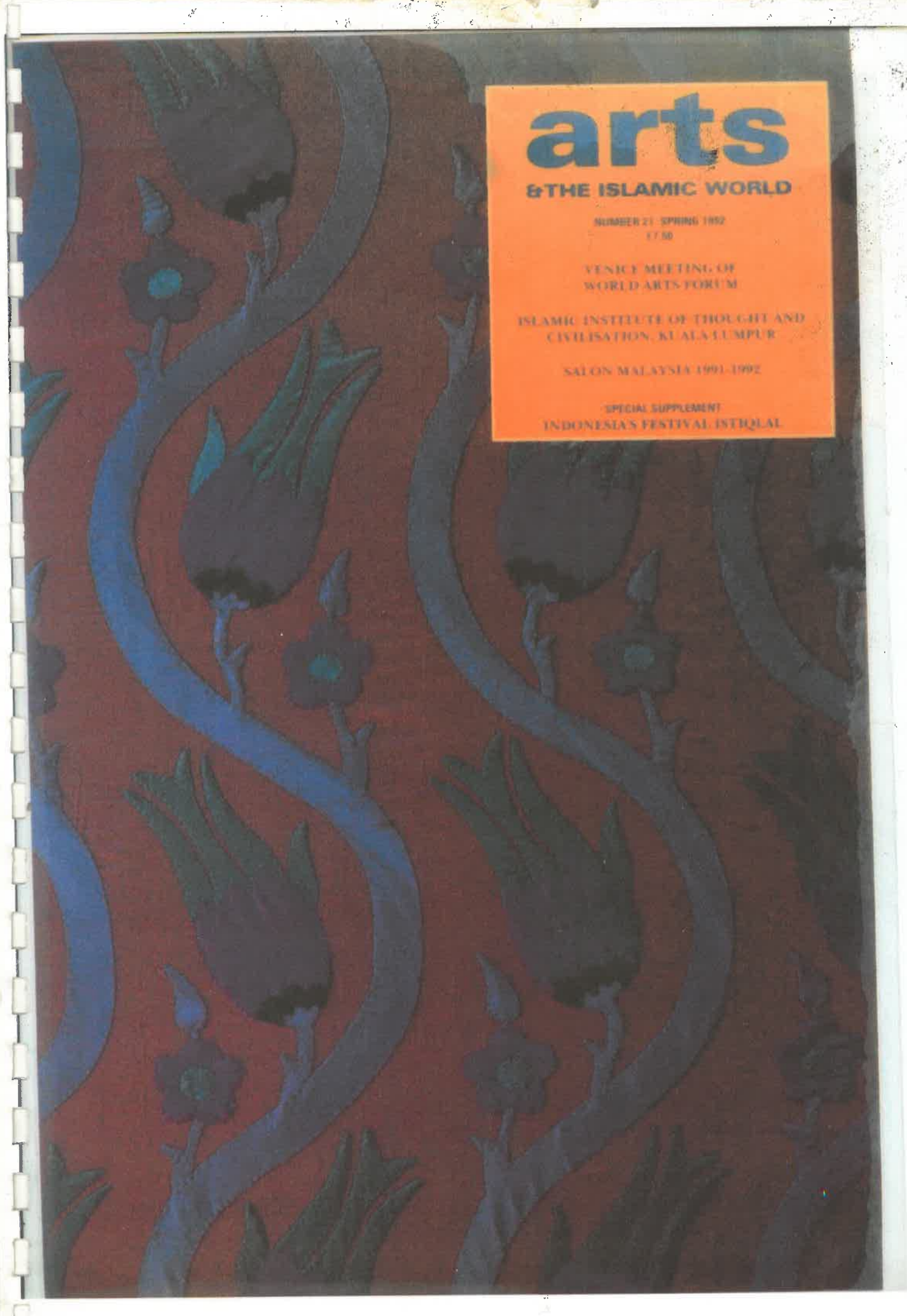


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Godfrey Goodwin

editorial

Arts & The Islamic World magazine is now entering the 11th year of its publication since its first "experimental" issue came out in January 1983. This was in pursuance of the recommendations of the 1st International Seminar on Islamic Arts, organised by the Islamic Arts Foundation in 1982, with academics and professionals from more than 20 countries attending. The idea, or the challenge, was to produce the magazine without any capital investment, on a self-paying basis, without much obligation to belong to any country, group or ism; and a team of volunteers from among the Seminar participants, who agreed to assist in an honorary capacity, was entrusted with the task of editing and producing it on that basis!

The networking team grew, drawn from many Eastern and Western countries — the present list appears on our Contents page — making it possible for this, in some ways unique publishing project, to develop as it has over the last 10 years. There have already been 20 issues, including a number of special supplements on specific themes, combining two or more issues of its quarterly appearance: a cumulative list of contents of all these issues has been prepared and is available on request. During this period, while the magazine has steadily shaped as a leading international publication on the subject, its financial viability has been under severe strain. There is more to a magazine than writing, editing and production: it needs proper marketing which, in turn, needs substantial financial input!

The situation was reviewed last September at a special session of the 4th in the series of international seminars organised by the Islamic Arts Foundation every three years. There were wide-ranging discussions on the state of the arts funding in the Islamic world generally, and on the predicament of publications like *Arts & The Islamic World* in particular, which suffer from lack of resources for professional promotion and sales. In the light of these deliberations, various avenues are being explored to restructure its production and marketing. Proposals for its collaborative publication in association with other institutions are also being considered, and we shall keep our readers in the picture as these plans develop.

■■■■■■■■■

The present issue opens with a report on the Venice meeting of the World Arts Forum, where the world artistic community sought to create its own constituency to encourage a spirit of understanding in a world of cultural diversity. In the Islamic world itself a landmark development has been the formal opening of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation in Kuala Lumpur, masterminded by the distinguished scholar, Professor Naquib Al-Attas, here introduced to our readers in evocative text and visuals by one of our Contributing Editors, Dr Gulzar Haider. And there is a special supplement devoted to the spectacular Festival Istiqlal in Jakarta, the first of its kind that brought together the whole range of Islamic arts from all over Indonesia, and attracted an estimated six million visitors over a four-week period.

■■■■■■■■■

Islamic Arts Foundation has announced that the 5th International Seminar on Islamic Arts, due in 1994, will be held in Budapest (Hungary), in association with the International Union of Oriental and Asian Studies, and the Alexander Csoma de Koros Society of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The theme will be *Islamic Arts in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia*; and proposals/suggestions for papers to be presented on various aspects of the theme are invited from scholars who may like to attend. The duration will be one week, including day-trips and excursions to important Islamic collections and archaeological sites in Hungary. Exact dates, most likely sometime in August 1994, will be announced later.

Global Unity Through Cultural Diversity

At a historic meeting in Venice last autumn, the world artistic community created its own voice in global affairs as prominent leaders in the arts, business, the media, sciences and government from 25 countries committed themselves to enhance the role of the arts in cross-cultural cooperation, and to encourage a spirit of understanding in a world of cultural diversity.

The occasion was the 1st Annual meeting of the World Arts Forum,an independent, not-for-profit foundation initiated by Prof Klaus Schwab, founder and president of the World Economic Forum. The meeting was jointly chaired by him and the Foreign Minister of Italy, Gianni De Michelis, and it issued strong recommendations to governments to put much greater emphasis on cultural issues in education at all levels. Among the concrete proposals were:

- the creation of a world arts satellite programme, a "cultural CNN";
- the establishment of an annual award for that media organisation which best fosters global transcultural understanding; and
- the organisation of a " world arts village" foreseen for 1996, which will become the quadrennial global arts event, matching in its importancethe Olympic games, but reflecting the spirit of the World Arts Forum: global unity through cultural diversity.

Artists in different disciplines, and art patrons from the five continents gathered at the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista's chapel for the opening session which was a working affair instead of a ceremonial function. Under the Renaissance frescoes of Tintoretto and his students, the two co-chairmen emphasized the need for having a global initiative that would enhance the ability of individuals around the world to understand and appreciate cultures different from their own, through exposure to diverse artistic disciplines belonging to different cultures. Gianni De Michelis spoke of the concept behind the Forum initiative and how it could be achieved, while Schwab set the actual framework to be followed during the three day summit meetings (29-31 August).

Most of the members who had attended the two preparatory meetings earlier in Geneva led small working groups that identified what the participants thought to be specific and concrete steps for the Forum to take, in order to

achieve its goal of "Global Cross-Cultural Cooperation: The Biggest Challenge for Mankind". The rapporteurs summed up the points and some were called upon to read them aloud.

The second day was dedicated to different workshops on the following subjects: *Arts and Education*; *Arts and Science and Technology*; *Arts and Business*; *Arts and the Media* and a special preparatory group on *A World Arts Village*. Participants were to choose the group with the subject according to their own specific interest. The discussions were refreshingly frank and animated though sometimes these seemed to focus more on western problems.







The Forum was officially launched in the afternoon of the second day by six speakers from different parts of the world, once more under the gaze of Tintoretto's school. Princess Wijdan Ali, President of the Royal Society of Fine Arts in Jordan, called for the abolition of cultural apartheid that exists between the developing and the developed world. It was followed by Jack Lang, the French Minister of Culture, with his usual humour in a trilingual speech in Italian, French and English that brightened the atmosphere. Johnny Clegg and Quincy Jones representing contemporary music were balanced by Maestro Lorin Maazel. The final speakers were Professor Schwab and Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis who summed up by stressing the importance of global cultural exchange for the purpose of eliminating regional differences in order to attain world peace.



Top, left, from left: Arpad Goencz, President of Hungary and Gianni De Michelis, Foreign Minister of Italy. Top and middle: Views of the meeting at the Scoula Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista Chapel. Above: Amjad Ali Khan, Indian sarod player and composer.





Top, from left: Quincey Jones, Jazz musician and Producer, Princess Wijden Ali, President, Royal Society of Fine Arts, Amman, Prof Klaus Schwab, President World Arts Forum and Jack Lang, Cultural Minister of France. Above, from left: Prof Klaus Schwab, Arpad Goencz and Gianni De Michelis.

The last day of the Conference dealt with questions of "Globalism vs. regionalism: the cultural identity dilemma", followed by discussions on "The role of the arts: what society expects from the artist, and what is the responsibility of the artist towards society".

The star of the closing ceremony was the President of Hungary Arped Goencz. His moving and candid speech gave hope to the concept that when culture and politics meet, it augurs well for the future of the world. The World Arts Forum ended its meetings with a short and ethereal recital by the Indian Sarod player Amjad Ali Khan, proving once more that through art all barriers melt and universality is no more a dream.

The success of the meetings was due to wide and varied choice of the participants. It included international and regional figures, such as Helene Ahrweiler, former president of the George Pompidou National

Centre of Arts and Culture in Paris, Ebrahim Alkazi, President and Founder of the Center for International Contemporary Arts in New York; Irina Antonova, Director of Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow; Amnon Barzel, Director of Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, in Prato, Italy; Italian painter Alighiero Boetti; rock star Johnny Clegg from South Africa; Adelina von Furstenberg, Director of Centre Nationale d'Art Contemporian in Grenoble; Lord Gowrie, chairman of Sotheby's in London; Thomas Hoving, arts commentator and former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Arts in New York; Indian painter M.F. Hussain; Malaysian painter Ibrahim Hussein, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Director General of Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture in Istanbul; Michael Kahn, artistic director of the Shakespeare Theatre of Folger in Washington D.C.; Indian sarod player and composer Amjad Ali Khan; American conceptual artist Joseph Kasuth; Greek jewellery designer Ilias Lalaounis; French minister of culture Jack Lang; Olive Lewin, executive director of Jamaica Institute of Folk Culture in Kingston; Chinese painter Li Chi-mao; Turkish composer Zulfu Livaneli; Lorin Maazel, conductor and music director of Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra National de France; Souren Melkian, art editor of the International Herald Tribune; American collector Raymond Nasher; Efrain Paesky, chief of Division of Arts, at the Organization of American States; Mexican sculptor Sebastian; Russian violonist and director Vladimir Spivakov; George Whyte, chairman of the Committee for Cultural Events at the Festival of Switzerland in Britain; Susumu Yamamoto, President of Fuji Television Gallery Co. in Tokyo: they are but a few of many others. Artists from black Africa were certainly missing, though some were invited. Hopefully in future meetings this gap will be filled. It is further hoped that many other meetings among the participants will bear fruit in the form of diverse and frequent artistic collaborations and exchanges on various levels, and at different locales.

Apart from these meetings two spectacular events took place. The first was the visit to the dramatic exhibition "The Celts: The First Europe" held at Palazzio Grassi and the second a gala dinner in the breathtaking surroundings of Villa La Malcontenta, where Italian good taste in music, decor and culinary art manifested itself in all its exquisite and varied richness. To have about two hundred people, from the five continents, meet under one roof and be united in one objective is a great feat in itself. The person who achieved this is Professor Klaus Schwab and he deserves a global applause.

W.A.

WORLD ARTS FORUM

Extracts from Addresses

Artists are the Challengers, the Questioners of Today's Societies

Our presence here in Venice, today and the next two days, may become a historical event. Everything will depend on us, on our commitment, on our enthusiasm and how much we can transmit this commitment, this enthusiasm to the outside world.

We are here 150 men and women from the 5 continents, from different artistic disciplines, young and old (our friend Mr Long who came all the way from Taiwan is even 101 years old!). We are here to act as the global ambassadors of culture, to make our contribution to the "New World Order". As the latest developments, only some hundred kilometers from here show us, no New World Order will be peaceful if we cannot create a better cross-cultural cooperation.

Why are we here? Not just to look at the arts and what can be done for the arts. No, we are here to look at what the arts mean for mankind, and what artists can do for the survival of our endangered human race.

Let me recall how we have defined our mission:

> "The mission of the World Arts Forum is to enhance the role of the arts in effective cross-cultural cooperation and to encourage a spirit of understanding in a world of cultural diversity".

Many tell us that the next century is the century of creativity, of culture, of real human self-development. But in reality, to put it bluntly, culture today is not present in global, in national decision-making. You, the artists, are not a predominant constituency as you should be.

We are at the crossroads of development. In the coming years the arts may become entirely "banalized", or else we may see complete democratization and renaissance of the arts. It is not the politicians or our friends from the

media (whom I cordially welcome here) who will decide in which direction we are going. No, in the end, it is you: the artists.

■■■■■■

The World Arts Forum was incorporated last year as an independent, not-for-profit foundation, in the public interest, located in Geneva. The creation of the Foundation was possible thanks to the charitable contributions of my co-founders whom I cordially welcome here.

The Foundation provides the legal framework and limited start-up finance, but the vitality—the action—has to come from the Foundation's Council: you. We prepared our action here with two Preparatory Meetings in which over 50 of you participated.

In order to create the Council, we identified over the last year, and with the help of many of you, about 400 potential members. We presented the idea to those 400 and found an enthusiastic response: the right idea at the right time. Out of those 400 more than 300 felt committed to the idea and over 150 are here, despite the fact that the invitation to this Meeting was issued—due to the Gulf crisis—with only a 4-month notice and despite the many festivals which take place at the end of August. I am grateful for *your* presence here. Your *active* presence. We are here not at a conference with some nice speeches and social events. No, this here is the beginning of a new partnership for global action and YOU are the partners.

■■■■■■

Artists are the challengers, the questioners of today's societies. They have to ask questions. They have to be critical. But for our joint initiative here: let's join hands and share our minds, let's be positive throughout the Meeting to meet the real challenge: how to create a spirit of understanding in a world of cultural diversity.

Klaus Schwab
President
World Arts Forum

Growing Importance of Free Time

Why is it important that such a group of people be together in Venice at this very moment to discuss the problems of art and culture today, people who have come from many different parts of the world? I will just try to open the discussion, by giving a few subjective guidelines. As Professor Schwab has said it is up to you to fulfil the objectives. Our aim is only to try to start the process. This is a real experiment. As with all experiments we cannot know yet what the results will be in the end.

■■■■■■

We need to take into consideration what creativity will mean in the near future, in a world which is changing very rapidly and very deeply. The impact of creativity, of culture and of the arts on society and the economy, on institutions, and normal life must all be considered. Obviously in our view — and this is why we consider the present the right moment for such a meeting — the centrality of creativity which we have today, is unique in history, and this is having an impact on the economy, on society and all our institutions. We will want to discuss the impact that the increasing overall importance of culture will have.

■■■■■■

Another key element is the growing importance of free time. Obviously free time now is different from the free time of the past. At the end of this century, a person's working time during his or her lifetime will be reduced by half. And the so-called free time of the past will become the most important part of a lifetime.
The increasing importance of free time is connected with economic progress and with educational progress. People want to have the possibility to fulfil not only their basic material needs, but also their immaterial needs.

■■■■■■

We have two options before us: the option of integration or that of disintegration. Integration is the positive reaction. The other option, the option of disintegration — even though we understand that there are good reasons for it some times — can only lead the world in the wrong direction.

We know that we want integration, but the problem is that we do not want to pay a high price in terms of the destruction of identities, of individuality, for this integration. Integration must mean the capability to put together globalism and regionalism. Integration means being able to handle — at the same time — a process of devolution toward decentralized structures, and evolution of international structures. To put together individualism and globalization.

Gianni De Michelis
Foreign Minister of Italy

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Making Art, instead of Politics and Weapons , the Common Language of the World

Our meeting was imbued with the common conviction that the arts, even though they have always unconciously expressed some theory or ideology, should not be lowered to the rank of simple servant of politics irrespective of the noble character of political intentions. The political role of the arts lies in their lack of politicism, in the fact that their very existance proves and demonstrates the universality of the world.

Let us not forget that the arts are not merely an expression, but also a tool of the universality of our world, because facts and common knowledge do not necessarily conform to each other, because the universality of art is the dream of a precious few while the majority only perceives their great diversity. Few people know that autochthonous culture as such does not exist, that every culture, mass or elite, shows a multitude of ties in time and space with other cultures while different from these other cultures by virtue of an equally high number of singular features.

It goes without saying that we stand to benefit from making art instead of politics and weapons the common language of the world. The task is endless, but not an impossible one. We must take this task upon ourselves, but should not cheat ourselves into believing that either we or our distant successors will fulfil it completely. Actually, this may well be what makes the task beautiful.

■■■■■■

What is it that we want to transmit through the arts? The unity of the world? Its diversity? Mankind's sense of danger? Its vision of the future? The joy of life? Or all of these simultaneously, because this is how to picture the world as a whole? It is up to you to decide these and many other questions on a case by case basis, and in different ways.

I think one meeting only will not provide these answers and there will never be such a thing as a final answer. This is why the World Arts Forum and its projects are of the utmost importance. When creating this Forum's structures, we must think in terms of an extremely flexible, open, absolutely independent and decidedly humanist organization of people capable of looking beyond their natural national, social and cultural determinism, capable of rejecting every manifestation of racism and national bias, all too frequent in our times, capable of collecting the cream of artistic creation and presenting it to the world once in every three or four years, in places where it is both worthwhile and useful to organize such a presentation.

Arpad Goencz
President of Hungary

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Cultural Ignorance is the Main Factor that Breeds Mistrust

This meeting for me is a dream that has turned into a reality, in an age where dreams hardly occur, let alone materialize. The person to achieve such a feat is Professor Klaus Schwab. I take the liberty on behalf of all present and extend to him our applause, deep gratitude and sincere appreciation for bringing together this distinguished and certainly most interesting body of artists and art patrons, in the beautiful and inspiring environs of historical Venice.

■■■■■■

This forum comes as the first breakthrough towards attaining a real Global Village free of misconceptions. Only by bringing artists and art patrons from different cultures and backgrounds together, a better and deeper understanding can be created among ourselves. No matter how many political, economic, agricultural and military pacts and agreements exist between nations, there will be no peace if mistrust remains the prevailing norm; and cultural ignorance is the main factor that breeds mistrust among us.

■■■■■■

All through history, only politicians, economists and the military have had a say. For the first time now an attempt is being made, on such a grand and comprehensive level, to assemble under one roof a diverse group whose common denominator is the involvement of each one in the arts, regardless of one's religion, race, income or occupation. This in itself is an achievement.

Wijdan Ali
President
Royal Society of Fine Arts, Amman

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Nothing Beautiful is Accomplished without Passion

Nothing beautiful is accomplished without passion, and the key question facing us today is, do we want to create a uniform world or do we want to respect and develop the immensity of our possibilities? Will exchange enrich or impoverish culture? Do we risk homogenizing culture, demultiplying our possibilities, diminishing our creativity?

Jack Lang
Cultural Minister, France

Whose Globalism Is It ?

I have come from a developing country. And having attended these first 24 hours I cannot help but register a certain nervousness about the problems which I think are developing. It is important that they be dealt with. A Forum like this cannot be established without many of these problems being addressed and identified.

In South Africa, people who are in any sense talking about globalism, and who are talking about culture, are asking a very important question. They are asking, whose globalism is it, and what kind of globalism will it be? Is it a globalism which is going to be managed by the developed nations, through their cultural values and symbols? Or is it going to be a globalism which is derived in a more democratic way, and how can we move towards that kind of situation. And I hope that this particular forum will be a platform for that.

Johnny Clegg
Vice-President
South African Musicians Alliance

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I Knew that this is Really Going to Happen

I am very happy to be involved here in such an innovative and ambitious plan. That is what this is all about. I plan to give all that I have in my soul to implement this program. The people in this audience are used to dealing with situations from a blank page. They start with a blank page and they make something magical happen. We may not come out here with concrete plans, but with all the ideas and the passion and energy that is out there today, I know that this is really going to happen.

Quincey Jones
Jazz Musician and Producer, USA

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●



Interior of Wazir Khan Mosque, Lahore.

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3rd Salon Malaysia 1991-1992

Sharifah Zuriah Aljeffri

There was an air of excitemen in the crowded exhibition hall on the ground floor of the National Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital city of lights and gardens on Friday, 20 December 1991. The excitement was justified. It was the opening of an exhibition of works submitted for the Third Salon Malaysia Competition which was revived after a lapse of thirteen years.

As stated in the Judges Report, written by art historian and senior lecturer in the School of Architecture, National University of Singapore, Mr. T.K. Sabapathy, "A salon is a spectacular event; it propels artists, institutions such as museums and galleries devoted to the acquisition and display of contemporary art, as well as other agencies constituting the art world, into the public realm. A salon is competitive; it seeks to identify works embodying artistic values and quality, and accords it status and merit; in this respect, each entry is considered as a discrete entity, entailing the use of languages uniquely and appropriately, and delineating concepts clearly, powerfully and distinctly." To some extent the Third Salon Malaysia met these criteria.

Although some of the well-established artists did not participate in this competition, the works submitted by the younger artists proved to be challenging, intriguing and imaginative. A total of 447 artists submitted 699 entries in response to three designated categories—painting, printmaking and sculpture. The works were judged on the following criteria:

(i) To gauge the current state of art in Malaysia;
(ii) To encourage creativity and attainment of excellence by Malaysian artists;
(iii) To provide opportunity for greater appreciation and understanding of contemporary Malaysian art by the Malaysian public.

In describing the entries, the Judges Report stated: "Two dominant interests are discernible from the entries. In one, the focus is on creating entities which are self-referring, in which concept and technique are integrated so as to produce images or objects which are aesthetically satisfying; such productions uphold the canons of painting, sculpture and printmaking. The majority of prints as well as paintings can be viewed from this stance.

"In this connection, the entries in the category of printmaking were disappointing. One can only assume that as a medium it does not sufficiently interest those practising art here. When compared to prints that were produced in the decade of the 70s by artists pursuing diverse specialisations, the present entries are tepid and generally devoid of conviction; even when employing the medium at a technical level, there is a noticeable absence of rigour and circumspection. In this respect, the winning entries by Fauzan Haji Omar (*Diversity and Unity Series 1*) and Juhari b. Muhammad Said (*Tiga Cawan Kopi*) stood out sufficiently from the rest in terms of imagery, composition and execution. Both artists have produced works which are refined and visually absorbing.

"Mention was made of two dominant forces and one of them has been explained briefly. The other is aimed at producing images and entities operating in what can be termed as an expanded field. By this is meant that artistic practices are not defined solely in relation to the medium or aesthetic quality but in connection with operations on a set of cultural terms for which any medium or combination of them might be used. No longer is the notion of artistic engagement dictated by conditions of medium or the intrinsic values of materials or, for that matter, the transformative power of the artist's subjective concerns but in terms of structures and juxtapositions oriented towards cultural issues and conditions. Such interests also embrace notions of the self and the other.

"It is in painting that these two forces appear most vigorously and in antithesis to one another. And nowhere do these forces appear as opposed to one another than in viewing Awang Damit b. Ahmad's *Nyanyian Petani Gunung 1* and Tan Chin Kuan's *Tragic Blue Night!*

"Awang Damit's composition is a tribute to painterliness; surface, pigment and brushmark are interwoven to produce a seamless image; materially, structurally and psychologically the picture is self-sufficient. In viewing it, we are absorbed into a world that is as complete as one can imagine and, for that reason, completely satisfying. Tan Chin Kuan's world is fragmented; the narrative vein is not continuous but made up of disparate segments in which visual images and words are juxtaposed so as to generate discourses that are cacophonous. It is an overwhelming, jarring, angry world, and no less real for all that, filled with anxiety and trepidation.

"Awang Damit was awarded the winning prize for painting not because the world he projected was preferred but because his control over language and concept was consistently more commanding.

Others like Tan Chin Kuan, who were all running close to one another, are developing concepts, languages and strategies along complex structural and systematic fronts. They are producing extremely engaging works which require the viewer to make connections with the world other than those strictly defined by aesthetics. In my view, they are pointing to artistic practices which need critically engaged stances; this is evident from a number of submissions in which conventional boundaries delimiting medium and genre are continually disrupted. Paintings no longer attach themselves politely, effacingly on walls; they protrude into and at times occupy actual space. The subject matter of some of the submissions project radical stances towards social, cultural and political situations, as well as dissonant conditions of the self. These are intimations of intentions which are evidently expanding the sphere of painting here, and mark radical departures from Salon 1 and 2. Even as these must be hailed as exciting, it was in the realm of sculpture that the judges encountered the most exhilarating works. This was indeed surprising, as the art world in Malaysia has largely been dominated and circumscribed by painting and two-dimensional practices. In one bounding leap, or so it appears, the situation has been turned on its head, at least for this occasion.

"Bayu Utomo's *Lang Kachang*, Raja Shariman's *Watak* and Mad Anuar's *Pemain Rebab* are works projecting compelling presences in terms of both material existence and psychological beings. They are the outcome of rigorous engagements with materials and disciplined formulations of concepts. These are sculptures embodying the canons of that art.

"It is such entries as Zulkifli Yusof's *The Power 1*, Tan Chin Kuan's *Garden* and Yeoh Jin Leng's *Humans, Icons and Precious Earth* that sculpture attains its heights and, for that matter, Salon Malaysia 1991/92 reaches its climax. These presentations point to the complex, vexing relationship that prevails between man, objects, the environment and belief systems; they point to the weight and obligations of the past, the fragile nature of both man and planetary environment, the horror of mechanization and the impenetrable structures of power. In all these respects these artists, even while rooted in their respective social/cultural contexts, also attain validity in their work which is universal; they have expanded the very notions of sculpture and of art intellectually, emotionally, materially, and psychologically. Their works require the viewer to be totally immersed in them.

"In viewing the sculpture entries, the judges were unanimous in awarding the winning prize to Zulkifli Yusof for his *The Power 1*; in scope and execution it exudes authority and conviction. For these reasons as well, this entry has been awarded the Hadiah Menteri Kebudayaan, Kesenian dan Pelancongan Malaysia (Award of the Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism)."

It is worth quoting here from Zulkifli's own statement about his winning entry:

"In *The Power 1* symbols presented spontaneously bring the viewer to the past. The artist deals with both the old and modern symbols in an attempt to give the viewer a comparative understanding between the two spans of time. The chair represents the main image symbolizing power. The bridge, which has often been used in the artist's early works, is being incorporated again to represent mobility and commitment in reaching for the ultimate goal in life.

"Frustrations often occur when these goals are not achieved. The artist believes the ultimate power is the highest symbol to a man. One's integrity becomes more virtuous when power is properly used.

"*The Power 1* reveals the artist's abhorrance towards arrogance, prejudice and brutality which often comes with power. In both the 2D and 3D works, symbols such as medals and awards are presented to symbolize one's success. All human beings crave for this worldly status and power, sincerely or otherwise. These struggles are unusual if obstacles emerge even when one is sincere in the pursuit of reaching for a higher goal.

"The *image sword* in *The Power 1* is deliberately placed near the owner of the chair, to show a state of perpetually protecting the man in power.

"The sword stands for 'power to kill' those who stand against the owner of the chair. In terms of usage of media in *The Power 1* the artist tries to incorporate various materials and techniques such as paintings and drawings."

Out of 699 entries by 447 artists, 503 entries by 335 artists were in the painting category. However, what was disappointing was that only 68 works by 46 artists were selected under this category. As one art critic commented "Has painting become outdated, or is this a reflection of the standard of artists taking part? Or, are the judges being overwhelmed by installations and sculptures?" Salon Malaysia 1991/92 was no ordinary art competition. It was prestigious and works submitted had to be of a very high standard. Thus judges, in their selection of works, had to look for excellence and creativity.

A total of 116 works, out of which 27 were winning entries, by 83 artists were on display on the ground and first floors of the National Arts Gallery (through 1 March 1992). Salon Malaysia 1991/92 was jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism and the National Art Gallery and was the biggest art exhibition of the year with a total of M$131,000 (US$48,268) as prize monies. The exhibition was officially opened by the Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism, Dato' Haji Sabbaruddin Chik.

There were some shortcomings in terms of display. Had there been more exhibition space in the National Art Gallery, some of the works, especially the installation pieces and the large-sized paintings, would have created a greater impression. As a result, the impact of getting the message across to visitors was lacking. For example, Bayu Utomo's life-sized sculpture



piece entitled *Lang Kachang*, depicting a warrior made of steel and plaster, was displayed against a wall allowing the viewers to see three sides of the sculpture only. It was a very dramatic figure expressing "valour, chivalry and pride" and "symbolising the latent struggle of the human spirit."

Yeoh Jin Leng's ceramic *Installation of Humans, Icons and Precious Earth* was placed in one section of the room flanked by three big paintings. The space between his installation and the paintings on the wall was narrow and the impact of his message to care and love for the environment was lost. One of the big paintings that was in this small area was Hamidi Ahmad Besar's *Bas Mini* which had a portion of the painting protruding and occupying some space. Fauzan Haji Omar's painting *Layer Series/Hightide/Lowtide* and Fauzin Mustaffa's *The Last Horizon II* were hung close to each other giving the impression that they were one painting.

It must have been difficult for the National Art Gallery trying to fit all the works in such a small area. This shortage of space had hampered the display of art works effectively and creatively and one hopes the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism realised the importance of expanding the National Art Gallery as the custodian of Malaysian art heritage. (The National Art Gallery was to have undergone extensive





Top: Juhari Muhammad Said, *Tiga Cawan Kopi*, woodcut and lino, 1991. Major Award (Printmaking). Middle: Loo Foh Sang, *The Sound of Zen 111*, Cetakan mono, 1991. Above: Awang Damit B Ahmad, *Nyanyian Petani Gunungi*, mixed media, 1991. Major Award (Paintings).

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism Award
(M$15,000/US$5,527)
Zulkifli Yusof,
"The Power I"

PAINTING

Major Award
(M$10,000/US$3,685):
Awang Damit Ahmad,
"Nyanyian Petani Gunung I".

Minor Award
(M$5,000/US$1,842 each):
Eng Hwee Chu,
"Black Moon 12";
Fauzan Haji Omar,
"Love Series Highside/Lowside";
Hamidi Ahmad Besar,
"Bas Mini";
Mohamed Fauzin Mustafa,
"The Last Horizon II";
Tan Chin Kuan,
"Tragic of the Blue Night".

Consolation
(M$3,000/US$1,105 each):
Awsang Damit Ahmad,
"Nyanyian Petani Gunung III";
Rafiee Abdul Ghani,
"Kebun Sultan I";
Tan Tong,
"Yang Yang".

PRINTMAKING

Major Award
(jointly M$5,000/US$1,842 each):
Fauzan Haji Omar,
"Diversity and Unity Series I";
Juhari Muhammad Said,
"Tiga Cawan Kopi".

Minor Award
(M$3,000/US$1,105 each):
Ahmad Shukri Mohammad Said,
"Harimau Mati Meninggalkan Belang, Manusia Mati Meninggalkan Nama";
Fauzan Haji Omar,
"Diversity and Unity Series II";
Hasmul Hazi Mohamed,
"The Colour of Misery II";
Long Thien Shih,
"Untitled";
Riaz Ahmad Jamil Ahmad,
"Mohor Hitam Putih".

Consolation
(M$1,000/US$368 each):
Juhari Muhammad Said,
"Cawan Cawan Kelmarin";
Loh Foh Sang,
"The Sound of Zen III";
Tan King Hock,
"Equus Overpowering".

SCULPTURE
Major Award
(M$10,000/US$3,685):
Zulkifli Yusof,
"The Power I".

Minor Award
(M$5,000/US$1,842 each):
Bayu Utomo Radjikin,
"Lang Kuning";
Mohamad Azhar Abdul Manan,
"Sarawak - September '89 : Documentation No. 6";
Raja Shahriman Raja Aziddin,
"Batok";
Tan Chin Kuan,
"Garden";
Yeoh Jin Leng,
"Installation of Humans, Ivory and Precious Earth".

Consolation
(M$3,000/US$1,105 each):
Anassuwandi Ahmad,
"Trap Series: Buku 3";
Mad Anuar Ismail,
"Pemain Rebab No. 2";
Zulkifli Yusof,
"The Power II".

renovations in March 1991 but this project is put on hold until the decision is made whether to build a new gallery or to carry on with the renovations.)

The common themes that came across in the works submitted were environmental and social issues. Malaysian artists, especially the younger ones, are constantly asking questions regarding national identity, national unity, the effect of pollution on human beings and the environment, and the abuse of the environment in general. Some works were thought-provoking, making us take stock of ourselves.

The artists in Salon Malaysia 1991/92 manifest the silent debate that goes on within ourselves concerning these issues and their works represent the current trend of contemporary art in Malaysia.





Fauzan Haji Omar, *Diversity and Unity Series 1*, Linocut, 109.5cm x 65.5cm, 1991. Major Award (Printmaking).

Prize winners are listed above.

On the Crest of the Hill

The International Institute of IslamicThought and Civilization Kuala Lumpur

Gulzar Haider

It was February 25, 1984. On her curatorial desk in the old national gallery in Kuala Lumpur sat the little blue book. It seemed to have anticipated my visit. For a fleeting instant the golden fish flew out of its blue world and then receded to its motionless graphic composure. Beautiful and silently eloquent, it would not let go of my heart. My host must have sensed this strange encounter. "This is Professor Syed Naquib", she said, "the philosopher, artist, calligrapher, designer, wood carver... a very unusual person. He writes with a unique clarity and power, personally produces all his books". I had nothing to say. "Here, please take this as a gift from me, it is a beautiful design, don't you think so? Can you read what it says?" I could not tell her how the fish had already read itself to me, how much I really wanted to read these words, to listen to the voice, to see the carvings. I remain indebted to the curator and the fish for this most serendipitous introduction to the Professor.

Over the past seven years or so I have been most fortunate in meeting Professor Syed Muhammed Naquib Al-Attas several times. I have heard him lecture to international audiences and listened to his critiques of contemporary Muslim thought. I have seen him make impassioned arguments for his philosophy of knowledge and his programmes for education. And I have been present at some of the



most intense encounters between the Professor and his critics. But I have never seen diplomacy and tact replace his characteristic honesty and candor. In the babel of Muslim intellectuals he remains one of the most clear and consistent voices.

Having no claim to the philosophical domain he encompasses I have been mostly a tenderfoot seeker of guidance in the artistic and intellectual issues that confront me in my "occidental exile". From midnights to his predawn prayers, in the reception court of his self-designed and embellished "Alhamra in Petlang Jaya", among the din of tropical sounds, with all etiquettes of traditional hospitality, he has been patient with my naivete and generous in his teaching. He has taught me how to respect the names and the words I use to formulate questions. He has cautioned me against answering questions without agreeing with the premises on which those questions are based. He has systematically led me through his elegant assertions about knowledge as the knowing of the causes of the existence of things, about education as the effort towards the cognition of the created nature and place of entities, about justice as the restoration of entities to their rightful places, and about harmony as pursuit of such a justice in the relational structures. For me he has restored the place of Revelation as not only the legitimate but the primary source of knowledge. From him I have also learnt to pray that

"the Divine Maker make this world to be a mirror to reflect the manifestations of Divine Beauty and Majesty; cause the fleeting forms reflected therein to be the sources of knowledge and insight and not the cause of ignorance and blindness."

And in shaping and transforming of the human environment as an architect, the spirit of this prayer has become my personal goal as a designer.

During one of his late night conversations he spoke at length about his Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization. He outlined its goals and spoke of the kind of place he imagined it to be. Almost as a matter of habit acquired in the aggressive market economy, I

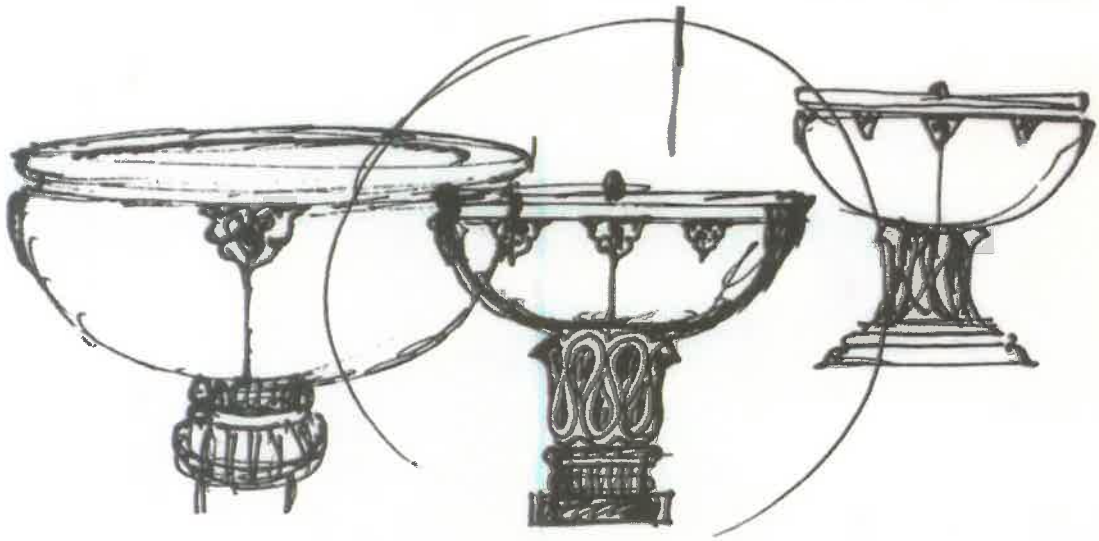
immediately offered "my services" as an architect. His hand-held fan moved with a sudden frenzy, he smiled and then broke out into his characteristic laughter that simultaneously answers and poses questions. He put his cigar down, got up from his comfortable squat, went inside and came back with a roll of drawings.

The plan had been drawn, there was a hinted elevation, a centralized formal garden, the fountain, the boundary wall, the gateway. On separate sheet there was an enlarged plan of a typical office study for a resident scholar with location of the window, table, chair, and the book shelf. In the margin space of this drawing were numerous floral, geometric and calligraphic

benign objectiness of buildings and landscapes and he firmly stood for architecture as the precursor of a state of being. In fact the feeling I got, though I have never had the opportunity to confirm it with him, was that he wished the architecture to encourage a state of being that would be predisposed, inclined, and ready to receive the enlightening reflections of the "Divine Beauty and Majesty" and thus knowledge.

In designing this Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization he intended to postulate a sense of place, and a state of individual and collective being, that would bring the knower and the sources of knowledge together. And towards this goal he worked like a pilgrim works for the preparation of the

majestic, white opaqueness among the tropical green, and a sense of well-rooted harmony with which the volumes sat on the crest of the hill. The stair, with its substantial cast stone balustrade and its generous landings was welcoming as it negotiated effortlessly between the present arrival court and the upper level. The arrival onto this upper level and the threshold of the fountain courtyard through a very gently scaled arcade was an experience that evoked the memories of some of the most beautiful courtyards in the Muslim world and more specifically the Andalusian, Mediterranean and some South European cloistered spaces. The courtyard enclosure was not complete and escaped to a mist -covered landscape. The



sketches. It was indeed a surprise for a formally trained architect to encounter a philosopher of the late twentieth century who thought as eloquently in lines and shapes as he spoke in words and sentences. I suddenly realized that the Professor, when he talks about the "fleeting forms reflected in the mirror of the world" actually encompasses the entire spectrum from the sensory images of the virgin nature to the humanly conceived and constructed orders of solids and voids, of opacities and transparencies, of absence and presence of light, of places and paths, of geometry and arabesque, of silence and sound, and of trees, plants, flowers, and fragrances. And through the discourse that night it also became clear to me that he rejected the

pilgrimage. A preparation that calls upon the covenant of the soul, that harkens all the faculties of the mind, and challenges the very limits of the body.

Between that nocturnal discussion over the drawings and the completion of the Institute premises, I had little contact with the Professor, primarily due to my employment constraints in Canada. As I later found out, many difficulties had arisen in the way of the Institute but in the finest tradition of a vision pursued with faith, sincerity and discipline, most were transformed into opportunities towards refinement.

As I arrived with other international guests soon after the sunset of October the 4th, 1991, I was overwhelmed b the site and the

place hovered between a traditional formality and some deliberate departures from it necessitated by the love for the existing trees and a pervasive care for the site.

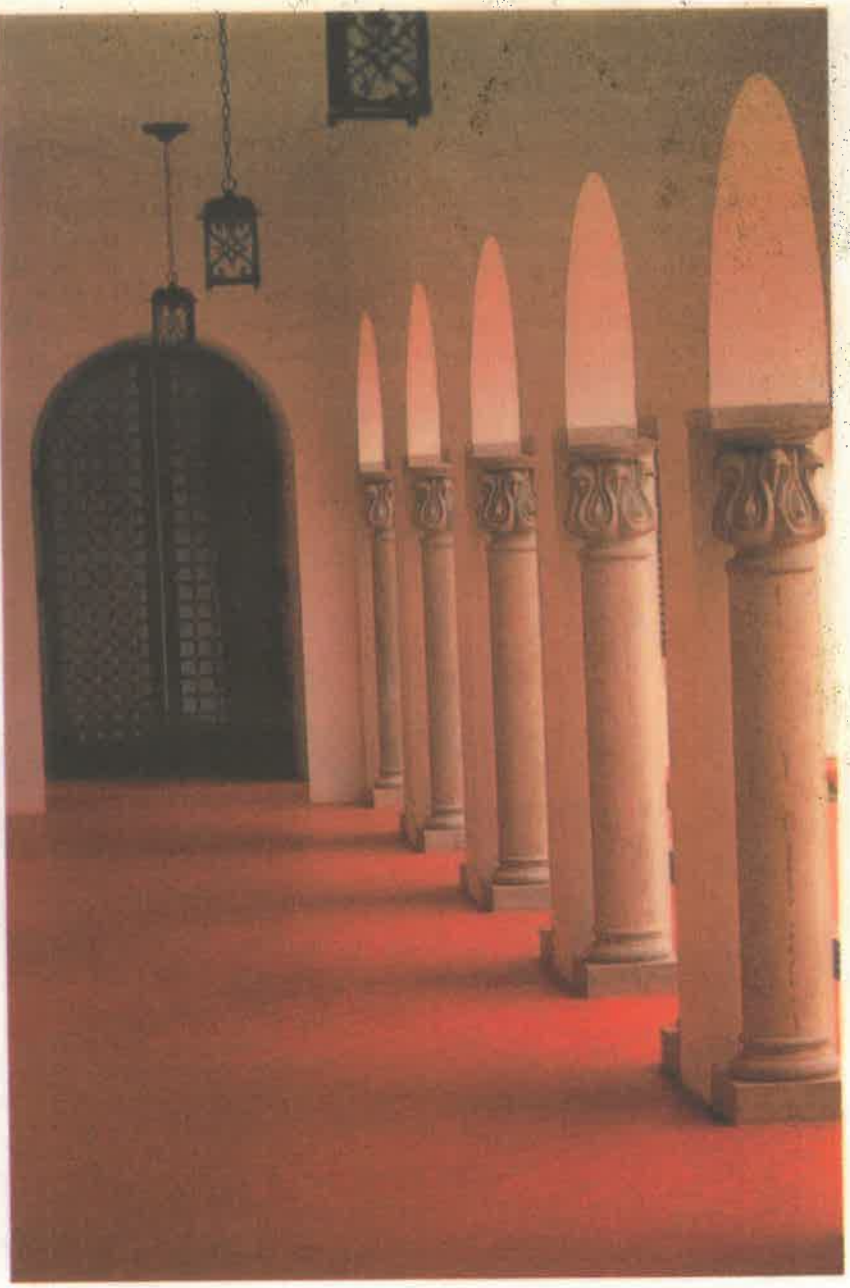
Perhaps it is a "curse" of teaching architecture that one unknowingly slips into the well-rehearsed mode of looking at buildings as a critical analyst and the vocabulary that goes with it. I was trying to come out of this academic trance when she came forward and wished me "Peace". The curator-artist from seven years ago had not only rescued me from myself but she also awakened in me the memory of my first innocent encounter with "Syed Naquib" in her office. What had started with a blue book titled "The Concept of Education in Islam" and the gold fish so beautifully veiling

"B'Ism-Allah" had, with the Divine Mercy and Grace, manifested itself in this place about to be inaugurated as the "International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation."

In his inaugural address the Founder-Director Professor Syed Muhammed Naquib Al-Attas positioned himself in the arched gate on the axis formed by the Qibla and the Fountain and spoke

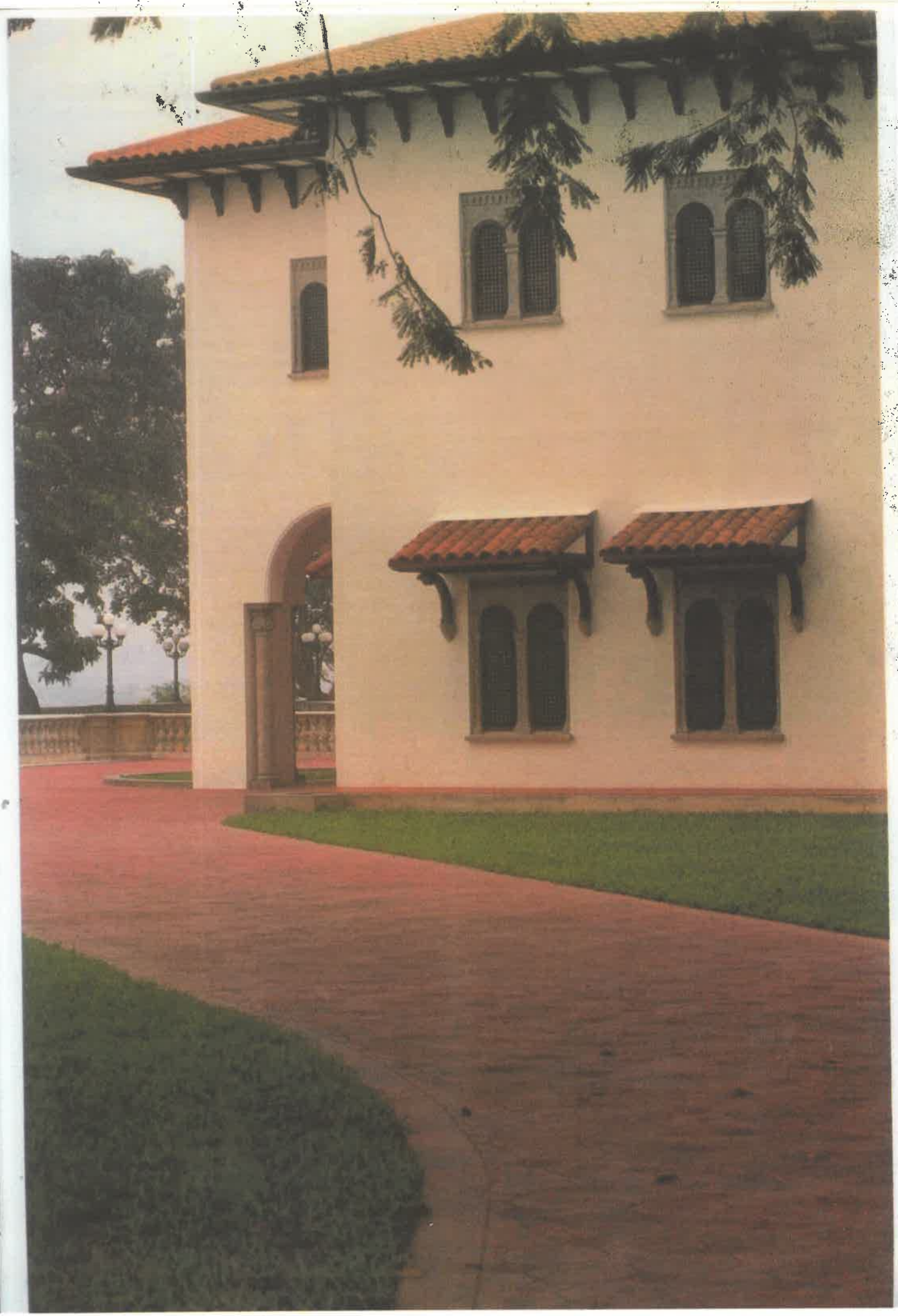












with rare confidence and eloquence. Some phrases remain engraved in my memory:

"To God alone be praise unending! May He deliver us from preoccupation with vanities, and remove from our vision the veil of ignorance, and show us things as they really are...

Those with understanding and discernment will know, by reading about the intellectual history and philosophy of this Institute outlined in the book(*) before you, and when they ponder over the significance of our aims and objectives, that we are not simply stating empty slogans, for they will realize that we do have a profound grasp of the real problems confronting the contemporary Muslim world. We are not dreamers, for we have demonstrated in less than two years that by means of our thought and creative effort, and with God's succor and the aid of those whom God guides to help us, the initial fulfilment of our vision has now become concretely realized before you...

The teachers in this programme will be selected most of all from among scholars who have a thorough grounding in traditional Islamic disciplines, and who are at the same time well aware of the modern world and of their own discipline as it has been studied by Western scholars, and from the point of view of various schools of modern thought...

In order to achieve its goal, the Institute will assemble an authoritative and superior library reflecting the authentic religious and intellectual tradition of Islam radiating from the works of its illustrious theologians, philosophers, metaphysicians, sages, scientists, jurists, historians, poets and artists; and at the same time also reflecting the cultural and intellectual traditions of the West, and even of the Orient, as projected by their luminaries. Such a library is already in the process of being assembled, and even in its present initial stage, with an acquisition of approximately 40,000 volumes, including 200 manuscripts, it is becoming one of the best libraries in the Muslim world...

The building of the Institute, where we are now assembled and which contains the library, was begun in late February 1990. As its overall designer and planner, as well as its interior decorator and landscapist, I have attempted to convey an Islamic presence; an atmosphere of serenity wherein should issue forth lofty and noble thoughts; wherein meanness and pettiness and mediocrity shall have no place; wherein the noisy strife and anxiety of secular life may be shaken off; wherein intellectual quests may be pursued amidst beautiful surroundings. I have situated it in such a manner that it faces the qiblah. The ground-breaking ceremony was performed on the 27th of Rajab, which commemorates the Night Journey of the Holy Prophet to the Highest Heaven; and even the numerical value of the address of this building, chosen from a given array of numbers after it was completed, corresponds to the same day, month, and year as the date its ground was first broken. The spot where the ground was first broken is where the bowl of the fountain now stands—and God created all things from water—water being the symbol of knowledge. I have constructed this building, with the aid of the various technicians and builders, from local materials and by local craftsmen, and this includes almost all wooden furniture and interior as well as exterior embellishments. As for the decor, most has been made by local craftsmen after my design, with the exception of the lighting fixtures and other accessories which have been imported. All this has been accomplished at reasonable cost well within the funds allocated to us by the Government...

Praise be to God, to whom all praise is due, Who has graciously bestowed abundant gifts for me to share with those who recognize and acknowledge them. Ability without opportunity is useless, and for granting the opportunity to put the ability to good use, my gratitude is also due to the innovative and energetic Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and his wise Government for their material support and valuable help, among whose Ministers Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim deserves my special acknowledgement...

Two days later, the Professor gave me a personal tour of the Institute, and opened before me his portfolio of original sketches. It will remain my hope that a document will soon be published covering the chronology of this design. Till then it is my privilege to share with you some of the images I managed to record during that afternoon, when the skies of Kuala Lumpur were grey with smoke from the forest fires of Kalamantan.

*Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud: *The Beacon on the Crest of a Hill, ISTAC*, International Islamic University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1991.



Photographs: Gulzar Haider.
Illustrations/sketches by Prof Syed Naquib.

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AHMAD HAMID

New Directions in Islamic Architecture

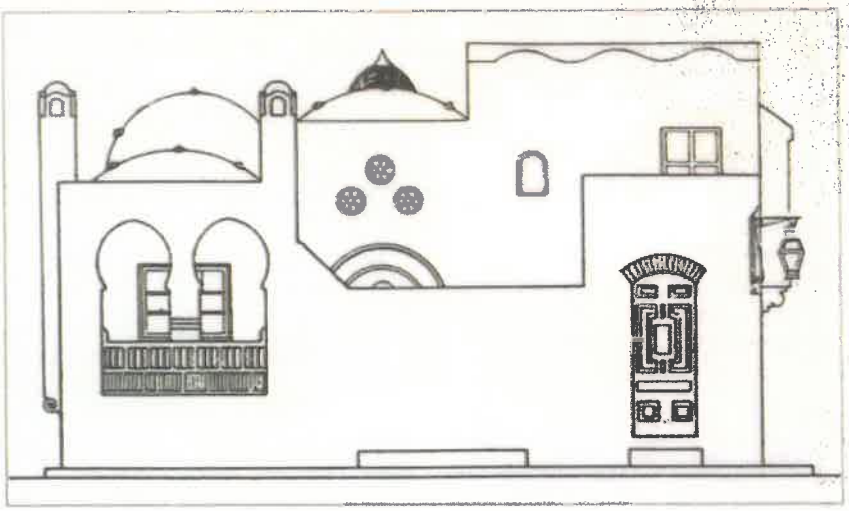
S. Abdullah Schleifer

In the middle of a Fayyoum estate in transmutation—here the golden grain of a wheat field reclaimed from desert, there the desert sand awaiting the alchemist's touch—sits a miniature Islamic palace or so it seems, but for its working day ambience along with massed exterior hints of incredibly intricate uses of space within.

It is Ahmad Hamid's "Al-Touni countryhouse" in Fayyoum—a farm house for a young Egyptian professional built on a site only 10 meter by 10 meters in stone and brick but housing three private bedrooms, living quarters with utilities, outdoor terrace and *maqaads*, and a designed accessible roofscape. The architectural vocabulary is appropriate—only by the use of domes and vaults for roofing could such intricate spaces, alcoves and niches be fitted within such a restricted space—in the same sense that Egyptian peasant village housing huddles together—so as to consume the minimal amount of expensive agricultural (and in this case reclaimed) land.

This is not an urbanite's weekend villa of the sort that proliferates beyond the edges of Cairo, in Giza, Saqarra and Mansouria and now at Tunis village above Lake Karoun. Weekend villas that at times thankfully served as a design vehicle for Hassan Fathy and his disciples in the past, but had little to do with the Egyptian countryside that haunted Hassan Fathy beyond its co-option for extraordinary peaceful sites and beautiful views.

The client for this particular house typifies a growing sector of new (or re-newed) farmers who have surfaced, quite privately, along with Egypt's desperate need for more and more reclaimed land to balance Nile Valley losses to creeping urbanization and rising population. In other words this house is perfect as prototype for the future of farming in Egypt which is situated—in the reclamation of remote desert or remote oasis—with housing for the "gentlemen farmer". They are young professionals, financially self-sufficient and working in the major cities (Cairo and Alexandria) but with family links to the land that were never severed (despite the Nasserist expropriations of more than three decades ago) and a yearning to return to the land and to agriculture as a career.



Al-Touni House. South elevation.

A mini-palace for the new rural gentry. No sarcasm here. This is the hope, the future, for Egypt. The intricacies afforded by this traditional treatment when shrunk to appropriate scale, working gentry, not rural magnates—make possible so much building on so little land and for so little money. The cost—20,000 dollars contrasts favourably with the cost of the typical weekend-vacation rural villas even when of similar treatment, but which in today's market exceed $100,000 dollars per typical unit.

What we are looking at is transition and reclamation. Not just of desert into productive farm land, but of the Egyptian countryside—away from statist mismanagement to the reclamation of a rural elite, but an elite that made its mark in contemporary terms—urbanized, well travelled and far more open than earlier Egyptian elites to its most neglected patrimony—its cultural inheritance. The client is typical in that sense; he heads an Arab video production company in Cairo and he heard about Ahmad Hamid and the Hassan Fathy legacy from the foreigners he worked with at NBC News before he headed out into business for himself.

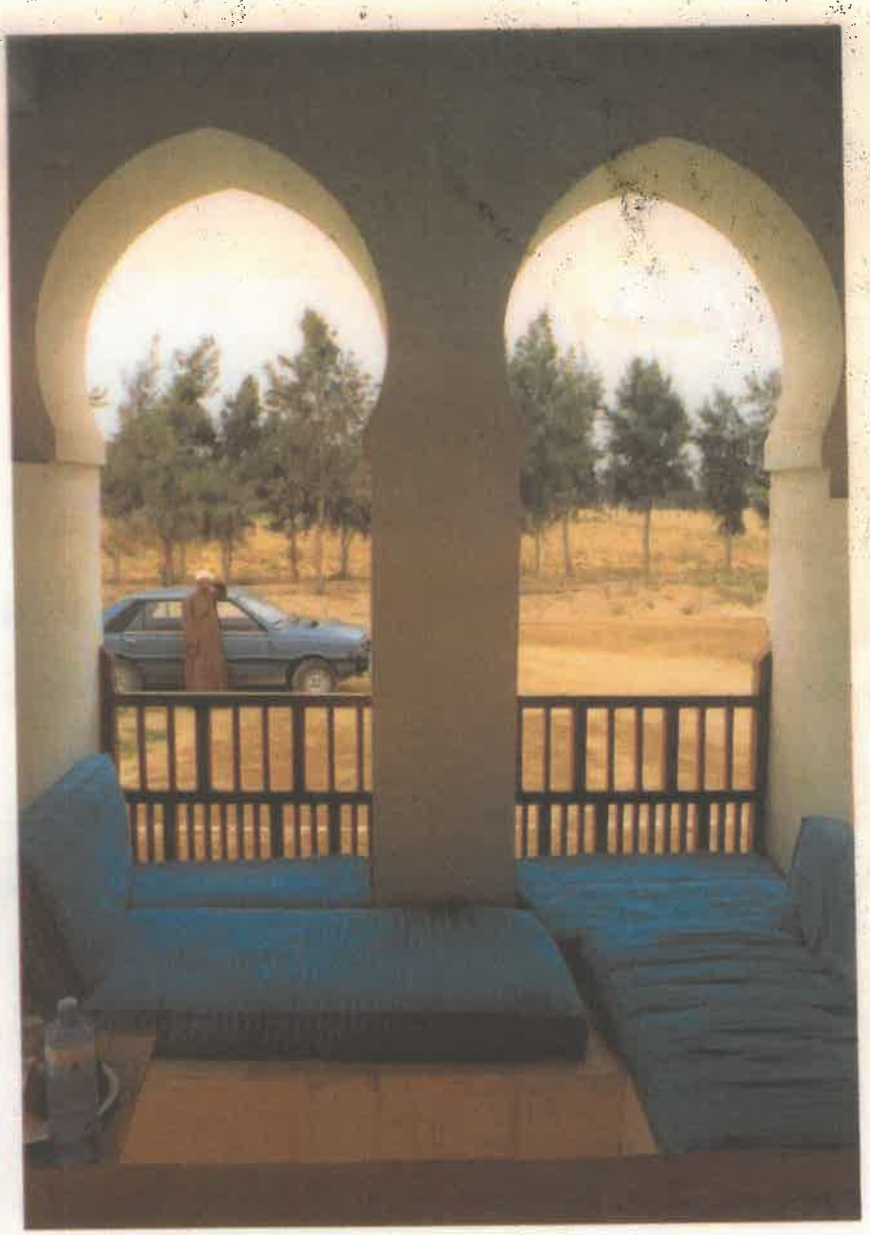
A sense of transition also applies to the architect's feeling for the site which inevitably—given the intention of reclamation—is a site in transition. In his own words: "The landscape is yellow sand in the process of becoming orange trees. In agriculture the timeless vision from seed to fruit is important. In architecture the same holds true."

And for those who follow the

fortunes of the Islamic architecture revival, there is a sense of transition in the totality of Ahmad Hamid's work—as architect, as designer of interiors, furniture and fabrics, at the very moment that this particular building fixes Hamid in the tradition of his Master, Hassan Fathy, and as a recognition of the work of Abdul Wahed al-Wakil.

Ahmad Hamid was a student at the Faculty of Architecture at Cairo University when he first met Hassan Fathy. It was 1976; Fathy's report on his ground-breaking project,







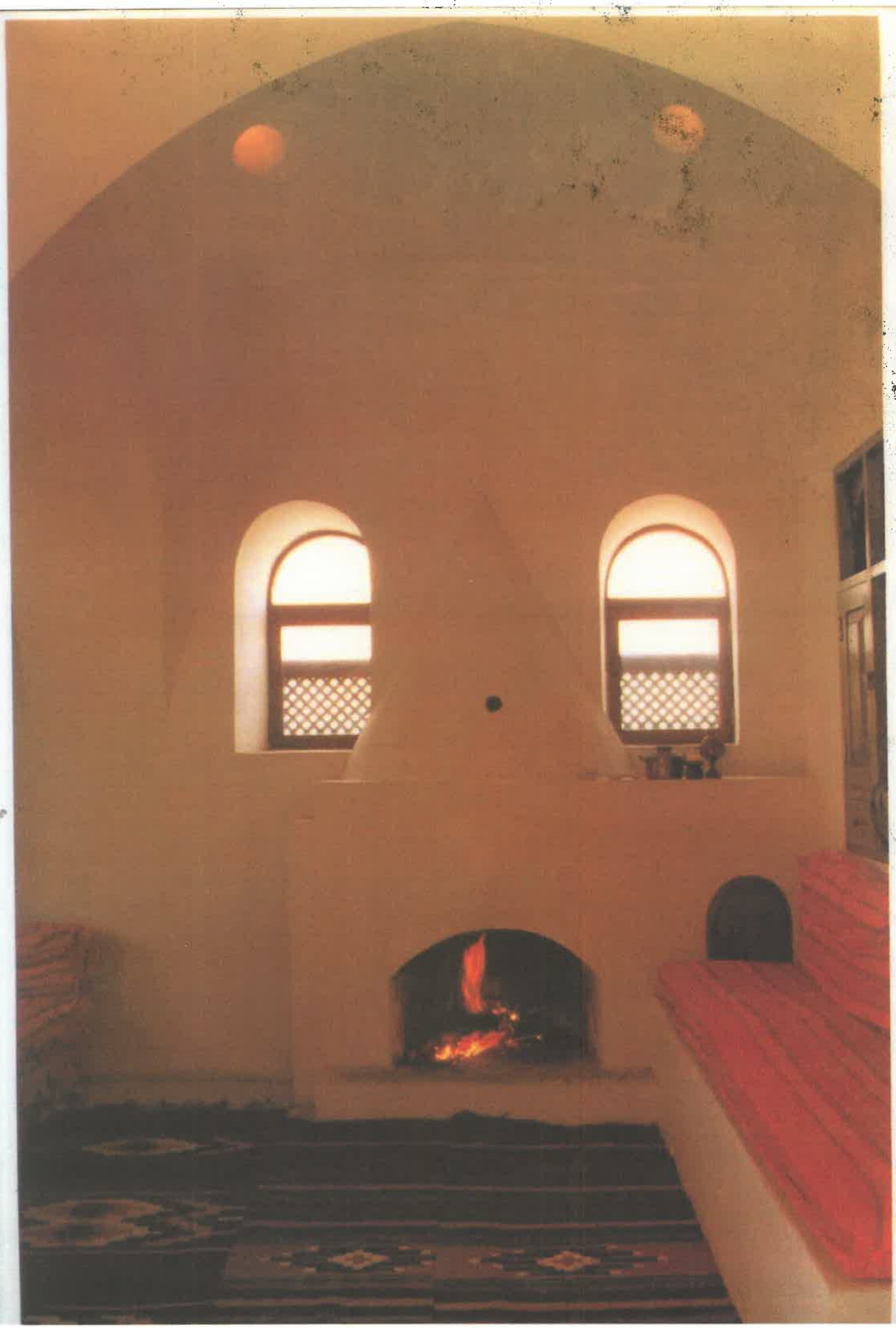


This page, top: *Karawita* for water-pipe smoking, highstanding according to the local tradition, Jeddah. Furniture collection 1989. Above: Main House, East Facade, Dahshour house painting by J Leimart, 1984. Top, right: Al-Touni House, view from 'Maqaad' on fields. Fayoum,1990. Bottom, right: Al-Touni House, roofscape, Fayoum. 1988. Opposite page: Al-Touni House, view from fireplace 'iwan'. Fayoum,1990.

Gourna: A Tale of Two Cities had already been in a sort of quasi-clandestine circulation since its publication in English by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture in 1969, and had already been re-issued in America and England by the University of Chicago Press as *Architecture for the Poor*.

This new edition with an introduction by William R. Polk, then President of the Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs and an outstanding Arabist, was to have an immediate and extraordinary impact in architecture schools and circles in the West as well as in the Anglo-American Counter-Culture.

But in Egypt silence still reigned supreme. Hamid says that until he was taken with a small group of students to meet "a famous architect who lives abroad" he had never heard the name Hassan Fathy mentioned by any of his professors. It all sounded exciting. In fact Fathy had returned to Cairo years earlier and now only travelled occasionally abroad but metaphorically the description was accurate in the



sense of the profound exile imposed on this man even while he dwelled in his own land, by the Egyptian construction and architectural establishment.

In retrospect, Ahmad Hamid says, the image of obscure stardom draped in mystery began to dissolve at the very doorway to Hassan Bey's top floor apartment in a restored Mamluk townhouse standing at a slight elevation beyond the Madressa Sultan Hassan and below the Citadel in one of those older quarters that are collectively known now as "Islamic Cairo".

Those were the best years to have heard Hassan Fathy and he went on and on as was his manner and with soft voice touching a wide variety of subjects: architecture and its canons, Sacred architecture and Le Corbusier's misunderstanding of it in Ronchamps, the modern movement, international style, domes and vaults, mud—the material from which we were created, the material with which Hassan Fathy had dreamt he would restore the Egyptian countryside and the Rosette window of Chartres Cathedral. "It was like stumbling upon the Treasure Island of architecture" says Hamid.

The impact of this one meeting, Hamid's subsequent reading of the Gourna book and his encounters with Abdul Wahed al Wakil (an earlier student=disciple now working on his own—the Agami beach house that would bring Wakil an Aga Khan award and worldwide recognition) was to have a nearly devastating impact.

A year later, when Hamid turned in his graduation project—a tourist village—its use of natural materials and vernacular design almost cost him his degree. The academic jury refused to undertake a critique since the work did not reflect what Hamid had been taught at the university. He was taken aside by the head of his department who delivered the verdict: "Listen, Hassan Bey is a great artist friend of mine but he is not an architect". Only the intervention of influential friends and his own brilliant but conventional record until then as a student saved his degree.

In 1979, Hamid went to work with Hassan Fathy as a full-time student-assistant serving as a draftsman for several projects including the design for the Hassan Tuhami Rest House and stables, the Gazouni Country House built in Saqarra and the 10 farmer unit mini-village for Minia, commissioned by the UNDP but never executed. In 1983, his last year with Hassan Bey, Hamid worked again as architect supervisor on the restoration and reconstruction of the theater at Gourna. It was Fathy's great bid to revive the Gourna project with the support of his Kuwaiti client Sheikh Naser el Sabah, but there was no follow-up. It was during this time that Hamid also undertook responsibility as tutor supervisor of a masonry school at Gourna to train Grouna children in building skills. Hamid remains haunted by that experience and one of these days no one will be surprised if he again returns to the Egyptian countryside to establish a masonry school.

During these years with Hassan Fathy, Hamid would take time off for private trips devoted to study and documentation through the startlingly beautiful Egyptian oases and on into Upper Egypt, trips that have all contributed to an extraordinarily cosmopolitan vocabulary that Hamid draws upon in his architecture, interior design, furniture and fabrics.

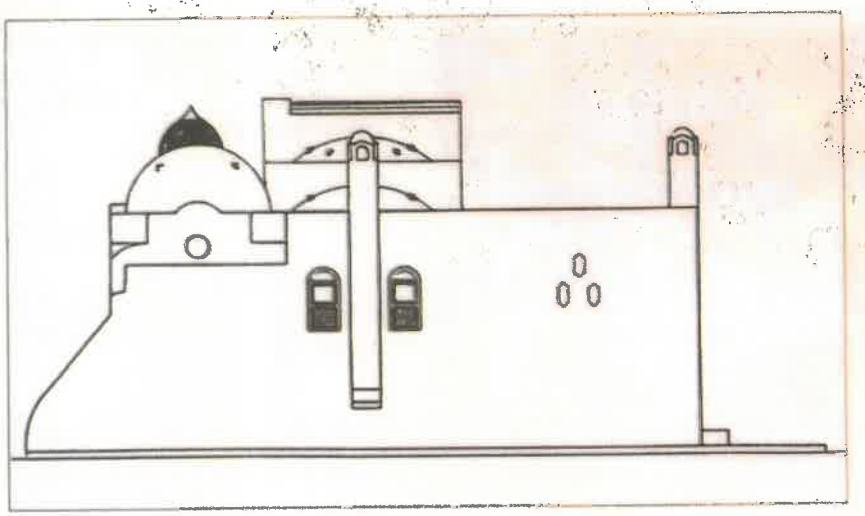
When a Master dies, whatever his discipline—spiritual and/or artistic, it is dangerously easy to over-simplify his teaching into rigid canons, even when the overall genre of the Master's work contradicts such rigidity. There is more to Hassan Fathy than mudbrick, domes and vaults. There was a vision of the spiritually appropriate (tradition) and the technologically appropriate (science) and an openness to a wide variety of materials determined by cost and accessibility as well as their "fit" or appropriateness.

Each student received Fathy's teachings differently and Hamid says he was particularly affected by Hassan Bey's broad receptivity: "We are not exclusive", Fathy used to say. "I remember when we were working on the design for the ten unit-houses for farmers in Minia he came up with an interesting courtyard entrance to one of them. I said jokingly, that it looked 'brand new'. No, he said, he had seen it on his last trip to Taos, New Mexico. "An architect has to be like a sponge absorbing the best of his surroundings wherever he goes', Hassan Bey often said, and many miss that quality in his work though the documentation appearing today reveals the wealth and variance of his solutions".

The roofscapes and other opportunities for views of the countryside from within the Al Touni farm house suggest another theme that runs through all of Hamid's work—playfulness in the treatment of space and significant openness to the view without sacrificing the introverted quality of a micro courtyard. In architectural terms this common theme first emerges from very different design problems posed in Ahmad Hamid's plan for a house in the fields of Dahshour, some 30 kilometers south of Saqarra, and then in the design for a Sharm al Sheikh summer house; a very different design intended as a prototype of a town house in the context of the urbanization of Sharm el Sheikh: a site 7 meters wide by 24 meters long with narrow sea foot frontage.

These same qualities of playfulness and appreciation of view but within an instinctive sense of limit that safeguards against eclectic pastiche, inspire Hamid's apartment reconstructions and interior designs. One thinks of the guest flat in the Old Jeddah townhouse that is now headquarters for Al-Ammar—a Saudi research and design house devoted to the preservation of the Hejazi cultural heritage; or the Abu Ela apartment in Maadi. And a playfulness that carries over to his mix of traditional material along with contemporary minimalist furniture within an Eastern treatment of interior space to his appliié fabrics which he uses to great effect in the apartment interiors that he designs.

I told Hamid that it was apparent to me and to some of his clients that he was reaching out towards some "point of harmony" (I quote from one of the architect's public statements) in his work between what we might allude to as Far



Al-Touni House. West elevation.

Eastern tradition, and the Islamic (and in particular, Ottoman) tradition, and that I could see how it happened, when it happened. I alluded to his use of parchment, rice paper, and canvas; all these materials used for screens and illuminations derived from Far Eastern tradition but very much at home within spatial treatments and design elements derived from the various Islamic traditions. And this is what Ahmad Hamid said:

"We have to remember that the Islamic tradition originated among a nomadic people, and to the nomad the world is very fragile. It is transience. The more "fixed" and rooted in locus, sedentary Islamic civilization was to become, it never lost the same outlook towards the world, towards the *dunya*.

"From the Far Eastern tradition we recognize this same fragility expressed clearly in design. That is why the process of borrowing here, is a borrowing based on a principle that lends itself to usage by the architect and the designer.

"A canvas screen that screens an interior space from a megaspace of a courtyard can serve an architect who today cannot cope with the price of a square meter of mushrabiya.

"The bareness and minimalism and clean, clear details of any tradition bear a certain harmony of keeping the essential, setting it in its place and excluding the superfluous.

"From the Ottomans, which is the closest Islamic civilization in time to us today, we learn the same principles. The spaces are clearer in scale, the decoration less, and the details are kept where they belong".

"Once on site in Garf Hussein, in Nubia, Hassan Fathy's master mason 'Alaadin injured himself. I decided I would take him to the hospital and I asked 'Alaadin to get his belongings. I waited in the car and when he turned up he had a piece of fabric in his hand. I asked him: "Where is your bag?" and he said: "That's it." It is this piece of fabric that he wraps about his head as a turban, that he might eat on as a floor cloth, that he might wrap about himself at night if he were cold and which will finally serve as his shroud if he were to die. Al-Hamdollilah, despite the visit to the hospital there was no need to use the piece of fabric for the last purpose, but I found in this bare sense of necessity, without baggage, without over-complication of need and desires, a certain spiritual beauty.

"Today, in the world of today, the eye is very exhausted. Visual perception is one of the qualities that media continuously exhausts. Billboards on the streets, television screens, newspapers and illustrated magazines, increasingly complex telephone dialers, increasingly complicated car dash boards and even fashion where writing and picture jumps to your eye from the fronts of an increasing number of passing T-shirts.

"Whether in the urban or rural context, the designer-architect has to be aware of the client's needs for repose and rest for his visual senses."

Hamid's sense of the contemporary need for "repose and rest" as a driving motivation was first expressed in a 1986 catalogue for his furniture and textiles; a statement that alluded to another "point of harmony"—this one between modernity and tradition as its goal. I asked Hamid to what degree the concerns he had just been talking about; concerns which touch upon what might be described as "minimalism" as well as the traditional quest for peace and contemplation indicate potential points of harmony between modernity and tradition? For instance, in Arabic, the commonplace and quite contemporary usage of *saken* for "abode" or "place" clearly suggest another Arabic word, *sakeena*—a sacred presence and the peace that is derived from that. He explained:

"In the view of tradition, art had a function which is to relieve man of his fixation to the earth, enlighten his spirit and help direct him, in rememberance, to and towards his Creator and Origin.

"In the modern world there is a lot of talent, or genius around and masterpieces are created. Some do serve this purpose and some fail. It is only a lack of wisdom in our times not to direct art to face up to that timeless function I have just alluded to.

"I cannot but help admiring the genius in the minimalist details of Mies Van der Rohe. But when you walk into his spaces you feel that strong presence of matter more than spirit. Islamic architecture, no matter the materials used (and I am thinking here of the Ottomans who used the richest materials, even the 'heaviest' materials) the spiritual is always evoked.

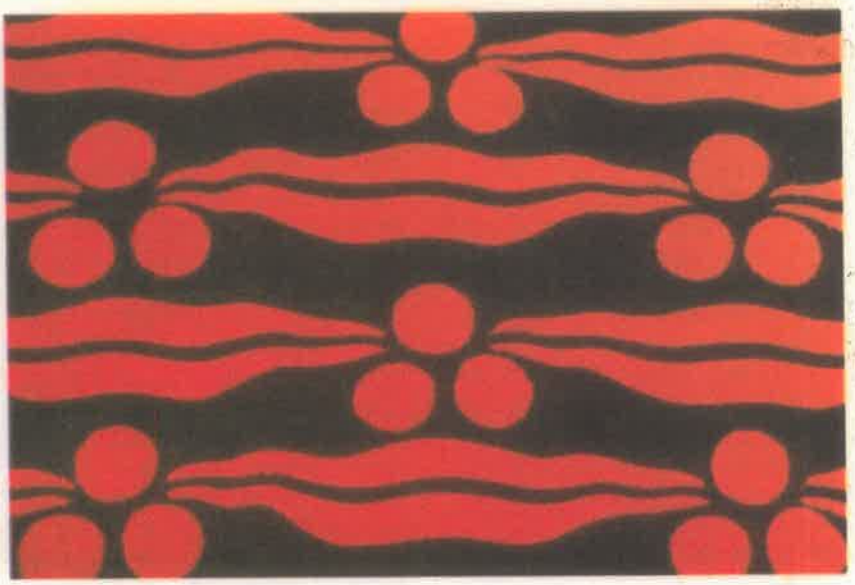
"Learning from one's clients and not discarding their desires as 'professionally unlearned', one sees that their perception of Islamic art or architecture is very askew. A person will think he has an Oriental house because he displays an inlaid cigarette box. And the other side of it—a client visits our monuments in the Muslim world and he finds dust and consequently darkness, negligence. So nobody comes to me and says 'I want an Islamic house'. Instead he says 'I want a Spanish

house' or a 'Mediterranean house' or a Moroccan house or he even says, 'I want an American house.' And we have to see what he means by this. We have to know what both clients mean in their identification system and it is to these problems that I would like to face professionally.

"Freshness and clarity, light, levity versus gravity, spiritual elegance and functional comfort—I think these are the requirements of all. And believing that Islam's architecture has used with genius all these principles in the past, transposing them into today's context is a responsibility far beyond an individual. A certain wisdom has to







be at the back of his decision making. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Wisdom is the lost belonging of the Believer. Wherever he finds it he acquires it.' So the wisdoms of the East and the West become his geographical locus.

"Sidi Sheikh said: 'Islam is like a tree. It has its roots sunken in the ground, from its very beginning. But the roots bore a trunk and the trunk bore branches and from the branches, leaves and fruits in due season. There are some who see only the roots and there are some who see only the fruits. It is wrong to assume that the tree is only in the roots, but it is only because of the roots that the tree can give fruit in due season'."

"To restrict the produce of architects working in the world of Islam today to their proud heritage,



is a kind of phobia of the future, exactly similar in valency to those architects who turn their back to their heritage bearing a phobia of their past. From this standpoint absorption of Western or Far Eastern ideas should not limit nor hamper the designer architect.

"The two axes — Time and Place — embrace an enormous treasure land of coordinates within. Here the designer has to move very prudently and cautiously asking continuous guidance from his inspiration".

Left: 'Table d'appuie' and cone lamps in coloured paper. Calligraphy above. Garden City, Cairo. Furniture collection1990. Above: Fabric designs used in the interior decoration.
All photographs courtesy of the architect.

Collecting 20th Century Middle Eastern Art in the British Museum

Venetia Porter

The British Museum is not normally associated with the 20th century. Under its now retired Director Sir David Wilson, a new policy was initiated to carry the collections forward and to ensure that the collection became one representing living cultures and not simply those rooted in the past. This new policy was celebrated recently by the exhibition *Collecting the 20th century*. In it, all the departments concerned with this new acquisitions policy displayed a selection of the material which they have been acquiring during the past few years. In the department of Oriental Antiquities,





contemporary acquisitions have been made in the fields of Chinese, Korean, Indian, as well as in Middle Eastern Art. The budgets are small and at the beginning the aim was to collect works on paper.

The founding pieces of the Middle Eastern collection were six lithographs by the Egyptian artist-calligrapher Ahmed Mustafa (one of these, a splendid composition in gold square Kufic on a blue ground, is on display in the Addis gallery). Faced with the increasing mass of work produced by modern artists from all over the Middle East, it was decided to limit the collection to works which had some connection with the museum's collection of



classical Islamic art. In this way a thread of continuity with the past could be demonstrated. This conservative approach meant that more abstract works, in an international style, were avoided. Instead, a collection of works centring on Arabic calligraphy was built up. However, gradually, art of



Top, left: Ali Omar Ermes, 1987 Above, top: Nja Mahdaoui, 1991 Above, left: Husein Zenderoudi, 1989 Above: Salah al-Ali, 1987

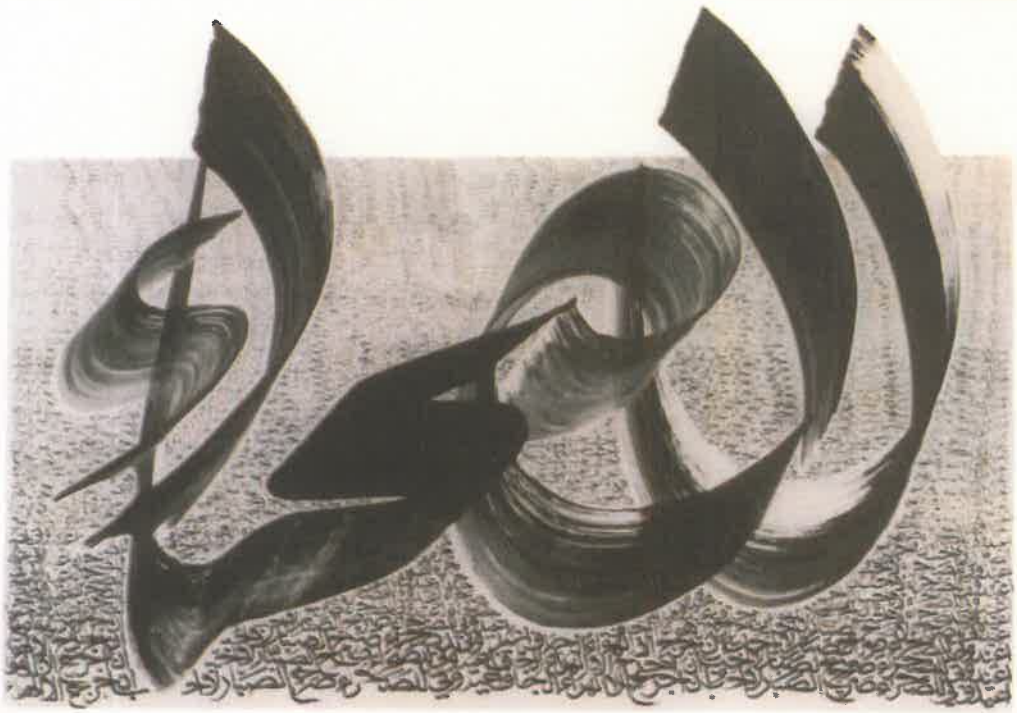
a more political nature began to be acquired, for instance Muhammad Rawwas's *'Beirut Revisited'*, as well as political posters, particularly those featuring graphic art. Among the most powerful examples of these, are the posters by Palestinian artists, such as Vladimir Tamari.

Although the term "Islamic" art is now difficult to justify in the context of modern art, many of the artists whether Algerian, Iraqi, Lebanese or Iranian show a continuing interest in exploring the potentiality of the Arabic script, one of the principal aspects of their culture which binds all Muslims together irrespective of which country they are from. Among the artists whose work has been collected by the British Museum there are highly original interpretations of traditional forms with striking differences in approach. Ahmed Mustafa and Husein Zenderoudi are traditionalists generally using verses from the Qur'an with staggering proficiency of execution and boldness of colour. Algerian painter Rachid Koraichi is interested in the secret meaning of letters: *Poemes sur un amour ancien* has a transcription of a poem by Mahmud Darwish and around the sides, magic squares with individual numbers and letters of a type often traditionally worn as talismans. His interest in calligraphy is not confined to Arabic: in the centre is a boldly drawn Japanese character. Koraichi's work is not limited to work on paper, the Museum has recently acquired a large silk banner painted with mysterious black symbols which was part of an exhibition at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris.

Other artists use the language and letter forms in a different way. Iraqi artist Salah al-Ali creates his compositions from the shapes of actual Arabic words while the Tunisian artist Nja Mehdaoui who works on parchment, uses the shapes of the letters but removes their meaning entirely simply delighting in the movements of the Kufic and Cursive forms themselves. Another Iraqi artist Hassan Massoudy turns words into imagery. In "al-Sahra" (the desert) he has created a vision of a limitless desert landscape by the repetition of a fading phrase taken from a French poet. "Take me back to the desert cried the cactus, I will only be flayed by the scorching air". Superimposed is the boldly drawn word "al-Sahra". Libyan painter Ali Omar Ermes has abstracted still further using just one beautifully drawn letter, the Arabic letter "S" contrasted with verses of poetry in the loop of the "S". Husein Madi from Lebanon creates a striking image of dancing letters, strongly reminiscent of Kufic calligraphy on the early medieval ceramics of Eastern Iran.

The work of Iraqi painter Dia al-Azzawi is completely different in style. The Museum has acquired a number of examples of his work, an acrylic painting (on display in the Addis gallery) and two sets of lithographs, "Homage to Baghdad" and a set of hand tinted lithographs produced to honour the Lebanese











Opposite page: Hassan Massoudy, 1990. This page, top: Dia al-Azzawi, 1990. Above, left: Husein Madi, 1990. Above: Rachid Koraichi, 1990. *All illustrations courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum*

poet Adonis on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. In these splendid compositions which are on folded paper, he transcribes the poems and illustrates them achieving wonderful vibrant creations that combine Western imagery with pure abstraction.

The success of the exhibition as a whole and the interest shown in the Middle Eastern section of it has encouraged us to try and collect 20th century Middle Eastern art more actively with the future aim of creating, within the constraints of limited resources, a more comprehensive collection of this material. We are now starting to collect paintings on canvas and our first acquisition in this area has been a figural composition with a strong political message about the status of women by Palestinian artist Laila Shawa.

Attar's The Conference of the Birds

Hafiz Karmali

The Ismaili Centre in London presented a play based on the 12th century classic *Mantiq at Tayr* (The Conference of the Birds). Adapted for the stage by J C Carriere and Peter Brook, it was directed by Hafiz Karmali, a theatre director currently based in Britain, who has served an apprenticeship at Harvard's American Repertory Theatre, and here gives his own impressions of the challenging production.





In a rather self-congratulatory epilogue to *Mantiq at Tayr* (The Conference of the Birds), Farid Ud-din Attar of Neishapur (1142-1229) wrote, "The cupolas of heaven will dissolve before this poem shall perish."[1] It is indeed a tribute to Attar's genius that this twelfth-century mystical poem of some four thousand verses continues to have a special appeal today.

No doubt influenced by al-Ghazzali and Ibn Sina, both of whom had contributed philosophical treatises on the bird, Attar's *Mantiq at Tayr* expresses man's spiritual quest in the form of an allegory.

Led by the hoopoe, an inspired bird with formidable credentials to prove it (*Bismillah* written upon its crest;) the birds set out on a journey to meet their King, the Simurgh.

> Those who are attached to the phenomenal world give excuses for not making the journey. The nightingale, that aspect of self caught in the exterior form of things, cannot leave the rose.[2]

The duck prefers to perform its ablutions waddling in its pond, the partridge loves her jewels, the narcissistic peacock its beautiful colours, the parrot its cage.

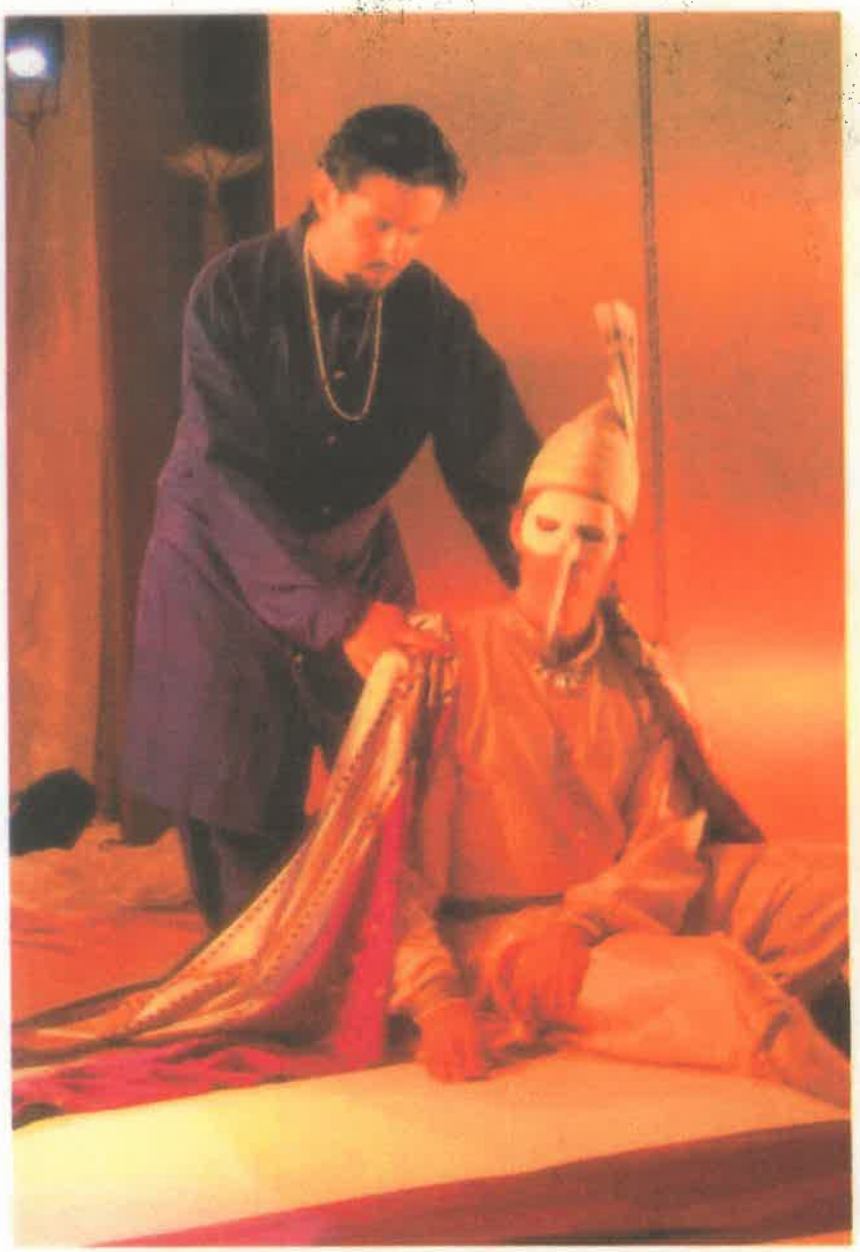
Only after a test of their will, having crossed what seems to be an endless desert, the Mountain Qaf and its seven valleys, do the few brave and persistent birds reach their cherished goal:

> At the end of the Quest, the birds find that the Simurgh has been with them, guiding them from within, throughout the journey. The goal of the Quest is the Self.[3]

In Persian, 'si-murgh' means thirty birds—a pun which may have been at the root of Attar's epic. The thirty birds (si-murgh) realize that they are the Simurgh—they contain within themselves that which they are seeking. He who knows himself knows his Maker.

The task of presenting such an esoteric theme on the stage is made less daunting by the very nature of Attar's writing—often lively and humorous and though sometimes deliberately obscure. ("Why must you always speak in riddles," the birds desperately ask) Attar's stories, by virtue of the fact that they are the stuff of myth and legend, lend themselves beautifully to the stage.

Drawing from Persian manuscript painting, Mughal art and commedia dell arte (a western tradition of improvisational theatre using masks), the mise-en-scène takes an eclectic approach. This is most readily apparent in the anachronistic use of props (the frightened



sparrow trembles clutching a newspaper) and in the selection of music (ranging from popular Egyptian to a film score à la Nina Rota).

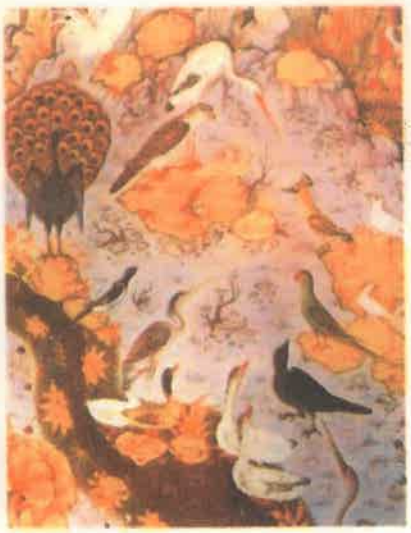
From the moment the actors enter ceremoniously in a procession, to the creation of a character, the poet Attar, outsized book and quill in hand, announcing scenes accompanied by banners, to the frivolous contemporary ad libs, one is deliberately reminded of the event as a twentieth-century performance of a twelfth-century fable.

While this approximates the self-aware, lighthearted storytelling aspect of the piece, there is a simultaneous contemplative strain which underscores the sacred in Attar's world. Gestures and movement drawn from the 'sama' (a Sufi whirling dance) serve as a motif for expressions of devotion. Moreover, as Attar's themes have resonances in Islamic literature, religious odes from various Muslim traditions are woven into the drama of the soul.

The bird, a metaphor for the soul, is suggested by mask and stylized choreography to create the illusion of flight in aspiration of soaring to the heavens as it were.

The set, predominantly white decorated with Persian carpets and framed by manuscript paintings writ large, serves as a canvas upon which the rich and colourfully costumed birds/humans dance to paint the stage. Borrowing a page from Japanese theatre, "invisible" stagehands, only here dressed in white doubling as a chorus of doves, move through the space enabling swift changes of scenery. A tree surrounded by an ornate table and chairs gives the impression at once of a momentous conference and also carries a hint of the mock epic so typical of an animal fable. Each bird form after all is an emblem of some characteristic of man and serves to remind us of our frailty and misguided priorities.

In keeping with the sense of the fable, there is a naive, simplicity to the staging: a gilded frame draped with Attar's coat creates a puppet stage wherein the sad and melancholy Heron longs for the sea; a chair is transformed into a cage for the Parrot; a Peacock dance evokes its hundred thousand colours.



Opposite page, top: The Peacock Dance. **Bottom:** Attar narrates the story of Mahmud and Ayaz. **This page, left:** The Chamberlain comforts the hoopoe. **Above:** The Conference of the Birds (painting). *Photographs by Rafiq Panjwani*

Transformed into a theatre, the Ismaili Centre Social Hall provided a fine showcase for this masterpiece of Islamic literature. In addition to the play, audiences were treated to an exhibition of artist Graham Day's monoprints on the same theme.

Footnotes:

1. C S Nott, transl. *The Conference of the Birds* (London, 1974)
2. Laleh Bakhtiar, *Sufi Expressions of the Mystic Quest* (London, 1976)
3. ibid.

PROBLEMS
of
ART EDUCATION
in the
ISLAMIC WORLD

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Indonesia's Festival Istiqlal 1991

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

More than six million people visited what turned out to be the most popular festival of Islamic art and culture in Jakarta (October- November 1991). Brought together from all over Indonesia, there were traditional and contemporary art exhibitions; classical and folk music and dance performances; architectural and archaeological displays; culinary art and costume shows; *azhan* and calligraphy contests; stage plays and poetry readings; and lectures and group discussions.

The festival was initiated and sustained by the people themselves, while the presentations were meticulously curated by a broadbased National Committee, with President Soeharto as the Chief Patron, and comprising scholars and specialists drawn from relevant disciplines, as well as outstanding artists, performers and craftspersons, executives of art and cultural institutions, senior officials and businessmen.

The initiative for this special supplement came from Dr A D Pirous, of the Fine Art and Design department, Bandung Institute of Technology, Achmad Noeman, Chairman of the Indonesian Council for Architecture, and their collegues whose contributions appear here; and its preparation was coordinated by the distinguished scholar and our contributing editor in Indonesia, Mr Ferdy Selim. Advice and cooperation received from various sources, including the Chairman of the Festival Executive Board, Mr Pontjo Sutowo, the Minister of Education, Dr Fuad Hassan, the Minister of Religion, Mr Munawar Sjadzali, and the Minister of Tourism, Mr Soesilo Soedarman, is gratefully acknowledged.

Identification Process of the Indonesian Muslims

Yustiono





Right: An informative map of regions in Indonesia most of which participated in the Festival Istiqlal. Below: Dance performance during the opening ceremony of the Festival.

Islam is a religion which brings peace and salvation to mankind. This may seem difficult to believe as the modern Islamic world still seems to be experiencing the influences of colonization, such as disintegration, poverty, backwardness and lack of confidence.

Indonesia, a country whose population has a majority of Muslims, is located at the eastern end of the Islamic world and represents the peaceful image of Islam which the Istiqlal Festival 1991 has been instrumental in presenting the familiar peaceful and tolerant aspect of Islam. This festival showing Indonesian culture as influenced by the Islamic spirit took place in the Istiqlal Mosque, known as the biggest in Southeast Asia and is in the centre of Jakarta city, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia.

It has not been by chance that the peaceful face of Islam has characterised the Indonesian culture up to the present time, because Islam, in





Above: A group of representatives of OIC member states paid a visit to the exhibition accompanied by the Minister of Post-Telecommunications and Tourism, Mr Susilo Sudarman. **Left:** A calligraphy workshop held during the festival.

fact, came to Indonesia by means of cultural and peaceful ways and not by the way of the military, nor by economic domination. The Islamization of Indonesian culture, which has lasted for centuries, has been reflected in the people's attitudes, traditions and aesthetic expressions. These are the values which were shown in the Istiqlal Festival.

The Istiqlal Festival, an activity which took two years to prepare, was concerned with four main aspects of Islamic life: the intellectual section, where were shown old Islamic manuscripts, both handwritten and printed and a variety of Qur'ans found in Indonesia; the architecture section, which displayed representations of the various mosques found in the country; traditional art; and modern art. There were also the performing arts, including music, dance, theatre and poetry reading in both traditional and modern

forms. The whole exhibition was displayed in an area of 6,000 square metres on the first floor of the Istiqlal Mosque.

Indonesia, which consists of many ethnic groups, has a great variety of performing arts. On the stage in the yard of the Istiqlal Mosque and in the Ismail Marzuqi Arts Centre, around 65 performances were given.

Besides the exhibitions and the performances, the Istiqlal Festival also introduced the intellectual side of Indonesian life. This took place in the Scientific Forum in the form of a symposium, which lasted from 21 to 24 October and included the themes: The Islamic Tradition and Innovation in the Indonesian Culture", "Islam and the Indonesian Culture: Past, Present and Future" and "Islam and the Future of World Civilization". There were also lectures on matters related to the *tafsir* (interpretation) of the Qur'an, the role of women in society, and education.

There were contests in Islamic calligraphy, in saying the *adhan* (call to prayer) and others for children and youth. There was a Muslim Fashion Show put on by famous national designers; a bazaar which offered a variety of art works, crafts, books and food, and a food; exhibition which showed Islamic meals typical of Indonesia.

The Festival was opened by President Soeharto in a ceremony attended by several distinguished guests including His Majesty Seri Paduka Baginda Yang Dipertuan Agong Malaysia, Sultan Azlan Shah, His Majesty Paduka Yang Dipertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam, Sultan Hassanal Bokiah.

In his speech, President Soeharto pointed out that Indonesian culture has two important elements: the Islamic element or spirit which is based on *tawhid* (unity), peace, blessings and brotherhood for mankind; and the spirit of Indonesia. The combination of the two elements, the universal Islamic spirit and the local Indonesian spirit, together lead to an identity which forms a specific culture for the Indonesian Muslim. At the end of his speech, the President stated clearly that the Festival was not a state festival nor a festival run by the government, but a festival organised by the people themselves. The success of the Festival relied on the support of the Indonesian Muslims in particular and the Indonesian peoples in general.

The President's hopes were fulfilled. During the one-month Festival, the people's response exceeded all expectations. The exhibition was visited by 6,100,557 people and 1,709,584 visited the bazaar, altogether almost 8 million visitors. This number does not include those who came to the performing arts both in the yard of the mosque and at the Ismail Marzuqi Arts Centre. In the symposium, the committee had to limit the number of participants owing to lack of room. The calligraphy contest and the *adhan* contest were participated in by representatives from 21out of 27 provinces in Indonesia).

The Islamic Cultural Festival—the first festival ever held in the country—received a great and touching response from people who came not only from the big cities but also from other parts of the country. The festival was indeed the people's festival. Such an enthusiastic response from the people can be regarded as a new phenomenon in the history of the Indonesian culture.

The participation of television, radio, newspapers and magazines played a foremost role in making the event a success. In general, this festival was said to be the most important cultural event in Indonesia during the last two decades.

Culturally, the Istiqlal Festival was able to contribute to the self-awareness and self-confidence required by Muslims in the current cultural and economic situation. It would not be untrue to state that the festival was an attempt of the Indonesian Muslims to recognize their own identity.

Those who see this event in its socio-political dimension have pointed out that the festival was a proof of the disappearance of government suspicion of the Muslims and, at the same time, a moment of mutual approach between the two elements. This situation has been demonstrated by several other important events, such as the establishment of the Association of the Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) and that of the Indonesia Mualamat Bank (BMI). To this matter, a statement of President Soeharto in his opening speech refers: "The Indonesian Muslims who take part in this festival are not the backward Muslims who were produced by colonization and who are chained by the past, but the Muslims who are growing and developing and are full of self-confidence, having a vast horizon, building up their future as an integrated part of the Indonesian nation."

From the aesthetic point of view, the Istiqlal Festival has automatically abolished the impression that Islam is a religion which dislikes the arts. More than 2,000 Indonesian works of art in the Islamic spirit, in a variety of styles, materials and techniques from the past and present, were displayed in the exhibition. Sixty five performances in both traditional and modern forms, from the various ethnic groups in Indonesia, were given during the festival. These activities have indicated that Indonesian Islamic arts are a living art form reflecting the vitality and dynamism of their supporters, the developing Indonesian Islamic society.

By the end of the festival, the public were wanting an extension of the period of the activities by the Minister of Religious Affairs. This has strengthened the belief that cultural consciousness is indeed awakening. This aspiration was warmly welcomed by the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr Soedharmono SH, when he stated, on the occasion of the closing ceremony of the festival, that there was a possibility of establishing an Islamic Culture Museum. Insha' Allah, if the museum is realized, the Istiqlal Festival may be held periodically.

Dr Yustiono works on the staff of the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, ITB, Bandung, and is also Research Coordinator at the Bandung Institute of Islamic Studies.

Islamic Indonesian Contemporary Art

Plurality and Synthesis

A.D. Pirous,
with contributions from Wiyoso Yudoseputro,
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First of all, to avoid any misconceptions, there should be a clarification made on what is meant by Islamic art in Indonesia. This form of cultural expression is not the same as in some other Islamic countries: it has its own unity in artistic features and a continuity in its development from the beginning to the present time.

Although the majority of Indonesians are Muslims, the development of Islamic culture does not cover the entire Republic of Indonesian territory that consists of thousands of islands. The development of Islamic culture in Indonesia began around the 14th century and reached its peak in the 17th century. Thereafter there was a hiatus in its development during the colonial times because no need was felt to nurture and develop art in the colonies.

The development of Islamic art in three centuries was limited only to some areas, namely, the islands of Sumatera, Java, Madura, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Lombok, and the Moluccas. In places outside those areas the ethnic art traditions remained unchanged.

Pluralism as one characteristic of Indonesian culture indicates the existence of plurality in artistic features and styles in accordance with local cultural foundations, within the living environment, and the influences of foreign art. Thus one of the strengths of the Indonesian art is the presence of Islamic features, in addition to a variety of traditional ethnic forms of expression, the Hindu and Buddhist traditional art, and the new art that is found in large cities.

There is Islamic classical art that is very well preserved and there is also that which can become an inspiration for the development of Indonesian contemporary art in accordance with the demands of modern culture.

Old Islamic Architecture

The adaptive attitude of artists and art patrons toward local cultures is the main characteristics of Islamic art in general. Starting from a commitment to spread Islam to all factions in society the pioneers and art minded thinkers dug deep into values and old traditions to find new art expressions in the interest of Islamic culture.

The development of Islamic architecture in Indonesia for about three centuries was a result of adjustments with previous architectural traditions, especially as seen in Hindu and Buddhist buildings, as long as these were in agreement with the aesthetic principles and norms of Islamic teachings. The application of foreign art elements such as from India, Persia, China, and from Europe, was in the interest of missionary activities and political and trade relations.

