

BRITISH TRAVEL ATTITUDES TO THE NEAR EAST  
IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

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## ABSTRACT

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century travel was considered to be a necessary adjunct to education, and, eventually, voyagers included Near Eastern countries within the Grand Tour. They visited the area at a time when Ottoman rule went unchallenged, and European countries, thanks to the help of their different societies and institutions, were amassing a large amount of data on a wide variety of subjects. Four outstanding contributors of the period were Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Richard Pococke, Robert Wood and Alexander Russell.

Lady Mary, who was a friend of some of the most prominent poets and writers of the age, immortalized the women of Turkey in her belles lettres, and attempted to present many of the customs and manners of that area in a more favourable light than that in the Arabian Nights or in the popular travel literature of the time. Pococke, who later in life was <sup>made</sup> ordained Bishop of Ossory and Meath, was a dedicated and selfless traveller, touring for five years the various regions under Ottoman rule. His A Description of the East was considered to be the most authoritative and comprehensive travel account of the period, and made any further attempts along the same lines useless.

The third traveller, Robert Wood, mainly concentrated on the works of Homer and the study of archaeology. He was particularly interested in the ruins of Baalbec and Palmyra, since they provided a notable example of smaller states successfully competing against

larger and more powerful nations. The last contributor, Alexander Russell, was a physician attached to the Levant Trading Company in Aleppo, and he, like Lady Mary before him, had the opportunity to observe and correct many of the popular misconceptions regarding Eastern women and the Islamic religion.

In later years, however, as Britain rapidly became a world power while the Ottomans lost many of the provinces under their jurisdiction, British travellers' attitude towards the area changed. Romantic revolutionaries at heart, they were no longer interested in acquiring information in the manner of their predecessors, but rather strove to challenge the past with the achievements of their own generation. Some works which demonstrated the new trend were William Kinglake's Eothen, Eliot Warburton's The Crescent and the Cross, and William Thackeray's From Cornhill to Grand Cairo.

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V.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis embodies  
the results of my own special work, and that  
it has been composed by myself.

Signed *L. Jamiani*

Date *March 1977*

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

To study an eighteenth century traveller to the East is to observe a very special kind of man, one, who after having followed in the footsteps of his predecessors for two hundred years, was destined to disappear at the turn of the century. The visitor to the East, soon after the Napoleonic Expedition to Egypt, and at the very latest, by 1820, no longer aspired towards a grand comprehensive tour which would cover vast areas of human tradition, and where he could test historical and scientific theories. His narrative accounts took a more personal turn and the topic he chose was one which appealed to him as an author rather than a traveller. As a travel historian pointed out: "The 'romantic revival', which transformed poetry and fiction, made itself gradually felt in the literature of travel also."<sup>1</sup> The same source explained: "It is true that solid and formal records, such as are characteristic of the eighteenth century, continued to appear down to about 1825, but narratives of a more natural and easy flow were already beginning to take their place."<sup>2</sup>

A traveller was no longer called upon to display great fortitude, exhibit great powers of observation and classical scholarship, nor was it necessary for him to belong to the privileged and aristocratic class. As a result of increased communication between East and West, created by growing numbers of diplomatic missions, trading outposts and classical and biblical pilgrimages, a bridge spanning both Asia and Europe

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<sup>1</sup> F. A. Kirpatrick, "The Literature of Travel: 1700-1900", in Cambridge History of English Literature, eds. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (London, 1907), 14, 248.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



was now erected. Voyagers braved the seas with less trepidation and fear from roving pirates; while inland, since the awesome reputation of the formidable Turk had been mitigated by the growing stature of Europe, the outlying provinces of the Ottoman domain were being approached with more confidence.

One of the most outstanding features of travel during the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries was the tour for the sake of education. At the very centre of education in Britain lay the contention that "experience by travel completed the process of academic education in school and university".<sup>3</sup> The argument posited was that "what is learnt by the eye makes a more lasting impression than book knowledge and is more accurate than hearsay".<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the difficulties encountered in the course of voyages, whether to Europe or further afield, were meant to "brace the moral fibre of man".<sup>5</sup> Gradually, in ever-increasing numbers, members of various professions joined others in traversing the seas in search of enlightenment and education. On one hand, "an influential and ambitious class of educated laity, who took the place of the mediaeval clerks", toured Europe, <sup>parts of</sup> America and the countries lying under Ottoman rule, while, on the other hand, "many diplomats were satisfied to visit the courts of Europe, and the gentry [to send] their sons away for a while to learn something of the languages and customs of the European people".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> J. W. Stoye, English Travellers Abroad, 1604-1667: their influence in English society and politics (London, 1952), p.21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Eventually, the number of young men touring Europe had reached such absurd proportions that many thinkers and philosophers of the age reacted vociferously against the merits of such a pastime.

Foremost among the critics of the grand tour was the British philosopher, John Locke. Having resided himself in France for a number of years, he cast serious doubts on the education to be derived from travel at a young and impressionable age. In his work, Some Thoughts Concerning Education, he indicated the weaknesses inherent in indiscriminate travel to new and strange civilizations. He said: "The last part usually in Education is Travel which is commonly thought to finish the Work, and complete the Gentleman. I confess Travel into foreign Countries has great Advantages, but the time usually chosen to send young Men abroad is, I think, of all other, that which renders them least capable of reaping those Advantages". Due to their youth they are unable to understand the way of men, their customs and their habits of living. "Going abroad", this empirical philosopher continued, "is to little purpose, if Travel does not sometimes open his Eyes, make him cautious and wary, and accustom him to look beyond the Outside, and, under the inoffensive Guard of a civil and obliging Carriage, keep himself free and safe in his conversation with Strangers and all sorts of People without forfeiting their good Opinion."<sup>7</sup> A further objection to this form of travel was the need for a tutor to accompany the young student of culture. Such a guardian, often hastily chosen and unresourceful in character, not only failed to help his protégé to attain the

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<sup>7</sup> John Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education (Cambridge, 1934), p. 186.

polish and culture he sought, but in many cases helped him to cultivate a habit of dissipation and vanity, against which there was much outspoken criticism. Foremost among the critics of this form of travel was Alexander Pope, who in the famous lines of his Dunciad traced the path of the brainless and dissipated spendthrift through the capitals of Europe.<sup>(Book III)</sup> A second critic, Gilbert West, satirized in fifty-eight Spenserian stanzas young men who imitated French fashions and adopted foreign vices. In his canto entitled "The Abuse of Travelling",<sup>8</sup> Spartan knight fights the vile enchanter, the promoter of pleasure and the direct cause of decadence and decay. Accordingly, the writer was against any form of travel and recommended the law of ancient Sparta, which did not allow its young citizens to depart from their own shores.

If travel within Britain and to the continent was regarded by its critics as frivolous and dissipating, voyages to areas further afield assumed a sense of mission. By 1750, when the Grand Tour to Europe was at its height, travel to the East was limited to the enterprising few. These individuals, filled with a sense of obligation and dedication to serve their particular field of interest on one hand, and their country on another, embarked to gather as much information as possible. Thus, "the characteristic travel book of the eighteenth century is a ponderous quarto or folio, handsomely printed, often beautifully illustrated, and conveying much leisurely information concerning monuments, customs and costumes".<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately,

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<sup>8</sup> Gilbert West, "The Abuse of Travelling", in Dodsley's Collection of Poems in Six Volumes (London, 1758), Vol. II.

<sup>9</sup> Kirpatrick, CHEL, op.cit., 14, 246.

also, "as a rule, these productions have about them little of the personal spirit, little of the lighter literary touch which gives vitality to travel books".<sup>10</sup>

A great burden was laid on the shoulders of the traveller, the implication being that he was the "complete" gentleman or ideal man Locke had praised. In the ideas of the century, to qualify to become such a person one must accept that only the "best scholar is fittest for a traveller, as being able to make the most useful observations: experience added to learning makes a perfect man".<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, "our sedentary traveller may pass for a wise man as long as he converseth either with dead men by reading, or by writing, with men absent. But let him once enter on the stage of public employment, and he will soon find, if he can but be sensible of contempt, that he is unfit for action".<sup>12</sup> The eighteenth century travellers found that the Renaissance gentleman represented true humanism and classical perfection: any person aspiring towards promotion or election must be cognizant of the ways of men. In the true humanist fashion, they believed a leader of men must have the "ability to treat with men of several humours, factions and countries; duly to comply with them or stand off, as occasion shall require", all of which "is not gotten only by reading of books, but rather by studying of men: yet this is ever held true".<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Clare Howard, English Travellers of the Renaissance (New York, 1913), p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Stoye, op.cit., p.28.

Travel societies and manuals of advice to travellers placed a strong burden of responsibility on the shoulders of the individual going abroad. The historical situation of England at that time necessitated the outward-looking movement which was provided by the media of travel. A lack of schools, teaching what we would call today political economy, modern history or modern languages, meant that such knowledge must necessarily be gleaned by first-hand observation. As a recent scholar remarked, it was from this fact arose the importance of improving one's opportunities, and the necessity for methodical, thorough inquiry, which we shall find so insisted upon in these manuals of advice".<sup>14</sup> Somewhat over-simplifying the issue, however, Miss Howard concluded that in 1724 "with the foundation of the chairs of modern history at Oxford and Cambridge by King George the First ... one great reason for travel was lost".<sup>15</sup> Information on contemporary politics on the Continent could then be obtained through news media: journals and gazettes. In addition one could learn languages at home without the necessity of spending long periods abroad.

Rarely were the accounts of travellers spontaneous, fulfilling the whim of the moment. They were carefully planned tomes, and the author relied fully on the guidance of travel societies, and the instructions of scholars, publishers and other travellers. All these, in close touch with scientific, philosophical and human needs of their age, jointly assessed the range of subjects in which the traveller should show interest.

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<sup>14</sup> Howard, op.cit., p.23.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

As a result of such coordination, a traveller found a ready market for his literary folios, which were to be obsolete less than a century later.

Among the many pamphlets of advice to voyagers was one by Josiah Tucker entitled "A plan for improving in the moral and political Theory of Trade and Taxes, by means of Travelling". He catalogued the kind of people who embarked on voyages, driven by particular motives:

To make curious Collections as Natural Philosophers, Virtuoso's, or Antiquarians. Secondly, to improve in Painting, Statuary, Architecture, and Music. Thirdly, To obtain the Reputation of being Men of Vertù, and of an elegant Taste. Fourthly, To acquire foreign Airs, and adorn their dear Persons with fine Cloaths and new Fashions, and their Conversation with new Phrases. Or, Fifthly, to rub off local Prejudices (which is indeed the most commendable Motive, though not the most prevailing) and to acquire that enlarged and impartial View<sup>16</sup> of Men and Things, which no one single Country can afford.

He discriminated between those who assimilated information which was useless and those who carefully screened their facts before documentation. Seekers of pleasure were sure to return as wise as when they departed on their voyage, while those who visited the "Countries of Italy and Greece out of a Kind of enthusiastic Reverence for Classic Ground, like the Pilgrims of old for the Rubbish of antient City, or to any Spot of Earth that has been famous in antient Story",<sup>17</sup> do no service to their country.

Two critics who confirmed Tucker's warning against accumulation of superficial and showy knowledge of foreign countries were Essex and Fulke Greville, Renaissance courtiers and politicians, who anticipated Tucker's warning. The<sup>latter</sup> contended:

<sup>16</sup> Josiah Tucker, Instructions for Travellers (London, undated), p.1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

"The true end of knowledge is clearness and strength of judgment, and not ostentation, or ability to discourse, which I do rather put your Lordship in mind of, because the most part of noblemen and gentlemen of our time have no other use nor end of their learning but their table-talk. But God knoweth they have gotten little that have only this discoursing gift: for, though like empty vessels they sound loud when a man knocks upon their outsides, yet if you pierce into them, you shall find that they are full of nothing but wind".<sup>18</sup>

For Tucker, the genuine traveller was one who cultivated an interest above and beyond the subjects listed:

/He/ must dedicate his principal Studies towards tracing such secret, tho' powerful Effects and Consequences, as are produced by the various Systems of Religion, Government, and Commerce in the World: He must observe, how these Systems operate on different People, or on the same People in different Periods, viz. Whether they enlarge, or contract the active Powers in human Nature, and whether they make those Powers become useful, or pernicious to Society.<sup>19</sup>

Presented with such comprehensive injunctions and the need to be cognizant with a wide range of subjects, the student of different cultures must possess the educational background, which, when put to the test in actual experience, will provide the kind of knowledge which preoccupied, among others, British legislators and historians. The fact that these subjects were actually included in eighteenth century travel accounts proved the vital role the traveller played in providing the material which British scholars exploited.

<sup>18</sup> Howard, op.cit., p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> Tucker, op.cit., p.1.

Tucker echoed Locke's philosophical premise when he stated that "in Fact, the human mind is in some Sense but as Clay in the Hands of the Potter, which receives its Figure and Impression, if I may so speak, according as it is moulded or formed by these different Systems: So that the Political, the Religious, and Commercial Characters of any People will be found for the most Part to be a Result of this three-fold Combination of Religion, Government, and Commerce in their Minds".<sup>20</sup> Several conclusions can be drawn from this theory: one, that the culture, government and religion of every country are uniquely its own creation, a product of the interaction of various physical factors, including climate which moulds human character in accordance with local tradition; two, that, in accordance with Locke's position, a traveller or thinker acquires his information from actual experience with such different universal systems rather than by drawing them out from a store of innate ideas. All knowledge is demonstrable, and, accordingly, the man experiencing within a scholarly framework is best equipped to supply the intellectual élite with the conclusions of his personal discoveries.

Two travellers, who illustrated that they had Tucker's advice at heart, prefaced their accounts with the two explanatory remarks: one, that this was "a volume of Travels and Observations; wherein are described the situation, polity, and customs of various nations; unacquainted with liberty and whose government is the very reverse of your Majesty's wise and

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.



gracious administration";<sup>21</sup> and, two, they proposed to describe and treat the "antiquities, Government, Politics, maxims, manners and customs (with many other circumstances and Contingencies)".<sup>22</sup> As will be seen in the course of discussion, it often proved impossible for many voyagers, and particularly in this instance Dr. Perry, to accomplish the objectives they set out for themselves. Hindered by the many obstacles which faced the eighteenth century traveller, these of ignorance of local dialects, the absence of proper accommodation and transportation, and the hazard of hostile tribes, their accounts were often skimpy in coverage and reflected all the national prejudices. Consequently, many authors' accounts need to be read in conjunction with other more authoritative as well as scholarly works.

Travellers to the East had to be cognizant of facets other than those provided in manuals of advice to voyagers. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a grand tradition of travel literature had been inherited, with which it was the duty of every traveller to be acquainted. Not only must he be instructed in the travel works accumulated by Hakluyt, Pinkerton, Harris, Purchas, Ray, Smollett and other travel guides,<sup>23</sup> but it was incumbent upon him to be conversant with the current travel works of his compatriots as well as those of other countries.

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Shaw, Travel or Observations Relating to Several Parts of Barbary and the Levant (London, 1757, Preface, 1738).

<sup>22</sup> Charles Perry, A View of the Levant: Particularly of Constantinople, Syria, Egypt, and Greece (London, 1743).

<sup>23</sup> See Clare Howard's English Travellers of the Renaissance for insight into many travel guides written during that period.

Very often Italian, Dutch and French accounts of distant areas proved far more enlightening than the works of some holy man, or the accounts of travellers distorted by preconceived notions. Furthermore, the nature of relations with a hostile Ottoman Empire dictated close cooperation between European embassies, many examples of which were provided in travel accounts. Competition in trade for domination of sea routes and markets meant, on a practical level, that the traveller naturally represented the interests of his nation abroad and had to be careful to maintain harmonious relationships with members of other foreign communities which he encountered.

An institution which motivated and guided travellers in their research was the Royal Society. Founded by King Charles II in 1660, it counted among its members many of the most outstanding scientists and thinkers, including John Locke. Incensed at the Aristotelian stance, which stifled research and the adoption of a different approach towards science and the humanities, they advocated: "... all along remembering, at least as a society, not to assert anything but what ocular demonstration would allow to be matter of fact, in spite of hypothetical influence of Aristotelians, Cartesians, Adepts, Astrologers and Common Longitudinarians..."<sup>24</sup> They demanded the survey of a certain number of scientific fields of study, to which the traveller must apply himself and include in his accounts. Prominent among the range of topics to be explored in foreign territories

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<sup>24</sup> Charles Richard Weld, A History of the Royal Society with Memoirs of the Presidents (London, 1846), p.425.

were those of Natural History, and any "that may be of any advantage to mankind as Food, or Physick, and /to examine/ whether those, or any other uses of them, can be further improved". Also welcome was information on new experiments in 'Chymistry' and "what medicines are easily incorporated together, and what not, and how compound Medicines may be reduc'd more simple, yet answer the same end".<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, travellers' massive volumes contained detailed explanations on Quadrupeds, Birds, Reptiles, Insects, Amphibious Animals and Plants. Thus, necessarily, every traveller, in addition to being a student of human nature and institutions, became a physical scientist. All topics must be considered by a genuine, scholarly traveller; this was the outstanding feature distinguishing travellers before the advent of the Victorian traveller, who wrote more in the personal manner and published his articles in news-journals and gazettes rather than in comprehensive volumes.

As a result of the stipulation of the foregoing societies and Crown-sponsored agencies, authors of literary accounts were inevitably "collectors rather than interpreters of data",<sup>26</sup> and they adapted their style to suit the content. To quote the words of a travel historian in this connection, the heritage of the English nation as found in the Bodleian and British Museum libraries, which comprises scattered evidence of the general history of the English people, is a "serried array of descriptive detail about churches, palaces, fortifications, 'rarities' and

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> N. W. Frantz: The English Traveller and the Movement of Ideas, 1660-1732 (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1932-33).

ceremonies; nevertheless they are the best available record of the seventeenth-century gentleman's tour of Europe".<sup>27</sup> A similar conclusion can be drawn about travel accounts to the Near East in the eighteenth century.

All knowledge, whether scientific or dealing with man in society, conspired to place a heavy burden of responsibility on the shoulders of the serious traveller. To arrive at empirical truth all avenues of human epistemology must be uncovered, not least of these the field of history. "To understand the present we must possess the past",<sup>28</sup> was the ringing cry of historians, rulers, theologians and travellers alike. In the shifting sands of religious controversy and in the vicissitudes of European politics, all thoughts were turned to the lessons to be gleaned from the rise and decadence of past civilizations. Rulers, while enjoying the divine right of kings, felt threatened by religious disputes, a warring parliament and the gulf that existed between the people and the aristocracy. In particular, during this period, known as the baroque age, voyagers and missionaries were interested in studying examples of Greco-Roman morality (particularly Stoicism), and Graeco-Roman art, which would elevate and purify the heart and raise the soul. Their efforts to reconcile ardent passion and firm, cool control, often resulted in a further rigidity and objectivity in their method of narration.

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<sup>27</sup> Stoye, op.cit., p. 18

<sup>28</sup> Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (Oxford, 1966), p. 57.

Historians were necessarily travellers. Their vision was outward growing and universal in scope, so that, irrespective of the fact that they had covered some territory and not others, mentally they surveyed all empires at all times. Outstanding historians of the period were Charles-Louis Montesquieu (1689-1755), Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) and Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704). All three dealt with the causes of the rise and decline of the Roman Empire, and each posited his reasons for the cause of events that necessitates the downfall of each great nation. For corroboration of many of their notions, historians relied very heavily on travellers' accounts. But, at all times, they were aware of the voyager's limitations and his inability to separate myth from reality.

A subject of special interest to cultural historians and theologians was the manners and customs of inhabitants of the East. In addition to providing entertaining reading for the public, they were also of particular value to classical and biblical scholars, who sought to corroborate many of the incidents of the past by tracing their occurrence in the peoples at that time. Since the habits of the community often reflected the mythology and geography of a certain region as well, voyagers devoted large sections of their travelogues to this field.

Two specialists who preferred to survey ancient or remote societies through an analysis of their manners were Thomas Harmer, a British theologian, and P. Guys, a French author. By tracing some cult or legend these authors were often able to determine the disappearance or evolution of a certain race of men. Guys wrote: "Once you have formed manners, they will always remain the same",<sup>29</sup> and accordingly classified the different sects into

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<sup>29</sup> P. A. Guys, Voyage Littéraire de la Grèce (Paris, 1783), I, 24.

Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Arabs and Ottomans in accordance with the habits they inherited from antiquity. Jews he classified as historically avaricious, while one should beware of Turks who accumulated out of self-interest. Furthermore, the Arab nomads of the area were the same as their ancestors. Change is slow in the Empires of the East, and consequently for these historians one could study the ancient customs in their present habitat. The Greeks were essentially the same; they still exhibited their love for singing,<sup>30</sup> for liberty,<sup>31</sup> and for decorations and flowers on the doors of houses.<sup>32</sup> Guys, unlike Harmer, having toured Greece, was very aware of distinctions between inhabitants of the area. He was aware of the all-powerful role played by the Turks, one which other cultural behaviorists, interested in a very particular kind of information, were unwilling to incorporate into the total picture of the Biblical lands. The French writer, concerned with truth and the need to separate, in certain areas, past events from the present, emphasized the danger of allowing pre-sentiments and passions to distort reality. "Le désir de se montrer soi-même, sont sacrifier la vérité..."<sup>33</sup> a characteristic which was not uncommon of many explorers and adventurers. The Turks he saw as invincible and strong, with the Christian princes at their feet:

Les Turcs, si on veut les en croire, ont été des Conquerants invincibles. La Porte dans ses actes représente les Princes Chrétiens implorants à genoux la clémence du Vainqueur.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 85-87.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

Thomas Harmer (1714-1788), on the other hand, author of Observations on Various Passages of Scripture (1816),<sup>35</sup> was renowned as one of the few who devoted their knowledge of ancient and modern history to the study of manners peculiar to the East. Observing a sacred conformity between "the present custom of the Eastern nations: and those of the Ancients", his avowed intention was novel and clear-cut: "no one, that I know of, has set himself purposely and at large after the manner of those that have published observations on the ancient Greek writers, to remark these resemblances" (i.e. "conformity between some of their present customs and certain corresponding passages of Scripture").<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, stating that human nature is the same everywhere, he outlined the procedure by which knowledge of all nations could be obtained and correlated:

Accounts of countries, very remote from those that were the scene of those transactions which are recorded in the Bible, may pour some light over particular passages of Scripture, the same way, as Buchanan's relations of the manners of the ancient inhabitants of Scotland may illustrate some circumstances recorded by Homer, whose Iliad speaks of Greek and Asiatic heroes, for there is a sameness in human nature everywhere, under the like degree of uncultivatedness: so we find there were no professed surgeons in old Scotch armies, as well as none among those of the Greek; but the great warriors themselves understood the art of healing, and practised it; and this skill was reckoned a military accomplishment.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Editions were respectively published in 1764, 1776 and 1808 (in 4 volumes). The last, produced in 1816, is the most useful since it is fully annotated.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Harmer, Rev., Observations on Various Passages of Scripture, Placing them in a New Light; and ascertaining the meaning of several, not determinable by the Methods Commonly Used by the Learned (London, 1816), Preface p. XIX.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

He continued by relating that "the examining, however, the narratives of what travellers have observed, in the Holy Land itself, is still more amusing; and at the same time, may justly be supposed to be more instructive; since many of their ancient customs remain unaltered, and references to those ancient customs appear everywhere in the Scriptures".<sup>38</sup>

It is precisely this vision of similarity in the customs of people everywhere that drove the Jesuits to China, America and the countries of the Near East among many others. To borrow the words of an author on this subject, they envisaged "a common realm of imagination and discussion in which minds separated by language, distance and creed could meet as equals".<sup>39</sup> The passage of time did not matter, the characteristics of primitive man and nations were such that they persisted unchanged over the centuries. What maintained them in their eternal form was either the nature of the civilization to which they belonged, and which allowed them to persist in their unchanged form, or their resistance to the influx of private property, luxury and the evils of civilization. Guys found that in the Ottoman Empire, "L'Alcoran a mis une barrière insurmontable entre des Sectateurs et les Nations étrangère. Les Turcs ont peu emprunté des Grecs."<sup>40</sup> Owing to the relationship existing between the Turks and their vassals, however, all was not lost for the Greeks. He hoped that they would be able to shake off the yoke of these oppressors and rise to their former glory; and then, liberty and light would shine on the land once more:

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Gilbert Highet, The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature (Oxford, 1967), p. 290

<sup>40</sup> Guys, op.cit., p.5.



Nous ne voyons pas dans l'histoire que les grandes Nations, après avoir été diffoutés, soient remontées, par une crise heureuse, au point de leur ancienne splendeur; disons plus: qu'elles aient pu former un corps de puissance.<sup>41</sup>

Harmer, by limiting himself exclusively to a survey of the Holy Land through the undisputed authority of the Bible and that of the travellers, was open to the fallacies of legend and myth. He cited Montesquieu to support the premise that customs in general remain unaltered, and therefore that it is valid to study them for an index into the behaviour and reality of ancient nations. He pointed out that whether one admitted Montesquieu's explanations or not, the fact that customs were a permanent distinguishing feature of a nation could not be denied. "A multitude of writers", he continued, "have mentioned it, as a thing with which they were extremely struck".<sup>42</sup>

For information of a classical and Biblical nature, Harmer depended to a great extent on the observations of Thomas Shaw, author of Travel or Observations relating to several parts of Barbary and the Levant, and chaplain to "His Majesty" in Algiers after serving "Her Late Majesty until April 25, 1730", i.e. Queen Anne and King George I. In his Preface Shaw had asserted his intention of restoring the ancient geography as well as the natural and civil history of the countries in which he travelled. His observations he believed to be of great consequence and moment since they bore "a near relation to several passages, customs, or expressions in the classic writers, and especially in the Scriptures". Furthermore, by endeavouring to compare the "ancient accounts and descriptions with those his later

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>42</sup> Harmer, op.cit., p.2.

discoveries", he sought to make them "receive from, and give to each other mutual light and illustration".<sup>43</sup> Harmer, who wholly endorsed Shaw's approach, was consequently particularly interested in his descriptions of the habits of the Bedouins and nomads of Algeria, and his substantiation of the observations of the Naturalists, Pliny and Strabo, on the many features of the Barbary coast. In addition, of particular interest were Shaw's observations on such cities as Latiekea, known to the ancients as Laodicea ad mare, Arwad, al-Hamath and Jerusalem, which also interested H. Maundrell, author of From Aleppo to Jerusalem.

Several topics provided recurrent themes in conjunction with Scripture and the Classics. One was the nature of shelter provided for strangers in the land. A traveller, exposed to hardship and danger, was dependent entirely on the hospitality of local residents for a roof under which to spend the night. Shaw said in this connection, that in the "maritime towns of Barbary and the Levant, where the British factories are established the author was entertained with extraordinary marks of generosity and friendship; having the use not only of their houses, but of their horses, also, their janissaries and servants."<sup>44</sup> In other instances, however, where no British outposts existed, he was obliged to rely totally on the hospitality provided by the local population: "But in most of the inland towns and villages particularly of Barbary, there is a house set apart for the reception of strangers, with a proper officer, called maharak to attend us; where we are lodged and entertained for one night at the expense of the community."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Shaw, op.cit., Preface.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. VII.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

In addition to this concern for their daily rest, missionary travellers were careful to note the connection between the manners of modern hospitality and those of ancient days. Shaw <sup>gave</sup> ~~illustrated~~ an instance of a custom of his day which re-enacted the hardships of the Biblical and Classical generations:

And as there were no inns or public houses to entertain us, and private families (contrary to the charitable custom recorded in Job XXXI 32 and Math. XXV35) would never admit us; we had now and then occasion enough to meditate upon the same distress with the Levite and his company (Judge XIXI 15) when there was no man that would take them into his house for lodging: and of the propriety there was to place (1 Tim.V.10. Heb Xiii 2) the lodging and entertaining of strangers among good works.<sup>46</sup>

The trials of the Levites became especially significant when wanderers centuries later found themselves again in need of the charity of strangers. Travellers now relived the experience of their ancestors and tested the truth of their sayings for themselves; this was indeed in the true philosophical mood of the period! They faced the same sense of alienation and isolation which the patriarchs of old felt; time in a way had stood still. The feeling was made more poignant and realistic in view of its being re-enacted under the same skies, weather and terrain; the setting remained eternally unchanged. Missionary travellers well into the nineteenth century continued to cultivate the sense of hardship and awesome aloneness in the effort to place a seal of authenticity on Biblical personages. Furthermore, by referring to "good works", Shaw invoked the Protestant ethic whereby the providing of shelter and hospitality to strangers must necessarily continue to be one of the distinguishing characteristics of the more civilized tribes inhabiting the Holy Land.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. vii.

Although Shaw equated the Arabs -- the Bedaweens -- and inhabitants of plains with the Nomads and Scenitae of old, he showed little tolerance for what he labelled as their rapaciousness and cruelty. His attitude was characteristic of many other 'holy' men, and whom another traveller, for one, Dr. Alexander Russell, attacked. The latter's comments will be discussed further in the chapter allocated to his views. Shaw found that of all the places he had visited, Syria, the Holy Land, Egypt, Algeria, Tunis and Morocco, in no area did he suffer more than in the Holy Land, in the "isthmus betwixt Egypt and the Red Sea".<sup>47</sup> In this area, the chaplain wrote, "our conductors cannot be too numerous; whole clans of Arabs, from fifty to five hundred, being sometimes looking out for a booty".<sup>48</sup> Their caravan, travelling in the year 1722 from Ramah to Jerusalem, /was/ guarded by "three or four hundred Spahees, four bands of Turkish infantry, with the mosolom, or general, at the head of them". However, all <sup>these</sup> were unable to fight the "repeated insults, ravages, and barbarities of the Arabs".<sup>49</sup> As a result of the "barbarity" of these people, all the "pilgrims" suffered by losing clothing and money, or the infliction of physical harm. Shaw himself suffered further "rapine and cruelty" by "being forcibly taken to Jeremiel or Anathoth, as an hostage for the payment of their unreasonable demands".<sup>50</sup> He related of being sorely used and only rescued by the intervention of the "aga of Jerusalem".

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. ix.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. ix-x.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. x.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

In the above incident he demonstrated a second hazard, in addition to shelter, that preoccupied touring dignitaries. On such occasions their attitude was less sympathetic in view of the very real personal danger that existed to life and limb. Gone was the air of academic pensiveness that characterized their comprehensive tours, and they were brought down to earth to realize the very real danger that these raiding tribes imposed on them. To safeguard themselves and their property - scientific equipment, food, money and diaries - they resorted to subterfuge. "The greatest safety for a traveller", said Shaw, "is to be disguised in the habit of the country, or to be dressed like one of his spahes..."<sup>51</sup> The Reverend Harmer in his turn took up this point. He wrote that Dr. Richard Pococke, an outstanding traveller of the century, adopted a striped garment to evade capture by roaming Arabs, a dress usually worn by shepherds. Harmer wrote: "The employment of the Arab is to feed cattle, and consequently a shepherd's garment may mean the same thing with the Arab dress."<sup>52</sup>

In view of Shaw's residence in Algiers, his experience was limited to a large extent to intercourse with the Arabs. He categorized the other sects as follows: "Besides Greeks, Maronites, and other sects of Christians, that inhabit this country, there are Turks, Turkmans, Arabs, Souries, and Druses. Of these, the Turks are master of the cities, castles, and garrisons: the Turkmans and Arabs possess the plains (the latter living, as usual, in tents; the other in moveable hovels).

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. xi.

<sup>52</sup> Harmer, op.cit., p. 6.

The Souries, (the descendants probably of the indigenae, or original Syrians), cultivate the greatest part of the country near Latikea and Jebilee; whilst the Druses maintain a kind of sovereignty in the Castravan mountains, particularly above Baroute."<sup>53</sup>

The chaplain's image of the Arab was mostly uncomplimentary. In addition to its rejection of the precepts of hospitality, this race signified ignorance. Lacking Christian virtues and moral instincts, he was regarded, as many other travellers also stated, as an alien from divine grace. Shaw explained:

This outward behaviour of the Arab is frequently the very reverse of his inward temper and inclination. For he is naturally false, thievish, and treacherous; and it sometimes happens that those very persons are overtaken and pillaged in the morning, who were entertained the night before with the greatest hospitality. The prophet Jeremiah has well described them: In the ways, says he, (iii.2.) hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness.

This view of the Arab inhabiting the 'wilderness' was shared by Harmer: "For in the Scriptures the Arabs are represented as distinguished from other nations, by their abode in the wilderness of the East, Jer. iii. is a sufficient proof of this: Lift up thine eyes to the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness, and thou has polluted the land with thy whoredom."<sup>55</sup> He quoted Worley Montagu in this connection:

Outside Pharan, we pressed through a remarkable breach in a rock ... each side of it as perpendicular as a wall, about eighty feet high, and the breach is about forty broad.

<sup>53</sup> Shaw, op.cit., p. 348 .

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 238 .

<sup>55</sup> Harmer, op.cit., p. 232 .

"It is at this breach, I imagine, the Hroites were smitten," said the celebrated Mr. Wortley Montagu, "four miles beyond the present ruins of Pharan; for having passed this breach they could make a stand, nor could they well be pursued". Accordingly the word descend may be understood to signify plunging deeper into the wilderness, without regard to the height or lowness of the ground.<sup>56</sup>

The wilderness, like the desert, barren of God's love and forgiveness, did not bloom. Missionaries attributed the desolation of the land to the absence of its rightful owners, members of the promised race, the Jewish nation. Furthermore, as members of the institutionalized churches, they frowned on races who had not accepted the Christian faith. Their attitude, blinded by precepts of the Bible, was ridiculed by the subtle Jesuits mentioned earlier. These French catholics surveyed all nations with a benevolent eye, searching for the universal, the 'natural' and the good. More will be said in this connection in a discussion of the century's attitude towards primitive nations.

Shaw explored the cause of the Arabs' cruelty to strangers. He found that the reasons for their behaviour resided in the fact that "the Arabs are very jealous and inquisitive; suspecting all strangers to be spies, and sent to take a survey of those lands, which, at one time or other (as they have been taught to fear...) are to be restored to the Christians".<sup>57</sup> Strange words indeed in view of the nineteenth century colonialist attitude and consequent events and changes in the area!

Some of those who adopted a more benevolent approach than that of Shaw towards primitive races were the Jesuits, who were mentioned earlier, the German philosopher, J. G. Herder (1744-1803),

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>57</sup> Shaw, op.cit., p. xi.

the first possibly historian of society, Adam Ferguson (1723-1816), and the <sup>16<sup>th</sup> century</sup> French writer, Montaigne. They all believed that society in its elementary stages was superior to its advanced stages, and that man's role in a smaller and more coherent group preserved his dignity, and his 'natural' rights. Outstanding among the Jesuits was P. Lafitau, author of Moeurs des Sauvages Ameriquains, comparée aux moeurs des premiers temps. Having lived among the Iroquois Indians for a number of years, he felt qualified to assess their qualities and manner of life. He stressed the accuracy of his observations in this connection: "Le séjour que j'ai fait parmi des Iroquois, m'a engagé a détailler plus particulièrement leurs moeurs, parce que je les connois mieux, et que je suis plus assuré de ce que j'avance".<sup>58</sup> Convinced of the importance of recording for posterity the customs of such a race, he invoked the authority of Homer, the great poet of nature and of heroic man:

La science des Moeurs et des Coûtumes de différens Peuples a quelque chose de si utile et de si intéressant, qu'Homère a crue devoir en faire le sujet d'un Poème entier. Le but en est de faire connoître la sagesse d'Ulysse son Heros, lequel après la siège de Troye se voyant sans cesse éloigné d'Ithaque sa patrie par la colere de Neptune, profite des différentes erreurs de ses Navigations pour s'instruire des Moeurs des Nations, ou les vents irritent l'obligent d'aborder, et pour prendre de chacune ce qu'elle a de bon et de louable.<sup>59</sup>

Lafitau's interest came in the wake of cosmological, anthropological and archaeological discoveries. Through his study of primitive races this priest attempted to link the interest of a historically awakened Europe with that of its ancestors. This was no idle

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<sup>58</sup> P. Lafitau, Moeurs des Sauvages Ameriquains, comparée aux moeurs des premiers temps (Paris, 1724), p. 25.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 4.



or frivolous task, but one which involved studying the very roots of civilizations. Lafitau explained:

Car si nos premiers Pères, son l'objet principal de la Mythologie Payenne quant a la partie historique, ils sont les premiers Législateurs, les premiers Propagateurs de la Religion. Ainsi la Paganisme concourt avec les Livres saints à nous démontrer que la Religion vient d'une même source.<sup>60</sup>

Of particular interest was the fact that traces of the ancient orgies of Bacchus, and the mysteries of Isis and Osiris were found to linger in these so-called barbaric races. This provided missionaries, as well as anthropologists, with the unique opportunity of studying the development of man, his legends and myths through the ages.

Alexander Pope, classical poet of Lafitau's age, writing on the nations of antiquity, represented by the Iroquois Indians, Germanic and Arab nomadic tribes of his day, said:

Nor think in Nature's state they blindly trod;  
The state of Nature was the reign of God:  
Self-love and social at her birth began <sup>61</sup>  
Union the bond of all things, and of man.

Such was the foundation of law and religion. God lived in the hearts of men and dictated to them directly the laws of conscience and justice. These laws governing the whole community were simple and binding. Bossuet, the French historian<sup>(1766)</sup>, summed up this concept as follows: "De lois simplement écrites, et en petit nombre, tenoient les peuples dans le devoir, et les faisoient concourir au bien commun du pays".<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>61</sup> Alexander Pope, "Essay on Man", Ill. 147-50, Cited in Arthur Lovejoy, Essays in the History of Ideas (Baltimore, 1948), p. 21.

<sup>62</sup> Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, Discours sur l'histoire universelle (Paris, 1825), p. 311.

Such an eternal and universal view as that taken by the Jesuit missionary, that people through the various stages of civilization exhibited similar characteristics, was at variance with the more dogmatic and doctrinal approach that was the feature of British and American missionaries to the East, the latter visiting the Near Eastern countries in the nineteenth century. The Jesuits' view with regard to the eternal and valuable heritage exhibited by natural man was shared by eighteenth century writers, such as ~~Michael de Montaigne~~ Jean Jacques Rousseau, Adam Ferguson, mentioned earlier, and Dr. <sup>John</sup> Brown, who wrote in 1763 A Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, The Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music.<sup>63</sup> All praised the "natural virtues", of a race "who despised all worldly possessions as any saint or ascetic would; and showed all the better qualities of an average Christian".<sup>64</sup> Unaware of the authority of tradition, of the Christian revelation and the doctrine of original sin, the Iroquois exhibited a simple, illuminating splendour:

The Iroquois laugh when you talk to them of obedience to kings; for they cannot reconcile the idea of submission with the dignity of man. Each individual is a sovereign in his own mind; and as he conceives he derives his freedom from the great spirit above, he cannot be induced to acknowledge any other power.<sup>65</sup>

To a Europe obsessed with the concept of the divine right of kings and the tremendous influence of the organized church, such a simple notion of government and a natural option of divine omnipotence held tremendous appeal.

<sup>63</sup> <sup>John</sup> Dr. Brown, A Dissertation on the Rise, Union and Power, The Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music (London, 1763).

<sup>64</sup> Benjamin Bissell, The American Indian in English Literature of the Eighteenth Century (Yale Ph.D. Thesis, 1925), p. 42.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-21.

The cult of sensibility or 'feeling' lay at the very heart of primitive man and his relation to nature and to his fellow man. The sociologist Adam Ferguson praised the qualities which bound men together, especially in war and hardship. He wrote: "They are sentiments of generosity and self-denial that animate the warrior in defence of his country; and they are dispositions most favourable to mankind, that become the principles of apparent hostility to men".<sup>66</sup> Every man is a keeper of his brother in such a situation, and the diffusion of common happiness becomes the law of morality. Man demonstrates the noblest principles of action: "public spirit, temperance, prudence, and fortitude".<sup>67</sup> "He himself", Ferguson pointed out, "as an individual is no more than a part of the whole that demands his regard."<sup>68</sup>

The British Constitution was considered to have grown most naturally out of these noble, although primitive, communal laws. In it was incorporated the true spirit of justice. Locke, Montesquieu, and Burke, who, among many other thinkers, were closely affiliated with the politics of the period, were aware of the necessity for civil rights to be administered equally to all segments of the population. Realizing that evolution of societies was inevitable, and that to conceive of them in their original state only was naive and unrealistic, these constitutionalists looked for the best laws which would guarantee justice, liberty and fair rule to everyone. Montesquieu, in his Account of the British Constitution (1781), discussed

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<sup>66</sup> Adam Ferguson, An Essay on the History of Civil Society (Edinburgh, 1767), p. 38.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 62

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

"the three Powers of Government that must exist in every Civil Society, the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Powers".<sup>69</sup> After attributing the Executive role to the King, and the Legislative to the House of Nobles and the House of Commons, he praised the judicial system which ensured that every case had its own jurors, drawn from the same class as the accused. Keeping all these executive privileges separate ensured distribution of law and order in as wide a segment of the population as possible. Montesquieu evaluated the British system with others in Europe in the assessment: "In most of the kingdoms of Europe, the government, though not perfectly free, is yet moderate, because the sovereigns have kept in their own hands only the legislative and executive powers, and have given up to their subjects the exercise of the judicial power."<sup>70</sup> Of Turkey, this writer is not so tolerant: "Whereas in Turkey, where all the three powers are united in the person of the Grand Seignior, we see a most dreadful degree of arbitrary power pervades the whole country".<sup>71</sup> By veering off the traditional path that ensured all people's basic rights, the Ottoman government provided the example of a nation that had laid the basis for its own destruction. England, on the other hand, having borrowed the leading principles of its constitution from "the practice of the ancient inhabitants of Germany, as any one will be easily convinced who shall read with attention the excellent account, given by Tacitus, of the manners of the

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<sup>69</sup> Baron De Montesquieu, A View of the English Constitution 1st ed. 1749. (London, 1781), p.1.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

ancient Germans,"<sup>72</sup> was not threatened with collapse.

All the great civilizations were no more; the magnificence of Rome, Lacedaemon, and Carthage had not survived the passage of time. The British nation, however, by continuing to have the public welfare at heart, ensured its throne and continuation of its rule.

Stuart Gilbert, in a book entitled An Historical Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the English Constitution (1768), affirmed the connection of the British laws with those of the ancient Germans. Impressed with the democratic methods of settling disputes among the primitives, he said: "Before the spirit of refinement has given birth to artificial manners, the highest respect and attention are produced by the exertion of superior qualities, and men willingly submit their disputes".<sup>73</sup> Men succumbed to an inherent moral law acknowledging the equality of all people. However, "when the Germans had left their woods, and had begun to reside in towns, when intelligence with regard to the inhabitants of districts and countries, was more certain; and when the greater knowledge, and a higher degree of cultivation had rendered the bulk of men more capable to judge in cases of intricacy, the number of jurors was diminished".<sup>74</sup> Transition, therefore, from ancient methods of resolving differences to the modern method of trial by jury retained all the old characteristics: "It is beautiful to observe", said Gilbert, "how the minutest circumstances of ancient customs are corrected and softened by the light and humanity of modern manners".<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>73</sup> Stuart Gilbert, An Historical Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the English Constitution (Edinburgh, 1769), p. 223.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

Another outstanding politician and orator of the period, Edmund Burke (1729-1797), appreciated the natural basis of political authority. He was impressed by Lafitau's remarks on the naturally noble merits of the Hurons and Red Indians, and especially his equating their characteristics with those of the ancient Persians, Cretois and Lacedaemonians. The Jesuit anthropologist, tracing universal qualities that were similar to all nations at various stages of human development, finds that some of the laws they had conserved were the traditions of ancient antiquity in relation to laws governing public assemblies, festivals and dances. Other universal and classical ceremonies were those ruling marriage, manner of divorce, education of infants and the upbringing of youth. Burke, searching for a natural basis that would grant politicians insight into the workings of enduring human rights and principles, especially as expressed within the permanent framework of the British Constitution, drew the conclusion: "On those occasions, the state of Lacedaemon ever occurs to my mind, which that of the Five Nations, in many respects, resembles; their laws, or customs, being, in both, formed to render the minds and bodies of the people fit for war".<sup>76</sup> Thus the Red Indian became the exotic 'intellectual', having at his command the qualities of all men at all times, not least those of the Spartans. In him resided the noblest and bravest behaviour of men at all stages of civilization.

