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Resurrecting “Das Jesus Video”: Translating a bestselling science fiction novel from German into English

John Endres
397284

A dissertation submitted to the
Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg,
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Translation by Research

Supervisor: Prof. Judith Inggs

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the process of translating the best-selling German science fiction novel, “Das Jesus Video” (1998) by Andreas Eschbach, into English. The novel was written in German and had previously been translated into a range of other languages, but not into English. The aim of the research was to create a part-translation of the novel to establish which translating strategies could be used to produce a commercially viable translation; to provide a review of the process of translating the novel; and to obtain information from the author on the reasons why this novel was not translated, even though some other novels by the same author have been translated into English. The theoretical framework is based on polysystem theory and a longitudinal review of German science fiction and its relationship to science fiction in English. The study reveals that the reasons why the novel was not translated into English are external rather than related to the text itself: in the original German, the novel is written in a very accessible style that adopts features of English-language bestsellers and which poses few challenges to the translator. However, the receptiveness of the English-language literature market to literature originally written in other languages is relatively low for reasons related to the commercial and cultural dominance of the English language.

Key words: science fiction, translation, German science fiction, polysystem theory, Andreas Eschbach

DECLARATION

I, John Peter Endres, declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Translation to the Faculty of Humanities of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination to any other university.



John Endres

27 July 2020

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Dietlinde Elisabeth Endres

* 4 December 1950 † 23 February 2019

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Although this work has only one author, it had many supporters and collaborators. Without them, I could not have brought it to a successful conclusion, and I owe them all a tremendous debt of gratitude.

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Andreas Eschbach, author of "Das Jesus Video", deserves my special thanks for readily answering my e-mails, and for enriching the lives of science fiction aficionados the world over as we explore the intriguing worlds he describes in his science fiction novels.

Postgraduate research is a test of endurance and persistence, not only for the writer, but also and especially for those close to him. My family has been unstinting in its support and patience, and I am eternally grateful to them. To my parents, Hans and Dietlinde; to my wife, Paola; and to my sons, Joachim and Liam: I love you and thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving me the time and space to complete this project.

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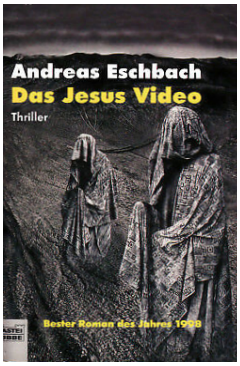
Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Motivation and objective

As with translations of other text types, translating genre fiction (also known as popular fiction) poses a specific set of challenges to the translator. The aim of this research is to investigate characteristic aspects of the process of translating one type of genre fiction, namely science fiction, from German into English, and to recommend strategies for addressing challenges that are encountered in the process. To this end, a part-translation of the science fiction novel "Das Jesus Video" by Andreas Eschbach was produced, annotated and positioned in the context of translation studies and science fiction studies.

"Das Jesus Video" was first published in hardcover in the original German in 1998. It was awarded the two most prestigious prizes in German science fiction, the *Kurd Laßwitz Preis* and the *Deutscher Science Fiction Preis*, both in 1999. Upon release in softcover in 2000, the book became a bestseller and was subsequently adapted for German television in 2002 (Breitsameter, 2002). An audiobook, read by German actor Matthias Koeberlin, was released in 2014 (Bastei Lübbe AG, 2014). At the time of writing, the book had been translated into 8 languages, but, surprisingly, not into English (Eschbach, 2018).[1] Other novels by Eschbach have, however, been translated into English.

The plot places the book in the time-travel category of science fiction, while the writing style is that of a thriller. Indeed, the cover of the German edition explicitly identifies it as such (Eschbach, 2001). The novel is set in the present and told by a third-person narrator. In broad terms, the plot revolves around an impossible archaeological discovery: an instruction manual for a video camera, found in a two-thousand-year-old grave during an archaeological dig in Israel. Complicating matters further, the instruction manual describes a video camera that is still in development and which the manufacturer only intends to introduce into the market several years hence. From this premise, the novel develops into a treasure hunt as the protagonist embarks on a quest to find the video camera and its recordings before his rivals do. The premise of the novel – that the



[1] An English "audio movie" of the novel called "The Jesus-Video Collection" was released in 2017. It was narrated by David Rintoul, Jared Zeus and Jess Robinson for Lübbe Audio and takes the form of a radio drama rather than an audio book; the text is adapted rather than translated. The publishing company was contacted to find out how and why the "audio movie" was made, but did not respond to the enquiry.

first thing the inventor of a time machine would want to see and record would be one of history's most influential, yet unknown figures, Jesus of Nazareth – establishes a solid foundation for an engaging science fiction novel.

At first glance, "Das Jesus Video" offers an obvious opportunity for a successful translation: it has already proved its appeal in the German-language market; some of the author's other works have already been translated into English; and both the science fiction and thriller categories of the English-language publishing market are large enough to justify translating a novel such as this. In support of the research for this project, contact was sought with the author to establish why the book has not yet been translated, whether the reasons had any bearing on its translatability and whether strategies could be devised to overcome the obstacles. The author's responses are summarised in the conclusion. It was assumed that the critical factor preventing the novel's introduction to the English-speaking market was commercial:

> Among the decisive factors in the current marginality of translation is its tenuous economic value. Quite simply, publishers keep the volume of translations low because such books are financially risky: they are so costly to produce, requiring a significant initial outlay for translation rights, the translator's fee, and marketing, that publishers generally regard them as inevitable losses. (Venuti, 1998, p. 124)

The decision to base this research project on a translation of "Das Jesus Video" into English hinges on several factors. I have a personal interest in science fiction; it is my favourite genre of literature and I am well-versed in it. This familiarity places me in a better position to translate the book because I am able to reference it against other books from the same genre. "Das Jesus Video" is also a book that has stood out in my memory since I first read it almost 20 years ago, primarily because of the intriguing premise on which the story is based and because the writing style appeared foreignised in the source text, reflecting some English-language style conventions rather than German. The fact that the book has not yet been translated into English, despite having been successful in the German market, is a further reason to undertake this research.

The difficulties science fiction authors encounter when writing in other languages and attempting to penetrate the English-language market are well documented:

> Sf[2] scholars and artists have complained for many years that the Anglo-American literary establishment does not translate enough non-Anglophone sf. It is difficult to make the case for one genre, however, when the problem is systematic. It is widely believed that, of the major European languages

[2] Sf is a commonly used abbreviation for science fiction.

> proportionally the fewest literary translations are into English. (Csicsery-Rona Jr., 2012, p. 483)

Indeed, even the author of "Das Jesus Video" himself, Andreas Eschbach, alludes to this on his website, describing the translation of three of his novels into English as a "rare honour" (Eschbach, 2018).

Statistics from the *Index Translationum*, an international bibliography of translations that covers the period 1979-2009 for about 100 countries, illustrate the dominance of the English language (UNESCO, 2014). It is the world's most-translated source language, with 1,266,110 translations from English into other languages, over five times as many as from German, ranked third at 208,240 translations, and easily more than the next 50 languages put together. Conversely, the *Index Translationum* counts only 164,509 translations into English, making it the fourth-ranked target language. About twice as many books were translated into highest-ranked German (301,935), even though far more people throughout the world speak English than German. The dominance of English can also be expressed as a ratio, by dividing the number of source language translations by the number of target language translations (UNESCO, 2014):

Source	Number of translations from "source" into other languages	Target	Number of translations from other languages into "target"	Source:target ratio
1 English	1,266,110	4 English	164,509	7.70
2 French	226,123	2 French	240,045	0.94
3 German	208,240	1 German	301,935	0.69
4 Russian	103,624	7 Russian	100,806	1.03
5 Italian	69,555	14 Italian	61,087	1.14
6 Spanish	54,588	3 Spanish	228,559	0.24
7 Swedish	39,984	10 Swedish	71,209	0.56
8 Japanese	29,264	5 Japanese	130,649	0.22
9 Danish	21,252	12 Danish	64,864	0.33
10 Latin	19,972	-	-	-

The calculated ratios clearly show that English is an outlier in the translation market. Using English as an example, the ratio can be interpreted as follows: the interest of speakers of other languages in reading texts originally written in English is over seven times greater than the

interest of English-speakers in reading texts originally written in other languages. What makes this discrepancy even more remarkable is that English is widely spoken in non-English-speaking countries (implying that there should be less need to translate texts written in English, as many people are able to read them in English) and that English-speakers are notoriously monoglottic (implying a greater need to translate texts from other languages into English, as English-speakers will not understand them otherwise). The ratio of 7.70 reflects the dominance of English in the realms of culture and business.

For many authors writing in languages other than English, getting their works translated into English is highly desirable as it provides access to a large, global and culturally dominant market: "English has become a sort of Grand Central Bottleneck for achieving worldly success – which is increasingly defined as reaching a global audience" (Csicsery-Rona Jr., 2012, p. 483). In "Das Jesus Video", one of the first characters to be introduced is Peter Eisenhardt, a German science fiction author who is very eager to be translated into English. When he is called to the telephone to take a call from New York, Eschbach describes Eisenhardt thinking to himself: *"New York! Das konnte nur heißen: Doubleday. Oder Random House. Oder Simon & Schuster. Oder Alfred Knopf. Oder Time Warner… Das konnte nur heißen, daß es geklappt hatte mit dem langersehnten Verkauf der Übersetzungsrechte seiner Bücher in den Vereinigten Staaten…"*[3] (Eschbach, 2001, p. 14). The impression that there are some autobiographical aspects to this excerpt is hard to avoid, although Andreas Eschbach clarified in correspondence that the resemblances are limited (my translation): "Yes, Peter Eisenhardt is an alter ego, but I intentionally drew him differently to myself. Let's just say he's an imagined colleague. But of course I knew that everybody was going to think it was me."[4]

Another reason for conducting this research is that science fiction constitutes a commercially important segment of the book market. In the United States, it represented the second fastest-growing print market segment between January and June 2018, recording an annual growth of 18%. Over 2.6m science fiction books were sold during this period alone (Milliot, 2018). Although science fiction & fantasy print sales declined by 50% from 2009 to 2017, combined print and digital book sales for the genre doubled between 2010 and 2017

[3] "New York! That could only mean Doubleday. Or Random House. Or Simon & Schuster. Or Alfred Knopf. Or Time Warner… it could only mean that the long-desired sale of translation rights to the United States had finally worked out…" (my translation).

[4] *„Peter Eisenhardt ist ein ‚alter ego', ja, aber ich gestalte ihn absichtlich anders als mich selbst. Sagen wir, er ist eher ein imaginierter Kollege. Aber natürlich war mir klar, dass jeder denkt, das sei ich"* (Eschbach, 2020).

(Rowe, 2018). The popularity of science fiction is well established and is reflected not only in books, but also in other media such as films, computer games and TV series.

According to UNESCO, the second most-translated author of all time is Jules Verne – a science-fiction author, whose works have been translated 4,751 times. He ranks below Agatha Christie, whose works have been translated over 7,000 times, but before William Shakespeare, with 4,296 translations. However, the only other science-fiction authors in the top 50 are Isaac Asimov (no. 24), J.R.R. Tolkien (no. 43) and Edgar Allan Poe (no. 44) (UNESCO, 2018). Notably, all of them – with the exception of Verne – wrote in English.

The desire to contribute to the exchange of cultural artefacts such as books between regions and cultures, rather than the mostly one-sided flow of such products from the English-speaking world to the non-English-speaking regions, constitutes a further motivation for the research.

> Global culture has been welcomed for freeing up creative energies from their confinement in self-isolating regions and mythicized group histories. Where capital sees a putatively free, institutionally unfettered exchange of money, humanists (including, of course, post humanists) often see a similarly 'free' exchange of symbolic goods, a cosmopolitan culture encouraging hybrids, interflows, and lines of flight in a grand, chaotic, carnivalesque planetary imaginary. (Csicsery-Rona Jr., 2012, p. 479)

Finally, a reason to explore the translation of science fiction in particular is that it plays a potentially important role in society, as it is a genre that allows the exploration of possible future scenarios without taboos. The best-selling non-fiction author Yuval Noah Harari, for instance, was recently quoted as saying that "Today science fiction is the most important artistic genre. It shapes the understanding of the public on things like artificial intelligence and biotechnology, which are likely to change our lives and society more than anything else in the coming decades" (Barr Kirtley, 2018).

As if to confirm the observation, Eschbach's latest book, "NSA – Nationales Sicherheits-Amt", published in September 2018, is an alternate-history novel that explores what would have happened if information technology had been developed a little earlier: what could the Nazis have achieved if they had had access to current technologies such as the internet, social media, e-mail, cashless payments and electronic surveillance? The resulting dystopia which Eschbach describes is not that far-fetched, taking into consideration recent developments in China (Mozur, 2018). At the same time, this aspect should not be overemphasised. Harari rightly cautions that much science fiction is also fanciful and implausible, and Tamás writes

that “The trope of the prophet is what often stands behind the possibility of co-opting science fiction into high literature in critical discourse” (Tamás, 2001, p. 433).

1.2. Methodology and structure

At its core, the purpose of research is to extend the boundaries of knowledge (Schanz, 1975, p. 7); it is the “attempt to make the chaotic diversity of our sense-experience correspond to a logically uniform system of thought” (Einstein, 1954, p. 323). In this process of discovering new facts about reality, two criteria are generally checked to establish whether they are true or not: “In general, a scientific assertion must have both logical and empirical support: It must make sense, and it must not contradict actual observation” (Babbie, 2016, p. 4). The logic of an assertion can be tested internally, for coherence and consistency with the rules of logic, as well as externally, for its compatibility with existing theories and concepts related to the assertion. The empirical support for an assertion is sought by observing reality to discover whether it confirms or disproves the assertion.

A distinction can be drawn between empirical and non-empirical research methods. “Those employing empirical methods see systematic collection of material and/or analysis of data as the way to acquire knowledge. Those employing non-empirical methods value alternative ways, such as reflection on past scholarship or on a certain aspect of social life” (Dan, 2018, p. 1). Non-empirical research can take the form of abstract theorising, as in mathematics or cosmology. In contrast, empirical research is guided by observations of observable phenomena in the real world – as is the case with “Das Jesus Video”, the topic of this dissertation. The distinction between empirical and non-empirical methods mirrors that between empiricist and intellectualistic research (Schanz, 1975, p. 40) or empirical and analytical research (Grochla, 1976, p. 634). In empirical research, the focus lies on “observations (in naturalistic or experimental settings) about the world of our experience” (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013, p. 5).

Depending on the main objectives of a research study, its purpose can be described as exploratory, descriptive or explanatory; many studies combine all three elements (Babbie, 2016, p. 19). This dissertation *explores* the topic of German to English translations of genre fiction, using a specific book as an example; it *describes* the process of producing the translation; and it aims to *explain* how a commercially viable translation could be produced and, especially, why this has not been done yet. The study combines idiographic and nomothetic approaches to the research question. The idiographic explanation relates to one

specific book, namely “Das Jesus Video”, while the nomothetic explanation focuses on an entire class of situations, i.e. the translation of German science fiction into English (Babbie, 2016, pp. 21-23).

Research can also be categorised as being quantitative or qualitative. This dissertation takes a qualitative approach. A characteristic of such research is that “the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis” (Merriam & Grenier, 2019, p. 5). A consequence of this feature is that it introduces a degree of subjectivity that is generally less pronounced in qualitative research. The following table identifies some of the main differences between quantitative and qualitative research:

Aspect	**Quantitative**	**Qualitative**
Aim	The aim is to count things in an attempt to explain what is observed	The aim is a complete, detailed description of what is observed
Purpose	Generalisability, prediction, causal explanations	Contextualisation, interpretation, understanding perspectives
Tools	Researcher uses tools, such as surveys, to collect numerical data	Researcher is the data gathering instrument
Data collection	Structured	Unstructured
Output	Data is in the form of numbers and statistics	Data is in the form of words, pictures or objects

Source: Adapted from (MacDonald & Headlam, 2008, p. 9)

Research approaches can also be identified as being inductive vs. deductive (Asimov, 1987, p. 9). The difference between the two strategies hinges on the starting point: inductive approaches “start with observations and derive generalizations (axioms, if you will) from them”, while deductive or analytical approaches involve “working out a body of knowledge as the inevitable consequence of a set of axioms” (Asimov, 1987, p. 12). Qualitative research tends in the main to be inductive (Merriam & Grenier, 2019, p. 6), although in reality deductive steps are often also employed: “In reality, most researchers maintain a dialectical position between induction and deduction, drawing on each as needed. The researcher is a human being, not a machine, involved in the theory development process and does not shy away from making cautious ‘creative leaps’” (Stacks & Salwen, 2019, p. 6), leading to “eclectic” approaches as described by (Crisafulli, 2014).

As the book is quite long, at 651 pages, translating it in its entirety would have been prohibitive. A single, contiguous section was therefore translated, consisting of chapters 1 to

16, that is the first 213 pages of the book, about 60,000 words in the target text. The reason for translating a continuous section rather than selected excerpts is that the translation was intended to illustrate how the source text could be transferred into the target language in a way that maintained the narrative tension and "flow" of the text. Focusing on isolated words or sentences would have defeated this objective.

The translation was written in Microsoft Word, working directly from a physical copy of the book. Although I usually work with Wordfast, a computer-assisted translation tool, doing so would have been of little benefit in this case because I did not have an electronic version of the source text. During the translating process, notes relating to the product and the process itself were kept. They highlight noteworthy aspects of the translating process, such as difficulties encountered and strategies to overcome them, while also addressing relevant features of the source text. Punctual observations on the translation process and product are included as footnotes in Chapter 3 (the translation itself). Together with the summary notes, they are evaluated in the final section, with a number of examples illustrating patterns summarised in table form. The annotations can be considered as individual data points for the analysis. They identify observations from which general conclusions about the translation process were derived.

Expressed in translation studies terms, the skopos of this translation was to produce a target language text with high commercial viability, a purpose likely to align closely with the intentions of a hypothetical commissioner of such work, be it the author or a publishing house.

Translation processes tend to be recursive, in the sense that after an initial output is produced in the target language, it undergoes further processing in the form of editing, corrections and optimisation in relation to the source text and the skopos of the translation. Such recursive activities, although common, are often invisible: when translators submit their work to the party that commissioned it, it is presented in its final form.

> [I]n those interactions where the individual presents a product to others, he will tend to show them only the end-product, and they will be led into judging him on the basis of something that has been finished, polished and packaged. In some cases, if very little effort was actually required to complete the object, this fact will be concealed. In other cases, it will be the long, tedious hours of lonely labour that will be hidden. (Goffmann, 1956, p. 28)[5]

[5] "In the middle of delivering a lecture, [English mathematician] Hardy arrived at a point in his argument where he said, 'It is now obvious that…' Here he stopped, fell silent, and stood motionless with a furrowed brow for a few seconds. Then he walked out of the lecture hall. Twenty minutes later he returned, smiling, and began, 'Yes, it *is* obvious that…'" (Derbyshire, 2003, p. 55).

For the practical section of this dissertation, I therefore made the recursive process visible in a section of the text by tracking my later edits of the initial translation and commenting on the reasons for the changes. This aspect of the work is reflexive and is intended to cast a spotlight on the process of refinement in translation rather than the output. A complete edit history of the entire translation would have made it prohibitively long. Therefore, the process of highlighting and commenting on changes made after the initial translation was completed is limited to the first section.

One of the main challenges of the translation process was the question of how to deal with the impact of social and behavioural changes since the book's date of publication in 1998. These relate particularly to technology, which from today's perspective seems dated. For example, most of the characters in the book do not own mobile phones, and the author has to spend almost an entire page explaining what e-mail addresses and the internet are (Eschbach, 2001, pp. 45-46). In addition to technology which already existed in 1998 and which has evolved since then, the translator also has to consider inventions that did not exist at the time. An obvious case can be made for social media: in today's world, all of the young people assisting at the archaeological dig would not only have mobile phones, they would also be in constant communication with their friends via Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and other platforms. Under these conditions, it would be much more difficult to keep details of surprising discoveries secret than it would have been a mere 20 years ago.

In addressing this question, the approach chosen is to produce the translation without making any changes to accommodate anachronistic aspects. However, selected anachronisms – as well as potential ways of addressing them – are listed and discussed in the fourth chapter.

The dissertation is structured as follows. The introduction sets out the motivation and objective of the research project, as well as describing the methodology and structure of the document. The second chapter sets out the theoretical framework and provides a literature review, focussing specifically on popular fiction and science fiction as types of written products. The third chapter consists of a translation of the first third of "Das Jesus Video". The fourth chapter evaluates the translation and summarises the findings, with a particular focus on the question of anachronisms and language style. The dissertation closes with the conclusion in the fifth chapter, which provides an overarching summary and assessment of the project.

Chapter 2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1. "Popular" literature vs "serious" literature

When deciding which approach to take when translating a text, several considerations come into play. One of them is the position the text occupies in the literary polysystem of both the source and the target language. According to Itamar Even-Zohar, the originator of polysystem theory, the literary system can be defined as "the network of relations that is hypothesized [sic] to obtain between a number of activities called 'literary,' and consequently these activities themselves observed via that network." (Even-Zohar, 1990, p. 28). Building on this, a "polysystem" is a system made up of interacting, heterogeneous sub-systems:

> A semiotic system is necessarily a heterogeneous, open structure. It is, therefore, very rarely a uni-system but is, necessarily, a polysystem – a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent. (Even-Zohar, 1979, p. 290)

Within the literary system, "producers" (writers) produce a "product" (message) for "consumers" (readers). The product is made available to consumers through a "market" (channel) and is created based on a certain "repertoire" (code), mediated through "institutions" that provide context (Even-Zohar, 1990, p. 31). Within such a literary system, any given product can be central – when it becomes part of that literature's canon – or peripheral. It can also be associated with innovation (primary position) or conservation (secondary position) of repertoires. Its position and role are specific to the polysystem under study (Even-Zohar, 1990, p. 46).

Polysystem theory shows some interesting parallels to Bourdieu's theory of cultural production, which can be summarised as follows. Cultural production – which includes the production of literature, music, sculpture, film, television etc. – can be sub-divided into two types, "restricted production" (autonomous, no audience, no economic profit) and "large-scale production" (heteronomous, interacting with the market). Restricted production deals with what is commonly referred to as "high" art, for instance classical music, opera, "serious" literature. Participants in this field compete for prestige, celebrity and peer recognition, are often averse to commercialism, and pursue innovation and disruption to establish their avant-garde reputation. In contrast, large-scale production involves what is often referred to as "mass" or "popular" culture: mainstream movies, TV series and Mills & Boon romances are

typical examples. It is designed to appeal to broad audiences and measures its success according to commercial criteria, e.g. market share or profit (Johnson, 1993, pp. 15-16; Bourdieu, 1993). With respect to literature, Gelder introduces his book on popular fiction, which references Bourdieu heavily, with the aphoristic statement "popular fiction is best conceived as the opposite of Literature (sic)" (Gelder, 2004, p. 11). Most science fiction can be identified as popular fiction – the reader's attention is meant to be focussed on the content rather than the style. *"In aller Regel mutet die Science Fiction [...] ihren Lesern erzähltechnisch und sprachlich nichts Ungewohntes zu. Es darf keine Aufmerksamkeit vom Vermittelten abgezogen und auf den Vermittlungsvorgang gelenkt werden, weil dies der Plausibilität der imaginierten, empirisch beispiellosen Wirklichkeit Abbruch tun könnte"* (Hienger, 1989, p. 195).[6]

According to these frames of reference, "Das Jesus Video" can be identified as being peripheral in the German literary polysystem because it is certainly not canonical in aspiration or in fact, but possibly in a primary position because its style is (slightly) innovative in the German context. Despite being peripheral,

> the sf [sic] field is not located in some different space from the globalized general literary field – or what Casanova calls the 'world literary space' – but is rather fully within the latter. So the sf field can be visualized as a particular two-dimensional slice of the world literary field conceived as a three-dimensional space. (Milner, 2011, p. 395)

In Bourdieu's terms, "Das Jesus Video" is positioned in the field of large-scale production and mass culture, meaning that its aspiration is to be commercially successful, which precludes radical experimentation. It is clearly a work of popular fiction and not Literature (with a capital L), according to Gelder's aphorism. Still, at this instant it is worth recalling Even-Zohar's exhortation, made in the context of his assertion that polysystem theory makes the integration of objects previously unnoticed "a precondition for an adequate understanding of any semiotic field": "mass literary production (thrillers, sentimental novels, etc.) is not simply [to be] dismissed as 'non-literature' in order to evade discovering its mutual dependence with 'individual' literature" (Even-Zohar, 1979, p. 292). The point is repeated by Venuti: "translations that reward investment, especially those that become bestsellers, risk the stigma of scholars and critics who possess the cultural authority to shape taste and affect long-term

[6] "As a rule, the language and narrative techniques used in science fiction do not unduly trouble the reader with the unfamiliar. The reader's attention must be kept focussed on the content and must not be diverted to the process by which the content is communicated, as this would risk making the imagined reality, for which there is no example in the real world, less believable." (my translation)

sales" (Venuti, 1998, p. 124) – but this should not preclude academic study of such translations. Not being considered a part of "serious" studies can inspire a sense of defensiveness, as illustrated by the following quote, which points to the leading academic science fiction journal, *Science Fiction Studies* (SFS), as justification why the genre should be taken seriously:

> SFS thus shows, not only by its mere existence as an academic periodical but also by its concrete contributions, that the opening up of SF to literary criticism and scholarship has advanced far and that the study of SF potentially operates at the same level as the search for knowledge in other literary fields. (Borgmeier, 1990, p. 390)

In respect of the translation strategy, the aim is to create a translation that could be commercially successful in the literary system of the target language, which again precludes radical experimentation and suggests that the translation should be highly domesticated. In Venuti's terms, writing about bestsellers, "the translation will put to work discursive strategies that facilitate its appeal to a mass readership" (Venuti, 1998, p. 125). The success of the translated work depends on accurately transferring the "page-turner" character of the book into English. Maintaining narrative flow and tension would be undermined by introducing foreignising aspects, which should therefore be avoided. "[Publishers] insist on fluent translations that produce the illusory effect of transparency, of seeming untranslated" (Venuti, 1998, pp. 126-127).

An aspect that should also be taken into consideration is the role played by the various participants in the translation process. The involvement of the author, for example, can range from absolutely no involvement at the one extreme – sometimes perforce, such as when the author's work is translated into a language with which he or she is unfamiliar – to self-translation at the other extreme, where the author and the translator are identical and his or her involvement is total. In Eschbach's case, he had very little contact with the German-to-English translators of his books – none at all in the case of Samuel Willcocks, the translator of "Lord of All Things", and only limited contact in the case of Doryl G. Jensen, the translator of "The Carpetmakers" (Eschbach, 2019).[7]

As an aside, an anecdote about the Polish science fiction author, Stanisław Lem, illustrates the potential risks of the author's involvement in the production of translations:

> [Lem] believes something is lost in translation, but it should be said that, in Germany, Lem has 'authorized' the poorest available translations, and

[7] Eschbach no longer had current contact details of the translators. My own attempts to find them were unfortunately not successful.

> whenever he had a hand in choosing translators it had a detrimental effect. One translator refused to have her translation authorized, feeling this to be a dubious honor, precisely for that reason. (Rottensteiner, 2001, p. 290)

In addition to the author, the publishing house plays an important role as well, as it has greater insight into the marketability of publications and will want to ensure that the translation's prospects of commercial success are maximised. In toto, the interaction between these three parties can exercise a considerable influence on the success of a translation project.

2.2. The science fiction genre

There is disagreement both about what constitutes a genre, and what the characteristic features of the genre of science fiction are (Wilson & Cenk Gökçe, 2018). "There are no undisputed 'maps' of the system of genres within any medium (though literature may perhaps lay some claim to a loose consensus). Furthermore, there is often considerable theoretical disagreement about the definition of specific genres" (Chandler, 1997, p. 1). Possibly the most helpful approach to identifying genres is by means of "family resemblances" rather than through definitions (Swales, 1990, p. 49), accepting that "both their forms and functions are dynamic" (Chandler, 1997, p. 3). Based on family resemblances, the following can be used as a working definition of this genre:

> Science Fiction is the branch of literature that deals with the effects of change on people in the real world as it can be projected into the past, the future, or to distant places. It often concerns itself with scientific or technological change, and it usually involves matters whose importance is greater than the individual or the community; often civilization or the race itself is in danger. (Gunn, 1977)

By some accounts, the science fiction genre is less than a hundred years old: it only became recognisable as a separate category in 1926, when Luxembourg expatriate Hugo Gernsback started the first science fiction magazine, *Amazing Stories*, in New York City (Gunn, 2010, p. 27; Stableford, 1996). Before then, there had already been books and stories of a kind that would be retrospectively identified as science fiction, but it was not a literature apart: "Before 1926, such works were considered literary adventures, interesting uses of non-realistic materials" (p. 27). Gernsback initially referred to this story type as *scientification* (1926), but by 1929 had changed the name to the more familiar term "science fiction" (Friedrich, 1995, p. 3).

According to Milner, science fiction had its roots not just in written literature, but also in the theatre: Jules Verne struggled to make a living until the success of "Le Tour du monde en 80 jours" made him a wealthy playwright almost overnight from 1874 (Margot, 2005). "This, then, was sf's [sic] original location within the field of cultural production: in the overlap between the bourgeois novel and the bourgeois theatre" (Milner, 2011, p. 395). The current popularity of science fiction in other formats such as cinema, television and computer games can be seen as an extension of the genre's origins in theatre; indeed, according to Hintermeier, Eschbach long dreamt of seeing a movie version of his novels, directed by Steven Spielberg, on the big screen (Hintermeier, 2002).

As Borges put it, writing about authors: *"El hecho es que cada escritor crea sus precursores. Su labor modifica nuestra concepción del pasado, como ha de modificar el futuro"*[8] (Borges, 1952, p. 109); the same is true of genres. "Historians can look back and identify science-fiction stories, but only after the genre has been created" (Gunn, 2010, p. 27).

Prominent examples of early literary adventures which would later come to be viewed as science fiction include Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus", about a young scientist who creates a sapient being in an unorthodox scientific experiment (Shelley, 1818); Jules Verne's *voyages extraordinaires* (54 novels published between 1863 and 1905, including voyages to the centre of the Earth, to the moon and to the bottom of the sea); several of H.G. Wells' novels, such as "The Time Machine" (time travel, 1895), "The Island of Doctor Moreau" (creation of human-like beings from animals, 1896) and "The War of the Worlds" (Martian invasion of Earth, 1898). As these examples show, many of the tropes of the science fiction genre were in circulation well before the genre itself became established: for example, time travel, space travel, extra-terrestrials, bio-engineering and advanced technology.

Similar precursors of what is today considered science fiction can be found in the German literature. The online "Encyclopedia of Science Fiction" identifies the earliest origins of German science fiction as lying as far back as the 17th century, mentioning Johannes Kepler's "Somnium" (1634, in Latin) for its reflections on life on the moon and Johann Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen's "Der abenteuerliche Simplizissimus" (1669, in German), which includes a description of "a journey into a utopia located in the centre of the hollow earth". Books published in German in the 18th and early 19th century included robinsonades ("Wunderliche Fata einiger Seefahrer" by Johann Gottfried Schnabel (4 parts, 1731-1743)) and

[8] "In fact, every writer creates his own predecessors. His work changes the way we view the past, just as it has to change the future." (my translation)

also covered topics such as aliens (the third novel of the trilogy "Die schwarzen Brüder" (1791-1795) by Heinrich Zschokke is set in the 24th century, when "humanity is used as a kind of livestock for aliens") and robots (E.T.A. Hoffmann's story "Der Sandmann" (1816), in which the protagonist builds an automaton in the shape of a human being) (Clute, et al., 2018).

In the early 20th century, German writers such as Robert Kraft and F. W. Mader, seemingly inspired by the success of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, wrote a large number of books describing adventures and fantastic voyages. Kraft's works included "Im Panzermobil um die Erde" (1906), "Im Aeroplan um die Erde" (1908), "Der Herr der Lüfte" (1909) and "Die neue Erde" (1910), a post-Holocaust novel. F. W. Mader wrote juvenile adventure novels that often included utopian and fantastic elements, as in "Die Messingstadt" (1924), or space travel, as in "Wunderwelten" (1911). Other writers capitalised on growing public interest arising from astronomical discoveries, such as Carl Grunert's collection "Der Marsspion und andere Novellen" (1908), Albert Daiber's "Vom Mars zur Erde" (1910) and Oskar Hoffmann's dime-novel series "MacMilfords Reisen im Universum" (1902-1903) (Clute, et al., 2018).

The most prominent science-fiction novel of the time was "Auf zwei Planeten" (1897) by Kurd Laßwitz, after whom one of the main German science-fiction awards is named. Published in the same year as H.G. Wells's "The War of the Worlds", it also deals with a Martian invasion of Earth. While Wells's Martians are driven to conquest by dwindling resources on their own planet (perhaps presaging the Nazi idea of conquering *Lebensraum*) as well as by the desire to harvest humans for their blood, Laßwitz's Martians desire to bring humanity peace and freedom. In both books, Martian science and technology is far superior to that of Earth. Wells's Martians are serendipitously stopped by being infected with earthly pathogens, to which their immune systems can offer no resistance. Laßwitz's aliens are infected by the human thirst for power and passion for conflict, but in the end, humanity manages to defend its independence and sovereignty, while learning valuable lessons from the higher civilisation of the neighbouring planet (Hienger, 1989, p. 195). Laßwitz's aliens are unusually altruistic; Hienger describes them as *"Kantisch gesonnen wie ihr Autor"* ("Kantian in outlook, like their author") (Hienger, 1989, p. 195).

Between the world wars, a particular flavour of German science fiction emerged. This was the *Zukunftsroman*, a technical-scientific type of novel. The most popular author by far of this genre was Hans Dominik, whose 16 books sold several million copies combined. As the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction puts it: "Dominik's books are clumsy and badly written, but they survive on the frisson given by their technically oriented adventure, and were probably

also successful because their distinctly nationalistic overtones." The novels typically described competitions between representatives of the major powers, often involving miracle weapons and scientific discoveries, from which the German engineer eventually emerged victorious. Nationalistic overtones were not the exclusive preserve of German science fiction; the same could be observed in Anglophone writing of the period (Krome, 2012, p. 106). Claims like the following, that during this period, "German SF in general anticipated the ideology of National-Socialism so extensively and so exactly that one is tempted to suppose that the later Nazi politicians took their plans and actions from this literature" (Nagl, 1981, pp. 30-31) can be dismissed as hyperbolic. Nevertheless, in Germany, science fiction of this kind greatly influenced the first post-war German science-fiction authors (Clute, et al., 2018).

In addition to science fiction aimed at the mass market, some books with higher literary ambitions were also published during this interwar period. For example, "Utopolis" (1930) by Werner Illing describes a socialist utopia in which workers defeat rebellious capitalists. "Tuzub 37" (1935) by Paul Gurk is set in a "green" dystopia in which nature rises up against humanity after having been ravaged by it. Alfred Döblin, a famous German author, wrote "Berge Meere und Giganten" (1924), which tracks the evolution of human society into the 27th century, deals with genetic engineering as a means of creating a future race of better humans, and culminates "in the catastrophic harvesting of Iceland's volcanic energy in order to melt Greenland's ice cap" (Clute, et al., 2018).

After the horrors of World War Two, including the devastation wrought by the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, several German writers wrote post-holocaust novels. Among the more famous are "Wir fanden Menschen" (1948) by Hans Wörner, "Blumen wachsen im Himmel" (1948) by Hellmuth Lange, "Helium" (1949) by Ernst von Khuon and "Die Kinder des Saturn" (1959) by Jens Rehn (Clute, et al., 2018). The war had a similar effect on Anglophone science fiction, where:

> "The [post-apocalyptic fiction] genre blossomed – if that's the right word and it probably isn't – after World War II. The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki showed humanity had the tools for global self-destruction. The 1950s was a decade where the end of world could be found on the end of our bookshelves." (Davies, 2012)

The division of Germany into an eastern part, occupied by the Soviet Union, and a western part, occupied by the Western allies, influenced the development of science fiction in the two parts of the country. While literature in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), including science fiction, had to serve socialism (discussed below), West German science fiction initially

oriented itself on its pre-war origins (the *Zukunftsroman*) and then, increasingly, on western, especially Anglophone science fiction. US science fiction started being published in Germany in 1951 and included translations of works by Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, John W. Campbell Jr., Jack Williamson and Isaac Asimov – prominent representatives of the first Golden Age of science fiction (Clute, et al., 2018).

Over time, West Germany's exposure to Anglophone science fiction increased, thanks to the efforts of publishers such as Pabel, Lehning and Moewig, who between them published hundreds, if not thousands of science fiction novels, including many translated from English (Clute, et al., 2018). A peculiarly West German feature of science fiction in this time were pulp adventure science-fiction series such as "Mark Powers", "Ad Astra", "Ren Dhark", "Rex Corda", "Raumschiff Promet", "Die Terranauten", "Zeitkugel", and, most famous among them, "Raumschiff Orion" and the "Perry Rhodan" series. Perry Rhodan is the most popular pulp science fiction series of all time and in any language (Clute, et al., 2018). Having started in 1961, over 2,900 short novels had been published by 2017 in the main series, in addition to over 1,000 magazines and books in the "Atlan" spinoff series (Perrypedia, 2018). In this, it mirrors the success of Anglophone series like "Battlestar Galactica" and "Star Trek", which launched large and faithful fan bases in the Anglophone world.

Contrasting "Star Trek" with "Raumschiff Orion" provides some useful insights into the differences and similarities between Anglophone and West German science fiction of the post-war era. The first episode of "Raumpatrouille", the television series from which the "Raumschiff Orion" series of over 140 novels emerged, aired just nine days after "Star Trek" premiered on US television in 1966. Both series follow the adventures of a spaceship crewed by men and women from different nationalities, representing a unified humanity. But where the mission of the Star Trek crew is open-ended exploration – as expressed by the word "trek" – the task of the Raumpatrouille ("space patrol") crew is to patrol the borders and keep humanity safe. This has been interpreted as reflecting the contrasting history and worldview of the US and (West) Germany: "Whereas the drive to the unknown regions of the West had ultimately established the United States of America in the nineteenth century, the feeling of being surrounded by powerful competitors had driven German politics for hundreds of years" (Kniesche, 2007, p. 162).

Other themes commonly found in West German post-war science fiction were time travel, alternate and parallel worlds, and post-apocalyptic societies (Gottwald, 1990) – topics also

common in Anglophone science fiction – in addition to ecological topics, which were less common in Anglophone science fiction (Stapleton, 1993).

In East Germany, science fiction became generally referred to as *Wissenschaftliche Phantastik* (science fantasy), a translation of the Russian term first used during the 1920s. Its mission was "to educate the youth for a socialist society based on state-induced and state-planned technological progress" (Kiausch, 2000, p. 80). During the forty years that the German Democratic Republic lasted, only about 150 science fiction novels were written and published. Probable reasons for the low output included the suspicion with which science fiction was regarded (in 1973, the Stanisław Lem Club in Dresden, a science-fiction fan club, was dissolved and declared illegal), economic factors, and the restrictions imposed by the state:

> The state official doctrine insisted on the predictability of future social developments in accordance with the laws of historic and dialectic materialism. Novels dealing with the future, therefore, were supposed to anticipate real developments and to paint bright and realistic pictures of a technologically advanced, wealthy and peaceful socialist society or world. (Kiausch, 2000, p. 80)

The poverty of East German output, especially during the first decades after the war, is well described in the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction:

> The first East German sf novel was "Die goldene Kugel" (1949) by Ludwig Turek (1898-1975). During the whole of the 1950s in the GDR only 11 sf books, plus 50 or so short stories scattered here and there, were published. In the 1950s and 1960s authors […] wrote an upright, arid, often didactic sf that was miles away, thematically and in literary quality, from all international standards. (Clute, et al., 2018)

The plot of "Die goldene Kugel" serves as a typical example of early East German science fiction. Technologically advanced aliens land on Earth. Thanks to their telepathic powers, they discover that the U.S. military is preparing to conquer the world. The aliens destroy the U.S. energy systems and win over enlightened Americans as allies, allowing them to peacefully abolish the capitalist system before departing for home, leaving behind a "peaceful world with established socialist systems" (Kiausch, 2000, p. 81).

The quality of East German science fiction improved from the 1970s, with the publication of books such as "Die Ohnmacht der Allmächtigen" (1973) by Heiner Rank, "Der Irrtum des Großen Zauberers" (1972) and "Unheimliche Erscheinungsformen auf Omega XI" (1974), both by Johanna and Günter Braun, as well as "Andymon" (1982) and "Pulaster" (1986), both by Karlheinz and Angela Steinmüller. The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction describes these as

"examples of sf books that are full of ideas and well written, and need not fear international comparison" (Clute, et al., 2018). The improvement was probably linked to a relaxation of the state's restrictions on permissible subject matter: in June 1971, Erich Honecker succeeded Walter Ulbricht as party chairman. In a speech in December 1971, he declared: "There can, in my opinion, be no taboos in the fields of art and literature. This concerns questions of textual contents as well as of style" (Kiausch, 2000, p. 86). This clearly encouraged science-fiction writers to be more daring and experimental in their writing.

For example, "Der Irrtum des Großen Zauberers" employs elements of satire and the grotesque in describing a story of individual resistance against a dictatorship. In the book, the great magician is a well-intentioned but manipulative totalitarian ruler. His attempts to find a suitable successor fail because he has trained people not to think for themselves – instead, they have become accustomed to the dictator's benevolence and machines (Kiausch, 2000). This was a highly subversive story, considering that it was published in a state with a planned economy, where the government decided which careers people could pursue, which news they could consume and with whom they could associate, and where the state provided comprehensive social welfare and security, from the cradle to the grave.

With the collapse of communism and German reunification in 1990, the contextual factors that had led to the emergence of East German science fiction as such a distinctive sub-genre disappeared, although their effects lingered. For instance, fundamental questions explored in East German science fiction, such as the role of the individual vis-à-vis the community, the "truth" or reality of a given statement or situation, and environmental concerns, continue to be relevant today. But the transition towards a unified German state under a different political and economic system ultimately spelled the end of East German science fiction as a distinct category.

> Since 1990, publication has been sporadic at best. East German writers had occupied a protected island that allowed them, albeit with many restrictions, to develop in a direction primarily free of market forces. They are now experiencing the realities of the German science fiction market, which is dominated by Anglo-American translations. (Fritzsche, 2006, p. 278)

To summarise, science fiction, despite its usual focus on futuristic themes and far-away worlds, is very much rooted in the present and the author's geographical location. The social, technological and economic environment of writers influences their choice of topic and setting. The greater integration of West Germany with the western world during the Cold War was reflected in its science fiction, and the same applied to East German science fiction. The

development of the genre in Germany over time reflected scientific, political and economic developments at home and abroad. Where strong cultural links with the Anglophone world existed, these were reflected both in the choice of topics and the wide availability of translated English science fiction literature in Germany.

Even though the roots of science fiction can arguably be found in Europe, it was in the United States that the genre became most firmly established. Today, the dominance of science fiction written in English is so complete that most English-speaking readers would be hard-pressed to name more than a couple of non-English authors – most likely Jules Verne and the Polish writer Stanisław Lem (Liro, 1992). The most prominent German science fiction authors in recent decades are arguably Andreas Eschbach, Wolfgang Jeschke and Frank Schätzing, but their impact outside of Germany has been limited.

> US sf [sic] in particular, through the sheer scale of its production over a dozen decades and the volume of compelling models that could not help but emerge in such a mass of works, more or less determined the shape of the genre. The US models can be contested and resisted, but they cannot be ignored. (Csicsery-Rona Jr., 2012, p. 483)

It is in the face of such dominance that authors like Andreas Eschbach have experimented with adapting the winning formula of Anglophone science fiction to the German market, with considerable success domestically, but limited success internationally. For translators of foreign-language science fiction, this development means that some of their work has already been done for them.

2.3. Author background – Andreas Eschbach

To understand the position Andreas Eschbach occupies in the science fiction field, particularly in Germany, it is helpful to be familiar with his background. Andreas Eschbach was born in Ulm, Baden-Württemberg, in 1959. He initially studied aerospace engineering at the University of Stuttgart, but dropped out to pursue a career as a software developer and IT consultant instead. He started writing when he was 12, received a writing scholarship at the age of 35 and wrote his first books on self-developed word processing software (Perry-Rhodan.net, 2009).

His first novel, “Die Haarteppichknüpfer”, was published in 1995 and won the *Deutscher Science Fiction Preis* in 1996. His second novel, “Solarstation”, was published in 1996 and won the other major German award for science fiction writing, the *Kurd Laßwitz Preis,* in 1997.

The subject of this dissertation, “Das Jesus Video”, published in 1998, was Eschbach’s third novel and won the *Kurd Laßwitz Preis,* the *Deutscher Science Fiction Preis* and the *award@phantastik.de* audience award, bestowed by the online magazine www.phantastik.de, for best German novel (Eschbach, 2018).

Eschbach has won the most important German science fiction awards multiple times: the *Kurd Laßwitz Preis* for Best Novel eight times (Trustee of the Kurd Laßwitz Preis, 2018), and the *Deutscher Science Fiction Preis* four times (Science Fiction Club Deutschland e.V., 2018). He has also won the Belgian *Prix Bob Morane* twice, and the French *Grand Prix de l'Imaginaire* once.

As of 2019, he has published 16 novels, 13 young adult novels, a series of short stories, as well as authoring several episodes of the long-standing Perry Rhodan science fiction series. His works have been translated into multiple languages, including Czech, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Latvian, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Turkish. He describes being translated into English as a “rare honour for non-English authors” and has been thus honoured thrice: for “The Carpetmakers” (2005), “One Trillion Dollars” (2014) and “Lord of all Things” (2014) (Eschbach, 2018).

A leading German daily, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, described Eschbach as “the German Michael Crichton”, a writer of popular fiction who “unashamedly orients himself on American patterns of narration and their middle-of-the-road stylistic approach” (Hintermeier, 2002). This is noticeable throughout “Das Jesus Video”, which in parts reads like a German translation of an English source text. Eschbach successfully applies an “international style”, in Csicsery-Rona Jr.’s terms, to his writing. “Like the English language, Anglo sf [sic] is the unmarked term. Because they are frequently seen and so easily recognized, elements of the American style need only to be simplified and abstracted to become an ‘international’ style” (Csicsery-Rona Jr., 2012, p. 483).

I asked Eschbach via e-mail whether the writing style displayed in “Das Jesus Video” had been as a result of a conscious decision, and whether he had read widely in English to refine his style. He responded (translation mine):

> I don’t think that I was capable at that time of choosing an approach ‘intentionally’; I’m not even sure I’d be able to do it today. The fact that I wrote ‘Das Jesus Video’ the way I did was that I’ve always preferred reading US or English authors (in German translation, though), writers like Michael Crichton, John Grisham, Alistair MacLean, Stephen King etc. and that I loved thrillers of this nature. In other words, I wrote the story the way I thought such

> stories had to be written. If I'm not mistaken, I'd just read – no, devoured – 'Jurassic Park' by Michael Crichton and simply wanted my novel to be as spellbinding.[9]

In other words, Eschbach's writing style was not adopted directly from Anglophone literature, but rather via a mediated transfer, by his reading of translations of bestselling English-language science fiction and thrillers into German.

Eschbach's success as a writer has permitted him to concentrate exclusively on his writing career since 1996. He is a member of PEN International, a worldwide association of writers, and has lived in Brittany, France, since 2003 (Eschbach, 2018).

[9] *"Ich glaube nicht, dass ich damals schon imstande war, irgendeinen Ansatz »bewusst« zu wählen; ich bin mir nicht mal sicher, ob ich das heute hinkriegen würde. Dass ich das »Jesus Video« so geschrieben habe, wie ich es geschrieben habe, liegt eher daran, dass ich tatsächlich schon immer mit Vorliebe amerikanische bzw. englische Autoren lese (in deutscher Übersetzung freilich), Leute wie Michael Crichton, John Grisham, Alistair MacLean, Stephen King usw. und mit Vorliebe Thriller dieser Art. Sprich, ich habe die Geschichte so geschrieben, wie ich das Gefühl hatte, dass solche Geschichten geschrieben sein müssen. Wenn ich mich recht entsinne, hatte ich kurz zuvor »Jurassic Park« von Crichton gelesen, nein, verschlungen und wollte einfach, dass mein Roman genauso spannend wird."* (Eschbach, 2020)

Chapter 3. English translation of "Das Jesus Video"

3.1. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 1

Ever since he knew that he was going to be famous,[1] he'd been waiting for them. He was amazed that they arrived so quickly, but it didn't surprise him.[2]

At first, there was nothing but a far-away trail of dust which he picked up out of the corner of his eye. When he looked up, he wondered if it was just his nerves playing tricks on him. Probably. Vehicles were forever[3] whirling up dust when they drove over the rocky dirt road which passed about a mile to the south-west of the camp. He was sure that it was just a truck on its way to the nearby village. It probably didn't mean anything. It wasn't what he was waiting for.

He turned his attention back to the minute patch of ground he'd been working on for over an hour with a bristle brush. It was hot. June: the temperature soared to twenty-eight degrees centigrade in the morning and then kept rising. Afterwards, everybody avoided looking at the thermometer. It had been weeks since it last rained, which was good for the work, of course. But it meant that the top layer of soil turned into fine, loathsome dust, lifted on the slightest breeze, dust which they inhaled, ate, took with them into their tents and camp beds and which would stay with them until the dig ended. Mixed with sweat, the dust formed a thin, greasy layer, impervious to the camp's water-saving drip showers.

