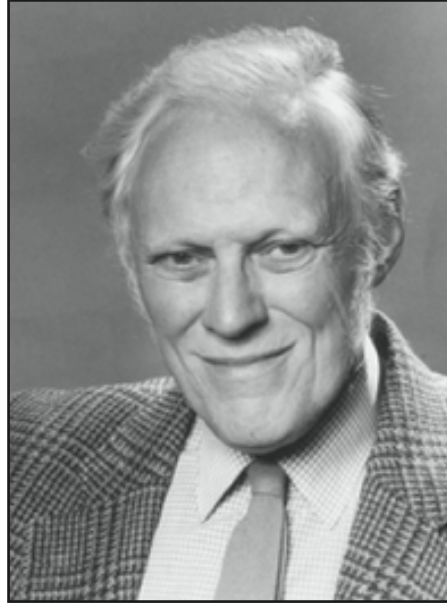


In Memoriam



CLIFFORD EDMUND BOSWORTH
(1928-2015)

Clifford Edmund Bosworth was a giant amongst historians of the Middle East and Central Asia, and only the likes of his direct and indirect mentors, Vladimir Minorsky (d. 1966) and V.V. Barthold (d. 1930) respectively, could parallel his staggering erudition and productive zeal in his writings on the eastern Islamic world and beyond it.¹ Other colleagues have written detailed bibliographies of Edmund Bosworth's astoundingly prolific work, and I will draw on these.² In this essay, I offer

1. C.E. Bosworth, *A Century of British Orientalists, 1902-2001* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 205.

2. Until now, the two-volume Festschrift published in his honour fifteen years ago provides the most comprehensive and accurate

a biographical sketch, while weaving in the highlights from his scholarly portfolio. Above all, I want to explore what made Edmund—as he liked to be called—who he was: an institution unto his own, a trailblazer, and nonetheless, incredibly kind, polite, and generous in spirit, a tall, slender man with his hallmark “unfashionable sideburns.”³ After publishing

bibliography. Ed. Ian R. Netton, Carole Hillenbrand and C.E. Bosworth, *Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), vol. 1: xiii-xxxv. That list has now been boosted and updated to the present day by Michael O'Neal in “C. Edmund Bosworth: An Updated Bibliography,” in this issue of *al-'Usur al-Wustā*.

3. Ian R. Netton, “An Appreciation of the Life of Professor Clifford Edmund Bosworth,” posted

hundreds of articles, twenty monographs and edited volumes, hundreds of conference papers, and editorial productions of multi-tome compendia such as the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition), the British Institute of Persian Studies journal (*IRAN*) for more than 40 years—“surely a record in journal editorship!” by his own account⁴—the *Journal of Semitic Studies*, and the UNESCO series on *The History of Civilizations in Central Asia*, as well as numerous major translation projects in advanced age, Edmund Bosworth never lacked the time to meet and support the lowliest of scholars—myself included (I had the pleasure of Edmund’s acquaintance and mentorship in the last decade of his life). Geert Jan van Gelder remarks that:

Meeting him was always a pleasure, for he was not only a mine of information, often curious and entertaining, to use that phrase once again, but also kind and interested in other people (unlike some other brilliant academics I have known).⁵

I have divided up the biographical sketch into four chronological sections: I) Edmund’s formative years in war-time Sheffield, and his early studies at Oxford; II) His Scottish years and his transformation into an academic and a family man; III) Manchester, where Edmund consolidated and established himself as a senior academic; and finally, IV) Castle Cary, his refuge of peace and writing, and setting

online http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/iaais/news/title_443572_en.html [last accessed: 15.09.15].

4. C.E. Bosworth (tr. and ed.), *The Ornament of Histories. A History of the Eastern Islamic Lands AD 650-1041. The Persian Text of Abu Sa’id Abd al-Hayy Gardizi* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011): xi.

5. *International Study for Iranian Studies Newsletter* 36/1 (May 2015): 16-18.

the foundations for the next generation of scholars and making more widely available the primary sources for non-specialists and specialist readerships alike.

