comfort, explaining that Dr. W. Wagner at Frankfurt had assumed the position of Acting Director of the RGK, that the correspondence had been passed to him, and that Comfort should now pursue the matter with Dr. Wagner³⁵. A letter from Frau Oxé to Comfort dated 7th September expressed anxiety that he had not responded to her June letter, and rehearsed again her familiar concerns. The letter is handwritten by her, and goes on to report personal news.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 7th September 1947 (extract)

(18)

Meine Familie u. ich kann nicht vom Gelde leben in dieser traurigen Zeit. Können Sie dafür sorgen daß meine Familie zunächst getragene Kleider, Schuhe u. Lebensmittel erhält? Wir haben Mangel an allen.

Dieser, mein Brief soll nicht abgehn ohne Ihnen Dank zu sagen für Ihre Güte u. die Hilfe der Haverford Freunde.

*Ich selbst bin sehr schwach geworden u. schreibe solange ich es noch kann. Mit den freundlichsten Grüßen auch an Ihre Gattin
Ihre Luise Oxé u. Familie Pfarrer Fuß*

My family and I cannot live off money in these unhappy times. Could you therefore arrange that my family may obtain second-hand clothing, shoes and food? We are short of everything.

This letter of mine should not go without my thanking you for your generosity and for the help of the Haverford Friends.

I myself have become very weak, and I write so long as I am able. With warmest greetings, to your wife also,

Your Luise Oxé and family of Pastor Fuss

at Cavertitz, from 1948 minister of the Zionskirche parish, Dresden, from 1957 OKR (member of High Consistory) in the Saxony church region. GRIEBEL 2003, note 67.

³⁵ Dr. Walter Wagner (1900–1966) was not, in fact, formally serving as Acting Director. He had become a Research Assistant at the Institute in 1938 and, for much of the war had been the only member of the academic staff to remain in Frankfurt: though conscripted into the army in 1943, he could still attend to RGK business in the evenings, until he was posted elsewhere in January 1944. After the end of hostilities he was released by the American

authorities in September 1945, but as a member of the Nazi party was barred from returning to his pre-war job. In practice, however, he assisted with RGK business; the restriction was lifted in April 1947 and he was then formally reinstated (hence von Merhart's letter in July) and continued to manage its academic business until September 1950 (see *letter 70*). The Institute building had been largely destroyed in a bombing raid in March 1944, so at this time he and the Institute's Administrator, Frau Irmgard Menzner, were working out of a room in her apartment nearby. All of this is fully described in VON SCHNURBEIN 2001, 209–248 *passim*; especially 228 ff.; 239.

(19) H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 6th October 1947

Haverford College
Haverford, Pa.
October 6, 1947

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

First allow me to congratulate you upon the return of Pfarrer Fuss to your home after his long absence. I was very happy to hear of it, and I thank him for his cooperation in carrying on the correspondence between you and me.

Your letter of last June arrived in good order, but there was little to reply to it until I should have heard from Dr. Merhart. Eventually he also wrote to me, to the effect that the whole matter was now in Dr. Wagner's hands. I am afraid that I have allowed matters to drift a little since then, for I have been very much occupied with administrative matters clamoring for immediate attention, and have been reluctant to undertake negotiations with a completely new correspondent until I saw my way clear to carrying on. By coincidence, I spent most of last evening writing the letter of which I enclose a copy, to Dr. Wagner. It is principally a reiteration of my previous correspondence with Dr. von Merhart and you, except that I discussed in a little more detail the problem of Part II, based on your comments of last June. Then this morning your letter of September 7 arrived.

One point on which I am not wholly clear is the present location of the Katalog, whether in Marburg or Frankfurt. I understand that at least all the correspondence has been sent to Frankfurt.

I suppose that there will have to be at least one more exchange of letters between Dr. Wagner and me, and that thereafter he will send the material to this country if the Archaeological Institute wishes to do so. Or if he wishes to do so without waiting for letters to pass back and forth, I am satisfied to have him simply send the material. The sooner it gets here the sooner we can give the matter detailed study and consideration.

During recent weeks I have had occasion to use Dr. Oxé's "Haltern seit 1925" in considerable detail, and wish to thank you once more for your interest and kindness in getting Dr. Rembert to send me his copy. It is, of course, an exceedingly useful study, and in preparing a review of a recent British book I have had occasion to cite it often, - so much so that I have virtually reviewed both the book and Dr. Oxé's article together³⁶. I suppose that mine is the only copy at present available to American or British scholars, and I treasure it very highly.

With kindest regards and best wishes,

Sincerely,
Howard Comfort

The letter to Dr. Wagner is not reproduced here: Comfort briefly introduced himself, summarised the state of discussions on the publication of Oxé's corpus and invited Dr. Wagner to indicate whether the RGK was interested in pursuing the matter further.

³⁶ COMFORT 1949: review of C. F. C. Hawkes and M. R. Hull, *Camulodunum. First Report on the Excavations at Colchester*.

Frau Oxé wrote again at the beginning of October, of course crossing with the letter above, and so still concerned that she had not heard from Comfort and repeating the same arguments about ownership as before. There is a hint that she imagined some eventual financial return from the publication: 'Es war meines Mannes Wunsch das seine Tochter Frau Lotte Fuß Oxé und ihre Kinder die Früchte seiner Lebensarbeit ernten sollten' ('It was my husband's wish that his daughter Mrs. Lotte Fuss Oxé and her children should enjoy the fruits of his life's work'). The letter continues:

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, ? [date torn off at top of page] October 1947 (extract)

(20)

Vor Kriegsende sandte ich aus Angst vor der Östlichen Gefahr den Katalog an Herrn v. Merhart, der ihn in guter Sicherheit hielt und ihn jetzt an Herrn Dr. Wagner übergibt. Auch Dr. Wagner ist jetzt für den Druck in Amerika. Ich hoffe die amerikanische philologische Gesellschaft entschließt sich zur Drucklegung trotz der damit verbundenen hohen Kosten.

Wir sind ein so elendes u. armes Volk geworden, alle hungern. Können Sie uns helfen? Sie haben uns schon einmal geholfen durch die Freunde von Haverford. Ich dankte so wenig, konnte es nicht. Entweder arbeite ich, oder ich muß liegen wegen Herzkrankheit. Jetzt hat der Arzt mir endlich etwas geholfen, aber ich bin 76 Jahre alt. Wie Sie denken können erhalte ich kein Geld aus Krefeld; es ist gesperrt. Aber vom Gelde lebt man nicht. Es fehlen vor dem Winter Schuhe u. Wolle für Strümpfe u. Jacken; diese brauchen nicht neu zu sein. Mein guter Schwiegersohn wollte mir helfen beim Schreiben, aber er hat so viele Aufgaben u. ist selbst noch nicht gesund aus der Gefangenschaft heimgekehrt. Bei besserer Ernährung wäre hier viel zu helfen. In diesem Pfarrhause des Gottfried Fuß setzen wir unsere Hoffnung auf eine höhere Macht.

Mit sehr herzlichen Grüßen auch von meiner Familie an Ihre Frau Gemahlin u. Sie

Ihre Luise Oxé

Hoffentlich kam mein Brief vom 30.6 an Sie an, es war die Antwort auf Ihr Statement, ich bin mit Ihren Vorschlägen einverstanden. L. O.

Before the end of the war I sent the catalogue to Mr. von Merhart out of anxiety in the face of the threat from the East; he looked after it securely and is now handing it over to Dr. Wagner. Dr. Wagner too is now in favour of printing in America. I hope that the American Philological Association decides in favour of the printing, despite the associated high costs.

We have become such a wretched and needy people, everyone is hungry. Can you help us? You have helped us once already through the Haverford Friends. My thanks are so inadequate, I could do no more. Either I work, or I have to lie down because of heart trouble. Now the doctor has at last given me some help, but I am 76 years old. As you can imagine, I can get no money from Krefeld: it is frozen. But one cannot live off money. Before the winter we need shoes and wool for stockings and jumpers; they don't have to be new. My good son-in-law wanted to help me write, but he has so many responsibilities and did not come back in good health from the prison camp. More to eat would make a big difference here. In this house of Pastor Gottfried Fuss, we place our hope in a Higher Power.

With warmest greetings from my family also to your lady wife and yourself

Your Luise Oxé

I hope that my letter of 30.6 reached you, it was the response to your 'Statement', I agree with your proposals. L. O.

Within a few days, she wrote yet again, this time explicitly asking for money for the sale of Oxé's work:

- (21) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 10th October 1947

Cavertitz 10.10.47

*Sehr geehrter u. Lieber Herr Comfort,
darf ich Sie bitten mir zu bestätigen dass
Sie die Arbeit von Prof. Dr. Oxé für wis-
senschaftliche Kreise zwecks Drucklegung zu
kaufen beabsichtigen und mir oder Familie
Fuß Oxé den noch festzusetzenden Preis
bezahlen werden, nicht dem Institut.
Letzteres hat kein Verdienst an der Fertig-
stellung des Werkes.
Die Auslagen des Instituts müssen ersetzt
werden sowie die Unkosten.
Die Auslagen konnte ich nur nach Anga-
ben meines Mannes angeben, schriftliche
Aufzeichnungen sind nicht mehr da. Ich
bitte Sie meine Interessen im Sinne des For-
schers zu vertreten u. grüße Sie freundlichst
Ihre Luise Oxé*

Cavertitz 10.10.47

Honoured and dear Mr. Comfort,
May I beg you to confirm that you intend
to purchase the work of Prof. Dr. Oxé for
scientific circles with a view to printing it,
and that you will pay the price which is to
be agreed to me or to the Fuss Oxé family
and not to the Institute.
The latter has earned nothing in regard
to the completion of the work.
The outlay of the Institute must be rec-
ompensed, as also the expenses.
The outlay I could only report on the
basis of information from my husband;
written evidence no longer exists. I beg
you to represent my interests on behalf of
the researcher and send you my warmest
greetings
Your Luise Oxé

A further letter, dated 21st October, reported that Comfort's letter of 6th October (*no. 19*) had arrived after only eight days. Frau Oxé was pleased with the direction that things were taking, and assured Comfort that he would be impressed by the facsimiles of all the pot-ter's stamps and that he would derive great pleasure from publishing the work.

On 1st November, Dr. W. Wagner, acting on behalf of the RGK, wrote to Comfort in reply to his letter of 5th October (referred to in *letter 19*). He was clear but cautious.

- (22) W. Wagner to H. Comfort, 1st November 1947

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
Römisch-Germanische Kommission
Frankfurt a.M.
Bockenheimer Landstrasse 97
1. November 1947

Herrn
Professor Howard Comfort
Haverford. Penna.
Haverford College

Sehr geehrter Herr Professor!
Mit Dank bestätige ich Ihr Schreiben von
5. Oktober.

German Archaeological Institute
Romano-Germanic Commission
Frankfurt-am-Main
Bockenheimer Landstrasse 97
1 November 1947

Mr
Professor Howard Comfort
Haverford. Penna.
Haverford College

Honoured Professor,
I acknowledge with thanks your letter of
5 October.

Die gesamte Korrespondenz, die zwischen Frau Oxé, Ihnen und Herrn von Merhart geführt worden ist, befindet sich in den Händen der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission, ebenfalls Ihr Vorschlag vom 12.3.47. Ich stehe nicht an, die Stellungnahme der Kommission dahin zu präzisieren, dass unter den obwaltenden Verhältnissen auch sie es für richtiger hält, das ganze Werk zunächst einmal zur Prüfung über die Möglichkeit der Veröffentlichung nach den Vereinigten Staaten zu senden ohne irgendwelchen Auftrag als bis zur definitiven Entscheidung. In diesem Sinne verständigte ich Frau Oxé am 18. September.

Da das Material der Arretina-Arbeit Herrn von Merhart als damaligem Leiter der Kommission zugegangen war, um es aus Sicherheitsgründen in Marburg zu deponieren, wo es auch jetzt noch liegt, so wird Herr von Merhart, wie ich einem seiner Briefe entnehme, kein Bedenken tragen, es einem legitimitierten Empfänger, vermutlich einem amerikanischen Staatsangehörigen, auszuhändigen, der den Transport übernimmt.

Doch wäre das eine Angelegenheit, die in erster Linie Frau Oxé angeht, für die Kommission galt es nur, die oben ausgeführte Stellungnahme zu fixieren.

Ich darf die Bitte anschliessen, der Kommission über den weiteren Verlauf Kenntnis zu geben.

Mit den verbindlichsten Empfehlungen!

Ihr ergebener
W. Wagner

The whole correspondence which has passed between Frau Oxé, yourself and Mr. von Merhart is in the possession of the Romano-Germanic Commission, including your proposal of 12.3.47. I have no hesitation in setting out the position of the Commission on this, that in the prevailing circumstances it would be more appropriate to send the whole work to the United States for an evaluation of the possibility of publication without any commitment before a definitive decision is made. I informed Frau Oxé of this on 18 September.

Since the documentation of the Arretine work was sent to Mr. von Merhart as Director of the Commission at the time, for it to be deposited in safety in Marburg, where it is now, so will Mr. von Merhart, as I understand from one of his letters, have no objection to handing it over to an authorised recipient, presumably an American citizen who will undertake its transmission.

However, while this might be a matter which, in the first instance, concerns Frau Oxé, it would be the Commission's only concern to agree on the position set out above.

I close with the request that you will keep the Commission informed of developments.

With most sincere regards,

Yours faithfully,
W. Wagner

The receipt of these various letters prompted the following lengthy explanation from Comfort.

(23) H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 12th December 1947, copied to W. Wagner

Haverford College, Haverford, Pa.
December 12, 1947.

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

About a week ago I wrote you a letter which I did not send because the following morning there arrived your letter of October 10 and a letter from Dr. Wagner of November 1. In my own letter I told you that some time ago my wife sent two packages of food and clothing to you in the hope that they would arrive in time for Christmas; I hope that they have already come to you, and that they may serve as a help in making the Christmas of your grandchildren a bit less dull than might otherwise be the case. Certainly these packages carry with them the best greetings of my wife and me.

I have also recently received an extra copy of the *American Journal of Archaeology*, which has appeared several months late. I shall forward it to you because it carries an obituary notice of Dr. Oxé which was written a long time ago on the basis of the earliest correspondence between you and me after the war³⁷. If I were writing it now, I should of course have been more precise about certain details, and more accurate. But it represents a tribute which I felt it a privilege to be able to pay. This should come to you in the course of time.

In the same letter I also acknowledged your letter of October 21, which had arrived much more promptly than your letter of October 10. Each of them helps to explain the other, with the help of Dr. Wagner's letter of November 1.

I am not sure whether I completely understand the financial situation between you and the Institute, but I think I should review the salient points of my own proposition as they affect finances and certain other matters. First, my whole intention in suggesting that the *Katalog* be published in this country was to ensure that Dr. Oxé's life work did not come to nothing through neglect, for I supposed that if it stayed in Marburg no one would have the interest or the initiative to have it printed and made available to the learned world. After the death of the author of as highly specialized a work as the *Katalog*, especially when it is not clear whether the work is ready for the press or not (as is the case with the second part of the work), it is unusual that there is sufficient interest in the matter to stimulate the necessary editorial effort to actually ensure publication. In the present case this appears to be particularly true, since even during Dr. Oxé's lifetime the whole thing drifted along from year to year. Yet I am convinced that the thing is worth publishing and would be useful to a comparatively small number of persons. But one may as well recognise that the number of classical scholars is not large, and that only a very small proportion of them are interested in terra sigillata and, especially, in Arretine ware. A few specialists would buy copies (though one must remember that such specialists would probably receive copies gratis for review), and a fair number of academic libraries would purchase copies; but I am sufficiently familiar with the academic book business to feel that an edition of 200 copies would supply the needs of the scholarly world for some time to come³⁸.

³⁷ Reproduced with permission in the Appendix, p. 144.

³⁸ Eventually, sales of the publication between 1968

and 1993 ran to over five hundred copies (information from R. Habelt GmbH of Bonn, courtesy of Dr. Susanne Biegert).

Under these circumstances there can be no question of any financial profit coming to anyone. The costs of publication will be large, and there is not the slightest chance of their being equalled by the income from sales. This will be true regardless of who looks after the publication, or of what country it is done in. It seems to me that the only realistic way of looking at the whole thing is to recognize that all expenses previously incurred for travel, drawings, etc. will be completely lost if there is no publication, and that they had better be considered as a total loss even if publication does take place. In other words, the past costs of compiling and preparing the work are one matter, and its actual future publication is an entirely different one; there can be no relation between them, nor any attempt to use publication to compensate either yourself or the Institute for any of its past investments. Similarly, there can be no question of my purchasing the Katalog from you (or the Institute) at any price. In the first place, there could be no such thing as a fair price for a work that represents a scholar's lifetime investigations. Second, even if there were, I should not be able to pay it. Third, I could not possibly commit myself to such a course without having examined the work carefully first. If your willingness to have the material come to this country for possible publication (which I repeat would be conditional upon the judgment of others as well as of myself, and upon our finding the funds necessary to pay for the publication) rests upon the promise of purchase by myself at a price to be determined, then I think we had better not pursue the subject farther.

There is another matter which Dr. Wagner raised, which is also a hindrance to pursuing the matter. He is willing that the material be sent, but is not willing to give permission at this time that it be published. I suppose that he would like to have some further discussion after it has arrived here and been examined. I am not enthusiastic over this limitation. It seems to me that if the Katalog is sent to this country for possible publication, the permission to publish should accompany the material. The decision as to whether to publish, and how much to publish, must lie with us in this country. If Dr. Wagner has any hesitation about granting permission for publication, in so far as he controls a part of the material, then I think the Katalog should stay in Germany. For I suppose that his hesitation about publication rests upon the hope that publication may take place in Germany within the predictable future. And if he does have such a hope, I should most cordially encourage him to work toward its realization. It has always been my contention that publication in Germany would be better and less expensive than publication in this country, provided there is any possibility of its taking place. Indeed, the only reason why I have taken such an interest in publication in America is that I have supposed that publication in Germany is out of the question for obvious reasons, and because I feared that if publication were long deferred, the whole matter might be forgotten and allowed to be lost.

I am afraid therefore that I must stick to my original proposition, which was intended to be clear in the memorandum which I sent under date of March 10, 1947, – namely that if the material is sent to this country at all, any future claims against it and any limitations on its use must be given up by both you and the Institute. I am sure that you can see the reasons for this: it would be very difficult and complicating if, once negotiations were in progress with various American sources of publication funds, I had to suspend them while consultations were carried on with you and the Institute. It seems to me that if the material is sent to this country for publication, it should be sent without limiting conditions except those which I mentioned in my memorandum of March 10, – namely that the whole material be returned within two years if no publication takes place, that Dr. Oxé's name appear as the sole author, that you receive the usual number of author's

copies, that if some parts seem publishable and others do not, then the American editors are the judges of what should be printed and what should be returned.

My wife tells me that it looks as though I might be trying to take some advantage of this situation for my own profit or use, but I am sure you know me well enough to see that such is not the case. I have simply had enough experience with attempting to mediate between persons not in contact with each other to realize that the whole matter before us must be kept as simple as possible, and it could not be simple unless you decided to give me a free hand by the very act of sending the material to this country.

I hope that this rather lengthy discussion, of which I am sending a copy to Dr. Wagner, clarifies the matter somewhat.

With renewed best wishes,

Sincerely,

In point of fact, Comfort did not send a copy to Dr. Wagner until nearly two weeks later. In his covering letter he reiterated his goodwill in the matter and suggested that, while he was keen to see Oxé's work published, he had no wish to intrude if there was a genuine wish – and practical possibility – to publish it in Germany within a reasonable time-frame. He also reiterated that, if the material had once been sent to the U.S.A., there could be no constraint on decisions which might then be taken.

On 19th December a parcel arrived in Cavertitz.

(24) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 19th December 1947

Cavertitz, 19.12.47

*Sehr geehrter u. lieber Herr Comfort,
das war eine rechte Weihnachtsfreude als
es hieß: es ist ein Paket aus Amerika ange-
kommen u. man holte es ab weil es hieß,
es sei beschädigt. Es war das Papier etwas
eingerissen, ich glaube nicht mit Absicht.
Meine Tochter u. ich packten es aus. Welch'
schöne Sachen kamen zum Vorschein. Wir
danken Ihnen u. Ihrer Familie herzlich für
die wertvollen Geschenke u. hoffen auch Sie
feiern ein fröhliches Christfest u. gehen in
ein gutes neues Jahr! Schon seit Wochen ist
hier im Familienkreise eine frohe Stimmung
weil trotz aller Not das wahre Licht der
Heilsbotschaft in die Herzen dringt; ohne
diese könnte man keine Hoffnung haben.
Mein Schwiegersohn bemüht sich sehr die
Menschen wieder zur Kirche zu ziehn; viele
haben sich ihr entfremdet, oder sind teils
gleichgültig, teils verbittert.*

Cavertitz, 19.12.47

Honoured and dear Mr. Comfort,
That was a real Christmas treat, when
it was announced: a parcel arrived from
America and it [had to be] collected, as it
was said to be damaged. The paper was a
bit torn, but I don't think intentionally. My
daughter and I unpacked it. What wonder-
ful things came into view! We thank you
and your family sincerely for these precious
gifts and hope that you too will celebrate
a Merry Christmas and enter upon a good
New Year! Already for weeks in the family
circle there has been a happy atmosphere,
because despite all distress the true light of
the Sacred Message finds its way into our
hearts. Without this, there could be no
hope for anyone. My son-in-law is trying
hard to draw people back to church; many
have become estranged, or are either indif-
ferent or embittered.

Die Überraschung der Kinder beim Fest wird groß sein da man hier nichts kaufen kann u. doch für jeden ein passendes Geschenk da sein wird. Wenn mein Brief Sie erreicht, sind wir schon im neuen Jahr. Möge es der ganzen Welt ein Jahr des Friedens werden u. Ihnen ein besonderes glückliches werden! Ich hoffe sehr, dass der Druck des Katalogs zustande kommt u. alle Interessierten erfreut. Den Namen Oxé wird das Werk tragen u. Sie werden als Herausgeber geehrt sein. Von Herrn Wagner habe ich längere Zeit nicht erfahren wie es mit der Absendung steht. Wahrscheinlich wird ein Vetter von mir, der auch in Frankfurt zu tun hat, einmal mit Herrn Wagner sprechen. Die Korrespondenz ist so umständlich u. mündlich lässt sich viel erreichen in kurzer Zeit.

*Meine Tochter wird Ihnen selbst von der Bescherung am Christfest schreiben u. Ihnen danken. Ich sende Ihnen die letzte Drucksache meines Mannes aus Dankbarkeit. Mit vielen Grüßen auch von m. Familie verbleibe ich Ihre dankbare
Luise Oxé*

The surprise of the children on the day will be great, as one can buy nothing here but for each there will be a suitable present. When my letter reaches you, we shall be already into the New Year. May it be a year of peace for all the world, and a particularly good one for you! I hope very much that the printing of the catalogue will come about and that it will please all interested parties. The work will be in Oxé's name and you will be honoured as editor. I have for a long time heard nothing from Mr. Wagner in regard to what is happening about the sending. Probably a cousin of mine, who has business in Frankfurt, will some time manage to speak with Mr. Wagner. Correspondence is so complicated, while in a conversation much can be dealt with in a short time.

