



# ASIA HALEEM

*British (Anglo-Scot)*

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An unusual individual of exceptional range, with an international perspective. Art historian, archaeologist, author of illustrated books and innovative educator, has pursued long- or short-range research throughout her career. Concerned especially with interdisciplinary links between the material culture, history and spiritual beliefs of Western civilisations and their significance - from modern times back to the Neolithic. Gifted in formulating and presenting information in speech, text and pictures.

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## ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

*All London University*

*Present Career (Phase 3): Freelance scholar working to solve a puzzle in ancient near eastern art (See p.2)*

**MPhil** (to commute to a **PhD** if the solution to the puzzle is proved) School of Oriental & African Studies **1986**



*Career Phase 2: Background study for PhD while in office day jobs, including Whitehall (See pp 2 & 5)*

**External degree in Archaeology** (4 yr course) Birkbeck College/Inst. of Archaeology **1990**

**Higher Certificate of Education in Aegean and Ancient Near Eastern Studies** *art* (see p.3)  
(6 course units over 4 yrs) Birkbeck College/Institute of Archaeology/Institute of Classical Studies **2011**



*Career Phase 1: VIth form 'A' Level School Teacher and Illustrated Book Publisher's Assistant (See pp 3-4)*

**PGCE** (Post-Grad teacher training, specialising in teaching the History of Art) Institute of Education **1970**

**B.A (Hons)** History of European Art (3 yr course) Courtauld Institute **1968**

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## PROFILE

Widely travelled and from an internationally-minded background due to childhood, work and marriage, Asia is confident in her dealings with men and women of varied backgrounds, and has met people from most nations. Activities as author (two books so far) and teacher/lecturer activated networks in academia, publishing and the museum world which led to freelance projects in publishing and other media (detailed later). While executing these, day jobs as an administrator in a worldwide manufacturing company - and latterly in the British Government in the Deputy Prime Minister's Department in Whitehall - not only paid the bills but also turned out to be indispensable in building up research and IT skills, pointing the way towards structuring and storing her pictorial research electronically. (Experience of present-day government working methods also led to insights about the way bureaucracies were run in the *ancient* world!) She develops excellent working relationships with people in any position within an organisation, has a positive, enthusiastic approach and is always ready to encourage productivity and talent in others.

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## OVERALL AMBITION

Progress has been slow in attaining her true ambition to qualify as art historian of the Ancient Near East because she has had to self-finance all her University courses through day jobs, doubling the time taken to fulfil goals. Yet user-friendly computerisation of her pictorial evidence would not have been possibly very much sooner, and the Career Phase 1 experience of producing illustrated books and teaching the history of art, both involving the matching of words to pictures - and finding effective ways to communicate the subject - turned out to be the essential foundations for her mature work.

Late in life the combined expertise from all her degrees, and experience from Careers Phases 1 & 2, is finally coming into play, and she finds relevance for her present PhD research in the fascination modern society has for its roots in the ancient world, *most especially the surprisingly enduring, astronomical and polytheistic cultural roots of present-day traditions*. Now a full-time freelance writer and lecturer, between the periods of isolation necessary for the scholarly life, she is keen to share and discuss her findings, on-line and in person.

□ **PhD ongoing at School of Oriental and African Studies, London**

**1985 to date**

While still married, after my first visit to Egypt (see below) as part of my ambition to move from school teaching to university lecturing I started work on a PhD topic, ***The Meaning of the Lion Attacking its Prey in Ancient Near Eastern Art*** with Prof. A D H Bivar. Career Phase 1 as Art History Teacher and Assistant to a Publisher of Illustrated Books was already drawing to a natural end, but with divorce and change of home as it turned out this self-imposed Career Phase 2 took far longer than intended, financially and because I needed to build up a new repertoire of coursework and travelling experience to be in a position to handle the PhD work. My supervisor was not happy with this strategy, but soon after I had reached the **MPhil.** stage he retired anyway, so apart from a brief period of private tuition with Dr Dominique Collon (B.M. seals expert), it was then difficult to find a multi-disciplinary successor to oversee my work also willing to take in the full extent of my evidence dating from the Fifth to the First Millennia BC, so I simply continued to work on my own.

I had gone some way into the gathering of evidence before I realised I had been handed an art history detective story overreaching the bounds of the PhD topic - since I found the meaning of the Lion and Prey symbol only made sense by considering the other images it is placed with. I began to take it seriously and was determined I would bring my enquiry to a conclusion, however long it took (for an understanding of its full scope, see **Newsletter 1** on my website ([www.layish.co.uk](http://www.layish.co.uk)) where my findings are now gradually being stored).