I. Formative Years: Sheffield and Oxford (1928-52)

Edmund was born during the Christmas season, on the 29th of December 1928, in the industrial steel-producing town of Sheffield in the English county of South Yorkshire. His grandfather had worked in the steel industry as a fitter, and his father was a local government clerk. His mother had come to Sheffield from Peterborough as a teenager for her father to take up a post as a reporter with one of the local papers. At the time, Sheffield was suffering from a recession and the effects of high levels of urban growth. The city saw the development of back-to-back dwellings, poor water supply, and factory pollution, which inspired George Orwell to write in 1937 (when Edmund was nine years old): “Sheffield, I suppose, could justly claim to be called the ugliest town in the Old World.”⁶

Edmund began his secondary schooling at Sheffield City Grammar School at the start of World War II in 1939. The pupils at grammar schools, which provided a strong focus on intellectual subjects (classics, literatures, math), were given the best opportunities of any school children in the state system, and many had received extra tutoring for entering the Oxford and Cambridge University systems. Edmund was to become a success story of that system. Sheffield City Grammar School “was to prove very influential in his

6. George Orwell, “Chapter 7,” *The Road to Wigan Pier* (Victor Gollancz Ltd. 1937): 72.

life,” writes Edmund’s family.⁷ It is worth mentioning some of the fine qualities of his school: it was co-educational at a time when it was considered revolutionary for the sexes to mingle in class. One reporter wrote:

... there is a solid, down-to-earth atmosphere about it that fits the character of the city, and its pupils have the friendliness and assurance one expects from Sheffield’s hard-working, self-respecting citizens ...⁸

Sheffield’s steel factories began manufacturing weapons and ammunition for the war effort, which made it a target for bombing raids by the German Luftwaffe. Edmund’s school suffered damage after the “Sheffield blitz” on the 12th of December 1940, but it was nothing that could not be fixed in a few weeks.⁹ However, more than 660 lives were lost and many other buildings were destroyed in the blitz.¹⁰

According to an account written in 1963 and attributed to the school’s headmaster, Stephen Northeast, the School resumed its normal function after the Christmas holiday in January 1941 amid occasional evening raids. In his retrospective, Northeast marveled at the steadfastness of the pupils to assemble at the usual

time despite a sleepless night caused by the air raids. It would be hard to imagine that young Edmund’s drive for knowledge and cross-cultural understanding was not related to his childhood wartime experience. He was only 12 during the “Sheffield blitz” and 16 when the war ended: too young to be involved on the battlefield, but too old to be unmoved by the horrors that war and hatred of “the other” can bring.

The end of the war also brought to the British education system a new vigour. Edmund’s old headmaster, Mr Northeast, explained: “As all who lived through it will remember, the end of the war brought a great surge of spirits as though we had emerged into the daylight after a journey through a long, dark tunnel.”¹¹ Edmund’s music tutor instilled in him a love for classical music (Edward Elgar, in particular), and his history tutor coached him for the Oxford entrance exams. He was awarded a scholarship (“exhibition”) at St John’s College, which Edmund took up after attending his mandatory army service from 1947 to 1949.

At Oxford, Edmund picked up choir singing and photography, while earning a first-class degree in Modern History—a programme that was focussed on Europe and the history of the West. At Oxford, he also began his contact with the Church, which was to become a lifelong passion. It was a personal acquaintance with an American friend at Oxford studying Arabic that awakened in Edmund what would become an enduring interest in Arabic and the Islamic world. And thus, his journey

7. Personal communication, 6 May 2015.

8. “The City Grammar School, Sheffield,” *Yorkshire Life Illustrated* (March 1960): 54.

9. Account by Stephen Northeast, “You will have a new building soon.” <http://www.omnesamici.co.uk/SPTC/SPTCnortheast.HTM> [last accessed 14.09.15]

10. Mary Walton and Joseph P. Lamb, *Raiders over Sheffield: the Story of the Air raids of 12th & 15th December 194* (Sheffield: Sheffield City Libraries, 1980).

11. <http://www.omnesamici.co.uk/SPTC/SPTCnortheast.HTM> [last accessed on 10 September 2015]

into the world of the Islamic history began. But first he had to earn money.

II. Scottish period (1952-67): Becoming an academic, gazing to “the east”

Edmund set off for Scotland in 1952, aged 24, to take up a new post in the Department of Agriculture. The job paid the bills, but Edmund’s real interest lay elsewhere. He managed to combine work with Arabic studies with the help of the Reverend Professor Montgomery Watt, who headed the department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Edinburgh University (1947-79). Watt studied Islam from a Christian perspective, and was driven by the desire for a better understanding between the religions.¹² Given Edmund’s increasing closeness to the Church, Watt’s motivation must have had an effect on him too. Edmund was not a straight-out-of-the-mould “Orientalist” (in the best sense of the term, i.e. someone who worked closely with the primary source texts in the original language). He had experienced life as a civil servant, a theme that would be echoed in his thematic interests in medieval politico-administrative and military systems as a scholar of the Islamic world. During a visit to Oxford, when Edmund took me to St John’s Senior Common Room, he reassured me, in his usual generosity of spirit, that he, too, had come late to studying the Islamic world.