Not all philosophers, however, believed in a given law of nature which could be grasped intuitively by mankind. John Locke, who in turn was interested in the formulation of the British constitution and in the given rights of man, found it relatively

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<sup>76</sup> Bissell, op.cit., p. 527

useless to turn to primitive traditions for knowledge. There were many conflicting traditions all over the world that made it impossible to select the true law. Locke stated: "... it would be difficult to decide completely what is true and what is false, what is law and what is opinion, what is commanded by nature and what by utility, what advice reason gives and what instructions are given by society".<sup>77</sup> Instructions are usually contradictory, people fight to establish their own authority, which in Locke's opinion discounted the authority of tradition. Rather than consider these traditions to be part of the natural scheme of the universe that could be grasped by sentiments in tune with nature, or by the proper exercise of reason, Locke favoured the following explanation: "I am in no doubt that most persons, content with these second-hand rules of conduct which they derive from tradition, build up their morals after the manner and belief of those among whom they happen to be born and educated, and that they have no other rule of what is right and good than the customs of their society and the common opinion of the people with whom they live".<sup>78</sup> Men, he emphasized, seldom delved into themselves for reasons of their existence; furthermore, the idiots and insane provided ample proof that the law of nature was not imprinted in human hearts. The truth was that most people were "guided not so much by reason as either by the example of others, or by traditional customs and the fashion of the country, or finally by the authority of those

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<sup>77</sup> John Locke, Essays on the Law of Nature (Oxford, 1954), p. 129.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

whom they consider good and wise".<sup>79</sup> Locke, however, added: "It does not therefore follow that the law of nature cannot be known by the light of nature because there are only few who, neither corrupted by vice nor carelessly indifferent, make a proper use of that light."<sup>80</sup>

Enlightened travellers expected to capture 'that light' in their travels in the lands of the poetic bards of the human race. The East, home of the three great religions of the world, had inspired men to present the greatest prophetic poetry known to the world. Philosophers and men of faith hoped that in the process of invading these countries it would be possible to recapture some of the melodies which had once illuminated men's thoughts. J. G. Herder, in his Oriental Dialogues (1801), presented his views on the land of promise, or God's land:

And what was there so peculiarly valuable and inviting in that little district? The people in question, if they continued to exist together as a people, must have existed somewhere. This corner of the world, it is true, has been highly extolled in the poetry of the Hebrews; scarcely any mountain, spring, or valley, has been left unsung; -- but how, and in what sense, has this boasted region been so celebrated? Merely as God's land, as the land of promise, and in no other point of view.<sup>81</sup>

The living presence of the creator permeated all natural phenomena:

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 135

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> J. G. Herder, Oriental Dialogues containing the Conversation of Eugenius and Alciphron on the Spirit and Beauties of the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews (London, 1801), p. 373.



Sion, Lebanon, Carmel are God's hills. The rivers, where any events happen, are the rivers of God. The land is a holy land; a land of election. In the histories of other countries, we find that the people regarded certain places, here and there, as peculiarly dedicated to their deities, such as shady groves, mountains of a lofty and awful aspect; cities renowned for arts or arms, but I know no poetry of any nation, in which even unfruitful regions are regarded as scenes of divine munificence, and the corner of a country is consecrated as the residence of the majesty of Jehovah.<sup>82</sup>

Herder singled out in this dialogue the role given to the Hebrews in this land of election. His protagonist, Eugenius, forecasts to his compatriot Alciphron the future dreams of this race: "Even to this day the wandering multitude of the dispersed tribes, turn their views to this great object, the PROMISED CANAAN: they still comfort themselves with the idea that their descendants shall inhabit one day that holy land, that land of election".<sup>83</sup>

Travellers to the holy land tended to favour J. Herder's animistic view of nature. The Bible to many men of the church, such as T. Shaw, T. Harmer and R. Pococke (who will be discussed in a separate chapter), was still regarded as historically true. Its explicit narratives and history, reinforced with the naturalist heritage of Strabo and Pliny, provided the traveller with the 'inner light' with which to explore both the habitation and the inhabitants of the land of consecration. All must coalesce in the land of expectation, J. Herder emphasized, from whence all knowledge and the primeval soul must spring: "Their history, their traditions, their law, their poetry terminate and centre in this land of promise, without which they are no more than castles in the air, without consistence or foundation, Alciphron".<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 363.

He laments that they have no part of this land, "and that we cannot read the maledictions pronounced by the prophets on all other countries with that enthusiastic pleasure, which they excite in the minds of this chosen people..."<sup>85</sup>

Herder, affected by Spinoza, Goethe and Lessing, regarded the universe as a garment of God. Vital and dynamic, the world's very essence was composed of an endless chain, "the visible expression of the primeval soul". All thought and power of action emanated from the Urkraft, the original power imminent in and part of creation itself. However, within the larger creation existed small nations bound to their environment by virtue of their possessions, lands, manners and language. In a study on Herder, Henry Nevinson points out that "in common with most naturalists of the time (Darwin hadn't written his Origin of the Species), Herder is inclined to lay the greatest stress on the influence of climate in determining the variations and laws of life amongst the lower animals, and especially amongst the tribes of men".<sup>86</sup> Posing his version of the nature of development of nations within the universal soul, Herder explained:

Self preservation is the first object for which a being exists: From the grain of dust to the sun everything strives to remain what it is. When there is no struggle or competition their law of persistence is sufficient and does not lead to development, and consequently we see that the less a nation is pressed upon and the more truly it is obliged to abide by its simple and savage way of life, the more exactly does it also maintain its original conformation or type...<sup>87</sup>

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85 Ibid.

86 Henry Nevinson, Herder (London, 1884), p. 359.

87 Ibid.

For Herder, and, as we shall see a little further on, for Bishop Robert Lowth, the highest "true lyric -- the reflection of the inmost soul, the purely subjective poetry -- .. reached its sublime height ... amongst the Hebrews".<sup>88</sup>

To be able to penetrate the Urkraft and establish contact with creation it was necessary for the traveller to be equipped with a very sharp sense of perception. "Il est à regretter des voyageurs", Herder pointed out, "oblient de nous parler de ces essais des peuples étrangers: s'ils sont inutiles au musiciens ils sont de l'importance pour celui qui étudie l'homme; car la musique d'une nation, dans ses formes les plus imparfaites et dans ses tours favoris, indique le caractère du peuple, c'est-à-dire, le ton vrai de ses impressions, avec beaucoup plus d'exactitude et de profondeur que les descriptions les plus complète des accidens externes".<sup>89</sup> In this context Herder was reiterating notions of the close alliance between the songs of a country and their religious, moral and political systems. Brown, in A Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music, traced the progress of a nation from savage to civilized life as it could be exhibited through its song. He explained of the ancient nations:

Their Songs would be of a legislative Cast; and being drawn chiefly from the Fables of History of their own Country, would contain the essential Part of their Religious, moral and political Systems. ... The Celebration of their deceased Heroes would of course grow into a religious Act: That the Exhortations and Maxims intermixed with these

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. 316-317.

<sup>89</sup> Edgar Quinet, Idées sur la philosophie de L'histoire de L'Humanité par Herder (Paris, 1827), p. 71.

Celebrations, and founded on the Example of their Heroe-Gods, would naturally become the Standard of Right and Wrong; that is, the Foundation of private Morals and public Law; And thus, the whole Fabric, of their Religion, Morals, and Polity, would naturally arise from, and be included in their Songs, during their progress from Savage to civilized Life.<sup>90</sup>

Consequently, for the people of a country to be lacking in the knowledge of their music, implied "a deficiency in the three great leading Articles of Education, Religion, Morals and Polity".<sup>91</sup> It inevitably follows that Herder's interest in all aspects of a nation's culture was very enlightened, and although he excused the traveller for occasional ignorance, it was unforgivable for him not to pass on his information to more specialized sources.

Every country has its own peculiarities which only a person with very developed sensibilities can ascertain and evaluate.

The German social philosopher explained:

"Plus j'étudie les variétés de sensibilité dans l'homme, dans leurs rapports avec les contrées qu'il habite et les genre de vie qu'il adopte, plus les preuves de la bonté universelle de la nature se mutliplient autour de moi. Là où une organe est moins susceptible, de développement, elle n'veille point l'irritabilité qu'il contient, et le laisse pendant des siècles dans une sorte de sommeil salulaire, au contraire, a-t-elle perfectionné et déploie un organe, elle préparé autour de lui les objects qui doivent de servir et l'exercer. Ainsi, par cette organisations, tantôt réprimée et tantôt excitée, la terre entière résonne à l'oreille de l'homme comme une lyre harmonieuse, d'où s'échapperont a la fin tous les accords possibles dans la succession des choses et des âges.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Dr. <sup>John</sup> Brown, A Dissertation on the Rise, Union and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music (London, 1763), p. 39.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>92</sup> Quinet, op.cit., p. 71.

He was very adamant that not all inhabitants or travellers to a region were equipped to understand a culture. Only certain men developed over the years a sensitivity or organisation of the mind, which, at times repressed and at others let loose, allowed the whole world to sound to his ear like that of a harmonious lyre. Upon reaching this stage, nothing will escape the senses of this enlightened human being and he will be aware of the whole range of human experience. In the process of ~~the passage of~~ the years the whole course of the world will seem logical, coherent and understandable to this new man.

Nature does not divulge its secrets to the weak. People who have imagination must have strength, as anyone who has experienced the solitude and the ravages of the sea and sat at the foot of volcanos must realize. In such situations all emotions of the heart are equally moved. Herder again singles out the land of the East as best portraying all physical and human attributes:

Depuis les temps les plus reculés, les déserts de l'Arabie ont inspiré de sublimes extases, et ceux qui s'y sont livrés ont presque tous été des hommes solitaires et curieux. C'est dans la solitude que Mahomet a commencé le Coran; son imagination exalté le ravit au ciel, le fit assister à l'assemblée des anges et des saints, et lui dévoila le spectacle des mondes'.<sup>93</sup>

The solitude and the nature of the landscape also inspired the birth of great mythologies unique to each area. Practice of such beliefs was closely affiliated to the expression of the divine will, which manifested itself to the individual. Correct interpretation of such a relationship is not easy as a person

must be aware of the particular effects of climate and other influences; he must carefully sift the true from the erroneous and retain what he realizes is most commensurate with the realities of the country. Herder explained: "Les voyageurs les plus expérimentés n'ont pu voir sans étonnement certains prodiges de ce genre, et des effets de l'imagination, qu'ils auraient hésité à croire s'ils n'en avaient été témoins, et que le plus souvent il leur est impossible d'expliquer".<sup>94</sup> The encounter of travellers with a wide variety of strange and often, to them, inexplicable phenomena led often to divergent interpretations. Such different versions allowed both the writer and reader of such narratives either to climb to the height of pure fantasy, or share in someone's experience of sublime ecstasy, or in some cases, to denounce foreign rites and rituals as too dangerously affiliated with the passions and the pitfalls of religious enthusiasm!

Various cultures were a source of enlightenment and knowledge to the world. G. Leibnitz (1646-1716) in his Critique of Locke on Human Understanding (1765) was fascinated by the study of nature; he contributed a part to the "contented and mechanical Deism [which] was still triumphant amongst the enlightened whether they followed Voltaire or Gibbon, Nicolai, Rousseau, or Wolff".<sup>95</sup> This philosopher, fascinated by the various cultures in the same manner as Herder, wrote: "When the Latins, Greeks, Hebrews and Arabs shall some day be exhausted, the Chinese, supplied also with ancient books, will enter the lists and furnish

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>95</sup> Nevinson, op.cit., p. 337.

matter for the curiosity of our critics. Not to speak of some old books of the Persians, Armenians, Copts and Brahmins, which will be unearthed in time so as not to neglect any light antiquity may give on doctrines by tradition and on facts by history".<sup>96</sup>

Each culture had its own unique characteristics which necessarily emerged from its own tradition and history: it followed the law of cause and effect. It was impossible for matters to be otherwise, as Herder explained:

Peuple la Grèce de Chinois, que devient la Grèce d'Homère? Repandez les, Hélienes dans les lieux où Darius conduisit les Érétriens en esclavage, adieu le spectacle de Sparte et d'Athènes.<sup>97</sup>

Continuing in the same vein, Herder attempted to connect the modern Greeks to their ancestors in the same manner that many travellers were apt to do, specifically P. Guys, who was mentioned earlier. He said: "Voyez la Grèce d'aujourd'hui, où sont les Grecs de l'antiquité? Leur terre même, ou est-elle? Si l'on n'entendait ça et là quelques mots de leurs harmonieux langage, si l'on ne rencontrait quelques traces de leur génie, de loin a loin une ville cachée sous les ronces, des statues mutilées, que sais-je..."<sup>98</sup> Greek society, an ideal culture, had persisted for a longer period than that of the Persians, Romans, Mongols and other groups. But, unfortunately, the greatness of nations does not endure; a fortuitous chain of circumstances causes it to attain glory and renown for a time, until another country invades it and shatters its achievements.

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<sup>96</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, New Essays Concerning Human Understanding (New York, London, 1896), p. 372.

<sup>97</sup> Herder, op.cit., p. 511.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

Furthermore it is impossible to recapture that happy moment in which all factors coalesced to present that pinnacle of fame; all that remain of a once magnificent civilization are traditions and language. The traveller, Robert Wood, was greatly influenced by the theories of Herder, as will be shown later in the chapter devoted to his works.

History was not the only method of surveying the past. As a matter of fact, the Reverend Robert Lowth (1710-1787), in his influential book, Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews (first published 1787), found history to be limited in scope. He said: "History treats of things and persons which have been in actual existence; the subjects of poetry are infinite and universal".<sup>99</sup> Poetry, since it teaches morals, being inspired by the Divine, "raises the mind, and fills it with sublime ideas, by proportioning the appearances of things to the desires of the mind, and not submitting the mind to things, like reason and history".<sup>100</sup>

Hebraic imagery, poetry and language being grounded in external nature or from daily, familiar Palestinian life, "invariably invested the literature with majesty and force".<sup>101</sup> Drawing power and wisdom from God the Almighty, its language was sublime and therefore unrivalled in any other literature. No other culture could match the Hebraic imagery in rich colour, splendour and strength; "the daring and magnificent use of metaphors and similes are never obscure".<sup>102</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Right Reverend Robert Lowth, Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews (London, 1839), p. 8.

<sup>100</sup> Lowth, op.cit., p. 191. See J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries (London, 1966), pp. 191-2.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 189.



Bishop Lowth's particular contribution was his belief that the Hebraic heritage was equalled by no other; and that "in sublimity it is superior to the most finished productions of the Greeks".<sup>103</sup> He said, "we must endeavour to read Hebrew poetry as the Hebrews would have read it, since each language possesses a peculiar genius and character, on which depend the principles of its versification and in a great measure the style and colour of the poetic diction".<sup>104</sup> Hebraic poetry's glory lay in an ultimate sublimity, a quality which he defined as "that force -- which strikes and overpowers the mind -- excites the passions, and ... expresses ideas with perspicuity and elevation ... whether the language be plain or ornamented, refined or familiar";<sup>105</sup> and for his use of this term he acknowledged indebtedness to Longinus and his treatise on the sublime. Lowth clarified that where there is no passion, there is no sublimity; only "the fervent emotions of the poet, communicated with compelling force to the reader, can result in the 'transport' described by Longinus".<sup>106</sup>

Dr. Brown, in his Dissertation, explored the concept of poetic purity with which Dr. Lowth was concerned. He, however, was more preoccupied with Greek culture, from which he drew his examples. Brown pointed out that 'melody', a relative thing, was "founded in the particular Associations and Habits of each People; and by

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>104</sup>Atkins, op.cit., p. 190.

<sup>105</sup>Lowth, op.cit., p. 55.

<sup>106</sup>Atkins, op.cit., p. 192.

Custom (like Language) annexed to their Sentiments and Passions: Thus it becomes the natural Vehicle of these Sentiments and Passions; but a Vehicle, which can never extend farther than to Those, upon whom such particular Impressions have been made".<sup>107</sup> Such a statement echoed the refrain posited by Herder, in which the traveller was challenged to break the barrier of his country, language and culture, and, furthermore, to step back into the ancient past, to capture in the present the music of the ancient lyre. Continuing his presentation of the importance of understanding barbaric expression of a culture, Brown remarked: "That Sounds, therefore, may have their full Effect, the Melody must be animated by such Movements, as contain in themselves the Representations or Images of Those Things which we mean to express or imitate by Song: and This if we can do, we may be sure to command the Passions of the Soul..."<sup>108</sup> In other words, sounds are the expression of society: an index to the development of their manners, a guide to their historic legends and a sign of the development of their affections.

For a culture to maintain its original, historic identity and tie with God, the Heroic bards, ancient Patriarchs or Urkraft, it must maintain "its Empire over the Passions". As long as the ancient Greeks and Romans, in Brown's view, "relied on Measure or Rhythm for the Force of their Melody", they were within the limits of the passions of the 'Soul'. For, Brown explained, "Simplicity of Melody, whose Power arose from mere

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<sup>107</sup> Brown, op.cit., p. 75.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

Rhythm or Measure, was most suited to the Powers of the first barbarous Legislators or Bards, as well as to the Capacity of the Surrounding Peoples", its force being increased "by the Power of Early Association and continued Habit".<sup>109</sup> Unfortunately, as their melodies "grew more artificial, [they] grew less powerful".<sup>110</sup> To deviate from the imperfect modes of sound, which are characteristic of barbarous countries, was disastrous and usually arose as a result of a change of manners in society. Original or primitive sounds expressing the passions of Grief, Terror, Joy, Pity, Rage were a natural outpouring of a particular people (but "a Hearer from another Country, whose Associations and Habits are different, will be little, if at all, perhaps very differently affected by them...").<sup>111</sup> When a society changed its ways, new sounds were introduced to the detriment of closely knit community. Hence Brown commented: "Manners being the leading and most essential quality of Man... a change of Manners influences Music, and reciprocally Music changes Manners, many times to the detriment". All emanated from misapplication of the noble heritage of man: "For being educated in a corrupt State they would be apt to debase their Art to vile and immoral Purposes ... Hence the Power, the Utility and Dignity of Music would sink into a general Corruption and Contempt".<sup>112</sup> Deterioration of these guiding principles meant the breakdown of the great articles of education: Religion, Morals and Polity, which had emanated from the Songs of their Historic Past, and, as was mentioned earlier, in connection with the makings of the British constitution.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

The search for the sublime played a vital role in travellers' acquaintance with the poetry, literature, mannerisms and culture of the Eastern nations. Bishop Lowth stipulated that the sublime must be grounded in nature, although it partook of the terrible, remote and passionate elements of the natural world. Portraying the Sun and Stars "as rising with increased splendour in a new creation, or again involved in chaos and primeval darkness"<sup>113</sup> the sacred bard describes the phenomena in magnificent colours:

"The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun,  
And the light of the sun shall be sevenfold." 114

Again, on the banks of the river Jordan where the mountains pour forth "the tempestuous violence of his sorrow", the poet in a "figurative description of his own situation", depicted with great force of language and energy:

Deep calleth unto deep, in the voice of thy cataracts;  
All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me.<sup>115</sup>

The two mountains of Palestine and Lebanon: Mount Carmel and Mount Lebanon each assume the appearance of abundance. Lebanon became a metaphor used "for the whole people of the Jews, or for the state of the church; for Jerusalem; for the King of Assyria even, and for his army; for whatever, in a word, is remarkable, august and sublime; and in the same manner, whatever possesses much fertility, wealth, or beauty, is called Carmel".<sup>116</sup> Owing to the equating of such images with the natural terrain of the country, Lowth pointed out that it was imperative for the critic

<sup>113</sup> Lowth, op.cit., p. 63.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

"to remark, as far as possible, the situation and habits of the author, the natural history of his country, and the scene of the poem".<sup>117</sup> In this context, Lowth drew the attention of the reader to Dr. Russell's Natural History of Aleppo (1756). He applauded him for his description of the regeneration of nature, the juxtaposition of the dry season with that of abundant water overflowing the area and transforming it into a paradise; a simile which Mahomet made use of as an idea for the resurrection. Lowth continued to remark that every man ought to read Russell's book, especially one "who wishes not only literally to understand the oriental writers, but to feel them".<sup>118</sup>

In the age of reason, writers such as Lowth, Burke and Kant, as well as advocates of Gothic splendour praised the language of the passions. Lowth explained: "The language of reason is cool, temperate, rather humble than elevated, well arranged and perspicuous, with an evident care and anxiety lest anything should escape which might appear perplexed or obscure".<sup>119</sup> However, on the other hand, "the language of the passions is totally different: the conceptions burst out into a turbid stream, expressive in a manner of the internal conflict; the more vehement break out in hasty confusion; they catch (without search or study) whatever is impetuous, vivid, or energetic".<sup>120</sup> He summed up: "in a word, reason speaks literally, the passions poetically". He found that magnification

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

and exaggeration, as long as they were rooted in reality, were not dangerous: for they indicated in some degree the state of the soul:

For nature to each change of fortune forms  
The secret soul, and all its passions warms;  
Transports to rage, dilates the heart with mirth,  
Wrings the sad soul, and bends it down to earth.  
The tongue these various movements must express.<sup>121</sup>

The boundlessness of natural and poetic imagery appealed to eighteenth and nineteenth century writers of narratives about the Orient. Many travellers, aware of the attraction of tales of terror which titillated the fancy and the imagination and yet remained within the secure boundaries of reason, hastened to provide stories of the marvellous and the fantastic.<sup>122</sup> "It is our ignorance of things that causes all our admiration, and chiefly excites our passions", said Burke in his Essay on the Sublime. He elaborated: "conciseness is not synonymous with passion", for "the ideas of eternity and infinity are among the most affecting we have..."<sup>123</sup> The mind enjoys receiving a crowd of confused images, which if separated would lose their greatness.

Sublime imagery was adopted by many outstanding writers of Oriental tales, who incorporated the mannerisms and symbols into their literary works. Outstanding among these works are Johnson's Rasselas (1759), Beckford's Vathek (1786), Goldsmith's Citizen of the World (1762), and Walpole's Castle of Otranto (1764). As a modern author on the Oriental tale points out: "In both the oriental and the Gothic tale ... there is romantic longing".

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. (Francis' Hor. Art of Poetry, v. 155, etc.)

<sup>122</sup> Burke, Essay on the Sublime, op.cit., pp. 63-64.

<sup>123</sup> See Samuel C. Chew, The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance (New York, 1965). He explores fully in his first chapter the subject of travellers and travel liars.

"In the one", she says, "there is the reactionary desire to escape to the far away, mysterious East -- the remote in space; in the other the desire to return to the Middle Ages; the remote in time; in both the longing for picturesque coloring, for magical atmosphere, for strangeness, coupled sometimes with beauty, sometimes with horror". 124

In the following chapters some of the foregoing concepts will be explored as they occur in the travelogues of four outstanding travellers of the eighteenth century. Although some of these narratives are now considered archaic and contain much obsolete information, especially those on natural science, still, in view of the homage they received from their own generation, they are worth studying today. Furthermore, in their efforts to show something of the various countries in which they travelled, the voyagers often revealed some of their own personal characteristics and national prejudices. Hence, in the final analysis, one is able to obtain a clearer picture not only of Eastern nations, but also of British society and of the role of the traveller in it at that time. Thus Lowth wrote in this connection:

The mind of man is that mirror of Plato, which, as he turns about at pleasure, and directs to a different point of view, he creates another sun, other stars, planets, animals, and even another self. In this shadow or image of himself, which man beholds when the mirror is turned inward towards himself, he is enabled in some degree to contemplate the souls of other men; for, from what he feels and perceives in himself, he forms conjectures concerning others; and apprehends and describes the manners, affections, conceptions of others from his own. 125

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124 Martha Pike Conant, The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century (New York, 1966), p. 248.

125 Lowth, op.cit., p. 57.

CHAPTER ONE

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

(1689-1762)

Warm'd with Poetic Transport I survey  
Th' Immortal Islands, and the well known Sea...<sup>1</sup>

When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and her husband, Mr. Wortley Montagu, England's new ambassador to Turkey, left Britain for Constantinople in August 1716, with their son, a doctor, and a retinue of thirty servants, they were unaware that Lady Mary's letters to friends and relatives would capture their visit for posterity. Unfortunately, only fifty-two letters<sup>2</sup> describing their trip and two-year sojourn in Turkey remain; her daughter unwittingly destroyed the rest. These Turkish Embassy letters, admired by Johnson, Gibbon, Walpole and Voltaire,<sup>3</sup> were addressed to prominent literary and aristocratic figures of the time, among them Alexander Pope, Lady Mar --- Lady Mary's sister --- and Abbé Antonio Conti (1677-1749), a cosmopolitan savant who lived in Paris and was a frequent visitor to the British court.

This correspondence, written in the belles lettres tradition, was a tribute to the scholarly achievement and vivacious personality of the writer. A neo-classicist in her outlook, adept at

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<sup>1</sup>The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford, 1965), I, p. 146. (Hereinafter referred to as Letters.)

<sup>2</sup>Note: A new letter that was printed in Le Nouveau Mercure of October 1718 (pp: 98-99) as "Lettre de Me ... à Me ... écrite de Constantinople," has come to light. See Robert Halsband, "A New Lady Mary Letter," Philological Quarterly, XLIV (January 1966), 180-184.

<sup>3</sup>The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford, 1956), Preface.



languages, having taught herself Latin and become reasonably fluent in French, she was also influenced by the 'stout' romances which Jonathan Swift admired so much. Lady Mary found a wealth of material in the landscape, customs and manners of the Turks, that could not be equalled elsewhere in the globe. Adopting the cult of the picturesque,<sup>4</sup> which intrigued poets and painters of her age, she gave in her writing a vivid visual impression of the subjects she selected. A talented writer, she undertook successfully to compare life with art, and to show how closely nature was allied with both.

Lady Mary's distinguished birth and privileged position played a dominant rôle in determining her approach towards the Ottoman people. It was not strange to find her as a member of the British aristocracy preoccupied with the dress and manners of upper-class Turks. Graciously and with great consideration for the traditions of the privileged of the Turkish nation, among whom she and her husband found themselves, Lady Mary, with the tact born of experience, courted and won their favour. A daughter of Evelyn Pierrepont, successively Fifth Earl of Kingston, Marquis of Dorchester and finally Duke of Kingston in 1715, she had learned the way of politicians. Under his tutelage she had cultivated her talents and

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Spence, Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men: Collected from Conversations, ed. James M. Osborn (Oxford, 1966), I p. 255.

The painter, Charles Jervas (1675? - 1739), who painted Lady Mary in the dress of a shepherdess, and at the same time was a close friend of Alexander Pope, who had already been impressed with the cult of the 'picturesque' which was imported from France, imparted to him a heightened awareness of the visual.

met many outstanding scholars and 'wits', whom she was to cherish ~~and include in her experiences~~ throughout her life. Outstanding among these were Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, Drs. John Arbuthnot and Samuel Garth (~~her father's close friend~~). Two additional writers with whom she enjoyed a particularly close and rewarding friendship were Pope and Congreve. Through her cousin, the rising young novelist, Henry Fielding, and others, Lady Mary was kept aware of the development of that newest emerging genre: the novel.

The Montagus were especially well qualified to undertake the duties of representing the British nation abroad. Wortley Montagu, a staunch Whig, had the reputation of being a scholar and experienced politician. Having represented Huntingdon in the House of Commons from 1708 to 1713, and become part of the ministry of King George I in October 1714,<sup>5</sup> and one of the commissioners of the Treasury to his cousin, Lord Halifax, he was particularly well placed to represent the interests of the British nation in the Ottoman Empire and to watch over the affairs of the Levant Company at Aleppo with its important trade connections in the Mediterranean. It was tragic, therefore, that instead of serving the full five year period of his initial appointment, he left, with his wife, after only one. Mr. Montagu succeeded Sir Robert Sutton, who had occupied this post for

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<sup>5</sup> "Montagu, Wortley," Dictionary of National Biography, eds. Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (London, 1909), XII, 706.



fifteen years. The function of the ambassador was to safeguard the trade rights of the Levant company, established since 1581 when Elizabethan England joined in Levantine trade with the French and other nations. Residence in Constantinople facilitated close contact with those in power, favour often being sought through the offering of lavish gifts to powerful Turkish officials. The people in power, on the other hand, welcomed companies' generosity in return for their own benevolence, for it helped to keep their households in abundant prosperity. This method of obtaining favours from the Turks was to elicit outspoken criticism from many ambassadors and travellers, who chafed under the burden of overwhelming expenses.

Lady Mary's political background and her literary interests influenced her approach to the area. While she often adopted an extravagant descriptive style for the benefit of the beau monde of her acquaintance, she proved capable of abandoning a preoccupation with the luxurious frivolities of life among the Ottoman households to focus on the current issues of war and religion. Happily, she belied Alexander Pope's ironical forecast of her trip to the East. Upon learning of her imminent departure, he had jokingly described her prospects there as follows: "In the sensual courts of the East she would abandon herself to extreme Effeminacy, Laziness, and Lewdness of Life."<sup>6</sup> He described her destination as "the land of Jealousy, where the unhappy Women converse with none but Eunuchs,

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<sup>6</sup> Halsband, Life of Lady Mary, p. 63. (18 August, 1716-17, Correspondence, i. 354, 384) 406, 368, 364-5.

and where the very Cucumbers are brought to them Cutt..."<sup>7</sup>  
 His rakish attitude clearly exemplified the current popular view of life and manners in the languid East. Phil-Hellenic in outlook, he refused to regard the other inhabitants of the area with any admiration, an attitude from which Lady Mary fortunately differed. To her everlasting merit she succeeded in painting a happy and cheerful picture of the lives of the women of Turkey, whether in or out of harems, effectively opposing many other contrary attitudes.

Upon learning of their appointment, Lady Mary had communicated her feelings to Spence (a friend of many of the 'wits' of the age and collector of some of their observations), which he had summarized as follows:

Lady Mary, who had always delighted in romances and books of travel, was charmed with the thoughts of going into the East, though those embassies are generally an affair of twenty years, and so 'twas a sort of dying to her friends and country. But 'twas travelling; 'twas going farther than most other people go; 'twas wandering; 'twas all whimsical and charming; and so she set out with all the pleasure imaginable.<sup>8</sup>

Entering the land of Sultan Achmet III kindled her spirit of enthusiastic adventure. Her love of romance taking over, it seemed as if she had invaded one of Congreve's elaborate scenes, where "Heroes, Heroines, Kings, Queens, and Mortals of the first Rank

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 56. See Spence to his mother, 25 February 1741, MS Eg. 2234, f.248.

used Lofty Language, and undertook miraculous Contingencies and impossible Performances." Similarly her letters seemed designed to "elevate and surprise the Reader into a giddy Delight, which leaves him flat upon the Ground whenever he ... is forced to be very well convinced that 'tis all a lye."<sup>9</sup> At times she was so carried away with the subjects of her encounters that her readers may have found it hard to draw the line between truth and fiction. To<sup>th</sup> Abbé Conti, on the other hand, a well-known religious scholar, she showed her awareness of the necessity of faithfully recording the details of human knowledge she encountered, and wrote to him: "You see that I am very exact in keeping the promise you engag'd me to make, but I know not whither your Curiosity will be satisfy'd with the Accounts I shall give you, tho' I can assure you that the desire I have to oblige you to the utmost of my power has made me very diligent in my enquirys and observations."<sup>10</sup>

Although at times Lady Mary's accounts seemed extravagantly unreal, nevertheless she was conforming to the tradition of one hundred and fifty years of travel literature. Methodically, and in the manner of preceding travellers, she covered the wide range of historical, geographical, archaeological and scientific subjects which those interested in literature had come to expect from voyagers abroad. In her various letters she methodically noted information on the cities she visited, emphasized their historical sites and religious

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<sup>9</sup> Walter Allen, The English Novel (London, 1954), pp. 35 - 6. (Incognita, Prefatory letter).

<sup>10</sup> Letters, p. 315.

institutions, dwelt in detail on monuments of classical antiquity, and explored the natural wild-life and vegetation of each area covered in her travels.

Lady Mary was aware of the responsibilities of the traveller abroad and emphasized this role on several occasions. To prepare herself for her impending journey, she had not been content with reading that immortal book, A Thousand and One Nights, a work, which as will be discussed later on, influenced her thinking, but she also perused at great length the accounts of authoritative travellers to the Ottoman Empire. Prominent among these were the volumes of Paul Rycaut (1628 - 1700),<sup>11</sup> who had resided for seven years at Constantinople as secretary to the Ambassador and for eleven as Consul at Smyrna; and of Richard Knolles,<sup>12</sup> whose ~~him, and with whom he jointly published~~ account of the Turks, their government, religion and customs <sup>(published in 1603), was revised by Rycaut.</sup> Her dedication to her task emerged in the course of her travels, when she analyzed some of the deductions of these European residents and either verified or discounted their comments about the inhabitants of the area.

Another traveller whom Lady Mary quoted on frequent occasions was George Sandys.<sup>13</sup> Interested in classical antiquities, he, in many ways, was the precursor who most resembled Lady Mary in his

<sup>11</sup> Paul Rycaut, The History of the Turks: From the Year 1678, to the year 1699 (London, 1700).

<sup>12</sup> Richard Knolles, The Turkish History from the original of that nation to the growth of the Ottoman Empire with the lives and conquests of their princes and Emperors (Oxford, 1687). Whereunto is added: Sir Paul Rycaut, The Present State of the Ottoman Empire (London, 1687).

<sup>13</sup> George Sandys, A Relation of a Journey Begun An. Dom. 1610... (London, 1615).

approach and interests. His work, which abounded with personal observations about his travels, transcended the usually dry and humourless approach of his contemporaries and won him such wide acclaim that it went through nine editions in fifty years. Sandys resided in Constantinople for several months at the home of the British Consul, at that time Sir Thomas Glover, where he was joined for a period by another well-known traveller, the 'crop-eared' Scottish wanderer, William Lithgow (1610 - 1611),<sup>13</sup> who had published his observations a few months before Sandys published his own. Of the two other outstanding travellers of that period, Thomas Coryat (1611)<sup>14</sup> and John Sanderson (1584),<sup>15</sup> the latter was mentioned by Lady Mary in one of her letters. Although Coryat was a notable clergyman's son and wrote about the various institutions of the Turks much in the manner of the other voyagers she had consulted before embarking on her journey, she did not mention him in any particular connection, since <sup>he was</sup> much less reliable and serious than, say, Sandys. Sanderson's account, however, was of particular value, as he was a Levant merchant serving under the new and extended charter of "The Governor and Company of Merchants of England Trading in Levant Seas".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> William Lithgow, The Totall discourse of the rare adventures and painful peregrinations of long nineteene Yeares from Scotland to the most famous Kingdoms in Europe, Asia and Africa, (London, 1632).

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Coryat, Crudities (London, 1611).  
Purchas His Pilgrimes (London, 1625).

<sup>15</sup> The Travels of John Sanderson <sup>in The Levant 1584-1602. 1st ed. 1614.</sup> ed., William Foster (London, 1931), p. 162, note.

<sup>16</sup> John Sanderson, The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant, ed. W. Foster. Hakluyt Society, No. LXVII (Glasgow, 1930).

At this time in history, Europe still viewed the Turkish challenge with concern, although the victories won by Austria at the turn of the century had succeeded in mitigating their power. Britain, still in the process of founding her empire, had not yet envisaged that one century later she would forge an alliance with what she now considered to be her most powerful adversary.<sup>17</sup> Lady Mary, in the course of her journey through the Ottoman domains, had the opportunity to make her own political assessment of the situation in Turkey, and her route highlighted some of the cruelties of war. Travelling via Austria, since it was the role of the Ambassador to reconcile the Turks and the Austrians, they started their journey by spending a period of time in Vienna. They shipped their luggage and household effects from Leghorn. Spurning the sea route along the Danube and the Black Sea to Galata, they elected to journey from Vienna to Trieste,<sup>thence</sup> passing by Corfu, ~~Serbia~~, Smyrna and the Dardanelles; the journey lasted for twelve days. On the second stage of their trip, through the Balkans, the western part of the Ottoman Empire, and over the fields of the Peace of Carlowitz (1699), Lady Mary had the opportunity to visit the scene of the Battle of Zenta (1697), "where the Grand Vizier,

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<sup>17</sup> The battle of Navarino which took place about a century later, on November 17, 1827, under the command of a phil-Hellene, Sir Edward Codrington, was not welcome in English and French circles. Politicians were dismayed at the destruction of the Turkish fleet in this battle, which had been launched in support of the rebellious Greeks within the Turkish dominions. They "feared that Turkish defeat meant Russian success, or that a general war might begin". Later on the Greek revolt against the Turks was to gain the sympathy of many Englishmen ~~from Byron to Elgin~~; they were not too concerned with Russian containment at the expense of the Greeks. See Stuart M. Tave, New Essays by De Quincey, (Princeton, 1966), pp. 185, 79.



four viziers, and 30,000 Turks fell",<sup>18</sup> and this led her to contemplate the cruelties of war. She was to return to this theme whenever she encountered the elaborate preparations for battle, and to regret their necessity.

Like Byzantium before it, the whole area suffered from the continual wars waged by the Turks against the Persians, and signs of poverty existed everywhere. Lady Mary, in a letter to the Princess of Wales, exposed the plight of the poor. The people's need, she emphasized, did not emerge from any poverty of the land; the soil was fruitful and produced such a prodigious quantity of wine that the prosperous in Servia "were forc'd to dig holes in the Earth to put it in, not having Vessels enough in the Town to hold it".<sup>19</sup> Here she was to witness examples of the harshness and inhumanity of the Janizaries, a phenomenon repeated throughout the course of their journey. On one occasion the soldiers accompanying their own caravan refused to compensate the twenty wagon owners for their services, summarily dismissing them with the curt order to be on their way. Lady Mary, naturally moved at the sight of the "poor fellows weeping and tearing their Hair", proved, however, surprisingly inept at providing any remedy to this blatant injustice, satisfying her conscience with the remark: "I would have paid them the money

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<sup>18</sup> Halsband, Letters, p. 305. Cited from Encyclopedia of Islam, IV, p. 1226.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 311.

out of my own pocket with all my Heart, but it had been only giving so much to the Aga, who would have taken it from them without any remorse".<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere, she contrasted the misery of the masses, caused by torture and by the greed and corruption of their petty officials, with the serenity and majestic beauty of the adjacent snow-capped mountains of Haemus and Rhodophe. Here, on the river Hebrus, lived an enclave of Greeks amidst Christian churches, who were careful to hide their wealth in order to escape the sad fate of those less fortunate than themselves.

During her stay in Belgrade, the first important city at which the Montagus had arrived after Vienna, Lady Mary first observed the two contrasting sides of Turkish life: despotic barbarism and opulent culture.<sup>21</sup> Distressed at learning of the killing of the Bassa two months before their arrival for refusing permission to his soldiers to attack the German frontiers, she sympathized with the plight of a town that had fallen under the mercy of an "insolent Soldiery". After having exposed the tragedies of the common man, she was not averse to describing the luxurious home and warm hospitality of one of its outstanding citizens, Achmet-Beg. The son of a great Bassa, and now holding the post of the city Pasha,

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Halsband, Life of Lady Mary, p. 67.

he was educated "in the most polite Eastern learning, being perfectly skill'd in the Arabic and Persian languages", and, as an extraordinary scribe, was called 'Effendi'.<sup>22</sup> Immensely pleased to have encountered an educated gentleman in the East, one who had forsaken "the greatest preferments of the dangerous Honnours of the Port for the sake of a secure life", she elaborated on this visit at great length. While she enjoyed the musical sound of Arabic poetry he was impressed with her knowledge of the Persian tales. Complimenting herself on her knowledge of the Arabian and Persian tales, she remarked: "I pass for a great Scholar with him by relating to him some of the Persian Tales, which I find are Genuine. At first he believ'd I understood Persian."<sup>23</sup> Records indicate that in 1739 Lady Mary had in her library a copy of a Thousand and One Nights in two volumes.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Halsband, Letters, p. 307.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 308.

<sup>24</sup> These are the famous tales written by Francois Pétis de la Croix, who published Les Mille et un jours, Contes Persanes (1710 - 1712). He said he had heard them from a dervish; scholars, however, believe the tales already existed in Persian and Turkish writing, although there is no manuscript available to substantiate such a claim. Ibid., note 1.

Her discussions with Achmet-Beg provided her with the first opportunity to discuss the habits of Eastern women, a subject which most intrigued her. Finding him easy to converse with, Lady Mary compared this somewhat noble savage of recent acquaintance with men of her own country. To Pope she remarked: "He has wit and is more polite than many Christian men of Quality. I am very much entertained with him." Again, she could not forego paying herself the compliment: "You cannot imagine how much he is delighted with the Liberty of conversing with me."<sup>25</sup>

The Baths in the city of Sophia gave her the chance to describe at some length to her readers the manners and habits of Turkish women. Here her sex and position worked to advantage and made it possible for her to invade a territory forbidden to many other aspiring visitors from abroad. She took full advantage of her visit to describe fully and in great detail, here and on several other occasions, this most controversial of Eastern institutions. Aided by her vivid and versatile pen, she painted a picture of seated women, "most of their skins shiningly white, only adorn'd by their Beautifull Hair divided into many tresses hanging on their shoulders, braided either with pearl or riband, perfectly representing the figures of the Graces".<sup>26</sup> Then, recreating her tableau in a scene reminiscent of the Garden

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 314.

of Eden in Milton's Paradise Lost, to which she actually referred, she pictured her ladies as reclining in various postures, naked, conversing and drinking coffee or sherbet while indulging in the latest gossip.

To understand more fully her preoccupation with the finer arrangements of domestic life, as exemplified in the following extract, it is necessary to realize that she believed in the Augustan concept of nature, which saw it as having a strongly social cast: "It was a nature of man's creations, his civilizations, cities, estates, temples, palaces, drawing-rooms, boudoirs, theaters, debates, conversations, and literature."<sup>27</sup> The 'unnatural' for her would have been a deviation from the norm, in this instance a departure from the civilizing order imposed by man on nature. Thus 'natural' woman blended perfectly with her elaborate trappings, no harsh gesture intruding to shatter the illusion of calm serenity and eternal bliss:

The first sofas were cover'd with Cushions and rich Carpets, on which sat the Ladys, and on the 2nd their slaves behind 'em, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any Beauty or defect conceal'd, yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest Gesture amongst 'em.<sup>28</sup>

Their behaviour was at all times exemplary and outshone that of the 'polite' element in her own society. She wrote: 'I was in my travelling Habit, which is a rideing dress, and certainly appear'd very extraordinary to them, yet there was not one of 'em that shew'd the least surprise of impertinent Curiosity, but receiv'd me with all

<sup>27</sup> William K. Wimsatt Jr. and Cleanth Brooks, Neo-Classical Criticism (London, 1957), p. 319.

<sup>28</sup> Letters, p. 313.

the obliging civility possible". Comparing these ladies with those of her own world, Lady Mary commented: "I know no European court where the Ladys would have behav'd themselves in so polite a manner to a stranger."<sup>29</sup>

The above scene demonstrated that not only was Lady Mary thoroughly cognizant of the doctrine of Ut pictura poesis,<sup>30</sup> but was intent on invoking all the senses in her effort to conjure up an idyllic setting worthy of being painted by the most prominent of painters. Consequently, her statement, "I had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr. Gervase could have been there invisible", was no idle wish. Again intent on proving an inseparable, elevating relationship between painting (the art of the eye) and that of poetry (the music of the untainted soul), she mentioned two of the most outstanding painters of the past, . remarking: "There were many amongst them as exactly proportion'd as ever any Goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido or Titian..."<sup>31</sup> In this letter, as well as on other occasions, Lady Mary conjured up images to inspire the artist's imagination and lead him to capture on his canvas a glimmer of natural beauty or of outstanding monuments such as elaborate palaces and mosques in their carefully arranged landscape. Her wish was not in vain: <sup>long afterwards</sup> the French painter Ingres took up the challenge, and his 'Le Bain Turc' (1862), inspired by Lady Mary's vivid description, now hangs in the Louvre.

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29 Ibid.

30 This was a concept which "brought art closer to art and made even Nature herself desert her ancient and uncivilized disorders". See Neo Classical Criticism, p. 134.

31 Letters, p. 314.

If women provided her with one subject which readily lent itself to the secondary imagination as interpreted by Addison and Locke, the other was the pageantry and spectacle provided by the royal processions. Watching such a parade in the city of Adrianople, while in the company of the French Ambassador's wife, she again sought to paint a tableau vivant, so that in Addison's words: "It is but opening the Eye, and the Scene enters."<sup>32</sup> The retinue were dressed in "lively Colours that at a distance they appear'd like a parterre of Tulips; after them, the Aga of the Janizarys in a Robe of Purple Velvet lin'd with silver Tissue..."<sup>33</sup> followed. The Sultan, who headed the procession, could only be seen at a distance: a situation commensurate with his bearing, position and dignity. To them he appeared to be "a Handsome Man of About 40, with very gracefull air but something severe in his Countenance, his Eyes very full and black".<sup>34</sup> In this portrait of Achmet III, fifteenth Emperor of the Turks, Lady Mary exercised the art of 'painting of the passions'. Such a picture was characteristic of the way these powerful monarchs were often regarded.

On another occasion she described a procession, headed by the Sultan, whose purpose was to escort the army to the frontier.

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<sup>32</sup> William K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Cleanth Brooks, Neo-Classical Criticism: A short History. "Addison and Lessing: Poetry as Pictures" (London, 1957), p. 260.

<sup>33</sup> Letters, p. 323.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

War being of the very nature of the Turkish Empire it was important that the populace should be able to see the army going off to battle with great pomp and ceremony. For nine reigns, for two hundred and sixty-five years (i.e. 1299 - 1566) A.D.), or from the reign of Othman until the death of Soliman, the whole machinery of the empire had been geared towards supremacy in the battle-field. <sup>Even now</sup> the powerful sultans could not afford to be lax in ensuring that their descendants were "educated in the council and the field",<sup>35</sup> as they were to be entrusted with preserving the sovereignty of their nation. On the surface all seemed well for the soldier setting off to fight for the preservation of Turkish military might. Lady Mary composed the following picture of this procession:

It was preceded by an Effendi mounted on a Camel richly furnished, reading aloud the Alcoran, finely Bound, laid upon a Cushion. He was surrounded by a parcel of Boys in white, singing some verses of it, follow'd by a Man dress'd in Green Boughs representing a Clean Husband Man sowing Seed. After him several reapers with Garlands of Ears of Corn, as Ceres is pictur'd with Scythes in their hands seeming to Mow...<sup>36</sup>

This grouping of the symbols of holiness, purity, abundance and industry, however, camouflaged the grim reality underneath.