He couldn't deny it: he was waiting. Something inside him was quivering[4] with impatience. The work was just a way of distracting himself. The coin he'd found earlier, carefully clearing the soil with his bare hands at a promising spot, was a shekel from the Judean War. A valuable

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[1] The opening sentence is disorienting, even more so in German than in English. The reader is dropped very abruptly into the story and confronted with a series of pronouns, not knowing who these pronouns refer to. In the German, the pronouns are *"er"* (three times) and *"sie"*; at this stage, it is not clear whether *"sie"* refers to a third person feminine singular, e.g. a woman, or a third person plural, i.e. a group of people. The opening sentence in full reads: *"Seit er wusste, daß er berühmt werden würde, wartete er auf sie"* (Eschbach, 2001, p. 5). The technique is repeated in other parts of the novel, e.g. the first sentence of chapter 15 reads: *"Er beobachtete die beiden schon eine ganze Weile"* (He'd been watching the two of them for a while) (p. 168). Again, it isn't clear who "he" is or who "the two of them" are.

[2] Another example of ambiguity: it is unusual to have words with such similar meanings being used in different senses, namely *"erstaunte"* (amazed) and *"überraschte"* (surprised) (p. 5). Because of its ambiguities and missing referents, the opening has a disorienting effect. The reader is dropped straight into the story and expected to find his way.

[3] Edit: replaced "continuously" with "forever" as it is more idiomatic.

[4] Edit: replaced "trembling" with "quivering".

find, a minted silver coin showing three flower calyxes and an inscription in old Hebrew along the edge. With his brush, he'd carefully cleaned the coin enough for it to be photographed and entered in the excavation logbook. Usually, such a find would have left him feeling euphoric. The Jews had minted high-denomination silver coins only during a very short period of the Roman occupation, namely during the time of the Jewish Revolt that began in the year 66 before being crushed by Roman troops in the year 70. This was the time when the temple was destroyed and the expulsion of the Jews had begun. The coin was a further data point that would help them date the graves they were excavating precisely.

But his thoughts were elsewhere:[5] he was thinking of the previous day's find. He hadn't made the discovery himself – it had been one of the field assistants, a young American student – but he was the only one who understood its significance. He shuddered at the thought.[6] The artefact they'd discovered was unprecedented. It could literally shake civilisation to its very foundations.[7]

The dust cloud came closer. It had passed the turn-off and started approaching[8] the camp instead of continuing on towards the village. Charles Wilford-Smith[9] put down the brush on the open excavation logbook, the sand rustling between its pages, and stood up.

The surrounding landscape never failed to irritate him. Dull and desolate, it stretched out in endless undulations in every direction, barren but for scraggy stalks that grew in the shadows of the larger rocks. At least the plants gave the plain a green shimmer before it transitioned into low, grey hills on the horizon, worn down over thousands of years by a wind that still continued to blow. Even so, there was no feeling of spaciousness. It felt oppressive[10], like being under a magnifying glass. The history of at least three major cultures was concentrated in this land. He

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[5] This paragraph illustrates a writing pattern: short, declarative sentences, which make it easy to follow the storyline and contribute to a sense of tension or even breathlessness. In the source text, some sentences are not even sentences, but just fragments without a finite verb, for example: *"Aber er war mit seinen Gedanken woanders. Bei dem Fund vom Vortag."* (p. 6). In the source text, short sentences are mixed with occasional long ones.

[6] Edit: changed "he shuddered when he thought about it" to "he shuddered at the thought". It is more pithy and more colloquial.

[7] This is hyperbolic, and the word *"buchstäblich"* (literally) is misplaced if one wants to be pedantic. It can be debated whether a less hyperbolic, more muted formulation should be chosen for the translation (p. 6). Edit: replaced "shake civilisation to its very core" with "shake civilisation to its very foundations" because it is more idiomatic.

[8] Edit: changed "heading towards" to "approaching". The more neutral word is more appropriate for a dust cloud; "head towards" has a connotation of the dust cloud having a mind of its own.

[9] The names of the characters in the book are clichéd and stereotypical: the Englishman is Charles Wilford-Smith, his Israeli colleague is Shimon Bar-Lev, the American protagonist is Stephen Foxx, cunning and agile, with the doubling of the letter x in the surname hinting at intrigue and international mystery.

[10] Edit: added in the word "oppressive", which is not in the source text, but adds to the mood.

could feel it like a physical burden, weighing on his mind. Every stone, every desiccated and stunted[11] shrub seemed soaked in memories of blood-drenched dramas and pitiless persecutions. It was as if the voices of the biblical prophets echoed from the remote mountains, and the fervour of countless prayers seemed to penetrate his[12] body like radioactive radiation.

He slowly took off[13] the wide-brimmed hat he always wore at work. It had inadvertently become something of[14] a trademark, and the years had left their mark on it. He pulled out a handkerchief that had once been white and used it to wipe his forehead and the top of his head, from where his grey hair had long been in retreat.

"Shimon", he said softly.

The head of a man, around fifty years old, round face with curly dark hair and a bushy beard, emerged from the neighbouring hole. His eyes were distracted, unfocused. A moment ago, he'd[15] been peering[16] two thousand years into the past, and now[17] he was finding it difficult to return to the present. "What's up?"

Wilford-Smith[18] pointed towards the approaching dust cloud. "Visitors." It was becoming possible to make out the vehicle, a dark stretch limo that clearly wasn't built for rough dirt roads. The sun glinted from the chrome trim surrounding the tinted windows as the car hit one of the innumerable potholes, swaying like a small boat in heavy seas.[19]

"Visitors?" Shimon got up stiffly and looked over to the vehicle. "I wonder who it is[20]?"

"High-ranking visitors."

"The government?"

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[11] In the source text: *"Krüppelstrauch"* (cripple bush) (p. 7). To spare the reader's sentiments, the more anodyne "stunted" was used for the translation. It is likely that the expression *Krüppelstrauch* would no longer be used in German, either.

[12] Edit: replaced "seemed to penetrate the body" with "seemed to penetrate his body" to create a greater sense of immediacy and identification with the character.

[13] Edit: changed "removed" to "took off", which seems more colloquial when talking of hats.

[14] Edit: replaced "something like a trademark" with the more idiomatic "something of a trademark".

[15] Edit: replaced "they'd" with "he'd". In the source text, the focus is on the eyes. In the translation, it reads better when the focus is moved to the person.

[16] Edit: replaced "looking" with "peering" because it is more expressive.

[17] Edit: added in the word "now" to create a stronger contrast with "a moment ago".

[18] Edit: replaced "he" with "Wilford-Smith" to reduce ambiguity.

[19] Edit: replaced "like a coastguard boat in heavy seas" with "like a small boat in heavy seas". Mentioning the coastguard is distracting in this context, even though it is present in the source text: *"... schaukelte wie ein Küstenwachboot in schwerem Seegang."* The parallelism of small boat > heavy seas and the juxtaposition of small versus heavy makes the simile easier to absorb (p. 8).

[20] Edit: replaced "who could that be?" with "I wonder who it is?" as it is more idiomatic. The initial translation was coloured by the German: *"Wer kann das sein?"* (p. 8)

“Even higher-ranking, I think.” He put his hat back on and stuffed the handkerchief back in his pocket. “Our funder.”

“Oh!” Shimon Bar-Lev looked at him. They’d been working together for almost 20 years. “Plot 14, right? That’s what he wants to see. And what about us? Are you planning to keep this to yourself forever?[21] Aren’t you ever going to tell me what you and – what was his name again?”

“Foxx,” Wilford-Smith replied patiently. Shimon’s inability to remember the names of living persons was legendary. “Stephen Foxx.”

“Yes, exactly. What you and this Foxx guy found?”

“No, of course not.”

“But the man in the limo is going to find out before me?”

“Yes. Believe me, Shimon, once you know, you’ll understand why I’m handling it this way.”

Shimon growled under his breath. It made him sound like a petulant child.

Wilford-Smith looked around. Satellite images had led him to the remains of this settlement, which had been inhabited around the year 0. Based on the images, he had identified nineteen plots for excavation. Each plot was first subdivided into grids sized five metres by five metres and then excavated. The gridlines marked at the surface remained in place and formed a cutting profile one metre wide between the excavated quadrants, allowing every find to be located in a fixed frame of reference. This was the traditional method, tried and tested and used worldwide.[22] The grids or “catwalks” gave easy access to all of the excavation sites, like a system of narrow bridges[23] spanning chasms.

Out of the nineteen plots, only the five most promising were being worked on. Actually, six since yesterday. He’d stopped work at plot 14 and had redeployed the excavation helpers to start removing the top layers of plot 3. A large, white tent had been erected over the hole. At night, it was guarded by two grim-faced young men with loaded machine pistols. The men

[21] Edit: changed “do you want to keep this secret” to “are you planning to keep this to yourself” as it is clearer.
[22] Edit: reformulated the sentence from “which had been proved to work throughout the world” to “tried and tested and used worldwide”.
[23] Edit: deleted the word “sometimes” from “sometimes like a system of narrow bridges spanning chasms” as it is not required.

worked for a security company[24] based in Tel Aviv and had appeared a mere one-and-a-half hours after his telephone conversation with the man who was probably sitting in the black limousine.

Of course there were rumours. He could feel their[25] rumblings whenever he walked past the excavation helpers. Most of them were volunteers, young people from all over the world, sent by the Israel Antiquities Authority in Jerusalem. In exchange for a ridiculously small stipend[26] and a sense of adventure, they were willing to get up early every morning and carry buckets filled with soil and stones all day long.[27] Now they were watching him unobtrusively, asking themselves what was going on.

"Maybe it would be best if we stopped work for the day," he muttered.[28] "The volunteers need a rest."[29]

Shimon stared[30] at him, dumbfounded. "Stop? But it's not even three o'clock!"

"I know."

"What on earth got into you?[31] There's so much still left to do. They've only just started on the new plot and…"

Wilford-Smith[32] detected a note of impatience in his own voice.[33] "Shimon – they're all young people, intelligent, brimming with[34] energy and bursting with curiosity. I don't care how you do it, but none of them is to come anywhere near plot 14 this evening, understood?"

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[24] Edit: replaced "security service provider" with "security company", thereby replacing corporate-speak with plain English.
[25] Edit: changed "the" to "their" to make it clear that the reference is to the rumours.
[26] Edit: replaced "a small amount of money" with "a small stipend" because it reads better.
[27] Edit: replaced "the whole day long" with "all day long" as it is more idiomatic.
[28] Edit: replaced "he said to himself" with "he muttered".
[29] Edit: replaced "the people need to rest" with "the volunteers need a rest", which is less obtrusive.
[30] Edit: replaced "looked" with "stared", as it is more expressive.
[31] Edit: replaced "What are you thinking?" with "What on earth got into you?", which captures the sense of exasperation implied in the German *"Was soll das?"* much better (p. 9).
[32] Edit: replaced "he" with "Wilford-Smith" to make the reference unambiguous.
[33] Edit: replaced "He could feel his tone become impatient" with the more idiomatic "He could hear a note of impatience entering his voice."
[34] Edit: replaced "full of" with "brimming with", which is more expressive and leads up nicely to "bursting".

His counterpart looked at him for a long time. Eventually, the mutual, almost magical understanding they'd shared for as long as he could remember dawned, as it always did.[35] "Alright[36]," Shimon said finally. It sounded like a promise. It *was* a promise.

Shimon sighed and climbed laboriously out of the hole and onto the narrow walkway of unexcavated soil. The helpers were already waiting over at plot 3. Most of them were young men, with just a few women among them for whose attention the men competed.[37] They watched as the black car slowly, almost indecisively, crawled across the parking area[38], then looked back at him. He sensed their gaze on his skin as he walked[39], relaxed, towards the roughly demarcated square where vehicles were parked. At least, he hoped he was looking relaxed and not just shaky. Since turning 70 himself, he kept thinking of his father's frequent complaints about ageing. His old man had reached the age of 87 and had never left his family in any doubt about the *progressive decay* of his body, as he put it.[40]

The black car had stopped. It had a yellow licence plate, so it was an Israeli vehicle. Where on earth did you get a car like that in Israel? He never ceased to be amazed at what money could buy, if you had enough of it.[41]

Clearly the visitors[42] were waiting inside the car, which was presumably pleasantly air-conditioned. As he approached the vehicle[43], the driver emerged, a giant of a man with broad shoulders, a regulation crew cut, wearing a uniform that looked almost military, with a revolver

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[35] Edit: replaced "His counterpart looked at him for a long time, and like always, the mutual, almost magical comprehension they'd always felt dawned" with "His counterpart looked at him for a long time. Eventually, the mutual, almost magical understanding they'd shared for as long as he could remember dawned, as it always did." to make it easier to read and more idiomatic.

[36] The word "alright" is in English in the source text, a reflection of the foreignisation of the source text.

[37] Source text: *"Junge Männer hauptsächlich, nur einige wenige, heftig umworbene Frauen dazwischen"* (p. 10). Original translation: "Mostly young men, with just a few heavily courted women interspersed." Reworded to: "Most of them were young men, with just a few women among them for whose attention the men competed."

[38] Edit: replaced "They watched the black car which was now slowly, almost indecisively, rolling across the parking area rolling over the parking area" with the more idiomatic "They watched as the black car slowly, almost indecisively, crawled across the parking area" (p. 10).

[39] Edit: Changed "He felt as if he could sense their gaze on his skin as he walked" to "He sensed their gaze on his skin as he walked". The shorter and simpler formulation is easier to read.

[40] Edit: single sentence in the source text split into two. First translation: "Ever since he'd turned 70, he kept remembering the frequent complaints of his father, who had reached the age of 87 and had never left his family in any doubt about the progressive decay of his body, as he put it."

[41] Edit: replaced "Where on earth could one get such a car in Israel? He never stopped being amazed at what could be achieved with money" with "Where on earth did one get a car like that in Israel? He never ceased to be amazed at what money could buy, if you had enough of it" (p. 10).

[42] Replaced "they" with "the visitors", which improves coherence by removing the need to remember what "they" referred to.

[43] Edit: replaced "When he reached the vehicle" with "As he approached the vehicle" as it sounds more idiomatic.

clearly visible in his shoulder holster. It was obvious that he was primarily a bodyguard and only incidentally a driver: the way he opened the door looked unpractised and awkward.[44]

The man who alighted from the back of the limo was wealthy and powerful, and he looked the part.[45] He was wearing a perfectly tailored dark blue suit. On anybody else, it would have looked completely out of place in this environment.[46] But John Kaun, every inch the absolute ruler over a global consortium of companies, was used to having his environment adapt to him, not the other way around. In a way, this seemed to be true even for desert landscapes, archaeological digs and hot summer temperatures.

They greeted each other with the requisite courtesy. They had only met twice before – the first time to discuss financial support for the excavation, and then again at the opening of an exhibition of artefacts from the time of King Solomon, in New York. To say that they liked each other would have been an exaggeration. In fact, they thought of each other as a necessary evil.[47]

"So, you've done it," said John Kaun, letting his gaze sweep over the landscape. Watching him do this was fascinating. It seemed as if his eyes were capable of sucking in all available optical information and emptying their environment of any visual cues.[48] One half expected the mountains to bulge towards Kaun's eyes or to be drained of all colour, something like that. "You've found something that's going to be more than just a footnote in some archaeological textbook."

"Looks like it[49]," agreed Charles Wilford-Smith.

"Heinrich Schliemann discovered Troy. John Carter found Tutankhamun's grave. And Charles Wilford-Smith…" For the first time, some human emotion shimmered through the

[44] Edit: replaced "He was no doubt primarily a bodyguard and only a part-time driver, because the way he opened the door appeared awkward and recently learned" with "It was obvious that he was primarily a bodyguard and only incidentally a driver: the way he opened the door looked unpractised and awkward." as it sounds more idiomatic.
[45] Edit: replaced "The man who alighted from the back of the limo was not only wealthy and powerful, he also looked the part" with "The man who alighted from the back of the limo was wealthy and powerful, and he looked the part."
[46] Edit: "He was wearing a perfectly fitted dark blue suit which would have seemed completely out of place in this environment if it had been anybody else wearing it" with "He was wearing a perfectly tailored dark blue suit. On anybody else, it would have looked completely out of place in this environment."
[47] Edit: replaced "each thought of the other as a necessary evil" with "they thought of each other as a necessary evil" because it sounds more idiomatic (p. 11).
[48] This sentence seems a bit curious, but it reflects the idea expressed in the source: *"Es war faszinierend, ihm dabei zuzusehen – man hatte den Eindruck, dass diese Augen imstande waren, die zur Verfügung stehenden optischen Informationen buchstäblich anzusaugen, die Umgebung förmlich leerzuschauen"* (p. 11).
[49] Edit: replaced "That's what it's looking like" with the more idiomatic "Looks like it" (p. 11).

magnate's mask. "I have to admit that I can hardly wait," he said. "I could think of nothing else during the entire flight."

Charles Wilford-Smith pointed invitingly towards the tent, which had once formed part of the British army's equipment. "Whatever you might have imagined," he said, "the truth is even more astonishing."[50]

[50] Edit: replaced "reality exceeds it" with the more idiomatic "the truth is even more astonishing".

3.2. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 2

The first excavation campaign was planned for a period of five months, starting in May. The excavation was directed by the author, while Dr SHIMON BAR-LEV was responsible for the documentation. RAFI BANYAMANI was the foreman. Owing to the size of the excavation field, up to one hundred and nineteen volunteers[51] *were employed to assist with the excavations.*

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

The telephone rang just before dinner.

Lydia Eisenhardt came out of the kitchen on the second ring and wiped her hands on her apron before taking it off. The telephone was of the old type, with an antiquated rotary dial and a heavy, massive handset. It was installed on the wall in the dark passage, meaning you had to take calls standing between the packed coat rack and the shoe rack crammed full with the children's colourful wellies. They had taken the telephone over from the previous owner of the house, who had lived there for forty years, and decided to keep it.

"Eisenhardt."

A crystal clear voice sounded from the other end of the line, in fluent German with a distinct American accent.[52] "This is the office of John Kaun, Susan Miller speaking. May I speak to Mr Peter Eisenhardt?"

"Just a moment, I'll get[53] him. You must be calling from overseas?"

"Yes, from New York."

Lydia nodded to herself, impressed.[54] Her husband received many calls, but this was new. "I'll be quick."

[51] Source, p. 13: *"freiwillige Grabungshelfer"* (voluntary excavation assistants). Here a more idiomatic translations was needed.
[52] Single sentence in the source text broken into two in the translation for better readability.
[53] Edit: replaced "call" with "go get" to avoid the repetition of "calling". It is also closer to the original *"Ich hole ihn."*
[54] In the source text, Lydia watches herself nodding to herself in the coat rack mirror (p. 14). I've decided to simplify the sentence and omit the mirror.

She put the handset down, rushed to the stairs leading to the first floor and quickly took the first few steps up. “Peter?”

“Yes?” His voice sounded annoyed from behind the study door.[55]

“There’s a call for you!” And, with greater emphasis: *“New York!”*

Some words are imbued with a kind of magic. *New York* was one of them.[56] For an author, New York meant what Hollywood meant for actors – the centre of the world, the artistic Mount Olympus, the embodiment of desire, admiration, fear, contempt[57] – the only place in the world where a writer could reach the ultimate peak of his profession.[58]

New York! That could only mean Doubleday. Or Random House. Or Simon & Schuster. Or Alfred Knopf. Or Time Warner… it could only mean that the long-desired sale of translation rights to the United States had finally worked out…

He had to remain calm.[59] Peter Eisenhardt stared at the large sheet of brown paper stuck onto the wall above his desk. It was covered in thick and thin arrows, strange symbols, names, tangles of scribbled notes, pinned scraps of paper and magazine photos: the draft of the new novel he was working on. At least the draft itself, three metres by one and a half metres, was a piece of art, he sometimes thought. But now all he could think was: New York!

“I’m coming!”

He was out of breath when he arrived at the telephone. He didn’t know whether this was good or bad. Lydia, listening intently[60], stood at the door to the kitchen, which smelled of vinegar and basil and freshly grated cucumber .

[55] The author uses both an exclamation and a question mark here: *“Ja!?”* (p. 14). I have chosen to simplify the punctuation and interpret it as annoyance because of the interruption.
[56] Edit: replaced “these words” with “them” (p. 14). The repetition is more glaring in English than in German. New York is also two words in German, so it is not completely accurate to refer to it as one word. Left unchanged as an example of poetic license.
[57] Edit: replaced “the desired, admired, feared, despised place” with “the embodiment of desire, admiration, fear, contempt”.
[58] Edit: replaced “the only place in the world where a career could attain the very peak of achievement” with “the only place in the world where a writer could reach the ultimate peak of his profession”.
[59] Gloss: “Now not to go mad.” (p. 14).
[60] Edit: replaced “tensely” with “intently” (gespannt), p. 15.

“Peter Eisenhardt,” he said, watching himself in the mirror. He was still quite slim, despite his mostly sedentary lifestyle. Only his hair was beginning to thin worryingly. How was that going to look on the cover of an American paperback?

“Good day, Mr Eisenhardt,” he heard a voice – indeed American, although she spoke German surprisingly well. “My name is Susan Miller. I’m John Kaun’s secretary. Do you know who he is?”

Kaun? John Kaun? He hesitated. He hoped it wasn’t someone whose name he had to know to avoid being disqualified.[61] “Actually, no. Should I know him?”

“Mister Kaun is the CEO of Kaun Enterprises, a holding company that owns – among others – the television company N.E.W., *News and Entertainment Worldwide…”*

“The CNN competitor?” As soon as he heard the words, he wished he’d bitten his tongue.

“Well, yes. We’re working on becoming the number one.”

Awkward. “Nice,” said Eisenhardt, lamely.

“Among other things,” the voice continued, “Kaun Enterprises owns the German publishing company which publishes your books…”

“Oh,” said Eisenhardt. He hadn’t known that. Amazing.

“Mister Kaun asked me to let you know that he is very proud to publish your works. He asks whether he can engage you for a few days.”

“Engage?” Eisenhardt echoed. “You mean, for lectures? A book tour?” This was almost as good as a rights sale. And he was really in the mood for it: travelling to the US for a few days, being a sought-after guest at a multimillionaire’s property, at the centre of a literary soirée at one of the legendary, exclusive New York clubs, surrounded by members of the old-money aristocracy who were proud to show off that they remembered a few words of German…

“Not exactly a book tour.” The voice at the other end of the line corrected him, delicately. “Mister Kaun wants to engage your sci-fi brain. Your literary imagination.”

“My literary imagination? What would he need that for?”

[61] Translating this sentence was challenging: *„Hoffentlich war das niemand, den nicht zu kennen ein k.o.-Kriterium war.“* Gloss: „Hopefully this was nobody, whom not to know was a KO criterion” (p. 15).

“I don’t know. I’m authorised to offer you a fee of two thousand dollars per day, plus expenses, of course.”

Wide-eyed, Peter Eisenhardt looked at his wife, who stared back at him.[62] “Two thousand dollars per day?” What was the current exchange rate? “And how many days was Mr Kaun thinking?”

“At least a week, probably more. And you’d have to travel tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow? So soon?”

“Yes. That is one of the conditions.”

Lydia gulped, but then gave the thumbs-up. They could use the money. An overdue advance wasn’t coming through, and one of the magazines for which Eisenhardt occasionally wrote for extra income had rejected an article in which he’d invested a huge amount of time.

“And you don’t know what I’m meant to be doing for those two thousand dollars per day?” Eisenhardt asked, suspiciously.

“No idea, I’m afraid. But the agreement I’m going to fax[63] through to you, should you accept the offer, is our standard consultant contract. So I assume that he wants you to advise him on some or other matter.”

Peter Eisenhardt took a deep breath and exchanged another glance with his wife, who nodded encouragingly. And yes, he was feeling adventurous. Why not? Going back out into the world, leaving the wife and children behind for a while… “Alright,” he said.

“Okay,” said the woman, sounding relieved. She had probably already called a whole list of authors, thought Eisenhardt grimly, who weren’t available or didn’t have enough time because they earned more through writing than what was being offered as a consulting fee.

“I’ll have a ticket put aside for you at Frankfurt airport,” the voice on the telephone continued busily. “All you need is your passport. You’ll have to be there tomorrow morning, no later than eight thirty. At the El Al counter. It is really important that you arrive on time.”

“El Al?”[64]

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[62] The source text (p. 16) repeats “wide-eyed”: Eisenhardt looked at his wife, wide-eyed. Wide-eyed, his wife looked back at him. This sounds overspecified in English.
[63] This is the first potential anachronism in the translation (p. 16).
[64] El Al is italicised for emphasis in the source text.

“Because of the security checks. The plane leaves at ten o’clock, and if you arrive at the counter after eight thirty you won’t be allowed to board.”

Eisenhardt was still amazed. “Did you just say *El Al*?”

“Oh,” she said. This time she really seemed embarrassed. “I’m very sorry.[65] I forgot to say that Mr Kaun is currently in Israel. He wants you to go to Israel.”

[65] This sentence is in English in the source text.

3.3. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 3

Regarding the following, see the map of the excavation site, Fig. I.3[66], the map of the sections, Fig. I.4a-s, as well as the map of the structural remains.

Based on the satellite images mentioned in Chapter I.2 (see Appendix C.3), nineteen excavation plots were identified, of which the five most promising, that is plots 14, 9, 2, 7 and 16 (named in the sequence in which they were scheduled) were selected for the first excavation project. As mentioned previously, work on plot 14 was prematurely stopped in favour of plot 3 (see Chapter II.1).

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

It looked like a pretty big deal. More like an invasion than a visit. The semi-trailer truck was currently putting down the third of five long, silvery caravans next to plot 14, and the number of quasi-uniformed helpers increased by the hour. Some of them were putting up a kind of fence around the area where the caravans were parked. Off to the side, they'd placed a generator, a dark, angular box that emitted a throbbing hum and from which thick cables snaked across the ground to the caravans and to the large tent which had been erected above plot 14.

"A whole lot of them are armed," said Judith, who was watching the goings-on with narrowed eyes.

"Mm," said Stephen Foxx, who had his mouth full. The sandwiches they were given during the breaks were becoming worse by the day. It was time to have a word with the two men who were responsible for meals. Or to think of a way of feeding himself. Maybe the village that people kept talking about was a possibility. There had to be stores, perhaps even something like a supermarket.

"I wonder what the point of all of this is. They are setting up camp. Those are caravans, aren't they?"

Foxx nodded. "Of course. People who pay to be chauffeured around in cars like that don't sleep in basic tents."

[66] The mix of Roman and Arabic numerals is used in the source text and retained in the translation.

"I'm surprised that such a person would choose to stay overnight here in the first place."

"Me too." He grabbed his water bottle and rinsed the bland taste of the bread with lukewarm, stale water. Not much of an improvement.[67] "By the way, about tonight – it's not going to be a religious family gathering or anything like that, is it?"

Judith shook her head briefly, without taking her eyes off the construction work. "Not at all."[68]

"So, I won't have to wear a skullcap or take off my shoes?"

"As you're not Jewish, you don't have to wear a skullcap in any case."

"What about prayers?"

"Stop it. We're just going to take a stroll through Tel Aviv and then grab a bite to eat. Yehoshuah knows the owner[69], so we'll get the best table, that's all. – I wonder who the guy in the suit is?"

"His name is John Kaun."

"What?" Now she turned her head and stared at him. Not bad. Stephen Foxx liked it when she looked at him with her dark sultry eyes. Judith Menez was the sister of Yehoshuah Menez, an archaeological assistant at Jerusalem's Rockefeller Centre. Stephen had met him via the internet and had got the position as a volunteer helper through him. But more importantly, she was slender, except in those places where that would have been a disadvantage, had long black curls, a breathtaking hook nose and an impressive temper, and it was high time that he got her into bed. Regrettably, it seemed she hadn't noticed his persistent flirting, and if she had, she really knew how to ignore it.[70]

"John Kaun," repeated Stephen. "Owner and CEO of Kaun Enterprises. His most important possession is the N.E.W. TV station. He's been trying for years to take over the number one spot on the news market from CNN."

She seemed impressed. "Sounds like he has a lot of money."

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[67] In the source text (p. 19): "a dubious exchange".
[68] Source text (p. 19): *„Ach was."*
[69] Implied: the owner of a restaurant. The implied referent is omitted in the source text as well.
[70] Edit: replaced "But up to now she seemed not even to have noticed his persistent flirting, or if she had, she really knew how to ignore it" with "Regrettably, it seemed she hadn't noticed his persistent flirting, and if she had, she really knew how to ignore it".

“He made his first million at the age of twenty-two. Some call him Johngis Khan because of his, how can I put this, ruthless business methods. He is forty-two years old and one of the wealthiest men in the United States.” Foxx wondered for a moment whether now would be a good time to mention that he’d made *his* first million at the age of nineteen. Rather not. It would have sounded as if he was boasting. Of course, he wanted to boast, but proper boasting never sounded like boasting. “And he’s funding this dig.”

Her eyes opened even wider. “Really? How do you know?”

“I read the right papers.”

“You read the right papers, sure.”

Stephen Cornelius Foxx, twenty-two, hailed from the state of Maine in the United States. He was wiry and a little shorter than average. He compensated for his lack in height through his erect bearing and self-confident demeanour.[71] He wore thin-framed glasses that gave him an intellectual air. His hobby was taking part in scientific research projects anywhere in the world. He had ringed birds in Iceland, counted ant species in Brazil, conducted comparative studies on the efficacy of different irrigation systems at the edge of the Sahel and helped dig for dinosaur bones in Montana. Stephen Foxx was the youngest-ever member of the venerable Explorer’s Society of New York, which had a long history[72] of supporting archaeological excavations, jungle expeditions and other research projects throughout the world, both financially and through personnel. And he was a *paying* member, just like all the others. This was why people took him seriously, which was what he wanted.

He’d never shied away from doing things just because he was supposedly too young.[73] At an early age, he’d understood the role money played in life. Money was the tool that allowed you to lead the life you wanted to lead. If you had money, you could do what you wanted. If you didn’t, you had to do what others wanted. It was therefore better to have money.

He had therefore started working with computers at an early age. Unlike most other computer freaks, he wasn’t attracted by gaming so much as by the sense that this would be the

[71] Edit: replaced “He was slim, almost wiry, a little too short compared to the average, for which he compensated through his erect bearing and self-confident demeanour” with “He was wiry and a little shorter than average. He compensated for his lack in height through his erect bearing and self-confident demeanour.”
[72] The expression in the source text, *„seit jeher“*, literally means „since forever“ (p. 21).
[73] Edit: replaced “He’d never shied away from doing something he’d set his mind to, just because he wasn’t the right age according to conventional wisdom” with “He’d never shied away from doing things just because he was supposedly too young.”.

easiest way to earn the money which would allow him to lead the life he wanted: above all, an *interesting* life.

At the age of sixteen, he'd managed to convince a car-parts dealer in his hometown that he was capable of building a customised IT admin system which would work better than their existing system – and which would run on their existing computers. A year later, he received a cheque for an amount that earned him respect even from his father, a lawyer who was not afraid to issue eye-watering invoices.

Stephen Foxx's clever stratagem had been to limit himself to writing the exact system specifications.[74] The system components themselves had been coded by programmers in India, all of them IT students, whom he had recruited over the internet and none of whom he'd ever met. Everything had been arranged through the data networks, at a time when this was still a complicated matter for insiders. For any given module, he'd sent detailed descriptions to India, whereupon the partner in question coded the corresponding software and sent the code back via the same channel. All Stephen had to do was assemble the components to create the overall system and – after comprehensive function tests – deploy it on the client's computers, which were fortunately already in place and ready for use.

It had worked even better than expected. The quality of the code he'd received from his Indian partners far surpassed anything he'd ever known locally. Flawless, so to speak. In the end, the most complicated part of the project had been transferring the money due to the programmers from US to Indian banks, a procedure which Stephen repeated five times because he sold the programme to a further five companies subsequently. This had made both him and his Indian sub-contractors wealthy. By now, most of them owned companies which wrote software for clients throughout the world. For many Western companies, it had become standard practice to have their programming done in India.

Having made his first million, Stephen did not feel the need to set his sights on a billion. Although he could try to imagine what went on in the mind of somebody like John Kaun, he couldn't properly comprehend it. He'd completed high school in the usual way, studied economics at a relatively unknown, comfortable little university, driven around in a bright-red Porsche and picked up all the hottest girls. He let his money work for him, earning returns

[74] Edit: replaced "The trick with this mammoth undertaking had been that Stephen Foxx had actually only written the precise specifications for the IT system" with "Stephen Foxx's clever stratagem had been to limit himself to writing the exact system specifications."

sufficient to take care of most of his expenses.[75] The way things were going, it looked like he would never have to work again. For this, he thought, the one-and-a-half stressful years had been worth it.

And at least once a year, he disappeared off into the wide world. He'd despised normal travelling for as long as he could remember. Going somewhere to "see the region" or "the sights" had never made sense to him. The people who went in for that kind of thing usually boasted of knowing nice restaurants in Sri Lanka or having ridden once around the pyramids, but when you started digging and asking probing questions, you found out that all they knew about their own hometowns was the location of their favourite bar. Often, they didn't even know the attractions in their own region which people came from all over the world to see, maybe even from Sri Lanka. It was no good. Stephen Foxx was interested in the world, but when he travelled somewhere, he wanted to do something useful there. He couldn't think of anything more fascinating than taking part in archaeological excavations, zoological observations or botanical expeditions to a rain forest. Since finding out about the Explorer's Society and discovering that even amateurs could play a role in such undertakings, he'd known exactly what he wanted.

Naturally, this usually meant hard physical labour, physical discomfort and drudge work. It meant counting thousands of larvae, carrying dozens of baskets filled with soil, rubble and stones, being bitten by mosquitoes and sleeping in soaked, stinking tents. But this was part of the adventure. He would not have wanted to trade places with the scientists who did the more demanding work, who developed theories, wrote essays and gave instructions to the helpers, because this would have meant having to study a scientific subject in depth and then keep doing the same thing for the rest of his life. This sounded anything but interesting. It sounded extremely boring.

"Do you think they might want to make a film about our excavation?" asked Judith.[76] From a distance, Rafi waved to them. He was responsible for the work at plot 3. Breakfast break was over.

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[75] Edit: replaced "He more or less rested on his money. He had invested it in a way that the returns funded took care of most of his expenses, and the way things were going, it looked like he would never have to work again" with "He let his money work for him, earning returns sufficient to take care of most of his expenses. The way things were going, it looked like he would never have to work again."

[76] Note on the name "Judith": this is the name used in the German text, presumably because of its Hebrew origins. In Germany, it peaked in popularity between about 1975 and 1985, when it climbed to between 50th and 100th in the popularity rankings.

“I’m not sure,” said Stephen. “But I don’t think so. I don’t think that the CEO would come to make a movie.”

“But it has something to do with the find. The one you don’t want to talk about.”

“I think it is safe to assume that that’s the case.”

“So, what do you think is going on?”

“I think,” said Stephen Foxx, taking off his glasses and wiping his eyebrows, wet with sweat, with the back of his hand, “that there’s been a murder.”

3.4. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 4

We now come to the detailed analysis of the stratigraphy. Stratigraphic elements, such as layers and pit walls, were assigned numbers (numerals), while building remains were assigned letters. Both were added in the appropriate places in the stratigraphic presentation. See Chapter XII regarding the stratigraphic classification of the ceramic finds in Chapter III-9.

Numbering and schematisation of the stratigraphy are based on the method published by HARRIS (HARRIS 1979, 81-91, see also FRANKEN 1984, 86-90). In some places, a single number was used for an entire agglomeration of deposits for reasons of simplification.

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

For safety reasons, the El Al[77] counter is housed in a separate passage, away from the main hall. Peter Eisenhardt made it at the last minute and found himself standing among people the likes of whom he had only ever seen on the evening news. Orthodox Jews with long sidelocks, dressed entirely in black, stood beside imperturbable Palestinians who wore the distinctive headscarves made popular by Yasser Arafat. The two groups ignored each other completely. Women, modestly cloaked in long robes and headscarves, queued with Franciscan monks attired in cowled robes. In among them, and less conspicuously, completely ordinary men and women of all ages and classes waited patiently: grandmotherly matrons and distinguished-looking elderly gentlemen, wearing white summer hats in hopeful expectation, even though it was early in the morning and the sky in Frankfurt was overcast; pale, stocky men in greasy suits carrying heavy plastic bags, conversing in a language that sounded Russian. Progress was very slow.

"Why are you travelling to Israel?" asked the lady from the Israeli security agency, a giant of a woman[78] who inspected him with such mistrust that it seemed she suspected him of criminal intentions.

[77] Note on formatting: earlier in the text, El Al was italicised. But this was for emphasis, not as a marker of a foreign language term.
[78] The woman in question is referred to first as a *"Dame"* (lady), then as a *"hünenhaftes Weib"* (enormous or giant woman). Accurately translating the connotations of the latter is tricky. *"Hüne"* is usually reserved for very large and strong men rather than women. Etymologically, it derives from the Middle Low German word for the

“For, um[79], business reasons.” Why was this question making him so nervous?[80] He pulled the fax from New York out of his pocket. “I have a consultant contract.”

She studied the fax closely. This wasn’t a formality, this was deadly[81] serious. He had never experienced anything like it before a flight. They would rather delay the flight than wave through any questionable items during the security check, and with good reason. Eisenhardt involuntarily found himself reminded[82] of the airplane hijackings he’d read about, mostly in passing. There were many good reasons.

What on earth had he got himself into. She studied the fax a second time, painstakingly reading the English legalese of the entire four-page contract, simultaneously picked up the telephone, dialled a number without looking and talked to someone in a guttural language that must have been Hebrew. Finally, she returned the piece of paper and nodded, scrawled a signature onto a form and allowed him to pass. “Okay,” she said, and directed her concentrated mistrust at the next person in the queue, whom she would treat as a suspected terrorist until persuaded otherwise.

Why are you travelling to Israel? A damned good question. He, a moderately successful author, acting as a consultant to a millionaire media titan! Crazy. And highly suspect. The true reason was, it suddenly dawned on him, that he was in arrears with the repayments on his mortgage. And the reason he was in arrears was that he wasn’t getting paid by the publishing house which indirectly belonged to the man who had engaged him.

She was sitting right where Stephen wanted her: on the edge of his camp bed. But unfortunately, she was fully clothed, while he was half-naked.

Stephen had taken a shower. Although in truth, the showers hardly deserved the name. Their awe-inspiring showerheads emitted little more than a dribble. At the camp, everybody was complaining constantly that the showers were incapable of rinsing off the pervasive dust. Everybody also knew that there was no point in complaining because the showers were not

Huns, *hūne*. The word *Weib* also has pejorative connotations that are not reflected in English equivalents such as woman or wench.

[79] Translation of interjections – source text *“ähm”*.

[80] In the source text, the word *“eigentlich”* reinforces the “why” question. On translation of particles like these, see (Schoonjans & Lauwers, 2010)

[81] In the source text: this was *“richtig”* (properly) serious.

[82] In the source text: *„musste an die Flugzeugentführungen denken“* (was forced to think of the airplane hijackings).

going to change before the dig was complete. Stephen used a simple trick, which he had learned from irrigation experts in Africa, to get rid of almost all of the dust: he used a sponge. He hadn't kept the secret to himself, but as far as he could see, most of the others preferred to continue complaining.

"You are the only person I know who brings a tailored jacket[83] to an archaeological dig," said Judith.

"That's not the only thing that's special about me,"[84] replied Stephen, who was still busy towelling his hair and shaping it with a wide-tooth comb. It felt good to know that the day was behind him and a pleasant evening lay ahead. He welcomed the physical exertion, which helped him get into shape and allowed him to be more in tune with his body.

The volunteers were housed in relatively spacious tents made of heavy white sailcloth. The tents looked as if they had been left over from one of the British army's Africa expeditions. Perhaps that was the case. Most of the tents were shared, two helpers to a tent, but Stephen had managed to get an entire tent to himself by creating the rumour that he snored terribly, tended to sleepwalk and often ended up in the wrong bed when he returned. Nobody was willing to take the risk. He therefore had enough space not only for a table and a chair, but also to put up a compact clothes rail and a large mirror.

"I'm going to find out in the end, anyway," said Judith for the fifth time.[85] She was still talking about his find, which seemed to have triggered all the commotion.[86]

"You'll find out tonight," said Stephen and pulled his trousers on. Judith watched him unapologetically. Earlier, she had simply walked into his tent while he was standing there in his underwear, had sat on his bed and started pestering him about his find. "It's a long story. If I tell you, I'll have to tell it again to Yehoshuah later, and that's too much effort."

"You're just trying to make it more interesting."

"Of course. That, too. When is your brother coming?"

"In about half an hour."

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[83] The German *„Jackett"* implies a more formal item of clothing than the English "jacket". To add this connotation, a qualifier can be added, such as "tailored".
[84] Gloss of the source text: "I also have any number of other extraordinary properties."
[85] Source text: "for *at least* the fifth time".
[86] Simplification of the source text, which reads (gloss): "It was still about the find, which he had made and which, as it appeared, had caused all the unrest."

There was something rough about her, perhaps because she had already completed her two years of military service in the Israeli army at the age of only twenty.[87] With a shiver, Stephen recalled that this long-legged, spirited being could drive a tank, had been involved in firefights with *intifada* fighters and could put together a disassembled machine gun in under a minute, blindfolded. Whereas he only knew the army from the movies.

"Why don't we take my car and meet him in Tel Aviv?" He nodded towards his mobile phone, which was lying on the table.

"You won't be able to reach him.[88] He's already stuck in Jerusalem's rush-hour traffic."

"Fine." He tucked in his favourite shirt.[89] It was made of a refined mix of linen, cotton and synthetic fibres and accompanied him on all of his expeditions. Worn by itself, it created a casual look; combined with a jacket, it looked elegant; and best of all, in an emergency it could be cleaned with cold water and soap, and it always looked white. He'd bought it at a small, exclusive boutique[90] in New York which a member of the Explorer's Society had recommended, a man who was approaching his eighties and who used every opportunity to talk about how he had circumnavigated the globe on a bicycle in his youth.

Then he slipped into his jacket. Another item which he'd spent a long time searching for. It was lightweight, cool in hot regions and warm in cold, could be rolled up tightly in a suitcase without creasing, and could be combined with practically anything. It had not been cheap, of course. But he'd decided never to travel anywhere without being able to dress in a tasteful and businesslike[91] manner. He even had some neckties in his rustic-looking duffel bag; Judith hadn't seen them yet, otherwise she would have made fun of them as well. But in his experience, nothing created self-confidence as effectively as knowing that you were well dressed. When dealing with people, a tie could be as essential as a revolver was when dealing with a tiger.

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[87] Edit: joined up the two sentences in the initial translation: from "There was something rough about her. Which might have been because…" to "There was something rough about her, perhaps because she had already completed…".

[88] If the novel were set in the present, Yehoshuah would presumably have a mobile, so Stephen could have called him.

[89] In the source text, the sentence begins with a redundant duplication: *"Er zog sein Hemd zurecht, sein Lieblingshemd aus einer raffinierten Mischung von Leinen"* etc. (p. 29).

[90] In German, the word order of the adjectives is "exclusive, small", which sounds a bit unnatural in English. Regarding adjective order, see (Teodorescu, 2006) (p. 29).

[91] This word is in English in the source text (p. 29).

Judith had stood up and stepped across to the tent entrance. The low sun cast a broad, warm ray of light across the tent, lighting up the camp bed and the dusty dirt floor as she pushed aside the tent flap. “There’s a taxi approaching, I think.”

“Mm,” said Stephen, who was tying his shoelaces. Of course, in an environment like this, you couldn’t get your shoes properly clean. And he needed to tidy up; from the corner of his eye, he saw that the excavation box[92] he’d used the day before was still under his bed. It was a rectangular box made of dull sheet iron, with a detachable, hinged lid into which the excavated soil was placed before being carefully sieved at a later stage. Sometimes, small, but important finds – such as teeth, small bones, parts of jewellery – were overlooked at the excavation site and only discovered later, during sieving.

But all of that could wait until tomorrow. He grabbed his wallet and mobile phone and checked whether he had enough cash on him.

“Looks like they want to make a film after all,” said Judith. “That’s a movie camera, isn’t it?”

“What?” Stephen stepped up behind her. Looking over her shoulder, he felt the warmth of her cheek, no more than a centimetre from his own.[93] She smelled intoxicating, even though he couldn’t quite identify the smell.

“That thing on the tripod. In front of the tent.”

Stephen stared at the object, which was indeed a movie camera. Two of Kaun’s people were in the process of mounting it on a large tripod. “Strange,” he said.

“They’re making a movie, told you so.”

Stephen slowly shook his head. “I can’t believe it. I can’t believe that Johngis Khan would come in person when all they’re doing is making a film about an archaeological excavation.”

He was beginning to doubt whether he really knew what was going on. As he looked across to plot 14, to where the five caravans gleamed red in the reflected light of the evening sun and the strange faceless men scurried about in their N.E.W. overalls, he felt excluded, pushed to the margins. What he saw reminded him of movie scenes showing an epochal discovery being

[92] *“Fundkasten”* – unsure of what the correct English term is. Terms found through a Google search include archaeology box, finds box, artefact box, metal box, lidded box, excavation box and ammunition box (the latter suggested by the Wits archaeology department via the @WitsArchaeology Twitter account).
[93] Edit: split the sentence in two.

made – an alien, a prehistoric man – where "scientists" poured in like locusts, blocking everything off, building fences and erecting screens and putting up their measuring instruments everywhere.

In his mind, he reviewed the timeline. The previous day. The find. His theory about it. As he thought about it, it no longer seemed so obvious. Something about it was wrong. What was happening didn't fit into the picture. Perhaps it would be good to discuss everything with Judith and her brother in the evening.

The person seated next to him on the plane recognised him as they crossed the Alps. "Excuse me, but aren't you Peter Eisenhardt, the author?" he said, his words bringing joy to Eisenhardt's heart. It was a phrase which obscure authors the world over loved more than life itself.[94]

Yes, admitted Peter Eisenhardt, he was.

"I've read some of your books," said the man, naming two novels, both of which were unfortunately by other authors. "I must say I really enjoyed them."[95]

Eisenhardt smiled awkwardly. "That's great."

His neighbour introduced himself as Uri Liebermann, journalist and foreign correspondent for several Israeli newspapers, based in Germany. He lived in Bonn, but travelled home to his wife and children once a month, as they couldn't be persuaded to move abroad. "And why are you travelling to Israel?" he asked. "Are you on a book tour? Or on holiday?"

Peter Eisenhardt explained that it was not for a book tour, and that he preferred not to go on holiday without his family.

"Ah!" concluded the lively foreign correspondent, who looked to be just over forty and sought to balance[96] his high forehead with a remarkable, almost Prussian moustache, "so are you visiting Israel for research?"

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[94] Edit: replaced "The person next to him on the plane recognised him as they flew over the Alps. 'Excuse me, but aren't you Peter Eisenhardt, the author?' he said, pronouncing the joyous words adored by not particularly famous authors the world over like their very own children" with "The person seated next to him on the plane recognised him as they crossed the Alps. 'Excuse me, but aren't you Peter Eisenhardt, the author?' he said, his words bringing joy to Eisenhardt's heart. It was a phrase which obscure authors the world over loved more than life itself.".

[95] Edit: replaced "'I've read some of your books,' said the man and named the titles of two novels which were unfortunately by other authors. 'I must say I really enjoyed them.'" with "'I've read some of your books,' said the man, naming two novels, both of which were unfortunately by other authors. 'I must say I really enjoyed them.'"

[96] Edit: replaced "compensate" with "balance" (p. 32).

"Something like that," admitted Eisenhardt.

"Does this mean that your next novel could be set in Israel?"

"Possibly." A thick notebook was the first thing he'd packed, as always when he travelled. A part of his brain had started working semi-autonomously years ago. It was constantly on the lookout for unusual settings, unfamiliar turns of phrase, and interesting persons and events. He captured these observations on paper for later use in his novels.[97] In a sense, he was indeed conducting research.[98]

"Great, great," said the journalist happily and started digging through his hand luggage. "Say, would you mind if I took a photo of you? I'd like to publish a note in one of the newspapers I write for, something like 'Famous German author currently travelling in Israel', I imagine that would also be in your interest?"

"With pleasure."

And so, Peter Eisenhardt allowed himself to be photographed, smiling as engagingly as possible, and after the third flash Uri Liebermann was satisfied. Proudly, he showed off his camera, a brand-new model with a flat monitor on the back. The screen allowed you to view the photo you had just taken, almost at original size, before it was stored on a small optical disk[99] inside the camera. "Completely digital," he explained. "And see this, here, on the side? I can plug in a serial cable and transfer the photos directly to any commercially available PC. Amazing what you can do with technology these days, isn't it? But wait, there's more."

He pulled out a flat device that looked like a mobile phone. But to Eisenhardt's astonishment, he flipped it open lengthwise and was left holding a tiny computer in his hand, complete with a dainty keyboard and a small LCD screen.[100] "Now we have to make ourselves inconspicuous, because they don't like it when you use these things on board a plane. But I've got to show you this. So now I'm writing my report here, a bit laboriously, true, but doable – my fingers somehow seem to have become slimmer since I got this thing, remarkable, isn't it? So, what are we going to write… 'Well-known German author visits Israel'. That's the title. Then a bit of blah-blah; I guess I won't be getting more than ten or twelve lines, but together

[97] Edit: replaced "There was a part of his brain that seemed to have declared independence a while ago and which was constantly on the lookout for unusual settings, unfamiliar turns of phrase, interesting persons and events, and these observations had to be captured on paper and used in novels later on" with the phrasing shown above.
[98] Edit: replaced "In this sense, there was a possibility that this was true" with "In a sense, he was indeed conducting research".
[99] This term is in English in the source text.
[100] A description of a smartphone when such devices were still new. Notably, it doesn't have a touchscreen.

with the photo…" He already seemed to be calculating his fee. Focussing intently, he typed a short text; Eisenhardt watched over his shoulder, but the journalist was using Hebrew text processing, so he couldn't read what he was writing. Liebermann appeared to have memorised how the Latin letters marked on the keys mapped to the Hebrew alphabet, and it was fascinating to watch the lines of text fill up from right to left instead of the other way around, as Eisenhardt was used to.