Through family connections going back generations and my own wide-ranging travels in the Middle East, it turned out that as art historian/archaeologist I was ideally placed to cover the iconography of ancient near eastern art and the mapping of a probable Canon of imagery linked to a mythology rooted in ancient astronomy. In order to make my case and prove it, the work involves a picture code-cracking operation akin to reassembling a pack of cards scattered by the great civilisations over four millennia, where the same cards keep cropping up. It is slow and labour-intensive, involving checking, sorting and matching images on artefacts from museums all over the world. Once the ordering of the material evidence in eight small catalogues is completed, in the same way there is a Canon of Images for Christian art, I will be in a position in associated chapters to prove the same for ancient near eastern art.

As mentioned above, I realised that to extend my art historical competence to include the Ancient Near East and cope with the PhD topic properly required the acquisition of further qualifications - but because British academia is not as in the US, where it is possible to study the Art History of the Ancient Near East on its own as a discipline, in the UK it had to be done via Archaeology courses. One then has to draw one's own conclusions in a cultural climate sometimes pedestrian in its mindset where symbolic interpretation is avoided (with notable exceptions in the case of European and US experts). So I worked for the following two qualifications to ensure I had a proper grounding in my new domain of interest, and to get abreast of the latest scholarship in the field.

□ **Diploma in Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology/Birkbeck College, London**

**1986-90**

Included 6 weeks' practical field work at a Roman Villa site in E Sussex (4-year external degree course)

*Syllabus and sites visited:*

**I: Palaeolithic Man and his artefacts**

*Tutor: Dr David Price-Williams*

**II: Prehistoric Europe**

*Tutor: Dr Sue Hamilton*

**III: The civilisations of the Ancient Near East other than Egypt**

*Tutor: Dr D Price-Williams*

Extensive archaeological student trips were part of this four-year period:

**A** led by DPW to **Turkey** - notably visiting Bögazkoy, Kültepe, Çatal Hüyük, Ankara Museum and many Classical sites;

**B** led by DPW and Peter Parr to **Syria** and **Jordan** notably visiting Mari, Palmyra, Ebla, Megiddo, Jordan Valley, Petra, Aqaba, Aleppo and Amman Museums and

**C** led by Louise Schofield, Assistant Keeper at the BM to **Crete & Cyprus**, notably visiting Knossos, Phaestos, Mallia, Heraklion Museum and most other Minoan sites on the island; also Neolithic and Phoenician sites, as well as the better-known Classical sites in S Cyprus - and Nikosia Museum.

**IV: Egyptology**

*Tutor: Eric Uphill*

Over time took part in seven student trips to Egypt led by different distinguished leaders, travelling up and down the country to most key sites (but no further south than Abu Simbel or north of Tanis.

- **Certificate in Higher Education (HCE) in Ancient Near Eastern and Aegean Studies, Institute of Archaeology/Birkbeck College/Institute of Classical Studies, Lond 2006-10**  
(Awarded on basis of 15 essays (half marked Merit/Distinction) for 6 course units held over 5 years)  
Course Units Student no. 012309111

**I Aegean and Ancient Near Eastern Studies Overview [3<sup>rd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> Millennia]**

Tutors Drs Olga Krzyszkowska & Andrew Shapland (BM)/Diana Stein/Franz van Koppen/Lorna Oakes

**II Archaeology of Western Asia: Seals and Sealing Practice**

Tutor: Dr Diana Stein

**II Seals and Society in the Aegean Bronze Age**

Tutor: Dr Olga Krzyszkowska

**IV: Witchcraft, Magic and Divination in the Ancient Near East [3-1M]**

Tutor: Dr Diana Stein

**V: The Archaeology of the Ancient Near East in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium: Nationalism and International Relations**

Tutor: Dr D Stein

**VI The Ancient Near East in the 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium:**

Tutor: Dr Diana Stein

**Expanding Empires, Power Politics and Lasting Legacies**

I also followed evening classes in the London adult education network on:

- **Traditional Astronomy** Tutor: Leslie White, Astronomy Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*
- **Traditional Astrology** Various Tutors (over 18 months of term courses) at the Company of Astrologers, Queen Square, including authors Derek Appleby, Geoffrey Cornelius and Maggie Hyde



**EARLIER EDUCATION, APPLIED DURING CAREER PHASE 1**

- **B.A. (Hons) History of Western Art, Courtauld Institute, Portman House London W1, 1965-68**

