Henriette Antonia Groenewegen was born on December 17, 1896 in Leyden, the Netherlands. She was the second youngest of six children. Her father, Hermanus Ysbrand Groenewegen, was a minister in the Remonstrantse Broederschap, a branch of the Dutch Reformation, which distinguishes itself from Lutheran hard-liners by its liberal attitudes.1 When Jettie, as Henriette was called by her family and friends, was six years old, her father became professor for practical theology, history of the Remonstrantse Broederschap, and philosophy of religion at the seminary of the Remonstrantse Broederschap in Leyden. He was an important figure in this circle, and famous as orator. Over time the focus of his work seems to have shifted more and more toward philosophy. In 1916, when Jettie was twenty years of age, he became professor for philosophy of religion and philosophical ethics in the theological faculty of the University of Amsterdam, for which he had to give up his leadership at the seminary.

Jettie thus grew up in a liberal and intellectual milieu, and received a good general education. Perhaps inspired by her father's work, she pursued studies in Greek and Chinese philosophy at the University of Amsterdam. Although women had been admitted to universities in Holland since 1890, it was still unusual for a young woman in the second decade of our century to pursue academic studies, especially philosophy. Most professions then were taught by apprenticeship, institutions of higher education in general were restricted to those who could afford it, and the middle and upper class woman's common occupation was that of mother and housewife.

At the university, Jettie met her future husband, Henri Frankfort. One year her junior, he studied several disciplines including history, ethnology, as well as Chinese religion. They
were engaged in May, 1920, and worked together for their exams in the Groenewegens' country house in Huis ter Heide.

Frankfort, from a merchant family of the more emancipated wing of Amsterdam's Jewish society, was most cordially received by the Groenewegens, and was accepted as the fiancé of their daughter, despite his future being entirely uncertain at this time. As the eldest son in his family, he was originally destined to succeed his father in the family business. Accordingly, he had been sent to the Hogere Burger School (a commercial high school), rather than to the traditional humanities-oriented Barlaeus Gymnasium (a Latin high school). However, encouraged and supported by three friends from the Barlaeus Gymnasium, who had recognized his brilliance and wide reading and had pleaded with his father to let him pursue academic studies, he had given up his intended career, and had gone to the university instead. The change of his career, as well as the circumstances of his engagement to Jettie, were quite unconventional for the time and confirm the liberal spirit which prevailed in both the Groenewegen and Frankfort families.2

To one of his friends, Hans, as Henri Frankfort was called by his friends, described the state to which his engagement to Jettie promoted him as follows:

"It is a miracle, a great miracle how everything has changed in the last two months. I assure you that I feel like a new person in the world around me. My self-confidence, my strength, my determination to do good, have all grown to an extent that I never felt possible, and they are still growing. I feel a more complete human being and my previous life, which was neither empty nor poor, now seems unhappy, miserable and worthless. It is as if all the various forces in me, all inclination and all striving have at last found a focus on which to converge, or should one say a common base from which to diverge. It is a miracle, a real miracle, because it makes me not only a completer but also a better human being. (...) The great thing is that everything good in me has been infinitely strengthened while everything weak or puny has shrunk. Of course there is more that is great: assurance and confidence, not to mention all the beauty that I cannot now describe."3

It seems that there was an attraction on both sides for the other's intellect, and that they were mates on that level, engaging in learned debates from the very beginning. In addition, they shared an interest in ancient and exotic cultures, as well as contemporary
art and literature. Their union proved to be most creative and fruitful for ancient Near Eastern studies.

Both Jettie and Hans received their M.A. degrees in July, 1921; Jettie in philosophy and Hans in Netherlands Language and Literature (which included history). Motivated by the writings of the British pioneer Egyptologist Flinders Petrie, Hans left in October of that same year for London to study under him at the University College. Jettie was to follow her fiancé and work, at least initially, for a Dutch professor copying documents in the British Museum. For a while she also taught French at a girl's school on the South Coast. In 1922, Frankfort was considered for the position of Assistant in the British Museum's Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities. His appointment, however, fell through, because he was not prepared to give up his Dutch citizenship. Thereupont Petrie made him a member of the British School of Archaeology in Egypt and took him to excavate in Qau el-Kebir. Upon his return in 1923, he completed his second M.A. On December 31st of that year, Jettie and Hans were married.

