WHAT INFLUENCE DID BRITISH WOMEN ARABISTS HAVE ON THE ANGLO-ARAB RELATIONSHIP IN THE MIDDLE EAST (1914-45)?

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ABSTRACT

My meeting in Kuwait, in 1984, with 88-year-old Dame Violet Dickson, *Umm Kuwait,* began a quest to expand my world-view of the region that would be my home for forty years. My research led to the discovery of a network of British women who had travelled through, lived, worked and even died in the Middle East in the nineteenth- and early twentieth- centuries. I was intrigued by the roles played by such women in a time when imperial Britain, a former trade partner of the Ottomans, had increased its political influence in the region after WW1. Post-colonial discourse today describes the period as imperial 'colonisation', 'occupation' and 'invasion' with the narrative focussing upon the male British key-players (administrators, politicians and military personnel) being opposed by Arab nationalists. This thesis will argue that the women under consideration were not part of the 'imperial machine' and their influence, within their given circumstances, was directed towards supporting Arab self-determination and survival.

It will show that their personal identities, albeit individual, were the hybrids of imperial, national, gender and cultural identities. These evolved through independent travel and cross-cultural communication, into an alternative British persona (one which has been overlooked by the current academic scholarship). To consider each woman separately is to exceptionalise and easily dismiss her as an anomaly, therefore this thesis has created a collective of British women Arabists to demonstrate that, although they were not the norm, they were representatives of the extraordinary women of their space and time and must be included without bias in the 'colonial' discourse. This thesis will demonstrate that women Arabists acted through the ideals of liberalism and in their official positions in support of the self-determination and well-being of the Arab people.

Their humanism has left positive legacies remembered today in the Middle East and yet their histories are absent in the current summary of British imperialism in the region. Thus this thesis opens a new discussion for British anti-imperialists existing in the Middle East during that period.

The four Case Studies cover the period from the decline of the Sultanate of the Ottoman Empire, the rise of the Ottoman Committee for Union & Progress, World War 1, interwar years and World War 2. This thesis builds on extensive research, using Western and Arab academic, primary and secondary sources. The focus is upon the evolution, work, international thought and influence of Gertrude Lowthian Bell CBE (Case Study 1), Dame Violet Dickson (Case Study 2), Dame Freya Stark (Case Study 3) and Doreen Ingrams (Case Study 4) in the Middle East.

DECLARATIONS AND STATEMENTS

I declare that this work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any degree. This thesis is the result of my own investigations. I agree that the metadata and abstract can be made available in the University repository to outside organisations. The University's ethical procedure has been followed.

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CONTENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- His Majesty's Government — H.M.G.
- World War 1 — WW1
- World War 2 — WW2
- Turkish Petroleum Company j — T.P.C.
- Anglo-Persian Oil Company — A.P.O.C.
- Committee for Union & Progress — C.U.P.
- Kuwait Oil Company — K.O.C.
- Ministry of Information — M.O.I.
- Royal Geographical Society — R.G.S.
- American University of Beirut — A.U.B.
- English East India Company — E.E.I.C
- Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding — C.A.A.B.U.
- "Peace Be Upon Him" — P.B.U.H.
- Royal Air Force — R.A.F.

INTRODUCTION

In *Women's International Thought: A New History* Patricia Owens and Katharina Rietzler cite Linda K. Kerber's 1970 conclusion:

> 'when women are absent from the narrative history of ideas, it is not because they are truly absent, but because the historian did not seek energetically enough to find them'.[1]

International thought is 'defined broadly as [documented] reflection on the relations between peoples, empires and states'.[2] Owens, Rietzler and Others' editorial of the 2022 canon of *Women's International Thought* emphasises the omission from present world historiography of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women's important contributions to the creation of national and international political and social structure. This thesis aims to rectify the omission by exploring the wealth of knowledge acquired by British women through solo travel, residency and work in the Middle East, and how it influenced their contributions to the Anglo-Arab relationship during war and interwar years.[3] Defined as 'white' and 'elite' by Owen and Rietzler, their accounts written in situ in the Middle East and in real-time are valuable documents worthy of analysis, as conveying the world-view of intelligent women who were removed from their familiar 'Western' backgrounds to observe and participate in a rich and different culture: outsiders who sought to understand and immerse themselves into 'Arabia'.

This thesis will build upon ideas developed in recent years by Arab women academics who have adapted international concepts in their drive to create the historiography of their own regions. It will show that the contributions of each woman chosen as the subject of a Case Study has been acknowledged to have contributed to the historiography of her region(s) of residency in the Middle East and that, collectively, they should claim their rightful place as agents in shaping the history of the Anglo-Arab relationship.[4]

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[1] Linda K. Kerber, cited in *Women's International Thought: A New History*, ed. by Patricia Owens & Katharina Rietzler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p.1.
[2] Owens & Rietzler, p.5.
[3] This thesis acknowledges the Western-centric change of name from pre-war *Near Eastern Ottoman Arabia* to the same geo-location in the post-WW1 *Middle East*. For clarity the name *The Middle East* will be used throughout the thesis to represent both time periods and the name *Ottoman Arabia* (detailed in Case Study 1) will be used to refer to the regions of Ottoman hegemony within the same location prior to WW1.
[4] Amira El-Azhary Sonbol (ed.), *Gulf Women*, 2nd edn (Qatar: Hamad bin Khalifa University Press, 2017).

The omission of the authorship of these women from so many of the standard accounts of Anglo-Arabic relations can be understood as a Foucauldian 'tidying up' of 'ruptures' within history, and the summarising of eras to produce a linear timeline of the imperial British period, as is preferred by post-colonial narratives.[5] However, I am in agreement with material feminist Sara Mills who suggests that although there is evidence of a high volume of women's travel writing constituting counter-hegemonic voices they have not as a collective been considered worthy of inclusion in colonial discourse and need to be part of the discussion.[6] This thesis shall contribute to that discussion.

It acknowledges the existence of many British women in the Middle East prior to and during the chosen period of this thesis; hospital matrons, nurses, teachers, nuns, administrators, travellers, wives, daughters and journalists.

For the purpose of this thesis the following criteria has been adopted for Case Study :

- Paternal British nationality, including daughters born outside Britain.
- Born in the latter half of the 'long nineteenth century (1775-1915)'..
- Fluency in Arabic and experienced in the praxis of Arabic culture.
- Extensive travel throughout the Middle East.
- Residency in a British Mandate/Protectorate/Colony in the Middle East.
- Active in the Middle East during a world war (WW1 or WW2).
- Extensive acts of humanitarianism.
- Archival repositories of contributions made to local heritage through the recording (documentation, photography, cartography) of archaeological or historical evidence.
- Recipient of prestigious awards from reputed international geographical societies establishing authentication of accounts of travel.

To create diversity of time and geo-location four British women have been chosen in order of their arrival in the Middle East:

Case Study 1: Gertrude Lowthian Bell (1868-1926), arrival circa 1900.

Case Study 2: Dame Violet Dickson (née Lucas-Calcraft) (1896-1991), arrival 1921.

Case Study 3: Dame Freya Stark (1893-1993), arrival 1927.

Case Study 4: Doreen Ingrams (née Shortt) (1906-1997), arrival 1934.

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[5] See the introduction to Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Oxon: Routledge Classics, 2002).

[6] Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An analysis of women's travel writing and colonialism* (London & New York: Routledge, 2005). Taylor & Francis e-library.

This thesis is in agreement with Sara Mills' citation of Cooper and Clark that 'colonial' British-occupied regimes were 'neither monolithic nor omnipotent'.[7] The diversity of British presence in the Middle East will be represented in the form of Anglo-Ottoman treaties (Case Study 1), British protectorates (Case Studies: 2, 3 & 4), British Mandates under the *League of Nations* (Case Studies: 1, 3 & 4) and the British colony of Aden (Case Studies: 3 & 4).

Who was the British woman Arabist? American Robert D. Kaplan referred to British Arabists as 'sand-mad Britons who went native in the desert'.[8] In his aim at lampooning the British Arabist, Kaplan could not deny the depth or regular occurrence of cultural integration. Whilst this thesis acknowledges individuality and aims not to produce a stereotype, in its investigation of individual receipt of this honorary title, and the evolving worldview of its recipient, it will explore imperial, national, gender and cultural identities, which Doreen Massey describes as contributing to a 'personal identity, argued to be multiple, shifting and unbound'.[9] It acknowledges Dr Satyajit Patil's statement that 'culture, context and climate shape a person's identity, who becomes the author, narrator and protagonist of their autobiography, their travelogue'.[10]

Evolution of worldview is demonstrated by Dame Freya Stark who on her maiden journey to the Middle East in, 1927, observed 'people are more than scenery, art or fashion…there is too much civilization here…one great thing about an interest in civilization is that it gives you a fresh look at your own'.[11] This thesis takes Stark's insight on board, accepting that evolution of identity and thought occurred through travel, experience and choice, undefined by the academic identification of a people and era.

Imperial Identity versus Imperialism.

It shall be taken as fact that by the end of the nineteenth-century Britain was exerting sovereignty over in excess of 100 Million people throughout the world. M. Page Baldwin states that all individuals of British paternal parentage, regardless of their country of birth, were 'subjects of the Empire' and had British 'nationality' through their allegiance to the

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[7] Sara Mills, citing Cooper and Clark, *Gender and Colonial Space* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2005), p.9. E-book.
[8] Robert Kaplan, *The Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite* (USA: The Free Press, 1995), p.20.
[9] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gende*r (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p.10.
[10] Satyajit Patil, 'Reviewing Autobiography as a Travelogue-A Study: Romancing with Life', *The Criterion International Journal in English,* 8.1 (February 2017), pp. 903-11 (p.903).
[11] Freya Stark, *Letters from Syria* (U.S.: Franklin Classics, 2018), p.41.

Sovereign.[12] The women in each Case Study had acquired an official 'Imperial identity' at birth.

In his seminal work *Orientalism*, the father of Postcolonialism, Edward Said (1935-2003), devised a different definition for 'imperialism' defined as 'the binary typology [the binary-model] of advanced and backward races, cultures and societies.'[13] Thus for Said and his acolytes, the world is understood as polarised between 'us' and 'them', 'superior' and 'inferior', 'Self' and 'Other', with a stark, black-and-white, contrast between the two camps. Mary Louise Platt agreed with Said in her description that interaction between different cultures takes place in a 'Contact Zone' in which power-gain is the objective.[14]

Whilst I agree that imperial identity was a factor contributing to the subjects of Case Studies' international thought, I argue that such women did not necessarily adhere to Said's definition of imperialism nor did they agree with imperial expansion and control. Each Case Study will explore whether its subject was proactively part of 'the imperial machine' for territorial expansion and material gain or not.

National Identity and its Diversity.

Eric J. Hobsbawm states that the purpose of a 'nation' is to define a 'territory' and to take forward a 'flag'. Hobsbawm also states that:

> '[in] the nationalism of 1880-1914 *any* body of people considering themselves a'nation' claimed the right to self-determination which meant the right to a separate sovereign independent state for their territory, with ethnicity and language becoming the central or the only criteria of potential nationhood'.[15]

This indicates that 'nationals' supporting the creation of a nation-state would adopt a standardised *lengua nacional,* the national language, used in the literary form in official

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[12] M. Page Baldwin, 'Subject to Empire: Married Women and the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act', *Journal of British Studies*, 40.4 (2001), (Cambridge University Press, North American Conference on British Studies), pp. 522–56.

[13] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p.206. Vintage e-books.

[14] Mary Louise Platt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation,* 2nd edn (London & New York: Routledge, 2008), loc. 358, (lns 12-16.) Taylor & Francis e-library.
'an Imperial Space in which people geographically, and historically separated, come together to form ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict.

[15] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780, 2nd edn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.102.

documentation, academia, literature and high culture. In doing so they separated themselves from 'foreigners/aliens' and also from locals speaking a dialect. In this, Hobsbawm suggests the creation of social stratification within a nation.

In the rise of imperialism, 'alien' occupation, the sovereign language took precedence becoming the *lingua franca* at the subjugation of the indigenous national language. During the 400-year old occupation of Ottoman Arabia by the Ottomans Ottoman-Turkish was the *lingua franca* and the speaking of Arabic was discouraged. By Hobsbawm's definition a subjugated, indigenous people become the foreigners in the new sovereign territory. This fact will be of great importance in exploring whether post-WW1 British Civil Administration was an imperial occupation, or not, and will be explored in each Case Study.

In the growth of Arab nationalism (discussed in Case Study 1) the re-establishment of classical Arabic (*fusa*) as its *lengua nacional* was championed and became the language studied and spoken fluently by each woman Arabist. The language had been preserved for six hundred years, since the beginning of the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, in Baghdad, to the Mongols (circa 1258), retained within sacred texts and the Islamic religion, cultural conversation, tribal language and scholastic records. George Antonius in his seminal work *The Arab Awakening* states:

> 'The connotation of the word[s] 'Arab' [and Arabic] changed accordingly. It was no longer used to denote a member [or language] of the nomad tribe who populated the Arabian Peninsula. It gradually came to mean a citizen of that extensive [heterogeneous] Arab 'world''.[16]

The definition of the 'Arab identity' is part of an ongoing discussion by Arab academics today due to the heterogeneity of religion, birth place, ethnicity, heritage, culture and language. This evolution of identity is important to note as the Case Studies cover a transitional period from the Ottoman Empire to the Arab Nation-states. References will apply to terminology used at the time of authorship and confirmed by Arabic advisors consulted in the writing of this thesis.

Francis Fukuyama's definition of national identity displays a diversity dependent upon choice:

[16] George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The story of the Arab National Movement* (U.S.A.: Allegro Editions, 1939), p.14.

> 'When channelled in the form of an exclusive and intolerant ethnonationalism, it can drive acts of persecution and aggression. Yet national identities can also be built around liberal and democratic political values, and around the shared experiences of diverse communities'.[17]

What of the British or 'English' national identity abroad, which would contribute to the creation and subsequent development of Anglo-Arab relationships? Diane Robinson-Dunn's research confirms similar diversity within the English identity in the Ottoman Empire in her conclusion that 'individuals [in the nineteenth-century]...created 'English' identities informed by their understandings of Islam'.[18] This suggests that a spectrum of identity based on worldview, values and attitude was evident and each individual's place on the spectrum was dependent upon the depth of integration with people of the Islamic religion. Considering that the period of British Administration in the Middle East in the first half of the twentieth century was a time of great change and increase in British communities, it is fair to assume that this spectrum was extended and its polarisation accentuated.[19] At one end of the spectrum were the stereotypical middle-class imperialists aping the manners and rules of the bygone Tory gentry of the Indian Raj, with no understanding of, or desire to enter into cross-cultural communication with local people or learn about the Arabic culture, religion or languages. Their 'intolerant ethnonationalism' of viewing local Arab people as Said's 'Others' criticised for being unable to speak standard English and exhibit a knowledge of English culture created a binary topology. Such women created a heterotopic existence which locals nicknamed *Little England* within their region of residence; a pseudo-imperial 'territory' in semblance of 'flying the British flag'. They were prime candidates for Said's binary-model and their contributions to the Anglo-Arab relationship will be investigated in each Case Study.

At the polar opposite of the spectrum was Said's 'omission' from his discourse, the 'counter-imperialists', the women *Arabists* who exhibited Fukuyama's alternative national identity. By undertaking the lengthy and dangerous process of 'solo' travel through turbulent

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[17] Francis Fukuyama, 'Why National Identity Matters', *Journal of Democracy*, 29.4 (Oct. 2018), pp. 5-15.

[18] Diane Robinson-Dunn, *Harem Slavery and British Imperial Culture, Anglo-Muslim Relations in the Late Nineteenth-Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p.3.

[19] The term *The English* ('alanjilizia') was a common Arab descriptive, its connotation dependent upon placement in sentence and tone to depict pro- or anti- English/British sentiment at the time as explored in each Case Study.

Middle Eastern conditions accompanied only by Arab retainers local respect was gained. Participation in Arabic praxis and dialogue with local people was paramount to survival. Whilst their choice of a residence in a local area was a contributory factor, the ability to speak Arabic was the key-stone to building successful relationships. Paul Christopherson emphasises that 'There is…an indissoluble link between language and culture and hence personality. Language is…a part of a community's culture…behaviour patterns and knowledge'.[20] He concluded that the acquisition of two languages to an advanced level created bilingualism and biculturalism and in doing so created two personalities, each used in different cultural situations. Through the additional adoption of Arabic dress, even if only in private, such women were seeking to become acculturated within traditional Arabic culture, hence distancing themselves from the imperial identity by dissolving the barrier between 'us' and 'them'.

The Case Studies will show that each individual's personal identity evolved alongside geo-locational and socio-political transitions. A 'personal journey' is perhaps over-used in contemporary culture, but it conveys a useful notion here: that the individuals' ideas and credos evolved as they spent time in these locations.

To recognise personal evolution it is important to explore the national foundations of women Arabists, their pre-travel 'base-camps'. Bruce Westrate's detailed information based on the Arab Bureau founded in 1916 in WW1 to support an Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire (Case Study 1) makes the assumption that the British Bureau members were 'Tories, from public school and military career men' of which Gertrude Bell was one such member.[21] But at that time 'Toryism' had taken a back seat to 'Liberalism' heralding a national paradigm shift from conservatism and classical liberalism to social liberalism in support of the people. Governmental plans were created to form a welfare-state, improve human rights and support the increased call for independence of Ireland, Wales and Scotland. The Liberal Party had formed several governments and would take Britain into and out of WW1 (albeit under two different Prime Ministers).

Sheila Rowbotham specifies that a universal paradigm change during that period due to Liberalism was affected by American and British women in their respective countries:

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[20] Paul Christopherson, *Second Language Learning-Myth and Reality* (England: Penguin Education, 1973), pp. 22-23.

[21] Bruce Westrate citing H.V.F. Winstone in *The Arab Bureau:British Policy in the Middle East, 1916-1920* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1984), p.53.

> ‘American women played an important part in the pressure for moderate change influencing both municipal and state policies from the sidelines. In Britain comparable ideas were found (amongst middle class women) and the radical Liberal Party’.[22]

The role of liberalism was to play an important part in the development of international thought of the middle-class (non-elite) women travellers of the Middle East, the daughters/granddaughters of Liberal Party Members of Parliament (Gertrude Bell, Rosita Forbes (1890-1967) and Doreen Ingrams). From an early age each girl was encouraged to travel, become educated in international languages and to participate in discussions about socio-politics, politics and policies at home and abroad. Such women did not attend an all-male public school (their education is explored in the following section on Gender) or make the military their career. Due to female exclusion from regimented and competitive all-male private-school education, which incorporated R.B. Haldane’s Army reforms in 1907, and the introduction of Officers Training Corps, a girl's liberal education was not overridden by conservative army discipline from an early age and its strict installation of leadership and duty to ‘protect’ the Empire.[23]

Although Liberal ideas gained popularity and support at home, the practice of infusing Liberalism into Britain’s Foreign Policies proved challenging. Elizabeth Monroe, in her seminal work, *Britain’s Moment in the Middle East, 1914-56*, emphasises the difficulties for British trade routes and investments in the Middle East, such as the Suez Canal (of which Britain was a major shareholder) and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (opened in 1909), which needed to be made secure. Elizabeth Monroe states that prior to WW1:

> ‘Liberal instincts were only too often cut short by exigencies of British Middle East Policies. Given the need for Ottoman stability in Asia, British action on behalf of minorities stopped at the Bosphorus’.[24]

At the end of WW1 Prime Minister David Lloyd George (in office 1916-22), the leader of the Liberal Party and a man who had previously argued in favour of devolution of power and Home Rule for Wales and Ireland, supported the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s plan for

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[22] Sheila Rowbotham, *Dreamers of a New Day: Women who invented the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 2010), p.7. Ebook.

[23] See the comments of Oxford graduate Vera Brittain (1893-1970) in Alan Bishop & Mark Bostridge (eds.) *Letters From a Lost Generation* (London: Virago,1998), loc. 228 (lns 16-22). Ebook.

[24] Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain’s Moment in the Middle East:1914-56* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), p.19.

self-determination of the colonies of the dissolved Central Powers inclusive of the Ottoman Empire.[25] Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik concept of self-determination which emphasised 'the right to existence of a separate state' with no interference from another (alien) country was not the type that Wilson had envisaged.[26] Wilson's understanding of self-determination, and that of Lloyd George, was, according to Adom Getachew, based on the concept of acquired 'modernisation' and not necessarily without an alien sovereignty thought necessary for 'tutelage' to guide the creation of a nation-state.[27] Getachew stresses that Wilson based modernisation on 'Western' concepts whilst prominent Arab nationalists had interpreted Wilson's declarations regarding post-war self-determination in a similar way to Lenin's concept with no external interference.

Getachew specifies that the word 'self', when related to the heterogeneous populace of the empires of Central Powers, was of great concern to Wilson (and to a lesser degree to Lenin). 'Self' was a word that he considered demanded specification and discourse amongst interested parties.[28] The creation of external alien tutelage was aimed at ensuring that each potential Arab nation would acquire requisite Western modernisation to be accepted into the new *League of Nations.* This disregarded the importance of tradition and dependency upon religion and was a primary factor in the creation of intense violence in the regions.

After four centuries of separate Ottoman governorates the questions of which external bodies would act as 'moderators' *in situ*, to enable material post-war recovery and supply necessary funding were paramount in illuminating the challenges to Wilson's idealism in the absence of a detailed proposal. Wilson was not supported by the American Senate, which voted to pursue isolationism and refused to become a signatory of Wilson's brain-child the *League of Nations,* or fund the creation of an Arab nation by accepting a mandate in the Middle East.

British Mandates were awarded to provide tutelage in the name of the *League of Nations* conducted under increased Arab nationalism, and Ottoman sympathy. They became synonymous with 'Westernisation', 'colonisation' and 'occupation'. Hisham Sharabi

[25] David Lloyd George's performance as wartime Prime Minister (1916-22) has been extensively researched and will not be evaluated in this thesis.
[26] Stanley W. Page, 'Lenin and Self-Determination', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 28.71, (1950), pp. 342–58, (p.342).
[27] Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and fall of self-determination* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2019).
[28] Getachew, p.45.

(1927-2005) wrote of his time in the founding centre for Arab nationalism, the A.U.B. the American University of Beirut, under the French Mandate of Lebanon stated *'*Students and faculty were united in their support of a strike and opposition to their coloniser...I hated Imperialism*'*.[29]

The Case Study subjects were active in the Middle East during this period. This thesis will explore their contributions from the position of being both an imperial subject and an Arabist in these turbulent times.

Gender Identity and Crossing the Traditional Gender-Space.

Whilst physical gender was an important factor in determining the availability of opportunity for women within individual regions of the Middle East, the understanding of gender-space and its occupation was equally as important. This thesis acknowledges the diversity in gender definition today. For the purpose of twentieth-century gender-space definition this thesis will follow Doreen Massey's determination of two genders-spaces as 'Western radical polarisation which is hegemonic in Western societies today…defining the 'masculine' and 'feminine' through continuous series of mutual oppositions'.[30] Massey codes 'the masculine' as 'time: history, progress, civilization, politics and transcendence', and 'the feminine' as 'space: stasis, passivity and depoliticization'.[31]

For the purpose of this thesis *masculine-space,* inhabited by women travellers in their dismissal of personal restriction, shall be taken as being different to traditional *patriarchy*. Sylvia Walby cites Webster's definition to be the worst scenario:

> '[patriarchy is] a system of government in which men ruled societies, and households, the domination of younger men, who were not household heads, was as important, if not more important than the element of men's dominance over women via the household'.[32]

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[29] Hisham Sharabi, *Embers and Ashes: Memoirs of an Arab Intellectual*, trans. by Issa J. Boullata, (Massachusetts: Olive Press, 2008), pp.10-11.
[30] Massey, p.6.
[31] Massey, p.6.
[32] Sylvia Walby citing Webster, in 'Theorising Patriarchy', SAGE Publishers Ltd., *Sociology*, 23. 2 (May 1989), pp. 213-234, (p.213).

Webster's definition of *patriarchy* will be adopted to describe imperial structure and hegemony and *masculine-space* will be used to describe freedom from the patriarchal structure.

This suggests that subjugated men and women were 'feminised' by patriarchy and hegemony. I suggest that space surrounded by barriers created within the family or national 'home' (Case Study 2), in which there is prevention of mobility, thought or speech, should be considered examples of Massey's *feminine-space*. Massey implied that 'all attempts to institute horizons, to establish boundaries and secure national identity can also be seen as attempts to stabilise the movability of space/time'.[33] I agree with Massey's affirmation and add that 'stabilisation' refers to the reduction of mobility and if unnegotiated, is an act of patriarchy, and should be considered as 'feminising' national citizens, subjugated races, 'younger' men, and women.

Massey declared that 'the need for security of boundaries, and defence, is culturally masculine'.[34] I argue that the creation of boundaries is 'patriarchal' if created for 'control' to keep people in, but 'masculine' if only for 'protection' to keep out invaders. It follows that in a patriarchal structure the raising of an objection, through action or moving out of forced stasis, by objectors would be termed 'rebellion', 'activism', or specifically, if addressed to women - 'scandalous', with the common aim of inciting public ostracization as experienced by Dame Freya Stark in Baghdad (Case Study 3).

The women's drive towards personal freedom and occupation of traditionally masculine-space is described by Rowbotham as 'their [women's] strenuous personal rebellions…[which] helped shift attitudes about how women could be and live'.[35] In England one can see examples of how even 'strong' women in the nineteenth-century had constraints put upon their actions. In 1938, Laurence Housman wrote of prowess in his description of social reformer and founder of Modern Nursing, Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)

> 'Her exceptional powers of body and brain and the abnormal driving forces served to give expression to a problem already in thousands of homes… Strength of character made them obstinately possessive of the little world they had over which they bore rule'.[36]

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[33] Massey, p.5.
[34] Massey, p.5.
[35] Rowbotham, p.5.
[36] Laurence Housman, 'Florence Nightingale', in *The Great Victorians,* ed. by H.J. and Hugh Massingham (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson Ltd., 1938), p.319.

Genna Duplisea states that 'gender roles were not monolithic but tied to class, behaviour and [most importantly] education'.[37] Duplisea concludes that middle-class women, given the opportunity to enter the masculine space, emulated their masculine peers. Maria Tamboukou disagrees and emphasises the creation of the 'new woman' as depicted by Rowbotham. This was due to education (which was increasingly open to all classes if funding was made available). In her research on women's higher education, Tamboukou suggests that new women's colleges were, according to the advent of a 'new female culture', aimed to 'destabilise the boundary between private and public spaces [and create expansion into a new female-space]'[38] Tamboukou's research concludes that women students' autobiographical writings conveyed a matrix of ethical concerns, aesthetic orientations and evolving social attitudes which linked them to a new emerging female culture of the university colleges, previously attended only by men.[39] Oxford and Cambridge Universities, the primary *alma mater* of 'free thinkers', encouraged regular debate and critical analysis. Opening their doors to women in 1860 opened the possibilities that women would bring in change to a conservative way of life, championed by a long-reigning female monarch.[40] Gertrude Bell was educated at Queen's College in London and Lady Margaret's Hall, Oxford, Freya Stark and Helen Bentwich at Bedford Ladies College and journalist, political analyst and editor of *Basrah Times*, Emily Lorimer OBE (Case Study 2) at Trinity College, Dublin and Somerville College, Oxford.

Employment of unmarried and educated middle-class women awarded them economical freedom. Bell (in WW1) and later, Stark (in WW2), were employed as Civil Servants, but this was not unprecedented. Such women had been employed by the Home Office Civil Service since 1845, due to their wider and more productive skill-base and work-ethic compared with male employees on equal pay.[41] Unofficial Foreign Office posts had been successfully occupied by widows of Consuls since the eighteenth century, but up until WW1, no unmarried British woman had occupied a position of British authority in the Middle East. Educated women were now available to take and create positions that would improve social conditions for women in Britain and Abroad.

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[37] Genna Duplisea, 'Writing in the Masculine: Gertrude Lowthian Bell, Gender, and Empire', *Terrae Incognitae*, 48.1 (2016), pp. 55-75, (p.57).
[38] Maria Tamboukou, ' Of Other Spaces: women's colleges at the turn of the nineteenth century in the UK', *Gender, Place & Culture,* 7.3. (2000), pp. 247-263, (p.247).
[39] Tamboukou, p.255.
[40] Lisa Alaana McGurk, *Challenging Male Hegemony: A Case History of Women's Experiences in British and US Higher Education, 1970-2002*, PhD thesis, University of Gloucestershire (2002).
[41] *A History of Women in the UK Civil Service.*https://www.civilservant.org.uk/women-history.html

Said argued that philanthropy, if exhibited in the Middle East by imperial women, was an example of the binary model of superior/inferior. He stated that what was absent was *humanism* as 'humanism is sustained by a sense of community with other societies…there is no such thing as an isolated humanist'.[42] I argue that Said's criticism is based on priori knowledge and imaginings. He did not take into consideration the fact that communities can be inspired to work together as humanists in times of great need by one special individual. Acts of humanitarianism performed in the Middle East will be investigated in each Case Study.

In her research of the social history of women in England from 1760 to 1914, Susie Steinbach details extensive acts of female philanthropy and humanitarianism as practised by middle-class Victorian women in Britain. Their intensive campaigns enabled improvements to be made throughout the British working-class strata, and, through their male contacts in governmental positions, changed conditions in Britain and the British Colonies.[43] The evidence for compassion for others cannot be related to women alone, as many social reformers were men, but as it was acknowledged as a fundamentally nurturing act, it was considered to be fundamentally 'feminine' and an extension of the female space.[44] The humanitarian actions of women in this thesis, particularly on behalf of women and children, must be considered as an attempt to better the lives of others who were suffering.

At the beginning of WW1, the British Government, conscious of the need to employ Arabists as war-time advisors with knowledge of the Middle Eastern region and alternate voices to that of the Government of India, commissioned male archaeologists to join the Middle Eastern British Intelligence. In 1915, in an act that realised the importance of superior knowledge over gender Commander D.G. Hogarth and T.E. Lawrence requested that Gertrude Bell be invited into the traditionally 'male' war zone of strategic planning for a world war (Case Study 1). Mark Sykes' description of Bell in a letter to his wife as a 'flat-chested man-woman' demonstrates a paradigm change in the recognition of gender-space hybridity.[45] Likewise, acknowledgement of female achievement was demonstrated by Field Marshall Allenby who wrote of Rosita Forbes, after her 1100 mile

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[42] Said, loc. 202, (lns 17-21). Vintage e-books.
[43] Susie Steinbach, *Women in England 1760-1914: A Social History* (London: Weidenfield &Nicolson, 2005).
[44] Steinbach, p.63.
[45] Rory Miller,'Kingmakers: the Invention of the Modern Middle East by K. Meyer & S. B. Brysac', *Reviews in History* (London: W. W. Norton, 2008), p.3.

trek from the Red Sea to the Blue Nile 'the intrepid Englishwoman leads us through experiences that would have appalled the hardiest old-time [male] pioneers of the Empire'.[46]

It follows that such a woman in her personal challenges to free herself from the traditional feminine-space through education, private funding and travel through the Middle East could empathise with Arab nationalists in their revolt against imperial (patriarchal) domination as experienced under pre-WW1 Ottoman hegemony and the post-WW1 'tutelage' of British and French mandatory occupation under the name of the League of Nations. Freya Stark recounted an interwar conversation in Arabic with a Sultan of Shiram, who was initially unfriendly towards Europeans, her frank observation being 'The way to get on is not to be Western even if they want you to, they are not grateful at all at being made to feel they are here to learn, who would be?'[47] This is not the only example of one of the women being studied showing an appreciation of the difficulties of bridging the gulf between 'Western' and 'Middle Eastern'.

Each Case Study will investigate the unique opportunities for women to cross the gender-divide in the Middle East and enter both the masculine and feminine spaces; the Arab male *diwanyas* and the female *harems* forbidden to male visitors. Thus it is possible for women to be seen as matching, or even excelling the efforts of male peers through single-minded dedication.

The Evolution of Cultural Identity

The evolution of the woman Arabist's worldview is represented in her writings when read in chronological order. Their publications served the purpose of not only recording events but of educating Anglo-centric readers.

Acculturation or assimilation, enhanced by the wearing of Arabic traditional costume, adoption of manners and language, was suggested by T.E. Lawrence as having 'acquitted me of my English self and I looked at the West with new eyes'.[48] One can find numerous examples in the authorship of women (and men) who embraced assimilation in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, including Lady Hester Stanhope (1776-1839, died

[46] Rosita Forbes, *From Red Sea to Blue Nile* (Great Britain: Penguin books Limited, 1939), Foreword.
[47] Freya Stark, *Coast of Incense-an Autobiography, 1933-39* (London, John Murray, 1953), pp.77-78.
[48] T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom and The Evolution of a Revolt.* (e-artnow, 2015), p.18. e-artnow online.

in Lebanon), Lady Jane Digby Sheikha *Umm al-Laban* (1807-81, died in Damascus), Lady Anne Blunt (1837-1917, died in Cairo), Lady Isabella Burton (1831-1896), Dame Violet Dickson, Rosita Forbes and Doreen Ingrams. All donned traditional regional costumes for comfort, respect and at times anonymity, in extreme environments and turbulent regions.

In her hypothesis of a 'Contact Zone' Platt did not research the whole spectrum of traveller identity, omitting the importance of cultural evolution though travel, especially in the fluency and choice of Arabic language spoken in the 'Zone'. As they embarked upon 'Arab-centric' discussions, the British traveller became 'The Other' or more commonly within Arab etiquette, the 'guest' of her Arabic 'host'. Paul Christoferson stresses the reasons for successful and unsuccessful cross-cultural communication 'in the preparation of local praxis of a second language with acquired mannerisms, philosophies and an adoption of culture'.[49] The Case Studies will investigate whether the women in question were inside or outside Platt's 'Contact Zone', the sphere of power and war.

Amongst the evidence left behind by the subjects of the four Case Studies is a compilation of private letters, diaries, travelogues and work journals supported by sketches, rubbings, pressed flowers, recipes, original maps and photographs. The autobiographies/travelogues of the four subjects provide a vivid personal narrative, encompassing historical references and recounting discussions on socio-and geo-political, historical, religious, scholastic and cultural subjects with named participants. Rather than being a linear summary of events, these accounts give a first-person account in which the narrator's viewpoint is taken as 'the norm'.

Did travel writing create the binary? Platt and Ali Behdad agree that (all) travel writers, writing in English, were the creators of 'The Other' having created the travel imagination within the living room (of their reader) and in the manner of books informing travellers before their arrival. Behdad argues that a tourist's 'storytelling' through authorship based on travels in a foreign country, in the absence of local records, is a declaration of cultural superiority.[50] Hoda el Saadi, writing for Amira Sonbol's groundbreaking editorial *Gulf Women* (Case Study 2), also agrees that it did. She states:

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[49] Paul Christopherson, *Second Language Learning-Myth and Reality* (England: Penguin Education, 1973), p.64.

[50] Ali Behdad, *Belated Travellers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham & London: Duke University Press,1999), pp.26-27. E-book.

> 'an observation recorded by an 'uninformed' Western eye who cannot totally understand the cultural context of what it sees has the power to define and construct reality for a Western audience'.[51]

I agree that cultural mistranslation between the subject and the writer and/or the writer and his/her Anglo-centric reader will accentuate the binary and that all hypotheses based on travel-writing should not be through imaginings, but by cross-reference of information. An example of repeated mistranslation between writer and researcher is given in Case Study 3.

It must be noted that there is a fundamental difference between the authorship of the nineteenth-century Orientalist and the twentieth-century Arabist. The Orientalist received national acclaim for his /her Euro-centric discoveries and reports through educational and scientific information whilst the Arabist, through time spent in the development of Arab-centric viewpoints, at times, faced national criticism for their critical references of British individuals, policies and actions (explored in all Case Studies).

The writing of a woman Arabist is further differentiated from that of the male Arabist.
Maria Dolors García Ramón states:

> 'Women's travel narratives are fundamentally different from those of men. The differential access of women to the dominant imperial position produced a gaze on the Orient that registered differences in less pejorative ways. However, the analysis…gives evidence that in women's narratives and life experiences one can find sites of resistance to colonialism as well as sites of complicity'.[52]

Mills cites C. Stephenson, who states:

> 'Women travellers developed strategies of accommodation not confrontation or domination and wrote loosely structured narratives of their discoveries of the continent, people and their own psyches'.[53]

It can be argued that the narratives of women travellers cannot be so simply summarised, or dismissed by the implication of 'the female psyche'. Stephenson fails to recognise that women create the most detailed accounts of history.