My daughter will write to you herself about the Christmas presents and to thank you. I am sending you the last publication of my husband in gratitude.³⁹ With best wishes from my family too, I remain your grateful
Luise Oxé

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 28th December 1947

(25)

Cavertitz 28.12.47

Sehr geehrter u. lieber Herr Comfort, das schöne Christfest von 1947 liegt in dankbarer Erinnerung hinter uns. Eine große Tanne mit Schmuck u. selbstgefertigten Kerzen strahlte hell u. etwas Kuchenduft erfüllte den Raum. Kleine Arbeiten der Kinder lagen auf dem Tisch und daneben die von Ihnen geschickten Sachen, die uns hoch erfreuten. Michael erhielt den Anzug, Christof die Haarbürste, Moni ein warmes Jäckchen u. etwas Süßes, m. Tochter das hübsche grüne Kleid u. den grauen Rock, m. Schwiegersohn erhielt die Seife u. die Nudelsuppe u. ich das warme Jäckchen u. das Unterkleid. Alles paßte gut. Als ich den

Cavertitz, 28.12.47

Honoured and dear Mr. Comfort,
The beautiful Christmas celebration of 1947 lies now in grateful memory behind us. A big fir tree with decorations and home-made candles shone brightly and an aroma of cake filled the home. Little things made by the children were on the table and, next to them, the things which you sent, which pleased us so much. Michael had the suit, Christof the hairbrush, Moni a warm cardigan and something sweet, my daughter the pretty green dress and the grey skirt, my son-in-law had the soap and the noodle soup and I the warm cardigan and the petticoat. Everything fitted well.

³⁹ See letters 25 and 29.

Wunsch nach praktischen Sachen schrieb, hatte ich nicht daran gedacht daß Sie u. Ihre Familie sich dieser Sachen berauben wurden. Ich dachte, als ich den Wunsch äusserte, die amerikan. philologische Gesellschaft, die sich für den Katalog interessiert würde eine Summe festlegen, für welche solche Sachen angeschafft werden können. – Herr Wagner teilte mir nicht mit, ob der Katalog nun mit allem Zubehör unterwegs ist. Sie werden verstehen, daß ich sehr interessiert bin darüber zu hören. Möchte das Jahr 1948 Klarheit in diesem Punkt bringen!

*Ihnen u. Ihrer Familie spreche ich die besten Wünsche für ein gutes neues Jahr aus. Mit Dank grüßt Sie herzlich
Ihre Luise Oxé*

Mit derselben Post geht die letzte Drucksache von A. Oxé an Sie ab.

Sehr geehrter Herr Comfort!

Auch ich möchte Ihnen herzlich danken für all die nützlichen Sachen, die Sie uns gespendet haben. Ganz besonders freue ich mich über das hübsche grüne Kleid und über den Anzug, den der Schneider für unserem großen 13 Jährigen passend machen soll, der sehr große Junge wächst aus allem heraus; auch die Halbschuhe sind ihm sehr wertvoll. Das Paket, das gerade ein paar Tage vor Weihnachten ankam, war eine rechte Weihnachtsüberraschung und füllte die Lücken aus, die gegenüber früher bestehen, – denn früher kamen liebe Pakete von Krefeld, – und von Dresden, wo meines Mannes Eltern lebten, die beide bei dem Angriff auf Dresden umkamen. – Wenn wir diese Weihnachten auch so bescheiden und ärmlich feierten wie noch nie, so war doch mein Mann glücklich wieder bei uns, der 5 mal dieses Fest in Afrika verbrachte und davor 3 mal zu kurzem Urlaub bei uns war, also seit 1938 nicht mehr in Ruhe zuhause Weihnachten feierte. Wir alle waren und sind sehr glücklich über unser Zusammensein. – Da die Bauern in diesen Tagen auch mal etwas besser leben,

When I wrote expressing a wish for practical things, it had never occurred to me that I should rob you and your family of these things. I thought, when I wrote that, that the American Philological Association, which was interested in the catalogue, would determine a sum from which such things could be bought. – Mr. Wagner has not told me whether the catalogue and everything that goes with it is on its way. You will understand that I am very interested to hear about that. May 1948 bring some clarity into this matter!

To you and your family I express my best wishes for a good New Year. With thanks and cordial greetings from
Your Luise Oxé

By the same post I am sending you the last publication of A. Oxé⁴⁰.

Honoured Mr. Comfort,

I too would like to send heartfelt thanks for all the useful things that you have donated to us. I am particularly pleased with the pretty green dress and with the suit, which the tailor must alter to fit our big thirteen-year-old; this very large young man is growing out of everything; the shoes are also very precious to him. The parcel, which arrived just a couple of days before Christmas, was a real Christmas treat and filled the gaps which otherwise remained, – for earlier there had been parcels from Krefeld, – and from Dresden where my husband's parents lived. They both died in the attack on Dresden. – While we celebrated our Christmas so modestly and poorly as never before, yet happily my husband was with us; he had spent five Christmases in Africa and was at home briefly three times on leave before that, so since 1938 he had not been peacefully at home for Christmas. We were and are all very happy to be together again. – Since the farmers are also doing better these days, we too have a tasty morsel now

⁴⁰ Oxé 1942.

fiel auch für uns ab und zu ein fetter Bissen ab, das tat uns recht gut, besonders meinem Mann, der seit seiner Rückkehr immer schmäler geworden ist infolge der sehr knappen Kost. – Das Jahr 1948 wird uns vom alten Cavertitz fortführen, wo wir 15 Jahre lebten, in eine Stadt in Westsachsen, wo mein Mann Superintendent werden soll. Wir freuen uns, auch in Hinblick auf die Schulen, aber betreffs der Ernährung ist es eine neue Sorge. –

*Ihrer lieben Gattin auch vielen Dank!
Ihnen beiden das Beste für 1948
Ihre Lotte Fuß-Oxé*

and again; that does us a lot of good, particularly for my husband, who has become ever thinner since his return because of the very meagre food⁴¹. – 1948 will take us away from old Cavertitz, where we have lived for 15 years, to a town in West Saxony where my husband will be Superintendent. We are pleased, also because of the schools, but with regard to food it will be a new worry⁴². –

Many thanks also to your dear wife! All the best for 1948 to both of you,
Your Lotte Fuss-Oxé

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 18th January 1948 (extract)

(26)

Cavertitz 18.1.48

Sehr geehrter Herr Comfort,

Ihren Brief vom 12. Dez. erhielt ich am 14.1. Ich danke Ihnen sehr für alle Mitteilungen u. besonders für Ihre große Mühe, die Sie u. Ihre Frau sich machten um uns hier zu erfreuen. Ein Paket kam an u. meine Tochter u. ich dankten Ihnen für die wertvollen Sachen. Das andere wird wohl verloren sein, wie es heute oft vorkommt.

Zu Ihrem Brief kann ich sagen, ich verstehe Sie gut; habe auch von Anfang an Vertrauen zu Ihnen gehabt. [...]

Cavertitz, 18.1.48

Honoured Mr. Comfort,

I received your letter of 12 December [no. 23] on 14 January. Thank you very much for all the news, and particularly for the great trouble that you and your wife took to make us happy. One parcel arrived and my daughter and I have thanked you for the precious things. The other has probably gone astray, as often happens nowadays.

In reply to your letter, I can say that I understand you clearly; I have always had faith in you from the beginning. [...]

The letter goes on to further matters concerning the catalogue. Dr. Wagner is not being helpful and she wishes that Dr. von Merhart was still in charge of the RGK: at least he answered her letters⁴³. She has asked her cousin, Dr. Paul Hollender, who is a wholesaler

⁴¹ It was one of the less honourable aspects of the post-war period that the victorious Allies retained hundreds of thousands of German prisoners for several years as forced labour. This was regarded informally as a kind of reparation: they were employed in mine-clearance, agriculture and other forms of reconstruction. In Tunisia much mine-clearance would have been required, also the reconstruction of the war-damaged port and railway facilities. For the subject in general, see THÉOFILAKIS 2014.

⁴² In a village with farms, it will surely have been easier to come by food than in an urban environment.

⁴³ One must feel some sympathy here for Dr. Wagner, who was being bombarded with letters by Frau Oxé. He had only a very tenuous authority to speak for the Institute and was occupied with the arguably much more pressing matter of rescuing the RGK, its activities and publications from a state of virtual ruin at the end of the war (see note 35).

and a Dr. *honoris causa*, and who often has business in Frankfurt, to go and talk to Dr. Wagner. She is in agreement with Comfort's proposal (in *letter 23*), even if there will be no financial return; she expresses once again the desire that the manuscript and supporting material should go to America, since there can be no practical prospect of publication in Germany.

(27) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 20th January 1948

Cavertitz 20.1.48

Sehr geehrter u. lieber Herr Comfort,

Am 18.1 als mein Brief an Sie gerade fort war, brachte mir die Post auch das andere Paket u. ich beeile mich Ihnen u. Ihrer Gattin dies mitzuteilen. Wie sollen wir Ihnen danken für Ihre große Hilfe? Meine Tochter u. ich waren zu Tränen [sic] gerührt als wir Ihre Gaben auspackten. Das Mäntelchen für meine kleine Enkelin entzückte uns, es passt ihr wunderbar; auch die Joppe passt Michael. Christof erhielt die Haarbürste u. Seife, weil er sich gerne sauber hält. Die wertvollen Lebensmittel sind ein herrlicher Vorrat; der gerade zum Geburtstag meines Schwiegersohns höchst erwünscht anlangte, aber ohne Ihre Hülfe unerreichbar gewesen wäre. Wie die Zukunft aussieht, müssen wir Gott überlassen, Er hat noch niemals was versehn. Mein Schwiegersohn erklärte eines Abends den Kindern so schön, wie der Herr Jesus die 5000 Menschen speißte weil er die Menschen nicht verhungern lassen will.

Sie werden verstehen, daß wir in dieser Zone nicht sehr glücklich sind, aber man muß Geduld haben u. hoffen, daß der eiserne Vorhang nicht fällt. Der Zufall wollte, daß mir vor Weihnachten ein kleines Buch in die Hand fiel, „Christmas Carol“ von Charles Dickens. Ich las es in den Tagen u. freute mich an der hübschen Schilderung von der Freude aller Menschen in der ganzen Welt. Möchte unser Heiland auch Ihnen lohnen was Sie an uns getan haben!

*In großer Dankbarkeit grüßt Sie u. Ihre Frau Gemahlin auch von Familie Fuß
Ihre Luise Oxé*

Cavertitz, 20.1.48

Honoured and dear Mr. Comfort,

On the 18th January, when I had just sent my letter to you, the post brought me the other parcel and I hasten to let you and your wife know. How can we thank you for your tremendous help? My daughter and I were moved to tears as we unpacked your gifts. The little coat for my granddaughter delighted us: it fits her perfectly; and the jacket fits Michael. Christof had the hairbrush and soap, as he likes to keep clean. The precious foodstuffs are a wonderful supply, which indeed were highly desirable for my son-in-law's birthday, but which without your help would have been unobtainable. How the future will turn out, we must leave in God's hands; nothing has yet escaped His gaze. My son-in-law explained so beautifully to the children one evening how the Lord Jesus fed the five thousand because he was not prepared to let people go hungry.

You will realise that we are not very fortunate in this zone, but we must be patient and hope that the Iron Curtain does not fall⁴⁴. It happened by chance that before Christmas a little book came into my hands: "Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. I read it in those days and enjoyed the lovely portrayal of Joy to all Men throughout the World. May Our Saviour also reward you for all you have done for us!

With huge gratitude and greetings to you and your lady wife from me and the Fuss family,

Your Luise Oxé

⁴⁴ The 'Iron Curtain' is a term first used by Winston Churchill in a speech in the U.S.A. on 5th March 1946; it was evidently known to Frau Oxé.

On 6th February, having received on 26th January the obituary which Comfort had promised (in *letter 23*; see the Appendix, p. 144), Frau Oxé wrote to thank him and tried, once again, to move forward the issue of the catalogue and its publication. She continued her criticism of Dr. Wagner, both for attempting to exert authority over what should happen to the work, for sustaining the illusion that publication could take place in Germany and for failing to respond to her letters. She made clear her readiness for the materials to be shipped to the U.S.A. She accepted that there would be no question of any financial recompense, but asked that she and her children (and, only after them, the RGK) should receive ‘a few’ printed copies of the work. She concluded with a further explanation of her personal circumstances.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 6th February 1948 (extract)

(28)

Zum Schluß möchte ich Ihnen als Freund meine Lage erklären. Sie können verstehen, daß es für mich nicht leicht ist in der russ. Zone zu leben. Erst konnte ich nicht fort weil meine Tochter meiner bedurfte während ihr Mann in Gefangenschaft war. Jetzt kann ich nicht in m. Heimat weil ich nicht mehr imstande bin 2–3 km. zwischen der russ. u. der engl. Zone zu laufen. Ich muß bleiben u. hoffen auf bessere Zeit. In Krefeld habe ich Haus u. Einrichtung verloren. Mein Vermögen ist bei der Deutschen Bank in Krefeld gesperrt schon 1946. Meine Witwenpension von 350 M. monatlich wird mir seit ½ Jahr nicht mehr ausgezahlt wenn ich nicht dort wohne oder selbst hole. Das ist für mich schwer.

Haben Sie noch Beziehungen zu engl. Militär?

Mein Schwiegersohn u. m. Tochter sind so lieb u. gut zu mir; aber ich bin nicht gewöhnt, daß andere für mich sorgen. Heute sind alle arm, die früher alles besaßen. [...]

Finally, I would like as a friend to explain to you my position. You can understand that it is not easy for me to live in the Russian zone. At first, I could not leave because my daughter needed me while her husband was in the prison camp. Now I cannot go to my home town because I am not capable of walking the 2–3 km between the Russian and English zones. I have to stay and to hope for better times. In Krefeld, I have lost my house and its furnishings. My assets are in the Deutsche Bank in Krefeld, and have been frozen since 1946. My monthly widow’s pension of 350 Marks has no longer been paid to me for the last six months since I do not live there and present myself in person. That is difficult for me.

Do you still have any contacts in the English military?

My son-in-law and my daughter are so kind and good to me; but I am not used to being dependent on others. Today all are poor, who previously had everything. [...]

The letter was accompanied by a carbon copy of a typed declaration:

Erklärung

Ich erkläre hiermit mein Einverständnis dazu, daß das Manuskript der archäologischen Arbeit von Prof. Dr. August Oxé mit dem Titel „Katalog der Arretinischen und anderer frühzeitiger Sigillata-Töpfer“ durch einen Beauftragten des Herrn Professor H. Comfort, Haverford (U. S. A.) abgeholt und in USA zur Drucklegung und Veröffentlichung gelangt. Die Arbeit befindet sich in Obhut des Herrn Professor G. v. Merhart in Marburg/Lahn, Jubiläumsbau, und ist laut testamentarischer Bestimmung mein alleiniges Eigentum.

Cavertitz über Oschatz/Sachsen
den 6. Februar 1948. *Frau Luise Oxé*

Declaration

I declare herewith my agreement that the manuscript of the archaeological work of Prof. Dr. August Oxé entitled “Catalogue of Arretine and other early Sigillata potters” be taken in charge by a representative of Professor H. Comfort of Haverford (USA) and transmitted to the USA for printing and publication. The work is in the custody of Professor G. von Merhart in Marburg/Lahn, Jubiläumsbau, and is through testamentary disposition my exclusive property.

Cavertitz near Oschatz/Saxony
the 6th February 1948. *Frau Luise Oxé*

As on many occasions, Comfort’s next letter crossed in the post with this one.

(29) H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 8th March 1948

March 8, 1948

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

Allow me to thank you for your letters of December 19 and 28 and January 18 and 20, which did not all arrive in the order in which they were sent, and for the copy of Dr. Oxé’s Kor und Kab⁴⁵. I have been very slow about writing to you, partly because of the pressure of academic and similar matters which have not permitted me to take the time to relax for social correspondence, and partly because I wished to show your letters to my wife before replying. She has been absent on a long visit from which she has not yet returned, but will I hope be home again day after tomorrow. However, since I have the time to write this evening, I do so without waiting for her return. It was very largely her interest and enterprise that is responsible for the two packages which came to you, and I am very happy that the second of them finally came to you.

Your letter of January 18 dealt with the Katalog, which I am still ready to examine with a view to publication in the United States if Dr. Wagner sends it to me. I feel that I am too far from him and from the whole complicated circumstances (although you and Dr. von. Merhart have explained them in detail by letter) to take an active part in attempting to influence Dr. Wagner one way or another. If I were in Germany and had an opportunity to speak with him *vis-à-vis*, that might be different. As it is, I feel that my offer, which after all has no promises attached to it except to do the best I can, is about as far as I can go. I should certainly hesitate to apply any pressure to him which might suggest that I was using American military victory to extract material from the

⁴⁵ Oxé 1942: see *letter 25* above.

German Archaeological Institute against its will. I hear much which leads me to believe that American military victory has already been quite bitter enough for Germans, and I do not wish to add to that situation any more, especially among scholars. Furthermore, I am a Corresponding Member of the Institute, and should not wish to exert pressure upon those who have been kind enough to honor me by that election. So I incline to let Dr. Wagner consider the matter from whatever point of view he considers best, and to hope that he will send the material along to me. In the meantime I had occasion, at the end of January, to speak with some of the persons who might be interested in the publication, and found that at least for the time being they are quite willing to consider it.

Frau Fuss was kind enough to add some lines to your letter of December 28, which I appreciated very much. She mentioned that during this year you would be moving into another city; please keep me informed as to your address as it changes.

With my best greetings and best wishes, and renewed thanks for sending me Dr. Oxé's article from the Bonner Jahrbuecher,

Sincerely,

On 22nd March, Dr. Wagner wrote to Comfort from Frankfurt. The RGK would be agreeable to the manuscript being sent to the USA and printed there, provided that an appropriate number of free copies would be supplied in return. On 5th May, Comfort replied. Ever mindful of possible misunderstandings where a correspondence was carried on in more than one language, and of potential bureaucratic booby-traps, he sought to clarify (1) that an 'appropriate' number of free copies did not mean sufficient for their sale value to recompense the RGK for its investment (which would be an unacceptable burden), and (2) that 'printed' (Druck) carried no specific limitation as to the mode of reproduction.

In a further letter dated 24th May, Wagner replied that he was thinking only of 15–20 free copies, that could be distributed to German libraries and institutes; however, if the American Philological Association were in a position to be more generous, a further fifteen copies or so would be very welcome and would be considered ample recompense for the money that the RGK had put into the project. The support of the RGK should, of course, be acknowledged in the preface. With regard to 'Druck', no technical sense was intended, merely a wish that the work should be published: 'Man kann nur wünschen, dass sie dort zustande kommt, denn in Deutschland sind die Aussichten entmutigend' [One can only wish that this will come about there (in the USA), since in Germany the prospects are not encouraging].

Meanwhile, at the beginning of April, Frau Oxé had written again to Comfort, expressing her pleasure on learning that the RGK had at last agreed to the sending of the catalogue to America for potential publication. She went on as follows.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 5th April 1948 (extract)

(30)

[...] Ich wünschte den Druck noch erleben zu können. Aber meine Gesundheit lässt sehr nach u. das Leben wird immer schwieriger in Deutschland. Viele Aufregungen stehen uns bevor. Wie m. Tochter schon schrieb ist

[...] I wanted to live long enough to see it in print. But my health is seriously deteriorating and life is getting ever more difficult in Germany. We have to cope with all sorts of annoyances. As my daughter has already

*m. Schwiegersohn versetzt worden in eine Stadt im Industriegebiet. Sie heißt Werdau, dort soll er die Amtstätigkeit des Superintendenten übernehmen, während hier ein jüngerer Herr ihn vertritt. Die Familie wird erst im Herbst, oder noch später nach Werdau übersiedeln. Die Sorge wie m. Schwiegersohn in der fremden Stadt seine Verpflegung erhalten soll, drückt uns sehr u. lässt mich nicht ruhn ohne einen Versuch zu machen, wie zu helfen möglich sei. Ich denke an die Möglichkeit einer Hilfe durch die amerikan. philologische Gesellschaft, die doch so viel Interesse für meines Mannes Arbeit hat. Im Anbetracht dessen 47 jährigen Tätigkeit für das Gelingen dieses Werkes würden die Herren uns vielleicht helfen. Das wäre möglich durch die Soli-Waren-Aktion, deren Hilfe dem alleinstehenden Herrn zu statten käme. Ich füge die mir von Freunden besorgte Liste der zu erhaltenden Waren bei. Es wird mir nicht leicht nach dem Sie u. Ihre Gattin uns in so lebenswürdiger Weise mit wertvollen Sachen versorgten wieder mit dieser Bitte zu kommen. Bedenken Sie, daß ich aus der englischen Zone kein Geld erhalte, alles wurde mir gesperrt weil ich in der russ. Zone lebe. Lebensmittel von Ihnen sind noch da, aber auf die Dauer reicht es nicht. Gern kehre ich in m. Heimat zurück, wo ich sofort Geld erhalte, aber ich kann die Familie jetzt nicht verlassen, würde die Reise kaum überstehn. Ihnen u. Ihrer Frau herzlich für alles Empfangene dankend, hoffe ich auf Ihr Verständnis für unsere Lage. Mit den freundlichsten Grüßen u. guten Wünschen grüßt auch von Familie Gottfried Fuß
Ihre Luise Oxé*

Wenn die Sendung nur erst in Ihren Händen ist, so werden Sie dieselbe mit Freuden studieren u. nicht wieder zurückschicken. Auch der II Teil hat seinem Wert. Das werden Sie sehn. Wie das Institut so rechne ich auch mit einigen Freixemplaren wenn es möglich ist. L. O.

written, my son-in-law has been transferred to a town in the industrial area, called Werdau⁴⁶. There he is to take over the office of Superintendent, while a younger gentleman has replaced him here. The family will not move to Werdau until the autumn, or maybe later. The anxiety about how my son-in-law will feed himself in a strange town concerns us greatly, and I cannot rest without trying to find out how to help him. I am wondering about the possibility of help from the American Philological Association, which has such an interest in my husband's work. In view of his 47 years of dedication to the completion of this work, perhaps the authorities would help us. This could be done through the Soli-Waren-Aktion [Solidarity Action for Commodities], whose help would be of good use to men living on their own. I enclose the list of products which they supply, which I have obtained from friends. I don't find it easy to ask this again after you and your wife have so kindly sent us precious things. But bear in mind that I receive no money from the English zone: it has all been blocked from me because I am living in the Russian zone. There is still food from you, but it will not last long. I would willingly go back to my home town, where I can get money, but I cannot now leave the family and I would not survive the journey. While I thank you and your wife heartily for all you have sent, I hope that you will understand our position. With friendly greetings and good wishes from the family of Gottfried Fuss and

Your Luise Oxé

As soon as the consignment [= the catalogue] comes into your hands, you will study it with joy and will not send it back. Even the second part is of value: you will see. Like the Institute, so I too expect a few free copies, if possible. L. O.

⁴⁶ This is a small town some 130 km southwest of Cavertitz. The family did not in fact move there, since Pastor Fuss was transferred in July 1948 to Dresden, and in February 1949 they joined him in Radebeul, on the outskirts: see *letters* 36 and 50.

On a separate piece of paper (which includes an address for Pastor Fuss in Werdau) is the list of goods which can be obtained, and how it is done:

Soli – Waren – Aktion

Bei Einzahlung von \$ in den USA, Swiss Overseas Company Inc, 249 West 34th Street, New York, N. Y. erhält der Einzahler Waren-Bons, die im eingeschriebenen Brief geschickt werden können u. nach Vorweis derselben in mehreren Städten folgende Waren erhalten werden.

Z. Beispiel in Zwickau, was Werdau am nächsten liegt, könnte mein Schwiegersohn sich etwas abholen.

Am empfehlungswertesten sind folgende Bons:

A	5 Kg.	Zucker	\$ 3,90
C	3 Büchsen	Kondenzmilch	\$ 1,60
F	1 Kg.	Speisefett (Margarine)	\$ 2,45
H	3 Pf.	Ochsenfleisch	\$ 2,60
J	2 Kg.	Kaffee	\$ 2,75
K	3 Pf.	Milchkakao	\$ 2,70

Diese Liste dient zur Auswahl; Fett, Zucker u. Fleisch sind am wichtigsten zur Beifügung zu der fettlosen Kost.