*Syllabus*

**Comprehensive History of Western painting, sculpture and architecture since Greece and Rome, in the final year majoring as a Modern Period specialist.**

Tutors included Anthony Blunt, Michael Kitson, Alan Bowness (later Director of the Tate Gallery), Chris Green, John House, Phoebe Poole, John Newman, Reyner Banham, Anita Brookner, (later a novelist), Robert Ratcliffe (restoration expert) and occasional lectures by Michael Levy, Kenneth Clark, Ernst Gombrich, Margaret Whinnie, Denis Mahon [Full-time 3-year course]

*Countries of art historical interest visited*

Went on student trips to Athens, Florence and Rome (and surrounding towns of Tuscany) before and during my First Year, as well as making several visits to Paris, Berlin, Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges and Amsterdam. In the middle year made a two month summer vacation trip to the USA, visiting art museums and looking at the 19C and 20C architectural highlights of cities such as New York, Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Buffalo, Los Angeles, San Francisco.

As a modern period specialist, a potential thesis I was considering was to show how modern artists had been inspired by archaeological discoveries of their time, such as the Royal Tombs of Ur or that of Tutankhamun in Egypt (both discovered in 1922) – but after starting to travel to the Middle East when my parents were posted to Iran, following a visit to Persepolis and marriage to an Egyptian lecturer at my university, putting aside a brief flirtation with Islamic art, I became too involved with the ancient near east to want to remain with my specialism of modern art movements in the West - though I was to still teach the subject for over a decade (see the next qualification).

- **Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE in Art History) Institute of Education and Senate House, London University 1969/70**  
**Teacher training course geared to devising approaches to teaching Art History.**

I did teaching practice at Gospel Oak Primary School and Parliament Hill Secondary School (London N5) both near where I lived at the time in north London (Highgate). I was then fortunate enough to get my first job at the well-known grammar school, Camden School, just down the road. While negotiating this position during the summer hols, as training for Career Phase 1 proper, I was able to give freelance art history lectures on *British Art* at summer schools in London for American students, and a guest lecture on *Colour and the Post-Impressionists* at Marlborough College (Anthony Blunt's old school). I also ran a privately sponsored course for adults on the Principles of Gothic and Islamic Art and presented two lectures at the Victoria & Albert Museum on Hindu Sculpture and the Hindu Temple.

For School Education and Office Skills see p.9

**PHASE 1: TWO DECADES AS MODERN ART HISTORY SPECIALIST, USED IN 'A' LEVEL TEACHING & ILLUSTRATED BOOK PUBLISHING 1968-1987**

☐ **Camden School for Girls**

**1970-83**

**Teacher of A-Level Art History (Associated Examining Board** – for which latterly I was also an examiner - *a two-year course for Lower and Upper Sixth-Form pupils*). The syllabus was entirely a Humanities subject, demanding four essays a term, with no practical component, and as vast and open-ended as A Level History. My classes were popular: an average of 30 in the LVI and 30 in the UVI each year, with a 99% success rate and many coming out with top grades and moving on to study the subject at university and thereafter follow careers in the media, galleries or museums.

Year 1: **Overview of the history of Western painting, sculpture, architecture & design.**

Year 2: **Modern movements in art to the present day**

As well as in school, to ensure exposure to the originals wherever possible I frequently held classes in the Tate and National Galleries, at the British Museum and London art galleries. I conducted several visits to notable buildings for the architectural side of the syllabus, and led a sculpture walk round London every year. I had a natural vocation for teaching but after 12 years following the same syllabus I found myself getting stale and ready to move on to a new challenge.

**PRIME ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS PERIOD**

◇ **Trained a generation of young people** in the history of Western painting, sculpture and architecture: some of my ex-pupils now work in the art or art history world (Royal Academy/Brighton Museum/National Gallery/Education). I was fortunate to have bright pupils, teaching the children of many of the famous people who lived in Hampstead such as Mel Calman the cartoonist, Richard Rogers the architect, Joan Bakewell the television presenter, Alison Weir the history author, Thomas Neurath Director of Thames & Hudson – and many more.

*There was a gradual move out of teaching into publishing (initially part-time) which explains an overlap of the two 1979-1983*

☐ **The Herbert Press Ltd**

**1979-87**

From the time he set up his own company, I was appointed (on personal recommendation) as Assistant to the Managing Director, David Herbert, ***publisher of illustrated books on all aspects of the arts***. David and his wife Brenda Herbert had started in Penguin Books after doing English at Cambridge: he then made his name as MD of the trendy Sixties art book publishers Studio Vista, and subsequently Elek Books. He maintained his high reputation for the illustrated books he produced under his own imprint (distributed by A & C Black) and had obituaries in *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph* when he died.