In 1954, Edmund obtained a scholarship for a Masters degree in Persian, Turkish,

12. In an interview he said that the study of Islam had taught him more about the “one-ness of God,” something he found to have been obscured by the concept of the Holy Trinity in Christianity. Interview with Bashir Maan and Alastair McIntosh, *Coracle* (August, 2000): 8-11. Rev. Prof. Watt died in 2006, aged 97.

and Arabic at the University of Edinburgh. In Edinburgh, he met Annette Todd. They married, and she joined him in St Andrews where Edmund took up his first lectureship and started working on his Ph.D. (at Edinburgh). Edmund and Annette had a long and happy marriage together, and their three daughters were all born in St Andrews (and eventually produced six grandchildren). Edmund was awarded his Ph.D. in 1961 when he was 33 years old. Edmund’s thesis on the “Transition from Ghaznavid to Seljuq rule in the Islamic East” was prepared under the joint supervision of Montgomery Watt (d. 2006) and J.R. Walsh (d. 1993). It was Walsh, Senior Lecturer in Turkish at Edinburgh, who instilled in Edmund a specific interest in the eastern Iranian world.¹³ Edmund also collaborated with John Andrew Boyle (d. 1978), a student of Vladimir Minorsky, on Turkish name forms. Boyle was at the University of Manchester, which was to become Edmund’s main academic base a few years thence.¹⁴ In his Ph.D. thesis, Edmund examined a number of themes that have set the tone and direction of scholarship on the region until the present

13. C.E. Bosworth, unpublished Ph.D. thesis at the University of Edinburgh, entitled “Transition from Ghaznavid to Seljuq rule in the Islamic East” (1961): v; and C.E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids, their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994-1040* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963), with a 2nd ed. in Beirut 1973, reprint in New Delhi 1992, and a Persian translation: v.

14. *Idem.* J.A. Boyle is best known for his translations of the Ilkhānid chronicles of ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī’s (d. 681/1283) *Tārīkh-i Jahān-ghushāy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997 [1958]), based on an earlier translation by Muḥammad Qazwīnī, and parts of Rashīd al-Dīn’s (d. ca. 718/1318) *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* in *The Successors of Genghis Khan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

time, such as the background of the Turkic Oghuz confederation, conversions to Islam and the general Islamization of the Turkmen tribes, as well as the processes and consequences of the entry of the Turks into the Islamic lands of Central Asia and the Middle East.¹⁵

Edmund had already started publishing whilst working on his Ph.D. His first article, an entry for the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam's* (*EI*²) first volume, appeared in 1959. Might he already have suspected that he would become the most prolific encyclopaedia writer in his field? Edmund became the British editor of *EI*² for the next three decades. In his updated bibliography of Edmund's works, Michael O'Neal has brought the publication list up to October 2015, and revised the frequently cited number of 200 to more than 700.¹⁶ To this, can be added many dozens of articles written by Edmund as consulting editor for the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (<http://iranicaonline.org>). In 1961, Edmund published his first book review: again, one of many more to come every single year of his illustrious scholarly career.

In 1963, two years after completing his Ph.D., Edmund published his first book, *The Ghaznavids, their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994-1040*. It was a revision of his Ph.D. thesis, and it secured Edmund's place as the foremost historian of medieval Afghanistan. Miklós Maróth of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (of which Edmund was an Honorary Member) has pointed out that Edmund was "admired not only by European Orientalists, but

by Oriental scholars too."¹⁷ The book was reprinted in Beirut and New Delhi, and translated into Persian.¹⁸

For the remainder of his 15-year Scottish sojourn, Edmund produced around 35 articles and book chapters dealing mainly with Afghan and Islamic Central Asian history, particularly medieval dynasties, such as, the Ghūrids, the Ghaznavids, and the Khwarazmshāhs. Edmund was also able to branch out and publish on administrative and political manuals produced elsewhere in the Islamic world, such as the Egyptian Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*. He began inventorying dynasties in places like Daylam, Gurgān and Ṭabaristān in modern-day Iran, for example.¹⁹ This research culminated in perhaps his best-known and most-used work, *The Islamic Dynasties*.²⁰ It continues to serve as the standard manual for historians on the rulers and ruling families of the entire Islamic world. Edmund substantially reworked and extended the

17. Maróth Miklós akadémikus laudációja C. E. Bosworth tiszteleti tag székfoglalója alkalmából 2005. április 25-én.

18. C.E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids, their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994-1040* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963); 2nd ed. (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1973); repr. (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1992); Persian translation (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1356/1977-8).

19. "Dailamīs in Central Iran: the Kākūyids of Jibāl and Yazd," *IRAN* 7 (1970): 73-95, repr. *The Medieval History of Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1977), art. V; "On the Chronology of the Ziyārids in Gurgān and Ṭabaristān," *Der Islam* 40 (1964): 25-34, repr. *Medieval History*, art. II; and *EI*² article on "Ṭabaristān."