<sup>35</sup> Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and fall of Roman Empire, ed. J. B. Bury (London, 1902), VII, p. 78.

<sup>36</sup> Letters, p. 356.



The price paid to maintain this panoply of plenty was very high. For watchers the pathos of the situation was immediately brought to light, the condition of the 'volunteers' at the very end of the line revealing the falsity of the "Zeal of Glory". Pierced with arrows and bleeding profusely, they emphasized the cost of the battle of Zenta (1697) and the famous peace of Carlowitz, which had cost the lives of 25,000 men. Lady Mary, who had crossed that battlefield, and had chafed under the incredible amount of human pain, commented: "The marks of that glorious bloody day are yet recent, the field being strew'd with the Skulls and Carcases of unbury'd Men, Horses, and Camels."<sup>37</sup>

This defeat, however, brought immense advantages to the West, as it boosted the influence of the Christian governments and their emissaries. Paul Rycaut wrote, in a letter of dedication to the British King, which prefaced his substantial work on the Ottoman Empire, of the change in attitude which had taken place:

Since the last war and peace concluded, things have no doubt been set upon another foot, and other Provisions have been made to secure the Christian cause and interest; for before this time the Turks were become the most Insolent People in the World, and would never do justice to a Christian; for unless it were consistent with their own Interest and Design, they would show themselves Proud, Haughty, and Supercilious...<sup>38</sup>

Previously the Turks had considered their foreign ambassadors as hostages of peace dispatched for this purpose by their governments,

<sup>37</sup> Letters, p. 305

<sup>38</sup> Rycaut and Knolles, Preface, p.iii.

and, accordingly, were not loth to receive 'tribute' from them in the form of lavish gifts.

The reality of war affected differently each group within the Ottoman domains. Those belonging to the aristocracy, and whom Lady Mary admired, went to these ceremonies in the same spirit as any of their counterparts in Europe would go to attend some special gala function; they accepted the goriness of war as a necessary evil, one from which they were probably quite effectively sheltered. She wrote:

The Ladys go in their Coaches to see this camp as eagerly as ours did to that of Hyde Park, but 'tis easy to observe that the soldiers do not begin the Campaign with any great cheerfullness. The War is a general Greivance upon the people but particularly hard upon the Tradesmen.<sup>39</sup>

The dominions also accepted the omnipotence of Turkish rule. They were believed to be descended from the "Tartar khans of the house of Zingis", a supposition which seems to <sup>have</sup> been founded more on flattery than truth.<sup>40</sup> In a short time they had succeeded in wresting obedience from the territories which they had conquered, a fact which frightened the West and caused it to regard this foe with fear. Limited in numbers, this dreaded race was forced to recruit for its forces and administration from the nations it subjugated. One group, the militia, formed "the heart and principal of the life of that government";<sup>41</sup> then came the

<sup>39</sup> Letters, p. 356.

<sup>40</sup> Gibbon, op.cit., p. 78.

<sup>41</sup> Knolles and Rycaut, op. cit., p. 81.

Saphees and Janissaries, with whom most travellers associated the cruelest malfunctions of justice. These were "an infantry corps founded in the fourteenth century and originally recruited from Christian boys captured, conscripted or even bought by the Turks",<sup>42</sup> and regarded as "the Horse and Foot of the Turkish Empire".<sup>43</sup> All evil doings were often regarded as stemming from this latter group by the common people, who believed in their hearts that all wrong doing was unknown to the omnipotent, all powerful Sultan, who would have been sure to rectify matters if he had been available and aware of such cruelty. Such was the authority of the Sultans that, although they had only adopted Islam and were not descendants of the Prophet, like the Caliphs of Syria and Baghdad, their claims to both position and holy respect went unchallenged. Paul Rycaut attested to the truth of this precept by pointing out that "a weak or vicious sultan may be deposed and strangled; but his inheritance devolves to an infant or an idiot; nor has the most daring rebel presumed to ascend the throne of his lawful sovereign".<sup>44</sup> Sultan Achmet III, for example, whom Lady Mary had ~~seen~~, was affected by "Dropsie, that fatal and common Disease of the Ottoman family",<sup>45</sup> and this emphasized the hopeless and misplaced obedience of the scattered nations under their rule.

<sup>42</sup> M. S. Anderson, The Eastern Question, 1774 - 1923 (Glasgow, 1966), p. xiv.

<sup>43</sup> Knolles and Rycaut, op.cit., p. 81.

<sup>44</sup> Rycaut, p. 502.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Eventually, however, the internal confusion, combined with the inconclusive Ottoman-Persian wars of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, led to the opening up of the area to commerce, much in the same manner as the Byzantine-Persian wars before had led to conquest by the Arabs.<sup>46</sup> Already at the time of the Montagus' period of ambassadorship, the cracks in the Ottoman facade were becoming more apparent to the West, so that, by the nineteenth century, the Turks were hopelessly manipulated by the European powers and had succumbed to various nationalist revival movements within the areas they had claimed as their own for many centuries.

Having witnessed the injustice of the large bureaucratic war machine of the Ottoman Empire, the "numbers of mangled humane bodys", and the law "that makes murther not only necessary but meritorious",<sup>47</sup> Lady Mary questioned the logic ("whatever fine claims we pretend to Reason") which convinced men to contest for "a small spot of Ground, when such vast parts of fruitful Earth lye quite uninhabited".<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> George Kirk, A Short History of the Middle East (New York, 1964), p. 58.

<sup>47</sup> Letters, p. 305.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Referring to Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan (1651) and his statement that the "State of Nature is a State of War", she concluded that human nature was not rational "if the word reason means common sense, as I suppose it does".<sup>49</sup> For, if anything demonstrated lack of reason it was this habit of war, which could not but be detrimental to the interests of all mankind.

In his observation of 'living in a state of nature', very often quoted and mentioned by Pope in the "Essay on Man",<sup>50</sup> Hobbes did not mean the state of living in primitive social groups, as was usually believed. For him the state of nature was one where no dominant group had seized power, all people enjoyed the same privileges and had similar status. He argued, however, that such a condition was impossible to maintain; every man would fight his neighbour for property and power. Gradually this would "thwart every man's desire for 'commodious living' and for avoidance of violent death",<sup>51</sup> which would be impossible to prevent in view of man's selfish interests. Consequently the only method left open to mankind to guarantee everyone's security would be to acknowledge the omnipotence of an absolute power. Thus, Hobbes was justifying the absolute rule of the Turks and of other despotic regimes in the past, a concept which Lady Mary in her remarks was intent on questioning,

49 Ibid.

50 Alexander Pope, An Essay on Man: Address'd to a Friend, 4 parts (London, 1732-34), Epistle I. verses 140-170, pp. 14-8.

51 Letters, p. 305.

especially when viewed from the advantage of on-the-spot observation, or when theory was put into practice. John Locke (1632 - 1704) would have agreed with her that human nature could not always be counted upon to be rational, and that the habit of war had a momentum of its own: "Custom settled habits of thinking in the understanding, as well as of determining in the will, and of motions in the body; all which seems to be but trains of motion in the animal spirits which once set a-going, continue in the same steps they have been used to ... and as it were natural".<sup>52</sup>

To rulers everywhere, sacrifice of human lives had become a customary and necessary evil: a natural phenomenon of man's existence.

It was while still in the grip of the horrible implications of war and mal-administration that Lady Mary sympathized most with the plight of the common man, or the 'vulgar Turk', as she called him. Living in an atmosphere of insecurity, the ordinary citizen avoided private property, for "every house upon the death of its Master was at the Grand Signor's disposal".<sup>53</sup> To build out of anything but wood was folly. Accordingly she found that the only ones "to walk the streets without fear" were turtle doves, because the Turks held them in religious reverence, and "Storkes because they are suppos'd to make every Winter the Pilgrimage to Mecha".<sup>54</sup> Their advent portended good, and their nesting in a house was welcomed as a sign against pestilence and fire.

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<sup>52</sup> John Locke, Essays on the Law of Nature (Oxford, 1954), II, p.120.

<sup>53</sup> Letters, op.cit., p. 342.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p.341.

The writer's preoccupation, however, did not revolve primarily around the ravages of battles; she, like many of her aristocratic acquaintances, preferred the nostalgic associations of an idyllic countryside to those of a war-torn area. Now, in a different context, where she moved away from the sensuous, voluptuous beauty of the baths as well as from the political implications of her husband's position, Lady Mary affirmed her neo-classical upbringing. In the style of the English descriptive and topographical poetry of the eighteenth Century, the Eastern landscape became the objective counterpart of human emotions. Writing from her house "on the banks of the Hebrus", the ambassador's residence in Pera (which had witnessed the visits of Lithgow and Sandys earlier on), Lady Mary rhapsodized to Pope about her surroundings:

My Garden is full of Tall Cypress Trees, upon the branches of which several couples of true Turtles are saying soft things to one another from Morning till night. How naturally do boughs and vows come into my head at this minute! And must not you confess to my praise that 'tis more than an ordinary Discretion that can resist the wicked Suggestions of Poetry in a place where Truth for once furnished all the Ideas of Pastorall?<sup>55</sup>

Her 'friendship' with Pope being at its height at that time, Lady Mary blatantly attempted to ensnare her reader's attention so that he could ~~successfully~~ share her rich emotional experience.

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<sup>55</sup> Letters, p. 331

She described the landscape overlooking the Golden Horn in terms of the classical belief in the harmony of man and nature. Dwelling on the theme of fertility and abundance, she remarked how in spite of summer's drawing to a close, the area still abounded with gardens and fruit trees. She described a musical instrument of unequal reeds "perfectly answering the description of the Ancient Fistula",<sup>56</sup> accompanying young lads as they played or sang, all the while making garlands for the lambs, which were painted and adorn'd with flowers". Here, she further pointed out, Mr. Addison would not fail to find the instruments of music "among the Greek or Roman statues" that he "speaks of in his travells..."<sup>57</sup>

At all times Lady Mary was aware that her travels had taken her to the land of eternal truth and perfection. Such a realization played an important part in moulding her approach to and apprehension of the land of Creation and of the Patriarchs, who provided the criterion of moral virtue. In this spirit she compared many of the manners and customs to those of ancient times so that they partook of the reality of the landscape and climate of the area. Thus, expanding on the pastoral scene previously described, she explained: "It is not that they ever read Romances, but these are the Ancient Amusements here, and as natural to them as Cudgel playing and football to our British Swains, the softness

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 332.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 331



and warmth of the Climate forbidding all rough exercises."<sup>58</sup>

The East's weather was conducive to a "Lazyness and aversion to Labour, which the great Plenty indulges".<sup>59</sup> How and at what cost the 'great plenty' was obtained 'polite' society questioned on rare occasions!

To differentiate the various customs and traditions of such an amalgam of cultures and nations posed a challenge to the most perceptive and scholarly of travellers. An editor of Lady Mary's letters (1724), however, lavished unstinting praise in his preface on her abilities in this connection. He wrote: "... the reader will find a more true and accurate account of the customs and manners of the several nations, with whom this lady conversed than he can in any other author".<sup>60</sup> To Pope, Lady Mary emphasized that there was no amount of learning that could replace actual experience. Her actual presence in the area clarified the works of the greatest poet of ancient times, many of the rites taking on a hitherto unfathomed dimension. She wrote:

I read over your Homer here with an infinite pleasure, and find several little passages explain'd that I did not before entirely comprehend the Beauty of, many of the customs and much of the dress then in fashion being yet retain'd; and I don't wonder to find more remains here of an Age so distant than is to be found in any other Country, the Turks not taking pains to introduce their own Manners as has been generally practis'd by other nations that imagine themselves to be polite.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 332.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M... y W-  
(London, 1763), vol. I, Preface, written in 1724.

<sup>61</sup> Letters, p. 332.

Paul Guys,<sup>62</sup> a French traveller who visited Greece in the latter half of the eighteenth century, also shared Lady Mary's relief that Islam allowed the peoples under its control to maintain their own traditions. He was thankful for the insurmountable barrier of the Koran, which helped, in his opinion, to retain and propagate the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome. Lady Mary, on the other hand, attributed the survival of such groups to tolerance on the part of the Turks, who could not possibly subvert the beliefs of such a multiplicity of nations under their control. At the most all these rulers could hope to do was to encompass these countries with the iron creed of military power. Such a method, in fact, often worked against the governing authorities, in so far as it drove nations into closer solidarity against a common and powerful enemy.

Lady Mary's epistles abound with allusions to classical customs. Gardeners, most of them Greeks, who furnished the city with fruits and herbs, were the only happy group in Turkey. Their women went unveiled and they were the ones to "pass their time at their Looms under the shade of their Trees". In addition, many of the "Princesses and great Ladys pass their time at their Looms, embroidering Veils and Robes, surrounded by their Maids, which are allways very numerous, in the same Manner as we find Andromache and Helen describ'd".<sup>63</sup> She continued to find

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<sup>62</sup> P. A. Guys, Voyage Litteraire de la Grece (Paris, 1783), I, pp. 3-5.

<sup>63</sup> Letters, p. 332

the belt worn by men to be similar to that of Menelaus, while "the Snowy Veil that Helen throws over her face is still fashionable". Again the "old Bashaws with their reverend Beards sitting basking in the Sun", recall to her "Good King Priam and his Councillors".<sup>64</sup> Systematically she covered the various arts: dancing, singing and poetry, so that "Their manner of dancing is certainly the same that Diana is sung to have danc'd by Eurotas", with their tunes always "Gay and lively", and "always in exact time and infinitely more Agreeable than any of our Dances..."<sup>65</sup> For a moment in time all development seems to have been arrested, the new blending perfectly with the old, while art completed both human and geographic nature. Exquisite costumes, extravagant jewellery and lavish surroundings blended with the harmony and beautiful<sup>or</sup> sublime poetry of Nature. Writing for the eye as well as for the mind, Lady Mary showed that she was affected by another pictorial tendency of the time: the painting of portraits against a background of landscape. Charles Jervas, mentioned earlier, as well as the outstanding painter of the century, Joshua Reynolds, incorporated Italian and French styles of painting into the English landscape. This procedure, closely affiliated with the doctrine of Ut Pictura Poesis, had captured the attention of Pope and other classicists, as well as the Restoration poets and dramatists, such as Andrew Marvell, who were

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 333.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

impressed by the various connotations of poetry in the context of the Pastoral. Similarly, Lady Mary, in viewing her surroundings, realized that the countryside with its scriptural and classical connotations could readily be interpreted in the same manner.

Methodically she showed her complete involvement with the various aspects of Oriental culture. Turning away from Greek vestiges in the area, she reaffirmed the then very real attributes of Oriental learning (to the Western mind often affiliated with the Turks). For this purpose she selected for Pope's benefit "a faithfull copy of the Verses that Ibrahim Bassa, the reigning favourite, has made for the young Princesse, his contracted wife..."<sup>66</sup> In view of the subject she concluded that it was a sample of the finest oriental poetry, one "most wonderfully ressembling the Song of Solomon, which was also address'd to a Royal Bride".<sup>67</sup>

To ensure that her reader appreciated the background of the poem she felt it necessary to explain the setting and emotional connotations of this sublime style, "that is, a stile proper for Poetry, and which is the exact scripture stile".<sup>68</sup> The first verse, she pointed out, was a description of the Season of the year, "all the Country being now full of Nightingales, whose Amours with Roses is an Arabian fable as well known here as any part of Ovid amongst us, and is much the same thing as if an

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<sup>66</sup> Letters, p. 333.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 334.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 333.

English poem should begin by saying: Now Philomela sings..."<sup>69</sup>

One stanza which especially impressed her read:

Ah! Sultana! stag-ey'd, an angel amongst Angels,  
I desire and my desire remains unsatisfy'd.<sup>70</sup>  
Can you take delight to prey upon my heart?

The epithet 'stag-ey'd', a typical Eastern word which flamboyantly portrayed the "image of the fire and indifference in his mistress' eyes", especially affected her. It denoted the natural passion which was typical of Eastern manners and sadly lacking in the West. She found this discrepancy to lie in the use of language, explaining: "We want those compound words which are very frequent and strong in the Turkish language".<sup>71</sup> As rich gifts were an outpouring of great longing and were typical of Eastern manners, so must expressions of love utilize the most elevated of styles.

Language being a product of environment it was necessary for the reader to be able to project himself into the culture which had shaped it. Accordingly she explained: "We are never to judge of the Elevation of an Expression in an Ancient Author by the Sound it carries with us, which may be extremely fine with them at the same time it looks low or uncouth to us."<sup>72</sup> For to reject some 'expression' as unfathomable would deprive the reader of the language of the scriptures, and the vocabulary of the patriarchs of old. Therefore, on this basis, she sought Pope's indulgence in reading the poem and justified her interest

<sup>69</sup> Letters, p. 336 .

<sup>70</sup> Letters, p. 334 .

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 337.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 335 .

in learning Turkish poetry and <sup>the</sup> language. In this manner Lady Mary attempted to bridge the gap between East and West and to promote understanding and respect for the various cultures of the Orient.

Believing in the finer aspects of Turkish culture, she regretted the circumstances which caused travellers to distort reality. One cause for scarcity of information about the East she attributed to the following: "We have but very imperfect relations of the manners and religion of these people, this part of the World being seldom visited but by merchants who mind little but their own Affairs, or Travellers who make too short a stay to be able to report anything exactly of their own knowledge."<sup>73</sup> Jonathan Swift also remarked on the unreliability of voyagers, censuring the movements of his protagonist in Gulliver's Travels, where, after commenting on the generous amounts of food available in a kitchen, he made the reservation that he would be hardly believed, "... at least a severe critic would be apt to think I enlarged a little, as travellers are often suspected to do. To avoid which censure, I fear I have run too much into the other extreme..."<sup>74</sup>

One fallacy common to many travellers was the belief that a foreign culture could be comprehended without alteration of one's basic patterns of thought. Lady Mary drew attention to the re-

<sup>73</sup> Letters, p. 315

<sup>74</sup> Walter Scott, ed., Works of Jonathan Swift (Edinburgh, 1814), XII, pp. 148 - 149.

ticence of the Turkish nation, which prevented them from divulging their sentiments and feelings to every passerby. Ignorance of such a fact severely curtailed the aspiring writer's efforts, and resulted in his giving "no better an Account of the ways here than a French refugee lodging in a Garret in Greek Street could write of the Court of England".<sup>75</sup>

Her realization of the limitations under which a visitor laboured led her to read their works critically. On the other hand, in the absence of reliable historical compilations, voyagers found it necessary to consult a select number of accounts on any area for enlightenment. In addition to the two historical books of Paul Rycaut and Richard Knolles, who were previously mentioned as authorities on Turkish sultans and the Islamic religion, and on whom Lady Mary relied for guidance, she had read travel narratives of French and Italian voyagers. Outstanding among these was The Travels of Monsieur Thevenot into the Levant (1655),<sup>76</sup> published in Harris's Collection of Voyages. Thevenot, a French graduate of Navarre college, had visited England, Holland, Germany and Italy as well as the Levant. Another author, whose travel narratives appeared in extract form in various anthologies, and whom she consulted, was G. F. Gemelli Careri.<sup>77</sup> Both authors were concerned with the role of women in Islamic religion, a subject in which Lady Mary was especially interested.

<sup>75</sup> Greek Street was in Soho, where many French Protestants settled after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Letters, p. 316.

<sup>76</sup> John Harris, ed., The Travels of Monsieur Thevenot into the Levant. Compleat Collection of Voyages... (London, 1705).

<sup>77</sup> Letters, note, p. 364. (See A Voyage around the World. Pt. 3. Indian travels of Thevenot and Careri (1687)).

Two authors for whom she showed very little sympathy were Aaron Hill<sup>78</sup> and Jean Dumont. They represented the category of travel liars Swift had warned about and whom Johnson was also to criticise. Exposing some of the fraudulent reporting of the first<sup>author</sup>, she commented: "I am more enclin'd, out of a true female spirit of Contradiction, to tell you the falsehood of a great part of what you find in authors; as, for example, the admirable Mr. Hill, who so gravely asserts that he saw in Sancta Sophia a sweating Pillar very Balsamic for disorder'd heads. There is not the least tradition of any such matter, and I suppose it was reveal'd to him in Vision during his wonderfull stay in the Egyptian Catacombs, for I am sure he never heard of any such miracle here".<sup>79</sup> Aaron Hill was often quoted as the kind of voyager guilty of irresponsible reporting; he himself, in later years, regretted such lapses of truth as the one mentioned above. As for Dumont, the French historian, the extent of his reputation was revealed in Lady Mary's remarks to one of her acquaintances in 1717:

Your whole Letter is full of mistakes from one end to 'tother. I see you have taken your Ideas of Turkey from that worthy author Dumont, who has writ with equal ignorance and confidence. 'Tis a particular pleasure to me here to read the voyages to the Levant, which are generally so far remov'd from Truth and so full of Absurditys I am very well diverted with 'em.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Aaron Hill, A Full and Just Account of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire in all its Branches of the Government, Policy, Religion, Customs and Way of Living of the Turks in general... (London, 1709).

<sup>79</sup> Letters, pp. 405-6.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 368.



After having drawn attention to some such totally false statement, she proceeded to describe the intricacies of life in the East.

She found that most of the mistaken notions about the Eastern hemisphere usually involved the role of Turkish women in society. The West envisaged them as totally deprived of all personal initiative, authority and any role in this world or the next.

Mrs. Sullen in George Farquhar's The Beaux' Stratagem (1707)

summarized their position: 'Were I born an humble Turk, where women have no soul nor property, there I must sit contented'.<sup>81</sup>

Both English and French literature abounded with references which attributed to the oriental woman a passive and erotic role.<sup>82</sup>

Prominent among these was Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes. He abhorred what he considered the enslavement of oriental women, which resulted in the family life of Islam becoming one of servitude. As for the harem, to him a place of orgiastic license, with the eunuchs, the Sultan's hateful sexual tyrants, all ran contrary to the laws of nature. Norman Daniel, a twentieth century writer who has studied the image of the Turk in the West over the centuries, deduced that the West's concept of the enslavement of Eastern woman contributed towards the creation of a chasm between the two cultures.

<sup>81</sup> Letters, note, p. 363

<sup>82</sup> See Lancelin de Laval's Histoires Secrettes du Prophète des Turcs (1715); Fromaget's Le Cousin de Mahomet (1750); Lyttleton's Persian Letters, or the Mémoires Turcs (1735); Marmontel's Soliman the Second (1737); Marlow's Tamurlane (1630); Massinger's Renegado (1620) and Racine's Bajazet (1672).

Lady Mary, however, saw no signs of rampant illicit behaviour, nor did she find the<sup>women</sup> deprived of freedom. On the contrary, writing to her sister, Lady Mar, she made the controversial statement: "Upon the Whole, I look upon the Turkish woman as the only free people in the Empire".<sup>83</sup> Concealed behind their muslins, "one that covers her face all but her Eyes and another that hides the whole dress of her head and hangs halfe way down her back", combined with the Ferigee, a long dress, a woman was able to ward off the attentions of any man. So perfect was the disguise that it was "impossible for the most jealous husband to know his Wife when he meets her".<sup>84</sup>

At the root of most of the West's hostility towards oriental men's treatment of their women was widespread ignorance about the actual practices of Islam. They viewed the whole Ottoman structure as war-oriented, with the women awarded to the warriors as objects to fulfil their lustful intentions.<sup>85</sup> To enable them to easily satisfy their desires, harem quarters were created in the seraglios for the propagation of immoral practices by officials of the administration. Actually, Alexander Pope in one of his letters to Lady Mary sarcastically remarked on just such practices. He joked on how she would discard one "Article of

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<sup>83</sup> Letters, p. 329.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 328.

<sup>85</sup> Norman Daniel, Islam, Europe and Empire (Edinburgh, 1966), p. 13.

Faith" after another as she approached Turkey. Seeing Turkey as the "free Region of Adultery, and the land of the 'True Believers'", he ironically traced her journey across:

At this Town they will say, she practised to sit on the Sofa; at that village she learnt to fold the Turban; here she was bath'd and anointed; and there she parted with her black Fullbottom... Lastly, I shall hear how the very first Night you lay in Pera, you had a Vision of Mahomet's Paradise, and happily awakened without a Soul. From which blessed instant the beautiful body was left at full liberty to perform all the agreeable functions it was made for.<sup>86</sup>

To all such lewd and insidious remarks, Lady Mary presented one answer: "As to their Morality or good Conduct, I can say like Arlequin, 'tis just as 'tis with you, and the Turkish Ladys don't commit one Sin the less for not being Christians."<sup>87</sup>

Referring to the view that women were considered to have no souls, she hastened to negate such a position and even showed that a place was reserved for them in the Mahometan paradise:

Tis true they say they are not of so elevated a kind and therefore must not hope to be admitted into the paradise appointed for the Men, who are to be entertained by Celestial Beautys; but there is a place of Happyness destin'd for Souls of the Inferior Order, where all good Women are to be in Eternal bliss.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Daniel, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>87</sup> Aphra Behn, The Emperor of the Moon (London, 1687), Act III, Scene i. Harlequin announced that morality there is no different from that on earth, quoted in Letters, note, p. 327.

<sup>88</sup> Letters, p. 363.

Daniel, in studying the causes which contributed towards rapprochement or alienation between East and West, found that one single factor which had resulted in creating a change for the worse between the two Continents, was the circulation of a Thousand and One Nights in the eighteenth century. After reading these tales, the Western public felt it incumbent upon them to view the cultures of the Orient through a mantle of exoticism and fantasy. Such an attitude, in this author's view, was detrimental since it mingled fact and fancy, and prevented the creation of a mutually nurtured concept of co-existing cultures which shared a common classical and Biblical heritage. The effects of such an approach were evident at times even in Lady Mary's writings as she often searched for the 'diverting', 'extraordinary', and the curious with which to entertain her friends.<sup>89</sup>

Probably it was her admiration for the land of fantasy connected with that fabled people, that led Lady Mary to identify in part with the Turkish culture. As she had spoken up in defence of slavery on one occasion when identifying herself with them, "I know You'll expect I should say something particular of that of the Slaves, and you will Imagine me half a Turk when I don't speak of it with the same horror other Christians have done before me, but I cannot forbear applauding the Humanity of

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<sup>89</sup> See her letter to Anne Thistlethwayte, where she promised to find something 'extraordinary' to relate as it "would be as great a Disappointment as my visitors will receive at London if I return thither without any raritys to shew them". Letters, pp. 380 and 340.

the Turks to those Creatures," in the same manner she also adopted their dress and habits. Totally enraptured with their costume and ornaments, in which she appeared and was painted on several occasions, she described their beauty in great detail to many of the aristocratic ladies of her acquaintance. One especially poignant and rich portrait she drew was that of Sultana Hafife, the favourite of the poisoned Emperor Mustapha, whose sorrow was more than matched by the luxurious habit she sported. Giving way to her weakness for beautiful objects, Lady Mary found in her a replica of one of the heroines of the famous tales. Especially impressive in the Sultana's dress were the large diamond loops for buttons displayed "on each side down to her feet and round the sleeves with pearls of the best water".<sup>90</sup> Around her neck were three chains of gold and pearls reaching her knees, and at the end of one of them hung an Emerald as big as a 'Turkey Egg', while on the fringes, another 200 sparkled. Again keeping in mind her links with the 'picturesque", she was careful to present her subjects in subdued demeanour, since "an air of robustness and strength was very prejudicial to beauty".<sup>91</sup> Aware of the similarity of her descriptions with those of the Arabian and Persian Tales, she hastened to rectify any notion that might equate them with fantasy:

This is but too like (says you) the Arabian Tales;  
these embroider'd Napkins, and a jewel as large as

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 381.

<sup>91</sup> Wimsatt, op. cit., note 7, p. 259.

Turkey's egg! -- You forget, dear Sister, those very tales were writ by an Author of this Country and (excepting the Enchantments) are a real representation of the manners here.<sup>92</sup>

Her appearance in Turkish costume enhanced her descriptions of them. All the gl amour of the East appeared to be metamorphosized in the distinguished figure of the outstanding lady traveller of the century. The caption<sup>under her portrait</sup> read:

Let Men who glory in their better sense,  
Read, hear, and learn Humility from hence;  
No more let them Superior Wisdom boast,  
They can but equal M-n-t-g-e at most.<sup>93</sup>

Whether, on the other hand, she viewed her adoption of the Turkish costume as a sign of humility was open to doubt. Most probably, impressed by the fashion which resulted in many outstanding figures being painted by the important portrait artists of the day, she wished to make a greater impact by wearing Eastern dress. Hence not only did her dressing in this way appeal to her vanity, but, what was of more significance, by this act she created a bridge with the unknown, highlighting the impression her letters gave and making the unfamiliar more credible to her friends in Europe.

In Turkey itself she envisaged that her costume would serve the dual role of endearing her to the Turkish community, and, on certain occasions, act as a disguise. How effective this was

<sup>92</sup> Letters, p. 385.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 400, plate 7.

as such remained a subject of doubt, as she herself queried. Wearing it for the purpose of seeing the Mosque of Sultan Selim the First, which "is a Building very well worth the Curiosity of a Traveller", she was admitted without hesitation, "tho' I believe they guess'd who I was, by the Extreme Officiousness of the door keeper to shew me every part of it".<sup>94</sup> On a second occasion, she described the effect the dress had on the public:

I had the Curiosity to go to see the Exchange in my Turkish dress, which is disguise sufficient, yet I own I was not very easy when I saw it crowded with Janizarys, but they dare not be rude to a Woman, and made way for me with as much respect as if I had been in my own figure.<sup>95</sup>

In the final analysis, Lady Mary had felt that her strength lay in her personality and the prestige of her position. The costume was an indulgence, used more for personal vanity than to fulfil any serious function. This view is borne out by her own explanation to her sister: "I will try to awaken your Gratitude by giving you a full and true Relation of the Novelty's of this Place, none of which would surprise you more than a sight of my person as I am now in my Turkish Habit, tho' I believe you would be of my Opinion that 'tis admirably becoming".<sup>96</sup>

To view, however, Lady Mary's interest in Turkish culture as frivolous, or an attitude formed by vanity, would be erroneous.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., pp. 357-8.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 354.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 326.

Although at times she tended to soar somewhat on the wings of fantasy, either in subservience to the literary ideas of the age, or to cater to preconceptions of the Turkish way of life, basically, she was a ~~dedicated~~ and responsible traveller.

The respect she won was not based on an indulgence for the meanderings of a fanciful woman; it emerged as a result of a genuine interest she displayed in a culture which she found beautiful and creative in its own right. Her commitment to this different way of life emerged perhaps most clearly when she tried the smallpox inoculation on her son prior to introducing it to Britain. In effect, her highly descriptive style, combined with the image she imparted of a vivacious and enterprising personality, provided to most readers of travel literature a welcome relief from others less gifted than herself.

After visiting the many palaces, gardens, mosques and cities of Turkey, and consistently describing to her readers their magnificence in great detail, Lady Mary summed up:

These people are not so unpolish'd as we represent them. 'Tis true their Magnificence is of a different taste from ours, and perhaps of a better. I am almost of opinion they have a right notion of life; while they consume it in Music, Gardens, Wine and delicate eating, while we are tormenting our brains with some Scheme of Politics or a studying some Science to which we can never attain.<sup>97</sup>

Furthermore, to show that she separated any ulterior considerations that might be connected with the Turkish mode of life,

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<sup>97</sup> Letters, p. 415



she added that they knew how "to divide the idea of Pleasure from that of Vice, and they are only mingled in the heads of Fools".<sup>98</sup> Such an attitude, however, failed to take into account the actual realities of nations who are always called upon to industrialize further or else suffer poverty and despair. Nevertheless, Lady Mary was advocating an ideal, and instead of sowing further suspicion and seeds of hostility, she succeeded in promoting the possibilities of an interesting and meaningful dialogue between these totally opposed cultures. As indicated above, she defended on many occasions Turkish behaviour, emphasizing that their norms were essentially the same as those of the more presumably polite nations of the world.

Finally, although she succeeded in this particular genre and has continued to delight readers through the centuries with her wit and observations on Turkish life, hers was by no means the only authoritative travel account of that part of the world. Others, writing after her towards the middle of the century, promoted, each in his turn, some aspect he believed worthy of further study. Three of these outstanding travellers, whose works will be viewed in relation to their contribution to the ideas and knowledge of their own period, were Robert Wood, archaeologist and scholar of the classics; Richard Pococke, whose two volumes, entitled A Description of the East, were considered to be the authoritative books of the century and covered every religious, natural and historical aspect of those

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.,

countries; and, finally, Alexander Russell, resident physician at the Levant Trading Company in Aleppo, who, from his vantage point, pursued his research into a possible cure for the plague, which was ravaging Europe at that time and causing the loss of many lives, and, who, with the trained eye of a scientist, noted facts regarding local natural life while not overlooking the many varied manners and customs of the Aleppo population.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RICHARD POCOCKE (1704-1765)

"And God saw everything that he had made,  
and, behold it was very good." (Genesis 1.31)

Of all eighteenth century travel narratives on the Near East, the one to occupy first place in the department of literature for half a century was Richard Pococke's A Description of the East<sup>1</sup> (1743-1745). Praised in Britain by many of the outstanding travel critics and exploration societies, his book gained universal renown by being translated into German, French and Dutch.<sup>2</sup> Pinkerton, who reprinted Pococke's two volumes in their entirety, prefaced his reproduction of the writer's work with the comment: "The high value of Pococke's travels with respect to antiquities and science is universally acknowledged".<sup>3</sup> Dibdin's Library Companion stated: "These are noble tomes; and the author rises in estimation more and more every day. He is facile princeps in his department. Antiquities and science are the leading feature of his work."<sup>4</sup> Stevenson in his Catalogue of Voyages and Travels added: "The merits of his work in pointing out and describing the antiquities of Egypt and the

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Pococke, A Description of the East, and some other Countries: Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Cyprus, Candia, Greece, Asia Minor... 178 large plates of views, plans, details, plants, etc. 2 vols. (London, 1743-45). Another edition appeared in 1771.

<sup>2</sup> The German translation in 3 volumes, published in Erlangen, appeared in 1754-55; the French, published in Paris in 7 volumes, in 1772-73; and the Dutch in 1776-1786.

<sup>3</sup> John Pinkerton, Collection of Voyages and Travels (London, 1808), X, 406-770, and XV, 163-402.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Frognall Dibdin, The Library Companion... 2nd ed. (London, 1825), p. 433.

East are well-known."<sup>5</sup> Mant described the Travels 'as among the foremost of modern European descriptions of those regions, and which, notwithstanding the numerous narratives that have since been published, still continue to rank with the most valuable standard productions of their class'.<sup>6</sup>

Pococke, like many other travellers of his age, was a scholar who enjoyed some social prestige and eminence in his chosen profession. Educated at Oxford, where he obtained a B.A. degree in 1725, a B.C.L. in 1731, and a D.C.L. in 1733, he was able to make substantial contributions in the fields of archaeology, natural history, geography and science, and to interpret customs and habits in the light of scriptural and classical traditions. Furthermore, his works attained a prominent place amongst other travel narratives, because they explored the government, laws, religion and trade of those countries which preoccupied all Europe at that time. The general attitude towards these works could best be summed up in the following general conversation between Boswell and Johnson during their celebrated tour of the Hebrides, when Boswell said: "I should wish to go and see some country totally different from what I have been used to; such as Turkey, where religion and everything else are different"; to which Johnson replied: "Yes Sir; there are two objects of Curiosity, the Christian world, and the Mahometan world. All the rest may be

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<sup>5</sup> "Pococke, Richard," S. Austin Allibone, A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors (Philadelphia, 1870), II, 1612. See Stevenson's Catalogue of Voyages and Travels, No. 104.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 1612.

considered as barbarous".<sup>7</sup> Johnson, however, was not particularly impressed by Pococke's work and did not rate it as outstanding in comparison to other standard travel narratives of that century.<sup>8</sup>

Pococke was not the first in his family to be associated with Eastern travel and learning. A distant relative of his, Edward Pococke (1604-1691), had distinguished himself as an orientalist and prominent author. His knowledge of Hebrew, Samaritan, Syriac, Ethiopic, and other associated languages had led to his appointment as chaplain at Aleppo for five years, from where he was able to obtain many valuable manuscripts which were later purchased by the Bodleian Library. In addition to his elaborate essays on Arabian history, science, literature, and religion obtained from 100 Arabic manuscripts and published in "Specimen Historiae Arabum", he had marked an epoch in Eastern studies, held the Laudian chair of Arabic at Oxford, and provided a sound foundation for all later orientalists such as Reland, Ockley, and S. de Sacy, who were consulted by eighteenth century travellers. Two prominent relations, who were closely connected with Richard Pococke during his lifetime, were the Bishop of Waterford, who, soon after his graduation in 1725, appointed him to the position of Precentor of Lismore, and

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<sup>7</sup> Boswell, James, The Life of Samuel Johnson (London, 1820), IV, 212-213.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Johnson said: "I have been reading Twiss' Travels in Spain; which are just come out. They are as good as the first book of travels that you will take up. They are as good as those of Keysler or Blainville; nay, as Addison's, if you except the learning. They are not so good as Brydone's, but they are better than Richard Pococke's." Boswell's, Johnson. 1775. Allibone, op.cit., "Twiss, Richard", III, 2488.

promoted him, a decade later, to the position of Vicar-General of the Dioceses of Waterford and Lismore whilst he was away on his first tour to Europe. The second was Jeremiah Milles, dean of Exeter, who accompanied him during his three-year initial trip to Europe, and whose company Poccocke would probably have welcomed during his seven-year tour a few years later.

Poccocke's Description, written in a precise, factual and objective manner, reveals the personality of a man who was impressed by the importance of his research and was reluctant to write about the lighter and more humorous aspects of his travels. The following remark indicates that he somehow associated the entertaining side of travel with amusement to be derived (at the expense of) his own misfortunes, for he pompously writes:

If those, who expected to be diverted, do not find sufficient entertainment, it is owing to his good fortune; and it would be straining politeness to too high a pitch, to say that he is sorry he did not meet with more unlucky accidents, in order to relate a greater variety of pleasant stories; but he has, however, given an account of almost all the incidents that happen'd, in their natural order, without pretending, to any great art or judgement in selecting them.

Again, showing his contempt for the intellectual capacity of the general reader who approached a travel narrative solely for the purpose of diversion, he stated drily: "And such as delight only in reading travels, and the history of the several little accidents that happen, may pass over, with a transient view, the dry description of plans, buildings, and statues, which others may esteem as the most valuable part of this book".<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Description, I, p. v.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. iv.

A contemporary of Pococke, the Reverend Thomas Shaw, who was chaplain at Algiers for 12 years and author of Travels or Observations Relating to Several Parts of Barbary and the Levant (1738), shared Pococke's outlook in many ways, and his comments, in addition to those of his compatriot, serve to illustrate the general attitude of their class or type of travellers. He supported Pococke in his view that the function of travel books was not "merely to amuse and divert, (as is commonly expected from Books of this kind;), but, in a Literary Way, (as far as Author's abilities would permit), to inform and instruct; by making the ancient branches of literature receive light from modern discussions; and by making these again, give light to them in their turn. This, I presume will always be reckoned, by proper judges among the most useful and instructive advice that can be reaped from Books of Travels: and for which we may appeal to Pliny himself, that great master of Natural History; who, in his Prefatory Discourse seems to authorize the same thing".<sup>11</sup>

Pococke selected the countries which he considered worthy of his attention on the following basis: that he would travel to those places which "are visited by few persons, and not withstanding either were formerly very remarkable in antient history, or are curious at present with regard to natural history".<sup>12</sup> He explains that "in relation to places which are

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas Shaw, A Supplement to a Book entitled Travels, or Observations, etc., wherein Some Objections Lately made against it are fully considered and answered with several additional remarks and dissertation (Oxford, 1746), XVI.

<sup>12</sup> Description, pp. iv.

commonly seen, I have been very short, and as to others I have almost entirely confined myself to the antiquities and what relates to natural history, mentioning only a few things of another nature, which are very remarkable".<sup>13</sup> His reason for this restriction was to avoid filling another volume and writing about countries which "are out of the way of what is commonly called the Grand Tour".<sup>14</sup>

Any enlightened traveller needed to take the following principles as a guideline if he was to write an authoritative and comprehensive travel account. Pococke stressed the interrelation of the fields of civil and natural history, geography, archaeology and science, each of which could not be studied intelligently in isolation of the other, as he explained:

The great relation antient geography has to antient history and medals, which are a great help in the study of history, I am persuaded will plead my excuse with many, for frequently considering that subject; though I am sensible that there are a great number to whom it will appear dry and unentertaining, and to save them the trouble of casting an eye to see how much they are to pass over, I have thrown everything into notes on this subject which runs into any length.<sup>15</sup>

Shaw drew attention to the fact that much of the knowledge given by antiquarian writers and other writers of history needed to be updated in the light of modern advances and research, and he had accordingly embarked upon writing an "essay towards restoring the ancient geography, and placing in the proper light the natural and sometimes civil history of those countries".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, II, p. iv.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Description, II, p. iv.

<sup>16</sup> Shaw, op.cit., p. vi.



Furthermore, Shaw explained that it was the traveller's duty to observe and understand the significance of certain manners and traditions in the light of the Scriptures and the classics:

And as the greatest part of these observations bear a near relation to several passages, customs, or expressions in the classic-writers, and especially in the Scriptures, the author has further endeavoured, by comparing those ancient accounts and description with these his later discussions to make them receive from, and give to, each other mutual light and illustration.<sup>17</sup>

Thus voyagers were faced with a vast amount of knowledge which required selection and evaluation. Both Pococke and Shaw, as already indicated, took their task very seriously. Gibbon acknowledged the superiority of this kind of voyager, and in particular exempted Shaw from the "blind travellers (who) seldom possess any previous knowledge of the countries which they visit".<sup>18</sup>

In a dedicatory passage to his Lordship, the Right Honourable Henry, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery . . . , Pococke justified his interest in archaeology as follows:

As the magnificent buildings of Egypt, and antient architecture are the chief subject of this book, it could not be more properly addressed than to Your Lordship. . . . But your Lordship knows, it was a custom among the antients, which prevails at this time in the East, to present to great persons of the best they had; and how indifferent soever, the good intention supplied the want of greater abilities.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. iv.

<sup>18</sup> Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (New York, 1880), II, 671n.

<sup>19</sup> Description, vol. I, p.i.

His research covered a wide range of ancient ruins, burial sites, statues, obelisks, and included many relics of antiquity such as coins, medals, native ornaments and craft work.

Pococke's work on coins and medals in his Description and in a separate study of the subject,<sup>20</sup> was a development of a widespread movement among classical scholars, travellers and virtuosi, notably Addison, whose Dialogue on Medals was one of the literary products of his travels in Italy.

Pococke embarked on his long tour from Alexandria, where he had arrived from Leghorn on September 29, 1737, spending twenty-two days along the way. He was aware of the important role the city had played in ancient times and accordingly quoted many of Herodotus's observations on it, which he, in turn, had learnt from Arab historians. One of Alexandria's outstanding features was that it had been the residence and burial-place for kings, particularly Alexander, whom the Mahometans had especially revered. Quoting other travellers on this point, he wrote that, when Alexander's body was moved, it was taken out of its gold coffin and placed into one of glass, "in which condition, it is probable, Augustus took a view of the corpse of that great hero, and with utmost veneration scatter'd flowers over it, and adorn'd it with a golden crown".<sup>21</sup> Another indication of the greatness and magnificence of the city was evident in the fact that, when Alexandria was occupied by the Saracens, it had four thousand palaces, as many baths, four-hundred squares, and "forty thousand Jews that paid tribute".<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> A Catalogue of a Collection of Greek, Roman and English Coins and Medals of ... Dr. Pococke, etc. (London, 1766).

<sup>21</sup> Description, I, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

Unlike Shaw, who had placed his various subjects under relevant headings, Pococke gave his narrative an element of continuity and cohesion by describing all the features of any place lying across the voyager's path. Thus, (as noted previously), he related anecdotes as they should logically occur in the course of the journey, and similarly he explained in his account of Egypt that he thought it best to report on all the buildings in a regular manner, as if he had seen them all when he went up the Nile, and in order to prevent any confusion of things in the mind of the reader, this being all "the better to settle the ancient geography, by taking all the places, with their antiquities, in their natural order, although he saw many of them in his return".<sup>23</sup>

After Alexandria, Pococke proceeded to Rosetto with the English consul. They found the vice-consul of Rosetto camped just outside the city, and Pococke wrote that he was "surprised at the sight of a magnificent tent, where a handsome collation was prepared. After this refreshment, we were all mounted on fine horses, sent out by the governor of the city, each attended by a groom on foot, and so arrived at Rosetto. The next morning the governor sent a present of sheep and fowl to the consul, which I suppose was return'd by something of much greater value".<sup>24</sup> Another special feature of his visit to this city was his call on the Greek Patriarch of Alexandria, Cosma, with whom he enjoyed all

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<sup>23</sup> Description, I, iv.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

the honours of an Eastern visit. A servant offered him a lighted pipe, which was followed by sweetmeats, then coffee and sherbet, served with a napkin with which to wipe one's mouth, and, finally, "they sprinkle rose water on the hands, with which the guest rubs his face; then the incense is brought, which he receives, leaning the head forward, and holding out his garment on each side to take the smok..."<sup>25</sup>

From Grand Cairo, and again in the company of the consul, Pococke embarked upon side trips to Ethiopia above the Cataract of the Nile, Arabia Petraea, Mount Sinai and back to his starting point. In the course of his journeys he was careful to describe his discovery of, or encounter with, every ancient ruin, being chary to accept <sup>blindly</sup> ancient authorities' writings on the subject.