Palace Courts

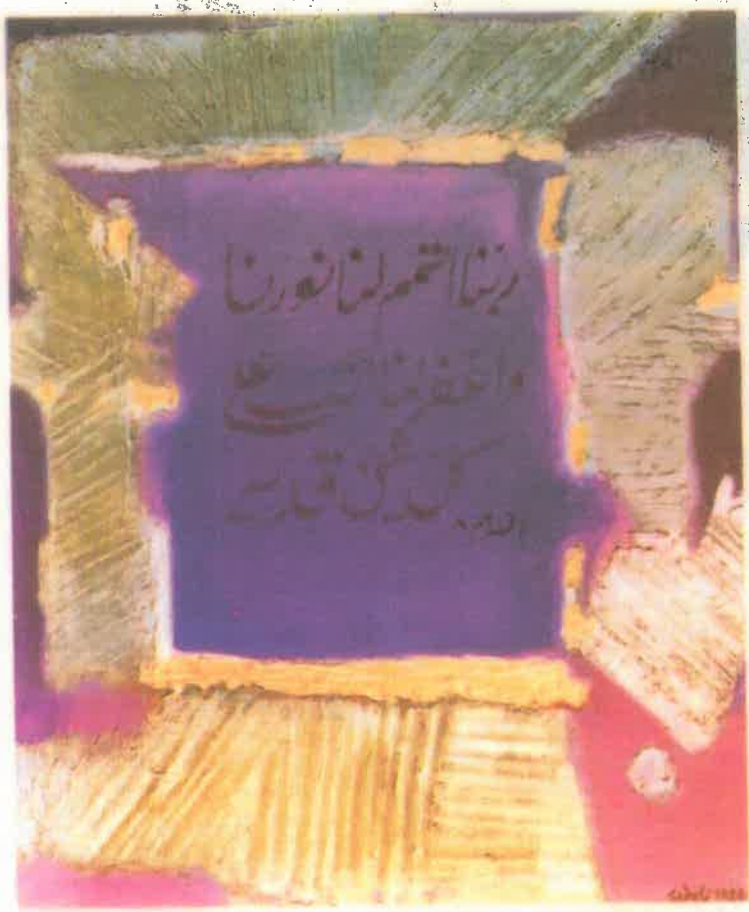
Palaces that were built by Islamic cultural authorities (*Wali, Sunan, Sultan*) around the 15th and 16th centuries in several parts of Java and Madura were results of further development of the basic architectural principles of the Hindu era. One could observe this on the building site arrangement of a palace court in its entirety according to its function and on the spatial arrangement of every building. A palace that stood adjacent to a mosque symbolized the authority of a king in government and religion.

Wood construction and features of roofs explain the influence of the Indonesian tropical environment. The influence of Hindu and Buddhist architecture can be seen in interior decorations, for example, in the application of floral and geometric decorative motifs in a mixture of an ornamental unity with the spirit of Islam.

Several palaces of Islamic potentates in Sumatera that were built in a later period showed a pre-Hindu influence as well as that of European architecture. These influences are apparent in the building features, the use of materials and construction, and in the presence of furniture to complete the palatial majesty.

Mosques

Assembly halls in agrarian societies, or rooms for royal audiences that are called *pendapas*, serve as examples for the erection of the oldest mosques in Indonesia. Wooden construction buildings with several layers of pyramidic roofs are seen to be very open; one only sees rows of pillars and brick walls for separation of prayer zones. The use of brick walls without plaster is a continua-





Top: Modern calligraphic painting by Ahmad Sadali (1924-1987). Above: A modern metal sculpture by Arsono. Opposite page, top: Modern painting by Srihadi Soedarsono. Middle: Tapestery with calligraphic design by Yusuf Affendy. Bottom: Modern painting by Barli.

tion of the Hindu (*Majapahit*) building tradition—also the method of decorating with adhesion techniques (*bajralepa*). One sees also the use of bricks for walls surrounding the mosque yard and for the gate that has the shape of a Hindu temple (*candi*). Ornaments in the form of porcelain dishes show an apparent Chinese influence.

In addition to mosques with such a traditional style, in several places in Sumatera are found mosque features that show extensions of Indo-Persian dome roof mosque tradition. Ornaments in this mosque are relatively richer in variety as well as in the use of media and the decorative techniques.

During the colonial government period, European building techniques and styles further influenced mosques without changing the basic structure of the main building.

Decorations and Islamic Paintings

The outstanding strength of graphic art values in the wealth of pre-Islamic ornamental art reappears in the development of decorations and paintings that have Islamic spirit.

The cessation of sculptural activities boosted the attention of Indonesian Muslim artists in crafts and decorative art. On the one hand this attention came from the desire to continue the development of the old art tradition but on the other it was a desire to apply Islamic aesthetic values to decorative art. Abstraction and stylistics of flora and fauna forms, with mixes of geometric designs, that are exhibited in the decoration of craft objects for palaces, show ornamental strength and sensitivity in miscellaneous lines: repetitive, rhythmic, and imaginative. The artistic achievements of royal decorators can be seen in decorations on gravestones, palace interiors, on weapons and musical instruments, on royal garb, and other objects in various media and with the use of diversetechniques.

The Wayang Beber, one of the *wayang* performances with Islamic missionary element, is a painting on canvas that has its roots in the pre-Islamic tradition. Through the hands of Muslim

artists came the creation of paintings with decorative styles containing themes from history and legends. Apart from paintings on canvas, the court artists also created paintings on glass—that were thought to originate from the Chinese painting tradition. The themes in the paintings continued to develop in accordance with Islamic elements and symbolic forms that merged with Islamic calligraphy. The practice of making glass paintings later spread outside the court and some existed until recently as traditional painting.

Old Islamic Calligraphy

The art of calligraphy revered in the history of Islamic art, did not in fact receive attention in the early stages in Indonesia, apparently due to a lack of interest among court artists. Although *Kawi* calligraphy was known before, calligraphy as an art of beautiful writing was not a court tradition.

Palaces, mosques, and old gravestones did not exhibit much calligraphic decorations that added value to the beauty of edifices—as did Islamic architecture outside Indonesia in the same period. The existence of calligraphy then was only as a complementary element to show the Islamic spirit as was shown on the gates of mosques and palace courts and on *keris*, a status symbol weapon of nobility in the palace culture.

There was also a kind of old calligraphy used as symbols such as found on flags and royal banners and on glass paintings. Symbolic calligraphy often was an imaginative design in painting using words from scriptures from the Quran. The manifestation of the adaptation of Islam towards *sayang* can be found in much of the symbolic calligraphy painting.

In batik, a famous form of palace court dress design, Islamic calligraphy also appears as a complementary decoration motif. In old palaces calligraphic art is stored in the form of calendars or almanacs that are made with batik techniques. In the development of contemporary Indonesian art, Islamic calligraphy will surely reappear as a medium of expression as discussed







later in this presentation.

Development of New Islamic Art

The disregard of the Dutch colonial government toward fostering culture in Indonesia created a long hiatus in the development of art. Although artistic activities did not cease totally, the result showed repetitions of the old art tradition and imitations of foreign art without attempts to pioneer developments with new perceptions.

The palace courts lost their authoritative power as art centres, no longer capable of putting life into the classical art tradition. They were unable to motivate artistic activity in a contemporary context.

In educated circles, among the *priyayis*, the consciousness and appreciation for art was eroded due to materialistic attitudes and an education devoid of artistic and cultural values.

When political developments came to surface at the beginning of the 20th century a change came with the rise of nationalistic movements that influenced much of Indonesian cultural life.

This awakening that was led by intellectuals (*Boedi Oetomo*) developed further into a determination among the young. Their Oath of the Youth (*Sumpah Pemuda*) not only boosted the nationalistic spirit to fight for independence but also reawakened interest in art and cultural values. The role of Indonesian Muslims in this field was significant.

The spirit to develop art which manifested itself after Indonesia gained independence, was previously nurtured during the collapse of the Dutch Indies government and the Japanese occupation. This transition period opened a new page in the history of Indonesian art in meeting the cultural demands of the newly independent nation and anticipating the incoming flow of modern culture.

Contemporary Indonesian art shows vigorous development after the Declaration of Independence in 1945. This art does not start from, and is therefore not a continuation of, the traditional art that has roots in one or more, or all, Indonesian ethnic groups. (Indonesia has more than 300 different ethnic groups in thousands of islands.)

The modern Indonesian art is part of the Indonesian metropolitan superculture and is closely linked to the cultural contact between Indonesia and the West. It arrived in our midst when the Indonesian people of various ethnic groups moved and were transformed into one new nation. They aspired to have a new culture and, therefore, a new art.

The period until the sixties was the beginning when painters grew in numbers and associations of painters began to form; this was the first stage of the development of modern Indonesian art. In the second stage came the important role of higher education in art and culture. Around 1950 an institution was established that grew rapidly and in the seventies became the main centre for the education of painters and other visual artists. They proclaimed numerous renewals and made experimental and exploratory innovations while the flow of information from the world of modern art came rushing in.

In the wake of this development there arose issues and concerns for environmental problems in society, art, and culture. Initially, interest in the old art and old tradition led several artists to create paintings with decorative styles. Later the decorative style became a trend on its own in Indonesian paintings.

Additionally, the trend to delve into the treasure of Indonesian traditional art as an alternative expression and to find an identity for Contemporary Indonesian Art could also be observed in calligraphic paintings. This form of painting came to the fore at the beginning of the seventies as abstract, non-figurative paintings, enriched with elements of Arabic calligraphy. Most of these calligraphic paintings use holy scriptures from the Quran or Hadith as their themes.

II

The Trend Setters

The trend that was started by several painters developed in less than 10 years, and at the end of the seventies (1970-1980) was followed by more than 30 painters in various exhibitions in large Indonesian cities. It continued to develop and has been followed by many young painters. The new painting style that was calligraphic and had the Islamic spirit spread very quickly to the art centres and took various forms with miscellaneous features in accordance with the ethnic plurality in Indonesia.

The specific characteristics of Indonesian contemporary art with Islamic spirit appear in abstract and modern paintings and is fused with Islamic calligraphic elements from the Holy Quran. Another form presents itself in abstract non-calligraphic paintings, consistent with the background of the artists; there are also paintings that are figurative and based on Sufistic themes. Some of the trend setters are the following.

Achmad Sadali (1924-1987)

A senior painter whose style is abstract-meditative and whose paintings become objects of contemplation. He has created many beautiful paintings, enriched with Islamic calligraphic elements as well as non-calligraphic paintings which are rich and evocative. A faithful Muslim painter, he was also a scholar and a preacher who gave direction and contributed much thought on Indonesian art with Islamic spirit.

A.D. Pirous (1933 -)

He is a painter who, since 1970, has tried to express himself in calligraphic paintings with abstract patterns as background. Calligraphic forms unite with the structure of painting and harmonize with the materials used; there is an effort to waft an old and archaic atmosphere with imagination of time-intervals of the past. His dreams took shape from old graves and folk art in Aceh, his birthplace, and North Sumatera. His paintings are rich in textures and are suffused with deep spiritual meaning.

Amang Rachman (1931 -)

This artist from Surabaya, East Java, with its environment of mysticism

and Javanese spiritual beliefs (*kejawen*), creates paintings that are rich with surrealistic and Sufistic ambience. His creations have calligraphic themes and human forms in contemplation.

Amri Yahya (1939 -)

A Yogyakarta painter with an abstract style whose lines are drawn with spontaniety and expressiveness. His style is much influenced by *batik* tradition with masterly use of the *canting* and paint brush. The colours are bright, sharp, and lively, on paintings with calligraphic themes as well as on his abstract and non-figurative creations.

Saiful Adnan (1957 -)

A young painter who tries to develop a calligraphic style that is specifically his own, with bold lines and minimum use of colours; thus his calligraphic forms come forth very sharply and stand out.

In addition to the painters mentioned earlier, there are many others who have developed styles imbued with Islamic spirit, and their forms are in harmony with the individual elements or features specific to every artist; therefore, their calligraphic painting expressions are rich in various trends and aesthetic approaches, e.g. meditative, contemplative, symbolic, decorative, realistic, and expressive values that are in concert with the artists' painting styles. One can see here the high degree of pluralism in the visual forms of creations of those artists, although they all start with the very same Islamic spirit.

Search for Alternative Identity

If we study why the art with Islamic spirit is developing rapidly in Indonesia today, we can make conjectures on its close ties with, or on its support from, conditions and situations that exist in society. The development of Indonesian modern art is clearly being supported by formal higher art education that is improving. This helps the development of research, a quest for new vision, and an enthusiasm that is supported by analytic capabilities.

As the largest Islamic society in the world, the Indonesian ethos is a source and simultaneously a support for an art trend with Islamic spirit; and the search for an alternative identity creates art that is in harmony with the faith of Islam.

At the same time, the wealth of Islamic expressions in ethnic groups of different cultural backgrounds produces a pluralistic spectrum.

Modern Indonesian art is becoming more firmly rooted because of an increasing appreciation for art among the population. Art transactions have boomed in the last five years. There is a growing zeal in society to accept and embrace Islam both as a religion and for its social, artistic, and cultural aspects. This can be seen from an increase in facilities provided by the government and by the population for the establishment of Islamic hospitals, and Islamic education foundations and other similar organizations. A larger number of Indonesians are going for the *haj* pilgrimage every year (approximately 70,000 pilgrims per year and increasing). Other helpful factors have been the enactment of more Islamic marriage laws; an increase in the number of women who wear the proper *Muslimah* dress among the intellectuals; the screening of an Arabic language program in the government television; activities in the national program of *Musabaqoh Tilawatil Quran* (*MTQ* - competition in reciting the Holy Quran), held once every two years, and now expanded to include exhibitions of calligraphy; the establishment of the *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* (*ICMI* - Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) as an organization and an intellectual group to organise activities to uplift the quality, and to expand mental horizons in harmony with the visions of Islam; and the great number of mosques built by the government and by the population as a continuation of building in traditional forms or with new architectural concepts.

One of the finest forms for new expressions in modern Indonesian art that simultaneously possesses the spirit of Islam and provides stimulus to the other arts in the country was the Istiqlal Festival, organised as part of the Visit Indonesia Year 1991 campaign. On the initiative of the Indonesian people this large festival was arranged for the purpose of raising the potential of this culture steeped in the spirit of Islam and integrated into one magnum exposition from October 15 to November 15, 1991.

Festival Highlights

The Istiqlal Festival had as its theme **"Indonesian Islamic Culture: Past, Present, and Future."** It had a wide spectrum covering five main subjects, namely, **Scriptorium** (writing of ***Mushaf al-Quran***): **Exhibitions** (Architecture, Traditional Art, Modern Art, Manuscripts and Books, Culinary Arts, *Muslim* Dresses & Fashion Show); **Performing Arts** (Music, Dances, Quran Recitations, Poetry Reading, Theatre, and Films); **Scientific Forum** (Symposium, Lectures, and Discussions), and **Competitions** (Calligraphy and *Adzan*).

The activities under each catagory were as follows:

a. Scriptorium Indonesia

This was the area devoted to the art of writing beautifully verses of the Holy Quran on special sheets of paper, with *khat* or calligraphy, and with illustrations and illuminations. This manifestation of the Quran wasnot in the usual form but in a large format, reflecting a national treasure that is in harmony with the laws and principles governing the writing of *Mushaf al-Quran*.

Various aspects and stages of the writing of *Mushaf al-Quran* were arranged in one of the many halls of the Istiqlal Mosque, overseen by a team of experts who were selected from various fields, such as *tashih* specialists, *alim ulama*, *khattat* (calligraphers), designers, and illuminators, from all overIndonesia.

After completion of this event, a formal Quran with Indonesian characters was planned to be printed for all Indonesian Muslims.

b. Exhibitions

Architecture: The aim of this

exhibition was to introduce Islamic Indonesian architecture to the international public through works of Muslim architects from the earliest times to the present. The setting was a simulation of a mosque building as primadona. Presentations were in the form of photographs, drawings, maps and diagrams, models, replicas, original artefacts, and audio-visual arrangements.

Art: This was divided into two categories, the Modern Art Exhibition, and the Traditional Art Exhibition.

The Modern Art Exhibition showed the contemporary Islamic art expressions: paintings, graphic art, three-dimensional forms, calligraphy, etc. It was a group showing and there was a total of 175 painters participating in this program with approximately 400 creations in various techniques.

The Traditional Art Exhibition showed various crafts, including textile art (*batik, ikat, songket, pelekat* textiles, and *sulaman*), leather craft, jewellery, ceramics, glass paintings, macrame, weaponry, dress and costume, and Islamic art of interior decoration. The technique of presentation utilised original works as well as two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects.

Manuscripts and Books: This included a presentation of hand written Quran s.Such manuscripts are found in many parts of the country with their own distinctive styles, in Aceh, West Sumatera, West Java, Central Java, East Java, Madura, South Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and other places.

Two collections were shown in this exhibition: old Qurans (Indonesian main collection) and modern printed Qurans (collection from Islamic nations).

Other manuscripts and books were also on display as a presentation of writings, including material about science, technology, and Islamic art in Indonesia. There were also examples of print and electronic media.

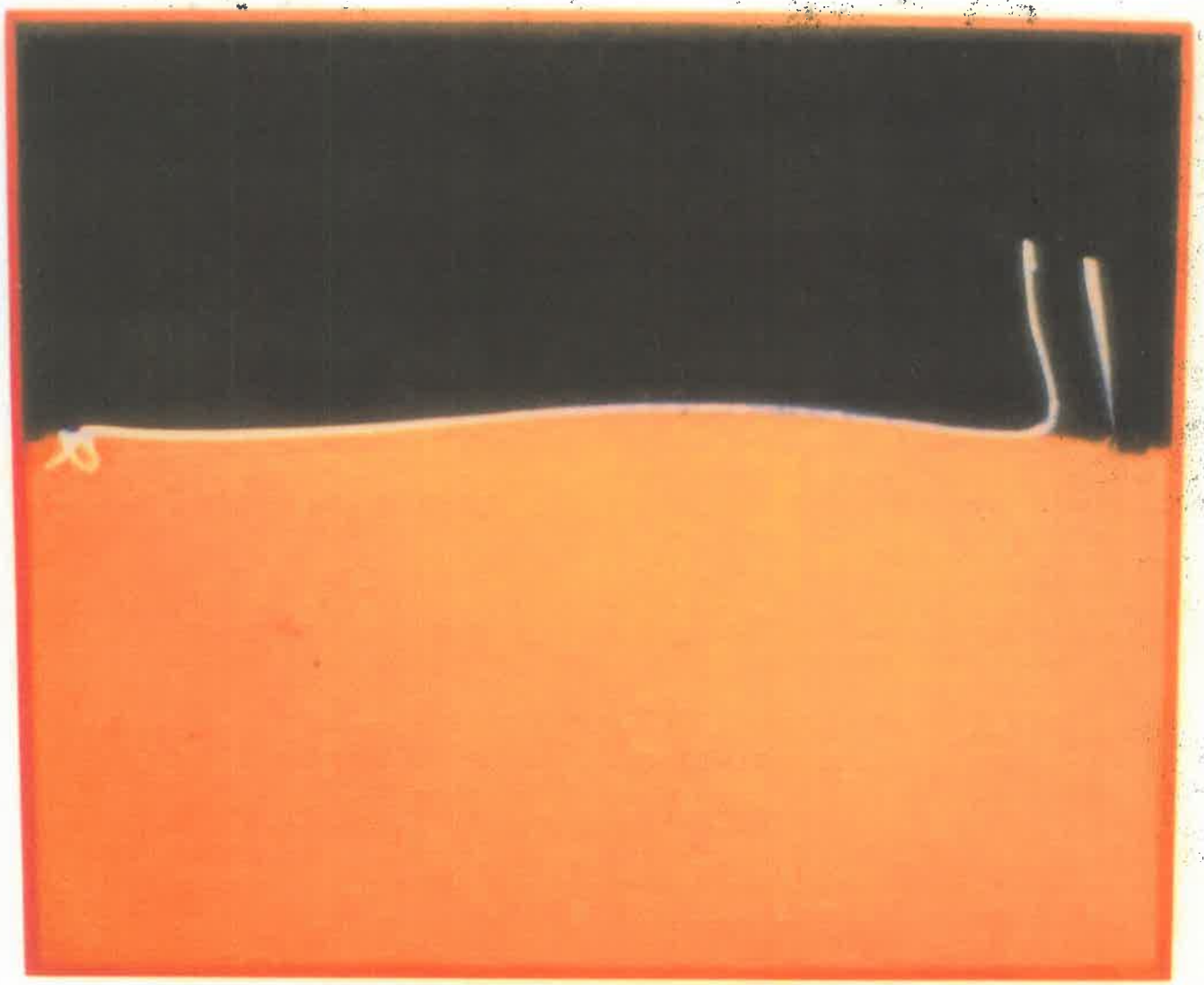
The exhibition occupied one hall of approximately 7000 square metres.

Culinary Arts: This section was visualised as a bazaar of Indonesian culinary arts. Islam sets rules and methods relating to food; this was shown in the form of daily food as well as dishes for important days in the Islamic calendar, among many Islamic ethnic groups in Indonesia.

Muslimah Fashion Show: This display featured designs with the theme "From









Opposite page, top: Modern calligraphic painting by A D Pirous. **Bottom:** Modern painting by Ema G Pirous. **This page, top:** Modern calligraphic painting by Srihadi Sudarsono, Bandung, 1982. **Left:** Modern painting by Umi Dachlan.

the traditional towards present day Indonesian *Muslimah* fashion". Putting forward Indonesian characteristics is a certain challenge for fashion designers. The show was aimed at improving the appreciation by the common people for *Muslimah* dress from the point of view of religion, society, ethics, and aesthetics.

c. Performing Arts

Various branches of performing arts were represented including the art of the recitation of the Holy Quran, poetry reading, music, dance, film, and fashion show. These arts had ele-

ments of both Islamic and Indonesian spirit, values that are translated through the diversity of Indonesian cultural tradition.

The program brought forth traditional and modern performances and also various other cultural aspects. Fifty-five performances from various regions were presented during the month-long festival.

d. Scientific Forum

Symposium: It was felt that as a cultural event, the Istiqlal Festival would be more meaningful when all the cultural activities and aspects presented were assessed and interpreted by scholars and specialists who were invited to a symposium on the theme: "Islam and Indonesian culture: past, present, and future". The main theme was divided into three sub-themes:

1. Islamic Aesthetic Expressions in Indonesia;
2. Islamic Tradition and Innovations in Indonesian Culture; and
3. Islam and the Future of the World Civilization.

Each of these sub-themes treated one commonly understood concept of culture: culture in the sense of art was treated in the first sub-theme; culture in the sense of the total activities of man was part of the second sub-theme—although still limited by the definition of nation; and in the third sub-theme this limit was disregarded so that the term 'civilization' came in use.

The symposium was open to Indonesian scientists, *ulamas*, intellectuals, artists, and experts and scholars, who had an interest in the development and progress of Islamic Indonesian culture. The deliberations were spread over four days.

Lectures: In addition to the symposium, lectures were held in the scientific forum. The material was selected and determined in the context of the challenges faced by Muslims in the globalization era, and according to the importance of solving problems within the context of Islam in Indonesia. In three sessions the lecturers discussed issues on education, the role of Muslim women, and interpretations of the Holy Quran.

e. Competitions

There were two competitions: The *Adzan* Competition was for children and youth in the 7 to 12 and 12 to 18 age groups; and the Islamic Calligraphy Competition was open to the entire Indonesian Islamic society without age groups restrictions.

Dr A D Pirous, Vice-Chairman of the Festival Executive Board, is a practising painter and teaches at the Bandung Institute of Technology. Wiyoso Yudoseputro is author of Sejara Seni Rupa Indonesia *(History of Indonesian Art). Dr Setiawan Sabana MFA, is a teacher-painter and was Chairman of the Festival's Section on Modern Fine Arts.*

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The Mushaf of Al Qur'an at Istiqlal

Machmud Buchari

The development of the art of writing or calligraphy of the Qur'an started with *kufic* lettering. The art of lettering lies in the several variations created by the calligrapher and it was then not yet as perfect as we know it today. From the 8th century to the beginning of the 10th century, the development of Arabic calligraphy was fast. At that time, Ibn Muqlah, a genius among calligraphers, invented italic Arabic calligraphy and later on yet more designs were invented. There were six basic standards for Arabic calligraphy: *thuluthi, naskhi, muhaqqaq, rayhani, riga* and *tawqi*. From then until the 19th century, there was further rapid development through the many variations and combinations of these, which were also subject to external influences. Since then, the writing of the Qur'an has been developed even more and is now famous in countries where the majority of the population are Muslims.

According to a study done by historians, the development of the illumination of the Qur'an was slower than that of calligraphy. However, since the 10th century, the illumination of the Qur'an and the art of calligraphy have developed alongside each other. It should be noted that during the dynasty of 11 Khanid in the 13th century, the development of illumination in Islam led to the establishment of a school of illumination in Baghdad where not only the illumination of the Qur'an but also ornaments for mosques, royal documents and literary books were designed.

In later developments, calligraphy and the art of illumination of the Qur'an became specific Islamic traditions in all the countries where the majority of the population were Muslims. Therefore, *mushafs* of the Qur'an, beautifully written and illuminated, can be found in every Islamic country. The *mushafs* have so far been kept in museums or in personal collections in North Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Samarkand, Russia and Indonesia.

The Development of Mushafs of the Qur'an in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the calligraphy and illumination of the Qur'an have developed throughout the country from Sumatra and Java to Madura and Lombok; from Kalimantan and Sulawesi to Tidore and Ternate.

The study of the history of *mushafs* of the Qur'an in Indonesia has not yet been completed. However, it is suspected that this art has been developing for four or five centuries.

It is amazing to look at the art of *mushaf* in Indonesia, because it was done so carefully and was full of ornaments in good taste. Usually, *mushafs* of the Qur'an were written and illuminated by the outstanding *ulamas* in each region, with amazing perseverance and planning, and included about 660 pages of the whole content of the Qur'an.

The most beautiful and extraordinary pages are the first and second pages of the *fatihah* (opening) and the first verse of *al-Baqarah* (Surah 2). The ornament and colours on these pages are usually used as a reference for the following pages, which have less elaborate variations. The type of ornament is usually floral themes in the most abstract shapes. We will not see any anthropomorphic shapes, because these are forbidden in Islam.

The types of calligraphy used are usually not less than three or four of the seven standard types: *thuluth, naskhi, muhaqqaq, raihani, riq'a, tawqi* and *kufic*.

Beside the first two pages of the Qur'an, some other famous verses, such as the *al-kahfi, an-nur* and *al-ikhlas*, also bear the beauty and ornament of illumination.

Other peculiar features are the writing and colouring of the Name of Allah, which was done in gold as the symbol of glorification or *taqwa*. *Taqwa* means obedience to God. This is the root of the development of calligraphy and the art of illumination of the Qur'an. It was motivated by the concept of a reward for moral conduct and for the good and proper saying and writing of each word of the verses in the Qur'an.

Bearing this in mind, the art of calligraphy and the illumination of the Qur'an has been a religious expression for the calligraphers. It gives them the same joyous feeling as they get from converting others to Islam.

A *mushaf* written by one expert or *alim* is usually different from that written by another. This is because the art of decoration varies from one region to another. The Qur'an for example, made by Tuanku

Syekh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari from Banjarmasin is different from the one made by Syekh Nawawi from Banten.

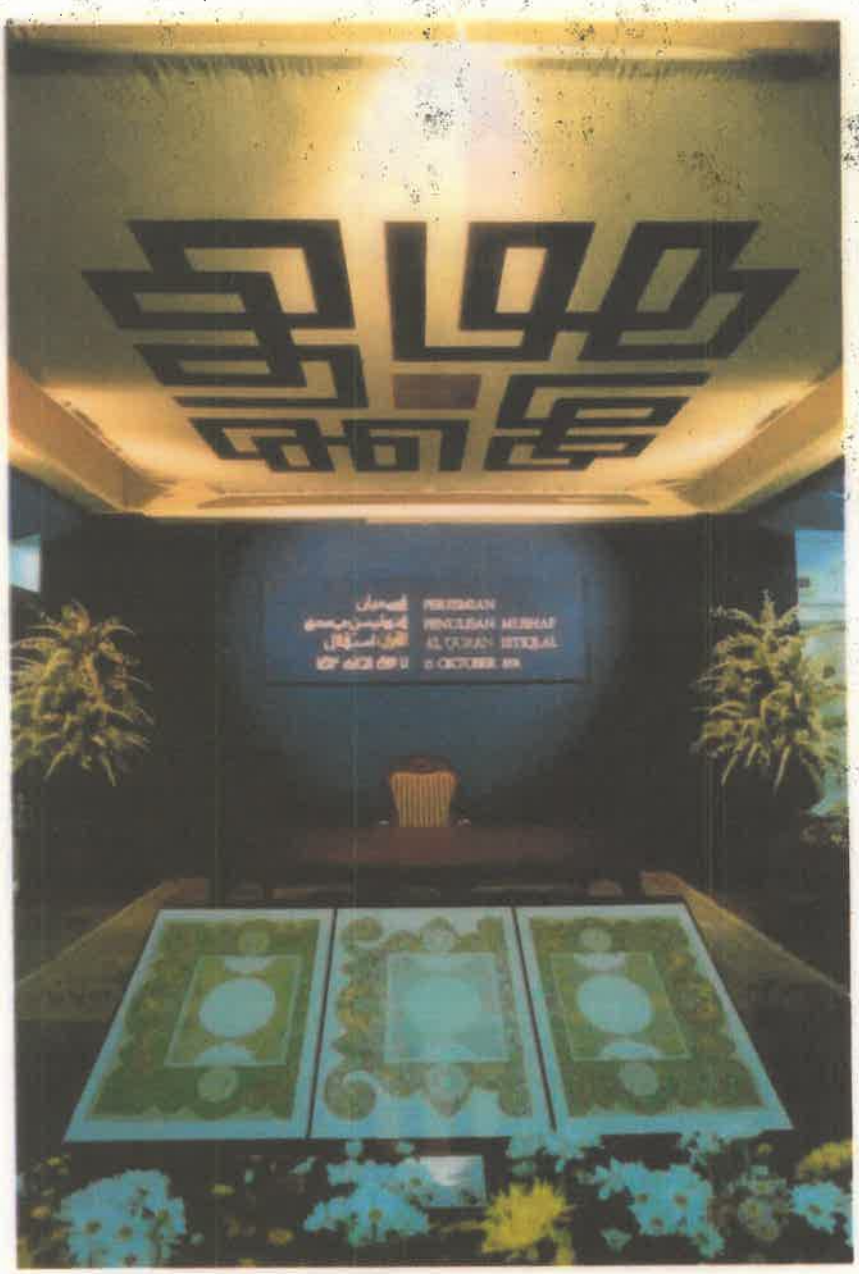
The *mushafs* of the Qur'an which are so beautiful and are found almost everywhere in Indonesia are cultural riches we should be proud of and which should be preserved. At present, the *mushafs* are mostly kept in museums but some are in private collections.

The Istiqlal *Mushaf* of the Qur'an

It should be noted that Indonesia, unlike other Islamic countries, has no *mushaf* specific to the country. We know that a *mushaf* indicates the level of culture of the nation making it. The fine lines and shapes, colours and compositions reflect the time and generation they were made in.

The diversity of the *mushaf* of the Qur'an in Indonesia is a reality and something which should be preserved by taking care of the old ones and writing new ones. A plan for writing an Istiqlal *mushaf* of the Qur'an has been made. This Istiqlal *mushaf*, which will have specific Indonesian features, will be based on the study of the diversity of the art of decoration. It will bear various elements, such as the shapes used in traditional houses, batik, weaving, embroidery, etc.

Another specific feature of this *mushaf* will be the new Qur'anic punctuation which has been approved by the Indonesian Board of Qur'an *ulamas*. This is the result







Top:The room where the official ceremony of the first writing of the Mushaf Al Qur'an was carried out. It was inaugurated by President Soeharto. Above,left: The Holy Qur'an, calligraphed by Mas Muhammad bin Husen at Makkah, collection of " Pesantren Al Khairiyah", West Java. Above, right: Old handwritten Al Qur'an.





Top: The Holy Qur'an, originally from Kudus, Central Java – Mr H Jamhari, collection of Masagung Jakarta. Above: An old handwritten Qur'an.

of a long study made with a view to making the reading of the Qur'an easier and reducing the possibility of making mistakes in the reading and interpreting of the content of the Qur'an by Indonesian Muslims.

The Istiqlal *mushaf* of the Qur'an is planned to be printed, so that every Muslim can possess it and use it for various purposes. Some of the benefits of the use of the Istiqlal *mushaf* of the Qur'an will be that it can be used as:

1 Reference and study material for practical use and for learning the verses by heart.

2 A reference for the calligraphy and illumination of the Qur'an.

3 A means of preserving the culture of calligraphy and the illumination of the Qur'an.

4 An attempt to create a specific Indonesian art which is rooted in the various regional kinds of art.

The plan to make the Istiqlal *mushaf* of the Qur'an expresses the outpouring of our love for the Divine Revelation as our guide in life. Besides, we know that the Istiqlal Mosque, as the biggest mosque in Indonesia, is the result of the ideas of the *ulamas* and the late President Soekarno. This mosque was built and completed by President Soeharto in the New Order era. It is only fair now to create the Istiqlal *mushaf* of the Qur'an specific to Indonesia which was initiated by President Soeharto.

Machmud Buchari is Director of the Decenta Gallery, Bandung and Director of the Indonesian Art Foundation. He was Planning Coordinator of the Istiqlal Festival, 1991.

The Diversity of Traditions in Indonesian Craftsmanship

H Hasanuddin

At the 1991 Istiqlal Festival, which took place in the Istiqlal Mosque from 15 October to 15 November, many handicrafts were displayed. They were articles known and used for their daily needs by the Indonesians, yet they were not insignificant things; they were valuable because of being related to religious functions, particularly those of Islam.

In selecting those articles, many things were considered, such as appearance, function, material, process, historical background, originality and wholeness, social, cultural and ethnic aspects, craftsmanship and aspects related to Islamic values.

The goods displayed included textiles, plaited mats, carved objects, ceramic objects, *tosan aji*, goods for religious services, musical instruments, tools and others. The two-dimensional goods were displayed on panels, three-dimensional goods on bases and rare goods in show cases. The goods were grouped into traditional categories reflecting the life cycle of the Muslims.

The life cycle of a Muslim starts with the time of birth and goes on to babyhood, childhood, youth, adulthood, marriage, congregational life, maturity and death. Islam has taught its people to follow the guidance given by Allah and the Prophet, with all its rights and responsibilities. The Commandments of Allah cover the relationships between parents and children, individuals and groups, rich and poor rulers and the ruled and many others. Islam has drawn up regulations based on the Qur'an and *hadith* to be obeyed at all times.

According to the teachings of Islam, the Muslims in Indonesia have a tradition of uttering the Name of Allah in the ear of the baby at birth so that the baby will thereafter know its God. Other traditions are to cut the baby's hair, give the baby good names, read to it the book on the history of the Prophet (*berzanji*), *akekah*, *sedekah*, breastfeed it, carry it, swing it, watch it crawl, help it stand up and help it walk.

The traditional art goods related to birth include handspun white cloth, handwoven cloth, silk, cloth made of pineapple fibres and cloth made of fibres from the trunk of a banana plant to symbolize that each birth is sacred. The nature of a person depends on the conduct of life as reflected in the kinds of batik decorations and *sungkit* cloth worn.

Other goods displayed were: square *nyiru*, embroidered outfits for babies, clothes made of batik *nitik*, the cutter of the umbilical cord, brass bowls, scales, gold pieces, batik and *lurik* cloth for carrying the baby, Bugisnese cloth, rattan cradles, babies' toys, handwritten texts on the history of the Prophet, goods related to *turun tanah*, *tatihan*, *kroncong* and accessories, traditional bathtubs, tools to make certain *jamu*, children's outfits, children's toys, various *bengkung*, *gunungang* and other things. Childhood and youth are spent in the traditions of playing, in the belief that playing is the beginning of a creation process. The Prophet recommended that during this period the children be told to read the Qur'an, pray, learn how to write, learn arithmetic and self-defence, save money, be aware of health and cleanliness and be circumcised.

Goods related to childhood and youth included ceramic *dakon* from Banten, *takraw* balls, tops, toy horses, kites, various piggy banks, *rehel*, handwritten Qur'ans, handwritten books, pens, ink-wells, earthenware bowls, water dippers, earthenware flasks, self-defence costumes, prayer rugs, *tasbih*, things related to circumcision, various kinds of headdress for Muslim men, tambourines and things related to the *khataman* ceremony.

Adulthood is the time when a person has learnt how to tell good from bad and so becomes eligible to have rights and becomes liable to perform the obligations set by God. From now on, a Muslim has to dress properly, covering certain parts of the body, carrying out his work with full responsibility and achieving according to his potential. A Muslim has to give priority to quality in his work, which may include making embroidery, *sungkit*, *jumputan*, batik, carving, plaiting, painting, glasswork, weaving, *tenun ikat* and other things.

The articles displayed in the adult section were clothing, various kinds of hand embroidery, cloth and *sungkit* from Sumatra, Tuban and Lombok, *pelangi* and *jumputan* from



Modern calligraphic painting by Saiful Adnan, Yogyakarta, 1984.

Palembang and Yogya, *tenun* batik from Tuban, *kain sogan* from Solo, Pacitan, Trenggalek and Yogya, *gentongan sekarjaqat* from Madura, *bangbiru* shawls from Cirebon, *kelengan* from Indramayu and Tuban, various kinds of headbands including those with calligraphy, various *cap* from Pekalongan, carved objects from Kuningan, plaited materials, *enping*, carved leather, wood and glass, *lurik* and *palekat*, *sarung ikat lusi* and *pakan* and other goods made and used according to religious stipulations.

To implement the *Sunnah Rasul* (lifestyle of the Prophet), the Muslims marry in order to create a family and receive the Blessings of God. Married life starts with the wedding, which includes the giving of the dowry. Goods shown in connection with marriage included *jamu* for the special treatment of the body, batik, prayer accessories, the headdress and accessories for the bride and groom, the *sungkit* for the ceremony, *kain ikat*, *tasan aji* and *keris*, footwear, wallets, working costumes, tools and other things related to making a living, household goods, goods for religious purposes, and so on. To illustrate family life, a "Portrait of a Muslim Family" was displayed. In the life of the family, there is a need for balance between the *ukhrowi* (other worldly) and the worldly. There was also shown a place for prayer, a prayer rug and a *tasbih*, *rehal* and Qur'an, besides a kitchen, a workroom and a room where children could play.

The importance of doing things together is imposed on an adult. Being charitable to society is desirable, though not an obligation, unlike the obligation to support the family. Helping others comes after fulfilling one's responsibility to one's family. In fact the family is the smallest but most important unit in society so that helping society is dependent on helping one's family.

To depict group activities, *berjamaah*, the following were presented: praying in a group, the situation in a mosque, a *mihrab*, a pulpit, *sholat ied*, *sholat istiqa*, reading the *sholowat*, poems, playing the tambourine and other musical instruments, *dakwah* through the *wayang golek menak*, *wayang kulit*, *wayang menak*, *wayang krucil*, *gamelan sekaten*, *mauludan*, *isra mi'raj*, *lebaran*, *silaturahmi*, distributing *zakat* and *fitrah*, the tradition of sending food, the distribution of the *qurban* meat, *gotong royong*, building, *jihad*, various war devices and others.

In *jamaa*, the emphasis was on the *musyawarah*, respecting the difference in opinions, customs and traditions as shown in the various regional costumes from Palambang, Banten, Madura, Buqis and Sasak. Maturity, known as "the time of perfection", is marked by improvement in the observance of religious duties, the attempt to be closer to God, the preparation for replacing the leaders and perfecting the pillars of Islam.

Other things on display were the *ihram* costume, headdress and other things for the pilgrimage and prayer rugs from Afghanistan, Syria, Iran, India, Sudan and other places. Some tableaux depicted situations such as *sholat jamaah*, *thowaf*, praying, the *arafah*, *jabar ramah*, *wukuf* and *khutbah wukuf* as well as the "night in Muzdalifah, Mina and Jumrah", the *qurban* and the Masjid Nabawi, Madinah. The grave of the Prophet and the architecture of the Masjid Nabawi and the Masjid 'l-Haram were also







Top: batik from Jambi. Above: A wall hanging with Arabic calligraphy formed in animal motifs – the Paksi Nagaliman and the Garuda from Cirebon. Above, right: Modern calligraphic painting by Saiful Adnan. Right: A piece of ornamentic calligraphic woodcarving from an old mosque in Java.



shown.

To depict the last part of the cycle of a Muslim's life, there were gravestones made of wood, stone and ceramics, *kendi* for the grave, devices to bathe the dead, wills, *talqin*, *tahlil*, covers for the dead, covers for the bier, the funeral, *sholat mayat*, the *ta'ziah*, covers for the dead with Quranic calligraphy and a representation of life in the Hereafter.

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Mosque Architecture in Indonesia:

Variations on a Theme

Yuswadi Saliya

It is generally acknowledged that Islam came to Indonesia through various routes as well as channels. There are those who believe that Islam was brought to Indonesia by merchants from Gujrat with traces of (South-)Indian influences. Some would insist that the Islamization process was primarily due to the trading activities, and that it was predominantly done by Indonesian natives themselves, i.e. those who had the opportunity to go overseas and came back with the new religion. In all likelihood the spread of Islam was done both by the local and foreign traders at the same time. By all means, there were also scholars as well as students of the new religion, sent abroad by local or traditional educational institutions (*pesantren*), who on their turn held key positions in their community, and became *agents of Islamization* in their own accord. Their roles as *kiayi*, teachers of Islam, in spreading the teachings were thus instrumental to the making of an Islamic community.

It is worth noting that the process took place at all social strata simultaneously, although the *grass-root approach* seemed to be more pronounced in terms of speed and number. That is to say, that at the early stages the larger proportion of the population undergoing the process of Islamisation was mostly of the lowest or lower level of the community, notwithstanding the selected few at the higher echelons of society. Drewes (1955) contended that the Islamization process moved from the lower to the upper classes. This process began at the very level of family unit and it was significant that the *door-to-door* process was initiated peacefully. The teaching must have been introduced through daily activities by way of interpersonal contact, hardly disturbing the existing formal institutions; the message was passed onwards and continued almost in confidence through a process of "Osomosis". This kind of *penetration pacifique* might well be held responsible for the diverse creation of mosques, to some extent even for the differing forms of religious organizations to contain the swarming *mualaf*, the new converts, in its later stages of Islamization.

There were (and to some extent still are), to be sure, some conflicts regarding the differences between Islamic and the existing, i.e. pre-Islamic, customary laws, such as the wellknown case in Minangkabau,







Top: A maquette of Kudus Mosque (Central Java): a compromise between the old (Hinduistic) and the new (Islamic) architecture. Middle: A maquette of Demak Mosque (Central Java) with Limasan (Pyramid like) as its roof characteristic. Above: Mosque Al Hurriyah, under construction, Darmaga IPB Campus, Bogor, West Java.

West Sumaira. But, the topic being more relevant to the socio-political problem than to architecture is beyond the scope of this paper, however interesting it may be. Somehow, as far as the formative Islamic architecture is concerned—to make a long story short—the unique cultural expressions produced were made possible both by the *insistence* and *tolerance* of Islamic teaching, each in accordance with the social and physical environment. That is to say that the final adaptations, or adoptions in that matter, were conceived as the most appropriate solution in terms of their social and physical conditions.

Here comes the magic word of *genius loci*, the ingenuity of the local people in concocting new forms out of the existing ones to accommodate new functions, or new forms blended into the old to fulfil new religious requirements of Muslim worship. And that happened from island to island, each producing its own characteristics and uniqueness.

It should be noted that Indonesia comprisesthousands of large and small pieces of land, an archipelago stretching for more than 5000 km. along the equator. Islamic influences spread primarily to Sumatra (late XIII century); Java (ca. XIV); Southern Kalimantan (Borneo; ca. XIV); Southern Sulawesi (Celebes; ca. late XIV) esp. Goa and Bone; Northern Maluku (Moluccas; ca. XIV) esp. Ternate and Tidore; and to some smaller islands to the East of Bali (incredibly untouched by Islam; ca. XIV), namely Lombok, Sumbawa, some Northern coast of Flores; all in a long stretch of about 4000 km., inhabited by more than 170 million Muslim, the largest Muslim community in the world.

It is hard to imagine the total sum of possible combinations and permutations between Islam and local cultures within so large an area and such varied characteristics in the hands of *genius loci* i.e., local religious intelligentsia even within the rules and restraints of the new religion.

However, much to the dismay of the Indonesian intellectuals, the multitude of Islamic artistic expressions are still hidden from the world at large. On the other hand, the equation of Islamic art and cultures with the Arabs or Persian remain strong among the local people, even among the elite and the modern well educated people and the cultured classes concerning the mosque architecture, they are overwhelmed, even obsessed, by the idea that it should be as impressive, extravagant, elegant and sophisticated as the Isfahan Mosque in Iran or The Great Mosque in Cordoba.

However, the *Festival Istiqlal 1991* was an attempt to show the wide variety in mosque architecture rather than the grandeur of a single type or style and the productivity born out of creative dialectical deliberations between man and his environment with emphasis onb elements of restraint and tolerance within the religious domain of Islamic theology. It served to underline the purposefulness based onthe will to live, true to the way of Allah.

The theme of the Festival was Islamic Architecture in Indonesia, in line with other aspects of Islamic art and culture being exhibited (a.o. traditional arts, tapestry, modern plastic arts, Quranic Texts and calligraphy, performing arts).

Architecturally speaking, the first question would be '*Why the mosque?*'

Islamic architecture would be an interesting subject in itself, including dwellings, houses, institutional/public buildings, or any other building types from the monumental to the mundane, even towns and cities. However, due to the characteristic of *syncretism/eccleticism* in Indonesian art and culture, the differences between the Muslim and the non-Muslim are not readily discernible, except of course, in mosque architecture. What is more, the mosque is the most valued and "venerated" of all buildings in Muslim societies. It is the community centre, the gathering place for all Muslim in its vicinity, it is the communal *binding agent* so to speak. That is, all communal activities are centered around this building. It serves also as a communal symbol, a landmark, encompassing an area on the high ground (the usual plot). Such being the case, mosques reveal other aspects of daily life as well as the religious one.

The sub-theme of the architectural exhibition was the diversity of mosque architecture in Indonesia. The rich complexity of the formal and spatial hierarchy were and still are surprising. Just as complex wasthe interaction between the indigenous and exogenous factor exemplified by the daring, straightforward, and spontaneous but still creative and innovative architectural responses.

Architecturally speaking, one can look at the mosque architecture as an important element within a city, which shows the historical linkages with the past. Orientation, for one,could be seen as part of the North-South axis developed during the Hindu period, crossed by the East-West axis around an open space called *alun-alun*, the public square. And mosques were used to conform with it by way of locating it just in the western side of the square, albeit it is not the exact direction toward Makkah. The Great Mosque of Yogyakarta is a case in point. It is a good example of how the Islamic teaching may tolerate the lack of traditional direction which is actually a fundamental rule in spatial ordering to be in compliance with the true requirements of the Muslim worship.

The ground plan of mosques is always a square (Pijper 1947:275) with one side perpendicular in the direction of Makkah (in Java more or less to the North by North-West). The square plan, following Pijper (*loc. cit*),—*is not a foreign structure brought to this country by Muslim missionaries from abroad, but an ancient native one adapted to the requirements of the Muslim worship.* He mentioned about the many structures of Hindu-Javanese art, especially the *candi*, which still exist in Java.

The gate is also interesting in terms of the historical continuity of the Hindu-Javanese art. The use of the same Hindu-Javanese idiom for a definitely different function or purpose is still to be found in, a.o. Cirebon (West-Java), Kudud (Central Java), and Sendang Duwur (East Java). All were using the symbolical split of mount *mahameru* as the gate, a powerful architectural metaphore in itself. The phenomenon of gates should be seen as part of the idea of territoriality which is manifested into a compound system in Java and

Bali, following Hindu spatial concept (e.g. micro- & macro-cosmos). The significance of the gate as seen cosmologically has been studied and interpreted by a host of theoreticians/thinkers. The gate is a marginal space between *outside* and *inside*, so passing it is embarking on a moment in time of a transitory state of being between *you* and *me*, of changing status from, say, *public* to *private*. The gate is *the* critical point of truth, of judgement, of *being* and *unbeing*. And so on. In short, the gate is a symbol of venerated fear or zeal to change. This feeling, the belief, seems to be deeply ingrained and thus, once the gate is made and known, understood and accepted, it may as well contribute something to their wellbeing.

It is worth mentioning that influences from the west came with the Portuguese, German, British, and mostly the Dutch, of course. Some mosques were even designed and built by them, as a token of goodwill to a Sultan or local-king warrior. *Masjid Agung Baiturrahman*, Baiturrahman Great Mosque, in Banda Aceh (Northern tip of Sumatra), is a noted one; with its three Byzantine domes (1612), and then extended into five after it was destroyed by fire; and now it will be extended into seven domes! The style is purely Arabian, lavishly ornamented with beautiful geometrical latticeworks. In Langkat, there is another Grand Mosque which was designed and built by an obscure German architect for Sultan Abdul Aziz, named the Mosque of Azizi (1862). A pair of slender square minarets were built in front of the mosque. It is undoubtedly western or North African in style, with a tint of Moorish colour scheme of white and dark reddish-brown. An urbane form introduced into a rural area; must be a daring architectural experimentation indeed.

The roof, the clearest visible architectural feature in most Indonesian traditional architecture, when applied to cover a mosque, is just as varied as the roof of traditional buildings. The Mosque of Rao-Rao, in Batu Sangkar (West Sumatra), for example, boldly uses a very complex roof top taken from traditional *rumah-adat*, community house. While in Java, the roof was usually pointed, *consisting of from two to five stories, narrowing upward* (Pijper, *loc. cit.*), reminding one of the *meru*, a pagoda-like stacked roof from Balinese temple. The possibilities seem endless, not to mention the varied usage of building materials.





Top: Rao-rao Mosque, West Sumatera, 1940.
Above: Istiqlal Mosque, Jakarta, 1978.

A high standard of craftsmanship is clearly visible in most buildings or mosques, especially in the primary elements such as the gates, columns, minaret, *mihrab* (niche), etc. The skills were equally marked in calligraphy and furniture, especially in the ornamented *mimbar* (pulpit); in several cases the ornament and adornment is as intricate as on a throne, the favourite colours being red and gold (traces of Chinese influences).

The skill was exercised also in the making of tombstones, among the oldest being the resting place of Sultan Malik as-Shaleh in Samudra (North Sumatra) dated 1297. The style was of Kambayan, Gujrat, one of the places of origin of the Islamic missionaries. Of the same form and style is a tomb for Malik Ibrahim, in Gresik (East-Java), dated 1419. The former was of carved pink marble, presumably imported from Southern Thailand (Siam). It was fully carved out of a solid piece of marble. The surface of the tomb was covered with calligraphy up to about 160 cm in height, just like an enlarged page of a religious book,

opened to be read aloud.

The exhibition was an earnest attempt to show the intricacies of variability in mosque design. It pointed out how the environment induces the use of materials and, finally, moulds it into forms and spaces which everyone arbitrarily calls it architecture. And then also of how they are used, manipulated, or *actualized* by experiencing it: to *live-it* in, be it as a Corbuesque machine or anything else; the name of the game is *experiencing*. Indeed forms and spaces that are empty and unused (or unusable) are redundant and a waste. Forms and spaces should never be devoid of the human element, which need to be incorporated in the formulation and definition of architecture, much more so of mosque architecture.

In real life, architecture cannot be abstracted. The whole gamut of life is contained in and, upon revelation, reflected by it. Thus, the Indonesian experience has to be transferred in its entirety. The challenge is: go to the field.

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Above: A replica of a 15th century tombstone from Aceh.

Ir Yusuadi Saliya, M Ard., is one of Indonesia's leading architects.



A Persian Slip-painted Pottery Bowl, 9th-10th Century, with flaring sides standing on a low splayed foot, decorated in deep manganese-brown on a cream ground with four kufic inscriptions around the sides, the centre with a pair of stylised fish, Nishapur, 20.7 cm; (8 1/8 in) Diameter.

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Islamic Inspiration in Indonesian Performing Arts

K.M. Saini

If one is trying to observe how far Islam has inspired, influenced and imbibed the element of the performing arts in Indonesia, one has to consider two aspects. The first lies in the ethical norms: performing art is a kind of audio-visual and kinetic phenomenon, depending on the power of expression and attraction in sound/voice, shape/form and motion. How far Islamic ethics allow the fair sex to have a dancing show on the stage, for example; and how far are they allowed to have their voice heard or to show their body-



Right: Dance performance during the opening ceremony of the Istiqlal Festival. Below: Marhaban performance by a music group from Bandung.



motion? The second, and perhaps even more important problem lies in the quality required so that the performing arts may have Islamic characteristics. Can a certain genre of performing arts be called 'Islamic' only because some verses of Al-Quran are introduced or incorporated? And how about the performing arts with the Islamic elements which inspire and are embraced by the non-Muslims in the interest, and for the sake of professionalism only?

Obviously, these questions cannot be answered in a brief essay like this. They demand a deep search for aesthetic and philosophical as well as ideological and scientific solutions and, therefore, require a truly professional approach and considerable historical and anthropological depth. In spite of the complexity of the problem, I would like to try and deal with some aspects within my comprehension, and through my observation of the performing arts with which I am directly involved. In other words, I would like to offer some preliminary thoughts as suggested by the title of the essay.