20. C.E. Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties. A Chronological and Genealogical Handbook*, Islamic Surveys 5 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967).

15. See Michael O'Neal's bibliography below for details.

16. These are listed in *EI*² as being written by "Ed."

text in 1996, and again in 2010. The increase in dynasties from 82 (in 1967) to 186 (in 1996) is a testament to the superlative span of Edmund's vision. It would take the cooperative efforts of a team of scholars to produce a future dynastic manual that exceeded the scale and scope of his 2010 edition, and this only underscores the gaping hole that Edmund has left in the field.²¹

Edmund spent the final two years of his lectureship at St Andrews on a visiting professorship in the University of Toronto, where he must have been putting the final touches on his third book in the course of a mere five years, *Sistan under the Arabs*, which came out in 1968. This book continues to be the standard work on the Ṣaffārids, and the medieval history of this highly complex and (still) little understood part of the world: an area between modern-day Iran (Zahedan) and Afghanistan (Zarang and Nimruz), with an ancient history known as the Middle Persian Sakastan. Sīstān was the staging ground for the caliphate's push into Qandahar and Kabul, and ultimately India, which were only brought into the *dār al-Islām* four centuries later. This area, clustered in Afghanistan around the Helmand riverine areas, was a linchpin to the Umayyad and 'Abbāsīd eastward expansion project. It continues, of course, to provide the focus for the international security efforts in Afghanistan today.

Although Edmund was about to embark on a new chapter in his life outside Scotland, he never turned his back on the Scottish hills which he loved. He would return to Isle of Arran for family holidays

21. I am grateful to Michael O'Neal for studying Edmund's bibliography in detail.

almost every year, with his characteristic walking stick and hat.

III. Manchester (1967-93): Consolidating and going international

In 1967, Edmund took up the post of Professor of Arabic Studies at the University of Manchester where he remained until his retirement 26 years later (in 1993). During most of his Mancunian period Edmund (in his forties to sixties), also carried the burden of being head of his department. This seems in no way to have reduced Edmund's output either in scope or in diversity. In his research and publications, he remained true to his interest in the history of the eastern Islamic regions, but equally explored new areas as wide and varied as the study of the Turks in medieval Islam and Turkish onomastics, Islamic military organisation, early modern European travel literature and Orientalism, theology, the relationship between medieval Muslims and non-Muslims, literary criticism (e.g. the influence of Arabic on English), the biographies of Sufi shaykhs, and many more.²²

22. See details in O'Neal's bibliography below. On Turkish onomastics: "Notes on some Turkish names in Abu 'l-Faḍl Bayhaqī's *Tārīkh-i Mas'ūdī*," *Oriens* 36 (2001): 299–313; "Further notes on the Turkish names in Abu 'l-Faḍl Bayhaqī's *Tārīkh-i Mas'ūdī*," Ch. 18 in O. Alí-de-Unzaga, *Fortresses of the Intellect. Ismaili and other Islamic studies in honour of Farhad Daftary* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011): 443–52; "Notes on some Turkish personal names in Seljūq military history", *Isl.*, LXXXIX/2 (2012), 97–110.

On military: "Ghaznavid military organization," *Der Islam* 36 (1960): 37–77; "Military organization under the Būyids of Persia and Iraq," *Oriens* 17–19 (1965–6): 143–67, repr. *Medieval History*, art. III.

On theology: "Al-Ḥwārazmī on Theology

At the same time, Edmund's encyclopaedia articles proliferated at an astronomical rate. For example, in the span of just three years, from 1968 to 1970, Edmund produced 40 encyclopaedia articles, on top of publishing several book reviews and scholarly articles. Rather than being a mere summary of the existing literature, Edmund's encyclopaedia articles are substantial pieces of original scholarship, such as his very important article on the "Saldjūkids." Around this time, in 1969, Edmund took on a visiting professorship at the Near Eastern Center,

and Sects: the Chapter on kalām in the Mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm," BEO, 29 (1977) [1978] [= Mélanges offerts à Henri Laoust]: 85–95, repr., *Medieval History*, art. VII.