Being a small company I did everything: dealt with authors, museums in the case of co-publications linked to exhibitions, organised picture rights and publicity, liaised with warehouse, distributors and printers, and did editing, picture research, correspondence and typing. I wrote copy for the catalogues: David Herbert thought my writing was good enough to recommend me to the literary agent, Curtis Brown (without success - however, I eventually went into print without an agent).

**PRIME ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED THIS PERIOD**

- ◇ **Helped to bring about the publication of a decade of illustrated books by distinguished authors, artists, critics and designers**
- ◇ **Briefly ran own literary agency, *Bycornute Books*** (outside office hours and therefore not very productive). Listed in the *Writers & Artists Yearbook* as handling projects for illustrated books.
- ◇ **I was in the end most successful with my own two books** (published by Harper Collins) on festivals in the ancient world (**The Year of the Goddess, 1990**), and ancient texts, sculptures and paintings of priestesses of the ancient near east (**Journey of the Priestess, 1993**).
- ◇ A few years earlier, while still married, I had helped compile, with my husband and Ernest Kay, an **Arabic/English Businessman's Dictionary (1984)** (published by Graham & Trotman).

**AT THIS JUNCTURE I HAD TO FACE A HARD FACT: A FEMALE SCHOLAR WHEN MARRIED RUNS THE HOUSE AND HELPS THE HUSBAND DEVELOP HIS CAREER: IT IS RARE FOR IT TO HAPPEN THE OTHER WAY ROUND. HENCE MY SLOW PROGRESS. COULD I EXPECT TO MARRY SOMEONE WHO WOULD RUN THE HOUSE FOR ME WHILE I PURSUED A SCHOLAR'S CAREER? THE HARD DECISION I HAD TO TAKE WAS TO BECOME SINGLE AGAIN TO DO SO.**



## PHASE 2: TWO DECADES SPENT EXPANDING ART HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY REPERTOIRE TO INCLUDE THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST 1987-2010

*During part-time university courses (see pp 2-3) I paid my way with office jobs (better remunerated than teaching and publishing). Though not related to my academic career, by moving on from a world still on electric typewriters the posts briefly summarised on this page not only enabled me to buy my own flat, but also to learn modern office organisation and IT skills (Microsoft Windows was introduced and taken up immediately in the business world from 1985) – now computers were now being adopted by academics. Thanks to improving software, learning how to process pictures and integrate them with text turned out to be the most useful by-product of all, at last enabling me to deal with masses of pictorial evidence reasonably fast, making progress on the visual component of my research goals feasible.*

### TEMPORARY ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

- ❑ **BM Media Group:** Assistant to the CEO, 35 Piccadilly, London W1 **1987-8**
- ❑ **Amerindo Investment Advisers** PA to Stockbroker Principals, Curzon Street, London W1 **1988-9**
- ❑ **ALSTOM UK Ltd Head Office, 34 Dover Street, Mayfair, LONDON W1** **1989-2003**

This French global electrical engineering firm at its height employed 120,000 people worldwide, manufacturing trains such as the Eurostar, London Underground and ordinary trainsets and power stations all over the world – most notably in China.

Gained experience in office administration and liaison at senior level with factories and embassies in France and Britain, Government Ministers and Departments, International Banks and large UK contractors; also with ALSTOM Country Presidents and Sales Directors in 60 countries; and organised visits in the UK to our factories/Head Office for distinguished overseas clients.