Some Conceptual References

Let us begin with a broader perspective introduced by the Indonesian scholar, H.D.F. Kitto: in his opinion, the centre point of attention in religious drama is not the hero, but the Divine background. Kitto bases his examples on classical Greek and Shakespearean drama: in watching these, we always pay our attention to, or are directed by the playwright, to the three worlds: the 'Above-World', inhabited by God/gods and angels; the 'Mid-World', inhabited by human-beings, and the 'Under-World', inhabited by devils and ghosts. Confronted with such a divine background, the audiences are challenged to choose their path and direction in their freedom and responsibility. They are always warned that the hero's deeds are not as important as the Divine background, which is none other than the cosmos directed by the 'Super-Director', God or Zeus.

Kitto's opinion, in some way, runs parallel to Seyyed Hossein Nasr's, who states that a piece of work is considered religious because of its function and message. If a piece of work talks not only about the world but also about the world 'beyond', and its function is to warn man about freedom and responsibility in choosing their religious cosmos, then it can be considered as religious.

In fact, in this context, Nasr goes further to argue that from certain viewpoints, art is a screen which *hides* but also simultaneously *reveals* God. Nevertheless, the creation of arts requires media: the artists manipulate the media, both at the level of distillation and in the manner of distortion, so that the media become symbols. It is these symbols that hide but at the same time reveal the artists' vision and comprehension of God and the universe. Nasr actually argues that to see the Non-Form, the artists have to use forms. Therefore, a piece of canvas or icons (or stage!) could possibly be used as the realm of the *Non-Form*.

It can thus be seen that the arts have a very important and honourable position in religion, and so they do in Islam. God Himself, according to Nasr, is not only the Super-Architect, but also the Super-Geometrician, the Super-Poet, the Super-Artist and the Super-Musician. And from here human achievement comes (as the ruler of the world) in development, verse-writing, painting, music-composing, etc., although all the various branches of art do not develop in the same way. Each culture generally develops certain forms of art in accordance with the ethnic genius of the people who imbibe and contribute to the related culture.

Nasr, however, warns us of the danger of music and dance. Like wine, dance is intoxicating. Therefore, music and dance have a 'confined' space, limited to sufism where both play a very important role in performing the *tariqat* of that school. Music, according to Nasr, is the Sufi's wine. This is a very powerful spiritual means and may endanger them who are not ready to use it. About dance, Nasr says that holy dance unites human beings with the Holy One in the meeting place between space and time, in the endless time, in the centre of the universe where the Holy One is present.

The Universe of Symbols

Although the essence is various, on the surface, all religion may be considered as the 'universe of symbols'. In expressing its view about God, cosmos, eternity, death, etc., which is related to the basic human problems, religion uses a number of symbols: verbal, behaviour patterns or things. There are symbols used by any religion, but the difference between one religion and the other is actually seen from the difference of each symbol. It is from the symbol that we may see that each religion is different from the other (mutual exclusiveness). The Crescent Moon, for instance, is an exclusive symbol of Islam, David's Star is exclusive of Judaism, the Cross is exclusive of Christianity, the Water Lily is exclusive of Buddhism/Hinduism, etc. Further, the symbols used in a certain religion form a kind of galaxy of symbols, with one or several symbols becoming the centre. Some times two or more religions use the same symbol which then assume a different meaning and interpretation.

The position of hands in the way of praying in Christianity is different from that in Buddhism, for example. In short, on the surface, a religion may be regarded as the perfect universe of symbols. A work of art created by followers of a certain religion, especially if the work is religious, is manipulated from the element in the 'universe of symbols' of the religion concerned, in addition to the other symbols taken from the artist's environment and vision which are considered to be useful as a means of expression.

Poets like Omar Khayyam, Rabiah al-Basari, and Hamzah Fansuri, in addition to their choice of words like Mecca, muazzin (prayer-caller), minaret (of the mosque), sujud (prostration) as exclusive symbols of Islam, also use local symbols as anggur (wine), mawar (roses), kekasih (beloved), burung bulbul (nightingale), perahu (boat), etc., taken from their historic and geographic vicinity. But these

individual symbols are then appreciated as the Islamic universe of symbols and become an integral part of it. The main power of expression of the related religion, however, remains exclusive of its own universe of discourse. Therefore, we can always differentiate a work of Islamic art from that of Christian, and that of a Christian from that of a Hindu, etc.

Indonesian Ethnic Genius

If Indonesia is considered a country of great potential in arts, it is not only because it is instinctly rich in various kinds of arts of high quality, but also because its people are adept at manipulating specific Indonesian symbols taken from the universe of several others that are or were once present in Indonesia.

Since Indonesia lies on the historic and geographic as well as ideological cross-roads, it has imbibed several religions and cultures of the world. Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, Christianity and Western Humanities have all settled down or have left some impact in Indonesia: in addition, ancestral religions and philosophies have spread from island to island with local differences as well as with some basic similarities. This means that the Indonesian people have been experiencing cross-fertilization or amalgamation, on the one hand, and clashes and antagonism on the other, bringing new elements in the universe of several symbols. Such a process, which is usually called acculturation, could bring about the destruction, or at least decadence, in the case of less creative and innovative people. But, to the Indonesian people, it happened in a rich perspective, demonstrating their genius in developing specific Indonesian symbols from the universe of several symbols, in a different or even in a contradictory way.

An interesting example is glass painting of Cirebon style. Elang Umbwara Wijayakusumah created calligraphic glass painting in the form of Maharashi Narada incorporating the Surah *Al Ikhlas*. The Narada symbol is taken from the universe of Hindu-symbols: he is a demigod, symbolising a combination of natural and supernatural elements. He is a 'political' individual as well as a religious ruler (Chalifaurrosiddin) on earth: human but also Divine, evoking symbols from the Mahabharata Epoch combined with *Al Ikhlas*, in which the 'Oneness' of God is contained. For those who are familiar with Sufism, especially in Cirebon, Sumedang (Pariangan) and Central Java, such a painting depicts sufistic experience subtly but profoundly.

Indonesian local genius also shows very powerfully in all kinds of puppet-theatre: wayang cepak (Priangan), wayang papak (Cirebon), wayang golek menak (Central Java). Superficially, the latter are similar to that of West Java, and so are the music and literature: but the theme is based on the story of the Prophet Muhammad's uncle, which in the theatre is called Wong Agung Hamzah (Hamzah the Great).

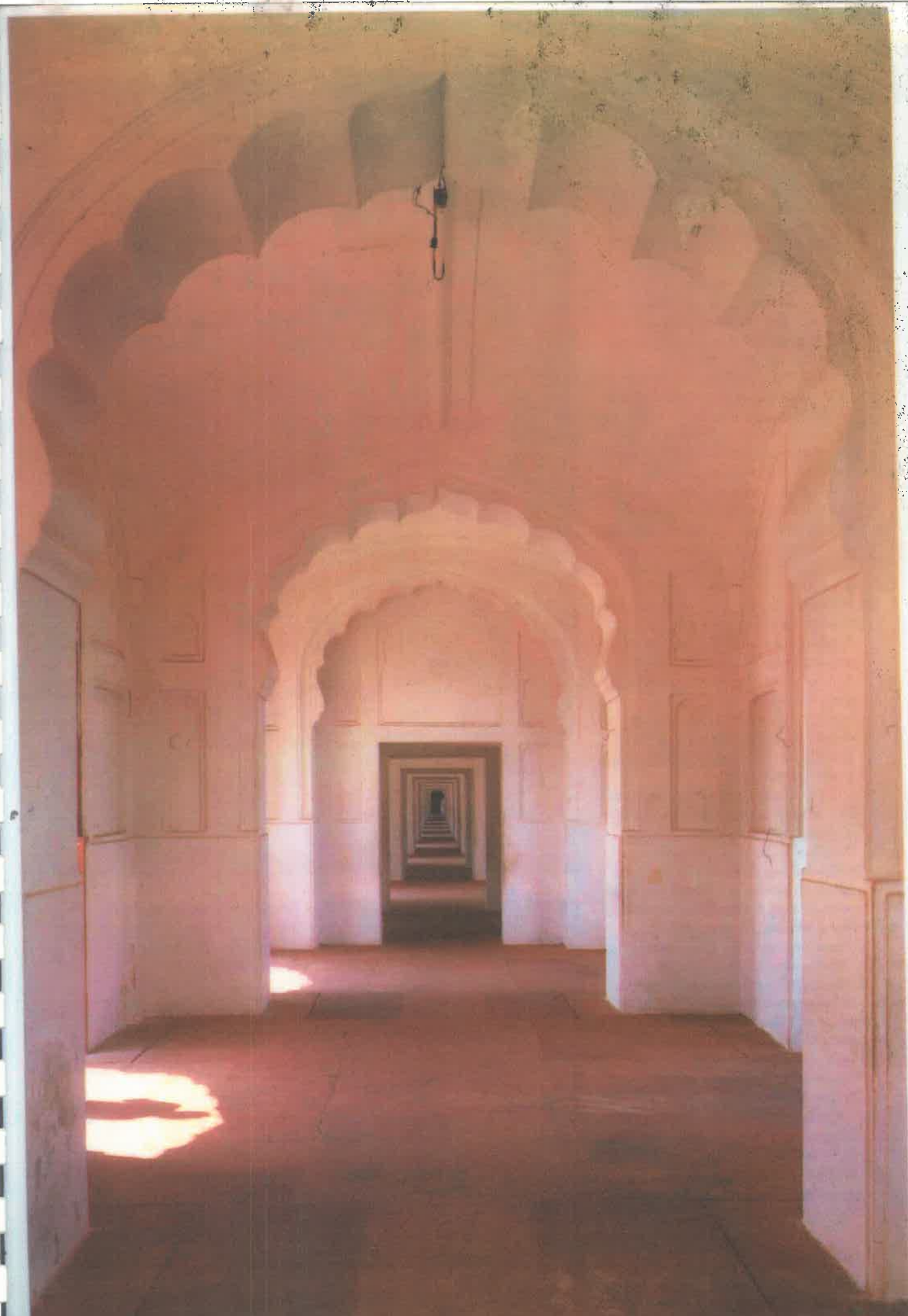
Again, if one listens to the music of Cianjuran (classic songs) from West Java discerningly, in the way it is sung, one realizes the deep impact of the techniques of reciting Al-Quran. The Islamic spirit infiltrates this genre of music, the source of which is the Sundanese art of *pantun* (the technique of singing where after initial four syllables the singer has to pause). The elements from ritual and folk arts (Rice Goddess and Javanese macapet) subtly blend with Islamic notes and modalities that only one who has very sharp and well-tuned ear is able to detect and appreciate.

Aceh, which is nicknamed as 'Mecca's verandah', easily symbolises and synthesizes this aspect of the Islamic spirit in Indonesian arts. The dance of Saman, Merukun, Rapai Seudati etc., is rooted in the *dzikir* (recollection, or songs of praise to God and the Prophet). These geners of art, initially inspired by ritual values, have come increasingly to be identified by the performers themselves, and aesthetically adapted and manipulated by local Aceh genius into theatre, music and dance of superb artistic merit. These achievements would be impossible without the innovating capacity of comprehending and incorporating musical and kinetic symbols taken both from the universe of Islamic symbols, and the universe of Aceh ethnic symbols. These are just a few of the elements that come to mind, among many kinds of stage-arts in Indonesia that are imbued with Islamic and ethnic aesthetic values.

Life and Dynamics

To summarise, Indonesian arts which have the Islamic spirit are vivid and dynamic: these are inherent in the people's daily social and cultural life. Indonesian Muslims spontaneously respond to the fact on symbolic and artefacts on important occasions such as wedding, circumcision, thanksgiving, even in death rituals and observance of various Islamic holidays. Above all, Indonesian Islamic arts are not static: these are transformed in accordance with the challenging course and demands of time and occasion. In music, for example, Bimbo Group has succeeded in creating songs with Islamic sincerity. In the field of dance, young people like Roy Akhmad Tobing and Miranda Risang Ayu keep manipulating and searching for new symbols for the benefit of their fellow young people. In theatre, there are the works of the late Mohammad Diponegoro and Rendra, i.e. Kasidah Barjanzi (Barjanzi's Panegryics). The ongoing search is deeply rooted in formulations and creations of Islamic performing arts to be dedicated to the rich and varied Indonesian gardens of arts and culture. In these efforts, Indonesian younger generations will not only be confronted with aesthetic but also with ethical and metaphysical questions and concepts.

K M Saini is a writer and Director of the Indonesian Academy of Dance (ASTI).



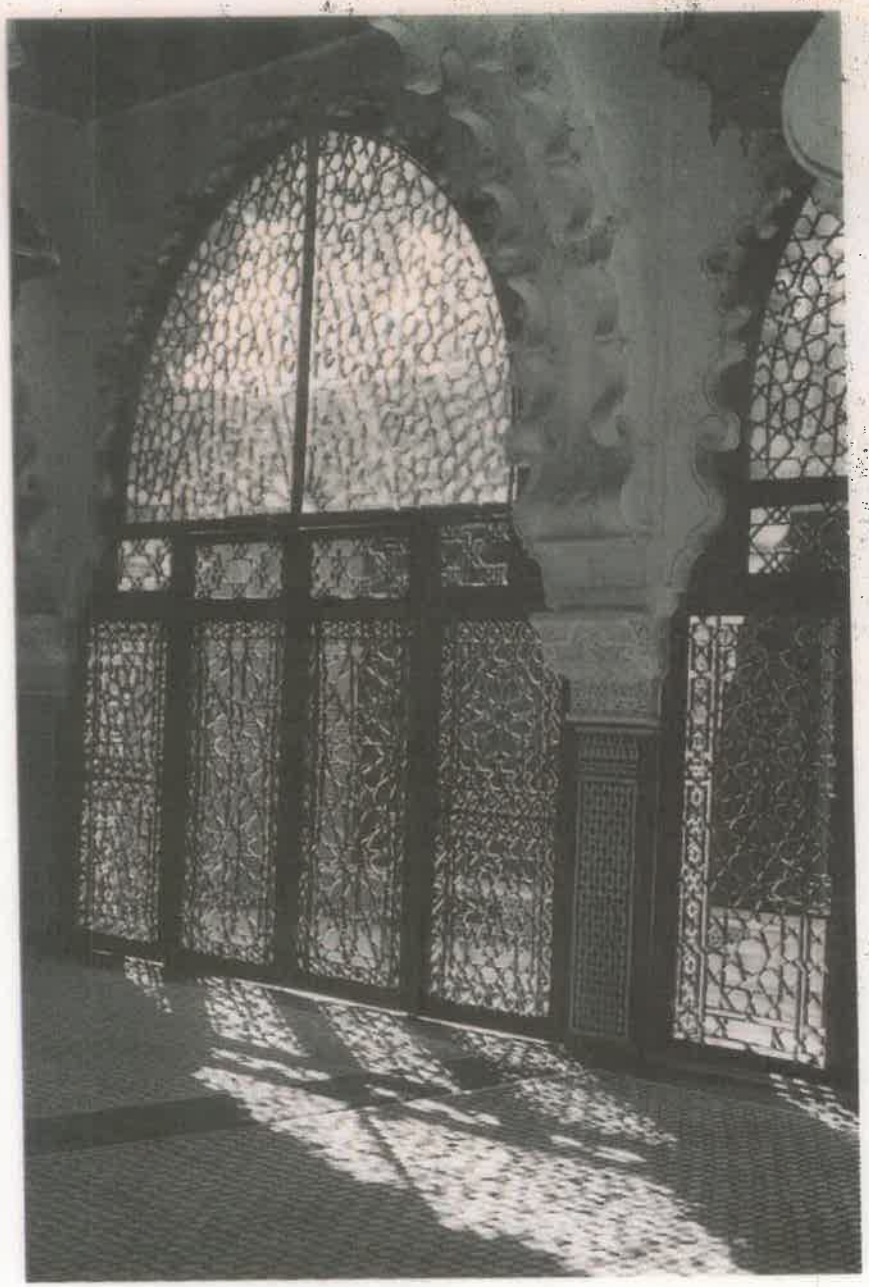
asserts his presence as the thoughtful dweller of this earth.

Architecture outlives its builders and thus promises continuity beyond mortality. Those of the future visit those of the past by reflectively roaming about the cities of a distant time and resting at the thresholds of their ancestors. And through travel memories, images and verbal accounts, one generation is introduced to another. It is in this sense that the architectural narrator becomes the essential link between cultures of different times and distant places. Khalida Rahman's photographs tell us about the architecture of a world that has passed by but whose spirit continues in the hearts of the believers; the spirit that is agitated today in search of its identity and expression.

Khalida Rahman is in search of the formative principles through her impassioned seeing of culturally particular arts, crafts and architecture of Islamic past. Though her photographic career is firmly rooted in England, she and her camera have travelled far and wide. Her work invites the jarred senses of today to take a calming stroll through another time, experience a different space, feel a light unknown, silently converse with a weaver or a potter, and pause at a pattern that resonates with rhythms of the human soul.

As a consummate practitioner of her art and science, she has photographed Andalusia, Almaghreb, Bosphorus, Anatolia, Khurasan, Indus Valley, Punjab, and Malay lands. Her work has previously been published in *Arts and The Islamic World* and has been used for academic writings. She has exhibited in Ottawa, Kuala Lumpur, and most recently in London. She has been on international photographic juries and was recently invited to present her photographic research work on Thatta necropolis at the International Seminar on Crafts, Rabat, Morocco.

Khalida Rahman has had twenty six years of active involvement with the North East Surrey College of Technology in Britain, and has been the Head of its photographic section since 1969.





Above: Interior Ladies section, Mohammed V Mosque, Rabat, Morocco.
Left: Pattern, Shahi Qila (Royal Fort) Lahore, Pakistan.

GH

azzawi

Mirrors of Memory

George Sorley Whittet

My first close acquaintance with a contemporary Islamic artist occurred in the early 1960s when I was introduced in Paris to Ahmed Cherkaoui, a young Moroccan painter for whom I arranged a small exhibition of his work in London in 1966. Sadly he died the following year though his works are still sought after by discriminating collectors. What I found notable in his paintings was his use of the sign, the written symbol that preceded the alphabet. My initial interest in the special character of Arab art in which calligraphy plays a vital role was stimulated some fourteen years later when I met Dia Azzawi, the leading Iraqi artist who has been working in London since 1976. Born in 1939 Azzawi has developed his intensely individual style dating from his study of archaeology at the University of Baghdad (he graduated in 1962) and then at the Institute of Fine Art learning the techniques of modern painting and allied media which were then based largely on European, especially Parisian, practices.

Here as a young and keen artist he was lucky to come under the influence of the late Jawad Selim, famous as Iraq's greatest sculptor and pioneer of the modern movement there. With Selim's encouragement Azzawi aimed to synthesize the new abstract idioms spreading from the West into his own heritage of Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian prototypes and the ever-renewed diversities of Islamic calligraphy.
In the beginning of his career, as he admits, his work was largely figurative, taking his subjects from ancient statuary and cylinder seals, then extending his pictorial repertoire to esoteric signs, folk lore and handwritten manuscripts. Calligraphy thus became a major preoccupation for his pictures as it did for several other progressive artists in the Middle East and in the Maghreb, among them Hossein Zenderoudi from Iran, Ali Omar Ermes from Libya and Mahdi Qotbi from Morocco.

A combination of linear outline and colour mass in abstract shapes has been used by Azzawi in his graphic images to great effect. *Homage to Baghdad*, his series of ten silk-screen prints is a richly evocative album of abstracted scenes in colour and tone, varied and contrasting in its hard-edge profiles of buildings, flying birds, verdant foliage embroidered with various symbols and signs, geometric shapes, all superscribed by quotations in golden writing. What is urban topography is transformed by magic allegories, playing on the viewers' expectations and imagination. Windows are the motifs of the most illuminating panels in acrylic Azzawi produced during the past decade, many of them with cut-out details projecting from the conventional rectangular formats. Isolated signs and letters add tension and movement to the vivid patchwork mosaics.

Abstract can only be a broad term of reference to describe Azzawi's concepts for always contained in them are the artist's allusions, personal and intimate to his thoughts and experience. The vocabulary of his unique form language epitomises rather than illustrates his country's beloved environment both spiritual and physical. Letters of the alphabet rise gracefully, arched like a dragon's head, the foliage of the riverside trees is plumed in green, parallel bands of yellow and red repeat the grids of cereal fields and textile decoration. Some paintings strike echoes of the blue doors and white walls of Arab dwellings, bright and clear of the dust that hangs over windless Baghdad. Others have the four divisions as in a window. Through them and the doors are the openings to the scenes of the world the artist lived in and he now reconstitutes to share with us.

Among the most memorable of Azzawi's images are the series titled *What Al-Nifarri said to Abdullah* in which a tribute is paid to this famous Sufi poet of 10th century Babylon whose verses are still popular among the people of Iraq of whom Abdullah is the universal Everyman figure, strong and erect, his dress bearing symbols of the poetry. Two lines of one poem that inspired Azzawi are significant:

I knew you and you knew me not
That is remoteness.

Literature, legend, folk lore and poetry, traditional and modern, comprise only part of his subject-matter. He is moved by national and universal tragedy: the massacre of refugees in the Lebanese camps at Sabra and Shatila in 1983 he recorded in *We are not seen but, corpses*, an edition of eight harrowing etchings and a lithograph. His graphic fragmentation of the men, women and children conveys a





This page, top: *Remains II*, Gouache on paper, 51x66 cms. 1990. Above: *Remains I*, Gouache and crayon on paper, 66x 51 cms. 1990. Opposite page: *Links of Memory*, Gouache and crayon, 77 x 57 cms. 1990.

personal areas of experience. Large paintings in acrylic have wider spaces of pure colour as setting for passages of landscape, signs, buildings, faces. Incidents in his life are materialised in pigments such as one striking composition commemorating the death of Siyah, the modern poet of Basra. Such larger works, some numbered under the title *Diary*, are produced gradually and grouped together over periods of months, changed and refined from the first application of the primer coat until the layers of the medium, sometimes integrated with paste and collage, are built up into complex textures. Colours, high in keys of reds and blues, set complementary optical moods. These overlaid surfaces suggest analogues of ancient civilisations' art revealed in the many archaeological sites he studied which are also reflected in his figure sculptures.

Regularly completing works for sale in both Islamic and Western more memorable effect than that of any impersonal photography.

In the past few years Azzawi has reoriented his content into more cities he achieves success in both spheres. This non-exclusive appeal of his painting was demonstrated a few years ago when Pierre Cardin, leading French fashion designer, bought two of Azzawi's pictures at the annual contemporary art fair in Paris and later used them as centre pieces for displays of his own latest models.

In Azzawi's art, past and present co-exist in an integrated perspective. Individual objects are assembled in a surreal atmosphere of colours and forms. His paintings vividly present many aspects of a poetic artist's life recalled from memory, inscrutable and mysterious, yet establishing with convincing subtlety the impressive evidence of his unique identity in the competitive context of international art.



Orientalism in Knightsbridge

Sarah Searight

The current exhibition of Orientalist paintings at the Mathaf Gallery in London neatly exposes once again the cultural dichotomy that arose in the 1980s between the 'western' art critic on the one hand, concerned with a fashion for the exotic that typifies so many of this genre of painting, and on the other hand the critic from the region associated with that exoticism, the Near or Middle East. Leading Middle Eastern critics of western Orientalism, most notably Dr Edward Said, author of *Orientalism*, object to outsiders portraying the Middle East in these highly coloured, often highly imaginative terms. While their views have usefully highlighted the condescension which has also been a feature of East-West relations, they are unkind to the artists and their clients. Most of us have an occasional hankering for escapism, whether to the Wild West, in interplanetary travel or by hanging one of the Mathaf canvases on our walls. They certainly brighten the London winter.

The gallery has a reputation for displaying the more exotic element, borne out here by Ferdinand-Max Bredt's *Arabesque Dream*, a portrait of a languid beauty intoxicated by fumes from a giant incense burner, or by Juan Jimenez Martin's *Moorish Queen*. But other painters of the 'Orient', also represented in the exhibition, must be given credit for recording on canvas ways of life, often in an architectural or topographical setting, which either have disappeared or are threatened with extinction. Their depictions are neither exotic nor romanticised.

The taste for exoticism goes back a long way in European painting, notably in the vast exhibition of the fifteenth century Italian artist Andrea Mantegna also on show in London (at the Royal Academy). In a number of Mantegna's paintings one sees in the lavishly robed portraits an early fascination of the European artist with the opulent world of Ottoman Turks and Timurid Persians, a world which Venetian merchants had been exploring for over a century.

By the early nineteenth century the validity of turbaned inhabitants of fairy-tale lands had been severely undermined by Napoleon's conquest of Egypt. This military expedition to Egypt was accompanied by an army of 'servants'—writers, painters, scientists, scholars—the most outstanding of whom, Dominique Vivant Denon, subsequently produced a vast illustrated compendium of what he had seen. The expedition introduced Europe to a Pharaonic and an Islamic Egypt instead of the classical portrayal which had hitherto been its main attraction.

Commercial links between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, developing in the first half of the nineteenth century, led to political links and imperial expansion. Both movements encouraged travel by artists and writers, often in search of the unfamiliar, some more concerned than others with portraying accurate details of costume, way of life, buildings of even greater documentary value now than then. Such paintings attracted considerable popularity in Europe, the genre taken up even by those who had never been near the Near East. These latter artists, and the taste for the exotic which they perpetuated, are largely responsible for the bad name of 'orientalism' today.

Many Orientalist artists were French but Mr Brian MacDermot of the Mathaf Gallery has also uncovered a number of Austrian artists attracted by the genre. Charles Wilda, in the current exhibition, studied painting at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts under Leopold Carl Muller and in the 1870s established a studio in Cairo. He is particularly known for his depictions of street traders and his *Arab street Vendors* in the Mathaf exhibition shows typical attention to architectural detail as well as an acute sensitivity in portraiture. A similarly fine painting in the exhibition by another Austrian artist is *A Council of Elders* by Ludwig Deutsch, showing a characteristic attention to the pose of the group of old men sitting on the ground outside a coffee shop, deep in conversation.

A later member of the Austrian school was Rudolf Ernst whose later paintings were almost entirely associated with North African background. A charming painting of his in the exhibition, *The School*, shows an attention to architectural detail in the mosque decoration strongly reminiscent of medieval Persian miniature paintings of similar scenes.

Topographical scenes of the Near East were (and still are) as much in demand as portraiture or genre scenes. A fine example in the exhibition is Gustav Bauernfeind's *Back Street Jaffa*. Bauernfeind travelled extensively in the area in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, eventually settling in Jerusalem. The exhibition also

includes a typical Nile scene by Eugene Alexis Girardet—Washerwomen by the Nile.

Topographical painting, particularly in water-colour, is, however, more often associated with British artists than with their European contemporaries. David Roberts, the Scottish artist, remains one of the most popular topographical artists and the Mathaf Gallery earns some useful bread-and-butter through sales of Roberts' lithographs of Palestine and Egypt of which it still has a large selection. These were originally published in 1855-6 in six magnificent volumes and a number now decorate the walls of the gallery. The exhibition also contains one of Roberts' less notable water-colours (reproduced as a lithograph in the fifth volume of the lithographs)—*Colossi at Wadi Sabooa Nubia*: Roberts depicts one colossus fallen, one standing, but both had in fact fallen, and the figures standing beside the colossus, included as an indication of its stupendous height, seem to have caught the artificiality of the actual colossus.

The Orientalist school has often been criticised for emotionalism, even sentimentality. But one must be careful in decrying emotionalism. A most interesting oil sketch in the exhibition is entitled *Arab Fiesta*, by G.C. Michelet, depicting a vast procession of fervent Muslims packing the streets of Cairo on one of the great Muslim holy days. The artist has dramatically captured the intensity of the crowd's emotion, an emotion familiar today from scenes of similar crowds of fervent Muslims. Presumably this kind of 'emotionalism' is acceptable.

It is a pity that Orientalism has become a dirty word in some critical circles. The term has usefully exposed the condescension that so often still lies behind western dealings with the Middle East but it also remains a valid description of European and American painting whose creators were confronted by scenes and situations outside their normal horizons.

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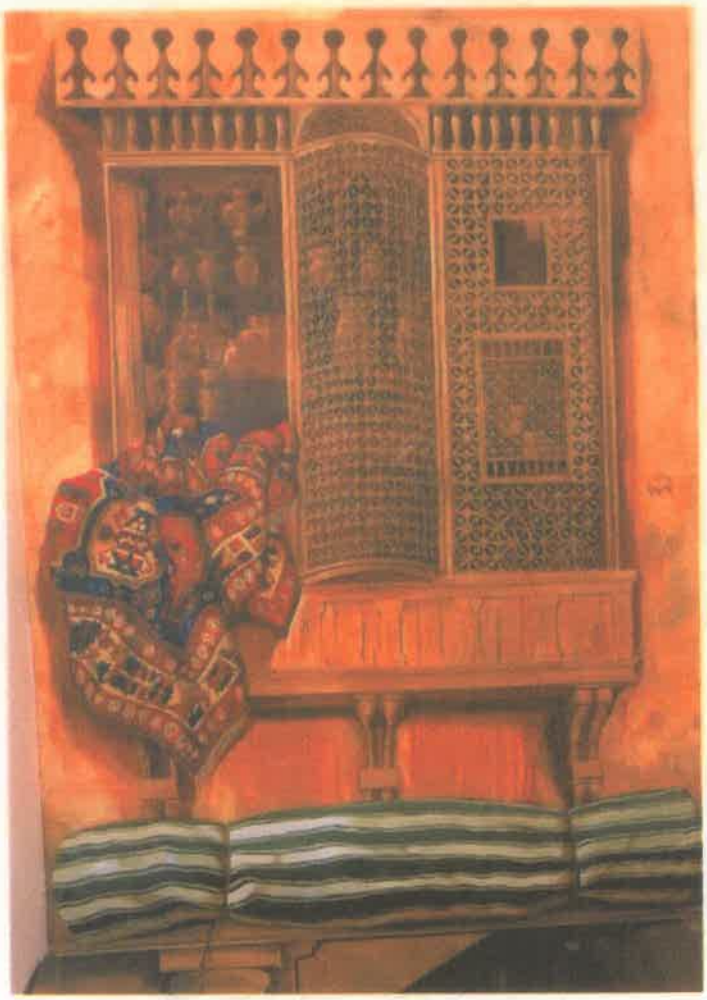
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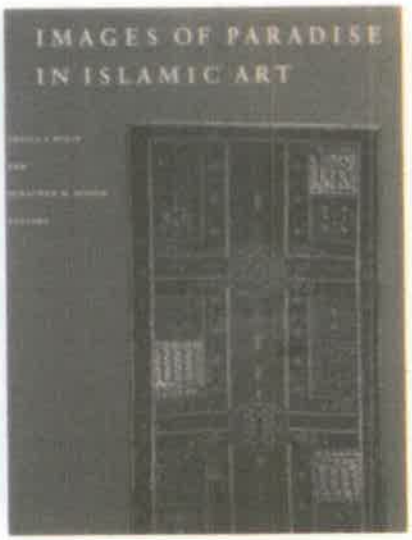


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The Paradise I Seek



Dr. Ziauddin Sardar visits a travelling exhibition and discovers what paradise means to him

In the European mind, the Islamic idea of paradise is associated with 'huris' and 'sensuality'. The Qur'anic verses that describe paradise as 'Gardens of Delight' where 'huris', untouched by man or jinn, 'cloister in cool pavilions' has excited European fantasy and elicited ridicule for centuries. Given that much of the Occident has thought (and dare one say, still thinks) of Islam as a licentious and bigoted culture, it is hardly surprising that the Qur'anic depiction of paradise is cast in the same mould.

The paradise of the Qur'an is not so much an abode of pleasure, as a place of eternal bliss and sublime innocence. The Qur'an itself tells us that its description of paradise is a 'similitude', metaphors to be used as springboard for imagination. The 'huris' derive their name from the eyes of the gazelles which are marked by large black irises and contrasting whites. They personify beauty and total innocence; these eyes have never cast their gaze on sin. In classical Arabic, Persian and Urdu poetry, the huri often signifies the sun or the moon: those celestial eyes, one shining the other reflecting, their beneficial gaze on the dwellers of earthly existence. In the gardens of paradise, the Qur'an says, huris with wide eyes... hear no idle talk, no cause of sin, only the saying, "Peace, Peace!".' So in the domains of the earth: innocence, beauty and peace must prevail.

But the huris are only a side-show. The central metaphor is the garden which the Qur'an mentions 130 times in its descriptions of paradise. But paradise is not any garden. It is a specially landscaped garden, with 'fountains of gushing water' and underneath 'rivers of milk unchanging in flavour, and rivers of wine—a delight to the drinkers, rivers, too of honey purified'. It is well endowed 'with every fruit two kind'. It is a place of 'immortal youth' and eternal bliss. It is a world of beauty and freedom (from physical desires and moral inaptitude) and synthesis and diversity (apart from men and women, it is the habitat of angels, jinns, huris, as well as all flora!). Above all, it is a place of protection. The Qur'anic word for paradise, *jinna*, contains the root meaning of 'veiling, covering'. Just as the garden veils us from the harshness of the build environment, so does paradise protects from the heat of hell.

To the Qur'anic description of paradise, we can add the arresting detail of the hadith—here too metaphors are a plenty. One hadith describes a tree so huge that one can ride for a century in its shade and not reach its end, another tells of how the blessed sweat musk, yet another talks of a garden with silver and gold bricks glued together with mortar of pungent musk. The Prophet, aware that we can grasp only what we can perceive with our limited earthly vision, uses analogies to this world and the human body—and then deliberately subverts the lush detail to make the point that analogies are, after all analogies, and no metaphor can really portray the real thing. He thus tells us that there is nothing in the garden that is on earth except the name of things: for what is in the garden, no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no nose has smelled, no body has experienced, no mind has perceived. What appears at first to be straight literalism is in fact used to illustrate the limitation of language and demonstrate the ineffability of the world to come.

One way to appreciate paradise is to think of its exact opposite: hell. And indeed, the Qur'an describes hell in opposite terms to heaven. Here, fire provides the fundamental metaphor. Whereas paradise is cool, hell is hot; paradise is water, hell a place of perishing thirst; hell is hunger, paradise a place of delicious fulfilment; paradise is contentment, hell is eternal regret. But, most important of all: hell is ensnare from God, while paradise is the grace of His (although 'He' has no gender!) company.

Paradise and hell are two sides of the same coin of the Islamic notion of the Hereafter. In the Hereafter, such concerns of life as sickness, hardship, agony, love, happiness, death as well as time and change cease: pleasure and pain go their separate ways, one to the garden, the other towards fire. In between, the fulcrum on the plane of time, between now and the Hereafter, is the Day of Judgement, when one will be held responsible for one's actions in life.

That life, and those actions, embrace the totality of our earthly existence; a circumference that is described by the radius of art. Just as the individual Muslim seeks paradise both in this world and the Hereafter, so does Islamic art reflect both the desire itself and its imaginary and metaphoric manifestations. As such, the Muslim quest for paradise has played a vital part in shaping traditional Islamic art. Here the contrast with Christianity is sharp. Whereas traditional Islamic art exclusively focuses on notions of paradise, Western art, old and new, is largely concerned with images of hell. Traditions speak louder than words: both customs provide us with an internal criticism of their respective worldviews—not to mention the pursuits of their individual civilizations!

Heavenly symbols and metaphors permeate all aspects of Islamic culture and have produced a truly astonishing array of varieties in Islamic art. This is well illustrated by a neat little travelling exhibition entitled 'Images of Paradise in Islamic Art' and organised by Hood Museum of Art of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. The exhibition centres around a large 'Garden Carpet with Chahar Bagh

Design'—a design that reflects the Muslim idea of *firdaus* or walled garden—which also graces the cover of the exquisite catalogue that accompanies the exhibition; a little treasure in itself. In addition to detailed descriptions of the artifacts on display, the catalogue contains three learned articles that examine the significance of the heavenly metaphors in the work of classical Muslim artists: Kevin Reinahrt presents the images and allegories of paradise displayed in the Qur'an, *ahadith*, Sufi literature and the works on *Kalam*; Gene Garthwaite assembles documentation on traditional notions of death and afterlife, particularly in Shia thought; and an excellent chapter by Walter Denny discusses the use of heavenly metaphors in Islamic art. The catalogue is beautifully illustrated, tastefully produced and should become a collector's item.

The metaphors of paradise lift an ordinary work to the dimensions of sublime beauty and eternal appreciation. A simple prayer rug is transformed into a symbolic gateway to the world of paradise. Persian, Turkish, Moghal prayer rugs, with their constellation of flowers seen through an arch and flanked by the mystical lode tree, present the worshipper with an image of paradise that can be transformed into reality through prayer. Some works of Islamic art present the viewer with multiple layers of metaphorical meaning that may not be obvious at a first glance. A mosque lamp, for example, is not just an exquisite practical object: often made of enamelled glass, with a round belly, a flare at the top and a small round foot, it symbolises divine light; indeed, the omnipresence of God. The Qur'anic inscriptions on its surface make the metaphorical connection explicit:

> God is the Light of the heaven and the earth;
> the likeness of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp
> (the lamp in a glass,
> the glass as it were a glittering star)
> kindled from a blessed Tree,
> an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West,
> whose oil wellnigh would shine, even if no fire touched it;
> Light upon light;
> (God guides to His Light whom He will) (24:35)

We can read the same metaphors in all forms of Islamic art: from pottery to paintings, bookbinding to metalwork, ceramic tiles to architecture, calligraphy to textiles.

It is because of its metaphorical richness and symbolic virtuosity that traditional Islamic art still has tremendous meaning for us today: indeed, this depth of meaning can never be eroded. But art is a reflection of a society: traditional Islamic art not only tells us what Muslim society was like in history, it also reminds us what we have become today. And it can help us shape our tomorrows. Look at the arts in any Muslim country. If it is allowed to exist at all, if painting, pottery, sculpture (yes, sculpture!) are really present in any contemporary Muslim society, what are they telling us? In the last few years, I have attended numerous art exhibitions—from one-person exhibitions in Karachi, Istanbul and Amman, to the national protract of 'Salon Malaysia' in Kuala Lumpur to a world encounter in 'Contemporary Art in the Islamic World' in London. The overriding impression is of imitation, illustration, immersion in western ethos; of literalism, of absence of symbol and metaphor. This is not at all surprising. Contemporary Muslim societies are total internal reflections of this art.

The Hood museum exhibition contains a miniature entitled 'allegory of heavenly and earthly drunkenness', an illustration from a manuscript of Dewan-e-Hafiz, painted in the sixteen century. A drunken poet, a book in hand, reclining in his balcony, looks down on a scene of merrymaking with intoxicated ulama, equally senseless musicians, a group of travelling mystics with grotesque faces, and an assorted number of recognisable types, dancing, singing and falling down in a stupor. On the roof top, five angles are engaged in their own form of drinking. Hafiz's couplet, at the top of the painting, reads:

> The angel of mercy took the revelling cup,
> and tossed it down
> As rose-water, on the cheeks of houris and angels.

Wine has often been used as a metaphor for mystical elevation in Sufi poetry. But 'good times' in heaven are clearly not the same thing as good time on this earth. Drunkenness on earth signifies something quite different. The mystic intoxicated with the love of God is on quite another plane. The painter, however, has also managed to subvert the clearly mystical intent of the poet. For him the one dimensional mystical intoxication as signified by the grotesque faces of the mystics is not much better than earthly drunkenness of the literalist ulama: the stupified expressions on their faces speaks volumes. Perhaps the search for paradise on earth lies neither in the direction of literalism nor mystical incantations. We ought to be looking elsewhere.

Yet the contemporary Muslim world is dominated by a stupifying array of mystical cults and an equally banal variety of literalism. The world of the Muslim mystic is selfish (mysticism is the ultimate form of ego trip), sanctimonious (mystics are amongst the most authoritarian figures around), a silhouette of what we could be. The world of pure literalism is dry, dreadful, dead: One drowns in Selfhood, the other fries in a medieval mindset—both are fatally flawed, dangerously drunk.

The 'allegory of heavenly and earthly drunkenness' points us towards a different world: the world of balanced metaphor, a marvellous, mature and meaningful world. It is a world of numerous dimensions: note how the two dimensional representation of the 'allegory' in fact communicates a number of dimensions. A world where metaphor and realism fuse into a synthesis of pragmatism, where intrinsic values combine with freedom to engender beauty and creativity, where Islam is expressed as an open system flowering with diversity. That is the vision of the 'earthly paradise' that I seek.

For me, as indeed for all believing Muslims, one's Hereafter is a function of one's here-and-now. It is the idea of accountability on the Day of Judgement, more than anything else, that shapes, though not always successfully, most of our conscious actions as well as a great deal of our thought. But in trying to carve out a piece of paradise for themselves, quite a few of us are happy to consign the rest of us to an earthly hell. For most Muslims, an 'earthly paradise' signifies an utopian 'Islamic state'. And every 'Islamic state' that has been dragged out of the deep recesses of our medieval history, has turned out to be a vision of hell: an isolated enclave of bloodbath and bigotry, suppression and severity, censorship and castration. Not surprisingly, these people talk of paradise as if it was some real estate that one could purchase by accumulating dinars of Islamic deeds: the accumulation of this perceived wealth often becomes an end in itself! What could be further from the spirit of the Qur'an, so far apart from its description of paradise?

I believe neither in the possibility of an earthly utopia nor have much faith, at least in its contemporary manifestations, in any form of 'Islamic state'. I find the literalists and the fundamentalists, and to some extent the mystics, to be cancers on the body politik of Islam. I have resigned from the *ummah* of fundamentalist politics and monolithic literalism. I want, as the

Qur'an encourages me to be, an ocean, not a river forced into a single direction. My concern, therefore, is with the reconstruction of a Muslim civilization of the future where, like the Qur'anic paradise, synthesis and diversity, beauty and imagination, green pastures and freedom are the basic norms. It is a vision deeply rooted in Islamic history and tradition where literary, artistic, scientific and moral concerns and themes drew their basic sustenance from the central metaphor of the garden as paradise. A fresh understanding of revealed text based on conceptual analysis and an understanding of the modern world, a passion for humanity, a distaste for all forms of oppression are the columns which support the gateway to my vision of paradise. I belong to the *ummah* of those Muslims who have come to realise that slogans and platitudes, mass hysteria and messiahism, medieval jurisprudence and outmoded conventions are no substitute for thought and practical policies, no panacea for real problems that demand real, contemporary solutions.

As a Muslim writer and thinker, my main efforts have been directed at painting pragmatic pictures of what a future civilization based on the Qur'anic ideas of paradise would look like. What would be the nature of governance in such a civilization? How would cultural diversity and ethnic autonomy be ensured? How would a garden-civilization promote genuine freedom? What would be the style and content of science and technology in this civilization? And, how can we get from here—where the Muslim world is dominated by fundamentalist slogans and monolithic literalism—to there, a world of cultural authenticity and dynamic pluralism? What policies are needed to engender the transition? Much of my life has been spent in wrestling with these and similar other questions.

In the process, I have discovered that I have been an environmentalist since long before it was fashionable to be one. The concerns of a Muslim are not divorced from the concerns of the rest of mankind. It is not possible for a believer in the Islamic ideas of the Hereafter not to be concerned about the environment. Gardens flourish and enhance their beauty by symbiosis. I therefore seek and promote symbiotic relationship between my own and other cultures and loath all kind of isolation and ghettoisation as well as all forms of cultural domination, in particular the absorption and annihilation of other cultures by the West. Those running away from the 'flame of fire and molten brass' of *jahannam* cannot conceivably support the combustion of this world. It is, thus, both a matter of belief, and sane logic, for me to stand against all weapons of mass destruction and such fire and brimstone technologies as nuclear power, vivisection and genetic engineering put to the service of eugonics. The quest for the Qur'anic paradise places one at the epicentre of contemporary currents.

The potent and protean metaphors by which the Qur'an describes the Hereafter serve me as guides to shape my own life and the world that I inhabit. They provide me with images within which I move and act; with metaphors with which I imagine and reflect; with allegories with which I seek comprehension, association and appreciation. They furnish me with visions of better worlds to build. They give me both warnings of what can be and hope of what could be. I seek my 'wide-eyed huris', my reward 'of goodness for goodness', repeating after them, "Peace, Peace!". I live my metaphors. I walk my talk.





Above: Young woman with a Tambourine; A Houri or a Personification of the Sun or Moon, Ottoman Turkey (Iznik), ca.1600 CE. Diameter: 28.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1957. **Left:** Tile Panel Depicting the Gateway to Paradise. Ottoman Syria (Damascus), 17th century CE. Panel: 70 x 73.5 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Mrs Samuel D Warren.

Ziauddin Sardar

Sheila S Blair and Jonathan M Bloom (Editors), *Images of Paradise in Islamic Art*. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, University of Texas Press, Austin Texas. 1991. pp. 116. Hdbk: $29.95; Pbk: $19.95.

International Craft Seminar, Rabat '91

Some time ago, Dr. Mohamed Sijelmassi, writing on the "*Traditional Arts of Morocco*" had this to say about the relationship of the artisan with the environment:

> "Everything, in Morocco, predisposes the artist to a simplicity of conception and clarity of execution: the magnificent landscapes, the striking reliefs, the extensive desert, the brilliant movement of the stars, the vivid light of the sky, the mundane or the transcendent preoccupations of men, their passions, their sensibilities: this whole universe is written in filigree on objects of popular art according to an established code, which has retained an exceptional capacity for innovation, written into a network of exchanges from which emerges the weft of human relations and the cultural harmony of Morocco, an Arab Berber country living symbiotically with the rest of the African continent".

I was deeply moved by this statement and reading it revived my childhood curiosity and dream of visiting the Maghrib: to see the fusion of energy, talent, skill and vision which had perpetuated Moroccan traditional crafts to what it is today. Thus, receiving an invitation to an International Seminar on crafts, convened in this part of the Islamic world, drew a spontaneous reaction not only from myself as we were to witness from the response.

The International Seminar on "Craft: Prospects for Development" was held in Rabat from Oct. 23 - 25, 1991, under the patronage of His Majesty, King Hassan II of Morocco. Its main aim was to assess and determine the prospects for the economic, social and cultural development of traditional crafts in the respective regions of the Islamic World with a view to develop a strategy for global co-operation.

The Seminar was organised by the Istanbul-based Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (IRCICA-OIC) in co-operation with the Islamic Research and Training Institute, Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah (IRTI-IDB). In the opening remarks, Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Director General IRCICA expressed concern for information exchange and the need to cooperate in this area. He also intimated the Centre's intention to publish an international directory of craft institutions in Islamic countries and a directory of research works undertaken in the field of Islamic art and crafts.

The host organisation was Ribat Al Fath Association of Rabat, an organisation concerned with cultural, social, economic, scientific, artistic and environmental development in Morocco. In the welcome address, Mr. Abdul Karim Benani, Chairman of the Organising Committee, called for a collaboration of efforts of the Islamic community in the preservation of Islamic cultural heritage particularly in the area of traditional crafts. The development of science and technology, he emphasised, should be made applicable in the approach to sustain and promote the traditional craft industry.

The official opening ceremony was highlighted by the Royal Address of His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco, in which it was announced that a Museum of Islamic Arts and Crafts is to be established in Rabat. It was a gesture well received from the seminar participants who pledged to contribute craft artifacts from their respective countries to be housed in the museum. The museum, in turn, will serve as a resource centre through the culling of the strands of creativity of the Muslim artisans worldwide. In spirit, I believe, it shall embody as a manifestation of the first-ever gathering of experts and professionals concerned with the preservation and promotion of Islamic craft heritage.

The Seminar brought together representatives from Africa, Asia and the Arab world to a discourse on the problems and prospects of craft development focusing on the developing countries of the Third World. The participants came from a varied background consisting of policy-makers, planners, administrators, professionals and experts, whose wide-range of experiences enriched the discussion and contributed to the free flow exchange of ideas.

The focal point of the seminar was the presentation of the 6 pertinent issues relating to craft development and the key-note address on *Living Crafts of Islam* by Dr. Jean Louis Michon. Topics and paper presenters were *Revival and Re-Use of Traditional Designs* by Dr. Esin Atil, *Technical Cooperation in Skill Development and Transfer of Technology* by Dr. Uxi Mufti, *Quality Craft Production: Problems and Prospects* by Dr. Omar Amine Ben Abdullah, *Economics and Funding of Craft Development* by Dr. Mohammad Fahim Khan, *Exploring New Market Opportunities* by Mr. Dominique Bouchart, *Government and Patronage: Towards a Dynamic Growth and Preservation of Traditional Arts and Crafts* by Raja Fuziah Bte Raja Tun Uda. Dr. Mohamad Sijelmassi made a slide presentation on the "*Art of Illumination of Morocco*". Supplementary papers were also offered by country experts, representatives of corporate agencies and regional bodies.

We learnt from the seminar that the Islamic traditions is very much alive today. Dr. Esin Atil in discussing the *Revival and Reuse of Traditional Designs* concluded that "Throughout the history of Islamic civilization artists have strived to create the most appealing designs to embellish their wares, continually refining and perfecting their compositions and techniques. They excelled in devising decorative themes that complemented and enhanced the form and function of their pieces, experimenting with new ideas and improving upon existing traditions. This vibrant and dynamic approach to artistic production is one of the most outstanding features of Islamic civilization..."

"Artistic creativity in certain periods was more energetic and innovative than others, stimulated by demanding patronage as well as political and economic affluence, which promoted lucrative domestic and foreign trade. During these moments of cultural florescence artists formulated unique decorative styles and established the criteria for technical and aesthetic excellence that inspired future generations... The decorative styles and themes created during the period of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent not

only had a strong impact on neighbouring cultures but continue to influence the arts and crafts produced today."

In regard to human resource development especially in skill training and transfer of technology—there is a need to adapt to the changing structure of the craft industry. Production organisation also has to be reviewed in terms of its competitiveness in the market situation. At the same time, craftsmanship and striving for quality excellence are standards which should not be compromised. Traditional craft producers need funding support and innovative measures such as craft development banks and cooperatives should be explored further.

Marketing traditional crafts require input of critical market info and require logistic planning and improvement of product development. The success of the small and medium scale entrepreneurs and exporters would ultimately depend on the Government support and patronage extended. Indeed, "political-will", has a leverage effect providing the motivation and initiative for the artisans to develop and grow.

In conjunction with the seminar, an exhibition of Moroccan traditional crafts and craft artifacts from participating countries were displayed and created a visual impact of the uniqueness of Islamic craftsmanship. Works on display included woven, printed and embroidered textiles, woodcraft, metalware, kilim and carpets, jewellery, ceramics, pottery and leatherware. Alongside the craft exhibition was a display of craft publications which revealed another dimension of the history and development of Islamic artistic achievements. Contributors were namely the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Malaysia, Oxford University Press, South-East Asia and the research findings of Professor Onder Kucukerman of Turkey. A study-tour to the historical cities of Fez and Marakesh provided a firsthand knowledge of the state of the traditional arts and crafts apart from appreciating the environment in which the artisans have flourished and continue to foster the development of the traditional craft industry.

The seminar concluded with a consensus and the adoption of a forward-looking strategy for global co-operation. It endorsed the economic, social and cultural importance of crafts. It stressed the significance of crafts as a means for livelihood, and its importance in sustaining and improving the quality of life. Out of the many suggestions and proposals discussed, five areas of concern were given priority. These deal categorically with the issues concerning craft information network, training, craft artisan's exchange programme and the need to nurture the growth and development of cultural industries in the Islamic world. The resolutions were as follows:

1. Cultural Information Network

The Conference resolved to set up a Cultural Information Network called Info-Craft for the promotion of craft information and establishment of Data Bank.

The conference recognised that in each participating Islamic country there already exists a core institution for the development of crafts both in governmental as well as the non-governmental sectors.

It was proposed that these core institutions in their respective regions may be recognised as Info-craft network focal points.

The conference recognised the following existing centres:

- IRCICA (OIC) Turkey.
- Ministry of Artisanal & Social Affairs Rabat, Morocco.
- World Crafts Council Asian Secretariat
- Loke Virsa Pakistan
- National Crafts Organisation Tunisia

Other National Crafts Organisations

- Amar Architectural Heritage Saudi Arabia
- Crafts Centre New York, USA

All other suitable organisations having capability to establish data banks for information on Islamic world be invited.

These core institutions are intended to collect and compile a craft directory of craft resource persons, researchers, experts, craft galleries, master artisans, museums and other related information for their respective countries. IRCICA offered to publish this information for international circulation by 1994.

The WCC Asian Secretariat will provide the format for collection of information for the proposed crafts directory.

2. International Festival of Islamic Artisans at Work

The Rabat Conference emphasised the need to organise regional and international Festival of artisan's at work and proposed to hold the first Islamic artisans festival in October 1994 in Pakistan. IRCICA, World Crafts Council, Asia and Loke Virsa, Pakistan agreed to collaborate for the organisation of the festival. The conference agreed to explore the possibilities of holding such a festival every three years.

