

**Reference code:** GB165-0320

**Title:** William Elphinston Collection

**Name of creator:** Elphinston, William Graham (1886-1952) Colonel

**Dates of creation of material:** 1918 - 1952

**Level of description:** Fonds

**Extent:** 1 box

**Biographical history:** Elphinston, William Graham (1886-1952) Colonel

Born 5 June 1886 in Scotland. Professional soldier in Indian army, 30 years service in India. Served in Allenby's Palestine campaign with the Desert Mounted Corps. Posted at Arab Punar in the northern Jazira in 1918/1919 as Assistant Political Officer. Member of the British Military Mission to the Iraqi Army 1925-1928 serving as a Staff Officer for the Ministry of Defence. Served within Middle East Intelligence as Intelligence Officer during the Second World War in Cairo under Brigadier Quilliam. Involved in campaign against Rashid Ali al-Kailani in Iraq and the British occupation of Syria/Lebanon. Connected with Chatham House Research Sector in 1944/1945 proposed economic and statistical survey of the Middle East. Colonel William Graham Elphinston died on 20 Nov 1952, leaving a widow. Further details unknown.

**Scope and content:** Papers mainly relating to Elphinston's role as Assistant Political Officer at Arab Punar 1918–1919 including a memoir and photographs relating to the Berazi Kurds, as well as a TS text of a lecture giving a strategic analysis of cavalry operations in Palestine of 1918; a TS report 'Operations in Kurdistan'; correspondence with the family of Mustafa Shahin 1947-1952 and also with G.W.Bedir-Khay 1947–1948. Also includes a series of lectures given to the Royal Air force (R.A.F.) Intelligence School 1947–1948 relating to British policy and the Middle East.

**System of arrangement:**

1	Memoir and photographs	1919
2	Movement Order	1919
3	Calvary in Palestine 1918	1918
4	Report - Kurdistan	1926
5	Correspondence	1942-1952
6	Lectures and articles – Kurds	1945-1952
7	R.A.F. Intelligence School – Lectures	1947-1948

**Access conditions:** Open

**Language of material:** English, with a small amount of French

**Conditions governing reproduction:** No restrictions on copying or quotation other than statutory regulations and preservation concerns

**Custodial history:** In the possession of Elphinston and family, passed on to Charles Tripp as a friend of the family

**Immediate source of acquisition:** Received from Charles Tripp in January 2000

**Related Units of Description:**

In MEC Archive

For other papers relating to Kurds see:

GB165-0095      Cecil John Edmonds Collection

GB165-0229      St John Philby Collection (see especially 1/3/3/5 Kurdish and Armenian settlements 1919-1920)

**Finding aids:** In Guide; Handlist

**Publication note:**

- Elphinston, W.G. 'The Future of the Bedouin of Northern Arabia', *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 21, No.3 (Jul.,1945), pp.370-375)
- Elphinston, W.G. 'The Kurdish Question', *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol.22, No.1 (Jan., 1946), pp.91-103)
- Elphinston also published several reviews of books in *International Affairs*

**Archivist's note:** Fonds and file and item level description created by Jake Dowse, July 2011 and revised by Debbie Usher 7 Nov 2011. Biographical History based on information provided in the donor correspondence and the file of W.G. Elphinston at Chatham House, as well as a small amount from the Elphinston Collection.

**SERIES AND ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE WILLIAM ELPHINSTON  
COLLECTION**

<b><u>1</u></b>	<b><u>Memoir and Photographs</u></b>	<b><u>1919</u></b>	<b><u>2 files</u></b>
	Account of Elphinston's meeting with Kurdish tribes on the Iraq/Syrian border near Arab Punar entitled 'Some Experiences Among the Berazi Kurds 1919 By Al Musawir', a postscript and photographs		
1/1	<p><u>Memoir</u></p> <p>TS Memoirs with MS annotations entitled 'Some Experiences Among the Berazi Kurds 1919 By Al Musawir' [Elphinston] written in 1936 which covers Elphinston's posting at Arab Punar Railway Station and is divided into the following sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'A Living Passport' visit to Sheikh Mustapha-ibn-Shahin of the Allauddin tribe and his subsequent wedding Including meeting with Basrowi of the Khetkhan Tribe</li> <li>2. 'Diplomacy' Account of relations between Allauddin and Khetkhan tribes, also relating to Turkish officials</li> <li>3. 'Highway Robbery and Sheep Lifting' British conducting arrests of local peoples</li> <li>4. 'Armenian Atrocities'</li> <li>5. 'Sport in Western Kurdistan'</li> </ol> <p>The memoir also includes an attached 'Postscript Twenty-three Years Later', several black and white prints in illustration of text and an attached TS map 'Eastern Turkey in Asia Meskene' including Baghdad Railway compiled by 'Major F.R.Maunsell, R.A'</p> <p>Old Ref: File 'Kurds'</p>	1919-1936	96 sheets 25 prints