#### **PRIME ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO THIS PERIOD**

- ◇ **Was instrumental in setting up from scratch the London office (UK headquarters)** of the then new Anglo-French electrical engineering merger between GEC (headed by Lord Weinstock) and ALSTOM (based in the UK and France respectively, but now demerged). The office served as the hub for contact with and visits from ALSTOM Directors in 60 countries of the world; for Government Ministers and officials as well as foreign and British Ambassadors; and not least for our worldwide prestigious clients, often from those very countries whose ancient past was my key interest!
- ◇ **Helped build the website** of ALSTOM Head Office by taking pictures and writing text for the Commercial Section. This involved finding out names of and getting into dialogue with product specialists in ALSTOM factories around the UK, getting them photographed and listed as contact points for orders coming in from abroad, whether for spare parts from Iran, turbine generators from Egypt, or HVDC equipment from India.
- ◇ **Dealt with VIP Clients from all over the world.** In the name of gaining exports, I took a Chinese delegation of nuclear power station engineers round Westminster Abbey (Cromwell's was the favourite tomb) and, more recently, a party of officials from the Chinese Ministry of Transport (including the Minister for Transport himself) on a tour of London (with translator/guide)–including visits to DLR at Canary Wharf, London Underground and the Transport Museum.
- ◇ After the ALSTOM UK London Head Office was closed down, spent the summer in the Department of Transport using Microsoft Master Document software to **organise and type a large report** with several contributors and including diagrams, maps and charts -. On the strength of this gained enough Government experience for the job following.

- ❑ **OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, Whitehall** **2003-2010**

Worked as Higher Executive Officer (HEO) to one of the DPM's Under Secretaries, Peter Unwin (now called Directors General) and - when he left for a new position in DEFRA - to the Director of IT and IT Security, Roy Marshall. It was a highly demanding position interfacing with John Prescott's Office, his Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and Director-Generals across Government. These Departments work in a very different way from the Private Sector, and from this period I learned how to:

- manage a huge workload electronically, predigesting and ordering it for my Under-Secretary
- at high speed filter incoming material, prioritising it as actions for my Under-Secretary, and taking the initiative to deal with minor matters myself without concerning him in them;
- help work on a series of draft policy submissions to DPM, Ministers or Permanent Secretaries, to a never-ending succession of tight deadlines;
- best practice for secure IT operation, archiving and every-day 'housekeeping'
- interact within a team of colleagues and juniors to ensure things get done.

With qualifications achieved and day-job no longer necessary, I now pursue my research full-time in my home office, coming in to London to consult the Libraries of Warburg the School of Oriental and African Studies, Warburg Institute and Institute of Classical Studies Libraries (University of London) – and sometimes the British Library - with a view to eventually completing my PhD research, now entitled *The Canon of Ancient Near Eastern Art (CANEA)*. As each chapter is completed, the results are made available on [www.layish.co.uk](http://www.layish.co.uk). The qualification in itself is not important to me, but sharing my findings is.

**PRIME ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR**

- ◇ Presented a paper at the ARAM International Conference on **Astronomy and Astrology in the Art of the Ancient near East** at the Oriental Institute, Oxford, July 2010  
 Link: [http://www.layish.co.uk/astromical\\_iconography\\_of\\_5\\_icons.pdf](http://www.layish.co.uk/astromical_iconography_of_5_icons.pdf)  
 (N B spaces are underscores)
- ◇ Devised a second website related to my invention of a three-dimensional model of the Zodiac, Patent no. 3014118  
 Link: [www.cosmokrator.com](http://www.cosmokrator.com)

**MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

Member of Convocation, London University	Association of Art Historians and Alumna of the Courtauld Institute
Alumna of the School of Oriental and African Studies	Alumna of Birkbeck College, London University
Palestine Exploration fund	British School of Archaeology in Iraq
Institute of Classical Studies	Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society
	Sussex Archaeological Society

**REFEREES**

**CAREER ADVISER (for Phase 2/3 strategy)**

Kim Wain, Juvo Ltd, Verona House, Filwood Road, Fishponds, BRISTOL BS16 3RY Tel: 0117 958 5830  
 e-mail: [kim.wain@juvo.biz](mailto:kim.wain@juvo.biz) [freelance Consultant who advised me at the Capita London Office]

**PHASE 1: POSTS WITH ART HISTORY CONTENT**

Mrs David Herbert [Brenda Herbert], The Herbert Press 46 Northchurch Road, LONDON N1 4EJ  
 Tel: 0207 254-4379 (David Herbert himself would have been a referee, but he died of cancer in 1996)

Mrs Carol Handley (a Classics specialist), Headmistress, Camden School, Sandall Road, London NW5.  
 Home Address: Colt House, High Street, Little Eversden, Cambs CB3 7HE, or c/o The Classical Institute, Senate House, London University, London WC2

**PHASE 2: PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS**

Paul Barron CBE, President, ALSTOM Ltd. Home address: St Hilda’s Lodge, 60 Steep Hill, LINCOLN LN2 1LR or c/o ALSTOM, Newbold Rd, RUGBY CV21 2NH

Dr Clive Palmer, Commercial Director, ALSTOM Ltd (formerly a DTI Director). Home address: 482 Bideford Green, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, BEDS LU7 7TZ e-mail: [clive.palmer5@btinternet.com](mailto:clive.palmer5@btinternet.com)

