

THE INTREPID GERTRUDE BELL: VICTORIAN LADY, EXPLORER OF THE  
MIDDLE EASTERN DESERTS, AND KEY ADVISER TO THE NEW IRAQI  
NATION, 1868-1926

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE  
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

BY  
ANN LAWSON DREES, BS  
DENTON, TEXAS  
AUGUST 1993

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

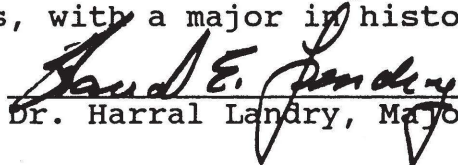
DENTON, TEXAS

July 7, 1993

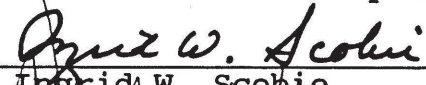
Date

To the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Ann Lawson Drees entitled "The Intrepid Gertrude Bell: Victorian Lady, Explorer of the Middle Eastern Deserts, and Key Adviser to the New Iraqi Nation." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in history.

  
Dr. Harral Landry, Major Professor


We have read this thesis  
and recommend its acceptance:

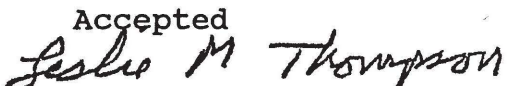
  
Dr. Ingrid W. Scobie

  
Dr. Valentine Belfiglio

  
Dr. Bullitt Lowry (UNT)

  
Dr. Jim Alexander, Department Chair

 7/7/93  
Dr. Robert E. Collier, Dean

Accepted  
  
Associate Vice President for Research  
and Dean of the Graduate School



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of members of my faculty committee in the preparation of this thesis. Without the gifts of their time, expertise, and moral support, I would not have met the challenge with the same degree of confidence. I also wish to acknowledge the help of my husband, Barry Drees, who shared his computer skills with me, and the tremendous support of other graduate students at Texas Woman's University, especially Patricia S. Pederson. They shared with me their knowledge, their creativity, and, above all, their spirit of perseverance.

**THE INTREPID GERTRUDE BELL: VICTORIAN LADY, EXPLORER OF THE  
MIDDLE EASTERN DESERTS, AND KEY ADVISER TO THE NEW IRAQI  
NATION, 1868-1926**

Ann Lawson Drees, Texas Woman's University, August 1993

This biographical study of Gertrude Lowthian Bell, the noted British explorer and political officer, portrays a woman who achieved fame in several fields, an archaeologist, travel writer, wartime intelligence officer, and powerful British official in the new Iraqi nation. This study examines Bell's personal life and her career in the Middle East, using her letters and the memoirs of her contemporaries to gain a clearer picture of Gertrude Bell beyond the public image her family protected. The thesis also covers more recent writings which revealed information Bell's family had kept secret for forty years. The conclusion is that Bell exercised tremendous power in British and Iraqi politics but had very little control over events in her private life.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: THE YOUNG VICTORIAN LADY.....	5
CHAPTER TWO: THE WORLD EXPLORER.....	20
CHAPTER THREE: THE WARTIME INTELLIGENCE OFFICER.....	29
CHAPTER FOUR: "THE UNCROWNED QUEEN OF IRAQ".....	43
CHAPTER FIVE: THE PEAK OF POWER.....	58
CHAPTER SIX: THE DIRECTOR OF ANTIQUITIES.....	67
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE AFTERMATH IN IRAQ, AN ASSESSMENT OF GERTRUDE BELL'S POLICIES.....	78
CHAPTER EIGHT: THE WOMAN INSIDE GERTRUDE BELL, A 1990s VIEW.....	93
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	111
NOTES.....	116
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	127

## INTRODUCTION

She crossed the Arabian Desert and climbed the Matterhorn. She was the first woman to receive a First in history at Oxford University, the first woman to write a White Paper for the British government, the only woman in the British army in 1916--an intelligence officer and, some say, a spy--and the most powerful British official in Iraq, in fact if not in title, by 1921. She was called "Al Khatun" (the lady), "Umm al Muminin" (mother of the faithful), and "the uncrowned queen of Mesopotamia." She was Gertrude Bell.

"Oh Sheiks, this is a woman--what must the men be like!"

--Fahad Bey, paramount sheik of the Amarah,

quoted in The Letters of Gertrude Bell

What did other contemporaries think of Gertrude Bell?\*

During her lifetime and immediately afterward, most people knew her from her letters, her reports to the British

---

\*This thesis will use "Gertrude Bell" or "Bell" when referring to the subject as an adult outside her family circle and "Gertrude" when referring to the subject as a young person, to distinguish her from other family members with the same last name.

government, and her published writings. As Bell's co-workers, the other British officials serving in the Middle East after the Great War, retired and wrote their memoirs, their accounts of her accomplishments among the Arabs added to her fame. In the early 1960s, Bell's family allowed the public to see a new side of Gertrude Bell's life when family members at last opened to the public previously unpublished letters between her and a married man written between 1913 and 1915, letters full of passion and longing. Forty years after Bell's death, new disclosures about the circumstances of her death also surfaced in the 1960s, including some rather startling information contrary to her family's published accounts.

Gertrude Bell appears in this thesis as her contemporaries described her, supplemented by comments she made about herself in her famous letters. Bell emerges as a very private woman, with secrets known to few people in spite of her fame and her talent for exercising political power. A more interesting, more human Gertrude Bell comes to light. That this warm, outgoing public figure, with so many literary friends and family members writing about her, could have harbored such deep secrets and hidden emotions seems amazing.

A wealth of background information exists in Gertrude Bell's published letters, edited by her stepmother, Florence



Bell, and her sister, Elsa Richmond. Their personal comments among the letters provided a close, if slightly romanticized, view of Gertrude's homelife and family connections. In a 1940 biography, her cousin, Ronald Bodley, and Lorna Hearst primarily rewrote in narrative form an account of Bell's life taken from the books of her letters, with very little new information. Bodley acknowledged that he had never met Gertrude Bell.

Elizabeth Burgoyne's two-volume biography of Bell, which she wrote with the cooperation of Elsa Richmond and published in 1958 and 1961, expanded the body of knowledge of Bell's work but offered very little new information about her personal life. H. V. F. Winstone's 1978 biography of Bell was the first to include information from her secret love letters and the first to reveal that Bell had committed suicide. Many more British documents from Bell's lifetime were now available to researchers, and this access to new sources made his biography very enlightening. Susan Goodman published a short biography of Gertrude Bell in 1985, which confirmed the same information.

None of these authors, however, examined Bell's life in the context of women's history or fully explored the effect of her gender on her remarkable career. They gave little attention to Bell's methods of overcoming the barriers to women or to her reasons for acceptance of the barriers she

did not overcome. This thesis will offer the first attempt to fill the gap, and also compare Bell, a woman of great brilliance and passionate feelings, to other women of her time and circumstances.

This thesis also includes the first look at Bell's career from a vantage point almost seventy years after her death, by exploring the recent history of Iraq. To properly evaluate Bell's career, a comparison is necessary between the monarchy she helped organize and the governments which have followed it, all of which have had the same problems of ethnic diversity and troublesome neighbors. Gertrude Bell helped make policy decisions which have affected the course of history and which must be assessed in that context, for the Middle East of today was born in Gertrude Bell's day.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE YOUNG VICTORIAN LADY

Gertrude Bell was always a high-spirited child, although not quite naughty, according to her sister Elsa's memory. Elsa recalled that Gertrude had a great deal of energy and loved to climb and leap. She was always adventurous, always the leader, and she exhausted her governess by running away when it was time to go inside. This spirit of adventure and independence would last throughout her life. It would take her to places of which the young Gertrude had never dreamed, and she would use this spirit to her last breath in the service of the British Empire.<sup>1</sup>

Gertrude Margaret Lowthian Bell was born on July 14, 1868, in her grandfather's stately home at Washington in Durham County, England. The birthplace was appropriate, for her grandfather's vast fortune and his keen scientific mind had a great impact on Gertrude's life. Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell, a well-known scientist and ironmaster, owned a number of ironworks, chemical works, and even a valuable salt mine. He served as a Liberal Member of Parliament for a time and passed his love of politics on to his son Hugh and

granddaughter Gertrude. Sir Lowthian built an even larger residence in Yorkshire called Rounton Grange where Gertrude loved to visit as a child. She herself later laid out part of the gardens, many years after the famous interior designer William Morris had planned the estate's interior decor.

Gertrude's mother died of pneumonia in April 1871, leaving her three-year-old daughter and a newborn son, Maurice. Hugh Bell raised his children with help from his unmarried sister Ada and a series of nurses and governesses. When Gertrude was eight, Hugh married Ada's friend Florence Olliffe and brought her to his new home, "Redbarns," at Redcar, on the Yorkshire seacoast. Florence Olliffe Bell, who later edited The Letters of Gertrude Bell, wrote that the fearless Gertrude had climbed to the top of the greenhouse and the nine-foot garden wall at Redbarns and lured her younger brother Maurice up after her; while she could jump and land on her feet or scamper down safely, Maurice unfortunately fell.<sup>2</sup>

Gertrude's earliest known letter is an affectionate one addressed to her future stepmother, the first of many such letters in their long and warm relationship. Florence Bell was herself a unique woman. While her husband was often absent, pursuing his interests in politics, science, and hunting, Florence wrote an opera and some forty books, many

of them in foreign languages, for she spoke several fluently. She accomplished this literary career, gave birth to three babies--Elsa, Molly, and Hugo--and then supervised the education of all five children, most of whom received tutoring at home. Florence numbered among her close friends many leading educators, actresses, and social leaders of the day. Her friends, along with Sir Hugh Bell's friends in the scientific and political worlds, provided the Bell children contact with a constant flow of interesting visitors.

Gertrude at the age of sixteen moved in with Florence's mother, Mrs. Joseph Olliffe, at 95 Sloane Street, London, an address which would be her London home for the rest of her life. She enrolled at Queen's College in Harley Street for two years, first as a day student and later as a boarder.\* Most of her letters home to her family from this period survive today. Her sister Lady Elsa Richmond, the wife of Vice Admiral Herbert Richmond, published them in 1937, along with letters home from Gertrude's early travels. She added many loving memories of her own about Gertrude as she edited them. Gertrude's letters home are now used by scholars as a

---

\* The family chose Queen's College because Camilla Croudace held the office of "lady president" there. Miss Croudace, a friend of Gertrude's deceased mother, was very close to the young Gertrude and her family.

rich source of information about her life and experiences, because she only sporadically kept a diary.\*

During her first year at Queen's College, 1884, Gertrude had confirmation in the Church of England. She wrote to her "dearest Mother," her stepmother, Florence Bell, that she had made many resolutions to be a better, more obedient daughter and was applying all the lessons she had learned to all her "bothers and worries." Elsa wrote that this reference to Gertrude's religion was the only one she had ever discovered because, in spite of her high ideals, Gertrude claimed to have no religious beliefs at all.<sup>3</sup> In her later editing of the letters, Elsa referred often to her sister's loving nature and consideration of her family, which showed in even her earliest letters.

Teachers must have seen sixteen-year-old Gertrude's intellectual gifts immediately, for she wrote about her good grades to her father in March 1884, only two months after entering for spring term. In classes of thirty to forty girls, she was already first in history, second in arithmetic, and third in geography. She was no more than seventh from the top of the class in any of her eight subjects, and she considered her seventh place in German,

---

\* Researchers can find Gertrude Bell's papers in a catalogued archive at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.



her hardest subject, to be "bad."<sup>4</sup> Once her dance mistress, Mrs. Birch, "who is most terribly strict," called her aside and complimented her improvement, for "in the beginning she thought I danced very badly." Later, when editing the letters, Elsa remarked that she found the dance mistress's criticisms interesting, since Gertrude later was a graceful dancer with a "springy lightness" which was a joy to watch, especially when she and her partners danced the "Hop Waltz," a popular dance of the day.<sup>5</sup>

Gertrude's letters were full of commentary on her clothing: "I've got my elegant bodice with puffs; you can't think how nice it is! I believe even you will like it." This letter she addressed to her stepmother who, according to her photographs, usually dressed very conservatively. Elsa later remarked in her edition of the letters that Gertrude used a vocabulary of women's apparel different from modern usage, referring to dresses for both day and night as "gowns," for "dresses" were worn only by the lower classes in her day. Elsa explained that gowns were two-piece ensembles, with a skirt and a bodice or "body" for short, the latter lacing up the back in evening wear--a trial to take off without the help of one's maid or a friend.

Beginning in 1884 when she was at Queen's College, Gertrude's letters often contained requests for the family to send her certain items of clothing, describing exactly

what she wanted, and Elsa noted that it gave her a thrill to search for the right thing and post it to Gertrude. After college, the volume of clothing requests increased. Years later, during the Great War, Elsa felt that Gertrude's clothing packages were "a veritable Jonah" to any vessel carrying them, for so many were torpedoed and sunk with Gertrude's new apparel aboard.<sup>6</sup>

Reading between the lines in Gertrude's letters home from Queen's College sometimes offers another insight into her relationship with her stepmother. Even though Gertrude loved Florence, she sometimes was angry with her. While Elsa stated that "[Gertrude's] deference to my mother's opinion in matters of what may be called social deportment only shows the trust Gertrude felt in her judgment," the letters offer evidence that Gertrude, like many young women, grew tired of motherly admonitions. She wrote that she was angry at being told the same things over and over again, that she knew what Florence would say before she even opened her letters. The young Gertrude complained to her stepmother, "I know exactly what you'll say when you read this--trust that I know it and don't write to me."<sup>7</sup>

One letter illustrates the sense of independence the young Gertrude would later develop. On a day in 1885 when Gertrude wrote that she wanted to go to "the National," meaning the National Gallery, she evidently triggered a

response from Florence that Gertrude's casual shortening of the museum's name was not good form. Gertrude replied that she was already feeling cross and the letter made her "crosser than ever," that she considered the letter "quite horrid" and burned it promptly.<sup>8</sup> However, she apologized in the next letter for her outbursts and asked to be forgiven.

Elsa later observed that Gertrude, at that stage of her life a very dependent young woman, felt she had to write for permission even to dine at the home of a school friend. Her stepmother denied Gertrude this very permission, which might explain why Gertrude felt she should ask: Florence Bell had very strict Victorian standards, and, as Elsa pointed out, Gertrude unquestioningly accepted the "maternal veto."<sup>9</sup> For many years to come, Gertrude accepted her parents' decisions without question, even later when her engagement was the issue. In retrospect, such dependence seemed out of character to Elsa, considering the very independent woman Gertrude became in her later life.

Gertrude's letters also conveyed a lively interest in politics, even at the age of eighteen. Her sister said her sympathies leaned to the Liberal party, and her letters home referred often to her favorite politician, Prime Minister William Gladstone, and often gave the young Gertrude's impression of events unfolding at the time. She favored



Home Rule for the Irish, which Gladstone supported in his third term, and commented on this subject frequently to her parents. Elsa wrote that, while Gertrude's interest in politics was real, she remained also a bit detached, apparently feeling that no issues would have an impact on her personally in her protected world.<sup>10</sup>

After Gertrude finished at Queen's College, Hugh Bell decided to allow her to enter Oxford University, according to her friend Janet Hogarth, to "work off the awkward years," before making her debut in London society.<sup>11</sup> Janet, one of Gertrude's first friends at Oxford, described her at seventeen as wealthier than the other girls and spending more on her room's decor, younger than most, untidy, with "conspicuous auburn hair." She said the girls loved Gertrude immediately and considered her to be the most brilliant student in either of the women's colleges.<sup>12</sup>

Gertrude's college was Lady Margaret Hall, one of two colleges for women at Oxford when she entered in 1886, only seven years after Oxford first admitted women students. The rules for women were very rigid; the women could not walk on the streets alone or attend a lecture on campus without a chaperon, and at lectures they were seated separately from men. Elsa noted that it was hard in retrospect to imagine a girl of Gertrude's impetuous temperament submitting to such rules, which she accepted as a matter of course. The

obvious answer is that Gertrude was already accustomed to the strict Victorian rules enforced by her parents, and attending Oxford University offered a new world to her, a world worth the restrictions.

The women of Lady Margaret Hall, in the Victorian custom, called each other "Miss So-and-So" until they were intimate friends. Gertrude referred to her closest friend, Mary Talbot, as "Miss Talbot" for six months, although she called Janet Hogarth by her first name in the first term, possibly because she lived next door in the hall. Janet and Gertrude had a "natural understanding of each other" from the start.<sup>13</sup> Janet, under her married name of Courtney, later wrote extensively about Gertrude Bell and their Oxford days, and her brother, Dr. David Hogarth, later played a major role in Gertrude's life in the Middle East.

Although Gertrude is described as a very slender and erect adult, her aunt, Mrs. Thomas Marshall, saw the nineteen-year-old Gertrude differently. She wrote to Florence after a visit with Gertrude in 1887 that she considered Gertrude overweight and was most concerned about her stooping shoulders, but she admired her "pretty white soft neck and arms."<sup>14</sup> Photographs of Gertrude in her late teens do portray a much fuller-figured young woman than her later photographs show after an active life spent exploring the world. By the time John Singer Sargent painted her

portrait when she was in her fifties, she was, in fact, exceedingly thin.

Gertrude visited Germany for a summer during the years at Oxford and lived with a German family. This trip caused a conflict the following year at Oxford, when Gertrude indulged a tendency to argue with her elders and superiors, always certain that she was right. During oral examinations before graduation, Gertrude's professor corrected her assertion that a certain German town was on the left bank of a river; to the amazement of all, according to Janet Hogarth Courtney, Gertrude dared to insist that he was wrong. She knew it was on the left bank because "I have been there."<sup>15</sup> This absolute confidence would be a lifelong characteristic of Gertrude Bell.

After Gertrude graduated from Oxford in 1888 with a coveted First in history, another aunt, Lady Mary Lascelles, invited her to Bucharest, Rumania, for the winter social season, to "help get rid of her Oxfordy manner."<sup>16</sup> Gertrude spent a month in London enjoying a round of teas and dinner parties before leaving for Bucharest. In Rumania she attended balls, concerts, and other gatherings and made contacts in the British circle who would be her lifelong friends. Her uncle, Sir Frank Lascelles, was the British minister in Bucharest and his circle included Valentine I. Chirol, the future foreign editor of the London Times, as

well as Charles Hardinge, the future Lord Hardinge who became viceroy of India.