Thus on one occasion he identified a monument as follows:

The pillar commonly call'd Pompey's pillar is situated on a small height, about a quarter of a mile to the south of the walls, and may be supposed to have been erected after Strabo's time, as he makes no mention of such an extraordinary monument. It might be set up either in honour of Titus, or Adrian, who were in Egypt.<sup>26</sup>

On another occasion, he made a particularly comprehensive study of the town and people of Tentyra, identifying it geographically, discussing its mythology and showing what the visitor may expect to see so many centuries later. He identified this ancient city as follows: that it lies "... about a league to the south to Amara, where are the ruins of the ancient Tentyra, about a mile

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 8 (Plate No. IV).

from the river, and from the mountains to the south; for which the name of the present town seems to be derived".<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the people of Tentyra were famous for their hostility to the crocodile, so that they often engaged in wars with the worshippers of the crocodile, the people of Ombos. He related that in this city they were great worshippers of Isis and Venus; to each of these deities the people had built a temple, but all that remained to attest to their greatness were the heaps of ruins ranging over a mile in length. It was during visits like these that Pococke was in his element, convinced that he had served the purpose of his journey, and briefly noting his own pleasure: "Having view'd all these fine remains of antiquity with the greatest satisfaction, I return'd to the town; and at parting, my friends sent me a present of a lamb..."<sup>28</sup>

Another famous conglomeration of monuments, to which he devoted considerable attention, drawing and describing them in every detail, were the temples, sepulchres and statues of ancient Thebes. A particularly impressive diagram is that of a cross-section of the great temple of Jupiter at Carnack, located to the east of Thebes and call'd Diospolis. (See Plate 28.) Others show a view of the city of Thebes, of the Memnonium and the sepulchres of their Kings; there are also drawings of mausoleums, statues, and inscriptions, totalling sixteen in all. Particularly impressive is his description of the statue of Memnon:

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

But the statue of Memnon, representing a youth, is turned towards the sun; it is of black stone, both the feet of it are set even together, according to the manner of making statues to the time of Daedalus; the hands rest on the thighs, as if in a posture to get up, the manner and look of the eyes and mouth appear like a person speaking; but this they less wondered at; as they were not yet acquainted with the virtue of this statue.<sup>29</sup>

One of its particular characteristics, which had <sup>been</sup> noted by Pliny, was that the basalt~~s~~, which were of the colour and hardness of iron, almost came alive, and shone brightly in the light of the sun.

Pococke devoted the last two books of Volume One to 'The Government, Customs and Natural History of Egypt', and to 'Miscellaneous subjects chiefly relating to the antiquities and natural history of Egypt'. In the first section, while recognising the need for a study of present-day government, military rule, and the general economy of this country, he still found that this could not be seen independently of the natural institutions and past history. Thus he explained that, after he had given as short and perfect an account as he could of Egypt, he thought it worthwhile to "add something of the government, customs, and natural history, as the latter would also give a general idea of the Turkish polity and manners".<sup>30</sup>

The provinces of upper and lower Egypt, he wrote, were ruled by Arab Sheikhs in conjunction with the Ottoman Sultans after the total destruction of the Mameluks in 1673 by Sultan Selim. All Egypt was governed by a Pasha, whose business consisted chiefly

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. iv.

in communicating to his Divan of Beys, and to the Divans of the several military Ogiaks, the orders of the Grand Signor.<sup>31</sup> To stay in office he had to be able to placate all parties concerned, and this, very often, was not an easy task, especially since the Turkish administration was devious in its appointments, at all times plotting to maintain control of all its outlying provinces. An example of their wily tactics could be seen in their appointment of Turks rather than Arabs as Beys to rule over Egyptian villages: thus, if trouble were to break out, it was easy for the Porte to isolate the leader from the people without causing damage to Turkey.

Egypt was obliged to furnish the Grand Signor with three thousand soldiers every three years, twelve hundred janizaries, nine hundred Arabs, nine hundred Sipahis, and all the revenues of the lands from custom dues, and the poll tax imposed on Christians and Jews. Pococke showed his utter contempt for Ottoman rule and their avaricious methods by writing:

For the little officers oppress the people;  
the great officers squeeze them; and out  
of Egypt, the Pasha all the people under  
him; the Pasha himself becomes a prey to  
the great people of the Porte; and the  
Grand Signor at last seizes the riches of  
the great officers about him.<sup>32</sup>

He found no merit in Turkish rule; their motives and behaviour were completely merciless and corrupt at all levels of government.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 171.

Pococke was not very much impressed with the different categories of inhabitants he met either. He described the natives of Egypt as a slothful people, who delight in sitting still, and listening to tales. Here he made one of the faulty assumptions for which he was criticized by readers of his work, by equating directly the religion of the Egyptians with some of the stories of Greek mythology. He asserted that:

..This idle manner of living is probably one great reason for the fruitfulness of their invention, with regard to their antient Heathen religion, and of their making so many extravagant fables; out of which the Greeks might take some of the most beautiful, as foundation for their religion and poetry, and so they passed to the Romans.<sup>33</sup>

He found the Copts, who had been singled out by Strabo, and formed one sixth of the population, "all exceedingly ignorant, both priests and people",<sup>34</sup> although they were considered to be the country's professional accountants; while, on the other hand, the "meanest Mahometan thinks himself above any Christian".<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, although he believed that the Arabs were great levellers, who "put everybody on a footing with them",<sup>36</sup> he was nevertheless annoyed with them, since, being suspicious of travellers, they refused to believe in his genuine desire to excavate old ruins, and were inclined to suspect that he sought treasure: "they cannot otherwise conceive why they should come so far to see ruins".<sup>37</sup> He preferred to restrict his connection

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 178.



with them to a study of the objects they wore or used for decorative purposes in their churches and Mahometan processions. Thus he drew many sketches of Egyptian utensils, collars of silver wire, Turkish beads, musical instruments, pipes, vases and dresses peculiar to Egypt. Upon completion of his tour, he had also managed to acquire a great collection of Greek, Roman and English coins and medals, together with some<sup>o</sup>ther antique items, minerals and fossils. As a result of his efforts he eventually became a member of the Egyptian Club and of the Spalding Society, and was elected a fellow of the Royal Society on 11th February 1741.

The first volume of A Description of the East, which covered the author's travels to Egypt, received more direct criticism than his second volume on the Holy Land, Cyprus and Candia. Paul Ernesti Jablonski eulogised this first part, and wrote that after the author's diligent and successful efforts he abandoned his own ambitions to undertake a similar task: 'Profecto quantum attinet ad Aegyptum Sacram, quam aliquando moliebar, video operam istam a praestantissimo Rich. Pocockio, in Descriptions Aegypti, jam occupatam, mihi que profecto non invito, praereptam fuisse. Is enim in isthoc argumento, plerumque tam diligenter et feliciter versatus est, ut Spicilegio nonnissi tenui, locum requerit.'<sup>38</sup> Another reviewer, who was impressed with some of this indefatigable traveller's discoveries, commented in an article in The Gentleman's Magazine:

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<sup>38</sup> Richard Pococke, Tours in Scotland: 1747, 1750, 1760, ed. Daniel William Kemp (Edinburgh, 1887), p. xxxviii.

Having heard an advantageous Character of Dr. Pococke, I was one of the first to peruse his Observations on Aegypt, newly publish'd, and found many of them very elaborate and curious. As he honestly distinguishes between the Relations, which he makes from his own Knowledge and casual Reports, he describes with Diffidence, even a Method of catching Ducks by men walking up to the Neck in the Water, with their Heads in a Pumpkin Shell, because he had not himself seen it, tho' this is the Method which the Chinese use; (see description of China, in Folio, vol. I, p. 314, and the Plate showing the Manner of catching Fishes and Ducks facing p. 329 or 330) and the translation of Du Haede, published while he was in his Travels, represents it in a Plate. The Dr. has made a great number of Drawings to assist the Readers; but one, of an Aegyptian Woman, is so extremely singular, that I have copy'd it...<sup>39</sup>

Jean-Pierre Le Chevalier, an eminent author on the legends of ancient Troy,<sup>40</sup> also accused Pococke of unwarranted scholastic diffidence with regard to his discoveries in Greece and Asia Minor. His comments will be considered towards the end of this chapter.

A third person, who singled out Pococke's Egyptian volume for criticism, was the eminent Bishop Warburton. He attacked Pococke's approach, believing he was wrong to place so much emphasis on ruins rather than on people and their current civilizations:

...But our author seems to have been misled by a wrong Imagination; that the Public would expect it of a Traveller to be intimately conversant in all the old Learning and Religion of the Places he had visited: As if these were to be picked out of the Rubbish of the dead walls in which they were once contained, rather than from the living Monuments of their contemporary Inhabitants.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Sylvanus Urban, Gent., The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle for the Year 1743 (London 1743), Vol. 13, p. 190.

<sup>40</sup> Jean-Pierre Le Chevalier, Description of the Plain of Troy, with a Map of that Region. Delineated from an actual survey. Read in French before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, February 21 and 28 and March 21, 1791, trans. and ed. by Andrew Dalzel (London, 1791).

<sup>41</sup> Warburton Tracts 1744-1746, "Remarks on Several Occasional Reflections: In Answer to: The Reverend Dr. Middleton, Dr. Pococke, the Master of the Charter House, Dr. Richard Grey, and others..." (London, 1744), pp. 24-25.

He added that Pococke should have heeded many manuals of advice to travellers which warned against such a procedure.

Warburton also attacked Pococke for 'rambling through the Land' without materials. Such a lapse detracted from the accuracy of his findings and inevitably the results of his research. He selected two areas in which to take him to task: one, his "account of the Hieroglyphics in the present", and second, his "Mythology of the antient Egyptians". Reflecting the mounting interest in Egyptology, Warburton was vitally concerned with preserving the integrity of Egyptian writings and what they were meant to express. Therefore he attacked travellers such as Pococke for allegedly being "men of Fruitful Inventions that have no sort of Foundation in their writings".<sup>42</sup> Exposing lapses in Pococke's academic education, the Bishop criticized him for involving himself in the controversy between the Ancients and the Moderns, and for confusing Greek Gods with the mythology of the Egyptian deities, an example of which is given above. Pococke had shown himself to prefer believing the accounts of writers of antiquity, who, it seemed to him, were in a better position to understand the events and geography of their own age than the scholars who followed them. Consequently, Warburton alleged that this writer wrote in a sort of no-man's land, not understanding ancient accounts, while, on the other hand, trying to interpret the data without the benefit of recent scholarship. Such faulty methods resulted in erroneous conclusions.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

One example of such a lapse the critic found to be in the traveller's interpretation of the 'Origin of Animal Worship'. In his well-known merciless manner <sup>Warburton</sup> he traced Pococke's method of arriving at incongruent conclusions, which he demonstrated by citing the account of the Fable of Typhon. Legend had it that the body of Osiris was divided into twenty-six parts, which, having been found by Isis, were handed to the priests. She enjoined them "to pay divine honours to him, and to consecrate some particular Animal to his Memory". At this point Warburton sarcastically attacked Pococke's conclusion: "From this Account (says our Author very gravely) we may see the Reason why so many sacred animals were worshipped in Egypt".<sup>43</sup> Finding Pococke gullible and revealing him as something of a fraud, his critic denounced him for believing the Greek account in Diodorus of the Osiris expedition, which "has been shown to be a Heap of impossible Absurdities; yet our Author believes it all".<sup>44</sup>

One final criticism, that will be cited here, was that levelled by Warburton at Pococke's interpretation of the Egyptian hieroglyphics. Pococke's study is valuable in that it reflects the eighteenth-century climate before the uncovering of the Rosetta stone and the resurgent interest in Egyptology. Pococke, in attempting to define the nature of the hieroglyphics, had successively labelled them as words, sounds and signs, or marks. He noted that children were taught to identify the figure of a crocodile by a certain sound, a conclusion which Warburton disputed, since no particular relation existed between a sound and a thing. The critic explained the source of such an error:

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

Had our Author spoken the same intelligible Language, and told us that Hieroglyphics naturally expressed Things, and that Things were arbitrarily denoted by Words, he would indeed have spared both of us the <sup>45</sup> present trouble, but then he had said nothing new.

Pococke continued from Egypt to the Holy Land, arriving there on 14th March, 1737. In his preface he emphasized the importance of the area to the Christian world, and indicated his intention of giving every particular relating to that country, and to tell his readers of "the places of which we hear mentioned every day, and generally take pleasure in acquiring the least knowledge in relation to them".<sup>46</sup> Of Syria and Mesopotamia, to which he proceeded, he declared that his intention was to study "the history (of these countries) of which we have delivered to us from the earliest times, as they were inhabited by the patriarchs, and afterwards became the renowned scenes of action of the Persians, of Alexander the Great, and of the Macedonian Kings".<sup>47</sup> During his visit to Asia Minor and Greece he recognized their historical role and concluded that "I could not be too particular in the description of those countries, which are the subjects of ancient history and poetry".<sup>48</sup> This section was later accepted as invaluable by outstanding scholars of ancient Greece, namely, J. C. Hobhouse,<sup>49</sup> Jean-Pierre Le Chevalier, and Jacob Bryant.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> Description, Vol. II, p.iii.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Vol. II, p. iii.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> J. C. Hobhouse, A Journey through Albania, and other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia to Constantinople During the years 1809 and 1810, 2 vols. (London, 1813).

<sup>50</sup> Jacob Bryant, Observations upon a Treatise entitled "A Description of the Plain of Troy", by Monsieur Le Chevalier (Eton 1795).

Methodically, and in the manner of his first volume, Pococke described the different cities, rivers and historic landmarks he visited. His first stop was in Joppa, mentioned by the ancients as the scene of adventure between Andromeda and Perseus, and where St. Jerome had later confirmed seeing the ring with which the lady had been fastened to the rock.<sup>51</sup> It served now as the port at which pilgrims bound for Jerusalem arrived, and Pococke noted that the city excelled in the production of soap. Manufactured also in Jerusalem, Rama, and Lydda out of the oil of olives and ashes, it was still sold under the name of Joppa soap to Egypt and other parts of the Empire. Cotton, their second main export, was dispatched in small boats to be shipped to the port of Acre. He noted that by digging wells close to the sea shore, the city was always assured of a constant supply of good water for its inhabitants and local industries.

He spent the rest of the month of March and until about 22 April 1737 visiting Jerusalem and its environs, after which he proceeded northwards to Nazareth, Lydda, Acre, Bayrut, Sidon and Tyre, and arrived in Damascus on June 22, 1737. Whenever possible, he stayed at Latin and Maronite convents, relying on them for advice and the provision of escorts to the various regions in their vicinity. The convent in Jerusalem enjoyed a brisk turnover; it contained a cross-section of the people one could normally encounter as visitors to that city during that period, and he described its routine and relationship with its rulers in some detail. Among the wide variety of guests

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Description, Vol. II, p. 3. See Strabo xvi, p. 759 and Josephus iii, p. 29.

assembled in this convent were Copts, Greeks, Armenians, a lay-Jesuit from Aleppo, "a Hamburger arrived afterwards, and then a Ragusean, captain of a ship".<sup>52</sup> Invariably he found that "those of condition" always left a present of £6.00, while the others were maintained free of charge. The routine of the convent was that "the European pilgrims dine and sup in the refectory with the monks, where some of them read all the time <sup>in</sup> books of devotion; they are well served with three or four plates, and have excellent white wine of their own making".<sup>53</sup> The institution, furthermore, had an international governing body: the 'guardian' was Italian; the vicar, who governed in his absence, was a Frenchman, while the procurator was Spanish. At no time in the narrative does the author make us aware of any special relationship that developed out of his stay in such convents.

As a Christian Pococke was aware of the special relationship that existed between the convents and the Turkish rulers of the area. Such establishments, he pointed out, received considerable revenue, but were under an obligation to pay great charges in the way of presents to the governor of the province for protection. In addition, they had to send "presents to the great men, as well as in the support of their houses". He found the convent at Jerusalem to be under a good governor, who did not require exorbitant revenues, but still "sometimes they have not been able to go out of the walls without danger",<sup>54</sup> because of the hordes of Arab nomads who roamed the countryside in search of sustenance. When intercepted or threatened by these tribes, Pococke was explicit in expressing his annoyance. He elaborated

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

on the precautionary measures taken to counteract vagrant actions: "So I put all my cash into the superior's hands, it being a rule never to carry any money, because if the Arabs should chance to find it, it would often expose pilgrims to be searched, and ill-used for the same end".<sup>55</sup> The fear of wandering Arabs dominated the travel narratives of many visitors to the East, and especially those of the Reverend Thomas Shaw and of another colleague of his, the Reverend Charles Robson, who had been chaplain to the English factories at Aleppo some years before Pococke visited that area.

Characteristically, although Pococke met many religious sects, especially the Latins and Maronites belonging to Greater Syria, he remained aloof, contenting himself with an exposition of their religious life and rituals. Strong criticism, however, was implicit in his description of the religious ceremonies held at the Holy Sepulchre by the Latin and Greek orthodox denominations during Easter. He described the occasion when he witnessed the ceremony in which the bishop's feet were washed:

The uppermost priest representing Peter, made a speech that he should not wash his feet; which being answered by the bishop, he submitted to have that honour done to him. The basin then being brought up to the bishop, he often dipped a large lettuce into it, and several times sprinkled all the people; then the water was thrown on them, and they crowded to wipe the vase with their handkerchiefs, and went so far as to take the herbs out of the caldron in which the water was boiled.<sup>56</sup>

Such practices, related to popery by the Church of England, were anathema to most <sup>Protestant</sup> pilgrims to the Holy Land. The criticism

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 18.



implicit in Pococke's presentation can be traced in both earlier and later travellers to the Holy Land. More will be devoted to this point when the nineteenth century travellers, among them William Kinglake and <sup>Makepeace</sup> William Thackeray, are discussed.

Such practices recalled to most travellers Conyers Middleton's Letter from Rome Showing an exact conformity between popery and paganism (1729). Middleton had written that he found so much in the Roman church of his day concurred with his original intention of conversing with the ancients; nothing "so much helped my imagination, to fancy myself wandering about in old Heathen Rome, as to observe and attend to their religious worship; all whose ceremonies appeared plainly to have been copies from the rituals of primitive Paganism; as if handed down by an uninterrupted succession from the priests of old, to the priests of new Rome; whilst each of them readily explained and called to my mind some passage of a classic author, where the same ceremony was described, as transacted in the same form and manner, and in the same place, where I now saw it executed before my eyes: so that as oft as I was present in at any religious exercise in their Churches, it was more natural, to fancy myself looking on at some solemn act of idolatry in old Rome, than assisting at a Worship, instituted on the principles, and formed upon the plan of Christianity..."<sup>57</sup> Again, on another occasion, when watching a ceremony, he added: "This similitude of the Popish and Pagan Religion, seemed so evident and clear, and struck my imagination so forcibly, that I soon

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<sup>57</sup> Conyers Middleton, A Letter from Rome, Shewing an Exact Conformity between Poperty and Paganism: or, The Religion of the Present Romans, derived from that of their Heathen Ancestors, 4th edition (London, 1741), p. 131.

resolved to give myself the trouble of searching to the bottom..."<sup>58</sup>

Pococke illustrated Middleton's theories when he described a religious ceremony in Jerusalem:

At the place of the crucifixion an Italian sermon was preached, and two monks performed the ceremony of taking the small statue of Christ from the cross; and as they took out the nails, shewed them to the people, who at the sight of them beat their breasts. The statue being wrapped up in a white sheet, was carried by four of them to the stone of unction, where it was anointed and perfumed; and this being opposite to the great door, where the Mahometans on the outside might hear the sermon, one of them preached in Arabick. The statue was then carried and laid in the sepulchre, and the people were harangued in Spanish, and so the ceremony concluded about eleven o'clock.<sup>59</sup>

In spite of the international character of the ceremonies and the obvious spirit of fellowship pervading the groups of worshippers, Pococke failed to find anywhere a genuine spirit of humility and faith. In all instances he showed perfect contempt, and wrote of another ceremony whereby fire was said to have descended from heaven in accordance with Latin precepts of the earliest ages. Eventually, he explained, the guardians of this fire, having seen the cessation of this unusual phenomenon, which had continued to descend every Easter-eve until the fifth or sixth century, took the following action: "The Catholics wrote to Rome in relation to it, and received an answer, that since providence did not continue to act supernaturally in this respect, they ought not to endeavour to impose ~~it~~ on the people; <sup>that</sup> since that time the Greeks have pretended to be in possession of the miracle, and made people believe it".<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>59</sup> Description, p. 18.

<sup>60</sup> Description, p. 29.

Pococke carefully pointed out that these Greeks had no connection with their ancient compatriots: they seemed to have departed from the spirit of liberty and humanity of their ancestors. Here they failed to exhibit the noble characteristics which P. A. Guys and Robert Wood praised, and had substituted ritual for ~~truth~~<sup>piety</sup>, so that "the Greek young men came running like madmen towards the holy sepulchre, carrying standards..."<sup>61</sup> The ceremony within the church had also partaken of the qualities of paganism:

The Greek procession began with shouts of the people; the priests came first, followed by their bishop, and went three times round the holy sepulchre... The Armenian bishop, who was grey-headed, and very infirm, followed immediately afterwards, and was thrust in with much difficulty; but, I think, only permitted to wait within, by the door; the Armenians not being allowed a part in the secret of this ceremony.<sup>62</sup>

Throughout the performance Coptic and Syrian bishops remained outdoors alongside the Turks, who guarded the door of the sepulchre, "and money was given them to permit people to be near, that they might light their tapers first at the holy fire".<sup>63</sup>

At one time Pococke showed that his religious sentiments were, after all, not totally alienated by Christian behaviour; in spite of their exhibitionist and almost commercial character, the Catholic and Orthodox population provided a bastion against the total autocracy of the Turks. The Maronites, whom Pococke visited in a village called Dar-el-Qamer (The Convent of the Moon), one of their strongholds in the mountains of what was then Greater Syria, reflected the general characteristics of this people.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, Vol. II, p. 29.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

Followers of Yuhanna Marun, a member of the ancient church of Syria, who was consecrated bishop of al-Batrun in Lebanon, they <sup>had</sup> grown in strength and remained independent of Rome until the eighteenth century. The monastery of Qannubin, 'carved in the solid rock of rugged Lebanon', provided for a long period the seat of the Maronite patriarchate.<sup>64</sup> On the occasion of his visit to the above village Pococke wrote:

The people pay for their lands to this prince. It is a place of refuge for Christians from the tyranny of the Turkish governors, and especially for those unhappy wretches, who having denied the faith, repent of it, and become Christians again.<sup>65</sup>

In the above assertion, Pococke revealed his outright condemnation of the <sup>tyranny of the</sup> Muslim religion as practised by Turks and Arabs. It is precisely in such areas that the criticism of Robert Wood, whose works will be discussed in the following chapter, is apt and true, that "the historian often finds the traveller 'perplexed' or 'unsatisfactory'".<sup>66</sup> Completely engrossed in past civilizations, especially those with biblical and classical associations, Pococke was either unwilling or unable to understand the particular incident he encountered, <sup>to view the present independently from its past associations,</sup> and separate it from the general totality of history. It is to be regretted that he was unable to capture some of his ancestor's enthusiasm for Islam and its contributions. His outright condemnations could have sprung from the undercurrent of European thought in the eighteenth century, which followed the argument wherein

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<sup>64</sup> Philip K. Hitti, History of Syria: Including Lebanon and Palestine (London, 1957), p. 521.

<sup>65</sup> Description, II, Part 1, p. 93.

<sup>66</sup> "Robert Wood", Samuel Allibone, op. cit., 235 n. 237 n.

"Islam was judged by believing Christians, and judged as not being Christianity, as being in some ways the antithesis of Christianity". Gibbon, for example, saw in Islam "an object-lesson ... in which the rational can be dominated by fanaticism and so lead to imposture".<sup>67</sup>

Pococke's chief merit was summed up by Robin Fedden, a modern authority on travel literature, who wrote that: "It was ultimately such writers, generously and accurately providing the information that Europe wanted, who made the genre superfluous. Though travellers took a century to realize it, there was little to be done in the same vein after the publication of works such as A Description of the East."<sup>68</sup> Working within the framework of information required by that period, and consulting the works of antiquarian writers and those of earlier travellers, Pococke sought to corroborate many facts, and to add those which lay within the bounds of his own experience. Writing, for example, about some of the monuments to be found outside and within the city of Jerusalem, he explained to the traveller what to expect when visiting such a place:

There remains an observation with regard to what is to be seen in and about Jerusalem; that as there are few signs of any antient buildings, it is natural there should be but little account of anything except grottos, pools, and cisterns, which could not easily be destroyed; and we are not to expect great remains of that city, of which it was foretold, whether literally or not, that the destruction or desolation was to be such as never yet happened; and that of the most famous building in it, there should not be one stone left on another.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Albert Hourani, Islam and the Philosophers of History, Middle Eastern Studies (London, April, 1967), III, 218-219.

<sup>68</sup> Robin Fedden, English Travellers in the Near East (London, 1958), p. 14.

<sup>69</sup> Description, op.cit., II, p. 30.

Then, in another instance, he tested the information provided by earlier geographers and historians, wishing to corroborate through first-hand observation the truth of their deductions. Viewing Jerusalem from Joppa, he wrote:

There was an opinion that Jerusalem could be seen from this place, but it would be difficult to conceive it, as the hills between these places are considerably higher than those on which Jerusalem stands, unless they could see from the height of Joppa any of the very high towers of Jerusalem; for Josephus affirms that they could view the sea from the tower Psephinus, as well as the utmost extent of the Jewish dominions to the West.<sup>70</sup>

Although Pococke relied heavily on ancient literature, and on his own observations, he was not altogether impervious to the importance of studying local customs and habits or of taking into consideration the oral tradition of the people. His narrative abounds with statements such as the following:

Here they say, the blessed virgin lived three months, and the stairs are shown, on which they have a tradition, that Elizabeth met her; they lead to a grot,<sup>71</sup> which, they say, was their habitation at that time.

Or again, certain spots indicate where the "blessed virgin's girdle fell at her ascension, and left an impression", while the "olive trees were said to have been there in our Saviour's time", and, <sup>Going along the foot of</sup> "A. Mount Olivet <sup>to the south,</sup> there is a stone where the disciples slept, whilst Christ prayed", and a little north "they say he was betrayed by Judas".<sup>72</sup> Showing the credulity of which Warburton accused him, Pococke recounted legends such as the following:

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

"They have a tradition, that the part of the mountain, over this corner of the bay, was the spot famous for the sacrifice of Elijah, by fire from heaven... but I could not go to it, as it was at that time much infested by the Arabs".<sup>73</sup>

In addition to his study of native lore with regard to the Biblical history of the Holy Land terrain, Pococke observed closely the customs of the inhabitants. He found a very close parallel between their existing habits and those of their ancestors. Among these was that of sleeping on rooftops, another of conversing under the shade of trees, circumstances peculiar to warmer regions. Pococke was impressed with this patriarchal way of life and made the remark:

The custom of sitting under trees at this time, and many others I had observed, led me to reflect on the great resemblance there is between the manners and simplicity of the ancients, and those of the eastern people at this day; which is very remarkable only in one short part of the history of Abraham.<sup>74</sup>

As in olden days, when the Lord visited Abraham in the plains of Mamre, and desired three angels to rest under a tree where fine meal was served to them, similarly Pococke said of his hosts: "It is the custom to make bread whenever they eat, and they bake it on iron hearths, which are heated on the embers".<sup>75</sup> Moreover, as Abraham had set the butter and milk and the calf before his guests, and stood apart during the meal, while Sarah remained at the entrance of the tent with the other woman, so Pococke, upon returning from a visit to the town, had observed

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

"the Sheikh and the elders (were) sitting in the gate of the city, after the ancient manner, and I sat a while with them".<sup>76</sup> He partook of the fatted calf and received all the traditional courtesy of an honoured guest.

At all times he was careful to note the state of the landscape surrounding some monument or religious shrine. He believed that a brook, cluster of trees, or ancient well could help to identify the location of a biblical story, or attest to the continuing beauty of God's creation. For example, upon visiting Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, he examined the olive trees, and he described the role they had played in the story of the nativity: "The only remarkable thing shewn in the latter (road to Bethlehem) is the place where the blessed virgin rested under a Terebinth-tree with the babe Jesus; they say that the tree was burnt, and now there is an olive-tree on the spot round which there is a wall built".<sup>77</sup> Again, on his journey to Lydda, the terrain takes on a special significance, and he finds nature paying homage to the glory of God:

All this country has a very rich soil, and throws up a great quantity of herbage. I observed chardons growing very rank, also, rue, fennel, and <sup>the</sup> striped thistle, which probably, on this account, has been called the holy thistle; they say also there are a great variety of anemonies. I saw likewise many tulips growing wild in the fields, and anyone, who considers how beautiful those flowers are to the eye, would be apt to conjecture that these are the lilies, to which Solomon in all his glory was not to be compared.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp. 96-98.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 5.



In Jordan, he wondered where the Aboutzoccum tree was located, the fruit of which had been described by Pliny as "the produce of that part of Arabia, which lay between Judaea and Aegypt".<sup>79</sup>

Shaw, who was just as interested in exploring the geography and natural life of the Biblical lands, and whose Travels was published before Pococke's journey to the East, challenged many of his conclusions about various sites he visited. In a Vindication and a Supplement to his book of travels, which was published in 1747, Shaw took his colleague to task for often ignoring his own conclusions and for not taking into account some of the conversations they had together on this subject.<sup>80</sup> Referring to Pococke's first volume on Egypt, he disagreed, in one instance, on his method of arriving at the location of Corondel, which was used as a camping site for the Israelites fleeing<sup>from</sup> Egypt, and his identifying it with Elim. Pococke had written in this connection: "I am inclined to think that one of them, but rather Corondel, is Elim, because it is said afterwards they removed from Elim, and encamped at the Red Sea...".<sup>81</sup> Shaw, on the other hand, pointing out that the Israelites encamped when they took their journey out of the Wilderness of Sin (Numbers XXXiii.12), into the desert of Sinai of which Zin, Kadesh and Paran formed an integral part, surmised that the flourishing Elim was not Corondel but Hamam Mousa. Thus, in

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>80</sup> Thomas Shaw, Supplement: Collection of such notes and Emendations, as fell in my way after the Book of Travels was printed... A Vindication... (London, 1747), p. XV.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 104-105. See Pococke's Description, I, 156.

much the same manner followed by Pococke above, Shaw studied the physical characteristics of the area for corroboration of his own conclusions. He elaborated: "For the Scriptures instruct us and (we have no other guide)... that at Elim there were twelve wells of water, Seventy Palm Trees, and that the Desert of Sin lay betwixt Elim and Sinai, all which circumstances have proved to agree with Hamam Mousa (i.e. the Baths of Moses) and not at all with Corondel; where I do not find there are any Wells, properly so called or so much as one Palm Tree bearing fruit." He continued "whereas at Hamam Mousa there are nine of the twelve wells still remaining, some of which are of a considerable Depth; the Seventy Palm Trees have increased themselves into a large fruitful Grove, which supplies Mt. Sinai and all the neighbourhood with Fruit and Arrack extracted from it; betwixt this Plantation likewise and Mt. Sinai is the Desert of Sin... this... is not the same with the Zin or Dadesh or Paran as you have asserted".<sup>82</sup>

A second location<sup>over</sup> which Shaw chose to take Pococke to task was with respect to his deductions about the drainage of water from the Dead Sea. Pococke had written that, since the water of the lake (in which he enjoyed swimming), was not seen to rise, and quite a few rivers poured into it, then there must be some subterranean passage into the Mediterranean which maintained it at a constant level in all seasons.<sup>83</sup> Shaw criticizes him for

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Description, II, p. 35.

taking the  
not a trouble, in this instance, as well as in others  
(probably referring to his own work in this connection),  
to consult the conclusions of other researchers, and in  
failing to realize that the process of evaporation ensured  
that a uniform quantity of water remained in the lake at all  
times. Accordingly, he advised Pococke: "For Nature always  
acts uniformly and consistently with itself, let our Reasonings  
and Conjectures about the Actions and Phenomena of it, be never  
so doubtful and erroneous..."<sup>84</sup>

After visiting Jerusalem and its environs, <sup>Pococke</sup> spent the  
latter part of March and the beginning of April in travelling  
around the area of the Dead Sea, Jericho and the river Jordan.  
He found that the plain of Jericho abounded in fruits and trees,  
while the "river Jordan is deep and very rapid, it is wider than  
the Tiber at Rome, and may be about as wide as the Thames at  
Windsor..."<sup>85</sup> While, on the other side of the river, on Mount  
Nebo and opposite Jericho, was the place "from which Moses took  
a view of the Holy Land, and where he died".<sup>86</sup> Here again,  
somewhat characteristically, Pococke did not abandon his role  
of a traveller to attempt to speculate upon Woolston's  
controversial deistic views, or comment on his theories with  
regard to the similarity in the life of Moses and Christ.

Another eminent figure to criticize Pococke for his technique  
of research was Gibbon. While attesting to his having written  
a work of superior learning and dignity, he objected that the

<sup>84</sup> Shaw, op.cit., p. 10.

<sup>85</sup> Description, p. 33.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

author "too often confounded what he had seen with what he had heard",<sup>87</sup> and suggested that his conclusions should not be accepted without verification. Nevertheless thanks to his extensive and painstaking approach to many fields of human endeavour, Pococke was often able to provide valuable and original information. Some of his contributions were in the field of geography, where, for the first time, he gave a description of the hitherto uninvestigated area surrounding Lake Tiberias, also of the village of Safad on the Jarmaq Mountains; in addition, he discovered antiquities related to the Christian era in the vicinity of Ma'arrat-en-Numan and Erriha in Syria; while a third original contribution was his account of the active north-east Aleppo trade, which centered in Urfa and Diar-bakr, and of Mesopotamian trading activity between Mosul and Basra.<sup>88</sup>

Stokes<sup>89</sup> paid Pococke a [lasting] tribute for a discovery for which another author was to claim credit some years later. A certain Count De Vogüé, exploring certain areas in Syria already covered by Pococke in his journeys, published a work, beautifully illustrated, under the title of The Architecture of Central Syria.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Gibbon, op. cit. IV, ch. li, Note 69.

<sup>88</sup> Mohammed Ali Hachicho, "English Travel Books About the Arab Near East", Die Welt des Islams (Leiden, 1964), IX, 38.

<sup>89</sup> Pococke's Tour in Ireland, ed. George T. Stokes (Dublin-London, 1891).

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

In telling of its marvellous ruins, he selected that of Simeon Stylites, and related anecdotes connected with his pillar, which made the whole era come to life. Stokes pointed out that De Voguë had been given credit for this discovery, but in Pococke's neglected volumes, written one hundred years earlier, "splendid plates of Simeon's Church and pillar, and other ruins of that district" had already been given. So impressed was this editor with Pococke's contributions that his advice to the reader was that "in the enthusiasm for eastern travel and research, which now exists, it would be well to keep an eye on Pococke's volumes".<sup>91</sup> Stokes concluded that, it was "well worthwhile to compare the Bishop's account of Ancyra, Galatia, and the River Halys, with the investigations of the modern scholar and travellers".<sup>92</sup> (The editor's reference to Pococke as 'the Bishop' arose from the fact that he was appointed to the bishopric of Ossory in Ireland in 1756.)

Pococke was impressed by Baalbec, and he devoted a detailed analysis and 11 plates to it. At the same time he referred the reader to the works of De la Roque and the Reverend H. Maundrell about it. Regarding Palmyra, the second ancient city of great splendour, he was content to speculate about who had constructed the aqueduct which was used to transmit water through the desert. With reference to this, he wrote:

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., pp. 239-442.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

As to the great aqueduct, there is a tradition, that it was made by Solomon, which, if it were well grounded, would confirm the opinion, that Tadmor was first built by him; for the Scripture says, that he built Tadmor in the wilderness; They have also another tradition, that the aqueduct was made or improved by a woman, which may be owing to some improvements that might be made by Zenobia, the famous queen of Palmyra.<sup>93</sup>

Providing the kind of information that any traveller would welcome, Pococke explained that: "It is sixteen hours or two small days journey with a loaded caravan from Baalbec to Damascus; the course altogether being about east south east. The road is mostly between hills, there being three chains of mountains divided by narrow valleys, which extend in breadth from Baalbec to Damascus".<sup>94</sup> He also wrote that a caravan trip from Damascus to Aleppo could be covered in eleven days, and supplied the following particulars: "I paid sixty medines to a janizary going out of the gate; their demands on Franks being arbitrary. We went two leagues to a large village called Touma, where I could get no lodging, but was obliged to lie on the bulk of a shop".<sup>95</sup>

Pococke was delighted with Damascus, and his description of this city captured some of the enthusiasm which <sup>had</sup> pervaded his trip to Egypt. Upon seeing the city from the outskirts, he was enchanted with the view of the Barrady River dividing into many streams, "coming from between the hills, and running to the city through the fine field of Damascus, which appeared more beautiful, as the pasha's army, with their beautiful green tents, was

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<sup>93</sup> Description, II, i, p. 137.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

encamped at one end of it". He then added: "This is the place where, they say, Adam was made". Gardens and villages surrounded the city, while Damascus itself with "its towers, minarets, and cypress trees growing all over the city higher than the houses (made) a most glorious appearance".<sup>96</sup>

This city, unlike other places he had visited, still retained some of the magic of its biblical and classical past; its inhabitants preserved the spiritual beauty which had characterized life in ancient days:

This is certain, that as the Damascenes think their situation a sort of earthly paradise; so they would make one believe, that<sup>it</sup> is really the spot where our first parents were happy and accordingly they say, that Adam was created in the field of Damascus to the west of the city, and formed out of the red soil which is found there: and to confirm this story, have others of places, near relating to Abel and Seth.<sup>97</sup>

To be able to simulate the experience of his ancestors was for Pococke extremely important. To visit the same "red soil" that could have given form to Adam, and to breathe the same climate that had helped in this creation was to participate in a very unique type of birth, one which could not possibly have occurred elsewhere. In Herder's opinion, and as explained in the Introduction of this dissertation, this man of the church had returned to participate in the Urkraft, the primeval soul, which had not yet been disturbed. The relatively unchanged climate and pattern of existence permitted the visitor to travel

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

literally backwards many hundreds of years to witness earlier laws of life among animals and men. In the field of religion and ethics, the Damascenes were regarded as the first to promulgate the doctrine that man was created in the image of God, and that each one is the brother of every other man under God's fatherhood, thereby laying the basis of the democratic way of life. They emphasized the supremacy of spiritual values and believed in the ultimate triumph of the forces of righteousness, thus regarding themselves as moral teachers of mankind.<sup>98</sup> Viewed in this context, the visit to Syria became as important to Pococke as that to the Holy Land.

In addition to his interest in the religion and geography of the area, he was also aware of the necessity to corroborate the sites of ancient mythology. For him, Syria warranted special attention in this field besides being a country which the ancients had regarded as a place "where abnormal things happened, a land of rare coincidences in time and of curious objects in space".<sup>99</sup> Amongst these varied beliefs was the worship of Ishtar, Ashtoreth, or Astarte -- the enigmatic Syrian Goddess. Pococke paid homage to this goddess, whose rites and person (were) famous",<sup>100</sup> thereby anticipating the special fascination that the mythology of Syria held for the nineteenth century statesman and traveller, Benjamin Disraeli,

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<sup>98</sup> Hitti, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>99</sup> Robin Fedden, Syria: An Historical Appreciation (London, 1946), p. 13.

<sup>100</sup> Description, p. 167.



who endowed the protagonists in his novels, such as Sidonia in Coningsby and David in Alroy, with some of the mystique of Eastern legends and tales.

Pococke found daily life in Damascus particularly pleasant and gratifying. The River Barrady and the many gardens, which dotted the city, provided a welcome sight, especially after the dreary landscape which surrounded many of the ruins. Like other travellers before him, he found the coffee houses, with their large rooms, fountains and high ceilings a welcome haven for the weary visitor, and approved of their entertainment, which consisted of telling Arabian stories interspersed with the serving of sherbet and coffee.

After further travels in the Pashalick of Damascus, which took in Hems, Hamah, and Aleppo, Pococke departed from Tripoli on October 24th, <sup>1738,</sup> aboard an English ship bound for Cyprus.

When he assumed his official duties, first in England and later in Ireland, as Bishop of Ossory and Meath, Pococke's parishioners and colleagues saw in every action signs of his experiences abroad. Richard Cumberland, quoting the editor of Pococke's English tours, gave the following profile of this traveller:

In his carriage and deportment he appeared to have contracted something of the Arab character. Yet there was no austerity in his silence, and, though his air was solemn, his temper was serene. When we were on our road to Ireland, I saw from the windows of the inn at Daventry a cavalcade of horsemen approaching at a gentle trot, headed by an elderly chief in clerical attire, who was followed by five savants at distances geometrically measured and most precisely maintained, and who, upon entering

the inn, proved to be this distinguished prelate, conducting his horde, with the phlegmatic patience of a sheikh.<sup>101</sup>

Considering however, Pococke's attitude towards officials and inhabitants of the East, it would be difficult to agree with the above assessment. His research had always taken precedence over any contacts he might have had with eager natives. In Jerusalem he had preferred to retire to the privacy of a convent, and in Baalbec had prolonged a visit to the pasha of the town very reluctantly. Throughout the narrative of <sup>this visit,</sup> the reader cannot escape the impression that Pococke was under some duress in his efforts to humour the whims of his host:

"He desired me to come up to him, and put me on his right hand; and signified to me, that I should not put myself in the kneeling posture, as is usual, when inferiors are before superiors; but that I should sit as I found most convenient." Then, with the help of an interpreter, they "talked on some subjects that I thought had relation to his own interest", when the pasha "treated me in every respect as an equal, and with the utmost politeness, of which there are very few examples in these countries".<sup>102</sup>

On another occasion, Lady Helton, in a letter to Dr. Ducarel in 1768, referred to several instances when Pococke enlightened his audience about some aspect of his travels abroad. When travelling through Scotland, where he preached several times to

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<sup>101</sup> The Travels through England of Dr. Pococke, ed. J. J. Cartwright (London, 1883, 89), I, xv. See also Charles Vallancey's Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis (Dublin, 1770-1804), ii, 460-2.

<sup>102</sup> Description, p. 113.

crowded congregations, she wrote that "he stopped at Dingwal, and said he was much struck and pleased with its appearance; for the situation of it brought Jerusalem to his remembrance, and he pointed out the hill which resembled Calvary".<sup>103</sup> He again compared the rocks near Cape Wrath to the granites of the statues of Memnon in Egypt; Ben Vheir to Mount Tabor; he believed a cave near Brora in Sutherland resembled those about Bethlehem, and a mount near Cromarty towered in the horizon like Olivet over Jerusalem.<sup>104</sup>

In addition to noting points of resemblance between various historic places around the world, Pococke left an inscription or memento of his eastern journey at the different sites he visited. Thus, "he found time ... to leave a mark of his oriental travels in the demesne at Ardracchan, planting the seeds whence sprang the splendid cedars of Lebanon, which still stand on the southern side of the pleasure grounds behind the palace;<sup>105</sup> while his name is graven to this day on an immense boulder in Chamonix, which he had discovered in the year 1741.<sup>106</sup> Proud of his travels, he grasped every opportunity to converse with his colleagues, while he was known to have presented them with copies of his narrative of the East whenever the opportunity presented itself.

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<sup>103</sup> John Nichols, Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century Comprising Biographical Memoirs ... of William Bowyer (London, 1812), II, 157.

<sup>104</sup> Kemp, op. cit., p. xxxix.

<sup>105</sup> Stokes, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 10. See the letter of the Right Reverend W. P. Walsh, D. D. to Kilkenny Moderator (November 20, 1886).

Pococke's shortcomings, however, as far as his eager audience was concerned, were not to be hidden. <sup>In their opinion he had failed to actively follow up his initial research on the East.</sup> They regretted the fact that after "having given the world a full detail of his researches in Egypt, he seemed to hold himself excused from saying anything more about them, and observed in general an obdurate taciturnity".<sup>107</sup> Cumberland focused on the same complaint that can be made about his Description: "A few words here and there on the appearance and ways of life of the inhabitants of some of the remote districts of Cumberland, Yorkshire, and elsewhere into which he penetrated would have added vastly to the human interest of his subject, at present we can call to our recollection but one instance where this side of the picture is given".<sup>108</sup>

If Pococke is to be taken to task, however, it must be on the basis of what he conceived was his mission. As a scholar of ancient civilizations, he preferred to study their monuments and any other traces they might have bequeathed, rather than devote his attention to the existing generation. More concerned, like Shaw before him, to identify various historic sites by associating them with other natural and geographic landmarks, he rarely allowed a mound, plain or river to escape his careful scrutiny. Thus, a writer's remark that Pococke's Description is of more value to the traveller "who visits the countries where he was; as he does not describe from hearsay, but from actual inspection,"<sup>109</sup> is particularly true.

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<sup>107</sup> Cartwright, op. cit., Preface, p. xv.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Le Chevalier, op. cit., p. 76-77.

His thorough and painstaking method of description, and of consulting Strabo and other writers of antiquity, was welcomed by Le Chevalier and Hobhouse. Vitally interested in all information that would corroborate their own opinions about the war of Troy and the legends of Homer, they also regretted that much of what Pococke had seen was gone, and that the present traveller "must not expect to find all those remains of antiquity which are noted by early travellers, and of which plans and written details have been given by Pococke and others";<sup>110</sup> just as "no common observer would, I believe, recognize Pococke's plan in the present appearance of his Gymnasium".<sup>111</sup> Both authors found Pococke's account to be far superior to that of the other cursory glimpses of the Troad, such as that provided by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whose vessel had anchored briefly at the Promontory of Sigeum where Achilles was buried.<sup>112</sup> Although they admired Wood's work on Palmyra and Baalbec, both Hobhouse and Le Chevalier were forced to admit that Wood was bewildered in the Troad, and that his study was insufficient and even "destitute of all merit".<sup>113</sup> Hobhouse wrote in this connection that Pococke,

<sup>110</sup> Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 678.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 686-687.