**PHASE 2: CIVIL SERVICE, OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

Peter Unwin, formerly Director General Corporate Strategy & Resources Group, ODPM 26 Whitehall, London SW1A 2WH - now D-G Natural England, DEFRA, e-mail: [peter.unwin@defra.gov.uk](mailto:peter.unwin@defra.gov.uk)

Roy Marshall, formerly Director IT Strategy, CLG, Bressenden Place London SW1E 5DU - now Head of IT, Hull University Tel: 07899 063832; e-mail: [roy.marshall@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:roy.marshall@hotmail.co.uk)

**ACADEMIC**

*Referees from the Courtauld Institute can if really necessary be resurrected, such as Alan Bowness (ex-Tate Gallery Director), or Anita Brookner, but others (Anthony Blunt, Michael Kitson) are now deceased.*

Dr David Price-Williams, Lecturer in Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, London University (13 The Avenue, Richmond, Kew, MDDX TW9 2AL Tel: 0208 940 4114/F 0208 332 2456; e-mail: [david@templeworld.com](mailto:david@templeworld.com)

Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr, George Washington University, 709R Gelman Library, Washington DC 20052 USA Tel: 001 202 994 5704/Fax: 001 202 994 4571

Dr Dominique Collon (ex-Assistant Keeper, British Museum Ancient Near East Department). Home Address: 74 Cobbold Road, London W12 9LW; Tel: 0208 740 8339

Dr Diana Stein, Home: 11 The Park, London NW11 7ST; e-mail [dlstein@msn.com](mailto:dlstein@msn.com) (the most up to date)

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## FURTHER PERSONAL DETAILS AND TRAVEL

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**Neé** Lynda Thomson – **Married** 1976-1986 to M Abdel-Haleem, Professor of Arabic Literature, School of Oriental and African Studies, London University – now divorced. No children. No current partner, but many friends of both sexes. One brother, three nieces.

Childhood spent in Southern Africa in the area known as the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Father (H H Thomson MBE/CBE) was in Colonial Overseas Civil Service in Northern Rhodesia until 1968, then worked for the UN in Iran and Libya. At the end of his time in Africa was Under-Secretary Home Affairs and Director Manpower and Planning under President Kaunda of Zambia.

Have travelled extensively within Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Congo and South Africa and all the way round coastal Africa both ways (by ship, train, car and aeroplane) – notably Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Beira, Mombasa, Zanzibar, Dar Es-Salaam, Aden, Port Said, Alexandria, Gibraltar, Madeira - also Khartoum, and Nairobi.

Corresponded with Freya Stark, pioneer traveller in the Middle East, in the last years of her life.

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## NEAR EASTERN CONNECTIONS

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**Scots Grandfather**, Professor G T Thomson, Professor at Edinburgh University with several degrees (Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh), was in Intelligence in Mesopotamia in WWI under General Allenby because he was a **Hebrew and Arabic** Scholar and Doctor of Divinity (he taught priests and was Moderator of the Church of Scotland).

**English Grandfather**, Herbert Partridge, in WWI entered Damascus with Allenby and Lawrence of Arabia – he was a mathematician with a degree from Jesus College, Cambridge, then taught maths and became Second Master of St Dunstan's College, South London. I inherited many items he brought back from Palestine.

**Father**, Hugh Thomson CBE, was in the Overseas Civil Service, and a District Commissioner in Northern Rhodesia until Zambia declared independence. He then worked for the UN/ILO in Teheran, and Tripoli – my visits to Iran sparked off a lasting interest in the Middle East, encouraged by

**Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr**, first of Teheran University, then of Washington University after the Iranian Revolution. He was a colleague of the then **Keeper of Oriental Manuscripts in the British Museum, Martin Lings** - both of them key organisers of the Hayward Gallery Festival of Islam Exhibition in 1976 and authors of books on Islamic Science and Art.

**Ex-Husband**, Prof. Muhammad Abdel-Wahhab Abdel-Haleem, sent to do a PhD at Cambridge on graduating from Al-Azhar University in Cairo, was cited 'the cleverest student of his year in Egypt', and subsequently employed at SOAS as Lecturer (when I met him), then Professor, of Arabic/Qur'anic Studies, specialising in Arabic Literature. Through him and his extended family I gained vast inside knowledge of the Middle East, though we never travelled there together - even to Egypt. Helped him in the early stages of his translation of the **Qur'an** for Oxford University Press, as well as reading and discussing the theses of his PhD students from the Middle East with him.