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[51] Hoda El Saadi, 'Women and Economy. Pre-oil Gulf States' in *Gulf Women,* ed. by Amira El-Azhary Sonbol (Doha: Hamad bin Khalifa University Press, 2017), p.150.
[52] Maria Dolors García Ramón, 'Gender and the Colonial Encounter in the Arab World: Examining Women's Experiences and Narratives', *Environment & Planning: Society & Space,* SAGE Journals, (1 December, 2003), Abstract. Sage Journals online.
[53] Sara Mills citing C. Stephenson, *Gender and Colonial Space* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), p.17. E-book.

In the 2013 Kuwait University Conference *The East in The Eyes of the West* Dr Irene Kamberidou delivered the results of her twenty five years of research on 6000+ primary sources of female travel writers and harem scholars in the Ottoman Empire, during the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries. Whilst agreeing that Orientalist literature confirmed the use of the binary model, Kamberidou argues that it was male writers who created the binary. Declaring that such reports were based on second or third-hand information and were both misinforming and factually incorrect, Kamberidou concluded that such reports were 'the result of fantasy and fervent Western imagination'.[54] She contends that 'European and American women identified with 'The Other' in solidarity. Kamberidou accentuates the women's anger at the published accounts of male peers on the subject of the harem and the lifestyles of Muslim women with whom they had no personal contact.

Carroll McC. Pastner's research of the authorship of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century male Arabists, inclusive of Sir Richard Burton (1821-90), Charles Montague Doughty (1843-1926) and Harold Dickson (1881-1959), is an example of such a tertiary source of information which informs the reader about the respected position of women within an Arab household. McC. Pastner concludes from her research that reports agree that the harem was an organised family-centric structure of matriarchy and women who were respected advisors to their husbands and heads of the household in their husband's absence.[55]

Kamberidou is correct in her declaration of imaginings within tertiary reports from solo male travellers, but I am also in support of McC. Pastner's research as Burton and Dickson received accounts of the harem from their wives Lady Isabella Burton and Dame Violet Dickson respectively, who wrote and edited various chapters of their husbands' books. Editor and Oxford graduate Emily Lorimer OBE (1881-1949) had similar qualifying skills. As a

[54] 'Irene Kamberidou,' The East in the Eyes of Western Women Travellers of the 18th and 19th Centuries: Solidarity and Understanding the East' published (2015) delivered at the International Conference *The East in the Eyes of the West*, Kuwait University (26-28 November 2013), pp. 285-311, (p.285). https://www.academia.edu/31863076
The relevant quotation is 'The mammoth body of writings by women travellers of 18 /19 Centuries, that claim to be eyewitness descriptions of the female microcosmos, provide a rich and detailed description of the orient including a feminine version, *a female gaze*. European and American women identified with 'The Other', expressed their solidarity and participated in Muslim women's daily domestic life, customs, female social gathering, religious celebrations and feasts. As a result, they accused male travellers who had written about domestic manners in the East and the position of women in Islam of misinforming and misleading their readers, their accounts, based on second or third-hand information, were a result of their unrestrained imagination and exotic fantasies.

[55] Carroll McC. Pastner, 'Englishmen in Arabia: Encounters with Middle Eastern Women', *Signs,* 4.2, (U.S.A.: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 309-323.

respected Arabist, translator, author and editor of the *Amara Sanjaq* in Arabic and *Basrah Times* during WW1 Lorimer became the female editor of Harold Dickson's seminal work *The Arab of the Desert* (Case Study 2), which is considered today the principal source of information on Kuwait's desert history.[56]

The evolution of cultural identity of a woman Arabust is rarely investigated and yet it is paramount to cultural understanding and the creation of international thought, and will be incorporated in each Case Study.

The Choice of Case Studies

Out of many worthy women Arabists, four Case Studies have been chosen to cover the diversity of action, place, residency and time. I acknowledge but have chosen to omit Helen Bentwich, wife of Attorney General Norman Bentwich, and resident of the British Mandate of Palestine. Helen Bentwich did not fulfil the criteria of being an Arabist in residency in an Arabic region. Although fluent in Arabic her remit was to develop the Jewish community. Emily Lorimar has been similarly omitted for her residency in North Africa, in Cairo during WW1. The intrepid traveller and Arabist Rosita Forbes was omitted for non-residency in an Arab region, but all women undoubtedly deserve to be the subjects of future research.

Case Study 1: Gertrude Lowthian Bell CBE (1868-1926)

Gertrude Bell has been chosen as a Case Study due to her extended solo travel from 1900 through the Ottoman Arabia, participation in the British Mesopotamian Campaign in WW1, and her position of the first woman Oriental Secretary in British Mandatory Iraq until her unexpected death in Baghdad in 1926. Much research has been undertaken on Bell's life and this thesis will build on that research to question Bell's influence in the Iraqi fight for Arab self-determination and her documented support of Arab nationalism and pan-Arabism. This Case Study will cover Bell's personal journey which ended in her untimely death immediately after her opening of the national Iraqi heritage centre, now called The Iraq Museum: her final act in furthering international recognition of Iraq as an independent

[56] H.R.P. Dickson, '*The Arab of the Desert*' (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1949). Much of Kuwait's history was related to Harold by the Kuwait's ruler Sheikh Abdullah al Salim al Sabah (1895-1965).

country. Bell's major archives are housed in Newcastle University and the Gertrude Bell Archive *UNESCO Memory of the World Register* (2017-present day).

Case Study 2: Dame Violet Dickson (1896-1991)

Dame Violet Dickson has been chosen to represent the wives of Colonial Officers stationed in the Middle East in both mandates and protectorates. This Case Study will explore the integration between British administrators and the local Arab people in the regions in which they lived. Dickson has been chosen due to her marriage to Arabist and milk-brother to the Anizah tribe, Lt. Colonel H.R.P. (Harold) Dickson and her creation of Anglo-Arab relationships within the regions of his post-WW1 postings. It shall focus on her journey to become an Arabist in poverty stricken, turbulent areas of anti-British sentiment, her balance of motherhood and her choice to support the people of pre-oil Kuwait, especially to Bedouin tribes living outside Kuwait's political sphere. This thesis will investigate how, despite being British, she received the honorary title of *Umm Kuwait* (a mother to Kuwait) in her widowhood from Kuwait's ruler in a period of Kuwaiti independence. After sixty-one years, Dame Violet, at the age of ninety-five, was airlifted to, and died in Britain during the Iraq invasion of Kuwait in 1990-1991. Her contributions to international thought and Kuwait's heritage are found in her writings, the books of her husband, photographs and support of excavations of pre-Islamic archaeological sites in the region. Dame Violet Dickson's archives are held in the Middle Eastern Centre, St. Anthony's College, Oxford, the British Museum and the *Dickson Cultural Centre*, Kuwait.

Case Study 3: Dame Freya Stark (1893-1993).

Dame Freya Stark has been chosen to represent the Arab-centric travel-writer. Stark's canon, inclusive of extensive international thought, written from 1927, represents an interwar and WW2 record of the many countries she visited in the Middle East under French and British mandates and protectorates. Building on extensive biographical research of Stark and her canon, this thesis will focus on Stark's determination to cross patriarchal, geographical and cultural boundaries to become an Arabist learned in the teachings of Islam. This Case Study will investigate Stark's personal conflicts which resulted in interwar criticism and wartime support of Britain in the Middle East, and the co-founding of *The [Arab]Brotherhood of Freedom.* It will investigate her belief in humanitarianism in support of Palestinians in their

fight against proposed ‘Zionist expansion’ in Palestine. Stark’s contributions to regional heritage are found in the passages of her canon relating the past to the present, her archaeological expeditions and the discoveries of artefacts and the thousands of photographs taken prior to the discovery of oil and destruction and the destruction wrought by WW.2. Dame Freya Stark’s archives are held in the Middle Eastern Centre, St. Anthony’s College, Oxford, the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, USA and international repositories with copies of primary sources used in Middle Eastern university research and programmes.

Case Study 4: Doreen Ingrams (1906-1997).

Doreen Ingrams is chosen to represent the humanitarian in times of local disaster and internecine warfare. An anti-colonialist and supporter of 'Home Rule' Ingrams married Arabist Harold Ingrams OBE and devoted her time to helping the local people in the Eastern Aden Protectorate of Hadhramaut to preserve their culture and dignity. This Case Study will investigate her role in the creation of the *Ingrams Peace,* peace treaties aimed at stopping Hadhrami internecine warfare and violence to both the traveller and trade. It will investigate Ingrams’ influence and personal contributions to relieving famine, and the creation of health and educational institutions for women and children. Ingrams’ contribution to the heritage of the Hadhramaut is in her many photographs, writings and creation of volumes of historical records. Her contribution to international thought is contained in her canon, BBC programmes, lectures, Middle Eastern philanthropy that was continued in her name posthumously by her daughter Leila Ingrams (1940-2015) and co-contributions with Arab academics to Middle Eastern historiography. Ingrams' archives are held in the Middle Eastern Centre, St. Anthony’s College, University of Oxford, the British Museum and the permanent *A Time in the Hadhramaut* exhibition of photographs at the Kathiri Palace Museum, Seiyun in the People’s Republic of South Yemen.

CHAPTER 1

CASE STUDY 1: GERTRUDE LOWTHIAN BELL CBE (1868-1926)

This Case Study aims to challenge the popular belief that Bell was an imperialist working towards the expansion of the British Empire. It offers a counter-narrative to show that she was a staunch supporter of Arab Nationalism in its drive towards independence from the 400-year old Ottoman hegemony. It aims to show that Bell's personal evolution during 'solo' travel through Ottoman Arabia (1899-1914) influenced her actions as Oriental Secretary (1916-26) and the development of Iraq to become the first Arab nation-state to be accepted into the *League of Nations* (1932). That Bell's name, as founder of the National Museum of Iraq, is included on its current website is a token of national respect for the woman they called *El Khatun* (The Lady).

In 2017 *The Gertrude Bell Archive* of Newcastle University was inscribed into the *UNESCO International Memory of the World Register* as a lasting legacy of historical record. It confirmed an invaluable contribution to the history of the pre-WW1 Middle East. Bell's personal achievements are beyond question; however, the extent of the influence she exerted on the Anglo-Arab relationship (1916-26) is the purpose of this Case Study.

Numerous studies of Bell have noted the tension and contradiction in her legacy. Moayad Hanoush suggests:

> 'In Iraq her name evokes contrasting reactions as the founder of the modern Iraqi state and its constitutional monarchy to being part of the British colonial rule in Iraq. But her great love for Iraq and its people cannot be denied. She was devoted to the cause of the Arab people in seeking to achieve self-determination'.[57]

Hanoush describes Bell's devotion to the Iraqi people and support of 'self-determination' whilst naming her as part of British colonial rule. This Case Study will question whether Bell's actions were based in Anglo- or Arab-centricity within the Anglo-Arab relationship.

[57] Moayad Hanoush,'A Tribute to Gertrude Bell' in *Gertrude Bell and Iraq: A Life and Legacy* by eds. Paul Collins and Charles Tripp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), Appendix.

It is a fact that Bell was part of the British Civil Administration (1916-20) of Iraq and advisor to King Faisal 1 (1921-26), which should classify her contributions as being in the British interest. However, a letter discovered in the *Churchill Collection* of Cambridge University strongly suggests a difference in the objectives of Bell and Britain in post-WW1 Iraq. Written by Hugh Frewen to Sir Winston Churchill after his attendance of the coronation of King Faisal 1 in Baghdad in 1921, it draws attention to Bell's reputation in Iraq:

> 'Gertrude Bell is called *Um Mummadian*-Mother of the Faithful, which will give you some idea of the extent of her prestige. She is credited with being Pan Arab… and desires Arab Hegemony to embrace Iraq, Hedjaz [Hijjaz], Syria and Palestine in a single kingdom. The widespread belief in this is the secret of her immense influence. She is a most remarkable woman, combining a woman's impulses with a man's habit of thought and action. I class her with Lawrence as a potential danger that requires constant watching. She is the most outstanding person in the country'.[58]

Although she did not leave an autobiography due to her untimely death, it is important to consider the contribution of Bell's bi-cultural evolution on her actions. One can see this in her own words:

> 'No sooner had I landed in Beyrout that I began to shed the European formulas and to look for the Asiatic value'.[59]

Bell's personal journey took place within a changing world paradigm and is an example of Dr Satyajit Patil's hypothesis:

> 'Culture, context and climate shape a person's identity, who becomes the author, narrator and protagonist of their autobiography, their travelogue'.[60]

Born in 1868, into a world of international empire-building in which Britain was a key-player, Bell originated not from London gentry as so often thought but from the self-made middle-class industrial North. She is described by Susan Beaumont as a 'daughter of industry' considered to be as important as sons to prepare to inherit the 'business'.[61] On being recognized at an early age as having excellent mental and physical prowess, Bell received financial, social and intellectual support from her family, staunch Liberal Party

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[58] Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, Letter from Hugh Frewen to Winston Churchill, CHAR 2/116/18-20 (14 Oct 1921).
[59] Gertrude Bell, *Amurath to Amurath* (Poland: Amazon Fulfillment), p.4.
[60] Satyajit Patil, 'Reviewing Autobiography as a Travelogue-A Study: Romancing with Life', *The Criterion International Journal in English,* 8.1 (February 2017), pp. 903-11, (p.903).
[61] Susan Beaumont, 'Gertrude Bell:The Iron-master's Daughter', in *The Extraordinary Gertrude Bell Exhibition catalogue*, ed. by Mark Jackson and A.Parkin (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Tyne Bridge Publishing, 2015), p.8.

supporters who drove social change. The recipients of most of her prolific letters from the Middle East were her supportive parents, Justice of the Peace Sir Hugh Bell (1844-1931) and step-mother, author, playwright and social reformist (Dame) Florence Oliffe (1851-1930).[62] Biographer Georgina Howell describes the Bells 'as civic leaders and benefactors…[building] assembly rooms, libraries, schools and offices'.[63] A confirmation of her politics was given by Sir Max Mallowan (1904-1978), the first director of Bell's proposed British School of Archaeology in Iraq, in a tribute to her, fifty years after her death: 'her politics tended towards Labour with a touch of Liberalism'.[64] Such influences in her life were a constant reminder of the importance of her civic duty regardless of her place of residence; on the Western front or in mandated Iraq and informed her actions.

By the time of Bell's birth in the latter half of the nineteenth century, as Genna Duplisea argues, gender roles had evolved and were dependent upon class, education, wealth and opportunity enabling well-connected women to enter traditionally male spaces'.[65] Bell was privileged and used the opportunities given to her. Her acceptance at Queen's College, London (1883-86) and Lady Margaret's Hall, University of Oxford (1886-88) would result in Bell becoming the first woman to receive a first-class honours 'degree-equivalent' in Modern History after only two years of study.[66] Such institutions endorsed vigorous debate within a mixed gender space and such was her confidence in her knowledge that she delivered her viva voce and argued with an examiner with the assertion and eloquence that would impress the *Mesopotamian Campaign* army generals Lake, Cowper, Shaw and Money thirty years later.[67] Bell's prestigious education and what David G. Hogarth C.M.G., F.R.G.S. (1862-1927) Keeper of the Ashmolean (1909-27) and Acting Director of the Arab Bureau (1916) called an 'extraordinary visual memory; a *memoria technica',* would prove major factors in her invitation to join the male arena of Middle Eastern war and statesmanship in WW1 and interwar years.[68]

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[62] In 1907, Florence would publish the study *At the Works - A study of a Manufacturing Town, Middlesbourgh, Yorkshire,* a study based on years of interviews and unromantic observations of the challenges faced by working-class factory workers in Florence's father-in-law's ironworks aimed at inspiring reform.

[63] Georgina Howell, *Daughter of the Desert- The Remarkable Life of Gertrude Bell* (2012), loc. 725, (Paragraph 1-2). Pan ebook.

[64] Max Mallowan, **'**Gertrude Bell-The Last Years in Iraq: Archaeological Activities **',** *IRAQ,* 38.2 (Autumn 1976) pp. 81–84 (p.81).

[65] Genna Duplisea,'Writing in the Masculine: Gertrude Lowthian Bell, Gender, and Empire', *Terrae Incognitae*, 48.1 (2016), pp. 55-75 (p.57).

[66] Women graduated for the first time from Oxford University in 1920.

[67] Janet E. Courtney, *Recollected in Tranquility* (London: William Heineman Ltd., 1926), p.104.

[68] Cox, Percy, et al. "Gertrude Bell's Journey to Hayil: Discussion." *The Geographical Journal*, 70. 1 (1927), pp.17–21 (p.17).

Bell would experience an opportunity to observe and participate in European diplomatic discussion during visits to stay with her aunt and uncle, diplomat Sir Frank Lascelles (1841-1920). During his posting to Romania in 1889, Britain was in a period of 'Splendid Isolationism' due to increasing liberalism experienced throughout Europe and America and was in the process of changing the national paradigm from traditional 'Toryism' to a hybrid of Socialism and Capitalism. A possibility that a European empire with visions of expansion would instigate war and create the need for international treaties such as the *Triple Entente* (1907) between Russia, Britain and France, would soon see an end to its isolationism. In Romania, Bell was introduced to diplomatic debate focused on the expansion of the new German Empire. H.V.F. Winstone relates an incident where Bell, at twenty-one years old, criticised a foreign statesman in discussion with Sir Frank by emphasising the importance of understanding a country not so much through politics but the people:

> 'Il me semble, Monsieur, que vous n'avez pas saisi l'esprit du peuple allemand [you do not understand the mind of the German people]'.[69]

This insight into Bell's assertiveness within a patriarchal society is paramount to understanding her character and determination to move into the traditional masculine space of politics and become a 'Person'.

During her 1892 visit to stay with Sir Frank in Tehran a developing world view of the Middle East is evident in her first published travelogue *Safar Nameh (Travel book,* 1894):

> 'as the procession of people flies past you you realise what a gulf lies between you. The East looks to itself; it asks nothing of you or your civilization'.[70]

Bell was not merely sharing an observation about 'the Orient' with her Occidental readers but was making a calculated hypothesis that Western interference could be an unwanted hindrance to Eastern governance. In Ghaderi and Wan Yahya's analysis of *Safar Nameh,* they address the concept of Western *exoticism*, a 'postcolonial term for the Western travellers' response to, and description of, differences in their culture, informed by a power relationship between cultures.' Through analysis of Bell's authorship, Ghaderi and Wan Yahya conclude 'Her response to and the representation of the cultural 'other' are too multilayered to be

[69] H.V.F. Winstone *Gertrude Bell* (London: The Anchor Press Ltd., 1978), p.24.
[70] Gertrude Bell, *Safar Nameh: Persian Pictures, a book of Travel,* reprinted as *Persian Pictures From Mountains to the Sea,* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2014).

reduced to a mere assertion of political dominance over Persia.[71] Ghaderi and Wan Yahya suggest Bell's acculturation had begun through travel, the praxis of the language and the indulgence of cross-cultural communication. Bell became fluent in Persian (Farsi) enough to write an acclaimed English translation of *Poems from the Divan of Hafez* (1897) accompanied by annotated and detailed descriptive notes.[72] Such dedication indicates an individual who wants to enter the cultural space of their host.

Each travelogue and letter written during subsequent trips to the Ottoman Arabia (1899-1914) incorporate Bell's socio-political viewpoints and represent an evolving awareness progressing from Occidental observations and comparisons in *The Desert and the Sown* (1907) to empathy and recognition of the diverse Arab 'national consciousness' in *Amurath to Amurath* (1910).

To undergo independent travel in Ottoman Arabia, Bell required a reason acceptable to the Ottoman authorities and chose archaeology:

> 'I was concerned mainly with archaeology, the results of which I did there have been published in a series of papers in *Revue Archeologique*.'[73]

Paul Collins and Charles Tripp suggest that Bell's passion for (pre-) Islamic archaeology was inspired as a student by the Ashmolean Museum; a House of Art & Archaeology in Oxford which was attached to the university.[74] Bell would be following in the footsteps of some of the greatest early twentieth-century British archaeologists including Arabists David G. Hogarth, T.E. Lawrence *Lawrence of Arabia* (1888-1935) and Sir Leonard Wooley (1880-1960) who would become her peers. Dr. Lisa Cooper's book *From Kings to Conquerors* details Bell's extensive work in the field.[75]

At the time of Bell's arrival in the Ottoman Sanjak of Jerusalem, in 1899, to learn Arabic the *Anglo-Ottoman* relationship was three hundred years old.[76] Britain had been a familiar

[71] Farah Ghaderi and Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya, 'Exoticism in Gertrude Bell's Persian Pictures', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 42.1 (2014), 123-138, (p.123).
[72] Gertrude Bell, *Poems from the Divan of Hafez* (Global Grey, 2018,) globlegreyebooks.co.
[73] Gertrude Bell, *The Desert and the Sown:Travels in Palestine and Syria* (USA: Dover Publications Inc., 2016), p.7.
[74] Paul Collins and Charles Tripp (eds.), *Gertrude Bell and Iraq - A Life and Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp.3-4.
[75] Lisa Cooper, *In Search of Kings and Conquerors: Gertrude Bell and the Archaeology of the Middle East* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2016).
[76] Doreen Ingrams, *Palestine Papers 1917-22: Seeds of Conflict* (London: John Murray, 1972), p.1.

presence in the region since Queen Elizabeth 1 had sent her first ambassador to Istanbul (Constantinople) in 1582. Through trade agreements *The Levant Company of Turkey Merchants* had opened its first factory in Aleppo, Syria, in 1592 and *The East India Company* E.E.I.C. had opened its first factory in Basra, Mesopotamia, in 1635. The Anglo-Ottoman relationship would prove victorious in the Crimean War against Russia (1853-56) and in stopping Russian occupation of Istanbul after the Russo-Ottoman War (1878).

Eugene Rogan explains that regardless of attempts at Ottomanism there was no Ottoman identity. Homogeneity did not exist across the multiple Ottoman colonies and vilayets. Rogan describes the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire and Caliphate as heterogeneous which, on losing the Russo-Ottoman war (1878), lost two-fifths of imperial land , one-fifth bringing independence to 'modern' Ottoman Balkan nations and signalling the beginning of the end of the Ottoman hegemony.[77] We can see here that Rogan uses the adjective 'modern' as a synonym for 'civilised' when applied to the Middle East: this is defined by llan Pappeas as the presence of 'industrialisation, urbanisation, hygienisation, secularisation, centralisation and politicising of societies.'[78] This description is paramount to understanding the translation of 'self -determination' and 'tutelage' as proposed by President Woodrow Wilson (1918) and the *League of Nations* which would change peaceful Arab nationalism and lead to violent revolution.[79]

For 400 years, the Ottoman Turkish Empire had exerted its control in various degrees over the now Middle East. The Empire subjected Arab people to hegemony in Mesopotamia and Syria and exerted a loose suzerainty over the Gulf Sheikhdoms (Case Study 2), North Yemen (Case Study 4) and Central Arabia. The diverse Anglo-Arab relationships between Britain and Arab sheikhs who desired independence from the Empire were in growing opposition to the Anglo-Ottoman relationship and would put a strain on it in the early twentieth century. In 1858, *The Perpetual Maritime Agreement* between the Royal Navy and Trucial Gulf Sheikhs had been signed in an attempt to stop piracy (and in Britain's case an attempt to stop the slave trade). This led to 'secret' Anglo-Arab protectorate agreements (Case Study 2).

[The geo-location of Palestine was recognised in 1920] and is absent from the Ottoman maps which shared the geolocation between the Vilayet of Beirut (North) and the Sanjak of Jerusalem (South).

[77] Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*: *The Great War in the Middle East 1914-20* (UK:Penguin Books, 2016), p.4.

[78] Ilan Pappé, *The Modern Middle East: A Social and Cultural History,* 3rd edn (London & NY: Routledge, 2014), p.3.

[79]Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and fall of Self-determination* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2019), p.45.

Rogan confirms:

> ‘the tribes of Iraq felt little loyalty towards the Sultan or revered him as Caliph. Nor did they see the British as a particular threat. Many Arab rulers at the head of the Persian Gulf had actively sought British protection against Ottoman rule’.[80]

It must be emphasised that pan-Arabism did not exist. George Antonius in his seminal book *The Arab Awakening* (1939) confirms that the populace of Ottoman Arabia, at the time of Bell's arrival, was differentiated by religion, birthplace, heritage and culture:

> ‘Christians…were in a position of distinct inferiority, and had become subjected to invidious laws of exception which worked to their detriment in matters of taxation, justice and other rights of citizenship.’[81]

He emphasised the absence of pan-Arabism by clarifying diversity in the structure and tradition of different Arab regions. Antonius explains that Arab people were ‘not solely members of nomadic towns peopling the peninsula but [all] those projecting ‘arabisation’ in the mother tongue of Arabic’.[82]

Thus the region that Bell visited and came to love was going through a very volatile period of change. In *The Desert and the Sown* (1907) she writes:

> ‘I wanted to write an account of the people I met and who accompanied me on my way and to show how it appears to them. It is better if they tell their tale. I have strung their words together as I heard them, the shepherd boy, the man at arms, around the campfire, in the black tent of the desert Arab and the guest chamber of the Druze. The cautious utterances of the Turkish and Syrian officials.’ [83]

Through travel Bell realised diversity was not only in the desires for ethnic nationalism but in the hierarchical treatment of different cultures by the Ottoman hegemon; equality did not exist. In peacetime Bell noted that difference was of little concern:

> ‘Society is divided by caste and sect and tribe into infinite numbers of groups, each one of which is following a law of its own. A man may go about in public veiled up to the eyes or in a girdle. He will excite no remark. Why should he? Like everyone else

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[80] Rogan, p.126.
[81] George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening:The Story of the Arab National Movement* (USA: Allegro Edition, 1939), p.32.
[82] Antonius, p.18.
[83] Gertrude Bell, *Desert and the Sown:Travels in Palestine and Syria* (2018), Preface: loc. 39 (paragraph 1.1). Lume online books.

> he is merely obeying his own law. So too may the European pass up and down with little interest'.[84]

Bell found that even Arabic had diversity:

> 'A very odd thing about it is that the Mohammedans use a set of words quite different from the Christians, both being Syrian Arabs so that you have to ascertain the creed of your interlocutor before you can converse with him.'[85]

Whilst travelling through Syria Bell noted interconnection of past and present everywhere: Islamic mosques had been built on Christian churches on top of pre-Abrahamic temples alongside Jewish graves carved into rocks which were recently purchased by the French for their burials:

> 'Such a spectacle of past magnificence and present squalor it would be difficult to conceive. There were inscriptions everywhere, Latin, Greek, Cufic and Arabic, built into the walls of the fellahin houses.'[86]

In wartime and disturbances, differences in ideology could and did create violence and massacre as Bell wrote in *Amurath to Amurath* (1910) in the aftermath of the *Young Turks' Revolt* (1908):

> 'The old tyranny has lifted, but it has left its shadow over the land. The five months of journeying which are recounted in this book were months of suspense and even of terror. Constitutional government trembled in the balance and was likely to be outweighed by the forces of disorder, by fanaticism, massacre and civil strife'.[87]

Travel in the Middle East was far from romantic but Bell was strong of mind and body having excelled in mountaineering in her youth (she would survive sandfly fever, pneumonia, jaundice, malaria, pleurisy and suspected Spanish Flu). Alexandra Mullen summarises that Bell's writings depict the hardships encountered 'defy[ing] the fantasy and romance of Western imagination and images of *1001 Nights,* through description of open spaces of sand, dried-up riverbeds, mud flats and volcanic rock'.[88] Her leadership of her caravan, through dangerous countryside and deserts earned her the dedication of her Armenian Catholic

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[84] Bell, *The Desert & The Sown,* p.x.
[85] Bell, *Letters* (2 February 1900) Newcastle University Library Online.
[86] Bell, *Letters* (2 May 1900) Newcastle University Library Online
[87] Bell*, Amurath to Amurath,* p.51.
[88] Alexandra Mullen, 'The Arabian Nights of Gertrude Bell', *The Hudson Review,* 54. 3 (2001), pp. 521–527 (p.521).

headman Fattuh and the respect of local people who awarded her the sobriquets *El Khatoun* (in Mesopotamia) and *Es Sitt* (in Syria) meaning 'The Lady'.

Hannah Khalil, the Palestinian creator of the RSC production *A Museum in Baghdad* (2019) admits that she had a culturally biassed opinion at the beginning of her ten years of research into Bell's life. In an interview with the *Daily Telegraph* she said:

> 'I went into this with a terribly preconceived view of her. A white woman travelling through the Middle East with her retinue. Extremely privileged, a colonist, I wanted to dislike her... [But I discovered that Bell] knew the intricacies of how the tribal system worked. She listened to them. She wasn't dabbling, she was in it for the long haul'.[89]

Khalil's research confirms that Bell co-existed with her caravan team who ensured her survival. Edward Said in his seminal book *Orientalism* (1972) makes the distinction between coexistence and control emphasising that 'there is a profound difference between the will to understand for purposes of coexistence and humanist enlargement of horizons and the will to dominate'.[90] Bell had a choice. She chose to reject the binary-model of cultural hierarchy, Bell would accept a position in WW1 British Civil Administration of Mesopotamia with this mindset, which at times made her unpopular with 'Tory' and imperialist male peers.

Bell would, with her knowledge of etiquette and the Arabic language, attempt to overcome all barriers placed in her way in the strictly patriarchal societies due to cultural and religious differences and regardless of anti-British feeling. To understand her acceptance as a woman into the *diwanya* (male space) and *harem* (female space) cultural viewpoints must be considered. In Amira Sonbol's editorial *Gulf Women,* Hatoon al Fassi explains that in the tradition of *As-Sabiyyah* (tribal/family belonging), a woman was considered to be the 'honour' of her tribe/family (Case Study 2) and, to her hosts, Bell and her country England were inseparable.[91] On a visit to the 'fierce' and independent Druze, she was greeted with the proclamation ''The English and the Druze are one''.[92] If Bell had desired 'freedom' from the country of her birth it was not and would not be forthcoming. Realising this, Bell would have been determined to display Britain in its best light to the Arab people. That she was accepted,

[89] Lucy Davies quotes Hannah Khalil in 'Gertrude Bell-The dashing ex-spy who founded Iraq's National Museum', *Daily Telegraph* (10 October 2019). https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/gertrude-bell-dashing-ex-spy-founded-iraqs-national-museum

[90] Edward Said, *Orientalism,* 25th Anniversary Edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1978) loc. 141. Vintage ebooks.

[91] Hatoon Ajwad Al-Fassi, 'Women in Eastern Arabia: Myth and Representation', in *Gulf Women*, ed. by Amira el-Azahary Sonbol (Qatar: Hamad bin Khalifa University Press, 2017), p.45.

[92] Bell, *The Desert and the Sown,* p.92.

as a woman, into such gatherings showed the respect that many Arab sheikhs had for Britain and her representation at the time of her travels.

It is important to acknowledge Bell's gratitude to the nineteenth century European travellers whose paths she took. Cooper references the maps that Bell accessed from German cartographer Heinrich Kiepert (1819-99) and his son Richard (1846-1915). Cooper states:

> 'Such maps were of tremendous interest and value to European travellers whose journeys were deeply informed by landscapes of antiquity and by the multitude of cities, military outposts, borders, roadways and ancient campaign routes that populated those regions'.[93]

An example of a renowned and respected traveller of Central Arabia was one of Bell's mentors Arabist Lady Anne Blunt (1837-1917), daughter of mathematician Ava, Lady Lovelace née Byron and founder of the Crabbet Farm Arabian Stud in England and Sheikh Obeyd in Cairo. Lady Anne had travelled many of the paths that Bell would take. Her journeys included living with the Anizah tribes of the Euphrates for three months in 1878, as detailed in her seminal book *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates* (1879) and crossing the an Nafud desert to be hosted at the Palace of ibn Rashid in Hayil as documented in *Pilgrimage to Nejd* (1881).[94] Lady Anne travelled with her husband Arabist Wilfred Blunt (1840-1922) a confirmed anti-imperialist and a contemporary and unofficial Middle Eastern advisor of the young Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965). Lady Anne would meet with Bell regularly from 1904 and share her knowledge with members of the Arab Bureau in Cairo during WW1.

In 1907, Bell took a photograph of Lady Anne sitting on her Arabian mare in her travelling clothes of traditional male Arab costume and carrying a rifle for protection.[95] Bell, admitting that she was not yet fluent in Arabic at the time, chose to retain her English clothing relating:

> 'It is wiser if he does not ingratiate himself or ape habits unless he can pass himself off so skillfully as he can pass as one of themselves. Let him treat the law respectfully but he will meet with greater respect if he adheres to his own'.[96]

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[93] Cooper, pp. 39-40.

[94] Lady Anne Blunt, *The Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates* (New York: Harper and Brothers,1879). http://www.archive.org/details/bedouintribesofe00blunrich,
A Pilgrimage to Nejd - the Cradle of the Arab Race (London: John Murray, 1881).

[95] Lady Anne's party slept in communal khans with Ottoman soldiers and travellers around a central fire. Her semblance of a male traveller was for protection. Bell travelled in caravan with three tents and travel furniture choosing not to share communal space.

[96] Bell, *The Desert and the Sown,* p.xi.

It was a sentiment echoed by T.E. Lawrence in 'Article 18' of his book *27 Articles*. Lawrence had been sent as a British military advisor to live and learn to fight in the desert with the family of Sharif Hussein al Ali al Hashemi, the future father of the *Arab Revolt* (1916) and sons Abdullah and Faisal, Kings of Transjordan and Syria and Iraq respectively. His experience made him a pan-Arabist and staunch believer in Arab nationalism. 'Article 18' warned native English speakers that the insults given to Arab hosts by making incorrect gestures or speech would be forgiven if the speaker was wearing his own national costume but not if wearing the traditional costume of the host.[97] Bell and Lawrence, albeit with a twenty years difference in age, would become staunch allies.

Photographs of Bell's adoption of items of male Arabian clothing are rare and she refused to wear the veil even in the presence of the devout Muslim Shi'a. In her position of Oriental Secretary, Bell's refusal to be veiled would have proved problematic in her initial attempts to secure audiences with the most devout Shi'a leaders. Answering only to Iran and the Ayatollah they were 'pan-Islamic' and anti-Ottoman, and later, 'anti-British'. In 1920 she wrote:

> 'Until quite recently I've been wholly cut off from them [the Shi'a] because their tenets forbid them to look upon an unveiled woman and my tenets don't permit me to veil - I think I'm right there, for it would be a tacit admission of inferiority which would put our intercourse from the first out of focus. Nor is it any good trying to make friends through the women - if the women were allowed to see me they would veil before me as if I were a man. So you see I appear to be too female for one sex and too male for the other'.[98]

Her first invitation from the prominent activist and Shi'a leader of the Sadr family (later responsible for Iraqi uprisings) was received on 14 March 1920 and the reason for being invited was her experience and understanding. She was told:

> 'It's well known that you are the most learned woman of your time and if any proof were needed it would be found in the fact that you wish to frequent the society of the learned. That's why you're here today'.[99]

In January 1909, Bell arrived in Aleppo to begin a five-month journey to Konia in Mosul through Baghdad during the aftermath of the *Young Turks Revolution* (1908). On her travels

[97] T.E. Lawrence, 'Article 18', *27 Articles* (New York:Simon & Schuster ebook, 2017) location 254..
[98] Bell, *Letters* (14 March 1920) Newcastle University Library Online.
[99] Bell, *Letters* (14 March 1920) Newcastle University Library Online.

she witnessed the chaos of revolution, a preview of what was to repeat itself in the Iraqi Revolt of 1920:

> 'In Aleppo sitting at the feet of many masters…from the highest official to the humblest labourer for hire I learnt something of the hopes and fears, the satisfaction and bewilderment…of Asia'.[100]

Rogan links the root of dissatisfaction to poverty caused by Ottoman bankruptcy which was declared in 1875 and still in evidence in Arabic regions thirty-five years later. Reduction of Ottoman territory was watched carefully by the rest of the Empire fuelling nationalist hope.[101] The strict autocratic government of Sultan Abdulhamid 11 had caused students and members of the militia to revolt between 3-24 July 1908 and revolution spread forcing the Sultan to install the Second Constitution, similar to the First (1876), which had failed in the *Tanzimat* era of modernisation (1839-76). The new government was called the *Committee for Union and Progress* C.U.P., ill-equipped to run not only Turkey but a heterogeneous Empire. Hassan Kayali details the problems 'faced by the fall [Autumn] of 1908 when the second constitutional elections were held the C.U.P. had barely formed [and] had not yet constituted itself as a political party with a coherent programme'.[102]

The Arab secret societies which had gone underground in the Sultan's rule of censorship emerged intent on establishing proto-nationalism and adopting the 1905 *The Arab National Council* 'aspirations of the Arabs to release themselves from political subjection that Turkish Imperialism and impoverishment had plunged them'.[103] Hobsbawm considers 'colonial nationalism' within an empire to be chaotic at the time of 'liberation' with the armed rebels rarely equipped to cope with the community's demands for separate independence.[104]

Bell agreed:

> 'Underlying all Turkish politics are closely interwoven problems of race and religion, stirred by exuberant promises. 'Fraternity' and 'equality' are dangerous words to scatter across an empire composed of many nationalities and controlled by a dominant race'[105]

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[100] Bell, *Amurath to Amurath,* p.4.
[101] Rogan, pp. 2-4.
[102] Hasan Kayali, 'Elections and the Electoral Process in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1919', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27. 3 (1995), pp. 265–86 (p.271).
[103] M.A. Aziz, 'The Origins of Arab Nationalism.' Pakistan Horizon, 62. 1 (2009) pp. 59–66 (p.60).
[104] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.136.
[105] Bell, *Amurath to Amurath,* p.6.