"There," he said finally. "Next, I'll upload the photo…" He pulled a short cable from his seemingly bottomless shoulder bag, plugged it into the camera, pressed a few buttons and some keys on his mobile phone computer, waited a few moments and then pulled out the cable, satisfied. "Done. Normally, I could send this straight to our editorial department's main computer, but here, on board, this obviously isn't possible. We'd probably crash, or, worse, end up in Libya, ha-ha! But I'll ask the stewardess if she'll let me use the plane's phone system. Usually, it's no problem.[101] Just a moment…"

Eisenhardt watched in amazement as Liebermann marched up to the front of the plane, holding another cable and his PC, before talking insistently to one of the stewardesses behind the galley kitchen curtain. Then the two of them disappeared, and for a while nothing happened.

Eisenhardt looked out of the window. Wispy clouds passed under the plane. Was that Tuscany, there below? Or only the Po Valley? A greenish-brown mosaic of fields, interspersed with gossamer[102] streets and paths. And shimmering darkly, the sea.

Uri Liebermann returned, grinning. "How about that – it worked. If you're lucky, you'll see your picture in the newspaper when we land… No, that's an exaggeration. It'll appear in the evening edition. When you arrive at your hotel, take a look at the Hebrew newspapers."

"You must be joking."

"No, I'm serious. Okay, usually I wouldn't rush a report like this. Obviously. But when there are dramatic developments – for instance, when a minister in Bonn[103] makes a statement critical of Israel – I type his words directly into my little box of wonders, press a button, and if everything goes to plan, you'll find my report in a newspaper in Israel's kiosks four hours later."

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[101] Clearly this was written before the attack on the World Trade Center on 9-11.
[102] *"Spinnendünn"*, "as thin as spiderwebs" (p. 34).
[103] Although the decision to make Berlin the capital of unified Germany was taken as early as 1990/1991, the actual move only took place in 1999 – after the book had been written.

"Four hours?"

"Four hours. And that's for a normal news story, mind you. Really important events get reported even quicker."

"Incredible." Eisenhardt was genuinely impressed.

"Check for yourself."

"I'm going to. Even though it's a crazy amount of effort, in my opinion."

Liebermann laughed. "Welcome to Israel! Believe me, Israelis are completely *meshuga* when it comes to the news. They are constantly listening to the radio, watch the news every night on TV, often follow the news on Jordanian, Egyptian and Syrian stations, and read the papers three times a day. And it's not just the Jews who do this, the Palestinians are the same. People are constantly talking about bad news and getting upset. Some of them even have heart attacks! It's a mania, you won't believe it till you've seen it. That's Israel!"

So, this was Israel. At first glance, Ben Gurion Airport looked like an airport in any other Mediterranean country: big and bright, hot and crowded. At second glance, Eisenhardt noticed the signs, which were without exception trilingual, in Hebrew, English and Arabic, and the soldiers everywhere, who kept a vigilant hand on the submachine guns draped over their shoulders. At some point, Liebermann had disappeared. Eisenhardt allowed himself to be carried along on the river of people, through the nerve-rackingly thorough security checks which left a chaotic mess in his suitcase, and finally out of the terminal building and into the sunshine of the cloudless Tel Aviv sky. Behind the crowd barriers, people were crammed together, studying every new arrival with tense expectation. From time to time there were little cries and squeals of delight as people fell into each other's' arms across the barrier. Eisenhardt heard *shaloms* and *salaam alaikums*[104], saw laughter and tears. He felt a bit lost.

Then he saw a cardboard sign being held aloft by someone standing at the back. On it, he saw his name, albeit without the *d-t* at the end: just Eisenhart. He walked towards it. The wrinkled old man holding the sign[105] was wearing a pair of shabby grey trousers that might

[104] There seems to be no standard spelling for this expression.
[105] Repetition in the source text: "The man holding the sign was a wrinkled old man who…"

have been fashionable in the 1960s, combined with an unspeakably hideous, garish shirt with distinct sweat marks under the armpits.

When Eisenhardt identified himself, the man gave an unenthusiastic nod, mumbled his name, which Eisenhardt didn't catch, and said that he'd been asked to take him to Mr Kaun. He spoke German with a guttural, eastern European accent. Up close, he looked even older than before.

Eisenhardt followed him across the parking lot to a taxi. A sticker with the Polish flag was prominently displayed on the vehicle's dashboard.

"Are you from Poland?" asked Eisenhardt as they followed the winding bends of a wide road through a desert landscape, leaving the airport behind them.

"Yes, from Krakow. But that was a long time ago."

"You speak German very well."

The driver's face remained impassive. "I learnt it in the concentration camp."

Eisenhardt gulped uncomfortably. He couldn't think of anything to say and looked out of the window instead. So, this was Israel.

3.5. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 5

After removing the 2-metre top layer mentioned above, the +/- 0.00m level was reached. At this level, the excavation site was divided into a 5x5 metre grid with 1 metre cuts. The gridlines followed a north-south axis (see Fig. II.29).

In the northern part, excavations were carried out between F.20 and F.13 (GL field; Fig. II.30 – see photos in Appendix H) in the first stage. In the cut between F.20 and F.19, an east-west wall line made of hewn rock was found, which appears to represent a boundary of the graveyard (w).

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

Stephen and Judith went down to the parking lot between the rows of the excavation helpers' tents. The taxi had stopped in front of the caravans, and Judith's brother's little white Mitsubishi was just coming off the pitiful dirt road. Yehoshuah waved to them through the windscreen.

"He's on time. You can set your watch by him," said Judith. "I really wonder how he always does this."

"Mm," said Stephen. Two men alighted from the taxi. One of them, a pale man in his late thirties with the beginnings of a paunch and thinning hair, looked lost, as if he weren't entirely sure how he'd got here. The other was the driver, a stooped elderly man who was heaving a suitcase and a shoulder bag from the boot. The new arrival seemed to be somebody special, as both Professor Wilford-Smith and John Kaun appeared, walking to greet him.

Yehoshuah braked, coming to a crunching stop immediately in front of them. He leapt from the car and extended his hand to Stephen across the dusty roof of the vehicle. He was tall and lanky, with the curly dark hair of the *sabras*, the Jews born in Israel. "Nice to see you again! Have you managed to find your feet? I hear you've already made the first spectacular find."

"Yes," said Stephen distractedly, nodding his head in the direction of the taxi. "Say, any idea who that is?"

Yehoshuah stared unabashedly in the direction in which Stephen was pointing. He'd have been useless as a detective. "No, not a clue. Why?"

“I know his face from somewhere. I just can’t quite place him.”

Judith looked at him questioningly, but didn’t say anything.

“Never mind,” said Stephen. “Maybe I’ll remember who it is later. Let’s go.”

They got into the car, Judith in the back. Yehoshuah started the engine and switched on the radio. The presenter was reading out something in Hebrew that sounded like a news bulletin. Stephen took another look at the man who had just arrived. He was wearing a remarkably ill-fitting suit and was listening attentively to Professor Wilford-Smith, who appeared to be explaining something with typically British, economical gestures. He knew this man, knew that he’d seen his face before, but where? Usually, he could rely on his memory for faces, and he was annoyed that it seemed to be failing him this time. He had never met the man, as he would have been sure to remember. Never mind, he thought as the car started moving. He’d remember at some point, when it mattered.

Peter Eisenhardt nodded along to everything the professor was telling him in his ponderous, unavoidably smug-sounding, upper-class English. There were some expressions he didn’t understand; his English had become quite rusty over time. So, this was the site of an archaeological excavation. That must have been why everything looked so temporary and messy. At first, Eisenhardt had thought of a training camp for rebel militias, then of location shooting for a movie.

The drive to the camp had been thoroughly annoying. They were travelling on the road from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem when the driver had suddenly turned onto a disaster of a dirt road at an unmarked junction. He did so at the very moment when a tailgating sports car was hooting at them and an oncoming tanker was thundering towards them. The road they’d turned onto continued for kilometres on end through a kind of no-man’s land. And while they were jolting and bouncing along, the old man had quietly muttered Polish phrases to himself, which to Eisenhardt sounded like curses and spells. Wild fantasies flourished in his mind: of robbers and highwaymen and cutthroats, of an evil conspiracy, and he felt a searing shock when he remembered that he hadn’t left a forwarding address because nobody knew where in Israel the fabled John Kaun had wanted him to go. He pictured himself lying abjectly in a roadside ditch, mugged and murdered, possibly with his writing hand chopped off because he had inadvertently written something somewhere that some fanatical sect considered sacrilegious.

Uri Liebermann would rush to the scene, take out his handy mobile phone/PC unit and start typing in the next headline, his next report. Which would then presumably appear in the morning edition.

At some point, when they had left the road far behind and were surrounded by nothing but flat, rock-strewn mountains, he finally dared to breathe again and relax his tensed shoulders. The old man didn't really look like a fanatic, come to think of it. He mainly seemed to be worried about whether his taxi would survive the trip over the pothole-strewn road.

Then they had turned once more and driven towards the camp, where the tents and vehicles cast long, strange shadows in the light of the setting sun.

Just as the professor starting describing the volunteers and their role in Israeli archaeology, two of them, a young man and woman[106], got into the white car which had at some point appeared behind them, drawing ever closer. Which had of course triggered the author's imagination once again. As they left, the young man looked curiously in his direction.

"Despite their scientific curiosity and engagement," said the white-haired archaeologist, "they remain youngsters, of course. I suppose they are going to a disco in Tel Aviv."

Eisenhardt nodded understandingly. Although he was approaching forty, it felt awkward to speak of others as "youngsters" as though he weren't one himself.

John Kaun, who had stepped aside briefly after the initial introductions to give an employee instructions *sotto voce*, joined them again, propelling his self-confidence before him like a bow wave. Clearly he wasn't the kind of man to remain standing on the sidelines. Wherever he was, people around him had to accept him as the focal point of the conversation or make an enemy. A powerful, dangerous enemy. The manner in which the media magnate presented himself was more than just self-assured, it was aggressive in a way that made it clear that this man wanted to conquer the world, or rather, was *going to* conquer the world. Eisenhardt realised with sudden clarity what the term "killer instinct" meant[107]. This man possessed it. Even the courteous way in which he interacted with Eisenhardt seemed calculated: it subtly signalled that it would be in Eisenhardt's own interest to cooperate willingly. Otherwise, if Kaun found it necessary or more conducive to achieving his aims, he would crush him in just the same calculated way.

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[106] In the source text: *"ein Junge und ein Mädchen"*, "a boy and a girl" (p. 40).
[107] The sub-clause "which he'd come across a couple of times" was omitted with no loss of meaning (p. 41).

“I trust you will forgive me for not having read any of your publications,” he said with a smile that didn’t reach his eyes. “Unfortunately, I don’t speak German. But I’ve been given summaries[108] of your novels. And they sounded very interesting.”

To Eisenhardt’s amazement, the CEO gave a brief, vivid synopsis of each of his novels – better than he himself could have done it. “It’s a real pity that I can’t read them,” he said. “Once we’ve concluded this adventure – successfully, I hope – I will propose to the publishers that we publish a licensed edition in English. What do you think?”

“Oh,” Eisenhardt could only gasp. “I think… that would be great.” What an enticing prospect! At some level, he understood that Kaun was luring him in, giving him a reason to do his very best with whatever task he was given… But by God, it worked!

“I imagine,” continued Kaun, “that since receiving the call from my secretary, you’ve been asking yourself why you are here and what I require from you.”

Eisenhardt nodded. “Yes. That’s right.”

“Let me not keep you on tenterhooks. The reason is that we are dealing with something that requires strict secrecy for now. In fact, even my secretary doesn’t have a clue of what it’s about.” A predatory smile[109] flashed across his narrow lips.

“I understand.” It had been ages since he’d last had an entire conversation in English. Fortunately, he understood the American pretty[110] well, and it appeared that he was not expected to make any long speeches at this stage.

“Frankly, what I needed was a science-fiction author. A science-fiction *mind*, to be more precise. And as you are one of the best in your field, our choice was clear. I am delighted that you could make it.”

Peter Eisenhardt grimaced uncomfortably.[111] This was a bit much, and it showed that Kaun didn’t have a clue about science fiction.

“You see, I’m a businessman. A merchant. A bookkeeper, basically. Without wanting to sound immodest, clearly I wouldn’t have made it to where I did if didn’t have a certain talent

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[108] Omitted the word *“Inhalt”* (“content”) – gloss “But I’ve had the contents of your novels described to me.” (p. 41)
[109] Source text: *“Haifischlächeln”* (shark’s smile).
[110] Very informal word choice - appropriate? German *“ziemlich”* could also be translated as “fairly”, “relatively”, “quite” etc.
[111] Source text: *“verzog das Gesicht zu einem schmerzhaften Grinsen”* (gloss: “pulled the face into a painful smile“) (p. 42).

for business. But businessmen depend on their sense of realism. Letting your imagination run wild can be quite dangerous: you see opportunities where there aren't any, or inflate risks beyond all measure. In other words, a good businessman is sober and not given to flights of fancy. As you can see when you look at me, right? But the opposite is true for authors, and especially science-fiction writers. If their sense of realism is too great, they wouldn't even be able to get started because they'd have less than a snowball's chance in hell[112] of getting published. When it comes to the imagination, authors have to be giants, artists, true artists: they have to navigate the realm of the impossible, the contradictory, the absurd as if it were their own home. They have to follow the most implausible lines of thoughts through to their logical conclusion, command time and space, break all the rules if needed. For authors, nothing must be impossible."

He directed his penetrating gaze at Eisenhardt. "That's who I need here. Because yesterday, Professor Wilford-Smith made a discovery that ties my brain in knots, the more I think about it."

Yehoshuah was in high spirits during the drive.[113] He sang along to the songs on the radio, which to Stephen sounded like a crude mix of American rock & roll and oriental melodies, and explained: "In Jerusalem, all you do is pray. In Haifa, all you do is work. But in Tel Aviv, you can really *live*!"

His joyful anticipation was contagious. Stephen leant back and relaxed[114].[115] He absorbed the impressions streaming in, the evening mood over the landscape, the silhouette of the city etched against the low sun glinting off the ocean. Together with innumerable other cars, they wended their way towards the city centre, crawling through cross streets and narrow alleyways, hooting to demand space like the other drivers did, gesticulating through the open windows when the traffic wasn't moving. Stephen looked around as they drove, almost twisting his neck; he saw dirty brown houses piled higgledy-piggledy, of the type that can only be built in hot

[112] Source text: *"...weil die Chancen, je veröffentlicht zu werden, geringer sind als die, die ein Schneeball in der Hölle hat"* (p. 43). The expression "like a snowball in hell" first appeared in German in the early 1980s. At the time, it was used exclusively when reporting on statements by English politicians. It only started to be used outside of that context in the 1990s. In English, the expression is found as early as the 1930s, which indicates that its use in German is a loan translation. (Source: e-mail response from Duden-Kundenservice, 20 August 2019.)
[113] Sentence split here.
[114] Source text: *"Stephen lehnte sich genüsslich zurück…"*, literally: leant back luxuriously or pleasurably, which doesn't sound right (p. 43).
[115] Sentence split here.

countries, with flat roofs or roof terraces where clothes billowed on the washing lines or, symbols of the modern era, where solar panels presented themselves obliquely to the skies like badly assembled black deckchairs, and above it all a fantastically tangled forest of crazy TV antennas[116] whose dipoles[117] pointed in all directions[118]. He saw half-finished garages full of building materials or blocked by rusty old iron scrap, while the cars were parked alongside on the barren, sandy no-man's land between the crumbling kerbsides, mutilated date palms and the wire-mesh fencing of the adjacent property. Stephen hadn't been here since landing in Tel Aviv and being taken to the excavation camp by Yehoshuah. At the time, the new impressions had been too overwhelming to leave their mark.

"Let's take a walk up and down Dizengoff Street," suggested Yehoshuah, "and then go to the old port. I've booked a table at a fabulous fish restaurant. Stephen, do you like fish?"

"I'll eat anything," said Stephen. "As long as it tastes good."

They found parking on the street and set off, and with every step they seemed to penetrate deeper into a no-go zone of sensuality, into a vibrating force field of a greedy zest for life.[119] He smelled the wild jasmine and bougainvillea that ran rampant on the vacant properties which appeared from time to time between the rows of houses, like gaps in a set of teeth. He smelled exhaust fumes and orange blossoms, the biting stench of petrol and underneath it all, the salty, humid smell of the sea. Muggy and debilitating, the hot breath of the sea crawled through the streets, heralding sleepless nights and shirts drenched with sweat.

The closer they got to the centre, the wilder the mix of architectural styles became. Low-slung villas, which looked as if they had been transplanted from Vienna or Salzburg, were overshadowed by ostentatious high-rise buildings, which in turn were surrounded by multi-storey, salt-corroded properties in the Bauhaus style. Palms and intensely fragrant eucalyptus trees lined the pavements – as did people.

People everywhere, as far as the eye could see. Elegantly clothed or sporting a smart-casual look, they strolled along the boulevards, sat in the sidewalk cafés and bars, of which there

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[116] Alliteration in the source text. *"... und darüber einen wild wuchernden Wahl wahnwitziger Fernsehantennen"* (p. 44).
[117] Could omit the dipoles. Surely it is enough to say that the antennas pointed in all directions. Anachronism: it would be satellite dishes today.
[118] In the source text: *"in alle Himmelsrichtungen"* (towards all cardinal points/compass points). Not commonly used like that in English.
[119] Source text: *"Sie fanden einen Parkplatz am Straßenrand und marschierten los, und mit jedem Schritt schienen sie tiefer einzudringen in eine Bannmeile der Sinnlichkeit, in ein vibrierendes Kraftfeld gieriger Lebenslust."* (p. 44)

seemed to be thousands, or simply stood leaning against parked cars, beer cans in hand, talking over each other, gesticulating, flirting, reading the newspaper or simply looking around. Yehoshuah, Judith and Stephen drifted with the crowds, passing brightly lit shop windows displaying American ready-to-wear fashion and frantically flickering video clips, slaloming around tables on which people were playing backgammon, and Stephen had to grin when he saw a fast-food outlet belonging to the "MacDavid" restaurant chain. They made their way to the beach, walked along the promenade and listened to the staccato of the wooden rackets used in a ball game that appeared to be very popular, to the crashing of the surf and to the incomprehensible, agitated announcements of the life-guards. They had a cappuccino in a beach bar and ate water melon with salty feta cheese, and Yehoshuah told Judith how he and Stephen had met.

"At first, he was just a name under a message on a Usenet forum. Not even a name, in fact – an e-mail address. Something like *Stephen-weird round symbol-MRT-dot-Maine-dot.COM*."

"And you were *ymenez-weird round symbol-Rockfelf-dot-IL-dot-EDU*," said Stephen, grinning.

Judith furrowed her brow. "What is a Usenet forum?"

"Hello-o! Welcome to the twentieth century, my dearest sister. Have you ever heard of something called the internet?[120] So – using a modem and a telephone line, you link your computer at home to a tangle of millions of other computers. Somewhere in this tangle – and the good thing is, you don't need to know where, the tangle knows it – there is a kind of whiteboard, in fact thousands of them, each one dedicated to a different topic. On the whiteboards, you can read messages left by others and put in your two cents if you feel like it. To make it sound better, these whiteboards are called Usenet forums. Ours focusses on archaeology. I'd written something about our work at the Rockefeller Institute. In response, Stephen got in touch and asked whether it was true that you could join a dig as a volunteer. So, Stephen, are you regretting it yet?"

Stephen got the impression that Judith was watching his reaction to this question particularly closely. He wondered if that meant something. But maybe it was just wishful thinking. "What is there to regret? It was a turning point in my life."

[120] The book is only 20 years old, but this sounds terribly dated. (p. 46).

Yehoshuah leant over to Judith, gesticulating and hogging her attention. “At first, he was just a name, a few strange symbols on a screen. As unreal as a video game. Fine, we were talking to each other – but who knows, it could have been a smart software programme running on a computer in a lab somewhere, pretending to be a real human being. But then I received a letter with an American stamp, stamped in the US state of Maine. I began to believe that he might actually exist as a real person. And then, one day, he simply called – what a shock! This name on my computer was talking to me, a real voice, with a strong American accent. He gave me a date, a time, a flight number – but honestly, I really only started believing it when he stood before me with his duffel bag.”

Stephen smiled. They hadn’t had much time. Yehoshuah had immediately taken him to the camp. Work had started the very next day, early in the morning.

“Boys and their computers,” said Judith before turning around to the man at the table next to her, who had unfolded his newspaper so expansively that one of its corners was continuously twitching right before her left eye. She let loose a volley of sentences in rattling Hebrew. In response, the man meekly beat a retreat.

Then they moved on, back to the boulevard, which seemed more and more oriental the further they moved south, smelling of kebabs and roasted nuts, enveloping them in melancholy melodies sounding from cheap, tinny transistor radios in cramped taverns. After a while, when it had already become dark and the neon signs reminded Stephen of Las Vegas, they reached the harbour – “did you know that Jaffa is the world’s oldest trading port, Stephen? It was built by King Solomon, fact!” – and the restaurant which Yehoshuah had chosen. They had to wait a short while as their places were cleared, the plates removed and the table set for them. Then they were finally seated and handed their menus, like priceless documents. The air was hot and sticky, and the noise level from the closely packed guests was deafening.

“Seems popular,” said Stephen.

“What did you say?”

“I said that this place seems to be popular,” shouted Stephen.

“Yes,” said Yehoshuah. “You have to reserve four days in advance.”

They ordered from a waiter who was wearing something like a tailcoat, but who buzzed with inelegant haste and could hardly wait to receive their orders before hastening to his next task. A young woman, clearly also highly stressed, served them their aperitifs, three large

sherries, with nervous movements. Judith wouldn't stop pestering him about the find and pointing out that he had promised to talk about it tonight, until Stephen finally gave in and began his story, even though he found the circumstances anything but ideal.

"Plot 14 was the necropolis of the settlement, its graveyard," he said, speaking to Yehoshuah, who'd had dealings with Professor Wilford-Smith on several occasions, but who wasn't familiar with the details of this site. "This was already known from the satellite images. So, we knew that we'd be finding any number of graves. Every volunteer was assigned to work on one grave. Mine was the last in a row and was located in its own quadrant. I was by myself in my pit and could hear the others on the other side of the dividing wall as they chattered and laughed. Using a brush, I was working on the bones that were slowly emerging from the soil after we had cleared the stones from the caved-in ceiling of the tomb. This was the day before yesterday, at around eleven o'clock. When the world was still in order."

The siblings were leaning forward, as was he. From a distance it must have looked strange, the way they were putting their heads together. Stephen sipped at his sherry.

"Stop teasing us," said Judith.

"I'm not teasing you. The story gets even more interesting. I reached a point where I became impatient and wanted to use my bare hands to push away a handful of soil next to the left upper arm bone, just to make faster progress. But I hit resistance. My God, I almost broke it. A burial object."

"Okay," said Yehoshuah with professional interest, "and what exactly was it?"

"A flat pouch made of a material I thought could be linen. Fairly well preserved, sewn up all around, and maybe this big." He indicated the size of the object between his fingers. "About as big as a paperback."

"And then?" asked Judith.

"Well," said Stephen, "I was curious to find out what was inside the pouch. So, I cut it open."

"You cut it open?"

"Yes."

"Just like that?"

"Just like that. Using my Swiss army knife. Along the side."

“I can’t believe it,” said Yehoshuah, aghast. “That’s the worst… That’s a cardinal sin in archaeology!”

“And what was inside?” asked Judith.

Stephen grabbed his glass, gulped down the remaining sherry, pursed his lips, glanced up at the ceiling and then looked from one to the other. “You won’t believe what I saw,” he said.

3.6. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 6

The repertoire of the Hellenistic and Roman eras is documented in its entirety in the form of vessel types.[121] *The cooking pots E-1 and E-2 have been identified as dating to the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D., with the earliest occurrences of type E-1 dated to the end of the 1st century B.C (see LAPP 1961, 190:Type 72.2; TUSHINGHAM 1985, 56; fig.22:28, 29; 23:5; 24:7,17,18), while E-2 appears to have appeared earlier in the same century.*

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

They walked towards the white tent, John Kaun in the lead, like a host showing his guests around his estate. The tent stood at the edge of an area marked by a chessboard-like grid of square pits, some barely visible, others deeply excavated. It seemed that the tent had been erected over one of the holes. Guards stood at every corner, fierce-looking young men holding submachine guns, short, black and menacing. They scanned their surroundings continuously, as if expecting an entire army to attack them at any moment.

Eisenhardt sweated. He wondered how the mogul bore it, dressed as he was in a dark blue double-breasted suit, with his tie kept neatly in place by a small golden pin. He was relieved to spot some of the ubiquitous yellow dust on his shoes and trouser legs, circumstantial evidence that he was perhaps not completely supernatural.

The professor walked behind him, slightly stooped over. Eisenhardt wondered how old he was. Certainly over 70, considering how white his hair was. Eisenhardt tried to understand why anyone that age would choose to spend their life grubbing around[122] in the soil of far-away countries instead of staying at home in comfort and growing roses. It was easy to picture him as a rose grower. Instead, he had been living here in the desert for who knew how many years. Eisenhardt had only been in the desert for half an hour, and was already fed up with it.

[121] This sentence was particularly difficult to translate. Gloss: "In the repertoire of the Hellenistic-Roman age, the entire time period of these two eras is evidenced by vessel types" (p. 50).
[122] Edit: changed "digging around" to "grubbing around". The non-standard expression is more interesting. In the source text, the non-standard *"wühlen"* is used instead of *"graben"*.

Kaun pulled back the tent flap and held it aside, letting Eisenhardt and Wilford-Smith step inside ahead of him. “Be careful,” he said as the writer entered the tent, “there’s a deep hole.”[123]

Inside the tent, the light was more diffuse and less intense. The stuffy heat was almost unbearable. Eisenhardt stood still to find his bearings. As expected, the tent had been erected immediately above one of the square pits, one of the deeply excavated ones. It appeared to measure about five metres by five. Just in front of his toes, a crude stairway had been hacked into the soil, made up of large steps with varying rises. In one place, a plank had been inserted and anchored with stones.[124] Eisenhardt carefully began to descend towards the pit floor, two metres below.

Somebody, probably Kaun, flipped a switch. Four lamps which Eisenhardt hadn’t noticed, mounted under the roof of the tent, lit up, flooding the scene with blinding light.[125] Eisenhardt paused for a moment and took another look around. How long did it take to excavate just this one hole? All around him, the archaeologists and their helpers had dug dozens of such holes in the ground.

The walls were dotted with large rocks and looked as if a single loud sound could make them collapse. The floor was flat, compacted and sandy. In the corner diagonally across from him, something had been covered with dark blue plastic sheeting.

The great mystery.

The discovery that could tie a brain in knots.

For a moment, Eisenhardt felt afraid. He was in a foreign country, in a foreign environment, and the powerful CEO of a powerful corporation expected something from him, and he didn’t even know what it was. He didn’t know whether he’d be able to deliver the goods. This fear had taken possession of every cell in his body, quietly, undramatically, but relentlessly, filling his every step with nervous tension, making him see the pit walls as menacing. Fear. It was an old companion. Perhaps it was why he preferred to write instead of having adventures. He remembered his childhood as an exciting, ecstatic time filled with wonder and surprises. But

[123] In the source text, *“es geht abwärts”* (“it goes down”) (p. 51).
[124] This sentence isn’t any clearer in the source text: *“An einer Stelle hatte jemand ein Brett eingefügt und mit Steinen befestigt”* (p. 51).
[125] The source text is more expressive than my translation: the lamps *“flammten auf”* (“burst into flame/light”), *“tauchten das Areal in gleißend helles Licht”* (“bathed the scene in glaring/dazzling bright light“).

one day, the fear was suddenly there, and he had stopped going out, instead remaining at home and starting to write.

He breathed deeply, sensing his breath as he exhaled. He'd found that it was impossible for him to feel afraid in that one tiny moment when he'd finished exhaling, when his lungs were empty. Sometimes this second was his window onto the real world, the world as it was without the fear in his eyes, his retina, his nerve fibres. And now, at this very moment, on the other side of the fear, he felt that the childlike, excited happiness was back, as if it had never gone away.

"Come," said Kaun, his eyes sparkling with excitement.[126] "Over here. Pull this sheet back."

"Please be careful," said Wilford-Smith calmly.

In effect, the pit was nothing but a large room without a ceiling, which had been covered by a tent cupola. Eisenhardt followed Kaun's request, took hold of one end of the plastic sheet, and lifted it carefully.

Below it was a skeleton.

It didn't exactly look like a skeleton from biology class. The parts of this skeleton had been scattered and were lying askew, as if a great weight had pressed and flattened it. Eisenhardt thought of the layers of soil which had been removed. That was probably exactly what had happened. The bones looked smooth and porous and he had qualms about touching them. But after he had pushed the plastic sheet to one side, he crouched down and stared in fascination at the empty eye sockets of the remarkably well conserved skull. So, this had once been a person.

"As I said," said the professor in his deliberate, polite manner[127], repeating his earlier explanations, "this grave is almost exactly two thousand years old. As far as we can tell, the entire settlement was abandoned no later than the year 90, and at the time it hadn't existed for much longer than about two hundred years."

"I understand," said Eisenhardt, wondering what was so mysterious about it. It was a skeleton, very well. This was to be expected when excavating old cemeteries. Lots of bare bones, more or less discoverable in anatomically correct configurations, along with a few burial objects like that flat linen pouch next to the sternum…

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[126] Edit: replaced "His eyes sparkled promisingly" with "…, his eyes sparkling with excitement."
[127] Source text: *"wiederholte der Professor in seiner langsamen, höfliche Unaufdringlichkeit verbreitenden Sprechweise"* ("repeated the professor in his slow manner of speaking that radiated polite unobtrusiveness") (p. 53).

“Exactly,” said John Kaun. “Take a closer look.”

Eisenhardt squinted. The pouch was rectangular, slightly larger than his open hand, and appeared to have been made of some type of burlap. The fabric looked desiccated and brittle. Something shone through it.

Kaun stood above him, his arms crossed expectantly. He seemed to enjoy watching him groping in the dark. “Open the pouch,” he said.

“Open it?” Eisenhardt asked.

“Yes. The right-hand side is open.”

Looking at it was one thing, but touching it… In museums, he’d had it drilled into him never to touch anything, and especially not to touch something if you knew it was thousands of years old or particularly fragile or both. Eisenhardt stretched out his hand, almost flinched when his fingertips, suddenly hypersensitive, touched the fabric of the pouch: wooden, scratchy fibres which yielded to his touch by crumbling into dust. But it was true: the pouch had indeed been cut open on the right-hand side. As carefully as he possibly could, he lifted the fabric.

Below it, he found another pouch, made of a strangely smooth, milky material that looked like mother-of-pearl and felt like plastic.

“Have you ever seen anything like it?” asked Kaun curiously.

Eisenhardt slowly shook his head. “I don’t think so. Should I?”

Kaun laughed quietly, a quiver in his voice betraying his inner tension.[128] “Actually, I think you have seen something like this before. By the way, this pouch is also open on the right-hand side – take a look.”

Why were his hands trembling? What did all of this mean? His fingers glided across the pouch with the utmost care, as if he were taking his final exam to qualify as a pickpocket. The material felt like plastic. Under the light of the ceiling spotlights, which shone down on him as bright and hot as the midday sun, he saw that there was an opening on the right-hand side and at the top, which looked as if it had been cut by a knife. Eisenhardt took hold of the loose edge and lifted it up gently.

[128] Source: *“Etwas in seiner Stimme vibrierte, als halte er eine innere Anspannung nicht mehr lange durch.”* (“Something in his voice quivered as though he would not be able to contain his inner tension much longer”) (p. 54).

He could hear the professor breathe in. He felt the media mogul hold his breath. And he stared at what was revealed. He couldn't have said what he was expecting to see, but it certainly wasn't this. Not at all. What he was looking at was so unexpected that his brain needed what seemed like an eternity to interpret the signals being supplied by his eyes.

He simply could not believe what he was looking at.

It was an instruction manual for a Sony video camera.

Stephen lifted his hands apologetically. "I'm sorry, but that's the truth. I sat there like an idiot, looking at it and waiting for it to vanish into thin air. Expecting it to be a mirage or heat stroke, who knows. But the thing didn't vanish. It was there, as real as these menus."

"An *instruction manual?"* Judith stared at him, an expression of utter disbelief on her face. "For a *video camera?"*

"A Sony MR-01 camcorder. At the top, it said 'US version'. I mean, I might be wrong, but I don't think that this was a common type of burial object in the year 50 A.D."

The waiter appeared with their three plates. His face was shiny with sweat and he looked as though he were being hunted, panting as if he were on the verge of collapse. The three of them drew apart, giving the waiter space to serve them, which he did wordlessly before disappearing back into the bustle.

"At first, I thought that somebody was playing a prank," said Stephen, taking his knife and fork. He had already forgotten the name of what he had ordered, but it looked great and smelled enticing. "Really, that was the very first thing I thought. If you look up now, I said to myself, you'll see them staring down into the pit, smirking and giggling and waiting to see your sheepish face. But then I looked up – and there was nobody there."

Yehoshuah shook his head in bewilderment as he skinned and expertly filleted his fish, separating out the fishbones, as carefully as if he were preparing an archaeological find. "And then?"

"I sat and thought. For a really long time. I guess I must have sat there for an hour, in my hole, doing nothing but thinking. But in the end, I couldn't think of anything better to do than to inform the professor." Stephen took a bite and started chewing. It tasted as good as it smelled. This restaurant really was a hot tip. "And his response was remarkable."

“Oh?” said Yehoshuah.

“He just looked at the find for a long time without saying anything. Then he quietly told me not to tell anybody about it. ‘No-one!’ he repeated insistently. And then he sent me to go and help Pierre. Pierre, who only speaks French. The only French I know is *oui* and *non* and *voulez-vous coucher avec moi?* I mean, what am I supposed I make of this?”

Judith giggled. Apparently she also knew that much French, at least. “And now you’re spilling your secrets anyway.”

Stephen gestured dismissively. “Whatever, I’ve never cared about any of that; he obviously doesn’t know me very well. I mean, he sends me away, has a tent erected over the pit, goes to make a telephone call, and the very next day the dig’s main sponsor turns up, invading the site with a swarm of people like Attila the Hun – what does it all mean? Did he really think I would stop asking myself what was going on?”

“And what do *you* think it means?” asked Yehoshuah.

“Well, one thing is clear: a dead person who was given an instruction manual for a camcorder as a burial gift definitely wasn’t a Jew living two thousand years ago,” said Stephen. “I guess he was recently murdered and buried there.”

Yehoshuah grimaced in horror. “My goodness. Do you really think so?”

“I’m not sure. But it’s a possibility.”

Judith furrowed her brow. “But why would a murderer place this exact instruction manual in the grave?”

“Maybe it’s a key piece of evidence. A telltale clue.”

“But if it was so incriminating, he could have burnt it. Or buried it somewhere else. His victim’s grave was the worst possible place. That’s where it would be more incriminating than anywhere else. Imagine if it hadn’t been there – everybody would have just viewed the skeleton as a normal archaeological find.” Behind Judith, somebody had started expansively unfolding his newspaper again. This time, the upper edge of the paper was scratching the back of her head, but she didn’t seem to notice.

“Earlier you said the skeleton was found in the necropolis,” said Yehoshuah pensively. “In a line with the other graves.”

“Yes.”

“This means that the murderer needed to have known the location of this settlement many years ago already, right?”

“Ah,” said Stephen, “and this despite the fact that it was only discovered on satellite images last year. Right.”

“Exactly. That’s weird.”

“If I wanted to bury a body,” said Judith grimly, passing her hand over her hair and missing the newspaper by a whisker, “then an undiscovered archaeological site would be the stupidest place of all, correct? I mean, if I’ve killed someone the last thing I want is for the body to be found.”

Stephen stared past her at the newspaper page. It was covered in dense Hebrew writing. Even though he couldn’t read a word, something had caught his attention. Or was it the man who was trying to read the paper in the dim light? “Maybe the murderer *wanted* the body to be found,” he thought aloud. “And he also wanted it to be immediately identifiable as a murder victim. And another thing: John Kaun is out there with his people. Not the police. What does that mean?”

Judith touched her deep black, curly hair again. This time she got hold of the newspaper, turned around, furious, and started berating the man in Hebrew. It wasn’t hard to guess what had made her so angry. Stephen grinned when the object of her anger, a slim, spectacle-wearing man with a mighty moustache, laboriously started folding his newspaper, apologising profusely.

Suddenly he discovered what had caught his attention earlier.

“Judith!”

She looked at him in irritation. He got up, bent over the table without noticing that he’d toppled the vase with the plastic flowers as well as the salt cellar, and grabbed the newspaper. “This photo!” he shouted, getting a better grip and tearing the newspaper out of the man’s hands before putting it on the table in front of Judith. “What is written here? In the caption?”

“Stephen? What’s going on?”

He tapped on the photo with his index finger. “This is the man who came in the taxi. As we were leaving. What does it say?”

“Which man?”

Stephen gaze bored into her eyes. “Just read what it says. Just do it.”

“Stephen, which man do you mean?”

“You’re driving me crazy,” growled Stephen. “Yehoshuah, you try. What does it say, for heaven’s sake?”

Astonished, but obediently, Yehoshuah bent over the newspaper photograph, which had apparently been taken aboard an airplane. “Peter Eisenhardt, the well-known German author, is travelling to Israel to do some background research for his next novel…”

“Peter Eisenhardt!” exclaimed Stephen. “Exactly. Thank you.” He pulled the newspaper away and gave it back to its owner, who had followed the interaction in obvious puzzlement.

“When we left camp, there was a taxi that arrived just before you,” said Stephen, turning to Yehoshuah. “And I asked you who the man was, remember?”

Yehoshuah nodded.

“I knew that I’d seen this face before on a photo, but I just couldn’t remember where or who it was. Now I know.” One of the members of the Brazilian expedition had been a German who had brought along two paperback editions of Peter Eisenhardt’s novels. The author’s face had been on the back covers.

“So what?” asked Judith with a frown. “I don’t recognise the name, sorry.”

Stephen leant back in his chair, and for a moment the background noise in the restaurant seemed to swell, a tsunami of voices in myriad languages, the clinking of glasses, laughter and the scratching of cutlery on crockery. A crazy thought shot through his mind, a completely crazy idea…

“In Germany,” said Stephen slowly, “he is a relatively well-known science-fiction author.”

Judith looked at him, and he looked back. Stephen Foxx loved crazy ideas. The life he lived was all thanks to a crazy idea. But this one took the cake.

“Perhaps,” she speculated, “John Kaun wants to turn one of Eisenhardt’s novels into a movie. And as they happened to both be in Israel, they agreed to meet…”

Stephen shook his head, very slowly, almost imperceptibly. “Kaun is a newsman. He isn’t interested in movies. He has never produced a movie.”

“Ok, wise guy. So it’s not that. Why don’t you tell us what it means.”

“I don’t know.”

“Science fiction, you say?” said Yehoshuah.

Stephen only growled. His mind was seething with ideas. He stared at his half-empty plate and suddenly wasn’t hungry anymore. Science fiction. Exactly. “Can we please get out of here as fast as possible?” he said weakly.

They left behind the maze of noisy streets, where a jazz piano sounded from the one restaurant while an electric guitar howled from the next, accompanying a belly-dancer. It was almost like a flight. Stephen marched ahead without knowing where he was going. His mind continued to seethe.

“Stephen?” he heard Judith behind him. “Is everything ok?”

He pulled his mobile phone from his pocket and switched it on.[129] “Everything ok, all fine. I just need some peace and quiet to make a telephone call.”

“A phone call?”

Next to a massive stone wall which must have been thousands of years old, he stopped and started dialling. The port’s dark, murky water lapped against the breakwater, the black silhouettes of ships marked their shapes against the sky, and it was quiet.[130] The other two caught up with him.

“Who are you calling?” asked Yehoshuah.

“Sony.”

“Sony?”

Stephen paused. “Would you two please stop repeating everything I say? I’m calling the company Sony, exactly. I want to know everything there is to know about this video camera.”

“At this time of the night?”

“In Japan, it is now” – he looked at his wristwatch – “just before eleven a.m.”.

“You’re calling *Japan*?” Yehoshuah was struggling to maintain his composure.

“Yes, I believe that is what I said. Yes. Sony is a Japanese company.”

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[129] Today, it would be highly unusual to keep one’s mobile phone in one’s pocket, but switched off.

[130] Source text: *“Das dunkle Wasser des Hafenbeckens manschte gluckernd gegen die Mole, die schwarzen Umrisse von Schiffen waren zu erahnen, und es war still.”* (p. 61)

Judith looked at him the way you look at somebody when you're not sure if they've lost their minds or if they're trying to play a prank. "And I suppose you've memorised the telephone number of Sony in Japan?"

Stephen held up his tiny, black mobile phone like a trump card. "It simply makes sense to choose the right service provider, even if it's a bit more expensive. If I need to speak to somebody whose number I don't know, I can call an agency that is open 24/7 and which has all the world's telephone directories. Clear?"

She started to say something, but then stopped and simply nodded.

He started dialling again. A woman's voice answered, as bright and cheerful as if it were early morning. For all he knew, it was early morning where she was. He explained what he wanted – "Sony, Japan, preferably someone in sales who speaks English" – received a chirpy "One moment please!" and was placed on hold.

Judith exchanged a glance with her brother. "I feel so old-fashioned," she muttered.

They waited. This wasn't going to be cheap.

Finally, they heard Stephen say "Good day", and he made an effort to speak slowly and clearly. The person at the other end of the line probably didn't speak English very well. "My name is Foxx, I'm calling you from Israel. Yes, Israel. In the Middle East. Yes. Between Egypt and Syria… Palestine, exactly."

Yehoshuah grimaced.

"I'm interested in your MR-01 camcorder. I'd like to know if there is a dealer in Israel where I can see the video camera." A pause. "MR-01, yes." Another pause, longer this time. "No, I'm sure. MR-01. M for Mike, R for Romeo. Dash zero one. Exactly."

The longer he listened, the more Stephen's eyes widened. His voice sounded strangely distorted when he spoke again. "Oh. I see. Right. Ok. Yes, I suppose there's nothing you can do. Yes, thank you. Thank you for the info. Not at all, you've been a great help. Thank you."

The beeping which marked the end of the call sounded forlorn. Then he just stood there, staring with vacant eyes at his telephone, then looking across the beach to where a small party had started. Music could be heard dimly from a portable tape recorder, snatches drifting across the sand to them, while dark, slim figures danced to the rhythm, some of them in the water.

"And?" Judith finally asked.

Stephen managed a short, joyless laugh. “Science fiction,” he said, taking another look at his telephone before turning it off and putting it back in his pocket. “Science fiction.”

“Could you be a bit clearer? What did they say?”

Stephen breathed in deeply and looked out over the wide, pitch-black harbour basin.

“The Sony MR-01 video camera,” he said, “is still in development. It will be launched in three years at the earliest. Currently, it only exists as a design.”

3.7. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 7

Coin 47: Site 98, Strat. JE 14/6, Per.30 Ph.83. Weight AE 2.53g. – Claudius (51-64 A.D.), Year 14; Judean procurator: Antonius Felix. – Reference: MESHORER 232. – Dated: 54 A.D.

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

"Well?" asked the owner of the world's second-largest news network triumphantly. "What do you make of it?"

Eisenhardt got up stiffly. He felt pins and needles in his right leg. Obviously the blood flow had been restricted while he was crouching, and he hadn't even noticed. "Hard to say," he said hesitantly. "It looks like a bad joke."

"And assuming that it isn't a joke?"

"What else could it be?" Eisenhardt massaged his thigh. "Didn't you say that one of the volunteers found this? Why would you think that it's true?"

John Kaun looked challengingly at the professor. "Tell him what we know about dating the find."

"We may," he replied, "assume that the layer in which the skeleton was located was intact. In other words, we can exclude the possibility that the deceased was buried here at a later stage. As you can imagine, it happens quite often that a cemetery is created in a place where there used to be one centuries earlier – especially in a country like this, which has been settled for such a long period of time. This is something you have to be aware of when doing archaeological excavations. Else there's a risk that finds could be assigned to the wrong era. There are certain unmistakeable indicators to look out for. In this instance, as I said, this was not the case – the layer was undisturbed, and thanks to numerous coins, pottery shards, grass pollen and wood fragments which could be dated thanks to their tree ring patterns, we were able to establish a date with a high degree of certainty. In other words, we can safely assume that the skeleton remained buried here for two thousand years."

"The skeleton," said Eisenhardt and nodded. "But we aren't talking about the skeleton. We're talking about the pouch."

“Well, the pouch was next to the skeleton.”

“When you saw it. But was it there when the skeleton was exposed?”

“I can show you fibres from the fabric of the outer pouch under a microscope. They come from a plant that hasn’t been found in the area for the last one-and-a-half thousand years.”

“But perhaps elsewhere?”

“Furthermore, the fabric is clearly very old.”

“Okay. Who opened the pouch?”

“It was Mister Foxx. The young man who found it.”

“Is it common practice for your volunteers to damage the objects they find?”

“No, of course not. I reprimanded him.”

“But it is conceivable that he could have swapped the contents of the pouch?”

“Conceivable, yes. But why would he have done such a thing?”

“To play a prank on you.”

Wilford-Smith shook his head. “He’s not the kind of person who plays pranks.”

“Alright.” Eisenhardt looked from one to the other. “What exactly would you like me to do? I have the feeling that you already have a theory, and apparently it isn’t that this is some sort of hoax. Why don’t you tell me what you make of this.”

Kaun spoke again. “We don’t think that it was fraud. I propose that we tell you everything we consider as verified and then describe our conclusion. And then you can tell us what you think.”

“That sounds sensible.”

“Firstly,” started Kaun, holding up his right index finger and starting to pace the floor, “the layer in which the skeleton was found is two thousand years old and was found undisturbed during the excavation. Secondly, the pouch is made of a material that was used in this area two thousand years ago, but which is no longer found anywhere. Thirdly, the material of which the second pouch is made is clearly plastic foil, discoloured due to some as yet unknown factor. Fourthly, the paper on which the instruction manual was printed also appears to be very old, as strange as that might sound. We will get all of the materials – fabric, paper, bone – carbon-dated. But that’s going to take time.”

“Incidentally,” said the professor, “we found amalgam fillings in the teeth of the skull. Amalgam was first used in dental fillings in France in 1847.”

“A lost invention?”

“No. This person had two professionally drilled and filled teeth, apart from teeth with terrible tooth decay; many teeth were missing entirely. If such an advanced dentist had been around in the year 50, the patient would have gone back to him.”

Eisenhardt sighed deeply, clasped his hands behind his back, walked a few steps, turned and came back the same way, stopped in front of the grave and looked at the half-exposed bones. He could smell the hot dust. The skull shone in the light of the spotlights, only the eye sockets remaining in shadowed darkness.

“You think he was a time traveller, right?”

For a heartbeat, there was only silence, then he heard John Kaun burst into laughter.

“You see?” he said to the professor. “What did I say? For a science-fiction author, this is child’s play. While we have to rack our brains, he just takes one look and – bang, he knows what’s going on.” He clapped his hands like a child, but not even this looked ridiculous on him. It looked threatening. Eisenhardt felt his stomach cramp.

“So that’s your archaeological sensation,” he said. “The skeleton of a time traveller.”

Kaun paused.

“No,” he said in a tone that showed that he had only now realised that Eisenhardt had missed the most important point. “That isn’t the sensation.”

“What then?”

“Think about it,” Kaun said.[131] “A time traveller. With a video camera.”

Eisenhardt stared at him. He understood.

“My God,” he said.

Kaun smiled, wolf-like. “Yes… what do you think he was looking for, two thousand years ago?”

[131] Source: *“forderte der Mann im dunkelblauen Anzug ihn auf”* („demanded the man in the dark-blue suit“) p. 67.

They found their way back to Yehoshuah's car, walking fast without noticing they were doing so, as if they were being chased.

"Forget everything we said about a murder," said Stephen. "That was no murder."

"What else?"

"The person really died two thousand years ago, was buried, and we excavated the grave."

"And the pouch? With the instruction manual?"

"As well."

What kind of a city was this, where at half past one in the morning there were streets entirely blocked by traffic? Stephen stopped, looked at the chaos and then turned towards his companions. "My theory sounds completely crazy, but it explains everything. Look: very soon, somebody is going to find a way to make time travel work. Perhaps three years from now, maybe a little later, but in any case it's going to happen at a time when this Sony MR-01 camcorder is the best video camera you can buy. Because somebody is going to buy it and travel two thousand years into the past. For whatever reason, the person can't come back to his[132] time. So he has to remain there, living among the people of the time until his death. He is buried, and somebody places the pouch with the instruction manual, still sealed in plastic, in the grave, not knowing what this object really is. And we have exhumed him – a few years before he starts his trip!"

He looked into his companions' faces and saw two jaws drop.

"But that would mean," said Judith at last, "that right now, the person whose skeleton you found lying in the grave is still *alive* somewhere?"

"Exactly."

Yehoshuah looked bewildered. "But then we have to find him! We have to warn him!"

"And then?"

"We have to stop him from starting on his journey."

[132] In the source text, it is simply assumed that the time traveller was male. In this paragraph, this can be explained because the grammatical gender of *"jemand"* ("someone") is male. But it remains male throughout the book, reflecting that the roles of heroes and adventurers are predominantly assigned to men.

“But then we won’t find him,” said his sister. “And if we don’t find him, we won’t even think of warning him. And if we don’t warn him, he will set off on his journey. So we find him after all.” She laughed in delight, her voice as clear as a bell. “Maybe I’m not so old-fashioned after all!”

“That really is a crazy theory,” Yehoshuah said accusingly[133] to Stephen. “Just thinking about it makes my head spin.”

They started walking again. A crowd of people streamed onto the street through some flap doors, and it took a while before Stephen realised that a movie must have just finished at the cinema. They threaded their way between hooting, stinking cars to the other side of the street and, following Yehoshuah’s directions, turned into a quieter and darker side street.

“It’s not about warning the man,” said Stephen. “I think it’s possible that he knew he wasn’t going to return. Perhaps time travel only works in one direction, and perhaps he accepted that.”

“But who would do such a thing?”

“Think about it! For this subject?”

“Which subject?”