As the archaeological career of her husband began to take shape, Jettie, too, entered the world of ancient Near Eastern civilizations. From the very beginning she was a "constant and faithful collaborator" to her husband in his research. The Frankforts spent most of 1924 and 1925 in Athens, where he was a member of the British School of Archaeology, and worked on his second book, which earned him a Ph.D. For the next 13 years they worked together on excavations in the Near East up to six months every year. From 1925 to 1929, Frankfort directed the excavations of the Egypt Exploration Society at el-Amarna, Abydos, and Armant, and from 1929 to 1937 he was the field director of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago's Iraq Expedition, which excavated four sites in the Diyala River Basin as well as the Assyrian city of Khorsabad. During this time, Jettie acquired an intimate, first-hand knowledge of ancient Aegean, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian art and civilizations.

Jettie took an active part in the organization of the excavations under her husband's directorship. On his first encounter with her at Tell el-Amarna in 1929, the British archaeologist Seton Lloyd remembers: "As for his wife 'Jettie', her literary gifts in no way impaired her ability as camp manager. The smooth flow of her colloquial Arabic suggested a longer familiarity with Egypt than was actually the case and we profited from her housekeeping". In October 1931 when Frankfort was impeded from starting the excavation season in Iraq due to illness, she stepped in, led the business for him, and
started the expedition on time, while he joined it six weeks later, after his recovery. It is
perhaps not surprising that Frankfort was unwilling to allow spouses of expedition
members in Iraq, unless they participated in the work. Rigmor, the wife of young
Thorkild Jacobsen, who was the expedition's epigrapher, had taken a course in
photography before joining the expedition, and became its excellent photographer.\textsuperscript{7}
Similarly, Lloyd's wife Joan took a course in bookbinding to take charge of the camp
library.\textsuperscript{8}

Fig. 2: H. A. Frankfort-Groenewegen at work in the "Antique Room" at Tell Asmar
during the 1933/34 season, with Rachel Levy standing in the background.

Jettie's functions in the field were not limited to the organization, but also included
excavating especially delicate finds, cleaning them, and preparing them for conservation.
Lloyd describes her in action in Tell el-Amarna: "On Tuesday there was a great thrill
over a complete, complex necklace, which had been wrapped in linen and hidden under a
hearthstone. The string having perished, Mrs. Frankfort spent the whole afternoon on her
tummy in the trench, \textit{blowing} sand away from round it and collecting the loose beads."\textsuperscript{9}
On an illustration in the same account (fig. 2), we see her cleaning the now famous
Sumerian sculpture found at Tell Asmar. Also Mary Chubb, the expedition's secretary,
remembered her doing "incredibly skillful work on the dig, in salvaging and restoring
fragile objects."\textsuperscript{10}

As a member of the Iraq Expedition, Jettie was at the heart of some of the most
exceptional discoveries which were to shape the field of Mesopotamian studies in the
20th century, and put our knowledge of early Mesopotamia on a firm footing. With the
generous financial support of John D. Rockefeller, the Oriental Institute of Chicago was
conducting large-scale excavations in a then little explored area at the northern end of
Southern Mesopotamia, and had enlisted for it an exceptionally gifted international team
of young scholars. The Diyala excavations were permeated with a wonderfully inspiring
\textit{pioniergeist}.\textsuperscript{11} As Jacobsen put it: "It was this sense of pioneering, of venturing into a
great unknown past and finding out about it, of excitement and responsibility, that made
the 30s unique."\textsuperscript{12} Systematic and well organized excavation techniques produced a
stratified architectural sequence, corroborated on different sites in the same area, which
permitted to propose a chronological framework for early Mesopotamian art. For the first
time, tablets were recorded with their find spots, which enabled Jacobsen to reconstruct
the sequence of local rulers. The large number of stratified cylinder seals allowed
Frankfort to draw a stylistic development of this category of objects, which spans the entire period of Mesopotamian art, but had until then hardly been classified, since most pieces had come either from unstratified excavations or from the art market. The Diyala excavations also produced a large amount of Sumerian sculpture, known previously only from a handful of exemplars. The novelty of all these finds together with the zeitgeist may explain why a wide general audience took an interest in these excavations, as is shown in the attention they received, for example, in the Illustrated London News.\textsuperscript{13}