Antonius insists that the rise in nationalism, excluding ongoing (traditional) tribal nationalism, was caused by a gradual growth of *Arabisation* through the revival of the Arab language. The teaching of Arabic had been suppressed in favour of the Ottoman Turkish *lingua franca* in Christian educational establishments opened by American and European missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century. *The Syrian Protestant College,* founded by American missionaries in 1866 with funding by America and Britain, was later renamed the *American University of Beirut* (AUB) and produced generations of independent and critical thinkers, future activists and ministers.[106]

Did Bell aggravate Arab nationalism? Turkish television affirms she did in its 2018 historical drama series *Payitaht Abdulhamid*, which portrays Bell as having a profound influence on an Arab uprising.[107] In her book *Amurath to Amurath*, Bell confirms her involvement in politics as she accepted invitations to Syrian C.U.P. committee meetings. Her question-led discussions with community leaders presented the same opportunity to crystallise their aims and objectives as did the post-WW1 U.S. *King-Crane Commission* (1919).[108] Bell would later complain in private letters that its insistence for a referendum concerning Iraqi post-war choice of self-determination unsettled the people, as she did in 1909 on leaving C.U.P. committee meetings followed by cries of 'Yasha Inghilterra [Long live England]'.[109]

Bell's visit to Baghdad on that journey in 1909 gave her an insight into the challenges encountered by a Mesopotamian 'alien' government. On attending a Persian dinner, she was informed that:

> 'Constitutional government was not likely to be popular in the province of Irak(q). Men of property were all reactionary, they had got together their wealth by force and oppression…to forbid corruption demanded a rise in salary or meant starvation'.[110]

Her travelogue details the problems of the C.U.P. Constitutional Government which had inflamed the violent traditional nationalism of tribes, the majority of whom were Shi'a Muslim. Objection to Ottoman army conscription, paying taxes and refusal to adhere to rules other than tribal or Sharia Law resulted in violent disturbances around and along the Tigris as

[106] Antonius, p.79.
[107] 'Gertrude Bell in Hediyesi' 42-44 Bolum, *Payitaht Abdulhamid,* E.S. Film (16 March 16 - 20 April 2018) Turkish Documentary https://youtu.be/x3GN2m-tN
[108] *The King-Crane Commission* was a 1919 commission set up during WW1 Peace Talks. An American investigation conducted as a tour of Syrian Ottoman vilayets to discover local requirements for the achievement of Arab self-determination.
[109] Bell, *Amurath to Amurath*, p.6.
[110] Bell, *Amurath to Amurath,* p.102.

steamboat passengers were murdered. At the time of her arrival two tribes had held up heavy traffic along the Tigris for five days using smuggled weapons 'from ibn Sabah in Kuwait' (Case Study 2).[111] Through her discussion with labourers, she realised that progress would be encouraged through modern irrigation methods and for aggressive tribal members 'dependent for their existence upon the river-side crops; the control of water would prove an effective check on revolt'.[112] In 1917, the retreating Ottomans would use the 'scorched earth policy' to create famine and employ 'hydraulic' warfare by the damming of the Middle Euphrates, as described by Faisal Husain.[113] Bell would later insist to H.M.G. that:

> 'Civilisation is better served by amicable cooperation…than by attempting to ignore and suppress divergence'.[114]

Bell's use of more humane solutions would, if they had been adopted, have proved preferable to the R.A.F. policy of bombing tribes as proposed by A.T. Wilson in the period of interim British Civil administration.

During her time in Baghdad, Bell learnt that man-made irrigation had, over the millennia, resulted in the growth of new cities, grain cultivation and economic progress at the expense of the hinterland. She surmised that this was a prominent cause of desertification, famine, poverty and lawlessness. She put her knowledge to use at the end of 1909 in the Royal Geographical Society's discussion *Mesopotamia Past, Present and Future* in which C.U.P. Irrigation advisor Sir William Willcock (1852-1932) was the Guest Speaker. Whilst Bell agreed that Willcock's plan for a new railway and irrigation network would bring peace and order to a 'turbulent' Mesopotamia, she put forward her argument against the proposed route of a new railway which would exclude ancient Arab trade routes on which cities had grown and depended upon water for their livelihood. During the discussion she stated:

> ''I know that the Germans are proposing to tap the grain-growing regions around Aleppo but I would have thought it would be better that some arrangements could be made rather than divert an ancient and well used traffic line''.[115]

Thus her championship of Arab people was being publicly sounded.

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[111] Bell, *Amurath to Amurath,* p.174.
[112] Bell, *Amurath to Amurath,* p.117.
[113] Faisal Husain, 'In the Bellies of the Marshes: Water and Power in the Countryside of Ottoman Baghdad', *Environmental History*, 19.4 (2014), pp. 638–64 (pp.648-649).
[114] H.V.F. Winstone, *Gertrude Bell* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978), p.199.
[115] Brown, Hanbury, et al. 'Mesopotamia: Past, Present, and Future: Discussion', *The Geographical Journal*, 35. 1 (1910), pp. 15–18 (p.16).

Bell observed that the Arab people were once again let down by the Ottoman government and nationalism was rising. Feroz Ahmad blames the C.U.P. 's *turkification* for not only destroying Arab faith in constitutional promises but further inflaming Arab notables, who were denied the promised equality and opportunity to develop their regions.[116] Turkish centralisation of revenue resulted in empty governorate treasuries, a rise in oligarchy and corruption.

In his autobiography *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926), T.E Lawrence highlighted the growth of the Arab 'secret' societies during Turkification; the Syrian civilian society *Al Fatat* (1909) which funded the first international *Arab Council i*n Paris in 1913 and the military society *al Ahd-al Iraq* (1914) composed of Iraqi-born men who infiltrated the Ottoman army with the aim to 'acquire military knowledge [become officers] turn against their masters'.[117] They would join the *Arab Revolt* (1916-18) under Faisal to fight for Arab independence of Iraq. In 1920, using British weapons and the support of the still-active Ottoman military, they would oppose the *League of Nations* British mandate of Iraq in the Iraqi Revolt (1920). What Bell learnt from her 1909 journey was that *any* alien government in the region would be the cause of a nationalist uprising if weapons, ammunition and funding were made available.

Antonius states that Britain had no knowledge about these secret organisations at the beginning of the war or the Sharif's links with them through his sons, and that if they had known, the Sharif Hussein's correspondence with Britain would have been taken more seriously.[118] It is probable that Bell would have known of their existence when she suggested an Arab Revolt to overthrow the Ottomans in her letter dated 5 September 1914 which was circulated and sent to the Foreign Minister.[119]

Was Bell a spy for Britain? It could be argued that this is ambiguous due to the normal practice of cataloguing personal experiences and reporting news in Victorian England. As an independent traveller with no restrictions or censorship, it can indeed be concluded that Bell was an open informer (in the mode of today's travel-journalist or in times of war, a war

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[116] Feroz Ahmad, 'War and Society under the Young Turks, 1908-18', *Review* (Fernand Braudel Centre), 11.2 (1988), pp. 265-286.
[117] T.E. Lawrence/ Lawrence of Arabia, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom & the Evolution of a Revolt* (2015), p.33. e-artnow.
[118] Antonius, p.166.
[119] Janet Wallach, *Desert Queen, The extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell: Adventurer, Advisor to Kings, Ally of Lawrence of Arabia,* 2nd edn (U.S.A.: Anchor Books Edition, 2005), p.134.

correspondent). However, it was common practice for middle-class Victorian women to keep diaries and journals documenting every event and conversation in intimate detail.

Bell also adopted the concept of mutual exchange of information in 'conversation' with Arabic and British peers. The reporting of news, before the freedom of press was encouraged by C.U.P., was a verbal exchange in regions without access to telegraph, telephone or regular desert mail service. Dinners hosted by Sheikhs and European Residents, to which tribal members, village elders and prominent dignitaries, including Ottoman Walis, were invited, presented an opportunity for such an exchange.

Bell's information was also of interest to prominent British politicians and organisations in Britain. When in London she actively lectured, and participated in discussion at the Royal Geographical Society.

As international war became imminent, Bell's writing became focused on current developments in the region. Bell's evaluation of rapid German expansion and settlement was confirmed by George Antonius who details the existence of the German colonisation policy of Asia Minor, the *Drang Nach Osten.*[120] She shared her information with respected contacts, friends and the Royal Geographical Society.[121] Confidante Șir Valentine 'Domnul' Chirol (1852-1929), traveller and editor of *The Times* had been a recipient of many of Bell's letters from 1896 to her death and had permission to publish her information, which does not equate to the secrecy required for spying.

Domnul published a series of articles called *The Middle Eastern Question* by 1903. He, in turn, supplied Bell with contacts and information and arranged many meetings for her including her meeting with the Viceroy of India, Lord Hardinge, in 1916, and with key players at the *Paris Peace Conference* (1919-20). The records of the India Office archived at The British Museum confirm that travel information was sent by Bell regularly to David Hogarth from 1905 as contributions in his book *The Penetration of Arabia, a record of the development of Western Knowledge.*[122] Bruce Westrate states that by 1920 Hogarth had 'amassed a library of 300 volumes on Middle Eastern topography, ethnography, history and

[120] Antonius, p.75.
[121] The R.G.S. trained travellers in cartography, surveying and also rented equipment. Bell would be one of the first women to be admitted to the fellowship (1913) and received *The Gill Memorial Award* (1913) and the *Founders Medal* (1918).
[122] D.G. Hogarth, *Penetration of Arabia; a record of the development of Western Knowledge* (New York: F.A. Stokes, 1904).

theology.'[123] Through the publication of books and R.G.S. articles her information was made public. Such information would be of significance in planning desert warfare, nine years later, and undoubtedly was the reason why Hogarth recommended Bell as a member of British Intelligence in WW1 Middle East.

What is evident in Bell's travelogues was that nothing could dissuade her from achieving her goals regardless of the opinion of others stating the contrary, an assertiveness that resulted in accusations of authoritarianism in her later years.[124] Bell refused to cancel her plans to travel through turbulent and uncharted areas of Central Arabia, in the winter of 1913-14 as requested by Britain, regardless of how important her maps would prove. The Great tribes of Al Rashid and Al Saud were in battle once again for territorial supremacy of Nejd and Janet Wallach writes 'Sir Louis Mallet, Ambassador to Constantinople, informed the Foreign Office ''there is considerable unrest among the Arabs…[Ottoman and British] Government has disclaimed all responsibility in the case of Miss Bell'''.[125]

Bell reported:

> 'At Zizia on the Hejaz Railway I was stopped by the Ottoman Government and had to give the local military written assurance that neither they nor the government were responsible for my safety.'[126]

At the same time she received a telegram saying that the British Government would disclaim her if she went towards an-Nafud.[127] Ottoman and British authorities could not persuade her to abandon her plans to journey to Jabal Shammar (Northern Arabia) and Hayil, to the emirate of the young Saud bin Abdulaziz Ibn Rashid (1898-1920). Such an act would take her through the treacherous an-Nafud desert. By going she was branded, as she described, an 'outlaw'.[128]Attacked en-route and saved by two sheikhs, in Hayil, without Ottoman permission to travel, Bell was held captive for eleven days in the al Rashid stronghold. Her account, presented in her R.G.S. talk *A Journey in Northern Arabia*, depicts that she was not allowed liberty whilst awaiting Ibn Rashid's return from a raiding party, but that she was well treated and given permission to photograph the area before she left.

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[123] Bruce Westrate, *The Arab Bureau; Middle Eastern Policy in the Middle East, 1916-20* (U.S.A.: Pennsylvania University Press, 2015), p.36.
[124] Mallowen, p.81.
[125] Wallach, p.113.
[126] Gertrude Lowthian Bell, 'A Journey in Northern Arabia', *The Geographical Journal*, 44.1 (1914), pp.76-77 (p.77).
[127] D.G.Hogarth, 'Gertrude Bell's Journey to Hayil.' *The Geographical Journal*, 70. 1 (1927), pp. 1–17 (p.5).
[128] Gertrude Bell, *The Arabian Diaries, 1913-14,* ed. by Rosemary O'Brien (Syracuse University Press, 2000) p.22. E-book.

Bell's journey would prove successful albeit with no support from the British government, in her cartography and ethnography of uncharted regions (by Europeans). In his 1927 tribute to Bell after her death Hogarth recounted Bell's journey to Hayil (1913-14) stating:

> 'She put her cartographic material collected on that journey at the disposal of the War Office and Royal Geographical Society, and her route plotted throughout on a Million map'.[129]

Bell's independent travels had created a wealth of knowledge which would be invaluable to Britain in WW1.

On 1 August 1914 Germany declared war on Russia and two days later on France. Following the German violation of Belgian neutrality, Britain gave an ultimatum to Germany and then declared war on 4 August. In the meantime, on 2 August 1914, the Ottoman-German alliance had been ratified and although this did not commit the Ottoman Empire to supporting Germany in a wider war, in late October the Ottoman Navy launched attacks on Russian ports, which ensured that the Empire would join in the *Central Powers* against the *Triple Entente.*

This imperial war would bring the people of their colonies to fight against each other and ultimately request independence in the *New World Order* post-WW1. Bell was concerned about the highly influential Great Tribes of Arabia who determined the allegiance of smaller tribes in the Arabian Peninsula (Case Study 2). The Great Sheikhs would continue their enmity against each other and the desert would become the battleground for two power games; the imperial war and the battle for the title of *King of Arabia* between the House of Saud, the House of Rashid, and (later) the Emir of Hijjaz (The Sharif).

Regardless of her vast experience, expertise and contacts Bell's request to join the British war efforts in the Middle East was refused, the region considered too dangerous for a woman in war time. Bell's biographer Janet Wallach writes:

> 'Gertrude, once a bane of British officials, became a source of vital information about the East. She was asked for a full report on what she had learnt from Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia, and on 5 September 1914 sent her assessment to the director of Military Operations in Cairo, who immediately passed it on to the Foreign Secretary.[130]

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[129] D. G Hogarth, 'Gertrude Bell's Journey to Hayil', *The Geographical Journal*, 70.1 (1927), pp. 1–17 (p.1).
[130] Wallach, pp.134-35.

Peter Slugett names British 'interests' as the main reasons for its entry into Ottoman (Turkish)-colonised territories. This is confirmed by Bell in the official record *Review of Civil Administration in Mesopotamia* (1920):

> 'British maritime and commercial interests in the Persian Gulf, together with the political importance of India had thrust upon us responsibilities we could not avoid.'[131]

Slugett states that H.M.G. had recently acquired a major share in the *Anglo-Persian Oil Company, A.P.O.C.,* in 1914 but does not state that A.P.O.C. was a private British company founded in 1909 at Abadan, the island leased to the British by their long-standing Persian ally, the 'Great' Sheikh Khazal of Muhammara (1863-1937), Ruler of the Shatt al Arab and much of Fao Peninsula. Potential Ottoman war-time annexation would put A.P.O.C. and the Sheikh at risk. Similarly 50% shares of *The Turkish Petroleum Oil Company, T.P.C.,* were owned by A.P.O.C. Founded in pre-war 1914, its aim was to rival the expansion of American Standard Oil, which became *the Iraq Petroleum Company* in 1929.[132]

British interests and war aims cannot be separated from German interests. Travelling through the region in the winter of 1913-4 as refereed Bell documented and photographed the increasing German presence in farming and industry, which included the beginnings of the construction of the Berlin-to-Baghdad Railway, with British protectorate Kuwait as a terminus.[133] Kaiser Wilhelm 11 (1859-1941) a frequent guest of Sultan AbdulHamid 11 since the late nineteenth century, had fashioned himself as 'Hajji Wilhelm, The Protector of Muslims'.[134]

When the Ottoman Empire chose to enter WW1 by attacking its old enemy Russia it turned its back on the Anglo-Ottoman relationship and on 5 November 1914, as per the agreement of the Triple Entente, France and Britain had declared war on the Empire.

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[131] Arnold.T. Wilson and G.L. Bell, *Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia* (Scholar Select, 1920), p.1.
[132] Peter Slugett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London & New York: I.B.Tauri, 2007), p.4.
[133] Shereen Khairallah, Berlin - Baghdad Railway and German Penetration in the Near East (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1958).
[134] Erik- Jan Zurcher 'Jihad and Islam in World War 1: Studies on Ottoman Jihad on the centenary of Snouck Hurgronje 'Holy War Made in Germany' *Lucies Series* : *Debates on Islam and Society.*

On 31 October the Acting Political Resident of the Persian Gulf, Lt. Col. S.G. Knox delivered a proclamation in Arabic on behalf of H.M.G. to Arab Rulers and Shaikhs in the Persian Gulf without whose support Britain would not have been able to enter the region:

> 'Turkey had entered the war on behalf of Germany to her destruction and it seemed impossible that the Ottoman Empire could be preserved and we required them on their part that they should preserve order and tranquillity in their territories…they would be freer than before'.[135]

The British Government of India under the Viceroy Lord Hardinge had been reluctant to supply a fourth Force D in addition to the Forces A-C on different war fronts. Force D would require extensive funding and manpower in a war to pit Indian Muslim soldiers against the Islamic Ottoman Caliphate.

On 6 November whilst Bell was working with the Red Cross on the Western Front in Boulogne, British troops were landing on Ottoman-occupied soil on Fao Island at Shatt al Arab with the aim to protect A.P.O.C. Force D accompanied by Cox had been moored off the shore of Bahrain since 23 October in expectation of war.[136]

Sultan Abdulhamid called for *Jihad*, a Holy war, against Christians supporting the Triple Entente countries which was encouraged in German newspapers. All Arab Christians and Muslims supporting the Allies were at risk; displaced, massacred (all except young women who 'served' a war purpose) and persecuted by Ottoman authorities, the Armenian holocaust (1915-16) of 1M Christians being one example.

Britain received support against the Jihad from the Sharif in his fight for the Caliphate. He refused to endorse it and in 1914 approached Britain through his son Abdullah (1882-1951), future King of Transjordan, with an offer of mutual benefit; he proposed an Arab Revolt would support the British if the British acknowledged the Sharif's claim for Arab independence of the entire Ottoman Arabia. The request assumed an Arab unity; a non-existent, pan-Arabism. Abdullah's request was refused by Lord Kitchener and the India Government but in a series of letters which would become known as the disputed *Hussein-McMahon Correspondence* (1915-16), exchanged in a time of much needed Arab support, Sir Henry McMahon (1862-1949), High Commissioner to Egypt, declared that H.M.G. had no objections to the demands of the Sharif within agreed 'limitations' concerning

[135] Wilson and Bell, p.1.
[136] R.E.C ., p.2.

Syria and Mesopotamia. This matter of interpretation has been extensively researched and will not be covered in this thesis.[137] In addition, in the regions that would protest British mandate in 1920 Britain was supported by an anti-Ottoman uprising:

> 'towns and villages around the Middle Euphrates rose in rebellions that ran for two years of Ottoman rule over Southern Iraq. Iraq's Shia community had grown increasingly disaffected with their Sunni rulers and resentful that they had been drawn into a global war that affected their lives'.[138]

Realising the magnitude of the war in Mesopotamia, in November 1915, at the suggestion of Hogarth and Lawrence, Bell was invited to join the centre of British Intelligence in Cairo.[139] In an 'unofficial' and unpaid capacity Bell, at forty-seven years old, had the opportunity to create her own role.

On 7 January 1916, Sir Mark Sykes (1881-1921) Middle Eastern advisor to H.M.G., co-creator of the *Sykes-Picot Agreement* (1916) and the *Balfour Agreement* (1917) founded the *Arab Bureau* from Arab-speaking British Intelligence members. Its centre of operations was in Cairo. The Bureau's brief was to 'incite an Arab revolt by creating a realistic viewpoint of possibilities and to collate knowledge'.[140]

How did Bell find a niche in the Bureau? Due to Sykes being a young 'India man' he was an example of what Organ described as one of 'many of the political officials attached to the Indian army in Mesopotamia [who] envisaged Iraq one day coming under the Government of India's control'.[141] Bell was a woman honed on the hardships of travel through Mesopotamia.

A letter by Bell letter dated 24 January 1916 considers the exchange of series of bad tempered telegrams stated:

> 'There is a great deal of friction between India and Egypt over the 'Arab Question' which entails a serious want of cooperation between the Intel. Deps. of the two countries.'[142]

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[137] Arnold Toynbee and Isaiah Friedman, 'The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence: Comments and Reply', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 5.4 (1970), pp. 185–201.
[138] Rogan, p.217-218.
[139] H.M.G., War Office, Colonial Office, Foreign Office, Home Office, India Office.
[140] Robert O.Collins, 'Reviewed Work: The Arab Bureau: British Policy in the Middle East by Bruce C. Westrate, *The American Historical Review*, 98.5 (1993), pp. 1610–1611.
[141] Oxford alumni Captain (Sir) Leonard Woolley (1880-1960), Commander David Hogarth and Colonel Lawrence.
[142] Bell, *Letters* (24 January 1916) Newcastle University Library Online.

Elizabeth Monroe's research agrees:

> 'Nicknamed the 'Western Arabians' in WW1 men stationed in London and Cairo, were enraged by the Government of India's men whilst the Government's men were aghast at the free reign given to [Arab] nationalism by 'Arabophiles' in Cairo.[143]

Ideas for solving this problem began to take shape as confirmed on 26 January 1916 when Bell wrote:

> 'A man came down from Simla to see me and spent a long day discussing how we should best co-operate in Intelligence work, so that the same ground should not be covered twice over by Egypt and by India. That was most profitable and I sent my scheme to Cairo for an approval which I think I shall get'.[144]

Bell's plan for creating an information network was agreed. Realising a need for collaboration in Delhi, Hardinge (1910-16) gave permission for Bell to have access to important data and a request was made that she become an editor of the *Gazetteer Arabia*. Bell became an editor of *The Gazetteer* (a geographical dictionary with details about the Persian Gulf, Persian Oman and Central Arabia).

To formally request and receive information from British Intelligence in the traditionally male arena of war, was challenging and required that her position be made official. In March 1916 such was her reputation for efficiency and hard work that, at the request of Viceroy Lord Hardinge and his successor Lord Chelmsford (1916-21) Bell was offered a position in Basra in the India Expeditionary Force D.

A secret letter on 28 May, 1916, from the Viceroy of India to the Foreign Department of India Government detailed Lawrence's recent work in India in several undisclosed projects, and included Lawrence's suggestion, seconded by Cox, that Bell was better qualified than any male candidate, to be appointed in the official role of Corresponding Officer between Cairo and Mesopotamia.[145] Bell would rise to the position of Oriental Secretary under Cox. One brief was to collect and report information in the circulated *Arab Bulletin* designed by Hogarth. The book *The Arab War* is a collection of some of Bell's information. In its introduction Lord Kinahan Cornwallis (1883-1959) a friend of Bell, member of the Arab

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[143] Monroe, p.36.
[144] Bell, *Letters* (26 January 1916) Newcastle University Library Online.
[145] File 4097/1914 Pt 3 'Mesopotamia: administration; personnel; military officers appointed to civil administration' [343r] (695/709), *British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers*, IOR/L/PS/10/515, in Qatar Digital Library.

Bureau, advisor to King Faisal and WW2 British Ambassador to Iraq (Case Study 3), wrote a commendation confirming Bell's Arab-centricity:

> 'Each [bulletin] was complete in itself, whether to describe a system, an individual, or a phase in tribal history…she wrote for an official purpose but nothing could spoil the freshness or vividness of her style or terseness of her descriptions. Throughout them can be seen her breadth of knowledge and the sympathy for the people she loved so well'.[146]

It could be said that Bell, through cultivating relationships, worked towards British colonisation of Iraq. However, Basra and Baghdad were not officially colonised by Britain. The *Review of Civil Administration of Mesopotamia* details the reason why Britain entered Basra:

> 'After the defeat of 17 November, the Turks retreated, abandoning Basrah…left at the mercy of fleeing tribesmen and cut-throats who applied themselves to the task of looting the Customs House and the bazaars. Urgent messages from the local [Arab] magnates as well as the British Consul were sent to the Force bidding it hasten. We entered the town on 22 November to find the House in flames and the population in great anxiety'.[147]

Annexing was a common practice in wars of the 'Old World Order' (pre-WW1) but became illegal post-WW1 and H.V. Rothwell states that the suggestion by Cox and Lord Hardinge to annex Basra was refused by H.M.G. owing to its wartime pledge to Allies not to annex. 'The Middle East' was not formally 'through annexation and full subordination to the Crown' part of the British Empire.[148] The Turkish administration had fled with recent registers, leaving the British Administration *in situ* in an unprecedented situation with little H.M.G. support and at the mercy of local uprisings and Ottoman return. It would cause problems if daily life did not run smoothly, as Bell had prophesied in 1909:

> 'The plain man …did not trouble his head with fiscal problems - he judged the new government by immediate results'.[149]

Bell's official documentation disputes the statement of Slugett that Civil Administration was

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[146] Gertrude Bell, *The Arab War*, (Selwa Press, 2012) p.3. SelwaDigital.com.
[147] Wilson and Bell, p.3
[148] Glen Balfour-Paul, 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East', in Judith Brown and W.M.Roger Louis (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV: The Twentieth Century*, The Oxford History of the British Empire (3 Oct. 2011). Abstract. Oxford Academic online edn,
[149] Bell, *Amurath to Amurath,* p.7.

imported. Britain created Organic Law, a hybrid of Ottoman and British laws.[150] She documented the original aims:

> '[to]keep intact the Turkish System to which the local people were accustomed but free it from corruption and abuses, and increase efficiency…Turkish changed to Arabic which satisfied local sentiment'.[151]

Such a change of lingua franca would make Bell indispensable as a fluent speaker and scribe of Arabic. In 1920 Bell protested to her parents that T.E. Lawrence's post-war criticisms of the British Civil Administration in the British press were untrue:

> 'T.E.L. again: when he says we have forced the English language on the country it's not only a lie but he also knows it is. Every jot and titch of official work is done in Arabic; in schools, law courts, hospitals, no other language is used. It's the first time that has happened since the fall of the Abbasids'.[152]

Hobsbawm infers that language of a nation was central to the creation of national identity.[153] By Lawrence falsely insisting that *Anglicisation* had taken place, he was deliberately suggesting an act of British colonisation.

Bell's insistence on the use of (classical) Arabic removed official British sovereignty. To Bell the use of the Arab language was a move towards independence. She became an advocate for the training of young Arab effendis in the role of inspectors, reducing the number of anglo-centric British staff.[154] In private letters, Bell would be critical of Cox employing non-Arabic speakers in prominent positions such as a 'Mr Garbett' appointed in 1920 as Civil Secretary, who put into place unpopular propaganda and informers due to cultural ignorance.[155] Such men counteracted Bell's attempt to create coexistence. To that end, Bell published the educational *The Arab of Mesopotamia* for new arrivals.

Frustrated in her new role, she complained that the generals were constantly asked for a clear statement on future policy and they were unable to get permission (to go ahead). Howell refers to Bell's anger over British delays in decision-making which had resulted in the murder

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[150] Slugett, p.6.
[151] Wilson and Bell, p.6.
[152] Bell, *Letters* (5 September 1920) Newcastle University Library Online
[153] Hobsbawm, p.102-3.
[154] A.T. Wilson, *Loyalties in Mesopotamia, 1914-17* (1930), p.32. Digital Library of India-Item 20.15.77288
[155] Bell, *Letters* (I November 1920) Newcastle University Library Online.

of lone Political Officers overseeing the administration of turbulent districts without protection.[156] A plan was paramount.

Unknown to Cox and Bell until 1917, such a plan had been created in secrecy: *The Sykes-Picot Agreement,* signed in May 1916 between Britain, France and Russia, focussed on the potentially divide of Ottoman Arabia at the end of the war (Palestine and Transjordan were not included). Nicholas Comaratta clarifies Bell's position:

> 'Syke's negotiations ignored the opinion of scholastic administrators who worked almost exclusively in the Middle East and developed strong self-determination ideologies through their direct experiences with the local culture and people… Most notable of these being T.E. Lawrence and Gertrude Bell and along with other notables petitioned to move forward with a policy supporting independence in the Middle East'.

Comaratta puts the blame of the Middle Eastern Sykes-Picot borders squarely on Sykes and imperial ideology, emphasising that Lawrence and Bell's voices were silenced by 'imperial machinations'.[157] Antonius agrees but states that by 1917 Sykes had serious misgivings and had moved away from his position of 1916. In a letter written to Lord Cecil in October 1918, Antonious insists that Sykes had changed his mind and conformed to Bell and Lawrence's way of thinking emphasising that it was necessary 'to foster and revive Arab civilisation and promote Arab unity with a view to preparing them for ultimate independence.'[158] Sykes would die at the age of thirty-nine during the *Paris Peace Conference* (1919) of suspected Spanish Flu without the chance to change his plan.

The act of secrecy put Bell as Oriental Secretary in a very difficult position with Arab notables. As early as 18 February 1916 she had insisted:

> 'When the principle of the government at home is to keep all matters in strictly watertight compartments it devolves upon the various branches to establish and maintain a close understanding of one another's doings'[159]

That Bell did not know about the Agreement until 1917 was not taken into consideration in 2016 by Al Jazeera World's docu-drama *Sykes-Picot: Lines in the Sand.* It included a report by US associate professor of history Ibrahim Al-Marashi, co-author of *The Modern State of*

[156] Howell, p.337.
[157] Nicholas Comaratta, 'Mark Sykes, the British Arabists and the Enduring Consequences of the Sykes-Picot Agreement', *Historical Perspectives: Santa Clara University Undergraduate Journal of History, Series II*, 20.10 (2015), pp 97-124 (pp 98-99).
[158] Antonius, p. 251.
[159] Bell, *Letters* (18 February1916) Newcastle University Library Online.

Iraq, entitled *The Women Behind Sykes-Picot* which claims that Bell in 1916 was a key-player in the creation of the Agreement:

> 'In some respects, she is remembered along the lines of Sykes and Picot, Europeans who drew up the borders of the region. In the words of the late journalist, Anthony Shadid: 'Here, the new Iraq looks like the old one, imbued with politics that might be familiar to Gertrude Bell, the British diplomat and adventurer who drew the country's borders after World War I. Even Nicole Kidman, who plays Bell in the film *Queen of the Desert* states "She basically defined the borders between Iraq and Jordan that exist today, borders that she negotiated between Churchill and different Arab leaders."'[160]

Dates refute this comment as on 16 May 1916, the date of signing the Agreement, Bell was not yet in a position of authority and had only recently moved to Basra. In addition, Sykes disliked her. He did not like Arabs or Bell's vocal support of them, writing to his wife 'she is a flat-chested, man-woman, globe trotting, rump-waggling blithering ass.'[161] Bell's opinion would not have been requested.

Similarly, Al Marashi has used a tertiary source or an 'imagining' and quoted a sentence from a film script which, as professor, will influence his students. According to Harold Dickson (Case Study 2), Bell did not 'create' the borders of Iraq as suggested by al Marashi and James Buchan in his article 'Miss Bell's Lines in the Sand'.[162] Dickson's eye-witness account of the *Uqair Conference* border agreement, which Bell was not invited to attend in 1922, reputes the assumption. He insisted that representatives underwent much discussion. Whilst Bell's advice and expertise in cartography would naturally have been requested by Cox, and reported in her letters, the final decision to create borders and *neutral zones* for protection and the sharing of potential oil wells between Iraq/Kuwait and Saudi/Kuwait (Case Study 2) was made after several days of discussion between the representative for Iraq, Sana Beg, and Ibn Saud when Cox 'drew a red pencil' on a map to mark agreed borders'. [163]

Why was Bell absent from such an important occasion? She had previously attended all-male gatherings. Winstone attributes Bell's absence to Ibn Saud's refusal of women in the male

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[160] Ibrahim Al-Marashi, 'The Women Behind Sykes-Picot', *Al Jazeera World* (22 May 1916). https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2016/5/22/the-women-behind-sykes-picot.
[161] Rory Miller, 'Kingmakers: the Invention of the Modern Middle East by K. Meyer & S. B. Brysac', *Reviews in History* (London: W. W. Norton, 2008).
[162] James Buchan, 'Miss Bell's Lines in the Sand', *The Guardian* (12 March, 2003). https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/mar/12/iraq.jamesbuchan
[163] H.R.P. Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbours* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1956), p.274.

space.[164] In Autumn 1916 Ibn Saud inspected the British troops and weaponry, an exercise to boost the morale of Arab fighters that had been hosted by Bell. Whilst the appointment of Bell as hostess demonstrates the British paradigm shift from patriarchal privilege to genderless meritocracy, it was a bad choice. Bell's gender and position in the military did not adhere to Ibn Saud's cultural understanding , despite his great respect for the women of his family (Case Study 2). Winstone cites Philby:

> "he certainly did not like her, while the fact she was accorded precedence, not only over himself but British civil and military chiefs did not seem to him to be in the keeping of the dignity of man."'[165]

In 1917 Bell was contributory to the fall of Ottoman Baghdad to the British:

> 'On the British advance to Baghdad over terrain she (Bell) knew better than any serving British officer, she drafted maps that were instrumental in the safe passage of the Imperial forces to Baghdad which fell to the British on March 10, 1917'. [166]

The army entered Baghdad under General Stanley Maude (1864-1917) accompanied by (Major General) Sir Percy Cox. Maude's proclamation was met with scenes of jubilation in the streets, if not by those who had profited from Ottoman rule. General Maude's declaration referred to the historical relationship between Britain and Baghdad:

> 'our armies do not come into your cities...as conquerors but as liberators. For 200 years the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. The Germans and Turks have despoiled you and yours…'[167]

What was Bell's position? Dr Helen Gregg, writing for the US Army College in her analysis of military and grand strategy called Bell a Military and Grand strategist:

> 'Bell was able to shape British strategy in the region from 1915 to 1926 because she was a woman, not in spite of being a woman. Bell had access to both men and women within the local population; she used gender-specific skills (such as throwing parties) as a means of connecting and influencing key actors in the region'.[168]

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[164] H.V.F. Winstone, *Gertrude Bell* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978) p.188.
[165] Winstone cites Philby, pp.188-89.
[166] Gertrude Bell, *The Arab War:Reports reprinted from the Secret 'Arab Bulletin'* (Selwapress 2012) Introduction p.45. E-book.
[167] 'Baghdad', *British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers,* IOR/L/PS/18/B253, in Qatar Digital Library <https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055
[168] Heather S. Gregg, *The Grand Strategy of Gertrude Bell: From the Arab Bureau to the Creation of Iraq*

Through Bell's detailed information Lawrence, working with the supply of British ammunition and funding, compasses and Arabic desert skills, such as measuring distances in 'camel time', assisted the Arab division of British forces to victory. Brigadier General Sir William Clayton (1875-1929), Lawrence's superior, stated 'I attribute much of the success of Colonel Lawrence's enterprises to the information & study in which Miss Bell had a very large hand'.[169] Examples of her gender specific skills were made evident on her arrival in Baghdad, seven days after Cox. Bell immediately visited The Naqib Abd Al Rahman Al Gillani (1841-1927), an educated and aged descendant of The Prophet Mohammed P.B.U.H., a gentleman and a man highly respected by all religious groups throughout the region. Bell had first met The Naqib in Baghdad in 1909 in peacetime.[170] In war-time, The Naqib referred to himself 'a spoil of war' yet agreed, with Bell's persuasion, to become Head of The Council of State over Arab ministers in 1920, but declined the offer of kingship on the excuse of age and religious grounds. He would finally accept the role of Prime Minister in King Faisal 1's first Constitutional government after Faisal's persuasion. The relationship between Bell and The Naqib contradicts Dr Toby Dodge's assumption of Bell, as cited by Gregg, that she would 'portray [in her private letters] the Iraqi population as mute and passive, favouring, when articulate at all, benign British rule'.[171]

Then in 1917 two new players entered the arena; Bolshevik Russia and America. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 had resulted in an armistice with Germany, on 22 December, in which Russia agreed to relinquish all ties with the Allies. Propaganda against the imperialist Tsarist regime was increased by publishing details of its acceptance of the *Sykes-Picot Agreement,* in which Russia would receive Istanbul. This information was used by the Ottoman government in an unsuccessful attempt to humiliate the Sharif and the Arab Revolt but succeeded in creating a reputation that Hashemite dynasties were linked with British colonialism. Cox and Bell had to calm worried sheikhs in Iraq with little information.[172]

(Carlisle: US Army War College Press, 2022).
https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/950.