He stopped and looked at them, stunned. “What do you mean, which subject? I have the ability to travel two thousand years into the past. I know that I won’t be able to come back, but I can take the best available video camera with me. What am I going to film?”

Two faces looked back at him in puzzlement. Until it dawned upon him.

“Damn,” he mumbled. “Of course. You’re Jewish. It’s only logical…”

He breathed deeply. “Okay, once again, from the top. Remember that the man who is travelling into the past is taking the US version of the instruction manual with him. Not the Japanese version or the Hebrew version. This means that he’s probably an American. And for an American who accepts the challenge of travelling two thousand years into the past and not being able to return, there can be only one worthwhile photographic subject in the entire world at the time: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus Christ.”

[133] Source text: *“klagend”* (“complainingly, plaintively”) (p. 68). The semantically correct translation doesn’t quite fit.

For a heartbeat, he felt himself step out of himself, saw himself standing in a narrow, dusky street in Tel Aviv, his word echoing from the quiet houses around him. The moment passed. He blinked. What was he saying?

"Yes. The calendar is based on this event." Then he remembered that the Jewish culture had its own calendar; it was currently around the year 5760. But even the state of Israel used the Christian calendar in its administration. Offhand, he couldn't think of any state in the world that didn't use it. Saying that the whole world based its calendar on the Christian chronology was absolutely justifiable.

Stephen could feel the palms of his hands getting sweaty. A shiver went up his spine. His mental turmoil had vanished, replaced by a crystalline clarity that almost took his breath away.

"John Kaun," he continued in a voice that felt strangely hoarse, "has come up with exactly the same theory. That's why he's here. He believes that the camera has to be somewhere out there, packed and sealed to survive for two thousand years – and inside the video camera, the video tape."

He saw Judith nod slowly. She understood. He saw Yehoshuah's face in the light of the street lanterns. He looked pale. Everything was clear now. The pieces of the puzzle had been joined together. The words tumbled, like the last dominoes at the end of the row.

"He wants the video," he said.

3.8. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 8

The composition of some vessel type walls was analysed by breaking off pieces of the vessel fragments and re-firing them in an electrically heated, oxidising oven. The samples were exposed to a maximum temperature of 800-900°C for iron age-Byz./Fr.-Arabic and 1000°C for medieval and later ceramics for a period of one hour. Oxidation usually lightens the colour of the shard, revealing tempering additives and coatings. The potential destruction of the shard from being exposed to high temperatures provides insights into the original firing temperatures (see Chapter III.5-1).

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

The opulence of John Kaun's caravan befitted his status.[134] Most of its interior was taken up by a luxurious study, panelled in dark wood, fitted with a deep pile, ultraplush grey carpet,[135] on which their dusty shoes left marks that were painful to the eye. An enormous mahogany desk dominated the room. On it stood a banker's lamp, the kind Eisenhardt had only ever seen in American movies. Mounted on the wall behind the mighty black leather chair there was an oil painting that looked expensive and probably was, while on a side table he saw a computer screen which displayed the company logo of Kaun Enterprises, and next to it an entire battery of telephones. Eisenhardt was reminded of the antennas he had noticed on the roof of the caravan, among them a large dish that was presumably capable of communicating directly with a communications satellite. Even when John Kaun was far removed from his head office in a desolate wasteland, he did whatever current technology allowed to keep his company under control.

And best of all: the room was pleasantly cool.

"What would you like to drink?" asked Kaun[136] and opened a fridge, fully stocked with bottles shimmering enticingly in a variety of colours. "Canadian whisky for you, professor?"

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[134] Source text: *"John Kauns Wohnwagen konnte nicht anders als mit dem Wort 'standesgemäß' beschrieben werden."* ("John Kaun's caravan could not be described in terms other than 'befitting his status'.") (p. 71). This seems an unnecessarily complicated way of describing the caravan.
[135] Source text: *"... dessen Boden mit knöcheltiefem grauem Teppich ausgelegt war"* ("the floor of which was covered in an ankle-deep grey carpet") (p. 71).
[136] Source text: *"der Industrielle"* ("the industrialist") (p. 72).

"Yes, please," said Wilford-Smith with a sigh before dropping into one of the armchairs. He looked tired.

"And for you, Mr Eisenhardt?"

Eisenhardt[137] hesitated. He rarely drank alcohol, not so much for health reasons or out of principle, but rather for the simple reason that he usually felt worse afterwards than before. Alcohol was something that impaired him. In the best case, it made him sleepy. "Do you have anything alcohol-free?" he asked.

Kaun gave him a look which Eisenhardt interpreted as irritated disapproval. As if he had violated some unwritten rules. As if he were a wet blanket. But Kaun kept a neutral expression and asked: "What would you like? A Coke? Ginger ale? Perrier?"

"A Coke would be great."

Kaun passed them their glasses, mixed himself a more elaborate drink and then sat down behind his desk. Eisenhardt involuntarily expected him to stretch, loosen his tie, lean back and relax, but he only sipped at his drink, leant forward and looked at him intently.

"What do you make of all of this?" he asked.

"Hmm," said Eisenhardt, searching for the right words. Even in his daily work, he didn't find it easy; in English, it was twice as hard. "How can I put it? Somehow it feels as if I'd ended up in an Indiana Jones movie[138] by mistake."

Something like a smile flashed across Kaun's[139] face, but he didn't say anything.

"Are you quite sure you're not being conned?" asked Eisenhardt. "Remember the Hitler diaries."[140]

"That was the very first thing I thought of. But there are diaries by Joseph Goebbels, and those are real." Kaun glanced at his wristwatch, which was flat, golden and looked priceless. "By now, the material samples should have arrived at a lab in Chicago which will date them

[137] Source text: *"der Schriftsteller"* ("the author") (p. 72).
[138] This cultural reference is almost forty years old (the first Indiana Jones movie was released in 1981), but still well understood. Sequels were released in 1984, 1989, 2008 and another instalment is planned for 2021.
[139] Source text: *"des Medienzaren"* ("of the media czar") (p. 73).
[140] The Hitler diaries were a series of 60 volumes of journals supposedly penned by Adolf Hitler, but which had in fact been written by Konrad Kujau, a dealer in Nazi memorabilia and small-time con artist. It probably wouldn't be necessary to explain this reference – the information is easy enough to find online.

using the radiocarbon method. If they find that the paper is two thousand years old, there can be no other explanation but that somebody travelled through time. Do you agree?"

"Yes."

"The camera exists. I'm sure of it. And I'm also sure that it has been well conserved."

Eisenhardt finally found the words to formulate an objection that had been going through his mind. "Have you considered whether a video tape which has been buried for two thousand years is even capable of holding a recording? Video recordings are magnetic. Surely magnetisation degrades over time. After two thousand years, there should be nothing left but static."

"You're right," said Kaun, nodding. "That was the first thing I checked. I spoke to NASA scientists who analyse radio signals from space probes which photograph distant planets like Uranus or Neptune. These people have a very similar problem, that is filtering out the weak signals transmitted by the probes from the cosmic white noise. The crystal-clear images they deliver prove what they're capable of. It may take a while and take up a lot of supercomputer processor time, but it will be possible to restore the recording, no matter how old it is."

"Ah," said Eisenhardt in amazement. That sounded plausible.

"Of course, I didn't say anything about a time traveller," Kaun added. He finally leant back, holding the glass in front of his chest with both hands. The liquid in the glass shimmered in golden hues. "I imagine that he worked with an ally…" – here he paused and corrected himself: "*will* work with an ally. You see? This is what I mean. Thinking about all of this twists my mind in knots. That's why I need you, Mr Eisenhardt. You have written a lot of stories about time travel. Meaning that you have already played through all the problems in your mind which we now have to deal with in reality."

Eisenhardt hesitated, then nodded.

"So – he'll be working with a second person. They'll agree on where he's going to hide the camera. Then one of them travels into the past, while the other simply goes to the place they selected and finds the recording which the traveller… made? Will have made? That makes sense, doesn't it?"

"Yes."

"Practically at the same time."

“If everything works out,” said Eisenhardt. He could feel himself getting tired. He wanted to sleep on it; tomorrow everything was going to look different. Maybe he’d come up with some new ideas which the indefatigable businessman hadn’t thought of yet.

“It will have worked out. You don’t travel into the past without doing everything in your power to prepare. This camera is at the appointed place. The only question is: where? Or, if you want to put it differently: what are the two of them going to decide? Put yourself in their shoes, Eisenhardt, guess their thoughts. You’re a writer – putting yourself in other people’s shoes is your job. Find out what he’s thinking. Find out where the camera is.”

Kaun’s voice had changed. His tone had become harsh, demanding, metallic. Eisenhardt stared at him and could feel panic rising like an incandescent hand reaching up from his guts to grip his throat. The real John Kaun was back. He’d just been hiding behind a mask of sociability. And the real John Kaun was a predator who wore a blue suit.

Eisenhardt looked nervously across to Wilford-Smith, but the professor had finished his whisky and was staring straight ahead, his eyes seemingly ready to fall shut at any moment. “I’m finding all this, um, a bit much at the moment. The trip, the find… but I’m going to think about it.”

“You have a bit of time. Not unlimited, but you have some.”

“I will need to do some research. I need access to a large library.”

Kaun nodded as if he had expected nothing less. With a quick movement, he turned to the side, reinforcing the discomfiting impression that he never tired, lifted one of the telephone handsets, dialled a two-digit number and said to the voice at the other end: “Please come over.” Then he put down the handset.

“We’ll give you the caravan next to this one,” he said. “You’ll have a fully equipped study at your disposal. Otherwise…” There was a noise from the entrance, then the door opened. A man came in whom Eisenhardt had never seen before. The professor gave a startled jerk. From the way he looked at the newcomer, it was clear he had never seen him either.

“Gentlemen, may I introduce you to Mr Ryan. He heads my security department and will take care of everything from here on in. Ryan, meet Professor Wilford-Smith, the excavation director, and Mr Eisenhardt, the author.”

“Pleased to meet you,” said the man, in a low, dark voice.

He was tall, at least a metre ninety, and gave the impression of peak fitness and of being as tough as nails. An elite soldier out of uniform, dressed in a plain khaki overall. His handshake was cool, brief, non-committal. His hair had been shorn so short that one could only speculate about its colour, and the eyes in his expressionless face were the clearest blue Eisenhardt had ever seen. It was impossible to guess his age. He seemed strangely ageless; he could have been 28 years old or 58.

"Ryan," continued Kaun, looking at Eisenhardt, "will get you any book you need. Moreover, he will get you anything you need, whatever it might be. He will take you to any library in this country or get a driver to take you there whenever you need to. If you can think of anything that will speed up our search, tell him."

Eisenhardt nodded, taken aback, and looked timidly at Ryan. The man returned his look emotionlessly.

"Mr Eisenhardt, I mean precisely that: absolutely anything that you can think of."

"Yes."

"Your job is not to give any thought to whether you are overburdening him."

"I understand."

"Should I discover," Kaun started again, fixing Eisenhardt[141] with his dark, glowing tiger's eyes, "that you worked without a resource which you didn't get because you would have had to ask for it and didn't – then you'll see a side of me which I guarantee you won't like."

Wow. Eisenhardt gulped uncomfortably, then nodded. The honeymoon was over. And Kaun clearly hadn't made it to the top because of his tie-knotting skills.

"Moreover," continued Kaun[142], leaning forward, resting his elbows on the leather desk pad and putting his fingertips together, "we are going to tighten up security. This place has to be protected. There will be no more unwelcome slip-ups like letting Foxx go out to visit some discotheques[143] tonight of all nights."

The professor pushed himself up in his leather chair and felt obliged to take sides. "Mr Kaun, I can assure you… Stephen Foxx is a young man and has his eyes on the girl. Of course he

[141] Source text: *"den Schriftsteller"* ("the author") (p. 77).
[142] Source text: *"der Milliardär"* ("the billionaire") (p. 77).
[143] Source text: *"Diskotheken"* ("discotheques") (p. 77). Language has changed since the book was written – today it might be more colloquial to say "go out clubbing".

wants to go out with her. The man who came to collect them is her brother. I know him well; he works at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem as an assistant."

Kaun mustered the archaeologist like a disgusting insect. "There are some questions we might have wanted to ask him."

"But we can still ask those questions tomorrow."

"We could have asked him tonight and would have lost less time."

Eisenhardt frowned. What was the man thinking? Did he believe he could solve this type of problem by using simple, brute logic, like saying 'You mean to say Leonardo da Vinci took six months to paint the Mona Lisa? Give him twenty-five assistants, then he can do it in week!'?

"Dear God," said Wilford-Smith with a sigh and let himself drop back down in his leather chair, which looked like it swallowed up his gaunt figure. "He's a free agent. Surely I can't tell him what to do outside of working hours."

"You don't have to," said Kaun. "We'll take care of that from here on."

Wilford-Smith[144] looked at him sullenly. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"We're going to impose a news blackout. I do not want news of the discovery to spread and trigger a goldrush where the whole country starts looking for the camera."

"And how do you propose to do that? Most of my assistants are volunteers…"

"I don't give a damn,"[145] said Kaun sharply.

They flinched as if he'd slammed his hand on the table. The fact that he hadn't needed to made it all the more impressive.

"You still haven't understood what we're dealing with here,"[146] said Kaun and looked from one to the other as if, by doing so, he could hammer meaning into their uncomprehending skulls[147]. "You think this is nothing more than a scoop. You think this is why I'm chasing it – because it's the biggest scoop of all time. The most sensational headline ever written. The most

[144] Source text: *"Der Wissenschaftler"* ("the scientist") (p. 78).
[145] Source text: *"Das ist mir egal"* ("I don't care") (p. 78).
[146] Source text: *"Sie machen sich noch nicht wirklich klar, womit wir es hier zu tun haben"* ("You have not really made it clear to yourselves what we are dealing with here") (p. 78).
[147] Source text: *"Hirne"* ("brains") (p. 78). Skulls are hard and tie the meaning back to the semantic field implied by "hammer".

sensational find since the dawn of archaeology. A revolution in physics. But none of you have understood what this video tape *really* means."

His words hung expectantly in the room for a few seconds before being swallowed up by the plush carpet and the mahogany-panelled walls. Nobody dared to breathe. Everybody was in suspense, waiting for Kaun to finish talking. He appeared to relish it.

"What," he asked quietly, almost in a whisper, "do you suppose the Catholic church would be willing to give for a video proving the resurrection of Jesus Christ?"

He paused.

"Or," he said with a tight-lipped smile, "one which *disproves* it?"

The car's headlights pierced the night, exploring the grey asphalt of the road that led through the darkness and that was surprisingly busy considering that it was two o'clock in the morning. They didn't talk much, each lost in their own thoughts, and apart from the drone of the engine, a peculiar dazed silence dominated the car's interior.

This time around, it was Stephen's turn to sit in the back. About halfway back to the camp, he leant forward, rested his elbows on the armrests and stuck his head between the two front seats. "Yehoshuah?"

"Mm?"

"You have several laboratories for analysing archaeological finds at the Rockefeller Museum, right?"

"Yes."

"Didn't you say that you also study old papers?"

"Papyri. Not papers. Plural of papyrus."

"Papyrus, right. That stuff made from reeds."[148]

"Not reeds. Papyrus was made from the inside of the papyrus plant, *cyperus papyrus* in Latin. A sedge."

[148] This short exchange is a challenge to translate (p. 79/80). Stephen says *"Schilf"* (reed); Yehoshuah corrects him, saying that papyrus is not made from *Schilf*, but from the inside of the papyrus *"Staude"* (herbaceous perennial), a *"Riedgras"* (sedge). However, in English papyrus is commonly referred to as a reed, even though it belongs to the sedge family, *Cyperaceae*.

“But it’s not the same as paper.”

“Exactly.”

Stephen nodded. A truck thundered past on the other lane. At the edge of the road, he saw a road sign flash past where somebody had sprayed over the English and Hebrew text, leaving only the Arabic writing visible.

“Assuming the professor wants to study the user manual, where would be the best place for him to do that?”

“At our laboratory.”

“At your laboratory? I thought you could only analyse papyri?”

“That’s what we do. But we can just as easily restore paper. In fact, that’s a lot easier than restoring papyrus. It’s just that nobody has ever come to us with old paper.”

“And why not?”

“Because in the entire Mediterranean region, nothing but papyrus was used as a writing material in antiquity.”

“But you would be able to restore paper?”

“Of course.”

“Treat brittle pages in a way that allows them to be safely turned?”

“Certainly.”

“Make faded letters visible?”

“No problem.”

“Good,” said Stephen. “That’s good.”

Now Judith got involved. She turned in her seat to look at Stephen from the side. In the weak illumination from the dashboard, he sensed rather than saw her suspicious expression. “You’re not just asking because you’re interested in Yehoshuah’s work, are you?”

Stephen dropped his head as if it had suddenly become very heavy and muttered: “No, I’m not just interested in Yehoshua’s work.”

“Well?”

“I forgot something.”

“You… what?”

“I forgot something. I forgot to tell, I mean. – Yehoshuah, please keep your eyes on the road!” The car had started to swerve alarmingly as Yehoshuah turned his head just like his sister had to look suspiciously at Stephen.

“Forgot?” Judith didn’t believe a word.

Stephen sighed. “I really forgot. I forgot to mention it when I showed the professor my find and I forgot it again when I told you the story. It really is strange.”

“So, are you at least going to tell us now?”

Stephen looked from one to the other. Filled with apprehension, Judith’s eyes glowed desirably in the dark, like two deep lakes. Yehoshuah stared straight ahead at the road. He seemed tense, as if he needed another unsettling story like a heart patient needs a claim for tax arrears.

But this was an adventure. Adventures and adrenaline went hand in hand. And hey[149], Yehoshuah was an Israeli, a hardened citizen of a nation under threat. He should be as used to stress as a New York stock trader. Stephen decided to forge ahead regardless. Maybe it was simply the weird lighting that made Yehoshuah look so stressed.

“The plastic pouch,” he began, “contained more than just the user manual.”

Judith made a choking sound. “I knew it.”

“I really forgot to mention it,” insisted Stephen. “I plain forgot. Perhaps my subconscious wants to keep it secret, I don’t know.”

“Let me guess what else was in the pouch. A map. Marked with an X.”

“No. Just a few folded, crumbling pieces of paper.”

Yehoshuah groaned. “Crumbling!”

“Yes. It was the first thing I saw after cutting open the pouch. Beside myself as I was anyway, I pulled out the papers with the tweezers. That’s when the Sony company logo appeared… I don’t know why, but that wiped everything from my mind. There was no room left to think about the other pieces of paper.”

[149] Exact rendition of the source text: *“Und, hey…”* (p. 81).

“So, where are those other paper fragments now – the crumbling ones? In the wastepaper basket?”

“No, I simply put them in my excavation box, on top of the soil I had swept together by then. And the box is still under my bed.”

“That’s just fantastic,” said Judith.

“The professor isn’t going to be too happy when you only show this to him now,” said Yehoshuah, shaking his head. “And after everything you’ve said about John Kaun… I don’t know. I think you need to work on your story a bit. I mean, to keep him from ripping your head off, at least.”

A pothole shook the car, stressing the suspension sufficiently to cause a distinct jerk and a sound. *Tsa-dum.* Yehoshuah took his foot off the accelerator. Another pothole. *Tsa-dum.*

Stephen breathed in and out slowly and allowed himself to sense the car’s vibrations. He licked his lips before continuing.

“I’m not planning to say anything about the papers. Not to Kaun and not to the professor.”

Tsa-dum.

He imagined that he could hear the hair on the back of Judith’s neck stand up.

Tsa-dum.

“Stephen, I didn’t mean it like that,” Yehoshuah finally said with an effort. “I mean, just because you forgot the papers… the first shock… you’ll be forgiven. Really, it could have happened to anybody. It’s no reason to hide it. The papers could be notes kept by the dead person, maybe even his diary! And if he really was a time traveller… then they may even contain a clue about the place where the camera is hidden!”

Stephen grinned as he nodded. “Precisely.”

“Yes, but…” appalled, Yehoshuah turned his head, looking at Stephen from the side. “By doing so, you are obstructing…”

“Yehoshuah, please! The road! If we end up in a ditch because of you, the papers will end up in the rubbish instead of your laboratory.”

“Okay, okay. But why in my laboratory?”

Judith sighed impatiently[150]. “He wants to examine them on his own,” she said. “Stephen Foxx, the dashing adventurer, wants to beat everybody to the punch.”

Yehoshuah could no longer keep his eyes on the road. “Is this true, Stephen?”

The car slalomed over the pothole-strewn road. Stephen sighed. At least there was no oncoming traffic. “Think about it. Why do you think John Kaun is here? To chase after an important archaeological discovery? Because he discovered his passion for historical science? Yehoshuah – Kaun is a businessman. Profits are his only passion. I know that you don’t follow this kind of news, but I do: Kaun was meant to be in Melbourne, Australia today to lead negotiations about buying Australia’s largest chain of newspapers. He must have cancelled. And when someone like John Kaun cancels that kind of appointment, it means he’s smelling greater profits elsewhere.”

“So what? He’s going to find the video and he’ll be the first to show it on TV. Let him – what is there to object about?”

“Nothing.”

“And supposing you find the video before he does – what are *you* going to do with it?”

“I’ll think of something, don’t you worry.”

“I have the feeling that what you really want to do is show everybody how smart you are,” said Judith, drily. “Smarter than anybody else, even if his name is John Kaun and he’s worth billions of dollars.”

“Nonsense,” responded Stephen, although with little conviction. What she had said had the unpleasant flavour of the truth. He wasn’t entirely sure of his own motives, but even so, her intuition wasn’t completely off track.

But dammit, he was a pretty clever guy, always had been. And here was John Kaun, who had been stylised into an absolute prodigy by the business press, someone who supposedly combined ruthless intelligence with brutal assertiveness, all in one awe-inspiring package.[151] This man, as the world’s press tirelessly proclaimed, was the prototype of the manager of the

[150] Source: *“Judith gab ein grunzendes Geräusch von sich”,* “Judith emitted a grunting sound” (p. 83).
[151] *“Und hier war dieser John Kaun, den die Wirtschaftspresse seit Jahren zum absoluten Wunderknaben hochstilisierte, zu einer angeblich absolut anbetungswürdigen Mischung aus erbarmungsloser Intelligenz und gewalttätiger Durchsetzungsfähigkeit”* (p. 84). This sentence required flexibility in translation.

coming millennium. When, if ever, would he could get another chance to compete with such a fascinating rival?

He looked at Yehoshuah from the side, who was finally watching the road again, which cut, smooth and black, between rocky hills. In any case, what was required right now was something like leadership. There was no way he could do it all by himself: he needed to get Yehoshuah on his side. And Judith, too.

Apart from which he also needed to get her into his bed.

"Listen," he began again. He had to clear his voice. "We don't have to make it complicated. Let us first study the papers ourselves – once we know what's written on them we can still decide what we're going to do."

Yehoshuah shook his head. "I'm not so sure."

"What aren't you sure about?"

"We – that means me, doesn't it? You want me to restore the papers. I've learnt how to do that, okay, but I'm not really experienced. What if I get it wrong? Damage something?"

"Why would you get it wrong?"

"Something can always go wrong."

Stephen hesitated. He had only one trump card left, and he needed to play it as effectively as possible.

"We have to be clear on one thing," he started, glancing from Judith to her brother. "Once we give up the papers, we'll be out. We'll be kept out of the loop. Nobody's going to ask us anything and nobody's going to tell us anything. It'll all be over."

Judith's eyes widened. Yehoshuah breathed out explosively. He'd got them, both of them.

"Well?" he said, shrugging his shoulders innocently. "Is that what we want?"

The camp lay dark and still at the foot of mountain ridge, unchanged from when they'd left. Dimly lit lamps hung from the guards' tents which had arrived with Kaun, hazily outlining the movements of the tents' occupants.

"So, tomorrow evening," said Stephen as he got out of the car.

“Sabbath begins tomorrow evening,” said Yehoshuah, who still wasn’t looking entirely comfortable.

“Don’t go all religious on me, okay?” Stephen closed the car door and stood next to Judith. Together they watched as her brother drove off, as quietly as possible. The loudest sound was made by the tyres grinding over the gravel. It seemed to echo from the mountains, but it might have been their imaginations running wild.

Finally, the car was reduced to a spot of light in the distance. Above them, the night sky sparkled like an empress’s treasure chest as they slowly walked back towards the tents. Stephen put his arm over her shoulders, and she didn’t shake it off, instead leaning in to him. Her hair smelled of the desert and of the orient, of secret spices from the narrowest alleys of the bazaar. He could feel muscles rippling under her skin as they carefully made their way, which made it easier to let his hand glide from her shoulder down to her upper arm and from there to around her waist. Her muscles felt hard and toned, which made him feel as if he were holding a tigress in his arms. She’d probably crush him during sex.

“Halt!” barked a harsh voice.

They stopped in surprise. A man they’d never seen before emerged from the shadows. He was trim and tall, wore a khaki overall without any insignias or a name tag, and had his hair shorn as short as a convict or a marine. He had strikingly clear blue eyes and gave them a piercing look. It felt like he was looking right through them with X-ray vision. He was carrying a large torch which he switched on and shone in their faces. “Who are you?”

Stephen blinked, annoyed. “Why don’t you tell me who you are first?”

The blue eyes narrowed. “It’s a bit late at night for this kind of joke, my young friend. Tell me your names and what you want.”

“Stephen Foxx and Judith Menez. We are excavation helpers. And all we want is to get to our tents because, as you rightly pointed out, it is already quite late.”

“Do you have identification?”

“Identification? No, I don’t.”

Judith had her identity card on her and produced it in a flash. The man with the blue eyes studied it carefully and compared the name against the names listed on a sheet of paper which he pulled out of one of the countless pockets on his overall before returning it with a nod.

“Great,” snapped Stephen. “And what are you planning to do with me? Are you going to arrest me or shoot me straightaway?”

“Calm down.” The man looked across to the tent erected above the site of the find and beckoned one of the guards to come over. One of the cigarettes glowing in the dark was immediately extinguished, and one of the men stepped out of the darkness, his machine pistol draped casually over his shoulder.

“Is there a problem, sir?”

The man with the blue eyes pointed at Stephen. “Do you know this guy?”

The guard nodded. “Yes, sir. He is an excavation helper.”

“Do you know his name?”

“Foxx, I believe, sir.”

“Okay. Thank you.”

The guard gave a brief nod before disappearing from the cone of the torch’s light. The man in the overall scrutinised Stephen from top to bottom, then nodded graciously and stepped aside. “You may pass.”

“Oh, thank you so much,” growled Stephen caustically.

The romantic atmosphere had evaporated. They trudged on towards their tents, keeping an arm’s length apart. Dull silence weighed on them like thick cloth.

“They’ll probably introduce a curfew next,” muttered Stephen after a while.

“Mm,” said Judith.

It wasn’t going to work. The incident had ruined everything. Stephen was filled with impotent rage at the man in the khaki overalls, who radiated the kind of physical superiority which all the cleverness in the world couldn’t beat. There was no point in confronting the man the next morning. At best, all he’d get for his troubles would be a bloody nose.

They arrived at their tents and stopped. Stephen turned to face Judith and put his arms around her, under no illusion that he’d be able to make any progress. He couldn’t shake the feeling of having failed, no matter how often he told himself that it wasn’t his fault.

She looked into his eyes. He looked back, fascinated by her jet-black pupils, which were large and wide open in the darkness, and which seemed to reveal a path into an unknown land.

Maybe, he thought suddenly, a sudden sortie[152] could save the muddled situation. He'd once used the technique to land the quickest hook-up ever.[153] He'd been invited to a large party. Scarcely thirty seconds had elapsed since he passed through the door when an incredibly desirable woman crossed his path. Instead of greeting her, he'd followed his instincts and boldly asked: "Do you want to sleep with me?" She'd looked at him in surprise and then said yes without hesitation. Sixty seconds later, they were out through the door, and he'd only gotten around to asking her name the next morning.

Wispy clouds moved across the narrow crescent moon.

"There was a time," Judith said suddenly, "when I went to bed with any man I liked without giving it a second thought. But it doesn't work. It's not enough of a reason."

Stephen cleared his throat. "Does that mean we met too late?"

She didn't seem to hear him. "I'm looking for a kind of relationship that means something. That's real. Do you know what I mean?"

"Yes, sure. How about you continue looking tomorrow?"

Judith smiled distractedly, kissed him softly on the lips and stepped out of his embrace. He followed her with his gaze as she walked across to her tent, second-to-last in a row of identical structures, and waited to see if she would turn around and give him a wave or beckon him to follow, something like that. But she didn't turn around. She simply continued walking proudly and desirably across the moonlit gravel before finally disappearing from view.

Stephen tasted the sandalwood flavour of her kiss, his mind in turmoil like an out-of-control steam engine. Maybe she's just waiting for you to follow, whispered a tiny devil. She wants you to show passion bordering on insanity. Perhaps, perhaps…

Then he remembered that she shared her tent with another excavation helper, a Scandinavian who wore a permanent scowl and who had to be at least forty years old. It was all bullshit. He stepped into his tent, got undressed and slipped into bed. In any case, he was completely exhausted. Not in shape for a sexual premiere. Especially considering that he was going to have an early start in the morning. High time to catch up on sleep…

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[152] *"Überraschungsangriff"* translates as "surprise attack" or "surprise assault", but this would imply a degree of violence and coercion which is not intended in the source text (p. 88).

[153] *"Damit hatte er einmal den schnellsten Aufriss seines Lebens gelandet"* (p. 88). This is a highly colloquial formulation in the source and requires a similarly colloquial translation.

Then, suddenly, just before he fell asleep, he remembered something. Right, there was something. He sat up, grabbed his flashlight and shone it under his bed.

The flat, grey steel excavation box was still there.

3.9. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 9

There is strong evidence for a highly developed stone vessel manufacturing industry in and around Jerusalem in the Herodian period. The vessels were made of limestone quarried in the area east of Jerusalem. It appears two techniques were used: turning roughly cylindrical limestone blocks on a lathe, or chiselling by hand.

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

Peter Eisenhardt woke up with a start. He turned over with the alarming feeling of not being at home, but abroad, in an unfamiliar bed that felt somehow wrong. The gleaming red display of the digital alarm clock showed that it was eight minutes past five. Suddenly it all came back to him.[154] Right. He was in Israel, in the desert, in a large caravan which he had to himself. Next to him, in a similar caravan, there was a multimillionaire who was expecting him to solve a damned difficult puzzle. He didn't have the faintest idea of how he was going to do it.

He[155] sat up. Experience had taught him that there was no point in trying to get back to sleep. When sleeping in unfamiliar beds, he always woke up at five o'clock on the first morning and couldn't fall asleep again. It was a personal tic he'd had ever since he could remember. Even when he was still a child, visiting an aunt or grandmother, he'd wake up at five in the morning, only to roam through the unfamiliar apartment, watching the silent movements of the aquarium fish or looking out at the street through the window, watching the morning traffic, sometimes awaiting dawn in the glow of streetlamps.

In any case, the bed was an imposition. It looked luxurious and tremendously expensive, but it was horribly soft: lying down, he felt like he was sinking into a mound of cotton wool, into a deep hollow designed to make his back muscles tense up and deform his spine. He was aching all over.[156]

It was already daylight. Eisenhardt pushed open the privacy screen covering the window to peek outside. All was quiet as far as the eye could see. All he saw were rocks and tents in the

[154] Single sentence broken into four (p. 91).
[155] Source: *"Der Schriftsteller"* ("the author"), p. 91.
[156] Source: *"Dementsprechend gerädert fühlte er sich auch"* ("He felt correspondingly broken on the wheel"), p. 92.

clear light of the rising sun. And alert men guarding the white tent that hid the ominous site of the find from view.

He stood up, slipped into his dressing gown and slippers, and shuffled over to what was probably meant to be a kitchenette: cool, white, austere, and as cosy as an operating theatre. The strange black device next to the sink, the only object in the room that wasn't white or chrome, was presumably a coffee machine. Behind one of the cupboard doors, he found coffee cups, individually fitted into holders that secured them in place when the caravan was in motion. He placed one of the cups under the nozzle and pressed the large, flat button at the front to see what would happen. Immediately, a small red lamp started glowing like the eye of a dragon just woken from sleep. Whirring and gurgling sounds emerged from within the apparatus. And then it started smelling like freshly brewed coffee.

Finally holding a cup of glorious coffee, he continued his tour. Over there, the meeting room. It occupied fully half the length of the entire caravan and was spacious enough to hold a large white table with space for at least ten people. At least, that was how many chairs there were, and they weren't even getting in each other's way. A flipchart had been put up, there was a folded overhead projector at the end of the table, and a large film projector at the end of the room led Eisenhardt to speculate about the main purpose of this caravan, which Kaun must have rented somewhere in Israel. Was it used when filming expensive outdoor scenes? Was this where the production team sat to view the day's takes? Was it usually directors or producers who slept in his bed? If so, there must be an inordinate number of directors with damaged discs in Israel.

At the narrow side opposite the film projector, there were sliding doors, presumably installed instead of hinged doors to avoid conflict with the projection screen which could be lowered from the ceiling. Curious, Eisenhardt peeked into the cupboards behind the doors. He found a telephone and a large collection of books, historical reference works, all of them in English. Oh well. They'd meant well. But without a dictionary, he wouldn't be able to make much use of them.

He turned back to the flipchart. It was fitted with a brand-new, thick pad of high-quality paper. An assortment of markers lay ready. Following an old habit, he tested all of them by drawing short lines in one corner of the paper.

At home, he often used flipchart paper to work out the ideas for his novels because it was so large and gave him the space to let his imagination run wild. But he hadn't bought a stand

yet. He usually stuck the sheets on his door or window before creating a rambling network of notes, arrows, ideas and sketches using a usually uncooperative coloured marker. In winter, doing this on the window pane was almost painful. The cold crept through the glass and paper into his knuckles until they hurt, stopping the flow of ideas.

He pulled one of the chairs closer, a massive cantilever structure of chromed steel tubes and black leather, and sat down, staring at the blank sheet of paper. He sipped at his coffee. This was what he always did: he stared at a blank sheet of paper to see what would happen. Waiting for the emptiness to spread through his mind, creating space for fresh, new, unexpected thoughts to emerge.

It was surprisingly cold. He shivered in his thin pyjamas, despite the dressing gown and the coffee.

Why am I here? In the very instant that he heard his inner voice ask this question, he realised that it had been there all the time in the background, unasked, but noticeable, overshadowing everything he had done. No matter how hard he tried, he simply couldn't persuade himself that he was the right man in the right place, despite the dynamic multimillionaire's flattery. He continued his ramble through the luxurious caravan – at least, luxurious compared with the tents housing most of the excavation helpers. Out of all the people somebody like John Kaun could get, why him? Why him, and not a team of scientists, historians, geologists, archaeologists, physicists, a whole bevy of Nobel laureates?

Was it just because of Kaun's need for secrecy? It couldn't be. Even an entire horde of scientists could be made to keep a secret; the USA's atomic bomb project at the end of the World War II proved it.

Perhaps the experts were on their way? It had been just three days since the ancient instruction manual had been discovered. Maybe your average top-ranked scientist wasn't available at the drop of a hat.

Peter Eisenhardt felt the characteristic click in his mind that signalled the moment when old certainties, seen from new angles, revealed novel insights, often embedded in a greater context.

John Kaun wasn't expecting him to answer the question by himself. All he expected of him was a way forward, a suggestion of how to get to a solution. And this proposal could, for example, consist of a list of scientists who might be asked to work on this bizarre problem.

He felt a warm, pleasant sensation suffusing him. It wasn't the coffee, at least not only. It came from feeling that this changed perspective on things felt *right* and that it allowed him to feel good. Perhaps he was the right man in the right place after all. Incredible as it sounded, apparently John Kaun had known this before he himself did. Eisenhardt remembered seeing a television report on the very John Kaun who was sleeping in the next caravan. It had mentioned that Kaun had a special ability for finding the right employees for the right jobs and deploying them according to their specific skills and talents.

"Who am I to fight with the TV?" he mumbled, tasting the sarcasm of the words on his lips.

That was just it. At this moment, he was at the start of the process. His task was to consider this bizarre problem from all angles and to find the best approach. And for this, he was indeed the right person. Because this was exactly what he did when he was coming up with a new novel. The only difference was that he usually also created the problems with which his characters were confronted, but from there on it was all really just problem solving.

An interesting thought. Maybe it could be used to construct an entirely new theory of story-telling. Although, to be honest, he preferred to stay far away from getting involved in such things. While still at school, he'd found that nothing hampered the creativity that nourished his writing more than literary studies in any form.

He looked back at the blank sheet. At the short lines at the top right corner. Red, green, blue, black. The black line was a bit uneven. The red one was quite short. Amazing how many patterns could be found in four coloured lines if one stared at them for long enough.

With a sigh, he got up, went back to the narrow kitchenette and coaxed another cup of coffee from the machine. While he was adding milk and sugar and stirring, he noticed to his surprise that he didn't believe in the possibility of time travel.

That was annoying. He stared at the cup, at the swirling coffee and finally shook his head, chuckling in astonishment. Incredible. He had written two novels based on time travel, as well as many short stories in which people travelled into the past, into the future, into parallel universes or into universes where the flow of time was reversed – he felt he had a *duty* to believe that time travel was possible.

But he didn't. Something within him was deeply opposed to the idea. If it happened in a story, okay, that was different. But not in reality. In stories and novels he could murder people, seduce women, discover important state secrets and resolutely confront entire legions of

enemies, usually emerging victorious. But in reality, even swatting flies made him feel bad (although they were a plague in his apartment in the summertime, he always tried to shoo them out of the window alive). In reality, he was faithful to his wife, glad that she had chosen him and generally as insecure as ever when dealing with the other sex. The bravest fight he could remember having been involved in was when, with trembling hands, he'd held out a parking ticket to a female traffic warden while pointing out that the parking meter where he had parked was broken. He had so vehemently rejected her stupid argument that he should not have parked next to this particular parking meter that she had finally taken the ticket and torn it up.

Time travel. What nonsense. He took the coffee cup, went back to the conference table, took the black marker and wrote on the sheet in large, squeaking letters:

Time travel??

Then he drew a circle around the words, added an arrow pointing to the top right and wrote: *possible?* next to the tip of the arrow. From there, he added another arrow and wrote: *Ask Dominik!* Like all science fiction authors, he had scientific advisers: friends who *really* knew what was what in the fields that mattered for his stories. Among them, Dominik was the universal genius, the source of all knowledge, someone who had an evidence-based answer to every question or who could – in extreme cases – tell you who to talk to. If there were any scientific arguments against time travel, Dominik would know about them. He *loved* areas of knowledge which were inaccessible to most normal people, like quantum physics, the theory of relativity and all that stuff.

A further arrow, this one pointing from the central circle to the bottom right: *Other explanations?*

Here, he remained motionless for a while, chewing on the end of the marker. He had forgotten that outside, a real archaeological excavation was in progress, that he had really climbed down into an excavated pit the previous evening and that he had found a seemingly ancient plastic pouch inside a linen pouch that also looked ancient. Reality had disappeared, had become completely irrelevant, had made space for abstract constellations, for dramatic elements, for building blocks of stories which combined over and over again into new patterns and sequences.

There is a whole class of crime stories that share the same theme: somebody has been found murdered inside a room with no exit that was locked from the inside. And every one of these

crime stories provides its own, ingenious explanation of how the murder took place and how the murderer was able to escape. The cleverness of the explanation was what gave the story its appeal. And these were the kinds of terms Eisenhardt found himself thinking in now.

From this viewpoint, the story of a two-thousand year-old video camera and time travel had more holes in it than a colander. The only person who had seen the untouched site of the find, which had supposedly been dated to the birth of Christ, was a young man whom he hadn't met yet. And possibly the professor. Not even Kaun had any evidence proving that the dating was correct. That was why he had sent the sample to an American laboratory for radiocarbon dating, which was considered the gold standard.

But supposing somebody had found a way to manipulate the radiocarbon method? Eisenhardt drew arrows, circles and question marks, then wrote: *Forgery? C-14?*

How would one go about producing such a forgery? Eisenhardt tried to recall what he knew about radiocarbon dating. He'd read up on it for one of his novels, but that had been a long time ago. So, how did it go? Any living organism – for example, the plant from which the paper for the instruction manual had been made – was continuously exchanging chemicals with its environment. Among other things, plants continuously absorbed carbon before emitting it in a different form. The key element was that a certain percentage of the carbon wasn't made of the normal carbon-12 atoms, but of C-14 atoms, which are slightly radioactive. This was why radiocarbon dating was sometimes called C-14 analysis.

And then? At home he would have been able to unearth his old notes. But he thought he could remember how it went: the organism dies. From that moment on, it no longer absorbs any carbon. The radioactive carbon-14 atoms in the organism's tissues decay slowly, but steadily. Over time, their share of the total amount of carbon declines – no matter whether the organism was fossilised, buried, mummified or subjected to other processes. Radioactive decay is unaffected by all those things. That was why the ratio between two types of carbon could be used to reliably establish the age of the organism in question.

Eisenhardt rubbed his temples. He needed to check if this was correct, but if the share of carbon-14 became *less* over time, then it would make no sense to bombard a find with radioactive radiation. In the extreme case, it might be possible to date it as *more recent* than it in fact was. That made no sense in this context. The opposite was needed – a method to *accelerate* radioactive decay. But that didn't exist. And if anybody had discovered a way to do

so, he'd use it to deal with radioactive waste and become filthy rich instead of forging shady pieces of evidence.

But still. Eisenhardt remained standing in front of his notes, chewing the end of the black marker as if he'd already given up hope of getting a decent breakfast, and staring at the large sheet of paper with the question marks. But still. Could that be the answer? The truth underlying this whole story? Was somebody engaged in perpetrating an enormous fraud and was he, Peter Eisenhardt, part of it for some inconceivable reason?

The thought made his heart beat faster. Usually it was a pleasant sensation because it meant that he had found a breathtaking topic, one that got his creative juices flowing and set the writing process in motion. But this, here – suddenly he became aware of his situation as reality reasserted itself, the caravan, the camp, the sound of footsteps on the gravel outside, the first clattering of dishes from the kitchen tent – this was no novel. He was alone, exposed, vulnerable. And he was just a weak, clumsy author, not James Bond.

If it was a fraud, then who was pulling the strings in the background? Kaun? The young man who had supposedly found the linen pouch? And if so, how did it benefit them?

As if on autopilot, his thoughts returned to the well-worn pathways of criminological thinking which he knew from detective novels. What were the three conditions that had to be fulfilled for a crime to be plausible? Means, motive and opportunity.

Motive. Huh.[157]

Eisenhardt stared straight ahead, unseeing. Then he replaced the marker on its little shelf, removed the top sheet from the flipchart block and tore it into tiny pieces, leaving only scraps the size of the palm of his hand which he threw into the rubbish bin in the kitchen.

He needed to find out what scientific reputation Professor Wilford-Smith enjoyed – whether he had a reputation to gain or one to lose. And he already knew whom he was going to ask.

[157] Source text: "*Oha"*.

3.10. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 10

On the north side, the pit (512) revealed a grey layer (513) and a wall (n), while a heap of four layers was found on the south side (514)-(517), of which the layer second from the top consists of white mortar, about 0.07m in thickness (515), while the bottom layer (517) partly forms the filling of a further pit (518).

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Kaun woke up and felt heavy, infinitely heavy, more like a sack filled with dense, stinking peat than a human being. He felt like this every morning. Mornings had become the worst part of the day for him, a period which filled him with dread starting the night before. Every morning, he felt heavier, more lethargic, more tired than ever before. Some fine day, he was going to wake up and not manage to move at all.

Of course, this was because of all the pills he was taking. As he'd joked with his doctor: "Having a large mass with lots of inertia is good, isn't it? It means that once you get moving, nothing can stop you. That's the secret of my success!" Of course, good old Dr Leuven could only smile awkwardly in response. He was probably too good a doctor to view such escapades solely in financial terms. Kaun wasn't really in a position to judge. For him, what mattered was that Leuven prescribed anything he needed and kept his mouth shut. Especially that he kept his mouth shut.

Oh God. Ok, one more try. He managed to make his hand move, a good start, then got it to the bedside table, which was where the box lay. A little box made of silver, with mother-of-pearl inlays. Nothing less would do for someone in his position. Even if the pills the box contained were annoyingly cheap.

He resisted the impulse of taking more than the three tablets which Doctor Leuven had allowed him, gulped them down without water and waited to feel their blessed effects. Getting him moving. The anecdote about mass and inertia was only partly a joke. Kinetic energy was something he actually believed in. This was the secret of successful leaders: you needed to be faster than the others, faster and especially imperturbable. You needed to have kinetic energy. You needed to be able to run over any obstacles when needed, and you had to *appear* as if you

could run over any obstacle. This was the only way to gain respect. In short, successful leadership was a question of momentum.

He could feel the pills beginning to have an effect. A warm feeling spread through his body, driving out the heaviness, making everything feel light and flexible, removing the veil from before his eyes and dissolving the dull pressure in his head into a sense of well-being. Fantastic pills. What objection could Doctor Leuven possibly have?

When he finally managed to sit up on the side of the bed, he noticed, as always, that the wonderful feeling was fleeting and deceptive. It would take a while before he really felt good. Just as well that he was by himself. His wife would have nagged him with a long list of ever-same accusations and contemptuous comments, all the way to boiling point, to when he felt that at any moment, his head was going to explode and he would either have to hit her or leave. Usually, he left, and recently he'd discovered how pleasant travelling the world without her was. The only thing that really bothered him was that he had only himself to blame. When he'd married her, the only thing that had really mattered to him was how she looked next to him on photos, in terms like "befitting his status" and "the woman at the side of the winner"… What a cliché! What bullshit![158] Every time he returned to the enormous villa they'd bought – on Coney Island, obviously – with stables, a large number of garages and innumerable rooms and hallways, he felt like a stranger, like an actor playing the role of husband. She had filled their house with ridiculously expensive bric-a-brac until her greatest dream finally came true, the only real, sincere desire in her shallow life: an interior decorating magazine – supposedly America's leading publication in the field – had dedicated a twelve-page spread to their house. Twelve pages! All in full colour! That became the only conversation topic for months on end at all the stupid parties she hosted, with all the stupid people she managed to find somewhere.

He dragged himself to the bathroom, opened the tap and held his head under the cold water. For a fleeting instant, he thought of the costs involved in consuming such quantities of ice-cold water here, in a caravan in the middle of the desert, but the pounding in his head receded and that was all that mattered.

This was his life. He hated everything about it, with the exception of his office and his company. He had often asked himself whether this could be the real secret of successful men: knowing that there was an insupportable wife waiting for them at home, making it easy to

[158] English term "bullshit" used in the source text, p. 104.

spend long hours at the office and work constantly, because this was still better than any other aspect of their lives.

But of course it was an unwritten law in these circles, which thought of themselves as the upper class, that you had to maintain the pretence of a fulfilled marriage and of being *completely* happy, knowing beyond the shadow of a doubt that all of this happiness and fulfilment was due to your own efforts and achievements. There was nobody he could ask whether his pessimistic speculation was accurate.

In any case, he was here now, thousands of wonderful miles away from home. He grabbed the razor and started shaving his dark stubbled chin with the same close attention to detail that he dedicated to his contracts. Gradually, the dark rings under his eyes started disappearing, as if they had only been shadows. The proper start to the day was finally getting closer.

Afterwards he combed his hair with great care, snipping an out-of-place hair here and there, and checked his skin for impurities. If he wasn't mistaken, there was a hint of natural tan. Great, that meant less time wasted in the solarium. He grabbed the shirt which was lying ready. At home, he had a butler, but that had just been a quirk of his wife's; he didn't need one, he could manage perfectly well by himself. Buttoning the shirt went smoothly, his movements quick and self-assured. He was gradually gaining momentum, like a steam locomotive, seven tonnes of steel on wheels, almost impossible to move at first, but unstoppable once in motion. Sheer momentum. Pure kinetic energy.

He selected the correct suit with great care. When it came to clothing, the most expensive was barely good enough. If he believed in anything at all, it was the fact that the right wardrobe was the most important argument in business life. You had to show that you belonged, that you were one of people who belonged at the top – no matter whether you'd made it already or were still on your way. If you wanted to have a lot of money, you needed to look as if you deserved it.

This was how his current popularity in the media had started: a magazine which pretended to be a business journal had voted him the "Year's Best-dressed Manager". He hadn't even known about it. In reality, the magazine simply sold colourful fairy tales about the rich and the mighty to male readers, as well as a lot of advertising space to manufacturers of overpriced shirts and horrible male fragrances (with names like "Wall Street" or "Success"). But after the story broke, other publications had started noticing him. The reports started growing, becoming longer and more enthusiastic, and for a while now he'd had the feeling that he needed to make

an effort to live up to the impressive image the public now had of him. He was increasingly coming to understand that this was a chase he could never win.

The unpleasant truth of the matter – which unbelievably, none of the media types appeared to have noticed yet – was that his flagship investment, the N.E.W. News and Entertainment Worldwide Corporation, was hardly making money. Sometimes it avoided making a loss by the narrowest of margins, and he spent a considerable share of his valuable time jazzing up the annual reports to hide his embarrassing balance sheets without going so far as actually committing fraud. Up to now, nobody had noticed. Blinded by his image, more investors were coming on board than were leaving in disappointment. He was working, fighting and pushing towards this one goal: creating a breakthrough, passing the point of no return and converting his financiers' trust into hard cash.

This meant that he had to persevere. At present, his empire still rested on feet of clay. The cautionary example that was always top of his mind – to such an extent that he had seriously considered placing a photo of the man on his desk – was the fate of a long-forgotten real estate tycoon of the eighties, a man called Donald Trump, whom the media had hyped as a prodigy and epitome of go-getting success until he had ended up believing it himself. He became reckless. Later, some observers called him "megalomaniacal", and many of them were the very same people who had applauded him when he seemed to be at the peak of his fame. His fall had been fast and brutal. Banks had cancelled their credit lines, investors had bailed, projects had failed – and he had fallen very, very deep, disappearing almost completely from the public eye.[159]

John Kaun wanted to avoid a similar fate at all cost. The face of total bankruptcy smiled grotesquely back at him in the mirror every morning. He was living it up, leading the life of a millionaire, which he had to do to get the deals he had to get. But he was living off profits he was hoping to make in future. If anything happened to derail his progress, he would be left as someone with millions in debt, who had to spend the rest of his life on the run from pitiless creditors. It was that simple. What it boiled down to, the real bottom line, was that he hadn't yet achieved anything in life. His New York chauffeur, who had finished paying off the mortgage on his little house on Staten Island two months ago, was in a better position than he was.