<sup>112</sup> Le Chevalier, op. cit., p. 54n.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 75. See Robert Wood, An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer: With a comparative View of the Ancient and Present State of the Troad (London, 1765).

who followed the text of Strabo, knew that what he said of the site of Ilium would not apply to Eski-Stamboul, but Mr. Wood was guilty of that inaccuracy and of confounding two towns which were known to be sixteen miles apart!<sup>114</sup>

Le Chevalier complemented Pococke by adding that Wood could have averted the mass of confusion he had fallen into had he "studied it with Pococke's book in his hand".<sup>115</sup>

In spite of their appreciation of Pococke's methods in the Troad, Hobhouse and Le Chevalier regretted his scholastic timidity. Often contenting himself with merely pointing out the salient facts about the landscape, Pococke hesitated, as mentioned previously, to make the necessary inference or to provide positive identification of some important site. Thus, while Hobhouse praised him for being the first to observe three barrows on the route from Giaour-Keni to Koumkale, south-east from the Sigean Promontory, and which could very well have been the sepulchres of Patrocles, Antilochus and the tomb of Ajax, he also chastised him for refusing to positively identify the ancient ruins. Hobhouse quoted Pococke in the above connection: "I cannot but remark, if I may not be thought to give too much into conjectures, that these possibly may be very good extraordinary pieces of antiquity, and the great one might be raised over the sepulchre of Achilles, as the other two might be on those of Patroches and Antilochus."<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Hobhouse, op. cit., pp. 686-687.

<sup>115</sup> Le Chevalier, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>116</sup> Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 729.

Pococke showed the same timidity about positively identifying the sepulchre and statue of Ajax in the Aiantéum, near Rhotéum by the sea. Although he saw some broken pieces of marble lying about a barrow in this region of the plain of Troy, he nevertheless, refused to note anything more positive than, "whether this was the tomb of Ajax, would be difficult to determine".<sup>117</sup> Le Chevalier, completely irritated at his attitude, could not but exclaim: "Too diffident Pococke! What reason could you have for expressing yourself with so much reserve upon the subject of the Tombs in the Troad? ... Why did you permit ... your excessive caution to expose others to the censure of temerity, when they were to hold that for certain, which you only had considered as probable?" To have been more certain of his findings, however, would have meant inviting criticism of a different sort, much of which Pococke must have been especially wary of attracting! Nevertheless, in the final analysis, and in spite of its many drawbacks, Pococke's Description remains as living a monument to his sincere and dedicated efforts as many of those other relics which he had sought to study and record for posterity.

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<sup>117</sup> Le Chevalier, op. cit., p. 101.

### CHAPTER III

#### ROBERT WOOD (1717? - 1771)

Posterity "should give the researches of the archaeologist and the epigrapher their place beside those of the literary critic, the philologist, and the historian".

An important traveller and archaeologist of the eighteenth century was Robert Wood, author of The Ruins of Palmyra (1753), The Ruins of Baalbec (1757), and an Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer: With a Comparative View of the Ancient and Present State of the Troade (1765). Having studied classics at Oxford, he developed his life-long interest in the excavation of ancient sites at quite an early age, and maintained it in spite of a very active political life. It was after the publication of his first two volumes on the civilizations of Palmyra and Baalbec that his scholarly ability was recognised, and he was asked to serve as under-secretary to William Pitt, a position he held throughout three administrations, from 1756 until 1763. During the course of his political career he also served as appointee to Parliament for the Duke of Bridgewater, sitting from 1761 till his death as Member for the pocket borough of Brockley in Northamptonshire, and for a time he was secretary to the Treasury during Lord Bute's administration.

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<sup>1</sup> Lionel Cust, History of the Society of the Dilettanti, ed., Sidney Colvin (London, 1896), p. 209.



His preoccupation with the study of past cultures, especially in relation to some of the outstanding issues of his age, placed him in the mainstream of British and continental trends of thought. He shared with Gibbon, in Britain, his interest in the causes of the rise and fall of nations; with Herder, in Germany, his preoccupation with the sociological study of nations in their own physical and climatic conditions; and with Bossuet, in France, the need to communicate to the political rulers of his country the necessity of incorporating the great lessons of the past into the enlightened laws of his own day to ensure continued stability. Convinced that travel must play an important part in the gathering of accurate information about archaeological ruins, Wood at an early age visited the sites of many of the ancient cities of Eastern Europe and Asia Minor. This enabled him to consolidate theoretical knowledge with actual experience, added authenticity to his writings, and increased his stature as a scholar. He was confirmed in his adopted method of seeking knowledge by the example of the greatest and earliest poet-traveller of all time, Homer.

In the Essay on Homer Wood pointed out the role that travel had played in moulding and inspiring the poet in the creation of his immortal epics. Homer, Wood asserted, had <sup>not</sup> left his native Greece to visit far-off Egypt in search of adventure and knowledge, going "from a country where Nature governed, to one of settled rules and a digested polity".<sup>2</sup> But, during his travels,

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Wood, An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer: With a comparative View of the Ancient and Present State of the Troade (London, 1765), p.117.

he had broadened his perspective, and now the bard must be given "additional credit under a comparative view; for, as, on the one hand, the traveller discovers himself to be an Ionian, so, on the other, the Ionian proves himself to be a traveller".<sup>3</sup> Wood emphasized that it was as a result of his experiences abroad that Homer had gained stature as a historian, chronologist, and geographer, in addition to increasing his awareness of nature. Dwelling on some of the Homeric adventures, and in particular those of Ulysses, he commented that they were marked "with too much precision and supported throughout with too much consistence, to allow us to think that he had acquired his knowledge of mankind at home".<sup>4</sup> The bard's "lively delineations of national character" emphasized the roughness and unreligiousness of his heroes, which appealed strongly to Wood, who saw in these qualities a parallel to those which helped to mould his own British constitution. These primitive attributes also met with the approval of the German nation, whose own national identity had evolved in much the same way. The French, on the other hand, were not specially impressed by the qualities of the ancient Greek heroes.

Wood believed that as Homer had drawn his inspiration and knowledge from the nature around him, under the direction of a fine imagination, and a sound understanding,<sup>5</sup> so could he, by following in the footsteps of the poet, under the same climate, gain insight into the formation of primitive societies.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

By searching in his own heart, he "compares what he sees with what he feels, and from the whole draws fair conclusions". His Essay on Homer, which was conceived long before it was finally published, influenced to a great extent his writing on the two cultures of Palmyra and Baalbec, and will be surveyed briefly later in the context of my remarks about these two cultures.

Wood established his reputation as a scholar and traveller soon after a trip to Palmyra and Baalbec in 1751, when, together with two other Oxford scholars, James Dawkins and John Bouverie, and Borra, "an Italian of undoubted skill in architecture and drawing",<sup>6</sup> he published two impressive works on the two desert civilizations. The works, embellished with finely engraved prints, went through several translations in French and German almost immediately after their publication. The volume on Palmyra was translated into French in 1753, 1819 and 1829; the one on Baalbec in 1757, when the Abbe Barthelamy wrote a review of both works for the *Journal des Savants*, which was afterwards included in 'Oeuvres Diverses'.<sup>7</sup> Pickering issued new editions of both works in 1827; while S. Salome published in one folio in 1829 a volume of Palmyrene Inscriptions taken from Wood's Ruins of Palmyra and Ruins of Baalbec, which were transcribed into the ancient Hebrew characters and translated into English.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Shaw, A Compendium of the most approved modern travels containing a distinct account of the Religion, Government, Commerce, Manners and Natural History of several nations (London, 1750?), I, p. 227.

<sup>7</sup> "Robert Wood", Dictionary of National Biography, eds., Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (1909), 21, p. 884.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Horace Walpole, himself a dedicated traveller and promoter of the grand tour, welcomed Wood's works and praised them as a valuable contribution to art, which did credit to their author and benefited his native country. He deplored the state of art and painting in Britain, which suffered from a lack of subjects worthy of the brush of Reynolds and Ramsay. He attributed this deficiency in works of great architecture and drawing to the fact that art, "having been circumscribed within selfish bounds as statuary, historic compositions (were) totally neglected".<sup>9</sup> Under these circumstances, Wood's volumes were especially welcome since they met a genuine need, and Walpole wrote of them: "But of all the works that distinguish this age, none perhaps excell those beautifull editions of Baalbec and Palmyra -- not published at the command of a Louis Quatorz, or at the expense of a cardinal nephew, but undertaken by private curiosity and good sense, and trusted to the taste of a polished nation".<sup>10</sup> He praised the drawings, but the real merit of the works, he believed, lay in the narrative. Walpole wrote: "The modest descriptions and prefixes are standards of writing: The exact measure of what should and should not be said, and of what was necessary to be known was never comprehended in more clear diction or more elegant style".<sup>11</sup> Time would attest to their greatness, and Walpole had the following words inscribed on Wood's tomb:

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<sup>9</sup> Horace Walpole, Anecdotes of Painting in England; With some Account of the Princinal Artists, and Incidental Notes on Other Arts (London, 1762), I, xiii.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

The beautiful editions of Baalbeck and Palmyra illustrated by the classical pen of Robert Wood supply a nobler and more lasting monument and will survive those august remains.<sup>12</sup>

The Reverend Thomas Shaw reviewed and included selections of Wood's work on Palmyra in a compendium of travel,<sup>13</sup> and some of his comments will be discussed later in this chapter.

Wood's interest in archaeological remains in Asia Minor had been awakened by a prevailing enthusiasm for Italian excavations since the Renaissance. Explorations had unearthed many treasures, which attracted the curiosity and admiration of artists and scholars from all over Europe. Wood, however, preferred to turn his attention to Greece, which hitherto had been inaccessible to students from Europe because of Turkish domination. Visitors to the various sites of Greek civilization in Thrace, Macedonia, Asia Minor and the Archipelago, had realized that the Turks, never wilfully destructive, had negligently allowed all those monuments, which had survived antiquity, to be over-run by newer civilizations, and suffer reckless usage.<sup>14</sup> In the last quarter of the seventeenth century British expeditions had taken the lead in organising visits to the Eastern Empire to preserve records and samples of existing archaeological buildings. Before Wood and his team of artists, several people had already explored the area: Carrey in 1675, Jacob Spon of Lyons<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Reverend Daniel Lysons, The Environs of London: Being an Historical Account of the Towns, Villages and Hamlets (London, 1792), pp. 420-421.

<sup>13</sup> Shaw, Compendium.

<sup>14</sup> Cust, History of the Dilletanti, p. 72

<sup>15</sup> Spon's Account was published in 1678.

with Sir George Wheeler<sup>16</sup> in 1676, and Edmund Chishull<sup>17</sup> of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who had held the special position reserved for a 'traveller' at Oxford, and was a friend of the famous antiquary, Dr. Mead; later in 1698 he was appointed chaplain to the factory of the Turkey Company at Smyrna, from which he made various expeditions into Asia Minor and Turkey. Their published accounts were welcomed by a public who had also been following with interest the archaeological excavations being conducted in Italy. Some young English aristocrats as well, such as Lord Sandwich, Lord Charlemont and Mr. Ponsonby, had extended the Grand Tour to Greece and the coasts of Asia Minor,<sup>18</sup> and as a result of the considerable interest awakened by these journeys, the Society of the Dilettanti was formed and continued to grow. A team, which overlapped with Wood, ~~and who~~ concerning themselves more directly with the Athenian antiquities, were led by James Stuart and Nicholas Revett. They both belonged to a colony of British artists in Rome that shared in the prevailing enthusiasm for classical works of art; their work was eventually sponsored by the Society of the Dilettanti, the outstanding, and for a time, the only supporters of archaeological expeditions into Greece.

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<sup>16</sup>George Wheeler and Dr. Spon, A Journey into Greece (London, 1682).

<sup>17</sup>Edmund Chishull, Inscriptio Sigea antiquissima, 1721; Antiquitates Asiaticae, etc., 1728. Travels in Turkey and back to England (London, 1747).

<sup>18</sup>Cust, op.cit., p. 72.

In 1750 the two groups met and explored Asia Minor together, after which Stuart and Revett published the Antiquities of Athens (1752), and Wood, with the co-operation of his group, The Ruins of Palmyra and The Ruins of Baalbec. The first publication was received with special favour by the British public, since it catered for the Grecian 'gusto', which characterized the taste of the age. This successful work, from which the modern study of Greek archaeology may be considered to date, and the researches of such men as Wood, Charlemont and Rockingham, not only provided valuable records of these ancient cultures, but served to strengthen the Society of the Dilettanti which promoted them. Their close cooperation was eventually to pay dividends both for the Society and its archaeologists, who continued to serve each other for many years.

Wood was fascinated for several reasons by the Palmyran civilization to the exclusion of other and more fashionable cultures. He found that the edifices of this society had best withstood the ravages of time and climate: "We had seen above twenty marble theatres in Asia Minor alone, most of them pretty entire... of all the antient buildings, those best resist the injuries of time."<sup>19</sup> He explained his reason for choosing to study the temples of Baalbec as follows: "When we compare the ruins of Baalbec with those of many antient cities which we visited in Italy, Greece, Egypt and in other parts of Asia, we cannot help thinking them the remains of the boldest plan we ever saw attempted in architecture".<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Robert Wood, The Ruins of Palmyra, otherwise Tedmor in the Desert (London, 1753), p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, The Ruins of Baalbec, otherwise Heliopolis in Coelosyria (London, 1757). p. 6.

A second reason for Wood's interest in these civilizations was that previously they had been inaccessible to ordinary visitors. Local marauding tribesmen and unsympathetic Turkish officials made them dangerous territory, and it was only after the efforts of the Levant Company in Aleppo, who had surveyed the ruins and published a preliminary account of them,<sup>21</sup> that Wood and Dawkins ventured out to visit the sites. It may be worth mentioning that Shaw attributed Wood's interest in Palmyra to Dawkins, who was interested in studying the history of the three Greek orders of architecture, "attuned with regard to the changes they underwent from the time of Pericles to that of Dioclesian".<sup>22</sup> Such a study was eventually carried out and will be discussed in connection with some of Wood's observations on the two cultures of Palmyra and Baalbec.

A point which puzzled and fascinated all those who encountered these civilizations was the fact that ancient literature mentioned the existence of these magnificent monuments only briefly and on very rare occasions. The Reverend Thomas Shaw summed up the attitude of all travellers and scholars to these two cultures, when he wrote:

The fate of these two cities differs from every other; we have no testimonies of what they were, but their own noble fragments; while, though not a single stone marks the situation of Troy, Babylon, and Memphis, we are by the books sufficiently acquainted with their importance and changes of fortune.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Wood, The Ruins of Palmyra, p. 14 and Shaw, Compendium, p. 246. The Levant Company account was reviewed by Dr. Halley and entitled "Dissertation on the antient state of Palmyra", and published in The Philosophical Transactions (London, 1694), XVII.

<sup>22</sup> Shaw, Compendium, p. 228.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 241.



Strabo, the most reliable of ancient geographers of antiquity, who could be depended on to supply some early facts of history, had neglected to mention them, as did the Seleucids, who had many of their inscriptions carved in the remaining relics of the Palmyran architecture. They might have been expected to say something about them in their records because of Palmyra's particular situation between Antioch and Seleucia, where it acted as an important barrier against the Parthians. Pompey, the Roman general who invaded Syria, also neglected to mention its art, architecture, painting and sculpture. The only antiquary who mentioned Palmyra briefly, and then only to give a short history of it, was Pliny; however, he neglected to mention the magnificence of its buildings. Faced with such a lack of information, it became imperative for scholars to try to unravel the mysteries of these two cultures from the only available record: the monuments still existing in the wilderness of the desert.

Shaw, in his review of Wood's book, missed the true reason which <sup>had</sup> driven the archaeologist to choose to write on these ruins. Drawing on his own explanation of the reasons for history's silence about such magnificent buildings, Shaw concluded: "May not their silence, in regard of Baalbec, justify what they advance about Babylon? and their not mentioning Palmyra be a sort of proof of the magnificence of Greece and Egypt?"<sup>24</sup> If this was the reason for the absence of information about Baalbec and Palmyra, then Wood disagreed with the assessment of historians regarding the true worth of different cultures.

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<sup>24</sup> Shaw, Compendium, p. 241.

In his opinion true credit for great achievements could be given only to small nations for whom the challenge was greater. Wood judged the Palmyran civilization to be superior to that of Egypt, whose art, laws, government and religion had never risen above mediocrity, while Palmyran culture provided a model to inspire all nations. In keeping with the belief of his day that each culture was an expression of "something in the climate, soil or situation of each country which had great influence in establishing its particular mode of superstition",<sup>25</sup> he attributed Egypt's lack of greatness to its climate. The arts had not started there, but in Greece, where the change of seasons provided an incentive to higher learning and to the arts, in particular architecture and sculpture. Wood, who was very interested in writing as an indication of the development of a society, found the hieroglyphics to be the "production of an infant state of society, not yet acquainted with alphabetical writing".<sup>26</sup>

The research of Wood and Dawkins among the monuments of Palmyra exposed several existing fallacies about the history of the nation and its prosperity. In consulting the records with which they had been provided in Italy before their journey to the Ottoman Empire, and which consisted of a collection of Greek historians and poetry, they found, from the meagre sources available on Palmyra, that its wealth and prosperity was attributed to the benevolence of Rome rather than to the industry and achievements of its rulers and inhabitants.

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<sup>25</sup> Wood, The Essay on Homer, p.124.

<sup>26</sup> Wood, The Essay on Homer, p. 118.

Writers had ascribed the magnificent private and public buildings to the efforts of the successors of Alexander, or to the Roman emperors, "rather than suppose its inhabitants could have been equal to the expense".<sup>27</sup> Wood found that inscriptions showed that their earliest dependence on Rome was in the time of Caracalla: that they "assisted Alexander Severus against Artaxerxes, proves no more than an alliance".<sup>28</sup> Their downfall started before the rule of Justinian, as Wood pointed out, when Palmyra as a vassal state rapidly lost "its liberty, trade, property, and inhabitants, in that natural chain in which publick misfortunes generally follow each other".<sup>29</sup>

Wood wished to prove that the period of Palmyran prosperity coincided with the time when its people were intent upon pursuing the advantages of their own situation: trade and security. In his famous parallel between Palmyra and Great Britain, Wood gave one of the reasons for his partiality to this desert culture, a partiality which earned him the title of 'Palmyra' Wood. He stressed the rewards of peace and adequate defence, which had led to Palmyra's prosperity: "A country thus peaceably employed, affords few of those striking events which history is fond of. The desert was in great measure to Palmyra what the sea is to Great Britain, both their riches and defence".<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Wood, The Ruins of Palmyra, p. 19.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

The secret of Palmyran dominance lay in its strategic position, which allowed it to be used as a trading centre for caravans travelling to Bassora, Egypt and particularly East India. The country's wealth accrued, Wood surmised, from the trade between the Phoenicians and the adjoining countries. Having learnt from their dealings with the Jews of the value of the East-India route, they employed the conveniently situated Palmyra for their commercial traffic. Appian, a Roman historian, had also argued that it was the East India trade that was responsible for the wealth of this nation.

This small Palmyra civilization prospered as long as it maintained its independence from the larger nations which surrounded it. No sooner did it surrender to Rome than the trade of the people suffered, and "they were reduced to live idly on as much of their capital as Aurelian had spared".<sup>31</sup> Such was the fate of nations, and had their monuments not survived the ravages of the climate and the greed of man, because of their physical isolation and benign weather, no record would have existed of Palmyra's greatness.

At its peak of achievement Palmyra's supremacy was reflected in its architecture, the personality of its rulers, and the justice of its laws. When Wood explained his reasons for being impressed by this particular culture, he remarked:

It is reasonable to suppose, that when private persons could erect monuments of such extraordinary magnificence, merely for the use of their own family, about the same time of opulence, the community may have been equal to the vast expence of their publick buildings.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.21.

Private opulence was possible when the state was ruled by laws which protected the welfare of every citizen, who would then have reason to guard their country. Under such conditions, the security and authority of the ruling body and of the nation as a whole was guaranteed, and the arts and architecture could flourish.

Wood was particularly impressed by the monument of Jamblichus, which had been erected about 1 A.D. He described it as "the most perfect piece of antiquity I ever saw, having all its floors and stairs entire, though it consists of five stories".<sup>33</sup> When he compared the other ruins with this monument, he discovered that they had been built over a period of over three hundred years, the work of Diocletian being the latest. It was during this period that the rich and expensive buildings which characterized Palmyran culture were built.

Palmyra had become a model to other nations because of the superior qualities of its leaders. Odenathus "for a while held the balance of power between the empires of Persia and of Rome", and succeeded in preserving Palmyran independence against the incursions of other contenders for the throne. His great abilities and excellent qualifications were attested to by Libanius in an oration written in his praise by Longinus, and which is, unfortunately, lost. However, another Roman writer, Pollio, confirmed that "had he not engaged in the Roman interest",<sup>34</sup> their cause would have been completely lost in the East. Zenobia, his queen, who succeeded him as a ruler, was also able

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> Shaw, Compendium, p. 251.

to manipulate the great powers surrounding her to serve Palmyra's interests. Well acquainted with history, "she abridged that of Alexandria and the East; she was perfect mistress of the Greek and Egyptian tongues, as well as the Latin, which she translated into the former, but was diffident of speaking it".<sup>35</sup> She was said to have incorporated into her daily life all the knowledge and arts of her ancestors, Ptolemy and Cleopatra, as well as the pomp of her most dangerous enemies, the Persians; she learned from the Romans their love of luxury and drank out of golden cups set with precious stones. She was courageous in the field, while remaining cautious and prudent in council. She had the benefit of wise guidance in all affairs of state from Longinus, the author of the Treatise on the Sublime.

This enlightened leadership was an example to the whole world. Zenobia, a woman governing a small and insignificant nation in the desert, succeeded in annexing to Palmyra the dominions of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae, and in ruling over Egypt in the south and as far as the Black Sea and the Bosphorus in the north. Her successful tactics against the Egyptians and her expulsion of the Romans from Syria and Mesopotamia proved a challenge to Claudius. Pollius, although describing her physical charms at great length, unfortunately ignored the battles she fought and the banner under which she conducted her campaigns. In spite of her incontestable valour and the support of her whole nation, Zenobia was unable to resist the omnipotence of the Romans, and succumbed to Aurelian, who "vanquished Zenobia's

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

Persian auxiliaries, and bought off the Saracens and Armenians from assisting her".<sup>36</sup> When time and circumstances seemed right, she had risen to meet the challenge of destiny, and had led her nation to greatness, but when circumstances worked against her, as eventually happens with all nations, she faded into the oblivion that shrouds the activities of ordinary human beings.

A nation, whether small or large, can succeed in grasping its moment of greatness when all conditions are propitious. Palmyra enjoyed, in addition to the advantages of situation and inspired leadership, the soil, climate and history which gave "birth to letters and arts, where soldiers, orators, philosophers, poets and artists have shown the boldest and happiest flights of genius, and done the greatest honour to humanity".<sup>37</sup> The land was that of the classics, and as Wood explained: "Classical ground not only makes us always relish the poet or historian more, but sometimes helps us to understand them better".<sup>38</sup> It was Wood's intention to study the history and poetry of a civilization in the light of the climate and situation in which they had taken shape; for example, "The life of Miltiades or Leonidas could never be read with so much pleasure, as on the plains of Marathon or at the straits of Thermopylae; the Iliad has new beauties on the banks of the Scamander, and the Odyssey is most pleasing in the countries where Ulysses travelled and Homer sang".<sup>39</sup> Palmyra enjoyed not only a unique

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<sup>36</sup> Shaw, Compendium, p. 258 .

<sup>37</sup> Wood, The Ruins of Palmyra, publisher to reader, p a<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

situation, but also valuable communications with neighbouring countries through its leaders, its military and trade contacts, and its location in a land which had witnessed the advent of important poets, heroes and various civilizations. Her combination of self-sufficiency and the ability to build meaningful and rewarding inter-relationships afforded an example for newer nations to follow..

Implicit in Wood's admiration for Palmyra was the belief, inspired by concern for the welfare of his own nation, that Britain could learn from this ancient culture. Already it was endowed with a constitution that all writers and thinkers of the period were agreed did great credit to the British nation. Wood was a friend of Burke,<sup>40</sup> and undoubtedly well read in the current philosophy of his day; he would <sup>have</sup> agreed with Hume's description of the British constitution<sup>as</sup> "that noble Fabric, the Pride of Britain, the Envy of our Neighbours, rais'd by the Labour of so many Centuries, repair'd at the Expence of so many Millions, and cemented by such an profusion of Blood..."<sup>41</sup> A country which possessed the most valuable legacy that a nation could have, already had the makings of a great country. It would, however, have been shortsighted and unrealistic to disregard the political and religious rivalries and dissensions of the age; the lessons of history were apparent for all to read. Anxious individuals foresaw disaster if British society persisted in behaviour which was totally artificial and contrary

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<sup>40</sup> Chatham's Correspondence: Correspondence of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, eds. Executors of his son, John, Earl of Chatham (London, 1838), I, 430-432. Letter from Dr. Markham to the Duchess of Queensbury, Westminster, September 25, 1759. In it he recommended Edmund Burke for the post of consul at Madrid, and mentioned Wood as one who would also recommend him for the position.

<sup>41</sup> David Hume, Essays, Moral and Political, op.cit., p. 47.



to nature, and to some of the precepts of the Constitution. Although Burke was ironic in pointing out that, if the body were left to itself, it would attend to "its own business more directly than the mind with its boasted subtlety",<sup>42</sup> and that reason, with its "extravagant sublimities and eccentric ro - vings", everyday led to the prescription of some new imaginary law, in his heart he ~~conveyed~~ feared for his own society which a false system of laws and beliefs could create. Great men had emerged in primitive societies because laws were simple, more in harmony with nature's requirements; they enjoyed a liberty which emanated from a government that was created by everybody, and therefore protected the interests of all its members.

Wood believed that in travelling outside the confines of his own society, each voyager abroad hoped to return to humble beginnings, to rude civilization, before the language of compact and artificiality had invaded man's institutions. Surveying the historic<sup>a1</sup> and political arena of his day, the voyager was faced with examples of despotic regimes, such as those dominated by the powerful Italian and Polish nobility, who deprived their subjects of all liberty and basic human rights. Religion, as understood in advanced societies, also failed, as Burke had explained, to combat the corruption which pervaded the 'modern' political state. On the contrary, institutionalised religion partook of the corruption of government, and created an "artificial code" which inevitably catered to the tyranny of the law. It took the form of superstition, folly,

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<sup>42</sup> Edmund Burke, A Vindication of Natural Society: or: A View of the Miseries and Evils arising to Mankind from every Species of Artificial Society. In a letter to Lord... (London, 1756), p. 12.

enthusiastic nonsense, slavery and malice, eventually undermining the whole roots of that society and causing it to collapse.

Faced with such dire circumstances in some over-sophisticated political entities, it was no wonder that prophets, voyagers and reformers turned their vision to the past. Wood believed that the lessons that Palmyra had to offer to his generation were real and concrete, and should not be lost in the sands of the desert. The success that Palmyra had achieved, and which Britain could also attain, was rooted in the soil and in the potential of its now silent population. Wood's interpretation for British readers of the civilizations of Palmyra and Baalbec was, as Gibbon pointed out, more than an importation of magnificent drawings of those cultures, but a recall to primitive values that society had lost in the process of transition and evolution from one stage of development to another.

Wood believed that a truly great civilization, once the basic requirements had been met, would continue to perpetuate itself. He posited that Palmyra's role had not ended, and it could, if conditions were right, continue to serve as a trade outpost in much the same manner as it had in the past. If it had not been used in his own time, it was because the Turks did not view its advantages in the light of the past. The Persians were no threat to them in that area, while, on the other hand, the local nomadic population could cause trouble for a Turkish garrison. Wood maintained, however, that should the Turks "lose Bagdat, their present extended frontier, they will no doubt, fortify Palmyra".<sup>43</sup> Commerce could also flourish

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<sup>43</sup> The Ruins of Palmyra, p. 20.

once more in that region if the East India trade were increased, in spite of Turkish rule, which he found "diametrically opposite to the true spirit of commerce".<sup>44</sup> Palmyra could achieve prosperity because of the caravan traffic still in existence between Aleppo and Damascus to Bassora, and could support the trade destined for Cairo and Suez, as well as for India, although Egypt would provide the market for the exchange of products. Here Wood became traveller, archaeologist and politician all at once, and with an eye to the economic advantages to his own country, he wrote of a German gentleman sent by his Emperor to study the possibilities of trade between the German dominions in Tuscany and the Red Sea. He showed that the role of a true traveller was to assess, in addition to his research, the advantages to be derived for his nation: every traveller must necessarily have the welfare of his own people at heart. This notion, in the final analysis, accounted for the close cooperation that existed between government, its ambassadors abroad, and travellers like Wood and his compatriots. Each visitor to the East was aware of the tremendous challenge Egypt offered both culturally and economically, but its truly great heritage was revealed only after Napoleon's occupation of Egypt at the turn of the century. The work of the savants in that expedition resulted, for the first time, in a coordinated study of its ancient language and science, in contrast with the dissociated attempts of contemporary voyagers. Prominent among the savants were Champollion, Savary and Volney, whose approach was similar in many ways to Wood's.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

Baalbec, the second desert civilization which Wood chose to study, was like Palmyra in many ways. Again the obscurity of its history drove him to visit it and to write his work, which, he reported, was "the first attempt towards a history of those buildings".<sup>45</sup> In spite of the temples' solidity and duration, the first and only historical authority on them a John of Antioch, surnamed Malala, who had said that "Aelius Antoninus Pius built a great temple to Jupiter at Heliopolis, near Libanus in Phoenicia, which was one of the wonders of the world".<sup>46</sup> Wood agreed with this assessment, since Pius had ruled for twenty-one years and the style of architecture fitted in with the taste of the time. Furthermore, Wood was inclined, by the accuracy of the other facts recorded by the historian, to believe his methods reliable.

Wood's analysis of the edifices erected in honour of the Sun God, called Baal in Syria and Chaldaea, was based on the following belief. "At present we shall only observe, as travellers through those ancient seats of idolatory, that we imagined that we could discover, in many of the deviations from the true object of worship, something in the climate, soil or situation of each country, which had great influence in establishing its particular mode of superstition."<sup>47</sup> He thought that the flat country and serene sky of the area impressed the

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<sup>45</sup> The Ruins of Baalbec, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

imagination of its inhabitants with its beauty, and drew attention to the majesty of the sun.

The worship of the Sun, Moon and Stars (Baal, Ashtaroth, and the Host of Heaven) dominated the daily life of the people of the desert. They could not evade the merciless Sun, their Lord or Master, who evoked a reverence which was full of awe, and forced them to offer victims as sacrifice. "In a country where the violence of <sup>his</sup> heat is destructive to vegetation, as it is in many other respects very troublesome to the inhabitants",<sup>48</sup> the people built temples to appease the wrath of what seemed to them a merciless God. Thus, Wood pointed out, one could trace an early superstition which "had misled the inhabitants of a flat country, enjoying a constant serenity of sky",<sup>49</sup> to the worship of the firmament of heaven as well as the sun. The step from awe to reverence was a natural one; an error, the origin and progress of which could easily be determined, and the leap from regarding them as objects of worship to imbuing the sun and sky with divine attributes was easily effected. Seen in this light, it was easy to understand the importance of mythology in determining the history of the area.

While in Palmyra Wood had been struck by the importance of the desert as a factor in national security; in Baalbec, which was also a trading centre and the site of much activity, his emphasis lay primarily on the effect on the traveller of the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

burning sun and the starry heavens. The extensive plain and unclouded sky, the uniform climate and soil, conspired to direct the vision to the firmament and led to the worship of these lesser deities who were more amenable to the inhabitant of the lonely plains. Wood described the contrast of the beauty of the skies with the desert: "No where could we discover in the face of heavens more beauties, nor on the earth fewer, than in our night travels through the desarts of Arabia; where it is impossible not to be struck with this contrast: a boundless, dreary waste, without tree nor water, mountain or valley, or the least variety of colours," and then the tired wanderer looks up at the sky and "is agreeably relieved by looking up to that chearful, moving picture, which measures his time, directs his course, and lights up his way".<sup>50</sup>

He believed this beauty, which can be experienced only in the desert, to be responsible for those passages in Scripture which, in the expressive language of Holy Writ, state that "their eyes went a whoring after their idols".<sup>51</sup> So awesome is the sight that wild admiration can soon be replaced by a superstitious respect for the elements, so that "the passions were engaged before the judgement was consulted".<sup>52</sup> The danger of such folly is great, and the Jews, passing through the wilderness while they bore the image of their god, "which St. Jerome supposes to have been Lucifer (worshipped in the same country in his time)," had been carried away by bewitchment

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

and their hearts had gone after their idols. Wood found an ancient native of the country, a man of real piety who understood the danger of contemplating such beauties and yielding to their temptation, and he warned him: "If I beheld the sun when he shined, or the moon walking in her brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth have kissed my hand; this were an iniquity, etc."<sup>53</sup>

When reading the Scriptures, a person unaware of the context in which some remarks were written, might be at a loss to fathom the ambiguities surrounding local deities. Enlightenment lies in realizing that a mythology is a direct product of a certain culture and cannot bear transplanting. "Egypt", for example, as Wood pointed out, "had some objects of divine worship, so peculiarly the growth of that soil, that they could never bear transplanting, notwithstanding the complaisance of antiquity for her absurdities".<sup>54</sup> Many of the deities were a product of the rule of the Pharoahs, and of belief in the after-life; to try to transfer these beliefs, or understand them out of context, would be almost meaningless. Again, in Greece, where the country is composed of a mixture of hill, vale, grove and water, it is not surprising that Oreades, Dryades, and Naiades are part of the superstition of that country. Together they provided Homer with the basis for that fanciful mythology which poetry had ever since thought proper to adopt.<sup>55</sup> Homer's language was closest to nature, rich and passionate, incapable of misrepresentation, appealed directly to man's feelings, and found the shortest way to the heart. It was

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.15.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pp.15-16.

<sup>55</sup> Essay on Homer, pp. 128-29.

"entirely addressed to the ear, in a climate, where conception is quick, and the organs of speech capable of nice articulation; it was, of course, formed to music and poetry, then closely united".<sup>56</sup>

Wood's study of ancient civilizations did not stop with those of Palmyra and Baalbec. Like many other travellers, he witnessed the persistence of many of the qualities of Homeric and Biblical man, and attempted to trace the reasons for their survival. Systematically, and like the other visitors of his age, he carefully watched the habits and customs of the local inhabitants, those same people who had quickly moved in to occupy the abandoned buildings of the Palmyran and Baalbec civilizations. In their way of life and beliefs, and in their laws, which were designed to protect every member of a tribe, they held the key to the survival of Western man, which travellers, historians, politicians and archaeologists alike were intent on preserving. Travelling among these people, an individual removed the barrier of time and renewed contact with the roots of his heritage. Accordingly, Wood wrote about the primitive men he encountered, whose language belonged "to imperfect arts, simple manners, and unlettered society",<sup>57</sup> that

The modern Arab, in whom I have seen the characters of prince, shepherd, and poet united, retains, in his compositions of this kind, the wildness, irregularity, and indelicacy of his forefathers, with a considerable share of the same original glowing imagination which we could discover even in their extempore productions, and under the<sup>58</sup> disadvantage of crude and hasty translation.

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<sup>56</sup> Essay on Homer, pp. 280-81.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 173.



The wandering Bedouin had retained his noble characteristics, in spite of efforts to assimilate him, because he "boast(ed) a longer independence and a purer antiquity than any other nation".<sup>59</sup> Like the Hottentot or Cherokee he enjoyed his unbounded liberty and was unwilling to exchange the pleasures of a roving life for that of an easy, secure and luxurious one. His respect for family ties and obligations superseded those of his Turkish ruler, and while expecting female restraint in society, he did not give rein to his 'unnatural passion' for women. Evidence of his ancient virtues was apparent in his ability to be, on the one hand, temperate, brave, friendly, hospitable, true to his engagements, nice in his point of honour and scrupulously observant of his religious duties, and, on the other, to carry out plunder and rapine without signs of any contradictory behaviour.<sup>60</sup> To stress his unwillingness to admit innovations into the life of his community he persisted in using the native names for towns, which recalled happier days of freedom and prosperity.

Accordingly, every society, Wood argued, no matter how advanced in its stage of civilization, must still retain some of the characteristics of unpolished people. While progress must be regarded as inevitable, he believed that, if a nation preserved some of the enviable traits of antiquity, it was assured of having built on a sound foundation which would weather the storms of progress. Homer, driven by the divine muse within him, communicated with his people through their passions,

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<sup>59</sup> The Ruins of Palmyra, p.3 .

<sup>60</sup> Essay on Homer, pp. 150-151.

and tamed them before instructing them. Thus the poet was all things to his people: "Indeed all instruction, civil and religious, was wrapt up in Melody and Verse; and the Priest who was a Lawgiver, was also a Poet and Musician".<sup>61</sup>

Drawing on the landscape around him, on the manners and character of the people, and on tradition, both fabulous and historical, Homer created the immortal Iliad and Odyssey.

He was inspired by man's emotions and experiences, the substratum which united all men. As Wood commented:

But whether we view this Ionian traveller at home or abroad, whether we attend him in his contemplations on the external beauties of the creation, or follow him into the secret recesses of our own hearts, in either light we trace him by the most natural representations of every characterizing circumstance of truth and reality.<sup>62</sup>

The great poet of nature had shown men the way, it was now up to them to refresh themselves at the fountain of light. Men who are in tune with the eternal precepts of truth and reality, have nothing to fear; the passions and the sentiments of the heart are a reliable guide when behaviour becomes too artificial. Wood, in these remarks, was not being frivolous or erudite for the sake of scholarship. In a manner he had risen to the challenge of the pessimism of philosophers like Hume, who wrote of the English monarchy and Parliament: "This admirable government, of which we have been treating, will, one day or other, come to an end, and the liberty of England will be lost".<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>63</sup> Hume, Essays, Moral and Political (1748), Essay 18, p. 76.

As this had been the fate of all governments: Rome, Lacedaemia, Carthage, how could England avoid the same catastrophe? By his study of the creation of the societies of Palmyra, of Baalbec, and of Homer's world, Wood was answering Hume's question and offering a guideline for modern nations to follow.

Walpole had regretted the lack of subject matter worthy of the great artists of his day, and for that reason he had especially welcomed Wood's contribution to knowledge as an inspiration to British citizens to produce great works of art. Wood had explored the causes which resulted in the most well-balanced societies. He took the view that Homer's poetic diction was to be admired, as it was "strongly engrafted upon vulgar traditional superstitions, which had already laid strong hold of the passions and prejudices of his countrymen".<sup>64</sup> In addition, when liberty reigns, the "Oriental Pastoral, though obscure and defective in the art of composition, affords the boldest flights of genius of this kind".<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, Roman and oriental despotism, for which Wood had no sympathy, destroyed the stock-in-trade of every artist: wit and humour, which is so subtle and volatile "that it evaporates upon the least change in the circumstances which produced it, leaving nothing behind but the <sup>insipid</sup> ~~Adregs~~ of low buffoonery".<sup>66</sup> England was fortunate, since it continued to enjoy a rich diversity of original character, "open to every artist, without

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<sup>64</sup> Essay on Homer, p. 128.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 172-173.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

those restrictions which seldom check licentiousness without suppressing genius".<sup>67</sup> Within such a liberal atmosphere, wits like Swift, Steele and Addison could flourish and multiply, and Britain could be sure that it had not departed from the conditions which inspire the creation of great works of art. Wood's views, as expressed in his 'Essay on Homer', interested Goethe in his younger days,<sup>68</sup> influenced his thought and captured the attention of the German schools of classical criticism.<sup>69</sup>

Wood joined the Dilettanti Society in 1763; and from his position within that exclusive group helped in the financing and guidance of further excavation tours to Greece and Asia Minor. Of the original team of helpers with whom he had set out to Palmyra and Baalbec, Bouverie had died early in the course of that trip, and Dawkins passed away in late 1757 or early 1758. He had, however, transmitted his interest and knowledge to Wood, who continued to sponsor Stuart and Revett's efforts, and helped in the publication of their Athenian Antiquities<sup>70</sup> as well as in the publication of another book by Revett entitled Travels in Asia Minor and Greece.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>68</sup> Archibald Ballantyne, Lord Carteret: a political Biography, etc. (London, 1887), pp. 263-4.

<sup>69</sup> Selections from the family papers preserved at Caldwell (Glasgow, 1733-64), Vol. I., Part II, p. 153.

<sup>70</sup> James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, Athenian Antiquities (4 vols., London, 1797).

<sup>71</sup> Nicholas Revett, Travels in Asia Minor and Greece. (London, 1817).

The second archaeological book that was encouraged by the society as a whole, for which Wood wrote the address to the reader, was Ionian Antiquities,<sup>72</sup> compiled by R. Chandler, N. Revett and W. Pars, Painter. Chandler, who was an outstanding scholar, the editor of the Marmora Oxoniensa<sup>73</sup> (impressive two folios on some of the ruins of Europe), had been a natural choice. He in turn held the Society and, in particular, Wood, in high regard; as he wrote in the Preface to the first volume; he praised Wood's knowledge of classical antiquities ~~besides~~ giving credit to Dawkins for his services to the study of architecture in Oxford.

Like all scholarly groups, the antiquarian society strove to fulfil several important objectives. A first aim was to coordinate the efforts of the various explorers to Italy, Greece and sites in Asia Minor. While there <sup>had</sup> <sup>been</sup> several works, as previously stated, before those of Stuart and Revett, theirs was the first the Society had actively sponsored, and from which the modern study of Greek archaeology could be said to date. Although the Dilettanti were not as a society responsible for its publication, yet, without their individual and cooperative encouragement, the book would never have been published.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Richard Chandler, Ionian Antiquities (London, 1769). Copies were sent to the King and Queen, prominent universities in Britain and Ireland, the Royal Society, the Royal Academy, the Society of Antiquaries, and the British Museum. A special, signed copy was presented to the King of Spain.

<sup>73</sup> Richard Chandler, ed., Marmora Oxoniensa (London, 1763), Preface, v.

<sup>74</sup> Cust, History of the Dilettanti, p. 81.

Furthermore, by sponsoring the first and subsequent volumes of these archaeologists, its members controlled the field and ensured the absence of duplication. Eventually, when Chandler was sent to Greece ~~on these islands~~ to explore the site of further ancient civilizations, the Society carefully called them Ionian Antiquities as opposed to the Athenian Antiquities explored by the earlier team. To justify the expense and layout of this work, Wood had written in the Preface of Chandler's impressive work that the knowledge of nature had first been taught in the Ionic School; geometry, astronomy, and mathematics were established here before Athens, and it was here that Greek navigation and commerce first started. Furthermore, this was the area in which history was born, the knowledge of medicine developed, and art started: here "the Father of Poetry produced a Standard for Composition, which no Age or Country have dared to depart from, or have been able to surpass".<sup>75</sup>

In the same Preface, Wood declared his partiality for small states,<sup>76</sup> and the reasons why they, rather than the more important larger cultures, should be explored and respected. He contrasted

<sup>75</sup> Chandler, Ionian Antiquities, p. iii.

<sup>76</sup> He wrote: "Of all the phenomena in the political history of man, there is none more curious and wonderful, than the great comparative degree of strength and power, external and internal acquired by those little states, whose only territory was a petty island". They had succeeded in maintaining their sovereignty and independence in defiance of the proud monarchs who "ruled the extensive and populace plains of Asia and Egypt, or the rude and hardy barbarians, who inhabited the no less fertile regions of Sicily and Italy". Ibid.

the buildings of small, little states in Ionia <sup>and</sup> (those of Paestum, Segesta and Selinus<sup>in Italy</sup>) with those of the great civilized centres of Athens, Corinth, and Syracuse, states about which much had been written in antiquity, and concluded that the buildings of small countries "surpass in size, strength and solidity of construction not only all the greatest potentates of modern times have been able to accomplish, but all that was ever produced by the unlimited resources and unlimited despotism of the Roman emperors".<sup>77</sup> He admired the smaller nations for their resourcefulness and ability to create a great culture, as expressed in their architecture, without the benefits of riches of the larger countries. Often without foreign trade and extensive dominions, they still succeeded in employing a large labour force to produce buildings as lavish and imposing as those of their most prosperous and powerful neighbours.