Both men became Gertrude's admirers. She corresponded with Chirol, whom she called by the pet name "Domnul," until she died, telling him her innermost thoughts.\* Later, it was Hardinge who sent her on a wartime mission to Iraq.

Elsa, in her Earlier Letters of Gertrude Bell, cited letters Gertrude wrote from Bucharest to her little sisters, who were then nine and seven, and remembered Gertrude's visit to Bucharest as her last period of absolute happiness. "She was brilliant, she was charming, she had an attentive cavalier in whom she felt more than a common interest." The Lascelles' son Billy, whom she dated for several years, often escorted her in Bucharest.<sup>17</sup>

She returned to London and spent the next three years trying to be a Victorian lady. She bought new gowns, learned needlework, and visited with her friends. Elsa said Gertrude, then in her twenties, was not allowed to go out in London without a female friend or her maid Lizzie accompanying her. Once, when she could not avoid riding in a hansom with a man from one party to another, Gertrude wrote and confessed the infraction to Florence, because this

---

\* The Lascelles' Rumanian servants referred to Chirol, who lived in a house adjoining the British legation, as "the gentleman next door," the first word of which, in their language, was "domnul."



act defied her beloved stepmother's rules of seemly behavior. Elsa said that she herself never was allowed to walk alone until she married at twenty-seven. Then she triumphantly strolled from Hyde Park Corner to Piccadilly Circus and decided that forevermore she would walk by herself wherever she pleased.<sup>18</sup> She added that Gertrude never dared to defy the Victorian mores of London society. She left at the first opportunity, however, to join a household where the rules were less confining. She made plans to visit the Lascelles family in Tehran, where Sir Frank was now ambassador to Persia.

Travel, a luxury the Bell family could well afford, provided Gertrude the freedom she could not achieve at home, although she wrote a loving letter to her stepmother saying she felt homesick on the channel boat. Traveling with the Lascelles' daughter Florence, Gertrude went by train from Berlin to Constantinople, which she had visited earlier on a side trip from Bucharest. She wrote home long letters about the flowers and the local customs in Constantinople and on the long overland trip to Tehran.

After a month of travel she arrived in Tehran and raved about the roses blooming everywhere. Gertrude began learning Persian from Dr. Friedrich Rosen, the German charge d'affaires, who years later introduced her to Palestine and Syria. She enjoyed reading Persian poetry with a young

embassy official, Henry Cadogan, whose admiration of the native people was contagious to her, and soon the excitement and sense of adventure turned into romance. Rosen watched Henry and Gertrude wander off at a summer picnic, where he lifted her onto a gate and they read poetry to each other all afternoon.<sup>19</sup>

Gertrude's letters home always contained references to "Mr. Cadogan," who was "always there when we want him and never when we don't." They took long rides, played tennis and billiards, and admired little treasures from the bazaars, but he also instilled in Gertrude an appreciation for the Oriental culture of Persia, giving her a translation of Omar Khayyam and reading Hafiz in Persian, two of his favorite poets. Gertrude's understanding of the Oriental people, which grew as the years went by, would be important to her country in the future, Elsa remarked.

Gertrude's parents had planned to visit her in Tehran, but Hugh Bell decided that autumn to stand for Parliament as a Liberal Unionist candidate. Since Gertrude could not speak to them in person as she had planned, she wrote a letter saying that she and Henry Cadogan wished to become engaged. Soon her parents' reply came, refusing their permission because they had learned of Henry's gambling debts, limited prospects, and delicate health. They wanted Gertrude to come home and reconsider, which she did, but she

also wrote to her friends and family asking them to intercede for her. As fate would have it, Henry died of pneumonia nine months after she left, and she found comfort in her large and loving family. In editing her stepdaughter's letters after her death, Florence Bell chose to omit most of the letters from Tehran and made no references to Henry Cadogan. She stated in her notes that the letters were "unfortunately not to be found," thus editing him out of the book.<sup>20</sup>

Elsa, who later did publish the Tehran letters with reference to Cadogan, said that these were sad months for her sister, but "hers was not a nature to sink under a blow." Her buoyant courage asserted itself and led her forth into new activities, mainly writing.<sup>21</sup> Gertrude wrote a series of essays about her observations in Persia, essays which friends encouraged her to publish, and a travel book called Safar Nameh: Persian Pictures, which she published in 1894. Janet Courtney assessed that it had "charm but not actual achievement."<sup>22</sup> When Gertrude published her translation of the Divan of Hafiz, her only book of poetry, she received critical acclaim. Professor Edward G. Browne of Cambridge University called it "the most skilled attempt to render accessible to English readers the works of this poet . . . poetry of a very high order."<sup>23</sup> Koranic scholar A. J. Arberry said in 1947, "Though some



twenty hands have put Hafiz into English, her rendering remains the best."<sup>24</sup>

Now in her late twenties, Gertrude had made travel her passion, and for the next five years she alternated time spent on the London social scene with trips across Europe, then went around the world with her brother Maurice in 1897-1898. She evidently decided at this point in her life to leave behind her memories and even her beloved family and fulfill a dream. At thirty-one years old, the woman who could not go out without a chaperon in London returned to the Middle East, alone.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE WORLD EXPLORER

The Ottoman Turks controlled the Middle East at the turn of the century and maintained political stability there, as they had for more than four hundred years. At its greatest extent, the Ottoman Empire--named for its founder, Othman I (d. 1326)-- had covered North Africa, the Middle East, and the Balkan Peninsula, but by the time Gertrude Bell arrived in 1899, the empire had begun to shrink. The Turks continued to dominate the other peoples of the Middle East politically but, prior to the 1908 Young Turk revolution in Constantinople, did not attempt to impose their religion or culture on those they conquered, who were mostly Arabs. Both the Turks and Arabs were Muslims, but their languages and cultures were very different. There were pockets of other Semitic peoples--Kurds, Armenians, and Jews--and there were also Europeans in the area.<sup>1</sup>

The British, French, Germans, Italians, and Greeks had traded in the Middle East for many years by the time Gertrude Bell arrived in Jerusalem in 1899. Most of them confined their business to the ports and major trading centers; only occasionally did a few brave foreigners

venture off the roads and into the vast deserts. Bell checked into the Hotel Jerusalem and immediately began preparing to leave the beaten paths, asking her old friend from Tehran, Dr. "Fritz" Rosen, now the German consul in Jerusalem, for help and advice. She found two tutors, a man and a young Syrian girl, to teach her Arabic and soon was conversing with the local people and learning their culture, showing an uncanny knack for making friends.

She acquired a horse and a guide and at first rode sidesaddle into the most traveled parts of the desert, touring the biblical spots (for archaeological reasons only, as her stepmother said, for she was not a believer) and enjoying the flowers blooming in the wilderness. Soon she ventured to Smyrna, Damascus, and Beirut, studying monuments and archaeological sites along the way, with Rosen and his wife usually accompanying her. He taught her to ride on a masculine saddle, and she began wearing a divided skirt and a long white keffiyeh, a cloth over the head and shoulders to protect her from the dust as she rode. The New York Times said years later that "no matter how strenuous her days of exploring were, it was said of her that she always dressed for dinner in a Rue de la Paix gown."<sup>2</sup> She took over six hundred photographs before heading for home in 1900, then returned to record other sites in Syria and

Turkey in 1902. Her notes and photographs from the second trip, unfortunately, are lost.

For the next fifteen years, Bell did not remain in one place for very long. Letters arrived home from Switzerland, Italy, France, the Orient, and spots all over the Middle East. She began to earn a reputation as a fearless alpinist because of several adventures in mountain-climbing in 1901, 1902, and 1904, feats which included an ascent of the Matterhorn from the Italian side and a near-fatal attempt to climb the northeast face of the Finsteraarhorn, which had never been climbed before.

Her guide on these expeditions, Ulrich Fuhrer, later described their 1902 climb on the Finsteraarhorn, where bad weather caught them on the summit and caused them to spend two nights clinging to their ropes before reaching safety: "When the blizzard nearly blinds you, half paralyzing your senses . . . clothing you in a sheet of ice, till life becomes insupportable--then, indeed, was Miss Bell pre-eminent."<sup>3</sup> Colonel E. L. Strutt wrote in the Alpine Journal in 1926, "Her strength, incredible in that slim frame, her endurance, above all her courage were so great that even to this day her guide and companion Ulrich Fuhrer . . . speaks with admiration of her that amounts to veneration," and wrote to her parents that her expedition,

one of only three to climb the mountain by 1926, was still considered one of the greatest in Alpine history.<sup>4</sup>

Her courage and endurance served her well on her more adventurous forays into the desert in the following years. She made a major archaeological expedition into Syria and Turkey in 1905 to record Byzantine ruins and gave her notes to a Princeton expedition going to Syria. Janet Courtney said Bell "could outlast any man" in physical ability, and she climbed in the mountains of Asia Minor to find Hittite inscriptions which other explorers had only "peered at from below."<sup>5</sup> She had no fear of the desert tribesmen and ventured into present-day Lebanon to the land of the Druses, who often terrorized travelers.

She published a book, The Desert and the Sown, in 1907 about her experiences in Syria, which before 1919 included Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine.<sup>6</sup> Mary Fleming Larabee of Lincoln University in Pennsylvania wrote in 1927: "But really, it is a pity that any man should miss Syria, The Desert and the Sown, when his heart also might leap 'at the sight of such lonely and unravished beauty.'"<sup>7</sup> After two trips to Turkey's Kara Dag Mountain with Sir William Mitchell Ramsay, Bell collaborated with him on another book, One Thousand and One Churches, published in 1909, and wrote several articles for Revue Archéologique.



Stephen Hill of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne has written that Gertrude Bell's notes on the Turkish ruins are now invaluable to archaeologists because many Byzantine sites in Anatolia since have been virtually destroyed.

She crossed the Syrian Desert from Aleppo to the Euphrates River in 1909, and then traveled to Ukhaidir, the "grandfather of castles." She visited Baghdad and the ruins of Babylon, and proceeded north along the Tigris River to the site of early Christian monastic settlements. In her books Amurath to Amurath and Palace and Mosque at Ukhaidir, she described her findings.

On a 1911 trip, she first met Thomas Edward Lawrence. She arrived at Charchemish on the Turkish-Syrian border hoping to see David Hogarth, the archaeologist brother of her friend Janet, but instead found Lawrence and other colleagues digging in the Hittite ruins. Lawrence wrote to Hogarth that she irritated them by calling their methods "prehistoric," and he hoped she did not denounce their methods in print. The Englishmen countered by expounding on prehistoric pottery, telephoto lenses, Bronze Age metal techniques, Meredith, Anatole France, and the Octobrists to impress her. Brian Fagan, referring to this letter in the journal Archaeology in 1991, wrote that "as gifted an archaeologist as the opinionated Gertrude was, she was not beloved."<sup>8</sup> But he failed to note that Lawrence added in

the letter to Hogarth that Gertrude Bell was a success and very brave.<sup>9</sup> He wrote his mother that they showed each other their finds, and Gertrude complimented the crew's results and admired the completeness of their notebooks. They parted "with mutual expressions of esteem." He also described Bell as "pleasant, about thirty-six, not beautiful (except with a veil on, perhaps)."<sup>10</sup>

Gertrude Bell made her most famous and dangerous expedition in 1913 when she crossed the Arabian Desert to Hayil, the domain of the fierce Rashid family, against the wishes of the British Foreign Office and all her advisers. During the previous five or six years, two ruling Rashid emirs had been murdered by their kinsmen, and the present emir was at war with his powerful neighbor, Abdul Aziz ibn-Saud. The situation at that time was a very dangerous one for anyone to enter, especially a British woman alone but for her guides and camel drivers. Very few European men had ever attempted the trip across the Arabian Desert, and some of them had died on the way. Only one known woman, Lady Anne Blunt, who had accompanied her husband's expedition thirty years before, had attempted crossing the Arabian Desert.

A photograph of Bell on the trip showed her riding a camel with a dark drape over her hat to protect her from the blowing sand. She was wearing heavy shoes and black



stockings; her "gown" definitely did not appear to be from the Rue de la Paix on this occasion. The expedition reached Hayil only to be held prisoner by deputies of the absent emir who were "alarmed at her arrival amongst a fanatical population," according to Bell's listing in the Dictionary of National Biography. She was held as a "guest" in the haremlik, but she made friends with the other women and soon acquired knowledge of the relationships in the Rashid house ("regular and irregular," according to Janet Courtney) and of domestic crimes, intelligence information which she told later to the British embassy staff in Constantinople on her way home.

The Rashid family finally released her under the condition that she return directly to Baghdad, where she arrived in March 1914. Janet Courtney said the trip must have been very stressful, for when she next saw her friend, she found her "bright vitality dimmed."<sup>11</sup> Bell went home to London by way of Damascus and Constantinople, where she informed Turkish officials that their current plans for central Arabia were not practical because of the warring bedouin tribes. The British minister in Constantinople sent British Intelligence a full report on her journey and her information about the Rashid stronghold.

The Royal Geographical Society honored her with a medal for the journey and preserved her map and field notes

in their archives. The Arabs who accompanied her on the Hayil trip also never forgot her courage, just as she never forgot their loyalty. Her cousin Ronald Bodley said that years later one of the men arrived at her home in Baghdad and, "without discussion, took his place in her household as if they had never been parted." Bodley also said that the man who was her guide on the return trip from Hayil to Baghdad, who had saved her life from raiders and brought her caravan back safely through the desert, called on her many years afterward in Baghdad. Bell, feeling that she had never thanked him properly, presented him with a heavily embroidered cloak which he proudly wore all over town although the temperature was 122 degrees.<sup>12</sup>

Bell returned to London in the fateful summer of 1914 and was at Rounton Grange when the Great War broke out in Europe. David Hogarth, speaking in 1927 as president of the Royal Geographical Society, said of her journey across Arabia that "the jaded traveller...had no suspicion that, in little more than a year, the knowledge and experience acquired during the past four months would become of national value," adding that her trip to Hayil thirteen years before was the last known visit by any European. Her new information about tribes and wells in the Nejd, he said, had been invaluable to Lawrence in the 1916 Arab Revolt

against the Turks, and he called her journey "a pioneer venture."<sup>13</sup>

Why did she make such a dangerous trip? Janet Courtney said Bell hoped to research early Christian and Islamic cultures.<sup>14</sup> The truth was not known until the early 1960s, when her family opened to the public previously unpublished letters between Gertrude Bell and a married man, Dick Doughty-Wylie, written during this time period. Evidence indicates that in undertaking the trip to Hayil, she was running away from her intense romantic feelings for him, an obsession that did not end until his death two years later. Travel, which once had provided Gertrude an escape from the Victorian restrictions of London, had beckoned to her as an escape from her secret passion.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE WARTIME INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Great Britain had been increasing her investments and its influence in the Middle East in the years before the Great War began. Although Egypt was still nominally under Ottoman rule as ostensibly a part of the Ottoman Empire, the British high commissioner, Lord Horatio Herbert Kitchener, in fact controlled Egypt and the Sudan from Cairo, and Britain's India Office under the viceroy, Lord Charles Hardinge, controlled British interests in the Persian Gulf. Britain had controlled Kuwait since 1899 under an agreement with the reigning sheik, and Aden had become a crown colony in 1834.

The British East India Company had enjoyed exclusive trading rights in Oman since 1798, and other sheikdoms on the "Trucial Coast" of Arabia had given the British virtual control of their economies in exchange for protection from the Turks and pirates in the eighteenth century. A British government representative headquartered in Basra was the crown's watchdog over the gulf region and, according to historian Robert Lacey in The Kingdom, "no one could cut much of a dash around the Persian Gulf without assistance--



or at least the tolerance--of the British government."<sup>1</sup> Protection of British shipping routes through the Suez Canal and the Persian Gulf to her empire in the east were hallmarks of British foreign policy in 1914.

The British were traditionally the protectors of the Ottoman Empire and considered the Turks an agreeable buffer against any encroachment by the Russians from the northeast; in return the Turks tolerated heavy British involvement in Egypt and the gulf region. This relationship ended rather abruptly in 1914, when the British declared war against Germany and Turkey allied with the Germans, who also had major investments in the area. German designs on the Middle East would be a major threat to British interests if the Germans won the war, and a crumbling Ottoman Empire offered tempting spoils should the Allies prevail. Winning the Middle East, therefore, became very important to the British war effort.

German strategy in the war included prodding the Turks to keep British forces occupied in the Middle East and diminish British participation on the French front. Jemal Pasha, commander of the Turkish army, took over Mesopotamia, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine as virtual dictator in 1915 and launched an attack on the Suez Canal, owned by the British and French together. When sixteen thousand Turkish troops crossed the Sinai Peninsula, they met one hundred



thousand British and Australian soldiers, who forced them back across the Sinai and, during the course of the war, as far as Damascus. The attack on the Suez convinced the British that future control of Palestine--a new British name for southern Syria and never before the name of any specific place--was vital to safeguarding the canal.

Lord Kitchener, for many years Britain's most powerful figure in the Middle East, was now secretary of state for war. His strategy included gaining a safe land route from Mesopotamia to Alexandretta on the Mediterranean Sea so that troops from India could be moved quickly across the Middle East; control of Mesopotamia's oil reserves, as yet largely untapped, which the Admiralty under Winston Churchill needed to fuel the modern British navy; and eventually irrigating Mesopotamia for farming. The British prime minister, Herbert Asquith, saw Mesopotamia only as a source of future trouble; in his view, irrigation would cost too much and defense of the area would require a large army operating in unfamiliar country with "a hornet's nest" of Arabs causing administrative problems. Asquith's first instincts proved to be right, but he changed his mind and supported Kitchener's plans. The British government's new policy was to destroy the Ottoman Empire and gain a share of it, including Mesopotamia and Palestine, in the process.<sup>2</sup>

The second most important voice in London about Middle Eastern policies, after Lord Kitchener's, was that of Sir Mark Sykes, the bureaucrat responsible for Middle East affairs throughout the war. Sykes, a well-known Arabist who had traveled throughout the Ottoman Empire, first chaired a committee for the Foreign Office in London in 1915 to set specific goals for the region along Kitchener's policy line. Then Sykes established a new agency, the Arab Bureau, to coordinate Middle East policy under his direction. Kitchener insisted the agency be based in Cairo with Sykes supervising from London under Kitchener's direction. The Arab Bureau became part of British Intelligence and David Hogarth, Janet Hogarth Courtney's brother, received an appointment to head the bureau in Cairo.

