

## THE EDITOR'S DESK

In the 'blissful' days preceding World War II, the relatively undeveloped field of Islamic studies was spared at least one problem which has tormented its highly developed successors ever since, namely that of defining, specifying, and naming the area under study as 'Middle East', 'Near East', or even 'Swasia'. Before 1939, the heartland of Islam, along with the Balkan Peninsula, was called Near East, the part of the East closest to the center of Civilization, Europe. The Far East, obviously, was that part of the world farthest away from Europe; and the Middle East was everything in between, in general the Indian sub continent, Southeast Asia, Afghanistan, and by involvement with the British establishment in India, Iran. The events and policies of World War II, by extending the definition of Middle East to include the original Islamic portions of the old Near East has left a confusion which has remained until the present day. For all practical purposes, the two terms are used interchangeably, although in some cases Near East is now limited to Southeastern Europe, with Middle East covering everything else in Asia until the Far East is reached.

There is another associated, yet distinct, problem, how to define and describe the characteristics of the cultural area itself, whether it be called Near East or Middle East. It is not simply the Islamic world. It certainly is not the Arab world alone. Nor is it just the area ruled by the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. As Professor Nikki Keddie points out, in her essay on 'Is there a Middle East?', it must include Iran and Afghanistan, while for historic reasons excluding large centers of Islamic civilization such as Indonesia, Malasia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and what is left of Islamic civilization in Soviet Central Asia. But neither is the term just a modern idea developed in the nineteenth century to express modern concepts. It is, in fact, a modern term developed to express a long-existing reality, namely that culture which is the modern expression of the amalgum of civilization developed over the centuries out of the contributions of the many peoples, religions, and cultures which have lived in, invaded, and contacted the area. It is the modern amalgum of the contributions of Semities, Hamites, Indo-Europeans, Turks, and others too numerous to mention. That amalgum, since the time of the Prophet Mohammad, has been largely epitomized through its Islamic and Arabic variant, which has been practiced and expressed not only by Arabs and Muslims, but by all the non-Arab and non-Muslim peoples living in the area, albeit, to be sure, with distinct variations. To apply a modern term, whether it be Middle East or Near East, to the study of the area before that particular term was used, either within or outside the area, seems justified when its application, as the embodiment of that amalgum of civilization, is accepted and understood.

In other contributions, Kamal S. Salibi, Professor of History at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, describes the rise to power of the Ma'nid dynasty in the middle and late sixteenth century. Melvin Albaum, of the University of Colorado, and Christopher Davies, University of Texas, Austin, discuss the effect of the social and economic modernization of Republican Turkey on the spacial structure of Turkish economic life. Donald P. Little, of McGill University, Montreal, Canada, discusses the conflict between Ibn Taymiyya and the Bahri Mamluk regime in fourteenth-century Egypt which led to his imprisonment and trial. And Mordecai Roshwald, of Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada, concludes his study of the 'Marginal Jewish Sects in Israel' with an examination of the situation of the Samaritans and the Falashas.

This issue contains a special memorial tribute to Gustav E. von Grunebaum written by one of his oldest friends and collaborators, Professor Franz Rosenthal, of Yale University. It is particularly fitting that Professor von Grunebaum has been named the posthumous recipient of the 1973 award of the medal which he, himself, created at the University of California, Los Angeles in the name of Giorgio Levi Della Vida, in recognition of the outstanding characteristics of scholarship, humanity, and courage which he, like the great scholar whom he honored, possessed in such abundance. May he rest in peace.

*Istanbul, Turkey*

STANFORD J. SHAW