On Muslims and non-Muslims: "Christian and Jewish Religions Dignitaries in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria: Qalqashandī's Information on their Hierarchy, Titulature and Appointment," *IJMES* 3 (1972): 59–74, 199–216, repr. *Medieval History*, art. XVI; "Jewish Elements in the Banū Sāsān," *BiOr* 33/5–6 (Sept.–Nov. 1976) [1977], 289–94, repr. *Medieval History*, art. VI; "The 'Protected People' (Christians and Jews) in Mediaeval Egypt and Syria," *BJRUL* 62/1 (Autumn 1979): 11–36, repr. *Medieval History*, art. VII; "The Concept of Dhimma in early Islam," in B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Functioning of a Plural Society, I, The Central Lands* (New York: Homes & Meier Publishers, 1982): 37–51, repr. *Medieval History*, art. VI, updated in M. Grey, et al. (eds), *Living Stones Yearbook 2012* ([London] 2012): 143–64.

On literary criticism: "The Influence of Arabic Literature on English Literature," *Azure* 5 (Spring 1980): 14–19. Arabic tr., "Ta'thīr al-adab al-ʿarabī fī 'l-adab al-inkilīzī," *al-Maʿrifā*, Damascus, nos. 191–2 (February 1978): 199–215.

On Sufi shaykhs: "An Early Persian Ṣūfī: Shaykh Abū Saʿīd of Mayhanah," in R.M. Savory and D.A. Agius (eds), *Logos islamikos. Studia islamica in honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984): 79–96, repr. *Medieval History*, art. XXIII.

in the University of California Los Angeles. He was now a world-renowned scholar and a "go-to" person for providing overarching introductions to many general works on Islamic history, the history of Iran, and religious history. Edmund, the Islamic scholar, was indefatigable and unflappable—to use the words of his *IRAN* co-editor, C.A. Petrie²³—and there was nothing that would hold him back. Three more books came out in the 1970s, amongst them a sequel to his Ghaznavid history—a study of "the later Ghaznavids."²⁴ A lesser-known but equally exciting new book was his treatment of the "Islamic underworld."²⁵ He saw the book as "scratching the surface" of what was a pioneering area of focus, and hoped that it would stimulate other scholars to follow suit.²⁶ In his obituary piece, Geert Jan van Gelder highlights this work as one of his favourites, and probably one that influenced van Gelder's attraction to the "marginal" in Arabic literature. "Like Edmund Bosworth I have always eschewed the decent obscurity of Latin," he declares.²⁷ Edmund's penchant for the underworld might also be reflected in his fine collection of Penguin original crime fiction editions.²⁸

23. Personal communication, 14.09.15.

24. *The Later Ghaznavids, Splendour and Decay. The Dynasty in Afghanistan and Northern India 1040–1186*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1977). Reprinted Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi 1992.

25. C.E. Bosworth, *The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld, the Banū Sāsān in Arabic Society and Literature*, in 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1976).

26. *Ibid.*: vii.

27. Geert Jan van Gelder, "Obituary for Edmund Bosworth," *ISIS Newsletter*, 36/1 (Summer 2015): 17.

28. Personal communication with Edmund's

Edmund's children were now of school age, and his daughter Felicity reminisced at her father's memorial service at Edmund's alma mater, St John's College, Oxford, on the 13th of June 2015, that the house rule was not to disturb her father when he was working. But the rule could be bent: the children always knew that if they needed help with their homework their father would lend a kind ear. Edmund loved to travel widely. He took on visiting fellowships at Kuwait University (1975), at the Center for the Humanities Fellow, Princeton University (Fall Semester 1984), and the Middle East Center, Harvard University (1997). His wife Annette formed the firm backbone of family life that gave him the ability to travel. "He always took many photos, which formed the basis of many family evenings spent with the projector viewing his slides," writes his family.²⁹

Edmund's output is too large to list in detail, and only a few highlights and trends can be selected. The 1980s marked the beginning of his most impressive scholarly output: his translations of some important medieval Arabic chronicles. Edmund translated three books from al-Ṭabarī's *History* in the span of four years (1987-91), as well as the delightful *Book of Curious and Entertaining Information* by Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī (d. 412/1021).³⁰

family, 6 May 2015.

29. Personal communication, 6 May 2015.

30. *The History of al-Ṭabarī. An Annotated Translation. Vol. XXXII. The Reunification of the ʿAbbāsīd Caliphate. The Caliphate of al-Maʾmūn A.D. 812-833/A.H. 198-213* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987); *The History of al-Ṭabarī. An Annotated Translation. Vol. XXX. The ʿAbbāsīd Caliphate in Equilibrium. The Caliphates of Mūsā al-Hādī and Hārūn al-Rashīd A.D. 785-809/*

Edmund was sensitive to the importance of manuscript traditions in his historical studies.³¹ Also in the 1980s, he added to his continued encyclopaedic production a new series of what eventually totaled 80 articles for the then newly established *Encyclopaedia Iranica* under the editorship of Ehsan Yarshater in New York. He also edited, corrected and annotated the works of Minorsky and Barthold, such as in the third edition of *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion* and the *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* translated by Vladimir Minorsky.³² And

A.H. 169-193 (Albany: State University of New York Press: 1989); C.E. Bosworth, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. An Annotated Translation. Vol. XXXIII. Storm and Stress along the Northern Frontiers of the ʿAbbāsīd Caliphate* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), *The Book of Curious and Entertaining Information. The Laṭāʾif al-maʿārif of Thaʿālibī. Translated with an introduction and notes* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968).