3. The Growth of Cultural Industry

The Conference stressed the need for the growth and development of cultural industries in the Islamic world as a mean to the dissemination, education and protection of Islamic Heritage. It was agreed that large scale production, distribution of art materials such as books, records, video cassettes, compact disk, journals, magazines, tourism and entertainment and crafts relating to the traditional heritage of Islam be promoted. The Conference recommended to the Islamic funding agencies and banks particularly, the Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah, the Islamic Relief Organisation Saudi Arabia to assign priority to such projects.

4. Amar Centre for Traditional Architecture

The Conference resolved to recognise the Amar Centre for traditional architecture in Saudi Arabia as a training centre in computer storage and retrieval system (data bank) for visual and graphic designs. It was also proposed that the Amar Centre may be identified as one of the network organisations for restoration and study of traditional architectural crafts.

5. Craft Host Family System

The Conference discussed the desirability of a craft host family system and craftsmen exchange programmes. Bangladesh offered to host four to six craftspeople each year for apprenticeship and study of traditional embroidery skills of Bangladesh under the proposed host family system.

All members agreed to the proposal and invited other countries and network organisations to participate in the system.

In retrospect, although the resolutions were addressed to the seminar organisers, I believe, the challenge is on each one of us, as the inheritor of this cultural heritage, to identify the role that we can effectively play in preserving and promoting the traditional arts and crafts. I know we will do it, because we care.

Raja Fuziah Bte Raja Tun Uda

Autumn Sales at Christie's and Sotheby's

After the highly successful April Islamic Week Auctions, the recession set in and past experiences believe sales take six to twelve months to regain their levels in a stabilised market.

SOTHEBY's total sales, however, even with approximately a third unsold in each department—Carpets, Islamic, Indian and SE Asian, and Oriental manuscripts—brought in T1,527,510.00. Dealers, naturally wary of locking up any surplus capital in the more expensive pieces, bought the less expensive where there was a smaller but quicker, margin of profit. In both auction houses the best pieces were bought by private collectors or buyers—where estimates were more attuned to the current atmosphere. The Gulf War has taken its toll from Turkey in the loss of trade and tourism, though the Turkish market is still fairly buoyant. A very rare Iznik slipware pottery jug c. 1570, decorated in red single sprays, some carnation-like flowers with white centres and circular white "buds" on a speckled powdery-blue ground, sold to a perceptive buyer for £50,000 (Est £50-70,000)—last April would probably have fetched double. The fact that three of the finest Iznik pieces were unsold must be related to the reserves placed on them; (a 1525-30 dish with a beautifully clear and balanced design in early blue and turquoise of the familiar hanging grapes motif, a unique animal style dish c. 1570, its animals around a central pine tree, and of the same date, a most elegant blue and white jug, its sparkling white ground sparsely decorated in ultramarine blue around the neck and centre of the body with a curving leaf and flower meander).

A 17thc pottery bowl—a fine example of the not often found Safavid "Gombroon"—sold for £8,500 (Est £1,400-1,800). Elegant with its "rice-grain" decoration and central omphalos surrounded by a starry halo of blue arrows, its transparent glaze over a hard paste body was very close in imitation of porcelain. A panel of 24 Safavid cuerda seca tiles on a typical yellow ground with a multicoloured floral design of cypress, vase and peacocks, sold for £6,000 (Est 3-5000). In a small chest of drawers sherds, glass and miscellanea collected during World War II sold surprisingly for £3,200 (Est £1,500-2,000).

In metalwork, a fascinating Ottoman 18thc silver-gilt and gem-set casket amalgamating a diversity of architectural and landscape elements (Est £20-30,000), was a disappointment, unsold. Unbelievable was the sale for £6,000 (Est £20-30,000) of a magnificent Ottoman silver gilt tankard c. 1550, (few European silver tankards from this era survive), which had formerly belonged to the City Art Museum of St. Louis. Of the finest craftsmanship, its three tiers of mythological and other animals attacking their prey are separated by braided bands, filigree silver bands and pellets—the latter combination typical of Balkan work of the period, while the Serbian iconography is based on Byzantine prototypes. However, a great coup was the sale for £28,000 (Est £20-30,000) of a tiny Ottoman silver gilt bowl c. 1500, also probably of Balkan workmanship, from the Lagonico collection, (and rumoured to have been used by Mme Lagonico as an ashtray). With a dark green, grey and light blue enamelled plaque attached at the centre, its rim and sides were engraved, the latter with arabesque and double-crescent motifs, and on its base an elaborate arabesque medallion, it comes from a group which had a considerable influence on Ottoman design particularly in the evolution of Iznik pottery. (The Lagonico collection of Iznik pottery is to be sold in Monte Carlo in December).

Among the military "hardware" gold hilted daggers all sold above estimates—a Yemeni horn-hilted, gold-inlaid dagger with its splendid gold buckled embroidered belt sold for £2,600 (Est £1,500-2,000). An Ottoman gilt-copper (tombak) powder flask of the 16-17thc, based on a leather prototype, sold well for £7,500 (Est £2-2,500).

All jewellery sold extremely well with many above estimates. A large gold 19thc Zanzibar necklace of thirteen flat discs, inscribed with Qur'anic verses and hung on filigree beads, brought £11,000 (Est £6-8,000).

In addition, Himalayan and SE Asian art—a highly unpredictable field—small sculptures were disappointing, though a 12thc Tibetan bronze stupa sold for £5,000 (Est £1,500-2,000) and a steatite 12-13thc Burmese plaque of Buddha for £4,000 (Est £1,500-1,700), while a fine 15-16thc Tibetan gilt-bronze Vahrasaa was sold for £8,500 (Est £4-6,000) and a 15-16thc Sino-Tibetan gilt-bronze of Sadaksari sold for £6,500 (Est £2,500-3,500). Sandstones had no appeal, but a very fine 10thc Khmer Vishnu with pleated skirt and tiered headdress sold for £55,000 (Est £40-60,000). A 15-16thc Tibetan Thang-ka in good condition, its Sakyapa lineage in colourful coral and blue, sold for £15,000 (Est £15-20,000) and another in delicate detail of the same period from Nepal for £5,500 (Est £3-4,000).

Beautiful textiles were left abandoned. Amongst the jewellery, a 19thc diamond-set gold collar sold for £4,500 (Est £2-3,000),m a ruby and gold choker for £1,800 (Est £1,200-£1,400). An 18thc Mughal rock crystal cup sold for £2,200 (Est £1,500-1,700). An early 19thc English printed Pearlware dinner service of some 45 pieces with various landscapes sold for £6,000 (Est £6,500-£7,500). Two rare Mughal polychrome-glazed terra cotta tiles with typical yellow floral motifs on a green ground—with the late C.M.G. Ogilvie's note stating his acquisition of a group of tiles stripped many years earlier from the palace near Lahore of Darah Shikoh, Shah Jahan's eldest son—sold for £4,000 (Est £1-1,500).

The sale of Oriental manuscripts and miniatures saw a drawing c 1640 of a naked dervish in the style of Govardhan make £2,200 (Est £1,200-1,800), and a fine mid 17thc Mughal drawing with gold on paper of a white-bearded Shah Jahan sold for £2,200 (Est £1-1,500). A beautifully composed evocation of life under a summer storm during "The Months of Ashadha" from Bundi c. 1680 sold for £6,000 (Est £3-4,000).

In calligraphy there was little of great excitement—the shadow of David James, former Curator of the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, must surely have cast sad reflections. The Ka'aba on an illuminated panel dated AH 1152/AD 1738 from Constantinople sold for £2,600 (Est £800-1,000); a leaf skeleton in gold calligraphy, probably from 19thc Turkey, sold for £1,000 (Est £5-700). The issuing of an *ijazat* (certificate) was vital to the career of a

young calligrapher and one dated AH 1277/AD 1860 signed by Muhammad Shauqi, Ottoman, sold for £3,200 (Est £1,500-2,000). A handsome leaf from a large early 14thc, Near Eastern Qu'ran, written in gold in Mushaqqaq and Rayhani scripts, sold for £3,800 (Est £1-2,000). Also from the Near East—dated 1979—a five metre long panel written in gold on a brown ground, sold for £4,000 (Est £1,500-2,500)! A large and beautifully presented FIRMAN, written in seven lines of elegant nasta'liq script on gold painted paper, was from the Mughal Emperor Mu'in ad-Din Akbarii (1806-37) concerning the care of his son, Prince Mirza Muhammad Jahan Shah Bahadur, and written in Delhi in 1837. The Emperor's tughra in an illuminated panel is above the text and his seal impression in an illuminated circular device with a canopy above all. Floral motifs in colours and gold are between the lines of text and in the border frame. Estimated at £4-5,000, the Firman sold for £9,000.

Christie's with only two auctions—Islamic art and Indian miniatures and the second of carpets—were much pleased with their results, a total of £900,000 with commissions. Again, private collectors or buyers were paramount, particularly in carpet sales of which 78% were sold. The extremely large Axminster carpet from the Lansdowne Club bought by Charles Goring for Wiston Park, Sussex, in 1829, and estimated at £6-8,000, sold for £17,000 to a private English buyer. Their Kazaks were good but the surprise was the many silk carpets which sold so very well. The exceptionally fine Zareh Penyamin Koum Kapu silk and metal thread prayer rug of "Sultan's head" design, (woven to a very high knot count even by Zareh Penyamin standards), estimated at £28,000-35,000, sold for £52,000 to a private buyer. A magnificent Qum carpet—thought by William Robinson to be the best he had ever seen—sold for £42,000 (Est £30-50,000), again to a private buyer.

Sotheby's also did well at their Carpet sale, most being sold at around their estimates and several beyond. A very fine Khorassan carpet fragment of the 17thc, in an excellent state of preservation and of high knot count, sold for £28,000 (Est £6-8,000) A gleaming Ottoman velvet and metal thread cushion cover from the first half of the 17thc, its large carnation flowers on a crimson background, sold for £13,000 (Est £7-10,000). A Konya Yatak c. 1800 (Est £10-12,000) sold for £10,000 and a Star Kazak rug from West Caucasus, dated AH 1304/AD 1887, sold for £48,000 (Est £50-70,000). A Dragon Soumakh fragment estimated at £2 to £2,500 sold for £4,000 and a Kashan carpet for £4,500 (Est £2,500-4,000). A Wilton carpet c. 1850 sold for £70,000 (Est £70-90,000) and an Aubusson estimated at £10-12,000 sold for £15,000, while the highlight of the Sale was a 17thc "Medallion" Ushak Carpet, estimated at £5-8,000 which sold for £72,000!

At CHRISTIE's even lesser Iznik all sold at roughly their estimates. The three best pieces, a blue and white Tondino c. 1535 sold for £22,000 (Est £20-30,000), a (repaired) c. 1555-60 dish, with classic design of splaying floral motifs of campanula and hyacinths from a central base and a surround of cloud forms, sold for £18,000 (Est £20-30,000) and a splendidly bold c. 1540 dish (repaired) with its very large green central circular pomegranate motif overlaid with curving sprays of blue hyacinths, encircled airly by blue and green leaves and flowers, which sold for £28,000 (Est £30-50,000).

Amongst metalwork, all Armenian pieces sold including a highly decorative enamelled and inset gold chalice, probably made in Julfa, Isfahan, which sold for £10,000 (Est £7-10,000). A 15thc Mamluk brass "Gulla" tray, used for carrying water jugs, sold for £4,200 (Est £2,500-3,500) A 13thc Herati silver inlaid bronze Stem sold for £1,500 (Est £8-1,200) and an early Safavid (late 15thc) tinned copper dervish's bowl (Kashkul), estimated at £1,200 to £1,800, sold for £4,000. Two beautiful Indian daggers sold very well: an 18thc Mughal jade-hilted dagger (Kindjal), the jade inset with a gold and jewelled design, jade terminal and gold upper panel, estimated at £1,500-£2,000 sold for £6,000. A late 19thc dagger, its grip and sheath enamelled with floral sprays on a green ground, the grip set with pink tourmaline and rose diamonds, sold for £8,500 (Est £2-3,000).

A 61.5 cm. square Agra marble panel, inlaid in various precious stones, sold for £4,000 (Est £1,500-2,000). A very large and splendid 12-13thc Mesopotamian unglazed pottery jar with a pointed base and bulbous body decorated with applied moulded bands and scrolling patterns, stylised human figures and a seated bull, sold for £16,000 (Est £8-12,000).

Amongst manuscripts, a Qajar calligraphic scroll sold for £4,000 (Est £2-3,000) and a Qur'anic scroll with the calligrapher's name and date, AH 1189/AD 1766-7, from Zand Persia, sold for £5,000 (Est £2-3000). From 12thc Persia a Qur'an section, its black eastern kufic flowing into naskh, with red, green, blue and gold vowels and marginal decoration, sold for £7,000 (Est £4-6,000). A formal message of condolence sent from the Court at Lucknow in 1861 to Queen Victoria on the death of Prince Albert in black nasta'liq, green, blue and gold decor, lion supports and crown crest on vellum, sold for £1,300 (Est £5-800) (Queen Victoria had fortunately studied Urdu!) A Near Eastern 9thc large Qur'anic section in brown kufic, green and red vowels and sura headings, sold for £62,000 (Est £60-80,000). Of twenty Qalamdans (pencases), all sold, three above their higher estimates—one for £4,000 (Est £2-3,000).

The high point of the Sale with many bidders was for a rare pair of early Safavid lacquer bookcovers c. 1570 from Qazvin. Amid varied trees and floral sprays, wild boar, wolves and snarling dragons are twined in combat while ducks and simurghs fly overhead on a golden ground within a black meandering flowering border. Though damaged, the finely decoupe spandrels on the black Morocco doubloures were of the exquisite delicacy of that rich period.

Patricia Jellicoe

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KL NEWSLETTER 1991 IN RETROSPECT

The art and cultural scene in Kuala Lumpur has continued to be lively, even challenging, as one looks back on the events of 1991 which, among others, saw the opening of a number of visual art exhibitions that focused on social and environmental issues.

The National Art Gallery director for eight years, Syed Ahmad Jamal, retired last year and the former curator, Wairah Marzuki is currently the Acting Director. The NAG's renovation plan has been shelved until a decision is made whether to build a new gallery or to give a facelift to the present one. Besides its annual exhibitions such as "The Open Show" and "The Young Contemporaries", the NAG had invited guest curators to shows that generated a lively discussion on the status of visual art in Malaysia. For example, art historian/artist Redza Piyadasa curated an exhibited with the theme "Art and the Social Context" while art historian/lecturer Zakaria Ali put together an exhibition on "Malaysianness of Malaysian Art: A Question of Identity." The "Art and The Social Context" exhibition travelled throughout the country after its showing at the NAG in June last year.

For the first time an exhibition by women artists from Indonesia and Malaysia was on display at NAG in October. It was first held at the Gedung Pameran Seni Rupa Depikbud in Jakarta in August. Another joint venture in art was the Japan/Malaysia Contemporary Art and Performance that was well-received. Foreign art exhibitions at the NAG included "Mind and Matter: New American Abstraction" and "Tamarind Impressions: Recent Lithographs." 1991 ended with the revival of "Salon Malaysia" art competition. Forthcoming exhibitions at the National Art Gallery will include "Graphics of the 50's from Germany", "Art and Islam in Malaysia Today", and Ceramics from Britain.

With the growing interest and support for the arts, new galleries have been set-up. Artiquarium (formerly the Loke Mansion built in 1862 and situated at Medan Tuanku), a centre for ethnic crafts, antiques and contemporary art, was introduced to the public in February last year with an invitational show by leading Malaysian artists



Pottery by Tai Teck Chin

entitled "Dokumenta 1", and an exhibition of antiques and cultural crafts entitled "Legacies". It was officially opened by Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. Galeri Shah Alam, the brainchild of HRH the Crown Prince of Selangor, was officially launched by HRH The Sultan of Selangor on 6 July 1991 with an exhibition by Malaysian artists. The Second Asean Travelling Exhibition of Paintings, Photographs and Children's Art was also held there. Other new private galleries in the Klang Valley are Room At The Top (32 B Jalan Tun Mohd Fuad 2, Taman Tun Ismail), Artfolio (City Square Centre, Jalan Tun Abdul Razak), City Square (Jalan Ampang) and Isetan Gallery (Lot 10, Jalan Sultan Ismail).

GaleriWan (City Square Centre, Jalan Tun Abdul Razak) celebrated its second anniversary early this year (January 1992) with an exhibition entitled "Sarawak Fibre and Form" which included bark paintings of Sarawak festivals by Ramsay Ong, wooden sculptures by Elis Balare, bead necklaces by Elizabeth Chan, wooden toys made by children in Sarawak loghouses, puas, baskets and pottery. JE Art & Craft Centre, opened in June 1989, (Micasa Shoppe, Jalan Tun Abdul Razak) put together early this year an exhibition of works by eight young emerging artists from diverse backgrounds. The exhibition was aptly called "Raw, Jagged But Fresh." GaleriCitra, established in 1967, (Shangri-La Hotel, Jalan Sultan Ismail) is planning to host an exhibition of pottery by Malaysian potter/ceramic artist Tai Teck Chin in June this year. Teck Chin is well-known for his creation of large pots.

Art House Gallery (Wisma Stephens, Jalan Raja Chulan) has been exhibiting works by contemporary artists from China. It has also branched out into other artforms especially religious and primitive art in Asia. On many occasions Art House has collaborated with Isetan Departmental Store to hold exhibitions at the Isetan Gallery. Talking of Chinese paintings reminds me of the biggest ever exhibition that was held in December last year at the Shangri-La Hotel. This exhibition featuring brush paintings from China in the late 19th and 20th centuries was organised by Singapore's Sin Hua Gallery. Included in the exhibition were masters like Wu Chang-shuo (1844-1927), Huang Binhong (1844-1955), Xu Beihong (1895-1953), Qi Baishi (1864-1957) and Zhang Daqian (1899-1983).

The Art Gallery of the MARA Institute of Technology (ITM) at Shah Alam organised exhibitions of works done by students as well as art exhibitions from foreign missions. Last year, final year students from the School of Art and Design under the leadership of the gallery's curator, Mohammad Ali Abdul Rahman, went on a trip to the historic Pengkalan Kempas in Negeri Sembilan and Kuala Selangor to study the megalithic structures. Their studies revealed that the megaliths reflected a combination of Islamic and Hindu cultures. The result of their studies was an exhibition of 52 drawings on megalith stones at the ITM Art Gallery. The megalithic stones found in Negeri Sembilan (south of Kuala Lumpur) are known to be culturally connected with the ones in West Sumatra. Some have elaborate carvings.

Last year Galeri MIA of the Malaysian Institute of Art (a private art college), at Taman Melawati held a significant, thought-provoking exhibition "2 Installations" by two young artists, Raja

Shahriman and Kungyu Liew with performance by dancer Marion D'Cruz. While Raja Shahriman's bamboo installation was based on Malay culture and myth, Kungyu Liew's work was on Chinese prayer altars and worship.

The Art Gallery at Malayan Banking on Jalan Pudu, the Foyer of the Australian High Commission on Jalan Yap Kuan Seng and the Creative Centre of the National Art Gallery on Jalan Sultan Hishamuddin also provide exhibition space for artists to hold their exhibitions. The Australian High Commission organised a very interesting in fact fascinating show "The Inspired Dream" (Aboriginal Art in Australia) at its foyer with lecture/demonstration on aboriginal art. The Islamic Centre held an exhibition of Islamic calligraphy "Ninety-nine Names Of Allah" by Pakistani artist Mrs. Neyar Ehsan Rashid while the Malaysian Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War organised a Poster, Painting and Essay Competition on the theme "One World—No War" in August last year to commemorate Hiroshima Day.

The Malaysian Tourist Information Centre (MATIC) on Jalan Ampang is another venue for exhibitions, cultural and theatre events. In October last year, the Centre was turned into a world of dolls when the Malaysian Child Welfare Council celebrated children's day with an International World of Dolls exhibition with the theme "Our World—Our Home." The Japanese kites and tops exhibition was also held there. An interesting exhibition by seven Mexican women artists, the first of its kind to be held in Malaysia, was on display at MATIC in January this year. Ramli Ibrahim, the guru of Indian dance, organised a two-week sell-out Dance/Drama Festival entitled "Up To You" with an exhibition of paintings of Ramli's dance scenes and black and white photographs of photo-journalist Eris Peris' Lotus series at the foyer of MATIC. The National Cultural Complex of the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism sponsors plays in the Malay language.

Malaysia lost two well-known painters last year. Portrait painter Mazli Mat Sum died at the age of 53. Wairah Marzuki's husband, Ismail Zain died at the age of 61. The late Ismail Zain was an artist of many talents who "infused Malaysian art with the sophistication and passion of thought that were equal to none." He was described as "the guru of art." Ismail had been the director of the NAG and the director of culture. Upon his retirement he was appointed the director of FINAS (National Film Development Corporation). He was also actively involved in theatre.





Above,left: Langang Bungai Nuing, silk, 22 x 36 in by Baru Anak Ngah. Right: Headman, mixed media on bark-cloth, 24 x 28 in by Ramsay Ong. Left: Ceramic artist Tai Tech Chin at work in his studio.

1992 is declared VISIT ASEAN YEAR and to start the event, the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism staged a week-long Second Dance Festival "Dance As A Cultural Horizon" from the six Asean countries: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. A year-long programme has been planned to include an exhibition on "Borneo Heritage" at the National Museum from January 31 - April 30, an International Kite Festival in May, an exhibition on Traditional Malaysian Musical Instruments in July/September and ASEAN Crafts Expo in November. The month of January also witnessed another feast from Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Taiwan in Kuala Lumpur in conjunction with the general meeting of the Asian Dance Association in Singapore on January 24.

In the world of crafts, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand was awarded UNESCO Gold Medal Award in recognition of Her Majesty's contribution to the development of crafts. Infokraf situated on Jalan Sultan Hishamuddin had a display of crafts by 32 young designers of the Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation in October last year. Another exhibition on "National Crafts Heritage" is on until April.

In the field of literature, Professor Muhammed Haji Salleh (the sixth recipient) received the Anugerah Sastera (National Literature Award) from His Majesty the Yang Di Pertuan Apong Sultan Azlan Shah in Parliament House in December. This award established in 1981 is the highest recognition in Malaysia for literary achievement. Professor Muhammad, a professor of Malay Letters at the National University of Malaysia and a well-known poet (having published 6 volumes of poetry in the Malay language and numerous critical books and essays in scholarly journals), is currently on a nine-month sabbatical on a Fulbright Fellowship at the University of California, Berkeley.

Sharifah Zuriah Aljeffri

Cultural Organisations in United Arab Emirates

At the very first Islamic Arts Seminar in 1982, I ended a full review of the arts, architecture and archaeology in the United Arabn Emirates with the following statement. "The Emirates have no intention of becoming a meritocratic society of spiritual and cultural nomads". I am happy to affirm that this remains so in 1991, despite a world recession and many obstacles.

Still a very young state founded only in 1971, its contemporary arts are clearly nascent, but firm policies and wise leadership ensure that the old traditional crafts such as dhow building and embroidery are preserved and the 'new' modern arts fostered. Various museums, governmental departments and organizations are devoted to this, in particular the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, which forms part of the Centre for Documentation and Research complex, located, thanks to the President, in the old fort, formerly his court.

Considered by Unesco to be one of three leading documentation centres in the Arab World, it by no means focuses solely on the past, hosting numerous lectures, seminars, plays, recitals and art exhibitions. Throughout the dreadful months of the Gulf War especially, both Emiratis and those Kuwaitis seeking refuge were given ample opportunity to express their views or experiences through the arts, and display their works—whatever their age.

Such exhibitions and activities are not limited to Abu Dhabi. Dubai also boasts a flourishing Arts Society—holding courses and mounting exhibitions. Likewise the Emirates Fine Arts Society in Sharjah, which recently held its 9th Fine Arts Exhibition under the aegis of Sharjah's Cultural and Information Department.

And what of the future? UAE Ministry Under Secretary for Information and Culture, Awad Mohammed Al-Otaiba, welcomed these exhibitions and stressed the importance of art, saying, "Those who cannot write down their feelings can express them in paintings", and urged everyone to go and see them.

The Cultural Foundation is certainly aware of its role for posterity—and holds regular courses in painting, calligraphy, ceramics and other art forms. There is, too, a special section for children aged 6-14, including materials and relevant literature, as well as a lively programme of festivals and cultural competitions.

Al-Fujairah Museum will soon be completed and it is expected that further projects will develop in Dubai.

The UAE however, is not prone to xenophobia, and it receives warmly the works of others and welcomes the chance to exchange or compare ideas with those from abroad. It also wishes to link directly with other countries in these matters, and is actively endeavouring to do so. The Society for Arabian Studies in London, for example, is closely involved with this year's conference on archaeology at Al-Ain University, and the Sharjah Fine Arts group is keen to exhibit in London.

Unfortunately, all such projects require considerable funds. Let us hope that neither politics nor economics will darken or confine the rising artistic aspirations of this young state, for as the poet T.S. Eliot wrote, "In my beginning is my end".

Jana Burasova

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Uzbekistan Ceremony Honours Winners of Samarkand Design Competition

The Mayor of Samarkand in Uzbekistan, Mr Aziz Nasirov, at a ceremony in the city's Town Hall on 9 April, formally presented awards and trophies to five teams—from Britain, USA, Japan, France and Russia—who won the international competition for the revitalisation of Samarkand. Jointly sponsored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, the CIS Union of Architects, and the Union of Uzbek Architects, the competition called for ideas for a cultural centre dedicated to Ulugh Beg on a 27-hectare site in the historic centre of the city of Samarkand—known to have an urban history of over 2500 years.

Designed to stimulate thinking by architects throughout the world, the brief for the competition emphasised two aims: to design a cultural complex in the heart of the city, the Ulugh Beg Cultural Centre; and to develop concepts redefining the Centre's broad urban context. The sponsors thus hoped that creative thinking about the city's architectural heritage and contemporary processes of change could produce 'urban utopias' that could transform the site in a controlled manner.

In an unprecedented response—there were 686 submissions from 68 countries—a wealth of design ideas were thrown up, and in August 1991 an international jury met for a week in Samarkand to assess the projects. The jury comprised the Chief Architect of Tashkent, Sabir Adilov; Egyptian architect Abdel Wahed El-Wakil; Indian architect Charles Corra; the Vice-President of the then USSR Union of Architects, Yuri Gnedovsky; former President of the International Union of Architects, Yuri Platonov; the chief of the special project on Samarkand's old town, Nematjan Sadikov; and architect-planner Ismail Sergeldin.

A report appearing in *Development Network* (No.12), about the jury's assessment of the designs submitted for the competition, makes the following observations:

"During the first round of evaluations, the jury singled out two projects that addressed most of its concerns. These were the proposals of ARCSIM (Alexander Larin) of Moscow and Yorganciogiu-Arikoglu (Y and A) of New York. Consistent with the present Master Plan for Samarkand which aims to restore and revitalise the remaining mohallas with their community centres, tea-houses (chaikana), mosques and religious schools, both groups proposed to preserve nearby mohallas and to reconstitute demolished ones within the site, or use mohallas as the generic form of Samarkand's new urban structure. ARCSIM even proposed rebuilding Timur's Citadel to accommodate the administrative centre and other buildings specified in the competition brief. For the jury, the idea of rebuilding Timur's Citadel was daring. Nevertheless, it commended ARCSIM's recognition of the duality between the old and new, divided by the river. Y and A's proposal is governed by a similar distinction between old and new; they also use the river as a dividing line. But their treatment of the new has a different scale and configuration. It has more articulated urban spaces, conceived as the welcoming antechamber of the regenerated old fabric.

"In the ARCSIM project, reconstituted mohallas lie in the area between the river bed and Registan, while Y and A propose a continuous low rise urban structuring that leads from Registan to the new administrative centre and touches the Ulugh Beg Madrasah. This courageous attempt to re-establish the urban scale of the complex was praised by the jury for its confidence.

"The other winning entry that did not hesitate to build adjacent to Registan is from Tokyo. Hidetoshi Ohno's proposal has powerful ideas for the future of Samarkand. He established the duality of the East and West of the river in the form of a dialogue positing a reciprocal relationship between the Park in the City and the City in the Park. The 'City in the Park' is the triangular urban expanse filling almost the entire site on the East. Emptied to create open spaces and courtyards, the triangular mass becomes an urban lattice. West of this structure, he proposes five protruding building complexes that form the "port" of the megastructure. This port is the point of interchange or interface between the "park" and the "city".

"Unlike ARCSIM, Ohno does not repeat the historic architectural forms. Instead, he highlights them as the context and presents his proposal uncompromisingly. It is a fresh look to the future, a realisable utopia combining the intense urban experience of the old city with new urban structures. This dense built form breathes out into the vast park through its "port". The park itself contains the monumental main axis of the city which now abruptly terminates at the theatre house. Ohno continues this axis in the park and dissolves it into lush green landscape.

"Park Berger treats this axis as a small episode in a grand gesture, a megapark linking old and new. His trapezoidal park is an esplanade starting from the outer west wall of Registan and reaching to the hill top where the former Party Headquarters of the City Administration is located. The buildings required by the brief spread throughout the landscape with almost no bonding architectural elements. The park is the jelling factor.

"The Jury questioned the economic feasibility and implementation potential of this idea, but unanimously agreed to premiate an urban utopia which highlights a solution to the suffocating pattern of over-building. In a leisurely fashion the landscape takes over a substantial portion of the city centre and relieves the pressure of urban concentration by introducing a completely new set of experiences.

"Studio 38 (Steven McDougall)'s proposal has an extremely simple approach, unconcerned with transforming the urban setting or solving Samarkand's future problems. It suggests a nodal point situated on the very edge of the river bed and directs four major pedestrial movements of the city toward it. The project does not bring clarity in the form of solutions to the whole site. The only part of the project that is architecturally specific is the link between the node and the Registan where the architects recapitulate the West-East approach of many of the proposals.

"The Jury has also identified eight

honourable mentions. Among these some showed certain similarities to winning projects, while others took completely different approaches. Olavi Koponen and Ilkka Tukiainen (Finland) turned the site into a park with huge linear buildings connecting the two hills. Yves Weinand (Belgium) and Claudio Sgarbi (Italy), used five bridges to connect the old town to the new sector. Michal Tomanek (Poland), Giuseppe Cappochin/Giovanni Comparini (Italy), and Eric Toeq (France) tried to integrate the city fabric by reconstituting damaged parts and introducing new spatial configurations. Santa-Rita (Portugal) and Hans Comeri/Dieter Geissbühler proposed new urban megastructures to revitalise the urban core of Samarkand through substantial building.

"The Competition has given Samarkand a collection of proposals from architects and planners throughout the world. Now it is up to the City to decide how it wants to revitalise Samarkand and give it back the grandeur it deserves."

Zafra House in Granada:

Combining Restoration with Contemporary Cultural Purpose

The Spanish Centre for Historical Studies of Granada and its Kingdom has found a new home in the meticulously restored 14th century Narid palace in Albaycin (Ribad al-Bayyazin) area of Granada adjacent to the Alhambra. Known as Casa Arabe Nazare de Zafra, or the Zafra House, the structure needed considerable restoration work, which was completed last June, and was carried out by the Municipality of Granada in collaboration with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. The Trust contributed professionally and financially as "a small gesture, a modest venture, toward creating bridges between worlds that do not often know each other", as HH The Aga Khan put it when Zafra House was jointly inaugurated by him and King Juan Carlos of Spain.

The area's Islamic past is recognisable in its warren of narrow whitewashed streets. Numerous houses and lanes remain little changed and in the vicinity of the Zafra house can be found other interesting medieval buildings such as the Bath of Nogal (Hunman al-Yauza) and the Nasrid House in the Lavadero de Santa Ines Street. The Zafra House occupies the North East corner of a rectangular block formed by the streets of Porteria de la Concepcion, Carrera de Darro, de Zafra and la Concepcion. The entire block is taken up by the Dominican Convent of Santa Catalina de Sena and bears the same name as the house.

Little is known about the history of the house during the Islamic era except for its period of construction and that it was used as a main living quarters of an important family. It later became the property of Don Hernando de Zafra, secretary to the Catholic Kings, and his wife. In 1507, they drew up a will expressing their wish that a convent for nuns should be founded there, dedicated to Santa Catalina de Sena. In 1527, Don Fernando Zafra, son of Don Hernando, officially handed over the house to the convent.





Top: The courtyard of the two storey Zafra House constructed in the late 14th century being restored as the centre for the Historic Studies of Granada and its Kingdom. Above: An architectural section across the building shows how the galleries on two sides of the courtyard lead into the principal rooms. The main doorways and windows open into the court.

The original form of the house has remained unaltered throughout the years except for minor changes such as the closing of the original entrance and opening of a new one giving access to the adjacent monastic complex. In 1933 the entire convent was declared a historical and artistic monument by the government.

The recent history of the building began in 1946 when it was acquired by the Municipality of Granada. Following this purchase, it was used by the Directorate Generale of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Education, and then by the Ministry of Culture, as offices. When the city administration took possession of the house again in 1982, it was in need of restoration. At that time, the Municipality decided to reconsider the question of its future function.

The Centre for Historical Studies of Granada and its Kingdom needed a space for a library with reading rooms, a secretariat with offices and a meeting room for ten people. All these functions have been accommodated on the first floor, leaving the ground floor free for public functions such as exhibitions and conferences.

Restoration was completed on schedule in early 1991, after some two years of work. Zafra House has been restored not only as an important historic landmark but as a living and ongoing institution.

4TH International Seminar on Islamic Arts

Artists, scholars, art administrators and cultural officials from 21 countries participated in the *4th International Seminar on Islamic Arts*, held on 12-13 September 1991, at the SOAS Lecture Theatre, University of London. It was organised by the Islamic Arts Foundation, in association with the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London [SOAS]; World of Islam Festival Trust, London [WIFT]; and OIC's Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul [IRCICA].

The earlier three seminars, held in 1982, 1985 and 1988, dealt respectively with the history and philosophy of Islamic art; Islamic art collections in various countries of the world; and the state of art education in the Islamic countries. The 1991 Seminar reviewed *"The Contemporary Arts Scene in the Islamic World"* with special reference to the promotion of, and support for the arts in the Islamic countries and communities worldwide. The discussions aimed to clarify such aspects as the quantum and scope of arts funding at national and regional levels; public and private institutions engaged in art promotion, projection and research; art awards and incentives in various countries, if any; the role of business houses and financial enterprises in the sponsorship of the arts; and art publications, audio-visual material, and media coverage of the arts by Press, Radio, Television and Films.

The Secretary General of the OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference, Jeddah), H.E. Dr Hamid Algabid, had delegated OIC's Assistant Secretary General for Information and Cultural Affairs, H.E. Mr Mohamed Mohsin, on his behalf, to inaugurate the Seminar. Indeed, among the Secretary General's earliest concerns when he took over his assignment at the OIC in 1988 was the cultural and intellectual regeneration of the Islamic world; and in January 1989 a Conference of the Cultural Ministers of OIC Member States, was convened in Dakar (Senegal).

It was the first such Islamic Conference of Cultural Ministers since the OIC's establishment more than two decades ago, and underscored the importance which the participating countries attached to the promotion of art and culture, by solemnly affirming in their Dakar Declaration that:

> "In spite of the progress made by the Islamic world towards solidarity, complimentarity and the consolidation of its personality, its efforts have not come up to expectations by reason, in particular, of the inadequacy of the resources allocated to cultural action. In order to achieve the desired development, the Muslim world must pay greater attention to culture by placing it among its highest priorities and fundamental Islamic objectives."

The Conference had, therefore, recommended that:

> "Since the contribution of nations is in fact the contribution of their scholars, intellectuals and other innovators, the Conference exhorts the OIC and the Islamic States to encourage and honour them."

It was with this end in view that, unlike the earlier three Seminars with their emphasis on historical, archival and educational aspects of Islamic arts, the 1991 Seminar was a little differently conceived. Apart from individual artists and scholars, invitees to the 1991 Seminar also included art administrators and cultural officials from Member States of the OIC, who looked at some of the practical, promotional and financial aspects of the contemporary arts scene in the Islamic world, with a view to evolving a plan for encouraging the arts and honouring the artists in various fields.

To oversee various aspects of the 4th Seminar, a Preparatory Committee was set up in London, headed by the Chairman of the Islamic Arts Foundation, Mr Muazzam Ali, with the Director General, Mr Jalal Uddin Ahmed, as its convenor. It comprised diplomats from London Missions of OIC member countries and a number of special invitees.
Diplomats representing London Missions of OIC member countries on the Preparatory Committee included:

Algeria	(Mr Mustapha Boukari)
Bahrain	(Mr Hassan Al Monfaradi)
Bangladesh	(Mr Shamsuzzaman)
Brunei	(Mr M Murad Haji Paijan)
Cameroon	(Mr Halidu Garda)
Egypt	(Prof Younes El-Batrik)
Iran	(Mr N Tajik)
Jordan	(Mr Omar Belbeisi)
Kuwait	(Mr Faisal Al Sabah)
Malaysia	(Mr S M Syed Baharum)
Morocco	(Mr Said Safi)
Pakistan	(Miss D S Qureshi)
Qatar	(Ms Leila Fanous and Mr Abdullah Sadiq)
Saudi Arabia	(Dr M A M Sobaihi)
Sudan	(Dr A W Effendi)
Syria	(Mr Feda El Amoud)
Tunisia	(Mr Mohamed Bakir)
UAE	(Ms Fawziya Al Dallal)
Yemen	(Mr Idrees A Al-Shammam)

Other members of the Preparatory Committee, including Chair of the previous (1988) Seminar, and those representing the Organiser and the Co-sponsors of the 4th Seminar, were:

HRH Princess Wijdan Ali,
President of Royal Society of Fine Arts, Amman;
Prof. Geza Fehervari,
SOAS, University of London;
Mr Alistair Duncan, Director,
World of Islam Festival Trust, London;
Dr Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu,
Director General IRCICA, Istanbul;
Mr K Shahid Hosain,
former Secretary, Pakistan Ministry of Culture;
Mr Sajid Rizvi,
Director "NEAR" & Editor "Eastern Art Report";
Mrs Azra J Ahmed,
Managing Editor "Arts & The Islamic World";
Mr S M Mustafa,
former President, Foreign Press Association, London;
Mr Awang H Javed Ahmad,
Manager Far East, Bridge Corporation, London;
Mr Laith Kubba,
"Al-Alam" magazine;
Mr Zafar Malik,
Director, Usman Associates, London;
Mr Ali Omar Ermes,
Director, Art & Blue Chip Design, London.

The Seminar had three Working Sessions, apart from the Inaugural and the Concluding Session as follows:

THURSDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 1991
INAUGURAL SESSION
Chair: Mr Mohamed Melihi,
Head of Arts Division, Ministry of Culture, Morocco

Welcoming remarks from
Mr Muazzam Ali,
Chairman of the Islamic Arts Foundation

Inaugural Address by
HE Mr Mohamed Mohsin,
Assistant Secretary General for Information and Cultural

Affairs, Organisation of the Islamic Conference

Messages/Statements by Co-sponsors of the Seminar and other dignitaries:

Dr Geoffrey King, on behalf of the Director of SOAS, University of London

Message from HRH Crown Prince El-Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan, presented by HRH Princess Wijdan Ali,

Dr Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Director General, IRCICA, Istanbul

Mr Alistair Duncan, Director, World of Islam Festival Trust, London

1st WORKING SESSION:
Art and Cultural Policies and Programmes
Chair: Mr Anthony Everitt,
Secretary General, Arts Council of Great Britain

Opening Remarks by
Mr Jalal Uddin Ahmed,
Director General, Islamic Arts Foundation, London

Mr Ayub Malik: *"Contemporary Art in Islamic Countries - Some Basic Questions"*

HRH Princess Wijdan Ali: *"Art Patronage in the Islamic World"*

Ms Merryle Wyn Davies: *"Art in the Islamic World: Beyond Mystique and Enigma"* (paper only)

Mr Sulaiman Esa: *"Islam, Art and Cultural Identity: The Search for Transcendence in Contemporary Plastic Arts of Malaysia"*

Dr Rafique Keshavjee: *"Teaching of Islamic Culture in the West: Case of High School children in Canada and USA"*

Dr Tasleem Shakur: *"Contemporary Art in Islamic Countries: A Viewpoint"*

Mr Sajid Rizvi: *"Funding Art in the Islamic World"*

Mr Mushtak Parker: *"The Cross in Islamic Arts Funding"*

Dr Moustafa El Razzaz: *"Survey of Funding and Sponsoring of Art in Egypt"*

Mr John Rodenbeck: *"The Arts in Egypt: Problems of Promotion and Conservation"*

Mr K Shahid Hosain, *"Cultural Policies in Pakistan"*

Mr Mohamed Melihi: *"The State of the Arts in Morocco"*

Mr Bozkurt Kuruc: *"State Support for the Arts in Turkey"*

Mr Mohamed Bakir: *"Culture in Tunisia"*

Ms Jana Buresova: *"Cultural Organisations in UAE"*

2nd WORKING SESSION
The Contemporary Arts Scene — Plastic Arts
Chair: Dr Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu,
Director General IRCICA

Mr Abdul Djalil Pirous: *"Islamic Indonesian Contemporary Art—Plurality and Synthesis"*

Prof Omur Bakirer: *"Contemporary Ceramic Art in Turkey"*

Mr Dzul Haimi Bin Md Zain: *"The Contemporary Islamic Art in Malaysia"*

Ms Khatija Sanusi/Ms Ruzaika Omar Bassaree. Joint paper: *"KSSR— Malaysian School of Art and Design: Development and Challenge"*

Dr Marcella Nesom: *"Development of Pakistani Painting"*

Prof Inci Aslanoglu: *"Turkish Republican Architecture"*

Prof Omur Bakirer: *"Contemporary Ceramic Art in Turkey"*

Prof Gonul Gultekin: *"Neo-Expressionist Painting in Turkey"*

Mr Saleem Quraishi: *"Islamic Art Resources in India Office Library"*

Ms Rose Issa: *"East in West: Near Eastern and North African Artists in Europe"*

Ms Dale Egee: *"Hope and Optimism: Holidays in Opportunity for Artists from the Emerging World"*

Ms Solene Nimetz: *"A Recent Visit to Ramalla and the Art Scene There"*

3rd WORKING SESSION
The Contemporary Arts Scene —Performing Arts
Chair: Dr Annemarie Schimmel,
Professor of Indo-Islamic Culture, Harvard University

Dr Aysin Candan: *"Development of Dramatic Art in Turkey"* (Paper only)

Mr Humayoun Ahabadi: *"Contemporary Iranian Ritualistic Plays and Western Theatre, especially Brecht's Theatre"* (Paper only)

Mr Abdulmajeed Kiani: *"The Role of Thought in Iran's Contemporary Music"* (Paper only)

Ms Maureen Ali *"Making Films about the Middle East —Frustrations and Pitfalls"*

Mr Bassem Abdalla: *"A Middle East Film Maker in the West"*

Prof George Hazai: *"The Ottomans in Central Europe: The Cultural and Artistic Impact of Islam in Hungary"*

Prof Geza Fehervari: *"The Scope and Theme of the 5th Islamic Arts Seminar"*

FRIDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 1991
CONCLUDING SESSION
Chair: HRH Princess Wijdan Ali,
President, Royal Society of Fine Arts, Amman

Open Forum: Discussion on the state of Arts Funding.

Seminar proposals and recommendations.

Proceedings of the Seminar will be published in *Arts & The Islamic World*, No.23, Autumn 1992

Al Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation:

Survey of Islamic Manuscripts

The first comprehensive worldwide survey of Islamic manuscript collections, work on which was initiated by the UK-based Al-Furqan Foundation three years ago, is now in an advanced stage of implementation; and the first in a series of three volumes is planned for publication this year (1992), it was announced in London.

The Foundation was set up in 1988, with Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani as its Chairman, and with a broadbased International Advisory Council, to promote, sponsor and initiate research into the field of Islamic manuscripts and to assist in the preservation and restoration as well as cataloguing, editing and publishing significant manuscripts.

The survey of manuscript collections undertaken by the Foundation aims not simply to carry out a bibliographical study, but to gather detailed information on all collections of Islamic manuscripts whether catalogued or otherwise. The Foundation is studying the feasibility of copying important manuscripts, and hopes that this project will be ready for implementation towards the end of 1992.

The Foundation also plans to hold an annual exhibition related to Islamic manuscripts, apart from organising conferences and seminars on the subject such as the one on "The Significance of Islamic Manuscripts" held last November as part of the Foundation's inaugural ceremonies.

The reference library of the Foundation, housed in a historic 17th century building in Wimbledon, has already acquired 3,660 titles in 4,735 volumes: it intends to build up a collection of about 15,000 volumes. The collection is classified according to the Library of Congress system, available on open shelves, and an automated catalogue displays all appropriate bibliographical data in both the Arabic and English alphabets. Scholars and students interested in using the library may apply to the Foundation at Eagle House, High Street, Wimbledon, London SW19 5EF. Telephone 081 944 1233; Fax 081 944 1633.

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The Centre for the Muslim Contribution to Civilisation, Qatar, and Garnet Publishing, Reading, UK, have signed a publishing contract which aims, "through English translation of the major books of Islamic civilisation, to disseminate genuine Islamic culture and to develop an understanding in the West of the cultural and intellectual heritage of Islam".

The 10-year publishing programme, according to a Press release issued by Garnet Publishing "is made up of translations of original Arabic works that were produced in the formative centuries of Islam, and is meant to serve the needs of a potentially large readership. Not only the serious scholar, but the educated layman, who has a more than amateurish interest in Islam and the civilisation it built, will be to benefit from the series".

It was stated that in selecting books for the series, the Centre for Research on the Muslim Contribution to Civilisation used one general and two specific criteria. The general criterion was that all major areas of Islamic intellectual pursuit be represented. Thus the series includes works not only on such better-known subjects as law, theology, and politics, but also on such subjects as literature, medicine, and geography. The two specific criteria, used to select individual books, were that the book should give a faithful and comprehensive account of the field it represents; and it should be authoritative. Each book in the series has been translated by a scholar and reviewed by another expert. And the series is presented "in the hope that it will contribute to a greater understanding in the West of the cultural and intellectual heritage of Islam and will therefore provide an important means toward greater understanding of today's world".

The initial list of titles announced for publication included the following:

1. *Suyuti: Al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Qur'an*
Comprehensive Guide to the Sciences of the Qur'an
Translated by Dr Hamid Algar, Professor of Islamic Studies, University of California.
Reviewed by Dr Izzidin Ibrahim, Cultural Advisor to the UAE President

2. *Ibn Kathir: As-Sirah an-Nabawiyya*
Biography of the Prophet
Translated by Dr Trevor LeGassick, Professor of Arabic Literature, University of Michigan
Reviewed by Ahmad Fareed, Dean of Education, Northeastern University

3. *Ibn Rushd: Bidayat al-Mujtahid wa Nihayat al-Muqtasid*
The Distinguished Scholar's Primer and the Intermediate Student's Complete Guide
Translated by Attorney Imran Nyazee PhD Candidate of Islamic Studies, University of Michigan
Reviewed by Professor Mohammad Abdelraouf, Former Rector, International Islamic University, Malaysia

4. *Mawardi: Al-Ahkam as-Sultaniyyah*
Ordinances of Government
Translated by Dr Mustansir Mir, Professor of Islamic Studies, University of Michigan
Reviewed by Dr Wafaa Wahba, Professor of Arabic Studies/ Translation, Al-Azhar University

5. *Ajuwayni: Al-Irshad fi Usul al Itiqad*
Correct Guidance with Respect to the Principles of Creed
Translated by Dr Mary Ann Danner, Adjunct Professor of Islamic History, Indiana University
Reviewed by Dr Salih al-Toma, Professor of Arabic Literature, Indiana University

6. *Al-Maqaddisi: Ahsan at-Taqasim fi Ma'rifat al-Aqalim*
The Best Divisions for Understanding the Regions
Translated by Dr Basil Collins, Professor of Middle East Geography, University of Toledo
Reviewed by Dr Mohammad al-Ta'ai Professor of Geography, University of Baghdad

7. *Al-Jahiz: Al-Bukhala*
Misers
Translated by Professor R B Serjeant (retired), University of London
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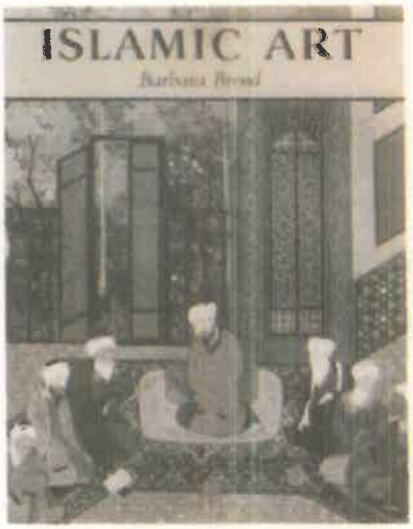
8. *Ibn-Sallam: Al-Amwal*
Revenue
Translated by Attorney Imran A Nyazee PhD, Candidate of Islamic Studies, University of Michigan
Reviewed by Dr Ibrahim M Oweiss, Professor of International Economics, Georgetown University

9. *Ibn Zuhr: Kitab al-Taysir fi al-Mudawa wa al-Tadbir*
Guide to Medical Care and Treatment
Translated by Dr Sami K Hamarneh (retired) Professor of History of Medical Sciences, University of Jordan
Reviewed by Dr Mustansir Mir, Professor of Islamic Studies, University of Michigan

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A Survey of Islamic Art



This is an important book because it is precisely that condensed, scholarly survey of Islamic art that has been lacking for students who need to gain some idea of art forms which are deceptively unlike those of Western arts. It will, therefore, be equally valuable to the general reader. The differences are deceptive because both Islamic and Western art have so many roots in common, including Greek philosophy and mathematics, Roman and Byzantine concepts of pattern and, indeed, Chinese influences on pottery above all. It is another virtue of this work that the geographical, and therefore cultural, roots of the varying styles are respected.

Such a survey will be no less a godsend as a work of reference for students of a particular area of Islamic civilization when they need information about areas of creativity other than their own. Any work which contributes to the liberation of the specialist is gold. This is particularly true of Islamic art studies, where one may be stuck in one's own lush meadow and never climb the stiles into other cultural fields, although their seeds have always been carried here and there to fertilize each other.

However, it is not the purpose of Barbara Brend's book to explore the inter-relationship of Islamic creativity with that of the West, above all the common dialects of the Mediterranean Sea. It is short and concentrates only on the many languages of Islam. Nor does it explore Islam in South-East Asia.

The book opens with a concise historical survey, where the point is well made that Islamic art means different things to different people, especially among non-Muslims. The western critic and traveller of the nineteenth century, for example, was blinded by the purely romantic aspects of the world that he encountered. Thus, Jones recorded the voluptuous qualities of the Alhambra, which, little understood in Europe, spawned many curious caricatures there, although the real tradition of Islamic architecture was one of calm, if not austerity. It created masterpieces utterly opposed to the luxury of the Nasrids, such as the structure of the desert palaces or the incomparable mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo.

Dr. Brend gives thought to the lawfulness of representing living or even symbolic beings and the significant fact that the miniatures which impressed the western critic with their delicacy of form and the strength of their pure colours were confined to the libraries of the ruling class. It is a complex subject which is of fundamental interest. Here it has had to be condensed and encapsulated, whereas its complexity, a key to one's comprehension of Islamic aesthetics, requires a book and a thousand notes. The human presence or absence, either in the flesh or as dynamic symbolism, cannot be avoided, if only because it is difficult to conceive of a civilization from which the human form is excluded. It is significant that although miniatures,along with caviar, were not for the public consumption, the populace (not least in Islam) had its own art, however humble the materials. The place of man and woman in Islamic art is germane to any study of painting but not exclusively so. Architecture may seem to be another matter, but it is not. The dimensions of historic Islamic building were based on measurements inherited from Greek science and mathematics which were indebted to human proportions. Accepting that it is not the task of a necessarily conservative survey to pursue radical ideas, it is to be hoped that Barbara Brend will apply her gift of clarity to this subject in another book, not neglecting the influence on architecture of past civilizations nor, indeed, of ideas on all creative thinking. Her present work breaks Islamic culture into areas and periods with a balance which recalls the Judgement of Solomon. No major contribution to painting, pottery or architecture is neglected. Nor is the kernel of ideas or skills that inspire now, perhaps, even more than when they were created. Each chapter guides one over one frontier after another of the world of Islamic art. Such an approach can hope to dwell only on the heights of man's achievements giving very little space to the windless valleys which are frequented by ordinary mortals. There is reference, perhaps with a smothered note of scorn, to the art of the 19th century, which is largely represented by the curious Qajar period. Yet photography in Iran was one of the more important Westernizing influences because it was concerned with the interpretation of visual reality or its semblance.