Soli – Waren – Aktion

By paying in dollars in the USA to the Swiss Overseas Company Inc. [...] the purchaser obtains goods-vouchers which can be sent in a registered letter and which on presentation in several towns can be exchanged for the following goods.

For example, in Zwickau, which is next to Werdau, my son-in-law could get something.

The most recommended vouchers are the following:

A	5 kg	Sugar	\$ 3.90
C	3 cans	Condensed milk	\$ 1.60
F	1 kg	Cooking fat (margarine)	\$ 2.45
H	1.5 kg	Beef	\$ 2.60
J	2 kg	Coffee	\$ 2.75
K	1.5 kg	Instant cocoa	\$ 2.70

This list is just an example; fat, sugar and meat are the most important additions to the fatless diet.

On 26th April, Frau Oxé wrote to Comfort, expressing yet again her pleasure that there was no longer any opposition to the sending of the catalogue to the USA and her confidence that the Americans would be really impressed and would not hesitate to undertake its publication. She returned also to the issue of feeding the family:

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 26th April 1948 (extract)

(31)

Mein letztes Schreiben hat Sie wohl in Erstaunen versetzt. Es fiel mir schwer mit einer Bitte zu kommen. Es ist wohl jetzt in Deutschland die schlimmste Zeit. Meine Enkel sind glücklich über eine Scheibe Brot. Sie können eine solche erhalten für abgestempelte Freimarken (Briefmarken) vom Ausland. [...]

Die Reise Ihrer Gemahlin ist hoffentlich gut beendet worden. [...] Unsere Anschrift bleibt vorläufig noch dieselbe. [...]

My last missive probably shocked you: it was very difficult for me to ask. It is probably now the worst of times in Germany. My grandchildren are thrilled by a slice of bread. They can get one in return for franked foreign postage stamps. [...]

I hope that your wife's journey has ended well⁴⁷. [...] Our address remains the same for the time being. [...]

⁴⁷ See letter 29 from Comfort.

Frau Oxé had certainly received Comfort's letter of 8th March when she wrote this, as she refers to it. But on 21st May she wrote again, concerned that she had heard nothing further.

(32) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 21st May 1948 (extract)

Cavertitz 21.5.48

Sehr geehrter u. lieber Herr Comfort, es beunruhigt mich dass ich lange nicht von Ihnen höre, hoffentlich sind Sie nicht krank. Ich vertraue Ihnen, wie einem Freunde, u. weiß, das Sie meine Interessen vertreten. Gern würde ich erfahren ob der Katalog bei Ihnen anlangt [...]

Wie Sie sich denken können, habe ich schon lange die Absicht in meine Heimat zurückzukehren; bisher ging es nicht; jetzt versuche ich es einem Reisepass zu erhalten, ob die Reise gut abläuft ist eine große Frage. Der Verkehr ist für junge Menschen auf der Bahn sehr gefährlich, erst recht für alte Menschen. Trotzdem will ich es versuchen wenn der Pass gegeben wird. Wie ich schon schrieb, erhalte ich hier kein Geld aus der engl. Zone; deshalb will ich auch in m. Heimat; muß mich von m. lieben Familie trennen. Mein Schwiegersohn bleibt mit seiner Familie nicht immer hier, er wird wahrscheinlich in eine Stadt kommen. Vorläufig sind wir hier noch einige Monate erreichbar.

Mit großem Dank denke ich an Sie u. an Ihre Frau Gemahlin. Ich grüße Sie auch von meiner Familie, die jetzt soviel im Garten zu tun hat, daß sie nicht zur Feder greifen kann.

Ihre Luise Oxé

Cavertitz, 21.5.48

Honoured and dear Mr. Comfort,

It troubles me that I have not heard from you for so long; I hope you are not ill. I trust you as a friend, and know that you consider my best interests. I would dearly like to know whether you have received the catalogue [...]

As you can imagine, I have long had the intention of returning to my home town; until now it has not happened; now I am trying to get a passport⁴⁸, but whether the journey will work out is a serious question. Travelling on the railway is very risky for young people, and more so for the elderly. However, I want to try if the pass is issued. As I have written before, I can get no money here from the English zone, and that is why I want to get to my home town; I shall have to part from my dear family. My son-in-law will not stay here with his family for ever, he will probably go to a town⁴⁹. For the time being, we shall still be reachable here for some months.

I think of you and your lady wife with much gratitude. With greetings also from my family, which has so much to do in the garden just now that they cannot take up the quill,

Your Luise Oxé

Towards the end of June, having finally clarified to his satisfaction all matters in contention with the RGK, Comfort at last wrote to Dr. von Merhart, asking for the catalogue to be sent to the U.S.A. Naturally, this was not going to be straightforward.

⁴⁸ Probably not an international passport, in this case, but an inter-zone pass: see *letter 58*.

⁴⁹ In *letter 30* (not reproduced in full), she already gave

an address for her son-in-law in Werdau; but at the end of June she reported that from 1st July he would be in Dresden (*letter 36*).

H. Comfort to G. von Merhart, 28th June 1948

(33)

June 28, 1948

Dr. Gero von Merhart
Marburg/Lahn Jubilaeumsbau, Biegenstr. 11.

My dear Dr. von Merhart:

You may be aware that on March 22 Dr. Wagner wrote to me stating that the Archaeologisches Institut was willing to have Dr. August Oxé's Katalog forwarded to this country for possible publication, and suggesting that I deal directly with you regarding its transmittal to me. One or two phrases in his letter still seemed to me to require clarification, with the result that about two months have been lost through my request for further details. Now, however, the whole matter is clear on both sides.

I should be glad to receive the material in its entirety, i.e. Parts I and II of the text and all illustrations, drawings, photographs, filing cards with data on them, etc. whenever it is convenient for you to send it. I do not know what will be the safest and most expeditious way for it to come to this country, but it occurs to me that perhaps the personal intervention of someone in the American Military Government may be of assistance. I am no longer acquainted with their personnel unless it should happen that Dr. Whitney Tucker or Dr. Lester K. Born are in your area. Both of these gentlemen are members of the American Philological Association, of which I am the Secretary-Treasurer, and might be willing to make some special effort to ensure prompt and safe delivery. But of course I cannot speak for them, and I leave it entirely to you to follow whatever course seems best. My own address remains as before, and as printed at the top of this letter⁵⁰.

It seems reasonable to me that unless some extraordinary expenses are involved, the cost of shipping to this country should be borne from your end, and the cost of returning the material to Germany should be borne from this end. In mentioning "return to Germany" I am thinking of the possibility that the whole work is considered unsuited for publication here; if the publication actually goes through as planned, I suppose there will be less reason for sending the present manuscript back, although I can imagine that Dr. Oxé's widow and daughter might be glad to have it for sentimental reasons. And of course if some parts are published and others are not, the latter parts should still remain available for scholarly use somewhere, – presumably in Germany.

I hope that the sending of this material will not be too great a burden upon you, for I am aware that the entire matter lies somewhat outside of your own professional field, and that your connection with it has been largely in the nature of a courtesy extended to the Oxé family. Allow me to express my own appreciation of your kindness and patience during our previous correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

Howard Comfort

⁵⁰ Comfort's address never appears on the carbon copies of his letters, though there is always space at the top of the page: he was undoubtedly using headed

paper with the Haverford College, Pennsylvania address.

On the same date, Comfort wrote to Dr. Wagner at the RGK, notifying him that he had now asked Dr. von Merhart to send the material. He wrote also to the Swiss Overseas Company, asking for information about sending food to an individual in the Russian zone of Germany, and to Frau Oxé.

(34) H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 28th June 1948

June 28, 1948

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé,

Your letters of April 5, April 26 and May 21 have all arrived, as well as Dr. Wagner's letters of March 22 and May 24. For a variety of reasons I did not reply to your previous letters, – chiefly because I did not know what to say. Dr. Wagner's first letter left me in some doubt as to the details of certain parts of the arrangements, and I wished to be more precise before actually giving the signal for Dr. Oxé's manuscript to be sent. Now, however, Dr. Wagner's most recent letter clarifies the doubtful points, and I have already written to Dr. v. Merhart asking him to send the manuscript as soon as may be convenient and possible under present circumstances. I suppose that it may arrive during the course of the summer or the early autumn. We are, of course, still a long way from final publication of the Katalog; but at least we are one step nearer to it, and that is a great satisfaction to me, and I am sure to you and your daughter also.

I was not unmindful of your request for some assistance through the Swiss Overseas Company. But there was no question of its coming from the American Philological Association. I hope that this Association may be drawn upon for part of the publication of the Katalog, but help to individuals lies aside from the Association's purpose. That meant that I should have to take a more direct personal interest in the matter, which has not been easy because of the constantly rising prices here. However, I have now undertaken to get more information from the Swiss Overseas Company, and may be in a position to do something useful before long. In any case, I hope so.

The formal academic year at Haverford College ended two weeks ago, which has given me a little more time to catch my breath, as we say, and to do some of the things which have had to be deferred through pressure of other matters. It was a fortunate coincidence that Dr. Wagner's last letter has come at just this time, so that I am now free to undertake what will, I am sure, be a rather complicated series of negotiations. I do hope that the manuscript arrives in time for me to have commenced these negotiations before the next academic year closes in with a new variety of responsibilities and demands upon time and interest.

With my best wishes for your summer, and the hope that you will find it possible to return to Crefeld,

Sincerely,

Howard Comfort

Next in the file is a leaflet from the Swiss Overseas Company / *Schweizer Hilfswerk* (see *fig. 5*), together with a list of prices and an order form, which implies that not only food-stuffs, but also cigarettes and coal could be supplied by this means.



The C. S. S. is not a business enterprise.
 With our relief organization we hope always to diminish the
 enormously distressed conditions in Europe.
 Help your friends and relatives with our certificates.

SWISS OVERSEAS COMPANY, Inc.
 249 West 34th Street, New York 1. N. Y.
 Longacre 4 - 0488 Cable Address: SWISOVSEAS, NEW YORK
Centrale Sanitaire Suisse - Schweizer Hilfswerk

SWISS OVERSEAS COMPANY, Inc.

249 West 34th Street, New York 1. N. Y.
 Longacre 4 - 0488 Cable Address: SWISOVSEAS, NEW YORK
 Centrale Sanitaire Suisse, Zuerich - Schweizer Hilfswerk

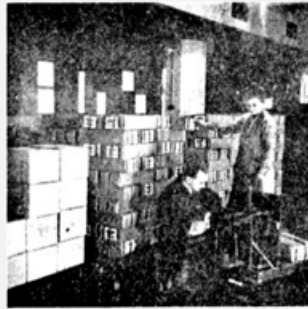


SWISS OVERSEAS COMPANY, Inc.



As a charitable institution the Centrale Sanitaire Suisse, Swiss Overseas Co., Inc., acts as intermediary in the distribution of relief packages with the consent of the various occupation authorities.
 Our goods and package certificates may be redeemed at all our distribution points located in every Zone of Germany.
 Our organization enables you to provide your friends and relatives with many vital articles which they may obtain at our storehouses and distribution centers.
 The majority of our goods go directly from Basel, Switzerland, our main shipping point, in closed freight trains to our central stores in the occupation zones.
 The shipment and delivery of our goods is guaranteed by Swiss Insurance Companies.
 This insurance comes to an end only upon the handing over of such goods to the recipient.
 Prior to that time all risks have been completely eliminated for both parties, the sender and recipient.

Centrale Sanitaire Suisse - Schweizer Hilfswerk



The quality of our goods is checked with the greatest of care. Only first class products are purchased, since the leading food importers of Switzerland are our suppliers.
 These firms guarantee us fresh products of high quality.
 Through careful storage at distribution centers these goods are protected from depreciation and spoilage.
 Our organization is so constituted that our stores are kept in constant quantity supply.
 The supply in our stores is at all times equivalent to certificate issues.
 We assure that each sender will receive through us notifications of receipt signed by recipient.
 Through wholesale purchases and through an efficient sale and distributive organization we can deliver our products at the very lowest possible price.
 Note the enclosed new price list and list of our distribution centers.
 Our principle is and has been:
FINE QUALITY FAST DELIVERY LOW PRICES

Fig. 5. Leaflet of the Swiss Overseas Company.

Following this research, Comfort wrote again to Frau Oxé.

(35) H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 12th July 1948

July 12, 1948

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

Today my wife is sending to you a package of foods, for which we have tried to take as a guide the suggestions you made from the Swiss Overseas list. I secured one of these lists and found that their prices are rather high, and that for the same amount of money we could do considerably better by purchasing here and sending by mail. We are also sending the package to you at Cavertitz rather than to Pfarrer Fuss, feeling that if you wish to send any of the contents on to him, you will be a better judge than we of what will be most useful to him.

It has been a long time since the letter in which you wrote me about this, but the fact is (and I may as well admit it) that prices here are now so high that it costs considerably more to live than we make. It is only recently that the income from extra work has allowed me to do several things which I have long been intending to do, – and this package to you is one of them. I hope that it arrives safely in good time.

Of course it is too soon for me to have heard anything from Dr. von Merhart in reply to my letter to him, but I suppose that something will come along during the course of the summer.

With our kindest regards, and our best wishes for the summer,

Sincerely,

Howard Comfort

On 19th July, Wagner wrote to warn Comfort that von Merhart was currently in Switzerland, and that the sending of the catalogue was unlikely to take place before September⁵¹.

Because letters evidently took very variable lengths of time to travel in either direction, they often crossed in the post, and it is difficult to present them here in a coherent order. Comfort's next letter to Frau Oxé was written in reply to letters from her dated 27th June and 1st August, so these should be read next. From this point on, remarkably, Frau Oxé generally wrote in English, which is competent but occasionally contaminated by German spellings or modes of expression. I have transcribed them faithfully as written.

⁵¹ The ancestral home (since 1702) of the Merhart family was Schloss Bernegg at Kreuzlingen in Switzerland. Gero von Merhart moved there definitively

in 1949, and was evidently making plans for this in the preceding year. See also *letter 48*.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 27th June 1948

(36)

Cavertitz 27.6.48

Dear Mr. Comfort,

It is a long time I did not experienced anything from you. I exercised a little to write in your language. Fearing you are a little bad [offended] with me, I must repeat, that I consider you as my friend.

I feel that I have not thanked enough for all what you and your wife have done for me and my family. You helped us in all cases, as well as in advising and in clothing and in other things, which have been a great help for us. We think often of you, for some days we delighted us in the chokoladepudding we raised [saved] up with several things for holydays.

How far is the enterprise of printing the Catalogue? I know nothing, whether if the work has been fetched by an American commissioner nor if it stays still in Marburg. I am not at all inspired bei the conduct of Mr. Wagner. He writes amiable words, but does not answer my questions. Mr. von Merhart was a gentleman in truth, though praehistoriker [prehistorian], he has more understanding in the case of my husband's work. And it is his help, that it has been conserved.

I liked to return in my native town but cannot travel. My fortune is lost. I must stay here in the family of my daughter. My son-in-law has been displaced to Dresden⁵² for the 1. of July, but we stay here. So many houses of pastors' families being destructed, we must stay till a home has been found. That will last a long time.

I hope to receive a letter from you with good news of the philolog. society in America, I repeat my thank and my greetings to your wife and to you from my family and me,

Your's old friend

Luise Oxé

I beg to pardon my mistakes with my 77 years, I was ill and had time to try to study languages.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 1st August 1948

(37)

Cavertitz 1.8.48

Cavertitz, 1.8.48

Sehr geehrter Herr Comfort!

Ihre lieber Brief vom 28. Juni kam am 25.8 hier an u. erfreute mich sehr. Sowohl darüber, das Sie die Arbeit meines Mannes nun von Herrn v. Merhart übernehmen wollen, als auch darüber, das Sie nicht böse sind wegen meiner Unbescheidenheit. Es ist erklärlich durch die schlimme Lage in der wir hier stecken. Ich kann auch nicht in m. Heimat kommen so lange die Zonengrenzen bestehn.

Honoured Mr. Comfort,

Your kind letter of 28 June arrived here on 25.8⁵³ and pleased me very much. Both because you want to take over the work of my husband from Mr. von Merhart, and because you were not offended by my presumption. It may be explained by the wretched conditions into which we are plunged. I am also unable to go to my home town so long as the zone-borders remain.

⁵² This is the first mention of Dresden, rather than Werdau.

⁵³ Since the letter is dated 1st August (in two places), this must be a simple error for '25.7', which yields a very typical travel-time for Comfort's letter.

An Herrn Dr. Wagner schrieb ich zum Xten mal, er möge sorgen, das die Arbeit meines Mannes vollständig übergeben würde.

Er behauptete stets, alles sei in Marburg bei Herrn v. Merhart. Ich sandte diese Arbeit in 3 besonderen Teilen nach Frankfurt. Der Holzkasten mit Zettelkatalog wurde sofort von Herrn v. M. nach Marburg geleitet. Die zwei andern Pakete (1 Paket mit Fotos u. den wertvollen Zeichnungen, ist in Frankfurt angekommen, wie die vertretende Sekretärin mir schrieb, desgl. das Paket mit den Gypsabgüssen. Die Sekretärin schrieb vom 8.9.44: auch diese Sendungen sind angekommen u. werden in das Safe bei der Reichsbank geleitet.) Sie befinden sich also wahrscheinlich dort.

Herr v. M. hätte diese Sendungen erwähnt, aber er sah sie nicht. Auf m. wiederholten Fragen schrieb er (Herr v. Merhart): die Gypsabgüsse sind ja im Katalog festgehalten (in planta pedis); es ist nicht schlimm wenn sie fehlen. Wenn Sie, Herr Comfort durch einen Beauftragten in der Reichsbank in Frankfurt nachfragen lassen, so wird das mehr Erfolg haben als alle meine bisherige Mühe, die ich an Herrn Wagner verlor. Er machte es sich recht bequem, meine vielen Fragen nicht zu beantworten u. schließlich zu schreiben: es ist alles in Marburg. Jedenfalls ist er kein so gewissenhafter Herr wie Sie. ...

Ich schreibe Ihnen als m. Freund u. dem einsichtigen Fachmann, der auch im Sinne meines Mannes handelt. Mit den

I have written to Dr. Wagner for the umpteenth time, that he must make sure that the whole of my husband's work is handed over.

He has insisted always that everything is in Marburg with Mr. von Merhart. I sent the work in three separate parts to Frankfurt. The wooden box with the card index was immediately sent by Mr. von Merhart to Marburg. The two other parcels (one parcel with photos and the precious drawings arrived in Frankfurt, as the responsible secretary confirmed, likewise the parcel with the plaster casts. The secretary wrote on 8.9.44 that these things had also been received and that they would be placed in the Safe of the Reichsbank.) So that is probably where they are⁵⁴.

Mr. von Merhart should have mentioned these consignments, but had not seen them. To my repeated enquiries, he (Mr. von Merhart) replied that the plaster casts were already incorporated into the catalogue (in planta pedis)⁵⁵; it is not a disaster if they are lost. If you, Mr. Comfort, can make enquiries through a representative at the Reichsbank in Frankfurt, that will be more successful than all the effort which I have hitherto expended on Mr. Wagner. He was quite content not to answer my many questions and eventually to write: It is all in Marburg⁵⁶. In any case, he is not such a conscientious gentleman as you. [She continues with some further tirades against Dr. Wagner.]

I write to you as my friend and as a judicious specialist who also acts in the

⁵⁴ The matter of what happened to the plaster casts is puzzling. It is known that certain museums supplied casts of their stamps to Oxé. Frau Oxé is insistent that three packages were sent to Frankfurt, but later copies out receipts for only two – and no other correspondent ever refers to plaster casts. Von Merhart (as reported here) seems to imply that the casts had been recorded and the information incorporated into the catalogue (i.e. that the casts themselves were no longer of great importance). It is possible that a differentiation between the many 'precious' profile drawings (on large sheets of paper) and the

drawings (on little cards) of the stamps, made in many cases from plaster casts, is the explanation of the puzzle. This would make sense of von Merhart's assertion that they were already incorporated in the catalogue.

⁵⁵ This Latin term refers to a particular type of maker's mark, in the shape of a footprint. I am not sure that it has been correctly understood by either party here.

⁵⁶ This statement by Wagner is reported again in postcard 39, in which Frau Oxé seems to apologize for not having previously believed it.

*freundlichsten Grüßen auch an Ihre Frau
hoffe ich auf Ihr Verständniß.
Ihre Luise Oxé*

Beiliegende Karte dient Ihnen zur Beglaubigung meiner Behauptung.

*An m. Handschrift sehn Sie daß ich alt u.
zitterig werde, kann nicht mehr viel Aufregungen ertragen.*

interests of my husband. With warmest greetings to you and you wife, I hope for your understanding,

Your Luise Oxé

The enclosed cards offer you authentication of my statement.

From my handwriting you can see that I am becoming old and shaky, I can no longer cope with much stress.

Attached are handwritten copies of two cards from Frankfurt-am-Main, dated 26.8.44 and 8.9.44 which are acknowledgements (by the secretary of the RGK, Carola Meurin) of safe receipt of two parcels. The first records 'safe receipt of the catalogue,' the second reports 'auch das zweite Paket ist wohlbehalten eingetroffen. Das gesamte Material wird einstweilen im Safe der Reichsbank aufbewahrt.' (The second parcel has also safely arrived. The whole material will for the present be stored in the safe of the Reichsbank.) It may be noted that these do not correspond exactly to Frau Oxé's assertion that the catalogue went to Marburg and two other parcels to the bank in Frankfurt. The bank would have been an appropriate storage location, since the RGK had at that time no building of its own, and its surviving possessions (books, equipment etc.) were scattered in various places. It would have been logical for von Merhart to have taken both packets as soon as possible to Marburg, where he could be more certain of their location and safe-keeping. Comfort was also hesitant about this when he wrote in reply.

H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 31st August 1948

(38)

August 31, 1948

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

For a large part of the summer I have been away from home under circumstances where no mail could be forwarded to me. Your letter of June 27 was therefore awaiting me when I returned and today your letter of August 1 has come.

The package of which I wrote in my former letter of July 12 was finally sent shortly before my family and I left home. Postage was paid on it at the new rate applicable to Germany. It was only after our return about two weeks ago that we found that the new rate does not apply to the Soviet Zone, and that we still had additional postage to pay. They had kept the package in the postoffice the whole time. It therefore got started from Haverford only very much later than my letter announcing it! I am sorry for this, but I believe that there was nothing perishable in it, and I suppose that it will arrive eventually. I hope that it will be useful.

As for Dr. Oxé's Katalog, on my return I also found a letter from Dr. Wagner, dated July 19, in which he told me that Dr. v. Merhart was for the moment in Switzerland, but that he should be returning at the end of August or beginning of September. So perhaps he will have the Katalog under way to me sometime soon. I could wish that it had been awaiting me here when I returned from my own trip, for I should have had an

opportunity to study it before the opening of the new academic year, but of course I shall be glad to see it when it comes.

At the moment it seems better to await its arrival before writing further to Dr. Wagner about the other two packages which you sent to Frankfurt. It is possible that all three units have now been brought together and will come to me in the same shipment. If they have not, I shall still have plenty to keep me busy in reading and assimilating the part that is sent, and in the meantime I shall write Dr. Wagner about the remaining two parts. But I am glad to know just what the entire Katalog consists of, for I think that without your letter I should have taken what is sent and supposed that this was all.

I hesitate to ask you for any favor that may put you to inconvenience, but I was very interested to notice that the stamps on your most recent letter were over-printed (“sur-charged”) “Sowjetische Besatzungs Zone.” These were the first of these that I have seen, and I suppose they will be comparatively rare in this country. Since I am by way of being a philatelist, and since the philatelic output in Germany is somewhat complicated, I would very much like to get some more of these stamps, with unused specimens of as many as may be convenient and used specimens in any reasonable small quantities. Of course I do not know what may be the restrictions on sending unused stamps out of the country; it may not be permitted at all. Nor do I know whether such special issues as Air Mail and semi-postal stamps are in use in Germany. But I am interested in what I have seen.

