



## DE GOEJE, MICHAÏL JAN

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**DE GOEJE, MICHAÏL JAN** (b. Dronrijp, Friesland, 18 August 1836, d. Leiden, 17 May 1909), Dutch orientalist and chief editor of Ṭabarī's world history, *Ta'riḵ al-rosol wa'l-molūk* (*Annales*, 15 vols., Leiden, 1879-1901; repr. Leiden, 1964). He was the second son of a Protestant minister. In 1854 he went to Leiden University to study theology and also took courses in Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, and Aramaic under T. W. J. Juynboll (1802–61). In 1856 he switched to the faculty of literature and studied Arabic and classics under **R. P. A. Dozy** (1820–83). He received his doctorate in 1860 with a thesis on North Africa as described in Ya'qūbī's *Ketāb al-boldān* (*Specimen Literarium Inaugurale Exhibens Descriptionem al-Magribi Sumtam e Libro Regionum al-Jaqubii . . .*, Leiden, 1860). In the previous year he had been appointed assistant curator of the collection of oriental manuscripts in the university library. In 1869 he was promoted to curator, a position he held until his death; in this capacity he was the main contributor to the catalogue of the collection (see below). Three years earlier, in 1866, he had succeeded to Juynboll's chair, at first as a kind of adjunct professor of Arabic; from 1869 to 1906 he had regular professorial status.

De Goeje received an honorary doctorate from the University of Cambridge in 1896 and was an associate member of the British Academy and the Institut de France. He was also active in public life, serving for several decades as a Liberal member of the municipal council of Leiden and as a member and later president of the municipal board of education.

De Goeje's main interest lay in Islamic geography and historiography,



particularly of the 'Abbasid period; few of the relevant Arabic textual sources were available in his time. From 1860 to his death in 1909 he therefore devoted himself to the edition, alone or in collaboration, of twenty Arabic texts, all with extensive indexes and Arabic-Latin glossaries. The introductions on the authors and the works themselves were, however, usually limited to two or three pages. After publishing a partial edition and translation of Edrīsī's *Ketāb nozhat al-moštāq* (*Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne par Edrīsī*, Leiden, 1866) jointly with Dozy, de Goeje embarked upon the *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, which eventually included seven volumes of texts by the most prominent geographers of the 9th and 10th centuries (Eṣṭakrī, Ebn Ḥawqal, Maqdesī [Moqaddasī], Ebn Faqīh, Qodāma b. Ja'far, Ebn Kordābeh, Ebn Rosta, Ya'qūbī, Mas'ūdī) and one volume of glossary, indexes, and addenda. No less important are his editions of such historical texts as Balāḍorī's *Ketāb fotūḥ al-boldān* (Leiden, 1866), the third part of the anonymous *Ketāb al-'oyūn wa'l-ḥadā'eq fī akbār'l-ḥaqā'eq* (with P. de Jong), and the sixth part of Ebn Meskawayh's *Tajāreb al-omam* (the latter two in *Fragmenta Historicorum Arabicorum*, 2 vols., Leiden, 1869–71).

De Goeje's main fame, however, rests on his edition of Ṭabarī's history of the world until the year 302/915. In 1858, when he took up the idea of preparing a printed edition, no complete copy of the text was known to exist, though manuscripts of single volumes were dispersed in libraries throughout Europe and the Near East; some had already been published. It was not, however, until 1871, when eight volumes were discovered in the Köprülü library in Istanbul, that a reconstruction of the original text began to seem possible. De Goeje invited a number of European orientalists to participate in the project, among them his most intimate friend, Theodor Nöldeke (1836–1930). De Goeje not only coordinated the project but also edited a large part of the text himself, prepared the indexes and glossaries, and concluded the work with an introductory volume in Latin. The publication of this edition, consisting of almost 10,000 pages, extended over twenty-two years and was one of the largest undertakings of 19th-century orientalism. De Goeje's extensive correspondence about the project is preserved with the collection of oriental manuscripts in the library of Leiden University.

De Goeje left no large works of research or synthesis, his main contributions of this kind being the modest volumes of his *Mémoires d'Histoire et de Géographie Orientales*: I. *Mémoire sur les Carmathes du Bahraïn* (Leiden, 1862; 2nd ed., Leiden, 1886); II. *Mémoire sur le Fotouho's-Scham attribué à Abou*



*Ismāil al-Baḡri* (Leiden, 1864); III. *Mémoire sur la conquête de la Syrie* (Leiden, 1864; 2nd ed., Leiden, 1900); IV. *Mémoire sur les migrations des Tsiganes à travers l'Asie* (Leiden, 1903). He wrote more than a hundred articles, many for popular Dutch magazines like *De Gids* and *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, and numerous book reviews. He also contributed to the work of other orientalists by careful proofreading and by revising books like William Wright's *Grammar of the Arabic Language* and his edition of the *Rehla* of Ibn Jobayr (*The Travels of Ibn-Jubayr*). At the age of seventy-one years de Goeje accepted the editorship of the first edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* but was soon forced to resign owing to ill health; he did not live to see the first volume in print.

Other works written or edited by de Goeje include *Catalogus Codicum Orientalium Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno-Batavae* III-V (III-IV with de Jong; Leiden 1865–73); *Catalogus Codicum Arabi-corum Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno-Batavae* (I with M. T. Houtsma, II, pt. 1, with Juynboll), Leiden, 1888–1907; *Historia Khalifatus Omari II, Jazidi II et Hischāmi* (Leiden, 1866); *Das alte Bett des Oxus Amû-Darja* (Leiden, 1875); *Diwân Poëtae Abu'l-Walîd Moslim ibno'l-Walîd al-Ançârî* (Leiden, 1876); *The Kâmil of el-Mubarrad XII* (critical notes to Wright's edition of the text; Leipzig, 1892); *ʿArîb Qortobî, Tabari Continuatus* (Leiden, 1897); *Selections from the Annals of Tabari* (Semitic Studies Series 1, Leiden, 1902); *Ebn Qotayba, Liber Poësis et Poëtarum* (Leiden, 1904); and *Selections from Arabic Geographical Literature* (Semitic Studies Series 8, Leiden, 1907).

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