[159] Donald Trump is no longer obscure, or a has-been (p. 107). He reinvented himself.

Of course, the great role model, the undisputed number one, was CNN, founded by the equally prominent magnate, Ted Turner. Who, as Kaun had grudgingly observed, had married the actress Jane Fonda and who was possibly truly happy. For CNN, the breakthrough had come with the Gulf War, the big moment for the live reporters with their satellite telephones, who had reported from the enemy's capital, exclusive, live and exciting, while all the other broadcasters had been forced to use CNN's images, reporting and analysis. That was Ted Turner's great moment, and God knew he'd made use of it. He had made CNN a household name, even more popular than the once so reputable BBC. He'd catapulted his permanent news coverage to all the world's cable networks, and whatever might still happen, his place in the pantheon of great businessmen was secure.

By comparison, N.E.W. was a minnow, not even the number two, but one of the also-rans occupying a place near the middle of the table. Highly confidential surveys had shown that close to a third of the American population knew the N.E.W. acronym and knew that it was a television broadcaster – some even knew that N.E.W. was available globally via satellite – but not even two percent recognised the N.E.W. logo when it was shown to them. Which meant that most of them had heard about N.E.W., but hadn't watched it, because the logo was on permanent display during transmission. Which in turn meant that most people only knew N.E.W. from stories about him, John Kaun. N.E.W. and John Kaun belonged together. Which wasn't a bad thing. Better, in any case, than if – which Kaun had managed to prevent, using all kinds of tricks – they'd found out that the only company in his group which really earned money, real and proper money, and quite a lot in relation to its size, was a potato chip factory in Oklahoma.

This video tape story, as unexpected, confusing and surprising as it was, was increasingly looking like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to turn the tide. His personal equivalent of Ted Turner's Gulf War. If he managed to make something of this find, there was every chance he'd be the number one by next year.

What a chain of strange coincidences and twists of fate. The request to fund the British professor's excavations had come to him via various intermediaries, and with the unmistakable undertone that some of his investors with a Jewish background would view his engagement in the Holy Land with approval. Although that in itself had been a sufficiently strong argument, he'd also seen it as a relatively inexpensive way of keeping a presence in Israel – always under the pretext of producing documentaries about the excavation work, being able to send film

reporters, and if they coincidentally happened to record images of the one or other Palestine uprising, well, that was life, wasn't it?

And now this.

When he'd finished dressing, he looked at himself in the mirror. Shoes polished to a shine, pocket square discreetly, but correctly tucked. Yes. Like this, he could appear on the world's TV screens, with higher viewership figures than the moon landing, higher than the boxing match between Muhammad Ali[160] and Joe Frazier, and higher than Princess Diana's funeral service (another unhappy marriage, he suddenly realised).

Ladies and gentlemen, he pictured himself saying with practised understatement, *today, N.E.W. is proud to present an exclusive: an extraordinary film recording. Keep watching to see, for the first time on TV, Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount.* Or the entry into Jerusalem. Or the crucifixion. Whatever it turned out to be, it would guarantee a one hundred percent audience share. The moment he appeared on screen with these words, all other stations could just as well cancel their programming. *As Jesus Christ spoke Aramaic, we have subtitled the film in English.* Dear God – what a sensation!

Enough of the daydreaming. He didn't have the video yet.

And finding it could turn out to be a lot harder than anybody could imagine.

They didn't even have undeniable proof that the video existed at all. Or that it still existed. And even if it did, it could be buried literally anywhere in Israel. Perhaps it would take years or even decades to find. And if news got out about the find – which was inevitable if the process dragged on for long enough – then it could be some goatherd or construction worker who made the all-important discovery.

Kaun continued to stare at his mirror image, looking straight at his face, which now revealed a grim expression. Every day he spent here in the desert was costing him a fortune. Not to mention all the problems that were popping up all over his vulnerable empire because he wasn't there to pay attention. If the search was going to take longer than expected he would have to fly back to New York at least once or twice a week to show his face at his office. He was taking a risk, an enormous risk.

[160] The source text mistakenly refers to "Cassius Clay". The boxer was born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. in 1942, but changed his name to Muhammad Ali in 1964. The first of his three fights against Joe Frazier took place in 1971, when he was already known as Muhammad Ali.

He expected a lot from the German author. Up to now, Eisenhardt hadn't really said much, but he'd only just arrived. Still: he'd been told that his novels were considered well thought out and original. Some of them had even won prizes, and, what was particularly interesting, they often dealt with time travel. He had a strong sense that the author was going to deliver some creative thinking.

Still, he was going to recruit some additional specialists. As few as possible, of course, in order not to tempt fate, but enough to ensure that they got beyond the amateur stage in which the search currently found itself. He needed to discuss this with the professor, and breakfast presented an ideal opportunity.

Fundamentally, he wasn't yet sure how he could make the best use of the video tape, if and when he managed to get his hands on it. Sure, he could broadcast it, exclusively, using his own network, pre-announced using a gigantic marketing budget. But naturally, there would be great controversies from the outset about whether the video was real, about whether it even could be real, and that would devalue the show in a sense. In the best case, hordes of scientists would descend upon it, only to spend years discussing the pros and cons without ever reaching a definite conclusion, much like the Shroud of Turin, supposedly the burial shroud of Jesus Christ. Scientists had been analysing it for over fifty years, and everybody came to a different conclusion: for some, the shadow was undeniably real, for others, it was a sophisticated forgery from the more or less recent past.

And in the worst case, thought Kaun, the sensation would simply fizzle out, just like that film which had supposedly shown the vivisection of an alien's body, an event that was alleged to have taken place and been recorded in the early 1950s in the United States. Believers in UFOs had felt vindicated, while sceptics had found plenty of reasons why the film had to be a fake – and nobody had deviated even an inch from their convictions.

What was going to happen with a video film which claimed to have been recorded two thousand years ago?

Kaun stepped into the small, pleasantly functional kitchenette and served himself the first coffee of the day, the first of at least twenty.

In yesterday's meeting, he'd been bluffing. He'd pretended that he knew exactly what he was going to do with the video. He'd come up with the idea of selling it to the Vatican on the spur of the moment, as he was saying it. This was incredibly important in his job: never to reveal even a trace of hesitation or uncertainty. You had to formulate spontaneous insights in

a way that made others think you'd thought everything through very carefully and that you were far ahead of anybody else, while presenting them in a way that ensured nobody could nail you if you turned out to have been wrong at a later stage. He had to concede he'd attained a certain degree of mastery in this obscure art in the course of his career.

But maybe, he thought, sipping the dark, intense brew, it wasn't such a bad idea after all. He could use more money just as much as greater popularity, especially because it wouldn't even be investors' money which he would have to pay back some day, but proper, good, own money. This meant that the decision was going to depend to a great extent on the price offered, and that this was something he needed to check without delay: what *did* the Catholic church have that was of value?

Holding the coffee mug in one hand, he pushed aside the privacy screen covering one of the caravan's windows and looked out across the desert, which was already shimmering in the heat despite the early hour. He could give the job to a reporter. Or, even better, a lawyer. He had a spontaneous vision of the enormous art treasures which the Holy See owned and which would certainly command astonishing prices, even in an atheistic art market. Art works, right, and real estate. The Catholic church had to own immense amounts of real estate – all the churches, monasteries, chapels and rectories, all over the world. And mostly in prime locations at the city centre.

A brief smile crossed his lips. A swap. The video in exchange for the properties on which the church buildings stood. And he, John Kaun, would start collecting the ground rent[161] until the Day of Judgment.

Ha! What a deal. He was reminded of various acquaintances who would die of a heart attack when they found out. One of them because he considered himself a good Catholic, the others out of sheer envy.

And then, entirely unexpectedly, almost like divine inspiration, it hit him, wiping the silly daydreams from his mind. The thought pushed its way to the front, created space for itself and

[161] Source text: *"Und er, John Kaun, würde von Stund an Miete kassieren, oder Pacht, von ihm aus, und das bis zum Jüngsten Tag"* (p. 113). There is a terminological distinction between the German words *"Miete"* and *"Pacht"* that doesn't exist in quite the same way in English. The former term is used to refer to rentals where the rental object is only occupied or used, while in the latter case the object is used to generate an income or other benefit which accrues to the tenant. Example: when renting an apartment, you enter into a *Miete* agreement. When renting shop premises or a piece of farmland in order to generate an income, the agreement describes a *Pacht* arrangement. In translation, *Pacht* is sometimes translated as *usufructuary rent*, but this term is highly technical and not entirely accurate. As the distinction isn't critical for the text, leaving it out, as I have done here, could be a viable strategy.

felt good. *True.* John Kaun closed the privacy screen and focussed all of his attention on this one idea. *It was better to negotiate before the video was found.* He turned the thought over in his mind, studying it from all angles, and felt the electrifying tingle that always appeared when he was chasing a really hot idea.

For as long as the tape hadn't been found yet, it could contain *anything.* Potential buyers could let their imagination run wild. Perhaps church representatives would start getting worried that the video might show that Jesus wasn't dead yet when he was removed from the cross. Or that the resurrected person was a *doppelganger*. Anything was possible for as long as the tape hadn't been found.

In reality, the tape could show all sorts of things. Or nothing. Maybe just banalities. Perhaps an entirely unknown sermon by Jesus, one which wasn't even mentioned in the bible. In other words, the actual video tape could turn out to be completely banal and unsellable.

Kaun smiled, and now it was the wolfish grin that had made him famous. This was exactly what he was going to do: enter into negotiations early, inflame desires, provoke fears – and use this as a basis to secure a foothold. In the meantime, he had the pouch and the instruction manual for the video camera and a whole lot of convincing arguments. This was what he was going to sell. His lawyers were going to be kept busy.

He smiled and set himself in motion, towards the desk. He was ready. The day had started.

3.11. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 11

Some of the burial sites could be dated to the time of the Hasmoneans and of Herod, the others are of a more recent origin. The family graves typical of the period were chiselled into rock and formed subterranean 'loculi' ('burial places'). They usually consisted of one or more burial chambers with wall niches for the ossuaries ('kokhim', i.e. bone chests), or benches under recessed overhangs ('arcosolia'). Once the body had completely decomposed, the bones were collected in an ossuary which was placed on a ledge in the wall niche. The fact that the bones of the body of 14/F.31 were left undisturbed indicates that he was not a member of any family or family network.

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

The annoying buzzing felt like it was coming from inside his ear. Stephen Foxx opened his eyes with difficulty, put his hand under his pillow and pulled out the alarm clock, which had the shape and dimensions of a credit card, switching it off. Was this even possible? How long had he slept for – ten minutes? Had he even slept at all or had he been drugged? Doped and then beaten up?

Seeing the roof of the tent above him brought back memories of the excavation, which reminded him of the events of the past few days. The memories felt like a series of electric shocks which drove the tiredness from every cell of his body. The excavation box! The letter! With a jerk, he sat up and put his hand under the bed to pull out the box. The dented sheet metal lid rattled quietly when he lifted it, and the papers were still there. In the dim light of the tent, they looked even more crumbling and hopeless than they had the evening before. It was beyond imagining that the pieces of paper had survived for two thousand years in the soil. Without the plastic pouch, nothing would have been left of them. Stephen thought of the mountains of plastic bags and yoghurt cups piled up in rubbish dumps throughout the world, and shivered at the thought of how indestructible they were.

Could this really be a letter from an unknown time traveller? Nothing was visible, no letters or symbols. That didn't necessarily mean anything. After such a long time, the writing could have faded, only to be made visible under ultraviolet light or X-rays. But what would have provoked the hypothetical time traveller to write such a letter?

Stephen Foxx remained seated, staring at the grey, friable artefacts and feeling his thoughts hitting a brick wall.

How had the process unfolded? Or, to be more precise, how was it *going to* unfold? On a given day a few years from now, an unknown person, equipped with a video camera, was going to embark on a trip through time. Two thousand years into the past, with no chance of returning. He was going to record some footage, preserve the camera and deposit it at some location agreed in advance with his helpers from the future – his present – and then finish living out his life in the past. All his helpers needed to do was turn off the time machine, stroll across to the agreed rock and excavate the camera which they had only just dispatched thousands of years into the past.

If this was the arrangement, what need would the time traveller have to write a letter? This required some thought.

The side of the tent facing the wind bowed inwards with a slight rustle. Bright light shone in through a small gap near the ground. Outside, the day was starting.

Hmm. Stephen replaced the lid on the box. He urgently needed to find out what was written on the pieces of paper. Very urgently.

Maybe it was a letter to the helpers telling them that something had gone wrong.

Like every morning, Rafi carried out his first task of the day. He prepared excavation boxes, one for each helper, carefully emptied and swept clean. He would spend the rest of the day sitting under a large canvas shade cloth with a handful of helpers, sieving the sand and soil out of the boxes which hadn't been emptied yet, carefully sighting each find – tooth fragments, plant fibres, tiny shards and so on – before capturing descriptions of the items on index cards and placing them into small plastic pouches which were filed together with the cards. To enable the finds to be correctly located, every helper was given a slip of paper which was placed at the bottom of the box and which showed the helper's name, the date, the precise description of the excavation area and a sequence number which was recorded in a large logbook. Preparing these slips of paper was Rafi's second task every morning. It took his full concentration to ensure that no mistakes crept in. That was why he was not particularly pleased that Professor Wilford-Smith chose this precise moment to loiter, as if he had nothing better to do.

“Ah, yes. Mm. Right. Ah.” The professor leant forward, peering at the latest notes. From time to time, he lifted up one of the plastic pouches, held it against the light and then thoughtfully put it back in its original location. Rafi tried to concentrate on completing the slips, but was finding it hard, given the director’s irritating muttering.

“It’s going to be a hot day today, won’t it?” Wilford-Smith suddenly asked.

“Yes, sir.” Rafi wrote a number on another slip and immediately captured it on one of the sun-parched pages of the logbook.

“It will, won’t it? A hot day, indeed. In fact, every day is hot at this time of year.”

“Quite right, sir.” Now he had to add the helper’s name as well as the description of the spot where he or she would be working. All while not losing focus.

“And, otherwise? All well?”

“All well.” The next slip. The helpers would soon be arriving, and by then everything would need to be ready.

“And, are you keeping up with the dig?” Wilford-Smith shuffled closer and leant over the clipboard with the list of overdue excavation boxes.

Rafi nodded, finished the slip and added it to the file with all the others. “On the whole, yes.”

“Wonderful.” The professor took a closer look at the list and tapped the uppermost number on the list, which Rafi had been carrying forward for several days. “1304? That’s quite some time ago, isn’t it?

“It’s from Tuesday, sir. Stephen Foxx’s box – you know, plot 14.”

“Ah, yes.” Professor Wilford-Smith stared thoughtfully at the scribbled number. Very thoughtfully. As if he were battling to remember the significance of plot 14. “Foxx, you say? And he hasn’t returned his box yet?”

“Not yet. I didn’t say anything because I thought you had instructed…”

“Ah, yes, of course.” Wilford-Smith nodded. “Right. That is correct. Yes, of course.” He nodded, still lost in thought. His fingers tapped out a marching rhythm on the clipboard for a moment, then he nodded to Rafia absent-mindedly and walked away, slightly stooped over as usual, towards the caravans of the new arrivals.

Rafi watched him walk off in surprise, then shrugged and started filling in the next slip.

The phone on the bedside table of Enrico Basso, lawyer and lobbyist for Kaun Enterprises Holdings Inc. in Italy, rang just before six o'clock in the morning, rudely interrupting a particularly pleasant dream involving an idyllic desert island and several young women wearing nothing but garlands of flowers. Their enchanting faces faded away and the sound of the sea turned out to be the drone of Rome's early morning traffic. Grumpily, the lawyer turned over to grab the intrusive telephone.

"Pronto," he growled.

A second later, he was sitting upright in bed and switched from Italian to English. "Oh, it's you… Good morning, sir, how can I help… Yes, of course…"

His wife's face emerged from somewhere between the rumpled pillows. She drowsily watched her husband as he listened to the voice at the other end of the line, his jaw dropping.

"Si," said Enrico Basso finally, "but that is going to take some time, *naturalmente*..."

The tone of the voice became more demanding. Basso began involuntarily shaking his head.

"But that's not so easy!" he interrupted the caller. "It's almost the weekend, and…"

Why was he even bothering to say anything? Was this person even listening to a word he was saying?

"Yes, *capito.* I will do what I can. I will call you tomorrow. *Addio.*" Enrico Basso put down the phone and let himself fall back into the pillows. Any thought of sleep had disappeared. He suddenly regretted having given up smoking four weeks ago and not having any cigarettes on his bedside table.

"Who was that, Enrico?"

"John Kaun."

"And which company does he want to buy now?"

"The Catholic church."

"What?" she sat up. "What are you saying?"

The lawyer pushed away the blanket and looked for his slippers. "He wants to know how much the Catholic church is worth. What it owns in terms of real estate, liquid funds,

investments, other assets. What its cash flow is. Imagine that – he asked what cash flow the *Catholic church* has!" He shook his head. "No idea why he wants to know that. It really sounds as if he's planning to buy it."

This time, the meeting took place in Eisenhardt's caravan. Like a triumvirate, thought Eisenhardt as Kaun and Wilford-Smith came in.

Kaun was his usual self, acting as if there were at least ten television cameras filming his every move, dynamic, spick and span, bursting with impatience and decisiveness. In contrast, the professor moved sedately and seemed frail, behaving almost as if none of this really affected him. He carefully wiped his shoes, closed the door behind himself and stepped into the meeting room, where Kaun was already sitting and waiting.

"Shall I make some coffee?" asked Eisenhardt.

Kaun gestured dismissively. "Don't bother. Let's get down to business. Have you managed to come up with anything?"

"Right." Eisenhardt turned to the large sheets of paper and the keywords he'd written down. He breathed deeply and suddenly felt under pressure. It was crunch time. If the others had already thought of what he was about to describe, he'd find himself on a plane back home the same evening.

"I, um, have written down some possible starting points," he began. Silence. Nobody said anything, everybody was listening. Damn, he wasn't used to this. It felt like an exam. He grabbed one of the markers and used it to point at the first keyword. "Time travel. What's the current state of research on the feasibility of time travel? Is there any research taking place anywhere in the world today that could lead to discoveries enabling time travel? As a science fiction writer, this is something I could investigate without raising undue suspicions." He looked furtively at Kaun, who was unconsciously furrowing his brow.

"Haven't you looked into this before?" he asked.

"No."

"But you've written several novels that deal with time travel."

Eisenhardt nodded. “That’s true. But it’s something you can do without worrying about the laws of nature. In fact, up to now I thought the *only* way to do it was by ignoring the laws of nature.”

Kaun thought for a moment, but didn’t respond to the comment. Instead he asked: “Who would you ask? And what would be the benefit of having this information?” The questions cracked like lashes of a whip.

“I would start with a science journalist who is a close friend of mine. He is used to being asked weird questions and has unparalleled insight into the current research scene. He knows who is studying what and where and so on. If I do this, nobody will suspect that I’m doing anything other than collecting information for a new novel.”

“And the benefit?”

“Knowing when the time traveller is going to embark on his journey and knowing which physical parameters apply to time travel would allow us to draw more far-reaching conclusions about the find. We are assuming that time travel is going to be invented at some point in time while Sony still exists, and that it only works in one direction, that is into the past. If we found out that time travel has to work in both directions, then we’d know that the reason why the body was buried there is because something went wrong.”

Kaun’s expression darkened. He was visibly uncomfortable with such hypotheses. “Okay. And then?”

“Furthermore,” continued Eisenhardt, “we should try to identify the body. If it belongs to someone who is alive this century, bone or dental information may allow us to find out who it is.”

“And then?”

“We keep an eye on him.”

Kaun snorted. “These attempts at identification are already underway, but without success. Sure, we need to act cautiously to avoid raising suspicions, but I don’t think this is going to get us any further ahead.”

Eisenhardt looked at him questioningly. “Have you ever considered that you may be the person who sends him into the past?”

“Me?” Bullseye. The flight back home tonight had been cancelled, that much was clear. Kaun’s eyes widened as his thoughts visibly traversed rough, unfamiliar terrain. “You mean, that I…? Ah. That could be, couldn’t it? No, I hadn’t considered it. True.” He seemed genuinely taken aback. He even smiled, and with a bit of imagination you could detect something like recognition in his smile.

The professor frowned. “I didn’t get it.”

“Right now,” said Eisenhardt, “we think that we’re going to think really hard for a few days, then dig in the right place and unearth the camera. But it doesn’t have to happen that way. Perhaps our investigations will lead us to a research project or we’ll find the future time traveller himself – and some years from now, *we’ll* be the ones he agrees on a place with. *We’ll* be the ones who identify the place where he’s going to hide the video camera to make sure it survives for two thousand years. *We’ll* be the team that directs his trip into the past.”

The archaeologist nodded. “An interesting hypothesis.”

“The next starting point,” said Eisenhardt, feeling increasingly confident and tapping on the third keyword, “is the camera. We need more information about the camera itself. We should study the instruction manual. Perhaps we’ll find a year reference, some notes, some sort of interesting information. Afterwards, we should request all available technical information on the camera from the manufacturer.”

“I’ve already done that,” said Kaun. “I called Sony in Tokyo this morning. The camera is still in development and will be launched in three years’ time at the earliest.”

“Ah.” Eisenhardt felt a strange shiver run down his spine. “So soon.”

“I discovered something interesting,” added Kaun with narrowed eyes. “The MR-01 camcorder will be based on a completely new technology where information isn’t recorded on magnetic tape, but on a kind of crystalline disk which has a much higher storage capacity than tape. A single new-generation video cassette will hold approximately twelve hours’ worth of recordings, and in contrast to a tape which has to be wound forward and backward, you’ll have instantaneous access to any part of the recording at any time, similar to a computer hard drive or a CD-ROM.”

Eisenhardt nodded. “What about the durability of the recording?” he asked.

“This is an interesting point. According to Sony, the new technology, which they are calling MR – I’ve forgotten what it stands for – will only allow a single recording process, much like

with traditional film, but this recording will last indefinitely. I was told it is at least ten thousand times more stable than conventional tape recordings."

"In other words, the perfect device for the time traveller's purposes," said Eisenhardt.

"Clearly." Kaun leant forward, resting his elbows on the conference table. "Another interesting point is that the man I spoke to was very curious to know where I'd found out about the project name of a camera about which Sony has not published any information so far."

"I can imagine."

"Hardly. Because he literally said: 'You're the second person to ask me about the MR-01 today.'"

Eisenhardt raised his hands defensively. "It wasn't me. Calling Sony directly without consulting you would have been too risky for me."

"I know," said Kaun, nodding. "Our telephone logs were the first thing I checked. You only made one call yesterday, to your wife."

Eisenhardt gulped. He wasn't used to this kind of surveillance and found it creepy.

"Why yesterday?" he asked.

"When I called Sony this morning, it was just before eleven o'clock in the morning in Tokyo. The man told me that the first call was just after nine o'clock in the morning. In other words, it was just after eleven last night here in Israel."[162]

Professor Wilford-Smith stared at the smooth white table top, lost in thought. "At that time, we were still sitting together," he said.

"Exactly," said Kaun grimly. "That's why I want to know what this Stephen Foxx is up to."

[162] The maths doesn't quite work out. The time zone difference between Israel and Japan is seven hours. If Stephen Foxx had called Tokyo just before 11.00am, Tokyo time, as he said on p. 61 of the novel, that would have made it just before 4.00am in Tel Aviv. Conversely, if Stephen's call to Tokyo had been at just after 9.00am, Tokyo time, as Kaun says here, it would have been just after 2.00am, Tel Aviv time, not 11.00pm. It is also unlikely that Kaun would have been calling Tokyo at 4.00am – surely his insomnia would have been mentioned otherwise.

3.12. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 12

The interment of bones in ossuaries was a preferred Jewish practice at the time. The ossuaries were made of stone in the shape of rectangular boxes decorated with traditional patterns, but they never depicted persons. The names of the dead were often chiselled into one of the sides. The inscriptions were written in Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek and often included additional information. In fact, the many epitaphs found in a large necropolis collectively provide something akin to a socio-historical encyclopaedia of Palestine's population, which even at that time was highly heterogenous.

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Stephen Foxx was sitting on a wobbly folding chair at a no less wobbly folding table in his tent, scowling at his laptop screen. The laptop's clear lines and high-tech appearance[163] stood in stark contrast to his rustic surroundings. His breakfast tray, which he had hijacked under the disapproving gaze of the kitchen staff, stood next to the computer. It was made of dented and battered metal, as were the plate and the mug that stood on it. The mug contained a strange liquid, supposedly a form of coffee, that came close to spilling every time he pressed a key on his computer. The cutlery appeared to have been made of the same metal as the crockery. Everything exuded the smell of old army stock. Stephen wanted to use the morning to finish some tasks which he needed to get done.

Like this fax, for example. Stephen began every day by plugging his mobile into his computer to fetch any electronic mail which might be waiting for him on the internet.[164] Most of the e-mails were generated by his other computer. This PC stood at home, was permanently on and received fax transmissions. Whenever anybody sent a fax to Stephen's fax number, it was stored on his computer's hard drive, where it would remain until his return. But in addition, an automatic process converted the fax into an e-mail which was forwarded automatically to Stephen's internet address, allowing him to receive it anywhere in the world. This meant that

[163] Source: *"... Laptops, dessen kühle technische Anmutung einen sonderbaren Gegensatz zu seiner rustikalen Umgebung bildete"* (p. 126). Sentence split for better readability and the description paraphrased to make it conform to target language norms.
[164] There are several anachronisms in this sentence. Nowadays, we talk about e-mail rather than electronic mail. Most e-mail is delivered through push mechanisms rather than pull mechanisms (Stephen has to "fetch" the mail), and it is delivered continuously rather than at discrete intervals, e.g. once a day. And we no longer think of it as "waiting for us on the internet" – we no longer give much thought to *where* it is, it just *is*.

he could always be reached, and as the fax he was studying over and over again showed, this was a good thing.

The fax was from a company to which he had sent information about his software system five or six months previously. It had been a spur-of-the-moment thing. He'd been queuing in the university cafeteria when he overheard somebody behind him mention that his father was working at the company and that they were having constant problems with their computer systems. Later that same day, Stephen had printed his little brochure, written a letter on his impressive letterhead, stuck everything into an envelope and posted it in the mail before forgetting all about it.

Now, somebody from the company had written back. They were planning a complete overhaul of their IT systems and were requesting additional information. A long list of questions was attached and they required an urgent response.

What made the whole thing curious was that the company was a video equipment wholesaler.

"This topic is following me around," said Stephen under his breath.

He sipped at his coffee – wind-borne sand had already settled on the edge of the mug, the grit grinding unpleasantly between his teeth – and thought. The fax had arrived on Thursday afternoon, Eastern Time. Taking into account the time difference, it was only about six or seven hours old. It was almost the weekend, so he would be justified in taking his time until the following day at least, while the Sabbath rest would give him time to consider his response. In addition, he would need to link directly to his computer at home to fetch some large image files, and as this required a transatlantic telephone connection, he could save a lot of money by waiting for off-peak rates. If he hurried, he would be able to send his fax response immediately afterwards, directly from his laptop.

He grabbed the last piece of his peanut butter sandwich. While still chewing, he lifted up the plate, tapped the crumbs onto the floor and then put it on top of the second plate. His plans for the day hadn't included dealing with business issues. Video equipment wholesalers, of all things! It was unsettling. He would have to ask his Indian partners whether they were available to adapt a system customised for tyre wholesalers to the needs of video equipment dealers. Fortunately, this could easily be done with a couple of e-mails. But the fact that it was video equipment really was curious.

Should he even bother to respond? He didn't need the money. He might as well ignore the whole thing.

"Nonsense," he muttered, unplugging the cable linking the telephone to the laptop. He could think about this some other time. It would be best to sleep over it. He was annoyed at being so unsettled by this strange coincidence.

The group of excavation helpers didn't interrupt their breakfast when Professor Wilford-Smith approached the kitchen tent, but the noise level dropped noticeably as almost everybody looked curiously in his direction. Since the mysterious find at plot 14, outlandish rumours had started spreading. Some were sure that something military had been found. No, said others, a large treasure trove had been discovered. But the presence of the American television crew didn't really fit in with any of their theories.

"David," said Wilford-Smith, beckoning to the chef to come over, a young man with untamed, curly hair and a permanent scowl.

"Professor?"

"I'm looking for Foxx," said Wilford-Smith, casting his gaze over the fully occupied rows of tables outside the tent. "Have you seen him, by any chance?"

"He was here earlier. Loaded his tray as if he were starving, then went back up to the tents." The kitchen staff didn't like to see eating utensils leaving the kitchen area because they tended not to be returned, instead disappearing into rock crevices for future generations of archaeologists to discover.

"Would you mind sending somebody up to let him know I'd like to have a word?"

"Of course. Right now?"

"Yes, if you don't mind. Ask him to come to the second caravan from here."

"Right away."

Stephen tossed the cable back in his travel bag and took out a CD case. This was the other thing he'd wanted to do while having breakfast: a little research. The CD he took from the little

folding case before slotting it into the drive on his laptop contained the entire Encyclopaedia Britannica.[165]

As a boy, he'd often looked in awe at the over thirty leather-bound volumes housed in a dedicated shelf in his father's study. From time to time he'd been allowed to page through them, and for a long time he'd been absolutely certain that the Britannica contained all human knowledge. Even when he'd discovered that this wasn't quite true –that even the longest, most comprehensive entries in the encyclopaedia included incredibly long lists of related literature for further reading – he'd maintained a habit of beginning any research task here.

With a soft rattle, the CD tray slid smoothly back into the laptop. Then a whirring noise emerged as the silver disk was spun up to the required speed. Stephen opened the search window and then paused.

The screen prompt read *Search for keyword*. The wafer-thin cursor blinked on and off expectantly in the search field.

Stephen hesitated.

This wasn't so easy. He suddenly had a flashback to his childhood. He remembered Sundays, meadows and shrubs in bloom, and the disappointment of having to wear his Sunday best and not being allowed outside to play for fear of getting dirty; he remembered boring, incomprehensible, interminable church services, after which you had to remain standing outside in the church forecourt while the grownups talked and smiled and pretended to be nice to people they badmouthed at home. And then there were his classmates and the other kids from the neighbourhood, who also had to remain standing near their parents and who were also dressed in fine clothes and who looked strangely unfamiliar.

He stared at the dark keys of his laptop keyboard as if he were seeing them for the very first time. There was the letter J. That's where he had to start. Why was he finding it so hard?

Jesus Christ, he typed and paused again.

Something dark and heavy seemed to solidify inside his body. It felt threatening, black and menacing. Another flashback came up. He saw an enormous cross extending above little Stephen, from which an outsized shape was suspended, looking down on him with a pain-filled grimace. He remembered vague admonitions which created a sense of dread even though he

[165] Nowadays, Stephen would do his research online. He would presumably consult more sources than just Wikipedia.

didn't understand them; all he had to do was listen and nod. It was only much later, when he kissed a girl for the first time, that they returned like terrifying inner voices, as if they had waited for this very moment for all these years, like time bombs lurking on the seabed of his subconscious.

He hit enter, and the CD-ROM drive started whirring. Keywords started appearing on the screen, a seemingly unending list of entries.

Jesus Christ or *Jesus of Galilee* or *Jesus of Nazareth.* Followed by a list of related fields, divided into subcategories: *Biblical literature. Doctrine and faith. Life. Art. Rituals and veneration. Theological and philosophical interpretations. See: Christianity, New Testament.*

For a heartbeat, he felt as if he'd stepped out of his body and were watching himself studying a list of keywords displayed on a computer screen. Just thirty years earlier, a mere description of this device would have been considered fanciful and unrealistic. Nevertheless, it existed here and now, a solid object resting on a table in a stuffy little tent erected in one of the most deserted areas of Israel, the country where certain events had come to pass – or not, depending on who you believed – two thousand years earlier, events which some people considered pious myths, no more believable than the adventures of Alice in Wonderland, while others held them to be self-evident truths that were of immeasurable importance in their own lives and, as a matter of fact, for the meaning of the entire universe. He had to laugh at the absurdity of the situation.

Churches and religious groups. Christian science. Dualistic Christian sects. Mennonites. Mormons. Eastern Orthodoxy. Protestantism. Roman Catholicism.

In essence, the thing he was searching for was just as fanciful. Wanting to find a camera that possibly contained recordings of events that had occurred two thousand years earlier? For some people, the mere idea would have made them question his sanity. But sometimes, fantastical things did come to pass. A scientist had proved that machines heavier than air would never be able to fly – yet his great-grandchildren could buy kiwis flown in from New Zealand in their local supermarket. The entire edifice of contemporary civilisation was built on inventions which previous generations would have dismissed as wild flights of fancy.

Best to start by getting an overview. He moved the cursor from one keyword to the next, clicked and scanned the texts that were displayed. Unbelievable amounts of text. And any number of further references. The topic was addressed in a way that could only be described as exhaustive. It permeated all of Western civilisation like a mould.

And yet it was surprisingly difficult to get a handle on the topic. This wasn't about one or other species of ant or some Hebrew king – he was trying to learn something about the man he'd been taught in younger, more vulnerable years to think of as the son of God – the very God who had created the universe, the stars in the night sky, nuclear particles, the genetic code, in fact everything which existed. This God, he had further been told, motivated by deep love for him, Stephen Foxx, had surrendered his own son to Roman executioners because this was necessary for Stephen's sins to be forgiven, a reasoning which had never been entirely clear to him. And he had to *believe* this. He had to resist the entreaties of his faculty of reason, which was also God-given, but which protested these violations of logic with increasing forcefulness the older he got. He was told he had to *believe; believe* or be condemned to eternal damnation, with or without the son of God.

And so forth. For a while he had asked questions, but the answers didn't satisfy him, and when he started arguing, he found that those who considered themselves entitled to provide answers weren't willing to argue – because they already *knew,* because they *believed,* and whenever he pointed out a contradiction, he was hit over the head with the argument that it wasn't about doubting, it was about believing. At some point he had stopped trying to find a hidden meaning in this mishmash of crude assaults on common sense. His intuition told him a hidden meaning simply didn't exist.[166] Religion had nothing to do with real life or the universe he encountered outside himself. He discovered astonishing wonders when looking through the eyepiece of a microscope or telescope, compared to which the religious worldview seemed petty and restrictive. That was how religion had disappeared from his life, just like his belief in Santa Claus, elves and trolls, and storks delivering babies.

But, as his own emotions were showing him now, not entirely. He was scared.[167] A cold, merciless hand seemed to grab and twist his guts, and in his mind a musty voice whispered: *What if it's all true after all? What if you're going to hell because you stopped believing?* The voice of an undead inquisitor, decomposing since the days of witch-hunts, unable to find peace for as long as there were heretics.

Stephen leant back, closed his eyes and breathed deeply. Then he lifted his head, fixed his gaze on the light grey tent wall and waited for the panic to die down. Creepy.

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[166] Source: *"Und irgendwann hat er aufgehört, in dem Sammelsurium kruder Denkzumutungen einen verborgenen Sinn finden zu wollen, den es seinem Gefühl nach einfach nicht gab"* (p. 133). The term *"Sammelsurium kruder Denkzumutungen"* is a beautiful formulation that deserves a good translation.

[167] This sentence is italicised in the source, but that seems inappropriate in the target text (p. 134).

Outside, he heard steps approaching his tent. He felt a rush of gratitude. Reality was taking care of him, was preventing him from sinking into the quagmire of nightmarish memories. He considered this extremely attentive on the part of reality.

It was one of the kitchen helpers, a skinny, dark-skinned young man[168] who didn't speak English very well. "The professor wants to speak to you. You must come now. But you must first return your tray."

Stephen grinned and nodded. There was no point in arguing, the guy was just reciting a sentence. "Okay," he said. "I'm coming now. And I will give back my tray."

The young man looked at him uncertainly, not sure whether Stephen was making fun of him or not. He waited until Stephen turned off his computer before he was satisfied and left.

Judith was having breakfast, later than usual and still feeling groggy, and thought about Stephen. They had seen each other while getting their food trays, but he had greeted her perfunctorily, as if nothing had happened, before leaving with his generously laden tray, saying that he still had things to do. Since then she had been sitting here by herself, eating her breakfast in slow motion, while the other helpers came and went and breakfast time gradually ran out.

What had happened? If she wasn't mistaken, there'd been sparks between them the previous night. They'd walked, tightly entwined, and she had been so close to following him to his tent. What would it have been like in the morning if she had actually slept with him? She suspected that even then, he would have had urgent things that he needed to do.

Now she saw him walking back with his tray. He was weaving between the rows of tents and seemed to be making a detour to hers. Was he expecting to find anything there? She simply couldn't understand what went through this man's mind. He was attractive, sure, and she liked him, no question. In a way. No, actually she did like him. He was always busy, true, but at least he wasn't a lazy slacker like many men she'd known, who would have been perfectly happy if they could spend their lives sitting in cafés, chewing the fat with their friends. With them, her role would have been that of the good housewife, who remained at home and took care of the children and the household. Stephen pursued whatever occupied his attention with a restless, crackling energy that scattered sparks in all directions.

[168] In the source text, the kitchen helper is referred to as a boy *("Junge")* (p. 134). Assuming that the excavation project didn't use child labour, the translation changes the meaning to reflect that he was an adult.

Erotic sparks, too. She saw his head reappear from behind her tent and wished she were up there, wished she'd waited for him to come visiting. Just to find out what his intentions were. He never did anything without reason, and usually he thought around several corners, more than anybody else Judith knew. For the first time, she admired someone for their razor-sharp intellect.

She liked the way he moved. She followed him with her gaze as he came down the hill with his tray, watching as he returned it at the counter. The chef seemed to be complaining about something – presumably reminding him, once again, that taking eating utensils to the tents wasn't allowed – and Stephen countered his remonstrations with his usual confident smile. She liked the way he moved, she really did. She'd met many extremely bright boys at school, but they were clumsy kids who wore glasses and whose intelligence seemed to have grown into something abnormal at the expense of the rest of their physical substance. In contrast, body and spirit formed a harmonious whole in Stephen. He didn't seem particularly athletic – she could probably beat him at any sporting discipline – but he seemed balanced and exuded a self-confidence that was sometimes unnerving.

But love was clearly a secondary concern for him. Not because he didn't see her while he was walking towards the caravans glinting silver in the sunlight. No, it was obvious that he wasn't a man looking for a partner. Right now, love meant sex for him, perhaps a bit of sympathy. Friendship at best.

It looked like people were expecting him at the caravans. One of the men whose uniforms made them look like invaders stopped him, asked him a question, nodded and pointed out where he should go. Stephen walked towards one of the caravans, second in the row as seen from the kitchen, opened the door and disappeared inside.

Once, she had been exactly the same. All over the country, there were men whose hearts she'd broken. The army, Israel's single largest match-making institution from the perspective of most conscripts, had been one long party. Having escaped her parents' supervision for the first time, she had given herself free rein, and whenever somebody started talking of love and marriage and babies, she has laughed out loud. Thinking back, she had been quite mean sometimes.

But she felt the longing for something else. She couldn't describe it exactly, and sometimes she felt that nobody else understood it either. Maybe she was just fooling herself. Perhaps she hated always appearing so strong that she couldn't trigger the protective instinct in any man.

Perhaps she just wanted to be able to let go and feel as a woman. But no, that wasn't it. She longed for a relationship which she couldn't describe in precise terms – but she was certain that she would recognise it if she ever encountered it. And she was determined not to give up the search before finding it.

It wasn't Stephen. He was attractive, she liked him, and he was probably what you would call a "good catch", even though this didn't mean much to her. But it was unfair to expect him to change. If she couldn't accept him the way he was, then the only option left was to keep looking.

"Can't you continue searching tomorrow?" Stephen had asked, and when she thought back to it now, she could feel her legs going weak. How could she rebuff him? What was wrong with taking a break during a search that was likely to continue for a long time? If he'd asked her right then, she would have dropped everything and gone with him.

But he wasn't there to ask her. Instead, the sun rose higher up in the sky, and it was time to drink the rest of the coffee and start working.

Just as she was about to get up, she saw a man step out of the caravan's shadow and start walking up the hill with slow, deliberate steps. The man who had stopped them last night. The man with the military crewcut and the blue X-ray eyes. He headed straight towards the tents, and Judith didn't like the way he walked at all.

She knew this kind of rolling gait. It was how men walked who had a black belt in martial arts and who, after countless sessions of incredibly hard training, were so full of self-confidence that they couldn't walk normally. *Look at me,* was the message of this gait, *see how dangerous I am! Why don't you try taking me on and see what happens.*

What was this man looking for?

Judith hastily cleared her cup and plate, put them on the tray and returned them at the counter. From the kitchen tent's shade, she watched to see where the man was going.

He went up to the top row of tents, turned right and appeared to count the tents.

Then he disappeared into Stephen's tent.

3.13. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 13

The stratigraphic principle – the insight that excavations require vertical profile cuts if finds are to be fitted into a relatively reliable chronological framework – is undisputed in Palestinian/Israeli archaeology today. As is generally known, however, one has to differentiate between "deposit layers" and "strata". A stratum is not identical to a layer, but is its theoretical equivalent in the context of scientific assessments of an excavation. In contrast, layers are objectively existing elements, such as a tell, for example.

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It was presumably meant to look harmless and non-threatening, but the entire room felt tense. The men were sitting around a white, polished meeting table and looked like a draft board about to question a suspected draft dodger. And in a way, that was exactly what he was. Stephen Foxx understood with complete clarity that this was going to be the overdue, embarrassing interrogation, and he was determined not to show his hand.

He quietly closed the flimsy door behind him, looked briefly at John Kaun, who was sitting in a way that occupied the maximum amount of space, his legs apart, his manicured hands stretched out far over the table top, his head lowered, cast an even briefer glance at the third man, who he thought must be the German author, Peter Eisenhardt, und finally looked at the professor. "You wanted to see me?"

"*I* wanted to see you," thundered Kaun immediately, taking command of the conversation. "I *couldn't wait* to meet the young man who made this mysterious find." He got up and stretched out his hand across the table. "My name is John Kaun. I have the pleasure of supporting this excavation financially."

Okay. So he was playing Mr Nice Guy. Stephen shook his hand and nodded his head respectfully, demonstrating modesty. "Stephen Foxx. It's an absolute honour, Mr Kaun, but I've got to admit I just happened to be at the right place at the right time. I really can't take credit for the achievement."

"You are being too modest, Stephen. May I introduce you to Peter Eisenhardt? Mister Eisenhardt is a German author who is here to collect material for his new novel. But please, do take a seat."

They sat, and for a moment there was a tense silence. Stephen took stock of his surroundings. A surprisingly cool room, both in terms of the décor and the temperature. The most important object appeared to be a flipchart stand, several sheets of which had already been used, but flipped to the back so he couldn't read them. The sheet that was visible was pristine.

Kaun, who had resumed his earlier expansive position, leant forward over the table, his hands folded, and fixed his gaze on Stephen. Stephen could feel the hair at the back of his neck rising under this gaze.

"Stephen," the industrialist said finally. "I'd like to know what you think about the find."

Foxx acted surprised. "Me?" he asked. "What I think about it?"

"Yes."

He had to take care not to overact. He wasn't sure how good an actor he was. Not as sure as he was that John Kaun was an expert at assessing people. Nobody was going to buy it if he pretended to be a clueless idiot.

"I'm afraid all I can do is speculate," Foxx finally said hesitatingly. "Of course you think about it, sure, but… well… in fact I don't know what to make of it."

"What do you *think*?" insisted Kaun.

"Hmm. How can I put it. What I saw in the grave looked like an instruction manual for a video camera, still in its plastic pouch. I mean, logically it can't have been there since biblical times, so the question is, what was it doing there? But I don't know either."

"Any hypothesis?"

"Nothing, I'm afraid."

The three men were drinking in his every word. And he had to play the earnest, unimaginative excavation helper who didn't notice.

"Did you see the brand of the instruction manual?"

"It was Sony."

"Did you ever consider calling Sony to find out more?"

Stephen took a deep breath and felt his heart start to race. Kaun knew something, that was why he was asking. He wasn't just taking a wild guess. Not Johngis Khan, the manager of the next millennium.

The only option was to take the bull by the horns. He needed to come up with something believable, fast. And as soon as he'd found something, he would need to make it sound as if he had been thinking about it all the time.

"Yes," said Stephen, carefully keeping a neutral expression. "I did actually call Sony last night."

"At what time was that?"

"Just before midnight, I think."[169] He opened his eyes wide. "Why, is it important?"

"Could be. Who exactly did you call?"

Foxx shrugged. "You can never be completely sure with today's telephone systems. It was some sort of toll-free hotline – at least, I hope it was toll-free – you know what I mean, 'we are here for our customers 24/7' – and then I got transferred again and again until I finally got through to somebody who knew the camera model." He nodded as if this were his greatest worry. "It was quite a long call, all in all. I really hope such calls are free when you call using your mobile. Do you happen to know if they are?"

Inside, he was shaking. The story was risky. In truth, he didn't know any such Sony number, and he wasn't even sure if the company had such a hotline. If Kaun asked him for the number, he'd be in trouble.

"*Why* did you call them?" Kaun asked insistently, ignoring Stephen's counter-question.

"Because I was curious. I wanted to know what kind of a camera it was. I know a bit about cameras, but I'd never heard of that model." He tried not to hesitate as he added: "Which isn't surprising, as it turns out the camera isn't even available yet."

Somebody snorted. Kaun raised his eyebrows imperceptibly. Looked like he'd played his cards well. He'd shown that he was a candid, trustworthy team member, and he hadn't given away anything they didn't already know.

"What conclusions have you drawn?" asked Kaun.

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[169] Here, Stephen is contradicting what he said on p. 61 – it would have been 4.00am in Tel Aviv when it was 11.00am in Tokyo. When it was 12.00am in Tel Aviv, it would have been 7.00am in Tokyo.

“No idea.”

“Your wildest speculation?”

“Hmm…” Foxx pretended to be reluctant, but in fact he was digging through the hypotheses he’d come up with before having the critical insight when speaking to Judith and Yehoshuah. “I really only know such stories from TV, so forgive me if I’m talking rubbish – but I think it might be a case of industrial espionage. Perhaps information about a prototype of the camera was stolen, who knows. But if you’re going to ask me how the manual ended up inside the grave, I have to pass. I just know that it was completely out of place in the excavation.”

Kaun looked at him for a moment, then nodded. He quickly glanced at the others, who also nodded. All of them were satisfied. Satisfied because they were convinced that they alone knew their outlandish secret.

Ryan slowly let the canvas glide back into place behind him. The light of the early morning sun was bright enough to penetrate the fabric. He saw a single camp bed which the occupant obviously hadn’t bothered to make up neatly. The sheet and the blanket dangled onto the dusty floor, which was made of compacted soil. Next to the bed there was a clothes rail with several items of clothing on hangers, and a mirror. The man with the expressionless, clear blue eyes whistled softly, his eyes losing none of their expressionlessness. No other excavation helper lived as comfortably as this, as he had already discovered. Not even he himself lived in such comfort.

There was also a small white folding table made of plastic and metal. There was a laptop on top of the table. Just like that. Clearly the owner wasn’t afraid that it might be stolen. Or that somebody might work on it while he was away.

Which was exactly what Ryan was planning to do. He sat down on the folding chair, which stood at an angle to the table, taking care not to move it, spread his hands as if he were about to cast a spell, and looked closely at the little computer. Was it distinctively orientated? Had a hair, a piece of a match or a slip of paper been stuck somewhere which could reveal that someone had meddled with it? Ryan couldn’t see anything of the sort, so he carefully flipped open the lid. Of course, there could be software on the computer which logged every device start-up to a hidden file, along with the date and time. But Ryan was familiar with such security measures. He knew what to look for and how to delete the corresponding entries, making it

impossible for anybody to discover that somebody had illicitly logged on to the computer. He pressed the power button. He could hear the typical whirring of the hard drive spinning up. Then the screen lit up.

Modern personal computers have a range of programme functions that seem designed to address the needs of spies, and Ryan knew all of them. He searched the hard drive for files created or modified within the past three days. The results were displayed in a long list which he studied carefully. He took a closer look at certain files, like letters and other documents, by opening them with the corresponding word processing software and reading them on the screen. He worked quickly and purposefully, and as his eyes wandered over the screen, they seemed to absorb the content it displayed before filing it in a different kind of storage.

His gaze came to rest on the CD-ROM drive. He opened it, briefly looked at the writing on the silver disk, lifted one eyebrow and nudged the tray to make it close, not bothering to find the button designed for that purpose. While the CD-ROM spun up with a characteristic whirring sound, Ryan launched the programme for reading the disk, opened the search function and studied the list of recent search terms.

Jesus Christ was the most recent.

Ryan smiled imperceptibly, a cool smile that didn't reach his eyes. He'd seen enough. He quickly checked to make sure his presence would not be detected, then turned off the computer.

For a moment, he remained seated. Had there been an observer, he'd have had the impression that all the energy was redirected from Ryan's eyes to his other sense organs. His eyes seemed to dim and glaze over while his ears absorbed every sound in the tent's greater surroundings. His nose smelled the dust, the dried sweat on the used, unwashed clothes and the bed sheets. His skin detected the heat that poured in from all sides, and seemed almost to sense the configuration of the furnishings around him. He didn't make the mistake of concentrating only on the computer. To an experienced intruder, a person's possessions could reveal as much as a computer, and with less effort.

Ryan stepped up to the clothes rail, checked all the pockets with quick, practised motions, but didn't find anything. He crouched and searched the half-open bag on the ground below the rail, managing to leave the layout of the things it contained – if one could even describe such chaos as a layout – unchanged. Clearly the results of his search were not satisfactory, as his eyebrows moved closer together the longer he searched, creating an unmistakable wrinkle of

displeasure on his forehead. No journal. No letters. Not even a diary or an address book with useful information.