I would suggest that the 19th century was as important a period as any other in Islamic art, for it was one of assimilation, of building citadels against alien influences; against, above all, the challenge to the concept of a universal, immaculate religion from which Islamic culture grew. It was also a period when popular art, with its roots in a past before the great religions were founded, broke all the rules. This deserves mention as do indeed the pictorial calligraphic movements of our own time. Again, one must hope that the author, who has the wisdom lacking in some of the partisans of living and lately living Islamic art, will consider writing on a period crying out for attention, if only because more Islamic art, if not architecture, must have been produced in this last 100 years than in all the other centuries put together—at least in terms of surviving examples.

The book is creditably produced and the copious illustrations judiciously selected. The author is well-known as a guide to visitors to the British Museum. Now we, too, can share in their good fortune.

Godfrey Goodwin

Barabara Brend
Islamic Art
British Museum Press, London
105 colour and 60 black & white illustrations
pp.240 Pbk. £14.95
ISBN 0 7141 1443 X

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Cover: **Timur and his Descendants.** Attributed to Bhawani Das. Mughal India, ca. 1707-12.
Painting in gouache and gold mounted as an album leaf. Verso with a panel of *nastaliq* calligraphy signed by Kashmiri al-Katib and gold illuminated borders with camels and birds in foliage.
Page size: 25.6 x 42 cm;
miniature: 20.8 x 31.5 cm
Accession number: MSS 874

The Mughal dynasty of India were descended from the Central Asian conqueror Timur, who occupies the place of honour in this painting. Timur is surrounded by a number of his descendents down to Aurangzeb. From left to right, they are Shah Jahan, Akbar, Babur, Abu Said, Miranshah, Sultan Muhammad, Umar Shaykh, Humayun, Jahangir and Aurangzeb. Each is identified by a caption giving his name. Timur is represented with a flamed halo around his head. The legend *sahibqiran* is inscribed near him.

Although Timur figured significantly in earlier Mughal painting, it is not until the reign of Shah Jahan that dynastic representations – showing Timur as the head of the line of Mughal sovereigns – appear to become a required feature of kingship and are frequently used.

As Aurangzeb is the last of the emperors depicted here, and since he is represented as a young man, it may be reasonable to assume that this painting was done soon after he ascended to the throne in 1658. However, by its style, the painting is more likely to be an early 18th century work based on a mid-17th century example.

The painting is not signed, but it may be attributed to Bhawani Das on stylistic grounds. Bhawani Das's signature appears in a painting from the former Binney Collection of two flower vases resting on a low table which is virtually identical to the one seen here.

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Editorial

This Special Issue of *Arts & The Islamic World* is devoted exclusively to what is undoubtedly one of the largest and most valuable collections of Islamic art this century. With more than 20,000 objects from almost every era of Islamic history and civilization, meticulously researched and catalogued by some of the best known scholars of Islamic art worldwide, the Nasser D Khalili Collection of Islamic Art is a tribute to the dedication, commitment and vision of the young but avid collector and connoisseur whose name it bears.

As a scion and inheritor of family tradition in art dealing and entrepreneurship over several generations, Dr Khalili would seem to have the inspiration as well as the role almost cut out for him. But it must be said to his immense credit that he learnt very early how to pick the extraordinary from the masses of the ordinary; and to realise that love and admiration for a work of art is best nourished and sustained by knowledge and scholarship.

How fervently he believed in this was underscored in an article on art collection he wrote for this magazine several years ago, emphasizing that "Behind every successful collector is a conscientious and knowledgeable dealer"; and that "A collector must have love and respect for the objects he is collecting and the culture that produced them." Indeed it was in this context, and within his long-term aim to stimulate a wider understanding of the material culture of the Islamic world, that in 1989 he endowed the permanent Nasser D Khalili Chair of Islamic Art and Archaeology at the University of London – the first to be devoted to the Islamic Decorative Arts in any Western University, and a Research Fellowship in Islamic Art at the University of Oxford.

And then last Autumn, to the astonishment and delight of a large and distinguished assembly of international art scholars, eminent statesmen and diplomats at a reception in the British Foreign Office's superbly restored Locarno Suite in London, he introduced four of the sumptuous Catalogue volumes – out of 26 planned for publication over the coming years – identifying, evaluating and cataloguing the enormous number of objects in this magnificent collection. As the Honorary Curator, Prof Michael Rogers, and the General Editor, Dr Julian Raby wrote in the introductory brochure, "Although some people have been aware of his collecting activities, few can have guessed at the extent and quality of his acquisitions, as he has deliberately refrained from making any public statement. Only the handful of scholars taken into his confidence have been aware that, in the range and quality, his collection now ranks among the best in the world."

As Dr Khalili himself put it, "I had a vision, and with God's help it has been realized." His main concerns continue to be in the domain of art education and research: he envisages the 26-volume publication as a survey of the arts of the Islamic lands: "essentially the work of a team of scholars from all over the world", as he emphasized, hoping it will find proper recognition in the world of Islamic scholarship. He also felt strongly that "Another means is needed to bring the wealth of the Islamic culture that my Collection encapsulates to a wider public. And that means is the establishment of a museum to house the Collection." London, already rich in Islamic art, will certainly be enhanced immeasurably as a world centre of Islamic studies if this unique Collection finds a home here.

Indeed, there is the vision that has inspired him all along, which unmistakably struck a responsive chord as he shared it with his audience: "Art is the universal language that can unite the hearts of mankind, crossing all frontiers, penetrating everywhere" , he said, beckoning us all that "The moment has come for the 'people of the book' – Jews, Christians and Muslims – to speak openly to one another and to see clearly the close cultural, social, spiritual and intellectual ties that have existed between them for centuries. In fact Jews and Muslims are cousins, and I believe it is far better for us to live together in peace and harmony, rather than to die together in disgrace."

We are happy to introduce some of the prime objects from this unique collection specially photographed by Mr Christopher Phillips.The relevant notes and comments are from some of the scholars and specialists engaged in preparing the definitive catalogue volumes. We owe a special debt of gratitude to the Collection's Deputy Curator, Nahla Nassar, whose inimitable skills of precision and communication made our own editorial work so much easier and pleasurable; she has been an ideal Guest Editor. Above all, of course, we must thank Dr Nasser David Khalili himself for the privilege extended to us to share with our readers these truly exquisite works from one of the greatest art collections of our time.



Treasures of Islamic Art

from THE NASSER D KHALILI COLLECTION

GUEST EDITOR Nahla Nassar
COORDINATING EDITOR Azra J Ahmed

Patience in discovery has not been Dr. Khalili's only virtue. Noteworthy is his appreciation of the curious and the rare, where even utilitarian objects like spoons, padlocks and children's toys may be of intrinsic beauty, and his fine judgement of similarities of form and decoration between objects in very different materials which show a unity of craftsmanship difficult to parallel in any other medieval society.

The individual delights of the Khalili collection are numberless ... chronicling the development and vicissitudes of Islamic art from the first centuries of Islam right up to the Qajar period. Dr Khalili's signal merit is to put together so much that at last we can view ... (this art) as one consistent and glorious whole.

J M Rogers

Presentation Ceremony at the Locarno Suite

It has taken Dr Khalili more than twenty years of dedicated and selective collecting to build the Nasser D Khalili Collection of Islamic Art as it stands today. The collection is currently being published in a series of 26 catalogues which will constitute the most significant survey of the arts of Islamic lands ever undertaken.

The first four volumes of the catalogues were launched at a reception held in the splendid surroundings of the newly restored Locarno Suite at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office – the first reception to be held there for over forty years. The reception also marked the publication of *Arabic Papyri*, the first in an accompanying series of academic monographs known as *Studies in the Khalili Collection*, as well as a facsimile of *The Khalili Portolan Atlas*, a 17th-century copy of Piri Reis's Atlas accompanied by a detailed study of his work entitled *Piri Reis and Turkish Mapmaking after Columbus*.

The special qualities of the Collection, its scope and the quality of its holdings were described in a speech by the Collection's Honorary Curator, Professor J M Rogers. Dr Julian Raby, the General Editor of the publications, talked about the catalogues and the publication programme. Dr Khalili spoke of his aspiration to assemble as comprehensive a collection of Islamic art as possible and his ultimate aim that the Collection be displayed in its own museum.

Apart from the small exhibition that accompanied the reception, the Collection has never been displayed. In fact, most of its treasures are unknown to any except the circle of scholars working on the catalogues. Many of the objects reproduced in this special issue of *Arts & The Islamic World* have never been published before. These objects represent a very small cross section of a unique Collection which is arguably one of the largest and most comprehensive private collections of Islamic art.

Nahla Nassar
Guest Editor







Top, *from left to right:* The Rt Hon Alastair Goodlad, MP, Minister of State, Foreign & Commonwealth Office; The Rt Hon Lord Young of Graffham, Chairman, Nour Foundation (UK) Limited; Dr Nasser D Khalili. **Middle,** *left to right:* Miss Judith Young; The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP, Home Secretary; The Rt Hon Lord Young of Graffham; Dr Nasser D Khalili. **Above,** *left to right:* The Rt Hon The Lord Archer of Western Super Mare; The Rt Hon Lord Young of Graffham; Dr Nasser D Khalili.







Above top: The Locarno Room, The Larger Conference Room of the Foreign Office, designed by George Gilbert Scott, one of the three rooms renamed the Locarno Suite in 1925, has now been stripped of its postwar plasterboard to reveal a coffered ceiling and pilasters crowned with Corinthian capitals, from which quadrants support iron beams now resplendent with gilding. (Reproduced by kind permission of Cecil, Denny, Highton Architects).

Above left, *from left to right:* Sir David Gillmore KCMG, Permanent Under Secretary of State and Head of Diplomatic Service; The Rt Hon Lord Young of Graffham; Dr Nasser D Khalili; Professor J M Rogers, Nasser David Khalili Professor of Islamic Art and Archaeology in the University of London, Honorary Curator of the Nasser D Khalili Collection of Islamic Art. **Above right:** Dr Julian Raby, Lecturer in Islamic Art and Architecture at the Oriental Institute, Oxford and Fellow of St Hugh's College, General Editor of the Catalogue of the Nasser D Khalili Collection of Islamic Art.

Text of the Addresses at the Presentation Ceremony are reproduced on pages 8-10.

J M Rogers

My relationship with Dr Khalili goes back to the early seventies, when he was in London in search of objects for his collection; at that time his home was in New York. Despite this long-standing acquaintance, when I was invited to take part in the project, I was not aware of the scope of the material he had assembled. It can be said without embarrassment that the Khalili Collection of Islamic Art ranks among the best in the world.

London is already a major world centre in terms of the holdings of Islamic art that its museums, libraries and other institutions contain. As a result, it is unusual for a major exhibition of Islamic art to be held anywhere in the world without the assistance of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Library.

But it has to be recognised that these collections have their limits. Most of them have been based on what is already known. The Khalili Collection is unique in broadening considerably our knowledge of Islamic cultures which have only recently come to be investigated by historians and archaeologists. The classical collections, moreover, were mostly formed in the period before the First World War, when collectors were relatively uninformed about the context from which the objects came, and concentrated on their decorative qualities. Their interest was both aesthetic and practical. They were taken with the richness of Islamic ornament, and they saw it as a mine for the design motifs of manufactured goods.

The Khalili collection has been formed with a far more systematic and historical approach and with far less ethnocentric view. As a result, the Collection has an important contribution to make to the range and quality of Islamic art available in this country.

To take a few examples. Until Dr Khalili started to do so, no one had collected the ceramics of the Timurid period on a systematic basis. This pottery was produced in Iran and Central Asia in the 15th century, a period when diplomatic and commercial contacts with Ming China were intensive. The Collection now has over 60 pieces which fall into this category, and these provide a much needed overview of the subject. It is to be hoped that at some point they can be displayed alongside contemporary Chinese blue-and-white wares, so as to bring out in full the links between them.

Another area where no museum in the non-Islamic world has substantial holdings is Ottoman calligraphy. The Khalili Collection includes the largest group of Ottoman fermans outside Turkey, many examples of the work of the most eminent scribes of the period, and a superb range of Ottoman calligrapher's tools. The Collection also contains close to a hundred Ottoman Qur'ans, and the Qur'an section as a whole is by far the largest collection in a non-Muslim country – there are 60 Qur'an manuscripts in the British Library, for example, but there are over 500 in the Khalili Collection. These are all of at least comparable quality with those in the national collections, and they include such peerless jewels as the only Qur'anic manuscript copied by the 13th-century Baghdad master Yaqut al-Mustasimi to retain its original illumination. The lack of a good range of calligraphic material in the national collections exemplifies the difference of approach between collectors of the past and Dr Khalili. Writing is a paramount art in Islamic culture, but when people brought up in the Western tradition have come to collect the Islamic arts of the book they have taken miniature painting as their primary theme, attracted by its aesthetic appeal and relatively accessible subject-matter. This has often led some of them to assemble totally unrepresentative samples of this art form.

Dr Khalili has applied the same systematic approach to every area of Islamic art: glass, arms and armour, scientific instruments, jewellery, inscribed seals. The famous collection of seals in the Hermitage in St Petersburg, for example, has over 600 examples, but the Khalili Collection has over 2800, and the coverage of the Collection is all the more thorough because of its greater size.

In practical terms, the breadth of the Collection's range means that it will provide an excellent basis for the study of many aspects of Islamic art. It also contains enough material for the mounting of exhibitions on historical, as well as on media-based, themes. But an even more basic aspect of the museum's work will be the conservation of the objects in it. This has already led to a number of important discoveries. For example, one Qur'anic manuscript on display this evening entered the Collection as a 13th-century piece from Saljuq Iran or Mamluk Egypt or Syria. But the careful conservation of the manuscript has revealed its true provenance and has shown something of its subsequent history. The removal of an extraneous piece of paper that had been stuck down over the front page and of a layer of red paint beneath it has uncovered the original dedication of the book. It was copied in the two decades after AD 1198 for the Qutb al-Din Muhammad, a member of the Zinged dynasty and the ruler of the towns of Sinjar and Nisibin in the Jazirah. It is the only Qur'an known to have been made for a Zinged prince in the Jazirah.

The breadth and quality of the Khalili Collection can be judged from the catalogues published today, and I look forward to seeing the conclusion of the work of conservation and display with the opening of a museum devoted to it.

Professor J M Rogers is Nasser David Khalili Professor of Islamic Art and Archaeology in the University of London and Honorary Curator of The Nasser D Khalili Collection of Islamic Art.

Julian Raby

Two traditions determine the make-up of most private collections today. One is that of the connoisseur, with a few select items chosen for their aesthetic merit. The other is the philatelic approach, where the emphasis of the collector is on assembling complete series of objects. The Khalili Collection is remarkable in that it belongs, as it were, to the heroic age of collecting, for it combines both of these traditions within an overall scheme of providing a synoptic vision of the arts of the entire Islamic world.

This means that the Collection can address both layman and specialist. The merits of this for the planned museum have already been mentioned by Michael Rogers. But the twin constituencies of layman and specialist have also been in our mind when designing the publications.

The core of the publications is the catalogues. In these volumes each object has been reproduced in colour and in an uncrowded manner. Each object has been given the space in which to find its voice so that it can speak even to those who have no knowledge of Islamic art.

Generous display has not, though, meant the sacrifice of the scholarly aspects of the catalogues. This has been presented in two ways. First, the individual items have been catalogued in detail; for example, documentation such as the colophons in manuscripts or the inscriptions on objects have been reproduced in the original language with a full translation.

The catalogues are intended to be more than a dry itemization of objects with generalized historical synopses. Instead the cataloguing is accompanied by a series of detailed essays that will contribute to our knowledge of the subject. Let me give you a single example.

As part of the cataloguing of the Qur'ans of the collection we had a paper expert analyze all the items. One of his discoveries concerned the most famous Qur'an of the 15th-century. This is a monumental copy over 6 ft. high, which was thought to have been written by one of the grandsons of Timur/ Tamerlane. We found that the two complete pages in the Khalili Collection are written on 19th-century paper, while other fragments in the Collection are on paper of 15th-century date. Using this information, the author of this volume has written an essay unravelling the later history of the Qur'an; and he has also clarified its early history. This Qur'an was not written by a prince of the House of Timur, but for Timur himself. A calligrapher known as 'Umar Aqta' tried to astonish Timur by writing a Qur'an so small that it could fit under a signet ring, but when the Lord of Time was unmoved, Umar went away and wrote a Qur'an so large that it had to be brought to Timur on a cart. This time the conqueror was impressed by the calligrapher's efforts and rewarded him on an appropriate scale. Umar's achievement was all the more notable in that he had only one hand, his left.

This is an example of how the catalogues are not the work of authors abandoned to work in isolation; but how each author receives back-up from technical experts. The team includes conservators and specialists to analyse, for example, metals, pigments and gemstones. One of the scientific globes has just been sent for an endoscopy, as we want to know what is written on a tiny scrap of paper interred inside the globe.

In all, the enterprise draws on the expertise of just over 40 people, including 30 authors, an in-house photographer, draughtswoman, curatorial staff and the design, editorial and production team at Azimuth Editions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all.

Discoveries make our task exciting – but some are so wide-ranging that they require separate treatment in a different format. This is why we have established a second series: Studies in the Khalili Collection. The first of these is also published today. It is a painstaking decipherment and analysis of just 96 of the early Arabic papyri in the Collection, and should be a major contribution to papryological studies.

Some of the manuscripts in the collection are of such intrinsic interest that they have inspired us to undertake a series of facsimile reproductions, the first of which is also published today. This is a facsimile of a charming 17th-century copy of the Atlas by the 16th-century Ottoman cartographer Piri Reis. His life and works have been discussed in detail in an accompanying volume. As Piri Reis' World Map of 1513 derived information from a lost world map by Christopher Columbus, the volume is entitled Piri Reis and Turkish Mapmaking after Columbus; it is our – small – contribution to the 500-year anniversary of that annus mirabilis, 1492.

I would like now to return to the main catalogues. Most are arranged, for ease of reference, by media. A few are thematic in concept. Volume XXIII, for example, is dedicated to Islamic art in the 19th century; to traditional crafts, to revivalism, to objects produced in the Islamic world in a European style, and to objects produced in Europe in Islamic style. This will be the first book devoted to what has been a woefully neglected aspect of Islamic art.

When the project is complete the catalogues will run to 30 books, that is, 26 volumes, several of which will be in parts. Together they will form a major survey. The entire enterprise, including the publications, is being funded by the Nour Foundation.

The books are being published by the Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, which is distributing the catalogues. The Delegates to Oxford University Press have asked me to say on their behalf that they feel that:

> In its breadth and vision Dr Khalili's magnificent survey of the arts of the Islamic lands must be regarded as one of the outstanding publishing achievements of the century.

Only time will tell whether it does live up to those heady expectations. At the very least we hope that the books will give great pleasure, and you are invited to go next door to form a judgement for yourselves.

Dr Julian Raby is Lecturer in Islamic Art and Architecture at the Oriental Institute, Oxford, Fellow of St Hugh's College, and General Editor of the Catalogue of The Nasser D Khalili Collection of Islamic Art.

Nasser D Khalili

For me this evening is a very special occasion. I am grateful to the previous speakers, to Lord Young, the Chairman of Nour Foundation, to my friends and colleagues, Michael Rogers and Julian Raby, and especially to the Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir David Gillmore, who by addressing this gathering has given a welcome measure of support to a project in which I have been involved for more than 20 years. By being present here tonight you have done the same. I thank them and I thank you all.

The project which I initiated all those years ago will be accomplished in three stages. The first was the process of assembling the Collection. The second stage, the one which we are celebrating here this evening, involves the publication of the Collection. And the third will be marked by the opening of a museum where the Collection will be on public display.

It has been my aspiration to assemble as comprehensive a collection of Islamic art as possible. And my reward for more than two decades of hard work is a collection that illustrates the whole material culture of the Islamic lands. Many of these items are of the highest artistic quality; they give me great pleasure, and I hope and trust that others will enjoy them, too. But I have not been mesmerised by objects made for kings and queens. I have also tried to collect the products of craftsmen made for use in everyday life. And it is for this reason that the catalogue of the Collection will be a genuine survey of the arts of the Islamic world.

Collecting is of its nature a fairly private activity. And it is my belief that, even if someone owns the greatest collection of art in the world, that collection is of no consequence so long as it is hidden from public view. With this in mind I have sought ways of making this Collection accessible to as wide a public as possible. And this evening's launch is one part of that process.

I am sure that anyone who sees these books will appreciate the dedication and hard work of the curators, designers, photographers and printers who have participated in their production. But the books are essentially the work of a team of scholars from all over the world, and their achievement will find proper recognition in the world of Islamic scholarship. Another means is needed to bring the wealth of Islamic culture that my Collection encapsulates to a wider public. And that means is the establishment of a museum to house the Collection.

There is a Persian proverb that is often used to decorate works of art: "Ultimately, all possessions are God's alone; we are but custodians". What more telling moral could be found to justify the establishment of a public museum of art?

Art is the universal language that can unite the hearts of mankind, crossing all frontiers, penetrating everywhere. The moment has come for the "people of the book" – Jews, Christians and Muslims – to speak openly to one another and to see clearly the close cultural, social, spiritual and intellectual ties that have existed between them for centuries. In fact, Jews and Muslims are cousins, and I believe it is far better for us to live together in peace and harmony, rather than to die together in disgrace.

My convictions, my aspirations and my achievements can all be attributed to the upbringing I received in the care of my beloved parents, and I cannot leave their contribution unrecorded this evening. I will be indebted forever to my late mother, whose wisdom was, and always will be, a source of inspiration. At the same time, the achievement we have gathered to celebrate would not have been accomplished if my father's love of Islamic art had not planted the seed of an idea in my mind. That idea has flourished, with my father's encouragement and that of my dear wife.

Thank you for coming here this evening, and God bless you all.

Dr Nasser D Khalili is Honorary Fellow, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and Member of the Governing Body and Director, Nour Foundation (UK) Limited.

Qur'ans

David James

The collection of Qur'ans contains a large number of manuscripts which are vital for understanding the development of the Islamic book. These manuscripts are not confined to any particular area and period: they come from places as far apart as Spain and northern India.

The full development of Qur'anic scripts prior to 1000 AD is represented in the collection. There are outstanding examples of almost every type and sub-type of Umayyad and Abbasid categories. There are several complete Qur'an sections and even more unusually for this period, a small number of complete copies.

Notable among the Qur'an sections are two quires from one copied in Palermo in AD 982, the only Sicilian Arabic manuscript to have survived, prior to the Norman conquest.

The catalogue of this material, by the leading scholar of the subject Dr Francois Deroche, is the clearest and most authoritative survey to have been produced so far.

There are Qur'ans from the Seljuk, Zengid and Ghurid periods. There is an impressive Mamluk section containing material from the 14th and 15th centuries. The Ottoman, Timurid and Safavid periods are represented by outstanding manuscripts of superb quality. There is a large Qajar section with all the 19th century Persian Qur'an scribes represented.

The collection has a section of the only Zengid Qur'an from the Jazirah area. Although five sections are known, that in the Khalili Collection is the only one that bears the vital information that the Qur'an was made for Qutb al-Din Muhammad ibn Zengi ibn Mawdud, ruler of Sinjar from 1198 until 1219 AD. No other Jaziran manuscript of the 13th century can be dated so precisely and the manuscript is therefore of great importance for understanding the art of the book in that area.

Several Andalusian Qur'ans from Valencia are known, but all are in public collections in the Middle East. The Khalili Valencian Qur'an of AD 1199 is the only manuscript in private hands. Its importance is further increased by the fact that it contains the names of both the



Single volume Qur'an. Shiraz or Qazvin, AH 959/AD 1552. 203 folios, 42.7 x 30 cm. Accession number: QUR 729 Volume III, *After Timur*, no.43. also published: T. Falk, ed., *Treasures of Islam*, catalogue of an exhibition at the Musee d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva, 1985, cat.no.66.

This is certainly one of the most magnificent Qur'ans produced in Safavid Iran, and it seems very likely that it was made for Shah Tahmasp (reg. 1524-76). It belonged at one time to the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (1628-57), who may have received it as a gift from a contemporary Safavid shah. The first folio bears an inscription in what appears to be the Emperor's own hand. Seals and other inscriptions from the period of Shah Jahan and his two immediate successors (folio 203v) record various inspections of the manuscript and changes of librarian. Some of these inscriptions suggest that the Qur'an was kept in the women's quarters of the Mughal imperial residence.

It has been suggested that everything about this manuscript – "its lavish illuminations, its gold script, its consummate mastery on every level" – indicates that this Qur'an must have been commissioned by the great shah "as an act of piety". (Anthony Welch in T. Falk, ed., *Treasures of Islam*, catalogue of an exhibition at the Musee d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva, 1985, pp.100-101).

illustrated:folios 2v-3r; the superb filigree work decorating the dabblers can be seen on the flap.

scribe and the patron. From the opposite end of the Islamic world is a Qur'an dated AD 1269. There are reasons to believe that this manuscript came from the Ghurid domains in northern India. If so, it is the earliest known Qur'an. The collection also includes what is probably the earliest dated Qur'an from Zanzibar.

There are numerous Qur'ans in museums and libraries bearing the name of Yaqut al-Musta'simi, but few can be proved to be genuine. A Qur'an section in the Khalili Collection bearing Yaqut's signature comes from a Qur'an dated Baghdad, 1282. Four sections are known, but the Khalili portion alone contains the original 13th century illumination - the other portions were repainted in the 16th century. The illumination is precisely in the style of a well known Baghdadi illuminator, Muhammad ibn Aybak, who worked on a famous Qur'an copied by one of Yaqut's pupils in 1302. The Qur'an to which the Khalili section belongs is thus the only Yaqut Qur'an which can be exactly linked to contemporary manuscripts from Baghdad. Few others, if any, have so good pedigree.

The collection has one of the finest 15th century Ottoman Qur'ans. Another Qur'an is a rare example of the work of a scribe who is actually mentioned in the earliest Topkapi Palace records. There are also a number of 15th century Timurid and Turkoman copies, including an outstanding example from Turkoman Shiraz or Tabriz. Sixteenth century Iran is particularly



Above: **Single-volume "miniature" Qur'an** copied on parchment. Second half of the 10th century AD.
166 folios, 7.3 x 6 cm.
Accession number: QUR 430
Volume I, *The Abbasid Tradition*, no.82.
Acquired: Christie's, London, 11 April 1989, lot no.52

Although there are considerable differences in the format, physical construction and illumination between this Qur'an and the Palermo quires, the two are closely related in terms of their script. The Qur'an is copied in a miniature version of NS (or "New Style") script.

Folios 1v–2r contain the number of surahs, verses, words etc., written in gold within a strapwork frame. The illumination on the second spread (folios 2v-3r) follows a model used in vertical-format Qur'ans from the 10th-12th centuries AD.

The title and verse count of surahs are written in gold outlined with black. Vignette extend from the titles into the margins; most are based on floral forms, but some incorporate short inscriptions. Trimming of the margins, however, has rendered most of the latter illegible.

illustrated: folios 154v–155r.

Right: **Part 28 of a 30-part Qur'an**, copied for Qutb al-Din Muhammad ibn Zangi ibn Mawdud. Sinjar or Nisibin, 1198–1219 AD.
50 folios, 22 x 15.6 cm
Accession number: QUR 497
Volume II, *The Master Scribes*, no.7.
Acquired: Sotheby's, 10th April 1989, lot no.184

This *juz* comes from a 30-part Qur'an of which four other sections survive in Bursa, Kuwait, Dublin and Paris, but none contain any indication of where or when the Qur'an was copied. Fortunately, restoration work carried out on this *juz* since it entered the Khalili Collection has revealed the original certificate of commissioning on folio 1r, so that we now know it was made for Qutb al-Din Muhammad, the Zinged ruler of Sinjar and Nisibin in the Jazirah from 1198 to 1219 AD. It is the only Qur'an known to have been produced for the Jazirah branch of this dynasty.

The text of the Qur'an is copied in a black-outlined gold *thuluth* script, with surah headings in gold *kufic*, accompanied by gold and blue palmettes in the margins. The lavish use of gold is also seen in the finely illuminated double frontispiece of this *juz*.

illustrated: double frontispiece, folios 1v–2r.



well represented by Qur'ans written and illuminated by several of the leading masters. There are two by Ruzbihan Muhammad-i Shirazi and one by Husayn-i Fakhkhar which, unlike many Shirazi Qur'ans, gives the name of the scribe, the date and place of completion. Finest of all is a Qur'an which was probably written for Shah Tahmasp.

These manuscripts, apart from being magnificent examples of the Holy scripture of Islam, often contain vital documentary evidence – a lot of which can only be revealed by extremely careful restoration work and research. Conservation and restoration work undertaken on several manuscripts in the collection has resulted in some extremely important discoveries. The first is the original certificate of commissioning on the Zengid section mentioned above (which was painted over in red and hidden under a piece of paper). Similar work on the frontispiece of a 14th century Qur'an revealed an inscription stating that the manuscript was commissioned by the daughter of the founder of the Inju'id dynasty of Shiraz.

Dr David James was formerly Islamic Curator, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.



Above: **Single-volume Qur'an** written on parchment. Valencia, AH 596/AD 1199-1200.
Copied by Yusuf ibn Abdallah ibn Abd al-Wahid ibn Yusuf ibn Khaldun, for Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Biyatush al-Makhzumi.
122 folios, 17 x 16 cm.
Accession number: QUR 318
Volume II, The Master Scribe, no.20.

This manuscript is one of a small group of Qur'ans known to have been produced in Muslim Spain, and one of four known to have been copied in Valencia. The manuscript retains the left hand page from its frontispiece as well as an elaborate colophon which extends over two pages. The Qur'an commences – in the usual Andalusian manner – with the whole of the first surah and the opening verses of the second arranged one above the other on the same page.

The text of the Qur'an is copied in a fine Andalusi hand. Surah headings are written in gold in a decorative variety of Western kufic, and are decorated with elaborate marginal palmettes and arabesques. The colophon pages are written in gold naskh.

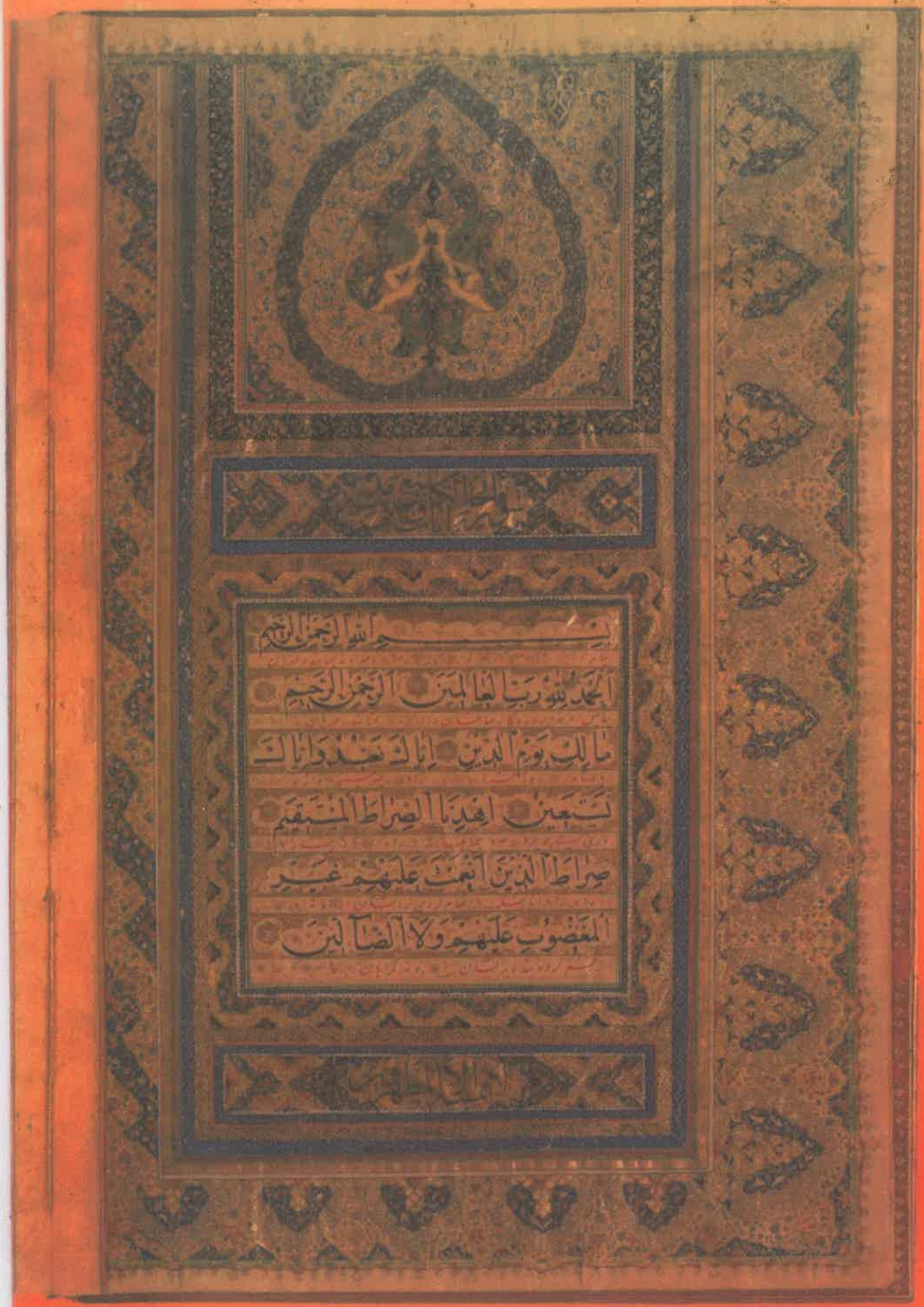
illustrated: folios 114v-115r.

Right: **Single-volume Qur'an.**
Iran, 19th century.
Persian marginal commentaries signed by Mohammed bin Vital and dated 25th Shaban 1272/ 1st May 1856.
Lacquer binding signed by Lutf Ali and dated AH 1269/ AD1852-3.
289 folios, 35 x 23 cm.
Accession number: QUR 914

Although the fine *naskh*, *thuluth* and *nasta'liq* hands in which this Qur'an is written are obviously the work of an accomplished calligrapher, it is the illumination which catches our attention. This is a perfect example of Qajar Qur'an decoration; in this style traditional motifs predominate, but they have been miniaturized and condensed, creating an effect reminiscent of carpet design.

The first three spreads are fully illuminated. They enclose an index of surah headings incorporated within a lattice design, prayer cartouches on scroll ground framed by a scrollwork border, and the verses of *surat al-Fatihah* and the opening verses of *surat al-Baqarah*. The text is copied in black *naskh* with incidentals in *thuluth*, and Persian interlinear translations and commentaries in *nasta'liq*. Quranic divisions are marked in the margins with superbly illuminated devices; marginal commentaries are also illuminated.

The outer bindings are decorated with birds perched on flowering branches. The dabblers carry sprays of iris and other flowers on a remarkable "tortoiseshell" background framed by a band of Quranic verses.
illustrated: folios 4v–5r.



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم

مالك يوم الدين إياك نعبد وإياك

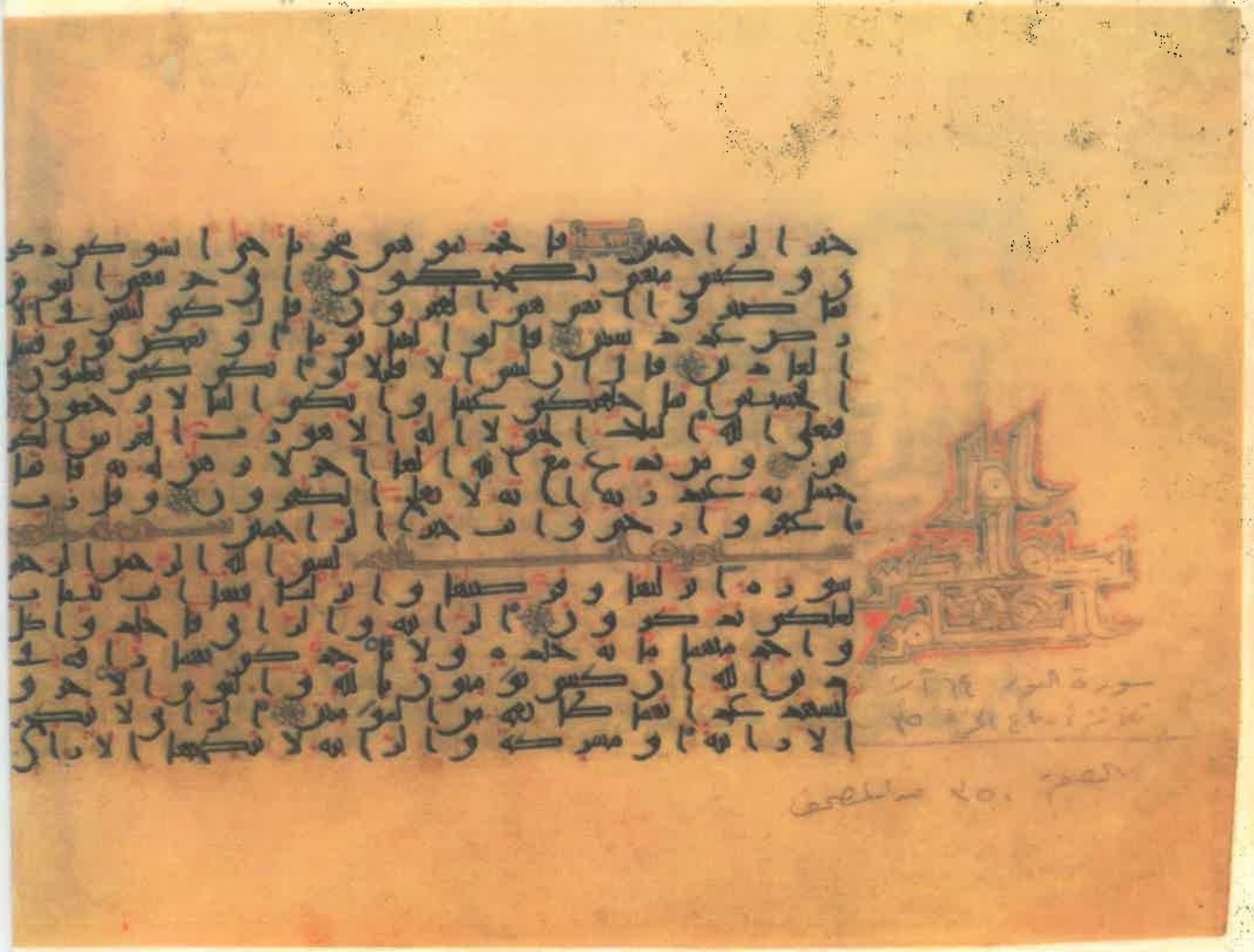
نستعين اهدنا الصراط المستقيم

صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم غير

المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين







Left: **Parts 10 and 14 and Parts 24 and 25 from a Qur'an,** originally commissioned by Fars Malik Khatun, an Injuid Princess. Shiraz, 1336-1375 AD
51 + 54 folios, 42.6 x 31 and 42.9 x 31.2 cm respectively.
Accession numbers: QUR 182 and QUR 181.
Volume II, *The Master Scribes*, nos 29 & 30.

Parts 1, 12, 13 and 30 of the same Qur'an are in the Pars Museum in Shiraz (MS.417).

These four parts come from an important Qur'an with an interesting history. According to an illuminated *waqfiyyah* on the initial pages of some of these sections, (parts 10 and 14) the Qur'an was made *waqf* – and we may presume commissioned – by Fars Malik Khatun, daughter of the Injuid ruler Mahmudshah. The Qur'an was to be kept in her house, and upon her death was to be placed at the head of her tomb. However, Fars Malik Khatun must have died before the illumination and the Persian interlinear translation of the Qur'an were completed. Sometime around the 1370's, the Qur'an became the property of the Muzaffarid vizier Turanshah, who ordered that the illumination be completed so that the Qur'an may be placed in the Jami al-Atiq in Shiraz. The endowment notices of Fars Malik Khatun found in some sections were painted over in gold, and the new *waqfiyyah* of Turan shah was written over this top. In other sections (parts 24 and 25) the new *waqfiyyah*, dated AH 777/AD 1375 was written in black *tawqi* directly on the first blank pages.
illustrated: folios 28v-29r, from the second phase of illumination;
folios 27v–28r from the first phase.

Above: **Two quires from a Qur'an manuscript copied on parchment.** Palermo, AH 372/AD 982-3.
20 folios, 17.6 x 25 cm.
Accession number: QUR 368
Volume I, *The Abbasid Tradition*, no.81.

According to a colophon on a fragment of the same Qur'an in the Nurousmaniye Library in Istanbul (MS.23), the Qur'an to which these two quires originally belonged was finished in "*Madinat Siqilliyah*" (i.e. Palermo) in AH 372 (AD 982-3). The Qur'an is therefore the earliest surviving example from Sicily, which came under Muslim rule in the 9th century AD. It is written in what Francois Deroche has named the 'New Style'. This piece is an excellent example of sub-style iii, and it is remarkable for its horizontal format.
illustrated: folio 10 verso.

Papyri

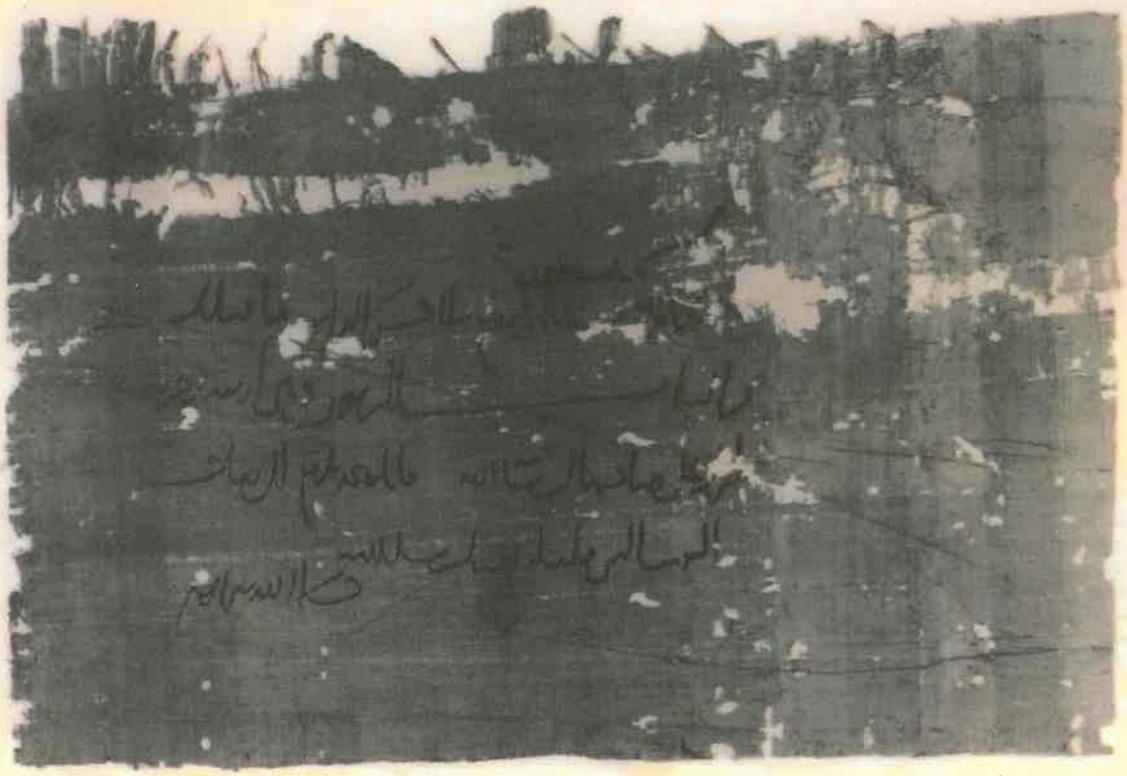
Geoffrey Khan

Most of the Arabic documents that have survived from the first three centuries of the Islamic era were written on papyrus, the most commonly used writing material in the Near East during this period. These documents reflect the details of everyday life and are an important source material for various disciplines, especially socio-economic history, topography and the study of Arabic language and diplomatics.

The Arabic papyri in the Collection include official and legal documents, receipts, accounts and private letters. Most come from al-Fustat, the old capital of Egypt, and many refer to specific areas known to have existed in the city. A few originate from Upper Egypt, but pride of place goes to the only extant Arabic papyrus from northern Mesopotamia. A number of other documents are of particular value for the light they shed on the agrarian administration of Egypt in the early Islamic period. One papyrus, datable to the 8th century AD, is the earliest surviving document relating to the distribution of *zakat* money to the poor.

Letters – covering both business and private family matters – constitute the largest group of documents. This wealth of material in the collection makes it possible to trace clearly the development of Arabic epistolary art during the first three Islamic centuries. One letter is of particular interest in that it includes a discursive autobiography of the amanuensis of a highly placed official working for the Tulunid regime in the 9th–century Egypt.

Dr Geoffrey Khan is Research Associate of the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit, Cambridge.

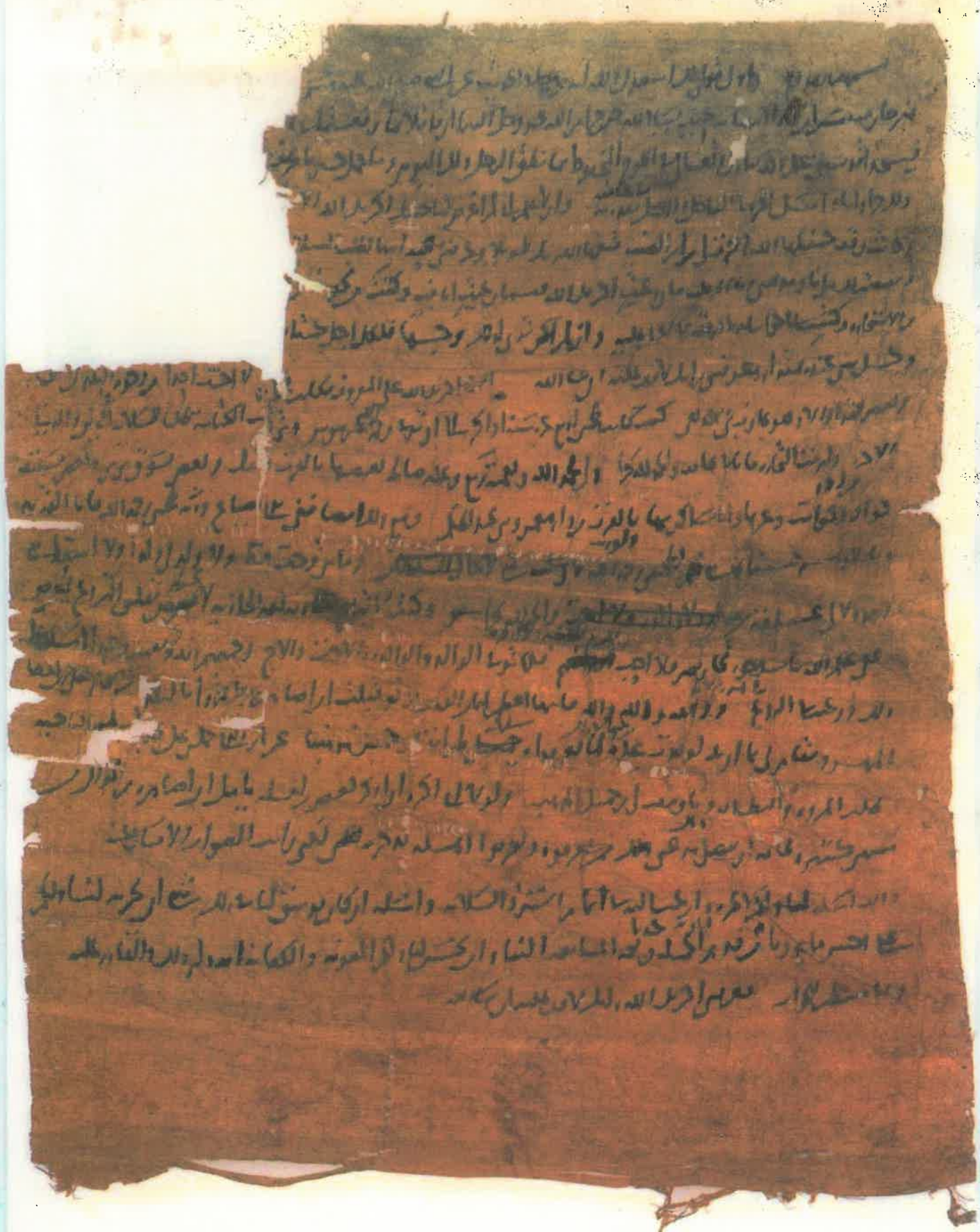


Opposite page: **Letter from the amanuensis of a Tulunid official.** Egypt, 3rd century AH/9th century AD written on brown papyrus; 40 x 32.1 cm. Accession number: PPS 411 *Studies in the Khalili Collection*, Volume I: *Selected Arabic Papyri*, no.18.

This letter is of particular interest in that it includes a discursive autobiography of the amanuensis of a certain Takhshi. This is most probably Takhshi ibn Balbard, an official of Ahmad ibn Tulun, who was appointed governor of Tarsus in AH 264 or 265 (877-8 AD). The letter was written after Takhshi's death – the scribe mentions that one of his duties is looking after the estates of Takhshi's heirs. He also mentions that he visits them – and their children – as a token of his loyalty to his late employer.

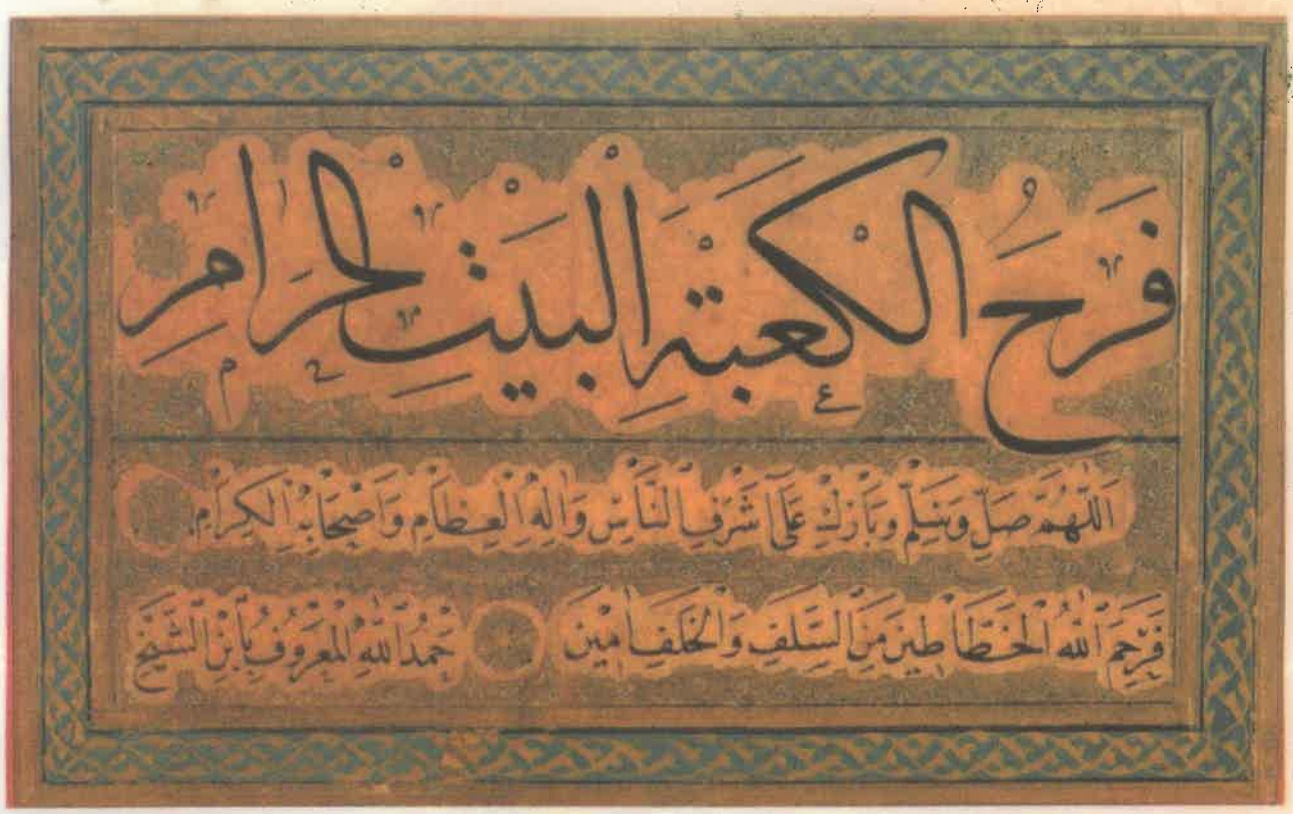
Above: **Letter to a weaver.** Egypt, 3rd century AH/9th century AD written on light brown fine papyrus; 32 x 21.5 cm. PPS 223 *Studies in the Khalili Collection*, Volume I: *Selected Arabic Papyri*, no.22.

