

Nikita Élısséeff prepared as an annexed thesis a translation of the description of Damascus by Ibn 'Asākir, in which he meticulously correlated the textual information with all the vestiges still visible on the ground. Because of its erudite annotations, researched bibliography, and suggestive plans, this work, published by the IFD, constitutes an essential tool which has inspired a great number of works. In response to the wishes of his successive advisors, Jean Sauvaget (above all an epigrapher), Henri Laoust (mainly interested in the Sunni madhhabs), and Claude Cahen (who cherished the analysis of social and economic data), Élısséeff wrote his magisterial three-volume doctoral thesis on Nūr al-Dīn, the Turkish prince and reunifier of Sunni Syria against the Franks. The committee, which unanimously awarded him highest honors, was composed of the elite of Arabic studies of the period in France: Régis Blachère, Claude Cahen, Henri Laoust, Charles Pellat, and Gaston Wiet. Nikita Élısséeff always held a deep admiration for Nūr al-Dīn, the pious Zankid malik, who did not become sultan until the end of his life in 1171 and whose glory was, for him, unjustly eclipsed by that of his Kurdish general, Şalāh al-Dīn.

In 1966, André Raymond replaced him as Associate Director and then as Director of the IFEAD. Nikita Élısséeff, returning to France after being awarded the highest distinctions by the Syrian, Lebanese, and Iraqi authorities, was appointed assistant and then maître de conférences and, finally, in 1969, Professor of Medieval Arabic history and civilization at the Université de Lyon (the future Université Lumière-Lyon 2). There he taught Medieval Muslim history and civilization and the history of the contemporary Arab Orient until his retirement in 1984, training many students, French and foreign, among them Michel Seurat. He was in charge of the Centre Interuniversitaire d'Histoire et d'Archéologie Médiévales and of the first DEA, put to work with Gilbert Dagron at the Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen and Jean Marie Pesez at the EHESS. In 1977, he published *L'Orient musulman au Moyen âge* (Armand Colin), presenting a convenient résumé of the main events. He continued deciphering and publishing Arabic inscriptions and making trips to Syria to collect textual and photographic documentation on the medieval monuments. He directed, from 1978 to 1981, an archaeological mission to the castle of Rahba on the Syrian Euphrates, with the architect-archeologist Jean Louis Palliet who surveyed all the levels of the vast fortress and made it the subject of a dissertation presented at Lyon. Following this, Nikita Élısséeff, at the head of a mission of the Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen, made an archeological survey of the Sudanese coast on the Red Sea.

Since his training by Jean Sauvaget, he maintained his ability to decipher medieval Arabic inscriptions and he actively participated in the direction and publication of the Répertoire Chronologique d'Épigraphie Arabe, continuing the work of Combe, Sauvaget, and Wiet. He had a passion for all medieval military architecture and trade itineraries between the Mediterranean, Mesopotamia, Cilicia, and the Upper Jazira. He edited for the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* the articles dealing with some great Syrian cities, but especially important crossroad sites in these regions. Thanks to his very rich personal library, he was able to continue this erudite and very useful work during his retirement and he did not stop writing until shortly before his death. He produced more than thirty scientific publications, without counting more than forty articles for the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and more than twenty in the *Encyclopaedia Universalis*. He was a member of the scientific council of the IFEAD and of that of the Max von Berchem Foundation. His modesty, his humor, his good nature, and his willingness to share his knowledge of the Medieval religious and military monuments with the young made his company particularly sought. The kindness of his wife and devout collaborator, born Geneviève Sichler, whose family had similarly lived in Russia, her gaiety and the devotion with which she completed and typed the texts of her husband, must be pointed out. They had three children, two of whom were born in Damascus, and formed a particularly close-knit family.

Norman Calder

MEM notes with regret the death of Norman Calder Professor of Islamic Law at the University of Manchester and one of the premier experts on early Islamic law. He died on Sunday, February 13, 1998.

Norman Calder was the author of *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence*, Oxford University Press, 1993, in addition to many papers published in academic periodicals. Beyond his numerous scholarly achievements, he will be remembered for his enduring commitment to scholarly discourse, whether at Manchester University, or elsewhere.

Jeanette Wakin

The editor of MEM regretfully notes the death of Jeanette Wakin, Lecturer on Islamic Law at Columbia University. Jeanette passed away on Friday, March 13, 1998, at the age of 69, one month after she was diagnosed with liver cancer.

Jeanette received her doctorate at Columbia University where she worked with Joseph Schacht. She joined the Department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures and became a popular teacher among her students. Her most important work was her book *The Function of Documents in Islamic Law*. She was the editor of the Journal of the American Oriental Society and chairperson of the Columbia Seminar on Arabic Studies.