I trust that things go as well with you as can be expected in the present unhappy state of Germany.

With kindest regards,

- (39) Postcard from L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 8th August 1948, bearing one of the stamps described by Comfort (*fig. 6*).



Fig. 6. Postcard franked 8.8.48 at Cavertitz über Oschatz.

Cavertitz 8.8.48

My dear Mr. Comfort!

I write in hurry to make good what I have made wrong. My last letter from 1.8 contained a mistake. Mr. Wagner wrote me finally: all the things which belonged to the Catalog are together in Marburg (also the Fotos and drawings). It is regrettable that he did not answer exactly. I lost many hours of sleep by this inattention and troubled you thereby. I beg your pardon and I am going to write a letter in all peace. – I have a great sense of shame when I got your letter of 12. July [no. 35]. Never had I the opinion to ask such things from privat persons. I regret much to have had the opinion of the help of society of philologists in your land.

With many greetings, your L. Oxé

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 14th August 1948,

(40)

Cavertitz 14.8.48

*Lieber Herr Comfort,
eine Karte sollte Ihnen sagen, daß ich Ihren Brief vom 12.7 hier am 7.8 erhielt. Erst heute kann ich in Ruhe antworten, denn die Zeitverhältnisse sind so, daß man immer zu viel zu Arbeiten hat. Ich wiederhole, daß Herr Wagner mir mitteilte die Zeichnungen u. Fotos seien in Marburg zur Übergabe mit dem Katalog bereit. Ich bin darüber beruhigt u. hoffe, daß alles gut in Ihre Hände gelangt. Möchte der Druck auch von Glück begünstigt sein!*

Der weitere Inhalt Ihres Briefes hat mich in einige Aufregung versetzt. Es lag mir fern Sie u. Ihre Gattin für uns zu bemühen; auch nicht für meinen Schwiegersohn. Wie kann ich solche Opfer annehmen. Sie sind ein zu guter Mensch; ich, oder später meine Tochter werden versuchen Ihnen die Auslagen zu ersetzen, die Sie sich machten. Ich habe viel verloren, aber ich habe noch das Grundstück in Krefeld u. kann es durch internationale Beziehungen durch Kaufleute verkaufen lassen. Wann das sein wird, weiß ich nicht, aber es wird hoffentlich ein Ausgleich kommen. Vorläufig kann ich nur immer wieder danken u. hoffen, daß Ihre Mühe nicht umsonst war. Aus Ihren Briefen erfahre ich, daß Sie besondere Arbeiten machten um uns zu helfen. Ein Höherer, als wir Menschen wird Ihnen vergelten, was Sie für Ihre Mitmenschen tun. Wir werden für Sie u. Ihre Familie beten. Mein Schwiegersohn wird

Cavertitz, 14.8.48

Dear Mr. Comfort,

A card should have told you that I received your letter of 12.7 [no. 35] on 7.8. Today is my first opportunity to reply in peace, since the times are such that there is always too much to do. I repeat that Mr. Wagner informed me that the drawings and photos are in Marburg and ready to be handed over with the catalogue. I am reassured and hope that all will come safely into your hands. May the printing also meet with good fortune!

The further content of your letter caused me some dismay. It was far from my intention to cause you and your wife trouble on our behalf, or on behalf of our son-in-law. How can I accept such sacrifices. You are a good person; I, or later my daughter, will try to repay the expenses to which you have gone. I have lost much, but I still own the plot in Krefeld and can sell it through international relations and an estate agent. When that will be, I cannot tell, but I hope there will be a settlement. For now, I can only thank you and hope that your efforts have not been to no purpose. From your letter, I realise that you have done important things to help us. One that is higher than us mortals will reward you for what you do for your fellow human beings. We shall pray for you and your family. My son-in-law will be happy when he comes home on Sunday and hears what you have

*sich freuen wenn er am Sonntag nach Hause kommt u. von Ihrer Sendung hört. Sobald Ihr Paket ankommt, werde ich wieder schreiben. Nehmen Sie meiner Tochter Dank mit dem Meinigen entgegen u. empfangen Sie mit Ihre Frau unsere herzlichsten Grüße
Ihre Luise Oxé*

sent. As soon as your parcel arrives, I shall let you know. Please accept the thanks of my daughter alongside my own and receive our heartfelt greetings to yourself and your wife
Your Luise Oxé

Excuse that I don't write in English. I am going to lend a conversation-lexicon-book.

Excuse that I don't write in English. I am going to [borrow] a conversation-dictionary-book.

(41) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 17th September 1948

Cavertitz, 17.9.48

My dear Mr. Comfort,

Your letter [no. 38, written on 31 August] came in my possession on the 10.9 and I have to thank you and your wife very much for all the pains and expenses. I liked to write directly, but we had the great fright to know from the sickness of my son-in-law, who was brought to the hospital in Dresden, where he suffers much of the gastric of the stomach. The doctor gives himself much trouble and if he is restored he must take holidays. Since his return from Afrika he had not holidays. I am happy to read that I can make a little pleasure to you with the stamps. I sent such which I can receive her[e] on the little spot of Cavertitz. Perhaps I shall get the others. Please, write how much you like to have.

As soon as your package arrives I will write to you and your wife. The announced things will be of great value for us and our patient. Hoping you will have recovered yourself from the studies and your trip you will take pleasure in the catalog.

*With many greetings also of my family your
Luise Oxé*

(42) L. Oxé to H. and E. (Mrs. Elizabeth) Comfort, 23rd September 1948

Cavertitz 23.9.48

My dear Mrs. Comfort and my dear Mr. Comfort,

Today I received your wonderful package, which enjoyed the whole family very much. It came in a moment of great care, because my son in law is very ill. He lives in the hospital and suffers on the stomach. He requires the things which you send just in this moment. The principal doctor said: he wants sugar and that is what he needs most. You may comprehend, who [how] worthfull⁵⁷ the things were for us. We cannot thank enough. Also the children were dejected of the wealth they never saw long time. I think at this occasion of the worthfull presents which you sent for the family at Christmas. All the things were so practical. The

⁵⁷ This word is used repeatedly for the German *wertvoll*, meaning 'valuable, precious'.

sweet mantel of Monika (it will be used in the winter), the jacket of Michael which he bears every Sunday. We have raised up the dress⁵⁸ for Michael till his confirmation takes place and all the other things do serve us still for long time.

Till now, we are not able to buy dresses or shoes in this zone and in the other zone people has no money. The shoes of waterproof have done great profit. We are obliged you for many help and assistances and will not forget it. It is curious that I dreamed in the night the package would come while we did not know how to get the sugar. And so it did. We do not know what to prefer the lard or the sugar.

We have now fine weather and enjoy the summer, but in few time it will be cold. Hoping that you had a good tourist season I send many greetings from my family and thank you in their name

Your Luise Oxé

My daughter is in Dresden in the hospital. You see from my letter that I am tired, I have to do so much during the absence of my daughter⁵⁹. Excuse the faults, please!

I hope, the catalog comes to you and all is together and you will have much pleasure with the study.

I send other stamps as soon as possible. In Germany exists no air mail since 1945.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 1st October 1948

(43)

Cavertitz 1.10.48

Dear Mr. Comfort,

I liked to know who [how] it is with the stamps? I can get them in every number. Please, tell me what you want. I hope my letter has arrived you with my thank for you and your wife for the wonderful package which arrived in short time. The things which you sent are much better than those of the committees or the Swiss Oversea Action, as we came to know by our neighbourhood. I don't know how to express my thank. Your help is so worthful for the whole family in this time of sickness from my son in law.

I would be enjoined if the catalog would soonly came to you.

With many greetings and best wishes for you and your family also from the mine

Your Luise Oxé

H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 28th October 1948

(44)

October 28, 1948

My Dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

Last week your letter of September 17 came, including a number of stamps which I am very happy to have for addition to my collection. Thank you very much for them, and for the additional stamp which you included in the other letter [no. 42] which came today. I am afraid that you must have gone to considerable trouble to get such a wide assortment, all of them from the edges of the sheet in which they were printed.

⁵⁸ = 'saved up the suit.'

⁵⁹ At the age of 77, she is managing the household for the three children.

I am of course very sorry to hear of the illness of Pfarrer Fuss, and hope that he may be on the road to recovery by the time that this letter comes to you. I am glad that the sugar was of some service, and my wife joins me in hoping that it will be useful to him. I suppose that the combination of the privations of prison life and of responsibilities after his return to Germany, with the addition of inadequate diet under both circumstances, have just been too much for him. We are glad too that the contents of the package have other uses, – and especially that it finally arrived. As I think I wrote you, it stayed in the post office here for over a month for lack of the proper postage, since we supposed that the new rates to Germany were all-inclusive instead of applicable to the Western zones only. It was only after our return to Haverford that we found that some additional postage was necessary.

There has been no further word from anyone connected with Dr. Oxé's Catalogue for some little time. As I understood it, Dr. v. Merhart was away for the summer, and would presumably take care of the matter on his return. I am of course awaiting the arrival of the material with interest and eagerness, and I suppose that it will arrive in due time. Of course I shall write to you when it gets here.

With best wishes from my wife and me, and especially heartfelt interest in Pfarrer Fuss's welfare,

Sincerely,

Howard Comfort

(45) L. Oxé to E. and H. Comfort, 17th/18th November 1948

Cavertitz 17.11.48

My dear Mrs. Comfort,

You will have received my thank for the great help you made our family by sending the package with food. It was like a smile of heaven when this arrived because my son in law had been very ill and needed good things. Now he is restored and returned to his place in Dresden. He visited us some days and was glad and thankful. I like to communicate you that we often think of your goodness. For example, the jacket for Michael, the nice mantel for Monika and the dress in green colour which has been changed now by a good steamdress [seamstress] for my daughter. The last is very thankful and tries to get much postage stamps for your husband.

Once, we think, might come the time, where we could pay our thank in another wise. The time hasted, and we must work we never had to do as now. My daughter has made Sirup from sugar beet with much trouble. All people must make such things her[e], because it is not to have otherwise. The children helped of course, during I take care for the household, by firing and cooking potatos. We have no person that helps us in any part. Otherwise I could write mor. In any time we must change our dwelling, it is not agreeable in the winter time.

*I hope you and your family are very well and send you thankful greetings from my family
Your Luise Oxé*

Cavertitz 18.11.48

My dear Mr. Comfort,

My family's and my thank for the wonderful packages you send us, will be arrived I hope. But the postage stamps I promised come but now and I try to gather more if you like it.

I would be glad if I could know that the Katalog has arrived in your country. I wrote to Mr. Wagner asking him. I hope you will enjoy the work of my husband in regarding his inscriptions. Mr. v. Merhart would have informed me. I miss every attention by Mr. W. He does as if the Katalog be his, or the Institute's property. It is only the work of Dr. Oxé, you know, he worked from 1897–1944. I confess to have made a mistake in writing that the Institute had given 1500 M. to the journey. I found a notice of Dr. O. He said: als Auszeichnung vom Deutschen Reich erhalten: 1500 im Jahre 1901 zu Studienreisen [received from the German State as an award: in 1901, 1500 Marks for study travel]. First by a friend of Dr. Oxé (director of the Institute) there was made 19. September 1912 a contract, where is said: that the Institute will publish and bears all the costs of the Kattalog and the author should have an honorar[ium] and other arrangements were provided⁶⁰. He never got own penni [one penny]. – All has come otherwise by the [illegible – 'war?']. I should be ashamed if I did not procede for my husband in his own work, what he made from beginning to the end. I can ask Mr. W. myself what the Institute has spended because I like the truth. My husband worked for the sciences not for the Institute.

The examination might go on and printing may not be too heavy! Knowing that you are my friend, you will do your best.

*Sincerely salutations of my daughter and your thankful
Luise Oxé*

H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 21st November 1948

November 21, 1948

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

I ought to have written to you some little time ago that my wife sent two packages to you, with the hope that the contents would be of some interest or use to your grandchildren. Perhaps they have already arrived, by the time this letter reaches you; in any case, we hoped that they would be there in time for Christmas. This letter will also bring our own sincere greetings, and the hope that Pfarrer Fuss's health is improving.

(46)

For some little time my own efforts have been exclusively devoted to teaching my classes and to preparing for the annual meeting of the American Philological Association, of which I am still the Secretary-Treasurer. That is why I have been less careful about writing to you than I should have been.

So far this fall I have heard nothing more from Dr. v. Merhart or Dr. Wagner. Neither have I written to them; perhaps I ought to do this in order to discover what the present status of Dr. Oxé's Katalog is, – that is, whether it has been shipped. I hope that it arrives before too long.

With best regards from us all,

Sincerely,
Howard Comfort

⁶⁰ This contract could not be found in 1946 (see RGK-A 2587, item 227). Frau Oxé sent a further copy to Dr. Bersu at the RGK on 20th May 1951

(RGK-A 2587, item 116), but this has not (yet) come to light.

(47) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 17th December 1948

Cavertitz 17.12.48

My dear Mr. Comfort,

I don't know how to begin my letter because I have so many obligations to you. Some weeks ago I liked to answer and to thank you for your kindest answering of my indeterminated letter in English language. But I was ill and could not write. From your letter of 28. Oktober [no. 44] I know how much interest you had with the health of my son in law. I repeat my thank and the thank of my family. If Gottfried Fuss could understand your language, he would whrite himself, for all what you have done for him. But he is in Dresden, where he has a fatigues chore being scarcely in good health. We hope he will find room, where we could live together.

The day bevor yesterday there came tow great packages which surprised us very much. Today there came your letter to announce the packages from you and Mrs. Comfort [no. 46].

Who [how] shall we explain our thank? Our astonishment is great and indescribable. You and your wife gave us an indistribution of presents from which I shall relate your kind wife in sum days after the feast. My and my family's wisches for a happy feast comes to late. Hoping the new year on which you had the preparing for the annual meeting of the American Philological Association will bring you much satisfaction and especially the Katalog.

I whrite also to Mr. v. Merhart as to Mr. Wagner.

Sending you my sincerest greetings I think I will not be able to thank you enough for all the rich presents and all the trouble. With many compliments to your wife, I remain your

Luise Oxé

At last, in January of the new year, Dr. von Merhart was able to report that Oxé's catalogue was on its way.

(48) G. von Merhart to H. Comfort, 12th January 1949

Prof. Dr. Gero von Merhart
Marburg/Lahn den 12. Jan. 1949
Jubiläumsbau, Biegenstr. 11

Prof. Dr. Gero von Merhart
Marburg/Lahn the 12th Jan. 1949
Jubiläumsbau, Biegenstr. 11

Professor Howard C o m f o r t
Haverford College
H a v e r f o r d, Pa. U.S.A.

Professor Howard C o m f o r t
Haverford College
H a v e r f o r d, Pa. U.S.A.

Sehr geehrter Herr Comfort!

Endlich ist es möglich gewesen, das Material von Prof. Oxé an Sie abzuschicken. Ich hatte gehofft, es werde von einem Herrn des Military Government abgeholt werden und hatte die Pakete mit dem beiliegenden Verzeichnis bereit gestellt, als ich anfangs Mai in die Schweiz abreiste, von wo ich erst im November zurückkehrte. Dort erhielt ich Ihren

Honoured Mr. Comfort!

At last it has become possible to send you the material of Prof. Oxé. I had hoped that it would be collected by someone from the Military Government and had put ready the package with the accompanying inventory, when I left for Switzerland at the beginning of May⁶¹. I only returned

⁶¹ See p. 96.

Brief vom 28. Juni, für den ich bestens danke, und im Juli auch die Mitteilung von Dr. Wagner über Ihr Abkommen mit ihm, konnte aber vor meiner Rückkehr nach Marburg nichts für die Versendung tun. Hier fand ich einen neuen university-officer, der sehr entgegenkommend war, aber durch seine Vorschriften ("red tape") verhindert war, die Versendung selbst durchzuführen. Er vermittelte mir jedoch die Hilfe von Prof. Paul Frankl, der eben als Gastprofessor hier liest und so gütig war, die Versendung auf seinen Namen zu nehmen, woraus sich sein in einem der Pakete liegende Brief erklärt. Wir warteten noch das Ende der Xmas-Post ab, aber heute sind die zwei Pakete glücklich bei der amerikanischen Post aufgegeben worden. Es wird mir eine wirkliche Erleichterung sein, wenn Sie mir ihre gute Ankunft berichten können. Porto und Versicherung wurden, Ihrem Vorschlag gemäss, hier bezahlt.

Frau Oxé und Dr. Wagner verständige ich vom Stand der Angelegenheit.

Aufrichtig danke ich Ihnen für die Geduld, mit der Sie diese lange Verzögerung hingenommen haben. Wenn ich auch an den arretinischen Töpfern kein persönliches Interesse habe, würde ich mich doch sehr freuen, wenn Sie es möglich fänden und durch Ihre Bemühungen erreichen könnten, die jahrzehntelange Arbeit Herrn Oxé's zum Druck zu bringen.

Mit den besten Grüßen und Empfehlungen

Ihr

G. Merhart

in November. There I received your letter of 28 June, for which my best thanks, and in July also the report from Dr. Wagner of your agreement with him; but I could not do anything about the shipping before my return to Marburg. Here I found a new University Officer who was very co-operative, but was prevented by his orders ("red tape") from arranging the despatch himself. He secured for me, however, the help of Prof. Paul Frankl⁶², who is teaching here as a visiting professor and was so kind as to take on the shipping in his own name, as is explained in his letter in one of the packages. We were waiting for the end of the Xmas-post, but today the two packages have been successfully handed over to the American Post. It will be a great relief to me, if you would report to me their safe arrival. Postage and insurance were paid, as you suggested, at this end.

I am informing Frau Oxé and Dr. Wagner of the state of play.

I am sincerely grateful for the patience with which you have tolerated this lengthy delay. While I have no personal interest in the Arretine potters, I shall nonetheless be pleased if you can find a possibility and through your efforts bring the decades-long work of Mr. Oxé into print.

With greetings and best wishes,
Your

G. Merhart

⁶² This is Paul Frankl (1878–1962), who was an art historian. Born in Prague and having held teaching posts at the universities of Munich and Halle, he was removed from his job by the Nazis in 1934 and subsequently made his way to the United States,

where he obtained a post at Princeton University. He returned to Europe for a while in 1947–49, and thus appears at this point in Marburg. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Frankl (last access: 06.10.2022).

Quittung

Für Herrn Prof. Comfort übernahm ich aus der Verwahrung von Prof. von Merhart, Besitz Frau L. Oxé

- a 1 Karteikasten
- b 7 Cigarrenkisten
- c 1 Faszikel

worin nach Aufstellung Prof. v. Merharts enthalten sind:

- a Katalog der arretinischen Töpfer
1185 paginierte Seiten + 24 Ergänzungsseiten
(eine Seite doppelt paginiert, eine ausgefallen)
- b 3230 (rund) Stempelzeichnungen
- c 135 Blätter Text und Notizen, 35 Blätter
Tafel- und Abbildungsvorlagen in 13 Umschlägen
alles zu der Arbeit Prof. Oxé's über arretinische Töpfer gehörig.

Marburg / Lahn den

Receipt

On behalf of Prof. Comfort I have received from the custody of Prof. von Merhart, property of Frau L. Oxé

- a 1 box file
- b 7 cigar boxes
- c 1 fascicule

containing as stated by Prof. v. Merhart:

- a Catalogue of Arretine potters
1185 numbered pages + 24 additional pages
(one page with duplicate no., one missing)
- b 3230 (approx.) stamp drawings
- c 135 sheets of text and notes, 35 sheets of draft plates and figures in 13 envelopes

all belonging to Prof. Oxé's work on Arretine potters.

Marburg / Lahn, on

The package itself presumably contained, as explained by Dr. von Merhart, the following note.

(49) Paul Frankl to H. Comfort, 29th December 1948

*Paul Frankl, OMG of Hesse⁶³
LSO, LK and SK Marburg
APO 872*

Marburg, Dec. 29. 48

Dear Mr. Comfort,

*It is a great pleasure to me to send you the notes of Dr. August Oxé for publication in the U.S.
If I can be of any help in this matter, please, do not hesitate in writing me again.*

*Sincerely yours,
Paul Frankl*

⁶³ The acronyms may be expanded as Office of Military Government of (Greater) Hesse, Liaison Security Office, Landkreis and Stadtkreis Marburg, Army

Post Office 872 (a non-geographic US military post-box).

Frau Oxé reported her pleasure on hearing the news.

L. Oxé and L. Fuss-Oxé to H. Comfort, 25th and 26th January 1949 (on opposite sides of (50) the same sheet of paper)

Cavertitz 25.1.49

My dear Mr. Comfort,

My thank will have arrived you and your wife I hope. We have daily so much pleasure for all the thinks you send us, but it was not time enough to write this. We are going to another place, where my son in law has found 4 rooms and a kitchen for the whole family. It is a hard time now changing all the places. Our new address is: Radebeul 2, Horst Vietstrasse 21.

It was a long time I waited the answer of Mr. v. Merhart and Mr. Wagner. When I received it I was very glad for you and for myself; also the philolog-society will be contented, regarding the Katalog. I admired your patience during the year 1945 till now because the post goes so slowly. I will now thank Mr. v. Merhart for his trouble. He told me that he will change to the Swiss in few month. This I regrett very much because he takes care still for another great work from my husband. It is a metrolog-work, named: "Aegypten die Wiege antiker Maße und Gewichte."⁶⁴ Diese Arbeit hat noch lang Ruhe. Sie kann nur in Deutschland gedruckt werden⁶⁵. I must now beg him for another person to take care. Hoping the Katalog arrives in good condition I close my letter with many salutations for you and your wife your thankfull

Luise Oxé

Cavertitz, 26.1.49

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Comfort!

You have made us such a great joy with all the fine thinks! I thank you from all my heart. Every day we are remembered too your kindness. Just now, as we are going to town, it is good, that the children and we ourself must not appear in the old dresses; a very great care is disappeared by you both.

Next week we go to Radebeul, near Dresden, where the Landesbischof⁶⁶ is dwelling and where my husband has his new change, since July. We are glad, to be then together. Christmas my husband was here some days, we all were delighted of your presents. The health of my husband is not yet so good as we wished.

We hope, that you and your family are in good health and that the year 1949 may be good and happy for your all!

Heartly greetings!

Your Lotte Fuß-Oxé

⁶⁴ 'Egypt, the cradle of ancient weights and measures.'

This appears to have been mentioned previously: on a slip of paper attached to letter 15, Frau Oxé wrote, *Herr v. Merhart machte den Fehler eine Metrologische Arbeit mit in das Register einzufügen, die nichts mit der archaologischen Arbeit zu tun hat* (Mr. von Merhart made the mistake of entering in the register alongside [the catalogue] a work on metrology, which has nothing to do with archaeology). Oxé had published several articles on metrology over the years (cf. *letter*

25), and this work, referred to several times in the correspondence and apparently amounting to two volumes, seems to have disappeared without trace. In December 1964 Oxé's daughter made further enquiries about it, but the manuscript could not be found at the RGK. (See RGK-A file 1895, 5 items.)

⁶⁵ 'This work will have to wait for a long time. It can only be published in Germany.'

⁶⁶ Regional bishop.

On 4th February, Comfort at last received the materials for the catalogue. He wrote at once to Dr. Wagner and to Prof. Frankl. There is no copy of a letter to Dr. von Merhart: he may have assumed that a letter sent to Prof. Frankl through the American military post would arrive more rapidly, and that Prof. Frankl would inform Dr. von Merhart of the safe receipt of the parcels. Comfort naturally also wrote to Frau Oxé.