[169] Cox, Percy, et al, pp.17–21, (p.19).
[170] Bell, *Amurath to Amurath,* pp.122-23.
[171] Gregg citing Toby Dodge, p.4
[172] Slugett, p.12.

America's act of joining the Allies resulted in its demand for British transparency. Pederson emphasises that from the entry of the Americans into WW1 Britain was accountable to the Allies, and later to the *League of Nations* committees for war time activities and post-war plans in the region.[173] Frustrated by British secrecy, no obvious war mission and a publicly outed design for British post-war imperial expansion, President Woodrow Wilson announced his *14-point* plan to bring the war to a close and to ensure peace in January 1918. The announcement was made without consultation with fellow Allies. On the basis of the announcement and having experienced defeat and bankruptcy in the Middle East, the Ottomans sued for peace at Mudros on 31 October 1918. It would be two years before the *Treaty of Sevres* (1920) was signed with the Ottomans, years of uncertainty, financial investment and danger for the British Civil Administration in Iraq.

In November Cox was posted to Iran to secure the *Anglo-Persian Treaty* and A.P.O.C. Sir Arnold T. Wilson (1884-1940), Cox's deputy, became Acting Civil Commissioner. Georgina Howell states that Wilson, an 'India man', in the process of closing the Arab Bureau effectively demoted Bell from Oriental Secretary to (Assistant) Political Officer. 'He did not involve her in policy as Cox had done, nor consult her before making decisions'.[174] Due to a continuation of Jihad, the drive towards violent nationalism combined with British government indecision resulted in Wilson making the decision that strict military rule assisted by R.A.F. bombing. Bell wrote to her father on 29 September 1919 that 'India is a striking example of how not to do things'.[175]

Two years later Bell was contemplating a government of Iraqi notables as documented by H.V.F. Winstone citing Bell's letter in 1920 to T.E. Lawrence:

> 'I have for some time past been bringing up very forcibly…the content to the argument that we cannot put up an Arab Government here before signing the peace with Turkey is quite nonsense'.[176]

[173] Pederson, p.4.
[174] Howell, *Daughter of the Desert,* p. 326.
[175] Bell, *Letters* (29 September 1919) Newcastle University Library Online.
[176] Winstone, p.225.

A.T. Wilson disagreed:

> 'The fundamental assumption [of Bell] is that an Arab state in Mesopotamia…and the recognition of a local scheme of government would be practicable and popular. I believe it would be impossible to create a sovereign state by diplomatic or administrative means'.[177]

Bell's American friend and educationalist Reverend John Van Ess agreed with Wilson in his opinion that Bell was 'too romantic in her unshakeable belief in Arab independence.'[178] Van Ess' distrust in the stability of a proposed centralised Arab government post-WW1, due to conflicting ideologies, supported Wilson's case for localised rather than centralised government.

Such was the Bell-Wilson animosity that Bell was almost removed from her position because of Bell's insistence on the importance of discussing all developments with Arab notables:

> 'I gave one of my Arab friends here a bit of information I ought not technically to have given. He [Wilson] told me my indiscretions were intolerable and I should never see another paper in the office…you have done more harm here than anyone….you and your Amir'.[179]

On 10 April 1920, Bell wrote about her concerns for Wilson's hard-line tactics occurring at a time of uncertainty:

> 'we are on the edge of a pretty considerable Arab nationalist demonstration with which I'm in a good deal of sympathy (but) I do feel if we leave this country it will go to the dogs and it will be occupied by seven devils a good deal worse than when we came'.[180]

From posteriori knowledge of 1909, Bell knew that independence without adequate military protection in the Middle East opens the door to displacement, ethnic cleansing and massacre. It concerned her greatly that Britain adopted a non-interference policy with regard to the atrocities committed by Russians and the Ottomans as documented by Howell. [181] Bell wrote:

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[177] Despatch from Civil Commissioner, Mesopotamia, to Secretary of State for India' [89r] (2/22), *British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers,* IOR/L/PS/18/B337, in Qatar Digital Library <https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100023576037.0x000004>

[178] Cox, Percy, et al., 'Gertrude Bell's Journey to Hayil: Discussion', *The Geographical Journal,* 70.1 (1927), pp. 17–21.

[179] Winstone, p.224.

[180] Bell, *Letters* (10 April 1920) Newcastle University Library Online.

[181] Howell, *Daughter of the Desert,* pp. 332-8.

> '[if] we allow ourselves to be influenced by any other consideration…other than the well being of the country itself and its people we shall be guilty of a shameless act of deliberate dishonesty.'[182]

Ethnic cleansing, a practice that has been deployed by emirates in the region over centuries, was a serious concern. Pederson confirms that Kurdish protest for an independent Kurdistan was made all the more necessary when they realised that the removal of British military support from Iraq [would] encourage 'ethnic cleansing'.[183] Bell's involvement in Anglo-Kurdish politics must be taken as separate to her involvement in Anglo-Arab affairs and this will not be covered by the remit of this thesis.

The announcement of the League of Nations' *Mandates* at *The San Remo Conference* on 25 April 1920, placed Syria under the French Mandate and Mesopotamia under the British Mandate in a similar distribution to the Sykes-Picot Agreement. As Bell prophesied it inflamed Arab nationalists who felt betrayed by the British. As in 1908, with C.U.P. promises, they had been asked to share their ideas and requirements for government with the U.S. *King-Crane Commission* in Syria and British *Mesopotamian referendums* in Iraq to no avail.

Crozier describes the problems created by the Paris Peace Conference in the establishment of the Mandate System, referencing Article 22 of the League Covenant (257) which stated that 'tutelage of the inhabitants of the territories (German and Turkish) was to be entrusted to advanced nations' and countries would be called 'Mandates on behalf of the League'.[184] It had been agreed by the League that 'tutelage' in the creation of a 'modernised' nation would be given to Iraq (and Syria) but not the traditionally tribal Arab Peninsula. The reason for differentiation was that only Mesopotamia and Syria were currently colonised under Ottoman sovereignty at the time. Pederson states that Iraq could legally have entered the League immediately under the mandate, which confirmed that Iraq (vilayets of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul) was formally recognised as an independent state in name though not yet in fact.[185]

The oil concession in the region was given to the British-controlled Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC), which had held concessionary rights to the Mosul province.[186] Permission

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[182] Howell, *Daughter of the Desert,* p.334.
[183] Pederson, p.89.
[184] Andrew J.Crozier, 'The Establishment of the Mandates System 1919-25: Some Problems Created by the Paris Peace Conference', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14.3, (1979), pp. 483–513. (p.484).
[185] Antonius, p.351.
[186] Edward Mead Earle, 'The Turkish Petroleum Company-A Study in Oleaginous Diplomacy',

from London was given to begin organising a *General Council of Iraq* by inviting ex-senators and councillors of the Turkish Senate and C.U.P.

Such a factor would go against the original objectives for Arab self-determination followed by Cox and Bell and increase their determination to go against H.M.G. in forging forward with a plan for an Iraqi government. However in its first meeting on 6 August arguments broke out between members.[187]

Political officers in each district noted great disturbances and the refusal to follow laws or pay taxes. Instead of independence they were presented with military rule and what they saw as colonisation; 'a mandate' of an alien country they did not want. The Sharif, his sons and Arab nationalists who had assisted Britain in the war would not ratify or recognise the Mandates, nor did the Arab nationalists and fighters of the Arab Revolt. With a promise of an Arab government advised by European advisors and heads of Ministries to become a modern Western nation under alien sovereignty, the Arab people considered it a return to colonisation, this time by an invasive Christian Empire.

On 7 November 1920 Bell realised Britain's objectives:

> 'We all thought that Arab liberties were our true goal, not only here but also in Syria and Palestine…but it is not the case'.[188]

Armed with British weapons and ammunition and convinced that Britain wanted imperial rule, members of the Al-Ahd and the tribes and villages of the Euphrates revolted on 2 July 1920. Bell remained in Baghdad, determined to be of use. Amal Vinogradov's summary *The Iraqi Revolt of 1920* considers that the Revolt took place solely on the Euphrates whilst inhabitants of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul, 12% of the 2 Million nationals, did not participate in the revolt.[189] Dr Toby Dodge's analysis of the violence of the ensuing Iraq Revolt of 1920, concludes that the creation of provisional boundaries in the formation of Iraq had incited *wataniyya* (territorial) Iraqi nationalism, a unification of inhabitants who had previously been in conflict; urban/tribal, Sunni/Shi'a sects, agricultural/shepherd groups against external Ottoman administration.[190] The Revolt led to the killing of hundreds of British inhabitants

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Political Science Quarterly 39.2 (1924), 265-279 (p.272).

[187] Wilson and Bell, p.142.

[188] Bell, *Letters* (7 November 1920) Newcastle University Library Online.

[189] Amal Vinogradov, 'The 1920 Revolt in Iraq Reconsidered: The Role of Tribes in National Politics.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 3.2 (1972), pp.123–139 (p.125).

[190] Toby Dodge, 'Bourdieu goes to Baghdad; explaining hybrid political identities in Iraq',

and troops and thousands of Arabic tribal citizens before being put down by A.T. Wilson deploying a 'peace-keeping' force which had remained after the British army had withdrawn, and the R.A.F.

Whilst revolt was preached in the mosques, much turbulence was prevented through discussions between agitators and A.T. Wilson's teams in Baghdad and Basra but if it failed whilst the most violent was stopped by R.A.F. bombing and execution of violent agitators. Dame Violet Dickson (Case Study 2), whose husband was a political officer during that time, emphasises that the uprising had been funded, encouraged and led by the influx of supporters and professional officers of Faisal. These supporters were angry at what they considered to be Britain's betrayal in allowing the French Mandate and Faisal's deposition by the French Mandate of Syria. She recounts that Bell put partial blame on the Political Officers of the revolting regions who did not adopt an Arab-centric mentality and leniency regardless of her advice. Those officers who had accepted it, such as Captain H.R.P. Dickson, experienced no trouble.[191]

On 22 August 1920, *The Times* reported Lawrence's viewpoint 'that the Iraqi rebellion was a spontaneous uprising against the British oppression in the country'.[192] Lawrence's rising 'Voice' resulted in Winston Churchill employing him as his Middle Eastern advisor.

Such was Bell's determination that A.T. Wilson was recalled to London and Cox was recalled as High Commissioner in Baghdad. In 1983, President of Iraq Saddam Hussein produced a bi-lingual film *Clash of Loyalties* based on this period in Iraq. Although it is regarded as anti-British propaganda, it highlighted Bell's support of the Arab people and A.T.Wilson's dismissal.[193]

Adom Getachew cites Susan Pederson for suggesting a post-colonial sovereignty of Britain over Iraq 'the only mandate to receive independence within the League but only after ceding economic and military privileges to Britain.'[194] Iraq could not afford to pay for an army, its Ottoman war debt and civil expenses and the British defence of borders was funded by British taxpayers.

Journal Historical Sociology, 31.1 (March 2018), p.7.

[191] Violet Dickson, *Forty Years in Kuwait* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.,1971) pp. 38-39.

[192] Winstone, pp. 224-25.

[193] *Clash of Loyalties,* dir. by Muhamed Shukri Jameel (Iraqi Film and Theater Foundation,1983). https://youtu.be/Q1qMJfQPAp4

[194] Adom Getachew, p.62.

Her concern was so great that on 7 November 2020 she reflected:

> 'I believe (learning from experience) that if we [Britain] had been wise we should not have insisted on the destruction of Turkish overlordship. We should have set up an autonomous Arab state here, under nominal Turkish suzerainty with British advice and help, thus preserving the Turkish cadre, which would have saved us many difficulties.' [195]

Money was a serious issue:

> "We shall not be able to retain the necessary troops and [with the withdrawal of British funds] the Arab Govt will have none at all for the moment and the tribes will have it pretty much their own way. And in the end they will have got what they fought for, namely a chaotic local independence; but the rest of the country will suffer for it. I think I have convinced them that though it is not our business to decide what form of Govt. they ultimately want, it is very much our business to see that the decision is a genuine one, not influenced by the intrigue of anyone.'[196]

In February 1920, the India Office had instructed Bell to create the acclaimed comprehensive *Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia.* This 150-page Blue Paper was presented in Parliament and published on 3 December 1920. In an act of authorship activism, Bell achieved her aim to enlighten the British authorities and public about Iraq history (1914-20), inclusive of budget sheets, resources, events, problems encountered in the region, British successes and British errors. Bell's detailed information ensured that the knowledge of the British advisors to Iraq prevailed over the British Coalition Government's increasingly conflicting viewpoints.

Bell's vision for a stable Iraq took shape whilst parts of the country were unstable; the Arab Government was created on 11 November 1920. Beginning with a provisional government created through the British invitation of highly respected Arab leaders from different ideologies to take up ministerial posts, this interim arrangement was before presenting a vote to the people in a general election. Between 1920-1921 Bell held Councils of State meetings in her home, trying to bring together the disparate members of a provisional government and elected assembly, assisted by Harry St. John Philby (1885-1960).[197] Such a practice had been adopted by Ambassadors' wives for centuries.[198] They were not popular with A.T. Wilson, when he was in office who considered it damaging to the British vision.

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[195] Bell, *Letters* (7 November 1920) Newcastle University Library Online.
[196] Bell, *Letters* (7-8 November 1920) Newcastle University Library Online.
[197] Winstone, p.233.
[198] Arlie Hochschild, 'The Role of the Ambassador's Wife: An Exploratory Study', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 31.1 (1969), pp. 73–87 (p. 73).

By 1921, H.M.G. had 'put' Iraq in the hands of Churchill in a bid not to burden British tax-payers further and withdrew British forces. He called *The Arab Summit,* a Middle Eastern Conference in Cairo and Jerusalem between 12-30 March 1921, attended by Cox' party; Iraqi members of the government and British advisors, Bell and Lawrence, but notably not Sayyid Talib or Faisal bin Hussein. A notable presence was A.T. Wilson in the role of Managing Director of A.P.O.C. It was agreed that Faisal would be an ideal candidate for the position of King of Iraq. Bell's support of Faisal, although he was not Iraqi-born, was based on many factors. He, unlike the Ottoman Caliph, was a direct descendent of the Prophet Mohammed P.B.U.H., he had led the Arab Revolt, was supported by the Syrian Al Fatat and Iraqi Al Ahd cells, and had been 'crowned' King of Syria by the Arab Council (reign: March-July1920). In July 1920 Faisal was accepted as 'King' in Iraq. Sir Max Mallowan, present in Baghdad at the time, recalled 'Older Iraqis...remember that Faisal was elected to the throne by an overwhelming plebiscite vote of tribes and town folk'.[199] As a tribal chief he was accepted in a tribal ceremony of Sunni Tribesmen at Ramadi prior to his coronation in Baghdad. Monarchs were traditional Arabian rulers and Faisal crowning would ensure that Britain would not be accused of retaining sovereignty. Iraq was called a constitutional monarchy by Hanoush but it must be clarified that the government Faisal shared power with was an Iraqi and not a British government.

That the Mandate of Iraq was unratified was to Britain and Iraq's advantage. Slugett argues that, with the continued unrest in 1920, it became possible for the notion of a 'mandate' to be modified to an Anglo-Iraqi 'Treaty of Alliance', allowing concessions of Iraqi nationalism.[200]

As an advisor to Faisal, Bell witnessed his refusal to sign an Anglo-Iraq Treaty the day before his coronation in 1921, insisting on an amendment to reduce British influence. Bell confirms that just before his coronation Faisal insisted on full self-determination, self-government and sovereignty and refused to accept British sovereignty:

> 'The Col. Office has sent us a red-tape cable saying that Faisal in his coronation speech must announce that the ultimate authority in the land is the High Commissioner. Faisal refuses and he is quite right. We are going, as you know, to drop the mandate and enter into treaty relations with Mesopotamia. Faisal says that from

[199] Max Mallowan, **'**Gertrude Bell-The Last Years in Iraq: Archaeological Activities **',** *IRAQ,* 38.2 (Autumn 1976), p.82.
[200] Slugett, p.35.

> the first we must recognize that he is an independent sovereign in treaty with us, otherwise he can't hold his extremists'.[201]

A hastily amended Iraq-Anglo Treaty was created, drafted by the Naqib and authorised by Sir Percy Cox, who received the wrath of H.M.G. for the authorisation. Slugett confirms that a compromise was made:

> 'Faysal withdrew his insistence on obtaining full clarification of his powers and the Colonial Office withdrew its insistence that he should announce subordination to Britain in his ascension speech'.[202]

The coronation organised by the newly appointed Arabic government, took place in Baghdad on 23 August 1921. New Iraqi flags projected symbols of a new nation. It would take another eight years before the request for Iraq's entry into the *League of Nations* was made in 1929.

What position did Bell play in Faisal's Iraq; 'kingmaker' or 'mother'? Tamara Chalabi gives a description of Bell ' with the pride of a busy mother invested in her son's success'.[203]At fifty-three years old, Bell saw Faisal as a way to unite all factions of the country and he did. She was a British advisor to a King who appointed his own Court. Faisal had been a king for three months in Syria and set up a government. Her flippant remark in a private letter should be taken in the vein it was meant. Bell was British; as Chalabi states, she would represent the restrictions on Faisal's newly-established kingship. She is wrong to state that Bell became 'subordinate' but who would experience an inclusion into the Arab female gender space, organising the Queen's diary, who, being in purdah could only meet in the harem.

Bell explains the time delay due to a lack of an Iraqi army in the country to collect taxes or defend borders, fearing safety and stability. H.M.G. wanted to withdraw the British army in 1922 due to the heavy cost to the British taxpayer and criticism in the press but Bell made powerful objections.

Bell's letter on 4 September 1921 details the way in which Faisal chose his Cabinet:

> 'Faysal says quite correctly, that these first appointments are of extreme importance to him because he will be judged by them. If he puts in figure heads just because they

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[201] Bell, *Letters* (21 August 1921) Newcastle University Library Online.
[202] Slugett, p.45
[203] Tamara Chalabi, 'Fragments of a Mirror: The Writing of Bell' in *Gertrude Bell and Iraq: A Life and Legacy,* by eds. Paul Collins and Charles Tripp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p.178.

> are known to be safe men and loyal to us, all the ardent people who want to be up and doing (and after all they are the only people who are any good) will say the new Cabinet is a farce and Faysal himself, not a king but a puppet of the English, and that won't be either to you or to me at all profitable'.[204]

Faisal continued to refuse the mandate and H.M.G. had to be persuaded that it must convince the League of Nations that a treaty was preferable to a mandate. Slugett states that due to the non-ratification of the *Treaty of Sevres* and Ataturk's expansion of Turkey (and private treaties created by the U.S.A.) the League decided to postpone its consideration of Class A-mandates.[205]

Bell's letter dated 12th October 1922 confirms the event. It states that two days after its official date had passed, the Treaty of Alliance, *the Iraq-Anglo Treaty*, surpassed the League of Nations Mandate, giving Britain a smaller advisory role and was signed by H.M.G. representative Cox and the King's representative, the Prime Minister. The Naqib had presented a document from the Iraqi government demanding the inclusion of the vilayets of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul, in their entirety.[206] Churchill was not pleased with Cox and called both Faisal and him to London. In an act that describes the strength of character that Cox had been respected for throughout the regions he refused to go.

Pederson explains that the Swiss director of the *League of Nations* William Rappard warned Britain not to proceed against the agreed mandate. Such a move would inconvenience the League which aimed to hold all mandates under the same restrictions and time scales. The fate of Iraq was not in the hands of Britain but Geneva. However 'Britain put their strategic alliances above League solidarity.[207]

Bell became Faisal's palace advisor and effective Majordomo. His Queen, in purdah, forbade bringing male and female Courts together and Bell had to attend the female Court. Bell was angry if Faisal appointed his own staff, chosen from his army supporters and friends who had their own agendas. She complained to her parents:

> 'It does take a great deal of watching. I saw in the Arab press the other day that one of the worst of scalliwags had been appointed Treasurer to Faisal's household. I've

[204] Bell, *Letters* (4 September 1921) Newcastle University Library Online.
[205] Slugett, p.46
[206] Bell, *Letters* (12 October 1922) Newcastle University Library Online.
[207] Pederson, p.263.

> known the gentleman, named Taha Lutfi, since March 1916 and I've never known him not to be a mischief maker'.[208]

Bell used her position for civic duty. Through the daily visiting of regions across Iraq, often by train, she created a punishing personal schedule and expected it of all British women in Baghdad, refusing to allow a 'colonial attitude'. Such an attitude resulted in the description of authoritarianism and a reputation for being strict on British women.[209] Echoing her family's work as civic benefactors and desiring medical, cultural and educational access for all, prior to the Revolt, Bell had started making plans to assist the philanthropy of Iraqi women.

On 29 February 1920, Bell wrote:

> 'I'm very busy trying to get a private hospital for women of the better classes - they have already organised an excellent ward in the Civil Hospital for poor women. It was when we showed them this that the well born women asked if they couldn't have something of the same kind and I replied yes if they would collect the money to pay for the building'.[210]

Although she was the secretary of the British Anti-suffrage movement in 1908, by 1922, Bell's work supporting women in Iraq was something she was proud of; muslim girls' education and hospitals. To celebrate the opening of the first civil hospital ward for impoverished women, many prominent Arabic ladies of Baghdad accepted their invitations to view and participate in a cross-cultural 'tea party', as opposed to only four British women who chose to attend the event. Those that chose not to attend subsequently received a formal letter criticising their lack of support.[211] Bell was right in her condemnation, the role of British women in Iraq was to support British efforts, which to Bell included humanitarianism.

Bell assisted with the opening and running of The Baghdad Peace Library *Maktabat al-Salam* established in Baghdad in 1920, at the suggestion of Muriel Jesse Forbes. Bell devoted energy and time to the management committee and fund raising for the library until it was transferred to the Ministry of Education in 1924.[212]

In 1923, in a period of relative calm and increased interest in archaeological excavation by prominent American universities, Cox retired and was replaced by Sir Henry Dobbs (1923-29) as High Commissioner. Although still Oriental Secretary, Bell was not included in

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[208] Rogan, p.400.
[209] Mallowen, p.82.
[210] Bell, *Letters* (29 February 1920) Newcastle University Library Online
[211] Bell, *Letters* (27 February 1920) Newcastle University Library Online
[212] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_National_Library_and_Archive

decision making as before, therefore combined her passion, archaeology with civic duty, creating an archaeological museum for Iraq.

Bell persuaded King Faisal and his government to found *The Baghdad Museum of Antiquities*.[213] Before international excavation could commence, after H.M.G. had prohibited excavations in 1918 due to the fragile nature of artefacts, Bell had to create the legally binding *Law of Excavations* for *partage* (division) to protect both national and excavator interests, without which no excavation would take place. An agreement was requested from the reluctant Iraqi government committee chaired by The Naqib who went through every point in Arabic in great detail for hours.[214] Max Mallowen, assistant to Sir Leonard Woolley, excavator of Ur, recalls that in partage, 'the rights of the Iraq Museum she defended like a tigress'.[215]

Bell was determined to respect the German archaeologists such as Robert Koldewey (1855-1925) who had made a great impression on Bell whilst attending his 'digs'.[216] Her respect for his work, and his past mentorship, resulted in her re-establishing relations and inviting the Germans to Babylon and Assur to clear their excavation houses during her period of tenure.[217] The arduous task of evaluating, cleaning, displaying and cataloguing artefacts in Arabic and English, in the brutal Iraqi summer conditions was undertaken by Bell. She refused to stop working and had created plans to open a *Baghdad School of Archaeology* for which she bequeathed £6000.

Today, the National Museum of Iraq credits Bell's work under the description of 'British author' as its founder. Originally *The Baghdad Archaeological Museum,* it *was* officially opened to the public on 14 June 1926 under the Ministry of Public Works, the opening attended by the King. The Museum was Bell's last act in the establishing of Iraq as an independent nation as she died at the age of fifty-seven, in her home in Baghdad, four weeks later on 12 July 1926. Her death was certified by Dr W. Dunlop, director of the Royal Hospital of Baghdad, as 'Dial' poisoning.[218]

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[213] Wilson and Bell, p.107.
[214] Bell, *Letters* (1 November 1922) Newcastle University Library online
[215] Mallowen, p.83
[216] Cooper, p.7.
[217] Mallowen, p.83.
[218] Winstone, p.259.

Today, a century later, rumours of depression and suicide, as popularised by the film, drama-documentary. *Letters from Baghdad*, or even murder, overshadow the facts of her recent attack of pleurisy and regular reports in letters and by friends, of a probable, more serious but unconfirmed, lung disease.[219]

A military funeral was organised by King Ali, the Regent of Iraq, the King's brother, in the King's absence, and the car carrying her coffin draped with the Iraqi and British flags was followed on foot by the dignitaries of Iraq and Britain, with global tributes and obituaries.[220]

King Faisal designated 'The Gertrude Bell Room' and unveiled a plaque in Arabic and English which read

GERTRUDE BELL

Whose memory the Arabs will ever hold
In reverence and affection.
Created this museum in 1923
Being then The Honorary Director of Antiquities for the Iraq
With wonderful knowledge and devotion
She assembled the most precious of objects in it
And through the heat of the summer worked on them until the day of her death
King Faisal and the Iraq Government
In gratitude of her great deeds in the country
Have ordered that
The Principal wing shall bear her name.[221]

The moral question of whether artefacts and monuments are national heritage or whether people are global citizens of the world and share in the presentation of artefacts, is an ongoing discussion. Dr Collins, in his lecture *Telling Stories in Basrah: a New Museum for Iraq,* questions the creation of an Iraqi National Museum by a non-national, relating it being a national monument in which national stories are contained.[222]

Dr. Mayriam Yakoub emphasises that a non-national can provide a narrative of events rather than a stories of people through artefacts:

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[219] *Letters From Baghdad,* dir. by Sabine Krayenbuhl & Zeva Oelbaum (Vitagraph Films, U.S.A. , 2016) [DVD].
[220] Georgina Howell (ed**),** *Gertrude Bell-A Woman in Arabia: The Writings of the Queen of the Desert* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), p. 253.
[221] Howell (ed.), *Gertrude Bell-A Woman in Arabia,* pp. 252-253.
[222] Paul Collins, 'Telling Stories in Basrah: a New Museum for Iraq', *MBI Al Jaber Foundation Lecture Series* (April 2018). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kwVw6GKh9Q&t=2378s

> ‘Many countries will consider such artefacts to be the identity of the country. This was also Gertrude Bell’s view when she worked on the creation of the museum...Bell’s belief was that a national museum displaying artefacts of the great civilisations which had thrived in Iraq would provide a national narrative transcending ethnic and religious divides.’[223]

Bell’s determination to secure a museum in Iraq, compared with the Ottoman removal to museums in Istanbul and abroad, is evidence of her effort to encourage *as Sabiyyah* of the Iraqi people. Bell brought artefacts into the museum in Iraq, as opposed to the Ottoman removal to museums in Istanbul and abroad and in doing so she created a space for the development of identity, through preserving a forgotten heritage.

Orit Bashkin describes the Iraqi identity as being created through a hybrid of cultural models:

> ‘Hybrid cultural models signified not only the meeting of British/colonial and Iraqi/national but also the process that rendered unfeasible the conception that Sunni and Shi’a were inseparable monoliths. Migration from the countryside to Baghdad, the emergence of Iraqi education, and the rise of the shared Arab print market contributed to the hybrid nature of Iraqi culture. In fact three hybrid models existed; colonial and national, national and transregional and hybridity between sects’.[155]

This infers that Bell's actions must be taken as an influence and contributing factor to the multi-faceted development of Iraq and towards its driving force.

By straddling the Arab-Anglo divide in a time of changing ‘world order’, Bell was able to create an indispensable role in which to support the Iraqi people. She used her extensive knowledge acquired through travel in pre-war Ottoman Arabia and her position of war-time Oriental Secretary in the British Civil Administration of Iraq to further the post-war development of the Iraqi people after 650 years of subjugation. Bell refused to leave a vulnerable, new nation-state open to re-invasion, poverty and Ottoman retaliation without funds or army in a turbulent region threatening ethnic cleansing. To the detriment of her safety and health Bell worked towards the creation of a democratic, constitutional Iraqi government through the minefields of encroaching British imperial interests, change in British governments, *a priori* international interference, national revolt, Wahabi tribal raids, Turkish threat of reinvasion and H.M.G. indecision.

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[223] Mayriam Yacoub, ‘Who Owns the Past?’ Souvenir programme of *A Museum in Baghdad,* dir. Erica Whyman (Royal Shakespeare Company, 28 October 2019).

Regularly unsupported by her British peers, Bell was described as 'a supporter of pan-Arabism'…'a potential danger [to Britain] that requires constant watching'.[224] And yet she was as Hannah Khalil described, she chose to be 'in for the long-haul', embracing Hashmite Arab sovereignty in King Faisal 1, leader of the Arab Revolt, as the only solution to bring together diverse ideologies and cultures.[225]

It is best to regard her as neither an archetype model, a legend nor a scapegoat for others' failings or misinformation. Perhaps she is best viewed as a permanent reminder of a promise made by Britain to the Arab people and to the *League of Nations*; that of Arab self-determination. There are still those who remember her fondly for that stand.

George Antonius writes:

> 'The British contribution to the building up of Iraq is one of the most remarkable instances of post-war reconstruction…By some lucky accident of circumstance, Iraq was fortunate in getting the services of an unusually capable and conscientious band of British officials'. [226]

Susan Pederson's seminal work *The Guardians* does not include the name of Bell, however her determination that this moment should take place cannot be forgotten because of her death:

> 'On 4 November 1929 [three years after Bell's death] the British Foreign Office informed the League of Nations that Britain would support Iraq's entry into the League as an independent state in 1932 sending shockwaves through the League's secretariat, the Foreign ministries of European Powers and nationalist movements in Syria and Palestine…no power had put forward a roadmap for its realization. There was no precedent for what Britain was doing.'[227]

Thus Iraq's emergence as an independent state stands out, at a time when so many countries in Africa and Asia remained under the rule of their colonial masters. There are of course, a number of reasons to explain this unprecedented development, but one factor was the influence of the subject of this Case Study. No other country had had a Gertrude Lowthian Bell.

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[224] Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, Letter from Hugh Frewen, CHAR 2/116/18-20, (14 Oct 1921).
[225] Lucy Davies quotes Hannah Khalil in 'Gertrude Bell-The dashing ex-spy who founded Iraq's National Museum', *Daily Telegraph* (10 October 2019).
[226] Antonius, p.363
[227] Susan Pederson, *The Guardians; The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.262.

CHAPTER 2

CASE STUDY 2: DAME VIOLET DICKSON (1896-1991)

In contemporary British society, where a sentiment that is suspicious or hostile to 'imperialism' is prevalent, the phrase 'imperial Britain' is often used as a catch-all pejorative term for the period of British expansion and control of overseas territories. As 'imperialist' ideas are linked to notions of racial supremacy, this can lead to the blanket idea that those Britons involved in the administration of the Empire were complicit in upholding the divide between the 'rulers' and the 'ruled'.

This Case Study shall investigate the Anglo-Kuwaiti relationship through the journey of the 'Colonial wife' Dame Violet Dickson *Umm Kuwait* (Mother to Kuwait), both geographically and personally. It will follow the path from her arrival as a new bride in turbulent Babylon, experiencing the aftermath of the 1920 *Iraq Revolt,* to her life in the desert as a mother organising famine relief and her final departure from Kuwait airlifted to safety at the age of ninety-five in the *Iraqi Occupation of Kuwait* (1990-91). Dame Violet Dickson is a representative of the Arab-centric British women who dedicated their lives to the Middle East and to the Arab people they lived amongst who became their friends.[228]

Dickson's autobiography *Forty Years in Kuwait* (1971) is the primary source of information about her life, as little has been written about her.[229] Looking at the ebb and flow of Dickson's life we can see that she was not constrained by a particular identity nor limited in her mobility. As one sees how her personal identity evolved it helps us to understand the choices she made and why she was respected. Born Violet Lucas-Calcroft in Gautby, Lincolnshire, in 1896, Dickson's freedom of movement had been encouraged by her father, in a family of daughters, in which she occupied the 'masculine place' of the absent son.[230] Through her own accounts of 'unladylike' acts of trapping and skinning moles, undertaking mountaineering

[228] In this Case Study, to avoid any confusion I have used 'Dickson' to refer to Violet, and 'Harold' to refer to her husband Lt.Colonel H.R.P. Dickson.
[229] Violet Dickson, *Forty Years in Kuwait* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.,1971).
[230] Dickson, p.11.

and skiing, she acknowledges her enjoyment of masculine pursuits.[231] In Bikaner, India, a respite between postings in Iraq and Kuwait (1922-29) allowed Dickson to enjoy traditionally male sports, participating in rifle and clay pigeon shooting competitions, gymkhanas and golf, inclusive of winning the Silver Cup, whilst pregnant.[232] The ability to shoot in Iraq and Kuwait would always be necessary for self- defence in volatile regions she lived in, and to 'bag' the dinner for visiting guests, such as Iraq's King Faisal 1 and Gertrude Bell CBE.

From an early age, in England, Dickson understood the importance of her 'place' (position), not as a subservient woman protected by her family but, in following her matrilineage, a woman of independent choice. Her heiress grandmother had persuaded her grandfather to take his wife's surname as a condition of marrying her, and her widowed mother had chosen to relocate to Switzerland in 1909. Violet could now make her own decisions, unfettered by the patriarchal hierarchy of the nineteenth century, and work at an English bank throughout the war, a time when women had, albeit temporarily, opportunities to do the work of men who had departed to join the Armed Forces.

Non-scholastic, but privately educated and well travelled, Dickson chose to earn her own salary and in 1914 travelled solo 'with difficulty' from Switzerland to England to work in a bank.[233] Five years later, she transferred to Cox and Co. Bank in the port of Marseille to 'use her French'.[234] It was a life-changing decision as Captain H.R.P. (Harold) Dickson (1881-1959) was on his way back to duty in the Middle East and chose to visit the bank to enquire about personal mail. On the strength of chatting for a few minutes over the counter a week later Violet received a telegram asking her to marry him. She cabled back 'Yes!'[235]

Harold Ingrams OBE, Resident Advisor to the Hadhramaut (Case Study 4) suggested a reason for Harold's quick proposal. He quoted Dame Freya Stark (Case Study 3):

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[231] Dickson, p.11.
[232] Dickson, p.59.
[233] Dickson, p.12.
[234] French was a language popular with educated Arab sheikhs and scholars, Dickson conversed in the French with Arabic Dignitaries including her dinner guest King Faisal until proficient in Arabic. English was a new language for them, previously only related to Ottoman trade.
[235] Dickson, p.13.

> ‘Freya Stark’s dictum [is] that ‘‘The British appear to be popular wherever they go until they come to settle with their wives.’’...nevertheless, as we all know, there is a lot in that statement and if I may add one word more to those contemplating a Colonial service career, it is, choose a wife who will not only share your life but that of the people amongst whom she and you will live’.[236]

Harold Dickson had made a calculated choice within one meeting about the woman who was to become a ‘colonial wife.’

Like many political officers who were posted to distant Arabic regions with little support or governmental guidance during WW1 their survival was dependent upon the respect they earned and their ability to speak Arabic, understand Sharia Law and participate in regional cultures. Harold Dickson was bi-cultural from birth, able to inhabit both Arabic and English cultures in dress, manner and language. He came from a patrilineage of English Arabists, men who were born and died abroad and who had dedicated their lives and work to medicine, antislavery and diplomacy.[237] Such men were the backbone of English diplomacy and reputation in the Ottoman Empire.

Harold, son of British Consul John Dickson (1847-1906), was born in 1881 in the Ottoman vilayet of Beirut. In 1882, he moved with his family to Damascus, where they rented the house of Arabist Lady Jane Digby (1807-81) who had recently died.[238] In urgent need of a wet nurse, one was found for him by Lady Jane's husband Sheikh Medjuel el Mezrab, from the Great Anizah tribe. By Islamic custom Harold became a tribal ‘milk brother’ spending much of his youth in Arabic assimilation of his tribal ‘family’ whilst assuming his place as John Dickson's son in traditional British pursuits.[239] He regularly wore Arab dress when living in the desert or visiting Saudi Arabia and it can be noted from photographs that Harold considered geolocation as cultural, and dressed accordingly.

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[236] Harold Ingrams, *Arabia and The Isles* (London: John Murray,1943), p.xiii. Foreword.

[237] H.R.P Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours (London: George Allen & Unwin,1956) pp.129-135, online. https://archive.org/details/kuwaitherneighbo0000dick/page/8/mode/2up:
Harold’s great grandfather had settled in Tripoli, on the Barbary Coast ‘as principal surgeon to the Ottoman pashilage’. His grandfather, Edward, had a great effect on Harold’s life. Born in Tripoli, he died in Constantinople, after a long career as the private physician to the British Embassy in Constantinople and three Ottoman sultans. Against slavery, Edward had travelled with the Ottoman African slave train for three years to tend to, and collect data about, slaves for his protest. Harold’s father, John. born in Constantinople, became the respected Consul General of Damascus and Jerusalem.