British officials, in their wartime desperation to take over the Middle East at any cost, made diplomatic ventures in several different directions beginning in 1915, and some of the promises they made to their allies in exchange for support were in direct conflict with other British commitments. Sykes began negotiations with the French and Russian governments to divide up the Ottoman Empire into "spheres of influence" after the war, with each getting a large chunk of new territory. Sykes and his French counterpart, Charles Georges Picot, signed an agreement that Britain would acquire Palestine and Mesopotamia, France

would receive Syria, including Lebanon, and Russia would gain part of northeastern Turkey.

At the same time in Cairo, Sir Henry McMahon, the British high commissioner after Lord Kitchener left for London, was corresponding with Sharif Hussein of the Hijaz, a small but important country on the Arabian Peninsula which included the Muslim holy city of Mecca, encouraging him to start an Arab war against the Turks. McMahon promised British recognition of an independent Arab nation if Hussein would join the Allies in overthrowing the Turks. In the written negotiations which followed, comprising eight letters between July 14, 1914, and January 30, 1916, McMahon defined the area promised to the Arabs, including present-day Syria, Israel (Palestine), Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. After the war, McMahon said Palestine was excluded. Parliament had signed the Balfour Declaration promising the Jews a homeland there hoping to gain wartime support from the international Jewish community, but Hussein said it was promised to the Arabs. The letters themselves show that Hussein was right and an area to the northeast near present-day Lebanon was the place excluded, according to the Arab historian Nejla Izzeddin and the British diplomat-historian Richard Allen, as well as the American historian Deborah Gerner.<sup>3</sup>

David Hogarth, forming the Arab Bureau, sought out the services of T. E. Lawrence to work with the Sharif of Mecca and his sons, Emirs Faisal, Ali, Abdullah, and Zaid, in the anticipated Arab Revolt. Then he recruited Gertrude Bell, who knew more about the geography and tribes in the Middle East than almost anyone else, to come to Cairo. Immediately after the war began, the director of British military operations had asked Bell for her views on Syria. In her first official report to the British government, written in her own hand, she answered in September 1914 that most Syrians preferred British jurisdiction over the French, and the Germans did not count there at all.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, she worked for the Red Cross with Janet Courtney, who said that Bell was obsessed by the war because several close friends had been killed, and at first she declined to go to Cairo with Hogarth, even though he begged for her help. She finally told Courtney, "I've heard from David, he says that anyone can trace the missing but only I can map northern Arabia. I'm going next week."<sup>5</sup> She arrived in Cairo on November 30, 1915, met with Hogarth and Lawrence the same day, and immediately began collecting and summarizing information on the bedouin tribes of Arabia.

On January 28, 1916, with three hours' notice for packing, she left for India on a troopship to visit with the viceroy there, her old friend Charles Hardinge. The only



good news for the Allies at this low point of the war was the fall of Basra on the Persian Gulf to the British, giving them at last a foothold in Mesopotamia from which to launch an attack on Baghdad. Although she went to Delhi to help prepare a gazetteer of Arabia, Lord Hardinge asked her to go on to Basra afterward to add her information to the intelligence reports coming in to the British forces there.

She spent her first three months in Mesopotamia, beginning with her arrival in Basra on March 3, aiding military intelligence by keeping in friendly touch with desert tribes. Then she asked to stay in Mesopotamia as the Arab Bureau's representative there, to assemble intelligence reports, translate Arabic correspondence, and write articles for Sykes's Arab Bulletin, a summary of intelligence reports on the Middle East distributed to military and civil leaders. She received her orders to stay with the war effort in Basra and officially became an army political officer in Indian Expeditionary Force "D," although she never wore a uniform. In June 1916, Gertrude Bell was the only woman in the British army.

Several people in Basra have described her during her year spent there with army intelligence. Mrs. John Van Ess, wife of a missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church, became Bell's close friend and wrote that "her erect figure, and her eager animated delightful human qualities, her sparkle

and intelligence and zest for life, made her a most welcome companion." In contrast, Mrs. Van Ess described T. E. Lawrence, who visited the post at Basra in May 1916, as "unimpressive."<sup>6</sup> The Reverend Van Ess composed a poem about Bell in reply to a ditty she had written about him:

G is for Gertrude, of the Arabs she's queen,  
And that's why they call her Om el Mumineen,  
If she gets to heaven (I'm sure I'll be there!)  
She'll ask even Allah "What's your tribe, and  
where?"<sup>7</sup>

Bell's commanding officer in Basra was a famous Arabist and an old friend and adviser from her traveling days, Sir Percy Cox. Because they worked so closely, Cox sometimes received credit for papers written by Bell, a fact which either irritated or amused her, depending on the circumstances. She wrote to Hugh Bell on August 19, 1916, that Cox had approved her paper on labor and sent it to the War Office, not as coming from her but as a memo from his office.<sup>8</sup> In a review of one of her later papers on the Arabs, the faceless British clerks noted that, as to the origin of the paper, "practical men were the anonymous authors." She commented in a letter to her stepmother that "it's fun being practical men, isn't it."<sup>9</sup>

She expressed her frustrations over restrictions on women in a letter to her father. She wrote that she had

been composing a long memorandum on Arab relations which would go to "all the High and Mighty." She added, women can only "sit and record" events and, while they may influence the opinions of others, that is "very small change I feel at times" for having missed the opportunity of "doing things."<sup>10</sup> Another time she wrote to her mother that one professor had quoted to her from the Prophet Mohammed, "Seek the advice of women in order to do the contrary."<sup>11</sup>

Sir Percy Cox did not follow the Prophet's advice, for he made Gertrude his oriental secretary, the staff member who dealt with Arab relations, and included her in meetings of the highest level. She served as his top assistant at a "Great Durbar" in Kuwait in November 1916, a meeting with all Britain's Persian Gulf proteges to coordinate policy. Here she met Abdul Aziz ibn-Saud, the future king of a united Saudi Arabia, then a sheik rising in importance on the Arabian Peninsula. He had never before seen a woman outside a harem and certainly never one without a veil. This woman called out to him, "Ya Abdul Aziz, Ya Abdul Aziz," to get his attention and herded the visitors around.<sup>12</sup>

Harry St. John Philby, a British official who also attended the durbar, said ibn-Saud did not like her at all. "The fact that she was accorded precedence, not only over himself but over all the British civil and military chiefs,

did not seem to him to be in keeping with the dignity of man."<sup>13</sup> He went back to Riyadh and regaled his cronies by mimicking her shrill voice and gestures. It is ironic that one of Bell's most famous and most quoted reports is her assessment of Adbul Aziz ibn-Saud, a much more charitable description, full of admiration for him. The Foreign Office, impressed by this and all of Bell's reports to the Arab Bulletin, came to regard him very highly and later rued the day they had supported the Sharif of Mecca and his sons over this man, ibn-Saud.

Sharif Hussein and his sons decided at last to launch an Arab revolt against the Turks in June 1916 under the leadership of Faisal, the most charismatic and the best leader in the family. They were direct descendants of the Prophet Mohammed, reared and educated in Constantinople, and thus had the pedigree, training, and natural ability to attract Arab followers. When the revolt began, the British first learned of it from Zaid, the youngest son, who told them that Faisal and Ali had attacked the Turks at Medina and the Sharif himself would attack them at Mecca while Abdullah attacked Taif. The revolt, which T. E. Lawrence joined and aided with British money and his own expertise, cost millions of pounds, but it kept thirty-eight thousand Turkish troops occupied and spread disorder by means of guerilla warfare against the Turks in the Arab lands.<sup>14</sup>



Despite problems with their Indian troops and lack of food, British forces took Baghdad on March 11, 1917. Bell visited Turkish prisoners, probably to gather information, and spoke with them in their own language, she wrote her parents. Once she had received her orders to go to Baghdad, she began her intelligence work with a new fervor. The New York Times said at her death that she had wandered about Baghdad disguised as a native woman and was so successful at gathering intelligence that Germany and Turkey put a price on her head.<sup>15</sup> She also wrote a codification of Shiah traditions in order for the British to understand this fundamentalist sect of Islam which was so vocal in Mesopotamia, started an official Arab newspaper, Al Arab, and wrote a flood of letters and reports back to England.\* She accomplished all these achievements while suffering from a steady stream of tropical diseases, according to her letters home to her parents, which constantly mention bouts of jaundice, malaria, sandfly fever, "on the sick list," "in the hospital," and the heat (112 degrees in September). At forty-nine years old, her health was not as resilient as it had been when she was in her twenties.

---

\* "Shiah" and "Shiite" are interchangeable terms. Both refer to the largest minority sect of Islam, which Ali, son-in-law of Mohammed, founded. Shiahs regard the heirs of Ali as the legitimate successors of the Prophet and reject all other religious leaders and all Sunni religious and political institutions.

The natives of Baghdad, many of whom were old friends from her pre-war visits, received her warmly. The Naqib, the top religious man and an ally of long standing, received her "with open arms," and the head of the rich Zadah family, among her oldest friends in Baghdad, sent her a huge basket of fruit from his estates every week.<sup>16</sup> Two elderly sheiks sent her a pet gazelle in thanks for a favor, a "darling little animal" who lived on dates in her garden. She wrote to her mother that she felt proud to have so many friends among the Arabs and considered her job of meeting with Arabs of all creeds to be "wildly interesting," especially when the War Office telegraphed for more signed articles from her.<sup>17</sup>

Sir Percy Cox and his right-hand assistant, Gertrude Bell, were so admired by many Arabs that the mispronunciation of Cox, "Kokus," rapidly passed into the Arabic language, not as a name but as a title of respect; Bell was known as "Kokusah," the female counterpart.<sup>18</sup> She loved her relationship with the Arab peoples: "The great pleasure in this country is that I do love the people so much . . . it's a wonderful thing to feel this affection and confidence of a whole people round you."<sup>19</sup> In recognition of her work, she was made a Commander of the British Empire, a new order, in 1917.

The truth is that everyone among the Arabs did not love or trust the British presence in Mesopotamia. There were constant uprisings against the British in outlying areas, although not, as Bell reassured her London friends, in Baghdad or Basra. The British worked mainly with moderate Sunni Muslims and had a difficult time gaining the cooperation of fundamentalist Shiahs and the fierce Kurd tribes. While Gertrude Bell's letters to her family were cheerful and optimistic, her official reports were very different. On February 22, 1918, she wrote to Charles Hardinge, then undersecretary at the Foreign Office in London, that "things look so black now," but on that very same day she wrote a letter home to her father recounting two charming and upbeat stories about her visits with Arab friends.<sup>20</sup>

Sir Percy Cox received reassignment to Tehran in March 1918, a major loss to Bell, who felt he had treated her "with absurd indulgence" and "he exaggerates the value of anything I've done here."<sup>21</sup> Cox, who later returned to the post in Baghdad, was a distinguished and dedicated public servant who wrote his local communications first in Arabic to be certain their meaning was clear to the reader, and then translated them into English for his official records.<sup>22</sup> Captain Arnold T. Wilson, an officer in the Indian Army, succeeded Cox as civil commissioner in Baghdad

and began immediately to use Gertrude Bell's prestige and her network of family and connections to reinforce his policies. The two worked well together in 1918, when both were opposed to formation of an independent Arab nation. When she wrote to her friends to express a very different opinion after the war, it would end their friendly collaboration.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### "THE UNCROWNED QUEEN OF IRAQ"

From Trebizond to Tripolis  
She rolls the Pashas flat  
And tells them what to think of this  
And what to think of that.

--Sir Herbert Richmond,  
Gertrude Bell's brother-in-Law

The British and their European allies, in spite of winning the Great War, were left with many problems after the armistice: depleted funds, loss of many of their finest young men, war-torn lands to be rebuilt, and, in the former Ottoman Empire, "liberated" people waiting to learn their fate. Would the old empire become one independent Arab nation, as Sir Henry McMahon and T. E. Lawrence had promised Sharif Hussein and his sons, or would it be carved up by the allies into "spheres of influence," or colonies, as the now-public Sykes-Picot Agreement stated? While the Arabs and their neighbors waited, American President Woodrow Wilson assured the world in his Fourteen Points speech that self-determination for all liberated people would become a

reality, unconsciously renewing the confidence of many Arabs. But other Arabs believed the imperialistic European nations were now in control of the land and would never leave until forced out.<sup>1</sup>

Gertrude Bell and A. T. Wilson in Baghdad doubted in early 1918 that an independent Arab nation in Mesopotamia could ever work. Fanatical Shiah Muslims made up about sixty percent of the population, Kurds made up twenty percent, and Sunni Muslims were the final twenty percent. The Shiahs, mostly non-Arabs who had moved in from Persia, lived mainly in southern Mesopotamia. They despised the more moderate and more powerful Sunni Muslims, who lived in central Mesopotamia and got along fairly well with the British. Sunnis outnumbered Shiahs nine to one in the Islamic world, but not in this area. Northern Mesopotamia was largely the domain of the Kurds, a fierce nomadic people who were Muslims but not Arabs and who hoped to form their own nation of Kurdistan.<sup>2</sup> Because of the Muslims' general animosity toward each other and toward the British, forming one self-governing Arab nation in Mesopotamia seemed impossible and even undesirable to many of the British advisers.

Some British leaders, including Captain Wilson at Baghdad, wanted the area to be administered by the British under the India Office, while others, seeing administration

of Mesopotamia as a costly and impossible dream, wanted simply to bring the troops home and leave it alone. Gertrude Bell wrote to her father that all the Arabs who came to talk with her wanted British control under Sir Percy Cox as commissioner, and some wanted an Arab emir in addition.<sup>3</sup> Ronald Bodley, however, pointed out that the Arabs who visited her were mostly moderate Sunnis because few Shiahns would tolerate an unveiled woman; she, therefore, did not get a fair sampling of public opinion. She did, however, make some friends among all classes of Baghdadis, and met with one learned Shiah patriarch in his home.<sup>4</sup>

Her biographer H. V. F. Winstone said that by November 1918 she and Percy Cox already had come to favor an Arab government under British supervision, in other words, a "mandate" for the British to help form and oversee a local government in Mesopotamia. A. T. Wilson disagreed, but Bell's opinion carried more weight than his, and she sometimes wrote directly to the Foreign Office in London without going through him. When she sent her opinions on statehood in a memo, "Self-Determination in Mesopotamia," to the India Office in 1919, he attached a cover letter stating his reservations on the subject.<sup>5</sup>

When the peace conference convened in Paris in January 1919, Capt. Wilson sent Gertrude Bell to Paris to explain Iraq's political problems and to support the claims of Emir

Faisal to be king of Syria, since his troops had liberated Damascus and Aleppo.<sup>6</sup> She stayed at the headquarters of the British delegation, the Hotel Majestic, and spent most of her time with T. E. Lawrence, who considered Faisal to be the finest leader in the Arab world and the one who should head a new Arab nation. Faisal met with British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, who told him that conditions had changed since the McMahon correspondence with Faisal's father and "there is now a different atmosphere." Faisal also met with President Woodrow Wilson, who declined Faisal's proposal of an American mandate in the Middle East but told his adviser, Colonel Edward House, "I think to hear the voice of liberty speak in that desert king."<sup>7</sup> Gertrude Bell also besought both British and French officials to make good on their promises to the Arabs, and she sent for A. T. Wilson and David Hogarth to come to Paris and assist Faisal's cause.

Lawrence and Hogarth convinced Bell at Paris that an Arab kingdom under Faisal or one of his brothers (their father, Sharif Hussein, had fallen out of favor) would be an excellent solution in Mesopotamia, as well as in Syria. A. T. Wilson wanted no part of it and feared Bell's use of her contacts in London and Baghdad to promote her new Arab cause. He wrote to the India Office later that year that "some sort of outlet must be found for her energies . . .



she is undoubtedly popular in Baghdad among the natives, with whom she keeps in close touch, to her advantage, though it is sometimes dangerous."<sup>8</sup>

Young political officers under Wilson in Baghdad secretly ridiculed Bell's effusive greetings to visiting sheiks, her gestures and cries of welcome, which they felt increased with the status of the visitor.<sup>9</sup> She endeared herself to her Arab friends, however, and she told her father that the name they gave her--Umm al Muminin, or Mother of the Faithful--was last used for Mohammed's wife, so "you see why I can't leave."<sup>10</sup> Bartlet Brebner wrote in the Saturday Review of Literature in 1978 that legend said "that she was so beloved and trusted by the Arabs of Iraq that she alone conceived and set up the Arab Kingdom in spite of War Office, India Office, Shiahhs, and Turks."<sup>11</sup>

Revolts broke out in the outlying areas of Mesopotamia in the summer of 1920, protesting three years of British occupation. Shiahhs attacked both Sunni tribes, who had cooperated with the British, and British personnel at a time when the majority of British troops had left for home. Bell wrote to her stepmother, "We are now in the middle of a full-blown Jihad [holy war], that is to say we have against us the fiercest prejudices of a people in a primeval state of civilisation. Which means that it's no longer a question of reason."<sup>12</sup> Remaining British forces managed to put down

the rebellion but not without heavy casualties and a cost of forty million pounds sterling to the British government, thus angering the British public.<sup>13</sup>

Tensions ran high in Baghdad in 1920, and A. T. Wilson was angry with Gertrude Bell. He wrote to the India Office about her "irresponsible activities" in July 1920 and asked for her recall, because the army had delayed military action to put down the revolt, citing information from Bell that the revolt was already falling apart. Instead, Wilson himself was replaced and Bell's friend Percy Cox returned to Baghdad as high commissioner. He brought with him a plan from London for formation of an Arab government and withdrawal of British land forces, which would leave all security to be administered by the air force. Bell invited one hundred Arabs for private interviews with Cox about the proposed Arab government, considering it a dream to now "find all things one has thought ought to be done, being done without question."<sup>14</sup>

Bell wrote what some consider to be her finest political work in the fall of 1920, a British government official White Paper called Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia, which covered the British role in the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia since 1914 and rebutted the press's criticism of British policies there as being too costly. The Times ran a lengthy summary of the

report on December 11, 1920, saying that it ended with a note of reassurance and that Bell's accounts would be pertinent to forming future policy in Iraq.