(51) H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 4th February 1949

February 4, 1949

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

Allow me to acknowledge the receipt of a recent letter from you, a very kind letter from Michael Fuss sending me some postage stamps⁶⁷, and a letter addressed to Mrs. Comfort which came today and which I have not yet given to her⁶⁸. But most particularly I wish you to know that the entire material for Dr. Oxé's *Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum* also arrived today, in two packages. I have opened one of them and been hastily through the contents; I have not yet even opened the other. But I wish to send acknowledgment to Mr. Paul Frankl of Marburg, who actually sent the material, and to Dr. Wagner, as promptly as possible; and since I am at my typewriter, it seems right that you also should hear from me as promptly as possible.

It is of course entirely too early for me to forecast how much work this publication will take, or even whether it will be practicable at all, but I can assure you that I am delighted to have it safely here at last, and that I shall give it my very best attention. I hope that it will be possible to make at least its principal message available to the scholarly public.

With our best wishes,

Sincerely,

Howard Comfort

Scholarly and social challenges

Now that negotiations with the RGK had been successfully concluded and the Katalog (as all refer to it) had come into Comfort's hands, slightly less than three years after his first enquiry, the nature of his involvement changed. He had to study and assess the material, to approach American institutions in order to solicit their specific interest and/or money, and he had still to report enough of this to Frau Oxé to give her cause for hope both that her husband's *magnum opus* was worthy of her faith in it and that it would, some way or other, make its way into print.

This did not stop Comfort and his wife from continuing to support, as best they could, the widow and her younger family.

⁶⁷ Neither of these letters is in the file.

⁶⁸ The letter would have been addressed to Haverford

College, so Mrs. C. would not see it until Comfort returned from work.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 23rd March 1949

(52)

*Radebeul 2
Horst Vietstr. 21*

23.3.49

My dear Mr. Comfort,

It is a long time I did not write to you, I was not able to write. We changed our habitation, we abandoned Cavertitz, wher I lived since 1943 with my daughter's family. We used much time for this removal. My son in law has been removed in this very beautiful Radebeul 2 a town near the Elbe and we hope he will get his health entirely by his good doctor. – Our live in the country was good, here we enjoy the advantage of the city and the school is better for the children. They semselve prefer Cavertitz. I did not thank for your kind letter from 4 Februar [no. 51] with the information that the Katalog has arrived in America. It will be in best hands. I am sure, you will have much pleasure by studying the work and also the interested people. Mr. Wagner was so kind, to inform me from this fact.

My dear Mr. Comfort, you and Mrs. Comfort have delighted us in a great manner to Christmas, we cannot thank enough. Michael with his leather jacket is admired by his friends. – On the Palmsonntag⁶⁹ we celebrate his confirmation. With many thankful salutations from my family to you and your wife, I repeat my best wishes

Your Luise Oxé

H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 1st April 1949

(53)

April 1, 1949

Frau Dr. August Oxé,
Radebeul 2
Horst Vietstrasse 21
Germany, Russian Zone.

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

Allow me to acknowledge your letter of January 26 [no. 50], with Frau Fuss-Oxé's postscript of the following date. It has been in my hands for some time, and I have taken advantage of your new address to send an additional parcel (also some time ago), which I hope may have arrived by the time that this letter comes to you.

I have just returned from visiting a number of colleagues to whom I have shown, and with whom I have discussed, the Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum. There is general agreement as to its usefulness and importance as an enterprise, and of course the name of August Oxé is adequate guarantee of its quality. I consider it likely that one or more American groups will take care of the publication, but of course none of them have yet made any promises. At any rate, I am much encouraged.

I need not remind you that there are many problems to be settled. For instance, (1) shall the Katalog and the accompanying chapters appear together, or can the latter be separated and published in periodicals? I hope for the former, but the matter is not yet

⁶⁹ Palm Sunday.

decided. (2) How many of the accompanying chapters can be published now, without considerable redrawing of plates and even composition of the text? I should think probably two of them; the rest may have to wait some later time. (3) What language should be used? I formerly thought German would be most satisfactory, but now that I have the material here, I incline to think either English or Latin, – probably English. The possible publishers do not wish to print in German. (4) What should be done about material unknown to Dr. Oxé, such as the extensive contents of some American museums? Our present tendency is not to attempt to interpolate it into the text as it stands, but to print it as an appendix, either in the same volume as the Katalog or in a separate volume (which might also contain the chapters omitted from the original publication) which might not appear for some time to come. (5) What technique of reproduction shall be used? Printing⁷⁰ is out of the question because of cost, but photo-offset is much less expensive and in some ways considerably more satisfactory. There are several different offset techniques that would be possible. (6) I have a personal commitment to work in Athens from approximately June, 1950 to September 1951, during which period of course nothing will be done with the catalogue. I do not yet know how far it will be possible to move the catalogue by the time that I leave for Greece, nor how long after my return I shall be involved with completing the work undertaken in Greece.

In all my discussions of Dr. Oxé's work I have assumed that both you and the Archaeological Institute have given me carte blanche to make decisions as I think best in the interests (1) of classical scholarship, and (2) the honor which will accrue to Dr. Oxé's name, and (3) fair representation of those who will have contributed financially and otherwise to the final publication. In restating this I am simply reminding you and myself that under the circumstances I must do the best that I can. I am indeed conscious of my obligation to serve scholarship by making Dr. Oxé's work available as promptly and as completely as is practicable. I shall welcome the comments of yourself and of Dr. Wagner, to whom I am sending a copy of this letter.

Sincerely,

(54) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 7th June 1949

*Radebeul 2.
7.6.49.*

*Dear Mr. Comfort and
dear Mrs. Comfort,*

Whitsuntide it is time to thank you for the worthwhile packet which arrived here the 5.5. I hope my letter with my thank came in your hands with the new postage stamps those which are missed, follows here.

You do not know the meaning of each present you made us, especially the sugar, the fat, cacao and coffee as well as the nice dresses. Enjoying it, we think of the giver.

In the journal one reads that the nourishments and clothings had been easy to buy but it is not so here, there are several businesses of Russian employees, too expensiv. The hardest need is for us, that the children are not allowed to go to college, that is only allowed for workers

⁷⁰ Comfort means here letterpress printing.

children⁷¹. Michael must take a practical occupation in some time. — When the hot season begins you will think of a journey of reading after all the trouble with the catalog. Perhaps you find a possibility of printing. Fotocopy is not durable. I told some junger friends of my husband that the catalog is in the best hands for publishing and they are very rejoiced. I repeat my thank and those of family Fuß and remain with many greetings and good wishes your

Luise Oxé

L. Oxé and L. Fuss-Oxé to H. Comfort, 24th June 1949. The right-hand edge of the first page is lost. (55)

Radebeul 2.
24.6.49.

My dear Mr. Comfort,

Please excuse me not to have [written] earlier. It is already fourteen [days since] I received a packet with beautiful things. Especially the [...] was very welcomed because [...] such a cool June as never [...]. Each thing has enjoied the [...] family and found his destina[tion.] My daughter and I have so[...] much in our householt; the [...] in the school and the garden, [...] have planted vegetables and [...]

My son in law feels a little better with his stomach, his occupation is a hard one, but he likes it. I see him in the morning and the evening.

It would be of great interest for me to hear if the fotocopie goes on in good case of the catalog. I hope it.

My daughter likes to thank you for all your attention in this time. Repeating my hardly thank to you and your wife, I remain your affectionated

Luise Oxé

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Comfort!

My family and I say you heartly thanks for the very nice thinks you have sent to us. The thick mantle is pretty warm for my mother and fills up her wish for a quite warm mantle; the brown one suits me and next year I think also Moni; it is pretty. The charming pale blue dress is changed in a kasak-blouse, as alass, I am too big for it. — My husband wears often a pullover of you and a jacket which you have sent. We are very often remembered to you and think of you with the best wishes!

Yours thankful

Lotte Fuß

During the months of May to July, Comfort sought ways to prepare the catalogue for (offset) printing, envisaging that, given a suitably sophisticated typewriter, he could both translate the text into English and type it out in a form ready for printing. The most promising approach seemed to be a 'Varityper', which was going to be expensive to buy: \$ 400 at a 'special offer' price, with much higher sums also being mentioned. He hoped this might

⁷¹ This prohibition may have been related to the typical hostility of communist regimes to intellectuals, or

to the non-participation of the children in the Free German Youth: see *letter 72*.

be purchased by an academic institution which would then lend it to him. He talked with Varityper sales staff and corresponded with Henry Silver, who was Staff Adviser on Publications to the American Council of Learned Societies. On 4th August he reported on progress to Frau Oxé.

(56) H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 4th August 1949

(10a) Radebeul 2
Horst Viethstr. 21
Russian Zone, Germany

August 4, 1949

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

I have been a very poor correspondent this summer, but I must not leave for a short vacation without acknowledging your letter of June 24, and others which had preceded it. We are happy that the packages have arrived in due time.

The work on Dr. Oxé's Katalog goes very slowly. I have associated a colleague from the American Academy in Rome, Dr. Raymond T. Ohl, with myself in bringing it out, but we are hardly more than in the planning stage now. The work which I have done thus far shows clearly that the whole manuscript will have to be typed in English on a machine such as I am now using, and from that copy it will have to be typed again on a special typewriter which was formerly known as the Hammond Typewriter and is now called the Varityper. Its advantage lies in the use of different type faces such as italics, sans-serif, types of different sizes, etc. It is, however, a complicated machine to use, and it requires a special operator. I had originally supposed that I would be able to make this final typing myself, but I see now that I make too many mistakes on it and that I work too slowly.

To have a professional typist do the work will materially add to the expense of the undertaking and will probably also delay the final product considerably, but I think that the money for this can probably be found somewhere. I think you understand that the money for the actual publication, that is, for the offset printing and binding and selling of the volume is not yet assured, but I have no doubt that it will be. However, a number of different groups will be involved in the final production, and it takes time to bring them all together. Especially in summer there is little that can be definitively accomplished.

At the same time I want you to realize that I have not been idle in working on the matter, and especially that I have been in consultation with an advisor who has been very helpful indeed in making technical suggestions as to how the final copy can be prepared most attractively and expeditiously on the typewriter of which I speak. And I have spent several days in the Varityper offices in Philadelphia experimenting with their various types and machines in order to arrive at the best results for when the final work actually begins. I have also prepared about 80 pages of the English manuscript.

One of the difficulties is going to be the necessary handwork done on the final copy, since there will be a great deal of pasting of the small drawings of stamps and a great deal of drawing in ligatured letters which do not exist on the typewriter.

I wish that I could report that matters have proceeded farther, but I do wish to give you at least this much of the story.

With best regards to you and your family, and with the hope that something may be worked out with regard to Michael's further education,

Sincerely,

Howard Comfort

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 30th August 1949

(57)

*Radebeul 2.
30.8.49.*

My dear Mr. Comfort,

In the month of July I wrote a letter to you with my warmest thank for your worthwhile packet with dresses and mantels, which enjoyed us very much. I hope you have received this. We had such a cool June that the things came as called⁷². In the month before I put in my letter some post stamps, I do not know if they arrived, but I hope so. At last we have a little summer weather that the harvest can go on. We had a bad time during three weeks, there we could not have potatoes; that is the head of our nourishment. Fearing to appear quite immodest after all, what you have done for us, I tell the truth. In the journal you read it otherwise, we can buy more things than before, but we cannot pay them. Many people travel to the west, also now a partner of our house; we cannot go away though they have written, if I came I could receive my blocked pension. In my age and bad condition in walking I cannot travel, but my daughter will try to fetch some money and buy some pair of shoes and other necessary things. If I could receive still some pounds of sugar and cacao I would be very glad. You have sent always such worthwhile things with fat and coffee. In the meantime [meantime] you will have had much trouble with the photocopy of the catalog. Are you content with the undertaking and the interested persons also?

Hoping not to trouble you and your wife, by my question for help; I send my sincerest wishes and salutations also from my family.

Your Luise Oxé

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 1st September 1949

(58)

Radebeul 2.

1.9.49.

My dear Mr. Comfort,

Your kind letter [no. 56] arrived today 29. [sic] and I wrote the day before (30.8) to you. I regret to have written my letter and hope you will be so kind to injure⁷³ my letter with the unmodest [?] wishes. In my age I make these mistakes; perhaps by anxiety for the time when my daughter travels and I am alone in the household. You will understand my position. But it has changed suddenly. The children returned from the country and brought as well bread

⁷² 'As if summoned'.

⁷³ I. e. 'destroy' – see the end of the paragraph.

as potatoes and vegetables with them. Today the 1. of September it begins with the sale of potatoes and other things. So there is no need. – My daughter says: “it is possible that I do not get to Krefeld without an Interzonenpass” (then people must walk a few kilometre). All is indeterminated. I will have no rest till you write; “the letter is destroyed.”

I will now begin with the answer of your letter; seeing how much trouble you have with this work. From my husband I know how many patience belongs to bring the Katalog to paper with all the sizes. Your machine seems to be very good but the Varityper must help multiplying. Much persons are occupied of course, so I see clear that the costs grow on. As nearer to the end as more the difficulties will be found. But think; has this work had such a long use to come till now, it will be decided to a good end, especially when you have the association of good colleagues.

I remember how many faults Dr. Oxé must correct over and over again, but with his patience of age he forced his task.

By all the trouble that overcomes you I must say: “please pardon me that I annoyed you with unworthy things.”

*With the wishes for good vacations I send my sincerest salutations also to your wife
Your Luise Oxé*

Comfort's enquiries on how to arrive at a practical solution for the publication of the catalogue continued during October. It became increasingly apparent that he could not himself manage to reproduce the text on the Varityper, and that there would be substantial transcription costs, in addition to which, the whole thing was going to be a very lengthy process. Henry Silver, who was engaged on the challenge with commendable enthusiasm, then suggested the possibility of reproducing Oxé's hand-written pages on microfilm. A good deal of editing would still be involved, and in places his otherwise legible handwriting would need to be pasted over with something clearer, but the project looked both less laborious and more affordable than offset printing. Microfilm would have disadvantages, but might nonetheless be the only practical solution: it would be, 'in effect, like lending Professor Oxé's manuscript to a colleague.'

In a letter of four full pages of typescript, Comfort reported all of this on 10th November to Frau Oxé; he sent a copy to Dr. Wagner at the RGK in Frankfurt⁷⁴, for he was open to contemplating, in this new scenario, that the material should be returned to Germany and microfilmed there. He also told her that he was expecting to be in Greece from June 1950 until September 1951; his absence, together with the research that this trip would generate, would undoubtedly cause further delay to work on the catalogue. For Frau Oxé, this was of course an unwelcome addition to her domestic concerns, and in her response she lapsed once again into her native language.

⁷⁴ See RGK-A 2587, items 138 (English) and 137 (German translation).

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 19th December 1949

(59)

Radebeul 2.
19.12.49

Radebeul 2
19.12.49

Lieber Herr Comfort,

Ihr letzter großer Brief, für den ich sehr dankbar bin, war für mich eine traurige Nachricht. Ich wollte ihn sofort beantworten, hatte leider keine Zeit. Während meine Tochter im Westen war, konnte ich keine Zeit u. Kraft aufbringen zur Beantwortung. Ich mußte mich ganz um den Haushalt kümmern.

Nach aller Mühe, die Sie um den Katalog hatten, wünschte ich Ihnen einen guten Erfolg. Die großen Schwierigkeiten haben Sie zu überwinden versucht. Ob es in Deutschland heute möglich sei? Das wird ein Mann der Wissenschaft sagen können. An erfahrenen Setzern u. Druckern wird es fehlen. Aber die Hoffnung zur Vollendung des Katalogs bleibt bestehen.

Gerade jetzt vor dem Christfest denke ich mit Dank an Sie u. Ihre Gattin. Wie oft erfreuten Sie uns mit Ihren schönen Gaben. Ich wünschte ich könnte Ihnen genügend danken. Ich bin nun sehr alt u. schwach; aber das Interesse bleibt. Ob Michael sich dankbar erzeigen kann?

Wenn nur der Katalog vervielfältigt wird, so ist keine Mühe vergeblich gewesen.

Es grüßt Sie u. Ihre Frau auch von m. Tochter Ihre Luise Oxé

Es folgt bald mehr

Dear Mr. Comfort,

Your last long letter, for which I thank you very much, was for me a depressing report. I wanted to reply to it straight away, but unfortunately did not have the time. While my daughter was in the West, I couldn't muster the time or energy for a reply. I had to devote myself solely to managing the home.

After all the trouble you had with the catalogue, I wished you much success. You have sought to overcome great difficulties. Could it work out in Germany? Only an expert could say. There will be a lack of experienced typesetters and printers. But hope for the completion of the catalogue still stands fast.

Now directly before Christmas I think with gratitude of you and your wife. How often you have given us joy with your beautiful gifts! I wish that I could thank you enough. I am now very old and weak, but the interest remains. Will Michael be able to express our thanks [in person]?

If the catalogue can only be copied, that will not be a labour in vain.

With greetings to you and your wife from my daughter and from your Luise Oxé

More to follow soon⁷⁵

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 19th January 1950

(60)

Radebeul 2.
19.1.50

Radebeul 2
19.1.50

Mein lieber Herr Comfort,

Möchte das Jahr 1950 für Sie u. Ihre Familie ein recht gutes sein, das hoffe ich. Meine Gedanken sind oft zu Ihnen u. Ihrer Arbeit gekommen, möchte alles gut werden

My dear Mr. Comfort,

May the year 1950 be a really good one for you and your family, that is my hope. I often think of you and your work, may all go well as you wish also for your trip to

⁷⁵ See letter 63.

wie Sie wünschen auch mit Ihrer Reise nach Griechenland. Es tut mir leid so wenig von Ihnen zu wissen. Ich habe Ihnen viel zu danken. Sie haben mir u. meiner Familie sehr viel Hilfe geleistet in den schweren Zeiten und noch jetzt haben Sie herrliche Chokolade geschickt u. nützliche Sachen. Ich denke immer mit Dankbarkeit an Sie. Im November-Dezember war meine Tochter im Westen, sie kam gut hin u. zurück, auch brachte sie von unsern Verwandten viele schöne Dinge für die Kinder mit. Die Freude war groß zu Weihnachten.

Mein Schwiegersohn hat sich noch nicht ganz erholt, aber bessern wird es sich hoffentlich. Ich hoffe immer daß der Katalog doch noch zur Veröffentlichung gelangt; wir müssen Geduld haben; alles Gute kommt langsam.

Für alle Mühe u. Anstrengung wünsche ich Ihnen guten Erfolg Ihrer Reise u. bleibe mit meiner Familie Ihre dankbare Luise Oxé.

Viele grüße auch an Ihre Frau!

Greece. I am sorry to know so little about you. I have so much to thank you for. You have given me and my family so much help in these difficult times, and just now you have sent wonderful chocolate and useful things. I think of you always with gratitude. In November-December my daughter was in the West; she went and returned successfully, and brought from our relatives many lovely things for the children. Our joy at Christmas was great!

My son-in-law is not yet fully recovered, but hopefully he will improve. I hope always that the catalogue will get published; we must be patient; all good things come slowly.

In all your troubles and exertions I wish you success for your travels and remain with my family your grateful Luise Oxé

Many greetings also to your wife!

(61) L. Oxé and L. Fuss-Oxé to H. Comfort, 25th January 1950

*Radebeul 2
25.1.50.*

*My dear Mr. Comfort and
my dear Missis Comfort,*

There came one paket after the other, we cannot stop with thanking. The greatest wish we have now is, you have a very happy new year as well in health as in progress. I thanked you for the nice paket with chocolade and practicle things, the following packet with sugar, coffee, fat and clothings will again serve us for a long time. Much pleasure made us the three pairs of shoes, that is a rare article in this country. Likewise the valuable jaket which is quite suitable to Michael. How many things has he got from you? I cannot count. The first is still there and Christof will bear it, he is now 14 years old. Michael grows astonishing. He is learning English and Russian in his quiet manner, he does not speak of it, during [whereas] Christoph tells all what he can experience. I hope to send you a foto of my grandchildren in one month. You will see that Mony is the best of all. Minewile [meanwhile] we have got some affectionated acquaintances in this town. We had a nice and elevating Christmas, the children had been very contented and happy.

We learn the coldness in America is great. It follows here, the youth will now make use of the skates and skys [skis]. Christoph has got the shoes which you have sent, the greater ones are fitting to my daughter, and the last will be useful to my cousine. She lost all her possetion. You have contented these persons very much. If you think that our external life has become better, it will not be necessary to make such expenses as you and your good wife

did, with coffee, sugar, spry⁷⁶ and other things. I know that the victuals have become much higher in your country. If you have used clothings, that you don't want, it may go on, but don't buy such rare things. My family and I thank you cordially for all your kindness and care. God will be with you!

I often think of you and liked to know if all your trouble with the Katalog comes to good end. Mr. Wagner did not answer my question and I wait still another answer of my cousin who made still again the journey for Africa by airway. He can learn if the printing in Germany would be possible. I hope to live to see if the Katalog makes his way.

My best wishes accompany you to Greece, and your dear wife shall know that we think of you both in grateful feelings.

Your Luise Oxé

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Comfort,

I thank you very much for your fine pakets, especially for the jaket, which Michael wanted just [now], and for the warm shirts, just so for the shoes. Also the other things have made us much pleasure. As we have three birthdays in January, I was very glad to have these victuals. The cakes have well succeeded, and tomorrow, when my husband will be 44 years old, we shall think of you again with heartly thanks, and we shall drink of the valuable coffee, which otherwise most serves as a medicine and refreshing for my mother. – I am sorry, that the Catalog makes such difficulty and demands so much patience of you, Mr. Comfort, and I send my best wishes for your work and for your travel. Also my best wishes for the beginning year for Mrs. Comfort!

Yours

thankful

Lotte Fuß

H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 30 January 1950

(62)

January 30, 1950

Frau Dr. August Oxé,
Horst Viethstrasse 21
Radebeul 2

My dear Frau Dr. August Oxé:

Your letter of December 19 [no. 59] has just arrived two or three days ago. It was the letter which you wrote in reply to mine in which I indicated the difficulties surrounding the publication of the Katalog, and suggested that it might have to be given up.

I am now able to be somewhat more optimistic as a result of a day spent at an offset printer's.

[The letter goes on to explain that there may still be a viable way to generate a clean, typed text which will be reproducible by the offset method. Comfort also explains (though this is surely the project that he has already mentioned) that he has been invited to apply for a Fulbright research grant, which would take him to Greece for a year. If this happens, there may be a colleague who could do some work on the catalogue during his absence.]

⁷⁶ An American brand of margarine / cooking fat.

My wife and I hope that sometime in the general Christmas season you received another box which she made up and sent to you. I am not sure now just what it contained, but I recall that there was some food in it; whether there were other kinds of things I do not know. Evidently it had not arrived when you wrote on December 19.

I am happy that your daughter was able to get to the west for a while, for I know that your interests and ties there are strong. I trust that she was able to make some arrangements while there that will ease your situation⁷⁷.

With kindest regards from us both,
Sincerely,

(63) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 1st February 1950

Radebeul 2.
1.2.50

My dear Mr. Comfort,

Please excuse that I did not answer your long letter [of 10.11.49] till now. I had sent it to my cousin, Dr. Paul Hollender, because he can better read the special expressions than I can. He returned again from Africa. He sent a friend of him to Dr. Wagner in Frankfurt because I complaint myself of Dr. W. that he did not answer my question. Mr. Michael the friend of Dr. Hollender spoke with Dr. Wagner and the two persons agreed with your offer to publish the Katalog by the mikofilm-manner. I am quite contented with this resolution. I only regret the lost time. My cousin writes me that it would be impossible to print in Germany such things.

Dr. Wagner wishes to get some copies for the Institut alsow for the German libraries, but he will write this himself. I would be happy if I could have few exemplares.