[238] H.R.P. Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert: A glimpse into Badawin Life in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia,* Fifth Impression (London: Routledge, 2017), Foreword.

[239] H.R.P. Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert: A glimpse into Badawin Life in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia,* Fifth Impression (London: Routledge, 2017. Foreword

Harold was a student of Wadham College, Oxford (1900-03) but there is no record of his graduation. He joined the British army in 1903 and was active in the taking of Basra in 1914. He became an officer of the 29th Lancers, Deccan Horse, Indian Army. In 1915 Harold joined the Political Department in Basra under Sir Percy Cox before becoming Political Officer of Nasiriyah and the Great Muntafiq tribal confederation (Muntafiq Lewa). As Assistant Political Officer Harold was responsible for handling challenges of tribal irrigation, crop growing, floods, ruined crops, famine and inter-tribal disputes. Progressing to Political Officer in the interim period between the end of WW1 and the introduction of the Iraqi Mandate in 1920, Harold held majlis (councils) with the sheikhs, in an attempt to heal disputes and disasters. His records are detailed in his book *Kuwait and Her Neighbours*.[240] Harold's colleagues reported that 'he maintained British authority by sheer personality'.[241]

In her autobiography *Forty Years in Kuwait* Dickson writes that Harold had won the trust and respect of the tribes whilst a 'Major D.' his opposite number, in Diwaniyah, was using military tactics and was hated in his area. The 1920 Iraqi Revolt began in Diwaniyah whilst Nasiriyah, of similar demographics, stayed stable.[242]

Could Dickson's account merely be biased towards Harold? Evidence to the contrary comes from the 1983 film *A Clash of Loyalties,* a piece of anti-British propaganda commissioned by Saddam Hussein. This drew attention to the division between the Arabist British Political Agents and the British Army in WW1. It emphasised the anger of the Political Agents, and of Bell, having undertaken extensive dialogue with notable Arab regional leaders, to have their opinions and data disregarded by the army commanders. One could argue that Saddam had a sound understanding of diverse British identity.[243]

Harold was the Political Agent of Bahrain at the time of their marriage but on their honeymoon Harold received a summons to go immediately to Iraq. Dickson writes:

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[240] H.R.P.. Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbours* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956) online https://archive.org/details/kuwaitherneighbo0000dick/page/8/mode/2up

[241] H.V.F. Winstone, *Gertrude Bell* (London: the Anchor Press Ltd. 1978), p192.

[242] Dickson, p. 38

[243] *Clash of Loyalties,* dir. by Muhamed Shukri Jameel (Iraqi Film and Theater Foundation,1983). https://youtu.be/Q1qMJfQPAp4

> ‘When we reached Muscat on 22 December [1920] we received a cable from Sir Percy Cox, who had been appointed High Commissioner in Baghdad instructing us to proceed to Basra and await further orders’.[244]

Harold was to be posted to Hillah, the Capital of Babylon, a centre of turbulence on the Euphrates. Ian Rutledge in his seminal book *Enemy on the Euphrate*s states that in the summer of 1920, during the Holy Month of Ramadan:

> ‘resistance to British rule had been steadily increasing in the mid-Euphrates region, the Shi’a heartland. So as to underline his determination that the status quo would be enforced Wilson authorised the political officer (Major Pulley) responsible for Hillah Division to arrest a group of leading nationalists…on 17 June the last day of the month of Ramadan, the upsurge of opposition spread to Hillah’.[245]

Refusing to abide by the Colonial Office’s advice to return to the safety of England as violence increased, Dickson began to work as Harold’s unofficial secretary and typist. His personal objective in Hillah, as the only British official in the region after army withdrawal at the end of the war (leaving only a police force of Arab, Egyptian and Indian officers), was to heal the Anglo-Arab relationship bruised by what he termed ‘the rough treatment of the British army’.[246] To assist in relieving growing tension, Dickson coded and decoded Harold’s messages for the pardon of thirteen notables, men condemned to death for their assumed role in the revolt by the British Army commander. Many distraught female relatives of the condemned men came to her courtyard each evening, crying and appealing to her understanding ‘as a woman’. Riots were threatened and the gallows were erected. At the eleventh hour a pardon was received from the newly crowned King Faisal and read from the rooftop by Harold. Dickson had insisted on supporting Harold in his endeavours to bring peace.

It was a lonely existence for Dickson with Harold working on calming the region and Dickson was of no real ‘assistance’, not being able to speak Arabic, nor had she any experience of being a ‘home-maker’. Her house was old and poorly maintained with sand fleas, damp walls, no running water, no sanitation, threat of cholera and a growing ‘zoo’ of ill behaved and escaping animals, many of them gifts, others a vital source of food.[247] Dickson quotes Bell, at a dinner party where only Arabic was spoken as having said:

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[244] Dickson, p.22.
[245] Ian Rutledge, *Enemy on the Euphrate: The British Occupation of Iraq and the Great Arab Revolt, 1914-21* (London:Saqi Books, 2014), p.244.
[246] H.R.P. Dickson, *Kuwait and her Neighbours*, p.262.
[247] Dickson, p.25.

> ‘It is such a pity that promising young Englishmen went and married such fools of women’.[248]

The challenge of learning Arabic proved great, not only in sound production and dialect variation but without the access to official courses, as supplied by educational establishments and the American Mission in Bahrain for its medics. Non-classical Arabic ‘language’ is spoken as a mixture of vocabulary from different Arabic regions often mixed together in one sentence, dependent upon the speaker’s heritage, their travels and the contributors to the dialogue. She persevered by buying the only language book available, *The Spoken Text of Mesopotamia*, written by the educationalist Reverend John Van Ess, of the American Mission, and attempting conversation with local people on her walks with Harold’s dogs.[249] Dickson admitted that it took her a very long time to adapt and feel fearless in such conditions and yet commended her children, who through her employment of an Arabic nanny, became fluent in the language at a very early age. Dickson's later fluency in Kuwaiti and ‘desert’ Arabic was demonstrated in the Kuwait TV interview of 1974.[250]

It can be argued that Dickson’s swift evolution occurred as a result of Gertrude Bell’s cutting remark. When British women didn’t learn the language but remained in isolation in British compounds this did not help relationships to progress. Dickson became exactly what Bell had wished she would also become, *El Khatun* (The respected lady), a name given to the respected Ottoman ladies of the court and Western female doctors in the Gulf.

Harold’s second aim was to attempt to teach the British government the importance of respecting Islamic custom, a stance Bell had advocated throughout her work as Oriental Secretary. His suggestion of the election of Abdullah Sana as the first Arabic governor in Hillah, proved an excellent choice, as Sana introduced many reforms. In 1931, Sana would become the male victim of an ‘honour killing’ by a Sheikh from Sana’s wife’s tribe, because he had not asked her family for permission to marry her. Harold criticised the naivety of the British advisors who jailed the Sheikh, for not understanding the cultural sensitivities, and

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[248] Dickson, p.24.
[249] Rev. John Van Ess, *The Spoken Text of Mesopotamia* , (London: Oxford University Press, 1917).
[250] A television interview with Ms. Violet Dickson Um Saud and media Mr. Reza Feeli 1974 -
لقاء تلفزيوني مع السيدة فيوليت ديكسون ام سعود والإعلامي السيد رضا الفيلي سنة ١٩٧٤م
الكويت كويت شركة نفط الكويت
British Kuwaiti Lady (الرسمي لعائلة شمّـوه - دولة الكويت Sab الموقع)
(The Official Website of Shammoh Family - Kuwait State)
www.shammoh.net http://shammoh.net/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DhxLpghIZA

congratulated the Sheikh on his release.[251] Whilst this may appear hypocritical of a typical British representative, it was not Britain's intention to Westernise Iraq and Harold, through his experience, realised that Western understanding of Arabic honour and customs had to be taken seriously if cultural dialogue was to take place. History has since proved that Western ideology, as exemplified by British practice in the region, will only be adopted in the Middle East by choice, not by demand.

But Harold was not in total agreement with Arabic custom. His frustrated accounts of attempting to dissuade certain traditional practices and potential honour killings of innocent girls in his region are prominent in his detailed accounts in *Kuwait and Her Neighbours.* In his narrative Harold appears torn between his understanding of non-interference in cultural and religious matters, and humanitarianism.

Honour was of great importance in the Arab world. The woman was the 'honour' of her tribe, a concept which dated back to the pre-islamic notion of 'Our Lady of Victory', priestesses and women tribal chiefs who fought in battles.[252] Marina Warner refers to such a female representation, which appears in all religions, (the Madonna, goddesses) or nations (American Statue of Liberty, Britain's Britannia, France's Marianne) as an allegory, 'a symbolised female presence that both gives and takes value and meaning in relation to actual women'.[253] But much more than representing the ideal woman, she symbolised the honour of her tribe and as such was both revered, as men would die for her, and trapped 'upon a pedestal' due to her role.

Harold Dickson recounts in his book *Kuwait and Her Neighbours* the practice of *Markab* (a camel litter named the *Arc of Ismael*) ridden in tribal war by the daughter or wife of the Sheikh, the fairest tribal maidan unveiled and hair unbound to shame her men into action, to inflame them hearing insults thrown at her. Continually urging her warriors forward, at a certain distance away from the confrontation, her camel would be hobbled. If the warriors, who had ridden forth, retreated, they could not go further than her camel, defending it to the death to prevent her being taken hostage. Sheikh Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah (reigned: 1921-1950), grandson of Mubarak, ruler of Kuwait recalled to Dickson that the last 'Markab',

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[251] H.R.P Dickson, *Kuwait and her Neighbours,* p.336.
[252] Sonbol, p.12.
[253] Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens;The Allegory of the Female Form* (London:Vintage Books, 1996), location 291/20 paragraph 2/4.

he was aware of was in 1915, in the Battle of Jahra between Ibn Saud against Ibn Rashid in which Ibn Saud's beautiful wife led his men into battle.[254]

Her name, if slandered, became the topic of the gravest of insults between men of different tribes. Poetry of rival tribes has been blamed for much slander about 'Our Lady of Victory', such slander being forbidden by Islam and punishable by eighty lashes, but this type of poetry made a serious impact on the image of women and the association between women's honour/dishonour and tribal honour.[255] Furthermore, due to men's rivalry and pride the tribal honour and virility of the tribe was represented by the woman. If the slander of a woman became so great that her character was irreparably defamed, male relatives were allowed to 'dispose' of her (an act that was not sanctioned by Islam). Dickson herself had evidence of this practice. Her dear friend Zahra, a girl from Hillah, Iraq, was 'honour killed' by her brother as she ran away with her lover to get married:

> 'She had been killed by her brother…and that he had fled from justice. She had eloped with the man she loved, but was followed by her brother, who had overtaken her and killed her.'[256]

Dickson named her daughter Zahra (1925-2015), author (Irene) Zahra Freeth, after her friend.

Harold established excellent relationships with sheikhs in his region, but was aware that friction could occur between rulers and their people if they were seen to be a 'puppet' of another country. Elizabeth Monroe's states:

> 'Rulers who are 'run' by foreigners (in geolocation and ideology) soon lose the respect of their people and produce a Nationalist reaction'.[257]

King Faisal I provides an example of Monroe's argument as attempting to balance all factions in his kingdom and gain sovereignty as quickly as possible (Case Study 1). In 1922, Dickson wrote to her sister that the extremists were trying their hardest to stir up the tribes against the English 'once more' and the King was backing them up. Revenue to run the country had

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[254] H.R.P. Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbours: A Glimpse into Badawin life in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia* (UK: Routledge, 2016), pp.550-51.
[255] Amira El-Azhary Sonbol (ed.), *Gulf Women,* 2nd edn (Qatar: Hamad bin Khalifa University Press, 2017). p.12.
[256] Dickson, p.43.
[257] Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East, 1914-56* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), pp. 17-18.

ceased to come in and the Arab officials were unable to collect it. Dickson, fearing increased turbulence, wrote to her sister saying 'I want to be out of it before the crash comes'.[258]

South of Iraq is the Gulf nation-state, Kuwait, on the Arabian (Persian) Gulf bordering Iraq and Saudi Arabia, both of which have attempted to absorb it into their territories up until the twentieth-century. Until the *Conference of Uqair* in 1922 borders were flexible and changed with internecine war specified by tribal boundaries.

Britain's relationship with Kuwait was established in 1775 when Persian invasion and plague demanded relocation of the E.E.I.C. factory from Basra to Kuwait between 1775-78. The deep water port allowed ships to come closer to the shore, creating an increase in trade and revenue.[259]

That Kuwait was occupied or colonised is a myth of modern post-colonial history. Abu Mustafa abu Hakima describes the invitation from Sheikh Mubarak al Sabah of Kuwait to Britain to form a protectorate after much deliberation over which European country to ask. In 1898 Sheikh Mubarak chose Britain to form a Protectorate Treaty against the encroaching Ottomans, Russians and Germans.[260] In addition to the 'non-invasive' and 'non-interference' agreement Britain paid the Sheikh 15,000 rupees as a bond of promise.[261] In 1995 five top scholars from Kuwait, Germany, Russia, Netherlands and Great Britain, basing their evidence on historical documents from their respective countries confirmed this request.[262]

Ahmad Mustafa abu Hakima's detailed book *The Modern History of Kuwait 1750-1965* contains copies of treaties and paid leases agreed with Britain, formally called the Imperial English Government.[263] With every formal agreement in the 1899 treaty a clause was agreed that Sheikh Mubarak and his heirs would not sell any Kuwaiti land, or yield from the sea such

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[258] Dickson, p.52.
[259] The National Archives, *Records of the British Residency and Agencies in the Persian Gulf* Reference: IOR/R/15
[260] Abu Mustafa abu Hakima, *Undertaking with the British Government,* (New Jersey:American Arabian Mission Historical Archives (18 November 1910), p.201.
[261] Ahmad Mustafa abu Hakima, *The Modern History of Kuwait 1750-1965* (London:Luzac & Company, 1983), pp.184-201, (pp. 184-5).
[262] Ben Slot (ed.), *Kuwait: The Growth of a Historic Identity* (London:Arabian Publishing, 2003). On 19 May, 1995 a collection of papers, on the growth of the identity of Kuwait were presented at a seminar held in Peterhouse College, Cambridge, by Drs. Ben Slot (Holland),Ulruch Haarmann (Germany), Grigori Bondarevsky (Russia), Richard Schofield, (UK) and Suhail Shuhaiber (Kuwait).
[263] Hakima, pp.184-201.

as pearl beds, to a third country without agreement by Britain. All British expenditure was paid by the Government of India.

Was Kuwait independent or part of the Ottoman Empire? Until 1913 Kuwait was legally a member of the Empire due to a new ruling that all owners of property in Mesopotamia had to have Ottoman nationality. Ahmed Feroz using Turkish and English data to confirm that in 1871 Medat Pasha, the creator of the Tanzimat came to Kuwait and declared it an Ottoman district attached to Basra, the Sheikh was made a *kaymakam* under the *vali* (governor) of Basra. On 29 August 1913 under the new C.U.P. Ottoman government, Kuwait as a separate nation was recognised in the *1913 Anglo-Ottoman Convention* which defined the limits of Ottoman jurisdiction in Arabian Persian Gulf regions of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Shatt al Arab. The agreement was signed but not ratified by the Ottoman Government. [264]

Kuwait would support Britain throughout WW1. Antonius states that Sheikhs of the Arabian Peninsula, except for Ottoman supporters ibn Rashid and the Imam of Yemen, upheld the *Arab Revolt* on 20 Nov 1916 at a *Durbar* in Kuwait. It was attended by 150 chieftains, Sheikh Khazal Muhamarra, Sheikh Mubarak and ibn Saud who urged everyone to 'spare no effort to further the common cause of England and Arabs'.[265] Kuwait would detain Sayyid Talib in his Ottoman-backed propaganda to persuade Kuwait and ibn Saud to back the Ottomans against Britain leading to his arrest by Britain. Ibn Saud had signed a British protectorate in 1915 and his friend Captain William Shakespear, Political Agent of Kuwait was 'cut down' in the *Battle of Jarrab* manning ibn Saud's cannon. [266]

Whilst Britain did not directly interfere with internal affairs, the protection offered by the Royal Navy prevented piracy from stopping seatrade and discouraged incursions over the border by Nejdi tribes, ultimately preventing the expansion of Ibn Saud, and this secured the success of the economy. [267]

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[264] Feroz Ahmad, 'A Note on the International Status of Kuwait before November 1914', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 24.1 (1992), pp. 181–85.

[265] Antonius, p.205.

[266] Peter Harrigan, 'The Captain and the King', *Aramco World: Arab and Islamic Culture and Connections*, 53.5 (September/October 2002).

[267] At the beginning of the 20th Century, ibn Saud had been protected by Sheikh Mubarak in Kuwait
In the expansion of ibn Rashid, Sheikh Mubarak had supported ibn Saud's overthrow of Ibn Rashid. On the Sheikh's death, his sons' support of the Ottoman Empire removed Ibn Saud's allegiance from Kuwait.
Their only link was held tentatively by the British presence supporting both rulers.

By 1922 it was clear that security of the Kuwaiti border could not take place without border demarcation. Sir Percy Cox sent Harold, accompanied by Dickson on her first official visit, to Bahrain to meet Ibn Saud. The aim was to secure a conference date in the desert at Uqair, in which to discuss country borders. Dickson, as Harold's typist, had won favour with Ibn Saud by offering to translate into French the daily English news bulletins received by Harold and send them by 'fast camel' to Riyadh, where they were translated into Arabic by Foreign Secretary Dr Abdullah Damluji.[268]

Harold's account of the talks at Uqair are recorded in his book *Kuwait and her Neighbours.* In summary: Sir Percy Cox chaired the conference with Sana Beg of Iraq, Ibn Saud of Nejd, and 'Kuwait', represented by the British political agent, Major Moore. Harold, as an observer, disagreed in his autobiography with Sir Percy's preferred choice of a boundary created by 'division by wells' and backed Ibn Saud's suggestion of 'division by tribe' which had worked for Harold in his role as Political Officer on the Euphrates.[269] The Nejdi tribes of Ibn Saud, led by Ikhwan leader Faisal al Duwish, were at that time, camped up to the Kuwaiti Great Wall, which if division by tribe (and their occupation of land) was the chosen as the land boundary, would have made all land before the wall, ruled by Ibn Saud. Division by tribe would have meant that Kuwait would be contained within the Great Wall erected in 1920 (for the third time) to keep out the Ikhwan, and lose its desert land.[270] After constant argument of rulers, Sir Percy drew a red line on the map, based on well information. Kuwait lost two thirds of what it believed to be its right to the land, but shared in two neutral zones which could possibly yield oil.

The Anglo-Kuwaiti relationship had been strained, with the loss of their right to 160 miles of land, resulting in a reduced size to 6000 sq. miles.[271] However, Kuwaiti author Farah Al Nakib argues that it was not a simple 'stroke of a British pen', confirming that the tribal division at that moment was in favour of Ibn Saud up to the Great Wall of Kuwait, due to Ikhwan expansion and lack of tribal support shown to the sons of Mubarak.[272]

The Dicksons arrived in Kuwait on 22 May 1929 to take up residency at the British Political Agency with their two children. The country was in a serious economic decline, with no

[268] H.R.P. Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbours,* p.26.
[269] H.R.P. Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbours,* p.276.
[270] Tribes could change their allegiance if they had no confidence in the Sheikh.
[271] H.R.P. Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbours,* p.276.
[272] Farah Al-Nakib, 'The Lost 'Two-Thirds': Kuwait's Territorial Decline between 1913 and 1922.' *Journal of Arabian Studies* 2.1 (2012).

natural resources except from the sea. Trade had been hit by the trade embargo of Ibn Saud, forbidding the sale of sheep to Kuwait and ceasing desert trade. Stark documents that as a result of global depression, and increased competition, natural Gulf pearls, a major source of wealth for Kuwaiti divers, merchants and the Sheikh, were being supplanted by the Japanese Cultured Pearl industry. Furthermore cheap imitations of bedouin hand-woven carpets and cushions were flooding the market impacting on the desert economy.

The Dicksons were two of only eleven Westerners in the country, where English was rarely spoken.[273] Dickson's first task was to renovate the dilapidated Political Agency on the stoney Bahr (Sea) Road, an allegory of Britain in the country. The building was made of traditional Arabian sun-dried mud bricks. The mud roof collapsed in heavy seasonal storms which washed away half the houses in Kuwait Town. Without electricity, air conditioning and running water, conditions were worse for Dickson than they had been in her house in Iraq. In daytime temperatures reached 57C in summer and dropped below 0C at nighttime in the winter. The Agency had fallen into ruin because Colonel Moore expected to move into a new Agency, which was opened in 1935, in the final year of Harold's tenure. For six years Dickson was the solitary 'home-maker' as Harold's duties took him away during the day. By raising fowl in the courtyard, scouring the markets for bargains and making contacts with local craftsmen, Dickson was creating her own 'bayt'. In the process, she was forming relationships with the Kuwaiti people.[274]

In 2017, Amina El-Azhary Sonbol published a groundbreaking book *Gulf Women* composed of fourteen papers by female Arabic academics celebrating the prominent roles of women in the Arabian Gulf countries. Subjects included scholars, benefactors, midwives, business owners, healers, and warriors. in times of serious battle.[275] A number of only partially informed perspectives have tried to frame and describe the lives of the people of the Middle East during this period. Hoda el Saadi states that 'an observation recorded by an 'uninformed' Western eye who cannot totally understand the cultural context of what it sees, has the power to define and construct reality for a Western audience'.[276] However, throughout the book, the authorship of respected Western female Arabists (Dickson, Stark and American

[273] The Dicksons and the Agency medical doctor, Dr Alan Greenway (the quarantine officer) , his wife and children were the only British people living in the country. The staff of the American Mission Hospital made up the American contingency.
[274] Dickson learnt the Kuwait dialect by employing a local nanny for her children.
[275] Amira El Azhary Sonbol (Ed.), *Gulf Women* (Qatar:Hamad bin Khalifa University Press, 2017)
[276] Hoda El Saadi, 'Women and Economy. Pre-oil Gulf States' in *Gulf Women,* ed. by Amira El-Azhary Sonbol (Doha: Hamad bin Khalifa University Press, 2017), p.150.

Mission doctor, Dr Evelyn Calverly) are considered by the contributors to be primary sources of Arabic female life; stories of female accomplishment, challenges, successes and opinions which were confided in Arabic conversations with these Western 'guests'. Such recordings of 'memories' transferred a 'mother' role to the writer. Only in women's authorship can the full Arab cultural experience be found.

The Foreword of Harold Dickson's book *The Arab of the Desert* credits Dickson and daughter Zara for information. Egyptian academic Soraya Altorki referenced the writings of British explorer Charles Doughty and Dutch explorer Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje for information to create her chapter on the *Structure of the Family.* Not present today, the harem is a space of the past, Altorki *s*tates 'the harem did not have to be a fixed place as in Ottoman era, but was where ever the women were, as they move around the house…and could be represented by a screen, a lattice or a veil'. The act of removing the veil symbolised entering the female space.

It also was preferred by rich men to separate the elite class of (free Arab) women from their female slaves, who went unveiled. Whilst British women in Britain were increasingly denied a traditional woman's space in a house, other than a single room or kitchen, as lamented by author Virginia's Woolfe in *A Room of One's Own,* Arabic women had ownership of their space, the harem, in which all female relatives, female servants, slaves and their children (boys up to the age of 14) resided. Such a space was not governed by the presence of men who had their own gendered agenda, enabling women to live and develop at their own pace.

It is important to consider a country not only as a geo-location or a political body, but as 'a People', who had, through the act of survival, traditionally agreed upon gender specific roles. Massey considers that 'limiting women's mobility in identity and space in some cultural contexts are seen as subordination'.[277] It can be argued that subordination is only realised in the comparison between two cultures and genders. The choice to leave the house within the Great Wall was the woman's. Retired from Diplomatic Service in 1937 (although recalled for a period in 1940), the Dicksons were free from 'convention' to wear Arabic dress as a mark of respect to King Abdulaziz on their visit to Saudi Arabia in an unofficial role. Western freedom of choice, in comparison, is demonstrated by Winstone in his recollection of the

[277] Massey, p.179.

mobility of Dame Violet Dickson, 'who (at the age of 82) still wanders among her friends of the desert.'[278]

Whilst public positions were occupied by men in inland Arabic countries, In 1929, the Gulf Countries, bordering on the Arabian (Persian) Gulf Sea, experienced extended male absence for long periods, as men were sailors or travelling merchants, enhancing the prominence of women. Mothers in Gulf countries held additional importance as scholars, benefactors, business owners, healers, and even warriors, if necessary, in times of serious battle. The Mother was responsible for her family's survival and the descendants of these pre-oil women inherited this empowerment and patriotism. 'Umm' was associated with the physical and psychological concept paramount to tribal foundations, of belonging, of 'Home'. In the Middle East the birth of the first son in the Middle East elevates a woman from *bint* (daughter of) to *umm* (mother of). This is not specific to women as men are similarly elevated from *ibn* (son of) to *abu* (father of). I surmise that such names, signs of respect, are determined to remind the individual of their allegiance to family members and tribal affiliation, the infrastructure of Gulf countries having developed from the settlement of nomadic tribes. Each tribe had a strict code of conduct presided over by their sheikh as 'Father, *Abu*'. The Mother kept the memories, relaying them in the oral tradition.Thus although the outside world sees societies in these countries as being male-dominated, they have an important and respected female element in their core. On becoming a mother on the birth of her son (Warrington) Saud, in 1923 Dickson was awarded the honorific Arabic title of 'Umm Saud', Mother of Saud, who had been named at the request of Ibn Saud, the future King of Saudi Arabia and friend of Harold. In receiving their honorary titles this respect was awarded to the Dicksons, confirming their acceptance into the Arab-fold.

Hibba Abugideiri defines 'home' from an Arab-centric point of view:

> 'The home in traditional bedouin societies was not simply a place of residence…it offered cultural spaces for exchange based on ritual acts and a code of conduct that inscribed collectively tribal identity ... .Their *bayt* (home) referred not to a fixed dwelling but small groups within social interaction.'[279]

With constant upheaval and movement by tribes, parallelled by Dickson in her early years, culture became family-centric. Dickson's determination to create a space for traditional

[278] H.V.F. Winstone, *Gertrude Bell* (London: the Anchor Press Ltd. 1978), p.xi.
[279] Hibba Abugideiri, 'A Labour of Love: Making Spaces for Midwives in Gulf History' in *Gulf Women,* ed. by Amira El-Azhary Sonbol (Doha: Hamad bin Khalifa University Press, 2017), p.196.

Arabic women in her *bayt* continued into the new Agency (now the British Embassy) and at *Bayt Dickson*, to where the Dicksons returned on retirement from Diplomatic Service at the request of the Sheikh.

Dickson's practical nature led to finding solutions amongst the community and in turn learning about local methods.. On the collapse of her wall due to storm damage, she found Persian builder, Usta Ahmad, who added the strengthening sea coral to the wall plaster.[280] To protect the large teak door she painted it with shark oil. To reduce the rat infestation Dickson enticed them with barley onto a white sheet at night, shone a light on them and shot them from the balcony with her .410 shotgun. When seasonal armies of locusts invaded, eating down to the last blade of grass vital for desert flocks, famine spread to Kuwaiti's desert Arabs. Dickson contacted the National History Museum in London, to which her daughter Zahra sent insect specimens from the desert, and hosted (Sir) Boris Uvarov, the entomologist, at the Agency, in 1932, to 'study the breeding habits and swarming of locusts which would begin organised international action and eradication in the 1970s'.[281]

Whilst city states were built around plentiful water supplies on trade routes and attracted multicultural communities, nomadic desert tribes ran on an autonomous structure of blood relations, each with an elected sheikh, their structures and laws had been created for survival.[282] However these people were excluded from Kuwaiti citizenship and a division of Kuwaiti's oil revenue.

The desert was a very dangerous place for foreigners without the Sheikh's protection, prior to modernisation and the introduction of foreign military contracts. Dickson's description of the desert, Kuwait's hinterland, influenced by stories told to her by tribal survivors of Ottoman hegemony, present it as a fearsome place:

> 'in 1929 the desert of Arabia and the Hinterland were a great and rather frightening unknown, there were no accurate maps and the desert was not peaceful place in those days…raids by the Ikhwan, the fanatical religious sect, in revolt against King Ibn Saud, were taking place continuously into Kuwait territory.'[283]

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[280] Dickson, p.76
[281] Dickson, p.85.
[282] Salwa Al- Jassar (ed.), *Social Studies: Kuwait and the Islamic World (Book 4),* 3rd edn (Kuwait: Kuwait Ministry of Education, Third Edition 2016), p.27-28
[283] Dickson, p.95

Dickson could have adopted the role expected of a diplomatic 'wife' and focussed on only building relationships with the royal family and merchants' wives but was determined to be of support for all people regardless of connections. Her humanitarianism was first displayed in Kuwait a few months after her arrival in 1929. Ikhwan leader Faisal al Duwish had again reached the Great Wall. He had started a rebellion against Ibn Saud and had been forced across the Saudi-Kuwait border. H.M.G. was a supporter of Ibn Saud and ordered Harold to instigate the removal of Duwish and employ active warning with R.A.F. bombers, if necessary. Dickson, as Harold's confidant and secretary, objected to the idea of R.A.F. carrying out a 'warning' bombing raid even though it was targeting the peripheral area of the rebel encampment. Dickson argued that it would have a profound effect on the thousands of camp followers; women and children. She was met with stern insistence by Harold, under orders, that 'it was none of her business'.[284] This act depicts Dickson as having a 'voice' against the decision of H.M.G., so strong that it resonated in her autobiography written forty years after the event.

Starving, the rebel families reached Jahra Oasis. On 10 January, Faisal surrendered his sword to Harold, and was brought to Kuwait City where Dickson insisted upon feeding and clothing the prisoners before they were handed over to Ibn Saud. She was so affected by the plight of the rebel women that she wrote a plea to Ibn Saud, delivered by Harold's messenger, to spare Faisal's womenfolk and children from the fate of vanquished tribes, in becoming 'the spoils of war'. Ibn Saud gave her his word. Her autobiography recounts 'We went immediately to Jahra with food and clothes, and later brought Faisal's wife (Amsha), three sisters, six women and their children into our house, until a house was made available for them in the Murgab area.'[285]

Although he was the British Political Agent, Harold Dickson was not just a mouthpiece for H.M.G. In May 1930, he fell foul of the High Commissioner of Iraq, Sir Henry Dobbs, by questioning the legality of the summons for taxes by the Iraqi Government of Kuwaitis with houses in Iraq and Iraqis living in Kuwait. Ruler Sheikh Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah (1885-1950)had objected and the High Commissioner threatened to send down an Iraqi administrator into Kuwait, which hardened the tone of British rhetoric in Iraq, but at Harold's

[284] Dickson, p.80.
[285] Dickson, p.80.

continual formal objections it was not implemented.[286] Harold considered his role to be Kuwait's British Representative and not the Representative for Britain in Kuwait.

Dickson's introduction to the Kuwaiti 'Badu' (Bedouin) took place in the Spring of 1930. In visits to the desert as a guest of the nomadic Muzaiyin family, Dickson developed an affection for the people that would remain with her all her life. Harold's friendship with Salim al Muzaiyin, who he respected for his 'honesty, stability and honesty' and knowledge of the land from Kuwait to Hufuf. was created by chance, out riding. Head of his own camp, Salim agreed to become the manager of what was locally known as *The Dackson Camp* (sic) which would be transported with him on his nomadic routes, their sheep moving with his flock. Tribal raids were common, resulting in the stealing of food, camels, sheep, tents, clothes and cooking pots, which were vital to survival. The Dicksons chose to live in the desert for three months every year, assimilating the tribal culture. The Dicksons' original, inappropriate, 'India tents', were replaced by black tribal tents designed for the cruel environment and woven by Salim's wife, Amsha.

The Dicksons' sheepdog was trained to look after their sheep and protect the family from wolves. Harold combined his pleasure at being back in the desert with business at his camp, hosting other tribes around the campfire and receiving information about the desert, visitors, battles, weather, famine, challenges and livestock. Harold desired to write a detailed history book about Kuwait. The final manuscript, inclusive of chapters by Dickson, maps, photographs and sketches was divided into two books; *The Arab of the Desert (1949)* and *Kuwait and Her Neighbours* (1956). Harold recorded every detail of tribal structure as it was told to him by tribal elders and the rulers Sheikh Ahmad and Sheikh Abdullah.

Amsha, a healer, taught Dickson about the desert fauna and flora, specimens of which Dickson sent back to the Kew Herbarium. Dickson followed in the footsteps of numerous Arabists including H. St. John Philby and Sir Percy Cox.[287] In their 1949 paper entitled 'On Flora of Kuwait' for the *Kew Bulletin*, Burtt and Lewis acknowledged Dickson's documentation and delivery of 600 specimens.[288] One particular plant, *Khuzama*, was given

[286] 'File 3/3 'Arab Desert Law', *British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers* IOR/R/15/6/122, in *Qatar Digital Library.*
[287] James Mandaville, *Flora of Eastern Southern Arabia* (Routledge, 2013) e-book.
[288] B. L. Burtt and P. Lewis. "On the Flora of Kuweit: I." *Kew Bulletin*, 4.3, 1949, pp. 273–308, (p.273).

the Latin name *Horwoodia Dicksonia.*[289] The plant has been scientifically proven to exhibit properties against breast cancer, liver cancer and lung carcinoma, known as an important medicinal herb to the women of the desert.[290] Dickson's documentation and her book *Wild Flowers of Kuwait and Bahrain* (1955) continue to influence the ongoing research into the recovery of desert flora destroyed in the Iraq invasion and subsequent liberation of Kuwait.[291]

Could Harold's position of Political Agent have determined the welcome the Dicksons received? Travel author Freya Stark (Case Study 3) was a guest of the Dicksons in Kuwait, in 1933, and was taken to the desert camp considering this question.Writing to her mother she noted 'The Dicksons love the Arabs, and are not a bit touristy.'[292] In 1937, after Harold's retirement, Stark visited the camp again with the new Agent, Gerald de Gaury, and referenced a difference in the attitude of the tribal Sheikhs towards the new Agent. Stark stated:

> 'The Dicksons adore the Bedouin and now he is no longer the representative here they go on pathetically giving all the little presents they can afford and indeed far more, to their old friends. The Bedouin are fond of them, but whether these presents have not got something to do with it, it is hard to say'.[293]

This last comment is proof that the Dicksons' generosity was not position-based for information gain.

Freya Stark's exceptional black and white photographs of Kuwait in 1933, depict a bygone land 'the 400 working boats and market (selling Frankincense, camels, gold and pearls)…and where a slave baby could be bought for 20 rupees'.[294] Stark's comment about the slave market was disputed by Harold who stated that he was not aware of any *mamluk* (purchased slave) , only many *mu'allid* (born to slave parents). Unlike in Iraq, Britain had no anti-slave treaty with Kuwait. Sheikh Ahmad preached the errors of owning slaves from a religious and political viewpoint, and a decline became evident.[295] Harold expressed concern about the

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[289] Although the plant was named in honour of Dickson, the flora species family name 'Dicksoniaceae', has been in existence since 1788 (named in honour of botanist James Dickson). Many plants were destroyed during the Iraqi invasion, liberation and building of army barracks in the desert.

[290] Rasha Khalid, 'Morphological, Anatomical and Geographical Distribution Studies of Species: Horwoodia Dicksonaie (Turrill) in Iraq', *The Iraqi Journal of Agricultural Sciences* 50.1613-1620 (December 2019).

[291] Violet Dickson, *Wild Flowers of Kuwait and Bahrain* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1955).

[292] *Beyond Euphrates: Autobiography 1928-33* (London: Century Publishing Co.Ltd.,1985) p.25.

[293] Freya Stark, *A Winter in Arabia: A Journey Through Yemen* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2010), p.137.

[294] Freya Stark, *Baghdad Sketches* (London: Tauris Parke Publishers, 2011) p.124.

[295] Professor Benyan Turki, *'Slavery in Kuwait, 1896-1921'* (Kuwait: Kuwait University, 2022) https://www.academia.edu/81608306/Slavery_in_Kuwait_1

present *mu'allid* born into a slave family (in which any children of the owner could be legalised and accepted as part of the family) and stressed the problem of freeing aged and disabled slaves freed by their masters sent from their master's house unable to earn a living. Harold only had permission to intervene if a slave complained to the embassy. Dickson does not mention the topic in her autobiography.