**Professor Keith Critchlow**, originally Lecturer at the Architectural Association, is an expert in Islamic art and architecture, and now Professor at the Prince of Wales' Institute of Architecture, with close contacts to Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr and others in a group of intellectuals who believe in the essential unity and validity of all religious traditions such as Titus Burckhardt, Ananda Coomaraswamy and Warren Kenton (see last page, under Spiritual Outlook).

**PhD Co-Supervisor (with Prof. Bivar)**, Dr Dominique Collon, Assistant Keeper in the Department of the Ancient Near East at the British Museum (an expert on cylinder seals, recently retired). At the start of the Iraq war she travelled to the Iraq Museum two or three weeks after it was looted, to liaise with the US Army on the inventory of what had gone, and to arrange training in London in the BM for Iraqi restorers.

**Other short-term tutors** (linked to essays and papers I wrote (see p.2) have included Dr C B F Walker (Expert on Babylonian Astronomy at the British Museum); Dr Andrew George (Lecturer in Akkadian at SOAS); Prof. Mark Geller (Lecturer in Hebrew and Sumerian, Jewish Dept, University College); Dr Amelie Kuhrt, Lecturer in Ancient History, University College); Professor Nicolas Wyatt (Professor Emeritus in Ugaritic and Biblical Texts, New College, Edinburgh University).

**After presenting a paper at the ARAM Conference in Oxford in 2010** I gained several interesting correspondents at universities in the Middle East, the US and Australia

**Attended one Rencontre Assyriologique in Paris** where I came across scholars such as Irene Winter, Pierre Amiet, Wilfred Lambert, Jerrold Cooper, Giacino Falsone and other AncNME experts.

- ◇ theatre; visiting museums and exhibitions
- ◇ swimming, fresh-water yacht sailing and tennis (in countries warmer than Britain);
- ◇ collecting art and archaeology books, tapes, CDs and DVDs
- ◇ world religions, literature and music
- ◇ beach-combing for stone-age tools and amber on the South Coast of Britain
- ◇ gardening and DIY
- ◇ painting, sewing and knitting

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**SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK**

To write the full detail of my spiritual c.v. and changes of outlook would be an extensive document – suffice it to say I was brought up a Christian, was extremely interested in the Hindu Tradition for ten years (1960s, SES); Platonism (1970s events organised by Keith Critchlow of Kairos, and RILKO); the Sufi Tradition as taught by René Guénon and Frithjof Schuon and their discussion of the Perennial Tradition uniting all religions (1980s); and thence the Kabbalistic Tradition as taught by Warren Kenton, picking up on its English Renaissance pursuit by Francis Bacon. I was never interested in modern nihilist philosophies.

I was leader of school choir in a Church of England school daily reading the King James VI Bible and using Cranmer's Prayer Book, so was beneficially stamped by the Protestant faith from an early age (my grandfather had been Moderator of the Church of Scotland - nullifying the faith for my father); I became interested in Hinduism during the Beatles era and learned Sanskr̥t; went through a phase of involvement in Zoroastrianism through parents' relocation to Iran, and in Islam through marriage to an Egyptian; finally learned about ancient world religions and their *pantheons* whilst pursuing PhD studies (I often feel sympathy with Julian the Apostate who longed for the Return of the Gods – hence my love of Hinduism). I buy into Charles Dupuis' *L'Origine de tous Les Cultes* which points to the origins of religious rites in ancient calendars. I have always looked for continuity between ancient and modern religions (which in some respects are astonishingly obvious) rather than for the differences, which often merely involve changes of vocabulary.

I trace this curiosity back to one early job while a university student working my way through courses at London University campus in Bloomsbury, at Luzac Oriental Booksellers round the corner in Great Russell Street opposite the British Museum. As their assistant and cataloguer I was asked to compile a comprehensive paperback catalogue of books on sale in the shop – mainly on Sanskr̥t, Arabic and other oriental languages in the first half, and books on the main oriental religions and arts in the second. This was the foundation of my polyvalent religious and linguistic interests from the earliest days. It was at this time that I came across the concept of Sacred Art, as expounded by Ananda Coomaraswamy (a Luzac author) and Titus Burckhardt, which put my expertise in Modern Art Movements into perspective and into the shade.