Gertrude Bell's power during this period of forming a new government was immense because she knew all the right Arabs. Humphrey Bowman, director of education in Iraq in 1920, later wrote to Bell's family that he had once seen her arrive at a party given by two British officials for a group of Arab notables. She was beautifully dressed as always and looked "queenly." Everyone rose and she spoke to every Arab by name, shaking each hand, and Bowman said there were forty or fifty of them.<sup>15</sup> Bowman's account of the Arab men's friendly greeting to Bell, rising and shaking the hand of this unveiled woman as if she were a man, seems amazing considering the invisible role of Arab women outside the home.

An unflattering story about Bell's power in Baghdad during this time circulated for many years in British diplomatic circles. Cox, according to the story, originally suggested a prominent citizen of Basra, Saiyid Talib Pasha, to be president and to form a cabinet, but Bell despised the man.\* He was talented, popular, and pro-British, but he

---

\* A "Saiyid" denotes a descendant of Mohammed. "Pasha" or "Pasa" after the name is a title of honor for a civil or military official, most often used in Turkey.

also had killed the Turkish governor of Basra during the war and expected British favors. Both the Naqib, a much-admired religious leader in Baghdad, and Talib were descendants of the Prophet Mohammed, as were the Sharif of the Hijaz and his sons, but the Naqib was very old, making Talib--a republican, not a monarchist--an attractive candidate for leader of Iraq.

St. John Philby wrote later that, but for Bell's interference, Iraq might have emerged under Talib as a republic, which many Iraqis preferred, rather than a monarchy in the British tradition, which was Bell's choice. Talib, instead, became minister of the interior, the number two job, in a cabinet carefully selected by Bell and Cox to bring in wide support. Bell personally persuaded several men to accept cabinet positions when they previously had declined; one had not wished to serve with Talib. Philby became very close to Talib as adviser to the minister of the interior, and was very angry later when British officers arrested Talib, Faisal's chief rival, as he left from having tea with Gertrude Bell and Lady Cox, packed him onto a British warship the same night, and exiled him to Ceylon. Bell's role in the plot was fuel for gossip for many years because Winston Churchill said Talib's deportation occurred at the high commissioner's request. The circumstances and the timing--just before the announcement of Faisal's



official candidacy to be king of Iraq--were subject to several interpretations and suspicions.<sup>16</sup>

When a new Iraqi Council of State formed in January 1921 under the Naqib of Baghdad as president, Bell herself named the tribes to be represented on the council, hoping to attract enough Shiahhs and villagers to gain their support for the new government, in which urban Sunnis predominated. They once met in her home when she had bronchitis. The council would oversee the election of an emir for Iraq, and therefore Bell's influence on them was crucial.

Emir Faisal, who had been forced out of Syria by the French, was emerging as a strong candidate to become permanent head of the new Iraqi nation and had the growing support of both Cox and Bell. A prominent Arab told her that no Iraqi would be acceptable to others because of jealousy, suggesting instead a son of Sharif Hussein or of the Sultans of Egypt or Turkey. She said it could not be a Turk and must be an Arab prince, preferably Emir Faisal. He enjoyed the respect of most Arab leaders and also most British, including Chaim Weizmann, the British Zionist who had met with Faisal in 1918 and who referred to Faisal in his own autobiography as "the titular and actual leader of

the Arab world."\* Weizmann called him "the greatest of the Arabs, Emir Faisal," finding him well-informed, a man whose "powerful moral support" he sought for his Zionist dreams in Palestine.<sup>17</sup>

Faisal's most powerful supporter was T. E. Lawrence, whose fame gave him a great deal of clout with Winston Churchill, the new colonial secretary. The American news reporter Lowell Thomas had filled lecture halls with his exaggerated account of Lawrence's role in the Arab Revolt and coined the name "Lawrence of Arabia." Thomas's stories had created a popular hero and, in the public mind, Lawrence's name had surpassed Gertrude Bell's as the best-known authority on the Middle East. They remained friends, as neither of them had ever sought publicity or fame. Bell later encouraged him to publish his famous memoirs, Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph, and they corresponded about the cost of private publication.<sup>18</sup> He wrote to his friend Edward Garnett in 1925 that "Gertrude Bell, a woman of enormous heart and whirling head," complimented his first, privately published edition and added, "very nice of Gertrude."<sup>19</sup>

---

\*Chaim Weizmann, a Russian-born British scientist, visited Faisal in his tent at Arab army headquarters in 1918. They required an interpreter, for Weizmann did not speak Arabic, unlike the Arabists Bell and Cox, who were fluent.

Lawrence was the leading critic of British policy toward Arabs in Mesopotamia, saying that Britain's government there had been much worse than the Turks'. He said the Turks had used fourteen thousand local recruits and killed two hundred Arabs a year to keep peace, while the British now had ninety thousand men with planes and armored cars and killed ten thousand Arabs in the summer of 1920 alone.<sup>20</sup> Both Lawrence and Bell were now eager to see the British set up an Arab government with British advisers as promised, instead of the opposite. Lawrence acted as liaison between Winston Churchill and Faisal; Faisal, in return for British support of his election as king of Iraq, agreed to abandon his father's claims to Palestine and lay aside any claim to Syria, now in French hands.

Churchill, as the new British colonial secretary, was in charge of setting up Britain's new mandates in Palestine and Mesopotamia, but he had no time for lengthy visits there. He instead called for a conference in Cairo in March 1921 and invited a "brain trust" of Middle East experts whom he called his "Forty Thieves," including thirty-five Englishmen, one Englishwoman, Gertrude Bell, and several Arabs who were supporters of Faisal. Together they set the Middle East on its present course by separating Jordan from Palestine and making it an Arab kingdom under Abdullah, Faisal's brother; officially renaming Mesopotamia "Iraq" and

supporting Faisal in a future election for king; leaving Syria and Lebanon in French control; naming Sharif Hussein "King of the Hijaz;" and granting a large pension to Abdul Aziz ibn-Saud as compensation for surrounding him with his Hashimite enemies.<sup>21\*\*</sup>

A photograph of those attending the Cairo Conference in 1921 showed a gathering of men plus one woman in a wide-brimmed hat decorated with roses. The lone woman was Gertrude Bell. David Fromkin, in his book The Peace to End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East 1914-1922, described Gertrude Bell in 1921 as a crucial force in creating today's Middle East. He praised her achievement: she persuaded the government of India to come over to the views of Cairo and support a protectorate under a son of Sharif Hussein rather than a direct government by the British. Convinced by Bell's arguments, Britain's old hands in the Middle East now spoke with one voice, ending a long stalemate within the British ranks.<sup>22</sup>

Lawrence, Cox, Bell, and others in Cairo set up a timetable for Faisal's election in Iraq, knowing that other candidates, including ibn-Saud and Talib, were gaining support. The British soon bought off ibn-Saud with money and favors and deported Saiyid Talib from Iraq. Bell and

---

<sup>\*\*</sup>The Sharif's family is called the Hashimites because Hashim was the family name of Mohammed, their ancestor.



Cox, while publicly neutral, were busy campaigning for Faisal as soon as they arrived back in Baghdad, although they had to wait for a final approval of the mandate by the League of Nations before setting up a new government. Faisal meantime was busy in Mecca, corresponding with supporters in Baghdad and urging their support for his candidacy.

Faisal arrived in Baghdad by train at the end of June 1921 in full Arab dress, and found that an official receiving committee, arranged by Gertrude Bell, was there to welcome him. While he inspected the honor guard and greeted Arab magnates, Bell hid behind a bystander, but he spotted her in the crowd and stepped across to shake her hand warmly in a remarkable public display of his respect. She visited him the following morning at seven to assure him that she and Cox were behind him totally. She wrote to her father that Faisal took both her hands and said he could not believe she had given him so much help. In reality, she had arranged for some sixty people to meet him in Basra and accompany him to Baghdad, planned his reception, supervised the decorating of his rooms at the Government House, and helped design a new flag to fly when he arrived.

Gertrude Bell was all the while meeting privately with Arabs of all persuasions, some of whom wanted Faisal declared king without elections and others of whom wanted a

republic with no king at all, hoping to convince them that a duly elected king under a constitutional monarchy would be best. In an earlier time she had been known to say that England's parliamentary system developed over hundreds of years, and therefore one could not expect Arabs to develop their government overnight. Nevertheless, she and Cox were evidently willing to attempt the unexpected in 1921. When the Naqib gave a dinner party honoring Faisal on July 8, Bell sat at Faisal's side. "We were making history. But you can rely upon one thing--I'll never engage in creating kings again; it's too great a strain."<sup>23</sup>

The Council of State officially declared Faisal king on July 11, 1921, but both Faisal and Cox wanted a national election to confirm his title. Faisal invited Bell to join him for planning sessions and teasingly promised her a regiment of the Iraqi army to be called "the Khatun's Own." In the election of August 14, 1921, he received ninety-six percent of the vote as the only candidate on the ballot. Faisal immediately asked the Naqib, as prime minister, to form a cabinet.

When the time came for Faisal's coronation, the British Colonial Office sent a cable saying Faisal must announce in his speech to the nation that the ultimate authority in Iraq would be the British high commission. Faisal refused, saying he could not control the Arab extremists if he made

such a declaration, and he insisted there be a treaty between Iraq and Britain as two independent governments with no reference to a mandate. Faisal's coronation as king of Iraq took place at six in the morning on a hot August day with even some Kurds in attendance.

In spite of the peaceful appearance, Faisal and the British high commission would soon be engaged in a power struggle for control of events in Iraq. He was unwilling to be quite the puppet king that many of the British had envisioned, yet he appeared to Arab nationalists to be just that. Faisal and his adviser, Gertrude Bell, would have to walk a tightrope to please so many factions in the Arab world and in Great Britain.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE PEAK OF HER POWER

Gertrude Bell's power was at its peak in 1921. Her role, from the time of Faisal's election, was to work with him, while continuing to write encouraging reports to Britain to counter criticism of British involvement in Iraq. She often had tea or dinner at his palace, discussing the desert frontiers, the new flags, the formation of political parties, and the extremists on all sides. "It's not at all true that I have determined the fortunes of Iraq, but it is true that with an Arab Government I've come into my own," she wrote home, and said that writing her fortnightly reports was like writing a history of the new nation.<sup>1</sup>

Arabs saluted her as she rode by in the streets, she wrote, and her friend Nuji told her, "One of the reasons you stand out so is because you are a woman. There is only one Khatun . . . . So for a hundred years they'll talk of the Khatun riding by."<sup>2</sup> She swam in the Tigris River every day, rode for pleasure, and chain-smoked cigarettes, a long-time habit. Her role with the British high commission was reduced, because at first she spent so much time with Faisal.



By the end of 1921, Faisal was seeking her advice on state matters less often, while he made more demands on the British for a treaty recognizing Iraqi independence. Her influence may have been greater in social matters and minor state decisions than in the negotiations between the Iraqi government and the British over the proposed treaty, although Faisal later felt that she had had great influence, and not always to his advantage. A woman visiting the Foreign Office in Baghdad observed that Bell was intent on choosing an official seal of Iraq. When a man suggested that the king be consulted, Bell replied that she was quite sure His Majesty would prefer her choice, and the same woman observed that, at tea in the queen's apartments, Gertrude Bell "seemed to command the board."<sup>3</sup>

Bell had a profound effect on the royal family and its activities. Faisal's queen was a Hashimite cousin from the desert with very little knowledge of Western customs, so Bell became her mentor on "proper" manners and dress. The queen rarely attended political occasions, and Bell was sometimes the only woman present. Bell was extremely fond of Faisal's small son Ghazi and entertained him at her house, giving him a toy train and toy soldiers from London. He went to England for his education, and his absence caused his mother to grieve. Gertrude Bell may have influenced Faisal to send his heir to a British boarding school, or he

may have made the decision himself. During these years, many Arabs considered Western cultural achievements to be superior to their own and worthy of emulation.

Outsiders saw her as very powerful. The New York Times in 1925 identified her as being officially known as the oriental secretary to the high commissioner, but "in reality she is the chief British authority in that part of the world."<sup>4</sup> However, she was careful with both Faisal and the high commissioner, knowing that she was powerful only at their pleasure. "When they want to come and ask my advice I'm always there; when they're busy with other things I go about affairs of my own."<sup>5</sup>

Affairs did not run smoothly for Iraq's new government or for the British high commission in 1922, with Faisal and the Naqib now saying they would never accept the mandate.<sup>6</sup> On the first anniversary of Faisal's coronation, for instance, there was an anti-British demonstration of three or four hundred people in the courtyard of the palace in Baghdad. The following day, as Faisal prepared for an emergency appendectomy, Percy Cox arrived at his room, according to the Arab historian Nejla Izzeddin, with an order for him to sign deporting seven nationalist leaders. When Faisal refused, saying his last act if he died would not be exiling his own people, Cox left without a word, exiled the nationalist leaders himself, and also dissolved

two new nationalist political parties.<sup>7</sup> Colonial Secretary Churchill said Faisal had fallen in with extremists and most British officials saw his brother Abdullah in Jordan as ineffective, but the British government was now committed to support both of them, in spite of the press's hostility toward continued involvement in the Middle East.

Gertrude Bell wrote a lengthy and scathing letter to the editor of the London Times, which the paper printed on February 11, 1922. She was, she said in her letter, responding to "alarmist conjectures" in the newspaper about Iraq and King Faisal. She affirmed that the Iraqi people looked to the British for help and advice in the difficult task of forming a new state. Moreover, she charged that, far from supporting extremists, British "sponsorship guarantees the equilibrium," so that men of education and experience in Iraq could form a national government.

The Daily Express, however, blamed Gertrude Bell for British entanglements in Iraq, charging "The reason why the British taxpayer pours out his money in Arab lands is a romantic one--the wonderful woman huntress, poetess, explorer and traveler, Miss Gertrude Lowthian Bell." The paper related that when Prime Minister Asquith first opposed any occupation of Mesopotamia, Bell had written to him that he did not understand the question and "put him and several members of the Cabinet under her spell."<sup>8</sup> Other members of

the press embarrassed Bell by resurrecting some of her early writings from a time in which she herself had doubted that Arabs could govern themselves. They quoted her earlier statements, for instance, "The Arabs can't govern themselves--no one is more convinced of that than I." She had written this appraisal, however, years earlier at the beginning of the Great War.<sup>9</sup> Many Arabists had changed their minds about this question since then, but words spoken or written years before often haunt policy-makers when quoted by the opposition. Gertrude Bell was no exception.

The promised treaty with Faisal's government became a reality on October 10, 1922, with Britain agreeing to end the mandate when the League of Nations accepted Iraq as an independent member nation. British and Iraqi officials amended the treaty later to give further concessions to Iraqi nationalism. Sir Percy Cox retired immediately and the British government replaced him in May 1923 by appointing Sir Henry Dobbs, who got along well with Gertrude Bell but required her services less and less. Some writers have suggested that Bell's fame and the press's implications that it was she and not the high commissioner who ran the mandate may have caused Dobbs to assert his own authority. She wrote that they usually had lunch together, presumably to discuss matters at hand, but later noted that he normally told her of decisions after they were made, in contrast to



Cox who had asked for her advice before making his decisions. King Faisal also needed her less for official advice after the treaty took effect. A Syrian writer who visited Baghdad after the first treaty was signed reported that Faisal was angry with Bell and felt she had allowed unfair terms to be imposed on him.<sup>10</sup>

Bell, who was honorary director of antiquities for the Iraqi nation, had arranged for a joint British Museum-University of Pennsylvania archaeological team to dig in Iraq. With Dobbs and Faisal now asking less of her time and advice, she gave more of her time to supervising new archaeological activities and representing Iraq in the tug-of-war over dividing up the artifacts dug up at Ur, Babylon, Sumer, and Kish by foreign excavation teams. She argued ferociously with her old friend Leonard Woolley, who headed up the archaeological team at Ur, but he wrote in 1924 that he had no cause for complaint after she divided the artifacts.<sup>11</sup> She drafted Iraq's Law of Excavations in 1922 to regulate the export of archaeological material and stored many of the finds at her house until an Iraqi museum could be established to display them properly, her next goal. She also was president of the Salam Library, Baghdad's public library, and sent letters to British publishing houses asking for contributions of books, with some success.

She continued to send intelligence reports to London and entertained a constant flow of visitors, both Western and Arab. The New York Times said "her salons were the rendezvous of all that was best in the service of the British crown and of all that was most patrician among the natives."<sup>12</sup> Marguerite Harrison, a correspondent for that newspaper, wrote after an interview in 1923 that Bell's office overlooking the Tigris River was untidy, with maps and documents overflowing onto the carpet. Gertrude Bell herself appeared slender and graceful, with the face of a "grande dame," a disarming smile, and a smart silk outfit. She was all "Paris frock, Mayfair manners," as she moved papers from the sofa to the floor to offer a seat to her guest. "And this was the woman who had made sheiks tremble at the thought of the Anglez!" Harrison reported.<sup>13</sup>

Bell always gave a great deal of attention to her clothing. One photograph from this period showed her, among a group of eleven dignitaries, standing behind King Faisal. He wore a business suit, as she had convinced him and his wife to adopt Western dress as king and queen. Bell and another woman, identified as Lady Lloyd, were wearing long-waisted flapper-style dresses in print fabrics, low-brimmed hats, and long ropes of beads in the latest fashion of the day. At Sir Henry Dobbs's New Year's Day party for the king and his cabinet in 1924, Gertrude Bell was the only woman

present, and she wore her best gown, a diamond tiara, and all her orders (ribbons) in honor of the occasion. During this period she was often referred to in Britain as "the uncrowned queen of Mesopotamia."