1/2	<u>Postscript</u>	c.1942	1 sheet
	TS 'Postscript Twenty-three years later' which is a duplicate of the Memoir postscript but also includes some additional MS alterations Old Ref: File 'Kurds'		
1/3	<u>Photographs</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>9 prints</u>
	Black and white prints from Elphinston's meeting with Kurdish tribes on the Iraq/Syrian border near Arab Punar Physical Condition: Please note that the photographs are stored separately		
1/3/1	Caption 'Basrowi at home (see facing p. 47)'	1919	1 print
	Old Ref: File 'Kurds' - within 'Some Experiences Among the Berazi Kurds 1919 By Al Musawir'		
1/3/2	Caption 'Arab Punar Looking North'	1919	1 print
	Old Ref: File 'Kurds' - within 'Some Experiences Among the Berazi Kurds 1919 By Al Musawir'		
1/3/3	Caption 'A Kurdish Tent (see facing p.7)'	1919	1 print
	Old Ref: File 'Kurds' - within 'Some Experiences Among the Berazi Kurds 1919 By Al Musawir'		
1/3/4	[Kurdish?] man and animals	1919	1 print
	Old Ref: File 'Kurds' - within 'Some Experiences Among the Berazi Kurds 1919 By Al Musawir'		
1/3/5	3 [Kurdish?] men and a [British?] man	1919	1 print
	Old Ref: File 'Kurds' - within 'Some Experiences Among the Berazi Kurds 1919 By Al Musawir'		
1/3/6	Black and White print of 4 [Kurdish?] men, including camels	1919	1 print
	Old Ref: File 'Kurds' - within 'Some Experiences Among the Berazi Kurds 1919 By Al Musawir'		
1/3/7	2 [British?] men on horseback and 2 [Kurdish?] men including 2 large stone statue remains	1919	1 print
	Old Ref: File 'Kurds' - within 'Some Experiences Among the Berazi Kurds 1919 By Al Musawir'		

1/3/8	2 men [Kurdish?] one on horseback Old Ref: File 'Kurds' - within 'Some Experiences Among the Berazi Kurds 1919 By Al Musawir'	1919	1 print
1/3/9	Child and man [Kurdish?] Old Ref: File 'Kurds' - within 'Some Experiences Among the Berazi Kurds 1919 By Al Musawir'	1919	1 print
<b><u>2</u></b>	<b><u>Movement Order</u></b>	<b><u>1919</u></b>	<b><u>2 sheets</u></b>
2/1	<u>Movement Order</u> Printed 'Movement Order Palestine Military Railway' form covering the railway passage of 1 officer, 8 'O.R.' [possibly Officer's Regiment] and 11 horses from Aleppo to Arab Punar Old Ref: File 'Kurds'	20 Jul 1919	1 sheet
2/2	<u>Map</u> MS map comprises of section of Syria around River Euphrates and Baghdad railway, includes Jerablus and Arab Punar Old Ref: File 'Kurds'	c1919	1 sheet
<b><u>3</u></b>	<b><u>Calvary in Palestine 1918</u></b>	<b><u>1923</u></b>	<b><u>15 sheets</u></b>
3/1	<u>Lecture</u> TS text of lecture entitled 'The Influence of Cavalry on the Operations in Palestine – March to November 1918' giving a narrative account of General Allenby's campaign against Liman Von Saunders with additional conclusion on the subject of the future of the cavalry, and 'tanks' with MS annotations	c1923	14 sheets
3/2	<u>Map</u> MS Coloured map titled 'Lines of Communications October 1918' outline of British communications from Port Said to Aleppo and Turkish communications from Constantinople to Jerablus	1918 30 Sep 1923	1 sheet

<b><u>4</u></b>	<b><u>Report Kurdistan</u></b>	<b><u>26 Nov 1927</u></b>	<b><u>10 sheets</u></b>
	TS Report entitled 'Operations in Kurdistan 1926' by [?W.G. Elphinston] with additional MS notes Old Ref: File 'Kurds'		
<b><u>5</u></b>	<b><u>Correspondence</u></b>	<b><u>1942 - 1952</u></b>	<b><u>11 sheets</u></b>
	Personal correspondence with G.W.Bedir-Khay and Mustapha Shahin		
<b><u>5/1</u></b>	<b><u>G.W.Bedir-Khay</u></b>	<b><u>1947-1948</u></b>	<b><u>5 sheets</u></b>
5/1/1	MS letter from G.W.Bedir-Khay, Damaskus addressed to 'Dear Sir and Friend' [Elphinston] thanking him for support of his case and requesting a copy of his article in International Affairs [The Kurdish Question by W.G.Elphinston International Affairs vol 22 no 1 Jan 1946] Old Ref: File 'Kurds'	12 April ? 1947	1 sheet
5/1/2	MS letter from G.W.Bedir-Khay, Damascus to 'Dear Sir and Friend' [Elphinston] offering his support in providing 'any materials' that Elphinston might need in preparing a lecture on the Kurdish question to the Central Asian Society as well as giving his views on the different situation of Kurds in Turkey and Syria Old Ref: File 'Kurds'	9 August ? 1947	2 sheets
5/1/3	MS letter from G.W.Bedir-Khay, Damascus addressed to 'Dear Sir and Friend' [Elphinston] commenting with praise on a lecture by Elphinston and asking for a reference for an application to employment Old Ref: File 'Kurds'	2 June 1948	1 sheet
5/1/4	MS letter from G.W.Bedir-Khay, Damascus addressed to 'Dear Sir and Friend' [Elphinston] thanking him for the sent testimonial and account of meeting with Mr Shotter	6 July 1948	1 sheet