The reasons for the success of smaller nations in erecting buildings that defied the passage of time more successfully than those of their more powerful and famous rivals lay in the self-sufficiency of their life and the justice of their laws. Living their life close to nature, and with means too limited for large-scale warfare, they succeeded in preserving and maintaining their identity and liberty in the face of foreign incursions on their life and property. The more opulent societies, on the other hand, which had grown luxurious beyond restraint, Athens not excluded, developed <sup>at the same time</sup> more advanced and sophisticated weapons of destruction, and their laws were necessarily moulded to protect the interests of the reigning body. As Burke wrote, "Writers on the science of policy are agreed, and they agree with Experience

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., ix.

that all governments, must frequently infringe the rules of justice to support themselves; that truth must give way to dissimulation, honesty to convenience, and humanity itself to the reigning interest".<sup>78</sup> In other words, the larger nation is forced to abandon virtuous behaviour, which in the final analysis is the mainstay and guarantee of success and endurance for any nation. Small and primitive states had achieved a greater measure of success, as shown in their art, because they were concerned with the welfare of the greatest number. Burke elaborated further on such model action by stating that "all happiness is connected with the practise of Virtue, which necessarily depends upon the knowledge of Truth; that is, upon the Knowledge of those unalterable relations which providence has ordained that every thing should bear to every other". Reason should direct itself to these truths, and "not think to force nature and the whole order of her system, by a compliance with our pride and folly, to conform to our artificial regulations".<sup>79</sup> The philosopher's remarks throw light on Wood's search for enduring truth and beauty among the smaller nations of the world; people whose clearly illustrated example spoke of the ephemerality of artificial values and mores, which had undermined even great civilizations throughout the ages.

In conclusion, it must be pointed out that, although the Society's policy in general was to preserve as comprehensive and authoritative records as possible of some of the more important monuments of the past, this was not the travelling scholars' only

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<sup>78</sup> Burke, A Vindication of Natural Society, p. 34.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 15.



task while abroad. Wood advised them that in addition to "remarking every circumstance, which can contribute towards giving the best idea of the ancient and present state of those places", this should not be their sole interest. "On the contrary," he observed, "it is expected that you do report to us, for the information of the Society, whatever can fall within the notice of curious and observant travellers; and, in order to ascertain more fully our meaning on this head ... to keep minute journals of every day occurrences." These, he explained further, could be transmitted to British consuls abroad or specifically to William Russell, Esquire, Secretary to the Levant Company.<sup>80</sup>

Every traveller, no matter how specialized, admitted the need for such observations. He realized his dependence on governmental and other sponsorship, and the necessity for some network of communication to be forged between his country and its outlying trade posts. Furthermore, since every step of his was fraught with hazards, and he was often driven to the limits of mental and physical endurance, every experience was of even greater importance. The primitive state of transport, which meant that the simplest journey covered a period of weeks, months, or even years, had the double effect of making every item of information collected by the visitor valuable, and, at the same time causing it to be viewed with special regard because of the difficulty with which it had been obtained. Under these circumstances, travellers were at liberty to present facts according to their own integrity and taste, in the certain

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<sup>80</sup> Wood's instructions to travellers dated May 17, 1764. Cust, History of the Society of the Dilettanti, p.4.

knowledge that, no matter how wondrous their tales, they would be welcomed by an audience eager for stories of adventure as well as anxious for academic and religious information.

Wood himself, although held in high esteem, was not entirely immune from criticism in this respect. Gibbon, who had on the one hand welcomed the publication of the works on Palmyra and Baalbec, on the other, in a reference to the Essay on Homer, censured him as an author who on occasions was inaccurate; in particular he criticized Wood's description of the Hellespont, the famous strait of Greek mythology.<sup>81</sup> Another author summed up his lengthy examination of the 'Essay' by remarking that 'he indulged too much in the suggestions of his own genius'.<sup>82</sup> Of all comments made on his work, the harshest criticism was levelled by Professor Andrew Dalzel in 1791 in his work, A Comparative View of the Ancient and Present State of the Troade. After an examination of the book he condemned his account as 'converting the whole into a mass of confusion'.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. by J. B. Bury (7 vols; London: Methuen & Co., 1902), Chapters Li note, and xvii., quoted in Dictionary of National Biography. Gibbon made the following stringent attack on Wood, "He had visited the banks of the Hellespont; he had read Strabo; he ought to have consulted the Roman itineraries; how was it possible for him to confound Ilium and Alexandria Troas which were sixteen miles from each other?" Ibid., Chapter XVII, note 19, p. 145. See Wood's Essay on Homer, pp. 320, 340-341.

<sup>82</sup> Thomas Howes, Critical Observations on Books, pp. 1-79 quoted in Dictionary of National Biography, op.cit.

<sup>83</sup> Demeunier Chevalier, "Descriptions of the Plain of Troy," Notes by Professor Andrew Dalzel (London, 1791) pp. 56, 75-81.

In the light of the above, it is not surprising that, when even the most authoritative comments of well-qualified scholars were subject to doubt, ~~that~~<sup>this would</sup> lead to a disparaging view of all travellers. Gradually, and as a result of the growing number of visitors to these remote regions, authoritative sources ceased to expect their ambassador to interpret and categorize for their benefit every phenomenon he encountered. The new voyager was forced to alter the fundamental precept that, being in a given location at a certain period in history, he was necessarily able intuitively, by establishing contact with ancient generations, and studying the customs of present inhabitants or fluctuations of climate, to grasp eternal truths. His view of the legends of Homer, of the lands of the patriarchs and the habits and mores of the people of the desert, necessarily became modified as a result of Britain's expanding role overseas, when it became necessary to view circumstances in terms of political allegiances and the struggle for supremacy. The most marked change between the eighteenth and nineteenth century traveller probably lay in the fact that, while Richard Pococke and Robert Wood's advice to collect any noteworthy information was secondary to the main purpose of recording archaeological data, the visitor at a later date was increasingly aware of his country's importance, and viewed all his excavations in the light of his nation's position. In a way he owed much of his new complacency to the efforts of these previous generations of travellers, who had inundated the museums, archives and libraries of Europe with manuscripts, books, and archaeological samples of Eastern civilizations. The concluding chapter will explore some of these changing attitudes.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ALEXANDER RUSSELL : A DOCTOR'S VIEW OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ALEPPO

1715 - 1768

The witness of the eye doth farre excell,  
The witness of the eare in high degree:  
What others doe by hearsay onely tell,  
This man most plainely with his eyes did see.<sup>1</sup>

If Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters are consulted for their insight into the manners and institutions of the beau monde in the Turkish cities of Constantinople and Adrianople, then Dr. Alexander Russell's work, The Natural History of Aleppo (1794),<sup>2</sup> can be referred to as an index of the science and manners of the inhabitants of eighteenth-century Aleppo. Pinkerton, in a volume of Voyages and Travels, praised Russell's work, and described his first edition, published in 1756, as "one of the most complete pictures of Eastern manners extant".<sup>3</sup>

Russell successfully bridged East and West, and achieved eminence in both areas of the world. A student of medicine at Edinburgh University in his youth, he interrupted his course of study to accept an appointment in the British factory of the Levant Trading Company in Aleppo in 1740. Between the years 1734 to 1740 he travelled throughout the Ottoman Empire,

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Robson, Newes from Aleppo, A Letter... (London, 1628).

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Russell, The Natural History of Aleppo. Containing a Description of the City, and the Principal Natural Productions in its Neighbourhood. Together with an Account of the Climate, Inhabitants, and Diseases; Particularly of the Plague. 2 vols. (London, 1794). The first edition published in 4to size in 1756 was only one volume. The second edition, also in 4to, published in 1794, was substantially enlarged through the contributions of Patrick Russell, half-brother of the author.

<sup>3</sup> Dictionary of National Biography, eds. Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (Oxford, 1904), XVII, 426.

gathering insight into its laws, government and culture. His diligence and personal integrity earned him the respect of many prominent people in Britain as well as in Turkey and the Levant.

One friend who paid special tribute to him as a person was the eminent physician John Fothergill. In a eulogy delivered in 1769 on the death of this outstanding and dedicated traveller, Fothergill praised his efforts in winning the support of the Porte, which was a welcome service and of great benefit to England. He applauded Russell's 'British' qualities and his high moral standards: "The pascha ... called him his friend, found him upright, sensible, and sincere; as a man, polite without flattery, decent, but not servile; as a Christian, true to his principles, disinterested and generous as a Briton; and in point of skill as a physician superior to everyone. A natural, even, cool and consistent temper ... was a character seldom to be met with in the Asiatic regions".<sup>3</sup>

Fothergill explained to the Royal College of Physicians, to whom he was addressing his eulogy, the circumstances which contributed towards the publication of the comprehensive volumes on Aleppo:

From the time he left England, to his return in February 1755, we had maintained a regular correspondence. I could not forbear mentioning to him repeatedly, how acceptable a more accurate account of Aleppo would be to this nation, and to all Europe; that no person would probably ever stand a chance of succeeding in it so happily as himself; that his long residence there, his knowledge of the language, the

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<sup>3</sup> John Coakley Lettson, "An Essay on the Character of late Alexander Russell, M.D.," The Works of John Fothergill, M.D. (London, 1783), p. 369.

manners, the customs, diseases of the place, the great credit he had acquired amongst all ranks, by an able, diligent, and disinterested exertion of his faculties amongst them, his influence over the pascha, and the respect paid him by the Turks themselves, would facilitate every inquiry.<sup>4</sup>

Fothergill added that his fellow student and colleague had "viewed the proposal in the same light, collected materials, made suitable enquiries, and has erected a lasting and honourable monument to his memory".<sup>5</sup> Fothergill's assessment of the value of the book was shared by Samuel Johnson, who reviewed it in the Literary Magazine, and also by Gmelin, who translated it into German,<sup>6</sup> with valuable annotations.

The process of gathering information for the second edition was long and protracted as a result of Alexander Russell's death. Eventually, a larger and more comprehensive work, encompassing two volumes, was possible, thanks to the unstinting efforts of Patrick Russell, the editor, and the accumulation of material throughout their respective periods of residence, first of Alexander Russell from 1750 to 1753, and then of Patrick from 1750 to 1768, who replaced the former as physician to the Levant Company. The plan and content of the second publication followed the design of the first edition to a large extent, and, as we shall see in the following pages, conformed to the established pattern for travel accounts of the period.

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<sup>4</sup> William Munk, The Roll of the Royal College of Physicians of London, "An Essay on the Character of the late Alexander Russell," Vol. II, 1701-1800 (London, 1878), p. 231. See also Lettsom, op. cit., p. 374.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Austin Allibone, A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American authors (London, 1870), vol. II, p. 1897. See Robert Kerr, A General History and Collection of Voyages (London, 1824), XVIII, Catalogue of Voyages and Travels No. 694., p. 608.

Most of the material incorporated into the two editions was based upon the personal observations of the writers, as they took pains to point out. Nevertheless Patrick Russell acknowledged his indebtedness to his friend, Mr. Niebhur, for a map of the city of Aleppo, and extended thanks to two scientists, Sir Joseph Banks and Doctor Solander, for their help in "tending to the advancement of Natural History".<sup>7</sup>

He explained that he had found it necessary to include a very comprehensive guide to Aleppo's streets, as it was "requisite for understanding the progress of the plague".<sup>8</sup> The [comprehensive] Notes and Illustrations at the end of each volume, in addition to the usual citations and references at the bottom of each page, were added by Patrick Russell after his return to London in 1771. He believed it was necessary to include useful additional information for the benefit of the reader who wished to research further into a particular topic.

Although the authors relied to a great extent on their own observations, thus proving themselves to be true empirical 'philosophers', they consulted, to some extent, the accounts of others for corroboration of ~~some~~ facts that they had discovered. Among the works they studied were the itineraries of Portuguese, German and French sixteenth and seventeenth century travellers,

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<sup>7</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo p. viii.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. vii.

in particular, those of Pedro Teixeira,<sup>9</sup> B. Tellez,<sup>10</sup> Dr. Leonhart Rauwolff,<sup>11</sup> and Jean-Baptiste Tavernier.<sup>12</sup> Patrick Russell wrote in this connection that fortunately he found that "in the most material circumstances, they agree with the Author, and himself, and occasionally prove more full than either".<sup>13</sup> They disagreed mostly, however, with other travellers' narratives in their relation of Mohammedan practices and the moral behaviour of the inhabitants of the region. The mistakes of the other travellers were a result of previous misconceptions, false interpretation of the data available, or insufficient contact with the populace in general. In the preface, Alexander Russell enlightened his reader by saying that "he knew that the Polity and Manners of the Turks had been amply described by several respectable Writers; but he had frequent occasion to remark in conversation, that many domestic minutiae, lying less in the way of Travellers, had either escaped notice altogether, or been erroneously represented: while their utility, from their connection with Scriptural History, rendered them interesting to the Curious".<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Pedro Teixeira, The Travels of P. Texeira from India to Italy by Land (1708).

<sup>10</sup> B. Tellez, Travels of the Jesuits in Ethiopia (1711). See A New Collection of Voyages and Travels, ed. J. Stevens, vol. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Leonhart Rauwolff, Itinerary into the Eastern Countries, as Syria, Palestine, etc. See J. Ray, A Collection of Curious Travels and Voyages (London, 1693) II, 61 and 88.

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Les Six Voyages de Jean Baptiste Tavernier (Paris, 1682).

<sup>13</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, p. xiii.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Vol. I, p. iv.



He was well aware of the "extreme difficulty of divesting one's self of prejudices contracted in familiar intercourse with the Natives, in a long series of years; and convinced that opinions formed of Men and Manners, from private experience, must inevitably in the representation to others, take some tincture from the observer's condition of life, as well as from his constitutional temper".<sup>15</sup> Some of the more outstanding instances of distortion of aspects of life in the East by foreign residents or travellers will be treated in the course of exploring a number of Russell's conclusions about life in the city of Aleppo and its environs.

The approach of the two Russells to the area, and especially that of Alexander Russell, who is the main author of the work on Aleppo, was objective and scientific. At all times he attempted to discuss systematically and thoroughly every aspect of life in the East. Volume one he devoted to a description of the city and its inhabitants, while<sup>in</sup> the first part of volume two he studied the natural history,<sup>16</sup> antiquities, and medicine of the area, supplementing it in part two, with further information on the customs of the inhabitants, their literature, the weather,<sup>17</sup> epidemic diseases, and the plague. Patrick felt dissatisfied

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. xii.

<sup>16</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, Vol. II, Book IV. It contains an analysis of Quadrupeds, Birds, Fishes, Insects and Reptiles as well as plants.

<sup>17</sup> The Reverend Thomas Harmer notes that only Russell gave an account of the weather in Aleppo, for which the West is indebted: "For Dr. Russell, speaking of Aleppo, which lies more to the north than Jerusalem ... tells us, that the severity of the winter there lasts but forty days, which they call Maarbanie, beginning from the 12th of December, and ending the twentieth of January". See Thomas Harmer, Reverend, Observations on Various Passages of Scripture. Placing them in a New Light; and ascertaining the meaning of several, not determinable by the Methods Commonly Used by the Learned (London, 1816), Preface, p. xix.

with the section given to natural history, but remarked that lack of contact with research teams in Europe made them unable to assess the value of their information. To remedy this situation he suggested the establishment of up-to-date research centres in trading outposts, which would contain "a small collection of Books on Astronomy, ancient Geography, and Natural History, together with a few Instruments". "These", he added, "might advantageously (be)placed in the libraries of the Levant Company at their principal settlements; to which might be added, heads of inquiry adapted to the respective stations, under the form of Queries".<sup>18</sup>

In his description of the city of Aleppo, Russell acquainted the reader with the main features of an oriental city. He pointed out that "in situation, magnitude, population, and opulence, it is much inferior to Constantinople and Cairo nor can it presume to emulate the courtly splendor of either of those cities". Its merits, he added, lay "in salubrity of air, in the solidity and elegance of its private buildings, as well as the convenience and neatness of its streets; Aleppo may be reckoned superior to both: and though no longer possessed of the same commercial advantages as in former times, it still continues to maintain a share of trade far from inconsiderable".<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, Vol. I, p.x.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

Located on the trade route between the Persian Gulf, Baghdad and Constantinople, and in close proximity to Latakia, one of the Levantine ports, the city provided a natural choice for a British trading outpost. Unfortunately, however, by 1753, during the time of Russell's residence in the city, the number of representatives had dwindled to nine people only in both the French and British sectors of Aleppo. The members of the British community consisted of a consul, ten merchants, a chaplain, chancellor, an officer and a "Chause (who) walks before the Consul carrying a staff tipped with silver".<sup>20</sup> Russell's function was to cater to their medical needs; however, as a result of the fewness of their numbers, he found ample time to practise his profession throughout Aleppo. His medical duties often allowed him <sup>to enter</sup> into the prohibited confines of the women's harems, thus affording him an insight into their life and habits usually concealed from less fortunate travellers.

In its history, Aleppo had captured the imagination of many writers, including Shakespeare. Impressed by the image of four to six hundred caravans passing through the city either on pilgrimage to Mecca or on their way to and from other exotic trading markets, he had mentioned Aleppo in several of his plays.

Russell described the impressive vista:

The mosques, the minarets, and numerous cupolas form a splendid spectacle; and the flat roofs of the houses which are situated on the hills, rising one behind another, present a succession of hanging terraces, interspersed with cyprus and poplar trees.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Vol. II, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., I, p. 14.

Gradually he led his reader along the streets of the city to ~~experience~~ and enjoy the features of architecture and adornment peculiar to cities of the Near East. Although admitting that many aspects were strange and mysterious to Western eyes, he never aimed at shocking or titillating the senses of avid readers of travel accounts. He could not tolerate the creation of a fictional town or scene from the Arabian tales; the West's interests could best be served by appreciating both the common and different features of Eastern and Western cultures.

On the surface, the atmosphere of the city was sombre, with the castle of Aleppo, where thousands had been killed at one time by invading Tartars under the command of Gengiz Khan, dominating the scene. Studied closely, however, it was not particularly impressive: "fortresses of the East are contemptible to a European eye",<sup>22</sup> while many of the streets surrounding it also appeared unattractive. Both public and private buildings were remarkably unadorned and only the flowing river Kowick, which irrigated the plentiful poplar trees and hanging terraces, relieved the silent and almost gloomy façade of latticed windows.<sup>23</sup> Appearances, however, were deceptive, for life within the seraglios, baths, khanes (inns), and mosques was very active, and the furnishings and intricate workmanship anything but simple and plain.

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<sup>22</sup> Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. J. B. Bury. (London, 1898), V, 437n.

<sup>23</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, p. 14-15.

Russell, always alert to the dangers of an over-active imagination, strove, almost continually, to portray as truthfully and as objectively as possible all aspects of religious and everyday life as he encountered it in Aleppo. Disagreeing with the then current Western attitudes towards Turkish power, the Islamic religion, Muslim women and the supposed vacuum arising out of the absence of a true Turkish gentry, Russell sought to present another, more scientifically truthful, version of life in the East. He systematically exposed the assertions of outstanding travellers and residents of the Ottoman domains by pointing either to the paucity of their information or to their being victims of blind prejudice. One outstanding personality whom he found to have been guilty of distorting the Turk's religious image was James Porter, British Ambassador to the Porte and author of Observations on the Religion, Law, etc. of the Turks (1768). Defining the Turk's religious character, Porter had written:

... the Turks hold all who are not of their belief and embrace not the doctrines of their Prophet, to be objects of divine vengeance, and consequently of their detestation, and against whom they are to exercise violence, fraud, and rapine.<sup>24</sup>

Porter had continued his condemnation of adherents to the Mahometan faith by elaborating further on the general principle above:

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., quoted by Russell, I, 417.

The force and efficacy of this principle operates so effectually, that Mahometans are ever ready to demonstrate their zeal by spurning and ill treating the persons, plundering the property, and even destroying the very existence of those who profess a different religion. If they are candid they will frankly confess, upon an inquiry, that such is their duty, so they are commanded, and that they are convinced it is most meritorious in the sight of God and his Prophet.<sup>25</sup> (Observations, p. 11.)

Russell answered him by pointing out that, although on occasion "Mohammedans are very apt to charge Christianity with idolatry, and a tendency towards polytheism",<sup>26</sup> they did not believe that Jews and Christians should be indiscriminately mistreated. In one of the rare statements that portray the 'infidel' Turk favourably to a suspicious eighteenth-century Europe, Russell elaborated:

Notwithstanding the contemptuous light in which the Turks view all other religions, they permit liberty of conscience in their dominions, and tolerate the public exercise of the Christian and Jewish religions, with their respective rites and ceremonies. The different Monks dress in their respective habits, go freely about their functions, and, at funeral processions, elevate the cross, the moment they get without the city gate.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., I, 213.

<sup>27</sup> Robson, first chaplain at the factory, conveyed the common western attitude towards the Turks, when, in writing about the use of the famous Aleppo aqueduct, he mentioned that the water was either "fetched for private uses, or forced to wash the stinking feet of the profane Turke before they enter into their bawling devotion". Robson, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>27</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, I, 214.

To support his own position, he cited the authority of De la Motray and de la Croix, two French writers on the Ottoman Empire, who had resided for fourteen years in Turkey, and particularly in Constantinople, and who had written that "no where was religion more free, or less disturbed, than in Turkey".<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, by imputing the maltreatment of non-Muslim residents to Koranic principles, Porter had merely showed his ignorance of the ethical system of the Koran. He had also failed to take into account the problems involved in the administration of a vast, unhomogeneous, loosely-flung empire.

Russell further criticized Porter for his unfounded observations on Moslem practices in prayer: "The information clearly could neither have been derived from the Turks themselves, nor from their books; yet I have no doubt that the Author considered it as exactly true".<sup>29</sup> He was sharply critical of Porter's methodology, and charged him with being concerned with trivialities:

The account of a Secretary of State found employed in disputing "to what exact height the hands or arms feet or legs, of a Moslem should be washed to render him truly acceptable to God", is exactly in the spirit of a Greek Christian, who considered making the sign of the cross with a finger dipped in holy water; or the aspersion of houses at the cross with a finger dipped in holy water; or the aspersion of houses at the Epiphany... as matters of serious consequence.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., I, 419.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

Many obstacles prevented a resident from properly evaluating a culture inimical to his own. Russell attributed the British envoy's failure, in spite of his long residence abroad, to "his situation at the Porte, which put it in his power to attain a practical knowledge in a diplomatic line, which precluded that familiar intercourse with the Moslems, which is necessary for learning the domestic life and manners of a people, whom he represents as naturally reserved, especially on subjects of religion".<sup>31</sup>

Oriental reticence was one of the main factors with which visitors had to contend, a point on which both Russell and Porter agreed. <sup>The</sup> <sup>of the population,</sup> <sup>by the Europeans,</sup> ~~^Evasiveness^~~ and ignorance of the language ~~^often~~ made intelligible conversation almost impossible:

Strangers who do not, and cannot perfectly understand the language, must converse by interpreters; but these dare not enter into inquiries they think will give offence: on such subjects, therefore, they never do nor will interpret; if they are pressed, evasion is their refuge, and both the question they make, and the answer they return, will be entirely their own invention.<sup>32</sup>

European residents did not attempt to intermingle with the local inhabitants. A twentieth-century author quotes a visitor who wrote in this connection: "As for our living amongst them, it is with all possible quiet and safety; and that is all we desire, their conversation being not in the least entertaining".<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., I, p. 418.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., I, p. 419.

<sup>33</sup> Norman Daniel, Islam, Europe and Empire (Edinburgh, 1966), p. 13.



Similarly, a chaplain to the English factory at Aleppo in 1698 had briefly ~~written~~ explained that "our delights are among ourselves".<sup>34</sup> Consequently, not many travellers were in a position to write authoritatively about the Ottoman world, and many of their assertions about the area needed careful evaluation. Lady Mary Montagu had shared Russell's opinion, and had remarked that the Near East was "seldom visited but by merchants, who mind little but their own affairs, or travellers, who make too short a stay to be able to report anything exactly of their own knowledge", to which she had added, "they can give no better idea of the ways here than a French refugee, lodging in a garret in Greek-Street, could write of the court of England".<sup>35</sup>

Another group whom Russell warned against were the legions of monks who deliberately misrepresented the behaviour of the local people. Self-righteous and bigoted, they represented the worst kind of travellers, since they attempted to attribute the most obnoxious characteristics possible to the inhabitants of the region. The two against whom he was particularly incensed were Baumgarten, who had travelled in 1505, and Symon Simion, the "learned Bishop of Apamea". Writing in Latin, Baumgarten and Simion had accused the population of being sodomites, villains and of cohabiting with asses and beasts.<sup>36</sup> They had shown no mercy or compassion for the people among whom they had moved and lived, and in one instance had described the extreme cruelty

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, I, p. 410.

of the inhabitants, who had allegedly allowed an erring saint to bake in the burning sun. Russell condemned such erroneous and unenlightened assertions, and criticized Baumgarten:

"He might possibly, while in Turkey, have seen no instance of public punishment of the crime alluded to, but what proof could he have had of the actual commission of such, sufficient to justify so general a charge against a numerous body of people, with whom he cannot be supposed to have been familiarly acquainted!." <sup>37</sup> Moreover, Russell chastized these erring monks by pointing to their limited experience of the area, and concluded that, had they made the acquaintance of more Turkish people, they would "surely have known some who led decent lives". <sup>38</sup>

Writing ~~not long after when~~ Conyers Middleton (1683-1750) had compared the current Catholic Church to ~~that of~~ heathen Rome, <sup>39</sup> Russell applauded Mohammedanism as much more tolerant and compassionate:

Were a Turk who travelled in Europe to bring a similar charge against the Legions of Monks he meets with in various habits, his prejudice and credulity, would be objects of pity or contempt; and some Catholic Prelate might possibly lament the Mohammedan's misfortune, in not having been born heir to a religion, which breathing a more benevolent spirit, enjoins its professors to judge of their neighbours with caution and charity. <sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 411.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Conyers Middleton, A Letter from Rome, Shewing an Exact conformity between Popery and Paganism: or, The Religion of the Present Romans, derived from that of their Heathen Ancestors, 4th ed., (London, 1741).

<sup>40</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, p. 411.

In this passage Russell revealed his total lack of prejudice -- especially since he advocated that the same yardstick of behaviour should be applied to all people, regardless of their country of origin or religion. Surely such a call for a tolerant attitude must remain as true today, in the twentieth century, as it was in Russell's time!

Within the Ottoman Empire, the various sects and religious denominations exercised the utmost care not to offend in any way one another's beliefs: "Should a grave Effendee condescend in conversation to appeal to a Christian for the truth of what may have been asserted respecting his creed, the Christian thinks it more prudent to assent equivocally, than to risk a contradiction which would hurt the pride of his opponent: and indeed the Eastern Christians are themselves but superficially instructed.<sup>41</sup> Such subtleties were not easily apparent to the casual visitor, and only the trained eye of a local observer could detect them.

A visitor also needed to distinguish between the different levels of society, just as it was necessary for him to realize that Muslims living close to Mecca were more dogmatic and anti-European than others living in the more cosmopolitan cities of Constantinople, Smyrna and Aleppo. Russell found, in the first instance, many travellers guilty of not realizing that basic differences existed between the privileged and un-privileged classes, and, in particular, took Lady Mary to task on several occasions for failing to make this distinction. So strongly did he feel about the necessity of avoiding this attitude that in his Preface he clearly

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., I, p. 415.

stated that "the fault of blending the different orders of Society, in the description of Eastern Manners, which has too often justly been imputed to travellers, and from which the contradictory descriptions, respecting the oeconomy of the higher ranks, have chiefly proceeded, has sedulously been avoided",<sup>42</sup> in his book.

Europeans involved in trade transactions with local officials often noted the growth of a comradeship which had been impossible previously: "Several Bashaws and other great men, have conferred publick honours on the Franks, and treated them with such distinguished regard and familiarity, as would in former times have occasioned much popular discontent."<sup>43</sup> The 'Ullama (educators), wayfaring merchants, and the inferior class of Osmanli, also showed a healthy respect for the European in their midst, while, on the other hand, among the vulgar classes, a contempt for the 'Frangi' infidels still existed.

No visitor to the Ottoman domains, whether for a short or long period, remained unaware of the oppression and injustice administered by high-ranking officials on the population in general. Russell was no exception, and added his voice to others equally critical:

In the ordinary course of administration, the provinces are left to be pillaged, by those whose duty it is to protect them. The Bashaw himself anxious and indigent in the midst of pomp and adulation, subject to the incessant demands of the Porte, and harassed by long and expensive journies, is continually in pursuit of that wealth which he is seldom permitted to enjoy; and which often must be procured by means as incompatible with justice, as ruinous to the Province.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., I, xi.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., I, 215.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., I, 342.

Not being allowed to remain long enough in his post to create any affinity with his province, and eager to accrue the wealth which he considered to be part of his right as a high-ranking employee, the bashaw, or ruler, not only allowed exploitation of the provinces, but viewed tyranny as an inseparable prerequisite of office .<sup>45</sup>

This practice was not new, as Gibbon was to explain in The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. The avarice of officials had been one of the causes responsible for the downfall of the Roman civilization: "The barbarian conquerors of Rome usurped in a moment the toil and treasure of successive ages." Since the value of gold and silver was the easiest to assess, because it "represented the most ample command of the industry and possessions of mankind", it had been the first thing to be removed. When monuments of antiquity had been stripped, "the Romans would demolish with their own hands the arches and walls, if the hope of profit could surpass the cost of the labour and exportation".<sup>46</sup>

A historian, writing about Syria, found that in spite of an increase in trade at that time, there had been a decrease in both the wealth and the numbers of population as a result of corrupt practices.<sup>47</sup> Russell discovered that of the three hundred villages, which were formerly comprehended in the Bashawlick, less than one-third were inhabited in 1772. Agriculture had

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 326.

<sup>46</sup> Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, (London, 1902), VII, 310-311.

<sup>47</sup> George Kirk, A Short History of the Middle East. Paperback ed. (New York, 1970), p.62.

declined proportionately. He mourned the state of sad neglect: "Under such circumstances, it cannot be wondered that the country, though blest with so many natural advantages of soil and climate should be found thinly people, and poorly cultivated."<sup>48</sup> Volney, the French traveller, who visited Aleppo around 1784-85, estimated that out of three thousand, two hundred taxable villages in the walah of Aleppo at the start of the Ottoman rule, only about four hundred were left.<sup>49</sup> The peasant, according to Russell, was victimized by "vagrant tribes of Tukmans, Rushwans, and Arabs", as well as "Russian troops of Levands out of pay", who were ordered "under pain of military execution (to) raise contributions from the defenceless villages". He could only retaliate by cultivating the minimum amount possible, just enough for his own needs, or moving away, if under too much pressure. On the other hand, areas such as the mountains of Lebanon, which were "better secured by natural situation, from tyrannical oppression", were finely cultivated, full of people, and presented "thriving hamlets on all hands".<sup>50</sup>

The cultural legacy of past civilizations also suffered from the neglect of the Ottoman authorities. Some 7,000 to 8,000 manuscripts and books, Russell assessed, were no longer the property of the Eastern nations, and had passed into the libraries of the West : to the Vatican, to Leiden, Paris,<sup>the</sup> Escorial, Florence and to Oxford's Bodleian, which had acquired 2,000 to 3,000 manuscripts and 11,000 printed documents, mostly in Arabic on

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<sup>48</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, Vol. I, p. 342.

<sup>49</sup> F. Volney, Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte pendant les années 1783, 1784 et 1785. (Paris, 1787), p. 147.

<sup>50</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, I, p. 339.

such subjects as philology, law, divinity, and medicine. No longer were the majority of these treasures confined to the Royal Treasury in Cairo, which in 1171, during the rule of the Fatimites, had contained over one hundred thousand volumes; nor to the Royal Library at Cordova, which owned six hundred thousand books, or to Constantinople, where a certain Hadji Calfa was said to own over forty thousand such works. Books left in the main cities of the Ottoman Empire had become mere collectors' items, and Effendees competed against Sheikhs at auctions merely for the prestige of owning more volumes.

The pursuit of knowledge had deviated from its original purpose, and students relied on the Koran for their education. The mosques, in which advanced pupils undertook their lessons, could be designated "more properly seminaries of pedantry and superstition than of science; and (were) chiefly frequented by the studious of the poorer class, who dedicate(d) themselves to the service of the mosque".<sup>51</sup> Not taught to challenge or question the content or method of their curriculum, the educated class in Aleppo grew up as "strangers to experiment, (who) indolently content themselves with what is found in books, and almost every fact, and every opinion for which they can produce written authority, is held to be true. Of the faculties given them by nature, memory alone is exercised, the others rust from inaction, or are employed to purposes very foreign from literature".<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., II, pp. 94-95.

As a result of this situation, "natural history, and the experimental part of physics, have made no progress for many centuries,<sup>53</sup> ... the literati are in a manner wholly ignorant of the later improvements and discoveries made in Europe", and regrettably the people "seldom seem interested in philosophical intelligence, unless where the facts related border on the marvelous",<sup>54</sup> and were now only earning "the rash contempt of travellers"<sup>55</sup> by foolish pretence to knowledge of European affairs.

Poetry and music, which had constituted the heart and soul of Arab culture from earliest times, had also lost their vitality:

Poetry, which from the earliest times had been successfully cultivated by the Arabians, and which met with patronage from several of the Ommiyan Khalifs, at a period when the sciences languished in contempt, still maintains a certain degree of respect among men of letters. But though poetry continues to be admired, the muses may be said to have fled.<sup>56</sup>

Effendees, sustained by the sanguine efficiency of puppets on a stage, "peruse their ancient poets with the unpropitious frigidity of mere grammarians",<sup>57</sup> so that Russell found the Aleppo bards in despair of ever reaching the excellence of their ancestors. They never attempted anything beyond a dirge, a ballad, or an epigram.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.



Visitors, therefore, who were eager to learn from the local inhabitants, found themselves sadly disappointed and were inclined to disbelieve records of past achievements of the Arabs. Russell quoted two such sceptical writers, Mr. Renaudot and a certain Dr. Friend, who had written:

I believe one may venture to affirm, that the Arabian learning, however magnified by their own nation, and by some European moderns, was entirely derived from the Greeks: and this race of men was so far from making great improvements in any science, that whatever they translated or imitated they made worse.<sup>58</sup>

Russell agreed with the authors' findings that the "books most read are modern abridgements of ancient authors, or collections made from various writers, either jumbled promiscuously together, or arranged in tables or subdivisions, agreeably to the fancy of the compiler",<sup>59</sup> and that the canon of Avicenna, a Roman edition in wide circulation in Aleppo, was *not* adequately *appreciated* ; but he did not concur totally with these and other writers in deprecating the achievements of Arabs, past and present. He pointed out that if Dr. Friend "had more leisure to bestow on perusing them, he probably would have been less disposed to join in Renaudot's harsh censure".<sup>60</sup>

Even the Greek nation, once considered to be opulent and flourishing, had lost its unity and direction under the misrule and chaos which pervaded the Ottoman Empire. Russell attributed

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 120-21.

this fragmentation to the growing schism in the Church, one faction honouring their own Patriarch, whilst the other had become latinized and followed the leadership of the Pope. The use of Greek was limited to a few Constantinople-educated clergy, who had been taught to regard it as a vulgar language. Travel between outlying areas was hazardous, and schools for the teaching of Greek were non-existent, so that the actual use of the language was limited to the confines of a few households.

Russell did not find any outstanding traits either in the 5,000 Jewish inhabitants of Aleppo. Employed as merchants and bankers, and rendering accounting and book-keeping services to the Ottoman Porte, they were "held in still greater contempt than the Christians".<sup>61</sup> Victims of the same malady that pervaded the Empire, they had nothing to offer that was commensurate with their standing in scriptural history: "They have one Synagogue ... where a manuscript of the Old Testament is preserved, which, as they pretend, is of very high antiquity".<sup>62</sup>

Russell did not consider the Turks to be deliberately malevolent; rather that they were very much in the same position as the European aristocracy. The more thoughtful Turks, like many social historians of the age, regretted that their fellow-countrymen had departed from their earlier virtues and simple ways of life. Russell quoted their assessment of the situation:

<sup>61</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, II, 60.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

They remark that the rougher virtues of their ancestors are lost in an excessive refinement of manners; and that Religion, not revered as formerly, retains little more than its outward form: not having influence sufficient to restrain the numerous vices, which modern luxury, and the frivolous spirit of the age, have universally introduced.<sup>63</sup>

Thus the Turks' shortcomings, he emphasized, were not due to their constitution, as some critics believed, but to the universal weaknesses of mankind.

Although his account of Aleppo emphasized the manners and customs of the inhabitants, and, especially, as he thought, those of the Arab or Syrian nation, Edward Lane, in the preface to his work on the modern Egyptians, criticized him for an imperfect understanding of Eastern manners. Lane believed that Russell's narrative in this respect was inadequate, and did not accurately represent the traditions of the Arabs. Consequently there was a real need for an account of these people, which Lane had himself written in Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians (1833-35). In it he furnished this explanation to the reader:

It may be said, that the English reader already possesses an excellent and ample description of Arab manners and customs in Dr. Russell's account of the people of Aleppo. I will not forfeit my own claim to the reputation of an honest writer by attempting to detract from the just merits of that valuable and interesting work; but must assert that it is, upon the whole, rather an account of Turkish than of Arab manners; and that neither the original Author, nor his brother, to whom we are indebted for the enlarged and much improved edition, was sufficiently acquainted with the Arabic language to scrutinize some of the most interesting subjects of inquiry which the plan of the work required them to treat; nor would their well-known station in Aleppo, or perhaps their national feelings, allow

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., I, p. 336 .

them to assume those disguises which were necessary to enable them to become familiar with many of the most remarkable religious ceremonies, opinions, and superstitions of the people whom they have described.<sup>64</sup>

Lane, however, mitigated his criticism somewhat by praising the authority of the Russell brothers in other directions:

"Deficiencies in their remarks on these subjects are the only faults of any importance that I can discover in their excellent and learned work".<sup>65</sup>

Lane's authority is, of course, indisputable. On the other hand, Aleppo's society being very closely integrated and interwoven, it was difficult to differentiate at all times between one group and another, especially since they all [shared in the local traditions of] visited the baths, coffee houses, bazaars, gardens and tombs of the faithful. As a matter of fact, Russell was probably aware that he was describing Turkish manners, since Aleppo was the second most important city in the Ottoman Empire, and since he frequently took Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to task for her observations on the Turkish women of Constantinople.

In his approach to many of the daily pursuits of this important trading centre Russell was not only intent on rectifying previous misrepresentations of the morals and customs of the area, but he was also challenging his reader to broaden the horizon of his experience in order to encompass within it a new dimension foreign to his own culture. The comments of a predecessor, E. Veryard, who was also a doctor and wrote in the

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<sup>64</sup> Edward William Lane, An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, Written in Egypt during the years 1833, '34, and '35 (London, 1860), p. xiv.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

beginning of the century, serve to show how important travel and experience were regarded by the philosophers and scholars of the time. Veryard spent thirteen years touring Europe and Asia and wrote in this connection:

There's hardly any Nation from which, by carefully observing their Laws and Customs, their Methods of Civil Government, and the wise Management of their Ministers, a prudent Man may not reap some Benefit. By seeing their different Manners and Humours, he may learn to form his own.<sup>66</sup>

For education to be valuable, and in order to enable him to resist the attractions of frivolity and a life of debauchery, a young man must study men and manners as well as books. By studying foreign languages and exposing himself to other climates, he might discover "jewels of value hid under that Rubbish", which might lead to the improvement and perfection of Arts and Sciences. Thus Veryard's and Russell's approach overlapped in many respects; both desired to have a larger field in which to operate, and both appreciated an opportunity of "actually viewing and contemplating such in the Original, as they had often (been) admired in the bare Copy".<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> E. Veryard, An Account of Divers Choice Remarks, as Well Geographical, as Historical, Political, Mathematical, Physical, and Moral; Taken in a Journey through the Low Countries, France, Italy, and Part of Spain; With the Isles of Sicily and Malta. As also A Voyage to the Levant: A Description of Candia, Egypt, the Red Sea, the Deserts of Arabia, Mount-Horeb, and Mount-Sinai; the Coasts of Palestine, Syria, and Asia-Minor; the Hellespont, Propontis; and Constantinople; the Isles of the Carpathian, Egean, and Ionian Seas. (London, 1701), p. b1.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

"Turkish houses, and even Palaces", Veryard explained, "are always low and mean without, which, they say, is to distinguish them from the House of God, and therefore hold it an undervaluing their Mosques".<sup>68</sup> Similarly Russell found the seraglios of Aleppo to be simple on the outside and much less ostentatious than those of Constantinople. In appearance, the front of the main building of the seraglio was "generally deformed by the irregular disposition of the windows, and projection of the Kiosks at unequal heights".<sup>69</sup> The gate, "arched and decorated with marble of various colours", was high enough to allow important personalities to enter on horseback as far as the bottom of a great staircase located in the second courtyard. At the top of the staircase was a colonnade, with a "richly painted and gilt", projecting wooden frame or curtains sometimes suspended between the columns. On the outside there were many courtyards, which served as barracks and offices for the foot guard, cavalry and the three to four hundred horses belonging to the Bashaw who owned the seraglio and his retinue. The central great court "serve(d) as an hippodrome with stables and offices on each side"; the principal structure within the enclosure included the bashaw's private quarters with special areas for the harem, household officers and pages. Visitors were shown one out of a total of three resplendent small courts complete with divan and water fountains. Russell found the five or six seraglios which

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 346.

<sup>69</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, I. 26.

dotted the city in a sad state of disrepair, more thought having been given to their gaudy decoration than to their durability. Other less impressive seraglios, once intended as residences of former Bashaws of Aleppo, had now been rented to governors or officers of the Porte.

Much of Russell's description of such buildings, the architecture and decoration of which lay outside the scope of the daily experience of a European, was not aimed at titillating his reader's fancy in the manner of the tales of the Arabian and Persian Nights, which since 1704 had dominated the thoughts "of almost every European visitor to the Muslim world".<sup>71</sup> Rather he wished to make him aware of the existence of other beautiful as well as functional styles of architecture. The Oriental style, with its emphasis on abundance and luxury, showed a different method of building and decoration from both the Neo-classical, where "a thought shines in its own natural beauty",<sup>72</sup> and where all monuments followed "nature's simple plan",<sup>73</sup> and from that of the Gothic, where sublimity and intricacy were the main aim of the architect. The décor of the East was calculated to enhance the daily life of man, and to contribute to his general well-being more than that of the West. For example, water-cooled pavements served to mitigate the effects of the heat, while in the Kaah, or reception hall of these large buildings,

<sup>71</sup> Daniel, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>72</sup> Lovejoy, op. cit., p. 161.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 144 .

a dome, supported on three arches of multi-coloured marble containing a shelf with china bowls, silver and crystal vessels, filled the beholder with pleasure. Wherever possible, walls and ceilings were "painted in lively colours intermixed with gilding, and richly varnished".<sup>74</sup>

Russell, like Lady Mary before him, sought after the picturesque, since it developed one's sense of taste and beauty, and provided a stimulus to the imagination.<sup>75</sup> He was also aware of Addison's maxim: "It is but opening the Eye, and the Scene enters. The Colours paint themselves on the Fancy..."<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, Russell, in yielding to the superiority of the senses over the power of reason on certain occasions, captured a scene of exceptional beauty: "Arbours are formed of slight latticed frames, covered by the vine, the rose, or the jasmine: the rose shooting to a most luxuriant height, when in full flower, is elegantly picturesque".<sup>77</sup>

In contrast with the symmetrical, and carefully cultivated gardens of the seraglio, the public parks of Aleppo appeared rough and unkempt. Russell argued, however, that the European would be unwise to adopt a superior or scornful attitude towards them, for here, in Addison's words, "the eye is fed with an

<sup>74</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, p. 26.

<sup>75</sup> Hume had argued that man needed to develop both his mind and senses in order to "exhibit a finer Taste and experience a greater pleasure", a concept to which Russell, in his position as traveller and scientist, heartily adhered. David Hume, Four Dissertations: The Natural History of Religion. Of the Passions. Of Tragedy. Of the Standard of Taste (London, 1757).

<sup>76</sup> William K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Cleanth Brooks, Neo-Classical Criticism: A short History. "Addison and Lessing: Poetry as Pictures" (London, 1970), p. 260.

<sup>77</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, p. 29.



infinite variety of image without any certain stint or measure":<sup>78</sup>

Inelegant as the Aleppo gardens may appear to the cultivated taste of an European, they afford a voluptuous noontide retreat to the languid traveller. Even he, whose imagination can recall the enchanting scenery of Richmond or of Stow, may perhaps experience new pleasure in viewing the glistening pomegranate-thickets, in full blossom. Revived by the freshening breeze, the purling of the brooks, and the verdure of the groves, his ear will catch the melody of the nightingale, delightful beyond what is heard in England; with conscious gratitude to heaven, he will recline on the simple mat, bless the hospitable shelter, and perhaps, while indulging the pensive mood, he will hardly regret the absence of British refinement in gardening.<sup>79</sup>

Two writers, who would have agreed implicitly with Russell's assessment and encouraged his viewpoint, were the sixteenth-century French humanist, Montaigne (1533-1592), and Burke, the British philosopher and politician, who, in 1756, wrote his "Philosophical Inquiry into the origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful" at the same time that Russell was residing in Aleppo. Montaigne, concerned about the aristocracy's departure from the simplicity of nature, had praised people who still retained primitive virtues, and enjoyed an uncorrupted palate. Their fruits, he pointed out, were conceived without art, and yet competed with the best that Western nations produced; primitive nature, not choak'd and smothered with sophisticated ornaments and graces, was able to live "in her own purity and proper lustre"; nor was it proper "that art should gain pre-eminence

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<sup>78</sup> Arthur Lovejoy, Essays in the History of Ideas (Baltimore, 1948), p. 161.