For Bell and other officials in Iraq, there were many problems to address. The new government of Turkey under Mustafa Kemal, having embarrassed the British army near the Dardanelles and brought about the fall of the Lloyd George government in London in 1922, moved Turkish troops to Iraq's northern frontier in 1923 and threatened to take the oil-rich Mosul province while the British were still in disarray. The Mosul area--believed to be one of the world's richest oil fields, although drilling had not begun--was also of prime importance to British and Iraqi interests for its strategic location protecting the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys and for its grain farms.<sup>14</sup>

Sir Henry Dobbs's first act as the newly-appointed British high commissioner was to send in British troops who defended the Mosul area successfully. Ronald Bodley said that when Bell wrote her reports about the action in Mosul, she remembered going there thirty years before to see the "Naphtha Springs" used by the people of ancient Nineveh, and now Britain was willing to risk a war over them.<sup>15</sup> Bell's last political cause was gaining permanent control of Mosul for Iraq, for the League of Nations had the final say

in the matter. When King Faisal gave a banquet in 1926 to celebrate the signing of a treaty with Turkey after the League of Nations finally awarded Mosul to Iraq, he thanked British representatives for all they had done for his country. Dobbs reported that Bell was "one of the most prominent of the guests" and "shared conspicuously" in the congratulations.<sup>16</sup>

When Dobbs sent his first confidential report on the members of his staff to London, he wrote of Bell that it was difficult to tell of her services without seeming to exaggerate because she understood the Arab mind and the country so well. He found her advice in the recurring crises with local tribes invaluable because she knew them all, and he saw her as the vital link between Europeans and Arabs in Baghdad. Her house was "a focus for all that is worth having" in Baghdad society.<sup>17</sup>



## CHAPTER SIX

### THE DIRECTOR OF ANTIQUITIES

Gertrude Bell's life began to change about 1923, in ways that were subtle and not-so-subtle. Arabs intent on establishing an independent nation appreciated her untiring work on their behalf but also felt that she represented the British Empire, and her motives therefore were suspect. Some Arabs sensed that she wanted to keep Iraq under Britain's control. After forming the new independent government of Iraq, the British were still present and would be until the League of Nations accepted Iraq's membership, which did not happen until 1932.

Bell may have been beloved by many but she was no longer entirely trusted. Her political duties in the high commission were winding down. She was not needed as much since many Iraqi problems were now handled by Iraqi officials. And if many Iraqis did not entirely trust Gertrude Bell now, neither did many of her own countrymen. The British public and the press considered Iraq a hole into which their tax money kept flowing with no reward or end in sight, and they saw her influence as one of the problems.

She gave most of her time and energy to establishing an archaeological museum in Baghdad, first storing artifacts in her home, then in one room of a government building, and finally in the fine new museum which opened in March 1926. Her cousin Bodley said that Baghdadis came to see the museum only because of Bell's involvement and actually were astonished in many cases to learn that the old pottery and ancient relics were valuable. They had passed by similar objects in the hills and ignored them.<sup>1</sup>

But Bell was only an unpaid "honorary director" at the museum in spite of the endless time she spent there, and she could not afford to lose her salary as oriental secretary in the high commission. Sir Hugh Bell's ironworks in England were losing money because of trade union strikes, and the Bell family's personal wealth had dissipated, forcing them to abandon the home at Rounton Grange in 1926. For the first time in her life, she found herself in a financial crisis. Her annual salary as oriental secretary had never covered her expenses, falling short by 560 pounds sterling in 1924, and her job offered no opportunities for advancement.<sup>2</sup> She had created remarkable achievements because she was an extraordinary person. But she could not advance, professionally or financially, because she was a woman. She could never become permanent curator of the museum because she lacked the credentials of a trained

archaeologist and could not read the cuneiform letters of the ancient Middle Eastern societies.

Her family's problems in England worsened when her brother Hugo became ill with typhoid fever and died in February 1926. Later in the year, the family lost the Yorkshire home, Rounton Grange, where Gertrude Bell as a child had loved to visit, and where she had helped lay out the gardens. In addition to these poignant family losses in England, she also had fewer and fewer personal friends in Baghdad. The Tigris River flooded the city in April 1926, and as summer came, many people left to escape the oppressive heat. Even King Faisal spent the summer of 1926 in London.

In Baghdad, Bell was recovering from near-pneumonia and losing her health very quickly, according to all who saw her. A trip home would be expensive and too brief to be worth the money, she felt. The last time she had visited London, in 1925, her family begged her to stay, and she told Janet Courtney, "It's lonely out there [Baghdad]. I sometimes think I will come home. What shall I do here, I wonder." When Courtney wrote her later suggesting she stand for Parliament or join the government as undersecretary for foreign affairs, she refused.

In her last letter to Courtney, Bell said she did not have the quickness of thought and speech for politics, and

her inclination was to slip back into the comfortable arena of archaeology and history.<sup>3</sup> She told other people she might go home to England and publish more books about her travels in 1913 and 1914. In the end, she seemed to be afraid to go home and afraid to stay in Baghdad.

Her friend from England, Vita Sackville-West (Mrs. Harold Nicholson) visited her in Baghdad in 1926. Sackville-West recalled that she had first met Bell years earlier in Constantinople where she had arrived from the desert "with all the evening dresses and cutlery and napery that she insisted on taking with her on her wanderings" and now saw Bell at her home in Baghdad, "her right place." They enjoyed an afternoon of catching up on news. "She had the gift of making everyone feel suddenly eager," Sackville-West later wrote. Bell confided that the doctors had told her not to go through another summer in Baghdad, but what should she do in England eating her heart out for Iraq? Sackville-West wrote, "I couldn't say she looked ill, could I? I could and I did!"<sup>4</sup> Another visitor who saw Bell in the summer of 1926, Elsie Sinderson, said she looked "as frail as a leaf that could be blown away by a breath."<sup>5</sup>

Ronald Bodley later wrote that her personal and financial losses and her poor health took their toll on her mental condition. She began to have sleepless nights and terrifying nightmares. He, Florence Bell, and Elizabeth



Burgoyne all wrote in their books that Gertrude went to bed on July 11, 1926, asking her maid to awaken her at six; she died in her sleep in the early hours of the following morning and could not be awakened.

One of her later biographers, H. V. F. Winstone, wrote in 1978 that she died of Dial poisoning, according to the death certificate signed by Dr. W. Dunlop, director of the Royal Hospital, Baghdad. Dial was a barbiturate which she kept in a vial beside her bed, and only a very large amount could have caused her death, Winstone says. She committed suicide two days before her fifty-eighth birthday in the middle of a hot Baghdad night. Susan Goodman, in a 1975 biography of Bell, quoted Bell's friend Lionel Smith, an education advisor to the Iraqi cabinet, as saying he had no doubt she had killed herself because she was ill, hot, and afraid of going to live in England.<sup>6</sup>

She died on July 12, 1926. Officials arranged her burial that same afternoon. Friends from the British staff bore her coffin through streets lined with Iraqi troops. Thousands of Arab and British mourners followed Bell to her grave site on a hill outside her beloved Baghdad, overlooking the Tigris River. Only a white stone, with her name in English and Arabic, marked the spot afterward. A question arises as to whether it still stands in 1993 or whether it was a casualty of Allied bombing in Operation

Desert Storm. Someday perhaps a Western researcher can travel to Baghdad and find the answer.

Government officials, archaeologists, and friends the world over showed their respect for Bell and her work. The principal wing of Iraq's museum of antiquities bears Gertrude Bell's name at the order of King Faisal, in gratitude for her untiring efforts in establishing the museum and indeed the nation itself. Her friends erected a plaque at the museum in her honor. King George V sent her parents a personal letter about her character and courage, predicting a "lasting benefit to the country and to those regions where she worked with such devotion and self-sacrifice."<sup>7</sup> In the House of Commons, no Englishwoman since Queen Victoria and Queen Alexandra had received such a tribute, according to Living Age in an obituary calling Bell "Queen of Irak."<sup>8</sup> Leo Amery, the new colonial secretary, informed the House of her death, lauding her intimate knowledge of the East, so important in Britain's wartime campaign in Mesopotamia, and her "profound sympathy with the Arab people and her strong faith in their future," which shaped policies in Iraq.<sup>9</sup>

Newspapers around the world carried obituaries extolling her courage and hard work, whether or not they had agreed with her goals in Iraq.<sup>10</sup> Sir Henry Dobbs telegraphed the colonial secretary that the Arab newspapers were full of

eulogies and regrets. "Never perhaps has the death of a European aroused such a remarkable demonstration in an Eastern country," and his staff felt proud to have been associated with her in work which "had so wonderful a result."<sup>11</sup>

Al Alam al Arabi, a nationalist newspaper in Iraq, cited her patriotism, free from all desire for personal gain, as a good example to the men of Iraq, and hoped that Iraqis would serve their country as Bell had served hers.<sup>12</sup> This editorial remark reveals that many Iraqis by 1926 saw Bell as having served the British Empire with distinction in Iraq, putting British interests over Iraqi in policy decisions. They, nonetheless, regarded the Khatun with awe and respect and, in some cases, personal devotion. An unidentified local Arab placed flowers on her grave for many years; perhaps it was the gardener Haji Naji, who had faithfully sent her produce from his garden while she lived. After her death, Haji Naji wrote to the high commissioner, "It was my faith always to send to Miss Bell the first of my fruits and vegetables and I know not now where I shall send them."<sup>13</sup>

Bell's obituary in the London Times was a column and a half long and covered every stage of her career in the Middle East, particularly the close relationship between Bell and King Faisal, which dated from the Paris Peace

Conference. The paper noted that "...no one had enjoyed his confidence more completely or used her influence with him more tactfully and beneficially" than Bell, whom he sometimes called his "sister."<sup>14</sup> She seems to have been in the dominant role in the Times's view, manipulating the king, however gently.

The Times continued to print tributes to Bell throughout the month of July 1926. Leonard Woolley of the British Museum, who once had wrangled with Gertrude Bell in Iraq over ownership of his museum's finds, wrote that Bell sacrificed herself to preserve Iraq's antiquities, starting out singlehandedly with no funds and no artifacts, and then building a museum around the finds at Ur and Kish.<sup>15</sup> W. Rothenstein wrote that it was archaeology that first brought Bell to the Middle East, and then came her love for the people. He listed her among the three greatest British female archaeologists.<sup>16</sup> One of the women he listed, Nina Davies, who had copied pictures from Egyptian tombs, wrote to the Times that she herself did not feel worthy of being mentioned with the name of the incomparable Gertrude Bell.<sup>17</sup>

Many former co-workers wrote to the editor about her special talents. "A. T. W." [presumably Arnold T. Wilson, her former boss] wrote of her "facile pen, her fund of accurate knowledge" and said she was always cheerful and



untiringly industrious, "even when it seemed religious and racial prejudice would wipe out the hopes of the Arab race."<sup>18</sup> Major General G. A. Leslie wrote that the Times's obituary failed to do justice to her charm and talents: "What a comrade and companion she was!" He described her versatility, wit, firm seat on a horse, table manners, mode of dress, and dancing ability and said Bell could "keep a roomful of people enthralled by her talk." He said her range of knowledge was wide enough that she could tell how many stitches to an inch in a Persian carpet or instruct on how to stock a larder.<sup>19</sup>

"D. G. H." [almost certainly her old friend David G. Hogarth] wrote of her trip to Hayil and her great contribution to intelligence manuals on the House of Rashid based on her observations there. He said it was her scientific knowledge and initiative which enabled archaeological exploration to resume in Iraq on a large scale after the war.<sup>20</sup> An anonymous author wrote that Bell was never bitter when other ideas prevailed and many people called her plans for Iraq a "Utopian dream." She had, instead, lived to see Iraq's borders settled and its government stable. She was "the one distinguished woman" among the British for whom the East became a passion.<sup>21</sup>

Gertrude Bell was the subject of articles and lectures for several years after her death. David Hogarth became

president of the Royal Geographical Society and gave a presidential lecture there in 1927 on her journey to Hayil. He said she had all the charm of a woman combined with many of the traits usually associated with men. Once, he said, he had employed her servant Fattuh for a journey. During a very rainy week, he told Fattuh they would not be traveling that day because of the continuing rain. Fattuh had replied, "No, we shan't start, but the silt, she went through mud and water to her waist."<sup>22</sup> Hogarth's sister, Janet Courtney, wrote about Gertrude Bell in many publications, recapturing in print their experiences and reminiscing of their university days "in that Oxford garden among the roses and scarlet robes" and their friendship through the years that followed.<sup>23</sup>

Gertrude Bell also received honors in her country from more objective sources. Encyclopedia Britannica, in its survey of the work of British professional women in 1928, listed only Gertrude Bell in the field of diplomacy. She was the lone woman in her day to achieve significantly in that male-dominated world of the British foreign service.

Fifty years after Bell's death, Stephen Hill of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where her letters, diaries, and some six thousand photographs comprise a major archive, prepared an exhibition of Bell's work to commemorate the anniversary. The

exhibition, including a large number of photographs, opened at Newcastle in May 1976 and traveled around England afterward. Hill also wrote several journal articles at the time about Bell and her accomplishments in the archaeological field, including one for Antiquity in its fall 1976 edition, inspiring a renewed interest in Gertrude Bell as an archaeologist. In many fields, she had left a legacy of courage, hard work, and excellence.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE AFTERMATH IN IRAQ: AN ASSESSMENT OF BELL'S POLICIES

Major changes took place in Iraq in the years between Gertrude Bell's death in 1926 and the onset of the Second World War in 1939, and some of these changes involved oil. After thirty-five years of discussion and speculation over Iraq's oil reserves, a multi-national syndicate received the concession to drill the first well in 1927, and it came up a gusher. At Baba Gurgur in the Kurdish territory of Mosul on October 15 at three in the morning, a loud boom reverberated across the desert and oil shot fifty feet into the air, covering the surrounding land. Seven hundred tribesmen helped build dikes to contain the flood, which could not be controlled for eight days. Poisonous gases threatened villages and the large town of Kirkuk. Baba Gurgur Number One, when finally capped, was producing ninety-five thousand barrels of oil a day, thus proving that large-scale production was well worth the trouble.<sup>1</sup>

A full contract was signed in July 1928 between Royal Dutch/Shell, Anglo-Persian (later called British Petroleum), the French, and the Near East Development Company, a combine which several American companies had created to hold their



joint interests. The international companies operated together under the name of the existing Turkish Petroleum Company, later the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC). In an agreement signed in 1931, the IPC received the sole right to develop the Mosul oil field, and the company guaranteed the government of Iraq annual royalties of four hundred thousand pounds sterling.<sup>2</sup>

Protecting this investment in Middle Eastern oil from outside aggression would be a problem to the Western nations involved for the rest of the twentieth century. However, a more immediate problem in the 1930s was an oversupply of oil in the world market following new discoveries in East Texas, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. All of these factors affected events in Iraq, especially in its relationship with the British Empire. Books about the early oil negotiations do not generally mention Gertrude Bell's name (the first well was drilled after her death) and therefore one may conclude that she had no appreciable role in forming economic policies in Iraq.

Political policies in Iraq, however, are a different story. Because she helped set the stage for later political events, it is important to look at these events and assess her career with the eventual outcome in mind. A new treaty between Iraq and Great Britain in 1930 provided that Britain would recommend Iraq for membership in the League of Nations

in 1932 and would end the mandate upon its admission. All of these conditions came to pass by October 1932, and Iraq officially became an independent sovereign state. King Faisal, unfortunately, died the following year.

Faisal's twenty-one-year-old son Ghazi, whom Gertrude Bell had once tutored in English, succeeded him. Ghazi was less experienced than his father and had more difficulty balancing the demands of the Kurds, Shiah, and Assyrians, a Christian minority group. Army generals dismissed several cabinets during his reign and flexed their political muscles, but did not overthrow the monarchy. During Ghazi's reign, Iraq formed new alliances with its Arab neighbors, including ibn-Saud in Saudi Arabia, to ensure peaceful relations between Arabs, but Ghazi's time on the throne was very short. He died in an automobile accident in April 1939, leaving a three-year-old heir, Faisal II.

During the seven-year period between the end of the mandate and the onset of World War II, contemporary historians viewed the outcome of the mandate, and therefore Gertrude Bell's work, with applause. Arabist Philip Hitti, in a 1938 article for the American Historical Review, pointed out that Iraq, which lagged behind Syria and Lebanon culturally, economically, and socially, was the first Arab nation to achieve full statehood. Hitti lauded the British tutelage which had made self-government possible, and

remarked that Britain's assistance was especially unselfish since Iraq's strategic location was so important to the British Empire. He noted that much of the progress in Iraq was made immediately after Faisal became king in 1921, which, although he did not mention her name, was also the era in which Bell's influence in Baghdad reached its peak. He termed the period of British influence in Iraq an "unprecedented and unparalleled achievement."<sup>3</sup> In addition to "tutelage" by Gertrude Bell and others, the British had helped Iraq build schools and medical facilities and update irrigation works, railways, and ports; the mandate period had brought Iraq into the twentieth century.

Although many wrote about Britain's mandate in Iraq without mentioning Gertrude Bell's name, possibly because she was a woman, her fame grew during this decade after her death. Florence Bell published the famous Letters of Gertrude Bell in 1927 and Elsa Richmond published her Earlier Letters of Gertrude Bell, those written by Gertrude before she began exploring in the Middle East, ten years later in 1937. Both books were successful in England and in America. Another British official who had worked with Bell, Sir Ronald Storrs, published his own memoirs in the same year and wrote admiringly of Gertrude Bell that she was compounded almost equally of head and heart.<sup>4</sup> T. E. Lawrence's Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph, which became

public in 1937, contained two references to Bell, as a desert explorer and as an official in Basra at the time of the Arab Revolt. His Letters of T. E. Lawrence (1939) included one letter and many references to her as a close acquaintance.

Many historians of the 1930s compared Bell and Lawrence. Both figures were British, both were archaeologists who began sending intelligence reports to the government about their observations in the Middle East, and both worked tirelessly after the war promoting the idea of Arab self-government. One Foreign Office assistant wrote in the 1950s, when violence overtook Iraq, that the world might be safer if Gertrude Bell and T. E. Lawrence had not been such persuasive writers.<sup>5</sup> After Bell's death, Brigadier General Sir Gilbert Clayton said of her intelligence reports, "I attribute much of the success of Colonel Lawrence's enterprises [the Arab Revolt of 1916] to information and study in which Miss Bell had a very large hand."<sup>6</sup>

Although Bell's and Lawrence's goals for the Arabs were the same, their styles were entirely different. This difference is most obvious in their choice of dress. Bell made no concessions to Arab conventions, refusing to veil and wearing stylish European attire. Lawrence, in contrast, donned the white robe of a prince of Mecca at Faisal's



wartime suggestion, because the British army uniform reminded the Arabs of a Turk. Bartlet Brebner, in a 1928 review of Bell's letters for Saturday Review of Literature, said that Bell did not try to be an Arab, whereas Lawrence "prostituted himself" by dressing like an Arab to gain his ends.<sup>7</sup> It was Bell who later convinced Faisal and his queen to adapt Western dress as Iraqi royalty, which some Arabs may have viewed with equal distaste.