In Europe, the Frankforts kept residence in England. Until 1938 they lived in London's Hampstead, which was at that time a stronghold of British avant-garde artists, poets, critics, and intellectuals. The Frankforts were accepted in these circles as foreign intellectuals, and actively participated in discussions of contemporary developments in art, philosophy, etc. They were acquainted with leading artists such as Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson, and read the works of T. S. Eliot and Dylan Thomas as they appeared.\textsuperscript{14} Following the developments on the Continent, the second decade of the 20th century marked the break-up of the traditional art forms in England, and the British avant-garde on search for new terms in a new world was certainly aware of the events of the time. Hand in hand with scientific discoveries about the atom, the universe, the theory of relativity, Freud's psycho-analysis, Russian structuralism and the Prague School, new terms in the arts manifested themselves in Cubism, Dada, Surrealism, the Bauhaus design and architecture, Russian Suprematism and Constructivism, the ballet of Diaghilev, the music of Schönberg and Stavinsky. Turning one's back on ideals which had prevailed since the Renaissance, a new interest grew in African art, but also in early Aegean and ancient Near Eastern art, with the recent discoveries in these areas. Jettie and her husband had an active part in these discoveries, and at the same time participated in the avant-garde exchange of thought, which is the exception rather than the norm among students of ancient civilizations.

On September 30th, 1929, Jettie gave birth to a son, Jon, who was taken to the digs as soon as he was three years of age. The Iraq Expedition came to a halt in 1937 due to the Depression. Frankfort, who had been appointed Research Professor at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago in 1932, accepted teaching duties for six months a year, starting in 1938. The winter months in the Near East were going to be replaced by teaching in the United States, and the summers were planned for work on various publications in Europe, and to spend time with their son, who by then was attending boarding school. For this purpose the Frankforts bought an idyllic countryside house
overlooking the sea in Kimmeridge near Corfe Castle, Dorset. In this remote place, and with her husband not driving a car, Jettie was the one maintaining "a liason with the outside world."\textsuperscript{15}

While Jettie accompanied her husband to Chicago in the winter 1938/39, she refused to leave Europe in 1939, after the Second War had broken out, as she wanted to make herself useful in the fight against Hitler's Germany. She joined the Red Cross, for whom she was debriefing escaped Dutch citizens. In early 1941, however, after an adventurous journey via Iceland, the Panama Canal, and California, she rejoined her husband in Chicago. During the remaining war years their son was sent to boarding school in Canada (Stanstead College, Quebec), and the summers were spent together on the ranch of Rachel Levy's brother in British Columbia near New Denver.

As intellectuals grown up and educated in Europe, the Frankforts did not easily adjust to American lifestyle or academia.\textsuperscript{16} When Hans was offered the directorship of the Warburg Institute, together with a professorship at the University of London in 1948, he gladly accepted, and the family moved permanently back to England. For her husband's new obligations a flat was taken in London. Jettie, however, preferred her country retreat in Kimmeridge over the city flat, and spent only a minimum amount of time in London. At her countryside house, she maintained an animated social life, receiving guests nearly every weekend, with whom she would spend long evenings in heated but amicable discussions. The surviving colleagues from her Chicago years had all been invited there, and remember her excellent hospitality.

Unfortunately, Jettie's rare presence in London, together with her critical, analytical mind and her ambitions causing her to push her husband in his work, seem to have contributed to the breaking up of her marriage. Jettie and Hans were divorced in 1952, and Hans remarried Enriqueta Harris, an art historian specializing in Spanish art. Nevertheless, they continued to collaborate professionally until Frankfort's premature death in 1954.