He sat on the bed, not caring whether he was leaving any traces in this cluttered landscape of folds, blankets and parts of a pyjama. His heel touched something under the bed, making a hollow rattling sound. Surprised, Ryan leant forward, spreading his thighs and pushing aside the bed sheet hanging from the edge of the bed, which had hidden the item from view.

Underneath the bed stood one of the dull grey excavation boxes.

"More visitors," said one of the excavation helpers who were loading sand and gravel into dusty, ragged baskets.

They stopped working and stretched their necks. Two large, silver trucks approached the camp on the gravel road, veiled in the usual dust cloud and rocking dangerously from side to side at every pothole. The trucks were really very large. They looked like the type you saw in American movies.

"It's an invasion," said somebody else. Then, one by one, they took hold of their shovels and went back to shovelling the dirt, even though, since Tuesday, the work was no longer so much fun.

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith cleared his throat at length, leant forward, and looked straight at Stephen. When Stephen didn't drop his gaze, Wilford-Smith looked away and instead studied the fingers of his hand, which were involuntarily drawing complicated, invisible doodles on the conference table. "There is something I've been meaning to ask you, Stephen," he said finally.

"Yes?"

"Why did you open the linen pouch?"

Stephen saw the professor's fingers stop their restless motion. Suddenly, it became very quiet in the room.

"You were working," said Wilford-Smith, "in the context of an archaeological excavation. I assume you were aware of this at all times. You found a linen pouch that was very old, beyond a shadow of a doubt." From the corner of his eye, Stephen thought he saw John Kaun cast an

unwilling, warning look at the excavation director. “And as you know, one of the most important rules at an excavation is that we are archaeologists, not treasure hunters. Finds are not damaged on the spur of the moment, not even if one expects to find the gold of the Queen of Sheba inside. You, on the other hand, simply opened the linen pouch and *cut* the plastic pouch it contained! You took your pocket knife and *sliced* it open!” He redirected his gaze to Stephen, and this time he didn’t look away. “I would like to know why.”

Now everybody was looking at him, and if their looks had been daggers, he’d have been skewered. Stephen had expected to be asked this question at some stage. He could feel the sweat running down his back, despite the coolness of the room.

He breathed deeply, but not too deeply. It was all up to him now, but he still had to pretend to be harmless. It wasn’t easy. Kaun was watching him like a hawk, and Stephen was certain that this man had not only a sixth, but also a seventh and eighth sense for detecting what was going on in other people. He leant back, kept his hands still and tried to smile nonchalantly.

“Well,” he said. “I knew that this couldn’t possibly be an archaeological find.”

Three pairs of eyebrows rose up in unison. “Excuse me?” said the professor.

“The plastic was shimmering through,” explained Stephen Foxx, as if the unarticulated accusations had never been implied. “It was obvious to the naked eye. A shabby old burlap pouch, quite fragile – it came apart on the side seam at the lightest touch – but plastic was shimmering underneath. Okay, at first I thought someone was trying to trick me. As you know, some of the other helpers can’t stand me. I thought I’d find a slip of paper inside the plastic pouch with a message like ‘Foxx is an idiot’ or ‘Regards from the pharaoh’ or something similar.” This was almost true, which was why he was able to present it convincingly.

“And that’s why you cut open the plastic pouch?”

“Yes. I thought I was being secretly watched and that people were going to start laughing at me at any moment.”

“And how were you planning to avoid this?”

“No idea. I didn’t think that far ahead because I saw the instruction manual, which seemed strange. And then I came to you.”

The professor nodded. Stephen looked from one to the other.

The suspicion had not quite left their faces yet. Only the German author seemed relatively uninvolved. Perhaps he hadn't understood everything.

At that very moment, the door of the caravan opened behind him, letting in a burst of heat and dispelling the sense of quiet seclusion. With it came a man wearing a khaki uniform. When Stephen turned around to look at him, he recognised the man who had spoiled the romantic atmosphere between him and Judith the previous night. Was it possible that this man was something like John Kaun's right-hand man? In any event, he was exchanging knowing glances with the magnate. This couldn't be good. It was the type of glance you sometimes saw in gangster movies, where it usually meant something like: *"All good, boss, I've taken care of the bastard."*

Kaun took the floor again, which he'd clearly only temporarily loaned to the professor. "Thank you, Stephen," he said, nodding as if he were truly grateful. "I believe we have taken up enough of your precious time. I would like to ask you to inform us if you're going to be leaving the camp at any time, this evening, for example. Just in case we have further questions, you understand."

"Yes," said Stephen, not without admiring the industrialist's ability to wrap unpleasant truths in shiny packaging. "Of course."

With that, he was dismissed, so he left. Kaun paid him no further heed, Wilford-Smith nodded distractedly, and the author was only watching in any case. Nobody said a word until Stephen had closed the caravan's door behind him.

He would have bet anything that they started talking about him at the very same moment.

Gleaming with chrome, the two huge trucks manoeuvred awkwardly across the parking lot, circled by a group of men in grey overalls who looked as small as ants beside them and who directed their movements with exaggerated gestures of their hands. Thick, grey clouds of exhaust fumes rose from the eye-catching, polished exhaust pipes that stretched towards the sky to the left and right of the monumental driver's cabs. The roar of their engines made the earth shake.

Up at plot 3, the excavation helpers stood and stared. The people in the kitchen tent stirred the pots in which lunch was cooking, but their eyes were glued to the silver behemoths. What was this? The question was on everybody's lips.

Stephen Foxx found a lookout point near the first row of tents. The trucks were unmarked. There was no company name. Nothing, not even in Arabic or Hebrew writing.

Finally the trucks arrived at a position which the men walking with them seemed to find acceptable. The roar of the engines died down, and the resulting silence was deafening. But the crews didn't pause. Without hesitation, they opened the doors at the back and started unloading.[170] Large cable drums, wooden boxes containing strange, dark metal equipment, tool boxes and computer monitors in robust steel cases emerged.

This really was beginning to look like the invasion of the Martians. Like a movie. What was their plan? Who the hell were these grey figures?

Stephen sensed somebody approaching from the back and turned his head. It was Judith.

"The man who came into the caravan just before you left… do you know who that is?" she asked quietly.

Stephen answered without turning around. "The guy who stopped us last night? No idea. I get the feeling he's a kind of right-hand man to Kaun. His man for the dirty work."

"He was in your tent earlier."

"Oh? Interesting."

She remained silent. Probably waiting, and Stephen could sense her becoming irritated. "Aren't you worried that he could have found your paper?"

Stephen smiled. So she was his ally after all. She had bought into his plan. That was good.

"No," he said. "He didn't find it."

"How can you be so sure?"

"Because I hid it in your tent this morning," said Stephen, grinning.

[170] Edit: replaced "But the crews didn't pause. Without hesitation, the loading doors at the back were opened, and the men started unloading the contents" with "But the crews didn't pause. Without hesitation, they opened the doors at the back and started unloading".

3.14. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 14

Narrow profile cuts are particularly suited for addressing chronological problems and questions of dating. But this represents only a small part of archaeological work. Beyond that, historians are also interested in learning how large a settlement was at a given time, whether it was fortified and had a centrally located ruler's building, what kind of houses people lived in, what kind of artisanal activities they engaged in, what they ate, which religions they followed and so on. Finding answers to these questions necessarily requires horizontal area or layer excavations, the purpose of which is to successively uncover individual walking surfaces.

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

Ryan's report was short and to the point. When he finished, everybody sat in silence and brooded. Mysterious popping sounds came from the caravan walls. The air conditioning unit, which had only switched on sporadically in the morning, was now running continuously. It probably wouldn't be able to keep the meeting room cool for much longer under the sun's fierce onslaught.

"And what does it mean?" asked Kaun finally, scowling. "That he's smelled a rat, right?"

Eisenhardt looked attentively from one to the other. He increasingly felt like he was no longer physically present. Ryan sat there motionlessly, as if hewn in stone. His boss, on the other hand, was frowning, tapping out a rapid beat on the table top with his fingers.

"I must admit," said Professor Wilford-Smith, "that I find it completely normal that someone who comes to Israel as an excavation helper and who brings a reference work like the Encyclopaedia Britannica is going to look up Jesus Christ at some stage. In addition to which weeks could already have passed since he looked up those terms. I don't think he'll have had much time for reading since he got here."

Kaun looked at Ryan. "Were you able to see when he searched for the keyword?"

Ryan shook his head. "No. That information doesn't get logged."

Kaun looked like he wasn't listening to him. "You have to keep an eye on him, Ryan," he said. The spot on the polished table top he kept staring at seemed to be revealing some

fascinating insights, and he kept nodding to himself. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, he slapped the table hard, taking everybody by surprise, and said: “You must keep an eye on him, Ryan – do you understand?”

“Of course,” said Ryan, unmoved.

For a moment, there was an awkward silence. Eisenhardt noticed that he had been holding his breath, and breathed out quietly. While Ryan seemed to be used to such outbursts, they made him break out in sweat.

Finally, Kaun relaxed. As if nothing had happened, his suave, confident, urbane smile was back. He looked at everybody in turn as if he had to encourage a depressed sports team which had just lost an important match.

“So,” he said. “What next?”

Judith hardly dared breathe. She was sitting on her bed, a small hand mirror in the one hand and a coarse comb in the other, trying to get some of the sand and dust out of her unruly hair and get some shape back into it. She had to retire to her tent twice daily for this ritual if she didn’t want to end up looking like a scarecrow by evening.

She was afraid of making a hasty movement and hearing the soft crackle of disintegrating paper. The paper which Stephen had found together with the instruction manual had to be two thousand years old. By now, it was probably so fragile and brittle that just looking at it the wrong way would make it crumble to dust. Not even the world’s best laboratory would be able to save it then. Judith wondered where on earth Stephen could have hidden the papers in her tent. Hopefully not in the pockets of an item of clothing. She had carefully checked under the sheets before sitting down. Did Stephen know that she went to her tent from time to time? Had he taken it into account?

While she dragged the comb slowly through her stubborn hair, she looked around, ignoring her reflection in the mirror. Where on earth could one hide such sensitive documents in such a tent?

The strange noises outside – howling engines, the grinding of heavy wheels on gravel, excited shouting, the banging of loading doors – drove Eisenhardt to push aside the privacy

screen on one of the windows and look outside. He saw two large trucks which had found a space between all the other vehicles parked outside and which were now being unloaded by a group of stocky men. “What’s that?” he muttered under his breath, not expecting an answer.

But Kaun, back to being charm personified, leapt to his feet, stood next to him and pushed the window covers all the way to the side. “Excellent. It’s finally arrived,” he said with obvious satisfaction, “the sonic tomograph.[171] A highly delicate piece of equipment, especially during transport. Really amazing how these shipping companies work nowadays. They tell you ‘tomorrow at ten o’clock’, and then they really arrive at ten. I don’t know, but this is not something you would have seen in the past.”

“A sonic tomograph?” repeated Eisenhardt and wasn’t sure if he’d heard properly.

Kaun grinned. “That should fall into your area of expertise, Peter. A sonic tomograph is used to X-ray the ground using shockwaves. Our palaeontologists use such devices to find dinosaur skeletons in Montana.”

“Dinosaurs?”

“I told myself,” said Kaun, who was clearly in a good mood, “that the likeliest place to find the camera was here. Not far from the time traveller’s grave. Perhaps he took care of it until the very last, who knows. But we can’t very well excavate the entire area, can we? Therefore: the sonic tomograph. See the device that is being unloaded now? Which looks like a hotdog stand on wheels? That’s the shockwave generator. It shoots a lead ball, the mass of which is known down to the last gram, at the ground at a precisely calculated speed. Sensors are erected all around. They register the echoes of the shockwaves and forward them to the computer. The computer generates an image of the ground beneath our feet, as clear as day.”

Eisenhardt nodded, impressed. “And that really works?”

“It works.”

“Why do people still bother doing excavations, then?”

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[171] The device is called a *“Sonartomograph”* in the source text. A Google search reveals approximately equal numbers of results for “seismic tomograph archaeology” and “sonic tomograph archaeology” (around 30,000 in each case). The qualifier “archaeology” was added to the search to narrow the results to this area of study – the technique is also used in other fields. I’ve decided to use “sonic tomograph” to preserve the acronym “Sotom” on p. 158 in the book. The expression “computer-assisted sonic tomography (CAST)” is found on p. 55 of Michael Crichton’s book “Jurassic Park” (Arrow, 2001).

The professor snorted dismissively, which Kaun seemed to find hilarious. Eisenhardt looked from one to the other in surprise, smiling uncertainly. Even Ryan started smiling, which looked disturbing because he clearly didn't practice this type of expression very often.

"No, seriously," said Kaun when he had regained his composure. "Of course we won't see coins or clay fragments, and some things have to be excavated before you can do anything with them. But a camera, made of dense metal… How do you think the time traveller packaged the camera? To make it survive for centuries? I imagine that he must have used a sturdy metal chest. The camera must be in a large metal housing, wrapped in a way that protects it against dust, radiation and temperature extremes."

Eisenhardt thought this sounded plausible. Why am I the only one who cannot believe that that's how it is? Why me, of all people?

"And if this box was buried somewhere around here," said Kaun, "we'll find it. Then we'll have the camera before sunset tonight."

"Well then," mumbled Eisenhardt. What did they need him for, in that case? Kaun had plainly taken all sorts of steps already without waiting to see what sorts of ideas he, the supposed specialist in outlandish concepts, had come up with. He hadn't thought of imaging the area with modern technology because he hadn't even known that this was possible.

After a while, when nobody had said anything, with everybody just watching the men unload the machines, he asked: "But seriously – wouldn't this type of device generally make archaeologists' lives easier? I don't understand why you would dig on a hunch if you have the option of first taking a look underground."

Kaun smiled indulgently. "Let me put it this way," he said. "If I got people to excavate the entire area to a depth of twenty metres, it would still end up costing less."

George Martinez was supervising the unloading of the equipment, but when it came to the thumper[172], he joined in personally. Although in essence, it was nothing but a robust cannon for shooting head-sized lead balls at the ground, some parts of it were delicate. The packers in their grey overalls had handled some of the boxes with the other devices so roughly and

[172] The word "thumper" is used in the source text (p. 157).

carelessly that he could not bring himself to let them unload the core part of the equipment by themselves. “Careful… don’t use that handle… take care of the rocker switches!”

He kept an eye out for Bob Richards. But as usual, Bob didn’t worry about trivial details such as loading or unloading equipment worth millions. They had brought only one thumper. If it failed, they’d have to pack up and go home.

He heaved a sigh of relief when the machine finally stood safely on the ground. It was a very deep sigh, as he was not used to such heavy exertions. Nobody would have expected him to be. Since his childhood, he’d been as thin as a rake, to the disappointment of his father, who proudly described their ancestors as a “healthy tribe of strong Mexican mountain farmers”.

The shockwave generator stood on four large wheels fitted with fat tyres. George looked around. Without thinking, he was scanning the area for the most suitable location to set it up. When the images weren’t satisfactory, you had to experiment with setting up the machine in different places, and he wanted to develop a feel for good locations. The surrounding landscape was a bit hilly, meaning that a hilltop would be the first preference. Provided there was solid bedrock. Gravel or rubble didn’t transmit the shockwaves properly.

And then the realisation struck him like a hammer blow: he was in the Holy Land! In the land of the Bible, the prophets, the crucifixion and the resurrection! He was standing on ground on which the Messiah himself had walked two thousand years earlier!

For a moment, he felt dizzy. He’d always dreamed of this. And now everything had happened so quickly that he hadn’t even had time to understand where he had been sent in such a rush.

George Martinez’s greatest gift were his slender, elegant hands, hands like precision tools, which had enabled him, as an atypical offspring of Mexican immigrants, to successfully train as a precision engineer and get a job as a technical assistant at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana. There, he’d become used to being mistaken for a Native American because of his caramel-coloured skin, his jet-black hair and his fiery eyes. In the course of time, he became the technical supervisor of *Sotom 2*, short for *Sonic Tomograph 2,* a more advanced version of earlier echolocation devices. He also became used to being hired out along with the equipment to cash-flush businesses such as oil or construction companies. He’d criss-crossed the world to analyse oil fields, map the shafts of abandoned mines or trace water pipes, gas lines or other underground infrastructure in South American cities that had grown explosively

and which didn't have reliable building plans, or indeed any at all. For the University of Bozeman, *Sotom 2* was an important source of income.

But yesterday everything had been extremely rushed. He'd been given a whole ten minutes to pack his toothbrush and a change of clothing. He'd had to cancel his appointments for the next ten days on the way to the airport, where the largest cargo transporter ever to have landed at Bozeman was waiting. He'd only found out where he was going when the plane had already taken off, while he was still busy checking that the set of signal cables was complete.

One of the men from the logistics company startled him out of his reverie. "Where does that go?" he asked in guttural English that sounded Arabic, so that George couldn't understand him at first, while pointing at the thumper.

George pointed to the boxes which had been stacked on the edges of a sprawling tented camp. "Over there," he said weakly.

The Holy Land. He had to find a way to send his mother a postcard from here before their deployment was over and he got shipped out as quickly as he had come in. And he had to…

"Is it far to Jerusalem from here?" he asked one of the guards who were standing around, each of them carrying a machine pistol over their shoulder.

"No," replied the man. "Israel is a small country. It's not far to Jerusalem from anywhere."

Calvary. The Garden of Gethsemane. The Via Dolorosa. He had to make a trip to Jerusalem. Pray at each of the stops of the Via Crucis.

"Can you tell me how much that is in miles?"

The guard grinned, nodded, appeared to calculate the distance in his head. "Twenty five miles, maybe. But I may be completely off."

Israel really was a small country. George travelled twice that distance daily, just to get to work, and he thought he lived close to the university.

He pointed to his surroundings, the tents, caravans, cars. "What's going on here?"

"No idea. An excavation, as far as I know."

"And it needs to be guarded?"

"Yes. Ever since they made some sensational discovery."

"A sensational discovery? What did they find?"

“It’s top secret. They don’t tell us anything.”

The man really didn’t seem to know anything. George spotted Bob, who was responsible for the scientific part of the deployment. He was standing next to one of the five large, silver caravans, talking to a man wearing a pigeon-blue suit, pretty much the least suitable attire George could imagine in these surroundings. Like always and everywhere in the world, he was wearing his fifteen-year-old jeans and a faded t-shirt and felt pretty good about it. He liked the heat, Montana was too cold for his taste during much of the year.

“Top secret? Right. But there are always rumours, aren’t there? At least, that’s what would happen where I come from.” He pulled a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and offered one to the stocky, curly-haired guard.

“All kinds of rumours. But it’s all bullshit, if you ask me.”

“Like what, for example?” He offered the guard a light. “My name is George, by the way.”

“George? I’m Gideon. I heard somebody say that plot 14 was sealed off because they found something nuclear. Others say it’s treasure. King Solomon’s treasure. But you know, this always happens. There is so much history in this country that you can barely excavate the foundations for your house without hitting something.”

“I understand.” It all seemed pretty ominous. But exciting. George couldn’t wait to see the images *Sotom 2* was going to supply.

He finally got through to him. “Wilde,” said the low voice, which sounded full of inexhaustible energy and zest for life.

“Hi, Dominik,” said Eisenhardt, “it’s Peter.”

“Peter! What a surprise. And so early in the day – what’s up?”

“The usual. A scientific emergency call. Do you have a moment or shall I call back later?”

“No problem, I’m busy having my coffee.” Dominik was always ‘having a coffee’ when Peter called him. “Did you move your study to the passage? There’s a strange echo on the line.”

“It’s a long story, I’ll bring you up to speed some other time.”

“Okay, shoot.”

Eisenhardt took a deep breath. “Are you aware of any research into time travel?”

"Oops," said Dominik. Then silence. Dominik was thinking.

This was what Eisenhardt really appreciated about Dominik: he was never hasty in his responses, no matter how weird the question. And pretty much all of Eisenhardt's questions were weird. Dominik Wilde, a freelance science journalist who wrote for numerous magazines, was something like his ultimate lifesaver when it came to questions of hard science. By the time he called Dominik, he'd usually exhausted all of his encyclopaedias and reference books and had spent days in the university library without finding an answer. Dominik was highly knowledgeable about almost all scientific fields and knew who the leading researchers were in each area. And on the rare occasions when he didn't know the answer, he was always able to help Eisenhardt in some way – with an address, a telephone number, a book title.

They'd met some years previously, when Peter Eisenhardt, having read an article, had called the author, Dominik Wilde, to ask further questions. It turned out that Dominik had read all of his novels, loved them and was honoured to help. Unfortunately he hadn't been able to provide answers immediately as the questions were more complicated than they'd thought. Answering them made it necessary to meet in person. They discovered that they liked the same movies and that there was an infinite variety of topics they could talk about. That was how it had all started.

"Time travel," said Dominik after a long pause. "I would say, no. I don't think there's even anybody studying the *phenomenon* of time, at least not from a physics perspective.[173] Psychologists and neurologists are doing a lot of research on the perception of time, the experience of time, that type of thing. What is memory, how long is the time period which we experience as the present, all sorts of interesting questions. But that probably isn't what you're looking for, is it?"

"No," admitted Eisenhardt. "Specifically, I'd like to know if there is even the slightest chance that five to ten years from now, we'll be able to send somebody into the past."

"Like a time machine. H.G. Wells and all that."

"Exactly."

"Well… there is always a slight possibility. You know how fast science is advancing. It's really unpredictable. All sorts of people have embarrassed themselves by saying that one or

[173] That's not quite accurate. Physicists have not neglected the topic – "The Order of Time" by Carlo Rovelli (2018) provides a comprehensive and highly readable overview of how physicists view time.

other thing is impossible. But I'd say that the chances of inventing a faster-than-light drive, an inexhaustible source of energy or an immortality treatment, while also minimal, are far greater."

"I see. Ok, let me turn the question around: what does modern physics say about time, if anything?"

"Quite a lot, as you can imagine. You'll need to be a bit more specific."

"Fine." Eisenhardt paused and thought. This was part of the game: a good question was often worth half an answer. Many problems were a result of imprecise questions, not lacking answers. "In thermodynamics, there's the law of conservation of energy, which implies that it is impossible to build a perpetual motion machine. The second law and all that. What I really want to know is whether there is a similar proof that shows that time travel is physically impossible."

"There's no such thing."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. Since Albert Einstein, time has been interpreted as being one of the dimensions of the four-dimensional spacetime[174] continuum. More specifically, since Hermann Minkowski, who showed that the Lorenz transformations are simple rotations of the spacetime axes…"

Eisenhardt gulped. Dominik was veering hard into technical jargon. "Stop, stop," he said. "Just run it past me slowly, at author speed. What does dimension mean? I know length, width and height, and those are the three directions in which I can freely move. I can take a step forward and I can take a step back. Does this mean I should be able to do the same in time?"

"It's something you do all the time in your novels."

"Yes, I know, but that's fiction. I'm talking about reality."

"That must be an unfamiliar feeling."

"If time is just a dimension, then why can't I just walk back, say to my schooldays, and choose a different path for my life? Or just go back a week and pick different lotto numbers?"

[174] There is some debate about whether spacetime should be hyphenated. In Nabokov's novel Ada, the character Van (Ivan) writes: "I cannot imagine Space without Time, but I can very well imagine Time without Space. 'Space-time' – that hideous hybrid whose very hyphen looks phoney" (Nabokov, 1969, p. 543). It appears that dictionaries are keeping the hyphen, while physicists are ditching it.

"You're really after the money, aren't you?"

"If I were after the money, I wouldn't have become an author."

"Okay, as far as I know, the commonly used term is spacetime, but scientists still make a distinction between spatial and temporal dimensions. There is at least one theory that postulates a fifth dimension, also a time dimension, referred to as hypertime. But don't ask me what it means. I haven't got a clue. I imagine there are also theories that posit a sixth dimension. Physicists like their theories to be symmetrical, and then you'd have three space and three time dimensions."

"That's all very nice, but what's the point? Can time be reversed or not?"

"There is an entire class of physical laws which are called *time-invariant*. In plain English: they always hold true, whether time moves forwards or backwards. The classical example is a collision between two billiard balls. If you record the event on film, you can run it forwards or backwards, it works both ways. The motion can occur in nature. Somebody watching the film wouldn't be able to tell which variant is the 'correct' one."[175]

"Okay, fine. But when I get up in the morning, I add milk and sugar to my coffee, stir it and get a light brown, bitter-sweet liquid. You're not going to tell me that if I stir it the other way around, it separates out into black coffee, milk and granulated sugar?"

"No, that situation isn't time-symmetrical. Processes of that kind are explained using the concept of entropy, which increases as a result of mixing. It allows the fundamental symmetry of time to be maintained in the edifice of physics."

"Great."

"Listen, it's not my fault. You were the one who wanted to know what modern physics tells us about time."

Eisenhardt remembered something. "Say – surely you know Stephen Hawking?"

"Of course I know Stephen Hawking. I even interviewed him once."

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[175] As presented, this doesn't seem quite right: in the forward direction, the balls slow down until they come to a *gradual* stop. In the backward direction, they speed up until they come to a *sudden* stop. It would be easy to identify when the film was being played forward vs. being played backward. This is because of the effects of friction between the table surface and the balls. In the classic thought experiment, the billiard table is conceived of as being frictionless. In this case, the balls would keep bouncing off each other, and their paths could be mapped forward or backward with equal fidelity because the laws governing their interaction are time-invariant (Jesperson & Fitz-Randolph, 1977, p. 126).

“I seem to recall him proving that time travel is impossible in one of his books. And he’s considered a living Einstein, if I’m not mistaken. Are you familiar with the proof?”

“Hmm, yes.”

“And?”

Dominik sighed heavily. “You’re not going to like it. It’s not a physical proof, strictly speaking.”

“Just tell me what he based his argument on. I’ll tell you if I like it or not.”

“As you wish. Hawking says the following: if time travel is possible, we’re going to figure out how to do it some day. Maybe in a hundred years, maybe in ten thousand, it doesn’t matter. From then on, people are going to start travelling in time, and at some point they’re going to come to our time, which is interesting enough. And they’d come in large numbers because from the day when time travel is discovered through to all eternity, anybody could be struck by the desire to visit us – and all of these tourists, no matter whether they come from the twentieth, the hundredth or the millionth century, would arrive practically simultaneously from our perspective. They’d fall over each other’s feet. There’s no way we’d overlook them. Do you follow?”

“Yes,” growled Eisenhardt. “I follow.”

“But we’re not seeing *any* time travellers. Therefore, said Hawking, time travel is never going to be discovered. Experience tells us that anything that *can* be done *will* be done, sooner or later. Thus the only logical conclusion is that time travel is physically impossible. End of the proof.”

“Hmm,” said Eisenhardt. He’d read a similar chain of reasoning in a science fiction novel. “I’m a bit disappointed.”

“I thought you’d be. More recently, however, Hawking has corrected himself. He says that time travel should be physically possible.”

“Hmm.”

“But then you need an explanation for all the missing time travellers, of course.”

“That’s my area of expertise, I think,” said Eisenhardt morosely. “I can immediately come up with an explanation, and you’re not going to like it either.”

“Really? Do tell.”

“We’re all wondering if humanity’s ever going to sort out its problems, like the hole in the ozone layer, atomic bombs and famines,” said Eisenhardt, staring at the white wall in front of him. “Perhaps what Hawking’s argument shows is that humanity won’t exist for long enough to discover time travel.”

3.15. Das Jesus Video – Chapter 15

Figures 200 to 235 were taken from the assays conducted by the sonic tomography team of Montana State University under the direction of Dr Richards. The assays were encumbered by the fact that four months of excavations had already taken place. The dark rectangular areas (crosshatched in the diagrams) represent the areas already excavated, while the grey areas behind them (marked using parallel hatching) are the so-called 'sonic shadow'.

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

He'd been watching the two of them for a while. He couldn't figure out how they could make out anything at all on the computer screen in the blinding daylight, but they didn't take their eyes off it for a moment. The bony guy who was sitting on a stool facing the screen was wearing a greasy t-shirt and threadbare jeans. He looked too emaciated to be able to get up unassisted and was talking non-stop while Judith stood next to him, her right hand placed provocatively on her hip, listening with a degree of rapt attention that drove Stephen up the wall the longer he watched it. And the way the guy gesticulated! It was very suspicious. As if he intended to 'accidentally' touch her.

Was this jealousy, Stephen asked himself, slightly bemused. Nonsense. He wasn't jealous. No. He didn't mind if a woman slept with other guys. The only thing that irked him was when she didn't want to sleep with him. You could hardly call this jealousy.

As he came closer, he heard scraps of conversation. It looked like the man wasn't really talking about anything but the technical details of his equipment, which he'd spent the whole day setting up. The trucks had left, leaving behind a stack of boxes and two men. One of them, the one who looked as hungry as he looked Mexican, the one who was trying desperately trying to impress the hot Israeli woman, had done more or less all of the work. He had unpacked boxes, pulled thick cables across the entire dig site and rammed strange metal objects into the ground which looked like oversized tent pegs. Into these, he'd screwed smaller objects which he'd carefully and gently lifted from their small wooden boxes, which appeared to have been lined in red velvet, as far as one could tell from a distance. Delicate devices, clearly, probably some type of measuring equipment. Finally, he'd hooked up the cables to the measuring devices, not stopping until the entire area had been connected.

“But what is it that makes the terrain so challenging?” he heard Judith ask. She was ignoring him as he approached.

“The excavations,” said the technician, baring his bad teeth. It was probably meant to be a smile. “The holes refract the shockwaves. On the images, they’ll look like black cubes. But never mind, we’ll work it out. This is the first time we’re scanning an active site – up to now we always came before the digging started.”

“What sorts of digs were they?”

“Dinosaurs. This one time, we discovered two beautiful, large dinosaur skeletons. They’re on display in some or other Smithsonian museum. And on one occasion, a dig was cancelled after we’d been there. Because the images showed that there was too little to be found.”

Stephen cleared his throat. “Judith?”

“Hmm?” She looked at him in annoyance. “What?”

“Can I speak to you for a moment?”

She gave him a look that invited him to drop dead, then smiled an apology at the technician and walked over to Stephen. “What’s up?”

“In case anybody asks you what your plans are for tonight, tell them that we’re going to visit your parents.”

She threw her head back and looked at him as if he were mad. “What? Why on earth?”

“Because that’s what I told Professor Wilford-Smith.”

“And why did you tell the professor that the two of us were visiting my parents?”

“Listen, the Sabbath starts tonight. I can’t very well say that we’re going to catch a movie in Jerusalem.”

“I don’t get it. What business is it of his where you or I are going tonight?”

“Apparently he thinks it is his business,” Stephen said calmly. “Just think of the guy who was in my tent. While he was snooping, they were interrogating me and instructed me to tell them if I was planning to leave the camp.”

Judith looked at him questioningly. Her irritation appeared to be abating. “If anything, say that we’re visiting my mom.”

“Your mom? What about your dad?”

“He left my mom the day I left home to join the army. Since then, he’s been living in a cold one-room apartment, spends all day reading the Talmud and thinks he’s a pious man.”

“My goodness.” Stephen, whose parents had a relatively happy marriage, was shocked. “I didn’t know that. Yehoshuah never mentioned it.”

“I would have preferred never to have mentioned it either.”

“Hmm. In any case, I wanted to let you know.”

“Okay.”

“Say…”

She almost smiled. “What?”

He nodded in the direction of the man at the computer. “What do you see in him?”

Suddenly the thaw disappeared, and ice and thunder returned to her expression. “Stephen Foxx,” she said grimly, “you understand nothing!” With that she turned around and marched across to plot 3, which was where both of them were meant to be.

Stephen watched her in bafflement. He probably shouldn’t have said what he did, but he wasn’t entirely sure why not. Sometimes women were simply incomprehensible. Understanding them wasn’t his goal, even though it would have made things easier sometimes.

“Excuse me,” said the guy, who was still sitting on his stool at the computer. “Can I ask you something?”

“Hmm,” said Stephen without much enthusiasm. “Of course.”

The man got up and strolled over to him. “George Martinez,” he said, stretching out his hand. “From Bozeman, Montana.”

Stephen shook his hand carefully. Was there a food shortage in Bozeman, Montana? “Stephen Foxx. I’m from Maine.”

“Good to meet you, Stephen. I couldn’t help overhearing part of your conversation with the young lady…”

“Couldn’t help it, sure.” A nice way of saying *I eavesdropped.* Worth remembering.

“Yes, I heard you talking about going to Jerusalem tonight. Right?”

“Yes.”

“Would it be presumptuous to ask you for a ride?”

Stephen had to make an effort not to grimace defensively. He was planning to smuggle an irreplaceable document, which he had illegitimately taken possession of, to the laboratory at the Rockefeller Institute for analysis. The last thing he needed was an unknown passenger.

“To Jerusalem? What are you looking for there?”

“I just want to see the city.”

“It’s Sabbath. The city is going to be dead.”

George sheepishly shifted his weight from one foot to the other. “Let me explain. I attend church every evening. I feel that I’m missing out if I don’t do it here. What’s more, we’re in the Holy Land – all of the holy sites are just a short drive away. I’d really like to see them, even if tonight isn’t a good time. I don’t know if we’re going to be heading back tomorrow – it often happens very quickly.”

“I understand.” He took a closer look at the thin, dark-skinned man. He actually looked quite likeable. A devout Catholic, it appeared. Not really a serious rival for Judith. “My problem, George, is that I don’t know when we’re coming back. We’re going to Jerusalem – but I don’t want to commit to where we’re going or when we’re returning. Not even that we’re going to return sometime tonight. Do you understand? I can take you along, no problem. But you’ll have to make your own way back.”

George held up his hands defensively. “Okay, that’s no problem. I can do that. I’ll find a taxi somewhere. It’s just that there aren’t any taxis here, that’s why…”

“Okay,” said Stephen and shrugged his shoulders. “See you tonight, then.”

He’d started tearing sheets off the flipchart pads, spreading them out on the large, wonderfully empty table and covering them in wild scribbles, his hand moving restlessly and angrily across the page. He wrote like a man possessed, used all of the colours, dashed down keywords, drew large question marks, sketched connecting lines, circled areas of his chaotic map, crossed out others with dense, crosshatched lines. This was all so crazy. Complete madness. Writing like a madman was the only way to retain his sanity.

At some point in the afternoon, he finally dropped the pen in exhaustion, sank back against the back rest of the chair and massaged his right shoulder, which was sore from all the effort.

He only noticed now that he was hungry, ravenous in fact. He'd completely forgotten about lunch, and no-one had come to remind him. Or perhaps somebody had come, stood in the door and called his names a few times, and he hadn't even looked up. He couldn't remember.

What if…? Was the question he'd dived into. Supposing time travel were real. Supposing the remains were indeed those of a kamikaze time traveller, who had been transported by some unimaginable means to the time of Jesus and condemned to live out the remainder of his life in Palestine after the crucifixion. Supposing, supposing, supposing.

He still didn't quite believe it. It was unbelievable. Deep inside of him there was a certainty, as strong as a massive steel beam, that moving through time was impossible. It was impossible to travel to the past and transform what had already happened into a new present. Nothing could change this feeling of immovability.

Of course, this was an interesting discovery. He was a science-fiction author who had achieved his greatest successes with time travel novels. And now, finding himself in a situation which should make him rejoice – *see? I told you so!* – an inner voice piped up and kept shouting: *It isn't possible! It's all a hoax!*

Nevertheless, he'd managed to become fully absorbed in the world of *What if?* scenarios, muting his scepticism through relentless activity. The result lay on the table in front of him, the outcome of a work frenzy lasting hours: large sheets of paper, filled with scribbles in four bright colours that made them look like modern works of art.

He'd begun with the question: What if I were to write a novel in which somebody from the present travels through time into the past, to the time of Jesus, with a video camera in his bag? Not that that had been his intention. He'd once read a story which he liked, in which it had turned out that *all* of the people witnessing the crucifixion – the soldiers, the bystanders, even the priests and executioners – were time travellers from various periods in the distant future.

Which immediately reminded him of Stephen Hawking's argument. If it were true that time travel was going to be invented at some point in the future, wouldn't it imply that people would be able to book adventure trips into the past to witness the great events of world history? *Meet Leonardo da Vinci! Watch Michelangelo paint the Sistine Chapel! Accompany Christopher Columbus on his historical voyage to the New World!* Wouldn't the same hold true for all periods and for all significant events? If at some point, a way to travel through time were discovered and commercialised, then history should be full of time-travelling tourists from the

future. And maybe it wouldn't stop at sightseeing. *Ascend to the Roman throne – celebrate the most lavish and decadent orgies in known history!*

If John Kaun and Professor Wilford-Smith were correct in their beliefs, then this discovery wasn't going to be made in the remote future, in the 24th or 36th century – by then, so many things could still happen, so much history could be forgotten, that Columbus and da Vinci would perhaps be left in peace – no, at issue was a discovery that had to be imminent. The video camera at the focus of everybody's attention was going to be introduced in three years' time. Taking current product development cycles as a guide, it was unlikely to remain the top-of-the-range model for longer than a further three years. In other words, the relevant period covered the next six years. The man whose bones had been dug up had to depart within the next six years, no later.

The next question was how it was going to be done. Would he use a kind of time machine, as in H.G. Wells's book? What was such a machine going to look like? Would it be a small, portable device you could attach to your belt, or an enormous machine, as large as a power station? If it was large, people were going to notice the departure of the time traveller. Perhaps there would be a media circus, a live transmission to all four corners of the world, comparable with the moon landing. This was easy to visualise: the time machine in the background, the brave, selfless time traveller in front, waving to the cameras, perhaps saying a few final words – something like "A giant step for a man…" – before embarking on a voyage from which there was no return. And then, immediately after he'd left, people would start digging at the agreed place, at a location carefully chosen, a spot which, according to the unanimous opinion of all reputable historians, would have been left undisturbed since the time of Jesus. There, they'd find video cassettes containing recordings of Jesus Christ because the time traveller had been there at that time before hiding the cassettes at this precise location. And billions of TV viewers throughout the world would see the recordings being played back for the first time, live and in colour…

Eisenhardt paused, then grabbed the red marker and added a large full stop after the relevant keywords. There was something about this scenario that he needed to think about. Something was bothering him. A thought that hadn't managed to break through to his consciousness. An important thought.

Never mind, on to the next item. If there was a time machine – a device that transported the traveller into the past, the way a rocket transported an astronaut to the moon – then the next

question was: where was this device now? And why hadn't it been possible to use it to return to the present?

Eisenhardt had found a simple answer for this question. Kaun and Wilford-Smith weren't going to like it, but it could not be easily dismissed.

Where was it written that only one time traveller was going to embark on a journey into the past? Was it not much more likely and obvious that an entire team would be sent? Such a trip was much too dangerous for a lone individual. An unfamiliar culture, unknown languages and mindsets, illnesses that had been eradicated by the time the traveller was born – it was unlikely that they'd take such a risk. Just like they hadn't sent just one man to the moon.

Well, maybe a team member had simply got lost. Perhaps the Roman occupiers had arrested him. Perhaps he'd fallen in love with a beautiful woman and decided to remain behind. Perhaps he'd had an accident. Whatever the reason – he'd stayed behind, died after a number of years and was buried where Wilford-Smith found him. The other team members returned to the present, and that was why no time machine was found. And obviously, they'd taken all the video recordings back with them.

If this explanation was correct, they could search for the camera till kingdom come, they wouldn't find it.

Hmm. No matter how hard he thought about it, he couldn't see anything that contradicted this interpretation. At most you could speculate about why the man who had remained behind had decided to keep the camera's instruction manual with him.

But supposing it was a lone time traveller after all. Supposing time travel didn't depend on a transportation device, but worked in some other way. More like being "beamed" in the Star Trek movies. A large time cannon that fired the subject into the past. Did the time cannon need to be set up in Israel?

In movies, that was how it was done. Same place, different time. It looked good on film. But in reality, if you travelled only through time, but not through space, you'd almost certainly find yourself marooned somewhere in outer space. Nothing moved as fast as the supposedly solid ground beneath your feet. Not only did the earth spin around its axis once every twenty four hours – meaning that somebody quietly sitting in his armchair at home in central Europe was almost travelling at the speed of sound – but even worse, the earth was revolving around the sun at an even higher speed, which in turn was going even faster around the centre of the

Milky Way, which was shooting through the universe at a speed earthly rocket builders couldn't even dream of. An incomprehensible cosmic carousel. Eisenhardt couldn't really picture how this was meant to work. How could you send somebody through spacetime to such a precisely defined spot as Palestine two thousand years ago? It was like spitting into the air while riding the world's wildest carousel and intentionally hitting the left shoulder of a specific person riding the same carousel.

All the way through spacetime…

He paused and gasped. He tore the cap off the marker in his hand and started writing.

If time travel were possible, if you could transport somebody through spacetime – then it would be possible to transport somebody to another planet! Hitting Palestine on planet earth at a location where it had been two thousand years previously was no harder than hitting a planet circling Alpha Centauri or Epsilon Eridani.

So the technology to do this was going to be developed within the next six years? Unlikely. So far beyond the bounds of the possible that he might as well abandon this train of thought.

If only it weren't for the instruction manual.

Eisenhardt pushed the sheet aside. He was hungry. He had a headache. And he'd never liked instruction manuals.

Next, he could speculate about how the hypothetical time traveller was going to prepare for the trip. Eisenhardt found this particularly hard. He found packing a suitcase for a one-week trip challenging, but what did you pack if you were planning to travel into the past, film Jesus Christ and then remain in the past? Perhaps a few favourite books. Maybe there was a Walkman with a cassette rotting quietly away somewhere? Medicine. Surely he would have brought all his vaccinations up to date before the trip, but he would also have taken along medication, such as antibiotics, anti-diarrheal drugs, headache pills and so on. He'd have to find out from a pharmacist how to pack a first-aid kit for a time traveller. And he would have needed to learn at least one of the languages spoken at the time. Probably Aramaic, the mother tongue of Jesus of Nazareth, as he'd discovered. And Latin, of course, to be able to communicate with the Roman occupiers.

By the time he finished, he'd come up with a sizeable packing list. Bulky luggage. In addition to clothing and similar items – what did people use for toothpaste at the time? – the camera, of course. Sufficient video cassettes for the camera. Perhaps he had taken along

something to disguise the camera. Eisenhardt's tried to imagine how the people of the time would have reacted to someone walking about with their eye glued to the viewfinder of a small grey camcorder and failed.

In addition to all of that, the camera needed power. And as far as he was aware, power outlets were rare in Palestine two thousand years ago. The time traveller would hardly have charged the camcorder's batteries and then departed. He would have taken some type of power source allowing him to recharge the batteries repeatedly.

Perhaps some good solar cells. He could try to find out what was available from expedition outfitters. There really wasn't any other good option.

Eisenhardt pushed this sheet aside as well, put down the marker and rubbed his temples with a sigh. What a shit job. What a crazy adventure.

And he was hungry, damnit. To hell with all the thinking, he'd go over to the field kitchen and find out if he could get a bite to eat.

Stephen tried to keep the gap in the tent canvas through which he was peering as small as possible.

"I've been asking around," he said quietly. "The guy's name is Ryan."

"Which guy?" asked Judith, who sat waiting on her camp bed.

"The one who was in my tent. Kaun's henchman." He let go of the heavy grey fabric. "The coast is clear."

Judith looked at him expectantly. "And now?"

"You'll be taking your dirty washing to your mother tonight," said Stephen. "In your large travelling bag."

"And if somebody wants to search it? This Ryan guy, for example?"

"Then you scream blue murder. Tell him to keep his hands off your underwear."

Judith sighed, bent over and pulled the travelling bag towards her before starting to empty it. "I don't know. I've got a bad feeling." Stephen remained standing next to the entrance and took another peek outside. The sun was already dropping towards the horizon. The day had

passed surprisingly quickly. They had to hurry because the other excavation helpers would soon be returning to their tents.

"Do you know what they're doing?" she asked, stacking her clean clothes on the bed next to her.

"Who do you mean, 'they'?"

"The technicians who arrived this morning. I was speaking to one of them earlier."

"Yes, I saw. And, what are they doing?"

"He called it, let's see, a sonic tomography study of the ground. A sort of scan. Like X-rays, except they're using shockwaves or sound waves or something like that."

"That's what I thought."

Judith grimaced. "Of course. I should have known that that's what you thought. Why do I even bother?" She emptied the plastic bags in which she kept her dirty washing into the travelling bag. "And I'm sure you've already got an idea of what they're looking for."

"For the camera, I imagine. Kaun probably thinks it's around here somewhere."

"The man I spoke to doesn't know anything about a camera. By the way, his name is George Martinez. He works at the University of Bozeman, Montana."

Stephen bit his tongue and didn't mention that he already knew. "Interesting. And what did they tell him?"

"That they're looking for a large metal chest. A metal box, about the size of a suitcase. Supposedly the ossuary of a Hasmonaean king."

"A metal chest… the container inside which the camera and recordings were meant to survive through the centuries."

"That's what I assume," said Judith, giving her bag a shake to make the contents settle. "Right, the dirty laundry is ready."

"Great. Now I need a few minutes to myself. Best if you stand guard outside."

"If you insist."

She got up. They stepped past one another awkwardly, Judith moving to the entrance and Stephen to beside her bed.

He kneeled down next to her bed. “Okay, crunch time. We need to make sure nobody’s coming.”

“And what if somebody does come, Stina for example?” Stina was her tent mate.

“Then we’ll have to kiss,” Stephen said as drily as possible. “And behave in a way that makes her leave as tactfully as possible.”

He heard her catch her breath in surprise. “Are you being serious?” He didn’t reply, but began digging in the dirt under her bed.

“Oh, well,” she said quietly after a moment. “I’m sure she won’t come in any case.”

Stephen couldn’t help but grin. Fortunately, she couldn’t see. He continued digging until he’d exposed what he’d buried earlier in the day.

Judith’s eyes widened when she saw him emerge from under her bed. “What on earth is that?”

“The kitchen guys have a point when they forbid us from taking our food away,” he said, grinning. “The plates really do disappear.”

He was holding two flat metal plates in his hand, one placed upside down on top of the other, leaving a cavity between them. They’d been stuck together with tape, creating an object that looked a little like a flying saucer.

“That’s where the papers are?”

“Exactly. Well protected, I hope.” He blew the last few grains of sand from the surface of the improvised container and then stored it carefully in Judith’s travelling bag, underneath the laundry.

Eisenhardt was sitting by himself at one of the tables in the kitchen tent, surrounded by empty benches, and was hungrily spooning food from the plate into his mouth. When he’d arrived, there’d been no lunch left, but it was a bit later than he’d thought and the cook had served him some of the evening meal. It tasted good: a strange, interesting vegetarian dish, the name of which he had forgotten. He thought he could taste aubergine, garlic and cumin, but it was accompanied by a sauce that was completely unfamiliar. Really tasty, especially if you were hungry.

The sun was already low against the horizon. In the distance, he saw the excavation helpers slowly making their way towards the tents, presumably to freshen up before invading the kitchen. He saw a dark-haired girl carrying a large travelling bag to the parking area, where she loaded it into the boot of a small, dark blue car. He vaguely remembered that Sabbath started at sunset; some of the Israeli helpers were probably going home for the occasion.

While he was still watching her – she really was rather good-looking, with long black hair and a good figure – he noticed another car approaching the camp in a cloud of dust. Eisenhardt frowned and looked more closely. It was a taxi. Exactly the same kind of taxi in which he had arrived the previous night.

The scene was so familiar and so surprising that he forgot to keep eating. The taxi stopped. While the taxi driver unloaded the luggage from the boot, John Kaun and the professor stepped up to the car and greeted the man who alighted, looking around in bemusement. As far as Eisenhardt could make out, the new arrival was slightly over middle-aged, perhaps around fifty years of age, had an untidy white beard, a bald patch and an impressive pot belly. Wilford-Smith spoke to him in his deliberate way and with economy of movement. Then the magnate took over. He used sweeping gestures, spoke verbosely, dynamically and with great assurance, he explained and smiled charmingly, got a nod from the man and finally took him by the arm. Obliging staff came up, took the suitcases and paid the taxi driver while Kaun and Wilford-Smith accompanied their new guest over to the white tent at plot 14.

Since speaking to the technician, Gideon had started to think about what he and his colleagues were guarding.

Usually, he didn't care. Guarding things was what he did. It meant keeping his eyes peeled and being ready at any time to stop an intruder or, if there was no other option, kill them. When he was guarding a person, it could mean letting himself be injured or killed for that person, but this extended form of deployment was rare and was well compensated. Usually he guarded industrial plants, communication facilities, cultural sites or tourist centres, but on occasion he'd guarded industrialists or politicians, including Yassir Arafat, the president of the Palestinians, before he became president and when he was just the leader of a controversial movement. At the time, he hadn't given much thought to the purpose of his deployment. For him, the man wearing the blue-and-white *keffiyeh* was a client he had to protect, just like any other. Perhaps that was why the company had picked him for the job. He was often selected for special jobs,

usually because he spoke good English. Once, he'd been deployed as the bodyguard for an American actress who had travelled through Israel for two days. She'd kissed him when she left. Since then, he made sure that he watched every one of her movies. Sometimes it also played a role that his reflexes were extremely fast, which emerged when he was conscripted into the army. As a result, he was trained as a sniper. But he'd never been accused of exhibiting great curiosity.

He still wasn't particularly curious. But still, there were some thoughts going through his mind. He'd been standing guard at one of the entrances of the white tent without ever once thinking about taking a peek inside. They'd been told they weren't allowed to. And Gideon did what he was told.

But some thoughts were still crossing his mind. It was his first time guarding an archaeological excavation. That in itself wasn't unusual. He'd heard of others who'd once had to guard ancient gold treasure, coins and jewellery from the time of the old kings. And archaeological finds often became political in Israel. Somebody found something that someone else saw as contradicting their political or religious convictions, and then the fighting started.