Nejla Izzeddin, in her distinctly pro-Arab book The Arab World: Past, Present, and Future, wrote in 1953 of Bell and Lawrence: "Their support was colored with the imperialists' view which looked upon the Arab movement as the handmaid of British imperial interests."<sup>8</sup> In defense of Lawrence and Bell, they found what seemed to them in 1920 to be a plan favorable to both Arab and British interests: formation of Arab governments in Iraq and Jordan headed by a family of men who were esteemed in the Middle East and also friendly (or beholden) to the British. Their plan was a compromise between the extreme Arab nationalists' views and the British imperialists' views which were in conflict at the time, and ended a three-year stalemate. Would either of the extreme solutions have worked out any better? The evidence seems to say "no," based on bloody events after the monarchy ended. As in most diplomatic questions, a

compromise was the best, if not only, solution possible at the time.

Gertrude Bell always felt that she knew best, and Ronald Bodley, assessing Bell's career in 1940, wrote that in matters connected with the Arabs, Bell was rarely wrong. Her self-assurance seemed far more justified when facing problems of the Arab world than when confronting those within her own private life. Of her disagreement with A. T. Wilson, who wanted Britain's India Office to continue its civil administration in Iraq in 1920, Bodley said that she was not the intriguer some have suggested, but that she did report confidently and directly to London because she knew that she was right and he was wrong about the manner in which Mesopotamia should be governed. Bodley pointed out that the powers in London must have agreed with her, because they listened to her and replaced Wilson, not Bell, when he objected to her "insubordination," although failing to go through proper channels was highly unorthodox in the British foreign service.

To properly evaluate Gertrude Bell's work, it becomes necessary to look at how Iraq's monarchy, which she helped establish, handled the nation's problems as compared to the governments which followed. The 1930s proved to be the last stable period in Iraq, for the coming war and a leadership void in the royal house following the death of Faisal's son,

Ghazi, brought turmoil. When war broke out between Germany and the Allies in 1939, the treaty of alliance between Britain and Iraq became very important to Allied defense of the Middle East, but a military revolt in Iraq put at the head of the Iraqi government a pro-Axis Arab nationalist who refused to cooperate with the British. Subsequently, British forces invaded Basra on May 2, 1941, and a month-long war ensued between the two nations until the Iraqis conceded defeat.

Under terms of the armistice, Iraqi leaders formed a pro-British government, and Iraq became the first Muslim nation to declare war on the Axis, in January 1943. Iraq made a major contribution to the war effort by becoming an important supply center for Allied forces. British forces again moved into Iraq in 1946, this time to protect the oil fields in the north from Soviet encroachment, for the British believed that Russians were behind a Kurd uprising in the Mosul area in 1945 and 1946. As in Gertrude Bell's day and still in 1993, the Kurds inhabiting the oil-field areas were a constant source of trouble.

New agreements between the Iraqi government and the Iraq Petroleum Company in 1950 and 1952 increased Iraq's share of the oil profits to fifty percent. Iraq also became a founding member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), designed to give oil-producing nations

more bargaining power with foreign-owned oil companies. Iraq bought out all foreign oil interests by 1975, and afterwards received all the profits. Iraq's first direct suffrage elections resulted in a constitutional government in 1953, and King Faisal II, educated in England as Gertrude Bell and his grandfather would have wanted, formally assumed the throne that same year on his eighteenth birthday.\*\*\*

For the next five years, new agreements with Western nations and a pro-Western federation between Iraq and Jordan (Faisal II and King Hussein of Jordan, grandson of Abdullah, were cousins) angered some Arabs. The United Arab Republic of Syria and Egypt, which had ties to the Soviet Union, called on the army of Iraq to overthrow the government. A bloody coup began on July 14, 1958, in which King Faisal II, age twenty-three, died, along with the crown prince, Abd al-Ilah (Faisal's cousin and former regent), and the premier, Nuri al-Said. Iraq's new government declared itself a republic and withdrew from its pacts with the West, except that it kept the oil pipelines flowing.

When H. V. F. Winstone wrote his biography of Gertrude Bell in 1978, he said that the bloody 1958 revolt against the Iraqi monarchy, with republican mobs dragging corpses

---

\*\*\*Life magazine's June 1, 1953, issue covered the coronation of Faisal II and featured a picture of him with schoolmates from Harrow who attended as his personal guests.



through the streets of Baghdad, should serve as a warning to anyone else who is tempted to try a hand at king-making. The catastrophic events in Iraq after 1958, however, make it appear even more amazing that Gertrude Bell and Faisal's Iraqi kingdom, born under difficult circumstances with a diverse population, lasted for almost forty years and was vastly more stable and more successful than any government which has followed it, up to the present date in 1993.

Iraq's new anti-Western republic immediately stirred up trouble with its neighbors. When the British terminated their protectorate over Kuwait in 1960, Iraq claimed Kuwait as part of the territory included in Iraq's formation. Kuwait, however, had been a separate British protectorate since 1899. British troops entered Kuwait in 1961 at the invitation of the sheik and with authority from the United Nations to prevent an Iraqi invasion. This action was almost thirty years before Operation Desert Storm brought Britain and her allies back to defend Kuwait from the same aggressor.

The general who ruled Iraq, Abdul Karim Kassem, was overthrown and later assassinated in 1963, and a new president took over, declaring Iraq to be a socialist country. He died in a helicopter crash in 1966, and was replaced by his brother, who was overthrown in a 1968 military coup by Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr. Al-Bakr, also a

socialist and member of the Baath party, ruled until 1979, when he resigned in favor of his trusted comrade-in-arms, Saddam Hussein. The Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), which ran the government, declared shared ownership of farms and industries and elimination of social inequities.

Saddam Hussein still controls Iraq in 1993, and throughout these years, from 1979 to 1993, Iraq was generally hostile to the West and friendly with the former Soviet Union. The Baath party rejects the West wholesale, not because of its history of imperialism, but because Western culture threatens the "Arab spirit." This pan-Arabic nationalistic spirit differs from Khomeinism in Iran, which sees all forms of nationalism and anything Western as corrupting Islam.

Iran became the biggest problem for Iraq in the 1970s and 1980s. Kurds seeking separate statehood, encouraged with arms from Iran, were in continual revolt until Iran cut off its aid in 1975. But in 1980, after Iran, a Shiah nation, called on Iraq's fundamentalist Shiah population (fifty-five percent of the nation) to overthrow Saddam Hussein's secular regime, Saddam invaded Iran and began a costly eight-year war. Most Arab countries, run by moderate Sunni Muslims who feared the fanatical Shiahs in Iran and Iraq, supported Iraq and Saddam Hussein and sent him money for the fight, leaving Saddam with a forty billion dollar

war debt afterward. Most Iraqis supported their aggressive president, even many Shiahhs, because Saddam did not interfere with non-political religious activities.

In Iran, the Ayatollah Khomeini also led an adoring nation of ardent supporters in his "holy war" against Iraq, and a stalemate resulted. When a United Nations-sponsored cease-fire ended the war in 1988, Saddam turned his weapons on the Kurds, who had supported Iran in the war. The Iraqi army destroyed their villages and, according to international sources, used a poisonous gas to kill Kurdish civilians, a fact Saddam patently denies. Saddam's harsh methods of dealing with the dissident Kurds have made the British response to uprisings in Gertrude Bell's day seem very low-key.

The Arab world's fears of the Iranians and their "holy war" mentality against more moderate Muslims has made the continued existence of Iraq as a nation vitally important, however, whether or not one has any personal regard for Saddam Hussein. Iraq provides a balance of power and acts as a buffer between Iran, which is not an Arab nation, and the rest of the Middle East. Iraq, on the other hand, put the pan-Arabic spirit to the test when its armies invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the first time any modern Arab nation has invaded another. Fearing a similar invasion of Saudi Arabia, every Arab nation except King Hussein's Jordan

supported Operation Desert Storm in January 1991, when 350,000 American ground troops and 32,000 British, along with air squadrons and allies from other nations, defended Kuwait and bombed Iraq. Other Arab leaders were glad to see this charismatic "strong man" reduced in status and in the ability to wage war from a capital devastated by bombing raids.

But most of them were less enthusiastic, even downright uneasy, when President George Bush ordered new attacks on Iraq during his last week in office in January 1993, seeing the move as vindictive and counter-productive. Many Arabs fear a possible break-up of Iraq if Saddam Hussein is overthrown, and see a Kurdish nation in the north and a Shiah Muslim state in the south, both under Iran's umbrella, as a much worse threat than Saddam Hussein. Other Arabs fear the Shiahs, just as Saddam himself does, and fear Iran's influence over Shiah minorities in their own countries. Iran, not Iraq, is now seen as the biggest threat in the Middle East.<sup>9</sup>

Had the British not put together a nation called Iraq in the fertile Tigris-Euphrates river valleys and the oil-rich Mosul, in whose hands would those strategic areas be today? The answer can be nothing more than a meditated guess, essential in appraising Gertrude Bell's policies in the Middle East. If the British had simply left Mesopotamia



after the war ended in 1918, Kurds, Sunnis, and Shiahhs might have formed their own separate states under Woodrow Wilson's promise of national self-determination, and these Balkanized states could not have withstood the Turkish, Russian, and Iranian pressures which later plagued Iraq.

Gertrude Bell's methods do seem Machiavellian in promoting Faisal at the expense of other viable candidates. Possibly a republic under Saiyid Talib, an Iraqi by birth, would have been a better choice than a monarchy under King Faisal, and this may have been an error in judgment on the part of T. E. Lawrence, Winston Churchill, Bell, and everyone at the Cairo Conference, that crucial point in policy-making. They can all share the blame. But the Arabs never would have tolerated a continuing British administration, as A. T. Wilson and the India Office wanted, and some compromise between the extremes of pulling out and total administrative control had to be made.

Britain chose to accept the League of Nations' mandate, gradually to create a new and independent nation, which Winston Churchill knew would be a thankless task. Philip Hitti's observation in 1938 was correct--British tutelage during the mandate was an unparalleled achievement. But human beings were in charge and their conflicting ideas, and, at times, their egos, affected their judgment. Gertrude Bell and several others were convinced that they

knew what was best for the Arabs, and, in the truest tradition of British paternalism, they did what was necessary to carry it out. Since many of the same problems encountered then are present today, especially Kurdish nationalism and religious conflicts between Shiahs and Sunnis, the final chapter cannot be written on Iraq. No government yet, and there have been many in Iraq, has solved these problems any better than the one Gertrude Bell helped create in 1921.<sup>10</sup>

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE WOMAN INSIDE GERTRUDE BELL: A 1990s VIEW

Gertrude Bell was "the incarnation of the emancipated heiress, using gold given her by the industrial revolution to buy not privilege but the opportunity for noble performance."<sup>1</sup> Author and critic Rebecca West wrote this description of Bell in the Sunday Times in 1958, and she was very accurate. Bell's money, family, and social connections gave her an opportunity for "noble performance" that few women ever have.

Six categories of women have gained political power in Great Britain in the twentieth century, and Gertrude Bell fits into five of the six categories.<sup>2</sup> There were no other outstanding women in British diplomatic positions at the time, but one might compare her to women serving in Parliament. Bell did **not** serve as the stand-in for a man, as Nancy Astor did when she stood for her husband's seat in the House of Commons after he inherited his father's title and became ineligible. Lady Astor and two others became the first three women in Commons, and all were substitutes for

their husbands.\* She **did** (a) come from a politically active family, (b) have a supportive man behind her, (c) have few family responsibilities, (d) come from a wealthy family, and (e) have a high level of education.

Having made a fortune in iron and other businesses in the Industrial Revolution, Gertrude's grandfather, Sir Lowthian Bell, used his wealth and prestige to run successfully for mayor of Newcastle and become a Liberal member of Parliament. Sir Hugh Bell ran an unsuccessful race for Parliament, and was extremely politically aware throughout his long lifetime. Gertrude's relatives, the Trevelyan, Lascelles, and Russells, held high-ranking jobs at Whitehall through the years, and she knew Winston Churchill and Arthur Balfour.

The British foreign service before World War I was very much an "old boy" network of the aristocracy; Gertrude Bell, recruited by her friend David Hogarth, fit in perfectly in terms of family connections. Politics was a prime topic of conversation in the Bell home. The women evidently felt free to disagree with the men, as Gertrude's letters to her family about Home Rule for Ireland clearly show, for she supported Home Rule and her father did not. Studies

---

\* Women over thirty years of age received the right to vote in Britain in 1918. Voters elected Countess Markiewicz in 1918 in her own right, but she declined to serve.



indicate that women from politically astute families have not necessarily followed their family's party or opinions when they gained power for themselves.<sup>3</sup>

Many women who have risen to powerful positions in Britain have had supportive husbands. Some, as noted, were stand-ins for their mates; however, Margaret Thatcher's husband, older than she, was ending a successful career of his own as she rose in power, and he supported her career in every way. Bell, who had no husband, had instead a very supportive father, who served as her mentor and cheerleader. Her letters show that she and Hugh kept up a lively correspondence, and her friends said she quoted him constantly. He often visited her in the Middle East, and was in Cairo during the Cairo Conference.

Studies show that a disproportionate number of twentieth century women in high corporate and political positions, like Bell, are widows, spinsters, divorcees, or, in a few cases, lesbians.<sup>4</sup> Many of these women have few family commitments. Gertrude Bell was free to go to Cairo in the middle of a war and move on from there to Basra and Baghdad to pursue her career. Women with husbands and children to care for could not do this in 1915, and few choose to do so today.

Women from upper-class, wealthy families have domestic help and are more likely to have time for political

activities. By contrast, the only working class women to serve in the House of Commons before 1981 were unmarried or married without children.<sup>5</sup> Gertrude Bell was from a wealthy and privileged class, and had her maid, Marie, until the day she died. Bell never lived solely on her government worker's salary. She dipped into other funds for her clothing, special food from England, and other expenses.<sup>6</sup>

Women with an exceptional education are more likely to attain powerful positions because they are generally better at written and verbal communications than others and later have a useful network of friends. Gertrude Bell's education at Queen's College and Oxford University placed her on an educational plateau well beyond most women of her day; she also came from an unusually literate family. In an era when many "newly rich" industrialists were poorly educated, Lowthian Bell was a distinguished scientist and a Fellow of the Royal Society. Hugh Bell was a prolific writer of pamphlets, letters, speeches, and articles for the press, and his wife, Florence, wrote over forty works listed by the British Library on her "tightbriter," her children's name for her much-used typewriter.<sup>7\*\*</sup>

---

\*\* Florence Bell also did sociological research with ironworkers' families and wrote a document on the steel industry of northeast England, specifically noting laborers' problems. She asked workers' wives into her home for visits to hear their problems as part of her research.

According to Frances Mary Buss, a Victorian schoolmistress testifying before Parliament about the deplorable state of women's education in Britain, most young women, even in the wealthy classes, "get no encouragement at home . . . serious study is considered unnecessary and unsociable."<sup>8</sup> This attitude certainly was not the prevalent one in the Bell family. The Bells educated the brilliant Gertrude at home with help from governesses until she entered Queen's College, probably knowing that boarding schools for young women were very expensive and very shallow "finishing schools." Another Victorian critic of women's education, Frances Power Cobbe, wrote that these schools for upper-class young women were so poor that, after being "finished" and graduating, one's real education had to be accomplished on one's own.<sup>9</sup> Bell's home tutoring was of such quality that she not only entered Oxford University but even earned a coveted First in history.

Many Victorian women gained power, whether in their own homes or in the outside world of British politics like Gertrude Bell, by sheer force of personality, manipulative charm, meanness, or even illness if necessary.<sup>10</sup> Bell was often ill in Baghdad, but there is no record of her using illness to exercise power. She felt no qualms about using the other three means of getting her way, however. She was willing to do whatever was necessary to achieve her ends,

because she absolutely knew what was best. Earlier chapters attest to her skill at arm-twisting prominent Arabs to serve on the Council of State; one account says she left in the middle of her breakfast when she heard that one potential member might decline to serve and hastened to his home to change his mind.

Her constant barrage of persuasive letters to her many connections at Whitehall offices of the British foreign service, even over the head of her superior, A. T. Wilson, showed a determination, certainly a force of personality. Abdul Aziz ibn-Saud was shocked when she ordered Arab men around at Percy Cox's conferences. Meanness was not entirely out of Gertrude Bell's range of tactics. Her role in the deportation of Faisal's rival, Saiyid Talib, would be proof of that, if St. John Philby's accounts are true.

Gertrude Bell's personality fits perfectly a description of British political administrators operating in the Persian Gulf before the Great War. Dr. Paul Harrison of the American Mission said the British agents were from the best schools in England, hard-working, clean-living, and incorruptible. But they were also patronizing and inflexible, having "a blind confidence in the divine perfection of the system [they] followed," and they reacted with a "surprising impatience at the least question of its fundamental correctness."<sup>11</sup>



Bell reacted badly to any questioning of her own correctness. Janet Hogarth Courtney's memory was that Bell bristled and said emphatically, "I have been there!" when contradicted about the location of a town in Germany by an Oxford professor during her oral examinations. She once told her cousin that the French would be thrown out of Syria within a year. (She was wrong.) When the cousin doubted it, she reportedly said, "You must know that I know best." Her cousin then said, "In that case, Gertrude, there can be no further rational conversation between us."<sup>12</sup> Cousins may be harder to convince than policy-makers in Whitehall, for Bell was very successful at convincing the Foreign Office that, in matters relating to Arabs, she was right. She used argument, feminine charm, tact, or the sheer force of her personality, whichever the situation called for, to persuade the powers that her way was best. Several men in their memoirs mentioned her considerable womanly charm.

Like many powerful women in the twentieth century Gertrude Bell rose to her position in a man's world by making even more effort than men, being even better than a man, knowing even more than they. Margaret Stacey and Marion Price wrote in Women, Power, and Politics that only by being even better than a man can most women reach the top. They also find it easier to ascend in government departments of health and women's and children's issues than

in defense, foreign policy, and fiscal concerns, which have higher prestige.<sup>13</sup> Bell's job in the prestigious foreign service depended on her ability to convince the men that, in fact, she knew more than they did about Arabs and the Middle East.