The years starting with her husband's teaching appointment at the Oriental Institute until his death saw the publication of no less than eight monographs by Henri Frankfort and one by Henriette Groenewegen-Frankfort, all of which have become classics in the field, in addition to a collaboration by the two.
In her monograph, entitled *Arrest and Movement: An Essay on Space and Time in the Representational Art of the Ancient Near East*, Jettie set herself the task to investigate the formal aspects of the representation of space and time in pre-Greek, i.e. Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Cretan art. The book developed "out of a desire to account for the eccentricities of spatial rendering in Near Eastern works of art" which differs considerably from our own, and for which the traditional explanations seemed unsatisfactory. She observed that the idiosyncrasies of spatial rendering vary in different regions of the ancient Near East, and ventured to discover their respective significance or implications beyond mere form, i.e. in cultural rather than aesthetic terms. Her study led her to conclude that the varieties of "non-functional rendering" are correlated to the implicit meaning of the represented. As a by-product, the problem of monumentality, understood as the tension between the ephemeral, concrete event and its lasting, transcendent significance, became a leitmotiv.

Although the approach of this study is to some degree shared with the German structuralism represented by Krahmer, Matz, Kaschnitz von Weinberg, and Schweitzer, which aimed at replacing the concept of style with that of spacial structure and linking the latter to cultural identity, the author thought the problems through in her own right. The book is full of sensitive observations and valuable insights, bringing vividly to life a many works of Ancient Near Eastern art. For example, she radically improved our understanding of the so-called scenes of daily life in Egyptian tomb paintings of the Old Kingdom by interpreting them as the deceased watching life's manifestations, rather than as a survey of the deceased's activities in life, and by revealing their conceptual character as pictographs rather than narrative images of transient events. Or, in the case of the Naramsin Stela, she grasped in one paragraph the essence of this extraordinary monument: the splendid isolation of the king, who "is not only the symbolic and decorative but also the actual dramtic center of the whole composition ... This victory ... was a solitary achievement."

*Arrest and Movement* is methodologically founded, always sets out from the works themselves, and includes a precious introduction in which the author clarifies her premises and explains the terms she uses and the concepts lying behind them, a feature which has been notoriously absent in art historical studies concerning the ancient Near East (and especially Mesopotamia) until recently. In addition, it is written in a clear and witty language which makes the reading fluid and truly enjoyable. Neither the points of fact which need updating today nor her use of some terms which might be considered
subjectively evaluative or culturally biased by a reader of the late twentieth century can diminish the value and beauty of this monograph. It received widespread attention upon its first appearance, was reprinted twice, and continues to be cited for its contribution to the study of pre-Greek art.\textsuperscript{20} It is noteworthy that this early attempt of analyzing ancient Near Eastern art with the tools of the art-historical discipline, and of appreciating it in its own rights as art remained virtually unique for thirty years.\textsuperscript{21}

A few years earlier, Jettie had suggested an equally novel subject for a carefully coordinated series of public lectures at the University of Chicago, which resulted in the well-known and not yet superseded book entitled \textit{The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East}. Her training in philosophy must have inspired this investigation. Three leading authorities in their respective fields contributed the chapters on Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Hebrews, while Jettie and her husband co-authored the introduction and the conclusion.

In the highly stimulating introduction, entitled \textit{Myth and Reality}, the Frankforts offered an insightful perspective on primitive thought, indebted to Ernst Cassirer's \textit{Philosophie der symbolischen Formen}.\textsuperscript{22} Presuming that, like in modern primitive societies, the ancients conceived man always as part of society, and society embedded in nature and dependent on cosmic forces, the authors postulated that the phenomenal world for them was animate, a "Thou," not an "It," as it is to us. The ancient Near Eastern mind made no distinction between appearance and reality, nor between subjective and objective knowledge. It looked for the who, not the why, when it looked for a cause. Similarly, its conception of space and time is qualitative and concrete rather than quantitative and abstract. In this world view, myth is not mere fantasy, but perpetuates the revelation of a "Thou." The imagery of myth is not allegory, but a carefully chosen cloak for abstract thought, revealing a metaphysical truth, and imparting speculative thought. This is what the authors called "mythopoeic thought." After the surveys of the ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Hebrew conceptions of the universe, the function of the state, and the values of life from this perspective, the Frankforts traced the "emancipation of thought from myth" through early Greek philosophy.