But still, he would really have liked to know what important find they'd made in the pit underneath the tent. He consoled himself with the thought that if it were really important, he'd find out about it from the newspapers eventually. And then he'd cut out the article and take it to the cafés where he met with his friends so he'd be able to say: I was there! I was guarding it!

In the evening, he watched as the English professor who was directing the excavation and the American who, as he'd discovered, was the multimillionaire funding the project, received a visitor brought by taxi from Tel Aviv. He had no idea who the man was. He was tall, around fifty years old, had a grey beard and seemed to be affected by the heat. He kept wiping his forehead and the bald patch on top of his head while the three of them walked along the walkways towards the tent.

Perhaps he's a scientist, thought Gideon, stepping aside to let the three men enter the tent.

"Erev tov," mumbled the professor, who was following behind the two others, giving Gideon a distracted smile. *"Toda."*

"Bevakasha," replied Gideon.

Good evening. Thank you. Pleasure. Gideon realised that the professor didn't know that he spoke English. The very professor who was about to show the new, important visitor his valuable find.

Gideon's eyes widened as he understood what this meant. It meant…

No. He couldn't do it.

On the other hand…

They'd been ordered not to look into the tent. But they hadn't been told not to eavesdrop.

Gideon shifted his chair a bit closer to the tent canvas, placed his Uzi on his lap and leant back. He could make out the voices of the three men quite clearly.

At the agreed time, Eisenhardt dialled the same number he'd called earlier in the day. His call was answered immediately. "Uri Liebermann."

"Good evening, Mr Liebermann. It's Peter Eisenhardt."

"Mr Eisenhardt, right. Good to speak to you."

"Well," asked Eisenhardt, barely managing to keep the tension from his voice. "Did you manage to find out anything?"

"Yes."

Eisenhardt took a deep breath. "I'm listening."

"Right." It sounded like the journalist needed a moment to gather his thoughts. "So, you were right. There was a lot of information on Professor Wilford-Smith in our archives. One simple query and the results started filling up the screen. The man is digging his way through the soil of Israel at an amazing rate."

"Oh?"

"But," added Liebermann, "despite his efforts, his reputation in scientific circles isn't great."

Eisenhardt felt the corners of his mouth lift into an involuntary grin. How interesting! "Can you be more specific?"

"The main accusation is that he works sloppily. His detractors claim that he doesn't treat artefacts with due care and that he records more breakages than others. He is accused of digging

too much and too fast. I found an interview with Yigael Yadin where he says that Wilford-Smith appears to mistake quantity for quality. In a section of the interview that wasn't published, he literally says: 'This man is a disaster for Israeli archaeology.'"

"That's harsh." Eisenhardt had never heard of Yigael Yadin. Presumably he was also an archaeologist, and probably a reputable one.

"It also appears that Wilford-Smith publishes little, most of which is either boring or controversial. Have you heard of Benjamin Mazar?"

Eisenhardt hesitated. "Can't say that I have."

"He's considered an eminent authority in Israel; he directed excavations along the Wailing Wall. A few years ago, he said that he suspected that Wilford-Smith didn't have a clue about large parts of the history of Palestine."

"Wow, that's quite something."

"The only thing that all archaeologists appear to admire about Wilford-Smith is that he always manages to find a sponsor for his projects."

"Perhaps that is why they can't stand him?"

"As I say, I'm not really in a position to give an opinion. I searched our database as promised, but I'm a complete amateur when it comes to ancient history. It's hard enough keeping up with contemporary history."

Eisenhardt took some hasty notes. "Is his academic title real?" he asked.

Liebermann sighed. "Yes and no. In principle, his title is genuine. He's a professor of history at Barnford University in the south of England. But the university is linked to a relatively unknown religious community, the True Church of Barnford, and is considered somewhat controversial."

"Never heard of it."

"Nor have I, I must admit. I wasn't able to get any more information in the short time."

Eisenhardt scribbled *Barnford* on his notepad, underlined it three times and added a big question mark. "Anything else?"

Liebermann laughed softly. "I'm saving the best for last."

"I thought that journalists always lead with their strongest point."

“Only in newspaper articles. Did you know that Wilford-Smith used to be a professional soldier?”

Eisenhardt couldn’t believe his ears. “A *soldier*?”

“In the war, he served in North Africa under Montgomery before being stationed in the British Mandate of Palestine. He was among the British troops who left Palestine when the state of Israel was founded in May 1948.”

“Incredible.” Eisenhardt tried to picture the fussy, stooped academic as a brave desert warrior on patrol.

“Yes, and he seems to have retained an undying affection for our country. After leaving Palestine, he returned to England, was discharged from the military, got married, found a position as a manager at a textile factory and lived a quiet life until 1969. Then, aged 42, he suddenly quit his well-paid job and his pension entitlement. Instead, he began studying historical sciences, specialising in biblical archaeology. In 1974 he launched his first sortie on Israeli soil.”

“Just like that?”

“No idea what triggered it. But maybe he inherited a bit of money and no longer had to work for a living.”

And then he couldn’t come up with anything better to do but spend years digging through a desolate, boiling desert landscape? Eisenhardt shook his head.

“In 1980,” continued Liebermann, “Barnford University appointed him as a professor, but simultaneously exempted him from teaching duties. Since then he’s been in Israel almost full-time. But to answer the question you asked this morning: in all these years, Wilford-Smith has discovered absolutely nothing of scientific value. He doesn’t even have a listing in the *Who’s Who of Archaeology*. If he still wants to earn a footnote in the annals of science, he’ll have to hurry up.”

3.16. Das Jesus Video - Chapter 16

The sonic tomography tests, which were not originally planned, allow far-reaching conclusions to be drawn regarding future excavations (see App. II of the Closing summary). The tests indicated that plots 3 and 19 were not as promising as thought on the basis of the satellite images, while the trapezoidal area between plots 4, 5 and 6 shows structures of an unknown nature, which require further excavation.

(Footnote: at the time of writing, it was not clear whether work at Bet Hamesh would be resumed, or when.)

Professor Charles Wilford-Smith
Report on the excavations at Bet Hamesh

At first, the city they approached through the barren night-time hills was simply a large conurbation like any other. Houses started appearing, as did advertising billboards, high-voltage power lines and streetlights. Then illuminated factory parking lots, supermarkets and restaurants began rushing past. Dark cypresses pressed themselves into the gap between the houses, and Stephen noticed that all of the buildings seemed to have been constructed of the same pale yellow sandstone, creating the impression that the entire city had been hewn from a solid piece of rock.

Once they'd passed the city limits, George became quieter and quieter. From time to time, Stephen, who was driving, looked at Judith, who was meant to be navigating. But whenever she saw him looking, she simply pointed straight ahead. Which meant: stay on the main road.

Stephen had only a vague understanding of the rules around the Sabbath. He knew that it had something to do with rest and a prohibition on work of any kind, and that it lasted from Friday evening until Saturday evening, from sunset to sunset. In any event, there were more vehicles on the road than he'd expected. He hadn't really expected to encounter a dead town, one where his car roared through deserted streets while pious city-dwellers pelted them with stones. But he had expected something of that nature. The fact that they were driving in heavy traffic towards the city centre was a bit of a surprise.

And then, just as he'd accepted that this was a city like any other, they arrived at the top of a hill and saw the city centre for the first time.

From the back seat came a heartfelt sigh. “Jerusalem,” whispered George reverently, *“Yerushalayim.* The City of Peace…”

The City of Peace, which had been at the centre of more conflict during thousands of years than any other place on earth, lay spread out before their eyes like a gold-shimmering quilt. Lit by countless lights large and small, it was nestled in a wide valley, sprinkled with slender minarets and dark church steeples, and adorned with large and small cupolas. On the other side of the valley, the city rose up again to the Temple Mount, where the greatest of all the domes stood enthroned in awe-inspiring splendour, the only one with an actual golden roof: the Dome of the Rock.

“A place on earth, but halfway to heaven,” said George, his voice trembling. “That’s what my grandmother always said. And she was right, she really was right…”

“Keep it together,” growled Stephen, “okay?”

George didn’t seem to hear him. “Jerusalem – I’m in Jerusalem, it’s not a dream!”

Stephen was about to bring him back down to earth with some well-placed barbs when he felt Judith’s hand on his. He looked at her in surprise as she smiled at him, as gently as never before. “Leave him be,” she said softly. “Jerusalem touches everyone. Even you.”

“Me? What gives you that idea?”

She just smiled. Her smile really was cute.

“No, I’m completely cool. Coolness personified,” he assured her. “Seriously, I’m the most faithless of the faithless. I could have *invented* atheism.”

“It’s okay. Turn left at the traffic light.”

In the evening, they gathered again in Kaun’s caravan. The new arrival occupied his armchair like a giant Buddha, his fleshy hands folded over his substantial paunch. He appeared to be around fifty years old, wore a grey suit that looked as if he’d slept in it and didn’t seem to think much of ties – his collar was wide open beneath his sparse, fuzzy beard. His bald pate shimmered in the room lighting, and Eisenhardt thought he could detect a hint of sunburn on it.

Kaun handled the introductions with the smooth aplomb of a born socialite, praised the author in glowing terms and then presented the newest member of their little conspiracy:

Professor Goutière from Toronto, historian at the university and specialist in the history of Palestine.

"Pleased to meet you," said Eisenhardt with a polite nod, thinking to himself: how interesting, I thought Wilford-Smith was the specialist…

For a moment, there was an awkward silence, which Kaun broke by playing the barkeeper. When it was Goutière's turn, he requested Canadian whisky, "as much as will fit in a large glass."[176] And then he downed the entire glass so greedily that just watching him made Eisenhardt feel dizzy.

"Well," Kaun asked him eventually, "what do you make of this story?"

The Canadian stared into space for a while before answering. "I must confess that I'm not yet able to take all of this at face value," he finally said in his deep, rumbling voice. "Therefore, in the meantime, I will limit myself to pretending that it's true. And I will probably require several glasses of your superb whisky to dampen my critical faculties sufficiently to do so."

"That shouldn't stop us," said Kaun, refilling his glass.

"Thank you." Goutière held his glass without drinking. Apparently the first whisky was still working.

For a long while, nobody said anything. Everybody looked at the historian as if he were an oracle incarnate. The air conditioning made soft gurgling sounds and the leather of the armchairs squeaked from time to time when somebody crossed or uncrossed their legs.

"You want to know," the Canadian finally said, still staring at the mahogany wall panelling, "where the camera is."

Kaun nodded. "Exactly."

"You're thinking of a place where you could bury something at the time of Jesus Christ, knowing that you'd be able to find it there two thousand years later, unharmed and undisturbed."

"Exactly."

He sighed in a way that was almost funny. "That's difficult."

[176] The reasons why whisky is sometimes spelled without an "e" and sometimes with an "e" ("whiskey") are historical. A succinct overview is presented by (Micallef, 2018).

Kaun smiled indulgently. “If it were easy, we would have done it ourselves.”

“Israel is very large…”

Eisenhardt caught Wilford-Smith also smiling.

The professor from Toronto finally drank from his glass, exhaled with a sound that might have shown profound pleasure or great tension, and then announced: “I will have to think about it.”

The look Kaun gave him in response showed that he was fighting to maintain his composure. It seemed to say: *Oh God, I went and got myself a moronic alcoholic!*

But then he remembered that he’d already given the task to another bright spark, and with his hopes visibly rising he turned to the author: “Mister Eisenhardt, you’ve been thinking all day long – have you come to any conclusions?”

Eisenhardt looked sadly at the media magnate. There was no way to avoid it, he would have to tell him the painful truth.

“Yes,” he said. “I believe that the camera we are looking for doesn’t exist.”

They had stopped by the side of the road, near a gate in the Old City wall that looked as if it had been added as an afterthought. The wall itself shimmered where it rose up behind trees and palm trees, as tall as a multi-storey building, solidly made of hewn stone.

“Are you sure that you’ll be able to make it back to camp on your own?” asked Judith again.

“Yes, of course,” George assured her. “There are taxis. And if need be I’ll hitchhike.” He raised his thumb. “I hitchhiked across half the US, hey!”

“Alright. That over there is the New Gate. Walk through it and continue straight until you hit a large intersection. Turn left, and you’ll find yourself at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre after about two hundred metres. Perhaps two hundred and fifty. There’s a sign.”

She looked at the lanky Mexican, who no longer had eyes for her. He stood next to the car, breathing deeply, as if he wanted to absorb every single moment through every single pore of his skin. He only had eyes for the massive wall that encircled the Old City of Jerusalem, as it had done for centuries.

“George? Are we clear on everything?” she asked.

“All clear,” he said, nodding. He appeared almost to stumble, but then he turned around laboriously, bent down to Judith, took her hand and kissed it softly. “Thank you. Thank you very much. And you, too, Stephen: thank you.”

With that he left, slowly. It almost seemed as if he were floating. The gate appeared to magically attract him, and when he disappeared into the dark opening, it looked as if he had been swallowed.

“What a weirdo,” said Stephen as they drove on.

His arguments had surprisingly little impact. After he’d presented his thoughts – namely, that it was most likely a team rather than a single person who had been sent into the past, and that this team, even if it had been forced for whatever reason to leave behind one of its own, would certainly have returned to the future with the camera and especially the recordings – he looked into eyes that seemed somehow uninvolved, almost amused. As if they knew better. It was how his parents had looked at him when he’d come up with the idea at the age of five that they should start hand-drawing bank notes to help daddy reduce his workload.

Eisenhardt felt himself getting angry. If there was one thing he couldn’t stand, it was this arrogance, this condescending attitude of *Sure, keep talking, we’re listening.* If he’d been able to come up with something sarcastic, biting, hurtful, he would have said it. But he couldn’t think of anything, so he remained silent and helpless, waiting for someone else to comment.

It turned out to be Professor Wilford-Smith. All he said was: “I’m certain that the camera exists.” In his soft, gentle, grandfather’s voice.

And John Kaun, ruler over a consortium of companies worth millions, just nodded and said: “Yes. I’m convinced that the camera is somewhere out there.”

Only Professor Goutière remained silent. He watched the others talking, but didn’t seem to be registered what was going on. It might have been because he was thinking, just as he’d said he was going to do. But perhaps it was because of the good Canadian whisky.

“But I’ve just told you why it is highly unlikely…” insisted Eisenhardt, his temper flaring.

“Peter,” said Kaun with beguiling charm, “I see that you are making a great effort to consider this problem from all angles, but that’s not the kind of result we need. Nothing that demotivates us. Everything you’re saying is logical and sensible, of course. But in effect there are only two

possibilities: either the camera is somewhere out there or it isn't. We have no real way of knowing. If it exists, it's going to be hard enough to find. But if we allow ourselves to believe that it doesn't exist, then we've already given up. And I never give up, understand?"

Eisenhard stared at the millionaire in stunned silence. What a way of looking at things. He had to keep himself in check not to start shouting. "All I'm trying to say," he started again, lifting his hands in an imploring gesture, "is that we may be wasting a lot of time and money on a search which…"

"I," said Kaun immediately, correcting him. "*I'm* wasting money. It is *my* money. All of this" – and here he made a sweeping gesture that encompassed the caravan, all of the caravans outside, the tents, the volunteers, the tools, everything – "is being paid for with my money. Whether I consider it to be a waste or an investment that justifies the risk is my decision alone."

It made no sense. Eisenhardt could feel something inside him collapse listlessly and dropped back in his chair. "Okay," he said lamely. "Sure. Of course."

"Apart from which," Kaun continued, "I believe you have not thought your idea through properly."

Eisenhardt raised his eyebrows. "How do you mean?"

"You said that it was more likely that an entire film crew would have been sent into the past, rather than just one person. That sounds plausible. Now, see here – I'm continuously dispatching film crews all around the world, most often to areas which are quite dangerous. From time to time we lose a crew member – they get kidnapped, are involved in an accident or get murdered. This happens every year, sometimes multiple times. What do you think I do when it happens?"

"No idea."

"There's one thing I definitely don't do: I don't leave them where they are. I spare no expense and leave no stone unturned to get the man or woman back. I negotiate, I beg, I bribe, I threaten when I can – but I will do *anything* to get the team member back home, no matter whether they are injured or dead, no matter whether it was their fault or not, no matter what it costs. And up to now, I've never left anybody where I lost them. Seven of my employees have died in the course of duty, but they are all buried at home. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

Eisenhardt nodded slowly, impressed by Kaun's obvious commitment despite himself. He was inclined to believe him. If he was just acting, he was wasting his talent.

And he was right. It irked Eisenhardt to have to admit it. Perhaps it was right that Kaun was a millionaire while he had to be satisfied with being a writer who didn't know how he was going to pay off the mortgage on his terraced house.

"They would have come back for him," he said, nodding. "Even if something had happened to him." Perhaps the time travellers could have returned to the time just before the event to prevent it from happening. But that thought led straight to the notorious realm of time paradoxes. Supposing a member of the time travel team got killed in an accident. His colleagues could go back in time to before the accident and prevent it from happening. But if the accident didn't happen, they would have no reason to make the trip. Therefore they wouldn't prevent the accident and it would happen after all. Meaning that they'd travel back in time – and so on.

Whatever the mechanism by which time travel worked, such speculation was ultimately futile.

"And even if a member of the hypothetical team had fallen in love during his time travels," Kaun continued, "the team would have brought the young lady back to the future. Surely that would be safer than leaving somebody in the past who knows the history of the next two thousand years."

"A leap of two thousand years," said Eisenhardt, "would create a culture shock so great that it would be difficult to cope with…"

"Not really. Millions of people in developing countries have managed to cope. Have you ever seen a seventy year old aborigine working at a modern PC? I have. Believe me, a person from the year 0 would find it easier to adapt to our current lifestyle than the other way around." Kaun shook his head indignantly. "Apart from which there are more than enough areas where people are still living the way they were two thousand years ago."

"And even if he had remained in the past, for whatever reason," added Professor Wilford-Smith, "why would they have left him with the instruction manual for the camera, but not the camera itself?"

Eisenhardt pondered. He reconsidered his arguments. The thoughts he'd formulated during the afternoon. There was something…

"I asked myself," he said, thinking out loud, "if time travel were really invented in the near future, whether there wouldn't inevitably be companies offering adventure trips into the past. That's just how we are as a species. There were tourists who travelled to the battlegrounds in

Yugoslavia – and surely there must be people who would love to be present at some of the key battles of World War II. Others would want to meet Mozart or Shakespeare.[177] Our history should be teeming with time travellers from the future. We'd expect stories about people who speak in funny ways, who ignore habits and customs, who wear strange clothing and use mysterious devices. People who commit crimes and then mysteriously vanish. Sex tourists would be a plague. There should be stories about people whose origins are a mystery, but who make suspicious deals – who buy large quantities of paintings by artists who only become famous much later, for example. But that's not what we're seeing. There aren't any such reports. And the question is: why not?"

Kaun nodded approvingly.

"Perhaps time travel will be subject to strict government regulations, like the making of nuclear bombs," Eisenhardt continued. "Perhaps time travel, like travelling to the moon, is so expensive and difficult that there is no opportunity for tourism. Perhaps there will be a kind of time police that keeps things under control. But perhaps there is a simple physical explanation…" And then, suddenly, he felt something rupture within him, as if his rock-solid certainty that time travel was impossible had cracked. That was precisely what had happened: he'd started to believe. It was deeply disturbing to feel convictions which he'd believed to be unchangeable and true begin to shift so suddenly.

"For example?" said Kaun.

"Perhaps," continued Eisenhardt slowly, "the physical principles of time travel will soon be discovered – and one of the principles is going to be that it only works in one direction. Into the past. You can travel into the past, but you can never return to the time you came from."

Which would still be enough to change the world as he knew it forever. People would travel a week into the past and pick the right lotto numbers. In return for hitting the jackpot, they'd have to endure being on their own with their millions for a few days.[178] And what about preventing accidents before they happened? What would happen with the time paradoxes that could still come up?

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[177] In the source text, the two names are Mozart and Goethe. Goethe especially is culturally specific to German-speaking audiences. Here it might be better to replace Goethe with Shakespeare, for example. Even Mozart might not be famous enough: a recent survey found that three quarters of 18-34 olds in the UK had never heard of him (Hamer, 2019).

[178] It is unclear what the author means by this. Is he implying that old-me disappears when current-me travels into their shared past? Source text: *"Leute würden eine Woche in die Vergangenheit reisen und die richtigen Lottozahlen tippen können. Und es für den Millionengewinn ein paar Tage mit sich selbst aushalten."*

"That's why there will be no time tourists travelling into the past – not even ten million years from now. Just a few individuals who embark on one-way journeys. Romantics fleeing to the good old days. Volunteers sacrificing their lives for science."

Professor Wilford-Smith nodded. "And we've found one of them."

The Rockefeller Museum occupied a large building complex that bordered on a park. Its most striking feature was a large, octagonal tower visible even from a distance. They hadn't needed to travel far from the New Gate. They simply drove down the large road that ran parallel to the Old City wall. It began as HaTsanhanim Road and became Sultan Suleiman Street. Stephen stopped the car at the large, empty parking lot in front of the museum, took out his mobile and dialled the number which Yehoshuah had given to him.

"We're here," he said when Yehoshuah answered.

He heard a sigh. "At last. Wait, I'm coming out."

"I thought we were coming in."

"Yes, of course. I mean, I'll open up for you."

Stephen grinned. "We're waiting."

They waited. A few low-mounted lamps, obscured between bushes and grass, cast faint circles of light on the tarmac. A wide footpath led to the glass entrance, which was enveloped in darkness.

"You think that we'll make history tonight, don't you?" Judith asked suddenly, without looking at him.

Stephen looked at her, admiring her striking profile silhouetted against the dusky background. "I do think it's possible," he said.

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards?"

"What will you do afterwards? After making history, I mean."

"No idea." He thought he'd seen movement at the entrance, but it must have been an illusion. Nobody came out or waved to them. "Your brother is taking his time."

Judith remained silent. The engine plinked as it cooled.

“Hey,” said Stephen finally, “I get the picture – you think I’m an obsessive nutcase and you don’t think we’ll find anything significant. Okay. And in the end you’ll probably turn out to be right. But until then, you can still let me have some fun, right?”

She sighed, then softly said: “No. It’s not just that I think we will find something. I’m scared that we will.”

Someone suddenly knocked on the car window, giving them a huge fright. It was Yehoshuah, who had somehow managed to approach the car from the back without them noticing.

Unnerved, Stephen wound down his window. “Yehoshuah, you madman,” he growled. “Are you trying to kill us?”

“Oh,” said Yehoshuah, blinking. “Did I give you a fright?”

“A fright? You’ve taken years off my life. We’ve been waiting for you to come through the main entrance, only for you to knock on the window like a silent killer…”[179]

“The main entrance is guarded at night. We have to go in through a side entrance. The night guard doesn’t need to know we’re here.” Yehoshuah pointed vaguely at the bushes next to the car. “You chose a good spot. It’s just a few steps from here.”

Stephen carried Judith’s travelling bag as they followed her brother along the narrow footpath leading through the decorative shrubs. Dry leaves rustled under their feet.[180] They came to a door which was about a metre below the level of the sandy soil and descended the few steps down to the door. Yehoshuah rattled his keys, said: “Come!”, and they pressed ahead into the darkness.

After the door had closed behind them, the lights came on. They found themselves in a small, dusty storeroom. Countless wooden boxes, large and small, cluttered the space, all of them diligently nailed shut and labelled with Hebrew writing, some of them covered with tarpaulins on which years’ or even decades’ worth of dust had settled.

There wasn’t much time to look around. Yehoshuah gestured to them to keep moving and turned off the lights. They went up a flight of stairs and came to another door, behind which

[179] Source text: *“meuchlings”* (p. 203). This is a rare word – I’ve never seen it used before. The only form I am familiar with is *“Meuchelmord”*, meaning assassination.
[180] Source text: *“Das Unterholz knackte sanft unter ihren Schritten”* (“The undergrowth crunched softly under their footsteps”) (p. 204). *Unterholz* isn’t quite the right word here because undergrowth is still attached to the trees.

was an exhibition hall lit with emergency lighting – a large, bare room in which every footstep echoed loudly. Stephen involuntarily held his breath as they walked past the glass vitrines, which were lined up in long rows. A plethora of old coins and ceramic vessels was on display; bones, brooches made of bronze, silver and gold, fragments of papyrus scrolls and worn leather parts of shoes or items of clothing. The displays were accompanied by information panels with detailed explanations in three languages, but it was too dark to read them.

"This way," said Yehoshuah, and Stephen felt as if he could hear a faint echo of his voice bouncing back from the corners of the room: *way... way... way...*

He opened a tall door that creaked softly. In the silence of the museum even this quiet sound set their nerves jangling. They passed through into a long passage, bare except for a small bust of the founder, John D. Rockefeller. A flight of stairs took them back down into the basement and from there to the lab rooms.

The fluorescent tubes lit up, harshly illuminating long, bare workbenches. Chairs were scattered in front of the benches, and here and there restauration work appeared to be underway. There was no shortage of magnifying glasses, which were mounted on long swivel arms that allowed them to be freely moved into any position. The shelves above the tables held transparent flasks of all sizes, filled with liquids in a variety of colours, all of them carefully labelled by hand. Washtubs had been placed on a rack next to the washbasin for drying, and trays and bowls held pincers of different shapes and sizes, large and small brushes, needles, small metal cubes and several tools which Stephen had never seen before.

"So," said Yehoshuah, who, judging by his facial expression, wasn't sure whether he should be scared or excited, "here we are."

"Yes," said Stephen, nodding and putting down the bag, "looks like we are."

George Martinez found the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with its mighty dome, but he found it closed. As he had expected. He placed his forehead against the cool metal of the portal and remained like that for a while, trying to grasp his good fortune. He was here! He had reached the place where the Redeemer had been entombed before his triumphant resurrection, the manifestation of the victory of light over the power of death. It had happened two thousand years ago. And now he, George Martinez from Bozeman, Montana, was here. And while he stood in silence, trying to comprehend the incomprehensible, he felt as if he'd lived his entire

life in preparation for this very moment, as if he'd had to walk all the paths and detours of his life just to get here.

He couldn't tell for how long he remained standing there. It might have been half an hour, a whole hour or just ten minutes. Time no longer mattered. When at last he raised his head and looked up, he felt transformed, filled by a sense of profound peace and gratitude. It seemed as if the world around him had also been transformed. It seemed to glow with an inner radiance. Colours appeared more intense, the darkness seemed darker, and the light brighter. Everything was exactly the way it was meant to be. He had arrived.

Afterwards, he lost his way, of course. But you couldn't really say he lost his way because he wasn't going anywhere specific. He strolled through the narrow streets of the Old City, looked up at the latticed windows above their crumbling sills, let himself be drawn to dank, tunnel-like passages in which dim old lamps cast their weak light, fed by electricity from cables mounted higgledy-piggledy on centuries-old walls. Here and there, he came across people: women wearing chaste headscarves. Arabs in white burnouses, keffiyehs on their heads. They ignored him, apart from an occasional indifferent glance. They all looked beautiful. He walked past metal roller shutters, past closed doors and past men sitting on stone benches under tunnel arches, smoking. Peace reigned.

Then he discovered a little cast iron sign, dark and weathered, nailed to a wall. It was inscribed with the letters VII ST. Below it, another sign had been fastened. George needed the flame from his cigarette lighter to read what it said.

This, explained the text, was the seventh station of the Via Crucis. The place where Jesus had collapsed for the second time under the weight of the cross which he'd been forced to carry to Golgotha.

George involuntarily glanced down at the floor. Flagstones, firmly set in place and showing the wear and tear of centuries.

Then, with a few seconds' delay, like a mental wrecking ball on its return trajectory, it hit him: here? In this narrow alley? Standing in the middle and stretching out both arms, he could touch the walls to his left and right. Back home they had sewers which were wider.

This was where it had happened. They'd stood to the left and right of him, had taunted him as he staggered under the weight of the enormous cross, weakened by the effects of the torture,

the interrogation, the abuse. They had spat at him and mocked him as, wearing a crown of thorns, he had made his way to the place of his execution.

He had walked through this alleyway.

The Redeemer's feet had touched this ground.

George sank to his knees and touched the paving.

His sweat and his blood had wettened this path. It was as if he could still feel it.

At the camp, Ryan had finished doing his rounds and now stood facing the caravan in which his boss stayed. A faint glow emerged from the windows of the meeting room, but all was quiet. The guards at plot 14 had just completed their shift change; this was probably going to be the last night that they'd have to guard the site. The camp was silent.

Almost inappropriately silent if you considered what they'd found.

He calmly turned his head in all directions, slowly breathing in through flared nostrils. He couldn't smell anything. It was a tic of his, a habit whenever something was bothering him. Whenever his instinct told him that something wasn't quite right.

He reviewed the events of the day in his mind, recalling what he'd seen and heard and what he'd been told, paying close attention to anything that seemed out of place, anything that said: "Hey, what's this?"

Yes. There was something.

With a catlike economy of motion, he suddenly turned around and walked across to the caravan which housed their organisational headquarters. Here, activity never stopped, and the door was always locked. Ryan had a key, of course, and in his hands bunches of keys never made a sound.

As opulent and comfortable as the other caravans were, this one was entirely spartan and functional. It contained only desks and chairs, filing cabinets, computers, video conferencing equipment, and satellite telephones – lots of phones. Ryan nodded to a man seated at a console with several television monitors. The man had a walkie-talkie and a notebook in which he occasionally made notes. Further towards the back, a woman sat at a monitor, tracking stock prices and sometimes speaking softly into a microphone attached to her headset. She was highly focussed and ignored Ryan; she probably hadn't even noticed him coming in.

Ryan pulled a file from a shelf and sat down at a table with a telephone. The phone was grey, which in their colour-coding scheme meant that it was linked to the national telephone network of the country in which they currently were. He opened the file and browsed through the list of excavation helpers until he found the name Judith Menez. Then he moved his finger across to the phone number.

He pulled the phone towards him and dialled the number. The phone rang for a long time before somebody answered. It was an older woman who mumbled softly, and he couldn't understand what she was saying.

"Mrs Menez?" he asked.

"Ken," she replied. Ryan didn't speak Hebrew, but he had learned that it meant *yes.*

"Do you speak English?" he asked, speaking slowly and enunciating each word clearly.

A short pause. "Yes," she said. "A little."

That sounded like very little. "May I speak to your daughter, Judith?" he asked.

She needed time to think again. "No, sorry. She is… not here."

"Do you know where she is?"

"She is working. At an… excavation." She clearly was finding it hard to find the right words.

"Wasn't she going to visit you tonight?"

A long pause. Then: "Sorry…?"

Ryan took a deep breath. She hadn't understood him. "Tonight," he repeated, speaking even more slowly, "Judith wanted to visit you. I was told."

"Judith? No. She is not here. She is working."

"She is not coming tonight?"

"No."

Alright. That was good enough. Judith Menez had said that she and Stephen Foxx were visiting her mother, but her mother didn't know about it.

The professor from Canada, who had been slumped in his chair, limp and uninvolved except for the close attention he paid his whisky, suddenly came to life. Up to now, John Kaun had topped up his glass resignedly whenever he'd lifted it.

Now, suddenly, his free hand shot out and grabbed a coffee-table book lying on Kaun's desk. He held it up while he laboriously tried to regain an upright position. The cover image showed the temple as seen from the Mount of Olives, with the golden cupola of the Dome of the Rock at the centre of the image and Jerusalem's Old City in the background. An image that was presumably repeated ad infinitum across innumerable travel guides.

"I have to tell you something," said Professor Goutière in his rumbling voice, "about the Temple Mount. Or, if you already know it, I have to refresh your memory."

"To what end?" asked Kaun.

"You'll find out in a moment. No doubt you are aware that Jews are prohibited from setting foot on the Temple Mount – but do you know why?" He continued without waiting for a response. "It is commonly believed that the Muslims prohibited the Jews from entering the site for all time when they conquered the town in 632, but that isn't true, it turns out. It is the Jews' own tradition which prohibits it. That's because the Temple Mount, as we all know, is the ruin of Herod's Temple – as an aside, the very temple frequented by Jesus of Nazareth –, which in turn was erected on the ruins of Solomon's Temple, which is mentioned in the Old Testament and which must have been an absolutely monumental structure. As it is no longer known where exactly on the Temple Mount the Holy of Holies was located – the inner sanctum which no person was allowed to enter on pain of death and eternal damnation, with the exception of the high priest – devout Jews do not set foot on the Temple Mount, just to be safe."

He shifted his weight uncomfortably in the chair, as if he couldn't find a position he could stay in. "By the way, historians are now quite certain," he continued, "that the Holy of Holies must have been approximately where the Fountain of Qayt Bay is today, slightly to the southwest of the Dome of the Rock."

"So what?" said Kaun, who, like everybody else, was in the dark about where the professor was going with this.

"The remarkable thing about the Temple Mount," continued Goutière with a heavy tongue, "is that both Jews and Muslims venerate it as a holy site. Jews expect the Messiah to appear here someday, and for Muslims it is the third-holiest site after Mecca and Medina because

Mohammed was supposedly transported to heaven for a day from here. Their name for it is *Haram esh-Sharif*, meaning something like 'the noble sanctuary'." He paused and spent a moment studying the book cover. "And God knows it's noble. You'll find no more magnificent building in all Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock is incomparably beautiful – the faience cladding on the exterior walls, the cupola's arabesques and mosaics… it was the model for St Peter's Basilica in Rome, did you know that? It is almost unearthly. But above all it is a symbol, a powerful political symbol of Islam. Allah spoke to Mohammed because the preceding religions – Judaism and Christianity – had failed in their task. Islam is called upon to supersede the other religions. The fact that the golden cupola of the Dome of the Rock and the silver *Al-Aqsa* Mosque are here is seen as a visible sign that Islam won this historic victory and that Muslims are the true heirs of the Old Testament's divine mandate.

Kaun took the whisky bottle, placed it back in the fridge and closed the door with an audible click. "I think," he said, "that we are vaguely familiar with these facts, and in as far as we aren't, our interest is at most purely theoretical, unless you care to explain how all of this relates to our search for the camera."

"Ah, yes." Goutière laid the book aside. He again shifted uncomfortably in his chair before pausing for a moment and searching for a starting point. "If your theory regarding the camera and the intrepid kamikaze scientist who will soon travel into the past to film Jesus Christ is correct…" – and with that he looked straight at Eisenhardt, as if he were the most enthusiastic supporter of this interpretation – "Well, we can look at it this way: perhaps a young man will approach me in the near future, asking where in Palestine he should hide an object in the year 35 to be completely certain that it will remain there, undisturbed, for two thousand years. That's the question we're trying to answer, right?"

Kaun nodded. "Exactly."

The Canadian historian was drunk, but it didn't seem to dull his intelligence. "Off the cuff, I would respond: simply bury your object somewhere in a remote area, no matter where. As long as it's deep enough, nothing will happen to it."

Kaun cleared his throat. "Frankly, that's not exactly what I was hoping for."

Goutière lifted his hand. "Wait. I'm not done yet. Then I'd think about it and would find that the question isn't that easy to answer. It's not just that I want to bury something – I want to be able to find it later. And that's a problem. Palestine has been densely populated for over five thousand years. Cultures are piled on top of cultures, almost every building is erected on

the ruins of an older one, every shrine is built on top of another. Over time, the landscape has changed considerably in appearance. If we were to take a map of Israel and mark every place where we know that excavations have taken place – every known archaeological dig, every house, every road – then we'd still be left with lots of unmarked areas. But this land has had a restless two thousand years. In fact, there is not a single patch of ground about which we could say with absolute certainty that it hasn't been touched in the past two thousand years." He looked at each of them individually, responded to Eisenhardt's sceptical glance, smiled at Wilford-Smith's approving nod and finally looked at Kaun, who was visibly struggling to hide his annoyance. Then he added: "With one exception."

Eisenhardt saw Kaun's eyes narrowing to slits. Apparently, he didn't approve of such rhetorical games unless he was the one playing them.

"I must emphasise that I view this as a thought experiment," said Goutière. "A wild theory, nothing more. So please don't hold me to account for what I'm coming up with."

"I promise. Okay – so which place are you thinking of?"

"I would draw the hypothetical young man's attention to the fact that the Dome of the Rock was erected over a large, irregularly shaped rock, about thirteen by seventeen metres in size, from whence Mohammed is said to have ascended to heaven. This rock, which the Muslims call *al-Sakhrah*, consists of the original bedrock and was previously used as a sacrificial altar in the Jewish temple. The Jews also considered it holy because it is the exposed peak of Mount Moriah, the rock on which God tested Abraham's obedience by demanding that he sacrifice his son, Isaac."

For a moment, there was stunned silence.

Kaun gulped uncomfortably. "You can't be serious."

"The only place," said Goutière, unfazed, "of which we can say with absolute certainty that it has remained untouched for the past two thousand years is this, the Foundation Stone, the holiest of rocks. The rock at the very centre of the Dome of the Rock."

[End of translated section]

Chapter 4. Evaluation and findings

This chapter provides a commentary on the translation process. It highlights some of the difficulties encountered and describes how these were addressed. The first section of the chapter discusses a range of general observations on the source text and how these aspects were dealt with in the translation. The second section addresses the question of anachronisms specifically, while the third section focuses on matters of the writing style. The explanations should be read in conjunction with the footnote annotations throughout Chapter 3 (the translation).

4.1. General observations

In the original German, "Das Jesus Video" was written in a smooth, flowing style designed to engage the reader and minimise distraction. In keeping with this objective, it shows few signs of experimentation or literary innovation, but rather follows mainstream conventions throughout.

Corroborating this observation, no misspelled words were found in the text, implying that the author did not purposefully introduce any unorthodox spellings and also that the author's and the editor's spellchecking efforts were diligent and successful. The absence of unorthodox spellings reinforces the "mainstream" nature of the novel.

In terms of text style and typography, the source text is set in standard font throughout, with few exceptions. Italics are used for quotations from other texts, notably the short paragraphs opening each chapter, which represent excerpts from a report on an archaeological excavation. Italics are also used to mark expressions not in German in the source text (e.g. where John Kaun's secretary tells Peter Eisenhardt "I'm very sorry" in English on p. 17); for emphasis (e.g. where Peter Eisenhardt is told that he'll be flying El Al and repeats the airline's name twice, incredulously, also on p. 17); and to mark internal monologues, as on p. 195, where John Kaun thinks to himself: "*Oh God, I went and got myself a moronic alcoholic!*". Italics were retained in the translation in all these cases, except where the foreign language used in the German text was English.

Bold or underlined text was not used anywhere in the novel. Small caps formatting was used for some, but not all, company names, e.g. Sony, CNN and N.E.W. (p. 15), the country name

USA (p. 15) as well as the product name Sony MR-01 camcorder (styled as CamCorder, p. 68). I decided not to keep the small caps format, but rather set these names and acronyms in normal type as it is less disruptive to the reading flow. If the novel were to be translated for publication, the publisher's house style would have to be adhered to, which might well specify small caps for acronyms and product names.

Direct speech is indicated with »guillemets« (angle quotes) in the source text, even though the standard style in German is to use „lower and upper" quotation marks to open and close direct speech segments. The use of guillemets, although not the norm, is not unusual in published German fiction. Quotation marks were changed to the standard English style of "upper quotes" to open and close direct speech segments in the translation. Other punctuation was kept the same in the target text as in the source text.

In the source text, the names of characters were chosen to be culturally instantly identifiable while being completely ordinary – if not stereotypical – within their implied cultural context. Examples include Peter Eisenhardt, the German science-fiction author; Professor Charles Wilford-Smith, the English academic and archaeologist; Shimon Bar-Lev, the Israeli archaeologist; Stephen Foxx, the brilliant young American millionaire (with the double "x" at the end of the name indicating that there is something exceptional about him); Susan Miller, the personal assistant of the US billionaire who funded the excavations; the billionaire himself, John Kaun, whose surname is unusual and is an alternate spelling of the surname "Khan", meaning "chief or ruler" (Powell, 2019); Uri Liebermann, the Israeli journalist; Yehoshuah and Judith Menez, Stephen Foxx's friends and accomplices (the surname is of Spanish origin and might have been chosen for its Mediterranean connotation); Professor Goutière, the Canadian historian; and Enrico Basso, the Italian lawyer and counsel for Kaun Enterprises. All of these names were retained unchanged in the English translation. The name of the pharaoh, *Tut-Ench-Amun* in the source text, p. 11, was changed to the usual English spelling of Tutankhamun.

Place names in the source text were usually represented using standard German spellings, which were translated into the standard English renderings wherever possible. For example, place names like Israel, Jerusalem and New York remained unchanged, while *Krakau* (p. 36) was translated to Krakow, *Flughafen David-Ben-Gurion* (p. 35) became Ben Gurion Airport, *Troja* (p. 11) became Troy, and *Dizengoff Boulevard* (p. 44) was translated as Dizengoff Street. The excavation site is called *Bet Hamesh* in the source text; researching the name online proved inconclusive. No place of that name appears to exist, but the spelling was retained as it works

in English and is similar to the place name *Bet Shemesh*, the name of a city near Jerusalem in Israel (sometimes given as *Beit Shemesh*).

In some places in the source text, words or phrases are given in languages other than German, a minor foreignising touch to reinforce the sense of place. For example, travellers arriving at Ben Gurion Airport are greeted with *shalom* or *salam alaikum* (p. 35); the Italian lawyer Enrico Basso answers the phone by growling *pronto* (p. 119); and a short dialogue between Professor Wilford-Smith and a guard called Gideon includes a few phrases in Hebrew (p. 186):

> *"Erev tov,"* mumbled the professor, who was following behind the two others, giving Gideon a distracted smile. *"Toda."*
>
> *"Bevakasha,"* replied Gideon.

These words and phrases were transferred either unchanged or with minor modifications into the target text. For example, *salam alaikum* in the source text becomes *salaam alaikum* in English, and *'erev tov* in the German text is rendered as *Erev tov* in English (*erev* was capitalised because it is at the beginning of the sentence). Where I was unfamiliar with the foreign language in question, I looked up the expressions online to identify the most common spelling in English. Phrases where the foreign language was English in the source text were left unchanged in the translated text, meaning that a small part of the foreignisation was lost in transfer.

An aspect of translating that can represent challenges is the handling of puns and wordplay, which do not always transfer well from one language to another (Low, 2011). But they did not play a role in this translation, as there did not appear to be any instances of either in "Das Jesus Video". This might have been a conscious decision on the part of the author as it allows the narrative to remain in the foreground at all times (puns can be distracting), but it is also a reflection on culture: puns and wordplay are far more prominent in English communication than in German (Attardo, 2018). Although the absence of puns and wordplay made the text easier to translate, idiomatic expressions represent a similar category of challenges, and are addressed in section 4.3 below.

"Das Jesus Video" can also be analysed in terms of its register, defined as "the configuration of semantic resources that a member of a culture typically associates with the situation type" (Halliday, 1978, p. 111). This type of analysis typically focuses on the field, tenor and discourse mode of a text (Dittmar, 2010, p. 222) and can in this case be conducted at

two levels: the first is the level at which the author interacts with the reader, and the second the level at which the characters interact with each other in the novel.

In relation to the first area of analysis, the discursive field, the situation in which the author is interacting with the reader is one where the reader anticipates reading a novel of the science fiction or thriller genre and therefore expects certain tenor-related features characteristic of such texts, discussed below. For the characters in the novel, there are different discursive fields, for example a technical or scientific field at the site of the archaeological excavation, an informal field when the younger protagonists are amongst themselves in Tel Aviv, and a couple-related field in the scene where Peter Eisenhardt receives the phone call from New York with his wife watching.

The second area of analysis, the tenor, adapts to the field. Tenor can be defined as "the degree of formality between the interaction partners" (Dittmar, 2010, p. 222). At the level of the interaction between the author and the reader, the tenor is neither particularly formal nor particularly informal. It is at a medium level, in keeping with the novel's aim of appealing to a broad target audience with an interest in technical thrillers. At the level of the interaction between the characters, the tenor varies from scene to scene, depending on the circumstances as well as the nature of and the relationship between the characters. For instance, at the beginning of the novel, when Peter Eisenhardt takes the call from New York, Kaun's secretary, Susan Miller, speaks in a more formal style, using longer sentences, than does Eisenhardt, who appears somewhat shell-shocked, as well as not being entirely sure of his English skills. In the scenes where Stephen and Judith are amongst themselves (or in the company of Yehoshuah), the tenor is much more egalitarian and informal, as in this section, for example (p. 92):

> "The plastic pouch," he began, "contained more than just the user manual."
>
> Judith made a choking sound. "I knew it."
>
> "I really forgot to mention it," insisted Stephen. "I plain forgot. Perhaps my subconscious wants to keep it secret, I don't know."
>
> "Let me guess what else was in the pouch. A map. Marked with an X."
>
> "No. Just a few folded, crumbling pieces of paper."
>
> Yehoshuah groaned. "Crumbling!"

Finding an appropriate way to translate tenor can be challenging, as it is composed of many elements, including vocabulary, grammar and speaking styles (in the case of dialogue), some

of which are culturally specific. For example, German distinguishes between a formal and an informal version of the singular "you", namely *Sie* and *du*. This distinction is not immediately available in English and therefore has to be reflected through other markers of formality, such as vocabulary and sentence length. For instance, swear words and short sentences are usually a marker of informal speech, while technical vocabulary and multisyllabic words of Latin origin tend to indicate a higher degree of formality. One of the most formal characters in the novel is Professor Wilford-Smith, who uses long, complex sentences and never swears, for example (p. 153):

> *„Ich muss gestehen," wandte Professor Wilford-Smith ein, „daß ich es für meinen Teil völlig normal finde, daß jemand, der nach Israel kommt, um als Ausgrabungshelfer zu arbeiten und der dabei ein Nachschlagewerk wie die Encyclopaedia Britannica mit sich führt, irgendwann nach dem Schlagwort Jesus Christus sucht."*

In translation (p. 142):

> "I must admit," said Professor Wilford-Smith, "that I find it completely normal that someone who comes to Israel as an excavation helper and who brings a reference work like the Encyclopaedia Britannica is going to look up Jesus Christ at some stage."

A part of the novel that has a very distinct tenor consists of the opening paragraphs at the beginning of each chapter, supposed excerpts from a report on the archaeological excavations at Bet Hamesh. Here, the language is technical and required additional research to translate. For instance, terms like *Mauerflucht aus behauenen Steinen* (p. 37); *Repertoire der Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeit* (p. 50); *die Beschaffenheit der Wandung mancher Gefäßtypen, Magerungszutaten* (p. 71); *Ossuarien, Nekropole* (p. 127); *das stratigraphische Prinzip, relative Chronologie* (p. 139), do not usually form part of everyday speech and clearly belong to the specialised domain of archaeology. The choice of technical language has the effect of lending an air of verisimilitude to the story, aiding in the willing suspension of disbelief that is a prerequisite for enjoying this type of fantastical fiction.

The third area of register analysis deals with the discourse mode, which in this instance is written at the level of the author-reader interaction, and mostly oral at the level of the interaction between the characters in the novel. The second aspect is more relevant from the point of view of the translation, as it required translating dialogue in a way that sounded idiomatic and appropriate to the respective scene.

4.2. Anachronisms

The next feature of the translation to be discussed is that of anachronisms. One of the remarkable aspects of translating "Das Jesus Video" was how dated parts of it read, even though the book is just over twenty years old. From today's perspective, it is easy to forget how much things have changed since 1998, when the novel was first published. The science fiction genre appears to be particularly susceptible to becoming dated quickly:

> Science fiction always suffers from the march of time, even more than other genres. Since its premise is often couched in technological extrapolation based on existing knowledge and theory, the stories from even ten years ago can seem dated. Stories from the beginning of the 20th century frequently told of alien inhabitants discovered on voyages to the moon, which became impossible when it was confirmed that the moon was lifeless. (Fritzsche, 2006, p. 278)

The types of observations referred to here as "anachronisms" can be divided into two groups: on the one hand, objects which already existed when the novel was published, but which are no longer commonly used or obsolescent, such as fax machines, rotary dial telephones and CD-ROMs. On the other hand, technologies which exist today, but did not in 1998, such as advanced smartphones (with cameras capable of recording high-quality stills as well as moving footage), ubiquitous internet access and social media. The first category of anachronisms is addressed in table form below, while the second category is discussed after the table.

The pace of technological progress over the past two decades has been rapid. The World Wide Web, which laid the foundations of the internet as we know it today, was invented in 1990 (Andrews, 2019). The first smartphone, the Nokia 9000 Communicator, was introduced in 1996 (Goodwin, 2019). From the descriptions in the novel, the device which the journalist Uri Liebermann uses appears remarkably similar to this phone: "He pulled out a flat device that looked like a mobile phone. But to Eisenhardt's astonishment, he flipped it open lengthwise and was left holding a tiny computer in his hand, complete with a dainty keyboard and a small LCD screen" (p. 40). Both the World Wide Web and smartphones play a role in "Das Jesus Video", but it is clear that they were still new and unfamiliar. The author



Figure 1 - The Nokia 9000 Communicator

had to describe them in great detail because he could not assume that readers would know what they were and how they worked.

Many of the companies that today dominate the world had only just been started or would not be for several years. For example, Amazon, the world's largest online retailer, was founded in 1994 (Murphy Jr., 2019), while Google, the dominant global search engine company, began in 1998 (Bellis, 2019). Most of the familiar social media companies were created in the 2000s, e.g. Wikipedia in 2001 (Wikipedia contributors, 2019), Facebook in 2004, YouTube in 2005, Twitter in 2006 and WhatsApp in 2009 (McFadden, 2018). The first iPhone was released in 2007 and has transformed the world of electronic devices in ways that would have been hard to foresee in 1998: "Millions of people use an iPhone as their only computer. And their only camera, GPS device, music player, communicator, trip planner, sex finder, and payment tool. It put the world in our pockets" (Pierce & Goode, 2018).

If the novel were set in the contemporary present, it is likely that many of these devices and services would play a role in the story. They have become so deeply woven into the fabrics of our daily lives that we rarely think about what it would be like if they didn't exist. Their absence in a novel that is intended to be set in the present is disorienting. It is like a foreignisation of time rather than of language, as some objects seem out of place and events do not unfold in quite the way one would expect if the protagonists had access to modern technology.

