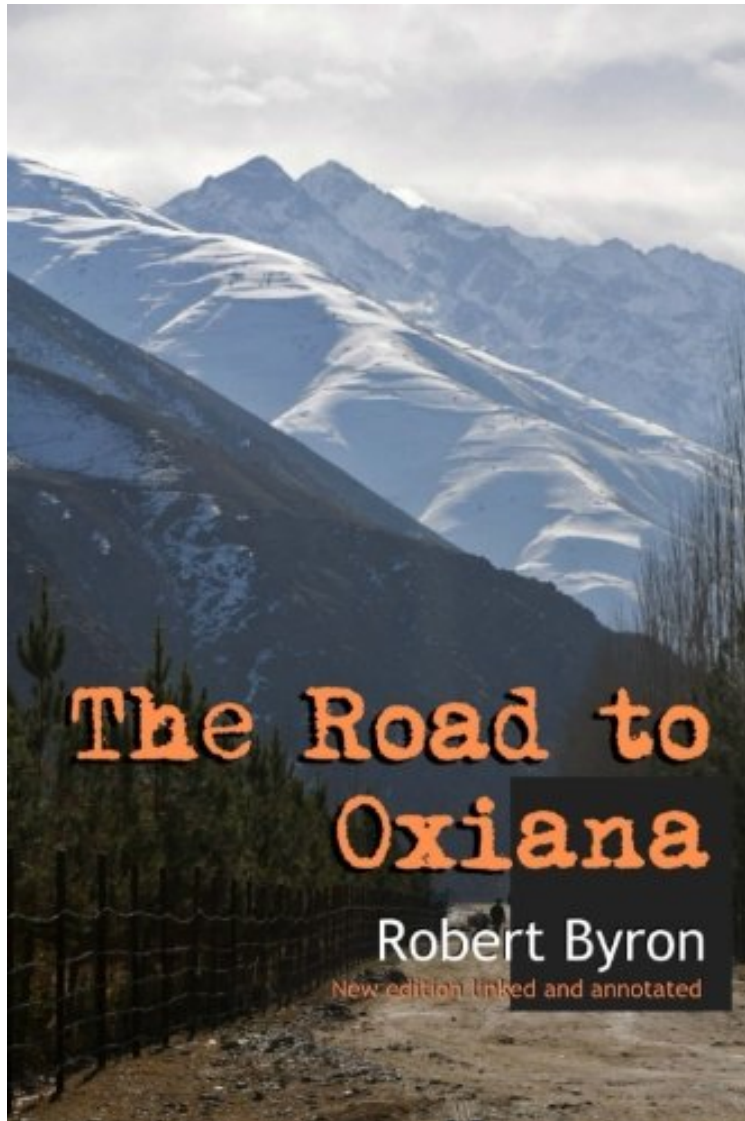


(Free pdf) The Road to Oxiana: New linked and annotated edition

## The Road to Oxiana: New linked and annotated edition

*Robert Byron*

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**Robert Byron : The Road to Oxiana: New linked and annotated edition** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Road to Oxiana: New linked and annotated edition:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Breathtaking ride into 6th century persia.....and the everybit as remote pre-WWII Iran by English brahminsBy William V. DePauloExtraordinary story by man with deep knowledge of and appreciation for architectural history.....but you don't need to share that interest to enjoy the literate description of a world long since evaporated, of travelers who actually carried "letters of introduction" .....in part absurd, in part wildly entertaining.....the ride, by car boat rail truck camel foot ....whatever... is worth it for the company.....4 of 4

people found the following review helpful. Great writing, great landscape, great characters - read it! By William J. Feuer This wonderful account by Robert Byron of his travels through Persia and Afghanistan is spare when it should be spare: "Lifar came to dinner. Bertie mentioned that all whales have syphilis" (a complete paragraph from page 19) and effusive when it should be effusive: "Here the green resolved, not into ordinary grass, but into wild corn, barley, and oats, which accounted for that vivid fire, as of a life within the green. And among these myriad bearded alleys lived a population of flowers, buttercup and poppies, pale purple irises and dark purple campanulas, and countless others..." (from a paragraph on page 200). Never mind the country he was traveling through, I just love his prose. They are never trite, never cliché. It's almost as if when a hackneyed phrase would have done, he sought hard for something bright, fresh, new. But don't never mind the country he explored (stony deserts, mountains, steppes, caves, rivers) or the people he encountered (generous peasants, officious police, frightened guides, accommodative local governors, obstreperous archaeologists, clueless tourists, declamatory larger than life ambassadors whose words are accompanied by appropriate dynamic markings...) - he makes them all fascinating. His dry British wit pervades much of the manuscript. And, oh, how he waxes eloquent on architecture, a subject which in the abstract seems excruciatingly boring to me, but is never so within this book, as he documents the features of mosques and mausoleums and ruined cities. In the 30's when Byron made this trip Iran was Persia and under the autocratic rule of the Shah (AKA Marjoribanks) instead of being strangled by fundamentalist clerics. Afghanistan was a poor underdeveloped country under (what in Afghanistan passes for) the benign rule of its royal family. Now that country has been destroyed by 30 years of internal strife, war with the Soviet Union, Taliban depravity, war with the US, and more internal strife. Whatever the consequences for the peoples of these countries, the time is long gone when an English speaking traveler could make their way from Persepolis to the feet of the Hindu Kush or the Pamirs. How sad. But at least one can read Byron's book. I'd also recommend Dervla Murphy's *Full Tilt: Ireland to India with a Bicycle*. It's not as cerebral, but just imagine the idea of anyone, let alone (gasp) a woman, bicycling all the way from Eastern Europe, through Azerbaijan, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan into India. That was in 1963. Wow! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Yes - a true classic By Alan McNamara This is a true classic. Easy read full of personality and dry English humour. Travelling through Iran and Afghanistan between the world wars, Robert Byron describes places familiar from the news but inaccessible today. And travelling as only an Englishman abroad can do so. Byron's special interest was architecture and his descriptions of the many mosques and cities he visited are superb. But it is his word paintings of the various characters he encountered that enchant, from the Afghan ambassador to Byron's driver and donkeys.

"The Road to Oxiana" is an account of Robert Byron's ten-month journey to Iran and Afghanistan in 1933-34 in the company of Christopher Sykes. This travelogue is considered by many modern travel writers to be the first example of great travel writing. Bruce Chatwin has described it as a sacred text, beyond criticism and carried his copy since he was fifteen years old, spineless and floodstained after four journeys through central Asia. By the Si-o-seh pol bridge in Isfahan, Iran, Byron wrote: The lights came out. A little breeze stirred, and for the first time in four months I felt a wind that had no chill in it. I smelt the spring, and the rising sap. One of those rare moments of absolute peace, when the body is loose, the mind asks no questions, and the world is a triumph, was mine.

About the Author Robert Byron (26 February 1905 - 24 February 1941) was a British travel writer, art critic and historian. Byron traveled to widely different places; Mount Athos, India, the Soviet Union, and Tibet. However it was in Persia and Afghanistan that he found the subject round which he forged his style of modern travel writing, when he later came to write up his account of "The Road to Oxiana" in early 1936, in Beijing, when he found himself alone in house of Desmond Parsons, the unreciprocated love of his life. Robert Byron died in 1941, during the Second World War, when the ship on which he was travelling was torpedoed by a U-Boat off Cape Wrath, Scotland, en route to Egypt. His body was never found.