Hoping that this answer is satisfying for you, I sent my best salutations

Your Luise Oxé

A letter to Comfort from Dr. Wagner in Frankfurt, dated 2nd February 1950 purports to be replying to one from Comfort dated 10th January. This is not in the file, but a partial translation preserved in Frankfurt⁷⁸ indicates that Comfort was still awaiting a response to what he wrote previously to Frau Oxé on 10th November (above, p. 116). In any case, Wagner acceded to the idea of reproduction on microfilm and reported that he had had this conversation with the friend of the cousin (see *letter 63*), through whom he had conveyed his opinion to Frau Oxé. He continued

⁷⁷ Surely a reference to getting the frozen pension released, though there is no further mention of this. ⁷⁸ RGK-A 2587, item 135.

W. Wagner to H. Comfort, 2nd February 1950 (extract)

(64)

Ob es aber zu dem oben angedeuteten Verfahren kommen soll, darüber entscheidet letzten Endes Frau Oxé selbst als Erbin des Nachlasses Ihres Mannes, auch darüber, ob die Wiedergabe in den USA oder in Deutschland getätigt wird.

Ich bin nicht sicher, ob Frau Oxé Ihnen geantwortet hat. Gleich ob es geschehen ist oder nicht, darf Ich um Ihre liebenswürdige Nachricht bitten. Selbstverständlich stehe ich Ihnen zur Verfügung und niemals bin ich auf den Gedanken gekommen, Ihre Korrespondenz etwa als Last zu empfinden.

But whether one should proceed with the process indicated above, that will be a decision, in the end, for Frau Oxé as the heir to her husband's inheritance; also as to whether the reproduction is carried out in the USA or in Germany.

I am not sure whether Frau Oxé has replied to you. Whether she has or not, I would be grateful if you would kindly let me know. Naturally, I remain at your disposal and it has never occurred to me to regard your correspondence as a burden.

There seems to be a hint here that Wagner is conscious of 'having got off on the wrong foot' with Frau Oxé, and that he is anxious to assert his sympathetic interest.

Comfort's letter to Frau Oxé of 30th January (*no.* 62) reported more optimistically on the prospects of arriving at a copy of the catalogue which would be suitable for offset printing. He made some mock-ups, even pasting in (from a collection of drawings which Oxé had marked 'not for use') examples of facsimiles of the potters' stamps in order to judge the general effect. On 10th February he wrote to three colleagues, enclosing a specimen page which, he said, 'looks rather good to me.' He asked for their opinions and canvassed a potential request for funding to cover typesetting costs.

On the following day, he wrote in a similar vein to Frau Oxé, inviting her approval of the specimen. He also wrote again to Dr. Wagner (evidently not having received by then Wagner's letter of 2nd February, *no.* 64), explaining the point to which matters had come, the delay which would inevitably occur if Comfort's trip to Greece were to come off, and inviting Dr. Wagner once again to say whether these circumstances would make it preferable for the job to be returned to Germany. There is no hint in these repeated offers that Comfort would actually like to give up the project and send it back; but he was ever courteous in extending the opportunity to the RGK to reclaim it, and open about the still uncertain prospects of funding and actually completing the publication in the U.S.A. In the letter to Dr. Wagner, Comfort voiced, for the first time, his fear that the publication might not come out while Frau Oxé was still alive. In her next letter to Comfort, she voiced more explicitly the same uncertainty. (She was now 78, though her writing was still firm.)

(65) L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 21st February 1950

Radebeul 21.2.50

My dear Mr. Comfort,

Your letter from 30.1. [no. 62] arrived here the 20.2. and said me that my letters from January and February did not get in your hand. In one of it I thanked you and your wife for tow boxes with food and dresses, as well as 3 pairs of shoes which delighted us.

I begged you not to make such expenses in this time where food is as rare in your country as in the others. (We have now more bread and fat than bevor.) In the second letter I agreed your offer with the photocopy of the Katalog after having got the opinion of my cousin Dr. Paul Hollender, who said: "it cannot be printed in Germany."

I hope you will be satisfied by your try with photographing the typewritten script.

I regret all your trouble with the Katalog, but on the end it will be very good. There is an important thing what is not mentioned till now. If the Katalog bears the name of August Oxé, it is the duty to call the name of Mr. Howard Comfort as the man of sciences, who made the Katalog known!

Thanking for all your trouble with writing and explaining your work as well as your and Missis Comfort's personal presents, I close my letter with many good wishes for the future. I hope still to live after your return from Greece, but one cannot know it. My daughter coming back from [to?] home was very glad. She explained me, what that means: "offset".

I shall be very delighted if I get the copy of this specimen page. In great gratitude your Luise Oxé and family

On 8th March Comfort replied to Wagner's letter of 2nd February (*no. 64*), reporting further optimism about both the technicalities of the production process and the serious interest (and possible financial support) of American institutions (specifically the American Academy in Rome, which had published Comfort's own study of potters' stamps in 1929)⁷⁹ in taking on the publication. He wrote in a similarly optimistic vein to Frau Oxé.

On 25th March he wrote to several correspondents, enclosing the latest, improved mock-up. A significant note inserted here, however, was that he might now be away in Europe for two years rather than one.

On 8th March and again on 22nd April, Frau Oxé wrote brief letters applauding the new mock-ups. At the foot of the first, she added, 'We often suffer by the Stream sperre⁸⁰ so I must write by waxlight.' Towards the end of May, Comfort replied, assuring Frau Oxé that, though letters took a long time and therefore not infrequently crossed in the post, it did seem that all of them in either direction had arrived successfully. At this time there was little to report apart from a greater uncertainty as to whether Comfort would be in Greece for a year, or in Italy for two years. In the latter case, it might be possible to take the catalogue with him and to do some further work on it.

On 25th June, Frau Oxé wrote that she had been imagining Comfort in Greece, but now thought that Italy would suit him and his family well. She remembered with fondness her last trip there, with her husband in 1939, and concluded with an image of old age less troubled than it had been in recent years: 'We are now in the jolly time of summer, I like to sit in the garden with a work or book and to think of the past time, it was a wonderful time with my husband.' Next month, she wrote to Mrs. Comfort.

⁷⁹ COMFORT 1929; see p. 51.

⁸⁰ Power-cut.

L. Oxé to Mrs. E. Comfort, 18th July 1950

(66)

Radebeul 2
18.7.50

My dear Mrs. Comfort,

In the last time my daughter and I have thought often of you. My granddaughter was in the West and has had occasion to recover her health splendid. If you have time and opportunity to spend your live in Italy, it would be of great importance. What shall I wish more than that the events [events?] become clear and good for you and your whole family. In many years you have taken care for us in an amiable and generous way, so that we never can explain our thank enough.

Being now in better time we will not forget what you and your husband have spent for us. The clothes, jackets, stockings, shoes and all other things, the worthful victuals have helped us and have showed, that there was Christensense in your family. I wished I could thank you in any time but I am old and do not know how it happens but I can pray for you.

My granddaughter Monika coming from the West with nice summer clothes, has just tried a mantle, which you have sent, it is fitting for the cool season; long time the mantle of green-blue colour was very nice and is still so. Because the coats were very good we preserved some things and now we are glad to use them. Each of them remembers us of you.

My family and I think in grateful feelings to you all.

Your Luise Oxé

On 25th July, Comfort wrote a substantially longer letter, reporting both on further work he had been able to do, unexpectedly, on the catalogue and on future plans and expectations for himself and his family.

H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 25th July 1950

(67)

July 25, 1950

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

Your letter of June 25 arrived a day or so ago; letters between us seem to take just under one month in transit.

I had supposed that I should be en route for Greece sometime in June, sed dis aliter visum⁸¹. Instead, I heard only about June 10 that the Fulbright award had been made to me, and subsequently I heard that I am to sail with my family on September 5. However, in the meantime another attractive proposition has been made to me, so that perhaps I shall not go to Greece at all. Instead, I should be in Italy for one or perhaps two years. In this latter case I should expect to take the manuscript of the Katalog along with me, and to work on it as I have the time. Even this summer, since I have not been able to leave for Greece as early as expected, I have worked with it more than I had supposed would be possible, and I have made considerable progress with it. This progress is not enough to make me feel that we are very near to publication (I wish that we were!), but at least I am some pages farther along than would have been the case otherwise. I think

⁸¹ 'But the gods have decided otherwise' (Latin).

that I am about one-fifth through now. Once the pages have been transcribed into English there will still be a large task of editing and verification before the copy can be handed to a professional typist for preparation of the “shooting script.” And I shall have to decide how many of the plates should accompany the publication. They cannot all be used in their present state, and the same is true of the introductory chapters. But at least we are farther down the road than we might have been at this time.

In your letter you referred to your visit to Italy in 1939. I had supposed that Dr. Oxé must have been there at that time because he has noted that several stamps were seen and verified by him at that time, but I had not previously realized that this trip had taken place so late in his life. Where did you go, and what collections did you see? And can you tell me whether he ever visited the Klagenfurt Museum, and when? Dr. Wiesinger has prepared a discussion of the sigillata in that museum, and I have written to him for a copy of his article⁸². I assume from Dr. Oxé’s manuscript that he never visited Klagenfurt, but I may be wrong. It would be helpful to know⁸³.

You kindly inquired about my son’s studies⁸⁴. He prefers mathematics to anything else, and I think has the elements of a good mathematician. And in other respects he seems to be a good boy too; he finished his schooling this year at the head of his class, or near it, and was asked to make a speech at the graduation exercises. He is now in France where he is living in a French family for a month and thereafter will go by bicycle with some French and American young people through some of the country. He will stay over there until I arrive in Greece or Italy, and will join me there for the rest of the year instead of coming home to go to the university. It is our hope that Mrs. Comfort will also be there, and that our daughter will be in school in Switzerland⁸⁵. The events of the last month have given us some hesitation about carrying this plan to completion, since the newspapers and the radio are continuously telling us of the war in Korea and its possible implications for the United States, which are not reassuring. To this must be added my wife’s poor health, which keeps her on a rather restricted diet, and the fact that her mother is aged and also in poor health. So there are reasons why she may not feel it advisable to accompany me. And if she does not, then it is likely that our daughter will not go, although she has been looking forward to this year with the greatest pleasure and interest. It is a hard decision to make, but it may be made for us by events. I recall that the last time I was abroad, in 1940 in Italy⁸⁶, it was with the prospect of a war which eventually broke in Italy in June of that year. My parents were very much worried at that time, and I am sure that they will not be less so if I go again. But I have noticed that emergencies always look much worse at a distance, through the inflation of journalism, than they look close by. A good example was in Holland in 1939, just after I had visited you and gone to The Hague. I witnessed the mobilization of the Dutch army early in September, but was not greatly impressed by it until I saw a film which purported to show just what I had been witnessing. Meanwhile my wife in this country was very

⁸² WIESINGER 1942.

⁸³ Oxé had in fact visited Klagenfurt in the autumn of 1913, as Comfort might have discovered from the account of his researches which appeared in 1915: Oxé 1915, esp. 14.

⁸⁴ W. Wistar Comfort (1933–2016), later a professor

of mathematics at Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, USA.

⁸⁵ Laura Comfort (1936–2020), later married to George Kesel.

⁸⁶ When he was serving with the American Friends Service Corps: see p. 57.

greatly disturbed by what she read in the newspapers. Yet there was no immediate emergency there at that time.

So you see we do not know what it is best to do now. In any case, if you continue to send letters to me here, they will reach me eventually.

My wife joins me in sending best wishes to you and to all your family. I do not believe there is much probability that we shall meet during my projected trip to Europe, though I should like to think so. Perhaps in some future and more settled time an opportunity will be given.

Sincerely,
Howard Comfort

On 17th August this letter reached its destination, and prompted a correspondingly extended reply.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 18th August 1950

(68)

Radebeul 2.
18.8.50.

My dear Mr. Comfort,

On the 17.8. arrived your kind letter and enjoied me very much. I thank you for all the news referring your plans. Hearing that you got the Fulbright award, I congratulate you, hoping that you utilize the time in Italy for your health after all the trouble with the Katalog and others. Of course it would be a great fortune if Mrs. Comfort could accompany you strengthening her health. But it may be better to wait for your invitation to your family. If there was only peace, your whole family would enjoy the beautiful country, air and sun.

My husband and I did so in the year 1939. I liked this time as the most beautiful of my life. We visited Florenz (14 dais), Rome (18) Capri (2) Neapel⁸⁷ (3). In every museum my husband noticed [noted down] the stamps he found still joining [incorporating] them at home in the Katalog. From Rom we visited Arezzo (2 dais) and Orvieto, C[h]iusi, Genevieto⁸⁸ and other little places, where we remained several hours⁸⁹.

This voyage was made extra⁹⁰ (because I made a little inheritance by my brother). You see, one must take the opportunity direct. We had in general, the manner like our parents and grandparents to keep all our money to the save; in time of war all is lost. – To the question of Klagenfurt is to say: my husband was in Klagenfurt bevor the I War, I think bevor 1912. 1912 we stayed in Paris, there he would wright and keep everything. When Dr. Oxé was in Klagenfurt he visited also Aquileja the destroyed town. I cannot say in which year⁹¹.

I understand your delight to your son's future, he will become a great mathematician. Here in our family there is not much with studying, not one word of Latin. But Michael is content, his holydais he passes on the country where he is gathering by a family of his friend.

⁸⁷ Naples.

⁸⁸ I can make nothing of this name, though it is clearly written.

⁸⁹ See the account on p. 135 which she later wrote to G. Bersu (RGK-A 2587, item 117).

⁹⁰ I.e. at their own expense.

⁹¹ This was in the autumn of 1913. See *note* 83.

He likes to be on the country. Cristoph will come in the Oberschule [secondary school], Michael visits the Oberschule in the second year⁹². Monika, returning from the West, has had many holidays and is feeling very well. She has now 13½ years, is much younger than your daughter⁹³. But now I like to write some words of thank to your dear wife. I still add that my nephew whom you know⁹⁴ lives in Italy. During the war he was there and afterwards he rested there, his business is in Milano but he lives with his family in Cernobbio near Como Via 25 aprile 10. He is the same who was flying by airway to Afrika⁹⁵. His name is: Dr. Hans Holstein, he will be pleased to see you. Perhaps he can be helpful in anything. His eldest son is in an internat. school in Switzerland. I am quite astonished that you will take the Katalog with you, it is a great burden and if you have time to work? You will be pleased to have worked one fifth of the Katalog.

I would be pleased to learn of your voyage to Europa. Naturally the happiness to meet you is a little far because my age of 79. Thanking for all your friendship, I remain with many salutations of my family to yours

Your Luise Oxé

By 9th September, Comfort had still not left for Italy. He reported to Frau Oxé that he had done some more work on the catalogue, and that he had sent another package ‘containing principally clothing.’ That letter arrived in unusually good time, for Frau Oxé was able to reply to it on 1st October and to thank him for sending yet more ‘fine clothings’.

Later that month, Comfort wrote to Dr. Wagner in Frankfurt. The letter mainly concerns exchanges of journals, which do not concern us here, but there are some relevant pieces of information.

(69) H. Comfort to W. Wagner, 23rd September 1950 (extract)

I ought to have acknowledged long ago your kindness in writing to me ... My failure to do so has been caused in part ... by the necessity of spending considerable time in packing my books etc. in preparation for an extended absence from this country in Rome, where I have been appointed Assistant Cultural Attaché in the American Embassy. I expect to be leaving about the end of October ...

You will be interested to know that during the summer I have made considerable progress with the Oxé Katalog, which is now about half-way retyped and edited. Much more remains to be done, and I am taking it with me to Rome where I hope to be able to finish at least the preliminary work. ...

⁹² The difficulties regarding access to education, mentioned in *letter 54*, seem to have been overcome.

⁹³ In a letter dated 2nd December 1964 (RGK-A 1895, item 5), Lotte Fuss-Oxé reported on her children, fourteen years on. Michael had followed his father into the priesthood and was still in Saxony; Christof was a teacher of Biology and Physical Education in a

middle school for boys in Holzminden; and Monika was qualifying as a teacher in Heidelberg.

⁹⁴ See *letter 1*, of 26th May 1929.

⁹⁵ There is possible confusion here; she has previously mentioned a cousin, Dr. Paul Hollender, who visited Africa by air. See *letters 61* and *63*.

I shall be in further communication with you from time to time, and hope that sometime during my stay in Rome I may even be able to revisit Frankfurt, which I had the pleasure of coming slightly to know in 1928. Needless to say, if your own travels should bring you to Rome, I hope that you will let me know.

The visit to Frankfurt in 1928 will surely have been the occasion also of Comfort's first visit to the Oxé household in Krefeld.

It seems that Comfort's responsibilities in the American Embassy in Rome did not allow him the time he had hoped to continue to work on the catalogue, and there is a hiatus of many months. The next item is a postcard from Frau Oxé, addressed to the American Embassy in Rome, which seems to imply some previous communication from Comfort which is not preserved.

L. Oxé to H. Comfort, 25th July 1951

(70)

R. 25.7.51

*My dear Mr. Comfort,
I hope you will make printed Dr. Oxé's Katalog by the Mosson
[?]⁹⁶ in Rom, otherwise it will never be printed. Please inform
Dr. Bersu in Frankfurt a.M. of this fact. He is now in the place
of Dr. Wagner⁹⁷. He knows the wishes of Dr. Oxé and me.
I regret not to be able to write more but I think, you understand
this.
With sincerest greetings your*

Luise Oxé

This is the more puzzling in the light of a letter written by Comfort just a week later, which seems to contain a first mention of the specific interest of the American Academy.

⁹⁶ The writing seems to be quite clear, but not what she meant – 'Mission' = American Academy?

⁹⁷ Dr. Gerhard Bersu (1889–1964) was an energetic archaeologist who had already served as First Director of the RGK from 1931 until 1935, when he was demoted by the Nazis (on the grounds of 'half-Jewish' ancestry) and transferred to the DAI in Berlin. In 1937 he was forcibly 'retired' and moved to the UK. During the war, he was interned in the

Isle of Man but was able to carry out important excavations there. Subsequently, he was invited to return to his post in Frankfurt, but this was not considered practical until September 1950 because of the state of the RGK (bombed in 1944, then sealed off in the American military headquarters) and because of the shortage of usable housing in Frankfurt. See KRÄMER 2001.

(71) H. Comfort to L. Oxé, 3rd August 1951

AMERICAN EMBASSY
Rome, August 3, 1951

My dear Frau Dr. Oxé:

I am sorry that I have been so neglectful of my correspondence with you during recent months. I find it hard to believe that the last letter, of which I have a copy, was last September 9.

Since my arrival here there has been no opportunity to do any work whatever on the Katalog, and you remember I had transcribed about half of its extent.

However, the American Academy in Rome has raised with me the question of printing the text which would make for a better looking finished product than the offset process which we have formerly discussed. Just when this can be done I do not know because the transcript which I have made thus far has been prepared for offset reproduction and will need some revisions for letter press printing. And then of course the remaining half is still to be done anyway together with considerable work involved in the plates and some of the drawings and indices. However I am sure that you will be glad to know of the interest which the American Academy is showing.

My wife has recently left Rome to go to America. If she knew that I am writing she would wish her cordial greetings to you and your family included with mine.

Sincerely yours,

Howard Comfort

Frau Dr. L. Oxé,
Radebeul II (10a),
Horst Viethstr 21,
Germany, Russian Zone.

On the same day, he wrote to Dr. Bersu, referring to the postcard (which, postmarked 27th July, seems to have travelled in record time) and giving him the same news. The next letter in the file (which must certainly have been preceded by one or more communications which are not preserved), is dated almost a year later. It is written in an untidy and difficult hand, evidently in some haste, and is the last communication from the family in the file.

L. Fuss-Oxé to H. Comfort, 25th July 1952

(72)

Lotte Fuß
bei Frau E. Wittmer
Berlin-Dahlem
Thielallee 23

25. Juli 1952

Sehr geehrter, lieber Herr Comfort!

Für Ihren lieben Brief der Anteilnahme am Heimgang meiner lieben Mutter danke ich Ihnen noch recht herzlich!

Ich benutze einem kurzem Besuch bei meiner Tante in Berlin, um Ihnen zu schreiben, und Ihnen zu versichern, daß ich Ihre Anteilnahme an unserer Familie und Ihre große Hilfe, die wir immer noch spüren in der Kleidung der Kinder, durchaus nicht vergessen habe, und daß wir in Dankbarkeit an Sie denken.

Aber es ist für eine Pfarrfamilie nicht gut, in Correspondenz mit Amerika zu stehen. Deshalb erwähnen Sie bitte auch nie, daß ich von Berlin aus geschrieben habe. – Vielleicht kann man von 1.8.52 ab von uns aus nicht mehr nach Westberlin, deshalb bin ich schnell nochmal zu meiner Tante gekommen. Wenn ich mehr Zeit hätte, schriebe ich Ihnen auf Englisch, aber ich fahre bald wieder ab.

Wir sind noch alle gesund. Aber wir fürchten böse Zeiten für die Kirchen. Von unsern Kindern ist keines bei der F.D.J. Michael ist bald 18, ein Riese, Christoph 16, Moni 15. Mein Mann ist der nächste Mitarbeiter des Landesbischofs und hat sich gut eingearbeitet in seinem Amt.

Daß Sie am Katalog meines lieben Vaters in Zukunft weiter arbeiten werden, freut mich im Gedanken daran immer, und ich wünsche Ihnen weiter gutes Gelingen und einem angenehmen Aufenthalt in Rom.

Bitte grüßen Sie auch Ihre verehrte, liebe Frau herzlich in Ihren Briefen von mir.

*Mein Mann läßt auch grüßen
Ihre*

Lotte Fuß-Oxé

Lotte Fuss
c/o Mrs. E. Wittmer
Berlin-Dahlem
Thielallee 23

25 July 1952

Honoured and dear Mr. Comfort!

My heartfelt thanks for your kind letter of sympathy on the passing of my mother⁹⁸!

I am taking advantage of a brief visit to my aunt in Berlin to write to you and to assure you that your sympathy for our family and your great help, which we can yet see in the clothing of the children, have certainly not been forgotten, and that we think of you with gratitude.

But it is not good for the family of a pastor to be in touch with America. Thus, please never mention that I have written from Berlin. – It is probable that from 1.8.52 it will no longer be possible to get from us to West Berlin; that is why I have made one more quick visit to my aunt. If I had more time, I would write to you in English, but I must soon go back.

We are still all well. But we fear bad times for the churches. None of our children are in the F.D.J.⁹⁹ Michael will soon be 18, a giant, Christoph 16, Moni 15. My husband is the personal assistant to the local bishop and has settled well into his job.

It always gives me pleasure to think that in the future you will do further work on my father's catalogue, and I wish you success and a pleasant stay in Rome.

Please also send heartfelt greetings to your dear and honoured wife from me when you write to her.

My husband also sends greetings.

Yours,

Lotte Fuss-Oxé

⁹⁸ A notice of the death, preserved in RGK-A 2587, item 109, shows that this had occurred on 25th February, and that Luise Oxé was to be buried in the Johannisfriedhof in Dresden.

⁹⁹ The *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (Free German Youth) was a youth organization in East Germany, founded in 1946 and intended to provide constructive leisure activities for young people, but also to inculcate

Another perspective

Reference has already been made several times to items in the archive of the RGK in Frankfurt, the consultation of which, in digital form has been greatly assisted by the current archivist, Sandra Schröer. The transmission to me of the digitized indexes to the archive revealed three files which were likely to be of interest:

RGK-A 982	‘August Oxé	1915–44’
RGK-A 1895	‘A. Oxé und Tochter	1964–65’
RGK-A 2587	‘ <i>Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum</i>	1936–62’

These files amount to nearly fifteen hundred pages of correspondence. Each entry bears an item number which appears in pencil at the foot of the document. The papers in RGK-A 2587 (the file which is most relevant here) are numbered in reverse chronological order, from the top downwards (i. e. item 1 is the latest addition).

The following items add significantly to the narrative derived from the Comfort correspondence files.