<sup>79</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, I, pp. 49-50.

of our great and powerful mother nature".<sup>80</sup> Burke, on the other hand, while recognizing the inevitability of progress and the cultivation of a more refined taste, still conceded that the standard for art lay in the simplest manifestations of the world, and where "easy observation of the most common, sometimes of the meanest things in nature, will give the truest lights".<sup>81</sup>

The gardens of the East, Russell remarked, unlike those in Europe, were available for people from all shades of life. One particular group of people, who took advantage of this recreation, were the women of the harems. Very often in Aleppo two or three households would hire a garden for the day, where the ladies would lounge on divans provided in the summer-house kiosks, be served all kinds of delicacies by cooks and pages, and be "at liberty to walk about more negligently veiled".<sup>82</sup> A visitor to the East, who witnessed such an outing, would be treated to a spectacle hitherto unknown to him in the West, and he would have the opportunity to obtain the experience that could only be gained by personally participating in such peculiarly local traditions. Music was provided for the entertainment of the entourage both on the journey to the gardens and in the "kiosks projecting over the river". The procession, "walking with a slow and stately step", was preceded by a group of women singing to

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<sup>80</sup> Michael Seigneur de Montaigne, Essays (London, Charles Cotton, 1870), p. 134. He quotes Virg. George: "Hos Natura modos primum dedit."

<sup>81</sup> Edmund Burke, Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful (London, 1765), p.7.

<sup>82</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, p. 255.

accompaniment of the tympanum and 'ziraleet', while professional musicians, together with buffoons, enlivened the outing. Interspersed with the crowd were mules and asses, bearing those women who did not wish to walk in a covered litter or muhassi, which Harmer, the biblical scholar, traced to ancient days.<sup>83</sup>

Another public gathering place, which was unique to oriental culture and afforded the resident an opportunity of witnessing the traditional display of emotion, was the site of the tombs of Islam's holy leaders. There, at the monuments of the Omayyad caliphs, or those of their religious men, the women, children and slaves in their bi-weekly visits first paid homage to the person whose loss they mourned, and then took the opportunity to enjoy being out of doors:

The women ... set out, early in the morning, carrying flowers and aromatic herbs to bestrew the tomb. The moment they arrive at the place, they give loose afresh to their sorrows, in loud screams, interrupted at intervals by the chief mourner, who, in a lower tone of voice recalls the endearing circumstances of past times, or, in a tender apostrophe to the deceased, appeals to the pains she incessantly employed to render his life happy: she describes the forlorn condition of his family, now he is gone, and mingles fond reproach with professions of unalterable affection.<sup>84</sup>

The atmosphere to the onlooker was almost theatrical: "The stillness of the morning is favourable to the Wulwaly. The surrounding tombs, the attitudes and action of the mourners, all conspire to interest a spectator, who, at the time, does not

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., I, p. 257. (Harmer, v. i, p. 445.)

<sup>84</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, I, p. 311.

consider that the whole scene is often little more, than a mere external show".<sup>85</sup> Immediately afterwards the slaves spread the carpets, and the group partakes of the coffee and provisions brought especially for the occasion.

The 'wulwaly', which is a prolonged expression of either sorrow or joy, trilled by hired professional mourners or women of the community during funerals, wedding ceremonies, or even after a triumphant battle, was a custom common to both East and West. In ancient Greece, Penelope, upon discovering the departure of her son, cried out her grief and prepared a supplication for Minerva, and in a while

She ceased; shrill extasies of Joy declare  
The sav'ring Goddess present to the prayer:  
The Suitors heard, and deemed the mirthful voice  
A signal of her Hymeneal choice.<sup>86</sup> (Pope, Odyssey, B. iv.  
v. 1, 1913)

Used by Aeschylus, Euripides, and Homer<sup>87</sup> in passages of personal incantation, these 'wulwaly' or ziralcet, all representing some expression of emotion, found their way into British literature. Smollett, in The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (1771), wrote of the <sup>Scottish</sup> landlord who entertained his lord's kinsmen every morning by playing the family march, and "in this exercise, he indulges them with a variety of pibrachs or airs, suited to the different passions, which he would either excite or assuage".<sup>88</sup> In another instance, at a funeral in the Scottish Highlands, a multitude of

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., I, p. 383, note xxxv.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. See Aeschylus Sept. Theb. v. 272; Euripides, Elect. v. p. 691; Homer, Odyssey, 22. v. 408; Od. iv. Barnes (ed.).

<sup>88</sup> Tobias Smollett, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker. First ed. 1771, 2 vols. (London, 1795), II, p. 88.

old hags, tore their hair, beat their breasts, and howled most hideously, "every period being confirmed by a yell of the coronach".<sup>89</sup> All these calculated emanations of shouts or trills were variants of the Eastern traditions still in existence in remote regions, which had not severed their connections with their heritage.<sup>90</sup>

Edward Pococke, as a distinguished Arabic scholar, in trying to trace the genesis of this loud public articulation and see how it came to be used interchangeably in Greek and Arabic civilizations, especially since the word Wulwaly ولوالي is a variant of the Arabic La Ulah -ila Ullah لا إله إلا الله (there is no other God than the Almighty God), had cited an instance from Herodotus, who had said that the Greeks might have misconstrued the Arabs' use of the words Ulla Ta'ala, الله تعالى, God Almighty. The Greeks had misused it, believing that the ancient Arabs (as pagans) had applied this phrase to the God Bacchus, and it had become Ouratal, أُرَاتَلْ, Oratal, أَرَاتَلْ or Olotal. أَلْتَعَلْ.<sup>91</sup>

Grief, however, was not at all times merely an external show. At times, it provided a sad and moving spectacle, and Russell captures a scene where "a disconsolate father is seen sitting solitarily by the recent grave of an only son; where bending under years and affliction, his eyes raised in silent adoration, while tears fall

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>90</sup> Sir Walter Scott in The Talisman (1825) also wrote of the exultation in the voices of the soldiers, carrying with it an omen of approaching victory. See Walter Scott, Tales of the Crusaders: The Talisman (Edinburgh, 1825), p. 141. Russell also mentioned a passage in Xenophon's Retreat where the soldiers raised a shout of exultation, echoed by "the numerous band of women attending the army, shouted at the same time in their manner". See The Natural History of Aleppo, I, p. 383.

<sup>91</sup> Edward Pococke, Specimen. Hist. Arab. (Oxford, 1649), p. 107.

fast on his blanched and neglected beard, he gives way to the forbidden emotions of grief, and sits an affecting object to the eye of sympathy".<sup>92</sup> Such emotions are ennobling, and, as Hume pointed out, men who experience great depths of pain and pleasure will be more aware of beauty and deformity. Yet, in civilized society, they had to beware of excesses of emotion which would imply a departure from reason and the standards of beauty and taste.<sup>93</sup> In Eastern civilizations, however, expressions of sorrow or joy are natural, and must be admired. Guys, the French eighteenth century traveller, who was concerned with the manners and customs of the Greeks, elaborated on the merits of such emotions when he wrote:

Une femme Grecque pleure son époux, son fils, et avec ses amies pendant plusieurs jours; elles chantent ses louanges et leurs regrets. Nous traiterions de folie ces emportemens de la douleur, parce que la nature, abandonné à son énergie, choque nos bienséances factices, et notre politesse artificielle; mais, telle est l'ivresse des passions, telle est l'expression de la nature, le délire de la douleur et même de la joie. On pleuroit amèrement et on chantoit en même tems les morts.<sup>94</sup>

After all, only when confronted with scenes of real feeling could a poet write truly great verse and an artist imbue his subjects with emotions that are universal to all mankind.

Another feature of oriental life which fascinated most travellers was the manner and method of Eastern dress. It could range from the simple abayah, loose cloak, of the nomad to the

<sup>92</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, p. 312.

<sup>93</sup> Wilson O. Clough, "Reason and Genius -- An Eighteenth Century Dilemma", (Hogarth, Hume, Burke, Reynolds) Philological Quarterly, Volume XXIII (Iowa, January, 1944), p. 38.

<sup>94</sup> P. A. Guys, Voyage Litteraire de la Grece (Paris, 1783), p. 172.

lavish apparel of the more privileged ladies of Aleppo society. The women, in all their finery, could be seen during their weekly visits to the famous Turkish baths which were scattered all over the town. Since those of all ranks were admitted to these places, one had the opportunity to study the different varieties of dress. Thus, while on the one hand the ladies of France and Britain circulated in "a pointed bodice fitting the figure with elbow or long sleeves, a skirt reaching at least to the ankles, and very full on the hips ... the hooped petticoat ... standing out stiffly by the sides",<sup>95</sup> the women of the East cut equally elegant figures. The material for their garments was made of "India Kermazoots, calico, or muslin", and was often embroidered with diamonds and other precious jewels, as Russell explained:

Their Shakshoors, called Gintian (female trousers) are of silk, or India stuff, and pursed at the ankle with a ribband ... Their shift is of fine silk gauze, hanging down to the feet, under the Kunbaz and over the Gintian. Their Cinctures are three inches broad, richly embroidered, and fastened before by a large gilt clasp, set with pearls, or precious stones.<sup>96</sup>

Although he continued his description by recounting all the details of the ladies' costume worn on this and other occasions (not allowing Lady Mary to outdo him in her description of the elegant and expensive costumes of the ladies of Constantinople), he was careful not to escape from reality into the world of fiction and that of the imagination. The manner in which people dressed was either rooted in the past and had taken some tincture from the present, or bore the stamp of degenerate luxury, against which some

<sup>95</sup> Dorothy Hartley and Margaret M. Elliot, "The People's Life and Work Series", Life and Work of the People of England (London, 1931), p. 14.

<sup>96</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, p. 105-106.

enlightened Turks preached. These men of foresight were repelled by the sight of both men and women dressed in jewels and ornaments, a fashion which was said to have been imported from Persia and Egypt by Sultan Selim in 1512, and which continued in vogue under the rule of the austere Mahomet II and Bajazet II.

Probably no other aspect of Eastern life so much repelled the European as the Oriental custom of confining women behind veils and inside harems. Russell, however, was concerned to point out that this "custom of keeping the women close shut up is of high antiquity in the East",<sup>97</sup> a legacy which the Turks adopted to a limited extent. He quoted Plutarch in this connection:

The barbarous nations... and amongst them the Persians especially, are naturally jealous, clownish, and morose, toward their women; so that not only their wives, but also their female slaves and concubines, are kept with such strictness, and so constantly confined at home, that they are never seen by any but their own family; and when they take a journey they are put into a carriage shut close on all sides. In such a travelling carriage they put Themistocles, and told those whom they met or discoursed with upon the road, that they were carrying a young Grecian lady out of Ionia to a nobleman at court.<sup>98</sup>

The sanctity and special position of women on the streets also had its roots in antiquity. Artaxerxes in 462 B.C. had said "that it was a capital offence in Persia to cross the way when a carriage containing women was passing".<sup>99</sup> Even the origin of

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.



the harems could be traced to ancient Greece rather than to the Arabs, where the Greeks had "had their wards for the reception of the women", and which, Russell concluded, "seem to have been much the same with the women's quarter in the Syrian Seraglios".<sup>100</sup> Various sources suggested that Greek women enjoyed very little freedom; they were always attended by eunuchs, and on their walks around the city were veiled and accompanied by female companions. Roman manners, on the other hand, were quite different in this respect, but the Greek presence in the Levant was much more conspicuous.

Slowly and at some length, Russell explored the various features and institutions of the East to present to posterity as unbiased an account of Eastern manners as possible. One such meeting place, which revealed women's behaviour, was the usually private ritual of taking a bath. The spectacle of so many women indulging in the ritual of washing and reclining on luxurious sofas, which were scattered amidst the inner and outer rooms of the Turkish Bagnio, or hammam, appealed to the lurid imagination of many passing travellers, who did not hesitate to embellish the facts in a manner best calculated to impress their readers. Even Lady Mary in her forty-second letter could not resist the temptation to describe an assembly of ladies at the mineral baths in Sophia in a manner which Russell systematically reasoned could not have been true. He explained that she had presented the matrons at the bath as fully clothed, but the bride as "attended by a train of thirty virgins, all without ornaments or covering

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

than their own long hair".<sup>101</sup> For women to lie around naked in all stages of undress, as painted by L'Ingres in his 'Odalisque' after the description of Lady Mary, would, Russell argued, be "a deviation from Mohammedan delicacy". Apart from the practical consideration, which would be the liability to "catch cold, by coming out at once from the hot into the cold room, in a state of nature",<sup>102</sup> there was a question of propriety which made such behaviour completely impossible. He elaborated on this ritual for the benefit of his readers:

This insinuation will appear to be slightly founded, when it is considered that in the ordinary bath, the company assembled are mostly strangers to each other, and that the young girls are not only under the eye of parents or mistresses, but think themselves more particularly obliged to preserve decorum at the Bagnio, it being often from thence that they are selected by the matrons, as brides for their sons.<sup>103</sup>

Accordingly, he generously attributed Lady Mary's presentation to a desire to impress her audience, and suggested that "allowance (must be) made for a fine imagination in the glow of youth, revelling amid scenes possess[ed] of all the advantages of novelty, I see no reason to suspect wilful misrepresentation".<sup>104</sup>

To confirm his conclusions about the absence of any indecent behaviour whatsoever at the bagnios of Aleppo, and of Turkey for that matter, Russell cited the authority of three writers on the area: D'Ohsson, D'Arvieux and Grelot. The last named had taken

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 382.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 382.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 380.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 381.

some of the visitors to task and hastened to set them right: "Mais comme une partie de ce qui'ils me'en ont raconté ne tourne pas tout à fait à l'honneur des Dames d'Orient. J'aime mieux le taire pour leur prudeur, et dire icy que ce sont des contes des petits Enfans, etc."<sup>105</sup> Implicit in these writers' defence of Eastern traditions and moral values, whether in the bath or in their public promenades, was the belief that this culture should be respected by the West. Taste and beauty were not the exclusive prerogative of European nations; they existed elsewhere, although in different forms. A wise society was one that retained an objective and clear-minded attitude towards other civilizations, borrowing from them the features that would improve their own national well-being, and discarding all that was not worthwhile.

Donald Campbell, a British traveller who visited Syria and Iraq en route to India in 1781, aptly lent weight to what Russell and other meticulous observers wished to present to their own people: the existence of a simple, natural and genuine way of life, which served to expose the artificial manners and behaviour of Western privileged classes. He questioned the need for an established gentry, a notion upon which the whole structure of Western society was based, and which the upper classes found sadly lacking in Ottoman culture. Instead he praised the natural beauty of Arab and Turkish women, who, unlike their Western counterparts, abstained from the use of artificial paints,

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p.235. See Guillaume Joseph Grelot, Relation d'un voyage de Constantinople (Paris, 1680).

depending on their chastity and gentleness to invoke a chivalrous attitude in the Near Eastern male:

When the women grow up, they are not, like our women, here, subjected to the contagion of infamous gallantry; neither are the men trained to, nor do they pride themselves, like some among us, on the arts of seduction. In fact, that practice makes no part of the accomplishments of their fine gentlemen; nay, it is held by them to be infamous.<sup>106</sup>

Absolute praise or condemnation of either the British or Ottoman society, however, would be wrong. Each culture had its own strong and weak points, all of which needed to be regarded in the context of the economic and social conditions of the age. As mentioned previously in this chapter, Turkey also suffered from its own corrupt chain of officials, who, although not titled in the manner of the European aristocracy, still deprived the poorer classes of their livelihood and basic rights. In the case of Eastern culture, though, many travellers were inclined to attribute their mode of behaviour and government to the fictional world of the oriental tales rather than to the presence of the universal characteristics of greed and corruption.

In his privileged position as a physician, Russell was able to intermingle with the women of the harem and he hastened to point out that, contrary to European opinion, they enjoyed a greater measure of freedom than that attributed to them by the West. Their confinement was often self-imposed, and viewed as consistent with "their notion of female honour and delicacy".<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Donald Campbell, A Journey Overland to India, partly by a route never gone before by any European ... in a series of letters to his son, etc. (London, 1795), part ii, p. 29.

<sup>107</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, p. 257.

In one circumstance only, that of partaking of a meal together, which is very much the established mode of behaviour in the West, did Russell chafe at the absence of the ladies of the house at any repast:

The most intimate acquaintance carries no privilege of admission to those social, domestic hours, where the wife, gracing the feast, adds dignity to her husband, by her attention to his friends; while those female powers which conspire to polish the manners, and enliven society, languish from want of exercise, and are little cultivated.<sup>108</sup>

The Turkish women, however, upon being informed of this ritual in the West and of the other incontestible rights and liberties of their European counterparts, did not appear the least envious. They were proud, to a great extent, of their own manner of living, and the restraints imposed on them, had become less irksome over the years.

Russell was among the few travellers who regarded East and West as not too dissimilar, their cultures containing many elements which were reconcilable one to the other. One way of drawing closer to Turkish culture had been for some of the European residents to don some of their garments. He asserted in this connection that "it was formerly the custom of all, or most of the Franks, to wear the Turkish dress, retaining the hat by way of distinction; but of late (i.e. 1751), the far greater part of the English dressed in the European fashion".<sup>109</sup> The French and Italian communities wore the "Eastern habit, retaining only

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

the hat and wig when in town, and wearing the turban when travelling".<sup>110</sup> To use the national garments to advantage, it was necessary to differentiate between the various dresses, slippers (baboozes) and headdress; otherwise offence might be taken. Referring to Lady Mary's views on Eastern dress, Russell stated that, "reference might have been made to Lady Mary Wortley's description of the female dress, had it not in some respects, especially the headdress, been rather Grecian than Turkish, and different from the dress at Aleppo".<sup>111</sup>

A place which revealed Eastern costume in its richest and most varied forms was the coffee house. Somewhat gaudy, and usually spacious to accommodate the large number of people who frequented them, and to permit the staging of a variety of poetry reading and live shows, these houses were furnished with matted platforms and benches; while the soft tinkle of a fountain added its music to the general hubbub around. Russell described the picturesque scene as follows: "A row of large windows discovers to a passenger all that is going on within, and the company, being supplied with small, low, wicker stools, often choose in the summer to sit before the door, in the open air."<sup>112</sup>

The coffee house had been introduced from Persia by the mufti of Aden in 1454, and it had been adopted one hundred years later by Sultan Soliman in Constantinople. It was also popular in Damascus and Aleppo. The crowd there were often composed of men

110 Ibid.

111 Ibid., I, p. 105. See Lady Mary's Letter XXIX.

112 Ibid., I, p. 23.

from all walks of life: tradesmen and employees, who met and exchanged news about the trend of the market and the latest official appointments, as well as high-ranking officers and pashas from the seraglios, who in turn were on the look-out for news items to their advantage. Such was the demand for this form of rendezvous that we are told "the imams, or officers of the mosques, complained loudly of their being deserted, while the coffee houses were full of company".<sup>113</sup> The customers could be recognized by their dress whether playing a game of tric trac or draughts, or listening to the news of the pillaging of a caravan on its way to Mecca, or the robbing of a vessel by the Barbary Corsairs, who caused so much havoc to the Levant Company in particular. While the grandee could be known from his three-furred garment, the average citizen was marked by his abai, "a camelot gown, with large sleeves, laced down the seams with a narrow gold lace";<sup>114</sup> the very poor were dressed in a single fur coat, usually of course fox skins. Under the noble man's Giubbe there could often be seen a cloak hanging at mid-calf length and "made of fine Kermazoot (a silk and cotton fabric), lined with ermine (with) fur round the collar, and the Kurk, a "coat furred with sable, or other rich furs".<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> John Coakley Lettson, The Works of John Fothergill, M.D. "Extracts from an historical account of coffee by John Ellis", 2 vols. (London, 1783), p. 290.

<sup>114</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, I, p. 105.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., I, p. 101.

Wide trousers made of red cloth, "to which are sewed socks of yellow leather, serving at once for breaches", completed the nobleman's outfit.

To complete their costume, men wore a turban and babooge, which were determined by rank and denomination. All turbans consisted of a stiff, quilted round cap, called the Kaook, with a piece of muslin, called shash, wrapped around it. About twenty-four yards in length, it was worn in many colours, the shade determining the sect. For example, Arabs, Christians and Jews wore different colour shashes from those of the Turks of Constantinople and the European provinces, which were commonly white.

Mingling in many such assemblies were the Bedouins, whose distinguishing marks were the wearing of "a large ring of gold or silver, pendant from the nose, the cartilage on one side being pierced for that purpose...",<sup>116</sup> or the use of blue marks on lips or flower imitations pinpricked on cheeks, breasts and arms.

It was important to distinguish between the urban and rural way of dressing, especially since the former was adapted to the social and political atmosphere of the main cities, while the latter tended to retain the ancient characteristics of the land. A brief comparison between the sketches of Russell and those of earlier travellers would easily reveal the intrinsic changes that had taken place over the years.

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., I, p. 163. For the scriptural reference see Genesis xxiv. 47, Isaiah, iii, 21, Ezekiel, xvi, 12.



The coffee house, which fulfilled a very real need in Eastern society, had also found favour in Europe. We are told that in January 1699, when Sir William Temple had died, leaving his secretary, Jonathan Swift, the sum of one hundred pounds, Swift's first action had been "to go straight to the coffee houses. There he could hear the latest political news, the best criticism of recent literature, and the spiciest gossip about the theatre and the court; and perhaps he could make the acquaintance of a wit or a noble with influence enough to get him a living in the Church".<sup>117</sup> The Aleppo coffee house, though, in addition to being a meeting place for gossip and refreshment, also provided its patrons with a full entertainment programme. In the larger and more lavish of these places there would be a band, a puppet show and a story-teller. The different performances were presented at set intervals during the course of the day, the customers contributing towards the maintenance of the artists.

The puppet show, performed with shadows "in the manner of Les Ombres Chinois", consisted in the presenter changing his tone of voice to range over the provincial dialects to emphasize their local peculiarities. In a way there were "some faint attempts towards dramatic fable... which are moreover diversified and decorated by the march of caravans, bridal processions, and other gaudy pageants".<sup>118</sup> The hero of the show was Punch, "Kara-guze",

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<sup>117</sup> Raymond F. Howes, "Jonathan Swift and the Conversation of the Coffee-House", Quarterly Journal of Speech, 17 (April 1951), 14.

<sup>118</sup> The Natural History of Aleppo, I, p. 147.

who made interruptions and was "disgustingly indecent". His was the voice that satirized administrators and state functionaries in a manner ranging from the modest to the obscene. He was careful not to direct "pointed reflection on persons immediately in power; but has full scope to lash in general, the follies of private life, the perversion of public justice, and the corruptions of government".<sup>119</sup> In some instances, however, Kara-guze so overstepped his limits that he warranted the interference of the magistrate. The defeat of the Janizaries of Aleppo in the Russian war of 1768 gave impetus to his tongue, whereby he extolled the courage and prowess of the sad losers, thus incurring severe punishment upon himself. On another occasion, when bankrupt merchants applied to the Seraglio for protection "under much popular clamour", Karaguze did not hesitate to play the role of the wronged merchant, a victim of "fraudulent intrigues".<sup>120</sup>

The story-teller and dramatist had a role to play in the coffee-house. Very often, after having worked his audience to an excited pitch, he would suddenly, in the manner of the Arabian Nights, interrupt his performance, leaving the audience divided into "separate parties, (who) fall a disputing about the characters of the drama, or the event of the unfinished adventure".<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., I, p. 149.

Russell did not specify the source of these tales; he did not say whether they had come from Arabic literature, or belonged to the wealth of oral tradition. However, room for initiative was left to the showman, "who by combining the incidents of different tales, and varying the catastrophe of such as he has related before, gives them an air of novelty..."<sup>122</sup> Undoubtedly the Arabian Tales formed part of the actors' repertoire.<sup>123</sup>

In his systematic presentation of some of the diverse aspects of living in Aleppo, Russell succeeded in preserving for posterity a comprehensive record of this important eighteenth-century trading centre. Over a century before his narrative, Robson, preacher to the Company of the English Merchants, had recommended the writing of just such a book, a suggestion which Russell, under the guidance and encouragement of Fothergill, and his brother, Patrick, took up and implemented successfully. In his letter on Aleppo, Robson had explained why he thought such an effort would be rewarding:

For the inhabitants of it, and the concourse of people, it is an Epitome of the whole world. There scarce being a Nation of the old World, (except that all-hated Spaniard) who hath not some trading either here or hither. English, French, Dutch, Italian, Jewes, Greekes, Persians, Moores, Indians, etc. Men of all Countries, of all Religions: Georgians, Nestorians, Cophts, Arminians, Georgians, etc. The description of whose different customes in their conversation, and tenents in their Religion, deserveth rather

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 145. Also see note p. 385, No. XXXVIII, where the author wrote: "The Arabic title of our Arabian Nights is 'Hakaiat Elf Leily wa Leily', Stories, a Thousand and One Nights. It is a scarce book at Aleppo. After much inquiry, I found only two volumes, containing two hundred and eighty nights..."

'a volume than a letter: and a more appropriated observer of them, then I can be...'<sup>124</sup>

During the intervening years many travellers had published narratives on Aleppo, especially during the seventeenth century, and then again in the eighteenth century, when there was a revival in the trading activity within that region. Most of these narratives, however, were concerned with the role which Aleppo played as the meeting place on the Great Desert Caravan Route, or, as it was briefly called, the 'Overland Route', and for the traffic to Basra, Egypt, Baghdad and India.<sup>125</sup> Maundrell's famous, and much admired, compact narrative, published in 1698, also mentioned Aleppo as his departure point on his pilgrimage towards the holy city. Others, like John Green's A Journey from Aleppo to Damascus (1736), are brief, rambling and unreliable in their method of narration,<sup>126</sup> as is also that of Charles Perry, A View of the Levant ... (1743). Charles Thompson, another traveller, concerned himself with historical and scriptural concepts in an attempt to relate them to the geographical and political facts of that area.<sup>127</sup> The writer, whose narrative most closely resembled that of Russell in general structure and content, was D'Arvieux. Having lived in the East for over twelve years, and

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<sup>124</sup> Robson, op.cit., p. 14.

<sup>125</sup> See A Journey from Aleppo to Basra in 1745 by William Beawes, A Journey from Aleppo to Basra in 1748 by Gaylard Roberts, A Similar Journey in 1750 by Bartholomew Plaisted, and A Journey from Aleppo to Basra in 1751 by John Carmichael. Douglas Carruthers, ed., The Desert Route to India: Being the Journals of Four Travellers by the Great Desert Caravan Route between Aleppo and Basra 1745-1751 (London, Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1929).

<sup>126</sup> Green described the city of Aleppo as oval in shape, about three miles in compass, and at its handsome gates "there is a Cave, with Lamps burning continually, in Honour of the Prophet Elijah, who, they say, made it his Retreat for some time..." John Green, A Journey from Aleppo to Damascus (London, 1736), p. 3.

<sup>127</sup> The Travels of Charles Thompson (Reading, 1744), 2 vols.

served in the capacity of French consul at Aleppo from 1682 to 1689, his knowledge of the area was reflected in his views on the ancient history, politics, customs, manners, and learning of the Levant nations. He, however, highlighted the traditions of the nomad rather than those of the city Arabs.<sup>128</sup>

Russell's special achievement lies in the fact that, although he followed in the footsteps of a well-established travel tradition, he brought to his narrative an objectivity and frankness which was seldom found in books of this category. To a nation who had become used to reading tales that required a most vivid imagination, and to be presented with a world of fantasy that at times resembled those of the renowned Arabian Nights, Russell's lucid and unbiased presentation of the Ottoman and Arab way of life, in spite of Lane's criticism, created a world in which it was possible for both Europe and the East to meet and exchange ideas. Thus, in this sense, he can be regarded as a 'real' traveller, one who sought to interpret one culture to another for the mutual benefit of all.

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<sup>128</sup> Chevalier Laurent D'Arvieux, Voyage dans la Palestine (Paris, 1717).

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### Travel in the Nineteenth Century

If eighteenth-century travellers had felt the necessity to study in detail the history and natural phenomena of the various countries under Ottoman administration, most voyagers in the early nineteenth century were not thus inclined. Rather than survey objectively the various monuments and shrines of antiquity for knowledge about the progress of humanity, they preferred to study their reactions to their surroundings, upholding Pope's dictum that "the ~~proper~~ study of mankind is man"<sup>1</sup> (Essay on Man, Part I, 2.2). Supporting the revolution in England which, in accordance with the precepts of Rousseau, had moved from logic and sophistication towards feeling and simplicity,<sup>1</sup> they viewed all previous methods of accumulating data as too ambitious and often irrelevant to a developing society. Together with the romantic poets they regarded man's source of creativity to lie within his innermost mind, while the external world was merely a mirror reflecting and making visible what lies within. Coleridge, in his Notebooks, neatly summarized the new trend as follows: "I seem rather to be seeking, as it were asking for, a symbolical language for something within me that already forever exists, than observing anything new",<sup>2</sup> and, consequently, every traveller became interested in surveying himself in relation to his surroundings rather than exploring them independently of his own reactions. More than at any time

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<sup>1</sup> René Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1790: The Romantic Age (New Haven, 1955), II, xiii. Basil Willey also writes: "With the growth of sensibility, Rousseau's je sens, donc je suis gradually displaced the Cartesian cogito ergo sum."

<sup>2</sup> Northrop Frye, Romanticism Reconsidered (Columbia, 1963), p.10.

in history, and in accordance with the premises of Kant and Coleridge, they had "a faith in a priori, deductive, geometric principles", which, together with a sentimental belief in a kind of 'inner light' within the human heart, would in their opinion allow them to grasp, during their travels, simple, inexorable and axiomatic truths.<sup>3</sup>

There were, however, certain drawbacks to their adoption of such a method to understand the many features of the East. Often western man found that, as a result of his passionate and over-sophisticated life, he had lost touch with that inner guiding light which would have allowed him to penetrate into the nature of being. He shared Byron's obsession with the idea of the English traveller who is driven by the evil spirit away from his home, like a victim of the old Grecian furies, because he believes that he has committed some sin against God and his conscience. An exile, and often regarding himself as guilty of some pride or ambition, "big or small, imperial or parochial, which being offended has made the lone places more tolerable than ballrooms to him a sinner",<sup>4</sup> he eventually sought the lands of ancient Greece and those of the revered patriarchs for absolution of his sins. There, on the terrain of the ancient heroes of The Iliad and The Odyssey, within the sublime majesty of the desert and mountains which had inspired the prophets to perform great miracles, and amidst the real dangers of hunger and fear from marauding tribes, he hoped to shed the burden of his sins and restore the 'lamp' to its original lustre. Then, fortified, after close contact with the fundamental

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> William Kinglake, Eothen (London, reprinted from 1931 edition - first edition 1844), Ch. XVII, p. 177.

principles of existence, the voyager considered himself to be in a better position to evaluate the cultures he encountered, to act as an effective bridge between East and West, and promote the interests of his society.

But the traveller, living in the aftermath of the French Revolution, was not content merely to reform himself in order to appreciate foreign travel to a greater extent. He saw the heavy yoke under which the many peoples under Turkish rule were suffering, and, belonging to an age whose industrial achievements had affirmed the ability of man to forge a new and dynamic nation, he felt impelled to rise to the task of helping to restore the area to its once free and natural state. This task, regarded as impossible by earlier travellers, had now become feasible, as the Turks gradually lost their military might, and Western nations gained ascendancy and power.

These travellers, however, unlike their predecessors, were unwilling to take advantage of much of the genuine literary contributions of their compatriots about outstanding Arab works. Notable among these were the translations of Sir William Jones of the Arabic Moallakat (1783), and the complete translation of the Arabian Nights by Edward William Lane (1838-40).<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, and with an often detrimental effect, visitors preferred, during their own journeys in the East, to rely on much of the literature which used the Arabian Nights as

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<sup>5</sup> Other outstanding contributions were those of J. D. Carlyle, Specimens of Arabic Poetry (1796), Jonathan Scott, Bahar-Darush, or the Garden of Knowledge, "an oriental romance translated from the Persian of Ein auit Oolah", (1799), and James Alkinson, Selections from the Shah Nameh of Firdausi, translated from the Persian (1814).



background and setting for the poetry and prose of the period.<sup>6</sup>

Three travellers, who departed totally from the methodology of their predecessors, and whose works on the East will be briefly surveyed in this concluding chapter, are William Kinglake, author of Eothen (1844), Eliot Warburton, whose The Crescent and the Cross (1845) gained greater popularity during his lifetime than Eothen, and William Makepeace Thackeray, who conceived From Cornhill to Grand Cairo (1845) more as a record of a trip into the countries of the Arabian Nights than as an informative and authoritative work on the monuments and institutions of the Orient.

Kinglake considered an account of a journey to be a deeply personal experience and accordingly addressed Eothen to Warburton. In this work, published ten years after his journey to the Ottoman dominions in 1833-34, he preferred to present his own deductions and reflections on the regions of the East rather than compile "those impressions which ought to have been produced upon any 'well constituted mind'".<sup>7</sup> "As I have felt, so I have written," Kinglake stated in the preface to his narrative, and thus started a journey, which, with its insistence on 'sentimental truth', echoed Sterne's 'Sentimental Journey'. Believing that he

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<sup>6</sup> Among these were Tennyson's "Noureddin and the Fair Persian in Haroun al Raschid's garden", William Beckford's Vathek (1786), Thomas Moore's Lalla Rookh (1817), Robert Southey's Thalaba (1801). Byron and the writers of travel novels like Thomas Hope and James Morier were among those who introduced oriental imagery obtained from travel narratives and the Arabian and Persian tales into their works. Wallace Cable Brown, "Byron and English Interest in the Near East", Studies in Philology, Vol.34 (Chapel Hill, 1937), p.55.

<sup>7</sup> Eothen, op.cit., Preface, p.3.

possessed the ability to recognize 'sentimental truth' when he encountered it, and the capacity to make sound judgments by exercising his 'strong sense and delicate feelings',<sup>8</sup> when the occasion warranted such an evaluation, Kinglake confidently sought to unravel some of the inconsistencies of Eastern travel. Of particular significance in this connection was his assessment of his encounters with the 'noble Arabs' of the Desert, the magicians of Cairo, and Lady Hester Stanhope, the Prophetess of the East, all of whom will be dealt with in due course.

Accordingly, Kinglake disagreed with all methods of observation that failed to take into account the personality of the individual traveller, or which refused to accept that he occupied only a particular space and time of history. In his view, the historian who believed that he could "go to Athens, and think of nothing later than the age of Pericles", or "live with the Scipios as long as he stays in Rome",<sup>9</sup> was unrealistic in his approach. Similarly a detailed survey of ruins could be meaningless if the particular monument studied was not remarkable or famous in history, or "serv<sub>ed</sub> to mark some spot very dear to my fancy".<sup>10</sup> Kinglake singled out such a ruin in Cyprus, that of the Paphian temple, which, although hardly discernible, he still wished to see in order "to live a favoured mortal under the old Olympian dispensation", to hear

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<sup>8</sup> J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries (London, 1968), p. 363.

<sup>9</sup> Eothen, op. cit., ch. XI, p. 116.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., ch. VII, p. 73.

counsel from the Greek Gods without jeopardising his inheritance for the life to come.<sup>11</sup> Visits to such monuments and sites, which were inspiring to the individual, should be exploited, while, as Coleridge had pointed out, surmise about objects and events of which the individual was uncertain, represented idle thinking, and should not be encouraged.<sup>12</sup>

A factor which usually inhibited the range and depth of a voyager's perception of an object, and which previous travellers, such as Pococke, had refused to take into account, was that a visitor was not always looking at sights: "He remembers (how often!)", Kinglake pointed out, "the happy land of his birth -- he has, too, his moments of humble enthusiasm about fire, and food, about shade, and drink."<sup>13</sup> These feelings, which revealed his kinship with the world as a Child of Nature, needed to be consulted and given their proper role in the formation of the human psyche. The desert and the sparse landscape around Jordan afforded Kinglake the opportunity to be concerned with the elements of existence. He wrote on that occasion that one has to reckon with the fundamentals of nature, and fight for survival:

... the wherewithal we should be fed -- whether by some ford we should regain the western bank of Jordan, or find bread and salt under the tents of a wandering tribe, or whether we should fall into the hands of the Philistines, and so come to see Death -- the last, and greatest of all 'the fine sights' that there be -- these were questionings not dull nor wearisome to us, for we were all concerned in

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., ch. VII, p. 73.

<sup>12</sup> S. T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross, 2 Vols. (Oxford, 1907), I, 133.

<sup>13</sup> Eothen, op. cit., Preface, p.4.

the answers ... the lights of those low Philistines -- the men of the caves -- still shone on the rock above ...<sup>14</sup>

Living out of society, man had the opportunity to test his courage and explore the moral goodness of the 'natural' man under circumstances where all are equal. Later travellers were to explore this aspect even further: Doughty, sincere, humane and brave, sought an impossible grail in the deserts of Arabia, while both Burton and Lawrence adopted the Bedouin's way of life. Burton, who juxtaposed the "vigorous, passionate life of Europe" with that of Arab bravery and freedom, decided finally that he preferred the former, since the "Bedouin daring was usually practised from necessity".<sup>15</sup> He commented, taking Kinglake's position still further: "In the desert, even more than upon the ocean, there is present death: hardship is there, and piracies, and shipwreck, solitary, not in the crowds when, as the Persians say, 'Death is a Festival'". The reward for this toughness was the Arab Kayf: "The savouring of animal existence; the passive enjoyment of mere sense; the pleasant languor, the dream of tranquillity, the airy castle-building, which in Asia stand in lieu of the vigorous, intensive, passionate life of Europe".<sup>16</sup>

Kinglake, however, was aware of the danger of excessive emotion and feeling, and of regarding himself too seriously in the role of the protagonist of his travel narrative. Rather than be accused of rapturous expressions, which could indicate a failure to view objects rationally and in their proper

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., ch. XII, p. 126

<sup>15</sup> Michael Foss, "Dangerous Guides; English Writers and the Desert", The New Middle East (London: June, 1969), p. 41.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

perspective, he, and other travellers of that period, chose to take refuge in irony and satire. By adopting this technique of social censure or muted praise, which had been used so successfully by Swift and his fellow Augustans, Kinglake, Warburton and Thackeray avoided the possible criticism of seeming to be too engrossed with their own knowledge and experience. Furthermore, the witty and mock heroic approach that they favoured towards the many citizens of the countries they visited, enabled them to categorize and immortalize certain types for the benefit of posterity. Thus, as pointed out by D. G. Hogarth in his introduction to the edition of Eothen in use in this chapter, Kinglake created portraits of the Levantine European, the Levantine Greek, the Levantine Jew and the Levantine Turk, pictures which "would be less true to-day for a single added touch".<sup>17</sup> Kinglake excused this approach to his readers, and especially if they noted "a jarring discord between the associations properly belonging to interesting sites, and the tone in which I speak of them".<sup>18</sup> But quite apart from his view that monuments should not be allowed to dwarf the personality of the individual viewer and his subjective experience of them, travellers who belonged to a nation that aspired to dominate the world were in any case unwilling to give credit unless it was truly deserved.

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<sup>17</sup> Eothen, op. cit., Introduction, p. xvi.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Preface, p. 3.

A graduate of Eton, and Trinity College, Cambridge, and a lawyer by profession, who was later to become an eminent historian and a member of parliament,<sup>19</sup> Kinglake described himself as one who belonged to the "industrious class, who was not flying from his country because of ennui, but was strengthening his will, and tempering the metal of his nature for that life of toil and conflict in which he is now engaged".<sup>20</sup> Thus he found that he was particularly well suited to undertake a journey of rebirth in the countries of the East; and during his stay there, and through the trials and dangers which would come his way, he hoped to achieve the personal and artistic excellence to which every romantic poet aspired. Regarding himself, in Wordsworth's words, as a <sup>man</sup> "endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a great knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul",<sup>21</sup> his task now, as a 'complete' man of the nineteenth century, was to help to forge a new social, moral and philosophic age for his own society.

Kinglake entered the Ottoman domains from Semlin, at which he arrived from Hungary in the north. Cheered by the scenes and sounds of familiar life there, he viewed with foreboding the Ottoman fortresses in the south, "austere, and darkly impending high over the vale of the Danube -- historic Belgrade".<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "William Kinglake, ed. Sidney Lee, Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1892), 31, 171-173. Kinglake published between 1863 and 1887, in three volumes, his book The History and Invasion of the Crimea after following the English expedition to the Crimea and being present at the battle of Alma. He was also the liberal M.P. for Bridgewater from 1857 to 1868.

<sup>20</sup> Eothen, op. cit., Preface, p. 6 .

<sup>21</sup> William Wordsworth and Samuel T Coleridge, Lyrical Ballads, eds. R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones (London, 1963), 1802 Preface, p. 249.

<sup>22</sup> Eothen, op. cit., Ch. I, p. 7.

With the river Save effectively dividing the two worlds, there was no one there, "who had ever gone down to look upon the stranger race dwelling under the walls of that opposite castle".<sup>23</sup> The alienating factor was the presence of the plague in Belgrade, which raised a natural and imposing barrier between the two parts of the city. But Kinglake and his companions, like Ulysses, were prepared to invade the underworld, as did the officials of the Austrian Government, "who for that purpose live in a state of perpetual excommunication", together with their 'compromised' rowers.<sup>24</sup>

In his descent to this second world, Kinglake could no longer rely on his old set of values, but needed to draw on new resources within himself. Although accompanied by Methley, his school friend, who later became Lord Pollington, and his 'faithful' servant Steel, he had, in most circumstances, only his intelligence and his own perspicacity to depend upon. In addition, he could very rarely rely <sup>wholly and completely</sup> on the local recruits, even on Mysseri, a Tartar whom Kinglake described as the "brain of our corps", and who could be considered as a "government courier (not only) properly employed in carrying despatches, but also sent with travellers to speed them on their way and answer with his head for their safety".<sup>25</sup> Undaunted, however, and anxious to proceed with his adventure into the unknown, he, like Steel, cast "one affectionate look back at Christendom and then marched forward with the steps of a man "not frightened

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Ch. I, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Ch. II, pp. 18-19.

exactly, but sternly prepared for death, or the Koran, or even for plural wives".<sup>26</sup>

However apprehensive he might <sup>have</sup> ~~been~~ concerning his future experiences and encounters with the population, Kinglake nevertheless revelled in his freedom of movement and the lack of necessity for any outward decorum. Enthusiastically he wrote at the commencement of his journey: "The first night of your campaign ... is a glorious time in your life. It is so sweet to find oneself free from the stale civilization of Europe! Oh my dear ally", [and here he was possibly addressing Warburton, to whom he directed his narrative] "when first you spread your carpet in the midst of these eastern scenes, do think for a moment of those your fellow-creatures that dwell in squares and streets..."<sup>27</sup> During the days that Kinglake and his retinue spent travelling over the Balkans to Sophia, then on to Adrianople and Constantinople, he was gradually able to discard 'unnatural' habits and city values and prepare himself for the reception of the virtues which had distinguished the heroes of his beloved Homer. He summed up his attitude in the observation:

If you are wise, you will not look upon the long period of time thus occupied (in riding) in actual movement, as the mere gulf dividing you from the end of your journey, but rather as one of those rare and plastic seasons of your life, from which, perhaps, in after times, you may love to date the moulding of your character -- that is, your very identity.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., Ch. I, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Ch. II, p. 23.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Ch. II, p. 25.



In the course of their journey over the plains and through the forests of Asia Minor, Methley was struck with fever, and Kinglake, faced with his first practical task, constructed an 'araba', a carriage, to transport his friend to civilization and a doctor. Burdened with a feverish patient, Kinglake was also forced to reckon with the presence of the plague in Constantinople, the declining capital of the Ottoman sultans. The presence of this fatal disease, which he found to be symbolic of the regime's waning power at home and abroad, immediately served to heighten his sensibility and awareness of the danger of his surroundings. The disease, hovering over what he considered to be the dreary monuments of past power and splendour, evoked an awe and reverence more "mighty than armies, more terrible than Suleyman in his glory".<sup>29</sup> Terrible and destructive, the plague was most likely to be seen amidst the rich furs, costly shawls, embroidered slippers and gold-laden saddle-cloths of the corrupt Turkish officials and other wealthy inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire. In addition, wherever the fragrance of burning aloes and patchouli could be detected, among the holy dwellings of the city, then indeed the plague was also to be seen. Throughout his stay in Constantinople, and later in Jerusalem and Cairo, where the disease was progressively more widespread, he could not divest himself of the "lively and continuous sense of danger",<sup>30</sup> brought on by

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Ch. III, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Ch. XVIII, p. 186n. He elaborated further on his feelings in this connection: "Fear does not necessarily damp the spirits; on the contrary, it will often operate as an excitement giving rise to unusual animation; and thus it affected me".

fear of the plague. But were these not the ideal conditions, to the mind of the 'industrial' generation of the 1830's, under which to survey the scenes of many old and decrepit civilizations? Did one not participate best in the spirit of decay that characterized those areas when all the senses were involved in the boundless possibilities of contamination and either personal or national death? For these Turks of Constantinople had nothing in common either with their proud ancestors or with those who had carried the luggage of the visitors up to the city, and who "had not yet forgotten the fierce, careless bearing of their once victorious race".<sup>31</sup> They were, on the contrary, rulers who had succumbed to the avarice which had characterized their counterparts before the French revolution.

Both in Constantinople and then to a greater extent in Cairo, Kinglake had the opportunity to study his own reactions to danger as well as those of his European compatriots who resided permanently in these cities, and to compare them with the fatalistic attitude of the local population. As an integral part of the inhabitants' daily routine the all-pervading presence of the malady was inescapable, and accepted by them with a resigned equanimity. Europeans, on the other hand, convinced of the dangers of personal contact, barricaded themselves in their homes, in an attempt to cheat the Angel of Death. Now there was a complete reversal of the chivalric code of the West, and man dreaded most that which he should love -- "the touch of a woman's dress; for mothers and wives hurrying forth on kindly errands from the bedsides of the dying go slouching along through the streets more wilfully and less courteously than the men".<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Ch. I, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Ch. XVIII, p. 195.