In 1932, the Great Smallpox epidemic, introduced inside the Great Wall by refugees fleeing turbulent regions of internecine fighting and pilgrims travelling to Mecca, depleted the 60,000 population by half. The Dicksons insisted they were vaccinated to encourage the citizens to follow their example, but to no avail. Harold suggested that a tent be put up in the middle of the town, in which he could assist the doctors of the American Mission in its administration. Sheikh Ahmad had schoolboys, brought from the Koranic school under armed guard and forcibly vaccinated in public view. On the evidence of their healthy survival, residents came forward to receive their vaccination and curb the pandemic.[296]

In 1934, the signing of the Kuwait Oil Concession took place at the British Agency on Dickson's dining table, witnessed by Harold. When, In 1936, Harold was retired from his office at the mandatory age of fifty-five, Sheikh Ahmad invited him to become the Chief Local Representative of the newly formed Kuwait Oil Company, wanting one 'he told Harold that he wanted to be sure that he had in Kuwait one good English friend he could trust'.[297] Nor did the Sheikh trust Westerners to understand local traditions such as stopping work, on machines that needed constant manning, to pray five times a day, or Kuwaitis understand the rigid Western work ethic ruled by the clock.

Initially the search for oil in the North had been unsuccessful. However, Harold was prone to vivid dreams and was so in tune with tribal custom, that he consulted Umm Mubarak, an interpreter of dreams.[298] Um Mubarak interpreted his dream, documented by Dickson, to

[296] Dickson, p.104.
[297] Dickson, p.131.
[298] The summary of the dream is as follows :
Harold and Violet were living in an oil company bungalow in Ahmadi, behind which was a large garden, where stood a Sidr tree. One night a tremendous wind blew. In the morning, they found that a large cavity had opened up in the South side of the garden 100 feet wide and 6 feet deep. Inside the cavity was a stone slab on which lay a mummified body wrapped in an ancient yellow shroud. She began to assume life as a beautiful young woman who stated that she had been buried for thousands of years and was in need of food and drink. She sat under the Sidr tree asking to be taken to the Sheikh as men would try and put her back in the ground. Suddenly a horde of men carrying swords rushed towards her and dragged her back into the cavity, Harold managed to fight them off before waking up'.

mean that oil would be found in a different part of Kuwait territory, the South, near a lone sidr tree (the sidr being common to every courtyard for its medical properties and shade). Dickson records that 'Harold was diffident at accepting the interpretation' yet told the Sheikh who insisted the location of drilling be changed, even though it was considered ridiculous by Western contractors.

Jonathan Fryer, commissioned by Kuwait Oil Company to compile a book about its history stated:

> 'When Europeans listened to Harold, they thought he had gone 'native', but many Kuwaitis, with their respect for signs, portents and the power of dreams treated his story with reverence.'[299]

However, when a well in the area of the long Sidr tree, now called *The Dream Tree*, a sign of Good Fortune, in Burgan, was drilled on 26 Feb 1938, it struck oil and turned out to be Kuwait's most productive oil field, Burgan 1. The Kuwaiti people did not forget Harold's part in their past.

In 1937, the Dicksons received an invitation to visit King Abdulaziz (ibn Saud) in Saudi Arabia where he protested about the Palestinian problem to Harold. Harold in his non-diplomatic capacity declared that there was nothing he could do, to which Ibn Saud replied 'but you will tell the right people.' Harold duly recorded his conversation and informed the India Government.[300] The threat was clear that if a partition was to take place, Saudi Arabia would not back Britain in future warfare. Ibn Saud's declaration was taken very seriously and it gave great support to McDonald's 'White Paper' proposing prohibition of further Jewish immigration (Case Study 3).[301] Harold's information was supported by Sir George Rendel (1889-1979), the Head of the British Office's Middle Eastern Department who also visited Ibn Saud, in 1937.

Dickson's contribution was to have talks with Ibn Saud's advisor, his sister Princess Nura bint Adul Rahman al Saud (1875-1950) said by Dickson to have been 'one of the most important

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[299] Jonathan Fryer, *Fuelling Kuwait's Development: The Story of the Kuwait Oil Company,* (London:Stacey International. 2007) p.48.

[300] PZ 1115/1938 'Col. Dickson's visit to Riyadh and conversations with Ibn Saud.' [6v] (12/96), *British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers,* IOR/L/PS/12/245, in Qatar Digital Library <https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100041284252.0x00000d

[301] McDonald's *White Paper* was overturned by Britain's ally US, to whom Britain was, once again in great financial war debt , on US insistence that (x 10) Jewish refugees were allowed into Palestine. With (expanding) border control.

personages in the whole of Arabia, sitting in on the King's most intimate of councils.'[302] Once again Dickson was using her power as a woman, and her access to the harem, to gain knowledge and strengthen the Anglo-Arab relationship through personal communication.

Anti-British feelings were growing amongst the youth. Already excited by the prospect of oil wealth, nationalism had arisen within the younger generation encouraged by liberal education in American Universities. They were *effendis*, young state employees (officials, teachers, health workers, engineers) who adopted Arab nationalism and Pan-Arab ideology as a means to cope with their socioeconomic and discontent.[303] Noga Efrain argued that members of this group had benefited from modern education and donned Western dress. In 1939, an attempted Revolt by the secret *Young Man's Party of Freedom,* influenced by Iraq and led by AlShabiba, attempted to seize power of Kuwait but was put down by Sheikh Ahmad and the bodies of rebels 'displayed' in the open marketplace. Dickson reported:

> ' Harold left me in the car. The crowd closed around me…I thought they said 'crucified' and believed they meant 'wounded'. I asked where he [the man] was and they made a way for me in the crowd. To my horror I saw a man hanging on a cross-which had been fixed to a pole in the ground… he was one of the rebels.'[304]

On the outbreak of war, Dickson insisted on staying with Harold in Kuwait, to support the Kuwaiti people, leaving her own children in bombed Britain to calm the nervousness of local people, because the other Western wives and families had left the Gulf countries. In January 1940, Arabic anti-British propaganda on the radio produced a falsified account of R.A.F. bombing in Kuwait, supposedly killing 240 women and mainly children.[305] The rise of Hitler could have turned the allegiance of the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia against Britain, but the rulers continued their support for the Allies.

Dickson's second major humanitarian effort occurred in WW2. The difference in life behind and infront of the Great Wall was large. Whilst markets were stocked in the city, with trade unaffected between India and Kuwait, Ibn Saud had banned the sale of sheep and camels from Saudi Arabia, the staple requirement for life in the desert.[306] In addition, the government

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[302] H.R.P. Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbours,* p.414.

[303] Noga Efrati, 'The Effendiyya: Where have all the women gone?: Relocating Arab nationalism' *Internal Journal of the Middle East Studies*, 43.2 (May 2011) , pp. 375 - 377. Published online by Cambridge University Press (8 April 2011).

[304] Dickson, p.139.

[305] Dickson, p.145.

[306] Ibn Saud had been mentored by Sheikh Mubarak in his escape into Kuwait from Ibn Rashid, and reclaimed Riyadh with the support of Kuwaiti warriors.

of Iraq, in its anti-British act, had banned the import of dates from the Kuwaiti date farms in Basra. Dickson, no longer in a diplomatic position, on Harold's retirement, strongly and successfully raised this matter with the British Resident in Basra. The effects on essential foodstuff for Bedouin tribes were severe. A nomad man can live on six dates and camel milk a day, the stones ground down for animal fodder, but without that supply the tribes outside the wall suffered serious famine. Dickson convinced the City citizens to supply the little food that they could and the British Resident to send second hand overcoats from the U.S.A., for which a mass descent of tribesmen came to snap up the small number.[307] At the same time Dickson rescued and cared for Persian illegal immigrants sailing from the similar Persian famine, in a *sambuk* (boat) which had hit a reef. She worked with Persian immigrants to agree to support them before being sent back to Persia. [308]

In March 1941, Harold was recalled to the position of Political Agent for three months and was now in the position to assist Dickson's plan to assist in famine relief. Harold organised the shipping of 100 barley grinding stones from Persia to Kuwait. The ability to make bread created the only source of food for starving tribes outside the wall. In August 1941, Harold finally had retired from Diplomatic Service and returned to his position as Sheikh Ahmad's Local Representative in the *Kuwait Oil Company*, K.O.C. Harold had the responsibilities for liaison, and oil and water wells. Continued starvation in the desert led to fighting for the ancient rights of grazing and access to water. The water wells drilled by K.O.C. had twenty or so tribes living around each of them, but were often guarded by tribesmen of wealthy sheikhs who, tending to the sheikhs' flocks, refused to permit the Bedouin people to drink and feed their flocks from the wells. Dickson listened to the plight of the women and regularly brought rice and cloth, sewing equipment and utensils.

At the end of the war Kuwait celebrated its first shipping of oil which would transform the country:

> 'The [Kuwait Oil] Company began building the new town of Ahmadi to house the many staff and employees near the site of operations…It was a great moment in Kuwait's history when Sheikh Ahmad performed the inaugural ceremony.'[309].

[307] Dickson, p.164
[308] Dickson, p.164
[309] Dickson p.178

With regard to British feeling, in 1956, Zahra Freeth published her book *Kuwait Was My Home* after her journey back to the country of her childhood. Freeth wrote :

> 'The change from the old Kuwait to the new has taken place…Their leaders have sought British help but popular feeling is eager to have done with it, impatient for Kuwait to exert her independence and prove the ability of Kuwaitis to run their own affairs.'[310]

The death of Harold, in 1959, and his burial in Kuwait, forced Dickson to make a decision to either return to her family in England or spend the rest of her life, as Harold wanted, in Kuwait. Dickson received the honorific title *Umm* (Mother of) Kuwait to persuade her to stay. The ruler, HH Sheikh Abdullah al Salim al Sabah (reigned 1950-61) 'Father of New Kuwait' and grandson of Sheikh Mubarak, bought the building from its Kuwaiti owner. On handing the deeds to Dickson saying 'You are part of this country's family, and mother to many.'[311]

Supported by K.O.C. Dickson was employed as an advisor on cultural affairs for K.O.C. and as a hostess to visitors, being welcome in every household as before, her generosity to the poor went unabated. Her interest in archaeology in Kuwait, Failaka Island and Saudi Arabia as recounted in the last chapters of her book was enhanced by shared reports of archaeologists for her documentation. The British Museum holds pre-Islamic shards (small remnants) from Dickson's 1938 trip to Failaka, investigating Kuwait's heritage (which, through different civilisations, went back to over 4000 years).[312] *The Dame Violet Dickson* scholarship was awarded annually by the British Council of Kuwait to Kuwaiti girls who wanted to study postgraduate courses abroad. Until modernization post-oil drilling (1947 onwards) and the flood of European contractors and their families, Dickson knew all the news in the Gulf countries, due to her continual conversations with sailors, visiting the houses of working merchants and hosting passengers of visiting ships on their way to and from India. In her position as Harold's wife, she had notification of all foreign visits to Kuwait. Westerner's autobiographies and travelogues are now collectors' items and part of University modular programmes.

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[310] Zahra Freeth, *Kuwait Was My Home* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1956), p.154.

[311] Aziz al Nasrallah,*The British Lady Kuwait Called Mother,* @abdkwt

[312] The British Museum, *Mrs Violet Dickson*: BIOG62127.
The museum on Failaka Island, containing artefacts of its pre-islamic, Hellenic past set up by Rajab and often visited by Dickson was trashed during the Iraqi Invasion. The island had become a base for 1400 Iraqi soldiers. Evidence of an advanced civilization dates back 4000 years.

On 19 June 1961, Kuwait became independent as the protectorate was concluded. Six days later Iraq made its claim that Kuwait was originally part of the Ottoman vilayet of Basra and belonged to Iraq. Sheikh Abdullah requested Britain's military support for Kuwait once again. By October the British Force was replaced by an Arab Force but Iraq did not relinquish its claim. On 2 August 1990 Iraq under President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, declaring it the '19th Province of Iraq'.

Such was Dickson's largesse that, in his essay on Harold's father, John Dickson, David W. Morray related a 'widely circulated legend' of 'the redoubtable Dame Violet Dickson fighting stoutly and successfully resisting Iraqi orders to invade her home (in the 1990 Invasion of Kuwait).'[313] The rumour of Dame Violet in the mode of Britannia, an allegory of female British strength in times of adversity was not true. In March 1990 Dickson had suffered a stroke and been transferred to Ahmadi Hospital and, sadly, was never to return to the old house on the seafront. Her house and memorabilia were subsequently looted by Iraqi soldiers, the following August.[314]

Fortunately, years previously, Dickson and her family had donated photographs and documents to the Middle East Centre, St.Anthony's College, Oxford and The British Museum, where they are archived. Kuwait was under a media blackout with electricity and water turned off, Western prisoners housed in the and the freedom fighters. It was a time of unbelievable evil inclusive of medevil torture, and exceptional kindness by East Asian and Arabic residents towards Westerners who were targets for capture to become part of the Iraqi *Human Shield* in Iraq around installation plants. During the Iraqi occupation of the hospital and search for Dickson, she was smuggled out of the hospital by two nurses from India, and placed on the flight organised by Sir Edward Heath.[315] Dickson died in the presence of her children in England on 4 January 1991. After Kuwait's liberation, in 1992, the Amir of Kuwait, HH Sheikh Jaber al Ahmad al Sabah (reigned: 1977-2006) requested the repatriation

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[313] David W. Morray, 'A late-Victorian consul in the Near East: John Dickson (1846-1906)', *Biblical and Near Eastern Essays* (T & T Clark International, 2004) pp.341-353, (p.341).

[314] Anne Bassam, 'A Piece of England Forever Kuwait', *Arab Times,* 20 June 2017.

[315] A key player in the Liberation of Kuwait, Prime Minister Lady Margaret Thatcher agreed that ex-British prime minister Edward Heath could 'privately' organise a *Mission of Mercy* to Iraq to persuade Saddam Hussein, to allow British women and children to return to England and not become part of his *Human Shield*. The families were transported by brave Virgin Airlines and British Airways staff.

A Personal Note: Not all women, including my friend Bella Wells and her two daughters were lucky to escape and were held in Iraq as part of the Human Shield for months. My family and I are were lucky to be on vacation in Britain on 2-8-1990.

of Dame Violet, as were her wishes, but it was refused by her family. In this request, the Amir and Violet had considered Kuwait to be Violet's home. On their visit to Kuwait to open the Cultural Centre, in 2019, her grandchildren were hosted by prominent Kuwaitis.

The relationship between the British in the Middle East and the Arab population and rulers had become vulnerable at the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, due to the imposition of boundaries and a slew of other decisions which led to mis-trust of the British authorities' priorities and intentions. The dedication of Dame Violet Dickson to the understanding and respect of the culture of the Arabs, and in her support of the less fortunate throughout her residency in an area then little frequented by Westerners, is her legacy. She showed determination and worked hard both to improve the lot of the people she lived amongst and to preserve their heritage, as shown in her later commitment to promoting archaeology.

Dame Violet Dickson made the decision to be of service to the people of her adopted home of sixty-one years. In Kuwait Dickson chose to prioritise the local people, before the wishes of her own children, remaining in Kuwait for the duration of WW2, and after her husband's Harold's death, in 1959. Her dedication to the Bedouin people led to the creating, self-funding and running of extreme relief efforts in severe famine and monetary shortage, and resulted in being awarded the honorific title of *Umm Kuwait*. On 23 January 2019 The Dickson House Cultural Centre was opened to celebrate 120 years of friendship between Kuwait and Great Britain.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY 3: DAME FREYA STARK (1893-1993)

Dame Freya Stark was a celebrated Arab-centric travel writer who through her extensive knowledge and Arabic praxis received the honorary title of 'Arabist'. Compared to the other Case Studies, she was not introduced to the Middle East through archaeology or marriage to a colonial officer. Rather, she immersed herself in Arab culture for a period of two decades , travelling through, and living in, Arab lands. Stark's contributions offer a different perspective of 'colonial understanding' to the other three case studies and will be seen as having equal value. This Case Study will explore whether her contributions to the Anglo-Arab relationship during that period were more influential through her actions in the Middle East and co-founding of the Arabic *Brotherhood of Freedom* or her writings in bringing awareness and help to bridge the Anglo-Arab cultural divide.

Today, international repositories hold Stark's archives of letters, travelogues, photographs and maps, which together constitute a historical record of international thought in a period succeeding that covered by Gertrude Lowthian Bell CBE (1868-1926). She was a prolific letter writer, whether on donkeys, horses (which she loved and rode until her eighty-fourth year), or camels (which she hated), writing letters to friends and family. Such letters formed the basis of her books, edited by John (Jock) Murray (1909-1993).[316] Stark wrote in excess of two dozen books and her best sellers were *The Valleys of the Assassins: and Other Persian Tales (*1934*), The Southern Gates of Arabia: A Journey in the Hadhramaut (*1936*), Baghdad Sketches: Journeys through Iraq (*1937*), A Winter in Arabia: A Journey through Yemen* (1940*)* and *East is West* (1944).[317] Letters and books were combined to form the basis of her four autobiographies: *Traveller's Prelude* (1950), *Beyond Euphrates: Autobiography*

[316] Murray's editing of *A Winter in Arabia,* to prevent a libel action by Gertrude Caton Thompson, archaeologist and Stark's partner in the *Wakefield Exhibition,* created friction between Stark and Murray, as referenced in her letter to Jock dated 28 July, 1939. Stark strongly objected to Thompson's interpretation of the East and its people and was concerned that historians would accept her negative viewpoints.

[317] Freya Stark, *The Valleys of the Assassins and Other Persian Travels* (New York:The Modern Library, 2001), *Baghdad Sketches: Journeys through Iraq* (London:Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2011), *The Southern Gates of Arabia*: *A Journey in the Hadhramaut* (New York:The Modern Library Paperbacks, 2001), *A Winter in Arabia: A Journey through Yemen* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2011), *East is West* (London: Century,1986).

1928-1933 (1985), *The Coast of Incense* : *Autobiography* 1934-99 (1990) and *Dust in the Lion's Paw: Autobiography* 1939-1946 (1985).[318]

Stark's canon transports its readers through her four chronological autobiographies (1914-45). Her details of current events are interspaced with historical records, meticulously researched and enhanced by the oral histories shared by her Arab guides and the people she met on her travels from Aleppo to Hadhramaut via Kuwait.

Quantitative and scientific data are absent from her authorship suggesting that Stark was neither an ethnologist or a social geographer. Her travelogues echo those of Gertrude Bell in the preference for international thought whilst personalising her references of dignitaries, villagers, shoe makers, guides, shop sellers, doctors, school teachers and brigands. In times of peril she confides that she is frightened, in a way she would not divulge to her British peers, who tried to dissuade her in her travels. Her travelogues warn of dangers; in Luristan whilst searching for Bronze artefacts of the early Iron Age or in areas of British impotency where she admits 'none travels here unless he has freedom of the tribes or other protection'.[319] As a prisoner in the WW2 Baghdad Siege, or undergoing Axis bombing in Aden and Cairo, Stark conveys, and analyses, her anxieties, stating 'fear comes and goes in an unreasonable way'.[320] As we realise her fear in dark times we are persuaded to share in her excitement, humour and joy at the discovery of a bed of flowers, the blue sea of Kuwait, a castle unknown to Europeans, an unmapped mountain range or a string of natural Gulf pearls in Kuwait *Souk*.

By discovering her personal identity and childhood influences we can interpret the meaning of, and messages within her writings. Stark was born in Paris, in 1893, to bohemian parents Robert Stark, an English Gentleman and artist, and his European cousin, musician Flora Stark. Travel was considered by Robert to be a vital part of childhood social development in creating acceptance of difference in cultures.[321] Doreen Massey emphasises the importance of acknowledging difference, that 'any real unity of purpose can be constructed out of prior recognition of differences, place, gender and ethnicity'.[322]

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[318] Freya Stark, *Traveller's Prelude* (London: John Murray, 1950), *Beyond Euphrates: Autobiography 1928-33* (London: Century Publishing Co.Ltd.,1985), *The Coast of Incense: Autobiography 1933-39* (London: Arrow Books, 1990), *Dust in the Lion's* Paw, (London: Century Publishing Co.Ltd.,1985).
[319] Stark, *The Valley of the Assassins,* p.152.
[320] Stark, *Dust in the Lion's Paw,* p.48.
[321] Freya Stark, *Perseus in the Wind: A Life of Travel* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2013), p.144.
[322] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gende*r (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p.119.

Moving between her parents' homes in England and Italy enabled Stark to become bi-cultural and multilingual, in empathy with the 'Other' in new social situations. Throughout her early years Stark experienced increased 'placelessness' in the absence of a permanent house, country and family unit (her parents were separated when Stark was nine years old).[323]

At the age of thirteen Stark experienced a traumatic accident in her mother's new carpet factory in Droneo, Italy, which hastened her personal voyage to self-dependence and increased her determination to excel at challenges she set herself. The act of crossing borders or in Stark's words 'horizons', was an escape from the subjugation caused by increasing familial and economic restrictions. When her education at Bedford Ladies' College in London (1912-14) was suspended by WW1 a year before completing her degree in History, Stark was forced to return to Italy, leading to her developing a sense of Italian patriotism during WW1.

In July 1914 Italy aligned itself with the *Central Powers* but remained neutral at the beginning of WW1. Dislike for Austro- Hungary made Italy align itself with Britain and join the Allies and declared war on Austro-Hungary on 23 May 1915. In 1914 Stark went to work for the Red Cross in Bologna before moving to the Italian Front in 1916. 30% of Stark's first autobiography *Traveller's Prelude* focuses on her experiences as a nurse on the Front. The chapter entitled *War Diary* details her daily experiences.[324] The following year, 1917, she became a censor in London.

Why did Stark choose the Middle East as her place of travel ten years laterè? In an interview conducted half a century later with Betty Patchin, Stark explained her determination to become fluent in Arabic:

> 'Arabic covers the greatest number of countries with the most interesting histories within my reach …and I thought that the countries where oil was being found were going to be the most interesting in my life.'[325]

Stark's vision of being part of an evolving region and recording both pre-oil and oil eras inspired her to be part of the historical period of change. Her prolific photographs and records

[323] Flora opened a carpet factory in 1902, in Droneo forming a partnership with Count Mario Roascio, twenty years her junior and Freya caught her long hair in a new machine.
[324] Freya Stark, *Travellers Prelude,* pp.180-226.
[325] Betty Tatchin Greene, 'A Talk with Freya Stark', *Saudi Aramco World: Arab and Islamic Cultures & Connections ,* 28.5 (16-19 September/October, 1977).

of the pre-oil era are referenced as primary sources today by universities in the Middle East.[326]

On 25 April 1920 the San Remo Conference of the *League of Nations* announced its decision to change the map of the Ottoman Empire of the Near East and create a new Middle East. Stark, living close to San Remo, a place where she took Arabic lessons, would have followed the Conference with interest. The announcement determined that the Eastern Arabian vilayets (governorates) of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul would be placed under the League's British Mandate of 'Iraq' and the Sanjak of Jerusalem and the Southern part of the vilayet of Beirut in Western Arabia would be joined to become the British Mandate of Palestine (under which the Emirate of 'Transjordan' made up of parts of Syria and the now Saudi Arabia, would be placed in 1921). The remaining part of Beirut which included Brummana would become absorbed into a new region called Lebanon and the vilayet of Syria would absorb the vilayet of Aleppo and Sanjak of Alexandretta, together under the French Mandate of Syria and Lebanon.[327]

On 11 December 1927 Stark arrived on the S.S. Diana in Beirut to stay at the Quakers' Mission in Brummana, run by the Christian Audi family. Stark's letters during that maiden voyage are the foundation of her book *Letters from Syria* (1942), a wealth of information about the early years of the new mandatory nations. Writing to her friend Margaret about Beirut Stark states:

> 'People are more than scenery, art or fashion…there is too much civilization here…one great thing about an interest in civilization is that it gives you a fresh look at your own'.[328]

This one sentence questions the decision of the League to award a mandate of tutelage over a region of great civilisation.

France was awarded the Mandate of Syria encompassing all regions including the Jebel Druze: a strong minded people with a fierce reputation who considered themselves

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[326] Malise Ruthven, and راثڤنماليز. "A Subversive Imperialist: Re-Appraising Freya Stark / إمبريالية بثورية مبطنة: إعادة تقييم فريا ستارك." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 26, 2006, pp. 147–67, (p.147). 6000 black and white photographs and 50,000 negatives were bound in volumes by Stark at her expense and brought from her home in Italy to The Middle East Centre, by Malise Ruthven, her godson.

[327] This summary has been devised from analysing data. Although regions were in existence, territories were not and the new territories of Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon and Transjordan were created post-WW1.

[328] Stark, *Letters from Syria,* p.41.

independent and befitting Hobsbawm's definition of a nation.[329] Stark saw evidence of the 1925-27 *Druze Rebellion* against French introduction of administration methods, rules and subsequent arrests of Druze leaders who protested peacefully. In 1921 the Druze State would be created by France and exist until 1936. The Druze are a minority following, a separate religion which has often been the focus of religious persecution and massacre in attempts at ethnic cleansing. Stark's books contain accounts of serious nature offering suggestions for extended historical research.

In 1928 Stark, following in Bell's footsteps, planned a visit to the Druze, friends of the British since receiving support from Britain in their war against French-backed Christians in 1860.[330] Stark experienced a little of the French military treatment for disobedience. British tourists were strictly forbidden by the French to communicate with the Druze, on the serious charge of spying for the rebels. Stark quietly defied the edict, evading the border patrol with a Druze guide and her friend Venetia Buddicom, who had travelled from India. After attending a Druze wedding and talking to the elders for two days, the young women were arrested by the French border control on their return, blaming their appearance in Druze territory as a mistake due to an out-of-date Thomas Cook guidebook and were let go.[331] That both women had the privilege of being British nationals would have played an important part in the decision of their fate. Stark's account of her visit with the Druze became her first paid publication in *The Cornhill Magazine* and secured her an editor and publisher for her future canon, John (Jock) Murray (1909-1993). This episode in her life depicts Stark's determination to reach her goal and to use the privilege of her chosen passport and gender to full advantage. She declared 'The great and only comfort about being a woman is that one can always pretend to be more stupid than one is and no one is surprised'.[332]

Neither did Stark adhere to British edicts. Advised not to visit Luristan in Persia by the British authorities in Iraq, in 1931 she escaped over the Iraq-Persian border to Luristan with a single, hopefully trustworthy hired guide to look for non-existent buried treasure. Not only concerned about the number of murders of lone travellers in areas of no British influence,

[329] The Druze State existed between 1921-1936 under the French mandate.

[330] Stark, *Letters From Syria,* p.45.
It began with the humanitarian work done by the (unnamed) widow of a British doctor, who died in Beirut persuading the British Consul to assist starving Druze women and children in the Druze massacre by the French Christians, flooding into Beirut. On returning home to Britain she convinced her brother to set up missions for the Druze. It was not forgotten and British people were always welcome.

[331] Geniesse, p.72.

[332] Stark, *The Valley of the Assassins*, p.49.

Britain was undergoing Anglo-Persian Treaty talks with the new military ruler Reza Shah Pahlavi (1878-1944) and did not want an international incident.

British officials considered Stark a 'loose cannon' as WW2 Ambassador to Iraq Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, a peer of the late Gertrude Bell recalled:

> 'For several years I have encountered Miss Stark when I was in the Ministry of Interior in Iraq. Miss Stark made light of bureaucratic red tape, she saved our hair from going prematurely white by just going and telling us all about it on her return.'[333]

Only once did Stark document a decision not to 'go rogue', in her preparation for the *Wakefield Expedition* of neolithic sites in South Yemen, with archaeologist Gertrude Caton Thompson, in 1937. With great respect for the work of Doreen and Harold Ingrams (Case Study 4) she wrote:

> 'I am not of those who blame officials for looking upon me with misgiving…in this case we were bound by ties of kindness…as far as possible with officialdom and Aden.'[334]

The mutual sharing of information and additional recognition of the severe problems that could be caused to the *Ingrams Peace* a new agreement signed by 1400 warring tribes to stop internecine warfare in the Hadhramaut in 1937 would have deterred Stark from her usual course of action.

Stark's statement about 'kindness' relates to respect a vital component of her personal ethics; respect for the local people she met on her travels and their expertise in ensuring the success of her journey and her survival. Cynthia Young states:

> 'The underlying theme in all of Stark's writing is the concept of respect: who gets it, who gives it, who doesn't and why. It is Stark's use and interpretation of this concept that makes her writing distinctive among her contemporary Arabian travel writers.' [335]

Much later, in 1980, Stark wrote a letter to a Miss Marlow, a modern traveller along the same routes, of the importance of mutual respect:

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[333] Stark, *A Winter in Arabia,* Foreword by Sir Kinahan Cornwallis.
[334] Stark, *A Winter in Arabia,* pp. 5-6.
[335] Cynthia Young, *Respect, Postcolonialism and the Travel Writing of Freya Stark,* (USA: Athabasca University, 2014) p.9.

> ‘I do not think you need to worry about safety, the Arab feeling for women’s propriety is so strong that you only need to show that you are a modest creature covering from neck to ankle.[336]

To show respect for local people Stark shared facilities and food as noted by Malise Ruthven:

> ‘In many cases her illnesses were results of her insistence, unlike Gertrude Bell, of eating local food, drinking the water and sleeping alongside women and their sometimes infected children…on which she relied on local treatments’[337]

As an ex-army nurse Stark not only relied upon, but was highly appreciative of, the traditional methods of local people and doctors which were specific to the location. Writing of an illness suffered while travelling towards the mountains of Alamut, in Persia, she remarked 'I was under the jurisdiction of women who gave me a bowl of soup *harira;* rice, almonds and milk …they scrub one out.’ She was told by a doctor, with whom she argued about doses of quinine to administer for her dysentery on her mountain climb, ‘we know more than your doctors do about these [our]diseases and dysentery.’[338] In turn, she offered her assistance, if requested, often to a villager or tribesman who had walked miles to find her, even suggesting treatment to an armed bandit ‘one of them had a wounded leg which I doctored with brandy’.[339]

Only once did she put the blame of a bitter failure to complete her expedition on an illness induced by local people as recounted in *Southern Gates of Arabia.* At the Fortress of Masna’a, Do’an, Stark visited the Sheikh's harem in which all the children had measles, a four year cyclical pandemic. She remarked ‘I had a delirious week'.[340] Two weeks later Stark, eager to be the first (recorded) European to visit the *Hidden City of Shabwa,* decided that she had recovered and resumed her journey only to fall seriously ill on the outskirts of the city and require an airlift to Aden by the R.A.F., arranged and paid for by close friend entrepreneur, Sir Antoine Besse (founder of St. Anthony’s College, Oxford).[341]

Stark made one city her temporary home, Baghdad, the Capital of Iraq, a base from where she could visit Kuwait, Yemen, Hadhramaut and Persia. In 1929 Iraq had just been put

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[336] Caroline Moorehead (ed.) *Over the Rim of the World:Selected Letters of Freya Stark* (London: John Murray,1988), p.396.

[337] Malise Ruthven, and راثفنماليز. “A Subversive Imperialist: Re-Appraising Freya Stark / إمبريالية بثورية مبطنة: إعادة تقييم فريا ستارك.” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 26, 2006, pp. 147–67, (p.152).

[338] Stark,*Valley of the Assassins,* p.214.

[339] Stark,*Valley of the Assassins*, p.4.

[340] Stark, *Southern Gates of Arabia,* pp.113-114.

[341] Stark, *Southern Gates of Arabia*, Dedication.

forward by Britain for admission as an independent nation in the *League of Nations* and independence would follow in 1932. When Stark arrived in Baghdad, Gertrude Bell CBE (1868-1926), the first Oriental Secretary of Iraq, had been dead for three years.

Stark stated:

> 'the Iraq she had helped to build had almost passed away…The country was still divided…but the reigns were held by King Faisal with a genius of diplomacy and a small competent band of British advisors and officials who…were building up its independence'.[342]

George Antonius agrees with Stark:

> 'Just as hard things may legitimately be said of the British Government's piratical attempt to grab Iraq so it can without exaggeration be said that the modern state of Iraq owes its existence largely to the efforts of and the devotion of its British officials.'[343]

Susan Pederson emphasises that the British Empire had 90,000 casualties in expelling the Ottomans (and more in anti-British uprisings).[344] It had spent millions of pounds of British tax-payers money in rebuilding Iraq and utilised British experts to reach that point in time.

Peter Slugett states that the Middle Class had grown 'largely in response to secular requirements of the colonial state'.[345] The continuation of Bell's insistence to train Baghdadi effendis for administrative and clerical posts was now more important as the completion of the British mandate and its withdrawal was imminent. This factor attracted several Baghdadis to request English lessons from Stark. One such gentleman, Naser, offered to share conversation in Arabic for English tuition. He told Stark that everyone who was not Ottoman wanted the British to come but the Ottomans used 'famine warfare' and a 'scorched earth policy' (Case Study 1) and starved the Baghdadis.[346]

Stark's respect for, and friendship with, local people created a protective attitude towards them. Stark, as did Bell, and Ingrams in Aden, began to witness a cultural binary appearing in the attitudes of the British people towards local people living in Baghdad. She wrote to her mother:

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[342] Stark, *Beyond Euphrates*, pp.87-88.
[343] George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (U.S.A.: Allegro Editions, 1939), p.363.
[344] Susan Pederson, 'Getting Out of Iraq—in 1932: The League of Nations and the Road to Normative Statehood', *The American Historical Review*,115.4 (2010), pp. 975–1000 (p.978).
[345] Peter Slugett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London & New York: I.B.Tauri, 2007), p.213.
[346] Stark, *Baghdad Sketches,* pp.29-30.

> 'I am not 'pro-native' and am an Imperialist as much as anyone here but it is that attitude from '*The Passage of India* [E.M Forster, 1924] though I would never have believed it before, and it does make one rather sad.'[347]

Stark mentioned the negative reaction to her accepting invitations of Arab hosts to dinner to her mother in a private letter which she later published:

> 'I put my foot in it dreadfully by accepting the mulla'allim's invitation from the bedouin Sheikh, Mrs. Dower tells me all the men disapprove of me. It makes me feel like a pariah from my own kind…I am regretting we cannot be less superior and more polite, but Mrs Sturges said you can't be friends with British and natives both…it seems to me an almost unbelievable idiocracy…but they can't order about an independent traveller.'[348]

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Refusing the constraints of an English compound and with little money, Stark entrusted Mrs Kerr, the American headmistress of The Girl's School, which Stark attended, in a class of twelve year olds, to improve her Arabic, with finding cheap, local accommodation in the 'Muslim' Old Quarter of Baghdad. Such was their camaraderie that neighbours knocked on her window after walking over the roofs to herald the arrival of Stark's approaching visitors. Her choice of dwelling in the less affluent as detailed in *Beyond Euphrates* endeared her to local people and made them realise the existence of 'different' British people who were friendly and spoke their language.

Living outside the heterotopia of the British community Stark deduced that the excellent work created by many British people after WW1 was being annulled by the behaviour of the current British community and enhanced anti-British feeling. Whilst having tea with a Syrian family Stark was told 'we would like to be allowed to love the English, if they did not always make us feel they are snubbing us'.[349] Stark lamented 'Outside the government very few British took trouble to meet Iraqis'.[350] Whilst Stark considered Britain's presence to be for the purpose of 'transit' not colonisation in the Middle East she disagreed with the choice of the British people not to connect with the Iraqi people. It festered anger in the interwar years, fueled by Nationalism in newspapers.

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[347] Moorehead (ed.), *Over the Rim of the World,* pp.47-8.
[348] Moorehead (ed.), *Over the Rim of the World,* p.47.
[349] Moorehead (ed.), *Over the Rim of the World,* p.47.
[350] Freya Stark, *East Is West,* p.162.

Stark was invited to become a journalist for the *Baghdad Times* and proving that 'the pen is mightier than the sword' created a satirical column called *Baghdad Sketches* aimed to be read by the inhabitants of *Little England.* Stark's determination to champion the side of the 'Other' is evident. In 1937 Stark published the book *Baghdad Sketches* which included chapters entitled 'European and American Ladies in Iraq- Regulations regarding Residency and Travelling.' (pp.56-60), 'The Social Status of Ladies-A Problem for the Authorities' (pp.59-60) (signed 'an Enquirer') and 'Concerning Manners', *(*pp.61-65), drawing attention to the developing divide between British and Iraqis, a warning of what might occur. The increasing Baghdadi nationalism was documented in the chapter 'The Making of a Nationalist' (pp. 26-31) in which Stark concluded:

> 'it was fashionable to be anti-British…it made you successful as a lawyer, politician or journalist: you made an income, and were a patriot as well, pro-British you were a Betrayer.'[351]

Evidence has shown throughout her canon that Stark was reluctant to adopt the imperialist persona, a courageous act considering potential British ostracization. Travelling similarly unchaperoned with an Arab companion had beleaguered explorer Rosita Forbes throughout her travels in the Middle East during the same period.[352] Stark was not a danger to the British image but to the patriarchy of the British community.