This document is addressed to a weaver who had received an order for cloth together with advance payment from a client. Textiles were often purchased by a commercial transaction involving advance payment. The right of the client who had paid for the commodity was also confirmed by a document.



Islamic Calligraphy

Nabil F Safwat



The Islamic Calligraphy in the Khalili collection is a remarkably integral group of masterpieces devoted mainly to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. However, the collection also contains 15th and 16th century calligraphic works, which, when examined with the remarkable Khalili Qur'an and manuscript collections, succeeds in becoming a most comprehensive and unique gathering devoted to the arts of the Islamic book. Equally, the collection of the *Muraqqa'at* represents a very unique and important group of calligraphic works which are indispensable for any serious student of Islamic calligraphy.

The volume will make as clearly as possible the continuity of the art of calligraphy mainly through Iran and Ottoman Turkey which sustained what has been called 'the sacred art of Islam'. Being the medium for the transmission of the word of God, fine examples of devoted master calligraphers inspired by reverence for the written word, will shed light on some neglected aspects in the study and interpretation of Islamic calligraphy.

Outstanding among this calligraphic collection are numerous *Muraqqa'at* texts; several rare and remarkable calligraphic embroideries, Iranian and Ottoman *Ijazas*, an extremely important group of *Hilias*, and some examples of outstanding Ottoman *Fermans*. A typical example from this collection is one by the 17th century calligrapher Muhammad ibn abu al-Baqa, written in *Thuluth*, *Tawqi'* and *Naskh*. This crisp, bright and boldly arranged page is a good example of why calligraphy earned its attribute as the "Islamic Art par excellence". In all there are close to 500 calligraphic works in this collection, which will show the richness of this important artistic tradition.

Dr Nabil F Safwat was formerly Lecturer, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Album of calligraphy,
copied by Shaykh Hamdullah;
Turkey, ca. 1500 AD.
3 folios with 4 calligraphic panels;
folio size: 13.5 x 19 cm;
text area : 6.5 x 11.7 cm (average)
Accession number: MSS 28

Shaykh Hamdullah al-Amasi (died 1520) is considered to be the greatest and most influential calligrapher of the Ottoman period. He taught the art to Sultan Bayazid II. It is reported that the sultan held the shaykh's inkpot as the latter wrote his lines – a reflection of the great respect the sultan must have had for this master calligrapher.

The four calligraphic panels – copied in *naskh* and *thulth* script – were mounted in their present album format in the 19th century, at which time most of the illumination was added, illustrated: folio 3r, showing Shaykh Hamdullah's signature.

Manuscripts and Miniatures

Tim Stanley

The collection of manuscripts and miniatures contains several items of major literary and artistic importance. Pride of place goes to the Universal History of Rashid al-Din, formerly in the possession of the Royal Asiatic Society, which is without doubt one of the greatest illustrated medieval manuscripts of either East or West. A facsimile edition of the manuscript is planned, to be accompanied by a major study of the work by Sheila Blair.

Another manuscript in the collection, a mid-17th century copy of Piri Reis's Atlas containing more than 100 maps has been produced in facsimile.

Among the unillustrated manuscripts, perhaps the most important is a volume of poetry by the great mystic Ibn al 'Arabi, who was born in Spain and died in Damascus. This volume is in Ibn al 'Arabi's own hand; it also bears a note stating that it was read to him by a student at his house in Damascus just a few years before his death in AD 1240. Another work of historical interest is a Mamluk copy of the Poem of the Mantle by al-Busiri, made in Cairo in about AD 1363 for the exiled Marinid sultan of Morocco.

The catalogue will also include illustrated manuscripts and detached paintings that range in date from the 14th to the 19th centuries AD. One of the finest of these is a long-lost 15th-century painting which depicts the Prophet and His companions together with with Moses and the Virgin and Child.

Tim Stanley is Editor of the Catalogue of The Nasser D Khalili Collection of Islamic Art.









Above: **Ottoman leather binding**. Turkey, ca. 1540–60 AD.
31.5 x 65.5 (including flap).
Accession number: MSS 576

The leather binding is an extremely fine example of book bindings from the period of Suleyman the Magnificent. The outer covers and flap are decorated with stamped medallions, corner cartouches enclosing beautifully articulated "cloud scrolls", lotus flowers and other chinoiserie-style motifs. The brown dabblers are similarly decorated, though the cloud scrolls are replaced by scrolling leaves.

Page 21: Ottoman album page, in the style of Shahkuhi.
Turkey, 2nd half of the 16th century.
Ink drawing on paper, mounted on card as an album leaf with *ebru* and gold-sprinkled borders.
page size: 27 x 37 cm; drawing: 11.5 x 25 cm.
Accession number: MSS 917

This ink drawing depicts a dragon tearing its way through *saz* leaves and composite blossoms and charging towards a fantastic bird whose head develops out of similar foliage. A lion's head also evolves out of the flora and bites the dragon's neck. A very similar drawing is in the Cleveland Museum of Art (44.492), though the Cleveland example is much larger in size.

The term "*Saz* style" is often used to describe drawings of this nature. The word *Saz* has been identified as an ancient Turkish word given to an enchanted forest filled with fantastic creatures. The *Saz*-style had its roots in Timorid art, but was widely used in the Ottoman sphere in the 16th century.

Characteristic elements of this style, seen in this and similar drawings, are the bold black "calligraphic" lines and brushstrokes that outline certain elements of the design – the dragon's back or the central vein in the leaves in this example. These contrast with the soft, feathery lines used to render details. Occasionally, washes and colour or gold highlights are also used.

Two comparable dragon drawings bear the name of Sahkuhi. One, badly damaged, bears his seal and the notation "This dragon is the work of the master Sahkuhi al-Rumi" (Topkapi Seray, H. 2154, fol. 2a). The second, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (acc. No. 57.51.26) bears a later notation identifying the work as his.

Previous page: **View of Cairo**, from an Ottoman portolan atlas.
Turkey, 2nd half of the 17th century.
63 folios, 34 x 24 cm
Accession number: MSS 718

Piri Reis and Turkish Mapmaking after Columbus, special facsimile edition.

The portolan atlas contains charts of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, as well as topographic views of Istanbul, Galata, Cairo and Candia in Crete. The charts are mostly based on those in the Kitab-i Bahriye of Piri Reis. The author, who was executed in 1554, is famous both for this work and his two world maps, of 1513 and 1528-9, which both included depictions of the New World. One of his sources for the map of 1513 was a lost map of the Americas by Christopher Columbus.

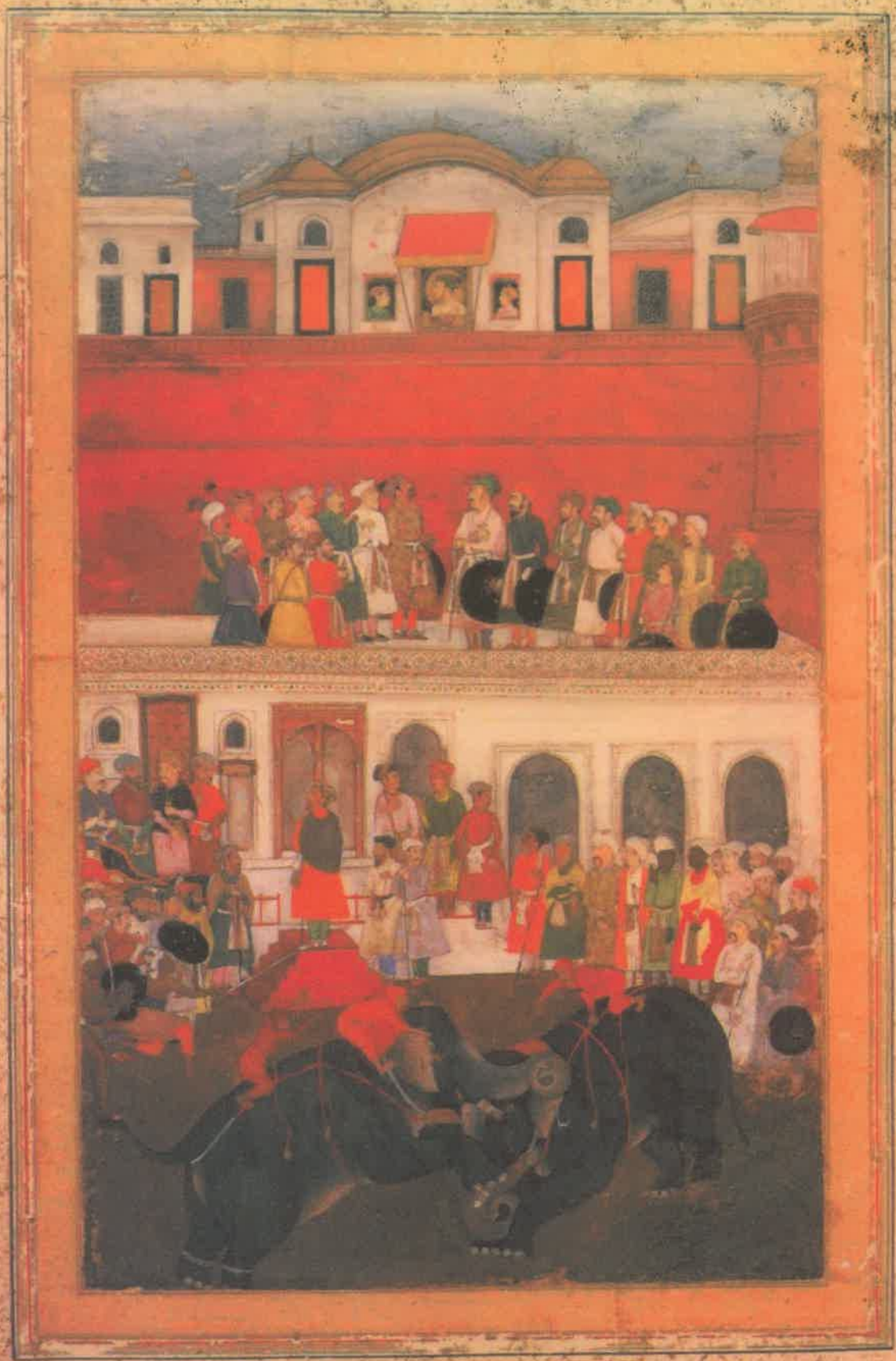
Cairo was not frequently illustrated by Ottoman artists: depictions of the city appear only in the Kitab-i Bahriye. Piri Reis's views of Cairo seem to be based on a European model. The most likely source for the Khalili Portolan Atlas view of Cairo is one of a series of city views published by Ferrando Bertelli in 1568.
illustrated: Cairo, the Nile and the pyramids, folios 48v–49r.

Right: **Shah Jahan at the *Jharoka* (window) in the Red Fort.**
Page from the *Padshahnama*, mounted as an album leaf.
India, ca. 1650.
Album page: 50 x 35 cm; miniature: 33.5 x 20.4 cm.
Accession number: MSS 900
Published: P. Pal, et al., Romance of the Taj Mahal, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989, no. 35.

This page probably comes from a dispersed illustrated copy of the Padshahnama, the official history of Shah Jahan's reign. The Windsor Castle Padshahnama, with its 44 miniatures, is the only remaining illustrated volume of the work, and it covers the first 10 regnal years of Shah Jahan. Several dispersed miniatures – including this one – however, are believed to have illustrated other copies of the manuscript.

The miniature depicts Shah Jahan at the Jharoka window, in his private apartments in the Red Fort. His sons are represented in windows to either side. Nobles and attendants stand on the terrace below and in the courtyard, surrounding two elephants engaged in a duel.

Shah Jahan's daily routine included appearances in the Jharoka window, where he communicated directly with his subjects and was entertained by watching dancers or animal combats – in this case a duel between elephants.



Pottery

Ernst J. Grube

The collection contains about 2000 pieces from all periods and all parts of the Muslim world. The collection is particularly strong in Seljuq lustrewares of the 12th and 13th centuries, in ceramic figurines (an unusual and rare form of Islamic sculpture), and in later Safavid blue-and-white wares. It also has two groups of pottery that are virtually unique, the first from early 13th-century Afghanistan, and the second, from 14th- and 15th-century Central Asia.

Among the many fine objects in the collection are some truly remarkable masterpieces that find few, if any, parallels elsewhere. Among them is a relief decorated small flat dish of the 9th century, which is one of only about a dozen such pieces known; a polychrome-painted 10th-century Persian bowl with the representation of Buraq, the mysterious steed that carried the Prophet Muhammad through the seven heavens, probably the earliest surviving rendering of this subject; a lustre painted fragment

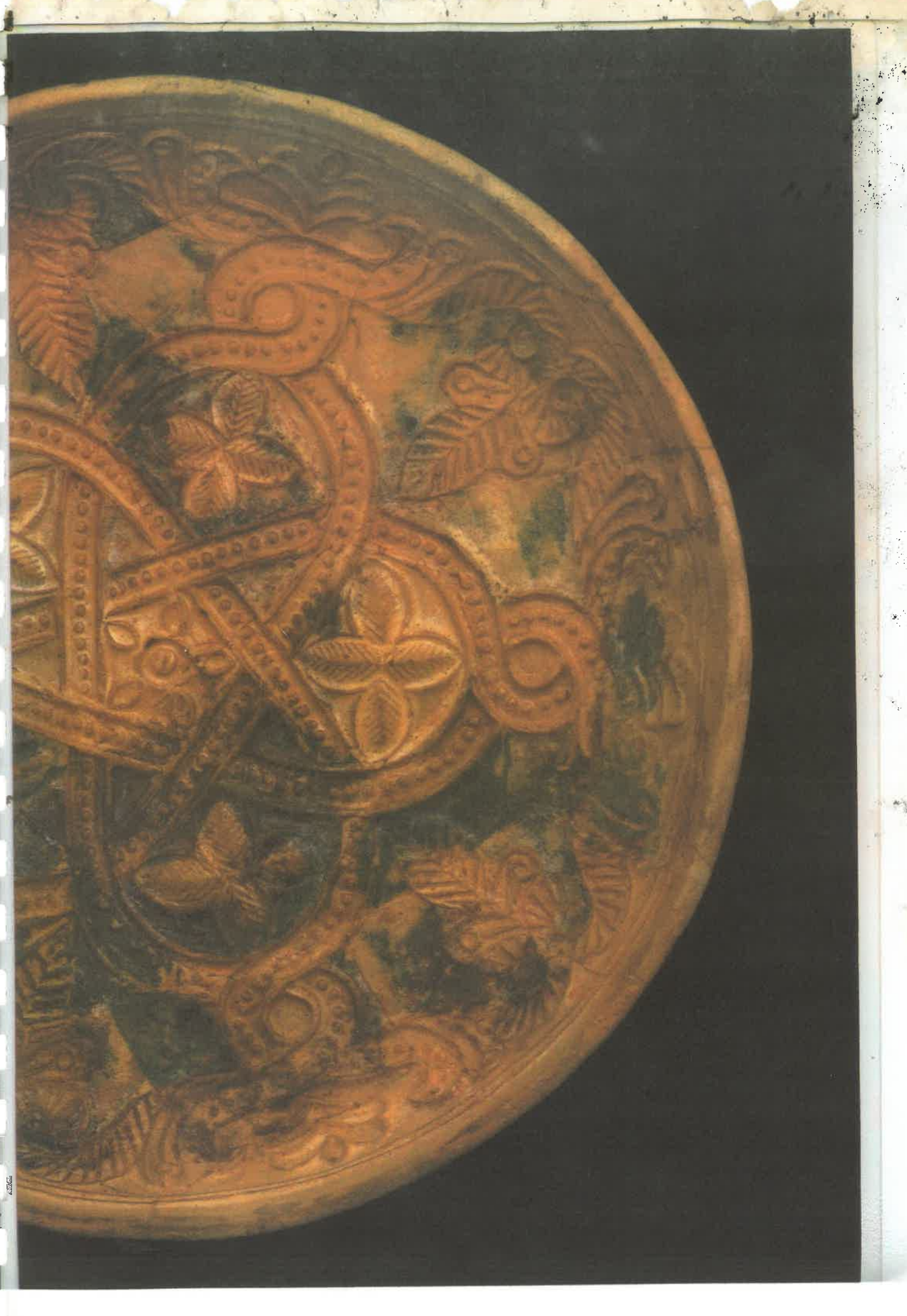


Relief decorated plate covered with lustre
Iran or Iraq, 9th century
Diameter: 18.2 cm; height: 3 cm
Accession number: POT 844

The development of the lustre technique is perhaps one of the most significant Abbasid contributions to the field of Islamic ceramics. Contemporary with the polychrome lustre-painted vessels is a much rarer group of plates decorated in moulded relief and covered with golden lustre, occasionally accompanied by green glaze splashes, as in the example. It is possible that these plates were inspired by repousse decorated gold prototypes.

The plate is decorated with an interlacing scroll motif. Its beaded contours are extended into the centre to form stylized snake's heads. Other motifs include small rosettes, quatrefoils and palmettes. Although glazed pottery with moulded relief decoration was common in Roman times and continued to be produced in the early Islamic period, the Sasanian-inspired motifs that decorate this and similar plates point to an Eastern centre of production.

Similarly decorated lustre wares were excavated at both Samarra and Susa. A much published plate in the Freer Gallery of Art (inv. 37.23, 1–2) is said to have been found at Susa.



from Fatimid Egypt decorated with the figure of bearded man executed entirely in the Byzantine manner; a large lustre painted plate from Syria decorated with a lion, and a 14th century blue-and white decorated Syrian vase, one of only three known intact pieces of the type; an openwork ewer from early 13th-century Persia, with black decoration painted under a deep turquoise-blue glaze; a large lustre painted figurine of a camel from 12th-century Persia; a polychrome-glazed figurine of an elephant with a howdah from 13th-century Syria, and a late 13th-century figurine of a man kneeling in prayer, painted in black under blue and colourless glazes, which in its size, and the quality of its design and decoration, is unique.

As already noted above, the collection has an unparallelled number of pieces in two areas which are little known. Thus they constitute new chapters in the history of Muslim ceramic making: the pottery of pre-Mongol Afghanistan, and the pottery of the Timurid period.

Finally, the collection includes a large number of unglazed, relief-decorated pieces, including many moulds from which these pieces were made; these again, constitute a new and major element contributing to the history of this little-known and appreciated type of Islamic pottery.

All in all, the collection both broadens our understanding of the variety and quality of Islamic ceramic-making throughout a millennium, as it offers significant new areas between the 12th and 15th centuries.

Dr Ernst J Grube is Professor Emeritus, University of Venice.



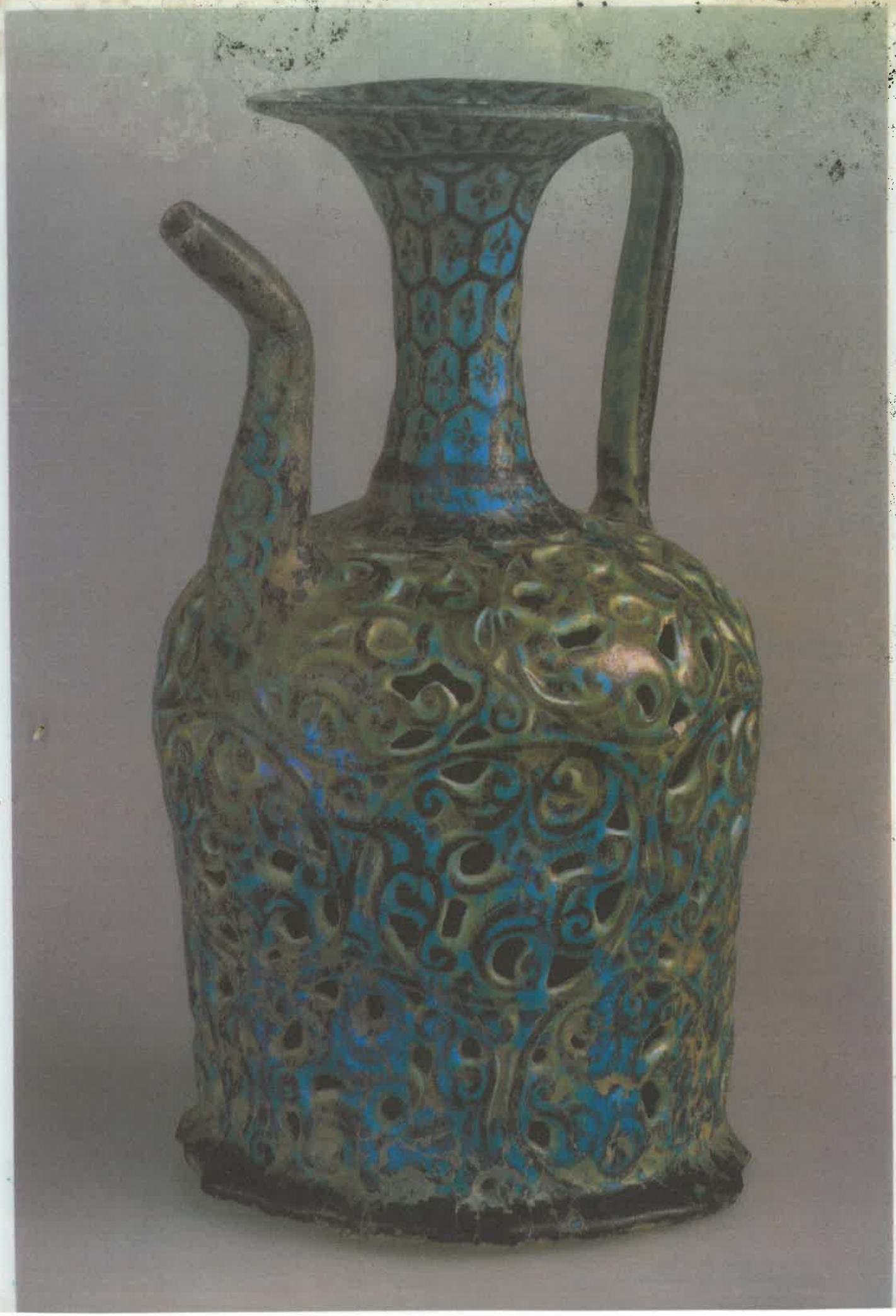
Left: **Underglaze painted bottle.** Iran, late 15th century.
Height: 35 cm
Accession number: POT 1320

This pear-shaped bottle is perhaps one of the most spectacular underglaze-painted examples to survive from the 15th century. Its unique decoration consists of birds amongst clouds of a distinct Chinese nature. The birds are grouped in confronted pairs. The motifs are reserved in blue against the black background.

Right: **Double-shell ewer.** Iran, late 12th century-early 13th century.
Height: 28cm
Accession number: POT 775

This ewer belongs to a very small and exceptional group of Iranian underglaze-painted objects which are of double shell construction. They differ from contemporary wares in that their inner shell is "wrapped" in a second wall decorated with pierced, openwork designs. The origins of the technique must derive from metalwork, a material which lends itself more readily to openwork than clay. The vessels are decorated with black motifs painted under a turquoise glaze, with the occasional cobalt blue splash.

Shapes constructed in this technique include ewers, bottles and jugs. Some of the ewers have zoomorphic spouts. The designs used in their decoration include arabesques, human, animal and mythical figures, as well as inscriptions. Arabesques and geometric motifs are used in this example, but the decoration on a jug in the collection (POT 686) – a virtual pair to a jug in the Metropolitan Museum in New York which is dated AH 612/ AD 1215-16 – includes harpies, sphinxes, antelope and other animals.



Right: **Large Iznik water bottle.**
Turkey, ca. 1560–1565.
Height: 47 cm
Accession number: POT 1584
Published: N. Atasoy and J. Raby, **Iznik**, the Pottery of Ottoman Turkey, plate 680; and Christie's, 24 April 1990, lot no.386.

Remarkable for its size and for the thinness of its potting, this bottle belongs to a small group of vessels in this shape. Two examples in the British Museum (inv. nos OA 14237 and FB.IS 1) are of very similar shape and share some of the decorative motifs seen here, but are slightly later in date.

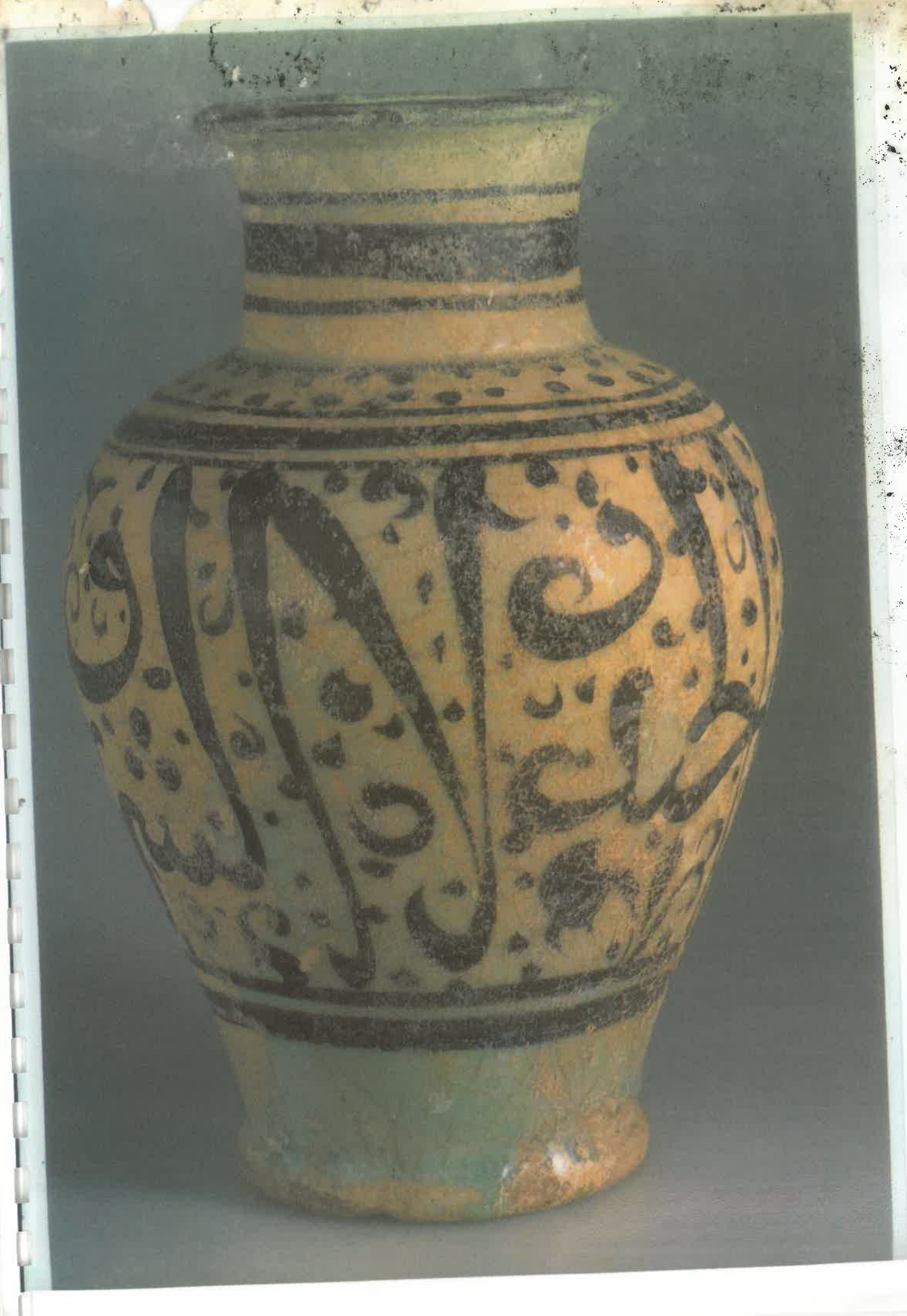
The bottle has been described as "possibly the best proportioned and painted of all of this small group of large water bottle". Its floral decoration has parallels on Iznik dishes, but the sprays of hyacinths alternating with small red flowers find their nearest parallel on a jug in the Barlow Collection (G. Fehervari, Barlow Collections London 1973, no. 265)

Opposite page:**Underglaze painted jar.** Syria, early 13th century.
Height: 25.5 cm
Accession number: POT 2

Among the the group of wares produced at Raqqa between the late 12th century and 1259 AD when the city was sacked by the Mongols is one where the decoration is painted in black under a clear glaze. This ware is closely related to the more common black-under-blue glazed ware, but the vessels in both are closely related in shape and decoration.

The decoration on this jar consists of a wide calligraphic frieze, with the large, sinuous letters surrounded by small leaves of a type particularly associated with Raqqa.







Right: **Samanid slip painted bowl**
Eastern Iran or Central Asia, 10th century.
Height: 7.8 cm; diameter: 27.7 cm
Accession number: POT 1204

The inscription-decorated bowls of Eastern Iran and Central Asia are perhaps amongst the most beautiful Samanid wares. The bold inscriptions, usually painted in a black strip over a white background, are superbly controlled and often accompanied by any other form of decoration. A variety of *kufic* and floriated *kufic* scripts were used for these inscriptions. The texts were often proverbs.

Variants of the style – representing slightly later developments or different centres of production – carry inscriptions as well as interlaced motifs, scrollwork and geometric designs painted in red and black slips. Birds are sometimes used, but human figures – common on other Samanid wares – are totally absent.

The striking pattern on this bowl is achieved through the remarkable balance between the bold black decoration and the white background. The inscription consists of a single word repeated eight times, and written in a highly decorative *kufic*. It is framed between two interlaced bands. The small black roundel in the centre of the base is often found on vessels of this group.



Right: **Large lustre-painted dish**
Syria, late 12th century.
Height: 10.4 cm; diameter: 35.7 cm
Accession number: POT 1249

Lustre painted vessels of Syrian provenance are usually divided into two main categories, 'Tell Minis' and Raqqa wares. The former were produced during the 2nd half of the 12th century, the latter continued into the 13th.

Tell Minis is a village near the town of Maarat al-Numan in Central Syria. A hoard of 13 vessels found in a cave there led to the name 'Tell Minis' ware being given to these vessels. Related vessels in various public and private collections have since been identified as belonging to the same group. Many pieces were also excavated at Hama.

Both the shape and decoration on this dish have parallels in 'Tell Minis' examples. The drawing and treatment of the lion and the background foliage, for example, are similar to those on one of the original Tell Minis finds (Copenhagen, Kunstindustrimuseet, 28/ 1959).

There is no clear evidence of where 'Tell Minis' pieces were produced, but a Syrian provenance and a dating to the 2nd half of the 12th century are certain.

Metalwork

Geza Fehervari and Nahla Nasar

The Nasser D Khalili collection of Islamic metalwork comprises nearly 1000 objects, ranging in date from the Sasanian period to the 19th century. It is especially noteworthy for the range of objects that are represented. While some are fine examples of well known types, many are unique in form or decoration.

As well as variety, however, the collection emphasizes similarities: there are several examples of a single form or design – such as the 20 mortars or the impressive group of high tin bronze objects in the collection - which enables the tracing of developments within a given school.

Several items are of historical importance as they are dated and inscribed with the names of artists and patrons. One such example is a silver inlaid inkwell dated AH 607/AD 1210 which was made for Haji Muhammad bin Hasan bin abu Sa'id. The two tray stands made for "Amir Khurasan" Ikhtiyar al-Din Muhammad bin 'Ali Kharpust are also of great historical significance. Kharpust, a descendant of the great Kings of Ghur and governor of Peshawar, occupied Ghazna in 1220 AD and was assassinated there in the same year. Among the signed pieces are two penboxes (one complete, one fragmentary) by the brilliant craftsman Shadhi al-Naqqash.

The collection boasts several important precious metal objects – a rare group in Islamic metalwork. Examples are a large ewer from the early Islamic period , a repousse decorated silver bowl from the Fatimid period and a unique silver plate decorated with a granulated gold inscription mentioning the name of Shahriyar bin Qarin (AD 1074-1110) , a ruler in Mazanderan.



north-western Iran. Ottoman silver vessels include a late 15th century silver jug and the only dated Ottoman silver item, a ladle with a niello inscription and the date AH 985/AD 1577-78.

Notable among the silver inlaid items is a 13th century rectangular casket which still retains the four-dial component from a combination lock. Of similar date and provenance is the only known matching pair of [illegible] handles in the shape of two inlaid dragons. These are the largest and most splendid of an extremely rare type. The same can be said about a contemporary, cast decorative attachment of monumental dimensions, signed by Shakir ibn Ahmad and probably made in Mosul.

Professor Geza Fehervari was formerly Professor of Islamic Art and Archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. (He is currently the Hungarian Ambassador to Kuwait and the Gulf).

Nahla Nassar is Deputy Curator and Registrar, the Khalili Collection of Islamic Art.

Previous page: **Signed cauldron**. Eastern Iran or Central Asia, 9th or 10th century AD. Height: 21 cm; rim diameter: 22.2 cm. Accession number: MTW 625. The hemispherical body of this bronze vessel is un-decorated except for its cast-in, floriated *kufic* benedictory inscription. The inscription is interrupted by four ring handles, three of which retain suspension loops. The wishes of glory, blessings, prosperity, happiness etc. are followed by the words: "made by Abd al-Rahman". The vessel is not self-supporting: the foot is too small to support the weight and size of the body. If it is indeed a cauldron, it would have been intended to be suspended (by its four loops) over a fire. Cauldrons of this type are known from later periods, but there are no exact contemporary parallels for this piece.

One other possibility is that the object was used as a drum. The slightly inset vertical rim would have allowed a skin to be stretched over it and secured to the body. But as the object is quite heavy, this is probably unlikely.



Left: Silver inlaid stem-cup. The Jazirah, early 13th century. Height: 13.2 cm; diameter of rim: 13.5 cm. Accession number: MTW 825. The most striking element of this silver inlaid, high tin bronze cup is the superb animated inscription that decorates its lip. The inscription appears to be benedictory but has not been fully deciphered.

The inscription incorporates human figures engaged in a variety of activities, as well as animals and birds. The complexity of its design finds a close parallel in the animated inscription on the "Blacas" ewer in the British Museum, which was made in Mosul in AH 629/ AD 1232.

Right: Ottoman silver fountain ladle. Turkey, dated AH 985/ AD 1577-8. Length: 26.8 cm; diameter of bowl: 16.5 cm. Accession number: MTW 906. Published: Y. Persopoulos (ed.), *Tulips, Arabesques & Turbans*, Alexandria press, 1982, no.23.

With its emphasis on form as opposed to heavily textured and decorated surfaces, this ladle is an excellent example of what has been called "The Plain Tradition" in Ottoman metalwork. The aesthetic appeal of the pieces is the result of a combination of well balanced proportions, bold shapes and sweeping outlines with a careful manipulation of the reflective metal surfaces.

The main decoration on the ladle is a nielloed inscription: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful; and We made from water every living thing" (Qur'an, xxi, verse 30), followed by the date 985. The handle has a prominent collar set with rubies. The ladle is one of a very small group of dated Ottoman silverware.


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٩٨٥



Above: **Pair of cast brass dragon door-handles.** The Jazirah (south-east Turkey), early 13th century.
Size: 35 x 40 cm
Accession numbers: MTW 1407, MTW 1428

The pair of drag·n door-handles belong to a type discussed and illustrated by al-Jazari, the author of *The book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices*, in the late 12th century. In this work he describes how he made such door-handles for the palace of Nasir al-Din, the Artugid ruler of Diyarbakir. Very few of these door-handles have survived, and this is the only matching pair. They are considerably larger than the other known examples.

Dragons were often used on doors and gates in the Middle East. The dragon door-handle in the David Collection, Copenhagen, comes from the doors of the *Ulu Cami* in Cizre in southern Turkey. Dragons decorate the Aleppo Gate of Diyarbakir and the gate of the Citadel in Aleppo. They were once to be seen on the Talisman Gate in Baghdad.

Below: **Two Timurid gold and silver inlaid jugs.** North eastern Iran, late 15th century.
Height: 12.9 cm and 13.1 cm
Accession numbers: MTW 305, MTW 288
Acquired: Christie's, 11 October 1988, lot no. 303 and Paris, Hotel Drouot respectively.

Closely related in shape to the Ottoman jug illustrated above are these two Iranian examples. They are both cast, and their surfaces are covered with a gold and silver inlaid network of arabesques on hatched ground. Both have dragon-shaped handles which are similarly inlaid. The small loop on the handles was probably attached to a chain connected to a domed lid, now lost. The interior of one of them has been painted red. The base of the same jug has the silver inlaid inscription: *al-Faqir Shaykh... Wara* (?).

Although the two jugs are very similar, one jug (MTW 288) differs from the other in two respects. The first is in the shape of its neck which is taller and more splayed, the other is its lack of any inscriptions.

The decoration of one of the earliest dated Iranian examples of this group (Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. no.943-1886) depends heavily on epigraphic bands and cartouches. It is dated AH 866/ AD 1461-2. Jugs such as those in the Khalili collection, where inscriptions are less prominent or are altogether absent, are believed to represent later developments within the style and are therefore datable to the late 15th century.

Opposite page, left: **Large ewer.** Eastern Iran (perhaps Nishapur), 9th century AD.
Height: 44.5 cm
Accession number: MTW 1323

This very large ewer belongs to a known type, seven examples of which were excavated at Nishapur (cf. James Allan, *Nishapur: Metalwork of the Early Islamic Period*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982, nos 93-99). Three examples were also excavated at Maimana in Afghanistan, one at Susa and at least one in Sweden. Their presence in Sweden provides a clue for their dating, since it was in the 9th and 10th centuries that trade across Russia into Scandinavia was at its highest.

All these share the cylindrical body, sloping shoulders and cylindrical neck, and they are all





constructed from sheet metal. Their decoration is of a simple, geometric nature, and is mostly punched. The Khalili example differs slightly from the Nishapur excavated examples in the shape of its rim and its triangular spout.

The most prominent feature of these ewers is the lobed strap attached to the neck and joining it to the handle. The purpose of these strips is not clear. They appear to emulate leather, and it is not impossible that they copy an earlier design of ewer where leather straps were used to add extra strength to the handle. The neck of the ewer carries a worn inscription in what appears to be Pahlavi script.

Right: **Silver ewer with niello and traces of gilding.** Iran or Central Asia, 7th or early 8th century. Height: 38.5 cm
Accession number: MTW 455

Only faint traces remain of the gilding that once covered all or part of this silver ewer. It is cast, with the footring made separately and soldered on to the body. The main decoration is engraved, with two bands of niello-inlaid geometric motifs on the upper part of the neck and the footring.

The main decoration consists of three ovoid medallions, two of which enclose griffins assuming a heraldic position with one of their front paws raised. Both griffins face a third medallion with a double-headed eagle. The rendering of details is extremely fine; this is especially noticeable in the plumage of the eagle.

Similarly shaped ewers from the Sasanian and post-Sasanian/transitional periods are known (cf. *Survey of Persian Art*, pls. 226 and 234). Although most examples have handles, there are no traces on the Khalili piece that indicate that a handle was ever attached to the ewer.





Below: **Ottoman silver jug**
Turkey, late 15th century.
Height: 13.2 cm
Accession number: MTW 312
Acquired: Spink and Son.
Published: *Turkische Kunst und Kultur aus osmanischer Zeit*, Recklinghausen, 1985, plate 5.

Hammered from silver sheet and decorated with light repousse work, engraving and ring-matting, this jug is an important example of Ottoman silver from the late 15th century. Jugs of this shape, made in precious and base metals as well as in ceramics, are closely related to Timurid examples.

Palmette arabesques and scrolls are often used to decorate such jugs. In this example, they are enclosed within five of the six medallions on the body and within a band on the neck.

The scene represented in the sixth medallion, however, is highly unusual. It depicts a unicorn, standing with its head turned back amongst foliage that includes a cypress tree, with a rabbit crouching just above its back. The placing of this interesting roundel immediately to the left of the handle, rather than centally is also unusual.

Opposite page top: **Large decorative attachment**; signed by Shakir ibn Ahmad. The Jazirah, probably Mosul, 13th century.
Size: 30 x 49.5 cm
Accession number: MTW 825

This is perhaps one of the finest examples of cast metalwork from the Jazirah. Given the weight and monumental size of the piece, the quality of the casting and the superbly controlled design are quite remarkable.

These features are found in a pair of door-handles in a private collection in Kuwait (cf *Louisiana Rev*, vol.27, no.3, March 1987, plate 13). In his study of these door-handles, James Allan has compared them to 13th century architectural decoration from Mosul, and attributed the pieces to that city.

This attribution is confirmed by another object which bears an even closer resemblance to the Khalili piece, namely the suspension element from an astronomical table in the British Museum which bears the signature of Muhammad bin Khuthikh al-Mosuli and the date AH 639/ AD 1241-2. Although much smaller in size, the treatment of the motifs is almost identical.

The function of this piece is not very clear. That it was meant to be seen from the front and the back is obvious, since the casting and the finish on both sides is the same. The lower end of the piece has a deep groove which runs along its length. This would have allowed another object to slide through it – perhaps an astronomical table of gigantic proportions?

Opposite page, bottom: **Bowl**
North-east Iran or Central Asia, late 12th century.
Height: 10.7 cm;
rim diameter: 22cm
Accession number: MTW 1174

Hemispherical high tin bronze bowls were produced in Iran, and especially Khorasan, between the 10th and 12th century AD. The decoration on earlier examples consists mainly of geometric motifs, but examples from the 12th century onwards combine epigraphic and figural decoration with geometric and floral designs.

The base is decorated with a six-pointed star inscribed within a rosette. The body has a series of gently fluted petal shapes followed by a band encl losing a benedictory inscription and an undulating scroll reserved against a ring matted background.

The patina on the interior walls of this bowl is typical of high tin bronzes. The exterior surfaces, however, appear to be "tinned". This bowl, together with the large group of high tin bronze objects in the Khalili collection, are undergoing detailed technical and scientific analysis, and the results will be included in the first part of the metalwork catalogue (vol.XI).







Below: **Silver inlaid brass casket.** The Jazirah, first half of the 13th century.
Size: 19 x 18.5 x 14 cm
Accession number: MTW 850
Acquired: Christie's, 10 October 1989, lot no. 526

This silver inlaid casket still retains the component from a four-dial combination lock. It is one of five known boxes with combination locks, but the only example from the Jazirah.

The entire surface of the casket is decorated with bands and medallions enclosing benedictory inscriptions and a wide variety of scenes drawn from the repertoire of princely activities found on metalwork from the Jazirah. These include audience scenes, courtiers, musicians, mounted warriors, falconers and so on. In addition, there are small medallions enclosing a crescent holding figure. The background is covered with dense scrollwork. The base has an arabesque roundel framed by a radiating sun motif. A similar sun motif is also represented on the lid.

One interesting and unusual scene in the central medallion on the back of the casket has two men playing a game of backgammon!

reproduced with
A Mamluk silver inlaid bowl with the name of Sultan Qalaun
Egypt, early 14th century.
Height: 8 cm; rim diameter: 15.8 cm
Accession number: MTW 255
Acquired: Christie's, 11 October 1988, lot no. 370

The fine inlaid metalwork that was produced in the Jazirah during the Ayyubid period continued to be made in Egypt and Syria under the Mamluks. This bowl is an example of the best quality of Mamluk metalwork of the early 14th century. The bowl is datable by its inscription which mentions the name of the Mamluk Sultan al-Malik al-Nasir Muhammad bin Qalaun (*reg.* 1293-1340 AD).

The external surface of base and the walls is covered with silver inlaid decoration, including a superb roundel depicting three phoenixes in flight, cartouches of Mamluk *nasbi*, several small blazon-like roundels with the word *al-malik*, scrolls, rosettes and lotus-type flowers. The rim, however, carries what is possibly the most interesting element: a band of running animals including an elephant and a hippopotamus. The representation of the first is extremely rare in metalwork of this period, the second is perhaps unique.

Right: detail of the base of the bowl described above.





Science, Tools and Magic

Francis Maddison and Emilie Savage-Smith

The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art includes ... a large and important group of objects and manuscripts relevant to the history of Islamic culture which, often without great aesthetic pretension, nevertheless embody techniques and principles of design that transcend their immediate, practical use. These objects are described in a volume under the broad title "Science, Magic and Tools". Included are astronomical and astrological instruments, mostly of engraved brass, a number of medical manuscripts, amulets and other magical and geomantic devices, and merchants' and general household material such as balances, weights, spoons and locks. Many objects of this type have never before been systematically catalogued, and this volume, therefore, brings together much scattered information, presenting a corpus of material for further comparative study.

The astronomical instruments are those primarily connected with the three fundamental motivations of Islamic astronomy: the determination of the astronomically-defined times of prayer; the determination of the azimuth of the Qibla, that is, the direction of Makka; and the teaching and practice of cosmology and astrology. The latter, based on the Islamic inheritance from the Hellenistic lands and Hindu India, became an important and original part of Islamic scientific activity, much of which was to lay the foundation of European astronomy, from the twelfth century onwards, after its transmission to medieval Christian Europe from Muslim Spain. The collection's holdings in this field enable ideas and centres of production to be documented, and include highly important individual pieces.

Among the celestial globes, there is a very fine globe, with a full set of constellation figures engraved upon it and position of some 1024 stars indicated by inlaid silver points, made in AH 684 (AD 1285/6) by Muhammad bin Mahmud al-Tabari. This globe is now known to be the original of a nearly identical globe in the Musee du Louvre, Paris. It is interesting to be able to compare two globes in the collection, one of which is engraved in Sanskrit as well as Arabic, both signed by Muhammad Salih Tatawi, an astrolabist of the eleventh/seventeenth century. There are also an eighteenth century globe of unique type and exceptional workmanship, and a globe copied between 1842 and 1847 for Amjad 'Ali Shah, Nawab of Oudh. More recent globes, made like the latter in Muslim India, allow the survival of astrological thought and imagery to be traced. The iconography of the constellation figures engraved on the globes links with the wider traditions of Islamic art.

Similarly, the engraved script and design of the planispheric astrolabes place them firmly in the artistic workmanship of several regions of Islam, and a comparison of the scales engraved on them is instructive of the astronomical traditions and needs. The astrolabes date from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and come from the Maghrib, Iran and Muslim India; they are representative of the main styles of Islamic astrolabes. There is a unique Judaeo-Arabic astrolabe, made c. AD 1200 in a Jewish community in Muslim Spain and inscribed in Arabic written in Hebrew script. Other unusual and important items are an astrolabe "rete" (star-map in stereographic projection) and an associated plate from an astrolabe or, possibly, a water clock with an astrolabe-dial, made c. AD 1220 by Muhammad bin Abi Bakr bin Muhammad al-Rashidi al-Isfahani, the maker of the famous astrolabe with the geared calender-movement at Oxford, who signed in silhouette in the tracery of the "rete". Related to the astrolabes are the astrolabe-quadrants; this instrument, usually made of lacquered wood, was especially popular in Ottoman Turkey. Scales on some astrolabes could be used for finding the direction of Makka, but there are also special instruments for this purpose usually incorporating a magnetic compass. Particularly noteworthy among them is a beautiful and rare sixteenth-century Ottoman signed example of an instrument known as "da'irat al-mu 'addil (the equatorial [semi-] circle), invented by the fifteenth century Egyptian astronomer, al-Wafa'i.

Scientific material in the collection includes several interesting medical treatises, one of them a fifteenth-century Timurid medical manuscript in Persian, one of the earliest recorded copies of a treatise on human anatomy by Mansour bin Muhammad bin Ahmad Ilyas, c. 1396.

The medical treatises represent the formal, learned side of medical care, while the group of magic bowls, amulets, talismans and geomantic material represents a more popular level, and comprises much that hitherto has not been studied in depth. Of note are the ceramic magic bowls, probably deriving from an Islamic community in China, a unique geomantic/astrological engraved plate from Iran, and several geomantic dice.

Merchants' balances and weights, a vast number of padlocks and other characteristic Islamic locks, calligraphers' and household knives, scissors, tweezers, spoons, and miscellaneous tools, in a wide variety, provided material for the study of unfamiliar and often neglected metalwork.

Francis Maddison is Curator, Museum of the History of Science, University of Oxford.

Dr Emilie Savage-Smith is Research Associate, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, University of Oxford.

Celestial globe. Made by Muhammad bin Mahmud al-Asturlabi in AH 684 (AD 1285-6).
Diameter: 13.5 cm
Accession number: SCI 21

The globe has a full set of constellation figures engraved upon it and the positions of some 1024 stars indicated with silver inlaid points. It is now known to be the original on which a nearly identical globe in the Musee du Louvre, Paris, is based. This is the earliest of a large group of celestial globes in the Khalili collection.

A long inscription states that the globe was made by Muhammad bin Mahmud al-Asturlabi in the year 684 (AD 1285-6). The inscription also states that although the images of the constellations were drawn from "*Kitab al Suwar*" of Abi al-Hasan al-Sufi, the information derived from that source was updated for the globe and certain errors corrected.



ودخن به مسحور زال سحره وان طبع به على شي وحل في ماء وسقي به
ملدوغ اوسقي شمًا بري بحول الله تعالى وقوته وهذا صوره وضعه

صورة



وضعه

قوله تعالى ولقد نادانا نوح فلنعم المجيبون هذه الايه لمن اراد
ان يستجاب لدعاؤه فليصل ركعتين ويكتب هذه الايه في كعكة الايمن ويسال
الله تعالى اخر الليل وقال يارب بحق هذا الجب دعوتي انك سميع الدعاء
وهذا صوره وضعه

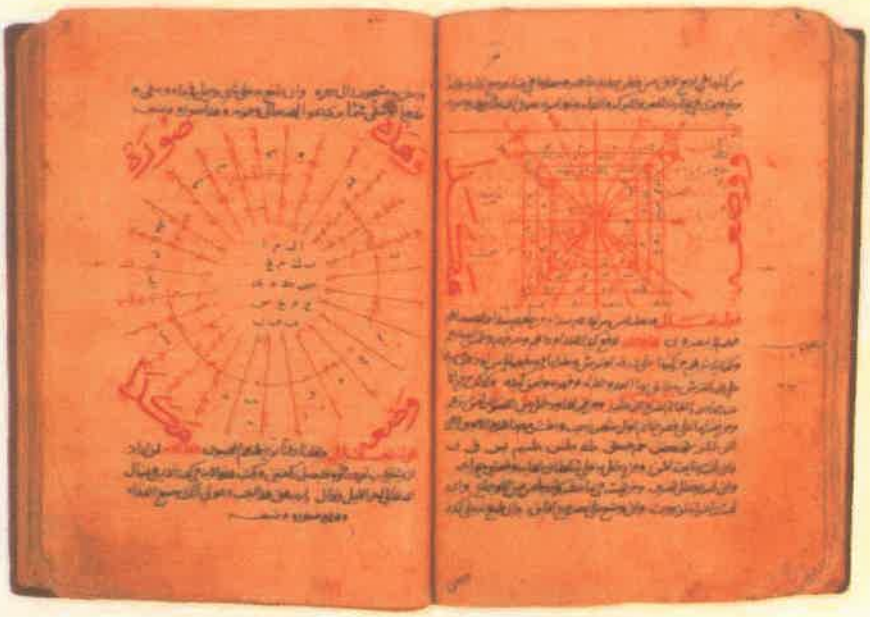
Left and below: **Al-Buni's *Kitab al Taliq*.** Copied by Abd al-Muhsin…Ahmad al-Kuni (?) al-Baghdadi. Probably Iraq, dated AH 828/ AD 1425. 121 folios, 25.7 x 18 cm. Accession number: MSS 300 illustrated: folios 70v-71r.

This is a copy of a manuscript written by Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad bin Ali bin Yusuf al-Buni al-Qurashi. The manuscript has no title page, but the title *Kitab al Taliq* has been written on the flyleaf by a pevious owner.

The manuscript deals with the magic qualities of *Asma' Allah al-Husna*, the Beautiful Names of God as they appear in the Holy Qur'an. The names are discussed singly or in groups, their arrangement in magic squares described and illustrated in diagrams. The text also explains in detail the talismanic uses of the names, what material they should be written on, as well as when that should be done and for what purposes.

The second part of the manuscript starts on folio 41 recto and deals with the talismanic qualities of various Qur'anic *suwar*. The folios illustrated here contain the discussion of two verses and their diagrams. The text on folio 70 verso describes how a verse from *Surat Ya'Sin* (XXXVI: verse 9) can be used in defeating an enemy, for example. This can be achieved by inscribing the verse – following the diagram represented on folio 71 recto – on a piece of paper, or engraving it on a brass or gold boss on a shield and confronting the enemy with it.

The same verse can be used for a multitude of other purposes if inscribed on the setting of a ring, on the first day of the month of *Rajab* with some additional magic words. If this is done, and the ring is worn by a woman, she will get married. If the ring is placed on the forehead of someone who has fainted, he will be revived. If, on the other hand, the ring is immersed in distilled water, the water, when drunk, will clear all pains. An impression of the inscription on the ring can be used to remove magic spells and to cure poisonous bites.