Old Ref: File 'Kurds'

<u>5/2</u>	<u>Mustapha Shahin</u>	<u>1947-1952</u>	<u>6 sheets</u>
5/2/1	TS letter from R.Howe, Foreign Office to Elphinston dated 19 <sup>th</sup> March, 1947 relating to permission for 'visit to the Kurdish tribes on the Syrian-Turkish frontier' also returning attached letter from Mustapha Shahine. MS letter from Mustapha Shahine to Elphinston relates to Syrian liberation and thanking Elphinston, also includes invitation to visit Old Ref: File 'Kurds'	9 Jan 1947 19 Mar 1947	2 sheets
5/2/2	MS letter from Mustafa Shahine to Elphinston relates to thanks for visit, plans to visit London with reference to doctors Old Ref: File 'Kurds'	16 Jan 1952	2 sheets
5/2/3	MS letter from [?Faridun] Shahine [son of Mustapha] to Elphinston relates to planned visit to London, father's illness and request for Elphinston's help Old Ref: File 'Kurds'	16 Jan 1952	1 sheet
5/2/4	Telegram informing Elphinston of Mustapha's arrival at London airport Old Ref: File 'Kurds'	23 Mar 1952	1 sheet
<b><u>6</u></b>	<b><u>Lecture and Articles</u></b>	<b><u>1945-1952</u></b>	<b><u>64 sheets</u></b>
	Various accounts and analysis in relation to the Kurdish people		
6/1	<u>Lecture</u> TS text of lecture entitled 'Shaikh Mahmud of Kurdistan' account of Shaikh Mahmood from May 1918 to March 1931 Old Ref: File 'Kurds'	Before 1947	18 sheets
6/2	<u>Lecture</u>	c1946	16 sheets

	TS text of lecture entitled 'The Kurds' by W.G.Elphinston with additional TS document of instruction with MS notes Old Ref: File 'Kurds'		
6/3	<u>Lecture</u>	c1947	18 sheets
	TS text of lecture entitled 'The Kurds and their Problem' with MS notes Old Ref: File 'Kurds'		
6/4	<u>Article</u>	[Jan 1952]	4 sheets
	TS off print article 'In Memoriam The Emir Jeladet Aali Bedr Khan The Passing of a Kurdish Prince' includes passage by Kamuran Aali Bedr Khan [Language: French] and also passage by W.G.Elphinston from The Journal of the Royal Asian Society vol 39, Issue 1, Jan 1952 Old Ref: File 'Kurds'		
6/5	<u>Article</u>	July 1945	8 sheets
	TS article 'The Kurdish Question' By W.G.Elphinston published in [International Affairs vol 22 no 1 Jan 1946] on Kurdish Nationalism including TS map also [see Elphinston 5/1/1] Old Ref: File 'Kurds'		
<b><u>7</u></b>	<b><u>R.A.F. Intelligence School Lectures</u></b>	<b><u>1947-1948</u></b>	<b><u>50 sheets</u></b>
	TS text of lectures given by Elphinston in relation to British military and diplomatic policy and the Middle East Old Ref: 'R.A.F. Intelligence School: Britain and the Middle East'		
7/1	<u>Letter</u>	1947-1948	8 sheets
	TS Letter from Wing Commander F.K. Kennedy to Colonel W.G. Elphinston dated 12 Feb 1948 inviting him to lecture and enclosing a TS 'revised edition' of Elphinston's lecture 'R.A.F Station Highgate Lecture		

- The Middle East. Britain and the Middle East' dated  
24 Oct 1947 with MS notes
- 7/2      Review      c1947      17 sheets  
TS titled 'A Brief Review of Events in Iraq, Syria  
and the Lebanon 1918-1943'
- 7/3      Lecture      c1947      9 sheets  
TS titled 'Lecture on Military Tactics' with MS  
annotations and corrections
- 7/4      Lecture      c1947      7 sheets  
TS lecture script 'R.A.F Station Highgate The  
Middle East Do present conditions demand a  
reorientation of British Commonwealth policy?' with  
MS annotations and corrections dated 24 Oct 1947  
Lecture covers Indian independence, Soviet policy,  
Oil, Suez Canal, and Anglo-American relations
- 7/5      Lecture      c1947      9 sheets  
TS lecture 'R.A.F Station Highgate Lecture "The  
Middle East (2)"' giving an assessment of British  
foreign policy within the Middle East  
Also includes MS annotations and corrections  
Attached to envelop binding