In 1932 Stark began working as a war correspondent for *The Times* while continuing to write powerful articles for the *Baghdad Times*. One from November 1932, which rallied against the superior attitude of the Foreign Office was entitled 'The Foreign Office's 'H' 'printed in the *Baghdad Times* in November 1932:

> 'I saw amongst the papers on my desk a typewritten sheet signed with a rubber stamp, British Embassy, Bagdad. I was shocked…is it a Diplomatic incident? Without the 'h' Bagdad means nothing, with it it means 'Garden of Justice.''[353][354]

Stark succeeded in being noticed:

> 'Major Young tells me that my editor published something he shouldn't (anti-British probably) and that everyone instantly said 'he would have not dared do it til Miss Stark went to his office,'[355]

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[351] Stark, *Baghdad Sketches,* pp. 27-28.
[352] *Rosita Forbes* (1890-1967), explorer, Arabist, author and film-maker.
[353] Stark, *The Zodiac Arch*, p.1
[354] The article was also published in her second autobiography *Beyond the Euphrates* (p. 286), entitled 'The Foreign Office drops its 'H''. It is also on the first page of *The Zodiac Arch*, p1.
[355] Stark, *Beyond Euphrates,* p.255.

Ruthvern cites Justin Garrick 'Stark criticises the attitudes and behaviour of the British Empire but does not impugn its right to exist…her aim is reform of the Empire, not its abolition'[356] She criticised the Empire, and its buildings such as government offices and the new Agency in Kuwait seen as a symbol of solidarity with Power:

> 'our lumbar rooms are still groaning with the furniture of Victoria solidarity…if Progress marching hand in hand with Oil, is to erect her palaces over the length and breadth of Arabia, regardless of expense, what may we not fear.'[357]

It can be argued that Stark could not, even if she had wanted to, have demanded abolition in print, our only primary source of reference, due to the threat of being labelled a subversive, accused and interned as an 'Italian traitor' in interwar years. It can be assumed that her publisher and friend Jock Murray would have removed anything he considered libellous, as he did when Stark wrote derogatory passages about Caton Thompson in her draft of *A Winter in Arabia* (1937). Instead of accusing Caton Thompson of exhibiting imperial characteristics she was only allowed to retain the description 'pedantic and insensitive to the local people.'[358]

Stark, through her books, aimed to positively influence the Anglo-Arab relationship through removing inaccuracies within the conception of her Western public. Her writing portrays the diversity of Arab cultures, philosophies, religions and allegiances, where countries, sects and tribes were more often at war with each other. It is clear that Stark's writings strongly go against the preconceived notion of the Arabs as one undifferentiated people. However, her books are often misinterpreted through the modern post-colonial narrative.

An example of such a misunderstanding is found in Chaitali Roy's interview with the production team of *Freya: Letters from Kuwait.*[359] The play was an original biographical monodrama, written and produced by Palestinian-Kuwaiti, award-winning playwright Hooda Shawa for *Kuwait: Capital of Islamic Culture, 2016.*[360] Shawa told Roy that she had been inspired by Stark's travel writing:

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[356] Ruthven cites Justin Garrick, *Journeys in Perspective: Critical Approaches To the Travel Writing of Freya Stark,* diss., University of Cambridge, (2002), thesis, p.152.
[357] Stark, *Baghdad Sketches,* p.160.
[358] Analise Van Ven, *Trowelblazers: Dame Freya Stark* (March 12, 2017).E-book.
[359] Chaitali Roy, *Freya:Letters From Kuwait,* Arab Times, 14 April 2016.
[360] Stark's travel writing was included in a component Shawa was studying for her 2015, Kuwait University's MA programme: *Comparative and Cultural Studies*; Middle Eastern academic acknowledgement and recent interest in her authorship. I had the privilege of creating the role of Dame Freya Stark.

> **"**what stands out in her immaculate and crisp travel narratives is an uncanny ability to capture the machinations of human interactions; with her keen eye for observing the human condition and conveying the ultimate universality of human behaviour and emotions''.[361]

Roy includes in her report a criticism from Dutch researcher Ulrike Brisson which refers to Stark's trip to Kuwait:

> 'The *country* seemed to her [Stark] like 'an untried bridegroom'... but instead of lingering over the untried beauties of the land Stark's imagination was captured by the exciting prospect of oil drilling and she saw in the drilling machine an idea stronger than the elemental matter around it'. [362]

From the point of primary source data found in *Baghdad Sketches,* it will be shown that Stark made *two* visits to Kuwait in 1933 and 1937 which were confirmed by Dame Violet Dickson (Case Study 2) in her autobiography *Forty Years in Kuwait.* Brisson references the latter without reference to the former. That Stark was prolific in her description of elemental beauty of sea, sky, desert and 'healing air', on both journeys is documented in her chapters *The Kuwait Journey* (p.123-132), and *Kuwait 11, 1937* (p.133-68). Stark wrote to her mother in March 1933:

> 'The sand is white, the houses windowless, there are no trees except for those around the Sheikh's palace but who can describe the beauty of the boats or the feeling of time turned backwards'.[363]

That Kuwait was poverty stricken has been addressed in Case Study 2. With no natural resources above ground other than what came from the sea the discovery of oil would have secured Kuwaiti's survival and development. However, Stark addressed her concerns about the dramatic change that would take place heralding modernization. In the chapter entitled *Kuwait 11: 1937* with reference to oil Stark writes:

> 'The shadow [oil] is there already...Luckily it takes eight months to drill a hole, the first experiment has failed…Civilisation [modernisation] by then will be more like a Marriage than a Rape…and the poor little town that looks to her untried bridegroom with temporal blessings may yet with gentle treatment keep her peculiar charm.'[364]

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[361] Chaitali Roy*, Dame Freya Stark - a woman of remarkable spirit and adventure.* https://www.academia.edu/36071146

[362] Ulrike Brisson (ed.) & Berard Schweizer *Not so Innocent Abroad: The Politics of Travel and Travel Writing* (Cambridge:Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), p. 92. Ebook.

[363] Freya Stark, *The Zodiac Arc*h, p.15.

[364] Freya Stark, *Baghdad Sketches: Journeys through Iraq* (London:Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2011), p.139.

Brisson's criticism is mistaken here about the term 'bridegroom' as Stark uses the term 'bridegroom' to refer to oil, not the country of Kuwait: the marriage of the town with oil was to bring material benefits and growth of infrastructure (as witnessed in Kuwait today).

With reference to oil-drilling Stark stated:

> 'The drilling machine too is an Idea, stronger [physically] than the elemental matter around it, it bites away regardless of landscape or climate, the cynosure of its human devotees.'[365]

It is evident that Shawa's intent was to portray the voice of Stark through her writing from Shawa's Arab-centric viewpoint and personal Middle Eastern experiences whilst Brisson appears to convey a Euro-centric bias, without reference to her subject's original place-time frame, with the objective to connect modern readers to the past through a popular modern perspective. It forces Roy into the position of a tertiary source who is in danger of passing on mistranslated information to a wider public.

Susan Pederson draws attention to the three year delay from the British request for Iraqi entry in 1929 until '3 October 1932 when the League voted unanimously to admit Iraq to membership'.[366] She states it was 'because Iraq was a mandated territory its 'emancipation' had to be internationally agreed'.[367] The League had become an International Empire. Britain had submitted this entry without any prior discussion with other League members and its preferred method of 'secrecy' which was so disliked by President Woodrow Wilson in 1918 had once again enabled work to be done without interference and quickly. Pederson points to the fact that only Britain believed in its readiness and stood firm.[368]

Iraq was independent and all Arab nations were impressed. The anti-British sentiment in Iraq receded and the realisation of loss of British presence in the region made the enormity of the country evident.

Antonius states:

> 'The stand taken by the British Government did much towards creating a better feeling in Anglo-Arab relations [as Bell had always protested]. It created a wave of

[365] Freya Stark, *Baghdad Sketches: Journeys through Iraq* (London:Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2011), p.139.
[366] Pederson, 'Getting Out of Iraq',(p.975)
[367] Pederson, 'Getting Out of Iraq', p.976.
[368] Pederson, 'Getting Out of Iraq', p.976.

> satisfaction and gratitude…and its effect on the Arab mind was not confined to Iraq'.[369]

Britain's withdrawal and King Faisal's sudden death of a heart attack a year later in 1933 left the country with Faisal's brother King Ali as Regent while his son and his brother. This left Iraq open to external influences.

Stark's canon describes the changing Middle East and its transition to modernisation. She documents the rise of the effendi, the educated new generation, encouraged by liberal Western education abroad or the American Universities in Syria and Egypt, funded through the British Council and Western scholarships, or from the resources of rich parents. Such education freed the students of both genders from the constraints of traditional, segregated, non-secular, education and many students returned to their countries with ideas for development and independence. However, Stark realised the danger of Western education to the British position in the country stating 'and what is more we [the British] actively try to produce lawyers, politicians and journalists'.[370]

She, unlike Bell, was a witness to the successes and downfalls of the first Arab governors post-Ottoman dissolution.[371] To her readers she described the inevitable change, a result of the hybrid European investment (in money and advice) and Arab management, albeit in a period of 1930's World Depression. It was a period which widened the division between the educated, progressive city dwellers, with increasingly secular government, and the traditionalism of the tribes, and their Sharia laws.

Directly or indirectly Stark notified readers of political changes in the regions including a change in the British influence in Iraq through her reference to the requirement of a visa for a British passport holder to enter Baghdad in 1927, information she received after her meeting in London with Iraq's Ambassador to Britain, the transient Prime Minister, Ja'far Pasha Askari.[372]

In the years leading up to WW2 the mood of her books changed. Ben Cocking states:

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[369] Antonius, p.362.
[370] Stark, *Baghdad Sketches*, p.127-8.
[371] Coup d'etat and anti-British protests in Mosul (1930) and the Iraq Presidency(1939).
[372] Stark, *Beyond the Euphrates*, p.61.

> While traditional nineteenth century Arabist-writing covered 'desert and bedouins', in the age of WW.2, socio-political changes and the demise of colonialism changed Western travel-writing about the region.[373]

Throughout her books, in a similar way to Bell referencing German expansion, Stark references the build-up of Italian influence in North African countries in the interwar years. When Italy, an ally of Britain in WW1 supported the Axis Powers in WW2 Stark's choice to support Britain rather than Italy was not taken lightly and would ultimately condemn her mother to prison in Mussolini's Italy during WW2. [374]

Stark's objective regarding the Anglo-Arab relationship was to improve the relationship. The relationship was deteriorating rapidly due to the rise in pro-German support and the rumour of a potential British partition of the Mandate of Palestine to produce a homeland for the Jewish people. It is through her political information that readers are presented with an in depth record of the Middle East in WW2

Was Stark a spy? Adrian Sullivan suggests that Stark had 'been spying professionally for the British Government since the inception of Section D of the Special Intelligence Service (SIS) in 1938'. He admits that there are very few documents existing that would confirm this claim that she was appointed earlier than this date.[375] This shines a different light on Stark's WW2 focus on the Anglo-Arab relationship. Whilst the principal focus of Bell, Dickson and Ingrams was Arab-centric, Arab self-determination and progress through the assistance of Britain, Stark's focus during the war was a combination of Anglo-centric and Arab-centric objectives. It is Anglo-centric in its intention to strengthen the relationship and Arab-centric in her objection to a potential fascist government in the Middle Eastern which could potentially reinstate the subjugation of the Arab people. Stark acknowledged her work for British Intelligence in WW2 in her autobiography *Dust in the Lion's Paw* by printing her criticism to Cornwallis in 1940, based on Britain's lack of acknowledgement of information sent by informers. Stark wrote:

> 'Our intelligence is filled with sorrow, it appears that there are files and files about it [Italian build-up] reposing at the Colonial Office, if one cares to look at them…I plan

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[373] Ben Cocking, 'Writing the End: Wilfred Thesiger and Freya Stark and the Arabist Tradition', *Journeys* 8.1-2, (December 2007), pp. 57-76 (p.55).
[374] Stark, *Dust in the Lion's Paw,* p.3.
[375] Adrian Sullivan, *The Baghdad Set -Iraq through the Eyes of British Intelligence, 1941-45* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) Loc. 76, paragraph 1.

> to go up to Yemen [which was being courted by Italy]...and alter the atmosphere from a position of female insignificance, which has its compensations.'[376]

This letter shows Stark's frustration with what she perceived as non-acknowledgement of fascist build-up and her determination to pursue her own course of action.

Stark's official choice of work was 'persuasion' and the enforcement of pro-British propaganda. Stark's accounts of her travels were submitted to the Royal Geographical Society. The War Office directly or indirectly received copies of Stark's maps, included in her travelogues. Stark wrote:

> 'My task was propaganda in South Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, America, India and Italy….we are all propagandists with persuasion being our aim, integrity alone keeps us truthful'.[377]

In her drive to instil propaganda Stark was appointed as script writer for *BBC Arabic* with diplomat and archaeologist Stewart Perowne (1901-1989), her future husband, as Chief of Programmes. Simon Potter details and evaluates the success of *BBC Arabic* as being different to the aggressive, political broadcasts of the Axis countries. By adopting the unique 'keep calm and carry-on attitude' with delivery of musical events and serials announced by eloquent presenters, most popular were the Arabic programmes transmitted from UK's Arabic populations, such as the Muslim community of Cardiff.[378] However, Axis propaganda was more popular with the Arab people and the Allies' reputation was diminishing. Case Study (4) details the Ingrams' visits to Yemen and the success in persuading the Imam to remove Axis broadcasts from the airwaves.

Stark's idea for a more effective method of propaganda was to recruit a team of local people, fighters for 'freedom' against Fascism. Malise Ruthven quoted Stark in her Arabic address to the *Ikhwan al Hurriya* (*Brotherhood of Freedom)* which she co-founded in Cairo in 1940:

> 'Propaganda…should depend on its efficacy and dissemination entirely on personal influences, following a tradition which for so many centuries of history has made it familiar and well adapted to the East. '[379]

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[376] Stark, *Dust in the Lion's Paw,* p.19.
[377] Stark, *Dust in the Lion's Paw*, p.3.
[378] Simon Potter, *The Wireless Internationalism and Distant Listening: Britain, Propaganda and the invention of Global Radio,* (Oxford Press, 2020) p.127.
[379] Malise Ruthven, *Traveller Through Time: A Photographic Journey with Freya Stark* (London: Penguin Books Ltd.,1986), p.71.

Ruthven concludes:

> 'It was her faith in mankind that made her an effective propagandist when she started the Brotherhood of Freedom in Cairo, a network of Allied sympathisers focused on achieving a democracy. In Egypt it grew from 16 to 75,000'.[380]

As promised to Cornwallis, Stark accepted the invitation of the King of Yemen to visit his country with her objective being to encourage, at the very least, neutrality in a region desired by, and bordering on areas under Italian authority. Stark was a guest of his Majesty the Imam Yayha Hamid al Din, who had liberated the region from the Ottoman Empire in October 1918, but had no quarrel with 'Christians', or the colony of Britain in South Yemen as long as there was no interference or the intrusion of modernization in his country.

Stark was informed by her cook/guide, Qasim, who accompanied her on many trips, (akin to Gertrude Bell's Fattuh) that 'all things in Arabia are done by the harem. Get them to wish what you wish and you will get it'.[381] Stark's gender was of great advantage, as she was able to enter the harems, host ladies' tea parties and visit to talk with the chief wives and influencers. Refusing to be subversive, Stark insisted on following protocol by requesting from the Queen the permission to present a film show. The royal permits, *ruskas,* for each performance were awarded. 16mm films from the British Ministry of Information, M.O.I., had been carefully placed amongst her personal belongings in her luggage. Information was given including films showcasing Britain's military might and ones on everyday life in Britain. Visually 'innocent', Stark's showmanship and skill in storytelling (with accompanying sound effects of aeroplanes and bombs) delivered a clear message of Britain's 'strength and success'. Considering the year was 1940, at a time of increasing Axis occupation of Europe, Stark was in the business of selling imaginary British success, much to the chagrin of Italian inhabitants of the country who could not get permission to import a wireless. As news travelled fast all harems, inclusive of the Royal Harem, requested viewings. Being female-only events, male family members were denied access, resulting in the request for male-only viewings. In a strictly segregated community, Stark had the added advantage of age. Being nearly fifty years old, she had entered the age when postmenopausal women could move freely between gender spaces. Amongst those who requested viewings were police chiefs, princes, regional Amirs and officials. Knowing the importance of hierarchy in Arabia, Stark compared the royal personage of King George V1 with Hitler 'a

[380] Malise Ruthven, Obituary: Dame Freya Stark, *The Independent.* Tuesday 11 May, 1993.
[381] Stark, *Dust in the Lion's Paw,* p.23.

wallpaper hanger' and Mussolini 'the son of a blacksmith'. Regardless of the intense pressure from the Italian military threat exerted on Yemen, near Italian Middle Eastern and North African bases, North Yemen remained neutral throughout the war. Stark's ten days played an important part in influencing this decision, by strengthening the Anglo-Arab relationship in the strategic region.

Stark's fear of fascism was well founded. In 1941 in Baghdad four pro-fascist generals, the *Golden Square,* seized control of the Iraqi army, arrested pro-British Iraqi citizens, deposed the Iraqi Regent and held prisoner the young King Faisal 11 and Queen Mother, in the palace. The Square supported pro-German Iraqi Prime Minister Rashid Ali Al Gaylani. Doubt of a British victory had influenced the rise of German support and young effendis spread the news in a call-to-arms. The British Embassy, inside which Stark was situated with the Ambassador Cornwallis came under threat of a siege. Britain retaliated by employing the Royal Navy and R.A.F. before the arrival of the German army. Gaylani and supporters were removed and the old government restored with a much stricter British presence in Baghdad than in WW1.[382] Stark was present at the surrender of the Iraqi government to Ambassador Cornwallis, who she considered acted wisely in his decision to placate angry British residents and pro-British Iraqis previously in great danger. Stark's accounts are written in *East is West* and *Dust in the Lion's Paw.*

Stark's final sphere of influence put her into the modern Arab-centric definition of an Arabist as a person recognised for expressing sympathy toward Arab causes. The King of Saudi Arabia raised a concern to the retired Political Agent of Kuwait, Lt. Colonel Harold Dickson (Case Study 2), in his representation of the voice of the Arabic people concerning Palestine. In 1939, The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Malcolm McDonald had subsequently created a White Paper promising the limitation of Jewish immigration into the region. The Arab: Jewish population was at that time 2:1.

Stark wrote:

[382] Jan Keating, *A Prairie Girl Living In Baghdad-The True Story of Sarah Hayden Powell* (Amazon, 2020) loc. 2004 (paragraph ⅓):
Britain banned the teaching and support of Axis Countries in educational institutions, including the learning of the German and Italian languages.

> 'The Zionist campaign at this time was aimed against Mr Malcolm McDonald's White Paper - to limit Jewish immigration into Palestine to twenty-nine thousand …and further immigration would only be in acquiescence with the majority, the Arabs. …. Britain was willing to help the Zionists *as far as she could do so with the consent of the Arabs and no further*….'[383]

Stark realised that it would not come to fruition due to the wartime relationship between Britain and America. She wrote 'knowing the position of Britain in Arabia, the Zionists shifted their impetus to the USA, knowing that Britain could not put through an Arabian policy in the teeth of their ally.'[384]

In 1943, on an army ship and suffering from appendicitis, Stark travelled to the USA at the request of Isaiah Berlin to put forward the case of the Arab Palestinian people. Her lecture series resulted in her being labelled pro-Palestinian and anti-Zionist in the American press and Congress,

Not once in her canon did Stark criticise the Jewish people of which many were her friends. She lamented:

> 'Zionism is only part of Jewry… An opponent of Zionism may be anti-semitic, but as easily not so. In 1943, there was no anti-Semitism in the British opposition, there indeed was much sympathy.'[385]

She continued:

> 'I have no wish to enter the Palestinian arena or take any position beyond a fundamental one that it must be wrong to make a country accept immigration by force. The people of Palestine, after 2000 years, are attached to their soil. The British position is a promise that future immigration will only take place by consent of the Arabs who are in majority in the country. Why a reasonable recognition of these facts should brand one an anti-semite I do not know.[386]

Stark suggested that the people who wrote the manifestoes, US Congress and the British Labour Party should study the history of the interwar years of Middle East so that 'they may have some idea what loss of life, sacrifice and failure their choice entails'.[387]

Her defence of the Arab right to Palestine and agreement to cause 'a stomach ache' in America's plans to increase Jewish immigration is detailed by Simon Albert.[388] Albert

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[383] Stark, *Dust in the Lion's Paw,* pp.165-66.
[384] Stark, *Dust in the Lion's Paw,* p. 166.
[385] Stark, *Dust in the Lion's Paw,* pp. 165.
[386] Stark, *East is West,* p.99.
[387] Stark, *East is West,* p.99.
[388] Simon Albert, 'The Wartime 'Special Relationship' 1941-45: Isaiah Berlin, Freya Stark and Mandate Palestine." *Jewish Historical Studies*, 45 (2013), pp. 103–30.

suggests that Isaiah Berlin, a member of the British Embassy in Washington and of Zionist heritage, might have arranged such a tour knowing that it would fail and sabotage British anti-Zionist efforts from inside. It can be suggested that Britain was very careful not to encourage anti-Zionist activity, having a history of Zionist cabinet members who encouraged the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and who encouraged investment into war efforts. Albert states that 'Halifax, Hackney and Wright sent positive reports about Stark's 'success' to the Foreign Office and Ministry of Information, however a U-turn was made by Prime Minister, (Sir) Winston Churchill who wrote 'I have always considered the White Paper a disastrous policy, why should we make trouble with the USA…the Arabs have done nothing for us in the war, except the rebellion in Iraq.'[389]

Churchill was not considering the important fact that Arab leaders had stopped Axis support in their own countries, and they had not been asked to contribute at the beginning of the war. Added to the severity of famine, lack of revenue, local embargoes on neighbouring states and the strength of Axis WW2 war machinery, any possible contribution made by Arabs, untrained in modern weaponry, using WW1-era equipment, would have been considered ineffective. Thus the Arab support for the Allied cause (which included some wealthy patrons buying fighter planes for the R.A.F.) was undervalued, and was marginalised in the greater scheme of the global war, and Stark's mission was doomed to failure.[390] Stark refused to cancel her tour, even though objections were put forward in the USA, including that of Emmanuel Celler who, in Congress, denounced Stark asking for her removal. Stark failed to change the course of the future but through her efforts offered an alternative British viewpoint and acted as a Voice for the Arab people.

After the war, Stark returned to Italy to rebuild her bombed Italian villa and endure a short marriage to Stewart Perowne, marrying in 1947 and separating in 1952 due to wanting different outcomes for their marriage. She was determined to continue her travels and writing. At the age of 86, the BBC filmed Freya sailing down the Euphrates on a raft and at 88, Freya journeyed to Nepal participating in a documentary by Colin Luke. She died on 9 May 1993 at the age of 100 having worked tirelessly in the years between 1927-45 to build a

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[389] Winston Churchill's *Telegram Frozen 1256,* dated 12 January 1944 from Prime Minister to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister cited by Simon Albert, "The Wartime 'Special Relationship', 1941-45: Isaiah Berlin, Freya Stark and Mandate Palestine.'*Jewish Historical Studies*, 45 (2013), pp. 103–30, (p.107).

[390] Dickson, p. 146.'
'Arabs, British, and other communities in the Persian Gulf have formed a Persian Gulf Fighter Fun, which has been remitted to the Minister of Aircraft Production, through the India Office , £10,000 for fighter aircraft.'

decaying Anglo-Arab relationship in peace and wartime on all fronts. Freya Stark's authorship and lectures aimed to cross the cultural divide between Anglo and Arab, are as important to read today in our divided world, as they were in the 20th Century.

Dame Freya Stark exerted influence on the Anglo-Arab relationship in two ways - action and authorship - and both were effective in different ways. In her personal space-time frames Stark's actions worked towards the improvement of the relationship through cultural integration during her travels and the creation of anti-fascist propaganda throughout the Middle East in support of Britain in WW2. Her co-founding of, and active involvement with, the *Brotherhood of Freedom,* a 75000-strong group of pro-British Arab propagandists and her visit to the King of Yemen removed the potential threat of a fascist WW2 victory in the Middle East. Stark's act of humanitarianism took her to America in WW2 to deliver lectures in support of Palestinian Arabs under threat of mass Jewish immigration. Although not successful it cannot be counted as a failure as it educated many Westerners about potential (and eventual) regional turmoil. Whilst the humanitarian acts of Bell, Dickson and Ingrams can be considered as regionalised and physical, that of Stark was international and educational.

The influence through Stark's authorship is time-less. Recent digitisation makes her writing globally accessible and its inclusion in university programmes has opened a proactive platform for cultural and colonial discourse. In her words are vital messages for the future bridge-building of cultures by the people.

Sir Kinahan Cornwallis encompasses the essence of Dame Freya Stark's message:

> 'The value of personal contacts and friendships has been proved over and over again and the evil of aloofness and indifference are for all to see…but it is hoped that all who read Miss Stark's pages will learn the difference between the right way and the wrong.'[391]

[391] Freya Stark, *A Winter in Arabia,* Foreword by Sir Kinahan Cornwallis.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY 4: DOREEN INGRAMS (1906-1997)

Dame Freya Stark's book *A Winter in Arabia: a Journey through Yemen* is dedicated to 'Doreen and Harold Ingrams and all those friends in Aden who made easy the paths of the Hadhramaut.'[392] In this sentence Stark references not only the Ingrams' maps or support for travel but most importantly their joint ventures in securing peace in the region. Without this acknowledgement Ingrams' legacy of co-founding the 'Ingrams Peace' in South Yemen and her extraordinary humanitarian efforts are in danger of becoming lost within the repositories of the Middle East Centre, St. Anthony's College, Oxford and the British Museum. This Case Study will follow Ingrams' personal journal through inter-war years and WW2 as she traversed the desolate wadis, jols, villages, tells and jebels (mountains) of Hadhramaut, at the start of the ancient Incense trade route (from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea). It will aim to show that Doreen Ingrams (nee Shortt), was a supporter of Home-Rule, who influenced the Anglo-Arab relationship despite being a woman in the patriarchal, predominantly tribal, orthodox, infrastructure of Yemen, which advocated purdah for its women. Initially called 'Christian (Nasrani) Woman', in the anti-Christian streets of Hadhramaut, she later became known as 'The Female Ingrams', 'Ingrams Woman', 'Doreen' and 'Dori' (the nickname given by Sultan Ghalib bin Awadh al-Qu'aiti).[393]

Harold would write of Ingrams in *Arabia and The Isles:*

> 'I dedicate this book to my wife not because without her help it would never have been written but because without that help there would have been little to write about.'[394]

Thus from Harold Ingrams point-of-view, he and his wife were a partnership. However, this is contested by Khalid Belkhasher, of Hadhramaut University, Yemen, who submitted a

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[392] Freya Stark, *A Winter in Arabia: a Journey through Yemen* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2011), dedication.
[393] This Case Study will use the convention of referring to Doreen as 'Ingrams', and her husband as 'Harold'.
[394] Harold Ingrams, *Arabia and The Isles* (London: John Murray,1943), Foreword p.xiii.

critical review of Ingrams, in 2012, through analysis of her autobiography *A Time in Arabia* (1970).[395] Belkhaser states that his intention was 'to analyse…in the light of postcolonial theories of Edward Said'. A close reading of his review indicates that Belkhasher's selection and interpretation of passages in the book are constrained by traditional presumptions as his arguments deny Ingrams an independence of choice. Belkhasher introduces Ingrams as:

> 'The daughter of Edward Short[t], Home Secretary under the Government of David Lloyd George at a time when the British Empire was at its climax of its glory…she was interested in Shakespeare plays and took part in them on stage before marrying Harold Ingrams, a colonial officer. These factors have exercised great influence in the shaping of her consciousness of both the Empire and the World'.[396]

Belkhasher suggests a binary on two accounts, of culture and gender, in the assumption that Ingrams' awareness and understanding was shaped by British Imperialism and the male members of her family (her mother is absent from the review); that Ingrams had no individual thought. Belkasher's suggestion of *place* (role and geolocation); Ingrams both as daughter of a Home Secretary in London, and the wife of a colonial officer in Yemen, can be justified, However, this review does not adequately deal with her identity within *space*, which was dependent upon experiences, personal decisions and interactions which will be investigated in this Case Study.

The title of her autobiography *A Time In Arabia,* comprised from her prolific, detailed diary entries, is a clever double entendre suggesting both a period of residence, and an isolated era, a Foucauldian 'disruption' which is ignored today in the summary of British imperial presence in the Middle East between WW1 and WW2.

It mentions Ingrams' childhood, giving evidence of her individualism, which influenced her unchangeable belief in freedom of expression. Born in 1906, Ingrams grew up in the era of the British fight for women's suffrage. Her early years were spent in Ireland, as her father, Liberal Party M.P. Edward Shortt was of Irish descent, the son of a vicar born in Gertrude Bell's industrial North in Newcastle Upon Tyne. He supported the idea of Irish Home Rule,

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[395] The title of Ingrams' autobiography *A Time In Arabia is* a double entendre, referencing both a period of residence and a unique era to be considered apart from a linear timeline, a Foucauldian 'disruption', ignored in traditional historical summaries of eras.

[396] Khalid Belkhasher, 'Hegemony as Philanthropy: Colonial Discourse in Doreen Ingrams's A Time in Arabia', *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literature,* April, 2012, p.52.

and became David Lloyd George's Home Secretary (1919-22).[397] Ingrams admitted that she 'was raised to believe in the right of nationals to rule themselves.' An early memory of being a child in Ireland was of presenting flowers to a member of the Royal Family and announcing they were from 'from a Little Home Ruler'.[398]

Ingrams' socialist affiliations increased as she became older as detailed in her obituary written by Michael Adams. He states that her reading of Tolstoy, at the age of twelve, (taken from her father's library) had created domestic disputes about class system, resulting in Edward Shortt ordaining that it would be her responsibility and not that of the housemaid to empty her chamberpot.[399] Ingrams daughter, Leila wrote of her mother in later life '[she] showed reluctance to conform and had distaste for all forms of social distinction.[400] Incidents such as these paint a picture which go against what one could call an 'imperialist' philosophy.

Belkhasher correctly considers Ingrams' years in theatre as contributing to her consciousness. Defying family, privilege and social circle to leave home with the decision to support herself as an actor portrays a strong will and determination to succeed alone. In her autobiography she reflects on her six years of freedom, living in terrible boarding houses, on low pay (she was self-supporting) and communicating with people from all walks of life. Through the disciplined and structured journeys of an actor to 'become' a character, Ingrams was prepared mentally and physically for future desert travel and work. Acting is the 'Art of Becoming' and Massey considers the act of *becoming* to be in a state of mobility and opposite to the stasis of *being*.[401] By 'becoming' 'Doreen Shortt, the actress', denying her previous place of being 'Edward Shortt's youngest daughter', Ingrams' consciousness was built on personal observations, experiences and deductions, the remnants of the spirit of the Victorian woman and the post-WW1 change in paradigm concerning the emancipation of women.

In 1930, Ingrams left a moderately successful London stage career for thirty-four year old W. Harold Ingrams OBE (1897-1973).The question must be asked as to why Ingrams would agree to give up her independence to marry a colonial officer, in the anticipation of following

[397] It must be noted that Home Rule of Ireland, Scotland or Wales is a Western-styled self-government under an alien sovereignty.
[398] Ingrams, pp.152-3.
[399] Michael Adams, 'Obituary: Doreen Ingrams' *The Independent*, 30 July, 1997. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-doreen-ingrams
[400] Ingrams, Biographical Afterword, Leila Ingrams, 2012, p.155.
[401] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gende*r (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). p.119.

the strict H.M.G. constraints and rules expected of a traditional colonial wife and home-maker within the 'Little England' of the British Colony of Aden in 1934? Such women were the type of imperialists criticised by Arabists Gertrude Bell (Case Study 1) and Stark (Case Study 3) in the 1920s.

Doreen's answer to the question was:

> 'I married a man of independent mind who refused to conform to the mystique in the colonies…the social round that excluded 'natives', the formalities of calling, and the way of talking (to local people), all of which was supposedly keeping up British prestige, or so I was assured when I questioned British behaviour.'[402]

In 1934 the Ingrams moved to the British colony of Aden, governed by the Government of India. Caesar Farah, in his seminal book *The Sultan's Yemen,* summarises the imperial British expansion within the region. He confirms a three hundred-year-old relationship beginning in Mocha in 1623 where the English East India Company, E.E.I.C.,opened a factory for the purpose of exporting coffee.[403] In 1833, on the death of the Imam of Sana'a the hereditary ruler of Yemen, civil war broke out resulting in the E.E.I.C. losing the Mocha port. This instigated the occupation of the port of Aden in 1839 by Captain Haines.[404] Scott S. Reese states how the E.E.I.C. used its India Navy to take Aden 'the least prosperous port along the coast'. He explains how Captain Haines decided to attract Arab and Indian merchants by securing a protective wall between Aden and the rest of Arabia with naval guns positioned to fire into the Crater.[405] Ingram states:

> '[Britain] entered into treaties with tribal chiefs in the vicinity of Aden, paying stipends and offering them the protective power of H.M.G. in order to get their good will and prevent them interfering in the development of the colony of Aden'.[406]

The growth of British influence in the hinterland around Aden was called the *Aden Protectorate*. Eugene Rogan describes the protectorate in the late nineteenth-century:

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[402] Ingrams, p.4.
[403] Caesar E. Farah, *The Sultan's Yemen: Nineteenth Century Challenges to Ottoman Rule* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002), p.1.
[404] Farah, p.18.
[405] Scott S. Reese, "Aden, the Company and Indian Ocean Interests." *Imperial Muslims: Islam, Community and Authority in the Indian Ocean, 1839–1937*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), pp. 40–63 (pp.40-1).
[406] Ingrams, p.1.

> ‘the protectorate consisted of nine distinct mini-states with their own autonomos rulers, whose territory covered 9000 square miles. Between 1902-5, an Anglo-Turkish Boundary Commision demarcated the frontier between two territories [Ottoman Yemen in the North ruled by the Imam Yahya Muhammad Hamid ed-Din (1869-1948) and the British Aden protectorate in the South]’.[407]

Ingrams summarised the expansion in the early twentieth-century emphasising the increased influence of Britain over the tribal-states:

> ‘The protectorate covered an area of 112,000 sq. miles surrounded by the protective red of the British Empire. There were twenty tribal states in treaty relations varying from a small village to the size of Wales and the chiefs were entitled to stipends [payment]and to seven or more gun salutes according to the importance of their territories which were only nominally under their control…When a tribesman from the hinterland came to Aden he had to leave his gun at the police post’.[408]

Ingrams documented her observations of the Aden administration:

> ‘The influence of the Government of India lay heavily upon Aden with its official houses and innumerable Indian clerks, traders, police officers and schoolmasters [who] through no fault of their own…delayed the opportunities for native born Adeni’s to take their place’.[409]

On their arrival the Ingrams were determined to integrate with local people and chose a home in the volcanic *Crater*, the mercantile centre of Aden away from the British community. Harold would disturb colonial superiors by wearing traditional dress As G. Rex Smith noted:

> ‘His habit of wearing Arab dress did not endear him to all, and some colonial administrators, though acknowledging his achievements in Hadhramaut, were critical of his approach’.[410]

Such individualism, as demonstrated by Harold, T.E. Lawrence (Case Study 1) and Lt. Colonel Harold Dickson (Case Study 2), though vital to Britain in inter-war years when personal relationships were paramount to regional success, was unrecognisable to the powers-that-be, in London.

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[407] Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*: *The Great War in the Middle East 1914-20* (UK:Penguin Books, 2016), p.88.
[408] Ingrams, pp. 1-2.
[409] Ingrams, p.3.
[410] G. Rex Smith, ‘‘Ingrams Peace’, Ḥaḍramawt, 1937-40. Some Contemporary Documents’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 12.1 (2002), pp. 1–30, (p.2).

Harold's role in arbitration of daily tribal disputes in the Eastern protectorate of Hadhramaut presented at the Aden Secretariat initiated his request to the Colonial Office to be permitted to undertake a 9-week reconnaissance of the region (accompanied by Ingrams). Internecine tribal activity had halted progress and created turbulence for years.[411] Freya Stark wrote of the subject in a letter dated 13 January 1935, which confirmed the seriousness of the disturbances 'the Imam cannot encourage trade because the British protectorate is so unsafe.'[412] The economy was floundering and Ingrams made it a priority to acquire as much information as possible (often through the use of Arabic language in which she became proficient).