31. See, for example, "Some new manuscripts of al-Khwārizmī's *Mafāṭīḥ al-ʿulūm*," *Journal of Semitic Studies* IX (1964): 341-5; "Manuscripts of Thaʿālibī's *Yatīmat ad-dahr* in the Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul," *Journal of Semitic Studies* XVI (1971): 41-9; also catalogue publications for Arabic manuscripts at the John Rylands Library in Manchester (1974, published 1975) and the Chetham's Library in Manchester (1976).

32. See details in O'Neal's bibliography. V.V. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, 3rd ed. with additional chapter hitherto unpublished in English trans. Mrs. T. Minorsky and ed. C.E. Bosworth, and with further Addenda and Corrigenda by C.E. Bosworth, Gibb Memorial Series, N.S. V (London: Luzac, 1968); Vladimir Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam. The Regions of the World, a Persian Geography 372 A.H.-982 A.D.*, 2nd ed., pref. V.V. Barthold, trans. from Russian and with additional material by the late Professor Minorsky, edited by C.E. Bosworth, GMS, N.S. XI (London: Luzac, 1970); V.V. Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran*, tr. Svat Soucek, ed. with intro. by C.E. Bosworth, Modern Classics in Near Eastern Studies (Princeton:

Edmund also edited Minorsky's Festschrift.³³ Edmund's editorial exceptionalism was probably best described in the obituary notice of Charles Melville who had worked with him on the British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) editorial board:

Edmund was a long-standing member of the BIPS Governing Council and, most admirably, editor of the Institute's journal *IRAN* for many years, handling all the contributions in the non-archaeological fields. A measure of the work he dedicated to this task is the fact that it has taken a committee of editors to try to fill the gap left by his retirement.

At Edmund's memorial service in Oxford, the Islamic art historian Robert Hillenbrand again reiterated Edmund's unfailing politeness and industriousness as an editor, a task that has led many a seasoned scholar to near-collapse and angry repartee. I experienced Edmund's tactful handling of my errors as a junior scholar submitting her very first scholarly article for the last *IRAN* volume which Edmund was editing. I also experienced the immense hospitality to which his colleague Ian R. Netton (at the University of Exeter's Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies where Edmund was a Visiting Professor) refers in his obituary piece.³⁴ My two-year old daughter and I were welcomed at Edmund and Annette's home with open arms when we were passing through Castle Cary in 2012. Our hosts very quickly produced their children's toys, neatly preserved in original 1960s tin

Princeton University Press: 1984). Section by C.E. Bosworth: "Editor's Introduction," ix-xv.

33. *Iran and Islam. In memory of the late Vladimir Minorsky*, ed. C.E. Bosworth (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1971).

34. Netton, "Appreciation of the Life."

boxes to ensure my toddler was sufficiently entertained.

In 1992, Edmund—having just been elected to the prestigious and select fellowship of the British Academy—edited a centenary monograph of British Orientalists (1902-2001) on behalf of the Academy. Out of the thirteen biographies (twelve of which were of Academy fellows and all of whom were men), Edmund contributed the chapters on E.G. Browne, Gerard Clauson and Vladimir Minorsky. Minorsky, in particular—the Russian trained Orientalist who ultimately settled in the UK following the Bolshevik Revolution—is constantly invoked in Edmund's work, as will be seen shortly. Edmund's gratitude and respect towards his senior colleagues are evident from the obituaries he produced.³⁵ He has also, rather unselfishly, as Macuch observed, picked up occasional work left undone by his deceased colleagues. The exceptionally good Qur'ān commentary by Richard Bell is one such example.³⁶

IV. Castle Cary, Somerset (1993-2015): Going Back to the Basics

Castle Cary, a picturesque and sleepy

35. Obituary of S.M. Stern, *IRAN* 8 (1970): ix; Obituary, "Sir Gerard Clauson (1891-1973)", in *Bulletin BSMES*, I/1 (1974): 39-40; Obituary, "Professor J.A. Boyle," *IRAN* 17 (1979): i-ix; Obituary, "Martin Hinds, 1941-1988," in *Bulletin BSMES* 16 (1989): 118-20; Obituary: "Joan Allgrove 1928-1991," *IRAN* 29 (1991): v; Obituary: "Professor Charles Beckingham," *The Daily Telegraph*, 14.10.98; Obituary, "Ronald Whitaker Ferrier 1929-2003," *IRAN* 41 (2003): v-vi.