In June 1946, Frau Oxé sought advice from Professor von Merhart on receiving an enquiry, through various intermediaries, from Professor Comfort. This is the counterpart, in effect, to the report which Major Highet was able to send to Comfort (*letter 3*).

RGK-A 2587, item 236: L. Oxé to G. von Merhart, 10th June 1946

Cavertitz 10.6.46

Sehr geehrter Herr von Merhart!

Wieder habe ich Ihren Rat einzuholen. Es ging mir das nachfolgende Schreiben zu.

Sehr geehrte Frau Oxé!

Ich bin von der Militärregierung mit der Verwaltung von gesperrtem Vermögen beauftragt. In dieser Eigenschaft wurde mir vor einigen Tagen ein Schreiben der Kontroll Kommission [sic] für Deutschland in Bad Oeynhausen übergeben, in welchem nach Ihrem verstorbenen Gatten gefragt wird. Es heißt in dem Schreiben:

Der Sekretär der amerikanischen philologischen Gesellschaft fragt nach einem alten deutschen Gelehrten, der einer der besten Kenner römischer Vasen in der Welt war. Seine Bibliothek u. sein Verzeichnis der Signaturen von Künstlern, die römische Vasen bemalten, waren einzig. Bitte ermitteln Sie u. tun Sie das Erforderliche, diese

communist values (and hence hostility to religious interests); membership was nominally voluntary,

Cavertitz 10.6.46

Dear Mr von Merhart!

Once again I have to ask your advice. I received the following communication.

Dear Mrs Oxé!

I am entrusted by the military government with the administration of locked property. In that capacity I received some days ago a communication from the Control Commission for Germany in Bad Oeynhausen, in which was an enquiry for your late husband. It says in that communication:

The secretary of the American Philological Society is enquiring about an old German scholar, who once was one of the best connoisseurs in the world of Roman vases. His library and his catalogue of the signatures of artists, who painted [sic] Roman vases, were unique. Please enquire and do all necessary to save

but non-membership excluded young persons from universities and many forms of employment.

Vermögenswerte zu schützen, wenn sie noch vorhanden sind. Wenn Prof. Oxé oder seine Frau noch leben, würde es angenehm sein, wenn ihnen gesagt werden könnte, daß Professor Howard Comfort vom Haverford College, Pennsylvania/USA ihnen Grüße sendet.

Es war möglich, im Museum zu erfahren, daß die Bibliothek Ihres Gatten verloren gegangen ist, daß aber sein Lebenswerk, der Boden: [-Stempel] terra sigillata noch vorhanden ist u. sich in Frankfurt a.M. befindet. Ich würde es sehr begrüßen, wenn Sie sich zu dieser Angelegenheit auch äußern würden. Zweck dieses Schreibens aber war, Ihnen von den Grüßen aus Amerika Kenntnis zu geben.

Peter Tibio

Was raten Sie, Herr Professor mir zu tun?

In Berücksichtigung des traurigen Kriegsausgangs u. der dadurch unmöglich gewordenen Drucklegung des Katalogs in Deutschland, werde ich die reale Seite dieser Frage der ideellen vorziehen. Und indem ich der Wissenschaft diene, komme ich auch dem Wunsch meines Mannes nach, dessen Forscher u. Arbeitsfleiß seinen Rechtsnachfolgern zuteil werden sollte.

Ich werde an Herrn Prof. Comfort schreiben; ich erinnere mich seiner gut. Er besuchte uns nach dem ersten Weltkrieg als er von Rom kommend seine Studien beendet hatte und meinen Mann bat seine Arbeit durchzusehn. Das geschah, es gab viel Correctur u. manche Correspondenz mit ihm. Diesem Herrn schreibe ich, daß der Katalog erhalten blieb, ohne Angabe wo er ist. Würden Sie die Güte haben, mir Ihren Rat in diesem Fall zu erteilen?

these assets in case they are still available. If Prof. Oxé or his wife is still alive, it would be a kindness to tell them that Professor Howard Comfort from Haverford College, Pennsylvania/USA sends them his greetings.

It was possible to learn in the museum¹⁰⁰, that the library of your husband is lost, but that his life's work, the base [stamps on] terra sigillata are still existing and are located at Frankfurt a.M. I would appreciate very much your comments on this matter. But the purpose of this letter was to bring to your notice the greetings from America.

Peter Tibio [?]¹⁰¹

What do you suggest I should do, Mr Professor?

In consideration of the woeful end of the war and the consequent impossibility of publishing the catalogue in Germany, I shall prefer the practical side of the matter to the ideal one. And in favouring the cause of scholarship I am as well complying with the wish of my husband, whose effort as a scholar and worker should benefit his legal successors.

I shall write to Prof. Comfort; I remember him very well. He visited us after the First World War, when he, coming from Rome, had finished his studies and asked my husband to look through his work. That happened, there were many corrections and some correspondence with him. To that gentleman I shall write that the catalogue is preserved, without indication where it is. Would *you* be so kind to advise me in that matter?

¹⁰⁰ This would probably have been the museum in Krefeld, and the informant would have been Oxé's friend Dr. Rembert, for whom see *letter 10*.

¹⁰¹ This is an unusual name, and may therefore be the person who, in 1918, was a joint founder of the firm Hilsenbeck und Tibio oHG in Krefeld. The company was initially an agent for Royal Dutch/

Shell, expanding subsequently into insurance; it is still in business. (See <https://www.1918hilsenbeck.de/hilsenbeck/ueberuns.php> [last access: 06.10.2022]). I am grateful to Susanne Zabehlicky-Scheffenecker, who discovered and drew my attention to this possible connection.)

In der Zeit vor 47 Jahren [...]

The catalogue was begun 47 years ago [...]

[There follows a brief account of her husband's researches, rehearsed many times in other letters.]

Nun ist zu fragen, ob die philolog. Gesellschaft in Amerika einen Vorschlag machen will die Arbeit zwecks Drucklegung zu erwerben. Das Werk muß doch den Namen des deutschen Professors tragen. Da die Währung unsicher ist, könnte Herr Comfort ja Vorschläge machen für die Zukunft. Mindestens müßte einer oder zwei Enkel des Forschers studieren können. – Wir haben hier und in Krefeld alles verloren.

Meine Tochter erhält kein Gehalt da ihr Mann als Lagerpfarrer schon 3 Jahre in frnz. Gefangenschaft in Tunis lebt.

Ich hoffe Ihre Zeit erlaubt es Ihnen mir bald eine Nachricht über den Empfang meines Briefes zukommen zu lassen u. Ihre hochgeschätzte Meinung zu den Fragen zu sagen.

*Es grüßt Sie freundlichst Ihre
Luise Oxé*

Es ist nur von dem Katalog die Frage, die andere Arbeit ruht bei Ihnen.

Now the question arises whether the Philological Society in America wants to make a proposal to acquire the work for publishing. The work must bear the name of the German professor. Since the currency is insecure, Mr. Comfort could make proposals for the future. At least one or two of the scholar's grandchildren must be supported to study. We have lost *everything* here and in Krefeld.

My daughter has no income, because her husband as a military chaplain has been living now already for three years in a French prison camp in Tunis.

I hope that your time will allow you to send me soon a note that you received my letter and to tell me your opinion on these questions.

Kind regards, Yours
Luise Oxé

The question concerns only the catalogue, the other work [a paper on metrology] is in your hands.

The next letter which bears directly upon our story was written by Frau Oxé in 1951 to Dr. Gerhard Bersu. Bersu had been Director of the RGK in 1930–35, at which time, on the basis of Jewish ancestry, he was removed from office by the Nazi authorities. He was eventually restored to his post in September 1950¹⁰². Frau Oxé, who clearly had known him in earlier years, wrote in haste to bring him up to date with her previous correspondence with the Institute and, shortly after, provided an informative summary of the events which had affected her and her husband during and after the war. The letter was accompanied by a separate postcard with an account of the trip to Italy which she and her husband had made in 1939 (for which, see also *letter 68*).

¹⁰² For more detail on Bersu, see *note 97*.

RGK-A 2587, item 117. L. Oxé to G. Bersu, 10th May 1951

Radebeul 2.
10.5.51

Sehr geehrter und lieber Herr Dr. Bersu, was werden Sie von der Frau Ihres alten Freundes Oxé denken, da Sie keinen Dank für Ihren lieben mich zu Tränen rührenden Brief erhielten. Eine Erklärung bin ich Ihnen schuldig. Es trafen zwar Anfangs April mehrere mich stark bekümmernde Nachrichten der nächsten Verwandten ein, die mich sehr beschäftigten, aber das Schlimmste war, ich verlegte Ihren Brief. Mein Schwiegervater schüttelte den Kopf, wie kann man nur so einen Brief verlieren? Vorgestern fand ich ihn sorgfältig mit den für Sie bestimmten Papieren zusammen geheftet wieder. Ich war fast krank vor Aufregung darüber. Nun will ich Ihnen noch von der letzten Zeit berichten. Die Juninacht 43 u. die folgenden Tage nach der Katastrophe hatten uns so mitgenommen, daß wir ganz apatisch der weiteren Verwüstung unseres Heims entgegensahen. Es brannte von Oben nach unten. Während ich noch etwas aus der Wohnung retten wollte, fand ich m. Mann im Keller beschäftigt die Treppe zu retten um diesen Weg frei zu halten. Es nützte alles nichts, da die Wasserleitung versagte, konnte die Feuerwehr nichts ausrichten. Wir verbrachten noch 2 Nächte im Schutzraum, eine im Gartenhäuschen, weil es im Keller zu heiß war. Inzwischen kam die Flak aus Hilden und barg unsere Koffer, meines Mannes Arbeiten u. Sonstiges, was wir in Sicherheit brachten u. dann überredete uns der Bruder unseres Schwiegersohnes zur Flucht nach Sachsen wo die Tochter auf dem Land lebte. So lieb wir auch aufgenommen waren, war doch diese Übersiedlung kein idealer Aufenthalt für alte, verwöhnte Leute. Mein lieber Mann wäre auch nicht in Sachsen geblieben und erwartete auch von mir, daß ich in die Heimat zurückkehren würde. – Ein altes verdecktes Leiden trat wieder auf u. nach längerem Aufenthalt im Riesaer Krankenhaus führte es nach längerer Privatpflege

Radebeul 2
May 10, 1951

Highly honoured and dear Mr. Bersu,
What will you think about the wife of your old friend Oxé, because you did not receive any thanks for your kind letter which moved me to tears. I owe you an explanation. Although at the beginning of April there arrived multiple reports of nearest relatives, which grieved me very much, the worst thing was that I was unable to find your letter. My father-in-law [*sic* –surely son-in-law] shook his head, how can one lose such a letter? The day before yesterday I found it again, carefully fastened together with the papers destined for you. I was nearly sick with excitement. Now I want to report to you about the latest times. The night in June '43 and the days following the catastrophe distressed us so much that we awaited the further devastation of our house with complete apathy. It burned from the top downwards. While I tried to rescue things from the living quarters, I found my husband busy in the cellar to rescue the stairs in order to keep clear this way out. Nothing was any use: because the water main failed the fire brigade could not achieve anything. We stayed two more nights in the safe room, and one in the little garden house, because it was too hot in the cellar. In the meantime there came the flak from Hilden and rescued our trunks, the work of my husband and other things we could bring to safety, and then the brother of our son-in-law persuaded us to flee to Saxony where our daughter was living in the countryside. Although we were received very kindly, that relocation was not at all an ideal place for old and spoiled people. My dear husband did not want to stay in Saxony and expected also from me to return to our homeland. – An old and hidden sickness emerged again and after a longer stay in the hospital in Riesa and a yet longer one

zu seinem Ende. Das war am 17.5.44. So brauchte er das traurige Kriegsende nicht mehr zu erleben. Er hoffte noch auf einen ehrenvollen Frieden. Im July 43 freute er sich noch sehr über die ihm verliehene Goethemedaille anlässlich seines 80.sten Geburtstages. Er kümmerte sich bis zuletzt um den Katalog u. seine metrologischen Arbeiten. Seinem Wunsch gemäß fand die Einäscherung in Meissen statt.

Ich selbst mußte mich bald entscheiden u. entschloß mich bei meiner Familie zu bleiben. Mein Schwiegersohn kehrte erst 47 nach [...] jähriger Gefangenschaft aus Tunis zurück. Leider zog er sich ein Magenleiden zu, das ab und zu noch auftritt, besonders bei Witterungseinflüssen. Er hat einen anstrengenden Dienst in der Kirchenkanzlei u. beim Bischof u. wurde jetzt Oberkirchenrat. Meine Tochter u. 3 Enkel vervollständigen die Tischrunde mit mir zu 6 Personen. Soweit wäre das äußere Leben in guter Ordnung, aber die Zerrissenheit unseres Vaterlandes liegt schwer auf jedem Einzelnen. Man sieht auch nur ernste Menschen, kein glückseliges Kind wie früher. Unsere gehen in Schule und Politik auf.

Ich habe aus früherer Zeit allerlei für Sie zusammengelegt, vielleicht ist es Ihnen nur lästig, dann lassen Sie es nur liegen.

Sie erwähnten Herrn von Merhart, den mir so wohlwollenden u. mich zum Dank verpflichtenden Gelehrten. Es wird auch ihn interessieren zu erfahren, daß Herr Comfort den Katalog noch in seinen Händen hat u. für sich selbst einmal copierte. Ich will versuchen ob er mir noch einen Probedruck für Sie senden kann, es würde Sie besonders interessieren. Vorläufig wird die Arbeit bei ihm in grösserer Sicherheit sein als sonstwo.*

in private care he came to his end¹⁰³. That happened on 17 May 1944. So he no longer had to endure the tragic end of the war. He still hoped for an honourable peace. In July 1943 he was very pleased with the Goethe-medal he received on occasion of his 80th birthday. Till the end he cared about the catalogue and his metrological works. According to his wish he was cremated at Meissen.

I myself had to make up my mind soon and decided to stay with my family. My son-in-law returned from Tunis only in 1947 after [4] years of imprisonment. Unfortunately he developed gastric troubles which still occur now and then, especially influenced by weather conditions. He has a stressful job in the church chancery and at the bishop's and has now become an *Oberkirchenrat* [higher member in the consistory]. My daughter and the three grandchildren complete the gathering at the table, including me six persons. To that extent our life is nominally in good order, but the disrupted condition of our home country rests heavily on everyone. Also one sees only serious people, no happy child as before. Ours are caught up in school and politics.

I have put together for you all kinds of things from the past; perhaps it is only tedious to you, then let it go.

You mentioned Mr von Merhart, that scholar who has been so benevolent to me and to whom I owe so much. He might be interested to know that Mr Comfort still has the catalogue in his hands and once made a copy for himself. I shall find out whether he could send me a proof copy for you: you might find it very interesting.* For the time being the work is much safer with him than elsewhere.

¹⁰³ Oxé's last letter to the RGK (RGK-A 982 part 2, item 491), written on 7th February 1944, explained that on 22nd January he had undergone an appen-

dectomy at Riesa, some 17 km from Cavertitz. The experience, at the age of eighty, was ultimately too much for him.

*Indem ich dankend zurückkomme auf
Ihre Worte über meinen Mann, grüße ich
Sie mit guten Wünschen*

Ihre Luise Oxé

** Besser wäre es, er schickte ihn Ihnen selbst
weil ich schlecht korrespondieren kann mit
dem Ausland auch sonst, wie Sie verstehen.*

*Von einem schönen Erlebnis 1939 möchte
ich Ihnen noch Mitteilung machen. Ich
hatte immer den Wunsch einmal mit m.
Mann in Rom u.s.w. zu sein. Infolge einer
kl. Erbschaft konnten wir im Frühjahr 39
eine Reise antreten. Zunächst ging es nach
Florenz dann Rom dort auf dem Forum
zusammen zu stehen u. auch die Plätze zu
sehen wo der Forscher gewohnt u. gearbeitet
hatte*, war eine Freude. Wir besuchten viele
herrliche Gebäude, sahen alle Kunstschätze,
die Kirchen u. Michelangelos Gallerie, die
päpstlichen Museen, die alten Gebäude aus
der Geschichte bekannt, die Katakomben.
Wir besuchten die Triumphstrasse weit vor
Rom gelegen, über die die Sieger einzogen.
Die Augen konnten nicht genug aufnehmen,
so interessierte alles. Im Termen Museum
gab es längeren Aufenthalt. Wir wohnten
dort herrlich, trafen auch Bekannte, trenn-
ten uns so ungern von Rom wie vorher von
Florenz, fuhren dann nach Neapel, wo es
viel zu besichtigen gab auch den Tempel
bei Paestum u. Solferino, die Umgegend
von Capri entzückte uns mit dem Palazzo
Tiberius. Hier finde ich die Bilder dieser
herrlichen Gegenden. Auf dem Rückweg
ging es über Arrezzo [sic] u. den etruskischen
kl. Städtchen langsam nach Mailand, über
Como ging es heimwärts. Für m. Mann war
die Reise auch schön; ich staunte über seine
Leistungsfähigkeit bei allem Ermüdenden.*

¹⁰⁴ She is referring to her husband, who had spent time in Rome in 1901 and in 1912.

¹⁰⁵ This reference is perhaps to Michelangelo's Cloister which is now the courtyard of the Museo

Meanwhile, returning my thanks for your kind words about my husband I send you my greetings with best wishes

Yours Luise Oxé

* It might be better if he would send it directly to you because I have problems in corresponding with any foreign country, as you understand.

I would like to relate to you a lovely experience in 1939. Always I had the desire to be once with my husband in Rome etc. Due to a small legacy we were able to make a trip in spring 1939. At first we went to Florence and then to Rome, it was a great pleasure to stand there together on the Forum and to see the places where the scholar¹⁰⁴ had lived and worked.* We visited many magnificent buildings, saw all the art treasures, the churches and Michelangelo's gallery¹⁰⁵, the Papal museums, the old buildings known from history, the catacombs. We visited the triumphal road far away from Rome, along which the victors entered the city¹⁰⁶. The eyes could not absorb enough, everything was so interesting. In the Terme Museum we stayed for a long time. We resided there superbly, also met acquaintances, departed from Rome as reluctantly as before from Florence, then travelled to Naples, where again there was much to see, also the temples at Paestum and Solferino; the area of Capri with the palace of Tiberius charmed us. Here I have the pictures of these wonderful places. On the return, we passed through Arezzo and the little Etruscan towns, making our way slowly towards Milan and then homewards via Como. My husband also enjoyed the trip; I was astonished at his endurance in the face of such exhausting demands.

delle Terme. I am grateful to Dr. Susanne Zabehlicky-Scheffenecker for this suggestion.

¹⁰⁶ Presumably the Via Appia.

Für mich selbst ist die Erinnerung von unbezahlbarem Wert. Ich freue mich im Alter darüber und kann nur jedem anraten Zeit u. Gelegenheit wahrzunehmen. L. O.

**im deutschen Institut bei der Botschaft*

For my part, the recollection is priceless. In my old age it gives me pleasure and I can only recommend everyone to treasure every moment and occasion. L[uisse] O[xé].

* in the German institute at the embassy¹⁰⁷

A postcard, sent by August Oxé to the RGK immediately after the bombing and the flight to Cavertitz, sheds further brief light on this traumatic event from the scholar's perspective.

RGK-A 982, part 2, item 499. A. Oxé to the Director of the RGK, 27th June 1943

Cavertitz 27.6.43

*Lieber Herr Direktor,
bei dem Bombenüberfall auf Krefeld ist mein Haus und fast alle meine Habe, vor allem m. ganze Bibliothek und alle Scheden vernichtet worden; durch ein Wunder sind m. Frau und ich mit dem Leben u. unversehrt davon gekommen. Gerettet haben wir einige Kleidungsstücke u. was im Keller war; ferner den Katalog der Arretina u. eine große metrol. Arbeit. Hier sind wir im Pfarrhaus von unserer Tochter aufgenommen, in einem kl., vom Verkehr entlegenen Dörfchen. Vergebens fahnde ich hier nach Schreib- u. Briefpapier und einem Füllfederhalter. Ein gefaltetes Taschentuch bildete bis gestern m. Kragen. Nur langsam kehrt volle Besinnung und seltsches Gleichgewicht wieder.
Mit herzlichem Gruß
Ihr August Oxé*

Cavertitz June 27, 1943

Dear Mr Director,
with the bombing of Krefeld my house and nearly all my belongings, especially my whole library and all file cards were destroyed; by a miracle my wife and I escaped alive and untouched. We saved some clothes and what was in the cellar; furthermore the catalogue of the Arretina and a big metrological work. Here we are received in the vicarage of our daughter, in a small remote village. In vain I search for writing paper and letter paper and a fountain pen. A folded handkerchief served as my collar up to yesterday. Only slowly full reflection and mental balance returns.

Cordially,
Yours August Oxé

One final item, something of a curio, deserves mention here. In 1953, ten years after the destruction of her parents' house, Lotte Fuss-Oxé revisited the ruins.

¹⁰⁷ At the times when Oxé was in Rome (1901, 1912), the German (Prussian) Embassy was located in the Palazzo Caffarelli on the Capitol, while the German Archaeological Institute was on the southwest

side of the hill nearby. See https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsche_Botschaft_Rom (last access: 06.10.2022).

RGK-A 2587, item 105. L. Fuss-Oxé to W. Wagner as Director of the RGK, 12th December 1953

Hannover[?], 12.12.53

An das [... RGK ...] Herr Dr. Wagner

Sehr geehrter Herr Direktor,

Bei einem Besuch meiner Heimatstadt Krefeld fand ich im Keller unseres Hauses an einer geschützten Stelle in Asche und Mörtel einige Sigillata-Scherben. Obgleich sie mir ziemlich zerkleinert und nicht mehr so ausdrucksvoll vorkamen wie früher in dem Häuschen meines Vaters, wickelte ich sie in Papier und überlies sie zur Abwaschung meiner Kusine, Frau Ilse von Elten, bei der ich gewohnt hatte. Ich selber musste leider schon meine Rückreise antreten. Der Aufenthalt in Krefeld hat mir sehr gut getan. (Die Scherben waren das einzige, was seine Form behalten hatte in all dem Schutt.) An den Katalog meines Vaters denke ich manchmal in der Hoffnung, dass die archäologische Wissenschaft bald ihn benutzen und ausnutzen kann. Die Korrespondenz mit Herrn Comfort habe ich aus verständlichen Gründen[...] nicht fortgeführt. Wir haben ja manchmal sehr schwierige Zeiten durchgestanden. – Die Scherben werden vielleicht nicht mehr viel nützen aber ein paar Fußprofile möglicherweise doch etwas. Mit freundlichem Gruß, L. Fuss-Oxé

Hannover[?], 12.12.53

To the director of the RGK, Frankfurt a.M., Dr. Wagner

Dear Mr. Director,

On a visit to my home-town of Krefeld, I found in the cellar of our house in a protected spot amongst ashes and mortar some sherds of sigillata. Although they seemed to me much more broken up and less informative than they were in my father's house, I wrapped them in paper and handed them for washing to my cousin, Mrs. Ilse von Elten, with whom I was staying. I myself had unfortunately shortly to return home. The stay in Krefeld did me a lot of good. (The sherds were the only things which had kept their shape in all the collapse.) I often think of my father's catalogue, in the hope that the world of archaeology will soon be able to use it and to benefit from it. For obvious reasons, I have not continued the correspondence with Mr. Comfort. We have often had to contend with very difficult times. The sherds are perhaps no longer very useful, but a pair of foot-profiles might be.

With warm regards, L. Fuss-Oxé.

This earned a reply from W. Schliermacher, who reported that, since the RGK had no repository suitable for such material, he had consigned it on her behalf to the Römisch-Germanische Zentralmuseum at Mainz – where it remains to this day¹⁰⁸.

Epilogue

So what happened to the catalogue after this correspondence came to an end?