For instance, a hypothetical time traveller travelling two thousand years into the past from 2019 would likely not have taken a video camera, but a smartphone instead. It is less obtrusive, has a better screen for reviewing footage, can record audio only if desired, uses far less electricity and would be much easier to charge using a small solar panel. Another example: when Stephen Foxx wants to learn more about the historical figure of Jesus Christ, he consults a single publication, the Encyclopaedia Britannica (albeit stored on a CD-ROM, advanced for the time) (Eschbach, 2001, p. 129). Today, he would have simply done some online research across a variety of sources.

For the translator, the question of how to deal with anachronisms requires a decision on whether to ignore them, allowing the story to unfold as it was written over twenty years ago, or whether to change the text to remove the anachronisms and bring the text into the present. In this dissertation, the first approach was chosen: anachronisms were ignored and transferred from German into English as they occurred. Although at first glance it might appear that doing so would impair the commercial viability of the novel in English, this is not necessarily so

because a sequel to the book, “Der Jesus-Deal”, was published in 2014 (Eschbach, 2014). If a publisher decided to have both novels translated, then “Das Jesus Video” could remain set in the late 1990s as a scene-setter and prequel to the second novel.

If, on the other hand, the decision was taken to update “Das Jesus Video”, this would require addressing both types of anachronisms – those of obsolescence and those of missing products and technologies. The table below lists some of the anachronisms of obsolescence identified in the translation, along with proposed ways of addressing them. In some cases, such as faxes, the obsolescent technology recurs throughout the book, and would need to be accordingly updated in various places.

Name, page	Context	Suggestion	Impact	Comments
wall-mounted telephone with a rotary dial, 23	Lydia Eisenhardt came out of the kitchen on the second ring and wiped her hands on her apron before taking it off. The telephone was of the old type, with an antiquated rotary dial and a heavy, massive handset.	Replace with a more modern telephone, e.g. a cordless telephone.	None – minor impact on the feel of the story.	Both wall-mounted phones and rotary dial phones are now only found in museums.
fax, 26	"But the agreement I'm going to fax through to you, should you accept the offer, is our standard consultant contract."	Replace with e-mail.	None.	Fax technology is obsolete. It appears in several other places in the novel and can be replaced with e-mail in each instance.
Newspapers as main source of information, 30	Her eyes opened even wider. "Really? How do you know?" "I read the right papers."	Replace with news sites.	None.	Even though newspapers are in decline, they are not anachronisms yet. However, it is unlikely that a 22-year-old in 2019 would use newspapers as his main (or only) source of information.
mobile phone, 37	"Why don't we take my car and meet him in Tel Aviv?" He nodded towards his mobile phone, which was lying on the table. "You won't be able to reach him. He's already stuck in Jerusalem's rush-hour traffic."	Modify story to suggest Stephen called Yehoshuah and either didn't get through to him or spoke to him and decided to let him continue on his way to the camp.	None.	Here, the anachronism is that Yehoshuah does not have a mobile phone. Highly unlikely in 2019.
digital camera, optical disk,	…after the third flash, Uri Liebermann was satisfied. Proudly, he showed off his camera, a brand-new model with a flat monitor on the	This entire section would need to be rewritten. Nowadays,	No major impact – some loss of	Most of the technology described in this section was cutting-edge at the

Name, page	Context	Suggestion	Impact	Comments
serial cable, smartphone 40	back. The screen allowed you to view the photo you had just taken, almost at original size, before it was stored on a small optical disk inside the camera. “Completely digital,” he explained. “And see this, here, on the side? I can plug in a serial cable and transfer the photos directly to any commercially available PC.” … He pulled out a flat device that looked like a mobile phone. But to Eisenhardt’s astonishment, he flipped it open lengthwise and was left holding a tiny computer in his hand, complete with a dainty keyboard and a small LCD screen.	the journalist would probably snap a pic with his mobile phone, type or dictate a short text either on the mobile, a tablet computer or a laptop, then send it off using the Wi-Fi connection on the plane. Readers would be familiar with the process, so it would not be necessary to explain everything in great detail.	descriptive colour and the sense of marvel at modern technology.	time the book was published. Today, more modern technologies have superseded the old solutions: we use Bluetooth instead of serial cables, memory cards instead of optical disks, touch screens instead of tiny keyboards. It is also unnecessary to tell the reader that you can view a photo on the device’s screen after taking it.
access to flight deck, 41	“Normally, I could send this straight to our editorial department’s main computer, but here, on board, this obviously isn’t possible. We’d probably crash, or, worse, end up in Libya, ha-ha! But I’ll ask the stewardess if she’ll let me use the plane’s phone system. Usually, it’s no problem. Just a moment…” Eisenhardt watched in amazement as Liebermann marched up to the front of the plane, holding another cable and his PC, before talking insistently to one of the stewardesses behind the galley kitchen curtain. Then the two of them disappeared, and for a while nothing happened.	Replace references to the plane’s telephone system with on-board Wi-Fi. Change the story to reflect that internet access is available on planes and that Liebermann does not need access to the flight deck to send his story.	None.	It sounds as if Liebermann was given access to the flight deck to send his story. Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, passengers are no longer allowed on the flight deck.

Name, page	Context	Suggestion	Impact	Comments
Bonn capital of Germany, 41	"But when there are dramatic developments – for instance, when a minister in Bonn makes a statement critical of Israel – I type his words directly into my little box of wonders, press a button, and if everything goes to plan, you'll find my report in a newspaper in Israel's kiosks four hours later."	Replace Bonn with Berlin.	None.	Although the decision to make Berlin the capital of unified Germany was taken as early as 1990/1991, the actual move only took place in 1999 – after the book had been written. Today, Berlin is unambiguously the capital of Germany.
news cycle, 41	"… if everything goes to plan, you'll find my report in a newspaper in Israel's kiosks four hours later." "Four hours?" "Four hours. And that's for a normal news story, mind you. Really important events get reported even quicker."	Emphasise that Lieberman is talking about print editions, not online news sites.	No significant impact.	For a story to appear in print within four hours is still a very quick turnaround time. But today, breaking stories would be published online within minutes instead of hours.
TV antennas, 49	Stephen looked around as they drove, almost twisting his neck; he saw dirty brown houses piled higgledy-piggledy, of the type that can only be built in hot countries, with flat roofs or roof terraces where clothes billowed on the washing lines or, symbols of the modern era, where solar panels presented themselves obliquely to the skies like badly assembled black deckchairs, and above it all a fantastically tangled forest of crazy TV antennas whose dipoles pointed in all directions.	Replace dipole antennas with satellite dishes.	None.	Satellite and cable television, along with streaming services, have taken over almost completely from terrestrial broadcast television. Dipole antennas have become rare.

Name, page	Context	Suggestion	Impact	Comments
Usenet forum, having to explain what the internet is, weird round symbol (the @ sign), 50	“At first, he was just a name under a message on a Usenet forum. Not even a name, in fact – an e-mail address. Something like Stephen-weird round symbol-MRT-dot-Maine-dot.COM.” “And you were ymenez-weird round symbol-Rockfelf-dot-IL-dot-EDU,” said Stephen, grinning. Judith furrowed her brow. “What is a Usenet forum?”	Rewrite the whole section to describe a plausible way how Stephen might have come across Yehoshuah. Perhaps on a Reddit or Quora thread.	None.	Usenet is obsolete, but everybody knows the @ symbol and how e-mail works.
stamp, 51	“But then I received a letter with an American stamp, stamped in the US state of Maine.”	Replace the letter with an e-mail, or even a message sent through a messenger app like WhatsApp.	None.	People rarely send each other (physical) letters, and post offices are discontinuing stamps.
tape recorder, 63	Music could be heard dimly from a portable tape recorder, snatches drifting across the sand to them, while dark, slim figures danced to the rhythm, some of them in the water.	Replace the tape recorder with a boom box or portable music player.	None.	Tape recorders are obsolete.
video tape, 77	“He believes that the camera has to be somewhere out there, packed and sealed to survive for two thousand years – and inside the video camera, the video tape.”	Replace the video tape with a memory card.	None.	Video tape is obsolete.
coming millennium, 82	This man, as the world’s press tirelessly proclaimed, was the prototype of the manager of the coming millennium.	Replace “coming millennium” with “future”.	None.	The book was written in the second millennium, but we are now in the third millennium.

Name, page	Context	Suggestion	Impact	Comments
Donald Trump, 97	The cautionary example that was always top of his mind – to such an extent that he had seriously considered placing a photo of the man on his desk – was the fate of a long-forgotten real estate tycoon of the eighties, a man called Donald Trump, whom the media had hyped as a prodigy and epitome of go-getting success until he had ended up believing it himself. He became reckless. Later, some observers called him "megalomaniacal", and many of them were the very same people who had applauded him when he seemed to be at the peak of his fame. His fall had been fast and brutal. Banks had cancelled their credit lines, investors had bailed, projects had failed – and he had fallen very, very deep, disappearing almost completely from the public eye.	Replace with a different ambitious, prominent tycoon who failed. Perhaps Adam Neumann, the founder of WeWork.	None.	Donald Trump was written off in the 1990s, but now he is the US president.
electronic mail waiting on the internet, fax to mail conversion, 111-112	Stephen began every day by plugging his mobile into his computer to fetch any electronic mail which might be waiting for him on the internet. … This PC stood at home, was permanently on and received fax transmissions. Whenever anybody sent a fax to Stephen's fax number, it was stored on his computer's hard drive, where it would remain until his return. But in addition, an automatic process converted the fax into an e-mail which was forwarded automatically to Stephen's internet address , allowing him to receive it anywhere in the world. This meant that	Replace with "Stephen checked his mail." It might be necessary to justify why he didn't check his mail before – perhaps his phone battery was flat, he didn't have reception or he ran out of data (unlikely in the case of a millionaire).	None.	There are several anachronisms in this sentence. Nowadays, we talk about e-mail rather than electronic mail. Most e-mail is delivered through push mechanisms rather than pull mechanisms (Stephen has to "fetch" the mail), and it is delivered continuously rather than at discrete intervals, e.g. once a day. And we no longer

Name, page	Context	Suggestion	Impact	Comments
	he could always be reached, and as the fax he was studying over and over again showed, this was a good thing.	The section explaining the fax-to-mail process is obsolete and redundant, it can be deleted in its entirety.		think of it as "waiting for us on the internet" – we no longer give much thought to where it is, it just is. Another sign of how our relationship to e-mail has changed is that we would no longer say that somebody sent a message to our "internet address". It would simply be our e-mail address.
advertising posted through the mail, 112	Later that same day, Stephen had printed his little brochure, written a letter on his impressive letterhead, stuck everything into an envelope and posted it in the mail before forgetting all about it.	Replace by saying that Stephen e-mailed the company's IT department.	None. A delayed response is plausible, even when communicating via e-mail instead of the post.	Physically mailing advertising material is not completely obsolete, but it is in decline. On balance of probabilities, a young person like Stephen Foxx would be unlikely to use this method.
transatlantic telephone connection, off-peak rates, 112	In addition, he would need to link directly to his computer at home to fetch some large image files, and as this required a transatlantic telephone connection, he could save a lot of money by waiting for off-peak rates. If he hurried, he would be able to send his fax response immediately afterwards, directly from his laptop.	These two sentences can be deleted with no loss of meaning.	None.	As a rule, the prices of communication services no longer depend so much on distance or time of day, but rather on the amount of data transferred. Today, Stephen would perhaps care about the cost of fetching "large image files", which

Name, page	Context	Suggestion	Impact	Comments
				consume a lot of data. He would not pay any attention to whether it was transatlantic or at what time of day he was doing so.
CD, CD containing the entire Encyclopaedia Britannica, 114	Stephen tossed the cable back in his travel bag and took out a CD case. This was the other thing he'd wanted to do while having breakfast: a little research. The CD he took from the little folding case before slotting it into the drive on his laptop contained the entire Encyclopaedia Britannica.	Replace with Stephen doing online research. Similar adjustments will have to be made further down in the text, e.g. where Ryan studies Stephen's search history.	None.	Stephen would most likely have looked up Wikipedia and other online information sources. As a discerning man who demands quality, perhaps he would even have paid for a Britannia online subscription at $75 per year.
Stephen Hawking alive, 140	"Of course I know Stephen Hawking. I even interviewed him once." "I seem to recall him proving that time travel is impossible in one of his books. And he's considered a living Einstein, if I'm not mistaken."	Replace with "he was considered a living Einstein".	None.	Hawking died in 2018.
hole in the ozone layer, 140	"We're all wondering if humanity's ever going to sort out its problems, like the hole in the ozone layer, atomic bombs and famines," said Eisenhardt, staring at the white wall in front of him.	Replace with "… like poverty, inequality and climate change".	None.	Despite Eisenhardt's pessimism, the hole in the ozone layer is no longer a concern and famines are increasingly a concern of the past. Atomic bombs are still a threat, but on the other hand they have

Name, page	Context	Suggestion	Impact	Comments
				helped prevent a large number of wars since 1945. Today, the world is more concerned about other dangers, first and foremost climate change.
Walkman, 148	Maybe there was a Walkman with a cassette rotting quietly away somewhere?	Delete the sentence.	None.	The function of portable music players, from various types of Walkman to iPods and MP3 players, has been almost entirely replaced by mobile phones – and the time traveller was certainly going to have one on him.
World War 2, 156	"Did you know that Wilford-Smith used to be a professional soldier?" Eisenhardt couldn't believe his ears. "A soldier?" "In the war, he served in North Africa under Montgomery before being stationed in the British Mandate of Palestine. He was among the British troops who left Palestine when the state of Israel was founded in May 1948."	Rewrite to provide a justification why Wilford-Smith was in Israel around 1968. Perhaps the Six-Day War of 1967?	None if done carefully.	If this sentence was left unchanged, it would make Wilford-Smith around 90 years old in 2019. Probably too old to be doing the things he is described as doing in the novel.
wind down a car window, 166	Unnerved, Stephen wound down his window.	Replace with "lowered his window".	None.	This is not necessarily an anachronism – manually wound car windows still exist, but they are becoming rare.

As the examples in the table above show, most of the anachronisms of obsolescence could be resolved with relatively little effort, and without affecting the story much. References to older technologies can be replaced with references to the newer technologies that took their place, and outdated historical references could be replaced with newer ones (e.g. Donald Trump, Stephen Hawking, General Montgomery).

We now come to the second class of anachronisms – the missing technologies that we would expect to see, but which did not exist at the time. These are harder to address because they affect how people communicate with one another and how information spreads. Today's ubiquitous access to information and means of transmitting it makes it difficult to maintain the types of information asymmetries that create tension in the novel. In plain English, it was easier for person A to know more than person B in the 1990s, or know it sooner, because person A had better access to information sources and communication technology.

The great change of the past twenty years has been to democratise and broaden information sources and communication technology, while also improving the connectedness between users by orders of magnitude. Today, almost everybody in the developed world has a smartphone which can perform the same functions as a high-speed computer, camera, voice recorder and library with a competent librarian. It is easy to find information on the internet or through social networks. Remaining in constant communication with friends and family is simple. It requires neither great wealth nor great skill.

An example of how this would affect the story relates to the secrecy which Kaun attempts to maintain around the dig. He is able to control the spread of information by hiding the place where the instruction manual was found under a tent, posting armed guards, and swearing those in the know to secrecy. Today, news that a momentous discovery had been made – even if it was still unclear what it was – would have spread in minutes through social media such as Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp. And it would have spread not only locally, within the group of the excavation helpers, but globally, as the friends and followers of the volunteers read their status updates. From there, journalists would have found out about it, and soon there would have been drones hovering above the excavation site.

For that matter, the first thing Stephen would have done when he discovered the instruction manual would have been to take some photos with his mobile phone. Even if he had been circumspect about sharing them, the risk of a leak would have been much greater than in the absence of mobiles and social media. It is also likely that Ryan, Kaun's henchman, would have

been able to track Stephen's movements through his mobile phone. He would not have needed to call Judith's mother to disprove Stephen's alibi (Eschbach, 2001, p. 209).

Finding other types of information is also much easier than before. For example, Eisenhardt asks the journalist, Liebermann, to dig up information about the archaeologist, Wilford-Smith (Eschbach, 2001, p. 187). Nowadays, he could easily have found both primary and secondary information about Wilford-Smith online by himself. He could also have researched the mysterious Barnford University, which appointed Wilford-Smith as a professor. Similarly, Eisenhardt could have found out far more about the possibility of time travel by doing internet research before calling his friend, the science journalist Dominik Wilde.

The adjustments required to address this category of anachronisms would be far-reaching and fundamental. They would go well beyond the scope of what translators are usually expected to do, requiring rewriting rather than translating. Therefore, the best way of approaching the project – if the aim were to update the text to account for all the changes modern technology has wrought – would be for the author to update the novel in German before giving it to a translator to translate, or, alternatively, to decide on the required changes collaboratively.

4.3. Translation style

In Venuti's terms, the strategy applied in translating this book can be described as fluent: "Fluent strategies pursue linear syntax, univocal meaning, current usage, lexical consistency; they eschew unidiomatic constructions, polysemy, archaism, jargon, and linguistic effect that calls attention to the words as words and therefore pre-empts or interrupts the reader's identification" (Venuti, 1998, p. 127). The writing style used in the German source text is complementary to this approach. In the main, Eschbach uses short, declarative sentences that are unambiguous and work to propel the story forward. Transferring this style into English the translation is mostly straightforward and poses few challenges.

However, there are occasional exceptions: sections where the author uses longer, more complex sentences and less common words to evoke a mood or create a memorable description. Here, he applies "unidiomatic constructions" and "calls attention to the words as words and therefore pre-empts or interrupts the reader's identification". The effect of such sections is to vary the pace of the narrative, to give readers a chance to catch their metaphorical breath, and to create a more lyrical counterpoint to the action-focussed bulk of the novel.

In translation, such sections present a greater challenge because English is generally less accommodating of long, complex sentences than German is. At the outset, translating these sections required a decision about whether to maintain sentence length and unidiomatic constructions as much as possible – accepting a degree of foreignisation – or to simplify them radically, in keeping with the objective of producing a "fluent" translation. Between these extremes of strict fidelity to the source text on the one hand and radical simplification on the other, there lies some middle ground.

As the examples in the following table show, a balanced approach lying between the two extremes was chosen for the translation. Long German sentences were generally split and simplified. Even so, some of the resulting English sentences are still longer than is common in English.

German	p.	English (gloss)	English (translation)	Comments
Er wandte sich wieder den wenigen Quadratzentimetern Erde zu, die er seit einer Stunde mit einem Borstenpinsel bearbeitete.	5	He turned back to the few square centimetres of soil on which he'd been working for an hour with a bristle brush.	He turned his attention back to the minute patch of ground he'd been working on for over an hour with a bristle brush.	Rewritten for clarity, replaced the overly specific "square centimetres" with the more general "minute patch".
Es hatte seit Wochen nicht mehr geregnet, was für die Arbeit natürlich gut war, aber die oberste Schicht des Erdreichs verwandelte sich dadurch in feinen, widerlichen Staub, den der leiseste Windhauch mit sich forttrug, den sie atmeten, aßen, mit sich in ihre Zelte und Feldbetten trugen und bis zum Ende der Ausgrabungsarbeiten nicht mehr richtig loswerden würden. Zusammen mit Schweiß bildete er eine dünne, schmierige Schicht, gegen die die wasserarmen Tröpfelduschen, die sie hier im Lager verwendete, keine Chance hatten.	5	It hadn't rained in weeks, which was obviously good for the work, but the top layer of soil turned into a fine, loathsome dust as a result, which the slightest breeze carried off, which they breathed, ate, carried to their tents and camp beds with them and which they wouldn't properly be able to get rid of until the excavation works ended. Together with sweat, it formed a thin, greasy layer, against which the water-poor drip showers which they used here in the camp didn't stand a chance.	It had been weeks since it last rained, which was good for the work, of course. But it meant that the top layer of soil turned into fine, loathsome dust, lifted on the slightest breeze, dust which they inhaled, ate, took with them into their tents and camp beds and which would stay with them until the dig ended. Mixed with sweat, the dust formed a thin, greasy layer, impervious to the camp's water-saving drip showers.	Split the first sentence in two, rewritten for clarity.
Es war noch ein Telefon mit einer altmodischen Wählscheibe und einem schweren, massiven Hörer, das im dunklen Hausflur an der Wand hing und einen zwang, alle Telefonate zwischen den an der Garderobe aufgehängten Mänteln und den mit den bunten	13	It was still a telephone with an old-fashioned dial and a heavy, massive handset, which hung on the wall in the dark passage and forced one to take all telephone calls between the on-the-coat rack-hanging coats and the with-the-colourful-rubber-	The telephone was of the old type, with an antiquated rotary dial and a heavy, massive handset. It was installed on the wall in the dark passage, meaning you had to take calls standing between the packed coat rack and the shoe rack	Source text sentence split into two, sentence structure greatly simplified, unidiomatic beginning of the sentence reformulated.

German	p.	English (gloss)	English (translation)	Comments
Gummistiefeln der Kinder vollgestopften Schuhregal zu führen.		boots-of-the-children stuffed shoe rack.	crammed full with the children's colourful wellies.	
Stephen sah sich um, verrenkte sich fast den Hals; sah planlos aufeinandergetürmte, schmutzigbraune Häuser, wie man sie nur in heißen Ländern bauen kann, mit Flachdächern oder Dachterrassen, auf denen sich Wäsche an Leinen blähte oder, Symbole der Neuzeit, Sonnenkollektoren sich schräg dem Himmel darboten wie falsch aufgestellte Liegestühle, und darüber einen wild wuchernden Wald wahnwitziger Fernsehantennen, deren Empfängerdipole in alle Himmelsrichtungen wiesen.	49	Stephen looked around, almost twisted his neck; saw planlessly stacked, dirty brown houses as can only be built in hot countries, with flat roofs or roof terraces on which laundry billowed on lines or, symbols of the new era, sun collectors exposed themselves at an angle to the sky like wrongly assembled deck chairs, and above it a wildly flourishing forest of crazy TV antennas whose dipoles pointed in all directions of the compass.	Stephen looked around as they drove, almost twisting his neck; he saw dirty brown houses piled higgledy-piggledy, of the type that can only be built in hot countries, with flat roofs or roof terraces where clothes billowed on the washing lines or, symbols of the modern era, where solar panels presented themselves obliquely to the skies like badly assembled black deckchairs, and above it all a fantastically tangled forest of crazy TV antennas whose dipoles pointed in all directions.	Long sentence in the source text kept as a single sentence in the translation. Some foreignisation accepted in exchange for greater fidelity to the author's lyrical intention.
Er war groß und schlank, trug einen khakibraunen Overall ohne Abzeichen oder Namensschild, hatte das Haar kurzgeschoren wie ein Sträfling oder ein Marine-Soldat und auffallende blaue Augen, die sie beide musterten, als seien es tatsächlich nur	86	He was tall and trim, wore a khaki-brown overall without insignia or a name tag, had his hair shorn as short as a convict or a marine, and (had) remarkable blue eyes which scrutinised them as if they were only covers for two integrated X-ray machines.	He was trim and tall, wore a khaki overall without insignia or a name tag, and had his hair shorn as short as a marine. He had strikingly clear blue eyes and gave them a piercing look. It felt like he was looking right through them with X-ray vision.	Original sentence split into three. X-ray vision metaphor simplified.

German	p.	English (gloss)	English (translation)	Comments
Abdeckblenden für zwei eingebaute Röntgengeräte.				
Peter Eisenhardt erwachte abrupt, wälzte sich herum mit dem alarmierenden Gefühl, nicht zu Hause zu sein, sondern in der Fremde, in einem fremden Bett, in einem falschen Bett, sah rotglimmende Digitalziffern, die acht Minuten nach fünf anzeigten, und da fiel es ihm wieder ein.	91	Peter Eisenhardt woke up abruptly, turned over with the alarming feeling of not being at home, but abroad, in an unfamiliar bed, in a wrong bed, saw the red gleaming digital number that showed eight minutes past five, and then he remembered.	Peter Eisenhardt woke up with a start. He turned over with the alarming feeling of not being at home, but abroad, in an unfamiliar bed that felt somehow wrong. The gleaming red display of the digital alarm clock showed that it was eight minutes past five. Suddenly it all came back to him.	Original sentence split into four. Maintaining sentence length in the translation would have run counter to the intention of picking up the narrative pace, which expressions like “with a start” and “suddenly” require.
Fertig angezogen, die Schuhe glänzend, das Brusttuch dezent, aber korrekt gezupft, betrachtete er sich im Spiegel.	109	Dressing completed, the shoes shining, the pocket square discreetly, but correctly plucked, he looked at himself in the mirror.	When he’d finished dressing, he looked at himself in the mirror. Shoes polished to a shine, pocket square discreetly, but correctly tucked.	The formulation in the source text, with its heavy use of participles, is very German. Required reformulating for English.
Wenn er jetzt nur Gesichtspunkte brachte, die den beiden auch schon eingefallen waren, würde er heute abend wahrscheinlich bereit wieder in einem Flugzeug nach Hause sitzen.	121	If he now only brought aspects which had already occurred to the other two, he would probably be sitting on a plane back home this evening.	If the others had already thought of what he was about to describe, he’d find himself on a plane back home the same evening.	Transferred into idiomatic English. Removed the qualifier “probably”.
Und jetzt mußte ihm etwas Plausibles einfallen, es mußte ihm schnell einfallen, und es mußte, sobald es ihm eingefallen war, so	142	And now he had to think of something plausible, he had to think of it quickly, and it had to, as soon as he’d thought of it,	He needed to come up with something believable, fast. And as soon as he’d found something, he would need to	Split the sentence into two and simplified the structure.

German	p.	English (gloss)	English (translation)	Comments
klingen, als ging es ihm schon die ganze Zeit so durch den Kopf.		sound as if it had been going through his mind the entire time.	make it sound as if he had been thinking about it all the time.	
Sie warf ihm einen kurzen Blick zu, der zu sagen schien, der Schlag soll dich treffen, dann lächelte sie dem glutäugigen Techniker entschuldigend zu und kam zu Stephen hinüber.	170	She cast a brief glance at him which seemed to say, *may you drop dead*, then smiled apologetically at the fiery-eyed technician and came over to Stephen.	She gave him a look that invited him to drop dead, then smiled an apology at the technician and walked over to Stephen.	Simplified the sentence, made it more idiomatic, eliminated the qualifier "seemed to".
Er hat meine Mutter verlassen, einen Tag, nachdem ich bei der Armee war und damit aus dem Haus.	170	He left my mother, one day after I was in the army and with that, out of the house.	He left my mom the day I left home to join the army.	Poetic licence in the interest of greater punchiness.
Das war natürlich eine interessante Entdeckung. Ausgerechnet er, der Science Fiction-Autor, der seine größten Erfolge mit Zeitreiseromanen erzielt hatte.	174	This was of course an interesting discovery. He of all people, the science fiction author who had achieved his greatest successes with time travel novels.	Of course, this was an interesting discovery. He was a science-fiction author who had achieved his greatest successes with time travel novels.	The German structure, where the second sentence is actually a fragment, does not quite work in English. Reformulated to make it a complete sentence. The build-up is resolved in the next two sentences.
Aber er hatte es geschafft, sich in dieses „Was wäre, wenn" hineinzusteigern, sich darin zu verlieren, die Stimme des Zweifels zu übertönen mit hektischer Aktivität. Und da lag es nun vor ihm auf dem Tisch, das Ergebnis eines stundenlangen	174	But he'd managed to work himself up into this "What if", to lose himself in it, to drown out the voice of doubt with hectic activity. And there it lay now in front of him on the table, the result of an hours-long work frenzy: large paper sheets,	Nevertheless, he'd managed to become fully absorbed in the world of What if? scenarios, muting his scepticism through relentless activity. The result lay on the table in front of him, the outcome of a work frenzy	This section needed extensive reformulation to be made to sound idiomatic.

German	p.	English (gloss)	English (translation)	Comments
Arbeitsrausches: große Papierbögen, vollgesudelt mit Notizen in vier grellen Farben, so dass sie aussahen wie moderne Kunstwerke.		scribbled full of notes in four bright colours, so that they looked like modern works of art.	lasting hours: large sheets of paper, filled with scribbles in four bright colours that made them look like modern works of art.	
Wilford-Smith redete auf ihn ein, in seiner betulichen Art und mit sparsamer Gestik. Dann ergriff der Medienmagnat das Wort, weit ausholend, bestimmt, dynamisch, erklärte, lächelte verbindlich, entlockte dem Mann ein zustimmendes Nicken und faßte ihn schließlich am Ellbogen.	184	Wilford-Smith spoke to him insistently, in his deliberate way and with economical gestures. Then the media magnate took the floor, speaking verbosely, with great assurance, dynamically, explained, smiled charmingly, elicited an affirmative nod from the man and finally took him by the elbow.	Wilford-Smith spoke to him in his deliberate way and with economy of movement. Then the magnate took over. He used sweeping gestures, spoke verbosely, dynamically and with great assurance, he explained and smiled charmingly, got a nod from the man and finally took him by the arm.	The sentence rambles in German, and the switches between present participles (“ausholend”), past participles (“bestimmt”), adverbs (“dynamisch”) and finite verbs in past tense (“erklärte”, “lächelte”, “entlockte”, “faßte”) is difficult to transfer into English. It required rewriting.
Ich habe ein Interview mit Yigael Yadin gefunden, wo er sagt, Wilford-Smith scheine Masse mit Klasse zu verwechseln, und in einem Interviewteil, der nicht veröffentlicht wurde, sagt er sogar wörtlich, ‚dieser Mann ist eine Strafe für die israelische Archäologie‘.“	187	I found an interview with Yigael Yadin where he says that Wilford-Smith appears to mistake mass for class, and in a part of the interview that wasn’t published, he even says literally, ‘this man is a punishment for Israeli archaeology.’”	I found an interview with Yigael Yadin where he says that Wilford-Smith appears to mistake quantity for quality. In a section of the interview that wasn’t published, he literally says: ‘This man is a disaster for Israeli archaeology.’”	Split the sentence into two, found an idiomatic expression that mirrors the “Masse-Klasse” rhyme, and replaced the word “Strafe” with the more idiomatic “disaster”.
Damals, mit immerhin schon zweiundvierzig Jahren, verließ er plötzlich seinen gutbezahlten Beruf mit Pensionsanspruch und		Back then, aged 42 already, he suddenly left his well-paid job with pension entitlement and began studying historical	Then, aged 42, he suddenly quit his well-paid job and his pension entitlement. Instead, he began studying historical	Split the sentence into three and found a better translation for the German expression “über etwas/jemanden

German	p.	English (gloss)	English (translation)	Comments
begann, Geschichtswissenschaften zu studieren, spezialisierte sich auf biblische Archäologie und fiel 1974 schließlich das erste Mal über israelischen Boden her.		sciences, specialised in biblical archaeology and finally overran Israeli soil for the first time in 1974.	sciences, specialising in biblical archaeology. In 1974 he launched his first sortie on Israeli soil.	herfallen" as the usual translations do not quite fit: overrun, ransack, mob, pounce.
Er hatte nicht wirklich damit gerechnet, eine totenstill daliegende Stadt vorzufinden, in der sein Auto durch leer Straßen dröhnen und von strenggläubigen Einwohnern mit Steinen beworfen werden würde, aber doch ungefähr etwas in der Richtung.	192	He hadn't really expected to find a town as quiet as death, in which his car would roar through empty streets and be pelted with stones by pious inhabitants, but something more or less of that kind.	He hadn't really expected to encounter a dead town, one where his car roared through deserted streets while pious city-dwellers pelted them with stones. But he had expected something of that nature.	Changed the conditionals to indicative tenses, split the sentence into two, simplified the vocabulary.
Die Stadt des Friedens, die in Jahrtausenden mehr umkämpft gewesen war als jeder andere Ort der Erde, breitete sich vor ihren Blicken aus wie ein golden schimmernder Flickenteppich, in dem unzählige Lichter und Lichtlein glühten, hineingeschmiegt in ein breites Tal, gespickt mit schlanken Minaretten und dunklen Kirchtürmen, verziert mit kleinen und großen Kuppeln, bis sich die Stadt dann wieder erhob, hinauf zum Tempelberg, auf dem atemberaubend die gewaltigste Kuppel thronte und die einzige,	192	The City of Peace, which had been more contested during thousands of years than any other place on earth, spread itself out in their view like a golden shimmering patchwork rug, in which countless lights and little lights glowed, nestled in a wide valley, sprinkled with slender minarets and dark church towers, decorated with large and small cupolas, until the city rose again, up to the Temple Mount, where breathtakingly the most magnificent cupola sat like on a throne, and the only one really	The City of Peace, which had been at the centre of more conflict during thousands of years than any other place on earth, was spread out before their eyes like a gold-shimmering quilt. Lit by countless lights large and small, it was nestled in a wide valley, sprinkled with slender minarets and dark church steeples, adorned with large and small cupolas. On the other side of the valley, the city rose up again to the Temple Mount, where the greatest of all the domes stood	In the source text, the sentence is long, rambling and poetic. Doing it justice required splitting it and finding the appropriate words to convey the sense of magic the author created.

German	p.	English (gloss)	English (translation)	Comments
die wirklich aus Gold war: die Kuppel des Felsendoms.		made of gold: the cupola of the Dome of the Rock.	enthroned in awe-inspiring splendour, the only one with an actual golden roof: the Dome of the Rock.	

The table below provides examples of another type of translation challenge encountered. In this instance, some of the idiomatic expressions used in German were not suitable for direct translation, but had to be replaced with suitable substitutes.

German	p.	English (literal)	English (idiomatic)
Ja, er musste eingestehen, daß [sic] er wartete.	5	Yes, he had to admit that he was waiting.	He couldn't deny it: he was waiting.
Dementsprechend gerädert fühlte er sich auch.	92	He felt correspondingly broken on the wheel.	He was aching all over.
Jetzt galt es.	121	Now it counted.	It was crunch time.
Das war ja beinahe eine Prüfungssituation.	121	This was almost an exam situation.	It felt like an exam.
Ach so. Die scheißfreundliche Platte war aufgelegt.	140	Okay, so the shit-friendly record was playing.	Okay. So he was playing Mr Nice Guy.
Hier half nur die Flucht nach vorn.	142	Here, only fleeing forward helped.	The only option was to take the bull by the horns.
Übergangslos war wieder Wolkenbruch und Hagel in ihrem Gesicht.	171	Seamlessly, cloudburst and hail returned to her face.	Suddenly the thaw disappeared, and ice and thunder returned to her expression.
Auch der Journalist schien erst einmal Anlauf nehmen zu müssen.	187	Even the journalist seemed to need a run-up first.	It sounded like the journalist needed a moment to gather his thoughts.

Another pattern emerges where the author went to great lengths to avoid repeating the names of certain characters. Eisenhardt is referred to as the writer, Wilford-Smith as the scientist or the archaeologist, and Kaun as the media magnate, the industrialist, the billionaire or the media czar and so on. In the translation, preference was given to allowing repetition rather than avoiding it, as this seemed less obtrusive than using substitutions and circumlocutions. Some illustrative examples are listed below:

German	p.	Avoiding repetition	Allowing repetition
Eisenhardt folgte der Aufforderung des Medienmagnaten, ...	52	Eisenhardt followed the media magnate's request…	Eisenhardt followed Kaun's request…
„Was möchten Sie trinken?" fragte der Industrielle und	72	"What would you like to drink?" asked the industrialist and opened	"What would you like to drink?" asked Kaun

German	p.	Avoiding repetition	Allowing repetition
öffnete einen Kühlschrank, prall gefüllt mit...		a fridge, fully stocked with…	and opened a fridge, fully stocked with…
Der Schriftsteller zögerte.	72	The writer hesitated.	Eisenhardt hesitated.
So etwas wie ein Lächeln zuckte über das Gesicht des Medienzaren, aber er sagte nichts.	73	Something like a smile flashed across the media czar's face, but he didn't say anything.	Something like a smile flashed across Kaun's face, but he didn't say anything.
„Sollte ich", begann Kaun noch einmal und sah den Schriftsteller mit dunkel glimmenden Tigeraugen an, „feststellen, dass Sie auf irgendeine Ressource verzichtet haben..."	77	"Should I discover," Kaun started again, fixing the writer with his dark, glowing tiger's eyes, "that you worked without a resource which…	"Should I discover," Kaun started again, fixing Eisenhardt with his dark, glowing tiger's eyes, "that you worked without a resource which…
„Im übrigen", fuhr der Milliardär fort, während er sich nach vorne beugte, ...	77	"Moreover," continued the billionaire, leaning forward, …	"Moreover," continued Kaun, leaning forward, …
Der Wissenschaftler blickte ihn mürrisch an.	78	The scientist looked at him sullenly	Wilford-Smith looked at him sullenly.
Der Schriftsteller setzte sich auf.	91	The writer sat up.	He sat up.
Der weißhaarige Mann mit dem unvermeidlichen Lederhut nickte.	119	The white-haired man with the inevitable leather hat nodded.	Wilford-Smith nodded.
Der Industriemagnat machte eine unwillige, wegwerfende Handbewegung.	121	The industrial magnate gestured dismissively.	Kaun gestured dismissively.
Die Miene des Unternehmers verfinsterte sich.	122	The businessman's expression darkened.	Kaun's expression darkened.

As the examples provided in the three tables above show, the writing style employed in "Das Jesus Video" generally lends itself to translation into English. Certain aspects required greater attention, but none of them posed an insurmountable obstacle.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Translating “Das Jesus Video” provided some valuable insights into the process and viability of translating genre fiction from German into English, the world’s dominant language. The study comprises two principle components: an annotated translation, followed by a reflexive section that analyses and summarises the translation process and product.

Chapter 1, the introduction, identifies the novel as being written in the style of a thriller, but as belonging to the science fiction genre, and more specifically to the time-travel category of the science fiction genre. A brief plot summary is presented and the issue of a lacking translation into English is identified as the guiding question for the research. An overview is provided of the quantitative dominance of the English language, as measured by the number of translations from English into other languages and vice-versa. The role of the science fiction genre in the broader literary space is highlighted from various perspectives, including commercial and cultural. The section on methodology and structure identifies the study as belonging to the empirical (rather than analytical) branch of research, as it focuses on gathering observations concerning the world of our experience (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013). The section further describes the actual research method used, that is the production of a part-translation of “Das Jesus Video” with notes and annotations, and describes the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework and provides a literature review. The theoretical framework is based on Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory and Bourdieu’s theory of cultural production. “Das Jesus Video” is identified as being peripheral in the German literary polysystem and (possibly) in a primary position because the writing style, which displays features of Anglophone literature from similar genres, is innovative in the German context. In Bourdieu’s terms, the book is positioned in the field of large-scale production and mass culture, i.e. popular fiction rather than “Literature”. Given that the self-defined objective for the project was to produce a translation that could potentially be commercially viable, the chosen strategy was to maintain a non-experimental writing approach in English and to produce a “domesticated” translation, that is a translation that would not seem out of place in the target language.

The literature review begins by defining the concept of a genre and then traces the roots of the science fiction genre. Some early forms of literature that displayed features of science fiction before the genre was named and identified are discussed. Next, the evolution of German science fiction is described from its origins. Links to contemporaneous Anglophone science

fiction are drawn where appropriate. The observation that science fiction, despite usually dealing with remote and unfamiliar times and places, is rooted in the author's historical and geographical context, is discussed with special reference to East German science fiction. The literature review ends with some background information on Andreas Eschbach, the author of "Das Jesus Video", and his position in the German science fiction arena.

Chapter 3 consists of the actual annotated translation of the novel. As mentioned previously, the book was written in an accessible style that is conducive to being translated into English. However, the process did present some challenges, among them the fact that the initial translation often didn't feel idiomatic enough or didn't display the required smooth narrative flow. This meant that a process of editing, revising and correcting was necessary to improve the text. The annotations in sections 3.1 to 3.4 describe some of the changes made to achieve this goal. Deciding when the text was "idiomatic enough" presented difficulties, as repeated readings and revisions sometimes increased rather than reduced my uncertainty about whether my language sense was on the right track or not. Here, having a second pair of eyes read and edit the text would help improve the outcome.

A further text-related difficulty involved the prefatory paragraphs at the beginning of each chapter, supposed excerpts from a technical report on the archaeological excavations. Here, the vocabulary was technical and the writing style stilted. Translating these sections took proportionally longer than translating the main text, as more time was required to understand the meaning of the German text and to look up unknown terms before translating the text into English. Similarly, translating dialogue in a way that sounded natural proved to be time consuming and challenging at times.

Other aspects relating to the source text and the translation are discussed in Chapter 4. The chapter begins with a section providing general observations on how aspects such as orthography, punctuation, text styling, names of places and people, non-German phrases in the source text and register were addressed. The second section focuses specifically on anachronisms, providing a tabular overview of instances where they occur in the source text along with suggested strategies for dealing with them. Finally, the third section deals with questions of writing style, including syntax, sentence splitting or joining, idiomatic expressions and name repetition.

Returning to the guiding question of the research – "How come 'Das Jesus Video' has not been translated into English, and what would need to happen for it to be translated?" – the

finding is that several reasons combine to explain this state of affairs, and that even when all necessary factors for a translation to be commissioned appear to be in place, as was the case with "Das Jesus Video", the book in question may still end up not being translated.

The first thing an English-language publisher would gauge is whether the book has the potential to be commercially successful in translation. Factors such as the author's track record, the book's genre, and its performance in the source language market would be assessed. In this instance, the book in question was written by an award-winning, commercially successful author. It forms part of the popular science fiction and thriller genres, which sell well, and was highly successful in the source language, winning several important literary genre awards, selling a significant number of copies, and being adapted for television.

Further supporting the argument in favour of translation, other books by Eschbach were translated into a wide range of languages, so there seems to be no fundamental obstacle to translation. A few books were even translated into English: for instance, Eschbach's first novel, "Die Haarteppichknüpfer", published 1995 and awarded the Deutsche Science-Fiction-Preis in 1996, was released in English translation as "The Carpet Makers" in 2005, thereby becoming the first of his books to be translated into English (Brusso, 2005).

For this to happen, a highly acclaimed English-language science fiction author, Orson Scott Card, had to bring the book to the attention of Tor Books, a publishing house that specialises in science fiction. "'The Carpet Makers' comes to us through the literary intercession of Orson Scott Card, who met Eschbach during a convention in Europe, brought the book to Tor's attention, and provided the foreword to this edition" (Brusso, 2005). It appears that the support of an influential sponsor was instrumental in helping this novel enter the English-language market. It is worth quoting in full Andreas Eschbach's response to my question about why "Das Jesus Video" wasn't translated into English (translation mine):

> Translations into English represent a special challenge. Compared to other language areas, English is an exclusive club. British and US publishers are used to EXporting [sic] their books, but they are clueless when it comes to IMporting [sic] them – in fact, it almost never happens. The first of my books that managed to crack the US market only did so thanks to vehement support from Orson Scott Card – 'Die Haarteppichknüpfer' – and I'm not exaggerating when I say that it took 3 years for (a) the contracts to be negotiated and (b) for the US publisher to understand that they needed a translator and had to pay him (!).[190]

[190] *„Übersetzungen ins Englische sind so eine Sache. Verglichen mit anderen Sprachräumen ist Englisch ein exklusiver Club. Englische und amerikanische Verlage sind es gewöhnt, ihre Bücher zu EXportieren, aber mit*

On amazon.com, "The Carpet Makers" has an average rating of 4.4 out of 5 stars (66 ratings). Despite receiving such a positive rating, however, perhaps the translation of "Die Haarteppichknüpfer" was not successful enough to enable Eschbach to establish a foothold. It took almost a decade before another two novels of Eschbach's were translated, and neither of them was published by Tor Books. "Lord of All Things", the second Eschbach novel in English translation, was published by Amazon Crossing[191] in January 2014, and is rated at an average of 4.4 out of 5 stars (202 ratings). The third novel in English translation was "One Trillion Dollars", published by Bastei Entertainment in August 2014. It has 19 ratings, at an average of 3.8 out of 5 stars. According to the author, none of the novels were commercially particularly successful in the Anglophone market (Eschbach, 2019), and since then, no further Eschbach novels have been translated into English. Eschbach also speculates that the particularly poor television adaptation of "Das Jesus Video" may have been a further reason why Anglophone publishers could not be persuaded to buy the translation rights for this particular novel.

> With this book, there may be another obstacle: there is an (abysmal) film version – which is available in English. Maybe some publishers saw it and thought, 'Well, with crap like that there really is no point in translating the book'…[192]

Keeping these exogenous factors in mind, the next step is to consider the endogenous factors, in other words, the content of the book itself and whether it is suitable for translation. Two main factors affecting this decision were identified in Chapter 4: the question of anachronisms on the one hand, and stylistic aspects of the text on the other. It was found that in terms of style, there are few barriers to translation, and what obstacles there are, are not insurmountable. In German, the book was written in an accessible, fluent style that is easy to translate into English. There are occasional sections where the author switches to a more lyrical, evocative style, but this can also be transferred into English without great difficulty.

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dem IMport sind sie überhaupt nicht vertraut - tatsächlich kommt das so gut wie nie vor. Das erste meiner Bücher, das es in die USA geschafft hat, verdankt dies der vehementen Fürsprache von Orson Scott Card – ‚Die Haarteppichknüpfer' -, und es dauerte ohne Witz 3 Jahre, bis (a) die Verträge ausgehandelt waren und (b) der amerikanische Verlag kapiert hatte, dass er einen Übersetzer braucht und den auch bezahlen muss (!)." (Eschbach, 2020).

[191] According to the Amazon Crossing website: "Amazon Crossing is the leading publisher of translated books in the US. We publish award-winning and bestselling books from around the globe, making international literature accessible to many readers for the first time. Amazon Crossing invites open submissions from languages around the world for translation into English" (Amazon Publishing, 2019).

[192] *„Vielleicht ist speziell bei diesem Buch auch hinderlich, dass es eine (grottenschlechte) ‚Verfilmung' gibt – und die gibt es auf Englisch. Womöglich hat sich die schon so mancher Verleger angeguckt und gesagt, ‚na, zu so einem Mist brauchen wir nicht auch noch das Buch übersetzen...'"* (Eschbach, 2020).

Regarding the other group of content characteristics, that is the anachronisms, two types were identified: anachronisms of obsolescence, where the characters in the book interact with products and services that are no longer widely used or which have been discontinued altogether, and anachronisms of absence, namely products and technologies that are commonplace nowadays, but had not yet been invented at the time the book was written and are therefore conspicuously absent from the story. Of these two types, the anachronisms of obsolescence are easy to address as most obsolete technologies have been superseded by newer inventions that perform a similar function. For instance, faxes have been supplanted by e-mails, rotary dial phones by cordless or mobile phones, encyclopaedias by online information sites, Usenet by a range of discussion forums, and printed newspapers largely by online news services. The indeterminate contemporary period in which the novel is set can be updated to the present by replacing references to outdated technologies with references to the newer technologies which succeeded them.

Anachronisms of absence are more difficult to address. Because many of the technologies and services introduced since the book was published in 1998 are related to information – its availability, how it is accessed, how it is disseminated and shared –, they potentially have a significant impact on how the story develops. Parts of the story depend on one person knowing something before somebody else does and being able to use this discrepancy to their advantage. The information asymmetry is what feeds and enhances the competition between rivals like John Kaun and Stephen Foxx, adding to the narrative tension. A reduction of the asymmetry, resulting from modern technologies like smartphones, online information and social media, changes the dynamics of the competition and the way the story develops. Updating the book to accommodate these types of changes would require the author's active participation as the changes involved go beyond what translators usually do.

Apart from bringing the text into the present, there is another option, and that is to leave it in the past. In most cases, this would weaken the argument in favour of translation because the book would sound dated for no compelling reason, and the place it occupies in the literary polysystem is not prominent enough to warrant a translation. However, in this case, there is a sequel to the novel – "Der Jesus-Deal", published in 2014 – which provides a strong argument in favour of leaving the first text as is, allowing it to serve as a scene-setter and prequel to the second novel. This strategy is not free of risk either, as persuading a publisher to commission two books for translation is presumably even more difficult than doing the same for one book.

The sequel, "Der Jesus-Deal", is set an unspecified number of years after "Das Jesus Video" (Eschbach, 2014).[193] Several of the characters reappear in leading roles. The second novel fills in the detail that is only hinted at in the first novel: it explains who, how and why a group of people travelled into the past to capture video footage of Jesus of Nazareth. Interestingly, apart from the time machine itself, technology plays far less of a role than in the first book. Mobile phones are mentioned as part of the ubiquitous background, but the focus clearly lies on the characters themselves: their personalities, histories, relationships and motivations. For this reason, the novel gives the impression that it is more timeless and less likely to become dated as quickly as the first one did. There are also no obvious continuity conflicts between the first and the second novel, making a translation of both books a plausible proposition, should it be possible to convince a publisher to pay for it.

Regarding avenues for further research, a number of suggestions can be made. For instance, while the strategy for dealing with anachronisms in the present translation was to transfer them into English unchanged, producing a translation that instead attempts to eliminate, update or avoid the anachronisms could prove instructive. Since three novels by the same author have already been translated into English, comparing those translations with each other and with this part-translation of "Das Jesus Video" might also lead to some worthwhile insights. Similarly, producing a translation or part-translation of the sequel, "Der Jesus-Deal", could help explore the potential for a commercially viable translation of both novels in conjunction. Another option would be to produce a back-translation of this English version of the novel to identify patterns as well as opportunities for improvement. Looking at Eschbach's oeuvre more broadly, a cross-linguistic comparison could be made of one of his novels and the way it is rendered in different languages.

From a commercial perspective, other strategies for getting books translated into English could be investigated; for instance, there may be structured ways of obtaining the type of celebrity sponsorship that helped "The Carpetmakers" get translated, as well as more effective ways of communicating with Anglophone publishers directly to persuade them to go ahead with a translation. The open submissions initiative of Amazon Crossing could also provide an opportunity to create momentum for a translation, for instance if a large number of readers requested that these books be translated. In this way, a resurrection of "Das Jesus Video" for the English-speaking market might yet succeed.

[193] [Sic] – the older title is not hyphenated, the newer one is.

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