Like \textit{Arrest and Movement}, this book was a success, and had a lasting effect.\textsuperscript{23} It was repeatedly reprinted, - the second edition appeared under the title \textit{Before Philosophy} only three years after the first -, and was translated into several other European languages (see bibliography). As the first attempt of analyzing and classifying pre-Greek thought, this
contribution was certainly thought-provoking, and that was perhaps its greatest merit. It has to be understood as a reaction against the prevalent views of the time when it was conceived. History, philosophy, and logic started with the Greeks. The pre-Greek world as well as modern primitive societies were evaluated and judged strictly from the point of view of Western thought, which evolved from Greek philosophy, and consequently often dismissed as animalistic or personalistic. The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man, like some tendencies in contemporary anthropology, made an effort to understand and analyze a world-view foreign to Western thought, and, perhaps, over-stressed the otherness.24

In addition to her own book and co-authorship, Jettie had no little part in the publications of her husband. Her son recalls fervent disputes of his parents over them, and confirms that Jettie read and discussed with Hans every manuscript he wrote, including his lectures. Mary Chubb remembered:

"Her wide reading and deep thinking gave him at once a stimulus and a testing ground for his own inspiration, when the evidence of the fieldwork, both here (Iraq) and all over the Near East, set his brilliant mind afire with new ideas about the ancient civilization which was his preoccupation - its art, its thought, its religion. Like a smith, he brought these ideas, molten-glowing and still pliant, to the cool anvil of her judgment. And there, between hammer and anvil, sparks flying, the newly created thing took shape, always well-wrought, always of high worth, later on perhaps to take outward from as a new book which would be an event in the world of archaeology. Temperamentally they were worlds apart. Paradoxically, they seemed to me the most strongly distinct personalities that I had ever known, and, at the same time, so perfectly attuned that nobody ever thought of either without the other."25

Frankfort himself acknowledged having greatly profited from discussions with his wife when writing his interpretation of ancient Egyptian Religion.26 His own well-known works need not be discussed here; suffice to say that each one of them is unique and unrivaled in its approach and profusion of ideas.27

After her divorce, Jettie lived a reclusive life in Kimmeridge until her death in 1982. Being a proud woman with a well developed sense of right and wrong, she felt herself disgraced by Frankfort's second marriage, and broke contact with former friends and colleagues who had accepted it. Cutting herself off from the sources she needed for her own work, perhaps together with Frankfort's premature death, apparently inhibited her
from continuing her research in the ancient Near East. She co-authored but one more book, a survey of the art of the ancient world aimed at an educated lay audience, in which she contributed the chapters on Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Crete and Mycenae (see bibliography). Once more she was successful in bringing alive a representative selection of works of art of these civilizations, and skillfully weaving in an adequate amount of background information concerning history, society, or religion. Another, more challenging project she had, however, a project on "monsters," i.e. *Mischwesen* in ancient Near Eastern and early Aegean art, did not progress without libraries and colleagues beyond the introduction, which she repeatedly rewrote before giving up. This topic had to await another thirty some years to become a *Festschrift* title for a prominent Near Eastern art historian sixteen years her junior, the late Edith Porada. 

There is no doubt that the divorce from Hans destroyed Jettie. Perhaps as a consequence of the deprivation from the stimulating discussions she used to lead with her husband and her colleagues, she apparently also lost the willpower necessary for creative work. The only two former colleagues she continued to correspond and communicate with were, perhaps not accidentally, two women: Rachel Levy, with whom she had been digging in Iraq, and Helene Kantor, who had been Frankfort's student in Chicago. Helene visited Jettie regularly on her trips to Europe, and introduced her excavation assistants to her. For them Jettie would revive the memories of the famous expeditions she took part in. They remember her as a charming elderly lady, poet and philosopher.