36. *A Commentary on the Qur'ān . . . Prepared by Richard Bell*. Vol. 1. *Surahs I-XXIV*. Vol. 2. *Surahs XXV-CXIV*, edited by C.E. Bosworth and M.E.J. Richardson, 2 vols. JSS Monograph no. 14 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991).

small town in the heart of the English countryside of Somerset was to become Edmund's refuge and retirement bliss. His library was vast, extending into a converted garage set against the rest of the house. "I don't need to use any libraries; I have my very own," he said proudly when showing me around the house during our visit in 2012. "I could use a librarian though," he smiled.

Edmund was still receiving many accolades for a lifetime of achievement: the Silver Avicenna Medal of UNESCO (1998); the Dr Mahmud Afshar Foundation Prize for contributions to Iranian Studies in 2001 and the Prize by the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance for contributions to Iranian historical studies in 2003, both in Tehran; the annual Award for Services to Middle Eastern Studies in Britain of the British Society for Middle East Studies in 2007 in Oxford; the Levi Della Vida Award for Excellence in Islamic Studies in 2010 in Los Angeles; and the triennial Royal Asiatic Society Award in 2013 in London. Edmund had retired at 65, but some of the best of his bibliography came during more than two decades of retirement in Castle Cary (1993-2015). First, Edmund tied up loose ends with books on the Saffarids (1994), by revising *New Islamic Dynasties* (1996 and 2010), and completing a fourth book of translation based on Ṭabarī's *History*.³⁷ Then Edmund returned to his love of travel writing and British Orientalism with a charming biography of an "intrepid Scot," a William Lithgow of Lanark, published in

37. *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)*. Vol. V. *The Sāsānids, the Byzantines, the Lahkmids, and Yemen, Translated and Annotated by C.E. Bosworth* (Albany: Bibliotheca Persica, State University of New York Press: 1999).

2006.³⁸ Edmund possessed the rare skill of knowing how to speak to a variety of new audiences. A review by a non-Islamicist illustrates this point:

In numerous intriguing notes, this book directs readers to studies of Eastern sources that add mightily to the general project of advancing our understanding of the encounter between Britain and the Muslim world in the early modern period. This project tended to be dominated, during the 1990s, by scholars working in English literature and drama who became intrigued by 'Turks' but who had little interest in or access to Ottoman, Maghribian, Safavid or Mughul sources, and largely ignored recent work being produced in the fields of Near Eastern studies. Bosworth's study quietly and unobtrusively draws attention to this deficit by correcting it by example rather than by engaging in polemic.³⁹

In some sort of grand finale, Edmund actively worked on a series of major translations, all of which were published in 2011—two from Persian and one from Arabic into English. Far from taking it easy in his retirement years, in his early eighties, Edmund had reinvented himself as a Persianist (with the help of his revisers, Profs Heshmat Moayyad and Mohsen Ashtiany).

Edmund chose one of the most difficult

38. *An Intrepid Scot: William Lithgow of Lanark's Travels in the Ottoman lands, North Africa and Central Europe, 1609–21* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

39. Gerald MacLean, "Review: An Intrepid Scot: William Lithgow of Lanark's Travels in the Ottoman Lands, North Africa and Central Europe, 1609–21, by Clifford Edmund Bosworth (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)," *The English Historical Review* 122/497 (2007): 825–6.

pieces of Persian prose as one translation object: the *History* of Abu al-Faḍl Bayhaqī (d. 470/1077). Bayhaqī had served the Ghaznavid court as chronicler, and his work had formed the cornerstone of Edmund's Ph.D. and all the subsequent scholarship that emanated from it. Already 30 years prior to this Edmund had been asked by his old mentor Minorsky during a visit to his house in Cambridge to work on the text. He managed to find the time for it only after Ehsan Yarshater had asked him again in the late 1990s.⁴⁰ Edmund dedicated the three-volume annotated translation to "Vladimir Fedorovich Minorsky." He was now going back to the basic texts and making them available to the next generation of scholars and a wider non-specialist audience. But Edmund did not just translate this fragmentary, but highly entertaining, work that provides us with a rare insight into the inner workings of the Ghaznavid court and on the topography of 11th-century Ghazna (modern-day Ghazni, Afghanistan). The final product—three volumes published in 2011—included one volume of detailed commentary on the historical, geographical and philological background. In 398 pages of commentary, Edmund brings to bear his vast and all-embracing scholarly insight on aspects of Bayhaqī's text that range from armaments to food, festivals to military campaigns.