Her cousin and biographer Ronald Bodley explained Bell's success as a desert explorer and an alpinist as resulting from her "tenacious spirit" which enabled her to "endure hardships which would have broken the resistance of many men."<sup>14</sup> Her physique was not masculine but she pushed herself to climb literally the highest mountains which most men would not attempt to climb, cross the very desert that men feared the most, and proceed in weather so severe that most prudent men would delay the trip another day. By outdoing the men, she won their respect and earned her position of power, yet she always dressed like a woman in the latest styles, never like a man. She did not try to be a man in any way or seem to be competing with men, for that would have been a threat. Mary Beard, in Women as a Force in History: A Study in Traditions and Realities, quoted Dr. Olga Knopf of Vienna as saying, "The art of being a woman can never consist in being a bad imitation of a man. It can consist only in being equal, independent, and cooperative," and this description was exactly the way Gertrude Bell saw her own personal challenge.<sup>15</sup>

Considering the level of independence she enjoyed in her own life, it seems incongruous that Bell was active in the anti-suffrage movement in England. She joined the Women's Anti-Suffrage Committee in 1908, a group formed by Mrs. Humphrey Bowman and the Countess of Jersey, which later became part of a larger organization headed by Lord Curzon and other powerful politicians of the day. Lady Jersey wrote to Florence Bell that, "in the initial steps and until her departure for her great Arabian journey, Gertrude displayed her usual delightful energy and powers of organisation" for the committee.<sup>16</sup> Janet Courtney remembered that Bell later was amused at her five-year involvement in the movement.<sup>17</sup> Why she became involved, no one seems to know, but it is likely that many women of her stepmother's circle in the conservative upper class were against women's suffrage and Gertrude joined their cause.

T. E. Lawrence once said that Bell was not a good judge of men or situations and was always the slave of either Hogarth, A. T. Wilson, Percy Cox, or himself. She changed her mind "like a weathercock," he said, depending upon which man had her under his control, and had no depth of mind, only depth of emotion.<sup>18</sup> This assessment does not flatter Bell as an independent thinker, and it may not be correct. Lawrence and Hogarth totally convinced her of Faisal's potential as an Arab king at the Paris Peace

Conference. There were, however, many times when she convinced men to come around to her way of thinking, so it is more likely that she simply kept an open mind and could be influenced if a man she respected put forth a convincing argument. The men Lawrence named were her favorites; in fact, she once called Lawrence her "beloved boy." These men were the ones to whom she would have listened, except for Capt. Wilson. She disagreed with him so emphatically that he tried to have her fired; she definitely was not under Wilson's influence.

In fact, most people did not see Gertrude Bell as easy to influence at all. Author Virginia Woolf described Bell as a "masterful woman who has everyone under her thumb, and makes you feel a little inefficient."<sup>19</sup> Susan Goodman, Gertrude Bell's most recent biographer (1985), said Bell was excellent at shaping other people's opinions, Arab and British alike.<sup>20</sup> According to most people who knew her, Bell's greatest fault was in being a woman too strong in her opinions, not the easy-to-change "weathercock" described by Lawrence. Florence certainly saw Gertrude as strong in her opinions and even argumentative; her stepmother wrote of the young Gertrude that "it was a mistake for Gertrude to proffer her opinions, much less her criticisms, to her superiors in age and experience."<sup>21</sup>



Bell did learn how to inject her opinion more discreetly as she grew older. Like many other bright and capable women, she served in an office where she would never have the top job herself. While Bell was in Iraq, the high commissioner's job turned over three times, but she was not appointed and did not expect to be. She may have exercised power only by being what some who study women's power call an "office wife," working through the man who has the title but never trying to have the title for herself.<sup>22</sup>

One of Bell's American contemporaries, Belle Moskowitz, exercised great power in New York State as secretary and campaign manager to Governor Alfred E. Smith, but she manipulated him so gently that, according to her biographer, Elisabeth Israels Perry, he always left her thinking he had had the thoughts himself.<sup>23</sup> Moskowitz had an agenda of her own, social reform, but she spoke only when asked for her views, which is exactly what Gertrude Bell said of her relationship to Percy Cox and King Faisal: "When they want to come and ask for my advice I'm there; when they're busy with other things I go about affairs of my own."<sup>24</sup> In the case of Gertrude Bell and Percy Cox, especially, one may never know who influenced whom the most, for they presented a unified front to the world.

Elizabeth Burgoyne wrote in 1961 that Bell got along with men better than women, but she was so prone to

intellectual argument that "she was not perhaps the sort of woman men want to marry. In fact, I rather fancy she frightened off even those she cared for most."<sup>25</sup>

Burgoyne, unfortunately, published her biography of Bell just before Bell's family opened for research a new, previously undisclosed set of her letters.

There had always been rumors that secret letters existed or that her stepmother had edited out important information, but most people assumed that this was political information. Bartlet Brebner complained in his review of her Letters in 1928 that "co-editors from officialdom" had edited out details of important international affairs and left in too many orders from her dressmakers, so that "myth and legend will persist as the record of what 'G. B.' did" in Egypt, Mesopotamia, or Paris.<sup>26</sup> According to researchers who have read Bell's letters in their entirety, however, very little of political interest is missing from the published letters because she wrote no classified information to her family and kept the tone light for the most part, shielding them from the fears and worries generated in her official career. T. E. Lawrence, for instance, wrote to a friend that he had read Bell's letters with delight and did not think much of importance was edited out, because her life had crisis after crisis and very probably she did not write home about them. (He called her

"a wonderful person . . . not very like a woman, you know," but added he had not liked her taste in clothing.)<sup>27</sup>

The important fact which the Bell family, steeped in Victorian traditions, edited out of the published collection of letters was a personal one: Gertrude Bell was passionately in love with a married man for at least two years and exchanged long letters with him, with each declaring a passionate love for the other.

The man in her life was Lt. Col. Dick Doughty-Wylie, whom she had met, along with his wife, in the Middle East in 1907. For years she wrote to both of them, but by 1913 the letters were for his eyes only. Ninety letters from Doughty-Wylie to Bell, dated from August 15, 1913, to his heroic death in the battle of Gallipoli in April 1915, are in the Bell archives now, but the collection includes only nine from her to him. He destroyed most of her letters to prevent his wife from knowing of their love, but saved the ones he received en route to Gallipoli and placed them in a bundle addressed to Bell.

Bell's family did not release the letters or acknowledge their existence until after the death of Doughty-Wylie's wife in 1960, to save her embarrassment. Elizabeth Burgoyne wrote her "authorized" biography of Bell, two volumes published in 1958 and 1961, and evidently did not know of their existence, although she thanked Elsa

Richmond for her constant help. Soon afterward, the secret letters surfaced, spilling over with passion in a love affair that may never have been consummated, as the two were so rarely in the same location. He spent one weekend at Rounton Grange in 1913 and otherwise they met at her London home on Sloane Street when they were in England. Most of the time he was stationed in Albania or some other outpost of the empire, and she was traveling. On her long journey through the Arabian Desert to Hayil in 1913-1914, she kept a special diary for him, where she wrote down her innermost thoughts. When he received his orders for the invasion of Gallipoli, he had a short leave in London and Bell rushed home from Boulogne, where she worked for the Red Cross. After he left, she wrote and begged him to claim her before the world when the war ended. He wrote that some foreknowledge must have kept them apart (sexually?) in London because the risk for her would have been too great.<sup>28</sup>

Both Bell and Doughty-Wylie were forty-seven years old when he died in 1915. She threatened suicide, but assuaged her grief by immersing herself in Red Cross work in London, helping to locate missing soldiers for their families. She turned to her sister Elsa for comfort, and to her parents, who knew of her obsession for Doughty-Wylie. When David Hogarth asked her to come to Cairo later that year, she left



England for good. For the rest of her life, she returned to the England that had been "home" only for brief visits. His wife, who had threatened suicide also, went instead to France and worked as a nurse in the battlefields.

So Elizabeth Burgoyne was wrong--Gertrude Bell did not always frighten men off. On the other hand, Doughty-Wylie was never truly available. Perhaps the love would not have lasted had they spent more time together. At forty-seven, Bell needed a great romance. British journalist Eliza Lynn Linton (1822-1898) wrote in the Saturday Review that Victorian women past forty of the upper and middle classes were very concerned about losing their looks, especially if they were fashion-conscious, and often engaged in flirtations and affairs to reassure themselves that they were beautiful and loved.<sup>29</sup> In an era when an unmarried woman was an "old maid," Bell must have needed this affair even more than most married women for affirmation that she was feminine and desirable.

After Doughty-Wylie died and Bell joined the war effort in the Middle East, she referred to herself as carrying on an existence among the Arabs she loved. Burgoyne wrote that that was exactly what it was--an existence--and a lonely one, for although Bell entertained a lot and had friendly relations with her co-workers, she longed for something more. She was still alone.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to protecting the letters about her love affair, her family also protected the facts of her death. Her suicide did not come to light officially until after 1960. Bodley and Hearst in 1940 wrote of her unhappy state in 1926, and, along with a list of her other troubles, added that she had no real women friends in Baghdad of the kind who traditionally help each other get through the hard times.<sup>31</sup> The suicide of a strong woman has several precedents in history: the British warrior-queen Boadicea killed herself when her forces lay at the mercy of the Romans, according to the Roman historian Tacitus in Agricola, and Cleopatra took her own life in 31 A.D. when Octavius defeated Mark Antony at Actium because she knew she had lost her realm. Mary Beard said Cleopatra "was her own law" and had "one object, power."<sup>32</sup> The ultimate empowerment for Cleopatra, Boadicea, and Gertrude Bell may have been the decision to stop here, when whatever one cares for is gone forever.

For Gertrude Bell, watching the British gradually leave Iraq to the Arabs, there was no future in staying in Baghdad and no real desire to return to the boring life of a spinster in English society. Her family had lost even the haven she treasured--Rounton Grange. The opportunity for wealth or power or adventure or even good health had run out. If she could not live life on her own terms, she could

at least control her exit from it. On a hot night in Baghdad, a sick woman simply bowed out.

Gertrude Bell's perception of the future must have seemed increasingly bleak. Living in the Tigris-Euphrates river valley, she could see the end of life where life had once begun. In many respects, she had been held in awe and moderately paid rather than either loved or appreciated properly. She would have to surrender more of the independence that she had accepted as her due all her life. Now, with the emergence of Arab independence which she had so encouraged, she must have felt unneeded if not unwanted. Part of the tragedy is that more of the outpouring of praise for her came after, if not as a result of, her death.

To live a life with independence and flair and something approaching her usual lifestyle required family connections, influential friends, good health, enough financial wealth to avoid a scramble for expenses, and enough wealth of information to make her needed if not wanted by a British foreign service. To go where she wished, to do what she wished, when she wished to do it, and to do these with the flair and élan which had marked her life, were slipping beyond her grasp. She could not continue to live in the land she loved, Iraq, in the style she wished, and would not return to an England that was no longer "home" to live a life of genteel, though merely

moderate, existence as the woman who had once been the  
Gertrude Bell.



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Gertrude Bell was ideally suited from birth for the life she led, except that she was female. All her life she was a fearless explorer and a writer who described what she saw, beginning as a child on the Bell estate at Rounton Grange and continuing later in her treks through the deserts and over the Alps. She was a brilliant child and woman and she knew it. She contradicted her superiors at Oxford, Bucharest, Baghdad, or wherever she was. Her courage, her family connections to people in high places, her "facile pen" and store of correct information took her from Rounton Grange to Oxford University to a position of immense power in the Middle East.

Unlike most Victorian women, Bell had money, political connections, a family who considered education for women important, and no husband or children to keep her at home. She left the social restraints of Victorian life in England for the freedom of travel, exploring the world but returning always to the Middle East, where she learned fluent Arabic and used her considerable charm to make friends with tribesmen from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. She knew their culture, tribes, location of important wells in the desert, and other vital information which, after she

joined the British intelligence in World War I, she passed along, helping the British win Mesopotamia and enabling her friend T. E. Lawrence to mastermind the Arab Revolt against the Turks. Lawrence might not have become "Lawrence of Arabia" without Gertrude Bell's prior intelligence work. She was able to convince men that on at least one subject, Arabs, she knew more than they did, and this was her entree to the male-dominated world of the British foreign service.

After serving in Cairo, Basra, and Baghdad during the years of the Great War, Bell stayed on in Baghdad after the war to help with the civil administration of Mesopotamia. She attended the Paris Peace Conference where T. E. Lawrence and Emir Faisal, "the brain and the flame" of the Arab Revolt, convinced her that the Allies owed the charismatic Faisal a throne and that he would be a superior choice in Baghdad--a popular Arab prince, a descendant of Mohammed, and a friend of the British. Bell came to regard an Arab government under Faisal as a compromise solution to the problem in Iraq, where Arab extremists wanted immediate independence and British imperialists wanted to govern Mesopotamia themselves. Not one of the alternatives was as acceptable as Faisal.

A pro-British Arab on the throne would be the best possible solution, but she had to convince both sides of this. She won over the powerful India Office; T. E.

Lawrence convinced Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill, who confirmed the plan at the Cairo Conference in March 1921. The next problem was to convince the Arabs. She and Percy Cox used charm, arm-twisting, diplomacy, and downright meanness in one case to attain their goals because they absolutely knew what was best for Iraq.

Faisal as king owed Gertrude Bell everything and made her his number one adviser for a period of time. They rode, took tea, played bridge, and dined together while they made plans for the new nation. She tutored him, as the League of Nations' mandate authorized, to rule a nation built in the British image. A decade later historians praised the British for giving this unprecedented assistance, and also for building and improving schools, medical clinics, irrigation systems, ports, and rail systems.

Although the British helped update Iraq with twentieth century technology, many Arabs resented their presence as imperialists and thought they had the good of the British Empire, not the Iraqi nation, at heart. They wanted the British to leave, and many did. By the summer of 1926, Gertrude Bell--lonely, hot, sick from exhaustion, and financially insecure after her father's fortune dwindled--began having nightmares and insomnia. She had finished her work in Baghdad and yet she feared the boring life of a

spinster in England, so she took her own life at the age of fifty-eight.

Her contributions were many: an excellent translation of a Persian poet's works into English, many travel books on the Middle East, valuable photographs and records of ancient ruins in Anatolia and Syria, intelligence assistance to Britain and her allies in World War I, arrangement of important archaeological digs in Mesopotamia and the preservation of Iraq's share of the finds in a museum of antiquities which she founded, and, for better or worse, a prominent role in the formation of a new Iraqi nation.

Modern Iraq has had a bloody history, with internal hostilities between Sunni and Shiah Muslims, between Arabs and Kurds, between monarchists and republicans, and between pro-Western and anti-Western factions. Its international relationships have brought even more bloodshed since 1980. An eight-year war with arch-rival Iran and a disastrous war in which Iraq stood almost alone against the world after invading Kuwait have left Iraq with an uncertain future. Gertrude Bell's Iraq seems quite stable compared to the present.

Will Iraq rise up from its present defeat with hatred of the West as its rallying point? Will the nation split up when Saddam Hussein is gone from power? The answers remain to be seen. Did Gertrude Bell and other British officials



unknowingly do the world a disservice when they created an unstable nation in the heart of the important Fertile Crescent? Or, as more nearly seems the case, did they accomplish a nearly impossible task by bringing together many factions into one nation which today serves as a buffer between the powerful fundamentalist theocracy in Iran and the rest of the Middle East? Can outside forces contain Saddam's aggression without destroying him or Iraq, a nation capable of maintaining the balance of power against Iran? The free world, ironically, needs Iraq today, when Iran's Shiah imams are calling on fundamentalists in Egypt and other Arab nations to rise up against their leaders in holy wars. Gertrude Bell may have helped create a monster in a sense, but this warlike nation of Iraq may be the force which protects the Arab world from a foe even worse.

## NOTES

## CHAPTER ONE: THE YOUNG VICTORIAN LADY

1. Quoted in Josephine Kamm, Gertrude Bell, Daughter of the Desert (New York: Vanguard Press, 1956).
2. Gertrude Bell, The Letters of Gertrude Bell, ed. Florence Bell (1927; reprint, London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1930), 17-18.
3. Gertrude Bell, The Earlier Letters of Gertrude Bell, ed. Elsa Richmond (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1937), 20, 132-3.
4. Ibid., 19.
5. Ibid., 31.
6. Ibid., 91, 164-5.
7. Ibid., 95, 79-80.
8. Ibid., 69-70.
9. Ibid., 81.
10. Ibid., 95.
11. H. V. F. Winstone, Gertrude Bell (New York: Quartet Books, 1978), 16.
12. Janet [Hogarth] Courtney, "Gertrude Bell," North American Review 223 (Dec. 1926): 656-63.
13. Bell, Earlier Letters, 97-8.
14. Quoted, *ibid.*, 133-4.
15. Courtney, "Gertrude Bell", 656-63.
16. Bell, Earlier Letters, 176.
17. Ibid., 215.
18. Ibid., 217-8.
19. Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 34.

20. Bell, Letters, 31.
21. Ibid., 341.
22. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 37.
23. Quoted in Mary Fleming Larabee, letter to the editor, Saturday Review of Literature 3, no.48 (June 25, 1927): 932.
24. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 37.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE WORLD EXPLORER

1. For more information about the Ottoman Empire, see:  
Cemal Pasa, Memories of a Turkish Statesman, 1913-1919, translation of Hatirat (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922).  
  
Philip Marshall Brown, "The Capitulations," Foreign Affairs 1, no. 4 (June 1923): 71-81.
2. Obituary, New York Times, 13 July 1926.
3. Quoted in Ronald Bodley and Lorna Hearst, Gertrude Bell (New York: Macmillan Company, 1940), 93-4.
4. Quoted in Bell, Letters, 128.
5. Courtney, "Gertrude Bell," 657-8.
6. For the best example of one of Gertrude Bell's travel books, see The Desert and the Sown (1907), reprinted in America as Syria: The Desert and the Sown (Salem, NH: Arno Press, 1973).
7. Larabee, Saturday Review of Literature, 932.
8. Brian Fagan, "Bell of Baghdad," Archaeology 44, no. 4 (July- August 1991), 14.
9. T. E. Lawrence, The Letters of T. E. Lawrence, ed. David Garnett (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1939), 104.
10. Ibid., 106-7.
11. Courtney, Gertrude Bell, 659.