Aside from her own publications and the collaboration in her husband's publications, Jettie merits our acknowledgment for having provided ideal conditions for her brilliant husband to prosper in his career by accompanying him on his many expeditions, which she helped keep going, by encouraging and stimulating his work, as well as by organizing the everyday routines. The latter was perhaps more of a burden to her than her talent in it would make us believe, as Mary Chubb remembered: "In a way, her practical bent was a misfortune from her point of view, because all her inclination was towards the realm of the intellect, so that life in camp for her was a perpetual struggle to get through the necessary chores in order to have time for her main concern ... Hans was fiercely in sympathy with her over this problem, for with him, too, the things of the mind came first."

Henriette Groenewegen-Frankfort never held a position, and published comparatively little under her name. Yet, what she left us directly and indirectly is a remarkable and
precious legacy for ancient Near Eastern studies. The more is it deplorable that circumstances in her personal life cut short the creativity of this gifted woman in her prime.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

       Second Edition:  
       Translations:  
1954   Frühlicht des Geistes: Wandlungen des Weltbildes im alten Orient. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer  
1958   El pensamiento prefilosofico. Mexico: Fonds de Cultura  
1963   La filosofia prima dei Greci: concezioni del mondo in Mesopotamia, nell" antico Egitto e presso gli Ebrei. Torino: Einaudi  
1967   Hebrew: Tel-Aviv: Yahdav.


NOTES

1 The information concerning Hermanus Ysbrand Groenewegen was kindly provided to me by Theo J. H. Krispijn, Rijks Universiteit Leiden.

2 In the same vein, Frankfort circumvented the usual procedure of having his parents speak to the parents of his would-be-bride on his behalf, but went himself directly to professor Groenewegen about the engagement, even before he had informed his parents of his intentions; see van Loon (supra n. 1) 18.

3 Van Loon (supra n. 1) 17.

4 In his first book, *Studies in Early Pottery of the Near East* (London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1924), which was completed in December 1923, Frankfort already acknowledged the "invaluable help of a constant and faithful collaborator, my wife."


8 Lloyd (supra n. 7) 41.

9 Lloyd (supra n. 7) 20.


11 See Chubb (supra n. 12); Lloyd (supra n. 7) 35-56; idem, "Excavating the Land Between the Two Rivers" in: Jack M. Sasson (ed.) *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. IV. New York: Charles Scribners's Sons, 1995: 2730-2741; Jacobsen (supra n. 8) 2745-2747.

12 Jacobsen (supra n. 8) 2747.

13 See the bibliography in *JNES* 14 (1955) 6-8.

Van Loon (supra n. 1) 56.

See van Loon (supra n.1) 58f., 61f.


Note the appropriate word "essay" in the sub-title; for a different opinion difficult to accept, see the review by Ricardo Caminos in JEA 38 (1952) 134.

For lists of reviews see the Annual Egyptological Bibliography Indexes 1947-56 (1960) 147, and 1972 (1976) 76.


Especially, Philosophie der symbolischen Formen II: Das mythische Denken. Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1925.

For contemporary reviews, see AJA 50 (1946) 490-491 (W. F. Albright); Commentary 4,6 (1947) 595-597 (T. H. Gaster); Antiquity 21 (1947) 116-121 (M. E. L. Mallowan); JNES 7 (1948) 123-124 (T. J. Meek); Antiquity 24 (1950) 156-158 (V. G. Childe).


Chubb (supra n. 12) 71-72.

Ancient Egyptian Religion: An Interpretation. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961: ix: "We have ... reduced critical marks to a minimum. But one general acknowledgement must be made here. This work was written while Mrs. H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort was engaged upon
her book, *Space and Time in the Representational Art of the Ancient Near East*. Many problems were a matter of concern to both of us, and I have profited from our discussions in more ways than I can specify." And ibid., 122-123 he quotes a long paragraph from *Arrest and Movement*.

27 For a bibliography, see *JNES* 14 (1955) 3-13; for an appreciation, see ibid., 1-3; *AfO* 17 (1954-56) 230-31; and Paolo Matthiae's introduction to Henri Frankfort, *Il dio che muore: Mito e cultura nel mondo preclassico*. Scandicci: Nuova Editrice, 1992: vii-xxi.


30 Chubb (supra n. 12) 71.