Two more of Edmund's major translations were published in 2011. One was the "historical section" of 'Abd al-Ḥayy

40. *The History of Beyhaqī (The History of Sultan Mas'ud of Ghazna, 1030-1041) by Abu'l Faḍl Beyhaqī. Tr. by C.E. Bosworth and rev. by Mohsen Ashtiany, vol. I (421-423 A.H. (1030-1032 A.D.))* (Boston, Mass.: Ilex Foundation and Center for Hellenistic Studies, 2011): xxi.

Gardīzī's (flourished first half of the 5th/11th century) *Zayn al-akhbār*.⁴¹ Edmund dedicated this work, again, to Vladimir Minorsky, and also Gerard Clauson "who were always ready to share their expert knowledge on the Iranian and Turkish world with a much younger scholar."⁴² Charles Melville, in his 2013 review of the *Zayn al-akhbār* translation, utters a not-so-veiled lament that Edmund has left out the sections on the neighbouring peoples, especially the Indian and Turks, as well as the pre-Islamic kings, caliphs and local Islamic ruler, which makes it a model for later works, and also "stands as a testament to the imperial horizons of the Ghaznavid court." At the same time, Melville declares that Bosworth is "at his most magisterial at elucidating these facts [of Khurāsānī history] and identifying the correct record of names, dates and places, upon which a secure knowledge of medieval history can be placed."⁴³

The third major translation was that of the Arabic chronicle, *Akhbār al-dawla al-saljūqiyya* ("History of the Seljuq State") ascribed to Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī (fl. A.D. 1180-1225).⁴⁴ It is the first complete

41. C. E. Bosworth, *The Ornament of Histories. A History of the Eastern Islamic Lands AD 650–1041. The Original Text of Abū Sa'īd 'Abd al-Ḥayy Gardīzī translated and edited* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

42. Bosworth, *Ornament of Histories*, preliminaries.

43. Charles Melville, "Review of C. Edmund Bosworth: *The Ornament of Histories. A History of the Eastern Islamic Lands AD 650–1041. The Original Text of Abū Sa'īd 'Abd al-Ḥayy Gardīzī translated and edited*. (I.B. Tauris and BIPS Persian Studies Series.) xiv (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011)," *BSOAS* 76/1 (2013): 114-6.

44. *The History of the Seljuq State: A Translation with Commentary of the Akhbār al-dawla al-saljūqiyya, Translated by C.E. Bosworth*

English translation to appear in print (superseding Qibla Ayaz's translation in his laudable though unpublished Ph.D. thesis). The source is important for Seljuq history, especially for western Iran in the late sixth to twelfth centuries where much of its testimony is unique and must derive from first-hand reports. The highly detailed commentary of 497 endnotes that accompanies the text supersedes Edmund's own 202-page article on the Seljūqs in the *Cambridge History of Iran* which was the standard reference on the Seljuqs for nearly five decades, with a necessary update provided by the 1995 article "Saldjūkids" in *EI*² that incorporates numismatic material. The translation of the *Akḥbār* and his more recent articles, therefore, provide important supplements to his earlier Seljuq scholarship.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Edmund Bosworth had a sixty-year scholarly career that is truly staggering, from the beginning of his doctoral studies in 1956 to his very last months in 2014. Edmund's greatest qualities were fourfold: first, he had the vision to put Afghanistan and Central Asia on the map of Islamic history within western European scholarly circles, thus correcting the biased view of the western Islamic lands as the "heartlands" of Islam. Second, Edmund understood the need to produce

foundational books that could facilitate a sound understanding of the medieval Islamic world. These included elucidating difficult primary sources, identifying place names, and translating and interpreting the sources. Edmund was not one for grand theories and daring hypotheses, and for this he is sometimes diminished, especially by younger scholars who may not appreciate the diversity and soundness of his scholarship. But, as Geert Jan van Gelder comments, theories come and go, and it is the solid studies that remain.⁴⁶ Third, Edmund was highly versatile in his linguistic abilities and a historian with a lively interest in literature and language which enabled him to write cultural history. Finally, he had a wonderful personality: a humane, kind and generous colleague. With these qualities, Edmund was able to bridge the divide that still exists between Islamic historians in western Europe, North America, Russia and Central Europe, and those in the studied region itself. It is only in this way that the divergence perceived in cultures can be overcome. And ultimately, I think this is what drove Edmund, the war-time schoolboy from smoky Sheffield who never missed a beat and always looked ahead.

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(Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011).

45. I am grateful for Michael O'Neal's bibliography below that highlights Edmund's contributions to Seljuq history.

46. van Gelder, "Obituary": 17.