12. Bodley and Hearst, Gertrude Bell, 163.

13. Quoted in Bell, Letters, 289-90.

14. Courtney, "Gertrude Bell", 657-8.

### CHAPTER THREE: THE WARTIME INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

1. Robert Lacey, The Kingdom (New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich, Publishers, 1981), 76.

2. David Fromkin, The Peace to End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East 1914-1922 (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1989), 140-5.

3. For more information, see Nejla Izzeddin, The Arab World: Past, Present, and Future (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953), 96; Richard Allen, Imperialism and Nationalism in the Fertile Crescent: Sources and Prospects of the Arab-Israeli Conflict (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 228; and Deborah J. Gerner, One Land, Two Peoples (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1991), 29.

4. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 151.

5. Courtney, "Gertrude Bell," 660.

6. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 181, 183.

7. Ibid., 182.

8. Bell, Letters, 314.

9. Ibid., 375.

10. Ibid., 318.

11. Ibid., 379.

12. Lacey, The Kingdom, 125.

13. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 189.

14. Fromkin, Peace to End All Peace, 328. For a first-hand account of the Arab Revolt, see T. E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1937).

15. Obituary, 13 July 1926.



16. Bell, Letters, 331, 343.
17. Ibid., 332.
18. Ibid., 338.
19. Ibid., 337-9.
20. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 202, and Bell, Letters, 363-4.
21. Bell, Letters, 339, 364.
22. Lacey, The Kingdom, 80.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: "THE UNCROWNED QUEEN OF IRAQ"

1. For general information and several views on the problems in the Middle East after World War I, see:

Richard Allen, Imperialism and Nationalism in the Fertile Crescent (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

Yahya Armajani, Middle East Past and Present (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970).

W. B. Fisher, The Middle East, A Physical, Social, and Regional Geography (London: Methuen & Company, Ltd., 1950, revised 1971).

Albert Hourani, The Emergence of the Modern Middle East (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981).

Michael C. Hudson, Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977).

Elie Kedourie, England and the Middle East: The Destruction of the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1921 (London: Bowes & Bowes Publishers, Ltd., 1956).

Marian Kent, ed., The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984).

William Yale, The Near East, A Modern History (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1958, revised 1968).

2. Sandra Mackey, "If We Get Rid of Saddam, Then What Happens," Dallas Morning News Sunday Reader, 20 August 1992:5J.

3. Bell, Letters, 377.

4. Bodley and Hearst, Gertrude Bell, 181-2.

5. Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 206-7.

6. For further information about the Paris Peace Conference, see:

Herbert A. L. Fisher, "Mr. Lloyd George's Foreign Policy, 1918-1922," Foreign Affairs 1, no. 3 (March 1923): 69-84.

John Maynard Keynes, The Economic Consequences of the Peace (New York: Harcourt Brace and Howe, 1920).

David Lloyd George, Memoirs of the Peace Conference (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1939).

George Goldberg, The Peace to End Peace: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1969).

J. A. S. Grenville, ed., The Major International Treaties, 1914-1973 (New York: Stein and Day, 1974).

Fred L. Israel, ed., Major Peace Treaties of Modern History, 1648-1967 (New York: Chelsea House, 1967).

R. B. McCallum, Public Opinion and the Last Peace (London: Oxford University Press, 1944).

Arnold J. Toynbee, "The Main Features in the Landscape," in The Treaty of Versailles and After, an anthology without editor (New York: Oxford University Press, 1935).

7. Quoted in the New York Times, 5 June 1945.

8. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 213.

9. Ibid., 219.

10. Bell, Letters, 385.

11. Bartlet Brebner, review of The Letters of Gertrude Bell, edited by Florence Bell, Saturday Review of Literature 4, no. 33 (10 March 1928): 663.
12. Bell, Letters, 404.
13. Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 223.
14. Bell, Letters, 457.
15. Quoted, *ibid.*, 403.
16. Quoted in Caroline T. Marshall, "Gertrude Bell: Her Work and Influence in the Near East 1914-1926" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1968).
17. Chaim Weizmann, Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 189, 223, 234-5.
18. Lawrence, Letters, 427-8.
19. *Ibid.*, 480.
20. Quoted in Fromkin, Peace to End All Peace, 497.
21. Lacey, The Kingdom, 160-1.
22. Fromkin, Peace to End All Peace, 496.
23. Bell, Letters, 492.

#### CHAPTER FIVE: THE PEAK OF POWER

1. *Ibid.*, 503, 505, 513.
2. *Ibid.*, 502-3,
3. Quoted in Larabee, Saturday Review of Literature.
4. "Woman Advises Faisal", New York Times, 25 December 1925.
5. Bell, Letters, 504.
6. *Ibid.*, 520.
7. Nejla Izzeddin, The Arab World: Past, Present, and Future (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), 191.

8. Quoted in "Blames One Woman for Mesopotamia," New York Times, 18 February, 1923.

9. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 165.

10. Ibid., 243.

11. Fagan, "Bell of Baghdad," 15.

12. Obituary, New York Times, 13 July 1926.

13. Quoted in Bodley and Hearst, Gertrude Bell, 231-2.

14. For general background information on Britain's problems in the Middle East during this period, see:

Valentine Chirol, "Islam and Britain," Foreign Affairs 1, no. 3 (March 1923): 48-58.

Hans Kohn, review of The Making of Modern Iraq: A Product of World Forces by Henry A. Foster, American Historical Review 41, no. 1 (Oct. 1935): 813.

Stephen H. Longrigg, Iraq: 1900-1950 (London: Oxford University Press, 1953).

Arnold J. Toynbee, "The East After Lausanne," Foreign Affairs 2, no. 1 (Sept. 1923): 84-99.

15. Bodley and Hearst, Gertrude Bell, 233.

16. Quoted in Bell, Letters, 453.

17. Ibid., 553.

#### CHAPTER SIX: THE DIRECTOR OF ANTIQUITIES

1. Bodley and Hearst, Gertrude Bell, 248.

2. Bell, Letters, 578.

3. Courtney, "Gertrude Bell," 662.

4. Quoted in Bodley and Hearst, Gertrude Bell, 248-9.



5. Quoted in Elizabeth Burgoyne, Gertrude Bell: From Her Personal Papers 1914-1926 (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1961), 392.
6. Susan Goodman, Gertrude Bell (Dover, NH: Berg Publishers, 1985).
7. Quoted in Bell, Letters, 624.
8. "Queen of Irak," Living Age 330, no. 4286: 473-4.
9. Quoted in London Times, 15 July 1926, 9-10.
10. For an example, see editorial comments in The Nation 123, no. 3186 (28 July 1926): 69.
11. Quoted in the London Times, 24 July 1926, 15.
12. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 262.
13. Quoted in Bodley and Hearst, Gertrude Bell, 252.
14. Obituary, "Miss Gertrude Bell, Oriental Scholar and Administrator," London Times, 13 July 1926.
15. London Times, 15 July 1926, 21.
16. London Times, 19 July 1926, 8.
17. London Times, 21 July 1926.
18. London Times, 15 July 1926, 21.
19. London Times, 31 July 1926, 15.
20. London Times, 13 July 1926, 15.
21. Ibid.
22. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 263-4.
23. Ibid.

#### CHAPTER SEVEN: THE AFTERMATH IN IRAQ

1. Daniel Yergin, The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1991), 204.

2. For more information about the Turkish Petroleum Company and early negotiations for the oil concession in Mesopotamia, see also Marion Kent, Oil and Empire: British Policy and Mesopotamian Oil, 1900-1920 (New York: Harper and Row, 1976),

3. Philip K. Hitti, review of Iraq: A Study in Political Development by Philip Willard Ireland, American Historical Review 44, no. 1 (Oct. 1938): 632-3.

4. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 38.

5. Ibid.

6. Quoted in Marshall, "Gertrude Bell: Her Work and Influence in the Near East 1914-1926," 84.

7. Brebner, Saturday Review of Literature 4, no. 33 (10 March 1928): 663.

8. Izzeddin, The Arab World, 353.

9. "After Saddam" and "A Missile Too Many?" The Economist 326, no.7795: 16 and 37-38.

10. For further views of the problems between Iraq and the West, see:

Richard Chivara, "Who Will Keep the Peace? New Wars Pushing U.S. Toward U.N. Partnership," Dallas Morning News, 21 Feb. 1993: 1J, Sunday Reader section.

Samir Khalil, Republic of Fear: The Inside Story of Saddam's Iraq (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990).

Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," The Atlantic 226, no. 3 (Sept. 1990): 47-60.

Sandra Mackey, Passion and Politics: The Turbulent World of the Arabs (New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1992).

Daniel Pipes, "The Arab World from Mohammed Onward," review of The History of the Arab Peoples by Albert Hourani, Wall Street Journal, 5 April 1991.

John A. Teta, ed., Iraq in Pictures (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 1990.)

## CHAPTER EIGHT: THE WOMAN INSIDE GERTRUDE BELL

1. Quoted from The Times, 1958, in Winstone, Gertrude Bell.
2. Margaret Stacey and Marion Price, Women, Power, and Politics (London: Tavistock Publications, 1981), 156-9.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Bell, Letters, 578.
7. Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 272.
8. Buss's testimony before Parliament's Schools Inquiry Commission, quoted in Erna Olafson Hellerstein, Leslie Parker Hume, and Karen M. Offen, ed. Victorian Women: A Documentary Account of Women's Lives in Nineteenth Century England, France, and the United States (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981), 80.
9. Quoted, *ibid.*, 72.
10. *Ibid.*, 124.
11. Quoted in Lacey, The Kingdom, 74-5.
12. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 250,
13. Stacey and Price, Women, Power, and Politics, 161, 166.
14. Bodley and Hearst, Gertrude Bell, 94.
15. Quoted in Mary R. Beard, Women as a Force in History: A Study in Traditions and Realities (London: Macmillan Company, 1946), 28.
16. Quoted in Bell, Letters, 215.
17. Quoted in Elizabeth Burgoyne, Gertrude Bell: From Her Personal Papers 1889-1914 (London: Ernest Benn, Limited, 1958), 274.
18. Lawrence, Letters, 543.
19. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell.

20. Goodman, Gertrude Bell, 101-3.
21. Quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 24.
22. Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran, Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness (New York: Basic Books, 1971), 368.
23. Elisabeth Israels Perry, Belle Moskowitz: Feminine Politics and the Exercise of Power in the Age of Alfred E. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 153.
24. Bell, Letters, 503-4.
25. Burgoyne, Gertrude Bell.
26. Brebner, review of Letters in Saturday Review of Literature.
27. Lawrence, Letters, 543.
28. Letters quoted in Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 154-8.
29. Eliza Lynn Litton in the Saturday Review, 1868, quoted in Hellerstein, Olafson, Hume, and Offen, Victorian Women, 467.
30. Burgoyne, Gertrude Bell, vol.2, 60.
31. Bodley and Hearst, Gertrude Bell, 165.
32. Beard, Woman as a Force in History, 281-2.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### SOURCE MATERIALS

#### BOOKS

- Bell, Gertrude. Earlier Letters of Gertrude Bell. Edited by Elsa Richmond. London: Liveright, 1937.
- Bell, Gertrude. The Desert and the Sown. 1907. Reprint. Salem, NH: Arno Press, 1973.
- Bell, Gertrude. The Letters of Gertrude Bell. Edited by Florence Bell. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1927.
- Cemal, Pasa. Memories of a Turkish Statesman, 1913-1919. Translation of Hatirat. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922.
- Bodley, Ronald, and Lorna Hearst. Gertrude Bell. London: Macmillan Company, 1940.
- Keynes, John Maynard. The Economic Consequences of the Peace. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920.
- Lawrence, T. E. The Letters of T. E. Lawrence. Edited by David Garnett. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1939.
- Lawrence, T. E. Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1937.
- Lloyd George, David. Memoirs of the Peace Conference, vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939.
- Weizmann, Chaim. Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949.

#### CONTEMPORARY JOURNALS

- Brebner, Bartlet. Review of The Letters of Gertrude Bell, edited by Florence Bell. Saturday Review of Literature 4, no. 33 (10 March 1928): 663.

- Brown, Philip Marshall. "The Capitulations." Foreign Affairs 1, no. 4 (June 1923): 71-81.
- Chirol, Valentine. "Islam and Britain." Foreign Affairs 1, no. 3 (March 1923): 48-58.
- Courtney, Janet. "Gertrude Bell." North American Review 223 (Dec. 1926): 656-63.
- Editorial comments, The Nation 123, no. 3186 (28 July 1926): 69.
- Fisher, Herbert A. L. "Mr. Lloyd George's Foreign Policy, 1918-1922." Foreign Affairs 1, no. 3 (March 1923): 69-84.
- Hitti, Philip K. Review of Iraq: A Study in Political Development by Philip Willard Ireland. American Historical Review 44, no. 1 (Oct. 1938): 632-3.
- Kohn, Hans. Review of The Making of Modern Iraq: A Product of World Forces by Henry A. Foster. American Historical Review 41, no. 1 (Oct. 1935): 813.
- Larabee, Mary Fleming. Letter to the editor. Saturday Review of Literature 3, no. 48 (25 June 1927): 932.
- "Queen of Irak," an obituary. Living Age 330, no. 4286: 473-4.
- Toynbee, Arnold J. "The East After Lausanne." Foreign Affairs 2, no. 1 (Sept. 1923): 84-99.

#### NEWSPAPERS

- Times (London), 1920-1926.
- New York Times, 1920-1926, 1945.

#### TREATIES

- Grenville, J. A. S., ed. The Major International Treaties, 1914-1973. New York: Stein and Day, 1974. [Contains the texts of the Treaties of Sevres, Lausanne, and the Straits]

Israel, Fred L., ed. Major Peace Treaties of Modern History, 1648-1967, vol. 3 and 4. New York: Chelsea House, 1967.

## SECONDARY MATERIALS

### BOOKS

Allen, Richard. Imperialism and Nationalism in the Fertile Crescent. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Armajani, Yahya. Middle East Past and Present. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970.

Beard, Mary R. Woman as a Force in History: A Study in Traditions and Realities. London: Macmillan Company, 1946.

Burgoyne, Elizabeth. Gertrude Bell: From Her Personal Papers 1889-1914. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1958.

Burgoyne, Elizabeth. Gertrude Bell: From Her Personal Papers 1914-1926. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1961.

Fisher, W. B. The Middle East, A Physical, Social and Regional Geography. London: Methuen & Company, Ltd., 1950, revised 1971.

Fromkin, David. A Peace to End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East 1914-1922. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1989.

Gerner, Deborah J. One Land, Two Peoples. Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1991.

Goldberg, George. The Peace to End Peace: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1969.

Goodman, Susan. Gertrude Bell. Dover, NH: Berg Publishers, 1985.

Gornick, Vivian, and Barbara K. Moran. Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness. New York: Basic Books, 1971.

- Hellerstein, Erna Olafson, Leslie Parker Hume, and Karen M. Offen, eds. Victorian Women: A Documentary Account of Women's Lives in Nineteenth-Century England, France, and the United States. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981.
- Hourani, Albert. The Emergence of the Modern Middle East. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981.
- Hudson, Michael C. Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Izzeddin, Nejla. The Arab World: Past, Present, and Future. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953.
- Kamm, Josephine. Gertrude Bell, Daughter of the Desert. New York: Vanguard Press, 1956.
- α Kedourie, Elie. England and the Middle East: The Destruction of the Ottoman Empire, 1914-21. London: Bowes & Bowes Publishers, Ltd., 1956.
- Kent, Marian, ed. The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984.
- α Kent, Marian. Oil and Empire: British Policy and Mesopotamian Oil, 1900-1920. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.
- Khalil, Samir. Republic of Fear: The Inside Story of Saddam's Iraq. New York: Pantheon Books, 1990.
- Kimche, Jon. The Second Arab Awakening. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.
- Lacey, Robert. The Kingdom. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1981.
- Longrigg, Stephen H. Iraq: 1900-1950. London: Oxford University Press, 1953.
- McCallum, R. B. Public Opinion and the Last Peace. London: Oxford University Press, 1944.
- Mackey, Sandra. Passion and Politics: The Turbulent World of the Arabs. New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1992.



Perry, Elisabeth Israels. Belle Moskowitz: Feminine Politics and the Exercise of Power in the Age of Alfred E. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Stacey, Margaret, and Marion Price. Women, Power, and Politics. London: Tavistock Publications, 1981.

Teta, John A., ed. Iraq in Pictures. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 1990.

Toynbee, Arnold J. "The Main Features in the Landscape," in The Treaty of Versailles and After, an anthology without editor. New York: Oxford University Press, 1935.

Winstone, H. V. F. Gertrude Bell. New York: Quarter Books, 1978.

Yale, William. The Near East, A Modern History. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1958, revised 1968.

Yergin, Daniel. The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991.

#### JOURNALS

"A Missile Too Many." The Economist 326, no. 7795 (23-29 Jan. 1993): 37-8.

"After Saddam." The Economist 326, no. 7795 (23-29 Jan. 1993): 16.

Chivara, Richard. "Who Will Keep the Peace? New Wars Pushing U.S. Toward U.N. Partnership." Dallas Morning News, 21 Feb. 1993: 1J, Sunday Reader section.

Fagan, Brian. "Bell of Baghdad." Archaeology 44, no. 4 (July-Aug. 1991): 12-15.

Hill, Stephen. "Gertrude Bell." Antiquity 50 (Sept.-Dec. 1976): 190-3.

Lewis, Bernard. "The Roots of Muslim Rage." The Atlantic 266, no. 3 (Sept. 1990): 47-60.

Mackey, Sandra. "If We Get Rid of Saddam, Then What Happens." Dallas Morning News, 20 Aug. 1992: 5J, Sunday Reader section.

-----"Parade for New Rulers." Life 34, no. 22 (June 1, 1953): 93-95.

Pipes, Daniel. "The Arab World from Mohammed Onward." Review of A History of the Arab Peoples by Albert Hourani. Wall Street Journal, 5 April 1991.

Will, George F. "Bedeviled by Ethnicity: The Itch to Fix the World, and the Perils of 'Self-Determination.'" Newsweek 120, no. 8 (24 Aug. 1992): 47-8.

Zettler, Richard L. "Iraq's Beleaguered Heritage." Archaeology 44, no. 3 (May-June 1991): 38-42.

#### DISSERTATION

Marshall, Caroline T. "Gertrude Bell: Her Work and Influence in the Near East 1914-1926." Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1968.