Since the beginning of my university life I belonged to successive discussion groups looking at spiritual traditions, arriving at the view that all religious traditions are valid, arising to suit different peoples under varied geographical conditions - and to be respected. I found out that in dealing with people of different faiths one needs to engage with them in *their* spiritual idiom if there is to be dialogue, rather than imposing Western attitudes – this applies also to academic approaches in my art history research. I believe in following the spirit, rather than the letter, of the Law and abhor literalist fundamentalism. I have moderate-minded Jewish, Muslim, Zoroastrian, Hindu, Christian, Humanist and agnostic friends with a pluralist outlook.

After so much exposure in my academic work to cross-comparisons between the mythologies and scriptures of the ancient Near East, I have now found it possible to come back to the tradition I was brought up on with greatly deepened understanding of its submerged dimensions. On reading so much Biblical Archaeology and comparing other traditions with my own, I have gained an enriched perspective on Christianity, especially since I now understand how its *mythos* is a reiteration of the great death and resurrection myths of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia (Christ=Tammuz=Osiris). I have also become engaged with the eastern branches of Christianity through the *Association of the Churches of the East* sponsored by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Prince of Wales, with a view to regaining what Western Christianity lost when it separated from its Eastern Other Half – most notably in its use of Icons and cenobitic disciplines.

Over these decades I discussed and lived these philosophies and religions but aside from spiritual verities, on the social level the biggest issue for me was their attitude to women, especially those who are spiritually gifted – and by that acid test they ultimately stand or fall. Having begun my enquiries into ancient religions, by the 1990s I had started the long journey, inspired by other women before me, of delving into female spirituality in past millennia for clues. A by-product of this ongoing search are my two books (see p.4).



## SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION AND OTHER SKILLS

**Arundel Boarding School**, Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe)

**1958-1963**

(Headmistress, Miss P A Fisher, was niece of the then Archbishop of Canterbury – later posted as Headmistress of Wycombe Abbey)

- ☐ **OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE BOARD 10 O LEVELS** [IN THOSE DAYS O LEVELS WERE GRADED ACCORDING TO 8 LEVELS – MY GRADES WERE ALL 1, 2 OR 3].

Physics with Chemistry	English	French	Latin	Geography
English Literature	Maths	German	Russian	Art (Drawing and Painting)

- ☐ **OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE BOARD 3 A LEVELS** [ALL A GRADE]

English Literature	French with French Literature	Art with Art History
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### Languages

*All these languages open doors to relevant art and archaeology publications*

**French** A-level (A grade) ~ excellent reading and writing with reasonable spoken fluency.

**German** O level (grade 1) ~ proficient reading and writing with dictionary – halting spoken.

**Arabic** (no qualification) ~ basic reading and spoken, but can copy type (*used to mark **Arabic 'O' levels** with my husband every summer, and helped him assess the PhDs of his Arab students*); during a short spell of interest in Islamic art, did a term of the Arabic degree course at SOAS.

**Russian** O level (grade 1) ~ now lost through lack of use.

**Sanskrit** *While pursuing my interest in Hindu art history, did first year of degree course at SOAS.*

**Greek, Egyptian Hieroglyphics, Sumerian** *Acquired the basics of the alphabets/signs and vocabulary at beginner's courses at UCL - to enhance understanding of relevant art and archaeological artefacts studied at Birkbeck/SOAS - etymology can be important for understanding iconography. It was too time-consuming at this late stage to try to really master these languages.*

*\*For my **HCE** I did one essay for Akkadian specialist Franz van Koppen on recent ideas that the Greek Alphabet is based, not on Phoenician, but on the earlier West Semitic alphabet as found at Wadi el-Hol, taking the earliest Greek alphabets back to the 1M.*

### Computer Skills

During Career Phase 2 I did several training courses on computer packages at agencies or in-post: the following categorisations are the results from assessments by the trainers for which I have the certificates.

<b>Microsoft WORD</b>	<b>Advanced User</b>
<b>Microsoft POWERPOINT</b>	Expert User
Microsoft Outlook	Proficient User
Lotus Notes	Proficient User
JASC PaintShopPro	Basic Knowledge of picture enhancement, scanning, copying and resizing
<b>Microsoft EXCEL</b>	Basic Knowledge

Agency tests stated my speeds to be 100 words per minute typing and 120 words p.m. shorthand.

Trained to organise electronic material in quickly retrievable categories and maintain regular 'housekeeping', always deleting out-of-date material in order to avoid computer overload and consequent system slow-down.

Experience gained in e-mail management when large amounts are coming in every day – prioritising for action, filing and presenting to Management in relevant order – and also techniques of security protection.