On 12th October 1953, Comfort was finally able to write to a colleague that he had finished typing the English script of the catalogue, reducing the 1,185 pages of manuscript to 696 pages of typescript. While celebrating this achievement, he pointed out that there would still be a fair amount of error-checking and copy-editing to be done.

¹⁰⁸ I am grateful to Sandra Schröer for this information.

In April 1959, he wrote a long and detailed appeal for a subvention to the publication costs from the Bollingen Foundation of New York. In this, he reported that discussions in 1951 had led to an agreement that (ironically) the work should be published in the German *Antiquitas* series, the General Editor of which was Prof. Andreas Alföldi of Princeton University, with printing and distribution being managed by Rudolf Habelt GmbH of Bonn. (This was presumably later than August of that year, when Comfort was still reporting the possibility of an American publisher: see *letter 71*.) The nature of the material continued to be extremely challenging, but the appearance was much improved by using letterpress to compose the pages and then offset-lithography as the final production process. The printed *Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum*, amounting to 616 pages of catalogue and index, with twelve additional plates of drawings, finally saw the light of day in 1968, twenty-two years after Howard Comfort had first enquired as to its survival of the Second World War and roughly seventy years after August Oxé had conceived its desirability and started to work on it¹⁰⁹. The financial support of the Bollingen Foundation of New York and of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft of Bad Godesberg was acknowledged.

In 1987, Lotte Fuss-Oxé, the daughter of August and Luise Oxé, made contact with the Director of the RGK in Frankfurt, and handed over roughly a thousand pages of her father's manuscript notes. These represented a working copy of the catalogue, from which Oxé had composed his final manuscript version, and which she had kept faithfully for over forty years.

Professor Howard Comfort was always mindful of the fact that Oxé's catalogue would need to be updated, in regard to both museum collections (notably in America) which Oxé had not seen, and to subsequent publications of related material (see *letter 53*). For many years he therefore assembled cards from which he hoped eventually to compose a supplement to the Corpus. In 1990, when he was in his eighties, it was clear to both him and others, that he would not himself be able to achieve this. Soon after that, it was agreed that the current writer would take over the project, and funding was secured from a wide variety of sources. By now, the world was into the digital age; a supplement was prepared in the form of a relational database with an accompanying printed volume (considered necessary for the facsimile drawings of the stamps). This was then expanded into a comprehensive second edition, involving a reworking of all of Oxé's entries (often incorporating additional information recorded by him in the working copy now in Frankfurt: see *fig. 7*). The new edition was again published by Rudolf Habelt GmbH of Bonn and appeared in 2000, composed essentially of the work of just three scholars over a period of 103 years since Oxé had started his researches in 1897¹¹⁰.

It was a consequence of my taking over Professor Comfort's work that, following his death in 1993, his professional correspondence files were entrusted to me by his daughter; these included the correspondence with August Oxé and his family which forms the subject of this memoir. I have also the 1,185 pages of the 'definitive' (*fix und fertig*) manuscript that was sent to Marburg for safe-keeping in 1944 (see *fig. 8*), and the 696 pages of English typescript which Comfort laboured to produce between 1949 and 1953 (see *fig. 9*). For comparison, a page of the 1968 publication is reproduced in *figure 10* and a corresponding page of the 2000 edition in *figure 11*. The relationship between the Comfort and Oxé families probably involved occasional letters from Mrs. Elizabeth Comfort which did not get into the professional file: it is clear that the parcels which were sent from America resulted mainly from her initiative, and that Comfort himself did not always know what was in

¹⁰⁹ Oxé / COMFORT 1968.

¹¹⁰ Oxé / COMFORT / KENRICK 2000.

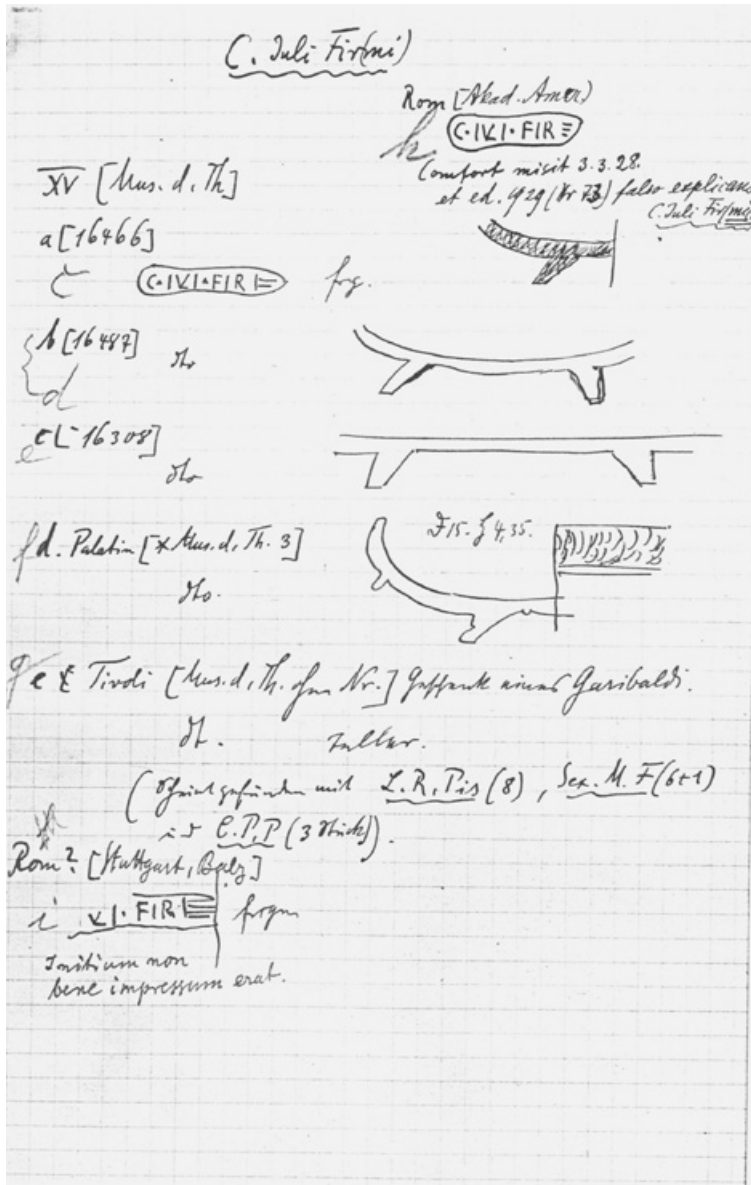


Fig. 7. A typical page of Oxé’s penultimate (working) copy of his work, showing sketches of vessels and other information, which was excluded from the 1968 publication, but which it was possible to utilize in 2000.

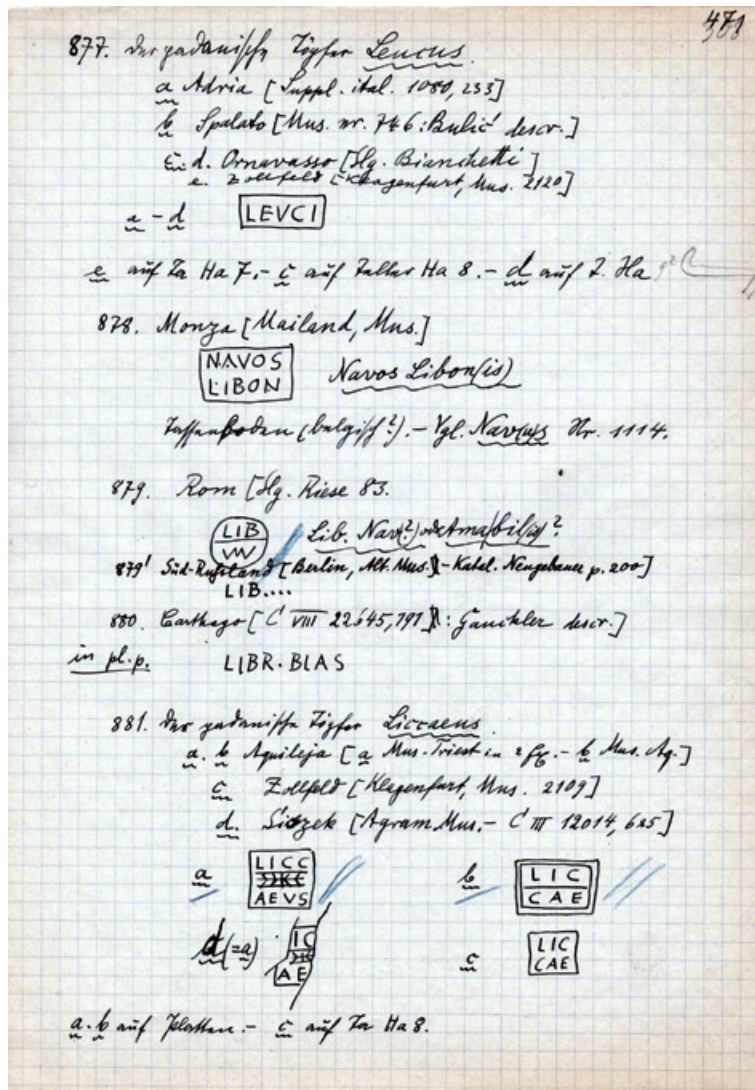


Fig. 8. A typical page of Oxé's 'finished' manuscript of 1944. The marks in blue crayon indicate where facsimile drawings were to be inserted.

them (see *letter 62*). During the period covered by the correspondence, it seems that one parcel was sent by the Haverford Friends and that ten were sent at different times by the Comforts.

A final paragraph brings the story of this project up to date. In 2000, the publication of a database contained on a compact disk, sold with the printed volume, was a considerable novelty and was greeted with enthusiasm by several reviewers¹¹¹. Alas, while the previous edition had served for over thirty years, the CD accompanying this one became virtually unusable after only nine. This was due to the rapid and continuing evolution of the

¹¹¹ See RUPRECHTSBERGER 2001; ETTLINGER 2001; ROTH-RUBI 2001; WILSON 2002.

288

878 NAVOS LIBON(IS)
Monna (Milan Mu); cup, Belgio(?)

N-AYOS
LIBOM

Cf. Nav(u)s (1114).

877 LEVCVS of the Po Valley
a Adria SIT 1080 233
b Spalato (Mu 746), Bulif desc.
c.d Ornaveaso (Bianchetti Coll.); [g almost certainly Ha 2 with fp 18, but also recorded as plate (1) Ha 8]; d on plate Ha 4?
e Zollfeld (Klagenfurt Mu 2120): Ha 7

a-d LEVCI

879 LIB() NAV(?) or AMA/BIL(IS)?
Rome (Riese Coll.)

out

879^{*} LIB()
South Russia (Berlin Altes Mu); Neugebauer p 200 and Comfort Suppl. p 52; Knipowitsch Form 9

LIB...

880 LIBR() ELAS()
Carthage VIII 22645 191, Gauckler desc.

LIBR•ELAS in p.p.

881 LIGCAEVS^v
of Po Valley
a.b Aquileia (a 2 exx. in Trieste Mu; b Aquileia Mu): all platters
c Zollfeld (Klagenfurt Mu 2109): Ha 8
d Siseak (Agram Mu) III 12014 625, fragmentary stamp = a

a.(d) out
b out
c LIC
CAE

882 (=2113b, a.v.) TITI (ET?) LIC(INI)?, TITI LIC(INI)?

883 C. LIC(INIVS), an early potter of Arezzo
a.b Arezzo XI 6700 337a,b; a in several exx.: all black ware
c Aquileia (Trieste Mu): black ware

a C•LIC 4x and 6x radially
b.c C•LIC

884 C. LICINIVS EVSCI X, a later potter of Arezzo
a Arezzo XI 6700 338a after Rossi and Casurrini, inaccurately
b Arezzo XI Add. p 1409; Chase Leeb n. 456. 'small shallow bowl with straight rim, slightly inclined inward.
c Suasa XI 6700 338b Ht. 5; diam. 12, ht. of foot 1. The juncture of the rim with the body of the vase is marked by a heavy moulding. The rim is decorated with four attached rosettes, at regular intervals.'

b.c C•LICINI•EVSCI in p.p.

Fig. 9. The corresponding page retyped by Comfort.

Windows™ operating system which, after *Windows Vista*, no longer supported the program in which the database had been written.

When the second edition of the Corpus was in preparation, the question of on-line publication was raised; but at that time internet accessibility was limited in many countries, and was dependent in any case on hard-wired connections – it would not have been possible to consult the database ‘in the field’. These restrictions no longer apply and in 2020 an approach was made to me by the RGK to create an on-line replica of the database for open access on the iDAI website, thus re-engaging with the project that it had fostered more than a hundred years ago. At the time of writing (summer 2022) this is under active development. Furthermore, I have myself continued to amass further data from publications, to the extent that it should be possible, before long, to upload new data files to this platform and thus to extend the history of August Oxé’s project into a third, freely available edition.

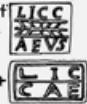

	father and son, cf. X 4654 (= Desau 5979).		
876	LEGE	879	LIB()
a. b	Arezzo XI 6700 1a. b		South Russia (Berlin Altes Mu); Neugebauer p. 200 and Comfort Suppl. p. 52: Knipowitsch Form 9
c	Chiusi? ib. 1c		LIB...
d	Fiesole ib. 1d; Oxé descr.: yellow-red cylindrical cup without foot, period of Tiberius or Claudius	880	LIBR() BLAS()
	↓ ω ο ρ η in round stamp ○		Carthage VIII 22645 191, Gauckler descr.
	[So Oxé; XI 6700 1 gives four varieties with ↓ turned to right or left and the two E's both facing downward, both upward, and counter-clockwise.]		LIBR·BLAS in p.p.
	Cf. Dragendorff BJ 96 1895 p. 40 and Ihm BJ 102 1898 p. 126.	881	LICCAEVS of the Po Valley
877	LEVCVS of the Po Valley	a. b	Aquileia (a 2 exx. in Trieste Mu; b Aquileia Mu): all platters
a	Adria Stt 1080 233	c	Zollfeld (Klagenfurt Mu 2109): Ha 8
b	Spalato (Mu 746), Bulić descr.	d	Siszek (Agram Mu) III 12014 625, fragmentary stamp = a
c. d	Ornavasso (Bianchetti Coll.): [c almost certainly Ha 2 with fp 18, but also recorded as plate (!) Ha 8]; d on plate Ha 4?	g. (d)	
e	Zollfeld (Klagenfurt Mu 2120): Ha 7	b	+
a-e	LEVCI	c	LIC CAE
878	NAVOS LIBON(IS)	882	(= 2113b, q. v.) TITI (ETI) LIC-(INI), TITI LIC(INI)?
	Monza (Milan Mu): cup, Belgic (?)	883	C. LIC(INIVS) , an early potter of Arezzo
	N·AVOS LIBON	a. b	Arezzo XI 6700 337a. b; a in several exx.: all black ware
	Cf. Nav(t)s (1114).	c	Aquileia (Trieste Mu): black ware
879	LIB() NAV(I) or AMA/BIL(IS)?	a	C·↓IC 4× and 6× radially
	Rome (Riese Coll.)	b. c	C·LIC
		884	C. LICINIVS FVSCVS , a later potter of Arezzo
		a	Arezzo XI 6700 338a after Rossi and Gamurrini, inaccurately
		b	Arezzo XI Add. p. 1409; Chase

Fig. 10. The same material, as it appeared in print in 1968.

I first met Professor Howard Comfort in 1975, at a congress of the *Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautores* (RCRF), an international association dedicated to promoting the study of Roman pottery. This association (which flourishes ever more strongly today) was founded jointly by him and by Professor Elisabeth Ettlinger of Zurich in 1957 to bolster and reinforce personal relationships between those who shared his own abiding interest. I subsequently had the pleasure and privilege of his friendship – and on occasion of collaborating with him – until his death in 1993.

When I read his correspondence with the Oxé family for the first time, I was profoundly moved. It shows that the kind of unconstrained collegiality which the RCRF fosters was being expressed, despite all obstacles, in a field of historical study at a time of immense political and military turmoil. Scholars of goodwill were able to resume their studies and their relationships as circumstances allowed without ever once feeling a need to denigrate the motives or allegiances of one another. (This is admittedly a single example of a

4		3 456	1032 (881)	LICCAEVS	16 entries
5		13 130 ■	Internal stamps on plain ware Location: Po Valley Approx. date: 20 BC–AD 10		
6		3 465	1*		28 105
1028 (—)		1 entry	2		14 766
LIBANVS (1)			3*		28 107
Internal stamps on plain ware			4		16 055
Location: Po Valley			5		3 468
Approx. date: ?			6		3 472
A rhomboid stamp of this potter has now been reported from the Magdalenberg (Zabehlicky-Scheffenecker 1998, 230 with fig. 16).			7		3 469
1		6 976	1033 (884)	C. LICINIVS FVSCVS	3 entries
1029 (879)		3 entries	Internal stamps on plain ware Location: Arezzo Approx. date: AD 30+		
LIBANVS? (2)			1	C-LICINI-EVSCI (p.p.)	19 754
Internal stamps on plain ware			1034 (885)	LOLLIVS LVCR()	3 entries
Location: Central Italy			Internal stamps on plain ware Location: ? Approx. date: ?		
Approx. date: ?			Interpretation uncertain.		
My suggested interpretation, no more or less plausible than AMABILIS or LIB()NAV() (Oxé).			1		2 207
1*		28 103	1035 (886)	M. LOLLIVS	5 entries
1030 (880)		1 entry	Internal stamps on plain ware Location: Cales?		
LIBR() BLAS()					
Internal stamps on plain ware					
Location: ?					
Approx. date: AD 15+					
Interpretation uncertain: could this possibly be a mis-reading of L-RASIN-PIS (no. 1690) or the like?					
1	LIBR-BLAS (p.p.)	28 104			
1031 (883)		5 entries			
C. LIC()					
Internal stamps on plain ware					
Location: Arezzo					
Approx. date: 40–20 BC					
An early maker of black ware.					
1		28 108			
2		28 114			
3		28 115			

Fig. 11. A corresponding page from the second (2000) edition.

phenomenon which was hardly unique.) The story is also one of immense dedication by one scholar to the uncompleted project of another. I never cease to be impressed by the courtesy which emanates from every one of Comfort's letters (and which was familiar to all who knew him in person). Finally, alongside the academic challenges, there runs the story, so vividly reported, of two families in the years after the tragedy of the Second World War. The one faced appalling daily difficulties in a defeated country, while the other reached out to help them from a land which had been victorious, but nonetheless also faced considerable practical problems¹¹². To the descendants of August Oxé and Howard Comfort this memoir is dedicated.

¹¹² An unexpected correspondence in 2022 with Christoph Fuß revealed that in 1957 Howard Comfort had contributed to the expense of his first year at

university – so the contact between the two families did not in fact come to an end in 1952!

APPENDIX: Obituary of August Oxe by Howard Comfort
(reproduced with permission from the American Journal of Archaeology 51,
1947, 219).

August Oxé, 1863–1944

August Oxé's doctoral dissertation, *Prolegomena de Carmine adv. Marcionitas* (Bonn, 1888) was the first of a long list which had reached sixty-eight titles in 1938, and was somewhat extended thereafter. With few exceptions these dealt with Romano-German archaeological topics lying ready to hand in the Rheinland, and with their extensions into broader fields such as the linguistics of Celtic inscriptions. His principal field of interest, however, in which he shared a world-primacy with Dragendorff of Freiburg, was *terra sigillata*, both Italian and provincial; his first two studies in this field, one on the Sels Collection in Neuss, written in collaboration with Siebourg, and the other on the enigmatic potter Cn. Ateius, appeared simultaneously in 1897 close on the heels of Dragendorff's fundamental study of the previous year. This latter subject, the *Ateiusfrage*, continued to engage his attention from time to time for the remainder of his life and is the subject of an important paper which, in 1939, was shortly to be published in the *Mitteilungen aus Westfalen*. It is to be hoped that the article expressing his matured judgment on this subject has not been included among the casualties of the War. Most important of his publications is *Arretinische Reliefgefässe vom Rhein*, immediately followed by *Frühgallische Reliefgefässe vom Rhein*, respectively volumes v and vi of the series *Materialien zur römisch-germanischen Keramik* (1933). These two put into final form many of the observations of a lifetime and, together with his study of the Arretine sigillata at Oberaden, are unique among the publications of such material in that the explanatory text deserves as close study as do the illustrations. Indeed, careful observation and penetrating interpretation permeate every one of Oxé's articles and reviews; some of the latter are very long, but every paragraph carries a solid and often strikingly original idea which generally turns out to be right. Oxé's theories approach the authority of primary evidence. Oxé made at least one grand tour to the continental Roman sites and museums, while he gathered material for the Catalogue which he called his "Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum." Happily, this remarkable card index has been preserved from the ruin of his library and other possessions; it unites into one card file the epigraphic stamps on Italian sigillata gathered from the Corpus, from a host of incidental publications, and from personal observation. It should sometime form the basic stuff for compiling the scientific history of the wares represented. Oxé and his wife lived in Crefeld until a bombing attack destroyed their gracious home in June, 1943; thereafter they lived with their daughter in the Saxon countryside until his last illness in May of the following year. Until his retirement Oxé's professional life was that of Gymnasialprofessor in Crefeld; as one of his former students now resident in the United States has well noted, it is given to few school teachers to enjoy the respect and professional confidence of the learned world as he did. And one may properly add the learned world's affection. On his seventy-fifth birthday the City of Crefeld, the Rhine Province and thirty-seven scholars presented him with a Festschrift which he had earned not merely by an international scholarly reputation but also by the personal qualities of courtesy and generous helpfulness which transform the pedagogue into the teacher and friend.

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Scholarship across barriers –
the social history of the *Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum*

Summary · Zusammenfassung · Résumé

SUMMARY · This paper traces, through the preserved correspondence of Prof. Howard Comfort (1904–1993) of Haverford College, Pennsylvania the recovery after the Second World War of the unpublished catalogue of makers' marks on Italian terra sigillata pottery which had been compiled over many years by August Oxé (1863–1944) of Krefeld, Germany. The manuscript had in 1944 been placed in safe keeping in Marburg; permission was obtained for it to be sent to the USA, where it was translated into English and edited. It was eventually published in Germany in 1968. The correspondence also paints a vivid picture of the difficulties of life in different parts of Germany in the immediate aftermath of the war.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG · Dieser Artikel verfolgt anhand der erhaltenen Korrespondenz von Prof. Howard Comfort des Haverford College in Pennsylvania (1904–1993) die Wiederauffindung nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg des unveröffentlichten Katalogs der Herstellermarken auf italischer Terra Sigillata-Tonware, welcher über viele Jahre hinweg von August Oxé (1863–1944) aus Krefeld (DE) zusammengestellt worden war. Das Manuskript war 1944 zur sicheren Verwahrung nach Marburg gegeben worden und nach Einholung der Genehmigung in die Vereinigten Staaten geschickt worden, wo es bearbeitet und ins Englische übersetzt wurde. Schlussendlich wurde es 1968 in Deutschland veröffentlicht. Die Korrespondenz zeichnet auch ein lebendiges Bild der Schwierigkeiten des Lebens in verschiedenen Teilen Deutschlands im direkten Nachgang des Krieges.

RÉSUMÉ · Cet article retrace, grâce à la correspondance du prof. Howard Comfort (1904–1993) du Haverford College de Pennsylvanie, la découverte après la Seconde Guerre mondiale du catalogue inédit des marques de potiers sur la sigillée italique compilé durant plusieurs années par August Oxé (1863–1944) de Krefeld (DE). Le manuscrit avait été envoyé à Marbourg pour être mis en sécurité, puis, après en avoir obtenu l'autorisation, transféré aux Etats-Unis où il fut traduit en anglais. Le catalogue fut finalement publié en 1968 en Allemagne. La correspondance brosse aussi un tableau vivant des difficultés quotidiennes régnant dans différentes régions de l'Allemagne juste après la guerre. (Y. G.)

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