Below: **Healing or "magic" bowl** made for Mahmud bin Zangi, Syria, dated AH 565/ AD 1169-70. Height: 6.7 cm; diameter: 19 cm. Accession number: MTW 1445.

The main inscription band that encircles the outer wall lists the various conditions that may be cured by using this "blessed cup" which has "benefits collected within it". These are manifold, ranging from snake and scorpion bites to heart and liver diseases, labour pains, blindness, severe colds and all sorts of illnesses and disasters. One should drink from it with God's permission…The inscription ends by stating that the bowl was inscribed while the sun was in Leo by order of "al-Sultan al-Malik al-Adil Mahmud bin Zangi in the year 565".

The remainder of the outer wall is filled with magic inscriptions and numbers. These inscriptions were once inlaid.



with a white compound, traces of which remain in several places.

Although the decoration of the interior is very worn, it consisted of nine roundels, some enclosing astrological figures (the outlines of a scorpion, a quadruped – perhaps a horse – and a seated figure are still discernible) as well as magic inscriptions.

Al-Malik al-Adil Nur-ad-Din Abu al-Qasim Mahmud bin Zangi took over his father's Syrian conquests and ruled between AH 541-569 (AD 1146-74).

Three spoons. Iran and the Jazirah, 12th and 13th century AD.
Length: 22.2, 18.3 and 15.5 cm.
Accession numbers: MTW 872, MTW 758 and MTW 1420 respectively.

The Khalili Collection includes a large amount of specialized tools, as well as a variety of household implements, ranging in date from the early Islamic period to the 19th century. Many of the spoons and ladles are inscribed with magic squares and talismanic inscriptions, indicating that they may have been used for healing or magic purposes, perhaps together with objects like the bowl described above.

Two of the spoons reproduced here are made of high tin bronze and are decorated with engraved and silver inlaid motifs. The bowl of the first (MTW 758) is decorated with a star interlace design. The bowl of the second spoon (MTW 1420) is decorated with a pair of intertwined dragons. Three rabbit's heads are incorporated into the background scrollwork. The handle terminates in a three-dimensional bearded head wearing a flat-topped turban.

The third and largest spoon (MTW 872) is made of silver and decorated with a gilded, repousse arabesque.



Seals and Talismans

Ludvik Kalus

The collection of Islamic seals and talismans in the Khalili Collection is especially impressive because of the number of objects it contains – around 2800. No less than 2300 of these are seals; most are carved out of semi-precious stones or are in metal.

Although a large proportion of the seals and talismans are of relatively recent date – i.e. 18th, 19th or even early 20th century – the collection's holdings of seals from the so-called "classic" period between the 7th and 13th centuries, make it the largest and most important such collection in the world.

Professor Ludvik Kalus is Professor of Medieval Oriental History at the Universite de Paris-Sorbonne and teaches Numismatics and Arabic Epigraphy at the Ecole Pratique.



Talisman, Iran, 10th century.
lapis lazuli with a gold frame.
size: 4.5 x 4.5 cm.
Accession number: TLS 54
Among the early talismans in the Khalili collection is this fine octagonal lapis lazuli example. The stone is inscribed in *kufic* script with the verses of *Surat al-Ikhlas* (cxii: 1-4).
The hardstone seals and talismans in the Khalili Collection exceed 2800 in number. The Collection is the largest in the world, by far outstripping its nearest rival, the Hermitage in St. Petersberg.

Carpets and Textiles

Friedrich Spuhler

The Nasser D. Khalili Collection includes around 200 oriental carpets and textiles. The earliest textiles date from the 7th - 11th centuries. These are rare examples of Abbasid and Fatimid textile arts, and are of great importance. The most outstanding textiles from an artistic point of view, however, are the gold brocades and velvets of the Ottoman and Safavid periods. No other private western collection has such an extensive and comprehensive range of calligraphic textiles.

The group of "Classical" carpets include examples from Safavid, Ottoman and Mughal Indian royal workshops. The collection also includes important examples of Qajar silk carpets, and these will be covered for the first time.

Dr Friedrich Spuhler was formerly Curator, Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin.



Kashan medallion carpet. Iran, 16th century.
Wool pile with silver thread on a silk foundation.
248 x 199 cm.
Accession number: TXT 220

Formerly in the Baron Edouard de Rothschild Collection

This outstanding carpet – which is in almost perfect condition – is one of a small group of medallion carpets which are woven on a silk foundation, knotted with a very fine wool pile with some areas worked in silver thread. Many of the group have inscriptions of poetry (as here) or Qur'anic verses.

The place of origin of this group of carpets has been the subject of much speculation and discussion. Kashan had been suggested as a possibility, but there was no direct evidence to prove the theory. Recently, however, the famous "Ardebil" carpet in the Victoria and Albert Museum – considered to be one of the greatest art treasures in the United Kingdom – was taken out of its glass box for photography. It was therefore possible to make a direct comparison between it and the Khalili carpet. The close similarity of numerous features led to the conclusion that they were both made in the same city.





Velvet coat; Iran, mid- or 2nd half of the 17th c.
velvet, gold brocade, gold and silver thread.
Length: 73.5 cm
Accession number: TXT 65

This spectacular garment is of a type represented in the work of such painters as Shaykh 'Abbasi and Muhammad Zaman. No exact parallel, however, can be found for the striking applique trefoils decorating the front, back and top part of the sleeves.

The coat is of red velvet, with frogging on the chest and conical silver thread buttons. The appliques are of "cloth-of-gold" of superb quality, woven with a repeating pattern of flowering plants. The cuffs and the hem are edged with gold ribbon carrying bird and flower motifs, and are embroidered in gold thread.



Pre-Islamic and Islamic Glass

Sidney M Goldstein

The Khalili collection of Pre-Islamic and Islamic Glass offers the history of ancient glass as an encapsulation in some four hundred objects. It is focused on visually presenting the development of glass technology from Byzantine and Sasanian origins through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century revivals... The story told by this assemblage is quite impressive and will offer many new objects for scholarly study and comment.

Enormous is an adjective which aptly fits objects of Sasanian as well as Islamic date. A Sasanian linear-cut and polished bottle in the shape of a melon is just about watermelon size and a simple pear-shaped ewer known in form from Egypt to Iran could easily hold a gallon of liquid. Even the nineteenth century material contains a spectacular enamelled lamp signed by Brocard in Paris which is nearly twice the size of such objects.

The collection contains nearly two dozen Byzantine glasses from the Syro-Palestinian coast. These set the stage for the development of the later Islamic glass industry that rose from these same regions, if not virtually the same individual craftsmen and their successors. A comparable group of Sasanian vessels offers an interesting and useful contrast to this "Western material" from the Syro-Palestinian Coast.

There are more than sixty mold-blown and pattern-molded vessels in the collection and they offer the rare opportunity to study vessels with identical molds as well as variations of objects with the same mold design. All of the patterns have been drawn and selected profiles provided. This is one of the strongest components of the collection and contains seven objects with mold-blown inscriptions: two typical small ewers of the ninth-tenth century, a simple royal blue bottle and four globular long-necked so-called Gurgan type bottles of the eleventh-twelfth century.

Roughly three dozen vessels have applied decoration and take the technique to aesthetic heights: from a large transitional ewer of the ninth century which sports trail-decoration reminiscent of the Byzantine glassmasters' to twelfth century bottles sporting layer upon layer of trails, medallions, blobs and animals. Other examples of applied decoration include cold-painted, lustre-decorated and enamelled objects. Three simple cold-painted bottles of the eighth century, said to be from Afghanistan, will be of particular interest. The enamelled objects span the period when this technique was in fashion and include an inkwell, a set of beakers and bottles as well as a mosque lamp from the mosque of Sultan Barquq in Egypt. The nineteenth century material, which is mostly enamelled, is based on these shapes. It contains an amazing range of forms from well-known factories producing materials for this eclectic and burgeoning market. (Most of the 19th century material will be included in Volume XXIII, *Occidentalism. Islamic Art in the 19th Century*-NN)

The collection is rich in objects where glass was removed to create design. These include linear, facet, bevel and relief cut-forms. From the simple molar flask to cameo glass vessels, there are numerous masterpieces along the way. Two notable objects are a handle cut in the form of an elaborately coifed female and a rare sack-shaped drinking jug with a cut inscription. Within the group is also a cameo-carved cup against which all other cameo glass, if not all relief-cut glass, might be compared.

The glass vessels of the Khalili collection form a comprehensive and unique body of material for the further study of this amazing medium.

Dr Sidney M Goldstein is Associate Director, St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri.



Previous page: **Drinking jug with cut decoration.**
Iraq or Iran,
9th century AD
Height: 17.7 cm
Accession number: GLS 179

This is a rare example of a sack-shaped drinking vessel. It is blown out of clear glass and has a trailed handle and thumbrest.

Early facet-cut Islamic glass follows on from the Sasanian traditions. By the 9th century a new technique was developed in Iraq, and linear-cut inscriptions, plants, animals or geometric designs replaced the various forms of facets.

The decoration on the jug includes an unusual inscription *"Afiyah Shafiyah"* and two interlaced bands around the handle.

Bottom left: **Trail-decorated bottle or sprinkler**
Probably Iran,
12th century AD
Height: 17.5 cm
Accession number: GLS 330

The technique of decorating glass with trailed threads and applied discs of is one inherited from pre-Islamic times. It was developed further during the early Islamic period, and Muslim artists managed to achieve spectacular and varied results. The versatility of this technique ensured its continuing popularity as a means of decorating glass objects.

Trailed threads of varying thickness are used to decorate this sprinkler. These create linear effects on the neck and on the body, but on the shoulder thicker threads assume the shape of stylized birds. In addition, the body carries a series of stamped inscribed discs, similar to glass weights, the inscriptions are partially obscured by the opaque turquoise glass knobs that have been applied over them.

Below: **Trailed-decorated jug** Iran,
10th–11th century
Height: 19.5 cm
Accession number: GLS 567

The jug, which is intact, is blown in transparent glass with a tan tinge, and decorated with trailed threads in the same colour and in manganese. A fold in the trailed handle creates a thumbrest.

Manganese threads are applied in a spiral pattern on the body, interrupted just below the shoulder by a zig-zag-trail in clear glass. A series of delicate threads have been trailed down the neck to create an undulating, wave-like effect.







Left: Lustre-painted cup. Egypt, 8th or 9th century AD.
Height: 9 cm; diameter: 8.5 cm
Accession number: GLS 438

The technique of decorating objects with metal oxides to produce lustre effects was probably developed by Egyptian glassmakers sometime before Islam, and was practised in Egypt and Syria up to the 12th century.

The lustre decoration on this cup consists of a wide frieze enclosing vertical bands alternately filled with a palm-leafs and pearl bands. Above it is an inscription: "Drink with enjoyment and pleasure in its fine qualities. Blessing to its owner".

A blue knob of glass is attached to one side of the cup. It is not clear whether its position there is intentional or accidental.

Below: Large cameo bowl. Egypt or Iran, 10th century AD.
Height: 8.5 cm;
diameter: 19.5 cm
Accession number: GLS 585

With its large size, superbly written inscription and except inhale thin walls (0.1 mm in some areas !), this cameo-carved bowl is a technical tour de force for which there is no known counterpart.

The benedictory inscription is in a characteristic style of floriated kufic. Some of the letters have curious "fish-tail" forms, others terminate in split palmettes. These elements are unknown on glass, and rare in other materials. The nearest parallels to the "fish-tails" are to be found in an inscription carved on wood in the Maqsura of Sidi Oqba in Qairawan (1st half of the 11th century).

The shape also has parallels in other materials. A silver repousse-decorated bowl of possible Fatimid provenance in the Khalili Collection (MTW 1313) is of the same shape and proportions as the cameo bowl.



Below: **Set of enamelled "nesting" beakers. Syria, Ayyubid period, early 13th century.**
Height: 18 cm, 16 cm and
Accession number:
GLS 578 (a-c)

These unique beakers are three of a set of four made to fit one inside the other (the second smallest is missing). They are decorated with enamelled and gilded bands. The areas of weathering on each of the three beakers indicate they must have been buried one inside the other.

Other Ayyubid and Mamluk enamelled glass in the Khalili Collection include a large bottle decorated with a band of courtiers and musicians, a bottle decorated with inscriptions, and a large mosque lamp bearing the name of the Mamluk Sultan Barquq.

Right: **Enamelled mosque lamp with the name of the Mamluk Sultan Barquq. Egypt or Syria, 1382-99 AD.**
Height: 33 cm (incl ding the foot, which is a resin replacement)
Accession number: GLS 572
Acquired: Gallery des Venues d'Orleans, 21 March 1991.

The lamp comes from the *madrasah* of the Mamluk Sultan Barquq, built in Cairo between 1384 AD and 1386 AD. Al Malik al Zahir Abu Said Barquq was the first in the line of the *Burj* Mamluk Sultans and ruled twice between 1382-89 and 1390-99 AD.

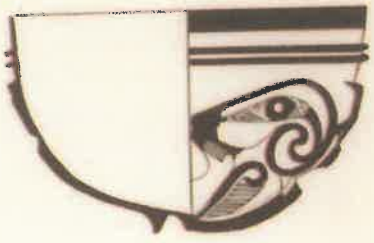
Barquq's name is mentioned four times on the lamp. It appears three times as al-Malik al-Zahir in the calligraphic blazons interrupt a second calligraphic frieze enclosing the words of *Ayat al Nur* (Qur'an, XXIV, verse 35).

Gaston Wiet recorded 37 mosque lamps with the name of Sultan Barquq. Twenty-two of these are in the Cairo Museum. The Khalili example is in very good condition, and a large proportion of the gilding has survived. When acquired, the original foot had been replaced by a European glass substitute. The latter has since been replaced by a resin foot. Its reconstruction was based on other Barquq lamps of similar type and proportions.







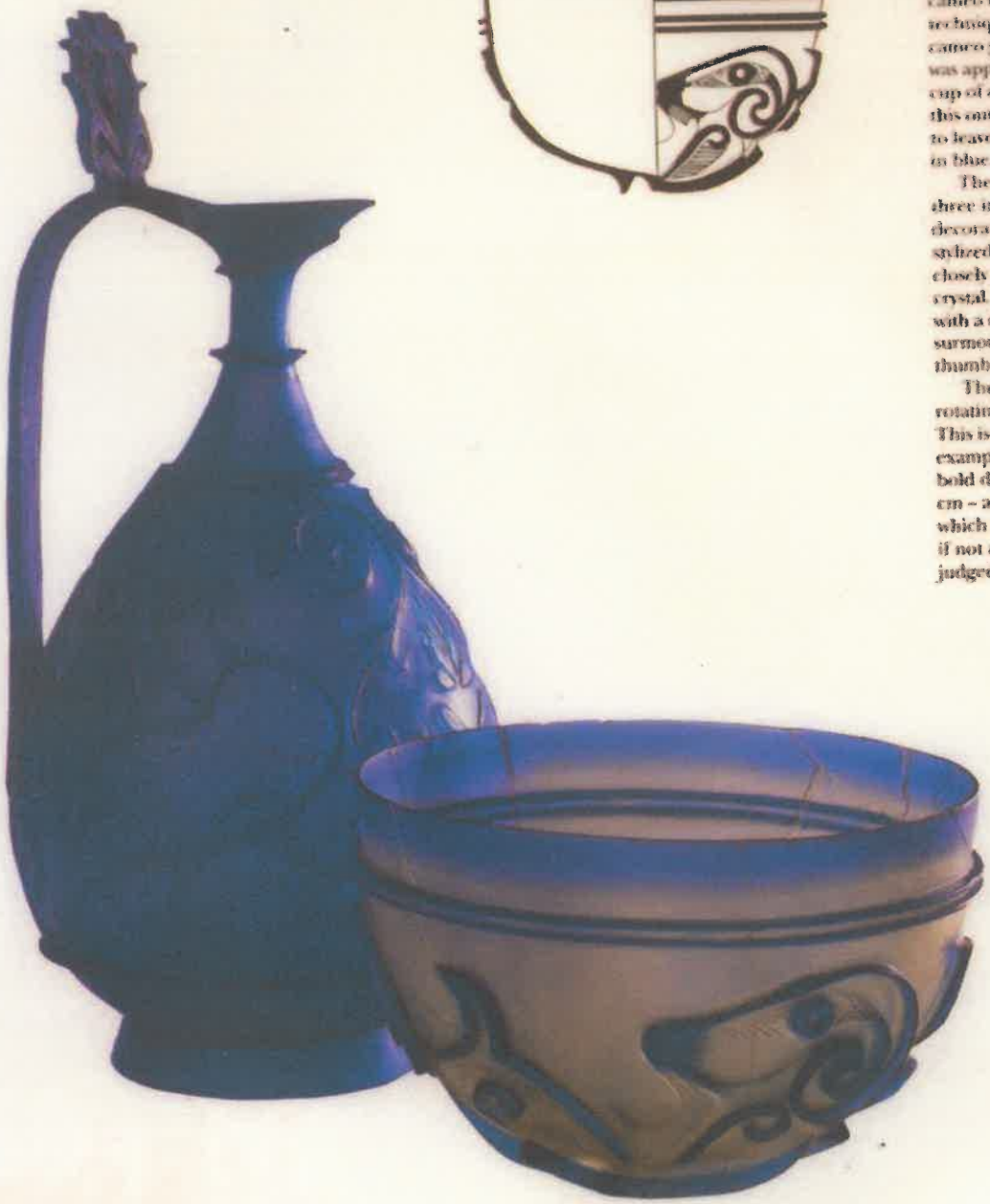


[illegible] ... (60 cm, [illegible]
Height of jug, 19 cm; height of
of cup, 6.5 cm, diameter, 9.9 cm.
Accession numbers: GLS 551 and
GLS 550, respectively.

These two exceptional objects are part of a large group in the Khalili Collection decorated in a technique which is a direct development of the linear cut technique introduced in the 9th century. This involved marking out the design on the surface and cutting away the surrounding area so that the pattern stood out in relief. In the cameo cup this decorative technique has been applied to cameo glass: a layer of blue glass was applied to the exterior of a cup of clear glass, and most of this outer layer was then cut away to leave the design standing out in blue.

The ewer, the smallest of three in the Khalili collection, is decorated with two birds and stylized foliage. The designs are closely related to Fatimid rock crystal. The handle is decorated with a diaper design, and is surmounted by an openwork thumbrest.

The cup is decorated with a rotating design of three rams. This is an exceptionally fine example of cameo glass – the bold design is cut to a depth of 1 cm – and acts as a standard by which all other cameo examples, if not all relief-cut glass, might be judged.



Islamic Je

Marian Wenzel, Alfr[illegible] and J[illegible]

The magnificent holdings of Islamic jewellery in the Nasser D Khalili Collection are comprehensive in a way which cannot be claimed for any other published collections of the Islamic decorative arts. The jewellery dates from the 7th century through the 19th, and includes copious examples of virtually every form of personal ornament.

A great number of pieces – of all Islamic periods – originated in Iran and Afghanistan, so the development of jewellery production in these areas can be traced in great detail in this Collection. Complementing these comprehensive Iranian "core" items are important additional groups of carefully selected high-quality works from other regions, which fill out the picture of the Islamic jewellery arts. The Collection is unique in possessing a wide variety of gold granulated filigree, Fatimid period rings, bracelets, pendants and earrings, some with cloisonne enamels, including a remarkable gold link-bracelet consisting of joined enamelled medallions. Major early Ottoman pieces in granulated silver-gilt, with jade cartouches inlaid with gold, are also represented and can be seen as inheriting the design-traditions of the rare Ilkhanid ornaments. A number of superbly designed Moroccan items contain emeralds from the New World.

About a third of all the pieces of jewellery in the Khalili Collection are finger rings. All 618 rings will be published in a detailed volume, where each example will be shown in a photograph and in drawings from four angles. (Volume XVI, *Ornament and Amulet. Rings of the Islamic Lands* – now in Press, will be out shortly – NN). The existing literature on Islamic rings is not sufficient for any detailed study of the development of the form, and it is hoped that the rare opportunity which arises here to publish together so many examples will greatly increase the appreciation of this fascinating topic.

A second volume (Volume XVII, *The Art of Adornment. Jewellery of the Islamic Lands* – NN) will present key pieces from the remainder of the jewellery in the Collection.

Dr Martin Wenzel is an art historian, London.

Ralph Pinder-Wilson was formerly with the Department of Oriental Antiquities, British Museum, London.

Jack Ogden adds:

The large group of exceptionally fine Fatimid goldwork in the Khalili Collection exemplifies the extraordinary openwork filigree and granulation produced by goldsmiths in the 11th and 12th century Egypt and Syria. The group includes rings, bracelets, earrings and beads, and the detailed study of the items has permitted a fuller understanding of Islamic goldwork and its place in the medieval world.

Dr Jack Ogden is a research consultant in Cambridge, who is working primarily on gold items of jewellery.

a Fatim[illegible] [illegible] jewellery
Egypt or Syria, 11th–12th century AD
Size: 8.7 x 9.5 cm
Accession number: JLY 1286
Acquired: Sotheby's, 11 October 1989.
lot no. 334.

This extremely fine item of jewellery may have been half of a belt buckle. Two hinge elements are still attached to it on one end, while the back has two rings which may have been intended to secure it to a belt.

The item is made from gold sheet and wire. The top is decorated with openwork filigree using twisted as well as flat wire. The filigree is supported on the back by a series of small strips of gold sheet.

It has been suggested that the large heart shape may have been intended to hold a gem. It is more likely, however, that it contained an enamelled inset, now lost. Earrings which are comparable in both style and technique of manufacture to this example are often decorated with such enamelled insets.



Mughal Je

Robert Skelton

Unfortunately, despite literary and pictorial evidence that the Mughals possessed and wore large numbers of priceless jewels, very little has survived today. The subject is still very largely unexplored and the publication of a collection as substantial as that brought together by Dr Khalili is an event of some significance.

All known collections of Indian jewellery comprise mainly of later or post-Mughal pieces. However, the Nasser D Khalili Collection does contain several outstanding examples from seventeenth and eighteenth century royal Mughal workshops. Prominent among these is a spinel ruby engraved with the names and titles of the Emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan, and two carved enamels of notable size and colour which may be attributed to the end of Shah Jahan's reign or the early years of his son, Aurangzeb. The high level of luxury craftsmanship achieved in the early eighteenth century is demonstrated by an exquisite enamelled box overlaid with carved emeralds.

Among other excellent enamelled objects is a superb eighteenth century pedestal dish and an octagonal box and tray set similar in its size and opulence to the famous seventeenth century example in Leningrad (St. Petersburg).

Jewellery in the Collection covers a very wide range including South Indian gold pieces of exquisite form and excellent workmanship as well as turban ornaments and other pieces of Mughal design.

Robert Skelton was formerly Keeper, India Department, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Left: An enamelled gold box and tray set. India, early 18th century
Box height: 10 cm, diameter: 13 cm
Tray diameter: 29 cm
Accession number: JLY 1729
Published: *The Indian Heritage*, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982, no. 330 and colour plate II c-d.

Enamel work of extremely high quality was produced during the Mughal period. The technique may have been introduced into India from Europe, but it was soon used on a variety of objects ranging from small items of jewellery, to boxes, bottles and other such objects as well as arms and armour.

The octagonal box and tray are made of gold and decorated with enamelled designs, in translucent red and green enamels on an opaque white background. Both are decorated with floral sprays, based on dianthus blossoms, as well as foliage. On the tray, the sprays are arranged within an arcade made up of stylized cypress trees supporting leafy arches. The interior of the box and its base are decorated with an engraved design and covered with green enamel.

Right: An emerald-covered gold box.
India, Mughal period, ca. 1720
Height: 3.9 cm; diameter: 5 cm.
Accession number: JLY 1857

This box is unquestionably an object of the greatest distinction in its [illegible] sign a[illegible] provides an almost [illegible] of carved emeralds (55 in total) being used to cover the entire visible surface of a gold object. The only comparable example is a box of much later date and simpler design in the Persian Royal Collection.

In view of the precious materials and superior craftsmanship attained in this box, it is reasonable to assume that the box was made at the highest level of Mughal court patronage, possibly for the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah.

The exterior of the box and lid have been shaped into 16 panels defined by narrow gold bands deeply engraved with a zig-zag motif. These bands also secure the emeralds in place. The emeralds are carved in low relief with cypress trees and a border of stylized leaves. The base of the box carries green enamelled floral decoration.







Previous page: Gold necklace set with rubies. India, 19th century.
Length: 71 cm; height of individual beads: 10.5 cm
Accession number: JLY 115

Gold jewellery derived from traditional Indian styles continued to be produced in the Mughal period. This necklace, which was probably made in south India is an excellent example of the remarkable skills of Indian goldsmiths.

The necklace is made up of 39 identical elements, all fabricated from sheet and wire. Each element consists of two main components: a horizontally fluted melon-shaped bead and a vertically fluted conical pendant surmounted by a dome, with the joint hidden by means of twisted wire. The two components have been soldered together and set with small cabochon rubies mounted in conical bezels. A small cone made up of gold wire surmounts each element.

Below: Enamelled gold spittoon
India, perhaps 18th century
Height: 5.5 cm; diameter of rim: 11 cm
Accession number: JLY 1972

This small spittoon must rank high amongst the most beautiful and refined enamelled objects from Mughal India. The superbly rendered motifs that decorate its surfaces are more reminiscent of painting in their elegant shapes and fine execution.

The spittoon has a spherical body with a wide, gently scalloped rim and a quatrefoil-shaped base. The body is decorated with a series of 6 lobed cartouches, each bordered in dark blue and enclosing a floral spray on bright yellow ground. Small flowers fill the interspaces. The rim is decorated with two alternating floral sprays: the underside of the rim has a floral scroll. The base is carved with a feather-like arrangement of leaves and enamelled overall in green. White enamel, with a pale blue tinge, is used as the background colour.

The overall texturing of the surface of the object, by means of finely engraved lines, adds depth and richness to the translucent enamel colours. White is the only opaque colour used. It has been thinly applied over surfaces engraved with a wave-like pattern.

On stylistic grounds, the motifs indeed suggest that the spittoon was made sometime in the 17th or early 18th century. The flowers, for example, have parallels in the border decoration of albums made for Shah Jahan. Some of the enamel colours – especially the blue-tinted white – suggest a later date. It is therefore possible that the spittoon was made sometime in the early 19th century, by a master craftsman who was well

Right: Detail of the decoration on the rim of the spittoon below.





Michael Bates

The Khalili coin collection includes many series represented in greater numbers and greater variety than elsewhere. The most spectacular and surprising example is its holdings of the earliest Arab gold coinage of North Africa, with Latin inscriptions. The standard corpus of the series includes only three examples of the first two years' issues, of 704-05 CE. In the Khalili collection there are at least a dozen, with others waiting to be precisely identified. Many ideas about the origin of this coinage will be changed completely.

Dr Michael L. Bates is curator of Islamic coins, American Numismatic Collection, New York.







Elizabeth Savage

The many strengths of the Khalili numismatic collection will take years to be fully studied and appreciated. The coins span the Islamic world from North Africa to Central Asia and date from the reign of the Umayyads to the present. Of particular value and interest are those of the early Abbasids and Ikhshidids. Here the Khalili coins contribute not only new varieties but new types as well.

Dr Elizabeth Savage is a historian, London.



Andre de Clermont

The Khalili collection of Islamic gold, silver and copper coins ... is an exceptional collection containing many major rarities in all series. Among the gold coins, references should be made to the superb quality dinar of the year 77, the transitional dinar, which is the first Arab gold coin with the words of the Kalima in its legend; the excessively rare Hijaz dinar (the only specimen in a private collection); a superb and extremely rare Abbasid dinar of the year 132; the two issues of the Abbasid dinar of Harun al-Rashid bearing his full title (years 170 and 171); the unique dinar of the Ilkhanid Musa Khan; and the Qajar Shahs of Iran treasury set, of 50, 20 and 10 tomans (five pieces in all). There are many other rarities among a collection of gold coins which is ambitious in scope and comprehensive in acquisition. The silver coinage covers all historical periods and geographical areas of the Islamic world, and combines superbly with the gold collection. In the bronze series, there is an extensive gathering of high quality pieces which are always hard to obtain. Particular emphasis has been placed on the early Arab-Byzantine period, and also on the expressive and visually pleasing Urtuqid coins.

Taken as a whole, this collection is without doubt one of the most outstanding groups in private hands, and compares favourably in many respects with some of the National Museum collections around the world. It is certainly well worth detailed publication and illustration. Were this to be undertaken, it would become a standard reference work for both scholars and students of Islamic numismatics.

Andre de Clermont is a Director of Spink and son Ltd. and head of their coins and medals department.

(examples of rare/important gold coins)

a. Umayyad dinar of the "Arab-Byzantine" type.
Anonymous, reign of Abd al-Malik bin Marwan, ca. 691-3 AD.
AV; 4.38 gm, diameter: 20 mm.
This extremely rare *dinar* marks the first appearance of the Muslim attestation of faith on Islamic coinage. The coin is without mint or date, but it was probably struck in Damascus during the reign of Abd al-Malik bin Marwan, ca. 691-3 AD.

The obverse has three standing figures, adapted from the image of Heraclius and his two sons found on *solidi* current in Syria when the Arabs came to power. The field on the reverse has a 4-step pedestal with a column surmounted by a globe (a modification of the cross found on Byzantine coins) surrounded by the legend: "In the name of God, there is no god but God alone. Muhammad is the apostle of God".

b. Umayyad dinar. *Madin Amir al-Muminin bil-Hijaz*,
AH 105/AD 724.
AV; 4.26 gm; diameter: 20 mm.
This is an extremely rare example of a special type of dinars minted in 105 AH, and the only one known to be in a private collection.

c. Wajihid dinar. Muhammad bin Yusuf. Struck in Uman in 335 AH.
AV; 4.45gm; diameter: 26 mm.
This is a coin of Muhammad bin Yusuf, the Wajihid ruler of Uman (333-ca. 340 AH).

d. one of a special issue Qajar treasury set of 50, 20 and 10 gold tomans (5 pieces in all) ; struck in *Madinat al-Saltanah* Tehran in 1210 AH.

Arms and

David Alexander

The arms and armour in the [illegible] Collection include items as varied and widely separated as a Crusader sword from the Mamluk arsenal at Alexandria and an 18th century cannon from the palace of Tipoo Sultan at Mysore. Among the more outstanding pieces are a 15th century war mask from Iran and a 15th or 16th century chamfron signed by the maker. There is interesting group of early stirrups and a 13th century hunting drum. Of historical importance is the sword of the Sudanese warlord Ali Dinar, taken after his defeat and death in 1916.

Amongst objects of ceremonial significance in the Collection are a group of belt fittings from the medieval period and two sets of horse trappings including a gold saddle and small accoutrements.

Dr David Alexander was formerly with the Department of Arms and Armour, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Dagger and Scabbard. India or Afghanistan, late 18th or 19th century.
Forged steel blade; gold-damascened and silver-inlaid steel hilt; velvet-covered wooden scabbard with silver-gilt mounts.
Length: dagger: 52.3 cm; scabbard: 40.7 cm.
Accession number: MTW 1134
Volume XXI, *The Arts of War*, no.124.
Formerly in the Hugh Kennedy Collection.

The hilt and blade of this dagger were shaped in the form of the Arabic word *Nasir* (Helper – one of the Names of God), with the edge of the blade forming the last letter. It is one of the only two known daggers crafted to form an Arabic word.

The hilt is damascened with feathery gold scrolls between silver-inlaid borders. The highly polished, sharply pointed blade is of watered steel forged with an overall wave-like pattern.

This type of blade was common in northern India and Afghanistan, and the dagger was probably made there in the late 18th or early 19th century.

Right: Dagger and Scabbard;
Ottoman blade with European mounts, 16th and 17th century
Steel blade with gold overlay and three seed pearls; lapis hilt; gilt silver mounts and leather covered wooden scabbard.
Length: 36 cm; scabbard: 26.5 cm
Accession number: MTW 1143
Volume XXI, *The Arts of War*, no. 51.

The pierced blade used in this dagger belongs to a group of blades made for the Ottoman court in the 16th century. This example is slightly curved and is pierced along its length. Three free-rolling seed pearls are fitted inside the top groove. The blade is damascened in gold, with extremely fine floral arabesques and rosettes.

A number of examples from the Ottoman court group of blades are preserved in European collections, which they originally entered as princely gifts or captured booty. The fittings on the Khalili example were made in Europe – probably Germany – and are 17th century.

The lapis hilt is fitted into a quillon block decorated with an elephant and a rhinoceros. The quillons are sculpted into a mask and a lion's head. The wooden scabbard is covered in black leather, with silver-gilt mounts decorated *en suite* with the hilt.

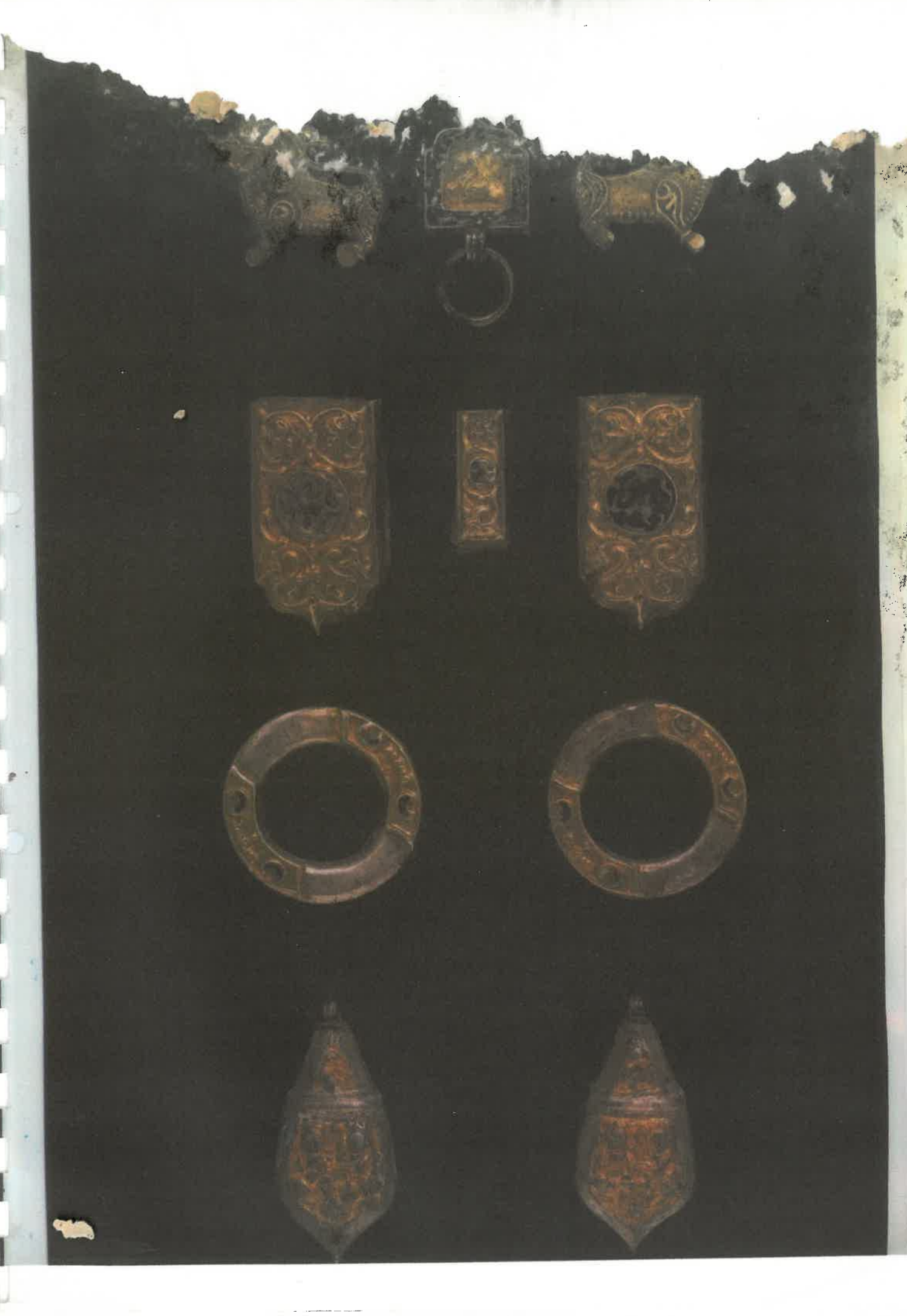


northwestern Iran, 13th century
Silver, cast and sheet with repoussé decoration, with gilded and niello.
lions: 3.8 x 3.9 cm; suspension element: 5.6 x 3.2 cm; pendants: 6 x 2.9 cm; diam. of circular elements: 4.6 cm
Accession number: MTW 1438
Volume XXI, *The Arts of War*, no.13.

In view of the material used and the quality of the workmanship, these pieces were almost certainly part of a ceremonial belt belonging to a Saljuq amir and were probably made in an Anatolian centre such as Konya. It is possible that the two pendant elements were not components of the belt, but they may have served as ornaments on a costume.

The gilded repoussé decoration on three of these elements consists of a winged animal, in two cases turning to bite its tail. That on the two pendants depicts musicians surmounted by a bird.

The entire group can be attributed to a workshop in Saljuq Anatolia on stylistic grounds. Similar motifs may be found on Anatolian buildings and works of art. Two almost identical circular elements, however, were found with a similar set in Northern Iran.





Dagger and Scabbard, India, perhaps Hyderabad, late 17th or 18th century.
Forged steel blade, wooden scabbard covered with velvet, enamelled gold hilt and scabbard mounts set with rubies.
Length: dagger: 37.4 cm; scabbard: 28 cm.
Accession number: MTW 1146
Volume XXI, *The Arts of War*, **no.118**

The gold hilt of this dagger is decorated with staggered rows of green, white and dark and light blue lotus flowers, with *saz* leaves on the curled pommel, and is set with rubies.

The double-curved blade is undecorated. It is double-edged and has a central rib. The wooden scabbard is covered with green fabric that sports trimmings of silver-enriched fabric. The gold scabbard mounts are decorated *en suite* with the hilt.

The delicately arranged rows of lotus flowers and *saz* leaves are unique as hilt and scabbard decorations. They are known, however, decorating other objects as well as on textiles.

It is not known where the dagger was made, but it is reported to come from the collection of the Nizam of Hyderabad, and it is not unlikely that it was made there.

Carving

Ralph Pinder-Wilson

The Collection possesses some five examples of carved wood and stonework, including a signed and dated wooden cenotaph of the late 15th century from Mazandaran, in north western Iran. Of similar date, but of quite different scale, medium and function, is a jade 'dragon-handled' jug; this differs from other known examples in that its body is enlivened with a network of gold arabesques.

Ralph Pinder-Wilson was formerly with the Department of Oriental Antiquities, British Museum.

Panel from a marble calligraphic frieze
Eastern Iran, 13th century
Size: 55 x 48 cm
Accession number: MXD 256

The superbly carved inscription on this marble frieze does not appear to be Qur'anic. The inscription, which reads "*nasir (?) al-fuqara ammal*" may therefore be part of a poem, or is perhaps of a historic nature. The background palmette scroll is also beautifully carved, and is interrupted by an interlaced knot.



Carved ivory plaque. Probably Egypt, Fatimid period, 10th or early 11th century. Size: 8.7 x 16.6 cm. Accession number: MXD 59 (a-k).

This is one of a set of 11 plaques decorated with reciprocal palmettes carved in openwork. They are all of the same height, but are of four different lengths.

It is not certain what object the plaques were intended to decorate. Given their various sizes, it is unlikely that they came from a casket – although it was of very large proportions and more than one plaque was used on each of its walls. It is more likely that the plaques were used to decorate a door or even a large piece of furniture.

Timurid gold inlaid jade cup. Iran, 15th century. Height: 4.5cm; diameter: 8cm Accession number: MXD 57 Acquired: Sotheby's, 10 October 1990, lot no.187

This unique gold inlaid cup is carved out of a pale green nephrite jade. It has a stepped, slightly everted rim and a superbly carved handle in the shape of a dragon's head. The cup is decorated with a gold inlaid network of lobed cartouches joined by half-palmette scrollwork. The gold inlay is further decorated with fine beading and engraved details.

The shape of the cup has parallels in a few examples, also with dragon's head handles, that

Dragons were a popular motif in Timurid art. In metalwork, they are found on the handles of various objects such as jugs and are often used as sockets in candlesticks. They are also a feature of a type of Timurid ring, where dragon's heads appear on either side of the bezel, which is often set with a jade stone.

Carved jade spoon. India, 17th century. Length: 15 cm Accession number: MXD 253

Finely carved of a pale green nephrite jade, this delicate spoon is a perfect example of the remarkable skills of Mughal hardstone carvers.

The spoon is in the shape of a rolled lotus leaf, the veins delicately carved on the back of the bowl and the stem twisted and terminating in a curled lotus bud.







Figural

Nasser D Khalili

The Collection is rich in figural sculptures. Some are in human, some in animal form, and most are in metal and ceramic. This is a topic with which few scholars have concerned themselves, and it has therefore been decided to group these figural sculptures together in a single volume. A unique example, with an historically intriguing inscription, is a ceramic figure, some 43 cm high, which shows a bearded figure kneeling in prayer. It was produced in Kashan under the Mongols in the second half of the 13th century, yet its inscription identifies it as a portrait of the Saljuq ruler Tughril Beg.



Ceramic figure of "Sultan Tughril", Iran, Kashan, second half of the 13th century.
Height: 43 cm
Accession number: POT 1310

The inscription, which reads *Maulana Tughril al-Sultan al-amil a. adil Tuin* (?), ends with the date 658 AH (1259-60 AD). This date corresponds to the style of the piece, but not to any known Sultan Tughril. One explanation would be that the statue had some commemorative purpose.

This is a purely decorative piece. As such it may be considered as the most outstanding example of portraiture in an extremely small group of figural objects which have no functional use.

Bird-shaped aquamanile, made by Abu al-Qasim bin Muhammad al-Marawi, Central Asia, probably Marv, 12th or 13th century.
Size: 36.3 x 32 cm
Accession number: MTW 846

The aquamanile is in the shape of a duck resting on two webbed feet which are connected by a curved bar. The large faceted handle has a circular opening which is covered by a hinged lid in the shape of a lion's head. It is cast, with some of the engraved decoration originally inlaid with black and white compounds. The eyes are set with two fragments of turquoise glazed pottery. This is not uncommon: glazed pottery fragments are often used to decorate metalwork and jewellery.

The aquamanile is decorated with several roundels enclosing birds, rabbits or gazelles, rosettes or palmettes. One such cartouche is engraved on the underside of the tail – it is only visible when the object is lifted, as it would be if the liquid was being poured out!

The signature of the artist is engraved on one side of the bird. It reads: *'amal Abu al-Qasim bin Muhammad al-Marawi* (made by Abu al-Qasim bin Muhammad of Marv). If the *nisbah* "al-Marawi" can be interpreted as implying that the artist came from, or even lived in, the city of Marv, it is reasonable to assume that the aquamanile was made there.

[illegible] Feline figure
[illegible]ghanistan, 12th or
[illegible] century
Size: [illegible]43 cm
Accession number: POT 941

Large figures [illegible] ceramic sculptures of [illegible] in Islamic art. This example [illegible] the shape of a stylized lion standing with its tail elegantly curled against its flank, carrying two bowls which are strapped to its body. The straps are represented as mouldings.

The nostrils and the eyebrows are represented in relief on an otherwise flat face. The boldly outlined eyes terminate in split palmettes that run along the sides of the nose. The lion's body is decorated with split palmette scrolls and bold stripes, painted in black under a turquoise glaze. Overglaze painted red lines are used to outline some [illegible]

The [illegible] lion was [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]



Incense
bird, Iran, 12th–13th cent.
Size: 18 x
Accession

Several of the zoomorphic burners that have survived from the 12th and the early 13th century are made in the shape of birds and animals. The Khalili Collection includes examples in the form of birds, lions, elephants and mythical animals.One unique example is in the shape of a horse, although only the head has survived.

These incense burners are of two main types. The first is made in two hinged or interlocking parts. In these, the head normally lifts off so that the incense may be placed inside the object. The bird reproduced here belongs to the second type, in which the objects are provided with an opening fitted with a flat cover or small drawer. In the case of this bird, the opening has a flat cover with a small loop handle.

This exceptional
painted decoration carrying a
"Jarduniere" shape, but is
unique. This piece is intact,
except for a small break on its
rim. The break must have
occurred during the firing as the
broken pieces can now be seen
stuck to the neck.

The camel is covered in bright
painted patterns that include
figural medallions, bands of
inscriptions and palmette motifs.





Islam...

Nasser D K...

The Nasser D Khalili collection is the largest and most important collection of Islamic lacquer. It includes over 500 penboxes, bookbindings, mirror cases, caskets and boxes. Among the less usual objects are a pendant with the bust portrait of the Shah 'Abbas II which was probably worn by a member of his seraglio, and the only known backgammon board which is attributable to Muhammad Hassan Khan.

The objects come from Iran, India and Turkey. Around half are datable to the 17th and 18th centuries, the remainder to the 19th. The majority of the pieces are signed and the work of virtually every known lacquer artist is well represented. These include Mu'in Musavvir, Muhammad Zaman, his brother Muhammad Ibrahim and his son Muhammad 'Ali bin Muhammad Zaman, 'Ali Ashraf, Abu Talib and the various members of the Najaf and Imami families. Some pieces are signed by previously unrecorded artist. The collection also includes 19th century Russian penboxes which were made for export to the Persian market and reflect the artistic trends in Iran at that period.

Islamic lacquer painting has never received the same degree of attention awarded to other fields of Islamic art. The publication of the Khalili Collection of Islamic lacquer, which is the most comprehensive of its type, will therefore provide an invaluable reference work on the subject.

Dr Nasser D Khalili is Director, Nour Foundation (UK) Ltd. and an Honorary Fellow of the University of London.

B W Robinson was formerly Keeper, Victoria and Albert Museum.



A unique, lacquer painted backgammon board.
Unsigned, but may be attributed to Muhammad Hasan Khan. Iran, early 19th century.
Accession number: LAQ 284

This unique folding backgammon board is unsigned, but may, on stylistic grounds, be attributed to Muhammad Hasan Khan, an artist who was active during the Fath Ali Shah period. This holds especially true for the female figures: their faces, dresses and jewellery are treated in an identical manner to large oil paintings signed by, or attributed to, him.

When open, the main decoration falls within a shape of a cross with a lobed central medallion enclosing a formal bouquet of flowers framed within gold "rococo" scrolls.

This is flanked by two small and four larger medallions enclosing single figures or couples.

Although European influence is discernible in both style and content, the background decoration of the cross and the floral medallions are typically Iranian. This mixture is characteristic of lacquer painting of the Qajar period.





The

Stephen Vern

Instead of being incorporated at the end of each volume, much of the 19th-century material has been accorded its own separate volume. The intention is to show the contrast between items produced in traditional taste and those produced in a new Europeanizing vein. Also covered are objects produced in Islamic style for the European market, and, conversely, items produced in Europe for the Islamic market.

Dr Stephen Vernoit is Nasser D Khalili Research Fellow in Islamic Art at St. Antony's College, University of Oxford.



enamelled p
period of Fath
early 19th century
Size: 6.2 x 4.4 cm
Accession number: JLY 1231

Although many portraits of Fath Ali Shah are known, this painted-enamel example is perhaps one of the most charming. The Shah is represented as a relatively young man, richly dressed and wearing several necklaces, a jewelled *sarpech*, epaulettes and arm bands. The portrait is signed by Ghulam Khanazad Baqir.

A small, lobed, tear-drop cartouche to the left of the portrait is inscribed with the legend: "The Sultan Fath Ali Shah Qajar". An emerald sealstone bearing the name of the Shah and set in a gold ring, has an identical shape. (Khalili Collection, JLY 1178).

Below: Enamelled pipe. Iran, 19th century.
Height: 6 cm.
Accession number: JLY 1617

The square shape of this pipe is unusual, but its enamelled decoration is an excellent example of the fine work produced in Iran during the Qajar period.

Panels on two of the walls depict a falcon attacking a duck, while a third has the figure of a woman in "exotic" dress holding a spray of flowers and a glass. The panels are framed within floral bands. The same bird-combat scenes are used to decorate the openwork lid, where they are rendered in "*silhouette*", surrounded by various blossoms.



Right: A set of royal Ottoman calligrapher's tools. Turkey, 19th century.
Length of knife: 23 cm; *magta'*: 16.8 cm; scissors: 28 cm.
Accession number: SCI 264

It is said that the necessary requirements for a calligrapher – apart from a good temperament, an understanding of the art of calligraphy, a good hand and the capacity to endure pain – is a perfect set of implements. It is not surprising, therefore, that at a time when such high standards were set for calligraphy and the art reached an elevated status, calligraphy tools of remarkable quality and beauty were being made in Ottoman Turkey.

This royal set comprises a pair of steel scissors, a knife with a jade handle and a tempered steel blade and an ivory *magta'* or pen-rest. All are decorated with gold damascening and enamel and are set with diamonds. The knife is stamped with a maker's mark.

The scissors were mostly used for the cutting and trimming of writing paper. The knife, on the other hand, was meant for the cutting of reed pens. Blades of different shapes and sizes were required – narrow blades, for example, were designed for cutting extremely fine nibs. The cutting of the reed pen was accomplished with the use of the *magta'*: the reed pen was held in place in the raised groove on the latter while the nib was trimmed with the knife. *The magta'* also served as a pen rest when the calligrapher was at work. Many of the makers of these implements were Sufis, as can be seen by the presence of turbans of the various orders on many Ottoman *magtas'*.







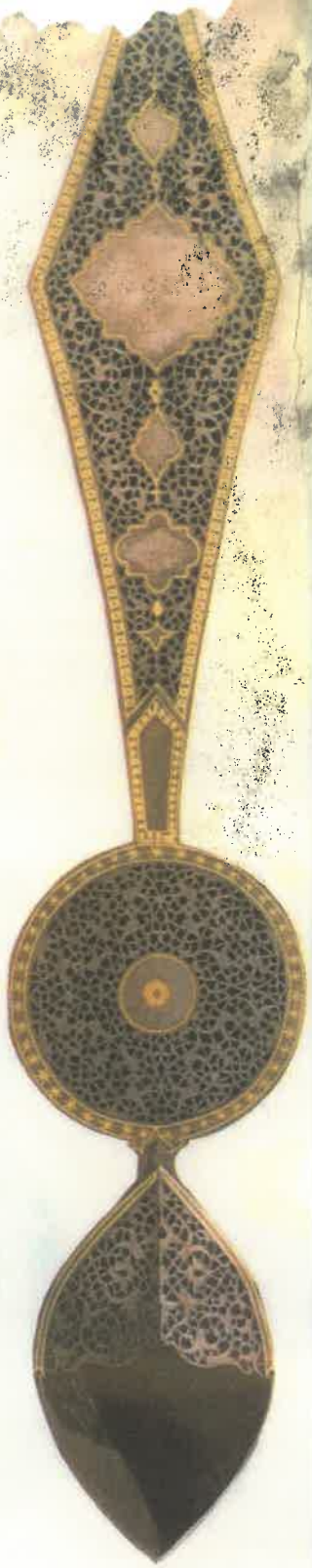
Length 50 cm
Accession number [illegible]

Pierced steel objects were produced in Iran in some quantity from the Safavid period onwards. Many of the pieces are small, and these include belt fittings, hooks and various tools and implements. Larger steel objects, such as standards or *'alams*, were also decorated with pierced work. The art is still being practiced in Iran today.

This ladle is a fine example of Qajar pierced-steel work. It has an angular, boat-shaped bowl, half covered by a pierced plaque. Both the circular and diamond shaped sections of the handle are decorated with pierced work. The join between the bowl and the handle is strengthened by means of another pierced plaque. The design of the ladle copies contemporary wooden types.

The pierced decoration consists of floral and palmette arabesques, bordered by gold damascened bands. In addition, the plaque below the handle is decorated with two snakes, reserved against a pierced background and outlined in gold.

Snakes have always been associated with healing powers in the Middle East (see for example the *Kitab al-Diryaq* manuscripts). This is still the case today, where pharmacies are identified by the symbol of two snakes wrapped around a stem cup. The presence of the snakes on this ladle therefore, may be an indication that the ladle was used for healing purposes.



SPINK

IN Islamic



Qajar – Nasir al-Din Shah
Gold Portrait Toman, 1276, regnal year 9
Astarabad mint



Banu Ghantya rulers of Cordoba:
gold dinar. Madinat Qurtuba 543h

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A Massive Kashan Lustre Jug, the shouldered rounded body with slightly flaring cylindrical mouth, sloping curving trough spout and angled handle on short foot, the shoulder with scrolling motifs around four birds roundels, a band of similar motifs above and an arcade below, the neck and spout with further similar motifs, the handle with a cursory naskh inscription, 13th Century (restored) 42 cms high.

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