She wrote:

> 'it had become clear that there were influential leaders in the Hadhramaut who were asking 'What use is a Protectorate treaty if the protecting power takes no interest in those its protecting?'"[413]

The visit was encouraged by the Chief Commissioner of Aden, Sir Bernard Reilly (1882-1943), nicknamed *Reilly of Aden,* who had visited Wadi Hadhramaut in 1933 and noted the tribal obstruction of an incomplete road from Tarim to as-Shihr. Financed by Hadhrami philanthropist Sayyid Sir Abubakr b. Shaykh al-Kaf KBE (circa 1885-1965) the road was aimed to join the Qu'aiti and Kathiri sultanates.[414] Britain had treaties with both. In 1888 the Qu'aiti-Anglo Protectorate agreement covered the territories and tribes of His Highness Sultan Awad Al Qu'aiti of Mukalla and as-Shihr. The Kathiri Sultanate of Seiyun, was however only under trading terms with Aden in 1888, but became part of the British-Hadhrami and Eastern Aden protectorate in 1916. It became six British treaty-areas by the addition of the two small Wahidi Sultanates of Bir'Ali and Balhaf and the sheikhdoms of Irqa and Hawa.[415]

On their first journey together (Ingrams would often travel solo) Ingrams accompanied Harold on camel and donkey through villages and over the desolate, stoney terrain where water was scarce. Her autobiography describes how danger lurked on every path even though

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[411] W. H. Ingrams, 'Hadhramaut: A Journey to the Sei'ar Country and Through the Wadi Maseila', *The Geographical Journal*, 88.6 (1936), pp. 524–51.
[412] Freya Stark, *Coast of Incense: Autobiography 1933-39,* (London: Arrow books,1990), p.55.
[413] Ingrams, p.10.
[414] Rex Smith, p.7.
[415] Harold Ingrams, "Political Development in the Hadhramaut", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, 21. 2 (1945), pp. 236–52 (p.236).

they were accompanied by protectors (Sayyid Mseika and Sayyid Muhsin). as they encountered armed tribesmen who didn't consider that protection covered 'Christians'.[416] Together, the Ingrams produced the first *Report on Social, Economic and Political Conditions of the Hadhramaut* (1935), the accumulation of their data, which was often procured from observations made from the back of the camel. They were initially viewed with suspicion, because any verbal request for information was seen as potential reasons for additional taxation.[417] Doreen specifies that Harold's official Colonial Report No.123 contained information about 'tribal organisation, the economy of the country, social conditions' and a 'good deal of hitherto unmapped territory'.[418] In 1940 they would become co-recipients of the Royal Geographical Society's *Founder's Medal* for 'Explorations and studies in the Hadhramaut.'

Could the act of collecting data be considered, as Belkhasher implied, 'Colonial expansion'? It must be argued that, at that specific time, it was not, because entrance into the Hadhramaut had been at the invitation of the ruling Sultans. In addition, G. Rex Smith references Harold as being sensitive to such concerns. He cites Harold who admitted:

> '[He] wrestled with the problem of British assistance in bringing peace and stability to the area on one hand and preserving Hadhramaut's independence on the other…and it need not be compromised if a good deal of help was offered beyond obvious fields of health and education'. [419]

However, it was the property of the Colonial Office and would be used as required in the future.

Ingrams includes:

> 'The difficulty of making a living from the largely desert country had for many years caused Hadhramis to emigrate, in order to support their families by remittances, to Java, Singapore, Hyderabad or East Africa'.[420]

In August, 1937, the Qu'aiti Sultan signed an Advisory Treaty with the Government of Aden stipulating Harold should be his first Resident Advisor (and the first European to be recorded as living in the Hadhramaut). A few months later the Kathiri Sultan did the same, and so for a period (1937-40) and (1942-44) Harold was advisor to both states.[421] Ingrams became fluent

[416] Ingrams, p.9
[417] Ingrams, p.7
[418] Ingrams, p.9
[419] Rex Smith p.7.
[420] Ingrams, p.8.
[421] Ingrams, p.71.

in the Hadhrami dialect and was described by Stark as 'Chief Administrator, Political, Personal and Oriental Secretary.'[422] Stark writes that the Ingrams:

> 'were carrying on the business of some thousand miles of land with their own ardour and half a dozen native clerks, striving for prosperity and peace with slenderest of resources (little money)'.[423]

Elizabeth Morgan in her seminal work *Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914-56,* a critical review of Britain's position in the Middle East, entitled the period 1922-45, 'The Years of Good Management'. She noted that British policy could be flexible and that:

> 'the men on the spot had denounced British force of habit and advised meeting rebels half way to evolve a compromise between the Middle Eastern wish for independence with the British wish for partial control'[424]

Despite Morgan's 'men on the spot', it is clear that Doreen Ingrams did more than just support her husband, but was a key-player in projects and official reports. But how did her gender permit her entry into the male space within the strictly patriarchal system of South Yemen which expected women to be 'in purdah'? She respected her hosts and regularly chose traditional dress although regularly travelled in trousers as depicted in her photographs. Appreciating how status was important to the men, she noted that:

> 'A tribesman might be prepared to earn money by working for a European as a servant, he felt equal to his 'master' and definitely superior to his 'mistress''.[425]

Being fluent in the languages and the Holy Qu'ran assisted her in entering both female and male spaces, unescorted, in the strictly orthodox region.[426] Being able to enter the harim was highly beneficial in her tribal peace talks (1937) and visits to notables including the highly influential Queen of Yemen (1941) during German and Italian expansion in WW2.

Belkhasher concludes that whilst he considers Ingrams' trips as a means of enhancing the British position in the Aden protectorate with Britain as a hegemon, he acknowledges her humanitarian efforts.[427]

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[422] Ingrams, p.6.
[423] Stark, *A Winter in Arabia*, p.5.
[424] Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914-1956* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), p.71.
[425] Ingrams, p.4.
[426] G. Rex Smith , p.8.
[427] Belkhaser, p.54.

It must be emphasised that Ingrams' adoption of a freed 'slave's' child in 1937, went beyond assumed 'colonial duty'. Zahra's mother had been taken as a tribal spoil of war and therefore wrongly enslaved at an early age. Having the opportunity to marry into a family of her choice she could not take her partially emaciated child with her. She chose to leave two year old Zahra with Harold, who had been responsible for her release.[428] Without an orphanage or sponsor, Ingrams agreed to become her mother but the beginning of the relationship was fraught. Zahra screamed whenever she saw her, which Ingrams concluded was due to her own skin colour and blue eyes frightening the child. With the aid of Somalian nurses Halima and later, Mehani who travelled with the family to Ethiopia in 1942, Ingrams and Zahra became inseparable.[429] Zahra received health treatment and a full Arabic and English education befitting her heritage. Stark noted that 'in her small and engaging person she [Zahra] represented Education for Women in the Hadhramaut of to-morrow, a delicate future'.[430] Zahra and Leila, Ingrams' natural daughter born three years later in Cairo, in 1940, and heir to her charitable work in the region, accompanied Ingrams on much of her travels in two boxes on the back of a mule.[431]

Ingrams' involvement in peace developments was considerable and acknowledged by key players Sayyid Abubakr al-Kaf, the Sultan al Qu'aiti and Harold Ingrams. It was a consequence of Harold's official impotence in matters outside the protectorate, other than as a Resident Advisor giving advice that Ingrams offered to travel treacherous routes to enter the homes of warring tribal chiefs who showed no allegiance to Britain. Her role was to make the overtures for peace and persuade their wives and mothers to support her, women who regularly lost their menfolk and belongings in raids. Ingrams made no reference to her participation in her autobiography or her success in securing the *Ingrams Peace* (the name awarded by the Hadramis) a treaty signed by almost 1400 tribes in 1937, originally for three years (1937-40), extended by ten and still existing at the time of Ingrams' visit in the early 1960's.[432] Smith references Harold Ingrams' book *Arabia and The Isles,* in which Harold recalled:

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[428] The arrangement of a protectorate was that the Resident could only act if a request was made.
[429] Richard Pankhurst,"Doreen Ingrams's 1942 Ethiopian Diary." *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 5.2, (2010), pp. 131–71 (p.134).
[430] Stark, *A Winter in Arabia,* p.6.
[431] Ingrams, Photograph 22, after p.78.
[432] The Peace would continue throughout the creation of the Federation. It broke apart on full independence on Britain's exit in 1968.

> ‘she had prepared the ground well and all these wild tribesmen spoke highly of her’.[433]

In 1939, Harold and Ingrams were jointly awarded the *Lawrence of Arabia Memorial Medal* by the Royal Central Asian Society (later known as the Royal Society for Asian Affairs) for their ‘outstanding role in bringing peace to Hadhramaut.’ The fact that Doreen was included alongside her husband gives further evidence of her individual contributions to the Anglo-Arab relationship.

G. Rex Smith explains that to ensure that peace was upheld, and roads kept free from capture by tribes which had not signed the Treaty, the *Hadhrami Peace Board* of judges (on which Harold Ingrams refused to sit) was able to legally request Britain’s assistance. Protectorate agreements specifically stated non-involvement in internal affairs and jurisprudence was determined by tribal and Islamic law. The R.A.F. could not be utilised for peacekeeping purposes without the request of the Board or it would have been seen as an act of British aggression by the international community.[434] Before the R.A.F. was requested a legalised three-stage warning campaign was launched in 1937. The process began with a fine levied upon a warring chief as determined by the Hadhrami Peace Board. Fines were decided using traditional tribal methods: payments of animals, hostages who were housed by the sultan and could be exchanged regularly with members of the same tribe, and payment of rifles; the fine increasing daily. Failure to comply resulted in the joint sultanate states and Peace Board sanctioning a ‘control of peace’ through a request made for intervention by Britain. If fines were not paid, messages were delivered to the tribal chiefs by R.A.F. airdrop, specifying the day, time and location of future light bombing and giving an opportunity for the tribe to move their location of tents, tribe and livestock. The third-stage was bombing of the original and (hopefully) empty location.[435] Continual defiance meant continual upheaval and potential damage to vital wells around which tribes congregated.

In a similar vein to Gertrude Bell and Violet Dickson, Ingrams voiced misgivings of such methods of keeping the peace. Ingrams bemoaned the fact that British and Sultanate money used to employ the R.A.F. could have been more beneficial in the creation of roads and schools in an attempt to unify people:

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[433] Rex Smith, p.4.
[434] Rex Smith, p.8.
[435] Rex Smith, pp. 9-10.

> ‘The morality of bombing people into submission is arguable and questions were asked in parliament, I thought it was purposeless with rarely any follow up (except in Hadhramaut)’.[436]

For the traveller, resident and economy, the *Ingrams Peace* was a success; the sale of rifles dropped, trade improved, water wells were dug and flourished and wheat was grown without fear of destruction in raids. Stark, on her 1937 visit, remarked ‘that money (in sacks of Maria Theresa dollars) could travel unguarded, a thing impossible three years ago’.[437]

Whilst tribal peace held, imperial peace floundered. Nazi Germany’s invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 caused Britain and France to enter WW2 on 3 September. In 1940 Harold was made Acting Governor of Aden, a time Ingrams described as ‘anxious with bombing raids by Italians on Aden and continuous bad news from Europe’.[438] The major worry for the Ingrams was the Italian-Yemeni relationship as Imam Yayha bombarded Aden. John Baldy’s research on Anglo-Italian rivalry in Yemen confirms the expansion of Italian influence on the African coast and the Red Sea in the later part of the nineteenth-century and by 1923 Yemen had signed a treaty with Italy.

In 1941 the Ingrams and their little daughters visited the King, Imam Yayha in Sana’a, to develop the Anglo-Yemeni relationship during the anti-British, pro-German rebellion in Iraq. In Yemen the Ingrams observed potential problems ‘especially as the Yemeni army was being trained by an Iraqi military mission.’[439] She stated:

> ‘It was an anachronism to be driving in a motor-car up to the gate where only the previous day the heads of criminals had been displayed to show that justice had been done…Soldiers followed us everywhere we went and also occupied the guest house we stayed in’.[440]

The Ingrams’ six week visit in which Harold had many meetings with the Imam and his Foreign Minister to understand politics and border disputes.[441] Yemen chose to stay neutral and Baldry states that the Imam was persuaded by ‘British delegations’ to close two Axis radio stations and break off ties with Germany.[442] Visits by the Ingrams and Stark (Case Study

[436] Ingrams, p.46.
[437] Stark, *A Winter in Arabia,* p.7.
[438] Ingrams, p.111.
[439] Ingrams, p.121.
[440] Ingrams, p.118.
[441] Ingrams, p.121.
[442] John Baldry, “Anglo-Italian Rivalry in Yemen and ʿAsīr 1900-1934.” *Die Welt Des Islams*, 17.1/4, (1976), pp. 155–93.

3) would have contributed to this achievement. The fact that both women participated in audiences with the Queen and the wives of notables and Ingrams had taken her daughters into the mediaeval city of San'a cannot be denied as powerful British emissaries.

Ingrams' third major contribution to the Hadhramaut took place in the *Great Famine* of 1943 which targeted only certain regions such as Redidat al Ma'ara, caused by six years drought, crop failure, no animal grazing. Harold reported that the fall of Singapore and Java to the Japanese cut £600,000 off remittances from abroad. [443] In April 1943, Ingrams accompanied the Hadhrami peace-keeping force, the *Hadhramaut Bedouin Legion*'s camel patrol, on their quarterly, one month's 500-mile trek by camel of the region to pay garrisons and connect with tribes.[444] Ingrams' tasks were to write a report on her observations of the region and to inform tribes of developments. The Legion, created by Harold Ingrams and modelled on the TransJordan Arab Legion played a great part in the region :

> 'the development of the Hadhramaut after 1937, the medical services, educational Services, agricultural developments could not have taken place without peace or without the Hadhramaut Bedouin Legion; tribesmen from different tribes to police, spread education to Bedouin children through lessons in arithmetic, Arabic reading and writing, giving medical assistance, and arbitration'.[445]

Treated as one of the soldiers; rising to the sound of a whistle at 4am, stopping every 10 minutes and dismounting to give the camel's a rest, sleeping on stones, eating dried shark and drinking ginger tea, Ingrams was able to observe the deteriorating conditions of the people as she moved inland, the starving drawn by the campfire in hope of food. Her tribal and village data received over the years had concluded that in normal years '75% of children born alive died before reaching their second birthday.'[446]

The legionnaires would share their meagre rations with the children. Ingrams recalled:

> 'I noticed a little skeleton hanging onto the hand of another boy (his stepbrother) blind and covered in sores. His stepmother did not like him. I asked to see his father and arranged for the child to be taken to Mukalla, to my husband '.[447]

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[443] Harold and Doreen Ingrams, *War in the Hadhramaut,* p.18.
[444] Harold and Doreen Ingrams, *The Hadhramaut in Time of War,* p.20.
[445] Ingrams, p.135.
[446] Ingrams, p.41.
[447] Harold & Doreen Ingrams,*The Hadhramaut in Time of War,* pp.20-21.

The child arrived a week later on a donkey with the note and Harold fed him a diet of cod liver oil and milk. 'Effendi, as we called him, became the first pupil in *the blind school* which was started because we felt there must be many more children like him.'[448] The Ingrams arranged for Somali women to teach the disabled children basket-weaving, and to make mats and brooms, to garden and help with housework. The oldest boys were taught braille by a blind merchant of Mukalla and a blind man came twice a day to give religious instruction. Ingrams displayed the compassion adopted by the UN today. but not by appointing a team or sending funds, she was without aid, physically and economically, or specialist knowledge of how to train a team in the region of low income and continual drought.

Ingrams' report was sent to H.M.G. and resulted in a donation of £300,000 (of taxpayers' money) and an additional Rs 300, 000 given by Sultan Qu'aiti to the *Crisis Fund*.[449] Funding enabled supplies of grain to be bought and transported to collection centres run by the Legion; the R.A.F. began transporting tons of grain daily flying in difficult conditions.[450]

During this period Ingram rolled up her sleeves and worked tirelessly. She reported that each day lorries returned with sick and dying women and children. Considering gender space and the use of purdah in many places, Ingrams had to rely on men to help in her creation of women's hospitals and orphanages, as the rules of purdah forbade such manual work by women. When Ingrams opened her women's hospital in 1944 there was one hospital in Mukalla and that was for men. Employment of men was forbidden in inner female spaces and Ingrams, with the aid of bedouin women flown in from areas untouched by famine helped in the makeshift wards. Ingrams opened her house, soon full of emaciated women and babies. Women were reluctant to be deloused, dewormed, bathed or give up their dead babies. 100 women arrived per day, with 20 daily deaths, the worst being those of children dying in her arms who she could not save. Ingrams wrote of the period:

> 'Anyone who has seen a famine stricken country can never forget it…where communications are limited it can spread throughout the land before people become aware, and when aid is rushed to the worst hit places it takes time…Tomorrow is a day too late'.[451]

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[448] Ingrams, p.143.
[449] Harold & Doreen Ingrams, *Hadhramaut in the Time of War*, p.19.
[450] Ingrams p.146.
[451] Ingrams, p.147.

In 1944 the Ingrams went on vacation to England. Instead of returning to the Middle East, as expected Harold was posted to the British Control (Allied) Mission in Germany (1945-7). Erik Macro, author of Harold's obituary, suspected that his post-war plans for the region was a reason why his post in the Hadhramaut was terminated.[452] Harold, in his 1945 Royal Geographical Society lecture had stated 'I learned much from the unfederated Malay States about building of self-governing protected states'.[453] This public admittance of alternate governing methods and his desire to suggest their incorporation into the Hadhramaut-Anglo Protectorate was not acceptable to all in London, who were developing their idea of a Federation.

One interesting anecdote which shows how the Ingrams continued to respect the people they had encountered comes from Leila Ingrams. She recalled 'In 1952, Sir Michael Balcon wanted to make a film of 'Ingrams Peace' with Jack Dawkins as Harold and Deborah Kerr as Doreen. Harold rejected the scripts because Sir Michael hardly portrayed the Hadramis'.[454]

Ingrams returned to Hadhramaut in the 1960's and she was pleased to witness great strides in the development of women, with education no longer a stigma. In the Kathari state the first primary school for girls was created in the Director of Education's house with his daughters as teachers using the same model as Ingrams had created with Sheikh Abduklah and his daughters in Mukalla. A secondary school for girls had been established there, but life for a woman in purdah had not changed greatly except that they were now allowed to be treated by a male doctor, which was previously forbidden. The Ingrams Peace had remained, but a cultural division had been created, reminiscent of interim Iraq. The race for an oil commission had been won by the Pan-American Company, but oil was not discovered. Ingrams expressed her sadness about the lack of oil wealth, knowing the desperate need of the country for funding for development.[455]

Ingrams' continuing belief in the right to the independence of all people influenced her relationships and efforts to assist them to that goal. Ingrams, the home ruler, was supportive of nationalism in the former colonies of Britain. In 1970 she wrote:

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[452] Eric Macro (1974) 'Obituary: Harold Ingrams, CMG, OBE', *Asian Affairs*, 5:2, p.236.
[453] Harold and Doreen Ingrams, 'The Hadhramaut in Time of War', *The Geographical Journal*, 105.1 / 2 (1945), pp. 1–27, (p.10).
[454] Ingrams, p.157.
[455] Ingrams, p.153.

> ‘The genuine affection and respect of most colonial officials for the people of the country in which they served, and their wish to promote their welfare, cannot be denied, but paternalism by its very nature denies the right of free expression to the children’.[456]

In 1965 Harold in a similar tone delivered a lecture to the *Royal Society of Arts:*

> “The Arabs will not tolerate foreign rule and the British process of guiding it to self-determination…Because the pattern of rule is the Western idiom foreign to any Arab idea of independence. The Yeminis were the first people to evolve an advanced civilization. They have ideas of kingship meant to bind tribes together, they spoke a common language and have a common culture’.[457]

He quoted from the words of the great South Arabian philosopher Al Khaldun ‘Every Arab regards himself worthy to rule.’[458]

With that philosophy Ingrams channelled her energy into pro-Arab projects. Ingrams lectured widely for the Central Office of Information on Hadhramaut and the lives of Arab women, trying to dispel many of the misconceptions prevalent in Britain, In 1956 she joined the BBC Arabic Service as a Senior Assistant in charge of Talks and Magazine Programmes, including the Women's Programme. During the years at the BBC she had the opportunity of duty tours to many Arab countries, including a return to Hadhramaut in 1963. Ingrams enjoyed seeing many old friends and revisiting the Girls School, the Bedouin Girls School, the Children's Village and the School for the Blind, which had continued. As a founder-member of the *Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding*, C.A.A.B.U. Ingrams continued her mission to educate the West. Her book A *Time in Arabia* was published in 1970, in which her Postscript, written 25 years after the end of WW2, emphasises her belief in Home Rule, a theme continued through her review of David Lloyd George’s Foreign Policy in *Palestine Papers 1917-192*2: *Seeds of Conflict* which appeared in 1972. It is a detailed, unapologetic, study of official papers in which her summary argued in detail that the Balfour Agreement was set up to placate the influential contributors to vital British wartime funding.[459] *The Arab World,* an educational publication, was published in 1974 and *The A*wa*kened*: W*omen in Iraq,* in 1983. *Records of Yemen 1798 to 1960,* co-edited with Leila, was published in 1993.

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[456] Ingrams, p.153.
[457] Harold Ingrams, ‘The progress towards independence of Aden and the Aden Protectorate’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 111. 5085 (1963), pp. 756–69, (p.763).
[458] Harold Ingrams, ‘The progress towards independence of Aden and the Aden Protectorate’, p.760.
[459] Doreen Ingams, *Palestinian Papers 1917-22*:*Seeds of conflict* (London:Eland, 2009) p.173.

She was an active committee member of local branches in Kent of various organisations such as Amnesty International, United Nations Association and welfare groups. Ingrams continued to work towards development, becoming the first patron of FOH and their charitable causes until her death in 1997. *The Doreen and Leila Ingrams scholarship fund for Women's Education in Palestine for additional educational needs* was established in 2004 and is ongoing.

In March 2010, a permanent exhibition of the Ingrams' photographs *A Time in the Hadhramaut* was opened at the Kathiri Palace Museum, Seiyun in the People's Republic of South Yemen to retain a permanent legacy to her work. [460]Her memory is still treasured in some quarters of the region where she launched so many initiatives to help the people.

The first newsletter of the *Friends of the Hadhramaut* (*FOH)* credits Ingrams in establishing the *al-Noor Institute for the Blind*, the first Bedouin Girls School, the Women's Centre, the Famine Centre and the Children's village for orphans.[461]

Included is a message from Sultan Ghaleb bin Awadh Al Qu'aiti:

> 'How appropriate, particularly in view of the fact that the Trust's headquarters are in the U.K., that the peerless Doreen should be invited to become its first Patron and how lucky for the Friends and how truly gracious of her to accept. For several reasons, too numerous to specify in this brief message, I sincerely feel that no better qualified person for this role in this society could have been found elsewhere'.

Doreen Ingrams' acts of unselfish humanitarianism in the name of peace and for people without hope of material reward or benefits and in situations of discomfort are examples of humanism within her consciousness which transcend her nationality and roles of 'daughter of a Home Secretary' and 'wife of a British colonial officer.

[460] Ingrams, p.158, *Afterword* by Leila Ingrams.
[461] *Friends of the Hadhramaut,* Newsletter 1, July, 1997, p.4

CONCLUSION

This thesis shows evidence of the influence of Gertrude Bell, Violet Dickson, Freya Stark and Doreen Ingrams in regional Anglo-Arab politics and humanitarianism during the transition period from Ottoman Hegemony to Arab through 1914-45. It offers an alternative representation of British presence to that of the imperialist during that period in the Middle East. This thesis supports Sara Mills' declaration that women must be included in the 'colonial discussion'.[462] I am in agreement with Mills who states that, although there is evidence of a high volume of women's travel writing constituting counter-hegemonic voices they have not as a collective been considered worthy of inclusion in colonial discourse and need to be part of the discussion. The detailed eye-witness accounts of historical events, by Bell, Dickson, Stark and Ingrams deserve to take precedence over tertiary academic sources and criticisms.

Diane Robinson-Dunne's description of the diversity of English peoples' identities in the nineteenth century based on their 'knowledge of the Holy Quran' can be applied to the British in the twentieth century.[463] Robinson-Dunne's description will be taken as a spectrum with polarised opposites of 'the imperialist' and 'the anti-imperialist'. The imperialist, the 'Anglo-centric', is the popular representative of British presence, demonstrating Edward Said's concept of the binary-model, 'the binary typology of advanced and backward (or subject) races, cultures and societies.[464] By emulating the Indian Raj of the nineteenth century, they were advocates for their imagined hierarchy of 'Self', the foreign superior and the 'Other', indigenous inferior. Examples were short-term visitors and residents who created a 'Little England', the 'closed' British community, 'a home from home'. They were women (and men) bound in Massey's feminine-coded space of 'stasis, passivity and depoliticization' within the physical and mental patriarchal barriers erected in the name of safety and 'national image', conditioned to live abroad and/or die or send others to die for 'King and Country'.[465] These are the kind of individuals who were singled out for criticism by Bell, Stark and

[462] Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference* (London & New York: Taylor & Francis e-library, 2005)
[463] Diane Robinson-Dunn, *Harem Slavery and British Imperial Culture, Anglo-Muslim Relations in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), p.3.
[464] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism,* (New York:Vintage Books, 1979), p.206.
[465] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gende*r (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press,1994), p.6.

Ingrams for their unacceptable manner and reluctance to integrate with local people, a practice that resulted in harming the sensitive Anglo-Arab relationship.

Their polarised opposite was the Arab-centric women (and men), the Arabists, who through study and practice immersed themselves with enthusiasm into Arabic culture, choosing to live in local areas. These individuals are generally ignored by post-colonialist scholars or referred to, as by Robert D. Kaplan, as 'individuals who go native in the desert.'[466] They occupied Massey's 'masculine-coded space of time and progression' in the enjoyment of the self-earned freedom of mobility of mind and body, unrestricted by patriarchal barriers, physical or social. This thesis has separated the masculine-coding of Massey from the traditional patriarchal structure of imperial Britain. Unlike their foresisters Lady Hestor Stanhope and Lady Jane Digby, a transgressive reputation ardent to women does not define Bell, an academic and archaeologist who entered the emerging Baghdad scene at the age of 50 years old. Regardless of references to her considered hybridity such as those made by Sir Mark Sykes, Orientalist and H.M.G. Middle Eastern advisor, who detested Bell, describing her as a 'flat-chested man-woman'.[467] Dickson and Ingrams were protected by their Arabist husband's positions, who were themselves criticised at times by peers for Arab-centric behaviour. Stark, unmarried, at 34, challenged the British patriarchal structure of the Baghdad 'Little England' and suffered what she called 'attitude from '*The Passage of India* [E.M Forster, 1924] though I would never have believed it before, and it does make one rather sad.'[468] Stark referred to the disapproval of her residency in the Old Quarter, intercultural friendships and acceptance of invitations to visit Sheikh's in their tents. Regardless of condemnation Stark was undeterred from doing what she believed was right, regardless of rules. Attitudes, however, changed overnight as news of her literary success reached Baghdad.[469]

This thesis has demonstrated that reversal of traditional gender-coded space was encouraged from birth by middle-class liberal parents in a time when the Liberal Party was gaining strength in its anti-imperialist and Home-Rule movements in Britain. Each woman benefited from a privileged education (private, college or university), international travel and

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[466] Robert Kaplan, *The Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite* (USA: The Free Press, 1995) p.20.
[467] Rory Miller, 'Kingmakers: the Invention of the Modern Middle East by K. Meyer & S. B. Brysac ', *Reviews in History* (London: W. W. Norton, 2008), p.3.
[468] Caroline Moorehead (Ed.), *Over the Rim of the World: Selected Letters of Freya Stark* (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd. 1988) p.47.
[469] Massey, p.6.

encouragement to participate in political discourse. This thesis concurs with Satyajit Patil's argument that 'culture, context and climate shape a person's identity, who becomes the author, narrator and protagonist of their autobiography, their travelogue'.[470] Their opportunities to travel through the Middle East resulted in their evolving worldviews of diverse cultures and religions brought together in a history of trade, changing empires and migration. Stark reflected 'People are more than scenery, art or fashion…there is too much civilization here…one great thing about an interest in civilization is that it gives you a fresh look at your own.' Each woman was able to evaluate Britain's civilisation at Home compared with its commercial and political presence in each region. Criticisms of British attitudes abroad were imbedded in their writings; implied subtly in the introductions to travelogues, written in the Ottoman Empire, and official documents written in office by Bell, blatantly in the press, the *Baghdad Times* by Stark and in post-imperial, reflective autobiographies by Dickson, Stark and Ingrams. Their writings included messages aimed at creating awareness in the British public and H.M.G. based on their knowledge acquired through observation and cross-cultural communication.

World Wars presented opportunities for women to enter the political sphere. Even when working in administrative positions where there was perceived to be little room for manoeuvre they effected change. Their particular skill sets were needed to create order out of disorder. Women such as Bell, Dickson, Stark and Ingrams utilised their skills in support of Arab self-determination, ready to act without hesitation for what they believed to be right. Their actions could resist being contested due to their acclaimed knowledge of the region, or in the case of Dickson and Ingrams, because their husbands held prominent positions as Arabist colonial officers.

Bell, a life-long supporter of Arab Nationalism believed 'The East looks to itself; it asks nothing of you or your civilization'.[471] Bell wrote of her concerns of revolt if a British mandate was enforced, writing 'we are on the edge of a pretty considerable Arab nationalist demonstration with which I'm in a good deal of sympathy [but] I do feel if we leave this country it will go to the dogs and it will be occupied by seven devils a good deal worse than when we came.'[472] She used her position as Oriental Secretary of Iraq to depose her superior,

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[470] Satyajit Patil, 'Reviewing Autobiography as a Travelogue-A Study: Romancing with Life', *The Criterion International Journal in English,* 8.1(February 2017), pp. 903-11, p.903.
[471] Gertrude Bell, *Safar Nameh: Persian Pictures, a book of Travel,* 1894, reprinted as *Persian Pictures From Mountains to the Sea,* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2014 reprint of Ernest Benn Ltd, 1928, and 47).
[472] Bell, *Letters* (10 April 1920) Newcastle University Library Online.

imperialist A.T. Wilson, considering him antagonistic to Arab self-determination. This act was recognised and remembered in the Arab world, as is shown by the fact that the film *Clash of Loyalties*, produced under the auspices of Saddam Hussein, put her contribution in a favourable light.[473] Fearing violent internecine warfare after the withdrawal of Ottoman hegemony she worked towards a vision of a democratic Iraqi government made up of notables from different political and religious factions. The British opinion of Bell was that she was 'a supporter of pan-Arabism desiring Arab hegemony, the secret of her immense influence…a potential danger that requires constant watching'.[474] Her founding of what is now the Iraq Museum, before her untimely death at the age of 56, was aimed at announcing Iraq as an independent nation to the world; her name, regardless of present anti-British feeling, remains on the Museum website today.

Bell was a 'thorn' in the British side as was Violet Dickson in her refusal to vacate turbulent areas which had been at the centre of the Iraq Revolt. Her presence forced the removal of the British army from the region, as insisted by her Arabist husband, colonial officer Harold Dickson. Dickson assisted Harold in the release of condemned Arabic prisoners in Babylon and the bringing of Arab-centric viewpoints to the attention of the British government. Her autobiography details her objections to the use of R.A.F. bombing as 'warnings' to rebellious tribes, in a similar vein to Gertrude Bell who attempted to cancel Wilson's orders for bombing and Ingrams who questioned the morality of such methods used in keeping the peace. As a widow resident in Kuwait (at the completion of the British protectorate) Dickson was given the honorary title of *Umm Kuwait*, and her highly respected knowledge resulted in invitations to attend the Sheikh's official all-male meetings (mujlis).

Freya Stark was an anti-fascist working as a Middle Eastern advisor and propagandist for the Allies against Axis expansion in the Middle East, at the expense of her mother's safety in Italy. A traveller and an author who lived temporarily in Baghdad, her determination to integrate with the diverse culture and religions created numerous intercultural relationships in her belief in egalitarianism. Stark co-founded the WW2 anti-fascist Arab *Brotherhood of Freedom*, to resist fascism. Her objection against occupation was exercised in her representation of the Palestinian people in the USA, in the fight against Zionist expansion within Palestine.

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[473] *Clash of Loyalties,* dir. by Muhamed Shukri Jameel (Iraqi Film and Theater Foundation,1983). https://youtu.be/Q1qMJfQPAp4

[474] Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, Letter from Hugh Frewen, CHAR 2/116/18-20, 14 Oct 1921.

Anti-colonialist Doreen Ingrams co-founded the *Ingrams' Peace,* with her husband Harold, and Hadhrami key-players, in interwar years to stop the destruction caused by internecine warfare in the Hadhramaut and to allow economic and structural development to progress. Conscious of the imperial presence in the Middle East, Ingrams, a supporter of Home Rule from an early age, emphasised her objections to colonialism in the Middle East:

> 'The genuine affection and respect of most colonial officials for the people of the country in which they served, and their wish to promote their welfare, cannot be denied, but paternalism by its very nature denies the right of free expression.'[475]

Bell, Dickson, Stark and Ingrams believed in Arab self-determination and were proactive in its achievement. Their choice to remain in what could be harsh and unforgiving environments throughout World Wars, anti-British riots, plagues, infestations, droughts, and pre-oil poverty demonstrated dedication to the local people. Health suffered (Bell, Stark) and in the case of mothers (Dickson and Ingrams), this often meant denying their own children their time and attention. Their determination influenced the decisions of both H.M.G. and local rulers to assist in their plans for aid for the Arab populations, despite the challenges of wartime, the shortage of funds and the perils of travel. They triumphed over objections in the British Press and Parliament, where voices argued against Middle Eastern support at a time of desperate need for 'Home' funding in the rebuilding of post-war Britain and the support of its own starving population.

Evidence of humanitarian action by the women Arabists is seen in the opening and running of schools (Bell, Ingrams), the organisation and the initial running of famine centres (Bell, Dickson, Ingrams), the creation of hospitals, inclusive of the first women's hospitals (Bell, Ingrams) and the opening of orphanages (Ingrams). After obtaining permission from local dignitaries each woman rolled up her sleeves and worked in the absence of local assistants; men were forbidden to enter female spaces and women in purdah were forbidden from undertaking such work. Dickson and Ingrams describe the tragic lengths the starving people would go to in WW2 and their own struggles in obtaining famine relief.

[475] Doreen Ingrams, *A Time in Arabia: Living in Yemen's Hadhramaut in the 1930s* (London: Eland, Publishing Ltd. 2013), p.153.

Ingrams recalled:

> 'Anyone who has seen a famine stricken country can never forget it…where communications are limited it can spread throughout the land before people become aware, and when aid is rushed to the worst hit places it takes time…Tomorrow is a day too late'.[476]

All four women were, quite literally, life-savers. At various times they acted with compassion and humanity to relieve hardship and prevent humanitarian catastrophes.

Each woman presented detailed records of the history of their particular regions, Dickson and Ingrams also supporting their husbands' research through access to women-only spaces. Thousands of their photographs are now archived in regional and international repositories. Thus they have left a legacy which preserves for the world records of a bygone era, land destroyed in the future by post-oil modernisation, wars and invasions. Whilst this thesis accepts that history is more than the deeds of 'great men', it emphasises the importance of social and cultural developments in enriching our understanding of 'political' events. The writings of Bell, Dickson, Stark and Ingrams are the personal narratives, questions, criticisms and reflections of experienced and highly knowledgeable women who lived amongst the local populace in the Middle East. Proactive in supporting Arab self-determination, and respected by the people of the Middle East, their contributions resulted from being 'of service' to the Arab people, especially Arab women, without whom famine centres, women's hospitals, girls schools, orphanages, training programmes and heritage centres would not have been established.

Thus these women were not *outsiders*, looking in upon the Arab world like tourists passing through. Rather, they were (in some situations), of that Arab world, empathising with the Arab people and appreciating the world through their eyes. Bell, Dickson, Stark and Ingrams bridged the cultural divide. This thesis has aimed to show that this bridge has been in place for one hundred years or more, its route is found in the writings of each woman, an example to the present. Bell, Dickson, Stark and Ingrams deserve to belong not only in the colonial discourse for the purpose of academic dialogue but celebrated as examples of the way forward.

[476] Ingrams, p.147.

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CHAPTER 2: CASE STUDY 2: DAME VIOLET DICKSON

A television interview with Ms. Violet Dickson Um Saud and media Mr. Reza Feeli 1974 -
لقاء تلفزيوني مع السيدة فيوليت ديكسون ام سعود والإعلامي السيد رضا الفيلي سنة ١٩٧٤م
الكويت كويت شركة نفط الكويت
British Kuwaiti Lady (الموقع Sab دولة الكويت - شمّــوه لعائلة الرسمي)
(The Official Website of Shammoh Family - Kuwait State)
www.shammoh.net http://shammoh.net/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DhxLpghIZA

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