A man after Kinglake's own heart, and one who had successfully blended the fatality of the Oriental with the admirable heroism of a European, was the British doctor who attended him in Cairo when Kinglake feared that he had contracted the dreaded plague. Fearless, "the generous fellow, with a good-humoured laugh at the terrors of the contagionists, marched straight up to me, and forcibly seized my hand, and shook it with manly violence".<sup>33</sup> Kinglake had left "the centre of the greatest and strongest amongst all earthly dominions", to encounter in his moment of greatest need a fellow countryman who caused him "to swell with fresh pride of race".<sup>34</sup>

Another of his compatriots to fascinate Kinglake was Lady Hester Stanhope, Chatham's fiery granddaughter. Once hostess to her uncle, the younger Pitt, she now lived apart from the British aristocracy of which she had formed an integral part. It was in her Lebanese residence in Jûne (Djouni or Jôon), near Sidon, that Kinglake had his famous interview with her. Visiting her, however, and seeing her in person was an experience that did not fulfil his earlier expectations, especially those nursed by his mother, of whom Lady Hester had been a friend. Portrayed to him as a unique heroine, one who lived in tents and reigned over wandering tribes so as eventually to earn the title of Queen of the Desert, the figure he saw before him conveyed a totally different impression:

The woman before me had exactly the person of a Prophetess--not, indeed, of the divine Sibyl imagined by Domenichino, so sweetly distracted between Love and Mystery, but of a good, business-like, practical Prophetess, long used to the exercise of her sacred calling.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Ch. XVIII, p. 212.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 85.

Her face astonishingly white, and dressed in a mass of white linen loosely folding, with a large turban "made seemingly of pale cashmere shawls", to conceal her hair, she seemed intent on living up to her reputation, as hinted by the people of the Mountains, that "she claimed to be more than a prophet".<sup>36</sup>

During his conversations with her, Kinglake was often obliged to abandon all hope of hearing about her days at Somersetshire or of discussing subjects that were related to her existence in the everyday world. Totally engrossed in "loftier spheres of thought",<sup>37</sup> she very rarely spoke of her relations with the Arab and Druze tribes surrounding her. If she did, it was to praise her bravery and prowess, or to reveal her superiority in the magical arts. As a matter of fact, she showed total contempt for all Europeans, just as she ridiculed outstanding historical personalities who crossed her path. Two people whom she found particularly inept in unearthing the source of the great treasures near the Suez were Napoleon Bonaparte, and Ibrahim Pasha, the fierce Lieutenant of Mehemet Ali, the powerful ruler of Egypt, whose domination extended to Syria and Lebanon at that time. Where they failed she had succeeded, however, and <sup>she</sup> informed Kinglake that with the assistance of her 'divining twig' she had discovered the vast chest in which the treasure had been deposited, but alas only to find it was full of pebbles!<sup>38</sup> Consequently, she concluded "that the times were approaching, in which the hidden treasures of the earth would become available to those who had 'true knowledge'".<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 79.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 88.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 93.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

She also showed contempt for Lord Byron, whom she had met when she arrived in Constantinople, and whom she accused of curious affectations in his manner of speech. Lamartine, the French traveller who had visited her and written about her prophetic powers, also ~~marked~~ her harsh criticism. For although he lacked the violent grimace of his countrymen, she found that he still "rather bore himself mincingly, like the humbler sort of English dandy".<sup>40</sup>

Kinglake apologetically pointed out in the Introduction that his account "of the lady had gone to a length which was not justified either by the importance of the subject, or by the extent to which it interested the narrator".<sup>41</sup> But, probably, his primary concern was to show the dangers of succumbing to excesses of feeling, an awareness which Lady Hester herself showed at times. On several occasions he noted that she checked herself from soaring to heights from which she could not return, her reason often "too strong to be thoroughly overcome by even this potent feeling".<sup>42</sup> The ability to think rationally and logically, however, which was such an intrinsic condition of life in the West, was not necessarily so in the East. Lacking the newspapers, books and society which ensured that men were not too susceptible to fables and stories which were unfounded in fact, inhabitants of the East were too easily drawn into believing stories of the marvellous. "In Syria, and Palestine, and Egypt, you might as well dispute the efficacy of grass or grain as of Magic",<sup>43</sup> wrote Kinglake. For a Westerner

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 97.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Preface, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 102.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

to take refuge in it from a "fierce and inordinate pride",<sup>44</sup> and because he was something of a misfit in British society, like Lady Hester, was dangerous. Kinglake himself, when during a visit to Cairo<sup>he</sup> sought out the local magicians, was careful to maintain only a very temporary "willing suspension of disbelief"! Warily he challenged them to describe the features of his tutor at Trinity College and to establish contact with the Devil. When his flirtation with these sorcerors failed, and they were exposed as frauds, Kinglake merely shrugged his shoulders at this additional evidence of man's frailty and ignorance. To believe like Lady Hester that he was able to sway the course of history, was fallacious and dangerous. The chagrin and disappointment she suffered had put her out of humour with all mankind.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, whereas a century earlier, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had succeeded to a great extent in appreciating Eastern culture, approaching it with genuine humility, Lady Hester adopted an imperious and resolute manner. Disdaining the garments of the local population and all their attributes which did not relate to the marvellous, she took refuge in her belief in a gift for prophecy. On all occasions she adopted "a downright manner, amounting even to brusqueness", in her behaviour towards her retinue. She shrugged aside someone like Byron who would

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Charles Lewis Meryon, Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope, as related by herself in conversations with her physician; comprising her opinions and anecdotes of some of the most remarkable persons of her time. 3 vols. (London, 1845), p. vi. This was the opinion of her doctor, Charles Lewis Meryon, concerning her situation towards the end of her life in the run-down convent she inhabited in south Lebanon.

allegedly have been totally ineffectual in his dealings with the inhabitants. Lady Hester emphasized to Kinglake that what was needed was "a good, honest, open-hearted, and positive naval officer of the old school".<sup>46</sup> Kinglake himself was not altogether at odds with her in this respect. Although he mocked her arrogance, he was not above allowing Dthemetri to use terrorizing tactics to subdue the Arabs.

Neither Kinglake nor Lady Hester, although sojourners in the Holy Land, sought answers to their questions in the religious sites at Jerusalem. On the contrary, like Pococke and other travellers who had made that pilgrimage, they were alienated by the rituals practised in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other sacred places in and around the city. Visitors, Kinglake pointed out, were too easily drawn into a world of make-believe religion, having undertaken the journey as a result of "the superior veneration so often excited by objects that are distant and unknown ...", or, having been "moved by the winged strength of Fancy",<sup>47</sup> rather than as a result of any specific religious emotion that operated directly between God and the individual. Since they were not properly imbued with the knowledge of that genuine faith which, as Coleridge believed, must spring from spontaneous feelings and "operate in a manner analogous to that of the consciousness in the experience of knowing God",<sup>48</sup> would-be pilgrims were

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 98.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Ch. XVI, p. 144.

<sup>48</sup> James D. Boulger, Coleridge as Religious Thinker (New Haven, 1961), p. 103.

easily misled into relying on rituals as practised by the leaders of the different sects for the expression of their beliefs.

Comparing some of the rites he witnessed amidst the religious shrines in the Holy City with those in Britain, Kinglake remarked: "If this kissing of the shrines had seemed as though it were done at the bidding of Enthusiasm, or of any poor sentiment even feebly approaching to it, the sight would have been less odd to English eyes..."<sup>49</sup> But, unfortunately, since these people could be seen as not involved in 'working out' true faith, but rather "transacting the great business of salvation",<sup>50</sup> they failed to promote the true spirit of Christianity. Most English travellers, as members of the Church of England, were often repelled by the use of icons and worship in front of statues, which, as pointed out earlier, had been abhorred by Middleton in the Roman Catholic Church and connected with paganism. These ceremonies, however, which are still performed in the same manner at the present day, form an intrinsic part of any religious service throughout Eastern Europe, and pilgrims expect the pomp and magnificence which the beneficence of Queen Helena, Constantine's mother, had made possible.

As a consequence of the commercialism and sectarian rivalry which Kinglake witnessed in the Holy City, he felt that any expression of genuine piety was hopelessly drowned. The sight of Arab nomads attempting to participate in the rituals of the

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<sup>49</sup> Eothen, op.cit., p. 145.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 146.



Holy Sepulchre, only added to the grotesqueness of the situation, while on the river Jordan, he was incensed at the sight of pilgrims who believed that by donning a burial white dress they were "inured for salvation in the realms of death".<sup>51</sup> A circumstance that served to highlight to Kinglake the tragic situation of worship in the Holy Land was the undignified, burial of an old, frail and poor pilgrim. Bundled unceremoniously into an open grave by a sleek, over-fed monk, the pilgrim's plight affected all Kinglake's sensibilities. The priest, obviously contemptuous of the man who lacked all worldly possessions, was unwilling to recognize the greatness of the man's faith which had driven him across the many miles to die in Jerusalem. Witnessing him suffer so many indignities, <sup>Kinglake</sup> could only be glad that the pilgrim was spared the indignity of seeing his plight. For, roughly handled by the rude men who sought to bury him, the pilgrim's neck was twisted as he went into his grave, "so twisted", Kinglake explained with special awareness, "that if the sharp malady of life were still upon him, the old man would have shrieked, and groaned, and the lines of his face would have quivered with pain".<sup>52</sup> But the 'lines of his face' were unmoved, he was beyond the reach of mortal hands, nothing could hurt him any more: "His clay was itself again -- cool, firm, and tough".<sup>53</sup> Thus, paradoxically, only in death could this poor pilgrim find salvation and regain the stature and dignity of which his fellow human beings had deprived him.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Ch. XVI, p. 154.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

The situation, fortunately, was not the same throughout the Levant. Two places, which Kinglake found had succeeded in escaping, to a certain extent, the scourge of Islam and the stifling hand of the Church, were Bethlehem and Nazareth. In the first, the birthplace of Christ, Kinglake found that Mehmet Ali had succeeded in freeing the inhabitants from the tenets of Islam, and from "that horrible outward decorum which turns the cities and the palaces of Asia into deserts and gaols".<sup>54</sup> The people's escape from bondage could be most clearly witnessed in the sweet, unblemished refrains<sup>and behaviour</sup> of the town's young girls. Their untarnished youth refreshed Kinglake, who in the manner of Childe Harold, had complained at the outset of his journey of parched sensibilities!<sup>55</sup> He welcomed "as though in a desert, this gushing spring of fresh and joyous girlhood, "which reminded him of the shyness of a wild deer. They, in turn, uncorrupted by carnal passions, did not fear the wiles of a handsome stranger like himself, and he prayed silently that they might retain their innocence. This was the love after all which romantic poets sought, often returning from their life of social dissipation to that which they had known with their sisters in their days of innocence."<sup>56</sup>

To shatter the veil of reality that surrounded him, and to transcend the confines of his own culture and being, Kinglake often sank into a reverie or participated in a fast in order to

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., Ch. XVI, p. 158.

<sup>55</sup> Cited in Peter L. Thorslev, Jr., The Byronic Hero (Minneapolis, 1962), from Childe Harold III, p. 43.

<sup>56</sup> Lord Byron's poem entitled 'Augusta' was concerned with just such a theme.

understand the source of many miracles. After a long fast in Nazareth, by the shrine of the Virgin, he felt himself blending with the spirit of the Holy Mother. So strong were his emotions that "with a half consciousness -- with the semblance of a thrilling hope that I was plunging deep, deep into my first knowledge of some most holy mystery, or of some new, rapturous and daring sin, I knelt, and bowed down my face till I met the smooth rock with my lips".<sup>57</sup> But it was dangerous to linger in a realm which did not belong to mortals, for, like Icarus, he might incur the displeasure of the Gods, and lose his life and his sanity. Reason was too ready to drag him back: "Let there but come one chilling breath of the outer world, and all this loving piety would cower, and fly before the sound of my own bitter laugh".<sup>58</sup>

Although Kinglake here showed that he agreed with Byron's views on the sinfulness of man's nature, and his fall from God's grace, still he differed from him in so far as he allowed for these 'epiphanic' moments when the light of 'sentimental truth' could illuminate one's being. In relishing the state of sublime ecstasy, one where his senses, together with his passions, succeeded in uniting with the universal spirit, a state not unknown to the great mystics, he revealed his identification with deism, the philosophy most in harmony with sentimental concepts. Based on a belief in eclecticism, with its central doctrine an adherence to natural religion

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<sup>57</sup> Eothen, op.cit., Ch. IX, p. 107.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Ch. IX 1, p. 106.

based on reason, it was at the same time flexible enough to include within itself "the Locke of the Reasonableness of Christ, the Pope of the Essay on Man, Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Shaftesbury, Rousseau, and of course the theological controversialists".<sup>59</sup>

Kinglake's journey between Bethlehem and Cairo on the back of a camel provided him with another opportunity to lapse into a languorous state and experience another dimension than that within the usual range of human knowledge. Here again he was afforded another example of man's cosmic unity, but this time not only with respect to his ability to reproduce moments of great spiritual significance in the history of man, but to demonstrate the global unity of man's experience. After five days' travel under the fierce sun, he slumbered. Then it appeared that the entire world was still and lifeless, "as some dispeopled and forgotten world that rolls round and round in the heavens through wasted floods of light".<sup>60</sup> All of a sudden, and out of nowhere, he was gently awakened by the church bells of his native town Marlen, but the music of which had never before gone beyond the Blaygon hills. At a loss whether to attribute these chimes to one of the illusions of nature, or, as "it would have been sweeter to believe", to his mother's pious thoughts on that actual Sunday morning service, he and his retinue continued to hear the bells several moments after he had awakened. Such a phenomenon, however, which was

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<sup>59</sup> James R. Foster, History of the pre-romantic novel in England (London, 1949), p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Eothen, op.cit., Ch. XVII, p. 183.

common to sailors at sea, suggested a close relationship between mind and matter and the ability of one to influence the other. Thus Kinglake attributed these sounds to a supernatural agent, which by "occasioning a great tension, and consequent susceptibility of the hearing organs, had rendered them liable to tingle under the passing touch of some mere memory that must have swept across my brain in a moment of sleep".<sup>61</sup> For time and space, after all, formed part of one complete whole, although very often the "inner cause of unity was unknown" to man.

He found such experiences of particular value since they substantiated the simple, natural and innocent faith of the romantics. Although he looked to some extent to the Bedouin for a portrayal of some of the ancient Homeric traits which would ennoble 'natural' man, Kinglake, unlike Robert Wood, often saw him in a pathetic light. Too aware of his "ascendancy as a European",<sup>62</sup> and of the non-heroic characteristics of his age, Kinglake was willing to explore the life of the nomad within the possibilities of Sturm und Drang, the more sentimental and fanciful currents of thought and feeling. One particular occasion which allowed him to discover the deep subterranean currents that distinguished the nomad Arab's attitude to the city was the hiring of a camel caravan to convey him from Suez to Gaza. Led by particularly "wild fellows of the Desert", Kinglake was to witness an even

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 183-84.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXIII, p. 237.

more violent repetition of "the most moving expressions of grief and fond entreaty", as they approached the outskirts of the city. "Every moment his uneasiness increases, and at length he fairly sobs aloud, and embracing your knees, implores, with the most pitous cries and gestures, that you will dispense with him and his camels." Unable and unwilling to release the Arabs, Kinglake saw them desert him one by one until even Selim, their stalwart chief, after having exhausted "all his rhetoric of voice and action, and tears", fixed despairing eyes on his camels and vanished into the farthest Desert. The camels, not enjoying the same freedom of movement, were forced to carry their fear of the habitations of men into the city. Echoing their masters' horror as genuine beasts of the Desert, "they shrank from the beginning of every high narrow street as though from the entrance of some horrible cave or bottomless pit; they sighed and wept like women".<sup>63</sup>

In the desert, as in the ocean, man loses his personal identity. Unable, like the tribesmen, to claim affinity with some group or God, Kinglake found refuge in the religion and mythologies of old. But more than ever, he became aware of his frailty: "There were these two pitted together, and face to face, -- the mighty sun for one, and for the other -- this poor, pale, solitary Self of mine that I always carry about with me".<sup>64</sup> Thus had men of old succumbed to the "fiery sceptre" of the sun and created their mythologies to bridge the gap between

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXIII, pp. 236-38.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., Ch. XVII, p. 185.

the majesty of the elements and their own mortality. Hence, and as Kinglake explained at the outset,<sup>65</sup> man was understandably limited in his grasp of history.

He viewed the pyramids with utter horror. Seeming like "the sheer giant-work of some old dismal age weighing down this younger planet",<sup>66</sup> they were on the contrary, very much of this world! Built by swarms of poor Egyptians, "who were not only the abject tools and slaves of power", but who also "ate onions for the reward of their immortal labours",<sup>67</sup> the pyramids represented much unhappiness. Furthermore, their sheer immensity and timeless quality screened them from modern minds. Associating the pyramids with childhood nightmares rather than with "any eternal, and genuine art form which had an essence independent of the time and place of its composition", he rebelled against the "forced contemplation of a mere quality, distinct from matter".<sup>68</sup>

Next to the pyramids stood the Sphinx, also eternal and impassive. Fashioned according to some classical mould of beauty now forgotten, it still reflected these same traits in the present generation. With characteristic sensibility Kinglake drew a parallel between this monument and the living image of the Coptic girls of Egypt: "Yet still there lives on

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., Ch. VII, p. 73.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., Ch. XIX, p. 215.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., Ch. XIX, p. 214.

the race of those who were beautiful in the fashion of the elder world, and Christian girls of Coptic blood will look on you with the sad, serious gaze, and kiss your charitable hand with the big pouting lips of the very Sphynx."<sup>69</sup> His earlier promise to abstain from <sup>studying</sup> relics not directly relevant to man's destiny, which was a direct allusion to the methods of his predecessors,<sup>70</sup> Kinglake fulfilled by revealing the existence of immortal aspects of creation: "the same seeming will, and intent for ever and ever inexorable"! Furthermore, he showed himself to be clairvoyant about Britain's fortunes in that area and prophesied:

And we shall die, and Islam will wither away, and the Englishman straining far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile and sit in the seats of the Faithful, and still that sleepless rock will lie watching and watching the works of the new busy race, with those same sad earnest eyes, and the same tranquil mien everlasting. You dare not mock at the Sphynx.<sup>71</sup>

Kinglake had not planned to return to Lebanon or to visit Damascus, but, as predicted by Lady Hester during his visit to her,<sup>72</sup> he had to change his plans because of the prevalence of the plague, and finally sail for home from the port of Sataliah in Syria. His ride across the anti-Lebanon mountains, those

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Ch. XX, p. 217.

<sup>70</sup> At the outset Kinglake asserted: "I believe I may truly acknowledge that from all details of geographical discovery, or antiquarian research--from all display of 'sound learning, and religious knowledge' -- from all historical and scientific illustrations -- from <sup>all</sup> useful statistics -- from all political disquisitions -- and from all good moral reflections, the volume is thoroughly free". Ibid., Preface, p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., Ch. XX, p. 218.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 95.



dividing Syria from Lebanon, gave him further scope for thought. Reflecting on East and West and his relation to them, he commented:

My place upon this dividing barrier was as a man's puzzling station in eternity, between the birthless Past, and the Future that has no end. Behind me I left an old and decrepit World -- Religions dead and dying -- calm tyrannies expiring in silence -- women hushed, and swathed, and turned into waxen dolls -- Love flown, and in its stead mere Royal, and 'Paradise', pleasures. -- Before me there waited glad bustle and strife -- Love itself, an emulous game -- Religion a Cause and a Controversy, well smitten and well-defended -- men governed by reasons and suasion of speech -- wheels going -- steam buzzing -- a mortal race, and a slashing pace, and the Devil taking the hindmost -- taking me, by Jove (for that was my inner care), if I lingered too long, upon the difficult Pass that leads from Thought to Action. I descended, and went towards the West.<sup>73</sup>

Thus Kinglake recognized at the close of his journey to the East the dangers of remaining in a state of inaction, or of apathy, and departed to the country where he could apply some of the personal experience he had gained in his journeys in the East.

Two other travellers of the same period who adopted Kinglake's personal approach towards the countries of the East were Bartholomew Eliot Warburton and William Makepeace Thackeray. Whereas Warburton dedicated The Crescent and the Cross (1845) to Monckton Milnes, author of the travelogue called Palm Leaves (1844), Thackeray addressed From Cornhill to Grand Cairo (1846) to the Directors of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company who had invited him to join the cruise undertaken in the autumn of 1844. Whereas Kinglake regarded his journey, as described in Eothen, as an exercise in self-discipline, during which he gleaned such knowledge as was personally beneficial, his two compatriots saw their voyage in a somewhat different light.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXVIII, p. 268.

Warburton was more interested in the political and religious issues, and their bearing upon relations between East and West, whereas Thackeray, showing European prejudice at its very worst, satirized the common type of Eastern traveller, his impressions of the countries he visited, and the 'dandy' standards by which he evaluated the cultures of the various regions. History, however, has attested to the superiority of Eothen, ~~although~~ during the three authors' lifetime it was The Crescent and the Cross that enjoyed the greatest measure of popularity and acclaim.

In The Crescent and the Cross, which went through nine editions in ten years, Warburton described his journey first through Lower and Upper Egypt, then through the main cities of the Levant: Acre, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Beyrout, Damascus, and on to Constantinople, Smyrna and the Greek Islands. Since it would be useless at this stage to repeat some of his observations on the more frequented sites of ancient history, comment will be restricted to those places which were less accessible to residents and visitors of Eastern countries, especially since steamship travel and conducted tours, such as that taken by Thackeray, had eliminated the novelty and strangeness connected with distant lands.

Of special interest to many readers of his day were Warburton's voyages in Upper Egypt where he pursued the course of the Nile through Nubia, as far as the boundaries of Aethiopia. This journey along the river, whose source such travellers as Clarke, Lord Lindsay and later Livingstone and Burton were to seek, impressed Warburton with a sense of history and majesty. He reflected in the manner of Kinglake on the secret recesses of man's heart as he sailed down the Nile:

Who has not voyaged on the Rhine, and, as he glided down that noble river, felt an absorbing interest in the busy cities and calm solitudes; the vineyards and fortresses; the castled crags, where the banners of old history are still visible to the imaginative eye; and the deep glens, where lurks many a legend believed by the imaginative heart; all following in succession as uninterrupted, and more rapid than the thought which strives to follow!<sup>74</sup>

The river which had borne the Egyptian, the Ethiopian, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Roman, and the Saracen,<sup>75</sup> showed no physical signs of their presence. It was the Pyramids and the sites of cities, "in their varied stages of decay", that provided milestones by which "memory traces the progress of time's stream".<sup>76</sup> Whereas cities had epitaphs to show that they had once existed, the deep glens and wild desert can only bequeath their legends: "traditionary lore ... as ancient and as pure as the prouder history, that is more indebted to its oral voice than it would fain allow".<sup>77</sup> It was the echoes of these sounds that travellers such as Pococke, Shaw and Wood had also sought on their visits to the monuments of Palmyra, Baalbec and the Troad in their search for some living evidence to indicate the majesty of Jehovah, the 'awful' power of the God of the Sun, or the immortality of the Gods of Olympus.

During his voyage down the river, which covers a distance of eight hundred miles, Warburton had the opportunity to witness the old and the new, to see nature in its simplest and most primitive form, and indulge in romantic feelings of the sublime.

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<sup>74</sup> Bartholomew Eliot Warburton, The Crescent and the Cross. 2 vols. (London, 1845), I, Ch. XXIII, p. 247.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., I, Ch. XXIII, p. 249.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., I, Ch. XXIII, p. 249.

He watched on the banks the crocodile basking, the giraffe and gazelle grazing, the pelican gliding, while the ibis soared "over the mounds of buried cities,

'with pale white wing,<sup>78</sup>  
Like phantom o'er a grave.'

Near Philoe, the cataracts, rapids and torrents unleashed his own wild and vivid imagination, while the Nubian maidens, with their natural and graceful modesty, recalled "associations of primitive purity, and Eve-like innocence".<sup>79</sup>

Warburton's detailed observations and lengthy coverage of the monuments and institutions of Egypt resulted in his work being considered as almost a guide-book to Egypt. The London Literary Gazette regarded it as "A work of very high literary character and lasting historical value",<sup>80</sup> and Escott, in an article in the Observer, was to find in it the germ of many ideas accepted by Victorian statemen.<sup>81</sup> The Quarterly Review explored at some length Warburton's comments with regard to the British role in Egypt, with special reference to his remarks that "England is expected in the East".<sup>82</sup> Statesmen were particularly interested in the travellers' assessments of the Oriental attitude towards British subjects in that region. The Quarterly critic, substantiating both

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXV, p. 288.

<sup>80</sup> Samuel Allibone, A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors (London, 1871), III, pp. 2568 - 2569.

<sup>81</sup> Observer, 5 December 1897, p. 7.

<sup>82</sup> Bartholomew Eliot Warburton, The Crescent and the Cross (London, 1858), Ch. XV, p. 163.

Kinglake's<sup>83</sup> and Warburton's understanding of the situation, wrote that every victory won by France only served to alienate it further from the Egyptian people. He clarified the basic relationship, that travellers often hinted at, as existing between the local people and their British visitors. To illustrate what he believed to be the national character, the reviewer wrote: "The Orientals ... see an English traveller crossing the wilderness with his handful of ill-armed attendants; they see him maintaining his coolness, his wilful habits, and even perhaps enforcing compliance with many an odd silly whim -- and all this in the midst of strange and armed tribes who are the terror of the peaceable natives; instantly they infer far more than the bare fact would warrant; they will not believe that a mere firman from a sultan, or a mere safe-conduct from a chief, could warrant all this assurance -- and they therefore impute to the self-protected stranger either some infernal aid, or else the possession of unknown temporal resources that guard him completely from danger".<sup>84</sup> Kinglake, for example, boasted of his ability to survive amidst hostile Arabs in the desert, as did Warburton during his visit to Baalbec. This bravado, with which British travellers were endowed, could also be seen, the reviewer continued, in their leaders. Eastern politicians

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<sup>83</sup> Kinglake wrote in this connection: "... the merit of the English especially was so great that a good Mussulman flying from the conscription or any other persecution, would come to seek from the formerly despised hat that protection which the turban could no longer afford..." Eothen, op.cit., Ch. XXV, p. 247.

<sup>84</sup> The Quarterly Review (December, 1844 and March 1845), London, 1845, LXXV, p. 544.

believed that their destiny was bound with that of the United Kingdom, and now all that was needed was the "man of Destiny", 'King of Kings', or the 'shadow of God upon earth', to appear, and he would crush their French foes and re-instate Britain as the true sovereign of the world.<sup>85</sup>

Warburton substantiated the views of the above critic by writing how Napoleon's atrocities and false promises had alienated the inhabitants without whom no victory could ever be permanently won. Britain's reputation, on the other hand, was unsullied, and she enjoyed unparalleled popularity, especially after Napoleon's refusal to ratify the armistice of Treviso:

The spirit, which dictated the British sailor's act was understood in the deserts -- a voice went forth among the tents of the Bedouins and the palaces of the despot, that England preferred honour to advantage. Battles, since then, have been fought, and been forgotten-- nations have come and gone, and left no trace behind them -- but the memory of that noble truthfulness remained, and expanded into a national characteristic; and our countrymen may, at this hour, in the streets of Cairo, hear the Arab swear "by the honour of an Englishman".<sup>86</sup>

Such interpretations of Eastern character were especially welcome to all those who were particularly eager to acquire a foothold in Egypt and guarantee their route to India!

Warburton at all times was interested in the religious significance of the East for the West: "We envy not the man who can merge the pilgrim in the traveller, and the believer in the antiquary".<sup>87</sup> For the most wondrous fact about travel in the Levant and Egypt after all was that "after ages of obscurity and

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 545.

<sup>86</sup> The Crescent and the Cross (1858), op. cit., Ch. IV, p.27.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXIII, p. 251.

oblivion as a mere province of a fallen empire that country suddenly became invested with a glory till then unknown to the earth".<sup>88</sup> The Crusades had admittedly failed to achieve the liberation of the area from the hands of its infidel rulers, but Warburton, philosophically observed that: "Gold wins its way where angels might despair, and the interests of India may obtain what the Sepulchre of Christ has been denied".<sup>89</sup> Benjamin Disraeli eventually succeeded in obtaining the Suez Canal for Britain, turning Kinglake and Warburton's dreams into reality. A Jew by birth, he was even more convinced of a common destiny for both East and West.<sup>90</sup>

At the basis of Warburton's belief that the countries of the East could not be left to guide their own destiny was his contempt for Islamic culture, which had even eliminated the noble inhabitant of old. Thus he wrote of the Egyptian character:

The Egyptian has no home; at least, in the English sense of that sacred word: his sons are only half brothers, and generally at enmity with each other; his daughters are transplanted, while yet children, into some other hareem; and his wives, when their beauty is gone by, are frequently divorced without a cause, to make room for some younger rival. The result is, that the Egyptian is a sensualist and a slave, and only fit to be a subject in what prophecy long since foretold his country should become -- 'the basest of Kingdoms'.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> The Crescent and the Cross, (1958), op.cit., Ch. XIX, p. 190.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Ch. XV, p. 163.

<sup>90</sup> Donald Sultana, Benjamin Disraeli in Spain, Malta and Albania: 1830-32 (London, 1976), p. 63.

<sup>91</sup> The Crescent and the Cross, Ch. VI, p. 45.

In a review in the Athenaeum, (1844), a critic severely chastized him for this attitude: "He sees well enough, and pities, the supersition of the Moslem, but he is blind and partial to his own".<sup>92</sup> By condemning the whole social system, the critic continued, Warburton showed that he did not consider reform to be possible at any level. When slavery, for example, is viewed as part of the culture, a victim does not merely become a victim of humanity, so that there is a chance of the evil being overcome, but his plight is eternal since all engaged are mere animals.<sup>93</sup> Warburton continued in this vein on numerous occasions during his tours in Egypt and the Levant, repeatedly creating the image of a mindless, fantastic society built upon the fiction of the Arabian Nights. All the effort that travellers like Russell and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, on occasion, had bestowed on the nurture of a better understanding between East and West, was dismissed by nineteenth-century travellers with statements such as "the Moslem purchases his wife as he does his horse",<sup>94</sup> Arab women in general were no more than lovely birds in a cage, pinning and soulless, while their family life had no daughters or sons in it.

Warburton found the inhabitants' immorality and corruption reflected in the state of the land. At one time, he claimed, the Moors had "enlightened Europe with the wisdom of the East

<sup>92</sup> The Athenaeum: Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts (London, Saturday, November 16, 1844), p. 1041.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> The Crescent and the Cross, (1858), Ch. VI, p. 45.



and the chivalry of the Desert". Then the gardens smiled, the valleys were rich with corn, the rocks with vines, and Alhambra with roses ... but then "arose bigotry and fanaticism",<sup>95</sup> which changed the destiny of men, and the new soullessness was reflected in the parched and desolate landscape.<sup>96</sup> To remedy this situation, Warburton advocated not only the promotion of a British presence there, and the encouragement of Christianity, but also the necessity of planning for Jewish immigration. His ideas in this connection came to fruition in Laurence Oliphant's narrative, The Land of Gilead: With Excursions in the Lebanon (1850). Oliphant, editor of The Owl, a magazine to which Kinglake contributed, painstakingly surveyed the various regions of the Holy Land in the light of the Old Testament with the aim of making it as attractive as possible for Jewish migrants from around the world. Such a great undertaking, these travellers believed, would prop up the Turkish Empire as an effective buffer against Russia, provide a national home for a dispersed nation, defeat Islam and at the same time promote the prophecies of the Old Testament. The scheme involved awaiting the coming of the Second Messiah and restoring the landscape to its original abundance. Warburton had given

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., Ch. II, p. 10.

<sup>96</sup> Warburton quoted in this connection the Biblical verse: "The country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein; and Noph shall be desolate." Ibid. Ch. IX, p. 77. Such quotations indicate that the nineteenth-century traveller was more inclined to agree with the belief that the individual was actively involved in the formation of history. He accepted Coleridge's observations in this connection rather than those posited by Herder, who had seen history as a succession of events which were outside the control of the individual.

expression to this idea as follows:

In the dark-robed form that lingers thoughtfully among the tombs in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, or bends with black turban to the ground at the "Place of Wailing", you seem to behold a Destiny incarnate. That fierce, dark eye, the noble brow; that medallic profile, that has been transmitted unimpaired through a thousand generations and a thousand climates; these are Nature's own illustrations, and vindicate old history.<sup>97</sup>

In the Athenaeum, the same critic condemned Warburton as an "imperfect Optimist", one for whom "everything ... is somehow right, though somehow also it is wrong". Yet, he continued, "between the two points, Warburton manages to keep a sort of pendulating equilibrium which defies decision".<sup>98</sup> This poetical extravagance can best be seen in his description of a visit to the home of a British officer who was married to a Maronite lady in Beyrout. After having received every courtesy from his hosts, the visitor, revelling in the beauty of the evening hour and the sight of the Syrian families reclining on their house-tops, drew the scene:

From every terraced roof rose the faint clouds of the chibouqou; blue, red, and purple dresses glittered on every group that was gathered round us, with the veil-enfolded horns of the matrons, or the black tresses of the maidens sparkling with golden coins. And the music of merry voices was heard from far and near, with sometimes a strain of song, or the tinkle of a guitar; and the sea made its own solemn music on the distant shore, and the whole scene was one of perfect harmony, and peace, and beauty.<sup>99</sup>

In spite of the happiness of the scene, Warburton, as the same critic pointed out, advocated a change in their administration

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXVI, p. 283.

<sup>98</sup> The Athenaeum, op. cit., p. 1042.

<sup>99</sup> The Crescent and the Cross, op.cit., pp. 193-199.

and way of life on the basis of "certain obscure and mystical sentiments ... which have nothing in common with the greatest happiness dogma".<sup>100</sup>

Eventually Kinglake's narrative was considered to be superior to that of Warburton's because its arguments and presentation followed a systematic pattern. Moreover, the factors that had especially swayed public opinion to favour one rather than the other, gradually ceased to be important. For example, Kinglake had been especially chastized for his treatment of the holy places, as one of his critics pointed out: "In the deep levity of the latter -- if we may use words which seem a paradox -- is concealed, amidst the very brightness of the wit, something that shocks and offends us. It is too indiscriminately pervading -- it is a garment never put off, even where reverence requires it -- a plumed head-gear, undoffed in the most august presence."<sup>101</sup> Warburton, on the other hand, had impressed the more devout among his readers by writing piously about the religious sites he visited. Less concerned with discovering 'sentimental truth' in the manner of Kinglake, he felt instead that Jerusalem and other holy cities justified genuine outbursts of emotion. In one of his passages Warburton seemed to be criticising his friend for his mockery of the practices there: "It is difficult to speak of such things gravely; and yet I would not have one light feeling or expression intermingled with the solemn subjects of which this

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<sup>100</sup>. The Athenaeum, p 1042.

<sup>101</sup> The Dublin University Magazine, "The Crescent and the Cross", (January to June: 1845), Vol. XXV, Dublin: 1845, p. 123.

chapter attempts to treat; when we visit Marathon or Salamis, it would shame us to be insensible to their heroic associations; and the pilgrim who can scoff within the walls of Jerusalem does his heart as little justice".<sup>102</sup>

If The Crescent and the Cross enjoyed a great measure of success for a period of over ten years, having gone through some 17 editions, Thackeray's From Cornhill to Grand Cairo was appreciated by very few even at the time of its publication. Written in a mock-heroic vein, in which the author satirized his whole journey to the East, it is not strange that some of his colleagues doubted if he had even taken the trip. Others, and De Quincey, in particular, who was thought to be the critic of a certain article on The Crescent and the Cross in Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, wrote that the work was below the required standard<sup>of travel books</sup>. Thackeray, as quoted by George Saintsbury, in a fit of temper, replied in a letter to Punch on March 14, 1846:

"What his opinion may be is neither here nor there. Every man has a right to his own; and whether the critic complains of want of purpose, or says (with great acuteness and ingenuity) that the book might have been much better, is not at all to the point".<sup>103</sup> But he himself could not seriously chastise his compatriots when he did not view his voyage as more than a story-book adventure, undertaken at the spur of the moment at the instigation of a Mr. James of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, during a chance meeting at the club

<sup>102</sup> The Crescent and the Cross, op.cit., (1858), Ch. XII, pp. 238-239.

<sup>103</sup> George Saintsbury, A Consideration of Thackeray (London, 1931), p. 142.

which they both frequented. Throughout his journey of approximately three months, Thackeray did not abandon his tone of sarcasm and summed up the experience derived from his trip: "If it be but to read the Arabian Nights again on getting home, it is good to have made this little voyage and seen these strange places and faces".<sup>104</sup>

Thackeray's steamer travelled via Vigo, Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Malta, Athens, Smyrna, Constantinople, Rhodes, Beyrout, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Alexandria. His stop in every city provided him with the opportunity to malign some particular feature and present it in such a manner as to warrant public disdain. The monuments of Athens, he found, lay outside the sphere of the consciousness of men like himself who were more a product of commercial newspapers and Baker-Street values. Lord Byron, to whom Greek independence meant so much, he believed was terribly misguided in his affections. His mistake had been to praise "the peasant girls with dark-blue eyes of the Rhine, rather than see them as they truly were: "brown-faced, flat-nosed, thick-lipped, dirty wenches!"<sup>105</sup> Consequently he accused Byron of never writing from his heart. "He got up rapture and enthusiasm with an eye to the public; -- but this is dangerous ground, even more dangerous than to look Athens full in the face, and say that your eyes are not dazzled by its beauty". Thackeray, in a sense, was preaching against the pitfalls of departing from the limitations of ordinary human experience, to take refuge in

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<sup>104</sup> William Makepeace Thackeray, Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo (London, 1846), p. 328.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., Ch. V, p. 52.

some ideal world that was beyond human cognizance. Even the famous guide-book of the century received its measure of criticism: "The Great Public admires Greece and Byron; the public knows best. Murray's 'Guide-Book' calls the latter 'our native bard'. Our native bard! Mon Dieu! He Shakespeare's, Milton's, Keats's, Scott's native bard! Well, woe be to the man who denies the public gods!"<sup>106</sup>

Thackeray saw the decaying face of Mohammedanism portrayed best during his stop at Rhodes. He described it as lingering and "about just ready to drop", with its houris "darning their faded muslins", and "the chief of the faithful himself, the awful camel-driver, the supernatural husband of Kadisheh", sitting alone in a tumble-down kiosk thinking of the day when "his gardens of bliss shall be as vacant as the bankrupt Olympus".<sup>107</sup> The Turks, who had seized power from the Crusaders, he ironically pictured as nobler, in the long run, than the "superb fraternity" of knights who were the most gallant pirates of the inland seas and "who made vows of chastity, and robbed and ravished". Saladin he considered to be a pearl of refinement compared with his foe, the 'beef-eating Richard -- about whom Sir Walter Scott has led all the world astray". Finally with the grocer now being acknowledged as ruler of the world instead of the baron, and the spirit of pageantry, as presented by the Scott romances gone, Titmarsh

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., Ch. V, p. 52.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 99.

(Thackeray's code name), begged indulgence for an exhibition of "tender feelings" over the decay of knighthood and Mohammedanism. All that was present now, and which was dispersed in such a fashion as if to highlight the appearance of decay that pervaded Rhodes during his visit, were the "few consuls' houses planted on the sea-side here and there, with bright flags flaunting in the sun; fresh paint; English crockery, shining mahogany, etc."<sup>108</sup>

The Turkish baths at Constantinople gave him the opportunity to indulge in the grotesque. Having been ushered by a dancing dervish in high wooden pattens into a tepidarium, "a moist oozing arched den", with a faint light, he heard yells of "frantic laughter and song" reverberating through the arches. This, he stated, "was the laughter of the followers of Mahound, rollicking and taking their pleasure in the public bath"<sup>109</sup>. Then, in the hot room, where he had the sensation of "potatoes steaming", he was horrified to see "a great brown wretch extended ... only half dressed, standing on pattens, and exaggerated by them and the steam until he looked like an ogre, grinning in the most horrible way, and waving his arm, on which was a horsehair glove"<sup>110</sup>. Gone from this account was the delicate modesty which Russell had presented of the Aleppo ladies visiting the baths, as was the luxury and magnificence with which Lady Mary had surrounded the setting.

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 98.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., Ch. VII, p. 73.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., Ch. V, p. 52.

After arriving at the famous pyramids, Titmarsh pretended to lament his inability to be impressed with any of the relics of the East, and cried out: "Are we so blasés of the world that the greatest marvels in it do not succeed in moving us? Have society, Pall Mall clubs, and a habit of sneering, so withered up our organs of veneration that we can admire no more?"<sup>111</sup> During this visit he went to great lengths to show that the traveller was more engrossed in his personal comfort than in seeing the sights. Any merit that might have been derived from seeing those monuments, he dismissed with the statement: "Shelley's two sonnets are the best views that I know of the pyramids ... better than the reality; for a man may lay down the book, and in quiet fancy conjure up a picture of it out of those magnificent words, in which I shan't be disturbed by any pettiness or mean realities, -- such as the swarms of howling beggars, who jostle you about the actual place; and scream in your ears incessantly and hang on your skirts and bawl for money".<sup>112</sup> One cannot but wonder how Poccocke would have reacted to Thackeray!

He did not even have any liking for the Jews in whom Warburton, Oliphant and other American missionaries saw the salvation of the West. So filthy were they in both their abode and manner of dress that they were unworthy subjects, and "could hardly be painted by Swift in his dirtiest mood".<sup>113</sup> Reverting again

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., Ch. XV, p. 175.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., Ch. XV, pp. 202-203.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 93.



to the dandy attitudes which distinguish the inhabitants of one of London's fashionable streets, he continued: "What would they say in Baker-street to some sights with which our new friends favoured us? What would your ladyship have said if you had seen the interesting Greek nun combing her hair over the cabin -- combing it with the natural fingers, and, averse to slaughter, flinging the delicate little intruders, which she found in the course of her investigation, gently into the great cabin?"<sup>114</sup> Titmarsh summed up his attitude with the remark: "The much-maligned Orient, I am confident, has not been maligned near enough; for the good reason that none of us can tell the amount of horrible sensuality practised there".<sup>115</sup>

George Saintsbury, a critic who was favourably impressed with the above travelogue, wrote that its merit lay in the method of writing rather than in the subject matter. The vivid, impressionistic style, interspersed with many sketches of the inhabitants, their dress and manner of life, he found gave a uniqueness to a narrative which would otherwise have been regarded as 'phantasmagoric' and 'panoramic'.<sup>116</sup> One cannot but agree that on occasion, especially when the writer gave free reign to his descriptive powers, the result was picturesque, with a surrealist effect. The two examples that may be chosen to demonstrate his talents in this direction are his verbal drawings of the dawn in Cairo and at Jerusalem. They are especially

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., Ch. VIII, p. 94.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., Ch. XV, p. 183

<sup>116</sup> George Saintsbury, op.cit., p. 140.

significant, as the word 'Eothen' denotes 'from the early dawn', -- 'from the East',<sup>117</sup> and Warburton was also pre-occupied with its connotations in one of his chapters.<sup>118</sup>

Over Cairo, the lights and shadows of nature forged their own reality:

In the sky in the east was a long streak of greenish light, which widened and rose until it grew to be of an opal colour, then orange; then, behold, the round red disk of the sun rose flaming up above the horizon. All the water blushed as he got up; the deck was all red; the steersman ... praised the Maker of the sun: it shone on his white turban as he was kneeling, and gilt up his bronzed face, and sent his blue shadow over the glowing deck...<sup>119</sup>

In Jerusalem, the scene of parched mountains, bleak olive trees and savage ravines and valleys paved with tombstones, because of the frightful deed that was committed there, the sight of the magnificent sunrise provided the only relief. Drawing the scene in a manner <sup>foreshadowing</sup> the impressionists, Thackeray wrote: "I have seen only in Titian's picture those magnificent purple shadows, ... the nakedness and misery of the surrounding city were hidden in that beautiful rosy atmosphere of mingling night and dawn".<sup>120</sup> More than ever aware of the Christians,

<sup>117</sup> Eothen, op. cit., Preface p. 3 ftn.

<sup>118</sup> Warburton quoted from Childe Harold:

Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow,  
Such as creation's dawn beheld, Thou rollest now!

The Crescent and the Cross, op.cit., (1858 ed.), p. 187.

<sup>119</sup> From Cornhill to Grand Cairo, op.cit., Ch. XV, p. 174.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., Ch. XIII, pp. 159-160.

"who make belief a ground to cheat upon",<sup>121</sup> Thackeray's overwhelming wish, like Kinglake's, was to return to the Christian world whence he had come.

Such was the East as some travellers of both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw it. But whether they regarded it with awe and reverence, as did the earlier travellers, or viewed it with disdain, as in the early and mid-nineteenth century, all recognized their religious, cultural and artistic dependence on the events that had occurred there and had moulded the course of history. If some of them failed to understand and appreciate the talents of the various inhabitants they encountered, it was a failing characteristic of travellers through the ages. Nevertheless, it is well to remember some lines of Thackeray's, which hold true today as they did then, and which point to the true spirit in which any kind of travel should be undertaken:

So each, in his fashion, and after his kind, is bowing down, and adoring the father, who is equally above all. Cavil not, you brother or sister, if your neighbour's voice is not like yours; only hope, that his words are honest (as far as they may be), and his heart humble and thankful.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., Ch. XIII, p. 151.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., Ch. XV, p. 208.

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